

# City of Beacon LWRP Monitoring Report December 2010

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## Community Background:

The City of Beacon encompasses an area of approximately five square miles (3,127 acres) and is located on the east bank of the Hudson River in the southern portion of Dutchess County. The Town of Fishkill surrounds the City on three sides, while the Hudson River forms the boundary on the fourth. The Hudson Highlands are immediately south of the City, while the City of Newburgh lies directly across the river.

The City's Waterfront Revitalization Area encompasses nearly one-fourth of the City's total area. Included in the coastal area are all lands west of Route 9D along the Hudson River and Fishkill Creek (south and west of Route 9D).

The existing land uses in the Waterfront Revitalization Area are largely residential and institutional, with former industrial sites scattered near the Hudson River and Fishkill Creek. A large part of the area (approximately 200 acres) is vacant or underutilized land; often consisting of steep hillsides with highly erodible soils. The railroad tracks run along the river for the length of the city, limiting water access to three peninsulas.

The City of Beacon's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) was approved in 1992. Due to the number of recently completed and proposed projects that have implications for Beacon's waterfront and surface waters, the City drafted a Harbor Management Plan (HMP) to address all of the City's surface waters and waterfront. The City's of Beacon's Harbor Management Area (HMA) extends from just north of the Newburgh-Beacon Bridge, south to the southern tip of Denning's Point, and thence up the mouth of Fishkill Creek. The HMA's surface water area extends out into the Hudson River to a distance of 1,500 feet along the whole waterfront area. However, the focus of the HMP is mainly Beacon Harbor and its harborfront.

The City of Beacon's waterfront is comprised of two distinct components: an active harbor and harborfront and a relatively undeveloped riverfront along the Hudson River to the



north and south of the harbor and a portion of Fishkill Creek. Surface water activities are focused in the harbor and harborfront while the riverfront is largely open space and includes Denning's Point State Park. The HMA includes both surface waters and the lands adjacent to the surface waters that can influence what takes place on the surface waters and whose use, in turn, may be influenced by what takes place on the surface waters.

The land use in the City of Beacon's waterfront area is a mix of parkland, transportation, institutional, commercial and residential uses. The Metro-North railroad tracks run along the Hudson River several hundred feet inland from the river and across the mouth of Fishkill Creek. The tracks are a dominant feature of the City's waterfront because they separate the City from the river. The only access is provided by: a vehicle/pedestrian bridge on Red Flynn Drive, which crosses over the railroad tracks in the Beacon Harbor area; a bridge and an at grade crossing which provides access across railroad tracks to Denning's Point; and a pedestrian tunnel beneath the railroad tracks at the Beacon Metro North Station.

### **Collaborations with Department of State:**

After the adoption of its Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) in 1991 the City of Beacon began working to advance its implementation. The City's partnership with the Department of State (DOS) to implement the LWRP began in 1995 with its first implementation grant (see grants list below). Including the grant from 1995, the City has received 16 NYSDOS Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (EPF LWRP) grants, totaling \$4,193,227, focused primarily on improving the City's waterfront and accessibility to it.

The City and the DOS have worked successfully on a variety of projects bringing much needed revitalization to parts of the City's waterfront. The City currently has eight projects underway. The DOS is working actively with the City to complete their Harbor Management Plan and get its approval by the NYS Secretary of State and concurrence by NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resources Management as an amendment to the City's LWRP. The DOS and the City are also working collaboratively with Scenic Hudson, Inc. on the completion of Long Dock Park (seen in rendering to the right with further description below).



### **LWRP Monitoring Process:**

The goal of the monitoring process is for the Division of Coastal Resources (DCR) 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 the community

to highlight successes, and request technical and financial assistance for program implementation-should it be needed.

