

VILLAGE OF WAPPINGERS FALLS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN VOLUME I

Dutchess County, New York



ADOPTED MARCH 14, 2001

By:

Village of Wappingers Falls Board of Trustees

Prepared by:

Village of Wappingers Falls Comprehensive Plan Committee
with Technical Assistance from
GREENPLAN INC.

VILLAGE OF WAPPINGERS FALLS, NY

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Prepared by: Village of Wappingers Falls
Comprehensive Plan Committee

Technical Assistance Provided by: GREENPLAN INC.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Comprehensive Plan ----- Volume I

1. Executive Summary -----	1.1
1.1 The Planning Process -----	1.1
1.2 Goals, Objectives, and Actions -----	1.2
1.3 Vision Statement -----	1.4
1.4 Organization of the Plan -----	1.4
2. Existing Conditions -----	2.1
2.1 Regional and Local Setting -----	2.1
2.2 Historic Background of Wappingers Falls -----	2.2
2.3 Demographic Profile -----	2.3
2.4 Economic Profile -----	2.8
2.5 Housing Characteristics -----	2.11
2.6 Summary -----	2.15
3. Land Use -----	3.1
3.1 Survey Method -----	3.1
3.2 Existing Conditions -----	3.2
3.3 Recommendations -----	3.7
3.4 Summary -----	3.16
4. Environment -----	4.1
4.1 Existing Conditions -----	4.2
4.2 Recommendations -----	4.11
5. Transportation -----	5.1
5.1 Existing Conditions -----	5.2
5.2 Transportation Recommendations -----	5.9
6. Community Facilities and Services -----	6.1
6.1 Facilities -----	6.1
6.2 Services -----	6.7
7. Implementation -----	7.1
7.1 Purpose of Land Use Planning -----	7.1
7.2 Implementation of the Comprehensive Plan -----	7.2
7.3 Summary -----	7.8

Appendix A: Glossary of Planning Terms

Appendix B: Traffic Calming Techniques

Recommended Land Use Map	Back Pocket
Wappinger Greenway Trail Map	Back Pocket

Comprehensive Plan Background Studies Supplement	Volume II
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Public Opinion Survey Results
Background Socio-Economic Data
Historic Sites in Wappingers Falls
Existing Land Use Survey
Wappinger Greenway Trail Action Plan
Recommended Intersection Improvements
Wappingers Falls Transportation Plan

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Comprehensive Plan Process	page 1.5
Table 2	Goals, Objectives, and Actions	page 1.6
Table 3	Changing Age Profile	page 2.6
Table 4	Educational Attainment: College Graduates	page 2.9
Table 5	Major Employers in Dutchess County, 1992-1993	page 2.10
Table 6	Types of Housing Units	page 2.12
Table 7	Residential Construction to 1990	page 2.12
Table 8	New Residential Construction 1990-1999	page 2.13
Table 9	Sample of ZBA Use Variances Granted from 1979-1995	page 3.17
Table 10	Traffic Count Data for State Roads, 1991-1997	page 5.3
Table 11	Recommended Intersection Improvements	page 5.15

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Regional Location, Village of Wappingers Falls	page 2.2
Figure 2	Population Density	page 2.4
Figure 3	Population Trend from 1920 to 2003	page 2.4
Figure 4	Existing Land Use Inventory	page 3.2
Figure 5	Planning Areas	after page 3.18
Figure 6	Proposed Expanded CB District	after page 3.18
Figure 7	Zoning and Existing Land Use: Ward 1	after page 3.18
Figure 8	Proposed Zoning: Ward 1	after page 3.18
Figure 9	Zoning and Existing Land Use: Ward 2	after page 3.18
Figure 10	Proposed Zoning: Ward 2	after page 3.18

Figure 11	Zoning and Existing Land Use: Upper Ward 3 -----	after page 3.18
Figure 12	Proposed Zoning: Upper Ward 3 -----	after page 3.18
Figure 13	Zoning and Existing Land Use: Lower Ward 3 -----	after page 3.18
Figure 14	Proposed Zoning: Lower Ward 3 -----	after page 3.18
Figure 15	Wetlands, Watercourses, Waterbodies and Hydric Soils -----	after page 4.20
Figure 16	Wappinger Lake Critical Environment Area Boundaries ----	after page 4.20
Figure 17	Average Daily Traffic, Routes 9 and 9D, 1999 -----	after page 5.15
Figure 18	Pedestrian Generators -----	after page 5.15
Figure 19	Pedestrian Accident Locations, 1991-1997 -----	after page 5.15

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This *Comprehensive Plan* was prepared by the citizens of the Village of Wappingers Falls who donated countless hours of volunteer time by responding to the Public Opinion Survey, attending community planning workshops, and serving on boards. All the citizens of Wappingers Falls who participated are thanked for their assistance. The strength of the *Comprehensive Plan* derives from their commitment to the Village.

The Village of Wappingers Falls Board of Trustees had the foresight to recognize the importance of developing a new *Comprehensive Plan* and was instrumental in all stages of its creation. The Village Board is commended for taking the steps necessary to ensure that present and future Wappingers Falls residents will continue to enjoy a high quality of life.

Village of Wappingers Falls Board of Trustees

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The *Comprehensive Plan* was prepared by the Village of Wappingers Falls Comprehensive Plan Committee, and received input from other Village Boards and Committees. The Comprehensive Plan Committee wishes to thank the Planning and Zoning Department Secretary Mary Ann Bolander, the former Zoning Enforcement Officer Armand Alfonso, the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Wappinger Greenway Committee, Department of Public Works, Wappingers Falls Fire Department, Police Department, and Water Department, Justice Court, Wappingers Central School District, Wappingers Falls Business and Professional Association, New York State Department of Transportation, and the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development for their suggestions and for reviewing this plan.

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vision Statement

The Village of Wappingers Falls is committed to preserving its rich historic, cultural, and environmental resources, while encouraging diverse economic development, providing services and recreation for the community, and facilitating tourism.

Wappingers Falls' *Comprehensive Plan* presents a vision for land use and development over the next 10 to 20 years. It prepares the Village for growth and redevelopment during this period and provides a reliable basis for public and private investment.

Wappingers Falls last prepared a comprehensive plan in 1968, along with a community facilities plan. Although many changes have occurred during the three decades since that effort, the basic land use pattern in the Village was established long before 1968 by the environmental constraints posed by Wappingers Lake, Creek and Falls, and the steep slopes along their shores. Nonetheless, new issues, such as increased traffic throughout the Village, the conversion of single-family homes to multi-family residences, the deterioration of Wappingers Lake, and the decline of the Main Street shopping district warrant the development of a new *Comprehensive Plan*. Significant amendments to the New York State Village and other enabling laws affecting planning and zoning have also been enacted since the 1968 *Village Development Plan*. These amendments, which include a comprehensive revision to the enabling laws governing preparation of this Plan, also addressed the need for greater flexibility in the way land use is controlled. These amendments are addressed by this *Comprehensive Plan*.

1.1 THE PLANNING PROCESS

New York State Village Law states that “*among the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to a village is the authority and responsibility to undertake village comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens.*” [Section 7-722 (a)]. A comprehensive plan is a guide to the development or redevelopment of a community. Although it is the core document providing the basis for land use and policy decisions, a comprehensive plan is general in nature so that changes in the community and development trends can be addressed as they arise.

In the Fall of 1997, the Village of Wappingers Falls Board of Trustees adopted a resolution that established the Wappingers Falls Comprehensive Plan Committee. One of the first tasks of the Comprehensive Plan Committee was to solicit input from the community. In January 1998, the Comprehensive Plan Committee, with technical assistance from the Village Planners at GREENPLAN Inc., developed a Public Opinion Survey that was mailed to all 1,400 Village households. The survey included an invitation to attend two planning workshops at the Village Fire Department's two stations in 1998. Every effort was made to ensure maximum participation from the community in the planning process. The public participation process was based on the premise that, when planning begins with a lively exchange of information and ideas, it will result in effective actions with broad support. The Public Opinion Survey identified issues that were important to Village residents and that formed the basis of the new *Comprehensive Plan*. The results of the Public Opinion Survey are included in Volume II, the *Background Studies Supplement* to the *Comprehensive Plan*.

Preparation of the *Comprehensive Plan* began with a review of numerous planning reports, socio-economic studies, and regional plans which contained information pertinent to the Village and other Southern Dutchess municipalities. These include the Village's previous *Development Plan*, the Dutchess County Plan *Directions*, the *Dutchess County Consolidated Plan* prepared for the US Department of Housing and Development (HUD), and many others. During preparation of this *Comprehensive Plan*, Dutchess County became the first county in the Hudson Valley to adopt a Hudson River Valley Greenway Compact. On July 12, 2000, the Village of Wappingers Falls adopted a resolution to participate in the Greenway Compact. The Compact program and guides, known as *Greenway Connections*, illustrate desirable land use development options for the Village and are incorporated by reference in this *Comprehensive Plan*. Greenway Connections can be viewed on-line at "<http://www.dutchessny.gov/greenway.htm>".

Table 1, which appears at the end of this chapter, presents a chart of how the Planning Process for the Village was conducted. The end product of this planning process will be a new guide for growth and development of the Village for the next 10 to 20 years.

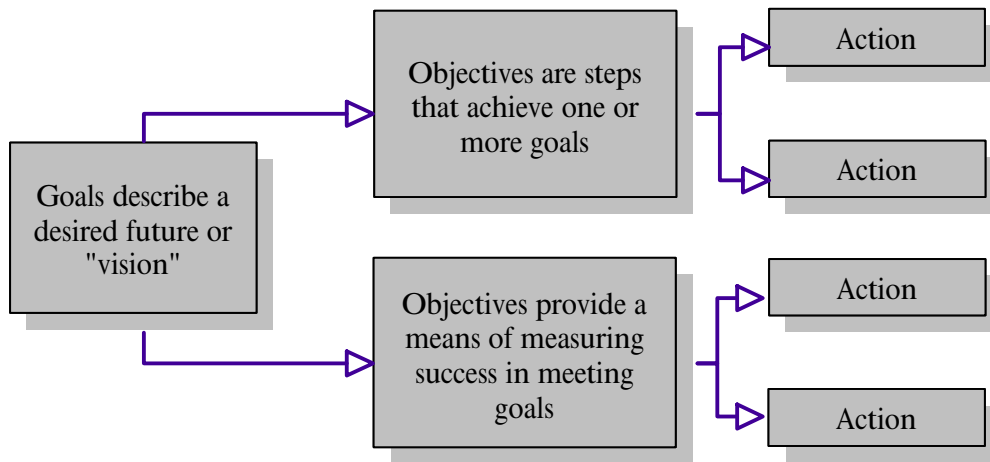
1.2 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS

The success of any municipal planning process depends upon reaching a consensus on community goals. Objectives bring the community closer to achieving its goals, while actions assist in implementing objectives. Their interrelationships can be expressed as follows:

- A Goal is a broad policy description of community desires for the future. It is a long-term end toward which programs or activities are directed.
- An Objective is a specific intermediate end that is achievable in the short-term and progresses towards a goal.

- An Action is a specific program or project designed to implement an objective and ultimately achieve a goal.

The relationship between goals, objectives, and actions can be seen in the following illustration:



The goals presented below and discussed throughout the *Wappingers Falls Comprehensive Plan* were developed over many months by the Comprehensive Plan Committee. During the planning process, these goals were periodically revisited to provide continuous guidance in developing the *Comprehensive Plan*. The overall goals for Wappingers Falls are:

1. Land Use Goal: Encourage diversified growth of the Village, including a variety of residential, commercial, and industrial areas, while preserving its single-family residential character.
2. Environmental Goal: Protect and enhance the character of the Village as defined by its water resources, steep slopes, trees, and rich history for present and future generations to enjoy.
3. Transportation Goal: Reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflicts caused by the Village asset of accessibility to Routes 9 and 9D.
4. Community Facilities Goal: Ensure that public facilities and services are adequate in location, capacity, and design to properly serve planned development and growth of the Village.

Objectives and actions were added as they were recommended by committee members, residents, business people, planners, and other interested parties. Some of the recommended actions were undertaken while the *Comprehensive Plan* was under

preparation to begin implementing those objectives of greatest concern to the community. The Comprehensive Plan Committee believed it was important to seize opportunities as they arose to ensure that the *Comprehensive Plan* would be a “living” document and would provide meaningful guidance to the Village. The objectives and actions to implement the goals for Wappingers Falls appear in Table 2 at the end of this chapter. The underlying themes embodied in the goals and objectives resulted in the Vision Statement for the Village of Wappingers Falls.

1.3 VISION STATEMENT

A vision statement is a formal expression of the overall image of how a community wishes to present itself in the future. The goals and objectives formulated during the planning process provide the basis from which the vision statement emerges. The Village’s vision statement appears at the head of this chapter.

1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The *Comprehensive Plan* begins in Chapter 2 with a description of existing conditions, including the historic background of the Village, its regional location, and its socio-economic, demographic, and housing conditions. Chapter 3 describes existing land uses in the Village, and analyzes development patterns, land use conflicts, building code violations, and zoning districts. Chapter 4 discusses environmental conditions in the Village and its natural and historic resources. The vehicular and pedestrian transportation system, the issues that affect its components, plans for improvements, and traffic enforcement are addressed in Chapter 5. Community facilities, both public and private, along with municipal services are described in Chapter 6; this discussion presents an overview that can be used as the foundation for a more intensive Community Facilities Plan and Capital Improvements Program. Chapter 7 recommends implementation strategies and priorities. The Recommended Land Use Map and the Wappinger Greenway Trail Map can be found in the back of this document. A glossary of planning terms that may be unfamiliar to the general public is included as Appendix A, and illustrations of recommended traffic calming techniques appear in Appendix B.

Background studies to the *Comprehensive Plan* have been included in a supplemental Volume II. These studies include the results of the Public Opinion Survey, a complete description of the Village’s socio-economic, demographic and housing conditions, an inventory of the Village’s Historic Sites and Buildings, the Existing Land Use Survey, the Wappinger Greenway Trail Action Plan, Recommended Intersection Improvements, and the Wappingers Falls Transportation Plan.

TABLE 1: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROCESS
Village of Wappingers Falls, New York

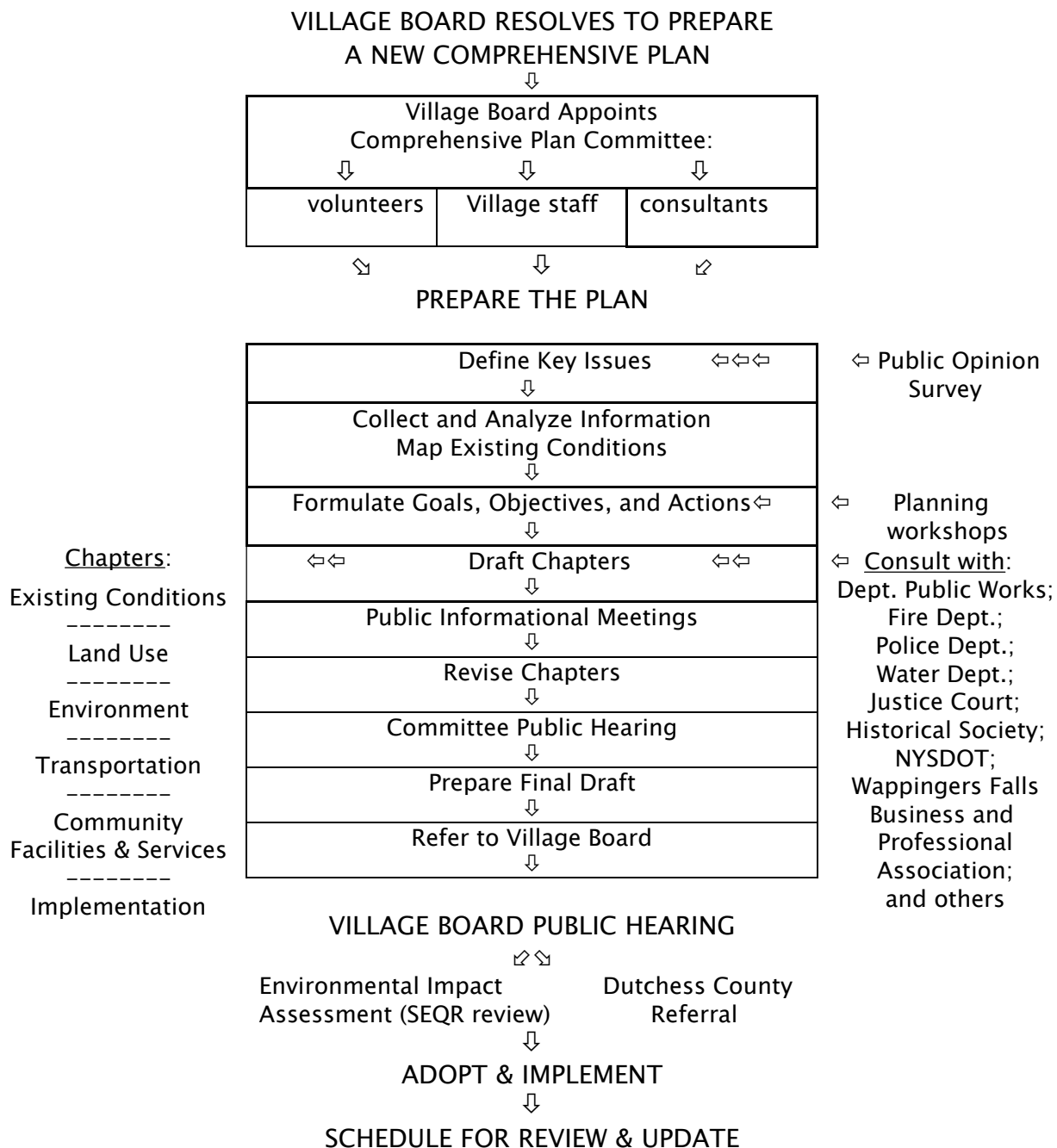


Table 2: GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS
Village of Wappingers Falls, New York

LAND USE GOAL	LAND USE OBJECTIVE	LAND USE ACTION
Encourage diversified growth of the Village, including a variety of residential, commercial, and industrial areas, while preserving its single-family residential character.	Improve or redevelop areas with substandard conditions to improve neighborhood vitality and prevent depreciation of property values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Amend the zoning to limit permitted uses in street-level storefronts in the Central Business District to shops and services with walk-in clientele. Storefront apartments should not be permitted. ✓ Identify target areas for housing rehabilitation. ✓ Enforce zoning regulations strictly to ensure realization of the Village character desired by residents. ✓ Implement the zoning changes recommended in Chapter 3 of this <i>Comprehensive Plan</i>.
	Encourage development of single-family homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Limit use variances to a specific hardship so the variance can be lifted when the hardship no longer exists. ✓ Adopt policies and programs to attract young families and singles to the Village, such as working with banks and realtors to develop a home-buyer assistance program. ✓ Retain and enhance the single-family residential character of Remsen Avenue. ✓ Rezone the R-M1 District on Channingville Road to R-12.5. ✓ Create a Trailer District on the east side of Marshall Road.
	Revitalize and expand the Central Business District in the Main Street area to serve as the shopping, service, and government center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identify vacant buildings and parcels for new or adaptive reuse. ✓ Enact the zoning recommendations in Chapter 3 to expand the Central Business District.
	Encourage the continued development and improvement of the Market Street Industrial Park as the center of Village industrial activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Explore recreational and tourism opportunities associated with the Market Street Industrial Park. ✓ Use the Greenway Guides for new development applications at the Industrial Park.
	Encourage the continued development and improvement of Route 9 as the regionally oriented business activity area of the Village.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Enact the zoning recommendations in Chapter 3 to convert CB to GB Districts along Route 9. ✓ Implement and encourage other jurisdictions to implement the Greenway Guides for Route 9.
	Encourage the continued development of Office Business along East Main Street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Enact the zoning recommendations in Chapter 3 to include all properties from Mesier Avenue to Remsen Avenue on both sides of East Main Street in the OB District.
	Create a northern gateway to the Village.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Study the Upper West Main Street area to determine where land use conflicts exist. ✓ Facilitate a meeting of property owners in the area to find a solution to land use conflicts that satisfies all stakeholders.

ENVIRONMENTAL GOAL	ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVE	ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS
Protect and enhance the character of the Village as defined by its water resources, steep slopes, trees and rich history for present and future generations to enjoy.	Maximize the potential of the unusual open space and recreational opportunities presented by the Falls, Lake and Creek in the midst of the Village.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Encourage intermunicipal cooperation to improve the quality of water in Wappinger Lake. ✓ Create and implement an intermunicipal agreement to designate the entire Wappinger Creek a Critical Environmental Area and an Estuary Conservation Area. ✓ Create overlay districts to protect significant ecological areas. ✓ Seek funds and secure easements to continue development of the Wappinger Greenway Trail, trail maintenance and related park development, including Falls View Park and Galucci Park. ✓ Adopt an Official Village Map, in accordance with § 7-724 of NY State Village Law, showing the location of the Wappinger Greenway Trail.
	Maintain and enhance the historic character of the Village.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Encourage restoration of historic properties in the Wappingers Falls Historic District. ✓ Create Landmark or Conservation Districts to preserve historic structures outside the National Historic District. ✓ Expand Planning Board responsibilities to include architectural reviews of historic structures.
	Ensure that new development is in keeping with the character the community wishes to present in order to enhance quality of life and facilitate tourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use the Greenway Compact design recommendations to improve the overall appearance of the Route 9 corridor. ✓ Examine Zoning regulations pertaining to landscaping, lighting, street trees, and signage, and strengthen where necessary to conform with the Greenway Compact guides. ✓ Use recognized lighting standards during Planning Board reviews. ✓ Participate with the State DOT in the design of widening Route 9 from Liss Road to Meyers Corners Road. ✓ Facilitate the work of the Village Economic Development Committee to revitalize the Central Business District and promote tourism in the Village. ✓ Secure grants to prepare and implement a streetscape plan to make the downtown more inviting and livable. ✓ Consider zoning modifications to strengthen control over Adult Uses and Tattoo and Body Piercing Parlors. ✓ Regulate cell towers for their visual and aesthetic effect. ✓ Inventory significant trees in the Village and create a replacement, supplementation, and management plan for them.
	Protect groundwater for current and future needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure that groundwater in the Village meets Safe Drinking Water Act quality standards and that an adequate amount of water will be available to provide for current & future needs. ✓ Encourage the DEC to require cleanup contaminated sites. ✓ Request that the Three Star Anodizing site be fenced to prevent people, especially children, from entering it.

TRANSPORTATION GOAL	TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVES	TRANSPORTATION ACTIONS
Reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflicts caused by the Village asset of accessibility to Routes 9 and 9D.	Provide safe pedestrian traffic circulation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Establish an Alternative Transportation Committee to encourage alternatives to the automobile, such as walking, bicycling, public transportation, van or car pooling, and telecommuting, to reduce vehicular traffic congestion. ✓ Prepare a pedestrian and bicycle plan to provide safe circulation for these alternative modes of transportation. ✓ Install traffic calming devices throughout the Village.
	Improve parking availability in the Central Business District.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inventory existing off-street parking areas in the Central Business District and create a parking plan to provide additional parking lots that are appropriately hidden and/or landscaped for residents, businesses and visitors in the Village core. ✓ Delineate parking spaces with curb markings along West and East Main Street.
	Provide the necessary infrastructure to support Telecommuting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Establish a Telecommunications Task Force to investigate which broadband access would be most feasible in the Village, and lobby for this service as quickly as possible.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES GOAL	COMMUNITY FACILITIES OBJECTIVE	COMMUNITY FACILITIES ACTIONS
Ensure that public facilities are adequate in location, capacity and design to properly serve planned development and growth of the Village.	Improve municipal facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consolidate the Village Offices downtown in a larger building. ✓ Continue use of the Village Hall for some governmental purpose. ✓ Develop a comprehensive website for the Village. ✓ Share databases by connecting departmental computers, where appropriate. ✓ Secure grants to fund restoration of Mesier Homestead. ✓ Secure a State grant for Historic Municipal Records Management. ✓ In the long-run, Consolidate the Water Dept. with other Village Offices. ✓ Consolidate the Zoning, Code Enforcement, and Assessor's offices with other Village Offices. ✓ Secure a State grant for Historic Preservation Records Management. ✓ Install a pay phone near the Grinnell Library.
	Expand and improve recreational facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop a Master Park Plan itemizing specific park improvements and a timetable for their completion. ✓ Create an inventory of existing open spaces in the Village and identify areas to be preserved or developed as parks. ✓ Adjust the Village recreation fee to reflect the actual costs of providing recreational services incurred by new residential development in the Village. ✓ Consider developing the current Village Garage site as an Estuary Education Park. ✓ Begin needed improvements to parks. ✓ Identify waterfront access points with signage. ✓ Secure grants to fund park and recreation acquisition, development, & improvements.
	Improve facilities for the Police Department.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ In the short term, examine ways to maximize space in the Village Hall for the Police Department. ✓ Increase community policing through bicycle patrols, Neighborhood Watch activities, and citizen education of police services like House Watch for owners who are away. ✓ Hire a part-time person to do administrative police work. ✓ Investigate increased use of technology in the Police Department.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Secure grants to help defray the costs of community policing, administrative help, and new technology for the officers. ✓ Continue to evaluate manpower requirements as population in the Village increases. ✓ In the long term, explore options to find a larger space more suited to the needs of the Police Department.
	Continue to explore cost-effective ways to maintain a volunteer Fire Department.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Continue to support the Volunteer Fire Department through the Service Awards Program. ✓ Secure grants to upgrade fire fighting equipment. ✓ Include replacement of fire fighting equipment and ongoing maintenance of the fire stations in the Village Capital Improvements Program.
	Improve water service facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Include all of the Water Department's Capital Improvements in the Village's overall Capital Improvements Program. ✓ Continuously search for alternative funding (such as grants) to finance the Water Department's Capital Improvements. ✓ Continuously evaluate the efficiency of the existing computer system. ✓ Encourage the placement of additional telecommunications antennae on water storage facilities to reduce the proliferation of cell towers throughout the Village. ✓ Enhance the water towers with murals depicting the Falls to reinforce the Village identity as intertwined with its water resources.
	Improve other public services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop a comprehensive Capital Improvements Program. ✓ Consider an alternative, more convenient site for a larger Village Garage.
	Improve Justice Court facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Create full-time positions for the two court clerks in the next year. ✓ Hire an additional part-time court clerk within the next year. ✓ Within the next year, there should be two elected Judges and one appointed Judge. ✓ In the near future, Justice Court should be relocated to a larger facility. ✓ Increase the number of computers and upgrade computer capacity. ✓ Secure grants to upgrade the current Justice Court facilities.

2. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Village of Wappingers Falls is a well-established, predominately middle-income community located in the historic Hudson River Valley.

2.1 REGIONAL AND LOCAL SETTING

The historic Village of Wappingers Falls is located in the Hudson River Valley in southern Dutchess County, New York. The Village includes portions of the Towns of Wappinger and Poughkeepsie within its boundaries. Situated approximately 1.5 miles east of the Hudson River, the physical setting of the Village is quite impressive due to the presence of Wappingers

Creek, Wappinger Lake, the Falls and the gorge below the Falls.

State Route 9 traverses the east boundary of Wappingers Falls, and three primary entry points provide access to the Village. The north entry is via West Main Street (Route 9D), the east entry is via East Main Street (from Route 9), and the south entry is via South Avenue (Route 9D), which provides access from Interstate 84. Route 9D winds through the Village as South Avenue and then as East Main Street, where it crosses the Falls then turns north and becomes West Main Street.

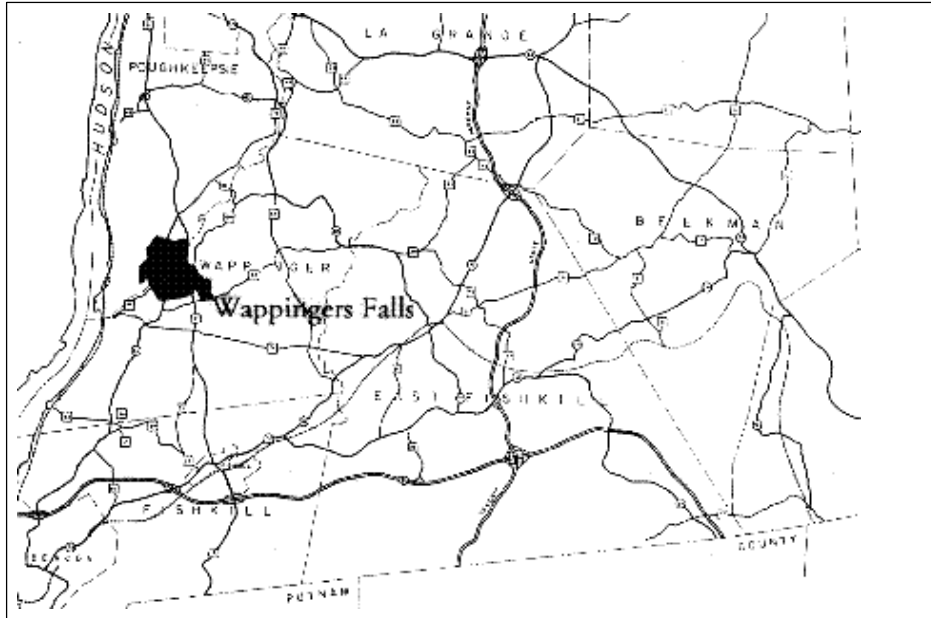
The proximity to Routes 9 and 9D is a mixed blessing. The beneficial aspect is that these routes provide excellent access to Interstate 84 approximately 10 miles south of Wappingers Falls. Eastbound Interstate 84 connects the southern end of Dutchess County with the Taconic Parkway (a major north-south thoroughfare linking Westchester County to Interstate 90) and to Connecticut, the gateway to New England. Westbound Interstate 84 connects southern Dutchess County with the bridge across the Hudson River to Newburgh, where it intersects with I-87, the New York State Thruway. Also located in Newburgh is Stewart Airport, which is an increasingly busy regional airport.

The drawback of Wappingers Falls' proximity to these major transportation corridors is that truck drivers and others who regularly use Route 9 know that Route 9D provides a direct link between Route 9 and I-84. As a result, Wappingers Falls endures a tremendous amount of commercial traffic which creates a need for continuous law enforcement. This problem is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

Despite this problem, Wappingers Falls enjoys an excellent location about 15 minutes south of the City of Poughkeepsie, 90 minutes north of Manhattan, 90 minutes south of Albany, 50 minutes west of Danbury, Connecticut, and about 20 minutes northeast of Newburgh. The highway access, along with the Metro North commuter and Amtrak rail

stations in nearby New Hamburg, Beacon and Poughkeepsie, provide Village residents with numerous choices for employment, travel and shopping, and access to cultural and entertainment destinations.

Figure 1: Regional Location



Village of Wappingers Falls, New York

2.2 HISTORIC BACKGROUND OF WAPPINGERS FALLS

The Village of Wappingers Falls was settled about 1730 and was later incorporated in 1871. The presence of the Creek and the Falls attracted the first settlers. The Falls generated hydropower which fueled the industrial base of the local economy. The first industrial building was a flour mill constructed around 1738 by Adolphus Brewer who owned most of the land which was to become the Village of Wappingers Falls. The increasing agricultural activity in Dutchess County created a demand for flour production and related support industries. Peter Mesier, a New York City merchant, acquired Brewer's property in 1776, continued to operate and expand the mill, and then opened a shipyard. The Mesier Homestead remains as a monument to these founders of the Village's industrial base.

After the Revolutionary War, and heightened by the War of 1812, trade embargoes and anti-British sentiment created a demand for American-made products. This spurred the construction of small factories for manufacturing and printing cotton fabrics in the Village, beginning in 1819 with the establishment of a cotton mill on the Creek's west

side by John Gnans and Benjamin DeLavernne. The textile plants were consolidated under the corporate umbrella known as the Dutchess Company by 1850, and Wappingers Falls was then considered a factory town. Over 1,000 of the 4,210 residents in 1880 were employed by the Dutchess Company, many of whom lived in the 460 houses that the company built and owned.

Despite significant population growth, commercial expansion along West Main Street did not begin until the late 1860's. As noted in the National Register of Historic Places Inventory nomination form, "*the limited number of storefronts reflects the limited disposable income of the worker and disproportionate influence of the small managerial class. The number of civic structures in the business district distinguishes Main Street as a social common ground serving philanthropic interests of some and pretensions of others.*"

In 1909, the new owners of the Dutchess Company restricted their operation to bleaching and dying textiles, and the company then became known as the Dutchess Bleachery. By the late 19th century, industrial and commercial growth in the Village had subsided, and most construction was limited to infill housing along South Avenue and on the former Mesier property, which had been subdivided. The Depression caused the dramatic decline of aging plants, including the Bleachery. An opportunity may have existed for industrial revitalization of the Bleachery if management had not discouraged the inquires of firms, such as the National Biscuit Company, Ford Motor Company and General Electric, that expressed interest in acquiring the plant both for its facilities and its excellent work force. Although the Bleachery eventually closed in 1955, the Village's tradition as a "company town" reemerged after World War II with the establishment of IBM's manufacturing headquarters north of Wappingers Falls. Considering its industrial and company town roots, the influence of IBM on the post-World War II growth of Wappingers Falls was destined to be significant.

2.3 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

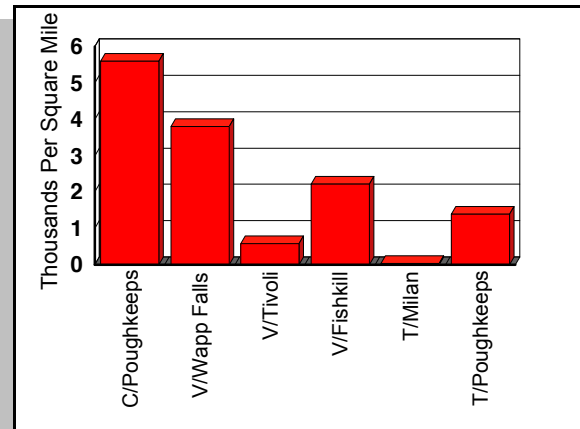
A primary component in planning a community's future land use, capital improvements and public services is a thorough analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of its residents. This section includes discussions of population characteristics, such as age distribution, racial and ethnic background, household and family composition. Economic factors are considered in the following section and include income levels, employment, and economic conditions. The final section addresses housing. The data and trends discussed in the respective analysis of each of these factors provides the basis for developing strategies to address the needs of Wappingers Falls residents and businesses in the future. The complete socio-economic data can be found in the *Background Studies Supplement* to the *Comprehensive Plan*.

2.3.1 Population: Trends and Projections

Wappingers Falls is the second most densely populated community in Dutchess County.

Although the 1.21 square mile Village comprises only 0.15 percent of the County's 802 square miles, the Village's 1990 population of 4,605 residents represented 1.8 percent of the County's total. This represents a density of 3,805 persons per square mile, second only to the City of Poughkeepsie. Density in other Dutchess County villages ranges from 589 persons per square mile in Tivoli to 2,234 persons per square mile in Fishkill. When the density of Wappingers Falls is considered in relation to that of other Dutchess County municipalities, the urban character of the community is obvious.

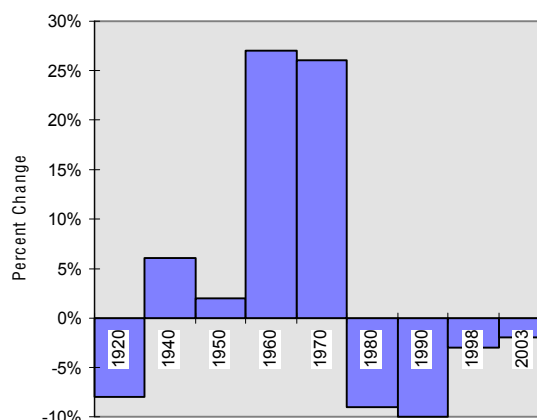
Figure 2: Population Density



Population shifts in Wappingers Falls since 1900 highlight some of the most significant events of the century. For instance, the Village population declined from 3,504 in 1900 to 3,235 in 1920, a loss of 269 people, or 7.6 percent. Contributing factors to this decrease may have been the influenza epidemic that claimed many lives in the early twentieth century, and the American involvement in World War I. The largest increases in population occurred between 1950 and 1960, when a 21.5 percent increase occurred, and between 1960 and 1970, when the Village gained an additional 1,170 residents, a 20.6 percent increase. These significant increases resulted from the post-World War II "baby boom," along with the establishment of IBM's engineering headquarters during the early 1950s a few miles north of the Village in the Town of Poughkeepsie, and the expansion of its operations in 1960-61 with the construction of its East Fishkill facility.

Another factor that contributed to the increasing population in the Village during the 1960s was the growth of suburbs throughout the country, particularly those with good access to employment centers.

FIGURE 3: POPULATION TREND FROM 1920 TO 2003



As the "baby boom" children approached teenage years, many people looked to the suburbs as a safer environment with larger homes and newer schools. New Yorkers were no different from other American city dwellers in this regard, and many moved to suburbs with neighborhoods perceived as safer, along with good transportation systems oriented to the car. By the 1960s, IBM's firmly established presence in the region contributed greatly to the recognition of Dutchess County as an influential employment center, and this attracted many new families to the area.

However, population in Wappingers Falls has been declining since 1970 when the population peaked at 5,607 residents. The greatest decrease occurred between 1980 to 1990, when the Village lost 505 people or 9.9 percent of its population. By 1990, the population was only 4,605. In 1998, the Village population was estimated to have declined further to 4,507 residents, and the projected population for 2003 is only 4,411. Thus, population has been projected to continue to decline in the near future, although at a slower rate. A major factor contributing to the recent population decline was the downsizing of IBM and other corporations during the early 1990s.

2.3.2 Household Trends

The Village's decreasing population has been accompanied by declines in both the number of households and the average household size. Between 1980 and 1990, the number of households declined by 4.56 percent (to 1,862 households) and the average household size decreased from 2.62 persons per household to 2.47 persons. The decline in number and size of households is expected to continue, with a projected number of households in 2003 of only 1,821 and an average household size of 2.42. These declines reflect a national trend resulting from the aging of the "baby boomer" population. In addition, lifestyle alternatives, such as higher divorce rates, a decrease in the number of children per family, and a growing number of single parent households have further contributed to this trend.

2.3.3 Racial and Ethnic Characteristics

In 1998, the population of Wappingers Falls was predominantly White. The remainder of the population was comprised of 4.4 percent Black, 5.6 percent Asian, and 6.5 percent Hispanic. However, the Village's population is gradually becoming more diverse. Despite a population decline in 1998, minority groups increased from 8.6 percent of the population in 1990 to an estimated 16.5 percent in 1998. The trend towards increasing diversification is occurring on the County level as well. Between 1990 and 1996, the County's Hispanic population increased by 17 percent, while the Black population increased six percent. This trend is expected to continue as Metro North expands northward and more City dwellers discover that Dutchess County is within reasonable commuting distance.

2.3.4 Age Group Distribution

Consistent with the statewide trend, the number of elderly residents in the Village is increasing as a percentage of total population. In 1990, 15.3 percent of the residents were over 65. By 1998, this percentage had increased to 15.6 percent. The increase in the proportion of elderly people indicates that the “baby boom” generation is aging and, in general, people are tending to live longer. Another contributing factor may be the recent trend toward “aging in place.” As more home-care services become available, people are able to remain in their own home if they do require specialized health care.

Also consistent with the statewide demographic trend, the Village has seen a decrease in the percentage of young people. In 1990, persons age 35 and under comprised 54.3 percent of the total population in the Village, while in 1998, they comprised only 47.7 percent. This decrease may be due to the tendency of young adults to leave home for college or to relocate to pursue their goals. Developing youth programs may reverse this trend by encouraging young people to remain in the Village as adults. The Village should also adopt policies and programs to attract young families and singles to the Village. One approach is to work with banks and realtors to develop a home-buyer assistance program.

Table 3: Changing Age Profile		
	Percent of Total Population	
Age Group	1990	1998
under 5	6.8	6.6
5-19	18.3	18.8
20-34	29.2	22.3
35-54	22.4	29.5
55-64	8.0	7.2
65 and over	15.3	15.6
Total	4,605	4,480

The greatest increase in age groups in the Village is seen in the “baby boom” generation. The baby boom, which occurred between 1946 and 1964, is reflected in the age 35-54 segment of the population, which increased dramatically from 22.4 percent to 29.5 percent of the Village population between 1990 and 1998. Baby boomers represent the largest segment of the Village’s population, and will have a strong voice in setting the community’s priorities in the future. Finally, the aging of the Village’s population is reflected in the median age of its residents, which is relatively advanced at 37.9 years in 1998.

2.3.5 Household Composition

Wappingers Falls is a stable, well-established community whose residents have deep roots in the community. The 1990 Census reported that one-third of all households were established prior to 1980, and 16 percent moved to the Village between 1980 and 1984. Even more impressive is the length of time that renters have lived in the same home. The 1990 Census indicates that 27 percent of renters had been at the same address for at least five years, and of those, 14 percent had moved in prior to 1980. However, the stability

of the Wappingers Falls community can be an obstacle to attracting young families to the area. In a developed community with a limited supply of vacant land, it is difficult to build houses large enough to accommodate families. Moreover, as more elderly people choose to remain in their homes, there is less turnover in the real estate market and fewer opportunities for home-ownership. As mentioned previously, efforts should be made to attract young families to the Village.

A number of other household characteristics reinforce the impression of Wappingers Falls as a stable, middle-class community. Married couples occupied half the households in 1990, while only about seven percent were occupied by individuals with no spouse and no child. Two-thirds of the households were family households. Half the residents of legal age were married, eight percent were divorced, and 11 percent were widowed. The proportion of divorcees is fairly low, which is reflected on the County level as well. The County-wide proportion of divorced people is only seven percent, which may be due, in part, to the large proportion of Roman Catholics in Dutchess County. According to the 1998 Data Book published by the Poughkeepsie Journal, 68 percent of Dutchess County residents with a religious affiliation were Roman Catholic.

The major contrast between Wappingers Falls and the County was the proportion of widows and married women. In the Village, 18 percent of women were widows and 51 percent were married. In the County, seven percent of women were widowed and 57 percent were married. The County-wide proportion of widows and widowers was nearly equal at seven percent and five percent respectively. In the Village, only three percent of men were widowers.

Over one-third of Wappingers Falls' elderly residents live alone, and over half live in family households. Given the extended length of residency of Village households, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of senior citizens have lived in the Village most of their adult lives.

As discussed previously, "baby boomers" make up the largest segment (29.5 percent) of the Village population. An additional 16 percent are in the 25-34 year age group. Thus nearly half of the Village's population are in an age range when people are most actively employed--either just beginning or at the peak of their careers.

About half of Village householders aged 25 to 64 years old are in the \$35,000 to \$74,999 income range. Twenty-nine percent of householders aged 45 to 64 years earns \$50,000 to \$74,999, and another 25 percent earns over \$75,000. The 25 to 44 year old age group includes only 14 percent in the \$75,000 and over income range, while 38 percent earn less than \$35,000. This indicates that many of these people are in the early stages of their careers; however, the income distribution for the 45 to 64 year old age group suggests that these younger workers have excellent earning potential.

The 65 years and over age group includes retirees and people who are nearing the final years of their work life. Although 34 percent of these householders earn less than \$15,000, this does not necessarily mean that a third of the elderly population is in poverty. Many have assets, such as their homes, savings, and investments, that are not included in annual income figures. The large proportion (42 percent) that earn \$15,000 to \$34,999 and the 24 percent that earn \$35,000 or more indicates that many in this age group earn a pension and are also continuing to work well beyond the traditional retirement age of 65 years.

2.4 ECONOMIC PROFILE

The economic profile of a community's residents can be drawn through an analysis of income data, educational background, and employment trends in the area. This section expands on the income discussion that concluded the preceding section to address these topics. It begins with a description of the income and educational background of the Village residents, and includes descriptions of major occupations and employers, unemployment rates, commuting time, and mode of transportation to work. The discussion concludes with an overview of the economic climate of Dutchess County and the Hudson Valley region in relation to Wappingers Falls.

2.4.1 Income Characteristics

Wappingers Falls is a middle-income community with nearly half of its households earning between \$35,000 and \$75,000. Another 14 percent earn over \$75,000. However, 27 percent of the households earn less than \$25,000. These are the households of concern when such issues as affordable housing and methods for moving renters into home-ownership are examined.

The 1989 median household income for Wappingers Falls was \$36,083 and the 1998 estimate is \$40,115. When compared to the other 29 Dutchess County communities, Wappingers Falls ranks eighteenth in income. In 1989, the median household incomes in the County ranged from \$26,853 in Millerton to \$54,510 in East Fishkill.

Another economic indicator that should be considered is household wealth. This is particularly important in a mature community with an aging population and a significant number of people on fixed incomes. Household assets considered in the wealth estimate include retirement savings, the current value of real estate and vehicles, and the market value of securities (stocks, bonds and mutual funds). Liabilities include mortgage balance, credit card balance, auto loans and personal loans. Liabilities are deducted from assets to estimate wealth.

In 1998, the average household wealth in the Village was \$107,741. This indicates that the primary asset of Village residents, like most Americans, is their home. However, nearly half of households in the Village had less than \$25,000 in wealth, and the estimated *median* household wealth was only \$36,929. This is due to the large proportion of households who rent, rather than own, their homes. On a more positive note, the length of time that most owner-occupants have lived in their homes indicates that many have seen a substantial increase in the value of their homes and probably have little or no mortgage balance.

2.4.2 Education

In 1990, one-third of Village residents over the age of 25 were at least high school graduates. Over 43 percent had some higher education, including 18 percent with Bachelor Degrees. In Dutchess County as a whole, 25 percent of the population had Bachelors Degrees, indicating a well-educated County population. The proportions of college graduates in the County ranged from 10 percent in Dover to 34 percent in the Town of Poughkeepsie. The Dutchess County proportion is higher than the percent of college graduates in New York (23.1 percent) and the United States (20.3 percent).

Given the many fine colleges and schools in Dutchess County, and the close proximity to educational centers in Orange County, Ulster County, Westchester County, New York City, and Connecticut, the high level of educational attainment should come as no surprise. Many fine colleges and universities are within a one hour commute of the Village of Wappingers Falls.

Table 4: Educational Attainment: College Graduates	
Wappingers Falls	18%
Dover	10%
Town of Poughkeepsie	34%
Dutchess County	25%
New York State	23%
United States	20%

2.4.3 Employment Trends

In 1990, approximately 96 percent of the labor force in the Village was employed. Sixty percent of employed persons were male, and 36 percent were female. The unemployment rate in the Village was roughly the same as the County average of three percent. In comparison, both the New York State and the national average unemployment rates in 1990 were nearly double the Dutchess County rate, at 5.2 percent and 5.5 percent, respectively. Between 1982 and 1998, the Dutchess County unemployment rate was less than the State and national rates in all but two years. The slightly higher unemployment rate in the County in 1993 and 1994 was due to the difficult economic conditions during the early 1990s when several IBM facilities in the area were affected by plant closings and thousands of employees were laid off. However,

the continual decrease in the County unemployment rate since 1994 indicates that Wappingers Falls is in a region with a relatively healthy economy. In 40 percent of Village households with children, both parents worked, as compared with half of County households. Twenty-seven percent of Village children had only one parent in the work force, as compared with 13 percent of children in the County as a whole. The large percentage of working women with children in the Village indicates that many are single mothers and the sole support of their families.

The Wappingers Falls occupational distribution is similar to that of the County in many areas. For instance, 60 percent of the Village's employed persons are occupied in sales or services, compared with 67 percent of County residents. However, the Census data on employment by industry indicates that the highest proportion of Village residents are employed in the retail or wholesale trade, while on the County level, the highest proportion are in professions.

The Public Opinion Survey conducted by the Comprehensive Plan Committee in January, 1998 indicated that the majority of Wappingers Falls residents still work close to home. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents said they worked in Southern Dutchess County, and 34 percent of these said they worked in Wappingers Falls. According to the 1990 US Census data, 76 percent of employed persons in the Village had less than a 30 minute commute, and only 12 percent commuted more than 45 minutes.

In 1993, the twelve major employers in Dutchess County provided 40,870 jobs, or nearly one-third of the employment in the County. IBM was, and still is, the County's largest single employer. However, after the peak employment year in 1990 when 121,000 jobs were based in Dutchess County, the region began to feel the effects of IBM's downsizing. By 1994, the total County-based employment had declined 15.8 percent to 102,000. In 1995, employment was on the rise and, by the close of 1997, the number of jobs had increased to 106,500. The economic upturn was primarily due to about 50 corporate expansions and relocations between 1993 and 1997, rather than the result of activity by a single firm. The County's recovery is continuing due to increased diversification and efforts to discourage the dominance of a single industry or corporation. Ironically, 400 of the new jobs in Dutchess County

Table 5:
Major Employers in Dutchess County, 1992-1993

Employer	Type	Employees
International Business Machines (IBM)	Manufacturing	11,000
State of New York	Government	9,500
Federal Government, including Post Office	Government	1,600
Local Government, including Education	Government	11,500
Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corp.	Utility	1,375
St. Francis Hospital	Hospital	1,238
Vassar Hospital	Hospital	1,200
Vassar College	Education	1,005
Texaco	Petroleum	685
Marist College	Education	935
Bard College	Education	382
Culinary Institute of America	Education	450
Total Major Employers Jobs		40,870
Total County Employment		121,000

were created by Micrus in East Fishkill, a joint venture between IBM and Cirrus Logic. This venture was bought out by Phillips in the Fall of 2000, and now employs over 1,200 people. In November of 2000, IBM announced that it would undertake a \$2.5 billion expansion at its East Fishkill plant. The purpose of the expansion is to create an advanced semiconductor facility. IBM expects that it will create 1,000 new jobs by 2003.

Another phenomena spurred by the economic downturn in the early 1990s was the growth of home-based businesses. In 1990, 2.4 percent of Dutchess County residents and 1.2 percent of Wappingers Falls residents worked at home. Since 1990, the number of home-based workers has increased significantly. According to the National Personal Transportation Survey (NPTS) conducted by the US Department of Transportation, in 1995 about 6 percent of Dutchess County residents worked from home. The state-wide proportion was fairly close to that of Dutchess County with about five percent working from home. With the advent of telecommuting and the increasing availability of rapid Internet access, home-based businesses are expected to increase.

Government and educational institutions continue to be major employers in the County, although the number of State jobs has dropped from about 9,500 in 1993 to 7,000 in 1998. A major contributor to this decrease was the closing of the Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center in 1994, which caused an economic crisis in eastern Dutchess County similar to that of IBM-dependent communities like Wappingers Falls. Thus, the danger of relying on a dominant industry is very real throughout the County and makes the recent growth of small businesses an encouraging sign. Numerous restaurants, small retail shops, and services have emerged as a result of the influx of new residents, many of whom have moved up from the New York Metropolitan area in search of a quieter, more affordable lifestyle, and by countywide efforts to bolster the tourism industry.

2.5 HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

The housing stock of a community is a major determinant of its quality of life and its ability to attract new residents. Mature communities like the Village of Wappingers Falls must confront such problems as an aging housing stock, a limited amount of developable vacant land, and a proliferation of rental units. Housing characteristics reported in the 1990 Census for residential building construction during the past decade, and the condition of the housing stock throughout the Village are the issues discussed in this section.

2.5.1 Type of Housing

The housing stock in Wappingers Falls is urban in character. Only one-quarter of the Village's 2,058 dwelling units are single-family detached residential structures, as compared to 62 percent in the County.

