

## **Congratulations 2002 Award Winners!**

The New York Upstate Chapter handed out nineteen awards in eight different categories in 2002. Each of the plans, projects, and individuals honored with an award has made significant contributions toward improving the quality of life for people throughout Upstate New York.

The selection criteria by which each of the nominations were evaluated included quality, originality, transferability, implementation, comprehensiveness, and effectiveness/results. The members of the 2002 Awards Committee were:

- Rocco Ferraro, AICP, Awards Chair
- Richard Harris, Capital District Section
- Michael Long, AICP, Central NY Section
- Richard Perrin, AICP, Genessee/Finger Lakes Section
- Julie Sweet, Southern Tier Section
- Gary Palumbo, AICP, Western New York

The following is a brief description of each of the 2002 award winners.

### **OUTSTANDING PLANNING AWARD: COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING**

*Center City Zoning & Design Standards for Rochester, New York.* This study represents a completely new approach to revitalizing urban centers. The design standards that have been adopted by the city do not regulate land uses but instead control development through design and performance standards, thereby allowing the market to drive development in the Center City Downtown District. By doing so, eighteen different zoning districts were eliminated and replaced with six design districts that reflect the unique character of the different areas of the Center City Downtown district. This design based approach to urban revitalization is precedent setting and is based on the design and quality of public space rather than buildings.

The standards replace traditional zoning. They eliminate the conventional regulation and segregation of land uses and allow existing and proposed buildings to adapt to a variety of acceptable uses. The design standards emphasize local context and compatibility, environmentally appropriate standards, and an approval process that is functional, efficient, and user friendly. The presentation of the standards is clear and the writing style is easily understood.

The consultant was *peter j. smith & company, inc.*

*Main Street Business District Revitalization Study, Niagara Falls.* The Main Street Revitalization study highlights thirty items that are integral and important to the overall enhancement of the corridor. The items represent proposed initiatives and physical improvements including a number of traffic calming measures, gateways and linkages at strategic locations, new community parks and passive recreational opportunities, street landscaping, a transportation inter-modal center, and enhanced visitor attractions. The Plan also recommends substantial revisions to the existing zoning code including new design guidelines that foster traditional and mixed use development opportunities and retention and enhancement of the existing urban fabric. The Plan also recognizes the importance of reinvesting in the surrounding neighborhoods including the preservation of the traditional neighborhood homes and historical character of the residential streets.

Public private partnerships have been established to implement the study recommendations which have been embraced by the Main Street Business & Professional Association.

The consultant team consisted of *Parsons and Allee King Rosen & Fleming, Inc.*

***Valley Communities Hazard Mitigation Plan*** (Special Community Initiative: Honorable Mention). This Plan is a notable example of six communities in two different states joining together because the local leaders recognized that in addition to sharing an interconnected system of streets and highways, railroads, and public water and sewer infrastructure, they faced natural and technological hazards that recognize no boundaries.

The formally adopted Plan recommends over two dozen action items to mitigate the identified hazards. Over two thirds of the recommended actions would be carried out by all six municipalities. The remaining third consist of specific capital investments or other projects to be carried out by the communities individually. The recommended actions include bridge and culvert replacements, the relocation of a road, stream rehabilitation, flood levee maintenance, and upgrades to sanitary sewer systems. Non-infrastructure projects include programs to fund the installation of mobile home tie-down technology and preparation of a redevelopment plan for a frequently flooded neighborhood focusing on state of the art flood proofing technology.

The Plan also identifies a number of areas in which individual residents can act on their own to reduce losses using radio public service announcements and printed materials to educate residents about those approaches.

The consultant team consisted of *George R. Frantz and Associates and Ann-Margaret Esnard, PhD.*

***The City of Cohoes Route 470 Corridor Study*** (Corridor Study: Honorable Mention). The Route 470 Corridor Study is the first community based planning process in the City of Cohoes in over 20 years. The Corridor study outlines a series of recommendations that balances the demand for transportation improvements with quality long range planning, good urban design, and site specific redevelopment strategies that are economically viable. The implementation strategies are divided into Immediate, Short Term, Intermediate Term, and Long Term timeframes. The implementation timeline is designed to be used by the City for daily decision making and long term planning. A number of the immediate and short term action items are being implemented.

Public participation was an integral element in the preparation of the Route 470 corridor study. An advisory committee was formed which consisted of residents, merchants, and state and regional transportation representatives. The public workshop included a hands on design session that resulted in designs for three demonstration sites.

