

Let's House Our Workforce!

By Anne Saylor, Housing Coordinator

Dutchess County Executive William R. Steinhaus brought together the first meeting of the Dutchess County Workforce Housing Coalition (WHC) last year in an effort to address the lack of moderately-priced housing for the Dutchess County workforce. The Coalition, supported by Dutchess County and the Dyson Foundation, is composed of a Board of Directors which includes representatives from a range of sectors in the county, including local governments,

closing cost assistance program, and the WHC has begun working with employers who have expressed concern about the impact that housing costs are having on their retention and recruitment efforts. As part of this effort, an employer-based housing program will be announced this fall. The WHC will also be working with municipalities and employers to actually develop workforce housing, both rental and homeownership.

In this issue:

- Site Plan Case Study
- Cleanup of Brownfield Site Creates Housing Opportunity
- Planning Federation Award Nominations
- 2005 Community Development Block Grants Allocated
- Award-Winning County Landscapes Keep Moving
- Legal Notes - Clarifying ZBA Authority and Eminent Domain



The Hamilton, a 54-unit apartment complex for moderate income households, is under construction on Main Street in the City of Poughkeepsie.

businesses, employers, housing developers, nonprofit organizations, school districts and mortgage lenders.

The WHC is focusing on three specific tasks: advocacy, employer-assisted housing programs, and development. The advocacy program seeks to increase awareness of the need for moderately-priced housing, the short and long term impacts of a lack of such housing in the community, and the variety of housing solutions available to communities. The Employer-Assisted Housing Program will include education and a downpayment/

The WHC has worked closely with the County's Department of Planning and Development to develop and distribute information that demonstrates the housing cost problem in our community. One component of this information dissemination is the County's 2004 Rental Housing survey, which was released this February. This survey covers four types of rental housing: apartment complexes of 20 units or more, multi-family rental housing, condos and homes for rent, and subsidized housing. The following table

Inspiring Plans with Specific Priorities

By John Clarke, Development and Design Coordinator

Communities often get bogged-down doing comprehensive plans, taking years to complete, costing way too much money, eventually creating long-winded, watered-down documents with not many real results to show for all the work. Here are a few key suggestions to focus plans on specific actions needed now:

Shorten the time frames. New plans can take two years in the process and are only updated once every 10 or 15 years. Plans with long horizons tend to be too general and soon become increasingly less useful as circumstances change. Instead, set a six to twelve-month schedule, streamlining the process. Long-term goals are fine, but concentrate recommendations on now and the next few years.

Directly involve the public. Plans often rely on monthly committee meetings that lose momentum and written surveys that take months to distribute and compile. As an alternative, actively involve as many people as possible up-front in face-to-face public workshops where specific ideas can be tested under fire and built upon by others, quickly creating a larger community consensus on many issues.

Continued on page 2

Continued on page 3

"House Our Workforce" continued from page 1

shows the average rents for Dutchess County apartment complex units:

Apartment Complex Average County Rents and Percent Change 2003-2004			
	2004	2003	Percent Change
Studio	\$697	\$643	8.5%
1-Bedroom	\$882	\$858	2.8%
2-Bedroom	\$1054	\$1029	2.4%
3-Bedroom	\$1354	\$1307	3.6%

Although these rents and the corresponding increase may be considered high by many residents, they do indicate a slowing in the rate of increase from the 2003 survey. The vacancy rate for the 6,917 apartment complex units covered by the survey was 2.8%. This rate is considered low by housing experts who feel a healthy rental market should have a 5% vacancy rate; at 5% landlords have acceptable vacancies from a financial perspective and there are sufficient vacancies for tenants to move.

The multi-family housing section shows a similar trend to apartment complexes. Although a vacancy rate is not calculated for multi-family housing, it appears there is more availability in the multi-family market than the past five years. The following table shows average rents for multi-family housing:

Multi-Family Housing Average County Rents and Percent Change 2003-2004			
	2004	2003	Percent Change
Studio	\$620	\$643	-3.6%
1-Bedroom	\$817	\$808	1.1%
2-Bedroom	\$1,018	\$995	2.3%
3-Bedroom	\$1,226	\$1,235	-0.7%

The condominiums and homes for rent section had a combination of moderate rent increases and some decreases,

although these numbers may fluctuate more than other data because of the smaller sample size. The section also showed an increase in the number of units available. Subsidized housing is a continued need, and homelessness information from 2004 showed that 3,489 separate individuals accessed emergency housing through Hudson River Housing and Grace Smith House.

