

# DRAFT

## WAPPINGERS FALLS VISION PLAN



"A public visioning process to promote pedestrian access and develop environmental tourism as catalysts for Village revitalization."

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
Project Description	1
Study Area	2
Public Process	3
Context	7
Precedents	8
<b>EXISTING CONDITIONS</b>	<b>12</b>
Central Business District	12
<i>Existing Conditions Map</i>	12a
Village Gateways	14
Wappinger Greenway Trail	15
Village Parks	16
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>17</b>
Schematic Corridor Improvements	18
<i>Schematic Corridor Plan</i>	19a
Central Business District Improvements	20
<i>Corridor Enlargement Plan</i>	20a
<b>FUTURE ISSUES</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b>	<b>39</b>

## INTRODUCTION

**Effective** change begins with a vision. Many residents of Wappingers Falls already have a vision of what the Village can be. As expressed in the Comprehensive Plan (2001), it is one of the most pedestrian-oriented urban centers in Dutchess County, and it boasts both a natural environment and industrial heritage that offer opportunities for “commerce, recreation, and tourism development.” With its intact main street, historic architecture, hometown businesses, numerous parks, and walkable neighborhoods, Wappingers Falls can be what many communities aspire to become in the 21st Century. The vision is to make a more vibrant village center for Wappingers Falls residents and visitors by building upon these great resources.

The purpose of this plan is to outline strategies for implementing this vision and to make specific recommendations for first steps. It sets out a design palette for Village streetscape, gateway, and park identity improvements, and specific design concepts for the central business district where traffic-calming, pedestrian safety, and aesthetic enhancements are a priority. The Future Issues chapter is a discussion of additional improvement areas identified by the Village for future consideration. An Action Plan with phasing recommendations and potential sources of funding is provided to the Village as a separate working document.

### Project Description

The Village has obtained funding from the New York State Quality Communities Program to conduct a public process to define this vision. The project focus is the Central Business district and its links to Village gateways and parks utilizing the Wappinger Greenway Trail as the primary connector.



Park Avenue neighborhood



Mesier Homestead



Lower Wappinger Creek

**The natural environment shaped industry and village development, and remains today as an opportunity for "commerce, recreation and tourism development "**

The Village has provided matching funds and the project has been coordinated by the Beautification Committee, a subcommittee of the Wappingers Falls Civic Association, with participation by an Advisory Group. The consultant activities have included field reconnaissance, base mapping, public input opportunities, concept development, and a series of documented coordination meetings at key points in the process. In addition to this Vision Plan, and the Action Plan, the Village has been provided with hard and digital copies of all presentation materials for use in publicizing the plan and seeking financial support for implementation.

## Study Area

The study area for the new design palette encompasses the following locations. Also see the **Schematic Corridor Plan**, Page 19a.

- The 9D corridor within Village limits.
- Gateway locations:
  - West Main Street
  - South Avenue
  - East Main Street at Route 9
  - Market Street near Reese Park
- The Central Business District
- Links to Village parks and natural areas, including park entrances:
  - Veterans' Park, via North Mesier Avenue between Mesier Park and Park entrance
  - Temple Park, via Market Street to Dutchess Terrace

And the following planned parks:

- Bain Park, via Fulton Street, Dutchess Terrace and Elm Street to the entrance on Clapp Avenue
- Falls View Park, via Market Street

More detailed applications of the design palette are shown for locations in the Central Business District. See the **Corridor Enlargement Plan**, Page X and the perspective view sketches that follow.

## Public Process

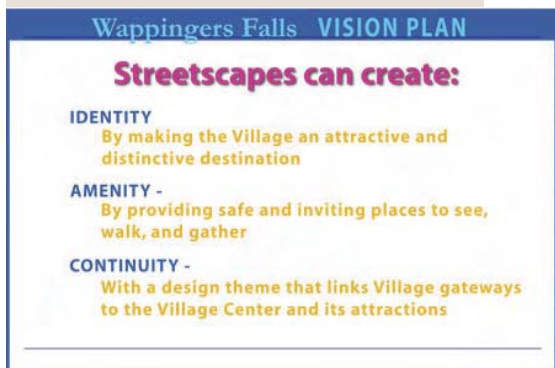
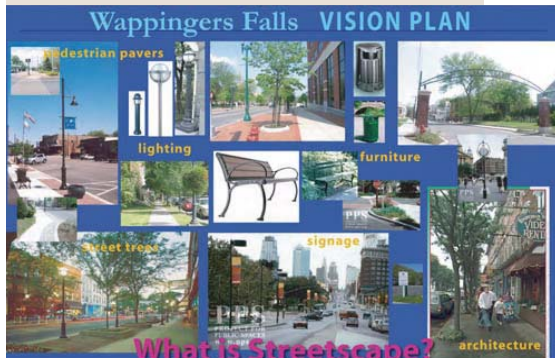
The public participation process was designed with two components -- coordination by the Beautification Committee and Advisory Group, and a series three public meetings. The Beautification Committee has been charged with decision-making authority for the final contents of the plan.

X coordination meetings have been held, one at each phase of the project in order to review and approve findings and recommendations. At the first coordination meeting with the Beautification Committee and Advisory Group, an extensive list of preliminary issues was generated in three major areas of concern (See Appendix):

- Streetscape Improvements and Central Business District Revitalization
- Walkability and Readability
- Park and Open Space Improvements

Some of the issues generated are beyond the scope of this plan and are included in the Future Issues chapter for future consideration.

The second public component was designed as a series of three successive meetings: Issues Identification, Outcomes & Goals, and the Vision Plan Presentation. While participants could attend any one of the meetings, it was hoped that a core group of residents would participate in the logic of the design process and would attend all three.

