

4.0 THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

The boundaries of the Town of Lewisboro define a government entity and delineate an area which this Town Plan proposes can be maintained and enhanced as a community of special character and unique image. But the boundaries have little relationship to the market forces which move the economy and development of the region. Lewisboro is part of the New York City metropolitan region and the regional transportation system, economic base and development patterns directly affect the Town. Furthermore, the plans, programs and policies of agencies outside of Lewisboro and of those at higher governmental levels can also influence what happens and when it happens within the Town's boundaries.

A basic objective of responsible local government must be to remain aware of region-shaping forces and development proposals affecting the local municipality from outside its borders. In responding to these external forces through comprehensive planning policies, Lewisboro can adopt appropriate guidelines to ameliorate undesirable trends and to insure that future development within the Town is carried out in a manner consistent with local goals and policies.

The purpose of this section is to briefly summarize the present thinking of outside agencies as to how future development in the region as a whole, and in northeastern Westchester in particular, should be accommodated and to summarize those specific planning proposals made to date which are likely to have an impact on Lewisboro.

4.1 New York State

In recent years, the involvement of the State of New York in areawide planning has been limited to the Coastal Zone Management Program and several environmental regulatory programs such as the Freshwater Wetlands Act and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). Several statewide plans focusing on different subjects were prepared prior to 1973. Most of these plans were based on an assumption of continuous population growth and urban expansion through to the year 2000. As a result, many of the recommendations and text discussions are inconsistent with present conditions and trends.

In 1964, the New York State Office of Planning Coordination released a report titled Change, Challenge, Response: A Development Policy for New York State. It promoted the establishment of self-contained communities in the suburban fringes of the New York Metropolitan Area as a planned method of handling the expected population growth. A more detailed development policy statement was produced in 1971 under the title New York State Development Plan. It included a preliminary plan map. The 1973 Lewisboro Town Plan described the Plan as follows:

The map basically reflects present land use patterns and trends and assumes that future growth will be guided to avoid the disorganized sprawl that has occurred in the past. The Plan proposes a low intensity urban density of between 500-999 persons per square mile for Lewisboro by 1990. This projection assumes a considerable growth rate for the Town.

People, Resources, Recreation: New York Statewide Comprehensive Recreation Plan was prepared in September 1972 by the New York State Department of Parks and Recreation. The thrust of the report was to establish grounds for continued State action and funding in the development of regional recreational facilities and the preservation of important natural features. Maintenance of the existing system of parks, development of new facilities in urban areas, and the preservation of outstanding natural areas are emphasized. With regard to local governments, the Recreation Plan states: "Facilities designed primarily to serve the immediate community are essentially a local responsibility since the benefits will be localized...local communities should finance and operate such facilities." Cooperative efforts with private recreation operators is urged as the Plan observes that "private operators can be induced to fill local recreational needs through tax incentives, special zoning, and public support functions (such as construction of access roads)."

A State transportation plan was released in September 1968 by the Department of Transportation under the title Policies and Plans for Transportation in New York State. This plan, prepared at a time when population growth was expected to continue rapidly and funding was not seen as a significant limiting factor, proposed no major improvements in the vicinity of Lewisboro with the exception of the completion of what is now Interstate 684. One section of the plan discusses "the long view" and outlines additional facilities which may be needed by the year 2018. The only addition in northern Westchester County is the proposal for an east/west intercity expressway linking Peekskill and points west with Interstate 684 near Katonah. This expressway would follow the general corridor of Route 35 and terminate at I-684.

4.2 Tri-State Regional Planning Commission

Until it was disbanded in December of 1981, the Tri-State Regional Planning Commission was the official planning agency designated by the Federal Government for the New York City metropolitan region. The region consisted of nine counties in New Jersey, seven in New York, the five boroughs of New York City, and six Connecticut planning regions. Although Tri-State no longer functions in a review and advisory capacity, its plans and reports are still considered a valid regional basis for local planning.

