



# Sullivan-Wawarsing Rural Economic Area Partnership Zone Strategic Plan

September, 1999

**The Shepstone Management Company**  
THE SARATOGA ASSOCIATES

# **Sullivan-Wawarsing Rural Economic Area Partnership**

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# **Sullivan-Wawarsing Rural Economic Area Partnership**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This document outlines the strategic plan for the Sullivan-Wawarsing Rural Economic Area Partnership Zone (REAP Zone), one of only four REAP Zones in the United States designated by the US Department of Agriculture. Announced earlier this year by Congressman Maurice Hinchey, the Sullivan-Wawarsing REAP Zone provides for special Federal attention to the economic and community development needs of Sullivan County and the Town of Wawarsing. Applications for Federal funding originating from within REAP Zone will be given preferential consideration in the funding process. This preference currently applies to all programs of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), but is expected to be extended to the funding programs of other Federal agencies.

Projects win REAP Zone preference by demonstrating that they are consistent with the goals and needs of the REAP Zone. In order for this determination to be made, the USDA requires that each REAP Zone develop a strategic plan. The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to assess the needs of Sullivan County and the Town of Wawarsing and produce both short and long-term strategies which the REAP Zone Steering Committee and involved agencies can use to set funding priorities.

The REAP Zone process began with the establishment of a Board of Directors to oversee its operation. The Board is responsible for overseeing the strategic planning process. The Board also confers REAP Zone preference to projects submitted to the Board for consideration. In June, 1999, the Board created 17 task forces addressing different aspects of community development in Sullivan and Wawarsing. With titles like 'Agricultural Business Development' and 'Family and Youth' these subcommittees investigated the current situation in the region respective to their Task Force's topic. Each task force reported back to the REAP Board of Directors with a list of problems facing the Sullivan-Wawarsing area and long-term and short-term goals to address these problems.

In addition, many of the task forces proposed specific steps to address these issues. On August 11 all 17 Task Forces met to review and synthesize the individual reports into an overall statement of needs and goals. This synthesis of the Task Forces' reports is included in this report as section 3.0 "Needs and Goals.": Getting public input in regard to this draft needs and goals was the next step. Four public meetings were scheduled at the following locations in Sullivan County and Wawarsing:

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Wednesday, August 25, 1999 – Liberty, NY

7:30 PM at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Center

Saturday, August 28, 1999 – Narrowsburg, NY

9:00 AM at Narrowsburg Central School

Monday, August 30, 1999 – Ellenville, NY

7:30 PM at the Ellenville High School

Thursday, September 2, 1999 – Rock Hill, NY

7:30 PM at Frontier Insurance Headquarters

Following the public meetings, the final strategic plan was submitted to the REAP Zone Board for approval. The strategy has been compiled by Tom Shepstone of the Shepstone Management Company and Peter Fairweather of the Saratoga Associates.

## **1.1 The Approach: Building upon existing strengths within the REAP Zone.**

As aspects of this plan emerged, they were linked by a clear sense that the future of the REAP Zone must build upon its existing strengths. As demonstrated in the needs, goals, and projects outlined in this plan, REAP Zone residents seek to improve their communities through revitalization efforts in a variety of existing industries and enterprises. In addition, the planning process highlighted the fact that the Zone's arts and cultural programming are important for tourism and for the economy in general. The plan indicates that the REAP Zone's tourism should emphasize the area's natural environment and cultural/heritage resources as part of a regional revitalization effort.

Finally, this approach centers on the quality of community life. The REAP Zone downtowns must be made more vital and attractive to serve residents and tourists alike. But community quality also extends to the daily lives of individual residents. Even the most cursory review of the recommendations included in this report make it clear that the REAP Zone is dedicated to improving the lives of children and adults in every community. The plan recognizes that these individual residents (embracing a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds) are the most important resource for revitalizing the regional economy.

As the strategic planning process moved forward, a vision for the REAP Zone began to emerge. During the work of the task forces and the four public meetings, the residents of

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the REAP Zone repeatedly asserted their desire for the REAP Zone to become a year-round economy. This economy should include a diverse economic base in manufacturing and service coupled with a four-season tourism industry based upon the natural environment and cultural and environmental heritage of the Zone. At the same time, in meeting after meeting, participants argued that the REAP Zone must create a distinct, high-quality image for itself through more effective promotion of the Zone's strengths both internally to residents and externally to potential visitors and investors. Finally, the recommendations coming from the task forces and the public underscored the notion that children and families are key to quality of community life and sustained economic development.

This plan is a first step. As detailed in section 5 of this report, it is intended to be evaluated and updated annually. Over the course of the next ten years, new needs and new opportunities will emerge. It is the expectation of the REAP Board of Directors that the strategic plan will be revised to respond. As such, the current document may be best thought of as the beginning of a process by which the citizens, government agencies, businesses, and civic groups of Sullivan County and Wawarsing will develop innovative ways of working among themselves and with others to build a new basis for long-term prosperity.

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## 2.0 CURRENT STATUS OF SULLIVAN-WAWARSING ECONOMIC AREA

### 2.1 General Description of Economic Area

The economic area has a cultural identity as the resort hotel portion of the Catskills and includes the Upper Delaware River valley and adjoining towns. It is a generally rural region of diverse landscapes linked by major highways such as Routes 17, 42, 52, 55, 97 and 209 and a common public transportation system (Shortline). Communities are also joined together by economic reliance on tourism. Ellenville, Liberty and Monticello are the primary shopping areas within the REAP zone. Some municipalities on the fringes of the area are also oriented in other directions but new development in and around the Villages suggests they will gain strength as economic centers. There are also numerous other hamlets and villages within the REAP economic area that are undergoing revitalization, from Narrowsburg to Mountaindale. Table 2.1 below shows population changes for the zone between 1990 and 1998, as estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau.

| <b>Table 2.1 - Sullivan-Wawarsing REAP Zone Social &amp; Economic Profile</b> |                        |                      |                    |               |                        |              |                            |                 |                              |                            |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Town  | 1990<br>Census<br>Pop. | 1998<br>Est.<br>Pop. | %<br>Chg.<br>90-98 | 1990<br>HH's  | 1990<br>Renter<br>HH's | %<br>Renters | 1990<br>Persons<br>Age 75+ | %<br>Age<br>75+ | 1989<br>Avg.<br>HH<br>Income | 1990<br>Avg.<br>HH<br>Size |
| Bethel  | 3,693                  | 3,710                | 0.5%               | 1,330         | 250                    | 18.8%        | 177                        | 4.8%            | \$32,894                     | 2.79                       |
| Callicoon   | 3,024                  | 3,082                | 1.9%               | 1,107         | 259                    | 23.4%        | 202                        | 6.6%            | \$30,992                     | 2.78                       |
| Cochecton   | 1,318                  | 1,337                | 1.4%               | 504           | 94                     | 18.7%        | 87                         | 6.5%            | \$31,611                     | 2.65                       |
| Delaware  | 2,633                  | 2,612                | -0.8%              | 888           | 218                    | 24.5%        | 187                        | 7.2%            | \$33,133                     | 2.94                       |
| Fallsburg   | 11,445                 | 11,409               | -0.3%              | 3,247         | 1,320                  | 40.7%        | 392                        | 3.4%            | \$29,873                     | 3.51                       |
| Forestburgh   | 614                    | 633                  | 3.1%               | 223           | 33                     | 14.8%        | 43                         | 6.8%            | \$48,381                     | 2.84                       |
| Fremont   | 1,332                  | 1,357                | 1.9%               | 499           | 109                    | 21.8%        | 88                         | 6.5%            | \$28,803                     | 2.72                       |
| Highland  | 2,147                  | 2,231                | 3.9%               | 820           | 159                    | 19.4%        | 155                        | 6.9%            | \$33,655                     | 2.72                       |
| Liberty   | 9,825                  | 9,636                | -1.9%              | 3,594         | 1,429                  | 39.8%        | 554                        | 5.7%            | \$30,912                     | 2.68                       |
| Lumberland  | 1,425                  | 1,430                | 0.4%               | 576           | 78                     | 13.5%        | 144                        | 10.1%           | \$29,160                     | 2.48                       |
| Mamakating  | 9,792                  | 9,829                | 0.4%               | 3,565         | 690                    | 19.4%        | 427                        | 4.3%            | \$39,752                     | 2.76                       |
| Neversink   | 2,951                  | 3,026                | 2.5%               | 1,087         | 182                    | 16.7%        | 133                        | 4.4%            | \$45,317                     | 2.78                       |
| Rockland  | 4,096                  | 4,043                | -1.3%              | 1,503         | 428                    | 28.5%        | 264                        | 6.5%            | \$30,239                     | 2.69                       |
| Thompson  | 13,711                 | 13,533               | -1.3%              | 5,133         | 2,361                  | 46.0%        | 671                        | 5.0%            | \$35,551                     | 2.64                       |
| Tusten  | 1,271                  | 1,243                | -2.2%              | 500           | 84                     | 16.8%        | 188                        | 15.1%           | \$32,059                     | 2.49                       |
| Wawarsing   | 12,348                 | 12,941               | 4.8%               | 4,094         | 1,456                  | 35.6%        | 634                        | 4.9%            | \$32,206                     | 3.16                       |
| <b>TOTALS</b>   | <b>81,625</b>          | <b>82,052</b>        | <b>0.5%</b>        | <b>28,670</b> | <b>9,150</b>           | <b>31.9%</b> | <b>4,346</b>               | <b>5.3%</b>     | <b>\$33,758</b>              | <b>2.86</b>                |

Note: "HH" = Households

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The limited population gain between 1990 and 1998 (+0.5 percent) reflects a continued slowing in the growth rate which began in the 1980's. Most of the zone's towns and villages experienced double-digit population growth between 1970 and 1980, and the most significant growth occurred in the eastern portion of the area as a result of a surge in population from the New York metropolitan region toward Orange County. Towns and villages in this portion of the zone had especially high growth rates. These included; Mamakating (+91.5 percent), Forestburgh (+67.9 percent), Wurtsboro (+54.1 percent), Lumberland (+41.2 percent) and Highland (+36.4 percent).

The population growth rate dropped significantly between 1980 and 1990. Although several towns, notably Mamakating (+34.8 percent), Lumberland (+17.8 percent) and Fallsburg (+17.8 percent), experienced population gains over the same time period greater than those of the two counties (+6.3 percent for Sullivan and 4.5% for Ulster), many towns and villages began to experience declines indicative of the economic slowdown which began to impact on the zone. During the 1990's nearly all population growth has evaporated, even in the previously fast-growing Town of Mamakating. The most rapidly growing Town was Wawarsing with a 4.8% increase over 8 years, about the same rate of expansion experienced by the zone as a whole during the 1980's but still well below the national average.

The zone is of a very diverse make-up and this has led to some unusual situations such as an 8.8% decline in housing units in Sullivan County even while it was gaining 6.3% in population during the 1980's. The explanation for this lies in the fact that much of the area's housing stock has traditionally consisted of second-homes and, specifically, bungalow colonies. These have lost favor over the years, deteriorated and been razed in many instances and this has obscured growth in permanent residences. The Town of Liberty, for example lost a total of some 502 units between 1980 and 1990. However, a more detailed examination of Census data reveals the number of occupied housing units actually grew by 26 during the same period, the supposed decline having all been within the second-home market.

## **2.2 Economic Climate**

Employment within the zone is very seasonal due to the heavy reliance on natural resources and tourism as the foundations of the regional economy. This portion of the Catskills has a long history as home to many of the resorts visited by residents of the metropolitan region. Although their numbers have dropped considerably, a select few of these resorts carry on that tradition today and are among the largest employers in the zone. The Nevele Grande, Kutshers, and Villa Roma resorts continue to draw vacationers on a year-round basis and there is renewed interest in revitalizing the Concord and Grossinger facilities as well as establishing new attractions in the Shawangunk ridge area.

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Agriculture is another foundation industry within the zone. Approximately 58,000 acres of Sullivan County is in farm use, some 8.9% of the total land mass and there are another 8,900 acres of farmland in Wawarsing and adjacent Ulster communities. About 30% of the farmland is wooded, this area being in addition to over 450,000 acres of other forested land, meaning that well over 75% of the zone is in farm or forest uses that principally account for its character. The largely hardwood forests produce both high quality timber and the spectacular fall foliage that attract tourism. There are also, in Sullivan County alone, some 232 farms generating sales of at least \$2,500 per year. Altogether, these farms produced some \$23,364,000 in sales in 1997, of which \$21,247,000 or 91% was livestock-related. Poultry products accounted for sales of \$9,225,000 or 40% of the total and dairy represented \$8,335,000 or 37%. These farms also accounted for some 600-700 full or part-time jobs (including owner-operators primarily occupied with farming). This is the agricultural economic base.

