



# PEEKSKILL'S WATERFRONT: Bringing Back the Vitality



**FROM BUSY TO EMPTY AND BACK.** A century ago, Peekskill's waterfront was one of the busiest places in New York State. Today this incredibly valuable real estate stands relatively empty and underused. Where factory buildings once stood, there are now parking lots and empty fields. An ongoing development effort should change all that—and your input is requested.

A hundred years ago, Peekskill's waterfront was an unrecognizable place. A decade from now, it may once again be transformed. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Peekskill's waterfront was a crowded, busy area. Few people lived there but many factories crowded the shoreline. Trains chugged up and down the Hudson River, while steamships carried stoves and plows and other goods all over the world.

Then the industry went away, and one by one, the factory buildings vanished. Today, relatively few structures remain, but some of the buildings that do are outstanding examples of their kind. Some of Westchester's most beautiful real estate is devoted to

parking lots or even empty space.

For decades, the City of Peekskill has been working on changing that. Now its efforts are gathering profound momentum in ways that will have enormous implications for the present and the future. Some projects are already underway, and in fact have proceeded far enough to win significant awards. Other proposals are only just beginning, but, understanding their importance, the City is making their creation as open and interactive a process as possible. That is the case with Ginsburg Development and its intentions to create significant residential development on the waterfront.

Ginsburg is looking at the possibility of constructing anywhere from 350 to 425 condominiums down by the waterfront. It also is considering creating a 500-space parking garage and some retail and restaurant spaces. No money has changed hands yet. Ginsburg is currently conducting a detailed analysis and is in the planning stage. This includes intensive interaction with the community. A recent session held at the Paramount Center for the Arts drew more than 200 people and lasted more than three hours. The company is now incorporating the ideas it heard at that session into revised plans for its waterfront proposals.

Determining what will happen with this key 40-acre portion of the city's waterfront, which includes the parking lots for the Metro North trains and much of the land east of the train tracks, will take a year or more.

In the meantime, other projects aimed at revitalizing Peekskill's waterfront are moving

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## PLAYING A WINNING GAME IN PEEKSKILL



*By Mayor John Testa*

Transforming a city isn't something that happens in big leaps. It usually takes a series of small steps by government, individuals and the community working together. We have been steadily assembling the building blocks of prosperity, and lately they appear to be coming together better than ever before. As we revitalize and gain recognition, one of the best measures of success is the people who want to work with and invest in Peekskill. By that standard, Peekskill is doing very well indeed. We are witnessing millions of dollars in private investment throughout the city that include quality residential projects, recreation enhancements and commercial and retail additions.

Mark and Livia Straus are acknowledged as being among the world's leading collectors of contemporary art. Drawn in by our city's successful artist's district, they decided to open a museum that would showcase the best of modern contemporary art in Peekskill. After several years of hard work, the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art is now open. It's an exciting place, both in the exhibits it holds and in what it says about our city's future.

Peekskill is being complemented in other ways as well. One of America's leading real estate developers is betting millions of dollars on our City's neglected and underused waterfront. This developer is putting together a plan for the future that should draw every citizen's interest. You can take part in making this future happen. The City, along with the developer, will hold a number of educational and informational forums that will discuss the resource that is our waterfront and the future we're planning for it. We've already held one citywide event at the Paramount, which resulted in over-whelming support for the initiative. There will be others. Please attend if you possibly can. You'll be able to help shape our city's future.

Finally, we've all heard the phrase, "If you build it, they will come." Well, we've built a great ballpark, and people sure are coming to it. The Peekskill Stadium on Louisa Street is open and is a busy place—and a huge resource not only for our city, but also for all of Northern Westchester. We cannot overlook the importance of additional and enhanced recreation opportunities for young and old alike. We are taking a balanced approach to moving the City of Peekskill forward as the "Jewel on the Hudson." **Thank you, the citizens of our city, for making all of this possible.**

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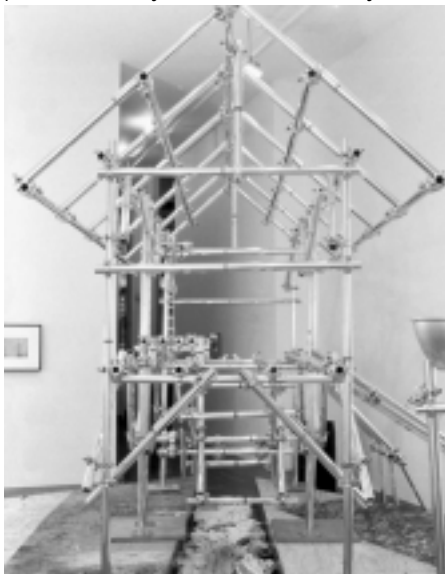
# A BOLD ARTISTIC VISION BECOMES A PEEKSKILL REALITY

When real estate developers are building a shopping mall, they always look for an anchor tenant—a big name that will draw traffic in and thus boost business for the entire community.

