

3.2 Households

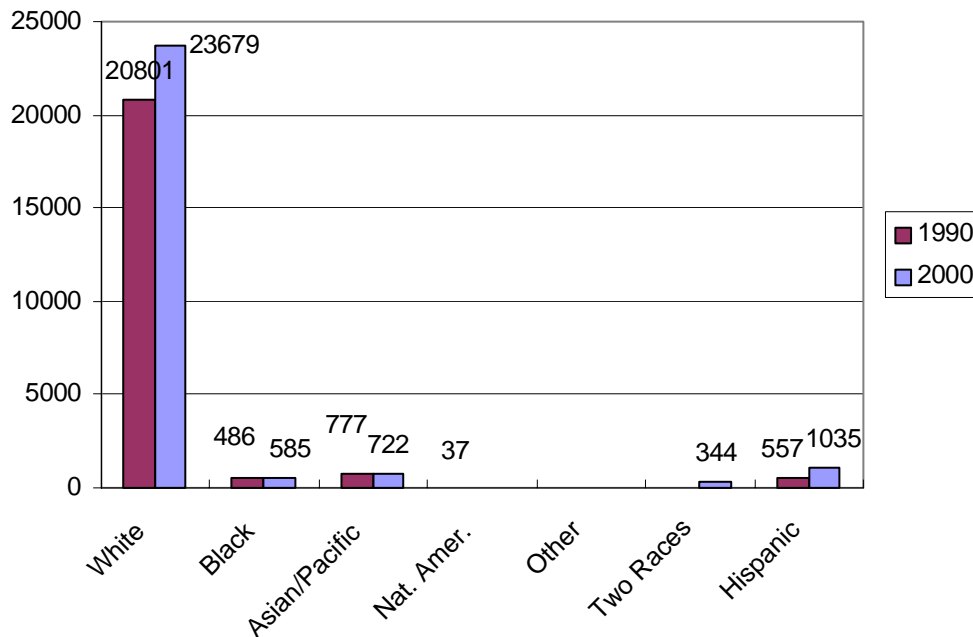
Data from the 2000 census indicates that the average number of persons per household was 3.1. This number is well above the Dutchess County level of 2.8 persons per household and reflects the large number of families with children that find East Fishkill an attractive place to live. Following national population trends, however, the average number of people within an East Fishkill household has consistently declined over the years. In 1990, for instance, the average household size was 3.24. Population projections indicate that this trend will continue, which has implications for schools and classrooms, recreational space, and commercial demand.

The number of households with senior citizens is also growing in East Fishkill. Between 1990-2000, the number of one-person households over 65 years of age grew 25% from 253 to 317. The number of two or more person households with at least one member over 65 increased 41% over the past decade to 1,142. In order to meet the needs of the Town’s growing senior population, the Town may want to consider housing alternatives that are attractive to older residents. Alternatives could include smaller home sizes and smaller lot sizes, to reduce maintenance responsibilities. The location of new housing options near hamlet centers where services are available should be considered.

3.3 Race and Ethnicity

According to the 1990 census, minority groups represent a very small percent of the population. However, each group showed modest growth. The following chart shows the racial and ethnic composition of East Fishkill.

**Chart 3.1
Racial and Ethnic Composition – 1990 & 2000**



Source: US Bureau of the Census

Home Prices

Towns in southwest Dutchess County have some of the highest average home prices in the County. Homes in East Fishkill sell for far more than the County average. Home sales for the last six months of 2001 indicate that East Fishkill has an average sale price of \$254,647, which is second from the top of the range for the six towns in southwest Dutchess County. Only Pawling exceeded the average selling price of East Fishkill for the second half of 2001. Table 3 shows the residential sales (under 5 acres) statistics for July-December, 2001.

Table 3.3
Residential Sales Statistics (Jul-Dec, 2001)

	No. of Sales	Average Price
Beekman	109	\$215,775
East Fishkill	98	\$254,647
Fishkill	57	\$218,342
LaGrange	86	\$235,056
Pawling	38	\$287,552
Wappinger	112	\$217,150
Dutchess County	1,216	\$199,351

Source: Dutchess County Department
of Real Property Tax

According to the 2000 Census data, the median East Fishkill family income in 1999 totaled \$83,213. That income level would allow a purchase price of approximately \$280,000, with a 10% down payment. In contrast, the median Dutchess County family income in 2001, according to the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, was \$63,400. This income level would allow a purchase price, with 10% down, of approximately \$205,000. It is expected that the average selling price of an East Fishkill house will continue to rise to match what the median family can afford. However, if East Fishkill is to remain a diverse community of residents of various income ranges, then the Town may consider an affordable housing policy.

