

# TOWN OF SHANDAKEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

## Draft Recommendations for Public Input

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**Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress**

For the **Town of Shandaken**

Supported by the **NYS Environmental Protection Fund**  
Adirondack Park Community **Smart Growth Program**

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HUDSON VALLEY  
PATTERN *for* PROGRESS



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# Smart Growth Principles

**Shandaken’s comprehensive plan is funded in part by a grant from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Adirondack Park Community Smart Growth Program, through appropriations from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF).**

**Created with Smart Growth principles top of mind, this comprehensive plan meets Smart Growth goals in the following ways:**

**1. Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities.**

The plan prioritizes Main Street hamlet centers of Phoenicia and Pine Hill for increased density, mixed-use development, and reduced lot sizes (Section 1.1). It encourages redevelopment of previously developed sites throughout the town and along Route 28 (Section 1.2), allows ADUs (Section 4.1) and gentle density<sup>1</sup> in existing residential areas (Sections 4.2 and 6.1), and adaptive reuse of existing buildings (Sections 1.2, 6, and 8.3), directing growth away from undeveloped areas and building on existing residential uses.

**2. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas.**

The plan promotes conservation subdivisions (Section 1.1.d) that preserve large portions of land as open space. It also relies on the Natural Resource Inventory (Section 2.4) to guide development away from sensitive areas and includes tree preservation (Section 4.2 and 7.2), habitat protection (Section 3.6), and scenic corridor protections (Section 1.3).

**3. Mix land uses (residential with retail and business).**

The plan shifts away from separation of land uses and encourages mixed-use buildings, especially in hamlet centers (Sections 1.1, 1.2, and 12.4). It supports conversion of existing structures into mixed-use developments (Section 1.2), integrating residential and commercial uses. It also unlocks local enterprise and small businesses, allowing people to more easily make a living from home (Section 2).

**4. Take advantage of compact building design.**

Compact development is encouraged through smaller lot sizes, reduced setbacks, clustered housing, and multi-family options, minimizing land disturbance while improving efficiency and affordability (Sections 1, 4, and 7.2).

**5. Foster distinctive, attractive places with a strong sense of place.**

The plan is rooted in Shandaken’s unique identity by outlining development guidelines in line with community priorities (Section 1.1), protecting scenic viewsheds (Section 1.3), supporting locally owned businesses (Section 8), supporting quality of life for all ages

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<sup>1</sup> Gentle density is defined as a small increase in allowable number of residential units on a parcel of land while preserving the existing character and scale of the neighborhood.

(Section 12), promoting public art and historic narratives (Section 13), and encouraging community cohesion and belonging (Section 15).

#### 6. Create walkable neighborhoods.

Walkability is supported through compact development in hamlets (Section 1.1 and 4.2), sidewalk districts (Section 9.13), reduced parking requirements (Section 1.2.a), and investment in pedestrian connections between public amenities (Section 14.3).

#### 7. Provide a variety of transportation choices.

The plan promotes multimodal transit options including biking, walking, micro-transit, and ride-sharing (Section 7.3), along with transportation demand management and reduced parking minimums (Section 1.2.a).

#### 8. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices.

The plan generates a wide range of housing including ADUs (Section 4.1), multifamily, (Section 4.3), cluster cottages (Section 1.1), tiny homes (Section 4.3), and workforce housing (Section 1.1.e). The plan also recommends a mandated affordable set-aside policy for larger developments (Section 4.4).

#### 9. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration.

The plan was created with extensive community input and emphasizes ongoing community stewardship and implementation of recommendations (Section 16). Wherever possible the plan encourages partnerships with county and state agencies and collaboration with local organizations, youth groups, and residents (Sections 3.3, 3.7, 8.5, 8.6, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 14.5.)

#### 10. Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective.

The plan calls for clear, consistent, and accessible zoning, objective design standards, and streamlined permitting for development and community events (Sections 1.1, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.2, 4.2, 9.4, 13.4, and 13.5).