As County Executive Steinhaus noted when he released the survey, "The level of Dutchess County's rents and a lower than ideal vacancy rate correspond to a strong local economy and increased demand for housing in Dutchess County. While in many ways these are indicators of a strong economy, they also show there are currently too few apartments in Dutchess to keep up with the natural demand for

such units. Dutchess County is working closely with local municipalities to create a full range of housing options available for our residents and our workforce. *The Workforce Housing Coalition*, in cooperation with the County's Department of Planning and Development, is working to encourage and assist local municipalities in developing models to create a range of housing which addresses the needs of their residents."

For more information on the activities of the WHC call (845) 463-5405. The County's Rental Housing Survey is available for free on the County's website <http://www.dutchessny.gov/CountyGov/Departments/Planning/PLpublications.htm>. Hard copies can be obtained from the Department of Planning and Development for \$4.00 plus postage. 🌳



PLAN ON IT STAFF



Editor - Lynette Wacker
Graphic Designer - Patricia M. Houston

PLAN ON IT is a publication of the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development in conjunction with the Dutchess County Planning Federation. *PLAN ON IT* brings local, regional and state planning news to over 1600 individuals and organizations. If you would like to be added to our mailing list or wish to share your views on planning, write to Editor, *PLAN ON IT*, 27 High Street, 2nd Floor, Poughkeepsie, N.Y. 12601, or phone (845) 486-3600. *PLAN ON IT* is also posted on our website at www.dutchessny.gov.

Reclaiming Main Street

In addition to The Hamilton housing project (shown on page 1), there are several other apartments being developed in the heart of the City of Poughkeepsie. Pictured are just a few of the projects that are under

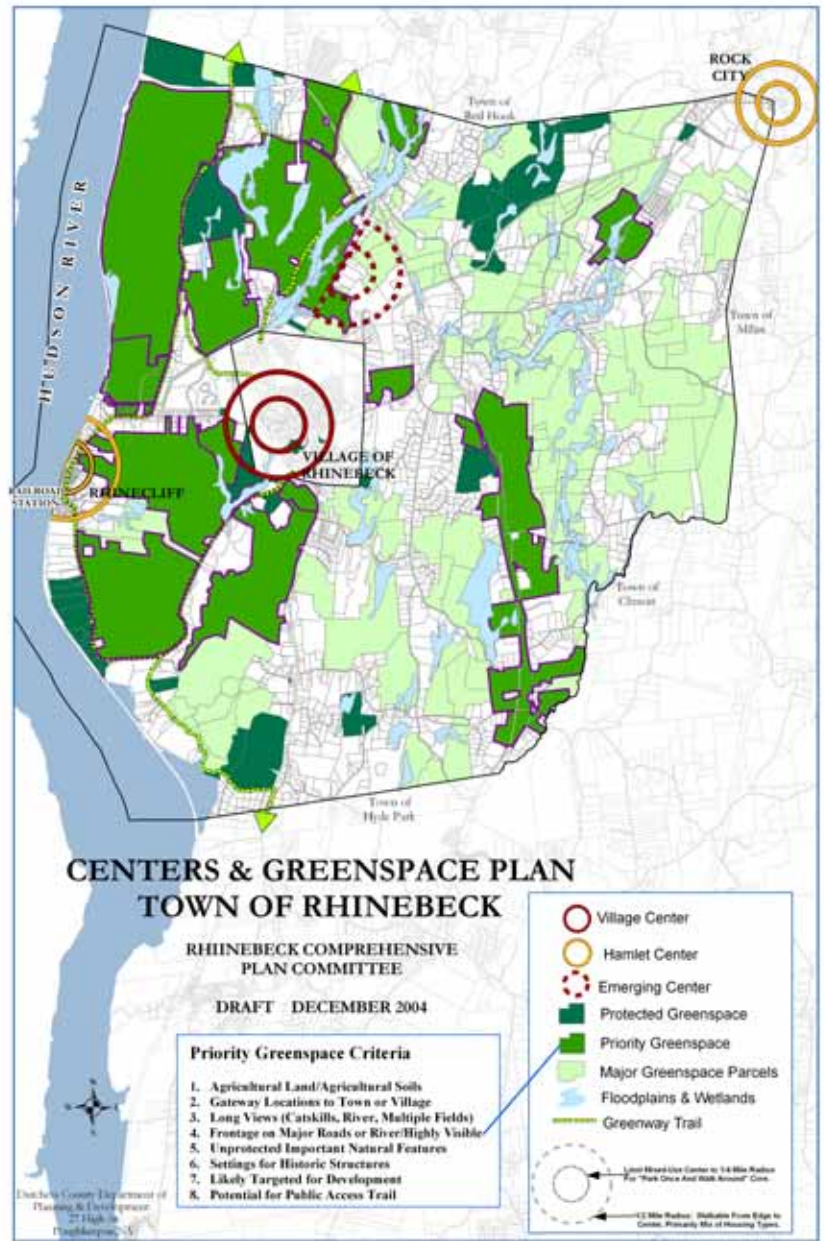
way along three blocks of Main Street: 1. Behrends Court, 56 units; 2. the Lucky Platt Building, 136 units; 3. the Schwartz Building, 8 live-work units.

