

Sleepy Hollow, New York

A Vision for Sleepy Hollow: Managing Change & Building for Diversity

AUGUST 2018



Table of Contents

1 Executive Summary	3
2 Urban Land Institute and the TAP Program.....	6
3 Village of Sleepy Hollow TAP Panelists, Sponsor, and Process.....	7
4 Background and Assignment.....	10
5 Panel Observations and Findings	15
6 Panel Recommendations.....	18
7 Next Steps	25

Executive Summary

Sleepy Hollow, New York is a small and beautiful village located on the east side of the Hudson River 25 miles north of New York City. It is experiencing redevelopment activities and pressures that will reshape and impact the community long into the 21st century. Its blue-collar roots and past status as a factory town for General Motors appear evident in its eclectic mix of modest homes, narrow, hilly streets and century-old commercial buildings. It sits in the shadows of the new, \$5 billion-dollar Hudson River bridge that will bring new traffic and economic development to its streets. In addition, and most importantly, the GM auto manufacturing plant closed in 1996 and is now being redeveloped as a 1,100-unit luxury housing community (Edge-on-Hudson) across the railroad tracks from a low and moderate-income, largely immigrant neighborhood. In this context, the Village Board of Trustees, led by the mayor, sought the outside advice of the Urban Land Institute. Through ULI's New York and Westchester/Fairfield District Councils, a two-day Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) was held on November 14 and 15, 2017 and sponsored by the Village of Sleepy Hollow.



The Village of Sleepy Hollow has cherished its relationship to the Hudson River for centuries. As new development arrives on the waterfront, the Village's leaders intend to revitalize the central area upland to connect all Sleepy Hollow residents.

Images courtesy of Lipofsky Photography

During those two days, the eight TAP volunteer professionals and three ULI staff members listened and learned about what makes Sleepy Hollow unique and special to its residents, as well as causes for concern from Village leadership and community stakeholders. The overarching goals were (1) to propose strategies to manage the change emanating from the large housing project and integrate it appropriately into the community and (2) to revitalize and incentivize development of the Village's commercial corridor, Beekman Avenue and the housing in the lower income neighborhoods.

The panel's objective was to propose strategies to connect the new housing to the Village and encourage/incentivize investment in its downtown area that celebrates Sleepy Hollow's diversity and history while welcoming new residents and not pushing out lower income households. The mayor and community want to ensure that these efforts work in harmony with the Village's economic and cultural diversity. In addition, Village leaders want to encourage new retail businesses and multi-family residential housing along Beekman Avenue, the main commercial corridor. Today, popular bars and restaurants along Beekman Avenue sit beside weedy vacant lots and sidewalks that are unattractive and in need of repair. In its place, they want a mix of thoughtful new construction with adaptive reuse of neglected properties.

As panelists toured the Village and conducted stakeholder interviews, they found involved residents, engaged businesses, committed Village employees and many historic and cultural assets in the community. Based on interviews, they learned that the library, schools and medical institutions are strong anchor institutions and doing a good job of providing social and educational services to Village residents and establishing trust with the immigrant community.



Sleepy Hollow renamed itself not long ago to capitalize on the tourist appeal of its legend, especially around Halloween. Its main corridor, Beekman Avenue, has the potential to draw more tourists and boost local investment.

Image courtesy of Lipofsky Photography

At the same time, the business community and local government need to strengthen its outreach efforts to the new largely South American and Caribbean immigrant community and integrate them more fully. Panelists learned that many immigrants may be undocumented and fear arrest or deportation by immigration authorities. Doubling and tripling up in many immigrant households is a problem creating potential health and safety issues. In addition, established businesses, such as restaurants and small property owners expressed frustration with code enforcement for existing buildings and permitting for new ones; the rules seem complex, unfriendly and processing for permits and inspections cumbersome and oftentimes slow.

The TAP process calls for two days of intense study and analysis by the panelists to develop recommendations in response to the proposed scope of work. By the end of the second day, the panel crafted recommendations for addressing the core issues outlined in the scope, building on the Village's unique history, character and strengths. The panel centered on two strategies as catalysts for development of the study areas, as well as short- and long-term implementation recommendations. Those two strategies are connectivity and placemaking.

Connecting Sleepy Hollow's residential and shopping cores to its waterfront can provide benefits to all of its communities.

Images courtesy of Lipofsky Photography



Connectivity offers many great opportunities for Sleepy Hollow by focusing and enhancing the mobility/transportation, streetscape and parking environments. Sleepy Hollow is interesting (and challenging) because of its existing assets, i.e., the Metro-North Railroad connecting it to New York City and Beekman Avenue connecting it to the region. Local streets offer challenges due to topography and narrowness but there are opportunities for using smaller circulator buses that could be integrated and coordinated with the new Edge-on-Hudson project; so too with bike routes and bike share programs. Roadways and streetscapes would benefit from better definition of street hierarchy and focusing on gateways (Beekman and Cortlandt Street),

establishing consistency of materials and standards; adding green space where possible; enhancing wayfinding and better maintenance of sidewalks and street trees.

Placemaking is an intentional strategy of putting people first. It is about being unique and authentic, which the panelists felt Sleepy Hollow has in its DNA. The challenge for Sleepy Hollow is to create centers of activity and to leverage existing cultural resources. The popularity of Halloween festivities that take place in October, drawing together residents and tourists, suggest that other events throughout the year can inspire community involvement, attract visitors and bring greater vibrancy to the Village. Sleepy Hollow has a rich historical legacy, so it would be advantageous for the Village to strengthen its connections and collaborations with nearby landmarks and national treasures. Many commercial corridors and small businesses (with limited resources) work together to organize farmers markets, animate their streets with outdoor string lighting and activate vacant retail with pop-up shops or artist installations. A merchant's association, art's council or business improvement district are good vehicles for organizing such activities, and among the panelists' recommendations.

Sleepy Hollow's population spans a wide range of incomes. The TAP presented ways to use placemaking and connectivity to appeal to a sense of pride that crosses demographic lines. Placemaking can also help unify long-established residents with newcomers.

Image courtesy of Lipofsky Photography



The panel prepared and presented its findings at the end of day two outlining actionable recommendations for implementing the strategies it developed during the TAP study. They are grouped as immediate actionable items focusing on connectivity and placemaking in the study area (1-5 years) and then longer term (5-10 years) recommendations addressing planning and policy issues. Lastly, the panel suggested using the Urban Land Institute's extensive library of resource materials, such as "Building Healthy Corridors" and "Building Healthy Places," that offer municipalities, businesses, not-for-profits, developers and community organizations tool kits of best practices. These resources can assist Sleepy Hollow in navigating the challenges ahead using its best and most important resource, its people.



ULI TAP panelists tour the Village's waterfront and downtown with Mayor Ken Wray (in hat).

Image courtesy of Lipofsky Photography

2 |

Urban Land Institute and the TAP Program

Founded in 1936, the Urban Land Institute (ULI) is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization whose mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI has more than 40,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines working in private enterprise and public service. As the preeminent multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, national, and international industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better places.

