SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS PLANS

Town of Schodack Comprehensive Plan (2011)

The Town of Schodack Comprehensive Plan (2011) established a vision to preserve the Town’s character and identity, while allowing for environmentally sound growth and development. The Plan established several guiding principals for the Town officials to use to maintain a satisfactory quality of life for all of its residents, business owners, and visitors. The guiding principles are simple, logical, and reflect the attitude of Schodack residents. These fundamental guiding principles that have so clearly resonated in four decades of plans, reports and studies completed for and by the Town, include the following:

- Protect vital natural assets, particularly the water resources of the Town.
- Cluster residential development along water and sewer infrastructure, both existing and yet to be developed.
- In recognition of the historically rural nature of the Town of Schodack, protect and conserve open space and agricultural land as much as is reasonable and economically feasible.
- Protect ecologically sensitive areas such as streams, wetlands, or steep slopes.
- Encourage business growth around the I-90 exits and the Route 9 Corridor to build a strong tax base for public services and to provide appropriate retail and service business support for Town residents.

Vision Statement for the Town of Schodack

The Town of Schodack will continue to be a desirable place to live, work and recreate, offering an excellent quality of life for residents and visitors. The Town will encourage and manage its growth to preserve its historic, cultural and natural resources for this and future generations. Schodack will retain its “small-town feel” by encouraging the preservation of prime farmland and agriculture, the key components to preserving rural character and natural landscapes which are so valued by many residents. Sensitive natural resources such as steep slopes, wetlands, lakes, rivers, and streams will be protected and forested areas and other natural resources will be managed sustainably. The Hudson River waterfront will provide public access for a variety of outdoor recreational activities as well as business enterprises.

The Town will continue to value the importance of history and the protection of historically important structures to maintain the Town’s unique identity, particularly in the Village of Castleton, and the hamlets of Schodack Landing and Muitzeskill. The preservation of historic hamlets and neighborhoods will be encouraged and a broad range of housing opportunities will be made available in areas where expansion of infrastructure is appropriate.
The Town of Schodack will strive for a mixture of residential and commercial development, encouraging mixed-use walkable development in and around the hamlets and the Village of Castleton. Commercial development along existing commercial corridors will also be encouraged. The Town will continue to take advantage of existing infrastructure and encourage redevelopment of previously developed buildings and areas. An appropriate mix of residential and commercial development will provide a variety of necessary goods, services, entertainment venues, and attractions for local and regional patrons.

The transportation network will continue to address the needs and safety of vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle travel alike. The Route 9 corridor will continue to be the commercial backbone of the community, containing a diverse mix of business and industry, providing services and local employment opportunities, while helping to keep property taxes reasonable for Town residents.

Proactive planning, design standards, and infrastructure development throughout the Town will assist in attracting businesses to ensure that residents continue to enjoy small-town qualities that make Schodack unique. Schodack will strive to preserve and enhance the Town’s many assets while providing the necessary amenities and services to existing and new residents, businesses and visitors now and into the future.

**Town of Schodack Corridor Plan (2006)**

With its 2002 designation as one of the State’s 12 pilot Quality Communities, the Town of Schodack received funding from the NYS Department of State to develop this plan. Completed in July 2006, the Route 9 Corridor Development Plan was developed to help the Town foster market-based community revitalization along Routes 9 7 20, and extending from Exit 10 of I-90 to the B-1 exit area of the Berkshire Spur. One of the primary factors prompting Schodack to develop this plan was the construction of new residential developments, which had resulted in a tremendous financial strain on local schools and local taxpayers. The Town of Schodack hired a project team comprised of Blueberry Ridge Stewardship Services, Camoin Associates, CLA SITE Landscape Architecture, Engineering & Planning, P.C., and DBS Planning Consultants to create the plan.