The largest portion of housing stock in the Village is multi-family (structures with two units or more), which accounts for 60 percent of units. In contrast, multi-family units comprise only 28 percent of the County's total. Many residential units in Wappingers Falls are located in converted single-family structures which can only be distinguished as multiple residential by the number of electric meters or mailboxes.

Table 6:
Types of Housing Units

	Village	County
Single-Family Detached	27.8%	62%
Single-Family Attached	9.6%	3.5%
2 Unit Structures	19.3%	7%
3-4 Unit Structures	11.2%	7%
5-49 Unit Structures	20.4%	12.6%
50+ Unit Structures	9.5%	1.8%
Mobile Homes, Trailers	2.2%	6.1%
Total Multi-Family	60.4%	28.4%

➔ Important Planning Concern: *A problem with the oversupply of multiple-residential structures throughout the Village is that it limits the opportunities to increase owner-occupancy and creates a need for building code enforcement (especially where illegal single-family to multi-family conversions occur), which can result in property neglect by absentee landlords.*

2.5.2 Age of Housing

One-third of the housing in the Village was built prior to 1940. Many of the residences in the vicinity of downtown Wappingers Falls were built as workers' housing by the Dutchess Company and date back to the last half of the 19th century. The Wappingers Falls Historic District, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984, includes 125 residential structures. The list of historic sites in Wappingers Falls can be found in the *Background Studies Supplement*.

The next flurry of construction activity in the Village occurred between 1950 and 1970, when over 40 percent (877 dwelling units) of the housing was built. This period coincides with the "baby boom" era, the suburbanization of America, and the growth of IBM. Another

Table 7:
Residential Construction to 1990

Construction Period	% of Homes Built
Before 1940	33%
1940-1950	6%
1950-1970	43%
1970-1980	12%
1980-1990	6%

238 units were constructed between 1970 and 1980. Construction activity then declined to 134 units between 1980 and 1988.

Of the 208 new units constructed during the 1990s, only four were single-family detached homes. The rest were multi-family residences, including a six-unit building constructed in 1994, a 32-unit senior citizen complex built in 1995, a 12 unit building constructed in 1997, and a four-unit building constructed in 1998 to replace a six-unit building destroyed by fire. In 1999, the Village approved 150 multi-family units for senior citizens on Imperial Boulevard.

Table 8: New Residential Construction 1990-1999	
Single-Family Detached	4
Multi-Family Units	204
Total Units Built	208

✓ Important Planning Concern : *The decrease in single-family residential housing is greater than the data reflects because the residential construction activity report does not include single-family houses illegally converted to multiple-residential structures.*

2.5.3 Renter-Occupied Housing Conditions and Rents

The abundance of multiple residential structures in Wappingers Falls has resulted in a predominantly renter-occupied housing stock. In 1990, over half the housing units in the Village were renter-occupied, which is considerably higher than the County's proportion of 31 percent. Furthermore, 10 percent of the Village housing units were vacant, while the county-wide vacancy rate was only eight percent. These figures are relatively high for a municipality the size of Wappingers Falls, and are indicative of the age of its housing stock. Many of the rental units are in former large, single-family houses. The conversion of these houses to apartments further reduces the already limited opportunities for home ownership. It also creates the problem of neglect by absentee landlords.

✓ Important Planning Concern : *Unless some limitation is established on future conversions, it will be difficult to attract young home-owners to the Village. The recent and continuing in-migration of metropolitan NY residents to Dutchess County, many of whom have relatively high incomes and good earning potential, presents a great opportunity to revitalize the Village. However, if the conversions are not curtailed there will be a minimal amount of housing available for single-family home-ownership.*

Affordability is an indicator that measures housing cost as a percentage of income. When a large proportion of households pay over 30 percent of their income for housing, this usually implies that the housing supply falls short of demand. In 1990, the Village was among the most affordable communities in the County, with most renters paying 25

percent of their income to rent and utilities. The County-wide percentage was 26 percent, indicating that housing was affordable to most Dutchess County renters. In 1990, median rent in the Village was \$530 a month, the same as in Dutchess County.

✓ Important Planning Concern : *Affordable rent is a positive feature as related to cost of living. On the negative side, it may indicate that supply exceeds demand, creating vacancies and property neglect that poses a potential threat to neighborhood character.*

2.5.4 Owner-Occupied Housing Condition and Value

Given the high proportion of rental units in the Village and the shortage of single-family homes, the 1990 median housing value in the Village of \$118,904 is somewhat of an anomaly. One would expect that the limited amount of single-family residential housing would push the housing value to a price above the County-wide median value of \$149,200. However, the 1990 housing value in the Village was one of the lowest of any municipality in the County, which ranged from \$111,600 in Tivoli to \$179,300 in the Town of East Fishkill. The relatively low housing value may have been due, in part, to the onset of IBM's downsizing and the ensuing economic problems in the early 1990s.

Nearly half of the Village's owner-occupied housing values ranged from \$100,000 to \$149,999. The next largest range was \$75,000 to \$99,999, with 25 percent. The remaining one-quarter of the values were scattered throughout the ranges below \$200,000. Only 3 percent of the owner-occupied housing stock was valued over \$200,000.

Affordability for owner-occupied housing is determined by the percentage of income paid for housing costs, including total mortgage payment, taxes, insurance, and utilities. The affordability measure for owner-occupied housing is the same as for renter-occupied housing, namely 30 percent of income. In 1990, Dutchess County was generally affordable, with most owner-occupants paying less than 30 percent of income for housing costs. The affordability measure for the County ranged from a low of 18 percent in the Town of Washington to a high of 27 percent in the Town of North East. In Wappingers Falls the affordability measure was 19 percent, considerably lower than the County-wide average of 22 percent.

Housing values in the County remained relatively stagnant in the early 1990s due to the economic problems in the region. Since 1995, the housing market has recovered, and values have increased significantly with the gradual diversification of the economy and the in-migration of more affluent people seeking a more affordable and quieter quality of life.

Recent price listings in the Village indicate a demand for smaller houses. The average listing prices for two- and three-bedroom houses increased 18 percent and three percent respectively, while the average prices for four- and five-bedroom houses declined by 18

percent and four percent. The prices for townhouses were higher than those for two-bedroom houses and not much less than the average for three-bedroom houses. Furthermore, two family structures were listed for prices lower than single-family houses and townhouses.

➔ **Important Planning Concern:** *The apparent demand for two- to three-bedroom residences, and the similar prices between two-family structures and the smaller single-family houses, makes it understandable that an owner of a large single-family house would be tempted to convert it to a two-family residence. The rent from a second unit provides additional income for an owner-occupant. For an investor, the price is low enough to consider acquisition of the property. These conversions are depleting the single-family housing inventory in the Village. Unless this situation is curtailed, it will be impossible to raise the proportion of homeowners. The danger in allowing the proliferation of rental units to continue is that the blight resulting from neglectful and/or absentee landlords will continue to creep into neighborhoods until it is beyond control. This, in turn, will make it increasingly difficult to attract potential home owners to the Village.*

2.5 SUMMARY

The Village of Wappingers Falls is a well-established, predominately middle-income community with a relatively high level of educational attainment. As the Village's population ages and as more of its younger residents leave the Village to live and work elsewhere, retaining or attracting new young people to the Village will be an on-going challenge. In addition, the Village must encourage the development of more single-family homes. In recent years, new construction has been dominated by multi-family structures, and numerous conversions of single-family homes to multi-family units have occurred. To attract new young families to the Village and to maintain its single-family character, the Village must reverse this trend.

3. LAND USE

Community Goal

Encourage diversified growth of the Village, including a variety of residential, commercial, and industrial areas, while preserving its single-family residential character.

The Village of Wappingers Falls is nearly fully developed. The advanced age of the community creates a need to identify the few remaining vacant parcels that can be developed, as well as opportunities for the redevelopment of underutilized properties. A survey of existing land uses is an important tool for identifying these areas and for establishing a future land use plan. An existing land use survey delineates development patterns that have occurred since the previous

plan's adoption, and provides guidance for future development and redevelopment. Some of the questions answered by an existing land use survey include the following:

- Are the development patterns well-established, or are there areas where the original character has been lost and a new development pattern is emerging?
- In which areas do land use conflicts exist and how can they be eliminated?
- Are there areas of dilapidated housing stock or commercial buildings that could be demolished to assemble larger redevelopment parcels for adaptive reuse? If so, what are the viable land uses in the area and what type of redevelopment will be compatible with the surrounding area?

This chapter of the *Comprehensive Plan* presents the results of the existing land use survey of Wappingers Falls conducted in 1998 in preparation for this *Plan*. It also makes recommendations for a future land use plan, including zoning modifications, based on those results.

3.1 SURVEY METHOD

Eleven land use categories were selected for the existing land use survey: single-family residential; multi-family residential; office; local commercial; general commercial; industrial; public uses; quasi-public uses; recreation and open space; parking; and vacant land. A windshield survey was conducted to verify existing land uses in the Village, which were color-coded on a lot-line map. Each land use category was then calculated as a percentage of the total land in the Village. Planning areas were used to analyze the

development patterns in various parts of the Village and to highlight any significant changes that have occurred since the previous plan was adopted in 1968. The planning areas are: Ward 1, Ward 2, Upper Ward 3, Lower Ward 3, the Market Street Industrial Park, and the Channingville Road area. The boundaries of these planning areas are shown on Map 3, which appears at the end of this chapter along with other maps referenced herein. The complete existing land use survey and tabulated results can be read in their entirety in the *Background Studies Supplement*.

3.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The total land area of Wappingers Falls is 773 acres. However, Wappingers Lake and Wappingers Creek comprise 130 acres, or approximately 17 percent, of this total area. Streets and right-of-ways comprise another 104 acres. Developed land in the Village amounts to 415 acres. The remaining 124 acres (16 percent of the total land area) is vacant.

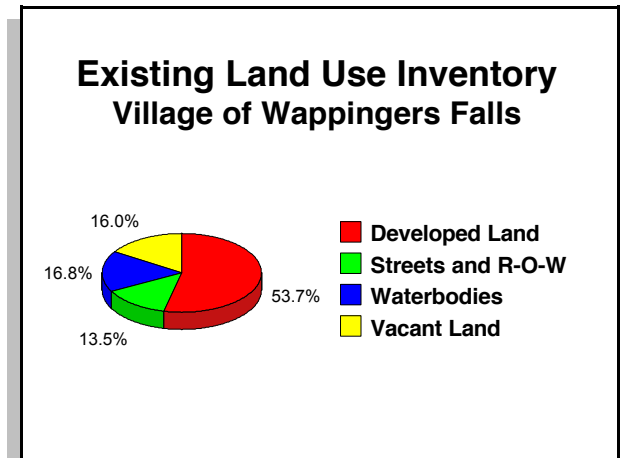
There may appear to be an abundance of vacant land in the Village. However, much of the vacant land is constrained by steep slopes or other natural factors. These unique features, which are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, enhance the historic character of the Village and present opportunities for recreation and tourism, two key components of the future land use plan for the Village. But they also limit other more traditional forms of development. For this reason, the *Comprehensive Plan's* land use recommendations emphasize redevelopment of underutilized parcels and adaptive reuse of existing structures.

Developed land in the Village, which comprises 54 percent of the Village's total area, is analyzed according to the eleven land use categories in the following section. This analysis provides the basis for the recommended land use plan, which appears in the second half of this chapter.

3.2.1 Residential : *Single and Multi-family*

One third of the Village is residentially developed, including 137 acres of single-family housing and 105 acres of multi-family residential structures. Although mortgage lenders define two to four unit structures as single-family residential, local municipal boards generally consider structures with more than one unit as single-family only under special

Figure 4



circumstances. The existing land use survey therefore includes two- to four-unit properties in the multi-family residential category.

In recent years, the Village has seen a proliferation of multi-unit properties in essentially single-family neighborhoods. In some cases, absentee landlords of these multi-family residences have resulted in the deterioration of these structures and a decline in neighborhood character. One purpose of the existing land use survey is to identify single-family residential areas in the Village where this situation exists.

According to the 1990 Census, 27.8 percent (572) of the 2,058 dwelling units in Wappingers Falls were single-family detached structures, while 40.1 percent were in single-family attached, two unit, and three to four unit structures.¹ Approximately 16 percent of the remaining third of the housing stock are apartments in five to nineteen unit buildings. This interspersing of small apartment buildings and single-family attached structures in single-family neighborhoods is most evident in the southwest part of the Village.

Residential development in Upper Ward 3, north of East Main Street and east of Wappingers Lake, is predominantly single-family. The single-family homes in this area, are generally in very good condition, probably due to their relatively new 1960's construction, particularly along Liss Road. South of High Street, around Mesier Park, are a number of scattered small multi-family residential structures with two to ten units. This is not unusual in older Village centers and, considering its age, this housing, with the exception of Brookside Terrace, is in good condition.

Other single-family residential areas in the Village are in Lower Ward 3, between South Avenue and South Remsen Avenue, and in Ward 1 north of West Street. However, along the West Main Street corridor approaching the Central Business District (CB), and in Ward 2 south of the CB District, the single-family residential neighborhood image that many Villagers wish to present becomes more diluted.

Larger multi-family residential developments are found in Lower Ward 3 east of South Remsen Avenue. These include Oakwood Terrace and Wenliss Terrace, both of which were built in the 1950s and 1960s. Though the structures are predominantly duplex or two-family and are zoned R 2-F, these developments have more in common with a multi-family residential complex than a single-family subdivision. In the same area is DiMarco Place, an attractive 32 unit apartment complex for senior citizens constructed in 1997. A large co-operative apartment development, Imperial Towers, is located on the east side of Route 9, and Oak Tree Gardens Apartments are located in the Channingville Road area in the northwesterly portion of the Village.

¹ Of this 40.1 percent, 9.6 percent were single-family attached, 19.3 percent were two unit, and 11.2 percent were three to four unit structures.

3.2.2 Commercial

Wappingers Falls has three commercial land use categories: general business (GB), local business (NB and CB), and office (OB). Together these comprise about 10 percent of the total land area in the Village.

General Business (GB)

General business includes highway-oriented businesses with a regional market. Most of the 48 acres of general business use in the Village are located along Route 9. Businesses in this area include the Dutchess Shopping Plaza, the Grand Union supermarket, Home Depot, and the Rite-Aid Drugstore, located on the east side of Route 9. The west side of Route 9 includes free-standing, general commercial uses such as McDonald's, Dairy Queen, several auto-related businesses, and the Holiday Recreation Center bowling alley. A few older general commercial businesses are scattered throughout the Village on West Main Street between Delavergne Avenue and Clinton Street. These include a truck rental company, an auto repair shop, and a gas station. A few other general business uses are also found in Ward 2 on South Avenue and off of Fulton Street.

Local Business (NB and CB)

Local commercial uses are intended to serve the surrounding neighborhood and tend to be small proprietorships. In total, Wappingers Falls has eight acres of local commercial uses. Their primary concentration is in the Central Business District. The rest are scattered north of the Central Business District along East and West Main Streets.

Office (OB)

Office development totals 16 acres and is primarily found in converted houses along East Main Street and South Avenue. Larger office developments include Regency Plaza on the east side of Route 9, and those located in the Industrial District on Delavergne Avenue.

3.2.3 Industrial

Industrial development in the Village totals about 15 acres and includes fuel service and storage establishments, located on West Main Street and Delavergne Avenue, and the Market Street Industrial Park. The Industrial Park is the only traditional industrial area in the Village, and the largest, with a total of about 10 developed acres. The focal point for the Industrial Park is the former Bleachery, a series of historic loft-type buildings.

Prior to 1999, expansion of the Market Street Industrial Park was limited by the inadequacy of the only bridge providing access to the site. In 1998, State funding was

obtained to construct an additional bridge. The new Fedigan's Bridge, completed in the Spring of 1999, is expected to encourage more light industrial firms to locate in the Park, bringing more jobs to the Village. Some limited expansion of the site is also possible.

3.2.4 Institutional: *Public and Quasi-Public*

The broad Institutional land use category is comprised of public and quasi-public uses, which include facilities used by government and non-profit organizations respectively.

Public uses occupy 19 acres of land and include the Village administrative buildings in and near Mesier Park, the Post Office on East Main Street, the Village Highway Department Yard and Collection and Pumping Station off Creek Road, the well fields at Canale Park, three Village water storage facilities, and two Village Fire Stations.

The majority of the 48 acres of quasi-public land in the Village is comprised of the Mount Alvernia Retreat Center and St. Mary's Church, school, cemetery and grounds, located in the northwest portion of the Village. Much of the land on these two properties, which are zoned R-12.5 or R-7.5, is vacant. However, these properties are classified as quasi-public, rather than vacant, because there are no current plans to sell them. Other quasi-public uses include: the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post Hall on School Street, the Knights of Columbus Hall on East Main Street, American Legion Hall on Spring Street, First Presbyterian Church on South Avenue, United Methodist Church on Remsen Avenue, Zion Episcopal Church on East Main Street, and Bethel Baptist Church on South Avenue.

According to the Poughkeepsie Journal's 1998 Fact Book, 68 percent of Dutchess County residents with a religious affiliation are Roman Catholic. Given the population density of Wappingers Falls, the large percentage of land owned by the Catholic Archdiocese in the Village is understandable.

3.2.5 Recreation and Open Space

Recreation and open space areas in the Village total approximately 53 acres. Two parks create the focal point of the Village: the six acre Mesier Park and Homestead, located on the north side of East Main Street, and the Zion Episcopal Church Park, directly opposite. These two parks are located in the approximate geographic center of Wappingers Falls forming a traditional "village green." Significant community facilities, such as the Village offices and the Grinnell Library, front on this green.

Other recreation and open space areas include:

- James J. Temple Memorial Park at Market and McKinley Streets in Ward 2. This six acre park includes a baseball field, a play lot, and a basketball court. Parking is provided for about 80 cars.
- Veterans Memorial Park on North Mesier Avenue in Upper Ward 3. This six acre park, which abuts a portion of the east shore of Wappingers Lake, was developed after World War II at the request of returning servicemen. It includes a Little League baseball field, a basketball court, a playground, a multi-purpose building, and picnic tables. Parking is provided for about 20 cars.
- Canale Memorial Park at the north end of West Main Street in Ward 1. This three acre park abuts the well field on a northwest portion of Wappinger Lake. Adjacent to Canale Park is the seven acre well field which shares the total ten acre site.
- Fisherman's Park at the north end of Liss Road in Upper Ward 3. This park is adjacent to the Lake and provides access to the lake for fishing and boating.
- The MIA Park is a vest pocket park off of Route 9 in Lower Ward 3. It consists of a monument to military personnel who were declared Missing in Action in the Vietnam War.
- Bain Park located west of Franklindale and Clapp Avenue in Ward 2. This six acre park was formerly the Village land fill.
- The Scenic Hudson property, located on Channingville Road at the top of the ridge overlooking the Market Street Industrial Park. This is a wooded 27 acre parcel that is part of the Wappinger Greenway Trail.
- Two parks proposed for the Downtown area will emphasize the presence of the Falls. Falls View Park will be located on Market Street and Galucci Park will be located on West Main Street.

Attention should be paid to each of these parks, since they could be instrumental in defining Wappingers Falls as a small Village with many recreational opportunities that appeal to residents and visitors alike. Needed improvements to these parks are discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

The current condition of Wappingers Lake makes the Village's lakefront parks less than desirable during peak summer months. The Lake was acquired by the Village in the late 1960s, and the process of cleaning and protecting it is ongoing. In 1998, the Village designated the Lake as a State Environmental Quality Review Act Critical Environmental Area (CEA), which ensures that any land development project that may impact the Lake will require an additional level of environmental assessment prior to approval by State and/or local agencies. The designation has also brought to the fore the issue of the Lake's water quality, and has facilitated funding for dredging the Lake, helping to ensure an effective cleanup. The Village is currently working with neighboring communities to

create an intermunicipal plan for restoring the Lake. Development of the Wappingers Greenway Trail, a portion of which will wind around the Lake, will also contribute to improved Lake conditions. Wappingers Lake and the Wappingers Greenway Trail are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

One reason for periodically revising a land use plan is to identify emerging development patterns and determine whether they are appropriate. If an emerging development pattern is appropriate, the zoning should be amended to allow uses consistent with the pattern. This process also allows an identification of areas where incompatible land uses are creating conflicts that threaten the character and quality of life of a neighborhood. By comparing the existing land use map with the Zoning map, land uses that are inconsistent with the current Zoning can be identified, as well as areas with unique features that may require special treatment.

The following discussion recommends Zoning map amendments, based on the existing land use analysis, to encourage appropriate development and redevelopment in the Village. The analysis has been broken down into four primary areas of concern: Downtown Wappingers Falls; Other Commercial Areas; Single-Family and Multi-family Residential Areas; and the Market Street Industrial Park. The existing and proposed land use maps for the four planning areas, Ward 1, Ward 2, Upper Ward 3, and Lower Ward 3, can be found at the end of this chapter.

3.3.1 Downtown Wappingers Falls

A traditional downtown serves as a focal point for shopping, community services, and social interaction. It is characterized by a dense concentration of land uses, building styles, and other features that convey a community's image and character. Typical downtown land uses include mixed-use buildings with retail on the street level and apartments or offices above. Civic buildings, entertainment establishments, and cultural or social facilities are also commonly found here.

Downtown Wappingers Falls includes a three block area zoned Central Business (CB) located around the intersection of East Main and Mill Streets. Over the years, however, land uses appropriate to a traditional downtown have extended beyond the CB district line along East and West Main Streets and Market Street. The resulting land use conflicts has created a haphazard development pattern in the downtown area. The *Comprehensive Plan* recommends that the CB district be expanded to include adjacent appropriate uses and to eliminate some existing non-conformities. Expanding the CB district will also facilitate downtown revitalization by permitting more shops and services appropriate to this area. Since the CB district already exists in the Village's Zoning Law,

expanding it could be done with relative ease. Figure 6 at the end of this chapter identifies the existing and the proposed expanded CB District. Areas beyond the current CB district boundary with land use patterns more consistent with the downtown are discussed in detail below.

East Main and Spring Streets

This area includes the Village Hall, the American Legion Hall (which houses the Village Planning and Zoning Office), Mesier Park, and the Zion Church and Park. All of these uses are appropriate for the CB district.

Immediately north of Grinnell Library on the west side of Spring Street are three lots included in the R-7.5 (Single Family Residential) Zoning District. Two of these three lots include a physical therapist's office and the American Legion Hall. Only the northernmost of the three lots is occupied by a single-family residence. Although the R-7.5 District includes most of the Village east of Spring Street, south of High Street, and west of Remsen Avenue, the north half of Spring Street and the north frontage of High Street is interrupted by a three-block R-2F (Two-Family Residential) Zoning District. Extending the R-2F zone south will create greater consistency on Spring Street.

Mesier Homestead and Park, which occupies the entire north frontage of East Main Street between Spring Street and North Mesier Avenue, and the Zion Church and Park are also zoned R-7.5.

✓ Recommendations:

- Extend the CB District to include the west side of Spring Street (the office and the American Legion Hall/Village Planning and Zoning Office).
- Extend the R-2F District to include the house north of the American Legion Hall and the house across from the American Legion Hall (#8 and #11 Spring Street).
- Extend the CB District to include Mesier Park and the Zion Episcopal Church and Park.
- Create a Recreation Park Overlay to include Mesier Park and the Zion Episcopal Church and Park.

A portion of the block between North Mesier Avenue and Remsen Avenue is zoned R-7.5; however a funeral home and a two-family residential structure are located in this R-7.5 District. At the northeast corner of East Main Street and Mesier Avenue, the R-7.5 District is interrupted with an office building which is zoned OB (Office Business). The parcels east of Remsen Avenue, both north and south of East Main Street, are also zoned OB. This is one of numerous examples in the Village where small, isolated zoning districts present potential conflicts with surrounding uses.

✓ Recommendation:

Extend the OB District on each side of East Main street from Remsen Avenue to Mesier Avenue.

Givens Avenue

Currently, Givens Avenue between the CB and Industrial Zones is zoned R-M2 (Multifamily Residential) and R-2F (Two-Family). However, Givens Avenue includes only a few two-family structures and two mixed-use buildings. These are appropriate land uses in a downtown area. Givens Avenue is also significant to the historic character of Wappingers Falls. The pedestrian access to the Industrial Park at the end of Givens Avenue was the route used by the Bleachery employees to walk to work. This pedestrian path was restored in 1999, as a link in the Wappinger Greenway Trail.

✓ Recommendation:

Extend the CB District as far as 10 Givens Avenue.

Market Street south of East Main Street

The section of Market Street between East Main Street and Franklin Street is currently zoned GB (General Business). This poses a serious threat to the downtown identity. The purpose of the GB District is to allow commercial uses that have a regional market and are oriented towards the car. Because they have a regional draw, these uses tend to generate high traffic volumes and a significant amount of commercial truck traffic. This type of traffic is inappropriate for the Village's Central Business District, and would, in fact, compound the already existing conflict between pedestrians and vehicular traffic in the Village core. As discussed in detail in Chapter 5, this vehicular conflict threatens the economic vitality of the downtown shopping district, which depends heavily on pedestrian activity. GB uses also require deep setbacks from the road, which are inappropriate for the smaller lots in the Village core and would imperil the existing character of its historic streetscapes.

The east frontage of Market Street and the south side intersection at Franklin Street include some marginal commercial uses which are inconsistent with the historic character and aesthetically pleasing image that the Village wishes to project. Most of the west side of Market Street along the Falls and the Creek, which is currently vacant, is municipal property. The Village plans to develop a park here that will provide views of the Falls. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Village's water resources are an integral part of its fabric and historic legacy. With the development of Falls View Park and the Wappingers Greenway Trail, that legacy may become a lucrative tourism attraction as well. It is therefore important to ensure that the redevelopment of adjacent areas, such as the east

frontage of Market Street, is in keeping with the Village's historic character. Rezoning this area from GB to CB could encourage owners of buildings in this area to apply for grant money for commercial building rehabilitation.

