

CITY OF HUDSON

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Diversity Through Balance



April 2002

THE SARATOGA ASSOCIATES

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Landscape Architects, Architects, Engineers, and Planners, P.C.
Saratoga Springs ■ New York ■ Boston

CITY OF HUDSON

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



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PREPARED BY:

THE SARATOGA ASSOCIATES



Landscape Architects, Architects, Engineers, and Planners, P.C.
Saratoga Springs ■ New York ■ Boston

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

What will it be like to live in Hudson five years from now? Ten years from now? What steps does the community need to take to make life in Hudson the best it can possibly be? Under New York State law, the comprehensive plan is the vehicle that lets a community as a whole respond to those questions. Through a comprehensive plan residents can set a vision for their community's future and then outline the policies and projects required to achieve that vision.

The plan is *Comprehensive* in that it focuses on any or all aspects of the community that affect the quality of life it offers. It is a *Plan* in that it should provide a shared vision and a common set of goals that shape public and private investments and initiatives for the foreseeable future. As economic, demographic, and social conditions change over time, the comprehensive planning process provides a moment in time to re-examine community priorities and either stay the present course or change direction. This process has included significant opportunities for public input and brought together many residents to shape the policy and project recommendations made in this plan.

In order for Hudson continue to be successful it must protect the assets that make it attractive.

WHY THIS PLAN IS IMPORTANT TO HUDSON

When Anna Bradbury wrote her history of Hudson almost 100 years ago, she felt that the land sale that led to the creation of Greenport was a bad idea. However, the land sale of 1837 helped keep Hudson a compact, walkable city. Everything remained within walking distance—the neighborhoods, the schools, the stores, the factories, the parks, etc. This legacy is part of Hudson's recent success and the key to its long-term prosperity.

In order for Hudson continue to be successful it must protect the assets that make it attractive.

Hudson needs to keep its built environment attractive and walkable. At the same time, Hudson's *culture* is part of what makes it attractive. Taken together all of these physical, economic, social, and cultural ingredients create a dynamic quality of life that is found nowhere else in the Hudson Valley. Maintaining Hudson's distinct quality of life is central to this plan. In short, this plan is intended to enable the City to take advantage of new opportunities by keeping Hudson true to its nature.



THE PLAN VISION: QUALITY OF LIFE AS AN ECONOMIC ASSET

Home to a culturally diverse population of about 7,500 people, Hudson has the advantages of an intact urban fabric set in a rural region with a relatively low cost of living and proximity to big cities like New York and Boston. Few locations have the potential to offer a high-quality urban experience in a small-town setting with easy access to major metropolitan areas. Consequently, maintaining and improving the quality of life in Hudson is the City's source of long-term economic competitiveness for attracting and expanding employment opportunities.

This requires a delicate balancing process. It means protecting the environmental quality in the City and maintaining the integrity of Hudson's neighborhoods and historical character, while nurturing and supporting a variety of relatively small-scale enterprises that are both information-rich and environmentally friendly. This comprehensive plan seeks to establish a role for Hudson in the information/idea economy by building upon Hudson's long-term strengths: diversity and entrepreneurship.

THE PLAN APPROACH: DIVERSITY THROUGH BALANCE

Since its founding in 1783 as the whaling port of Claverack Landing, Hudson has been a home for entrepreneurs while providing a relatively ready welcome for newcomers. Each generation of residents and new arrivals enthusiastically pursued livelihoods that, over time, ranged from whaling, woolen mills, pig iron, and cement, to button manufacturing, antique dealers and cultural tourism. This legacy of openness and entrepreneurial activity still shapes day-to-day life in Hudson. It has fostered a diversity in the kinds of people and businesses found in the City together with a readiness to debate

the relative merits of virtually any issue or initiative affecting the City. Thus, the comprehensive plan for the City must address the critical issue of improving the quality of life in the City while maintaining the diversity and liveliness that defines Hudson.

The Plan responds to this challenge by focusing on four key Plan Goals in Hudson's civic life:



PLAN GOAL 1: PROTECT THE TRADITIONAL CHARACTER OF HUDSON'S DOWNTOWN & NEIGHBORHOODS

The Plan calls for maintaining and improving the City's built environment. This can be achieved by protecting Hudson's distinctive architectural integrity and walkable character. But the City, too, must balance this with cost-effective development that does not disrupt its opportunities for social interaction. The following project and policy recommendations are intended to accomplish these objectives:

Create a Design Manual for the City to Maintain Traditional Pattern & Character of Development at a Human Scale

Hudson is essentially a mature City with little undeveloped land available. Consequently, it is critical that when development/redevelopment occurs, it is coordinated with the overall vision for the City. In an effort to promote this coordination, the City should develop a design manual to maintain its traditional pattern and character of development.

Residential and Commercial Development: Some commercial areas seem to invite people to walk through and explore. Other areas seem too cold, impersonal, or scary to walk through. Whether a place feels friendly and welcoming is partially related to its overall design. Traditional urban designs connect public and private space in a way that feels comfortable to passing pedestrians. Buildings are built to the edge of the sidewalk with strong "front door" spaces that let walkers make a comfortable transition from the public sidewalk to more private buildings via stoops, porches, passing by display windows, etc. Maximum building heights range between four and six stories, allowing ample natural light to reach street level. The spacing of buildings creates a protective wall along the sidewalk while subtle variations in building facades draw pedestrian along the sidewalk. To promote these objectives, the City should develop design policies (including policies for the waterfront) that encourage future development to incorporate these principles.



Sample of what design policies might look like: building infill



Industrial Development: Contemporary industrial building styles, often reflecting modern systems of mass production, tend to look very different from the local style of Hudson. If allowed to become visible in historic sections of Hudson, they could damage the local community character. Consequently, it is important that *any future industrial development proposed within the City of Hudson be held to standards that allow the proposed activity to be screened from other adjacent uses, or when possible, to blend into its surroundings by keeping to the same architectural character as the rest of the City.*

Develop a Historic Preservation Plan

Preserving historic buildings and traditional urban development patterns helps connect a community to the original qualities that made it a good place in which to live in the first place. Historic preservation can also establish the community's contemporary identity, and help set a direction for future revitalization efforts. Hudson has a rich architectural history, which has evolved from an equally rich cultural history. Consequently, a Preservation Plan should be developed in coordination with the proposed design policies.



Municipal Building Consolidation

Municipal buildings play an important role in communities. They bring residents together and, if located and designed properly, can send a message to both residents and visitors alike that this is a community that cares about itself. Current discussion within Hudson is assessing the need for a number of new municipally owned facilities (municipal building, jail, firehouse, etc.). As a result, the City is presented with a number of significant investments regarding its physical facilities. To comprehensively understand the implications of these needs and how these needs may complement each other, a team approach should be taken. Consequently, a municipal building consolidation committee should be formed by the City to explore various alternatives to mutually solve these complex, and costly, physical facility matters.



Improve Traffic Flow Through and Around the City

Strengthen and Maintain the Integrity of Gateways

Gateways play an important role in forming first impressions and welcoming visitors and residents alike. Both the form and the character of a gateway can influence the overall experience of a particular area. In Hudson, several key gateways should be improved to ease traffic circulation and provide a stronger sense of entry into the City:

- *Gateway from south via Route 9G/23B;*
- *Worth Avenue;*
- *The intersection of Columbia Street, Green Street and State Street;*
- *The Waterfront; and*
- *Train Station.*



Develop a Parking Strategy

Preliminary inventory of the parking facilities available in Hudson suggests that sufficient parking exists for today's visitors; however, many these places are difficult for arriving motorists to locate. Consequently, improved way-finding signage should be developed to draw the visitor to these facilities. Further, the existing parking lots should be made more inviting and visually appealing with plantings that flower in the summer months. However, as more people are choosing to move back into urban center and Hudson's commercial attractions continue to evolve, the City can expect increasing parking demands. Consequently, the City should develop a comprehensive parking strategy that improves the parking capacity in ways that complement the City's walkable, attractive urban environment.

Commission an Independent Truck Study

Currently, the state designated truck route moves trucks through the City of Hudson via 3rd Street and Columbia Street. Trucks accessing the waterfront are required to use Warren Street and Front Street. These routes are forcing trucks to pass through residential neighborhoods and are significantly deteriorating the quality, and in some cases historic integrity, of these homes. Further, trucks are required to make turns on urban streets that were not engineered to meet their turning radius needs. Strategies to this urgent need can include various levels of investment as well as a combination of solutions. Consequently, a comprehensive truck study should be accomplished. The primary goal of the truck study should be to develop a strategy that takes truck traffic away from Hudson's neighborhoods and commercial core area while providing a more efficient circulation pattern for trucks. Such a study should gather input from Hudson residents and officials, while also consulting with County residents who might be impacted by its conclusions.

Personalize the City by Encouraging Public Art

Public art and decoration can serve as an expression of community character, and help in the process of place-making and community revitalization. Public art should be considered an opportunity to translate Hudson's history to the broader public. In an effort to help facilitate the realization of public art integrated into the community, the City should consider establishing a Public Arts Commission.

PLAN GOAL 2: PROTECT & STRENGTHEN HUDSON'S SENSE OF COMMUNITY

The Comprehensive Plan recommends programs and projects to promote increasingly wide-ranging and meaningful dialogues among residents, neighborhoods and local institutions. The following recommendations are intended to promote citizen involvement in problem solving and empower the community with ideas and resources that can help shape the future of Hudson.

Public Safety – Maintaining Progress Toward Community-Based Policing

In every avenue of public participation used in developing this plan, improving public safety in Hudson emerged as a top priority. If Hudson is to reach its full potential as a successful, lively place, all people must feel safe in the streets. Residents must feel safe from crime at the same time that they are confident that their police force understands and respects all community members and their needs.

Building partnerships and nurturing communication among residents and community leaders in Hudson is one of the key elements of this plan. This involves not only interaction among local residents and public officials, but also interaction among residents and public safety personnel. In an effort to reduce neighborhood criminal activity, reduce fear of crime and



enhance the overall quality of life in Hudson, the City should continue to encourage interaction between the Police Department and residents to develop innovative, collaborative, and community-based strategies to reduce crime. By being involved in policing efforts residents will begin to see the human side of Hudson's police personnel and feel a part of the solution, thereby engendering an increased sense of ownership in their neighborhoods and the community as a whole. These interactions will also allow for

Hudson's police personnel to get to know community residents and to more comprehensively understand their needs, thereby making their environment a more satisfying and rewarding one to work within.

Promote Image of City Through Festivals

Many regional residents never visit downtown Hudson, assuming the City is unsafe and unpleasant. For Hudson to continue to renew itself, it must overcome these stereotypes and encourage people to visit and explore the city. Hudson should build on its efforts to attract visitors with well-organized events like the Winter Walk,

Firemen's Parade, Flag Day, the Fourth Down Block Party and the Art Walk. Others the City might consider include a Garden Walk, Community Clean-Up Day, an Antiques Festival, and ethnic festivals that celebrate the diversity of Hudson.

Cultivate the Development of Community Gardens

Community gardening is a park concept that is becoming increasingly common in many communities across the country. These spaces are providing urban residents, which typically do not have a plot of land to cultivate, the opportunity to grow their own fruits, vegetables, flowers, and plants. Community garden programs are geared toward providing common spaces that bring community residents together, foster a sense of community pride and ownership, and help families produce clean and nutritious food. Community gardens also empower individuals, knit together a stronger

community, beautify local areas, and provide valuable recreational, spiritual and therapeutic opportunities. Community gardens can be used as a communication tool to help residents express what they want from the garden, their neighborhood and their community. Hudson should expand its community garden program as a means to engender increased community pride and interaction.



Foster Development of Neighborhood Associations

Neighborhoods are a critical part of the social, economic, and political foundation of the City. Hudson's neighborhoods are made up of the *people* who live, work or have an interest in the area. These individuals are the key instruments in making their neighborhoods more enjoyable, livable places to be and should be encouraged to contribute to the neighborhoods long-term livability in ways that stimulate a sense of ownership.

Hudson is a community full of people who care about where and how they live. Many Hudson residents are already involved in organizations addressing the well-being of the City as a whole. But there are some residents who do not feel they are a part of the

community and may need smaller organizations where they can speak about ideas and concerns they have within their own neighborhoods. If given an appropriate venue to talk about neighborhood-level issues, many of these residents may become committed to public participation in larger civic decisions and projects. A Neighborhood Association can help determine what future activities best serve the interests of individual neighborhoods within the goals of the larger community and connect neighbors to each other and to the City government.



Establish a Series of Open House Meetings

City Government should hold a regular series of “open house” meetings throughout the City in an effort to relieve the perception that local government is unresponsive to residents’ concerns.

Encourage Mass Transit By Developing a Bus Loop Serving the Hospital, Downtown, and Community College

One of the major obstacles to sustaining mass transit is the failure of such systems to generate sufficient ridership. It may be possible to generate ridership by a loop that runs from the Community College to Columbia Memorial Hospital to downtown Hudson.

PLAN GOAL 3: PROMOTE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL VITALITY

The Comprehensive Plan recommends programs and projects that support the kind of dynamic and lively culture that makes Hudson a place enjoyable to live in and attractive to businesses and entrepreneurs.

Promote Balanced Economic Opportunities

Part of the reason Hudson is so lively and interesting is that the City has attracted a variety of enterprises that in turn employ a variety of individuals. Efforts to maintain Hudson’s liveliness should begin with efforts to retain and attract a variety of industries, including antiques, culture, medical services, professional services and small-scale niche manufacturing. As firms are attracted to, or expand in Hudson, care must be taken to ensure that they do so without compromising the residential and environmental quality of the City, or diminish the competitiveness of existing enterprises.

Improve the Pedestrian Streetscape

If a downtown area is pedestrian friendly, numerous benefits can result. Where the distance is reasonable, people will choose to walk if the connections are safe, comfortable, enjoyable, and if destinations are clearly linked by a network of pedestrian walkways. Combined, with such improvements as benches placed in shaded areas and directional signage, these provisions can help create a vibrant downtown community. In addition, street plantings can improve the urban aesthetic immeasurably. These public improvements can play a strong role in defining downtowns and help create a pedestrian friendly atmosphere.

Repair and Maintain Sidewalks Linking Residential Areas to Downtown The City should establish a priority schedule for maintaining sidewalks in higher traffic areas such as State, Columbia, Union, and Partition streets between First and Fourth Streets.

Improve Crosswalks The City should consider making key intersections more prominent and pedestrian-oriented.

Minimize “Dead Spaces” Vacant and underutilized parcels create activity voids or “dead spaces” that have the potential to create eyesores and engender a sense of danger, as well as provide the opportunity for illegitimate activity to occur. The City should take proactive steps to minimize these spaces with public art, appropriate lighting and regular upkeep of these areas.



Conceptual illustration for intersection of 4th Street and Warren Street.

Provide Pedestrian Amenities In addition to safe crosswalks and continuous sidewalks, it is important that the City continue to invest in amenities that make walking more interesting and enjoyable. This includes amenities such as benches, trees, planters, hanging flower baskets, banners, directional signage, and attractive pavement that can help to enhance the pedestrian environment.

Landscape Edges Where parking lots abut the sidewalk, a distinct border should exist between the two. Ideally, this border would be landscaped, creating a continuous edge to the sidewalk and enhancing the aesthetic value.

Create Improved Educational Opportunity for Residents

A community that promotes learning on the part of all of its residents will certainly be more economically competitive, more culturally vibrant, and more civically involved and responsible. The City government should seek partnerships with the schools, cultural institutions, and owners of historically significant properties to provide learning and interpretive experiences that help residents and visitors better understand Hudson’s past.

Ethnic heritage festivals and programming can help build understanding across the divides of culture and race, particularly when these activities are tied into school curricula and the work of local civic organizations. The community could create important learning experiences that might appeal to all residents (e.g., training in network installation and testing, or restoration carpentry, special programs on the history of Hudson for residents, etc.) If those courses or projects were housed in the Second Ward, it could provide new opportunities for an already disadvantaged population, while attracting residents from all over the City so that they might come to better know that part of their own community.



Respond to the Needs of Hudson's Youth Population

While Hudson does have some facilities providing youth activities, like the Hudson Boys and Girls Club and Oakdale Park, these activities do not necessarily appeal to everyone. During many of the community outreach meetings as this Comprehensive Plan was being developed, it was repeatedly stated that the youth of the community need more activities to occupy their time. This was further supported in the community survey: greater than seventy-five percent of survey respondents identified that improving and expanding activities for the youth was “one of the most important things to do”. Recognizing that different activities interest different people, the City of Hudson should work with existing youth organizations, *and the youth of the community*, to develop a Youth and Community Center that meets the varied interests of today's younger generations.

Respond to the Needs of Hudson's Senior Population

Housing trends across the country are indicating that as the “baby-boomer” generation ages and approaches retirement new housing types are necessary. While recent statistics indicate that the proportion of the population 65 and older in Hudson is declining, the 45 to 54 age group has increased by nearly 50 percent. In the next ten to fifteen years Hudson can expect a significant increase in market demand for elderly living facilities and services. Further, Hudson offers little social gathering and recreation opportunities for the senior population. Hudson should consider the needs of this population and develop a central location for activities. One potential solution to meet growing senior needs may be to merge their needs with the needs of the youth and create a unique community center that encourages interaction between both groups.

