

Congratulations 2005 Award Winners!

Every year, the New York Upstate Chapter of the American Planning Association recognizes outstanding achievements that advance the art and science of planning. The selection criteria consist of quality, originality, transferability, implementation, comprehensiveness, and effectiveness/results. 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.

This year the Chapter will be handing out eleven planning awards in nine different categories. Each of the eleven plans, projects, and individuals receiving a 2005 award at the Chapter's Awards Luncheon here in Buffalo are well deserving of their recognition.

Congratulations to all.

The 2005 Awards Committee consisted of the following Chapter members:

Rocco Ferraro, AICP, Awards Chair
Arnie Hausler, AICP, Capital District Section
Scott Shannon Central NY Section
Richard Perrin, AICP, Genessee/Finger Lakes Section
Frank Evangelisti, Southern Tier Section
Jeffrey Lebsack, AICP, Western New York

Many thanks to the Awards Committee for a very difficult job well done!

The following is a brief description of each of the 2005 award winners selected by the New York Upstate Chapter of the American Planning Association. The PDF file for each of these Award winning projects is posted on the Chapter Web site at www.nyupstateplanning.org.

OUTSTANDING PLANNING AWARD FOR A PLAN

City of Niagara Falls Strategic Plan. This plan is a multifaceted document whose recommendations will serve as the basis for updating the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan, Urban Renewal Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The first stage of the Plan's development was a collaborative, community based visioning process to discuss specific challenges and opportunities. Strategies were outlined based on a set of guiding principles established through this process. The Strategic Plan is both design based, integrating planning and urban design to enhance quality of life and action based, focusing on implementation. The Plan outlines a set of Citywide strategies designed to establish a broad framework for the revitalization of key components of the City's urban environment and Core City Strategies targeted to specific sites or precincts within the city.

The implementation framework is intended to help guide the City toward realizing the new vision of Niagara Falls and includes policy recommendations, procedural changes and streamlining, and other tools and mechanisms that encourage and support the implementation of the recommendations.

The strategic plan is the first document to approach Niagara Falls as a whole complex city and balance competing interests to establish a shared vision with broadly based benefits. It integrates projects to address land use, housing, culture, economic, education, healthcare, tourism and industry designed to bring about long term change.

The document represents a collaborative effort among the many stakeholders in the City, led by the ***Urban Strategies, Inc. and City of Niagara Falls staff.***

An Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan for Putnam County; Agricultural Opportunities and Challenges in Putnam County. Agriculture in Putnam County is a diverse multi million dollar industry. There are 215 farms, 86 of which are classified as "hobby" farms, and 11,309 farmland acres in Putnam County which represents about 4% of the total land area. The average size of a farm in the county is 53 acres. The land and building value per farm in Putnam County in 1997 was \$477,895 which was almost twice that of New York State as a whole. Thirty three percent of the farms in the county are included within an agricultural district. Top agricultural and farming activities include equine and livestock operations, greenhouses, nurseries, orchards, maple syrup, hay, and corn production.

Under intensive pressure of being converted to nonagricultural uses, the Plan outlines a series of strategies and actions to maintain and promote programs that encourage and sustain farming. Five goals, each of which includes a series of strategies, have been

identified to fulfill the vision for agricultural and farmland protection in the County. The goals are related to 1. identifying and supporting economic opportunities to preserve agriculture as an important industry in the county; 2. increasing community support and an enhanced appreciation of agriculture and its role in the county; 3. promoting supportive regional, county and local policies to encourage and sustain farming; 4. promoting policies that enhance farm viability and profitability; and 5. preserving agriculture as working open space and promoting farm practices that protect natural resources.

The document includes action steps that will be necessary to implement each of the goals including responsible agencies/key players and a time frame. The report also includes an exhaustive listing of public and private resources available to farmers/producers as well as to local municipalities and organizations.

The Plan was prepared by the *Putnam County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Board* with technical assistance and consulting providing by *Community Planning & Environmental Associates*.

