

VILLAGE OF AIRMONT  
ROCKLAND COUNTY, NEW YORK  
ADOPTED COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Prepared by:  
VILLAGE OF AIRMONT MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

With assistance from:  
TURNER MILLER GROUP  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS

Recommended to the Village of Airmont Board of Trustees:  
December 10, 2007

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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<u>Table of Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. BACKGROUND STUDIES	1
A. Location and Regional Setting	2
B. Demographics	2
C. Existing Land Use	5
D. Environmental Conditions	7
E. Historic Preservation	12
F. Utilities	13
G. Circulation	15
III. DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL	18
A. Build Out Analysis	18
B. Residential Zoning Districts	18
C. Non Residential Zoning Districts	19
IV. GOALS	21
V. VISION	22
VI. PLAN	23
A. Concept Plan for the Route 59 Corridor	23
B. Concept Plan for the Residential Portion of the Village	23
VII. IMPLEMENTATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	25
A. Route 59 Corridor Design Guidelines	25
B. Proposed Zoning District Modifications	27
C. Proposed Recommendations for Recreation and Open Space	28
D. Proposed Recommendations to Protect and Improve Water Resources	28
E. Proposed Historic Preservation Recommendations	30
F. Proposed Utility Recommendations	30
G. Proposed Circulation Recommendations	31
<b>VIII. CONCLUSION / LIST OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES</b>	<b>32</b>

List of Figures

Following Page

Figure 1: Existing Land Use	5
Figure 2: Route 59 Vacant Parcels	5
Figure 3: Parks and Open Space Map	8
Figure 4: Surface Water Resources	10
Figure 5: Transportation Network	15
Figure 6: Land Use Plan	32

List of Tables

Page

Table II-1: Village Population 1990-2015	2
Table II-2: Population by Age, 2000	3
Table II-3: Housing Value (Owner Occupied Units), 2000	4
Table II-4: Median Home Value, 2000	4
Table II-5: Rockland County Parks within the Town of Ramapo	8
Table II-6: Town Parks and Recreational Facilities within Airmont	8
Table II-7: Accident Data 2002-2006	15
Table II-8: Commuting to work, 2000	16
Table III-1: Residential Buildout Analysis	19

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This document constitutes the Comprehensive Development Plan for the future of the Village of Airmont. The Village of Airmont is located in the south central portion of Rockland County within the Town of Ramapo, New York. Airmont is generally bordered the Village of Suffern and unincorporated Town of Ramapo to the west, the New York State Thruway and Village of Montebello to the north, the Village of Chestnut Ridge to the east, and Bergen County, New Jersey to the south.

Among the most important powers granted to a local government by the New York State Legislature is the authority and responsibility to undertake a comprehensive plan and regulate local land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its residents. Before the Village Board of Trustees adopts a new plan or any amendments to the existing plan, the Board will hold a public hearing in order to allow for comments from Village residents. This updated comprehensive plan will be subject to the provisions of the State Environmental Quality Review Act under article eight of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law and may require a generic environmental impact statement if impacts from the plan are determined to have the potential to negatively impact the Village based on requirements therein. Once the plan is adopted by the Village Board it will remain on file in the office of the Village Clerk and with the Rockland County Planning Office. The adopted Comprehensive Plan shall be reviewed for relevance every five years to ensure the document continues to adequately meet the needs of the Village and a new Comprehensive Plan shall be adopted at a minimum interval of every ten (10) years.

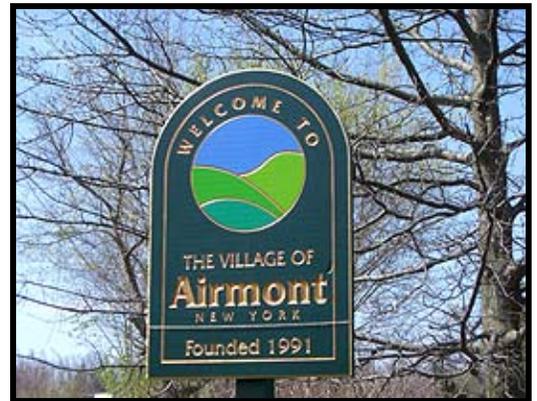
This plan focuses on the development of goals and vision for the Village as a whole, while placing specific emphasis on the Route 59 Corridor and policies relating to environment, design and housing. The objectives of this Comprehensive Plan are to determine the most appropriate land uses and corresponding densities for the Route 59 Corridor, to ensure the long term quality of residential neighborhoods, protect sensitive environmental resources, as well as assess the need for improvements or expansions with respect to infrastructure, utilities, community facilities, and aesthetics within the Village.

## **II. BACKGROUND STUDIES**

As a basis for establishing goals and vision for the entire Village, the Comprehensive Plan preparation includes background studies which include a review of Airmont's major environmental characteristics and general land use as well as demographic trends. The Route 59 Corridor was selected as a specific study area for detailed analysis because of the broad range of land uses as well as the corridor's role as the Village's "front door", its role as a business center, Village Center, its economic importance to Airmont and increased likelihood of negative implications as a result of irresponsible development.

## A. LOCATION AND REGIONAL SETTING

The Village of Airmont is located along the southern border of Rockland County within the Town of Ramapo in New York's scenic Hudson Valley. Rockland, the smallest county in New York State outside of New York City, is approximately 176 square miles and located on the west bank of the Hudson River approximately 33 miles north of New York City. The Village is bordered to the north by the New York State Thruway and the Village of Montebello, to the west by the Village of Suffern and an unincorporated portion of the Town, to the east by the Village of Chestnut Ridge, and Bergen County, New Jersey to the south.



## B. DEMOGRAPHICS

### 1. Population

**TABLE II-1: VILLAGE POPULATION**

YEAR	POPULATION	% CHANGE
1990 <sup>1</sup>	7,835	-
2000	7,799	-0.46%
2005	8,672	11.19%
2015	9,700	11.85%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau with 2015 projection from Rockland County Office of Community Development

Latest population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, report the Village of Airmont contains approximately 8,672 residents (2005). This total is up over 11% since the 2000 census total of 7,799. This growth was due in part to three multi-family housing complexes constructed during this period which contained approximately 330 units.

The Rockland County Consolidated Plan for 2000-2004 estimated the population within the Village will continue to increase at a slightly higher rate. (See Table II-1) Since the time this plan was written, the majority of the remaining residential land has been developed, and few available residential parcels remain. Population within the Village is likely to continue to increase, but most likely at a slower rate than the County Plan had originally projected. (See Buildout Analysis)

Rockland County Office of Community Development has projected Rockland County population to increase by 4.4% by 2010 and an additional 5.3% increase by 2020. The Village of Airmont represents approximately 2.9% of the total population of Rockland County which was estimated in 2005 at 292,916.

<sup>1</sup> At the time of the 1990 U.S. Census the Village was unincorporated and all census data was collected for a "census designated place" that closely coincided with the physical boundaries of the area that is today Airmont.

Age related population data is helpful for the Village to understand its future needs for community services and housing. **TABLE II-2** shows that the school aged population is slated to remain relatively constant over the next few years do to natural growth. The Village has a small percentage of young professionals ages 20-34. Due to the construction of two age restricted housing complexes, the Village’s population of residents aged 65 and over has likely increased since 2000 but will most likely remain steady from this point forward.

**TABLE II-2: POPULATION BY AGE, 2000**

Age Group	#	%
Under 5 years	500	6.4
5 to 9 years	678	8.7
10 to 14 years	650	8.3
15 to 19 years	510	6.5
20 to 24 years	308	3.9
25 to 34 years	678	8.7
35 to 44 years	1,304	16.7
45 to 54 years	1,186	15.2
55 to 59 years	480	6.2
60 to 64 years	432	5.5
65 to 74 years	624	8
75 to 84 years	293	3.8
85 years & over	156	2
Median Age	39.4	-

Source: US Census, 2000

## 2. Housing

Housing has become an increasingly important issue throughout the County as municipalities struggle to ensure an availability of affordable housing and a diversity of housing types while preserving and enhancing existing residential areas. At the time of the 2000 census, the Village of Airmont was made up of mostly (approximately 90%) single family detached dwellings. Since this time, certain large multi-family housing complexes were constructed within the Village to help meet regional demands for both senior and affordable housing. These facilities are Airmont Gardens and The Retreat at Airmont. Approximately 330 units in total were constructed. Based on building department records, the Village is now made up of approximately 82% single family detached residences. Residential lots within the Village vary in allowable square footage from 15,000 square feet to 50,000 square feet.

Tables **II-3** and **II-4** below show housing characteristics within the Village. Nearly all, or 93.9% of the homes within the Village were valued between \$150,000 and \$499,999 with over 50% being valued between \$200,000 and \$299,999 as of the 2000 census. The median home value in the Airmont is slightly above that of Rockland County but both the Village and the County experienced an approximately 12% raise in median home value between 1990 and 2000. Since 2000 the median home price has continued to increase in both the Village and County-wide. According to the Village’s building department newly constructed homes are currently selling much higher than these census totals with most new developments selling between \$650,000 and

\$1,000,000.<sup>2</sup> This is supported by the 2006 American Community Survey published by the U.S. Census which reports the median housing value in Rockland County to have increased to \$502,300. This increase is equivalent to a 107% increase in value.

The Village has two affordable housing developments totaling 260 units, 140 of these units are age-restricted. These units are restricted to residents who earn 80% of the County median income which for 2008 was reported at \$96,700. Income limits for affordable housing developments are set annually by the U.S. Office of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) based on the number of persons per household. For Rockland County, the income limit in 2008 for a 2 person household in a low income development is \$49,200 and \$55,350 for a three person household.<sup>3</sup>

Generally even in an uncertain market as land becomes increasingly scarce, housing prices can be expected to continue to increase and housing affordability throughout the County will remain an issue.

**TABLE II-3: HOUSING VALUE (Owner Occupied Units), 2000**

	#	%
Less than \$50,000	6	0.3
\$50,000 to \$99,999	17	0.8
\$100,000 to \$149,999	86	4.1
\$150,000 to \$199,999	327	15.6
\$200,000 to \$299,999	1,216	57.9
\$300,000 to \$499,999	407	19.4
\$500,000 to \$999,999	42	2
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0

Source: U.S. Census

**TABLE II-4: MEDIAN HOME VALUE, 1990-2006**

	1990	2000	% Increase	2006	% Increase
Village of Airmont	\$226,300	\$253,500	12%	n/a	-
Rockland County	\$217,100	\$242,500	11.7%	\$502,300	107%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census and 2006 American Communities Survey

<sup>2</sup> Based on person communication with the Building Department Clerk, August, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Fiscal Year 2008 Income Limits Documentation System found at [www.huduser.org](http://www.huduser.org)

## C. EXISTING LAND USE

The land use pattern of the Village of Airmont has remained virtually unchanged since the previous Comprehensive Plan adopted in 1997. The Village is comprised of essentially two parts. The Route 59 Corridor which is developed with a combination of local and regional commercial centers, offices, civic uses, and industry, as described in more detail below and the remainder of the Village which is devoted to primarily single family residential neighborhoods of varying density. This part of the Village also contains day camps, cemeteries, parks and open space, schools and utility uses. (See **Figure 1: Existing Land Use**)

### 1. Residential Land

The residential portion of the Village extends south from the Route 59 corridor to the New Jersey border. According to the 2000 U. S. census there are approximately 2,373 residential units in the Village with 93% being single family detached units. Since the previous Comprehensive Plan a number of single family residential subdivisions have taken place most of between two and six lots. The largest of these subdivisions is known as the Cardinal Hill Subdivision which consisted of 20 new homes centrally located in the Village just west of Lorna Lane. Few additional opportunities for residential subdivisions still exist. The largest vacant residentially zoned property is located just south of Route 59. The property consists of approximately of 24 acres and is zoned R-40.

