Urban Action Agenda’s Progress, cities’ transformation detailed in new report

Pattern For Progress has been working with 25 cities and urban areas to help them revitalize. The efforts, which Pattern believes can help these communities attract a new wave of residents, are outlined in “Urban Action Agenda: A Program in Motion.” This new 44-page report is available at PatternForProgress.org.

With their existing infrastructure, access to transit and traditions of denser development, these communities are well positioned to accommodate the region's growth, and yet protect the region’s green space, the report said.

Pattern has employed a toolbox of strategies to assist. They include the Fellows and Community Builders’ Programs; quarterly meetings with mayors; detailed community profiles that aid municipal leaders; surveys on gentrification, urban farming and infrastructure; encouraging collaboration among school districts; shared-services agreements; research papers; bringing in keynote speakers to share successes elsewhere across the nation; and conferences, such as on the Urban Action Agenda.

"Ultimately, this is about helping the communities succeed," President & CEO Jonathan Drapkin said. "When you work with 25 communities, you find them in completely different environments. So, we need to tailor the assistance we provide to fit each situation."

In one example of success, Pattern assisted the Village of Brewster. The community profile Pattern developed helped secure a $2 million state grant to aid Brewster's transit-oriented development. The report also said that cities and urban areas’ revitalizations include safer and more attractive downtowns, diverse population centers, improving commuting options and increasing access to locally grown food.

Upcoming Events >>>

APRIL 21 - Get tickets to hear Maloney, Faso at “Across the Aisle”

Tickets are available for a bipartisan discussion between Congressmen Sean Patrick Maloney and John Faso, who will focus on how Washington politics affect the Hudson Valley when they take part in Pattern For Progress’ "Across The Aisle” talk April 21 at Marist College.

MAY 15 - Astorino, Day, Odell headline County Leaders Breakfast at Pace Univ.

Learn how Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino, Rockland County Executive Ed Day and Putnam County Executive MaryEllen Odell are steering their counties through unique times when they take part in a Pattern For Progress panel discussion May 15 at Pace University’s Pleasantville campus. Pace students in the master’s of public administration program will help question the leaders. Tickets are $55 for Pattern members and $70 for non-members.

Make reservations for both events by visiting PatternForProgress.org or calling (845) 565-4900.

Pattern seeks to aid school superintendents secure more state funding >>>

Pattern For Progress believes collaboration is important for the Hudson Valley’s growth. This is why Pattern’s Center For New Models in Education has begun meetings with city and urban areas’ schools superintendents.

These districts, with high poverty levels, budget constraints and complex demographics, have long felt there's an imbalance in how the state provides money for schools. They maintain they are not receiving their “fair share” of funding, and that forces these districts to make difficult choices in efforts to find money for the highest priority programs.

Pattern's Center For New Models in Education will be holding quarterly meetings with superintendents in urban areas to collaboratively examine this issue and others, and help mold an agenda that might assist. Pattern also seeks to identify models for schools/business partnerships.

Attendees at the first session were Dr. Paul Padalino of Kingston schools (in the photo at center, right); Dr. Kenneth Eastwood (left) of Middletown schools; Tammy Mangus (at right) of Monticello schools; and John Xanthis (second from right) of the Valley Central School District, which serves Walden. Pattern President and CEO Jonathan Drapkin (center) moderated. They discussed a range of funding issues and the special circumstances such districts face.

Pattern Welcomes New Planner

Eric Pierson has joined Pattern For Progress as a junior research planner. Prior to joining Pattern, Eric worked for as an assistant planner for the Monmouth County Division of Planning in New Jersey. With the county, he assisted in the administration of the farmland-preservation program and served as staff for the Monmouth County Agriculture Development Board, conducting site visits and preparing reports regarding the New Jersey Right to Farm Act. Eric earned a bachelor’s degree in natural-resource management from the University of Delaware in 2012 and a master’s degree in city & regional planning from the Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy at Rutgers University in 2015.
Anthony Mahler
Senior VP, Westchester Medical Center

Why is your business in the Hudson Valley?
Westchester Medical Center was established by statute to serve the Hudson Valley. We are committed to improving the health of the region and have established the Westchester Medical Center Health Network (WMCH) to extend our services throughout the valley.

