

WEST MAIN STREET REVITALIZATION PLAN

Village of Wappingers Falls

Adopted by the Board June 11, 2008



In May of 2007, the Village Board named West Main Street Revitalization as one of its top five priorities.

West Main Street in the Village of Wappingers Falls is a half mile stretch of State Road 9D which goes North from the Bridge over the Wappingers Creek to the Village limit south of the Wappinger Rural Cemetery. Prior to 1871 when the Village formally incorporated, the area was known as Channingville. The street is mostly made up of mid – nineteenth century homes and retail storefronts. After the Bleachery closed and the malls were built just North of Village limits, the street began a decline. The street faces many obstacles but has great potential.

This plan seeks to work on the first portion of the street from the Bridge Northward to School Street.

In an effort to further that goal, the Mayor advertised that there would be a series of meetings relating to the revitalization of West Main Street. The first meeting was held in November 2007, followed by three more public meetings.

The first meeting was to identify strengths and weaknesses of West Main Street. Secondly, the group sought to identify Opportunities and Threats. After two meetings, the Mayor took the information provided and presented a Vision Plan that incorporated drawings done by different members of the community and held discussion groups. There was also an online parks survey which questioned community members about what they would like to see in West-side parks.

The following general vision statement was further broken down into concrete goals.

“West Main Street of the Village of Wappingers Falls will be the Western center of the community, complementing the East side of the Central Business District. The area will be safe and attractive with an emphasis on preservation of historic characteristics and values. The block long portion of the Central Business District will capitalize on County Players, the Greenway Trail and the historic and natural scenery. The thoroughfare will provide refuge at several locations from the aggressive traffic which threatens pedestrians and bicyclists who try to navigate the street. Thriving businesses will provide a blend of goods and services to residents as well as visitors. A combination of convenient access and promotional activities will encourage continued patronage and stimulate future planned economic development. A blend of desirable housing opportunities will be available. A more stable economy will result in a stronger tax base”.

With the above statement in mind, the revitalization plan focuses on land use, streetscape and design, utilities, traffic, and parking as they apply to the Village of Wappingers Falls. The next step is the refinement of this public participation work. Each of these goals will be studied individually to identify actions to accomplish the targeted goal. The study of a goal may include: research and data collection; setting objectives; creating goals;

identifying assets, liabilities, and opportunities; action strategies, and identifying key players, partners, and organizations.

The initial goals for West Main Street from the Bridge to School Street were as follows:

1. Provide more Green Space for the most densely populated area of the Village's Central Business District
2. Provide more access to the viewshed of Wappingers Lake, Clapp Dam, Water falls, gorge and the bridge from different points along West Main Street.
3. Encourage property owners to clean up their properties
4. Provide additional streetscape elements like lighting, period signage etc to make the street more appealing
5. Provide pedestrian respite areas along the Eastern side of the street so that pedestrians who are walking along this side can get away from the close proximity of the vehicular traffic due to the lack of protection by parked cars. The first opportunity is to develop the Galucci overlook, which is already owned by the Village.
6. Work to nurture and support County Players as the anchor of West Main Street and the cultural anchor of the Village and develop businesses which would be supported by the theatre's 11,200 annual visitors each year.
7. Market empty storefronts with local and regional agencies to show prospective renters and/or investors the opportunities in the Village of Wappingers Falls.
8. Exploit the Village's position as a "green," walkable, cluster development with historic structures, many feet of developable waterfront, and 37 acres of public space.
9. Capitalize on the Historic assets of the Village by providing access to them, namely: the Stone Bridge and the dam which created Wappingers Lake. Market the Village as a living walking Industrial Heritage Area.
10. Future housing development should be marketed to higher income levels to support a more sustainable local economy in the Village. (Currently, the Village has a high percentage (>50%) of low to middle income population.)

As these broad goals are refined, the actions will be documented in the West Main Street Revitalization Plan.