The consultant team consisted of *Clark Patterson Associates, Trowbridge and Wolf, and Thomas Point Associates.*

***City of Hudson Comprehensive Plan*** (Comprehensive Plan: Honorable Mention). The Comprehensive Plan prepared for this city of 7500 persons located along the Hudson River in Columbia County, New York builds upon the cultural diversity of the community. The integrated approach of land use, economic, social, recreational, and environmental features are focused on improving social interaction and establishing dialog among all community residents. Plan Goal 1 specifically recognizes the need to maintain a human scaled building environment that promotes chance interactions among residents. Goal 2 reinforces the social aspects of the plan by encouraging the creation of programs such as community gardens, neighborhood associations and festivals. The third goal recognizes the connection between economic and cultural vitality. Recommendations include improving the streetscape, creating educational opportunities for residents, developing a fully integrated bike and pedestrian trail network and promoting balance economic opportunities without diminishing the competitiveness of existing enterprises.

Throughout the two year process of the plan development, a broad consensus was established for adoption of the plan. City leaders, recognizing the value of the Plan and the broad based support it has received are moving forward toward implementing a number of the Plan's recommendations.

The consultant was *The Saratoga Associates*.

## **OUTSTANDING PLANNING AWARD: PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION**

***Town of Penfield Open Space Plan.*** In 1999, the Town Conservation Board prepared an Open Space Inventory Report which identified current open spaces and recreational opportunities in this western New York suburb of Rochester. In 2001, the Town of Penfield completed an update to its Comprehensive Plan that recommended the preparation of an Open Space Plan designed to inform the community what properties were most valuable and how to preserve them.

The Plan was prepared by Town Planners using GIS, aerial photography and field reconnaissance. It was reviewed and revised by a citizen advisory committee, presented to the public, and adopted by the Town Board. The Plan identifies seven family owned farms and 32 other parcels worthy of preservation. Upon the Plan's completion, a campaign to educate the public was initiated. Shortly thereafter, there was grass roots support to put to a public vote a ballot question allowing the Town to borrow up to \$10 million to fund the Plan's implementation. It passed by a two to one margin in April, 2002.

The Town presently has signed contracts on four of the seven farms for purchase of development rights totaling more than 650 acres. Appraisals, surveys, environmental audits, and negotiations are underway on two other farms and three additional properties identified in the original inventory.

The Open Space Plan was prepared by the *Planning staff for the Town of Penfield*.

***Kershaw Park & Lakeshore Drive, Canandaigua, New York*** (Honorable Mention). The City of Canandaigua recognized that revitalization of its existing waterfront and adjacent lakeshore roadway had to occur in order to promote both the quality of life for its residents and increase economic development. A conceptual master plan was developed followed by an extensive public outreach effort to advance the proposed improvement and design strategies. The process helped create consensus, ownership of the project, and develop a sense of civic pride.

The renewal project was a public /private venture. The City invested \$4.5 million (bonded through a public referendum) in the Lakefront Redevelopment Project to rebuild its seven acre waterfront park, reconstruct Lakeshore Drive, and to acquire 800 feet of shoreline for park expansion. The private investments included renovation of several restaurants, including a conference center, and the complete rehabilitation of the Colonial Inn.

The consultant was *The LA Group, P.C.*

***Town of Eden Comprehensive Plan Implementation*** (Honorable Mention). In accordance with the Town of Eden's Comprehensive Plan, the Town formed a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to guide the implementation of the Plan. The Plan, adopted in 2000, recommended a number of high priority actions which the Committee was responsible to implement. Among the actions taken thus far by this rural agricultural town of approximately 8000 residents located in Erie County are the following:

- Amended the agricultural zoning district to permit small businesses as an allowable accessory use;

- Adopted a Creekside Open Space Overlay with the intent to preserve and protect the environmental features of the major stream corridors in the Town;
- Amended the subdivision and zoning regulations requiring that any feature listed in the Open Space and Natural Resources Inventory must be identified on site plans and subdivision plats and efforts need to be made to incorporate these features into the design;
- Adopted cluster subdivision provisions focused toward encouraging the greater use of clustering along road frontage;
- Prepared a set of rural development guidelines and standards for use by developers in designing their developments; and
- Adopted a Hamlet Overlay District and amended the zoning code to allow residential apartments as a right within the central business district of the hamlet.

Other actions included the adoption of a Right to Farm Law and improvements to the Town's industrial park. The Committee's work has ensured that the Comprehensive Plan remain a living document, adaptable to change but consistent with the Town's vision.

