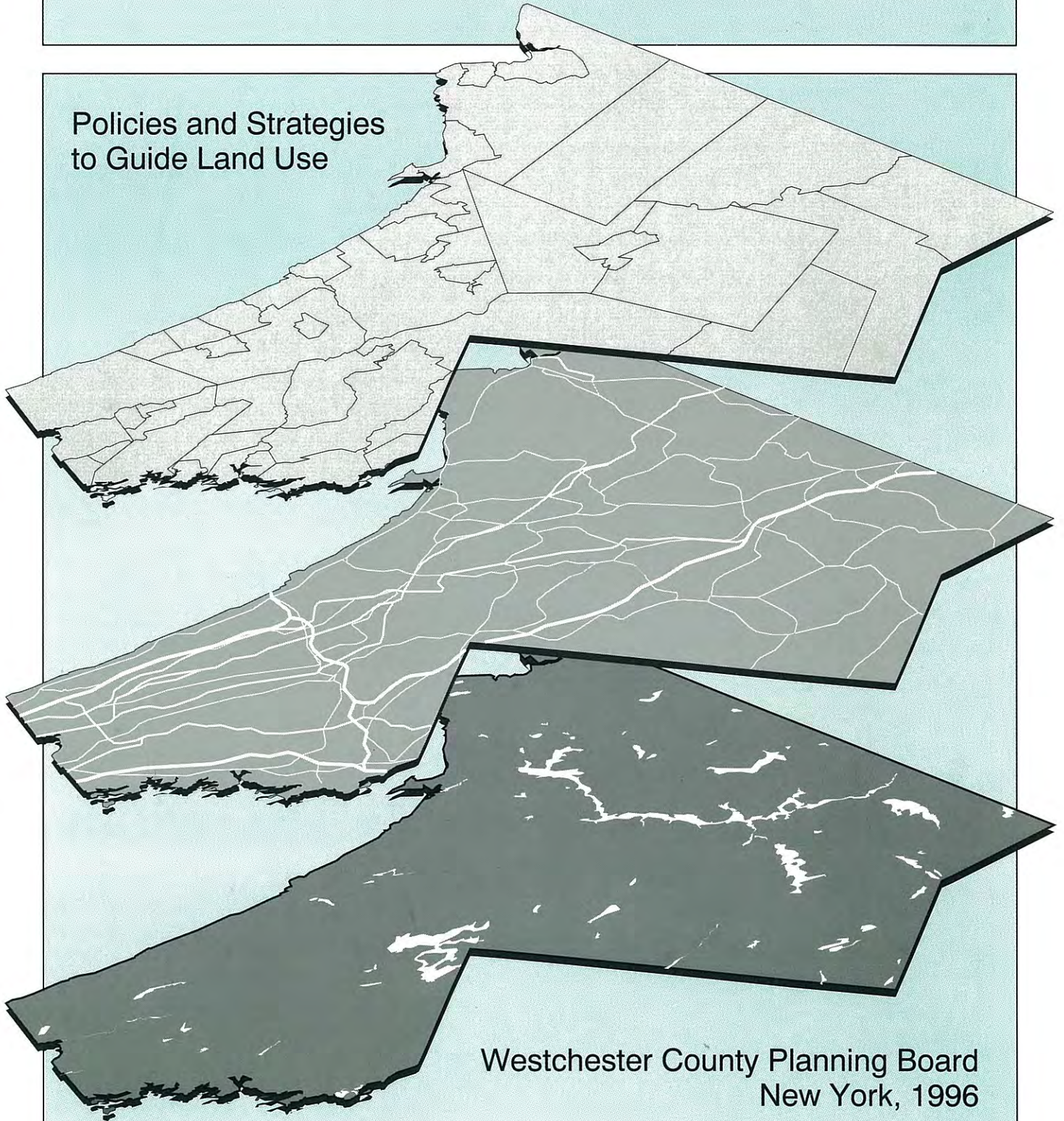


# Patterns for Westchester

## The Land and the People

Policies and Strategies  
to Guide Land Use



Westchester County Planning Board  
New York, 1996



# **PATTERNS FOR WESTCHESTER:**

## **THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE**

**Westchester County Planning Board  
Westchester County, New York  
1996**

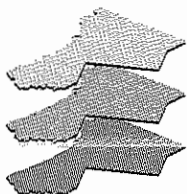
**The WESTCHESTER COUNTY CHARTER directs the County Planning Board:**

*To formulate and recommend major development policies in the form of statements, plans and maps and other appropriate material, to serve as reference guides with the object of achieving a physical development of the county that will be orderly, harmonious, economically sound, and of attractive appearance. Such policies shall relate among other things, to land use; population density; transportation facilities, including roads and highways; parks, recreation areas, and other open space; community appearance; and public buildings.*

**The WESTCHESTER COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE calls upon the County Planning Board:**

*To aid in maintaining a high level of municipal action in all such matters (master plan, zoning regulation, subdivision regulation, or official map) and in coordinating such action as among the various municipalities in the county by means of procedures for bringing pertinent inter-community and county-wide considerations to the attention of such municipal agencies.*

*On the cover: The three maps symbolize the combination of municipal jurisdictions, infrastructure and natural features which together shape the patterns of Westchester County.*



**Patterns For Westchester:  
The Land and the People**

**Adopted December 5, 1995  
Published March, 1996**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout the Patterns project, which began in 1990, members of the Planning Board have made a continuing contribution to the development of this document as has the professional staff of the Planning Department during countless meetings, work sessions and board retreats. County officials from other executive departments and the legislative branch have provided important input. The participation of both elected and appointed municipal officials at meetings held in each city, town and village has made Patterns truly a joint county/municipal undertaking. Many organizations and individuals, representing a wide range of viewpoints, spoke at regional meetings and public hearings, attended informal conferences and submitted comments in writing. This participation has been an integral part of the Patterns process. As Planning Board Chairman, I acknowledge with deep appreciation all those who have played a part in this multi-year project.

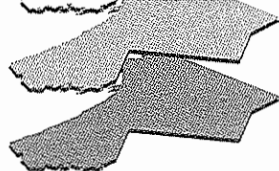
It was at the initiation of Commissioner Lynn Oliva that Patterns has become not only a statement of long range policies but also a guide that presents suggested strategies for action by the County and the municipalities.

I want to make special acknowledgement of the debt Westchester County owes to Jeanne Richman, who chaired the Board's Patterns committee. She is the principal author of the text of Patterns which skillfully blends into a balanced whole the many special concerns and points of view expressed concerning the policies and strategies for Westchester's future development.

Recognition is also due Edward Buroughs, Chief Planner, and his predecessor Jonathan Kanter, who provided the project's basic substantive analysis, preliminary texts and professional coordination, and Paul Gisondo, Associate Planner, who was responsible for the graphics. These, particularly the mapping, are not only integral parts of the report, but also played a key role in the consultative process which was central to the preparation of Patterns and will be an essential tool in its implementation.

William N. Cassella, Jr.  
Chairman, Westchester County Planning Board

December 5, 1995



***I. INTRODUCTION .....1***

**Patterns** offers a policy framework to guide the County Planning Board on matters relating to the county's physical development. It offers a range of strategies to help county and municipal governments nurture environmental health, economic growth and the quality of life in Westchester.

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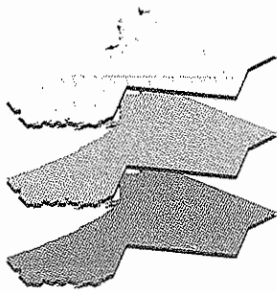
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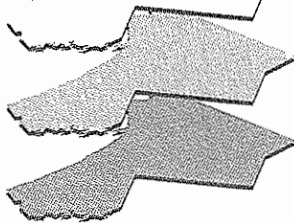
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**W**estchester is a county with unparalleled resources. Its Hudson River and Long Island Sound shorelines, river valleys, rugged wooded terrain, lakes and reservoirs give it a unique natural character. Its cities, distinctive villages and suburban and rural towns - 45 in all - give it vitality and variety. Long ago, Westchester County embarked on a course of parkland acquisition that continues to set a national example for preservation of natural resources. The county's proximity to New York City and the combination of commuter rail lines, bus transit network, interstate and arterial roadways and airport facilities nurture an economic and cultural climate attractive to business and residential development.

That said, it will take an unprecedented common effort by county and city, town and village government to preserve these attractions into the next century.

Environmental mandates, unknown before the 1970s, confront us. Much of Westchester's land is within the watershed of public drinking water supplies; all of the land drains into the Hudson River or the Sound. City, state and federal regulations to protect the purity of those waters may profoundly affect development in the county. The federal Clean Air Act presages far-reaching changes in our habits of transportation.

Manufacturing and corporate growth which once drove development patterns in Westchester is changing course. The results are dislocations in employment and underutilization of commercial space. The cost of housing adds to the number of county residents unable to afford decent places to live. No one in Westchester is exempt from the effects of such change.

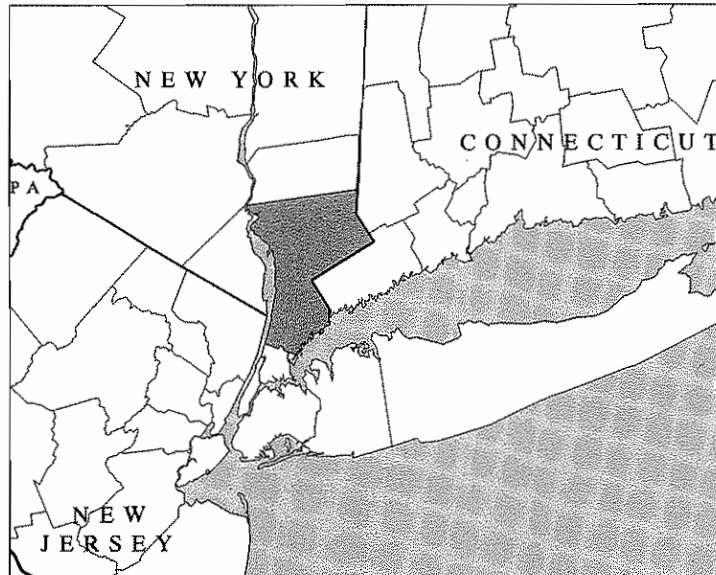


Figure 1: Regional location map of Westchester County

**Patterns for Westchester: The Land and the People** offers a broad policy framework for governmental action to guide the county's future physical development. But primar-

ily, **Patterns** provides a coherent set of standards for the Westchester County Planning Board as it carries out its three principal County Charter responsibilities. These are long range planning; advising the County Executive and Legislature on capital spending for infrastructure, land acquisition and other public facilities; and bringing the County's perspective to bear on planning and zoning referrals from municipal governments. It is through these functions that the County Planning Board must respond to the challenges ahead.

To this end **Patterns** proposes a range of strategies through which County and municipal governments may implement their common goals for serving people, conserving land and water and assuring economic growth. Municipal governments across the county have helped substantially with this project.

A most urgent hope is that **Patterns** will contribute to intermunicipal planning and will help communities make informed land use decisions in the context of a county under stress. Together we have learned that what happens in one community affects the surrounding area's economy, traffic, air, water, land and people, for better - and sometimes for worse.

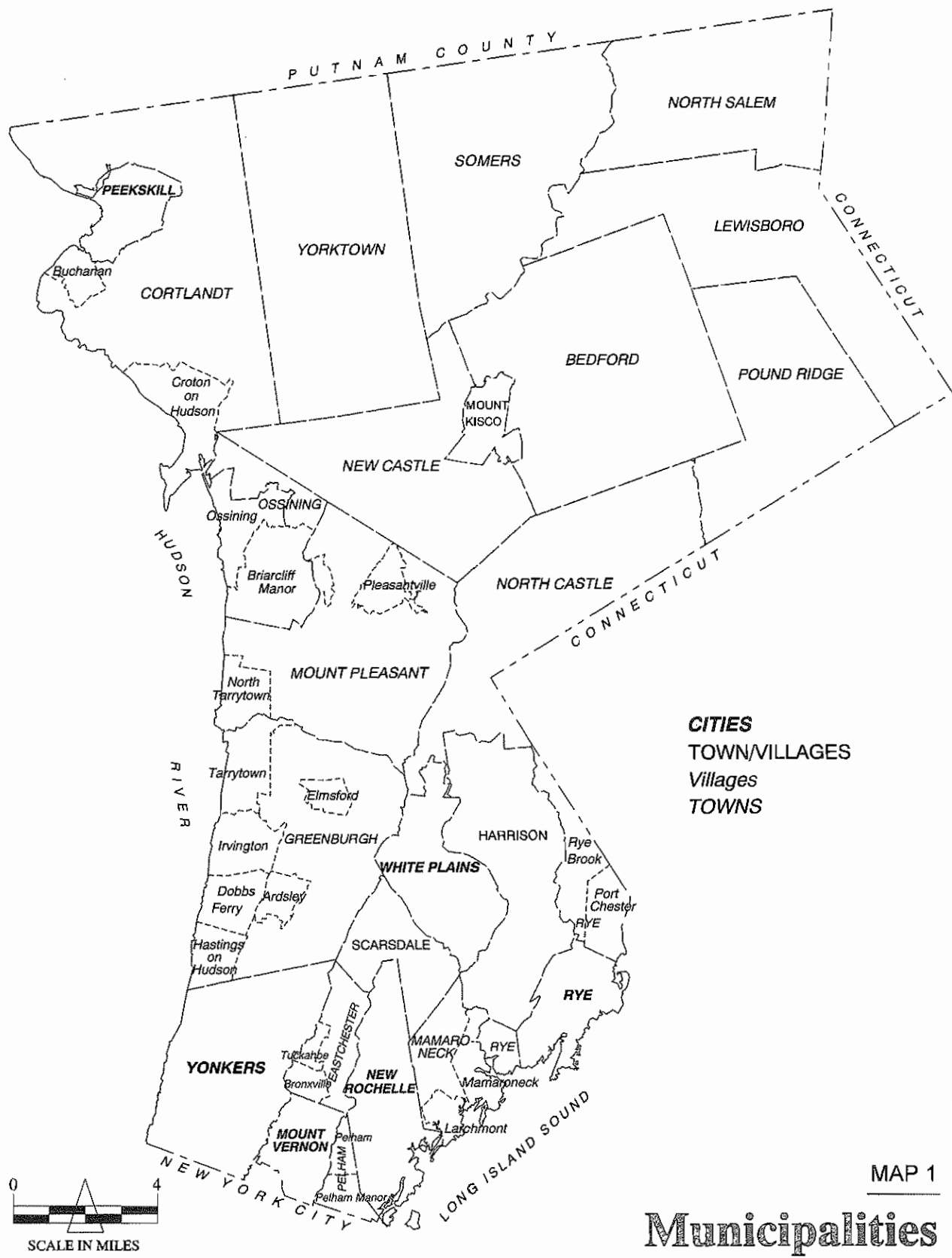
**Patterns** is a step in the continuum of County planning. It builds on **Assumptions, Goals and Urban Form**, a pioneering County planning project completed in 1975 and then updated in 1985 as **Urban Form Refinement**. Indeed many fundamental policies articulated in **Urban Form** are the building blocks for **Patterns**. But the daunting issues of the 1990s and thereafter impel the County Planning Board to reexamine and redefine the policies and strategies designed for a simpler time.

The crucial strategy for conserving the environment and nurturing the county's economy is to strengthen existing centers and corridors of development. This approach is a shift in emphasis from **Urban Form** in which the over-riding concern was density patterns.

To a great extent, the perspective which **Patterns** offers is a graphic one. Maps are its backbone. They show centers, corridors, existing and proposed density of development, zoning patterns, historic sites, parks and open spaces, wetlands, drainage areas, sewer lines - in short, the constraints on and the potential for growth.

These maps, charts and summaries are physical tools for local as well as County planning. But the soul of **Patterns** is in its text which presents policies that the County Planning Board advocates for the County and which it encourages cities, towns and villages to support in their own jurisdictions.

**Patterns** represents the work of many. It is dedicated to the people of the 45 municipalities that coexist in Westchester. It will be the foundation for the County Planning Board's response to the needs of Westchester residents who live in those diverse communities.



Westchester County Department of Planning



Figure 2:  
**1990 AREA AND POPULATION DENSITY**  
**Westchester Municipalities Exercising Land Use Controls**

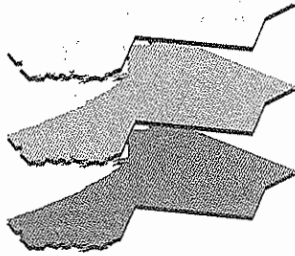
MUNICIPALITY	SQUARE MILES	POPULATION	1990 PEOPLE PER SQUARE MILE
Westchester County	450.5	874,866	1,942
<b>CITIES</b>			
Mount Vernon	4.4	67,153	15,262
New Rochelle	10.4	67,265	6,468
Peekskill	4.6	19,536	4,247
Rye	6.1	14,936	2,449
White Plains	9.9	48,718	4,921
Yonkers	18.4	188,082	10,222
<b>TOWN/VILLAGES</b>			
Harrison	17.4	23,308	1,340
Mount Kisco	3.1	9,108	2,938
Scarsdale	6.7	16,987	2,535
<b>VILLAGES</b>			
Ardsley	1.3	4,272	3,286
Briarcliff Manor	6.0	7,070	1,178
Bronxville	1.0	6,028	6,028
Buchanan	1.5	1,970	1,313
Croton-on-Hudson	4.9	7,018	1,432
Dobbs Ferry	2.4	9,940	4,142
Elmsford	1.0	3,938	3,938
Hastings-on-Hudson	2.0	8,000	4,000
Irvington	2.8	6,348	2,267
Larchmont	1.1	6,181	5,619
Mamaroneck	3.3	17,325	5,250
North Tarrytown	2.3	8,152	3,544
Ossining	3.2	22,582	7,057
Pelham	0.8	6,413	8,016
Pelham Manor	1.3	5,490	4,223
Pleasantville	1.8	6,592	3,662
Port Chester	2.4	24,728	10,303
Rye Brook	3.5	7,765	2,219
Tarrytown	3.1	10,739	3,464
Tuckahoe	0.6	6,302	10,503
<b>TOWNS</b>			
Bedford	39.5	16,906	428
Cortlandt*	34.7	28,369	818
Eastchester*	3.4	18,537	5,452
Greenburgh*	17.8	40,579	2,280
Lewisboro	29.3	11,313	386
Mamaroneck*	3.5	11,231	3,209
Mount Pleasant*	24.1	25,242	1,047
New Castle	23.5	16,648	708
North Castle	26.2	10,061	384
North Salem	23.4	4,725	202
Ossining*	3.0	5,076	1,692
Pound Ridge	23.2	4,550	196
Somers	32.1	16,216	505
Yorktown	39.5	33,467	847

The towns of Rye and Pelham are not included above because they do not encompass any land that is not part of an incorporated village and thus they do not exercise land use regulatory authority.

\* Area, population and density are for the unincorporated area outside of villages.

Source: 1990 U.S. Census

## II. Policies for 2000 and Beyond



**T**wo great opposing forces are pulling at Westchester's development patterns, deeply complicating planning for the years leading into the 21st century. On the one hand, the County, cities, towns and villages find themselves pushed to pursue development needed to support local economies and to finance public services. On the other hand, government officials and county residents accept the necessity of regulations that protect air, land and water resources while recognizing that such regulations may also restrict development in some locations.

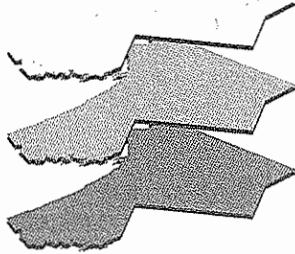
**Patterns** seeks to ease the tension between these forces through strategies that emphasize the historic planning framework of Westchester. A healthy balance between economic growth and a sound environment depends on directing growth to centers, reinventing developed corridors as multi-use places and factoring open space elements into the development process. The County will continue to foster the intermunicipal and regional approaches on which the planning for sustainable development depends.

The strategies recommended in Chapter VII are designed to implement the following policies which underlie all of the Westchester County Planning Board's recommendations on land use, land acquisition and capital projects and on matters referred to it by local governments:

1. Channel development whenever possible to centers where infrastructure can support growth, where public transportation can be provided efficiently and where redevelopment can enhance economic vitality.
2. Enhance the appropriate functions of the county's corridors by adapting already developed sections into efficient and attractive multi-use places, by protecting the quality of scenic routes and by making road and transit improvements that will reduce congestion and ease movement on travel routes.
3. Assure a diverse and interconnected system of open space to shape development, to provide contrast in the texture of the landscape, to separate developed areas and to relate to open space systems of the region.

4. Nurture the economic climate of the county with use of municipal, County, state and federal resources to improve infrastructure, housing and programs that attract and support business enterprise, with particular attention on intermunicipal impacts.
5. Preserve and protect the county's natural resources and environment, including its ground water resources, water bodies, wetlands, coastal zones and significant land resources which include unique natural areas, steep slopes and ridgelines and prime agricultural land.
6. Encourage a range of housing types that are affordable to renters and home buyers, with each municipality addressing its needs for affordable housing as well as a share of the regional need.
7. Support transportation alternatives that serve the needs of workers, consumers and residents and that improve air quality by enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of public transportation and reducing solo-driving.
8. Enhance use of Westchester's parks, beaches and recreation facilities by improving public access, by providing a variety of natural settings for passive enjoyment and by taking into account the need for recreation close to population centers and the interests of the county's changing population.
9. Enhance the quality of life for Westchester residents by protecting the county's educational, cultural and historical resources and factoring them into land use decisions.
10. Maintain safe and environmentally sound systems for the removal or treatment of waste consistent with land use policies; strengthen programs to reduce the waste stream.
11. Support capital improvements for physical facilities that enable the County to deliver social and public safety services in an efficient, economic and humane manner.
12. Join neighboring jurisdictions in the Hudson Valley, Connecticut and New York City in planning initiatives aimed at sound land use, transportation, development and conservation policies.

# III. The Westchester Pattern



## Centers, Corridors and Open Space

**C**enters, corridors and open space are the three building blocks of Westchester's pattern of development. All of the County's planning relates to their form and their function. This chapter examines each of these elements from the County perspective.

### A. THE HISTORICAL PATTERN

For 300 years, the development of Westchester County has been linked to the growth of New York City. Early travel and settlement north from New York was shaped by the county's topography, following three wide paths:

- Along the Hudson River
- Through the central valley systems
- Along the Long Island Sound Shore.

Centers of activity grew within these paths like "beads along a string", in the graphic words of **Urban Form**, developing at first around ports and stage stops on the early post roads. Rail lines were built through the county and new centers developed around the stations. With less definition, cross county corridors took shape to connect the original north-south paths of settlement and travel. Through the years, open spaces and farms continued to separate the centers.

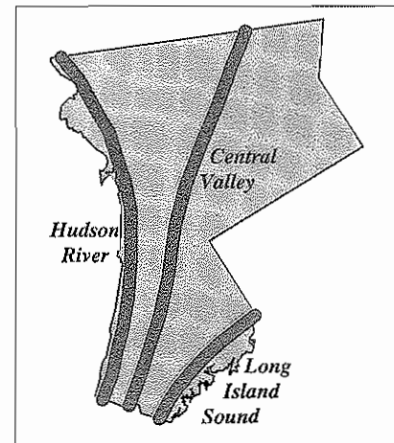


Figure 3: *Paths of development*

By the mid-19th century, a pattern of concentrated centers, linked by corridors and separated by open spaces was firmly established in Westchester. That pattern is still apparent as the 21st century approaches.

Although that historic framework for the county's development remains the best guide for continued growth and revitalization, the reality is that most cities and villages have experienced some dispersal of business and retail uses from their centers with resulting deterioration of downtown neighborhoods.

