

## COMMUNITY CONCERNS

### Stakeholders Includes A Regional Vision

There have been Hudson Valley groups who have been actively involved in the redevelopment of the Hudson River waterfront. These organizations have taken on a 'watchdog' role in the area, working with community members to offer guidance and expert oversight in the planning, public hearing and development process.

### Scenic Hudson

Scenic Hudson has worked throughout the region on land deals that have in many instance taken Brownfield sites and converted them to public parks and community use. Scenic Hudson generated alternative development plans for the Yonkers project and advocated for the following changes in the Master Plan:



1. Free and open access to the river for all citizens;
2. Eliminating visual impacts that restrict views of the Palisades and Hudson River;
3. Consideration of Yonkers' unique topography as the second hilliest city (after San Francisco) in the United States;
4. Development of a waterfront park system in half-mile increments along the Alexander Street Master Plan area consisting of green open space and recreational areas;
5. Setting master plan parameters for a 100-foot setback for all proposed development;
6. Encouraging mixed-use development, consisting of commercial, retail and institutional uses that promote economic development and the creation of new employment options; and
7. Encouraging the development of buildings that are within the height and density mix of the Downtown Waterfront Master Plan, which limits building heights to nine stories.

### Scenic Hudson's alternative development plan focuses on more open space and better connectivity to the rest of the Yonkers community. It includes:

1. Public parkland equal to 1/3 of the redeveloped waterfront;
2. Parks connected to the waterfront esplanade with a greenway that is a minimum of 100 feet wide (not 12 feet as the current plan calls for);
3. Each park would be connected to adjacent neighborhoods across the railroad tracks, which currently separates this riverfront project from the rest of Yonkers;
4. Views of the river and the Palisades would be enhanced and protected by all the new riverfront parkways.



## Riverkeeper

A second group that has provided community support is Riverkeeper. Riverkeepers' concerns covered the following issues:

1. Impacts on Hudson River Water Quality – Due to proximity to the river of the project, specific care should be given to assess:

- a) Stormwater management and erosion control;
- b) Sewage effluent (CSOs);
- c) Incidental fill needed for various marina and waterfront projects; and
- d) Cumulative impacts of the all the development plans throughout Yonkers.

## THE SEQR REPORT FOR THE YONKERS REDEVELOPMENT PLAN LISTED CERTAIN ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS TO THE PROPOSED PLAN:

- A possible **negative impact on the character** of the surrounding area by compromising the aesthetic quality of residents' views of the Hudson River.
- Impacts to the **shoreline** of the Hudson River could occur.
- The plan contradicts several previously instated conservation acts such as
  - Essential Fish Habitat Assessment
  - Draft Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan.
- The redevelopment could compromise essential **community facilities** and services such as schools, police, fire protection, emergency services, and public transportation, as well as on publicly accessible open space and recreational facilities, including the adjacent Beczak Center.
- The redevelopment could **displace low-income residences** and businesses and their financial stability.
- The redevelopment could impact **traffic** and traffic flow.
- Redevelopment could compromise **air quality** and noise.
- **Hazardous materials** could be exposed and could impact the general public and the environment.
- Higher amounts of **drainage and waste-water** could make its way into the ground water, as well as sewage, solid waste and stormwater.
- **High amounts of energy** would be needed.
- The redevelopment could impact **historic and cultural resources**.

## Alternatives or Mitigations...

It is important to note that no community group is actively supporting that the waterfront stay as it currently is – a deteriorated Brownfield site. Several alternative plans were considered by the Yonkers Community Development Agency (CDA)

- The No Action Alternative – which the CDA rejected since the existing area is unsightly and unproductive.
- A Reduced Height Alternative, which achieves substantially similar residential and commercial density goals with a lower but bulkier appearance - which the CDA

- felt was not adding any real benefits over the proposed plan.
- A Reduced Density Alternative, which assumes the creation of fewer housing units in the project area - which the CDA determined would not generate revenues needed for site clean up.
  - A Parkland Alternative, which considers revitalizing the Alexander Street site as a “central park” - which the CDA felt was not economically viable as the city would need to purchase the land.

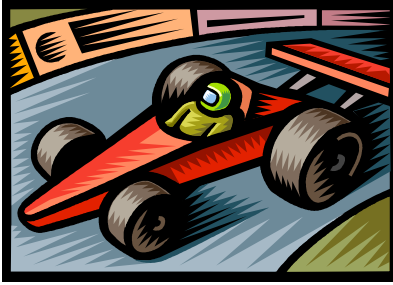
### **Yonkers Residents – PUBLIC HEARING 1/23/08**



Public hearings are a part of the SEQR process, and provide an opportunity for community members and interested parties to give input on a proposed development. Often changes are made as a result of public input.