The plan is being implemented under the direction of the *Town of Eden Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee with support from Wendel Duchscherer Architects and Planners.*

## **CURRENT TOPIC: SMART GROWTH**

*Town of Milton Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan, Town Center Master Plan, Zoning Code, and Design Guidelines.* The Town of Milton embarked on an ambitious planning initiative to not only update its comprehensive plan, but also to simultaneously undertake a comprehensive overhaul to its zoning and subdivision codes.

The adopted Plan and codes recognize the Town's unique and distinctive character by crafting custom zoning districts around selected places in the community. The codes are also designed to redirect rural development from a sprawl inducing model to a new vision that provides incentives for landowners and the development community to conserve natural resources and protect the rural character of the townscape.

The following new elements were included in the zoning and subdivision regulations: conservation subdivision design incentives, graphic design standards, hamlet zoning, stream corridor overlays, and a new Town Center Zoning District. Other steps taken include securing the transfer of ownership of all town center roads from the county to the town in order to develop the desired streetscape, including sidewalks, elimination of curb cuts, and parking consolidation; easement purchases in the Town Center; and the pursuit of funding for continued sidewalk and trail development. The combined projects have been successful in advancing the community's desire to retain the rural character of the town, improve the walkability of the town center and hamlet areas, and target growth in areas already supported by municipal utilities and services.

The consultant was *Behan Planning Associates, LLC.*

*Town of Warwick Zoning and Build-Out Analysis* (Honorable Mention). As part of the New York State Quality Communities Demonstration Grant, this inter-municipal planning effort was designed to answer several critical questions relating to the future growth and development of the Town of Warwick and the Villages of Warwick, Greenwood Lake and Florida. An additional objective of the study was to forge a cooperative and productive relationship among the Villages and Town for future planning initiatives.

The study included the following elements:

- A build-out analysis for each of the communities to estimate the impact of growth if all the developable land had been converted to uses permitted under the existing regulations;

- An alternative build-out analysis illustrating the effects of new development polices;
- Identification of common planning goals among the four communities and evaluation of consistency between these goals and current zoning practices;
- An evaluation of consistency between the zoning codes in each of the communities;
- An illustration of different potential development scenarios using photo simulations; and
- Identification of opportunities for future inter-municipal planning and cooperation.

The Town of Warwick has recently updated its planning and zoning rules including the creation of an agricultural protection district, reduction of allowable densities, and creation of a Transferable Development Rights Program.

The consultant was *Community Planning and Environmental Associates*.

## **EDUCATION**

***League of Women Voters' Education Campaign on Urban Sprawl.*** The Education Campaign on Urban Sprawl, planned and conducted by the League of Women Voters of Buffalo/Niagara, was a major effort by the League to educate people in the region about the costs of sprawl and what can be done to stop it. Funded by several foundation grants totaling over \$100,000, the campaign has succeeded in reaching large numbers of residents with important facts about the relationship between sprawl and air and water pollution, the loss of open space and farmland, traffic congestion and high property taxes.

The primary education tool is a 25 minute Power Point presentation on the economic, environmental and social costs of sprawl, on remedies used in other metropolitan areas around the country and options available to the Buffalo-Niagara region. The presentation includes data, graphs, and photos that provide the evidence associated with the costs of sprawl and alternative solutions to approach development.

The League has also developed and distributed print material, submitted newspaper articles, provided speakers for media interviews and panel discussions, sponsored public meetings and forums and has initiated the formation of a coalition to assist in the campaign. The campaign has received extensive press coverage in all three mediums.

The Education campaign was prepared by the *League of Women Voters Education Campaign and Committee*. ***The power point presentation can be seen on the League's web site at [www.lwvbn.org](http://www.lwvbn.org).***

***Improving Bicycling And Pedestrian Safety*** (Professional Education: Honorable Mention). The Manual prepared by the New York Bicycling Coalition is a user-friendly manual that portrays problems and identifies solutions for the cycling and pedestrian community. The manual is designed for advocates and transportation professionals who are devoted to improving current conditions so cyclists and pedestrians are safer on the road. The manual provides examples from communities in four pilot counties in New York and identifies specific modifications to improve the current situation. The procedures for intersection safety accommodations are transferable to all regions of New York State.

The guide represents a hands on approach to compile information that promotes better collaboration between experts and laypersons. Workshops were held in each of the four counties that served as a baseline to understand and articulate the obstacles to communication and some strategies for making improvements. The workshops brought together advocates, media representatives and professionals resulting in the establishment of an important dialog between bureaucrats, advocates, and elected officials.