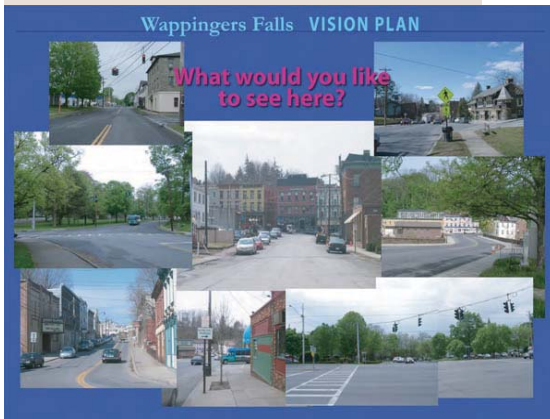


In fact, participation was so low at the first meeting that this format was replaced after extensive discussion with the Beautification Committee. Members were doubtful that they could attract greater participation at future meetings. Instead, the decision was made to bring the meeting to an already scheduled and popular summer event, Picnic-in-the-Park, at Mesier Park in the center of the Village.

During the month before the event, a display of presentation boards was placed in the windows of the Grinnell Library. They introduced the project and showed examples of streetscape improvements as well as sketches for potential enhancements at key locations in the Village. Residents were invited to attend Picnic-in-the-Park to contribute their ideas about what improvements they would like to see implemented.

At the event, the Beautification Committee set up a centrally located tent that was organized with a more extensive display of presentation boards. Consultants and volunteers were present to engage visitors in conversations about the purpose of the project, preliminary issues identified streetscape improvements they would like to see implemented, traffic-calming measures, concerns about specific areas of the Village, urban greenways, potential interest in an industrial heritage trail and other topics. A comments and questions box and large pads on easels were provided for visitors to offer ideas and feedback.





The verbal and written comments received endorsed many of the issues that were generated by the Beautification Committee and Advisory Group. Residents love their Village and want to see improvements that capitalize on its historic architecture and natural features that lend distinctiveness:

- Lighting that is appropriate to the Village architecture, and will call attention to the dramatic Gorge and historic bridge while addressing security there.
- Traffic-calming measures to address speeding and truck traffic, such as narrowing East Main Street to slow traffic with corner bulb-outs and striped parking.
- Pedestrian improvements including distinctive sidewalk and crosswalk pavements, benches, and litter receptacles.
- Street trees, planters and baskets, especially trees for Mill Street and South Avenue.
- Focal points like street clocks and public art opportunities.
- Sign standards that harmonize with the historic architecture, and municipal signing to announce special events and to identify parking, Greenway Trail, parks and open space connections.
- Opportunities to access Wappinger Lake and the Wappinger Creek.
- Park improvements and maintenance.

[ About Business Meeting in September]

## Comments from Public

Traffic - Narrow street thru business district.

### wappingers falls vision plan comments:

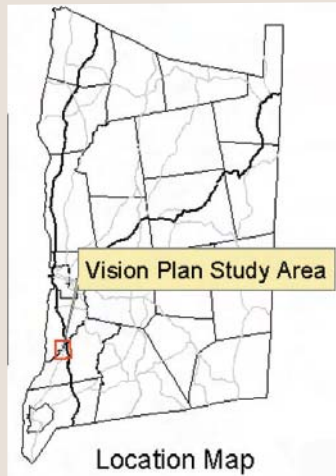
This space is provided for your comments, ideas, and con  
Please place it in the drop box provided...

- Trees on mill street approach main street.
- Another ornamental light post center of Falls Stone bridge
- Large planting boxes on bridge
- more trees everywhere...
- new curbs... more brick pattern w. pedestrian areas.
- fountain out

Replace current street lighting on both East & West Main Streets with vintage lighting

Village needs parking (off street)





East Main Street looking west

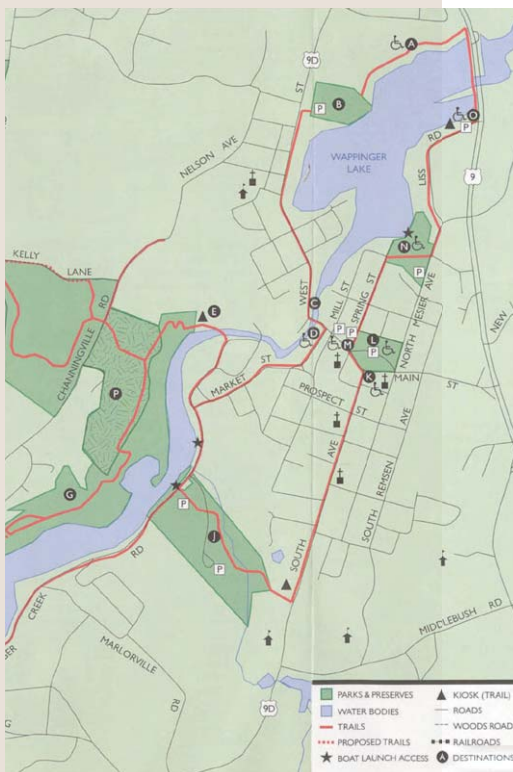


Wappinger Lake from Fisherman's Park

## Context

The Village is centrally located in Dutchess County, New York between two major state routes (9 and 9D), nearby major highways and minutes from a Metro North rail station. Thanks to an extraordinary regional effort by the Village and the towns of Wappinger and Poughkeepsie in which it lies, the Wappinger Greenway Trail, a State-designated greenway trail linking cultural and natural resources winds through the Village and helps position it to be a regional destination.

Today, however, many of the Village's assets are still unknown or underdeveloped and some also carry liabilities. The Village has extraordinary natural features – the dramatic Gorge and Falls, Wappingers Lake and the Upper and Lower Wappinger Creek – and a large number of neighborhood parks that aren't well known by the general public, even some local residents, because they lack amenities or have poor or unmarked access. The historic architecture that graces the Village also requires upkeep and investment, which must go hand-in-hand with economic revitalization. State Route 9D, which doubles as the Village main street through the Central Business District, attracts a large volume of traffic including truck traffic. Instead of counterbalancing the business impacts of the Route 9 commercial malls to the east, the traffic on Route 9D detracts from the pedestrian safety and attractiveness of East and West Main Streets and makes street crossing and parking more difficult.