Focus on recommendations, file the facts. Most plans start with multiple chapters describing background data and general inventories of resources and facilities. But as soon as the plan is printed, these facts begin to change, making the plan seem almost immediately outdated. Background information can instead be contained in a separate binder or file, where it can be periodically updated as new facts become available. After briefly summarizing the process and introducing major issues and planning principles, the plan should concentrate on policy and place-oriented recommendations and how to implement proposed improvements.

Be visual and be specific. Pictures are indeed worth a thousand words. Rather than endless paragraphs that soon become boring to many readers, an enticing plan breaks up every page of text with photos and design drawings to illustrate ideas. Good graphics with concise captions and annotated maps can not only replace pages of print, they force a plan to provide specific examples and solutions for particular places.

Set priority growth areas and greenspaces. The typical land use plan map looks like a modified version of the last zoning map, uninspiring and reinforcing the mistaken impression that once the zoning law is revised, the plan becomes more or less irrelevant. If an open space plan is included at all, it is in a separate section or document.

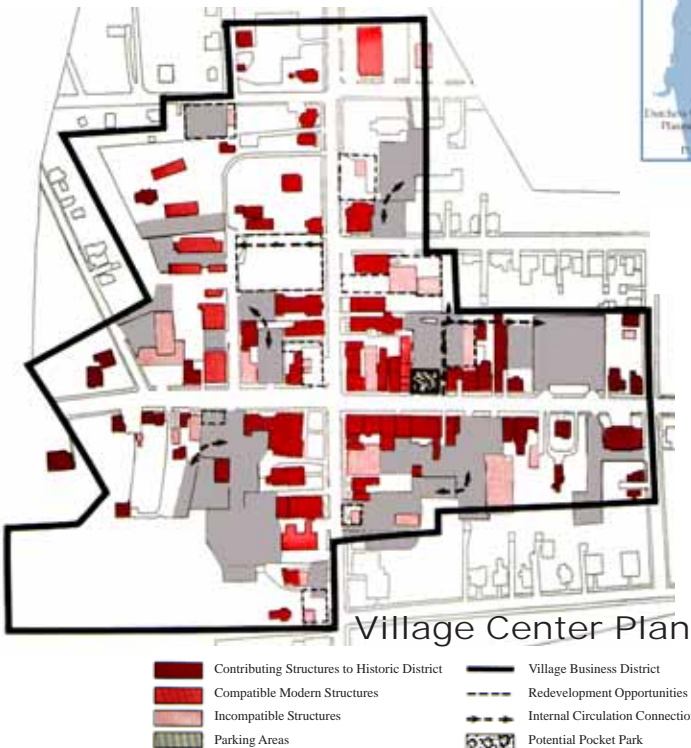
An improved approach recognizes that the protection of important natural and agricultural lands is a direct complement to the focusing of most new development in traditional, close-knit villages, hamlet centers, or city neighborhoods. A Centers and Greenspace Plan map



