



Quality Communities

Spring 2006
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George E. Pataki
Governor

THE QUALITY COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE demonstrates New York State's commitment to working with local government leaders to find smart, innovative solutions to strengthen our economy, improve the quality of our natural environment and enhance the livability of the place we call "home."

Regional Roundtables Suggest QC Directions for the Future

Lieutenant Governor Mary Donohue hosted three Quality Communities Regional Roundtables – in the Adirondacks, the Hudson Valley, and Western New York – designed to continue the dialogue between State and local governments and to solicit the views of local experts for improving partnerships and strategies.

Panelists presented numerous success stories in several subject areas, each giving the QC Interagency Working Group valuable insight into regional quality-of-life issues. Local panelists were joined by members of the Working Group, who provided updates on how State programs continue to advance the principles and recommendations of Quality Communities. At the conclusion of the presentations, the floor was opened for more ideas and suggestions. All of these comments are now being factored into the development of the QC Five-Year Report.

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Hudson Valley Roundtable: l to r, Christine Sculti, NYS Empire State Development, Edward Diana, Orange County Executive, Lieutenant Governor Mary Donohue, Tom Griffen, Commissioner, NYS Office of Real Property Services, Angelo Esposito, NY Power Authority.

Call for Nominations Governor's Awards for Excellence

Governor George E. Pataki takes pride in recognizing municipalities, neighborhoods, organizations and citizens who have risen to the challenge and embraced the goals and principles of Quality Communities with these Awards for Excellence.

Honoring communities and saluting the success of community leaders not only provides the State with the opportunity to acknowledge those who have improved the quality of life in New York State... but it also raises the bar for quality standards and points to model communities and practices for others to emulate.

If your community is proud of a project you've undertaken applying principles of Quality Communities, please nominate it for recognition. Eligible projects may include outstanding models of planning/visioning, public participation and consen-

sus building as well as innovations in land use planning and zoning techniques.

Because this year's QC theme is Intermunicipal Cooperation (including collaborative efforts undertaken between governments, school districts, as well as community organizations), at least one of the Awards will be given to one or more communities that exhibit successful, innovative partnerships.

Nominating form and additional information is available at www.qualitycommunities.org. All that is required is a brief description of your project, demonstrating how you applied QC Principles, and a photo or other illustration of the project, plan or the people leading the effort. Nominations should be sent to NYS Department of State, 41 State Street, Suite 900, Albany, New York 12231 by July 31, 2006.

Live Interactive Satellite Conference this Fall

In recognition of this year's Quality Communities theme of Intermunicipal Cooperation, a video teleconference is currently being developed by members of the QC Interagency Working Group. The teleconference will be broadcast at locations throughout the State. It will review strategies of successful intergovernmental collaboration, feature

working partnerships in several subject areas, and provide information on New York's Shared Municipal Services Incentive Program.

Please visit the Quality Communities Clearinghouse website (www.qualitycommunities.org) for updates on this event.

Quality Communities

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NYS Department of State

Christopher L. Jacobs
Secretary of State

Member agencies of the Quality Communities Interagency Working Group are dedicated to assisting local governments in implementing effective land development, preservation and rehabilitation strategies that promote both economic vitality and environmental protection.

Quality Communities Working Group

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NYS Department of Agriculture
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A "QC" Region to Watch: Genesee/Finger Lakes Region Knows the Value of Cooperation

Chief elected officials, local legislators, department heads, and key community leaders who make up the Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council (G/FLRPC) had the chance to learn more about Quality Communities and the new Shared Municipal Services Incentive Program at the Council's quarterly meeting held in Rochester on March 9. Peter Manning, the Quality Communities Program Manager from the Division of Local Government at NYS Department of State described the origins of the Quality Communities program, the Interagency Working Group that seeks to further the concept of Quality Communities, and progress that has been made in the years since the program began. While members of the Council enjoyed a lively Q&A about "QC," Peter also was inspired by what he learned about G/FLRPC and its many recent successes.