### 2. Route 59 Corridor

The Route 59 corridor is home to the bulk of office, commercial, light industrial, and most other nonresidential activity within Airmont. Retail uses are generally of a local convenience orientation, comprised of delicatessens and small capacity restaurants, drug stores, gas stations and auto repair shops, laundromats, banks, dry cleaners and hair salons. Other commercial uses serve a larger area or region and are located here as well, including Shop Rite Supermarket and Wal-mart. Office uses along the corridor generally consist of relatively small multi-tenant buildings for medical or general office use. In addition, both Ramapo Town Hall and a number of municipal services such as fire and ambulance services are located along this corridor.

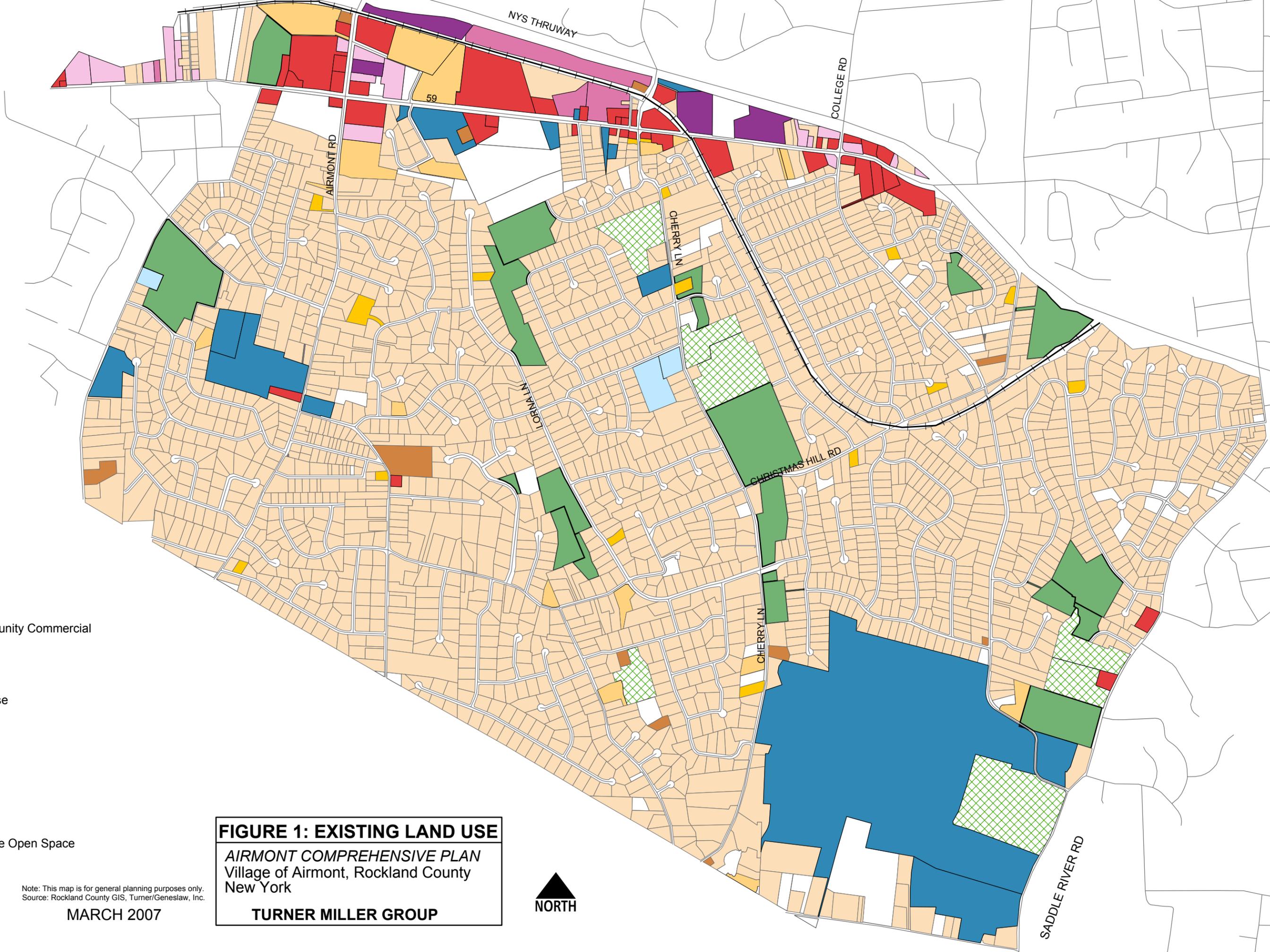
Some residential uses are located along the corridor as well. A majority of these are currently nonconforming, and may have preceded the creation of zoning controls for the area. Some houses have been at least partially converted to nonresidential uses, occupied by office or retail uses.

#### a. Recent Development

Since the previous 1995 Village Comprehensive Plan, a number of the vacant properties along the Route 59 corridor have been developed. (See **Figure 2: Route 59 Vacant Land Parcels**)

**Parcel B.** Construction has recently begun on an office complex on the western property, while the eastern property remains vacant.

**Parcels D & F** have been the sites of major development within the Village since the previous plan. These two lots contain newly constructed senior housing developments, Airmont Gardens and The Retreat at Airmont containing a total of approximately 285 units.



**Legend**

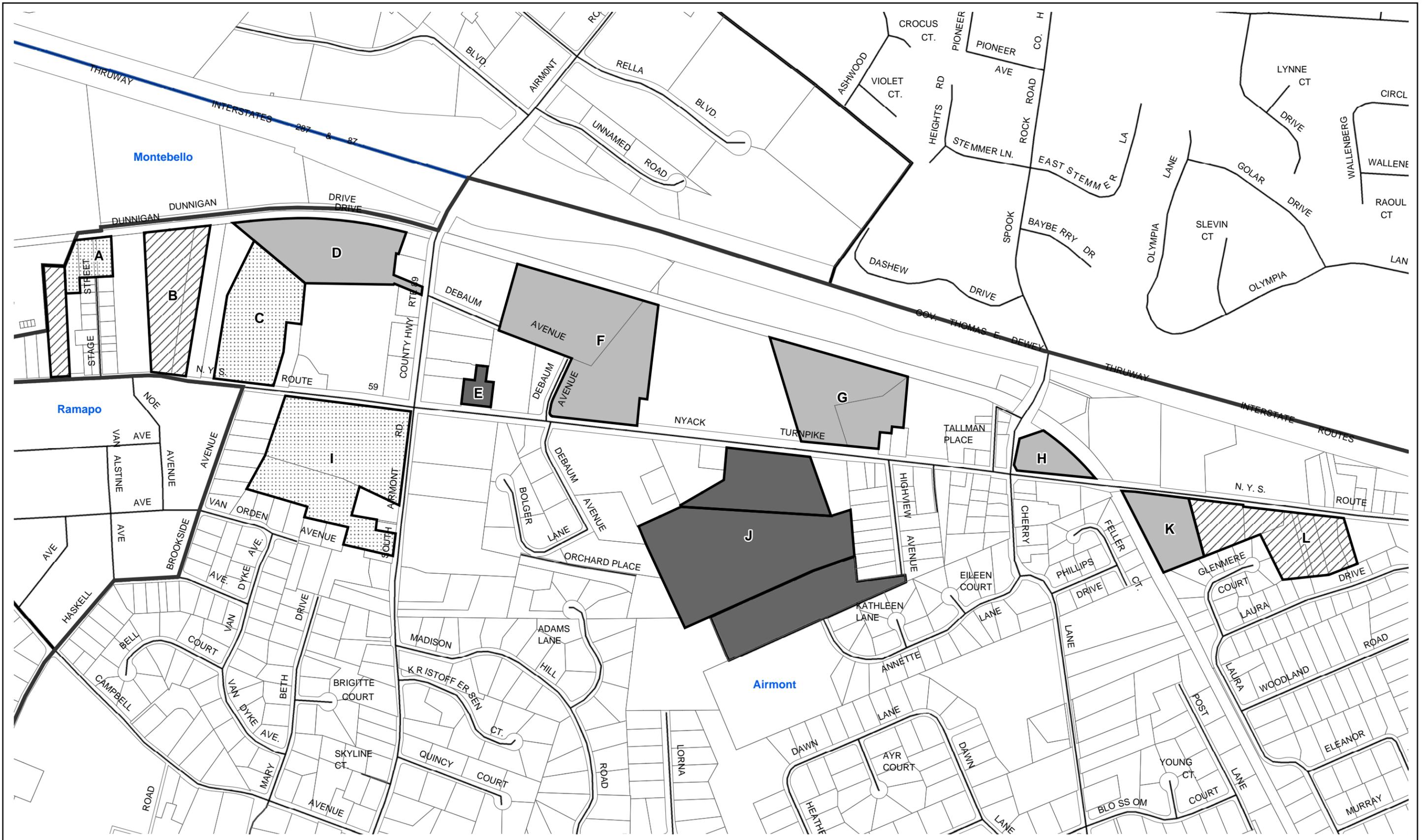
- ROADS
- Parcels**
- LAND USE CATERGORY**
- General Business/Community Commercial
- Heavy Industrial
- Institutional/Quasi-Public
- Light Industrial/Warehouse
- Local Park/Open Space
- Multi Family Residential
- No Land Use Code
- Office
- One Family Residential
- Private Recreation/Private Open Space
- School
- Two Family Residential
- Utilities
- Vacant

Note: This map is for general planning purposes only.  
Source: Rockland County GIS, Turner/Geneslaw, Inc.

MARCH 2007

**FIGURE 1: EXISTING LAND USE**  
*AIRMONT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN*  
 Village of Airmont, Rockland County  
 New York  
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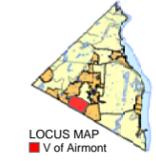
Tel: (845) 368-1475 Fax: (845) 368-1572

Note: This map is for general planning purposes only.  
 Source: New York State Department of Transportation,  
 Rockland County GIS, Turner/Geneslaw, Inc.

AUGUST 2008



- Vacant Parcels
- Partially Developed Parcels
- Developed Since 1995 Plan
- Development Proposal Under Review
- Parcels
- Municipal Boundaries
- NYS Thruway
- Roads



**ROUTE 59 CORRIDOR  
 VACANT PARCELS**  
*AIRMONT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN*  
 Village of Airmont, Rockland County  
 New York



*The Retreat at Airmont, image by Turner Miller Group*

**Parcel G** contains a newly constructed commercial plaza which includes a family restaurant, bank, doughnut and ice cream shops.

**Parcel H** contains Wendy's fast food restaurant.

**Parcel K** is known as Colonial Square, another recently constructed commercial plaza. The plaza currently consists of two buildings containing a bank, medical office, dry cleaners, and a flooring design center. The rear building on the site contains vacant commercial space that would accommodate up to five additional tenants.

#### **b. Remaining Vacant Land**

**Parcel(s) A**, is being considered for development with the parcel to the South which fronts on Route 59. The rear lots are currently vacant. The property is currently in the Laboratory / Office (LO) Zone and consists of approximately 3.4 acres but development potential is limited due to the size and shape of the parcels, limited access to the rear of the property and the proximity to residential dwellings.

**Parcel C**, is primarily wetlands and is owned by the Village.

**Parcel E**, is a small parcel located in the Village Center (VC) Zone. Currently a proposed retail development for this parcel is under review by the Planning Board.

**Parcel I**, located behind Chase Bank, is one of two large developable vacant properties within the Route 59 Corridor. The parcel consists of approximately 10 acres in the Neighborhood Shopping (NS) Zone.

**Parcel J**, known as Scenic International, has recently been subdivided into two separate pieces but remains vacant. The front portion of the property is in the NS Zone and contains 6.4 acres and the larger rear section is in the R-40 Residential Zone and contains 24.87 acres, a significant portion of which is Federally regulated wetlands.

**Parcel(s) L** contains several existing non conforming residential dwellings and some land that is currently vacant. The land is currently in the Professional Office (PO) Zone and encompasses approximately 8 acres of land.

