

# Plan On It

A Dutchess County Planning Federation eNewsletter

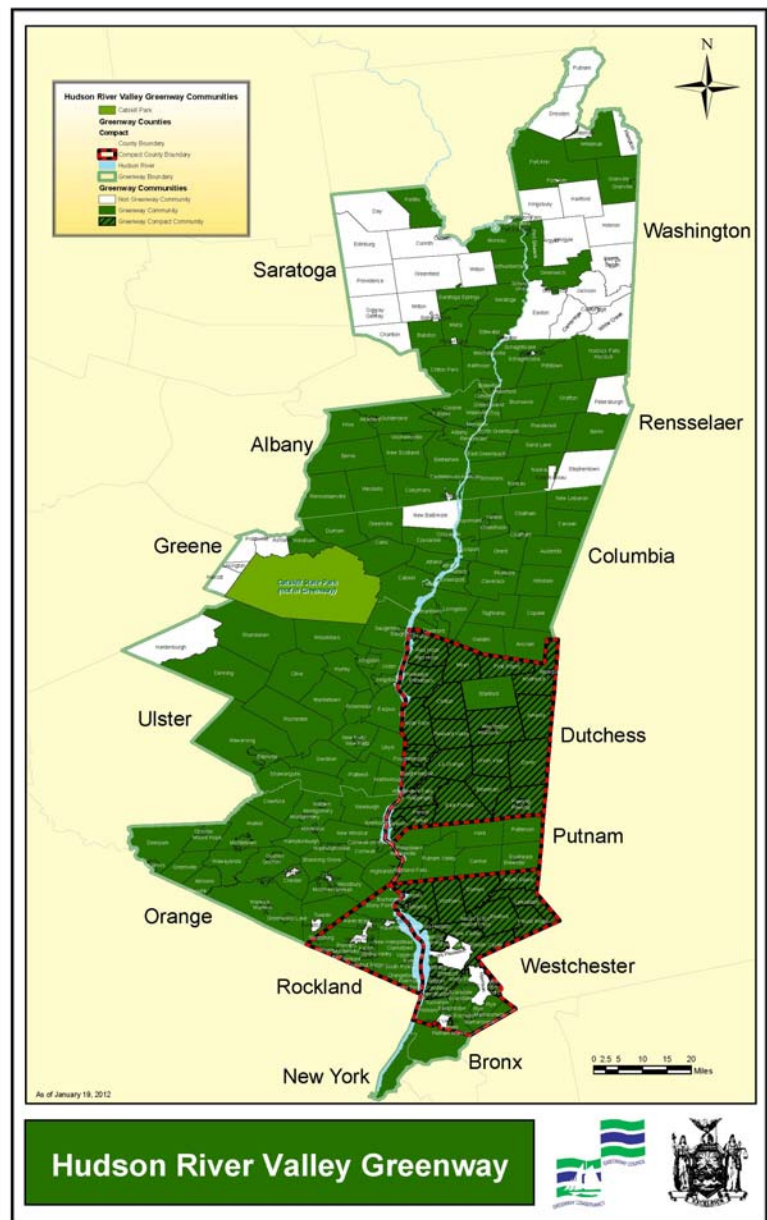
December 2011 / January 2012

## Growing in a Green Way: *The Past and Future of Greenway*

By John Clarke, Development and Design Coordinator

December 31, 2011 marked the 20th anniversary of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Act, originally sponsored by a few familiar names such as Hinchey, Pataki, and Saland, and signed into law by the previous Governor Cuomo. The Greenway record through several Albany administrations has been a growing success story of cooperation among the state, counties, and local governments, between public and private sectors, and between advocates for both economic development and environmental protection. In a time when many government programs are viewed with suspicion and the political climate seems sharply divided, the Greenway has been widely popular with broad bipartisan support. The regional area covered by the Greenway was even expanded in the last five years to include all of Saratoga and Washington counties.