✓ Recommendation:

Expand the CB District to include the existing GB district in this area.

West Main Street south of West Street

The CB District boundary extends less than 200 feet north of the intersection of West and East Main Streets, and includes only the southeast corner of Givens and East/West Main Streets. The CB District in this area includes only five buildings on the west side just north of the R-M2 zoning on Givens Avenue. The most significant of these structures is the County Players Theater. The other four buildings are mixed-use, commercial or multi-family residential buildings. Between the CB District and West Street, the west side of West Main Street includes a mix of multi-family residential, mixed-use (commercial/residential) buildings, small offices, and scattered single-family residences. Many of these uses are consistent with a typical Village downtown. However, the portion of West Main Street immediately north of the CB District is zoned R-M2. The north and southwest corners of West Street are zoned NB (Neighborhood Business). Between the NB and the R-M2 zoning districts, the west frontage is zoned R-M1. This inconsistent zoning emphasizes the haphazard land use pattern that has evolved along West Main Street.

✓ Recommendations:

Extend the CB District to replace the R-M2 District on the west side of West Main Street below Church Street.

Extend the CB District to replace the R-M1 District on the west side of West Main Street up to Church Street.

Extend the NB District to replace the R-M1 District on the west side of West Main Street from Church Street to West Street.

On the east side of West Main Street, only the three southernmost buildings are included in the CB District. The Falls and the Creek are located immediately behind these buildings. If appropriately developed, the east side of Main Street could provide an excellent vantage point for viewing these natural landmarks. However, the east frontage includes a mix of commercial, single-family and multi-family residential uses, and vacant properties north of the CB zoning district. The zoning immediately north of the CB district is R-M2. The R-M1 District adjacent to the north of the R-M2 District is interrupted by one lot zoned NB on the northeast corner of School and West Main Streets. Beyond the R-M1 District, the northeast and southeast corners of West and West Main Streets are zoned NB.

✓ Recommendations:

Extend the CB District to replace the R-M2 District along the east side of West Main Street.

Extend the CB District to replace the R-M1 District along the east side of West Main Street to School Street.

Extend the NB District to replace the R-M1 District along the east side of West Main Street from School Street to West Street.

3.3.2 Other Commercial Areas

Other commercial areas in the Village have a distinctively different identity from the downtown. While the Route 9 Corridor is the most obviously different, three other areas also stand out. These include: South Avenue, the east end of East Main Street, and Upper West Main Street. These areas are characterized by a mix of multi-family residential uses and some commercial and institutional uses. Due to location, however, these areas serve as gateways to the Village and its downtown core. The mix of uses in these three areas are characteristic of a transition zone rather than a Central Business District.

Two of these “transition zones” are described in this section, along with the rationale for the respective proposed recommendations. Upper West Main Street presents a special case and is discussed at the end of this chapter. The section concludes with a discussion of the Route 9 Corridor to emphasize the contrast between uses that exist along Route 9 and those typically found in a downtown district.

South Avenue

South Avenue (Route 9D) is the southern gateway to the Village. Although the Avenue is primarily zoned R-7.5, most development in this area is institutional, two-family residential, office, and business. The “transitional” two-family residential, institutional, and office uses along South Avenue from Maple Street to the current OB zoning boundary at Prospect Street should be permitted to continue. The business uses include the Texaco Service Station and Seimans Auto Service and Sales lot. These businesses provide convenient services for the densely populated multi-family neighborhoods tucked behind South Avenue.

✓ Recommendation:

Maintain the present NB District along South Avenue.

East Main Street

The north side of East Main Street between North Remsen Avenue and Route 9 includes vacant land and a mix of multi-family residential structures and offices, most of which are converted residential structures. The zoning in this area is Office Business (OB) and extends approximately 1,000 feet north of East Main Street to the adjacent vacant parcel that is zoned R-M2. The OB District also extends along Moran Avenue just west of Route 9.

Due to the proximity to Route 9, office and multi-family residential developments appear to be the most appropriate zoning for this area. However future development should be carefully planned to emphasize the small-scale, historic character of the Village and to create an attractive gateway for its eastern entry.

✓ Recommendation:

Maintain the present OB District along the north side of East Main Street.

The East Main Street frontage between the proposed CB zoning district and Route 9 includes the Post Office at the southeast corner of Remsen and a mix of single-family residential, small multi-family residential structures, and offices, most of which are converted residential structures. The OB zoning district north of East Main Street also includes the south frontage of East Main between South Remsen Avenue and Route 9. To further complicate the area south of East Main Street, a large vacant parcel occupies the west side of South Remsen Avenue adjacent to the rear of East Main Street's south frontage. The vacant parcel was originally zoned R-12.5 but was rezoned to CB in order to accommodate a proposed retail development adjacent to the new Post Office. Since that time, DiMarco Place, a 32-unit senior citizen housing development, was constructed on the R-M1 parcel immediately south of the vacant CB parcel. The CB zoning remains, although the proposed retail development proved to be infeasible, and a 3 acre parcel zoned R-12.5 was left between DiMarco Place and Gilmore Boulevard. The existing single-family residential and senior citizen housing south of East Main Street indicate that residential development would be most appropriate along the east side of South Remsen Avenue. At the informational meeting on the *Comprehensive Plan* held in June 2000, Village residents were unanimous in their desire that the residential character of Remsen Avenue be preserved.

✓ Recommendation :

Retain and enhance the single-family residential character of Remsen Avenue.

Route 9 Corridor

Despite the predominance of highway commercial uses along the Route 9 corridor, nearly all of this road's frontage is currently zoned CB. One exception is the entrance to Wenliss Terrace at the south end of the Village, which is partially zoned GB and partially zoned R-M2. The other is the OB District north of East Main Street, a portion of which fronts on Route 9. The Central Business District is traditionally used to define a downtown area with a mix of residential and commercial uses scaled to accommodate lower traffic volumes and permit pedestrian activity. CB zoning is inappropriate for the Route 9 corridor, with its exclusive auto-orientation of drive-through fast food restaurants, single use shopping centers, and auto-related establishments. Ironically, though the land use pattern in this area is predominantly general business, the only GB zoning on Route 9 is developed with multi-family residential structures.

✓ Recommendation:

Change the CB District to GB for all parcels fronting Route 9 that have sufficient front yard area for development.

3.3.3 Single Family and Multi-Family Residential

The Existing Land Use Map highlights the most prominent land use conflict in Wappingers Falls, the interspersing of numerous multi-family residential structures within single-family residential neighborhoods. In many cases, the multi-family units are two-family structures that were constructed prior to enactment of the Village's Zoning Law and were primarily intended to accommodate extended families. However, since Zoning was adopted, many additional units have been allowed through the granting of use variances by the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). Table 9, located at the end of this chapter, presents a sample of the ZBA variances granted between 1979 and 1995. Seventeen of the 21 cases listed permitted additional units or substandard lot widths in R-7.5 and R-2F zones. None of the cases in which variances were granted involved hardships related to lot configuration or some other physical constraint of the property which could justify granting the requested variance. Moreover, in nearly all of these cases the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development recommended that the requests be denied due to the absence of any hardship other than financial considerations. In 1994, New York State Village Law was amended to set forth specific criteria for the granting of both area and use variances.

This practice of granting use variances has encouraged the proliferation of rental properties with absentee landlords in the Village, which, in many cases, has resulted in neighborhood deterioration. Another result is that the inventory of affordable single-family residential housing, which is the preferred homeownership choice, has declined. An additional problem involves the conversion of street-level storefronts to

apartments in the Central Business District. This detracts both from the appearance and traditional function of the downtown as a shopping area, in addition to creating inadequate dwelling units.

Since 1995, the ZBA has been diligent in requiring justification of variance requests for reasons related to lot configuration or some other physical feature causing the hardship. The variances now have very specific conditions and are granted to the applicant on condition that the variance be lifted if the hardship no longer exists. The problems cited above can be eliminated through strict enforcement of the Zoning Law and continued diligence in denying use variances to allow additional dwelling units in single-family residential areas and the conversion of storefronts to apartments. To reduce neighborhood blight, the Village should consider adopting a rental housing maintenance ordinance. Blight can also be eliminated by demolishing non-historic structures, and by adaptively reusing historic or non-historic structures, if feasible.

✓ Recommendations:

Limit use variances to a specific hardship so the variance can be lifted when the hardship no longer exists. Moreover, if an existing non-conforming two-family structure changes ownership, the variance should be lifted and it should be incumbent on the new owner to petition the ZBA for a new variance to which the ZBA could respond appropriately.

Amend the Zoning to limit permitted uses in street-level storefronts in the Central Business District to shops and services with walk-in clientele.

Businesses that do not attract walk-in clients, such as professional consulting services, are more appropriate for upper floor levels in this area.

Adopt policies and programs to attract young families and singles to the Village, such as working with banks and realtors to develop a home-buyer assistance program.

Identify target areas for housing rehabilitation.

Enforce Zoning Laws strictly to ensure realization of the Village character desired by residents.

Channingville Road

A large area of the Village along Channingville Road is currently zoned for multi-family (R-M1) development. There is currently one apartment complex, Oaktree Apartments, on this road. However, the rest of the area is characterized by a number of single-family residences and vacant land. Much of the vacant land is constrained by steep slopes of 15 percent or greater. Current residents in this area experience water pressure problems when several apartment dwellers use water at the same time, and low water pressure is a concern for fire fighting as well.

Channingville Road is a winding two lane road owned by the Town of Poughkeepsie. Traffic has been increasing dramatically on this road because it is one of three routes to the Metro North Train Station in New Hamburg. A large number of buses use this road on the way to Sheafe Road Elementary School and St. Mary's School. Bottini fuel oil trucks and tankers also travel Channingville Road on their way to the Bottini facility near the Metro North Station. Moreover, the New Hamburg Fire Station # 1 is also located on Channingville Road; in 1999 this station responded to 550 fire and accident alarms, an average of 1.5 per day. Children walk and bike along Channingville Road, and the increase in traffic imperils them.

The high density permitted by the R-M1 District will only add to water and traffic problems in the area. In addition, much of the vacant land in this area is adjacent to the Wappinger Greenway Trail, and is a habitat for a diversity of wildlife, including deer, wild turkeys, red fox, owl, and red tailed hawk. High density development in this area may detract from the appeal of the Greenway Trail and impact natural habitats. Many mature trees, over 200 years old, and archaeological sites are also located in this area. Given these conditions, and the existing single-family residential character, this area would be more appropriately zoned for single-family residential development.

✓ Recommendation :

Rezone the R-M1 District on Channingville Road to R-12.5.

House Trailers and Mobile Homes

The current ordinance (Chapter 92) of the Zoning Code prohibits house trailers and mobile homes in all areas of the Village. This ordinance must be amended to permit mobile homes in some portion of the Village. The *Comprehensive Plan* recommends that house trailers and mobile homes be permitted in a Trailer District on the east side of Marshall Road in the area where trailers are currently located. Single family detached homes should also be a permitted use in this district.

✓ Recommendation :

Create a Trailer District on the east side of Marshall Road.

3.3.4 Market Street Industrial Park

The Market Street Industrial Park is one of a number of historic factories throughout the Hudson River Valley that are finding new life through adaptive reuse. As a converted historic property, the Market Street Industrial Park has tremendous tourism potential. The historic loft-type buildings are an attraction in themselves. Moreover, the Park is located on a section of the Wappinger Greenway Trail and in close proximity to two proposed new parks in the Village center. The Village should capitalize on this attraction

to draw more visitors to the downtown. One suggestion is to create a tour brochure, similar to that produced for the river mansions, of converted historic factories in the Valley, including other similar sites such as the Dia Center for the Arts in the National Biscuit plant in Beacon and the converted Baker's Chocolate Factory in Red Hook.

✓ Recommendation:

Explore recreational and tourism opportunities associated with the Market Street Industrial Park.

3.3.5 Special Cases

Upper West Main Street includes a hodgepodge of uses ranging from single-family residential to industrial. The area is further complicated by the existing R-M1 zoning along both sides of West Main Street, which is interrupted by a GB District between Delavergne Avenue and North Street. Moreover, the GB District has been developed with uses that are more industrial than commercial, and, in one case, a non-conforming general business use is located in a residential zone. A similar incompatibility is evident in the small, isolated Industrial District on the north side of Delavergne Avenue in a primarily residential neighborhood. To further complicate this area, this district has been developed with office uses rather than industrial ones. These conditions result in little relationship between the various land uses and the zoning of this area.

This area should be studied in greater detail. Upper West Main Street is the northern gateway to Wappingers Falls and should present a welcoming visual image of the Village's distinctive character. Reducing land use conflicts and creating an attractive gateway to the Village in this area will be a challenge. Residential property owners feel their property values will be negatively affected by further industrial and general business development in their neighborhood. However, commercial landowners have also raised concerns about creating non-conformities and limiting the resale value of their properties if the commercial zoning of their land is changed. The residential and commercial property owners in this area should participate together in finding an acceptable solution to these land use conflicts. A facilitated meeting of all stakeholders would be one method to reach consensus on this issue.

Recommendations:

Study the Upper West Main Street area in greater detail to determine exactly where land use conflicts exist and what the development potential of the existing GB and Industrial Districts may be.

Facilitate a meeting of property owners in the area to find a solution to land use conflicts that satisfies all the stakeholders.

3.4 SUMMARY

The Village must carefully weigh future development, redevelopment, and zoning decisions to encourage appropriate economic development, create greater compatibility between land uses, and enhance the Village's unique historic character. Allowing appropriate rezonings and justifiable variances, strengthening the Zoning Law, and diligently enforcing it, will be the most effective tools to implement the future land use plan for the Village.

**TABLE 9: SAMPLE OF ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS USE VARIANCES
GRANTED FROM 1979-1995**

Village of Wappingers Falls, New York

Address	ZBA Date	Zoning	Request	County Advice	ZBA Action	Rationale
10 Clinton	8/3/82	R-7.5	add 1 unit	Denial	Approved	Inherited property; Other 2F in Area; Owner disabled & needs rent income
22 Clapp	7/16/82	R-2F	add 2 units	Denial	Approved	Allow 2F on each half of duplex; Lot cannot be subdivided further.
15 South Ave.	4/13/82	R-7.5	add 2	Denial	Approved	ZBA allowed 2 Family
15 South Ave.	9/28/80	R-7.5	add 2	Denial	Denied	Financial hardship only
W. Main/Clinton	7/7/81	R-M1	repair shop	Denial	Approved	Repair shop accessory to gas station (9/9/70-original)
W. Main/Clinton	6/5/79	R-M1	Spec use	Denial	Denied	Unless proposed dual use is approved, deny variance
27 & 29 Clapp	7/3/79	R-2F	2-SF to 2-2F	Denial	Approved	Originally one 2F on lot; divided to 2 SF attached lots; destroyed by fire; ZBA approved one 2-F/lot built.
27 & 29 Clapp	6/5/79	R-2F	2-SF to 2-2F	Denial	Denied	Neighbor protest-stop work
27 Clapp	4/3/79	R-2F	2F to 3F	Denial	Denied	If RM would need 5 parking spaces; increase non-conf.
161 W. Main	1/2/79	GB	Parking		Approved	Insufficient size for parking
28 High St.	11/13/87	R-7.5	SF to 2F	Denial	Approved	Previous Multi-Residential; Addition to accommodate larger family size.
28 High St.	8/2/88	R-7.5	SF to 2F	Denial	Approved	Village rezoned from R-7.5-increase min. lot to 75'
28 Clinton	5/5/87	R-7.5	Add 2F house	Denial	Denied	Existing plus proposed SF create 2 houses on one lot
29 Mesier	5/3/88	R-7.5	SF to 2F	Denial	Approved	Variance to allow 2F on 62.5 ft. lot (75'minimum)
55 E. Main St.	5/3/88	R-7.5	2F	Denial	Approved	Replace demolished 2F with new 1,725 sf 2F house
8 Clapp Ave	9/20/88	R-2F	4 apts	Denial	Approved	Convert Tavern to 4 apts.
107-123 E. Main	1/3/89	CB/OB	Comm		Approved	Office retail & restaurant
19 Franklindale	4/4/89	R-2F	3F to 4F	Denial	Approved	Add 4th unit for family member; 6 - 4F in vicinity.
75 Market St.	7/31/89	R-2F	2F to 3F	Denial	Approved	Allow continued 3F
S. Remsen	7/13/93	R-12.5	32 apts		Approved	DiMarco rezoning to R-M1
Gilmore Blvd.	12/6/94 3/3/95	R-2F	Lot width		Approved	Allowed 33.6' lot width on Lots 4-10; then 2-12

Source: Zoning Board of Appeals, 1979 to 1995; Village of Wappingers Falls Zoning Office.

4. ENVIRONMENT

Community Goal

Protect and enhance the character of the Village, as defined by its water resources, steep slopes, trees and rich history, for present and future generations to enjoy.

Wappingers Falls' natural environment has been a major force in shaping the Village's development pattern. The Village is located on the banks of the Wappinger Creek. This settlement location did not occur by accident, but reflects a strong historic reliance on water resources. The Village is situated where the Creek makes a dramatic plunge over a series of falls, which lent the Village its

name, into a gorge that funnels its water into the Hudson River. The power generated by the falls gave the Village its industrial start in the early 1700's. The great hydropower resources of the Village attracted heavy industrial development at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and Wappingers Falls was one of the first sites established for cotton textile manufacture in the Hudson Valley. Well drained soils in the area accommodated densely concentrated development, and the early factory owners erected hundreds of frame housing units in the Village. The majority of these units remain as one of the largest concentrations of workers' housing in the region. After two centuries of development, Wappingers Falls survives as one of the most extensive historic factory villages extant in New York State. A 90 acre section of the Village has been listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places as the Wappingers Falls Historic District.

The Village's rich history indicates the complex interplay between the natural and the built environments. This interplay continues today. Wappinger Lake, Creek, and the dramatic Falls are the Village's most striking natural features and its greatest environmental assets. While no longer the center of industry, these water resources enhance the small town character of the Village, and present unique opportunities for commerce, recreation and tourism development.

However, these resources have also been negatively affected by the built environment, both locally and upstream. The Village is located in the lower basin of the Wappingers Creek watershed (Dutchess County's largest), a complex natural system that ignores political and jurisdictional boundaries. Runoff from intensively developed areas upstream has already seriously impacted Wappinger Lake, and has the potential to contaminate the groundwaters beneath it. Soil erosion from development activities, both upstream and within the Village itself, has also been a contributing factor. Thus, the future of Wappingers Falls is inextricably linked to the interplay between people and the

environment that occurs both within upstream watershed communities and in the Village's boundaries.

Environment is a term that encompasses both natural and man-made elements. This section of the *Comprehensive Plan* inventories the existing environmental conditions in the Village, including:

- Village Water Supply and Aquifer
- Wappinger Lake
- Wappinger Creek and Wappinger Falls
- Historic Districts
- Community Character
- Wappinger Greenway Trail
- Topography and Soils
- Contaminated Sites

It also recommends appropriate actions to ensure that future development and land use in the Village is consistent with the community's goal to protect and enhance its environmental resources.

4.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

4.1.1 Village Water Supply and Aquifer

The Village of Wappingers Falls owns and maintains a wellfield located on an eight acre site adjoining Wappinger Lake off West Main Street. The Village partially depends on this wellfield as its primary source of water supply and, at present, well quality is considered good. Approximately 40 to 45 percent of the Village's water supply is supplemented with Hudson River water from the Poughkeepsie water plant. Estimates by the US Bureau of Census indicate that 4,507 people were living within the Village in 1998. Virtually all of these people depend on the water supplied in part by the Village wellfield. The Village also supplies water to the Wappinger Central School District, and to users within the Towns of Poughkeepsie and Wappinger. Furthermore, these communities have been projected to grow in population through the year 2015. Thus, a significant current and projected population depends upon clean, non-polluted water supplies from the Village wellfield.

Water supply for the Village wellfield originates in the groundwaters below Wappinger Lake. In 1993 the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority identified Wappinger Lake as being located in a Zone 1 Aquifer Protection Area. Zone 1 areas contain "*Permeable deposits directly overlying the aquifer. Contaminants can move directly downward to the underlying aquifer with little or no natural filtration by the soil because the water is moving too quickly.*" Portions of the Lake are also located within Authority

identified Primary and Secondary Wellhead Protection Management Areas. A Primary Wellhead Protection Management Area (PMA) is that part of the aquifer which contributes water to the wellfield. Secondary Wellhead Protection Management Areas (SMA) are those areas which, on the basis of topography, drain into the PMA.

➔ Important Planning Concern: *Stormwater runoff that enters Wappinger Creek or Wappinger Lake directly, has the potential to affect water quality of the Lake, the aquifer that intersects the Lake, and potentially the Village's water supply.* Wappinger Lake is located in the lower Wappinger Creek watershed and the Wappinger Creek flows through it. The Wappinger Creek and its tributaries drain approximately 210 square miles, or roughly one-quarter of Dutchess County. According to the "Dutchess County Natural Resources Inventory", the lower Wappinger Creek basin "receives runoff from the County's most intensely developed areas."

4.1.2 Wappinger Lake

Wappinger Lake is one of the Village's most significant natural resources. In a Public Opinion Survey of Village residents conducted in 1998 for this *Comprehensive Plan*, over 84 percent of the residents responding indicated that Wappinger Lake was an important natural resource to maintain and enhance. The Lake has been designated in the *Dutchess County Natural Resource Inventory* as one of the County's 34 Significant Natural Areas. According to the *Inventory*, Wappinger Lake is important because it is a well used, publicly owned open space area which is remarkable for its aesthetic and scenic qualities. As the only surface water body within the Village of Wappingers Falls, Wappinger Lake is an important open space and recreational resource.

Approximately one-half of Wappinger Lake lies within the municipal boundaries of the Village of Wappingers Falls and the remainder of the Lake is split between the Towns of Poughkeepsie and Wappinger. However, the Village of Wappingers Falls owns the entire lake bed, an area encompassing 121.5 acres. The Village purchased the Lake in the early 1960s with State funding assistance for the purpose of recreational use.

The Village also owns and maintains two parks on the Lake's banks for use by the public: Veteran's Memorial Park on Mesier Avenue, which contains ball fields; and a pedestrian park and lake access site on Liss Road known as Fisherman's Park. Wappinger Lake contains Largemouth bass, Pickerel, Carp, and panfish, and is used by anglers, although use has significantly dropped as a result of weed overgrowth. Boat rentals are still available on the Lake for anglers and pleasure boating, and access is also available from two of the Village's parks and U.S. Route 9. However, the unappealing aesthetics of weed growth has limited use of the Lake.

Wappinger Lake is also located within an area designated, by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the New York State Education

Department, as sensitive for archaeological sites on the New York State Site Inventory. Portions of the Lake at the dam about the Village's National Register of Historic Places Multiple Resource District.

➔ **Important Planning Concern:** *Stormwater runoff from upstream areas in the watershed has limited recreational opportunities on Wappinger Lake.* Despite public ownership of this significant natural resource, public use of the Lake for recreational purposes has been limited by sedimentation, nutrient loading and pollution. Sedimentation resulting from erosion and stormwater runoff from intensive development upstream and from development occurring too close to the Lake's banks locally has made the Lake very shallow. Pavement on Route 9 and the massive parking lots in the malls along that roadway have compounded such problems. This problem is also affected by the dam at the southern tip of Wappinger Lake. The use of fertilizers on lawns, septic failures in upstream development and other causes have produced nutrient loading which has resulted in excessive algae and aquatic growth in the Lake. This problem is now compounded by the Lake's severe shallow condition, which allows more sunlight to penetrate the water and accelerates growth. These conditions have also encouraged the growth of waterchestnuts, an invasive exotic import that chokes out native species. Finally, pollution has resulted in a decline in fish stocks in the Lake.

4.1.3 Wappinger Creek and Wappinger Falls

Wappinger Creek is Dutchess County's major Hudson River tributary. A large, perennial, and for the most part warmwater stream, the Creek drains approximately one-quarter of the County, and is an important recreational resource for fishing and canoeing as well. The upper reach of Wappinger Creek is on the Nationwide Rivers Inventory, and is a potential wild and scenic river under both the State and Federal programs. The lower two miles of Wappinger Creek are a designated Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat. The coastal designation extends up the Creek from the Hudson River to the bridge at Main Street in the Village, and includes the steep wooded uplands on both sides of the Creek. The designation is intended to protect coastal fish and wildlife habitats of significant value to coastal communities.

The tidal portion of the Creek, which extends into the Village, is part of the Hudson River estuary and is an important habitat for plant and animal species. Osprey, a rare species, feed in the Creek during spring migrations, and the Creek is also a productive feeding area for herons, waterfowl, and turtles. Bald eagles have been sighted nesting near the Reese Audubon Sanctuary on the north side of the lower Creek. Known rare plant life includes Grassleaf arrowhead, Subulate arrowhead, Kidney leaf mud plantain and Maryland bur-marigold. The Creek is also an important spawning area for anadromous fish including Alewife, American shad, Blueback herring, Tomcod, and Striped bass as well as warmwater fish such as Black bass (both Smallmouth and Largemouth) and White perch.

➔ Important Planning Concern: *Competition among potentially incompatible uses contrasts with the recognized need to protect the Wappinger Creek corridor so that it continues to serve its natural function in flood control and ecological productivity, and its cultural function for active and passive recreation.* Over the years, extensive disturbance has reduced the quality of the Wappinger Creek corridor's habitat. Limited protection is afforded this habitat through the consistency review process of the federal Coastal Zone Management Act and the State Waterfront Revitalization and Coastal Resources Act. The latter allows communities in a coastal zone to develop their own Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP). Although Wappingers Falls does not have an LWRP, the area is still subject to the State's coastal zone management review.

