

APPENDIX VII

State Coastal Policies and Review of Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs

As part of this Phase I Feasibility Study, an extensive review of applicable local government Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs (LWRP's) was conducted along with a review of the State's adopted Coastal Policies.

Under New York State's Coastal Management Program, enacted in 1982, communities along the Hudson River, as well as around the Great Lakes, New York City, on Long Island and those bordering other specified inland water bodies, are eligible for grants from the Department of State's Division of Coastal Resources for the development of these program plans. One New York State requirement for these plans involves the inclusion of State adopted coastal policies addressing "New York's vision for its coast", covering ten (10) major policy areas, including public access and recreation.

The creation of public swimming sites on the Hudson River is consistent and supportive of the State's coastal access and recreation policies, which include:

Public Access:

- Protect, maintain and increase the level and types of access to public water-related recreation resources and facilities (#19)
- Access to the publicly owned foreshore and to lands immediately adjacent to the foreshore or the water's edge that are publicly owned shall be provided and it shall be provided in a manner compatible with adjoining uses (#20)

Recreation:

- Water-dependent and water-enhanced recreation will be encouraged and facilitated, and will be given priority over non-water-related uses along the coast (#21)
- Development, when located adjacent to the shore, will provide for water-related recreation, whenever such use is compatible with reasonably anticipated demand for such activities, and is compatible with the primary purpose of such development (#22)

The potential swimming sites that have been deemed feasible on the Step I and II screening process have been found to be consistent with and supportive of applicable locally adopted and State approved LWRP public access and recreation policies.

In addition to these policies, the State's Coastal Management Program has important policy directives associated with the protection and enhancement of natural, historic and scenic resources. The Hudson River Corridor abounds with these valuable, generally irreplaceable, unique resources, which provide sustainability, enjoyment, quality of life and economic

livelihood to many New Yorkers. In recommending the proposed swimming sites, it has been noted that some of these sites are within or adjacent to important resources, particularly designated "Significant Tidal Habitats". During the selection and evaluation of these sites, information pertinent to these concerns and issues has been reviewed and considered (see Section 6.2).

The next phase of this Project, which will encompass detailed planning and design work for some or all of the swimming sites found to be feasible, the coastal policies concerning the protection of natural, historic and scenic resources will be addressed under site specific EIS process and the "consistency" requirements of the State's Coastal Management Program.

A very important element of the State's Coastal Management Program is the "Consistency Review", where federal and State projects and activities are reviewed for consistency with State coastal policies and approved LWRP's. Thus, any proposed swimming site recommended in this Feasibility Study must meet the test of "Consistency".

Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Plans

The Department of State's information indicates that LWRP's are intended "...to guide the beneficial use, revitalization, and protection of their waterfront resources..." (NYS DOS 2000). LWRP's are plans for water and land use of a locality's natural and built-up waterfront and for the protection and development of coastal resources. Once approved by the Department of State and the Federal government, the LWRP provides the means to coordinate State and Federal actions to support the local program goals. There are currently 18 approved local programs prepared by communities along the Hudson River, as well New York City. In addition, there are 15 communities on the Hudson with LWRP's in various stages of development.

A review was conducted of available LWRP's for communities where possible sites might exist for public swimming, (or adjacent communities), based upon the initial 60 sites screened during phase I of the Feasibility Study. The purpose of this review was to:

- Determine if swimming needs and projects were identified
- Assess if there are other relevant shoreline recreation and open space proposals in the LWRP
- Seek information on water quality and water resource issues and uses, and infrastructure conditions
- Evaluate any situations where a proposed swimming facility would be incompatible with or supportive of existing land and water uses or proposals.

Plans for Sites Selected for Step II Screening

Nine of the 22 sites that remained after the Step I review have Waterfront Plans (nine adopted, one in progress). Our findings from these plans for these sites follow.

Schodack Island State Park

This undeveloped Park borders the southern end of the Village of Castleton, with which the Town of Schodack has prepared a LWRP that was adopted in 1993 and approved in 1995. The Plan notes the importance and need to develop this State Park as a local, regional and statewide resource, because of its recreational potential and scenic and environmental values and resources. The availability of public swimming in the Park would provide important recreational benefits, and should be considered consistent with an overall development and management plan for the Plan.