## D. ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

### 1. Recreation and Open Space

The 1995 Comprehensive Plan did not contain a section dedicated to recreation and open space. However, as the Village becomes more developed and population continues to increase the need to take an inventory of the existing facilities that serve Village residents, ensure they are maintained, and provide a basis for the acquisition of new land for either recreation or conservation of sensitive natural resources becomes increasingly important. In recognition of this, the Village Board did authorize the preparation of an Open Space and Recreation Plan in 1999. Although that plan was not adopted, information from that report is included in this document as the basis for recommendations related to both recreation and open space and the conservation of sensitive environmental lands.

The Village has also recently created an Open Space Committee which consists of local residents whose mission is to identify opportunities within the Village for the preservation of natural open space resources and also advises the Board of Trustees on how open space within the Village should be utilized and how the Village may be able to fund the acquisition of additional parcels.

Airmont is located within an area that is in close proximity to a number of excellent parks that provide residents with a variety of recreational opportunities. There are currently six (6) state parks within a half hour's drive of the Village, including Harriman State Park, Sterling Forest State Park and Bear Mountain State Park, which are large natural reserves that provide for swimming, camping, hunting, backpacking, biking and a variety of other activities. There are also seven (7) parks maintained by Rockland County that are located within the Town of Ramapo that are all within a half hour drive of the Village. Two (2) County parks are located within the Village (See **TABLE II-5**).

The Town of Ramapo has recently acquired new land and recreational facilities within the Village of Airmont such as the Swim and Tennis Facility at Rustic Brook and Camp Scuffy. Since the Village is within the Town of Ramapo, Village residents are eligible to participate in all recreational opportunities offered by the Town at the same rates as all Town residents. A complete list of Town parks located within the Village is shown in **TABLE II-6**. In addition to park facilities, camps and two (2) swimming pool complexes, the Town also maintains the Ramapo Cultural Arts Center, Joseph T. St. Lawrence Community Health and Sports Center, and an Equestrian Center. Town and County recreation facilities are also supplemented by recreational facilities of local school districts.

Town programs are popular and in most cases there is enough capacity to meet the needs in most areas. It had been determined in 2000 that additional field space for team sports was necessary to relieve some scheduling problems<sup>4</sup>. The Town has recently opened Torne Valley Sports Complex in nearby Hillburn to address this demand. In addition to turf fields, this complex features a community center with racquetball courts, basketballs courts, and a running track.

The Town of Ramapo also owns land within the Village that has remained unimproved. Much of this land is located within the floodplain and was acquired through dedication as part of the subdivision review process before the Village was formed. These parcels may represent opportunities to extend conservation areas, or create passive open space within the Village.

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<sup>4</sup> According to the Town of Ramapo Parks and Recreation Department website.

**TABLE II-5: ROCKLAND COUNTY PARKS WITHIN THE TOWN OF RAMAPO**

Name	Village	Acreage	Facilities Offered
Dater Mountain Nature Park	Sloatsburg	350.5	Hiking
Eleanor Burlingham Memorial Park	Sloatsburg	45	Fishing, canoeing, bird watching and hiking.
Flat Rock Park	Hillburn	1	Fishing, canoeing, and wild life observation
Kakiat Park	Suffern	353	Hiking, Horseback riding, picnicking, fishing and guided tours
Monsey Glen Park	Airmont	25	Hiking Trails
Samuel Fisher / Mount Ivy Park	Pomona	272	Hiking, Wildlife observation
Schwartz Park	Airmont	11	Wildlife Preserve

Source: Rockland County Parks Commission, 2005

**TABLE II-6: TOWN PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES WITHIN AIRMONT**

Name	Location	Acreage	Facilities Offered
Saddle River Pool	Saddle River Road	13	Swimming
Ramapo Tennis and Swim Facility	Rustic Drive	10	Swimming, tennis courts
Camp Scuffy	Christmas Hill Road	25	3 multi-purpose buildings, a swimming pool, mini-golf, tennis courts, basketball courts, soccer and baseball fields
Clark Recreation Facility	Campbell Avenue	18	Tennis Courts, bocce, shuffleboard, picnic area, basketball courts, playgrounds
Lorna Lane Park	Lorna Lane	9	Basketball Court, children's playground
Dawn Lane Park	Dawn Lane	12	Playground, footpath , naturally preserved area
Fred Rella Athletic Field	Annette Lane	11	Baseball fields
Besen Park	Besen Parkway	3.5	Baseball fields, basketball courts, playground

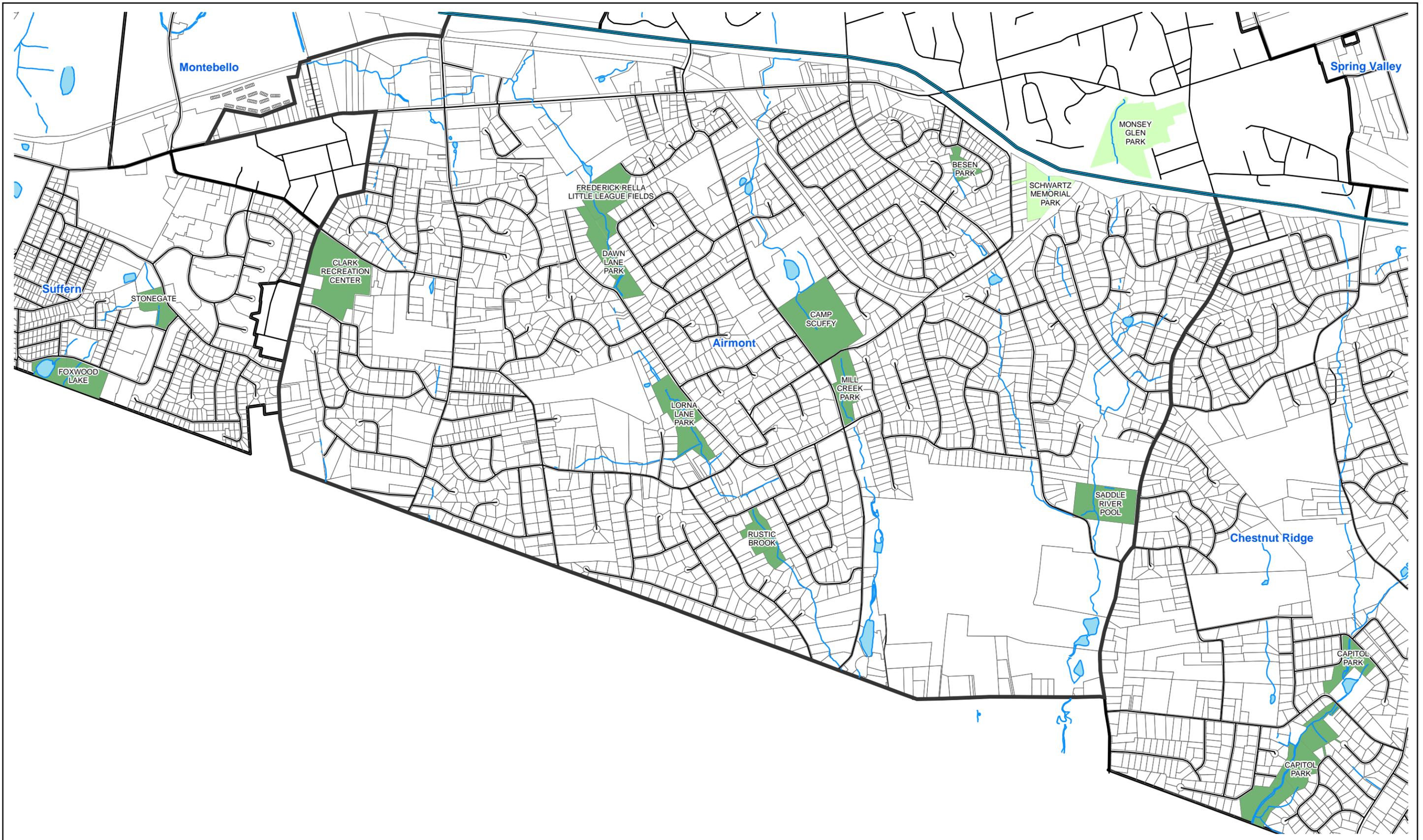
Source: Town of Ramapo Department of Parks and Recreation, 2006

## 2. Topography and Soils

According to the Rockland County Soil Survey compiled by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Village's terrain can be generally characterized as gently to moderately rolling topography. Approximately 75% of the Village has slopes between 0 and 10% and only approximately 12.5% of the Village has slopes of greater than 15%. Elevations in the Village range from 290 feet to 640 feet.

The soils most common in Airmont are classified as Wethersfield Series consisting of very deep, well drained soils formed in reddish glacial till derived mainly from Triassic sandstone, shale, and conglomerates. The soils are typically found on smooth ridges on uplands. Slopes range from 0 to 25 percent. Wethersfield soils are very deep and well drained with a dense substratum. Permeability is moderate in the upper part and slow to very slow in the lower part. The water table commonly is perched above the substratum at a depth of 1.5 to 2.5 feet from February to April.

Rock outcrops appear as ledges on side slopes and as angular and pointed blocks on ridge crests and hilltops. Rock outcrops are dominantly basalt, red sandstone, conglomerates or shale. Slopes and shallowness to bedrock are the main development limitations of Wethersfield soils.



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Note: This map is for general planning purposes only.  
 Source: New York State Department of Transportation,  
 Rockland County GIS, Turner/Geneslaw, Inc.

AUGUST 2008



- |                       |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Parcels               | Municipal Boundaries |
| Rockland County Parks | NYS Thruway          |
| Town Parks            | Roads                |
| Waterbodies           | Streams/Rivers       |



**PARKS & RECREATION**  
*AIRMONT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN*  
 Village of Airmont, Rockland County  
 New York

### **3. Geology And Water Resources**

#### **a. Geology**

The Village occurs in the glaciated portion of the Newark Basin of the Piedmont Province of North America. As such, it is underlain by geologic materials ranging in age from youngest to oldest of about 10,000 to 300 million years old.

The younger geologic materials were deposited by glacial ice which invaded the area starting about 30,000 years ago from the north, and that subsequently retreated from the area about 12,000 years ago. These materials consist primarily of clay through boulder-size unconsolidated deposits that were derived through erosion of overburden and bedrock occurring in areas to the north of the Village. These deposits are primarily classified as “till” and “stratified drift”, which reflect the nature of their placement by either glacial ice and meltwater emanating from the glacial ice, respectively. The movement of the glaciers through the area, not only resulted in the deposition of these unconsolidated materials, but also helped shape the local topography, by scouring bedrock surfaces and filling in low-lying areas. The glacial deposits comprise the majority of the parent materials for the naturally occurring overlying soils in the Village.

The bedrock underlying the Village is primarily “sedimentary” in nature, and consists of a vertical sequence, hundreds of feet thick, of reddish-brown, shale and sandstone, and sandstone and conglomerate. The western half of the Village is underlain primarily by conglomerate (a cemented mixture of primarily gravel and cobble size material) belonging to the Hammer Creek Formation, while the eastern half is underlain by conglomerate, sandstone, and shale (cemented mixture of clay through sand size material) belonging to the Brunswick Formation. The bedrock units comprising the respective formations were deposited during the Triassic through Jurassic Periods. Besides the horizontally to sub-horizontally inclined bedding planes which reflect the sedimentary nature of the comprising bedrock units, vertical to sub-vertical “fractures” (breaks and cracks) frequently penetrate the comprising rock layers. These bedrock units constitute the majority of the source materials for the overlying glacial deposits, as reflected by their dominant reddish-brown color.

#### **b. Surface Water**

The naturally-occurring topography or land surface of the Village is primarily reflective of the underlying geologic formations and the processes responsible for their occurrence. Being occupied by some of the higher elevation areas (in excess of 600 feet above mean sea level) in the Piedmont Province of Rockland County, almost all of the land in the Village occupies the headwaters of one of four watersheds. These watersheds are identified as that of the Masonicus Brook, Ramsey Brook, the East and West Branches of the Saddle River, and an unnamed tributary of the Mahwah River. All of the corresponding streams, with the exception of the unnamed tributary, flow south into Bergen County, New Jersey.