A regional land use plan and program titled Regional Development Guide 1977-2000 was adopted by the Commission in June 1977 and amended in September 1977 and January 1978. The Guide sets a target, not a forecast, of 11% population growth in the region by the year 2000. The Regional Land Use Plan from which this target was derived is based on three primary objectives:

- o conserve critical lands
- o concentrate development
- o balance dwellings, jobs and services

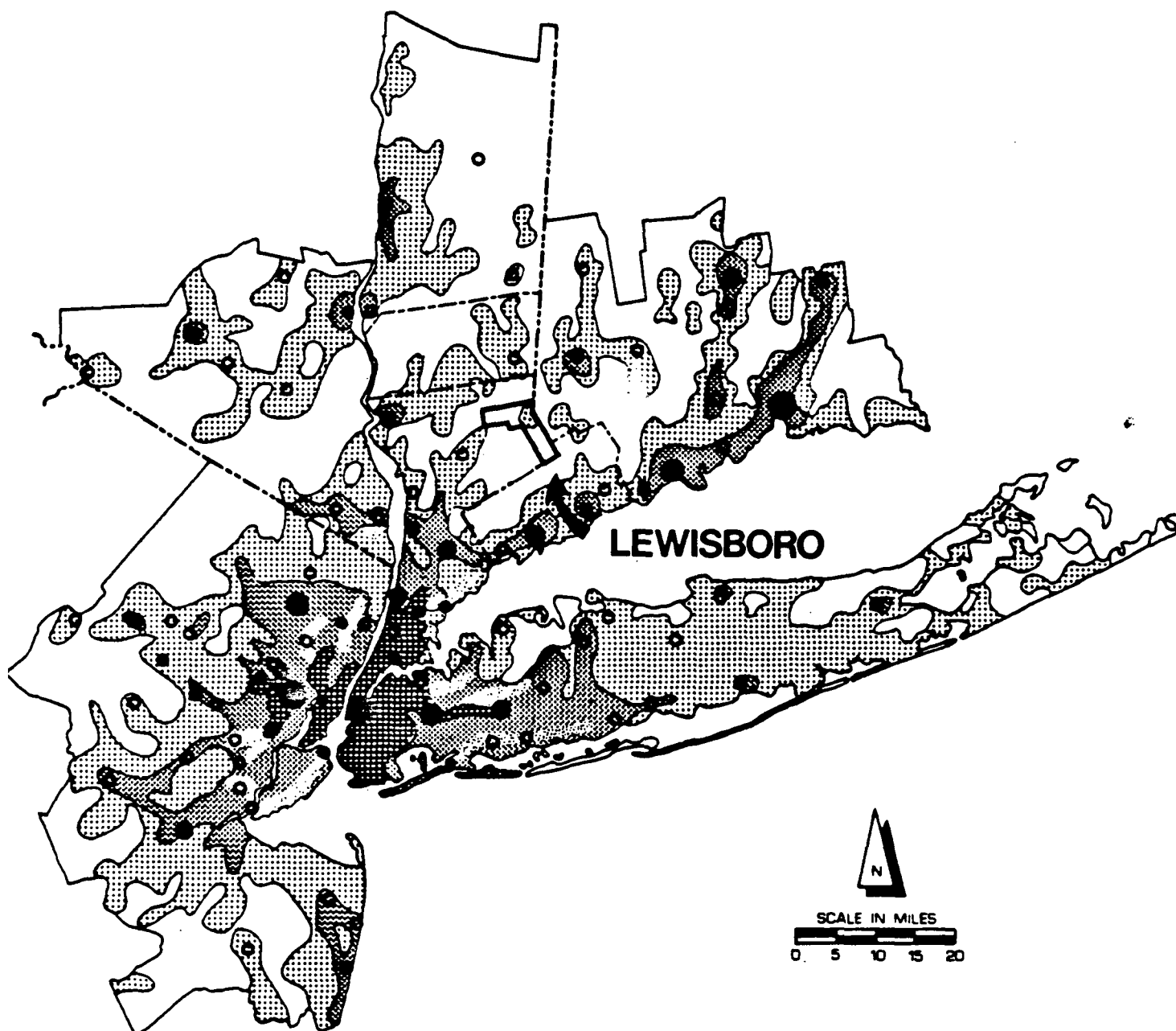
Achievement of these objectives requires the containment of "spread-city" development, the revitalization of the region's older cities and the preservation of critical natural resource lands. The Plan recognizes that such actions are not consistent with most current trends but states that changes must be made because haphazard suburban expansion results in: development of property that should have been conserved for natural uses; inefficient use of public services including sewer, water and public transportation systems; and accelerated decline of the older cities.

