

***State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA)
Findings Statement***

***Town of Mount Pleasant Comprehensive Plan
(Envision Mount Pleasant)
& Hamlet Zoning Code***

Town of Mount Pleasant, Westchester County, New York

SEQRA Lead Agency:

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1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Envision Mount Pleasant and the Hamlet Zoning Code are intended to provide both guidance and techniques for the Town to protect those resources requiring preservation, to enhance the built environment, while focusing on the hamlets of Valhalla, Hawthorne and Thornwood and provide for the future of the town responsibly, equitably and sustainably.

Envision Mount Pleasant creates a framework to achieve the vision through the establishment of Goals and Implementation Strategies.

Goals are the desired future outcomes.

Implementation Strategies are the specific tasks required to achieve each goal.

The format of **Envision Mount Pleasant** (“Envision Mt. Pleasant” or the “Plan”) is designed to provide historical and geographical context to future planning initiatives for the entire Town. The Plan is divided into chapters corresponding to broad initiative areas. Within each chapter, existing conditions are documented, and goals are set forth. An implementation matrix follows which lays out the tasks required to implement each goal. In certain instances, goals and implementation strategies overlap initiative areas.

The following initiative areas are addressed:

- Natural Environment
- Economic Environment
- Social Environment
- The Built Environment
- Mobility & Connectivity
- The Hamlets
- Sustainability & Resiliency

Envision Mount Pleasant will provide the context within which decisions on specific future actions can be made.

Envision Mount Pleasant includes numerous implementation strategies to successfully realize the goals and aspirational vision of the community, which are summarized below.

Natural Environment

- Permanently preserve important open spaces.
- Mitigate flooding impacts.
- Limit the impact and footprint of new development – “Smart Growth” is desired.
- Accommodate alternative energy.
- Check spread of invasive species, restore native species.
- Prioritize green building.
- Connect open space resources.

- Combat sprawl by channeling new, appropriately scaled new development into the Hamlets where adequate infrastructure exists.
- Employ a philosophy of “*Proactive Conservation.*”
- Establish the *Mount Pleasant Conservation Legacy Program* to prioritize and aggressively protect vulnerable open spaces.
- Adopt green building standards.
Legislate and incentivize alternative energy practices.
- Comprehensively evaluate stormwater management practices.
- Create the *Mount Pleasant Recreation Trailway.*
- Develop an *Invasive Species Action Plan.*

Economic Environment

- Ensure reasonable taxes.
- Provide jobs for young people.
- Diversify the types of businesses in Town and ensure adequate housing for a multi-generational population.
- Maintain the viability of the office parks through land use and zoning laws that allow for antiquated office parks to be repurposed.
- Provide a broad range of housing types and choices, including in the commercial areas of the Hamlets.
- Revitalize the Hamlets and “Flip the script.” Instead of primarily business districts, reimagine them as interesting and desirable places that people will be attracted to, who will then become customers for local businesses.
- Facilitate new residential development in the commercial areas of the Hamlets, creating a built-in customer base.
- Facilitate and attract small businesses and non-traditional entrepreneurial models in the commercial areas of the Hamlets.
- Capitalize and build upon the life sciences and medical sectors as pillars of the Town’s economic future.
- Ensure the development of the North 60 integrates into the Town.

Social Environment

- Preserve the Town’s historic resources and heritage.
- Diversify the Town housing stock to better serve older residents looking to downsize and younger people seeking to establish residences in Town.
- In alignment with facilitating smart growth in the commercial areas of the Hamlets, prioritize one- and two-bedroom apartments geared toward seniors and people without children.
- Facilitate assisted and supported living for seniors.
- Ensure adequate resources are devoted to the growing senior population.
- Maintain the quality of local schools.
- Ensure the compatibility of the institutional schools with the surrounding community.
- Strive for excellence, efficiency and cost effectiveness in Town Government.
- Charge the Mount Pleasant Historical Society with conducting a historic resource survey.
- Create a *Historic Advisory Council* to address historic preservation during the land use review process.
- Conduct *Educational Summits* with the 11 school districts and Town government to align priorities.

The Built Environment

- Preserve the character and integrity of the Town’s residential neighborhoods.
- Increase the variety and affordability of housing types, with a focus on senior housing.
- Revitalize and redirect new development to the commercial areas of the Hamlets, relieving development pressure from the outlying residential areas. Utilize new Hamlet Zoning Code.
- Maintain the Town’s commercial uses and tax base.
- Ensure that new development, particularly large- scale projects like the North 60, or the potential redevelopment of former institutional properties, fits into the character of the Town and do not result in adverse impacts.
- Create new overlay zoning applicable to the large institutional properties, to ensure their appropriate redevelopment.
- Operate an efficient and well-maintained infrastructural network.
- Maintain the Town’s excellent park system.
- Create more flexible zoning in the OB districts to allow the office uses to remain viable.
- Update and recodify the Zoning Ordinance.
- Improve water quality and supply through district consolidation and improvements.
- Expand the Community Center recreational facility.

Mobility & Connectivity

- Address poorly operating roadways and targeted roadway and intersection improvements.
- Make sure additional growth in the commercial areas of the Hamlets does not result in traffic congestion.
- Make the streets safe and usable for motorist pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Make getting around Town easier.
- Improve access to and incentivize public transit and solve the “First and Last Mile Problem”.
- Develop “Complete Streets.”
- Develop a long-term Traffic Calming plan.
- Provide Multi-Modal connections to all of the Towns activity nodes.
- Develop a well-defined wayfinding system.
- Address parking challenges through the construction of new public lots and on-street parking, zoning modifications, private incentives, and innovative techniques.

The Hamlets (Commercial Areas)

- Revitalize the commercial areas of the Hamlets and ensure that new growth in the commercial areas of the Hamlets is of an appropriate scale, consistent with the character of the community and exemplifies “smart growth” principles.
- New development and redevelopment must exhibit high quality design and architectural excellence.
- The Hamlet’s public spaces should be accessible to everyone and accommodate users of varied ages, abilities and cultures.

