Part II

Strategies for Quality Communities

The best of the Orange County landscape balances open space and built environments.

This part of this document summarizes the County’s Comprehensive Plan. Each of the color-coded bars in the margins of the pages correspond to different sections of the Comprehensive Plan. With a few exceptions, no more than a single page is devoted to each of the recommendations in the Plan, providing an easy-to-read summary.

In order to integrate the Design Manual, many of these pages are illustrated with images taken from the Manual. Through this image, the reader is directed to the relevant section of the full Design Manual which is incorporated into this Compact by reference.
Strategies for Quality Communities

**Open Space.** Identify undeveloped areas of the County as appropriate for permanent open space, establish acquisition priorities and conserve farmland to enhance the open space character of the County as well as to diversify its economic base.

**Built environments.** For all built environments of the County utilize infill, redevelopment and new development techniques which enhance the advancement of quality communities.

**Corridors.** Secure the rural ambience and community aesthetic of the County through control of land use along its multipurpose corridors.

**Transportation.** Promote a multi-modal transportation network that meets the needs of all segments of the County’s current and future population for intra- and inter-County travel adequately supports anticipated economic development.

**Economic Development.** Strengthen the economy in Orange County by attracting and supporting businesses that will enhance the County’s economic base and provide jobs, tax revenues, and an orderly and sustainable land use pattern.

**Housing and Neighborhood Preservation.** Offer an array of housing options that are affordable to a range of household incomes.

**Environmental Infrastructure.** Encourage the provision of adequate utility systems that meet the needs of Orange County residents and businesses while balancing the preservation and quality of the County’s natural resources.

**Historic and Cultural Resources.** Identify, protect and promote the County’s historical and cultural resources ensuring their ability to enhance the sense of place and quality of life of County residents while providing an important component of overall county economic development.
The Land Use Plan and the Vision for Quality Communities

The Land Use Plan for the County is based on the Priority Growth Area concept.

- Identify the places where development should take place, especially in the County’s historic centers. These are places that can support a more intensive mix of uses, infill redevelopment and provide a distinct sense of place.

- Link those places with transit at every scale. This means intermodal connections between transit, motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians.

- Manage whatever growth takes place outside of the growth areas in a way that protects Orange County’s precious natural and open space resources. As outlined in the County’s Open Space plan, the focus is on five major resource areas: Water, Agriculture, Recreation, Landforms and Landmarks, and Biological Diversity.

The Vision for Quality Communities builds on this fundamental strategy;

- Create a comprehensive vision for all of the County’s Open Space Environments

- Make sure that all of the Built Environments are guided by best practices for development and are of the highest quality. (see back of this document for an explanation of the Design Manual).

- Link all of those natural and built environments with well designed corridors of every kind – from commercial roads to multi-use trails.
Open Space Environments Goal

Conserve the County’s natural land resources in a sustainable, linked combination of parks, open space, agricultural lands and waterfront.

When we think of Open Space Environments in Orange County, our thoughts naturally turn to the many pristine riparian corridors, the majestic stands of old growth forest and acres of gently rolling farmlands. Fortunately, much of this land is publicly owned and the County is committed to on-going acquisition of more. In spite of these efforts, the County has seen 25% of its farm land converted to other uses over the last 20 years. Ultimately, preservation and enhancement of the County’s Open Space Resources will depend an integrated approach to all of the County’s resources – not just natural areas but recreational opportunities, agricultural lands and water fronts. By demonstrating the ways in which all of these initiatives are related, the County can build support among the many diverse interests who collectively will implement the policies that will insure the quality of life in the community.

“One of the many scenic views in the Hudson Valley.”

“The town should continue its effort to ensure that protected open space connects with open space proposed as part of cluster subdivisions through the 4-step conservation subdivision design.”


“Tuxedo's open spaces and small town size are major attractions and the reason most people come and remain.”

Open Space

Parks and Recreation Goal

Utilize and adequately maintain the County’s existing parks and strategically acquire or facilitate the preservation of additional parkland, more prominent vistas and develop facilities to meet the needs of all users.

With the County’s population expected to grow substantially in the next twenty years, quality of life – and in turn the economic viability of the County – will depend in part on providing recreational opportunities of the highest order. An increasingly diverse population will have increasingly diverse needs and the County will continue to work with the municipalities to locate and then connect the most strategic opportunities. Because financial resources will always be constrained, institutions, especially schools, will be essential partners by enabling more flexible and diverse activities into our biggest civic investment.

Finally, a comprehensive multi-purpose trail – also a core principal of the Greenway Compact – will not only create a signature recreational resource, but will create both a physical and emotional link between Orange County’s many diverse communities.

“Provide small parks, commons, and plazas to encourage a public focus for the Village Center.”

“Increase opportunities for bike use through development of a marked citywide bikeway system that coordinates with the Orange Heritage trail and of public bike racks to facilitate such transportation mode.”
– City of Middletown Comprehensive Plan, August 2007

Multipurpose trails link open spaces and communities.

Nature

Create the urban forest
• Landscape parks and plazas

Create linked open spaces
• Link protected resource areas on individual parcels
• Create and link parks and greenways
Open Space

Agriculture Goal

Identify undeveloped areas of the County as appropriate for permanent open space, establish acquisition priorities and conserve farmland to enhance the open space character of the County as well as to diversify its economic base.