Four Mile Point Road

This site is not within a LWRP area. However, it is worth noting that three miles south of the site is the small Village of Athens (est. population of 1,800) which has a developed Plan, which has not yet adopted nor approved by the State and Federal governments.

The Village, and much of Greene County, has households of modest incomes, with extensive pockets of poverty and a dearth of available and affordable public swimming sites. The Village has a park along the River and a nearby State boat launch site; waterfront recreation is also very popular. The Plan notes that there is informal swimming along the shores of Middle Ground Flats, which is easily reachable from boats from the launch site. This island was reviewed for its potential as a swimming site, but recommendations were deferred pending resolution of land ownership issues.

While the Plan (prepared in 1988) indicates there is a village municipal swimming pool, it notes that “rising operating costs put the cost of membership out of reach of many families”. The plan states that, “Development of a safe beach on the Hudson River would provide an alternate swimming facility” and a Community Survey documented the need for swimming facilities.

In its plan, the Village proposes upgrading its waterfront park and has identified the installation of a ferry service to the historic Athens Lighthouse as a desirable project, perhaps attempting to make Middle Ground Flats more accessible. A swimming site at Four Mile Point Road could significantly help meet the need for publicly available sites in northeastern Greene County. Furthermore, it could support tourism development projects for the Village of Athens.

Riverfront Park

This site is located in the Town of Stony Point whose Waterfront Plan was adopted and approved in 1994. The Grassy Point area is cited extensively in the Plan. It notes that, “The waterfront location, significant views and environmental resources make this land attractive for public recreational development.” The plan continues to recommend that, “Every effort should be made to...preserve it for public recreational use” (page II-18).

The LWRP also calls for a waterfront trail connecting the Town Park on Grassy Point Road and the County owned beach, located to the south of Grassy Point. This beach and the Stony Point

Historic Site, which is at the northern end of the Town's Riverfront, were each evaluated as potential swimming sites. Finally, the Plan states a policy to "encourage the restoration of the County-owned beach off Grassy Point Road" (page II-36).

Therefore, the development of a swimming site at this location and at the undeveloped County Park would tie very nicely into the Town's waterfront objectives for this general location. There is mention in the Plan of some traffic and parking issues that could surface with extensive development in the Grassy Point Area. This issue will have to be considered if any proposal is advanced.

Ossining, Louis H. Engel Jr. Park

The Town of Ossining's LWRP was adopted and approved in 1991. The potential swim site is in the downtown waterfront area south of the Metro North Railroad station, restaurant and marina. The town has made improvements to the Park, and it has a good but very narrow beach, with limited space for support facilities for parking. Solving these problems and developing a very small swimming program would take creativity in design and likely substantial cost. Further investigation of this feasibility by local authorities may be merited.

Kingsland Point County Park (Westchester Co)

Based upon The Consultant's contacts with the Village of Sleepy Hollow, staff of the Department of State and Scenic Hudson, and Westchester County Parks there is great interest in improving this apparently underutilized Park in the Village, which has a LWRP that was adopted and approved in 1997.

There are opportunities to strongly support the Village's waterfront redevelopment programs and objectives by restoring swimming and upgrading the infrastructure and access to this County operated park. It is opportune to link these initiatives to restore the closed, deteriorated pavilion, reclaim the beach for swimming, and provide better vehicular and pedestrian access to major adjacent public and private recreation and economic redevelopment projects that are being planned.

The Village is working on initiatives to enhance DeVries Park, separated from Kingsland on the West by the Metro-North line, and to restore and reopen the pedestrian bridge that crosses the tracks. General Motors (GM) is poised to propose redevelopment of its former Tarrytown Auto Assembly site, immediately South of Kingsland, along the Hudson. Scenic Hudson has been engaged by the Village and they have developed a concept plan for the GM Site that provides public waterfront access, other open space and mixed commercial and residential development. New Park access from the GM Site by pedestrians and vehicles, coupled with the Park's upgrading, would strengthen the economic values and recreation benefits of people living and/or working in and those coming to the redeveloped GM site.

An upgraded Kingsland may, however, need additional parking capacity. Improved access is needed; the current access to the Park is from a residential neighborhood on the north and neighborhood opposition would likely be generated if access is not improved.