The Sullivan County Legislature adopted an Economic Development Strategy in 1997 and, since then, has been steadily implementing it. The Strategy, which is as applicable to Wawarsing as it is to Sullivan, indicated that economic development efforts needed to be more focused, with a "single point of entry" for companies wanting to do business in the area. It was noted that the greatest job growth in the region has occurred among firms of 4 to 99 employees and the Strategy suggested prospective be targeted through a solicitation effort focused on the area's particular marketable advantages, which include:

- Location convenient to both Upstate and Metropolitan New York.
- Low turnover rates within the work force.
- Lower costs of doing business.
- Excellent telecommunications capabilities within the region.
- Financial incentives available from economic development agencies.
- Educational resources at Sullivan County Community College and nearby.
- Transportation links available via Route 17 (future I-86).
- The high quality of life as reflected in schools and housing opportunities.
- The high quality natural environment and rural character of the area as a whole, typified by the Catskills and Upper Delaware.

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The Strategy also notes that the area possesses the natural assets and proximity to the metropolitan market which a tourist destination requires, suggesting the need to rebuild that industry from the ground up, establishing the Catskills as a resort area for families and those looking for a rural experience. The area's passive recreational opportunities include both agricultural tourism and eco-tourism (e.g. the rapidly growing eagle watching activity along the Delaware and Mongaup Rivers and the Horse Show In the Sun events in Ellenville).

The presence of the Frontier Insurance headquarters in Rock Hill has also led Sullivan County to establish a new corporate center to attract other similar enterprises. The prominence, quality and rapid expansion of the Frontier project (and the nearby Siegel offices) have allowed the County to claim an "emerging office sector" and that is being capitalized upon by developing the "Emerald Corporate Center" business park around Exits 109 and 110 of the Quickway. Other corporate activity of a substantial nature within the zone includes the Imperial Schrade operation in Ellenville, a major employer with significant growth potential.

## **2.3 Infrastructure**

The zone is bisected by New York State Route 17, the "Quickway." Three of the major population centers, Monticello, Liberty, and Fallsburg, lie along the Route 17 corridor. Primary State and County roads radiating outward from these centers include Route 17B, 42, 52, 55, and 209. Travel along these roadways is somewhat constrained by physical topography, including the Delaware River and the Catskill and Shawangunk Mountains.

The Sullivan County International Airport in White Lake and some small facilities in Wurtsboro and elsewhere provide access to the area from the air. In addition, Stewart International Airport in Newburgh, New York is across the border in Orange County.

Sullivan County offices are located in the Government Center in downtown Monticello. Several County also maintains satellite facilities in Liberty. The Town of Wawarsing maintains governmental offices in the Village of Ellenville

Sullivan County Community College is located in Loch Sheldrake. Sullivan County BOCES is located in both Liberty and Monticello, with the latter representing a very active adult education program.

Shortline Bus Company operates routes throughout the zone with connections to Binghamton and New York City as well as other centers. Its main terminal in Sullivan County is located behind the Government Center in Monticello. The company operates a

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number of individual ticket agencies throughout the zone.

Sewer and water systems are fairly prevalent among the various hamlets and villages of the zone but often lack capacity for significant expansion or are limited in geographical scope. A number of the properties which might otherwise be good prospects for industrial development lack sewage treatment or water supply services and the cost of extending systems is very often prohibitive because of the low population density and rough terrain.

The fiber optics infrastructure within the zone is relatively up to date and extensive for a rural area but natural gas service is limited. The Columbia Gas Line offers the potential for future natural gas service but a local provider will have to be identified for this to become a reality.

## **2.4 Human Resources**

A number of towns and villages within the zone have significant numbers of elderly persons. Table 2.1 above, in fact, indicates that 5.3% of the 1990 population of the zone was at least 75 years old and, combined with relatively low household incomes, this suggests, for example, a need for more assisted senior living facilities.

The zone also has a large share of persons below the poverty level. Table 2.2 shows the total number of persons below the poverty level by town as well as the number of persons aged 60 years or over below the poverty level.

The number of individuals over age 60 and below the poverty level, as a sub-set of those individuals over age 60 described above and in addition to the set of all individuals below the poverty level, is an important indicator of a group with definite transportation and housing needs, among others.

Table 2.2 also shows the number of individuals, between the ages of 16 and 64 who have either mobility or self-care limitations or both. The zone, with 3.2 percent of its population having some form of disability, has a higher proportion of individuals with such disabilities than does New York State (not including New York City), 2.3 percent of whose population has a such limitations.

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| <b>Table 2.2 - Sullivan-Wawarsing REAP Zone Disability &amp; Poverty</b> |                              |  |                               |   |                                    |  |                                     |
|--|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Town   | 1990<br>Census<br>Population | 1990<br>Population<br>Below<br>Poverty | 1990<br>%<br>Below<br>Poverty | 1990<br>Population<br>60+ Yrs.<br>< Poverty | 1990<br>%<br>60+ Yrs.<br>< Poverty | 1990<br>Population<br>w/Disability<br>Limits | 1990<br>%<br>w/Disability<br>Limits |
| Bethel   | 3,693                        | 573                                    | 15.5%                         | 61  | 1.7%                               | 71   | 1.9%                                |
| Callicoon  | 3,024                        | 385                                    | 12.7%                         | 92  | 3.0%                               | 50   | 1.7%                                |
| Cochecton  | 1,318                        | 169                                    | 12.8%                         | 14  | 1.1%                               | 12   | 0.9%                                |
| Delaware   | 2,633                        | 621                                    | 23.6%                         | 27  | 1.0%                               | 66   | 2.5%                                |
| Fallsburg  | 11,445                       | 1,584                                  | 13.8%                         | 181   | 1.6%                               | 388  | 3.4%                                |
| Forestburgh  | 614                          | 49                                     | 8.0%                          | 0   | 0.0%                               | 23   | 3.7%                                |
| Fremont  | 1,332                        | 199                                    | 14.9%                         | 57  | 4.3%                               | 23   | 1.7%                                |
| Highland   | 2,147                        | 203                                    | 9.5%                          | 53  | 2.5%                               | 39   | 1.8%                                |
| Liberty  | 9,825                        | 1,308                                  | 13.3%                         | 276   | 2.8%                               | 402  | 4.1%                                |
| Lumberland   | 1,425                        | 133                                    | 9.3%                          | 44  | 3.1%                               | 36   | 2.5%                                |
| Mamakating   | 9,792                        | 465                                    | 4.7%                          | 139   | 1.4%                               | 263  | 2.7%                                |
| Neversink  | 2,951                        | 248                                    | 8.4%                          | 72  | 2.4%                               | 64   | 2.2%                                |
| Rockland   | 4,096                        | 535                                    | 13.1%                         | 95  | 2.3%                               | 78   | 1.9%                                |
| Thompson   | 13,711                       | 2,226                                  | 16.2%                         | 360   | 2.6%                               | 650  | 4.7%                                |
| Tusten   | 1,271                        | 107                                    | 8.4%                          | 53  | 4.2%                               | 34   | 2.7%                                |
| Wawarsing  | 12,348                       | 1,934                                  | 15.7%                         | 326   | 2.6%                               | 793  | 6.4%                                |
| <b>TOTALS</b>  | <b>81,625</b>                | <b>10,739</b>                          | <b>13.2%</b>                  | <b>1,850</b>                                | <b>2.3%</b>                        | <b>0</b>                                     | <b>0.0%</b>                         |
| <b>N.Y. STATE</b>  | <b>10,667,891</b>            | <b>892,302</b>                         | <b>8.4%</b>                   | <b>147,152</b>                              | <b>1.4%</b>                        | <b>248,725</b>                               | <b>2.3%</b>                         |

Residents of the zone seeking medical care have access to the following facilities in the zone: Ellenville Community Hospital, Community General Hospital in Harris or its satellite facility in Callicoon, the Narrowsburg clinic operated as part of the Wayne Memorial Health System, or the branch facility of the Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital (Cooperstown) located in Ferndale. The Ellenville Hospital is financially threatened at present, despite its role as the only such facility serving that portion of the zone and this is a critical problem to be addressed

## 2.5 Natural Resources

The Sullivan-Wawarsing REAP Zone covers approximately 1,142 square miles of land in southeastern New York State. The Delaware River forms the zone's western border with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Shawangunk Mountains straddle its border with Orange County to the east. Foothills to the Catskill Mountains run along the northeastern edge, while the rolling hills and farmland of Delaware County meet the northwestern edge.

The area is predominantly hilly with elevations ranging between 1,000 feet above sea level

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along the valleys to between 2,500 and 3,000 feet on the hilltops. A number of major bodies of water are located in the zone including the Neversink and Rondout Reservoirs, part of the New York City water supply system; Toronto and Swinging Bridge Reservoirs; as well as White Lake, Lake Superior, and the Bashakill.

The zone experiences a range of weather conditions typical to the northeast and New York State. An average of 48 inches of rain falls on the area each year. Seasonal temperature ranges from an average of 22.7 degrees Fahrenheit in the Winter to an average of 65.6 degrees Fahrenheit in the Summer. The potential for inclement weather, particularly during the winter months, is significant. On average, the area experiences 131 days with precipitation of 0.01 inches or more, and experiences 29 days with snowfall of 0.1 inches or above. Normal annual snowfall reaches approximately 73.1 inches as measured in Liberty. Rainfall and snowfall amounts tend to increase in the northeastern portion of the zone due to topographical conditions.

These various conditions have produced a natural environment well suited to agriculture and forestry and particularly good for tourism. Some of the best farmland in the area is found along the Delaware River in the Cohecton area and along the Shawangunk Kill near Bloomingburg. Natural beauty abounds with some of the best fishing, hunting, sightseeing and recreation in the Northeast. The forests also support an important timber industry. The most common species of trees are Soft Maple, Eastern Hemlock, Beech, Hard Maple and Eastern White & Red Pine. The growing stock includes over 1,966,000,000 board feet of saw timber and is growing by 54,100,000 net board feet per year.

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## **3.0 NEEDS AND GOALS OF THE ECONOMIC AREA**

Sullivan County and the Town of Wawarsing face many challenges related to community and economic development and, as the foregoing discussion indicates, several initiatives have already been taken to address the area's needs. As a part of the Strategic Planning process, the REAP Steering Committee created 17 different task forces to further study these needs. The Task Forces were requested to describe the problems of the REAP zone, articulate their visions for the future and identify specific short and long-term goals with respect to the subject areas they were asked to examine.

The task forces each included several representatives of the Sullivan-Wawarsing area and collectively involved over 120 individuals in strategic planning for the Sullivan-Wawarsing REAP zone. Some 40 of these Task Force members also came together for a workshop session on August 11, 1999 for the purpose of delivering their reports and coordinating their work. This effort resulted in the identification of four broad categories of needs and goals for the REAP zone which are as follows:

### **3.1 Economic Development**

The Sullivan-Wawarsing REAP zone is extraordinarily diverse in terms of its agriculture, the variety of business which have located in the area, and the types of tourism which it offers. Inherent in this diversity is an economic foundation of substantial breadth that needs to be built upon in new and creative ways. There are, nonetheless, also obstacles to economic development of the REAP zone that stem from this same diversity.

The multiplicity of farm enterprises in the areas of dairy, livestock, poultry and horticultural products, for example, limits the ability to engage in organized marketing efforts and withal no one area of production offers sufficient volume to do it on its own. The wide geographic distribution of farmers throughout the REAP zone presents yet another difficulty. There is a clear need, therefore, to develop a vehicle for connecting agricultural producers with New York City metropolitan area consumers. Successful linking of farmers with the appropriate markets for their products will result in more profitable and more numerous farm enterprises throughout the zone.

Business development in general within the REAP zone suffers from limited access to good paying jobs and, as a result, upward mobility is often stymied. Specifically, business development and expansion are hindered by limited access to capital and unnecessarily complicated and time-consuming financing mechanisms. Individuals seeking to start or expand businesses are, too, often in need of education or mentoring in running those businesses. Additionally, information on low-cost funding programs is not easily

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available and is typically not presented in a uniform manner. Most importantly, there is no single source of this information that cohesively links together the resources of the economic development organizations serving the area. Needs include; a) an available pool of low-cost financing, b) a streamlined process for accessing funding, c) consultants to visit and mentor new business owners, d) better coordination with local financial institutions and e) a more "business-friendly" environment.