## Recommendations

### I. Land use and the built environment: How can local laws and ordinances support Shandaken's vision and values?

#### 1. Update the town's zoning code to generate new development that aligns with community priorities.

##### 1.1 Revise land use, density, height, setback, design, and occupancy standards to better align with community priorities, including the following actions:

- a. The zoning code should encourage appropriately scaled development that fits with local character and supports energy efficiency. Adopt guidelines to support these goals, which may include maximum lot coverage, maximum height, or maximum square footage size for new single-family homes. should be informed by community input, market analysis, and energy standards; smaller homes are more likely to be affordable and energy efficient.
- b. Increase density allowances within hamlet centers to reduce fragmentation and sprawl, consistent with climate-smart development and community preferences against suburban development patterns.
- c. Evaluate and propose new dimensional and area requirements in alignment with community input, including reducing minimum lot sizes and setbacks. Cumulative impacts should first be thoroughly evaluated by assessing the number of affected lots and potential effects on forest fragmentation and wildlife habitat alongside benefits to housing choice and affordability. Based on these findings, adopt targeted zoning amendments allowing reduced lot sizes and reduced setback and side yard requirements in hamlet centers and where environmental impacts are minimal. Amendments may include:
  - i. Reductions where such changes would support compact, mixed-use, and walkable development in designated hamlet centers while reducing environmental disturbance in outlying areas and hollows.
  - ii. Flexible standards in environmentally sensitive or constrained areas where flexibility would reduce land clearing, grading, and environmental impacts while improving siting of on-site wastewater and well systems.
  - iii. Reductions in minimum lot sizes and setbacks for residential uses across the town where such changes would support affordable housing while upholding environmental protection goals.
  - iv. Allowances for multi-family housing, mixed-use, and reduced lot sizes in areas supported by municipal water and sewer infrastructure to maximize public utilities, provide diverse housing options, and reduce pressure on natural resources.
- d. Establish conservation subdivision provisions to guide residential development in a manner that protects the natural landscape while increasing housing opportunities. Conservation subdivisions should be designed to cluster development on a defined portion of a parcel, preserving the majority of the lot as

permanently protected forest or open space. Consider allowing additional units for multi-family, duplexes, and triplexes within conservation subdivisions, provided the concentrated building footprint preserves a significantly greater percentage of contiguous open space than a conventional single-family layout. Require conservation subdivision design for major residential subdivisions outside hamlet centers.

- e. Consider zoning tools, such as floating zones or overlay districts, that allow increased residential density on sites meeting defined criteria: the site should have previously been developed, have a minimum acreage, and meet environmental performance standards (i.e. limits on land clearing; clustering of development). Increased density for multi-family or attached housing types should be granted on the condition that the project provides a certain percentage of affordable or workforce housing.
  - f. Allow cluster housing (see 4.2 below). When determining the appropriate density of cluster housing in areas not served by a sewer district, consider flood resilience and defer to septic and water requirements set forth by the Department of Health to protect public health while enabling additional housing units where feasible.
  - g. Adopt clear and objective design guidelines for hamlet centers that focus on building form, scale, and relationship to the street. Guidelines should allow multi-unit development that is compatible with existing hamlet scale, development patterns, and diversity of architecture. Standards should be predictable and straightforward and should support affordable housing without altering overall rural character.
  - h. Reduce setback requirements for community-serving land uses such as playgrounds and community spaces to better support quality of life and the public realm. Ensure setbacks and site planning also allow for small public gathering spaces and public art installations where appropriate, fostering community interaction.
  - i. Ensure zoning and building requirements are clear, consistent, and easy to interpret (e.g., clarify accessory structure requirements).
- 1.2 Encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings and sites by considering the following:
- a. Remove parking minimums in hamlet centers. Consider alternative management strategies to meet parking needs. For example, consider in-lieu-of-parking fees and allocate those fees to a local transportation fund, and/or require a transportation demand management plan (TDMP) for projects that exceed a designated threshold. A TDMP may include shared parking, assessment of on-street capacity, seasonal demand, and/or multimodal access.
  - b. Allow conversions of existing vacant structures to multifamily residential or mixed-use development provided septic approvals are met.
  - c. There is a need to increase the financial feasibility of rehabilitating vacant and dilapidated structures. The cost of building rehabilitation often exceeds the value of allowable uses in existing zoning. To meet the community goals of preventing further dilapidation and increasing housing opportunities, the Town should create

an overlay district or special use ordinance to allow mixed-use or higher-intensity residential uses in lower-density zones. For example, when considering rehabilitation of a vacant, abandoned, or at-risk structure in a low-density residential zone, consider allowances for additional housing units or low-impact commercial use to support the financial feasibility of rehabilitation and continued/restored occupancy. Criteria for this permit could include an extended period of vacancy or demonstrated infeasibility of rehabilitating the structure within the ordinances of the base zoning. Criteria could also include structural, health, or safety concerns. Applicants should be required to demonstrate that such code compliance challenges are not the result of intentional neglect or other deliberate actions taken by the property owner to trigger a special use permit.