The loss of a convenient retail and entertainment presence at the center of a community changes its social fabric and raises difficulties for residents of the business precincts, espe-



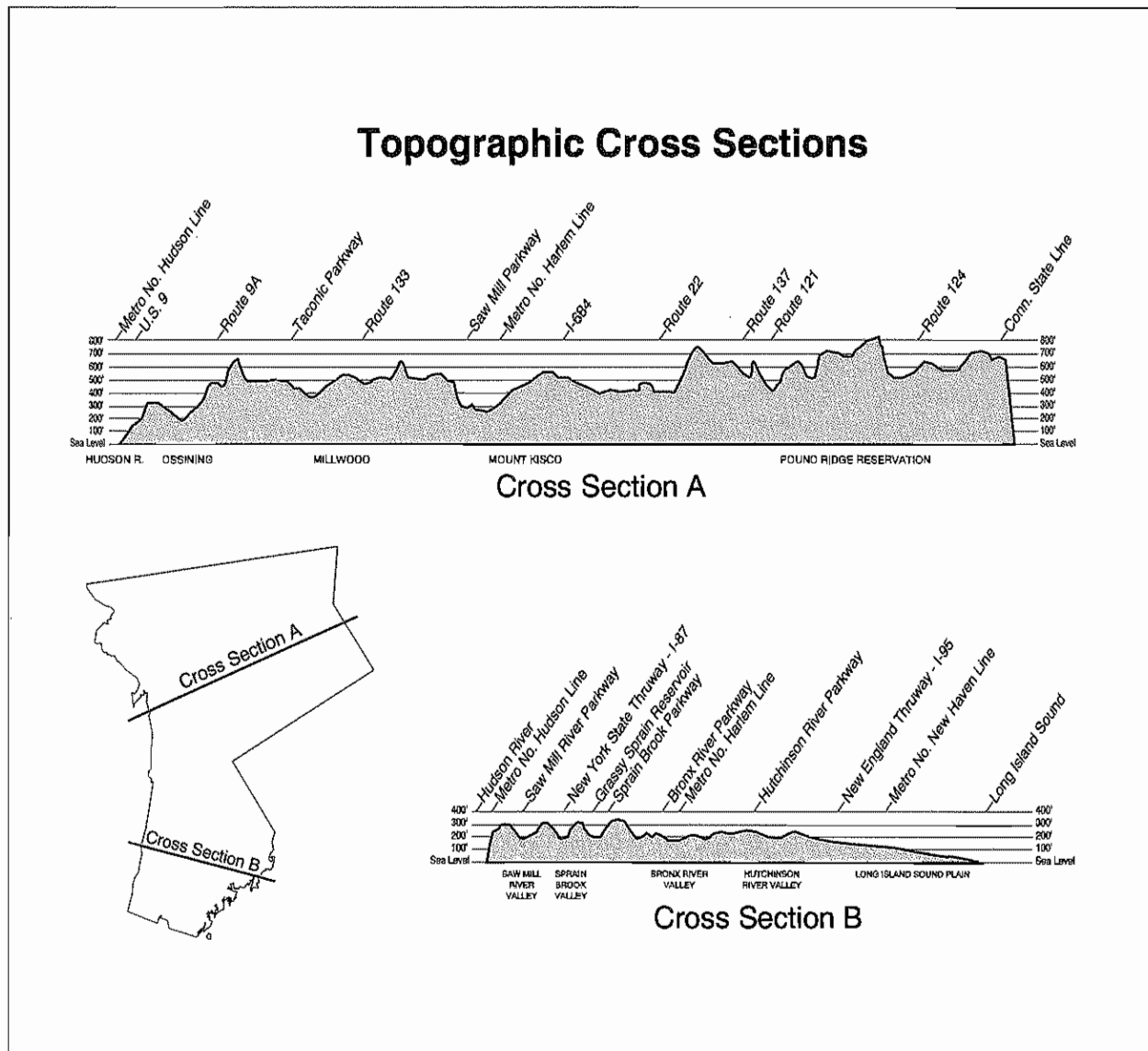
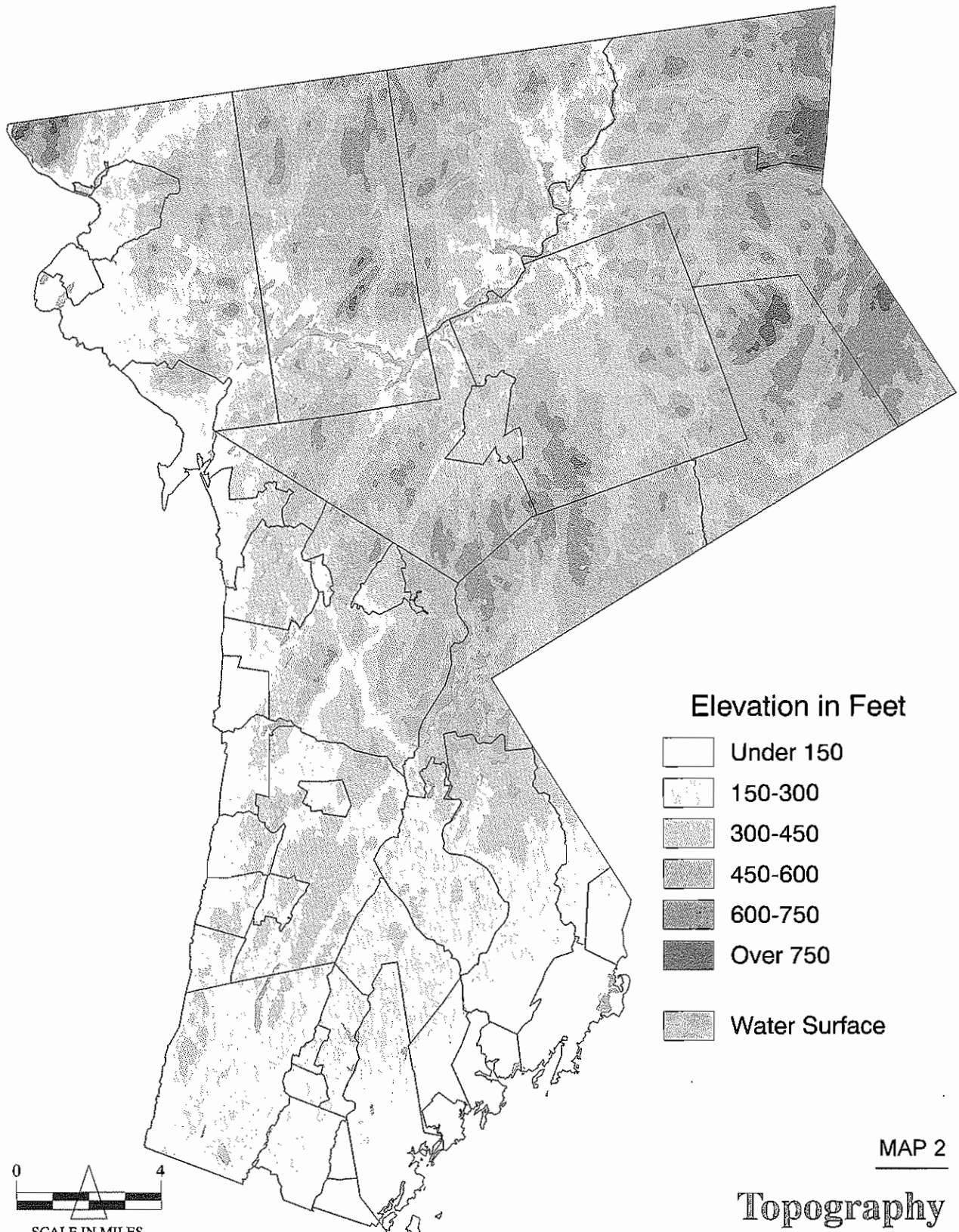









Figure 4: *Topographic cross sections.*

cially for the elderly and working people without cars. Scattered roadside development can sap the vitality of centers and overwhelm the county's hamlets, particularly in the north county.

In many parts of Westchester County, the dispersal of development strains the delivery of municipal services, such as fire and police, and imposes burdens on water supply and sewer systems. In all parts of the county, commercial activity outside of the centers has promoted auto use as a necessity, decreased the feasibility of public transportation service and increased traffic congestion and the perception of urban sprawl.



Elevation in Feet

-  Under 150
-  150-300
-  300-450
-  450-600
-  600-750
-  Over 750
-  Water Surface

MAP 2

Topography



Westchester County Department of Planning

A prophetic statement in the Westchester County Planning Board's 1975 publication, **Assumptions, Goals and Urban Form** framed the issue:

"The type of urban sprawl that Westchester faces is not the stereotype of endless landscape of subdivisions of sterile design... Westchester's topography is too multiform to permit homogeneous distribution of urban or suburban development over the landscape. Westchester faces a more realistic danger of fragmentation — the relatively indiscriminate placement of key urban elements over too wide a geographical area — as opposed to locating these major activities centers within the existing urban pattern, thereby strengthening it. A key element is any major generator or magnet for human activity..."

**Patterns** targets the problems of urban sprawl head-on in the conviction that County government, municipal governments and the private sector all have the most to gain by building on proven strengths - the land use characteristics that make Westchester unique.

The health of Westchester County's economy and environment depend on measures to protect the historic center/corridor/open space pattern. The basic premise of **Patterns** is that existing centers, if nurtured by necessary infrastructure, can support commercial and residential growth; that existing strip development along corridors can be reshaped to capture some benefits of centers; and that not all land uses are appropriate to all locations. It will take a concerted joint effort by County, city, town and village governments to enhance the pace of economic growth while facing up to the developmental limitations of some areas.

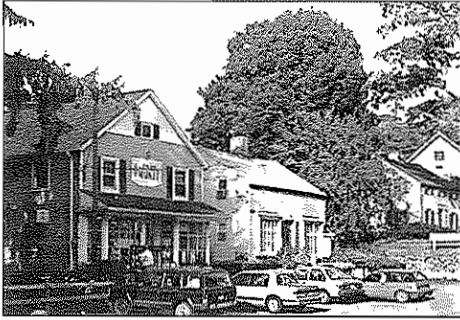
#### **B. CENTERS DEFINED**

Centers are the focal points in Westchester's pattern of development, the places that create and sustain a sense of place and community. Although homes and work places have increasingly spread far beyond the concentrated centers, even these dispersed residents and workers relate back to a center which remains a destination point for community life.

Centers, consisting of a commercial or mixed use core and surrounding residential and industrial sectors, are likely to have the principal commercial services on which most communities depend. They are the places where schools, libraries, seats of government and train and bus stations are usually found. Centers often provide a range of housing opportunities that outlying areas may lack. The activity and the density and mix of uses in centers distinguish these places sharply in form and appearance from surrounding areas.

From the **Patterns'** planning perspective even the smallest hamlets function, or should function within limits, as service centers. While some areas of concentrated development found along corridors can function as centers, particularly where public transportation and a residential component are provided, centers remain the optimum locale for development investment.

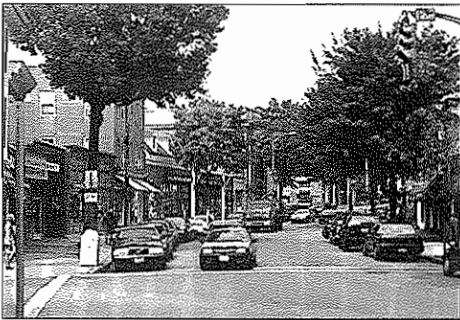
### Four levels of concentrated centers are found in Westchester:



- Cross River

#### Hamlets

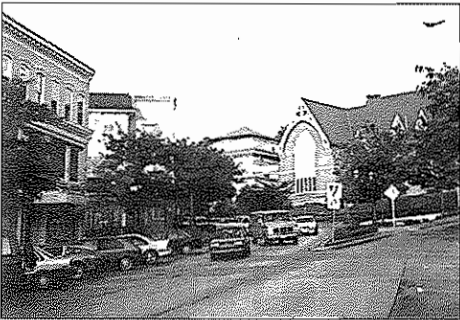
Hamlets, the smallest centers, are found in northern Westchester, some far from the major corridors. Often located at the crossroads of historic travel routes, they offer such basic facilities as a post office, municipal buildings, houses of worship and local retail stores. Few have in place the infrastructure necessary to support substantial additional development.



- Rye

#### Local Centers

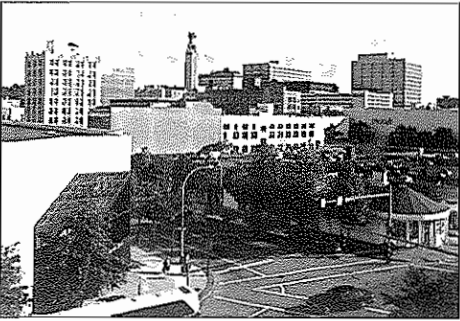
Most local centers are located on major roads. Many are served by the north-south commuter rail lines and almost all are served by the Westchester County bus system. Local centers typically have a well defined downtown business district and include, in addition to the uses found in hamlets, small scale offices, more extensive retail stores, supermarkets, libraries, other public buildings and residential uses "over the store" and in low-rise multifamily structures.



- Ossining

#### Intermediate Centers

Intermediate centers are characterized by unmistakable urban activity. All except Yorktown Heights are on rail lines and all have well developed infrastructure systems. Most, such as Mount Kisco, Tarrytown and Port Chester, provide essential services to a wide surrounding area. In addition to the services and facilities found in local centers, intermediate centers are likely to have mid and high-rise apartments, large-scale retail stores, office buildings and, often, light manufacturing.



- White Plains

#### Major Centers

Westchester County's cities are the engine that drives the county's economy. The four major centers are in the cities of Yonkers, Mount Vernon, White Plains and New Rochelle. Each has high density development and extensive infrastructure, though portions may be old and in need of repair. As employment and mercantile centers, they provide all of the services and facilities found in local and intermediate centers. Major centers contain little vacant land but have many residential and commercial redevelopment opportunities. Downtown revitalization is essential to their economic viability.



### C. CORRIDORS DEFINED

The county's corridors are Westchester's historic paths of movement and development. They contain the county's basic transportation infrastructure: the major roads, parkways, Interstates and rail lines, each of which influences the economy and environment.

All corridors to some degree serve a transportation role. Some are known for the development that has occurred along their roadsides. Others are valued for their scenic qualities and the access they give to Westchester's major open spaces. Often these three functions overlap; sometimes they conflict.

#### **The Transportation Function**

All corridors have a transportation function that serves varying combinations of private automobiles, buses, trucks, bicycles and pedestrians. The rail lines also serve a mix of passengers and freight. Some corridors, such as the four Interstate routes in Westchester, provide critical links to the surrounding region, while in-county traffic is more likely to use New York State, County and local roads. Understanding the role of a particular corridor in the overall transportation network is critical to the planning process.

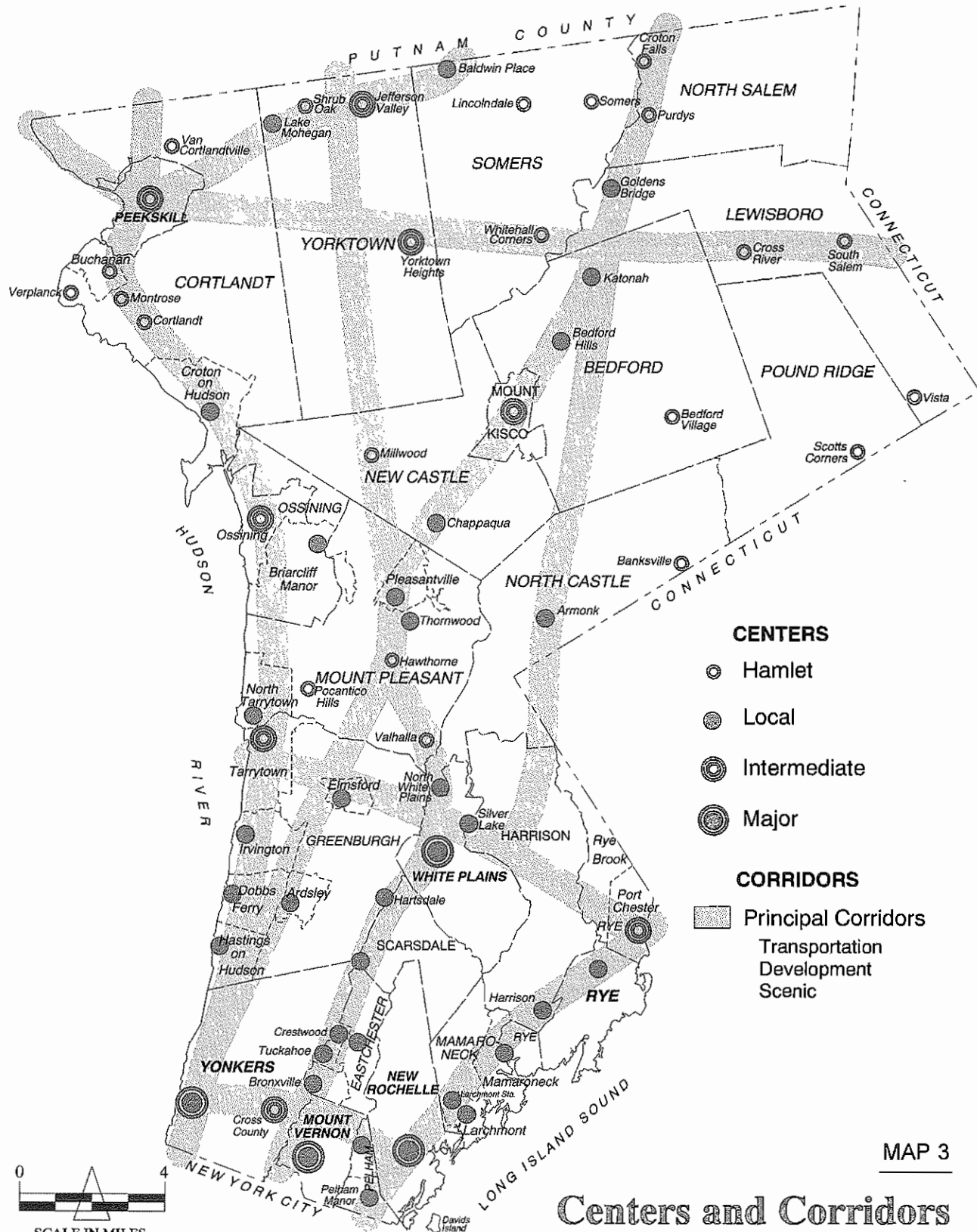
#### **The Development Function**

Land available for development along the county's corridors has been an avenue of opportunity for Westchester's economy but resulting office campuses and strip developments have also had some less welcome impacts. In the absence of rigorous planning, this type of scattered development can weaken centers, mar the landscape, strain infrastructure and create conflicts between local and through traffic - the classic signs of urban sprawl. Central Avenue through Yonkers and Greenburgh and Route 117 between Mount Kisco and Bedford Hills are examples of important road links whose transportation role has been overpowered by congestion brought on by the development along their sides.

Development along corridors should be consistent with County policy on transportation, housing, waste disposal and watershed protection. Existing corridor development can be enhanced and new corridor development can be designed to encompass mixed uses that improve their function and their economic vitality and make maximum use of the public investment in infrastructure. Forward-looking land use regulations can incorporate site design elements which ease traffic problems, enhance transit opportunities, promote pedestrian activity and deflect adverse impacts on adjacent areas. An example can be seen along parts of Central Avenue where the Town of Greenburgh has adopted regulations that promote housing and improve aesthetics.

#### **The Scenic Function**

Many of the county's roads provide a view of the open spaces and waterways that separate developed areas. This is not necessarily an accident; Westchester is notable for the number of its major roads designed to serve a scenic function,



Westchester County Department of Planning

including the Bronx River, Taconic State and Hutchinson River parkways. A section of the Bronx River Parkway is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Other roads have become scenic routes because of the open space character of the lands they traverse. Route 35 between Yorktown Heights and the Connecticut border is a prominent example. Although I-684 was designed for transportation, in northern Westchester it plays a major scenic function.

Scenic function roads are tangible as well as aesthetic assets in that they showcase Westchester's regard for the environment and contribute indirectly to higher property values. These roads do not generally serve a development function. In fact, significant, visible development could diminish or eliminate the scenic value. Similarly, the planning for improvements to the transportation function of such roads must take into account potential impacts on the road's scenic function.

#### D. OPEN SPACE SYSTEM DEFINED

Open space means different things to different people. For some it is undeveloped land or shorelines. For some it is parkland for active recreation. For others it means rare or ecologically valuable lands that need permanent protection. **Patterns** recognizes open space in all of these manifestations, including open space as a visual quality - the presence of nature introduced so as to minimize the impact of development. Open space, in the simplest terms, gives character and contrast to developed areas.

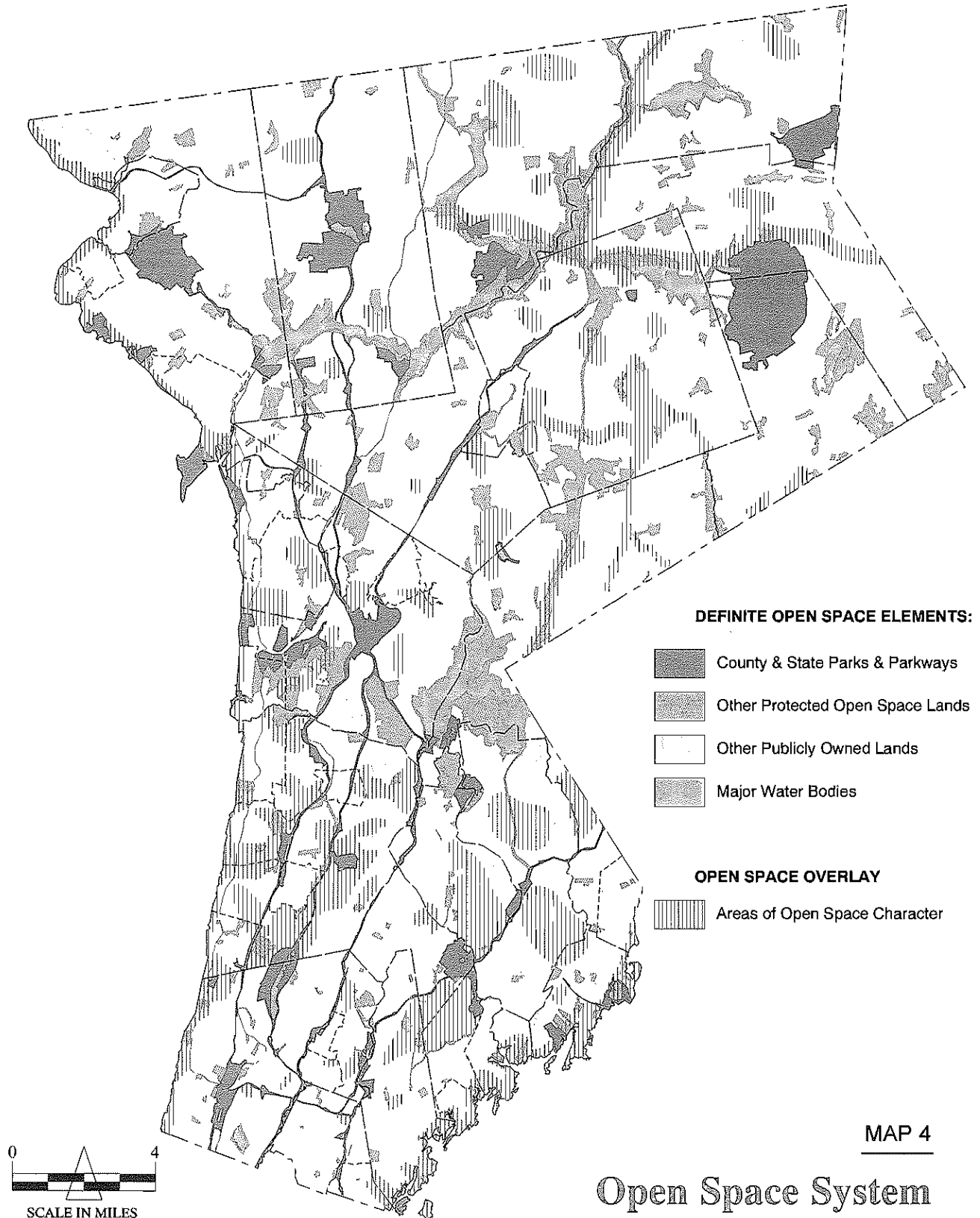
In the first decade of the 20th century, foresighted planners recognized that some open space would have to be preserved in a systematic way. Their vision led to the land acquisition and other techniques that have permanently established the open space nature of Westchester County. The acquisition of the Bronx River Parkway lands shortly after 1900 led to development of the first open space corridor - a scenic travel route linking concentrated centers and, eventually, additional County facilities and parks.

Westchester County's open space system, public and private, vastly enhances the quality of life in the county. One doesn't have to own open land to feel enriched by the sight of it. That value judgment has deeply influenced development in Westchester. It is reflected in County and municipal policies aimed at maintaining open space character.

From the perspective of **Patterns**, the open space system is a prevailing force in shaping development. Open space elements provide relief and contrast in urban and suburban settings, define and buffer communities and serve as linkages between major open spaces and concentrated centers. Open spaces also serve as community focal points for activities and assembly, especially in higher density areas. The open space system has two components:

##### Definite Elements of Open Space

Definite elements are primarily publicly and privately owned properties intended to be permanently protected from development such as parks, nature preserves, cemeteries and school district lands.



Westchester County Department of Planning

MAP 4  
**Open Space System**



**Areas of Open Space Character**

Some lands make important contributions to open space character but are not permanently protected. These parcels include golf courses, campuses and lands that municipal comprehensive plans identify as significant for their open space, ecological or recreational value. Privately owned lands, although subject to development, can retain their open space function through zoning and design techniques.

**E. PRESERVING THE WESTCHESTER PATTERN**

The goal of **Patterns** is to strengthen centers, improve the function of corridors and protect the county's open space character. All the strategies discussed in the following chapters are aimed at this goal.

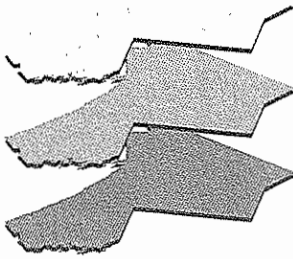
Development policies which strengthen centers are essential to the continuing vitality of the county. These policies require strategies which not only encourage new development in centers, where sufficient capacity exists, but also address urban decay brought on by industrial and commercial obsolescence and deteriorated housing.

Westchester's corridors present opportunities for improved functioning and additional development in select areas, but they require thoughtful planning and intermunicipal coordination. Most include County or state roads whose maintenance and access points are regulated by those governments. However, control of land uses alongside these roads is the responsibility of the cities, towns and villages through which they pass. Major roads that cross many municipal lines are prime candidates for intermunicipal approaches to management of traffic and development. Therefore, the healthy functioning of corridors is a shared responsibility and it, as well as the locational aspects of new development, are addressed in the policies and strategies of **Patterns**.

Open space character cannot be protected by the efforts of any one government. The strategies of **Patterns** encourage coordinated efforts by County, municipal and private agencies to nurture Westchester's open space network.

The **Patterns** premise is that Westchester County and its cities, towns and villages have within reach the tools and opportunities to vitalize centers, to improve the function of corridors and to sustain a unique open space character.

## IV. Making Patterns Work



### The Role of County, City, Town and Village Government

**T**he powers of cities, towns and villages to adopt comprehensive plans, to zone and to enact regulations on permitted uses give municipalities the last word on what happens in their jurisdictions. But those powers do not keep out traffic, noise, flooded streams or polluted air and water that land uses in a neighboring jurisdiction may produce.

No single municipality can rely on its own land use authority to overcome problems generated by regional conditions. By the same token, communities with common interests in economic growth or environmental health must act in concert to share in regional benefit.

State law has always defined the powers and responsibilities of municipal and county governments in land use, environmental protection and other areas that affect patterns of development. Increasingly, however, state and federal regulation, congressional action and court decisions affect local jurisdiction in such matters as water, waste disposal, housing and transportation.

A major purpose of **Patterns** is to prompt residents and municipal governments to take a broad view of issues that transcend borders, even as they keep local interests paramount.

#### A. AREA-WIDE PLANNING

One consequence of state and federal environmental regulation is a change in the posture of local governments toward area-wide planning. Municipalities with a shared interest in Long Island Sound or the New York City watershed, for example, are strongly impelled to establish close and continuing cooperative relationships with their neighbors, often with the County as facilitator.

This perceptible change in municipal attitudes toward area-wide planning significantly shaped the formulation of **Patterns**. At scores of meetings with municipal officials on their home territory, Westchester County Planning Board members and staff examined local land uses, zoning patterns and natural features, and sought advice on the development density that particular areas might support. At subsequent joint meetings of adjacent municipalities to discuss policy concerns, development along the corridors that connect communities emerged as a major issue.

In response, **Patterns** focuses sharply on the way corridors relate to centers, and area-wide concerns drive its policies. The **Patterns Map** presented here as the County-wide plan is the product of those meetings. When all of the city, town and village comprehensive plans are considered together, they demonstrate to a remarkable degree a shared vision of the county's future land use already existed to a remarkable extent.

## B. THE MUNICIPAL ROLE

Westchester's sound physical development depends heavily on town, village and city governments' judicious use of their powers to adopt comprehensive plans and to enact zoning and land use controls. If the policies of **Patterns** are an apt fit for municipalities, local plans and regulations will reflect regional concern for the environment, for residential quality, for the economy and for the tax base.

City, town and village expectations for development, or for protecting community character and natural resources, are now factored into **Patterns** with permanent impact on the County's own physical planning. It is the earnest hope of the County Planning Board that the policies of **Patterns** will become referenced parts of local plans. As the comprehensive plans of Westchester's communities are reviewed and updated, their specific approaches to land use regulation, to zoning and to intermunicipal cooperation can sustain both the county's environment and its economic growth along the **Patterns** model.

Many of the county's municipalities have used innovative approaches to promote their economies, protect natural resources or improve the housing supply. Their leadership has tested many of the strategies recommended in **Patterns**.

No matter how well **Patterns** articulates policy for the County, its effectiveness as a planning instrument ultimately depends on its usefulness as a guide for municipal action.

## C. THE COUNTY ROLE

Westchester County's physical impact on area-wide planning is expressed through its commitments to open space acquisitions, to road and transportation projects including the provision of a high level of public transportation services, to water and sewer facilities and to the development and maintenance of institutions that serve the public. The County perspective is also evident in the Planning Board's comments on municipal land use decisions. These comments have always given particular consideration to intermunicipal and regional concerns but do so more explicitly with **Patterns**.

Westchester County's role as an administrator of federal and state programs positions it to serve as a mediator on behalf of its municipalities, and as a representative of their interests in regional organizations.

In transportation, for example, the County is responsible under federal regulations for the management of federally-aided transportation system improvements and for administering Clean Air Act regulations. This role encompasses long range planning and planning studies on a county-wide, subregion, corridor and subject basis; guiding the selection process for projects to be funded; encouraging citizen participation; and coordinating activities with other counties in the New York City region through the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council.