Develop a Fully Integrated Bike & Pedestrian Trail Network

Trail networks are becoming increasingly popular in many communities because they provide residents with recreational amenity as well as connections with recreation and commercial destinations within the community and region.

***Develop a Close Working Relationship with the Town of Greenport***

The City of Hudson should seek to develop a close working relationship with the Town of Greenport. Close cooperation between these two municipalities will enable each of them to develop more effective initiatives in such areas as economic development, land-use policies, tourism and other areas. As this relationship grows, it may also increase the likelihood of saving tax dollars through sharing services.

Develop a Community Newsletter and Web Page

Providing more opportunities for residential involvement in the community was a key finding through the comprehensive plan process. Through both the neighborhood meetings and the community survey, residents expressed a desire to become more involved with City government and other aspects of community life in the City. One simple way to encourage this involvement is through the publication of a newsletter that is distributed

on a regular basis through City mailings (water bills, etc.). In addition, the City should develop a community web page. The page should be graphically interesting, easy to read and follow, and essentially serve as a portal into the community. Typical information that may be included on the web page should include: local history; meeting dates and agendas for the City Council, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and other similar boards or committees; contact names and addresses for City government leaders and staff; important announcements; an events calendar; City maps; and key links to other area web pages such as Columbia-Greene Community College, the Chamber of Commerce, Columbia Hudson Partnership, etc.

Support Creation of Empire Zone in Columbia County

Realizing that a diversified economic foundation is necessary to effectively compete in the global economy, Columbia County is in the process of implementing an Empire Zone (EZ) as designated by New York State. The intent is to make Columbia County and the City of Hudson more competitive in its efforts to attract new business and investment, and offer incentives to expand existing businesses while creating quality jobs for its residents. The City of Hudson should continue to support these efforts to help stabilize both the City's and the County's economy. At the same time, these efforts should also reinforce the existing character of the community.

Develop a Housing Strategy

While many of New York State's urban communities are struggling with strategies to attract middle-class residents, Hudson has already started to attract this group. Hudson's continuing revitalization is likely to coincide with increases in the cost of housing (including housing values and rents). For the most part, this increase in value will be a very good thing for Hudson. However, the challenge for local decision-makers, the business community and neighborhood residents will be to ensure the benefits of Hudson's resurgence are shared among all community members. Consequently, a coordinated, multi-tiered approach must be developed involving the City, the private sector and not-for-profit organizations such as Housing Resources.

Building Financial Capital in Hudson-Partnering Existing Resources

As part of implementing the comprehensive plan, the City of Hudson should promote improved access to capital for Hudson residents. In its current capacity, Housing Resources (a designated community development financial institution) has the necessary framework in place to help meet the housing capital needs of those residents which often have difficulty accessing capital via traditional financial institutions. Likewise, the Columbia Hudson Partnership has a micro-enterprise loan fund that makes capital available to entrepreneurs who may have difficulty obtaining capital via traditional financial institutions. A partnering of these two programs can have profound impacts on the future success of Hudson.

PLAN GOAL 4: GIVE THE COMMUNITY THE TOOLS TO IMPLEMENT AND MANAGE THE PLAN

The plan recommends that the City develop the tools to promote a diversity of housing, employment, shopping and social opportunities for all members of the community. Managing the economic and social progress of the City will be the most challenging component of this plan. To be successful, it will be important to compare and maintain an equilibrium regarding the type and location of investments are being made within the community.

Create Full-Time Planning Staff and/or Capacity To Retain Consulting Services for Reviews

Given the complex nature of plan implementation, it is critical to create an implementation plan that is community-based, effective and affordable. Moreover, developing long-term partnerships with state and federal agencies as well as private sector investors will be critical to the long-term realization of Hudson's revitalization. Accordingly, the strategies outlined below are intended to create a team of professionals who will have the resources to act in a complementary and coordinated manner with a variety of public and private partners. Consequently, it will be necessary for the City of Hudson to build support staff *internally* which has the capability to monitor local activity and lead initiatives outlined within the Comprehensive Plan. Responsibilities of the Community Planning Director should include:

- **Monitor** implementation of the comprehensive plan;
- **Coordinate** partnerships for plan implementation;
- **Manage** daily planning activities for consistency with the comprehensive plan;
- **Review** proposed projects for consistency with state and federal regulations;
- **Develop** and maintain socioeconomic database for the City, including estimates for housing, income, employment, school enrollment and other related variables.
- **Develop** a detailed building inventory; and
- **Establish** a Task Force on housing needs.

Adopt Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

The City of Hudson has an attractive and scenic waterfront that has received, and continues to receive, significant attention over the years. Hudson's waterfront has been extensively studied in the Vision Plan and Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. However, neither plan has been officially adopted by the City of Hudson. As a result, Hudson's waterfront is remains a contentious issue within the City.

Presently, the Hudson Waterfront Development Committee is using the Vision Plan as its guide for waterfront development projects. However, to give the City the regulatory authority to impose future development conditions along the waterfront, the City should complete and officially adopt the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. This report will then establish an official vision for the Hudson waterfront and require all development to be consistent with the goals and policies set forth in the LWRP.

Include Community Groups in Decision-Making and Plan Implementation

The ultimate success of this Comprehensive Plan, as well as Hudson's health, well-being and sustainability, will require significant collaboration among the City and County governments, community groups, and civic organizations. Building partnerships and nurturing communication among residents and community leaders in Hudson is one of the key elements of this plan. Bringing residents together to actively engage in pluralistic conversation and resolve complicated community issues will help to build Hudson and strengthen its future.

Develop a Strategy for Tax Foreclosed Properties

Communities across the northeast continue to struggle with housing and neighborhood revitalization efforts. Hudson is no different. One issue the City is currently faced with is the challenge of getting foreclosed properties rehabilitated and back on the tax rolls in a manner that will have the most productive impacts on the neighborhood. One strategy Hudson may consider is to put the home up for auction, but instead of selling to the lowest bidder, the City can require potential purchasers of tax delinquent properties to develop a rehabilitation proposal for the property.

Create a Capital Improvement Plan

The City of Hudson has been fortunate in having a Department of Public Works able to respond to the needs of the City with a relatively limited budget. Part of the reason for this is the extensive experience and expertise of the existing management team. As that leadership team nears retirement, the City should seek to institutionalize its planning and project management capacity. As part of implementing the Comprehensive Plan, the Department of Public Works should create a five-year plan for meeting the needs for expanding, improving or replacing capital facilities in the City (sidewalks, streets, sewer and water systems, etc.).

Proposed Zoning Modifications

Generally, Hudson's existing Zoning Ordinance is sufficient to meet the proposals outlined in this comprehensive plan. Nevertheless, a small amount of attention and refinement will significantly improve the long-term success of and appreciation for the community's future.

- *Urban Waterfront District.* In an effort to promote a mixed-use waterfront environment, the City should create a new zoning district to be called the Urban Waterfront District (UWD). Permitted uses should be a variety of water-dependant and water-enhanced

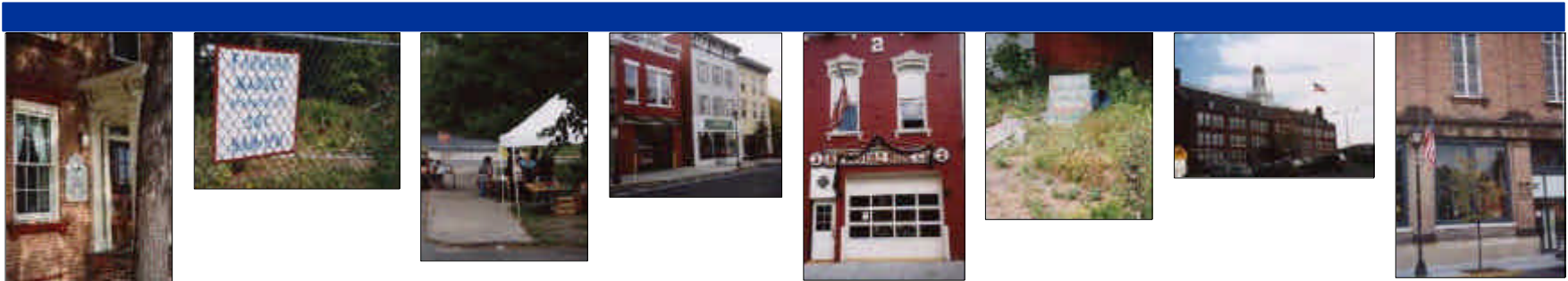
activities such as marinas, public boat launches, restaurants, parks and residential uses. Design standards, similar to those recommended for downtown, should also be developed and incorporated for this district.

- *Conservation Overlay District.* Hudson's North and South Bay's are unique environmental resource areas which provide flood control, water quality, recreational, aesthetic and open space benefits to the City. Protection and sound management of these natural resources will ensure continuation of their associated benefits and natural values. In response, to provide for the proper use of these valuable resources to the City and its inhabitants, a conservation overlay district should be established for Hudson's North and South Bay areas. The intent of the additional control of uses imposed in by this overlay district should be an attempt to achieve compatibility between environmental quality and future development.
- *Develop Performance Standards.* This comprehensive plan builds on Hudson's economic and social diversity. As this plan has noted, this will often involve a difficult balancing process. However, if the proper tools are in place, then this process can become clearer and be more effective. The proposed design standards will address the physical design of future commercial and industrial land uses. But the less tangible elements, like noise, dust and vibrations, are not limited in the existing ordinance. Consequently, many residences and businesses alike are experiencing some negative impacts from nearby industrial operations. In an effort to reduce these negative impacts, the City should develop performance standards.
- *Make the intent of residential cluster development more clear.* The current provisions for cluster development in residential districts (§121-23.1) need to be clarified in terms of intent and the desired nature of the built environment. For instance, Subsection A(1)(a) clearly defines lot size, width, and front yard setbacks, but Subsection (2) allows for special designs that effectively negate the requirements of Subsection A(1)(a). The City may consider replacing these provisions with a new zoning district known as a Planned Unit Development (PUD).

BEYOND IMPLEMENTATION: THE ROLE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IN HUDSON'S FUTURE

Hudson is in the process of building a long-term sustainable future. Success comes down to one thing: defining a course of action and sticking with it over a generation. But staying the course will require dedication to the goals and policy recommendations outlined in this plan. As Hudson continues to reconnect its people and places in a community fabric for generations to enjoy, community-wide interaction and dialogue are

critical. To a large extent, it is a matter of maintaining and building upon the interaction that is already underway. As long as this continues, and continues to involve the full diversity of this remarkable place, Hudson will set the standard for community renewal for the Hudson River Valley and beyond.



I. INTRODUCING THE CITY OF HUDSON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

What will it be like to live in Hudson five years from now? Ten years from now? What steps does the community need to take to make life in Hudson the best it can possibly be? Under New York State law, the comprehensive plan is the vehicle that lets a community as a whole respond to those questions. Through a comprehensive plan residents can set a vision for their community's future and then outline the policies and projects required to achieve that vision.

It is a Comprehensive Plan in that it focuses on any or all aspects of the community that affect the quality of life it offers—sewer and water systems, roads, parks, cultural activities, jobs, environmental concerns, neighborhood characteristics—whatever matters to residents.

It is a Comprehensive Plan in that it should provide a shared vision and a common set of goals that shape public and private investments and initiatives for the foreseeable future. In that sense, the plan can address almost any aspect of community life. Through its goals and policy recommendations, it can foster new ways of making a living, develop projects to protect open space or focus on revitalizing neighborhoods.

As economic, demographic, and social conditions change over time, the comprehensive planning process provides opportunities for the community as a whole to re-examine its priorities and either stay the present course or change direction. It is a singular opportunity for all residents to join in a discussion of their hopes for the future.

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community as a whole to re-examine its priorities and either stay the present course or change direction. Consequently, the City of Hudson planning process included significant public input opportunities. It is a

singular opportunity for all residents to join in a discussion of their hopes for the future.



WHY THIS PLAN IS IMPORTANT TO HUDSON

Hudson's Curse and Blessing:

The fact is plain that the city cannot expand to any great extent within its present limits, and it is hard to understand why our forefathers in 1837 allowed the town of Greenport to encircle us, almost to our very doors.

Mrs. Anna Bradbury, *History of the City of Hudson*, 1908.

When Anna Bradbury wrote her history of Hudson almost 100 years ago, she felt that the land sale that led to the creation of Greenport was a bad idea. And in some ways, she was right. It left Hudson completely land-locked, with little undeveloped property within the city limits. As older industries “aged out,” there were few undeveloped places to bring in new kinds of factories requiring different size lots and different types of transportation access.

On the other hand, the land sale of 1837 helped keep Hudson a compact, walkable city. It had no place to “sprawl out.” Everything remained within walking distance—the neighborhoods, the schools, the stores, the factories, the parks, etc. This legacy is part of Hudson’s recent success and the key to its long-term prosperity.

Hudson's Urban Character as a Source for Long-term Prosperity

For a variety of reasons, more and more entrepreneurs and small companies from major metropolitan areas are looking for locations that are outside metropolitan areas, but can provide a high quality of life and easy access to central cities. Hudson is well located to meet these kinds of needs. It also has an historic physical appearance that appeals to these entrepreneurs and small businesses. Indeed, over the last generation, Hudson has begun to attract this kind of activity. But in order for Hudson continue to be successful in this way, it must protect the assets that make it attractive. Hudson needs to keep its built environment attractive and walkable.

At the same time, Hudson’s *culture* is part of what makes it attractive. Hudson retains the entrepreneurial atmosphere & diversity of an ocean-going port. Unlike many of its neighbors, Hudson is a densely settled city. It is not a stately village like Rhinebeck. It is not a “country getaway” like Woodstock. It has a culture that is lively, interactive and urban. Hudsonians like to take matters into their own hands. They tend to distrust government. They are eager to express opinions on issues that they care about. Taken together all of these physical, economic, social, and cultural ingredients create a dynamic quality of life that is found nowhere else in the Hudson Valley.

Maintaining Hudson’s distinct quality of life is central to this plan. As detailed in the pages that follow, the plan focuses on maintaining the quality of the built environment. It recommends ways to further strengthen the sense of community in the City. And it concentrates on ways to enhance the cultural and economic vitality of this special place. In short, this plan is intended to enable the City to take advantage of new opportunities by keeping Hudson true to its nature.

II. CITY OF HUDSON PLAN VISION

THE PLAN VISION: QUALITY OF LIFE AS AN ECONOMIC ASSET

For most of American history, small cities had a straightforward economic role. They existed primarily as dormitories, warehouses, or even simple extensions of the local factories. As economic success has come to depend increasingly upon information and ideas, companies and entrepreneurs often seek out lower-cost small cities for their cultural and social advantages.

Home to a culturally diverse population of about 7,500 people, Hudson has the advantages of an intact urban fabric set in a rural region with a relatively low cost of living and proximity to big cities like New York and Boston. Few locations have the potential to offer a high-quality urban experience in a small-town setting with easy access to major metropolitan areas.

As economic success has come to depend increasingly upon information and ideas, companies and entrepreneurs often seek out lower-cost small cities for their cultural and social advantages ... Few locations have the potential to offer a high-quality urban experience in a small-town setting with easy access to major metropolitan areas. Consequently, maintaining and improving the quality of life in Hudson is the City's source of long-term economic competitiveness for attracting and expanding employment opportunities.

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This requires a delicate balancing process. It means protecting the environmental quality in the City and maintaining the integrity of Hudson's neighborhoods and historical character, while

nurturing and supporting a variety of relatively small-scale enterprises that are both information-rich and environmentally friendly. This comprehensive plan seeks to establish a role for Hudson in the information/idea economy by building upon Hudson's long-term strengths: diversity and entrepreneurship.



THE PLAN APPROACH: DIVERSITY THROUGH BALANCE

Since its founding in 1783 as the whaling port of Claverack Landing, Hudson has been a home for entrepreneurs while providing a relatively ready welcome for newcomers. Each generation of residents and new arrivals enthusiastically pursued livelihoods that, over time, ranged from whaling, woolen mills, pig iron, and cement, to button manufacturing, antique dealers and cultural tourism. This openness and entrepreneurial nature has left a legacy that still shapes day-to-day life in Hudson: a diversity in the kinds of people and businesses found in the City together with a readiness to debate the relative merits of virtually any issue or initiative affecting the City. Thus, the comprehensive plan for the City must address the critical issue of improving the quality of life in the City while maintaining the diversity and liveliness that defines Hudson.

