



Company of the Month: VHB is helping change the face of Long Island by providing engineering and environmental services

July 27, 2009 - Long Island

Bringing together two of the region's most highly respected consulting firms, led by Theresa Elkowitz and Robert Eschbacher, has created a formidable force in engineering and environmental services on Long Island. VHB Engineering, Surveying and Landscape Architecture, P.C. (VHB) is the integration of Eschbacher VHB, a leading transportation and land development firm formed by the 2007 merger of Eschbacher Engineering and VHB, and Freudenthal & Elkowitz Consulting Group, a highly successful environmental consulting firm.

One of the top engineering and environmental consulting firms in the U.S.

VHB is affiliated with Watertown, Mass.-based Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc., an 850-person firm that offers integrated transportation, land development and environmental services from 18 offices along the east coast. Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. has been named one of the top engineering and environmental service firms in the United States by Engineering News Record (ENR). In 2009, the firm placed 84th out of 500 top firms rated by ENR, which also rated the firm among the Top 100 Green Design Firms in the U.S.

The region's leading authority on planning, zoning and environmental issues

A certified environmental specialist and certified environmental inspector, Elkowitz is known as one of Long Island's foremost experts on planning, zoning and environmental matters. She is often called on to provide expert testimony before various town and village boards, and has lectured extensively on the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). Elkowitz has served as a member of the Suffolk County Historic Trust and was the chairperson of the Suffolk County Council on Environmental Quality for fifteen years. She is a member of the Village of Belle Terre's planning board and is a 2009 class member of Long Island Business News' Top 50 Most Influential Women on Long Island.

Highly regarded traffic and transportation engineer

Eschbacher, PE has amassed an impressive résumé of transportation, engineering and construction projects throughout the New York metropolitan region, with a combined construction value in excess of \$3 billion. Many of his projects have involved public presentations and working closely with local community groups. Specializing in transportation engineering, Eschbacher's work has included accident investigations, traffic counts capacity analysis, parking supply/demand analyses and other traffic engineering-related studies. He has regularly been retained to provide expert testimony throughout the region and has taught graduate and undergraduate level college courses in traffic and transportation.

Positively impacting the local landscape; LI's largest development projects

Locally, VHB is making its mark on the Long Island landscape through its work on some of the

area's most high profile projects, including "The Lighthouse," a mixed-use redevelopment planned to transform the Nassau Coliseum property into the premier sports, entertainment and cultural destination on Long Island and "Heartland Town Square," a proposed smart growth community on the 475-acre former site of the Pilgrim Psychiatric Center in the Town of Islip.

The Lighthouse is the largest and most ambitious project in downtown Nassau County. VHB was called upon to help turn that vision into a reality by providing integrated transportation planning and traffic engineering services and a comprehensive environmental impact study as required by SEQRA. VHB designed transportation infrastructure to support the development plan that includes residential units, hotel space, a sports center, a convention center, retail space, and public recreational space.

Meanwhile to the east, VHB is performing similar services for the Heartland Town Square. The smart growth project is expected to create over 9,000 apartments and include a one million s/f life-style center, three million s/f of class A office space, as well as indoor and outdoor civic spaces. The Heartland Town Square will be intergenerational, filling a need for next generation housing while affording an opportunity for empty nesters to remain on Long Island. Other notable projects include engineering and environmental services for campus improvement at Molloy College, redevelopment in the Village of Patchogue, and other professional services for an impressive list of clients including AvalonBay Communities; CVS Caremark Corporation; Lowes Companies, Inc.; North Shore LIJ Health System and numerous towns, counties and villages across Long Island.

Creating TOD along the LIRR

VHB was recognized in June by Vision Long Island, the region's preeminent smart growth organization, for a Transportation Oriented Design (TOD) planning study it prepared in partnership with the Town of Brookhaven. The Ronkonkoma Hub TOD planning study received a 2009 Smart Growth award for providing transportation options and revitalizing a multi-block area around the Ronkonkoma Long Island Rail Road Station, the busiest along the entire Long Island Rail Road system. Working closely with the Town of Brookhaven, VHB developed a land use plan that provides a long-term development strategy establishing clear and predictable guidance for the revitalization of the area. Vision Long Island promotes more livable, economically sustainable and environmentally responsible growth on Long Island through Smart Growth principles.

Taking Manhattan; flying high with the Port Authority

A long-time consultant to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, VHB recently opened a Manhattan office. The location is staffed to provide the Port Authority with a high level of on-call services for a number of assignments VHB is working on at Newark Liberty International Airport, John F. Kennedy International Airport, LaGuardia Airport and Stewart International Airport. VHB's current assignments with the Port Authority include providing strategic financial services related to Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) application development for all Port Authority airports offering passenger services. The project office represents a first step in VHB's strategic plan for providing the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and other clients with high quality consulting services through a responsive staff with a local presence.

The go-to source to be reckoned with

The combination of Eschbacher and Elkowitz and their team of 60 professionals at VHB offers one-stop, innovative design solutions across a number of disciplines in transportation, land development and environmental services. The partnership positions VHB as the foremost

multidisciplinary enterprise in the Long Island land use marketplace poised to impact the region for generations to come.

New York Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540