

Centers and Greenspaces

A plan to protect Red Hook's rural character, reinforce traditional village centers, and promote economic development

"Red Hook should maintain its rural character by providing incentives for new development to locate within or adjacent to existing centers while discouraging a land use pattern that uniformly disperses development throughout the Town." Town of Red Hook Comprehensive Plan

Agricultural Business District

The purpose of the Agricultural Business (AB) District is to protect agricultural lands, discourage incompatible land uses, and promote agriculture as a component of the local economy.

The AB District would permit farmers greater business opportunities, such as larger farm markets and a wide range of agri-tourism business, to enhance farm income. Many of these uses would receive a streamlined review process.



Farmers could choose different options for their properties. Under the conservation option, they could participate in the Town's PDR program, community preservation fund or incentive zoning program, to sell their development rights at the rate allowed under the current zoning as depicted on the 1999 Zoning Map, while retaining the right to build some new homes on the farm in a farmstead complex without the need to subdivide.

Under the limited development option, farmers could develop their lands at a reduced density based on a sliding scale using conservation subdivision design so that new residential development did not adversely impact other farms in the area.

Conservation Subdivision Design

A conservation subdivision permits greater design flexibility and smaller average lot sizes than otherwise possible in a conventional subdivision in order to preserve greenspace on the remainder of the property without increasing building potential for the tract as a whole.

Conservation subdivisions follow a four-step design process that identifies unbuildable lands and special features of the site around which development is designed. This would allow limited development in the Agricultural Business District to fit into the landscape while conserving greenspaces and minimizing impacts on farmland.

Benefits of the Centers and Greenspaces Plan:

- ✿ Permanently protect important farmland and the rural countryside
- ✿ Strengthen the residential and commercial base of the existing villages
- ✿ Transform the South Broadway strip into a traditional village entrance-extension
- ✿ Use close-in smart growth development to help finance sewer systems

Traditional Neighborhood Development District

The purpose of this district is to reinforce the traditional land use pattern of close-knit villages surrounded by rural countryside.

By locating new development close to existing centers, this tool would strengthen the existing commercial base of the Villages, and increase economic development opportunities by encouraging the development of a municipal sewer system.

The Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) District would have the same features that characterize the existing villages, such as walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods and more variety and choice in housing types. It would consist of three sub-districts: the commercial center, the residential neighborhood, and the office-industrial area, which would be designed to preserve the Town's southern gateway.

Developers could increase building potential above the base zoning by contributing to a dedicated greenspace fund through incentive zoning.



Greenspaces Incentive Zoning

This zoning tool authorizes adjustments to building potential in the TND District in exchange for preserving greenspaces in the AB District, at no direct cost to residents and taxpayers of the Town.

Incentive zoning is the mechanism by which building is promoted in the traditional neighborhoods rather than on farmland and greenspaces. In the case of the Villages of Red Hook and Tivoli, funds derived from incentive zoning could be used to preserve the Village's gateways.

Economic Development Initiatives

Taken together, these complementary steps to smart growth in Red Hook promote economic development and address local tax concerns in the following ways:

- The Town enhances the financially important, tax positive agricultural economy by protecting a critical mass of existing farmland.
- Zoning allows a wider range of industrial and commercial uses on farm properties.
- Compact development in and around the Villages supports existing businesses and helps pay for a sewer system, an essential element for attracting new businesses.
- The plan increases the commercial tax base and decreases the overall potential for new residential development, thus reducing future school tax impacts.
- Instead of reacting, often defensively, to development proposals in random locations, the plan provides a positive vision for where new development is most desirable and mutually beneficial, thereby acting as an advertisement for new economic investment and helping to streamline the review process.