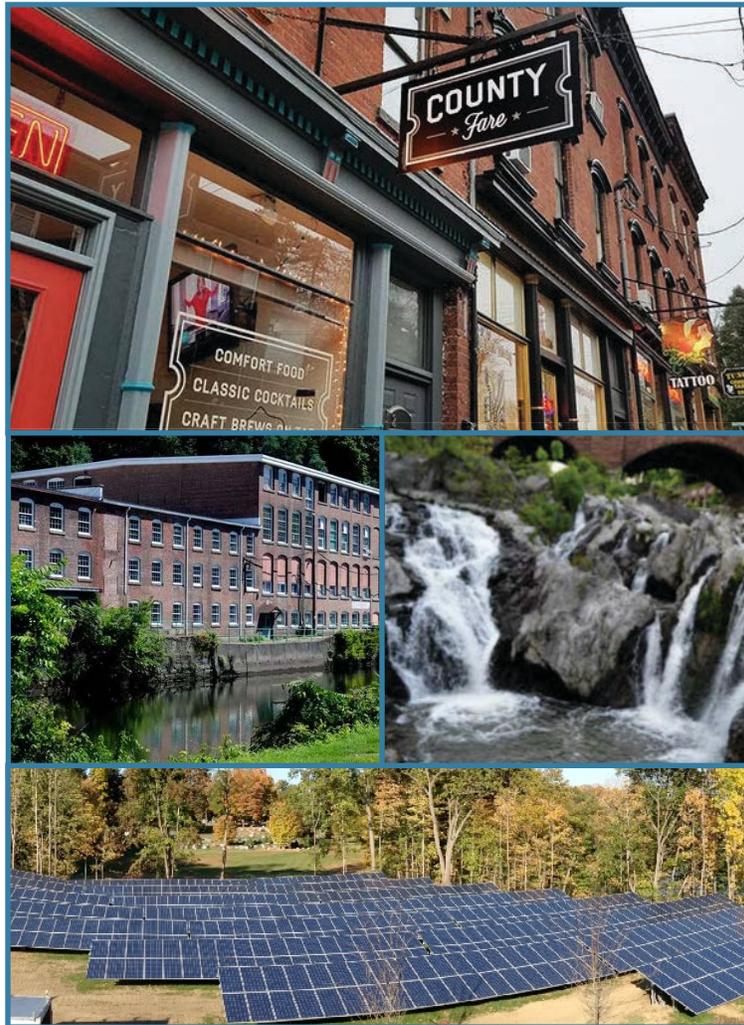


# VILLAGE OF WAPPINGERS FALLS *Comprehensive Plan*



VILLAGE OF WAPPINGERS FALLS, DUTCHESS COUNTY, NY

ADOPTED \_\_\_\_\_, 2022

Prepared by:  
Village of Wappingers Falls Board of Trustees  
with assistance from:



# VILLAGE OF WAPPINGERS FALLS, NY

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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Comprehensive Plan Completed: May 2022

Village Board Public Hearing:

Second Village Board Public Hearing:

Date of SEQRA Determination:

Date of Plan Adoption:

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This *Comprehensive Plan* was prepared by the Village of Wappingers Falls Board of Trustees to ensure that present and future Wappingers Falls' residents will continue to enjoy a high quality of life. The Village Board wishes to thank the citizens of the Village of Wappingers Falls who donated countless hours of volunteer time by participating in the numerous planning initiatives that resulted in the preparation of this *Comprehensive Plan*, including the 2008 [\*Vision Plan\*](#), 2011 [\*Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Strategy\*](#), and the 2019 *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study*, among others. In the preparation of these documents many residents attended community planning workshops and participated in public meetings and hearings. 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.

Special thanks are due to the Village committees that prepared the planning documents the Village Board relied upon in developing this *Comprehensive Plan*, including the Vision Plan Committee, Local Waterfront Revitalization Committee, Brownfield Opportunity Area Program Nomination Committee, Zoning Review Committee, and Capital Infrastructure Plan Committee. The Village Board also wishes to thank the following Village Boards and Committees for their significant contributions to the *Plan*: the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, Planning, Zoning, and Building Departments, Wappinger Greenway Committee, Department of Public Works, Wappingers Falls Fire Department, Police Commissioner, Water Department and Water Board, Justice Court, Wappingers Central School District, and Wappingers Falls Business and Professional Association.

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The Board especially wishes to thank Matt Alexander who, during his tenure as Mayor, spearheaded many planning initiatives, including this *Comprehensive Plan*, that have laid a strong foundation for the Village's future.

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# Chapter 1: Executive Summary

## Vision Statement

**Wappingers Falls is a charming, historic village characterized by traditional residential neighborhoods, a vibrant, walkable downtown organized around a village green, and a stunning scenic waterfront. The Village is committed to preserving its rich historic, cultural, and environmental resources, while encouraging diverse economic development, providing suitable community services, facilitating tourism, and making the community a great place to live, work and play.**

Wappingers Falls' *Comprehensive Plan* presents a vision for land use and development that takes into account recent planning initiatives as well as new concerns about the environment and climate change. This *Comprehensive Plan* will also guide the Village's priorities as it continues to invest in significant capital improvements.

Wappingers Falls last adopted a *Comprehensive Plan* in 2001. Since that time, the Village has undertaken numerous planning initiatives, as outlined below. Although many changes have occurred in the past 20 years, the

basic land use pattern in the Village was established long ago by the environmental constraints posed by Wappingers Lake, Creek and Falls, and the steep slopes along their shores. Significant changes that have occurred in the Village since 2001, such as increased traffic throughout the Village, the increase in the number of multi-family dwellings, the decline in home-ownership, the deterioration of Wappingers Lake, and challenges to the Village commercial center at Main Street, warrant the adoption of a new *Comprehensive Plan*.

### 1.A THE PLANNING PROCESS

New York State Village Law states that “[a]mong the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to a village government 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 7-722.1(b)]. A comprehensive plan is a guide to the development and 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.

Wappingers Falls has engaged in significant planning since the last *Comprehensive Plan* was adopted, beginning in 2001 when the Village became a participating community in the Hudson River Valley Greenway Compact and adopted *Greenway Connections: Greenway Compact Program and Guides for Dutchess County Communities* as a statement of land use policies,

principles and guides. Subsequently, the Village prepared numerous plans, reports and studies, as listed below, each of which was the result of an extensive public participation process, including workshops, meetings, and public hearings. This 2021 *Comprehensive Plan* is based on a careful review of these prior planning documents, and includes recommendations to amend the Village’s land use regulations to implement the goals of these plans.