Small businesses experience many of the same obstacles as other businesses but also represent some special challenges. Their needs include more outreach and guidance, a one-stop capital shop, "buy-local" programs, a quality labor force, targeted job-training, better mass transit and more aesthetically pleasing community appearances. They are often handicapped by high tax rates attributable to excessive layers of government and too much tax-free property. Governmental bodies and enforcement personnel are not sufficiently user-friendly and financial assistance programs often provide little real help because of the long time lags between grant approvals and actual transfers of monies. Additionally, many small businesses have trouble competing due to their older technological infrastructures. Overall, the small business community of Sullivan-Wawarsing requires a place where it can easily access and utilize existing resources, coupled with new technology, so to be able to better compete with more populated areas. It also needs more freedom from government regulation to be able to innovate and compete.

Tourism is the other element of the economy needing special attention. It is the basis of the County's culture as well as its past successes and offers perhaps the greatest opportunities for the future. The problems experienced by this vital industry are, nevertheless, many and include negative perceptions, remote geography, a short season, lack of quality hotel rooms, workforce limitations, a dearth of appropriate transportation and housing, inadequate marketing of in-zone tourism, insufficient manpower, scarce funding, and less than satisfactory cooperation among tourism entities.

Tackling these problems demands a two-fold approach, the first element of which must be a comprehensive and cooperative internal marketing program, including packaging of recreational activities, creation and distribution of informational materials for in-zone tourism marketing and promotion of already successful tourism entities. The second major aspect of a successful tourism promotion effort must include the identification and pursuit of major tourism attractions such as theme parks, convention centers, major musical venues, gaming and car racing.

Long and short-term goals with respect to these economic development needs (many of which are already being addressed to at least some extent by existing public and private organizations) include the following:

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- 3.1.1 Preserve and enhance the economic viability of agriculture in the REAP zone.
  - a) Create and fund an Agriculture Economic Development office for the REAP zone.
  - b) Expand financing programs available to agricultural-related businesses and start-ups.
- 3.1.2 Promote options to preserve farmland.
  - a) Identify and secure funding for farmland preservation.
  - b) Encourage local municipalities to adopt Right to Farm (RTF) laws and appoint Agricultural members to their planning boards.
- 3.1.3 Develop new and expand existing markets for both traditional and alternative products.
  - a) Identify and evaluate existing agricultural products and their potential for increased profitability through marketing efforts.
  - b) Establish and operate a Farmer's Market in the Town of Wawarsing.
  - c) Identify and evaluate existing agricultural product lines with a view toward increasing income through value-added goods and services.
  - d) Assemble and conduct educational programs that promote direct marketing and alternative agriculture for producers in the REAP zone.
  - e) Pursue new initiatives such as developing a green-sealed prepackaged firewood manufacturing facility in the REAP zone.
- 3.1.4 Support value added initiatives and new business marketing structures (e.g., new generation cooperatives and marketing associations) for agriculture producers in the REAP zone.
- 3.1.5 Promote agricultural tourism within the REAP zone.
  - a) Establish an agricultural tourism center to promote regional agricultural importance.

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b) Educate and promote the impact of the region's agriculture on consumers in the metropolitan area and Northeast.

c) Preserve the character of the area by implementing the Historic Barns Act locally.

d) Revitalize the "Pick Your Own" operations in the REAP zone.

e) Preserve and enhance existing agricultural tourism such as the "Horse Show in the Sun" (HITS) project in Ellenville.

3.1.6 Establish a business outreach center to educate all owners regarding the proper methods of running a business and accessing capital while also educating financial institutions as to available complementary programs to better serve their customers.

a) Hire a business outreach consultant to work with business and communities to both retain and create new job opportunities.

b) Prepare brochures, develop classes and workshops, revitalize SCORE and develop a list of other business owners who might be able to serve as business mentors.

c) Develop a Comprehensive Business Resource Manual encompassing information on various financial aid programs and regulations that businesses may be using or confronting.

3.1.7 Make a pool of funding available from major funding sources for business retention and expansion as well as new ventures.

a) Develop lists of funding programs and network with appropriate agencies to prepare applications.

b) Work with financial institutions by using public funds to leverage additional private funds and/or better terms/rates.

3.1.8 Streamline lending procedures and make access to capital easier for business.

a) Develop and coordinate one centralized pool of revolving loan money for use as seed capital.

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- b) Develop a "one-stop capital shop" to administer funding assistance to business.
- c) Develop informational brochures summarizing all capital resources available.
- d) Develop a pro-active campaign to market the availability of already existing resources.

3.1.9 Encourage State and Federal governments to reduce restrictive regulations on funding programs and business in general so as to decrease the costs of doing business.

- a) Review and make recommendations to elected officials regarding impact of new regulations.
- b) Assist in the development of cost-effective, business friendly regulations.

3.1.10 Develop a "Buy-Local" Campaign.

- a) Create a long-term buy local marketing plan to promote benefits of local purchases.
- b) Design an advertising campaign to promote benefits of local purchases.

3.1.11 Enhance the appearance of the zone and stimulate business district improvements.

- a) Encourage the development of downtown Business Improvement Districts (BID's).
- b) Regulate the appearance of seasonal businesses by better enforcing zoning regulations.
- c) Make available more modern, well-lighted and safe parking downtown.
- d) Create better access to capital for improvement of business appearances (facade improvements, landscaping, etc.)

3.1.12 Grow more small Main Street businesses.

- a) Establish a start-up business incubator program.
- b) Encourage home-based business to move onto Main Street with incubator program.

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## 3.1.13 Lower high tax rates.

- a) Encourage more local government out-sourcing of goods and services where feasible.
- b) Encourage consolidation of governmental services.
- c) Encourage reform of real property laws regarding tax exempt properties.

## 3.1.14 Develop a greater supply of labor from the zone. (See section 3.3, "Human Capital")

- a) Network with resort areas operating in opposite seasons to pursue potential workforce exchange programs.

## 3.1.15 Develop a comprehensive and strategic in-zone tourism and marketing plan.

- a) Hire a person or persons to head up an in-zone tourism and marketing campaign.
- b) Identify, develop, and market tourism packages within the zone.

## 3.1.16 Provide additional housing options for tourism workforce.

- a) Identify existing or build dormitory type housing for tourism based workforce.
- b) Provide incentives to appropriate existing and new businesses to create suitable on-site housing for workers.

## 3.1.17 Upgrade and expand the supply of quality hotel rooms in the area.

- a) Provide incentives to existing and new owners to create new and upgrade existing hotel rooms.
- b) Work with the proper agencies to attract appropriate new high-quality hotel operators.

## 3.1.18 Expand the tourism season of the zone.

- a) Identify, create, and expand off-season events and attractions.

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b) Market off-season events and attractions more intensively.

3.1.19 Change perceptions of the resort area represented by Sullivan and Wawarsing both inside and outside of the zone. (See Section 3.4 "Community Life")

a) Develop and implement major marketing campaign to create new image for tourism outside the zone.

b) Through education and marketing, promote a more positive community self image within the zone.

3.1.20 Considering the size of the zone, make it user-friendlier to tourists.

a) Identify, expand upon, and package various pocket tourism sites and attractions within the zone.

b) Create appropriate signage and printed promotional materials to expedite movement within the zone.

3.1.21 Enhance the quality of transportation to and from as well as within the zone for tourists.

a) Create travel packages, for both individuals and groups, that utilize all possible modes of public transportation.

b) Explore and develop in-zone transportation options of both a private and public nature that can accommodate the needs of tourists.

Many of these goals are starting to be addressed and their listing is intended to stress their continuing importance and the fact much can still be done. There is no intent to reflect on the quality of existing performance. Rather it is desired that these goals reflect the future aspirations of the Task Force members who participated in this strategic planning exercise.

## **3.2 Physical Capital**

The physical capital needs of the zone are those relating to infrastructure, planning, environment, natural resources, transportation and housing. Many of the needs identified in this section were, because of their foundational nature, also identified by members of other task forces across the spectrum of this strategic planning effort.

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The Sullivan-Wawarsing REAP zone lacks a sufficient supply of ready-to-develop business and industrial sites served with infrastructure. There is also a corresponding lack of capital available for the purpose of reusing older facilities within the area's villages and hamlets - facilities which otherwise might serve well to accommodate new business and industry and help to revitalize these downtown areas. Deteriorating sidewalks, streets, buildings and other facilities are evident throughout the zone and they have contributed to a vicious cycle of decline as new private investment has been thwarted by these conditions, tax bases have been eroded and funds to make repairs and new investments have dwindled. A coordinated capital improvements plan to provide new and improved infrastructure in a cost-effective manner with the help of Federal sources of financial assistance is very much needed.

Some of the specific areas of need are as follows; a) downtown infrastructure such as sidewalks, streets, lights, parking and buildings, b) private as well as public industrial site utilities, c) fiber optic cable and internet links and services, d) local natural gas service off the Columbia Gas pipeline cutting through the heart of the REAP zone and e) cellar phone service coverage. There is, too, a need for special investment incentives within selected economic development sub-zones similar to those offered under the Federal government's Enterprise Community (EC) and Empowerment Zone (EZ) programs. Moreover, old ideas that work, an example being Sullivan's Main Street Redevelopment Center, need to be broadened to cover the entire REAP zone and funded on an on-going basis.

Capital facilities planning, based upon a five-year budgeting schedule with this Strategic Plan as a foundation, also needs to be coordinated among municipal, County and State governments to shorten the cycle of repairs. The thrust of this capital budgeting program should be to create a revitalized core of Main Street business districts and shopping centers and a network of quality business and industrial sites served with essential utilities. Those utilities should include an extensive fiber optics network and there should be a program of other incentives that will make the REAP zone attractive to outside investment. Perhaps most importantly, the future should include regionalized sewer and water services to increase efficiencies of operation, the ability to capitalize new improvements and the capacity to accommodate economic development.

Physical capital also includes the natural environment and among the greatest needs of the REAP zone is the protection of that environment so that it may be used as a resource both to create new wealth in the community and maintain the overall quality of life. Enhancement of the recreational infrastructure and preservation of high quality lakes, ponds, streams and wildlife habitats is, therefore, critical. Amenity improvements to recreational links such as the O&W rail to trail project and the D&H Canal are also

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important, as are programs that build upon other public parks and recreation areas. The various reservoirs, the Bashakill, the Neversink River and the Upper Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River are all tremendous resources in this regard and need to more fully capitalized upon for their family tourism appeal. Historical programs are, for this reason, also important and preservation of these features by means of acquisition, conservation easements and open space design development is necessary. Purchase of development rights on farmland, too, is needed to complement these efforts and preserve that overall character which has served to draw those types of visitors.

Getting people to these resources, of course, demands a top-quality transportation system and various highway improvements are needed to facilitate the full designation of the Quickway as interstate route I-86. Complete highway interchanges at key economic development locations such as Rock Hill are needed as well. Other road and bridge improvements are demanded to address safety issues and accommodate new projects such as the proposed redevelopment of the Woodstock concert site.

The existing public transportation system, a combination of the Shortline Bus Company and the Sullivan and Ulster rural public transportation services, needs to be enhanced with new bus stops and routes, better service to public areas and buildings (e.g. the Sullivan County Community College) and greatly improved marketing to both residents and second-home tourists. It should also include bundled transportation services by sub-zone to the more rural areas of the REAP zone. More inter-county coordination of services is also required. Likewise, rail service improvements for both freight and passengers, including park and ride lots, are needed and high speed rail service to New York City should continue to be explored. Finally, the zone needs a fully functional regional airport capable of accommodating both air freight and corporate jets.

The underlying objective of all these improvements is, of course, to create more livable communities and the other essential element in making a community livable is having an adequate supply of affordable quality housing. The Sullivan-Wawarsing REAP zone is severely lacking in this respect. There is a need for additional rental housing units, particularly of the scattered site type, to serve all income levels. More rental assistance and tax-credit financed housing is also required to accommodate low and moderate income households on the waiting lists of public housing providers in the REAP zone and a great deal of additional education for both landlords and renters is demanded.

