APPENDIX H: SAMPLE CHECKLIST FOR ASSESSING SITE RESOURCES DURING SUBDIVISION REVIEW

The Town of Rhinebeck in Dutchess County, New York created a "Site Resource Analysis Assessment" checklist to provide guidance to applicants and the planning board during the subdivision review and approval process. The checklist could be equally useful during site plan review and approval or other development review processes of local government. Rhinebeck's zoning, subdivision regulations, and a local wetlands law were prepared by its planning consultant, Ted Fink, AICP and adopted by the town in 2009. Dutchess County's Department of Planning and Development initially developed a similar checklist in their Model Subdivision Regulations.

The checklist is used in conjunction with a "Site Resource Analysis Map" prepared by applicants under the town's subdivision regulations. The checklist is integral to the town's "Conservation Design" (cluster development) requirements but the new review process integrates a four step design process. Review of new subdivisions and other development projects in the town use this four step process to identify important natural and cultural resources on project plans; new development is then designed to avoid those areas and important natural resources are preserved as open space on the project site. All new subdivisions are subject to conservation design, unless an applicant can demonstrate that conventional subdivision will similarly protect natural and cultural resources (a special use permit is required for a conventional subdivision).

New development is subject to other design guidance including signage, lighting, landscaping, stormwater management, scenic viewshed protection, green building standards, historic building protection, and habitat management using Hudsonia Ltd.'s townwide biodiversity assessment entitled "Significant Habitats in the Town of Rhinebeck." Agriculture and forestry are encouraged in Rhinebeck as viable economic uses of open space by new "farmer-friendly" and "forester-friendly" allowances, and solar and wind energy systems have been promoted and encouraged by removing obstacles to them in the town's zoning. New provisions, also subject to the conservation design process, allow for the voluntary transfer of development rights within certain zoning districts.

Applicants initially prepare the checklist and it is then verified by the planning board during subdivision review. A pre-application process is mandatory, where applicants have an opportunity to relate the Site Resource Analysis Map and the Site Resource Analysis Assessment to the conservation of natural and cultural resources for their project. The findings from this pre-application process allow the planning board and applicants to adjust proposals early on in their design, well before more costly engineering designs are undertaken. This helps applicants in the long run because it avoids or minimizes disturbance to important resources, some of which may be costly to develop (such as steep slopes). An active Town Conservation Board also participates in the design and review of projects.

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Town of Rhinebeck Site Resource Analysis Assessment

Name of subdivision: _____

Address: _____

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Are there streams, wetlands, waterbodies or watercourses that require protective buffer areas?			
Is there active farmland on the parcel(s)?			
Will the active farmland be preserved?			
Is there active farmland contiguous to or within 500 feet of the subject parcel(s)?			
Is this an Agricultural Exempt parcel(s)?			
Are there ridgelines that the Town desires to be kept clear of development?			
Could development alter the visual character from offsite areas dramatically?			
Could development alter viewshed vantage points within the property?			
Have visual mitigation measures been discussed?			
Are there high-quality trees and significant groups of trees that should be preserved?			
Is there the potential for significant wildlife habitats or wildlife migration areas?			
Do any of these significant natural areas extend into abutting properties?			
Have mitigation measures been discussed?			
Are there stone walls and rock outcrops on the site?			
Is the parcel adjacent to a public recreational area?			
Are there possibilities for walkway, bikeway and/or trail connections?			
Are there special cultural, archaeological and/or historic features that should be preserved?			
Is the parcel adjacent to or within a National, State or locally designated Historic site or district?			
Is the parcel adjacent to or within an officially designated Scenic District or Scenic Road?			
Is the parcel adjacent to or within an officially designated Critical Environmental Area (CEA)?			
Is the parcel within the Local Waterfront Revitalization Area?			
Can the development be connected to a community water supply system?			
Can the development be connected to a community sewage disposal system?			
Will affordable housing be addressed by the subdivision?			

Priority resources that should be preserved on the site:

_____

_____

_____

Recommendations:

_____

_____

Date of Planning Board site visit: _____