OUTSTANDING PLANNING AWARD FOR A PROGRAM

Capital District Transportation Committee Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program. In 2000, the Capital District Transportation Committee (CDTC) initiated its Community and Transportation Linkage Planning Program. The Linkage Program is designed to fulfill the adopted principles and strategies of the Capital District Transportation Committee, the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Capital Region of New York State, by providing financial and technical support to communities undertaking local planning initiatives that integrate land use and transportation. One of the many unique characteristics of the program is the requirement that the CDTC staff play an integral part in the planning effort by providing technical oversight and staff support during the Plan's preparation. Since its inception, the Linkage Program has funded forty-one collaborative jointly funded studies, which in most cases, would otherwise not have been prepared, representing over \$1.5 million in federal funding commitments and over \$500,000 in local funds.

The Linkage program is intended to convert the promise of land use planning into reality. As a result, many of the recommendations integrating land use planning with transportation design have been implemented by the affected jurisdictions. The CDTC Linkage Program represents a unique partnership between a regional entity responsible for providing financial support for transportation improvements and local governments that are responsible for making land use decisions in the very strong "Home Rule" State of New York.

The Program was developed and is managed by the *Capital District Transportation Committee* under the directorship of John Poorman, Staff Director.

OUTSTANDING PLANNING AWARD FOR A COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

Infrastructure Master Plan 2004; Tioga County, New York (Honorable Mention).

The purpose of this Plan is to provide strategies for implementing future water and sewer infrastructure improvements in Tioga County. County officials commissioned the study in response to the concern over the absence of a well developed water and sewer network in the County. Currently about 4% of the land area and 34.3% of the households in the County are serviced by municipal water and sewer. An additional 5% are served by municipal water only. The Master Plan is designed to help prioritize infrastructure projects to address public health and safety concerns as well as enhance and encourage economic growth in a coordinated managed fashion.

Under the direction of an appointed 20 person Steering Committee representing each municipality, the planning process was organized into the following phases: Review of Existing Information, Preparation of Base Mapping, Public Outreach, Data Analysis, Project Identification and Prioritization, and Summary Findings and Recommendations. The extensive data analysis and community interviews resulted in a list of potential infrastructure projects. Project Rating Criteria were established for the following categories: Health & Safety, Economic Cost, Municipal Administration, Environmental Constraints, and Land Use & Economic Development. Applying the rating criteria, the Steering Committee prepared a Project Priority list. Fifteen Projects were rated as a High priority, an additional fifteen were rated Medium priority and the remaining 13 were identified as Low priority projects.

All the water and sewer systems in the county are either municipally or privately owned or operated. This initiative by Tioga County represents a model collaborative effort and will serve as an important resource for local officials to make informed decisions regarding infrastructure development. The Plan will be used in coordination with the County's Future Land Use Plan as well as municipal plans to manage growth and development based on infrastructure improvements. The Plan also recommends the establishment of Inter-municipal agreements for selected municipalities and suggests that the creation of a county wide water and/or sewer authority be investigated.

The Plan was prepared by *Clough Harbour & Associates* under the direction of the *Tioga County Water & Sewer Study Steering Committee*.

PLANNING IMPLEMENTATION

City of Batavia Downtown Revitalization Project. In 1997, the City of Batavia adopted a Comprehensive Master Plan, updating an Urban Renewal plan that had been prepared in the 1960's. The Plan, whose focus was on redeveloping a downtown area that was "traumatized" by urban renewal, was quickly embraced by the community. Immediately a dialogue was established among the business owners which led to the formation of a Downtown Batavia Improvement District in 1998. In 1999, the first of three phases of a \$1 million streetscape project began with the installation of decorative lights, stamped concrete, and landscaping. Property owners invested in street front and facade improvement to their buildings. In the meantime, the City entered into a partnering agreement with the New York State Department of Transportation whereby the City of Batavia would administer the design and reconstruction of Main Street (Route 5) to ensure that the design met the objectives that evolved from the Community visioning and design charrette process.