The comprehensive plan responds to this challenge by focusing on four key ingredients in its civic life:

Protecting the Traditional Character of Hudson's Downtown and Neighborhoods

Hudson's traditional development pattern embodies the latest thinking on "smart growth"-- a high-density environment built at a scale that feels comfortable and emphasizes the needs of the pedestrian. The plan seeks to strengthen Hudson's distinctive character by:

- ***Maintaining and strengthening the City's unique character while providing an equally critical complement of pedestrian-accessible open space.*** Unlike many nearby cities, Hudson still provides strong pedestrian connections among its neighborhoods, commercial areas and parks, with two- to four-story buildings that lend a sense of urban culture without overwhelming pedestrians. At the same time, residents of such a compact urban form need periodic relief provided by readily accessible parks, trails, and other green space.
- ***Promoting high standards of design and construction for both public and private facilities.*** Whether it involves firehouses, the Hudson Opera House, or neighborhoods, high quality design and materials have always been good for the City over the long run. On the other hand, projects that have been done "on the cheap" tend to become a burden to the City by becoming run-down and ugly, encouraging crime and other unsocial behavior, and/or becoming a financial drain on the City.
- ***Emphasizing the importance of economic development that meets existing environmental standards.*** With the growing role of small cities as business incubators and centers of innovation, the environmental quality of urban spaces has become a key competitive factor now in ways that it wasn't in the past.



Strengthening Hudson's Sense of Community

Hudson's residents care deeply about those processes and institutions that help govern how they live with one another. If Hudson residents are to convey their good judgment and experience on issues that directly affect their daily lives, they need to be empowered to do so. A primary goal of this plan is to unite Hudson residents and stimulate community-wide communication with recommendations that promote:

- *Safe neighborhoods that encourage pedestrian traffic and spontaneous interchange among City residents.* Pleasant, safe neighborhoods enable residents to get to know one another and encourage firsthand exploration of the entire City by its residents.
- *Community problem solving and civic engagement.* Interaction and dialog among City residents and elected and municipal officials will enhance community-building initiatives to establish a safe and livable community. Hudson's elected and appointed officials can play a major role in facilitating this sense of civic responsibility by helping their citizens analyze issues and develop solutions through democratic dialog.



Promoting Economic and Cultural Vitality

Part of Hudson's promise is its ability to support the kind of dynamic and lively culture that makes a place enjoyable to live in and that is attractive to businesses and entrepreneurs. A local economy that supports all kinds of businesses is the best assurance that economic opportunities can be available to *all* residents. The plan seeks to support this aspect of Hudson's culture through recommendations that promote:

- ***Balanced economic opportunities.*** The economic base of the City should be able to provide jobs at starting living wages for low-skilled workers and/or new entrants to the labor market, while supporting other kinds of industries that provide a range of higher-paying opportunities for more experienced/skilled workers.
- ***Strong cultural institutions.*** In addition to being a central focus of Hudson's tourism industry, arts and culture contribute to the quality of life of residents and reflect a culture of innovation and creativity that is at the core of Hudson's long-term competitive economic advantage.
- ***A focus on learning that is life-long and community-wide.*** Learning is an essential part of maintaining diversity in Hudson. Workers need to continually learn new skills. Residents should have the opportunity to learn of each other's cultures. Every citizen should have the opportunity to learn of Hudson's past, while keeping abreast of the City's current challenges and opportunities. Such educational opportunities might include special training for all residents about issues related to living with and taking full advantage of diversity in the community.



Giving the Community the Tools to Implement and Manage the Plan

In order to maintain a vital, diversified City, Hudson must have the resources to keep a healthy balance among the variety of businesses, institutions and other enterprises that are here along with those that are encouraged to grow here. The plan intends to accomplish this with recommendations to:

- *Clearly state objectives about the kind of growth people want.* Widespread agreement about the kinds of growth that are and are not acceptable in the City will enable the community to focus attention and limited resources on getting the kind of growth that people want. This comprehensive plan is intended to provide such direction.
- *Giving City government the technical tools to manage growth.* Every step of the way, the needs for job creation must be balanced with the needs for environmental and residential quality. City government needs to have the in-house capacity to address these concerns effectively and expeditiously.
- *Encourage everyone in the City to participate in an ongoing discussion about what is important for Hudson's growth and development.* In order for the comprehensive plan to be effective and widely accepted, the issues surrounding it must be presented to the community as a whole in a manner that is easily understood and readily accessible. In addition to traditional means of public information, new kinds of outreach including regular neighborhood meetings and new technology can play a role in this effort. This plan strives to encourage interaction and partnerships between elected officials, public safety personnel, and residents.

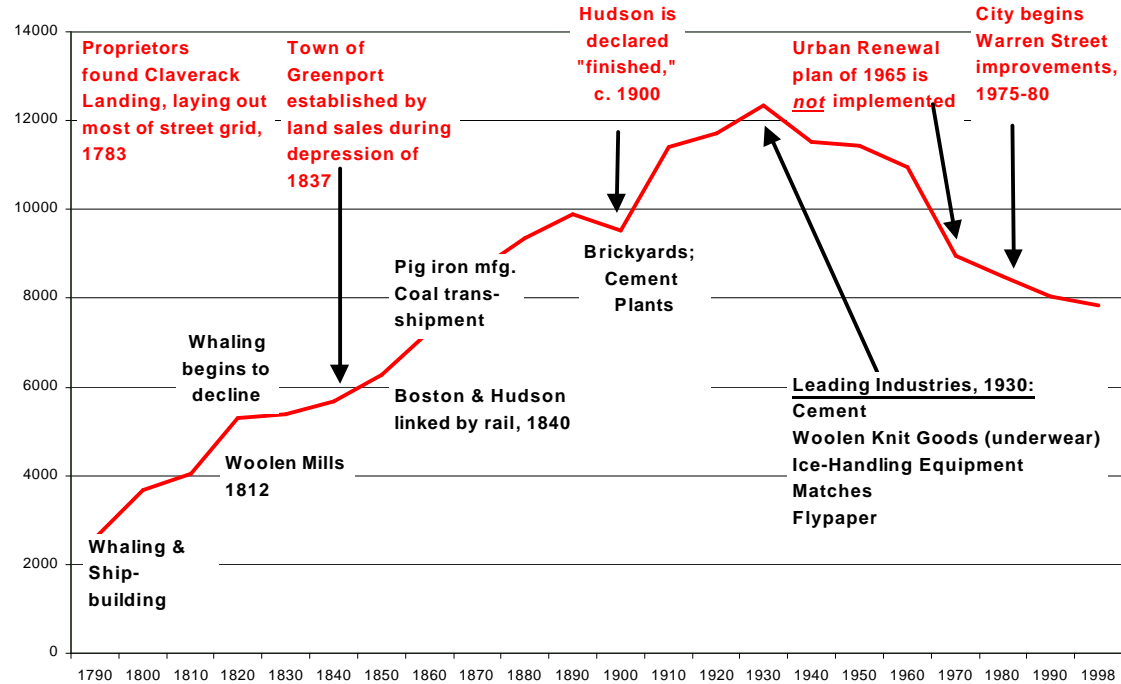


III. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

As Figure 1 demonstrates, Hudson's history is a story of changing fortunes linked to a variety of industries. But the City's character has been shaped to the greatest extent by a single transaction: the City was completely and permanently surrounded by the town of Greenport since it sold the land to the Town's founders in 1837. This has left Hudson with only a finite amount of land to support future development.

Figure 1

City of Hudson Population, 1790-1998



The Challenges: Sustaining Revitalization in a Compact Urban Form

Over the years, many of Hudson's initial industries became obsolete. For example, the introduction of central heating eventually reduced demand for woolen underwear. The increased use of refrigeration reduced demand for ice-handling equipment). Other industries left town when their supply lines changed from water and rail to highway. With little undeveloped land left for new industry, each loss left the City less able to provide the same number of blue-collar jobs as in the past. This has contributed to the steady erosion of population from the peak in the 1930s. It has helped shape the challenges and opportunities facing the City in a number of ways:

Declining Population with Blue Collar Legacy: Hudson's occupational make-up (Figure 2) and educational attainment (Figure 3) reflect its long history as a blue-collar community. Clearly, the 1990s witnessed an influx of affluent, well-educated residents. However, the data make it clear that, at least as of 1990, the educational levels and work force experience of Hudson's residents were still geared to participate in a traditional manufacturing economy. The 1990 Census data indicate that the proportion of residents employed in manufacturing and assembly-related positions were greater in Hudson than for Columbia County as a whole.

This concentration of blue-collar employment is also reflected in the educational attainment of residents. In 1990, thirty percent of the City's population over 25 only had a high school diploma. Even more telling, according to the 1990 Census, Hudson residents remained significantly behind Columbia County in the higher education categories, especially among those with bachelor's degrees and higher.

The full results of the 2000 Census was not entirely available at



the time of this report. But projections from Claritas (a leading demographic projection firm) suggest that Hudson's population is undergoing some qualitative changes. According to 2000 Claritas projections (Figure 4), Hudson can anticipate an increased population of residents earning greater than \$50,000 annually. Figure 5 also projects an increase in both median and per capita incomes. Accordingly, the 1990 occupational composition and educational attainment statistics can be expected to reflect this positive change when 2000 Census data are released in mid-year 2002. Nonetheless, the City will still have a large proportion of its population with education levels and work histories that have lent themselves to traditional manufacturing employment.

While manufacturing should remain an important source of employment in the City, such jobs, along with those in other sectors, will increasingly involve information technology requiring new sets of skills. Ensuring the City residents have the requisite education and training to secure such jobs must be a central concern of the comprehensive plan.

Figure 2
1990 Occupational Composition

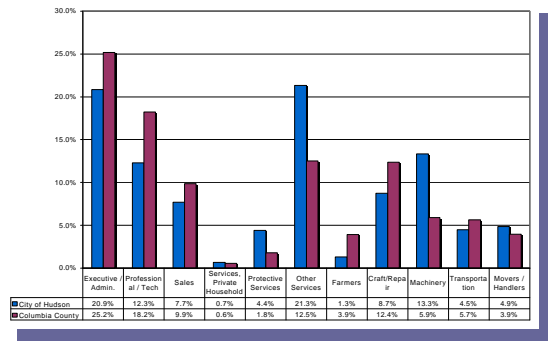


Figure 3
1990 Educational Attainment

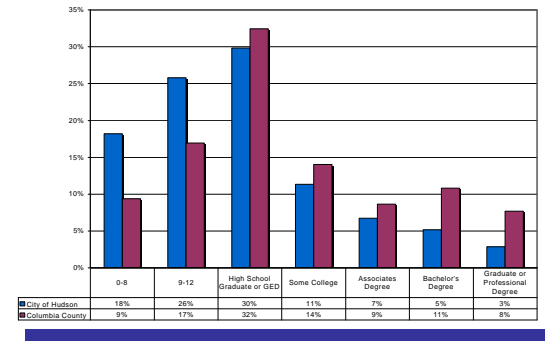


Figure 4
Hudson Household Income
1990 Census & 2000 Claritas Projections

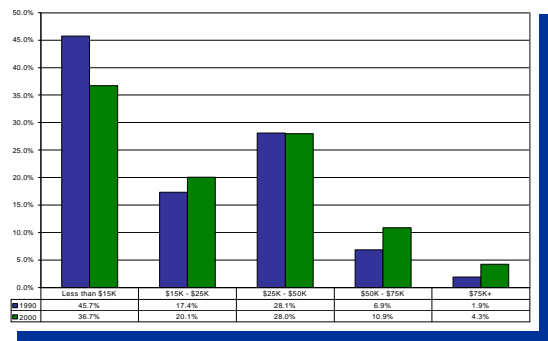
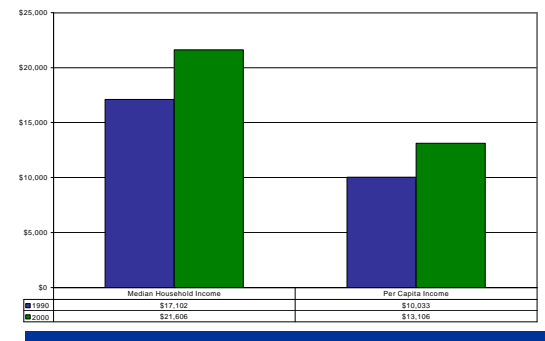


Figure 5
Hudson Median & Per Capita Income
1990 Census & 2000 Claritas Projections



While manufacturing should remain an important source of employment in the City, such jobs, along with those in other sectors, will increasingly involve information technology requiring new sets of skills. Ensuring the City residents have the requisite education and training to secure such jobs must be a central concern of the comprehensive plan.

Limited Land for Job Creation/Tax Revenue Generation: As in any “land-locked” city, land available for job creation and/or retention is rare and must be treated as a precious commodity. Hudson currently has approximately 197 acres, or 14 percent of its developable land dedicated to industrial uses. While this is a relatively generous share compared to the US average for cities (approximately 7 percent), much of this land is in small pockets scattered throughout the City. Others parcels are either on or adjacent to the Hudson River shoreline. In such a situation, uses must be carefully defined for these parcels so that they maximize the job-creation and revenue-producing benefits associated with development without compromising other values. In particular, given the close proximity of such parcels to scenic resources, neighborhoods, and other non-industrial uses, care must be taken that subsequent development does not compromise the quality of nearby properties devoted to residential, commercial, community, or cultural uses. At the same time, redevelopment must be carefully implemented so it does not create unintended impacts that may hurt the competitiveness of other industries located in the City.

...land available for job creation and/or retention is rare and must be treated as a precious commodity.

An Intact Urban Fabric in Need of Repair: At the beginning of the new century, principles of “smart growth” and “new urbanism” are being used to design and redevelop locations of choice throughout America. In many ways, the built environment of Hudson already embodies the kind of “new urbanism” that some companies and people look for. The land sale of 1837 forced the City to remain concentrated and urban in character. The City’s “failure” to adopt the 1960s urban renewal plan left Hudson’s traditional urban fabric more or less intact. For example, one can still use a city map of 1838 to navigate Hudson’s streets. Hudson’s traditional urban form in its built environment is a key source of quality of life and a potential competitive advantage that will be a focal point of this current planning effort. The inventory of the City’s physical assets identified areas where Hudson’s fabric needs attention:

Hudson’s traditional urban form in its built environment is a key source of quality of life and a potential competitive advantage that will be a focal point of this current planning effort.

- Many of the existing vacant and underutilized buildings are strategically located in the commercial core or occupy prominent sites in neighborhoods. If redeveloped appropriately, these can stimulate private sector investment and result in meaningful long-term revitalization of some threatened neighborhoods and commercial areas. For example, in wards 1 and 2, there are neglected residential buildings with distinctive architectural character located near the waterfront, rail station and commercial core. The combination of character and proximity gives these neighborhoods significant potential for revitalization.



In every type of public input received for the Comprehensive Plan, community members emphasized the importance of improving the “livability” of Hudson while bolstering its economic vitality.

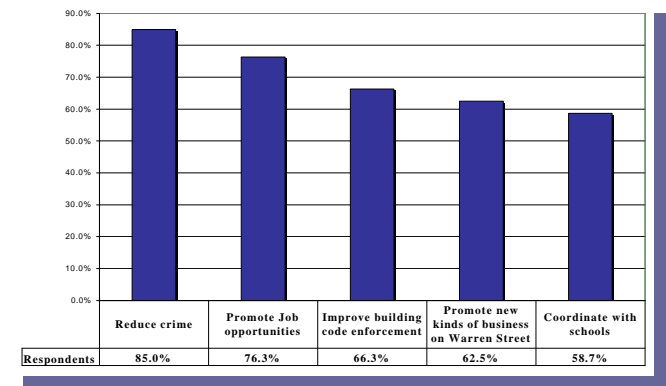
- The location of certain wholesale and warehousing facilities nearby some neighborhoods create traffic noise and an unsightly appearance. This makes the neighborhoods less attractive to live in. It also makes it difficult for retailers to create attractive storefronts and shopping districts in those areas.
- Parking generally meets needs, but alternate parking during winter months and for overnight parking creates problems, particularly for residents.
- Throughout the City, streets, sidewalks and alleyways need upgrading. Investments in public improvements like sidewalks, bicycle paths, better landscaping along major roads, planting street trees, improving public parks, and open spaces can raise property values and reconnect them to the rest of the City while potentially improving public safety.

The Opportunities: Commitment to Quality, Diversity and Momentum

The challenges facing the City are significant. But this moment also provides opportunities for progress. Many of these opportunities stem directly from the values expressed by the residents and business people of the City. They share a commitment to building a high-quality of life. They overwhelmingly believe in diversity as one of Hudson’s strengths. Working individually and working together, they have built a momentum for success and progress that began on Warren Street and now extends throughout much of the City.

