

TOWN OF HYDE PARK
DUTCHESS COUNTY, NEW YORK

PLANNING & ENGINEERING REPORT
FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN CENTER

CGC41658

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**CGC41658 Town of Hyde Park
Town Center Revitalization
Final Planning & Engineering Report**

Contents

1 Goals and Objectives 3
2 Existing Conditions..... 4
3 Market Analysis and Conceptual Redevelopment Plan..... 9
4 Wastewater Treatment Feasibility Study 11
5 Design for Route 9 Improvements 15
6 Zoning Code Analysis..... 19
7 State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) Compliance..... 22
8 Next Steps 23

Figures

Project Area Figure 1
Existing Streetscape Figure 2
Sewer Service Area Alternate Analysis Figure 3
Sewer District Cost Comparison Summary Figure 4

Appendices

- Appendix A: Existing Conditions Summary Report
- Appendix B: Market Analysis and Conceptual Redevelopment Plan
- Appendix C: Conceptual Site Plan
- Appendix D: Preliminary Engineering Report, Town of Hyde Park Wastewater System Feasibility Study
- Appendix E: Design for Route 9 Improvements
- Appendix F: Zoning Code Analysis Report

1 Goals and Objectives

The Town of Hyde Park is an historic community located along the banks of the Hudson River in Dutchess County, New York. During the 20th century, the Town developed into an automobile-based suburb with residential neighborhoods surrounding the heavily travelled US Route 9 commercial corridor. This automobile-centric stretch of Route 9 actively discourages pedestrian and bicycle usage, and the commercial node is safely accessible only by car. Further, the commercial area to the east of Route 9 has failed to reach its full potential in part because the area lacks a public sewer infrastructure that would facilitate development.

The goal of this Project is to help revitalize the declining central business district into a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly Town Center that will encourage new mixed-use development and serve as a lively “village” where residents can live, work, dine, and do errands without the need of a car. This Planning and Engineering Report is the initial step that the Town must take in retrofitting this key commercial node and identifying the multiple strategies to undertake to make the Study Area “development ready:” both more marketable to investors, and more walkable for, and attractive to, residents.

One principal goal is to facilitate private investment in the redevelopment of the Town’s languishing commercial area, the Town Center, through changes to zoning, improvements to Route 9, and most importantly, construction of a public sewer system. These advanced preparations will ultimately make the Town Center area more marketable to private investors and will establish a foundation consistent with the community’s desire to have a pedestrian-friendly downtown and, ultimately, a cleaner, greener community.

2 Existing Conditions

Please refer to *Appendix A, Existing Conditions Summary Report*, for detail

Project Area

The Project Area is centered on the portion of US Route 9 (Albany Post Road) extending from Parker Avenue to the north and Watson Place to the south, encompassing the commercial properties on both sides of Route 9 (see **Figure 1** on the following page). The Project Area is located in the heart of Hyde Park and is surrounded by residential neighborhoods. Because this project includes an evaluation of the costs and benefits of providing a central sewer system for the Town Center, portions of the project address a larger geographical area than the discrete Town Center.

Land Use and Zoning

The Town of Hyde Park adopted a Comprehensive Plan in 2005 and subsequently updated its zoning regulations. The zoning code was then completely overhauled in 2007 and has been periodically updated since. The zoning is generally described as “transect based,” in that the density and intensity of uses become greater closer to existing community centers. The area of study is centered in the “Town Center Historic District”, which allows for a mix of commercial and residential uses and encourages pedestrian-friendly lot layouts. The purpose of this district is “to permit diversified tourism-dependent nonresidential uses that meet tourist needs in areas convenient to major points of interest, including the existing national park/historical sites. To further diversify the economy of the Route 9 corridor, mixed-use development that incorporates residential uses is to be encouraged.”¹

Housing and Demographics²

Hyde Park’s population is not expected to change significantly over the next several years; projections indicate a slight decrease in population for the Town, and a slight increase in the population of Dutchess County as a whole. The median age in the Town is creeping up slowly, projected to increase from 39.8 years (2010) to 41.1 years in 2021; the County expects a 4% increase in median age as well.

While the median income in the Town is relatively high, at \$67,524 (2016), it lags Dutchess County by more than 10%; that gulf is expected to narrow to 6% by 2021. Data shows a concentration of middle-aged, wealthier households in Hyde Park, and a smaller concentration of older, lower-income households. Projections indicate that the population will shift slightly towards older, wealthier households across the next several years. Educational attainment in Hyde Park mirrors that of Dutchess County almost exactly, with 43% of residents having attained some type of college or advanced degree.

Hyde Park functions more as a bedroom community than an employment center. Just over 1,000 people both live and work in the Town, meaning that less than 30% of Town jobs are filled by residents. More than 8,400 residents commute out of the Town for work.

¹ From §109-3.1.1 Land Use Districts and Purposes

² The majority of data in this section was sourced from ESRI; please see Appendix A, *Existing Conditions Summary Report*, for detail

FIGURE 1: PROJECT AREA



Lastly, like Dutchess County (and much of the nation), Hyde Park's demand for housing has shifted recently from owner-occupied to rental units.

Public and Private Utilities

The Town of Hyde Park, including the Project Area, is provided with potable water by the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority (DCWWA) Hyde Park Water System. The Hyde Park Water System provides potable water that meets all applicable regulatory standards; water quality and quantity are robust. The source of raw water is the Hudson River which is filtered, disinfected, stored and distributed to the community.