In environmental protection, the County provides services and sponsorship for studies and programs that require cooperation among groups of adjacent municipalities that form natural planning subregions. Reacting to the federal Environmental Protection Agency's findings on the deteriorating water quality of Long Island Sound, the County initiated an intermunicipal task force to develop a responsive action plan. The County may be expected to play a similar role for Hudson River communities if the need arises to monitor river water quality. When New York City proposed implementation of restrictive regulations within its Croton watershed, the towns in this subregion looked to the County to create the working relationship that produced a unified response.

In housing and community development, the County administers federal and state programs ranging from housing assistance to funding for infrastructure. The County also offers technical expertise and makes information available to the municipalities which are members of the Urban Consortium (38 as of 1995) - services no one of them could afford to obtain on its own.

**Patterns** strongly supports the County's informal role as conduit, facilitator and sometimes spokesman for municipalities in their relations with other New York jurisdictions, the Regional Plan Association, the Hudson River Valley Greenway and other private and public agencies including neighboring jurisdictions in Connecticut.

On specific land use proposals, however, **Patterns** makes clear distinctions between the County's role in formulating policy, providing infrastructure and giving practical support, and the city, town and village role of making the final decisions. The County contribution is to identify common interests, to provide channels for intermunicipal cooperation and to offer strategies appropriate to a particular subregion or to an individual community's needs and character.

Strategies outlined in Chapter VII offer cities, towns and villages ways to support regional policies in a manner that also benefits the locality. Not all strategies offered are appropriate to all of the diverse areas that make up Westchester County, but the essential ingredient in all is the intermunicipal effort required to maintain the health of Westchester's economy and environment, and to protect and preserve shared natural resources.

Municipalities who helped formulate **Patterns** have an equal stake with the County in its success.

#### D. THE POPULAR ROLE

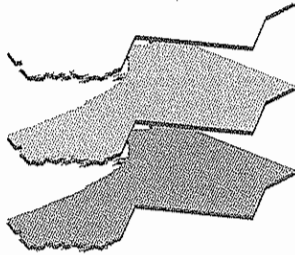
In the abstract, residents from all parts of Westchester, urban and rural, can agree on broadly stated goals for strengthening centers, managing corridors and protecting the environment. But the cities, towns and villages who make the land use decisions must deal with development proposals as they arise — parcel by parcel. A particular proposal may be inconsistent with the **Patterns** concept of planned growth. Or, a local project that is consistent may encounter bitter local opposition, especially when traffic and affordable housing are at issue. To complicate matters, a project that is welcome in one municipality may be anathema to the people of a neighboring community.

Centers, corridors, open space and natural features may define the physical character of the county, but it is the attitudes and actions of the people themselves that determine the quality of life, the nature of the economy and the condition of the environment.

The people who live, work, play and move about on this land are the fundamental decision makers, acting with particular effect through the governments closest to them. Politicians and government agencies alike respond, however unevenly, to the expectations of their constituencies. Thus the county's development will be shaped as much by the collective civic will as by governmental formulations.

It is the Westchester County Planning Board's hope that **Patterns** offers practical and useful guidance on ways that people, through their municipal and County governments, may address development issues and adopt common goals for the county's economic and environmental health.

## V. Land Use



### A County Perspective

**"The Westchester County Planning Board shall...formulate and recommend major development policies...with the object of achieving a physical development of the county that will be orderly, harmonious, economically sound, and of attractive appearance..."**

*- From the Westchester County Charter*

Unlike municipal governments which must be concerned with the details of land use proposals for particular sites, the Westchester County Planning Board takes a generalized view of land use issues, its paramount concerns being patterns of development that take into account:

- Density of development
- Relationship to surrounding development
- Visual impact.

These three elements transcend municipal boundaries and have been the Board's basis for evaluating the impact of development on land and on people.

From the perspective of **Urban Form**, a specific land use has been less critical than the overall location and density of development. Since that policy was adopted, sophisticated environmental reviews have given planners another tool to review the economic and environmental impacts of a proposed land use. In practice, those reviews have been concerned principally with the effect of development on natural resources.

**Pattern's** emphasis on centers, corridors and open space as the proper matrix for county growth adds still another dimension to the assessment process. Simply stated, the siting of a proposed use outside of centers and developed corridors may be compatible with **Patterns'** density recommendations and with surrounding land use, but may have an adverse impact on a nearby center or may reinforce a detrimental use in a corridor.

The efficient use or reuse of commercial space in downtowns may contribute more to the region's economic health and to the convenience of county residents than new office buildings or retail outlets on land where additional infrastructure would be required. Or, adding a residential component to a corridor already developed for office or commercial use may



do more for that corridor's appearance and economic vitality than scatter site housing introduced in its hinterland.

Centers, with their infrastructure, population concentrations and transportation hubs, provide the very resources on which the economy depends. When concentrated centers can accommodate development, the diffusion of commercial uses across the county's diminishing supply of open land becomes less likely. The same benefits accrue when developed sections of corridors can support housing or other uses that help them function as mini-centers.

When the County planners use the centers/corridors/open space form as the basis for reviewing a development proposal, the resulting evaluation is likely to complement and supplement municipal land use plans.

In expanding standards for assessing land uses beyond the matter of density, **Patterns** is also more responsive to changing public policy on the environment. Federal regulations require government at all levels to take measures to reduce automobile travel and to restrict sewerage discharge into the drainage basins of the New York City water supply and into Long Island Sound. The regulations place serious constraints on the use of much of the county's undeveloped land. As a result, the most practical locations for growth appear to be areas where infrastructure is in place in existing centers and developed corridors.

#### A. ELEMENTS OF LAND USE

The three basic elements of the County Planning Board's land use review measures are:

##### Density of Development

The concept of density is a key aspect of **Patterns** since it determines the point at which certain County provided facilities such as sanitary sewer trunk lines are needed, or services such as public bus transportation can be supported. The highest levels of density should relate beneficially to the county's centers or to corridors suitable for enhancement as mixed use areas.

Density may be expressed as a ratio of residential units or floor area to a unit of land area, usually an acre. These ratios relate **Patterns**' density recommendations to municipal comprehensive plans and zoning. Ranges of recommended density have been defined on the **Patterns Map** (Chapter VI).

##### Relationship to Surrounding Development

The impact that a particular use has on its surroundings is of area-wide significance. Although a use may have a density compatible with the recommendations of **Patterns**, it could generate traffic, produce sewage or consume water that would overburden the area infrastructure and markedly alter an established community character. The use also may have adverse economic impacts on existing centers.

Conversely, new development or redevelopment of facilities in aging cities may add to their vitality and spark other investment. The addition of multi-family housing to corridors developed primarily with commercial or office use could capitalize on some existing infrastructure without adding significant demands and help create mini-centers. Such development can enhance opportunities for public transportation services, bicycling and pedestrian movement.

### **Visual Impact**

Development can be evaluated through its impact on the form and appearance of the landscape. A building set in a green and shady framework may not change the viewer's perception of the area's open space character. Good design for new public buildings and respect for the architectural character of the old reinforce the quality of urban settings. Design elements are an integral part of the planning for the County's capital projects, in keeping with the Board's Charter responsibility to include the county's "attractive appearance" as a goal.

**Patterns** aims at guiding development in ways that will:

- a) Preserve and enhance the distinct character and visual quality of Westchester's cities, towns and villages and reinforce their residents' sense of place;
- b) Protect the open space that separates and gives definition to centers; and
- c) Encourage attention to design in public and commercial buildings, streets and other facilities, including the visual impact of developed corridors.

## **B. WESTCHESTER'S SUBREGIONS**

A single approach to land use planning is impractical in a county as large and geographically diverse as Westchester. Westchester has in fact five distinct subregions, each encompassing municipalities whose concerns are not always shared nor fully understood in other subregions. Merely identifying these areas expresses their differences:

- The Long Island Sound communities
- The Hudson River Shore communities
- The Bronx River Valley
- The Central County
- The North County Watershed.

Each subregion needs strategies tailored to its own economic and environmental experiences.

In addition, while each of Westchester's four major urban centers (Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, White Plains and Yonkers) is part of a subregion, there are occasions when the common issues linking them will come to the forefront and they may find themselves in a natural alliance. Cities also have strong ties to adjacent subregions. For example, White Plains shares major interests in development and transportation with the abutting Central County municipalities but it is strategically located at the head of the Bronx River Valley.

Conferences among the cities, towns and villages within each subregion on issues of mutual concern are a growing phenomenon. Watershed planning, Hudson River tourism initiatives, Sound Shore waterfront development, urban redevelopment and transportation planning are all topics and issues best addressed on the subregion level. More and more, when common interests can be identified, municipalities appreciate the opportunity to work together.

**Patterns** recognizes the links among communities with common interests. It also recognizes that the potential for joint action does not in any way overrule separate political identities and jurisdictions. **Patterns** assumes that the key to effective planning for Westchester's future lies in voluntary intermunicipal cooperation.

The County has already taken a lead role in promoting and coordinating such efforts. Examples include intermunicipal corridor studies; evaluation and response to New York City's proposed watershed regulations; Long Island Sound non-point source pollution reduction; the Westchester County Transportation Advisory Committee; the Interstate-684 North Corridor Task Force; and Croton water treatment plant siting. Much more remains to be done.

The County Planning Board and County Planning Department intend to use the subregion format as a routine forum for information exchange, updates on activities and regular meetings.

### C. APPLYING THE STANDARDS

County and municipal planners already take into account density recommendations, impacts on surrounding development and visual impact as they review zoning and land use actions. County planners will expect the major development proposals to include an assessment of the broader issues that are part of **Patterns**. Major proposals are considered commercial projects proposing construction of more than 50,000 square feet of commercial floor area (100,000 square feet and over in the major urban centers) and residential projects with more than 25 housing units. (Depending on intermunicipal relationships, some smaller scale projects may warrant analysis and, conversely, some larger ones may not.)

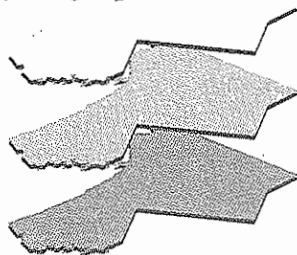
In particular, reviews should explore the relationships of these projects to centers, corridors and open spaces as these features are described in this document. Such considerations are vital to the economic growth and environmental health of the county.



Westchester County government also affects the land use equation through its capital decisions on infrastructure, including major roads, bus systems and sewer and water facilities and through its provision of public transportation services. These decisions can help facilitate development within centers over single use development along corridors and at isolated locations.

Most important is the consultation process among municipal governments and between them and the County on land use issues that have area-wide or subregion impacts. With a common understanding of their interdependence, County, city, town and village governments can work together toward a healthy economy without jeopardizing the county's protection of natural resources or the health of its centers.

# VI. The "Patterns for Westchester" Map



The **Patterns Map** is the view of Westchester in the first decade of the 21st century as seen by the County Planning Board.<sup>1</sup> It shows how land has been developed and preserved and how undeveloped land should be used or protected in the future. The map was prepared in close consultation with Westchester's cities, towns and villages.

## A. MAP FEATURES

### Centers

The four types of concentrated centers of Westchester, as described in Chapter III, are shown on the map. The centers classified in each category - hamlet, local, intermediate and major - are listed in the adjacent figure.

### Corridors

The principal transportation and development corridors appear on the **Patterns Map**. The major roads and rail lines follow the county's prevailing topographical features within the historic paths of development. The functions of each corridor, as described in Chapter III, are not conveyed by the map. However, the pattern of development in Westchester is visibly associated with these routes.

### Elements of Open Space

Definite elements of open space and areas of open space character, as discussed in Chapter III, are also shown on the **Patterns Map**.

## WESTCHESTER CENTERS

### HAMLETS

Banksville	Millwood	South Salem
Bedford Village	Montrose	Valhalla
Cortlandt	Pocantico Hills	Van Cortlandtville
Cross River	Purdys	Verplanck
Croton Falls	Scotts Corners	Vista
Hawthorne	Shrub Oak	
Lincolndale	Somers	

### LOCAL CENTERS

Ardsley	Elmsford	Mamaroneck
Armonk	Goldens Bridge	North Tarrytown
Baldwin Place	Hartsdale	North White Plains
Bedford Hills	Harrison	Pelham
Briarcliff Manor	Hastings-on-Hudson	Pelham Manor
Bronxville	Irvington	Pleasantville
Chappaqua	Katonah	Rye
Crestwood	Lake Mohegan	Scarsdale
Croton-on-Hudson	Larchmont	Silver Lake
Dobbs Ferry	Larchmont Station	Thornwood
Eastchester		Tuckahoe

### INTERMEDIATE CENTERS

Yonkers/Cross County	Mount Kisco	Ossining Village
Jefferson Valley	Peekskill	Tarrytown
	Port Chester	Yorktown Heights

### MAJOR CENTERS

Mount Vernon	White Plains	Yonkers/downtown
New Rochelle		

Figure 5: *Westchester Centers*

<sup>1</sup> The **Patterns Map** published in this report is of necessity presented at a small scale. Larger scale **Patterns Maps**, on a county-wide and municipal basis, can be obtained from the County Planning Department.



Elements of open space include:

**Definite elements of open space -**

- Westchester County and New York State owned parks and parkways,
- Other protected open space lands including land maintained for watershed or reservoir protection, large municipal parks, cemeteries, nature preserves and lands in private hands that are permanently protected,
- Other publicly-owned land including open lands that are part of public institutions and facilities such as Grasslands, Westchester Community College, Westchester Airport and public schools and
- Major water bodies.

**Areas of open space character -**

- Coastal areas along the Hudson River and Long Island Sound,
- Private golf course and recreation facilities,
- Private institutional properties such as colleges, schools and hospitals,
- Lands that municipal comprehensive plans identify as significant for their open space, ecological or recreational value and
- Undeveloped land and low density areas that preserve a visual quality associated with open space character.

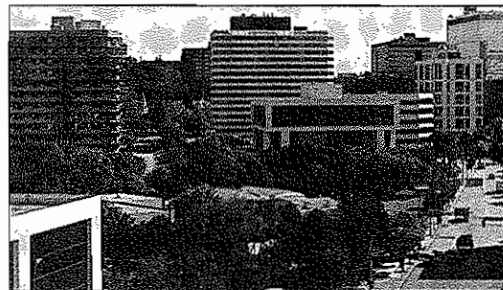
**Density of Land Use**

The **Patterns Map** shows three distinct levels of density: high density urban, medium density suburban and low density rural. These density categories are based on a Land Use Intensity (LIU) system that sets a numerical range for the density levels within each category. Density can be expressed as floor area ratios, gross residential density (dwelling units per acre) or as a mixture of the two.<sup>1</sup>

The **Patterns Map** categories are intended to overlap and to be much broader than municipal zoning densities for any particular zoning district. The density categories also differ from zoning in that they relate to the intensity of land use, not to specific types of land use such as residential, office or industrial. Guidance for the location of different types of use may be found in the policies and strategies of **Patterns**.

- **High Density Urban Areas** encompass the concentrated centers and transportation corridors that have significant development. Four subcategories are shown on the **Patterns Map** that include areas as diverse as central White Plains and the hamlet of Shrub Oak.

High Density Urban Areas outside of centers tend to rely heavily on the automobile and be specialized in function. They generally support such uses as

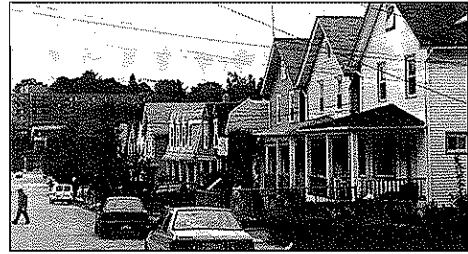


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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C for a complete discussion of measures of density.

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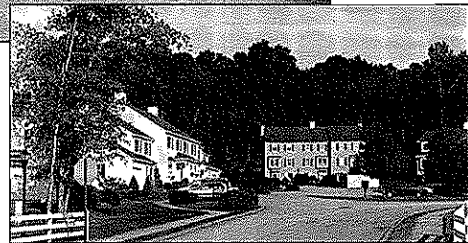
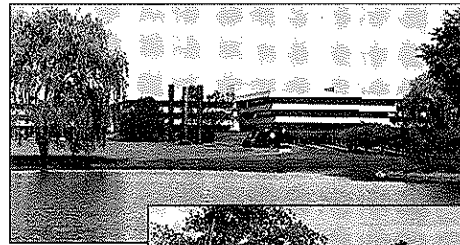
apartments, shopping centers, offices, high-way oriented business, commercial, industry or warehousing enterprises. By contrast, land uses in concentrated centers tend to be more mixed. Open spaces and community parks are an important component of the mix of land uses in High Density Urban Areas.



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- **Medium Density Suburban Areas** blend physical development with the natural environment. Three subcategories are shown on the **Patterns Map** that encompass all non-High Density developable land in southern Westchester and much of northern Cortlandt, Yorktown and Somers.

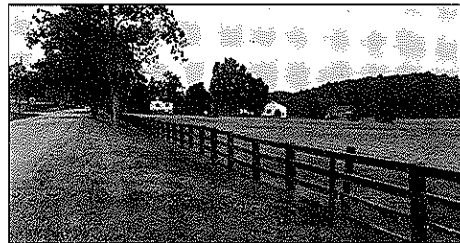
The primary character of Medium Density Suburban Areas is residential although office campuses and institutional uses are common. Central water supply and sewers are generally available or have potential for expansion.



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- **Low Density Rural Areas** have the fewest man-made structures. This category encompasses a wide belt of land that extends across northern Westchester centered on the Croton reservoir system.

Although Low Density Rural Areas may include hamlets, the primary use is single-family residences. These areas include the majority of Westchester's undeveloped land and its remaining farms. There are limited opportunities for public transit services; individual water and septic systems are typical.



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## B. PREPARATION OF THE PATTERNS MAP

The **Patterns Map** represents a composite of local insights and the County Planning Board's policies. To map densities accurately, County staff and County Planning Board members met separately with officials and staff in each of Westchester's municipalities to review information in Patterns. The mapping process utilized the County's Geographic Information System (GIS) to update the Urban Form Refinement Map of 1985 and to produce a series of map overlays.



Figure 6: *Map methodology. Overlaying GIS-generated data layers at the same scale enables visual comparison and analysis of spatial data.*

The layers illustrated in Figure 6 include:

- Municipal boundaries,
- Existing generalized land use,
- Transportation systems,
- Environmental features including steep slopes over 25%, New York State and locally regulated wetlands, streams, waterbodies, floodplains and drainage divides,
- Municipal zoning districts and
- Water and sewer districts.

Large scale sectional maps produced for each municipality in Westchester (or group of municipalities) allowed each to visualize for their own areas:

- Location and severity of environmental constraints,
- Proximity of development to water supply reservoirs,
- Potential for extension of central sewer systems,
- Land use intensity patterns and significant vacant parcels,
- Local zoning patterns,
- Accessibility to public transit facilities or major highways and
- Proximity to concentrated centers and relationships to corridors where major development has taken place.

These sectional maps were overlaid on the Urban Form Refinement base map allowing local officials to measure change over the decade. In addition, County and municipal officials shared information on local conditions not provided in the GIS format such as municipal comprehensive plans, local waterfront revitalization programs and physical changes.

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## C. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

The **Patterns Map** is a graphic statement about the direction development should take in Westchester. It offers parameters for County and municipal planning decisions by providing a unified picture of the density that surrounds existing centers, of the extent of developed corridors and transportation arteries, and of the definite elements of open space. The components of the map can be seen in each of the specific subject maps included in this document.

A close look at the map identifies characteristics that have significant planning implications:

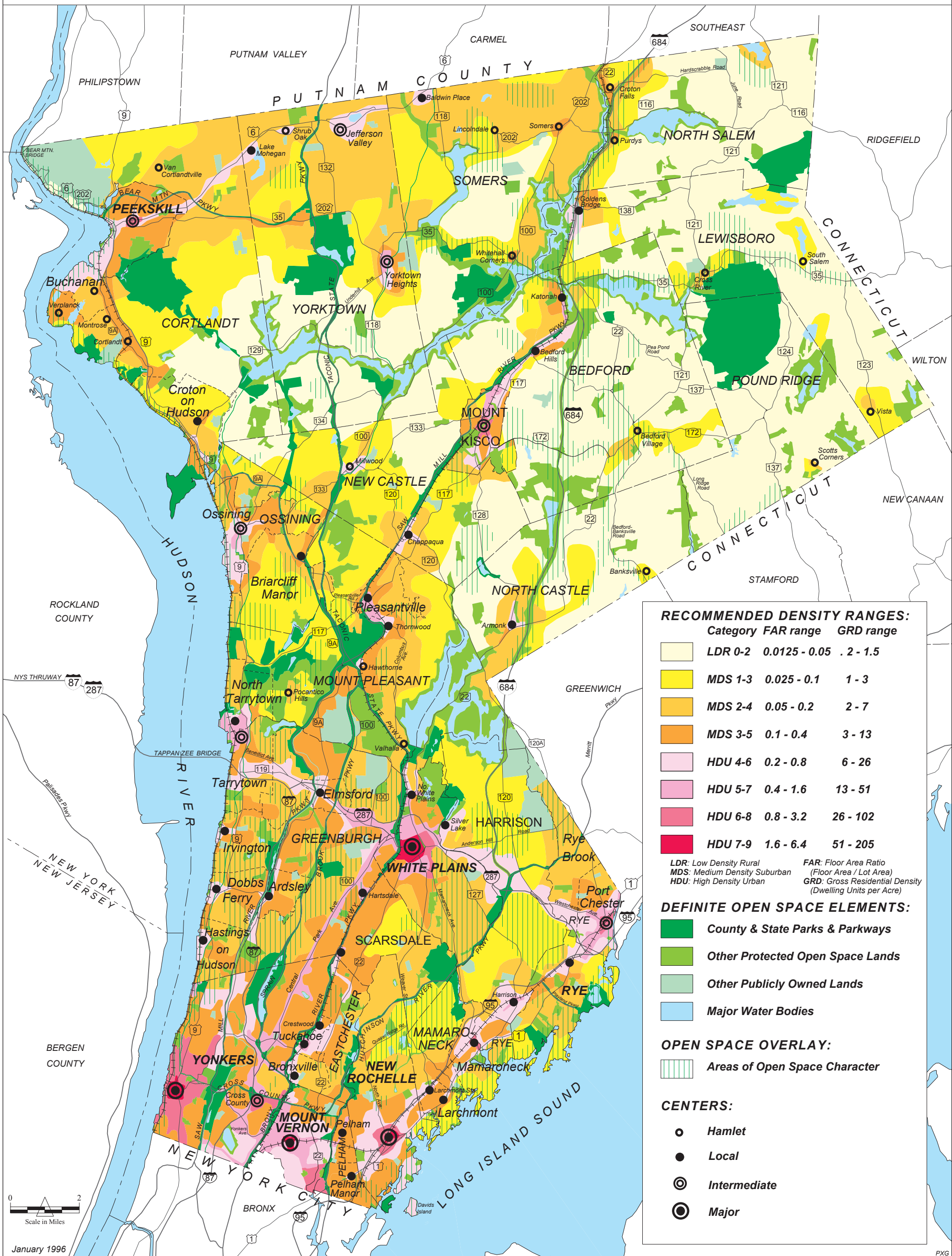
- The highest concentrations of density are in the older, established urban centers - Yonkers, Mt. Vernon, New Rochelle, White Plains, Port Chester and Peekskill. Redevelopment and revitalization of these centers are critical to Westchester's well-being.
- White Plains has a central location and excellent transportation facilities. The city is likely to expand its role as a service and retail hub.
- Outside of these urban centers, Westchester has significant capacity for economic development in other intermediate, local and hamlet centers - and in several corridors with a developed character - that have adequate infrastructure and relatively few environmental constraints.
- Roadways in several of Westchester's corridors have been identified through transportation planning studies as having regional significance, as well as long-range problems of a critical nature. Land adjacent to many of them has significant development potential, particularly if the type of land uses are broadened or modified through mixed use development and redevelopment that includes a residential component.
- I-287 is the key east-west corridor for Westchester and the greater region. It, and adjacent sections of some of the north-south corridors it intersects, could be the sites of new development of the type that would support the policies of **Patterns**. Transportation and other infrastructure enhancements will be required. The potential for improved public transportation will need to be explored.
- The Route 1/Boston Post Road corridor is the major connector for the older Long Island Sound Shore centers. New development, that factors in transportation and parking needs, should be directed to sites in and around the existing centers.
- The New York City reservoir system and its watershed encompass much of the land of northern Westchester. The need to enhance protection of the drinking

water supply will have land use and infrastructure impacts on existing developed areas as well as on the type and extent of future development. Possible limitations on development may make central and southern Westchester more logical locations for some development.

- The north county has an established pattern of well-defined center based development ranging in scale from hamlets to intermediate centers, where growth opportunities exist. Sustaining this pattern will depend on infrastructure capacity and on each municipality's ability to direct development so as to be consistent with existing character and with watershed protection requirements. A watershed approach to infrastructure planning will be necessary.
- North county corridors will continue to face development pressures. New non-residential construction should be directed toward existing and designated centers, accompanied by multifamily, affordable housing. Clustering of residential development will be required to maintain an open space character along corridors outside of centers.
- Planning on a subregional basis is essential to the continued health of the existing business centers in northern Westchester. Local governments will need to explore opportunities for enhancing hamlets as community focal points, as sites of controlled growth, and as service centers for adjacent areas.
- A broad intermunicipal view of planning will be required to maintain and enhance the open space character that marks much of the land along the shorelines of the Hudson River and Long Island Sound, major parkways, I-684 and sections of relatively undeveloped corridors that connect centers.
- Extensive privately-owned lands contribute to the open space character of many sections of Westchester. These parcels will often need special zoning and design techniques to retain their open space function.



# WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK



0 2  
Scale in Miles

January 1996



## Patterns for Westchester

432 Michaelian Office Building  
148 Martine Avenue  
White Plains, New York  
10601

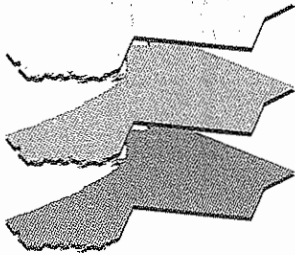




# THE PATTERNS PROGRAM

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## VII. *The Patterns Program*



**I**n this chapter, strategies are presented for each of the County Planning Board's programmatic concerns. For each topic, the discussion is organized under three headings - The Setting, Framing the Issues and Strategies. The first two provide background for the third. The strategies consist of recommendations for County action and suggestions for city, town and village governments to consider on their own. The County and the municipalities already practice many of the recommended strategies which effectively implement **Patterns'** policies.

### A. THE ECONOMY

**Nurture the economic climate of the county with use of municipal, County, state and federal resources to improve infrastructure, housing and programs that attract and support business enterprise, with particular attention to intermunicipal impacts.**

#### The Setting

Reflecting a regional trend, the county suffered a severe loss of jobs beginning in the late 1980s as corporate business retrenched and manufacturing left the area. Vacancy rates for office and commercial space soared, eroding the tax base. The construction industry which built the plants, office buildings and homes for people who worked in those enterprises suffered correspondingly.