A Commitment to Quality: City of Hudson residents place a high value on such quality of life in the City. Residents want the City to look beautiful and to make sure it has the

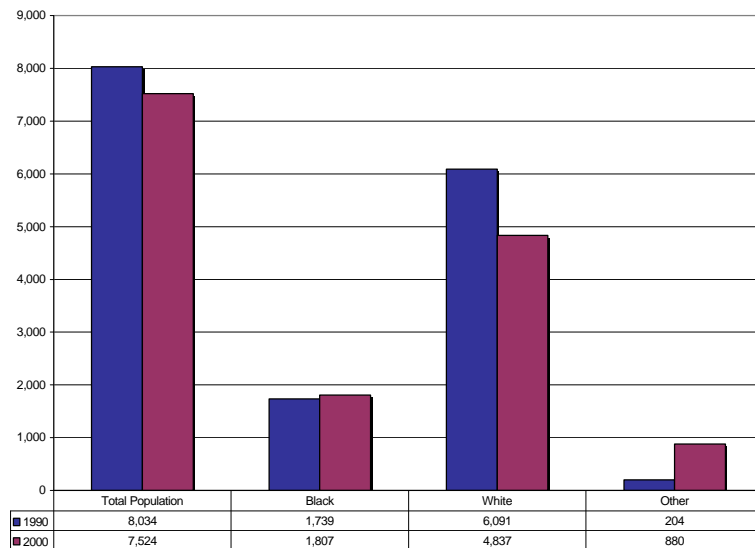
Figure 6
Community Priorities



things that will keep the City attractive and walkable: safe streets and neighborhoods, street trees and landscaping; green space, bikeways, and pedestrian paths. In every type of public input received for the Comprehensive Plan, community members emphasized the importance of improving the “livability” of Hudson while bolstering its economic vitality. For example, Figure 6 summarizes the result of one aspect of public outreach used thus far, the community survey. When asked to identify priorities for the Plan, the respondents identified such quality of life issues as the reduction of crime, the creation of jobs, improving the quality of building code enforcement, and so on.

A Belief in Diversity: It is unusual for a City as small as Hudson to have a population as diverse as it is, with better than one-third of the population nonwhite. Throughout the neighborhood meetings and discussions held during the creation of the comprehensive plan, residents almost universally describe diversity as one of Hudson’s most important assets, if not the most important asset in the City. The recent arrival of a substantial Bangladeshi population in the City, and the relative ease with which they have found acceptance in the City is one indication of a local culture that is capable of welcoming and assimilating newcomers. This trait can only be an asset as the City seeks to develop new types of enterprises and to build its competitiveness as a cultural tourism destination.

Figure 7
1990 & 2000 Total Population



...residents almost universally describe diversity as one of Hudson’s most important assets, if not the most important asset in the City.



Momentum Toward Success: In the early 1970s, an urban renewal plan was drafted for Hudson that called for the preservation and restoration of the City's historic architecture along with restoration of the sidewalks and streetscape of Warren Street. By the early 1990s, these strategic investments began to pay off. The City experienced an influx of antique dealers, taking advantage of Hudson's relatively inexpensive real estate and the inherently attractive retail corridor along Warren Street. At the start of the 21st Century, Hudson was becoming established as one of the premier antique centers of the Northeast. The community is actively seeking ways to extend that success into other areas and other kinds of enterprises. The comprehensive plan has the opportunity to both contribute to and draw upon this community momentum.



IV. PLAN RESPONSE - POLICIES & PROJECTS FOR A BETTER HUDSON

This plan builds on Hudson’s rich cultural, ethnic and economic diversity by embracing development principles that recognize the delicate, and often difficult, interaction between community, environment and economic progress. The plan policies and projects address each of the three aspects of the four critical elements of Hudson’s civic life:

- Maintaining and improving the built environment;
- Acknowledging that residents are “living together”;
- Promoting economic opportunity and cultural awareness; and
- Managing for the future of Hudson.

PLAN GOAL 1: PROTECT THE TRADITIONAL CHARACTER OF HUDSON’S DOWNTOWN & NEIGHBORHOODS

The Plan calls for maintaining and improving the City’s built environment. This can be achieved by protecting Hudson’s distinctive architectural integrity and walkable character. But the City, too, must balance this with cost-effective development that does not disrupt its opportunities for social interaction. The following project and policy recommendations are intended to accomplish these objectives:

Create a Design Manual for the City to Maintain Traditional Pattern & Character of Development at a Human Scale

Hudson is essentially a mature City with little undeveloped land available. Consequently, it is critical that when development/redevelopment occurs, it is coordinated with the overall vision for the City. In an effort to promote this coordination, the City should develop a design manual to maintain its traditional pattern and character of development.

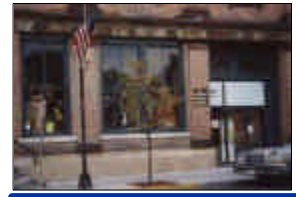
Zoning regulations define the kinds of activities properties can be used for and how many buildings are allowed per each acre of land. But zoning does not ensure that new buildings will blend into Hudson’s historic character. If Hudson wants to ensure that future development does blend in, design policies are needed to complement the zoning regulations.

Development policies can provide basic guidelines on the way new development should look and feel to blend in, or they can address every single aspect of construction (from materials to window sizes to colors) to make sure new buildings complement older ones. This plan proposes a middle-of-the-road approach—guidelines that provide suggestions about how the building, sidewalks, lighting and plantings should be located on the site (site organization), how those features should relate to each other (site design), and how the building itself should look (architectural design).



There are a variety of ways in which such standards can be implemented. The community design manual can be created as a mandatory policy, with those new construction projects that do not adhere to them subject to fines and/or other legal penalties. At the other extreme, the design manual can be implemented as suggested guidelines, encouraged by the City but lacking the force of law. Finally, the standards can remain voluntary guidelines, with incentives provided by the City in terms of tax credits, variances in other criteria, etc., as a means of encouraging compliance with the guidelines. Whatever level of implementation is selected, the design policies should encourage mixed-use development (i.e. ground level commercial/retail and residential development on upper floors) in high activity areas like Warren Street, Front Street, and the waterfront, and strongly discourage the use of variances. (See Appendix E for model design policies).

Developing these policies can be accomplished in several ways. For instance, the City leaders may choose to appoint a committee made up of City Council members, Planning and Zoning Board members, and City residents and business owners to develop the policies. Or, the City may choose to select a consultant to develop the policies in coordination with a committee representing local interests. Once these policies have been developed and adopted by the City Council, they should be incorporated by reference into the City's zoning ordinance. Many entrepreneurs and smaller businesses are seeking out communities with historic integrity and walkable character. Hudson has these qualities in place to attract such economic ventures. Creating this manual is essential for Hudson to retain its long-term economic competitiveness.



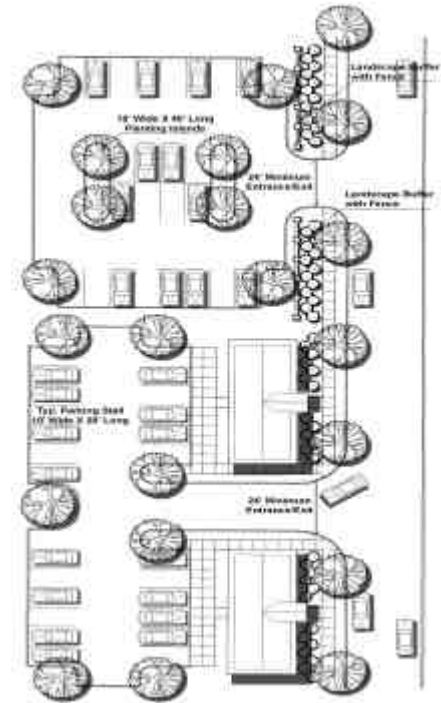
Residential and Commercial Development: Some commercial areas seem to invite people to walk through and explore. Other areas seem too cold, impersonal, or scary to walk through. Whether a place feels friendly and welcoming is partially related to the overall design of the place. Do the streets and public gathering places relate to nearby stores and offices? Are they connected with each other or are they isolated from one another? Traditional urban designs connect public and private space in a way that feels comfortable to passing pedestrians. Buildings are built to the edge of the sidewalk with strong “front door” spaces that let walkers make a comfortable transition from the public sidewalk to more private buildings via stoops, porches, passing by display windows, etc. Maximum building heights range between four and six stories, allowing ample natural light to reach street level. The spacing of buildings creates a protective wall along the sidewalk while subtle variations in building facades

draw pedestrian along the sidewalk. To promote these objectives, the City should develop design policies (including policies for the waterfront) that encourage future development to incorporate these principles. These policies should include the following:

- Sites should be redeveloped at high densities by minimizing lot area and maximizing building coverage.
- New buildings should be multi-story (two to four stories)- building up rather than out.
- New buildings should be located close to the street and close to each other - minimizing lot frontage and setbacks.
- Whenever possible, development should strive for higher density, mixed use development.
- On-site parking should be minimized and shared parking between established businesses should be encouraged.
- If a parking garage is to be developed, then ground level should be reserved for commercial/retail operations with parking on the upper levels. Further, the architectural style and features should be critically evaluated to make consistent with existing architectural features.



Sample of what design policies might look like: building infill



Sample of what design policies might look like: parking

Industrial Development: Contemporary industrial building styles, often reflecting modern systems of mass production, tend to look very different from the local style of Hudson. If allowed to become visible in historic sections of Hudson, they could damage the local community character. Consequently, it is important that *any future industrial development proposed within the City of Hudson be held to standards that allow the proposed activity to be screened from other uses, or when possible, to blend into its surroundings by keeping to the same architectural character as the rest of the City.* This means that the mass and height of any proposed industrial buildings should remain consistent with other

buildings in Hudson. They should be encouraged to be between two and four stories in height, and be screened from nearby residential areas or other nonindustrial uses.

These buildings should include features that are not just large, blank walls, but include architectural details and windows on the upper stories. Finally, any portion of an industrial building that is visible from adjacent residential or commercial areas should be required to use materials and designs consistent with Hudson's traditional building design. An illustration of these principals is provided below.



*Example of a new light industrial building
blending into small-scale urban environment*



Develop a Historic Preservation Plan

Preserving historic buildings and traditional urban development patterns helps connect a community to the original qualities that made it a good place in which to live in the first place. Historic preservation can also establish the community's contemporary identity, and help set a direction for future revitalization efforts. Hudson has a rich architectural and development history, which has essentially evolved from an equally rich cultural history. Hudson has building styles ranging from the Federalist style of the 1800s to Victorian designs from the turn of the last century, all laid out in a compact and walkable environment. It is a living reminder of the values that made many small urban communities of the 19th Century wonderful places in which to live. Indeed, Hudson has the type of compact urban environment that many young professionals and retiring couples are seeking out as locations of choice.

Consequently, a Preservation Plan should be developed in coordination with the proposed design policies. This plan should include a defined "Historic District" boundary, standards for building renovation and reconstruction within the district, and financial assistance programs (including local, state and federal programs) as well as technical assistance programs. The plan should specifically recognize unique buildings, and sites, of historic importance (such as those listed on the State and National Historic Register). To lead and implement the development of this plan, a dedicated Hudson Historic Development Commission should be established.

Both the Federal and State governments encourage historic preservation through various means. A number of not-for-profit organizations have also established programs that support local historic preservation efforts. Many progressive economic development practitioners are using historic preservation as a central component to long-term economic development strategy. In fact, the National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street initiative reports the following compelling statistics:

- The total amount of public and private reinvestment in Main Street communities is \$15.2 billion
- Average reinvestment per community: \$9,302,000
- Number of net new businesses generated: 52,000
- Number of net new jobs generated: 206,000
- Number of building rehabilitations: 79,000
- The Ratio of Reinvestment into the Community: the average number of dollars generated in each community for every dollar used to operate the local Main Street program: \$39.22 reinvested for every \$1 spent
- Average program length, to date: 6.27 years
- Average cost per job created: \$1,878
- Average cost per business created in a main street district: \$7,567

The advantages of historic preservation is best summarized by the National Trust's Main Street program:

"The Main Street program is designed to improve all aspects of the downtown or central business district, producing both tangible and intangible benefits. Improving economic management, strengthening public participation, and making downtown a fun place to visit are as critical to Main Street's future as recruiting new businesses, rehabilitating buildings, and expanding parking. Building on downtown's inherent assets -- rich architecture, personal service, and traditional values and most of all, a sense of place -- the Main Street approach has rekindled entrepreneurship, downtown cooperation and civic concern. It has earned national recognition as a practical strategy appropriately scaled to a community's local resources and conditions. And because it is a locally driven program, all initiative stems from local issues and concerns."

Taking advantage of the National Trust's Main Street Program can be one approach used to market and manage Hudson's proposed Historic Preservation program. Clearly, other partners and funding sources will need to be identified. Some of these partners may include the National Park Service, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation League of New York State, New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, New York State Department of Transportation, New York State Council on the Arts, New York Landmarks Conservancy, and the Great American Station Foundation. (See Appendix for more detail regarding these programs.)



Municipal Building Consolidation

Municipal buildings play an important role in communities. They bring residents together and, if located and designed properly, can send a message to both residents and visitors alike that this is a community that cares about itself. Current discussion within Hudson is the need for a number of new municipally owned facilities. For instance, the police station now located on Warren Street is outdated and in need of significant upgrades. The City includes a number of small volunteer fire departments and is discussing the possibility of consolidation in an effort to deliver more efficient and economical service to the community. City Hall is out-of-date and either needs significant upgrading or the construction of a new facility. Some municipal officials have also noted the need for new City Court quarters.

Clearly, the City is presented with a number of significant investments regarding its physical facilities. To comprehensively understand the implications of these needs and how these needs may complement each other, a team approach should be taken. Consequently, a municipal building consolidation committee should be formed by the City to explore various alternatives to mutually solve these complex, and costly, physical facility matters. Composition of this team should include both public sector representation and users of community services. Representation should include engineers and architects responsible for designing the

To comprehensively understand the implications and how these needs may complement each other, a team approach should be taken. Consequently, a municipal building consolidation committee should be formed.

facility(ies), a municipal finance professional, senior level representatives from both the fire and police departments, and all municipal and county departments that serve the City of Hudson, such as the Hudson Community Development and Planning Board, the Hudson Development Corporation, the Columbia County Planning Department, the Columbia Economic Development Corporation, Housing Resources and the Columbia-Hudson Partnership.

As one of its first orders of business, the committee should establish direction-setting goals. In particular, the committee should identify necessary levels of service, as expressed in standards about the type of facilities and equipment needs, accessibility, and minimum space needs. Direction setting should also include an infrastructure inventory and assessment. After a detailed understanding of location and space needs has been determined, a location for the facility should be determined.

The location of the new facility should provide maximum benefit to as well as relate to its surroundings. For instance, a consolidated city hall and police facility prominently located at the west end of Warren Street could provide a strong visual terminus to Warren Street and draw visitors to Front Street and further along to the waterfront, enhancing a necessary connection between Warren Street and the waterfront. While this may provide economic benefits to businesses

located along Warren Street, it may also provide increased opportunity for neighboring residents to become more involved in municipal affairs. Whatever the location, it is important that design of the facility be held to high design values that reflect the local architectural heritage of Hudson. Consideration should also be given to the facility's relationship to the street and make residents feel welcome. Many communities have built new facilities which are similar to those under consideration in Hudson, but the most difficult ones to share space are directly are police patrol and fire protection because of concerns of loss of identity and control and the building styles necessary to store fire apparatus. Consequently, it may be necessary to separate these functions.

If this consolidation occurs, the City will need to think of creative reuses for the vacated buildings, uses which could add to the local tax base and/or create new civic opportunities for the community residents. While the building interiors will likely need to be modified to meet the needs of new uses, it is important (if appropriate) that the new use preserve the unique architectural character of the original building facades.

To create a successful reuse strategy for these buildings, each building should be evaluated on an individual basis. In most cases, the adaptive reuse will be determined by market forces, the public approval process, physical characteristics of the building and availability of financing. The City should encourage

...it is important that the new use preserve the unique architectural character of the original firehouse-building facade.

mixed reuse of the buildings, which includes residential and office uses on the upper floors and retail and office uses on the ground floors. Allowing for mixed uses would provide two

distinctive benefits to the City. First, from an investor's perspective, a mix of uses will allow the building owner to receive maximum return on investment in the building. Second, from a civic perspective, the building will contribute to the vitality of the street at ground level with retail establishments while creating residential opportunities in the commercial core areas, thereby creating the opportunity for local residents to contribute to evening and night activities and keep their eyes on the street. The net result could be an increased sense of safety and liveliness in the evening hours.

To make these properties more attractive to private sector investors, a two-fold program can be developed that includes tax benefits and zoning changes. Tax benefits could include phased tax abatement for conversion of the fire stations into mixed residential, office and retail uses. In addition, zoning modifications can be made for the properties that allow for mixed use of the building. Zoning changes might include reduced minimum floor area per dwelling unit, which enables greater density; home office uses in apartment units, with up

to three employees allowed per unit; and provisions for parking. Perhaps to make the incentive more appealing, firehouses can be packaged as a group of properties for sale.



Improve Traffic Flow Through And Around the City

Over the past century, the introduction of automobile traffic into communities has often led to a disruption of community life and a loss of community character. For the most part, Hudson has avoided the sprawl and congestion produced when traffic is poorly managed. However, there are several traffic-related issues that should be addressed if Hudson is to maintain its traditional character.