Wappinger Creek bisects the Village and makes a dramatic plunge over a series of Falls, totaling 75 feet in height, in the Village's Central Business District. While no longer the center of industry, the Creek and the Falls make a significant contribution to the village setting and have the potential for economic renewal as a key tourism attraction. Two parks, Galucci Park and Falls View Park, have been proposed to allow pedestrians a closer view of the Falls and the unique iron penstock, nine feet in diameter, that runs through the gorge and transports water from the impounded Wappinger Lake to the Market Street Industrial Park at the Falls' base. Capitalizing on the Falls' recreational and tourism opportunities will support and further encourage commercial development in the Village's Central Business District.

Much of the land along Wappinger Creek is subject to flooding. This is particularly true in the lower Wappinger basin, where greater urbanization, with expanses of land sealed by pavement or buildings, has aggravated flood hazards. The increased volume and speed of stormwater runoff in these areas overloads storm drainage capacity of lowlands along the Creek. Persistent growth has also placed significant pressures on the Creek. Runoff and erosion have contributed to widespread pollution and contamination of sediments, which have resulted in a decline in fish stocks.

4.1.4 Historic Districts

The Village of Wappingers Falls contains a nationally significant historic district. In 1990, a 90 acre section of the 768 acre Village was listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places as the Wappingers Falls Historic District. The District contains 130 historic structures which reflect the growth of a significant industrial community over more than two centuries of development. The Village retains significant examples of industrial and commercial buildings, working-class houses, stylish residences, and public structures and parks directly linked to the Village's industrial economy. These structures are preserved to a degree rarely encountered in the region. In addition to the Wappingers Fall Historic District, three properties have also been individually listed on the National Register. Two of these properties, the Mulhern House and the Dutchess

Company Superintendent Residence, are related directly to the industrial history of the Village. The third structure, the Bain Commercial Building, is a distinctive example of a Second Empire style freestanding commercial building.

Wappingers Falls is significant as one of the most extensive historic factory villages surviving in New York State. The hydropower generated by the Falls, which lent the Village its name, gave the Village its industrial start in the early 1700s and attracted heavy industrial development at the beginning of the nineteenth-century. The Village's well-drained soils accommodated densely concentrated development, and the early factory owners erected hundreds of frame housing units. The majority of these units survive as one of the largest concentrations of workers' housing in the region. While the Falls determined the placement of industrial structures at their base, the Village's graduated topography also provided for echelons of status within the community. The commercial district and worker's housing were sandwiched between the factory at the base of the Falls and the ornate, stylish residences of mill owners and businessmen situated on the higher ground. This settlement pattern reflects the economic and social stratification typical of a nineteenth-century industrial village.

The variety of historic buildings in the Wappingers Falls Historic District span from the 1740's to the 1930's, but the predominate building types date from the last half of the nineteenth-century when industrial activity was at its peak. Notable structures include the picturesque 18th century Brewer-Mesier House, the distinctive shingle-style Grinnell Library, the 19th century industrial complex known as the Bleachery (Market Street Industrial Park), the Art Deco movie theater owned by County Players, and the Depression era Colonial Revival Wappingers Falls Post Office, currently the Village Hall. Also remarkable, because of its historic importance, are two blocks of tall, attached commercial buildings located along East Main Street and built in the post Civil-War period in an Italianate style typical of small-scale mercantile architecture in the region. These three-story brick structures are gradually stepped to the declining topography and survive essentially intact. On the west side of the Creek, West Main Street turns abruptly north. An intact, attached facade of historic buildings, including the theater, the old Farmers and Mechanics Hotel of the 1860's, and the Bain Commercial Building, face the roadway. The canyon-like quality of the streetscape in its descent into the gorge, and the abrupt turn of the street at the bridge crossing evokes the appearance of a classic industrial village of the period.

➔ Important Planning Concern: *In the Public Opinion Survey conducted in 1998, 83 percent of the residents responding said the Village should protect its historic buildings, and 86 percent rated maintaining and enhancing historic buildings as either important or very important.* Over the years relatively few alterations have been made to the physical plan and appearance of the Village. Because the population of Wappingers Falls has remained relatively stable, the community has not been affected by the wholesale demolition which has occurred with the urban renewal of other Hudson River Valley cities. Many incompatible alterations to historic buildings have taken place though. Fortunately,

modern highway construction bypassed the Village to the east, thereby contributing to the preservation of an historic village setting. Village residents continue today to appreciate their cultural history.

4.1.5 Community Character

➔ Important Planning Concern: *In the Public Opinion Survey conducted in 1998, 70 percent of residents responding said they were not in favor of encouraging new commercial development in the Route 9 corridor. Sixty-nine percent said they were in favor of more stringent regulation of commercial signs and lighting to provide a more aesthetically pleasing business environment. Seventy-three percent felt that, as the Village continues to grow, maintaining and enhancing trees was important or very important, and 85 percent felt that maintaining and enhancing streets was important or very important. Clearly the visual environment of new development in the Village is important to Wappingers Falls residents.*

A community's character is determined not just by its historic buildings, but by modern development as well. As Wappingers Falls continues to grow, it must ensure that new development is in keeping with the character it wishes to present. Garish signs, obtrusive lighting, vast expanses of asphalt, standard franchise design, and a proliferation of telecommunications towers can quickly turn a charming village into "Anywhere USA." *Greenway Connections*, a publication of the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development in conjunction with the Hudson River Valley Greenway, has been developed as a guide to integrate new development with the natural and cultural environment. As discussed in detail in the next section, the Village should use this important guide to preserve and enhance its community character.

4.1.6 Wappinger Greenway Trail

A greenway is essentially a linear park under public and private ownership. The greenway concept can be found in the 19th Century public park and parkway projects of Frederick Law Olmstead in cities such as Boston, Buffalo, and Chicago. Although the concept of establishing a "park" out of public and private lands originated in the English Lake District in the early 19th Century, New York State became a leader in the "greenline" concept of managing public and private lands to protect open space and other important resources when it established the Adirondack Park. A greenway is simply a type of a "greenline" park. Trails along a greenway can provide additional park space in largely developed communities, such as Wappingers Falls, by linking local public properties and other points of interest in the community.

➔ Important Planning Concern: *Greenways preserve rivers, trails and other important open space corridors for their environmental and recreational values and are widely recognized for their economic benefits as well. Many studies demonstrate that greenways and trails increase nearby property values, which in turn can increase local tax revenues and help*

offset greenway acquisition and development costs. Spending by local residents on greenway related activities helps support recreation-oriented businesses, as well as other businesses which are patronized by greenway and trail users. In addition, greenways are often major tourist attractions which generate expenditures on lodging, food and recreation-oriented services. Greenways help improve the overall appeal of a community to existing and prospective new residents.

In the 1980's, the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors stated that:

Across the country, when people were asked where they would prefer to live, work, shop, and recreate, they invariably select communities or neighborhoods that have an abundance of trees, open spaces, and uncluttered pedestrian ways. These preferences translate into clear economic terms: if a community is to succeed in attracting new residents and businesses, it must be concerned about its appearance, physical character, livability, and 'feel'.

Three participating Hudson River Valley Greenway communities, the Village of Wappingers Falls, and the Towns of Wappinger and Poughkeepsie, have been working cooperatively to implement a Wappinger Greenway Trail. These municipalities have been coordinating the project through the Wappinger Greenway Trail Committee, with the support of member highway and recreation commissions as well as partnerships with local businesses and business associations, nonprofit and civic organizations.

The mission of this unique public/private partnership is to develop a key segment of the Hudson River Greenway Trail System linking the resources of the Village of Wappingers Falls with those of the adjacent communities, with a focus on the Wappinger Creek and the Hudson River. A key element of the trail vision is to develop sites in the Village center for users of the trail, both tourists and community residents, to enjoy views of the Wappinger Creek and its magnificent natural falls.

The Wappinger Greenway Trail Committee has planned a ten mile figure "8" loop of on- and off-road trails encircling the lower Wappinger Creek and Wappinger Lake. This unique trail will link historic, cultural, natural and economic resources of local and regional significance. It will connect village, town and county parks, the Central Business District of the Village of Wappingers Falls, the Wappinger Historic District, the Grinnell Public Library, County Players Community Theater, the Wappinger Creek and Wappinger Falls, and the 19th century industrial facility, formerly known as the Bleachery, which has undergone adaptive reuse as the Market Street Industrial Park. The trail will also connect two proposed new Village parks, Galucci Park and Falls View Park, designed to allow pedestrians a close view of the Village's unique gorge and Falls. The proposed trail passes within one block of the Metro North train station in New Hamburg, allowing tourists who arrive by train to hike or bicycle from the station to the Village. The on-road parts of the trail include Routes 9 and 9D and Village sidewalks. A

map of the Wappinger Greenway Trail can be found in the back pocket of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

The Wappinger Greenway Trail Committee has inventoried existing conditions along the proposed route and has drawn up an Action Plan to complete the 40 segment trail. The Action Plan is included in the *Background Studies Supplement* to the *Comprehensive Plan*.

4.1.7 Topography and Soils

➔ Important Planning Concern: *The proximity of certain soils to the Wappinger Creek and Falls make them prone to erosion, which is a contributing factor to the sedimentation of these water resources.* The bulk of Wappingers Falls is now either urban land, covered by buildings, streets, parking lots and other impervious surfaces which obscure soil identification, or made land, which has been altered by cutting and filling. Urban land complexes of the Dutchess-Cardigan soil type prevail east of Wappingers Creek, with slopes of 1 to 6 percent in the southern three-quarters of the Village, and slopes of 5 to 16 percent in a band of land that follows the outline of the eastern side of Wappinger Lake. The area west of Wappinger Lake is primarily Knickerbocker Urban land complex, which is nearly level with 0 to 2 percent slopes. Hoosic soils, with slopes ranging from an undulating 2 to 6 percent, to a hilly 15 to 30 percent, to an extremely steep 25 to 45 percent, predominate in the area immediately adjacent to the Creek and on the western side of Wappinger Lake. Hoosic soils are very deep, somewhat excessively drained sandy over gravelly soils with rapid permeability.

4.1.8 Contaminated Sites

The Village of Wappingers Falls has only one identified contaminated site. Three Star Anodizing is a metal plating operation located in the Market Street Industrial Park on Market Street. In 1991, the DEC listed the property as one of the State's inactive hazardous waste disposal sites. The site has a priority classification code of 2, which means it is a "*significant threat to the public health or environment and action is required.*"

The site operated as a coal gasification facility during the late 1800's and early 1900's. Approximately 16 acres at the site and in the immediate vicinity have been filled with coal cinders. From 1832 to 1954, the site operated as a print works. The practice of discharging wastewater into Wappinger Creek began with Cambric Print Works, which built a raceway for the discharge. Three Star Anodizing began operation in 1958 and added a lagoon to the raceway in 1962. Their wastewater/rinsewater from plating operations were discharged to the raceway/lagoon until 1981, when it was found that this discharge contained copper and nickel. Since then all wastewater is discharged into the Village sewer system under a State Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES)

permit. The raceway/lagoon is still used today by the Village for stormwater drainage discharges.

A Phase I investigation of the site was completed in 1986. Sampling conducted during an EPA site investigation in November 1986 showed that on-site groundwater was contaminated with high levels of metals and lower levels of chlorinated solvents which exceeded NYS groundwater standards. These contaminants may discharge into Wappingers Creek during periods of high flow, and from there into the Hudson River. The Creek flows through the site and into the Hudson one and one-half (1½) miles downstream.

➔ Important Planning Concern: *Some private wells may still be used in the area of Three Star Anodizing, and private residences are located within 300 feet of the site. Wappingers Creek is heavily used for fishing, and fish could potentially be contaminated by exposure to contaminated surface water and sediments. Moreover, there are no controls to limit access to the site, and children have been observed skating on the lagoon. However, no public water supplies are likely to be affected by the site, and most residences are served by public water.*

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.2.1 Village Water Supply and Aquifer

✓ Recommendation:

- ➔ Ensure that groundwater in the Village meets Safe Drinking Water Act quality standards and that an adequate amount of water will be available to provide for current and future needs.

The Wappinger Creek watershed is the largest watershed in Dutchess County. New land uses and expansions of existing land uses within the watershed, particularly those land use activities that affect stormwater runoff into the Creek and Lake, have the potential to cause contamination of the groundwaters beneath the Lake which the Village depends upon for its water supply. Therefore, it is important for such land use activities to be reviewed under SEQRA for their potential effects on the Wappinger Lake and its aquifer. In 1998, the Village designated Wappinger Lake and the adjoining municipal parks and lands a Critical Environmental Area (CEA). Boundaries for the CEA are shown on Figure 16 in shading and heavy outline. This designation creates an additional layer of concerns to be addressed during the environmental review of all State or local agency actions that would affect the Lake or its water.

Community Actions

- Encourage intermunicipal cooperation to improve water quality in Wappinger Lake.
- Designate the Wappinger Creek a Critical Environmental Area and create an overlay district to protect this significant ecological area.
- Encourage restoration of historic properties in the Wappingers Falls Historic District.
- Create Landmark or Conservation Districts to preserve historic structures outside the National Register Historic District.
- Expand Planning Board responsibilities to include architectural reviews of historic structures.
- Use the Greenway Compact design recommendations to improve the overall appearance of the Route 9 corridor.
- Participate with the State DOT in the design of widening Route 9.
- Examine Zoning regulations pertaining to design issues, and strengthen where necessary to conform with the Greenway Compact guides.
- Facilitate the work of the Village Economic Development Committee to revitalize the Central Business District.
- Consider zoning modifications to strengthen control over Adult Uses and Tattoo and Body Piercing Parlors.
- Regulate telecommunications towers for their visual and aesthetic effect.
- Create an inventory and management plan for significant trees in the Village.
- Seek funds to continue development of the Wappinger Greenway Trail, trail maintenance and related park development, including Falls View Park and Galucci Park.
- Ensure groundwater in the Village meets Safe Drinking Water Act quality standards and that an adequate amount of water will be available to provide for future needs.
- Encourage the DEC to cleanup contaminated sites.

✓ Recommendation:

- ➔ The Village should continue to participate in the recently formed Watershed Intermunicipal Council.

Since Wappinger Lake is affected by runoff from Route 9 and its associated commercial areas as well as upstream development, intermunicipal cooperation will be required to improve the quality of the Lake's water. Prior to the formation of the Watershed Intermunicipal Council (WIC), an informal watershed association had been created by the Dutchess County Environmental Management Council. However, as the recent \$50,000 grant to the WIC from the State's Environmental Protection Fund indicates, a formal organization of municipalities in the Wappingers watershed will have greater success in securing the funding necessary to restore the Lake's water quality and ecology. Improving the Lake's water quality is necessary to ensure the future provision of a safe and adequate water supply to Village residents.

In addition to securing funding for specific cleanup projects for Wappinger Lake, the WIC should define intermunicipal watershed protection measures and coordinate the regulation of lands sharing the watershed. The New York State legislature has made it abundantly clear that villages, towns, cities, and counties have extensive authority and great flexibility to cooperate in the adoption and enforcement of their land use plans and regulations. New York State General Municipal Law Article 5-J (GML § 119-u) allows cities, towns, villages and counties to enter into intermunicipal agreements for the joint performance of their respective functions and to encourage intermunicipal cooperation in land use planning and regulation.

4.2.2 Wappinger Lake

Improving water quality is necessary to ensure future use of Wappinger Lake as a recreational resource. The provision of a high level of recreational opportunities is very important to the health and well-being of the community. Since most of the Village is already developed, provision of future recreational space is restricted. Full advantage should be taken of the unusual recreational opportunity presented by the Wappinger Lake in the midst of the Village.

✓ Recommendation:

- ➔ The Village should continue cooperative efforts with neighboring municipalities to restore the water quality of Wappinger Lake.

The Village currently operates an aquatic plant harvester to control algae and water chestnut growth on the Lake. However, given the pace of development that is occurring upstream, this remediation measure is inadequate to improve, let alone maintain, the Lake's water quality. To realize the recreation potential of Wappinger Lake, the Village should continue to seek intermunicipal cooperation and funding to dredge the Lake.

4.2.3 Wappinger Creek and Wappinger Falls

✓ Recommendation:

- ➔ To protect Wappinger Creek, the Village should adopt a stream corridor overlay district with additional, more stringent review standards for development that occurs along the corridor, such as increased setbacks and design requirements that would preclude inappropriate uses fronting directly on the Creek.

Wappinger Creek will continue to be pressured to serve complex and often competing uses. The overlay district should include measures that address advanced stormwater and non-point source pollution control, monitor and control runoff from nearby highways, maintain bank vegetation, protect habitats, and protect significant views. Most importantly, the overlay district should require a building and construction setback to buffer the stream environment from ground disturbance. Shoreline erosion is a major factor in contaminating the Creek with sediment. A reasonable buffer width should be set after an evaluation of the natural and cultural features of the portion of the Creek that runs through the Village. A similar buffer should be adopted for Wappinger Lake. Design requirements should be devised that would allow and encourage desirable uses to front on the Creek and take advantage of their proximity to it.

✓ Recommendation:

- ➔ Participate in the development of an intermunicipal corridor management plan, with highest priority given to stormwater management, setbacks for buildings and construction, and habitat and viewshed protection.
- ➔ Create and implement an intermunicipal agreement to designate the entire Wappinger Creek a Critical Environmental Area, beginning with the lower Wappinger Creek.
- ➔ Designate the lower Wappinger Creek an Estuary Conservation Area.

Local protection of the Wappinger Creek will be ineffective without regional watershed based cooperation. Rivers ignore political and jurisdictional boundaries. They reflect activity not just within one municipality or the immediate shoreline but throughout the entire watershed. Protecting Wappinger Creek will require a coordinated effort within multiple municipalities. Recommended management strategies to protect water resources include but are not limited to stormwater management, setbacks, and special areas protection. The management plan should also identify resources in need of protection, define compatible uses, establish intermunicipal boards or committees to review projects with regional impact, create incentives for land trusts to become involved in land use protection efforts, identify key land acquisitions by public agencies, manage growth, and encourage recreational development along the Creek. Appropriate river management boundaries for activities that have the potential to degrade the Creek, such as clearcutting, water impoundments and land subdivision, should also be defined. Development of a corridor management plan should be undertaken by the recently

formed intermunicipal Watershed Intermunicipal Council, which might also consider designating the Wappinger Creek a Critical Environmental Area, and the lower Wappinger Creek an Estuary Conservation Area. The Village should also consider preparation of a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Plan under the State's Coastal Resource program. Zoning changes and/or performance standards in the vicinity of the lower Creek may be required.

4.2.4 Historic Districts

Historic structures greatly contribute to the visual appearance and quality of life in Wappingers Falls. The *Comprehensive Plan* recommends that additional areas of the Village be studied to determine if they are eligible for inclusion in the Wappingers Falls Historic District or would be appropriate in a local historic district designation. The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) inventory of historic properties in the Village should be verified and supplemented, if necessary. The OPRHP has completed a database on all identified cultural resources in the Village. A listing of the identified resources can be found in the *Background Studies Supplement*. Housing resources, which are the predominant use of such historic structures, is discussed in Chapter 3.

✓ Recommendations:

- ➔ Create an Historic Overlay District, with supplemental review standards for historic structures to cover the Wappingers Falls Historic District.
- ➔ Create a Landmark or Conservation District to encompass areas of the Village which are locally significant and which support the Historic District but which do not contain all the resources to be considered eligible for inclusion on the National listing.
- ➔ Expand Planning Board responsibilities to include historic architectural reviews.

These steps would give the Planning Board the preservation tools necessary to oversee alterations to historic buildings. In the 1998 Public Opinion Survey, the majority of residents responding said that the Village should have control over the alteration or demolition of historic buildings. Restoration of historic structures within the Village, both listed and otherwise, should also be encouraged.

4.2.5 Community Character

✓ Recommendation:

- ➔ Use the Greenway Compact design recommendations to improve the overall appearance of the Route 9 corridor.

Route 9 is the most heavily traveled corridor in the Village and special attention should be given to how it looks and develops. The Greenway Compact guides in *Greenway Connections* for commercial strip redevelopment, highways into greenways, landscaping, lighting, and street trees should be used by the Planning Board when reviewing new business development along this corridor. The Greenway Compact guides should also be used by the Village and the State Department of Transportation during the design of the project to widen Route 9 from Liss Road to Myers Corners Road.

Specific steps to “zip up the strip” and improve the appearance of the Route 9 corridor, as recommended by *Greenway Connections*, include:

- ➔ Consolidate entrances along the road to a few main driveways with internal service roads based on a block system to connect nearby uses and parking lots. Multiple driveways for each use lead to traffic back-ups, more accidents, and the eventual need for expensive road widenings.
- ➔ Unify the streetscape with continuous street trees, high quality landscaping, and, where possible, generously planted medians to prevent unlimited left hand turns.
- ➔ Build sidewalks and crosswalks throughout the area to encourage connections to shared parking, public transportation, walking between stores and to nearby housing.
- ➔ Fill in the fronts of large parking lots with small, closely spaced storefronts to build a street frontage with courtyard parking behind.
- ➔ With buildings up front, attractive architecture, wall signs and sidewalks can be featured along the frontage, not parking lots and pole signs.
- ➔ Encourage a mix of housing and other uses adjacent to shopping to begin to build a walkable neighborhood rather than a strictly highway commercial district.

In addition, the Village should require, where possible:

- ➔ Placement of parking at the rear of buildings.
- ➔ Improved design and control of signage and lighting.
- ➔ Underground burial of all utility lines provided safety is ensured where Village water and sewer lines are involved.
- ➔ Coordination of site layout and design in designated commercial zones.

✓ Recommendation:

- ➔ Participate with the State DOT in the design of widening Route 9 from Liss Road to Meyers Corners Road.

The DOT plans to widen Route 9 from Liss Road to Meyers Corners Road. The Village should participate with the DOT in the design of this road widening to ensure it is in keeping with the recommendations made above for improving the overall appearance of the Route 9 corridor. The Greenway Compact guidelines for converting “Highways into Greenways” should be used in the design of this road widening.

✓ Recommendations:

- ➔ Examine the Zoning regulations pertaining to landscaping, lighting, street trees, and signage, and strengthen where necessary to conform with the Greenway Compact guides to improve the visual character throughout the Village and reflect the quality of life desired by its residents.
- ➔ Use recognized lighting standards during Planning Board reviews.

Good design in these areas can have a tremendous positive effect on community character. Open space standards for landscaping should be established. Existing natural features, such as mature trees and stone walls, should be included in landscaping plans. Generous use of low maintenance native plants should be used to reinforce the character of the region. Lighting should be adequate but never excessive, and should be shielded to prevent glare off-site and into the night sky. Human-scale lighting (10-15 feet high) is almost always preferable. Use of standards, such as those published by the Illumination Engineering Society of North America, the International Dark Sky Association, or New England Light Pollution Advisory Group’s should be implemented as soon as possible by the Planning Board. Street trees should be spaced close together, 20-30 feet in areas with slow speed limits, and farther apart (30-40 feet) on roads with higher speeds. Signs should be uncluttered, easily legible, lighted externally, if at all, and attractively designed. Building and monument signs are preferred over pole signs for Route 9.

✓ Recommendations:

- ➔ Ensure that infill development in residential areas conforms to existing setbacks to maintain the streetscape.
- ➔ Amend the Zoning to regulate telecommunications towers for their visual and aesthetic effects.
- ➔ Inventory significant trees in the Village and create a replacement, supplementation, and management program for them.

These recommendations will improve the overall visual character throughout the Village. New development that fills in vacant lots along existing developed streets should conform to existing setbacks to maintain the streetscape design. A uniform streetscape will maintain the historic character of the Village’s streets and encourage walking. Telecommunications towers should be regulated to ensure their presence does not mar

the historic character of the Village; ideally, new communications antennae should be placed on already existing tall structures, such as water towers. New exclusive use telecommunications towers should be avoided.

The Village is blessed with numerous mature trees, particularly in Mesier Park. However, many of these trees need ongoing management to ensure their survival, while others are reaching the end of their natural life and will need replacement. Some areas of the Village would be substantially improved by additional street trees. A tree inventory, tree supplement, and management program will ensure the Village maintains and enhances its “urban forest.”

✓ Recommendations:

- ➔ Facilitate the work of the Village Economic Development Committee to revitalize the Central Business District and create a marketing strategy to promote economic development and tourism in the Village.
- ➔ Secure grants to prepare and implement a streetscape plan to make the downtown more inviting and livable.

The Village Economic Development Committee is working to enhance the Central Business District through improved streetscape design, marketing the Village to attract new businesses, and encouraging tourism in the Village center. Many of these strategies will be supported by other recommendations in this *Comprehensive Plan*, such as improving pedestrian conditions in the Village, installing traffic calming techniques at key intersections, and developing the Wappinger Greenway Trail. The Village should work closely with the Economic Development Committee to achieve these goals. Private-public partnerships often have greater success in securing funding to make improvements. The Village should also explore the feasibility of instituting a trolley service connecting the New Hamburg train station to various points along the Wappingers Trail to encourage tourism in the Village during the summer months.

✓ Recommendation:

- ➔ Consider zoning modifications to strengthen control over Adult Uses and Tattoo and Body Piercing Parlors.

Adult uses include adult bookstores, adult video and/or novelty stores, topless/bottomless bars, adult hotels and motels, adult movie theaters, escort agencies, massage parlors, peep shows, and the like. The concerns with adult uses are the secondary effects that these businesses could have on the residents of Wappingers Falls and the character of the Village. Numerous studies, conducted by a wide variety of municipal planning departments across the nation, have found a direct relationship between the presence of adult uses in a neighborhood and secondary adverse effects, such as increased crime rates and depreciated property values. Local governments have used land use controls, based on the planning studies, to regulate the locations of adult uses in order to minimize

secondary adverse effects, and the courts have consistently sanctioned the use of land use regulations that are directed at those secondary impacts.