- d. Encourage adaptive reuse projects to incorporate energy-efficient retrofits, including insulation upgrades, renewable energy, and water-saving measures.
  - e. Allow flexible, mixed-use redevelopment of previously developed sites along Route 28. If a proposed development includes significant changes to existing building footprints, the development should trigger Scenic Byway Overlay District requirements (see 1.3 below).
- 1.3 Establish a Scenic Byway Overlay District along Route 28 to protect and enhance the corridor's scenic viewshed while maintaining flexibility for context-sensitive development (see 1.2.c above). The overlay should regulate building placement, height, signage, lighting, vegetation clearing, and parking location.
- 1.4 Continue to protect dark skies by regulating outdoor lighting to preserve night scenery in all areas of the town, including in the Scenic Byway Overlay District.
- 1.5 In reviewing any special use permit, the planning board should encourage and look favorably upon projects that include energy efficiencies and green building design including but not limited to Certified Passivhaus Design, LEED Zero Energy Certification, geothermal (ground source heat pump) or passive solar heating, and natural habitat preservation.

## 2. Allow and encourage a range of commercial enterprises throughout the town while protecting quality of life and environmental assets.

- 2.1 In Phoenicia and Pine Hill, allow ground floor commercial uses, such as retail and food services, along Main Street. Streamline permitting and review.
- 2.2 Rather than determine suitable uses, regulate activity (e.g. commercial, manufacturing, industrial) based on measurable impacts, such as noise, lighting, and environmental pollution. Include specific restrictions or requirements in any permit granted for commercial uses.
- 2.3 Clarify the procedure for commercial venues hosting events as part of their business operations, including when an event is considered an accessory use or whether additional permitting is required. Adopt clear guidelines about the allowable sizes, times of day, and frequencies of events that a commercial enterprise can host based on measurable impacts such as noise and pollution. Distinguish between venues located in hamlet centers and venues located in the hollows in a way that is aligned with the

unique characteristics of each. For example, consider solutions for setbacks or other noise barriers in the hollows. In hamlet centers, ensure guidelines do not have adverse impacts on the vibrancy of Main Street.

- 2.4 Use the town's Natural Resource Inventory to identify critical resource areas and low-impact areas. In low-impact areas where there are minimal or no critical natural resources, such as previously developed lands or areas with minimum ecological sensitivity, develop clear permitting for development.
- 2.5 Adopt a formula business ordinance under which a formula business, restaurant, or retail store (i.e. large national chain or franchise) is prohibited.
- 2.6 Through land use, policy, and funding pursuits, support commercial spaces for local, cooperative, small business incubators, and shared facilities such as commercial kitchens to support value-added locally produced goods. Consider zoning flexibility and building density bonuses as a way to incentivize and encourage space for such small, locally owned businesses in new developments.
- 2.7 Work with the county government to match the needs of small local businesses with county services.
- 2.8 Continue to regulate the visual impacts of parking through ordinances.
- 2.9 Allow hotels and guesthouses in Phoenicia and Pine Hill.
- 2.10 Allow hotels to have food establishments that serve non-guests.

### 3. Promote sustainability and climate preparedness through development standards, incentives, and intergovernmental coordination.

- 3.1 Adopt ordinances, informed by applicable international and state codes, to support low-impact and off-grid development, including but not limited to composting toilets, solar energy systems, and greywater reuse.
- 3.2 Adopt clear guidelines for building in the floodplain that follow flood resilient construction standards. Invest in public education with regards to flood and disaster preparedness and mitigation strategies. The town floodplain administrator will continue to offer public assistance around flood related construction.
- 3.3 Collaborate with Ulster County and relevant organizations to support projects that deconstruct and recycle building materials.
- 3.4 Adopt the NYSERDA Unified Solar Permit.
- 3.5 Pursue Climate Smart silver certification and any future certification set forth by New York State.
- 3.6 Prioritize tree preservation and natural buffers during site planning and development review. Prioritize native species and long-term ecological health.
- 3.7 Collaborate with neighboring Catskill towns, the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC), AWSMP, and the New York State Department of Health to identify and support lower-cost wastewater treatment alternatives, including composting toilets, graywater filtration, and compact or decentralized systems, in areas without access to municipal water and sewer, in order to improve housing feasibility while protecting public health and environmental resources. This may include advocating for pilot programs or regulatory flexibility where appropriate.

