

SAMPLE FOR CLASSROOM VISITS



ROCKLAND P.L.U.S.
PLANNING LAND USE WITH STUDENTS

Rockland PLUS Site & Community Assessment

**Note - the first section of this form (Questions 1-7) is to be completed during a field visit by the students, either independently in or small groups. Questions 8 & 9 are discussion items for small group work in class.*

Use this form to carefully investigate the section of your community you are reviewing for development/redevelopment. You are looking at existing character, current use, linkages to the community, and development potential.

SITE ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS #1-7:

1. Identify the specific site in your community that you are investigating and draw a sketch map on the back of this sheet to note the location of key features.

The Palisades Mall in West Nyack NY. See attached sheet for drawing

2. Why did you select this specific site?

Community magnet

Put Nanuet Mall out of business

Large tax base for the community

Potential to serve as community hub

Rearranged traffic

Interior of the mall and the parking lot could be better utilized

Flooding around the mall on a regular basis

3. Chose 5 adjectives to describe the appearance of your site:

Massive, cement cement cement, asphalt, lots of shopping options, uniform (all the same)

4. List the strengths of this site. What do you like best about it? What makes it unique?

Close to the thruway – easy to get to by local and out of town buyers

Located between major highways minimizing traffic impacts on residential areas

Fairly central location in County

Was one of the largest remaining open areas (not protected as parkland) for development in the County

5. List two challenges or obstacles to the use of this site? What detracts from this site?

Dumpsite across street

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Flooding

Nearby Thruway being near can be seen as both a strength and a weakness

6. What changes might you make to this site to have the biggest positive impact for the community as a whole?

Build a community

Incorporate recreation with both indoor and outdoor uses for general public – parkland, gazebo, create a destination space

Create some mixed use with the fourth floor being turned into residential

More greenery both inside and outside

Children's Center Museum

Senior Center

More local businesses and fewer chain retail stores

Make it bikeable and walkable both to and from

7. Do you know of any local groups or organizations that could be involved in the planning & development of this site? Before you answer this do a little research to determine what groups might use this site, benefit from a new use of this site, might find it in their core mission to be involved in working to improve this site?

Apple Computers – partner in internet café &/or young person's creative 'hang out' /spot to share talent

Real Estate

Steps to a Healthier Rockland

Museum (NYS and private)

Town of Clarkstown – develop a more walkable/transit-oriented area

Commuter tram/shuttle

Project for Public Spaces

Entertainment – Dance club, comedy club, local filmmakers showcase

Light industry – example the solar panel business in Poughkeepsie

Commuter tram/shuttle

CONNECTING TO COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS 8 & 9

Now think more broadly about your village/town. Consider the strengths and weaknesses of your community to determine how this site could fit into the larger whole.

8. Considering with the wider community, rate the following features under **Strengths** or **Needs/Challenges** using a score of 1 (mainly absent) to 5 (well represented). Descriptive words can be included with the number score.

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Community Feature	Strengths Rank 1 (low) to 5 (high) with comments	Comments on Needs/Challenges
<i>Community Character – History, the Arts, Diversity of Culture</i>	5 - Whole area has rich history beginning with early farming settlements and rivertown communities along the Hudson; historic Underground Railroad & contributions of African Americans in Palisades (Skunk Hollow – free Black community 1806-1905; history of thriving arts and theatre	Maintain sense of place as new mega buildings and suburban sprawl occurs. Culture ongoing financial support
<i>Housing/Affordability/Mix of Housing - apts., condos, single family homes – options for singles, families and retired</i>	3 – Fair mix of housing in the community, although some regions are dominantly one single style.	Pockets of single income housing that exist in all parts of Rockland. Design of riverfront town with its mix residence over shops has primarily been lost.
<i>Transportation/Accessibility/Walkability Automobile use and public transportation</i>	1-3 – There is some bus service and there is a shuttle for seniors.	Many unwalkable areas- sidewalks missing or too narrow, street crossings not friendly; poor mass transit - too many rely on cars with few other choices.
<i>Health & Wellness – preventive health and treatment</i>	4 - Major hospitals; clinics preventative care facilities; Steps to a Healthier Rockland; Rocknet agencies for aging, smoking cessation, teen alcoholism	Safety is an issue in some communities; fresh local produce available, but not promoted; health services need to do more to support preventative health and wellness
<i>Social/Recreation</i>	3-4 - Clubs for adults – Italian American Club, rotaries, chambers; parades and	

