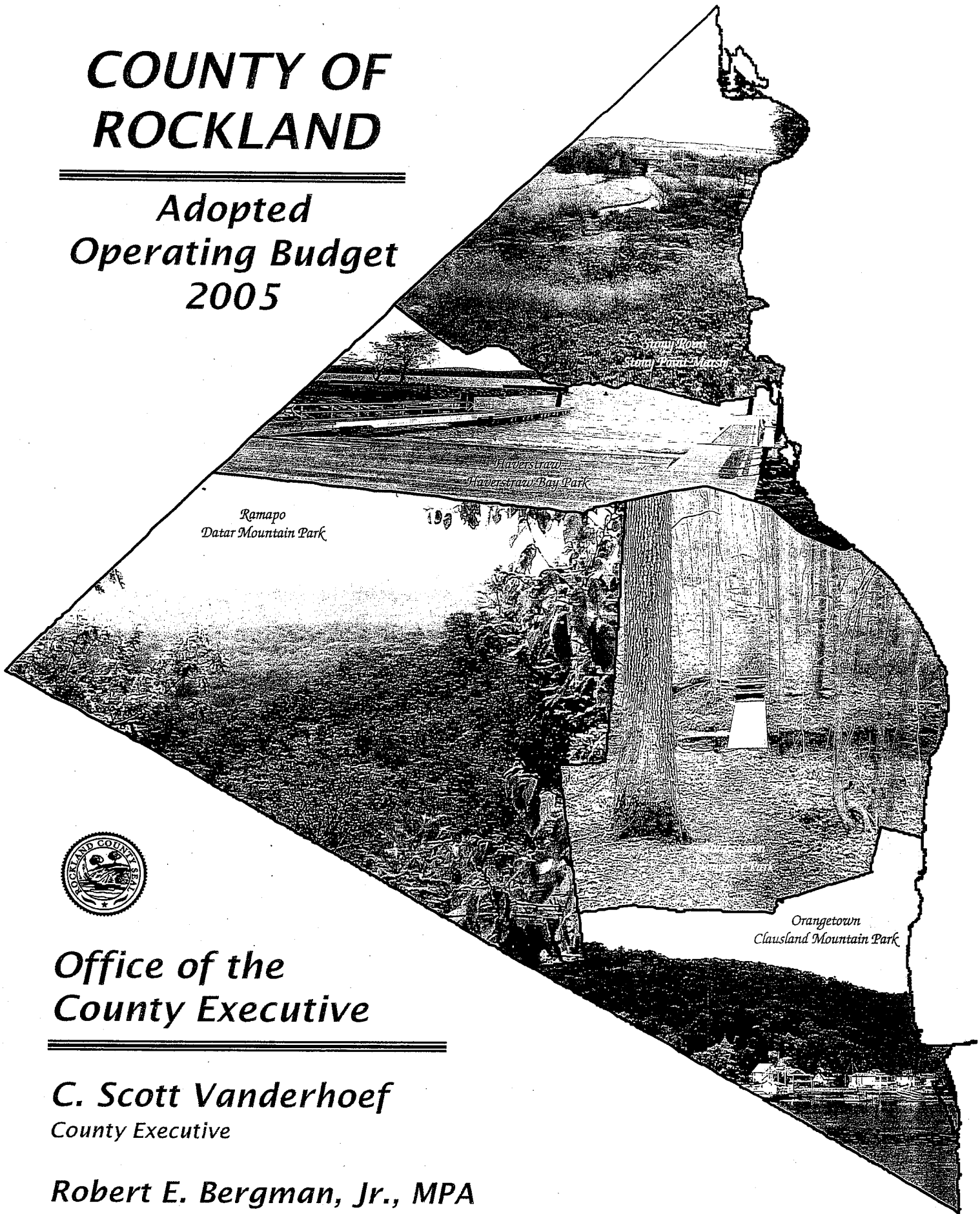


COUNTY OF ROCKLAND

Adopted Operating Budget 2005



Office of the County Executive

C. Scott Vanderhoef
County Executive

Robert E. Bergman, Jr., MPA
Budget Director



COUNTY OF ROCKLAND 2005 BUDGET

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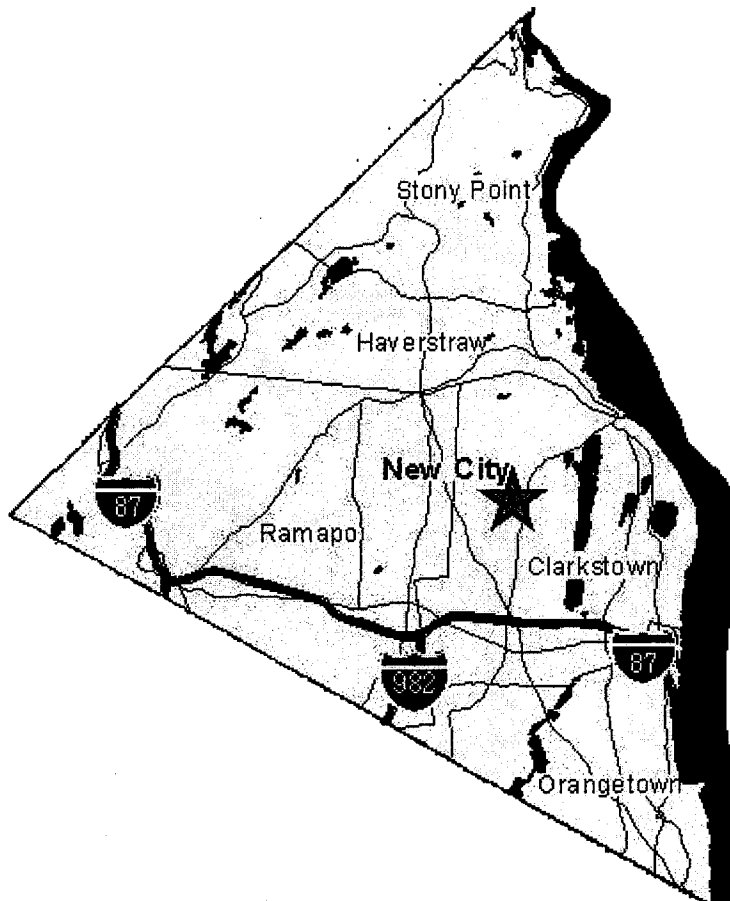
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COUNTY OF ROCKLAND

2005 BUDGET

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





COUNTY OF ROCKLAND

2005 BUDGET

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SECTION A

BUDGET MESSAGE



**COUNTY OF ROCKLAND
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

Allison-Parris County Office Building
New City, NY 10956
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C. SCOTT VANDERHOEF
County Executive

October 25, 2004

To the Honorable Members of the Rockland County Legislature:

In accordance with Section 4.04 of the Rockland County Charter, I am presenting the 2005 Proposed Budget today for your review and consideration.

This \$589.9 million proposed budget is the result of months of work by my administration and our department heads. This year our task was particularly complex given the significant cost cuts and staff reductions we have made over the past several years.

After implementing many suggestions of last year's Executive Financial Operational Review Team (EFORT), we began the 2005 budget process with an efficient, cost-effective government. However, we faced several difficulties – soaring state-mandated costs, particularly for Medicaid, and the financial fallout resulting from Mirant Corporation's challenge of its tax assessment.

Medicaid continues to be the most burdensome state mandate. On top of last year's \$6.4 million increase in our local share, Rockland faces a \$5.5 million dollar increase for 2005. Also, our total pension costs for 2005 are expected to rise 27 percent to more than \$20 million. In addition, the Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) reversed a position by the New York State Comptroller's Office that would have freed up \$8 million from the 2004 budget to use toward pension costs in 2005.