- Provide for economic prosperity and bustling activity in the commercial areas of the Hamlets.
- Create a “sense of place” for each commercial area of the Hamlets.
- Provide for adequate public parking.
- Replace the existing C-NR zoning with the new Hamlet Zoning Code in the commercial areas of the Hamlets.
- Expand the allowable uses to accommodate new business types and models.
- Target underutilized sites for redevelopment in the commercial areas of the Hamlets.
- Employ Design Guidelines to ensure architectural quality.
- Deploy an array of techniques to activate the commercial areas of the Hamlet’s public realm.
- Design memorable gateways to the commercial areas of the Hamlets. Develop new public parking facilities in the commercial areas of the Hamlets.

Sustainability and Resiliency

- Support the County *Climate Action Plan*.
- Become a *Climate Smart Community*.
- Utilize *Energize NY Benefit Financing Program*.
- Adopt a green building code, and a *Green Mount Pleasant* certification program.
- Adopt *NYSERDA Model Solar Energy Law*
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT’s) by 20% by 2030.
- Manage water resources prudently and implement a water loss management program.
- Reduce waste disposal to 0.6lbs/person by 2030.
- Create a *Food Policy Council*.
- Conduct a *Community Health Needs Assessment*.
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
- Manage water resources prudently.
- Mandate green building practices.
- Improve connectivity to reduce dependence on private automobiles.
- Reduce, recycle and reuse.
- Incorporate the food system into Town planning.
- Integrate public health into local government.
- Prioritize emergency preparedness and disaster response.

A key tool in implementing and achieving the goals of ***Envision Mount Pleasant*** for the commercial areas of the Hamlets of Valhalla, Hawthorne and Thornwood, is the Mount Pleasant Hamlet Zoning Code. This zoning is designed to accommodate appropriately scaled mixed-use development in areas proximate to train stations and public transit and where adequate infrastructure exists thereby relieving development pressures in the more environmentally sensitive, less developed portions of Town (traditional residential areas – single family zoning). Placemaking, and the design, character and physical appearance of each commercial area of the Hamlets are fundamental to the successful transformation of the commercial areas of the Hamlets from merely places where goods and services were sold, to unique and exciting areas that are the center of community life. The Hamlet Zoning Code is a tool uniquely suited to achieving this goal.

The Hamlet Zoning Code represents a change in the way the built environment is regulated. The Hamlet Zoning Code fosters predictable and desirable development characteristics and a high-quality public realm. The Hamlet Zoning Code uses the desired appearance and character of a place as the organizing principle and framework, rather than relying on the traditional focus of use. Specifically, the Hamlet Zoning Code provides for:

1. Development that is maximally transit supportive and in close proximity to the train stations in Valhalla and Hawthorne and other modes of public transit.
2. The reduction of auto dependency and roadway congestion by locating multiple destinations and trip ends near transit and within walking distance of one another.
3. Appropriately scaled, residential development in the commercial areas of the Hamlets where adequate infrastructure already exists.
4. The creation of a pedestrian-friendly environment.
5. A reduction in total vehicle miles traveled and regional greenhouse gas emissions.
6. The provision of an alternative to traditional development that emphasizes the integration of multiple, complimentary mixed-uses.
7. The facilitation of “placemaking” to stabilize and revitalize the Hamlet’s urban fabric.
8. The facilitation of new development and redevelopment that will create jobs and economic opportunities.
9. The concentration of investment into targeted areas that are well-suited to accommodate growth.
10. Emphasize, support and facilitate high quality building design, streetscape and public realm improvements.

The Mount Pleasant Hamlet Zoning Code replaces the C-NR (Neighborhood Retail) zoning which is the predominate zoning district in all of the commercial areas of the Hamlets. While many retail uses are experiencing a decline, and a number of properties in the area are underutilized, viable retail and retail service uses do remain in place, and should be preserved and supported to the extent practicable.

In addition, portions of the C-GC, M1, M2, R-40, PRDT-6 and PRDT-6 zoning districts located within the commercial areas of the Hamlet boundaries would also be replaced.

The Hamlet Zoning Code provides for the inclusion of a broad array of additional uses, including notably, appropriately scaled multi-family residential uses.

Facilitating the coexistence of diverse land uses represents one of the challenges in the Hamlet Zoning Code.

The regulations governing non-conforming uses remain applicable to uses and buildings in the VH, HH and TH districts. However, all legal pre-existing, non-conforming uses are encouraged to comply with the new design guidelines, to assure that the area evolves in a manner that is consistent with the goals and objectives of ***Envision Mount Pleasant***.

The Hamlet Zoning Code consists of the following elements:

- **Regulating Plan** – Establishes 3 districts; Valhalla Hamlet District (VH), Hawthorne Hamlet District (HH) and Thornwood Hamlet District (TH).
- **Allowable Building Types** – defines the types of buildings allowed in each Hamlet; such as General Commercial Building, Mixed-Use Building, Civic Building, etc.
- **Permitted Building Types by District** – Establishes within each commercial area of the Hamlet, where the various building types are permitted.
- **Development Rules** – Establishes definitions and rules for development.
- **Building Type Regulations** – Sets forth the lot requirements, building placement regulations, height and mass standards and building activation requirements.
- **Permitted Uses** – Establishes the uses permitted in each district.
- **Density Bonus** – Provides the parameters for an allowable density bonus in the Hawthorne Core Intensity Area.
- **Parking Regulations** – Establishes the transit oriented, “park once” standards for the districts.
- **Signs** – Establishes specific regulations for signage.
- **Design Guidelines** – Provides guidelines for site design, building design, street level activation, functional entries, building off-sets, building transitions, windows, building materials, color, awnings, lighting, building services, landscaping and sustainability and green building.
- **Administration** – Sets forth the review and approval process for projects along the No Review, Expedited Review and Full Review tracks.

2.0 SEQRA REVIEW PROCEDURE

In accordance with 6 NYCRR part 617, ***Envision Mount Pleasant*** and the Hamlet Zoning Code (the “Proposed Action”) is subject to compliance with the requirements of SEQRA.