Today, as urban tastes and challenges migrate into once-homogenous suburbs, ULI provides tools to amplify health and place outside major cities. District Councils deliver the ULI mission at the local level. Together, ULI's New York and Westchester/Fairfield District Councils cover all of New York State and Fairfield County, Connecticut. The District Councils have over 2,500 members combined, including real estate developers, investors, property owners, brokers, architects, planners, public officials, engineers, and students. ULI New York embraces the best practices in leadership development, community service, and enhancement of land-use policy and practice at the local level. The mission of ULI Westchester/Fairfield is to enhance the experience of the ULI local members by bringing national meetings content and contacts

to the local level. ULI Westchester/Fairfield strives to provide a local platform for ULI members which is open, friendly, easy to access and that encourages educational enrichment, personal development and networking opportunities.

ULI New York convenes Technical Assistance Panels (TAPs) at the request of public officials, community stakeholders, and nonprofit organizations facing complex land-use challenges. TAPs provide objective, unbiased recommendations from a panel of diverse experts from ULI New York's membership who are assembled specifically for their expertise in the issues identified by the TAP sponsor. Typically, the TAP panelists spend one to two days visiting the study area and analyzing existing conditions, exploring specific planning and development issues, and formulating realistic and actionable recommendations to move initiatives forward in a way that is consistent with the sponsor's goals and objectives.

ULI Westchester/Fairfield's TAPs program provides a unique, market-based perspective to address a broad range of issues including strategies for revitalizing corridors or specific properties; analyzing the re-use potential of existing properties; identifying key economic and land use issues relating to public/private land use situations; long-range visioning for corridors or nodes; evaluating specific development and land proposals or issues; market feasibility analysis, financial analysis and structuring, and more.



Technical Assistance Panels

3 |

Village of Sleepy Hollow TAP Panelists, Sponsor, and Process

TAP Panel Members and Support Staff

As organizers of the Village of Sleepy Hollow Technical Assistance Panel (TAP), ULI New York and ULI Westchester/Fairfield jointly convened a panel of volunteer ULI members. The volunteers work in small scale and affordable housing development, architecture, urban and environmental planning, economic development, traffic engineering, transportation planning, and historic preservation and adaptive reuse. Their pooled expertise brought insight to many of the cost, design, strategy and investment questions driving this TAP.

TAP Chair:

Kim Morque

President, Spinnaker Real Estate Partners, LLC

An architect:

Shay Alster

Partner, GF55 Partners

Two traffic engineers:

Adam Catherine

Senior Associate, Stantec

Lou Luglio

Vice President, Sam Schwartz Consulting

A project manager:

Joanna Cuevas

Senior Project Manager, Gardiner & Theobald

A placemaking consultant:

Andrew Manshel

Principal, Placemaster Projects Advisory Services

An economic development advisor:

Christian Michel

Senior Technical Director- Economic & Real Estate Advisory Services, AKRF

An urban designer and the in-house counsel for a major design firm:

LeAnn Shelton

General Counsel, Rockwell Group

Felix Ciampa, Executive Director of ULI New York, Mara Winokur, Director of ULI Westchester/Fairfield, and Kathryn Dionne, a Manager for ULI New York provided organizational and technical support in preparation for and during the TAP process. Special thanks to Alec Appelbaum, our TAP report writer and The Berman Group for providing support with the layout, design and production of this report.



TAP panelists learn as much as they can in two days prior to sharing their expertise. Here, TAP panelist and placemaking expert LeAnn Shelton asks Mayor Ken Wray a question, as traffic engineer Lou Luglio looks on.

Image courtesy of Lipofsky Photography



TAP panelists listen to a presentation from Mayor Ken Wray.

Image courtesy of Lipofsky Photography

Sponsor: The Village of Sleepy Hollow, New York

Mayor Ken Wray led the team from the Village of Sleepy Hollow. Panelists worked for several hours with Mayor Wray, who had met ULI staff in connection with his “day job” at a foundation that focuses on affordable housing. The mayor spent an hour with panelists on a conference call a week before panelists came to Sleepy Hollow. He also sat in on the first day’s meeting, arranged and led a bus and walking tour, and referred questions to village Public Works staff. During the tour he told stories to make panelists chuckle and fielded questions about history and economics for panelists to explore further. At the end of the second day, he joined Trustees and the Village Administrator to host the TAP presentation in Village Hall.



TAP Process

The TAP process creates intensive, iterative study and recommendations. Members volunteer two working days to a new place, then dive into interviews, maps and discussions to create recommendations that will take years to implement. In this case, members from around the New York City area worked from the Courtyard Tarrytown Greenburgh hotel. That setting suggests how Sleepy Hollow’s downtown could absorb boutique hotels, bed-and-breakfasts and small conference facilities.

Before the TAP, ULI staff and the sponsor work out a physical study area. TAP members research the area and study its current and past zoning codes before they arrive. On site, they tour the area, research its demographics, zoning and economics, interview stakeholders, and connect to relevant case studies. The first day ends with a dinner at a local favorite in Sleepy Hollow, a new farm-to-table restaurant called the Red Zebra. On day two, members caucus in small groups on key subjects. Frequently, the TAP Chair invites small groups back to a conference table to share impressions and seek data. On this TAP, Chair Kim Morque reminded members to craft actionable ideas- suggestions the Village’s all-volunteer government could handily explain and afford.

Members brought stories from their work as developer, architect, consultant, engineer and project managers. The members’ breadth of expertise led to a suite of coordinated ideas. The final report suggested rehabilitating historic buildings, zoning for greater density along the Beekman Avenue corridor, allowing 55-foot buildings to



The intersection at Route 9 and Beekman Avenue could, with a few affordable improvements, become a gateway and help connect Beekman Avenue to the waterfront.

Image courtesy of Lipofsky Photography



Panelists learned through interviews how the community uses and views downtown Sleepy Hollow, then applied this learning to placemaking recommendations. Simple investments like planting flowers can provide a base for placemaking.

Image Courtesy of panelist Lou Luglio

encourage mixed-income housing, developing a common streetscaping plan that would connect Edge-on-Hudson to downtown, creating a pocket park that capitalizes on the Tappan Zee Bridge viewshed at the intersection of Beekman Avenue and Cortlandt Street, and enhancing the gateway at the intersection of Beekman Avenue and Route 9.

Throughout their 15 hours of discussion, members returned to three central ideas: to lift the tax base and re-animate downtown by tapping into the economic power in the new project at the bottom of the hill, to connect the riverfront development to upper Beekman, all while integrating the lower-income and new immigrant population into the economic base of the Village.

A developer huddled with a lawyer in one corner while traffic engineers across the room spread papers on a conference table, sketching possible traffic patterns and bike lanes. An architect, a retail consultant and a project manager clustered around a speakerphone in the hotel lobby, taking notes as a local developer explained where the permitting process stalls.

