

Planning Ulster



Ulster County Main Streets: A Regional Approach

Ulster County Planning Department, 244 Fair Street, Kingston NY 12401

Why do we take a regional approach to Main Streets?

There are many different approaches to supporting these centers in our local economy. The goal of the Ulster County Main Streets approach is to develop a program that is based on our region's specific needs and support appropriate responses and strategies that are built and sustained from within our communities. It is also founded upon the idea that communities are stronger when they work together, share knowledge, leverage their resources, and think regionally to support their "competitive advantage."



What is the Main Streets Strategic Toolbox?

Any successful planning effort requires solid information as a basis for decision-making. The Toolbox includes resources to help your community create a strong, sustainable strategy for Main Street revitalization. For a full list of topics in the toolbox, please contact our staff at 845-340-3338 or visit our website at www.ulstercountyny.gov/planning.

Introducing the Main Street Strategic Toolbox

The Ulster County Main Street Program has developed a multi-faceted set of tools to help communities maintain successful and vibrant main streets as part of local economic development goals.

Combining models in New York and nationally with analysis of and direct experiences with Ulster County communities, the toolbox promotes strategic planning for communities that is locally-driven and carefully evaluates local assets, economic conditions, land use issues, regulatory responses, and the surrounding context to create a comprehensive main street strategy.

Planning
Guided



Working with each community in Ulster County allows our “toolbox” to grow. As part of this Main Street work, we have helped communities form Main Street committees and new business associations, conduct business surveys, map community assets and goals, create visions, obtain funding for planning and development, sites, purchase public parkland and trails, and many other activities that focus awareness on the strategic importance of Main Street.

1. Asset-Based Planning: Taking Stock

An analysis of opportunities for Main Street revitalization includes identification of community assets ranging from buildings and sites to recreational and historic sites to the available talent in the community’s workforce. It also involves discussion of existing land use regulations and plans, and discussion of opportunities for expansion, recruitment and retention based on regional economic and demographic trends.



Relevant Main Street Tools:

- **Developing a Main Street Strategy:** *How to work as a team to pursue a plan.*
- **Asset-Based Planning Workbook:** *A hands-on guide to identifying your community’s assets and working with others on a strategic plan.*
- **See link to our Toolbox for additional materials.**



What kinds of tools are in the toolbox?

The tools fall into the following five categories:

1. **Asset Based Planning**
2. **Community-Led Initiatives**
3. **Land Use and Design Analysis**
4. **Market and Economic Analysis**
5. **Targeted Development Initiatives**



2. Community-led Initiatives: Building Local Capacity

Long-term community stakeholder involvement is necessary. It includes the initial understanding of assets and the establishment of a shared vision as well as the commitment for implementation. An involved stakeholder base provides support for regulatory change, can make a strong case for grants and other public investments, and will coalesce around a broader success (*continued on page 5*)

Ulster County's Assets and Economic Drivers

In Ulster County, where many of our communities and their commercial districts are more rural and much smaller than in other metropolitan areas, our regional toolbox is created to help address specific issues that need to be addressed in our area. To begin with, we need to ask:

- What are the **specific economic drivers** of our communities?
- How do we take **strategic advantage of these assets**?

Livable Communities

Livable communities attract residents and economic development through their level of quality of life, including places that:

- foster good schools, housing, healthy lifestyles, multi-modal transportation opportunities, and quality jobs;
- take a sustainable approach to environmental, cultural, and human resources;
- encourage a broad range of physical, cultural, social and economic opportunities; and
- take a *context-sensitive* approach to planning and development that help keep and make places special.

Many of our communities recognize and cultivate their “livability.”

Kingston Farmers' Market

Farmers' Markets are increasingly popular and are becoming attractive aspects in many of our centers



Opus 40—a cultural landscape that reflects Ulster County's unique combination of creativity and nature.



Historic Centers



Budget Travel deemed Saugerties one of the “10 coolest small towns in America” for its indie shops and feels-like-home quality.