Pursuant to 6 NYCRR part 617.4 (b) (1) the Proposed Action is classified as a Type I Action.

On November 10, 2020, in accordance with the provisions of 6NYCRR Part 617.6 (b) (1), the Town of Mount Pleasant Town Board designated its intent to serve as Lead Agency for the SEQRA Review of this Type I Action. The Lead Agency Notice of Intent was circulated to all Involved Agencies. No objections were received.

On March 9, 2021 the Town Board confirmed its Lead Agency designation and adopted a Positive Declaration requiring the preparation of a Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (“DGEIS”), published a draft Scoping Document and established a public comment period on the Scoping Document that expired on April 9, 2021.

A draft DGEIS was prepared in accordance with 6 NYCRR part 617.10 and submitted to the Lead Agency on May 14, 2021. On May 25, 2021, the Lead Agency accepted the DGEIS as complete and scheduled a Public Hearing for June 8, 2021. The DEIS was circulated to all Involved Agencies and publication of notice of its acceptance by the Planning Board was duly published in the Environmental Notice Bulletin (“ENB”).

The public hearing on the DEIS was held on June 8, 2021, at which time all those wishing to comment on the project were afforded an opportunity to be heard. The public hearing was continued on June 22, 2021, July 13, 2021, August 10, 2021, September 14, 2021, September 28, 2021 and October 10, 2021. The public hearing was thereafter closed.

A draft Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (“FGEIS”) was prepared in accordance with 6 NYCRR part 617.10 and submitted to the Lead Agency in August of 2022. In September, 2022, the Lead Agency accepted the DGEIS as complete. The FEIS was circulated to all Involved Agencies and publication of notice of its acceptance by the Planning Board was duly published in the ENB.

3.0 REQUIRED PERMITS & APPROVALS

1. Town of Mount Pleasant Town Board
 - a. SEQRA Findings
 - b. Adoption of ***Envision Mount Pleasant***
 - c. Adoption of Hamlet Zoning Code
2. Town of Mount Pleasant Planning Board
 - a. Recommendations regarding ***Envision Mount Pleasant*** and Hamlet Zoning Code.
3. Westchester County Planning Board
 - a. GML 239-m Referral

4.0 FINDINGS CONCERNING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The DEIS and FEIS include an environmental evaluation of the following topics:

- Natural Environment
- Economic Environment

- Social Environment
- Built Environment
- Mobility & Connectivity
- The Hamlets
- Sustainability and Resiliency

4.1 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT:

Envision Mount Pleasant recognizes the importance of the Town’s natural environment as a fundamental aspect of the quality of life of the community. While some natural resources are permanently protected, other valuable areas are vulnerable to threats ranging from development pressures to climate change. The natural environment goals of ***Envision Mount Pleasant*** have been designed to preserve and protect the Town’s valued natural resources. Adverse impacts are not anticipated. The following measures will ensure the protection of the natural environment and the avoidance of adverse impacts.

Open Space – By implementing a policy of “proactive conservation” open space resources will be protected through strategies including conducting an open space inventory that ranks and prioritized the resources, establishing open space corridors, coordination with the NYCDEP’s land acquisition program, obtaining rights of first refusal for the acquisition of institutional lands, instituting a *Conservation Legacy Program*, establish a conservation fund, and ensuring equitable access to open spaces.

Water – The protection of waters can be achieved through improving stormwater management plans, improving deficient stormwater infrastructure, imposing zoning controls to regulate impervious surfaces, particularly above aquifers, adopt green infrastructure standards, consider a nutrient runoff law, increase public awareness of water conservation measures.

Flooding – Flooding will be addressed through improved maintenance of catch basins, creation of a water quality reporting link on the Town’s website, adoption of standards for permeable pavements, increasing public awareness of floor hazards, requiring flood vulnerability assessments for projects in Areas of Special Flood Hazard, and requiring critical building systems to be elevated above the base flood elevation.

Wetlands – Wetlands will be protected by updating the Town’s Wetland Protection Law, increasing the wetland buffer setback to 100’, considering deducting wetland areas from the buildable area of a parcel, the preparation of a GIS inventory of locally regulated wetlands, prioritization of wetland areas for restoration, development of wetland mitigation standards and the establishment of a wetland mitigation fund based on new permit fees linked to severity of impacts.

Geology, Soils & Topography – These resources will be protected by considering revising the steep slope law to deduct excessively steep slopes from the buildable area of a parcel and the modification of hilltop and ridgeline regulations to provide greater assessments.

Habitat & Ecosystems - These resources will be protected by conducting a habitat identification and corridor mapping program, development of conservation partnerships, requiring Habitat Protection Plans for large-scale development, development of street tree planting standards, development of a Community Forestry Program, employment of a Town Arborist, development of a list of approved native plantings, mandating parking lot landscaping, creation of a Town Tree Fund through private donations with the goal of planting 100,000 trees by 2030, development of an Invasive Species Action Plan and incorporating environmental stewardship into the local school curriculum.

Air, Noise & Light Pollution – Consideration of a local vehicle idling law, consideration of becoming a Climate Smart Community, move toward zero-emission fleet of Town vehicles, Updating the Noise Ordinance, mapping of sensitive noise receptor locations, consideration of a Dark-Sky lighting ordinance.

FINDING. *The Lead Agency finds that the natural environment goals of **Envision Mount Pleasant** have been designed to preserve and protect the Town’s valued natural resources. Subject to the implementation of the strategies noted above, no significant adverse natural environment generic impacts will result from the Proposed Action.*

4.2 ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The Town benefits from a broad and diverse economy. The primary challenge facing the Town involves aligning the Town’s land use regulations with a changing economic climate, ensuring a stable environment for existing business while simultaneously accommodating innovation and growth. While the rapidly evolving health care and life sciences (also known as biotechnology) fields play a dominant role in the Town’s economy, e-commerce and the changing face of retail are profoundly impacting the three hamlets of Valhalla, Hawthorne and Thornwood, particularly in a post pandemic world.