Members saw how the diversity makes Sleepy Hollow special in its bodegas, its connection to riverfront parks and its century-old buildings. They set out to frame parking, zoning, investment incentives and development policy to enhance that special identity. Comparisons to Seville, Newark, Yonkers, nearby Tarrytown, White Plains and Detroit flew around the meeting room. All along, the chairman of the group, in a quiet steady tone, circled participants back to the assignment; provide guidance the Village can act on to plan for a diverse community. Over sandwiches, panelists presented this framework to Mayor Ken Wray and the Village's Board of Trustees on November 15.



Panelists interviewing a local expert. During their two days, panelists interviewed more than a dozen stakeholders, including Tarrytown Mayor Drew Fixell, Sleepy Hollow's Chief of Police Anthony Bueti, and competing developers.

Image Courtesy of Lipofsky Photography

4 |

Background and Assignment

A. Assignment

The Village gave the panelists details on the strategies it sought. These overlapped and frequently complemented each other. As the mayor defined it, the experts set out to:

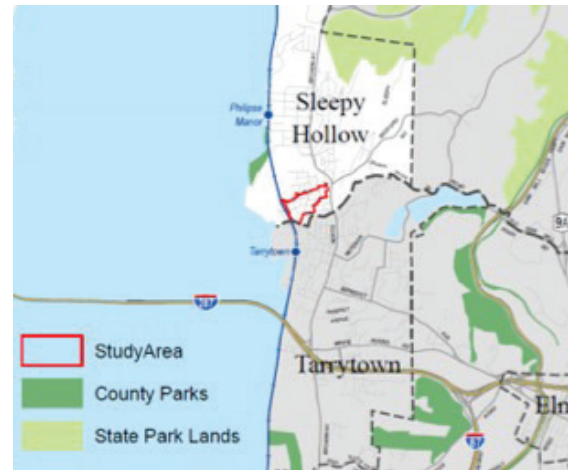
Propose strategies and scenarios that include an analysis of:

- the effect that Edge-on-Hudson will have on the project area's existing low-income residential neighborhoods, with methods for integrating Edge-on-Hudson with the Village's downtown;
- the existing retail environment downtown, with proposals for ways to meet unmet needs within the Village's existing tourism activities;
- residential and commercial parking needs downtown;
- possible reuse of existing Village-owned properties;
- zoning issues that inhibit investment and new development downtown, with proposals for zoning changes that can reduce or eliminate these disincentives, and
- the feasibility of workforce housing.

They also took on analyzing current public access issues to propose improvements that could complement new investment in the Village's downtown, including:

- pedestrian and bike access;
- improved overall access;
- parking, and
- the feasibility of integrating a required peak hour shuttle bus service to the local Metro-North station with the downtown.

B. Study Area and Location



Map of study area

Image courtesy of ULI Panel

The group's study area runs from Beekman Avenue, the main commercial corridor, south to a small street called Wildey, west to a small street paralleling the former GM plant and east to Route 9, which runs south to New York City and north to Albany. This area stands up a steep hill from the 97-acre former GM factory and current Edge-on-Hudson site. The adjacent East Parcel, once the parking lot for GM workers, looks to Village leaders like a potential "commons" or center for events and community activities.

Creating the park would mean moving the Village's Department of Public Works away from the waterfront, potentially to a tight site inside the study area. That idea prompted the sponsor to ask panelists to analyze whether and how to consider relocating other Village properties, including the Village Hall and a fire station that currently marks the southern edge of downtown.

Beekman Avenue wasn't the main shopping street when the plant operated, stakeholders say; Valley Street, also in the study area, was. Today, Valley works as a secondary retail street, with small grocers and other service businesses. Streets ran one-way uphill and down to ease traffic to and from the site, but some Village leaders now wonder about redesigning these streets to provide protected bike lanes and run a shuttle bus to and from the train station and the Edge-on-Hudson site.



The study area includes dilapidated homes, vacant lots and a main corridor with nonprofits, a school, and several local businesses. It also includes buildings with beautiful, distinctive architectural details.

Images courtesy of Lipofsky Photography



Encouraging tourism and shopping poses a challenge because there isn't a lot of available land for hotels or conference facilities. In each direction, landmarks like WL Morse Elementary School, Phelps Hospital and the 169-year-old Sleepy Hollow Cemetery currently occupy big chunks of available land. Even though Leona Helmsley and Andrew Carnegie lie among some 40,000 others in the cemetery, this star value doesn't extend to Beekman Avenue. And institutions disproportionate share of land for tax-exempt uses creates more pressure for revenue-producing land use elsewhere.



Village leaders want to make commercial activity in the downtown core more productive and spruce up housing to lift the tax base. Currently, institutions like Sleepy Hollow Middle School and High School, occupy valuable land but don't contribute to the tax base.

Images courtesy of Lipofsky Photography

Reconsidering Beekman, from the top of the hill. A modestly landscaped island at the intersection of Beekman and Route 9 comprises the extent of existing public placemaking in downtown Sleepy Hollow.

Edge-on-Hudson plans 110,000 square feet of onsite retail. Plans remain in formation, but the mayor says the site's developer envisions white-tablecloth restaurants and boutiques. Under one chain of events, this kind of shopping could create an enclave that boxes out the rest of the Village.

Parking need and supply seem hard to read, but many stakeholders said during the interviews that parking feels inadequate and inconvenient. Narrow streets provide little room for walking and biking, and no public transportation runs from the commuter train station to the core. Edge-on-Hudson has locked in its site and has targeted upper-income retirees with a unit mix that includes hardly any three-bedroom units. Developers around the Hudson Valley have already built a lot of supply for that market. The Village aims to tap the benefits that Edge-on-Hudson can bring for the whole population, rather than reopen questions about the Edge-on-Hudson plan. This means, among other things, encouraging other kinds of housing uphill, in the commercial core.

Panelist Joanna Cuevas explains the market dynamics she learned from the developer of a luxury project in an adjacent town. Panelists and experts saw a demand for mixed-income housing along the Beekman corridor.

Image courtesy of Lipofsky Photography



C. Existing Land Uses & Zoning

After GM shuttered its factory, Latino immigrants began moving into the area to work in landscaping and construction for the Hudson Valley's upscale residential towns. Landlords began neglecting properties, and a social services center took prominent space on Beekman Avenue.

The downtown business corridor caters to a diverse community. TAP recommendations include the need for local government to more intentionally and systematically build trust with recent immigrants.

Image courtesy of Lipofsky Photography



That said, Beekman looks and feels like a "good street" populated with a mix of uses and attractive historic buildings. Panelists still saw "great bones" in old buildings around downtown, and the potential for combining storefronts to create event spaces or destination retail. Already, restaurants keep the street active in the evenings. Some are traditional, like the pubs JP Doyle's and the Huddle. Others can attract a more upscale crowd. For example, panelists met for dinner at a new, farm-to-table restaurant called the Red Zebra. The white-tablecloth restaurant, with its locally sourced kale and small-batch Westchester whiskey, could anchor a food scene.