Water in the streams and wetlands occurring in the Village is derived from precipitation runoff and natural ground-water discharge (“baseflow”). As such, local land use can affect the quantity and quality of water in these resources. Currently, the conditions of these resources are of good quality. For instance, the East and West branches of the Saddle River have been designated by the State of New Jersey, just south of the Village border as being “wild trout” streams. This designation attests to the quality of the local water to be of adequate conditions to support indigenous fish which are considered to be representative of some of the more environmentally sensitive biota in the region. The maintenance of such conditions is typically contingent upon

adequate vegetative buffers (50 to 100 feet wide), adequate baseflow, and thermal refuges (stream bed seeps from ground water).

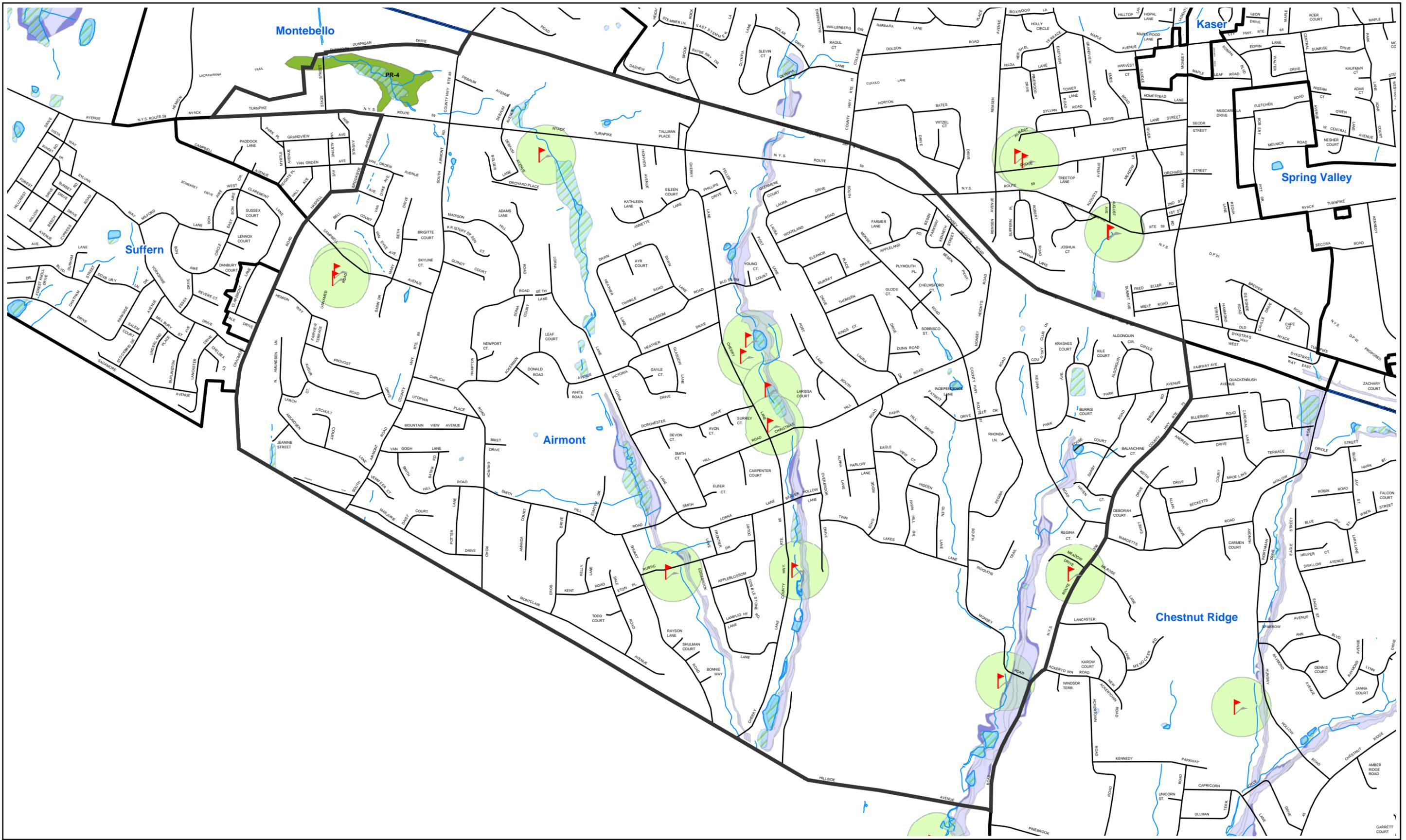
The main aquifer underlying the Village and tapped by many private and public wells (United Water New York) consists of the sedimentary bedrock units (shale, sandstone and conglomerate) of the Brunswick Formation, which generally underlie all of the unconsolidated materials occurring in the Village. This “rock” aquifer relies primarily on precipitation infiltration both directly and through the overburden, accumulated storm-water runoff (e.g., floodplains and local wetlands), and man-made features (e.g., dry wells and septic systems) originating within the County and the Village for recharge.

Recharge to the aquifer underlying the Village is derived from infiltration of precipitation and runoff, and constitutes a fraction of overall amount of ground-water recharge. Ground-water recharge consists of the amount of precipitation and storm water runoff which infiltrates below the “root zone” of the local vegetation. Some of the ground-water recharge will move laterally through the local geologic formations and possibly “daylight” in local wetlands and surface-water bodies (“baseflow”), while some will continue vertically downward until it is realized as “aquifer recharge.” As a result, generally only a fraction of ground-water recharge is available as aquifer recharge. Previous studies by the County indicate that average recharge rate for the bedrock aquifer underlying the Village is about 200,000 gallons per day per square mile (gpd/mi<sup>2</sup>). This reported value is based on “average” hydrologic conditions (normal precipitation amounts and patterns), and reflective of the land usage (e.g., amounts of impervious surface and storm water management techniques) existing at the time of the evaluations. Consequently, variations in hydrologic conditions and future development in the Village can affect local ground-water recharge which in turn can affect local aquifer recharge.

The amount of ground-water recharge available in a particular area is dependent on several factors. One of the more important determining factors is the prevailing land use and land cover (LULC). Another important factor controlling ground-water recharge is the type of soil underlying an area. The type of soil controls in part the ability of precipitation runoff to infiltrate beyond the root zone of the local vegetation and into the underlying geologic formations. Besides the LULC and soil type, the amount of ground-water recharge available for a particular area is also dependent on the local climate. The climate reflects the average annual precipitation, temperature, and wind velocity for a particular area, which when considered together can control the amount of precipitation that is ‘not available as ground-water recharge due to its loss to evaporation and plant transpiration processes (i.e., evapotranspiration).

### **c. Ground Water**

Water demands for the Village are primarily met by the public community water supply provided by United Water New York (UWNY) and in a few instances, individual private wells. The UWNY supply is developed entirely from the surface-water and ground-water resources occurring within Rockland County. UWNY currently does not have access to water sources outside of the County for water supply purposes. Though none of its surface-water supply is located in the Village, three (3) of its ground-water supply wells are located in the Village (See **Figure 4: Water Resources**). All three of these wells are capable of relatively high yields, on the order of several hundred gallons per minute (gpm) each. Each of these wells in turn derives its supply from ground-water resources occurring in the Village and as such can potentially be impacted by local changes in recharge and water quality. Protection of the quantity and quality of these resources is often considered an appropriate tool for protecting a water supply (i.e., well head and aquifer protection). Besides the UWNY wells, several large capacity private wells also



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Note: This map is for general planning purposes only.  
 Source: New York State Department of Transportation,  
 Rockland County GIS, Turner/Geneslaw, Inc.

AUGUST 2008



- |                 |                      |                |                                |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| NYSDEC Wetlands | FEMA 100-Year Flood  | NYS Thruway    | Public Community Water Supply  |
| NWI Wetlands    | FEMA 500-Year Flood  | Roads          | 500' Wellhead Protection Areas |
| Waterbodies     | Municipal Boundaries | Streams/Rivers |                                |



**SURFACE WATER RESOURCES**  
 AIRMONT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
 Village of Airmont, Rockland County  
 New York

exist in the Village and are sources of water for numerous users (e.g., Camp Scuffy, Camp Regesh). Based on the respective locations of these wells and relative yields, they are all anticipated to tap the local bedrock aquifer. Finally, numerous private residential wells are located throughout the Village (e.g., Provost Road area, Shuart Road area). Most of these wells are also anticipated to tap the local bedrock aquifer. Given the local geologic conditions and typical related well-construction considerations, most of the wells in the Village are anticipated to be approximately 100 to over 300 feet deep.

As previously discussed, the water supply for the Village is developed entirely from the ground-water and surface-water resources occurring within Rockland County. Of these sources, the majority of the ground-water supply is developed from wells tapping aquifers which underlie the Village. As such, hydrologic and land use changes which affect recharge mechanisms available to these sources can impact the quantity of supply available for use by UWNY and the local private wells. Given this relationship, the potential impacts of current zoning and future land use changes on ground-water recharge should be considered relative to Village land use ordinances. Specifically, ordinances geared towards maintaining and/or enhancing ground-water recharge (i.e., 0% loss of recharge) should be considered. These can include the use of storm water recharge basins, promotion of pervious surfaces and limitations on impervious surface areas associated with new and rebuilt construction.

In addition, land use can impact quality as well as quantity, of a ground-water supply. Each of the wells in the Village can be expected to draw water from portions of the local bedrock aquifer extending several hundred to over 1,000 feet away. As such, land use ordinances focused on controlling activities that can potentially impact the underlying ground water, can help protect a community's public and private wells. Airmont, similarly to other surrounding municipalities, regulates development in and around its wetlands and water courses. Chapter 206 of the Village Code prohibits a number of activities including drainage, excavation, and development of any kind within 100 feet of the boundary of such resources unless a permit is obtained.

#### **4. Endangered Wildlife and Plants**

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Natural Heritage Program reported that there are no known occurrences of rare or state-listed animals, plants or other significant habitats within the Village of Airmont or in its immediate vicinity.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This information should not be substituted for on-site field surveys that may be required for individual project environmental impact assessment.

## **E. HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

The Village of Airmont has a number of older, historic homes, buildings and landscapes reminiscent of its agricultural heritage. These homes as well as outbuildings, stone walls and other features provide the community with its own unique character and sense of place. While there is an awareness among residents as to this historic character no structures have been formally designated “historic” on State or National Register of Historic Places.

Several sandstone houses along Cherry Lane date back to the eighteenth century. The DeBaun Mill site, behind the Waterwheel Restaurant, contains a fully intact grist mill.

Clark Park was originally the summer home of the Clark family who founded the Avon Cosmetics Company. The house and property were donated to the Town of Ramapo for recreation purposes.

The Dogwoods Homestead, located to the rear of Ramapo Town Hall, was designed and constructed by author, economist, and philosopher, Ralph Borsodi in the 1920's. This model of cooperative living communities which originally consisted of an enclave of five buildings was built utilizing native field stone.<sup>6</sup>

Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, located at the corner of Church Road and Airmont Road, was built by a congregation of Palatine Germans who settled in Ramapo in 1713. The congregation was incorporated in Rockland County in March 1855 and the present building was constructed later that year.

Valentine House is located on Cherry Lane and some sections are over a century old. The site contains three (3) Colonial style dwellings. The Village has recently acquired this site for use as a Village Hall.

While the Village does not have a process for designation, Rockland County is a participant in the Certified Local Government (CLG) program, a status which it obtained in 2002 upon recommendation from the New York State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service, and can designate properties as historic. The CLG program consists of grants and technical assistance provided to support local historic preservation efforts. In order to participate, a local government is required to adopt a local law that meets certain standards and to establish a qualified preservation board. Instead of requiring that Rockland County have the power to approve or disapprove of demolitions and new construction affecting designated historic properties, as is the case for cities, towns and villages, the New York State guidelines make special requirements for County CLGs. The New York State guidelines specify that each county CLG must, at least, have the power to review and comment upon all undertakings that might affect historic properties and to report to the pertinent county agency or municipality whenever the county is called upon to formulate planning advice concerning actions that may affect historic properties.