Establishing a framework to allow the Town to transition from the economic model of the late 20th century, to the new paradigm of the 21st, is the goal of **Envision Mount Pleasant**.

The economic environment goals of **Envision Mount Pleasant** have been designed to meet these challenges.

Single-Family Residential Market – Preserving the character, value and tax base of the Town’s single-family neighborhoods is a key goal. Channeling new development into the commercial areas of the Hamlets where adequate infrastructure exists, will relieve development pressures on the undeveloped portions of the single-family areas of Town.

Multi-Family Residential Market – Multi-family housing options are currently extremely limited in Town. The new Hamlet Zoning Code is designed to allow multi-family housing of appropriate densities in the commercial areas of the Hamlets. A goal of **Envision Mount Pleasant** is the provision of a broad range of housing

opportunities that is multi-generational and affordable. A high priority is placed on accommodating senior housing.

Retail Market – Revitalizing the retail market through innovative placemaking in the Hamlets is a primary goal. Attracting residents to the commercial areas of the Hamlets will ensure a local customer base.

Office Market – Preserving the vitally important office parks requires an expansion of the permissible uses. By repurposing underperforming office buildings and replacing them with new uses, the remaining office buildings will be strengthened.

Health Care Market – A significant portion of the Town’s workforce is employed in the health care field. Sustaining this workforce requires a range of housing choices, access to public transit and other incentives to remain competitive.

Life Sciences Market – Integrating the life science campuses into the fabric of the community is imperative, and facilitating the provision of services that support this market will bolster the local economy.

Overall, adverse economic impacts are not anticipated as on-going shifts in the market sectors will ensure their continued success. Specific impacts associated with individual development projects in the commercial areas of the Hamlets will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. The recently completed SEQR environmental review for the North 60 project found that subject to an array of mitigation measures, no adverse impacts would result.

The primary mitigation measure to address the economy within the commercial areas of the Hamlets is the proposed Hamlet Zoning Code that accommodates appropriately scaled mixed-use development. Ensuring that balanced growth occurs across the residential, retail, office, health care and life science markets will broaden the tax base so that the incremental increased cost of municipal services will be off-set by new tax revenues. No one market sector is emphasized, so that if one sector should falter, the overall economy of the Town would remain stable. Since no major adverse economic impacts have been identified, no generic mitigation measures are necessary.

Future development proposals will be required to address site specific impacts and the associated provision of mitigation measures, through individual SEQR analysis.

FINDING. *The Lead Agency finds that the Proposed Action will ensure that balanced growth occurs across the residential, retail, office, health care and life science markets which will broaden the Town’s tax base so that the incremental increased cost of municipal services will be off-set by new tax revenues. No one market sector is emphasized, so that if one sector should falter, the overall economy of the Town would remain stable. No significant generic adverse economic impacts will result from the Proposed Action.*

4.3 SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Mount Pleasant’s future is inextricably linked to the complex web of interrelationships forged among its residents and social institutions. The Town’s history, demographic composition, social, religious and educational institutions combine to underpin the social framework that knits an array of diverse elements into a unified community with shared goals, values and aspirations. Fostering access to the arts, cultural institutions and educational opportunities requires close collaboration between the Town and its institutional partners.

The Town’s changing demographics are impacting the social environment. An aging population requires additional services. While the focus of ***Envision Mount Pleasant*** is on properly regulating future growth, impacts associated with population changes are likely to result.

Historic Resources – The goal of preserving Mount Pleasant’s unique heritage, character and historic resources can be achieved through an array of implementation strategies including the preparation of a comprehensive historic resource survey and the creation of an inventory of historic resources that are potentially eligible for listing on the National Register, the establishment of a Historic Advisory Council, requiring development applications to submit a Phase IA Cultural Resource Assessment, establishment of historic preservation incentives, installing local historical markers, enhanced collaboration with Historic Hudson Valley, among other initiatives.

Demographic Trends – It is anticipated that Mount Pleasant will experience growth in the years to come, resulting in a modestly increasing resident population. By carefully channeling the majority of that growth into the commercial areas of the Hamlets where adequate infrastructure exists to accommodate it, significant adverse impacts can be avoided. Diversifying the housing types developed in the future, beyond traditional single-family homes in the commercial areas of the Hamlets, will increase housing choices for a diversifying population. Special attention to accommodating seniors is a priority, including the provision of housing, recreational opportunities and services.

Educational Institutions – The majority of the projected new development will consist of housing types that typically generate lower numbers of school-aged children. This was done explicitly to minimize the impact of additional growth on the schools. While enrollments in most school districts in Town, and across the region are declining, enrollments in the Mount Pleasant Central School District are increasing. Development opportunities for projects that generate high numbers of school-aged children within this district are limited by ***Envision Mount Pleasant***. Measures to coordinate the unique needs and operational requirements of the institutional schools are included.

Municipal Services – The Town enjoys excellent municipal services. ***Envision Mount Pleasant*** anticipates future development across all of the market segments, resulting in a growing and broadened commercial and residential tax base. While a modestly growing population will require a proportionally increased supply of municipal services, the incremental costs would be off-set by new tax generation.

FINDING: *The Lead Agency finds that the Social Environment goals of **Envision Mount Pleasant** have been designed to strengthen and reinforce the social interconnections within the community. The primary mitigation measure to ensure this is the Hamlet Zoning Code which broadens the array of housing choices available in the community and directs it into the three Hamlets where adequate infrastructure exists to accommodate it. Ensuring that balanced growth occurs across the various markets will broaden the tax base so that the incremental increased cost of municipal services will be off-set by new tax revenues. The targeted geography of future growth will mitigate school impacts. No significant generic adverse impacts to the social environment are anticipated.*

4.4 BUILT ENVIRONMENT:

Mount Pleasant's built environment is extraordinarily diverse. The Town's central location in the heart of Westchester County and unique topographical characteristics played significant roles in the siting of major facilities such as the County's Grasslands Campus, the Kensico Dam and Reservoir, and the office parks at Eastview and along Columbus Avenue. When the Taconic State Parkway, Saw Mill River Parkway and Sprain Brook Parkways began construction in the 1920's they traversed the town's river valleys. When John D. Rockefeller, at the time, the richest man in the world, decided to construct a county manor, he selected the highest point in the Pocantico Hills overlooking the Hudson River for his estate.