Likewise, the supply of new owner-occupied housing in the median price range needs to be augmented and potential homeowners need education regarding financing, family budgeting and the like. Some real property tax and other incentives for first time homebuyers, such as amortized tax payments, are also needed along with transitional home ownership programs. Overall, the goal must be to increase family self-sufficiency

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and the investment by young families in their neighborhoods and this can be accomplished by such techniques as a homeowner incubator program designed to allocate a portion of the cost of rent during the early years toward purchase of their home in later years.

Raising housing standards is a special challenge. The overall supply of existing housing within the REAP zone needs to be inventoried and evaluated and a concerted and cooperative program of code enforcement between housing agencies and local governments begun to address deficiencies. There is insufficient cooperation at present within some portions of the zone and very inconsistent enforcement of building and housing codes from one multiple dwelling project to another. Clearly, the downtown and other neighborhood improvements discussed above are also critical to raising the images of areas where lower cost housing is often found and, thereby, attracting new investment by landlords and property owners. There is, too, potential for acquisition and rehabilitation of existing multi-family housing under the HOME and other similar programs.

Other special housing needs include providing more funding for elderly and handicapped housing projects (particularly assisted and other supportive living forms), offering incentives for homeowners to upgrade their property (e.g. perhaps a simple companion to the New York State 485-b program) and reducing the number of homeless individuals by providing for emergency shelters.

Long and short-term goals with respect to physical capital needs include the following:

## 3.2.1 Create full-service business and industrial parks within the REAP zone.

- a) Support Sullivan County's effort to complete the Emerald Corporate Center in Rock Hill.
- b) Provide similar assistance to those owners of existing business and industrial parks with substantial equity investments.

## 3.2.2 Upgrade the communications network within the REAP zone.

- a) Conduct a study of the technological communications needs of business, government and industry within the zone.
- b) Work with Bell Atlantic, Time-Warner and others to provide cost-effective access to the area's fiber optic network and upgrade switching equipment to improve data service capabilities.
- c) Link local government, BOCES, the Community College, Cornell Cooperative

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Extension and schools together through an integrated fiber optic network for distance learning and other information sharing purposes.

3.2.3 Upgrade the transportation system throughout the zone to improve access to major markets and provide alternative means of transportation for both residents and visitors.

a) Make the necessary improvements to Route 17 to allow full designation as I-86 (e.g. creating a Parksville interchange and improving the Rock Hill interchange).

b) Complete proposed upgrades to the Sullivan County Airport runway and taxiways and expand runway length to 8,000 feet.

c) Upgrade Route 17B from Monticello to Callicoon to provide better access to the Woodstock site as it is improved.

d) Extend passenger rail service from Port Jervis to Binghamton, from Port Jervis to Monticello and from Middletown to Wurtsboro and Ellenville.

e) Work with New York State to evaluate the potential for a high-speed rail connection to Manhattan.

f) Upgrade Route 209 to a four-lane divided highway from I-86 in Wurtsboro to Ellenville.

g) Construct a Catskills welcome center along I-86 in the Town of Mamakating and/or Town of Wawarsing, matching the \$2.75 million of funding already obtained for this purpose with an additional \$2.0 million as a Sullivan-Wawarsing REAP project.

3.2.4 Expand the network of trails and pedestrian connections to recreation areas and provide for other needed recreational amenities.

a) Support the proposed trail system and development of the Holiday Mountain Center as envisioned in the Neversink River 21st Century Plan.

b) Create designated bicycle lanes and other trail links using the D&H Canal and O&W rights of way as possible bases.

c) Improve sidewalks, curbs, foot bridges, traffic controls, lighting, benches and parking areas in conjunction with designation of various pedestrian and bike ways.

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d) Develop a New York City Watershed History and Science Museum in the vicinity of the Neversink or Rondout Reservoirs in the Towns of Liberty, Neversink or Wawarsing.

e) Work with the Upper Delaware Council and the National Park Service to expand and promote the array of recreational and interpretative offerings along the Delaware River and use them as a basis of general family tourism promotion, linking this promotion to a designation of Route 97 as a Scenic Byway.

3.2.5 Improve and expand upon sewer and water infrastructure serving areas of planned economic growth.

a) Regionalize sewer and water districts among towns and villages to create greater efficiencies, maximize use of Federal and State funding and add capacity.

b) Obtain funding to update the Section 208 Wastewater Management Plan for the region and develop a 5-year sewer and water capital improvements budget for the REAP zone to implement that plan.

3.2.6 Work with Columbia Gas and potential local partners to extend natural gas service to major population centers and business/industrial sites in the zone as part of the former's Millennium Pipeline project.

3.2.7 Substantially upgrade the public transportation system within the REAP zone.

a) Upgrade both the frequency and the reach of Shortline Bus Company's service by negotiating a contract with that operator which pulls certain existing public routes, such as senior shopping runs, into one coordinated system and includes new off-hours services, route deviations, identified stops and routes.

b) Address other public transportation needs by using zone service provided through contracted transportation brokers responsible for meeting all the special transportation needs of the zones they are selected to serve for a flat fee, whether using their own equipment or sub-contractors.

c) Market this combined system through; 1) marking and mapping of new bus stops on existing routes, 2) use of an attractive name and logo which links all transit services into one identifiable system, 3) development, printing and distribution of a simply written but attractive brochure of public transit services, 4) the training of social service professionals so as to provide them with a full

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understanding of public transit services available to their clients and how to utilize them, 5) use of conventional advertising and public service announcements, and 6) distribution of transportation information through various employers, social service agencies, transportation providers and other public entities such as Housing Authorities.

d) Supplement these transit services by filling in gaps with public services and or the zone service discussed above, providing, for example, guaranteed rides homes for those individuals who can only use the public transportation service one-way.

## 3.2.8 Increase the number of quality rental units for all household incomes and sizes.

a) Acquire, rehabilitate or construct rental units for all income levels, with an emphasis on scattered site projects of 10 or fewer units each.

b) Increase rental assistance funding to address existing waiting lists.

c) Expand education of landlords with respect to property standards and tenant relations while simultaneously training tenants how to properly use appliances and fixtures and how to request repairs.

d) Discourage communities from prohibiting upper story use of downtown properties for senior rental apartments.

e) Make tax and HUD foreclosed properties available to housing organizations for rehabilitation under the HOME program and similar initiatives.

## 3.2.9 Increase home ownership.

a) Use USDA and other housing funding programs to increase the supply of new homes in the median price range (\$50,000 to \$60,000).

b) Develop homebuyer education programs in conjunction with local lenders to reach potential homebuyers as early as possible and provide appropriate training in finances and budgeting.

c) Develop a real property tax incentive program for first-time homebuyers that amortizes front-end tax expenses.

d) Develop a transitional program designed to convert renters to buyers by converting a portion of rent to equity.

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- 3.2.9 Improve and maintain the quality of the housing stock.
- a) Conduct an inventory of housing conditions throughout the REAP zone.
  - b) Provide sufficient staff to identify and perform annual housing inspections of multi-family housing properties.
  - c) Foster more cooperation between local code enforcement personnel and housing agencies.
  - d) Provide incentives to owners of multi-family properties and homeowners to improve their properties by phasing in tax increases in a manner similar to the New York State 485-b program.
  - e) Provide additional funding for rehabilitation of both owner-occupied and rental housing.
  - f) Provide additional funding to assist the elderly and handicapped with housing repairs, emergency needs and routine maintenance.
- 3.2.10 Reduce the number of at risk and homeless, especially the chronically homeless.
- a) Increase case management assistance to the homeless.
  - b) Develop transitional housing accompanied with supportive services directed at single parents, teen parents and chronically homeless households.
  - c) Provide sufficient financial, legal and counseling assistance to help potentially homeless households avoid that outcome and redirect them to other alternatives.
  - d) Increase the supply of safe affordable housing for households not eligible or otherwise able to obtain for housing assistance.
- 3.2.11 Increase family self-sufficiency and investments by young families in their communities.
- a) Accompany the above programs (including those geared to renters) with family self-sufficiency assistance and initiatives.
  - b) Enforce housing codes and otherwise encourage homeowners to properly

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maintain their properties so as to add to neighborhood curb appeal and attract more investment - turning the vicious cycle decline around.

c) Encourage programs such as community playgrounds, neighborhood gardens and the like that attract young families.

d) Continue support for Sullivan First and other community pride and image improvement campaigns and extend them to the Town of Wawarsing as a means of getting homeowners and renters to take ownership of their community.

e) Provide support for development of residential neighborhoods around downtowns and Main Streets.

f) Develop additional programs such as "individual development accounts" which can be used to help young families accumulate equity for closing costs and down payments so that they can make the transition from self-sufficient renters to homeowners.

3.2.12 Increase the number of affordable accessible rental units for the elderly and handicapped.

a) Increase the number of quality rental units targeted to seniors and the handicapped, including both subsidized and unsubsidized types, by employing Section 202, tax-credit financing and similar programs used elsewhere to do so.

b) Employ real estate tax abatements and HUD mortgage insurance programs to stimulate the provision of more assisted living and other senior housing accompanied with supportive services, including lifecare and continuing care retirement communities.

## **3.3 Human Capital**

The human capital needs of the zone are related to the ability of individuals living in the REAP zone to maintain a high quality of life by obtaining well-paying, meaningful work, securing health care when necessary, actively contributing to the care and nurture of children, and developing one's own capacity for self-expression and participation in community life. The task forces contributing to the identification of human capital needs included Job Training, Education, Health, and Family and Youth.

Human capital issues in the REAP Zone are exacerbated by a history of poverty and limited economic opportunities. For example, it is not unusual for school districts in the

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REAP Zone to report that up to forty percent of their students are eligible for free or reduced school lunches due to low levels of family income. At the same time, the continued expansion of the national, state, and regional economies means that job opportunities do exist for REAP Zone residents, if they have the education and training to prepare them to compete in the labor market. In fact, it is increasingly clear that those regions with the best supply of educated workers will be best able to develop new jobs by either enabling existing firms to expand or attracting new firms that are seeking sources of high-quality labor.

In order to take full advantage of these opportunities, the institutional structure that now delivers education, training and health services may need to be reconfigured. In order to enable disadvantaged families to fully participate in the job market and community life, schools should serve as total family support centers, extending the services they offer beyond just academics. For most families, the schools are the one institution with which they have almost daily contact. Thus they are a logical source for providing other kinds of services required by families in the REAP Zone, including family services, mental health and substance abuse counseling and referrals, and opportunities for promoting family literacy and job training.

At the same time, job training provided in the REAP Zone must be built upon a close working relationship between schools, other work force development agencies, and private sector employers. Communicate needs and make aware of opportunities.

Finally, improving access to health care is a fundamental step to improving the lives of REAP Zone residents. This involves a combination of approaches. Additional government support (either federal or state) to enable small businesses to provide health insurance to employees would likely provide a dramatic increase in health care accessibility in the REAP Zone. In addition, ensuring that health care facilities are located to serve the needs of REAP Zone residents is equally important. This involves using the schools as an important part of a health care referral network, to providing facilities in western Sullivan County, to maintaining existing facilities such as Ellenville Community Hospital. Part of the solution also involved ensuring that citizens have access to transportation (particularly bus and van service) that enables them to attend work as required and to reach health care facilities when needed. In addition, the growing elderly population in the REAP Zone must have access to an adequate supply of health care workers, particularly direct care workers. Steps should be taken to ensure that there is an adequate supply of direct care workers throughout the REAP Zone.

Long and short-term goals with respect to human capital needs include the following:

3.3.1 Create readily accessible full-service family support centers to meet the needs of

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families, parents and children.

a) Use local schools to create family support centers that can provide services or referrals on issues related to family and children (e.g., education, training, daycare, mental health services, health care, etc.).

b) Create a transportation system to provide access to family centers, support services and employment opportunities throughout the REAP Zone.

3.3.2. Create an intra-net of support services which would be available at all family support centers and at various locations in the REAP Zone.

a) Use the Internet, public access television and public service advertisements to inform people of services available at the family support centers.

3.3.3. Create a full array of youth activities throughout the County.

a) Establish youth and family programs throughout the REAP region featuring integrated arts programs and educational theater. These programs should be coordinated so that all children have proper supervision before and after school.

b) Create a community/school task force to create multicultural programs for the community, mentoring programs for students, and empowerment programs for parents to encourage wider participation in school and community life by parents and children.

c) Create a clearinghouse of information on youth activities so that all persons have access to available services.