The Plan map (the Regional Development Guide), reproduced here as Figure 4, recommends density levels for new residential development and commercial centers. The categories are listed on Figure 4. The Plan does not include a density level for new housing in the range of 0.5 and 2 dwellings per net acre. The Plan text is explicit in stating that no new residential development should occur in this density range because such construction requires improvements such as streets, curbs, sidewalks and a central water and sanitary sewerage systems at significantly higher costs per housing unit on an initial and long-term basis than construction at higher density levels. In addition, energy costs are dramatically increased and environmental conservation becomes haphazard. In summary, the Plan states, "development at the inefficient, costlier, 'in-between' densities cannot be justified."

As the smallest interval on which the land use recommendations are made is one square mile, the Plan contains the cautionary advice that "square miles designated as urban lands may contain lands where development should not occur just as low density areas may contain small clusters of development." The importance of this allowance is linked to the objective that new land development establish a balance between dwellings, jobs and services in all areas of the region. The Plan states that "the designation of open (low density) land is not intended to provide any jurisdiction with support for exclusionary housing practices. Each jurisdiction (local government) is to make adequate land

Figure 4

LEWISBORO IN RELATION TO TRI-STATE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

RECOMMENDED CENTERS

- PRIMARY CENTERS**
- MORE THAN 90,000 JOBS
 - 50,000 - 89,999
 - 30,000 - 49,999
 - LESS THAN 30,000
 - SMALLER CENTERS

RECOMMENDED DENSITIES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS

- 0 - 0.5 DWELLINGS PER NET ACRE
- ▨ 2 - 6.9
- ▨ 7 - 14.9
- ▨ 15 - 29.9
- 30 OR MORE

available for a cross-section of housing types appropriate to the location and to employment within the region." Therefore, "open lands may be developed to balance housing with employment as long as careful design and adequate safeguards and facilities for environmental protection are provided."

Figure 4 shows Lewisboro in relation to the Tri-State Land Use Plan. The Plan locates no activity centers in the Town and recommends the lowest density levels for new residential development. With the exception of a small area in the vicinity of South Salem, all of Lewisboro is shown at a recommended density of 0 to 0.5 dwellings per net acre. Such low density level areas, termed "Open Land" by the text, are intended either to remain in their natural state as conservation or recreational open space or to be utilized for agriculture or residential uses at very low densities. Specifically, the Plan recommends:

The lowest residential densities deemed constitutional should be maintained in open land areas: three to ten acres per dwelling, more if possible. In any case, local zoning should be encouraged for densities lower than two acres per dwelling. Public works, particularly sewer trunk lines and arterial roads, should not be built on open lands, and interchanges on expressways should be omitted or widely spaced.

The Plan further states that "Open Land" areas can and should remain at a low intensity of use because "the remaining developable lands are amply sufficient to accommodate the planned and balanced growth of jobs and housing in the region and in each sub-region for the foreseeable future." Limited "in-fill" construction at existing densities in the small clusters of development which exist within the "Open Land" areas is appropriate and possibly necessary.

