



**COUNTY OF DUTCHESS**  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

August 19, 2015

Town of Poughkeepsie Town Board  
One Overocker Road  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

**Re: SQ# 15-293, Hudson Heritage Project Draft Scope**  
Parcel: 6163-03-011149, US 9

Dear Supervisor Tancredi and Members of the Town Board:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft scope regarding the proposed Hudson Heritage site.

The Hudson Heritage Project consists of commercial and residential development in two phases upon 156 acres at the former Hudson Psychiatric Center (HRPC) site. The Project's first phase is planned for the southern 40 acres and would include a total of 350,000 sf of commercial space (a 165,000 sf retail building and several smaller retail buildings). The second phase on the site's northeast portion would include 750 residential units (500 apartments, 225 townhouses & 25 single family units) to be constructed over ten years. The second phase could potentially include adaptive re-use of historical structures, including the 80,000 sf main wing of the Administrative Building. The 18-acre Great Lawn would be preserved.

For purposes of the Scope, the proposed action consists of 1) proposed amendments to the Town's Zoning Law, 2) approval by the Town Board of the Development Master Plan, 3) approval by the Planning Board of the site plan and subdivision for the Project, and 4) potential area variances from the ZBA.

**COMMENTS**

According to New York's State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), an objective of the scoping process is to identify the "potentially significant adverse environmental impacts" of a proposed project that are to be further studied. We are pleased to see that the Draft Scoping Document has identified traffic generation, historic resources, pedestrian/bicycle circulation, ecological/scenic resources and adherence to community goals as potential issues.

### **Recommendations from Town Plan and Transportation Study**

Poughkeepsie's Town Plan (2007) addressed this area specifically (see pages 66-67 and Map 10) as well as established specific zoning regulations referred to as the Hudson Revitalization Development District (HRDD) to reflect the Town's vision for this property and for the Fairview Center.

In addition, the Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council, in concert with NYSDOT, the Town, City of Poughkeepsie, Dutchess County, Marist College, Hudson Heritage LLC, the owners of the Mid-Hudson Plaza, and other stakeholders and citizens in the Fairview area produced the 2007 Route 9 Land Use and Transportation Study.

The Transportation Study was undertaken in direct response to complaints about unacceptable levels of traffic congestion on US Route 9 in the Fairview corridor. The Study developed a shared strategy for specific land use and transportation improvements, taking into account the development plans and traffic demands of major stakeholders and nearby projects (specific recommendations can be found throughout the document in Appendix B).

The Town Plan and Transportation Study recommended the following actions that relate to the Hudson Heritage Project:

- Establishment of a Route 9 to 9G connector road through the HRPC campus and a north-south secondary street from the site upon the former railroad right-of-way in order to diffuse traffic;
- Development of a pedestrian-oriented, village-like mix of uses for the southern portion of the site;
- Preservation of a greenspace frontage along the entire HRPC site up to the Hyde Park town line.

The Route 9 Land Use and Transportation Study made several other recommendations:

- Minimize the development of new, high-vehicle trip generators such as gas-stations and drive-through businesses;
- Encourage mixed-uses in order to reduce vehicle trips;
- Limit the square footage of commercial buildings to keep the area "neighborhood scale";
- Realign the Marist North Gate and the Mid-Hudson Plaza north entrance to the Winslow Gate, removing one existing traffic signal;
- Build a new north-south local road along the east branch of the abandoned CSX right-of-way from Hudson Heritage to West Cedar Street;
- Align the entrances to Quiet Cove Riverfront Park and the Hudson Heritage site;
- Build direct street and sidewalk connections between the Hudson Heritage site and Mid-Hudson Plaza.

As part of the traffic impact analysis for the proposed project, the DEIS should consider the recommendations of the both the Town Plan and Transportation Study.

### **Consistency with Local Zoning Regulations**

The Applicant contends that the Project is consistent with HRDD zoning regulations, but then proposes to amend the district's purposes and change most of the text to fit the Project. These proposed changes are at odds with the studies discussed above and result in a proposed Master Development Plan that is not village-like or pedestrian-oriented, with phasing that would allow large-scale commercial development to proceed with no residential mix. As proposed, the Project may overload the limited transportation network in the Fairview Center.

The following proposed zoning changes sought by the Applicant are of particular concern:

- Proposed purposes are changed from an emphasis on concentrated mixed-uses to separate commercial and residential areas and from sidewalk connections to adjacent neighborhoods to connections only within the HRDD;
- Existing zoning limits residential development to 300 units, with bonus conditions to add another 250 units and a maximum potential cap at 750 units. As proposed, the Project does not meet these conditions for more than 300 units, yet the proposed change would allow 750 units without any conditions. We suggest that the Town should add new incentives to replace existing ones if they are deemed to be outdated;
- Increases allowable commercial space from 350,000 sf to 430,000 sf if the Administrative Building is rehabilitated for use as a hotel;
- Eliminates the requirement that the Project be consistent with general site plan standards in the Town Code;

### **Pedestrian Connections**

We suggest that the Scope should also include a description of how the Project will provide safe pedestrian access between the site and the County-administered Quiet Cove Riverfront Park. It is also important to emphasize that the recommendations of the 2007 Town Plan and the Route 9 Transportation and Land Use Study must be considered throughout the DEIS, not solely in the "Public Policy" section.

### **DEIS Alternatives**

The Scope requires development of an "Alternative B" concept plan that reflects "Development Under the Existing HRDD Zoning." This design option should also be consistent with the Town Plan and Route 9 Transportation and Land Use Study discussed above. We note that the current proposal does not include residential units on the southern portion as part of a mixed-use development plan. We suggest the use of a market analysis to determine the marketability of residential units in the southern portion of the development.

In order to facilitate consideration of a feasible "Alternative B" our Department has provided an

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illustrative plan (attached) that was prepared in conjunction with previous property proposals. It is consistent with the Town Plan, existing zoning, and the Route 9 Transportation and Land Use Study. This plan should assist the Town in assessing the continued viability of existing zoning and of established community goals.

The Department's illustrative plan features the following:

- A multi-story neighborhood mix of housing and stores along a main street, with a supermarket anchor for the neighborhood, rather than a separated big-box configuration of commercial uses.
- Residential development integrated into the southern portion of the site. Reuse of a few key historic structures and/or erection of new buildings on existing footprints and development of a central green behind the Administrative Building. The existing Director's House as an attractive visual landmark at the end of the main street.
- A Route 9/9G connector road and a new local road upon the old railroad right-of-way to diffuse traffic. Pedestrian access and integrated street connections with the Mid-Hudson Plaza.
- Greenspace frontage along the length of the Route 9 frontage.
- Alignment of Winslow Gate Road with the Marist College North Gate Road.

As always, if we can provide clarification to any of our comments, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to the continued review of this important project.

Eoin Wrafter, AICP  
Commissioner  
By

Brian Kehoe  


Brian Kehoe, AICP  
Planner

c: M. Sassi, New York State Department of Transportation – Region 8



To Route 9C

**Hudson Heritage Site Illustrative Sketch Plan**  
 Consistent with the Town Plan, existing Zoning,  
 and Route 9 Land Use and Transportation Study

- Pedestrian-oriented mix of uses for southern HH site;
- Residential and commercial buildings set close to street;
- Village-like main street with parking lots screened to rear;
- Route 9 to Route 9G connection from Winslow Gate;
- North-south secondary street on former rail right-of-way;
- Greenspace frontage from Marist College to Hyde Park.

To Fulton Street

Quiet Cove Park

Route 9

Winslow Gate

1" = 300'