

INTRODUCTION

IMPORTANCE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

In the past, communities functioned without a comprehensive plan and without zoning regulations. People worked the land and settled in patterns which made sense and were convenient; growth occurred in an organic way. Concentrations of uses such as those found in Village settings were central within outlying farms and fields, a pattern that was efficient and beautiful at the same time.

We have come to value these old patterns as they are a direct link to our history and values. Modern conveniences such as the automobile have allowed civilization to move from the center and spread out. We now consider the old settlement patterns such as villages and hamlets unique, a piece of our history which is valued for the people, culture and simpler times they represent. We strive to keep our traditions while enjoying modern conveniences and accommodating automobiles.

To maintain the past while providing for present needs requires a balancing act; maintaining a sense of unique identity as technology and regional influences, franchise businesses, national builders, and other outside influences place a strain on our traditional patterns of growth. And so the need for the Comprehensive Plan.

A Comprehensive Plan defines the way a community wishes to grow and develop. It is part of a process which embodies and communicates the desires of residents and business owners. It is necessary reading material for those wishing to develop in the Village so that new development respects the community's values and so the reasoning behind zoning laws is understood.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Village of Fishkill Board of Trustees appointed a committee to prepare this Plan. The committee is made up of various members of the community, including Village board, Planning Board, Zoning Board, and business community and Village residents, each bringing a different perspective to the group as a whole.

Planners from the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development were retained as consultants by the Village to work with the Comprehensive Plan Committee to clarify issues and prepare draft material for review and approval. The committee held a public workshop on June 18, 2008 to solicit input from Village residents and business owners.

Decisions on text, planning recommendations and maps are achieved by consensus to ensure the broadest possible agreement among the committee members present. The draft plan and maps have been presented to Village of Fishkill residents and revisions have been made in response to public comments.



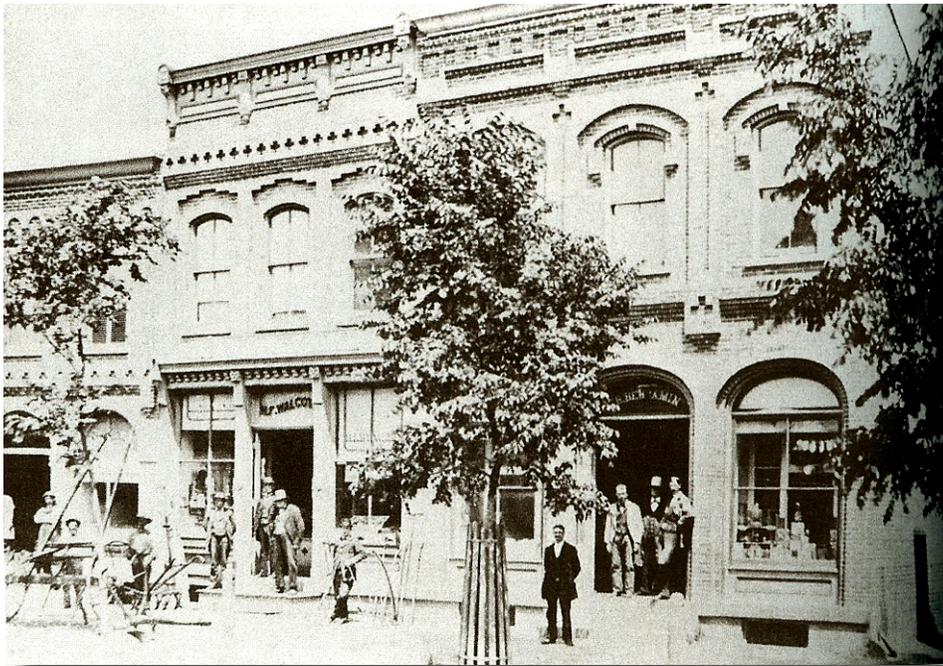
PLANNING POLICIES, GOALS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS and Implementation Strategies

The Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Fishkill focuses on seven policy areas:

- Community Identity
- Population and Economic Growth
- Community Facilities
- Historic Preservation
- Housing
- Transportation
- Land Use

Each policy area is broken down into two parts. The first summarizes, through “Policy Goal and Recommendation” statements, the Village’s vision for the future. These policies were developed as a result of the public meeting held early on in the process, as well as through the discussions initiated by the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee and consultants. These policies are the basis and rationalization for future land use, design and development decisions. They give a clear vision as to what the community feels is most important.