A small area of Lewisboro in the vicinity of South Salem is included in a classification with recommended densities of from 2 to 6.9 dwellings per net acre. The designation of this particular area is due to the well-established residential development around Lakes Truesdale, Waccabuc and Oscaleta which stands out from the surrounding land use when evaluated at a regional scale. Because of the attendant environmental issues associated with higher density lakefront development, this differentiation does not appear at the local level.

In summary, the Tri-State Regional Planning Commission developed a recommended planning concept of the Town of Lewisboro as an area remaining essentially open, without any activity centers of regional significance, and with new development for the most part occurring at densities of less than one housing unit per every two acres. This general

concept was tempered with the recognition that Lewisboro is an independent local community and must therefore plan for its own local needs which include commercial areas and a sufficiently wide range of housing varieties to adequately meet present and future needs of its residents and persons employed within the general area of the Town. To meet these needs, higher levels of density than that recommended for "Open Land" may be required and these clusters of development should be planned in accordance with the objectives of the Regional Land Use Plan. One specific recommendation is that zoning classifications which require between one-half acre and two acres per housing unit be avoided.

4.3 Regional Plan Association

The Regional Plan Association is a privately funded citizens planning advisory body which has worked for the orderly development of the New York Metropolitan Region since the 1920s. A major effort of the organization was the development of the Second Regional Plan which was released in 1968 as a successor to the 1929 Plan of New York and Environs. This new plan was then supplemented with individual reports focusing on application of the Plan's concepts in each of the Region's counties.

The Westchester County report, The Future of Westchester County, was released in 1971. It addressed seven issues concerning Westchester's development: the location of new major facilities, housing opportunity, housing location, poverty and racial discrimination, physical appearance, transportation, and governmental changes. The recommendations promote concentration of development in existing centers, particularly White Plains and to a lesser degree Mount Kisco and Peekskill, and the preservation of outlying areas as open space. Governmental action is recommended to prevent strip commercial development, segregation of jobs and housing, and a pattern of scattered development. Regional Plan is particularly critical of office campus developments isolated from the major activity centers even though they may be related to transportation arteries.

The Regional Plan Association planning concept of the Town of Lewisboro consists of a low density residential area with significant amounts of open space. All non-local commercial and employment needs of Lewisboro residents are seen to be adequately handled by existing or new facilities developed in Mount Kisco, White Plains or other existing activity centers.

4.4 Westchester County

The Westchester County Charter charges the County Planning Board with a comprehensive planning function with regard to the formulation and recommendation of major development

policies. In addition, the County Administrative Code states that the County Planning Board shall find "procedures for bringing pertinent inter-community and countywide considerations to the attention of municipalities." One means the Board has utilized for fulfilling its responsibilities has been the development of a series of planning documents.

Urban Form. The primary Westchester County planning document is titled Assumptions, Goals and Urban Form. It is intended to serve as a "guide for land development decisions which need to be made by the private sector and government agencies at all levels in their development of land and facilities and the provision of services." Originally prepared in 1971, the present version was adopted by the County Planning Board in January 1975. The document was also "cross-accepted" by the Tri-State Regional Planning Commission as the official portion of the regional plan for Westchester County.

The focus of Assumptions, Goals and Urban Form is on development patterns and density, not on varying land uses. It is for this reason that the concept "urban form" is used rather than land use. Five distinctive forms of development were delineated: concentrated urban center, high density urban area, medium density suburban area, low density rural area, and open space.

The classification of the County's land into these recommended density categories was based partially on existing development but mainly on application of key policy statements. These statements are:

- o The existing urban centers should be expanded and intensified.
- o The natural valley system, where corridors of development have historically evolved, should be enhanced by developing a balanced transportation system that will provide an alternative to the automobile, and by extending water and sewer utility lines.
- o Open space should continue to define, shape and provide relief and contrast to the urban environment. Community separation and identity should be maintained by a distinct decrease in development densities as one moves away from the centers.

The resulting Urban Form Concepts plan map is reproduced as Figure 5.