Despite the economic downturn of that period, important economic assets remain in place in the county. Among them are the county's convenient, central location in a busy metropolitan region, its proximity to New York City, its access to transportation corridors and public transportation and its inventory of commercial buildings and land suitable for development. It has a job base of well educated, experienced professionals and a high proportion of high school seniors who go on to college. Its higher educational institutions are a continuing resource for professional and vocational training and for designing economic programs tailored to Westchester's communities. Not least, the county's natural resources, distinctive character and the quality of its services make it an attractive place to live and to work.

The region's strength is evident in thriving young firms and small businesses diversifying into communications, arts, health care, advertising, computer/information, financial, edu-

cational and other service-oriented businesses. But maintaining and improving economic momentum requires the County and its cities, towns and villages to act as partners on regional issues. It requires concentration on the principle of sustainable development - recognizing the link between economic growth and environmental management so as to maintain Westchester's most valued qualities.

### **Framing the Issues**

The most pressing problems that confront Westchester County and its municipalities have regional implications. They are:

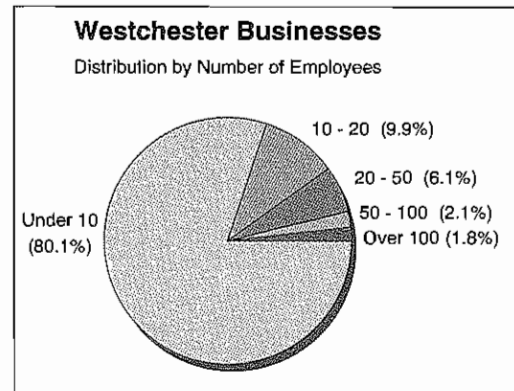
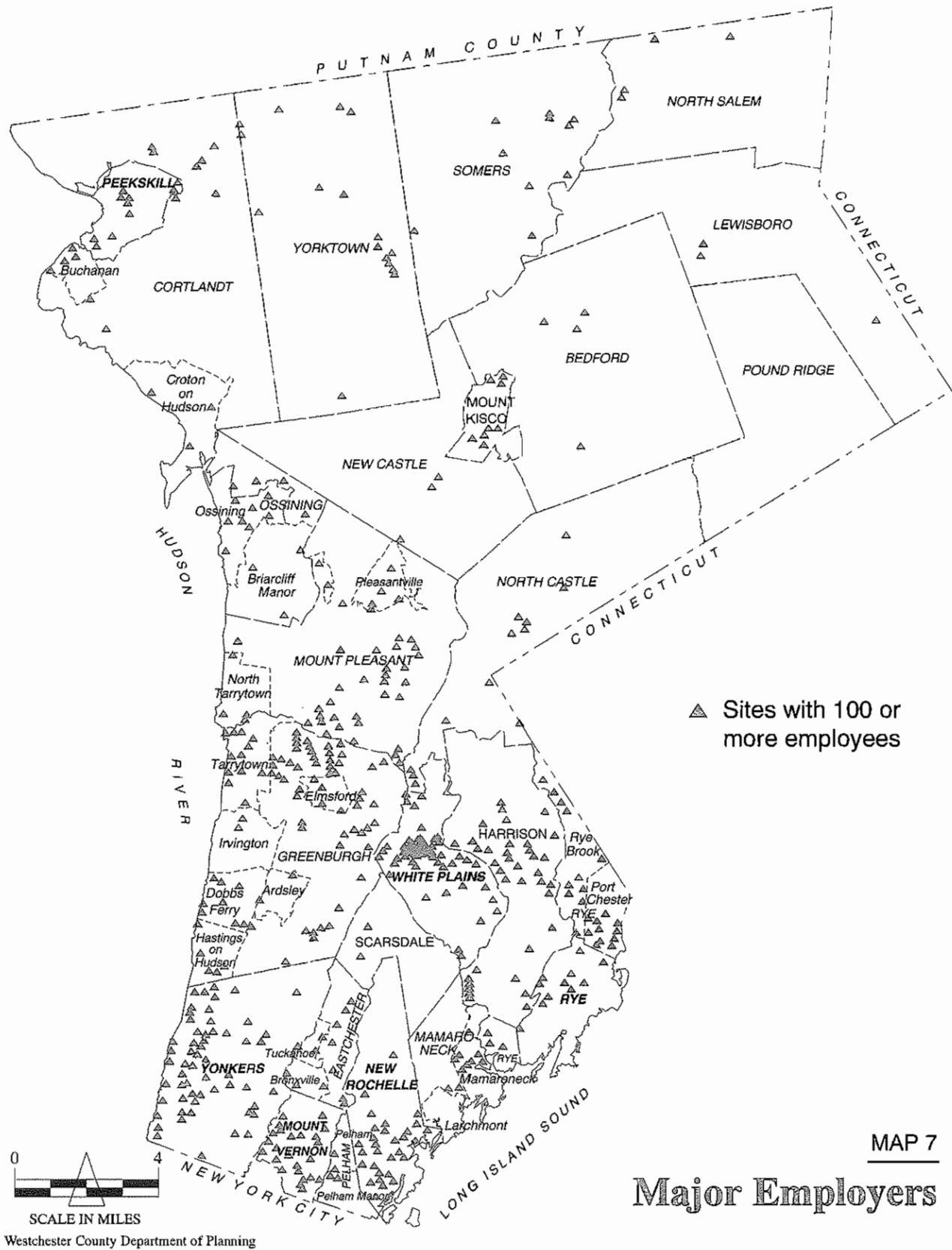


Figure 7: Employment by company size

- a) **INTERMUNICIPAL IMPACT OF ECONOMIC GROWTH.** Land use decisions that benefit one community's economy and tax base may adversely affect traffic patterns, housing demand, transportation accessibility, infrastructure needs and economic viability in neighboring municipalities.
- b) **SCARCITY OF LAND.** The shortage of vacant land reduces opportunity for commercial and industrial growth in the heavily developed south and central county while environmental constraints and lack of infrastructure have a similar effect in the north county.
- c) **INFLEXIBLE ZONING.** Local regulations that impede imaginative reuse of underutilized commercial buildings or prohibit mixed uses in new developments may thwart investment and may depress the economy of surrounding areas.
- d) **NEGLECTED INFRASTRUCTURE.** Prospects for regional development are seriously hampered when roads, bridges, water and sewer lines are in continuous need of repair or replacement.
- e) **ECONOMIC STRESS IN OLDER, URBAN CENTERS.** Obsolete commercial and industrial properties and deteriorating housing create the urban blight that drives away new investment.
- f) **TAX STRUCTURE.** The tax structure compromises the ability of all governments to address intermunicipal problems. Land use decision-making may be unwisely steered by an over-reliance on the property tax to finance services and distorted by disparities in municipal assessment practices.
- g) **CHANGING SHAPE OF RETAIL BUSINESS.** Shopping malls and huge, single retail stores increase regional commercial activity but can seriously weaken retail centers comprised of many small businesses, particularly in the county's downtowns.



- h) FEDERAL AND STATE MANDATES FOR CLEAN AIR AND WATER. The burdens of pollution prevention and corrective action must be addressed by state, county, intermunicipal and private action, probably without federal aid.

**Patterns** calls on County and municipal governments to acknowledge the interlocking building blocks of economic growth that transcend municipal boundaries: housing supply, efficient transportation, clean water and sound infrastructure. Clearly, no one municipality has the jurisdictional ability to resolve these issues on its own. But with a spirit of understanding and cooperation - and above all a willingness to innovate - Westchester County, the municipalities, the business community and the colleges can take effective actions singly and jointly.

### Strategies

#### *1. Identify redevelopment areas.*

##### The County and the municipalities can:

- ☐ Inventory the county's oldest established centers to identify undeveloped lands, properties that have become obsolete and properties significantly underutilized.
- ☐ Assess conditions of existing infrastructure and status of programs by industrial development agencies and other community development organizations.
- ☐ Establish a list of target areas with potential for rehabilitation or more intense mixed development that can offer competitive advantages.

#### *2. Identify growth centers.*

##### The County and the municipalities can:

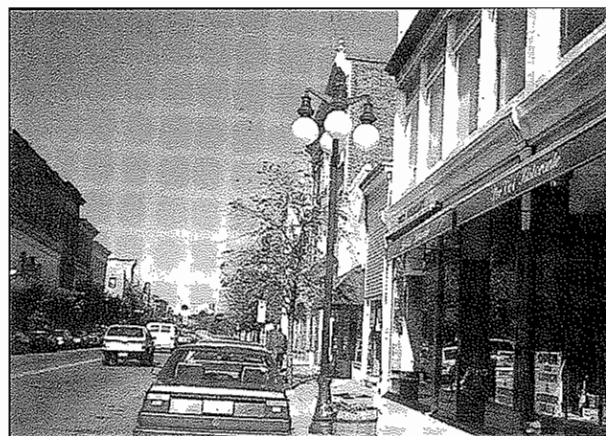
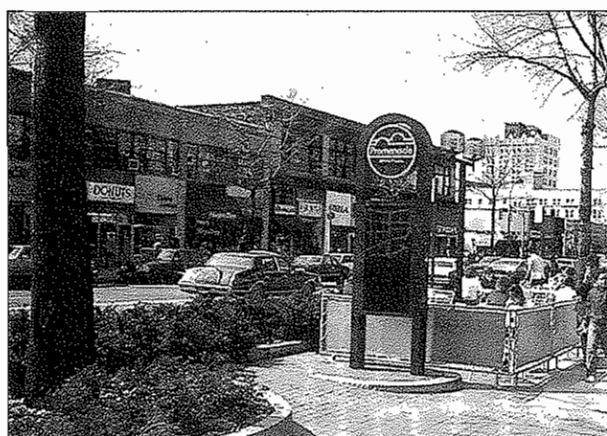
- ☐ Inventory the county's newer, non-city centers and developed corridors to identify areas with potential for significant growth through new mixed use development, in-fill construction and transportation hub enhancement.
- ☐ Survey infrastructure conditions and identify improvements that would support potential development.
- ☐ Keep abreast of retail and commerce trends, business clusters and market areas.
- ☐ Identify a development focus for each center that can build on existing strengths and competitive advantages.

#### *3. Create an environment for investment.*

##### The County can:

- ☐ Direct resources to centers with the greatest need and with the greatest potential to be competitive by judicious use of:

- Capital spending on infrastructure improvements,
  - Community Development Block Grants (CDBG),
  - Section 108 Small Business and CDBG loans to moderate size business,
  - Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and transportation funds and
  - New York State Revolving Loan Funds to local Industrial Development Authorities and then to businesses.
- ☐ Use the planning and zoning referral process from the municipality to the County Planning Board as a forum to emphasize economic impacts of development on centers, on the tax base and on infrastructure costs.
  - ☐ Provide tailored public transit services in areas where such service can stabilize the economy and enhance the attractiveness for private investment.
  - ☐ Mediate with New York City, state and federal agencies on behalf of local governments to facilitate a constructive response to regulations affecting watershed lands, non-point pollution and public transportation connections.
  - ☐ Promote tourism as a way to spur the economy of communities having special historic, cultural or scenic resources.
  - ☐ Encourage mutually supportive working relationships that avoid duplication of effort among the County, the Westchester County Association, the Chambers of Commerce, the Westchester Business Partnership, the Transportation Management Organization, Westchester 2000, Mid-Hudson Pattern for Progress, Community Quality Review Council, Team Hudson Valley, New York Main Street Alliance, Municipal Officials Association, real estate boards and local banks dedicated to economic development.



*White Plains (left) and Port Chester (right) have each invested in streetscape work to improve the appearance and function of their downtown.*

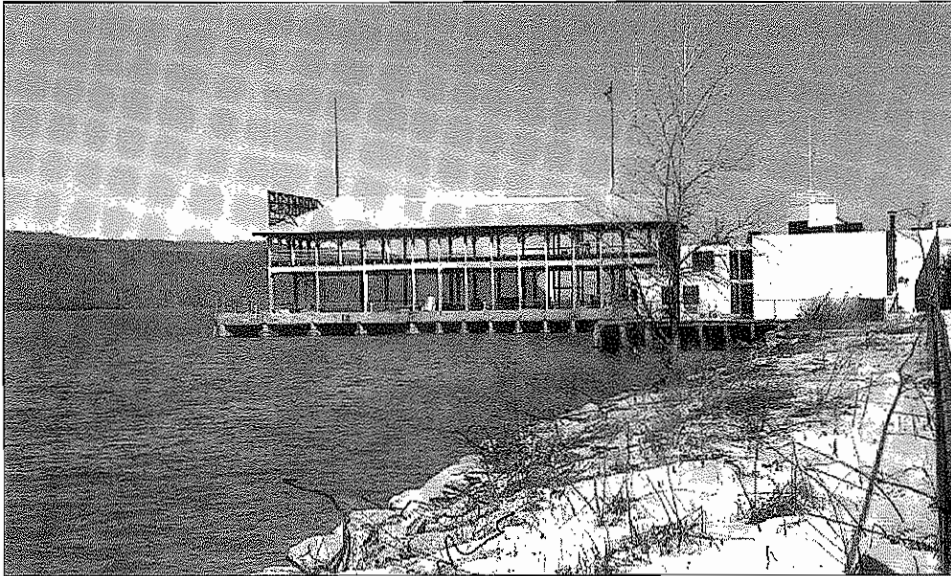
- ☐ Promote and support economic development programs that fill gaps in the programs of large agencies and serve the direct needs of Westchester's smaller cities and villages through "downtown managers", business promotion, building rehabilitation and other measures that complement community development block grant activities.
- ☐ Encourage opportunities for the faculty of the county's colleges to participate in economic development planning and programs that counsel small business owners.
- ☐ Provide guidance to municipalities in simplifying the regulatory process, for example by offering models for standardized procedures.

**The municipalities can:**

- ☐ Update comprehensive plans so that they are useful guides for economic growth. Plans should identify areas for industrial and commercial development, set out the basis for a capital improvement plan to provide the infrastructure needed to support such development and spell out the competitive advantages of locating businesses in centers.
- ☐ Update land use regulations to -
  - Define in clear terms the scope of permitted uses and all required application/review/approval steps,
  - Simplify development application procedures and control time frames for review and action,
  - Provide for special use zones tailored to specific needs,
  - Permit new uses in underutilized office buildings,
  - Encourage living over the store to stimulate activity in centers and developed corridors and
  - Permit flexible transportation options that include incentives and disincentives for parking facilities, provisions for user friendly public transit features and pedestrian design emphasis.
- ☐ Facilitate the assembly of sites large enough to support new commercial uses that can be profitable in their own right.
- ☐ Initiate waterfront redevelopment plans to encourage appropriate reuse of vacant or underutilized waterfront areas.
- ☐ Work with small businesses to mitigate regulatory obstacles and to identify means to provide competitive advantages.
- ☐ Investigate the advantages of business improvement districts targeted to centers or developed corridors.



- ☐ Plan jointly with neighboring communities in subareas to bolster economic activity through emphasis on shared strengths such as tourism, the arts and retail marketing.
- ☐ Participate in county and regionally based organizations dedicated to economic development.



*The Yonkers Pier, built in 1901, is at the center of the Yonkers waterfront, an area targeted for comprehensive redevelopment under a plan prepared by the City with the participation of the County. The plan is one of many such municipal projects along both Westchester shorelines.*

#### **4. Establish an information network.**

##### **The County can:**

- ☐ Sponsor conferences of local governments to share information and technical expertise on transportation, environmental or other concerns and to provide channels of communication on issues having intermunicipal implications.
- ☐ Maintain and share Planning Department data bases on employment projections, population characteristics and other information useful to businesses.
- ☐ Disseminate information that would help businesses take advantage of low cost employee training and research programs available at the Westchester Community College.
- ☐ Work with county-wide business associations to establish an hospitable climate for public-private partnerships.

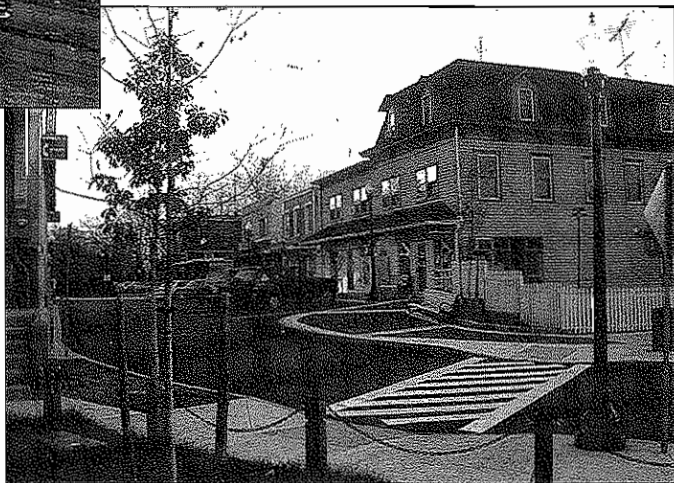
##### **The municipalities can:**

- ☐ Encourage communications between small businesses and banks that extend loans under the Community Reinvestment Act and with agencies that support economic development.



*Front Street Before*

*North Salem used Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for street, sidewalk, traffic, lighting, and utility improvements in the hamlet of Croton Falls. The public investment has sparked private renovations. CDBG funds are awarded through the Urban County Consortium administered by the County Planning Department.*



*Front Street After*

- ☐ Utilize intermunicipal organizations to sponsor forums and acquaint entrepreneurs with opportunities for small business, available commercial space, loan programs and employee training opportunities at the Westchester Community College.

## B. NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Preserve and protect the county's natural resources and environment, including its ground water resources, water bodies, wetlands, coastal zones and significant land resources which include unique natural areas, steep slopes and ridgelines and prime agricultural land.

### The Setting

Westchester's natural resources are unique - but imperiled. Nowhere is there a more compelling case to be made for intermunicipal and regional cooperation than in matters affecting the integrity of the county's land, air and water.

The county's waterways, coastal zones, wetlands, air and land resources are critical to the economic and social health of each of its component municipalities. Yet no single local jurisdiction can insure the purity of its water that flows underground from a neighboring municipality. It cannot avoid contamination of its air from thousands of motor vehicles moving through its boundaries nor from floods that arise in upstream areas where vegetation was recklessly cleared.

A valuable tool in natural resource protection planning is provided by the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). SEQR requires all government agencies to identify and mitigate potential adverse impacts of proposed actions on natural resources through a coordinated environmental review process. But the vigilance that the County and municipalities exercise in protecting their own natural resources is the best guarantor of environmental health.

### Framing the Issues

Of particular relevance to **Patterns** are the individual and interactive roles of County, city, town and village governments in five aspects of the county's natural resources.

- a) LAND PRESERVATION. Since 1922, the County has assumed primary responsibility for acquiring large land tracts with unique natural features as preserves available to all county residents. As fiscal constraints place limits on the amount of additional land that can be acquired, the County increasingly depends on cooperative efforts with municipal governments and with the private sector. The County also recognizes that measures other than outright acquisition can succeed in preserving sensitive land. For example, alternatives such as easements, cluster development and development restrictions may need wider applications.

The public is also the beneficiary of school district lands and of lands administered by New York State, including the Franklin D. Roosevelt State Park and new parkland gifted by the Rockefeller family.

Cities, towns and villages have acquired numerous smaller parcels of local significance. A 1994 County Planning Department tally found that non-government organizations, such as the Nature Conservancy, owned 4,550 acres of environmentally sensitive land at 41 different sites.

These various agencies seldom consult or coordinate their land acquisitions. But as financial resources shrink, partnerships and joint planning become critical needs.

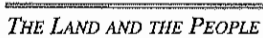
- b) FRESHWATER RESOURCES. The need to protect drinking water supplies, both surface and groundwater, and wetland systems has broad implications for land use and development decisions in Westchester.

**Watershed protection** is of necessity a major concern in the county. The large number of reservoirs located inside Westchester provide drinking water for some residents as well as for residents of New York City and several cities in Connecticut. The largest reservoir system in the County is part of the New York City supply system which has three components - the Croton reservoir source system which covers 18,000 acres of land and water surface in Westchester plus additional areas of Putnam County, the Catskill system and the Delaware system. Water from the two upstate systems passes through Westchester via aqueducts and the Kensico Reservoir on the way to New York City. The City's system provides water to 85% of Westchester's residents.

In the 1980s, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) required preparation of plans to filter all surface water sources. By 1994, New York City and local water companies had prepared plans to comply. However, New York City's plan applied only to the Croton system as the City sought EPA approval of an alternative filtration avoidance plan to address point and non-point source pollution threats in the Catskill and Delaware systems. This avoidance plan incorporated a comprehensive set of rules regulating development within all of the City's watershed, including the Croton watershed even though its water will be filtered. The County and the nine municipalities with land in the watershed concluded that application of restrictive regulations could have a significant impact on development. Construction of sewage treatment systems and roads and the future development of centers - particularly the north county hamlets - could be severely restricted or prohibited.



*The Croton Dam is the final checkpoint on water flowing from the 300-square-mile Croton watershed. Nine additional dams and reservoirs are located upstream.*



After an extensive period of negotiation and discussion, an agreement on watershed protection was reached in Fall 1995 among the affected New York State counties, municipalities, New York State, federal agencies and the City of New York. The agreement outlined a protection plan that featured public acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands, detailed development regulations, enforcement and a planning program.

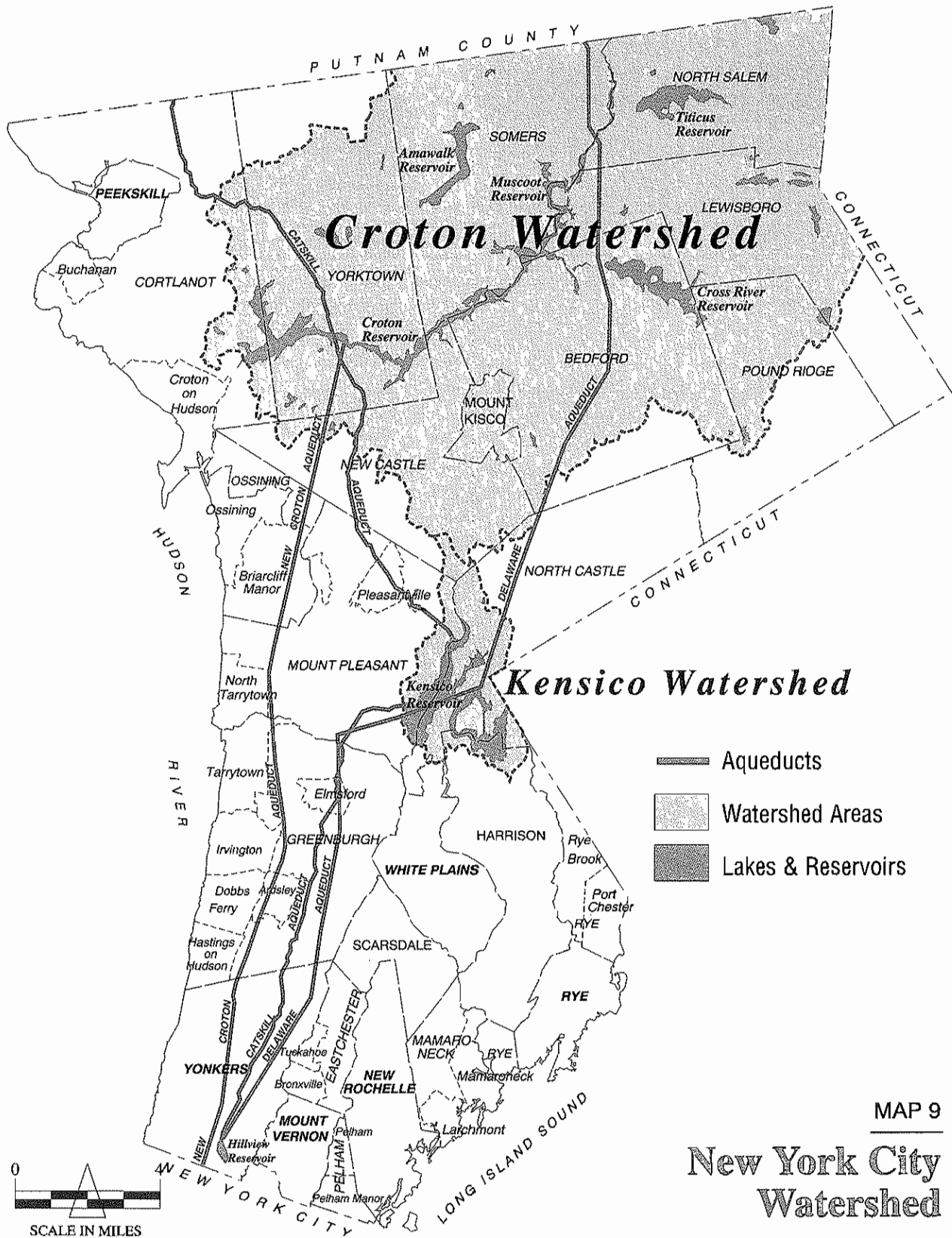
The multi-year watershed planning program requires the active and joint participation of Westchester County and the municipalities. Means to both protect the character of the communities and to prevent degradation of water supply are to be identified. These measures are anticipated to include diversion of wastewater from the watershed, upgrades of sewage disposal systems and non-point pollution controls. The objectives of the planning program parallel the policies of **Patterns**.

**Drinking water delivery** is the other key aspect of freshwater resource planning. Groundwater, through individual or community wells, provides drinking water for 10% of the county's residents, primarily those in northeast Westchester. Such resources may be limited in their ability to provide reliable supplies of safe, clean water. They are susceptible to contamination from a variety of sources and may be unable to keep pace with population growth. A 1987 water supply study prepared by the County recommended that additional sources of raw water be established, that distribution systems be linked and that the capacity of the County's Amawalk Water Treatment Facility be increased. Many of the concepts behind these recommendations have been realized, although in different forms, spurred by the federal requirements for filtered drinking water supplies. Opportunities for increased regional cooperation exist.

**Drought conditions** have occurred with frequency in Westchester despite the abundance of freshwater resources. Some former, now unused reservoirs which might serve as back-up or emergency water supplies are now private landholdings, subject to development pressures.

**Wetlands** are critical to groundwater supplies and protection of reservoir water quality, as well as to storm water management and wildlife. Considerable wetland acreage has been lost or impaired through draining, filling and development. Many remaining wetlands are in jeopardy. Naturally vegetated wetlands and watercourse buffers play a pivotal role in maintaining wetland integrity, a fact not widely recognized.

- c) **SHORELINE RESOURCES.** Management of coastal and riverfront lands is of growing importance to a public increasingly concerned with better access to the waterfront, with broader water recreation opportunities and with open space protection. Water quality is also under close scrutiny. The western end of Long Island Sound, an "estuary of national significance," is biologically imperiled as a result of nutrient contributions from sewage treatment plants and non-point source pollution from land uses within the tributary drainage basins. Large areas of tidal wetlands have been lost to filling or development.





Control over Westchester's two beautiful coastlines is in the hands of 22 municipalities with characteristics as diverse as the city of Yonkers and the village of Buchanan. The ability and resources of these municipalities to deal with coastal zone management, alone or in concert with other government agencies, is of importance to everyone in Westchester County. Similarly, program objectives of the Hudson River Greenway focus on waterfront access, shoreline tracts and local waterfront planning.

