

TOWN OF CLERMONT UPDATED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

(also known as "master plan")

September 2002

A town comprehensive plan " ... consists of the materials, written and/or graphic including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports, and other descriptive material, that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the municipality."

New York State Chapter 418 of the Laws of 1995 amending Town Law § 272-

Town of Clermont Comprehensive Plan Committee

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The Committee also wishes to thank Anne Poleshner, Town Historian, for use of text and graphics from her book "Clermont 1788-1988".

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Plan updates the earlier 1974 Comprehensive Development Plan of the Town of Clermont, prepared by Hans Klunder Associates, Inc. The updated Town Comprehensive Plan seeks to provide a vision. It also defines a series of recommended actions as Clermont sets to establish the way in which land should best be used, preserved and enhanced in the near future of this new century, and what program priorities should be set to support this vision.

Overall, Clermont is expected to experience several trends:

- Growth in second home and commuter land ownership.
- Shifts in agricultural pursuits as farmers seek business viability.
- A growing economic role for home businesses.
- Increased tourism as part of the larger region.
- Growing demands in providing services to an aging population.
- Increased pressure on real estate values to support tax revenues. The Updated Town Comprehensive Plan outlines a commitment by the Town, its officials and citizens, to positively address these trends. More specifically, this Plan recommends:
 - Continued support for eight (8) valuable goals of the 1974 Plan.
 - Support for new community goals including
 - (a) diversification of the property tax base;
 - (b) growth and vitality in the hamlets of Clermont and Nevis along Route 9;
 - (c) support for agriculture;
 - (d) incentives for flexible use and rehabilitation of existing buildings;
 - (e) encouragement of home businesses compatible with their neighborhoods;
 - (f) complementary efforts in support of the Clermont State Historic Site; and
 - (g) efforts to streamline the Town development permit and review processes.
- Prompt and on-going efforts to update and maintain the Town's land use regulations for consistency with this Plan, with up-to-date case law and legislation, and with contemporary land use planning techniques. Introduction This updated Town Comprehensive Plan seeks to provide a vision and a series of recommended actions as Clermont sets to establish the way in which land should best be used, preserved and enhanced in the near future of this new century, and what program priorities should be set to support this vision. A. The Importance of a Plan

Why do a plan update? First, all Towns in New York State are obliged to have an up-to-date plan as the legal foundation for any zoning and land use regulations. More importantly, a thoughtful plan, based on public input and a positive perspective for the future, can help set the priorities for coordinated action by officials, staff and volunteers. This plan also offers guidance to anyone interested in Clermont --- including residents, property owners, businesses, organizations, and prospective businesses or investors --- about our history, our current conditions, and what we prefer as our future. In summary, the leading reasons to update Clermont's plan are:

- To help attract the desired future and to help avoid the wrong one.
- To establish a contemporary, positive community vision.
- To identify actions to ensure economic stability and protect valuable natural, cultural and historic resources.
- To provide guidance and direction to other agencies and interests.
- To help avoid surprises by understanding the Town's assets and liabilities.
- To improve access to government and non-government assistance through clarity of vision.
- To back up and provide a legal and technical foundation for land use policies and tools such as zoning, subdivision and site plan regulations and design review. B. The Planning Process

This Plan updates the earlier 1974 Comprehensive Development Plan of the Town of Clermont, prepared by Hans Klunder Associates, Inc. under the authority and financial aid of Section 701 of the Housing Act of 1954. That original plan focused on the outcomes of a community questionnaire in defining goals, objectives and recommendations on how to best manage land use. Much of the 1974 Plan text presents background on the capacity of land in the Town to handle certain land uses. In 2000, a special committee, composed of

representatives of the Town Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, was appointed by the Town Board to provide advice and leadership regarding the Town drafting needed changes to Clermont's zoning regulations. During that process committee members came to realize that discussions about more significant changes to the zoning regulations demanded that the Town first review the status of the 1974 Plan. Late in 2001 the Town agreed to first focus attention on updating that Plan, to be followed by an update of the Town's land use regulations.

The committee has met twice a month to discuss leading issues with knowledgeable persons and to identify recommendations for this Plan. The Town also contracted with the New York Planning Federation for technical assistance to the Committee in updating the Plan and zoning regulations. With Federation staff, the Committee has continued to meet and discuss, has interviewed a variety of interested individuals and organizations, and prepared a draft of the Plan. That draft, including elements of the original 1974 Town Comprehensive Plan, formed the basis of this Plan as approved by the Town Board of the Town of Clermont. C. The 1974 Comprehensive Plan

In 1974 the Town of Clermont completed its first comprehensive plan with financial aid from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development Section 701 Program. That plan, available for review at the Clermont Town Hall, is essential background and a supplement to this updated Plan. The 1974 Plan included five (5) primary sections as follows:

1. **Questionnaire and Summary.** The Town Planning Board distributed a written, mail-back survey to all households within the Town. Ninety (90) or about 25% were returned, providing what was described in 1974 as "a fairly good idea of town-wide feelings on the issues ... such as attitudes towards planning, zoning, community services and facilities, and housing needs." Of the thirteen (13) general questions asked, lead responses supported the scenic, rural, clean and attractive aspects of the community, preservation of the rural character, and the use of zoning as a means of controlling development.
2. **Community Goals and Objectives.** The 1974 identified five (5) Policies that should guide the decisions of Town officials and other community interests. They were:
 - a. The Preservation of the Quality of the Environment including efforts to enhance the natural and cultural environment and the avoidance or discouragement of any change that would damage that environment.
 - b. Greater Citizen Involvement to insure that the planning process works and is effective.
 - c. Retention of Primary Agricultural Endeavors including work to preserve farmland, extend agricultural districts, and enhance the viability of farming.
 - d. Provision of Necessary Services to Residents. Included here was the identification of better and more convenient medical and shopping facilities and more collaboration with neighboring communities to attract needed, convenient services.
 - e. Restoration and Maintenance of Community Attractiveness.
3. **Land Development Capability and Existing Use.** The 1974 Plan includes multiple page discussion of soils, slope and other environmental factors that must be addressed when considering the capacity of land to handle development. That text is a supplement to this updated Plan and is included in the Appendix. 4.
4. **Transportation Considerations.** This section outlined a road classification system and complementary standards for roads within the Town. With the passage of nearly three decades, these standards and considerations are now out of date. However, this updated Plan recommends a review and updating of the Town's current road construction standards for consistency with modern standards as provided by the Cornell Local Roads Program
5. **Land Use Plan and Implementation Recommendations.** The 1974 Plan provides for a series of land use management recommendations that primarily related to amendments and additions to the Town land use regulations. The majority of these recommendations are now included in the Town's current land use regulations including provisions for zoning, site plan review, and subdivision regulation. The new updated Plan presented here offers current recommendations that supplement these 1974 recommendations.

II. TOWN HISTORY

CLERMONT was the home of Chancellor Robert R. Livingston (1746-1813) who:

- Served on the Second Continental Congress
- Was a member of the Committee of Five that drafted the Declaration of Independence
- Served as first United States Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Was Chancellor of New York from 1777 to 1801
- Was a leading member of the Poughkeepsie Constitutional Convention
- Negotiated the Louisiana Purchase as Jefferson's Minister to France With Robert Fulton
- developed America's first practical steamboat

Chancellor Livingston is one of two New Yorkers - John Jay is the other - memorialized in Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol.

Chancellor Livingston built an elaborate French inspired mansion he called "CLERMONT" south of the 1730 residence in 1793. When built, it was in Rhinebeck Precinct in Dutchess County. In 1799 the Chancellor successfully petitioned the State Legislature to change the county line so that his house, like the older mansion, would be in Columbia County. (The Chancellor's 1793 home burned early in the twentieth century). Chancellor Livingston introduced Merino sheep to the United States as a means of improving domestic wool production. His spring sheep shearing at CLERMONT drew national attention and were forerunners of the county and state agricultural fair movement. CLERMONT, built in 1730, is the oldest of the great estates of the Mid-Hudson Valley.

CLERMONT was the home to seven generations of the notable Livingston family of New York, who resided on the estate between 1730 and 1962

CLERMONT was originally an estate of 13,000 acres separated from the MANOR OF LIVINGSTON in 1728. The Livingstons of CLERMONT later acquired over 500,000 acres of land in the Catskill Mountains and over 100,000 acres in Dutchess County.

CLERMONT marked the northernmost penetration by British troops up the Hudson River during the American Revolution. The British burned Clermont, as they did the City of Kingston, in October of 1777. (Chancellor Livingston donated some of his Catskill Mountain land to the People of the City of Kingston to help finance the rebuilding of the city. The children and grandchildren of Judge Robert and Margaret Beekman Livingston of CLERMONT built a series of grand riverfront mansions on the family's Dutchess County lands after the Revolution. Those include "Montgomery Place" and "Mills Mansion", now operated as historic house museums CLERMONT was the port of registry of Fulton and Livingston's steamboat, which they called the "North River", but which is known today as the "Clermont." The ruins of the dock still exist at the historic site.

CLERMONT was a working farm, as well as a country retreat for the Livingston family, well into the twentieth century. CLERMONT was the home of Montgomery Livingston (1816-1855), a member of the Hudson River School of painting and a member of the National Academy of Design. The Town of Clermont is named after the Livingstons' CLERMONT estate; they were once virtually one and the same.

In 1860 J.H. French described Clermont as having a population of 155.1 German tenants of the Livingston estate established the first settlement. By 1791 a school was formed, at what is now the hamlet of Clermont, by a special act of the Legislature before any general school system existed in the State. Over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Town of Clermont grew slowly, remaining an agricultural and residential community.

Today Clermont is marked for several historic features on the National Register of Historic Places including the Clermont State Historic Site, at the historic home of the Livingstons, the Hudson River Estate Historic District, including several riverfront estates in the Town's Woods Road neighborhood, and the Hamlet of Clermont Historic District, along Route 9 and including a group of civic and community buildings which continue in use serving the Town's residents.

III. CLERMONT TODAY

The Town of Clermont is located in the southwest corner of Columbia County within the Hudson Valley region of New York State. The Town includes about three (3) miles of frontage on the Hudson River, defining the Town's western boundary. Substantial river frontage along the Roeliff Jansen Kill, a primary tributary of the Hudson River, defines most of the northern and eastern boundaries of the Town and contributes to the unusual shape of the municipality (see location map attached).

