

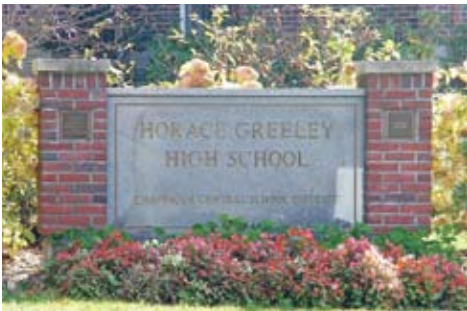
# The **FACTS** About Redeveloping the Former Reader's Digest Property

## CHAPPAQUA CROSSING **UPDATE**

In the coming weeks the Town Board and other town agencies will begin the environmental review of the Chappaqua Crossing development planned for the former Reader's Digest property in New Castle. In an effort to provide a clear understanding of the proposal, Chappaqua Crossing Update will provide town residents with the FACTS – not the myths – about the project. *The tax benefits of Chappaqua Crossing are outlined in this issue.*

### WHAT YOU MAY HAVE HEARD:

“The taxes that will be generated by Chappaqua Crossing will be insignificant.”



### Did You Know...

The Chappaqua school budget for 2007/08 increased 5.1% over the 2006/07 year. The previous two years of budgets increased approximately 8% annually, far ahead of inflation.



## Here Are The Facts:

The Reader's Digest property, now Chappaqua Crossing, has long been the largest taxpayer in the Town of New Castle. The property currently generates \$1.4 million in annual property taxes. With Chappaqua Crossing, our preliminary projections are that approximately \$3.5 million annually will be generated, more than double the current annual taxes paid.

The chief beneficiary of the increased property taxes will be the Chappaqua Central School District. As is the case in many communities across Westchester, a significant portion of the property tax bill is for the public school system. The balance is split roughly 50-50 between the town and the county. The Chappaqua Central School District budget for 2007/08 is nearly \$102 million.

Chappaqua's public schools enjoy a well-earned reputation for being among the best in Westchester County. With a very small commercial tax base, the financial burden for maintaining the high standards of the school district falls heavily on the individual residential property owners. The Chappaqua school budget for 2007/08 increased 5.1% over the 2006/07 year. The previous two years of budgets increased approximately 8% annually, far ahead of inflation.

### The High Cost of Top Quality Schools

Chappaqua residents are proud of their public schools. In fact, many residents choose to live in the community precisely because of the schools. Most residents recognize and accept that there is a price attached to having and maintaining high quality schools. And that price comes in the form of high property taxes.

At the same time, there is an obvious value for any community having commercial taxpayers with facilities large enough to generate significant tax dollars – while not adding students to the district. The Reader's Digest site traditionally was one of few properties that could fulfill that role. The town government recognized this role, and the Town Development Plan stresses the importance of maintaining and possibly expanding the few areas in the community that have commercial uses. There is now added urgency to generate taxes locally because state aid to education has not favored Westchester in general and its wealthier school districts in particular.

### The Importance of Generating New Tax Revenue

Our goal is to continue to be a key player as a taxpayer. We propose to fully lease the former Reader's Digest building that is now only partially occupied. It is imperative that we have this building fully leased to justify paying taxes at the levels that the town and schools hope for and expect. In addition, the market rate, age-restricted housing we propose will generate new property taxes in their own right.

You may also have heard some cavalier comments about the current and projected taxes that our property pays as being “meaningless” when compared to the overall budget. However, the \$3.5 million in annual tax revenue that we project is hardly insignificant. We're confident that the excellent staff that runs Chappaqua's world-class educational programs doesn't think several million dollars in tax revenue is meaningless. For most taxpayers, no matter how wealthy, any boost to the revenue stream from one of the few commercial taxpayers in town is welcome.

**SO, THE NEXT TIME** you hear someone say that they “don't care” if Chappaqua Crossing generates new tax revenues, you'll be able to let them know that you do care and they should, too.

**We welcome your comments and questions. Please visit our website [www.ChappaquaCrossing.com](http://www.ChappaquaCrossing.com) and join our community mailing list.**