

# Town of Stark Comprehensive Plan



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## 1. Town Plan

### MAJOR TOWN GOAL:

- Protection and improvement of the rural qualities of the Town and the village character of its Hamlets through implementation of planning policies that serve to retain rural features, minimize visual impacts of development, and maintain a suitable balance of uses while allowing for appropriate future growth.

### GENERAL LAND USE GOALS:

- The location of land uses that meet the physical, social, cultural, and economic needs of the present and future population while maintaining or improving the quality of the natural and man-made environment and amenities.
- A land use pattern that provides options for a variety of residential living environments, opportunities for recreation, and desirable locations for businesses.
- A land use pattern that is consistent with the capabilities of the street system, water and sewage needs, drainage facilities, and natural environmental systems.
- A land use pattern that separates and ensures non-encroachment of incompatible types and densities of land use.



## **AGRICULTURAL AREAS**

The maintenance and protection of the agricultural industry and lands is a major concern of the Town. In recent years, farms have been sold and the land is being left in open fields. The loss of active farms increased the concern for the conservation of natural resources. Threats of inappropriate land uses locating in the Town heightened concerns over the future patterns of land use.

Residents and visitors universally recognize the rural character of the Town as the most important resource in the Town. It is difficult to define, but you know it when you see it. Such a simple concept is difficult to define. Rural character relates to natural features, agricultural character, and visual environment. The survey portion of the report describes the rural character for Stark as defined by Town's Land Use Committee.

**GOAL:** Maintain farming as the primary industry throughout the Town.

**GOAL:** Conserve the natural resources and rural character of the Town.

### **Objectives:**

- To promote participation in the New York State agricultural districts program.
- To encourage agricultural support businesses and agri-tourism.
- To protect agricultural uses from uses that are incompatible with agricultural operations.
- To conserve natural areas important to environmental quality or the ecological balance such as wet lands, streams and creeks, floodplains, mature woodlands, steep slopes, and unique land-forms.