The Route 5 reconstruction project was recently completed and has received three statewide awards. Since 2002, 40 downtown businesses have participated in the Façade Improvement Program. In 2004, alone, 16 businesses made private investments totaling \$4 million. The City complemented the business investment by building a new City Hall in the center of downtown. Projects in the planning stages include downtown loft apartments, a creekside park and the redevelopment of an underutilized industrial area. The Revitalization effort represents a successful partnership among public and private stakeholders to implement a vision for downtown revitalization that not only included physical improvements, but economic development, promotion, and organization.

The ***City of Batavia*** has spearheaded the effort to realize the vision outlined in the Comprehensive Master Plan.

Town of Fleming Zoning Ordinance Update (Honorable Mention). In 2000, the Town of Fleming, population 2647, located along the southern border of the City of Auburn in Cayuga County adopted a comprehensive plan (awarded the Outstanding Comprehensive Planning Award in 2001 by the Chapter) that identified changes to local land use regulations that encouraged the conservation of agriculture, the development of walkable neighborhoods, the utilization of existing sewer and water infrastructure before expanding growth areas, and the establishment of design guidelines for lakeshore development.

Many of the land use related ideas outlined in the Plan have been implemented through changes in the Town's Zoning Code. Zoning districts have been established including

Hamlet, Neighborhood Transitional, and Neighborhood Residential districts. The Hamlet district is mixed use while the Neighborhood Transitional and Residential districts are defined by existing sewer and water districts. In addition, the zoning code establishes an Overlay District to protect steep slopes, lakeshore, and stream areas. Most notably, the new zoning regulations support agricultural protection and conservation. The zoning code includes specific techniques to protect viable tracts of farmland, avoid nuisance issues that occur due to residential encroachments, and provides hardship relief to farmers. Through the establishment of an "Area Allocation Method", the Zoning Code provides the flexibility to preserve farmland and open space via an agricultural easement while allowing for limited development to occur in a clustered fashion. Coupled with the aggressive use of a purchase of development rights program, the Town of Fleming is an example of what communities can do to achieve a balance between protecting agricultural and open space land and addressing development pressures.

The Zoning Code was prepared by the *Town of Fleming* with assistance from *Clark Patterson Associates* and the *Cayuga County Planning Department*.

2005 CURRENT TOPIC: HOUSING CHOICE & AFFORDABILITY

Sheridan Parkside Village Courts Redevelopment Plan. The Sheridan Parkside Village Courts neighborhood is a 137 acre residential community located in the northwestern portion of the Town of Tonawanda. Originally constructed as "temporary" wartime housing for factory workers during World War II, it consists primarily of two-story, two to eight family apartment units with single family detached units scattered throughout. Most of the apartment buildings are in poor condition; several have been demolished and replaced by new housing, including single family homes. It also includes a 3.5 acre commercial strip fronting on one of the perimeter roads and a community center (formerly an elementary school) on a 6.5 acre site. In addition to the park surrounding the community center, there are two smaller neighborhood parks which are rarely used because of safety concerns primarily due to their isolated locations.

In 2000, 2864 persons lived in Sheridan Parkside. 33% of the population is 19 or younger and 10% are 65 and over. There are 1176 occupied dwelling units. 79% of the occupied units are rented and 21% are owner occupied. An additional 141 units, or 10.7%, are vacant. The Median Household Income in 1999 was \$17,490 versus \$41,453 townwide. 61% of the households are family households and 31% are single person households. 40% of the households have children. According to the Census, 45% of the renters lived at their current address for less than one year and another 35% for one to five years. In contrast, 52.1% of the owners had lived at the same address for over twenty years. Over 33% had lived at the same address for thirty years or more.

The Redevelopment Plan supports increased housing choice by offering a range of housing styles in different price ranges. The Plan is pedestrian friendly through the incorporation of sidewalks, multi-use trails, and streetscape improvements that are visually appealing and enhance public safety. The Plan also incorporates recreational opportunities through the strategic location of pocket parks and an improved central community center. All of the proposed improvements are designed to improve the image of the neighborhood and support the Town's efforts to transform the neighborhood into a safer, more diverse, home ownership based community. Public input was provided through a series of public meetings that included formal and informal presentations and discussions, including a design charrette, with a range of stakeholders and interest groups.