Part of the SEQR process is the opportunity for affected individuals to voice their concerns about environmental impacts. The chart that follows on the next few pages is a summary of some of the concerns that were voiced at the January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 Public Hearing. You be the judge – are these legitimate concerns? How can they be addressed through adjustments to the development? To help get you started in this project, look at the discussion on the topic of transportation below.

## For Discussion Let's Consider Transportation



Getting where we want to go quickly seems to be a part of living in today's world. But sometimes getting places quickly is not the best approach either environmentally or for the community. Consider each of the transportation elements below for its merits or concerns.

### **Cars:**

A review of the transportation plans for the project seems to hinge in large part on the use of cars. The Master Plan includes 1.5 parking places for each residential unit, which is in excess of the required parking allotment, and considerable thought has gone into adjusting roadways to more efficiently move traffic into and through the waterfront area.

### **Train:**

In addition to focusing on street traffic, the plan also includes making full use of the commuter rail system - the Metro-North Railroad. Residential density will be focused around existing railroad stops in order to enable transit to jobs in the city and other destinations.

### **Ferry/Water Taxi Transportation:**

A passenger ferry service is a part of the newly refurbished Yonkers dock. It is anticipated that a majority of the residents in the new project will be commuting at least some of the time to New York City for work. With the project right on the Hudson River, ferry service to NYC is a quick trip.

### **Walkable Community:**

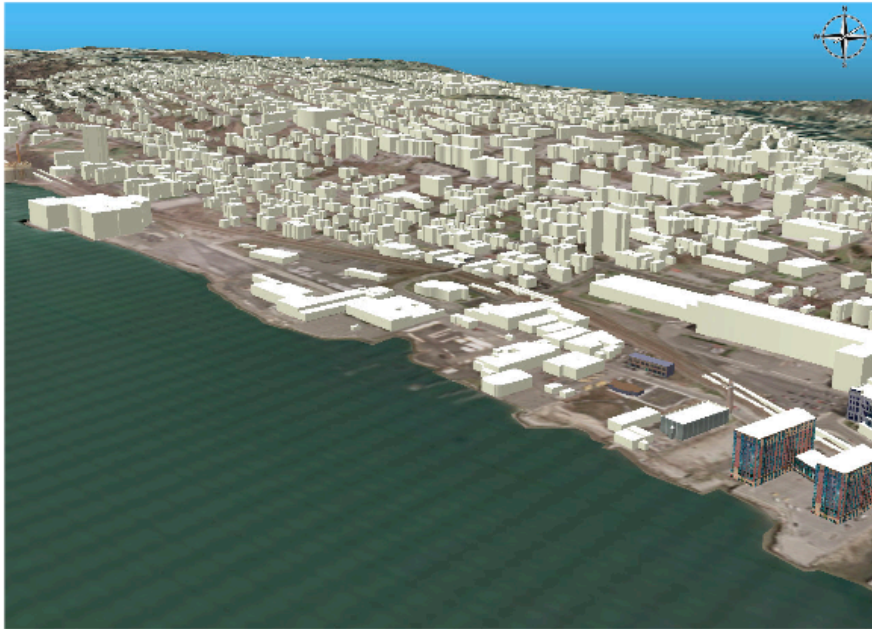
One of the best ways to offset the impact of increased traffic with development is to look at reducing the amount of transportation needed in the first place. Walkable communities are an important way to minimize transportation needs. The optimal time to develop a plan for a walkable community is when a large redevelopment plan is being considered. Building parking areas around the train station, reducing the parking within the project, and increasing the footpaths and walkways within the project area would encourage residents to walk within the waterfront area of the community.

### **It All Comes Down to the View!**

The most debated piece of the project is the high-rise buildings being proposed, and their impact on the views of existing Yonkers residents, and the look from the waterfront. Several buildings are planned to be 30 stories tall. You're the judge – will there be an impact? The following four images are from the DGEIS Master Plan documents and show existing versus built conditions.

**Aerial View**

**Existing Conditions**



**Aerial View**

**DGEIS Master Plan**



**View from Lamartine and Woodworth Avenue**

**Existing Conditions**



**View from Lamartine and Woodworth Avenue**

**DGEIS Master Plan**



View from the existing residents' point of view, with and without high rises.