Town of Rhinebeck Proposed Centers and Greenspace Plan, identifying priority parcels for long-term protection and three priority growth areas to focus most new development in traditional neighborhood centers.

locates both priority parcels for open space protection and priority growth areas in or around existing centers or emerging centers, such as the retrofit of a commercial strip into a walkable, mixed-use hamlet form (see *Greenway Connections*, especially Guides B-1, C-1, and D-1 for more information).

Benton MacKaye, best known as the inspiration behind the Appalachian Trail from Maine to Georgia, wrote in 1928: "The basic achievement of planning is to make potentialities visible...Planning is revelation." The more time-sensitive, place-specific, and visual a plan becomes, the more likely it will generate that sense of immediate, widespread impact, inspire positive action and achieve meaningful results. 🌳



The 1993 Rhinebeck Village Center Plan identified incompatible structures and specific infill redevelopment sites. Since then, more than half of these sites have been substantially improved.

Have You Seen the Award-Winning Landscape Photos of Dutchess County?

The Dutchess County LOOP Bus System has received fifteen new transit vehicles, decorated with panoramic photographs from ten different locations highlighting some of the County's scenic beauty. Some of the locations are familiar: the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library in winter, a bird's eye view of Poughkeepsie from the top of the Dutchess County Office Building, and the Hudson

River from the Newburgh-Beacon Bridge. Others may be less familiar: the Tivoli Bays, a barn in the Town of North East, and Jackson Farm in East Fishkill. Patricia M. Houston, Graphic Designer with the Dutchess County Planning Department, took the photographs and designed the artwork for the buses. Her designs received two awards from the National Association of County Information Officers (NACIO) for outstanding contributions in the field of public information. The familiar streetscape designs which still grace many of the LOOP buses also earned a NACIO award a few years ago. The new buses are replacing vehicles the County put in service between 1993 and 1996, and will be used primarily for our Dial-A-Ride and Paratransit services. 🌳



Legal Notes

Local Case Clarifies ZBA Authority

In the case of *Real Holding Corp. v. Lehigh*, the Court of Appeals, the highest court in New York State, considered whether a ZBA has the power to grant a variance for a special use permit provision which requires a separation between uses on an application for an area variance. Specifically, the Town of Wappinger Zoning Code possessed special use permit standards that mandated a distance of at least 1,000 feet between a gas station and a residentially zoned area, and a minimum distance of 2,500 feet between a gas station and another gas station. Real Holding Corp. applied for a variance from the ZBA because they did not meet either minimum distance standard, and the ZBA determined that it did not have the power to vary the requirements of the special use permit. Real Holding Corp. next applied to the planning board for a special use permit, which the board denied because the new proposed gas station would not meet certain zoning requirements, including the two distance standards. When Real Holding Corp. applied to the ZBA for area variances a second time, the ZBA determined that it was not authorized to grant the variances without an express grant of authority to do so from the Town Board. Real Holding Corp. appealed the second ZBA decision to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court annulled the ZBA determination, holding that Town Law §274-b (3) authorizes a ZBA to grant area variances from special use permit requirements. Upon the ZBA's appeal, the

Appellate Division affirmed. The Court of Appeals then affirmed the two lower court judgments, agreeing that the ZBA had the authority to grant an area variance from any requirement in the zoning code, including requirements for issuance of special use permits.

Eminent Domain Redefined

In another recent and noteworthy case, *Kelo v. City of New London, CT*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision that local governments may force property owners to make way for economic development, even in areas that are not designated as blighted. The Fifth Amendment to the Constitution allows the taking of property by government for "public use" with just compensation. While eminent domain has historically been used to acquire private properties to make way for bridges or highways, the U.S. Supreme Court expanded the definition of "public use" in a 1954 landmark case that gave local governments the right to condemn blighted areas in order to improve them.