No incorporated Villages exist in Clermont. Land use and development remains relatively even and rural throughout the Town with some concentrated development along the primary travel routes of New York State Route 9, running north/south through the center of Town, and Route 9G, running north/south through the western portion of Town. The hamlet of Clermont, on Route 9, is the most prominent residential settlement and the home of the Town's municipal offices, historical society, and a few businesses. Nevis, south on Route 9, and Elizaville, to the east, are the other two residential hamlets.

The Town is well served by various roadways including about 41 miles of roads including 20.4 miles of Town roads, 14.5 miles of County roads, and about 6.1 miles of State Roads.

Today and historically Clermont residents have gained additional services in the nearby Villages of Red Hook, about five (5) miles south on Route 9, and Tivoli, a mile south off Route 9G near the Hudson River. The hamlet of Germantown, to the north along Route 9G also offers some services. Travel times to other prominent locations range from twenty (20) minutes south to the Village of Rhinebeck and thirty (30) minutes south and west across the Hudson River, Kingston-Rhinecliff Bridge to the City of Kingston. The City of Hudson, Columbia County's government center, is less than thirty (30) minutes travel time north while Albany is about one hour north.

A. Regional Trends

In "Socioeconomic Trends in New York State" (Paul R. Eberts, Cornell University and the New York State Legislative Commission on Rural Resources, September 1994) defines a short list of critical, over-riding conclusions which can be made for rural Towns using trends data. They are:

1. New York has been transformed into a postindustrial society where services such as education, health, finance, insurance, real estate, retail and wholesale trade, and public administration will increasingly form its economic base. This can be seen in the work commuting, travel times increase for Columbia County residents as they seek jobs to the north and south. Alternatively, this can be seen in the rise of home based businesses as residents find ways to work to provide such services via modern telecommunications out of their rural homes.
2. Although poverty has been consistently reduced since 1950, rural communities still lag significantly behind more urban and suburban communities in income, affluence, education and employment. Note, while this may be partially true in Columbia County, as a rural place Clermont is more like its rural counterparts in northern Dutchess County, fairs better in many categories including income and education.
3. Metropolitan-based institutions and their resource optimization criteria and regulatory requirements increasingly dominate market, control, management and planning functions of rural people and communities. This control can leave rural leaders frustrated and may reward urban communities of the State more than rural. Note, this is important in Clermont for two primary reasons. First, local decisions are increasingly influenced by the needs of second homeowners, tourists, and urban residents who have relocated with expectations for services they were previously used to. Second, Clermont is situated at the edge of several government service jurisdictions, including the county and state agency regions (Departments of Environmental Conservation, Transportation, Economic Development, and Office of Parks all have service areas that change at the Columbia / Dutchess border). This distance from the service centers can aggravate gaining aid.

MUNICIPAL ECONOMY

An important piece of analysis is the New York State "Comptroller's Annual Report on Municipal Affairs for New York State, 2000. That report identifies the following key trends of municipal government:

- In the past decade total local government expenditures increased 18% more than the rate of inflation, with social services (29%), public safety (28%) and education (27%) increasing at the highest rates.
- Total funding sources (revenues and bond proceeds) increased 20% more than the rate of inflation and at a greater rate than total expenditures. This has resulted in an overall increase in many local government fund balances. The largest increases are seen in sales tax receipts, while many jurisdictions have seen stagnant property tax bases and stable or steady state aid.
- Bond proceeds, as a funding source, increased 60%. Also, the increase in bond proceeds exceeded the increase in capital outlay, indicating that local governments probably issued debt for capital expenditures, which in the past would have been paid from current revenues.

Overall, this means that local governments are increasingly reliant on bond proceeds and economically dependent revenue sources (sales tax) to fund increased expenditures. Accumulated fund balances may cushion this reliance against the risks of any prolonged economic downturn. To date Clermont has avoided the need to rely on bonds, yet is looking to a strengthen revenues and services though a focus on supporting properly scaled and designed commercial uses, with a gain in sales and real estate tax revenue.

ENVIRONMENT

The following key items have been identified in this research, including interviews with various planners and environmental professionals from the region.

- Efforts to protect and enhance agricultural and farmland activities as a vital part of the region's historic and current economy and landscape.
- Better water resource protection - including local efforts to identify and protect wetlands, floodplains, shorelines, and water supply sources.
- Municipal regulations to improve the location and design of new development - notably to control commercial "strip" development along the main roadways and at "gateway" locations to the Town and its hamlets.
- Need for continued attraction of development at an appropriate scale matching the environmental sensitivity of the region. A key element of this sensitivity is the substantial scenic views found in the Hudson Valley. Clermont offers some tremendous scenery, from the rolling farmlands of its interior to the signature views of the Hudson River and Catskill high peaks to the west.

B. Demographics

The table attached provides an overview of certain demographic trends related to the Town of Clermont as compared to nearby Towns and to the counties of Columbia and Dutchess. Overall, Clermont is now experiencing a rate of population growth (19.6% from 1990 to 2000) and of residential construction that is more pronounced than most of its peers in Columbia County. Indeed, this growth is more consistent with the fast-growing towns to the south in the midHudson Valley region of Putnam, Orange, Dutchess and Ulster counties. Also consistent with these places is Clermont's relatively low median age of population, at around 36 years or nearly four years younger than the Columbia County average.

Demographically, according to the recent release of more detailed US Census information, Clermont is particularly similar to its southern neighbor of Red Hook, yet with over twice the population rate of growth. In each town nearly 30% of the housing stock was built before 1939. Median age of the populations, household sizes, and income levels are also similar.

