



## Village of Lake Placid Climate Smart Communities

### PE6: Smart Growth Policies

Points Requested: 10

#### Summary

The current version of the [2011 Village of Lake Placid/Town of North Elba Land Use Code](#) was designed to incorporate smart growth principles. These include:

- Mix land uses
- Promote compact building design and cluster development
- Diversity of housing opportunities and choices
- Walkable neighborhoods
- Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and important natural areas
- Strengthen and direct development toward existing community centers, hamlets or urban areas
- Promote density that facilitates non-car transportation options
- Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions

#### Mixed land uses

The 2011 Land Use Code promotes mixed land uses in all of its Planning Districts, as per [Section 2](#). In all planning districts, accessory dwelling units, single family, and two-family residential is a permitted use. A number of conditional uses are also listed but vary per district. In several districts, accessory dwelling units are not considered when determining maximum residential density, to encourage mixed use and housing diversity.

The Illustrated Guidelines for Land Development in the Gateway Corridor District should “Develop mixed-use projects with second story office/floor space and shall employ shared walkways and parking between adjacent buildings and/or commercial uses.”

The Illustrated Guidelines for Development in the Old Military Road District refer to section 2.7 E, Illustrated Guidelines in the Gateway Corridor District, which calls for development that should “Develop mixed-use projects with second story office/floor space and shall employ shared walkways and parking between adjacent buildings and/or commercial uses.”

#### Promote compact building design and cluster development



The Land Use Code promotes compact building design and cluster development in such a way as to maintain the character of the community while promoting density and housing diversity in others.

1. The Village Center District Base Standards (Section 2.6) has no front or side setback requirements. The objective of this district is to promote development and redevelopment.
2. Minimum lot requirement for Village Residential District (2.5) and the Village Center District (2.6) is .1 acre (4,356 square feet). The minimum lot size for the Gateway Corridor District (2.7) is .2 acres (8,712 square feet). The minimum lot size for the Old Military Corridor District (2.8) is .25 acres (10,890 square feet).
3. The maximum height for buildings in the Village Center District (2.6), Gateway Corridor District (2.7), and Old Military Road Corridor is increased to 45 feet if 75% of the structure is permanently designated for use as income-based housing.
4. Section 3.4.1 Requirements for Development in Areas Designated as View Corridors:
  - A. Placement of Structures:
    1. Clustering of houses and other structures is encouraged and may be required to retain larger blocks of forest and fields
4. Section 3.4.2 Requirements for Development in Areas of Visual Sensitivity
  - B. Placement of Structures:
    1. Clustering of houses and other structures is encouraged and may be required to retain larger blocks of forest and fields

### **Diversity of housing opportunities and choices**

The Land Use Code promotes a variety of housing options. Single family and two-family residential are permitted uses in all districts and accessory dwelling units and multi-family residential uses are conditional in several districts as well (see "Mixed land uses" section). Accessory dwelling units, which provide potential for housing diversity, are not considered when determining maximum residential densities in the Rural Countryside (2.1), Town Residential (2.4), Village Residential (2.5), Gateway Corridor (2.7), and Old Military Road (2.8) Districts.

Density bonus for conservation subdivisions and income based housing are also considered for development in the Rural Countryside (2.1), Town Residential (2.4), Village Residential (2.5), Gateway (2.7), and Old Military Road (2.8) Districts. The intention is to incentivize income based housing to diversify housing options.

[Section 5.6](#) Provisions for Income Based Housing includes explanations for the mandatory inclusion of income based housing for developments resulting in ten or more dwelling units. Density bonuses for additional income based dwelling units and in lieu payment provide options for developers that still contribute to housing diversity.

5.6.1 A: Provisions for Income Based Housing, Objectives:



1. Provide incentives for residential development that meets the needs of North Elba's population, including housing for households with low and moderate income
2. Increase opportunities for home ownership
3. Allow for the development of a variety of affordable housing types including single, two-family and multi-family dwellings
4. Maintain the affordability of income based dwelling units in perpetuity through deed restrictions, covenants or other accepted legal mechanisms

The Illustrated Guidelines for Village Residential District (2.5, E) state projects should “consider new accessory buildings for year-round rental or affordable housing on the side or rear of lot.”

### **Walkable neighborhoods**

The Land Use Code includes provisions to maintain or improve walkability throughout the municipality.

An objective for the Town Residential District ([2.4, A](#)) includes the “...need for...connected pathways and trails.”