The main functions of the Rockland County Historic Preservation Board are to: provide advice and guidance to property owners and government agencies concerning historic preservation issues, recommend designation of properties and historically sensitive areas as worthy of preservation, and participate in and support the nomination of worthy properties to the State and

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<sup>6</sup> Rockland Historical Society, 1994.

National Registers of Historic Places.<sup>7</sup> In order to be eligible for designation on the County Register, properties must be, “Associated with persons, events, physical design, broad cultural patterns, archeology or natural events significant to the development of the county, and which significance was achieved at least fifty years or more ago”<sup>8</sup>.

## **F. UTILITIES**

### **1. Electricity**

Orange and Rockland Electric & Gas provide electricity and gas to residences and businesses within the Village of Airmont. They have recently upgraded the Tallman Substation on Airmont Road which is projected to significantly improve the electric delivery system reliability in the area. The additional capacity will also function as a backup for adjacent communities in the event that the need arises.

### **2. Cable Television and Land-line Telephone**

Cable television, land-line telephone and recently approved broad-band services are available to all residents and businesses by a range of options. Service can be obtained from private carriers based on the individual needs of each customer.

### **3. Cellular Telephone Service**

Cellular telephone service currently requires the presence of an antenna to send receive and / or boost and re-transmit signals. Currently there are two cell towers located within the Village of Airmont and a number of towers are located outside the Village which provide partial coverage extending into the Village. The existing towers are located at Airmont Lutheran Cemetery on Airmont Road and at the Gates of Zion Cemetery on Saddle River Road. Traditionally towers have been viewed as obtrusive and detrimental to the local landscape. However, recently advances in technology have allowed for the construction of stealth towers which are constructed to minimize impacts to the landscape as much as possible. The Village places a high level of importance on the appearance of these and other large utility structures and the need for them to be as unobtrusive as possible to the local landscape and local residents.

### **4. Water Supply**

Water in the Village is primarily provided by a network of pipes in the streets which are maintained by United Water New York. The company is a subsidiary of United Water Resources which is one of the nation’s largest water suppliers. The company supplies water to approximately 266,000 people in Rockland County.<sup>9</sup> The water supply come from a series of wells and surface water resources throughout the County. Due to the interconnectivity in municipal water service the Rockland County Health Department (RCDOH) has taken a lead roll in determining the availability of this resource. According to information provided by RCDOH United Water is capable of supplying 48.5 million gallons per day of water to the County and the current demand on the system is 47.5 million gallons per day. This equates to 98% of the total available supply.

Since the resource is shared by all municipalities in the County, the Village of Airmont does not have total control over the allotment of water that is available for any single municipality in the

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<sup>7</sup> Rockland County Historic Preservation Board website: [www.co.rockland.ny.us/planning/historic\\_board.htm](http://www.co.rockland.ny.us/planning/historic_board.htm)

<sup>8</sup> “Rules and Regulations of the County of Rockland Historic Preservation Board”, adopted November 2005.

<sup>9</sup> United Water New York website. 3/07.

system. However this plan does not recommend any changes in the zoning code that would result in the increase in demand for water at the Village level. If the remaining undeveloped land within the Village were to be developed in accordance with current zoning it would result in the build out of approximately 283 homes and 950,500 square feet of commercial development ( See Build Out analysis on page 23). It can be assumed that any new development within the Village would request to be hooked into the public water supply. Therefore, this new development would result in additional 185,600 gallons per day of water demand.

## **5. Sewer Service**

Sanitary sewer service is provided to the Village through a series of pipes, ranging from 8 to 27 inches in diameter, operated by Rockland County Sewer District #1. Village effluent is collected in the local system and conveyed to trunk lines which then convey sewage to a treatment plant located in the Town of Orangetown. The local collection system is regulated and operated by the Town of Ramapo Sewer Department. The County Sewer District operates the treatment plant as well as 22 pump stations, one screening facility, 530 miles of pipes and over 16,000 manholes . The Sewer District encompasses approximately 73 square miles in most of the Town of Ramapo and Town of Clarkstown. The Rockland County Sewer District Treatment Plant has a current capacity of 28.9 million gallons per day.

The sewer collection system located within the Village must not only accommodate effluent produced in the Village but also must incorporate flows from the unincorporated Town of Ramapo west of Airmont as well as the Villages of Montebello, Wesley Hills, and portions of Pomona. Numerous complaints have been received by the Village with regard to an overflow condition which has occurred several times on South Monsey Road near the intersection with Christmas Hill Road. As a result the spills and the complaints, the Sewer District has spent \$300,000 to upgrade a siphoning mechanism on South Monsey Road according to the County Sewer Commissioner and a second phase of the project is planned for later this year. The proposal calls for a new siphon along the trunk main east of the South Monsey Road problem area in order to increase the capacity of the system. Additionally, the district is studying the possibility of realigning pipes which flow into the problematic manhole and the overall capacity of the system.

The Sewer District's Collection System Evaluation Report shows that inflow and infiltration into the system is currently a major problem causing occasional overflows of the system during heavy rain events. Currently the County's Sewer Use Law prohibits the discharge of any storm water, surface water, groundwater, roof runoff, cellar drains, subsurface drainage, excessive infiltration, cooling water or unpolluted industrial waters to any sanitary sewer. Over the last five years, approximately \$5 million in remedial work has been done to identify and prevent infiltration and inflow into the system. Additional identification and reduction of inflow and infiltration as well as system repairs such as those mentioned above will be completed over the next ten years.<sup>10</sup>

When additional sewerage is generated above that projected in the original design of the system, the Rockland County Sewer District can assess a fee for the additional usage. These fees can then be used to upgrade the system or otherwise provide for the additional demand. The two senior citizen residential developments in the Village were assessed such a fee because of their higher density. Impact fees for developments which propose to expand the district or which will cause increased hydraulic or treatment demands than would a development that would comply with the existing zoning are currently assessed \$1,800 per unit.

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<sup>10</sup> Collection System Evaluation and Engineering Report for Order on Consent Compliance. RCSD No. 1, June 2007.

## G. CIRCULATION

### 1. Transportation Network

The Village's transportation network is made up primarily of State Route 59 and a series of local neighborhood roads with one moving lane in each direction. Route 59 is a State highway which serves as the main thoroughfare for the Village and its only major east-west road. Route 59 generally has one lane for travel in each direction with a turning lane in the center. Additional turning lanes are present at intersections and at entrances to larger commercial plazas. There are four main north-south roads serving the Village all of which are County highways; Airmont Road (County Highway 89), Cherry Lane (County Highway 85), New County Road, also known as South Monsey Road (County Highway 81) and Saddle River Road (County Highway 73). (See **Figure 5: Transportation Network**)

The New York State Thru-way (Interstate 87/287) runs along the northern border of the Village with an interchange onto Airmont Road immediately north of the Village.

**TABLE II-7** shows accident data which was obtained from the Town of Ramapo Police Department for major intersections along Route 59. The table illustrates that Airmont Road by far experiences the highest number of accidents both annually and in total over the four (4) year period.

**TABLE II-7: ACCIDENT DATA**

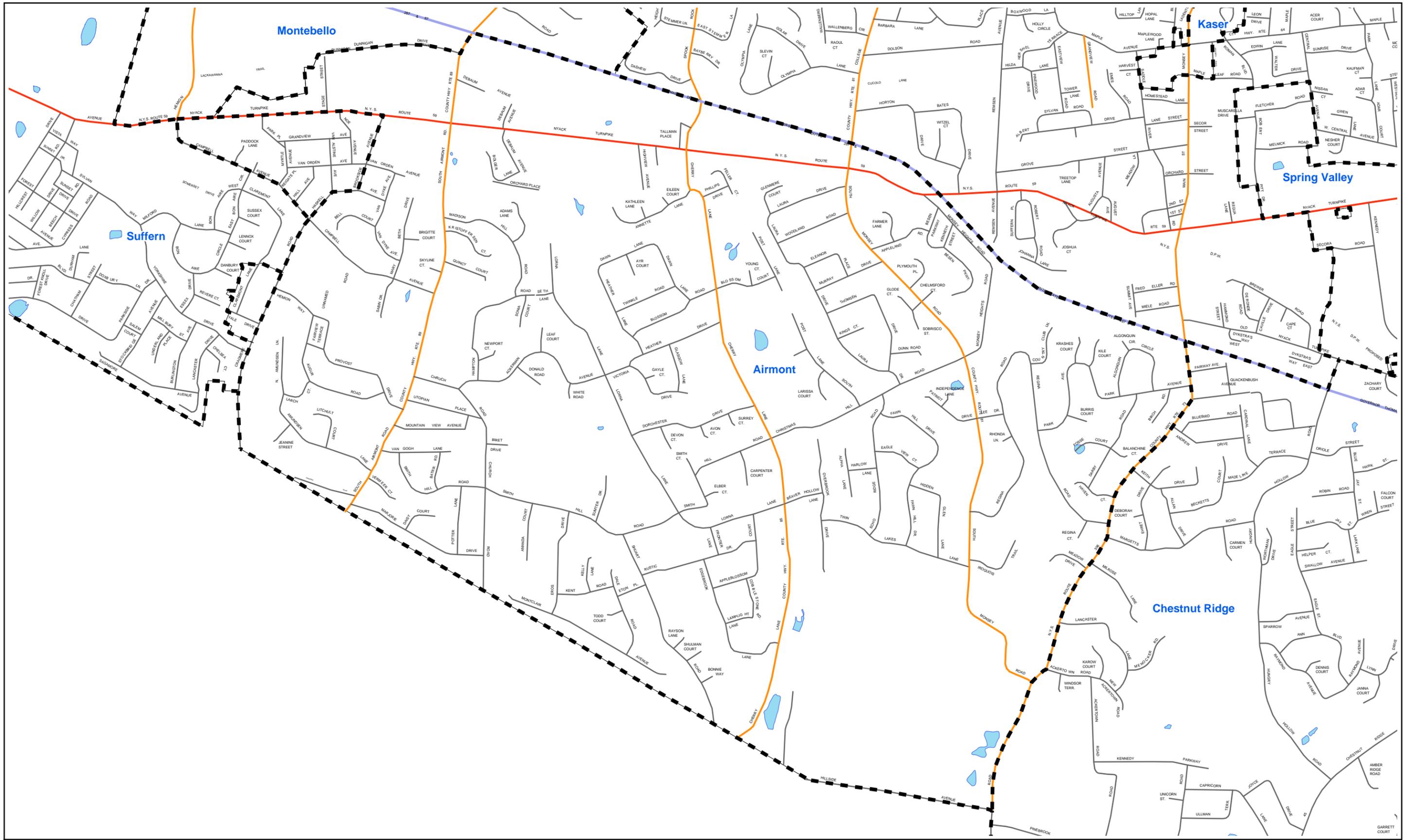
Intersection with Route 59	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Airmont Road	29	17	15	19	18
Spook Rock Road / Cherry Lane	16	2	6	6	3
New County Road / College Road	2	1	1	3	1

Source: Town of Ramapo Police Department

The Village has a contract with the Town of Ramapo Department of Highways to clean and plow its local roads as well as for the maintenance of all local storm drains. The Town also advises on paving projects and completes the work at the expense of the Village.

The New York Metropolitan Transportation Council prepares a five-year comprehensive Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) which identified \$31 billion in proposed federally funded transportation improvement projects in the New York metropolitan region. The current TIP which is proposed for implementation from 2006-2010 recommends the following improvements within the Village of Airmont or which may impact Village residents:

- Add turning lanes along Route 59 for 3/10 of a mile as it approaches the intersection with Airmont Road.
- Creation of a bicycle and pedestrian trail in Monsey Glen Park extended to Central Avenue in the Town of Ramapo.



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 Source: New York State Department of Transportation,  
 Rockland County GIS, Turner/Geneslaw, Inc.