The most extensive portion of Lewisboro is shown to be recommended for low density rural development. In the eastern end of the Town, Vista, South Salem and the lake communities are recommended as medium density suburban areas. Overall this category contains more land than any other in

LEGEND

CONCENTRATED URBAN CENTERS

- MAJOR
- INTERMEDIATE
- LOCAL

LAND USE DENSITY

- HIGH DENSITY URBAN
- MEDIUM DENSITY SUBURBAN
- LOW DENSITY RURAL

OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

- LOOSELY DEFINED
- DEFINITE ELEMENTS

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

- MAJOR URBAN CORRIDOR
- MINOR TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR
- TERMINAL-EXCHANGE

MAP REVISIONS

MAP REVISED AS OF SPRING 1974
BASED UPON COMMENTS RECEIVED

URBAN FORM CONCEPTS

Figure 5

Westchester. Areas with this designation are expected to have public water and sewer systems available either at present or in the near future. The dominant land use will likely be single-family residential although attached or multi-family residential and limited office and commercial development would not be inconsistent as long as it is within the recommended density and floor area ratio ranges established by Urban Form.

The western end of Lewisboro is shown to contain a narrow corridor parallel to Interstate 684 appropriate for high density urban development. This corridor is bordered by a wider medium density suburban area which extends east to include the Lake Katonah community. Located within high density urban areas are concentrated urban centers. One such center is shown to be Goldens Bridge. The centers represent the highest density levels in the County although the centers themselves vary in size from major (White Plains) to intermediate (Mount Kisco) to local (Goldens Bridge).

Since the adoption of Assumptions, Goals and Urban Form, the County Department of Planning has intended to produce a series of refinements to the Urban Form Concepts plan map. These refinements are to reflect increased consideration of environmental factors, conformance with the more recently adopted County Parks and Open Space Plan, and a more detailed breakdown of the five urban form categories. This last area of refinement is perhaps the most important. For example, the present high density urban classification which is recommended for the Interstate 684 corridor in Lewisboro includes a density range of 8 to 128 dwelling units per net acre. The density range in the medium density suburban area is 1 to 16 dwelling units per net acre.

Several areas of Lewisboro will likely be affected by the refinement process. First, the boundaries of the Vista and South Salem hamlets along with the lake communities will be more accurately located to reflect the areas likely to be served by future public water and sewer systems. Second, the Cross River hamlet, which does not appear at all on the present plan map, will be added. Here, as in the other hamlet areas, a more limited recommended density range will be redefined at lower density levels and will recognize more limited areas which are likely to be served by public water and sewer systems. However, the overall concept of intense higher density development in areas adjacent to Interstate 684 will likely remain unchanged.

Open Space. In June 1976, the Westchester County Planning Board and the Westchester County Parks, Recreation and Conservation Board adopted the second element of the County Comprehensive Plan, the Policy on Parks and Open Space. Recommended policies include creating linear open space linkages between major open space and recreation areas,

preserving environmentally fragile lands of more than local significance, and preserving reservoir and watershed lands in an open state while recognizing their potential for active recreational purposes.

The Open Space Plan map shows the approximate location of all lands which meet the policy guidelines of the report. Lands within Lewisboro that are shown on the Plan map include the existing County parks (Ward Pound Ridge Reservation and Mountain Lakes Camp), reservoir and watershed properties, and several conservation and private open space holdings including the Waccabuc Country Club. In addition, the Route 35 and Route 121 corridors are identified as "scenic routes" which should receive protection and enhancement where appropriate.

Waste Treatment. In 1978, Westchester County released a report titled Areawide Waste Treatment Management Plan. The report discussed non-point source pollution, urban storm water management, treatment of municipal and industrial point source discharges, residual waste management, and the administration and regulation of water quality management. The work is basically general in scope although several specific problem areas are dealt with in detail.

Lewisboro is cited in the report as being attuned to potential groundwater quality problems because of the local controls on drainage and wetlands, the requirement for the preservation of natural cover, and the allowance of clustered housing. Other recommendations are made on street cleaning practices, means of reducing storm water runoff by roof and parking lot ponding, and application of a zero increase in runoff standard to new development.