- 2001 [Wappingers Falls Transportation Plan](#)
- 2008 [West Main Street Revitalization Plan](#)
- 2008 [Vision Plan](#)
- 2008 [Wappingers Falls Action Plan](#)
- 2008 [Franny Reese Memorial Park Concept Plan](#) and [Master Plan Report](#) (2009)
- 2008 Galucci Park Concept Sketch
- 2009 Falls View Park Concept Plan
- 2009 [Veterans’ Memorial Park Master Plan Report](#)
- 2011 [Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Strategy](#)
- 2016 [Dutchess County Hazard Mitigation Plan with Wappingers Falls’ Jurisdictional Annex](#)
- 2016 [Tri-Municipal Sewer Commission Capital Planning Report](#)
- 2016 [Village of Wappingers Falls Pedestrian Safety Improvements--Route 9D](#)
- 2016 Boathouse (Darrigan) Park Plan
- 2018 [Existing Conditions Study and Restoration Recommendations to Mesier Homestead](#)
- 2019 [Capital Infrastructure Plan](#)
- 2019 [Parking Study of the VC District](#)
- 2019 [Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study](#)
- 2020 [Recreation Needs Assessment](#)

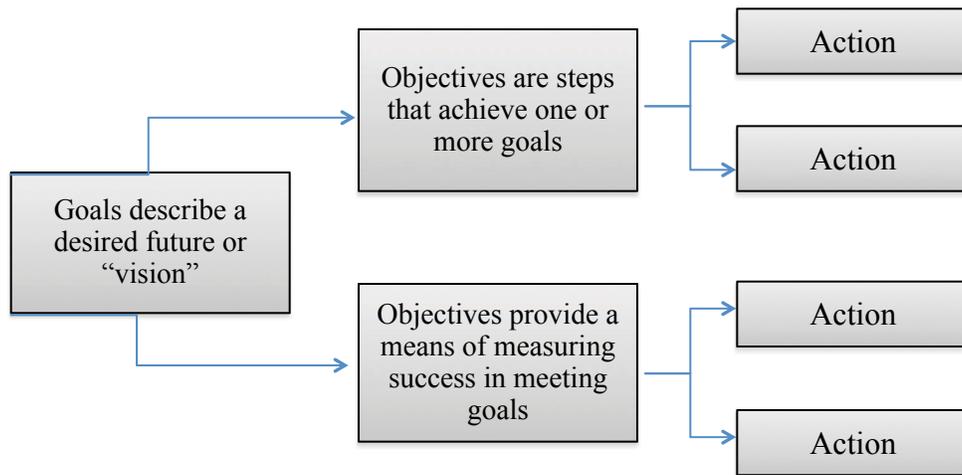
In addition to the plans listed above, the Village relied on a number of other background studies in preparing the *Comprehensive Plan*. These include a complete description of the Village’s socio-economic, demographic and housing conditions entitled *Urban Action Agenda: Village of Wappingers Falls* prepared by Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress in 2018, and an updated Existing Land Use survey and map. The end product of this planning process is a new guide for the growth and development of the Village for the next 10 to 20 years.

## **1.B GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS**

The success of any municipal planning process depends upon reaching 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 *Comprehensive Plan* focuses on eight goals that are the guide for all future land use decisions in the Village of Wappingers Falls. These goals, which are presented below and discussed throughout the *Comprehensive Plan*, were developed over many months by the Village Board during the planning process undertaken to prepare the new 2021 *Comprehensive Plan*. The overall goals for the Village of Wappingers Falls are as follows:

1. **Natural Resource Protection Goal:** Protect and enhance the Village’s natural resources for present and future generations, while continuing efforts to mitigate natural hazards, reduce energy usage, and minimize greenhouse gas emissions.
2. **Historic Preservation Goal:** Protect and restore the buildings, districts, and resources that provide tangible links to the Village’s rich historic, architectural and cultural heritage.
3. **Community Character Enhancement Goal:** Ensure that new development is compatible with the existing character of the neighborhood and enhances the visual environment of the Village, consistent with the recommendations of the *Greenway Guides*.
4. **Land Use Goal:** Encourage the orderly and efficient layout with appropriate uses of land in the Village, while respecting historic development patterns, to promote the health, safety and welfare of all residents and to leave future generations a desirable place to live, work and play.
5. **Transportation Goal:** Encourage alternative modes of transportation to reduce vehicular traffic, and provide sufficient but not excessive off-street parking in residential neighborhoods and commercial districts.

6. **Parks and Recreation Goal:** Provide a wide range of recreational opportunities that meet the current and future needs of all members of the community.
7. **Community Facilities and Services Goal:** Ensure that municipal facilities and services are adequate in location, capacity, and design to properly serve current needs and the planned development and growth of the Village.
8. **Economic Development Goal:** Encourage an economically-vibrant and environmentally-sustainable commercial base, anchored by businesses that create jobs in skilled labor and that encourage tourism and downtown revitalization.

Objectives and actions were added as they were recommended by residents, business people, planners, Village committees, 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 Village Board 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 throughout this *Comprehensive Plan*. The underlying themes embodied in the goals and objectives resulted in the Vision Statement for the Village of Wappingers Falls.

## 1.C 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.D ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The *Comprehensive Plan* consists of the following chapters and supplemental information:

- Chapter 2 describes the history of the Village, its regional location, and its socio-economic, demographic, and housing conditions.
- Chapter 3 discusses environmental conditions in the Village, natural and man-made hazards, and energy efficiency measures.
- Chapter 4 describes historic resources in the Village and steps to preserve and restore its cultural heritage.
- Chapter 5 describes the Village’s community character and ways to improve its visual and aesthetic quality.

- Chapter 6 describes existing land uses in the Village, analyzes development patterns, major land use changes since 2001, and recommends land use categories.
- Chapter 7 addresses pedestrian and vehicular transportation systems, alternative transportation options, off-street parking, and ways to improve walkability.
- Chapter 8 describes existing and proposed parks, trails and recreation in the Village.
- Chapter 9 describes community facilities, both public and private, along with municipal services.
- Chapter 10 identifies the key assets that are the foundation of the Village’s economic development strategy.

## **1.E MAINTAINING THE PLAN**

Frequent review of the *Comprehensive Plan*, to ensure 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 2021 *Comprehensive Plan*.

