

Plan On It

a Dutchess County Planning Federation newsletter

September 2026

Reintroducing Ourselves

What Dutchess County Planning Can Do for You

By: Dutchess County Planning & Development staff

After a two-year hiatus, we're excited to bring *Plan On It* back. We see this newsletter as a way to stay connected with municipalities and the public across Dutchess County – sharing ideas between trainings and meetings, and delving into key planning-related topics.

We thought the best way to return was with a reintroduction (or an introduction, for some) to the Dutchess County Department of Planning & Development. In this issue, we'll share who we are, how we support communities, and some resources you may not know about. Future issues will take a closer look at the topics we introduce here.

Who We Are

The County Planning Department works across a wide range of areas: land use planning, Greenway program implementation, farmland and open space preservation, municipal project review, planning assistance, housing and community development, transportation planning, environment and sustainability, grant programs, and GIS and mapping.

In essence, we support communities across Dutchess County in planning for the present and preparing for the future, supporting informed decision-making on local challenges and opportunities.

We provide technical assistance, data-driven planning support, and practical tools and guidance that municipalities can use to address local needs in ways that best fit their communities.

Our planners often wear multiple hats, sometimes within the same day. Below is a snapshot of our focus areas.

Land Use Planning

Our staff includes a lead planner for each of our municipalities who reviews and provides input on local projects (see our [lead planner directory](#) and [GML 239 Referrals webpage](#) for more). We also provide development guidance, review zoning and comprehensive plan updates, and help with model laws. Give

us a call, stop by, or email us if you're looking for support with local planning efforts. If we don't know the answer, we will put you in touch with someone who does or help research solutions.

Housing

We offer guidance to communities seeking to address local housing needs and can present to boards and committees on housing data and strategies. Our research and planning resources include the recently published [Affordable Housing Strategy Series](#), annual reports on the for-sale and rental housing markets, and a Housing Needs Assessment completed in 2022 to understand conditions across Dutchess County, with an update planned for 2026. We also manage funding programs for developers, including the Housing Trust Fund and the HOME Investment Partnership Program. We administer the Owner-Occupied Property Rehabilitation for Dutchess County homeowners and we serve as a resource for first-time homebuyers.

Transportation

The Planning Department houses a federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Dutchess County Transportation Council (DCTC), that focuses on transportation planning. The DCTC offers pro-bono planning support, such as safety assessments of high-risk locations, sidewalk inventories, and corridor studies, and provides data such as traffic volumes, speeds, and pavement condition. They also manage federal funding through a Capital Program and can help match your transportation project with the right funding opportunity.

Data & Mapping

GIS mapping can be a big lift for communities, and we have the tools to help you. This includes map-based apps such as Parcel Access, Zoning Map, Traffic Data, Parks and Trails, and others, developed in

Project Spotlight

Affordable Housing Strategy Series
Dutchess County Planning & Development



Affordable Housing Strategies for Dutchess County Municipalities

Our department has received numerous requests for guidance on tackling housing affordability at the local level. This resource is designed to help Dutchess County municipalities address this complex issue.

Since each community's needs are different, the strategies below are not listed by priority, but are instead organized alphabetically. Several of the strategies have detailed information sheets, which can be found by clicking the hyperlinked title or scrolling down.

General Considerations



Acknowledge Urban & Rural Distinctions

Strategies that make sense in cities, villages, and town centers will be different than strategies in more rural areas.



Consider Infrastructure Needs

Areas with centralized water and/or sewer infrastructure (or the potential to create such systems) will use different strategies from those on wells/septic.



Research Demographic Trends

Evaluate trends in local population and employment. These trends can help you determine not just how much housing to encourage, but what types. For example, many communities are experiencing little or no population growth but still adding new households, due in part to smaller household sizes, resulting in demand for smaller housing types.



Understand School Enrollment

Seek updated enrollment data and projections from your local school district(s) and learn about accepted methodologies for projecting the number of school children from new housing development. Most schools are seeing declining enrollments, which leaves room to add households with schoolchildren without causing school overcrowding.



Understand 'Affordable' and 'affordable' Housing

Affordable housing can either be subsidized (what we sometimes call 'Big A' Affordable) or unsubsidized ('little a' or naturally affordable). 'Big A' Affordable housing uses grants, tax credits, and other public funding sources to offset the loss from providing below-market rents or sale prices. Given the costs of land and construction, subsidies are often the only way to build housing that is affordable for the lowest income brackets, but these resources are limited and complex to navigate. 'Little a' affordable housing is just housing that is naturally more affordable – it might be on a smaller lot, have a smaller square footage, be older, or have a simpler design. Zoning codes are often an obstacle to creating new 'little a' affordable units.

Our [Affordable Housing Strategy Series](#) is now available online. This resource helps Dutchess County municipalities address local housing affordability with flexible, adaptable strategies. DCPF hosted a training on the series in May – slides and details are on our [website](#). Contact us if you'd like us to offer this training to your board or community.

[Greenway Guides](#) – the guides you know and love will be getting an update. Work is starting this year, so review what's available in these resources and let us know what you want added!

partnership with Dutchess County OCIS (see our [GIS Applications page](#)). Our department also coordinates GIS projects and data on behalf of the County's Health Department, Water and Wastewater Authority, and Public Transit. If you need a specific map, whether it's for a planning study, a zoning analysis or a grant application, our team can help.

Environment & Sustainability

Our department advances programs that enhance understanding and stewardship of the natural environment while supporting municipalities engaged in similar efforts. We provide key tools and resources, including the County's online [Natural Resources Inventory](#) and [Environmental Mapper](#) GIS application. We also serve as the County's sustainability lead, guiding the Climate Smart Communities Task Force to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from government operations and advance clean energy initiatives. Staff provide training and coordination for municipal Conservation Advisory Councils and Climate Smart Communities groups, and deliver educational presentations on sustainability topics to schools, local officials, and residents. Additionally, the Planning Department houses the County's Division of Solid Waste Management, which oversees programs to reduce waste generation and increase recycling and reuse countywide.

How the DCPF Fits In

For more than 50 years, the Dutchess County Planning Federation (DCPF) has supported local planning and zoning boards and the broader community with workshops, training, and resources. Planning Board and ZBA members can fulfill their required annual training hours through the DCPF's spring and fall sessions.



Our Department staffs the DCPF, helping share information and support their work. We also gather input from local boards to shape trainings and produce these *Plan On It* newsletters.

Explore, Connect, and Share

To learn more about the Dutchess County Department of Planning & Development, visit our [website](#), where you can explore our programs, mapping tools, and services.

Stay connected! Your input shapes future trainings, upcoming issues of *Plan On It*, and helps us focus on key issues in our communities.

- For training and newsletter ideas, contact the Dutchess County Planning Federation at dcplanningfederation@dutchessny.gov
- For questions about local planning efforts, projects, or data needs, reach out to your [County-assigned Lead Planner](#) or contact the Planning Department at plandev@dutchessny.gov

Know someone who would find this newsletter useful? Pass it along!
[Email us to receive](#) future issues of *Plan On It* and training updates.

This newsletter was created by the Dutchess County Department of Planning & Development, in conjunction with the Dutchess County Planning Federation.

Visit our [website](#) to view this as a PDF or to explore previous issues.

DUTCHESS COUNTY PLANNING FEDERATION

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