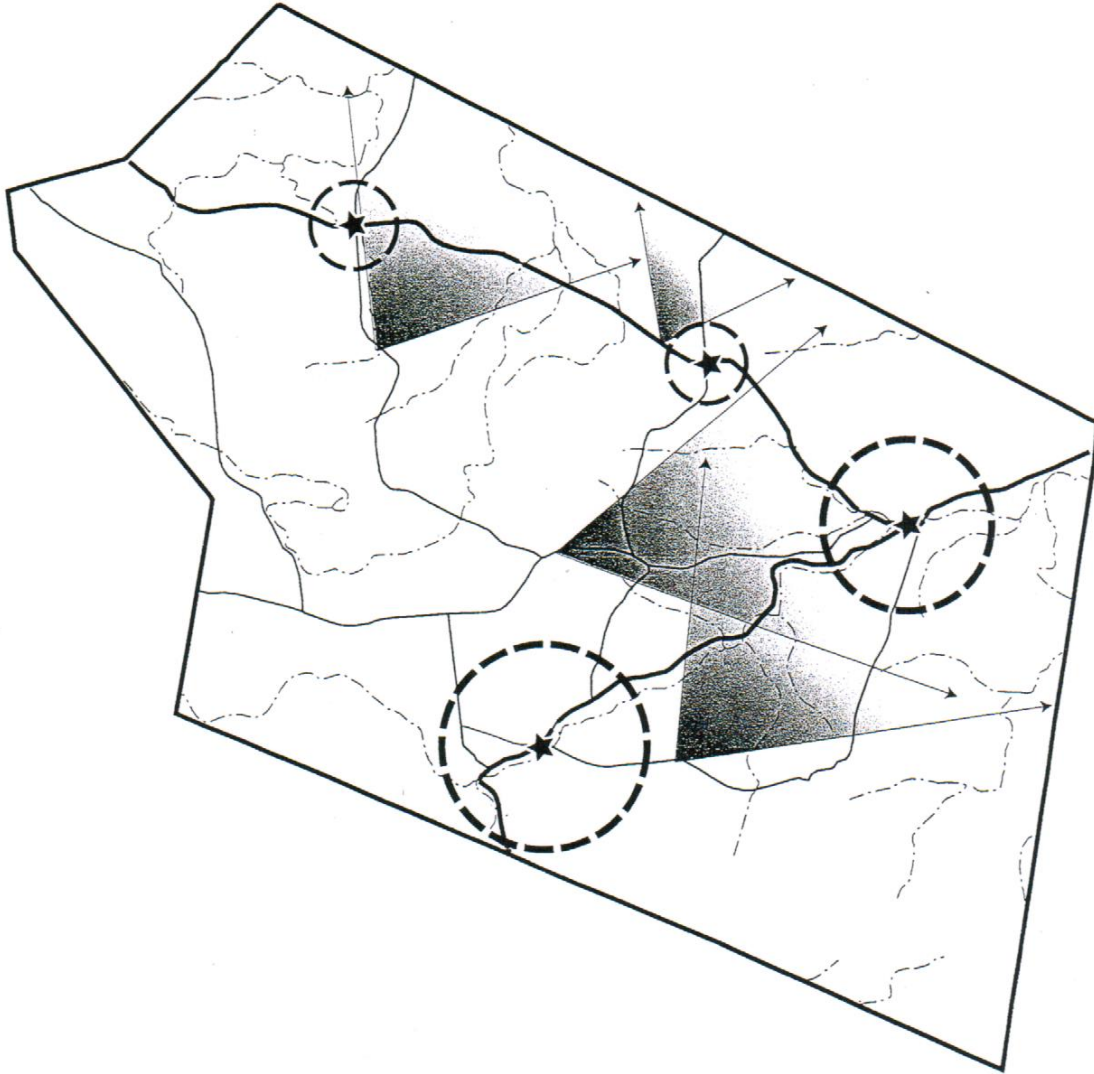


### **Policies:**

- Assist the County in encouraging farms in agricultural districts to remain in agricultural districts.
- Educate local landowners regarding the agricultural district provisions of the New York Agricultural and Markets Law.
- Implement a land development ordinance to provide basic protection against the adverse impacts of development.
- In the land development ordinance, allow agricultural operations throughout the Town.
- Permit only those uses in agricultural areas that are compatible with agricultural operations.
- Seek State and County assistance in developing agri-tourism opportunities.
- Discourage scattered residential subdivisions in agricultural areas.
- Use design guidelines to review non-agricultural uses located in agricultural areas.
- Minimize visual impacts of residential structures located in agricultural areas.
- Retain tree lines and existing agricultural structures such as barns and silos where feasible.
- Use environmental overlays to protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- Maintain an environmental inventory of the Town to be used as a beginning reference in implementing the use of environmental overlays and in reviewing environmental impact assessments.

# Map 1.1 Comprehensive Plan Map

Town of Stark, New York



— Roads  
- - - Streams





## 2. Hamlet Plans

Hamlets are predominantly residential areas with supporting commercial and public activities lying near their centers. They do not have a clear distinction between residential and nonresidential areas. The Hamlets are compact relative to their surroundings and to sprawled suburban tract development. They are easily distinguishable from the surrounding undeveloped land. The density mix and arrangement of land uses encourages pedestrian movement among local origins and destinations. A half-mile radius from hamlet centers represents an effective walking radius.

Hamlets and villages are closely related. Hamlets are often viewed as a small cluster of homes with a distinct identity in a rural area. A village is generally viewed as a small community offering a choice of housing types, some employment, basic services, and shopping for its residents as well as for those in the immediately surrounding rural area. It typically includes a post office, church, meeting places, and public open spaces. The Hamlets of Deck and Smith Corners are good examples of small hamlets.

The Hamlets of Starkville and Van Hornesville are more than the crossroad hamlets described above. They include many of the features attributed to villages. In this Plan, however, the term “hamlet” is used to describe Stark and Van Hornesville settlements to avoid confusion with the political jurisdiction usually associated with a village in New York State.

The typical hamlet/village usually includes personal service shops, specialized retail, and business or professional offices. It also includes cultural resources important to the community. Both these conditions are present to one degree or another in Starkville and Van Hornesville. The two Hamlets have a distinct history. Important historical resources exist in both Hamlets.

The Starkville and Van Hornesville Hamlets also have a distinct character. They are compact, buildings are relatively close together, and a variety of activities exist. The limits of the Hamlets are clear, beyond their borders the countryside begins. The Deck and Smith Corner’s Hamlets have less clearly defined boundaries.

The preferred location for new growth in the Town is in and adjacent to the Hamlets. New develop-



ment should extend the existing close-knit pattern of small lots, mixed-uses, interconnected streets and walkable neighborhoods associated with hamlets. Large lot, suburban style development disrupts the character of the Hamlets. If not done very carefully, construction of new commercial buildings can began a process of altering the historic coherence of the Starkville and Van Hornesville Hamlets.

**GOAL:** Conservation of the existing cultural and visual character of the Hamlets.

**GOAL:** Appropriately designed developments located adjacent to the Hamlets.

### **Objectives:**

- Encourage residential, commercial and office uses.
- Limit and discourage development of strip-type, highway-oriented commercial uses that create traffic hazards and congestion.
- Minimize visual and functional conflicts between residential and nonresidential uses within the Hamlets.

### **Policies:**

- Adopt land development guidelines for the subdivision of land and the appropriate location of residential land uses.
- Adopt a site plan review ordinance in order to educate developers about how to develop in a manner compatible with existing development and environmentally friendly.



- Utilize design guidelines in the review of non-agricultural development proposals.
- Relate new residential development to natural features including topography and soil conditions with special consideration given to potential storm water drainage problems.

## MAJOR PROPOSALS

- **Agricultural Areas:** Make the maximum effort to encourage the continuance of farming as a major part of community life in all areas of the Town.
- **Hamlets:** Encourage new residential and business development in and adjacent to the Hamlets compatible with the existing physical character of the Hamlets.
- **Roads:** Avoid highway strip development along arterial and collector roads.
- **Scenic Views:** Conserve the important scenic views that significantly contribute to the special character of Stark.

### Implementation:

First enact subdivision ordinance to protect new property owners and the Town from poor subdivision practices. Secondly, consider a site plan review ordinance utilizing design review guidelines to conserve the character of the Town and its Hamlets. Finally, consider the adoption of a basic land use ordinance to promote the long-range development of the Town in an efficient and desirable manner.