## **1.F 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.

# Chapter 2: History and Demographics

**The Village of Wappingers Falls is a well-established, predominantly working-class community located in the historic Hudson River Valley.**

## 2.A REGIONAL SETTING

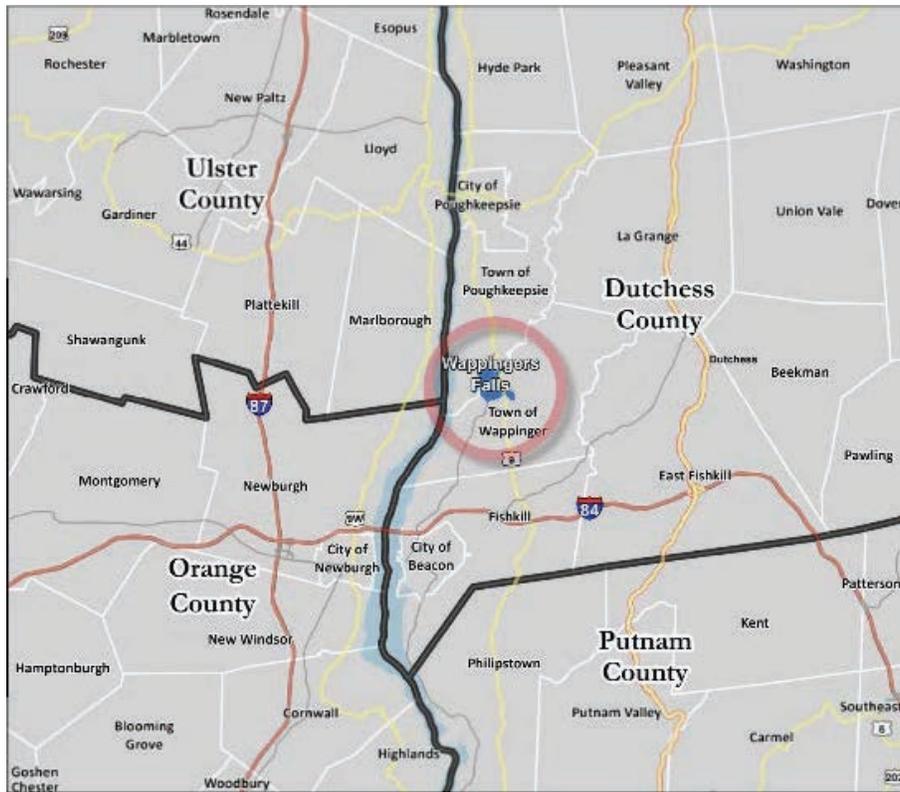
Nestled around a dramatic gorge that drains the man-made Wappinger Lake over a series of falls to the Lower Wappinger Creek, the physical setting of the historic Village of Wappingers Falls is quite

impressive. The Village is located in southern Dutchess County, New York within portions of two towns, Wappinger and Poughkeepsie. Located only 1.5 miles east of the Hudson River and bisected by Wappinger Lake, Creek, and Falls, the Village is truly a waterfront community. The Village contains a total area of 1.18 square miles. Of this area, 1.10 square miles is land and 0.08 square miles is water.

State Routes 9 and 9D run north-south through the Village. The proximity of these State highways 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 State Parkway (a major north-south thoroughfare linking Westchester County to Interstate 90) and to Connecticut, a gateway to New England. Westbound Interstate 84 connects southern Dutchess County with the bridge across the Hudson River to Newburgh, New York, where it intersects with I-87, the New York State Thruway. Also located in Newburgh is New York Stewart International Airport, which transitioned in 2017 from a regional airport to an international 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 pass-through commercial traffic, which creates a need for continuous law enforcement. Moreover, this traffic impacts one of the most densely populated areas in the County, making pedestrian safety a challenge. This problem is discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

Wappingers Falls enjoys an excellent location about 10 miles south of the City of Poughkeepsie, 75 miles north of Manhattan, 70 miles south of Albany, and 15 miles northeast of Newburgh. The highway access, along with the Metro-North Railroad 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. This is indeed a great Village in which to live, work and play.



**Figure 1: Village of Wappingers Falls, Regional Location**

## **2.B HISTORY OF WAPPINGERS FALLS**

The Village of Wappingers Falls was settled around 1730 and was incorporated in 1871. The presence of the Creek and the Falls likely attracted the first settlers. The Falls generated hydropower which fueled the industrial base of the local economy. The first industrial building in the Village was a flour mill constructed around 1738 by Adolphus Brewer, the owner of most of the land that was to become the Village of Wappingers Falls. 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 Givans and Benjamin Delavergne. The textile factories were consolidated under the corporate umbrella known as the Dutchess Company by 1850, and Wappingers Falls was then considered a factory town. More than 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 1860s. 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 inquiries 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.

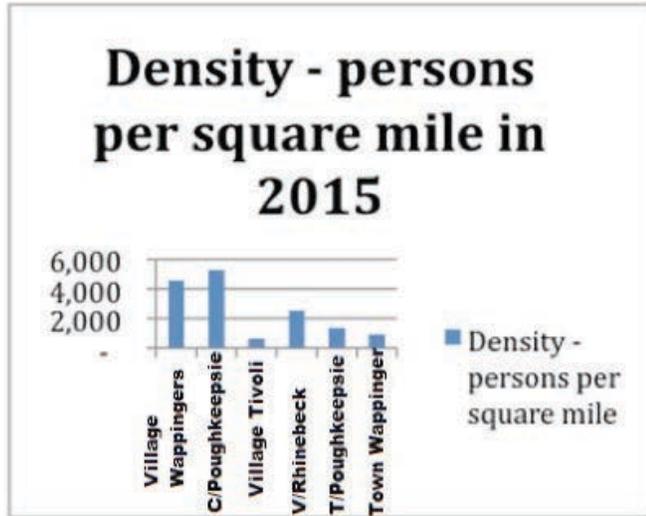
## **2.C DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

A primary component in planning a community’s future land use, capital improvements, and public services is a thorough analysis of the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of its residents. This chapter discusses population characteristics, such as age distribution, racial and ethnic background, and household composition; economic factors, including income levels, educational attainment, and employment; and housing. The data and trends discussed in the this chapter provide 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 Pattern for Progress’s demographic study *Urban Action Agenda: Village of Wappingers Falls*.

### **Population: Trends and Projections**

Wappingers Falls is the second most densely populated community in Dutchess County. Although just over one square mile in size and comprising only 0.14 percent of the County’s 825 square miles, the Village’s 2016 population of 5,429 residents represented 1.8 percent of

the County’s total. The population density of Wappingers Falls is 4,524 persons per square mile, second only to the City of Poughkeepsie, which has a density of 5,353 persons per square mile. 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 apparent.