A key and positive difference is found in the income growth from 1990 to 2000. Clermont substantially exceeded all regional numbers in growth of median family income and better than most areas, including Red Hook, in per capita income growth. However, to gain this income growth, Clermont residents, on average,

have to travel relatively far. In 2000 the US Census reports average one-way commuting times of about 32 minutes, compared to 24 minutes for Red Hook residents, and 26 minutes for Columbia County generally. In this factor, Clermont again is very similar to Dutchess County overall, where many residents are forced to travel out of Town for work.

C. Land Use

OVERALL KEY TRENDS

Key trends likely to influence how land is used in the Town of Clermont include:

- **SECOND HOME AND COMMUTING OWNERSHIP** as more and more urban residents, primarily from the greater New York City region but also from the Albany, Kingston, or Poughkeepsie regional areas, take advantage of the accessibility of Clermont and its relative affordability, safety and overall quality of life. This will continue to drive the residential real estate market.
- **THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE** as a viable economic activity. Reliance on agriculture is changing as farming shifts towards specialized production serving nearby urban and suburban centers.
- **THE GROWING ECONOMIC ROLE OF HOME BUSINESSES** as residents seek necessary, convenient, and independent options to make a living. According to the 2000 US Census, about 7.5% of Clermont residents worked at home, more than double the rate in adjoining Dutchess County and significantly higher than the Columbia County rate of 5.1
- **INCREASED TOURISM.** Travelers continue to focus on shorter, more localized sites, with historic and heritage locations becoming ever more popular. Clermont needs to look at ways to support local entrepreneurs looking to complement, with lodging, eating and other services, a growing tourism base visiting historic, scenic, recreation and retail (including antique shopping) sites in and near the Town.
- **AGING POPULATION.** Although Clermont has a relatively youthful population for its region, more similar to Dutchess than Columbia County (see Clermont Demographic Trends attached), the area has a tremendous sector of its population beginning to retire. The "baby-boom" generation, now 35-54 years old and older, is a significant portion of the population. The Town should consider housing, transportation, and other service needs for this aging population.
- **INCREASING, OVER-RELIANCE ON RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE VALUES.** According to New York State Office of Real Property Services, the Town of Clermont is substantially reliant on the assessed value of rural residential property to provide local revenue share of public services. Nearly \$33, 400,000 in total assessed value is represented in rural residences, three times the value of the next highest category. Residential estate properties are the next highest value at about \$11,500,000 and consistent primarily of Hudson riverfront locations and additional country estates.

While agriculture remains a critical component of the local economy, its role in supporting local property taxes has been greatly reduced. The highest category, field crops, provides only about \$1.5 million in total assessed value. Also important is the lack of contribution of nonresidential land uses. While many communities enjoy at least some significant contribution from commercial tax "ratables", the Town of Clermont does not have any commercial land use classes contributing at least \$1 million in total assessed value. The only exceptions are gas transmission lines (providing about \$2.2 million) and storage warehouses (providing about \$1.67 million).

HISTORIC SITES AND DISTRICTS

Clermont has a wealth of recognized historic sites and districts, reflecting the rich history of the area and strong local interest and support for this history. These places need continue recognition both for their value to the Town and for sensitivity if and when new development occurs nearby.

The most popular and recognizable historic site is the Clermont State Historic Site, located off Woods Road and the Hudson River shoreline in the southeastern part of the Town (see attached map). Operated by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the site includes a large day-use area, gardens and the prominent brick and stone mansion, circa 1730 built for Robert Livingston and his

family. Burned by the British in 1777 and rebuilt soon after, the mansion and its surrounding are a popular destination for adults, families and tour bus groups. The Clermont site manager, Bruce Naramore, reports that many visitors would like to see more convenient services including places to eat, specialty shopping beyond antiques, and more agricultural tourism options such as pick-your-own and farm markets.

The Town is also home to three districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The first is the Clermont Historic District including Federal style Clermont Academy, the Gothic Revival style Saint Luke's Church, and the vernacular Town Hall, clustered with several eighteenth and nineteenth century residences and making up the hamlet of Clermont along Route 9. A goal of this plan is to promote well designed, neighborhood scaled activity in this core, historic hamlet as a central, identifiable place of the Town.

This district is also part of the Clermont Town Multiple Resource Area including a variety of Colonial, Federal, Greek Revival, and vernacular residences at locations throughout the Town. Properties included are c. 1762 Bouwerie, c. 1795 Thomas Brodhead House, c. 1867 Old Parsonage, and c. 1859 Hickory Hill home, all on Buckwheat Ridge Road. Also included is the c. 1860 Clarkson Chapel and the c.1850 Coons House, both on Route 9G.

The Clermont Estates Historic District is a two-mile long group of seven (7) estates along the Hudson River and Woods Road developed from the mid- to late-nineteenth century. They include prominent residences, substantial grounds, and various tenant houses, cottages and out-buildings which together represent much of the highest valued real estate in the Town.

IV. GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research and public outreach completed for this new Town of Clermont Comprehensive Plan, a number of conditions have been identified which influence how land is used. While individuals and groups have particular features or conditions they like or do not like, or they find high or low priority, in the Town certain assets and challenges stand out.

