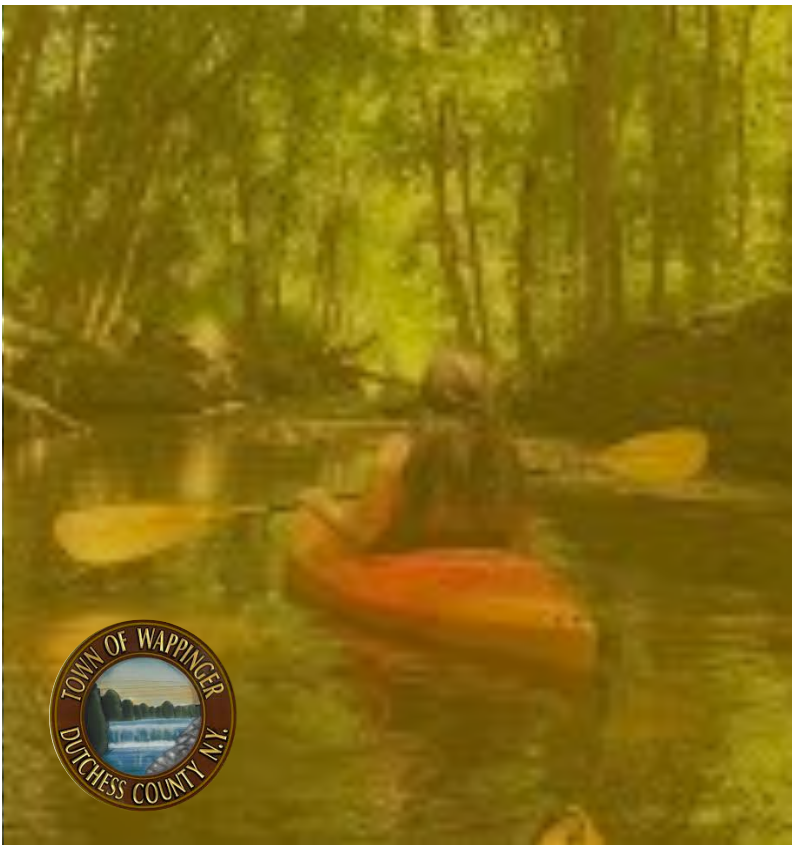




Town of  
**WAPPINGER**  
- INCORPORATED 1875 -

## 2025 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATES



Laberge  
ENGINEERING  
ARCHITECTURE  
 Group  
SURVEYING  
PLANNING



## Overview

Since the adoption of the Town of Wappinger's 2010 Comprehensive Plan, the Town has undergone substantial changes in population and housing. Between 2010 and 2016, the population decreased by about 2%, but between 2016 and 2021 it rebounded, increasing by about 6.5%. Today, the population of Wappinger is over 28,000, making it the third most populous town in Dutchess County despite being the smallest town in the County by land area—and, not surprisingly, the second most dense. In addition to population growth, Wappinger saw an increase in households, with a 13% increase from 2010 to 2023. The overall percentage of multifamily or apartments changed from about 30% to 40%.

Unfortunately, the infrastructure capacity has not kept pace with development. Other than roads specifically serving new developments, there have been no new roads built or existing ones expanded, despite steady increases in traffic volumes. Growth in schools, emergency services, and sewer and water capacity have also all lagged behind the growth in population and households.

While it is advised that the Town undertake a full rewrite of the Comprehensive Plan within the next few years, this interim update is being provided to deal with two pressing issues: 1). The rate of development outpacing the Town's ability to update its overall infrastructure, resulting in a decrease in the quality of life for its existing residents; and 2). Land use regulations becoming overly complicated leading to uncertainty for the Town's residential property owners in terms of what can be built or what other uses could occur adjacent to or across the street from their properties.

Despite Wappinger's infrastructure challenges, the Town has achieved a number of goals that were laid out in the 2010 Plan. Together with changing conditions, these and other goals may no longer be necessary or relevant. In recognizing this, as well as the capacity shortfalls, the Town is providing these updates to the Comprehensive Plan, and will reexamine zoning to ensure consistency within the Plan including the Town's overall capacity to deliver services. Key information provided in this update focuses on zoning unpredictability as well as the following four (4) Comprehensive Plan elements: Population and Housing; Economic Base; Water Supply and Sewage Treatment; and Land Use.

As noted, the primary changes that have occurred in the Town of Wappinger since the 2010 plan are related to population and housing. Housing, and the need for diversification was a recurring theme that was woven throughout the 2010 plan. Housing is largely defined by the zoning districts in the Town, which include single-family districts, multifamily districts, and mixed-use commercial districts that provide for a mix of housing. Currently, about 60% of the housing in Wappinger is single-family, while the other 40% are apartments or multifamily dwellings. This represents a 10% swing towards multifamily, compared with 2010, indicating a diverse housing stock. It also demonstrates a higher percentage of rental dwelling units in Wappinger compared with Dutchess County as a whole, suggesting that Wappinger is meeting its overall share of rental housing within the County.