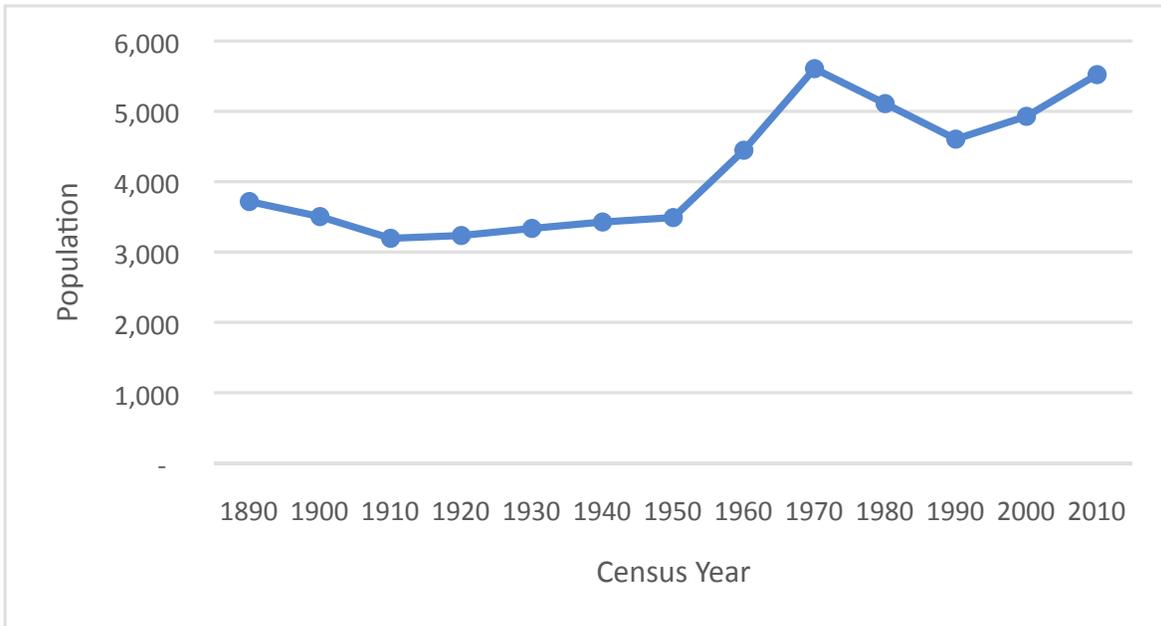


**Figure 2: Density of Various Dutchess County Municipalities**

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, likely due to the influenza epidemic and 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 a few miles north of the Village in the Town of Poughkeepsie during the early 1950s, and the expansion of its operations in 1960-61 with the construction of its East Fishkill facility. 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 experienced a significant decline between 1970, when the population peaked at 5,607 residents, and the last three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The greatest decrease occurred during the 1980s and 1990s, when the Village population decreased by 505 people, or 9.9 percent of its population. By 1990, the population was only 4,605.

Since 2000, the Village has experienced relatively strong population growth, increasing from 4,929 in 2000 to 5,429 in 2016. This change in population represents a 10.1 percent increase over 16 years. The steady increase in population growth is expected to continue.



**Figure 3: Population Trends from 1920 to 2010**

### **Household Trends**

The Village’s increasing population has been accompanied by an increase in the number of households, but a decline in the average household size. Between 2000 and 2016, the number of households in the Village increased from 1,980 to 2,385 households, while the average household size decreased from 2.49 persons per household to 2.28 persons. These changes reflect a national trend with both millennials and baby boomers desiring to live in walkable communities with smaller dwellings that can accommodate one or two people, such as can be found in older village centers like Wappingers Falls. 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 the trend of smaller average household size. The increase in the number of households is reflected in the increase in the number of housing units in the Village, as discussed later in this chapter in the section on housing.

### **Racial and Ethnic Characteristics**

There have been significant shifts in the racial and ethnic makeup of the Village since 2000. The White population in the Village has decreased by 758 people since 2000, dropping from 74 percent to 54 percent of the total, while the Hispanic population grew by 741 people. Hispanics now make up 27 percent of the Village's population, up from 15 percent in 2000. The Village has also seen growth in the Asian population, which increased from 3 percent to 12 percent of the Village’s total.

## Age Group Distribution

The age group of residents 65 and older as a percentage of the total population living in the Village has decreased from 15.6 percent in 1998 to 14.9 percent in 2016. At the same time, there has been an increase in people age 34 and younger, from 47.7 percent in 1998, to 48.9 percent in 2016. The increase of young people in the Village’s population is reflected in the 2.2 year decrease in the median age of Village residents, from 37.9 years in 1998 to 35.7 years in 2016.

Age Group	Percent of Total Population	
	1998	2015
under 5	6.6	5.2
5-19	18.8	19.5
20-34	22.3	24.2
35-54	29.5	24.5
55-64	7.2	11.8
65 and over	15.6	14.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,480</b>	<b>5,429</b>

According to the American Community Survey data for 2016, the greatest increase in age groups in the Village is in the segment of the population aged 55 to 64, which increased dramatically from 7.2 percent to 11.8 percent of the Village population between 1998 and 2016. The 34 to 54 age group represents the largest segment of the Village’s population (24.5 percent), and will have a strong voice in setting the community’s priorities in the future. These two age groups, baby boomers and millennials, are both seeking walkable communities in which to live.

## Household Tenure

Compared to Dutchess County as a whole, Wappingers Falls has a higher percentage of newcomers. Almost half of the residents in the Village moved into their current home since 2010. While some of these residents may have moved from a home within the Village, this statistic indicates that a significant number of Wappingers Falls residents moved into the Village relatively recently. In comparison, only 24 percent of residents are new to the County since 2010. Despite the high percentage of newcomers in the Village, there is still a strong core of residents who have deep roots in the community.

## Educational Attainment

In 2015, 82 percent of Village residents over the age of 25 were at least high school graduates, and 18.6 percent of Village residents had a bachelor’s degree or higher. For Dutchess County as a whole, 33.4 percent of residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher, which is slightly less than New York State’s rate of 34.2 percent but higher than the national rate of 29.8 percent. Higher education rates in Dutchess County municipalities range from 17.9 percent in Dover to 46.9 percent in Red Hook.

Wappingers Falls	18.6%
Dover	17.9%
Red Hook	46.9%
Dutchess County	33.4%
New York State	34.2%
United States	29.8%

The rate of High School graduates in Dutchess County is 89.9 percent, higher than both New York State (85.6 percent) and nationally (86.7 percent).

## 2.D ECONOMIC PROFILE

### Employment Trends

Over the past three decades, employment trends in Dutchess County have changed considerably. Dutchess County enjoyed a privileged position from 1963 until the early-1990s because it was the site of two large IBM facilities. It is also located near Kingston New York, and within commuting distance of Westchester, Manhattan, and northern New Jersey.

As shown in Table 3, in 1993 the twelve major employers in Dutchess County provided 40,870 jobs, or approximately one-third of the total employer jobs in the County.<sup>1</sup> In 2014, as shown in Table 4, the County's top twelve employers provided jobs for a similar number of people (41,300); however, data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages shows that

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

private and public sector employers in Dutchess County supported only 109,000 employees in 2014, the lowest reported for the eleven year period from 2004 to 2014, indicating that the County had yet to fully recover from the economic downturn of 2008.<sup>2</sup> Employment in manufacturing declined from 11,000 in 1993 to 5,900 in 2014 (which includes both IBM and Global Foundries, an international company which purchased a portion of IBM). In 1993, IBM was the County's largest single employer. In 2014, the County's largest employer was local government, including school districts. Within the private sector, the largest employer

<sup>1</sup> This figure does not include self-employed persons, which can make up a significant part of an area's total employment.