3.3.4. Improve education and job-training opportunities by creating a seamless continuum of vocational and educational opportunities.

a) Establish a coalition of stakeholders consisting of representatives from schools, social service agencies, businesses, civic organizations, and parents to develop a plan for implementing such a system throughout the REAP Zone.

b) Determine the appropriate role for various distance learning technologies (full-motion video, asynchronous instruction, etc.) to play in providing this continuum.

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c) Establish an incubator/training facility in Emerald Park or the Monticello area to encourage school/business collaboration and reinforce the need for lifelong learning on the part of employees.

d) Collaborate with major groups of local employers to develop specific curricula to serve their needs (e.g., insurance studies, telecommunications installation & programming, computer network installation, tool and die making, home remodeling certification, nursing and health technologies, etc.)

1. Improve access to health care throughout the REAP Zone.

a. Utilize federal funding to augment NYS Small Business Health Insurance Partnership Program funding, thereby decreasing employer contribution currently at 45 percent.

b ) Provide technical assistance to have the Sullivan-Wawarsing REAP Zone designated Medicaid/low-income dental health manpower shortage area eligible for National Health Service Corps loan forgiveness programs.

c) Utilize federal Community Health Center grant funding to maintain and expand primary care clinics for the REAP Zone's extensive Medicaid and medically indigent/uninsured population.

d) Provide start-up federal funding for pharmacies to establish within underserved communities in the REAP Zone.

e) Develop expanded Advance Life Support Ambulance Services throughout the REAP Zone.

f) Establish telemedicine communication linkages for on-site specialty and sub-specialty care between such key sites as Community General Hospital, Ellenville Community Hospital, and tertiary care medical treatment centers.

g) Provide financial start-up assistance for mobile van mammography and outreach services to medically underserved areas in the REAP Zone.

1. Alleviate the shortage of health care staffing.

a. Expand federal financial incentives for primary care physicians as well as medical and

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surgical specialists to practice full-time within medically underserved communities in the REAP Zone.

- b. Expand the Federal Area Health Education Center to serve the REAP Zone.
  - c. Provide federal grant funding for demonstration program to evaluate cost effectiveness of raising salaries of home health aides and personal care aides as means of reducing clinically unnecessary long-term institutionalization.
  - d) Increase dental Medicaid reimbursement to provide financial incentives for rural dentists to accept Medicaid patients in the REAP Zone.
1. Provide alternative forms of care for the elderly population.
- a) Provide augmented federal and State capital funding and operational reimbursement to develop assisted living housing projects for low- and moderate-income individuals.
  - b) Expand the NYS Office on Aging funding for the Sullivan and Ulster offices on Aging to develop expanded in-home services for the elderly population in the REAP Zone as an alternative to nursing home care.
  - c) Establish federal demonstration projects to provide Medicare coverage funding within the REAP Zone for the NYS Long Term Home Health Care Program.
- a. Promote NYS Health Department regulatory flexibility to enable respite program services within hospitals and nursing home facilities.
1. Provide primary preventative interventions on health-related problems.
- a) Use federal start-up funding to support preventative programs in school districts teaching life skills training to enable adolescents to avoid involvement with alcohol and substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and domestic violence.
  - b) Increase federal funding for both primary, preventative research evaluation studies and to disseminate findings to key stakeholders under the auspices of the Recovery Center program.
  - c) Expand federal funding for teenage pregnancy programs based upon the successful Rochester and Cortland County models.

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- d) Explore the feasibility of creating group home settings for pregnant teens to reduce the number of repeated pregnancies.
- a. Provide adolescent recreational opportunities in local communities during weekends, after school, and during summer recess.
- f) Increase self-esteem for adolescent girls through programs in mentoring and peer support along with increased participation in sports programs.

## **3.4 Community Life**

Community Life includes issues that shape the daily experience of residents and visitors in the towns and villages that comprise the REAP Zone. The REAP Zone task forces most directly concerned with community life were community image, cultural issues, social issues/quality of life, and public safety.

In a region marked by increasing social, demographic, and economic diversity, there is a need for all efforts to improve community life to be as inclusive as possible. This will provide all residents with opportunities to contribute to the quality of life in the REAP Zone. It will also encourage all residents to have a sense of ownership and pride in their neighborhoods, communities, and in the region as a whole.

Part of developing a sense of ownership and pride of place is insuring that the image of the REAP Zone communities is continually enhanced and upgraded. In that regard, successful efforts to enhance community image should be supported and extended to all areas of the REAP Zone. This includes such initiatives as "Sullivan First," the Sullivan County Main Street program, and others. Public awareness of the role the arts can play in the process is critical. The REAP Zone would benefit from sustained efforts to evaluate and nurture public awareness of the arts and the role they play in community life. In addition, the quality of community life is a direct reflection of the condition of the community's children and youth. Addressing the concerns of children and youth should therefore be a central focus in improving community life in the REAP Zone.

Finally, the quality of community life is directly dependent upon the extent to which people feel secure in their homes and as they move through their neighborhoods and downtowns. It is therefore essential that the communities of the REAP Zone have access to adequate services related to public safety (i.e., police, fire, and emergency medical services--EMS). Like all other human services in the REAP Zone, public safety services must be configured to meet the emerging needs of the new millennium. Thus police, fire

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and EMS services must be prepared to respond to a growing and increasingly diverse population. In addition, those services should have contingency plans in place to provide adequate services should legalized gambling be introduced to the REAP Zone.

Long and short-term goals with respect to community life needs include the following:

3.4.1. Enhance community image by significantly decreasing the number of billboards and signs in the communities and along the major routes in Sullivan County and the Town of Wawarsing.

- a) Inventory existing billboards and signs to identify which are illegal by current state and local standards.
- b) Work with local code enforcement officers and state officials to remove those that are in violation or bring them into compliance.
- c) Examine existing local sign ordinances and identify common issues.
- d) Develop a model sign ordinance for the REAP Zone and encourage Zone communities to adopt it.
- e) Create a design theme for major routes modeled after the "Adopt an Exit" program on Sullivan County's portion of U.S.17.

3.4.2. Enhance community image by removal of buildings and other eyesores that detract from the character of communities in Sullivan County and the Town of Wawarsing.

- a) Inventory and identify dilapidated structures within Sullivan County and the Town of Wawarsing.
- b) Meet with local officials and property owners to plan for removal and/or renovation of these structures.
- c) Coordinate with local groups to plan for beautification and/or improvement projects on vacant lots in communities.

3.4.3. Improve community image by ensuring the enhancement and maintenance of projects by providing educational programs and opportunities for career exploration and/or community service that emphasize the importance of high quality landscaping and design.

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- a) Create a curriculum that enables community members to become more familiar with concepts and techniques involved in landscape design horticulture.
- b) Establish a corps of community volunteers to become involved with the design and maintenance of landscaping projects.
- c) Establish a lending bank of tools necessary for the creation and maintenance of landscaping projects.

3.4.4. Improve quality of life by promoting collective respect and positive interaction among all groups, while making current resources more accessible.

- a) Use telecommunications technology to expand citizen access to library resources throughout the REAP Zone.
- b) Establish multicultural programs/community centers where all citizens can share information about their culture with others.

3.4.5. Improve quality of life by addressing the problems of drugs, violence, teen pregnancy, anti-academic attitudes, and peer pressure facing children and youth in order to break the cycle of poverty, financially and morally. (See Goal 3.3.3 under "Human Capital".)

3.4.6. Improve quality of life by promoting businesses that provide jobs as well as recreation for REAP Zone residents.

- a) Encourage the development of ethnic restaurants, main street businesses and businesses involved in outdoor recreation related to the region's mountains, lakes and rivers.
- b) Expand the D&H Canal Trail as a regional linear park.

3.4.7. Enrich cultural resources by developing strong arts/cultural organizations with professional staff and facilities that can sustain lively and engaging programming, preserve and interpret our heritage, and support the work of artists in all disciplines.

- a) Conduct an economic impact study that includes the businesses run by the area's professional artists, and the economic contribution made by arts facilities and arts events.
- b) Support and upgrade existing organizations, facilities, and museums.

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c) Create a central clearinghouse to encourage area businesses and governments to contract with local artists/artisans for projects involving arts-related functions.

3.4.8. Enrich cultural resources by encouraging larger, more engaged, and more diversified audiences in all communities in the REAP Zone.

a) Use existing and planned community festivals to attract new audiences for arts and cultural organizations in the REAP Zone.

b) Create a coordinated system of events to tour county and municipal parks as well as other cultural/recreational venues.

c) Highlight and support existing historic/heritage programs in all communities.

3.4.9. Enrich cultural resources by expanding financial support for the arts and culture.

a) Create a "1% for the Arts" program for all federally funded building projects in the REAP Zone whereby one percent of the project costs would be devoted to procuring locally produced art to enhance the project's appearance.

b) Emphasize cultural tourism and downtown development in tourism and economic development efforts in the REAP Zone.

c) Develop and maintain an arts endowment for the REAP Zone.

3.4.10. Enrich cultural resources by creating solid partnerships between the arts and culture and other community resources such as education, business and industrial, economic, and tourism development agencies.

a) Provide for representation of cultural and arts organizations in the deliberations of economic, educational, industrial, commercial and tourism development efforts.

b) Develop cross-marketing plans for cultural resources and events to tie them more closely with efforts at business recruitment, education programs, and tourism and economic development efforts.

3.4.11. Improve public safety by ensuring that police, fire, and emergency medical services are housed in strategically located, modern facilities with adequate equipment and staffing to meet local needs.

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- a) Create a public safety building in the Village of Monticello that would house police and fire services along with the justice court.
  
- b) Create a public safety building in the Town of Cohecton to house government offices, the County Sheriff's Department, the New York State Police, and a state-of-the-art firehouse. This location would consolidate existing offices in Narrowsburg and Hortonville, and would provide an enhanced public safety presence in the western half of the REAP Zone.
  
- c) Create a modern public safety building in the Village of Liberty that would update the condition of the current facilities serving the Liberty Joint Fire District and, where possible, promote collocation of other public safety services (e.g., police and emergency medical services). Part of this effort would include the creation of a round-the-clock paramedic service at least partially funded by savings effected through collocation.

3.4.12. In conjunction with BOCES, Sullivan County Community College, or another appropriate agency, create a public safety training facility to serve the communities in the REAP Zone. This would enable public safety providers to receive requisite training without leaving the area and would enable the REAP Zone to retain more of the tuition and other expenditures involved in receiving such training.

- a) The need to enhance the fire/rescue facility in the Town of Wawarsing should be examined to see if it can be included as part of a regional REAP Zone public safety training facility.

3.4.13. Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of public safety services by ensuring that all such services can make maximum use of existing telecommunications technology to share information and coordinate dispatching of services to emergency locations.

- a) Install a high-band radio system for countywide fire service agencies that could also serve the Town of Wawarsing. There are frequent service interruptions in mountainous areas with the current low-band system.
  
- b) Erect a radio tower to enhance communications on a Zone-wide level. Radio and cellular telephone communications are greatly affected by the mountainous terrain in the western end of the REAP Zone.

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## **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND BENCHMARKS**

Members of the 17 different Task Forces that participated in the development of this Strategic Plan met frequently over the course of two months to not only establish goals, but also to identify specific projects warranting governmental assistance. Some Task Forces chose to define their projects in the context of needs and goals that will require additional refinement as the REAP Zone Board of Directors continues its work. These may be found in Section 3.0. Other Task Forces described projects for which specific action or funding is required in the short term. Various Task Forces also continue to work, reflecting the fact this Strategic Plan is intended to be a dynamic document which is continually revised and supplemented with new ideas. Indeed, the intent here is to pinpoint ready to move over the next 1-2 years. Other projects will be added on a routine basis as the Board continues to plan and structure its program of economic and community development assistance.

The projects identified below are those ready now for assistance from USDA and other Federal, State and local agencies. They are organized by Task Force with cross-references to applicable goals from Section 3.0.

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## **4.1 Agricultural Business Development**

The following specific agricultural business development projects are among those identified as necessary within the REAP Zone:

### **4.1.1 Agricultural Economic Development Office**

#### **General Description:**

Create an Agricultural Economic Development office for the REAP Zone region to pursue added-value initiatives, direct marketing of agricultural products and the development of other agriculture or forestry-related industries within the zone.