AUGUST 2008



- NYS Thruway
- State Route 59
- County Road
- Local Road
- Municipal Boundaries
- Waterbodies
- Villages



**TRANSPORTATION NETWORK**  
*AIRMONT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN*  
 Village of Airmont, Rockland County  
 New York

- Implementation of the Rockland County Commute Alternatives Plan focusing on strategies to reduce congestion thereby improving mobility and air quality.
- Provide shuttle bus service within the Town of Ramapo to rail and ferry stop locations.
- Replace 400 temporary parking spaces at the Monsey Drive-In with a new County-owned Park and Ride facility.

Efficient circulation is key for a municipality to be able to continue to attract quality development. Both people and goods need to be able to travel both within its borders and to regional destinations. The Village of Airmont is conveniently accessible by a number of major regional roadways such as the New York State Thru-way and Route 59. Other major roads such as Route 202, Route 306, the Palisades Interstate Parkway and New Jersey Route 17 are also easily accessible. The Village is located in close proximity to both the Metro-North Railroad via the Suffern station and the Bergen County Rail Road, operated by New Jersey Transit, via two stations located in Ramsey, New Jersey. Local bus service is provided by County-run Transport of Rockland (TOR) which provides intra-county service. The County also provides express bus service via TOR’s Tappan Zee Express to Tarrytown and White Plains in Westchester County. **TABLE II-8** shows the means of travel Village residents use to get to work (2000). Based on the table, it is clear the vast majority of workers drive alone to work leading to both local and regional congestion and delays. More recent transportation studies published by the County show that travel time to work has slightly decreased since 2000 which is commensurate with similar increases in the use of public transportation.

**TABLE II-8: COMMUTING TO WORK, 2000**

	#	%
<b>Workers 16 years and over</b>	<b>3,629</b>	<b>100</b>
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	2,820	77.7
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	235	6.5
Public transportation (including taxicab)	357	9.8
Walked	29	0.8
Other means	15	0.4
Worked at home	173	4.8
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	37.9	-

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

Route 59, primarily used for intra-county travel, between the Village of Suffern and Nyack has been identified by the County’s Master Plan as having major roadway capacity constraints. The Plan cites bottlenecks and a lack of integrated local land use decisions as leading to these problems.

## **2. Tappan Zee Bridge / I-87 Corridor Project**

It has not been determined exactly what the Tappan Zee Project will entail but any improvements or expanded capacity will have an impact on the Village of Airmont. Currently there are six alternatives undergoing environmental review in the form of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Each of the proposals has already undergone review by the Westchester-Rockland Tappan Zee Futures Task Force and two rounds of public meetings. The project is a collaborative effort of the NYS Department of Transportation, the NYS Thruway Authority, and Metro-North Railroad.

The alternatives including combinations of alternatives fit into four basic categories of improvements: Travel demand management/ transportation system management strategies, New/Improved transit services, Corridor improvements, and Hudson River crossing improvement alternatives.

The plan emphasizes the implementation of a Bus Rapid Transit service that would provide service between Suffern and Port Chester in Westchester County and studied a number of potential Commuter Rail Transit options.

Roadway improvements as part of the proposal included additional Route I-87/287 interchanges in Rockland County, with one possibly being constructed directly onto Rt. 59 just east of Collage Road in the Town of Ramapo. This would have a number of traffic implications for the Village including the potential to reduce congestion at intersection of Route 59 and Airmont Road due to the re-routing of NYS Thru-way bound traffic.

The Village should review the DEIS when it is complete and provide any appropriate feedback it may have. Residents should also be made aware of the proposals and their potential impacts on the Village.

### **III. DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL**

#### **A. BUILD OUT ANALYSIS**

Buildout analysis is a useful planning tool that can illustrate what is likely to happen if the community grows to the full extent allowed under the present zoning regulations. This type of analysis makes it possible to see what pattern of development is likely in the future and elected officials can evaluate impacts, discuss alternatives, and make decisions based on desirability of this pattern of development. For this comprehensive plan update we have performed a zoning district analysis which looks at the aggregate of developable land in each zone on each parcel to produce an approximate number of new homes that could be built if the land was used to its capacity. This particular analysis does not take into consideration wetlands, steep slopes, or other environmental constraints that would otherwise limit development of the land, but gives a worst case scenario.

Municipalities can use buildout analysis to not only to assess future development possibilities but to determine the adequacy of infrastructure and possible changes in future traffic patterns as well.

#### **B. RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS**

With the Village's large population increase of just over 10% between 2000 and 2005 there is some concern among residents as to how much more development the Village will experience.

The build-out analysis shows that approximately 101 residential dwellings could be built on lots that are currently vacant under the current zoning regulations. Very few lots exist in the Village where a major subdivision could take place.

Some existing developed lots within the Village also have additional potential for development. Lots that are oversized by more than twice the minimum lot size for its particular zoning district have the potential to be subdivided. According to the build out analysis an additional 57 single family residential dwellings could fit on residential lots that are oversized. This figure does not take a number of factors such as environmental restraints or street access into consideration and some lots are not suitable for any additional development.

Thirdly, the Village should be aware that other development possibilities exist on lots that are currently used in part for other activities such as cemeteries. Build out analysis shows that over 100 houses could be constructed on such properties within the Village. While the potential for development on these parcels may not currently exist, the future may bring about unforeseen changes that could result in freeing up of a portion of this land. (See **TABLE V-1**)

**TABLE III-1: RESIDENTIAL BUILDOUT ANALYSIS**

<b>Total houses that could be built on vacant residential parcels according to current zoning by Zone</b>	
R-15 Zoning District:	2
R-25 Zoning District:	19
R-35 Zoning District:	19
R-40 Zoning District:	40
RR-50 Zoning District:	21
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>101</b>
Additional houses that could fit on developed parcels oversized by more than twice the minimum zoning (+)	57
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>158</b>
Houses that could fit on unused cemetery land and privately owned camps (+)	125
<b>*Total additional houses that could be built:</b>	<b>283</b>

\*This total is a worst case scenario and does not take environmental constraints or other lot conditions into account. Many lots are oddly shaped, lack street access, or contain wetlands or steep slopes and would not be able to support this number of structures.

Based on the analysis, if all 101 vacant lots were developed with single family homes and the additional 57 single family homes that could fit on oversized lots were constructed the population of the Village would increase by approximately 506 residents based on the average household size of 3.2 which was reported by the 2000 U.S. census. This would represent a 5.88% increase from the 2005 population estimate of 8,600. In the unlikely event that unused cemetery land and privately owned camps in the Village were also developed according to the current zoning the total increase in population would be approximately 906 residents. This demonstrates that at full build out under the current zoning the Village’s population would increase by approximately 10.5% from the 2005 population estimate of 8,600 residents regardless of when it occurs.

### **C. NON RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICTS**

The Route 59 Corridor in Airmont is generally comprised of contiguous property along Route 59 from the eastern lot line of the Indian Rock Shopping Center Property to just past the intersection of Monsey Heights Road in the east. The corridor extends from the New York State Thruway on the north to the rear of the first tier of properties south of Route 59. (See **Figure 2: Route 59 Corridor Map**)

#### **1. VC Village Center Zone**

Currently there are two small vacant parcels remaining in the Village Center Zone totaling approximately 2.3 acres. Both are just east of the Route 59 and Airmont Road intersection. Current uses allowed in this zone include restaurants (including fast food), taverns, medical offices, retail and service stores, automotive repair and rental facilities, hotels and motels,

libraries, museums, and schools of special instruction. This zone is intended to allow for more intensive and diverse uses and accommodate slightly larger buildings because it is located on the north side of Route 59 and does not back up to residential dwellings. Additional guidelines stress the importance of a physically integrated commercial district with an emphasis on smaller structures, good design, pedestrian linkages, and landscaping.

## **2. NS Neighborhood Shopping Zone**

There are currently two large vacant parcels in this zone totaling approximately 16.7 acres. The larger lot is located behind Chase Bank at the southwest corner of Route 59 and Airmont Road, the smaller lot is known currently as Scenic International and is located just west of Highview Avenue on the south side of Route 59. This zone is intended for smaller community-based convenience uses and require limited business hours and natural buffers because the majority of properties back up to residential neighborhoods.

## **3. PO Professional Office**

There are currently no vacant lots in the PO Zone. Several lots remain as non-conforming residential uses. Potential exists for these small narrow lots to be combined at some point in favor of larger development, as was the original intent when the area was zoned. Uses allowed by right in this zone are limited to professional and business offices with a few other uses such as banks, funeral chapels, and restaurants permitted conditionally by the Planning Board.

## **4. LO Laboratory Office**

There are a number of vacant properties currently in the LO zone. One parcel located east of the intersection of Route 59 and Spook Rock Road sandwiched between two light industrial uses, is approximately 4.5 acres. The remaining vacant parcels are located on the far west end of Route 59 on and around Stage Street. The largest of the parcels is 5 acres, but currently an approved office development is under construction on this parcel. Uses in this zone include all of the uses allowed in the PO zone as well as laboratories, research facilities, medical clinics with other more intense uses allowed by conditional permit by the Planning Board.

## **5. PI Planned Industrial Zone**

There is currently no vacant land in the PI zone. Uses in this zone include all of those allowed by right in the LO Zone as well as industrial uses, and warehouses. This zone is primarily occupied by Spook Rock Industrial Park.

## **6. RSH Residential Specialized Housing**

This is a floating zone created to accommodate housing for senior citizens and physically handicapped residents. The zone can only be implemented by special permit of the Village Board in areas zoned NS and VC on lots of adequate size as defined in the zoning code. Currently, due to lot size restrictions, there are only two currently vacant lots that would be eligible for RSH designation which include the lot behind Chase Bank at the southwestern corner of Route 59 and Airmont Road and the property known as “Scenic International” located on the south side of Route 59 between DeBaun Avenue and Highview Avenue.

## **IV. GOALS**

The following planning and development goals have been proposed for the Comprehensive Plan. The goals have been arranged by subject rather than order of priority.

### **Maintain Responsible level of development based on availability of resources and infrastructure**

- Maintain a robust commercial tax base
- As the Village already has a diversity in housing stock, additional residential development should be confined to single family homes at densities consistent with the current zoning code.
- Coordinate planning and development with adjoining Villages and Town of Ramapo.
- Develop lines of communication with providers of all utilities to ensure that they function correctly and are capable of supporting the growth that zoning permits without adversely impacting existing development.

### **Determine the desired architectural look for non-residential development and have it codified so that developers have guidance and the Planning and Architectural Review Boards would only approve applications that are consistent with the law.**

- Improve the appearance of non residential development
- Encourage the formation of a local Chamber of Commerce/ Business Association
- Continue to reduce the negative visual impact of signage and provide for natural / landscaped buffers

### **Preserve and Conserve Existing Natural Resources**

- Improve protection of local wetland areas
- Protect, preserve, and enhance existing stream corridors
- Protect and preserve natural barriers to the New York State Thruway, Route 59, and between residential and non-residential development.

### **Improve Traffic Safety and Circulation**

- Reduce or restrict the number of curb cuts, especially those within close proximity to major intersections
- Evaluate potential alternate routes that may improve circulation around major intersections.
- Encourage development that will have a minimal impact on traffic

## **V. VISION**

The vision for the Village of Airmont is one of a highly desirable and vibrant country- suburban community that is safe, pedestrian friendly and well maintained. The commercial corridor should provide a wide selection of viable and community-based business enterprises accessible to all residents in an aesthetically pleasing and period-consistent architectural environment. Airmont will be characterized by a strong focus on open spaces and recreational areas that is in keeping with a desirable quality of life and preservation of supporting environmental resources for its residents, and that also provides for a seamless connectivity with the Village's commercial corridor and existing senior housing.

## **VI. PLAN**

The Village Plan is based on an overall concept plan that reflects the Village's Vision and Goals. The Plan is divided into two parts which includes the Route 59 Corridor, the economic and civic heart of Airmont, and the predominantly residential area to the south of the corridor.

### **A. CONCEPT PLAN FOR ROUTE 59 CORRIDOR**

The concept plan for the Route 59 Corridor is to maintain a vibrant community based commercial district that offers a variety of goods and services to its residents in an aesthetically pleasing, pedestrian friendly environment.

