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# Westchester County Department of Planning

## 2009 Budget Presentation

November, 2008

**Westchester County Department of Planning**  
**2009 Operating Budget**

**Mission**

The mission of the Planning Department is to shape and influence growth & development in Westchester County in order to improve quality of life and protect the environment, resulting in more livable and sustainable communities.

Three of the specialized sections of the Department – Land Use and Development, Housing and Environmental Planning – focus on the programs that carry out this mission. They utilize the expertise of the Department's two other sections – Design and Administration – which enable the work program of the Department to be carried out in the most comprehensive and cost-effective manner for all county residents. Activities within each section focus on the pattern of development and the natural environment and ways in which buildings, transportation and open space can be shaped or utilized to achieve a physical environment that fosters smart growth for all county residents. The Mission is achieved by working closely with other County departments, the 45 municipalities and the private and non-profit sectors.

The work program of the department includes a number of activities that are mandated by the County Charter and New York State and the federal governments. These include the review of certain proposed land use and zoning actions by municipalities, review of County capital projects and the environmental review (SEQR or NEPA) of all County projects and legislative actions.

The Planning Department's work focuses on five program areas: General Government and Support, Culture and Recreation, Environmental, Economic Development and Health and Public Safety.

Increases to the Planning Department's Operating Budget (without Hilltop Hanover) and to the Operating Budget of the Hilltop Hanover Cost Center are discussed on page 12 and 13.

**2008 Accomplishments/2009 Work Program**

**General Government and Support-Land Use**

- Westchester 2025: Following the public kick-off of Westchester 2025 and its website in January 2008, the Department has met with more than a dozen Westchester municipalities to assist and promote local comprehensive planning work. The County Planning Board adopted policies for land use and development in May 2008 that now serve as the basis for Planning Board reviews of referred local planning and zoning actions as well as board reviews of capital budget requests and amendments. Improvements and enhancements of the website have continued through 2008. In 2009, staff will complete work on several additional enhancements and the Planning Board will outline the shape and scope of a new Vision Plan that will replace the Patterns Map, adopted in 1995. Work with individual municipalities, including technical assistance, will continue.
- Tappan Zee Bridge/I-287 Environmental Review: The Department continued to provide full staff support for the County Executive's Tappan Zee Futures Task Force, convened by Mr. Spano and Rockland County Executive Vanderhoef, to track the study of alternative plans for the Tappan Zee Bridge and I-287 corridor as well as to raise public awareness. Work will expand in 2009 as the project study team prepares a draft environmental impact statement that will provide more detail on a new cross-county bus rapid transit system. The Department will serve as the link to involve local governments in this process and to increase understanding of the value of a new transit system.
- Westchester County Capital Program: The 2009 County Planning Board annual report on the County's capital budget and its five-year capital program, prepared by Department staff for Planning Board

review and approval, evaluated 127 projects requested for 2009 funding and made recommendations on the physical planning aspects of each project. In addition, staff completed reviews of 114 design plans. Staff will continue these capital reviews in 2009 and assist departments in developing their capital programs. Staff will also work with operating departments to identify means to streamline the review process. In 2009, the Design Section will address site improvements and parking needs at county facilities, including Grasslands and the South County Trailway.

- County Facility Plans: A Draft Master Plan for the Grasslands Reservation was completed in 2007. We are currently working with a consultant to prepare a comprehensive signage system for the campus and expect to bring this to the BOL in 2009 to present the plan and request funding to proceed with fabrication and installation of the signage system. Work was also begun on a site improvement plan and a stormwater management master plan for the campus and will continue in 2009.
- Land Use and Zoning Referrals: During 2008, staff will have reviewed approximately 600 referrals of proposed municipal land use and zoning actions to County Planning Board and prepared 450 referral response letters for County Planning Board review and approval in accordance with the Charter mandate. The level of referrals has remained fairly consistent in recent years and is not expected to change in 2009.
- Property Dispositions: Staff worked with the Director of Real Estate on the disposition of surplus parcels. The Board of Legislators approved the transfer of 7 parcels to municipalities or to adjacent property owners. Other parcels have been appraised and transfers to interested adjacent property owners are in process. Staff will continue to work with the Director of Real Estate on the disposition of approximately 20 additional parcels of County land in 2009.
- Technical Assistance: Staff responded to over 3,000 requests for technical assistance from local municipalities on land use, environmental, housing and community development issues.
- Research:

Census 2010 - Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) In 2008, Planning staff met with the Town and Village Clerks Associations of Westchester to encourage their participation in the LUCA program and ensure the most accurate count in the upcoming census. The U.S. Census Bureau distributed address lists to all municipalities in Westchester for editing. The Bureau will review edits and determine which ones are acceptable. Municipalities will have an opportunity to challenge those edits in 2009. Planning will provide technical support to municipalities in 2009 as needed.

Census American Community Survey (ACS) In 2008, Planning partnered with the Census Bureau and NYS Department of Economic Development to form Complete Count Committees (CCCs) in preparation for Census 2010. CCCs, appointed by municipal officials, will encourage Westchester residents to complete Census 2010 forms. Department staff will contact municipal officials, other County departments, and non-government organizations to encourage the formation of CCCs in late 2008 and early 2009. Planning has also agreed to work with the Bureau on the Census Bureau's Participant Statistical Areas Program (PSAP) to review and comment on geographic boundaries of Census Bureau divisions, including Census Tracts, Block Groups and Census-Designated Places. Planning will review these boundaries and submit changes to the NY Regional Office of the Census Bureau in 2009 if warranted.

Municipal/School District Ball Field Survey Staff worked with the Department of Parks to conduct a survey of municipal recreation directors and school district athletic directors to identify the number and type of baseball, softball, soccer and multi-use fields in each jurisdiction. Using GIS, the location of each ball field will be mapped. The project will be

completed in 2009 and an analysis of the data will be used to evaluate future Legacy project requests.