- d) AIR RESOURCES. The 1990 amendments to the Clean Air Act are aimed at reducing toxic emissions from mobile, stationary and consumer sources. Westchester has limited stationary sources of pollution. However its mobile sources, namely vehicles, place the county on the list of areas of extreme/severe non-attainment of safe ozone levels. Employers of over 100 employees have been targeted to establish vehicle trip reduction plans which include promotion of alternate means of travel. To assist in this challenge, the County and the private sector have formed the Westchester Transportation Management Organization.
- e) ENERGY CONSERVATION. Since the fuel shortage of the 1970s, the nation has had to confront its dependence on foreign energy sources, wasteful attitudes towards fossil fuels and the need for energy conservation and alternative fuel sources. The County has sponsored important initiatives in this area including construction of a "garbage to energy" plant and a materials recovery facility as well as operation of the Bee-Line public transit system.

In some circumstances, the County is a designated administrator of federal and state regulations. Even when it is not, cities, towns and villages that treasure their own jurisdiction over land use often look to the County as both mediator and coordinator among governments on environmental issues.

### Strategies

#### *1. Implement measures to protect natural resources.*

##### The County and the municipalities can:

- ☐ Require implementation of best management practices for erosion and sediment control and storm water management as part of all construction projects.
- ☐ Manage public properties to avoid nutrient intensive uses and treatments (fertilizer, pesticide and herbicide) within or adjacent to wetlands, water courses, reservoirs or identified aquifers and wellhead protection areas.
- ☐ Incorporate energy conservation techniques in the design and maintenance of public facilities.
- ☐ Designate as critical environmental areas those lands and waters with extremely sensitive environmental features so as to insure full consideration of potential environmental impacts of construction.





*Best Management Practices, effectively applied, can control soil from eroding on construction sites. Such measures can significantly mitigate the water quality impacts from development.*

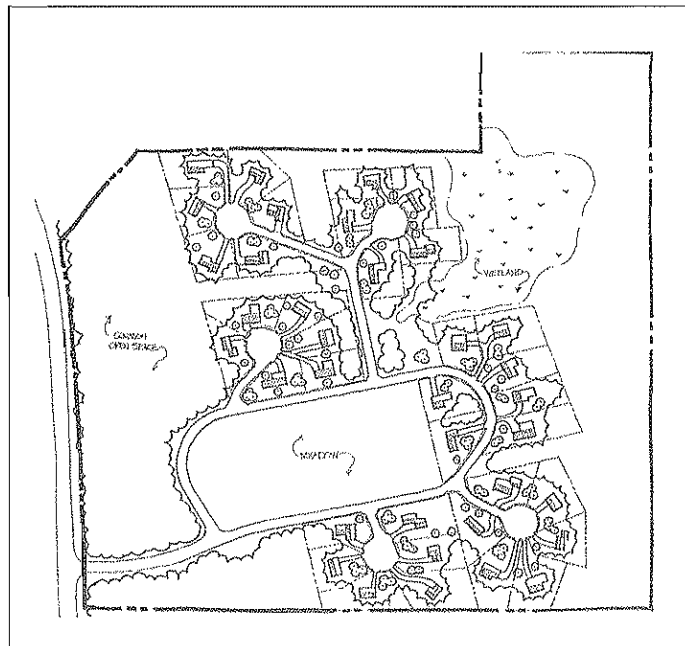
- ☐ Protect significant land areas through regular evaluations of available parcels and identification of appropriate measures to establish protection when warranted - acquisition by the County, by the municipality or jointly; acquisition by conservancy groups; conservation easements; land use regulation.

**The County can:**

- ☐ Explore opportunities to provide emergency water supplies by reactivating abandoned reservoirs and constructing connections between adjacent water supply systems.

**The municipalities can:**

- ☐ Enact wetland, tree preservation and steep slope protection ordinances.
- ☐ Amend subdivision and zoning regulations to include clustering, construction standards and other measures that protect the environment.
- ☐ Require consideration of impacts on water quantity and water quality as part of the review of proposed development.
- ☐ Encourage the use of conservation easements to protect wetland and riparian systems.



*Cluster subdivisions set land aside as permanent open space in place of conventional layouts that divide land entirely into building lots and roads. There is no increase in housing units and important natural features get better protection.*

- ☐ Participate in regional and subregional planning efforts focusing on environmental issues that cross municipal lines and require a coordinated response.
- ☐ Promote public access to land adjacent to the waters' edge.
- ☐ Ensure road salts are stored and used in an environmentally safe manner.
- ☐ Prepare and adopt local waterfront revitalization programs in coastal zone communities to set guidelines for development and redevelopment and to provide coastal resource protection.
- ☐ Protect prime agricultural lands.
- ☐ Implement site planning and design techniques, such as building orientation and use of plant materials, to maximize energy conservation including the benefits of solar energy.

**2. *Establish a framework for coordinated review and action on environmental issues.***

**The County can:**

- ☐ Assist in creating a unified and effective response to significant regional or subregional environmental issues when they arise by nurturing and coordinating working relationships among potentially affected municipalities.
- ☐ Pursue development and implementation of intermunicipal watershed protection plans.
- ☐ Assist in achieving cost effective coordinated water supply filtration and delivery systems by subregion.
- ☐ Pursue and implement the watershed protection plan outlined in the 1995 New York City Watershed Agreement with the participation and cooperation of the involved municipalities.
- ☐ Assist in coordinating waterfront planning efforts among applicable municipalities.
- ☐ Encourage the inclusions of coastal zone resource protection and public access in waterfront plans.

**3. *Establish a reliable and current environmental data base.***

**The County can:**

- ☐ Continue to utilize the County geographic information system (GIS) to develop a

comprehensive database of environmentally sensitive areas - wetlands, streams, aquifers, steep slopes and agricultural uses.

- ☐ Utilize the natural resources database to identify potential conservation areas and significant open space corridors.

**The municipalities can:**

- ☐ Prepare natural resource inventories in conjunction with comprehensive plan updates so as to integrate natural resource information into land use decisions.
- ☐ Develop GIS capability compatible with the County system so as to enhance an exchange of data and to establish an integrated county-wide data base.

**4. *Provide advice and technical assistance on environmental matters.***

**The County can:**

- ☐ Continue to use the technical resources of the County government in the review of development proposals submitted through the referral process to identify and suggest mitigation of potential environmental impacts.
- ☐ Rely on County Planning Board policies for protecting steep slopes, ridgelines, wetlands and trees in responding to local referrals.
- ☐ Conduct educational programs for municipal officials and the public on water conservation, water quality protection and reduction of non-point source pollution.
- ☐ Develop model wetland, steep slope, erosion control and flood plain regulations to assist municipalities upgrade the review process for new development.
- ☐ Encourage, and develop model regulations for, the use of clustering, transfer of development rights and overlay zoning as tools to preserve significant land resources.
- ☐ Establish guidelines and standards for the regulation of open space, tree protection, scenic corridors and wildlife habitat for use at the municipal level in the review and approval of development.



*"Wet" detention basins and artificial wetlands, such as these at the Westchester County Airport, control flooding and improve the quality of stormwater runoff.*

### C. HOUSING

Encourage a range of housing types that are affordable to renters and home buyers, with each municipality addressing its needs for affordable housing as well as a share of the regional need.

#### The Setting

On the one hand, Westchester contains some of the most desirable, and expensive, housing in the northeast region of the U.S. On the other, many who work in the county cannot afford to live here. The nature of this housing shortage is a worrisome economic indicator for the county.

In June 1992, the County Board of Legislators adopted a "Statement of Need for Affordable Housing," based on a Rutgers University study which outlined a need for 5,000 units of affordable housing by the year 2000. The legislative statement concluded that three income levels of residents should be targeted for affordable housing: middle, moderate and low income. The County Planning Board's housing policy is guided by this statement of need.

To meet the growing demand for affordable housing, Westchester County took the initiative in the mid-1980s by establishing its Housing Implementation Fund, the only county in New York State to do so. By January 1995, the fund had financed infrastructure improvements associated with 500 units of affordable housing, representing a substantial portion of the total new housing stock.

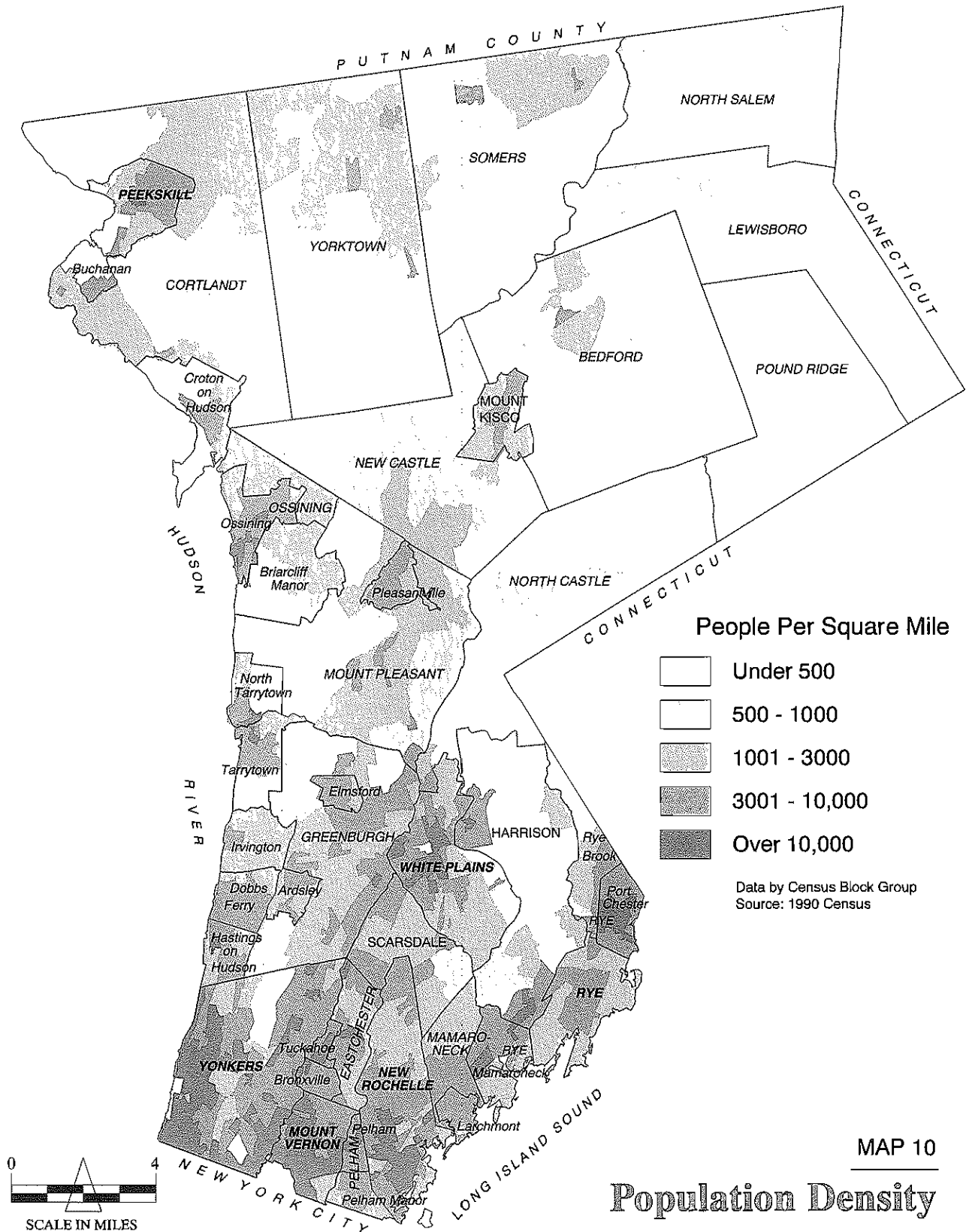
In another effort to encourage affordable housing, the County created a "New Homes Construction Fund" and a "New Homes Land Acquisition Fund" after the New York State Attorney General rendered an opinion in 1992 that the State Constitution does not prohibit County housing programs.

As administrator of the federal Community Development Block Grant for municipalities in the Urban County Consortium, the County has been able to help communities fight the loss of affordable housing in their own backyards. By giving priority to housing initiatives and neighborhood revitalization in awarding grants, the County has facilitated the rehabilitation of thousands of housing units.

In addition, the County has provided planning and technical assistance to local governments and private agencies willing to develop affordable housing within their communities using unique models tailored to their needs.

#### Framing the Issues

The shortage of affordable housing has many causes and effects.



- a) CONTRIBUTING ECONOMIC FACTORS. Trends in the economy and in the real estate market in the 1980s had adverse impacts on the availability of affordable housing. Increases in family incomes did not keep pace with the dramatic rise in real estate values. Thousands of rental units vanished as many buildings converted to cooperatives and condominiums. The availability of financing, particularly from federal assistance, dropped significantly. The amount of land suitable for affordable housing became scarce.
- b) REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT. As the complexity of the land use regulatory process increased between 1970 and 1990, the ability of developers to package and produce lower cost housing diminished. While much of the expanded focus and time required for the review of construction proposals is warranted on environmental grounds, some new requirements and zoning standards have left little opportunity or flexibility for advancing housing specifically geared toward low or moderate income families.
- c) POPULATION DISLOCATION. The lack of housing units affordable to low and moderate income employees causes some families to bypass Westchester and to seek employment and housing elsewhere. Others find affordable housing in nearby counties and commute long distances to jobs in Westchester aggravating road congestion and air pollution. The loss of rental units contributed to a sharp rise in Westchester's homeless population and led the County to undertake an extensive shelter program whose main beneficiaries were women and children.
- d) COMMUNITY IMPACT. Communities lose an important fraction of consumer spending when employees of local enterprises are unable to find suitable rental or home owner units in the county. As public service workers and would-be volunteers move away and are not replaced, Westchester's local governments have difficulty recruiting employees and enlisting personnel for public services traditionally handled by volunteers.
- e) BUSINESS LOCATION. When choices are available, businesses and entrepreneurs will seek to locate in an area where housing is readily available at a reasonable cost. A shortage of affordable housing, for purchase or rent, may impact business location decisions.

County and municipal governments possess discretionary powers to address the local and regional shortfall of affordable housing, often in cooperation with the private sector.

### Strategies

#### *1. Adopt and implement policies that support affordable housing.*

##### The County and the municipalities can:

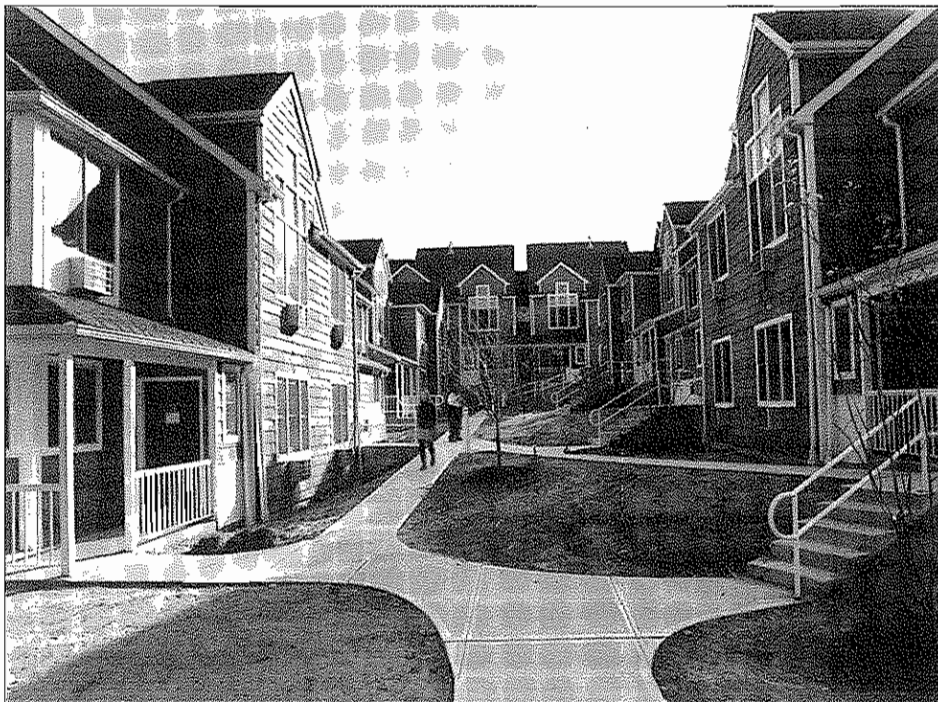
- ☐ Encourage private sector participation, including development of municipal/not-for-profit partnerships.

**The County can:**

- ☐ Provide guidance, including recommended allocations, to assist all municipalities in meeting a share of the regional need for affordable housing.
- ☐ Make County housing goals and policies a factor in County Planning Board responses to local planning and zoning referrals.
- ☐ Develop guidelines for establishing qualifying income ranges, sales prices and rent levels for affordable units.
- ☐ Seek state constitutional authorization for the use of County borrowing for affordable housing.
- ☐ Encourage measures to provide for permanent housing which will reduce the need for emergency housing facilities and transitional housing.

**The municipalities can:**

- ☐ Assess housing needs at municipal level and update regularly.
- ☐ Include affordable housing goals and locational criteria in comprehensive plans.
- ☐ Use code enforcement to insure maintenance of existing housing stock and to improve housing quality.



*The Hommocks Development sponsored by the Mamaroneck Housing Authority and the Town of Mamaroneck created 54 new rental housing units for low and moderate income families.*

**2. Make effective use of available federal, state, County and local programs, funds and resources.**

**The County and the municipalities can:**

- ☐ Make public land available for construction of affordable housing thereby reducing the development cost.
- ☐ Pursue programs to preserve and rehabilitate existing housing units.
- ☐ Provide funding and other incentives for affordable housing construction and rehabilitation through property tax abatement, where appropriate, and through revolving funds that can receive public and private contributions.
- ☐ Explore opportunities for development with not-for-profit organizations, public housing authorities or public/private partnerships as developers of the housing.

**The County can:**

- ☐ Give priority in awarding Urban County Community Development Block Grants to projects that promote affordable housing, especially when part of neighborhood revitalization programs that reinforce established centers or developed corridors.
- ☐ Channel capital spending into established centers that can accommodate affordable housing.
- ☐ Use the Housing Implementation Fund to reduce the cost of affordable housing through infrastructure improvements where appropriate.
- ☐ Encourage municipalities to apply for federal and state affordable housing programs, including federal Section 8 housing vouchers.
- ☐ Extend technical assistance to municipalities and not-for-profit housing corporations that provide low cost and special needs housing.
- ☐ Offer training programs and information on affordable housing programs to local governments and the private sector.

**The municipalities can:**

- ☐ Participate fully in state and federal housing assistance programs, including the federal Section 8 voucher program.
- ☐ Explore creative financing techniques for developing affordable housing.





*Doyle House Before*

*Private funds were pooled by the Town of Bedford and the County to rehabilitate the Doyle House in the hamlet of Katonah. Donated to the Town, the building is now divided into four low-income rental units.*



*Doyle House After*

### **3. Provide opportunities for affordable housing in land use regulation.**

#### **The County can:**

- ☐ Prepare model ordinances that incorporate means of advancing provision of affordable housing.

#### **The municipalities can:**

- ☐ Revise and update zoning ordinances and building codes at regular intervals to reflect housing needs and opportunities.
- ☐ Offer density bonuses for a percentage of affordable units in new development.
- ☐ Permit accessory apartments.
- ☐ Provide for and encourage mixed use development (housing over stores and residential components of office parks).
- ☐ Permit non-traditional family group residency consistent with health and safety standards for occupancy of single-family residences.

#### D. TRANSPORTATION

Support transportation alternatives that serve the needs of workers, consumers and residents and that improve air quality by enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of public transportation and reducing solo-driving.

Enhance the appropriate functions of the county's corridors by adapting already developed sections into efficient and attractive multi-use places, by protecting the quality of scenic routes and by making road and transit improvements that will reduce congestion and ease movement on travel routes.

##### The Setting

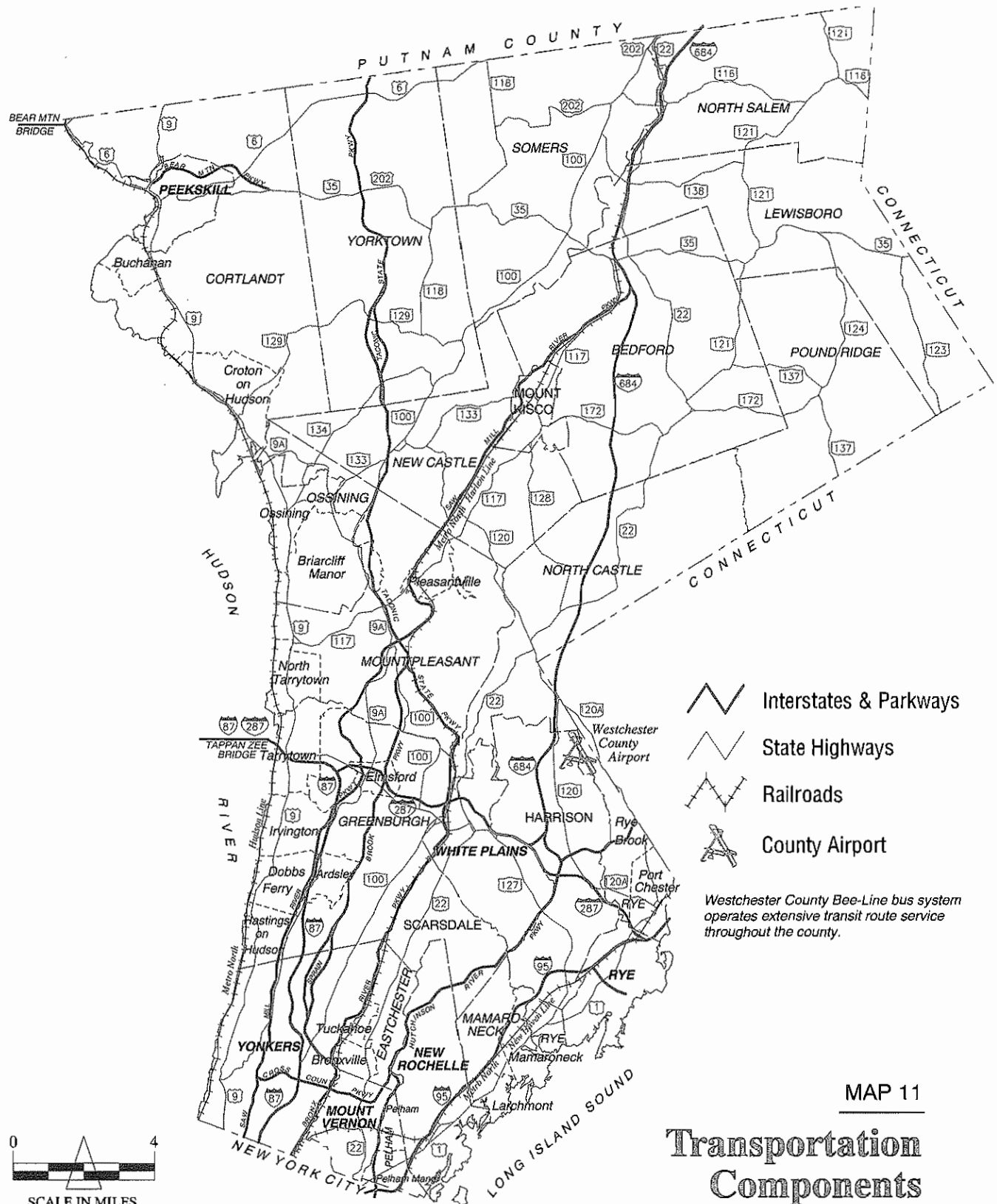
When the federal government put its standards for clean air into effect in the early 1990s, development models once governed by the attraction of open land and a motoring public went out of style, from a regional planner's perspective.

Automobiles remain the dominant means of transportation. Travel on New York State roads is estimated to increase 4% per year but no new limited access highways are under construction or even under consideration. The last completely new major roads to be constructed in Westchester were the Sprain Brook Parkway, completed in 1981, and Interstate 684, completed in 1974. Recent construction has focused on rebuilding existing roads to increase capacity and to improve safety. Ownership and maintenance of the road system in the county is divided among the state, the County and 45 municipalities.

Westchester offers good transportation options for many travel routes. The County operates the third largest public transit system in New York State and one of the largest suburban county based systems in the United States. The Bee-Line system includes 360 vehi-



*Highway access at the junction of Interstate 287, the Hutchinson River Parkway and Interstate 684 combined with municipal planning policies and development interest to produce a concentration of corporate headquarters and campus office parks, part of the "Platinum Mile".*



Westchester County Department of Planning

*Metro North Commuter Railroad serves 44 stations and 34 million passengers annually in Westchester County through its three divisions. Amtrak provides service from three stations.*



cles serving 58 local, express and feeder/distribution routes extending into all but one Westchester municipality, Putnam County and New York City. Passengers on the system total nearly 100,000 each weekday. The County has begun to explore new types of potential service, as outlined in "Transit Into the 21st Century", the County long-range transportation plan.

The three commuter rail lines of MTA Metro-North that lie within Westchester's historic paths of development serve 70,000 commuters daily. The New Haven, Harlem and Hudson lines provide service between Grand Central Terminal in Manhattan and New Haven, Dover Plains and Poughkeepsie respectively. Rail ridership, also increasing, includes significant growth in reverse commuting and intra-county travel.

The Westchester County airport, operated by the County, gives Westchester residents and businesses easy access to other regions. Scheduled commercial service connects to such hubs as Chicago, Detroit and Minneapolis but general aviation accounts for the largest share of the traffic. Airport operations raise complex planning issues including national and local accessibility, ground traffic, aircraft noise, land use compatibility, corporate location and service and interstate commerce.

The County is a key player in the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC), the regional coordinating agency for federal spending on transportation systems. NYMTC's goal is improved linkages between all components of the transportation network (highway, rail and freight) and coordination of components and services. Unified fares for travelers between the Bee-Line and Metro-North was a first step towards a fare system that would include New York City's bus and subway lines.

Studies of heavily used corridors prepared by the County Departments of Planning, Transportation and Public Works provide a baseline for planning infrastructure, road improvements and traffic controls. Such studies have become broader in scope to emphasize transit improvements, identification of travel alternatives and links between land use decisions and transportation.

At the state and federal level, revenues once devoted primarily to road building are increasingly used for mass transit and pedestrian access projects, though at lower spending levels. One mechanism is the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) which allows funds formerly restricted to highway projects to be spent on surface transportation of all kinds.

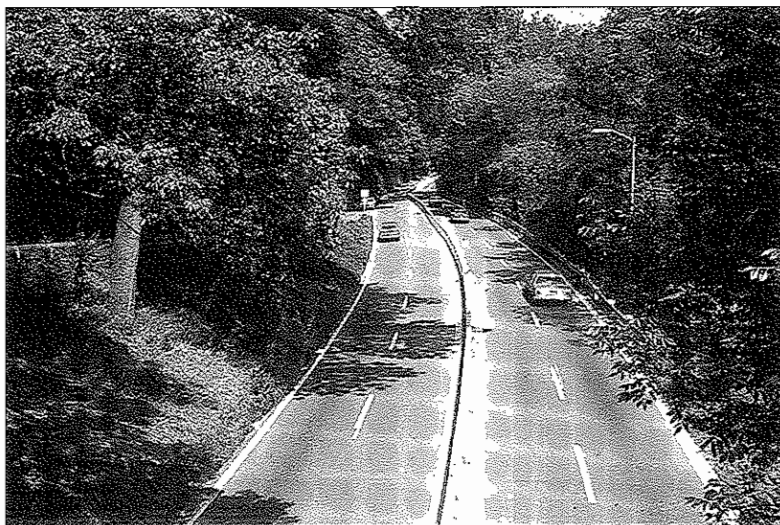
### **Framing the Issues**

No issue is more critical to the county's physical development than transportation planning. It is central to the centers/corridors/open space pattern that is the matrix of Westchester's land use policy. Several factors shape transportation planning:

- a) COMPLYING WITH THE CLEAN AIR ACT AMENDMENTS. Under state provisions for implementation of the federal Clean Air Act Amendments (CAAA), the County must administer compliance programs. As of 1995, Westchester County was overseeing the Employee Commuter Options (ECO) programs of all employers of more than 100 people, including municipal governments and private business. ECO is geared toward reducing the number of workers arriving at a work site in single-occupancy vehicles.