## Precedents

This study builds upon a strong foundation of plans and other efforts that the Village has undertaken over the past several years. Each of these contributed to the this plan by documenting specific opportunities and constraints and making recommendations for ways to address them.

### Wappinger Greenway Trail:

This 10.7 mile linear park, a State-designated trail still in development, consists of on- and off-road trail lands under public and private ownership. It includes a network of routes within the Village of Wappingers Falls that connect externally to Village gateways and link the Central Business District with parks and natural areas within the Village. The trail is a cooperative effort of the Village and the Towns of Wappinger and Poughkeepsie and is considered a key segment of the Hudson Valley Greenway System linking significant historic, cultural, natural and economic resources.

Greenways are important for environmental preservation and are known to be major generators of economic value through spending from tourism and recreation and by enhancing community character. The trail is still mostly invisible within the Village, but it offers numerous opportunities for attractive streetscape improvements and even historic interpretation that could make it a catalyst for economic revitalization. The Village Comprehensive Plan asserted that “the trail will achieve many of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.”

**After two centuries of development, Wappingers Falls survives as one of the most extensive historic factory villages extant in New York State.**

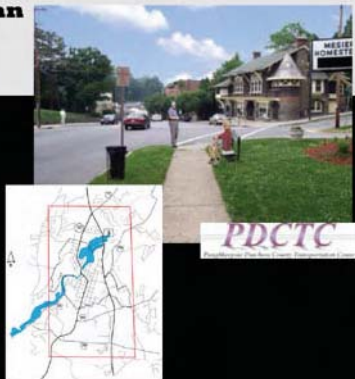
### **Village of Wappingers Falls Comprehensive Plan (adopted 2001):**

The most recent revision of the Village Comprehensive Plan in 2001 recommends attention to the natural environment, Village Parks, and the Market Street Industrial Park, as recreational draws for residents and visitors. It also recommends business district enhancements and the need to “reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflicts caused by the Village asset of accessibility to Routes 9 and 9D.” Citing a majority of residents surveyed, the Plan puts a priority on pedestrian safety and makes specific recommendations for integrating bicycling and pedestrian improvements, extending sidewalks, new crosswalks, signage and similar improvements. The Plan includes an appendix on walkable communities, and endorses traffic-calming improvements recommended in the Wappingers Falls Transportation Plan (March 2001). These improvements are also consistent with the Dutchess County Greenway Connections Program, which encourages development that is compatible with walkable communities.



Broad pedestrian crossing on East Main Street at Market Street.

### **Wappingers Falls Falls Transportation Plan**



### **Wappingers Falls Transportation Plan (2001):**

The Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council worked with the Village and New York State Department of Transportation-Region 8 to study traffic conditions, particularly along the Route 9D corridor. The Study highlighted major issues and findings, including that the vast majority of pedestrian-vehicle conflicts occurred where there were no crosswalks or signals. The recommendations include many structural traffic-calming improvements ("bulb-outs," right turn lanes) and streetscape enhancements that also have a traffic-calming benefit, from striping parking spaces to new and improved crosswalks, landscaping and street trees.

### **Village of Wappingers Falls Parks and Recreation Plan (2001):**

The Village is fortunate to have a large number of dedicated parks in addition to the Upper and Lower Creek areas and Wappingers Lake. An outgrowth of the Village Comprehensive Plan process was the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. A needs assessment was conducted to audit existing facilities and recommend long-range improvements based on current needs and expected growth. The study also considered three vacant parcels to be developed as Village Parks. While internal park improvements are beyond the scope of this plan, park visual identity is an important component and should be compatible with the Village design palette. The Future Issues section includes discussion of some park issues as well.



James Temple Park viewed from  
Market Street



## I. GREENWAY COMPACT PROGRAM

### What We Mean by Greenways

**G**reenways are connections between people and places, both cooperative agreements among neighboring communities and paths where the natural and human landscapes coincide.

Greenways are most often identified with trails or open space corridors. Trails are certainly Greenways, but so are sidewalk systems along tree-lined main streets, country roads through farmlands, safe and pleasant bike routes, and waterways with access points for fishing and floating small boats. Even a highway commercial district can be part of a Greenway, if it is built as a tree-lined boulevard rather than a linear strip of parking lots and pole signs.

In many ways we have always been a Greenway place. Dutchess County began as a network of trails through the wilderness. For centuries the Hudson River and other major waterways served as the regional routes for transportation and economic activities. From the early 1800s on, open farmland dominated the landscape. City neighborhoods, villages, and hamlets were closely centered around convenient walking distances. Early 20th century post cards show village center streets and country roads from Red Hook to Pawling shaded with overarching trees.

Design principles that emphasize trail connections, waterway access, farmland and open space protection, tree-lined streets, and compact walkable centers are based on traditional settlement patterns embedded in the area's history and landscape.

Greenway policies place value on historic patterns distinctive to this region, but they also serve as a guide to integrating natural and rural landscapes with new development. Thinking about the future in the Greenway context encourages us to consider common problems and possible connections in regional terms. In this sense, cooperative agreements among Dutchess County communities are also forms of Greenway Connections.



## Greenway Connections:

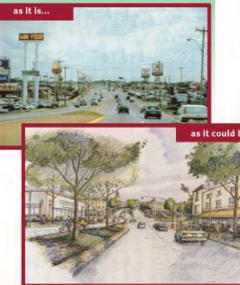
Both the Village Comprehensive Plan and the Transportation Plan reference the guidelines of the Greenway Connections program. This is a product of the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development that incorporates the Hudson Valley Greenway Compact Program, which promotes regional cooperation through technical assistance and incentives. Greenway Connections offers many guidelines strengthening town centers by promoting walkable communities. It emphasizes the interrelationship of economic vitality and greenway principles and endorses the goals that Wappingers Falls has identified for itself, from streetscape improvements, "greening," and traffic-calming, to improving access to waterways.