Since 2000, the majority of Americans show a preference for living, working and recreating in “walkable communities.” Ulster County’s compact growth patterns protect the landscape from unnecessary sprawl and maintain the critical mass necessary for viable Main Streets. They also support face-to-face interaction, an active, pedestrian-oriented lifestyle and a greater “sense of place” for socially vibrant communities. Various surveys confirm that our historic and cultural resources, including village centers, architecture, landscapes, historic sites, and an active cultural life are among the top attractions for visitors and residents.

Ulster County’s Assets and Economic Drivers, continued

Open Space and Recreation



Open space resources and access to recreational opportunities are among the most sought-

after factors in tourism and quality-of-life surveys. The connections between vibrant Main Streets and the availability of these resources is important to maintain and cultivate.

Our work to create additional trails, parks, protected open spaces and recreational opportunities in Ulster County can also help our Main Street by linking the value of maintaining them and increasing access to them from our centers.

New Paltz Main Street benefits from the presence of the SUNY campus and its proximity to the magnificent Shawangunk Ridge.



There are a number of specific economic drivers within our individual communities. Most fall into the categories of cultural and recreational attractions that propel tourism. Many are seasonal, such as skiing, fishing, hiking, water sports, pick-your-own farms; the numerous arts and cultural venues play a big role; other attractions include the close-knit social environment and small-town lifestyle of our communities. Much economic activity is supported by an increasingly large number of weekend residents. For all of our Main Streets, the key is to understand what the specific drivers are, identify the local and regional market, and work together as a community to use these assets.

Arts and Creative Industries

Ulster County has a high percentage of small businesses and creative workers. There is a big demand for “plug and play” facilities for these entrepreneurs, telecommuters, and many others whose work depends on state-of-the-art communications and an innovative environment.



High tech on the Hudson: Digital dynamos have turned Kingston into Brooklyn north

BY KAREN ANGEL
DAILY NEWS WRITER

Friday, December 17th 2010, 4:00 AM

Recommend 526 recommendations. Sign Up to see what your friends recommend.



Kingston is attracting a new generation of digital and creative workers who are looking for an affordable, urban lifestyle in the metropolitan region with a vibrant cultural community.

(continued from page 2) rather than for individual businesses. This includes social networking and marketing tools.



Milton's Clean Sweep



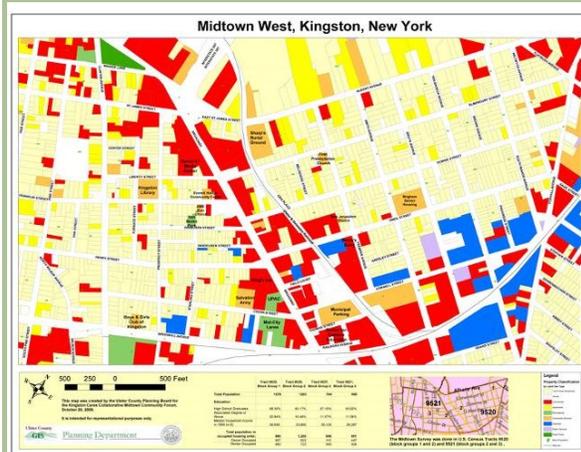
Relevant Main Street Tools:

- **Asset-Based Planning Workbook:** In addition to asset identification, this has a series of exercises to help develop community-led initiatives.
- **Social Networking for Main Street:** The uses of web-based technology to keep the community connected.

About Capacity Building

It is important to note that the local capacity building we do as part of building the Toolbox – in each of these five Toolbox categories – is done with the aim of building strong, inclusive, and sustainable (i.e., environmentally, socially, and economically sound) efforts that increase public participation in the process of local land use and economic development decision-making.