Established in 1977, today this Regional Planning Council includes the counties of Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Yates and Wyoming. Council-sponsored local government training workshops, widely read newsletters and publications (available at www.gflrpc.org),

and scores of regional projects have made G/FLRPC a leader statewide.

Earlier this year, the Council's abilities were recognized on a National level. The region was one of only 13 chosen for a three-year \$15 million grant from the United States Department of Labor. This funding is provided through the Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Initiative to "advance ... and catalyze the creation of high-skill and high-wage opportunities in the context of regional economies." Along with funding, the award brings technical assistance and access to a cadre of experts to the region.

As a member of the Finger Lakes Partnership, G/FLRPC will work with a broad group of stakeholders to prepare their region to compete in the "new" knowledge-based global economy. Earlier this year, Congressman Thomas M. Reynolds presented the Council's Executive Director, David Zorn, with a check for \$1.1 million for a regional aerial imagery system that will be used by law enforcement and emergency management personnel, planning officials and other users to deliver a variety of important benefits to many of the communities G/FLRPC serves.

2006-07 Quality Communities Grants

A Request for Applications for this year's Quality Communities Grants is expected to be announced as we go to press. The Lieutenant Governor will send announcement letters to the chief elected officials of all municipalities, and

the announcement will be posted on the Quality Communities Clearinghouse website www.qualitycommunities.org. Award announcements for the 2005-06 funding round also are expected soon.



Peter Manning, a Land Use Training Specialist in the Department of State's Division of Local Government Services has been named Quality Communities Program Manager. Since September, Peter has helped coordinate Regional Roundtables and a variety of efforts with State agencies to encourage new intergovernmental partnerships. He holds a Master of Landscape Architecture from Cornell University and was presented the Distinguished Graduate Research Award in 1995 by the American Society of Landscape Architects. Prior to joining the Department of State, Peter was a planner in the Delaware County Department of Planning and Economic Development in Delhi, NY. At DOS since 2000, he has delivered training programs and technical assistance to several thousand local officials. You can reach Peter at pmanning@dos.state.ny.us or 518-473-3355.

Community Spotlight

The City of Albany's Neighborhood Partnerships

Neighborhoods in the State's capital are undergoing a transformation to improve walkability, strengthen "town-gown" relationships, and encourage home ownership. Financed with a \$200,000 grant from the Quality Communities Pilot Program, the Midtown Colleges and University Study addresses the future needs of seven institutions of higher learning and the adjacent neighborhoods. The seven institutions (College of St. Rose, SUNY Albany, the Albany College of Pharmacy, Albany College of Law, Albany Medical College, Albany Medical Center and Sage Colleges) account for almost 11,000 students in these neighborhoods, a situation presenting several opportunities for investment and redevelopment.

Upon announcement of QC funding, the City retained a consultant experienced in town-gown planning processes. A series of meetings and focus groups involving the students produced several findings, which were then presented at well-attended public meetings and developed into objectives. These were further refined through input from Albany's numerous neighborhood associations. The planning process cultivated partnerships and created a dialogue among stakeholders for putting plans into action. These partnerships attracted the attention of Citizen's Bank and their pledge of \$13 million toward a Homeownership Assistance Program. Complementing the bank's support, the colleges and universities have pledged \$300,000 in the form

of mortgage assistance to their employees who purchase homes in the targeted areas. In less than a year, the program has assisted 24 new homeowners moving into the neighborhoods.

The Homeownership Assistance Program is a feature of the city's Education Zone, a strategy to pursue opportunities



A town-gown neighborhood on Madison Avenue

for building relationships between the schools, the students, and city residents. Other components include master planning for individual neighborhoods, improving code enforcement, and promoting commercial and retail redevelopment. These initiatives support the sizeable investments being made by the colleges to expand their institutions.