## GREENWAY GUIDE 23 Greenway Connections

### HIGHWAYS INTO GREENWAYS

*Treat roads and streets as our most important public open space system and the most visible opportunity to create a network of scenic Greenways.*

The view from the road is the most common way residents visualize their community and the means by which visitors decide whether it is worth stopping. Streets are the circulation system that binds together buildings into neighborhoods. Publicly owned road rights-of-way are the places where communities can most directly control their future. To make residents proud of their community and attract new businesses and visitors, improve the public streetscapes - make them more like parkways and less like traffic sewers.



Strip commercial areas can be gradually converted to Greenways with good signs and landscaping standards, shorter building setbacks, sidewalks, street trees, and rear parking.

### Rural Roads



River Road in Rhinebeck and Red Hook is a main-dedicated scenic highway that illustrates some of the best elements of rural roads: stone walls, mature trees, historic structures, farm fields and open views.

**Like a Drive in the Park...** The first Greenways roads, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted as the "park-ways" to connect Prospect Park in Brooklyn to the ocean and nearby parks. The model Greenway in Dutchess is the Taconic State Parkway - a river-greenway that flows through the center of our county. The roadside views of farmland and open space are an essential part of our identity and what makes our area so attractive to outside visitors and new businesses.

Preserving the rural qualities of our countryside is preventing roadsides from being lined by new ho strip commercial districts, which block views and down the even flow of traffic. Most development be clustered in and around traditional village or hamlets, not strung out along the roadways. Imp rural features, like farm fields, stone walls, barns, roadside trees, should be retained at every opportunity.



Central Business District looking west on East Main Street



Historic Grinnell Library

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

**B**ase mapping for this study was taken from aerial mapping and GIS (Geographic Information Systems) database information. The Wappinger Greenway Trail was added manually using maps from the trail committee. The consultants spent several days in the field to compile a photo log of the study area, and reviewed existing studies and plans.

The existing conditions inventory focused on four areas or aspects of the Village

- The Central Business District
- Village gateways
- The Wappinger Greenway Trail
- Village parks

### Central Business District

The Central Business District extends from Village Hall at East Main Street and South Avenue to West Main Street at Church and School Streets, and sections of Mill Street (to Wappinger Lake) and Market Street (past the Gorge, stopping before the Market Street Industrial Park, an adaptive reuse on the site of the 19th century Bleachery.) Thus it incorporates the Village's earliest history, from the first industrial settlement area at the picturesque Gorge, to the 18th century Mesier Homestead in Mesier Park. This area is roughly contiguous with the Wappingers Falls Historic District, which is listed on both State and National Registers of Historic Places.

The Central Business District includes a stretch of retail and restaurant businesses and services housed primarily in late 19th century buildings with offices and residences on upper floors, and such community facilities as churches and the Grinnell Library. Some business and





Main entrance to Mesier Park and the historic Mesier homestead on east Main Street



The Gorge viewed from Market Street



West Main Street in the Central Business District

community services extend onto side streets where they gradually blend into residential neighborhoods. West Main street includes a mix of commercial and residential uses as well as the popular County Players Community Theater.

The Comprehensive Plan reports that a large majority of residents favor aesthetic improvements for the existing business district and strong standards for new development. Currently there are many attractive facades mixed in with less well kept buildings. The existing streetscape is basic, with older concrete sidewalks, a heavy concentration of overhead wires, some tear-drop streetlights mounted on wooden poles, and with faded striping for crosswalks and on-street parking. (A detailed inventory of existing sidewalk and pedestrian conditions in the Village is provided in The Wappingers Falls Transportation Plan (2001).) Currently the Wappingers Falls Business and Professional Association in conjunction with local businesses and the Village Beautification Committee sponsor and care for attractive banners, hanging baskets and colorful park plantings.

The Gorge and Falls, while spectacular natural features, are oddly understated, with few places for onlookers to view them and nothing to call attention to them or to the locations of Wappinger Creek and the Lake. The Village offers many destinations for pedestrians – the Wappinger Greenway Trail passes right through the Village and its literature calls out the many cultural resources there – but there is no directional or locational information that would inform pedestrians, either visitors or residents.



Northern Village gateway on Route 9D/West Main Street from the Town of Poughkeepsie



Village gateway on Market Street at the Wappinger Creek, across from the entrance to Reese Park.

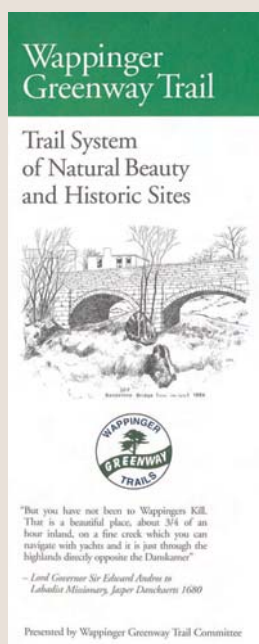


Department of Public Works garage on the Wappinger Creek and across from James A. Temple Park

## Village Gateways

Wappingers Falls is strategically located within central Dutchess County. One of its major corridors is State Route 9D, which is heavily traveled and well known by local residents, commuters, shoppers, and regional travelers as the quickest way north or south, bypassing Route 9. The Village has four major gateways, three on State Routes:

- *North* - Route 9D/West Main Street, south of South Hills Mall in the Town of Poughkeepsie, just below an attractive rural cemetery and nearby Canale Park.
- *South* - Route 9D/South Avenue, a heavily trafficked route from the Town of Wappinger and Route I-84, contiguous with a section of the Wappinger Greenway Trail and close to the Trail entrance to Reese Park from the east .
- *East* - East Main Street at Route 9. There is already a Village park and monument there and new commercial development is expected to upgrade the appearance of this intersection, making it timely now to adopt guidelines for a gateway treatment there.
- *West* - A less trafficked gateway on Market Street, it is nonetheless important for the interests of this study as it is adjacent to the Lower Wappinger Creek, with small boat access, and a connecting point for spurs of the Wappinger Greenway Trail. It is accessible from the New Hamburg MetroNorth rail station and nearby recreation areas like Reese Park, just outside the Village limit, and James A. Temple Park within the Village. (The Village would like to convert a Department of Public Works building on the Creek to an environmental center with an emphasis on water recreation.)



