

INSIDE INSIGHTS

The Monthly Newsletter of the Sullivan County Manager's Office

September 2017

“We have a skilled team of professionals dedicated to all sorts of ‘let’s be better’ initiatives, from elevating our health rankings to increasing the efficiencies and capabilities of County government. Think of it in terms of the fall harvest season — except we’re planting seeds that are already bearing fruit.”

- County Manager Josh Potosek

Serious about getting better

Be it the services offered citizens or the ongoing investment in the health and skills of County employees, the County of Sullivan is focused on improving the quality of life in this scenic corner of the Catskills.

“We have a skilled team of professionals dedicated to all sorts of ‘let’s be better’ initiatives, from elevating our health rankings to increasing the efficiencies and capabilities of County government,” notes Sullivan County Manager Josh Potosek. “Think of it in terms of the fall harvest season — except we’re planting seeds that are already bearing fruit.”

What we’ve been working on

- Cutting costs and complexity at our solid waste transfer stations
- Cultivating “Wellness Champions” to increase employees’ good health
- Creating a vanpool program to efficiently & inexpensively get people to work
- Forming an Opioid Epidemic Task Force to create effective solutions
- Undertaking emergency response training to be better prepared in disasters
- Initiating a Welfare Fraud Task Force to track down and halt waste & abuse

In This Issue

- Department Spotlight: Div. of Planning and Environmental Mgmt.
- Take the Farmers’ Market Survey!
- Park of the Month: Livingston Manor Covered Bridge
- Solid Waste Initiatives



The Sullivan County Opioid Epidemic Task Force held its inaugural meeting on Sept. 20.



The Division of Planning & Environmental Management includes, from left, Account Clerk/Database April Barschow, Financial Analyst Anna Novella, Community Development/Grants Planner Shannon Cilento, Commissioner Freda Eisenberg, Assistant Commissioner Jill Weyer, Senior Planner Heather Jacksy & Planner Travis North.

Departmental Spotlight: the Division of Planning and Environmental Management

Need expertise? Plan on it

If you've noticed development in Sullivan County — a new business, a revitalized farm, an improved street, a scenic trail — chances are high that the Sullivan County Division of Planning and Environmental Management has played a role.

“We help make places look and function better,” explains Freda Eisenberg, who’s led the Division as its Commissioner since 2014. “Regional planning covers a very wide array of topics, but at the core, Planning is about land use. It’s about promoting a quality environment that makes people happy to be here and is attractive to new investment.”

Since the County does not control local zoning, its role in local land use is manifested in part through “239 reviews”: state-mandated reviews of projects, subdivisions, rezoning, etc. Town and village boards are free to accept or reject Planning’s recommendations, and it is this collaborative, home-rule-conscious approach which defines everything the Division does.

“Much of the work we do is accomplished by providing assistance and working in partnerships with the County’s municipalities,” Freda affirms.

Sometimes she and her team are providing maps, drafting code amendments, researching local planning issues or identifying funding sources and grant opportunities. Other days they’re facilitating visioning sessions or project-based committee meetings, partnering with Sullivan Renaissance on façade and signage improvements in various downtowns, or offering businesses and farms access to capital through the County’s Revolving Loan Fund and nonprofits access to critical dollars through the Plans & Progress Small Grants Program.

On a Countywide level, the Division has completed a series of plans in recent years, including the Ag and Farmland Protection Plan now being implemented in partnership with Cornell Cooperative Extension, and the Coordinated Transpor-

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Change is GOOD!

The Department of Solid Waste and Recycling has undergone a slew of positive changes this year that affect operational efficiency and safety — and decreased both costs and complexity.

- We simplified and ultimately reduced the fee structure for bagged waste for our residential customers. Our transaction efficiency has improved over 80 percent by changing to a coupon book system for bags and eliminating the opacity requirement for bagged garbage.
- We expanded our residential bagged waste dropoff hours to 2:45 p.m. on Saturdays at the Monticello Transfer Station to give residents more flexibility for disposing bags.

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More change ...

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- We implemented many safety improvements in the department to ensure staff and residents leave our facilities without injury.
- Credit cards are now accepted at most transfer stations to add convenience for commercial and residential customers.
- The Legislature authorized additional tonnage in 2017 for our Bulk Cleanup/ Beautification program, and so far over 1.5 MILLION pounds of unsightly, bulky trash has been taken in!