But Sleepy Hollow does not yet boast such a scene nor could it, under current zoning. As Mayor Wray walked panelists around the active-if-not-bustling Beekman Avenue, he paused at South American and pizza restaurants. Store footprints are small, and at least six shopfronts on the two-mile stretch stood vacant. Parcel sizes and shapes look uneven, and don't create continuity along the street. Panelists noted the absence of a coffee shop, a large drugstore, or an event space.

In local context, it's relevant that trust seems lacking between the new immigrant community and the established civic leadership. Panelists called on government to address this missing trust in intentional, measurable steps.

At either edge of the Beekman Avenue corridor, though, signs and parking point to Hudson Valley tourist attractions. The Village lacks signs or shops, or a residential mix, that would connect immigrants and tourists in a sustainable economy.

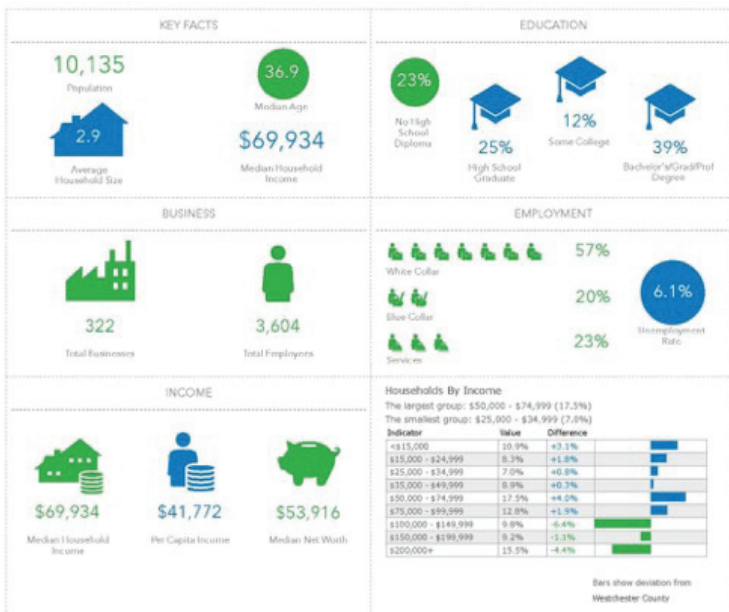
The Red Zebra restaurant serves farm-to-table cuisine and curated cocktails, a menu that would feel logical in more trendy neighborhoods. Like other longstanding businesses, it could benefit from zoning changes that encourage more density, outdoor dining and street life downtown.

Image courtesy of David Starkey

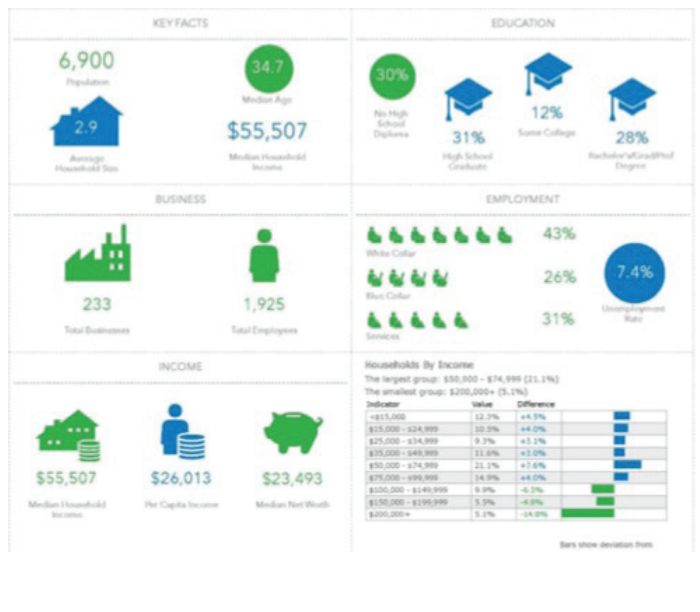


D. Demographics

The study area, roughly United States Census Tract 116, shows more harmony with a challenged city neighborhood than with a stereotypical suburb. Unemployment among the 6,900 working-age residents, roughly 70 percent of the whole Village, runs at 7.4%. Panelists saw unsafe, often absentee-owned housing around the downtown core. Mayor Wray said that many residents in this housing double and triple up, adding that it's hard to inspect buildings for code violations due to small staff.



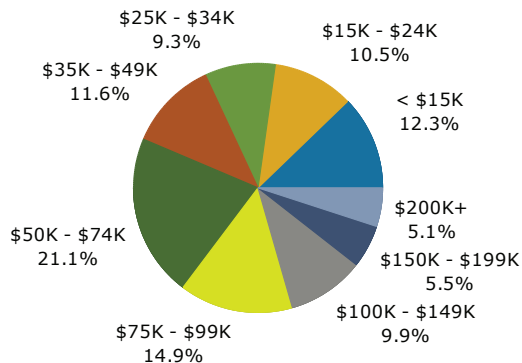
Demographic Snapshot of the Village of Sleepy Hollow
Graphics courtesy of ESRI



Demographic Snapshot of Census Tract 116 (Study Area)

This area stands in contrast with the successful retirees presumably bound for Edge-on-Hudson and with the multinational investment banks that support ventures like it. Only 28 percent of Census Tract 116 residents earned a bachelor's degree or higher, and 30 percent have no high school diploma (seven percentage points higher than the same statistic for the whole Village). More than half of the labor force works in service or blue-collar jobs, and 44 percent of them earn less than \$50,000 per year. The median net worth in the census tract is \$23,493 as of the last census. That's well less than it would take to buy a home in Edge-on-Hudson or anywhere without government support for affordable housing.

2017 Household Income



Educational attainment and income pose challenges to economic development in the study area, in contrast to the upland and waterfront demographics developers have already served.

Chart courtesy of ESRI

The TAP's assignment came down to practical ideas to fill in Sleepy Hollow's economic gaps while celebrating its diversity and enhancing its connection to the Hudson River.

Image courtesy of Lipofsky Photography

Poverty prevails in Sleepy Hollow, unlike in nearby Tarrytown or other affluent communities along the Hudson. The share of households earning less than \$75,000 runs higher than in Westchester County overall. At the same time, says one local, long-standing residents keep their uphill neighborhoods clean and safe with pride- and a growing pool of nationally known artists have settled in the Village. These natives, newcomers and artists already support performances in the downtown.

Sleepy Hollow shows smoother diversity in its storefronts than in its street life. The Mayor and Chief of Police told panelists that most calls to law enforcement stem from complaints about people hanging out on

stoops or leaving trash in yards- not from reports of crime. On the other side, fear of harassment and deportation and a lack of bilingual resources keep new immigrants largely silent in politics. Affluent families moving up from Brooklyn, though comprising a smaller share of the Village population day labor, cast a longer political shadow. Yet Mayor Ken Wray spoke in detail of wanting to affirm, and sustain, his Village's pluralist identity. "We're not a burb," he told the panel. "We're a river town."