Over the years, governments, employers and taxpayers have joined in subsidizing roads and parking lots for the driving public. The CAAA helps to restore a level playing field by supporting other transportation modes and efficient land uses.

- b) PROVIDING ACCESS TO CENTERS AND DEVELOPED CORRIDORS. Concentrated centers are intended to be focal points of development. These centers and corridors where development is strongly established need the improved access that would promote investment and bring people and their jobs within convenient reach of each other. Better coordination and links among cars, buses, rail and para-transit options are required to encourage inter-modal, efficient travel.



*Westchester's parkways have required careful planning to preserve their beauty while maintaining safe travel conditions.*

- c) EXPANDING THE REACH OF TRANSIT SERVICES. Development in Westchester has been shifting for decades from the urban and more densely developed areas of the south county to a pattern of low density construction across the north county. Concurrently the number of people commuting into Westchester to work has increased. Both trends add cars to roads that were never designed for heavy use and challenge transit agencies to devise alternatives.
- d) MAINTAINING TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE. The extensive transportation system in Westchester - roads, bridges, rail lines - require constant upkeep and renewal. Funding for this unglamorous work has always been in short supply but with travel demands mounting and no new facilities planned, maintenance must receive priority attention.
- e) RELIEVING CONGESTION. Increasing travel demands on a fixed system lead inevitably to congestion, especially where roads also provide access to development sites. Because congestion directly affects economic health and quality of life, there is an urgent need to reduce travel demand, improve efficiency and increase capacity of existing roads and rail lines.

The County seeks to join with municipalities and with the business community in approaches that reconcile changes in travel habits with the need to build Westchester's economic base. Access to public transit is a crucial factor in the Westchester business community's ability to attract investors and workers. County policy on siting new residential and commercial construction must consider land use and transportation together so as to promote economic health, protect open space character and help meet federal air quality standards.

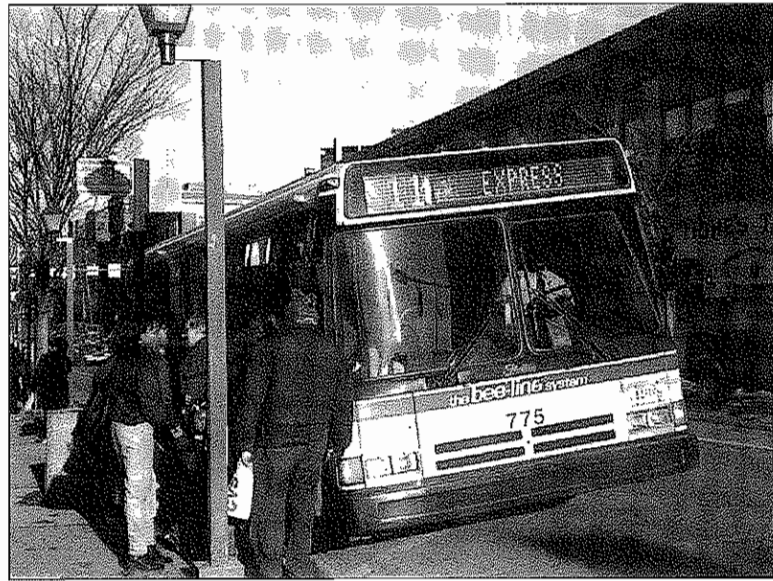
### Strategies

#### *1. Take direct actions to meet Clean Air Act Amendment goals.*

##### The County can:

- ☐ Meet federal standards for trip reduction by County personnel by promoting: preferential parking and pricing policies for shared rides, flexible work hours where appropriate and use of the Bee-Line, Metro-North and car-pooling.
- ☐ Increase the number of County vehicles that use alternative fuels to reduce emissions.
- ☐ Relocate County offices which serve clients on a regular basis to locations in centers where client need is heaviest and transit service can be provided.
- ☐ Provide bicycle and pedestrian lanes as an integral part of road improvement projects and promote use of the County railway system.

*Annual ridership on the County Bee-Line System averaged nearly 30 million passengers between 1986 and 1995.*



- ☐ Upgrade maintenance standards of municipal vehicles and machinery to reduce emissions.

## ***2. Implement the Strategic Transit Concept of the Bee-Line Long Range Plan.***

### **The County can:**

- ☐ Improve schedules and routes of the Bee-Line bus network that serves the urban centers.
- ☐ Integrate Metro-North Commuter Railroad lines as a backbone of the system for long haul service.
- ☐ Establish Transit Centers at rail stations to permit easy connections between bus routes and between bus and rail services.
- ☐ Establish a cross-county trunk route for transit services in the I-287 corridor.
- ☐ Develop peak-hour shuttle service, feeder lines and dial-a-ride services to match local conditions.
- ☐ Pursue coordination of services with adjacent areas - Putnam, Rockland and Dutchess Counties and Connecticut.
- ☐ Develop public transportation access to the Westchester County Airport from key transportation centers.



**3. *Maintain a planning overview of the transportation system.***

**The County and the municipalities can:**

- ☐ Channel capital budget expenditures to infrastructure improvements that reduce travel need and make centers more attractive places for residential and commercial investment.
- ☐ Promote land use policies and transportation investments that nurture establishment of multi-modal linkages such as transit centers.

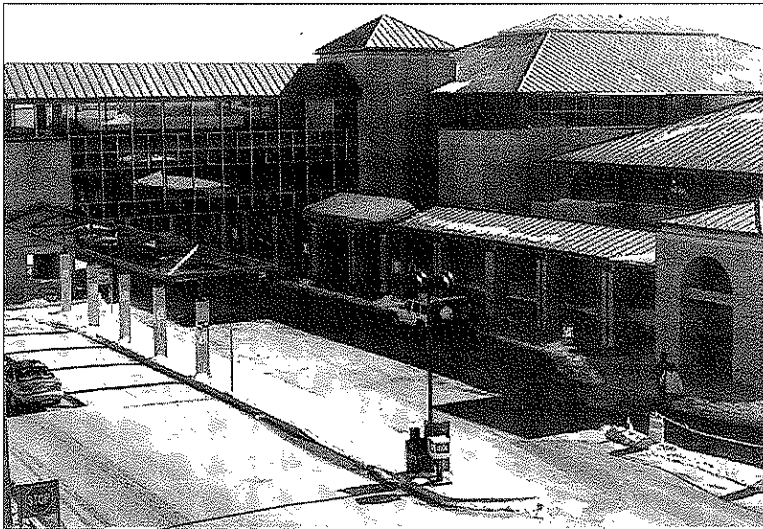
**The County can:**

- ☐ Maintain an effective role in the activities of the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council with attention to land use implications of all proposed transportation improvements.
- ☐ Undertake corridor and subregion studies when appropriate to assess the needs for public transit and road improvements.
- ☐ Influence site plans for new development along major roads through County Planning Board comment on referrals and through the County's ability to regulate curb cuts on County roads.
- ☐ Emphasize transit and pedestrian friendly design as key considerations in local referrals for development in centers and developed corridors.
- ☐ Implement the Westchester Airport master plan.

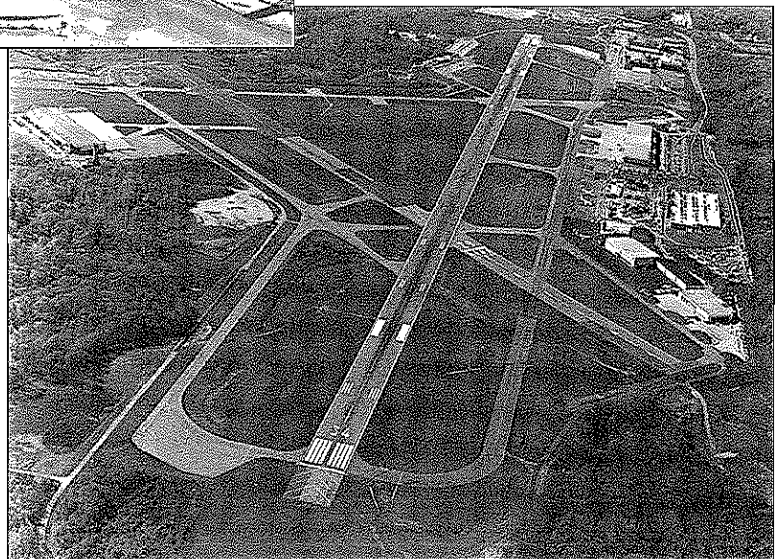
**The municipalities can:**

- ☐ Update comprehensive plans to encourage development in centers and to set standards of urban design that would improve the function of transportation corridors where development has taken place.
- ☐ Review parking ratios and revise where appropriate to discourage single-occupancy vehicle trips to employment centers and avoid excess parking; modify parking layouts in downtown shopping centers and train station parking facilities to provide preferential parking space and price rates for those who car pool; make CAAA requirements an integral element of site plan approval.
- ☐ Update site plan regulations to require pedestrian facilities, including sheltered walks and direct access from commercial buildings to streets or stations offering public transportation facilities.
- ☐ Require comprehensive identification and investigation of transportation system impacts and mitigation as part of the environmental impact review for large development proposals.

- ☐ Regulate curbcuts setbacks and landscaping where development occurs along transportation corridors.
- ☐ Support bus and train use by providing municipal sheltered waiting locations and expanded parking facilities.
- ☐ Help the County inform residents about available call-in and customized transportation services in the County system.
- ☐ Cooperate in the development of park and ride facilities.
- ☐ Support mixed use development at appropriate locations.



*The new passenger terminal neared completion in 1995 at the Westchester County Airport, a 675-acre facility located in Harrison, North Castle and Rye Brook.*



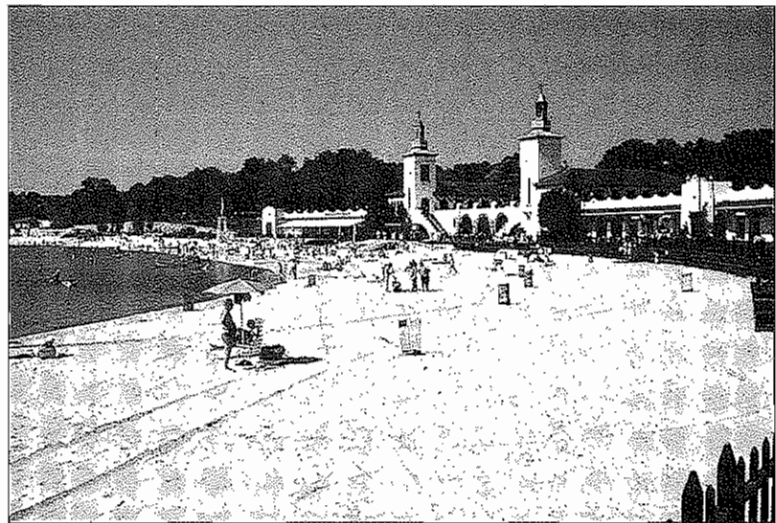
## E. PARKS AND RECREATION

Enhance use of Westchester's parks, beaches and recreation facilities by improving public access, by providing a variety of natural settings for passive enjoyment and by taking into account the need for recreation close to population centers and the interests of the county's changing population.

### The Setting

Planners traditionally refer to Westchester's system of parks and its open space in the same breath, largely because they have a shared life. But open space is a broad umbrella, encompassing parks, the preservation of ecologically sensitive lands and other diverse contributing elements that establish an open space character. The broad picture of open space is discussed in Chapters III and VI. This section examines Westchester's responsibility for providing parks and recreation as a function of County government.

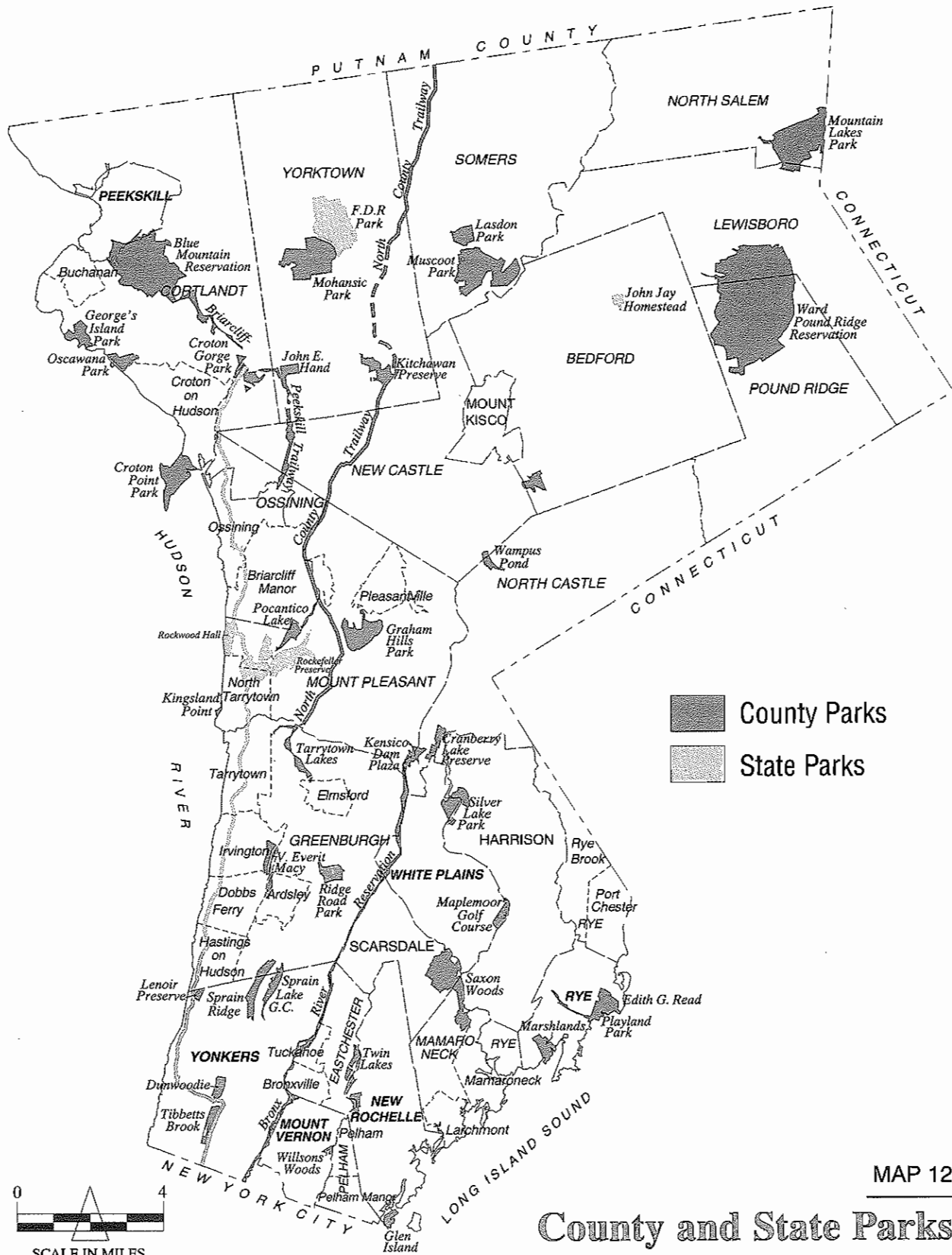
*The County's Playland Park on the Long Island Sound was developed in 1923. It features a beach, pool, ice skating rink and an amusement park that is a National Historic Landmark.*



Westchester County has been accumulating parklands since the establishment of the Bronx Parkway Commission in 1906. A massive acquisition program began when that agency was succeeded by the Westchester County Park Commission in 1922. By 1930, Mohansic, Glen Island, Ward Pound Ridge, Saxon Woods, Playland, Maple Moor, Tibbetts Brook and several other sites had been added to the County's Bronx River Parkway holdings. After a break during World War II, the County continued to acquire properties and diverse recreational facilities close to the concentrated population centers in southern Westchester.

In 1965, the County published a systematic plan for parks, recreation and open space, which included criteria for land acquisition and which listed parcels that would meet those criteria. The primary emphasis was on providing sufficient park and recreation space to serve the anticipated population increase. Several major acquisitions were made in the 1960s.

Westchester County expanded its land acquisition goals in the 1970s and introduced the concept of linear parks to connect important open spaces and to increase public access to



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them. As of 1995, a network of 60 miles of trails on separate rights-of-way had been established. The links greatly enhanced opportunities for hiking and cycling in Westchester.

As of October 1995, 16,000 acres were in the County park system. As extensive as the County's park and recreation holdings and programs are, they represent only part of the picture in Westchester.

New York State operates two major state parks in Westchester County. Municipalities and school districts provide scores of public parks and recreation within their own jurisdictions. These local ball fields, swimming pools, tennis courts, golf courses and nature preserves supplement the County's own extensive system. The facilities of Westchester Community College, Purchase College and private colleges offer other recreational opportunities.

### **Framing the Issues**

Parks and recreation programs are in special jeopardy when pressures mount to cut government spending. But fiscal constraints can also stimulate the County, municipalities and the private sector to use innovative techniques to enhance recreational opportunities. The principal issues confronting the County's park and recreation services are:

- a) **LAND ACQUISITION.** Competition for capital funds combined with the high cost of Westchester's remaining open lands restrict the County's ability to pursue its long-standing land acquisition program for parks.
- b) **PROGRAMMING.** Fiscal constraints on the County budget are putting limits on the scope and range of active recreation programming conducted by the County.
- c) **INTERRELATIONSHIPS.** The County's park system is one component of a broad range of recreation opportunities in Westchester. Competition and duplication among state, local and private programs is a wasteful use of recreation resources. A comprehensive system where cost efficiency and avoidance of overlap are prime motivators should be the goal of recreation operators in the county.
- d) **REACHING PEOPLE.** Competing interests complicate the siting of recreation facilities and the acquisition of new park lands. Factors that come into play include: the need for locations near population concentrations, especially in the south county; the availability of land, primarily in the more sparsely settled north county; and the reaction of adjacent private land owners and neighborhoods.

Because County and municipal initiatives have similar public benefits, the provision of park and recreation facilities in Westchester is fertile ground for cooperative effort. A pioneering step in that direction was the County's partnership with the Village of Hastings in the 1993 acquisition of Hillside Woods.

## Strategies

### *1. Plan parks and recreation as components of a comprehensive system comprising many providers and types of properties.*

#### The County and the municipalities can:

- ☐ Develop partnerships of the County, municipalities and school districts to acquire and operate recreational land, facilities and activities.
- ☐ Utilize parks and recreational facilities for cultural programs, special events and festivals.
- ☐ Cooperate with the Hudson River Valley Greenway initiatives along the Hudson River.

#### The County can:

- ☐ Periodically assess the recreational needs of the county's population and park use.
- ☐ Develop a county-wide trail plan to promote integration of existing bicycle trails, lanes and routes and establish a framework that can be used by municipalities, the state and the County to plan new facilities.

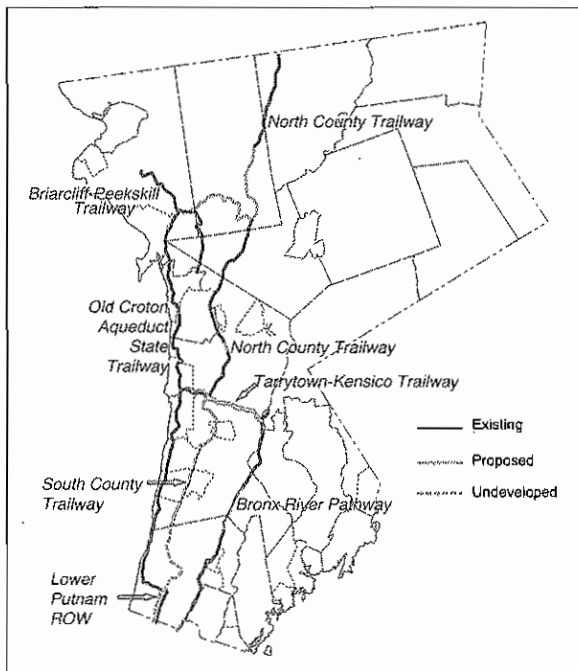


Figure 8: County trailway system. Westchester County's plan for a 90-mile core trail system links the north and south ends of the County with separate right-of-way trails. The figure shows the development status of the system as of 1995. Not shown are local trails and designated bicycle routes that expand the system.

**The municipalities can:**

- ☐ Consider acquiring first refusal rights for private properties that provide important local recreation opportunities.
- ☐ Include promenades and public open space in local waterfront revitalization plans (LWRP).
- ☐ Encourage private developments to incorporate public access and open space corridors, where appropriate, to integrate trailways and to enhance linear parks.

**2. *Coordinate the physical development of new parks.***

**The County and the municipalities can:**

- ☐ Improve access to public lands.
- ☐ Acquire and enhance linear parks and trails.

**The County can:**

- ☐ Add active recreational facilities to existing parks where appropriate, especially in southern Westchester, so as to meet subregional needs.
- ☐ Direct capital spending for land acquisitions to southern Westchester where land is accessible to population concentrations.

**The municipalities can:**

- ☐ Use the subdivision and site plan review and approval process to identify recreation needs and to acquire land or fees to meet additional demands for recreation due to new development.



*The County's parks are frequently used for special events and festivals. Kensico Dam Plaza at the base of the impressive dam for New York City's Kensico Reservoir is an especially popular site.*



## F. HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

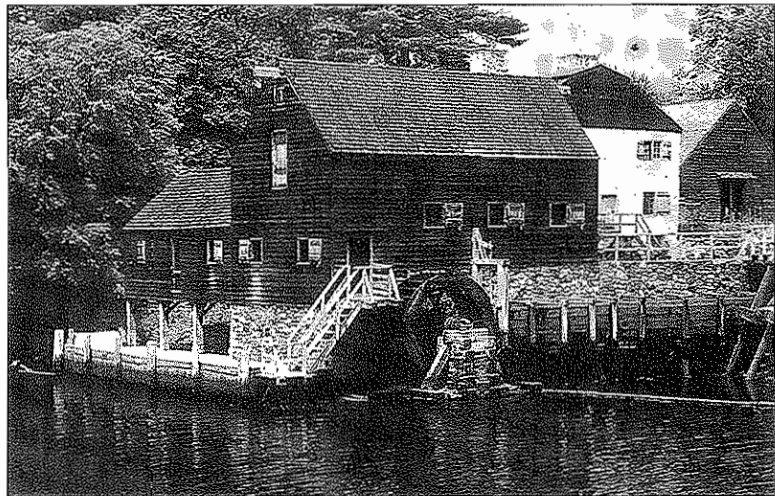
Enhance the quality of life for Westchester residents by protecting the county's educational, cultural and historical resources and factoring them into land use decisions.

### The Setting

Whatever prescriptions planners offer for the county's sound physical development, nothing affects perceptions of the quality of life in Westchester more than the county's cultural and historic resources. Although the county gains much from its proximity to the cultural resources of New York City, Westchester's own facilities, programs and rich social and architectural history are essential ingredients in establishing a sense of place for county residents.

Broadly speaking, Westchester's assets range from specific institutions such as schools, libraries and colleges to the more intangible community character. The cultural landscape includes theaters, museums, music, dance and art programs, historically and architecturally significant buildings, neighborhoods and settings. Together these elements determine how people see the county; more practically they constitute a direct economic asset that supports property values, enhances tourism and strengthens the county's reputation as a good place to live and to do business.

Substantial evidence of the county's nearly 350-year history of settlement survives across Westchester. The spectrum of historic sites ranges from the county's oldest house, dating from 1670, in the City of Rye, to the early 20th century Bronx River Reservation which runs through eight municipalities in lower Westchester. In between are the late 17th century Philipsburg Manor complex in North Tarrytown; 18th century buildings and places associated with General Washington and the Revolutionary War; the mid-19th century Lyndhurst in Tarrytown, one of America's pre-eminent Gothic Revival mansions; and late 19th and early 20th century estates and factory buildings along the Hudson River from Yonkers to Peekskill. Hamlets with turn-of-the-century and earlier buildings delight residents and tourists throughout the county. Art Deco treasures such as Playland Amusement Park and the Westchester County Center still fulfill the purposes for which they were designed and constructed.



*The mill at Philipsburg Manor, a Historic Hudson Valley property in North Tarrytown, is one of several sites in Westchester that have been restored to maintain a living record of the county's past.*

History is written on gravestones in cemeteries throughout the county, in the pages of works by Washington Irving to James Fenimore Cooper and in deeds and maps in County and local government archives.

No less an attraction is the county's abundance of public and private art. The collections at Kykuit, the Rockefeller property now open to the public, and the Chagall windows in the Union Church at Pocantico enhance life in Westchester. The sculpture gardens at PepsiCo headquarters in Purchase are a county treasure.

Across the road from PepsiCo at Purchase College's Performing Arts Center, audiences from Westchester and beyond enjoy year-round programs of music, dance and theater. Concerts at Caramoor in Katonah attract crowds from across the metropolitan area. Music schools and ensembles, theater groups, art studios and galleries appear in smaller settings across the county.

Libraries and museums, small and large, are equally important to public life. The Neuberger Museum of Art at Purchase College is an important center. The Hudson River Museum in Yonkers plays a major cultural role in the county, tailoring some programs to children in its urban neighborhood, and offering gem-like shows and exhibits to broader audiences.

The quality of the county's public and private primary and secondary schools figures heavily in attracting new residents. Westchester's twelve colleges and universities may be the most visible elements of its educational resources, but the county's 40 school districts, with their individual public schools are closest to daily life in the community.

### **Framing the Issues**

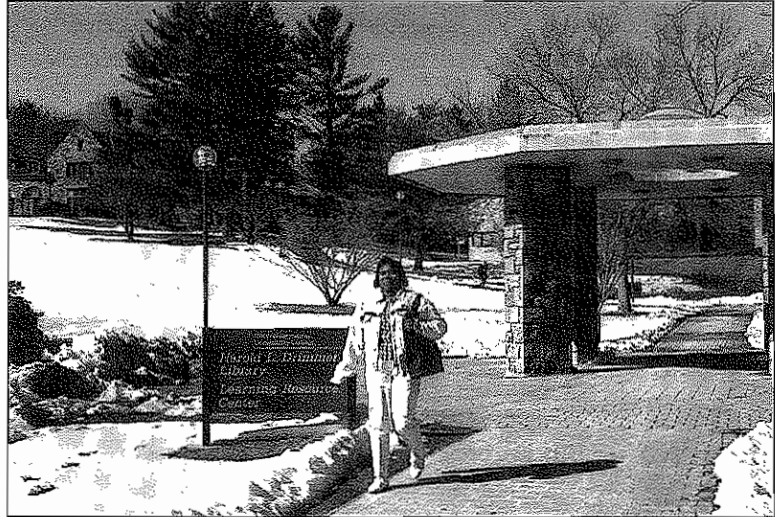
Although environmental review is required of development proposals that may have an impact on historic sites and other cultural resources, protection of Westchester's tangible heritage is by no means assured.