The second part enumerates “Implementation Strategies” that can make the policies and goals a reality. It is important that the Village enact these strategies; not doing so would limit the effectiveness of the Plan. Many of these “implementation strategies” can be effectuated in the zoning law or Village Code, while others may require additional committees in the future. Some of the recommendations are general statements for the Village, while others are much more specific; they are the core of the Plan.





Henry Dubois Van Wyck

~ History Of The Village of Fishkill ~

written and compiled with the help of various Village residents and historians

The name Fishkill evolved from two Dutch words, “vis” (fish) and “kil” (stream or creek). Dutch immigrants, in the year 1714, searching for an acceptable location to settle and prosper, chose the area in and around, what is now the Village of Fishkill. Fishkill Creek, today, forms the southern boundary of the part of the Village that lies west of Route 9. The Creek continues to flow westerly from the Village eventually emptying into the Hudson River. Prior to the eighteenth century the Creek was known as the Matteawan, the name of the Native American tribe that hunted, fished and populated the area.

The Village of Fishkill was a significant crossroads in the overland transportation network in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Kings Highway, connecting Albany to New York City, intersected with a major overland route from New England to the Hudson River. The Village grew in response to the needs of travelers and increasingly served as a village center for settlers in the adjacent agricultural areas. The Village of Fishkill, in the mid 1800s, was considered “one of the largest and wealthiest inland towns of the State.”

History has recorded the importance and involvement of the Village of Fishkill during the American Revolution and the Fight for Independence. This vital crossroads was “protected by a chain of inaccessible mountains” to the south and was close by a major navigable water route, the Hudson River. Immediately adjacent to continuously running fresh water and surrounded by rich, arable land, it represented a strategic military position. This was quickly recognized by General George Washington during his several visits to the area and he ordered General Horatio Gates to establish a large military encampment in the area. Soldier barracks, sufficient to accommodate in excess of 2000 troops were built in the fields adjoining the Village. The encampment served as a major Quartermaster-commissary facility whose mission it was to supply Colonial troops with ammunition, gunpowder, clothing and other provisions of warfare. The Village of Fishkill became part of one of the largest Colonial military encampments during the Revolutionary War. General Washington’s aide-de-camp, Alexander Hamilton, took residence here and boarded at an Inn across from the Dutch Reformed Church. In 1778, the Fishkill military complex served as headquarters for the Northern Department of the Continental Army.

Many historic buildings are preserved in the Village. The more renowned of these buildings are The First Dutch Reformed Church and The Trinity Church, each of which played a very important role during the Revolutionary War.

The Trinity Church, on Hopewell Avenue in the Village, was organized in 1756 and the structure built in 1760. It was used as a hospital during the Revolutionary War. The Provincial Convention fleeing New York City met in the Trinity Church September 1776 but, for greater convenience, removed to the Dutch Reformed Church.

The First Dutch Reformed Church, located on Main Street west of Route 9, was organized in 1710. The church proper was erected in 1731. The 4th Provincial Convention of New York met in the Church in 1776 thereby making Fishkill the State Capitol until its move to Kingston in 1777. The Church was then used as a prison during the War. Enoch Crosby, the historical American spy, was "captured" in conjunction with a group of recruits for the British Army. Confined in the Reformed Church after a mock trial by a Committee of Safety, he was allowed to escape to continue espionage for the Colonial Army.

The Hudson River, an excellent water highway, was not navigable during the winter months of the early years of our country because it froze solid above Poughkeepsie. Mail and travelers had to be carried overland. In 1785, Congress voted to employ stagecoaches to carry mail between major cities. The coaches carried passengers as well. Stage stops were established for the convenience of the passengers and the major overnight stage stop for the New York-To-Albany and the Albany-To-New York run was established in the Village of Fishkill. Two inns in the Village facilitated the travelers overnight. One inn opposite the Dutch Reformed Church was owned and operated by the tavern keeper Mr. Isaac Van Wyck. The building exists still today as a 3 story white building on Main Street, now with a Shoe Repair shop, Copy-A-Second shop and a Chiropractor's office built into a front addition. The second lodging was The Colonial Inn. Originally constructed with a tower in front, this building has had various modifications and additions over the years, including the loss of the tower feature. It today is the large yellow frame building on the northwest corner of Main and Jackson Streets formerly occupied by the Mid-Hudson Medical Group.