The DCR began the City of Beacon's LWRP monitoring process with a phone call to the City Administrator to describe that the City had been selected by DCR to participate in the LWRP monitoring project. A follow-up letter was sent to provide information relating to what the process would involve, and a list of survey questions was attached. The letter indicated that a conference call would take place between DCR representatives and key municipal officials to answer the survey questions; a follow-up site visit/meeting would be arranged to review the responses provided in the survey; and, following the site visit, DCR would prepare a written assessment of findings to identify areas of improvement, training, or need for LWRP amendments.

The conference call to discuss the City's answers to the survey questions was informative and provided the details necessary for the DCR to make its assessment. The City was well prepared for the call which took approximately two hours. City Administrator Meredith Robson and planning consultant David Stolman provided the responses. During the discussion, it was realized that since the City has recently adopted a comprehensive plan (2007) and is in the process of completing the HMP, it would be appropriate for the City to undertake an update to their LWRP to reflect the City's current vision as detailed through these more recent planning documents.

As a follow-up to the call, DCR staff traveled to Beacon to meet with City representatives. Participants from the City were City Administrator Meredith Robson, planning consultant David Stolman, and Scenic Hudson's Long Dock Park project manager Margery Groten. As part of the meeting, the City further described the relevance of the LWRP, its use, and where the City stood in its implementation. The meeting provided DCR with an opportunity to more fully assess the City's implementation of its LWRP and clarify several items discussed during the call. The meeting concluded with a tour of some key waterfront parcels, including Beacon Harbor and Scenic Hudson's Long Dock Park.

## **DCR Findings:**

### **LWRP Document Accessibility**

Paper copies of the LWRP and HMP documents are kept in the Clerk's office, the planning office, the Administrator's office, and the City's website. The documents are available for review to anyone who makes a request. Additionally, the LWRP and HMP are available electronically on the Department of State's website: <http://www.dos.ny.gov/opd/>

### **LWRP Implementation**

Since the development of its LWRP, the City has made use of private and public funds to reinvest in and revitalize its waterfront (see grants list below).

**Zoning-** Following the adoption of the LWRP, the City adopted various zoning changes to implement the LWRP. Sites throughout the City were rezoned to better achieve actions proposed in the LWRP, and new zones were created as well, including the Waterfront Development Zone and the Waterfront Park

Zone. Since the LWRPs adoption by the City in 1991, the City has amended its zoning code multiple times.

**Dia Beacon** – In May 2003, the Dia Art Foundation opened Dia:Beacon, Riggio Galleries, as a museum to house its renowned permanent collection of major works of art from the 1960s to the present. Dia:Beacon occupies a former Nabisco (National Biscuit Company) box printing facility built on the shore of the Hudson River in 1929 between Long Dock Park and Denning’s Point. The building’s most recent owner, International Paper, donated the property to Dia in 1999.

Following the renovation, the building was listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places, and Dia is currently undertaking steps to restore the exterior’s brick façade. Dia is also working with state and local government officials and Scenic Hudson, a nonprofit environmental organization, on a master plan to connect Dia:Beacon facility with the adjacent riverfront land.

**Long Dock Park-** The Former Beacon Landing site (23 acres) was slated for a mixed-use development project sponsored by the Scenic Hudson Land Trust Inc. and the Foss Group. The original project included shoreline stabilization, a hotel, boardwalk, restoration of a boat building barn, a public plaza, wetland restoration, trails and other site improvements. Due to the downturn in the national economy, the hotel developer was not able to secure the necessary funding to construct the hotel.

At this time, Scenic Hudson Inc. is moving forward with various components of the project: the shoreline stabilization, beach construction, a kayak platform and pavilion, the restoration of a barn for use as a “River Center”, trail construction, wetland restoration, and other park amenities. With multiple grants from the NYSDOS, the City of Beacon is working collaboratively with Scenic Hudson to make the Long Dock Park a recreational destination on Beacon’s waterfront.

**Harbor Management Plan-** Many of the implementation projects identified in the LWRP refer to the City’s harbor. Although many of these projects haven’t been undertaken, the City has used the HMP to provide further detail on accomplishing these projects successfully. The HMP explored various ways to achieve a deep water boat ramp, a pier to accommodate the Beacon Institute’s large research vessel, a turning basin for the ferry, the dock at the Long Dock Park, mooring field configuration and also explored the placement of various harbor support facilities.