Five areas within the Town of Lewisboro are identified in the Plan as possible sewer service areas. The immediate consideration of sewage disposal facilities at Lake Kitchawan is emphasized but the Plan also recommends that additional study be done to establish the extent of the water quality problem attributable to septic field leaching. The Plan recommends that the proposed treatment plant at the Meadows be designed in such a way as to permit expansion in the future to treat the sewage from the surrounding Cross River area. With regard to the third and fourth areas, Twin Lakes-Truesdale and Vista, the Plan states that "present water quality condition does not warrant abandonment of sub-surface disposal systems" and that therefore these areas should remain unsewered. The Plan does recommend, however, that a continuing monitoring and surveillance network be set up to identify future water quality problems or health hazards. The Plan recommends that the fifth area, the Muscoot River sewer service area, be developed as a regionalized system with all treatment conducted at the Yonkers Joint Treatment Plant. Obviously the construction of numerous interceptor

sewers and pumping stations will be required for this recommendation to be realized.

Housing. The County Board of Legislators adopted an official Westchester County Housing Policy in September 1979. The basic theme of the policy is that increased housing production must be encouraged in order to improve the quality of the housing stock, provide for the additional housing units needed as a result of the continuing decrease in average household size, and to allow for population growth. A target population growth of one half of 1% per year is presented as a requirement to maintain proper economic vitality. These factors combined equate to the construction of an average of 5,000 new housing units each year. Westchester lost approximately 30,000 residents between 1970 and 1980.

The Housing Policy urges the County to "pursue a program of need allocation that is based on cooperative, voluntary participation by the constituent municipalities of the county." It also recommends that the County "negotiate with each community regarding its contribution to the need for housing" while recognizing that "all decisions regarding the provision of these units should be made locally." Each local government should "define the need, the size, the scope and the type of housing that is required, its response to that requirement, and the methods to be used toward that end." County and local housing policy should provide a stimulus for the construction of new housing (in particular multi-family housing), the conversion of nonhousing structure for residential purposes, and the reinvestment and rehabilitation of existing housing and neighborhoods, so as to increase the production of additional housing units.

Summary. The several planning documents and policy statements adopted by Westchester County establish a broad outline of a recommended development pattern for Lewisboro. The Tri-State Regional Planning Commission portrait of Lewisboro as an area remaining essentially open is reinforced by the County. Differing from the region plan, the County plans identify an urban growth corridor along Interstate 684 and assume higher densities of development to occur in the hamlet areas of Vista and South Salem. The Areawide Waste Treatment Management (208) Plan also indicates that public sewer systems may some day be required in these areas as well as in Cross River and Lake Kitchawan.

With regard to housing, the County Housing Policy encourages local communities to provide proper zoning for the construction of multi-family housing in accordance with local needs in areas of concentrated density such as the hamlets. Meanwhile, the non-hamlet areas should be regulated to ensure

their preservation or development at low density levels and the maintenance of scenic corridors along major roads.

4.5 Adjacent Towns

Lewisboro abuts portions of seven other municipalities: Ridgefield, Wilton and New Canaan in Connecticut and Pound Ridge, Bedford, Somers and North Salem in New York. In many respects, these towns and Lewisboro share the same characteristics in terms of land use and development. All are generally low density residential suburban communities which have experienced a high percentage rate of population growth and new residential construction during the past 25 years.

With one exception, all land adjacent to Lewisboro is shown on local town plans and zoning ordinances as residential, with densities in the range of one housing unit per one to four acres. The exception, one small area in the Town of North Salem north of Nash Road and east of Route 22, permits a minimum lot size of one-half acre. This area is across the town line from Lewisboro's one-half acre minimum lot size district in Goldens Bridge.