Now the Peekskill's artist's district—and the city itself—has a new anchor and driving force. Created by two highly respected collectors, the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art has already gained the city tremendous positive attention and has begun to draw a stream of new visitors to Peekskill.

Marc and Livia Straus have long believed that art can not only change people's lives, but that it can transform the world as a whole. That's one reason why as collectors, they have focused on some of today's most cutting-edge contemporary art—works that can fundamentally challenge people's perceptions of how the world operates and change the way they experience life and themselves.

Both of the Strauses are highly accomplished people. Marc Straus is a highly respected oncologist. Livia is a senior professor at the Academy for Jewish Religion in Riverdale. Now the Strauses have brought their power and energy to Peekskill in a spectacular and dramatic way, transforming a former lumberyard and hardware store located at 1701 Main Street into a world class exhibition space, artistic resource and potential catalyst for our community.



**CUTTING EDGE MUSEUM.** Highly respected collectors and philanthropists Mark and Livia Straus chose the city of Peekskill, NY as the site of the Hudson Valley Museum of Contemporary art.

**“Peekskill attracted us for a number of reasons. We knew we wanted the center to be in a multiethnic community.”**

Even though it has only been open for a short time, HVCC is already creating events that both celebrate Peekskill and gain new attention for the city. One of the most exciting of these is the Peekskill Project, which will see respected artists from around the metropolitan region creating works that focus either on Peekskill or the issues that surround the city. The event is scheduled for the weekend of Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>.

A number of factors drew the Strauses to Peekskill. The most important was the Artist's Community. The Strauses wanted to go to a place that they knew respected and cherished the arts. They also knew how valuable it would be to be part of an active, vigorous artists community that could support the many projects and programs the HVCCA plans to engage in.

Peekskill's long and complex history also drew the Strauses in. They felt that the city's rich past would make an especially

powerful pallet from which artists could draw. Working with a local government that supported their vision and encouraged their work was also an important part of the mix that made Peekskill an attractive site for their museum.

“Peekskill attracted us for a number of reasons,” Dr. Straus told *The New York Times*. “We knew we wanted the center to be in a multiethnic community. We also knew that we didn't want it to be in a privileged community, where the residents already had access to an art center. And we also wanted it to be in a place where schoolchildren could come visit, look and learn. I know it sounds high-minded, but we wanted it to make a difference.”

Though they own much of the material that is currently being exhibited at the museum, and are its founders, the Strauses specifically established the HVCC as an independent artistic and educational institution. They felt that this was the best way for the Center to flourish and achieve its mission.

Anybody used to renovations knows what a challenge transforming a building can be. And turning the museum from a retail outlet into an exhibit space proved far more challenging than the Strauses expected.

It took almost three years for the transformation to occur. Now that it's done, they're thrilled with the results. To support present and future efforts, the Museum charges visitors a \$5 fee and a \$20.00 individual membership offers unlimited access as well as notification of the varied events and openings. Inside they will find what *The New York Times* described as a “a bold, visionary initiative for Westchester County.”

Peekskill residents are welcome to visit HVCCA. It may well give them a new sense of where their city is today, and what its future will hold.

**Information about HVCCA can be found at their web site at [www.hvcca.com](http://www.hvcca.com). The museum's hours are Saturday & Sunday, 11am - 6pm or by appointment. Its phone number is 914.788.7166.**

# GARBAGE RULES: Helping the Environment AND THE BUDGET

Dealing with garbage—which is known in the trade as solid waste—is one of the biggest challenges facing America's cities. Decades ago, cities had their own dumps and faced few regulations when it came to disposing of items.

Today, Peekskill's former dump is valuable real estate on Corporate Drive. A web of local, regional and national regulations cover everything from the type of waste that can be thrown away to the ways in which it can be handled.