<sup>2</sup> Source: *Moving Dutchess 2: The 25-Year Transportation Plan for Dutchess County*, Poughkeepsie-Dutchess County Transportation Council, 2016.

was HealthQuest, and employment in the medical sector quadrupled from 2,435 jobs to 9,500. Educational institutions also increased their employment, by approximately 50 percent.

After the peak employment year in 1993 when 121,000 jobs were based in Dutchess County, the region began to feel the effects of IBM's downsizing. Although the Town of East Fishkill plans to convert some of

IBM's former property to a mixed-use development, most of the former IBM manufacturing facilities currently lie dormant. The County has focused its economic recovery on increased diversification while discouraging the dominance of a single industry or corporation.

While major employers still provide jobs to a large number of County residents, the diversification of the job market is seen in the numerous small businesses that have emerged as a result of the influx of new residents, many of whom have moved from the New York Metropolitan area in search of a quieter, more affordable lifestyle. These businesses include restaurants (many founded by chefs trained at the Culinary Institute of America in nearby Hyde Park), small retail shops, and services. In the past 10 years, DIA: Beacon and other arts organizations have drawn artists and artisans back to the Hudson Valley, resulting in a dramatic revitalization of the City of Beacon and other small cities in the region; opportunities now abound for small independent production companies, crafts people, and artists. Countywide efforts to bolster the tourism industry have also contributed to this growth. This has created many new economic opportunities for Dutchess County residents.

The mix of large and small businesses can also be seen in the Village of Wappingers Falls. The Village has a number of large companies in its commercial mix, including big box stores, national chains, and medical practices. However, many smaller “mom-and-pop” businesses can also be found in the Village. While some of these have been in business for many years, others have opened more recently, particularly restaurants. The Village boasts a

<b>Table 4: Major Employers in Dutchess County, 2014</b>		
<b>Employer</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Employees</b>
Local Government, including Education	Government	13,200
State of New York	Government	5,800
HealthQuest	Medical	5,600
IBM	Manufacturing	4,100
Vassar Brothers Medical Center	Medical	2,100
Bard College	Education	1,800
Global Foundries	Manufacturing	1,800
Mid-Hudson Regional Hospital	Medical	1,800
Culinary Institute of America	Education	1,500
Marist College	Education	1,300
Federal Government, including Post Office	Government	1,200
Vassar College	Education	1,100
<b>Total Major Employers Jobs</b>		<b>41,300</b>
<b>TOTAL COUNTY EMPLOYER JOBS</b>		<b>109,000</b>

full menu of ethnic restaurants that reflect its richly-diverse population. Food and entertainment are growing new businesses opportunities in the region.

Another trend that is affecting employment in the County is the increase in the number of telecommuters. A 2016 study from Global Workplace Analytics showed, year-over-year, that the home-based self-employed population grew by 7.3 percent and the overall telecommuter population grew by 11.7 percent, the largest year-over-year growth since 2008. A record 4.3 million employees (3.2 percent of the workforce) now work from home at least half the time. New England and Mid-Atlantic region employers are the most likely to offer telecommuting options. With studies repeatedly showing that employees are already mobile (they are not at their workplace desk 50 to 60 percent of the time), this trend will continue to increase as an older, less technical workforce is replaced by younger and more electronically connected employees.

According to the most recent projections from the [\*New York State Department of Labor\*](#), the highest projected increases for short-term occupational employment will be in the fields of healthcare, construction, and education. The long term projection (from 2014 to 2024) is favorable for construction, the sciences, business and finance, healthcare, food preparation and tourism. These projections should guide the economic development strategies employed by the Village.

### **Household Income**

Median income in Wappingers Falls decreased from \$54,910 in 2000 (adjusted for inflation) to \$46,962 in 2016. This represents a 14 percent decrease in median household income. In comparison, the median household income in Dutchess County dropped slightly from \$74,508 in 2000 (adjusted for inflation) to \$72,706, a 2 percent decrease.

In 2017, the Village had a 14.8 percent poverty rate. The Village has been identified as an Environmental Justice Community since its residents are predominantly low-income.

Household income in the Village has not kept pace with the wealthiest municipalities in the County. In terms of income, the Village is still in the bottom third of County municipalities, and has not seen the increases in income that have occurred in the County's top eight communities.

## **2.E HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS**

The housing stock of a community is a major determinant of its quality of life and its ability to attract new residents. Well-established communities like the Village of Wappingers Falls must confront problems such as an aging housing stock, a limited amount of developable

vacant land, and a proliferation of rental units. Housing characteristics reported in the 2018 Urban Action Agenda Housing Profiles are discussed in this section.

### Type of Housing

Wappingers Falls offers a wide variety of housing options, from single-family detached houses and two-family dwellings, to medium size multi-family homes, and large apartment complexes with amenities. The majority of the housing stock in Wappingers Falls is multi-family (structures with three or more dwelling units), accounting for more 59 percent of the Village’s 2,385 dwelling units. In contrast, multi-family units comprise 21 percent of the County’s total. There is no public housing in the Village, but 13 percent of the housing units are subsidized affordable housing. Thirty-nine percent of housing in the Village is in single-family detached dwellings, and 2 percent is two-family dwellings.

	<b># Units</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Single Family	930	39%
Two-Family	48	2%
Multi-family	1,407	59%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>2,385</b>	<b>100%</b>

Historically, the Village included a much higher percentage of single-family detached dwellings. However, over the years, many of these structures have been converted to multi-family dwellings, as indicated by the number of electric meters or mailboxes associated with these structures. As recently as 2010, the Village had 17 manufactured homes; however a number of these have been demolished and currently there are only five.

### Age of Housing

Fifty-six percent of the housing in the Village was built prior to 1970. 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 19<sup>th</sup> century. The next flurry of construction activity in the Village occurred between 1950 and 1970, when more than 23 percent of the housing was built. This period coincides with the “baby boom” era, the suburbanization of America, and the growth of IBM. Another 789 units were constructed during the next 40 years.

<b>Construction Period</b>	<b>Percentage of Dwelling Units Built</b>
Before 1950	33%
1950-1969	23%
1970-1999	31%
2000-2009	9%
2010-2018	4%

Of the 137 new dwelling units constructed between 2010 to 2018, only five were single-family detached homes. The rest were two-family (4 dwelling units) and multi-family residences, including a 54-unit complex constructed in 2014 (Riverbend II), a 48-unit complex built in 2014 (Creekside Springs), a 6-unit building constructed in 2017 (West

Academy Street) to replace an 5-unit building destroyed by fire, and a 24-unit building constructed in 2018 (Marshall Road). Table 6 summarizes residential construction to 2018, and Table 7 summarizes the number and type of residential units constructed since the last *Comprehensive Plan* was adopted in 2001.