As part of an affordable housing policy, the Town Board could set income guidelines for sale or rent of units. An affordable housing policy could include safeguards to ensure that the designated homes were built of the same quality as the market-rate homes and that they were spread throughout the development, rather than concentrated in one area. To encourage the production of affordable units, the Town could offer incentives to developers, such as additional market rate units for each affordable unit. The ratio should not exceed 1:1, or one additional market rate unit for each affordable housing unit constructed.

3.5 *Income and Education*

As a rural/suburban community, East Fishkill's present population is relatively well educated and affluent. In ~~1990~~2000, according to the U.S. Census report, approximately ~~5,200-797~~ (385.2% of those over 25) persons held a college degree or had done some postgraduate work. ~~Almost 90%~~Over 91% of those over 25 years old held at least a high school diploma. In ~~1990~~2000,

about ~~2315~~% of all households earned less than \$305,000, **13% earned between \$35-50,000, 30% had income between \$50-100,000, and the final, and close to one-third of East Fishkill's households earned between \$30-60,000, another one-third earned \$60-100,000, and the last 10%** earned more than \$100,000.

3.6 *Place of Work*

In 1990¹, nearly 25% of East Fishkill residents worked and lived within Town. About 62% of working residents commuted within Dutchess County while another 20% traveled to Westchester County. Only about 5% of workers each commuted to Putnam County and New York City. The remaining 8% worked in Connecticut, New Jersey, and other parts of New York State. IBM's employment figures peaked at about that time. Today, it is likely that fewer residents work in town. Figure 3.2 illustrates the commuting patterns for East Fishkill residents according to the 1990 census.

According to the 2000 Census data, over 82% of all households in East Fishkill owned two or more automobiles and almost 83% of residents commuted alone to work. The automobile represents the primary means of residents to get to work. Parking requirements should require at least two off-street parking spaces for every single-family residential dwelling.

3.7 *Conclusions*

East Fishkill's proximity to employment centers, highway transportation, and its regional setting all work together to make East Fishkill a desirable place to live. This desirability is now evident with the high number of building permits in town, the strong real estate market, and strong population gains in the 1990s, which typically were much lower in other parts of Dutchess County.

But with the increase in population comes issues of traffic, accommodating school children, and providing infrastructure services to these new residents. The challenge now is to integrate new growth into the community and maintain existing or improved levels of community services.

¹ 2000 Census data was not available at the time of adopting the Master Plan.

5.0 ENVIRONMENT

This chapter describes the environmental characteristics of East Fishkill. East Fishkill enjoys a wide variety of terrains, offering diverse plants, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities. The environmental components listed below (slopes, surface water, soils, and ground water) are all interconnected. Water features interact with and connect topographical environmental systems as well as those underground. An understanding of the interrelated qualities of the various environmental components will make it easier to make decisions based upon this chapter.

The Town, roughly triangular in shape, can be divided into two fairly distinct physiographic zones: a stream valley and an upland zone. The southeast corner of the Town and a narrow band running along the southern boundary comprise the upland zone that includes a portion of the Taconic Mountains. This area contains approximately one-third of the entire Town's area and is characterized by relatively high elevations ranging from 600 to 1,200 feet, steep slopes, and shallow soils. The remaining two-thirds of the town is essentially a stream valley consisting of fertile soils, lower elevations, gentle hills, and containing a number of water bodies. Fishkill Creek and Whortlekill Creek (a tributary of the Fishkill) are the predominant lowland environmental features. This lower lying area holds most of the Town's developed land.

The Town has retained Hudsonia, an environmental research institute for the Hudson Valley, to provide a biodiversity study of the flora and fauna within East Fishkill. The biodiversity study, completed in 2002, examines present conditions as well as identifies potential threats to local and native species. The report includes maps of local habitat and aids in the land-use decision-making process.