Natural gas and electric services are provided in the Town of Hyde Park by Central Hudson. Central Hudson offers robust and accessible programs to support revitalization and economic development, which could be critical to public and private plans to retrofit Hyde Park's Town Center.

Telecommunications are provided by Cablevision, which offers cable television, internet and telephone services to property owners in the Town of Hyde Park.

Currently, the Town of Hyde Park has no centralized public sewer system. A major thrust of the Town Center study is to conceptualize a viable centralized or decentralized public sewer system for the Project Area, and possibly the vicinity, because all existing land uses rely on on-lot septic or treatment systems. Soils in the Project Area west of Route 9 are generally sandy, which allows for a rapid percolation rate. This may result in poor performance of septic systems from a treatment perspective (e.g., septic tank effluent travels through a leach field too rapidly to receive biological treatment prior to reaching ground water); however, because of the sandy soils, surface ponding or short-circuiting of leach fields (indicators of failed septic systems) is unlikely to be detected by property owners. While there is no direct evidence that septic systems are not providing adequate treatment, the sandy soils in the area result in the possibility that proper treatment does not occur, and untreated or undertreated waste water is infiltrating Hyde Park's ground water. Conditions to the east of Route 9 include rock outcrops at the surface. These conditions are also not amenable to proper septic system function.

Further, anecdotal evidence from local business owners and developers indicates that the limitations of on-site sewer systems are preventing development in the Project Area from reaching its full potential.

Locations and Types of Transportation Systems, and State of Roadways and Sidewalks

The two-way Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) volume for US Route 9 within the study area is approximately 20,000 vehicles per day. Approximately 3% of the AADT volumes are heavy vehicles. According to the most recent three years of accident data from NYSDOT, no accidents involving pedestrians were reported, and only one (1) involving a bicycle, but 75 vehicular accidents, including a cluster of 45 rear-end type accidents, occurred.

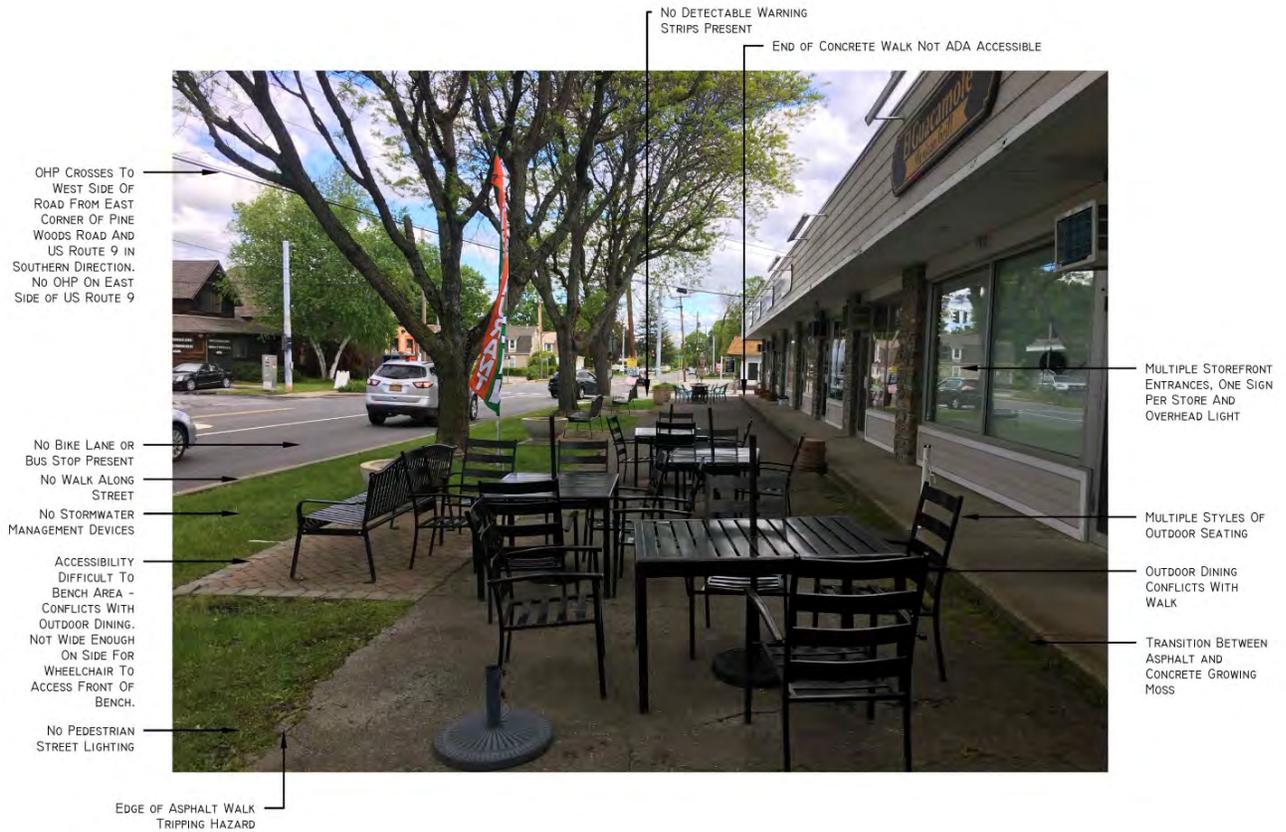
The existing parking conditions for the study area do not include any on-street parking. All parking is in private parking lots in shopping plazas and commercial developments. While a small number of residential properties do border US Route 9, all access is from public side streets.