Strengthen and Maintain the Integrity of Gateways

Gateways play an important role in forming first impressions and welcoming visitors and residents alike. Both the form and the character of a gateway can influence the overall experience of a particular area. Currently, Hudson's gateways do not establish a clear expression of what is about to be experienced. Generally, the goal should be to create signature gateways that give an enlivened feeling and a sense of arrival into Hudson. Several key gateways should be addressed, including:

Gateways play an important role in forming first impressions and welcoming visitors and residents alike. Both the form and the character of a gateway can influence the overall experience of a particular area.

- *Gateway from south via Route 9G/23B.* This gateway should continue with a primary orientation toward auto-traffic, but a more prominent welcoming to the City of Hudson should be established. This might involve a gateway structure relating to Hudson's built environment including a new welcome sign. Further, the visual character of this gateway is unique given its proximity to the South Bay. Consequently, special treatment should be taken to protect the views of the existing scenery.
- *Worth Avenue.* Worth Avenue provides the primary gateway into Hudson from the southeast. The general character of this corridor takes on a more residential feel and should be treated as such. Improved pedestrian connections should be made into the commercial core area and include a green planting strip between the roadway and sidewalk. Improved lighting, of the same character already being developed along Warren Street, should be extended to this corridor.
- *The intersection of Columbia Street, Green Street and State Street.* This gateway provides access to and from points north, northeast and east of the City. The gateway is currently very confusing for vehicles and should be clarified for automobile traffic as well as enhanced pedestrian crossings. As a gateway, this intersection should be treated as an important focal point for travelers entering and leaving





Hudson. An enhanced signature monument or water feature should be incorporated as a primary focal point at the intersection, perhaps featuring an artistic interpretation of Hudson's history and culture.

- *Waterfront.* The waterfront was studied extensively in the *1996 Hudson Vision Plan* sponsored by the Hudson Opera House and improvements have been recommended to enhance connections to Warren Street. These improvements should continue to be developed as Hudson's waterfront evolves.
- *Train Station.* Treatment of the train station as a gateway is important because it forms not only impressions first for visitors, but also for passengers enroute to other destinations. Consequently, the treatment of the buildings and landscape within the view of the train station should be given special care and attention. Further, signage and building façade treatments should strengthen the visual and pedestrian connections from the train station to the waterfront and Warren Street. A good example of a developing project in this area is the proposed Industria Basilica, in which the developer is restoring the building and incorporating new uses such as gallery space and other people-generating activities.



Source: 1996 Hudson Vision Plan

Develop a Parking Strategy

Preliminary inventory of the parking facilities available in Hudson suggests that sufficient parking exists for today's visitors; however, they are difficult to locate. Consequently, improved way finding signage should be developed to draw the visitor to these facilities.



...housing demographics are changing and more people are beginning to prefer living in cities. As this trend continues to evolve, as it already has in Hudson, patrons, employees and residents alike will begin to compete for these valuable parking spaces.

Further, the existing parking lots should be made more inviting and visually appealing with plantings that flower in the summer months.

Although visitors can often find available parking, residents are more often challenged to find adequate parking, particularly overnight and when alternate

parking takes effect during the winter months. Further, it is important to recognize that housing demographics are changing and more people are beginning to prefer living in cities. As this trend continues to evolve, as it already has in Hudson, patrons, employees and residents alike will begin to compete for these valuable parking spaces. Consequently, as the City continues to grow in terms of

Commission an Independent Truck Study

Currently, the state designated truck route moves trucks through the City of Hudson via 3rd Street and Columbia Street. Trucks accessing the waterfront are required to use Warren Street and Front Street. These routes are forcing trucks to pass through residential neighborhoods and are significantly deteriorating the quality of the unique, and in some cases historic, integrity of the homes. Further, trucks are required to make turns on urban streets that were not engineered to meet their turning radius needs. Consequently, it is recommended that an independent truck study be performed and alternative truck routes be worked out. Officials and residents of both the County and the City should have significant input in the process.

As with many other projects proposed in this plan, the proposed truck study will require efforts to maintain a balance within the region, requiring consensus building and partnerships with surrounding municipal and regional jurisdictions. Detailed truck

studies involve a significant amount of data collection and analysis such as truck origin/destination patterns, the type (class) of truck,

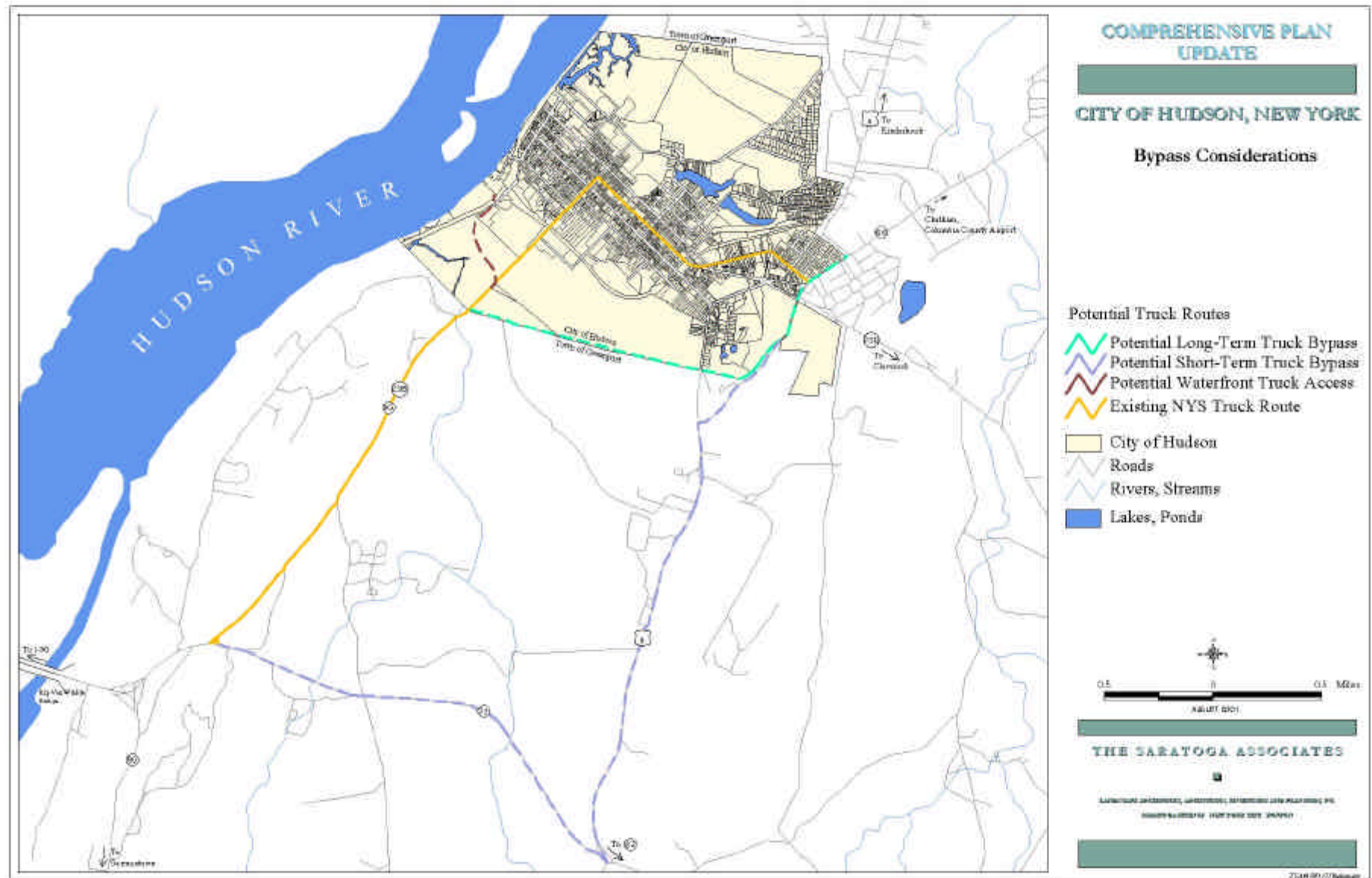
residential population as well as new retail and professional establishments, parking may need to be addressed before the “crunch” begins. Although the City has made some changes and additions to existing parking, it may be necessary to determine if more comprehensive changes are necessary.

These routes are significantly deteriorating the quality of the unique, and in some cases historic, integrity of the homes.



including length and weight, traffic counts, projecting potential growth patterns, and detailed engineering studies to determine the most appropriate solution. The primary goal of the truck study should be to develop a strategy that takes truck traffic away from Hudson’s neighborhoods and commercial core area while providing a more efficient circulation pattern for trucks.

Strategies to this urgent need can include various levels of investment as well as a combination of solutions. For instance, in the short-term (if allowed by existing transportation regulations) truck traffic traveling to destinations north of Hudson could be rerouted via Route 23 to Route 9. Trucks that need access to the waterfront (consistent with existing environmental regulations) could utilize a now closed off access road. Longer term, the truck traffic study may determine the need for construction of a roadway that skirts along the edge of the City. Whatever the solution, Hudson’s long-term economic growth, both commercial and industrial, and neighborhood revitalization potential will depend largely on addressing truck traffic and its impacts.



Personalize the City by Encouraging Public Art

Public art and decoration can serve as an expression of community character, and help in the process of place-making and community revitalization. Opportunities for public art range from imprinted dance steps in the sidewalks to sculptures made from steel; whatever an artist can imagine should be considered an opportunity to translate the rich history of Hudson to the broader public. Public art that graces public spaces adds a sense of comfort and security and can reinforce the identity of individual neighborhoods. Public art can also bring vitality to the city that makes the experience inviting as well as educational and interesting.

In an effort to help facilitate the realization of public art integrated into the community, the City should consider establishing a Public Arts Commission. Also, to demonstrate the City's commitment to a public arts program, the City should consider requiring that a defined percentage of total construction or reconstruction costs of proposed projects be set aside for public art endeavors, similar to set asides required for parks and open space. If such a public arts program is developed, it will be important to build a solid base of community support and keep the local public involved in public art projects from the beginning. However, as this plan has recognized, this too will require a delicate balance between the public's expectations, local officials, and allowing for the freedom of thought and expression necessary for artistic expression.



Example
of public
art:
bottles
made of
brass
anchored
to planter.

PLAN GOAL 2: PROTECT & STRENGTHEN HUDSON'S SENSE OF COMMUNITY

The Comprehensive Plan recommends programs and projects to promote increasingly wide-ranging and meaningful dialogues among residents, neighborhoods and local institutions. The following recommendations are intended to promote citizen involvement in problem solving and empower the community with ideas and resources that can help shape the future of Hudson.

Public Safety-Maintaining Progress Toward Community-Based Policing

In every avenue of public participation used in developing this plan, improving public safety in Hudson emerged as a top priority. If Hudson is to reach its full potential as a successful, lively place, all people must feel safe in the streets. Residents must feel safe from crime at the same time that they are confident that their police force understands and respects all community members and their needs.

Building partnerships and nurturing communication among residents and community leaders in Hudson is one of the key elements of this plan. This involves not only interaction among local residents and public officials, but also interaction among residents and public safety personnel. However, Hudson's police force, not unlike many other communities across the country, has become somewhat disconnected from the community residents they serve. Although officers enter into constant contact with citizens, they increasingly do so without developing any degree of familiarity. Required to travel through the City in patrol cars, officers have little opportunity to develop positive relationships with community residents. This alienation has generated a perception of unfriendliness and distrust. This has essentially allowed citizens to become passive in relation to policing. As a consequence, officers not only perceive the environments in which they work to be dangerous, they also begin to attribute dangerous traits to the community residents.

In an effort to reduce neighborhood criminal activity, reduce fear of crime and enhance the overall quality of life in Hudson, the City should continue to encourage interaction between the Police Department and residents to develop innovative, collaborative, and community-based strategies to reduce crime. One of the most effective strategies being employed by municipalities through-out the United States is community-based policing. Among the many aspects of community-based policing is increased use of foot and bicycle patrols in neighborhoods.



Current initiatives underway in Hudson include the use of new technologies to more efficiently and effectively reduce criminal activities in the City. However, while these technologies are an important component to effective law enforcement, they do not advance personal interaction between police and residents. One of the most effective strategies being employed by many other communities is to put foot and bicycle patrols

back on the street. For Hudson this will require a commitment from the City Council to redeploy and/or add more police personnel to effectively meet the needs of such a program.

Strategies to reduce crime that involve the built environment should also be explored. For instance, strategically placed lighting (including “safe path” lighting) will deter criminal activities. In an effort to reduce traffic flow through the neighborhoods south of Warren Street, the opportunity exists to close off some roads such as State Street, Cherry Alley, and Allen Street. This could have several benefits. For instance, by closing off streets to through traffic, “cruising” activities through the neighborhoods could be reduced and impart an increased sense of safety and quietness for neighborhood residents. Further, new development sites could be created for new housing and/or “pocket parks”. Other strategies may emerge from this initiative that integrates citizens into the planning and implementation of these efforts and all public safety programs. The overall goal of such a program should be to encourage the development of neighborhood organizations, get citizens involved in crime prevention, and encourage personal interaction between Hudson police officers and neighborhood residents.

By being involved in policing efforts residents will begin to see the human side of Hudson’s police personnel and feel a part of the solution, thereby engendering an increased sense of ownership in their neighborhoods and the community as a whole. These interactions will also allow for Hudson’s police personnel to get to know community residents and to more comprehensively understand their needs, thereby making their environment a more satisfying and rewarding one to work within. Overall, these efforts should result in an improved quality of life in Hudson by making it a safer and more livable community.

Promote Image of City Through Festivals

Many regional residents never visit downtown Hudson, assuming the City is unsafe and unpleasant. For Hudson to continue to renew itself, it must overcome these stereotypes and encourage people to visit and explore the City. Hudson should build on its efforts to attract visitors with well- organized events like the Winter Walk, Firemen’s Parade, Flag Day, the Fourth Down Block Party and the Art Walk. Others the City might consider include a Garden Walk, Community Clean-Up Day, an Antiques Festival, and ethnic festivals that celebrate the diversity of Hudson. When these visitors come to the City and experience a safe environment, they are more likely to let go of their negative images and come back for other reasons.

Cultivate the Development of Community Gardens

Parks and open spaces are places that reconnect urban residents with natural settings and provide green spaces for rest and relaxation. Some of these spaces are passive areas in which people can picnic; others are active where people engage in athletic activities at playgrounds and baseball fields. Community gardening is another park concept that is becoming increasingly common in many communities across the country. Hudson already has a community garden that is providing residents, which typically do not have a plot of land to cultivate, the opportunity to grow their own fruits, vegetables, flowers, and plants. Community garden programs are geared toward providing common spaces that bring community residents together, foster a sense of community pride and ownership, and help families produce clean and nutritious food. Community gardens also empower individuals, knit together a stronger community, beautify local areas, and provide valuable recreational, spiritual and therapeutic opportunities. In fact, many community garden programs have been set up in some of America's most challenged urban neighborhoods, converting unsightly and dangerous lots into a source of family food and personal accomplishment. Community gardens can be used as a communication tool to help residents express what they want from the garden, their neighborhood and their community. By doing so, these spaces can harness the energy and resources represented by the people who live in the neighborhood and allow residents to feel that they are a part of neighborhood and community revitalization efforts. Some more advanced community programs have incorporated learning opportunities by offering classes in nutrition and restaurant management skills. Hudson should expand its community garden program as a means to engender increased community pride and interaction.

For a community garden project to be successful, it is critical that the City and neighborhood residents are involved from the early stages of development. And this engagement does not stop there. Community input and management must be used to engender a sense of ownership and pride. It will also be important to remember that the community garden program is part of a larger effort for community economic development, public health, education, and coalition building. Most important to the success of the program will be the ability for community leaders to build partnerships between community organizations (such as neighborhood groups, schools and churches) and the private sector (such as local businesses, banks and foundations).



Foster Development of Neighborhood Associations

Neighborhoods are a critical part of the social, economic, and political foundation of the City. The identity of these neighborhoods is generally defined by similar historical, architectural, and socio-economic characteristics. Hudson's neighborhoods are made up of the *people* who live, work or have an interest in the area. These individuals are the key instruments in making their neighborhoods more enjoyable, livable places to be and should be encouraged to contribute to the neighborhood's long-term livability in ways that stimulate a sense of ownership.

Hudson is a community full of people who care about where and how they live. Many Hudson residents get involved in community organizations that lead the well-being of the City as a whole. But there are many other residents who do not feel they are a part of the community and may need smaller organizations where they can speak about ideas and concerns they have within their own neighborhoods. If given an appropriate venue, many of these residents may become committed to public participation in civic decisions and projects. A Neighborhood Association can help determine what future activities best serve the interests of individual neighborhoods within the goals of the larger community. With this in mind, the City should take an active role in defining neighborhood boundaries, with community residents, and develop Neighborhood Association programs that connect neighbors to each other and to the City government. This type of formal neighborhood organization can then evoke a sense of individual empowerment and provide a venue for residents to get involved in the community.