The manual was prepared by the *New York Bicycling Coalition*.

***The Black River Corridor Community Design Initiative*** (Community Outreach: Honorable Mention). The purpose of the Community Design Initiative is to educate local officials and community stakeholders on how good design and planning practices can preserve rural quality of life values and ultimately contribute to the attractiveness and marketability of their community. The Plan outlines a framework of design tools and principles that can be used to guide development along the Black River corridor which is located just east of Watertown along State Highway Route 3 in Jefferson County. The tools and principles were categorized under four basic elements: Landform, Vegetation, Structures, and Circulation.

The Community Design Initiative worked with large and small scale community meetings to receive feedback on existing community resources and to communicate the importance and principles of good design. The initiative produced the following materials to communicate the message:

- A slide show and report providing a detailed explanation of the design tools and their application;
- A promotional video highlighting the local commitment to quality design;
- A full color poster summarizing design tools; and
- A DVD incorporating the slide show, video, and additional educational materials.

The initiative has mobilized local officials to work together to ensure sustainable development along the corridor. Project participants are exploring options for further visioning, comprehensive planning, and regulatory changes within the corridor.

The project team consisted of staff from the ***Tug Hill Commission, the Jefferson County Planning Department, and the consulting firm of Environmental Design & Research, P.C.***

## **OUTSTANDING STUDENT PROJECT**

***West Side Neighborhood, Saratoga Springs, New York.*** The neighborhood plan outlines a series of strategies to improve the City's West Side. The Plan is organized according to theme groups in which the students worked, beginning with a brief history of the land and buildings and a socio-economic profile of the residents. The Land Use section identifies recommends zoning changes while the Gateways and Connections section examines key entries and connections offering ideas to enhance pedestrian safety at intersections and improve the visual quality of focal points within the neighborhood. The Design Guidelines section focuses on cohesiveness of design and recommends design standards and guidelines for different areas within the neighborhood. The Beekman Street section recommends a number of revitalization strategies while the Housing section evaluates the existing housing mix offering suggestions to maintain that mix as well as marketing strategies to realtors and potential residents.

The Plan includes a number of illustrations and photo simulations. Significant interaction and communication occurred between the students and the neighborhood and city representatives during the Plan's preparation. It has been well received by the neighborhood constituencies and the City. Elements of the Plan are being applied by the City's Office of Community Development and by several business owners on Beekman Street.

The Plan was prepared by ***students enrolled in the Graduate Planning Studio at the University at Albany Department of Geography and Planning.***

***Northside Neighborhood Based Planning Initiative*** (Honorable Mention). Students from the Cornell University Department of City & Regional Planning have joined with the City of Ithaca Planning Department and community stakeholders to produce a comprehensive plan that involved a variety of innovative outreach activities. It is the City's first neighborhood improvement plan for its low to moderate income Northside community.

The planning process included an extensive citizen participatory process involving more than 250 of the neighborhood's 1000 residents. Children also participated by drawing their image of a "Perfect Northside". The Plan has helped produce the following accomplishments:

- The City of Ithaca has included \$650,000 worth of Northside projects in their recently submitted 2002 Community Development Block Grant application to the State of New York;
- A \$116,000 energy conservation grant was prepared and submitted to the New York State Energy Research and Development Agency;
- A \$847,000 retail development proposal is being jointly pursued by the property owner, his primary tenant, area non-profits, and the city; and
- Approximately \$21,000 has been raised by the student planners to fund a portion of the project's pre-development costs.

The Plan was prepared by *students enrolled in the Graduate Planning Program at the Cornell University Department of City & Regional Planning.*

***Wind Energy Initiatives For Greater Buffalo*** (Honorable Mention). This study is a comprehensive evaluation that investigates the prospects for wind power generation for the greater Buffalo region. Initially seven sites were identified as having potential for the development of wind farms. The study investigated a number of issues including wind speeds, adjacent land uses, off-shore issues, electromagnetic interference, noise, shadow flicker, aesthetic impacts, bird migration patterns, fish breeding zones, land ownership, future land uses, and geotechnic considerations. Before a final site can be chosen, the study states that a more careful and in-depth investigation of these and other site specific concerns such as public safety and design need to be evaluated.

This feasibility study reported on existing wind conditions at each of the sites, land use permitting and other regulatory requirements, a build-out analysis and the potential economic and environmental benefits of wind energy to the Greater Buffalo region. The report has spurred a great deal of interest in the region and has been well received by the City of Buffalo and Erie County. An action group is being organized through the Green-Gold Development Corporation to move the initiative forward. Financial support is being sought from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority to further study the issue.