Bicyclists utilize the US Route 9 Bike Route for north-south travel. The availability of other bike routes and bike trails is limited in Hyde Park. Pedestrians can use the accommodations including sidewalks on both sides of US Route 9 in the study area to access residential streets and commercial properties; it should be noted that in some areas, sidewalks are damaged or nonexistent. No internal linkage between commercial properties exists outside of the sidewalks adjacent to US Route 9. Numerous parks provide walking paths, including Pinewoods Park accessed from Pine Woods Road, but pedestrians accessing these parks must use the shoulders of the other roadways to access these parks.

The existing roadway in the study area varies from having a 10-foot-wide shoulder to no shoulder, and sidewalks, where extant, are in various states of repair and accessibility. A stone wall exists on the west side of the roadway that extends from the southern study area limits to halfway between Mansion Drive and Crumwold Place.

Initial field work conducted to evaluate the elements of the existing streetscape and to identify opportunities and constraints for streetscape improvements identified several issues, ranging from lack of ADA accessibility, lack of bikes lanes, difficult intersections, multiple curb cuts, and other opportunities for improvement. An illustration of these challenges is presented in **Figure 2** on the following page.

FIGURE 2: EXISTING STREETScape



2 EXISTING CONDITIONS



Natural and Cultural Resources, and Open Space

There exist abundant cultural and natural resources in the immediate vicinity of the Town Center:

- FDR National Historic Site, including Springwood Estate, and Presidential Library & Museum
- Vanderbilt Mansion, a classic Gilded Age estate with formal gardens and hiking trails overlooking the Hudson River
- Culinary Institute of America, world-renowned educational facility with excellent restaurants
- Pinewoods Park, with many recreational options from tennis to fishing
- Many historic homes, buildings and neighborhoods

3 Market Analysis and Conceptual Redevelopment Plan

Introduction

The Market Analysis and Conceptual Redevelopment Plan (**Appendix B**) presents a redevelopment vision for the study area based on the *Market Opportunity Analysis*³, extensive public outreach, historical project experience, and the Existing Conditions Summary Report, which contains the results of an extensive real estate market analysis. The preliminary concepts were discussed with and vetted by existing and potential developers in the region, as well as representatives of anchor institutions, like the Culinary Institute of America⁴. The plan includes a conceptual site plan (see **Appendix C**), narrative description, a vision connected to Hyde Park's distinguished history and community, initial analysis of infrastructure carrying capacity, parking requirement details, and a summary of land uses along with the market and public-input rationale for the proposed uses. The end result envisions a mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented Town Center with locally-sourced boutique shops, restaurants, a hotel, modern apartments, and public, green spaces for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Design Concept Determinations

The conceptual site design reflects the vision articulated above; the commercial and residential uses and square footage requirements were determined by the evaluation found in the *Market Opportunity Analysis*, working first from a maximum feasible build-out based on space and infrastructure available and anticipated, then incorporating public input and physical design factors. Undergirding the *Market Opportunity Analysis* were a retail leakage analysis, analysis of factors influencing housing uptake (regional population growth, for example), and category analysis for the region. All concepts for redevelopment were "stress tested" with existing and potential developers in the region, as well as with large stakeholders in Hyde Park, such as the Culinary Institute. Further, the real estate market analysis contained in the Existing Conditions Summary Report supports the expected attractiveness of the principal elements of the Redevelopment Plan, including, most importantly, a sanitary sewer system to support higher density, pedestrian-friendly growth in the study area.

Conceptual Redevelopment Plan Narrative

A pedestrian gateway invites residents and visitors into the site from Albany Post Road, leading them to a cobblestone pedestrian street network that offers walkable links between the new shops, restaurants, and modern-style apartments. The pedestrian streets are rich in life and activity with outdoor café dining, plazas, entertainment, and public art installations. A new hotel anchors the Town Center development, drawing in tourists visiting the region's historic sites. A trolley stops at a designated location in front of the hotel and transports visitors to local attractions. The adjacent Visitor Center showcases the historic sites and businesses in the area while providing showcase space for one of Hyde Park's premiere attractions, the Culinary Institute of America. The neighborhood offers community-centric amenities, such as a new village green with small performance stage, and a new civic building, which opens onto a public plaza. The Town Center

³ The Market Analysis and Conceptual Redevelopment Plan is presented as Appendix B to this Planning and Engineering Report; this document contains the detailed *Market Analysis Report*.

⁴ This is evidenced by the *Market Analysis Public Outreach Summary*, Appendix B of the Market Analysis and Conceptual Redevelopment Plan.

features unified and attractive architectural styles that reflect the heritage of the town and incorporate high quality historic materials, including stone elements, throughout. The parking footprint of the site is minimized through a new parking garage that features an indoor pedestrian connection to the hotel. Additional parking is provided in smaller, decentralized parking lots that allow people coming to the site to park their vehicles and explore the site on foot. Lastly, the new Town Center development connects to Pine Woods Road and the Pinewoods Park via a new street and sidewalk connection.

Land Uses and Rationale

For all of the proposed land uses, the rationale behind the concept plans is laid out in detail in the *Market Analysis Report* (with detail beginning on page 7 of that document). The proposed land uses support the Town's larger vision of creating a lively, pedestrian-friendly Town Center with mixed-use development and a neighborhood feel consistent with the surrounding architectural and natural environment.