E. Objectives for the TAP

The Village's connection to the river, and to history, can drive creative placemaking efforts and can serve to catalyze demand for mixed-income housing at walking distance from restaurants, schools and shops.

In that frame, panelists set out to propose strategies and scenarios that make Edge-on-Hudson likely to incentivize investment throughout the Village, making it a complement to the commercial core. To enhance connections from the waterfront to the core, panelists encouraged a fuller suite of biking options. They aimed to weigh whether and when the Village could, in particular, run a shuttle bus service, sometimes called a tram or a circulator, to and from the train station.

In all this, panelists had to apply best practices from big cities to a small village where volunteers run the government and the municipal budget is too small to support even an independent school district. The panel arrived at a proposal to connect streets and public space and roll this work into a long-term comprehensive plan. That plan can promote long-term investment in new kinds of housing and draw visitors from Edge-on-Hudson without displacing low-income residents. Urban dilemmas of perceived danger, absentee landlordism and gentrification have ridden north to Sleepy Hollow. But urban strategic tools like placemaking, local eating, and support for the arts can address them.



Panel Observations and Findings

A. Unique Attributes and Opportunities

As the Mayor asserted, Sleepy Hollow connects more fully to the Hudson than many towns along the river. Beekman Avenue runs all the way to one of America's three longest rivers, with historic buildings along the route. The Village can draw on genuine resources as opportunities, panelists agreed as they got back on the van after their walkabout. These resource opportunities include:

- An inventory of historic, adaptable buildings, including the former Strand Theater
 - A core that connects to the Hudson on one side and the Rockefeller Preserve trail network on the other, potentially extending to the foodie destination Stone Barns
 - Proximity to tourist attractions like Historic Hudson Valley and Kykuit, the Rockefeller Estate
 - A "good street" in Beekman Avenue, with more busy storefronts than dark ones
- A resilient corps of nonprofit organizations, including Phelps Hospital and the Open Door
 - A history of arts, food and storytelling that can propel new festivals and placemaking
 - A manageable supply of parking, with sites like WL Morse Elementary School that can provide parking in the evenings and on weekends



Nonprofits like the Open Door Family Medical Center, in a former theater, provide strong civic presence.

Image courtesy of Lipofsky Photography

B. Study Area Challenges

With these assets and a compassionate, realistic government, Sleepy Hollow can embrace diversity. But holding onto that priority while managing economic development means facing some structural flaws. Panelists found land-use and management challenges. These include neglected properties, overcrowded homes, zoning that discourages density, and lack of dialogue between new immigrants and long-established residents. By visibly changing signs of blight and disconnection, the Village can realistically explore paths to more affordable and mixed-use development.

Even with several stalwart businesses and energetic nonprofits in the area, Beekman Avenue and its surrounding blocks underperform. Panelists noted that:

- Empty lots break up street flow and create a sense of menace
- Retail vacancies, next to oddly shaped and small lots, depress a shopping experience
- Footprints are too small for showrooming, event spaces, or other uses that can compete with online shopping
- Tourists who come to the Village to see the river, the Cemetery or the Rockefeller Estate have to look outside the Village for coffee, gifts, lodging and events



Abandoned lots break up the street wall and impede perceptions of the active street life that exists along Beekman Avenue.

Images courtesy of Lipofsky Photography

Housing, here and around the East Parcel, can encourage tourism and shopping by deepening a sense of place. Encouraging new housing entails its own challenges. These include:

- Absentee owners neglecting their buildings, with people doubling up or otherwise overcrowding
- Other owners holding out for inflated sales prices before selling their land, expecting inflation when Edge-on-Hudson units come on line
- Difficulty with building code enforcement
- A tax formula from the State that hits rental buildings with an extra layer of property tax
- An all-volunteer Village legislature and limited staff to manage zoning and building issues

Panelists noted the negative effect absentee landlords cast on the downtown area.

Image courtesy of Lipofsky Photography



Already, Village trustees and staff are working hard. The Mayor noted that the head of the building department follows firefighters on some calls, if he can safely enter the building in question, to look for code violations. Similar constraints also thwart zoning reviews. Developers told panelists that the zoning board's monthly schedule drags decisions out over four months, which is generally longer than a lender will allow a developer to hold capital.

Edge-on-Hudson creates opportunity for retail investment and could make the case for density throughout the residential core. Investment and policy would have to seek inclusion to satisfy the TAP assignment and the Village's stated goals. And it would have to explicate strategies for parking, pedestrian and bike access and transit that satisfy real and perceived needs into the future.

C. Stakeholder Perceptions

Through six hours of interviews and six more of discussion and research, panelists coalesced around key steps. They endorse envisioning a path from the waterfront to a Beekman Avenue with more shopping, eating and drinking, festivals, biking, and mixed-income living. Like Sleepy Hollow's legendary Ichabod Crane, though, anyone who'd start down that path must confront real and presumptive dangers.

In stakeholder interviews, panelists talked to officials from Sleepy Hollow and from Tarrytown, and to developers who'd worked in each area. Across the board, stakeholders affirmed the Village's potential. One developer reminded panelists that international investment banks bought into subdivisions south of the Village and could do so within its limits as well. But stakeholders urged the Village to expedite investment, clarify priorities, address tax headaches in the Village, and provide a framework for mixed-use development.

Stakeholders spoke about taxes as a real impediment and about perceived danger in the core. Taken together, these associations can make it hard to start a destination restaurant or complex housing investment. Panelists in breakouts managed to take them apart. Taxes really seem to be frustrating progress, but crime seems less of a menace than a misconception.

One stakeholder exhorted the Village to create a clean zoning slate and create bonuses for density near the train station. This bonus, the stakeholder said, could also "float" as an overlay zone so that a developer with financing and other commitments could build on or near Beekman more quickly.



Stakeholders distinguished a perception of danger from any actual spikes in crime, and Mayor Wray insisted that the Village would remain inclusive and welcoming.

Image courtesy of Lipofsky Photography

Attracting developers to the core, stakeholders said, would become easier with fewer questions about parking and more flags or signs to boost a sense of place. Panelists learned that the WL Morse Elementary School, on Beekman just outside the core, provides parking in evenings and weekends. They also agreed that traffic from Edge-on-Hudson could absorb more fully into the Village if the Village defines parking rules to steer drivers to available spots as those spots open up in the course of a day.



Many stakeholders and village trustees discussed the need for parking. Panelists suggested creative solutions that would use institutions' spaces differently at different times of day.

Image courtesy of Lipofsky Photography



6 |

Panel Recommendations

In its presentation, the panel suggested these strategies as a framework for planning and building a vibrant Sleepy Hollow that cherishes its history and diversity.