The Court's latest decision further clarifies the definition of "public use" to include the promotion of economic development. In affirming the State Court decision, the Supreme Court cited a series of public purposes, including the increase in tax revenues, the creation of over 1,000 jobs, and the building of a public access pedestrian riverwalk. Justice John Paul Stevens, on behalf of the majority, wrote, "Promoting economic development is a traditional and long accepted government function." In dissent, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor wrote, "The specter of condemnation hangs over all property. Nothing is to prevent the State from replacing any Motel 6 with a Ritz-Carlton, any home with a shopping mall, or any farm with a factory." The majority on the Court insisted that governments would still be forbidden from taking land for the purpose of providing benefits to a particular private party, and that federal courts should generally defer to state and local governments to weigh public benefits as part of a long-term planning process to revitalize an economically distressed city. 🌳

Federal Money for Local Projects

By Elizabeth Doyle, Community Development Administrator

Dutchess County Executive William R. Steinhaus announced the 2005 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) awards totaling \$1,830,179 for a range of local projects across Dutchess County. "Local governments spend CDBG money wisely," Steinhaus said.

Many municipalities throughout the County will benefit from the 2005 allocation:

- Town of Hyde Park: \$120,000 for parking lot improvements at the site of the existing train station along the Hudson River;
- Town of North East: \$150,000 to undertake water district improvements;
- Town of Pine Plains: \$100,000 for sidewalk repairs on South Main Street;
- Town of Poughkeepsie: \$150,000 for sidewalk repairs on College Avenue, part of an ongoing effort to revitalize the Arlington area;
- Town of Red Hook: \$120,000 for engineering work on a residential street between Routes 9 and 199;
- Town of Stanford: \$50,000 to complete ongoing infrastructure improvements;
- Village of Fishkill: \$150,000 for road and infrastructure rehabilitation;
- Village of Millbrook: \$25,000 for the Church Alliance to create additional senior housing;
- Village of Millerton: \$149,635 for the remediation of a parcel on South Center Street to create parking for visitors to the Harlem Valley Rail Trail;
- Village of Pawling: \$100,000 for handicapped improvements at the Village Hall;
- Village of Red Hook: \$120,000 for sidewalk and infrastructure improvements; and
- City of Beacon: \$219,621 (an allocation under a formula for Beacon as an urban center) to be used for infrastructure improvements, with \$20,000 going to the Rebuilding Together with Christmas in April program for home rehabilitation.

Human service agencies throughout Dutchess County will share in the \$220,000 allocated for human service programs:

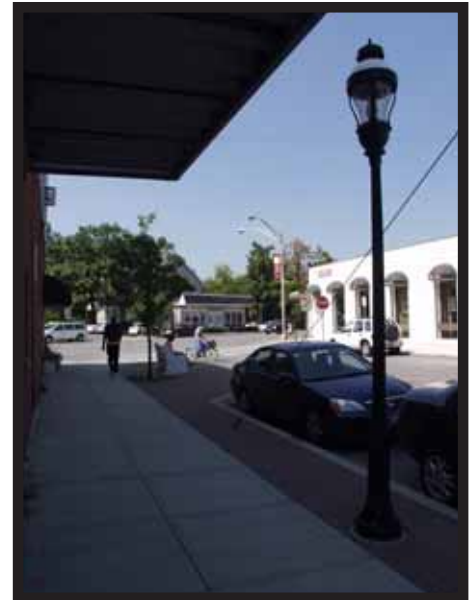
- Beacon Community Center: \$14,290 for its Youth Education and Development program;
- Child Abuse Prevention Center: \$19,290 for the Child Advocacy Center;
- Dutchess County Community Action Agency: \$19,290 for its Big Brothers/Big Sisters program;
- Hudson River Housing: \$22,715 for River Haven, a shelter and transitional living facility for homeless and runaway youth;
- Martin Luther King Cultural Center: \$13,579 for its after-school/summer program in the City of Beacon;
- Family Services, Inc.: \$22,715 for Families In Stress activities;
- Grace Smith House: \$13,578 to the shelter for women;
- North East Community Center: \$19,290 for their youth/family enrichment program;
- Dutchess County Association for Senior Citizens: \$19,290 for the Volunteers-In-Transition Project Care/Between Friends program;

- Literacy Connections: \$19,290 for their adult literacy program; and
- Mid-Hudson Addiction Centers, Inc.: \$13,579 for residential recovery services.

