

## Policy Area IV Community Development and Housing

### Goal:

*Create downtown business centers that meet consumer needs, enable small business retention and attraction and also preserve the County's rural image, quality of life and sense of community .*



### VILLAGE AND HAMLET REVITALIZATION

Existing village and hamlet neighborhoods should be promoted as key components of the built environment that greatly contribute to the vitality of the local economy and community life.

Suburban development patterns, which were the dominant development trend of the second half of the twentieth century, can also be found throughout Sullivan County. Like many communities, during its post-hotel and industry period, Sullivan County experienced rapid expansion at the edges of its population centers. Central neighborhoods within towns and villages were emptied of wealth and workers in favor of newer, low density, dispersed developments on their fringes. This pattern of development has had a dramatic effect on the social and economic vitality of existing communities, as well as a significant impact on the quality of community life.

If this type of land use continues to dominate development practices in the county, the downsides and problems associated with low-density development and sprawl will become more apparent.

The ***Sullivan 2020 Steering Committee*** and focus groups indicated a strong desire by county residents for a return to the traditional neighborhood. As discussed in the Health & Human Services, Housing and Transportation policy areas, a denser pattern of development provides enhanced living options for our aging population, including the opportunity to use public transit for health care visits and other services. Other benefits of developing in existing community centers include creating a stronger tax base, increasing the efficiency of already developed land and infrastructure, reducing development pressure in the fringe areas, and allowing for preservation of farmland and open space.

Despite the welcoming, convenient and lower-cost business environment that can be provided by rural hamlet and village cores, there remain numerous challenges to attracting investment. They include: a lack of access to business support and assistance; less federal and state financial support; inadequate infrastructure such as roads, water, sewer, high-speed internet and cable; difficulty in attracting and retaining customers due to lower visibility and inadequate pedestrian access and parking; confusing development regulations as a result of each town and village having its own rules, codes, fees and officials; competition from big businesses and “superstores” that carry lower priced goods; degradation of community character, reduction in natural beauty and loss of historic integrity; and regional population loss, especially the loss of young adults.

The creation of a strong community is multifaceted. Strategies to achieve the goal identified above traverse multiple policy areas. This section of the toolbox will provide strategies particular to: focusing growth in and reinforcing the special character of each hamlet (and village) center, providing more flexibility as to use in and near the centers, improving pedestrian access and parking, upgrading public spaces, improved streetscape design and preservation of historic qualities.

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**STRATEGY 4.18**

Develop a hamlet/village master plan.

**Timeframe**

SHORT TERM  
INTERMEDIATE  
LONG TERM

Steps	Leadership Role (C/M/P)	Status (A/P/C)
Establish a small committee consisting of residents, business owners, and other community stakeholders.	C/M/P	
Provide technical assistance to committee in developing the plan from both county and community development professionals.	C/P	
Hold a series of public workshops and visioning sessions, inviting residents, business owners, municipal officials, and other interested stakeholders to participate.	C/P	
Determine geographic boundaries and define the area to be improved and identify opportunities and constraints.	M/C/P	
Plan should include appropriate mix of land uses, design characteristics, transportation issues, economic development activities, natural resource conservation, recreation and civic uses	P/C	
County/Community Development Professional to assist with specific zoning code recommendations.	C	
Inventory sites and identify areas appropriate for residential and commercial development.	M/C	
Provide suggestions for pedestrian circulation, trails, traffic calming, automobiles and public transportation.	C/P	
Develop an implementation plan to include public and private sector activities, identify methods of funding neighborhood improvements, and prioritize actions.	M/C/P	

Leadership Role: C – County M – Municipality P – Partners  
Status: A – Active P – Pending C – Complete

Steps	Leadership Role (C/M/P)	Status (A/P/C)
Submit completed plan to local board for adoption as an addendum or amendment to the local comprehensive plan, and to the County for inclusion within the Sullivan 2020 strategic plan	M/C	A

## Resources

### Documents

- ◆ Fact Sheet 1—Hamlet Revitalization Master Plans

### Organizations and Programs

- ◆ **National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street Center** [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org)  
The Main Street Center seeks to empower people, organizations and communities to achieve ongoing downtown and neighborhood district revitalization based upon the principles of self-determination, resource conservation and incremental transformation.
- ◆ **NYS Department of State the Quality Communities Initiative** [www.qualitycommunities.org](http://www.qualitycommunities.org)  
This initiative demonstrates New York State’s commitment to working with local government leaders and community organizations to find smart, innovative solutions to strengthen our economy, environment, and improve the quality of the place we call home.
- ◆ **NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal** - [www.dhcr.state.ny.us](http://www.dhcr.state.ny.us)  
The DHCR is responsible for the supervision, maintenance and development of affordable low- and moderate-income housing in New York State.
- ◆ **RTPI Community Planning Project** - [www.communityplanning.net](http://www.communityplanning.net)  
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- ◆ **Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s** - [www.cdc.gov/healthypaces/](http://www.cdc.gov/healthypaces/)  
The CDC’s program, “*Designing & Building Healthy Places*”, seeks to address quality of life as interactions between people and their environments, natural as well as human made, continues to emerge as a major issue concerning public health.
- ◆ **American Planning Association (APA)** - [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org)  
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- ◆ **Project for Public Spaces** - [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)  
A nonprofit organization dedicated to creating and sustaining public places that build communities. They provide technical assistance, education and research through programs in parks, plazas and central squares; buildings and civic architecture; transportation; and public markets.

### Funding Sources

- ◆ **Neighborhood Funders Group** - [www.nfg.org](http://www.nfg.org)
- ◆ **NeighborWorks** - [www.nw.org](http://www.nw.org)
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**STRATEGY 4.19**

Continue development of the Sullivan County Division of Planning & Community Development's "Main Street Center" .