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	celebrations; street fairs; 1/3 of the county is dedicated to parks	
Open Space – <i>undeveloped land ranging from natural habitat to parkland</i>	4 - 1/3 of county is parkland	Isolated in one section of the county
Environmental Awareness	3 - Policy on non pesticide use in county parks; invasive plant brochure; camps; educational programs	Lack of conservation policy and education; wasteful water use resulting in need for tapping more water sources and consideration of desalination plant; invasive plants planted in public facilities
Green Development/Infrastructure – <i>energy saving and habitat preserving</i>	2 - County that has promoted rain gardens; Environmental Management Council; Soil & Water conservation; pervious paving; recycling program; composting for waste reduction	Lack of finance and laws that provide incentives
Access to Local Products – <i>Farmer's Market, local production</i>	3 - Farmers markets; Lucas Candies in Haverstraw; Defiant Beer in PR; local artisans; local farmers section in Stop n' Shop; street fairs	Economy of scale; true cost
Goods & Services (stores, shopping)	5 – One of the biggest malls in the Country	Overabundance of goods and services – cultural emphasis on consumption
Education –	5 - Many K12 schools; several colleges; Jr. colleges; extensions	Preschool is a challenge for some due to cost Head Start is available to low income families
Safety	3 – Crime is lower in this area than in many other communities.	Some pockets very safe others have high crime rates

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Employment	2 – NYC nearby and commutable; a few large vendors in area	County has lost most light industry; shortage of trade skill jobs
Aging in Place	3 - Senior facilities in several places in Rockland; Meals on Wheels; RSVP; local rotaries and lions clubs; Vietnam Vets have an active group; churches and synagogues.	Cost for senior services and facilities is a factor. Walkability is a huge factor, although there is some shuttle service for seniors.

9. Now moving to your particular site, how do the following features contribute to the wider community? What are its **unique** assets?

- **Historical** - (how is this site tied to early settlements, wars, employment, industry & technological change ...)

Dexter Press was once on this site (printed post cards)

Mt. Moor Cemetery still remains on the West end of the site - Graveyard for African American vets from the Civil War, Spanish War, WWI, WWII, Korean War -

- **Natural** - (how does this site connect to waterways in your community; how much original nature is left on this site, and how can this contribute to other open space in the area...) ____

Rural/Suburban Mix, Open Space, Flood plain

- **Built/Constructed** - (is the architectural style of this site unique, does it have an identity of its own)? _

Nyack and West Nyack each have a specific feel and style. Nyack is a riverfront town; West Nyack has older homes from the County – more farm like.

- **Culture** - (does this site contribute to the arts, and the diversity of culture in the community as a whole) ____

Rockland has great diversity of culture – Irish, Italian, Caribbean, Dominican, African American, Jewish, and has been home to many renowned painters, actors, and artisans.

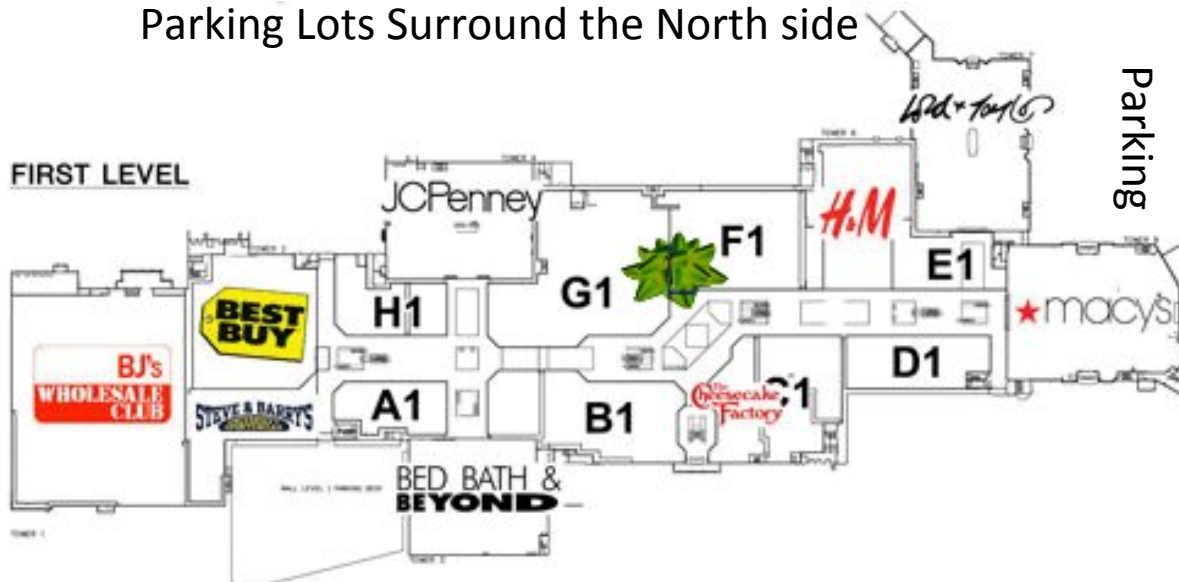
PALISADES MALL WEST NYACK NY

New York State Thruway

Parking Lots Surround the North side

Historic cemetery

Stacked Parking Lot



Parking

Route 303

Abandoned Frontage Road & Businesses

Parking Lots Surround the South side

Route 59

Shoprite

Detention Basin

Old Dump Site

Town Compost