The CDBG funding is administered by the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development through federal funds the county secures from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and provides grant funds to municipalities and human service agencies to benefit low-to-moderate income residents of Dutchess County. 🌳



The parking lot at the Hyde Park Train Station will be improved using CDBG money for paving, curbs, drainage, landscaping and historic lighting. It will provide a safe parking area for residents to visit the former railroad station, use the Town Park and enjoy the beauty of the Hudson River.



Previous CDBG awards to the Town of Poughkeepsie funded new sidewalks, curb extensions and decorative streetlights in the Arlington neighborhood.



This playground in the Village of Rhinebeck was made handicapped accessible using CDBG money.

Clean Up, Rent Up

By Noela Hooper, Senior Planner

Two important milestones have been reached in the planned transformation of the Perx property, a 20-acre "brownfield" site in the Village of Red Hook, into a residential and commercial neighborhood designed specifically to meet the needs of senior citizens in Northern Dutchess. Dutchess County Executive William R.



County Executive Steinhaus examines an aerial photo of the Perx property with Red Hook Town Council Member Sue Crane and Tivoli Mayor and Dutchess County Legislator Marcus Molinaro during a 2003 site visit.

Steinhaus has signed a New York State Assistance Contract that will allow the County to proceed with the environmental restoration of the Perx property and insure that up to 100 units of senior housing are developed on the site. On August 15, Mr. Steinhaus announced that Red Hook Commons, the proposed senior housing development, had secured financing from

the NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR).

The County Executive kicked off the Perx Initiative in 1999 after the Village and Town of Red Hook's Affordable Senior Housing Committee identified Perx as a potential site for development. In 2003, the County approved an agreement to transfer the Perx property to the Village of Red Hook upon completion of the cleanup, with the stipulation that the site

be dedicated to housing for senior citizens and appropriate commercial development.

In March of this year, the Commissioner of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced an award of \$1.26 million to Dutchess County to implement a \$1.76-million remediation plan approved by the DEC. The remediation plan is the result of a comprehensive environmental assessment of the

site conducted by Dutchess County under the DEC's Environmental Restoration Program.

Red Hook Commons developer Kenneth Kearney will receive a \$1.385 million grant from the NYS Housing Trust Fund Program and \$575,000 a year for ten years in Low-

Income Housing Tax Credits to finance construction of the 48-units of senior housing, Phase One in the conversion of the Perx property to Red Hook Commons. The County Executive also committed an additional \$153,000 from the County's HOME Investment Partnership to the project.

As a result of a dynamic partnership between the Village, Town, County, State, and the private sector, the Perx initiative will:

- Provide up to 100 units of senior housing, a critical need in Northern Dutchess;
- Return the Perx property to local tax rolls;
- Promote commercial development in the Village;
- Create pedestrian connections to surrounding neighborhoods, to the commercial district along Route 9, and to the shops in the village center; and
- Eliminate the County's financial obligation for the property.

As County Executive Steinhaus noted when he signed the State Assistance Contract, "It is special when Dutchess County can help transform a financial and environmental liability for the taxpayers into an economic and social asset for local communities." 🌳



Some of the buildings to be demolished as part of the environmental restoration phase of the Perx project.



Hudson Beach Glass, the 2004 award winner for Historic Preservation.

Honoring the County's Best

The Dutchess County Planning Federation (DCPF) is accepting nominations for outstanding projects that have taken place in the county during 2005. The DCPF Board will choose the best projects in the following



County Executive Steinhaus presents a Greenway Regional Panorama to Rhinebeck Supervisor Dennis McGuire for joining the Greenway Compact Program.

categories: New Development, Redevelopment, Historic Preservation, Farmland/Open Space Preservation, and a new category, Public Amenities. The winners will be honored at the DCPF Awards Dinner in January of 2006. If you would like to nominate a project, please visit our website for details.

