

TOWN OF PREBLE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
(Adopted February 13, 2006)

A. Objective

The purpose of this Plan is to adequately provide for inevitable changes and growth while retaining the overall rural character of the Town. The Town's general goals defined on the following pages reflect a comprehensive development pattern. The Plan defines seven major land-use categories as follows:

- Residential (R1)
- Residential – Lake Side (R1L)
- Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Conservation – wetlands, uplands or open water
- Agriculture – prime or secondary
- Recreation – Commercial or Public/Non Profit

B. Summary of Development Goals

The Plan establishes development goals and guidelines for the following:

- Protection of the Cortland Valley Sole Source Aquifer.
- Expansion of existing areas of commercial development.
- Avoidance of fragmented growth (strip development).
- Provision for gradual increase of development densities as one moves towards established growth centers.
- Continued protection of Town's lakes.
- Continued preservation of prime agricultural land.

In addition to these guidelines are the following considerations:

1. The plan recognizes growth potential for designated town areas and it does not support random, chaotic and incompatible development. Instead, a logical and smooth transition from intensive to non-intensive land uses is encouraged.
2. The Plan promotes cluster-type development as opposed to linear or strip growth. The retention of natural landscape between settlement areas of the Town provides each location with its own separate identity, thus giving residents a sense of the uniqueness of the place where they live.

3. **The Plan encourages preservation and enhancement of the existing rural nature of the Town.**
4. **Encourage preservation and enhancement of the existing rural nature of the Town.**
5. **Promotion of orderly development for designated Town areas with transitions from intensive to non-intensive land uses rather than random or incompatible development.**

C. Critical Issues for Meeting Goals

1. **Preservation of Existing Town Assets.** The existing historical, archaeological, aesthetic, agricultural, and most importantly, the ecological (water quality, etc.) assets of the Town must be safeguarded and preserved. New housing construction should be encouraged and promoted in desired areas of development such as secondary agriculture lands as referred to herein.
2. **Regulation and Enforcement.** To achieve the goals of the Comprehensive Plan, it is important for the Town Board and Planning Board to provide for and maintain updated standards with respect to: subdivision regulations, lakeside development regulations, site plan reviews, fire & building codes, zoning, junk regulation and the Town's official zoning map.
3. **Keep Comprehensive Plan Responsive.** A role of the Town Planning Board is to formulate practical policies and programs that will help promote the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan places a responsibility on the Planning Board to make policy or other modifications to keep the Plan responsive and up-to-date with current Town trends.
4. **Community Support of the Goals.** The Plan places a responsibility on the part of private developers to propose and build developments that are in accordance with the Plan. Occasionally, the interests of private enterprise may be in direct conflict with the general philosophy and community interests reflected by this plan.

D. Background Evaluation

The Town Comprehensive Plan Map (attached) is divided into seven major use areas or categories. The location and extent of each of these areas is based on existing physical constraints and other criteria such as soils, topography, drainage, locations of roads and highways, and the location of existing farmsteads, homes and other non-residential structures and facilities.

During several years spent in preparing the initial Town Comprehensive Plan, the Planning Board found that it needed an understanding of the trends that affect the general character of Preble. The Board studied such trends as housing, population characteristics, agricultural practices and the local and regional economy (see “Profiles of Preble” included as an appendix to this plan). A question that will continue to be asked is, how can the character of Preble best be maintained in the presence of inevitable growth and change? Or more specifically, how can growth and change be managed in a way that will maintain the rural character of the community while providing for economic development opportunities?

E. Comprehensive Plan Analysis and Rationale

1. Residential Areas

Since residential development and farming both require soils of high quality to be successful, new residential development should be directed to areas that already have some development. Encouraging infill and fringe residential development is an extension of this policy. Strip housing development is undesirable because of its creeping destruction of the community’s rural landscape character. Some of this loss of character results from the incompatibility between farm operations and strip housing.

Existing land use around the lakes has become more intensive in recent years as residents have converted seasonal-use homes into year-around residences. Also, new development around the Town’s lakeside areas has increased the threats to water quality and sedimentation of the lakes. Continued increased protection through the “Residential-Lakeside” District is an appropriate method of addressing this situation.