Agricultural lands are an essential part of the Orange County Open Space Resources. Large areas of farmland ensure the continuity of natural systems, preserve habitat, protect watersheds and ensure beautiful vistas that are part of the quality of life of the County and enhance the experience of adjacent recreational areas. Farmlands also play an important role in the economic life of the County. In addition to the direct benefits of the industry, agriculture adds value as a source of tourism and overall quality of life. Finally, in this age when local communities and regions alike have come to understand the importance of food security, Orange County has the opportunity to be at the vanguard of sustainable agricultural practices. A key implementation strategy is to work with local municipalities to develop creative land use regulations, such as conservation subdivisions to preserve farmland.

“Protect and enhance the agricultural activities and character of the Town. Encourage the preservation of viable agricultural properties; Identify farmland for use in a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program, instituted by Town-wide referendum in 2004; Actively work with farmers to promote best farming practices; and Maintain farm-friendly practices in agricultural areas.”


“In surveys and at public meetings, the people of Warwick have expressed their overwhelming preference to preserve Warwick’s rural quality, its natural beauty, and its agricultural heritage.”


Design Manual: See Detail

Nature

Protect natural and scenic resources

- Mandate conservation subdivisions

Conservation subdivision
Open Space

Waterfronts Goal

Utilize the active and passive recreation and open space potential of waterfront resources.

More than any other open space objective, waterfront planning needs to be based on inter-municipal and regional cooperation. Watersheds rarely if ever correspond to municipal boundaries. However, this challenge can be used to initiate new multi-jurisdictional conversations about a wide range of issues, including best-practice development relative to natural resources. To build support for these initiatives, the County will work with municipalities to identify and promote water-dependent and water-enhanced activities along waterfronts, including using waterways for transportation. As with other open space initiatives, financial resources will always be constrained and so public-private partnerships as well as partnerships with institutions will be an important part of this strategy. Finally, the Hudson River Greenway is the signature opportunity to not only provide a great recreational resource, but to take advantage of identifying with one of the greatest regional resources in the Northeast.

Within Orange County, there are four sites identified as part of the Hudson River Greenway Water Trail; car-top boat launches in Newburgh, Cornwall, and at Kowawese Unique Area in New Windsor, as well as a day use site at Fort Montgomery. The Town of Highlands, Scenic Hudson, and the Palisades Interstate Park Commission are currently collaborating to develop a park at the Fort Montgomery marina, which will add a further public access site. As part of the County’s and municipalities’ efforts toward promoting activities along the waterfront, all parties concerned should make an effort to identify additional sites for public access along the river. Once those sites are identified, strategies should be developed for improving them and integrating them into the Hudson River Valley Greenway Water Trail.

“...there is a significant need for additional active and passive recreation....the Village should immediately pursue the acquisition of some riverfront land in the northeastern portion of the Village as a joint public-private partnership in conjunction with private development activity.”


The active Cornwall waterfront.

“Future development in the waterfront area will provide an opportunity to improve open spaces, public waterfront access and amenities, which will all be linked by a continuous walkway along the riverfront.”

– City of Newburgh Future Land Use Plan, 2011

Design Manual: See Detail N45

Nature

Protect natural and scenic resources

- Protect watersheds
For all built environments of the County utilize infill, redevelopment and new development techniques which enhance the advancement of quality communities.

One does not have to look beyond Orange County’s older neighborhoods to see best-practice planning and design principles in action: an interconnected street network that not only distributes car traffic at reasonable speeds, but also enables pedestrian and bicycle mobility; beautiful tree-lined streets where the houses face each other, creating a sense of place; and where natural and man-made open spaces create a sense of community and a connection to Orange County’s landscape. The County will continue to work with municipalities to adopt site plan and subdivision regulations that capture these traditional neighborhood design values as illustrated in the Orange County Design Manual.

“Support existing Village centers and foster Town clusters: Promote subdivision designs and layouts that create connected street patterns where appropriate; allow cluster development in order to encourage pedestrian activity and reduce car dependence for all trip generated activity; and allow group water and waste systems in cluster developments in order to maintain environmental stability where appropriate.”

- Town of Goshen Comprehensive Plan, 2008

“Newburgh’s housing landscape supports the city’s vision as a pedestrian friendly, livable, high quality and fully integrated community which is in harmony with the natural and cultural environment.”

- City of Newburgh Sustainable Master Plan, 2008
For all built environments of the County utilize infill, redevelopment and new development techniques which enhance the advancement of quality communities.

Commercial development is essential to the economic well being of every municipality. Properly designed, context-sensitive infill development in downtowns and village centers can add value by making efficient use of existing infrastructure, supporting existing businesses and reinforcing community sense of place. Land use regulations can promote context-sensitive mixed-use development through design guidelines that encourage mixed-use buildings along the street and keep cars from taking over.

A bigger challenge are the commercial areas outside of centers. When these areas are not planned properly, they create disruptive traffic patterns, they use land inefficiently and they compromise the environment by generating a lot of polluted storm water run off. The worst of these places will go out of business and become a liability for the community. But if planned and designed correctly, these commercial areas can be more than just “Anywhere USA” strips. They can actually begin to function as centers for the adjoining communities, reducing expensive car trips and helping to create complete communities. And the higher-value development will generate more tax revenue. While many of these areas will remain almost exclusively commercial, it is possible to balance the needs of the automobile with those of the pedestrian. If enabled by the municipal zoning code, individual properties along the strip can have cross-access and shared parking agreements to reduce short, inefficient car trips and impervious surfaces. Sidewalks and landscaping can make it possible for people to walk between destinations and from the closest neighborhoods.