An objective of the Village Residential District ([2.5, A](#)) includes: “Existing vegetation and the pedestrian-oriented environment shall be maintained and enhanced.” The Illustrated Development Guidelines for the Village Residential District ([2.5, E](#)) say the project should “establish street trees and sidewalks where feasible and appropriate.” The cross-section of illustrated guidelines includes a 5' minimum width sidewalk and provide for a typical 10' travel lane.

An objective of the Village Center District ([2.6, A](#)) is to “...foster an economically healthy commercial district that is vibrant, pedestrian friendly, clean, safe, and sustainable...Pedestrian and vehicular traffic patterns and preserving view corridors should be addressed.” The Illustrated Guidelines for Development for this district (2.6, E) say that projects should “maintain brick walks and add pedestrian plazas where possible; promote ‘pause’ places with benches and other amenities...enhance, continue or establish lakeshore walks or visual and physical access where feasible...employ covered canopies or public spaces to provide shelter, display, and gathering space along sidewalk...install textured crosswalks if required or necessary...promote the installation of pedestrian-scale, historic lighting standards.”

Illustrated Guidelines for Development of the Gateway Corridor District (2.7, E) say projects should “lay out access points so that entires across streets match and employ textured crosswalks where pedestrian crossings are required...implement continuous sidewalk systems



that connect to existing routes or establish new sections for pedestrian circulation...develop connections to existing or proposed town-wide trail systems...”.

The Guidelines for Development of the Old Military Corridor (2.8, E) are the same as those for the Gateway Corridor District.

[Section 5.3.5](#) states that “All sidewalks constructed in the Village Center District shall be a minimum of ten feet in width.” This allows for greater ease of pedestrian movement. Section 5.3.4, Pedestrian Pathway Lighting, states that “pedestrian walkways, courtyards, and connections should include pole lighting, bollard lighting, accent lighting, or a combination thereof to aid in wayfinding and safety.”

Section 5.4.1 Architectural Guidelines and Requirements, Objectives and Applicability discourages strip development that limits pedestrian access:

To preserve our community character and appearance, "strip development" is discouraged. Strip development is strung out in linear fashion along a highway with limited pedestrian access, usually connected to a highway with a private drive and separated from the highway by a large parking area

Section 5.2.2, Landscape Design General Considerations states design techniques should reinforce pedestrian circulation routes and use street trees and planting patterns to provide sufficient shading and aesthetically pleasing environment for pedestrians.

Lots or parcels .30 acres or less are exempt from off-street parking requirements in the Village Center District. Additionally, the Review Board can vary parking requirements at their discretion and may consider specific circumstances related to parking needs and the availability of public transport.

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

The distinct Lake Placid aesthetic is a central part of the Comprehensive Plan, which in turn informs the Land Use Code.

The Purpose of the code (1.3) states:

- A. It is the purpose and intent of this Code to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the community and to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout the Village of Lake Placid and Town of North Elba.
- B. It is further the purpose of this Code to review land use and development in accord with the provisions of the Village/Town Joint Comprehensive Plan as regards the proposed settlement and density patterns and anticipated and desirable rates of population increase, to consider proposals of land use and development relative to these policies as



embodied in the Joint Comprehensive Plan in order to preserve the character and quality of life enjoyed in the community at present, and further, to consider the ability of the responsible units of governments to provide such services as will be required by new land use and development.

- C. It is further the purpose of this Code to fulfill the Joint Comprehensive Plan Mission Statement - "To provide by cooperation among congenial people and amidst beautiful natural surroundings all the advantages of an ideal place to reside and recreate." {From a Lake Placid Co. Publication Circa 1900}.

"Lake Placid/North Elba is a small, mountain community with an excellent world reputation. This reputation has come from both its beautiful natural surroundings and its People."

"The overall goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to protect and enhance both the community and its natural surroundings. The Comprehensive Plan recognizes that we are a dual-purpose community and that the needs of the residents and our visitors are equally important."

"The Comprehensive Plan, based on the foundation to the past, provides the direction to attain our goals as our community enters the 21st Century."

The document periodically calls for alignment with the Comprehensive Plan. Section [7.1.1 Land Subdivision and Development](#) states "These regulations are intended to establish a process and standards...to achieve the following...encourage the orderly, beneficial development fo the Village and the Town in accordance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan."

District standards are designed to maintain specific characteristics of the community ([Section 2](#)), which are defined in the Objective section for each district.

