

Village of Saugerties
Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Monitoring Process
Prepared by the New York State Department of State
2014

Community Background

The Village of Saugerties is located on the west shore of the Hudson River in Ulster County. It has a little over four miles of waterfront – 1.5 miles on the Hudson River and about 1.3 miles on either side of the Esopus Creek, and is located within the Town of Saugerties.

Historically, the growth of the Village was tied to both of these waterways, which were utilized as a transportation corridor, and for harnessing power. According to the Village's Comprehensive Plan, the Village was founded in the 1820's and has one of the earliest street plans to incorporate public health facilities for drinking, drainage and fire protection. As a hub of transportation, its infrastructure included bridges, commercial wharves and turnpike roads.

The Village includes many cultural and historical resources, including a National Historic District, and the Saugerties Lighthouse, the oldest remaining lighthouse on the Hudson River. Public open spaces, include Tina Chorvas Waterfront Park and Village Beach. The Village is also known for its scenic beauty, and is included in the NYS designated Ulster North Scenic Area of Statewide Significance (SASS).

Natural resources are also abundant along the Village's shore, and the Esopus Estuary is a NYSDOS designated Significant Fish and Wildlife Habitat. This important freshwater tributary of the Hudson River includes vegetated shallows and flats with a diversity of natural estuarine communities. The tidal creek portion of the habitat is a wintering site for adult largemouth and smallmouth bass, and is a popular recreational fishing area.

While the Village's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program dates back to 1985, recent planning efforts by the Village include an update in 2013 of the Saugerties Town and Village Comprehensive Plan, and participation in the recently completed Ulster County New York Rising Community Reconstruction (NYRCR) Plan, which provides strategies and opportunities to make the County's municipalities more resilient in the face of future storm events.

LWRP Monitoring Process

The goal of the monitoring process is for the NYS Department of State to assess a community's consistency with its LWRP, and to understand implementation activities and decision-making procedures related to the LWRP. Additionally, this process provides a forum for a community to highlight successes and request technical and financial assistance for program implementation.

Participating in this process from the Village were: Mayor William Murphy and Village Trustee Patrick Landewe. The monitoring process began with an initial conference call with the Mayor and Village Trustee to gather preliminary information, and was followed with a meeting and waterfront tour given by Trustee Landewe. The tour provided DOS staff with an opportunity to see first-hand existing and potential recreational opportunities within the Village's waterfront. Along the tour, DOS Program and Consistency

Staff also discussed a number of issues affecting the Village. Issues included maintaining channel depth, mitigating erosion at Village Beach, and addressing damage that occurred during Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee.

New York State Department of State Findings

LWRP Implementation and DOS Collaboration

As previously noted, the Village's LWRP was adopted in 1985. It was prepared in order to guide development within the coastal areas in a way that protects and preserves natural resources, and enhances public enjoyment of the waterfront.

Overall, the Village has made great strides in implementing projects identified in the LWRP and increasing the public's enjoyment and access to its waterways. It has done this by making improvements to the Saugerties Lighthouse, providing fishing and small boat access to the south side of the Esopus Creek at Tina Chorvas Waterfront Park, improving swimming opportunities at Village Beach, separating storm and sanitary sewers, rehabilitation of south side buildings into senior housing, and updating zoning regulations.

The Village has focused recent attention on improving economic development along Partition Street, located adjacent to the Esopus Creek. This involved working with private developers to create the Diamond Mills Hotel on a former industrial site, and installing streetscape enhancements along the roadway.

Although LWRP implementation funding has been available from DOS to municipalities that have embarked on the LWRP planning process, the Village has used other funding sources to implement their projects. In fact, the Village received only one Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program grant and that was in 1997, for the reconstruction of a stretch of bulkhead on Esopus Creek.

More recently, however, the Village has been working in coordination with DOS on the New York Rising Program, a Governor Cuomo initiative that has identified strategies and projects to make the Village more resilient to large storms events. Projects identified in this process include:

- Assistance with the development of an Army Corps Reconnaissance Study of Esopus Creek & Plattekill Creek Watershed
- Installation of a Hudson River gauge station for an improved warning system
- Repair of supporting infrastructure adjacent to Saugerties Lighthouse
- Restoration of several parks that suffered storm damage
- Removal of a sunken houseboat

DOS recommends that the Village take full advantage of the EPF LWRP funding that is available for eligible projects, and that the Village look to the DOS as a source for technical assistance, as well as funding.

LWRP Document Accessibility and Local Consistency Review Process

Paper copies of the document are kept in the Village Clerk's office. The Waterfront Advisory Board (WAB) also keeps copies of the LWRP. The Village is encouraged to provide a link on their website to the LWRP, or provide a link to the document on the DOS website.

The Village’s LWRP does not appear to be a well-known or well used document. The WAB meets only about once or twice a year, and there is little practice by the Committee in making local consistency determinations. It was noted that a local consistency decision was not made for an action such as the recent adoption of the Village’s Comprehensive Plan update.

Need for Updated LWRP

The Village’s long-term waterfront vision and key issues are now outlined in their Comprehensive Plan and in amendments made to zoning and other local laws over the past few years. As such, the Village is strongly encouraged to update its nearly 30 year old LWRP so that it can once again serve as a strategic plan for the waterfront. This update would provide an ideal window of opportunity to educate and train the Village on its responsibilities to ensure that all applicable actions taken by the Village are consistent with the LWRP. A key element would be formal local consistency training by DOS staff to all pertinent local officials and boards.

The update also would provide a means for the Village to consider emerging issues such as sea-level rise, as well as issues related to the Ashokan Reservoir, flood mitigation, dredging needs, adaptive reuse of vacant industrial sites, and enhancing linkages between the Village’s parks and green spaces.

Updating the LWRP is an eligible activity in the Department’s EPF LWRP funding application which is made available through the Consolidated Funding Application process <http://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/>

DOS Environmental Protection Fund Grants Awarded to the Village of Saugerties

Year	Amount of Grant	Project Description	Status
1997	\$ 24,000.00	Bulkhead Reconstruction on Esopus Creek	Closed