5.1 Slopes

Approximately half of the land in the upland zone has slopes in excess of 25% **and slopes greater than 20% are too steep for septic systems and driveways.** These areas, as shown in Figure 5.1, are considered unsuitable for intensive development for several reasons:

- Construction in these areas is difficult and expensive.
- Generally accepted planning standards state that roads should not exceed a 10% grade whenever possible with 15% being a maximum, and only when necessary.
- Clearing of vegetation for development on these steep slopes increases the rate and volume of surface runoff and soil erosion resulting in potential septic problems and problems in ground water availability.

As a result of the difficulties inherent with development on steep slopes, the Master Plan recommends a different development standard for steeply sloping areas. The soils cannot support the same level of intensity as flatter lands, and should therefore not have the same development density. This Plan proposes reducing the allowable development density from 100% to 50% **for slopes exceeding 20%.** This means that when calculating the lot area, the developer must count steeply sloping land **(slopes greater than 20%)** 50% towards the required lot area, rather than its full 100% value.

5.2 Surface Water, Wetlands, and Floodplains

6.7 Functional Classification of Future Roadway System

For the future we propose a road classification system that is basically the same as today's except for the new roads and road extension. The extended Fishkill Road is proposed to become a minor arterial, extending two other minor arterials (Beekman Road and Palen Road) and connecting to Rte 376, a principal arterial. Fishkill Road could in effect become an extension of County Route 9 (Beekman Road). The other new roads will all be collector roads, except for the shopping plaza service road in Hopewell hamlet which will be a local road. Figure 6.4 shows the potential future road classification system.

We recommend that the Town pursue a more aggressive control of the functional classification of the road network. Access control along the arterial roads (see page 38) is very critical to provide and should be implemented at every possible level. **Access control is important to maintaining safe arterial roadways and reducing conflict points, such as driveways and intersections, that pose potentially hazardous turning movements.** The Town has the authority to control access to arterial roads through the master plan, subdivision, and site plan approval mechanisms, even when a project is located on a State Highway. NYS DOT can only refuse a new driveway when the State can prove an overwhelming hazard. The new roadways proposed in the Plan do not alleviate the need to control access along the State highways. They make the access control process easier by providing alternate access points to some of the commercial properties. Creative planning techniques should be used to encourage safe, efficient and realistic access plans. The following actions may be considered:

- allowing only partial access (i.e. right-turn-in and right-turn-out only);
- offer connecting routes to other roads either directly or through adjacent properties whenever possible;
- request or require applicants to consolidate or share driveways;
- **require a turn around area within a property abutting a county or state highway when the only access to that site is from a county or state highway.**
- request applicants to provide easements to adjacent properties in perpetuity, so that in the future, when the neighbor applies for site plan approval combined driveways or interconnections can be provided.
- encourage development of other parallel by-pass roads that can attract the through traffic and thus eliminate part of the conflict.

On the other end of the scale there are situations where heavy through traffic uses local streets and affects the residential quality of those streets. Typically traffic calming measures can be implemented on those streets to limit traffic speeds and the amount of through traffic. Generally traffic calming measures consist of speed humps, pinch points, chicanes, or neckdowns that force drivers to slow down. Neckdowns can be installed on arterials. These other measures would be most appropriate on local streets. Appendix V of the Traffic Study includes more detailed descriptions of traffic calming techniques.

In addition to controlling access along arterial roads, visual impacts, noise, privacy, and safety concerns are important as well. Many of the county and state roads are designed and intended to carry traffic through the town. These roads move large numbers of vehicles, including trucks, which create noise and represent a potential safety hazard to children who may wander near the road. To better separate potential traffic from surrounding properties, a one-hundred foot buffer could be enacted from state and county highways,

measured from the edge of the existing pavement. This setback would provide a substantial yard setback from the structure to the roadway, limiting noise and environmental impacts, and allowing adequate space for movement and activities on the property. Parking could be allowed within this setback, particularly for commercial buildings. The setback should be landscaped to provide an attractive image for people using the roadway, while also serving as a separation for the property owner.

built out, the population could increase by 20,000 people for a total population of 45,000. The results of the Master Plan survey and comments at the public workshop indicate that potential growth should be managed to minimize potential adverse impacts such as traffic, views, design, and the environment.

Goals: A major goal of the Master Plan is to adjust allowable densities within the Town, in keeping with land characteristics, while at the same time providing for a reasonable mix of land uses. Ordinances that offer greater design flexibility will enable the Town to better preserve its local character through the careful control of densities and architectural elements.