Adult uses are appearing with increasing frequency in Hudson Valley communities. There is currently one adult use business in Wappingers Falls. The Village should consider the land use issues associated with adult uses before it is faced with more proposals. While the First Amendment prohibits banning adult uses outright, the Village can set specific minimum distances between locations of adult uses (to prevent the concentration of adult uses in any one neighborhood) and between land uses that are particularly sensitive to their secondary impacts, such as residential developments and places where children congregate like schools, parks, churches, and playgrounds. The US Supreme Court has affirmed the authority of local government to restrict the locations of adult uses based upon their known secondary adverse impacts. The *Comprehensive Plan* recommends that the current zoning be amended to regulate adult uses to minimize their secondary adverse effects.

Tattoo and body piercing parlors can also have objectionable impacts on a community. This use has been found to contribute to the blighting of surrounding residential and commercial areas, which can undermine a community's economic, physical and social welfare. Moreover, tattooing and body piercing can have serious health risks. The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) favors strict regulation of tattoo artists to prevent non-sterile tattooing practices that have led to the transmission of syphilis, hepatitis B and other infectious organisms. There is also the potential for transmission of blood-borne pathogens, such as HIV and hepatitis C, with both tattooing and body piercing. Allergic reactions to tattoo pigments are also common.

Municipalities such as New York City have found that regulatory measures have proved ineffective in eliminating these health risks because of the inability to supervise tattooing establishments at all times. Many municipalities lack the resources and personnel to supervise tattooing and body piercing establishments on an ongoing basis. For these reasons, states such as Massachusetts, Oklahoma and South Carolina have banned tattooing outright. Individual municipalities, such as Ocean City, Maryland and, more locally, Beacon NY, have also prohibited tattoo and body piercing parlors as the only feasible means of protecting the public against disease from this source. Wappingers Falls should consider legislation to ban tattoo and body piercing parlors. The legislation should contain a provision for the discontinuation of existing parlors based upon the amount of capital investment involved in the conversion of the premises into a tattoo and/or body piercing parlor.

4.2.6 Wappinger Greenway Trail

✓ Recommendations:

- ➔ Continue municipal support for the Wappinger Greenway Trail Committee.

- ➔ Work with DOT to create a pedestrian walkway along the west side of Route 9 crossing Wappinger Lake to complete the Greenway Trail loop around the Lake.
- ➔ Adopt an Official Village Map, in accordance with § 7-724 of New York State Village Law, showing the location of the Wappinger Greenway Trail.

The Wappinger Greenway Committee has made significant progress in defining a plan for the Wappinger Greenway Trail and in developing portions of it. The trail will achieve many of the goals of the *Comprehensive Plan*. It will increase local recreational opportunities, provide public access to the Lake and the Creek, spur economic development and tourism, protect natural and cultural resources, and provide opportunities for interpretation of the historic uses of the Falls' power and the ecological significance of Wappinger Creek. Establishment of the trail will also create opportunities for local residents (especially those older and younger residents who do not have access to cars) to walk to significant community destinations along a scenically inspiring path. Perhaps most significantly, the greenway trail provides an opportunity for the kind of intermunicipal cooperation that will be needed to protect Wappinger Lake and Wappinger Creek.

✓ Recommendation s:

- ➔ The Village should support the Committee's ongoing efforts to seek funding for further development of the trail and related park development, particularly Galucci Park and Falls View Park in the gorge.
- ➔ Secure easements to connect the Market Street Industrial Park with the Scenic Hudson property.

Funding from the Hudson River Valley Greenway's small grant program, and from grant sources such as Furthermore, the Hudson River Estuary Management Program, and others, could be used to assist in marking the trail and creating a booklet promoting it. An intermunicipal application to the Greenway would be particularly effective in securing funding. A small portion of the Village budget could be allocated to add shoulders and complete sidewalks where necessary. Design work for the portion of the trail that runs over steep slopes from the Market Street Industrial Park to property owned by Scenic Hudson is currently underway. An annual intermunicipal-sponsored Trail Day might encourage volunteerism necessary to maintain the trail.

4.2.7 Topography and Soils

✓ Recommendation:

- ➔ Draft a stream corridor overlay district which requires additional setbacks for buildings and construction, to buffer water resources from ground disturbance along their banks, as recommended previously in Section 4.2.3.

Shoreline erosion is a factor in contaminating the Wappinger Creek and Wappinger Lake with sediment. An appropriate buffer width can be determined by evaluating the natural features of the Creek and the Lake. Advanced stormwater control measures should also be adopted to reduce erosion in these areas.

4.2.8 Contaminated Sites

- ✓ Recommendation:
 - ➔ Encourage the DEC to ensure cleanup of the Three Star Anodizing site at the earliest possible time.
 - ➔ Request that the owner of Three Star Anodizing fence the site to prevent people, especially children, from entering it.

The status of Three Star Anodizing remains the same as when it was listed as one of the State's inactive hazardous waste disposal sites in 1991. According to Glen Angel of the DEC, the 1986 EPA investigation was inadequate to determine the full extent of the site's contamination and the required remediation measures, if necessary. The DEC has determined that the site needs further investigation, and has initially called for a soil gas survey and a proper engineering study. The site has been referred to the Division of Environmental Enforcement for negotiation of a consent order for a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study. The DEC has requested that the site owner fence the property to keep out trespassers. The Village should work with DEC to encourage fencing the site, particularly to prevent children from entering it.

5. TRANSPORTATION

Community Goal

Reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflicts caused by the Village asset of accessibility to Routes 9 and 9D.

Transportation is a key factor in determining a Village's quality of life. Roads should not only serve to easily transport people, but should make the experience enjoyable as well. An adequate street system that provides for the safe and expeditious movement of persons and goods is vital to the well-being of the community. Moreover, the street, if properly

designed, is the most important public space in the Village. A successful streetscape becomes the social center of a community, the place where people interact informally and profit from chance encounters with friends and colleagues.

Transportation refers to the movement of people, goods, services, and information. It is a term that covers various modes of getting around, including driving, walking, bicycling, public transportation, even telecommuting. However, the increased reliance on cars as the sole means of transportation, coupled with a growing population in surrounding areas, has created problems in Wappingers Falls, including:

- Congestion in the Central Business District.
- Unsafe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Parking problems.
- Excessive commercial truck traffic in the Village core.

Traffic congestion reduces the quality of life for local residents and creates unsafe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists. It can also have a negative impact on the local economy. Business areas with traffic congestion and inadequate parking are more likely to decline than areas where one may conveniently drive to one's destination and park nearby. The conventional answer to this problem has been to construct new facilities to meet existing demands. However, this type of program will only improve traffic conditions in the short run, and may further threaten the quality of life of the Village. While some upgrading can be done to ease traffic flow on the Village's network of streets, the *Comprehensive Plan* encourages alternative modes of transportation, such as walking and bicycling, and traffic calming techniques to reduce reliance on the automobile and alleviate traffic problems.

This chapter of the *Comprehensive Plan* describes the existing transportation networks in the Village and makes recommendations for their improvements. The chapter covers:

- Vehicle Transportation Systems
- Alternative Transportation Systems
- Road Standards and Improvements
- Traffic Calming
- Parking

5.1 EXISTING CONDITIONS

5.1.1 Vehicle Transportation Systems

Roads

The character of Wappingers Falls has been greatly affected by the regional transportation network. For the most part, major roads by-pass the Village. Regional multi-lane limited access highways are located in Dutchess County to the south (I-84) and east (Taconic State Parkway). Interstate 84 connects with Interstate 87, providing connections to Upstate New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, while the Taconic State Parkway provides primary access to employment centers in Albany and the New York Metropolitan area.

Two State Routes traverse the Village and provide access to this larger regional road network. Routes 9 and 9D are the most important roads in the Village, for they carry the heaviest traffic loads and provide access to other communities in the County and region. There is, however, a pronounced difference between the effects of these two major roads on the Village system. Whereas Route 9 tends to act as a barrier dividing the Village, Route 9D tends to unify and pull together the older Village area.

Route 9D winds through the Village as South Avenue and Main Street. As South Avenue, the road follows the ridge of the plateau, joining East Main Street to decline and cross the Creek at the mid-point of the Falls. From there the road turns and inclines as West Main Street to regain its original elevation. The Village's Central Business District and its significant civic structures are located along East and West Main Street. The number of civic structures in the business district distinguishes Main Street as a social common ground. The main focal point of the Village is the intersection of Route 9D at South Avenue and East Main Street. Another major transportation artery, Market Street, parallels the course of the Creek into the gorge through the Village's predominant industrial area.

➔ **Important Planning Concern:** *The location of Route 9D through the Village is a mixed blessing. On one hand, this road provides excellent regional access. On the other hand, it draws heavy pass-through traffic, including commercial truck traffic, that uses Route 9D as a shortcut between Route 9 and westbound Interstate 84. The pass-through traffic detracts from the Village shopping district and its potential economic benefits, and imperils pedestrian safety. The proposed expansion of the Junior High School on South Remsen Avenue will further burden Route 9D with additional bus traffic. A problem already exists with buses turning left onto Maple Street and holding up traffic on Route 9D.*

Route 9D's Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT's) count for 1997 indicates that there are at least 16,400 vehicles per day that pass through the Village. Moreover, traffic data indicates that traffic levels on Route 9D are rising rapidly. Table 10 shows the recent counts taken by the State Department of Transportation. A recent Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Galleria Mall expansion in the Town of Poughkeepsie indicated that Saturday Peak Hour traffic on Route 9D was 1,615 vehicles in 1997, with projections to the year 2000 (without the proposed Galleria expansion) at 1,693 vehicles for the same time period. If the Galleria Mall expansion is approved as proposed, year 2000 traffic is projected for the Saturday Peak Hour at 1,772 vehicles, which is close to the capacity of a two lane road.

In the last twenty years, Route 9, which traverses the east boundary of the Village, has been the site of the Village's most intensive development and has undergone significant changes. When the Village's 1968 *Development Plan* was adopted, Route 9 was just a two lane highway. Ten years ago it was expanded to four lanes in the Village, and future addition of a southbound lane from Liss Road to Meyers Corners Road is planned. Route 9 AADT's have been rising steadily, and for 1997 vary from 32,300 vehicles per day to 43,100 as shown below. Directional average daily traffic for Routes 9 and 9D can be found on Figure 17 at the end of this chapter.

Table 10: Traffic Count Data for State Roads				
LOCATION	1997 AADT	1996 AADT	1993 AADT	1991 AADT
Rt. 9D /East Main Street	16,400	16,200	15,300	13,900*
Rt. 9 @ 9D	37,000	36,400	33,300	30,900
Rt. 9 @ New Hackensack (CR 104)	43,100	42,500	38,700 ‡	36,800
Rt. 9 @ Meyers Corners Rd. (CR 93)	32,300	31,900	33,100 ‡	31,200

* 1992

‡ 1995

Public Transportation

The Dutchess County LOOP Bus System provides daily bus service to the Village with stops on Route 9D at Mesier Park and Route 9 at the Imperial Plaza. This service gives

Wappingers Falls residents access to all points in the County, as well as the Metro-North stations at New Hamburg, Beacon, and Poughkeepsie. While Wappingers Falls' population density is second only to Poughkeepsie, many Dutchess County LOOP buses run only two or three times a day. Public transit works best when population density is sufficient to support it. The County should consider more frequent fixed route transit services in the Village.

The LOOP system connects with Poughkeepsie Transit, Adirondack Trailways, Arrow Bus, and ShortLine bus services. Leprechaun Bus Lines also makes stops in Wappingers Falls. Inter-county bus service is provided on Leprechaun Lines to White Plains, on ShortLine to New York City, Albany and points west, and on Arrow between Poughkeepsie and New Paltz. These services provide direct access to towns and cities throughout the Hudson Valley and as far south as Long Island, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. They also serve major transportation centers that provide national access, such as the Port Authority Bus Terminal in New York City.

Two demand response services, Dial-A-Ride and the LOOP Paratransit Service, are also available to senior citizens and the disabled in Wappingers Falls. Both services provide direct transportation from an individual home to a destination. The LOOP Paratransit Service provides door-to-door lift equipped bus service for individuals whose disability prevents them from using the Fixed Route bus service. The usefulness of these services is limited by the requirements for advance bookings on an as-available basis, and limited daytime weekday hours of operation. The Dutchess County LOOP Fixed Route Service has wheelchair lift equipment available on two hours' notice. Deviated service up to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile is available for ADA eligible individuals.

Railroad Service

Passenger train service is provided by Metro-North Railroad, which makes up to 44 stops daily at the New Hamburg station just a short drive from Wappingers Falls. The Beacon station is just ten minutes further south. Parking was recently improved at both stations, and provision of additional parking spaces at the Beacon station is planned. The proximity of these stations to Wappingers Falls makes commuting to work by rail to Poughkeepsie, Westchester County, and New York City feasible.

According to the Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council's (PDCTC) *Transportation Plan Update* (1998), between 1970 and 1990 the number of residents commuting to work from Dutchess County to surrounding counties and New York City rose from seven percent to about 25 percent. Moreover, increasing numbers of commuters in the County are traveling longer distances to employment centers. These facts are borne out by the weekly ridership numbers from the New Hamburg train station. According to the *Transportation Plan Update*, between 1982 and 1996, weekly ridership from the New Hamburg station quadrupled, from 193 passengers to 799, twice

the increase of any other Metro-North station on the Hudson Line. The growing number of Wappingers Falls out-of-county commuters have contributed to this ridership growth on Metro-North.

Airports

Wappingers Falls is ideally located near two airports. Dutchess County Airport is immediately adjacent to the Village in the Town of Wappinger. This is the largest airport in the county and is owned and operated by county government. While Dutchess County Airport primarily serves private aircraft, it also has limited commercial activity. US Airways has a passenger hub connecting to Binghamton, Buffalo, Plattsburg, White Plains, and Burlington Vt. However, the number of passengers served by the airport has fallen dramatically with the opening and expansion of Stewart Airport.

Stewart International Airport is located across the Hudson River in Newburgh. The airport is easily accessible to Wappingers Falls from Interstate 84 via Route 9. However, there is no regular transit service to Stewart from Wappingers Falls at the present time. Stewart has become a regional airport offering connections to major hubs including Atlanta, Chicago, and Philadelphia. The airport is served by several carriers including AirTran Airways, American Airlines, Carnival Airlines, Delta Express, Midway Airlines, United Express, and USAir Express. The passenger terminal area has recently undergone an expansion and improvement project that expanded the airport's capabilities and provided jetways. Passenger counts have been relatively steady in the past seven years.

5.1.2 Alternative Transportation Systems

Pedestrian Circulation

The Village of Wappingers Falls is the second most densely populated community in Dutchess County. This population density was established by the Village's industrial past when the early factory owners erected hundreds of small workers' houses in groupings of two or more residences to a unit. Many of these densely concentrated units have been converted in the present day to multi-family housing. Additional multi-family homes, including senior citizens facilities, have been constructed over the years, with the result that today over 60 percent of housing in Wappingers Falls consists of multi-family units. Although the 1.21 square mile Village comprises only 0.15 percent of the county's total land mass, its 4,605 residents represent 1.8 percent of the county's population. This represents a density of 3,805 people per square mile, second only to the City of Poughkeepsie. The high density of people living in close proximity to businesses, employers, services, and numerous activity centers makes Wappingers Falls one of the most pedestrian-oriented communities in the County. Not surprisingly, the Village also has a lower rate of car-ownership than other municipalities, since other transportation options are more readily available. Twelve percent of Wappingers Falls households have

no automobile, one of the highest rates in the county. [PDCTC *Transportation Plan Update*, 1998]

➔ **Important Planning Concern:** *Due to its high density of population, which has historically encouraged walking, Wappingers Falls has a significant network of sidewalks. Throughout the Central Business District and in the neighboring residential quarters, sidewalks line both sides of the streets. However, use of these sidewalks is hindered by a number of unsafe conditions.* The existing crosswalks connecting sidewalks are inadequately marked, and traffic calming techniques in their vicinity are negligible or nonexistent. Many of the intersections where crosswalks exist are poorly aligned. Other critical intersections along Route 9D do not have crosswalks at all. In the Central Business District, the major intersections that link the shopping district are unnecessarily wide, poorly landscaped, and lack pedestrian amenities, such as benches, street trees, and human-scale lighting. The sharp steep turn on Route 9D, as it descends into the gorge, reduces visibility and further imperil pedestrians. Speeding is a perpetual problem on many Village streets. In combination, these conditions contribute to an unsafe environment that has the effect of discouraging walking.

Major activity centers that generate pedestrian traffic in the Village can be found in Figure 18, and pedestrian accident locations from 1991 to 1997 can be found in Figure 19.

Stretches of Route 9 also lack sidewalks. In particular, sidewalks are needed from Mesier Avenue north along Route 9 to Wappinger Lake, and a pedestrian walkway is needed across the tip of the Lake. This walkway would complete the ten mile loop of the Wappinger Greenway Trail.

Bicycling

➔ **Important Planning Concern:** *Bicycling has grown in popularity both for transportation and recreation in recent years. However, there are few dedicated bicycle facilities in the Village of Wappingers Falls.* Routes 9 and 9D have been designated by the State as major bicycle routes, and the NYS DOT has adopted a policy of accommodating bicyclists by providing State routes with wider shoulders and/or designated bicycle lanes, where possible. However, NYS Bicycle Route 9, which is a signed 345 mile bicycle route between New York City and Montreal, is designed for experienced bicyclists only. There are no designated bicycle facilities on Village streets, and, with the exception of small streets in residential neighborhoods, no places for inexperienced bicyclists and children to ride safely.

Telecommuting

A discussion of transportation would not be complete without mention of the most recent means of transportation--telecommuting. Here, of course, it is not people but

information that is being transported, and the transportation mode is electronic. But telecommuting is related to more traditional forms of transportation because, by allowing people to work at home, telecommuting can reduce vehicular traffic on the road. Encouraging telecommuting will alleviate vehicular traffic congestion, a beneficial impact for drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists trying to navigate Wappingers Falls' busy streets. It also provides a daytime presence in neighborhoods that can help to reduce crime rates.

No one can foresee the long-term effects of the growing telecommunications market. But many experts suggest that, in addition to reducing the everyday traffic of people coming and going to work, telecommunications will also reduce the traffic of consumers as more and more merchandise is ordered over the Internet. Some predict that this will affect retailers, particularly chain stores and big box establishments. Many big box stores are already feeling the pinch of on-line shopping and have established their own e-stores. Smaller proprietor-owned retail establishments, on the other hand, may find a new niche by providing a social setting and personalized service in addition to a product. Traditional village business districts where people can socialize with their neighbors, particularly when they have worked alone at home all day, are regaining popularity. As technology improves and people become more confident about the security of shopping on-line, these trends can be expected to continue.

5.1.3 Traffic Calming

➔ Important Planning Concern: *Edward T. McMahon, Director of the Conservation Fund, has said that our current road designs "have made cars happy and people miserable." According to the 1997 NYS DOT statistics, 26.3 percent of traffic fatalities in the state are pedestrians. On average, a pedestrian is killed in the US in a traffic accident every 93 minutes. The highest risk group for pedestrian traffic accidents is 8-year old children.*

Traffic calming can be used to rectify this situation by slowing automobile traffic and providing a safer street environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. Some of the most popular traffic-calming techniques are: raising or inverting pedestrian crosswalks; narrowing roads (especially at crosswalks) with extended curbs or flared sidewalks; changing the road surface texture or color at crosswalks; installing highly visible signage and lighting; and using street trees and pedestrian amenities, such as benches, to slow traffic and increase drivers' awareness of pedestrians. Shorter curb radii, planted medians, speed bumps, and use of in-street posts, bollards, or barrels, are also considered traffic calming techniques.

Traffic calming is already widely used in surrounding states such as Massachusetts and Connecticut, in Europe, Australia, and Canada, and is being adopted in a growing number of US towns and cities as well. The theory behind traffic calming is that roads should be multi-use spaces that encourage social links within a community. This is especially relevant in a pedestrian-oriented village setting such as Wappingers Falls.

At the present time, many intersections in Wappingers Falls, particularly along Route 9D, are in need of traffic calming techniques. Many of the Village intersections are poorly marked and do not have pedestrian signage. Some have no crosswalks at all. Others are excessively wide, which encourages speeding and creates an inhospitable and unsafe environment for pedestrians. Throughout the Village there is a notable lack of pedestrian amenities, such as street trees, benches, and human scale lighting. The absence of these amenities discourages walking. Table 11 summarizes the existing conditions and proposed improvements for intersections in the Village that are in need of traffic calming. These intersections are described in detail in the *Background Studies Supplement*.

5.1.4 Road Standards and Improvements

According to the Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council's *Transportation Plan Update*, the pavement conditions of Route 9 in Wappingers Falls is listed as "good." Route 9D is listed as "under construction." DOT has identified the maintenance of shoulders and the provision of sidewalks, where necessary, along Route 9D in the Village as a short-term priority. A long-term priority is to improve selected intersections along Route 9D between the Village's southern boundary and East Main Street (i.e. South Avenue).

The Village is responsible for local roads, including both vehicular and pedestrian paved areas. Maintenance of these areas is overseen by the Village Highway Department and is funded by the annual Village budget. The main problem in road standards faced by the Village is with roads, such as Route 9D, which are currently serving functions for which they were not originally designed including regional connections. There are also a number of gaps in the Village's sidewalk network. These problems are discussed in other sections of this chapter.

5.1.5 Parking

➔ Important Planning Concern: *In certain areas of the Village parking is a problem, and there is a lack of available parking spaces throughout the Village.* The Village of Wappingers Falls currently maintains two municipal parking lots located on Mill Street and behind the north side of East Main Street. A number of private lots also exist serving community organizations, such as Knights of Columbus, the VFW, and churches. On-street parking is allowed on both sides of the street in most areas of the Central Business District. However, many people complain about a lack of available parking in the Village. In 1998, for instance, the Grinnell Public Library conducted a survey of library patrons, and lack of parking in the vicinity of the Library was one of the top concerns patrons raised.

5.2 TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Actions

- Establish an Alternative Transportation Committee to encourage alternatives to the automobile, such as walking, bicycling, public transportation, van/car pooling, and telecommuting, to reduce vehicular traffic congestion.
- Prepare a pedestrian and bicycle plan to provide safe circulation for these alternative modes of transportation.
- Install traffic calming techniques throughout the Village to reduce the conflict between vehicular and pedestrian traffic.
- Establish a Telecommunications Task force to investigate which broadband access would be most feasible in the Village, and lobby for this service as quickly as possible.
- Inventory existing off-street parking areas in the Central Business District and create a parking plan to provide additional parking lots for residents, businesses and visitors in the Village core.
- Delineate parking spaces with curb markings along West and East Main Street.

In recent years, the increased volume of local and through traffic on Route 9D, both auto and commercial, has created considerable congestion on a road that was originally intended to move smaller quantities of vehicles primarily between local points. Redesigning this road to handle higher volumes is neither advisable nor feasible; inadvisable because it would attract even more through traffic which would contribute to a decline of the Central Business District, and not feasible due to the existing pattern of growth and unavailability of suitable rights-of-way. Moreover, continually widening roads and further promoting automobile dependency is expensive and environmentally degrading. In Dutchess County, there is concern that road and highway needs may outstrip the available financial resources during the next twenty years. For these reasons, priority should be given to promoting alternative modes of transportation and utilizing traffic calming techniques.

Reducing vehicle travel can be an effective means to ensure that the Village's transportation system will allow travel with minimal delays from one place to another in the community. The entire community will benefit from a reduction in air pollution because automobiles are a major source of pollutants in the Village. Local businesses will also benefit because the Village is likely to become a more popular place for shoppers. An uncongested, pedestrian-oriented environment can attract customers who may wish to shop in the Village, but go elsewhere due to congestion and the unavailability of parking. In addition, reliance on a car to shop for basic goods automatically erects barriers to youth, the disabled, the carless poor, and senior citizens. The *Dutchess County Forecasting Project* (1996) projects an increase in the number of people of older age groups between now and 2020. This increase will result in more people who are unable to drive. Improvements in transportation alternatives to the automobile are necessary or the mobility of a large proportion of the population will be impaired.

This section of the *Comprehensive Plan* presents a discussion of alternatives to auto-oriented solutions to the Village's transportation problems. Communities that share

similarities to Wappingers Falls have successfully used many of the concepts embodied in this *Comprehensive Plan*. The Village can and should build upon these successes.

5.2.1 Alternative Transportation Committee

✓ Recommendation:

- ➔ Create an Alternative Transportation Committee consisting of interested volunteers from the community.

The Committee's task would be to develop and promote programs that support, increase and facilitate transit (bus), rideshare (carpooling and vanpooling), pedestrian, and bicycle transportation to minimize vehicular traffic volume. This would include educational efforts such as the creation of an Alternative Transportation Booklet. The Booklet would be a convenient means to disseminate information on alternative transportation modes. The Committee could also meet regularly to discuss existing and proposed alternative transportation programs and projects, and could work with the State and County to seek an alternative route for truck and through traffic that will by-pass the Central Business District. The Committee should work closely with the Wappinger Greenway Trail Committee and with the agencies responsible for transportation.

5.2.2 A Pedestrian and Bicycle-Friendly Community

✓ Recommendation:

- ➔ Ensure that bicycling and walking are integrated into the Village transportation system.

Bicycle and pedestrian features should be incorporated into the Zoning Law. Moreover, the Village Board and Planning Board should consider the potential for pedestrian and bicycle movement when authorizing road building projects, and when specific destination points are involved, such as connecting schools and parks with residential areas. Traffic-calming techniques (such as those below and in Appendix B) can create a friendlier environment for pedestrians and bicyclists alike. While the *Comprehensive Plan* is not advocating the construction of wider shoulders on existing Village streets, a pedestrian and bicycle friendly community should have wide paved shoulders on arterial routes, well demarcated pedestrian crosswalks at intersections, and signage announcing that bicycles share the roadway. The NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law specifically describes the rights and responsibilities of bicyclists and pedestrians on public highways. The State Department of Transportation has issued design standards that prescribe a four-foot wide paved shoulder on newly constructed or reconstructed State routes. Addition of non-motorist amenities makes the roads safer for all users and may reduce liability exposure for local government following an accident.