- Westchester Municipal Planning Federation (WMPF): Staff provided administrative, technical and program support to the WMPF Board for 12 technical training seminars in 2008 for officials, staff and land use board members throughout Westchester County. At least the same number of technical sessions will be provided in 2009. As municipal land use board members are now required by State law to obtain four hours of training each year, staff has worked with the WMPF Board to continue training opportunities and identify new formats so all are able to obtain the continuing education credits.
- Design Primer: In 2008, a draft of a new Design Primer was completed. It will be incorporated into the *Westchester 2025*.
- Big House/Tear Down Report: Research was conducted in 2007-08 on trends in the development of larger homes and the tear down of existing homes in Westchester. Staff compiled data through a survey of 43 municipal zoning ordinances, interviews with local officials and review of regional and national trends. The project's end product will be a compendium of local ordinances compiled from the information that will be made available to municipalities through the County's web site in 2009.
- Sing Sing Museum: The Planning Department continued working with the County Executive's office and the Village and Town of Ossining on efforts to establish a museum at the Sing Sing State Correctional Facility. The integrity of the powerhouse was evaluated in order to proceed with phase one to establish the museum. In 2009, opportunities for funding will be identified and, if appropriate, pursued for implementation of phase one.
- Bronx River Parkway Reservation Design Guidelines: A set of guidelines for future development projects on the Bronx River Parkway Reservation was drafted in 2008 by Planning staff in conjunction with staff of Parks Recreation and Conservation and Public Works. The guidelines cover signage, fences, lighting and other design related elements. It will be finalized and made available to County departments and other interested groups in 2009.

### **General Government and Support-Design**

This section focuses on the design and implementation of plans for County and municipal facilities and natural resource projects. Included are trailway and open space projects and wetland and stream bank restoration projects. Design projects encompass a planting plan for an individual facility, urban design studies of a target area, playground designs and streetscapes. Accomplishments are itemized under all program areas. This work will continue in 2009. In addition, the Design section will provide technical planning and construction management services to municipalities and non-profits within the 40 municipalities that are part of the Urban County Consortium receiving CDBG funds.

### **General Government and Support -Administration**

This section is organized to support the work program of the Department by providing needed financial, budgetary, and contractual and personnel services including administration of grants, citizen boards and related functions. New administrative systems, policies and programs are being developed and implemented to maintain the smooth functioning of the department, enhance production and performance and achieve cost efficiencies and budgetary savings.

### **Culture and Recreation**

- Open Space: Westchester County, in collaboration with our municipal partners, has helped preserve over 2,000 acres of open space since 1998. Acquisitions have ranged in size and character from urban

parks in New Rochelle to the over 600 acres of Angle Fly Preserve in Somers. Planning also worked with Parks, Recreation and Conservation on Legacy proposals for ball fields in Yonkers, Mt. Vernon, New Rochelle and Lewisboro. A number of new projects for open space preservation and ballfields are under consideration for action in 2009.

- RiverWalk: Design is complete for several segments of the County Executive's proposed 50-mile long path along the Hudson River. A key segment of the Croton-on-Hudson RiverWalk was completed in 2008. Construction of a portion of trailway through Kraft Foods, Lyndhurst and a segment through the Metro-North Railroad property immediately north of Kraft, Tarrytown will begin in late 2008/early 2009. Construction on a second segment in Tarrytown known as Scenic Hudson RiverWalk Park is under construction as part of a private residential development. The County and City of Yonkers will commence design in 2009 on a segment of RiverWalk at the City's JFK Marina and Trevor Park that will include an outdoor amphitheater and pathway connection between Metro-North's Glenwood train station and the new amphitheater. Design will commence in late 2008 on a portion of RiverWalk in the Crawbuckie Preserve and Mariandale property in the Village of Ossining with construction to start in late 2009/early 2010. Staff is currently working with Dobbs Ferry on other segments of RiverWalk. The Department's RiverWalk Design Guidelines Report is being used by the County and others to ensure consistency and continuity in the use of materials and signage as segments are constructed.
- Trailways: Phase 6 of the South County Trailway from Dunwoodie Golf Course to Tuckahoe Road and an interim connection from Route 119/Elmsford to Warehouse Lane/Greenburgh will be designed in 2009. In 2009, design will begin to improve pedestrian access and provide parking for the South County Trailway in Hastings. In 2009, design will also begin on the rehabilitation and expansion of the Playland Parkway Pathway. Design is expected to begin on the Bronx River Parkway Reservation Trailway from Palmer Road to the Bronx border in Yonkers and on the portion from Crane Road to Fenimore Road in Greenburgh/Scarsdale in 2009. A feasibility/design study was begun in 2007 on the Tarrytown/Kensico Trailway and will be completed in 2009.
- Regional Bike and Pedestrian Plans: In 2008, staff continued to take the lead on planning for regional bike and pedestrian facility improvements. In addition to looking for innovative ways to include bicycle and pedestrian improvements as part of development and transportation projects, the Department continued its work on establishing a route for the East Coast Greenway/Bike Route 1 in Westchester County and distributed a draft report to local officials. This proposed route was presented at municipal meetings in 2008. Changes proposed at these meetings were incorporated into the plan. Additional meetings will be held in 2009 with Port Chester and Pelham Manor to solicit their input. The plan will then be finalized. The Department continues to look for new funding sources to help pay for bicycle and pedestrian projects.
- Historic Preservation: In 2008, the Department continued to provide staff support to the County's Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC) while reviewing the County's historically sensitive capital projects that included 85 ongoing projects and 4 new projects proposed for FY 2009. In 2008, staff assisted HPAC in developing and running the conference "Protecting Historic Character: Taming the Tear Down Trend" conference. In 2009, the interpretive and directional signage plan for the Bronx River Parkway Reservation will be completed. Assistance to local communities with the development/adoption of local preservation ordinances and the provision of historic preservation assistance to other County departments will continue in 2009.