- Create Scenic/Conservation Overlays that establish design guidelines and setbacks.
- Establish new residential R-3 zone for Hosner Mountain/NYC watershed area.
- Establish R-1.5 zone for properties ~~zoned R-1 within the Active Farm Overlay~~ **zoned R-1. Areas which could be considered for such a designation would include the areas south of interstate 84 (not otherwise zoned R-2 or R-3) and areas east of the Taconic State Parkway (not otherwise zoned R-2 or R-3).**

Environment

Findings: East Fishkill has 14,000 acres of vacant, open space, or agricultural land (see table 4.1, page 18 for a breakdown of this acreage). Steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains limit the development potential of these parcels. These open spaces provide a rural character that attracts people to East Fishkill and enhances the small-town charm. Agricultural practices retain large tracts of open land and tie residents to the Town's rural past. The Town Board adopted the Active Farm Overlay law to recognize and support properties under cultivation. This Master Plan is consistent with *Greenway Connections: Greenway Compact Program and Guides for Dutchess County Communities*, as specified in the design section 8.4, in seeking to support preservation of agriculture as available land use where possible.

Goals: Environmentally sensitive places shall be carefully regulated in the subdivision and site plan process. Regulations shall recognize the suitability of the land for development, as well as the underlying zoning. Land uses, such as agriculture, summer camps, and recreation, that preserve East Fishkill's open space and natural resource lands, shall be encouraged .

- Reduce allowable densities in wetland and steep slope areas (over 20%) by 50%.
- Acquire development rights and conservation easements to preserve open space land.
- Continue to encourage farming as a viable land use.
- Encourage Cluster Development

Transportation

Findings: Residents desire an efficient circulation system and seek ways to improve the existing road system. There is significant traffic in East Fishkill and there are many intersections with significant deficiencies.

Goals: New roads shall be planned and designed to improve traffic flow within East Fishkill and intersections shall be upgraded where appropriate to relieve delays and enhance movement within the Town. A comprehensive circulation system shall include alternative forms of transportation including rail, pedestrian, and bicycle paths. The Town shall strive for an interconnected pedestrian and bicycle network with other towns and counties.

- Create an official Town Map showing the location of proposed new roads within East Fishkill.
- Construct service roads behind commercial buildings within Hopewell Junction.
- Upgrade major and minor arterials to appropriate standards to improve traffic movement and safety along roadways.
- **Consider access management along county and state roads to limit access points.**
- **Establish 100-foot setback from state and county roadways for new construction.**

Utilities

Findings: East Fishkill has adequate groundwater resources for current and future population projections. There are a number of community water systems but most of the Town relies on individual wells and septic systems. Some contamination of private wells has occurred within the Town. Community/public water systems offer a measure of protection against contamination because there are multiple well sites. The Town is moving forward with public water and sewer systems for areas of Town that can support them.

Goals: East Fishkill's adequate groundwater resources need to be protected from contamination. . New developments shall anticipate future utility connections and install appropriate pipes and infrastructure where necessary. Public water/sewer systems shall be designed to accommodate current and projected future needs.

- Identify location of future water systems, placement of water tanks, and well fields.
- Land along streams and creeks shall be considered for the possible location of treatment plants.
- Utility lines shall be buried wherever possible.

Housing

Findings: Since the last Master Plan, more than 7,000 acres have been converted to residential uses. During the past decade, over 1,500 homes have been constructed In East Fishkill. The resurgent economy has resulted in a strong labor market that has invigorated the local housing market. This has reinforced concerns over suburban sprawl and lack of open space, design quality of the subdivisions, and environmental impacts.

Goals: Maintain diverse housing environments and options within East Fishkill, such as village centers, suburban homes, and rural homesteads. The Town seeks to offer housing choices to a wide array of households so affordable housing provisions shall be studied for inclusion into the subdivision regulations. Subdivision regulations shall provide greater design standards, offer a variety of housing types, and preserve scenic view corridors and environmentally sensitive land. Cluster housing shall be considered preferable to standard subdivisions where there are clear benefits to clustering, such as the preservation of large tracts of open space, views, and environmentally sensitive lands.