Infrastructure Carrying Capacity

With the exception of sanitary sewer, the infrastructure supporting the Town Center study area is ample in all respects to accommodate the type and extent of growth envisioned by the Conceptual Redevelopment Plan. Potable water, electric and communications infrastructure are robust. Growth in the Town Center area is significantly limited by the lack of a wastewater collection and treatment system that could support attractive, job- and housing-creating development in a density and configuration that best serves the Town's population, enabling Hyde Park to transform an automobile-oriented corridor into a thriving mixed-use neighborhood.

Parking and Public Transportation

The redevelopment plan was designed to demonstrate the benefits and potential outcomes of reduced or eliminated parking minimums found in Hyde Park's existing zoning regulations, which will create more pedestrian-friendly development outcomes. Shared parking spaces, well-suited to mixed-use development (with residential and commercial uses having different peak parking demand times), as well as expanded public transit (such as the local shuttle or trolley system along Route 9, as envisioned in the Redevelopment Plan), will cumulatively reduce the need for parking spaces. Further, the Redevelopment Plan envisions 245 surface parking spaces and 192 structure parking spaces in order to accommodate existing as well as new uses in the study area. While it is impossible to predict what types of development will happen on what schedule, the Town, through careful planning and the provision of needed sewer infrastructure, is providing the optimum conditions for increased pedestrian, bicycle and public transit, in order to achieve its goal of creating a cleaner, greener community.

4 Wastewater Treatment Feasibility Study

Introduction

The implementation of a centralized sewer system is needed to facilitate revitalization of the Town Center; the desired density of use is not possible with the current system of individual, private (and limited) septic systems. The lack of a centralized sewer system has stunted economic development in Hyde Park, even beyond the bounds of the Town Center project area. The soil conditions in the area severely limit any potential on-site treatment and subsurface disposal system, limiting therefore density of development. While there are currently no known violations, existing septic systems in such soil conditions are prone to failure, resulting in untreated sewage being released directly into the environment, with attendant negative impacts on the environment, public health, and quality of life.

The Wastewater Treatment Feasibility Study, attached to this report as the Preliminary Engineering Report (“PER”) for Hyde Park’s Town Center (see **Appendix D**), examines three sanitary sewer service areas (Alternate 1: Town Center project area only; Alternate 2: the majority of the Route 9 Commercial Corridor; Alternate 3: an expanded district including the Route 9 commercial area and the most densely populated adjoining residential areas), multiple wastewater treatment technologies, and various treatment facility discharge locations. Appendix D contains detailed maps of the considered sewer service areas.

The PER evaluates current environmental impacts and resources for the three alternate service areas (as well as a “no action” alternative), and finds that Alternate 1 is not viable, but both Alternates 2 and 3 are feasible, with Alternate 3 potentially offering the greatest benefits to the Town for longevity and sustainability of the system. The PER makes recommendations for further study and evaluation, both of which are anticipated to be pursued during SEQR for the sewer district ultimately chosen. For example, the report recommends a site survey to determine actual elevations of the components within the area of potential effect and recommends that the Town work closely with all involved agencies to determine the extent of wetlands, cultural resources and endangered species, and other environmental factors, within the study area.

Wastewater Treatment Options

For the wastewater treatment facility options, designs were based on “typical” high strength wastewater (anticipating that most wastewater will be typical residential strength, but that as much as 25% of the resulting wastewater could be from food service-type users) in accordance with *Wastewater Engineering: Treatment and Resource Recovery, 5th Edition, Metcalf & Eddy, 2014*. Consultation with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) provided preliminary effluent limits for both a subsurface system, in which the effluent is discharged to groundwater via absorption fields, and for surface discharge to both the unnamed watercourse that crosses Route 9 south of the Town Center site, as well as the Crum Elbow Creek. Details of the preliminary and anticipated SPDES permit limits are detailed in the text of the PER.

A subsurface disposal system was analyzed and, due to soil conditions, expected flow, and the sheer amount of acreage necessary to treat expected flows, this type of system was determined to be unfeasible. The requirement for hydraulically suitable soil conditions, which are in short supply

in the Study Area, resulted in a system that would require a much larger footprint than a facility discharging to surface water, which limits possible sites.

For a treatment facility with surface discharge, effluent limits require a higher degree of treatment; the preferred treatment technology is a facility utilizing activated sludge with tertiary filters. While there are a variety of such systems capable of meeting treatment requirements, the PER considers utilizing a Membrane Bioreactor (MBR) process. Details about the system and the headworks building may be found in the PER.

Several suitable sites for a treatment plant with surface discharge, with sufficient land, access to surface water bodies, and proximity to the proposed redevelopment area, exist. The Town does not own any of the potential sites and as a result, a precise location for the treatment plant cannot be identified within this Planning & Engineering Report. Sewer pipe routing has been considered for each of the service area alternatives, and will be illustrated in the Map, Plan and Report that will be created for the sewer district formation process. These activities are anticipated to be completed before the end of 2018.