**Relevant Goal:** 3.1.1

#### **Benchmarks:**

|    | <u>Description</u>                                   | <u>Leader</u>  | <u>Start</u> | <u>End</u> | <u>Budget</u> |
|----|--|--|--------------|------------|---------------|
| A. | Prepare job description                              | Cooperative Ext.<br>Ec. Dev. Partnership                   | 10/99        | 11/99      | \$0           |
| B. | Secure line item in County budget(s) & other funding | Cooperative Ext.<br>Ec. Dev. Partnership                   | 10/99        | 12/99      | \$0           |
| C. | Advertise and hire staff                             | Cooperative Ext.<br>Ec. Dev. Partnership                   | 01/00        | 03/00      | \$100,000     |
| D. | Promote & advertise                                  | Cooperative Ext.<br>Ec. Dev. Partnership<br>Ag Development | 03/00        | On-going   | \$25,000      |

**Total Funding Required:** \$125,000/year .

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## 4.1.2 Agricultural Business Loan Program

### General Description:

Expand financing programs available specifically for agriculture related businesses and start-ups throughout the REAP Zone by expanding Sullivan Agriculture Revolving Loan Program and making Wawarsing agri-businesses eligible, linking assistance to Sullivan and Ulster County Industrial Development Agency tax-abatement programs directed at agriculture.

**Relevant Goal:** 3.1.1

### Benchmarks:

|    | <u>Description</u>   | <u>Leader</u>                       | <u>Start</u> | <u>End</u> | <u>Budget</u> |
|----|--|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| A. | Examine existing financial programs for deficiencies and opportunities                                     | IDA's Plan. Dept.'s Ag Development* | 01/00        | 03/00      | \$10,000      |
| B. | Do needs assessment of agricultural clientele and revise local programs to maximize use of existing funds. | Ag Development                      | 3/00         | 9/00       | \$25,000      |
| C. | Match needs to current programs and identify funding sources.  | Ag Development                      | 3/00         | 9/00       | See above.    |
| D. | Make application and secure funding to expand revolving loan program                                       | Ag Development                      | 9/00         | On-going   | \$2,500,000   |

\* "Ag Development" refers to the Agricultural Economic Development office from 4.1.1 above.

**Total Funding Required:** \$2,535,000 .

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## 4.1.3 Farmland Protection Program

### General Description:

Develop a farmland protection program for the Town of Wawarsing that will allow the purchase of agricultural conservation easements on the USDA designated prime soils within the Rondout Valley. Pursue similar projects in Sullivan County and elsewhere in Wawarsing as recommended in the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plans for Sullivan and Ulster County.

**Relevant Goal:** 3.1.2

### Benchmarks:

|    | <u>Description</u>   | <u>Leader</u>  | <u>Start</u> | <u>End</u> | <u>Budget</u> |
|----|--|--|--------------|------------|---------------|
| A. | Begin search for matching fund requirement.  | Cooperative Ext.<br>Farm Protection Bds.   | 12/99        | 08/00      | \$10,000      |
| B. | Identify priority lands for preservation   | Rondout Esopus &<br>Catskill Conservancies   | 12/99        | 08/00      | \$5,000       |
| C. | Outreach to REAP Zone communities for proposals from landowners, hold informational meeting. | Cooperative Ext.<br>Farm Protection Bds.<br>Rondout Esopus &<br>Catskill Conservancies | 01/00        | 06/00      | \$10,000      |
| E. | Apply to NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets   | Farm Protection Bds.   | 06/00        | 08/00      | \$0           |
| F. | Appraise & acquire easements   | Ag & Markets   | 09/00        | 06/01      | \$1,750,000   |

**Total Funding Required:** \$1,775,000 .

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## **4.2 Community Image**

The following specific community image projects are among those identified as necessary within the REAP Zone:

### **4.2.1 Dilapidated Building Removal Program**

#### **General Description:**

Removal of dilapidated buildings that detract from the tourist image and quality of life within the REAP Zone.

**Relevant Goal:** 3.4.2

#### **Benchmarks:**

|           | <b><u>Description</u></b>   | <b><u>Leader</u></b>                               | <b><u>Start</u></b> | <b><u>End</u></b> | <b><u>Budget</u></b> |
|-----------|---|--|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| <b>A.</b> | Inventory existing structures by creating community teams           | Planning Dept.'s                                   | 01/00               | 04/00             | \$5,000              |
| <b>B.</b> | Contact property owners for input in planning of removal & new uses | Planning Dept.'s<br>Sullivan First<br>Garden Clubs | 03/00               | 06/00             | \$5,000              |
| <b>C.</b> | Secure permits  | Planning Dept.'s                                   | 06/00               | 07/00             | \$5,000              |
| <b>D.</b> | Demolition and clean-up   | County DPW's<br>Sullivan First<br>Garden Clubs     | 08/00               | 12/00             | \$85,000             |

**Total Funding Required:** \$100,000

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## **4.2.2 Billboard Removal Program**

### **General Description:**

Inventory existing billboards and identify which are licensed and which are illegal. Also identify which are in ill repair and need to be better maintained.

**Relevant Goal:** 3.4.1

### **Benchmarks:**

|           | <b><u>Description</u></b>                                  | <b><u>Leader</u></b>                      | <b><u>Start</u></b> | <b><u>End</u></b> | <b><u>Budget</u></b> |
|-----------|--|---|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| <b>A.</b> | Identify existing billboard and determine which are legal. | County DPW's<br>NYS-DOT<br>Sullivan First | 03/00               | 06/00             | \$5,000              |
| <b>B.</b> | Initiate campaign for removal of unlicensed billboards.    | NYS-DOT<br>Sullivan First                 | 07/00               | 09/00             | \$20,000             |
| <b>C.</b> | Initiate campaign for purchase of other billboards         | Sullivan First<br>County DPW's            | 10/00               | 07/01             | \$75,000             |

**Total Funding Required:** \$100,000

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## **4.3 Cultural Resources**

The following specific cultural resource projects are among those identified as necessary within the REAP Zone:

### **4.3.1 Family Performing Arts Center**

#### **General Description:**

Establishment of a Family Performing Arts Center by Catskills' IDEA (Institute for Development of Entertainment Arts) to reestablish the Catskills as an easily accessible vacation and entertainment destination for New York metropolitan area residents, while providing youth with wholesome, creative outlets to help them avoid the pitfalls of teen pregnancy, drug abuse and crime and will serve as a center for tourism and an influx of tourism dollars. This facility would provide a permanent home for Catskills' IDEA and its KidSkills' Theatre as well as provide a location for a KidsMUSEum and KidsCirque program. The theatre provides creative dramatics, dance, art, puppetry and cultural enrichment programs through imaginative learning, fostering self-esteem, teamwork and cooperation with theatre professionals and children of diverse backgrounds and abilities. The Center would be placed in the now defunct Rialto Theatre in the downtown area of Monticello, New York. The 500-seat theatre and state-of-the-art stage will provide a perfect platform for in-house performances and to host world-class family entertainment.

**Relevant Goal:** 3.4.7

#### **Benchmarks:**

|           | <b><u>Description</u></b>   | <b><u>Leader</u></b>                     | <b><u>Start</u></b> | <b><u>End</u></b> | <b><u>Budget</u></b> |
|-----------|-----------------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| <b>A.</b> | Appraise & acquire building | Catskills' IDEA<br>Village of Monticello | 01/00               | 06/00             | \$275,000            |
| <b>B.</b> | Planning & design           | Catskills' IDEA                          | 06/00               | 09/00             | \$25,000             |
| <b>C.</b> | Renovations & furnishing    | Catskills' IDEA                          | 09/00               | 06/01             | \$150,000            |

**Total Funding Required:** \$450,000

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## **4.4 Development/Financing**

Development and finance-related projects are described in Section 3.0 relating to Needs and Goals of the Economic Area. See § 3.1.

## **4.5 Education**

Education projects are described in Section 3.0 relating to Needs and Goals of the Economic Area. See § 3.3.

## **4.6 Environmental and Natural Resources**

The following specific environment and natural resource projects are among those identified as necessary within the REAP Zone:

### **4.6.1 Fire Tower Rehabilitation**

#### **General Description:**

Rehabilitate the fire towers of the Catskill Mountains, Shawangunk Ridge and Sullivan County. Make them safe and accessible to the public. Rehabilitate support buildings. Retain caretakers if possible. (Towers to be used to provide scenic vistas and interpretative uses.)

**Relevant Goal:** 3.2.4

#### **Benchmarks:**

|           | <b><u>Description</u></b>                                       | <b><u>Leader</u></b>           | <b><u>Start</u></b> | <b><u>End</u></b> | <b><u>Budget</u></b> |
|-----------|---|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| <b>A.</b> | Inventory fire towers<br>Determine ownership                    | Volunteers<br>Planning Dept.'s | 1/00                | 2/00              | \$10,000             |
| <b>B.</b> | Negotiate ownership and<br>access issues                        | Planning Dept.'s               | 1/00                | 12/00             | \$15,000             |
| <b>C.</b> | Involve local groups<br>Plan renovations<br>Require maintenance | Planning Dept.'s               | 1/00                | 12/00             | \$25,000             |
| <b>D.</b> | Rehabilitations and<br>inspections                              | County DPW's                   | 3/01                | 10/03             | \$250,000            |

**Total Funding Required:** \$300,000

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## **4.6.2 Conservancy Support Program**

### **General Description:**

Upgrade the position of Director/Office Manager position at the Rondout Esopus Land Conservancy to full-time to accomplish the open space conservation objectives of the NYS DEC, NYS Ag. & Markets and the D & H Canal Heritage Corridor Alliance.

**Relevant Goal:** 3.2.4

### **Benchmarks:**

|           | <b><u>Description</u></b>  | <b><u>Leader</u></b> | <b><u>Start</u></b> | <b><u>End</u></b> | <b><u>Budget</u></b> |
|-----------|--|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| <b>A.</b> | Advertise position.<br>Negotiate cooperative<br>agreements with agencies | RELC Board           | 8/99                | 8/99              | \$5,000              |
| <b>B.</b> | Interview applicants.  | RELC Board           | 8/99                | 12/99             | \$0                  |
| <b>C.</b> | Select & hire new Director   | RELC Board           | 12/99               | 12/99             | \$75,000             |

**Total Funding Required:** \$80,000

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## **4.6.3 Tree Planting Program**

### **General Description:**

Acquire funding for local communities to plant trees along streets of downtown areas and downtown parking lots and require maintenance agreements.

**Relevant Goal:** 3.4.2

### **Benchmarks:**

|           | <b><u>Description</u></b>        | <b><u>Leader</u></b> | <b><u>Start</u></b> | <b><u>End</u></b> | <b><u>Budget</u></b> |
|-----------|----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| <b>A.</b> | Approve planting sites           | Planning Boards      | 01/00               | 06/00             | \$5,000              |
| <b>B.</b> | Negotiate maintenance agreements | Municipalities       | 07/00               | 08/00             | \$5,000              |
| <b>C.</b> | Plant and maintain               | DPW's                | 08/00               | 10/00             | \$75,000             |

**Total Funding Required:** \$85,000

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## 4.6.4 Trail Development Program

### General Description:

Rerouting of the Long Path along the VerNooy Kill Corridor to connect the Shawangunk and Catskill Mountains and link two priority projects of the NYS-DEC Open Space Plan, eliminate miles of road hiking and protect the corridor as a habitat for endangered species. Also, complete the Town of Wawarsing's D & H Canal/O & W Rail Trail and develop a linear park along the way, rehabilitating scenic, historic, and farm buildings for such uses as interpretive centers, museums, galleries and picnic lodges. Trail spurs to Rondout Reservoir and Indian Hill are desirable.

**Relevant Goal:** 3.2.4

### Benchmarks:

|    | <u>Description</u>                            | <u>Leader</u>                              | <u>Start</u> | <u>End</u> | <u>Budget</u> |
|----|---|--|--------------|------------|---------------|
| A. | Consult landowners, including NYS             | Trail Conference                           | 9/99         | 12/99      | \$10,000      |
| B. | Secure R.O.W.'s,                              | NYS-DEC<br>Counties<br>Trail organizations | 1/00         | 2/02       | \$750,000     |
| C. | Clear trails and mark, build bridges, signage | Trail Conference                           | 2/02         | 12/02      | \$250,000     |
| D. | Publish trail maps, publicize                 | Trail Conference                           | 1/03         | 1/03       | \$15,000      |

**Total Funding Required:** \$1,025,000

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## 4.6.5 Neversink Learning Center and Museum

### General Description:

Establish a museum facility in the Town of Neversink to convey the history, engineering and bio-diversity of the New York City Watershed.