**Town of Schodack Proposed Water System Improvements (2005)**

Prepared by J. Kenneth Fraser and Associates, this April 2005 report, Town of Schodack Proposed Water System Improvements: Existing Water District #2A and Proposed Water District #8, was intended, according to its authors, to form the basis for legal proceedings and other procedures required to upgrade the existing water system of the Town of Schodack Water District # 2A. The report was also intended to provide a workable plan designed to facilitate future consolidation of selected existing water districts within the Town, as well as future Town districts yet to be formed, into a comprehensive Town of Schodack Water System. Once created, this Town water system would then employ a uniform method for financing and amortization of future water projects and a uniform operation and maintenance plan designed to provide equitable costs and uniform meter rates throughout the water system.
To address a variety of issues impacting the community, the Town of Schodack began working on a Comprehensive Master Plan. Although the plan was never completed, several committees were formed and presented their findings to the Town Board. These committees addressed the following areas: (1) Growth Analysis; (2) Economic Development; and (3) Infrastructure. A final draft of these committees’ research efforts and recommendations was furnished to the Town Board on March 24, 2003.

As part of this study, the Growth Analysis committee examined the following specific issues: (1) Public transportation; (2) Child care facilities; (3) Senior housing; (4) Affordable housing; (5) School enrollment; (6) Centralized postal services; and (7) Waterfront growth.

- **Public Transportation.** Given the fact that 95% of employed Town residents commute to work by car, expanding public transportation in the Town was identified as “unwarranted” by the Growth Analysis committee. However, it was determined that scheduling and route changes might provide better services for residents. Examples included improving service to Castleton, introducing Route 9 travel to Kinderhook and Valatie, and restoring previously offered weekend service.

- **Child Care.** At the time of the study, child care services were provided by Happy Day Care Center, which offered infant care (for 40 infants), and three school age programs – Castleton Kids, Greenbush Child Caring, and Boys and Girls Club in Castleton – total capacity of 125. Preschool programs were offered at the Maple Hill preschool and the publicly funded preschool that serves Schodack. A number of private facilities were also identified as being available in adjacent communities. The Growth Analysis committee found that, short of conducting a survey to identify needs, it was impossible to evaluate the unmet child care needs, as so many residents use facilities close to their workplace or use informal or relative care. No recommendations were made.

- **Senior Housing.** The Growth Analysis committee found that the Town may be in a position to encourage affordable senior housing in the future due to the fact that the median age rose considerably during the 1990’s; more than 70% of Town residents in 2000 were living in the house as they were in 1995 (demonstrating community “attachment”); and the fact that there was little rental housing located within the Town beyond the Village of Castleton. The study also outlined several factors that should be considered in any future senior housing development endeavors. These included: accessibility to public transportation and public roads; proximity (within walking distance) to essential services; compact and flat site development; and cost effective water and septic (or sewer) provision.

- **Affordable Housing.** The Growth Analysis committee listed both the advantages and disadvantages associated with allowing the free market to continue to influence Schodack’s residential development, in the absence of any stated preference from the Town. Potential positives identified included the growing proliferation of “high end” housing resulting in both higher tax assessments and residents with more disposable income. Potential negatives included the fact that long time residents may be precluded from finding affordable housing in the Town, a possible lack of affordable entry level housing, and “higher end” residents may be adverse to additional commercial development.

- **School Enrollment.** It was observed that the number of parcels in the Town served in school districts outside Town is nearly equal to the number of residents enrolled in the Schodack school district. No recommendations were made.

- **Centralized Postal Service.** The Growth Analysis committee approached the U.S. Postal Service with the idea of consolidating the Town’s areas currently served by six zip codes/post offices under one Schodack
name and zip code. The main reason for the proposed consolidation was to help provide a uniform identity for the Town. Unfortunately, the Postal Service indicated that in addition to great expense, the logistics and the precedent made it unfeasible. One change the Postal Service would possibly consider would be to allow more than one community to use the same zip code. This was identified as a change that would be considered during the 2004-2005 fiscal year.