**Pedestrian Walkway-** The City’s LWRP identified the development of a pedestrian walkway and bicycle path between the Waterfront Park and Dennings Point as a potential project. Today, the Beacon Shoreline Trail, a hard-pack trail which is part of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail System, connects the train station to Long Dock Park to Dennings Point.

### **Local Consistency Review**

City agencies, local officials, consultants and the public are generally aware of the LWRP and the consistency requirements associated with it. Chapter 220 of the City Code is the Waterfront Consistency Review Law. As part of the City’s local consistency process, City agencies proposing to undertake actions must make their own consistency determinations, however, these agencies can consult the Conservation Advisory Committee (CAC) for recommendations. The City makes approximately 6-10 consistency determinations a year, the results of which are rolled into the overall SEQR

recommendation/resolution. The City should make sure that the necessary Coastal Assessment Forms are completed and filed accordingly.

The City has generally had a good relationship with the DCR in relation to consistency of State and Federal actions with the City’s LWRP.

<b>Grants Awarded</b>			
<b>Title 11 Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program</b>			
<b>City of Beacon</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount of Grant</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
1995	\$3,000	Design of Park Improvements  This project involved the preparation of design plans and specifications for public access improvements and development of the 2.9 acre Tioronda Park (a vest pocket park), and the Madam Brett Mill Park Trail System on the additional 15 acre shore parcel leading to the marsh at the mouth of Fishkill Creek.	Closed
1996	\$45,000	Terminal Site Remediation	Closed
1999	\$20,000	Community Exchange Planning  This contract covered two elements stemming from the recommendation of the “Exchange”. The first component involved the City of Beacon contracting with George Trakus and Diane Shamash to prepare artist renderings and recommendations for linking the City's various waterfront sites and projects, including those proposed for the Harbor Area, Beacon Landing, the Dia Center for the Arts, Madam Brett Park, Denning's Point State Park, and the Metro North Station. Renderings depicted opportunities for river access and public art which are sensitive to the environment. The second element involved the preparation of a Visitor Orientation Center Signage Plan to assist in providing welcoming entry points to the City. The Signage Plan included the design of a kiosk and the information to be presented and the design of other visitor orientation signs.	Closed
1999	\$40,000	Garbage Incinerator Stack Removal  The City of Beacon demolished the 175 foot stack of its closed garbage incinerator in order to improve the visual environment of its waterfront. The project had two phases, demolition and site cleanup. Removal of the stack will improve views to the Hudson Highlands which was identified in the City's approved Local Waterfront Revitalization Program as a viewshed in need of both improvement and protection. Removal of the stack improved the environs of the Dia Art Center, which at the time was only just proposed as an adaptive reuse of the former printing plant industrial building, and of Long Dock, the former industrial site now being converted into a park.	Closed
2000	\$346,000	City of Beacon Waterfront Rediscovery Initiative – 1  The City will continue to implement a comprehensive plan to facilitate redevelopment of the Beacon waterfront. The project includes conceptual planning, design, and engineering of key elements along the waterfront and	Under-way