The Greenway offers a proven approach to conservation and development, without threatening home rule or local land use controls. The program is entirely voluntary and works through grant incentives and guidelines, not state requirements. Rather than top-down mandates, Greenway builds from the bottom-up. Each county designs its own Greenway Compact based on local public participation, municipal plans, and proposed projects. Dutchess, Westchester,



*Over 80% of the 316 eligible municipalities in the 14 Hudson River counties from Lake Champlain to New York City have endorsed the Greenway as individual members.*

[Click map to enlarge. Source: Hudson River Valley Greenway]

Putnam and Rockland counties have Greenway Compacts in place, and Orange and Ulster counties are currently working on compact documents. Compact communities gain additional benefits, including larger Greenway grants and preferences for other state grant programs.

### Dutchess County Accomplishments

In 2000 Dutchess County completed *Greenway Connections*, becoming the first compact program and a model for the rest of the region. Since then, 29 of the 30 Dutchess municipalities have joined the Greenway Compact by cross-referencing *Greenway Connections* into their local regulations and agreeing to consider the Greenway Guides in planning decisions. A few of the major accomplishments inspired by the program include:

- More than half of the compact communities have undertaken revisions to comprehensive plans and/or zoning laws to help implement Greenway principles and guidelines;
- More than \$1.8 million has been awarded to Dutchess communities in Greenway-related State grants;
- The County has allotted \$6.6 million for its open space and farmland protection program, helping to leverage over \$18 million of state and local funding, including major bond acts in Red Hook, Beekman, and LaGrange. Counting 16 completed and 5 pending projects, approximately 3,200 acres will be permanently protected;
- Dutchess County and a variety of communities have made major commitments toward regional trail systems, including the Harlem Valley Rail Trail in eastern Dutchess, the newer Dutchess Rail Trail, which will extend from Hopewell Junction across the magnificent Walkway-Over-the-Hudson and connect into Ulster County, and significant segments of the Hudson River Greenway Trail;
- New York State and Dutchess County created Quiet Cove Riverfront Park, an entirely new public park along the Hudson in the Town of Poughkeepsie.



*Dutchess County funds helped [Locust Grove](#) acquire 29.2 acres adjacent to the Young-Morse Historic Site, providing public access to a rehabilitated system of historic trails that will be included in the Hudson River Greenway Trail system.*



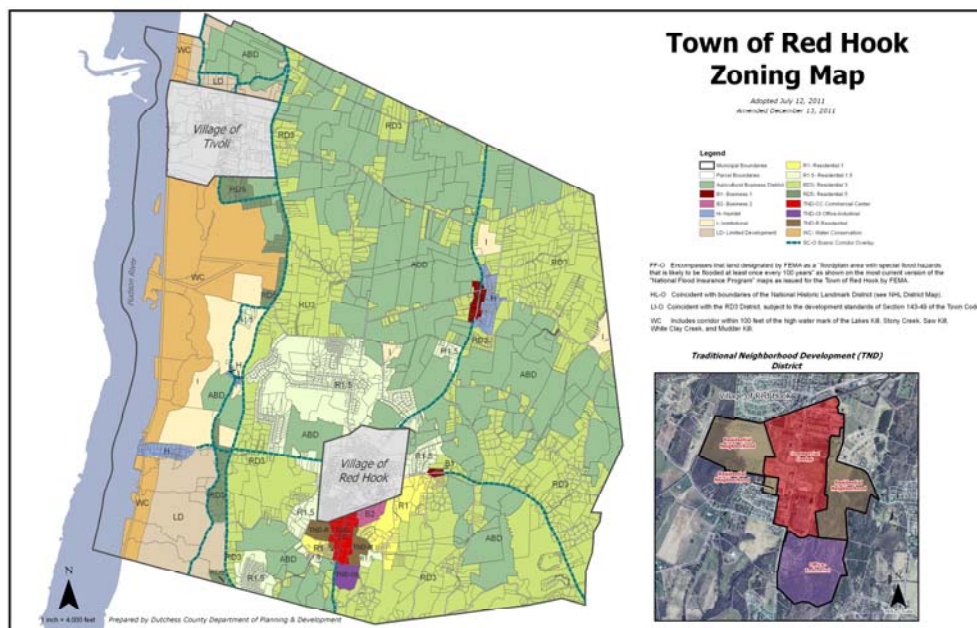
*The renovated Navy Crew house at [Quiet Cove Riverfront Park](#).*

