

# Comprehensive Planning & The Role of the Planning Board

Wednesday, November 30, 2011

**Frank S. Fish, FAICP**  
**Principal, BFJ Planning**  
115 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10003  
212.353.7476  
[www.bfjplanning.com](http://www.bfjplanning.com)

# A Note on the History of Comprehensive Plans

- New York State followed most other states until the mid 1990's
- Legislature changed the power to adopt
  - from: the Planning Board
  - to: the Elected Officials
- The George Raymond rationale

## Comparison with Other States

- Our neighbors:
  - CT: P&Z's adopt the Plan
    - Must be updated every 10 years
  - NJ: Planning Board adopts re-evaluation
    - Every 6 years
- New York State: No time requirement to revisit the Plan

# The Role of Planning Boards in New York State

## The Comprehensive Plan:

### 271.14

- a. The Town Board may refer any action to the Planning Board before final action
- b. The Planning Board may make recommendations on a proposed comprehensive plan
  - o or, recommendations regarding the planning and development of the town

The Planning Board is seen as a referral and advisory body

# Normal Powers of the Planning Board

- Advisory on Comprehensive Plan
- Site Plan review usually the final word
  - Exception: Port Chester
- Subdivision Review
- Special Permits?

# Who Prepares the Comp Plan?

- The Town Board, or by resolution of Town Board, or the Planning Board, or a Special Board
- A Special Board means a board consisting of one or more members of the Planning Board and such other members as are appointed by the Town Board
- Recommendation
  - Aim for 7-9 members:
    - 2 elected officials
    - 2 Planning Board members
    - 3-5 others:
      - CZM or conservation board
      - Business community (Chamber)
      - ZBA/BAR

## Lessons from Other Places

- Port Chester Village
  - CPAC (Comp Plan Advisory Committee with no Trustees)
  - Plan is being redone
  
- Mamaroneck Village
  - 25 member advisory committee
  - Long meetings
  - Needs leadership and patience
  
- Nassau County
  - Change of administration
  - Give Planning Board or committee a deadline

# Content of Plans

The town plan may include:

- (1) Goals & objectives
- (2) Regional needs & plans
- (3) Land use
- (4) Environmental & natural features
- (5) Population & socioeconomic
- (6) Transportation
- (7) Utilities/Infrastructure
- (8) Housing
- (9) Public/Cultural/Historic facilities
- (10) Parks & recreation
- (11) Commercial & industrial
- (12) Policies to improve local economy

Final Chapter: Implementation and anything else you want



# Some Lessons

- 1) The encyclopedia:  
**Port Chester**
  - Solution: 100 page goal
  
- 2) The non-physical plan:  
**Newburgh**
  - Solution: incorporate a land-use plan
  - “Zoning must be based upon a well-reasoned plan”



CITY OF NEWBURGH FUTURE LAND USE PLAN  
City of Newburgh, New York

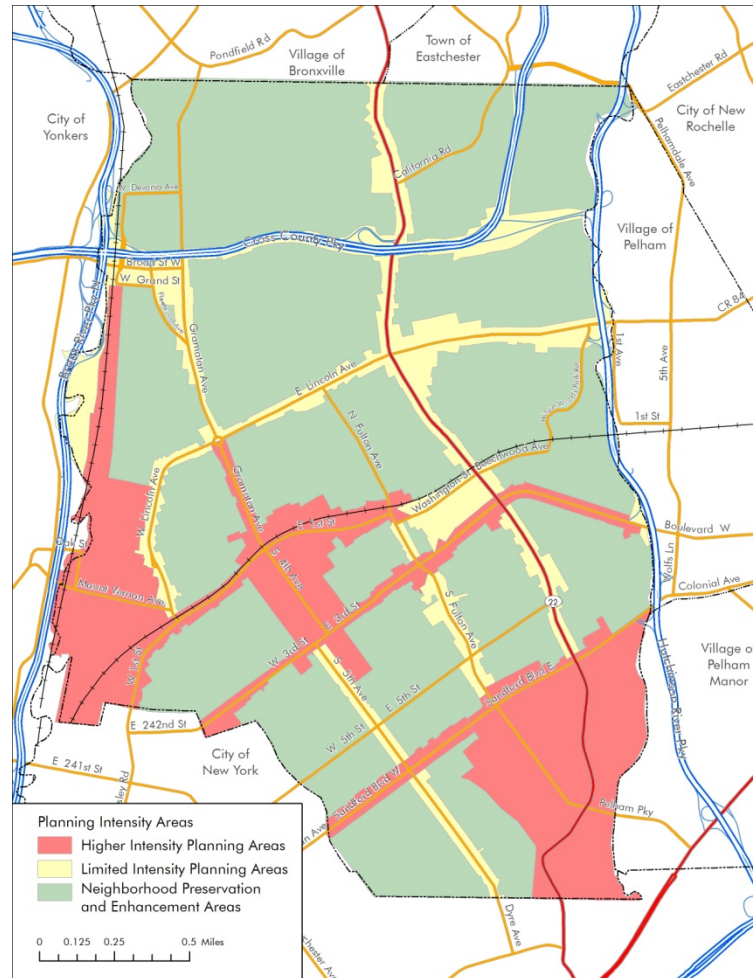
Addendum to 2008 "Plan-It Newburgh" Sustainable Master Plan