The success of these efforts depends on collaboration. As stated by R. Mark Sullivan, President of the College of Saint Rose "... the attraction of

our campuses rests on the fact that we co-exist with our residential and commercial neighbors... and the key to such development is a willingness on the part of the institutions to work with one another as well as with our neighborhood residents."

To learn more about this project please contact the Albany Department of Planning and Development at (518) 434-2532 ext 16 or visit the following web address: <http://www.albanyny.org/business/econdev/midtown.asp>.

Multi-Use Trails Activates Communities

New Yorkers need to be more active! In 2000, 56% of New York's adults were found to be overweight or obese. Obesity adds more than \$6 billion annually to health care costs in New York State — costs that directly affect what governments spend for Medicaid and what everyone pays in taxes.

Healthy Trails, Healthy People—a program of the statewide nonprofit Parks & Trails New York—helps New Yorkers develop more active communities and an enhanced quality of life through the creation of multi-use trails. The program is partially funded by a grant from the Healthy Heart Program of the New York State Department of Health.

Close to home, multi-use trails make it easier to incorporate physical activity into normal daily activities by providing

safe, off-road places to walk or bike to parks, schools, libraries, shops, and neighborhoods. Trails also help protect valuable open space, preserve natural and historic resources, increase tourism and recreation-related business activity, and foster public-private partnerships, community investment, and civic pride.

Healthy Trails, Healthy People is helping New Yorkers get the activity they need by promoting the use of existing trails and providing local governments and nonprofit organizations with technical and organizational assistance.

As part of the program, Parks & Trails New York sends out a free bi-monthly electronic newsletter with up-to-date information on ways to improve parks and



Harlem Valley Rail Trail

trails in communities from every corner of the state. To subscribe, visit www.ptny.org/e-news.

A free publication, *Getting Started: A Guide to Planning Trails in New York State* is also available from Parks & Trails New York by visiting the website www.ptny.org.

To apply for assistance with a trail project, contact Parks & Trails New York at ptny@ptny.org or 518-434-1583.

Honoring Dr. Terry Martin Cattaraugus Chief Planner and QC Advocate

His name has appeared frequently in news articles as well as scholarly papers about the Quality Communities Initiative in the State of New York. Terry Martin, Ph.D., a 19-year veteran in County Planning for Cattaraugus County, leaves a formidable legacy which includes a series of guidebooks titled, "Smart Development for Quality Communities." Collaborating with nationally-known conservation planner Randall Arendt, Dr. Martin's first volumes were in such high demand – from communities outside Cattaraugus – that the Department of State distributed the "Design Guidebook for Towns and Villages" to every municipality in New York. (Available on line at http://www.cattco.org/planning/guide_books.asp)

According to Dr. Martin, the guidebooks grew out of a desire by county leaders to create living documents for

future growth. The County Legislature and Planning Board adopted the vision and design guides as the initial components of their "Comprehensive Plan for the 21st Century."

Thanks to Dr. Martin's avid pursuit and successful application of the QC Principles in countywide planning, Cattaraugus County made history in 2003, receiving the very first *Governor's Quality Communities Award for Excellence*. Two years later, the seven volume series was honored by the American Planning Association for Outstanding Economic Development/Comprehensive Planning.

In a message read at his retirement ceremony, Lt. Governor Mary Donohue called Dr. Martin "an integral voice in spreading to local communities our message concerning the importance of developing visions... Your commitment to public service extends beyond the bor-



Planning Board Chair William Sprague (right) presents Dr. Terry Martin with a plaque honoring his 19 years of dedicated service "and for the Creation of the Award Winning *Smart Development for Quality Communities* Initiative for Cattaraugus County."

ders of Cattaraugus County and will richly enhance the quality of life for future generations of New Yorkers."