It is essential that Rockland County continue to fight for significant Medicaid reform and mandate relief. I have joined with County Executives from across New York State in working to spread the message that counties should not be forced to absorb costs over which they have no control.

Mirant Corporation's ongoing bankruptcy and dispute over its tax assessment delivered several blows to our budgeting process this year. First of all, the decision by the Town of Haverstraw, the Town of Stony Point and the North Rockland School District to lower the assessment of Mirant's properties raises taxes for other property owners throughout Rockland. The lower assessment translates into \$594,000 less in tax revenue for the County. Therefore, this tax burden has to be spread among Rockland County taxpayers.

In addition, Mirant is continuing its irresponsible and illegal action of refusing to pay County, Town and School property taxes while it fights its assessment in court. The County suffers in several ways from Mirant's failure to pay. First of all, when Mirant defaults on its County tax bill, we obviously lose revenue. We also are responsible under state law for making up the difference in unpaid taxes to the Towns and the school district. In order to do this we must bond money and, of course, pay interest on that bond. Lastly, we have to pay legal fees to attorneys to represent us in the ongoing Mirant court battle so that Rockland County taxpayers are adequately represented.

We were especially concerned with holding down property taxes in 2005, given the fact that property owners throughout Rockland will be particularly burdened next year with property tax increases from Town governments. Those increases range from a proposed 5.9 percent in Ramapo up to 28 percent in Stony Point. Taxes imposed by the Sewer District, a separate taxing authority from the County, will also rise 19.1 percent due in part to the construction of a wastewater facility for Western Ramapo.

