



Statement of

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City of Beacon Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing

**City of Beacon
City Council Meeting**

February 6, 2017

Comments on City of Beacon Comprehensive Plan Update

- Scenic Hudson is committed to the City of Beacon. Since 1996 we have been working in the community, protecting open space, creating world-class public parks and creating trail systems to connect them. These include Madame Brett Park, Mount Beacon Park, Long Dock Park, and the Klara Sauer Trail.
- We have been active in creating trails (most recently the Fjord Trail) that link protected lands with other popular destinations in Beacon and beyond.
- We have invested millions of dollars in cleanup and construction costs to create public access to the riverfront and Mount Beacon and maintain and operate these facilities no cost to the City.
- We played a significant role in helping to attract and bring Dia: Beacon to the City and have collaborated with them on several projects to engage the public.
- Scenic Hudson's parks have had a significant positive impact on Beacon's economic development. Property values adjacent to the parks increase, municipal revenues increase, parks and trails attract new people to an area.
- We are proud to be a vital part of the City of Beacon, and we applaud the Comprehensive Plan Update as a guide for Beacon's sustainable growth.

We would like to provide the following comments on the Comprehensive Plan Update:

Waterfront

- We support rezoning of Scenic Hudson's Long Dock Park to a Waterfront Park designation. This change acknowledges the issues brought about by climate change including sea level rise and the consequent flooding that affect Long Dock Park and any future development there.
- We also support scaling the train station area TOD in a way that retains views of the river and strengthens connections to Main Street.

Bike and Pedestrian Connections

- Enhancing trail connections and opportunities to walk or bike to natural areas is important to a successful “livable community.” The inclusion of a number of projects enhancing the walking and biking environment in the city is very encouraging. This includes:
 - Reopening the Tioranda Bridge as a multimodal bridge, which will create an important pedestrian connection for residents to access great recreation opportunities like Mount Beacon or Madame Brett Park trails without having to get in their car.
 - Continuing to partner on the Hudson Highlands Fjord Trail.
 - Improving bike and road sharing infrastructure on existing roads.
 - Continuing to support the Fishkill Creek Greenway and other trails the Beacon trails Committee has worked so diligently on over the past years.
 - Advancing reuse of the Beacon Line to connect the city to the newly announced Empire State Trail.

Meaningful Transit Service

- Too often, the response of traffic congestion is to figure out how to accommodate more cars. We are therefore encouraged that Beacon has moved more progressively to think about meaningful transit options to serve a growing community within its existing development footprint. This includes recommendations to add or expanding high-frequency transit service to the train station, up and down Main Street, and hopefully, eventually along the Beacon Line to jobs and hotels in Beacon and Fishkill.

Main Street

- Encouraging infill development to create public spaces and pocket parks will enhance Main Street and we support this goal.

Open Space

- The sustainable land use and development practices included in the Plan under the Environmental Features Goals and Recommendations provide forward-looking mechanisms for preserving Beacon’s natural resources, which are critical to a healthy city in the future.

We see opportunities to continue our collaboration with the City of Beacon and its residents to achieve many of the goals included in the Plan. We appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to continuing to partner with the city on implementation of some of these recommendations in the plan.