Roundtables... *Continued from Page 1*

Hudson Valley

The Hudson Valley Roundtable took place in Hyde Park at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum. The Ramapo River Watershed Council reported on its successful intermunicipal (and interstate) watershed protection efforts, while the Metropolitan Conservation Alliance presented an ecosystem-based approach to managing growth. Participants also learned about how the Dia Center for the Arts in Beacon is creating a sense of civic pride and having a rejuvenating effect on the city. Poughkeepsie-based Scenic Hudson also has been a key player in the valley's downtowns, as illustrated through their involvement with a transit-oriented, waterfront redevelopment in Yonkers.

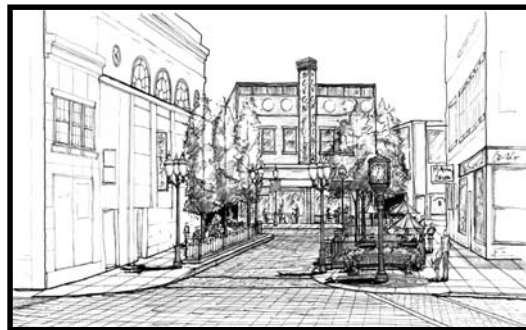
North Country

The Adirondack Regional Roundtable was held in the City of Plattsburgh. Plattsburgh and the neighboring Village of Rouses Point are among the 12 Pilot Communities which have received QC funding. Plattsburgh has developed and is implementing the Seven-Points Downtown Revitalization Project, which includes redesigned intersections, a city market space, and several streetscape improvements. In Rouses Point, a participatory community planning process helped galvanize a vision and focus the community on marketing their sense of place. The day was balanced with a mix

of panelists who covered fiber optic technology and rural businesses development, brownfield redevelopment, purchase of development rights, agri-tourism, and the multi-state Northern Forest initiative.

Western New York

The third Roundtable took place at the Chautauqua Institution. The day also featured land use training workshops organized by the Southern Tier West Regional Planning & Development Board. The City of Jamestown highlighted the day's Downtown Revitalization Panel. Jamestown is a QC Pilot Community that has made great strides in improving its quality of life through partnerships. Among those partners, the City's Economic Development Office, the Gebbie Foundation, and the Downtown Development Corporation highlighted many successes, including a renovated ice arena, the historic Erie Railway Station, and the Lucy-Desi Museum. Other panelists spoke about Intermunicipal Cooperation, Agriculture, and Tourism. Of particular note is how Western New York is becoming widely known as a center for horseback riding, which is boosting area businesses and complementing the popular winter activities.



Seven-Points Downtown Project

The Roundtables were enthusiastically received, and the Working Group was very impressed at the diversity of organizations bringing about positive change in so many communities.

Amherst Clarence Youth Planning Project Receives National Recognition

For its innovative approach to building awareness of, and participation in, planning among today's youth, the Amherst and Clarence Youth Planning Project received the American Planning Association (APA) 2006 Outstanding Planning Award for Public Education. Developed by planners and educators as part of the New York State Quality Communities Initiative, the project demonstrates how planning and community development can be seamlessly incorporated into existing curricula at all grade levels. The project was also recognized in 2004 by receiving the *Governor's Quality Communities Award for Excellence*.

Involving planners and teachers from several disciplines and grade levels in the creation of lessons, the project was designed to teach students about planning and community development. Planners from the Towns of Amherst and Clarence, teachers from the Amherst, Clarence, Sweet Home, and Williamsville Central School Districts, and educators from the State University of New York College at Buffalo, all successfully collaborated in the project.

With the towns about to embark on the update of their comprehensive plans, officials wanted to encourage young people to participate in the planning process. By linking the classroom component to the ongoing planning effort, students and

The intricacies of planning, the need to balance multiple community goals, and the application of technology were brought to life for students through various activities and instruction.

teachers were presented with exciting opportunities to apply classroom knowledge to real-life situations where they live.