### **Environmental Planning**

Croton and Kensico Watershed Planning and Studies (MOA): The following activities were undertaken pursuant to the 1997 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between New York City, Westchester County and other parties involved in protecting part of the watersheds that provides drinking water to New York City and 85% of Westchester water consumers:

- Croton Plan The *Comprehensive Croton Watershed Water Quality Protection Plan* for protecting water quality and community character was completed by Department staff for the County and the ten Croton Watershed municipalities. Work included GIS analysis, mapping, graphics and land use analysis as well as conducting public review sessions. After NYCDEP review is completed, municipal agreement on the final plan is anticipated to begin in early 2009. Work will continue in 2009 on implementation of the Plan's recommendations.
- Northern Westchester Watershed Committee (NWWC) Administrative and technical support was provided by staff to this coalition of town Supervisors who meet to implement the MOA. This will continue in 2009. The NWWC worked with the NYSDES, NYSDEC and Putnam County to consider the formation of Regional Stormwater Entity. A grant was awarded for a study to determine the financial, legal and technical aspects of such an entity. This will be completed in 2009.
- EOH Fund Administration The East of Hudson Water Quality Investment Program fund has grown from \$38 million to over \$59 million. Staff continues to administer expenditures from the fund including the previously approved use of \$10 million for the Peach Lake Sewering Project and \$3.75 million for 12 local projects for \$312,500 with equal matching funds provided through each watershed municipality. The BOL is currently reviewing an additional expenditure of \$500,000 for the County's Septic Management Program. The NWWC has recommended a number of additional studies to be funded. Review and implementation of their recommendations will continue in 2009.
- Watershed Protection and Partnership Council As a member of the Partnership Council, the County – through the Planning Department – provides the Council with progress updates on the program areas above and serves as a member of the Technical Advisory Committee, which reviewed NYSDEC's SPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from MS4s. In 2009, Department staff will continue to work with the Council on regional MOA issues, such as a regional approach to stormwater management.

#### Other Watershed Planning and Studies

- Indian Brook-Croton Gorge Watershed Plan A plan was prepared and finalized in 2007 in cooperation with the five watershed municipalities. The Department has received a grant from the Hudson River Estuary Program to develop and implement an intermunicipal agreement and a small demonstration project as a first step in implementing the recommendations included in the Plan. Work funded by the grant is underway and will be completed by fall of 2009.
- Bronx River Watershed Plan Staff completed a stormwater management plan for the Bronx River watershed, working with the 14 watershed municipalities, New York City, state agencies and non-for-profit groups to form the Bronx River Coalition. The plan includes a detailed wetlands assessment and wetlands assessment tools, an evaluation of municipal ordinances related to stormwater in the watershed communities and conceptual plans for 24 projects to improve stormwater quality. The Department has sought grant funding to construct projects identified in the Plan. The Department will continue this effort in 2009 and is working with Public Works on a plan to address flooding in the watershed.
- Lower Hudson River Watershed Plan In 2009, staff will begin work on a watershed plan for the Lower Hudson River watershed, which includes the Saw Mill River and Pocantico River. The plan will incorporate both flooding and water quality in the development of a stormwater management plan for the watershed. The plan is anticipated to be completed by end of 2010.
- Davids Island In 2007, the County and the City of New Rochelle continued to move forward with the \$1 million investigatory stage of the Davids Island Environmental Restoration Program. The County and City originally agreed to contribute up to \$60,000 each to match the \$882,000 grant from the NYS

Department of Environmental Conservation. Recently, the State Assistance Contract was amended to allow for increased costs to be funded by the State and City, with no additional County contributions. The site investigation is completed and Remedial Action Plan is being prepared to present to the public. Staff continues to monitor progress of the Army Corps of Engineers, which has received over \$27 million for building demolition, archaeological and remediation work on the island, which is nearing completion. Staff has been working in partnership with the City of New Rochelle on this project in anticipation of the County's possible acquisition of the island for park purposes.

#### Stormwater Management and Flooding

- Grant Award: Education and Outreach A \$200,000 grant was awarded to the County and 38 partner municipalities to develop an education and outreach program for stormwater education to meet requirements under the State's Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit program for municipal stormwater runoff (also known as the Phase II stormwater program). A scope of services and model intermunicipal agreements (IMAs) with the participating municipalities have been prepared. Work on the grant deliverables, which will consist primarily of education and outreach materials targeted at county residents and business owners, is underway and will continue through 2009.
- Stormwater Retrofit Projects Three stormwater retrofits have been completed and plans are underway to install additional retrofits designed to improve stormwater runoff quality at existing County facilities, including Maple Moor Golf Course. Retrofits will also function as demonstration projects to educate local communities and the development industry. Partial funding for the retrofits came through grants from the USDA, NRCS, and USACE. These projects will be posted on the County website to provide additional information and resources and promote these beneficial practices.
- Stormwater Demonstration Park Staff worked closely with the Departments of Public Works and Parks to incorporate a variety of stormwater best management practices (BMPs) into the redesign of the County Center parking area. The site is intended to serve as a stormwater demonstration park to show how to minimize impacts to the environment and protect water quality. Construction began in fall of 2007 and will be completed by spring of 2009. Funding is also being sought to restore a portion of the wetlands and streambank at the site, which will also enhance the educational benefits to visitors.
- Stormwater Management Plan Staff works closely with the Department of Public Works and other County departments in preparing annual reports under the County's State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit for Municipal Stormwater Runoff. These reports outline the efforts undertaken by the County to improve the quality of runoff discharged from its storm sewer system. 2007 was the last year in the first permit cycle. Staff worked with Public Works and other departments to prepare the final report and prepare for the new 2008 – 2013 permit cycle, which has a number of additional reporting and evaluation requirements. Planning staff also works closely with Public Works to administer a capital project for stormwater improvements to existing County-owned properties and facilities. For 2009, efforts will focus on County-owned facilities and roads within the Croton Watershed, as this area is subject to heightened standards and requirements. Additional efforts include the preparation of a stormwater master plan for the County's Grasslands Campus, with implementation of the plan's recommendations to commence in later years.
- Floodplain and Stormwater Management Staff continues to work with municipalities on floodplain and stormwater management to reduce impacts to the environment and to minimize flood impacts throughout the County. The Department has received a grant from the State Emergency Management Office to convene a workshop and develop a manual on how to improve stormwater management and flood reduction through the local site plan review process.
- Flood Task Force In June 2007, County Executive Spano created a citizen based advisory task force comprised of experts in land use and matters related to flooding to assist the County in reducing the impacts of flooding on people and property throughout the County. Planning and Public Works have been working closely with the Task Force in a number of areas. The primary focus has been on

