

WAYNE COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

2000 ANNUAL REPORT

The Wayne County Planning Department provides a wide variety of services designed to positively impact the quality of life of the residents of the County. Our most visible efforts involve the preparation and administration of grants; however, the staff also attends local meetings, provides technical assistance and supports communities with their planning initiatives. A synopsis of our activities for 2000 follows.

Grant Applications

1. The following applications were prepared under the Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act:
 - a. \$215,967 for site improvements to the Erie Canal Cultural Center (total project cost - \$441,967)
 - b. \$85,000 for erosion control and the construction of a greenway path connecting downtown Sodus Point with the County beach. (total project cost - \$170,000)
 - c. \$50,000 to construct a pocket park in the Hamlet of Walworth where a run down gas station and car repair shop presently exists. (total project \$100,000)

2. NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Snowmobile Grant-in-Aid Program. Awarded \$12,660 for the maintenance of snowmobile trails along the Route 104 corridor. This program is administered by the Planning Department. Funds are distributed to snowmobile clubs in exchange for work they perform to groom, sign and maintain the trails. The clubs submit documentation supporting their activities before receiving checks from the County. The planning staff submits documentation to the state for reimbursement for these activities.

3. HUD Disaster Recovery Initiative Program. Awarded \$99,000 to raise portions of River Road in the Town of Galen above the 100 year floodplain. The contract was not received from the state before the close of 2000. The Planning Department will administer this grant.

4. NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Farmland Viability Program. Awarded \$1.12 million to purchase the development rights on 1200 acres of active farmland in the Town of Macedon. The Planning Department will assist the Town of Macedon with administration of this grant.

5. Rochester Area Community Foundation. Awarded \$2,500 to hold an educational seminar for farmers and attorneys concerning the Purchase of Development

Rights Program. The program is scheduled for March of 2001 and will be held at the Farm Restaurant in Macedon.

6. Governor's Office of Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program. Awarded \$238,140 to provide municipal sewer service for residents and businesses along Route 31 in the Town of Lyons. The Planning Department is administering this grant and is currently finalizing the environmental review record, which must be completed before funds are released.
7. NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal. Awarded \$400,000 for a countywide owner occupied, low income housing rehabilitation program. Both the Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation and the Planning Department administer this program. The environmental review is complete and the first homes have been identified for assistance.
8. HUD Economic Development Initiative. Awarded \$319,125 to provide an erosion control structure along the Port Bay Barrier Bar. Currently completing the environmental review record which is required before HUD will release funds for construction.
9. Received a \$5,000 member item from Assemblyman Robert Oaks to pay for the design of the reflecting pool for the Aldrich Change Bridge Project. Currently awaiting receipt of the contract from the NYS Department of Transportation.
10. Received a \$20,000 member item from Senator Michael Nozzolio to conduct a ridership research survey to determine the market for the new Amtrak Passenger Station proposed for the Village of Lyons. Currently developing the scope of work and the RFP with the Genesee Transportation Council.
11. Received a \$1,000,000 member item from Senator Michael Nozzolio for the construction of the new Amtrak Passenger Station. Waiting for contracts from the NYS Department of Transportation so station and track design can begin.
12. Received \$200,000 from Senator Nozzolio and \$500,000 from Governor Pataki for the construction of the Crusoe Conservation Center in Savannah. In the process of completing the SEQR review, which also involves a Phase IA and IB Cultural Resource Inventory.

Income Surveys

Before communities are eligible to apply for Community Development Block Grant Small Cities funding, they must determine if they meet certain income criteria. The standard for eligibility is determined by conducting an income survey of the target area. In 2000, the Planning staff conducted and analyzed the results of income surveys in the Town of Huron, the Town of Williamson and the Village of Red Creek. Over 500

surveys were distributed and analyzed and the Village of Red Creek and the Town of Williamson went on to apply for funds under the CDBG program.