**Relevant Goal:** 3.2.4

### Benchmarks:

|    | <u>Description</u>                          | <u>Leader</u>                            | <u>Start</u> | <u>End</u> | <u>Budget</u> |
|----|---|--|--------------|------------|---------------|
| A. | Enter into Land Agreement                   | Sullivan County                          | 01/00        | 06/00      | \$5,000       |
| B. | Form Not-for-Profit Corporation             | Town of Neversink<br>Planning Department | 03/00        | 06/00      | \$5,000       |
| C. | Build Museum                                | Sullivan County<br>Museum organization   | 07/00        | 12/00      | \$700,000     |
| D. | Operate Museum<br>(Start-up capitalization) | Sullivan County<br>Museum organization   | 01/01        | On-going   | \$150,000     |

**Total Funding Required:** \$860,000

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## **4.7 Family and Youth**

Family and youth-related projects are described in Section 3.0 relating to Needs and Goals of the Economic Area. See § 3.3.

## **4.8 Health Care**

The following specific health care projects are among those identified as necessary within the REAP Zone:

### **4.8.1 Center for World Medicine**

#### **General Description:**

Creation of a high-national-international profile center adjacent to Community General Hospital of Sullivan County to treat cancer, heart disease, chronic and degenerative disease and other problems which might benefit from integration with or alternatives to orthodox medicine. The Center will offer patients, under the guidance of world master physicians, a regimen of multi-disciplinary diagnosis, clinical services and follow-up care including physical, psychological and energy therapies, particularly those which have helped others when all else has failed.

This will be accomplished by 1) bringing together for teaching purposes at an on-site institute world wide master physicians who have achieved recognition among their peers with demonstrable higher survivability statistics than typical for specific conditions; 2) on-going training of other physicians by these world-masters in relevant protocols, modalities, and treatments so that trained physicians could implement here treatments and practices for which patients currently travel outside the United States or to clinical trial/research facilities; 3) establishment of an ambulatory diagnostic and treatment center at which patients can be evaluated and treated; 4) affiliation agreements with Community General Hospital of Sullivan County for laboratory, radiology and other diagnostic modalities and for integration of conventional treatments such as chemotherapy, radiation, etc. and also for acute in-patient services and 5) establishment of housing facilities envisioned in a spa-like setting for out-of-area patients, visiting institute and center staff and physicians-in-training.

The Center for World Medicine will enable the REAP Zone to attract physicians and patients from across the world; enhance the image of the region among residents, potential investors and visitors and expand health and hospitality services employment opportunities.

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**Relevant Goals:** 3; 3.1.18; 3.1.19; 3.3.5

**Benchmarks:**

|    | <u>Description</u>   | <u>Leader</u> | <u>Start</u>     | <u>End</u> | <u>Budget</u> |
|----|--|---------------|------------------|------------|---------------|
| A. | Develop business plan and test assumptions. Establish new 501(c) 3 entity.     | Hospitals     | 11/99            | 04/00      | \$50,000      |
| B. | Establish affiliations Advisory Board, and recruit staff                       | New entity    | 04/00            | 07/00      | \$125,000     |
| C. | Design, build, equip 30,000 sq. ft. Institute, diagnostic and treatment center | New entity    | 04/00            | 12/00      | \$4,500,000   |
| D. | Design, build, equip   | New entity    | To be determined |            |               |
| E. | Funds for marketing and first three year operational subsidy.                  | New entity    | 11/99            | On-going   | \$2,500,000   |

**Total Funding Required:** \$7,175,000

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## **4.9 Housing**

Housing projects are described in Section 3.0 relating to Needs and Goals of the Economic Area. See § 3.2.

## **4.10 Infrastructure and Planning**

Infrastructure and planning-related projects are described in Section 3.0 relating to Needs and Goals of the Economic Area. See § 3.2.

## **4.11 Job Training**

Job training projects are described in Section 3.0 relating to Needs and Goals of the Economic Area. See § 3.3.

## **4.12 Public Safety**

Public safety projects are described in Section 3.0 relating to Needs and Goals of the Economic Area. See § 3.4.

## **4.13 Quality of Life/Social issues**

Projects relating to social needs and, more generally, to quality of life are described in Section 3.0 pertaining to Needs and Goals of the Economic Area. See § 3.4.

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## **4.14 Small Business Development**

The following specific small business development projects are among those identified as necessary within the REAP Zone:

### **4.14.1 Small Business Development Center & One-Stop Capital Shop**

#### **General Description:**

Establishment of a center where small business can have access to existing financing resources coupled with new revolving loan programs and technological resources to grow and compete with higher populated areas, doing so with minimal government regulation.

**Relevant Goal:** 3.1.6 and 3.1.8

#### **Benchmarks:**

|    | <u>Description</u>                                     | <u>Leader</u>                                   | <u>Start</u> | <u>End</u> | <u>Budget</u> |
|----|--|---|--------------|------------|---------------|
| A. | Inventory existing resources                           | Chambers of Commerce and Partnership and IDA's  | 01/00        | 06/00      | \$10,000      |
| B. | Identify program gaps (both technical & financial)     | Chambers of Commerce and Partnerships and IDA's | 03/00        | 06/00      | \$15,000      |
| C. | Establish place of business, initially staff & promote | Chambers of Commerce and Partnerships and IDA's | 07/00        | 06/01      | \$300,000     |
| D. | Fund local small business development "bank"           | Chambers of Commerce and Partnerships and IDA's | 07/01        | On-going   | \$1,000,000   |

**Total Funding Required:** \$1,325,000

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## **4.15 Transportation**

The following specific transportation projects are among those identified as necessary within the REAP Zone:

### **4.15.1 Public Transportation Modernization Program**

#### **General Description:**

Upgrade public transportation system administration and prepare it for expansion of service through modernization.

**Relevant Goal:** 3.2.7

#### **Benchmarks:**

|           | <b><u>Description</u></b>  | <b><u>Leader</u></b>       | <b><u>Start</u></b> | <b><u>End</u></b> | <b><u>Budget</u></b> |
|-----------|--|----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| <b>A.</b> | Modernize infrastructure, computers, software, maps, dispatching | County Transp. Departments | 09/99               | 12/99             | \$80,000             |
| <b>B.</b> | Train staff  | Transp. Dept.'s            | 12/99               | 03/00             | \$20,000             |
| <b>C.</b> | Modernize bus fleet  | Transp. Dept.'s            | 09/99               | 12/01             | \$400,000            |

**Total Funding Required:** \$500,000

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## **4.15.2 Public Transportation Zone Service**

### **General Description:**

Develop a rural zone system and expand scheduled service to areas not presently served by fixed route systems.

**Relevant Goal:** 3.2.7

### **Benchmarks:**

|           | <b><u>Description</u></b>                    | <b><u>Leader</u></b> | <b><u>Start</u></b> | <b><u>End</u></b> | <b><u>Budget</u></b> |
|-----------|--|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| <b>A.</b> | Identify test zone(s) and estimate ridership | Transp. Dept.'s      | 9/99                | 9/99              | \$5,000              |
| <b>B.</b> | Determine routes and frequency of service    | Transp. Dept.'s      | 9/99                | 10/99             | \$10,000             |
| <b>C.</b> | Acquire equipment and implement service      | Transp. Dept.'s      | 10/99               | 11/99             | \$185,000            |

**Total Funding Required:** \$200,000

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## **4.15.3 Fixed Route Public Transportation System Upgrade**

### **General Description:**

Expand the routing and frequency of service connected with existing fixed-route public transportation systems so as provide reliable, high quality transportation services throughout the most populated portions of the REAP Zone, including the development of feeder services.

**Relevant Goal:** 3.2.7

### **Benchmarks:**

|    | <b><u>Description</u></b>   | <b><u>Leader</u></b> | <b><u>Start</u></b> | <b><u>End</u></b> | <b><u>Budget</u></b> |
|----|---|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| A. | Develop new routings and schedules and negotiate contracts with private carriers          | Transp. Dept.'s      | 9/99                | 12/99             | \$10,000             |
| B. | Acquire equipment and implement service   | Transp. Dept.'s      | 10/99               | 12/99             | \$350,000            |
| C. | Market service, require use in workforce programs and provide incentives for employer use | Transp. Dept.'s      | 12/99               | 06/00             | \$40,000             |

**Total Funding Required:** \$400,000

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## **4.16 Tourism**

Tourism projects are described in Section 3.0 relating to Needs and Goals of the Economic Area. See § 3.1.

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## **5.0 Implementation and Evaluation**

The final step in creating an effective REAP Zone strategy is to put in place an administrative structure that can support the efforts of the Board, maintain records of Zone activities and support the efforts of the Board to expand public awareness of, and involvement in the REAP Zone.

This section outlines the administrative structure of the REAP Zone, defines a job description for the REAP Zone Coordinator, and recommends a process for evaluating the REAP Zone activities.

### **5.1 Administrative Structure**

At its meeting of July 27, 1999, the Board of Directors formally organized itself as a not-for-profit corporation. At its September 16, 1999 meeting, the Board of Directors of the REAP Zone determined that effective administration requires a stand-alone office to process requests for REAP Zone endorsements and maintain organization records. The nature of the REAP Zone endorsement process requires the REAP Zone coordinator to solicit, review and submit endorsement requests from various agencies to the REAP Zone Board. If the REAP Zone administration were housed in another agency, it could lead to concern that the “parent” agency might provide preferential support to endorsement applications from its offices and allied agencies. In the interest in maintaining the fact and appearance of an impartial process, the Board decided to establish its administrative capacity as a separate office.

The REAP Zone would be staffed by an Executive Director’s position as described in section 5.2. The Executive Director will be providing program leadership along with administrative and logistical support to the Board in its efforts to evaluate requests for REAP Zone endorsement by organizations seeking federal funding. The Board recognizes that there may be times when additional technical support is required to review applications or to expedite applications for high-priority projects. In those situations, the Board is prepared to seek paid consulting services from appropriate organizations with the relevant experience (e.g., the Sullivan County Planning Department could assist with grants applications).

In the meantime, it is the intent of the Board of Directors to encourage as many local organizations and/or agencies to submit applications through the Executive Director’s office for REAP Zone endorsement for funding proposals. The Board intends to provide endorsement to all projects that can demonstrate consistency with the REAP Zone

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The REAP Zone Board will evaluate each request for project endorsement separately with respect to its consistency with the REAP Zone Strategic Plan. It will not attempt to prioritize among projects submitted for endorsement. In order to perform the REAP Zone administrative duties efficiently and effectively, the following section provides a job description for the REAP Zone Executive Director.

## **5.2 REAP Zone Executive Director Job Description**

The Sullivan Wawarsing Rural Economic Area Partnership Zone (REAP Zone) seeks an Executive Director to provide programmatic leadership and administrative and logistical support for its 17-person Board of Directors. The Sullivan-Wawarsing REAP Zone was created through the efforts of Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey to provide for special Federal attention to the economic and community development needs of the area. REAP Zones must complete a strategic plan identifying priority needs and projects for their area. Applications for Federal funding consistent with that plan can be endorsed by the REAP Zone Board of Directors and thereby receive extra consideration for federal funding, particularly for applications to the programs of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

### **Responsibilities**

The REAP Zone Coordinator will be responsible for conducting the administrative tasks associated with implementing the REAP Zone. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director will be responsible for:

Providing day-to-day administrative support for the functioning of the REAP Zone Board under the direction of the Board co-chairs. This shall include:

- scheduling meetings of the Board and subcommittees,
- maintaining all board records (minutes, resolutions, correspondence, budgets, financial reports, etc.)
- receiving and processing all requests for projects endorsements under the REAP Zone strategic plan so that the REAP Zone Board is able to provide informed and timely responses to all requests for project endorsements
- providing Board members with timely notices of meetings and other important information required for the conduct of Board business.

Administering and monitoring the REAP Zone Strategic Plan across those agencies participating in the REAP Zone program. The Executive Director will update and

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maintain the strategic plan benchmarks consistent with the USDA benchmark management system.

Serving as an administrative liaison on behalf of the REAP Zone to various constituencies (e.g., individuals and organizations within the REAP Zone, local, state and federal agencies with inquiries regarding REAP Zone activities, government agencies providing funding to support for projects in the REAP Zone). This will include assisting local individuals and organizations to identify project funding sources, and informing them about how to apply for REAP Zone endorsement for projects being submitted for federal funding.