developing the criteria and process for the expenditure of up to \$50 million over 5 years. To date, applications for county funding have been received from 13 municipalities. Eight of these municipalities have been determined to be eligible for funding. The remaining five are being evaluated. We anticipate coming to the BOL in early 2009 to request funding for a number of these projects. At the same time, we are working on a separate capital project to identify ways to mitigate flooding on county property. In addition to regular meetings, subcommittees were set up focusing on specific issues. Staff has also been working with State and Federal entities on flood mitigation projects throughout the County. A subcommittee of the Task Force prepared development standards that municipalities will be asked to incorporate by in their local ordinances as part of the County's overall program to reduce the impacts of flooding.

### Environmental Review

- SEQR Reviews Environmental reviews in accordance with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) were conducted for over 200 County projects and legislative actions and over 1,200 A&C agenda items in 2008.
- County Airport Supplemental EIS Planning is working with Transportation and Public Works to direct the consultant to the County in the preparation of a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement related to proposed modifications to the Airport Layout Plan. The larger project was put on hold in 2007 to study the parking situation at the airport and complete designs and studies in support of some of the individual projects. The SEQR process commenced in late 2007 on an individual project to improve the de-icing facilities at the airport. The SEQR process for this project is anticipated to be completed by spring of 2009. The consultant is currently preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the remainder of the projects.
- NEPA Reviews 93 NEPA reviews were conducted in 2008 for federally funded projects including housing, streetscapes, park projects, lead abatement and projects located at Westchester County Airport.

### Education/Outreach/Community Involvement

- Hilltop Hanover Environmental Resource Center Activities, demonstration projects and educational programs at Hilltop Hanover continued to expand in 2008 under the direction of the Farm Manager. There has been an increased public demand for more agricultural educational programs on growing your own produce at home. This demand is in response to the "local foods" movement, more environmental awareness and economic necessity in hard economic times. In order to meet this new demand, the Farm has geared many of its new programs towards at-home farming programs, which provide many environmental benefits as well as help people learn how to grow their own produce thereby helping them to augment their food budgets. The new "Farm at Home" demonstration garden constructed in 2008 functions as the outdoor classroom for farming in your own backyard. The Hilltop Farmer works on crop production of 4-acres, but also helps develop and teach farming at home programs. New hoop houses to extend the growing season and provide in door "hot houses" for starting seedlings are under construction and will be up and running in the new year. More workshops are being planned for the home gardener with a how-to weekly manual being planned to be posted on the Hilltop website. The "Ask the farmer blog" is being set up to make it easier for the home gardener to benefit from our farmer's knowledge.
- In addition to working with the general public, a workshop series is being planned for interested schools on growing produce in the schoolyard. With the level of expanded programs, many more school groups, Boy Scout, Girl Scout troops and families visit the farm. Tours are given as well as participation in crop production. 'Something Good in the World, Inc', offers classes to children, families and school groups featuring a farm based curriculum. School groups love the programs offered by SGITW and hundreds more children have visited the farm over the last year. SGITW has also constructed a see-saw water pump and is planning on building a bicycle powered light for the chicken



coop. These demonstrations all add to the farms mission statement and increased popularity with residents.