These Neighborhood Associations could help weave together many of the programs being proposed in this Comprehensive Plan. For instance, the Comprehensive Plan has recommended that public safety officers become more integrated into the community. A Neighborhood Association could invite Hudson police to monthly meetings to discuss their concerns or offer new trends they may be noticing in their neighborhood. The Neighborhood Association could organize neighborhood fairs, block parties, fundraisers, and other fun events; participate in neighborhood traffic, zoning and development matters; start a neighborhood Community Garden program; beautify the neighborhood by planting and replacing trees; help to preserve historic landmarks; enhance playgrounds with new equipment and landscaping improvements; coordinate a Neighborhood Watch; and communicate needs for City services to the appropriate City staff through a designated neighborhood representative. Organized and active neighborhoods serve as a formalized "eyes and ears" of the community and allow the City Council to better measure the quality of the services they can provide. Clearly, an organized Neighborhood Association program could have profound impacts in the overall quality of life in Hudson.

Establish a Regular Series of “Open House” Meetings to Strengthen the Ties Between Residents and City Government

The perception that local government is unresponsive to residents’ concerns was raised in almost every public forum associated with this plan. Whether or not that perception is borne out by facts, it is nonetheless important that City government make a concerted effort to overcome the sense that City Government is not responsive to residents. As part of that effort, City Government should hold a regular series of “open house” meetings throughout the City. For example, on the first Saturday of every month, the City could invite the general public to a three-hour session that featured representatives of a City Department to answer questions from the public. Meeting locations could be varied from month to month to ensure equal access to residents from throughout the City.

Encourage Mass Transit by Developing a Bus Loop Serving the Hospital, Downtown, and Community College

Many residents felt that the City would benefit from the creation of a more extensive system of mass transit in the City. These discussions often focused on the need for residents to reach downtown from the neighborhoods, or for City residents to be able to ride to Columbia-Greene Community College to attend classes. One of the major obstacles to sustaining mass transit is the failure of such systems to generate sufficient ridership. It may be possible to generate ridership by a loop that runs from the Community College to Columbia Memorial Hospital to downtown Hudson. This opportunity is driven by the fact that Columbia Memorial is experiencing a severe shortage of staff parking. At the same time, the Community College has some excess parking capacity. As part of establishing this loop, the Community College would allow hospital workers to park at the College and ride the bus to work. The bus would then proceed downtown, picking up students and clients for the College’s “one-stop” center for job readiness. Through the proper combination of contributions by the benefiting institutions and fares paid by the users, it may be possible to create a sustainable transit loop serving the City and two important institutions.

PLAN GOAL 3: PROMOTE ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL VITALITY

The Comprehensive Plan recommends programs and projects that support the kind of dynamic and lively culture that makes Hudson a place enjoyable to live in and is attractive to businesses and entrepreneurs.

Promote Balanced Economic Opportunities

Part of the reason Hudson is so lively and interesting is that the City has attracted a variety of enterprises that in turn employ a variety of individuals. Efforts to maintain Hudson's liveliness should begin with efforts to retain and attract a variety of industries, including antiques, culture, medical services, professional services and small-scale niche manufacturing. These opportunities should range from the kinds of entry-level assembly positions in operations like Emsig to technology related enterprises such as HAVE, to artisan/crafts enterprises emerging from the City's reputation for antiques and restoration.

This will not be simple. As firms are attracted to, or expand in Hudson, care must be taken to ensure that they do so without compromising the residential and environmental quality of the City, or diminish the competitiveness of existing enterprises. (cf. the recommendations for a City-wide Design Manual discussed above.)

As firms are attracted to, or expand in Hudson, care must be taken to ensure that they do so without compromising the residential and environmental quality of the City, or diminish the competitiveness of existing enterprises.

How can Hudson keep this balance? City residents should be prepared to finance the additional administrative capacity in City government that would be required to conduct or oversee the management of the economic, environmental, and social analyses required to maintain this balanced diversity. In addition, the City may wish to consider expanding or creating public/private partnerships to foster diversity in local businesses. For example, the City may wish to encourage the creation of a business improvement district (BID) for the downtown area to ensure that there is a competitive mix among businesses and that development occurs in ways that builds synergy among local businesses. (See management recommendations in the following section.)

Improve the Pedestrian Streetscape

If a downtown area is pedestrian friendly, numerous benefits can result such as:

- enhanced vitality of the Downtown area;
- a greater sense of community – with greater numbers of pedestrians there is increased opportunity for social interaction;
- safer streets for pedestrians; and
- improved traffic flow by reducing the necessity for car trips.

Public amenities are extremely important as they create an inviting place in which people choose to visit, eat, shop, etc.

Where the distance is reasonable, people will choose to walk if the connections are safe, comfortable, enjoyable, and if destinations are clearly linked by a network of pedestrian walkways. Combined, with such amenities as benches placed in shaded areas and directional signage, these provisions can help create a vibrant downtown community. In addition, street plantings can improve the urban aesthetic immeasurably. These public amenities can play a strong role in defining downtowns and help create a pedestrian friendly atmosphere. Hudson should consider the following improvements:

Repair and Maintain Sidewalks Linking Residential Areas to Downtown

In a pedestrian-oriented city like Hudson, it is important that sidewalks are maintained in areas that link to the downtown. Residents expressed concern that on side streets like Columbia and State, young mothers often have difficulty navigating with strollers and carriages because of cracked and irregular surfaces on the sidewalks. The City should establish a priority schedule for maintaining sidewalks in higher traffic areas such as State, Columbia, Union, and Partition streets between First and Fourth Streets.

Minimize “Dead Spaces”

Vacant and underutilized parcels create activity voids or “dead spaces” that have the potential to create eyesores and engender a sense of danger, as well as provide the opportunity for illegitimate activity to occur. This also holds true for public spaces that lack appropriate lighting and include objects that block a clear view of the area. The City should take proactive steps to minimize these spaces with public art, appropriate lighting and regular upkeep of these areas. These areas should also be targeted for activities during festival events.

Improve Crosswalks

The easier a street is to cross, the more inviting and safe it will be for pedestrians. While stop signs and traffic signals are helpful, their goal is usually to stop automobiles rather than to guide the pedestrian safely across the road. In response, a highly visible crosswalk standard should be designed which can be applied throughout the City. It is recommended that the City investigate the possibility of stamped pavement at key (i.e., heavily traveled) intersections. The intersection of Warren Street and 4th Street is a good example. 4th Street serves as a midpoint along Hudson's extensive central commercial corridor. It also links two key community resources to Warren Street – the County Court House and the Library. As such, the intersection of Warren Street and 4th Street can be considered the axis of the commercial core and should be enhanced with pedestrian amenities that facilitate movement between the commercial core and the civic resources. The graphic below illustrates how this intersection might be redeveloped to emphasize the role of the pedestrian and bring attention to a prominent intersection.



Intersection at Warren Street and 4th Street

Before



Conceptual illustration of intersection at Warren Street and 4th Street

After

Provide Pedestrian Amenities

In addition to safe crosswalks and continuous sidewalks, it is important that the City continue to invest in amenities that make walking more interesting and enjoyable. Benches offer pedestrians a place to rest, talk, and people watch, and should be distributed widely. Attractive human-scale lighting enhances the aesthetic, and engenders a sense of personal security. Trees, planters, hanging flower baskets, banners, and attractive pavement also help enhance the pedestrian environment. Pedestrian-scaled wayfinding signage permits the casual visitor a sense of direction and improved comfort levels in unknown places. Wayfinding signage could be made available at each corner on Warren Street identifying the stores located on that block as well as side streets.

Street amenities such as benches, pedestrian scaled lights, street trees, clocks, planters, and trash receptacles should be located in the areas generally with high pedestrian activity, such as the intersection Warren Street and 4th Street. Although the City has already started to make many of the necessary improvements along Warren Street, there should be improved continuity to lend cohesion, particularly on the 200 and 300 blocks, northwest of 3rd Street.



Landscape Edges

Where parking lots abut the sidewalk, a distinct border should exist between the two. Ideally, this border would be landscaped, creating a continuous edge to the sidewalk and enhancing the aesthetic value. Such a border could take the form of a low hedgerow, a wooden or wrought iron fence, or a planting strip of shrubbery. This border would serve not only to improve the aesthetics, but also to create a physical barrier to separate pedestrians from parked vehicles.



Existing parking lot on 300-block

Before



Existing parking lot on 300-block

After

Create Improved Educational Opportunity for Residents

An old cliché suggests that life is a race between education and catastrophe. In the case of Hudson, life is certainly a race between education and obsolescence. This is most easily understood in its narrowest sense: Workers must continually upgrade their knowledge and skills if they want to fully participate in an economy driven by rapid technological change. But education and learning involve much more than job skills. In a community as diverse as Hudson, a culture of learning can serve as a glue that makes residents understand and appreciate those things they hold in common, along with those things that set them apart from each other. A community that promotes learning on the part of all of its residents will certainly be more economically competitive, more culturally vibrant, and more civically involved and responsible.

A community that promotes learning on the part of all of its residents will certainly be more economically competitive, more culturally vibrant, and more civically involved and responsible.



Community learning also extends to the built environment. This plan argues for the preservation of Hudson's historic character. Much of the benefit of that effort will be lost unless the community also makes commitments to interpret that past for its residents and visitors. The City government should seek partnerships with the schools, cultural institutions, and owners of historically significant properties to provide learning and interpretive experiences that help residents and visitors better understand Hudson's past.

The cultural diversity in Hudson also provides opportunities for community-wide learning. Ethnic heritage festivals and programming can help build understanding across the divides of culture and race, particularly when these activities are tied into school curricula and the work of local civic organizations. It can also broaden the cultural perspectives of residents to make them better citizens, more productive workers, and more considerate neighbors. The various cultures also bring new languages to the community that can encourage residents to learn these languages at language learning facilities, perhaps offered at the community center.

Finally, a culture of learning can strengthen the ties between residents and neighborhoods. For example, the plan analysis indicates that, in many ways, the Second Ward is isolated both socially and economically. The community could create important learning experiences that might appeal to all residents (e.g., training in network installation and testing, or restoration carpentry, special programs on the history of Hudson for residents, etc.) If those courses or projects were housed in the Second Ward, it could provide new opportunities for an already disadvantage population, while attracting residents from all over the City so that they might come to better know that part of their own community.



To be successful, these learning experiences must include a network of partnerships, including local elected official representation, the Columbia-Hudson Partnership, Columbia Memorial Hospital, local business operators, and, most importantly, Columbia-Green Community College. The Community College will be a critical partner to help lead an innovative academic outreach program which meets the needs of residents and business establishments alike. Columbia-Green Community College programs could be made available to residents within the City without transportation or those who may be intimidated by traditional university campuses. Such locations may be in the mini-storage facilities or the old Pocket Book factory. Another example may include the Community College partnering with Columbia Memorial Hospital to provide a bus loop between the two institutions, thereby relieving some of the hospital parking needs and providing a potential student base for the college. Further, the hospital employees may also be able to take advantage of day care programs offered at the college. Whatever the method(s) or location, the principle is to promote accessibility and convenience for Hudson residents.

...these learning experiences must include a network of partnerships...

Respond to the Needs of Hudson's Youth Population



While Hudson does have some facilities providing youth activities, like the Hudson Boys and Girls Club and Oakdale Park, these activities do not necessarily appeal to everyone. During many of the community outreach meetings as this comprehensive plan was being developed, it was repeatedly stated that the youth of the community need more activities to occupy their time. This was further supported in the community survey: greater than seventy-five percent of survey respondents identified that improving and expanding activities for the youth was “one of the most important things to do”.



Recognizing that different activities interest different people, the City of Hudson should work with existing youth organizations, *and the youth of the community*, to develop a Youth and Community Center that meets the varied interests of today's younger generations. For instance, some might be interested in active sports such as basketball, indoor beach volleyball, or even a climbing wall, while others may be interested in a place to develop their language, artistic or music skills. A new multi-use facility could also offer places for social gathering with a small Internet café and/or lounge. Providing these types of resources and services to the youth of Hudson can help to reaffirm the values of community life and instill a greater sense of integrity and respect for Hudson's pluralistic community.



Respond to the Needs of Hudson's Senior Population

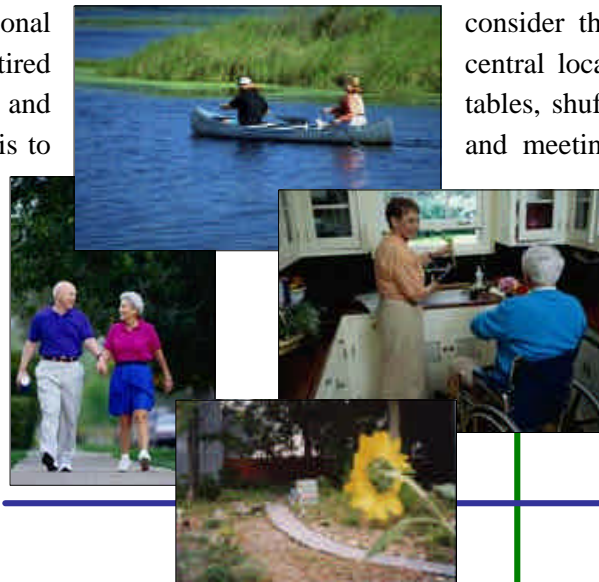
Housing trends across the country are indicating that as the “baby-boomer” generation ages and approaches retirement new housing types are necessary. While recent statistics indicate that the proportion of the population 65 and older in Hudson is declining, the 45 to 54 age group has increased by nearly 50 percent. In the next ten to fifteen years Hudson can expect a significant increase in market demand for elderly living facilities and services. This fact is supported by the community survey where the highest response rates for housing needs was Senior Citizen Apartments (53.8%) and Assisted Living Residence (42.5%).

These emerging housing demands in the Hudson are consistent with both national and state trends, and are being met with varying approaches. One approach is to build one and two bedroom town houses and/or condominiums with recreational amenities to meet the demands of a healthy retired community, such as congregate care communities and facilities. Another level of housing development is to build for a population which requires assistance in daily routines such as cooking meals and laundry, as in assisted living facilities. Both congregate care and assisted living housing allow residents to continue to be independent while providing the

security and knowledge that amenities and support services are available. Many of these senior housing facilities provide regular organized activity programs including speakers, seminars, and entertainment, as well as transportation to grocery stores and banks. A third level of housing for an aging population is to develop nursing home facilities. Often nursing home facilities are built near hospitals and other medically related services, and provide for those requiring 24-hour medical attention.

Studies have shown that seniors are living increasingly active lifestyles. The inventory and analysis phase of this project indicates that the senior population will play an increasingly important role in Hudson's future. Presently, Hudson offers little social gathering and recreation opportunities for the senior population. Hudson should

consider the needs of this population and develop a central location for activities such as gardening, pool tables, shuffleboard, bocci courts, organized bike trips and meeting space. One potential solution to meet growing senior needs may be to merge their needs with the needs of the youth and create a unique community center that encourages interaction between both groups.



Develop a Fully Integrated Bike & Pedestrian Trail Network



A trail network throughout Hudson can effectively become a new form of public space and connect neighborhoods with the commercial core, other neighborhoods, recreational opportunities, and unique areas within the city.



Trail networks are becoming increasingly popular in many communities because they provide residents with recreational amenity as well as connections with recreation and commercial destinations within the community and region. In fact, many people will choose to bike or walk if the connections are safe, comfortable, and enjoyable, and if destinations are clearly linked by a network of trails. Combined, these trail networks can help create a vibrant and well-connected community.

For instance, North Bay provides a unique background within the City of Hudson to experience a rare and special setting. The City should increase the amount and usability of this vital area as a learning center as well as create the ability for City residents to experience an idyllic counterpoint to the noise and activity of the city - a place where residents can restore the soul from the business of the day and the stress often associated with active lives. The proposed

community-wide trail network should include an opportunity for residents to explore and learn about the unique habitat of the North Bay. This should involve the creation of an interpretive boardwalk system that skirts the edges of the North Bay or even a water trail for canoes and kayaks. Interpretive signage could be provided along the trail that describes the role of North Bay, and nearby Middle Ground Flats, in the larger ecosystem in which we are a part of, such as improving existing water quality and the valuable role it plays for migratory fish and birds. Signage could also illustrate the types of fish and birds that migrate here annually. However, if such a unique trail “experience” were developed in the North Bay area, then property ownership issues at the south end will need to be resolved (for both access and liability interests).



Develop a Close Working Relationship with the Town of Greenport

The City of Hudson should seek to develop a close working relationship with the Town of Greenport. Close cooperation between these two municipalities will enable each of them to develop more effective initiatives in such areas as economic development, land-use policies, tourism and other areas. As this relationship grows, it may also increase the likelihood of saving tax dollars through sharing services.

These benefits will only be realized if a close working relationship can be built. There are currently several small projects that could benefit from City/Town cooperation. These could serve as a springboard for developing such relationships. These projects include:

Exploring the Possibility of Passive Recreational uses of the City's Back-up Water Supply Properties. The land in which the City's back-up water supply exists is owned by the City of Hudson but located in the Town of Greenport. The two municipalities may wish to consider creating a joint task force to explore ways of developing passive recreational opportunities on that site that could serve both communities, consistent with appropriate water supply protection.