- 3.8 Adopt local regulations to limit or phase out the use of gas-powered leaf blowers and snow blowers in favor of quieter, low-emission alternatives. Consider safety, accessibility, and emergency conditions when proposing regulation.

## **II. Housing: What approaches to housing support Shandaken's vision and values?**

4. Promote the creation of new and diverse housing opportunities throughout the town that are affordable, consistent with community character, and responsive to local needs.

- 4.1 Allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) as-of-right on lots with an existing principal structure, regardless of minimum lot size. Exempt ADUs from residential density calculations in all zoning districts, provided the ADU remains accessory and subordinate to the primary use of the property. Reduce barriers to building ADUs by addressing setbacks, parking requirements, number of entrances, and others.
- 4.2 Permit cluster cottages or cottage courts of 3-4 units in all single-family zones, while prioritizing already cleared parcels and maintaining regulations for maximum tree coverage. Create clear standards to ensure cluster cottages are centered around shared open space, maintain neighborhood scale, limit building height, and include site-appropriate access and parking. Encourage long-term or owner-occupied housing to maintain affordability and community stability.
- 4.3 Where appropriate, allow a diverse range of housing types that support affordability at different price points, including affordable multifamily ownership opportunities, manufactured homes, tiny homes and tiny home villages, and other options. Regulations for multifamily housing should include strict standards aligned with community priorities of increasing access to affordable housing while minimizing environmental impact.
- 4.4 Consider adopting an affordable set-aside policy with permanent affordability for any development that creates a certain number of units, including tiny home or manufactured home parks, subdivisions, and multifamily ownership and rental opportunities. Consider a requirement for accessible ground-floor units for seniors and people with disabilities.
- 4.5 Update short-term rental regulations to reduce impacts on long-term housing availability. See Appendix for a list of strategies rooted in best practices for communities in New York State.
- 4.6 Ensure that increases in residential zoning density and reductions in minimum lot sizes are pursued in conjunction with clear and enforceable short-term rental regulations, such that newly created housing units are used for long-term residential occupancy rather than transient lodging.
- 4.7 Pursue Housing Smart Silver certification by 2028 and Platinum certification by 2031.

5. Pursue tax mechanisms that support local homeowners.

- 5.1 Conduct a reassessment of property values in the Town.
- 5.2 Consider the feasibility of establishing a dedicated housing fund or community preservation fund in Shandaken. Identify revenue sources including, where authorized by state law, real estate transfer taxes or comparable mechanisms.

- 5.3 Adopt the NYS property tax exemption of newly constructed or converted rental multiple dwellings (RPL 421-p) to reduce financial barriers to creating new rental opportunities in town, including ADUs.
- 5.4 Consider adopting existing state-enabled real property tax law exemptions including but not limited to the following (detailed descriptions included in Appendix):
  - First-Time Homebuyers of Newly Constructed Homes (RP-457)
  - Capital Improvements to a One- or Two-Family Residential Property (RP-421-f)
  - If adopted by NYS, opt in to the 10% exemption for full-time residents set forth by Ulster County.

## 6. Rehabilitate, redevelop, and adaptively reuse existing structures and previously developed land (grayfields).

- 6.1 Allow single-family conversions to 2-4 family structures by right.
- 6.2 Allow multifamily housing in any zone that allows hotels.
- 6.3 Create strategies to address vacancies and dilapidation. Strategies may include:
  - a. Study the conditions that have led to vacancies to inform interventions. For example, vacancies may be due to cost of maintenance, estate disputes, bankruptcies, infrastructure, or other reasons. Efforts to address vacancies should consider underlying causes, as unique conditions require different interventions. For example, a vacancy tax will not incentivize productive use if the vacancy is due to underlying infrastructural challenges; in this instance an additional tax may add a financial barrier to addressing the vacancy.
  - b. Establish a vacant building registry to track underused, vacant, abandoned, and/or dilapidated properties.
  - c. Consider a vacant building fee to incentivize rehabilitation and generate funding to support the registry and associated code enforcement costs. A waiver should be available to property owners who can demonstrate efforts to rehabilitate and bring the structure into productive use.
  - d. Consider a requirement to install art in vacant street-facing windows.