To facilitate bicycling and walking, issues of access, education, enforcement, safety and security need to be addressed. Improving the overall environment for pedestrians and

bicyclists will result in increased use. The Alternative Transportation Committee could be responsible for implementing some of the following recommendations to encourage alternatives to the automobile:

- ➔ *Pedestrians First* We are all pedestrians and should receive priority over vehicles. All Village actions that may affect traffic and circulation should be guided by the basic principle of “*pedestrians first*.”
- ➔ *Pedestrian System* The Village Highway Department should inventory the existing pedestrian facilities in the Village, with particular attention to missing links in the sidewalk network that may impede pedestrian circulation. Sidewalks should be installed to fill these gaps. Intersections and other potential vehicle/pedestrian conflict areas should be identified to determine whether structural or other solutions would be feasible. Some of these deficiencies have already been identified by the Wappinger Greenway Trail Committee.
- ➔ *Pedestrian Crosswalks* The Village Board should promote the safety and convenience of pedestrians by enhancing existing pedestrian crosswalks and providing new pedestrian crosswalks where necessary. Specific intersections where crosswalks need enhancement or where new crosswalks should be installed are presented in Table 11 and discussed in the *Background Studies Supplement*. The Village should also work with the DOT during the design of the proposed widening of Route 9 to include safe and appropriate pedestrian crossing locations.
- ➔ *Signage* According to the PDCTC’s *Wappingers Falls Transportation Study*, which is included in the *Background Studies Supplement*, many of the signs along Route 9D are clustered together and their proximity makes it difficult for people to differentiate among the signs and determine which are relevant. Signs along this corridor should be reviewed and, if necessary, changed. “Yield to Pedestrians” signs and “Bikes Share the Road” signs should be placed at all major intersections in the Village and along bike routes.
- ➔ *Sidewalks* All new subdivisions and developments requiring Village approval should install and/or repair sidewalks with concrete, bluestone or masonry paving material. Curbing should also use concrete or granite instead of asphalt, which does not stand up as well. This should be codified into the Village’s Zoning regulations and implemented by the appropriate board.
- ➔ *Walking/Biking Paths* Off-street walking and bike paths should be created as opportunities arise to link neighborhoods with the downtown. This effort should be coordinated with the work of the Wappingers Greenway Trail Committee.
- ➔ *Pedestrian Walkway* The Village should work with the DOT to create a pedestrian walkway along the west side of Route 9 crossing Wappinger Lake.

This walkway would complete the ten mile loop of the Wappinger Greenway Trail.

- ➔ *Pedestrian/Bicyclist Master Plan* The Alternative Transportation Committee could promote bicycle and walking commuting by identifying routes in the Pedestrian and Bicyclist Master Plan brochure and making spot improvements on Village streets and walkways/bikeways.
- ➔ *Bikeways* Design standards for bicycle routes should be established for Village streets.
- ➔ *Bicycle Racks* The Village Board should provide bicycle racks at all municipal buildings and public facilities in the Village. The Planning Board should also consider the appropriateness of bicycle racks in their review of Site Plans.
- ➔ *Shared Access* To reduce traffic on the main arterials, which creates a safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, the Planning Board should require connectors between commercial properties and encourage shared access where possible on future commercial development along Route 9.
- ➔ *Park and Ride Facilities* The Alternative Transportation Committee could facilitate transit and carpool use by identifying appropriate locations for park and ride facilities that would support existing and new ride sharing and/or transit activities. Also, a bus shelter should be provided in front of the Grinnell Library to make use of public transportation more convenient.
- ➔ *Official Village Map* The Village Board should adopt an Official Village Map, pursuant to §7-724 of the New York State Village Law, showing the location of all existing and proposed streets, highways, bike paths and trails, including the Wappinger Greenway Trail. New development proposed where bike paths and trails are located on the map should be required to install these paths as part of the Planning Board and Zoning Board review processes. Businesses should also be required to install bike racks.

✓ Recommendation:

- ➔ Solicit assistance from the County to implement these recommendations.

The Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council (PDCTC) recognizes that traffic on Route 9D in the Village of Wappingers Falls creates problems for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists trying to maneuver in the Central Business District. Concerns about safety and accident rates have also been raised. Between 1991 and 1998, 88 percent of all accidents involving pedestrians in the Village occurred at non-signalized intersections where there were no crosswalks or special treatments for pedestrians. These issues are summarized in the PDCTC's recently issued *Wappingers Falls Transportation*

Plan. This study has determined where pedestrian improvements, such as high-visibility crosswalks, sidewalks and/or refuge islands, are needed, and these recommendations will be included in the County's future transportation improvement programs. The study also lists funding sources to finance these improvements. The Village should coordinate with the County and with the DOT in applying for these grants.

5.2.3 Traffic Calming

✓ Recommendation:

- ➔ The majority of Village residents who responded to the 1998 *Public Opinion Survey* saw a need to establish a pilot program to improve pedestrian safety in the Village, and specifically recognized the need for traffic calming techniques on Route 9D.

The *Comprehensive Plan* accordingly recommends installing traffic calming devices, including enhanced crosswalks and streetscape designs, to create a safer environment for pedestrians. Improving pedestrian safety will also enhance the economy of the Central Business District and promote tourism. Table 11 summarizes the existing conditions and proposed improvements for intersections in the Village that are in need of traffic calming. The PDCTC's *Wappingers Falls Transportation Plan*, which is included in the *Background Studies Supplement*, makes similar recommendations for traffic calming techniques along the Route 9D corridor. The Village is currently working with the DOT to implement the recommendations listed in Table 11, and will secure the necessary approvals and permits for this work.

5.2.5 Telecommuting

✓ Recommendations:

- ➔ Establish a Telecommunications Task Force to investigate which broadband access would be most feasible in the Village, and lobby for this service as quickly as possible.

Currently, most Internet service in Wappingers Falls is provided by dial-up access over a regular phone line. Broadband access, which is at least 10 times faster, is a requirement for any serious Internet-based business. Easier access to the Internet is also becoming more essential to telecommuters and professionals working out of home offices. As these forms of work become more prevalent, the economic vitality of Wappingers Falls may depend on its ability to secure high speed Internet access in the Village. In the near future, high speed access will be essential to sustain existing telecommunications businesses and to attract new ones.

There are two types of broadband Internet access which offer greater speed and ease of use of the Internet. Cable-based broadband access can be provided over the same cable as

television. This type of service is not widely available, even though the cables are in place in many communities. While cable companies are able to provide Internet access, many have been reluctant to make the necessary expenditures to do so. The other type of access is Digital-Subscriber Line (DSL), which could be provided by every telephone company but requires new infrastructure (a broadband line). Both of these technologies offer speed and access that is about equal. Cable is used more frequently now because more people are aware of it and the cable companies were quicker to make it available. But industry specialists predict that DSL, which currently has only 160,000 subscribers in the US, will be the industry standard once the telephone companies are forced to provide it. The 1996 Telecommunications Act, under Universal Access, specifies that rural and remote customers must be provided with the same Internet service as urban customers at a comparable cost for that service. The Village should lobby for high speed Internet access to bolster the Village economy and reduce traffic congestion by promoting this alternative mode of “transportation-to-work.”

5.2.6 Parking

✓ Recommendation:

- ➔ The Village should work with the Wappingers Falls Business and Professional Association and local landowners to create a Parking Plan for the Central Business District.
- ➔ Delineate parking spaces with curb markings along West and East Main Street.

The majority of respondents to the Public Opinion Survey stated that the local government should maintain and operate parking in the Village. The Village currently owns and maintains two municipal parking lots. There are also a number of private lots and parking areas that serve community organizations and churches.

Existing parking areas in the Village should be inventoried and analyzed for their availability for public use. Areas behind Main Street stores and other vacant areas in the Village core should be considered for development for parking, provided they are generously landscaped and integrated into the fabric of the downtown. The sharing of lots by businesses and other establishments with different hours of operation should be encouraged. Access between lots currently barred by fences and other barriers should be created. Village businesses could organize into a Local Development Corporation, which would then control parking areas in the core area. Community Development Block Grant funding could be used to finance part of the effort and the Corporation could lease lands and pay for insurance. In addition, parking spaces along East and West Main Streets should be delineated with curb markings to ensure more efficient use of these areas for parallel parking.

Table 11: Recommended Intersection Improvements

Intersection	Existing Conditions	Recommended Improvements
West Main & Convent Avenue	Sharp, steep turn creates poor sight distance. Intersection is poorly marked with no pedestrian signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine if conditions warrant installation of a flashing traffic signal warning northbound vehicles of pedestrian activity. • Post pedestrian crossing signs.
West Main and West Street	No crosswalk or pedestrian signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add zebra-striped crosswalks at intersection. • Post pedestrian crossing signs.
West Main & School Street	No crosswalk or pedestrian signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add zebra-striped crosswalks at intersection. • Post pedestrian crossing signs.
West Main & Church Street	No crosswalk or pedestrian signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add zebra-striped crosswalks at intersection. • Post pedestrian crossing signs.
West Main & East Main Street	Cars descending West Main St. tend to speed down steep slope and maneuver turn with difficulty. Road at turn is excessively wide. No crosswalk or pedestrian signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add flared sidewalks and curb extensions to narrow crossing distance. • Add street trees and native plantings. • Add crosswalk made of alternative paving material at main intersection. • Add zebra-striped crosswalk across Givens Avenue. • Post pedestrian crossing signs.
East Main & Market/Mill Streets	Intersection has unusual configuration, is poorly marked, and has no pedestrian signage. Cars descending hill tend to speed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add two crosswalks made of alternative paving material across East Main. • Add zebra-striped crosswalks across Market and Mill Streets. • Post pedestrian crossing signs.
East Main & Spring Street	Road is unusually wide which encourages speeding. Intersection is poorly marked with no pedestrian signage. Lack of pedestrian amenities discourages walking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a flared sidewalk to shorten the length of the crosswalk, slow traffic, and provide better pedestrian visibility. • Add a pocket park with pedestrian amenities such as street trees, native plantings, a trash can and bench. • Add crosswalks made of alternative paving material across East Main St. • Add zebra-striped crosswalks across Spring Street. • Add human-scale historic light fixtures. • Post pedestrian crossing signs.
East Main & South Avenue	No crosswalks or pedestrian signage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add crosswalks made of alternative paving material across East Main St. • Add zebra-striped crosswalks across the remainder of the intersection crossings. • Post pedestrian crossing signs.
South Avenue & West Academy/ South Avenue & Frankindale/ South Avenue & Maple Street	No crosswalks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add zebra-striped crosswalks at intersections. • Post pedestrian crossing signs.

6. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Community Goal

Ensure that public facilities and services are adequate in location, capacity and design to properly serve planned development and growth of the Village.

A critical element in the image of a community is the effectiveness and quality of its local government services. Notwithstanding scarce funding resources, the greatest control that a municipality has is over the adequacy of its community facilities and the efficiency of government service delivery. This chapter describes the community facilities and services

available in the Village of Wappingers Falls and identifies those that may need expansion or improvement. Privately owned facilities that serve the community are also addressed in this chapter, since small villages like Wappingers Falls often rely on the complementary or supplemental facilities that they provide.

6.1 FACILITIES

6.1.1 Village Hall

The offices of the Mayor, Village Treasurer, and Village Clerk are housed in the Village Hall on the southeast corner of East Main Street and South Avenue. The building was formerly the Old Main Post Office, one of five post offices designed and commissioned by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The Village Offices were moved to this building in 1995 when they outgrew their previous quarters in the American Legion Hall on Spring Street. The rear portion of the Village Hall is occupied by the Village Police Department, which had previously been stationed in the Mesier Homestead.

✓Recommendation s:

Consolidate the Village Offices in a larger building, while keeping these offices centrally located downtown and as close to other government departments as possible.

Continue to use the historic Village Hall for some governmental purpose.

Develop a comprehensive website for the Village.

Share databases by connecting departmental computers, where appropriate.
Secure a State grant for Historic Municipal Records Management.

6.1.2 Mesier Homestead

Mesier Homestead is the focal point of the Village. The Homestead, which is located within the five acre Village-owned Mesier Park, is the Village's earliest residential dwelling and most important landmark. Prior to leasing the Post Office, the Mesier Homestead was used as the Village Hall. Since 1914, the large east room has been used as a business office for the Water Department. For over 50 years, from the early 1940s until the 1990s, the Village Police Department occupied the west room of the Homestead, in part as protection against vandalism on the Homestead and Park. Since 1970, the Wappingers Falls Historical Society has maintained the second floor of the Homestead as a museum. The museum includes such artifacts as 18th century furniture, clothing, tools and documents, all of which originated from within the Village of Wappingers Falls, along with a photographic history of the Village. The Historical Society will assume use of the entire building, as a museum, once the structure has been fully restored.

In addition to its many historic, cultural and visual public benefits, Mesier Homestead directly impacts economic development activities of the Village. The Homestead is a major tourism attraction. With the Mesier Homestead as the centerpiece, Mesier Park is host to two annual functions, "Picnic in the Park" and "Christmas in the Park." On average, these two functions bring in more than 3,000 visitors to the Village from more than four states. Many of these visitors shop in the Village's Central Business District and contribute to its vitality. The Mesier Homestead is a true village green located in the heart of the Village's Central Business District. The Village maintains separate accounts designated for the maintenance of the Mesier Homestead and Park, and a Parks Commission has existed for decades to assure the on-going existence, maintenance and longevity of the Homestead and Park.

The Mesier Homestead is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places as a contributing component of the Wappingers Falls Historic District. The Village is committed to restoring and preserving this significant structure for use by present and future generations. In 1996, the Village received funding from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to restore the Homestead's roof. The roof restoration project created a watertight envelope, but did not address the extreme deterioration of the building's foundation, wood frame sections, and exterior. In 2000, the Village again applied to the State for grant money to complete the structural repairs and exterior restoration of the building. The Village should continue to apply for funding until the entire structure, both exterior and interior, has been fully restored.

✓Recommendation s:

Continue to secure grants to fund the ongoing restoration of Mesier Homestead.

In the long run, consolidate the Water Department with other Village Offices.

6.1.3 Zoning Office/American Legion Hall

The Village leases a building located at 7 Spring Street from the American Legion for the Zoning, Code Enforcement and Assessors Offices. The building's location directly across from the Water Department in Mesier Homestead and the Village Hall at the opposite end of Mesier Park keeps the Village Administrative offices in close proximity to each other. The building is still used as the American Legion Hall. However, the street level room has been designed as a single large office/meeting space which is used for Village Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals and other board and committee meetings.

✓Recommendation:

Consolidate the Zoning, Code Enforcement and Assessor's Offices with other Village Offices.

6.1.4 Grinnell Library

Although Grinnell Library is not owned by the Village, its public purpose and its location on the corner of Spring and East Main Streets reinforces the image of Mesier Park as the civic center of the Village. Grinnell Library was built in 1887 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Library Association is affiliated with the Mid-Hudson Regional Library System and has access to many shared services and collections. When the 1968 *Village Development Plan* was prepared, only the second floor of the building was occupied by the library. Since then, the library has expanded onto the main floor and now occupies the entire building. In addition to a large collection of books, periodicals, and historical information, the library provides special programs for children and adults, and has several personal computers available for use by its patrons.

The Grinnell Library conducted a survey in 1998 and discovered that the library improvements its patrons most desired were more parking spaces and a safer Main Street crossing. The need for better parking and improved pedestrian amenities in the Central Business District have been addressed in Chapter 5. Many residents would also like to see a pay phone located near the library.

Many of the Village's historic records are also housed in the Grinnell Library. This information is managed by the Wappingers Falls Historical Society.

✓Recommendation:

Grinnell Library and the Wappingers Falls Historic Society should secure a State grant for Historic Preservation Records Management.
Install a pay phone near the library.

6.1.5 Post Office

The Post Office relocated from what is now Village Hall to a new building on the southeast corner of East Main Street and South Remsen Avenue. Because the building and parking were constructed fairly recently and specifically for the Post Office, the new facility is adequate. It is fortunate that the General Service Administration was able to find a site that is still in the heart of the Village.

6.1.6 Schools

The Village of Wappingers Falls is served by the Wappinger Central School District (WCSD) #1. WCSD's jurisdiction is an area of nearly 100 square miles and includes the Village of Wappingers Falls, the Town of Wappinger, and portions of the Towns of Poughkeepsie, Fishkill, East Fishkill, LaGrange, Kent and Phillipstown. As discussed in Chapter 2, there are no public schools located within the Village. However, two public schools are adjacent to the south boundary of the Village. James E. Evans Elementary School occupies a 12 acre site and the Wappingers Falls Junior High School is situated on an adjacent 35 acre site.

Evans Elementary School was designed to accommodate 660 students and enrollment in 1999-2000 was 402 students. Wappingers Falls Junior High School, initially designed for 1,200 students, had a 1999-2000 enrollment of 968 students. Roy C. Ketcham Senior High School, designed for 1,500 students, occupies a 55 acre site on Myers Corners Road, approximately three miles from Wappingers Falls,. Enrollment is currently 1,569 students. The School District Board has been evaluating the need for expanding the high school, but there are no definite plans at this time.

Children who live near West Main Street in the north end of the Village attend Sheafe Road Elementary School, which is located just north of the Village. Sheafe Road School's 1999-2000 enrollment was 630 students. In addition, many children in the Village attend St. Mary's Elementary School, a private school which shares a large site with St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church and Cemetery on Convent Street west of West Main.

The Village benefits from having schools within walking distance. However, because the School District serves towns in a large geographic region, there is a tremendous amount of bus traffic on Village streets, which creates air, noise and traffic problems. These

problems should be carefully weighed when the School District considers the need for expanding its bus garages.

6.1.7 Parks & Recreation

The Village of Wappingers Falls, despite its small size, has been successful in acquiring an impressive number of parcels of land for parks and recreation. Twenty-six acres of public lands and 122 acres of public waters are available to Village residents. These include:

- Mesier Homestead and Park. This five acre park can only be used for passive recreation according to the deed restriction which accompanied its donation to the Village. The park's location on East Main Street, surrounded by Village Hall, American Legion Hall and Grinnell Library, make it a natural focal point for the Village. In December 1999, a Millennium Time Capsule was buried in Mesier Park with a plaque indicating it is to be unearthed in 100 years.
- James J. Temple Memorial Park. This six acre park at Market and McKinley Streets includes a baseball field, play lot, basketball court and parking lot.
- Veteran's Memorial Park. Located on North Mesier Avenue, this six acre park includes a Little League Baseball field, basketball court, playground, a multi-purpose building, picnic tables and a parking lot.
- Canale Memorial Park. This three acre park is located at the north end of West Main Street and abuts the seven acre Village well field on the northwest portion of Wappinger Lake. The park has minimal playground equipment.
- Bain Park. This six acre park is located west of Franklindale and Clapp Avenues and was formerly used as a landfill.
- The MIA Park. This is a vest pocket park off of Route 9 with a monument to honor military personnel declared Missing In Action in the Vietnam War.
- Fisherman's Park. This is a small park located at the north end of Liss Road. The park is adjacent to the Lake and provides access to the lake for fishing and boating.
- Wappinger Lake was acquired by the Village in the late 1960s and its cleanup is a priority for the Village. This is an excellent resource and could potentially be a major recreational attraction. In 1998 the Village designated the Lake a Critical Environmental Area (CEA) under SEQR. This may facilitate funding availability and other resources to clean up the lake.

- Two parks are proposed for the Downtown area to emphasize the presence of the Falls. Falls View Park will be located on Market Street and will include picnic area and benches along with parking. Galucci Park will be a vest pocket park on the east side of West Main Street.

Private recreation areas available to the public include:

- The Scenic Hudson Property on Channingville Road is a wooded 27 acre parcel that is part of the Wappinger Greenway Trail.
- Zion Park on the southwest corner of East Main Street and South Avenue is a beautiful complement to Mesier Park in the center of the Village.
- St. Mary's ball field, basketball courts and playground are available when not used for school activities.

Many of the Village parks need improvements, such as equipment replacement, additional landscaping to enhance overall attractiveness, and the addition of boat launches to improve lake access. In the future, the Village also wishes to develop new parks, such as Falls View Park and Galucci Park. Park enhancement and development can be partially funded through recreation fees. The Village currently requires that residential developments provide recreation areas (10 percent of land cover) or fees contributed to a general park fund to offset the costs of providing sufficient park land and recreational opportunities incurred by new residential growth. However, the fees currently charged by the Village of Wappingers Falls are low. These should be adjusted upward to reflect the actual costs of providing recreational land and services to new development in the Village. However, before the Village can adjust its recreational fees, it must first evaluate present and anticipated future needs for park and recreational facilities in the Village, based on projected population growth, among other factors. Recreation fees could also be used to provide opportunities for open space preservation. This requires that an overall long-term recreation and open space plan be developed to help define desirable acquisitions and easements as well as set priorities.

✓Recommendations:

Develop a Master Park Plan itemizing specific park improvements and a timetable for their completion.

Create an inventory of existing open spaces in the Village and identify areas to be preserved or developed as parks.

Adjust the Village recreation fee structure to reflect the actual costs of providing recreational services incurred by new residential growth in the Village.

Begin needed improvements to parks, including: equipment replacement and maintenance, additional landscaping to improve overall attractiveness,

the addition of boat launches to improve lake access, and improvements of Wappinger Lake's water quality.

Identify waterfront access points with signage.

Secure grants to fund park acquisition, development and improvements.

6.2 SERVICES

6.2.1 Police Department

The Police Department occupies the rear portion of the Village Hall and employs 20 officers (including five full-time) and eight dispatchers. The facility includes an office for the Commissioner, a booking room, and limited areas assigned to the Lieutenant, the Sergeant, the detectives, and the dispatcher. Just outside the building is a kennel for the canine unit and a parking lot with spaces for about 10 cars. The Police Department has five marked cars available to patrol the Village and one unmarked car for use by detectives.

Changes in technology have provided improvements in the way policing can be conducted and in the equipment available to subdue offenders. Neighboring communities, for instance, have included laptop computers in patrol cars to minimize the time patrol officers are off the road. This requires the proper support software in the office. While there is an expense associated with this technology, it is often offset by increased efficiency. The Police Department needs ongoing assessment of new technology to weigh the benefits and costs.

Ten years ago the Police were handling mostly traffic and vehicular violations. Now, in addition to increased traffic violations, the Police must also deal with homicide, rape, home burglaries, and narcotics. These more serious crimes require more extensive investigation, specialized investigative skills, and additional requirements on evidence gathering, maintenance and security. Continuous training updates are required to keep officers abreast of changes in the laws and technology, while maintaining the proper number of officers on patrol.

The current location of the Police Department in the Village Hall is not ideal. The facility has inadequate office space, which means that there is no private place for employee counseling or for detectives to investigate cases while providing victims full confidentiality. Private offices would enable this business to be conducted much more efficiently. Moreover, the numerous paper files in the Police Department must be retained for a long period of time (some for as long as 70 years). Currently the files are stored in the basement, and many are not in file cabinets. Since filing is done when the officers can find time, there is often a backlog.

✓ Recommendations:

In the short term, examine ways to maximize space in the Village Hall for the Police Department.

Increase community policing through bicycle patrols, Neighborhood Watch activities, and citizen education of police services like House Watch for owners who are away.

Hire a part-time person to do administrative police work.

Investigate increased use of technology in the Police Department.

Secure grants to help defray the costs of community policing, administrative help, and new technology for the officers.

Continue to evaluate manpower requirements as population in the Village increases.

In the long term, explore options to find a larger space more suited to the needs of the Police Department.

6.2.2 Fire Department

The Village Volunteer Fire Department was founded in 1837 and provides around-the-clock emergency fire and rescue response to Village residents. The Fire Department has two fire stations. The Garner Fire House #1 is located on West Academy Street, and the Johnson Fire House #2 is located on School Street. Both fire stations are brick buildings and are well-maintained. Each has a large multi-purpose or conference room which is available for community meetings and events. Garner Fire Station is equipped with one pumper and one ladder truck. Johnson Fire Station is equipped with two pumpers and one utility truck. This equipment is antiquated and will soon need replacement.

Firefighters must continuously educate themselves and train for each of the potentially dangerous emergency situations that could arise in the Village. These dedicated volunteers make many personal sacrifices to serve their community. In recent years, the Village Fire Department has seen a decline in the number of volunteers. With many families facing the need to work more hours further away from home, many people who would like to volunteer for the Fire Department have found it difficult to find the time to do so. At the same time, the number of calls for help had been dramatically increasing. The result is that the Fire Department had fewer active members to respond to significantly higher call volumes.

In 1999, Village residents passed a referendum to create a Service Awards Program to provide an incentive for volunteers to join and remain active in the Fire Department. The awards program provides qualifying active volunteers with a death and disability benefit, and a modest monthly pension. The size of the pension is directly related to the number of years the volunteer is active. The program is funded through local tax revenues and provides significant savings over paid firefighters. The awards program is a

cost-effective way to ensure an adequate staff of well-trained, active, long-term volunteers to provide emergency services in the Village.

✓Recommendations:

Continue to support the Village Volunteer Fire Department through the Service Awards Program.

Secure grants to upgrade fire fighting equipment.

Include replacement of fire fighting equipment and ongoing maintenance of the fire stations in the Village Capital Improvements Program.

6.2.3 Water Department

Since the Village was incorporated in 1871, providing water to citizens has been one of the most important services provided by the Village. According to the *Annual Drinking Water Quality Report*, in 1999 tap water in the Village met all State drinking water health standards and the Village system did not violate any maximum contaminant level or any other water quality standard. The Village water system is overseen by the Water Department, which is responsible for the wells, storage facilities, treatment plant, and distribution system.

The Village water system serves an estimated 4,605 people through approximately 2,307 service connections. The system consists of the water pumping station and well fields (located on the lake side east of Thornton's Service Station on West Main Street), three water storage facilities (located on Wenliss Terrace, Delavergne Avenue and Hillside Avenue) and approximately 20 miles of pipe, some of which were laid in the late 1800s. Two active wells alternate as production wells.

