

Town of Peru Comprehensive Plan

Executive Summary

Communities that plan — grow by choice, not by chance.

A plan makes growth thoughtful, understandable, and predictable.

A plan shows that a community is managing its future, and knows where it is going. A plan attracts investment and wins support for community projects.

In New York State, the comprehensive plan is the policy foundation upon which communities are built. It is a long-term “roadmap” for growth—a guide for decisions and actions by local government officials in shaping the future of their municipality. A comprehensive plan identifies needs and recommends goals, objectives, and strategies to improve the community for the health, safety, and general welfare of its residents.

The Town of Peru is authorized to develop and adopt a comprehensive plan by New York State Town Law Section 272-a. Although the comprehensive plan, itself, is not local law, the plan will be implemented through local laws and through local government initiatives. State statutes also require that all land-use laws in a municipality be consistent with its comprehensive plan.

Advantages of a comprehensive plan—

- Promotes consensus and broad support for common goals.
- Provides the basis for logically consistent regulatory programs.
- All government agencies involved in planning capital projects within the town must first take the comprehensive plan into consideration.
- Protects community resources, and advances desired growth and development.

What is in the plan?

Section 1 describes the planning process and presents detailed results.

- An introduction to the planning process that was implemented
- A vision for the town
- Identified community strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

Section 2 describes the goals and strategies recommended for Peru

- Strategies and Recommendations

Section 3 presents action items to assist with implementation

- Action step
- Type of action
- Time frame for implementation
- Identification of the group responsible for implementing that action step

Appendices A through G present supplementary information:

- Community input
- Demography and community profile
- Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats analysis
- Maps

The Town of Peru Comprehensive Plan was developed by a specially appointed Steering Committee by the Town Board. The planning process included broad public participation and dialogue through a community visioning workshop, community image survey and workshop, public forums, several questionnaires, background studies, mapping, and focus group meetings for farmers and business owners.

Long-Range Goals

From an analysis of public opinion and other data, the Steering Committee drafted a set of long-range goals to realize the proposed vision for the Town of Peru. Initial draft goals were amended based on responses to a written survey and public forum comments. For each goal, a set of strategies and action steps are recommended. These are summarized as follows:

Goal 1

Keep small town and rural atmosphere.

Summary

The small town and rural atmosphere of Peru is one of its most highly valued attributes. Peru is defined in part by its ruralness and residents want to maintain that. This goal was established in order to ensure that the inevitable changes that will occur in the future do not negatively impact this feature of Peru.

Strategies

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Land use regulations should include rural layout and design standards instead of suburban ones○ Amend laws to be consistent with New York State laws○ Encourage home occupations | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Have hamlet-style design and development standards in the hamlet and rural-style standards for the rural areas of town○ All for cluster and conservation subdivision developments○ Remove the RA designation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Allow for the clustering of commercial development at specific nodes only○ Bear Swamp Road should have new development standards oriented to rural character○ Address adult uses with strict standards to prevent negative impacts |
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Goal 2

Preserve and enhance the Towns' historical and cultural heritage.

Summary

The Town has many historical resources, some of which are in the hamlet of Peru that are highly valued by residents. The history of Peru adds to the cultural heritage and community pride. Residents indicated that they want to ensure that the town's rich history and the many cultural events continue to enrich the quality of life for those who live or visit Peru.

Strategies

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Town sponsored committee on cultural and historic resources to inventory these resources and act as advisors to the town○ Assist landowners who wish to obtain state or national historic register status for their property○ Use historic date and maker programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Promote cultural tourism via such things as historic driving tours○ Education efforts with Community○ Local incentives to encourage preservation and rehabilitation of historic locations○ Create historic overlay district to promote design principles that are | <p>consistent with the historic character can be accomplished (a review process, not a local historic district law)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Initiate commercial building design standards○ Develop the Heyworth Building as a park and historic site |
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Goal 3

Protect community identified open spaces and scenic views.

Summary

When asked what were the strengths of Peru, open spaces and scenic views topped the list. All public input events indicated that the people of Peru highly value these resources. This goal offers a variety of strategies that can work to protect these areas over time.