“streetscapes should encourage but not be limited to parking in the rear of commercial and residential development.”
- Village of Warwick Comprehensive Plan, 2007

“The Village is located partially in a priority growth area, described as a “community center.” These “centers” are smaller scale urban centers, typically with a central business district, a mix of civic, community and commercial facilities, and a variety of housing types and densities”
For all built environments of the County utilize infill, redevelopment and new development techniques which enhance the advancement of quality communities.

Orange County, with its excellent highway access, is a strategic gateway for the New York metro area. As a result, office and industrial parks can be found almost anywhere, but that does not mean that they should be located anywhere. Higher-value office and industrial parks are often well landscaped. However, if they are not properly sited, they can compromise views of the landscape and if they are in very remote locations, they generate excessive truck and auto travel, which adds to congestion and wear-and-tear on the roads. In addition, the industrial and office economy is changing. Conventional manufacturing is giving way to warehousing and distribution facilities. Office park vacancies reveal renewed interest in more mixed-use, transit-accessible locations.

In an increasingly competitive regional environment, Orange County must do more than just make land available for industrial and office park development. In addition to an economic development strategy that targets high-value added businesses linked to the knowledge economy, these places need to be physically attractive and strive to offer the kinds of amenities attractive to the next generation of entrepreneurs. New uses can be introduced and locations can be favored that put office and industrial parks in places near corridors that are well connected to other centers and even transit.

Preserved wetlands on a commercial campus.

"Those areas with good access to transportation networks should be considered for industrial and commercial development. The Town should take advantage of the new Route 84 interchanges proposed for Stewart Airport by N.Y. State."
- Town of Montgomery Master Plan, 1988

"Enhance and expand non-residential development to include infill along existing mixed use corridors. Extend well designed commercial development into new areas along heavily traveled routes... in order to encourage economic development while limiting unplanned and scattered strip development."
- Town of New Windsor Comprehensive Plan Update, 2009

Meridian Eco-Industrial and Office Park
The design of the Meridian Office and Industrial park maintains the integrity of natural systems while creating an open space amenity for users and adjacent communities.
For all built environments of the County utilize infill, redevelopment and new development techniques which enhance the advancement of quality communities.

Complete communities need well designed and properly located institutions. At the scale of the neighborhood, this means school locations that promote health through safe bicycle and pedestrian access. When they are properly integrated with their neighborhoods, schools can become places that are not just for classroom learning during the day, but also places for the civic life of the community at other times.

At the scale of the County, the design and location of larger institutions is as much an economic development strategy as a design strategy: for Orange County to remain competitive, it must build a relationship between institutions and emerging, high-value added industries. Similar to industrial and office parks, at their best these places can be true “campuses”, balancing landscape values with development. In order to achieve this goal, the proper location and connections are critical to integrate these places with the landscape, with the road and transit networks, and with the community.

"Future development in the neighborhood center character areas should be organized around focus areas which contain shopping, services, recreation, and office and institutional facilities needed to support the neighborhoods.”

-Town of Wallkill Comprehensive Plan, 2005
Corridors

Secure the rural ambience and community aesthetic of the County through control of land use along its multipurpose corridors.

Together with the natural systems and open space networks, corridors in Orange County create the framework around which we build our communities. While the tendency is to think of “corridors” as road-ways for moving cars around quickly, in this Vision for Quality Communities, corridors are part of a much bigger idea: corridors are not just roads, they are the off-road pedestrian trails and bicycle networks including rail trails. They are the rail corridors that move passengers and freight. And corridors are not just utilitarian infrastructure: corridors are one of the principal ways we experience the landscape and they create the gateways and Main Streets of our villages and downtowns.

This means that our corridors need to respond to the natural features and consider the views they offer. The roads need to reflect the individual character of the communities they pass through. The roads also need to work for all users – transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists as well as automobiles. For this reason, the County suggests a set of seven roadway corridor types based on the land uses they traverse including natural features corridors, agricultural area corridors, rural residential corridors, suburban residential corridors, mixed use corridors, intensive business corridors and limited access highway corridors.

These ideas are reinforced by the State’s Complete Streets legislation which promotes street design based on local context and alternative modes such as biking and walking.

“The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the Town designate roads with significant natural, cultural, and scenic resources and adopt a scenic roads program to protect and enhance these corridors.”

Corridors

Roadway Corridors Goal

Maintain the separate and distinct character of different segments of roadway corridors

By thinking of roadways in terms of discreet and distinct segments, each with its own character and purpose, the speed, volume and design of roads can support the communities they pass through. By making this fit, communities can avoid the appearance of the typical commercial strip.

The essential strategy is to think of roads as more than asphalt surfaces for moving cars and trucks; to think of them as public spaces. That perspective suggests a number of questions that will lead to good roadway planning and design: What is this road like to walk and bike along? What natural features do people see as they move along this road? Do the buildings look like they relate to each other, or do they create visual discord? Are the buildings along the road sited in a way that helps define the space of the street?

Design guidelines for different road segments can ensure that new development addresses these questions. Because there is often turnover along commercial strips, design guidelines can incrementally transform them into environments that are more attractive and pedestrian oriented. Zoning can encourage development in those places where commercial uses already exist, resulting in nodes of development that can support walking and become transit stops.

With design guidelines, commercial strips can become attractive streets.

“Scale all street widths and alignments, as well as building setbacks, to the neighborhood size, so as to retain the character of existing Town roads.”


Design guidelines for people

- Design for pedestrians and bicycles
- Design beautiful streets

Links

Design Manual: See Detail [L40]
Orange County is a large and complex place, with diverse ownership patterns and a multiplicity of jurisdictions. Therefore, wherever complete rail corridors already exist, they need to be preserved because they are almost impossible to reestablish. While the once close connection between passenger rail service and the development of the town centers has been lost, the rail connections still provide an important passenger and freight movement function, an importance that will only grow as fuel costs increase and as the County wrestles with traffic. By directing future growth to places that are accessible to rail corridors, municipalities garner a host of advantages: the economies of intermodal freight movement and the placemaking benefits of “transit-oriented development.”