In February 1997, an interconnection was completed on Delavergne Avenue that allows the Village water system to draw a maximum of 288,000 gallons per average day from the more historically reliable joint City/Town of Poughkeepsie surface water source (the Hudson River). In 1999, the water plant had a total output of 215,970,405 gallons or approximately 591,000 gallons per average day. Of this total output, 120,982,866 gallons were from the Village well field and 94,987,539 were from the interconnection. Estimated losses, municipal usage, and/or non-billed water theft accounted for 106,578 gallons per average day or about 19 percent.

The Water Department is overseen by a board of three appointed commissioners, each of whom serve a three year term. The Water Department employs one full-time office manager/clerk, and one part-time clerk, a full-time water plant operator, and two full-time water system maintenance mechanics. The number of county, state and federal regulations that pertain to the Water Department increases yearly, and each year at a faster rate. Computer use is already in effect, but needs to be continuously upgraded to meet the needs of the office.

The *Annual Drinking Water Quality Report for 1999* includes the following list of Future Capital Improvements:

- Twelve inch water main to the Wenliss storage facility to allow increased flow of water back to the Village from its largest water storage facility.
- Test, repair and replace storage facilities: this involves periodic inspections of the storage facilities by divers, and then assessment of the results to either repair or replace the facilities.
- Lead lines replacement: lead lines are a small percentage of the Village's overall pipes, and they are replaced as repairs are made.
- Old mains replacement (most date from 1885 to 1920).
- Iron filtration and treatment: well #5 has been inactive since 1992 because of high levels of iron.
- New main, Givens Avenue or Hillside Avenue to Industrial Park.
- Pressure reducing valve and meter pits, Givens Avenue or Hillside Avenue and McKinley Street.
- Treatment system expansion.
- Back flow prevention program. (New York State Department of Health requires the Supplier of Water to protect the public water system from existing and potential contamination sources.)
- Wellhead and Aquifer protection programs.
- New Route 9 main crossings.
- Emergency generator, pump station.
- New production well #6.

Additional capital improvements not included in the *Annual Drinking Water Quality Report for 1999* include:

- New pipes along the west side of Route 9 from North Mesier Avenue to New Hackensack Road when Route 9 is widened.
- Additional water storage facility and/or pump station east of Route 9 south of Imperial Towers.

In 1999, the first telecommunications antenna in the Village was mounted on the water storage facility at Wenliss Terrace. Since water storage facilities are the highest structures in the Village, future additional telecommunications antennae should be encouraged to locate on these facilities to reduce the proliferation of cell towers throughout the Village.

✓Recommendations:

Include all of the above Water Department's Capital Improvements in the Village's overall Capital Improvements Program.

Continuously search for alternative funding (for example, grants) to finance the Water Department's Capital Improvements.

Continuously evaluate the efficiency of the existing computer system.

Encourage the placement of additional telecommunications antennae on water storage facilities and other appropriate existing structures to reduce the proliferation of cell towers throughout the Village.
Enhance the water towers with murals depicting the Falls and other natural resources to reinforce the Village identity as intertwined with its water resources.

6.2.4 Public Services

The Village is directly responsible for the maintenance and improvement of its streets, sidewalks, sewer, parks, and all buildings and infrastructure under its ownership or stewardship. These services are administered or coordinated by the Village Highway Department Supervisor who reports to the Mayor and the Village Board. Trash collection and curbside recycling are provided by private companies that contract with the Village.

The Mayor and the Village Highway Department Director have developed a Capital Improvements Program to project funding costs for potential infrastructure and other needs as they arise. Capital improvement programming is an important but often missing element of *Comprehensive Plan* development and implementation. How funding is allocated for public improvements, whether for parks, recreational facilities, open space, schools, roads, or municipal buildings, has a major effect on the development of a community.

A capital improvements program is a systematic scheduling of various public works and land acquisitions that will be needed over a period of years as the community grows and develops. Six years is a common projection period used by many municipalities. Projects scheduled for the first year should be incorporated into the municipality's proposed budget for the next fiscal year. Each year the program is revised in light of new priorities that may arise due to changing conditions, and extended another year into the future. A capital improvements program provides a continuously updated picture of estimated future improvement needs and costs. It helps give greater stability to the tax rate by spreading improvement costs systematically over a period of years.

✓Recommendation:

Create a comprehensive Capital Improvements Program by surveying each of the Village Departments and Commissions to establish project priorities and cost estimates. Encourage the school districts, the County, and the State to cooperate. It is now required that such units of government consider the policies and recommendations made in the *Comprehensive Plan* in all their capital projects.

6.2.5 Village Garage

The Village Garage is located at the foot of Market Street and occupies one-third of an acre. The brick building, which is approximately 5,000 square feet in size, was built in the 1820s. The garage is inconveniently located in a primarily residential area, and the facility does not provide enough room for all of the Highway Department's vehicles. Eventually, a new facility will be needed.

The current Village Garage is located across from Temple Field and near Reese Park in the Town of Poughkeepsie. The Wappinger Greenway Trail runs along the property, which abuts the lower Wappinger Creek. The facility's location, and its historic brick building, make it ideal for future park development once a new Village Garage is established. The location on the lower Wappinger Creek make it a suitable site for an Estuary Education Park. Small unmotorized boats could be launched from the site, and the building could be used as a community center. The proximity to Temple Field might promote better utilization of that park as well.

✓Recommendations:

- Consider an alternative, more convenient site for a larger Village Garage.
- Consider developing the current Village Garage site as an Estuary Education Park.

6.2.6 Justice Court

Justice Court in the Village occupies the street level of 7 Mill Street. The three story brick building was formerly used as the Wappinger Town Hall until those offices relocated to Middlebush Road and the building was sold to the Community Services Program. The two upper floors were converted to apartments for low-income senior citizens.

Justice Court is a Division of the State of New York Court system. Wappingers Falls Justice Court has two types of jurisdiction: judicial jurisdiction and geographic jurisdiction. Judicial jurisdiction covers vehicular and traffic matters, small claims actions up to \$3,000, civil cases, criminal cases such as disorderly conduct, assault and harassment, jury trial jurisdiction for criminal cases such as driving while intoxicated and other Class A misdemeanors, marriages, notary public services, and orders of protection. In addition, Justice Court acts as an adjunct to Family Court when that court is not in session. To deal with all these matters the Justice Court must work with the Dutchess County District Attorney, Public Defender, Probation Department, Mental Health Department, alcohol and drug abuse centers, and private attorneys. Geographic jurisdiction is that area of responsibility where a police agency of the Village and the surrounding area can call the Justice for arraignments at any time. The case to be heard must be within the Village of Wappingers Falls limits.

Justice Court is staffed by one elected and one appointed judge (on call twenty four hours each day), two part time court clerks, and 12 court officers. To facilitate processing the different types of cases and to minimize the time police and attorneys need to spend waiting, different types of actions are handled at different times.

In 1999, Justice Court handled 3,016 line item cases or individual charges. Of these cases, 40 percent were vehicular and traffic, 30 percent were penal, 10 percent were civil (small claims, etc.), 10 percent were domestic violence, and 10 percent concerned zoning. The fines resulting from these cases produce about \$10,000 per month in revenue for the Village. This caseload is increasing at a rate of about 5 percent per year because of increased population density, increased traffic on Route 9 and in the Village, and the increased availability of drugs and alcohol. Each defendant brings to court at least one, and sometimes two or three additional people, so the Justice Court is often filled to overflowing. The capacity of the court is reaching its limits in both personnel and physical space. Moreover, there is no room for court records, which must be retained by law for a minimum of ten years, and often forever. At the present time, court records are stored in the Zoning and Planning Office on Spring Street. Finally, there is only one computer for the two clerks, and it is not powerful enough to download New York State laws.

✓ Recommendations:

Create full-time positions for the two court clerks in the next year.

Hire an additional part-time court clerk within the next year.

Within the next year, there should be two elected Judges and one appointed Judge.

In the near future, Justice Court should be relocated to a larger facility, one that is handicap accessible, has more bathrooms, and has the storage space necessary to hold court records.

Increase the number of computers and upgrade computer capacity.

Secure grants to upgrade the current Justice Court facilities.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 PURPOSE OF LAND USE PLANNING

New York State Village Law states that “*among the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to a village is the authority and responsibility to undertake village comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens.*” [Section 7-722 (a)]. A comprehensive plan is a guide to the development or redevelopment of a community. Although it is the core document providing the basis for land use and policy decisions, the comprehensive plan is general in nature so that changes in the community and development trends can be addressed as they arise.

Village Law does not dictate the elements of a comprehensive plan, but suggests that it consider issues appropriate to the needs of the community, such as existing and proposed land uses, historic and cultural resources, community facilities, natural resources and the environment, demographic and socio-economic trends, housing and affordable housing, transportation facilities, open space, recreation, and educational facilities. The comprehensive plan includes the supporting data, documents, maps, charts and written analysis of each element that forms the foundation for goals, objectives, actions, and recommendations. It concludes with strategies to facilitate the implementation of the plan, thereby achieving the objectives and, ultimately, the goals for each element. This includes its implementation through the capital projects of other governmental jurisdictions.

The comprehensive plan is often confused with the zoning regulations of the community. However, the function and process of each is distinctly different. The comprehensive plan and its land use element is a function of the legislative responsibility of the Village Board and provides broad recommendations for the general location and nature of residential, commercial, industrial and other uses, along with underlying policies such as environmental protection. Zoning stems from the regulatory or police power of the Village and prescribes regulations to specific districts which, ideally, are consistent with the comprehensive plan. Zoning is a tool to implement the plan, and the Village Board, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals use the recommendations in the plan as a guide to new construction, expansion and/or change in use of existing development, rezonings, zoning variances, and other relevant regulatory decisions.

It is critical to view the comprehensive plan as part of an ongoing planning process, periodically reviewed and revised as needed. Typically, the time frame of a comprehensive plan ranges from ten to twenty years; however, during this time, conditions can change radically. Therefore, the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan should be revisited annually, with implementation progress monitored regularly. An update of the plan may be warranted five years after adoption.

The Village Board of Trustees has the responsibility for preparation of the comprehensive plan, or the Board may, by a resolution, assign this responsibility to the Planning Board or to special Boards, such as the Village's Comprehensive Plan Committee. Final adoption of the comprehensive plan is by the Village Board of Trustees, upon recommendation by the Comprehensive Plan Committee and the Planning Board, after all required public hearings and the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) compliance procedures have been completed.

7.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

7.2.1 State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR)

The first step that the Village must take toward implementing its *Comprehensive Plan* is to comply with the requirements of the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). This State law requires that government agencies identify the environmental effects of their actions, including adoption of community comprehensive plans. This action, which is under the sole jurisdiction of the Village Board of Trustees, is classified as a Type I Action. The SEQR regulations require that the Village Board, as lead agency, identify any potential areas of environmental concern related to the action, thoroughly analyze the identified areas of environmental concern to determine whether an Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared, and then set forth its Determination of Significance or Non-Significance in a written form.

7.2.2 Adopting the Plan

The next step in putting the *Comprehensive Plan* to work is for the Village Board to adopt it as its recommendations for the future growth and improvement of the Village. Once adopted, there are many strategies that the Village and its citizens can use to implement the *Comprehensive Plan*. Many of these are already in use within the Village and County. These and other techniques are described below.

Prior to adopting the *Comprehensive Plan*, the Village Board should follow the requirements of § 7-722 of New York State Village Law. This enabling act requires that the *Comprehensive Plan* be referred to the Dutchess County Department of Planning and

Development for their review and comment, and that a public hearing be held by the Village Board. Historically, the Wappingers Falls' Planning Board had been responsible for preparation and review of the previous *Village Development Plan*. While not required by New York State Village Law or the Village's Code, the Comprehensive Plan Committee recommends that the *Comprehensive Plan* be referred to the Planning Board for their comments prior to adoption.

7.2.3 Implementing the Plan

Implementation of a community's plan for its future rests largely in the hands of the local government. The local government in turn, can enlist the participation of private citizens to supplement the work of elected and appointed Village officials. Organized groups of individuals participate in Wappingers Falls' government in the form of several bodies that have been granted specific powers by State statute.

Statutory Bodies

The Village Board, the Planning Board, and the Zoning Board of Appeals have statutory authority. The citizens named to the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals by the Village Board conduct their business according to prescribed procedures, and must perform as required by State law. Each of these Boards has a role in implementation of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

Advisory Groups

The Village Board has, from time to time, created official bodies that focus on particular areas of concern and perform the duties specified by local governmental resolution. The Village of Wappingers Falls Planning Board currently acts as an Architectural Review Board, and its responsibilities should be expanded to include historic reviews. These review responsibilities should also be more clearly delineated. The Village should consider creation of a Conservation Advisory Commission. All of these bodies can make valuable contributions to the local community and can each assist the Village Board with implementation of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

7.2.4 Maintaining the Plan

Frequent review of the *Comprehensive Plan*, to make sure that it meets any new conditions arising subsequent to its adoption, is one of the most important elements of the planning process. The *Comprehensive Plan* must reflect current Village planning goals and policies if it is to be respected and regularly used. A reexamination of the *Plan* should continue to be undertaken at least once every five years. Future amendments to the *Plan* can be accomplished by means of meeting minutes, resolutions, studies, reports,

and other descriptive materials that may be adopted as part of the *Comprehensive Plan* or through a comprehensive revision process, such as occurred for the preparation of this 2000 *Comprehensive Plan*.

7.2.5 Zoning/Village Regulations

Zoning controls the way in which land is used. While such controls cannot require that private lands be developed for uses proposed in the *Comprehensive Plan*, they can prevent land from being developed contrary to the *Plan*.

Following adoption of the *Comprehensive Plan*, a revision of the Zoning regulations should be considered to ensure that its provisions remain in accordance with the Village's development policies, as established in this *Plan*. Zoning regulations serve as a major instrument in carrying out the recommendations of the *Plan*, and the *Plan* acts as a firm foundation on which to base specific provisions of the regulations. New York State Village Law also requires that all land use controls must be adopted in accordance with a comprehensive plan.

Zoning can be expected to change, as it has in the past, to meet the changing objectives of the Village and its residents. Such changes should be made in accordance with the Village *Comprehensive Plan*. Special zoning and regulatory controls are often used to accomplish public purposes. They might be formulated to promote design zoning, protection of sensitive environmental areas, preservation of historic structures, appropriate conversion to accessory apartments, etc. These possibilities are discussed in further detail below.

➔ Important Planning Concern: *Strict enforcement of zoning regulations is needed to ensure realization of the Village's goals. Ways also need to be found to increase the effectiveness of the Building Department's enforcement efforts, such as instituting tight follow-up monitoring.* Performance bonding is a tool that can be used to ensure that proposed site improvements are indeed carried out in accordance with plans approved by the Planning Board.

This *Comprehensive Plan* has recommended consideration of a number of revisions to the Village of Wappingers Falls Zoning Law. To ensure consistency and comprehensiveness, it is recommended that any amendments be devised, considered, studied under SEQR, and enacted into law at the same time.

Natural Resource Protection Regulations

Land use controls dealing with natural resource protection are now firmly established in the State enabling acts, and use of such measures by local government have been increasingly upheld by the courts. These controls include:

WETLANDS, LAKES, AND STREAM BUFFER AREA PROTECTION

Special application procedures can be required whenever a development proposal involves construction adjacent to a water body. Buffer areas can be utilized to keep development away from areas such as wetlands, lakes, ponds, streams, or flood prone lands, as a means of protecting water quality and scenic beauty, and enabling recreational access.

AQUIFER PROTECTION

Densities and land uses in aquifer recharge areas should be regulated to permit maximum recharge and also to protect water quality. The use of the overlay zoning technique, in addition to the already adopted Critical Environmental Area designation, are recommended.

DRAINAGE CONTROLS

"Zero Runoff" is a concept in drainage control that requires the rate of runoff to be the same or less after the completion of development than it was before construction began. This technique should be used in all areas of the Village together with appropriate enforcement mechanisms.

STEEP SLOPE PROTECTION

Means for controlling development in steep slope areas could involve complete prohibition or, alternatively, a program of regulation wherein the degree of development permitted is related to the amount of slope involved, construction techniques, soils data and vegetation cover and runoff.

EROSION AND SEDIMENTATION CONTROLS

Approval of erosion control plans by the Village Planning Board or Building Inspector should occur before any building permits are issued. Erosion control plans are currently submitted by potential developers along with their applications for subdivision or site plan approval. Ideally, the Village should encourage designs that will avoid potential difficulties and preserve natural drainage to the greatest extent possible, rather than devising expensive engineering solutions.

Existing Non-Conforming Uses

As the zoning revision process moves forward, some existing uses may become non-conforming. These uses should be allowed to continue for their useful life and be allowed to expand to a reasonable extent. The reasonable use and reuse of these facilities should be the prime consideration for any rezoning.

Environmental Impact Statements

The State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process requires the preparation of Environmental Assessment Forms (EAF) at a minimum before approving any land use development project. The Village may require an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to be completed where a development has the potential to cause one or more environmental impacts. The SEQR review process can be exceedingly helpful in identifying and resolving the environmental and planning issues that affect the proper development of a major project or environmentally sensitive site.

7.2.6 Official Village Map

The Official Village Map is a foundation for the Village to base certain decisions and policies, such as reserving rights-of-way in subdivisions, providing appropriate locations for trails, parks, drainage facilities, or for new roads. Once an Official Village Map has been adopted by the Village Board, an applicant for a subdivision or other development cannot develop within such proposed areas without giving the Village the opportunity to develop the land as indicated on the Official Map. The Village Board may also require developers to locate roads or provide rights-of-way for future roads that connect to adjacent parcels. The *Comprehensive Plan* recommends that the Village Board adopt an Official Village Map showing the location of all existing and proposed streets, highways, bike paths and trails, including the Wappinger Greenway Trail.

7.2.7 Land Transactions

It is sometimes necessary and desirable for the Village to acquire land in order to improve municipal facilities and services. The following explains ways that this might occur:

Direct Acquisition

Direct acquisition is the simplest and most effective method of obtaining land. It is also the most expensive.

First Refusal Options

A first refusal option is the right to purchase a property before it is released for public sale, in the event that a decision is made to sell it. An approach such as this would be of great value in gaining some control over the disposition of lake front lands and other properties now held for private recreational purposes. If the Village were ultimately to benefit from this approach, it would need to begin securing such options now, either as gifts or as purchases.

Easements

An easement is a right in property that is less than full ownership. In conveying a conservation easement to the Village, the owner of the property voluntarily gives up the right to use the property in any way that is not consistent with its natural or historic character, as defined in the easement, in perpetuity. The owner continues to pay taxes on the land but the real estate taxes could be adjusted downward to reflect any reduction in the development value of the property. Easements are particularly appropriate for preserving open space, historic buildings, stream corridors, wetlands, steep slopes, and other sensitive environmental features while permitting them to remain in private ownership.

If property owners establish easements and covenants on their property, as described above, assessors can take such agreements into account when establishing the tax rate on this property. Fair market value is the basis of property assessment and easements or covenants on a parcel of land or building usually reduce market value and, thereby, total assessment. For historic structures, reducing assessed valuation can be made conditional on undertaking restoration or other improvements.

7.2.8 Real Estate Tax Inducements

In communities such as Wappingers Falls, the steady demand for more and improved services have combined with inflation to keep the level of property taxes continually rising. Means of reducing burdensome real estate taxes are described below:

Historic Districts or Properties

The Tax Act of 1986 provides incentives for the rehabilitation and restoration of historic buildings. These include a 20 percent investment tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic commercial, industrial or income producing residential buildings and a 10 percent allowance for nonresidential buildings in service before 1936. These credits are not available to the normal homeowner who may rehabilitate his or her own home.

To qualify for the historic tax credit, properties must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places or be a contributing element in an Historic District. A 90 acre section of the Village has been listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places as the Wappingers Falls Historic District, and three additional properties are individually listed on the Register.

Private Development and Philanthropy

The great bulk of development in Wappingers Falls has been and will continue to be carried out by private individuals and organizations. Therefore, it is private action that is

the most important element in developing the community, guided and regulated by the Village as described above.

Neither the *Comprehensive Plan*, the zoning regulations, nor the Village agencies which administer these regulations, can force any private individual or agency to develop a particular piece of land for a particular use. But where there is a good *Comprehensive Plan* and it is followed on a continuing basis, private enterprises have a more reliable foundation upon which to plan and build. This encourages good development, as well as helps to accomplish some of the specific recommendations of the *Comprehensive Plan*.

The active solicitation of donations of conservation easements to a municipality's private trust is an increasingly successful preservation implementation device. For many landowners, such donations can be the source of a significant tax benefit. Current federal income tax regulations permit the write-off of up to the full market value of the donation or easement. However, any such regulations devised will have to be reviewed in terms of changing tax laws. Also, many property owners have come to love and appreciate the historic quality of their property. Donation can guarantee that their property will be preserved as they desire.

Private organizations such as the Dutchess Land Conservancy, Scenic Hudson, Trust for Public Land, Open Space Institute, The Nature Conservancy, and the Audubon Society have played an active role in preservation by seeking land or easement donations or, alternatively, by purchasing properties.

7.3 Summary

The *Comprehensive Plan* in itself does not change the zoning or other land use control regulations of the Village, nor assure implementation of the proposals which it recommends. A community is developed over the years by hundreds of individual and group decisions--decisions by private citizens to build houses, by businesses to locate in the Village, by Village officials to create new public facilities and so on. The ultimate accomplishment of the *Comprehensive Plan*, as modified from time to time, requires the cooperative action of many people and agencies. All interests, whether public or private, have a stake in an attractive, orderly, and environmentally sound community. The *Comprehensive Plan* is designed to be a guide for achieving this shared goal.

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY OF PLANNING TERMS

Many terms used in this *Comprehensive Plan* are commonly found in professional vernacular. However, their use in a planning context may be unfamiliar to the general public. An important objective of the Wappingers Falls Comprehensive Plan Committee was to use the *Comprehensive Plan* as a vehicle for educating and involving the public in the planning process. This glossary was developed to meet that objective by defining terms that may need further clarification.

ACTION:	A specific program or project designed to implement an objective and, ultimately, achieve a goal.
ADAPTIVE REUSE:	Transformation of a vacant or obsolete property from its former use to a different function in response to contemporary economic market conditions.
AFFORDABLE OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING:	Residences that do not require monthly mortgage principal, interest, taxes and insurance (PITI) payments that exceed 35 to 40 percent of the owner-occupant household's monthly income.
AFFORDABLE RENTER-OCCUPIED HOUSING:	Residences that do not require monthly rent and utility payments that exceed 35 to 40 percent of the renter-occupant household's monthly income.
AS-OF-RIGHT:	In relation to zoning, use of a property allowed by the zoning ordinance as a principal permitted use in the zoning district in which it is located with no special conditions or permission required.
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT:	New construction or upgrading of existing facilities, infrastructure or physical plant used for delivery of services.
CENSUS TRACT:	A relatively permanent geographical subdivision of a county as defined by the US Bureau of the Census. Census tracts usually have between 2,500 and 8,000 persons.

CODE ENFORCEMENT:	Procedures used to compel citizens to comply with local laws and regulations related to property development and maintenance.
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:	Descriptive material that identifies the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices, and instruments for the immediate and long range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the Village.
EXISTING LAND USE SURVEY:	Physical inventory and identification of the general function of each parcel of land within the Village.
FUTURE LAND USE PLAN:	A map of the Village that illustrates the general boundaries of different land uses to guide future decision-making and bring about a desirable pattern of development and/or redevelopment.
GOAL:	A broad policy description of community desires for the future; a long-term end toward which programs or activities are directed.
HISTORIC PRESERVATION:	Procedures and activities in which buildings and other sites are defined as significant to an area's past and are kept in existence or restored to assist in defining the origins and past development of the area.
IN-MIGRATION:	Movement of new residents into the Village from a different community.
LAND USE CONFLICT:	Negative impact caused by the use of a property or properties for purposes that are inconsistent with the prevailing environment in the surrounding area.
LOW INCOME:	Earnings that are at or below 60 percent of the area's median household income.

MEDIAN INCOME:	Point in a distribution at which half of the incomes are higher and half of the incomes are lower than the level of earnings at the “median” income point.
MODERATE INCOME:	Earnings that are at or below 80 percent of the area’s median income.
NON-CONFORMING USE:	A use or occupancy of a property in a zoning district for a function that is not permitted in that district by zoning.
OBJECTIVE:	Specific intermediate end, achievable in the short-term, that progresses toward a goal.
QUASI-PUBLIC:	Institutional uses that are owned and/or operated by a private or semi-public entity but are similar in function or design to public facilities such as hospitals, schools, or churches.
REVITALIZATION:	Process of upgrading an economically depressed area through building rehabilitation, introducing viable land uses, and improving the physical environment.
SENIOR CITIZEN HOUSING:	Residential developments that are designed for the elderly and where occupancy is limited to those over the age of about 60 years.
STRUCTURAL QUALITY SURVEY:	Observation and inventory of the physical condition of residential or commercial structures, visible from the street through the “windshield” of a moving vehicle using a numerical ranking system.
SUBSIDIZED HOUSING:	Rental units in which lower income occupants pay less than market rent with the difference between their rent and market rent paid by government assistance.
VARIANCE:	Official permission from the Zoning Board

of Appeals to deviate from a zoning regulation which, under normal circumstances, the property would need to comply.

VISION STATEMENT:

Formal expression of the overall image a community wishes to present of itself in the future, which emerges from the goals and objectives formulated during the planning process.

WINDSHIELD SURVEY:

Observation and inventory of exterior features of properties and their use, that are visible from the street through the “windshield” of a moving vehicle.

ZONING:

A method of dividing the Village into land use districts where building restrictions limiting the height, coverage, and other dimensions of structures are established.

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS:

A local semi-judicial entity formed when zoning regulations are first adopted. The board’s essential function is to grant variances from the unfair application of zoning in a particular circumstance.