- **Waterfront Growth.** The study identified three areas along the Schodack Hudson River waterfront that could be considered for development. These included Cow Island, portions of Campbell Island, and the area between the Village of Castleton and Schodack Island State Park.

The Economic Development subcommittee was charged with studying current commercial development, identifying businesses located in and adjacent to Schodack, and analyzing the Town’s current and future economic needs. With this, the group was to develop strategies to create a successful business atmosphere and research the positives and negatives of maintaining a local industrial development agency.

Using previous studies and GIS data, the Infrastructure committee was to map all existing public sewer and water districts, services available from adjacent municipal systems and private systems. With this, the group was to assess future needs, as well as identify major roadways in close proximity to major water and sewer lines. Using information provided by NYS Department of Transportation, the group was to assess and analyze traffic count surveys and traffic patterns. The committee was also to identify the location of all utilities (e.g., natural gas, fiber optics) and sites of likely future expansion.

**Water and Sewerage Needs Study (2002)**

Authorized by the Rensselaer County Water and Sewer Authority (RCWSA) and prepared by Malcolm Pirnie, Inc., this plan was completed for the Towns of North Greenbush, East Greenbush and Schodack, City of Rensselaer and the Village of Castleton. The purpose behind this May 2002 study was to identify present and future requirements for water and sewerage infrastructure improvements in southwestern Rensselaer County.

According to the study, the Castleton-on-Hudson wastewater treatment plant treats the wastewaters collected from some Schodack sewer districts while one pumps wastewater to the Town of East Greenbush sewer system. Subsurface disposal systems used to treat some wastewater have been faced with ongoing problems, including excessive infiltration and inflow. At the time of the study, plans were underway to replace or line one aging subsurface disposal system in Sewer District No. 5 to reduce wet weather flows. In addition, Schodack was considering forming a new sewer district (that would pump water to the Castleton wastewater treatment plant) to service the Schodack Landing area. The study indicates that the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson’s sewers and wastewater treatment facility were constructed in the late 1980’s and, at the time of the study, were regarded as being in good condition with no immediate improvement needs. Due to growth trends identified in Schodack at the time, the report identified a likelihood that much more extensive sewerage coverage would be needed within a 20-year period (by 2022).

The City of Troy Water System (through its Tomhannock Reservoir) and groundwater are identified as the primary sources of water within the plan’s study area. The Schodack Terrace Aquifer, under the Towns of East Greenbush and Schodack, provides area residents with groundwater. It is also the water source for the Village of Castleton, the Hampton Manor Water District in East Greenbush, the Clearview Water District, and a number of smaller Schodack-based public water systems. The 2002 study cited several past studies that examined this aquifer as a potential source of groundwater for growing southwestern Rensselaer County. The plan also noted the fact that several areas in Schodack purchase water from East Greenbush and Rensselaer.

Completed by Percy B. Cotton, Associates in June 2000, the purpose of The Town of Schodack Water Study and Report: Proposed Extension to Water District #5 was to investigate the formation of a Water Supply and Distribution System which would use the Schodack Aquifer through the Town wellfield. This system would provide a central source of water, uniting several water districts in the Town, between the newly constructed District No. 5 on the north and Water District No. 3 on the south. The study also examined the extension of water provision to the area around the I-90, Exit B-1/ NYS Thruway Berkshire Spur interchange. In addition to providing service to several areas experiencing water quality problems (portions of Byers Estate and Sunset Hills), the proposed extension, it was indicated, would provide a strong basis for future expansions and set the stage for possible inter-municipal agreements between Schodack and neighbors such as the Village of Castleton and the Town of East Greenbush.