There is also a secondary gateway at Route 9 where it crosses Wappinger Lake near Liss Road at the north end of the Village. This is the northernmost point of the Wappinger Greenway Trail within the Village and the location of Fisherman's Park.

Each of these gateways marks a significant location and suggests opportunities for the Village, yet none of them are distinctive today. The average traveler would not notice that they have entered a new municipality, let alone a historic Village, and they wouldn't know anything about what it could offer them in terms of business services or recreation.

## Wappinger Greenway Trail

Greenways are said to connect people and places. So while they are often thought of as part of a natural system they are equally likely to be part of an urban system. Their broader purpose is to integrate developed and natural areas. The Hudson River Valley Greenway makes the point that historic communities exemplified the first greenways, with networks of wooded trails and the dominance of waterways as well as walkable, tree-lined village routes.

Greenways are also known to be major generators of economic value through spending from tourism and recreation, and they can enhance community character. The most effective greenway, then, will reflect its locale and history. The Wappinger Greenway Trail includes natural trails through open space and parkland but it also recognizes the historic qualities of the Village and gives those cultural resources equal billing in its brochures and maps.





Wappinger Greenway Trail kiosk on the Lower Wappinger Creek at Market Street, a Village Gateway location



Veterans' Park access to Wappinger Lake at Spring Street



Canale Park

What's missing, however, is sufficient presence of the Greenway "on the ground" through signage, interpretive plaques or inventive uses of materials and pedestrian, bicycle and waterway improvements to attract more recreational users. The Trail Committee has located kiosks and maps at three locations, but there is no indication in the Village that this resource is there for recreation and even alternative transportation uses.

The Wappinger Greenway Trail also offers many untapped opportunities for "placemaking" to exhibit the Village's interesting industrial history, enhance local streetscapes, connect with its parks and natural areas to offer new destinations for residents and visitors.

## Village Parks

Wappingers Falls is fortunate to have many Village parks within its limits. The 2001 Parks and Recreation Master Plan counted six parks in addition to the Wappinger Creek and Wappingers Lake, and three more parks still in the planning stages. The plan emphasizes the challenges of maintenance and funding as well as the need for youth activities. But it also recognizes the potential economic development benefits of creating new pocket parks within the Central Business District, especially to provide better viewing access for the Gorge and the Falls.

The Wappinger Greenway Trail already connects with most of the major Village Parks. What's needed is to connect them visually with the rest of the Village. Just as the Village needs its municipal gateways, the parks would benefit from design treatments that identify them as an integral part of the Village and welcome and inform users.

**The Village is one of the most pedestrian-oriented in the County, but there are many unsafe conditions.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

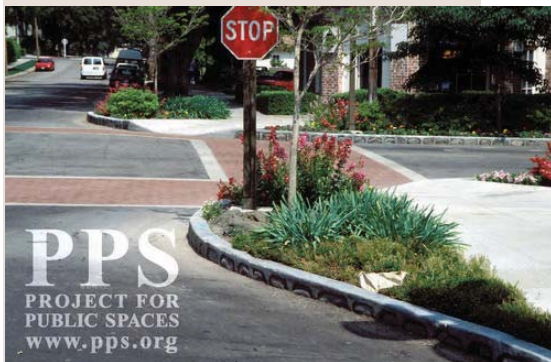
**W**hile many communities in the Hudson Valley are grappling with development and the pace of change, small urban centers like Wappingers Falls often struggle with a lack of investment. At the same time, many people are becoming tired of their car-dependent way of life and wish for a more walkable community for themselves and their families. A business district like Wappingers Falls, with graceful, pedestrian-scaled architecture and compelling natural features offers the community character and small-town quality of life that many communities wish to create, or recreate. The historic interest of Wappingers Falls is an untapped resource. With relatively little investment, the Village can begin to capitalize on its great resources.

These recommendations address improvements for the Village's Central Business District and connections to Village gateways and parks utilizing the Wappinger Greenway Trail and proposed Village Greenway Links, as depicted on the Schematic Corridor Plan. Several perspective views illustrate site-specific recommendations that can also be modified and applied elsewhere throughout the corridor.

Proposed phasing for the implementation of improvements is outlined in the Action Plan, a working document provided separately to the Village.



Parking as traffic-calming



Corner bulb-outs and greening to narrow intersections



Improvements are both safe and attractive

## Schematic Corridor Improvements

One of the primary reasons for undertaking this plan has been to address traffic issues in the Route 9D corridor, particularly along East Main Street. Pedestrian conditions there are poor due to the volume and speed of through traffic, compounded by unnecessarily large intersections and the lack of, or inadequately marked, crosswalks. These conditions negatively affect residents and businesses alike.

The Wappingers Falls Transportation Plan, after a detailed study of traffic conditions and pedestrian use and facilities, endorsed a number of traffic-calming improvements for use in this study area to improve and promote pedestrian and bicycle use. These kinds of measures are also endorsed by the Comprehensive Plan (2001). Additional locations and measures are also suggested by this plan.

Traffic-calming recognizes that our roadways are more important to a community than only moving vehicular traffic. They are also social, recreational and economic spaces. Traffic-calming measures can improve facilities for vehicles and pedestrians while making vehicles more aware of pedestrians so that they slow down. Some improvements that appear to be purely aesthetic can provide for traffic-calming by calling attention to a pedestrian area. All of these improvements provide opportunities for creating identity for the Village through the choice of materials and other design details. Traffic-calming measures are the basis for many of the improvements recommended in this plan.