Supporting the REAP Zone Board in their efforts to promote greater public understanding of and involvement in REAP Zone activities. This will include providing logistical and administrative support for Board efforts to publicize and promote REAP Zone activities, answering constituent inquiries regarding the REAP Zone, and, as directed by the REAP Zone Board, preparing materials and making presentations related to the REAP Zone, its purpose, and current activities. On behalf of the Board, the Executive Director may also have to convene and conduct public meetings on the REAP Zone or particular projects related to the REAP Zone.

Other responsibilities may be assigned to the Executive Director as required by the Board of Directors.

## **Qualifications**

Successful candidates for the position of REAP Zone Coordinator will meet the following qualifications:

- at least a bachelor's degree in education, social sciences, business, or a related field (a graduate degree is preferred);
- at least two years of successful experience providing coordination and logistical support to a publicly funded program in community development, human services or a related field;
- strong organizational skills including general office management and financial reporting;
- exceptional writing, public relations, and interpersonal skills.

An equivalent combination of education and experience may be substituted for the precise qualifications outlined above.

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## **Evaluation**

In order to ensure that the Sullivan-Wawarsing REAP Zone both reflects and responds to local needs and goals for economic and community develop, the Plan should be evaluated and updated at least annually. At the direction of the Board of Directors, the REAP Zone Executive Director should prepare an annual report that identifies the number of endorsement applications received, the number awarded endorsement, and the programmatic and geographic areas addressed by these projects, and the extent to which these endorsements were consistent with the needs and goals of the REAP Zone Strategic Plan. This annual report will use the Plan's "recommendations and benchmarks" and the USDA benchmarking system as the criteria for evaluating REAP Zone activities and performance.

In addition to reviewing these results internally, the Board of Directors should make an appropriate number of public presentations of the annual report to secure public comment on the results to date and to identify any emerging community needs that should be incorporated in the Strategic Plan. The results of this public outreach process should be reported back to the Board. As necessary, the Board should revise the Strategic Plan to respond to these emerging needs. This annual evaluation process should be conducted by the REAP Zone Executive Director, securing any additional technical expertise required through the use of paid consulting services from appropriate agencies and/or organizations.

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## **6.0 APPENDICES**

### **6.1 Public Hearing Comments**

Four public hearings were held to obtain comment on the draft needs and goals which are now contained in this Strategic Plan. Comments from each meeting follow:

#### **Public Meeting Held in Liberty on August 25, 1999**

**Location: Cornell Cooperative Extension Service Offices**

**Attendance: Approximately 30 persons**

- The Mountaindale revitalization project has been hurt by high property taxes, could the County and Town coordinate efforts to avoid penalizing property owners?
- Tax relief for entrepreneurs is needed.
- Arts and entertainment is a money-making business.
- The downtown building stock is old and may be a constraint.
- Would the County be able to phase out the hotel room tax?
- Zoning laws are fragmented and change from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, no clear image of the landscape is reflected.
- Transportation and natural resources are critical.
- The Sullivan County Airport name is not place-specific enough to attract attention of travel agents.
- A New York City rail link is long-standing dream.
- Child care is needed.
- Sustained development of cultural resources and assets is needed.
- Catskill Fly Fishing Contest is an example of how to educate youth on broader environmental issues and should be replicated
- Need to reach deep into communities to touch troubled youth (listen and adapt).

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- The area needs less bungalow colonies and more year-round visitation with less boarding up.
- Preserve rural landscape and avoid “stripping” of highways.
- Need to develop a “Woodstock” type arts enclave.
- Need landscape maintenance technical training and appreciation of creative aspects.
- Is legislation to create 1% arts tax from new construction appropriate?
- Are environmental impacts of transportation a concern?
- Need to consider that gaming will impact everything and need to protect what we have and maintain right linkages.
- Parents/teachers sometimes need to provide more directions and fewer choices.
- Need to better understand the resources we have and appreciate, need more hard data on tourism, reasons people come, etc..
- Want fully occupied, revitalized downtowns - something show off and be proud of.
- Need to address absentee landlord problems.

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## **Public Meeting Held at Narrowsburg - August 28, 1999**

**Location: Narrowsburg School**

**Attendance: 7 persons**

- Need to tie together plans into shared vision.
- Cultural development is key to tourism.
- Bus transportation is critical.
- Farmland preservation and 480(a) pose erosion of tax base issues.
- Need to develop mission statement that summarizes basics.
- Need equal representation throughout County (of diverse strengths) - also need to inventory assets/strengths.
- Is "mission statement" necessary? Or should it be ignored?
- Do Tusten and Western end of County get their share?
- Area is "gold mine" of opportunities.
- Need to market the County differently ("don't even need to lie")
- Visitation memories are rich assets.
- Need funds for removing bad buildings.
- Need to obtain and redevelop Main Street buildings.
- Include Narrowsburg river-side park in projects.
- Need viable youth clubs - specialized/arts, etc. and services to communities - FFA/4-H, etc.
- Need to support Rt. 97 Scenic Byway.
- Need to treat customers/visitors better - Sullivan Hospitality.
- Not clean enough for a visitor area - pursue Sullivan First.

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- Narrowsburg needs help with sidewalks.
- Give priority to celebration of diversity and culture.
- Need education and support for code enforcement.
- Preserve old trees in towns.
- Want healthier environment in 2009 (air and water).
- Must promote second homes and arts (in combo).
- Must clean up area.

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## **Public Hearing at Ellenville - August 30, 1999**

**Location: Ellenville School**

**Attendance: Approximately 90 persons**

- Need to do green markets and New York City restaurants.
- Must address hospital in connection with all goals - nearest hospital is 30 miles.
- Need administrative help in writing grants.
- Hospital, library and school are the critical resources (in danger of losing local hospital).
- Don't want to be "tail-end" of zone.
- Job training is the needed foundation.
- Need a community youth center.
- Child care is economic need (affordable, quality).
- Wawarsing has unique needs (hospital, school) and must have grant writer to help pursue.
- Truck farming (e.g., sweet corn and other) is opportunity and needs support.
- Cell service/communications need improving.
- Need bus links to Newburgh airport, etc. to attract tourism.
- Electric purchasing co-op to take advantage of de-regulation.
- Need local public transportation and other transit links - hi-speed rail, etc.
- Route 209 upgrading is critical.
- Ellenville airport is also important.
- Need to continue D & H Canal Trail and expand museum.
- Mountain can be tourism asset.

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- Route 209 is critical corridor.
- Need outreach regarding REAP potential.
- Lots of marketable skills - need to use this asset.
- Seniors need assisted living.
- Woodridge HUD 232 assisted living project in works - need support with HUD staff in New York City.
- Need to integrate literacy, job training and other programs - use REAP to partner and create awareness.
- Family support centers should not be limited to schools.
- Would like to see REAP recognition of State level.
- Need place for teens to burn energy “productively.”
- Drug rehabilitation is regional need.
- Library development vis-a-vis Internet is important.
- Schools and others need peer development aid.
- Use schools to do direct job training/internships (expand school year to accommodate).
- Need multi-cultural arts programs, etc.
- Arts and community interaction important and signage, etc. is corollary.
- Heritage Tourism is an economic opportunity.
- Community centers need to share the arts and cultural and other assets.
- Community (public) standardized signage is important.
- Multiple usage of signs can help.

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- NASCAR = opportunity.
- Want a NEW YORK TIMES article stating that we are the best.
- Lack of natural disasters is asset.
- Natural environment is an asset but despoiled by past activity - want better image.
- Need funding support for the arts.
- Loss of tree lines equals loss of character/quality.
- Want local headline that education goods and kids coming back.
- Science museum in Ellenville equals opportunity (build on library strengths).
- Need 3-stage life-care at hospital site - nursing, etc. and other senior living
- Main Street charm = equals valuable asset (need to revitalize and build).
- Need to publicize the endorsement process with continuous outreach, etc.
- Thousands of Veterans with critical needs.
- Ulster will work well with Sullivan and need to build on this.
- Needs grants information - sharing resource, clearinghouse, etc.
- Tourism is future resource as well as past.

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## **Public Meeting at Rock Hill - September 2, 1999**

**Location: Frontier Insurance Headquarters**

**Attendance: Approximately 30 persons**

- Could we host major athletic events?
- Recreation (family) better than gaming as tourism strategy.
- Theme Park development (e.g., Disney)?
- Need more public knowledge of development projects - monitor.
- Emerald Green is a good site for golf course, etc.
- Route 17 (I-86) widening to 3-lanes would address congestion problems and provide better access - more "visitor-friendly"
- Need to recognize tradeoffs between growth and farmland preservation.
- Have to address local transportation links, too.
- Child care is major issue - business and child development.
- School upgrades need facilitation.
- Need to accelerate I-86.
- There are problems with the NY Department of Transportation sign administration with respect to farms - wrong priorities.
- N.I.M.B.Y. attitudes are obstacle to economic development.
- Need to educate public regarding economic development and need.
- Zoning presents various obstacles to economic development.
- Attitude is an obstacle to attracting new business?
- Large businesses are good but impacts are still small and need to address needs of hamlets, etc..

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- Seasonal businesses a problem - boarding up, etc.
- Develop niche businesses (e.g., “booktown,” etc.) and specialty businesses which go along with big stores.
- Need business training - for small businesses to develop markets and manage.
- Need the big box stores, also, to meet local needs and keep shoppers here?
- Need to focus on higher-paying jobs.
- Four-season tourism strategy essential.
- County focused on consolidation of services for 2009 to more effectively deliver services.
- Want to see Woodstock with permanent improvements, etc.
- Want to attract quality tourists, etc.
- Need permanent arts center.
- Need more lodging, too.
- Lots of positives such as Sullivan First, Partnership, etc.
- Growth from within is the critical foundation.
- Proximity to New York City is an asset.
- Need to package our superior natural environment and continue to address, enhance and promote image.
- Ag education and tourism critical and must market to tourists (e.g., “Down on Farm” and “Ag Extravaganza.”)
- 2009 is Sullivan's 200th Anniversary and an opportunity
- Need to address REAP Plan distribution.

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## **6.2 Recommended Guidelines for Project Endorsement**

The USDA, as a means of ensuring projects within the REAP Zone did not secure funding priority on the basis of being in a REAP Zone absent consistency with the strategic planning for the Zone, required applicants to obtain REAP Board of Directors endorsement as a prerequisite for claiming of REAP benefits. This, in turn, demanded the Board put in place a process to review projects and ascertain whether or not they were deserving of REAP support. An interim procedure was adopted for this purpose in July, 1999 and subsequently amended in conjunction with the preparation of this Strategic Plan. The following criteria, accordingly, will be used by the Board of Directors to make such judgments regarding future endorsements:

- 6.2.1 A project should make a significant tangible contribution to the health, knowledge or wealth of the affected community or the REAP Zone as a whole. Projects of such scope as to exceed the boundaries of the REAP Zone should provide substantial benefits within it.
- 6.2.2 A project should, to maximum extent possible, reflect coordination among various REAP partners and other entities of similar interests operating within the Zone. Where applications are proposed for funding during a single round from the same limited source of monies, the Board of Directors may choose to endorse multiple projects provided all bear a tangible relationship to the needs and goals of the REAP Zone as expressed in this Strategic Plan. The Committee, in those instances, shall otherwise be neutral with respect to competing projects and not give priority to one project over another.
- 6.2.3 A project should significantly contribute, on either a short-term or long-term basis, to the economic well-being of the REAP Zone as measured by personal income gains, higher quality of services, lowered cost of living or greater economic opportunity across the population of the Zone.
- 6.2.4 A project should make a material contribution to the quality of life within the Zone as measured by the degree to which it will conform with the goals of the REAP Strategic Plan and other adopted strategies of governmental entities within the Zone. Projects should not conflict with such objectives.
- 6.2.5 A project should also be compatible with the objectives of the State Environmental Quality Review Act. Though full environmental assessment, if required, need not take place prior to making a project endorsement there should be no obviously significant negative environmental impacts, connected with any project, that cannot be mitigated.

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- 6.2.6 A project should not assist a public entity in competing with those private sector initiatives already underway that would produce substantially the same benefits.
- 6.2.7 A project should reflect a high degree of community input, professional presentation and practicality. A project must have credibility in terms of the ability of the proponents to carry it forward if funded or otherwise assisted through REAP. The project applicant must specifically demonstrate ability to effectively administer any funds received.

The REAP Board of Directors will act promptly on all requests for endorsements, scheduling special meetings as may be necessary or using a project review committee to consist of the officers of the Board and the chairperson(s) of affected Task Forces created by the Board to assist with planning and project review.