More changes are sure to come soon as we make improvements in efficient customer service and safety while continuing to protect the environment.

As always, recycling continues to be free and required by Sullivan County law, so be sure to support our program by removing all recycling from your garbage before disposal.

For more information, please contact Donna Egan, Director of the Sullivan County Department of Solid Waste and Recycling, at 845-807-0294.



The Livingston Manor Covered Bridge has spanned the Willowemoc since 1860.

Sullivan County Park of the Month: Livingston Manor Covered Bridge Park

Passing through? Stay a spell

Nearly 160 years after its construction, the Livingston Manor Covered Bridge still provides passage over the Willowemoc to horses, cars, bicycles and foot traffic. But have you ever stopped at the Park itself to have a picnic, walk under the bridge, or just take in the view of the Catskills?

Located right off Old Route 17 (County Route 179) between downtown Livingston Manor and the world-famous Catskill Fly-Fishing Center and Museum, the bridge was restored in 1984 and has been carefully maintained ever since by our own Division of Public Works, and our Parks, Recreation and Beautification Department provides picnic tables, portable toilets, a covered picnic pavilion and frontage along the Willowemoc for fishing and wading.

Though built by John Davidson, the 103-foot span was originally called the Mott Flats Bridge and may have had a family-name connection to John Raleigh Mott, who was born in Manor in 1865 and went on to lead the YMCA, winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1946.



What can you tell us?

Do you shop at farmers markets in Sullivan County? Then take the 9-question survey at cornell.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b17gxiiitQgnOGr3.

Sullivan County, Cornell Cooperative Extension, our partners, and local farmers markets are working together to improve the market experience. Your opinion is very important. The data gathered will help enhance local markets and how you'll hear about them.



Got a question?

Try your legislator first, by calling the Sullivan County Legislature's office at 845-807-0435. They can direct you to your representative, who is elected to serve you.

Or look up who you're seeking directly, via the County's website: co.sullivan.ny.us

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Demystifying the Division of Planning ...

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tation Plan that's now being implemented by the new Director of Transportation in the County's Public Works Division. The Transportation Plan led to the recent County contract bringing vanpool services here, as well as a soon-to-be-launched pilot for increased transit service to the shopping and medical services on Route 42 in the Town of Thompson.

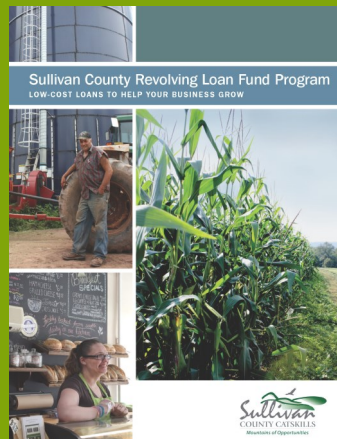
Meanwhile, the Upper Delaware River Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, or LWRP for short, has resulted in plan and designs for improving the public access points along one of our most popular destinations: the Delaware River.

Other major areas of focus include a now-annual Entrepreneurial Training Program to assist people thinking about starting or growing a business in Sullivan County, Main Street redevelopment, a Grow the Gateways planning project that has teamed the Village of Monticello with the Town of Thompson, and the new Sullivan County Land Bank, which — now flush with nearly a million dollars from the state — promises to turn dilapidated properties into engines of community revitalization.

Freda is particularly pleased about the recent launch of the O&W Rail Trail initiative, an effort to join the existing sections of rail trail in the County to form a continuous 50-mile path through the scenic heart of Sullivan.

"I actually got my start in planning through a trail program," she recalls.

"Here, we have a lot of pieces, and it's time to knit them together. Research has demonstrated that longer trails bring greater community benefits."



The Revolving Loan Fund offers seed capital and expansion loans to entrepreneurs.

It's a busy time for Planning, with a brown-fields program coming together and a new Community Development and Grants Planner on board to expand and build on the neighborhood revitalization initiatives embodied in the Land Bank and the brown-fields program, as well as the Gateways Plan.

Next to tackle is an update of the County's own "2020" Comprehensive Plan, but amidst that long-range view, Freda is keen not to lose sight of the day-to-day projects and assistance her Division renders, resulting in tangible improvements and higher quality development.

"We want to do more, and do it better," she says.

To see how Planning can help you, give them a call at 845-807-0527 or email PlanningPublicEmail@co.sullivan.ny.us.