Town of Schodack and Village of Castleton on Hudson LWRP (1995)

Funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, this Local Waterfront Revitalization Program was prepared by Shuster Associates during the late 1980’s and adopted on May 15, 1995. This plan was adopted and approved in accordance with the provisions of the Waterfront Revitalization of Coastal Areas and Inland Waterways Act. Following the template established by the NYS Department of State, Division of Coastal Resources, this plan documented existing and proposed conditions along the Hudson River Schodack/Castleton coastline. In addition to recommendations related to land and water uses along the Town’s coastline, the study examined the study area’s topography, soil conditions, bedrock and surficial geology, agriculture, wildlife, hydrology, water quality, wetlands, air quality, and transportation.

Schodack Long Term Planning Commission Strategic Plan (1994)

Prepared by Kenneth A. Gifford, ASLA for the Schodack Town Board and Schodack Planning Board, this March 1994 planning effort, identified alternative development scenarios. These scenarios were created by developing a composite of the Town’s natural and cultural resources with a variety of open space and farmland preservation techniques. In an interim report, the Town was presented with four main alternatives to guide future land use development. These included: (1) existing regulations; (2) agricultural zoning techniques; (3) “high tech” development controls; and (4) neo-traditional zoning.

Groundwater/Wellhead Protection Program (1993)

Funded by a pass-through grant disbursed under Section 205(j) of the Federal Water Quality Act, the State Department of Environmental Conservation enlisted the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) to work with local government entities to identify environmentally sensitive areas appropriate for the implementation of wellhead protection measures. This 1993 study, in Phase I of this effort, examined southwestern Rensselaer County where the primary source of drinking water is the Schodack aquifer.

As part of the study, CDRPC evaluated the Town’s (11) well systems and conducted an inventory of potentially hazardous land uses within the wellhead areas. The report also included a synopsis of existing land use and watershed regulations for the communities, including Schodack and the Village of Nassau. The report identified a
variety of management techniques and strategies used to establish wellhead protection programs. The techniques fell into three general categories: (1) Regulatory; (2) Non-regulatory; and (3) Legislative.

**Underground Injection Control and Wellhead Protection Demonstration Project (1993)**

According to the report’s introduction, this March 1993 study, *Underground Injection Control and Wellhead Protection Demonstration Project: Schodack Aquifer Hydrogeological Report*, conducted by Robert G. LaFleur of RPI’s Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, was funded as part of a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Underground Injection Control and Wellhead Protection Demonstration Project. The purpose of the hydrogeological investigation was to assemble and organize existing groundwater information so that protection options for public water supplies could be formulated and suggested to local communities.

The Town of Schodack was selected as the study area because it has an extensive aquifer, an available historical groundwater database, and it is part of a well-known and mapped glaciated terrain. An acknowledged challenge to the project was identifying the adequacy of available data for forming technically appropriate and defensible protective regulations.

The study identified the various drawbacks associated with several potential approaches to groundwater resource protection. While restricting potentially hazardous land uses can be done and may be effective, delineating the radius-of-influence zone can pose difficulties, including the fact that it may result in boundary disputes. Further, the author indicates that in order to protect the aquifer, one must “consider all sources of recharge, which invariably includes land and waters not a part of the aquifer.”

A more targeted approach would be to restrict the use of actual contaminants. One highlighted contaminant is DNAPLs, chlorinated organic solvents that are denser than water, e.g., degreasers and cleaning fluids, as they are regarded as “nearly impossible” to purge from groundwater.

**Route 9 Corridor Study: Draft Proposed Recommendations (1992)**

Prepared by Rensselaer County Planning Office in August 1992, this study was completed in recognition of the fact that the majority of commercial and industrial growth in Schodack was occurring along the Route 9 corridor. As a result, Town officials identified a need to balance this economic development with sound land use and environmental planning principles. Through a close examination of the Corridor, studying available information on land use and natural resources and constraints such as steep slopes, soil septic limitations, poor filters, shallow bedrock, wetlands, agricultural soils, and the aquifer, Rensselaer County provided the Town with a number of recommendations on how to guide future growth.