Creating a single sidewalk system linking Hudson's neighborhoods to shopping district in Greenport. At this point, the City of Hudson and Town of Greenport offer two entirely different shopping experiences. If the City and Town were able to ensure that a single sidewalk system linked Hudson's neighborhoods with Greenport's shopping district, both communities would benefit. Hudson's residents would have easier access to Greenport's stores. Shoppers in Greenport may be encouraged to take advantage of the restaurants and specialty shops in Hudson.

Develop a Community Newsletter and Web Page

Providing more opportunities for residential involvement in the community was a key finding through the comprehensive plan process. Through both the neighborhood meetings and the community survey, residents expressed a desire to become more involved with City government and other aspects of community life in the City. One simple way to encourage this involvement is through the publication of a newsletter that is distributed on a regular basis through City mailings (water bills, etc.). It may even be possible to cooperate with other local agencies (e.g., the school district, hospital, etc.) to create a single newsletter that provides information on each organization's activities.

In addition, the City should develop a community web page. The page should be graphically interesting, easy to read and follow, and essentially serve as a portal into the community. Typical information that may be included on the web page should include: local history; meeting dates and agendas for the City Council, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and other similar boards or committees; contact names and addresses for City government leaders and staff; important announcements; an events calendar; and key links to other area web pages such as Columbia-Greene Community College, the Chamber of Commerce, Columbia Hudson Partnership, etc.

Citizen involvement in public affairs is a key component of the Hudson community. In addition to disseminating information on City Government and events, a series of digital maps can be posted on the web page. The maps can be used to inform the public on a variety of information including zoning, current land use, places of interest, parks and open space, and environmental resources. The maps can also be used to display code violations, thus allowing the community leadership and residents the ability to quickly identify patterns within the community and potentially threatened neighborhoods.

Support Creation of Empire Zone in Columbia County

Realizing that a diversified economic foundation is necessary to effectively compete in the global economy, Columbia County is in the process of implementing an Empire Zone (EZ) as designated by New York State. The intent is to make Columbia County and the City of Hudson more competitive in its efforts to attract new business and investment, and offer incentives to expand existing businesses while creating quality jobs for its residents. The City of Hudson should continue to support these efforts to help stabilize both the City's and the County's economy. At the same time, these efforts should also reinforce the existing character of the community. As it is implemented, the EZ should:

Target high-value-added jobs in niche manufacturing and services to ensure that the mix of new jobs created in the City provide earnings opportunities well above minimum wage. At the same time, it is important that the mix of new jobs includes entry level jobs to provide opportunities for City residents to gain the job experience and training necessary to compete for higher-wage jobs.

Adhere to community design standards when developing or redeveloping real estate within the Empire Zone so that new development reinforces the traditional development patterns in Hudson (e.g., a rectangular street grid, easy pedestrian access, etc.),

Provide opportunities for new businesses “incubated” in the City to graduate into locations in the City’s share of the EZ. “Home grown” businesses in the City (whether created in the proposed Enterprise Center or in other places in the City) should be given a preference to expand into EZ sites within the City of Hudson.

Develop a Housing Strategy

While many of New York State's urban communities are struggling with strategies to attract middle-class residents, Hudson has already started to attract this group. The challenge for Hudson is to develop a strategy that continues to provide for an ethnically and economically diverse community. Hudson's housing strategy should seek to develop a "balanced" mix of housing types that encourages a mix of incomes as well as ethnicity and housing tenure throughout the City.

Hudson's continuing revitalization is likely to coincide with increases in the cost of housing (including housing values and rents). For the most part, this increase in value will be a very good thing for Hudson. However, the challenge for local decision-makers, the business community and neighborhood residents will be to ensure the benefits of Hudson's resurgence are shared among all community members. Specifically, the adverse consequences of community success (rent increases and displacement of families no longer able to afford living in Hudson) must be anticipated and effectively addressed.

A coordinated, multi-tiered approach must be developed involving the City, the private sector and not-for-profit organizations such as Housing Resources. For example, if the fire departments are consolidated in a single facility, the City may consider offering the fire houses as a package for redevelopment. Then the City can require that a percentage of units be reserved for low- to moderate-income residents. The City should also take advantage of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOPE VI program, which has been developed to help communities rebuild Urban Renewal era public housing projects into mixed-use, mixed-income communities. Many communities are using this program to demolish obsolete public housing projects and rebuilding affordable housing in ways that promote human interaction and public open space. (For more detail on HOPE VI programs see <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/ph/hope6/>)

As the City develops its housing strategy, the following should be considered as a framework.

1) Develop a strategy for transferring *in rem* properties

- Streamline process for transfer of *in rem* properties to minimize length of vacancy
- Develop proposal process and requirements in line with community vision for neighborhood revitalization
- Develop detailed guidelines for prioritizing proposals/bids for the properties (i.e. ownership tenure requirements, set asides for mixed-income projects)
- Market program to the public

2) Inventory vacant and underutilized parcels

- In residential areas create programs to encourage transfer or ownership of isolated parcels to neighboring residences or neighborhoods to create more visually appealing landscaped lots/community gardens
- Where there are clusters of vacant parcels and homes that are scheduled for demolition, consolidate parcels
- Market consolidated parcels to prospective developers

3) Establish an incentive program that can be used by households with incomes up to 120% of the area median income

- Determine what kind of incentive program can be managed in Hudson (live near your job, city employee incentive program, historic homes, targeted neighborhood programs)
- Establish a preliminary fund for the incentive program; if possible work with Fannie Mae
- Select target area or neighborhood so that the effect of the program can be evaluated
- Expand or shift program as goals are reached in initial target areas

4) Take into account the character and condition of parks and open space in Hudson

- Consider the role parks play in economic development and quality of life
- Make improvements to parks as a way to increase vitality and attractiveness of Hudson's neighborhoods

5) Hold stakeholder meetings to discuss medium and long-range objectives for revitalizing housing and neighborhoods in Hudson

- Developers
- Local foundations
- Housing non-for-profits, Land Trusts (i.e. Housing Resources)
- Real Estate Industry
- Economic Development Agencies
- Community Development Corporations

6) Expand incentive programs as funds allow

- Continue researching innovative housing programs
- Approach community foundations for assistance

Building Financial Capital in Hudson - Partnering Existing Resources

As part of implementing the comprehensive plan, the City of Hudson should promote improved access to capital for Hudson residents. This comprehensive plan recommends a number of initiatives aimed at creating an even stronger community fabric (e.g., reinvesting in community gardens, fostering neighborhood associations, and nurturing community-based policing efforts). Part of the rationale for these recommendations is that they will help create a better climate for local residents to invest in their own houses and businesses. In its current capacity, Housing Resources (a designated community development financial institution) has the necessary framework in place to help meet the housing capital needs of those residents which often have difficulty accessing capital via traditional financial institutions. For instance, Housing Resources offers assistance for home improvements, a first time homebuyer program, a renters assistance program, an in-home daycare lending program, and assistance for homeowners who are delinquent on their mortgages. Likewise, the Columbia Hudson Partnership has a micro-enterprise loan fund that makes capital available to entrepreneurs who may have difficulty obtaining capital via traditional financial institutions. A partnering of these two programs can have profound impacts on the future success of Hudson. For instance, interagency cooperation could help to reduce administration expenditures while enhancing the quality of services, create a coordinated marketing and delivery system, match up priorities between the two programs, enhance local information gathering and analysis, and create awareness of which services and programs can be combined and/or provided through alternative arrangements.



PLAN GOAL 4: GIVE THE COMMUNITY THE TOOLS TO IMPLEMENT AND MANAGE THE PLAN

The plan recommends that the City develop the tools to promote a diversity of housing, employment, shopping and social opportunities for all members of the community. Managing the economic and social progress of the City will be the most challenging component of this plan. To be successful, it will be important to compare and maintain an equilibrium regarding the type and location of investments are being made within the community.

Create Full-Time Planning Staff and/or Capacity To Retain Consulting Services for Reviews

While this plan seeks to establish a role for Hudson in the new economy, it also seeks to reestablish Hudson as a vital community in which residents feel comfortable to live, learn, and recreate. To succeed, the City will need to make a number of strategic investments which:

- demonstrate the City's commitment to revitalization;
- create a more attractive "address"; and
- result in an increased tax base.

Given the complex nature of plan implementation, it is critical to create an implementation plan that is community-based, effective and affordable. Moreover, developing long-term partnerships with state and federal agencies as well as private sector investors will be critical to the long-term realization of Hudson's revitalization. Accordingly, the strategies outlined below are intended to create a team of professionals who will have the resources to act in a complementary and coordinated manner with a variety of public and private partners.

Building the Management Team

The management strategy outlined below is founded on the principles of effective leadership and developing strong partnerships. These partnerships should be infused with a shared commitment to win-win agreements and mutual, long-term understanding. Essential to these partnerships is consistency and dependability.

Leadership will ultimately come from the Mayor and City Council. However, the current arrangement for local planning and development is insufficient for undertaking the objectives outlined in this plan and will require restructuring of existing responsibilities and additional personnel. Consequently, it will be necessary for the City of Hudson to build support staff *internally* which has the capability to monitor local activity and lead initiatives outlined within the Comprehensive Plan.

HUDSON COMMUNITY PLANNING DIRECTOR

Much of what has made Hudson successful both currently and historically has been the work of private individuals and groups. That will continue to be true in the future. But City government does have an important role to play. Hudson has the ingredients to become one of the premier small cities in the Northeast—a vital downtown, population diversity, proximity to the Hudson River, walkable neighborhoods and beautiful historic architecture. Getting there will involve coordinating a complex set of government policies and programs and private sector initiatives (along with the discipline to leave be those things that are already working). Further, a number of new projects are currently being considered for the City’s waterfront and other key properties within the City. Presently, the City does not have staff capacity to appropriately monitor these projects for their consistency with the City’s goals. Consequently, in an effort to comprehensively administer project development within the City and to manage project reviews under federal, state, and local regulations, a Community Planning Director position should be created.

Responsibilities of the Community Planning Director should include:

- ***Monitor*** implementation of the comprehensive plan;
- ***Coordinate*** partnerships for plan implementation;
- ***Manage*** daily planning activities for consistency with the comprehensive plan;
- ***Review*** proposed projects for consistency with state and federal regulations;
- ***Develop*** and maintain socioeconomic database for the City, including estimates for housing, income, employment, school enrollment and other related variables.
- ***Develop*** a detailed building inventory; and
- ***Establish*** a Task Force on housing needs.

Comprehensive Plan evaluation and monitoring should be the responsibility of the Community Planning Director. Over time, conditions in Hudson will change and new opportunities will emerge. For this reason, a formal review of the Comprehensive Plan, involving the City Council, Planning Board, and Strategic Transition Team should occur on a determined schedule. The Community Planning Director should organize these meetings. Typically, it is recommended that a detailed review of the Comprehensive Plan take place *every five years*. However, to be certain that the City is progressing the direction outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, and to keep the plan fresh, a less detailed annual review involving the above noted parties should also be completed. A “report card” should be included during these annual reviews which catalogs achievements to date and recommendations yet to be accomplished, reinforcing to the community the City’s commitment to success.

In an effort to understand the opportunities and to know when and where to market downtown, the Community Planning Director should develop a comprehensive building inventory. The database should be categorized to include commercial, retail, office, and residential uses. This database could then be used not only as an instrument to track the turnover of businesses by premises, but also as a strategic tool to monitor the various establishments throughout the City. It could also be utilized as a guide in local economic planning matters, by providing an accurate, legible and easily accessible summary of the success or otherwise of both specific businesses and of business types within the City. This inventory would also contribute significantly to the success of the balancing act proposed in this comprehensive plan.

This database should be linked to mapping software, which could display the different business and housing types graphically. A contemporary tool is a Geographic Information System (GIS), which can use existing databases and other information to graphically represent data geographically. This would be an invaluable aid in strategic economic planning, as it would allow for the creation of a visual illustration of business turnover (both by type and by specific company) over a given period of time as well as emerging trends within the City. By this means, positive and negative economic patterns may be observed, and strategic plans implemented to ensure future economic successes.

Urban communities across the country are struggling with housing and neighborhood revitalization efforts. Public housing policies made in the past have had profound land use impacts on the City of Hudson, significantly influencing many land use decisions today. In an effort to gain a complete understanding of the housing market in the City of Hudson, and the needs of the low- to moderate-income population, the Community Planning Director should organize a Housing Task Force. Regular meetings of the Task Force will also allow for various groups to discuss and share ideas and coordinate their efforts. Composition of this group should include Housing Resources, Columbia Opportunities, city representation (preferably this would be the proposed Planning Director), and representative from the County, and local business owners and banks. Leadership for this group should come from Housing Resources. The success of this group will come from the shared commitment of all involved groups to provide improved housing opportunities for both the residents of Hudson and the region.

There is no “silver bullet” for revitalizing threatened neighborhoods within the City of Hudson. Recovery will come from the work of private citizens and groups combined with a wide-ranging program that involves many different levels of investment and commitment. Thus far, many of Hudson’s housing and neighborhood investments have come from Community Development Block Grants, which are targeted to those that are at or below 80 percent of the area median income. In the absence of balancing housing and neighborhood planning efforts, this has contributed to further concentrations of low-income families. In response, a comprehensive neighborhood reinvestment program should be developed, beginning with the definition of neighborhoods in need of intervention from persistent decline. Initial review of the City indicated that Wards 1 and 2 might be logical neighborhoods to begin this review. Investments in the neighborhood can then be implemented at various levels. Beginning from the outside in, with the public realm, physical investments should be made to improve streets, sidewalks and lighting. In an effort to upgrade

substandard housing a two-fold approach may be taken. First, improved enforcement of existing codes should be encouraged. Simultaneously, a rental unit inspection program should be developed that requires the owners of these units to open their doors to building inspections between renters. In an effort to improve home ownership and maintenance in areas with high rental occupancy deteriorating housing conditions, the local business interests should be encouraged to help provide improved housing opportunities for their employees. One way this may be accomplished is for the local business and banks to partner and create a low-interest loan fund that helps employees purchase homes as well as make necessary improvements, such as a new roof, exterior painting, or plumbing improvements. Finally, investments in quality of life amenities should also be considered, including park reinvestment and enhancement of the community gardens program, both of which create unique neighborhood benefits, from building community and teaching children about nature to fighting crime and making adjacent property more valuable.

STRATEGIC TRANSITION TEAM

To help guide implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, a Strategic Transition Team should be formulated. While the Mayor and City Council will lead the City of Hudson, the Strategic Transition Team should help focus the City's annual goals and objectives in accordance with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Composition of the team should include the Mayor, the proposed Community Planning Director, representation from the City Council, the Chairs of the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals, representation from the local banking institutions, and local business and real estate professionals. The Strategic Transition Team should meet on a semi-annual basis to clarify the year's objectives and outline annual tasks, in a prioritized manner. To help cultivate the public's confidence, the Strategic Transition Team, in coordination with City Council, should develop annual reports highlighting the successes of Hudson. These reports should be made readily available to City residents and published on the City's web site.

Adopt Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

The City of Hudson has an attractive and scenic waterfront that has received, and continues to receive, significant attention over the years. The process to create a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) for Hudson has recently been revived. It is vitally important to the success of this comprehensive plan that the LWRP be completed and adopted by the City. Once accepted by the Department of State Division of Coastal Resources, an officially adopted LWRP will make Hudson eligible for new sources of State and federal funding support for infrastructure improvements and other projects within the designated Waterfront Revitalization Area.

Hudson's LWRP will establish an official vision for the Hudson waterfront and require all development to be consistent with the local goals and policies set forth in the LWRP which in turn will be consistent with New York State's coastal management policies. The LWRP also represents an ideal opportunity to rebuild the relationship between the waterfront and the remainder of Hudson. It is a powerful tool to implement the core

recommendations of the 1995 Hudson Vision Plan: the creation of a mixed-use waterfront. This mixed-used development should incorporate the design guidelines recommended under Plan Goal 1 to insure that the ultimate character of the waterfront is consistent with the historical character of the City. This comprehensive plan includes suggested zoning language to create such a Planned Urban Waterfront in the manner envisioned by the Vision Plan should that concept be included in the final Local Waterfront Revitalization Program.

Include Community Groups in Decision-Making and Plan Implementation

The ultimate success of this Comprehensive Plan, as well as Hudson's health, well-being and sustainability, will require significant collaboration among the City and County governments, community groups, and civic organizations. As noted earlier, building partnerships and nurturing communication among residents and community leaders in Hudson is one of the key elements of this plan. Hudson has an energetic network of community residents and organizations that are committed to building a vital community for the people of today and future generations. They want to ensure that their visions of a better tomorrow and their efforts result in positive changes. Bringing these individuals together to actively engage in pluralistic conversation and resolve complicated community issues will help to build Hudson and strengthen its future.

Coordinated Efforts will be critical to effective planning and project development. Although ultimate implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will be determined by consistent enforcement from the City Council, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Planning Board, it will be necessary for other agencies associated with the City of Hudson to put some initiatives into action. Coordination partners should include the Hudson Community Development and Planning Board, the Hudson Development Corporation, the Columbia County Planning Department, the Columbia Economic Development Corporation, Housing Resources and the Columbia-Hudson Partnership. The Community Planning Director should be capable of, and responsible for, the cultivation of these coordination efforts.