And in those places where rail corridors will no longer be used for trains, such as the Erie Railroad Main Line, there is an opportunity to create wonderful recreational opportunities in the form of rail trails that link open space resources and village centers as well as promoting active living and taking cars off the roads.

Orange County Rail Corridors

Older rail corridors can become multi-purpose trails.
As the trails map indicates, Orange County has a robust network of pedestrian corridors. This is one of the great amenities of the County but it is much more than just a recreational resource. This network creates a host of other related benefits, including promoting active healthy lifestyles, promoting economic development in the form of enhanced tourism, and supporting the kind of overall quality of life that is essential if the County is to attract creative entrepreneurs and industries.

There are some expansions and strategic missing links that can be completed, including the Orange County Heritage Trail, the D & H Canal trail, and the Walden Trail spur to Gardner. The Appalachian Trail, the most significant trail linking the states along the Eastern Seaboard, also passes through the southeast corner of the county. Enhanced connections to the Hudson River Greenway will enable Orange County to be fully integrated, at the regional scale, with one of the greatest natural resource areas in America.

“This revised plan recommends explicitly accommodating pedestrian and bicycle transportation needs in the higher density land use areas of the town.”


“The Town should work with Orange County under their Rails to Trails program to create a trail from Westbrookville to Cuddlebackville with a future extension to the Port Jervis Trail.”

Transportation Strategy

Promote a multi-modal transportation network that meets the needs of all segments of the County’s current and future population for intra- and inter-County travel that adequately supports anticipated economic development.

Orange County is rich in transportation resources which brings both challenges and opportunities; the core of Orange County is strategically located between three major highways, two of which are Interstates. There is both passenger and freight rail service and a significant regional airport at Stewart. Together these resources have secured the County’s status as a gateway to the rest of the region north and west of New York City. The challenge is to link transportation to other objectives so that the County does not grow at the expense of the other values articulated in this plan, especially the environmental protection and community-building goals that are embedded in the Priority Growth areas concept. Coordination with New York State DOT, the Metropolitan Transit Authority, the Thruway Authority, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and New Jersey Transit is essential. This Vision for Quality Communities, along with the transportation plan, addresses both roadway and transit systems.

Excellent highway connections support economic development.

“The City promotes transit-oriented initiatives that reduce automobile dependency and greenhouse gasses by developing simple, convenient, and affordable public transportation system offering all citizens the opportunity to travel and to participate in centers of activity.”

- City of Newburgh Sustainable Master Plan, 2008.

“As Greenville continues to grow, it should take steps to promote alternative modes of transportation where feasible, such as walking, bicycling, and telecommuting.”


The Port Jervis rail line links Orange County to the region’s core.
Transportation

Roadway System Goals

Promote a multi-modal transportation network that meets the needs of all segments of the County's current and future population for intra- and inter-County travel.

At the scale of the entire County, close coordination among all of the various providers is essential. But it is equally important to ensure that at the municipal scale, the road infrastructure supports the character and quality of life of many different individual communities. The process of providing access to the state and interstate highway network must account for impacts that this access will have on local communities. It also means that at the community level, roadway design needs to reflect local land use objectives. Roadway design should account for other modes and should reduce conflicts by minimizing the number of drive ways, promoting cross-access, minimizing parking requirements and introducing other traffic calming measures. Ultimately, roadway design is an essential part of community design.

In addition New York State has designated several scenic byways and roads in order to encourage both economic development and resource conservation. Orange County includes several byways including portions of Route 9W, the Newburgh Beacon Bridge, Bear Mountain Bridge Road, and Old Storm King Highway.

Well-designed neighborhood streets work for cars, pedestrians and bikes.

Orange County also includes small portions of New York State-designated scenic byways that are primarily located in other counties, such as the Shawangunk Mountains Scenic Byway and the Palisades Interstate Parkway.

Links

Design streets for people
- Design for pedestrians and bicycles
- Design beautiful streets

Design Manual: See Detail L52
Transportation

Transit System Goals

Promote a multi-modal transportation network that meets the needs of all segments of the County’s current and future population for intra- and inter-County travel.

Orange County has a variety of excellent transit resources, but there are strategic ways in which the County’s transit connectivity can be greatly improved. The County continues to work with both public and private providers to improve service including expanding service by Transit Orange, Coach USA’s commuter service and MNRR Port Jervis Line which also enables several opportunities for transit-oriented development.

Improving and extending bus service is an important strategy because rubber-wheeled transit is flexible and less capital intensive. The effectiveness of the entire system can be improved by building park-and-ride lots, implementing new feeder routes and coordinating more closely with other services, especially passenger rail service on the Port Jervis Line. Pedestrian and bike connectivity will also improve the way the entire system functions, whether for transit or trails. As population and employment grow, both bus and rail service can become more frequent and begin to compete with the automobile for convenience.

Orange County Transit System

Buses are the centerpiece of Orange County public transit.

Long term investments in passenger rail and regional bus services are priorities.

Long term investments in passenger rail, and regional and intra-county bus services are priorities. The County and local municipalities should work with private developers to locate new housing and jobs in places where there are existing concentrations of activity that support transit, as well as providing shuttle services to transit stops. Realization of the Priority Growth Areas concept is essential for improved non-auto mobility.
Economic Development Strategy

Strengthen the economy in Orange County by attracting and supporting businesses that will enhance the County's economic base and provide jobs, tax revenues, and an orderly and sustainable land use pattern.