In our desire to hold down taxes, however, we must never lose sight of our ultimate goal to deliver superior services to the residents of Rockland County. We have made hard decisions, but not harsh decisions. The mission of Rockland County government best sums up our philosophy in drafting this proposed budget: *To serve the people of Rockland County well by providing needed services in a high quality, ethical, courteous, timely and cost-effective manner.*

Because of the soaring cost of Medicaid, increased pension costs and the continued Mirant burden, it was necessary for us to raise revenues in this proposed budget. Therefore, this budget does include a slight property tax increase of 2.75 percent in order to continue to provide services and pay for other mandated costs. This will generate a much-needed \$1.25 million for a total real property tax levy of \$46.7 million.

In 1994, when this administration first took office, the actual property tax levy was \$50.5 million. My 2005 proposed property tax levy is \$46.7 or 7.34 percent less than 11 years ago. The benefits of our earlier property tax cuts are still being felt. The total percentage increase this year is 2.75 percent, but still less in real dollars than when I came into office, although inflation has grown by about 25 percent, our population has increased and the services we provide our residents have expanded.

In order to keep the burden of the property tax down, the proposed budget also includes a \$10 County fee for motor vehicle registrations. This fee is expected to raise \$1.7 million, which will be dedicated solely to County road and drainage projects. Thirty-one counties in New York have imposed this fee, which does not require approval by the State Legislature.

It is important to note that for the third year in a row, this budget does not include any allocation from the undesignated fund balance. Special thanks to all County Legislators for working with me in our efforts to rebuild our depleted fund balance. We are well on our way – with the fund balance up to \$19.7 million from a low of \$5.4 million in 2001. It is critical to Rockland County's financial stability, our bond rating and our long-term fiscal health, that we continue our efforts to rebuild this fund balance to a level appropriate for a county of our financial size.

This proposed spending plan does not include any increase in the County sales tax rate. The total sales tax revenue included in this proposed budget is \$156.5 million. That is \$12.25 million more than in 2004.

As in the 2004 Budget, my 2005 Proposed Budget includes a slight increase for most not-for-profit agencies of 1.5 percent. Although we have been unable to give substantial increases because of our tight fiscal constraints, we believe it is important to increase funding to offset inflationary increases and to show our support and thanks for the important work of our not-for-profit agencies.

This proposed budget continues this administration's strong commitment to education, law enforcement, health and human services, and open space with several new initiatives or increased funding for expanded, innovative programs.

Funding to the 21st Century Collaborative for Children and Youth was increased to \$309,070 in order to expand the highly successful Family Resource Centers from elementary schools into the County's junior high schools.

We have also funded Child Care Resources with an additional \$95,000 to revive a program that provides for the training and certification of day care providers in Rockland County. This will help ensure that our children receive the quality care they deserve in the important first few years of their lives.

A few additional not-for-profit organizations that demonstrated a specific need received an increase above 1.5 percent. We recommended funding the Challenger Space Center in Ramapo \$10,000 this year to continue to run school missions that were in danger of being discontinued. Konbit Neg Lakay will receive an additional \$20,000 to offer job training specifically for Haitian women.

In our ongoing effort to prevent cancer and other chronic illnesses, we have created a new division in the Health Department to house the County's Cancer Institute, which I first announced in my 2002 Message to the Legislature. This new division of Cancer and Chronic Illness Programs will lead to increased cancer screening programs modeled after the successful Breast Health Partnership. Other existing preventive programs such as the Tobacco Prevention and Control program and the Healthy Lifestyle Preventive Strategies will also be included in this new division.

We doubled funding to Alzheimer's programs in the Health Department from \$50,000 to \$100,000. This is in addition to the funding given directly to the Alzheimer's Association and to the Nathan Kline Institute to conduct research. The proposed budget also includes a plan to make five of our unused beds at the County Infirmary in Pomona available to Hospice. These five rooms will be renovated to provide a home-like setting for Hospice patients who are unable to spend their final days at home.

Several capital projects included in the proposed budget are geared toward improving the quality of our law enforcement and public safety. The Police Information Network is slated to receive \$600,000 in order to upgrade the computer equipment that links our Sheriff's Department and local police departments. In addition, the proposed budget includes \$600,000 for a new firing range for police officers at the Tilcon site in Haverstraw.

Our commitment to preserving open space and increasing parkland has been enormously successful and will continue with the addition of \$5 million to our Open Space Preservation Program. There is also \$100,000 set aside in the proposed budget to investigate the possibility of the County purchasing a golf course.