## Zoning Issues

Zoning is generally thought of as a tool to ensure that incompatible uses are not located next to one another, with a classic example being a smoke-belching factory next to residential homes. In addition to protecting against incompatible uses, zoning should also provide predictability for investment and stability in real estate values.

For most people, the purchase of their home is the single greatest investment they will make. For those making such an investment, they should be able to rely on zoning to know what can be done with their property, as well as how the properties next door, behind, or across the street can be built-out or utilized. When the zoning code becomes too complicated, or there is too much discretion in the approval process, it makes such an investment extremely unpredictable and often risky.

The multifamily districts in the Town of Wappinger are defined as either RMF-3 or RMF-5 districts, and make up a total of 16.4 acres. However, multifamily is also allowed within the mixed-use districts through the conversion of certain larger single-family homes, or through various subdivision types. These subdivisions, which are not at all clear, are difficult to find, and in some cases noted in the Use Table, include Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), Conservation Developments, Designed Residential Developments as well as others. Adding to the uncertainty, both the Planning Board and Town Board have wide latitude in modifying the requirements for the overall lot size and other area requirements for these types of developments, including how many bedrooms can go in any individual dwelling unit.

Most of the subdivision types listed above allow for the concept of clustering. This means rather than having all lots conform to the area requirements in terms of lot sizes, they are allowed to be smaller and closer together, provided that the overall density that would typically be permitted, is not exceeded. The rationale for this can be to avoid sensitive environmental features, preserve important views or viewsheds, be more economical in terms of running utilities, reduce run-off from excessive roadways and paved areas, or to set aside land for parks or open space.

In determining the number of lots with any type of clustering provision, it is important to understand what a conventional subdivision (one that adheres to all of the required lot sizes and other rules of the underlying zoning) would yield. This should be done through a full engineered layout, showing all parcels, roadways, rights-of-way, required drainage or detention ponds, other infrastructure, wetlands and required buffers, steep slopes, or other constraints to development. Without this approach, it is likely that clustering will allow much higher densities than a conventional layout.

The following table provides an example of constraints and considerations that should be taken into account when determining conventional yield for any cluster-type development. This example shows a 100-acre lot with 30 acres of regulatory wetlands and 15 acres of steep slope.

It assumes a 45-foot roadway right-of-way (ROW) with length determined by required lot width (assuming lots on both sides of the street) and potential drainage areas. What the table shows is the conventional yield with no constraints, versus the yield taking into account all of the constraints and required infrastructure. Without roadways, drainage, and other constraints being subtracted from total available area, a cluster subdivision could conceivably increase the density over a conventional yield by over 200%.

## Conventional Yield Table

CONVENTIONAL YIELD 100 ACRES	R-5A	R-3A	R-80	R-20	R-10
MINIMUM LOT SIZE	5 Acres	3 Acres	80,000 SF	20,000 SF	10,000 SF
TOTAL LOTS (Yield)	20 Lots	33 Lots	54 Lots	217 Lots	435 Lots
LOT WIDTH	275 ft	225 ft	200 ft	100 ft	60 ft
LOT FRONTAGE	50 ft	50 ft	50 ft	50 ft	50 ft
ROW	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft	45 ft
ROADWAY LINEAR FT	2,750 LF	3,712 LF	5,400 LF	10,850 LF	13,050 LF
ROADWAY ACRES	2.8 Acres	3.8 Acres	5.6 Acres	11.2 Acres	13.5 Acres
NET ACRES	97.2 Acres	96.2 Acres	94.4 Acres	88.8 Acres	86.5 Acres
NEW YIELD (Lots)	19 Lots	32 Lots	51 Lots	193 Lots	376 Lots
ASSUMED 30 ACRES OF WETLAND	30 Acres	30 Acres	30 Acres	30 Acres	30 Acres
ASSUMED 15 ACRES OF STEEP SLOPES	15 Acres	15 Acres	15 Acres	15 Acres	15 Acres
ASSUMED DRAINAGE (Acres)	.5 Acres	1 Acres	1.5 Acres	2.5 Acres	3 Acres
NEW NET (Acres)	51.7 Acres	50.2 Acres	47.9 Acres	41.3 Acres	38.0 Acres
CONVENTIONAL YIELD W/ CONSTRAINTS	10 Lots	16 Lots	26 Lots	89 Lots	165 Lots
PERMITTED OVER ACTUAL YIELD	200%	206%	207%	243%	263%

## Map Descriptions

The following set of maps depict the areas where multifamily could be developed based on the zoning district, as well as many of the other areas where multifamily could be developed through the various subdivision allowances.



**Map 1** shows only those zoning districts that are specifically defined as multifamily, which amounts to approximately 16.4 acres.