**Town of Schodack Service Extension Evaluation (1990)**

Prepared by Clough, Harbour & Associates for the Rensselaer County Water and Sewer Authority in December 1990, the full title of this report is *Town of Schodack Service Extension Evaluation from the Castleton-on-Hudson Water Pollution Control Plant and Wastewater Conveyance System*. The purpose behind this study was to examine the feasibility of extending existing sanitary sewer service within the Village of Castleton to adjacent portions of the Town of Schodack that overlay the Village’s water supply aquifer.

Two study areas were examined, one larger 6.4 square mile area east of the Village and a smaller sub-area concentrated along NYS Route 9. The study evaluated the anticipated service area based, in part, on population...
projections for both the Town and the Village. The study forecasted a 1990 population for the Town of 11,900; a 2000 population of 13,635; and a 2040 population of 20,578. The study forecasted a 1990 population for the Village of 1,662; a 2000 population of 1,673; and a 2040 population of 1,671.

**Draft Rensselaer County Master Plan (1989)**

At the behest of then-County Executive John L. Buono, a committee was formed to develop a basis for a County-wide Master Plan. This report was released in 1988, circulated widely among the public and interested stakeholders, and the County Planning Office presented the Master Plan to County Executive Buono the following year on July 17, 1989. The purpose of the County Master Plan was identified as two-fold: (1) it was to provide information to those in County and local governments and the public at large; and (2) it was to serve as a guide for future actions that would shape the County over the next decade. The Master Plan outlines a number of recommended policies in the following areas: Land Use, Economic Development, Environment, Transportation, Community Issues, and Recreation and Open Space.

As general guidelines, all are potentially applicable to the Town of Schodack. For example, the Use policies advocate locally adopted master plans, performance standards, zoning for commercial/industrial uses, and using clustering and Planned Unit Development to encourage provision of open space. Other policies more directly affecting Schodack include a call for waterfront communities to adopt Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs; development of a Rensselaer County master plan for sewer and water; maintenance of traditional community centers – cities, villages, hamlets; minimization of the negative impacts of strip development; and discouraging residential uses near the I-90 interchanges.

Additional policies identified that are potentially applicable to Schodack include preserving areas of prime and important farmland soils, implementing and enforcing measures (such as overlay districts) to protect watersheds and public water supplies (including the Vlockie Kill). Other policies were designed to encourage and preserve affordable housing; support education; provide for health and medical facilities; support efforts to foster new involvement in voluntary organizations (fire departments, ambulance corps); and support historic and cultural resources. The Master Plan also outlined several policies aimed at preserving open space for both active and passive recreational uses.


At the behest of then-County Executive John L. Buono, 32 individuals were selected to serve as a steering committee to formulate a report of ideas on how Rensselaer County ought to prepare itself for the 21st century. This document, not a master plan in itself, was described as a “provocative and thoughtful survey of what issues and matters should be considered by the County.” The work of the steering committee was divided into five task forces: Land Use, Economic Development, Environment, Transportation, and Community Facilities. This summary was presented to County Executive Buono on June 13, 1988.

The report identified specific goals associated with each of the five topic areas – Land Use, Economic Development, Environment, Transportation, and Community Facilities – and policies to advance each goal. The major themes of the report were that growth is inevitable and it is up to the County to guide where it goes by planning its infrastructure accordingly. New growth will also result in more demands on community facilities and care must be taken to preserve natural resources. Municipalities were encouraged to become more active in decision-making and to adopt and enforce regulations to more effectively manage growth. Information sharing
among all areas of government would be important, as would the role of the Rensselaer County Planning Office, and it should be strengthened.

**Comprehensive Water Supply Plan for the Town of Schodack (1988)**

Completed by Clough, Harbour & Associates in September 1988, the Town authorized this water study to evaluate existing conditions and several water supply/quality “problem” in anticipation of significant development trends. This plan not only sought to identify how the Town might best provide supply, transmission, and storage facilities supportive of Town-wide water needs, it also sought to provide a framework upon which future water planning, including implementation strategies such as water district formation reports, could be based.