### **III. Local economy: What approaches to economic development will support Shandaken’s vision and values?**

7. Encourage sustainable economic development that produces minimal environmental impacts.
  - 7.1 Adopt the term “recreational nature tourism” as a priority economic focus for Shandaken, defined as tourism based on activities in natural ecosystems such as forests, lakes, and rivers (e.g. hiking, fishing, cross-county skiing, nature photography, etc.) This framework should guide evaluation of tourism-related proposals, grant applications, and other funding opportunities, and serve as a benchmark to decide which activities do not align with local priorities. Regulation of tourism activities and projects should lead to preservation and long-term health of the natural systems in which the activities take place. Other actions pursued based on this Plan (e.g. lodging and short-term rentals, transportation, visitor management, etc.) should be consistent with this core principle.
  - 7.2 Adopt strict environmental guidelines for new lodging and tourism facilities. These may include open space provisions, minimizing tree clearing, minimizing impervious surfaces, clustering development on a minimal percentage of any parcel, strict recycling and food waste / composting requirements, and green building requirements.
  - 7.3 Encourage and invest in infrastructure that increases access to and safety of alternative modes of transportation, including walking, biking, ride sharing (e.g. ZipCar or similar), micro-transit, the increase and expansion of public bus service, and others.
  - 7.4 The Town should strive to create municipal parking in Phoenicia and Pine Hill as a long-term goal.
  - 7.5 Develop a visitor transportation plan to identify and address seasonal and peak demand. Plan elements should include shuttle or transit options, trailhead access, pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements, and coordination with relevant New York State agencies, nonprofit organizations, and tourism entities.
  - 7.6 Ban drive-through businesses throughout the town. Drive-throughs encourage idling cars and generate unnecessary emissions.
  - 7.7 Support local artisans, farm-to-table businesses, and seasonal markets to strengthen the local economy.
  - 7.8 Ban water harvesting throughout the town.
8. Encourage local ownership and work to retain circulation of dollars within the local economy.
  - 8.1 Support cooperative or community-owned business models.
  - 8.2 Adopt right-of-first-refusal policies that prioritize allocation or sale of public land to a community land trust (CLT), local organizations, and nonprofit owners or developers.

- 8.3 Incentivize redevelopment or reuse of vacant commercial and residential buildings for local businesses or affordable housing. Incentives from the town might include tax abatements or fee waivers.
- 8.4 Adopt tax mechanisms that discourage prolonged vacancies and reward investments that benefit residents and the local economy.
- 8.5 Work with partners such as Ulster County, local banks, and the Phoenicia Business Association to identify strategies that reduce operating costs for local businesses. For example, consider programs that support cost-sharing through economies of scale, such as by connecting local businesses with wholesale suppliers (e.g. operating supplies, basic ingredients, smallware, etc.), increasing competitiveness of local businesses within the broader economy.
- 8.6 Work with partners (see 8.5) to support tourism-oriented businesses to calibrate off-season business in service of local residents in order to mitigate challenges of temporal ebbs and flows of tourism and to provide essential goods and services to full-time residents.

#### **IV. Infrastructure and Municipal Services: How can Shandaken improve and maintain public infrastructure and services without undue tax burden on residents?**