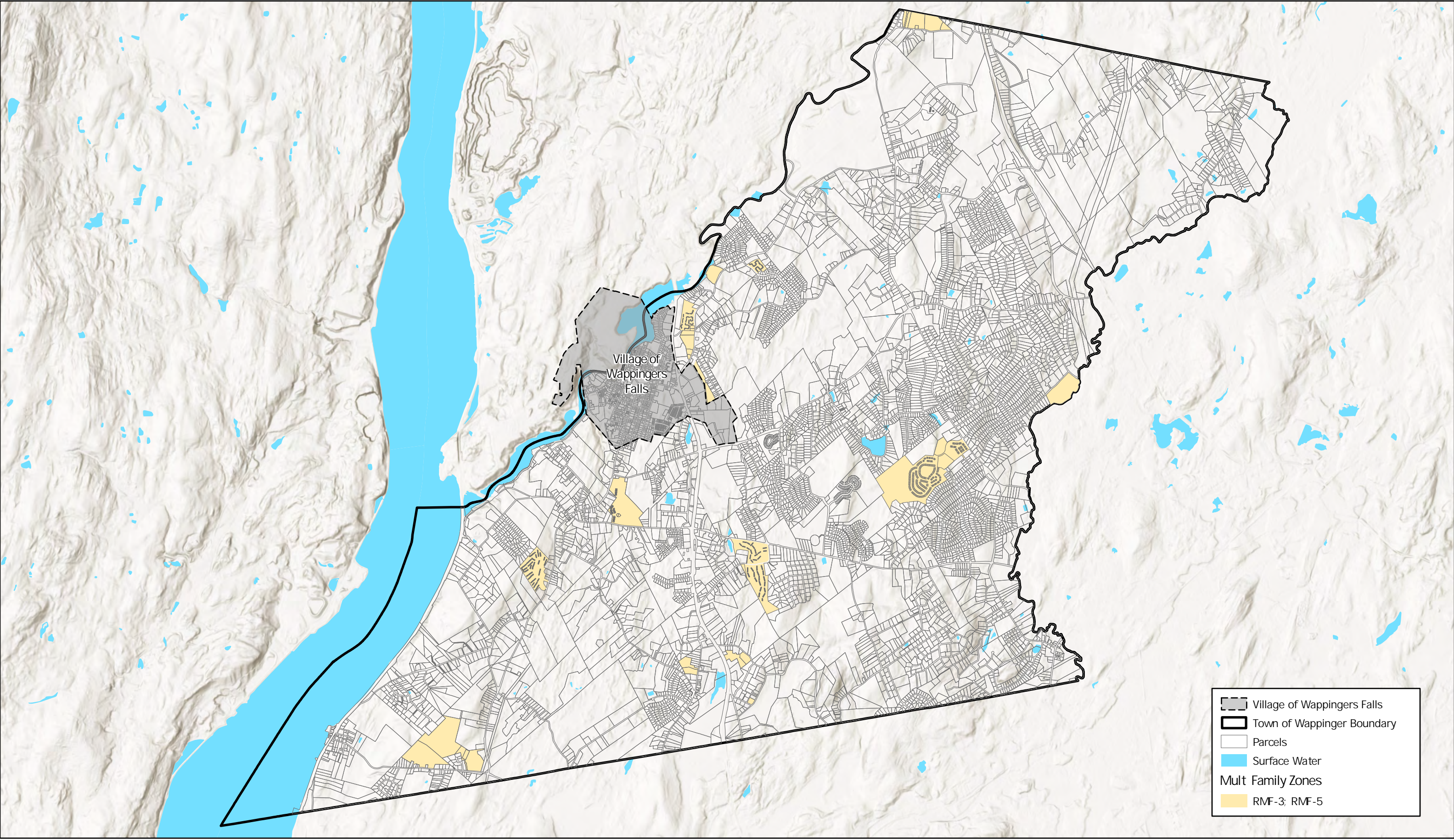
**Map 2**, in addition to the multifamily districts, includes mixed-use areas (which can also allow for multifamily dwellings) provided density does not exceed the prescribed amount.

**Map 3** includes the same as Map 2, but also adds all areas that comply with the requirements for a PUD (75 acres, adjacent to mixed use areas) as well as those lots that meet the requirements for Designed Residential Development (100 lots without sewer and water, 50 with sewer and water). What it does not capture is the Town Board's discretion to allow a PUD with less than 75 acres, or multiple lots being combined to create an area of 75 acres. In addition, once a PUD or Designed Residential Development is created, any land adjacent to it could also conceivably be developed as a PUD. Both the PUD's and Designed Residential Developments can also include commercial uses.

**Map 4** adds all lots that are classified as vacant or underutilized and could be developed under Conservation Development, which allows multi-family as it permits attached housing up to four units. Since conservation development has no minimum acreage requirement, technically any parcel that could be subdivided within a residential zoning district could be eligible under §240-19 (B). What Map 4 does not capture is all land that is classified as agriculture or farmland that could be subdivided and developed under any of the above listed provisions, or certain large single-family homes that could be converted to multifamily. Overall, the areas depicted on Map 4 that could be developed to include multi-family is approximately 8,081 acres, which is a considerable increase from the 16.4 acres that is specifically zoned to include multifamily.