Balancing regional demands with the needs and desires of the people of the Town represents a challenge. The evaluation of **Envision Mount Pleasant's** impact on the built environment addresses land use and zoning, housing, mobility, infrastructure, parks, and proposed future development.

Land Use and Zoning – The Town's existing underlying pattern of land use and zoning will remain essentially intact as a result of the adoption of **Envision Mount Pleasant**. Four adjustments to the existing pattern of land use and zoning are proposed:

1. The Hamlets:

New development/redevelopment in the commercial areas of the Hamlets will be channeled into the Hamlets where the infrastructure exists to accommodate new growth, thereby relieving development pressures on the Town's existing residential neighborhoods. The proposed Hamlet Zoning Code incentivizes development opportunities in the three Hamlets, where higher densities have always existed, in spite of existing zoning controls that tend to be unnecessarily restrictive.

2. The North 60:

New zoning is proposed to properly regulate the development of the North 60, a mixed-use community located on property owned primarily by Westchester County adjacent to the Grasslands Campus. The proposed development includes approximately 3 million square feet of bio-tech/research and development related uses and associates uses such as a children's science and education center, hotel and neighborhood retail. The specific impacts of

this development were separately evaluated through the review of the project's Environmental Impact Statement.

3. Institutional Uses:

The Town supports many large institutional uses, which if sold and developed pursuant to the existing zoning, may result in various impacts. New overlay zoning is proposed to accommodate the appropriate reuse of these sites in a manner that protects the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

4. Office Parks:

The decline of the office market throughout the region has impacted the Town's office parks as well. This decline has been exacerbated by the Pandemic, and occupancies may never return to pre-Covid levels. Expanding the list of permitted uses in the OB zone is necessary to allow for the viable repurposing of obsolete office uses.

Recodifying the zoning ordinance to eliminate arcane and outdated provisions and incorporate current standards will serve to reinforce and protect the Town's pattern of land use and zoning.

Housing – Meeting the goal of ensuring that the Town's housing stock meets the needs of the Town's population requires expanding the variety of housing types, designs and price points for all stages of life, family compositions and incomes. This can be accomplished by focusing new housing and housing styles in the commercial areas of the Hamlets. Doing so will facilitate a healthy housing cycle, where seniors can downsize from their single-family homes to smaller apartments while remaining in the community, allowing for families with children to re-occupy the larger single-family homes. This housing balance will create a long-term equilibrium in municipal service costs and impacts on school enrollments. Housing diversity will allow for price variability and affordability.

Infrastructure – The Town's basic infrastructure is functionally sound. Improvements and enhancements to the Kensico Water District, Pleasant Ridge, Pleasantville, etc., will ensure an adequate supply of potable water for the future.

Improvements to sanitary sewer lines and the reduction of inflow and infiltration will allow for the initiatives outlined in ***Envision Mount Pleasant*** to be successfully implemented.

Parkland and Recreation – The superior parks and recreation facilities are a key component of the Town's quality of life. ***Envision Mount Pleasant*** recognizes the importance of supporting these existing assets and enhancing the facilities at the Community Center and Town Park site. Creating a new Mount Pleasant Recreation Trailway will create a continuous uninterrupted links from the east side of the Town at the Kensico Dam to the major trailways on the west side.

Institutions - The Town supports many large institutional uses, which if sold and developed pursuant to the existing zoning, may result in various impacts. New

overlay zoning is proposed to accommodate the appropriate reuse of these sites in a manner that protects the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Columbus Avenue and Route 9A Corridors - The decline of the office market throughout the region has impacted the Town's office parks as well. This decline has been exacerbated by the Pandemic, and occupancies may never return to pre-Covid levels. Expanding the list of permitted uses in the OB zone is necessary to allow for the viable repurposing of obsolete office uses. Likewise, modifying the permissible uses within the C-RB district along Route 9A is necessary.

The impact of site-specific development proposals, particularly traffic-related impacts, will be evaluated through individual SEQRA project reviews, in conjunction with partner agencies such as the NYSDOT and Westchester County Department of Public Works.

North 60 - The potential impacts of the North 60 have been reviewed through the SEQRA Environmental Impact Statement process. An array of mitigation measures have been established to address adverse impacts.

Several specific mitigation measures are called for in ***Envision Mount Pleasant*** to ensure that implementing the goals of the Plan do not result in adverse impacts. The primary Built Environment mitigation measures include:

- Adopt the Hamlet Zoning Code.
- Create/consider institutional use overlay zone.
- Expand the list of permitted uses in the OB and C-RB zones.
- Recodify the zoning ordinance.
- Maintain the quality of the existing housing stock.
- Ensure the housing stock meets the needs of the Town's population in terms of variety and affordability.
- Facilitate environmentally sustainable housing.
- Address Kensico Water District improvements.
- Improve water supply to Pleasant Ridge.
- Address Pleasantville out of district water supply.
- Address sewer system improvements through individual development reviews.
- Institute an I&I reduction program.
- Create Mount Pleasant Recreation Trailway.
- Expand Community Center recreational facility.
- Impose North 60 mitigation measures identified during SEQRA review.

FINDING. *The Lead Agency finds that the goals of **Envision Mount Pleasant** have been designed to preserve the Town's existing built environment, and to channel new growth into appropriate locations where suitably supportive infrastructure already exists. Subject to the implementation of the mitigation measures noted above, no significant adverse built environment generic impacts will result from the Proposed Action.*

4.5 MOBILITY & CONNECTIVITY:

Mount Pleasant is geographically large and bisected by river valleys, steep terrain, parkways and railroads that serve to separate and isolate sections of Town. Moving around the community is difficult, particularly moving east/west.