Technical Assistance Panel – Sleepy Hollow, New York

		Short Term 1-5 years	Long Term 5-10 years
Catalyst Areas	Beekman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create Beekman Avenue merchant association or BID Hire professional municipal staff to implement goals Pop up businesses to fill vacant spaces Façade Improvement Programs Open communication with community, developers, and municipality (including EOH) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new zoning Comprehensive Plan Develop incentive programs Affordable Housing Programs
	Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify existing housing conditions through survey Community Outreach in multiple languages Review and enforce building code standards Municipal Streetscape programs Façade programs for owners and residents Identify land owners and create open communications 	
Connectivity		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shuttle to Station (15-Min Peak) Connect Bike/Ped Trail Bicycle Route with Signing and Sharrows from Station to Trail Streetscape Standards - Match Edge and/or East Parcel/Pallet Conduct Street Tree Inventory/Survey Repair Existing Damaged Sidewalk Begin Enhancing Gateways Starting with Beekman and US 9 Improve Wayfinding, Implement Mobile Parking System Evening and Weekend Parking Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand Shuttle Service Operation Bike Lanes/Cycle Track Enhance Intersections with Curb Bumpouts Full Pallet on Full Length of Beekman, Courtland, Valley Neighborhood Sidewalk and Street Tree Repair/Maintenance Establish Long-Term Streetscape Maintenance Plan Develop Realistic Parking Requirements for Zoning Identify Additional Parking Opportunities on US 9 and Waterfront
Placemaking		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relocate Green Market Downtown Animate sidewalk with outdoor dining Raise profile of Sleepy Hollow on Historic Hudson Valley website Activate vacant retail space (artist working spaces, pop-up shops, Latin Market Village, etc.) 	

The TAP panel's recommendations include bringing new activity to Sleepy Hollow, which requires a mix of short-term and long-term strategies.

Image courtesy of ULI Panel

A. Short-Term Plan (1-5 years)

In the short term, changes to public space and parking rules can change perceptions about the core and its relation to Edge-on-Hudson. By thinking through how people move around the Village, the panel tried to help Sleepy Hollow plan for rapid, sustained growth at the Edge-on-Hudson site and downtown. The three small teams, working in different spots around the hotel conference rooms and lobby, independently reached the idea of creating a small park at the peak of Cortlandt Street. The engineering experts worked up simulations of "Viewshed Park," which would focus attention on the Hudson.

Moves to foster a sense of place, like relocating an existing farmer's market to the downtown or installing a gateway sign or promoting the Village on the nonprofit Historic Hudson Valley's website can likewise happen almost immediately.

Panelists worked together to frame a hierarchy for one-way and two-way streets and on building sidewalks and planting trees. To execute these moves within an overall strategy of planning for a diverse community, panelists laid out four touchstones;

- Gather data on overcrowding, enforcement, crime and permitting headaches (survey, outreach)
- Simplify permitting for priority building types
- Look closely at building codes and target blight for enforcement; punish violators more quickly and consistently
- Set up roads and zoning (as-of-right, height) for dense mixed-income

The connectivity work necessarily occurs in phases over years.

Connectivity falls in four areas: how hard it is to move, how cars and other transportation options share space, how streets flow, and how streets look. Panelists eyed a future in which Edge-on-Hudson residents might go to the East Parcel for ball games, then uphill for dinner and down to the train station. This should spur a higher sheen on streets and sidewalks and shouldn't swell the number of car trips or parking problems. Panelists proposed three strategic ideas to attract visitors without overtaxing the parking situations. These include:

- Potential shuttle routes to connect Beekman Avenue, Edge-on-Hudson, and the train station
- Bike routes to feed into tourist areas and regional bike trails and down to the train station
- Alternative strategies for bikes, with and without protected bike lanes next to the curb

This engineering yields, as one panelist explained, “a sense of pride in what’s happening” on Beekman. This can extend to Edge-on-Hudson residents, neighbors from the upland areas, and visitors touring the legendary Hudson Valley. Inexpensive amenities such as stamped pavement signs, or bigger outlays like brick pavements, guide pedestrians to visit shops - and people - they might otherwise miss. Streetscaping with a common pallet from Edge-on-Hudson to downtown would encourage travel back and forth from the core to the riverfront.

Nobody can predict the exact mix of retail, pedestrian and bike enhancements that fits a particular place, but devices exist for helping motorists coexist with cyclists and pedestrians. Village leaders can use ULI tools to blend prices and rules for parking with street planning and improvements for pedestrians and cyclists. The panel’s transportation engineers observed how the Village’s traffic flow, like its zoning, had outlasted the General Motors employees it once served. Given the hoped-and-feared influx of visitors from the Edge-on-Hudson site, they realized, plans would need to allay worries about parking while easing ways for people to get around without cars.

To connect people of different incomes in different parts of the Village, panelists advised measuring and upgrading four aspects of how people move:

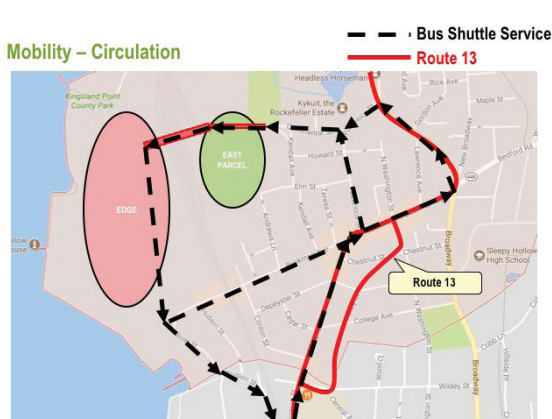
Mobility. Today, residents along the income spectrum see no alternatives to driving and worry about places to park. An infrequent bus feels like a nonstarter to most residents. Narrow streets make biking frightful even without a Headless Horseman on the roads. Fixes in the short-term flow from starting a shuttle bus and improving bike and pedestrian conditions. A circulating shuttle could travel on existing two-way streets, becoming more frequent as Edge-on-Hudson residents arrive and word of mouth spreads that the shuttle works. In the short term, a shuttle should run twice an hour during peak commuting times.



TAP Chairman Kim Morque and panelists work through developing short-term and long-term recommendations for the Village of Sleepy Hollow.

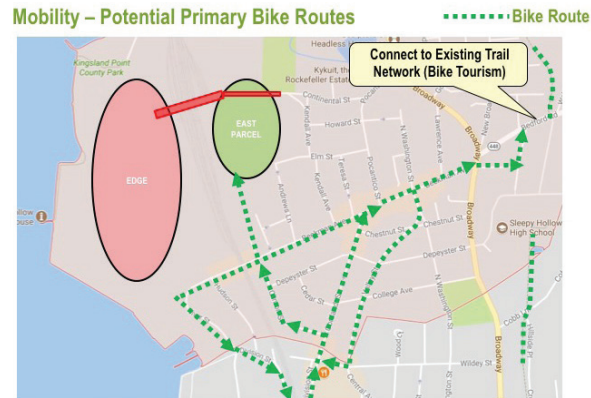
Image courtesy of Lipofsky Photography

Connectivity. Anyone going from east to west needs to travel on Beekman at some point. Panelists advised Village leaders to gather data on how drivers use streets to inform decisions about where bike corridors can connect to the train station and the nearby Preserve via the East Parcel.