These maps underscore the fact that all of the cluster developments, floating zones, and ability of the Town Board or Planning Board to waive requirements, creates complete uncertainty for the development or purchase of single-family homes in single-family zoning districts. Because many of these floating zones, or PUDs also allow commercial development, it also makes infrastructure capacity planning virtually impossible. This is due to the dynamic nature of the zoning map that floating zones and the various allowances create. Rather than mapped, well-defined, zoning districts, with uses that are explicit in the Use Table, the Town of Wappinger has an ever changing and impossible to predict zoning landscape.





	Village of Wappingers Falls
	Town of Wappinger Boundary
	Parcels
	Surface Water
Mult Family Zones	
	RMF-3; RMF-5



0 0.42 0.85 1.7 Miles

Accuracy not guaranteed. Map for illustrative purposes only.  
Produced by Laberge Group. Data provided by NYS GIS Clearinghouse  
2022, 2023. Revision #1 (3/10/2025). Job# 2024077

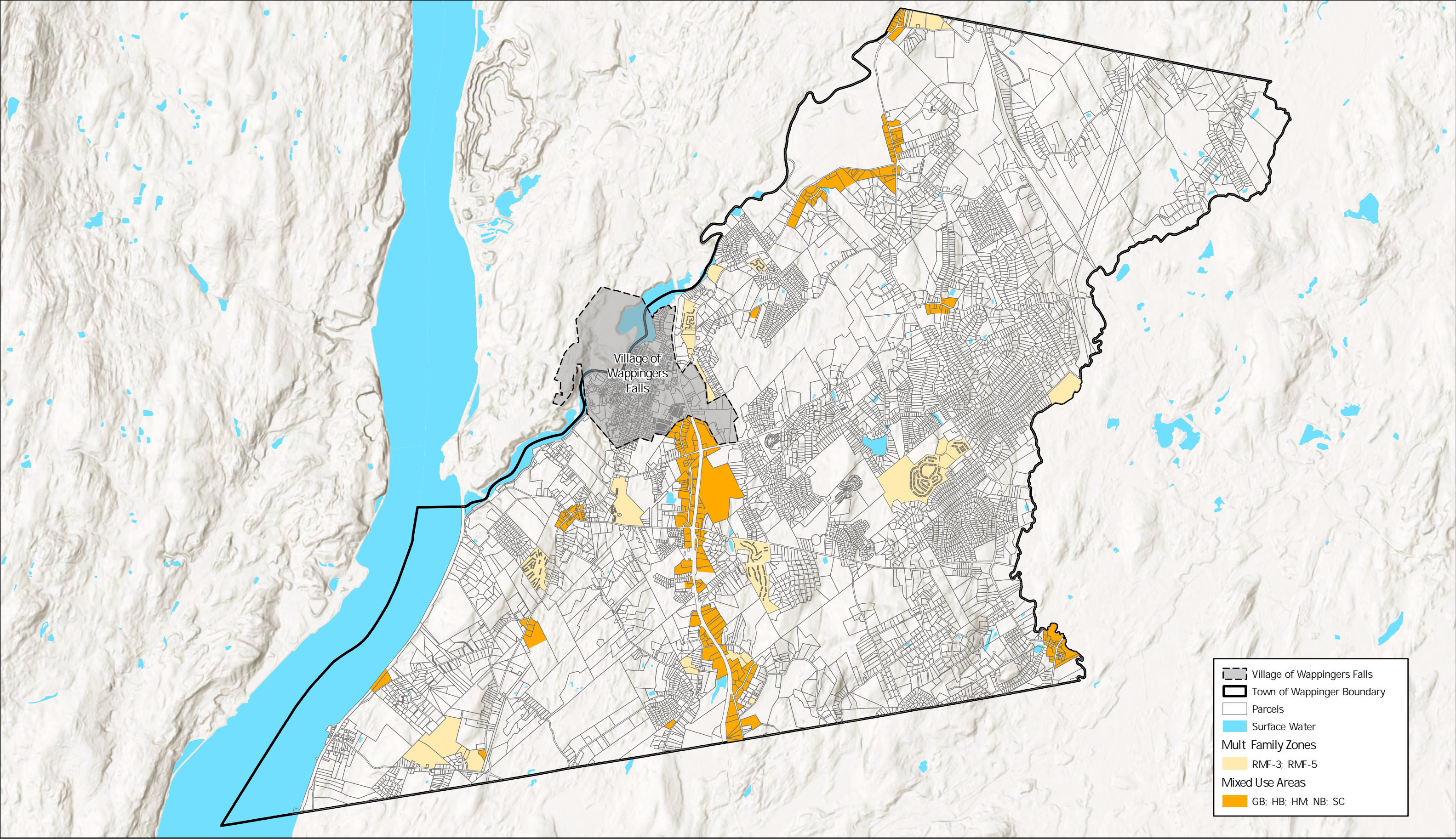


Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA

# MAP 1 : Mult Family Zones

Town of Wappinger,  
Dutchess County, New York





- Village of Wappingers Falls
- Town of Wappinger Boundary
- Parcels
- Surface Water
- Mult Family Zones
- RMF-3; RMF-5
- Mixed Use Areas
- GB; HB; HM NB; SC