- Volunteers on a regular basis participate and assist the staff with crop production. ‘Another Step’, a volunteer group of developmentally challenged adults attends the farm daily to help maintain the farm at-home garden. Pick-your-own produce was very successful, and the farm could not keep up with the demand. Many down County residents attended the pick-you-own produce on a regular basis.
- In addition to the pick-you-own, the farm stand continued to be an enormous success. The farm stand was built by an Eagle Scout as his Eagle Scout project and was completed in April 2008. Produce not sold at the farm stand is donated to the local food pantry. Food preservation classes including canning and freezing were offered to the public and well attended. The classes were taught by seasoned food preservation volunteers.
- Cornell Cooperative Extension continues to provide training workshops and classes to children, adults and visiting school groups. In 2008, these included grass/lawn clinics, composting clinics and a butterfly garden. Cornell also maintains demonstration gardens which have become a popular destination at the farm
- The Watershed Agricultural Council (WAC) continues to provide assistance to the County on water quality issues, best management practices and is working on assisting with the development of new programs in 2009. The WAC has also provided design assistance for a new on-site composting facility that will be constructed over the next several months and serve as a model other County facilities as well as facilities such as hospitals, corporate parks and educational institutions. A RFP to solicit additional licensee groups to provide demonstration and educational programs at the farm will be posted by the end of 2008, with the hopes of new agricultural and environmental opportunities at the farm in 2009.
- Planning worked with Public Works through 2008 on a facility master plan and building improvements plan. Several infrastructure projects are under way and water line work will be completed by December 2008, with new septic systems installed in 2009. Classroom improvements will provide a space for increase of programming and allow the Resource Center to expand and fulfill its mission of providing quality environmental programs for the residents of Westchester County.
- The Citizen Volunteer Monitoring Program Four workshops were held during the spring of 2008 and over 100 volunteers trained, resulting in the weekly monitoring of 21 sites throughout the County, representing continued growth of the program. The program continued to include local high schools and over 100 students. The program has been the subject of numerous news media reports, including the New York Times, and The Weather Channel. In 2009, the program will enter the third year of its second grant (with a five-year term) from the NYSDEC. Funding from the program will be used in 2009 to expand outreach efforts and the involvement of the volunteers in the County’s efforts to educate local residents and municipal boards and promote an understanding of watersheds, our impacts on them, and how we can use stream health as an indicator of water quality.
- Soil and Water Conservation District (SCWD) The Department provides administrative and technical services to the Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors, including overseeing the habitat restoration program and the provision of technical assistance to local communities, the professional community, and residents. The Soil and Water Conservation District continues to sponsor or co-sponsor three technical workshops on topics such as stormwater management and erosion and sediment control to protect the environment. Recent workshops have been overbooked and resources will be sought to repeat these popular programs.
- Technical Assistance Staff organized three workshops and training sessions to increase understanding and technical expertise of environmental issues and has participated in over one dozen meetings, conferences and seminars in 2008.

- Brochures and General Information The Department continues to disseminate material on stormwater management, based on our popular poster series, to local residents – primarily online. The Department has prepared and disseminated information on programs related to environmental protection and agricultural preservation. A limited number of hard copies are distributed at environmental fairs and events. In 2008, the Department produced a brochure on invasive plants, describing the plants and how they negatively impact the environment. The Department designed and installed six educational signs for aquatic habitat sites using a grant from the Long Island Sound Study Program. The Department also distributes literature and information prepared by other sources, such as technical manuals like the New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual. The Department will seek funding to produce additional technical and informational material in 2009.

#### Agricultural and Farmland Protection

- Farmland Protection Implementation Grant The Department, working with the Westchester Land Trust and the Watershed Agricultural Council, prepared a proposal to participate in the State's Farmland Implementation Grant Program. The County was awarded over \$2.7 million in 2006 and almost \$2.3 million in 2007 to purchase the development rights on two of Westchester's few remaining family farms. Planning will be working with other County departments, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Watershed Ag Council and Westchester Land Trust to implement these grants and secure the agricultural conservation easement on the farm. The Department also continues to submit applications for additional grant awards.
- Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan The Westchester County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan was certified by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets in 2005. The Department has submitted grant applications, partnering with the Westchester County Cornell Cooperative Extension Service, to implement a number of the recommendations contained in the plan. Department personnel participated in workshops on Agricultural Law and continue to work with local municipalities on agricultural issues. The Department will continue to seek funding in 2009 to implement the recommendations to protect and enhance Westchester's agricultural industry.
- Agricultural Nonpoint Source Assessments and Whole Farm Plans The Watershed Agricultural Council completed the inventory, assessment and prioritization of agricultural land in 2006, completing fifteen whole farm plans to reduce potential environmental impacts associated with ten high-priority agricultural operations. The Department has submitted a five-year strategic plan for additional funding under the State Agricultural Environmental Assessment (AEM) program and will continue to look for additional ways to achieve the goals of this program in 2009.
- Additions to the Agricultural District Department staff worked with the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) to review applications from local landowners who wish to be added to Westchester County's existing Agricultural District. In 2008, the AFPB reviewed six applications and recommended the addition of three parcels to the BOL. Legislation for the proposed addition of these parcels has been submitted to the BOL.
- Agricultural District Recertification In 2009, the County Board of Legislators must re-evaluate the current district and submit a report to the State. In anticipation of these efforts, a steering committee was established consisting of County and local municipal officials, various boards and representatives of various interest groups to work with a consultant to assist in the evaluation of the district. The steering committee is working with a consultant and is aiming to have a report done in early 2009.

#### Aquatic Habitat Restoration Projects

- Current Projects The Aquatic Habitat Restoration Program, which restores degraded wetlands, watercourses, waterbodies and related habitats to improve water quality has been a departmental priority since the 1990s. Active projects for 2008 and 2009 include:

- Construction or design of four freshwater pond restoration projects.
- Construction or design of one tidal pond restoration project.
- Construction of one streambank stabilization project.
- Construction or design of four stormwater retrofit projects.
- Education and Outreach A brochure of aquatic restoration sites with an accompanying video was prepared, distributed and put on the website to serve as an education tool and to encourage replication of these by local communities. Links to the County's website have been created from a number of other websites of related agencies and organizations. The Aquatic Habitat Program was the subject of several newspaper articles and a Weather Channel news spot.