- Rural Countryside (2.1): "...to maintain the Town's rural character"
- North Lake Residential (2.2): "...to maintain the wooded, low-density character"
- South Lake Residential (2.3): "...to maintain current character and density"
- Town Residential (2.4): "...to promote the design of safe neighborhoods that both conserve and benefit from their natural settings"
- Village Residential (2.5): "is intended to preserve the functions and appearance of such residential uses... new development and redevelopment in these neighborhoods shall reflect the existing and desirable pattern so size, scale, footprint, and massing."
- Village Center District (2.6): "...to promote development and redevelopment sensitive to the unique qualities of the downtown core...designed to preserve and enhance the area's unique and historic character and to maintain a sense of community among its diverse residents, businesses, and visitors."



- Gateway Corridor District (2.7): "...should create positive impressions of the community. The development of visual, physical, functional, and aesthetic enhancements that link, unify, welcome, and define this area is the principle goal of this district...to foster design and development patterns specific to the special character of lands lying on either side of the major transportation corridors..."
- Old Military Road Corridor (2.8): "...to maintain its traditional mix of residential, commercial, and institutional uses in the context of a natural landscape that defines the corridor's general rural character"

Each District has distinct Illustrated Development Guidelines (Section 2) intended to uphold these standards.

Section 4, General Standards Applicable to All Development Activities states that "The primary objective is that new development and redevelopment projects are compatible with the environmental, architectural and cultural context of the Village of Lake Placid and the Town of North Elba."

Additionally, the Review Board process helps ensure development aligns with community principles. [Section 5.1](#), Regulations That Apply to Development Activities Requiring Review Board Approval, Objectives and Applicability states that:

This section is set forth to ensure that site development is low impact and aesthetically and functionally appropriate. A primary objective is that new development and redevelopment projects are compatible with the environmental, architectural and cultural context of the Village of Lake Placid and the Town of North Elba.

[Section 6](#): Sign Guidelines and Regulations is "intended to protect property values, create an attractive economic and business climate, enhance and protect the physical appearance of the community, preserve the scenic and natural beauty of the Adirondack resort area, and provide an enjoyable and pleasing environment for residents of and visitors to the Village of Lake Placid/Town of North Elba."

Finally, the three Overlay Districts ([Section 3](#)) provide guidelines intended to protect certain visual, cultural, and natural resources in the Town and Village. These include the Viewshed Overlay (3.4), which are areas of visual sensitivity; the Historic Resource Overlay (3.5), which include important historic properties; and the Shoreland Overlay (3.6), which are areas within 100 feet of the shoreline of any lake, pond, or river.

### 3.4 VIEWSHED OVERLAY DISTRICT (VOD)

#### A. Objectives



Lake Placid and North Elba are set within a mountain, lake and forest landscape that is part of the High Peaks Region of the Adirondack Park and one of the most scenic areas in the Northeast United States. The Viewshed Overlay District is intended to protect areas of visual sensitivity from intrusive development. The District also protects view corridors generally accessible to the public that provide lines of sight to visual and scenic resources

### 3.5 HISTORIC RESOURCE OVERLAY DISTRICT (HRO)

#### A. Objectives

Lake Placid/North Elba has a rich cultural heritage that helps to define the character of the community. The Historic Resource Overlay District includes buildings, structures and sites deemed to be important in portraying the community's history, architecture and culture. To ensure that development respects those values and to promote responsible historic preservation practices, proposed development projects shall comply with the following guidelines and performance standards.

### 3.6 SHORELAND OVERLAY DISTRICT (SOD)

#### 3.6.1 Objectives

The waters of Mirror and Placid lakes are critical resources to the community and essential to the local economy. Their pure waters are known for clarity, low nutrients, potability and aesthetics. They enhance the identity and appeal of the community and are a focal point for essential retail and tourism based commerce. Of critical importance is the use of Placid Lake as a source of municipal drinking water and drinking water for many private residences. In addition, the waters of the lakes offer valuable habitats for fish, wildlife and plants that depend on existing environmental quality and habitat characteristics. The shallow water areas, often in proximity to new development, provide a specialized wildlife habitat important for such ecological functions as spawning areas for fish, feeding areas for waterfowl, sources of invertebrates and plant material in the aquatic food chain.

To protect water quality, sustain wildlife habitats, prevent bank erosion, and maintain scenic values, all lands identified on the Town's Shoreland Overlay Map, as well as all properties fully or partially within 100 ft. of the shoreline of any lake, pond or river within the Town or Village, shall address the following standards prior to any permit approval for any land development, including single-family homes, within these areas

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

The natural beauty of the Adirondacks is a central part of all planning and ties into the local sense of place, as discussed above. The Purpose of the Code, as defined above, specifically calls for the prioritization of the "beautiful natural surroundings," in alignment with the Comprehensive Plan ([Section 1](#)).