Service Area Alternatives

The three principal service area alternates were analyzed and compared to assess the intrinsic and public benefits of each, summarized here in **Figure 3**:

FIGURE 3: SEWER SERVICE AREA ALTERNATE ANALYSIS

	Provides Density	Allows for Growth	Enhances Tax Base	Environmental Benefit	Longevity	Sustainability
Alternate 1 Town Center	Least	Least	Moderate	Least	Least	Least
Alternate 2 Commercial Corridor	Moderate	Most	Most	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Alternate 3 Commercial & Residential	Most	Most	Most	Most	Most	Most

Density is critical to lowering costs and creating economically sustainable sewer systems. The “Town Center Only” alternate (Alternate 1) necessitates the construction of expensive infrastructure with very few parcels to support the cost and offers only limited opportunities to expand the system. The Commercial Corridor (Alternate 2) offers more density so that the cost of infrastructure is shared by more users, and the potential for *growth* is greater. The addition of the residential neighborhood to the west of Route 9 (Alternate 3) provides the greatest *density*, lowest cost and most economically *sustainable* sewer system.

The provision of a public sewer system will *enhance the tax base* by facilitating and encouraging commercial development. Moreover, while hard data may be difficult to obtain, anecdotal evidence from other communities that have installed public sewer systems indicates that residential property values increase after investment in a public sewer system is completed.

The *environmental benefits* of a public sewer system are manifold under any of the alternate service areas considered; however, the benefits of removing wastewater discharge from groundwater expand as the service area increases.

Longevity is the result of proper design and construction, but moreover, operations and maintenance. A system that has density offers a user base that can properly support maintenance which results in increasing the useful life of the system.

Sustainability is the ability of the user base to support the financial needs of the sewer system over time. Similar to longevity, a system that has density provides a user base that can share the costs of the system and respond to system demands more readily than a smaller service area that relies on very few users.

The comparison of intrinsic and public benefits commends the Commercial Corridor and the Commercial & Residential service areas and does not favor the small Town Center service area, which was determined not to be feasible due to excessive expense for limited benefit.

Cost Analysis

Cost estimates for treatment and disposal options are outlined in detail in the PER. The cost analyses take into account the capital cost, the grant monies that have been committed to the Town from various sources, the possibility of a Water Infrastructure Improvement Act (“WIIA”) grant, market-rate borrowing, subsidized borrowing, operations and maintenance costs, the user base, and a commercial growth factor, anticipating growth in the Study Area once public sewer is available. Actual user cost determination will be a public policy decision made by the Town Board when forming the sewer district, and as such, are not available at this time.

FIGURE 4: SEWER DISTRICT COST COMPARISON SUMMARY

Factor	Town Center	Commercial Corridor	Commercial & Residential
Capital Cost	\$10,858,000	\$17,186,000	\$24,099,000
Units	73	317	818
Current Grants	\$1,825,000	\$5,325,000	\$5,325,000
Market Rate	\$8,010/Unit/Yr	\$2,831/Unit/Yr	\$1,697/Unit/Yr
Subsidized Rate	\$6,436/Unit/Yr	\$2,338/Unit/Yr	\$1,395/Unit/Yr
Subsidized w/WIIA	\$5,103/Unit/Yr	\$1,921/Unit/Yr	\$1,139/Unit/Yr

Schedule

The project's environmental and SHPO review is expected to take place across the summer and fall of 2018, with short-term financing being secured in Q3 of 2019, and design and construction taking place from late 2019 until summer 2023.

Conclusions

The Preliminary Engineering Report comes to several conclusions:

- A sewer system serving just the Town Center (Alternate 1) is infeasible due to cost
- A sewer system serving either the Route 9 Commercial Corridor (Alt. 2A) or the Commercial & Residential Area (Alt. 3A) is feasible; either option would provide density and significant benefit to the Town. Alternates 2A, 2B, 3B and 3C are all feasible as well if the additional users agree to the costs to connect.
- A reduced or subsidized interest rate will have a significant impact on per-unit costs
- Obtaining additional grant funding will have a significant impact on per-unit costs
- The Town should aggressively pursue reduced interest rate financing and grants including WIIA and any others available

While Alternate 3A is the recommended option, the PER recognizes that, in order for the project to advance, several necessary steps must take place, including:

- The creation of a Map, Plan and Report that will further detail the scope and scale of the project, the boundaries of the sewer district and the user benefit/cost calculations
- The formation of the sewer district in accordance with New York State law.

The formal development of the sewer district will require additional public input. This important public process will ascertain property owners' interest regarding the extension of sewer service into the residential areas included in Alternate 3A. The ultimate boundaries and size of the sewer district, as well as sewer pipe routing, any need for easements and/or property access for any and all collection-system and treatment-plan construction, will be determined as the Town progresses through the Map, Plan and Report into sewer district formation.

The Town intends to use the Preliminary Engineering Report to seek listing on NYSEFC's Intended Use Plan (IUP) in order to seek low-interest financing for a portion of the total sewer project expense through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund.

5 Design for Route 9 Improvements

Overview

The Town of Hyde Park developed into an automobile-based suburb during the 20th century, with residential neighborhoods developing around the heavily traveled US Route 9 commercial corridor. The Town has been actively planning the creation of a walkable community with a true “town center” for over a decade, and improvements to Route 9, also known as the Albany Post Road, will be critical to advancing this plan for a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly district with dense, mixed-use development, job creation, energy savings, and convenient access to community destinations.

Currently, the stretch of Route 9 within the Study Area presents multiple challenges in terms of existing traffic conditions and streetscape. At the broadest level, the concepts for Route 9 Improvements (see **Appendix E**) seek to support the Town Center redevelopment plan by helping to create a “sense of place” that will attract both residents and those passing through. These plans incorporate Complete Streets design sensibilities, aiming to help transition the Study Area from automobile-centric to pedestrian-friendly, and utilizes traffic-calming measures, both for pedestrian and cyclist safety, and also to create a “neighborhood” feel.