Although many features of these neighboring towns are similar, there are also several unique factors in the other towns which have an influence on land use and activity patterns in Lewisboro. Of prime importance are the commercial centers located in Ridgefield, New Canaan, Katonah and Mount Kisco. Because of their size, these centers have market and service areas which extend well into Lewisboro. Their existence and proximity has partially precluded the development of and the necessity for similar size centers in Lewisboro. Under the recommendation of the several regional plans previously discussed, any expansion of non-local oriented businesses should take place within these existing centers and not in Lewisboro.

Campus Commercial. While no sizable campus office development project has been proposed for property in Lewisboro, such projects have been proposed or approved in adjacent communities along the Interstate 684 corridor. Developers of these types of projects, as well as major corporations, are finding that few campus building sites remain in and around White Plains and along Interstate 287, the Cross-Westchester Expressway. As a result, new sites are being sought further north along the major highways and parkways.

Construction began in 1984 on two large campus office developments in the Town of Somers on sites directly west of Lewisboro across the Muscoot Reservoir. The main access routes to these projects will be Route 35 and Route 138 between the sites and interchanges on Interstate 684. The scale of the developments will affect traffic levels and the

housing market in Lewisboro. The PepsiCo, Inc. project on Route 35 near Katonah has a long range master plan showing 1.3 million square feet of office space for 5,800 employees. As of November 1984, one building of 530,000 square feet to serve 2,000 employees had been approved by the Town of Somers and was under construction. Completion was expected in 1986. Four miles to the north on Route 138 near Goldens Bridge, the IBM Corporation was constructing a complex of 1.2 million square feet of office space for 2,700 employees. The anticipated completion date for IBM was mid-1987.

The policy of the Town of Somers, as stated in the final environmental impact studies for these projects, is to not permit additional development of this type. Even so, the traffic impacts of the approved development alone will require careful monitoring in the Goldens Bridge area to insure that the State highways continue to adequately serve local residents. In addition, the proximity of two major corporate developments along with the access available to I-684 will likely increase the interest of commercial developers in vacant land in Lewisboro near the interstate highway. The Town should be prepared to deal with development requests in a firm, consistent manner based on the Town Plan's recommended goals, policies and land use.

Multi-Family Housing. Another feature of neighboring towns which may have an influence on Lewisboro is multi-family housing. New York State courts have ruled that local municipalities must consider and provide opportunities for local and regional housing needs. These needs have been defined by the courts as including multi-family housing. The most recent suit was initiated by a developer after the North Salem Town Board turned down his request for a rezoning to allow the construction of 48 multi-family housing units. The court found that the "needs of the region have not been met in other communities which would free this Town from its obligation to contribute to such need" and that therefore "the Town has failed to meet its share of the regional housing needs and the needs of its own community." In this case, the local zoning ordinance did not permit the construction of multi-family housing as a matter of right anywhere in the town.

Other area communities have had different approaches to multi-family housing. Bedford has for many years permitted this type of housing. It presently contains approximately 700 such units. Bedford has also considered the adoption of a "floating zone" for multi-family housing. The Town of Somers has such a multi-family floating zone which has been mapped once to allow the construction of 120 townhouses. In addition, Somers has a designed residential development provision which has allowed the planning and construction of the Heritage Hills project. When completed, Heritage Hills is expected to contain 3,100 multi-family units on 1,000 acres of property.

The Town of Pound Ridge does not have any provision for multi-family housing although the Town Plan proposes the creation of a "floating zone" which would be limited to the provision of senior citizen housing in multi-family type construction. Multi-family housing has been constructed in all adjacent Connecticut communities with several large projects of more than 200 units each located in Ridgefield and New Canaan.

Lewisboro's commitment to the provision of opportunities for the construction of multi-family housing is discussed at length in the "Residential Development" chapter of the Plan. Following through on the recommendations of the 1973 Town Plan, the Zoning Ordinance was rewritten and the Zoning Map amended to include multi-family residential districts. In October 1984, 11% of the Town's total housing units consisted of multi-family units (385 units of a total of 3,499 units).