A. Assets and Challenges

Generally these **ASSETS** define the **COMMUNITY CHARACTER** of the Town and can be grouped into the following categories:

1. **HISTORY.** The Town has a unique and appreciated history marked by many historic sites and features, as well as a tradition of direct support for the preservation and enhancement of those sites and features. This history also goes beyond physical sites. Clermont has a tradition and history anchoring its sense of place.
2. **AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE.** Clermont has been and remains a community strongly linked to agriculture. Indeed, agricultural lands still define much of the landscape and remain an important economic factor.
3. **SCENIC RESOURCES.** The Town has tremendous scenic views and vistas, notably to the west across the Hudson River to the dramatic front of the high peaks of the Catskills in Greene County. Also notable is the Hudson River valley and the tributary corridor of the Roeliff Jansen Kill, two special, scenic and environmental features with shorelines directly in the Town. Most of the Town also offers numerous opportunities to experience rolling, generally unspoiled rural lands, which are becoming harder and harder to find in the greater northeastern United States.
4. **SENSE OF COMMITMENT.** Town residents are committed to the Town, its special qualities and its quality of life. This support for Clermont is readily apparent when groups get together.
5. **QUALITY OF LIFE.** The Town and surrounding Town continue to offer a high quality of life as shown by the leading indicators - relative quality of local schools, low crime rates, and relative affordability of real estate when compared with areas to the south. The physical setting - open landscape made up of working farms, open lands, small hamlets and residential neighborhoods, symbolizes this quality of life.
6. **ACCESSIBILITY.** The Town provides is accessible to the New York metropolitan region, the Capital District region of Albany and Troy, as well as the sprawling districts of the lower and middle Hudson River Valley. With the current strength in these real estate markets, Clermont is likely to see more development activity as people seek relatively accessible and affordable property, particularly for primary and secondary residences. This accessibility allows residents to enjoy the values and amenities of both metropolitan and rural life styles.

The Town also faces some leading **CHALLENGES**. They are:

1. **IDENTITY.** While residents share a tradition and "sense" of place, that identity is not well connected to the place known as "Clermont". When you are or are not in "Clermont" is difficult for many to define. There is no "Clermont" mailing address, with the State Historic Site as the most prominent place using the name. This lack of identity is also aggravated by the unusually complicated boundaries of the Town, making it hard for a traveler to know when you are physically in the Town (see maps in Appendix)
2. **GROWTH and SPRAWL.** The first concern Town residents have is over the consequences of future growth. Growth in the 1970s and 1980s occurred in spurts associated with annexation of lands for residential development. However, overall in the 1990s the Town showed relatively strong population growth as compared to other towns in its regions (see Clermont Demographic Trends in the attached Appendix. Sprawl-style development, regionally represented by repetitive housing subdivisions and roadside commercial "box-like" construction, is increasingly evident throughout the region near the Town of Clermont. Such activity challenges the Town setting at its surroundings, gateways and edges. Competitive commercial development also challenges the Town core.

3. **ECONOMIC DIVERSITY.** After residential development, agricultural activity, and a growing sector of home businesses, the economy and tax base needs to grow. Too often Clermont residents are forced to leave the Town and area for jobs or creatively find ways to be self-employed. Residents also have to regularly leave the Town for most shopping and services.
4. **INCREASED ATTENTION TO DESIGN AND AESTHETICS.** Clearly, Clermont residents have a concern for the design and appearance of land use and development. The private marketplace is already responding to this demand. The Town needs to demand from new development that quality in design be maintained to keep those characteristics that make Clermont unique.
5. **COMMERCIAL VERSUS RESIDENTIAL ROLES OF THE TOWN.** The 1965 Town Plan expected that Clermont would maintain a primarily residential role. Yet the Town has always offered a wide variety of quality services in its downtown commercial, Main Street. With inevitable market challenges to these types of businesses, where emphasis is placed on big inventories, fast service, and value over quality, businesses of the scale and style unique to Clermont will need incentives and support. The commercial and residential roles are not exclusive but should be of mutual benefit.

B. Goals and Recommended Actions

The following items are recommendations of the Town of Clermont for priority actions. All Town legislative, capital investment, and financial actions should take these recommendations into consideration. Any capital project by any public agency must also take these recommendations into consideration. Whenever possible the Town will identify, fund, and implement these recommendations.

1. SUPPORT FOR THE GOALS OF THE 1974 PLAN.

The Town continues to support most of the overall goals of the 1974 Town Comprehensive Plan. These include:

- a. Preservation of the rural environment (clean air, friendly people).
- b. Greater citizen involvement in Town planning and land use decisions.
- c. Preservation, support and enhancement of agricultural activities.
- c. Provision of necessary services (medical, shopping, other professions) for residents.
- d. Restore and maintain the attractive appearance of the community.
- e. Develop the recreational potential of woodland and water resources.
- f. Consideration of land use measures to avoid "over development".
- g. Retain, through land use measures, the rural landscapes and community qualities that make the Town unique, while accommodating residential and commercial development meeting local needs. All at a scale and intensity consistent with the current landscape.