9. Develop and maintain key infrastructure through strategic projects, policies, and partnerships with relevant government agencies and organizations.
  - 9.1 Relocate the Town Hall and all associated town services out of the flood plain. Consider co-location with Ulster County Highway Department.
  - 9.2 Improve signage to signal entry points to Phoenicia and Pine Hill to drive visitors downtown from Route 28. Signage should be colorful, bright, and highly visible, designed by local artists, and should highlight specific offerings along Main Streets.
  - 9.3 Restart discussions with the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC) and New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) about funding a wastewater treatment plant in the hamlet of Phoenicia, given changes in community sentiments and needs.
  - 9.4 Work with the Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program (AWSMP) to develop a long-term flood reduction strategy for the hamlet of Phoenicia. Implement strategies to remove critical assets from the floodplain, including Phoenicia's Main Street and the former Phoenicia School. Work with private property owners to assess tradeoffs and identify fair compensation to support private contributions to public safety. Clearly communicate the consequences of inaction, including loss of flood insurance eligibility, increasing costs of insurance and repairs, economic decline of Phoenicia's Main Street small businesses, and future dilapidation of floodplain buildings. Identify buildings in the floodplain that cannot currently be financed or renovated due to flood exposure. Demonstrate the necessity of flood mitigation for the hamlet's capacity to exist long-term, as the intensity and frequency flood events are expected to increase. Emphasize public safety, community resilience, and economic health.
  - 9.5 Complete storm-water runoff engineering, planning, and implementation in Pine Hill.
  - 9.6 Continue to participate in FEMA Community Rating System (CRS) program. Adopt flood mitigation strategies and procedures as necessary to maintain and improve CRS rating.
  - 9.7 Work with Ulster County, neighboring towns, and organizational partners to support community members in understanding and accessing programs provided by the Catskill Watershed Corporation (CWC). Encourage Ulster County to designate a staff member to assist residents in navigating all watershed-related services.
  - 9.8 Identify strategies to encourage resident participation in the CWC flood hazard mitigation program and other programs that offer financial assistance for flood prevention.
  - 9.9 Work with relevant organizations and agencies to publicize and provide up-to-date land-use board training on any updated flood mapping.
  - 9.10 Explore regional shared service agreements with neighboring towns around planning, engineering, legal, financial, and building inspection. Pursue funding from state and

county sources to support efforts to increase government efficiency and effectiveness through these partnerships.

- 9.11 Work with Ulster County to expand broadband and improve cellular coverage across the town, particularly in hamlets and along Route 28.
- 9.12 Partner with DEC and neighboring towns to develop strategies to reduce access to waste for bears and other wildlife. Efforts may include public education, requiring bear-resistant containers, and improved waste storage requirements.
- 9.13 Consider establishing a Sidewalk District in Pine Hill and Phoenicia to support walkability, accessibility, and safety in the hamlet centers. District policy should clarify maintenance responsibilities and public fees associated with sidewalk maintenance.
- 9.14 Consider using sustainable and environmentally friendly materials for sidewalks, parks, and other public infrastructure.

## **10. Improve capacity and maximize investment in emergency services.**

- 10.1 Collaborate with neighboring municipalities to improve efficiency and reduce costs in emergency services, including fire, EMS, and dispatch operations. Explore shared staffing, joint equipment purchases, and coordinated training programs.
- 10.2 Coordinate with regional partners and Ulster County government to improve emergency radio, cellular coverage, and dispatch capabilities throughout the town. Update the town's zoning code to allow the infrastructure necessary to facilitate these critical communication assets.
- 10.3 Conduct a comprehensive study of EMS capacity and demand, including the impacts of Belleayre Ski Center operations, and work collaboratively with the Olympic Regional Development Authority ORDA to ensure appropriate support and shared responsibility for emergency services.
- 10.4 Consolidate and coordinate fire services across the Town to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance emergency coverage.
- 10.5 To support emergency services and address the volunteer shortage, incentivize housing developments that include set-aside units for emergency service workers and volunteers.

## **11. Leverage the thriving tourism industry for local investment.**

- 11.1 Review and update local assessment and taxation practice for lodging, such that properties used primarily for short-term rental or transient lodging purposes are taxed in accordance with their predominant use, consistent with New York State Real Property Tax Law.
- 11.2 Consider collaborating with Ulster County and neighboring Catskill towns to conduct a study of the fiscal impacts of tourism-related land uses on public services costs and tax revenue. The study should assess whether existing taxation mechanisms adequately offset demands of tourism assets on town services and should include recommendations and strategies for fiscally responsible taxation based on best practices, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- 11.3 Develop strategies to steer tourism activity toward local businesses, including wayfinding and maps of local shops, dining, and services.

- 11.4 To increase visitor activity at local businesses, direct Route 28 traffic into hamlet centers and prominently showcase local businesses and attractions at hamlet entrances.
- 11.5 Work with relevant organizations (e.g. CWC, AWSMP, etc.) and government agencies (e.g. Ulster County, NYC DEP, etc.) to encourage visitors to respect the environment and the wellbeing of residents. For example, support proper disposal of trash through installment of receptacles and/or educational signage.