## **Housing**

### **Economic Development-Housing**

- New Affordable Housing: Staff has successfully worked with developers of affordable housing projects by conducting application reviews and providing technical assistance. Construction of 307 County funded affordable housing units in five individual developments will be completed by the end of the year. Another 602 units are currently under construction with 334 expected to be completed in 2008. Additional units are in the pipeline and will advance in 2009. These may result in an estimated additional 300 units being under construction by year-end 2009. These new developments include green and smart technology features which benefit the environment, reduce greenhouse gases and improve the quality of life for the residents.
- Affordable Senior Rental Housing-White Plains: The proposal for approximately 200 units of affordable senior housing in a well designed handicapped accessible building that features green and smart technology is expected to move forward in 2009. The Board of Legislators approved authority to enter into a 65 year lease with the development team, with three options to renew for 10 years each. The developer will need to secure planning and zoning approvals from the City of White Plains.
- Section 8 Rental Assistance: In the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, 4,271 units were assisted in 2008, including Vouchers made available for veterans through the federal Veterans Administration. In 2009, we expect an estimated additional 100 units. Some of these units may be made available to ensure the affordability of home ownership units for graduates of the Family Self Sufficiency Program. In 2009, the program will fully utilize its funding for rental assistance and expects to continue operating as a "High Performing Agency" as designated by NYS DHCR.
- Family Self Sufficiency (FSS): The FSS Program helps families improve their economic stability by linking them to educational programs, vocational programs and support services. There are 322 families currently in this program. Since the inception of this program in 1993, 281 families have graduated with 24 of those families graduating in 2007. A similar number are expected to graduate in 2008. The graduates of the FSS Program are encouraged to continue with our Home Ownership Program, which uses subsidies from Section 8 to assist with the mortgage payments. Presently, we have eight successful homeowners, with two other families preparing to close on the purchase of their first home.
- Homeless Assistance: The County coordinates and reviews applications for supportive housing services to aid homeless households throughout Westchester County, including the cities of Yonkers, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, White Plains and the Continuum of Care Network, and will continue to do so in 2009. Planning will also assist in the coordination and review of renewal Shelter plus Care Units and supportive services to the chronic homeless and homeless with special needs in 2009. The 10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness required by the federal government will be updated to include new

requirements from HUD. The Department continues to assist in the Homeless Management Information System to ensure an unduplicated count of homeless persons assisted by the various programs.

- **HOPWA Program:** (Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS); The Department received an award from NYC for additional funding of over \$2.24 million in 2008. The majority of these funds provide case management services and monthly rental subsidies to 90 families. The balance is granted to the Cities of Mt. Vernon and Yonkers to provide services to individuals with HIV/AIDS and their families. The City of New Rochelle has previously participated in this funding, but has opted out in 2008.

### **Economic Development-Community Development**

- **Community Development:** In 2008, 16 municipal improvement projects were designed in 13 communities. Twelve of those projects have been completed. Construction is underway on another 4 projects, which include parks, sidewalks, streetscapes, and playgrounds totaling almost \$6 million. In 2009, staff anticipates designing and constructing 12 projects in 12 communities valued at \$5 million. Staff will design an additional 4 projects valued at \$1.8 million that will be constructed in 2010.

### **Health and Safety**

- **Rehabilitation of Existing Housing:** In 2008, 16 units will be completed through the Property Improvement Program and other resources leveraged by the Planning Department such as the NYS Affordable Housing Corporation Housing Improvement Program, NYS RESTORE program, Access to Home Program and WRAP (Weatherization Referral Assistance Program) funds. PIP funds were also awarded to a 189 unit development, formerly a Mitchell Lama development, which assisted in maintaining the affordability of those units. Additionally, use of the leveraged improvement funds from NYS, supplemented an award of HOME funds to a limited equity affordable housing Cooperative to improve 11 units within the development, as proposed, allowing the remaining funds to be used towards 24 additional units in the development in 2009.
- **Lead Paint Abatement:** The Lead Safe Westchester (LSW) program continues to reduce the incidence of lead poisoning in high risk children and also to have a significant impact on improving the condition of the pre-1978 affordable housing stock. In September of 2006, the County was awarded an additional \$5 million from HUD to evaluate and reduce lead paint hazards and implement controls in approximately 350 housing units in the County through 2009. In 2006, 63 units were completed; 62 in 2007 and an estimated 120 units will be cleared in 2008 with approximately 140 units to be cleared in 2009. The LSW program is successful through an active partnership of County Departments and local housing agencies that assist with program deliverables including matching funds to rehabilitate substandard housing, relocation of families endangered by lead poisoning, education and outreach. Typical LSW include removal and replacement of windows, doors, paint stabilization and specialized cleaning.

### **Trusts and Grants**

Planning Department Trusts and Grants totals are one of the highest totals for Trusts and Grants administered by a County department. The majority of these funds are administered by the department for the direct benefit of individual families, not-for profit agencies and municipalities, most of which may not be eligible for funding on their own. It is important to note that these grant funds are critical in leveraging local fund raising, municipal contributions and project financing and can generate up to five times the grant revenue for individual projects.

The 2009 figure for all grants obtained by the Planning Department is \$98,606,486, an increase of \$8,438,729 over 2008.

Sixty seven percent of staff positions in the Department of Planning are fully funded through Federal and State grants. An additional eleven percent is offset through other non-tax levy sources.

## **Revenue**

The Department, including the Hilltop Hanover cost center, is projected to bring in \$903,984 in revenue from a variety of sources.

In 2007, six administrative and research lines were moved into the operating budget from the CDBG Trust Account in order to use reduced CDBG funding to deliver programs and services to the residents of the 40 municipalities that directly benefit from this funding. Before 2007, the CDBG Trust Account was able to absorb 100% of these personnel costs. The positions moved into the operating budget in 2007 are for staff that carries out critical departmental support functions such as accounting, contract management, personnel and research for the entire department. These positions are typically found in the operating budgets of other County departments. In 2009, these positions will be offset by revenue from CDBG administrative funds for 55% of the full amount for the entire year. The CDBG program will continue to absorb a significant percentage of these expenses as long as funding is available and, as is standard practice for the Planning Department, we will continue to be aggressive in the pursuit of outside funding sources to any replace future reductions in CDBG funding.

## **Tax Levy**

The Planning Department's tax levy forecast, including the Hilltop Hanover cost center, for 2009 is \$4,271,693, a decrease of \$623,974 over 2008.