The Village of Fishkill was incorporated May 1, 1899 and became a municipality. Henry Dubois Van Wyck was elected as the Village's President, a title preceding that of Mayor. He built what is now Van Wyck Hall as a theater, but in the latter part of 1901 his relatives deeded the Hall to the Village with a request that the Declaration of Independence be read every July 4th on the steps of the Hall. In keeping with this covenant, on July 4, 2009, the 108th consecutive reading of the Declaration of Independence was performed, not only as a testament to that great patriot, Henry Dubois VanWyck, but also as a continuing expression of patriotism by the Village of Fishkill.

Over the course of three centuries the Village of Fishkill has been a proud community of distinguished history and has always exuded a character of patriotism, pride and progress. It is dedicated to remembering and continuing that character as we move forward to develop the requirements and meet the needs of the future.

Today, the Village of Fishkill remains a classic historic village, a residential community with a strong commercial center. Located in the southwest corner of Dutchess County, it is home to 1,735 people who live in a total area of 0.88 square miles (or 563 acres). The Village is served by Interstate-84 and NYS Routes 9, 9D and 52 (Main Street in the Village), with its primary intersection being NYS Route 9 and Main Street (NYS Route 52). The Village is also only a short distance from the Metro-North train station in Beacon, NY. The Village is considered a "built" area as nearly all of its land area has been developed and is being utilized. Sara Taylor Park, a 45 acre site on the east side of Route 9 is the Village's only park which is located to the north of the Fishkill Creek. The Fishkill Creek is part of the Fishkill Creek Watershed which eventually flows into the Hudson River.

Over the years and with the emergence of Route 9 as the major north-south connection through Dutchess County, Route 9 has had enormous effects on the Village. The once two-lane road has now been enlarged throughout the Village to six (6) lanes of traffic with additional turn lanes, essentially splitting the Village in two. This has resulted in the historic, walkable core remaining on the west side of Route 9, a highway-business commercial strip along Route 9, and a variety of businesses and residences on the east side of Route 9.

The east-side residences and businesses do not share the same fortune in having a traditional, tightly-knit Village development as the west side does. This side of the Village is more suburban and single-use in nature, and lacks the fabric of interconnected uses and patterns that the west strongly possesses. Of note, the Merritt Park Condominiums and Townhomes project was approved in this section, just north of the GAP. The historic Main Street, which continues to preserve the historic mix of small scale stores and shops on tree-lined streets which contribute and ground the Village as a historic center, remains on the west side of Route 9.

Over time, the Village has evolved to include an industrial area at its most southern part, closest to Interstate 84. The GAP Distribution Center is a 1.2 million square foot facility that takes supplies of goods and packages them for transportation to its many stores across the region. Across Route 9 from the GAP, in the Town of Fishkill, is a Super Wal-Mart, Sam's Club, the Towne Center (open shopping mall) the Westage Business Center and the old May's Mall (located further south on Route 9) which currently houses the Home Depot. This area is well-known for its medical, hotel, conference and large-scale shopping opportunities, and makes it an easy resting point for weary travelers.

The Route 9 frontage in the Village encompasses the Village's highway-oriented and commercial businesses: several hotels, fast-food restaurants, the Ransley Square retail mall, car wash, gas stations, Montfort Bros. construction, the Shop-Rite mall, and other miscellaneous businesses.

Sitting in a healthy and prospering area of the Dutchess County, the Village is blessed by a variety of opportunities. Geographically surrounded by the Town of Fishkill, it is also close to the City of Beacon, Town of East Fishkill and Town of Wappinger. Area interests include the Village's own unique small stores and shops, as well as regional attractions such as Dia: Beacon, Dutchess Stadium and the Hudson Valley Renegades, Hudson River Estuary Center, Van Wyck House, Mt. Gulian, and Stony Kill Farm.