2. DEFINING ADDITIONAL, NEW COMMUNITY GOALS

The Town also supports the following goals:

- a. Greater diversification of the tax base, beyond the current reliance on agricultural and residential lands. Of particular interest are efforts to support new businesses serving the local population.
- b. Growth and vitality in the hamlets of Clermont and Nevis, where activity in the Town has historically focused and where future, mixed-use activity could efficiently flourish clustered along the primary transportation corridor of New York State Route 9. Such concentrated efforts, supporting adjacent and compatible land uses, will also help to overcome past experiences that stand-alone businesses have been hard to maintain.
- c. Proactive support for agricultural activities, including consideration of incentives for starting, expanding or diversifying such activities.
- d. Incentives for the flexible use of existing buildings, offering property owners greater options for keeping up such buildings. This includes land use code options for mixed uses within existing buildings such as barns or other agricultural out-buildings.

- e. Encouragement of home businesses as a key and growing element of the local economy while ensuring that any home business or home occupation remains compatible with its neighborhood setting.
- f. Support for activities that complement and build from the success of the Clermont State Historic Site, overlooking the Hudson River off Woods Road and New York State Route 9G.
- g. Efforts to streamline the Town permit and review process for proposed land uses and development that meets these goals.

3. UPDATING THE TOWN LAND USE REGULATIONS

This plan supports the need for updating the Town of Clermont land use regulations for consistency with this Plan, with more recent case law and legislation, and with more contemporary, land use planning techniques. The updating includes the need for improved procedures, standards and definitions in the zoning, site plan review, and subdivision regulations. This also includes more substantial changes. Lead issues to address include:

- a. Options for a mix and greater density of commercial and residential uses in the hamlets of the Town, either on individual lots or adjoining lots. These locations are identified as preferred locations for new development.
- b. Flexibility in uses that can support and enhance farm operations, notably in all agricultural districts as defined by Columbia County under NYS Agricultural and Markets Law. This includes consideration of a "right to farm" law for the Town.
- c. Performance or design standards in the site plan and subdivision regulations to ensure that any and all new development is compatible with its neighborhood setting and with proximity to any historic or scenic features in the Town and neighborhood. Also important are standards within the land use regulations to ensure that the Town's "gateways", those points at which travelers enter or leave the Town, remain attractive and welcoming.
- d. Consideration of overlay districts and special performance standards for the unique settings of the Hudson River shoreline, the Roeliff Jansen Kill corridor, the Clermont Historic District, as well as the Town's hamlets. Any new standards must take into account streamlining review where new development meets the goals of this Plan. New standards in the Town regulations should include incentives for "doing the right thing" as well as disincentives for doing something else.
- e. Incentives for private, voluntary conservation of lands such as through use of conservation easements or other land protection measures.
- f. Updating road construction and maintenance standards to ensure that these are matched to the unique, historic character of neighborhoods as well as to the role individual roads play in current and future transportation. This should include definition of a hierarchy of road standards, including special standards for more rural routes.

4. ACTIVE LEADERSHIP TOWARDS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR THE TOWN MATCHED TO THE PLAN'S GOALS. Any effort towards diversification of the Town's tax base, and support for business activity building from the historic, scenic and agricultural assets of Clermont, demands an organized strategy and leadership in support of that strategy. As defined by the National Main Street Center, a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, this will need to focus on at least the following:

- a. VISION - making sure that Town leaders and volunteers have a shared and positive vision or Plan for the future.
- b. ORGANIZATION - setting up an organizational structure to make the best use of the skills and energies of local leaders, volunteers, civic groups or regional partners.
- c. PROMOTION - not waiting to let market forces decide what should or should not happen, but taking a proactive direction promoting to outside interests the qualities that make Clermont special.
- d. ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING - understanding that for Clermont to prosper, the Town must understand its role in the modern, regional market place, and partner with neighboring Towns, with Columbia County, with Clermont State Historic Site, or with other regional and State organizations to help meet the economic, environmental and community goals of this Plan.

	Total Population		Change 90-2000	Median Age 2000	Total Households			Average HH-size 2000	Total Housing Units		
	1990	2000			1990	2000	% Change 90-2000		1990	2000	% Change 90-2000
<i>Columbia County</i>	62,982	63,094	0.2	40.5	23,696	24,796	4.6	2.43	29,139	30,207	3.67
<i>Clermont Town</i>	1,443	1,726	19.6	36.2	526	593	12.7	2.85	621	725	16.75
<i>Austerlitz Town</i>	1,456	1,453	-0.2	46.1	558	620	11.1	2.34	838	906	8.11
<i>Chatham Town</i>	1,731	4,249	145.5	42.9	1,731	1,762	1.8	2.41	2,062	2,110	2.33
<i>Dutchess County</i>	259,462	280,150	8.0	36.7	89,567	99,536	11.1	2.63	97,632	106,103	8.68
<i>Red Hook Town</i>	9,565	10,408	8.8	35.6	3,405	3,574	5.0	2.63	3,405	3,840	12.78

Source: US Bureau of the Census

	Median Household Income			Median Family Income			Per Capita		
	1990	2000	% Change 90-2000	1990	2000	% Change 90-2000	1990	2000	% Change 90-2000
<i>Columbia County</i>	29,785	41,915	40.7	35,144	49,357	40.4	14,044	22,265	36.9
<i>Clermont Town</i>	30,125	47,039	56.1	34,083	51,012	49.7	12,830	21,566	40.5
<i>Austerlitz Town</i>	34,375	51,369	49.4	43,558	56,771	30.3	18,875	38,054	50.4
<i>Chatham Town</i>	37,127	49,234	32.6	41,604	60,097	44.5	18,370	28,599	35.8
<i>Dutchess County</i>	42,250	53,086	25.6	49,305	63,254	28.3	17,420	23,940	27.2
<i>Red Hook Town</i>	38,716	46,701	20.6	45,547	57,473	26.2	15,039	20,410	26.3

