

# Planning for Villages and the Countryside

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# Two Types of Rural Sprawl

- Scattered houses outside of established villages.
- Commercial strip sprawl along major highways leading to and from a village: stores, service stations, and fast-food restaurants.



# Problems with Rural Sprawl

- Wasteful Land Use Patterns, Loss of Open Space, Farmland, and Natural Areas
- Water supplies and sewage disposal
- Underinvestment in infrastructure
- Heavy reliance on motor vehicles and energy
- Disconnect between where people live and where the work (and shop)



# Five Potential Solutions

- Design
- Regulation
- Financial Incentives
- Infrastructure Investment
- Prayer



# What is Good Village Form?

- Edge – can see countryside
- Mixed Uses – Walkable
- Buildings on a Human Scale
- Slow car + truck speeds (30mph)
- Public space (green, courthouse square)



# What is Bad Village Form?

- Commercial strips leading out of town (no edge, sprawl, auto-dependent)
- Dissimilar buildings placed together
- By-passes take traffic out to edge (more commercial strip)
- Junkyards on major streets

# Richmond, VT

- Combined the Village and the Surrounding Town into a single government
- New York Dept. of State is trying to encourage this, too
- Many NY villages lost population in the 1990s
- Richmond approved zoning to discourage strip sprawl: limits number of curb cuts, and drive in restaurants,
- Zoning encourages dense, mixed-use development within the village
- Keep public buildings in the village: Town office, post office, town library, schools

# Rural Zoning in the Northeast

- Usually requires a one-acre minimum lot size, a two-acre minimum lot size, or maybe a three-acre minimum lot size
- In other words, the countryside is zoned for sprawl
- The purpose of most towns is the hunt for property tax base.
- Most residential development demands more in services (especially for education) than it generates in property taxes



# Challenges Farmers Face

- Profitability- Be the low cost producer or find niche market
- Passing the Farm to the Next Generation
- Resisting the Temptation to sell land for development



# Development Rights Sale Example

- 250 acre Farm

\$850,000 Appraised Fair Market  
Value

\$500,000 Appraised Value Restricted  
to Farming and Open  
Space

\$350,000 Appraised Easement Value  
and Cash Paid to Farmer



# Sources of Funding

- Federal Farmland Protection Program – \$985 million approved in 2002 Farm Bill, requires a 50% match
- State of New York Farmland Preservation Program
- Counties: Dutchess, Suffolk
- Towns: Pittsford, Warwick, several on Long Island
- Partner with land trusts: Otsego Land Trust, Schoharie Land Trust, Cazenovia Preservation Foundation, Southern Madison Heritage Trust, Chenango Land Trust, Delaware Highlands Conservancy