

Why is the Town of Ulysses Revising the Lakeshore and Conservation Zoning?

In 2009 the Town adopted a new Comprehensive Plan. The goals and objectives are based on resident input gathered through workshops and town-wide surveys conducted during the three-year process of drafting the plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a document that guides future planning and is the basis for zoning laws and amendments. The Town Board's responsibility is to consider and adopt zoning laws that are in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan and which promote the health, safety and welfare of the entire town and all its residents.

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan is available here: www.ulysses.ny.us/tou-comp-plan-2009.pdf

Related to the Lakeshore and Conservation Areas, the Plan concluded:

- a. Residents feel it is important to protect the town's natural and environmental resources (pp. 74-76).
- b. The Plan encourages protection of sensitive areas such as steep slopes leading down to the lake, wetlands, Unique Natural Areas (UNAs), mature forests and wildlife habitats (pp.19-20 Obj.1.1 B.).
- c. The Plan calls for the Town to apply for legislative authority from NY State to enact regulations concerning boathouses, moorings and docks on Cayuga Lake on or near the Ulysses shoreline (p. 19, Obj.1.1 D.).
- d. The Plan suggests enacting zoning regulations to protect the Cayuga Lake waterfront and ensure development that is consistent with the lakefront's existing character and compatible with the natural environmental features (p. 19, Obj.1.1 E.).
- e. In reference to the lakeshore area, the Ulysses Comprehensive Plan stipulates, "The environmental sensitivity of this area demands establishing strong zoning regulations to guide appropriate scale development and protect the significant natural resources of the area. In order to implement protection of this area, the Town should consider a number of mechanisms including overlay zones, septic testing, size and density limitations on all structures, and incorporation of design standards for docks and accessory buildings to the Town's Zoning Law" (p. 44).
- f. The Plan asks to review and revise the existing Town regulations to more adequately protect streams in the Town through buffer zones and setbacks (p. 20, Obj. 1.2 A.)
- g. The Plan suggests to protect defined wetlands and establish appropriate buffer zones (p. 20, Obj. 1.2 C.).

Example Benefits from Lakeshore and Conservation Zoning

Some Example Areas of Concern:	Current Regulations and Zoning	New Regulations Under Consideration
<p>Preservation of steep slopes and designated Unique Natural Areas (UNAs)*</p>	<p>* Only a building permit is required which allows heavy excavation to occur in environmentally sensitive areas without any site plan review.</p> <p>* Clear cutting of forests is allowed on steep slopes and in UNAs.</p>	<p>*Site Plan Review by the Planning Board would determine if engineering or other steps are required to prevent erosion and slope failure during preparation of a site for construction.</p> <p>* Clear cutting would not be allowed in UNAs and the Steep Slope Overlay. Significant tree removal in these areas would require a Woodland management plan.</p>
<p>Neighboring property can build large structures in the water without a permit (docks, boat hoists)</p>	<p>Permit is only required 30 days after completion of construction for waterfront structures such as docks.</p>	<p>Permit would be required in advance of construction.</p>
<p>Riparian Rights are not clearly defined</p>	<p>Dock extensions and buoy placement can be sources of contention between neighboring properties due to vague water rights definitions.</p>	<p>Riparian rights would be more clearly defined with the option of neighbors working together to determine the best method to use.</p>
<p>Yacht Club</p>	<p>Yacht Club is a non-conforming use and cannot easily expand.</p>	<p>Yacht Club would have special zoning to make it a conforming use.</p>
<p>Girl Scout Camp</p>	<p>Can be used for residential development.</p>	<p>New definition of Park and Recreation would limit residential development.</p>
<p>Maintain existing character*</p>	<p>Current regulations allow structures and land uses that vary significantly from the existing character.</p>	<p>Future regulations aim to preserve the existing character of the lakeshore area.</p>

*Applies to Conservation Zoning also.