Source: US Bureau of the Census

	Occupied Housing Units (%)		Same House In	Total Families		%Change 90-2000	Average Family Size 2000
	By Owner	By Renter		1995	1990		
<i>Columbia County</i>	70.6	29.4	62.9	16,882	16,580	-1.8	2.95
<i>Clermont Town</i>	75.9	24.1	66	395	437	10.6	3.33
<i>Austerlitz Town</i>	84.2	15.8	67.1	396	427	7.8	2.81
<i>Chatham Town</i>	76.8	23.2	65.2	1,200	1,197	-0.3	2.87
<i>Dutchess County</i>	69	31	59.5	64,757	69,201	6.9	3.16
<i>Red Hook Town</i>	73.4	26.6	61.9	2,283	2,473	8.3	3.14

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
PHASE I
FOR THE TOWN OF CLERMONT, NEW YORK
DECEMBER, 1974**

FOR: TOWN OF CLERMONT PLANNING BOARD AND TOWN BOARD
Clermont, New York

BY: HANS KLUNDER ASSOCIATES, INC., CONSULTANTS
Hanover, New Hampshire

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LAND DEVELOPMENT CAPABILITY

Introduction

This report constitutes an introductory examination of those natural environmental factors which restrict development within any community, including soils, slopes, ground water sources, and unique or fragile areas. In the land use planning process, it is of primary importance to identify those land areas which, as a result of certain inherent environmental characteristics, represent either encouragements or discouragements to development. The maps which accompany this report are a preliminary effort in such an identification process. Generally speaking, the following environmental considerations should be carefully examined before development occurs in any location within the community, now or in the future.

Soils and Slopes

In the determination of suitable areas for specific land use purposes, consideration must be given to any soils that are within or adjacent to wetlands and marshes, shallow depth to bedrock or in flood prone areas. Specifically, soils in the alluvium and muck and peat categories are not appropriate for construction purposes for both ecological and physical means. In addition, Lake Beds I, II, III, and Till IV are unsuitable for all but the very lowest density of development. Tills I, II, and III are only marginally suited for development in localized areas and warrant careful regulation of any proposed construction. Outwash I and II are most suitable for development yet density levels even here deserve careful examination.

Areas with a sloping quality which would make construction environmentally hazardous and increase the cost of eventual public road maintenance or improvement should have development constraints. Flat lands or those of one to three percent slope are usually acceptable for development but should be subject to careful review, particularly in or near flood plains. Drainage of ground and surface water is poor, and water is apt to collect on

the surface or immediate subsurface. Slopes over fifteen percent demand strict regulation. Development on these slopes is often hazardous and difficult since erosion is more likely and water is more difficult to obtain.

Additionally, areas that contain soils and slopes inappropriate for adequate septic systems or requiring special leach field considerations should be defined and carefully controlled.

Rivers, Ponds, Lakes and Ground Water

Land areas adjacent to water bodies warrant particular attention. As recreational and aesthetic assets, these areas are apt to be subjected to intense development pressure, if privately owned. Regulations should be formulated that would protect such water bodies and abutting lands from pollution of the natural and visual environment, too easily injured by indiscriminate construction. Recreation potential, visual quality, and the problems of soil erosion and septic pollution in these areas require careful investigation.

Furthermore, those localities where the availability of ground water is limited would also require definite development control.

Unique and Fragile Areas

These are land parcels and sites that require special consideration and additional analysis. Future planning efforts should begin pin-pointing these sites, with a description and analysis of their value to the town and region, including:

- 1 . Areas where development would upset or prevent significant ecological processes, i.e., land or water bodies where the ecological balance is particularly delicate such as high altitude slopes, marshes and certain ponds, lakes and river banks.
2. Important habitats of native plants or animals. Lands or waters that contain such habitats should be described and assessed, since a particular habitat may exist which cannot be found anywhere else in the region. Alternatives to state ownership and management of privately owned areas are needed.
3. Areas incorporating important educational, cultural, or aesthetic assets. Such land would include particularly scenic views from local roads, as well as areas that contribute to and/or define the visual character of the town or region. Such land parcels, again, need to be described and their values assessed. Additional areas of historic or educational value should be designated.

To review the information incorporated in this section specifically involving soils, slopes, and ground water source areas as they affect the suitability of various land areas within the community for development purposes, is a vital portion of the entire land planning process. In order to design for density growth, it is paramount to first examine the natural restrictions to such growth in various portions of the town as discussed in detail in the following pages. Although unique and fragile areas are not specifically mentioned of this time, it is hoped that a complete inventory of .all-.such areas as outlined above -:.an be

completed in the not too distant future and an acquisition program initiated through capital reserve funding.

Soil Suitability for Development

Four principal soil types are present in Clermont: till, outwash, alluvium, and muck and peat.. All of these are the result of glaciation or the reworking of glacial materials.

Tills are the direct deposits of the glaciers which covered northeastern New York 10,000 to 20,000 years ago. They consist of heterogeneous mixtures of materials ranging in size from clay to boulders. These deposits are found throughout the town and cover the tops and flanks of existing hills.