Grants Awarded			
Title 11 Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program			
City of Beacon			
Year	Amount of Grant	Project Description	Status
		seeks to link waterfront and downtown revitalization. Many of the components will advance development efforts already underway, including the Dia Center for the Arts, the ferry dock and Long Dock Park. This project, as with others, will further work developed under previous LWRP grants.	
2001	\$120,000	City of Beacon Waterfront Rediscovery Initiative - 2  The City completed the stabilization of the southern shoreline at Beacon Landing. This was a critical part of a larger shoreline stabilization and public access project associated with Long Dock Park. This project furthered work developed under previous EPF awards.	Closed
2002	\$300,000	Beacon Waterfront Rediscovery Riverfront Access Project  The City will continue the stabilization of 2,500 feet of shoreline at Long Dock Park and the construction of a shoreline path around the entire 23 acre site. The path will link the riverfront with the Metro North train station, Dia Center for the Arts, and the Hudson River Estuary shoreline trail. This will further work developed under previous EPF awards.	Under-way
2003	\$300,000	Harbor Management Planning and Design of Waterfront Facility Renovation  The City has prepared a harbor management plan for Beacon Harbor, and studied potential locations and docking designs for siting Rivers and Estuaries Center research vessels. The project also included design improvements to an 1860's historic waterfront barn for community boatbuilding that was relocated to the site. This project will further develop work of previous EPF awarded projects.	Under-way
2004	\$100,000	Transportation Planning for Beacon Harbor, Downtown and Denning's Point  The City of Beacon, in partnership with the Rivers and Estuaries Center, identified enhancements and connections to facilitate transportation between Denning's Point, Beacon Harbor, and downtown Beacon. Work was coordinated with ongoing Metro North Station planning and redevelopment.	Closed
2004	\$300,000	Construction of Waterfront Amenities at Scenic Hudson's Long Dock Park  Scenic Hudson, in partnership with the City of Beacon, will construct amenities at the 23-acre Long Dock Park parcel on the Hudson River. In addition, a 19th century "Red Barn" that has been partially restored by Scenic Hudson is proposed for interior renovation for community uses. Grant funds will also support the continuation of the Beacon Waterfront Coordinator. This project furthers work developed under previous EPF awards.	Under-way
2005	\$325,000	Planning, Design and Construction of Building One Technology and Programming  The Rivers and Estuaries Center, sponsored by the City of Beacon, assessed and installed the technology needed to advance programming and public visitation to Building One, the first Center building constructed on Denning's Point. Building One houses the Center's exhibitions and education programs, Teacher Training	Closed

Grants Awarded			
Title 11 Environmental Protection Fund Local Waterfront Revitalization Program			
City of Beacon			
Year	Amount of Grant	Project Description	Status
		Center, research facilities, and a field office and visitor's center for Denning's Point State Park. Grant funds also supported the development of oral histories from the Hudson River Valley, and installation of New York State Coastal Resources Interpretive Program (NYSCRIP) signage for the Denning's Point Perimeter Trail.	
2005	\$500,000	Construction of Amenities at Scenic Hudson's Long Dock Park  The City of Beacon, in partnership with Scenic Hudson Land Trust is installing site furnishings and amenities at Scenic Hudson's Long Dock Park. Amenities will include public toilets, lighting, picnic tables, chess/checker tables, moveable chairs and sun canopies. This will further work developed under a previous EPF award.	Under-way
2006	\$18,800	Planning for Update of City of Beacon Comprehensive Plan  The City of Beacon rewrote their Comprehensive Plan. The demand for development in the City of Beacon affects environmentally sensitive areas, including lands adjacent to existing water bodies, wetlands and steep slopes. The grant award enabled the completion of a long-range, comprehensive land use plan that reflects maximum participation from the community.	Closed
2006	\$625,427	Phase I Construction of Beacon Institute Research Pier  The City of Beacon, in partnership with the Beacon Institute, will construct Phase I of a home-port berth to accommodate research vessels and other public uses in Beacon Harbor. Pier design and construction and proposed uses will be guided by the City's Harbor Management Plan. This will further work developed under a previous EPF award.	Under-way
2006	\$1,000,000	Construction of Amenities at Long Dock Beacon Park  The City of Beacon, in partnership with Scenic Hudson Land Trust, will create a native meadow, develop trails through a restored wetlands area, and construct a canoe/kayak launch and outdoor environmental learning center. This will further work developed under previous EPF awards.	Under-way
2009	\$150,000	Construction of Amenities at Long Dock Beacon Park  The City of Beacon, in partnership with Scenic Hudson, will construct a kayak deck at Long Dock Beacon as part of a kayak center. The project will increase public access to the Hudson River for non-motorized boats and attract visitors to the City of Beacon.	Under-way