- a) **LANDMARK PROTECTION.** Relatively few localities have enacted local landmarks ordinances or historic district legislation. The extensive Westchester County Inventory of Historic Places imposes no restrictions on property owners or public agencies, nor are private property owners restricted as a result of listing on the New York State or National Register of Historic Places.
- b) **ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER.** Recognition of the contribution of buildings to establishing a community's character and a sense of place is often missing in the evaluation of new construction. The fact that Westchester is home to outstanding architectural examples of every period in American history, many of them grouped in single locations, does not guarantee that this will always be true. Often the setting of buildings, or of a group of buildings along a street, may have more significance to establishing a desirable and unique sense of place than any one structure.

- c) ART AND MUSEUMS. The county's cultural programs and facilities enhance neighborhoods and are dynamic elements in Westchester's growth. The needs of these institutions are not always fully reflected in local planning regulations, nor are the institutions sufficiently exploited as county assets by the business sector.

- d) EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES.

The location of public schools relates closely to residential patterns and to local planning for streets, sidewalks, public safety and recreation programs. School buildings are often the principal community setting for civic meetings and cultural activities. Intermunicipal cooperation, treated gingerly on most levels, has long been normal practice between school districts and local governments, resulting in routine planning for joint use of athletic fields and other facilities.



*Westchester Community College operates from a 350-acre campus in the center of the county.*

An educated population and work force are a municipality's greatest single asset. Westchester Community College and Purchase College/SUNY are centerpieces for the education of the county's adult population. About 10 percent of county residents between the ages of 18 and 65 enroll in programs at these two campuses or in the outreach programs of the Community College. The physical site planning of each of these public institutions is also a major responsibility of government.

The county's private colleges, including Pace, Iona, Manhattanville, Marymount, Mercy and Sarah Lawrence, are strongly geared to county enrollments. The importance of these institutions to Westchester's cultural and economic health cannot be overstated.

Both County and municipal governments must go the extra mile to make Westchester's cultural and historic resources an integral part of the planning process. In cultural affairs as in other programmatic activities, County and municipal governments can work in tandem to enhance, strengthen and protect the contributions these resources make to the quality of life in Westchester.

**Strategies**

***1. Provide information and assistance.***

**The County and the municipalities can:**

- ☐ Maintain working relationships with preservation organizations such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Preservation League of New York State, Historic Hudson Valley, the Westchester Preservation League and others in the field.

**The County can:**

- ☐ Maintain a historic and cultural resources map utilizing the County's Geographic Information System; in consultation with local preservation councils, the County can maintain a database of Westchester properties that are eligible for local designation and for listing on the Westchester County Inventory or the state and national registers of historic places.
- ☐ Assist municipalities in developing guidelines for alterations to historic or architecturally significant properties, in establishing preservation ordinances and councils and by providing information about state and federal funding sources.
- ☐ Submit local referrals of projects affecting properties of historic or architectural significance to the County historic preservation planner for review and comment.

**The municipalities can:**

- ☐ Inventory local historic, architectural and archeological resources; determine levels of significance; and incorporate findings into comprehensive plan updates.

***2. Take direct measures to protect and enhance resources.***

**The County and the municipalities can:**

- ☐ Consider acquisition, or preservation through other means, of properties of documented significance that are threatened by development or neglect, jointly where possible and with private agencies where appropriate.
- ☐ Promote tourism based on the county's historic, scenic and cultural assets.
- ☐ Seek available state or federal funds to aid in the



*The Music Hall in Tarrytown continues to provide a setting for entertainment as it has since 1885.*

acquisition or rehabilitation of sites of documented historic or architectural significance from such sources as ISTEA Enhancement funds, the CDBG program and New York State Environmental Trust Fund.

- ☐ Reach out to the business community for support in sponsoring cultural programs and providing public access to places of historic or architectural significance.
- ☐ Integrate cultural activities and programs into municipal planning and activities.
- ☐ Support cultural and educational programs with the participation of the County, local governments, school districts and libraries.

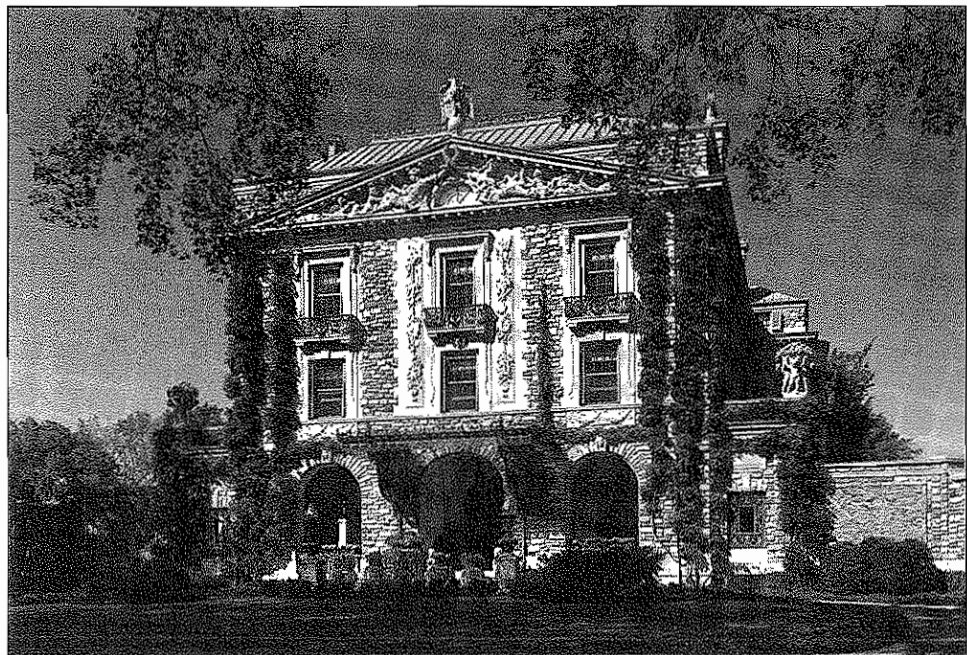
**The County can:**

- ☐ Support Community College programs and facilities that respond to employment and public needs and respect the physical setting of the college campus.
- ☐ Use the County's capital budget to enhance educational facilities that serve county residents.

**The municipalities can:**

- ☐ Enact local landmarks or historic district ordinances and establish review boards.
- ☐ Assure appropriate storage of and public accessibility to records and artifacts relating to designated local historic, architectural and archeological resources.
- ☐ Inventory areas or neighborhoods that have unique or special character and devise means to protect the components of identified significance.

*Kykuit, the former Rockefeller estate in Mount Pleasant, is now owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and open to the public.*



Ezra Stoller © Esio

## G. WASTE DISPOSAL

Maintain safe and environmentally sound systems for the removal or treatment of waste consistent with land use policies; strengthen programs to reduce the waste stream.

### The Setting

The installation of public sewer service and sewage treatment plants has profoundly affected the county's pattern of development. In the time frame encompassed by **Patterns**, the principal influences on development opportunities will be environmental considerations and constraints on public spending.

With a few exceptions, the southern and central sections of Westchester, where 90% of the population lives, are served by the County's seven wastewater treatment plants (Blind Brook, Mamaroneck, Port Chester and New Rochelle plants on the Long Island Sound shore and Yonkers, Ossining and Peekskill plants on the Hudson River shore). Feeding the plants are 190 miles of trunk sewers, 34 pump stations and 20 storm flow regulating chambers.

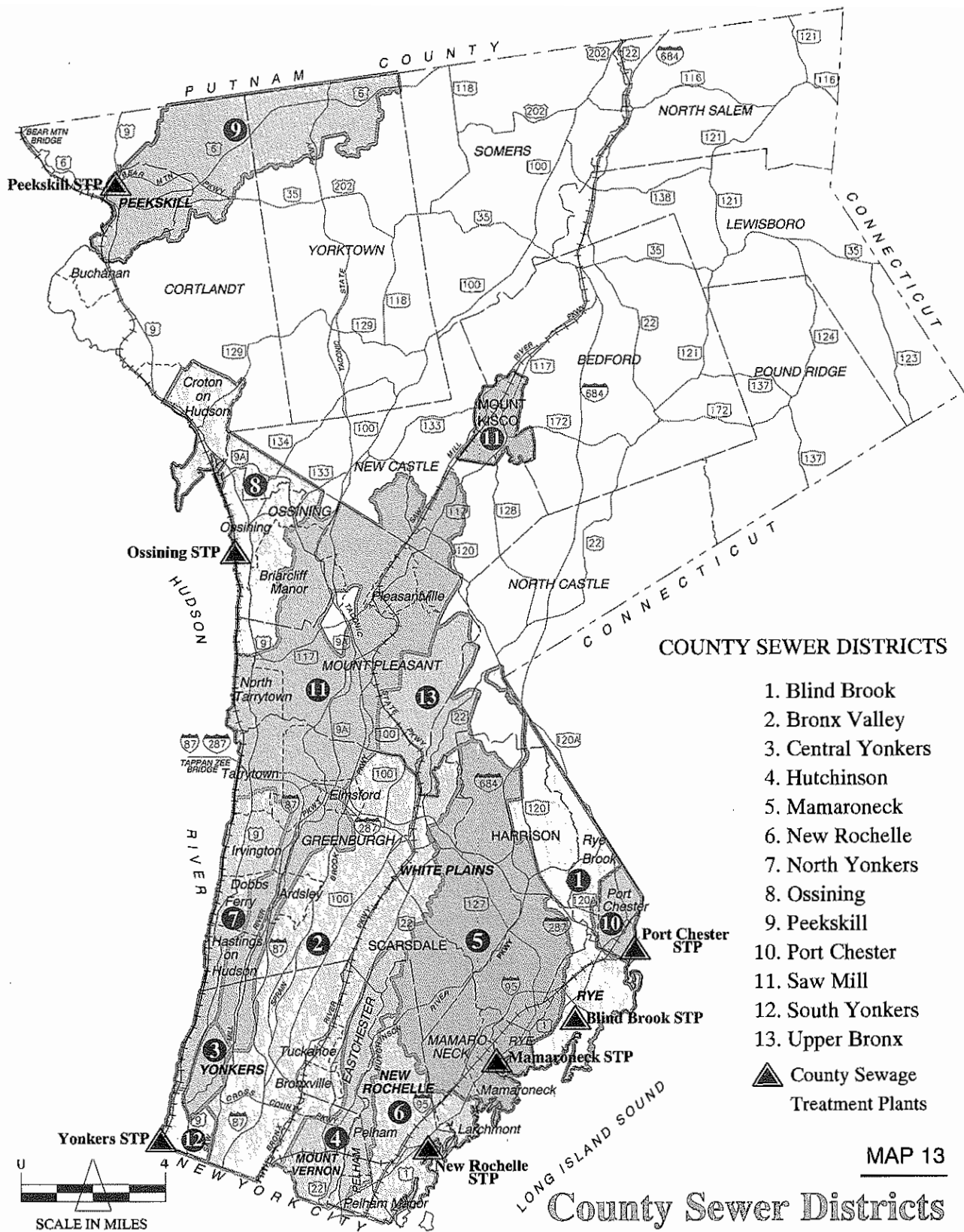
Most areas of the north county watershed towns are dependent on subsurface sewage disposal systems located on each lot or they are served by a few locally-based central sewage collection and treatment districts. In the 1970s, the County prepared a plan to outline how central sewer service could be provided to these areas, primarily through trunk line connections to the existing sewered areas. Cost and capacity issues have prevented implementation. Subsequently, all municipalities in the north county developed new comprehensive plans that recommended long-range land use densities not dependent on central sewer service for most of the unserved areas located outside of district boundaries.



*The County's Yonkers Wastewater Treatment Plant on the Hudson River is the largest in Westchester.*

Solid waste management was the formative intermunicipal experience for many of Westchester's local jurisdictions. In 1982, under federal consent orders to close the County's Croton Point land fill and local incinerators, 26 municipalities agreed to join in a special assessment district that would enable the County to build what would be known as the Charles Point Resource Recovery Facility, located in Peekskill. Completed in 1984,





Westchester County Department of Planning



the plant accepts solid waste from all municipalities in the district, which numbered 36 in 1995, representing 90 percent of the county's population. The facility can process 657,000 tons of solid waste per year. District municipalities deliver 550,000 tons while the excess capacity is allocated to commercial waste collected by private carters.

Five transfer stations receive collection vehicles from the participating municipalities and compact refuse into transfer trailers, avoiding longer hauls through the county.

Ash residue generated at the Charles Point facility is in turn disposed of at the Sprout Brook Ashfill located in Cortlandt.

With enactment of the Solid Waste Management Act of 1988, the State of New York assumed regulatory responsibility for the management of local solid waste plans. In response, the County updated its solid waste plan to conform with state regulations. The County Solid Waste Management Plan Update emphasized waste reduction, reuse and recycling initiatives.

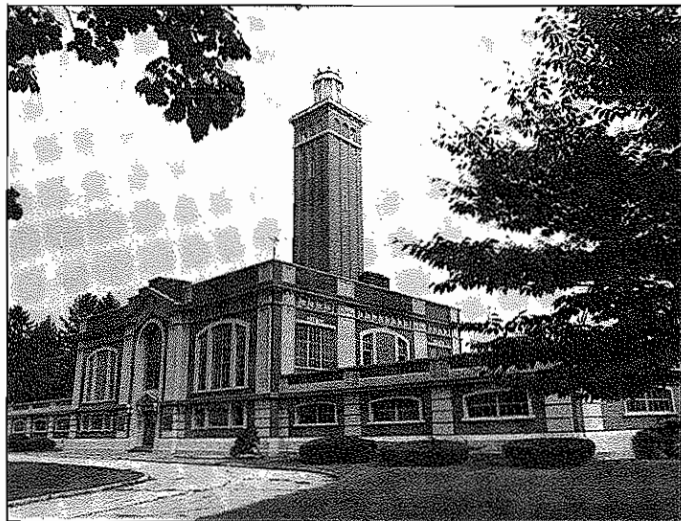
In July 1992, the County enacted a Solid Waste and Recyclables Collection Licensing Law and a Source Separation Law as part of its implementation of the Solid Waste Management Plan. These laws require licensing of private haulers and mandatory source separation in each municipality. A material recovery facility (MRF), brought on-line in 1992, was designed to accept 91,000 tons of municipally collected recyclables per year.

### **Framing the Issues**

A regional approach has helped local governments manage waste that must move across, or flow under, their municipal boundaries.

- a) **SEWAGE COLLECTION AND TREATMENT.** The existing sewage collection and treatment system is complex in terms of size, facilities and ownership. Municipal collection systems connect with the County trunk sewers which serve 13 separate sewer districts. However, not all areas within districts are served by public sewers. Capacity at the County's wastewater treatment plants is taxed by infiltration and inflow problems.

During periods of heavy rain, flows into some plants can exceed their daily capacity, sometimes resulting in discharge of untreated sewage into the Hudson River or Long Island Sound. Studies by



*The distinctive architecture of the Mamaroneck Wastewater Treatment Plant has made it a local landmark.*

the federal Environmental Protection Agency under the auspices of the Long Island Sound Study (LISS) have raised the possibility of tertiary treatment requirements for plants discharging into Long Island Sound. The County is bound to a long-term, land-based sludge management system for the dewatered sludge generated at the Yonkers plant; under a 25-year agreement initiated in 1995, the sludge is converted into a reusable agricultural fertilizer.

- b) CROTON WATERSHED. By land area, approximately one-third of the County is dependent on septic systems. Most of this land is in the Croton watershed in northern Westchester which encompasses five reservoirs that are part of the New York City water supply system. Also located in the watershed are 28 privately and municipally-owned wastewater collection, treatment and disposal systems that discharge 4 million gallons of treated effluent daily. "The Westchester County 208 Areawide Waste Treatment Management Plan (March 1978)" recommended extension of sewer service in the north county to include unsewered areas around established centers of development, and in areas where poorly functioning septic systems had resulted in deterioration of lakes and surface waters.

Although nothing has come of this plan, New York City's efforts to tighten regulation of development in the Croton watershed renewed interest in 208 goals. The 1995 Watershed Agreement provides a mechanism to take a fresh look at identifying where public sewer extensions and sewer diversions may be appropriate to best protect the reservoirs and to allow centers to continue their present function and to have reasonable growth opportunities.

*Westchester County's resource recovery facility (the "garbage to energy" plant) opened at Charles Point in Peekskill in 1984. It handles solid waste from all but a few of Westchester's municipalities.*



- c) SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT. The emphasis on waste management through reducing the waste stream and through recycling will continue to challenge the County, its municipalities and businesses to improve their conservation efforts. The few Westchester towns who have not joined the refuse disposal district have their solid waste carted to

facilities outside of Westchester, a course of action which may not be viable over the long term. Ash residue deposited in fills must be monitored. A County program for collecting household chemical waste has reached less than one percent of the county's population. Yard and barn waste continues to comprise 15 to 20 percent of the solid waste stream indicating a composting solution is applied to only one-half of all yard waste generated in Westchester. The former Croton Point landfill has been capped and converted to uses integrated into Croton Point Park.

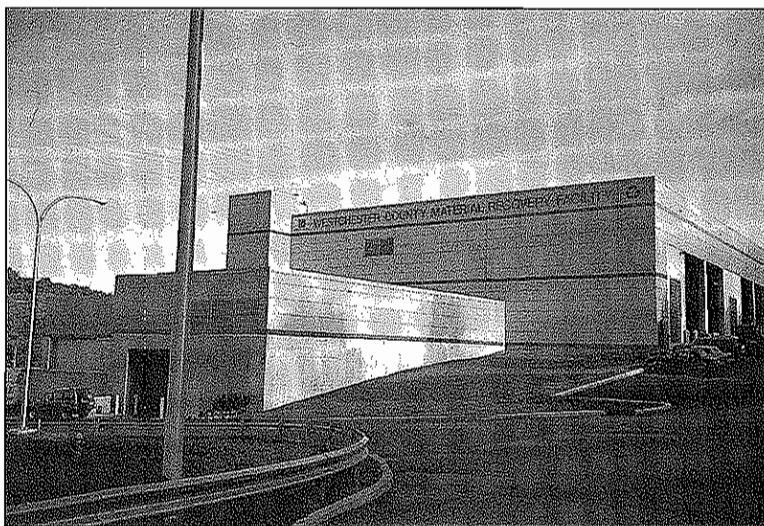
### **Strategies**

1. *Pursue programs to reduce the waste stream and make the existing waste management system more efficient.*

#### **The County and the municipalities can:**

- ☐ Develop a long term solution to sludge disposal.
- ☐ Promote County, municipal, business and individual recycling efforts to reduce amounts of solid waste incinerated or placed in land fills.

*Development of the County's Material Recovery Facility in Yonkers in 1992 was key to reducing the solid waste stream by providing a site to gather and process recyclable materials.*



- ☐ Encourage composting programs for yard wastes by individual homeowners and municipalities so as to remove this material from the waste stream.
- ☐ Assess yard waste composting needs, identify potential sites, and provide assistance expanding or establishing compost programs.
- ☐ Explore recycling and disposal options for construction debris to help keep costs of housing construction down.

**The County can:**

- ☐ Determine if consolidation of County sewer districts would provide efficiencies.
- ☐ Pursue a nitrogen reduction plan that averages nitrogen loading of the four treatment plants on Long Island Sound, and plants on the Hudson River, so as to allow flexibility in providing necessary upgrades at appropriate plants.
- ☐ Maintain efficiency, capacity, and marketing opportunities of the material recovery facility (MRF) in Yonkers.
- ☐ Investigate developing permanent household chemical reception center(s) that would allow a more regular, more frequent schedule for reception of the target wastes and would provide for more efficient handling.
- ☐ Explore establishing a mobile collection program for household chemical wastes.

**The municipalities can:**

- ☐ Continue efforts to reduce leaks in municipal sewer lines and to eliminate illegal sewer connections.

2. *Expand sewage collection and treatment systems to eliminate individual on-lot sewage disposal systems and surface discharges in environmentally sensitive developed areas.*

**The County can:**

- ☐ Expand the capacity of Peekskill wastewater treatment plant, through the funding support of New York City, so as to divert sewage disposal from sites within the Croton watershed.
- ☐ Extend County trunk sewer lines, through the funding support of New York City, into developed areas of the Croton watershed and to connection points with existing wastewater treatment plants so as to eliminate surface discharge into the Croton system.

**The municipalities can:**

- ☐ Extend public sewerage, through funding support of New York City, to areas with septic system failure and lake degradation to protect surface water resources, where consistent with local planning.

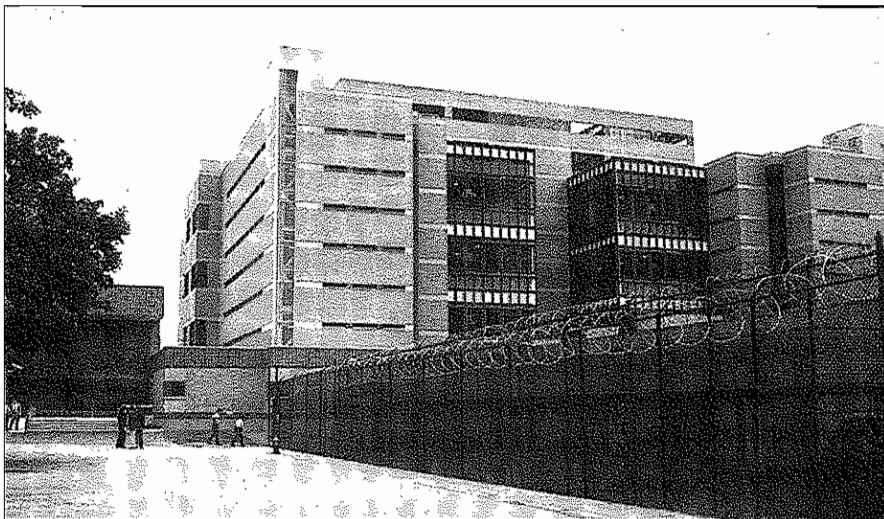
## H. PHYSICAL FACILITIES FOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Support capital improvements for physical facilities that enable the County to deliver social and public safety programs in an efficient, economic and humane manner.

### The Setting

The County Planning Board's broad policies for shaping development also guide its review of the County's capital improvement programs. These programs include not only parks, roads and sewage treatment plants, but also installations at the County's Grasslands Reservation in the Town of Mount Pleasant, such as the correctional institutions, the County Medical Center and the training facilities for fire fighters and other public safety personnel.

These facilities, along with the Community College, help make the county a prime attraction for service providers and professionals. As such they contribute significantly to the county's economic development.



*Westchester County's Norwood E. Jackson Correctional Center is located at the Valhalla Campus at Grasslands Reservation in Mount Pleasant.*

Because it has the Grasslands Reservation, the County avoids the enormous controversies that beset other jurisdictions seeking sites for major public institutions. The availability of the 577-acre tract is thus a major contribution to Westchester's orderly physical development. Uses on the campus include the Westchester Medical Center, the New York Medical College, the County's correctional complex including a jail, penitentiary and administrative offices, the public safety training facility and a Bee-Line bus garage. Construction of the new jail required the single largest bond issue (\$68 million); the main hospital of the Medical Center was a distant second (\$28 million).

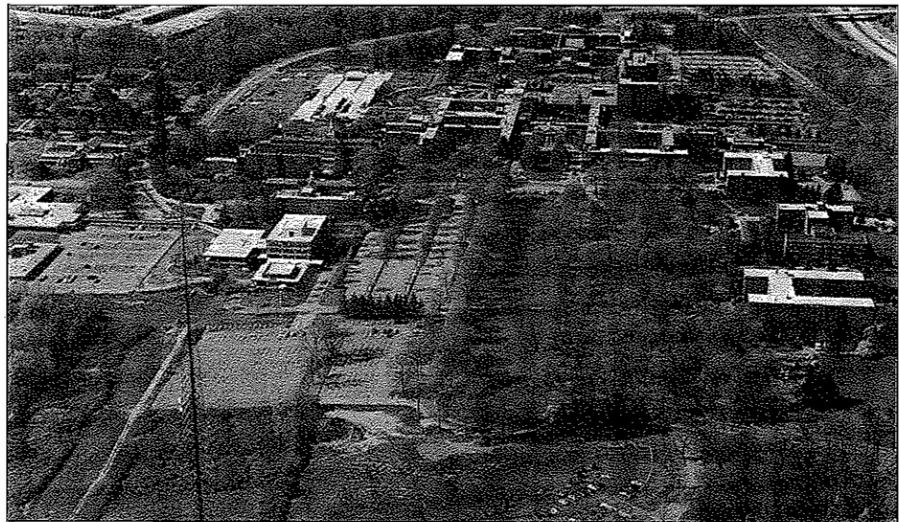
The campus has evolved from an isolated group of low-lying red brick buildings surrounded by open fields, to a major activity center of diverse functions with excellent

access to the Sprain Brook Parkway. Development of Grasslands has proceeded in accordance with a series of master plans that establish basic road and utility systems, design and open space guidelines and parking facility guidance.

### **Framing the Issues**

- a) **CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES.** The County's correctional facilities comprise the jail, penitentiary and women's unit. Although vigorous County programs for alternatives to incarceration divert thousands of offenders annually from the facilities, significant capital expenditures for correction are still in the offing.

The 1916 County penitentiary has long since exceeded its useful life. Whether the County embarks on a phased or a total new construction program, overcrowded and outdated cell blocks must be replaced. Their cost will be partially offset by reduced staffing and administrative expense, mirroring experience at the new County jail, but the larger consideration is the need to assure facilities adequate to the administration of justice and to public safety needs throughout Westchester.



*Aerial view of the north end of the County's Grasslands Reservation showing the Westchester County Medical Center.*

The women's unit, which has experienced the greatest percentage population growth, may also require new beds in the planning period that Patterns encom passes.

- b) **THE COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER.** Westchester's Medical Center is a teaching hospital that provides tertiary and trauma care for Westchester, Putnam and four other counties in this health region. The hospital is also the medical care giver of last resort for the indigent of Westchester. Its facilities, which include the only burn unit between New York City and Albany, have been a major focus of County planning.

As the climate of health care financing changes, the Medical Center has been hard pressed to meet responsibilities that are not well funded by reimbursement policies.

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This includes primary and secondary care to those not served by other area institutions. Also at issue is the need to keep abreast of this case load and new medical technology without competing with private sector hospitals. Thus capital planning for the Medical Center, a concern for the County Planning Board and Planning Department, must be balanced by judgements of area-wide needs for health services.

- c) TRAINING FACILITIES. A prime example of joint County and municipal activity takes place at the County's Fire Training Center which brings modern fire fighting techniques to each of the County's 57 fire departments. The staffing of these departments comprise nearly 8,000 professional and volunteer fire fighters. Besides training, a computer aided dispatch system helps coordinate their efforts and direct extra fire fighting strength where emergencies demand.

Since the Fire Training Center opened in 1979, fire, smoke and water have taken its toll on the facilities, including the smoke house, drill tower and burn simulator. In addition, the County is hard pressed for space for its Emergency Medical Services (EMS) training program which serves Westchester's volunteer ambulance corps, fire department ambulances and other EMS agencies. The physical facilities of this program include the County's helicopter and helipad, classrooms, and computer rooms.

As municipalities increasingly avail themselves of these programs, the County must contemplate capital expenditures for maintaining them.