- The CRD zone should allow multi-family and affordable housing.
- Cluster housing should be encouraged wherever possible but especially within large subdivisions.
- **An affordable housing ordinance should be adopted to maintain a diverse population**
- **Senior citizen housing alternatives should be considered by the Town.**

8.2 Future Land Use Plan

The land use plan (figure 8.1) is a conceptual map of East Fishkill that illustrates future development potential throughout the town. The Plan incorporates the goals of the previous section. In order to be effective, the Plan must recognize existing land uses, zoning, environmental constraints, development trends, and proposed infrastructure. However, the land use plan is general in nature, recognizing generally defined areas and a range of densities, not individual lot lines and site-specific development.

The most important change from the 1982 Plan is that the centers have been changed to reduce the number of developable dwelling units. Parts of Hopewell Junction had a mapped density of 4-6 dwelling units to the acre; this plan lowers that figure to 2-4 units/acre, a density in keeping with the CRD zone, adopted 1988. Much of the land around Hopewell Junction is also environmentally sensitive and will require creative developments, of a lesser magnitude, in order to preserve and protect the sensitive lands near the center. The outlying centers (Stormville, Gayhead, Fishkill Plains, and Wiccopee) have been reduced from 2-4 units/acre to 1-2 units/acre. In addition, a new center, Arthursburg, has been added at the intersection of the Taconic State Parkway and Route 82.

This Land Use Plan suggests that industrial uses belong primarily near the interstate highway system. The old Maybrook freightline, which brought rail freight through East Fishkill and over the old Poughkeepsie rail bridge, has not been operational for a decade. Dutchess County is now converting the rail line between Poughkeepsie and Hopewell Junction into a walking and bicycling trail. Thus, industry in East Fishkill is now primarily dependent upon truck traffic, which can most easily access the Town from Interstate 84. Low-impact and smaller industrial users, however, may be appropriate for the hamlets and existing locations along state roads, such as Ryan Drive, when their impacts do not exceed those of commercial users and their presence would bolster the center or existing uses.

Commercial areas remain the same as in the 1982 Plan. Although businesses have appeared along some arterials, this Plan recommends that commercial activities coalesce near existing centers. Stores that are in close proximity to each other can save residents' time and energy by reducing the number and length of trips to run errands.

This plan adds two new zones categories not contained in the 1982 Plan and one new category. First is a conservation density area (requiring 3 acres of land per home), which covers the southeast part of Town. This area includes the New York City watershed lands, the Appalachian Trail, and Stormville Mountain. Second, the Plan calls for a 1 ½-acre zone. Areas which could be considered for this zone include the existing R-1 lands east of the Taconic and south of Interstate 84. These parts of town contain significant areas of undeveloped land. Rezoning the land will better enable developers to use the cluster ordinance and preserve one-third of the site as open space, while still allowing homeowners to have on-site septic and individual wells. Agricultural preservation areas have been added as a result of a 1999 study of farmland within East Fishkill. These areas are outlined in green on the Future Land Use Plan and shown separately in Figure 8.2. Reflecting the rural nature of these agricultural areas, the Plan recommends a maximum density for the active farmland of 1.5 acres per dwelling unit. In other areas of the Town, the Plan maintains the 1-3 acres/unit densities. The density, however, says nothing about the particular type of development. This land use map should not be read as a zoning map encouraging the sprawl of one or two acre lots. Rather, the plan is meant to illustrate low residential densities throughout most of the town and higher

densities in the centers. Development within low residential areas should be carried out through the implementation of cluster development (see section 8.3) where deemed appropriate by the Planning Board and the Town Board.

Agricultural Preservation Area

These designations reflect a study of active farms within the Town that was completed in 2000. Some farms are located within areas under consideration for the R-1.5 acre district. This designation reflects the desire of the Town to preserve active farms and to support agricultural districts and tax deductions for active farms. ~~If these areas were ever developed, the Plan suggests a maximum density of 1.5 acres per unit.~~

