

Appendix 3 – Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

I. GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

For the purposes of compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), this comprehensive plan also serves as a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS). The purpose of SEQR is to avoid or mitigate adverse environmental impacts by considering environmental factors during the planning stages of actions that are undertaken, approved, or funded by state, regional, or local agencies. In this case, the “action” consists of the adoption of the revised Comprehensive Plan. This section of the plan examines the potential for adverse environmental impacts that may occur as a result of the plan’s adoption.

The adoption of the proposed Comprehensive Plan for the Town of New Baltimore will not result in significant adverse environmental impacts. The plan was drafted, in part, to mitigate the impact of future development in the Town. Environmental issues and resources were considered carefully during the drafting of the Inventory and Analysis and the Goals, Objectives, and Recommendations sections of the plan.

The adoption of this plan will not result in the approval of any new public or private development or construction activity. According to 617.10 (d) of the State Environmental Quality Review Act, “No further SEQR compliance is required if a subsequent proposed action will be carried out in conformance with the conditions and thresholds established for such actions in the generic EIS or its findings statement. A supplement to the final generic EIS must be prepared if the subsequent proposed action was not addressed or was not adequately addressed in the generic EIS and the subsequent action may have one or more significant adverse environmental impacts.” For the purposes of this GEIS, actions that may require no further review include regulatory actions such as zoning, subdivision, or street and roadway ordinance revisions, given that they are carried out in conformance with the conditions set forth in the plan. Deviations from the plan would require a supplemental EIS. Subsequent construction and development projects would require site-specific environmental reviews under SEQR, and should consider the vision, objectives, and recommendations of this plan.

Reference Table for EIS requirements	
EIS Requirement	Location in Comprehensive Plan
A concise description of the proposed action, its purpose, public need and benefits, including social and economic considerations;	I. Introduction II. Vision Statement Appendix 3 - GEIS
A concise description of the environmental setting of the areas to be affected, sufficient to understand the impacts of the proposed action and alternatives;	Appendix 2 – Mapping & demographic Summary Appendix 3 - GEIS
A statement and evaluation of the potential significant adverse environmental impacts at a level of detail that reflects the severity of the impacts and the reasonable likelihood of their occurrence.	Appendix 3 - GEIS

A description of the mitigation measures;	III. Goals, Subgoals, and Strategies Appendix 3 - GEIS
A description and evaluation of the range of reasonable alternatives to the action that are feasible, considering the objectives and capabilities of the project sponsor.	I. Introduction Appendix 3 - GEIS
A list of any underlying studies, reports, EISs and other information obtained and considered in preparing the statement including the final written scope.	I. Introduction Appendix 2 – Mapping & demographic Summary

A. Impacts on Land

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will likely indirectly impact land resources in the town. The plan calls for residential development to minimize environmental impact, either by creating open space or by using conservation subdivisions for major subdivisions. The plan also calls for the more intensive commercial and industrial development to take place in areas which have the potential to be served by infrastructure and which have easy access to transportation routes. These measures will mitigate the potential for sprawl. Through these recommendations, any significant adverse impacts on land which could arise as a result of this plan have been mitigated.

B. Impact on Water

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will not result in adverse environmental impacts for water resources within the Town. The plan calls for several measures which will protect the streams, lakes, ground water, and wetlands within the Town, including the following:

- The plan calls for stricter engineering requirements for major subdivisions. This would require developers to provide detailed information concerning how the development of private wells will affect surrounding groundwater resources. This measure is will mitigate the negative impacts associated with major residential development on groundwater resources throughout the town.
- The plan proposes several ways to encourage development which minimizes environmental impact, including the creation of a Rural Siting Manual, revisions to the subdivision ordinance to encourage conservation subdivisions for major subdivisions, and incentives to achieve desired land use patterns. These measures will reduce the likelihood of negative impacts on water resources
- The plan calls for collaborations with the Greene County Soil and Water Conservation District in the review of stormwater plans.
- The plan calls for the creation of a Natural Resources Inventory, which would include information about existing soil, vegetation, slopes, wildlife, ecosystems, and groundwater resources. The Natural Resources inventory provides a framework for the location of potential open spaces which are part of the conservation subdivision regulations. These open spaces can be sited to take advantage of existing ecosystems, such as wetlands, or be contiguous to other valuable features, such as forests or farm fields.

C. Impact on Air

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will not result in adverse environmental impacts on air quality within the Town. The plan calls for continued industrial development in and around the areas currently zoned for industrial uses, and for the boundaries of the Developmental Zone to be reviewed and revised as necessary. However, the plan calls for careful consideration of environmental features when undertaking any rezoning efforts. In addition, the plan calls for a review of uses in the Developmental Zone, so that the land uses allowed correspond to the Greene County Industrial Development Agency and Planning and Economic Development initiatives. These initiatives call for economic development that maintains environmental quality. The *Land Use and Infrastructure Report*, a key component of the County's recent draft *Comprehensive Economic Development Plan*, calls for development that will "Preserve and enhance the physical and environmental characteristics that make Greene County a distinct and identifiable place." These measures mitigate the potential for significant adverse impacts associated with air quality in the town.

D. Impact on Plants and Animals

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will not result in adverse environmental impacts on plants and animals within the Town. The plan calls for the creation of a Natural Resources Inventory, which will identify areas of ecological significance. This will allow for any conservation or open space preservation efforts to be coordinated, which will maximize the resulting benefits to plants and animals in the Town. These measures mitigate any potential adverse environmental impact as a result of the adoption of the comprehensive plan to the maximum extent practicable.

