

KEY CONCEPTS OF THE 2015 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN RELATING TO THE GREENBELT AND RURAL CHARACTER

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THE CITY IN THE COUNTRY:

Major theme of the 2015 Comprehensive Plan

“This Comprehensive Plan is a unified set of policies that will guide the future development of the City of Saratoga Springs. The Plan consists of nearly 250 recommended actions and a Future Land Use map that indicates the desired location, uses, and intensity of development.” (Executive Summary – page iv)

“This Plan sets forth the following vision for the community:

*Saratoga Springs is the “City in the Country.” This concept reflects a city with an intensively developed urban core and an economically vibrant central business district, with well-defined urban edges and an outlying area of rural character, comprised of agriculture, open lands, natural and diverse environmental resources, and low density development.”² (Page iv)
(Emphasis added)*

KEY POLICY STATEMENTS CALL FOR RURAL CHARACTER:

Several policies call for low intensity rural character in area around the city core.

Community form, design and quality: (Page 48)

3.4-1 Maintain and promote the “City in the Country” form that includes an intensively developed urban core, an economically vibrant central business district, and residential neighborhoods with well- defined urban edges and an outlying area of rural character, comprised of agriculture, open lands, natural and diverse environmental resources, and low density residential development. (Emphasis added)

3.4-2 Maintain the greenbelt by restricting incompatible uses and the intensity of development.
(Emphasis added)

3.4-3 Continue to prohibit the establishment of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) in the Conservation Development District of the City.

3.4-5 Discourage destination type resorts that compete with the downtown core.

3.4-6 Identify priority gateways into the City, such as Route 50 and South Broadway, and develop/review guidelines for appropriate area-specific amenities and treatments.

COUNTRY OVERLAY AREA:

Maps the Country part of the “City in the Country” theme”

- “The balance between the “city” and the “country” is fundamental to the general health, welfare and economic viability of the community. This has been reiterated by the community time and time again. Therefore, this plan sets out to reinforce the “country” within the City’s jurisdiction through a Country Overlay Map. Since the development of the towns surrounding Saratoga Springs is indeed beyond the City’s control, the City must take proactive measures to preserve the greenbelt surrounding the urban core.” (Page 60) (Emphasis added)

The Country Overlay Area is the City GREENBELT:

- “The Country Overlay Area depicts a desired “greenbelt” around the urban core which defines and shapes the “Country” in the “City in the Country” vision of this comprehensive plan.” (Page 61) (Emphasis added)

The Country Overlay Area does not define uses but establishes “Country” Character:

- “The Country Overlay Map is also intended to provide support for existing overlay design requirements such as the City’s Gateway Overlay districts, which protect the character of the City’s important gateways.” (Page 61) (Emphasis added)
- The Country Overlay Area does NOT specify the desired location, uses and intensity of development. Those are specified in the Plan’s Future Land Use Map.
- “The intent of this section is not to prohibit or permit any land use activity but instead is to reaffirm that open space values be taken into consideration in development proposals within the Country Overlay Area or in adopting any zoning amendments for areas included in the Country Overlay Area.” (Page 61)

Geographic areas that lie within the “Country Overlay Areas”:

- Low density residentially developed areas
- Protected open space areas
- Highway corridors: Northway, Route 9 (South Broadway), Route 50, Route 9P (Outer Union Ave), Route 29 (Outer Lake Avenue and Outer Washington St), Route 9N (Outer Church St)
- Lakefronts and stream corridors

Proposed UDO Zoning Districts that lie within the “County Overlay Area”:

- All of Rural Residential (RR)
- All of the Water Related Business (WRB)
- Most of Gateway Commercial – Rural (GC-R)
- Most of Institutional – Parks/Recreation (INST-PR)
- Small portion of Suburban Residential (SR) that borders Saratoga Lake and the Oak Ridge clustered development



- Small portion of Urban Residential – 2 (UR-2) that includes the vacant land off of Hutchins Rd and a residential development off of White Farms Rd
- Small portion of Institutional – Educational (INST-ED) (Yaddo and Skidmore College North Woods)
- Small portion of Institutional – Horse Track Related (INST-HTR) that was the former Whitney Farm
- Small portion of Institutional -Municipal Purpose (INST-MP) that is the former Weibel Ave Landfill.
- Small portions of PUD that border Saratoga Lake (Water’s Edge PUD, Interlaken PUD, Green Acres PUD)
- Small portions of Urban Residential-1 (UR-1) that lies along the Northway
- Small portion of Neighborhood Center (NC) that lies along the Northway

FUTURE LAND USE MAP:

The Plan sets forth a development vision for all geographic areas of the city. Each land use category is described and mapped.

“The Map sets the direction for future land uses within the City. It illustrates the City’s vision by identifying broad categories of land use. The Map is not a zoning map. However, the zoning map must follow the direction set forth in the Comprehensive Plan in accordance with General City Law §28-a. The zoning ordinance is typically the regulatory document that addresses densities, area, bulk, and specific permitted uses.” (Page 55) (Emphasis added)

“The land use categories are general guides to future zoning or other regulations. State law mandates that zoning must be in conformance with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan. This means that the density within the zoning for a particular area must be equal or less than that what is described within this document. When areas are to be rezoned, the uses and densities permitted within the zoning district must be compatible with the ranges presented in the land use category. (Page 55) (Emphasis added)

Key “Future Land Use Categories” of the Plan that comprise most the “greenbelt”.

“The following descriptions are offered for the proposed land use category designations. The descriptions are intended to include the purpose or intent of the category, an overview of general uses and a description of the character for each land use category.” (Page 56)

“Conservation Development District (CDD)

The Conservation Development District designation reflects the “Country” of the City in the Country. This designation allows for low density residential, outdoor recreation, agricultural, and other rural uses utilizing land conservation methods such as clustering. Areas typically include single-family lots and subdivisions, existing planned developments, farms, estates, and natural areas. Commercial activities should be limited to those that support rural and recreational uses



and which protect valuable open space, protect natural resources and maintain natural systems. This designation reflects a rural or agrarian character that works to preserve contiguous open spaces, protect natural resources and restore and maintain natural systems, which will all become increasingly important and valuable community resources.” (Page 58) (Emphasis added)

“Specialty Mixed Use - Gateway (SG)

The Specialty Mixed Use - Gateway designation allows for a variety of low to moderate intensity uses that focus on maintaining a distinctive entrance to the City. The goal for the commercial gateways is not to foster more intense or dense land use development, but rather to improve the physical appearance and attractiveness of the commercial uses. These uses are primarily commercial in nature and are complementary to the Downtown Core and Complementary Core. This designation is characterized largely by automobile access yet with aesthetically pleasing buildings and landscaping along the street with parking in the rear.” (Page 60) (Emphasis added)