<b>Table 7: New Residential Construction 2001-2018</b>	
Single-Family Detached	13
Two-Family	36
Multi-Family Units	303
<b>Total Units Built:</b>	<b>352</b>

### **Renter-Occupied Housing**

The abundance of multi-family structures in Wappingers Falls has resulted in a predominantly renter-occupied housing stock. Sixty percent of occupied housing units in the Village are rented, while 32 percent are owner occupied. This contrasts with Dutchess County where only 29 percent of housing units are rented and 64 percent are owner occupied. Since 2000, 303 new apartments were constructed in the Village, mainly in large multifamily complexes. Prior to this, most rental units were located in former single-family houses that had been converted to multifamily dwellings. Millennials prize mobility and seek rental opportunities for housing. The increase in the number of rental apartments in the Village may attract more young people.

### **Housing Affordability**

Median rent in Wappingers Falls increased from \$963 in 2000 (adjusted for inflation) to \$1,295 in 2016, a 34 percent increase. As of 2016, only 15 percent of apartments in the Village had a monthly rent below \$1,000. Unfortunately, while median rent increased significantly, median household income dropped by 14 percent.

Median house value in Wappingers Falls increased from \$179,000 in 2000 to \$211,000 in 2016, an 18 percent increase. Dutchess County experienced a more significant increase in median house value, increasing from \$217,000 in 2000 to \$274,000 in 2016, a 27% increase.

Perhaps due in part to rising rents and declining household income, many renters in Wappingers Falls are significantly cost burdened, defined as spending more than 30 percent of income on housing costs. In 2016, 54 percent of renters in the Village paid more than 30 percent of their income for rent and utilities, and 30 percent are spending more than half of their income towards housing costs. In contrast, 40 percent of home owners in the Village are spending at least 30 percent of their income towards housing costs, and of these only 8 percent are spending more than half of their income towards housing costs.

## **2.F KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

- The Village is the second most densely populated community in Dutchess County and has a distinctly urban character.

- Population is steadily increasing and becoming more diverse.
- Village households tend to be smaller, less wealthy, and not as educated as those in Dutchess County as a whole.
- The age of residents is trending younger, with the largest age group being millennials. The number of baby boomers has also increased, and these two age groups seek to live in walkable urban centers with more live-work options, less driving, and more convenient lifestyles. To attract new residents and investment, the Village should continue to enhance its traditional, historic village character with its compact, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods and interconnected streets lined with sidewalks.
- There has been an increase in the number of households in the Village, but a decline in average household size. The Village's small single-family homes may appeal to smaller households, such as those comprising single people, couples without children, and empty nesters.
- Over the years the Village has seen a decline in single-family home-ownership as large single-family dwellings in the Village's traditional residential neighborhoods were converted to multifamily dwellings. The Village should reverse this trend and encourage home-ownership since long-term residents are more likely to take on leadership roles in the community. Existing single-family homes should not be permitted to convert to multi-family dwellings. Smaller dwelling units can be accommodated in the Residential Mixed-Use District and in the upper floors of mixed-use buildings in the Village Commercial and Commercial Mixed-Use Districts. The Village already has a very high rate of rentals and a large number of multifamily dwellings.
- An influx of new residents in the County is diversifying the job market with numerous small businesses, including restaurants, small retail shops and services, arts-based businesses, and tourism. This presents opportunities for the Village, particularly in the historic downtown area.

# Chapter 3: Natural Resource Protection

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## Community Goal

**Protect and enhance the Village’s natural resources for present and future generations, while continuing efforts to mitigate natural hazards, reduce energy usage, and minimize greenhouse gas emissions.**

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 gave

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 1700s, and attracted heavy industrial development at the beginning of the 19th century, as discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

The Village’s rich history reflects the complex interplay between the natural and the built environments. This interplay continues today. Wappinger Lake, Creek, and the Falls are the Village’s most striking natural features and its greatest environmental assets. These resources and their associated wetlands and floodplains are shown on Figure 4 at the end of this chapter. While no longer the center of industry, these water resources enhance the aesthetic character of the Village, and present unique opportunities for commerce, recreation and tourism. At the core of the Village, both physically and historically, is the hydropower generated by the Falls, an important historically “green” asset that the Village seeks to preserve.

However, these water 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, has also been a contributing factor. Thus, the future of Wappingers Falls is inextricably linked to the interplay between people and natural resources that occurs both within the Village’s boundaries and within upstream watershed communities. This section of the *Comprehensive Plan* inventories the existing natural resources in the Village, and 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 these resources.

### **3.A VILLAGE WATER SUPPLY**

The Village of Wappingers Falls has provided public water since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the beginning, public water was merely available for residents to collect at several spots throughout the Village. Following its incorporation in 1871, the Village decided to create a water distribution system. The first system pumped unfiltered water from a reservoir on Reservoir Place using a steam pump located at Garner Dutchess Print Works, providing service for existing homes and about 20 fire hydrants strategically placed throughout the Village. Beginning in 1902, a water tank was built on what is now known as Hillside Avenue on Roy's Hill and the old reservoir was discontinued. In 1915, a new and enlarged filtered water system was installed. In 1938, the Village constructed a water treatment system at its present location on Canale Way, an 8-acre site adjoining Wappinger Lake off West Main Street, where water is sourced from wells.

The Village depends on these wellfields, which it owns and maintains, as its primary source of water supply and, at present, water quality is considered good. Previously, from the early 1990s to 2006, the Village had supplemented its own well water supply with water from the Hudson River treated at the Joint Poughkeepsies' Water Board (JPWB) treatment facility. However, in 2006 JPWB announced that it was switching its disinfection method from chlorine to chloramine which was incompatible with the Village's system, which used chlorine. This change required the Village to shut down its own facility and rely entirely on JPWB for its water supply. However, in January 2012, after spending \$5.6 million on investments in wellfield improvements and a new water treatment facility, the Village stopped the two-decade long dependence on JPWB and returned to water sourced from its own wellfields. The decision to build a new water treatment facility rather than buy water from JPWB was based on much deliberation and input from community meetings held from 2006 to 2008. Based on public input, the Village determined that it did not want water sourced from the Hudson River because of potential contamination of the river, nor did it want water treated with chloramines because this disinfectant does not dissipate over time. The Village was already experiencing disinfectant by-products because of its location so far from the northern Poughkeepsie water treatment facility. The Village also wanted to retain political control over its water system.

The most recent estimate from the American Community Survey prepared by the U.S. Census Bureau indicate that the Village population in 2015 was 5,429 people, the majority of whom depend on water supplied by the Village wellfields. The Village also supplies water to two schools and to users within the Towns of Poughkeepsie and Wappinger, communities that are projected to continue to grow in population. Thus, a significant current and projected population depends on clean water supplied from the Village wellfields.