The following expenditures impact the Department's tax levy:

### **I. Planning Department (without Hilltop Hanover)**

1000 Orgs: Annual Regular Salaries/Annual Other/Overtime: The 2009 proposal in these personnel lines is \$2,534,359, a decrease of \$131,742 over 2008.

2000 Org: Equipment: No funds were requested in 2009, a decrease of \$5,000.

3000 Orgs: Book/Office Supplies/Postage: The proposed expenditures in these three categories decreased by \$13,350 from 2008 to 2009.

4000 Orgs: Equipment Services/Memberships/Travel/Technical Services/Supplementary Programs: The proposed expenditures in these categories total \$861,146, a decrease of \$544,397 over 2008.

5000 Orgs: Inter-departmental charges from other County departments: Proposed expenditures for 2009 total \$1,265,984, an increase of \$59,558 over 2008.

The department is projecting \$866,304 in revenue from this cost center.

### **II. Hilltop Hanover Cost Center:**

1000 Orgs: Annual Regular Salaries/Annual Other/Overtime: The 2009 proposal in these personnel lines is \$268,639, an increase of \$94,953 over 2008.

2000 Org: Equipment: No funds were requested in 2009, a decrease of \$3,000.

3000 Orgs: Book/Office Supplies/Postage: The proposed expenditures in these three categories increased by \$6,500 from 2008 to 2009.

4000 Orgs: Equipment Services/Memberships/Travel/Technical Services/Supplementary Programs: The proposed expenditures in these categories total \$33,500, a decrease of \$86,200 over 2008.

5000 Orgs: Inter-departmental charges from other County departments: Proposed expenditures for 2009 total \$144,548, an increase of \$35,878 over 2008.

The total net tax levy operating budget for this cost center is \$437,507, an increase of \$22,451 over 2008. The department is projecting \$37,680 in revenue from this cost center.

The Planning Department, with the amount of trust and grant revenue it obtains and the services it provides to the County and its municipalities delivers major value for a relatively low cost to taxpayers.

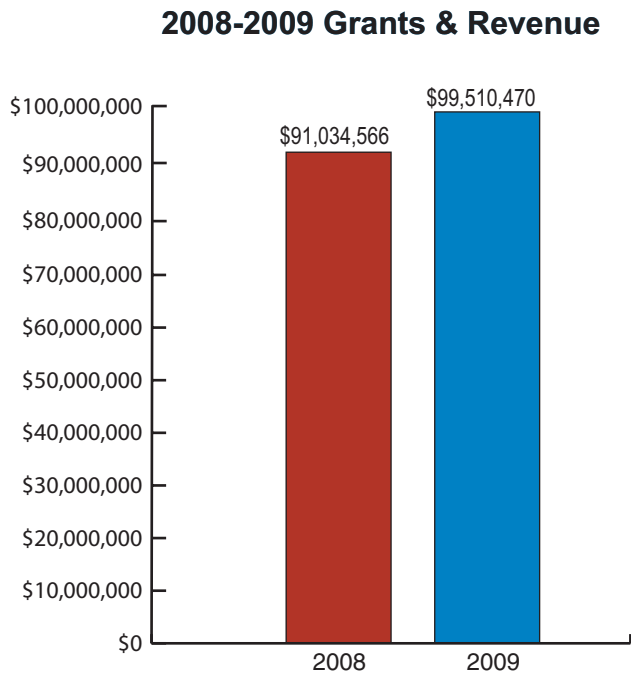
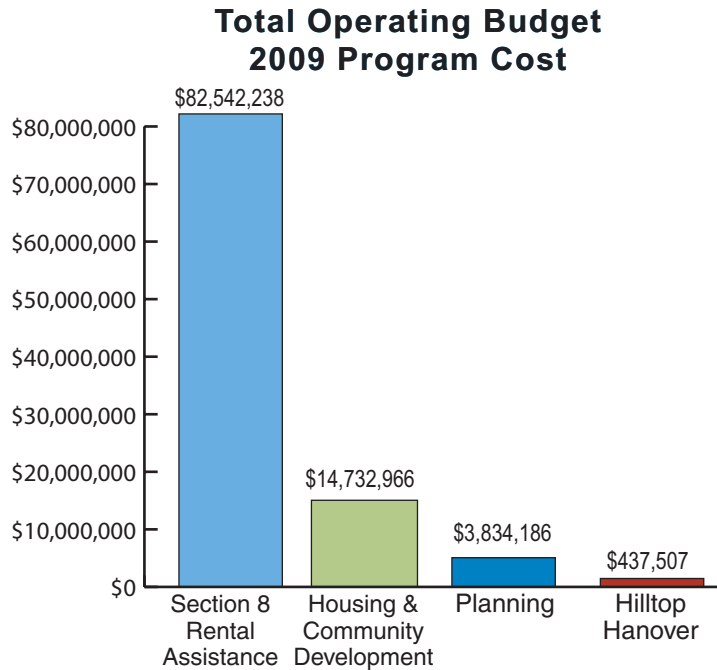
Westchester County Department of Planning  
November 25, 2008