These traffic-calming improvements form the basis for recommendations depicted in the Schematic Corridor Plan [figure] and the Central Business District Enlargement Plan



## Schematic Corridor Improvements

### Village Gateways

- Village welcome sign
- Feature lighting: 9D/West Main Street, East Main Street-Route 9, 9D/South Avenue
- Gateway archway: Market Street
- Distinctive roadway pavement

### Wappinger Greenway Trail

- New decoratively scored sidewalks (phased in with sidewalk replacement)
- New or upgraded designated crosswalks
- Pedestrian amenities at designated sites: benches, litter receptacles, bicycle racks, pedestrian lighting
- Wayfinding system

### Village Greenway Links

- New decoratively scored sidewalks (phased in with sidewalk replacement)
- Wayfinding system

### Village Park Entrances

- Timber bollards or archway designating pedestrian entrance
- Timber guardrail in Park parking area
- Pedestrian lighting
- Benches, litter receptacles and bicycle racks
- Wayfinding system - new engraved wood entrance and directional signage

### Central Business District (See below)

- Road re-alignment where designated
- New pedestrian areas and pocket parks
- Distinctive sidewalk, intersection pavements and crosswalks
- New street trees, plantings and amenities

## Central Business District Improvements

Revitalization of the Village's historic Central Business District is one of its highest priorities and a key strategy for success in making Village-wide improvements. Public comments have consistently called for traffic-calming and aesthetic improvements for this section of the 9D corridor. These improvements also create opportunities for new pedestrian areas and pocket parks at major intersections and points of interest, notably at the Grinnell Library, Mesier Park and the bridge at the Gorge.

- Traffic calming measures at the Route 9D/South Avenue-East Main Street intersection
- Road narrowing at the 9D/East Main Street intersection with Spring Street and Satterlee Place
- Creation of a new pedestrian area, plantings and a civic focal point due to the sidewalk enlargement in front of Grinnell Library,
- New and improved crosswalks and intersection treatments with distinctive pavements.
- Distinctive sidewalk pavements.
- Sidewalk and corner bulb-outs.
- New or renewed parking striping
- New street lighting, signal poles, pedestrian lighting and feature lighting for the Gorge and historic features.
- New benches, litter receptacles, planter boxes
- New street trees and plantings

All of these improvements can be important place-making elements when they reflect their locale or interpret historic significance. They can also be creative opportunities to engage the community with competitions and themed designs.

Traditional  
light pole  
at Grinnell  
Library



Gateway arch example



Example of engraved  
wood Village sign

## Discussion

**Village Gateways** welcome visitors, tell passersby that there are reasons to slow down and stay a while, and remind residents that they are home.

The traditional light pole in front of the Grinnell Library can be adapted as a focal point for use at the Village's north south and eastern gateways. Village signage can be incorporated in the design, along with plantings.

The Market Street gateway offers different opportunities – it is on the Lower Wappinger Creek adjacent to a Wappinger Greenway Trail kiosk and near the site of a proposed environmental center on the Creek. It is also in a neighborhood of older worker housing close by the Market St. Industrial Park, site of the historic Bleachery. Because it is not on a State route there are more options for interpreting this location, such as installing an arch designed with a Village-appropriate theme to span the road.

**Recommendation** – Apply distinctive treatments at designated gateways that reflect the character and heritage of Wappinger Falls.

## Village Gateways

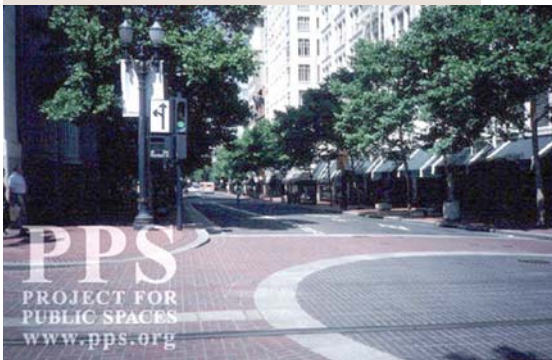


Route 9D/West Main Street





Textured crosswalk. Boston, MA



Distinctive pavement for intersection treatment



Corner bulb-out, and parking narrow roadway

**Textured crosswalks** promote safety by alerting both pedestrians and vehicles that they share a common space. Adding crosswalks will reduce acceleration through a pedestrian area. Special intersection treatments, along with textured pavements, are a visual and tactile reminder to slow down and watch for other traffic.

**Recommendation** – *Install or upgrade designated crosswalks and special intersection treatments using distinctive textured pavements for safety and aesthetic improvements. These may consist of imprinted pavement systems or vehicular grade unit pavers with either painted or concrete headers.*

**Strategies to calm traffic** by narrowing roadways include structural changes like new alignments, corner bulb-outs, and roundabouts, as well as on-street parking. These have been shown to reduce speed and provide pedestrian safety at intersections, and they can provide opportunities for new pedestrian areas and greening. Even improvements that create the perception of narrowing are shown to slow traffic – such as distinctive parking strips, street tree plantings and street lighting.

**Recommendation** – *Slow Traffic Flow: Narrow roadways at designated areas through alignment changes, corner bulb-out areas or a Roundabout.*



Traffic-calming measures  
at a central intersection



Route 9D at South Avenue  
and East Main Street





Street trees appear to narrow the vehicular zone. Planters and pavement help define the pedestrian zone

**Recommendation** – Expand pedestrian areas using roadway realignments as opportunities to create new pocket parks.

**Recommendation** – Define parking areas by renewing parking striping or install distinctive pavements in parking zones.

**Recommendation** – Establish street trees and other sidewalk plantings where there are opportunities.

**Distinctive sidewalk pavements** and streetscape improvements show pride, compliment architecture and define pedestrian space. Benches, lighting, litter receptacles and plantings offer the pedestrian comfort and relaxation, and they can support businesses by encouraging pedestrians to stop in the Village. These elements also establish a human presence on the street that can discourage negative behavior.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



Traffic-calming measures create new pedestrian areas



Route 9D/East and West Main Streets at the Gorge

Feature lighting at the Gorge





XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

**Recommendation** – Install distinctive sidewalk pavements to signal special districts or routes and to define pedestrian space. Use a hierarchy of pavements to identify different districts, for example

- Bluestone pavement with stone curbs will compliment the historic architecture of the Central Business District.
- Brick or unit pavers, alone or to accent blue stone, will identify special corners and call attention to pedestrian crossings.
- Tinted concrete, with decorative score patterns, or banded with brick or unit pavers, will call out Wappinger Greenway Trail sidewalks and Village Greenway links.