How does your business help quality of life in the valley?
In addition to providing health care services locally to residents, WMCH is one of the largest employers in the valley with a workforce of about 12,000 people. We are looking for opportunities to invest further in the communities we serve so that our impact expands beyond health care services.

What new initiative helped your business grow in the past year?
Implementation of our telemedicine program has allowed us to leverage the clinical expertise of our faculty in Valhalla to serve residents throughout the valley.

The valley is constantly changing. What best practice would you share to make the most of that evolution?
Listening to the communities that we serve to ensure that our programs and services are responsive to local needs. One size does not fit all in the Hudson Valley.

Briefly describe the Hudson Valley in five years, 2022.
The Hudson Valley will be thriving based on a diversified economy. It will be served by integrated health care systems that provide high-quality services as locally as possible.

Something fun folks should know about you or your business?
This year marks our 100th anniversary.

Your advice on how to ensure a strong workforce?
Employers such as WMCH need to invest in training to make sure that a skilled workforce will be available to meet the ever-changing needs of health care systems. This means working with educational institutions as well as our own employee-development activities.

What was your first job?
My first job out of college was as a janitor at a laboratory.

Why have you chosen to support Pattern for Progress?
Pattern’s focus on regional solutions to problems, based on strong analytics, makes it the leading planning organization in the Hudson Valley. WMCH needs to work with organizations that share our regional focus.

What else would you like to communicate to Pattern’s membership?
WMCH looks forward to working with organizations throughout the Hudson Valley to learn how it can better serve our region.

Pam Edington
President, Dutchess Community College

Why is your business based in the Hudson Valley?
Sixty years ago, forward-thinking community members, primarily women, advocated for the establishment of a community college in Dutchess County. Fortunately, county leaders agreed that enhanced access to higher education would benefit the local citizenry, and a college was born.

How does your business help quality of life in the valley?
DCC is one of the county’s most valuable resources. In addition to providing quality, affordable, accessible higher education to anyone with a desire to learn, the college is a key player in local workforce-development initiatives; has a major economic impact on the county through our payroll, purchased services and alumni; offers important cultural and academic events open to the public; and collaborates to advance collective goals.

What new initiative helped your business grow in the past year?
We opened a new site at the Family Partnership Center last fall to consolidate the English as a Second Language and high school equivalency-diploma programs that had been scattered throughout the City of Poughkeepsie. Almost 300 students are enrolled at the site, confirmation that the college’s enhanced visibility at this convenient location will create a pathway to college for many students who may not otherwise have considered higher education an option.

The valley is constantly changing. What best practice would you share to make the most of that evolution?
Clearly, collaboration is the key to progress. Organizations that work in isolation cannot be successful, especially now, when needs typically exceed resources. By working together toward a common good, we can have a collective impact that’s significant, powerful and sustainable.

Briefly describe the Hudson Valley in five years, 2022.
If community partners, public and private, continue to leverage assets to make the Hudson Valley stronger, businesses will be increasingly attracted by our educated workforce. Families will settle here because of good-paying jobs, our excellent location, beautiful landscape and abundant recreational and cultural opportunities. The valley has so much to offer.

Something fun folks should know about you or your business?
The college is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year! Among our 40,000 alumni is Karen Trovato, Ph.D., who was a trailblazer for women in the engineering and research field. She has more than 100 patents worldwide – and was one of the inventors of technology used in the self-driving car. She demonstrated it to Henry Ford III in the 1980s.

Your advice on how to ensure a strong workforce?
Businesses need to invest in the education and professional growth of their employees because people are an organization’s most valuable asset. We also need to ensure that young people see a connection between their performance in school and their future success. We know from the E-TECH program in the City of Poughkeepsie that motivated students can achieve high expectations if we give them the proper tools and support. As a society, we need to ensure that the next generations have the vocational skills or higher education necessary to earn good wages and become fully engaged members of our community.

What was your first job?
In addition to babysitting neighborhood children, I also helped my younger brother with his newspaper route. Those Minnesota mornings were bone-chilling; I think my parents called them character-building.

Why have you chosen to support Pattern for Progress?
Pattern is a data-driven, evidence-based organization that fosters high-level collaboration between key stakeholders in the region and the state. Through its impressive network, excellent research and solid resources, it has earned a reputation as a credible, forward-thinking organization that has the power to positively impact life in the Hudson Valley.