Technical Assistance

The Planning staff is responsible for analyzing zoning and subdivision referrals for review by the Wayne County Planning Board in accordance with General Municipal Law 239 l,m and n. The County Planning Board held 11 meetings and reviewed 168 zoning and subdivision referrals in 2000.

The Planning Department serves as a repository for census data, flood hazard areas, state and federally designated wetlands, SEQR regulations and coastal erosion hazard areas. The staff provided assistance on these issues as requested and fielded well over 200 requests for information on these topics.

The staff of the Planning Department partnered with SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry on a training program entitled “Your Towns – Designing its Future.” The program attracted 40 local elected and appointed officials, developers, business persons and farmers for two days of community design exercises. Using the Village of Sodus as an example, the group developed several community design opportunities for use by the Village in their efforts to revitalize their central business district. The event was highlighted by a visit from Lieutenant Governor Mary Donohue.

An educational video covering important land use issues was developed and produced by the Planning staff. The video, entitled Planning Your Future: A Community Vision, has been distributed to a variety of local officials, regional organizations and private citizens. The video is used in presentations to civic and business organizations to raise the level of awareness of the importance of planning to economic health and quality of life.

The process for reviewing agricultural districts has been modified after lengthy negotiations with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. District boundaries will now coincide with Town boundaries and all mapping will be digital, with parcel specific delineation.

The Planning staff provided assistance to the Town of Wolcott by drafting its first Land Use Code. This process also involved GIS mapping of the district map and coordination of the required SEQR review prior to code adoption.

The Planning Director serves as the Fair Housing Officer for Wayne County and is responsible for resolving complaints according to HUD guidelines. The Fair Housing Officer must also prepare and submit a report to HUD each year and comply with fair housing promotional initiatives.

Mapping

- ◆ Began digitizing the map for modified Agricultural District No. 1 encompassing the Towns of Macedon, Walworth and Ontario.
- ◆ Completed map for the Wolcott Land Use Code.
- ◆ Updated digital road files in conjunction with E-911 Department.
- ◆ Produced several maps for the Wayne Economic Development Corporation, including an industrial site in the Town of Marion and a general map for use on the WEDC web site.
- ◆ Digitized tax parcels around Zurich Bog for the Bergen Swamp Society.
- ◆ Produced the snowmobile trails base map for the Wayne County Trails Master Plan.

Erie Canal Corridor Initiative

1. Erie Canal Cultural Center. The Planning staff is preparing the final Section 108 loan application package for submission to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The appraisal is underway and lease commitments are in place for three anchor tenants. The application will request \$2,450,000 for the redevelopment of the old J.L. Hammett Building into the Erie Canal Cultural Center.
2. Old Lock E-53 Acquisition and Trail Development. The Planning staff is working with the property owner's attorney to clarify issues around title. It appears that a third party may own the land originally proposed for acquisition by the County, and clear title may not be available. Design of ½ mile of canal trail associated with this project has been completed.
3. Historic Easement and Coordinated Signage Program. Both of these projects are the subject of a program amendment currently under preparation for submission to HUD. If approved, this amendment would transfer money to the Erie Canal Cultural Center project to preserve a construction management position, provide funds for additional architectural fees and administrative costs associated with unavoidable delays due to the withdrawal of the Lyons Public Library from the project.

The Planning Department CCI programs were audited by HUD in August and September of 2000. The auditor's report cited several record keeping and operational deficiencies. The Planning Director prepared a corrective action plan that was accepted by HUD. Implementation of the plan is ongoing.

Agricultural and Farmland Preservation

The Agricultural Development Specialist continued his successful efforts to preserve farmland and enhance the farming economy. In addition to the grants awarded for Purchase of Development Rights and an educational seminar as described above, agricultural preservation efforts included the following activities:

Conducted an educational seminar for 45 landowners and interested individuals from Macedon and Ontario concerning conservation easements.

Met with the Ontario Town Board, the Sodus Town Board, Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Board on the issue of purchase of development rights.

Enlisted the Genesee Land Trust as a partner in the Macedon PDR project as an administrator of the pending conservation easements.