## **V. Community, Arts, Parks, & Culture: What strategies can strengthen Shandaken's sense of place and quality of life?**

### **12. Establish Shandaken as a town where people can live from childhood through senior years.**

- 12.1 Periodically revise the income qualifications for the Real Property Tax Law Senior Exemption (RP-467) to best reflect the earnings (social security payments and pensions) of local senior homeowners.
- 12.2 Proactively increase health services in the Town by working with commercial property owners to attract health providers and other needed services (e.g. clinics, day care centers, third places, etc.) to the area. Work with the Ulster County Economic Development office to include health services in any economic development efforts.
- 12.3 Implement and support programs that improve quality of life for families, including zoning that enables childcare and affordable housing, partnerships with schools and healthcare providers, accessible transportation, and workforce development.
- 12.4 Promote mixed-use development with senior-friendly and youth-oriented amenities to enable residents to remain in the community through all life stages.
- 12.5 Partner with Ulster County and neighboring Catskill towns to support transportation options for seniors, youth, and workers, linking residential areas to commercial, health, and recreation centers.

### **13. Cultivate arts and culture as integral to Shandaken's identity and economic vibrancy.**

- 13.1 Acknowledge the creative arts as a driver of tourism, economic vitality, and community life. Incorporate arts and cultural programming into town branding, wayfinding, and economic development efforts.
- 13.2 Uplift key historic narratives (i.e. Indigenous peoples, the Underground Railroad, labor and railroad history, etc.) in public spaces with signage, wayfinding, and public art.
- 13.3 Engage with tribal leaders locally and nationally who have ties to the area in creating public-facing messaging. Consider renaming the hamlet of Big Indian to Winnisook.
- 13.4 Adopt clear, consistent policies for the use of public spaces that apply equally to all types of community groups and organizers. Support modest outdoor activation (e.g., pop-ups, temporary installations, performances) that foster third spaces and community interaction, while maintaining compatibility with surrounding uses and environmental protections.
- 13.5 Clarify and streamline permitting for events. Distinguish small-scale events (e.g., art openings, exhibitions, live music, small festivals) from large commercial events based on measurable impacts such as attendance, duration, and noise. Develop a tiered event permitting and fee schedule based on expected attendance, amplification, duration, environmental impact, and demand on municipal services. Ensure that

permitting processes and fees do not create barriers to participation for small businesses, artists, and grassroots organizers.

13.6 Support efforts to incorporate arts into vacant windows along Main Streets.

13.7 Create a cultural asset map based on robust community input.

#### 14. Increase access to parks, public spaces, and community places.

14.1 In the case of sale of privately owned spaces used by the public, the Town should consider acquisition in order to secure public access to parks and open spaces. For example, the Town should acquire Parish Field from the Archdiocese of New York and designate it as public park space.

14.2 Support maintenance and updates for existing community facilities (i.e. libraries, museum, historic society, Pine Hill Community Center, and others) to improve accessibility, sustainability, and relevance to the community. Seek funding for these efforts through state, county, and other grant opportunities.

14.3 Invest in key infrastructure to increase pedestrian linkages and access throughout the town. For example, seek funding for pedestrian bridges linking Belleayre Beach, Smith Park, parking lot, and the hamlet of Pine Hill.

14.4 Facilitate safe and environmentally responsible public recreational access to the Esopus Creek by working with the Ashokan Streams Management Program and other partners to identify appropriate access points, signage, visitor requirements, and ideas for community stewardship.

14.5 Collaborate with local community organizations like the American Legion or Rotary Club to establish a memorial program for amenities in public spaces. The program would include the funding of improvements such as benches, plantings, and cleanups.

#### 15. Nurture a culture of cohesion, deep listening, and belonging among residents from all walks of life.

15.1 Support and encourage gathering opportunities that generate social interaction and respectful dialogue among different groups. For example, leverage the arts and community dinners to bring together and build bridges between lifelong and new residents; intergenerational groups; people with different political affiliations; etc.

15.2 Work with relevant organizations such as the school district, Pine Hill Community Center, and the libraries to revive and update the Youth Advisory Committee enabled by town bylaws. The Committee would meet regularly, attend Town meetings, and represent youth issues in formal Town processes. The Committee should be empowered to present recommendations directly to elected officials, creating a consistent channel for youth perspectives to influence decision-making.

## 16. Guide and monitor the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan.

16.1 Establish a mechanism for regular review and reporting of progress on all Plan recommendations. Prioritize transparency, accountability, and adjustment of strategies based on ongoing community feedback. Identify responsible parties for implementation of the plan, including Town Board, land use boards, staff, steering committee, and organizational partners. Outline expected outcomes and a timeline for actions.