2. Commercial/Industrial Areas

Commercial and Industrial development has been moderate over the past ten years, with minimal impact to the rural character of the Town. Both commercial and light industrial areas exist in Preble. The acreage, however, appears inadequate for further light industrial expansion. Future light industrial development is considered a viable land use in the community particularly along the west side of the NYS Route 281 corridor, north of Currie Road to Song Lake Road. A measured increase in the light industrial district recognizes this need for additional developable land yet at the same time preserves the rural character of the Town and results in a limited potential loss of the Town’s prime farm land. Expansion of existing sites and operations also provide compatible development. Provision for moderate commercial development, of low density and low environmental impact, is encouraged. However, this

development must be carefully located, while considering the economical and logical criteria which would invite investment in Preble.

3. **Conservation Areas – Uplands, Wetlands, & Open Water**

Certain areas of the Town have severe limitations for development of any kind. Preserving these areas helps maintain the Town's ecological balance. The conservation areas include those critical lands and waters which are vital to the life-giving food chains providing continuity for relatively wild natural areas. These areas replenish and provide stability for the aquifer, forests, steep slopes and natural drainage ways that combine to produce the unique quality and character of the landscape of Preble. These conservation areas require careful consideration to prevent permanent damage or loss to future generations (mudslide in Lafayette Valley (1993) points to steep slope instability caused by removal of natural cover).

Wetland areas indicated on the Comprehensive Plan Map and discussed herein are defined (to the best of our knowledge) to identify areas of concern, and may be under further regulations by the NYS Department of Conservation and the Army Corps of Engineers.

4. **Agriculture, Prime and Secondary**

The Town supports agriculture as a key to retaining the Town's present economy and open-space character. Defining land in prime and secondary agriculture categories is based on soils analysis. "Prime Agriculture" is highly productive valley land, while "Secondary Agriculture" refers mostly to hillsides composed of lower yield soils. These secondary agriculture areas provide necessary support for crops and grazing. The same soils that are good for agriculture are also good for housing and other forms of construction. Residential development is encouraged in secondary agricultural areas but not within the prime agricultural areas.

Agricultural land-use supports the protection of the primary aquifer underlying the Preble Valley. The cumulative effects of development in the aquifer area pose a serious threat to a safe and adequate water supply serving Preble and other areas of the County.

5. **Recreation Areas**

Land for organized outdoor recreation activities is located in each of the developing areas of the Town. Recreation land uses, in some cases, provide a buffer for residential and agriculture land uses.

The Town must increase the accessibility of the existing recreational areas by interconnecting trails, as well as providing long-range financial planning for expansion and acquisition of additional park acreage, particularly where the potential loss of private recreational land use to development would threaten environmentally sensitive areas.

6. **Aquifer Protection Area**

The sand and gravel aquifer in the Town of Preble is the water source for the majority of the Town's residents and businesses. If this resource were to become contaminated and no longer potable, securing an alternative source of water would be a great financial burden to the residents and businesses of the Town. Therefore, aquifer protection must be a priority for all land use decisions within the aquifer or aquifer recharge area.

F. **Development Goals**

1. **Residential (R1) Land Use Goal**

The Town should provide for compatible residential development in selected areas of Preble.

Policy Statements

- a. For the purpose of orderly growth, cluster type development is to be promoted within the bounds of designated centers.
- b. New residential development should take full advantage of solar orientation, using site positioning.
- c. Housing is to be discouraged in areas subject to natural hazards such as flooding or where soils and/or topography are not suitable for road access, septic systems or storm drainage.
- d. Every effort is to be made to limit strip development along roadways because of traffic conflicts and inefficient use of land and service utilities.
- e. Residential and other existing homogeneous development areas are to be protected where possible to maintain property and other values.
- f. The use of buffer areas, large lots, and common lands are some features to be considered in planning for residential developments, including multi-family units.

2. Residential Lakeside (R1L) - Land Use Goal

Development in areas which are within 1000 feet of the high-water mark of the Town's lakes shall apply a higher standard of protection for the environmental, aesthetic, and recreational qualities of the area.