0 0.42 0.85 1.7 Miles

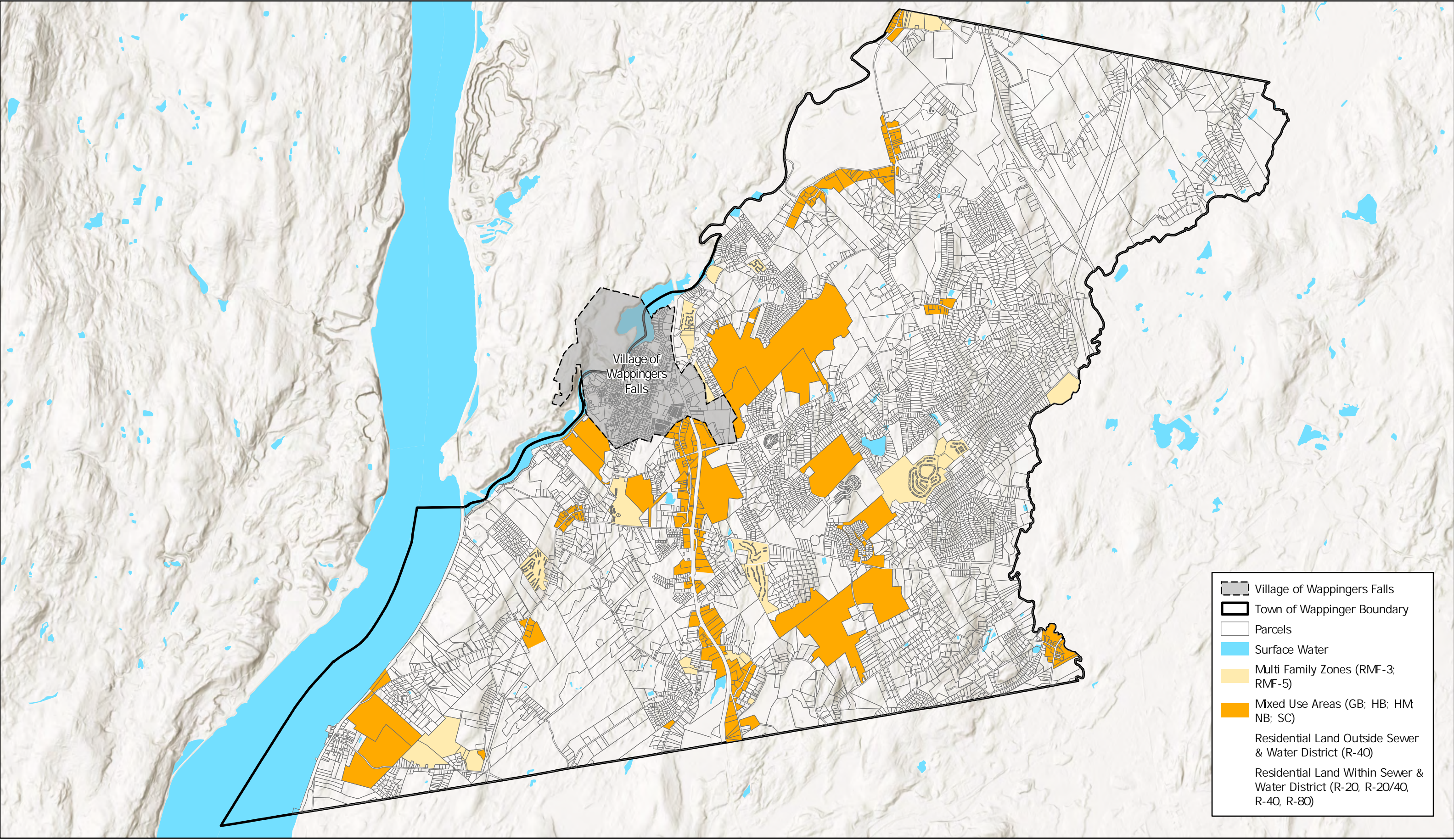
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Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA

MAP 2: Mult Family & Mixed Use Areas  
Town of Wappinger,  
Dutchess County, New York





Village of Wappingers Falls

Town of Wappinger Boundary

Parcels

Surface Water

Multi Family Zones (RMF-3;  
RMF-5)

Mixed Use Areas (GB; HB; HM;  
NB; SC)