To remain vital and competitive, Orange County will have to go beyond just being a cost-effective place to locate a business; the County needs to offer a skilled workforce, a well developed transportation and communications infrastructure and a high quality of life. Even as the County embraces technology, it must be alert to the danger that this will induce even more inefficient dispersion of labor and resources.

Economic development in Orange County should build on the County's unique position as a gateway to the region, served by a robust interstate and regional highway network and with the potential to grow its freight rail connections.

As a place for innovation, the County can encourage pilot projects for eco-industrial parks where businesses can coordinate their inputs and outputs, and industry cluster parks where business can work together to serve a particular industry sector. Agriculture, for instance has been identified as one of the County's key industries based on our rich agricultural heritage and traditional role as food supplier to the New York metropolitan area; as such, sustainable agricultural practices are as vital to our economy as they are to our environment.

Modern agriculture is essential to economic development in Orange County.

However it is accomplished, economic development in Orange County will be balanced with community and the environment. To ensure that economic development and growth is sustainable and compatible with the nature of the County and its communities, the County has written an Economic Development Strategy, which is pending adoption by the County Legislature. This strategy, together with the Orange County Design Manual, will be available to communities throughout the region to assist them in balancing the needs of the environment, such as open space preservation and natural resource protection with the other needs of the community through best practice development techniques.

"Encourage economic growth to enhance the tax base, provide more local employment opportunities, and create convenience shopping."


Orange County Economic Development
Economic Development
Quality of Life Goal

Enhance, support and maintain the County’s quality of life to attract an educated, highly skilled and diversified workforce and high earning businesses demanding a range of skills.

To be competitive, Orange County must continue to offer quality living environments that attract a strong and diverse workforce.

The downtowns and village centers in the Priority Growth Areas not only capture growth that would sprawl into the landscape, but offer the diverse housing options that suits an ever-more skilled and diverse workforce as well as the kinds of in-town living experiences that many young business professionals and entrepreneurs are looking for. The trail networks that link the many natural and cultural resources, as well as the waterways along the Delaware, Wallkill and Hudson Rivers, create another kind of open space resource attractive to residents and the new workforce. Linking to the larger Hudson River Greenway network is one of these signature opportunities.

Tourism is an area where emphasizing Orange County’s many assets not only creates amenity, but has direct economic benefits by bringing people from across the region to the front doors of Orange County businesses.

Communities can reinforce their downtowns and village centers by adopting the kinds of design guidelines presented in the Orange County Design Manual and by expediting review for community-supporting development.

Design Manual: See Detail C65

Communities
Create beautiful neighborhoods
- Orient buildings to streets
- Promote context-sensitive design

Active village centers attract talented workers.
Economic Development

Workforce and Technology Goal

Build the foundation for a knowledge based economy to capture part of the region’s share of growth in technology and globally oriented businesses.

Fortunately, Orange County already has a well-educated workforce. But to remain competitive, Orange County will have to address the needs of an emerging knowledge-based economy. This means supporting the existing and future workforce with training, transportation, diverse housing options and social supports such as daycare. The County must help incubate new businesses by providing a diversity of commercial spaces, incubator facilities and by fostering links to public and private institutions, both in the County and beyond, such as Columbia and Cornell Universities. Through programs such as Build Now-NY, communities can help identify those places best suited for new business locations and expedite approvals for development in those places.

“Several properties in the central business district are vacant or underutilized and could accommodate additional development.”


Design Manual: See Detail

Communities

Create a diversity of land uses
- Provide for flexible use/mixed use
- Create pedestrian-oriented commercial areas

Promote mixed-use buildings
- Promote infill development
Housing and Neighborhood Preservation

Strategy

Offer an array of housing options that are affordable to a range of household incomes.

An array of housing choices is an essential ingredient of livable communities. However, in the last twenty years, Orange County’s housing boom has primarily produced large single-family homes on multi-acre lots and market-rate condominiums, with multifamily rental units mostly constructed in age-restricted developments. Various market, economic, land use, zoning and regulatory conditions have combined with the existing problems of oversupply of higher-cost houses and tight credit markets to severely curtail the construction of moderately priced housing and put enormous pressure on the existing supply of housing units affordable to working families. As a result there is an affordability gap in the tens of thousands of units. Communities are increasingly aware that housing diversity is essential because it enables a broad range of workers to live in communities where they work, where they were raised, or where they have friends and family. Finally, housing choice is essential to the economic prosperity of the county as businesses want to locate in places where workers at every pay scale can be found.

Since 2001, Orange County has become the second-fastest-growing county in New York State. This has placed a lot of pressure on the affordable housing supply as evidenced by a housing needs assessment published jointly by the Planning Departments of Orange, Dutchess and Ulster Counties. Zoning practices and other factors have favored single family houses on large lots in lieu of moderately priced workforce housing in a variety of formats. In order to provide housing options that benefit all residents, individual communities need to choose the solutions that best suit their character and circumstances.

The County has a four-pronged strategy: Public Information, Municipal Housing Targets, Financial and Policy Incentives, and Monitoring.

“Ensure the continued availability of existing housing serving persons of low and moderate incomes.”
- City of Middletown Comprehensive Plan, 2007
**Housing and Neighborhood Preservation**

**Strategy Continued**

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**Strategy 1: Public Information**

The County will create a multi-faceted public information campaign. This includes outreach to municipalities to explain why housing choice is important and what techniques can be used to develop community-supporting development types. The County will also reach out to the general public through town hall meetings and by developing both hard-copy and web-based informational materials. Engaging developers is also important. Finally, the county will work with organizations that advocate for and help develop housing options.