**Recommendation** – Install at regular intervals a preferred palette of amenities and lighting that compliment the character and heritage of the Village, for example

- “Acorn” fixtures on traditional poles for pedestrian lighting.
- Upgraded street light poles for use with existing “teardrop” roadway fixtures and used throughout the Central Business District, including Village parking lots, and with signal arms at signal locations.

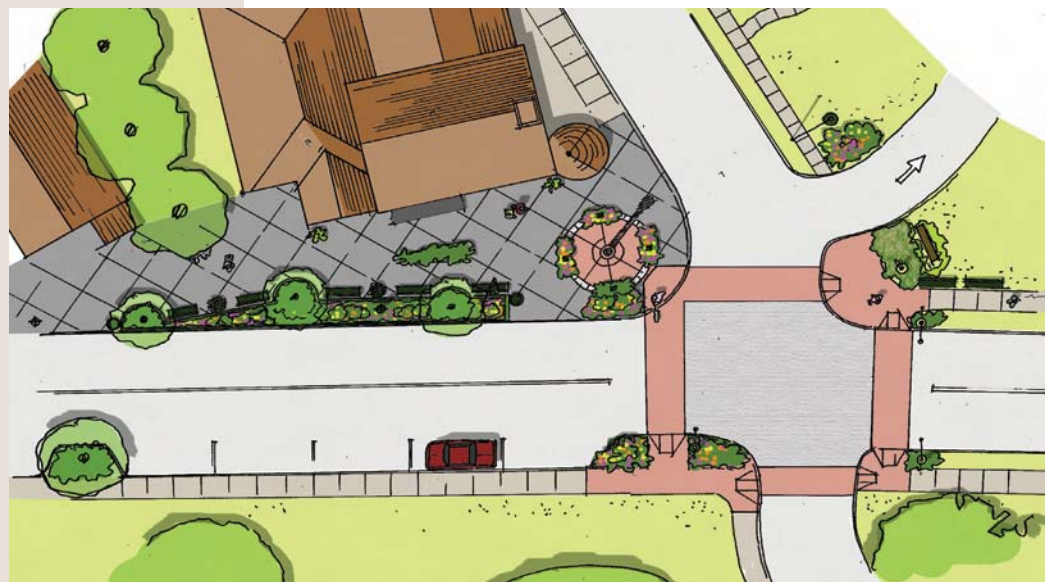




Distinctive intersection treatment where re-alignment creates new pedestrian park



Route 9D/East Main Street at  
Grinnell Library and Mesier Park





- “World’s Fair” type benches, or another classic wood slat and steel style bench and complimentary litter receptacles.
- Simulated stone (e.g. Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete, GFRC) planter boxes, and curbed sidewalk planting boxes.
- Period-style steel bollards to define safe pedestrian areas.
- Tasteful bicycle racks at pocket parks and other nodes and destination points.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

**Wayfinding systems** answer the questions ‘Where am I now?’ and ‘Where can I go from here?’ They make the pedestrian comfortable and encourage walking by locating destinations – businesses, landmarks or community services.



XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

**Recommendation**– Develop and implement a wayfinding system that reflects the character and heritage of Wappingers Falls to apply to the Central Business District, and to utilize the Wappinger Greenway Trail as the prime connector between the Village, its gateways, and its parks and natural features.

- Maintain a traditional look with materials and typefaces used.
- Design Village gateway signs for readability from a vehicle as well as on foot.





- Site signs to identify important natural and historic features, to provide directions to Village offices and businesses, to Village parks, the Greenway Trail, and other key destinations.
- Develop distinctive signage for the Wappinger Greenway Trail in coordination with the Trail Committee as well as to reflect the Village's character.
- Consider using the Village's industrial heritage as the theme for the wayfinding system, which offers opportunities for public art.



Public art on the Asheville, North Carolina heritage trail







Proposed Village Greenway link



Mill Street improvements at East Main Street

Xxxxxxx X

Xxxxxxx X

Xxxxxxx X

**Wappingers Falls** is fortunate to have many parks for both active and passive recreation for a Village its size. Parks are also part of the streetscape and one objective of this plan is to integrate them with the rest of the Village for a uniform visual identity. Each park carries its own requirements -- Mesier Park is also an historic property in the center of an historic district -- but a simple palette of design elements can be adapted to be appropriate for each of them.

**Recommendation**– Apply a uniform palette of design elements and materials at Village park entrances to identify them to residents and visitors.

- Engraved wood signage, appropriately styled and sized for the park, with a consistent type face and uniform information about the park.
- Identified pedestrian entrances, with walkways as needed (crushed stone or asphalt) and with direction signage and amenities.
- The same sturdy benches litter receptacles and bicycle racks. The Village streetscape bench and litter receptacle to be used at Mesier Park and other parks in the Historic Central Business District.
- Pedestrian lighting
- Street trees and plantings at entrances and along road frontage.

## Village park identity treatments



Veterans' Park at North  
Mesier Avenue

## FUTURE ISSUES

Many issues have been raised throughout the development of this project by members of the community. While some of these are outside the scope of this plan's focus, they are nevertheless important components of the Village's "vision" for the future and will contribute to and benefit from its successful realization.

### Truck Re-Routing

One of the issues most often mentioned as a negative impact on the Village is the heavy volume of truck traffic. The Village does have the ability to change the status of Route 9D as a truck route. The process for doing this requires approval by the New York State Department of Transportation and would involve the cooperation of neighboring municipalities that would receive the re-routed traffic. Other ideas involve re-routing within the Village limits, which would have positive and negative impacts on adjacent neighborhoods. This objective has many merits but requires careful long range planning and teamwork to accomplish.