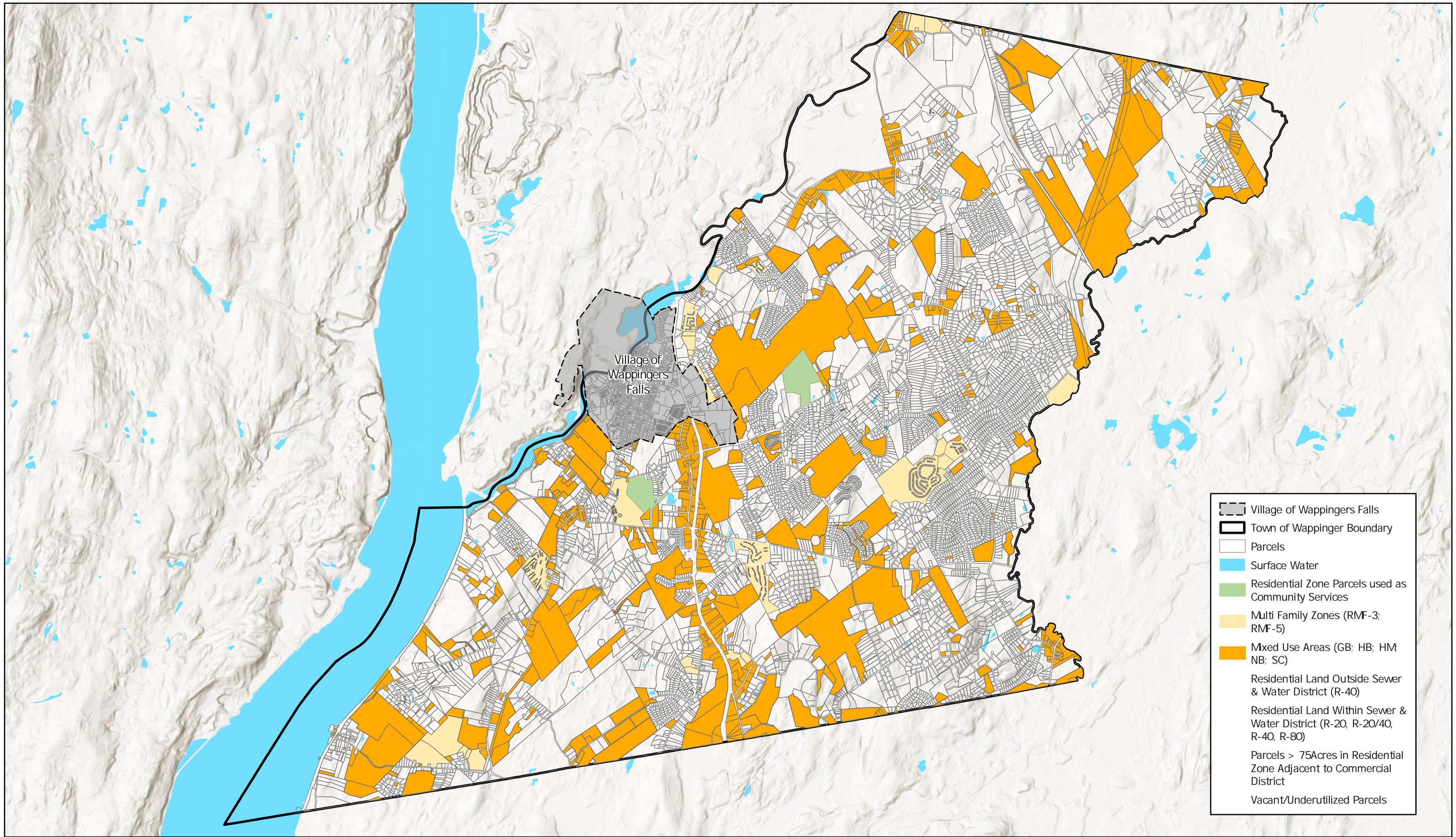
Residential Land Outside Sewer  
& Water District (R-40)

Residential Land Within Sewer &  
Water District (R-20, R-20/40,  
R-40, R-80)

MAP 3: Mult Family, Mixed Use Areas, PUD, Cluster etc.

Town of Wappinger,  
Dutchess County, New York







## 2010 Comprehensive Plan Goals and Objectives - Introduction

Many of the Goals and Objectives listed in the Goals section of the 2010 plan are repeated and woven in throughout the Plan. Any modifications to the goals listed below, either in the Introduction or Goals section, should be considered to effect additional references or rationale throughout the Plan.

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### Issues and Opportunities

##### Environmental Resource

###### **Removed**

3. Relatively impermeable soils covering much of the Town often result in septic unsuitability, less rainwater percolating into the ground, and more wetlands. Ten percent of septic systems are failing or marginal, and these pollute surface water and groundwater.

###### **Replaced With**

3. Relatively impermeable soils covering much of the Town often result in septic unsuitability, less rainwater percolating into the ground, and more wetlands.

###### **Rationale**

*The last sentence in the original # 3 was removed because it was from a voluntary survey, and not deemed accurate.*

###### **Removed**

4. There is a relative mismatch between the capacity of the land to absorb waste water and the allowable density of dwelling units in the northeastern part of the Town.