One of the panel’s short-term mobility strategies recommended a circulating bus shuttle connecting new development at Edge-on-Hudson with different parts of the Village.

Image courtesy of ULI Panel



As a short term connectivity strategy, the TAP panel recommended bike routes that can connect to the train station and the nearby Preserve via the East Parcel.

Image courtesy of ULI Panel

Streetscaping. Officials can upgrade lighting and clean up tree roots and sidewalks to make streets look like corridors for travel into the Rockefeller Preserve. Creating these vivid corridors can connect residents more compellingly to commuter rail and can tap a large supply of “bike tourists” who are already visiting nearby towns. Announcing those connections with signs and streetscapes makes a feasible short-term goal.

Panelists recommended sprucing up the Village’s sidewalks with a design palette that starts at the waterfront and runs throughout the town.

Image (Left) courtesy of Lipofsky Photography

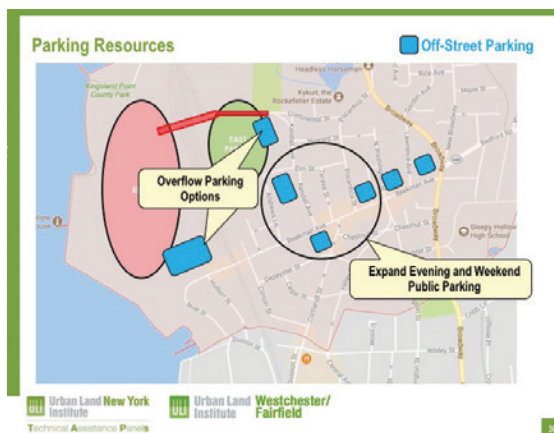
Image (Right) courtesy of ULI Panel



Parking. Panelists advised the Village to assuage concerns about parking, even as it cues people to get out of their cars. The Village can use software and reach out to institutions to help maximize off-street parking on evenings and weekends in places like WL Morse Elementary School, Sleepy Hollow High School, and Phelps Hospital. Many spaces on the north side of Beekman Avenue can serve different parkers at different times of day and overnight, and both the East Parcel and Edge-on-Hudson can house overflow parking for a fee.

The panel recommended maximizing existing parking resources and looking at new options for overflow parking.

Image courtesy of ULI Panel



More two-way traffic, and a supplemental east-west corridor to relieve congestion on Beekman Avenue, could help business and mixed-use development. And more sidewalks, street trees and carefully sited “parklets” to break up the Beekman Avenue thoroughfare can make streets more approachable, creating a base for retail growth.

Engineers honed in on a site at the corner of Cortlandt and Beekman. They mocked up a quick Photoshop of what they provisionally called “Viewshed Park” that would utilize unneeded pavement space and advised the Village to use it as a reference case for ways to make downtown more appealing at a low cost.

While this work proceeds, panelists encouraged the local Chamber of Commerce to stoke more active representation of businesses throughout the core. This could involve running meetings and promotions with Spanish translation. Over a slightly longer time horizon, panelists see the Chamber forming a Business Improvement District that can charge higher dues.

These dues can help incubate restaurants or other downtown startups. For other capital to jump-start downtown investment, panelists advised the Village to use its bonding agency to borrow and “put skin in the game.”

Making places and making Beekman rather than the East Parcel into a central place, presumes that people will choose to live where they see other people enjoying themselves. To play that premise out, panelists recommended the Village do homework to set a baseline. The volunteer staff could augment its ranks with professionals in code enforcement. At the same time, it can base housing strategies on data through steps like these:

- Survey existing owners and renters to get a sense of occupancy and use, and then choose sites for pop-up businesses and art shows
- Concurrently, reach out to civic groups in several languages
- Work with owners on facade improvements and streetscapes, in sync with buildout at Edge-on-Hudson and with adding parklets
- Review existing building codes and increase enforcement, either with professional staff or through partnerships with civic groups
- Create a Beekman Avenue Merchants' Association or BID, with staff
- Find a full-time professional to navigate permitting and incentives for small-scale ground-floor retail
- Promote food trucks, carts and temporary pop-up shopping to activate the street

Along with these attractions, the government should work to mend and upgrade streetscapes at each corner, creating a steady pattern from the riverfront uphill.

These short-term strategies feed each other. By finding creative parking schemes while encouraging people to walk to work and dining, the Village can lower its cost and use more of its land productively. That's vital for a place with so many nonprofit landowners. With a lower cost basis, it can undertake more public space improvements. Panelists suggested the following:

- Work to repair sidewalks and replant trees can combine with facade improvement to make Beekman the center of shopping, dining and entrepreneurship.
- With guidance from ULI and other experts, deploy established placemaking strategies to support the East Parcel's emergence as a place for weekend playground meetups, ball games and regional festivals.
- Create a parklet to encourage walking, biking and sightseeing along the half-mile length of Beekman Avenue. That would encourage more investment in restaurants and retail- and, eventually and in concert with changes in zoning and incentives, more mixed-income development of slightly taller buildings.

As we noted, this work entails financial risk. Panelists urged Village leaders to embrace that risk. Service opportunities can seem straightforward, but taxes and fees can feel difficult for entrepreneurs, especially in the restaurant business. An early sign of partnership might come if Village officials encourage Beekman businesses to put out chairs and benches on sidewalks in order to increase the animation of the Downtown -- particularly in front of food related businesses. Panelists say that this can occur instantly, and can encourage more shopping and strolling and eating, even before streetscape improvements.



The panel recommended adding carefully sited parklets, such as "Viewshed Park" at the intersection of Beekman and Cortlandt, which can help make downtown streets more appealing to pedestrians.

Image courtesy of ULI Panel

Panelists recommended that the Village create an incubator for restaurants or other pop-up stores. This can create virtuous cycles, attracting shoppers from Edge-on-Hudson and encouraging the local entrepreneurs to think bigger. With the Open Door about to leave the former Strand Theater site, the Village can invest in creating a new destination that can support other uses.

Supporting small businesses can also lift related strategies. These can include the following:

- Reaching out to shop owners in the Latino community with detailed explanations and workshops on incentives can help the Village identify and win trust from civic leaders.
- Populating storefronts can create context for the summer street life that bothers some upland residents.
- Organizing shop owners and merchants to assess and build demand for a shuttle bus running uphill and down between Beekman Avenue and the Metro-North station and Edge-on-Hudson. Merchants can also benefit from bike tourism.

B. Long-Term Plan

Over the long term, Sleepy Hollow's celebration of diversity should drive a comprehensive, coordinated planning process. Mayor Wray and his team, or successors, should work with traffic engineers to plan streetscapes, street hierarchy, bicycle lanes and

flexible parking. They should coordinate seed funding for restaurants, bars and galleries- especially ones who provide eye-catching displays or outdoor seating. And mostly, they should iterate a comprehensive plan in full, constant coordination with all communities. Panelists stressed that officials should stitch outreach in multiple languages, at multiple meetings, to all its long-term planning.