The Village seeks to attract development of local neighborhood commercial shops and services and professional and business offices that will be frequented, for the most part, by residents and employees from the Village and immediately surrounding communities already using the Route 59 Corridor. The Village should work with the Rockland Economic Development Corporation to attract development that is both appropriate for the specific lot and for the corridor as a whole. The Village should, when appropriate offer incentives to attract these types of desirable developments. These incentives can include an increase of density, a relief from a portion of the use's parking requirements or an increase in allowable Floor Area Ratio. (F.A.R.)

Development should be planned in a way that aims to reduce the number of variances needed to create an economically viable use that meets code guidelines. Variances should only be sought to remedy an extreme hardship and mitigations should be offered help off set any increased negative impacts that are created.

Development should be designed in an aesthetically pleasing manner that incorporates a number of period consistent architectural design elements and landscaping that aims to physically integrate the entire corridor. Pedestrian connections should be incorporated with new and existing development when opportunities arise.

The Village should discourage any additional large regional retail centers or "big box" type developments due to the additional traffic congestion that it would generate and the additional strain on natural resources. These types of developments are not consistent with the Village's stated goals and overall vision.

### **B. CONCEPT PLAN FOR RESIDENTIAL PORTION OF THE VILLAGE**

The area of the Village outside of the Route 59 Corridor is comprised of mainly suburban residential neighborhoods with single family detached homes on lots ranging from about one third acre (15,000 square feet) to just over one acre (50,000 square feet).

The remaining developable parcels include several existing camps, several scattered vacant parcels, cemeteries, and land currently controlled by utility companies.

Since there are few opportunities for development in most areas, there is little reason to suggest changes to the pattern or density of residential development or zoning changes even where existing lot sizes may not fully coincide with the zoning. However, there are some additional

regulations or policies that should be applied to all residential zoning districts to maintain the current residential character of the Village and maintain the safety and welfare of residents.

### **1. Prohibition of Flag Lots**

The Village should discourage the development of homes that propose a shared driveway with additional residences in order to gain road access. This typically is the result of attempting to develop a lot that is either land locked or does not contain adequate street frontage for residential use. Just because a lot is oversized does not necessarily mean it is appropriate for additional development. The Village should also consider setting a distance requirement between each driveway to ensure adequate site distance as well as pedestrian and motorist safety.

### **2. Cluster Development**

Cluster development is a useful tool Planning Boards can use to encourage the preservation of open space. A cluster plan maintains the gross density that is permitted under the zoning, while permitting an increased net density (i.e.: smaller lots) in recognition of the benefit of protecting open space or a sensitive historic or environmental area. The resulting development which will not increase the number of residences permitted by the underlying zoning, but can result in more open space, less environmental impact, more varied housing and save money for both the developer and the Village.

Bulk regulations will have to be adjusted due to the smaller lots. No lot within the clustered subdivision should be smaller than the smallest allowable lot within the Village, 15,000 square feet. While this will not allow for cluster subdivisions within the R-15 Zone, there are only four small areas of R-15 zoning in the Village with little, if any, undeveloped land. Whenever possible, the front setbacks should remain the same as existing surrounding homes to blend the appearance of the clustered development into the existing neighborhood.

## VII. IMPLEMENTATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations reflect the specific changes and improvements necessary to promote the goals, vision, and concept plan for the Village enumerated previously in this document. The proposed pattern of land use is reflected on **Figure 6: Land Use Plan** which follows the recommendations section.

### A. ROUTE 59 CORRIDOR DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Village should pass legislation in order to better codify design guidelines so that they may be more easily enforced and widely understood by property owners and developers. These guidelines should include the regulation of buildings, landscaping and signage in order to create a cohesive, pedestrian scaled, aesthetically pleasing commercial corridor. More specific guidelines will further provide the Planning Board, through the review process, a basis for making informed, consistent decisions about proposed non residential construction within the Village. The review process should be closely coordinated between the Architectural Review Committee and the Planning Board in order to achieve the Village's design objectives.



*A local shopping plaza featuring a brick façade, arcade, awnings and decorative roof structures.  
Image: Town Center Plaza, Kansas City, MO.*

Guidelines should provide property owners and developers ample but specific choices in design elements so buildings do not all look the same, but all fit together to create a visual cohesion. Final design should be reviewed on a case by case basis by the Planning Board as to the appropriateness of the overall detail of the design.

Existing guidelines and regulations should be reviewed to ensure terms are not ambiguous or contradictory and remain applicable.

#### 1. Buildings

Natural building materials such as wood, brick or stone should be used or materials that provide an identical outward appearance may be used pending approval by the Planning Board. Concrete block and prefabricated metal siding should be specifically prohibited within the Neighborhood Shopping and Village Center Zones. Design elements consistent with the American Colonial and American Colonial Revival styles of architecture should be encouraged with other styles being accepted pending review by the Planning Board and Architectural Review Committee. Bright colors and black shall be avoided. Applicants should use decorative details on the façade of the

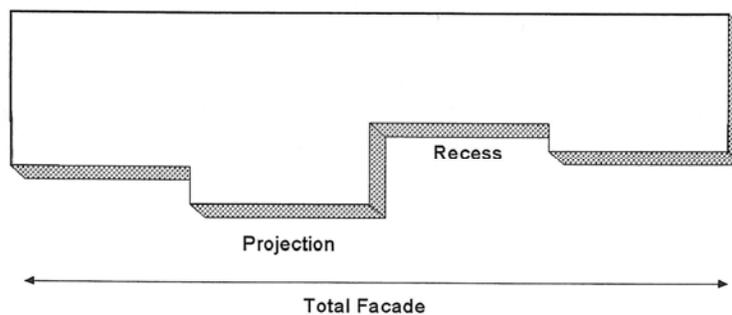
building appropriate to the architectural style being emulated. These details can include but are not limited to shutters, colonial casing, decorative cornices, and awnings.



*A colonial-style shopping plaza on Route 59 featuring clapboard siding, shutters, a hip roof and an arcade in the front. Image by Turner Miller Group*

In order to maintain a pedestrian scaled Village Center, wherever a building frontage over 100' in length is unavoidable, the façade shall be designed to visually reduce the scale and mass of the building. This will be achieved in one of two ways:

- By extending or recessing the façade to break up the flat plane of the building as shown in the diagram below.
- By providing projecting features on the front façade such as awnings, entry areas, arcades and windows with decorative details that make use of patterns and design.



Roof top equipment including air conditioners should be concealed from view of pedestrians and car traffic. Applicants should be encouraged to construct buildings with hipped or gabled roofs. For smaller buildings, less than 4000 square feet on one floor, shed style roofs (gambrel) are acceptable. Other non-flat styles may be deemed appropriate by the Planning Board provided they fit the architectural style of the building as a whole. Non-functioning projections or roof details are acceptable, provided that they look as if they could be functional from the exterior view of the building. Additional architectural embellishments that add visual interest to the roof structure such as dormers, cupolas, clock towers, or other similar elements are encouraged. (See Architectural Definitions in **Appendix A**)

Buildings on corner lots which have at least two front facades visible from the street shall have the architectural design used on the front of the building continue around to the other visible sides.

Any major changes or replacement of a non-residential building façade, except for general maintenance, should come before the Planning Board for review to ensure guidelines are met.

## **2. Sign Regulations**

Signs should also be constructed of natural materials similar to the building to which it is accessory and a similar color scheme should be used. The Planning Board should strictly adhere to sign regulations set forth in Article VIII of the Village's Zoning Code and chain and franchised stores should not be exempt from these rules. The illumination of signs is a concern for many residents that live in close proximity to non-residential zones, the hours that signs are illuminated should be discussed as part of the site plan review process and time restrictions should be included as part of approval.

## **3. Landscaping Requirements**

In addition to regulating the appearance of a structure, it is important to also increase landscaping on each lot. Landscaping can play an important role in the visual character of site development. While it is important to maintain the lush vegetative look of the Village, landscaping also offers a number of environmental benefits such as decreasing impervious surfaces and controlling stormwater runoff. Landscaping is currently required by §210-73 of the Village Zoning Code but regulation is minimal. The Planning Board currently encourages the use of landscaping but enhanced legislative backing is necessary. Landscaping should be required on each street frontage, around unsightly structures such as dumpsters, and on each island within a parking area. Increased landscaping should be used to shield a building's exterior lighting from nearby residential areas and to shield parking lot lighting or vehicle headlights from shining onto roadways. Vegetative buffers should be created between all non-residential buildings and any sensitive environmental area such as a stream corridor or wetland.

An applicant should use a variety of vegetation to protect against disease and ensure that landscaping will look attractive in both summer and winter months.

# **B. PROPOSED ZONING DISTRICT REGULATION MODIFICATIONS**

## **1. Non-Residential Zones**

The area on the north side of Route 59 from the western border of the Village to the Village owned wetlands property should have its zoning changed from LO to PO. This would eliminate possibility of developing laboratories or research facilities, and medical and dental clinics by right in this area. A number of other uses such as warehouses and hotels which are allowed as conditional uses in the LO Zone but not in the PO, require larger lots than are available and would attract a more regional customer base and increased amounts of traffic than is appropriate for this largely residential section of the Village. Medical offices should only be permitted as a conditional use by the Planning Board within the PO Zone so both the Planning Board and the Village's consultants can review the plan and take additional factors that apply to medical offices, such as increased parking and traffic, into account before the proposed use is approved and be sure the development will be appropriate on the selected site.

## **2. Residential Zones**

Based on reported sewer problems and studies which demonstrate the current zoning and development are in line with water supplies, it is recommended that the Village not increase densities within the residential portion of the Village.

### **3. New Zoning**

Recently, large scale private schools with residential components have been developing in and around Rockland County at an increased rate. These developments typically bring with them additional population which has the potential to place a strain on local infrastructure. This has been of some concern to local residents. The Village should create new zoning legislation which accommodates dormitory housing accessory to schools at desired densities and scale consistent with surrounding neighborhoods in order to plan for these types of developments in a responsible manner. These developments should be permitted in all zoning districts.

The Village should require these types of facilities to be on lots of at least 10 acres in order to accommodate such a use. It has been determined that 10 acres is appropriate based on available water and sewer capacity, calculated water recharge rates as described in the section above and is consistent with the resident student density found at a number of other local secondary education institutions. The net lot area of such developments should be calculated with the same deductions for sensitive environmental features as is used in other types of residential developments.

### **C. PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE**

In order to maintain its natural rural character, the Village should encourage developers to preserve as many trees and natural vegetation on a development site as possible, especially along roadways, near sensitive environmental areas and in or adjacent to residential areas.

The Village's Open Space Committee is encouraged to continue to provide feedback and recommendations to the Town of Ramapo regarding the Village's needs for recreation and open space resources.

### **D. PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE WATER RESOURCES**

Implementing measures to negate the loss and possibly even enhance the overall amount of future ground-water recharge in the Village are recommended. The introduction of impervious surfaces (e.g., pavement, and roofs) and the storm-water management techniques that often accompany such development, are generally considered the most deleterious to ground-water recharge. Best management practices ("BMPs") that are directed at conserving and/or enhancing recharge, as well as preserving and improving related water quality should be identified and promoted for use in the future development of those areas of the Village where future development may occur.