**Timeframe**

SHORT TERM  
INTERMEDIATE  
LONG TERM

Steps	Leadership Role (C/M/P)	Status (A/P/C)
Provide program guidance, technical assistance, training, opportunities for networking, library resources and advocacy and leadership services to communities.	C/P	
Continue existing loan/grant programs, providing low interest loans/financial assistance to businesses and property owners seeking to improve visual appearance	C/P	
Utilize the Sullivan County Partnership for Economic Development's Marketing Main Street and Entrepreneurial Development programs for hands-on assistance and funding for businesses	P/C	
Assist communities in creating an assessment of the problems and opportunities of the core areas with a focus on buildings, streetscapes, landscaping and the role it wants to play in the local economy	M/C/P	
Work with local BID's, CDC's and LDC's to create a sense of place and a network with other hamlets and villages.	M/C/P	
Work with local BID's, CDC's and LDC's to empower them to create local façade improvement plans to assist business and property owners in updating the appearance and image of commercial buildings.	M/C/P	
Assist communities with incorporating niche marketing strategies for hamlet and village core areas that were identified in Economic Development section policy area 5.(check)	P/C	
Work with municipalities to identify and map appropriate areas for infill development. (Assist with zoning code recommendations, if necessary.)	M/C/P	

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### Other

- ◆ Sullivan County Division of Planning Library Resource Center.

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**STRATEGY 4.20**

Improve the image and appearance of the hamlets and villages by encouraging the adoption of design guidelines and/or development standards.

**Timeframe**

SHORT TERM  
INTERMEDIATE  
LONG TERM

Steps	Leadership Role (C/M/P)	Status (A/P/C)
Encourage municipalities to develop design guidelines or development standards to steer how existing streets, buildings and public spaces can be enhanced through more attractive and historically sensitive facades, signage, landscaping, lighting and pedestrian enhancements, reinforcing its “sense of place.”	M/C	
Encourage municipalities to develop design guidelines or development standards to steer development of new streets, buildings and public spaces toward the hamlet or village center.	M/C	
Explore the possibility of providing county design review for future development proposals.	C/M	
Coordinate local design plans with Department of Transportation (DOT) capital project plans.	M/C	



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## Resources

### Documents

- ◆ “Historic Building Facades: The Manual for Maintenance and Rehabilitation”
- ◆ “Reinventing the Village: Planning, Zoning and Design Guidelines.” PAS Report #689
- ◆ “Sign Regulation for Small and Midsize Communities.” PAS Report #698
- ◆ “Aesthetics, Community Character, and the Law.” PAS Report #638

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### STRATEGY 4.21

Review and update local ordinances and regulations.

**Timeframe**

SHORT TERM  
INTERMEDIATE  
LONG TERM

Steps	Leadership Role (C/M/P)	Status (A/P/C)
Review, update or establish sign regulations and design standards that are appropriate to each municipal district.	M/C	
Establish cohesive signage and amenities to link vehicular and pedestrian traffic	M/C	
Encourage the use of landscape ordinances to realize the importance of trees and landscaping	M/C	
Provide and identify additional sources of funding for buffering and screening activities for business and building owners to ensure landscaping installation and parking lot improvements	C/M	
Encourage parking lot improvements, such as resurfacing, re-stripping, and installing landscape islands at several commercial locations throughout hamlets and villages.	M/C	
Provide incentives for redevelopment and consolidation.	M/C	



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## Resources

### Documents

- ◆ “Design Review.” PAS Report #666
- ◆ “Incentive Zoning.” PAS Report #635
- ◆ “Neighborhood Zoning: Practices and Prospects.” PAS Report #805
- ◆ “Linking Plans and Regulations.” PAS Report #752
- ◆ “Parking Lot Landscaping.” PAS Report 780

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**STRATEGY 4.22**

Create walkable communities.

**Timeframe**

SHORT TERM  
INTERMEDIATE  
LONG TERM

Steps	Leadership Role (C/M/P)	Status (A/P/C)
Inventory and map existing pedestrian access throughout the County.	C/M	
Evaluate sidewalk conditions and define safety problems. Prioritize issues and recommend appropriate techniques to solve them.	M/C/P	
Promote walkable communities by installing and repairing sidewalks in new and existing developments and provide amenities, such as bus shelters, street trees and furniture to make the pedestrian walkways more accessible, attractive and safe.	M/C	
Assist in identifying funding sources for implementation of the above.	C/P	
Develop or identify model development design standards that address how to maintain a distinct edge between the hamlet/village areas and rural countryside.	C/P	



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## Resources

### Documents

- ◆ “Planning for Street Connectivity: Getting from Here to There.” PAS Report #621

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**STRATEGY 4.23**

Extend principles of hamlet/village revitalization to surrounding corridors and community gateways.

**Timeframe**

SHORT TERM  
INTERMEDIATE  
LONG TERM

Steps	Leadership Role (C/M/P)	Status (A/P/C)
Utilize community development professionals and county technical assistance to take beautification efforts beyond single element projects, applying similar visioning techniques and design standards to corridors and community gateways.		
Work with Sullivan County Division of Planning & Community Development via the Beautification Initiative Grant (BIG) and Sullivan Renaissance as potential sources of funding for corridor beautification efforts.		
Create a partnership between County, Sullivan Renaissance and other organizations to work with local Code Enforcement Officers for training, technical assistance and community outreach.		



Leadership Role: C – County M – Municipality P – Partners  
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## Resources

### Documents

- ◆ “Preserving Rural Character.” PAS Report #690

### Organizations and Programs

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