The proposed budget includes \$2.9 million to purchase property adjacent to the Fire Training Center and the Samuel G. Fisher Mount Ivy Environmental Park. This acquisition will preserve open space and provide for the possibility of expanding County operations.

We plan to improve the appearance of County facilities and give facelifts to some of our 26 buildings, which are located at three locations. The proposed budget includes an additional \$100,000 for preventive maintenance on our buildings.

The 2005 Proposed Budget includes a net increase in personnel of 16 positions. The new County employees include two more correction officers to cut down on overtime and improve safety in the county jail, three additional emergency radio operators to handle the increase in 911 calls from cell phones and a public safety specialist to work on Homeland Security.

Other new employees included in the proposed budget are two new arson investigators, three more parks workers to handle increased work at the enormously popular Haverstraw Bay County Park, and two positions to answer phones at the County's new Information Rockland hotline.

The proposed budget also includes two new Senior Caseworkers in the Department of Social Services to work in the Nyack and South Orangetown school districts as part of the School Preventive Services Program. The schools pay a portion of these salaries.

Under the proposed budget, non-union employees will receive a salary increase of 3.75 percent in 2005, which is the same as the increase received by employees in the Civil Service Employees Union (CSEA) and the Rockland Association of Management (RAM) in 2004. At the request of the Legislature Chairman, I have included the same increase for Legislators and their staff.

Five key administrators received a slightly higher increase primarily because of both their increased workload and responsibilities. Those five include Sheriff James Kralik, County Clerk Edward Gorman, Director of Fire and Emergency Services Gordon Wren, Director of Housing and Community Development Joseph Abate, and Commissioner of Human Rights Ram Nagubandi.

We have been notified by the Empire Plan – which covers most employees' health benefits – that beginning in 2005, the co-pay for prescription drugs will double from \$5 to \$10 for generic drugs and \$15 to \$30 for non-generic prescriptions. This increase makes it necessary for us to change the County benefit for employees who use the pharmacy at the Robert Yeager Health Complex and currently are not charged a co-pay because the County picks up the tab.

This proposed budget includes a plan to have employees who use the County pharmacy pay \$5 for generic drugs and \$15 for non-generic drugs, thereby saving 50 percent over the new Empire Plan rates.

This new proposal will result in a savings to County taxpayers of approximately \$1.6 million annually and will benefit employees who will not have to pay the new higher Empire Plan co-pay. The employees will also continue to have the convenience of using a pharmacy near their workplace.

Preparing this budget was extremely challenging and required the joint efforts of all fiscal staff and department heads. I would like to thank the legislative leaders for their support and input during the budget process. I look forward to working with the Legislature to pass this 2005 Proposed Budget for the good of this County and its residents.

This year's proposed budget is available in both English and Spanish on the Rockland County website, www.rocklandgov.com, in a new user-friendly format.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my appreciation to Robert Bergman, Commissioner of Finance; Chris Kopf, Deputy Finance Commissioner; Steven Grogan, Deputy Budget Director; and their staff for their efforts during the budget preparation. I would also like to thank Susan Sherwood, Chief of Staff; Terry Grosselfinger, former Chief of Staff; and Laurie Rindskopf, Human Resources Coordinator for their work on this year's proposed budget.



C. Scott Vanderhoef
County Executive



COUNTY OF ROCKLAND OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Mission

Rockland County employees continually strive to meet their primary mission: ***To serve the people of Rockland County well by providing needed services in a high quality, ethical, courteous, timely and cost-effective manner.***

Quality of Life

Rockland County is a thriving, diverse community with a strong economy. Our residents, workers and employers all enjoy a community that offers:

- A healthy economy with relatively low unemployment.
- Safe, secure neighborhoods.
- Outstanding schools.
- Access to excellent health care and human services.
- A diverse population.
- A mix of businesses -- including health, retail, manufacturing, pharmaceutical, construction and research.
- A wide range of recreational and cultural activities.
- An extensive park system that has grown because of the Rockland's Open Space Preservation Program.

These factors make Rockland County a desirable community to live, work, own a business and raise a family.