Policy Statements

- a. Comprehensive lakeside development regulations shall be continued. These regulations shall continue to include at a minimum:
 - Larger lot size requirements (2 acre min.)
 - Increase construction setbacks
 - More stringent septic and water system requirements
 - Storm water and erosion management plans
 - Renovation standards which reduce existing environmental threats.
- b. Alternate plans from developers that meet average density goal of 2-acre lot minimums will qualify for waiver incentives on requirements stated above.
- c. Long-term comprehensive sewage disposal plans shall be explored and encouraged which ultimately lead to reduced threats to the water quality of the Town's lakes and ground-water assets, and will subsequently permit higher density development standards.

3. Commercial Land Use Goal

Development and/or expansion of commercial land uses shall enhance the economy of the Town and conform to aesthetic standards of recently approved commercial construction.

Policy Statements:

- a. Commercial development shall not conflict with but enhance rural character of the Town.
- b. Commercial development shall be supported, if it provides economic benefits to the Town, with minimal impact on health, safety, and welfare of the residents.
- c. Commercial development shall be encouraged in only the designated commercial areas.

- d. **Site plan design reviews by the Preble Planning Board may be utilized to provide comprehensive assessment of potential impacts.**

4. Light Industrial Land-Use Goal

Light industrial development and/or expansion shall enhance the economy of the Town and conform to aesthetic standards of recent industrial construction.

Policy Statements:

- a. **Light industrial development, in areas so designated, shall be encouraged.**
- b. **Light industrial development shall be supported if it provides major economical benefits to the Town with minimal impact on health, safety, and welfare of the residents.**
- c. **Site plan design reviews by the Preble Planning Board may be utilized to provide comprehensive assessment of potential impacts.**
- d. **Industrial development proposals for high intensity operations which obviously conflict with the rural character of the Town will not be encouraged.**
- e. **Mining of earth materials in Zone A will continue to be prohibited for reasons that include the potential detrimental impacts to the sole source aquifer in the Preble Valley areas, and the loss of Prime Agricultural land.**

5. Conservation Land Use Goal

Provide safeguards to prevent the irrevocable loss of selected uplands, wetlands and open water areas in Preble containing unique natural characteristics. Conservation of these areas is an essential element in retaining the existing rural atmosphere of the Town. The high level of environmental quality and natural beauty exhibited by the selected conservation areas are both a social and economic asset of the Town worthy of protection.

Policy Statements

- a. **The management of surface water must be carefully considered in any placement of buildings, alignment of roads and drives and the location of impervious surfaces.**

- b. It is the responsibility of land owners and developers to assure that proper analysis and planning occurs for the adequate removal of surface water via storm drains, streams, ditches or other means. Consultation with the Cortland County Soil and Water District is encouraged prior to completion of any construction plans.**
- c. Most development proposed in areas designated for conservation is inappropriate except at very low density. Intensive development in conservation areas should be discouraged or avoided.**
- d. Floodways, floodplains and streamways should be reserved for low intensity land uses or preserved in their natural state.**
- e. Where extraction of earth materials is proposed, the required reclamation plan must be practical and reasonable and the final use or uses it proposes must fit logically into the Preble Comprehensive Plan.**
- f. Long-term plans for land acquisition of environmentally sensitive areas should be initiated by the Town to provide important aesthetic and recreational assets for future generations.**

6. Agriculture – Prime and Secondary, Land Use Goal

The practice of agriculture is vital to the quality of life enjoyed and desired by residents of the Town of Preble. As shown on the Town’s land use map, agricultural lands comprise the majority of parcels in the Town. Agricultural land uses, especially within the areas designated as prime farm land, are therefore encouraged within the Town to protect and maintain the rural atmosphere of our community and the economy generated by farming.

Policy Statements

- a. Attempt to preserve agricultural land in the largest tracts possible.**
- b. Strive to promote land uses that are compatible with agricultural practices in areas largely devoted to farming or designated as agricultural districts.**
- c. Promote individual undertakings and private enterprises such as home businesses. These are low impact activities that can**

serve to preserve the rural atmosphere of the Town and bolster the economy.

- d. Where a planned residential or mixed use development is proposed, sufficient yards, fences or other buffering should be provided to separate the new development from farming operations.
- e. Strip development along roadways and the placement of residential subdivisions in prime farm fields should be prevented to the extent possible.
- f. The zoning or rezoning of agricultural road frontages for residential purposes should not be supported, as it runs counter to the maintenance of viable farming in Preble.