Low Density

The ~~vast~~ majority of the Town retains its one dwelling unit per acre designation, though a new low density zone, R-1.5. This zone could be considered for areas south of I-84 and east of the Taconic State Parkway (not otherwise zoned R-2 or R-3). These lands constitute 21% of the town's acreage. One acre per lot is the principal land use in Town and allows a lot to have individual wells and on-site septic systems. Engineering requirements to place a septic system and well within one acre do not allow excess land to be set aside as open space, however. The current zoning code and Land Use Plan concur with the level of density across much of East Fishkill. The low-density zone has been amended from one unit per acre to 0.66-1 unit per acre. ~~This change reflects the Agricultural Preservation areas, which have a minimum lot size of 1.5 acres. The purpose of creating and mapping this zone would be to better protect the rural atmosphere and character of the Town of East Fishkill by creating a residential zone that allows properties in areas of town that are not serviced by central water or central sewer facilities to continue to have individual wells and septic systems but to be able to also provide dedicated open space. Properties within the R-1.5 zone could cluster down to one acre lots and preserve one-third of the site as open space, enhancing the town's rural character.~~

Low-Medium Density

This designation applies to outlying hamlet centers. The previous plan allowed a density of 2-3 units / acre but consistent comment indicated that that level of density was too high for the historic hamlets. The purpose of the zone is to allow denser developments in older hamlets where there is a clear benefit to the Town in terms of open space (perhaps a "village green"), aesthetics, infrastructure and environmental protection.

Medium Density

The area around Hopewell Junction has been designated for residential densities of 2-4 units / acre. This area meets the following criteria: near major arterials and planned new roads, available and suitable land for development, and similar housing patterns and densities and the planned provision of public water and sewer.

Commercial Areas

The Land Use Plan continues the placement of commercial areas in Hopewell Junction and nearby hamlets. Hopewell Junction is the primary center in East Fishkill due to its size, central location, and proximity to populated areas. A mix of uses – parks/recreation, town services, and medium density housing - is proposed to enhance the center's commerce and services.

Average-Density Subdivisions

According to East Fishkill Section 67-13.1, subdivisions in the R-2 zone may employ lot size averaging when designing subdivisions. This technique allows minimum lot sizes in the R-2 zone equal to one acre. The purpose of establishing the R-2 zone was to provide greater protection of environmentally sensitive areas along the southern portion of East Fishkill affected by the steep slopes of the Taconic Mountain Range, the historic Appalachian Trail, and the sensitive nature of the New York City watershed. One-acre lots were not considered adequate to protect the sensitive nature of the southern tier of the town, so two-acre zoning was enacted. Average density subdivisions that allow one-acre lots, therefore, do not support the original intent behind the rezone to R-2. However, this section does not provide for the same regulations as a cluster development regarding open space preservation, setbacks, and other planning issues.—Therefore, the Master Plan recommends that the Town remove this provision from its codes and require that all conventional subdivisions in the R-2 zone have a minimum lot size of 2 acres. This Plan recommends that any proposed lot size reduction from the underlying zone should take place through the approved cluster law. Lots in the R-3 zone, however, may continue to utilize average density subdivisions provided that the minimum lot size in the subdivision is two acres.

Purchase of Development Rights and/or Transfer of Development Rights

This approach is particularly suited to farmland and lands of particular ecological importance. Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) implies that the town would utilize either its capital budget or special funds to acquire some or all of the development rights from owners of sensitive property who for estate or tax reasons may wish to utilize this option. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) permits the transfer of building rights between separated parcels of land. The owner of an open space area could transfer the development rights from that area (the sending area) to another parcel of land (the receiving area). Thus, more intense development would take place on land more suited for it. One option for a receiving area is the Conservation Residential Development (CRD) Zone, which is currently a zone that could be applied in Hopewell Junction.

Reduction in FAR

This plan recommends a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) control for all commercial development. Floor area ratio is explained on the accompanying chart (See Figure 9.1 for an understanding of Floor Area Ratio). A FAR of 0.30 is recommended for the B1 and B2 zones. A FAR of 0.25 is recommended for the PCP and the PRDP zones and all industrial zones. The Plan recommends deleting the PBN zone, which has never been mapped.

9.3 *Natural Resource Protection*

Scenic Resource or Conservation Overlay

Throughout the Master Plan, many have spoken out in favor of protecting East Fishkill's scenic resources. To further these goals, the Town Board may want to add a chapter to East Fishkill's Zoning Code to include Scenic Resource or Conservation Overlays. The list of scenic resources or conservation areas could include: roadways, slopes, ridgelines, farms, fields and meadows, streams and water bodies, cultural places, and trees or stands of trees. This chapter would identify the various scenic resource categories, the process by which areas would be designated as