“The affordability of the town’s land and resources is a significant cause of its growth”

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**Strategy 2: Municipal Housing Targets**

Every community has a need for housing choices but how that is defined and achieved may not be clear. The County will work with each municipality to determine their fair share allocation. The County will also help each community integrate housing choice goals into their land use regulations.

“The intent of this higher density residential use category...is to provide multiple dwellings for senior and age-oriented housing in affordable rental units in limited areas”

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**Strategy 3: Financial and Policy Incentives**

While very few public entities have the ability to construct housing on their own, there are incentives that can be provided for developers and there are alternative funding sources that can be pooled to create more housing choice. The county will work with municipalities to identify these sources and secure them.

**Strategy 4: Monitoring**

The County will assist communities in developing a housing management plan and assist municipalities in creating a list of potential properties.

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**Design Manual: See Detail**

**Communities**

Create beautiful neighborhoods

- Orient buildings to streets
- Promote context-sensitive design
Environmental Infrastructure

Strategy

Encourage the provision of adequate utility systems that meet the needs of Orange County residents and businesses while balancing the preservation and quality of the County's natural resources.

Growth patterns are affected by where water and sewer services are provided. For this reason, it is essential to align service provision with other goals and objectives of the Vision for Quality Communities, especially the Priority Growth Area concept. And because the County can fund these investments directly, this plan can have a real impact on implementation.

“Preserve groundwater and protect this important resource from pollution to ensure an adequate supply of safe drinking water for present and future needs”

Environmental Infrastructure

Water Supply Goal

Provide an adequate supply of high quality water in support of the County’s residential and business community.

Many water resources are on private land or are controlled by individual municipalities; however, as with other natural systems, a comprehensive and connected network is the most beneficial. The County will continue to work with municipalities to coordinate water resources by interconnecting systems. While the County has the ability to develop some of these resources, private sector involvement can help create regional treatment and distribution systems.

The County has recently adopted a Water Master Plan, setting priorities and policies for both water supply and water resource protection. The County will continue to work with willing municipalities to protect and to share water resources, and to be smart and efficient in the use of these valued resources.

However, it is important for municipalities, private land owners and developers to be partners in these objectives. They can do so by adopting best-practice stormwater management techniques and enforcing well-head protection regulations. The County will continue to develop tools, techniques and educational resources to support the municipalities and private sector providers.

“Allow higher density development to occur in specific areas around Sugar Loaf, the village of Chester near the King Tract, the Wickham Village area and along Lakes Road, in places where sewer and water systems could be developed or expanded in the future.”


“The Village of Florida is in an excellent development posture with the ability to both control its development growth and expand as it sees fit. Water and sewer services have excess capacity beyond the full build out of the existing village area.”


Orange County works to protect beautiful and pristine water resources.
Environmental Infrastructure

Sewage Treatment Goal

Ensure the availability of environmentally sound sewage treatment systems and disposal techniques appropriate for different land development patterns which serve existing development and provide sufficient capacity to accommodate anticipated residential and business growth.

Sewage treatment is an essential infrastructure that needs to balance local community needs with regional resource values. In some cases, a regional approach is most effective; in others a more decentralized approach can work if done in a smart, regional context. These include water conservation, industrial pre-treatment programs, and reduction of infiltration and inflow within existing systems. Building on its strong landscape values, Orange County can also be a place where innovative techniques are implemented, such as bioremediation. Pilot projects can be launched with the support of state agencies and the state university system.

“While the existing residential density is suitable for a village environment, the lack of central sewage treatment, and the proliferation of a dense concentration of individual septic systems, could result in a degradation of ground and surface water quality.”


Orange County Sewer Service Area
Historic Resources and Cultural Institutions

Identify, protect and promote the County’s historical and cultural resources ensuring their ability to enhance the sense of place and quality of life of County residents while providing an important component of overall county economic development.

Orange County has a wealth of historic and cultural resources set in a beautiful landscape. There are museums and performing arts centers as well as institutions of higher learning and other special destinations such as the Storm King Art Center. The County contains numerous historic sites, many of them dating to the Revolutionary War, as well sites depicting the historic roles of agriculture and industry. One of the great opportunities is to capitalize on the larger Hudson River Valley as a world-class cultural, natural and historical destination.

Orange County is part of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, one of 49 areas designated by Congress as places where natural, cultural and historic resources combine to form a cohesive nationally important landscape. Through their resources, National Heritage Areas tell nationally important stories that celebrate our nation’s diverse heritage. Sites in Orange County that have been designated as contributing to the National Heritage Area include Storm King Art Center, the United States Military Academy at West Point, Bear Mountain State Park, the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, and Washington’s Headquarters, among others. The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area is comprised of Albany, Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Rensselaer, Rockland, Ulster and Westchester Counties and the Village of Waterford in Saratoga County.

A study prepared in February 2013, using visitor and spending data from 2010, analyzed the economic benefits of six specific National Heritage Areas, including the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, to their regions, states and local communities by measuring employment and revenue generation and economic impacts. Primarily, these benefits are derived through visitors to the National Heritage Area, such as day visitors to an historic site. The combined annual economic benefits to the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area include $584,986,026 in direct and indirect economic benefits, 6,530 jobs, and $66,667,434 in tax revenue.