###### **Rationale**

*This was removed because most of the northeastern part of the Town is zoned R-3A, with some pockets of R-40/80, R-40. The majority of those districts have been platted and developed.*

##### Population & Housing

###### **Removed**

2. There is a growing mismatch between the trend of smaller household sizes and the large three-or-more bedroom homes that have been built and will be built under current zoning.

###### **Rationale**

*There have been a number of smaller households, apartments in particular, that have been developed since the 2010 Plan. Today, there is a 40% to 60% mix between rental apartments and single-family homes, which indicates a diverse housing stock.*



**Replaced With New #2**

2. Additions to the zoning code over time have created unpredictability for individual investments in homes. PUDs, Designed Residential Development, and other options in the zoning code should not be able to replace the uses in the underlying code. Consider changes to various subdivision options to better protect existing developed areas.

**Add New #3**

3. Limit the discretion of the Town Board and Planning Board to provide for major changes to the dimensional requirements through PUDs, Designed Residential Development, or other subdivisions. These provisions create additional unpredictability. Provide for a standard administrative adjustment. Beyond that, all major adjustments to dimensional requirements should go through the ZBA and follow the state law in terms of standards for an Area Variance, or require a zoning change

**Economic Base**

**Removed**

5. There is a strong consensus in the Town that any future development of commercial land uses should be well designed to fit in with the sites and should preserve and promote neighborhood/district features, so that community character is protected and enhanced. The Route 9 corridor in particular is a high priority, and is discussed further in the following chapter on Community Appearance and Character.

**Replaced With**

5. There is a strong consensus in the Town that any future development of commercial land uses should be well-designed to fit in with the sites and should preserve and promote neighborhood and district features, so that community character is protected and enhanced. All new commercial development should emphasize high-quality design that adds value to the Town, rather than relying on inappropriate landscaping buffers to hide poorly designed buildings and sites

**Water Supply and Sewage Treatment**

**Removed**

2. Nearly two-thirds of the Town have soils that provide severe limitations to septic suitability, and most of the remainder provide moderate limitations. One in ten households participating in the 2003 Water and Sewer Survey reported failing or marginal septic systems, and most had systems that had been replaced at least once.

**Rationale**

*It is unclear if a comprehensive soil study or evaluation was completed. Additionally, a voluntary survey should not be used to indicate what percentage of septic systems are marginal or failing.*

## Land Use

### **Remove**

4. Other areas to be changed to high-density residential to make existing trailer parks more conforming in terms of zoning include three areas in the Route 9 Corridor (on Cooper Road, on Osborne Road, and on Route 9 and Smithtown Road) and one area at the junction of Pye Lane and Montfort. An existing trailer park on New Hackensack Road northeast of Lakeside Road is currently zoned RMF-3 but the density of dwelling units on the site is approximately 4.7 units per acre. This site should be changed to RMF-5 zoning to make the site more conforming

### **Rationale**

The zoning for mobile home parks should not be changed to RMF zoning to make them more conforming. Change dimensional requirements rather than use if needed to improve conformity.

## **Goals and Objectives**

# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **Goals and Objectives**

### Population and Housing

#### **Remove**

- Goal** Improve housing choice in the Town by encouraging a balance of housing types and sizes that meet the needs of existing and future Wappinger residents and employees.

#### **Rationale**

*Currently, The Town of Wappinger has a diverse housing stock with a good balance—40% multi-family and 60% single-family housing.*

#### **Replace With**

Preserve housing choice in the Town by retaining a balance of housing types and sizes that meet the needs of Wappinger residents and employees while ensuring predictability in future development.

## **Objectives**

### Objective A

#### **Remove**

- A. Affordable / Workforce housing. Encourage a sufficient supply of homes within economic reach of Town residents.

#### **Rationale**

*This objective has largely been achieved.*

**Replace With**

- A. Housing Types. Encourage a variety of housing types and sizes through Conservation Development and within multifamily zoning districts.

**Objective B**

**Remove**

- B. Accessory apartments. Continue to allow the development of accessory apartments in appropriate conditions on single-family lots.

**Replace With**

- B. Accessory Apartments. Continue to allow the development of accessory apartments in appropriate conditions on single-family lots to provide opportunities for residents to age in place, bring in a caregiver, or realize additional income to be able to maintain their property.

**Objective C**

**Remove**

- C. Variety of housing types. Require that certain percentages of large, new developments be comprised of a variety of housing types (such as attached single-family homes, duplexes and apartments).

**Rationale**

*This objective has been achieved. The Town of Wappinger has a diverse housing stock with a good balance—40% multi-family and 60% single-family.*

**Replace With New (C)**

- C. Senior housing. Encourage housing appropriate for seniors near or in existing town centers to provide amenities and necessities within walking distance.

**Objective D**

**Remove**

- D. Develop in existing centers. Encourage new higher density residential development in existing centers that can be most economically served by existing roads, utilities and community facilities. Any new higher density residential development should occur in relation to existing centers. Allow for residential development above retail in existing centers, not to exceed three residential units per building, providing additional housing variety where it can be most economically served by existing roads, utilities and community facilities.