7. **Recreational Land Use Goal**

This goal calls for the provision of sufficient space and facilities for the desired recreation of local residents of all ages in all seasons of the year. In addition, the Town wishes to support the continuation of the existing recreation uses and facilities which are used by numbers of people from outside Preble and which are extremely important to the Town's economy.

Policy Statements

- a. Areas of land having exceptional recreational, educational or unique natural value to the public (ie: Girl Scout Camp), should be recognized and protected by whatever means possible.
- b. Existing town park areas are to be maintained and improved to provide structures and equipment for a wide variety of active and passive activities suitable for Preble citizens of all ages. Safe access to all public recreation areas shall be provided and maintained.
- c. Commercial recreation is an important part of the Town's economy, and to support this, the Town should provide good access roads.
- d. Open water areas should be protected from pollution and encroachment by aquatic weed growth so that these ponds and lakes can continue to be used for the full range of water-based recreation activities.

- e. **Assess and develop means for planning and construction of biking and walking trails which would make recreation areas more accessible.**

8. Aquifer Protection Area - Land Use Goal

Development in an aquifer protection area shall implement increased protective requirements on new construction, in terms of permitted uses, building setbacks, and environmental performance standards. Protection of the aquifer from contamination is a priority in order to ensure the availability of this valuable resource for future generations.

Policy Statements:

- a. **Aquifer Protection goals defined herein shall apply as additions to the specific Land-use goals of the area.**
- b. **Consider the adoption of an Aquifer Protection District Ordinance to:**
 - 1. **Prohibit land uses or activities that pose an elevated risk of contaminating the aquifers such as landfills, mining activities, or facilities that use, store, process, dispose of, or treat hazardous materials or waste material.**
 - 2. **Require additional protective measures to be installed or constructed to protect the aquifers from potential hazards of contamination.**
 - 3. **Require a larger minimum lot size for properties with on-site sewage treatment (septic) systems within the Aquifer Protection District overlay zone.**
 - 4. **Require a permit from the Town for excessive withdrawal of water from an aquifer.**
- c. **Support efforts to study the aquifers within the Town. Additional hydrogeologic information about the aquifers will enable the Town to better understand these resources in order to use them and protect them efficiently and effectively.**
- d. **Support efforts to initiate public education programs to inform people about the local aquifers, their importance, and ways to protect them. An informed educated public will help promote aquifer protection.**

- e. **Consider the adoption of a Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinance in order to:**
 - 1. **Manage stormwater runoff due to development in such a way as to prevent infiltration of contaminated runoff into the aquifer.**
 - 2. **Protect surface water quality and prevent increased flooding due to development in addition to protecting the aquifer.**
- f. **Make a commitment to use the ordinance to prevent contamination of the aquifer. Enforcement of local regulations is critical to efforts to protect the aquifer. Dick Martin wants this changed to “adopt.”**

G. Guidelines for use of the Plan

1. Project Evaluation

A town is developed over the years as a result of hundreds of individual and group decisions. These include decisions to buy land, subdivide land, build houses, locate businesses, improve roads and construct public facilities of various kinds. Whether or not these decisions produce a convenient, safe and attractive community depends on how they are related to the Town’s objectives as stated in the Comprehensive Plan.

2. Planning Board Assessment and Rationale

- a. **Recommendation of this plan by the Planning Board and its adoption provides Board members with a sound and logical basis for administering current and future planning efforts for the Town of Preble.**
- b. **The submittal of all subdivisions and proposed zone change requests shall be reviewed by the Planning Board. It is imperative that this Comprehensive Plan be referred to “without fail” as part of the review of such applications.**
- c. **All reviews and subsequent recommendations made by the Planning Board to the Town shall be made in writing and will cite the following (at a minimum):**
 - **Whether or not such proposals meet the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.**

- **Reasons for recommendation for approval or denial of the proposal.**
 - **Further details and recommendations to the Town Board that should be made part of the subsequent Town Board action on the proposal.**
- d. **In carrying out such reviews, the Planning Board members should be impartial, expedient, and continue to consider the long-range planing viewpoint in their evaluations.**
- e. **The responsibility for continued maintenance and update of the Plan rests with the Planning Board. This ongoing effort will identify specific Town problems and special needs that grow out of future growth issues that come before the Town. The Planning Board must avoid frequent minor adjustments to the plan to accommodate special interest situations.**

However, on a regular basis, the Planning Board shall formally review and update the Comprehensive Plan and Map to assure that it agrees with and describes the current long-range growth objectives of the Town and its' residents.