By supporting tourism, the County can link the cultural landscape to natural landscape preservation and economic development, including the revitalization of downtowns and village centers. Educational and not-for-profit institutions are also part of this cultural landscape. The County provides technical assistance and identifies mechanisms such as historic preservation tax credits for institutions that wish to establish or expand their programming in Orange County.
As part of the implementation strategy for this Greenway Compact, the Orange County Design Manual is included herewith by reference. The full document can be found on the Orange County Planning Department website.

On the preceding pages, representative details are excerpted to illustrate some of the recommendations from the County Comprehensive Plan. In this section, representative pages from the introduction to the Design Manual are reproduced to introduce the organization and contents of the Design Manual.

The Design Manual describes the Where, What and How of good development, and each of these is addressed in a separate section.

Where should our community grow?
The Places section describes preferred development patterns for the kinds of places that will be familiar to you and can be found in every community: Downtowns, the Edges of downtowns, Corridors, Crossroads and New Neighborhoods.

The preferred designs are explained in terms of the smart growth objectives of Nature, Links and Communities. The design details associated with the smart growth objectives are located on the plans so that you can understand where particular details are most applicable.

What should our community do?
The Details section provides design and development details. These best practices were collected from around the country and are universally applicable.

The Details are also grouped according to each of the three color-coded objectives of Nature, Links and Communities.

How should our community do it?
The Tools and Actions section explains implementation in terms of planning, regulations and administration. These are also grouped according to each of the three color-coded objectives of Nature, Links and Communities and cross-reference the Details that are most relevant for implementing that smart growth strategy.

Regardless of what community you live in or where that community is located, there are certain objectives that are essential to enabling good development. Throughout the manual, these are presented as three color-coded objectives:

Nature – Protect and enhance the environment

Links – Promote connectivity and mobility of all kinds

Communities – Create compact, mixed-use neighborhoods.
How the Manual is organized

This manual is organized into three sections:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1: PLACES</th>
<th>Section 2: DETAILS</th>
<th>Section 3: TOOLS &amp; ACTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHERE to grow</td>
<td>WHAT to do</td>
<td>HOW you need to do it</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Design Manual introduction includes a page that explains how the document is organized. There are three sections:

**Places:** Where to Grow
Best-practice designs are presented for five neighborhood types.

**Details:** What to Do
Best-practice details are presented around three themes: Nature, Connectivity and Communities.

**Tools and Actions:**
How to Do It Planning tools, regulatory tools and administrative actions are described.

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The first part of the manual describes best-practices for accommodating growth in each of five types of places. Each place-type has been assigned an icon to assist navigation by the user.

- **Downtowns:** infill in existing centers
- **Edges:** extend existing centers
- **Corridors:** re-make the commercial strips
- **Crossroads:** complete emerging centers
- **New Neighborhoods:** insure sustainable development in the landscape

In each case, the best-practice design study is explained in terms of the three themes described above—Nature, Links and Communities. The best-practice design details are keyed into the drawings so that the user can see where the various details apply. The detail numbers can also be used to navigate to the other sections of the manual.

At the end of this section, there is a collection of Case Studies. The Place icons are used to suggest the degree to which a particular case study is representative of one of the five place-types.

- Directly related
- Partially related
- Indirectly related

The second part of the manual is a collection of design details which can be used to implement the best-practice objectives.

The numbers of the details, as well as the edges of the pages on which they appear, are color-coded according to the three themes described above—Nature, Links and Communities.

The third part of the manual explains the tools and strategies that can be used to implement the best practices.

- **Planning Tools & Actions:** These are the documents that set out the goals and objectives of the community and that will be implemented through regulations and administration. The Comprehensive Plan is the most fundamental of these, but planning documents can include are-specific or resource-specific plans, economic development plans, and transportation plans.

- **Regulatory Tools & Actions:** These are the laws and regulations that are used to control development. Zoning in its various forms is the most fundamental of these, but this can also include other kinds of regulations, such as laws affecting natural resources.

- **Administrative Tools & Actions:** These are actions that governments can take that shape development, such as capital expenditures on different kinds of infrastructure (roads, water, sewer), purchasing of development rights, public-private partnerships, or the administration of various review procedures, such as design and site-plan review.

Again, these are organized into the three major themes—Nature, Links and Communities—and color-coded accordingly. The details associated with each of the strategies are repeated here so that the detail numbers and the best-practice strategies can be used by the reader to navigate back to the type of place in the first section or to the detail itself in the second section.

In the Appendix at the end of the manual, various Tools and Actions are described in terms of the Purposes, Issues and Advantages associated with each. Also, there is a brief explanation of the requirements for local capacity, such as the cost of new studies, or the administrative burdens of new review procedures.
The Design Manual includes a Guide to Locations. The Manual is heavily cross referenced, and it is possible to navigate between sections of the Manual by referencing to the Detail Numbers or the Smart Growth Principles which reappear throughout the manual.
The Places section of the Design Manual describes preferred development patterns for the kinds of places that will be familiar to you and can be found in every community: Downtowns, the Edges of downtowns, Corridors, Crossroads and New Neighborhoods.

The preferred designs are explained in terms of the smart growth objectives of Nature, Links and Communities. The design details associated with the smart growth objectives are located on the plans so that you can understand where particular details are most applicable.

**PLACES**

**Downtowns – Infill the Centers**

Downtowns are places that already contain a mix of activities associated with a complete community: places to shop, to work, civic and public spaces and a wide variety of housing types. Municipal services (water, sewer) are in place and it is capable of accommodating some forms of transportation.

**Edges – Expand the centers**

Edges are places into which the street-and-block network and land use patterns of a downtown can be extended. It may be completely undeveloped land, but it is more likely that it will be a place that already has some development and infrastructure but at a greatly reduced density so that there is an opportunity for a significant increase in development.

