# HIGHWAYS INTO GREENWAYS

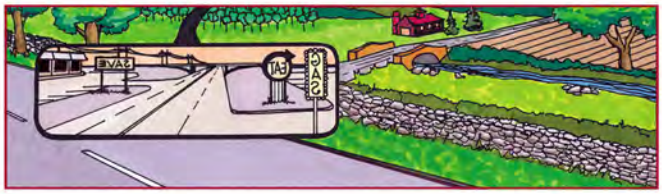
***Treat roads and streets as our most important public open space system and the most visible opportunity to create a network of scenic Greenways.***

The view from the road is the most common way residents visualize their community and the means by which visitors decide whether it is worth stopping. Streets are the circulation system that binds together buildings into neighborhoods. Publicly owned road rights-of-way are the places where communities can most directly control their future. To make residents proud of their community and attract new businesses and visitors, improve the public streetscapes - make them more like parkways and less like traffic sewers.

Wilmington Area Planning Council

*Strip commercial areas can be gradually converted to Greenway routes with good signs and landscaping standards, shorter building setbacks, sidewalks, street trees, and rear parking.*

## Rural Roads



*River Road in Rhinebeck and Red Hook is a state-designated scenic byway that illustrates some of the best elements of rural roads: stone walls, mature trees, historic structures, farm fields and open views.*

**Like a Drive in the Park...**The first Greenways were roads, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted as tree-lined "park-ways" to connect Prospect Park in Brooklyn with the ocean and nearby parks. The model Greenway route in Dutchess is the Taconic State Parkway - a river of greenery that flows through the center of our county. The roadside views of farmland and open space vistas are an essential part of our identity and what makes this area so attractive to outside visitors and new businesses.

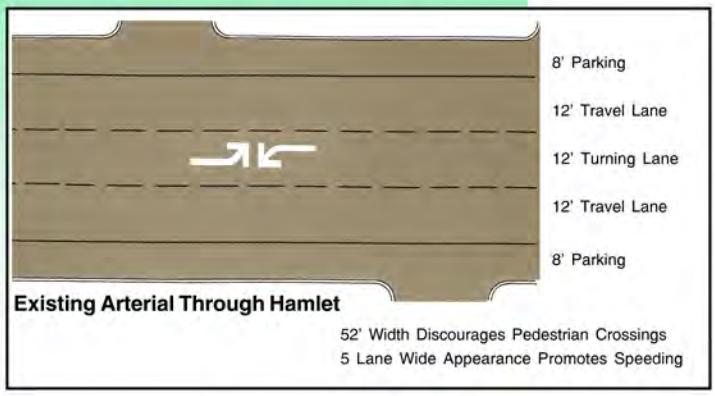
Preserving the rural qualities of our countryside means preventing roadsides from being lined by new houses or strip commercial districts, which block views and slow down the even flow of traffic. Most development should be clustered in and around traditional village or hamlet settings, not strung out along the roadways. Important rural features, like farm fields, stone walls, barns, and roadside trees, should be retained at every opportunity.

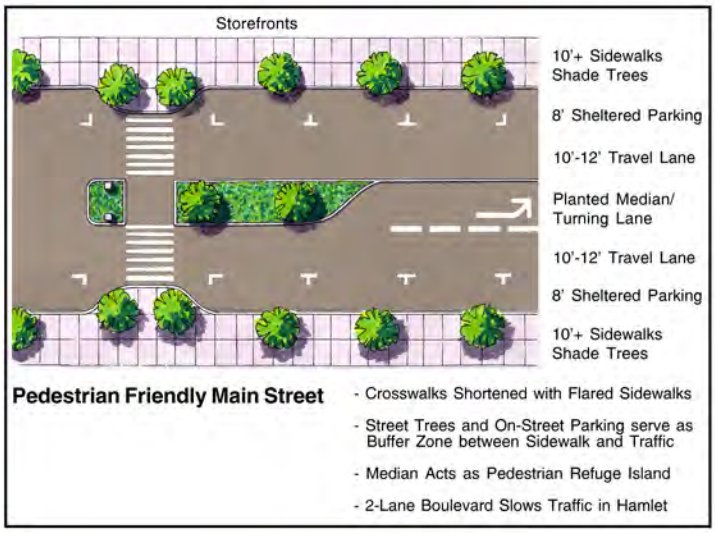
## Streetscapes

The models for Greenways in centers are the urban boulevard and the tree-lined village Main Street. The most significant single design change that will help turn a bland block into a more welcoming, unified streetscape is a row of street trees between the sidewalks and the curb. Street trees and continuous storefronts set close to the sidewalk provide a sense of enclosure to the street that helps to slow down traffic, tie the street together, and create a feeling of balance between pedestrians and vehicles.

**Scenic Center Streets include:**

- Sidewalks behind planting strips with rows of street trees
- Narrow lanes for slow speeds
- Planted medians, where possible
- Frequent, boldly marked crosswalks
- On-street parking
- Continuous storefronts along sidewalks
- Parking lots toward the side or rear
- Pedestrian scale signs and lighting
- Slow speed limits under 30 mph




**The long term goal:**

**Create an interconnected Greenway system of scenic roads and streets, bike routes, open space corridors, waterways, and sidewalks linked to trails throughout Dutchess County and the region.**

*Millerton is working to integrate the Harlem Valley Rail Trail through the countryside with the sidewalk and street system in the village. The trail design, widened around the old train station to form a village green, will be combined with streetscape improvements meant to turn highways into Greenways.*

***Sources:*** Wilmington Area Planning Council, *Connections to the 21st Century*, 1999
Dutchess County Department of Planning, *Improving the Visual Quality of Roadways*, 1987