3. Implementation

The following outline indicates how the Preble Comprehensive Plan will be carried out. Some of it is brought about through private actions, while some is implemented by the Planning Board and the Town Board or other government agencies. In some instances, joint public and private action may bring about desired results.

<u>Part of Plan</u>	<u>Carried Out by</u>
New residential areas	Private developers and individuals, after subdivision approval by the Planning Board.
New roads and streets	By Planning Board action on subdivisions and by Town Board action on new road acceptances, widening, relocation or Town Board action on new road acceptances, widening, relocation or rebuilding. Also by Town Board action on the "Official Map".
Regulation of land uses and density of new development	Through the Zoning Ordinance adopted by the Town Board.

Regulation of the character of new commercial/industrial development	Through the Zoning Ordinance adopted by the Town Board and by site plan approval of the Planning Board. The State Environmental Quality Review Regulation protects the natural environment.
Drainage, water supply, fire protection and sewage disposal	Town Board action to create districts and actions by special districts in authorizing improvements. The County Health Department issues sewage disposal permits.
Recreation areas	Action by the Town Board in land acquisition and improvement. Action by the Planning Board in approving new subdivisions requiring land or a cash payment in lieu of land.
Conservation areas	Lake Associations, and N. Y. State Dept. of Environmental Conservation. Both the above are concerned with natural resource protection.
Agriculture areas	Most Preble farms are included in an agricultural district administered by the County Planning Department. Improvement programs are sponsored by the County Soil & Water Conservation District.

4. Subdivision Regulations

Preble can be expected to develop by one subdivision at a time. Unless each major subdivision is planned to fit into a satisfactory pattern of streets and related facilities, the Town can become an unattractive collection of poorly designed housing developments with associated traffic, drainage and sanitation problems.

In 1978, the Town Board approved the establishment of subdivision regulations which were authorized by Town Law. These regulations, which were subsequently amended in 2002, set the standards and requirements that must be followed in creating new land subdivision and related road and street access. As provided by the Town Law, the regulations are administered by the Town Planning Board. Each new land subdivision must be approved by the

Planning Board before the subdivision may be recorded in the County Land Records and before any development may proceed.

The subdivision regulations of the Town are as important to the development of Preble as is the Zoning Ordinance. While zoning regulates the use of land, the subdivision regulations control the layout and design of streets and roads and establish the improvements required in all new land developments.

5. Town Zoning

Zoning carries out the planning program with respect to the use of private property. With adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, attention should be given to reviewing the relationship of the existing Zoning Regulations to the Plan. Such a review may indicate that changes or amendments to the Regulations should be made to bring the zoning into closer alignment with the adopted Comprehensive Plan and Comprehensive Plan Map.

6. Conclusion

This updated Comprehensive Plan has identified the need for improved regulations, as follows:

- a. Aquifer Protection District Regulations – An ordinance which will provide additional guidelines and requirements for uses which have the potential to impact the sole source aquifer.**
- b. Storm Water and Erosion Management – An ordinance which defines standards for run-off erosion protection for new developments and renovations in sensitive environmental areas.**
- c. Light Industrial District – Amendment of the Town Zoning Map to provide for measured expansion of this district.**

The Planning Board must continue to concentrate on the review of subdivision applications, but must also budget time and/or professional assistance to initiate and enact the new regulations described above.

The Planning Board continues to be the focal point to address special problems which may arise in the Town. In carrying out its' work, the Planning Board must be fair and impartial in its reviews and recommendations, while maintaining a long-term view point. The work activities of the Planning Board should be supported constructively by the Town Board and the Town residents, as these efforts will have a significant and direct impact on the future quality of life in Preble.

H. Comprehensive Plan Map

A copy of the Official Comprehensive Plan Map is attached. Larger copies of this map are available at the Town Hall or by contacting the Planning Board secretary.

The map defines land-use categories by depicting parcels with various shading or coding schemes. The categories are drawn as accurately as possible, but in some cases, the exact borders may require topographical surveys or Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) evaluation to resolve possible disagreements.