Water supply for the Village wellfields 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 Areas; Secondary Protection Areas are those that, on the basis of topography, drain into the Primary Protection area. Recognizing the importance of these areas to protect its water supply, in 1998 the Village designated Wappinger Lake and the Village wellfield property on Canale Way a Critical Environmental Area (see Figure 5).

The Village is acutely aware that its citizens depend on a single source of water from the Village wellfields. It is critical that this water source be protected from contamination. To this end, in 2016 the Village contracted with the New York Rural Water Association to prepare a *Source Water Protection Plan*. The plan uses the Wellhead Analytic Model developed by the Environmental Protection Agency to identify primary areas of concern regarding the wellfields. Based on a study of the cone of influence around the wellhead, the contributing aquifer and the watershed, the Rural Water Association prepared a set of recommendations on how to protect the Village water source, which includes the identification of Zone 1 and Zone 2 areas of protection, as shown on Figure 6 at the end of this chapter.

In 2017, the Village completed the Riverkeeper's *Drinking Source Water Protection Scorecard* to identify the degree to which the Village's water supply is protected and areas where such protection could be improved. The *Scorecard* identified the following as the primary issues the Village should address:

1. A source water assessment should be completed.
2. An accurate catalog of all potential hazards should be completed.
3. Watershed Management Planning should be completed.
4. Watershed Rules and Regulations for the watershed need to be implemented.
5. Streams, wetlands and open space need to be protected in the watershed.

These issues are being addressed through the *Source Water Protection Plan* discussed above and a *Nine Element Watershed Plan* that will study sources of pollution along the watershed and remediation alternatives; both plans are currently being finalized.

The Village Water Board is also interested in finding a second source of water independent of the current well field to serve as an alternative backup water source supply. The Village has had discussions with the Town of Wappinger about connecting to the Town water supply at the intersection of Losee Road and Myers Corners Road. This connection would have the added benefit of providing extra pressure on the east side of Route 9 in case of emergency. If the Village is going to renovate the Wenliss water tank, for example, it needs to have a means to provide temporary storage and pressure; this would address that issue. A back up water supply is also needed to mitigate future natural and man made hazards.

### Important Planning Concern:

*The Village has a considerable investment in its water supply, and must both protect that supply and also have an alternative source of water should this source no longer provide for its citizenry due to hazards or contamination.*

**Objective: Ensure a safe and adequate supply of water is available for current and future needs.**

**Actions:**

- Ensure that groundwater in the Village meets Safe Drinking Water Act quality standards and remedy any deficiencies.
- Identify and establish a back-up water source supply.
- Amend the Zoning Law to include an aquifer and wellhead protection overlay district to restrict uses that could adversely impact or degrade water resources within the Zone 1 and Zone 2 source water protection area identified in the *Source Water Protection Plan*.
- Amend the Critical Environmental Area designation to include properties within the source water protection area, as recommended by the *Source Water Protection Plan*.
- Protect and control lands within the source water protection area surrounding the Village wells through direct ownership of the land or through the acquisition of protective easements as recommended by the *Source Water Protection Plan*.
- Inform the Town of Poughkeepsie of the Village’s source water protection area and ask that they consider potential impacts on the water supply when making decisions to approve projects within this critical area.
- Enact the recommendations of the *Source Water Protection Plan* and the *Nine Elements Watershed Plan*.
- Complete the *Drinking Source Water Protection Scorecard* annually and remedy deficiencies in a timely manner.

### **3.B WAPPINGER LAKE**

Wappinger Lake is one of the Village’s most significant natural resources. 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*, the Lake is important because it is a publicly-owned open space area which is remarkable for its aesthetic and scenic qualities. In a public opinion survey of Village residents conducted in 1998 for the 2001 *Comprehensive Plan*, more than 84 percent of respondents indicated that Wappinger Lake was an important natural resource to maintain and enhance. This sentiment was reiterated during the public planning process for the 2011 [\*Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Strategy\*](#), which recommended that the Village “[c]ontinue to pursue water quality improvement and lake

dredging activities so that the quality and experience of the Wappinger Lake and Creek is restored.”

Approximately half of Wappinger Lake lies within 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 for recreational use in 1966 with New York State Parks funding assistance through the Environmental Protection Fund. In 1998, the Village designated the Lake a Critical Environmental Area (CEA) under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), which ensures that any land development project that may impact the Lake requires an additional level of environmental assessment prior to approval by State and/or local agencies. The designation also highlights the issue of the Lake’s water quality, and has facilitated obtaining funding for dredging the Lake to further its cleanup. The boundary of the CEA is shown on Figure 5 at the end of this chapter.

Wappinger Lake is an important open space and a potentially significant recreational resource. However, use of the Lake for recreational purposes, such as fishing and swimming, has significantly declined as a result of aquatic weed overgrowth, and the Lake has been severely damaged over the last 75 years by runoff from upstream farming activities, and phosphorous and nitrogen from heavily-fertilized suburban development upstream. Runoff from State Routes 9 and 9D have impacted it as well. Contaminated sediment has decreased the depth of the Lake from 12 feet to 2 feet over the last half of the 20th century, and the shallow condition allows more sunlight to penetrate the water, which accelerates growth of milfoil and water chestnuts, an invasive exotic that chokes out native species. The Lake also has a high amount of fecal coliform counts from both upstream sewer treatment facilities as well as private septic systems. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has classified Wappinger Lake as “impaired” due to the presence of phosphorus, aquatic vegetation, and sediment; pollution must be remedied before the Lake can be used for bathing, and invasive water chestnuts must be cleared before people can use it for other recreational purposes, as discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8.

In 2009, Route 9’s contribution to the contaminated sediment was addressed through a project which installed two Vortech® sedimentation separators on each side of the mouth of the Creek’s entrance into the Lake where the bridge crosses the Lake. This was funded by the DEC Water Quality Improvement Program (\$250,000) and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding (\$250,000) through NYS Department of Transportation.

In 2011, the Village received a \$634,000 grant from the Green Innovative Grant Program to construct a managed wetland structure to treat water quality for the largest Village inflow into Wappinger Lake. Because only a small fraction of the sediment that was running into the Lake was coming from the Village, efforts were also focused upstream. In 2016, the

Village received a grant for \$925,000 to install a bioswale to treat runoff from the ecosystem and to provide a method of treating re-directed inflow/infiltration from the Oak Park neighborhood in a later phase.

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 Wappingers Falls Historic District, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Lake is eligible for funding from the Department of State's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, the New York State Parks grants, the Department of Environmental Conservation Water Quality Improvement Program, and the Community Development Block Grant.

The Village has operated an aquatic plant harvester to control algae and water chestnuts on the Lake. However, given the pace of upstream development, harvesting alone 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 encourage intermunicipal cooperation and seek funding to dredge the Lake. The *Comprehensive Plan* also recommends that the Zoning Law be amended to establish a minimum setback for buildings and construction adjacent to Wappinger Lake to reduce impacts of erosion and protect scenic views from the lake.