Specific challenges of the Route 9 corridor include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Lack of on-street parking
- Lack of street furniture and pedestrian amenities (e.g., benches)
- Lack of cyclist amenities (e.g., bicycle racks)
- Uneven, heaved, cracked and narrow, non-ADA compliant sidewalks
- In some areas, no sidewalks at all
- Lack of crosswalks and other measures to ensure safe pedestrian crossings
- Lack of bicycle facilities (e.g., shoulders, shared lanes)
- Lack of bus stops
- Lack of stormwater management devices
- Trip hazards
- Lack of pedestrian street lighting
- Offset (misaligned) cross-streets entering Route 9

The purpose of this report is to serve as the baseline guide for near-term planning and conceptual engineering that, if constructed, will result in significant improvements in the safety and ease of use of the Route 9 corridor in Hyde Park for pedestrians, bicycles and motorized traffic sharing this relatively narrow, busy road.

Concept for Reconfigured Transportation System

The two-page *Site Location Plan*⁵ presents the schematic plan for the reconfigured traffic plan within the Study Area. Design elements for improved pedestrian safety and traffic calming include:

⁵ Please see Appendix A of the Design for Route 9 Improvements report.

- **On-street parking:** More than 20 on-street parking spaces, on both the east and west sides of Route 9, are proposed in this conceptual design (illustrated in orange). The addition of on-street parking incorporates NYS DOT’s plans and, most importantly, the Town of Hyde Park’s vision: Creating a “sense of place,” a lively area where people stop and park to shop, visit parks, drop by the library, run errands, dine and live. On-street parking also has the complementary effect of calming traffic, as vehicles must decelerate to accommodate cars entering and exiting these spaces.
- **Crosswalks:** The conceptual design introduces three new, four-way crosswalks to improve pedestrian safety and to signal to drivers the presence of those on foot; further, single crosswalks have been added at numerous intersections where cross-streets meet Route 9. And a crosswalk is proposed at the Park Plaza entrance, which is currently a wide, visually confusing and potentially dangerous pedestrian route.
- **Sidewalks:** Many new stretches of sidewalk are proposed (in blue on the Plan) where none existed previously, particularly along the west side of Route 9. The new sidewalks will enable pedestrians to move along Route 9 safely and with a much greater degree of comfort; further, physical sidewalks are also a visual cue to drivers to pay attention and slow down. All sidewalks throughout the Study Area will be protected from opening vehicle doors by grass or hardscaping that clearly creates a visual and actual buffer between pedestrians and parking cars. Further, some existing stretches of sidewalk needed to be expanded in order to meet safety and ADA compliance. For example, the sidewalk from Watson to Mansion requires expansion from its current width.

The proposal includes replacing much of the heaving, cracked and noncompliant existing sidewalks, which tracks with the work that the Town of Hyde Park has been undertaking to the south of the Study Area and ties directly into this project.

Lastly, the proposal incorporates the future sidewalk expansion planned for the Pine Woods intersection, for seamless execution.

- **Street markings:** Through careful analysis, the consultant team has designed changes to lane markings across the entire Study Area, identifying shared lanes, turn lanes and crosswalks. Where appropriate, flat medians have been incorporated to further calm traffic, delineate lanes, and increase safety. The hardscaping for these medians will be textured and colored, to produce both audio and visual cues for drivers, but still can be easily crossed by emergency vehicles when necessary.
- **Signals:** The proposal includes modifying traffic signal timings within the Study Area to optimize traffic flow, and the addition of pedestrian signals with countdown timers at locations of new crosswalks.

Cross-street at Route 9 and Crumwold Place

One element that the consultant team considered, per recommendations by the Town of Hyde Park and NYSDOT, was the creation of a public cross-street on the east side of Route 9 connecting Crumwold Place to Pine Woods Road, and a four-way signalized intersection at this new cross-

street at Route 9 and Crumwold Place. Due to development that has occurred in the Plaza recently, a cross-street in that location is no longer possible. The Master Redevelopment Plan, however, does envision a public street parallel to Route 9 along the existing access road within the plaza, which will now be tree-lined and set within a district designed to be shared between pedestrians, cyclists and automobiles.

Public Transport/Bus Stops Connecting with Dutchess County Public Transit (DCPT)

The Master Redevelopment Plan envisions a street interior to the Town Center “neighborhood” which will accommodate public transportation and a “visitors’ trolley” that will shuttle residents and visitors between key nodes along Route 9, from the Vanderbilt Mansion to the north, to the historic FDR site to the south. While the creation of on-street parking is a priority of this plan, a bus stop for Dutchess County Public Transit (DCPT) could be created on Route 9 by repurposing some of the on-street parking spaces. While this conceptual design does not specifically identify a location for a DCPT bus stop, the Town of Hyde Park may choose to pursue this option directly with DCPT.

Bicycle Right-of-Way Improvements, Amenities

One of the most significant improvements envisioned in this plan is new bicycle rights-of-way. Creating full bike lanes along the Study Area of Route 9 is not possible due to the varying and insufficient width of Route 9 in this location. However, the design team was able to conceptualize a system of shared lane markings (“sharrows”) to clearly demarcate bicycle lanes. Clearly marked sharrows coupled with clearly delineated turn lanes and cross-walks will visually cue drivers to slow down and pay attention for the possibility of cyclists and pedestrians. The streetscape plan also incorporates bicycle parking equipment through the study area.