A restored Kingsland would be a major critical link in the Village's approved LWRP that proposes a waterfront promenade from the Southern end of the Village, at the Tappan Zee Bridge, around the GM site, and anchored on the northern end by the Park. It would provide an outstanding recreation facility to serve the immediate surrounding communities with pockets of modest income residents, as well as more economically advantaged local and regional users.

Plans for Swimming Facilities Currently in Operation

Saugerties Village Beach

The Village's Waterfront Plan was adopted and approved in 1985, one of the earliest plans for Hudson River communities. Due to its age, information in the plan may be out of date, but it appears that the general conditions noted have remained the same.

The Village's Beach is located on the Esopus Creek about a mile upstream from the Hudson River. It is located on the western border of the Village's coastal area boundary, with about half in the official coastal area. There is no direct mention of the beach in this Plan. One area directly northeast of the beach, on the opposite bank along the Esopus, is a largely vacant abandoned industrial area, which is proposed in the plan for redevelopment to a new maritime commercial area. Another area immediately across the Esopus from the beach (and directly south of the vacant industrial) is the Southside Historic Neighborhood. The LWRP calls for the rehabilitation of buildings in this area and public investment in infrastructure upgrading.

Capital improvements for the Village's beach would be consistent with and supportive of improving its waterfronts and historic areas to attract overall more recreationists and tourists to the Village. These improvements would also benefit the concentration of antique stores and other commercial business located in the nearby "downtown" that brings many visitors into the Village.

Kingston Point Park

The City of Kingston's LWRP was adopted and approved in 1992 and this plan encompasses an extensive area along the Hudson, both north and south of the City beach and Park. The Coastal boundary also includes the Roundout Creek area of the City's Urban Cultural Park.

The Waterfront Plan slates the Park for major improvements to enhance active recreation, therefore capital improvements proposed in this feasibility study are consistent with the City's objectives. Furthermore, in the Plan the City identifies some important related projects. These include improvements to lower Delaware Avenue, the only access to the park, which has a bus route providing public access. Additionally, the City wants to improve the Ponckhockie neighborhood, which is adjacent to the Park.

Improving the City Beach and implementing the overall waterfront plan improvements would provide benefits to local residents, many who are of modest means, and strengthen the ability to draw outside visitors to the City's growing popular waterfront districts.

Port Ewen

This beach site is in the Town of Esopus, whose Waterfront Plan was adopted and approved in 1987. While the site is a Town Park with multi recreational uses, a swimming program at the Park was discontinued a few years ago because of the water chestnut control problems. Given the available facility and fine beach, it would make strong sense to address the water chestnut problem and restore swimming.

Croton Point-Westchester County Park

This site, a Westchester County owned facility, is in the Village of Croton-on-Hudson, which had its LWRP adopted and approved in 1992. The park and beach are on the southern end of the Village and the entire municipality is within the designated coastal area. The Metro-North Railroad station, about a half mile north of the Park entrance, is located in "downtown" Croton, and this general area is a key focus of the Plan's revitalization focus.

The Plan notes the importance of the recreational and scenic benefits of the Westchester County Park. But, at the time the plan was prepared in the early 1990's it was noted that "...no beach swimming is allowed due to polluted waters." Water quality improvements have of course now changed this situation and swimming takes place at the beach. County budgetary restrictions, as noted elsewhere, however, limited use to the weekends this past season.

The Village proposes many projects to make the waterfront more accessible, including a walkway/trail from downtown to the Westchester County-Croton Point Park. This tie in plus the close proximity of the Metro North station makes the Park, and it's many recreational facilities and scenic beauty, a unique local and major regional resource. Public investment in upgrading the Park's swimming and related facilities and finding budgetary means to provide lifeguards for weekdays in season should, therefore, be a priority public initiative.

APPENDIX VII REFERENCES

City of Kingston. 1992. Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, adopted July 7, 1992

New York State Department of State (NYSDOS). 1982. NYS Coastal Management Program 1982. www.dos.state.ny.us/cstl

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Town of Esopus. 1987. Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, adopted in 1987.

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Town of Stony Point. 1994. Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, adopted Oct. 27, 1994

Village of Athens. 1988. Preliminary Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan 1988, none officially adopted.

Village of Croton-on-Hudson. 1992. Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, adopted April 16, 1992

Village of Ossining. 1991. Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, adopted July 2, 1991

Village of Saugerties. 1985. Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, adopted Sept. 8, 1985

Village of Sleepy Hollow. 1996. Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, adopted November 19, 1996