Accomplishments

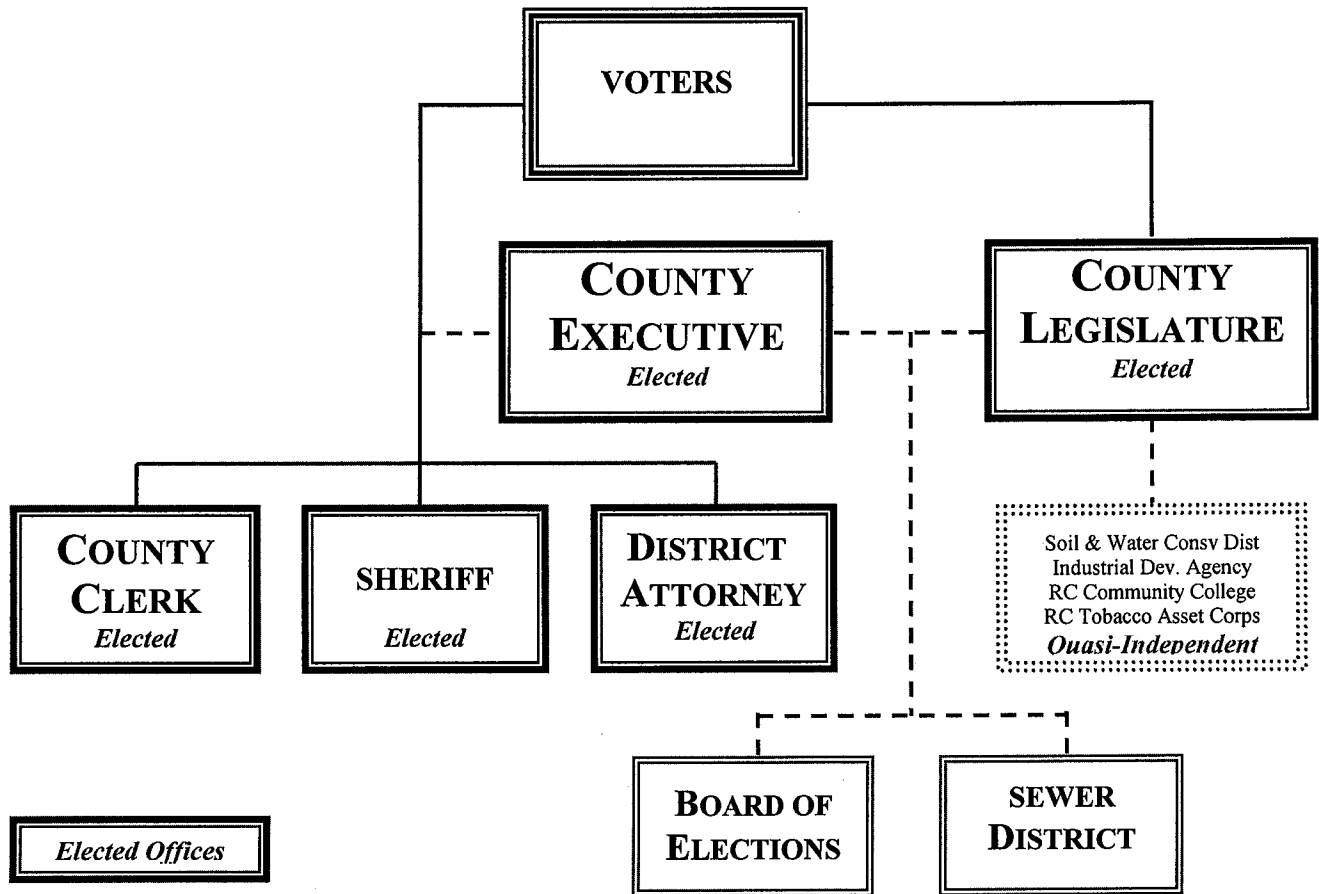
Rockland County government has achieved an impressive list of accomplishments over the past 10 years including:

- Preserved 657 acres of land, including the creation of 5 new parks and the preservation of two farms.
- Improved transportation with new trains, express service, enhanced transportation stations and more parking for Rockland commuters, as well as enhanced bus services and a ferry to Westchester.
- Constructed and rehabilitated more than 1,500 units of affordable housing and revitalized our downtowns.
- Reduced County welfare rolls by more than 60 percent.
- Increased the safety of our communities with new programs and resources for our Sheriff, District Attorney and Office of Fire and Emergency Services.
- Partnered the federal government to open the Veterans' Health Clinic in Rockland, which has 6,000 patients.
- Expanded environmental health programs.
- Opened a 41 bed state-of-the-art Alzheimer's unit at the Summit Park Hospital in Pomona.
- The first county in the U.S. to develop a "School of the 21st Century."

Government Efficiency

Over the past 10 years, Rockland County Government has cut costs, streamlined operations, reduced departments by one-third and improved efficiency. County property taxes are 7.3% lower than 10 years ago, even though inflation has grown, the population has increased and services have expanded.