To this end the plan recommends the use of retention basins for managing storm-water runoff for newly installed paved areas (e.g., parking lots, driveways and sidewalks) instead of routing to detention basin/surface-water bodies as a preferred BMP for preserving and enhancing ground-water recharge. A retention/infiltration basin differs from a detention basin in that retention basins allow infiltration of collected runoff into the ground-water and/or aquifer recharge regime, whereas a detention basin typically allows no infiltration, with 100 percent of the collected water being lost to a combination of surface-water runoff and evaporation. Of course, necessary BMPs directed at managing the quality of such runoff should also be employed as a precursor to any of

the utilized ground-water recharge preservation BMPs. Similar to retention basins, the use of “dry wells” connected to roofs can also help preserve and enhance ground-water recharge, and typically would not require associated water-quality related BMPs. The benefits to ground-water recharge of using retention basins is recognized by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and discussed in their publication entitled “*Reducing The Impacts Of Stormwater Runoff From New Development*”. Many municipalities in the New York City Metropolitan Area and nearby New Jersey rely on aquifers for their drinking water supply and have been impacted by reductions in ground-water recharge due to increased development. Many have recently adopted ordinances which promote and/or require the use of retention basins and other methods of water-resource management to help slow or possibly reverse these impacts. As an illustration of the potential benefit of these systems, significantly declining water levels in local aquifers were reversed through the use of such basins in Nassau and Suffolk Counties.

By capturing almost all of the precipitation that falls onto the impervious surfaces that exist in a particular area (e.g., rooftop, paved surface) and diverting it into a dry well or retention basin rather than directing it into a storm drain which discharges to a nearby stream, the amount of recharge to the local ground-water system is directly increased.

The Village should provide a mechanism for incorporating and promoting the use of retention basins and similar BMPs (e.g., roof-connected drywells, exfiltration trenches, pervious swales) into its land-use ordinances. The use of these BMPs in connection with the areas proposed for future development, should be considered as part of the future development applications for the respective properties. The applicants could be required to provide design and layout plans in connection with the respective BMP, along with information supporting the ability of the site conditions to afford assimilation of the recharge water. In the event that the “site” conditions were not conducive to supporting the use of these BMPs, nearby “open-space” and park areas could be considered for the siting of these facilities, with those closer to known supply wells being given possible priority. The prioritization of such areas as “ground-water recharge reserves” should be considered, and future land use ordinances directed at their preservation and future use.

The Village should expand its regulations in the Wetlands Law in Chapter 206 of the Village Code to include wetlands mapped on the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) and streams. The law, and related 100’ regulated surrounding area currently only apply to State mapped wetlands which meet the physical characteristics as described in the chapter.

Given the fact that local environmental resources, particularly bed rock aquifers and supply wells, may be impacted by development outside their immediate vicinity, inter-municipal coordination of development project reviews and County 239 Reviews are increasingly important. The Village should closely monitor development which may have a negative impact on regional environmental resources.

## **E. PROPOSED HISTORIC PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Village should conduct a more intensive and thorough cultural resources study in order to more comprehensively understand the historic and significant structures that exist within the Village. The result of this will be a list of “places of distinction”. It may be appropriate to recommend a number of these structures be listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places. Once a list has been completed, it also may be appropriate to propose additional regulations related to the alteration or demolition of such structures.

Short of any formalized action, the Village should also explore ways to encourage the owners of historic properties within the Village to preserve the historic nature of these properties. While the Village may not want to establish formalized historic districts due to the small number and geographic separation of historic properties, it should establish a way for residents who wish to have their home reviewed for possible inclusion on the County, State or National Historic Register to do so. An application for a review by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation could be kept on file at Village Hall and should also be made available on the Village website. Once the Village completes its own cultural resources inventory, this can also be uploaded to the Village’s website to celebrate these properties and promote preservation.

## **F. PROPOSED UTILITY RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Cellular Service**

The Village should continue to encourage Rockland County to create a comprehensive plan to address the issue of cellular communications on a more regional level with each municipality working together to ensure adequate coverage with the least amount of disruption to the local landscape.

At the Village level, the plan suggests provisions be added to §187-4 of the Telecommunications Chapter of the Village Code that incorporates an additional procedural step that requires an applicant to consider the location of any new telecommunications structure (stealth or conventional) on public lands before any other new location.

It is recommended that the Village lower the allowable height of a cell tower intended to be used by a single cellular service provider from 150’ to 110’ with the possibility of construction of a tower that is up to 150’ in height if the service provider can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Planning Board that the additional height will remedy the need for additional towers elsewhere in the Village. An applicant that wishes to construct a cellular tower must demonstrate that the tower can accommodate the infrastructure of other service carriers during the site plan approval process.

Also in order to reduce to the greatest extent possible visual impact from any proposed facility the Village should require all applicants to provide to the Planning Board a graphic analysis of the potential visual impacts. The analysis should include both photographs and computer generated images from several vantage points.

## **2. Sewer System**

The Sewer District's Collection System Evaluation Report reported on multiple improvements within the immediate area of the Village which are intended to improve sewer system function and reduce overflows. The Village should make it a priority to ensure the work that was planned in the report is completed in a timely fashion. Further development within the Village that exceeds the density for which the sewer system was designed is discouraged so existing problems within the system are not exacerbated.

## **3. Community Water Supply**

The Village should be aware of the well head protection area which has been mapped as part of the existing conditions section of this plan (See **Figure 4: Water Resources**) and the sensitivity for potential contamination in these areas. The Village may want to regulate or restrict the storage of toxic chemicals or other substances which have the potential to contaminate groundwater supply.

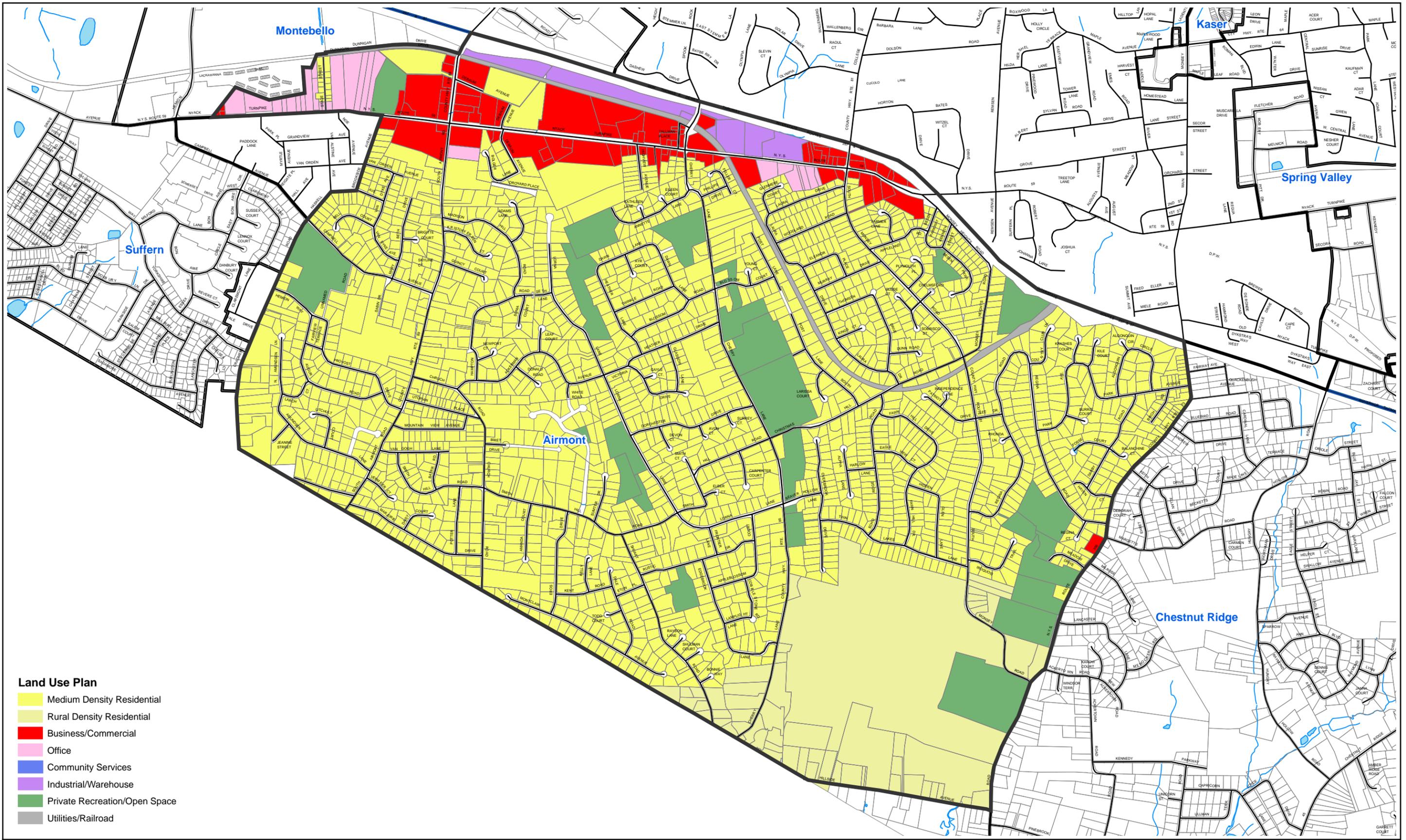
## **G. PROPOSED CIRCULATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Village should make every attempt to reduce number of curb cuts on major roads, particularly in close proximity to intersections and, where appropriate, regulate the number of curb cuts each establishment or plaza may have. Currently the minimum distance is 75' from any intersection and 100' from a signalized intersection.

The Village should pursue intersection improvements which will improve both traffic and pedestrian safety as well as traffic flow. Road connections that have the potential to reduce travel time and, or alleviate congestion around the Route 59 corridor should be encouraged.

## **VIII. CONCLUSION / LIST OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

- Revise definition of ‘Wetland’ in §206-3 to include any such lands designated on the National Wetlands Inventory Maps and streams.
- Authorize the creation of an application for residents who wish to have their home reviewed for possible inclusion on the County, State, or National Historic Register.
- Codify more specific non-residential design guidelines for buildings, landscaping and signage which include the following regulations:
  - Building facades should be constructed of natural materials such as wood, brick or stone or those that provide identical outward appearance pending Planning Board approval.
  - The use of bright colors and black shall be avoided on outer building facades.
  - Buildings over 100’ in length shall be designed to visually reduce the scale (see text for possible techniques).
  - All signs should be constructed using colors and materials similar to that of the building to which it is accessory.
  - Require landscaping on each street frontage as well as on each island within parking lots.
  - Require vegetative buffers between non-residential development and residential zones and any sensitive environmental areas as deemed appropriate by the Planning Board.
- Eliminate Laboratory Office (LO) Zone that exists on the north side of Route 59 from the western border of the Village to the Village owned wetlands property and change zoning to the Professional Office (PO) Zone.
- Allow medical offices in the Professional Office (PO) Zone as a Conditional Use by the Planning Board only.
- The Village should create a new zoning provision which accommodates dormitory housing accessory to schools on lots of at least 10 acres. Additional land should be required for each person residing on the lot and the density of residents should remain similar to the existing zone density of the surrounding neighborhood and zone.
- Require the use of retention basins for managing storm-water runoff for newly installed paved areas instead of routing to detention basin/surface-water bodies as a preferred BMP for preserving and enhancing ground-water recharge.
- Amend §187-4 of the Telecommunications Chapter of the Village Code to require an applicant to consider locating any proposed telecommunications structure on public lands before private property.
- Require all applicants wishing to construct cellular communication towers to submit a visual impact study as part of the site plan approval process.
- Reduce the allowable height of a cell tower intended to be used by a single cellular service provider from 150’ to 110’ with the possibility of construction of a tower that is up to 150’ in height only if the service provider can demonstrate that the additional height will remedy the need for additional towers elsewhere in the Village.
- Regulate the allowable distance between curb cuts on Route 59 and limit the number of curb cuts a plaza or single development may have.

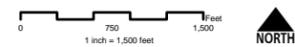


- Land Use Plan**
- Medium Density Residential
  - Rural Density Residential
  - Business/Commercial
  - Office
  - Community Services
  - Industrial/Warehouse
  - Private Recreation/Open Space
  - Utilities/Railroad

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Note: This map is for general planning purposes only.  
 Source: New York State Department of Transportation,  
 Rockland County GIS, Turner/Geneslaw, Inc.

AUGUST 2008



- Parcels
- NYS Thruway
- Waterbodies
- Roads
- Municipal Boundaries
- Streams/Rivers



**LAND USE PLAN**  
**AIRMONT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
 Village of Airmont, Rockland County  
 New York