Outwash soils are materials which were sorted by running water during glacial retreat. Outwash deposits are generally stratified sands and grovels and occur chiefly in narrow bands near the bases of hills and along the channels of large rivers.

Alluvium constitutes recent deposits of reworked glacial materials. These fine to medium grained deposits occur in the flood plains of present day streams and in Clermont they are associated with the Roeliff Jansen Kill and other minor streams.

Muck and peat deposits have formed in locations where drainage is restricted and silts, clays, and organic materials have been accumulated since the glaciers retreated.

For land use planning purposes, these major units have been further classified according to drainage characteristics, depth to bedrock, and depth to seasonal water table. The important characteristics are summarized in the table which follows:

Various Soil Types Included in Clermont Are:

- Outwash I - Hoosic
- Outwash II - Otisville
- Till I - Bernardston, Pittsfield
- Till II - Cossayuna, Dutchess
- Till III - Rough, Stoney land; steep, broken land
- Till IV - Mansfield
- Lake Bed I - Hudson
- Lake Bed II - Hudson
- Lake Bed III - Livingston
- Alluvium Ondawa, Meadow Land

CLERMONT

	Acreage	Percentage
O I	1,446	12.3
O II	138	1.2
LB I	457	3.9
LB II	1,222	10.1
LB III	322	2.7
Till I	184	1.6
Till II	5,109	43.5
Till III	634	5.4
Till IV	46	0.4
Alluvium	2,218	18.9
TOTAL	11,776	100.0

As can be easily concluded from the accompanying soil suitability map and the acreage figures incorporated in the preceding table, the Outwash soil deposits which are the most suitable for septic tank installation are not predominant, representing only 13.5 percent of the total 11,776 acres. Only two sizable areas of such soils exist in the community of Clermont; one located adjoining Buckwheat Road above Clermont Village in the northeastern portion of town and the other in the southwesterly section along Route 9G. In these areas, the soils are deep to bedrock and quite permeable with fair accessibility to ground water supplies.

Such Outwash deposits represent the best areas for filtering septic systems. However, the valuable sources of ground water may be contaminated if overdevelopment of residential uses occurs.

Till 11, the predominant soil type in Clermont with 43.5 percent, or almost half of the entire acreage, is the best soil for agricultural use since it retains water well. This in conjunction with Till I, also constitutes a fair quality soil for development. However, leach fields for septic tanks may of necessity be larger for these soils, dictating a low intensity of use.

The Lake Bed soils as well as Tills III. and IV, and Alluvium, which together comprise 41 .4 percent of the total, are all poor in relation to development potential and should be

carefully regulated, due to unsuitability for septic tanks, shallow depth to bedrock, low permeability, and susceptibility to flooding.

Slopes

Much of the Town of Clermont possesses slopes from 0-3 percent grade. This fact is important since, wherever large tracts of flat land exist, usually poor surface water runoff and ground water conditions require more detailed evaluation to insure proper development and adequate disposal of surface and waste water. Therefore, any developments to be reviewed by the planning board under subdivision regulations must clearly identify these two elements: surface and waste water disposal.

Most previous development within the town has occurred in such minimal slope areas, generally along the existing roadways. The remaining areas of development are on slopes under 15 percent. Both these categories should receive the largest percentage of any new housing construction. Since very little of the land in Clermont is in excess of 15 percent grade, no major obstructions to growth are envisioned as a result of slope characteristics. Those steep areas that do exist are in the northern portion of Clermont adjacent to the Roeliff Jansen Kill and along the Hudson River bank where intensive development should be avoided anyway. Due to the fact that such slopes make access difficult and are usually concurrent with poorer soils, greater depth to bedrock and lower water tables, development in any of these areas should definitely be regulated.

Ground Water

Ground water in Clermont can be obtained from bedrock wells and, in a few locations, from shallow wells in surficial soils. In the bedrock, water is found in small fractures and cracks, and most bedrock wells can supply sufficient water for domestic use (1 - 20 gpm). The yield of each well depends on the size and number of surface connections of the cracks which it encounters. Consequently, it is impossible to predict the depth and yield of a well drilled in a particular location. In addition, there is little relation between well yields and the type of bedrock encountered except that rocks with more fissures and cracks (limestone, slate, and shale) will generally produce more than competent rocks (granites and volcanics).

Wells in bedrock vary in water quality depending on the chemistry of the host rock. These wells often contain hard water or high iron content. Usually these impurities can easily be removed through simple chemical treatment. Without treatment these chemical impurities can cause staining of plumbing fixtures or clothing.

Two surficial deposits in Clermont show promise as sources of ground water. These are the alluvial deposits along the Roeliff Jansen Kill and the large outwash deposits scattered throughout the town. Properly constructed wells drilled in these materials have potential for high yields (20 - 400 gpm). Water quality from these wells should be very good as long as the surface sources are protected from excessive pollution.

Other surficial deposits cannot be counted on for potable water. The fineness of soil materials will cause seasonal variation in quality and quantity.

Conclusion

From both the soils and the slopes map information, it can be concluded that development within the Town of Clermont has in the past occurred in those areas most favorably suited. In fact, few limitations existed at all in relation to slopes, although soil restrictions were more severe.

The primary natural resources which Clermont now possess are water-oriented, in the form of the Roeliff Jansen Kill and the Hudson River. It is necessary that development in these areas, the most fragile from an environmental point of view, be carefully controlled in order to protect the town's primary recreational and aesthetic resources.