ORGANIZATION OF ROCKLAND COUNTY GOVERNMENT



ALL OTHER CHARTERED DEPARTMENTS

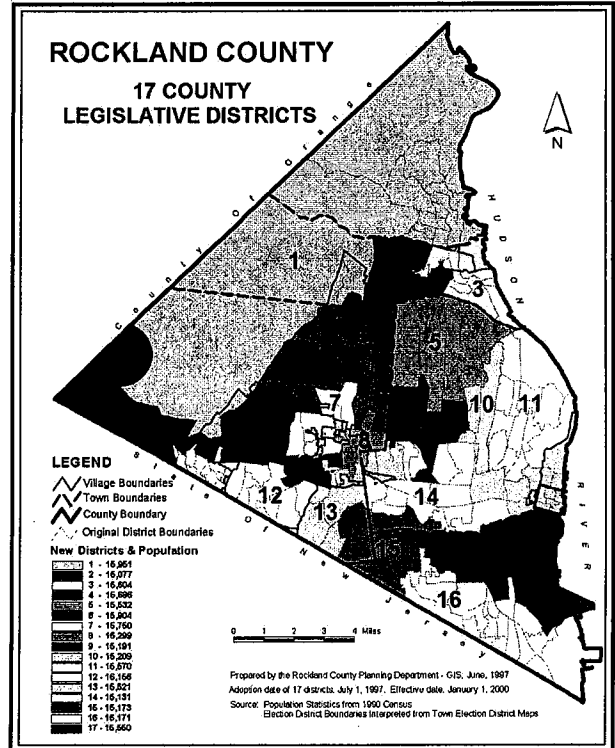
Dept of Planning Commissioner Charter 5.01	Dept of Personnel Commissioner Charter 6.01	Dept of Health Commissioner Charter 7.01	Dept of Hospitals Commissioner Charter 8.01
Dept of Mental Health Commissioner Charter 9.01	Dept of Social Services Commissioner Charter 10.01	Dept of Highways Superintendent Charter 11.01	Office of the Public Defender Charter 15.01
Dept of Law County Attorney Charter 16.01	Dept of Finance Commissioner Charter 17.01	Dept of Audit County Auditor Charter 18.01	Human Rights Commissioner Charter 19.01
Other County Boards, Offices, Institutions & Functions Charter 20.04			

ROCKLAND COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Local Law 15 of 1997 established 17 single-member districts, effective January 1, 1999. Seventeen Legislators were elected in the fall 1999 General Election to serve four-year terms, thus, reducing the size of the County Legislature from 21 to 17 members, effective January 1, 2000.

2004 LEGISLATURE

DISTRICT	LEGISLATOR
District 1	Hon. Douglas J. Jobson
District 2	Hon. Salvatore Corallo
District 3	Hon. Roman Rodriguez
District 4	Hon. Ilan S. Schoenberger
District 5	Hon. Kenneth P. Zebrowski
District 6	Hon. Robert M. Berliner
District 7	Hon. Philip Soskin
District 8	Hon. William L. Darden
District 9	Hon. Gerold M. Bierker
District 10	Hon. Harriet D. Cornell
District 11	Hon. Theodore R. Dusanenko
District 12	Hon. Ellen C. Jaffee
District 13	Hon. David Fried
District 14	Hon. VJ Pradhan
District 15	Hon. Patrick J. Moroney
District 16	Hon. John A. Murphy
District 17	Hon. Denise Kronstadt



LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP

Salvatore Corallo
Robert M. Berliner
William L. Darden
Harriet D. Cornell
Douglas J. Jobson
Gerold M. Bierker

Chairman of the Legislature
Vice-Chairman
Majority Leader
Deputy Majority Leader
Minority Leader
Deputy Minority Leader