[Section 1.7.1](#) Planning Districts, Objectives states:

In furtherance of the purposes of this Code, the following planning districts recognize the character and quality of land uses, natural features, and existing and desired patterns of development throughout the Village and the Town.

The Rural Countryside ([2.1](#)), North Lake Residential ([2.2](#)), and South Lake Residential ([2.3](#)) are intended to preserve low density, rural, natural areas with large minimum lot sizes, large set back requirements, and large minimum open space requirements. The Rural Countryside District specifically is meant for agricultural uses.

The Illustrated Guidelines for Town Residential, Village Residential, Village Center, Gateway Corridor, and Old Military Corridor call for a combination of: natural revegetation, adequate buffers around sensitive environmental resources, maintaining the integrity of woodlands and buffers, minimum tree removal, the maintenance of meaningful open spaces, street trees, retaining buffer and existing mature vegetation, promotion of lakeshore buffers, establishment or maintenance of view corridors, natural stormwater management, and native vegetation. This is meant to maintain or enhance the natural beauty even in more heavily developed parts of the Town and Village.

In [Section 4](#), development standards are intended to ensure projects are compatible with the environmental context. Section 4.4.3 Protection of Navigable Streams and Rivers, 4.4.4 Protection of Wetlands, 4.4.6 Protection of Forest Resources, and 4.5 Stormwater Management are all in part intended to preserve natural beauty and ecology.

[Section 7.1.4](#), Land Subdivision and Development, Design Considerations and Required Improvements (B) states that “consideration shall be given to existing natural features...and every effort shall be made to preserve and recognize in the design existing landforms, tree cover, waterways, vistas, and other important natural and physical characteristics.”

Also in this section (K), subdivisions involving the creation of 10 lots or more requires a minimum 10% of the subdivision be permanently reserved for open space. The Review Board may require open space for smaller subdivisions as well.

Density bonuses may be approved in some districts for conservation subdivisions, which incentivize conservation design ([Section 7.2.3](#)).

Finally, the Viewshed Overlays ([Section 3](#)) discussed above also exist to preserve the natural beauty of the area.

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





Development is directed toward existing community centers because it is located within Adirondack Park.

Additionally, Base District Standards ([Section 2](#)) exist to direct development toward existing community centers. Larger minimum lot areas, setback requirements, and open space requirements in some areas discourage development while smaller minimum lot sizes, setback requirements, and open space requirements encourage it others. Additionally, the opportunity for density bonuses encourages development in some districts while lack of access to public roads and utilities discourages it in others.

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

The minimum lot size, setback requirements, and open space requirements for the Village Residential, Town Residential, Village Center, Gateway Corridor, and Old Military Corridor Districts are smaller, as discussed in “Promote compact building design and cluster development” and “Strengthen and direct development toward existing community centers...”). Additionally, these areas include density bonuses for the inclusion of low income housing or conservation subdivisions.

Simultaneously, the Illustrated Guidelines ([Section 2](#)) for these higher density Districts call for pedestrian and bike friendly designs and the consideration of bike lanes, travel lanes, and sidewalks.

### **Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective**

Standards for Base Districts and Overlays are laid out clearly in sections 2 and 3. Standards for Development and Regulations that Apply to Development Activities Requiring Review Board Approval are laid out clearly in Sections 4 and 5. Land Subdivision and Development regulations are laid out clearly in Section 6 and the Review Process in Section 7. This is a predictable and fair process for all development activities. The Review Board allows for some flexibility where necessary.

The Review Process Objective (Section 8.1.1):

The Review Process exists to assure that development and redevelopment maintains the character of the community and its' environment, is in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan, and meets the requirements of this Code. The process should balance due diligence in the administration of the code with timely decisions regarding application

Plan Requirements ([Section 8](#)) also consider the effect of the development on transportation, including existing and planned public transportation facilities.



### **Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions**

As illustrated throughout this document, the Comprehensive Plan is a central informing document of the Land Use Code. This Plan is the result of a long community engagement process. Through the incorporation of the Plan to such an extent, the Land Use Code reflects community and stakeholder collaboration and insight into development decisions.

Additionally, the Review Board may hold a public hearing ([Section 8](#)) on any complete application for a Conditional Use. The Zoning Board of Appeals holds public hearings in consideration for any variance or request for interpretation ([Section 8](#)). This allows the public to provide input toward development decisions on a regular basis.