The Redevelopment Plan was prepared by *Wendel Duchscherer Architects and Engineers*.

OUTSTANDING STUDENT PROJECT

Otsego Land Trust Conservation Plan. The Land Conservation Plan is designed as a guide to assist the Otsego Land Trust, a nonprofit conservation organization, in their land conservation efforts. The Plan provides a demographic profile of change that has taken place in the county, outlines Land Protection criteria to select land conservation projects that reflect the land trust's mission, and creates tools to prioritize the landscape for proactive conservation.

Applying GIS, a series of maps are included in the report that visually display a variety of suitability coverages following the Ian McHarg model. In addition, the students performed a GAP analysis by using landcover data to assess the pattern of currently protected lands to determine if certain landcover categories were under- or over-represented in the current conservation land portfolio. The students also designed and completed a viewshed analysis of the county. Driving over 700 miles within the county, they located 55 scenic viewpoints that matched their criteria for scenic views. The students used Digital Elevation Models and ArcGIS Spatial Analyst to create viewsheds for each viewpoint.

The Land Conservation Plan has brought the Otsego Land Trust into compliance with national requirements as outlined by the National Land Trust Alliance. The Plan has strengthened the defensibility of both current easements held by the Land Trust and the selection of future conservation easements. In addition, the Conservation Plan strengthens the applications filed by the Trust on behalf of the County to the Purchase of Development Rights Program run by the New York State Office of Agriculture and Markets as well as other potential government funding sources.

The report also includes a guide of the step by step process associated with using the Land Protection Criteria.

The Plan was prepared by students enrolled in the *Graduate Planning Studio class at Cornell University's Department of City & Regional Planning under the direction of Professor Ole M. Amundsen, III.*

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

Michael Ball, AICP. Michael Hall received his Masters of Urban Planning Degree from SUNY Buffalo's School of Architecture and Planning in 1997. His first professional position was with the URS Corporation where, as Project Planner, he was responsible for the technical content of the Phase II Economic and Demographic Study for the Niagara Frontier Transportation Council. He then joined the staff of the Buffalo Economic Renaissance Corporation as Senior Project Associate. There he managed the implementation of key City of Buffalo development projects and special programs including revitalization efforts along the City's waterfront. As part of a reorganization effort, Mike worked for the Erie County Industrial Agency where he was responsible for coordinating the agency's urban planning initiatives related to consultant and feasibility studies, project initiation, and the planning and economic development activities of outside agencies. Presently, Mike is the Project Manager for the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus. He reports directly to the agency's Executive Director and manages all aspects of the Healthy Communities Initiatives as well as development projects and streetscape improvements for the Campus.

Since receiving his Masters Degree, Mike has been an active member of the American Planning Association. Mike has served as Deputy Section Director, Director, and is presently Past Director of the Western New York Section. He also served as a member of the Section's Conference Planning Committee and the Section Awards Committee for five years, including two years as Chair. During his tenure as Director of the Section, he involved the Section in a range of community and region wide programs and activities and initiated a number of activities including restoration of the dormant Section newsletter and the creation of an electronic listserve. He also represented the Section on the Chapter Board.

Mike is married and the father of two young children.

DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP: CITIZEN PLANNER

Richard T. Crandall, R.A. Richard Crandall had served on the Town of Hamburg Planning Board for 20 years, from 1984 to 2003, including Chairman from 1986 to his "retirement" in 2003. The following are among his accomplishments during his tenure with the Planning Board:

- Coordinated the update of the Town's Comprehensive Plan and its implementation and update.
- Established the practice of holding Planning Board Work Sessions as a means to gain a better understanding of a proposal and improve the approval process.
- Instituted regular meetings with the heads of the Town Departments and Committees to gather input, assistance, and feedback prior to Planning Board meetings.
- Established the Site Plan Waiver process to eliminate the need for minor site development actions having to go through the full review process.
- Involved in the establishment of the Code Review Committee responsible for the review and update of the Town's land use regulations and requirements.
- Served as the Planning Board Liaison to the Conservation Advisory Board, the Shoreline Revitalization Committee, the Recreation Board, Traffic Safety Board, and Citizens Advisory Board.
- Established a procedure for the Public Information Meetings and Hearings to allow for more effective and open communication between the public and Town.
- Instituted the practice of on site field inspections.
- Established a protocol for pre-submittal meetings with applicants to provide a better means of communication with the Planning Board.

As a Registered Architect, he worked for Milstein, Davis & Wittek for 20 years before taking a job with Erie County as Director of Capital Projects. While employed with Milstein, Davis & Wittek he was responsible for the design of a number of prominent projects including the Rath building in downtown Buffalo. During his career with the County he worked on, and was responsible for, a number of projects including the Erie County Medical Center, Erie County Jail, Erie County Home and Infirmary, Rich Stadium, The Botanical Gardens in Lackawanna and the four Erie Community College Campuses.

Upon his retirement, Mr. Crandall has stayed active in the Town's planning activities including the development of the Town's Seaway Trail Visitors Center acting in the capacity of construction manager. He remains very active with the Code Review Committee meeting weekly with Town Board members and Town personnel and is a volunteer member of the Town of Hamburg's Rejuvenation Project. He also is a member and past President of the American Institute of Architects.

Most importantly, Mr. Crandall has been married 52 years to his wife Lois and is the dedicated father of 12 children and enjoys the pleasure of 30 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren.

MICHAEL J. KRASNER DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP: PROFESSIONAL PLANNER

Dr. Henry Louis Taylor, Jr. Professor, Department of Urban & Regional Planning, University at Buffalo. Dr. Taylor is a full professor in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and Director of the Center for Urban Studies (CENTER). In 1987, Professor Taylor founded the CENTER at the University which was established to find solutions to problems facing cities and their metropolitan regions through research, planning, and community development activities, with particular emphasis on the African American community and other distressed areas in the Metropolitan area. For example, the edited publication, *African Americans and the Rise of Buffalo's Post Industrial City* is the most comprehensive study of Buffalo's African American community and is a frequently referenced document.

Dr. Taylor's report on the *Spatial Structure of Poverty and the Fight Against Poverty and the Underclass* led to the establishment of the Office of Urban Initiatives, Inc (OUI) at the University at Buffalo. His 1993 market study *The Towne Garden Plaza Neighborhood Planning Project - Phase One: The Market Study* was the first report in the Buffalo Metro area to indicate that a viable economic market existed in the African American community.

Dr. Taylor spearheaded efforts to create linkages between the University and University Height community that resulted in a number of redevelopment efforts and his founding of the University Community Initiative, a unit that focuses on engaging in activities linking the University to the community and the Regional Policing Initiative. Dr Taylor was a member of the team that produced the report *Governance in Erie County: A Foundation for Understanding and Action*, that led to changes in the way people think about governance in the metropolitan area. Dr. Taylor also prepared a landmark report entitled *Health Status of the Near East Community and Neighborhood Conditions* that showed the relationship between the built environment and health outcomes in the African American community. During the last several years, Dr. Taylor has been involved in a number of important planning and neighborhood studies including a project that links the public schools to the community development process.

Professor Taylor teaches in the undergraduate and graduate curriculum and coordinates the community development and urban management specialization which he

developed. In addition to the works described above, Professor Taylor is well published having written several books and numerous Journal articles for various publications. He has also participated in a number of forums providing critical commentary on a range of issues. In addition, Dr. Taylor has been the recipient of many honors and awards during his professional and teaching career. He presently serves on the Citizen Planning Council for the City of Buffalo, the Buffalo Neighborhood revitalization Corporation, and the Office of Urban Initiatives.