Streetscape and Pedestrian Improvements

The concept for the Hyde Park Town Center improved streetscape is also patterned on Complete Street Initiative guidelines. In response to best management practices, the pedestrian zone is separated from the carriageway by a four-foot buffer area. This area would either be textured hardscape or grass to accommodate people exiting their parked cars. Street trees will be incorporated into this space, as well as other attractive and functional plantings.⁶

Sidewalks are proposed behind the buffer area along the street. They will vary in width and are anticipated to consist of permeable concrete unit masonry pavers which will function as a stormwater management practice. The pavers will continue into the core of the Town Center pedestrian area. The pavers will be accented with various colors and patterns to reflect travel direction and use areas, directing pedestrians from the street corridor to the Town Center structures. The sidewalks will be expanded at street intersections to accommodate benches, bicycle racks and other street furniture.

The three major street intersections including Pinewoods Drive/US Route 9, Crumwold Place/US Route 9 and Rogers Place/US Route 9 are the primary pedestrian crosswalk areas. In addition to traditional pedestrian crosswalks at these locations, the entire intersection is proposed to be designated with either a color surface on the bituminous pavement or textured paver material. This

⁶ Beginning on page 7 of Design for Route 9 Improvements, readers may find illustrations of street layouts and streetscape materials and images.

will suggest to drivers that they are entering a "pedestrian" space which will cause them to safely proceed through the intersection.

Decorative pedestrian scale light fixtures are proposed along the entire length of US Route 9 in the Town Center. They will not replace the tall street lights; however, they will develop a visual ceiling for pedestrians and drivers in the streetscape and will enhance pedestrians' sense of safety and comfort. These fixtures can also be employed to hang decorative banners for festive events.

Utilities

The consultant team has determined that no existing utilities or water service lines will be impacted or disrupted by any of the proposed work, which will take place above existing utility depths. Any new utility needs could be driven, in the future, by development in and around the Town Center.

Energy Efficient Measures

In alignment with Complete Streets recommendations, the elements of the proposed Route 9 Improvements together encourage energy efficiency by promoting pedestrian access and decreased vehicle dependency. Optimized signals will decrease vehicle queuing, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Sharrows will encourage bicycle use, decreasing vehicle use, and the proposed trolley system, and possible bus stops for public transit, will decrease private vehicle use and improve air quality. Lastly, pedestrian-level lighting is anticipated to use LED lighting to further reduce energy consumption within the Study Area.

6 Zoning Code Analysis

Overview:

In the context of the historic setting of the Town of Hyde Park, it is not difficult to envision a bustling and beautiful Town Center with infrastructure, housing, transit, retail/commercial businesses, and abundant employment opportunities. Creating an environment where such a vision can be realized, however, is a challenge if land use regulations are either not in line with the vision of the community, or do not permit the desired development to take place. The Conceptual Redevelopment Plan, described earlier in this Report, suggests a higher density mix of uses designed as a small village center with some pedestrian-only streets surrounding an open green; the Zoning Code Analysis Report (attached as **Appendix F**) both evaluated the allowed uses, density, area and bulk requirements of the existing Town Center Historic District zoning, and identified optimal next steps to enable the Town to achieve its goal of revitalizing the declining Town Center into a vibrant, walkable, mixed-use area.

Zoning Code Review Process

After a thorough review of foundational planning documents, including the Town's Comprehensive Plan (2005) and several regional plans, including *The Greenway Connection* and *The Albany Post Road Corridor Study*, the consultant team analyzed the Town's Zoning Law, beginning with §108-1.4, *Purposes*: Frequently referred to as the "intents" section, *Purposes* provides a legal basis for discretionary review decisions by the Planning Board. Section 108-1.4 contains many purposes that are supportive of the redevelopment plan outlined in this Report. Further, the purpose of the Town Center Historic District ("TCHD"), which fully encompasses the Study Area of this Report, is described in §109-3.1.1, *Land Use Districts and Purposes*, as encouraging mixed-use development and tourism-dependent activities, both of which are fundamental elements of the redevelopment plan.

Preliminary findings from the review of the Study Area's existing zoning include the following:

- The Planning Board is granted a wide range of discretionary review with too few objective standards against which to review projects
- Architectural details and guidelines are mentioned in the zoning, but no clear vision for the built environment is outlined
- The development process and timeframe are not obvious
- Multiple overlays and references to other regional planning documents allow for irregular standards for discretionary review
- Historic guidelines are unclear
- Bulk regulations permit development at a scale that may not be aligned with the community vision for the Town Center

Site Development Standards

A careful analysis of TCHD Standards (§108.5-11.2) reveals that, as written, the standards offer the Planning Board considerable flexibility to enforce them, which may lead to an uncertain and prolonged approval process. In addition, "by-rights" uses are extremely limited in the TCHD, requiring site plan review or special use permit review for almost every application (excepting forestry and solar uses). Further, §108 Appendix 2, *Schedule of Bulk Regulations*, provides language around elements such as height, size, coverage, scale and density that could inadvertently

incent a development pattern antithetical to the Town's goals. Bulk and dimensional standards should be reviewed to ensure that they support a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use Town Center.