At the time of the study (1988), existing water demands were estimated to be approximately 750,000 gallons per day (GPD) based on a per capita consumption rate of 75 GPD. Using a population projection of 15,000 by 2000, the report anticipated a Town-wide (excluding the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson) water demand of 1.4 million GPD, based on a per capita consumption rate of 100 GPD, inclusive of a 25 GPD per capita for light industrial and commercial development. The maximum daily demand was forecasted to be 2.8 million GPD.

**Town of Schodack Engineering Report (1987)**

Completed by Smith and Mahoney, P.C. in May 1987, *The Town of Schodack Engineering Report: Generic Cost Opinions for Solid Waste Disposal Alternatives*, was commissioned by the Town to investigate three possible solid waste disposal options. The study included generic cost opinions for three possible alternatives: (1) Town owned and operated landfill; (2) Town owned and operated convenience facility for resident use only; and (3) Town owned and operated transfer station for resident and commercial use. Caveats to the cost estimates included the fact that they were “generic” and were not tailored to any specific conditions. The study also did not include the cost of more specialized and costly items, such as hydraulic push pits or compactors.

The study identified total disposal cost estimates based on cost per ton. The table above summarizes the 1988 cost analysis. The report points to the importance of considering the effects of variables such as disposal fees and haul distance when comparing the landfill and transfer options.

**I-90 Impact Study: Town of Schodack (1975)**

Prepared by Rensselaer County Bureau of Planning, this March 1975 study was completed to evaluate the impact Interstate 90 would have on the Town of Schodack. Based upon an analysis of the Town’s ability to provide essential services and the environment’s ability to support intensive development, recommendations were made for revisions to local land use codes. Specific recommendations spoke to the issues of access control on the existing highway system, and protection of the visual environment through revisions to the Town’s sign controls.

These recommendations consisted of three (3) general categories, with some sub-categories. These were the following: (1) Suggested revisions to the zoning regulations; (2) Development of subdivision regulations that include performance criteria; and (3) Development corridor. The appendices included a Planned Community Development article and supplemental sample regulations on signs.
Schodack Development Plan (1971)

Prepared by Raymond, Parish & Pine, Inc., the Town’s March 1971 Development Plan was the final document of a series of five documents this firm prepared for the Town of Schodack during this time. This report set forth planning proposals to guide future development. Strategies for implementation were identified as well. According to the report’s authors, the Plan was designed as a flexible guide to the future of Schodack. This document provided recommendations related to Housing, Economic Development, Community Facilities, Open Space, Land Use and Zoning, Transportation, Wastewater Treatment, and Water Treatment and Supply.

Basis for Comprehensive Planning (1970)

The full title of this November 1970 document is Basis for Comprehensive Planning: An analysis of overall development patterns and conditions. Consultants Raymond, Parish & Pine, Inc. prepared this report for both the Village of Castleton-on-Hudson and the Town.

This report presented an analysis of background data collected as a basis for the Town and Village Comprehensive Plan. Special attention was given to the impact that regional influences, environmental conditions and anticipated population growth would have on the two communities. Where applicable, the report uses four basic community functions – housing, transportation, economic development, and facilities and services – for detailed analyses of development patterns and conditions.

The report makes recommendations related to the four basic community functions. It should be noted that the planning consultants that conducted the study were very much proponents of communities developed at the “neighborhood scale.” That being said, they evaluated each neighborhood’s development pattern in contrast to its divergence from their preferred alternative. Then, they evaluated each neighborhood on the basis of whether or not there were adequate parks, community resources, transportation access, etc. for the area’s residents. Aside from the Village of Castleton and the hamlets of Brookview, East Schodack, and Schodack Landing, much of the Town lacked complete neighborhoods where residents had easy access to neighborhood level community facilities closely related to daily living.