## PUBLIC COMMENT FEEDBACK

Issue	Comment from the public	You Vote - can this be mitigated?	How would you suggest mitigating this?
<b>Parkland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• widen the esplanade – it needs to be more than a narrow walkway</li> </ul>		
<b>Viewshed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings proposed are too tall – 10, 20, 30 stories</li> <li>• Blocking existing homes views of the Hudson River</li> <li>• Look of Yonkers will be like Miami or NYC</li> <li>• Should not reduce views of existing residents</li> <li>• Don't want a wall of buildings</li> <li>• want a view not a view-line</li> <li>• build for current residents, not for residents you hope to attract</li> <li>• There is no lost view for much of the year because the leaves on the trees block it – but that is not correct, there is a light that reflects off the water that adds to the view of the leaves. This will be lost.</li> <li>• The buildings you're creating will create <b>tons of shadows</b>, like inviting giraffes to sit in the front seat at the theater blocking the Palisades.</li> <li>• Height - the Palisades <b>stand 525</b> feet above sea level. A 30 story building at 10 feet a story is 300 ft. high. You're putting Yonkers in a shadow at that height. It's way too high.</li> <li>• The Hudson River inspired the Hudson River painters and has been protected by the Rockefellers and many others over the years. We should protect the view and not shrink it to a peephole.</li> <li>• Build high rather than out – building out just creates sprawl.</li> </ul>		

Issue	Comment from the public	You Vote - can this be mitigated?	How would you suggest mitigating this?
<b>Density</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The density is the issue – too many units being added</li> <li>• More park less density</li> </ul>		
<b>Regional Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This opportunity will happen once in 50 years maybe longer – be careful</li> <li>• The Hudson River belongs to the whole regional area, think before you wall it off</li> <li>• The view belongs to everyone, not just who you think can afford it</li> <li>• Waterfront views are rare – don't sell out!</li> </ul>		
<b>Master Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 1998 the city developed a masterplan with buildings 7-9 stories high – what changed?</li> </ul>		
<b>Job creation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adding tall residential buildings is not going to create real jobs. It will just create low end janitor and maintenance jobs, and jeopardize our main industry in the Hudson Valley - tourism</li> </ul>		
<b>Walkable community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need parks, pedestrian access, pedestrian retail, we don't need parking lots. We need more public transit.</li> <li>• Should focus on less parking. Use pedestrian focus.</li> <li>• Cut parking back from 1.5 spaces per residence to less than 1 space.</li> </ul>		
<b>Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to focus on building community. This will not do that. These will be empty units during the day as people commute to Manhattan for work</li> </ul>		
<b>Historic Preservation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build to connect with the existing downtown, preserve the historic feel and sense</li> </ul>		
<b>Boating</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• human manpower boating has nothing to do with power boat marinas and they should be totally separate. And human power boating groups 20 shouldn't be forced into a power boat.</li> </ul>		



Issue	Comment from the public	You Vote - can this be mitigated?	How would you suggest mitigating this?
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should have 15% attainable (affordable) housing in each unit built for existing Yonkers residents &amp; spread throughout, not stick by railroad tracks</li> <li>• A community needs a variety of housing</li> <li>• Need a commitment for affordable, accessible, low-moderate living housing - a fixed percent – Brooklyn has 20%.</li> </ul>		
<b>Traffic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic is already bad - with added commercial and residential it will only get worse and no one will want to be there.</li> <li>• Focus on the ferry and the train - get people out of cars</li> </ul>		
<b>Parks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The open acreage in Trevor Park, JFK Marina and the Bescak Center already exists to underserve an existing population. It should not be included in calculations of what is needed for the increased population</li> <li>• Should not count sidewalks as open space</li> </ul>		
<b>Critical Mass</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must have a critical mass of residences to have a positive financial impact on the existing downtown</li> </ul>		
<b>RR Tracks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to integrate the neighborhood and build on both sides of the RR tracks. Connect this development to the rest of the city</li> </ul>		
<b>Sewage treatment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The existing sewage treatment facility will not be able to accommodate the added waste. There are so many cumulative projects planned in Yonkers that the sewage treatment plant will need more capacity this project foresees only a million additional gallons added to the 150 million the plant currently processes. My problem is that every gallon that's over the capacity that it was built to process is one too much.</li> </ul>		