Improved connectivity is a goal of ***Envision Mount Pleasant*** and not only includes modifications to make the Town’s roads more efficient and safer, but also includes expanding the various modes of transportation to accommodate existing and future mobility trends and technologies. Pedestrian circulation, bicycles, scooters, buses, ridesharing services and trains all contribute to a network of connectivity that can be enhanced and maximized. This network can be centered on existing facilities, resources and technologies, but should also be adaptable to future innovation.

Hamlet Mobility – Existing problematic traffic conditions in the commercial areas of the Hamlets that may be impacted as a result of the implementation of ***Envision Mount Pleasant*** include:

Valhalla:

- Cleveland Avenue/Taconic parkway intersection.
- Legion Drive/Broadway intersection.
- Stevens Avenue/Westlake Drive
- Bradhurst Avenue/Lakeview Avenue

Hawthorne:

- Elwood Avenue/Commerce Street

Thornwood:

- Commerce Street/Franklin Avenue
- Four Corners

While additional traffic generation is anticipated in all three commercial areas of the Hamlets, the transit-oriented nature of new development and proposed roadway improvements will reduce traffic impacts.

Complete Streets and Traffic Calming – The roadways that serve as the commercial areas of the Hamlet’s “main streets” also carry through traffic, and support a variety of land uses. This results in conflicts as local traffic frustrates through traffic, and excessive travel speeds cause safety concerns. High vehicle speeds and inhospitable streets discourage pedestrian movements and alternative modes of transportation – which are necessary in the commercial areas of the Hamlets.

It is a goal of ***Envision Mount Pleasant*** to facilitate the creation of “Complete Streets” in the commercial areas of the Hamlets where roadways such as Broadway, Elwood Avenue, Commerce Street and Kensico Road must accommodate safe access for all, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. Through this approach, these key rights-of-way would no longer be devoted to private automobiles, but rather to all who use them.

Connectivity – The most prevalent issue raised by residents during ***Envision Mount Pleasant’s*** public participation process was the lack of connectivity throughout Town. Most activity hubs are isolated and not physically interconnected in safe and meaningful ways, other than by the existing roadway network. This results in an unavoidable dependence on private automobile trips when residents would often prefer alternative methods of making their way around the community, such as walking or biking.

Ironically, the Town hosts numerous trailways, and paths. However, these links are isolated and are not interconnected to create a unified circulation system. The primary challenge involves finding ways to stitch these resources together with existing and proposed sidewalks to create a meaningful web of Town-wide connectivity.

Pedestrians & Bicycles – Walking and bicycling are increasingly important pieces in the Town’s transportation network. Previously overlooked as a necessary component during prior development, it is a challenge to reestablish a human scaled and oriented circulation network in an auto-centric community.

Parking – The provision of an adequate supply of parking is essential to the successful revitalization of the commercial areas of the Hamlets. While ***Envision Mount Pleasant*** is emphasizing the transit-oriented opportunities of the commercial areas of the Hamlets, which would reduce the need for frequent individual passenger vehicle trips, a sufficient parking inventory for residents, employees and visitors remains necessary.

Envision Mount Pleasant emphasizes a “park once” approach in the commercial areas of the Hamlets, where centralized parking areas located behind the main commercial streets are developed. Parking should not create large gaps or disruptions in the streetscape, and should be located in the rear of properties – out of sight, yet still be accessible. A major element in solving the parking problem involves creating realistic and convenient alternatives to frequent individual passenger vehicle trips.

The parking ratios for all uses located throughout Town should be reassessed to ensure the most current and accurate standards are being applied.

Public Transit - Mount Pleasant is serviced by two primary modes of public transit; the Metro North Railroad, and the Westchester County Bee-Line bus service.

A primary obstacle to improving the effectiveness of these transit modes is what is known as the “First and Last Mile Problem.” The “last mile” is a term used in supply chain management, describing the movement of goods from a transportation hub to the final destination. In commuting terms, it alludes to the problem which public transit users often face; the symbolic distance between a commuter’s transit stop and his or her home.

The generally accepted “comfortable” walking distance in the United States is defined as ¼ mile or 5 minutes. Given the existing geography and characteristics around the Hawthorne train station, that distance does not encompass many

households. In Valhalla, the steep rise of Columbus Avenue makes the northbound walk strenuous. As a result, alternatives to bridging the FMLM problem are necessary.

Several specific mitigation measures are called for in **Envision Mount Pleasant** to ensure that implementing the goals of the Plan do not result in adverse impacts. The primary mobility and connectivity mitigation measures include:

- Adopt of a “Complete Streets” policy whereby the Town’s roadways safely accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.
- Development of a long-term traffic calming plan.
- Implement the specific traffic improvements identified in **Envision Mount Pleasant**; including measures such as signal timing modifications, grading and realignment improvements, and the installation of roundabouts.
- Prioritizing non-motorized connectivity improvements at destinations such as schools, parks and the Hamlets.
- Install bicycle and pedestrian improvements, and where feasible, require private developers to implements these improvements as part of SEQR reviews.
- Implement a bike share program.
- Implement a wayfinding plan to direct residents and visitors to activity hubs.
- Develop appropriately sited additional public parking – particularly adjacent to the Broadway Field in the Hawthorne Hamlet or parking decks on MTA lots.
- Update the parking regulations in the zoning ordinance.
- Incentivize the use of public transit.
- Facilitate Transportation Management Plans for the Town’s larger institutional uses.

FINDING. *The Lead Agency finds that improving connectivity throughout the Town will require the persistent pursuit of the goals of **Envision Mount Pleasant**. This will require the combined efforts of the Town, affiliated regulatory agencies and private developers and property owners. Application of the mitigation measures noted above will ensure that no significant adverse mobility and connectivity generic impacts will result from the Proposed Action.*

4.6 THE HAMLETS:

The Town of Mount Pleasant encompasses a number of distinct communities; however, a primary focus of **Envision Mount Pleasant** is on the three commercial areas of the Hamlets of Valhalla, Hawthorne and Thornwood.