### Looking Forward

*Greenway Connections* has always been considered a living document, designed as a three-ring binder to allow additional guidelines to be adopted. Four new draft guides, including Centers and Greenspaces, Convenience Stores with Gas Pumps, Rural Roads, and Slower, Safer Streets have been circulated for public comments and presented to a variety of groups. The two guides on local street standards were specifically requested by the new County Executive, Marc Molinaro, when he was a mayor and county legislator. Two more guides are now in production — Planning for Bicycles and Connected Street Networks. All six will be presented to the Greenway Council and Compact members over the next few months, to be formally adopted and used as guidelines when local boards decide they are appropriate.

The Centers and Greenspaces guide, in particular, outlines a simple, common sense, yet comprehensive process for locally identifying and mapping priority growth areas, as well as priority greenspaces for future public or private conservation. Consistent with the entire Greenway program, the approach emerged over the last six years from bottom-up discussions on ways to implement Greenway principles in local plans and reverse the all-too-typical commercial strip and residential sprawl development patterns that have been consuming the countryside.

The Centers and Greenspaces principles and mapping techniques were first applied in the Rhinebeck Town Plan and by the Red Hook Intermunicipal Task Force, then with the towns of Poughkeepsie and Pleasant Valley and the City of Beacon. The Red Hook Intermunicipal Task Force recommendations, a cooperative planning process among the Town and villages of Red Hook and Tivoli, earned the annual Groundbreakers Award in 2009 from Pace University Land Use Law Center. The subsequent Town of Red Hook Centers and Greenspaces rezoning received the Pomeroy Award for outstanding zoning achievement in 2011 from the New York Planning Federation and the Charting Our Course award from the Northern Dutchess Alliance in January 2012.



Through most of the 19th and early 20th centuries, New York State was an undisputed leader in planning, natural land conservation, and economic development. Based on the ongoing Greenway record, the Hudson Valley region is in a position to reassert that example of leadership. The cultural history of the Hudson Valley is deeply rooted, essential to the founding of our nation, the birth of art and literary schools, and the organization of the modern environmental movement, yet the area is also at the cutting edge of computer and other clean technologies with convenient transit and economic connections to the country's financial and communications epicenter in New York City. The Hudson Valley Greenway is a uniquely New York invention that embeds good planning principles at the local level and then builds to a broader economic and environmental consensus at the regional and watershed scales. The Greenway, together with the Centers and Greenspaces mapping methods, should become a model for the rest of the state and beyond. The Greenway is not regulatory or bureaucratic — it sells through success stories.

## More Information

[Hudson River Valley Greenway](#)

[Dutchess County Greenway / Center & Greenspaces](#)

Previous DCPF eNewsletters on Greenway:

- [New Greenway Guide: \*Rural Roads\*](#) (March/April 2010)
- [New Greenway Guide: \*Centers & Greenspaces\*](#) (January/February 2010)
- [New Greenway Guide: \*Slower, Safer Streets\*](#) (December 2009)
- [New Greenway Guide: \*Convenience Stores with Gas Pumps\*](#) (Sept. 2009)
- [Biodiversity Blocks: A Sensible, Science-Based Way to Define Greenspaces](#) (September 2010)

[CLICK HERE](#) for a print version (.pdf) of this issue and to view past issues of the DCPF's newsletter, *Plan On It*.

This newsletter was developed by the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development, in conjunction with the Dutchess County Planning Federation.

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