Building Community Capacity



Our land use and site analyses in Kingston, providing technical assistance to numerous community organizations, have supported significant momentum for revitalization in the three business districts of the city. Examples include:

- **Rural Ulster Preservation Company:** mapping and analytical support for obtaining a New York Main street grant
- **Kingston Cares:** technical support for and facilitation of two large public forums on quality of life in Midtown Kingston
- **Healthy Kingston for Kids:** mapping and transportation analyses to support Complete Streets and Safe Routes to Schools initiatives.
- **King's Inn Design Charrette** process by the Business Alliance of Kingston and visioning with downtown Kingston stakeholders to target specific design and development approaches.
- **Kingston Land Trust:** support for trails initiative and related community projects.
- **Kingston Midtown Business Association:** design guidelines adopted for Broadway.

See page 7 for examples of capacity building activities with Main Street and community groups throughout Ulster County.

Relevant Main Street Tools:

- **Cost/Benefit Analysis for Main Street:** How to make well-informed decisions about types of businesses that support vitality.
- **Market Analysis for Main Street:** Understand the customer base and competition for business in your area.
- **Creating a Destination Magnet:** Land uses can work together can support an area’s “competitive advantage.”
- **Identifying the Right Retail Mix:** Concentrating and balancing uses can create a “critical mass” of activities.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation’s “Four-Point Approach”: A well-rounded, managed Main Street is the key to these four points of organization, design, promotion and economic restructuring, which have been successful in communities across the country. Consulting their resources at www.preservationnation.org/main-street/ is a must.

Building Capacity on Main Streets in Ulster County

- **Ellenville Village:** technical support for NY Main Street grant
- **Highland Hamlet:** grant writing, hamlet planning, surveys, and mapping
- **Gardiner Hamlet:** mediation, mapping, organizing
- **Milton Hamlet:** NY Main Street grant sponsor, development concepts, park acquisition technical support.
- **City of Kingston:** support for various community-based initiatives (*see p. 5*)
- **Marbletown (Stone Ridge and High Falls):** Main Street visioning, planning workshops
- **Pine Hill Hamlet:** Main Street/hamlet visioning/planning workshops
- **Phoenicia Hamlet:** community organizing and post-flood assistance.
- **Port Ewen Hamlet:** NY Main Street grant sponsor, community organizing
- **Rosendale Village:** technical support for market analysis
- **Woodstock Village:** business association support

5. Targeted Development Initiatives: Investing in Catalysts



Relevant Main Street Tools:

Case studies and best practices from Ulster County and elsewhere will be posted on the Toolbox.

Using strategic tools such as those listed above (and others, as noted on page 2) can help communities make development decisions that will support long-term vitality.



The montage above imagines what the existing center of Milton’s Main Street (below) could become if contextual infill development were developed.



Ulster County

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The Main Street "Strategic Toolbox"

This Toolbox has been created to provide communities in Ulster County with the strategic land use, market analysis and planning information they need to make decisions for revitalization and/or repositioning their "Main Streets" and commercial centers. This project is part of Ulster County's comprehensive planning approach now being developed simultaneously with this project. The approach recognizes the value of compact development and the utilization of existing resources as a means to sustainable economic development.

**Outreach and Technical Assistance | Seminars and Presentations | Tools and Handouts
Useful Links | Case Study Reports and Documents**

Outreach and Technical Assistance

We have worked with numerous groups and communities throughout Ulster County in the following Main Streets and Hamlets:

- Ellenville Village
- High Falls Hamlet
- Highland Hamlet
- Gardiner Hamlet
- Kingston Downtown (Rondout)
- Kingston Midtown
- Kingston Uptown (Stockade)
- Milton Hamlet
- Pine Hill Hamlet
- Port Ewen Hamlet
- Rosendale Village
- Stone Ridge Hamlet
- Woodstock Village

For more information on our work with these, click on the name or see **Case Study Reports and Documents** (below)

Some Useful Main Street Links:

see our website for additional links

New York Main Street Program:
www.dhcr.state.ny.us/Programs/NYMainStreet/

National Main Street Center, a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation:
www.preservationnation.org/main-street/

Center for Community and Economic Development, a program of the University of Wisconsin Extension in Madison, WI:
www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/

Project for Public Spaces, a nonprofit planning, design and educational organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build stronger communities:
www.pps.org



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