- d) SOCIAL SERVICE FACILITIES. The County's social service responsibilities present a different set of physical planning problems. Facilities needed for client populations are generally unwelcome; acquisition of some properties used for homeless shelters have required painful negotiation with hosting local governments. Nevertheless, putting administrative services in rehabilitated or underutilized buildings have helped revive some city neighborhoods.

Scores of private and non-profit agencies supplement County services, and help to provide for physically, mentally and emotionally handicapped people, shelters for abused women and pregnant girls, tutoring programs for children, counselling for troubled youths and families, programs for the elderly, meal delivery for the house-bound, food kitchens for those in need and sponsorship for affordable housing and other facilities.

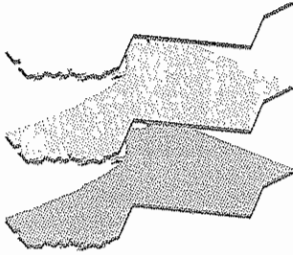
Without these private agencies and their largely volunteer staffs, both County and municipal governments would themselves have far greater physical planning burdens.

### Strategies

Strategies are not presented in this section as the County Planning Board's role is limited in this subject area to review of capital budget proposals for its physical components. The delivery of social services and the provision of public safety are responsibilities of other government agencies.



## VIII. Epilogue



**P***PATTERNS FOR WESTCHESTER: THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE* is an attainable vision for the county as it enters the 21st century. These pages offer county and municipal governments, and their constituent populations, the tools to sustain growth without compromising the natural resources on which future generations depend.

Through its history, Westchester's topography gave it a measure of protection from chaotic development. Its two coastlines, its interior waterways and valleys and the stability of its historic communities set the context for growth. Patterns of development were also greatly influenced by county acquisitions of open space and by its determinations for capital spending on infrastructure.

Planning and investment policies, particularly on transportation and sewage treatment, will continue to affect land use decisions on commercial and residential development. But the county's fiscal capacity for expanding infrastructure and acquiring land is limited and may not suffice to meet development challenges that are fundamentally different from those of the past.

Within a generation, Westchester's economic energy has shifted from industrial to office to retail. The trend has left a trail of obsolescence and vacancy in the county's major cities and has encouraged sprawl along many of its corridors and feeder routes. In the same time frame, a growing body of government regulations to protect air and water quality constrains development in many sections. Not least, Westchester's population, always in transition, is becoming older, more diverse and increasingly beset by a shortage of suitable housing.

Municipalities discussing this conflict at area meetings during the preparation of *Patterns* identified their core concerns as:

- Urban sprawl and its impact on traffic, aesthetics and economic viability of nearby downtowns;
- Spill over effects of development on neighboring communities;
- Planning initiatives more closely tailored to meet the differing needs of communities along the Hudson and the sound, and in the watershed and central valley systems;

- The need for the County to be specific about measures that municipalities and the County might take to address development constraints in the watershed, urban rehabilitation, housing shortages and their other program concerns; and
- The need to encourage development where opportunities are not burdened by environmental constraints.

These concerns reflect a general anxiety over the intermunicipal impacts of development. Nevertheless, the 43 municipalities exercising land use controls and 40 school districts are dependent on property tax revenue. Municipalities are strongly motivated to approve development that provides rateables and jobs in their communities. Some of the economic activity that serves a narrow local interest may also generate traffic and noise that can actually depress values in a neighboring jurisdiction.

In the long run no one benefits when the cumulative impact of development takes the form of urban sprawl or disorderly subdivision that saps the vitality of centers and threatens to destroy the grace of our landscape.

The County Planning Board's recommendations for channelling Westchester's development energy into a pattern of sustainable growth responds to these concerns and are presented in this report. They need not be restated here, but the principles which underlie those recommendations do bear repeating. They are:

- The economic well-being of Westchester's municipalities and their environmental health depend primarily on their ability to undertake effective intermunicipal and regional planning. Together we have learned that what happens in one community affects the surrounding area's economy, traffic, air, water, land and people. Municipalities, which will continue to have exclusive power of land use, must find ways to exercise those powers in the common interest. Of almost equal importance is the need to engage in joint planning with New York City and other neighboring jurisdictions whose actions have a profound impact on the county's economic growth and the integrity of its environment.
- Not all uses are appropriate to all locations. The long-standing pattern of centers, corridors and open space remains the best matrix for Westchester's physical development. Centers—our cities, villages and hamlets—that are the destination points for our commercial and social lives, are most likely to have the infrastructure and transportation facilities that support growth. Development and redevelopment in centers and in already developed sections of corridors make jobs and housing more accessible to the population most in need of them, conserve land and watershed resources and spare the public and private sectors the cost of adding roads, sewers and other infrastructure.

The County Planning Board will be guided by the Centers, Corridors and Open Space pattern of development in advising municipalities on land use referrals and in reviewing County government proposals for capital spending on infrastructure and land acquisition.

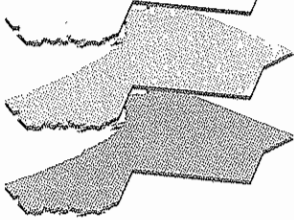
Its policies will be tailored to the distinctive characteristics of the Hudson River shore communities and those along Long Island Sound, the Bronx River Valley, in the Central County and in the watershed of the North County.

The Planning Board and County Planning Department, with its technical resources and established role in administering federally funded programs, will continue to be willing actors in intermunicipal and regional initiatives.

**Patterns** is dedicated to sustainable development which balances economic and environmental concerns and serves the needs of a changing population.



# APPENDIX A. Assumptions

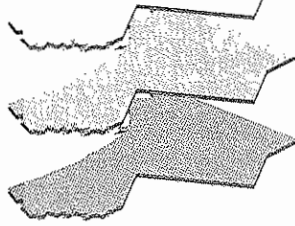


**P**lanning helps communities anticipate and respond to changing conditions. The parameters for county planning are set by economic and environmental considerations, by a body of state and federal law and regulation and often by external influences which we at the county level cannot change. Expressed as assumptions, these parameters set the stage for the policies and strategies of **Patterns**. The County Planning Board's assumptions are:

- a. Westchester's development pattern will continue to be shaped by its topography including its shorelines, valley and ridge systems, waterbodies, watershed areas for public water supplies and networks of rivers, streams and wetlands.
- b. Environmental standards and regulations originating at the state and federal levels of government will profoundly affect development in the county. Patterns of development will be influenced by state environmental review procedures, the federal Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, standards for water quality in Long Island Sound and the Hudson River and New York City's actions to implement federal standards for the purity of drinking water.
- c. Municipalities will continue to exercise control over land use but local governments increasingly will consult and act jointly on significant land use decisions, often in the context of subregions of the county. Westchester County's role as intermediary between cities, towns and villages on the one hand and agencies of the City of New York, New York State and federal government on the other will grow in importance, as will its participation in multi-county planning and development agencies.
- d. Economic trends of the region, particularly of New York City, will continue to drive the state of the economy in the county. Westchester will share in the benefits of the region's role in international business. Changes in the structure of large corporations will have major impacts on the county's economy; corporate downsizing will be offset by the growing number and diversity of small enterprises.
- e. The overall population of Westchester County will grow modestly through the year 2020. However, greater diversity in its composition and increasing number of elderly residents will influence the nature and direction of public services.

- f. Even without significant population growth, the demand for affordable housing will continue to rise in Westchester because of the trends in income and household size.
- g. Planning and investment decisions on transportation will continue to affect and be affected by land use decisions on commercial and residential development. Accessibility to public transportation will be a major factor in the location and density of residential and non-residential development.
- h. Open space and recreational opportunities, both public and private, will continue to enhance the quality of life in Westchester. Measures to protect and preserve public and privately held open space and environmentally sensitive areas will influence patterns of development.
- i. Westchester County government will continue to shape the county's development through capital programs, including land preservation and infrastructure enhancement, the delivery of services and the County Planning Board's advisory review of municipal land use actions.
- j. Recognition of the county's historic and architectural heritage will influence the location and tone of development.
- k. Westchester's educational, cultural and human services institutions, public and private, will of necessity adapt their physical facilities as well as their programs to demographic change.

# APPENDIX B. Historical Development



*The following summary overview of the historical development of Westchester County was prepared in 1974 as part of Assumptions, Goals & Urban Form, the first statement of Westchester County development policies to be adopted by the Westchester County Planning Board. One new section has been added to cover the period 1974-1995.*

In order to plan effectively and intelligently for Westchester's future, we must be aware of and understand the forces that have shaped the county's past development patterns. Over the years topography has had a distinct and profound impact on the location of transportation lines and also on the location of urban centers. The southern portion of the county is dominated by a series of north-south valleys, while in the northern portion the pattern of land form is irregular. Since transportation lines and urban development have traditionally sought the easiest terrain on which to locate, the pattern of development in Westchester becomes readily understandable. Although transportation is not as strongly influenced by the terrain as it was in the pre-automobile era, modern technology, in this instance public utilities, will be influenced by the terrain.

To illustrate this influence on development in Westchester, the county's history has been divided into four eras, as described and illustrated below:

<u>Era</u>	<u>Period</u>	<u>Features</u>
The Pre-Industrial	Up to 1850	The horse and stage coach; agricultural activities; small community clusters; three post road corridors.
Early Railroad and	1850 to 1920	Commuter railroad; station-commuting oriented urban centers; linear structure.
Early Auto Use and	1920 to 1950	Use of the automobile; suburbanization filling-in and spread development; image of upper-income bedroom suburb.
Intensive Urbanization	1950 to 1974	Super-highways; new economic growth; problems of rapid growth.
Suburbanization to Stability	1974 to 1995	More highways; large lot residential; corporate parks; urban decline; slow growth; urban rediscovery.



**A. Pre-Industrial Era (Up to 1850)**

As was stated earlier, topography had a major impact upon the location of transportation routes and on centers of urban development. The three major north-south valley systems in the county: the Hudson River Valley, the Bronx River-North Saw Mill River Valley and the Long Island Sound Plain were the corridors for the post roads and the early rail lines in the county. These corridors, in turn, stimulated urban settlement around the centers of economic activity, generally a river port, stage coach stop or rail stop. The majority of this development occurred along the Hudson River Valley, with the remainder scattered throughout the county. Unlike today, the majority of the county's population lived in the north with agriculture the dominant economic activity.

**B. Early Railroad and Commuting (1850-1920)**

During this period, the railroad became the dominant force in transportation technology. The early rail lines, limited by equipment capabilities, sought paths of least resistance and like the early post roads, utilized the easier terrain of Westchester's north-south valley systems. As a result, residential development, commerce and industry were attracted to the vicinity of the railroad stations. In fact, each of Westchester's six cities and twenty-two villages, as well as numerous hamlets (e.g., Valhalla, Yorktown Heights) developed around a railroad station, which served as a focal point for local economic and residential activity. An excellent example of this is the development of independent urban centers such as Yonkers, Mount Vernon, Peekskill and Ossining, where early industrial development clustered very distinctly around a railstop or a river landing and a major road. These urban centers remain to this day, and due to their age, have evolved with the same problems of older urbanized centers across the nation.

The overall structure of Westchester at this time was in the form of three strings of development closely related to the railroad lines within each of the major transportation corridors. These three linear elements generally paralleled the older post roads: the Hudson Division of the New York Central Railroad in the Hudson River Valley, the Harlem Division of that same railroad along the Bronx River-North Saw Mill River Valleys and the New Haven Railroad along the Long Island Sound Plain. Other railroads built in the county similarly followed level valleys and were generally oriented in the north-south direction.

Farming remained a major function in the North County. However, the availability of rapid transportation for both goods and passengers from Westchester to New York City resulted in population concentration in South County which remains to the present.

**C. Early Auto Use and Suburbanization (1920-1950)**

Although the entire period between 1920 and 1950 may be generally characterized by population growth based largely on commuting to New York City, two distinct types of development can be distinguished. During the first part of this period, settlement continued to take place near the railroad stations. During the 1930s, however, the automobile

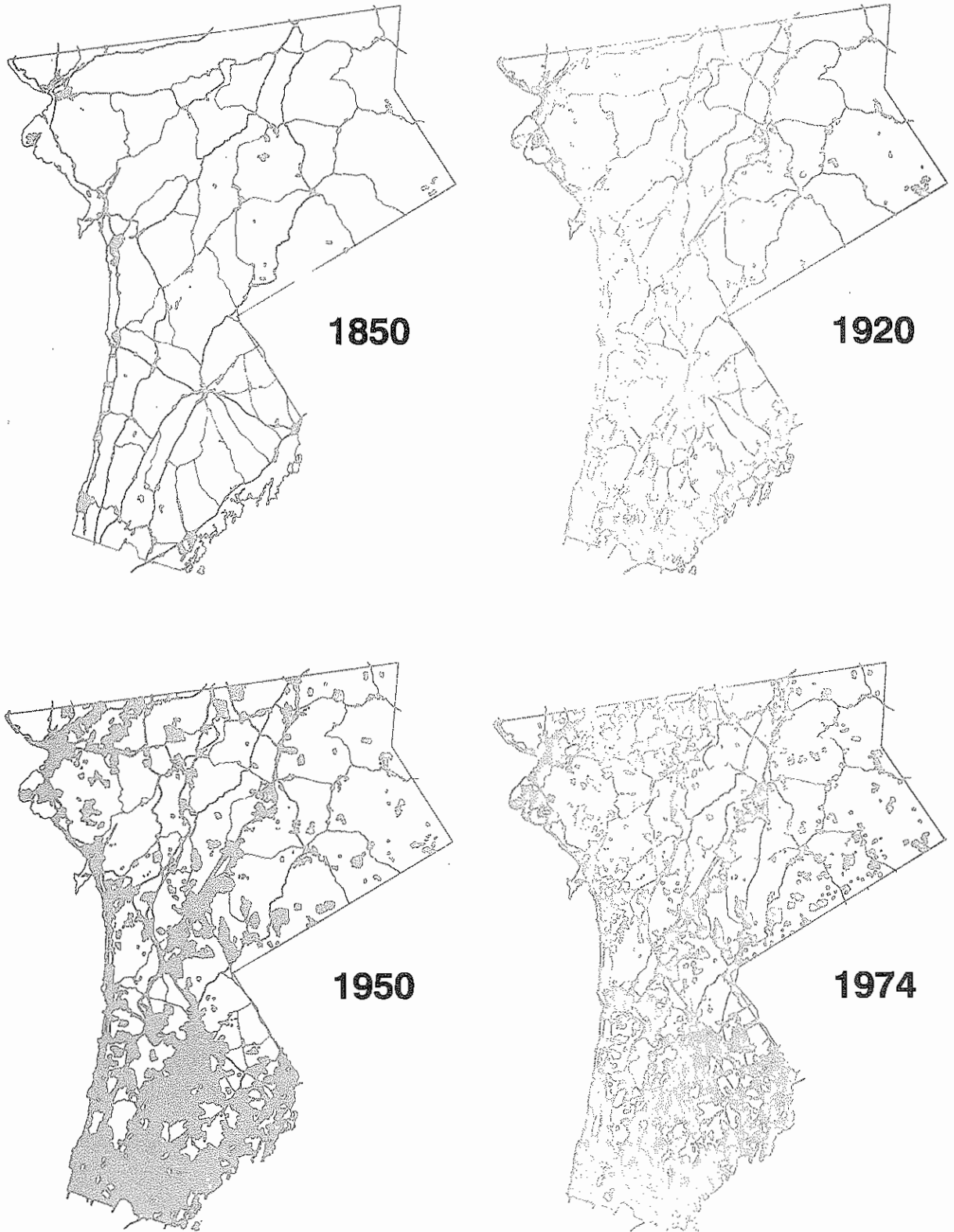


Figure 9: *Historic development patterns for Westchester County*

replaced the railroad as the major means of long distance, personal transportation and the established patterns of development along the topographic corridors of Westchester became blurred. The flexibility and increased mobility afforded by the automobile was in direct contrast to the limited, fixed nature of the earlier modes of travel, and is evident in the differences in development patterns that evolved. Concentrated, linear development gave way to spread-out and less closely knit development. Rural areas, hitherto relatively inaccessible, became developed, as did the open areas between the rail corridors.

The increasing numbers of automobiles created a demand for more roads, and such major arteries as Westchester's parkway system were designed and built to serve the specific demands of the ever-increasing traffic between the county and New York City. Each of the historic north-south corridors, in turn, was to have a parkway constructed during this period: the Saw Mill River Parkway, the Bronx River Parkway and the Hutchinson River Parkway.

#### **D. Intensive Urbanization (1950-1974)**

Increased automobile registration and road construction permitted an even greater dispersion of the population immediately before World War II, which resulted in a significant increase in the growth of the more rural unincorporated town areas as contrasted with the lower rates of growth in the cities and villages. By mid-century, a new form of transportation technology, the superhighway, began to dominate the growth patterns of the county. These super-roads widened the zones of equal travel time around the urban centers; it was, therefore, possible to live further from one's place of work and still reach it in the same travel time. As a result, there was a reinforcement of the dispersion of the county's population.

The completion of the Westchester portion of the New York State Thruway and the Tappan Zee Bridge in 1955, the New England Thruway in 1958, and the Cross-Westchester Expressway in 1960, are significant achievements typical of this growth period.

In the economic life of the county, the super-highway had a concomitant effect, with industrial and commercial development locating in areas only recently made accessible by new highways. The new economic growth is, therefore, oriented toward automobile accessible suburban factories, executive offices, research laboratories and shopping centers.

The rapid urbanization of Westchester in the twentieth century has not been achieved without growing pains, however, we are now facing new and changing problems. Among these are the ecological effects of an urbanizing society on our dwindling land and water resources; the provision of adequate public services and facilities; an adequate tax structure; adequate representation of local interests and needs in the face of larger metropolitan problems; and the protection of basic human rights.

**E. Suburbanization to Stability (1974-1995)**

*Between 1974 and 1995, Westchester County went through two distinct phases. The major residential growth of the early 1970s continued, even accelerated as residential subdivisions sprung up everywhere across the North County municipalities, prompted in part by the completion of Interstate 684 but advanced by the availability of large tracts of undeveloped land. The lack of central sewer and water services was less a deterrent than a reinforcement of a trend toward single-family homes on larger lots. Commercial development also took the suburban path as office parks filled in large parcels along Interstate 287 and on nearby sites. Major corporations constructed large complexes on more remote sites.*

*The older cities saw a decline in their perceived residential attractiveness and, in particular, the vitality of their commercial districts. Automobile traffic increased as in many communities there would be one car per person age 18 and over.*

*Then in the late 1980s a marked slowdown in new construction began. Development, both residential and commercial, had reached a pace that could not be sustained, especially as economic conditions in general became less positive. By 1995, a sense of stabilization began to emerge. The slowdown led to a rediscovery of the cities, a new appreciation for multi-modal transportation and alternative, "traditional", community design.*

**Summary**

Historically, three influences have been most dominant in shaping the physical structure and form of Westchester County. They are:

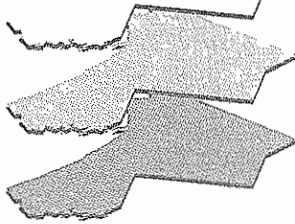
- A. TOPOGRAPHY: The north-south orientation of valleys in south county, and the hilly and mountainous terrain of north county were highly influential in determining early transportation routes and settlement locations.
- B. FUNCTION: The economic and social activity that took place in the county's past have determined the shape and form of its urban, suburban and rural areas. For example, the high quality residential areas of south county reflect that period of the county's history in which it was a distinct "bedroom suburb." Similarly, the older urban areas of Mount Vernon, Ossining and Port Chester reflect industrial activity that took place during distinct periods of the county's development.
- C. TRANSPORTATION: The nature, location and adequacy of the county's transportation lines have been a dominant force in determining its structure and form. Key elements of this influence were the early post roads, the railroads, the parkways, and the superhighways

## Land Use Intensity

<b>Patterns Category</b>	<b>LUI Range</b>	<b>Floor Area Ratio (FAR) Range</b>	<b>Gross Residential Density (GRD) Range (du/ac)</b>
Low Density Rural (LDR)	0 - 2	0.0125 - 0.5	0.2 - 1.5
Medium Density Suburban (MDS)	1-3	0.025 - 0.1	1 - 3
	2-4	0.05 - 0.2	2 - 7
	3-5	0.1 - 0.4	3 - 13
High Density Urban (HDU)	4-6	0.2 - 0.8	6 - 26
	5-7	0.4 - 1.6	13 - 51
	6-8	0.8 - 3.2	26 - 102
	7-9	1.6 - 6.4	51 - 205

Figure 10: *Land use intensity categories.*

# APPENDIX C. Measures of Density



The **Patterns Map** uses the Land Use Intensity (LUI) system to present policies in standard land use terms. The LUI system is a methodology adopted by the Federal Housing Administration to calculate development densities. It provides a scale to measure building bulk, open space and other aspects of land uses.

Each of the **Patterns'** land use categories is numerically defined by a band or range on the LUI scale showing upper or lower density limits for different land uses within each category. The LUI ranges are intended to overlap and to be much broader than municipal zoning densities for any particular zoning district. (See Figure 10.)

The LUI ranges can be expressed as Floor Area Ratio (FAR), Gross Residential Density (GRD) which describes dwelling units per acre or as a mixture of the two density measures (see Figures 11 and 12). Other measures, such as open space and vehicular space ratios, came from the 1975 Urban Form Policy Report's Technical Supplement and continue to be used in **Patterns**.

Density categories in **Patterns** are similar to those in the 1985 Urban Form Refinement report except for some modifications at the high and low ends of the scale. In this approach, ranges for the Medium Density Suburban and the High Density Urban are each divided into three narrower ranges to give a clearer picture of an area's actual or proposed density. **Patterns** also adds a fourth sub-category to the High Density Urban designation (LUI 7-9). Concentrated Centers are treated as functional categories with their density governed by that of the underlying LUI category.

The modified density ranges in **Patterns** for the Low Density Rural and High Density Urban categories are described below.

**Low Density Rural:** The lower end of the GRD range has been adjusted down to 0.2 (from 0.4). The change realistically reflects the environmental constraints and lack of central sewers in some of the north county as well as the four and five acre minimum lot size zoning which some communities have adopted.

**High Density Urban:** The upper limits (previously LUI 10) have been reduced to LUI 9 to reflect more accurately existing and desired density patterns in Westchester. The proposed LUI 7-9 density range has a recommended FAR range of 1.6 to 6.4 and a GRD range of 51 to 205 dwelling units per acre, whereas the previous LUI 7-10 in Urban Form Refinement had an upper limit FAR of 12.8 and a GRD of 410 dwelling units per acre.

## FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR)

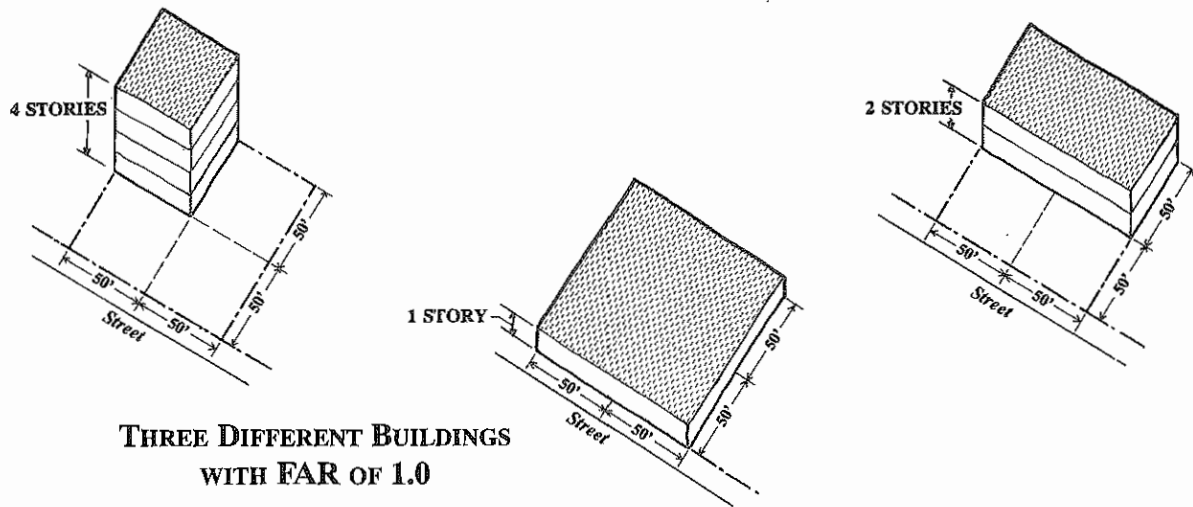


Figure 11: *Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is the total floor area on a lot divided by the area of the lot. A building with an FAR of 1 could be built in a variety of ways. For example, it could be one story and cover 100 percent of the lot; two stories and cover 50 percent of the lot; or 4 stories and cover 25 percent of the lot. Its the same lot, the same building square footage, just organized differently on the lot.*

## GROSS RESIDENTIAL DENSITY (GRD)

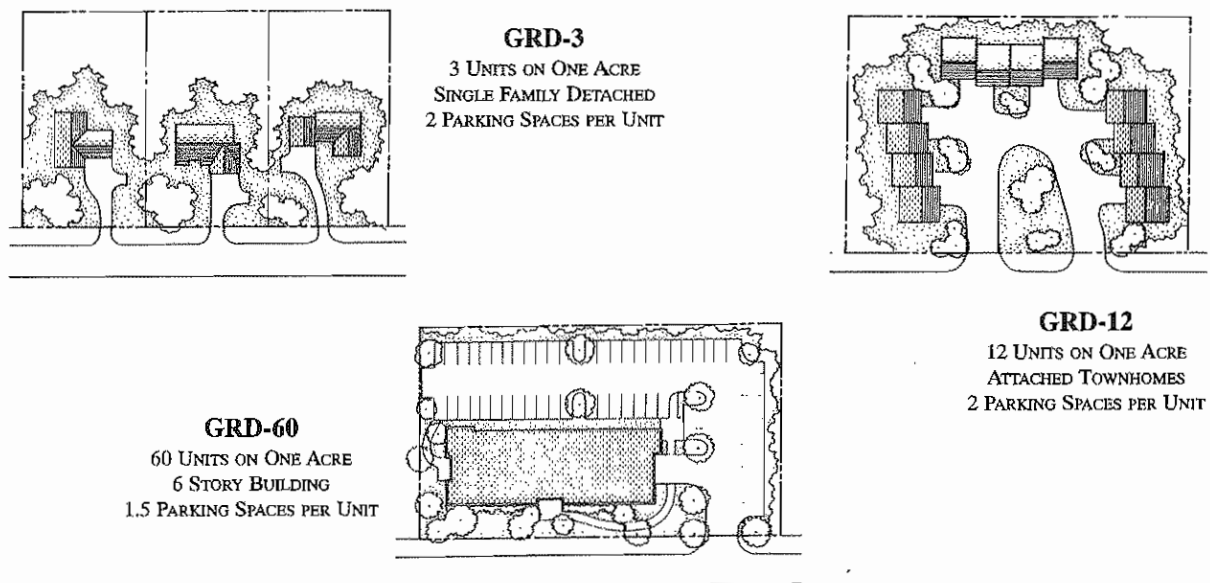


Figure 12: *Gross Residential Density (GRD) refers to the number of dwelling units per acre of land (without deducting areas for streets, utilities, open space, etc.). Hence, a three-unit development on a one-acre site has a GRD of 3; a 60-unit development on a one-acre site has a GRD of 60. This measure, however, is usually used for analysis of large land areas, rather than specific sites.*





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