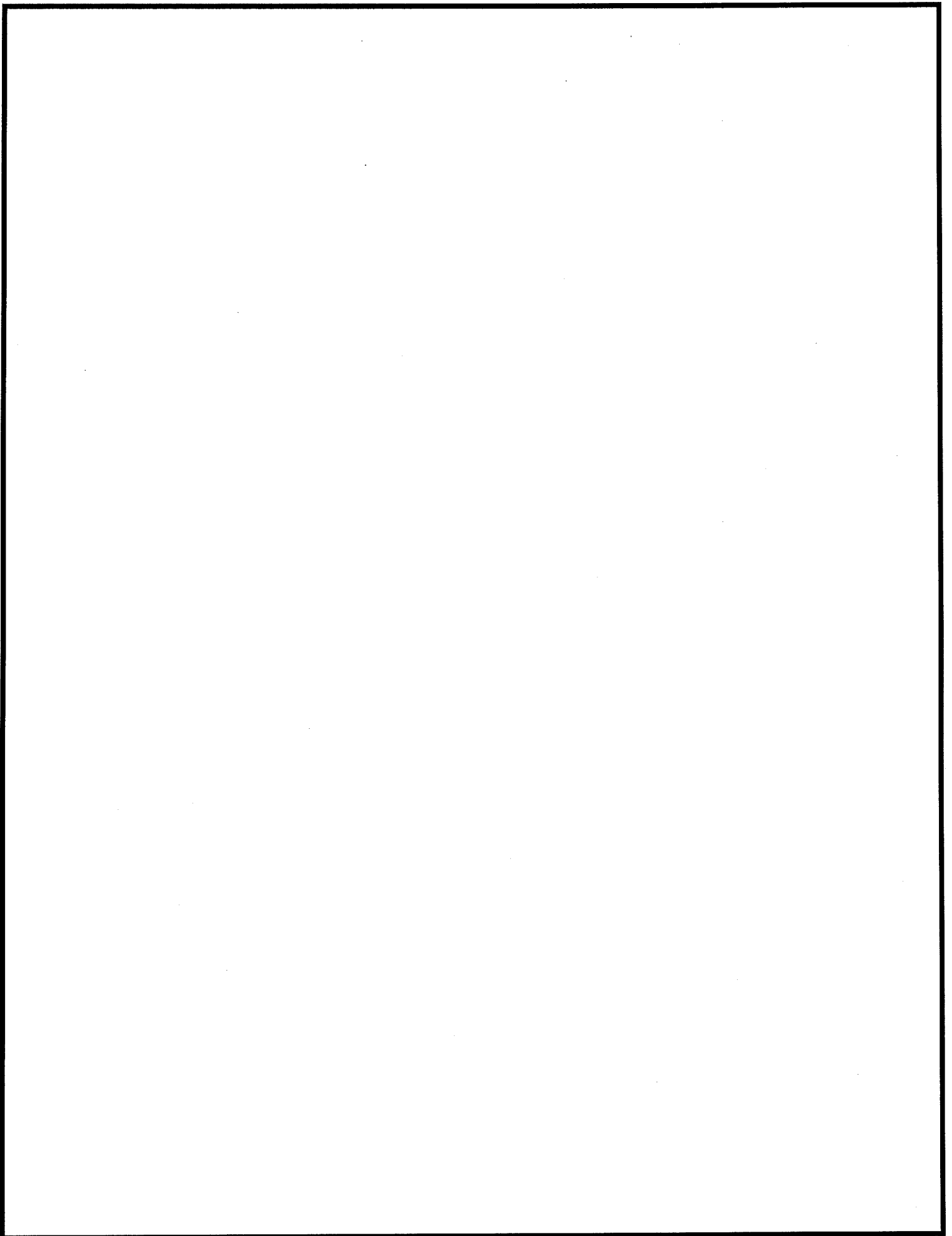
COUNTY OF ROCKLAND

2005 BUDGET

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SECTION B

BUDGET DOCUMENT & POLICIES



HOW TO USE THE BUDGET

This budget document presents information about appropriations and revenues for each County department. From the charts, diagrams, tables and narratives throughout this document, an individual can learn about the government of Rockland County, including each department's organizational structure, staffing, achievements and goals.

The section you are currently reading is How To Use The Budget. This section outlines and explains how the budget document is organized, describes the budget development process, and includes glossary of terms to assist you.

The budget document is organized into five (5) main sections:

1) Section A – Budget Message

This section contains a budget message from the County Executive, the mission statement of the Office of the County Executive, the organization of County government, and members of the Legislature.

2) Section B – Budget Document & Policies

This section contains descriptive material concerning the County's budget process, basis of budgeting, key budget dates, budget layout, component units of the County, a glossary of terms, fiscal strategies and debt management policy.

3) Section C – Profile of Rockland County

This section contains a profile and demographic data of the County, a listing of principal taxpayers, and property tax levies & collections for the last 10 years.

4) Section D – Budget Summaries, Charts & Graphs

This section contains various budgetary summaries, graphs, and charts by fund, and activity, a County government roster, staff composition, debt summaries, constitutional debt limit, largest N.Y. State mandated programs, contract agency schedules, budget history, fund balance summaries, plus additional highlights in the current budget.

5) Section E – Department Budgets

This section presents detailed information on each County department. For each agency in the budget, there is a narrative detailing the agency's mission statement, a brief outline of each department under the agency, a listing & head count by category of the employees in each department, the agency's achievements for the prior year and goals for the next.