Strategies

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Define and map priority open spaces and scenic locations○ Develop a full open space plan○ Work with willing landowners to open up access and allow trail easements○ Educational initiatives with landowners○ Local designation of roads as scenic○ New entrance signs to the Town | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Seek new sources of funding to acquire property and easements○ Offer density bonuses for protection of open space lands○ Require open space preservation as part of large subdivisions○ Lower allowed density○ Use dwelling per acre as the density measurement instead of minimum lot size | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Use clustering and conservation subdivisions○ Establish an open space/scenic overlay district for large/major developments○ Establish building envelopes during project review○ Work with area land trusts and explore financing techniques to accomplish these tasks. |
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Goal 4

Enhance the visual character of the town.

Summary

The visual character includes not only open spaces and scenic views, but streetscapes, rural roads, buildings, landscaping, signage, property maintenance, etc. The public indicated that they wanted to improve the visual character that exists and to make sure that new development that comes to Peru is of high visual quality. A community image survey was conducted to document the desired visual character and this was compared to existing conditions in order to identify areas needing work in the future.

Strategies

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Use rural road standards for new roads○ Initiate street tree requirements○ Start town beautification committee | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Amend zoning to better control signage, building design, lighting, parking lot design, landscaping for commercial development | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Do gateway improvements○ Identify additional sources of funding |
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Goal 5

Provide quality public services, infrastructure (including roads and pedestrian systems), and recreational opportunities in a cost effective manner.

Summary

Residents desire quality public services that are done efficiently, while paying attention to taxes, and with good communication between the public and the government. They also want expanded recreational opportunities. This goal is designed to offer a variety of programs, efforts, and policies that can be instituted to attain these public service qualities.

Strategies

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Initiate town newsletter○ Offer tax incentives for fire/rescue volunteers○ Initiate annual report and meeting between citizens and Town Board○ Initiate on-going training for all Planning Board and ZBA members○ Have annual reporting by Planning Board and ZBA to Town Board on land use issues that need addressing to keep laws and administration of laws current | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Encourage development where water lines already exist○ Establish maximum lot sizes in hamlet○ Minimize use of cul-de-sac roads○ Expand the reservoir watershed protection area to match the actual watershed boundary○ Establish a Capital Improvement Plan for water and sewer expansions○ Initiate parking study in hamlet | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Require access management techniques on Bear Swamp Road to minimize curb cuts○ Appoint a recreation advisory committee to help do a town-wide and long-range recreation plan○ Work with school district and other organizations to explore ways to enhance community use of existing buildings○ Develop Little Ausable River Trail to link the town's three parks, the school and the village |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with State to have kayak lockers at state boat launch | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify local roads that could be bike routes ○ Develop new trails | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Educate and promote recreational opportunities in town |
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Goal 6

Create a vibrant business climate that encourages growth in a manner that maintains the Town’s environment, rural character, and quality of life.

Summary

Peru desires additional economic development that is consistent with the town’s character and needs. This goal has been established to help Peru more aggressively market itself, attract and retain small businesses, and to ensure that new businesses enhance the character and quality of life for all residents.

Strategies

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create shovel ready site for industrial development on Dashnaw Road ○ Initiate a local economic development effort for Peru ○ Attract new and desirable businesses especially to the hamlet area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initiate as part of this effort a business retention program ○ Create incentives to stimulate commercial development ○ Establish low interest loan pool for new business start-ups ○ Include in zoning the ability to support a | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> diversity of commercial activities ○ Consider establishment of a BID (Business Improvement District) ○ Build an economic development program on Peru’s beauty, character, uniqueness, agriculture, and recreational opportunities. |
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Goal 7

Protect the Town’s significant environmental resources, including unique plant and animal habitats, ground water quality, wetlands, or surface water.

Summary

People in Peru value the clean environment of the town and are very concerned about changes in the future that might negatively impact water, wetlands, open spaces, wildlife, habitats, etc. This goal is oriented to identifying and offering ways to protect these environmental resources in the future as additional growth and development occurs.