**Rationale**

*Density should not be permitted to be increased beyond current zoning designations without a comprehensive infrastructure capacity study.*

**Replace With New (D)**

- D. Develop in existing centers. Allow for residential development above retail in existing



centers, not to exceed two residential units per building, providing additional housing variety where it can be most economically served by existing roads, utilities and community facilities.

**Objective F**

**Add New F**

- F. Underlying Zoning. Ensure that the zoning use table can be relied upon to understand what uses and dimensional standards are permitted within every zoning district.

**Objective G**

**Add New G**

- G. Multi-family. Ensure that multi-family development occurs only in zoning districts specifically defined and suited for this—RMF-5 & RMF-3.

**Objective H**

**Add New H**

- H. Single-family conversions. Remove allowances for large single-family homes to be converted to two-family, three-family or multi-family in single-family districts as this creates uncertainty and unpredictability for investments in the district.

**Objective I**

**Add New I**

- I. Commercial Uses. Ensure that commercial uses occur only in zoning districts specifically defined for such uses—HB, HM, NB, GB, CC, SC, HD, COP, AI.

**Economic Base**

**Objectives**

**Objective (C)**

**Remove C**

Promote well-designed office research parks and similar uses that offer good jobs and wages in appropriate locations.

**Rationale**

*There is no market for this, and therefore no corresponding need.*

**Water Supply and Sewage Treatment**

**Objectives**

**Objective (C)**

**Add New C**

Comprehensive capacity study. Undertake a comprehensive engineering study, and update regularly, to assess the current capacity of water and sewer, based on existing

customers, permitted expansion within developed lots, existing development that is within range for feasibly connecting, potential build-out of non-developed lots, and reserve needed for emergencies (pump station and treatment plant outages, water main breaks, etc. Make adjustment to zoning as necessary to ensure development does not exceed capacity.

## Land Use

### **Objectives**

#### Objective (B)

##### **Remove**

- B. Designate areas of the Town that are well situated for medium- and high- density residential development.

##### **Rationale**

*There is already a great variety in range of density allowed, from 5 acre lots to 10,000 sf lots.*

##### **Replace With New B**

- B. Zoning. Ensure that zoning is written and organized for clarity and to ensure predictability in permitted land uses.

#### Objective (C)

##### **Remove**

- C. Designate areas of the Town that, due to transportation links, the intensity of proximate land uses and other features, are appropriate for current and future use as Town centers.

##### **Rationale**

*There is currently no need for expansion of town centers or creation of additional town centers.*

##### **Replace With New C**

- C. Cluster development. Consider only allowing clustering to be utilized to promote open space and conservation of the natural and scenic qualities of the land, with lot sizes based on suitability for septic systems. The density shall not be greater than a conventional subdivision.

#### Objective (E)

##### **Add New E**

- E. Conventional Yield. Consider adding language to require the density of any clustering to be based on proof of a conventional yield for the number of lots.

Objective (F)

**Add New F**

- F. Planned Unit Development (PUD). Consider removing PUDs as a potential zoning district or use as they create uncertainty for existing land owners as well as unpredictability for infrastructure growth planning or investment.

**Rationale**

*Although a PUD is listed as one type of the twenty-one (21) separate zoning district types, it is not a mapped district, but rather a floating zone that can land anywhere it meets the minimum standards. These standards include 75 contiguous acres of land (although the Town Board can consider less acreage) on lands containing a combination of residential and non-residential districts, or planned for such uses within the comprehensive plan. The 75 acres need not be within one parcel, or under a single ownership so long as they are combined prior to the application to the Town Board. Since a PUD is not mapped, can occur on land that is zoned single-family, and is adjacent to or includes a portion of a mixed-used district, it creates great uncertainty for those who have already made investments in single-family districts. A PUD can include a range of land uses such as shopping facilities, multi-family housing, and a range of employment and recreation facilities. Once established, any parcel or combination of parcels that meets the 75 acres (or less if the Town Board decides) and abuts the PUD, can put forth an application to become a PUD as well.*

Objective (G)

**Add New G**

- G. Conservation Subdivision. Consider removing provisions within a conservation that permit attached units within a single-family district. Currently this allows detached units of no more than four dwelling units, which meets the definition of multifamily.

**Rationale**

*Allowing for multi-family within a single family district create unpredictability.*

Objective (H)

**Add New I**

- H. Subdivisions. Any type of residential subdivision that is permitted within a single-family residential district should be noted within the use table for each district where it is permitted.

**Rationale**

*This will provide awareness for what can be built adjacent, behind or in front of existing residential properties, creating greater predictability in investments.*

Objective (I)

**Add New j**

- I. Subdivisions. Any type of residential subdivision that is permitted should be listed within Article III - Establishment of Districts.



**Rationale**

*Currently a number of subdivision types are listed under § 240-19 Modification of lot requirements, under Article V - Regulations Applicable to All Districts. This makes the provisions for these subdivision very difficult to find.*