**Corridors – Retrofit the strip**

A commercial corridor is a road that is lined with auto-oriented commercial uses. While there may be other kinds of activities within the surrounding area, the commercial corridor is almost entirely single use. With a few exceptions in small areas, the environment is built around the automobile, so much so that auto access is excessive in scale and creates a hostile environment for pedestrians.

**Crossroads – Complete a new center**

Crossroads are places that already have some of the ingredients of a new center but at lower densities: perhaps there are some auto-oriented commercial uses; often there may be a fire station, town hall or other civic use; it is surrounded by developable lands that are suitable for future walkable neighborhoods.

**New Neighborhoods – Build communities**

New neighborhoods are places that are largely undeveloped, but are still appropriate for new development. These are mainly residential places in a wide variety of housing types. But to be “complete communities” these include some amount of neighborhood retail and services, opportunities for live-work space, and civic uses.
The **Details** section of the Design Manual provides design and development details. The Details are also grouped according to each of the three color-coded smart growth objectives of Nature, Links and Communities.

### Nature

This is the underlying framework of natural resources and open spaces around which development patterns must be organized in order to protect the environment and preserve the integrity of natural systems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Create the urban forest</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Landscape parks and plazas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create green streets</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Create linked open spaces</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Link protected resource areas on individual parcels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create and link parks and greenways</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protect natural and scenic resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Create resource-specific plans and regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mandate conservation subdivisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Protect watersheds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Protect freshwater wetlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Protect farmlands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Links

This is the linking of all elements of the built environment by creating a fine grained street-and-block network as possible and by enabling all forms of mobility to reduce dependence on the automobile.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximize Connectivity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Create a connected street network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create new roads and connections into and between developments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create a trail network</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Design streets for people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Design for pedestrians and bicycles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Design beautiful streets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manage the automobile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Deal with parking creatively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Accommodate transit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Traffic-calm roads</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Communities

These are places where, to the greatest extent possible, people can live, work, shop and recreate within walking distances. Building complete communities is essential for reducing dependence on automobiles, for advancing equity, and for fostering social interaction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Create diversity of land uses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Locate neighborhood civic uses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create diversity of housing types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provide for flexible use/mixed use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Create beautiful neighborhoods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Orient buildings to streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Promote context-sensitive design</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Create pedestrian-oriented commercial areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Promote mixed-use buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Promote infill development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create “main street” environments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The **Tools and Actions** section of the Design Manual explains implementation in terms of planning, regulations, and administration. These are also grouped according to each of the three color-coded objectives of Nature, Links and Communities and cross-reference the Details that are most relevant for implementing that smart growth strategy.

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### TOOLS & ACTIONS

**HOW** you need to do it

### Planning Tools & Actions

These are the documents that set out the goals and objectives of the community and that will be implemented through regulations and administration. The Comprehensive Plan is the most fundamental of these, but planning documents can include area-specific or resource-specific plans, economic development plans, and transportation plans.

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421 Interior open space, adapted from Design Review: Guidelines for Multifamily & Commercial Buildings, City of Seattle, October 1993.

422 Base, middle, top. Newwork architects and planners

423 Breaking down massing, Newwork architects and planners


425 Corner lot development photo-simulation. New Jersey Office of State Planning

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426 Parking lot retrofit. adapted from Greenway Connections, Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development and the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council

427 Arterial retrofit. adapted from Greenway Connections, Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development and the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council

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434 Direct the flow, University of British Columbia James Taylor Chair in Landscape and Livable Environments

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518 through 519 Street sections, State of Oregon Transportation and Growth Management Program Innovative Model Code

519 Suburban road diet, from Designing Streets for Pedestrians and Bicyclists, presentation by Michael Ronkin to the New Partners for Smart Growth, Los Angeles, February 2007

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522 Traffic calming: speed bump, City of San Diego, City Planning and Community Investment: Planning Division, Street Design Manual, 2002

523 Trail system, adapted from Brauer & Associates, Ltd.

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525 Retrof large blocks, University of British Columbia James Taylor Chair in Landscape and Livable Environments

526 Shared-use path, Trail Separates from road network, adapted from Brauer & Associates and Planning and Urban Design Standards, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

527 Planing buffer, trail separates from road network, adapted from Brauer & Associates and Planning and Urban Design Standards, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

528 Pathway separation trail separates from road network, adapted from Brauer & Associates and Planning and Urban Design Standards, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

529 Trail separates from road network, adapted from Brauer & Associates and Planning and Urban Design Standards, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

LINKS

The Design Manual also includes a comprehensive index to all of the design details in the Manual.

COMMUNITIES

530 Typical mixed-use development, City of Cupertino Heart of the City Tung and Saski (check title)

531 Neighborhood corner commercial development, The Infill and Redevelopment Code Handbook, Transportation and Growth Management Program, Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development

532 Typical mixed-use building, City of Austin, Special Use Infill Options and Design Tools

533 Street with attached houses, State of Oregon Transportation and Growth Management Program Innovative Model Code

534 Typical main street. The Infill and Redevelopment Code Handbook, Transportation and Growth Management Program, Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development

535 Main street enclosure. Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities, ITE

536 Commercial retail development. City of Cupertino Heart of the City Tung and Saski

537 Large scale commercial development, City of Cupertino Heart of the City Tung and Saski

538 Commercial office development. City of Cupertino Heart of the City Tung and Saski

539 Neighborhood commercial corner, City of Cupertino Heart of the City Tung and Saski

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