July 26, 2011

BFJ Planning

# Some Lessons

- 3) The strategic plan:  
Mount Vernon
- 4) Length of time/politics:  
Nassau County vs.  
Rockland County



Mount Vernon: Planning Intensity Areas

# Public Outreach

“The participation of citizens in an open and responsible planning process is essential”

- Hearings
  - One or more during preparation
  - One or more prior to adoption
- Special Committee must hold hearings/workshops
- Town Board must hold hearing within 90 days of referral



# Forms of Outreach

- Surveys
  - Universal or random sample
  - Mailers or online
- Online documents as work progresses
- The open house
- The workshop
- The New England town meeting



# Status of Comprehensive Plans

# Villages



**Status of Comprehensive Plans  
Municipalities in Westchester County, NY**  
July, 2011


Municipality	Most Recent Comprehensive Plan (Adoption or Draft Completion)	Update Status	Greenway Compact Plan Adopted	Other Significant Municipal Plans
Ardley	1964		GC	Business District Study 1993
Briarcliff Manor	2007		2004	
Bronxville	1992	2009	GC	
Buchanan	2005		2003	
Croton-on-Hudson	2003		2001	Greenway Vision Plan 1997; LWRP 1992; Visual Environment 1981; Upper Village Plan 1981; Trails Master Plan; Gateways Plan 2003
Dobbs Ferry	1971	Update in progress	2006	LWRP 2005; Open Space Inventory 1999
Elmsford	1995		GC	
Harrison	1988	Update in progress		
Hastings-on-Hudson	1999	Update in progress	2005	Waterfront Plan 2001; draft LWRP 2007, 1998 Vision Plan
Irvington	2003		2006	
Larchmont	1966		2006	Partial Plan Update 1987; LWRP 1986
Mamaroneck	2007	Update in progress	GC	Harbor Master Plan 2004; LWRP 1984
Mount Kisco	2000		2007	
Ossining	2009		2006	Waterfront Plan 1995; LWRP 1991
Pelham	2008		2007	
Pelham Manor	1979		GC	
Pleasantville	1995		GC	Plan amended 2007
Port Chester	1968	Update in progress	2006	LWRP 1992
Rye Brook	1985		2006	
Scarsdale	1994		GC	Village Center Comprehensive Plan 2010
Sleepy Hollow	1963		GC	LWRP 1997, Linkage Study
Tarrytown	2007		2001	
Tuckahoe	1993	2008		

GC – Greenway Community



# Status of Comprehensive Plans

# Towns & Cities

 <b>Status of Comprehensive Plans</b> <b>Municipalities in Westchester County, NY</b> July, 2011					
Municipality	Most Recent Comprehensive Plan (Adoption or Draft Completion)	Update Status	Greenway Compact Plan Adopted	Other Significant Municipal Plans	
Towns	Bedford	2003		2005	
	Cortlandt	2004		2003	Route 9A Corridor Study 1997; Route 202 SDS; Open Space Plan 2004
	Eastchester	1997		GC	
	Greenburgh	2003	Update in progress	2007	Hartsdale Drainage & Flood Study; North Elmsford Flood Study
	Lewisboro	1985	Update in progress	2007	
	Mamaroneck	1986		GC	LWRP 1988
	Mount Pleasant	1987			Open Space 1980
	New Castle	1989		2007	Millwood Center Area Design Plan, adopted; Chappaqua Plan, in progress
	North Castle	1996		2006	Armonk Downtown Parking & Traffic Plan; various Banksville studies
	North Salem	1985	Update in progress	2005	Critical Issues 1980;
	Ossining	2007		2002	
	Pound Ridge	1981	Update in progress	2005	
	Somers	1994	Update in progress	2005	
Yorktown	2010		2005	Plan Review 1988; Route 202 SDS	
Cities	Mount Vernon	1968	Update in progress (2011)		
	New Rochelle	1996		GC	LWRP 1998; Downtown N.R. Concept Plan 1998; Comprehensive Plan revisions in 2006 for downtown area
	Peekskill	1986		2001	LWRP 2001; Lower South Street Plan 1997; Route 202 SDS; Waterfront Community Redevelopment Plan In Progress
	Rye	1985		GC	LWRP 1991
	White Plains	2006		GC	
	Yonkers	2000		GC	Downtown Waterfront Master Plan 1998; Ashburton Avenue Urban Renewal Plan 2005; Alexander Street Urban Renewal Plan 2008

GC – Greenway Community

# Adoption

Make SEQR work:

- The Neg. Dec.
  - “No significant adverse impact on the environment”
- Comp Plan as GEIS
  - A town plan may be designed to serve as a GEIS
- “No further compliance with SEQR is required for subsequent site specific actions that are in conformance with the conditions and thresholds established.”