**City of Beacon Smart Growth Zoning and Land Use Policies**

The City of Beacon Zoning Code, originally approved in 1977, has been substantially revised since the 2007 Comprehensive Plan and 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update adopted smart growth and Greenway principles. As part of the Climate Smart Communities program, the City of Beacon seeks to demonstrate that the following smart growth principles have been incorporated into its local zoning and land-use policies:

**Mix land uses**.

Since 2007, the City has adopted or substantially revised four mixed-use districts to focus new growth in central locations with access to transit, stores, services, and jobs. The Waterfront Development (WD) district was remapped and revised in 2017 as a transit-oriented development district surrounding the Train Station, permitting a multi-level mix of residential and commercial uses above structured Metro-North parking. The Linkage (L) district was created in in 2013 to promote primarily residential development between the Station and Main Street, but also allows a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial uses along the West Main Street section of the district. The Central Main Street (CMS) district was created in 2013 and expanded in 2018. It is designed to mix uses by requiring multi-story buildings and prohibiting first floor residential frontages. Finally, the Fishkill Creek Development (FCD) district was revised in 2017 to require a mix of uses with at least 25 percent of total floor area in nonresidential uses.

**Promote compact building design and cluster development**

All four of the mixed-use districts are considered high-density in the Comprehensive Plan to promote compact, multi-level development. The Linkage and CMS districts have no fixed density limits, just building height and bulk restrictions. There are no minimum lot area or lot widths in the CMS and small lots are given incentives for redevelopment, such as reduced rear setbacks and waivers for minimum parking and the required percentage of greenspace. In all the residential and multi-family districts conservation subdivisions are encouraged, allowing the Planning Board to modify zoning regulations to protect significant natural elements or habitats, historic structures, archeological sites, or unique aesthetic features.

**Diversity of housing opportunities and choices**

In addition to the mixed-use districts there are seven single-family residential and seven multi-family residential districts, providing a full range of housing possibilities at different levels of units per acre. There is also a Senior Affordable Housing Overlay district to promote specialty housing for seniors. In 2010 the City adopted an inclusionary zoning Affordable-Workforce Housing section, which was strengthened in 2017 to require 10 percent of any apartment or townhouse project of 10 units or more to be below-market-rate workforce housing units. The City brought on Hudson River Housing, a not-for-profit housing advocacy group, to market and administer the program. Of the last 21 major residential projects approved or proposed in the City, including 959 total units, 21 percent qualify as affordable-workforce housing. This includes West End Lofts, where the City negotiated with an affordable housing developer to build 73 affordable-workforce artist lofts on surplus city land next to the Municipal Building.

**Walkable neighborhoods**

The 2007 Comprehensive Plan included a Centers and Greenspaces Plan based on three neighborhood centers, defined by ½-mile walking radii and centered on the Train Station and the east and west Main Street historic districts. This Plan and the subsequent zoning amendments targeted properties withing these walkable neighborhood centers for priority redevelopment. The WD, L, CMS, and FCD districts all cite walkability and pedestrian access in their purpose statements. The WD district includes a public promenade along the length of the development facing the river. The L and CMS districts include streetscape improvement sections with sidewalk clearway requirements. The FCD district requires a Greenway Trail along the Fishkill Creek as part of any development. The City has actively worked to repair and extend its sidewalk system and is in the process of implementing a sidewalk improvement project for Main Street that includes new extended curbs to shorten crosswalks and pedestrian signage and signals.

**Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place**

The L and CMS districts, originally created in 2013, are both form-based codes with illustrated design standards that reinforce traditional urban form and architectural characteristics. The FCD district was also upgraded in 2017 to include illustrated design standards, ensuring that any new construction is compatible with the industrial-style buildings that lined the creek frontage. In 1991 the City adopted the Historic District and Landmark Overlay (HDLO) zone, which protects numerous designated historic properties throughout the City. The HDLO district was amended in in 2018 to include stronger design standards that can be enforced by the Planning Board as part of the certificate of appropriateness review process. In 2019 the City Council proposed an expansion of the HDLO district to include 35 additional parcels in the vicinity of Main Street.

**Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and important natural areas**

In the late 1990s the City Council lowered the development potential under zoning for the larger-scale residential and undeveloped properties near the periphery of the City. In 2018 the City required that all properties in the residential and FCD districts must deduct from the dwelling per unit calculations any lot area covered by surface water, within a regulated floodway or wetland, or with 25 percent steep slopes. The FCD district along the Fishkill Creek requires a natural buffer and Greenway Trail right-of-way as part of any development proposal. Almost all of approximately 100 acres of waterfront land west of the railroad tracks has been reserved for parks, including the City’s Pete and Toshi Seeger Riverfront Park, Scenic Hudson’s Long Dock Park, and Denning’s Point State Park. In 2007 the City proactively purchased the 103-acre Hiddenbrooke property at the base of the mountains with a $1.1 million referendum-passed bond and supplemental grants for NY State and Dutchess County’s Open Space and Farmland Protection Fund. In 2008 the City agreed to manage the state-purchased 51-acre University Settlement Camp to protect the property as a recreation facility for city residents. The only substantial farmland within the city boundaries is state-owned land around the Correctional Facility, but 39 acres of surplus state land was recently proposed to be transferred to Urban Green Foods for a variety of uses, centered around farming, food, education, hospitality, and recreation.

**Strengthen and direct development toward existing community centers, hamlets or urban areas**

The City of Beacon is a historic urban center going through a growth spurt after decades of stagnant or low-level population increases. The 1950 population of 14,012 was very similar to the latest 2018 census estimate of 14,523, and some large parcels had remained vacant since the Urban Renewal clearance in the 1970s. However, in the wake of the Great Recession Beacon has seen many new building projects. Combining recently constructed, fully approved, and proposals in the review process, approximately 1,000 units of new housing is projected to be built. The decisions in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan to encourage development in the new WD, L, CMS, and FCD districts attracted redevelopment in centrally located, walkable, and transit-friendly areas.

**Promote density that facilitates non-car transportation options**

All the recent higher density, mixed-use zoning districts were designed to increase development for close-in areas that support walkability and bicycle use. The purpose statements emphasize pedestrian access and the L and CMS districts have specific standards that require minimum sidewalk clearways, street trees, and other pedestrian amenities. Bicycle parking can be used as a justification to reduce off-street parking and the Planning Board may require bicycle racks along Main Street. In the WD, L, and CMS districts minimum parking requirements were substantially reduced to avoid excessive asphalt and to discourage auto use. The Planning Board may further reduce parking requirements based on shared parking or other criteria, and the City Council may reduce off-street parking for projects within 2,500 feet of the Train Station. The City has also worked over the last two years with Dutchess County Public Transit to increase bus service in the City and finance the Beacon Free Loop bus service, connecting the Train Station with the Main Street corridor and other high-value destinations.