These commercial areas of the Hamlets are the Town’s three central business districts, and provide the centralized perceptual and economic hubs for these portions of the Town. Each commercial area of the Hamlets faces unique challenges, but all three suffer from an existing zoning and land use regulatory framework that prevents concentrated, smart growth development in their cores. This has resulted in a lack of investment that has become increasingly problematic as the traditional brick and mortar retail environment gradually deteriorated.

Envision Mount Pleasant calls for revitalizing the commercial areas of the Hamlets around several key planning principles:

- The commercial areas of the Hamlets are poorly defined. Create a unique “sense of place” for each through design, branding, signage and advertising.
- The commercial areas of the Hamlets are losing their traditional commercial influence though ever-expanding on-line shopping opportunities. Restore the commercial impact of these areas by reimagining the commercial areas of the Hamlets as unique and desirable destinations that offer a broad array of uses, activities and experiences.
- The most successful way to activate and enliven the commercial areas of the Hamlets is to populate these areas with eager consumers and new resident stakeholders, creating vitality both during the day and into the evenings, year-round.
- A perfect confluence exists to meet the housing demands of the Town’s primary demographic groups – older residents who are downsizing, and younger people looking to enter non-traditional housing markets. Channeling new appropriately scaled, mixed-use development into the Hamlets where new investment is sorely needed, will create new customers for local businesses. This development would occur in areas proximate to train stations and public transit, thereby reducing traffic impacts and where adequate infrastructure already exists to accommodate additional development. Focusing growth in the commercial areas of the Hamlets will in turn relieve development pressures in the more environmentally fragile, less developed portions of Town.
- Prudent, well-planned transit-oriented “smart growth” reduces auto dependency and the demand for parking; however, the provision of adequate parking is essential to the success of the commercial areas of the Hamlets.

Implementing these policies will result in impacts related to the revitalization efforts. In virtually all instances this new development replaces prior uses on previously developed properties. As a result, few if any site development impacts will result. Impacts of redevelopment on existing infrastructure, traffic, parking and municipal services will be incremental, and in certain instances, may result in decreases below existing conditions.

Given the pattern of property ownership in all of the commercial areas of the Hamlets, large-scale redevelopment would not be possible, without parcel assemblies. Thus, redevelopment will be strategic, and as controlled through the proposed Hamlet Zoning Code, appropriately designed and configured.

Importantly, the type of development permitted under the proposed Hamlet Zoning Code emphasizes the provision of public places and amenities that inherently limit and inhibit excessive development.

In Valhalla, the Church of the Holy Name of Jesus Church occupies over 1/3 of the land area of the commercial area of the Hamlet, and is currently underutilized. Repurposing the northern portion is ideally suited to support senior housing and the Hamlet's transit-oriented redevelopment goals. Because the Hamlet commercial district quickly transitions to residential uses, townhouse development can serve as an appropriate intermediate density residential use.

Hawthorne is key to the Town's overall smart-growth strategy. Hawthorne has the transportation and infrastructural capacity to accommodate redevelopment. Concentrating this new growth in the Hamlet will relieve development pressure in the outlying areas of the Town and focus it where it is most suitable, in close proximity to the train station. Undeveloped and underutilized property, particularly several vacant parcels on the east side of Elwood Avenue, and the underutilized light industrial area on the west side of the tracks along Broadway, where a "Core Intensity Area" is proposed, represent appropriate opportunities for new transit-oriented development.

Thornwood offers a number of redevelopment opportunities. The potential to install a roundabout at the Four-Corners not only serves to improve traffic flow and movement, but also creates a unique design feature that will help establish a distinctive "sense of place" for the hamlet.

Continuing to rely on traditional zoning tools to regulate the commercial areas of the Hamlets will prove ineffective in the years to come. This is because traditional zoning is based on use, and the future of many customary uses is uncertain. Creating the buildings and physical spaces that are most highly desired can be achieved in an alternative way. The Hamlet Zoning Code prioritizes physical form and building appearance rather than the separation of uses, and is a tool uniquely suited to assist in revitalizing Mount Pleasant's Hamlet commercial districts.

The following policies are embedded into the Hamlet Zoning Code to provide an efficient, effective and equitable regulatory and procedural code for the use of land in the hamlets:

- The commercial areas of the Hamlets should include a framework of transit, pedestrian and bicycle systems that provide alternatives to the use of private automobiles.
- Development should be compact, pedestrian oriented and contain a mix of uses.
- The development of isolated, single-use buildings and sites should be avoided.
- The ordinary activities of daily living should be provided within walking distance of residential uses, allowing for independence from the automobile.
- The layout and configuration of development should be designed to disperse traffic and reduce the length of automobile trips.
- Within each commercial area of the Hamlets, a range of housing types and price levels should be provided to accommodate diverse ages and incomes.

- Civic, institutional and commercial activity should be embedded throughout the commercial areas of the Hamlets, and not isolated into remote single-use complexes.
- A range of open space, including parks, squares, plazas, and playgrounds, should be distributed throughout the commercial areas of the Hamlets.
- Buildings, landscaping and other amenities should contribute to the physical definition of thoroughfares as public places.
- Development should adequately accommodate automobiles while respecting pedestrians and the spatial form of public areas.
- The design of buildings and sites should reinforce safe environments, but not at the expense of accessibility.
- Architecture and landscape design should reflect the history and traditions, topography, climate and building practices of the Town of Mount Pleasant generally, and the commercial areas of the Hamlets specifically.
- Public gathering places should be provided as locations that reinforce community identity and support self-regulation.
- The preservation and renewal of historic buildings, or the incorporation of historical architectural elements characteristic of the Town of Mount Pleasant generally, and the Hamlet specifically, and should be facilitated, to affirm the continuity and evolution of society.