This past January, more than 120 people turned out to honor selected outstanding development projects from 2004. The Dutchess County Planning

Federation's Fifth Annual Awards Dinner took place in the new clubhouse of the Dutchess Golf and Country Club in Poughkeepsie. County Executive William R. Steinhaus joined mayors, supervisors and other elected officials who were there representing a majority of the municipalities in the County. Planning Federation President Bruce Donegan presented the following awards:

- For Historic Preservation, to Hudson Beach Glass in Beacon;
- For Redevelopment, to Rhinebeck Savings Bank in the Village of Rhinebeck and to David Borenstein for the Old Milan Town Hall;
- For New Development, to Montgomery Row in Rhinebeck;
- For Open Space Preservation, to The Friends of Dover Stone Church.

County Executive Steinhaus also presented Greenway Awards to the Town of LaGrange CAC for the Wappinger Creek Greenway Trail, and recognized four new Greenway Compact Communities: the towns of Milan, Pleasant Valley and Rhinebeck, and the Village of Rhinebeck.

For more information about the DCPF Awards, please visit <http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/countygov/departments/Planning/PLdcpf.htm>.



The Wappinger Creek Greenway Trail

Site Plan Case Study: A Planning Board Holds Firm to its Standards

The North East Planning Board received a proposal from a major regional chain for a new convenience store with gas pumps on Route 44, within walking distance of the Village of Millerton. The proposed layout was typical of this retailer and many others, favoring asphalt and automobiles over landscaping and pedestrian access.

The Planning Board requested changes to the parking, canopy, sidewalks and other improvements, having done research that revealed this company had built a much better-designed store in Manchester, Vermont. The Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development also reviewed the proposal and recommended a number of changes with an alternative sketch plan. However, the chain-store refused to comply with several of the Board's requests, and eventually withdrew their application. But the Town's determination paid off. A few months later, a new proposal for the site came in from a local business person for the same use, but this time the proposal incorporated all of the elements that the Board had requested from the previous applicant.

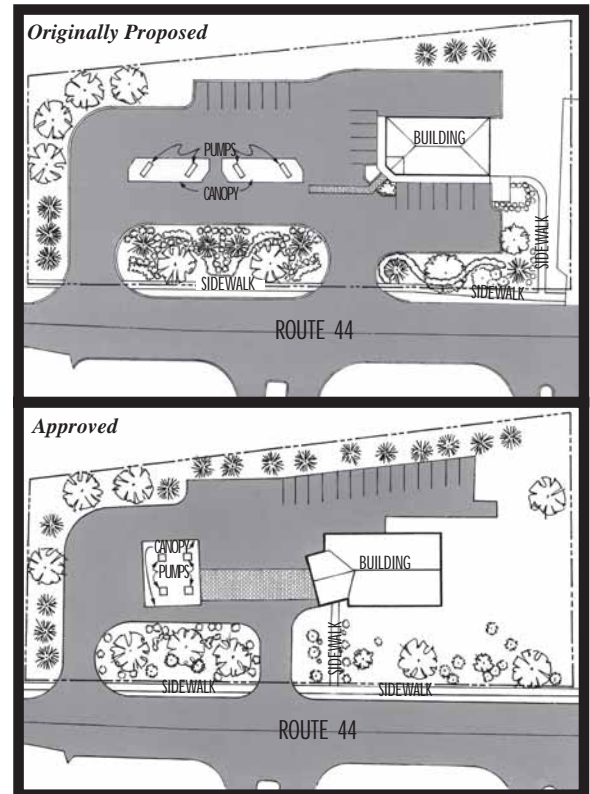
All you have to do is ask, and stand firm for good planning principles.

Original Convenience Store/Gas Station Proposal

- Two large gas canopies, more than 100 feet in total length
- Parking lot in front of the building facing the street
- Driveway did not align with the shopping center driveway across the street
- Sidewalk diverted around parking lot to store entrance
- Overly-wide driveways, encouraging speeding into the site

Approved Convenience Store/Gas Station Proposal

- A much shorter canopy, 30 feet wide facing the street
- Landscaping up front rather than a front-yard parking lot
- Driveway lined up with driveway across the street
- Direct sidewalk connection from the street to the front door
- Narrower driveways



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A Dutchess County Planning Federation Newsletter

Dutchess County Planning Federation
27 High Street, 2nd Floor
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