**WESTCHESTER COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING  
GRANTS AND REVENUE 2008-2009**

<b>Planning Department Grants</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)	5,862,732	5,715,632
HOME Program for Affordable Housing	1,752,104	1,687,787
American Dream Down Payment Initiative	27,284	11,024
Emergency Shelter Grant	254,833	252,466
Property Improvement Program	2,957,154	1,042,845
HUD Lead Abatement Program/HUD Lead Hazard Reduction Demonstration II	1,693,923	3,306,077
HOPWA - Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS	1,896,543	2,240,188
RESTORE Program	0	125,000
Affordable Home Ownership Development Program Grants	248,053	351,947
Section 8 Rental Assistance Program	72,885,560	82,542,238
Long Island Sound Projects	2,162,688	375,711
Croton Bay Watershed	3,074	36,926
Soil and Water Conservation District	33,768	55,939
Water Quality Improvement Project	295,438	326,312
Stormwater Education and Outreach Grant	0	200,000
Hudson River Corridor Quality Program	17,452	62,548
Croton Watershed Good Neighbor Payments	77,151	218,846
Croton Bay IMA	0	30,000
TV, Radio, Print Advertising Stormwater Education Program	0	25,000
<b>Subtotal Department Grants</b>	<b>90,167,757</b>	<b>98,606,486</b>
<b>Planning Department Revenue</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Revenue from all Sources	866,809	903,984
<b>Subtotal Department Revenue</b>	<b>866,809</b>	<b>903,984</b>
<b>Total Department Grants &amp; Revenue</b>	<b>91,034,566</b>	<b>99,510,470</b>
<b>Total Operating Budget</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Section 8 Rental Assistance	72,885,560	82,542,238
Housing & Community Development	14,692,626	14,732,966
Planning	4,480,611	3,834,186
Hilltop Hanover	415,056	437,507

WESTCHESTER COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING  
including Hilltop Hanover

**2009 OPERATING BUDGET**  
**2008-2009 GRANTS & REVENUE**

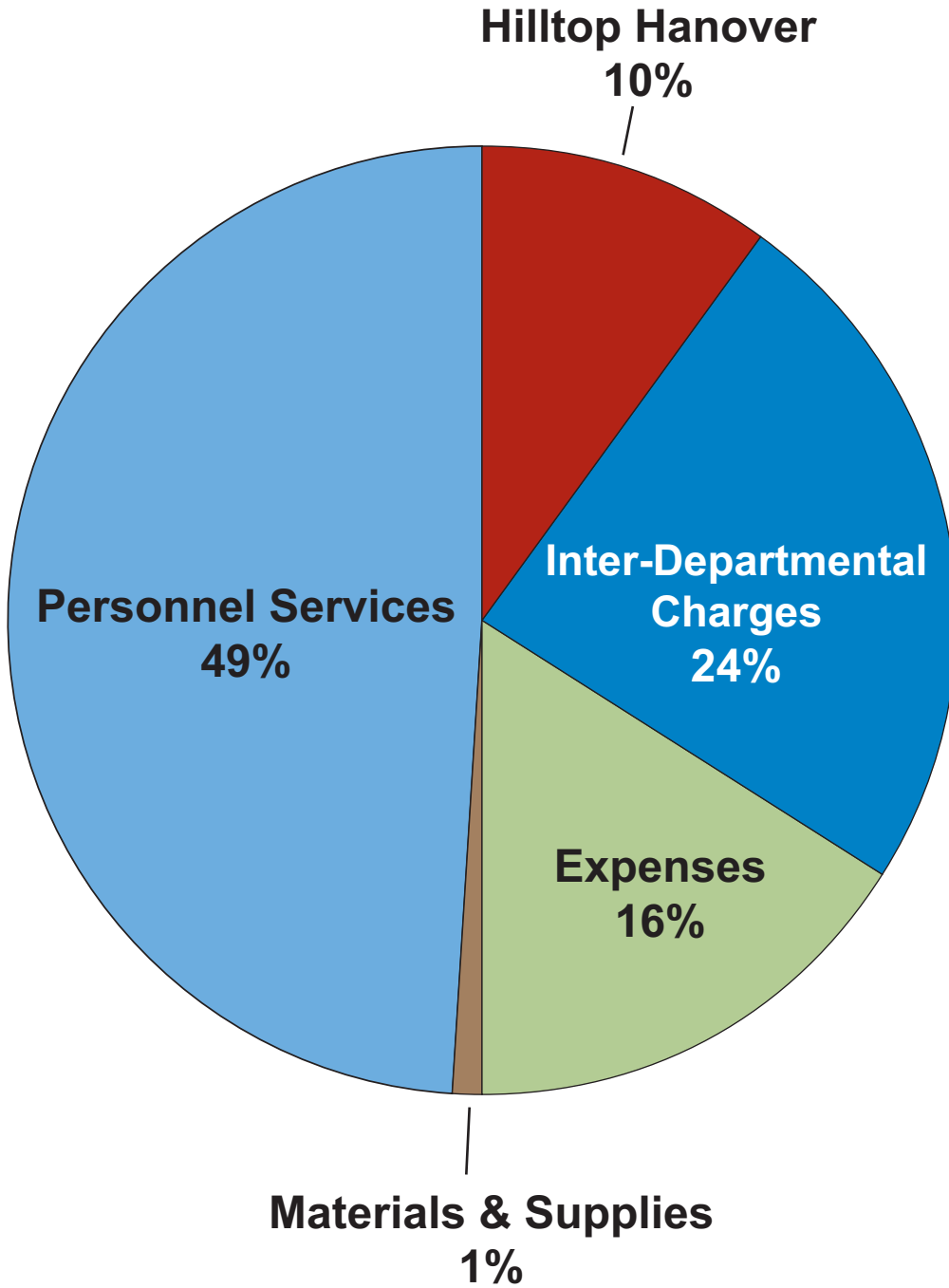


- *Planning Department Trusts and Grants represent one of the highest totals for Trusts and Grants administered by a Westchester County department.*



WESTCHESTER COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING  
including Hilltop Hanover

**2009 OPERATING BUDGET DISTRIBUTION**







**Andrew J. Spano, Westchester County Executive  
County Board of Legislators**

**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING  
Gerard E. Mulligan, AICP, Commissioner**