In the past two years, have successfully funded nearly 2100 acres of conservation easements in the Town of Macedon, helping them achieve nearly 1/3 of their open space preservation goal outlined in the Town's Master Plan.

Initiated and sponsored the third consecutive Wayne County Apple Tasting Tour with 13 farm stands participating. Also tripled the order for the second year of the new Wayne County apple salsa and added peach salsa and apple barbecue sauce to the inventory.

Along with Cornell University, initiated a concept to develop a farm business summary for local farm markets. This benchmarking study would allow individual farm stands to compare their activities against similar businesses, enabling them to identify areas where they may improve profitability. A proposal was submitted for an internal Cornell research study. If funded, Wayne County farms will participate in the study.

Met several times with Amish farmers in the Town of Galen who are interested in developing a goat's milk and/or goat cheese enterprise. Currently assisting them in exploring funding, markets and potential partners.

Organized an educational field trip to the Geneva Experiment Station Food Venture Center for representatives from 5 local fruit farms.

As part of the Western New York Buy Local Campaign, helped develop posters and literature to use as point of sale materials for local farm markets and farm stands. Wayne County Farm Stands were included in a test to gauge effectiveness of the campaign.

Helped a local apple cooperative packing house apply for funding to the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets for a Farmland Viability Grant. Funds would be

used to develop best management practices. A grant in the amount of \$25,000 was awarded to the packing house cooperative.

Actively participated in the Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty, which is a 14 county collaborative effort highlighting locally grown foods at locally grown restaurants. Other partners include Cooperative Extension, Wayne County Tourism, Wayne County Farm Bureau, local farmers, restaurants, wineries and small-scale food processors. There is a pilot project underway designed to identify and solve problems associated with the farmer-restaurant relationship, with Pine Hill Orchards participating in this effort. Also participated in the planning and implementation of the winter trade show held at the Holiday Inn in Waterloo.

As a result of the success of the Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty, the Ag Development Specialist was asked to assist with the planning of the 4th annual Finger Lakes Agritourism Conference in partnership with Cayuga County Office of Tourism and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County and Tompkins County. The conference, entitled "Rural Partnerships to Create Tourism Destinations," will feature a Wayne County Apple Tasting Tour Farmer and Wayne County Tourism staff person Joan Delaro as speakers. The conference will be held on February 21, 2001 in Auburn.

The Ag Development Specialist served on a 2 year project funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and administered by Cornell University designed to strengthen agricultural economic development initiatives and to train ag development practitioners. Members of the project team, which was co-chaired by the Ag Development Specialist, included Deputy Commissioners of Agriculture from Vermont and Massachusetts and representatives from USDA, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, the American Farmland Trust and an Agricultural land developer from Maryland.

Prepared and presented papers to the following conferences and seminars:

- ◆ NETSN Agricultural Development Symposium – 200 attendees from 15 states
- ◆ Northeast Organic Farming Association Annual Conference
- ◆ LEAD-NY
- ◆ American Planning Association Rochester Chapter Annual Conference

Organizational Representation

The Planning staff is represented on the following boards and organizations:

- ◆ Wayne County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board
- ◆ Crusoe Conservation Center Committee
- ◆ Friends of Montezuma
- ◆ Wayne County Water Quality Coordinating Committee
- ◆ Wayne County Trailworks, Inc.

- ◆ Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council
- ◆ Common Good Planning Center Planners Advisory Committee
- ◆ Rochester Renaissance 2000 Stewardship Committee
- ◆ Greater Montezuma Wetlands Complex Master Plan Committee
- ◆ Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty
- ◆ WEDC Microenterprise Loan Review Committee
- ◆ Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor Local Advisory Committee
- ◆ Lake Plains Resource Conservation and Development Council
- ◆ Genesee Transportation Council

The Planning staff attended over 375 meetings of town and village boards and planning boards, civic and business organizations, non-profit organizations and related professional organizations in the year 2000.