At the same time, the sheer amount of garbage handled by Peekskill has been rising almost exponentially in recent years. The City faced a difficult choice: see costs soar, or take steps that would both preserve the environment and help the Peekskill's budget.

When it's fully in force, the new program will both reduce the amount of trash and garbage generated by Peekskill and increase the amount of recycling. Though some of the steps have been painful, they were all necessary, City officials say.

"It's to the point now where we're ready to burst," says Howard D. Wessells, Jr., General Foreman of the Department of Public Works about the volume of garbage the City is currently handling. In 2003, the City's tipping fees—the prices charged to dispose of garbage—increased by 10% to almost \$400,000.

One of the primary reasons for the increasing tonnage and costs is the low rate of recycling currently taking place in the city. Last year, the City of Peekskill picked up 16,986 tons of garbage alone. That does not include 477 tons of glass, plastic and cans and 1,700 tons of paper and cardboard.

Recycling has a direct impact on the bottom line, since the City isn't charged for disposing of recycled material at the present time. The current low recycling rate of just over 10% costs the City a significant amount of money. "Our recycling rate should be at 25%-30%, other communities in Westchester County are recycling at a much greater percentage" he says. The measures the City is taking

should significantly assist the City in meeting that goal, he says.

Several different strategies are being used to reduce the costs. These include:

**A Four Can/Bag Per Parcel Pickup Limit.** A generous limit of four (4) 32-gallon barrels or bags per parcel has been set for pickup from residential areas. This "four barrel" rule has been on the city books for decades. It just wasn't being enforced. Now it is. Anyone wanting to dispose of more than four barrels or bags of garbage will need to purchase official City of Peekskill bags that will initially be available at City Hall and eventually will be available at numerous stores. The four-barrel limit holds whether a parcel holds a single or multi-family home. It also means "barrels," not "barrels with

piles of garbage on top." If a lid can't be put on the barrel, you're breaking the law. Those who leave more than four barrels or bags at curbside will face penalties that will escalate with each violation.

**Cutbacks in trash pickup.** Because of abuse and an almost exponential rise in volume, the City is reducing the number of general trash pickup days from 10 times a year to just four. In addition, the amount of trash that can be put out for disposal has been strictly defined in the City Code and is being published in the yearly brochure. Owners can put out no more than one and one half cubic yards of material per pickup day.

That translates into a pile roughly eight feet by three feet by two feet (8' x 3' x 2') in measure, or one about the size of a normal sofa. "People were bringing in trash from the outside, and landlords were using us as their cleanup crews," Wessells says. "We had situations where there were garbage piles

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## Rabies:



## Be AWARE, Be SAFE.

Rabies is one of the deadliest diseases known to humanity. It kills virtually every one it infects. And in recent years it has had an impact on domestic animals, pets and wildlife throughout the Northeast and in Peekskill.

This means that it is vital that city residents take extraordinary care of themselves and their pets. While relatively few domestic animals come down with rabies, a small but significant number of the wildlife population has the disease. Taking a few basic steps, however, can help protect you from this disease.

- **If you encounter a wild animal**, avoid touching it or getting any of its saliva or bodily fluids on your person. Take special care if the animal is behaving in an unusual fashion. This includes being overly aggressive, or the reverse, exceptionally friendly and displaying signs of excessive saliva or foam at the mouth.
- **If you have pets**, make certain that they get rabies shots annually. If your pets encounter a wild animal, and there is a possibility that they came into physical contact with it, or if they suffer any wounds from this animal, immediately get them a rabies booster.
- **If you find a wild animal** such as a bat, raccoon or other creature in your house, do not touch it. Call the police or a wildlife professional.
- **If you come into physical contact with an animal** in the wild, the animal should be trapped if possible and the police authorities contacted.
- **Be willing to get shots.** If you touch an animal and it cannot be trapped, you may want to consider getting a preventative rabies vaccination. This is something to discuss with your doctor and the Department of Health. The shots are a lot less discomforting than they used to be, and they can save your life.

**Remember, there is no cure for rabies. These basic preventive strategies can help save the lives of you and your loved ones.**

## J&J Clothing

21 South Division Street  
737-2191

Calvin Klein. Polo. Rocawear. Nike. Adidas. J&J Clothing is offering a full menu of national and international brand products at highly discounted prices in its new store at 21 South Division Street.