The Initiative Study was prepared by *students enrolled in the Graduate Planning Program at the University at Buffalo Department of Urban Planning.*

## **DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP: ELECTED OFFICIAL**

***Alice A Roth.*** The Honorable Alice A. Roth served as the Mayor of the City of Tonawanda, New York from 1990 through 2001. During her tenure, the Mayor led the effort to create a major Gateway Harbor on the Erie Canal and other redevelopment efforts in the city's downtown, spearheaded a number of community revitalization efforts throughout the city, established a five year capital improvements planning process, and initiated a study of the city's water system which has led to major physical improvements to the system. The Mayor also had a primary role in the expansion of the Niawanda Park along the Niagara River shoreline, including the 13 mile long multi use Riverwalk trail. As a result the entire city waterfront is now accessible to the general public for recreational purposes.

Beyond the borders of her own municipality, Mayor Roth has been recognized as a leader of inter-municipal cooperation. She was President of the Erie County Association of Governments, the Erie County Industrial Development Agency Policy Committee, and chaired the Erie County Community Development Block Group Consortium.

The Mayor also initiated the effort to update the City's 25 year old Comprehensive Plan. The draft plan has been completed and is in the final stages of review by the City Council.

### **DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP: CITIZEN PLANNER**

**Catherine M. Weiss.** Catherine M. Weiss has served the Western New York area as a citizen planner for over 33 year participating on volunteer boards, committees, and commissions for local and county government, quasi-government agencies and not-for-profit organizations. Ms. Weiss's first appointment was to the Town of Amherst Citizens Advisory Committee on the Urban Development Corporation in response to the Rockefeller administration's commitment to the construction of the Audubon New Community north of the SUNY Buffalo North Campus. She was later appointed to the Audubon Development Corporation where she served between 1973 and 1993 and again between 1998 and 2000. Between 1973 and 1980, Ms. Weiss served Amherst, Audubon and the US Army Corps of Engineers as a member of the Task Force on the Elliot Creek.

Ms. Weiss chaired the Amherst Industrial and Commercial Incentives Board in 1995 and 1996. Under her guidance, economic incentives to promote revitalization and redevelopment were targeted to commercial areas in Amherst's older neighborhoods. Her most recent planning appointment has been to the Town of Amherst Planning Board. She began her term in 1993 and was appointed Chair in 1998, a position she still serves. She also serves on the Capital Improvements Program Committee and is chair of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. Once dissolved at the end of its mission this fall, she will become chair of the Zoning Code Review Committee.

On the Inter-municipal front, Ms. Weiss is a member of the Erie County Development Coordination Board, the Harlem-Kensington-Wehrle Community Task Force and the Transit Road Land Use and Access management Plan Steering Committee. In the Not for Profit sector, Ms. Weiss has been a member of the Amherst League of Women Voters for 33 years, serving as President from 1979 to 1981. She is also a member of the Board of Directors of the Girl Scout Council of Buffalo and Erie County.

### **DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP: PROFESSIONAL PLANNER**

**Mark Tinkler, AICP.** Mr. Tinkler is a currently a Senior Transportation Planner in the City of Wilmington, North Carolina. Prior to his recent relocation to North Carolina, he was a Transportation Planner/Senior GIS Analyst between 1997 and 2002 for Bergmann Associates in Rochester. Between 1993 and 1997, Mr. Tinkler was a Transportation Planner for the Genesee Transportation Council, also based in Rochester.

Mr. Tinkler received a Master of Regional Planning from the University at Albany, SUNY in 1993, a Bachelor of Science in Information Technology from Rochester Institute of Technology in 1997, and a Bachelor of Science in Geography from Kansas State University in 1991.

Mr. Tinkler has been a Board member of the GIS Shared Interest Group since 1996. He served as Secretary between 1997 and 1998 and as President from 1998 to 2001. He presently is the Webmaster for the organization.

In 1996, Mark Tinkler chaired the New York Upstate Chapter Awards Committee. He was Vice President of Membership for the Genesee-Finger Lakes Section between 1995 and 1997. He was the Membership officer of the New York Upstate Executive Board between 1999 and 2002 when he resigned to take the Senior Transportation Planning position in Wilmington. In his current position, he serves a Secretary of the Transportation Advisory Committee and chairs the Technical Coordinating Committee. He is also the city's liaison to the Wilmington Transit Authority.