Strategies

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Zoning to protect floodplains ○ Planning will incorporate soil erosion and sedimentation programs and manage stormwater runoff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Highway Department will use Best Management Practices during road construction and maintenance ○ Effective use of site reviews and development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> layouts to direct actual disturbances away from stream corridors, wetlands, steep slopes, etc. ○ Maintain connections of and protect different environmental features |
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through use of a conservation overlay district, careful environmental reviews (SEQR), maintenance of open space in clustered or

conservation subdivisions, control of vegetation removal on steep slopes.
○ offer density bonuses for voluntary actions to protect the environment

○ Education programs for landowners, developers and builders

Goal 8

Protect farms, farmland, and promote agricultural economic growth.

Summary

Farms and farmlands contribute not only to the economy, but to open space, scenic views, rural character, the environment, and to our health. Although not all aspects of farming were found to be desirable, residents want to promote and maintain farming as having an important role in Peru. This goal is needed in order to ensure that farms have a strong place in the future of the town.

Strategies

○ Zoning to be consistent with all New York State Agriculture and Markets guidelines and definitions so as not to over regulate farm operations
○ Allow more flexibility in development of roadside stands
○ Offer town tax breaks to willing landowners in return for term easements to prevent non-farm development

○ Pass a right-to-farm law
○ Prioritize farmlands so that the town is eligible for preservation funding available from the state and federal government
○ Direct development away from active agricultural operations
○ Lower allowable density in agricultural areas of town

○ New development to buffer themselves from existing farms
○ Work with farmers to institute best management practices
○ Work with the County and regional economic development organizations to promote ag-related economic development and tourism

Goal 9

Promote quality and affordable housing conditions.

Summary

Studies done as part of the comprehensive plan indicated that people are concerned about affordable housing, especially as it relates to the need for senior citizens. A portion of Peru's population has income levels that make it probable that they might have trouble finding affordable housing. This goal was established to address this need and to offer suggestions to ensure that Peru will have affordable housing conditions and opportunities in the future.

Strategies

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Allow for two-family, multi-family and accessory housing units via special use permits○ Initiate guidelines and controls to ensure that these uses are | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Promote clustered development as a way to keep development costs down | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Allow a variety of senior housing types to be developed○ Offer incentives for those who offer affordable lots or houses |
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Goal 10

Promote the town center as the community focal point.

Summary

The hamlet of Peru is seen as the central focal point by residents. Without careful planning however, the traditional role of the hamlet can be eroded. This can be seen as growth extends down Bear Swamp Road away from the Hamlet. In order to promote the town center for its cultural, government, recreation, education, and economic roles, this goal was established.

Strategies

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Initiate landscaping, streetscaping and façade improvement programs in the hamlet○ Keep vital functions such as post office, town hall and library in hamlet○ Develop more recreational and cultural | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Develop new signage to delineate the boundary of the hamlet○ Link Bear Swamp Road visually and physically | <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Keep commercial development primarily in and around the hamlet (sidewalks) with the hamlet |
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Goal 11

Maintain and enhance Peru's sense of community.

Summary

Survey information indicated that residents of Peru are a close community. There is a great deal of pride about Peru, and friendliness and caring are features that help make Peru a quality and desired place to live and raise families. This goal offers a variety of strategies to ensure that these characteristics are maintained in the future.

Strategies

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initiate a community pride group/program ○ Initiate a town newsletter ○ Start a public recognition program for people who have community involvement and work towards enhancement projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Direct the Youth Commission to involve teens in community enhancement projects ○ Enhance use of web site for news, events, opportunities, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Town Board to sponsor an annual meeting to discuss issues with citizens and lay out an annual work plan to address them |
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Goal 12

Support a quality education system.

Summary

Although the Town of Peru does not have a great deal of influence over the school district, residents want to have a quality education system. This is a priority, but people are also very concerned about their taxes. It will be important for the Town to recognize what actions taken at the municipal level affects the school. This goal establishes the need for the Town and School District to work together to plan for future growth.

Strategies

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assist School District and become involved when school evaluates and develops long range facility needs ○ Continue to fund the public library ○ Work with the School District when reviewing development projects that might impact school taxes or the school-aged population ○ Continue to support the School District | | |
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