Given the changing demands on local governments, the City of Hudson should consider ways of restructuring the City government to improve its efficiency and responsiveness.

Develop a Strategy for Tax Foreclosed Properties

Communities across the northeast continue to struggle with housing and neighborhood revitalization efforts. Hudson is no different. One issue the City is currently faced with is the challenge of getting foreclosed properties rehabilitated and back on the tax roles in a manner that will have the most productive impacts on the neighborhood. A typical strategy involves selling a tax foreclosed home to the lowest bidder, with little or no concern about the purchaser's intent for the home. Often these individuals intend to put minimal investment into the structure and receive

maximum rent as an income property. Many times these landlords do not live in the neighborhood, much less the community. The net result is often an under maintained home that perpetuates the decline of the neighborhood. One strategy Hudson may consider is to put the home up for auction, but instead of selling to the lowest bidder, the City can require potential purchasers of tax delinquent properties to develop a rehabilitation proposal for the property. The City can also establish residency requirements on the purchaser. If residency is not required, then those proposals that include the intention of owner occupancy could be given priority over other proposals. The ranking system for this bid process is not entirely based on how much money the proposed use of the property will bring to the City, but rather on how the proposed use will benefit the neighborhood most. Two good local models for review are the cities of Troy and Schenectady.

Create a Capital Improvement Plan

The City of Hudson has been fortunate in having a Department of Public Works able to respond to the needs of the City with a relatively limited budget. Part of the reason for this is the extensive experience and expertise of the existing management team. As that leadership team nears retirement, the City should seek to institutionalize its planning and project management capacity. As part of implementing the Comprehensive Plan, the Department of Public Works should create a five-year plan for meeting the needs for expanding, improving or replacing capital facilities in the City (sidewalks, streets, sewer and water systems, etc.). This plan should be reviewed annually and revised to reflect changing community needs and availability of funding. The Capital Improvement Plan would enable the City to ensure that its capital investments priorities are consistent with the long-term direction of the Comprehensive Plan.

Proposed Zoning Modifications

Generally, Hudson's existing Zoning Ordinance is sufficient to meet the proposals outlined in this comprehensive plan. Nevertheless, a small amount of attention and refinement will significantly improve the long-term success of and appreciation for the community's future. While the proposed design standards will address the character and quality of the built environment, zoning regulations address building uses as well as the area and density of development. To ensure the integrity of Hudson's distinctive setting, the regulation amendments below should be completed without delay.

Create New Zoning Districts.

- *Urban Waterfront District.* In its present status, both the north and south segments of Hudson's waterfront are zoned I-1, while the central portion is zoned R-4. For all intents and purposes, the 1996 Hudson Vision Plan outlined recommendations for Hudson's

waterfront that are consistent with the goals and objectives of this comprehensive plan. However, the existing zoning districts are not consistent with these preferred future land use patterns. In an effort to promote a mixed-use waterfront environment, the City should create a new zoning district to be called the Urban Waterfront District (UWD). The general limits of the district should be the area west of the railroad tracks, north perpendicular to Warren Street and south perpendicular to Broad Street. Permitted uses should be a variety of water-dependant and water-enhanced activities such as marinas, public boat launches, restaurants, parks and residential uses. Design standards, similar to those recommended for downtown, should also be developed and incorporated for this district.

- *Conservation Overlay District.* Hudson's North and South Bay's are unique environmental resource areas which provide flood control, water quality, recreational, aesthetic and open space benefits to the City. While the North Bay is generally protected from future development because of its designation as a Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat by the Department of State, the South Bay has not experienced the same level of attention. Consequently, long-standing activities have been permitted in the South Bay area that has significantly undermined this valuable community and environmental resource. Protection and sound management of these natural resources will ensure continuation of their associated benefits and natural values. In response, to provide for the proper use of these valuable resources to the City and its inhabitants, a conservation overlay district should be established for Hudson's North and South Bay areas. The intent of the additional control of uses imposed in by this overlay district should be an attempt to achieve compatibility between environmental quality and future development.

Develop Performance Standards. This comprehensive plan builds on Hudson's economic and social diversity. As this plan has noted, this will often involve a difficult balancing process. However, if the proper tools are in place, then this process can become clearer and be more effective. The proposed design standards will address the physical design of future commercial and industrial land uses. But the less tangible elements, like noise, dust and vibrations, are not limited in the existing ordinance. Consequently, many residences and businesses alike are experiencing some negative impacts from nearby industrial operations. In an effort to reduce these negative impacts, the City should develop performance standards.

Performance standards are zoning regulations that permit uses based on a particular set of operation standards rather than on a particular type of use. Performance standards can provide specific criteria limiting noise, air pollution, emissions, odors, vibration, dust, dirt, glare, heat, fire hazards, wastes, traffic impacts, and visual impact of a proposed use. Generally, this set of criteria allows potential developers to understand how their proposed operation may fit into Hudson and, further, provides the City with clearly documented standards by which future projects can be evaluated.

There are at least two ways the City may develop these performance standards. One approach might include drawing upon the expertise of the New York State Planning Federation and/or the New York State Department of State, *Division of Local Government Services* for technical assistance. Another method may well require the assistance of a consultant who specializes in zoning.

Make the intent of residential cluster development more clear. The current provisions for cluster development in residential districts (§121-23.1) need to be clarified in terms of intent and the desired nature of the built environment. For instance, Subsection A(1)(a) clearly defines lot size, width, and front yard setbacks, but Subsection (2) allows for special designs that effectively negate the requirements of Subsection A(1)(a). The City may consider replacing these provisions with a new zoning district known as a Planned Unit Development (PUD).

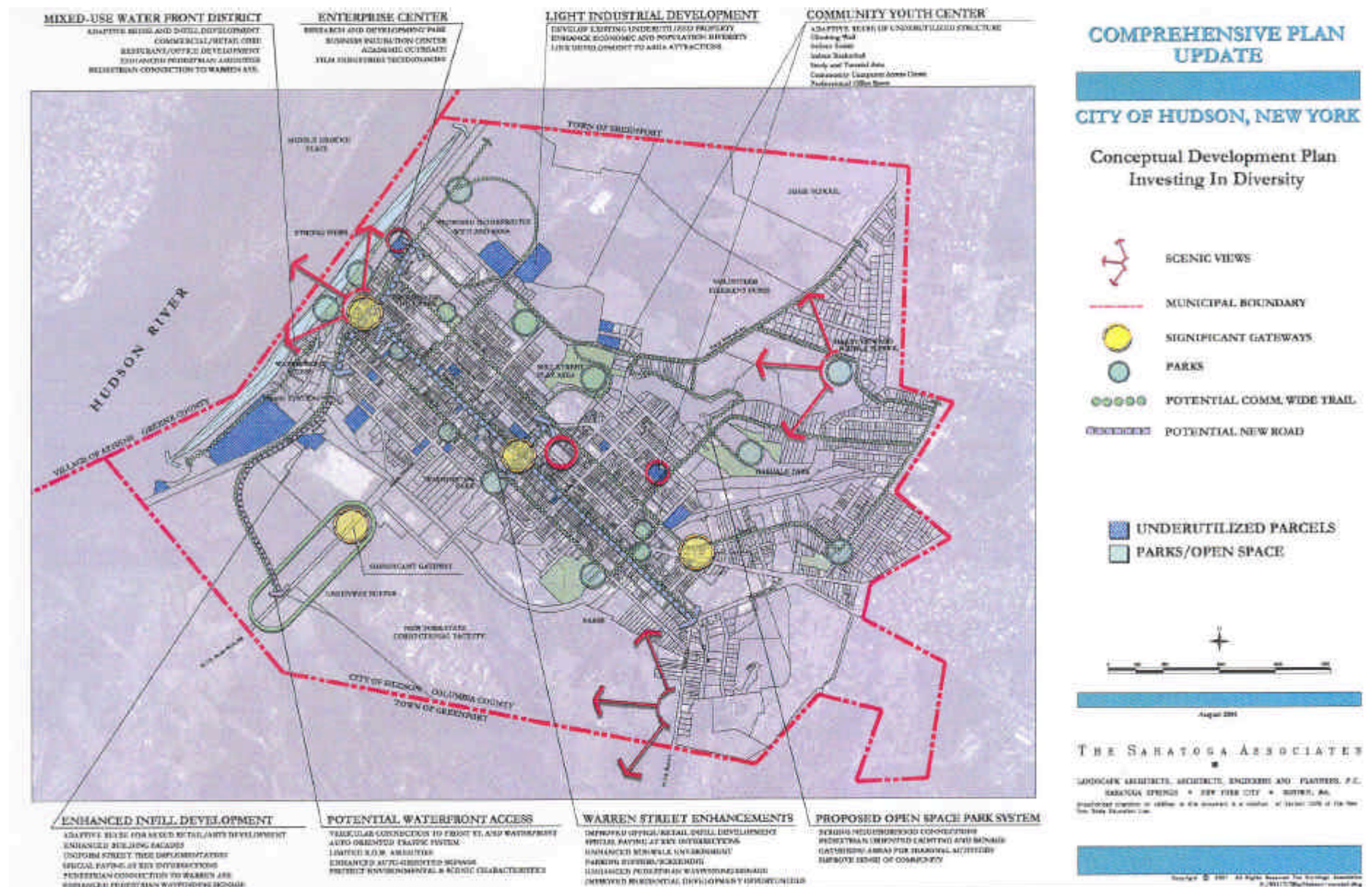
Planned Unit Development is a form of development usually characterized by a unified site design that may incorporate a number of housing units and types, open space, and non-residential units. This type of zoning regulation describes a philosophy that includes the clustering of units, the mixing of housing types, and the development of common elements and open space. PUDs offer many advantages such as reduced construction costs for roads and utilities; greater marketability; and an enhanced sense of community through the coordinated use of open space, recreational facilities, and convenient connections to the urban core.

LINKING GOALS AND ACTION: **PROJECTS FOR A BETTER HUDSON**

The City of Hudson Comprehensive Plan is a statement of intent, which recommends steps toward action. It translates community goals into a long-range social, economic and land use action program. It is designed to obtain a commitment by decision-makers to a coordinated set of actions that will maintain Hudson as a quality, livable community for future generations to experience.

The vision of the comprehensive plan is to develop and enhance quality of life amenities as an economic asset. As the plan is implemented, it will be important to show both the community and the region that Hudson is a place worth caring about. Projects like the reuse of the mini-storage buildings in Ward 2 as an Enterprise Center will reconnect residents with the needs of business and industry and stimulate social interaction. This will, in turn, generate an enthusiasm that will carry over into other projects and renew residents' belief in Hudson as a community of choice. The proposed Hudson Community & Youth Center will provide culturally enriching programs for Hudson's youth population. An improved parks and recreation system with associated trail amenity will provide further opportunity for social interaction and entertainment. Enhanced gateways will provide an initial gesture of welcome to visitors. These community entrances will further reflect the care and quality of the environment within. Taken together, these redevelopment undertakings will create a synergy that will lead to a distinctive quality of life for City residents as well as help generate a community commitment to success. These projects reflect the essence of the Comprehensive Plan. Further, they define the spirit of the plan to the community. Ultimate success will be realized through a persistent dedication to these common goals.

Hudson is in the process of building a long-term sustainable future. Success comes down to one thing: defining a course of action and sticking with it over a generation. But staying the course will require dedication to the goals and policy recommendations outlined in this plan. As Hudson continues to reconnect its people and places in a community fabric for generations to enjoy, community-wide interaction and dialogue are critical. To a large extent, it is a matter of maintaining and building upon the interaction that is already underway. As long as this continues, and continues to involve the full diversity of this remarkable place, Hudson will set the standard for community renewal for the Hudson River Valley and beyond.



**THE ABOVE PLAN GRAPHIC IS FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY.
PLEASE REFER TO THE APPENDICES FOR A LARGER GRAPHIC.**

HUDSON ENTERPRISE CENTER



Project Summary	<p>Located in Hudson's 2nd Ward, at the north end of Front Street, the Hudson Enterprise Center provides a unique opportunity to bring enhanced learning, social interaction, and trade and industry opportunity into a neighborhood that is both socially and economically disadvantaged. The adaptive reuse of an underutilized facility will help Hudson renew its image while providing a wide range of creative, educational and culturally enriching programs to community and region residents. The Center will be committed to fostering links between community residents and industry, and provide opportunity to gain the skills necessary to contribute to the long-term success of the community. By locating in the 2nd Ward, the Hudson Enterprise Center will help attract other City residents as well as visitors from outside the City and help strengthen connections between the 2nd Ward and the rest of the community.</p>
Proposed Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Research and Development ■ Business Incubation Center ■ Community College Outreach ■ Film Industries ■ Restoration Trades School ■ Boat Building/Handling School

HUDSON YOUTH & COMMUNITY CENTER



Project Summary	<p>Located in one of Hudson's former industrially used buildings, the Center will give Hudson's youth community opportunities for social interaction by providing variety of recreational, educational and culturally enriching programs. The activities and programs offered at the Center will enhance community life through recreation and learning and bring the youth together to 'make a difference' in the life of Hudson's multicultural community. In addition, the Center will offer professional office space on its upper levels which cater to youth needs.</p>
Proposed Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Arts and culture programs ■ Study and tutorial center ■ Community computer access center ■ Day care facilities ■ Professional office space ■ Climbing wall ■ Indoor basketball facilities ■ Indoor beach volleyball ■ Indoor soccer ■ Internet Café

PARKS & RECREATION IMPROVEMENTS



Project Summary	<p>Quality of life is a catchall term used to describe the non-economic amenities a community has to offer, including features like open space, cultural events, recreational opportunities and scenic views, among others. Increasingly, people are placing a higher value on these amenities and searching for places that are cleaner, greener, smaller, and offer high quality of life amenities. A better quality of life creates jobs. When a community is cleaner, safer, and more attractive to residents, it also becomes a better place to do business. The City of Hudson should commit itself to improving its park and recreation amenities by building an interconnected trail system linking improved parks with neighborhoods and the commercial core. Additionally, as the City strives to become a “learning community” opportunities for interpretive signage should be incorporated, especially in the North Bay area.</p>
Proposed Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved trail network connecting parks, neighborhoods, the commercial core and the waterfront ▪ Improved baseball facilities ▪ Programs that protect environmentally sensitive areas and scenic views ▪ Passive recreation facilities along the waterfront and Mill Street Play Area
















GATEWAY ENHANCEMENTS


















Project Summary	Gateways are portals into a community, significantly influencing impressions when welcoming visitors and residents alike. Gateways also sort traffic and provide clear direction for visitors and residents. Both the form and the character of a gateway can influence the overall experience within a community. Gateways should integrate vehicular needs with human needs and the needs of our natural environment and scenic environment. The City of Hudson should recognize the significance of its gateways and make improvements that show its pride.
Proposed Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clearly indicate arrival to City ▪ Protect scenic viewsheds ▪ Add features reflecting heritage ▪ Improved wayfinding signage for visitors ▪ Safe and efficient crossings for pedestrians ▪ Enhancements for bike and pedestrian traffic

City of Hudson - Comprehensive Plan Implementation Schedule

To be certain that steps are not out of sequence, the following implementation schedule is suggested as a phased approach for the City. In no way is this intended to be concrete. Rather, the schedule should be dynamic and reflect annual goals outlined at the proposed goal setting review meetings at the beginning of each year.

		Year							
		1	2	3	4	5	6-8	9-10	> 10
Essential (1-3 years)									
Straightforward									
	Open House Meetings								
	Development of Neighborhood Associations								
	Maintaining Progress Toward Community-Based Policing								
	Gateway Wayfinding/Signage								
	Create a Design Manual								
	Develop a Community Newsletter								
Complex									
	Full-Time Planning Staff								
	Adopt LWRP								
	Develop Historic Preservation Plan								
	Capital Improvements Plan								
	Reroute Traffic to Route 9 via Route 23								
	Youth Center Feasibility Center								
	Enterprise Center Feasibility Study								
	Develop a Close Working Relationship with the Town of Greenport								
	Proposed Zoning Amendments								

		Year							
		1	2	3	4	5	6-8	9-10	> 10
Important (1-5 years)									
Straightforward									
	Encourage Development of Community Gardens								
	Promote Festivals								
	Develop Parking Strategy								
	Encourage Mass Transit Bus Loop								
Complex									
	South Bay Conservation Easement (interpretive trail)								
	Develop a Strategy for Foreclosed Properties								
	Develop a Fully Integrated Bike & Pedestrian Trail Network								
	Address Gateway Circulation Patterns (Green/Columbia, Waterfront, Train Station)								
	Improve the Pedestrian Streetscape								
	Develop a Community Web Page								
	Respond to the Needs of Senior Population								
	Commission an Independent Truck Study								
	Construct Youth Community Center								
Secondary Importance (within 10 years)									
Straightforward									
	Personalize the City by Encouraging Public Art								
Complex									
	Address Need to Protect Affordable Housing								
	Foster Development of CDCU				