Approvals Process: Site Plan Review

The Site Plan standards mentioned above are intended to be integrated with site plan review, and to give the Planning Board a considerable amount of discretion. However, the lack of clear, objective standards by which to make the discretionary decisions means that developers are uncertain of what the eventual project outcome will be. Employing design guidelines and standards that clearly illustrate the desired development types and patterns to the Planning Board and applicants could expedite the review process and facilitate redevelopment. A clearly outlined path to site plan approval, using an established framework of design guidelines and permitted uses, will lessen the need for discretionary decision-making by the Planning Board, reduce uncertainty, and encourage developers to undertake projects in the Town.

Special Use Permit Process

While most communities have specific standards for special use permits, outlined point by point in their zoning ordinances, the Town of Hyde Park does not. Further confusing the process is the fact that developers must reconcile the sometimes-conflicting requirements of the Town's zoning ordinances, its Comprehensive Plan, and the *Greenway Connections Guide*.

Actions and Recommendations

In the interest of clarifying TCHD zoning to promote the type of higher density, mixed-use and pedestrian-friendly development that the Town desires within the Study Area (consistent with the Redevelopment Plan presented in this Report), and in the interest of moving forward expeditiously, the principal recommendation arising from the zoning code analysis is that the Town of Hyde Park extend, modify and rename the recently created Crossroads Core district, just to the north of the Study Area, to encompass the TCHD. The new district will be called the "Town Core" district. There are multiple advantages to this approach:

- First, the Crossroads Core ("CC") district was created recently (2014), thus the Town Board, the Planning Board and the public are all familiar with the district: it's both relevant and current.
- Second, the CC district guidelines illustrate the types of desired development, so that applicants and the Planning Board have a shared understanding of what the community wishes to advance in the district.
- Third, the CC district offers a degree of flexibility not seen elsewhere in the Town
- Lastly, the expense and time required to extend and modify the CC district to the TCHD will be minimal.

The approach outlined above has the advantage of speed coupled with minimal cost. The zoning code analysis does, however, recommend a longer-term approach, based on its review of local and regional planning documents, and stakeholder a resident input:

- Update the Town's Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted in 2005
- Subsequent to the Comprehensive Plan update, update the entire Zoning Ordinance, including establishing objective standards for special use permits and site plan review,

updating definitions and parking regulations, incorporating Green Infrastructure Standards into design guidelines, and more⁷

- Reconcile the Dutchess County Greenway Guides with the Town's updated Comprehensive Plan and its Zoning Ordinance

The Zoning Code Analysis Report (**Appendix F**) provides detailed recommendations and a set of next steps to ensure that the zoning and approvals process within the Study Area will indeed support and encourage the kind of development and revitalization desired by the Town.

⁷ Please refer to page 20 of the Zoning Code Analysis Report for detailed Town-wide zoning recommendations

7 State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) Compliance

All public entities in New York State must comply with the State Environmental Quality Review Act, which applies to the legislative decisions (“discretionary” acts to undertake, fund or approve an action) of governing bodies that might affect the environment. Adoption or modification of a comprehensive plan, or of the Town’s zoning, requires SEQRA compliance.

As the goal of this project is to have this Planning and Engineering Report adopted as an amendment to the Town of Hyde Park 2005 Comprehensive Plan, Part I of the Full Environmental Assessment Form (FEAF) will be completed, identifying relevant aspects of the action. Lead Agency will be established, Parts II and III of the FEAF will be completed, and a Determination of Significance will be issued by the Lead Agency. As the proposed amendment to the Town’s existing Comprehensive Plan recommends minor changes and additions, it is anticipated that the Town Board will be the Lead Agency and a Negative Declaration is expected.

Naturally, any construction-related activities that might ultimately stem from this Planning & Engineering Report – for example, construction of a sewer system, or a hotel or parking garage – would themselves be subject to SEQRA assessment at the time that those activities are proposed.

8 Next Steps

The Town of Hyde Park Steering Committee met a total of ten times across the course of a year, and at the tenth and final meeting, generated a list of Next Steps that the Town and Dutchess County should pursue in order to promote redevelopment in the Study Area. In addition, the Town has actively solicited public feedback concerning the Town Center project and has considered stakeholders' opinions and desires in creating its preliminary list of Next Steps, outlined below.

General:

- Consider undertaking an update of the Town's Comprehensive Plan
- Contact economic development partners (e.g., Think Dutchess!) to inform them of Planning & Engineering Report conclusions, and the steps that the Town is taking to make the Town Center "development ready"
- Contact local and regional realty firms for above purposes

Sewer:

- Establish an overall timeline for sewer system implementation
- Use 2018 for a major "information campaign" to inform the public about sewers, using the newspaper, realtors, neighborhood meetings, public meetings, "bumper stickers" and multiple other channels (get facts out in front of rumors)
- Complete a Map, Plan and Report; determine benefit assessment for users (benefit analysis)
- Seek public input concerning district boundaries
- Form the sewer district in fall/winter 2018; secure approval of the Office of the State Comptroller, assuming this step is required
- Adopt a bond resolution in spring 2019 and apply for grants and State Revolving Fund borrowing
- Research possible grant opportunities through EDA
- Continue to pursue grant funding

Route 9 Improvements:

- Implement TAP grant
- Continue to seek NYS DOT grants and incentives for pedestrian safety
- Implement recommendations from the Planning & Engineering Report

Zoning:

- Finalize Town Core District language and specifications
- Introduce to Town Board for consideration and adoption
- Should the Town revise and update its Comprehensive Plan, review Zoning Ordinance and modify accordingly