

Coordinating Development with Central Utilities

By itself, zoning has proved to be an inadequate tool for guiding development. Communities need to plan ahead for new schools, recreation areas, corridors for non-motorized transportation, and other forms of public infrastructure. Most of Dutchess County is zoned for one-acre to five-acre lots, to be serviced by individually placed wells and septic systems. Without designated growth areas and central utilities, the use of conservation subdivisions and the reservation of important open lands, existing zoning results in random large-lot subdivisions gradually replacing the rural landscape.

Almost all of our local plans call for retaining open space and rural character, but success will depend upon a more active set of strategies. **Ironically, to protect their municipalities from overdevelopment, local officials should establish policies to encourage development in the most appropriate areas.** Identifying priority growth areas allows for development to occur in a coordinated and cost-effective manner. At the same time, it works to protect the rural environment and natural features that we often take for granted until it is too late. Consider a five part approach:

1. Plan and implement central water and wastewater systems in existing centers and priority growth areas, including expanded systems tied to proposed new development and, when appropriate, gradual interconnection of larger, regional systems;
2. Encourage village or neighborhood scale lot sizes and mixed use development in priority growth areas;
3. Balance development opportunities with open space and agricultural protection strategies;
4. Provide density and timeline incentives for development in preferred locations and consistent with adopted design guidelines; and
5. Consider community water systems and combined septic alternatives in more rural areas to achieve compact, land-efficient development while still retaining the natural assets of the site.



A model sewage treatment plant in the Town of Beekman that blends in with its rural setting.

Central Water and Sewer Systems Existing and Future Growth Areas



The map above illustrates settlement areas which presently have central utilities and ones that could be served based on current and anticipated development. **Among the highest priorities, all the villages and the major hamlet centers of Hyde Park, Hopewell Junction, and Pleasant Valley should have both water and sewer systems.** The Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority will assist communities in finding funds and implementing and maintaining central utility programs.