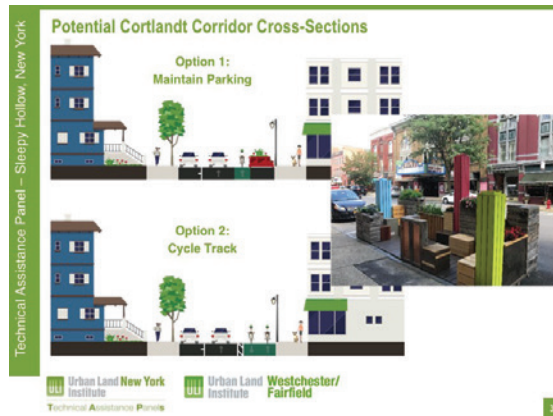
Over several years, the Village should replenish Beekman and the downtown core with fresh investment by again connecting mobility, placemaking and implementation for a range of stakeholders. This would involve:

- Choosing building and zoning code violations that matter most, and enforcing them
- Professionalizing the volunteer-driven process for zoning and permitting
- Allowing five stories and 55-foot building heights, as well as higher density of buildings and double-width storefronts, on and near Beekman
- Engaging the core and Edge-on-Hudson with tailored outreach and workshops in multiple languages
- Planning and promoting festivals and outdoor events that celebrate history and diversity

Panelists looked at a sequential approach to increasing bike tourism and improving traffic flow and connectivity throughout Sleepy Hollow.

Image courtesy of Lipofsky Photography





Panelists identified examples of potential bike lanes along the Beekman and Cortlandt corridors.

Images courtesy of ULI Panel

These strategies run more smoothly on a functional street network, so the Village should consistently adjust and rationalize its traffic planning. This would encompass:

- Expanding a shuttle from the train station and Edge-on-Hudson to Beekman and other key sites like the Rockefeller Preserve
- Creating sidewalk bump-outs at strategic corners and consistently funding good repair for sidewalks and trees
- Providing bike lanes or cycle tracks that connect the station to the community and other areas of interest
- Limiting on-street parking in strategic spots to create on-street bike lanes connecting the riverfront, downtown, and nearby Rockefeller Preserve
- Setting up partnerships with institutions and other landowners, including Edge-on-Hudson, for parking when a school or hospital doesn't need it, and for overflow parking for events

In considering how to pay for transit as Edge-on-Hudson comes on line, panelists said, the Village could look at comparable communities that have evolved past one-space-per-unit parking requirements. Following this strategy opens ways to think about financing to support changes to building and zoning policy. The Village should revisit its codes, apply some of its own capital, and push for tax changes to foster a downtown with the armature of a diverse community. These include:

- Hiring expert staff to speed up permitting for new development to 90 days
- Expediting permitting for workforce and affordable housing
- Studying workforce housing case studies from ULI and others
- Rescinding a "non-homestead" assessment formula that raises taxes on rental housing
- Studying nearby high-density developments and considering a zoning overlay to allow high density within commutable distance of transit
- Crafting, with expert support, a new comprehensive zoning code that reflects the Village's mix of commuters, immigrants, startups, artists and affluent retirees.

In all these, Village leaders can learn from other towns and from ULI. Most outdoor-dining districts live without the Hudson Valley's harsh winters, to be sure, but other Valley towns like Yonkers and Peekskill provide case studies (ULI also offers tools for productive outdoor retail). Creating a restaurant cluster can make mixed-use buildings on Beekman more feasible, and more feasible buildings on Beekman can support a more vigorous code enforcement regime.

Parallel to these innovations, the Village should reform policy over time to make housing development less cumbersome. This would mean investigating and mastering alternative tax programs, including considering lowering taxes on five-unit buildings, and allowing extra stories or buildings as high as 55 feet in the core. Panelists also suggested a transit-oriented overlay in zoning to let the Village apply high-density zoning where development will support it. Village leaders can learn, embrace and educate from these principles:

- Design tax innovations, with ULI tools
- Remember to reach out to civic leaders with economic partnerships
- Reach out many times in all languages to residents and shopkeepers, explaining menu of options
- Assign staff to work with merchants to explain tax breaks and incentives, and their rationale

Doing this daily outreach, while testing for clarity and applicability, can guide Village leaders to unite two poles. They can help leaders among the immigrant population emerge and can stitch Edge-on-Hudson to the daily life uphill.

Fast forward to the year 2028, with Edge-on-Hudson built out and thriving. The Hudson River glitters on a spring day, and tourists in the area want to get dinner someplace memorable. They can climb on a circulating shuttle that hits key stops every 15 minutes. They sit next to Edge-on-Hudson residents. When they get uphill, they pass visitors who've spent the day biking the twists and turns of the Rockefeller Estate. Some stop in Latin American food stalls; others head to the Red Zebra. Those who drive can follow wayfinding cues and gateway signs to get out of their cars and onto Beekman before it gets too crowded. When it gets late, many of the people who've been eating and drinking and smiling at others walk back to their homes. Others start making plans to come back- and stay longer- for the annual Halloween Festival.



7 |

Next Steps

Today, Sleepy Hollow shows an upscale development in one corner, a waterfront park in another, and space for a grand park right below a historic downtown. One panelist called this an “extraordinary piece of dirt from a developer’s perspective.” Connecting Edge-on-Hudson through a park to a vibrant Beekman Avenue, with mass transit to riverfront train stations, can mark a new era in the Village’s history.

Where to start? Village leaders can work with the Village of Tarrytown to move the farmer’s market from its current location in Patriots Park to downtown and can negotiate larger cyber-space on the Historic Hudson Valley website within a week. Within a few months, the Village can budget and schedule pavement stamping and tree repair. It can build the “Viewshed Park” within a year.

While Sleepy Hollow evolves as a destination, the Village’s leaders can keep looking carefully through parking demand, parking models, bicycle feasibility, and retail and housing economic histories. ULI’s case studies and tools can frame these studies and point toward successful tactics.

The mayor reminded panelists that many families have long established homes in the village, some for more than a century, while others are newcomers. Sleepy Hollow can continue as a unique place for an even greater diversity of people, if it makes a commitment to openness and inclusion. This vision should encompass accepting new residents and businesses, including retail, restaurant and hospitality, and offering a wide range of housing options. The legend of Sleepy Hollow may be old, but its most exciting days may be just beginning.



**Urban Land New York
Institute**

ULI New York
25 West 45th Street, Suite 505
New York, NY 10036
newyork.uli.org

For more information email
newyork@uli.org or call 917.773.8822



**Urban Land Westchester/
Institute Fairfield**

ULI Westchester/Fairfield
29 Par Road
Montebello, NY 10901
west-fair.uli.org

For more information email
mara.winokur@uli.org or call 201.312.8817