We hope we have succeeded in presenting a budget document that is both informative and useful for the residents of Rockland County. Please direct your comments or suggestions to the County of Rockland's Department of Budget & Finance, 18 New Hempstead Road, New City, NY 10956, telephone number 845-638-5262 or visit the County's website at www.co.rockland.ny.us

BUDGET PROCESS

The County budgets, maintains accounting records, and prepares financial statements on a calendar year basis. Rockland Community College observes a fiscal year ending on August 31.

The County Executive annually prepares and files the County budget, in accordance with the provisions of the County Charter and County Law. On or before August 1, or such earlier date as the County Executive may prescribe, the administrative heads of all County departments and/or authorized agencies submit estimates of expenses and revenues for the following year.

On or before October 23, the County Executive submits a proposed operating and capital budget for the ensuing year together with his/her budget message to the Clerk to the County Legislature. Upon submission, the Proposed County Budgets become public record in the Clerk's office and are available for inspection and distribution.

The proposed County operating budget presents actual expenditures and revenues for the last two completed fiscal years, the adopted and amended/modified budgeted appropriations and estimated revenues of the current fiscal year and appropriations and estimated revenues for the ensuing fiscal year. The County is required by law to prepare and adopt a balanced budget. The capital budget lists all existing projects, their sources of funding, funds expended to date, project status and any changes requested. The capital budget also indicates cost estimates and funding requirements for new projects.

The County Legislature or a committee designated by it reviews and holds hearings on the proposed County budget. The attendance by the heads of units or their representatives at such hearings may be required as deemed appropriate by the Legislature.

No later than November 20th of each year, the County Legislature holds a public hearing on the proposed budget. The County Legislature may add items to or increase items in the County budget provided that such additions or increases are separately and distinctly stated.

The County budget with such modifications, if any, must be adopted by resolution of the Legislature not later than December 7th. The budget as submitted by the County Executive is deemed to be the adopted budget, if the Legislature takes no action by December 7th.

If the budget is modified by the Legislature, it must be returned to the County Executive for examination and reconsideration. The Executive may approve the budget, as modified by the Legislature, by transmitting such budget and his approval to the Clerk to the Legislature. If the Executive objects to any modification to the budget, he must return the budget and a statement setting forth his objections and reason therefore to the Clerk to Legislature within 5 days after receiving the budget from the Legislature. The Legislature must then reconsider and approve the budget no later than December 20th. A two-thirds vote of the Legislature is needed to override the Executive's objections.

KEY DATES - BUDGET PROCESS

The following chart summarizes the key dates for review and adoption of the budget, as stated in Article IV of the County Charter and Article IV of the Administrative Code.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Dates</i>
<i>The Departments of Budget & Finance distributes personnel budget request worksheets to County departments.</i>	<i>May 1st</i>
<i>County departments submit their personnel changes & adjustments to the Departments of Budget & Finance.</i>	<i>June 1st</i>
<i>The Departments of Budget & Finance begin reviewing, correcting, adjusting and entering departmental personnel worksheets</i>	<i>Month of June</i>
<i>The Departments of Budget & Finance distribute operating budget request worksheets to County departments.</i>	<i>June 1st</i>
<i>County departments submit their operating budget request worksheets to the Department of Budget & Finance.</i>	<i>July 1st</i>
<i>The Departments of Budget & Finance begin reviewing, correcting, adjusting and entering departmental operating worksheets</i>	<i>Month of July</i>
<i>Departments of Budget & Finance begin departmental budget reviews</i>	<i>Month of August</i>
<i>Departments of Budget & Finance begin departmental reductions</i>	<i>Months of August & September</i>
<i>The County Executive submits the proposed budget to the County Legislature for review.</i>	<i>October 23rd</i>
<i>The County Legislature holds a public hearing on the proposed budget.</i>	<i>November 20th</i>
<i>The full Legislature meets to adopt the budget and/or submit changes to the County Executive. If the Legislature takes no action, the budget is deemed adopted.</i>	<i>December 7th</i>
<i>The County Executive must respond to any Legislative changes made to the budget. If the Executive vetoes any change, the budget is returned to the Legislature. If the Executive makes no vetoes, then the proposed budget with any Legislative changes is deemed adopted.</i>	<i>5 working days after receipt from the Legislature</i>
<i>The Legislature can override any Executive veto with a two-thirds majority vote. If the Legislature takes no action, the budget is deemed adopted.</i>	<i>Not later than: December 20th</i>