Additional mitigation measures include:

- Target underutilized sites for infill development.
- Ensure that all new development employs “smart growth” principles
- Design the public realm to be multi-functional and capable of accommodating community-based events, celebrations and markets.
- Provide for adequate and conveniently located public parking, specifically, acquire the NYSDOT property behind Broadway Field for the purpose of constructing a public parking structure.
- Refine the list of permitted uses in the commercial areas of the Hamlets to more accurately reflect current and anticipated market conditions
- Create gateways into each Hamlet. Gateways might include thematic signage, landscaping, monuments, decorative lighting, kiosks, public art, etc.
- Redeveloping existing properties offers the opportunity to consolidate building footprints and create pedestrian plazas and associated streetscape improvements.
- Establish a Core Intensity Area in Hawthorne, which allows for a density bonus in exchange for the provision of public amenities.
- Install a roundabout at the intersection of Commerce Street and Elwood Avenue.
- Reconfigure the train station pick-up and drop off area along Elwood Avenue.
- Replace the existing intersection at the Four- Corners with a roundabout.

FINDING. *The Lead Agency finds that the Proposed Action will foster prudent well-planned “smart growth” that channels new appropriately scaled, mixed-use development into the commercial areas of the Hamlets. This development would occur in areas proximate to train stations and public transit, thereby reducing traffic impacts and where adequate infrastructure already exists to accommodate additional development. Focusing growth in the commercial areas of the Hamlets will in turn relieve development pressures in the more environmentally fragile, less developed portions of Town. In virtually all instances this new development replaces prior uses on previously developed properties. As a result, few if any site development impacts will result. Impacts of redevelopment on existing infrastructure, traffic, parking and municipal services will be incremental, and in certain instances, may result in decreases below existing conditions. No significant adverse generic Hamlet impacts are anticipated to result from the Proposed Action.*

4.7 SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY:

The future prosperity and quality of life of the Town can only be maintained in a durable manner if resources are sustainably managed for the long-term. **Envision Mount Pleasant** has identified a number of challenging issues that must be addressed to thrive sustainably and resiliently; including:

- Recognizing that most of our energy comes from non-renewable sources, how can the Town better manage that use, or transition to renewable sources?
- Westchester County’s air quality can be characterized as generally poor, particularly regarding ozone. Maintaining the areas high quality of life is dependent on improving air quality. No major air polluting facilities, such as power generating plants, are located in Town, however, a number of pollution generators are present. The primary source of air pollution comes from vehicles; cars, trucks, buses and trains.
- Mount Pleasant’s relationship with water is complex. The Town hosts New York City’s most vital water supply infrastructure, which is also the source of the Town’s water supply. The regions water supply is a shared asset, requiring collaborative management.
- Buildings account for 40% of total energy use, 68% of electricity consumption, 30% of landfill waste, 38% of carbon dioxide emissions and 12% of water consumption. On average, about 90% of our time is spent indoors where pollutant levels are often higher than those outside. Developing efficient, green and healthy buildings is a fundamental component of a long-term sustainability strategy.
- Most everyone in Mount Pleasant is unavoidably dependent on private automobiles. Expanding mobility choices and reducing dependence on private automobiles is a long-term sustainability imperative.

- The amount of solid waste generated is growing, is toxic, and our systems to dispose of waste, including landfilling and burning, produce their own degrading environmental impacts. In 2018, the Town recycled 49% of its solid waste, slightly below the County average of 53% recycling and well below the Town of North Castle, which leads all County municipalities with an 80% recycling rate.
- Our current food production systems are incredibly wasteful, inherently unsustainable and are a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, eutrophication of waterbodies, soil degradation and social injustice. While food production is not a major industry in Mount Pleasant, food consumption habits in local restaurants and in the home can have a dramatic impact on our food systems.
- Public health is essential for the well-being of the residents of Mount Pleasant and for the overall social and economic development of the Town. Health is a human right; a vital resource and a key factor of sustainability. The devastating effects of the pandemic have sharply focused the need for local governments to include public health as part of routine municipal operations.
- Regardless of the level of preparedness, disasters happen. Natural disasters, pandemics, terrorism are all crises the people of the Town of Mount Pleasant have recently endured, and Town government is often the first line of defense, and the place most people immediately turn to. Ensuring that the Town is well prepared to react to likely and unanticipated crises has unfortunately become a necessity.

Although the Town has demonstrated leadership in pursuing sustainability initiatives including measures such as purchasing electric vehicles for the municipal fleet, and installing EV charging stations at Town Hall, the installation of solar facilities on municipal buildings, and the installation energy saving lights and devices in Town buildings and facilities, most of the sustainability and resiliency challenges identified in ***Envision Mount Pleasant*** exist today. No new impacts will result from its adoption. However, numerous measures can be employed to improve these existing conditions; including:

- Support the County ***Climate Action Plan***.
- Become a ***Climate Smart Community***.
- Utilize ***Energize NY Benefit Financing Program***.
- Adopt a green building code, and a ***Green Mount Pleasant*** certification program.
- Adopt ***NYSERDA Model Solar Energy Law***
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT's) by 20% by 2030.
- Implement a water loss management program.

- Develop **Complete Streets** standards.
- Reduce waste disposal to 0.6lbs/person by 2030.
- Create a **Food Policy Council**.
- Conduct a **Community Health Needs Assessment**.

FINDING. *The Lead Agency finds that Envision Mount Pleasant provides an array of goals and implementation strategies designed to enhance sustainability and resiliency over time. No significant generic adverse impacts will result from the Proposed Action.*

CERTIFICATION OF FINDINGS

Having considered the Draft and Final EIS, and having considered the preceding written facts and conclusions and specific findings relied upon to meet the requirements of 6 N.Y.C.R.R. Part 617, this Statement of Findings certifies that:

1. The requirements of 6 N.Y.C.R.R. Part 617 have been met;
2. Consistent with the social, economic and other essential considerations, from among the reasonable alternatives thereto, the action approved is one which minimizes or avoids adverse environmental effects to the maximum extent practicable; including the effects disclosed in the environmental impact statement; and
3. Consistent with social, economic and other essential considerations, to the maximum extent practicable, adverse environmental effects revealed in the environmental impact statement process will be minimized or avoided by incorporating as conditions to the decision those mitigative measures which were identified as practicable.

Town of Mount Pleasant Town Board

 Carl Fulgenzi
 Supervisor

 Date