E. Impact on Agricultural Land

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will not result in adverse impacts on agricultural lands within the Town. The plan recommends several methods designed to preserve, enhance agricultural activities within the town. These measures include:

- The creation of a standing Agricultural Committee to promote the local application of farming resources in New Baltimore.
- The adoption of a Right to Farm/Right to Forestry Law
- The consideration of zoning changes that protect and promote farming
- Research into the feasibility of a conservation easement program to provide tax relief to large landowners and farms.

These measures mitigate any potential adverse impact as a result of the adoption of the comprehensive plan to the maximum extent practicable.

F. Impact on Aesthetic Resources

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will not result in adverse impacts on aesthetic resources within the Town. The plan calls for improvements to the aesthetics of commercial development through the implementation of Design Guidelines. The plan also calls for the implementation of a Rural Siting Manual, which addresses the aesthetic impacts of major subdivisions. These measures mitigate any potential adverse impact as a result of the adoption of the comprehensive plan to the maximum extent practicable.

G. Impact on Historic and Archeological Resources

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will not result in adverse impacts on historic resources within the Town. The plan calls for the preparation of a Historic Preservation Plan. This plan will research which buildings, landscapes, and estates are most important to the Town and should be preserved. In addition, the plan will identify and consolidate the variety of information on financial assistance programs (including local, state, and federal programs) as well as technical assistance programs available to protect those identified historic resources. Finally, the plan will identify ways to adapt properties with historic character, but are not eligible for formal historic designation, for re-use. These measures mitigate any potential adverse impact as a result of the adoption of the comprehensive plan to the maximum extent practicable.

H. Impact on Open Space and Recreation

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will not result in adverse impacts on open space and recreation within the Town. The plan calls for the town codes to be revised to make conservation subdivisions mandatory for all major subdivisions. This measure, combined with the recommendation for the preparation of a natural resources inventory, mitigate any potential impact on open space resources in the town to the maximum extent practicable.

I. Impact on Critical Environmental Areas

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will not result in adverse impacts on critical environmental areas. There are no critical environmental areas presently listed for Greene County, therefore no impact is anticipated.

J. Impact on Transportation

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will not result in adverse impacts on transportation systems within the Town. Although future development as proposed within the parameters of the plan will likely result in an increase in automobile trips compared to current levels, this increase is likely to be less than if future development were to be created outside of the recommendations of the plan.

The plan calls for several measures designed to increase the efficiency of automobile transportation in the Town. This includes the proposal to create design guidelines to reduce curb cuts along major roads, and mandating conservation subdivisions for major subdivisions, which could result in more efficient street layouts.

In addition, the plan calls a Corridor and Connectivity Plan for the Route 9W corridor. This plan will consider the relationship of vehicular and pedestrian travel routes along Route 9W, and may result in fewer automobile trips within the town if pedestrian amenities are recommended. These measures mitigate any potential adverse impact as a result of the adoption of the comprehensive plan to the maximum extent practicable.

K. Impact on Energy

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will not result in adverse impacts on energy. Although future development as proposed within the parameters of the plan will likely result in an increase in energy compared to current levels, this increase is likely to be less than if future development were to be created outside of the recommendations of the plan. For instance, the proposal to encourage development through conservation subdivision for major subdivisions will result in less energy consumption, since the development will be more compact. These measures mitigate any potential adverse impact as a result of the adoption of the comprehensive plan to the maximum extent practicable.

L. Noise and Odor

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will not result in adverse impacts from noise and odor within the town.

M. Impact on Public Health

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will not result in adverse impacts on public health within the town.

N. Impact on Growth and Character of Community

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan will not result in adverse impacts on growth and character of the community. The intent of the plan, as outlined in the Vision Statement, is to integrate the future development necessary for the continued prosperity of the Town into the existing rural character, environmental quality, and quality of life.

To accomplish this, the plan seeks to focus the form and location of development, so that it is appropriate to the town. Specifically, the plan seeks to:

- Preserve and protect the rural character and environmental quality of the town
- Promote and encourage business development that is consistent with the rural and historic character of the town and that contributes to the town tax base
- Promote agriculture and protect farmland by recognizing the unique role that agriculture can play in supporting economic prosperity and protecting the things that make New Baltimore special
- Advance the administration and understanding of local laws and ordinances.

These measures mitigate any potential adverse impact as a result of the adoption of the comprehensive plan to the maximum extent practicable.

O. Alternatives

For the purposes of compliance with SEQRA, the Town must consider alternatives to the proposed action. These alternatives include:

- Adoption of the plan as written (the Preferred Alternative)
- Adoption of the plan with significant changes
- Do not adopt the plan (No-Action Alternative)

The adoption of the plan as proposed provides the most appropriate balance of land uses, economic development, environmental protection, and community character. This plan was created to reflect the needs and desires of the residents of the town. The proposed plan is the result of significant time and energy by the Plan-to-Plan group, the Citizens Planning Advisory Group, and the Comprehensive Planning Committee, and represents the most efficient method to accomplish the goals and vision for the Town.

Significant changes would result in a deviation from the careful balance created by the Comprehensive Planning Committee and may not accurately reflect the desires of residents and stakeholders. Therefore, adopting the plan with significant changes is not recommended.

Under the No-Action alternative, the existing Comprehensive Plan would remain in effect. This plan does not fully reflect the current needs and desires of the community and does not provide contemporary recommendations which speak to the challenges currently faced by the Town. In addition, the current zoning ordinance and comprehensive plan are not complementary. This would result in development that may not fit with the goals of the Town and community, which could have a significant adverse impact on community character, and other environmental resources. In addition, the absence of an updated plan would strip the Town of the ability to be proactive concerning development and growth.