At the 2004 Awards, l to r: Lieutenant Governor Mary Donohue, Joelle Guy, Town of Amherst, Lari Korniczky, Sweet Home Middle School, Dan Howard, Town of Amherst.

Funded for three years, the project provided the towns with the tools necessary to develop and maintain interactive and Web-based mapping. Teachers received GIS training and the towns developed online GIS maps and applications. Students learned to navigate the GIS system, gaining a better understanding of the geography of the two communities.

The Youth Planning Project will be recognized at APA's National Planning Conference during a luncheon ceremony April 25, 2006 in San Antonio, Texas. Accomplishments of the awardees will be highlighted in the March issue of Planning magazine and on the APA website, www.planning.org. The lesson plans, along with other planning information and the online map application, continue to be maintained on the project website for use by educators and students. This website can be accessed at www.amherst.ny.us, keyword "youthplan."

New Shared Municipal Services Incentive Program (SMSI)

The intermunicipal provision of local services can bring many benefits, including efficiencies of cost. In 2005, the State budget provided \$2.55 million for shared services assistance payments to successful applications of two or more municipalities including counties, cities, towns, villages or school districts. The SMSI Program, administered by the Division of Local Government at the Department of State, received 266 applications in its first year.

At press time, the budget for 2006-07 has not been finalized. Information on this year's funding round and news of the 2006-07 SMSI funding will be posted on the Department of State's website www.dos.state.ny.us.

Quality Land Use and Transportation Choices for our Communities Conference

June 13, 2006
Best Western Regency
Binghamton, NY



See www.qualitycommunitites.org for more information

New York State Department of State
Office of Local Government and Community Services
41 State Street
Albany NY 12231-0001

Governor Pataki Nominates Christopher L. Jacobs to be Secretary of State

On April 19, 2006, Governor George E. Pataki nominated Christopher L. Jacobs of Buffalo to serve as New York State Secretary of State. Mr. Jacobs has begun serving as Acting Secretary of State pending Senate confirmation.

“Christopher Jacobs has a distinguished career in public service and has demonstrated outstanding leadership that makes him a great choice to serve as Secretary of State,” Governor Pataki said. “With his vast experience in government, community affairs, and real estate, he is highly qualified to oversee the Department of State, which handles many diverse issues that affect the daily lives of New Yorkers.”

Mr. Jacobs is the owner of Avalon Development, LLC, a real estate development firm active in the revitalization of Buffalo. He served as deputy commissioner of the Erie County Office of Planning and Economic Development from January 2000 to May of 2002.

“As Acting Secretary of State I’m looking forward to working with Lt. Governor Donohue and the Quality Communities Group to generate sustainable, locally-driven, economic development projects,” said Mr. Jacobs.

Mr. Jacobs has been active in improving educational opportunities for low-income children in Buffalo. He was elected to the Buffalo Board of Education in 2004, and is the co-founder of the

Buffalo Inner City Scholarship Opportunity Network (B.I.S.O.N), a private scholarship philanthropy for low-income children in Buffalo.

He received the 2002 Leadership

Award from the Buffalo Urban League, the Business First 40-under-40 award, the Leadership Buffalo Values Award and other honors.

A native of Buffalo, he received a bachelor’s degree from Boston College, a master’s in business administration from American University in Washington, D.C., and a law degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo. He resides in Buffalo with his wife and stepson.



“... I’m looking forward to working with Lt. Governor Donohue and the Quality Communities Group to generate sustainable, locally-driven, economic development projects.”

Visit the Quality Communities Clearinghouse Website
www.qualitycommunities.org

To make it easier for all communities to take advantage of State programs and assistance, the 25 members of the Quality Communities Interagency Working Group collaborated with the Department of State to create a Quality Communities Clearinghouse Website.

Organized by QC Principles, the Clearinghouse is a quick and easy-to-use directory of grant information, technical assistance, success stories, data, news and other tools designed to assist local governments, community organizations and citizens in their efforts to build Quality Communities.