J&J carries products for people of all ages and tastes, says John Giampino, president and owner. "We cover a wide range of clothing for men, women and children," he says. "We're trying to attract the lawyer, the banker and the teacher as well as the younger, hip-hop generation that goes to high school."

## Total Knock Out Boutique

914-739-4949  
1011 Brown Street

Fun and funky, the Total Knock Out (TKO) boutique is the latest addition to the city's growing roster of unique and exciting downtown attractions.

Owner and founder Shara Shisheboran-Frame had a very specific goal in mind when she created her store: to create a store outstanding enough to be able to compete against nearby shopping malls yet with enough appeal to draw in parents and kids alike.

Anyone who has anything cool to sell can contact TKO as well. Consignment sales are an important part of the store's business, Shisheboran-Frame says.

TKO's business hours are 11:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday, and 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. on Sunday.



## Shades of Green

914-320-5667  
23 North Division

An oasis of opportunities for gardeners has bloomed in Peekskill's downtown with the opening of Shades of Green, a garden shop and design studio.

Shades of Green's customers will find a rich selection of everything from gorgeous plants to in-depth horticultural books. The store will focus on both mainstays and newer, more exotic products, carrying perennials, shrubs annuals orchids and houseplants.

Shades of Green's business hours are Thursday through Monday, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

# Congratulations & Welcome!

Visit these new businesses that have opened  
in Peekskill in the recent months.

## MANA International Foods 55 Hudson Avenue (914) 788-6430.

Peekskill has further cemented its status as the culinary center of northern Westchester with the opening of Mana International Foods Inc. at 55 Hudson Avenue on Peekskill's waterfront.

Mana is both a manufacturing operation and a café offering a wide variety of choices. Its menu is increasing on a daily basis, and includes fries, hamburgers, falafels, wraps and some oriental dishes. Mana is also a manufacturing operation, producing some of the region's premiere Kosher cookies and baked goods.

MANA's business hours are Monday through Friday, 5:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

## Peekskill's Waterfront: Bringing Back the Vitality

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along quite well. Not long ago, the shoreline of Annsville Creek was empty and neglected. But in the space of a few years, a concerted effort driven by the City government, supported by state and federal authorities, has transformed it into an exciting resource for the entire region.

In honor of that successful effort, the City of Peekskill received a rare and valuable tribute from New York State: a Governor's Waterfront Rediscovery Award. This award was granted for an effort that began back in the 1970s, but which really gained momentum in 2002 and should be finished by the end of 2004.

Annsville Creek is an inlet on Peekskill's north side. In the 1970s, the banks of the creek were lined with dilapidated bungalows. These were demolished, and then the property remained vacant for decades. In 2002, Peekskill received a grant from the Greenway Conservancy

and hired Stephan Yarabek of Hudson and Pacific Designs Inc. to create a master plan for the entire Annsville Preserve area.

Carefully designed to meet both the needs of the City and the financial realities involved in such a project, the master plan proposed a multi-phase effort that would proceed based on the availability of funds. As the projects proceeded, more and more of Annsville Creek's shoreline would become available to the public. Access to the Hudson River would become greater through the creation of trails, a fishing pier and other assets.

While portions of the project have already been completed, work on major segments is still underway. These efforts will include the creation of a 70-foot handicapped-accessible fishing pier, the construction of a lower trail that will lead from North Water Street to the Annsville Creek Park, and the construction of parking spaces and other facilities.

In another step forward in the City's continuing efforts to improve and redevelop a key portion of its waterfront property, the

City of Peekskill has hired Michael Ritchie of Dolph Rotfeld Engineering, P.C.; as the Waterfront Coordinator to oversee the Peekskill Landing Project.

Peekskill Landing is four-acres of waterfront property located on the shores of the Hudson River that are owned jointly by the City of Peekskill and the Scenic Hudson Land Trust, Inc. The property was formerly the Tallix Foundry and is currently vacant. The land is adjacent to the City's Riverfront Green Park and runs for about 1,800 feet north of McGregory Brook, its southern boundary. It was purchased in 1998, and its redevelopment as parkland has been the subject of extensive discussions.

A number of grants have been received to help revamp the Peekskill Landing property, which will be the waterfront coordinator's sole focus. One of his most important tasks will be to reach out to the community and see what the citizens of Peekskill want to do with this vital, valuable asset.

The city wants to work with every one of us to create our future. It's your waterfront.