### Enforcement and Incentives

Several comments have pointed out that better enforcement of existing traffic laws – e.g. speed limits, pedestrian rights-of-way – would help promote traffic-calming in the Village, as it does in nearby municipalities such as Rhinebeck and Red Hook. Operational solutions like this, along with incentive programs such as for downtown improvements, façade upgrades, etc., can help the Village toward its goals. Wappingers Falls has previously participated in a building facades improvement program through New York State... While only .... the program resulted in ....

There is no one solution -- community revitalization is



built upon an integrated approach to issues and opportunities.

## Route 9 Improvements

This plan largely focuses on the Route 9D corridor. But an important segment of Wappingers Falls businesses are located on Route 9 where pedestrian facilities and roadway amenities are almost non-existent. New commercial development at the East Main Street-Route 9 intersection has been planned to enhance that gateway to the Village. Wappingers Falls can continue to advocate for further improvements by the New York State Department of Transportation, such as a planted road median on Route 9 in the Village; and, a pedestrian walkway envisioned over the west side of the Peter Furnari Bridge to complete the Greenway Trail loop and to provide safe pedestrian access to the malls north of the Village along Route 9.

## Industrial Heritage

As the 2001 Comprehensive Plan observed, the Village is one of the most intact industrial villages in the state. Once you know where to look, this legacy is visible throughout the Village, from the historic architecture and infrastructure at the Market Street Industrial Park, to the buildings lining Givens Street -- the "lunchpail" route for mill workers -- the Gorge and Falls, and numerous other sites. The Wappinger Greenway Trail already touches many of these locations and Village Greenway Links can connect to others. There are numerous opportunities for historic interpretation and education to create an Industrial Heritage Trail in the Village. It can be the basis for public art and streetscape amenities, and a compelling tourism draw, thus helping to promote the objectives of this vision plan. The Village might pursue partnerships with educational and historical institutions to plan and implement such a Trail.

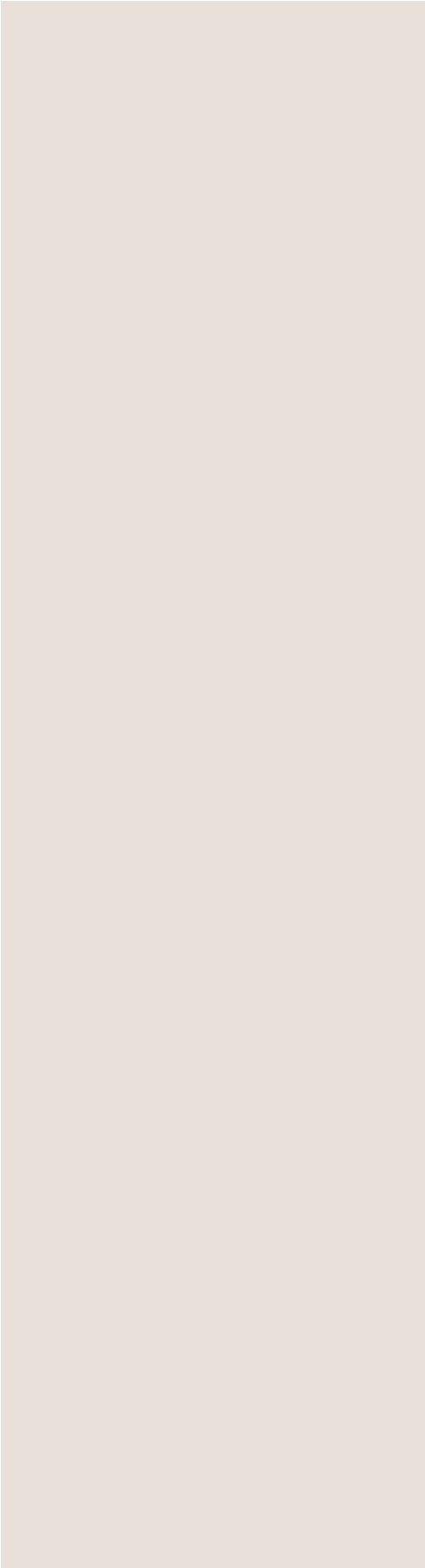
## West Main Street Redevelopment

Many comments express concern with the condition of West Main Street and how it affects nearby businesses and neighborhoods. The Village has begun to consider what role redevelopment might play and has begun outreach for information and support. There needs to be a systematic look at building ownership and land uses along those blocks and an engagement with partnerships that can help plan and implement a program of change that addresses social as well as economic issues.

**Park Development and Improvements** The Village Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2001) provides an excellent inventory of existing park conditions and priorities for new park development. The Village has begun to prioritize and implement some improvements and now has a vision for new park development that will work hand in hand with other goals for Village revitalization, specifically for Mary Ross Park, a pocket park at the corner of Mill Street and East Main Street; Falls View Park, to highlight the Gorge and Falls; and what is called Consentino Park, an opportunity to revitalize the lower West Main Street business and provide access to Wappingers Lake and the Falls. The Village has begun to explore funding for these developments. As comments have pointed out, ongoing maintenance for all Village parks also needs to be considered, along with paid park staffing, the role of the Recreation Fund, which is funded from assessments on developers of new dwelling units, and citizen volunteers.

## Water Resources and Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan

The Village is now focusing on both the benefits and difficulties with its water resources. The Wappinger



Greenway Trail, and the vision for park improvements and new park development are ways of capitalizing on these resources. Water quality issues will involve at least state level partnerships. An important next planning step for the Village is creation of a Local Waterfront Development Plan, in partnership with the State Division of Coastal Resources. This maps out a strategy for addressing a community's waterfronts with a consensus on their future. It actually refines State policies to reflect local conditions and community priorities. Once the plan is approved by the New York Secretary of State, it serves to coordinate State and federal actions to assist the community achieve its vision.

## Economic Development Plan

The Village...

## CONCLUSION