### Important Planning Concern:

*Stormwater runoff resulting in phosphorus and nitrogen loading and sedimentation, which have reduced the depth of the lake and accelerated aquatic weed overgrowth, has impaired the Lake's water quality, recreational value and flood-storage capacity.*

**Objective: Improve water quality and increase the depth of Wappinger Lake to protect the Village's water supply and enhance the Lake's flood-storage capacity.**

#### **Actions:**

- Continue cooperative efforts with neighboring municipalities to develop a comprehensive storm water management strategy to reduce sedimentation and nutrient loading of Wappinger Lake from upstream and restore the water quality of Wappinger Lake.
- Amend the Zoning Law to establish a buffer area adjacent to Wappinger Lake, with a minimum setback for buildings and construction to reduce impacts of erosion, protect scenic beauty, and enable recreational access.
- Conduct a Bathymetric Study and Sediment Analysis to determine the feasibility of dredging the Lake, and continue efforts to restore the recreational value of the Wappinger Lake.

- Explore methods for limiting the growth of invasive species, including weed harvesting and dredging.
- Explore options for returning an aquatic weed harvester to Wappinger Lake.
- Increase fish stocks in the Lake.

### **3.C WAPPINGER CREEK**

Wappinger Creek is Dutchess County’s major Hudson River tributary. A large, perennial, and for the most part, warm-water stream, the Creek drains approximately one-quarter of the County, and is an important recreational resource for fishing and canoeing as well. In 2014, New York State passed legislation defining the Creek as a “Designated Inland Waterway,” which makes local governments along the Creek eligible to adopt a *Local Waterfront Revitalization Program*. 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, which spend most of their lives in saltwater and migrate to freshwater creeks and streams to breed. Anadromous fish in Wappinger Creek include alewife, American shad, blueback herring, tomcod, and striped bass, as well as warm water fish such as black bass (both smallmouth and largemouth) and white perch. Wappinger Creek fish species also include chain pickerel, redbreast sunfish, pumpkinseed, bluegill, and black crappie. The American eel is also present during its juvenile life stage. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation classifies the Creek as a Class C(T) stream, indicating it is suitable for fishing and may support a trout population.

Wappinger Creek will continue to be pressured to serve complex and often competing uses. The Village should consider adopting a stream corridor overlay district that includes measures to 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 include building and construction setbacks 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 established after evaluating the natural and cultural features of the portion of the Creek that runs through the Village. Design requirements should be developed that would allow and encourage desirable uses to front on the Creek and take advantage of their proximity to it.

Approval of erosion control plans by the Village Planning Board or Code Enforcement Officer 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.

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 Program* (LWRP), as discussed above. An LWRP allows for more detailed implementation of the State's Coastal Management Program, and provides additional protection to the Creek and its watershed. The designation may also facilitate funding availability and other resources to clean Wappinger Lake. Although Wappingers Falls does not have an LWRP, the area is subject to the State's coastal zone management review. The Village should expand the 2011 [\*Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Strategy\*](#) into an LWRP under the State's Coastal Resource program.

### Important Planning Concern:

*Increased development and competition among potentially incompatible uses conflict 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.*

**Objective: Protect Wappinger Creek from contamination and sedimentation, and control runoff rates and volumes to prevent flooding.**

**Actions:**

- Amend the Zoning Law to include a stream corridor overlay district to protect the Wappinger Creek with additional, more stringent review standards for development that occurs along the stream corridor, such as maintaining existing streambank vegetation, increased building and construction setbacks, and design requirements that would preclude inappropriate uses fronting directly on the Creek.

- Buffer area protection should also be utilized to keep development away from wetlands and flood-prone lands, as a means of protecting water quality and scenic beauty, and enabling recreational access.
- Designate the lower Wappinger Creek an Estuary Conservation Area.
- Prioritize flood mitigation in new development projects to positively affect water quality in the Wappinger Lake, and encourage upstream communities to do the same.
- Adopt a *Local Waterfront Revitalization Program*.

### **3.D WATER QUALITY IN THE WAPPINGER CREEK WATERSHED**

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 by multiple municipalities within the Wappinger Creek watershed.

The Wappinger Creek watershed is the largest watershed in Dutchess County. It covers approximately 211 square miles of land, or roughly one-quarter of Dutchess County, and is fed by 320 miles of tributary streams, creeks and brooks. The watershed is located entirely within Dutchess County and includes 11 towns and two villages. The lower Wappinger Creek basin receives runoff from the County's most intensely developed areas. This has aggravated flood hazards. It has also contributed to pollution, which has the potential to cause contamination of the groundwaters beneath Wappinger Lake which the Village depends upon for its water supply.

Recommended management strategies to protect Wappinger Creek and Lake include, but are not limited to, stormwater management, setbacks, and special areas protection. A regional stream corridor management plan should be developed that defines compatible uses, establishes intermunicipal boards or committees to review projects with regional impact, creates incentives for land trusts to become involved in land use protection efforts, identifies key land acquisitions by public agencies, manages growth, and encourages 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. To minimize impacts of land development projects on the Creek, the Village should encourage the creation of an intermunicipal agreement to designate the Wappinger Creek a Critical Environmental Area under SEQRA.

Development of the corridor management plan should be undertaken by the Wappinger Intermunicipal Council (WIC), which was founded in 1995 and formalized in 2006. The WIC is the first watershed group in Dutchess County. Its mission is cooperatively to address common issues that affect the quality of the Wappinger Creek and its watershed. As a

formal organization, the WIC has greater opportunities to secure the funding necessary to restore water quality in the Wappinger Creek and Lake.

In addition to securing funding for specific cleanup projects, 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 municipalities 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 § 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.

In 2015, the Village was awarded a \$287,500 grant to complete a *Nine Element Watershed Plan* of the Wappinger watershed, to study sources of contamination and recommend projects to identify and address point and non-point sources of pollution and sedimentation across the Wappinger Creek watershed. This is imperative to protect the Village's drinking water quality as well as the recreational resource of the Lake. The Towns of Poughkeepsie, LaGrange, Pleasant Valley, and Wappinger have been cooperating with the Village to promote this promising planning initiative.

One source of contamination in the watershed is aging public/private sewer systems. In 2017, the Towns of Poughkeepsie and Wappinger met with the Village to discuss how these sewer systems could be de-commissioned and re-routed into the Tri-Municipal Sewer Treatment Facility. An Environmental Facilities Corporation grant application was submitted in 2017, and again in 2018, which requested assistance in de-commissioning the sewer systems owned by Woodhill Condominium and Wildwood Sewer Districts and connecting them to the sewer main on North Mesier Avenue to be carried to the Wappinger Pump Station. This would help these two facilities, which are both more than 50-years old, to remove phosphorous in their treated outfall into Wappinger Lake; they would also avoid millions of dollars in needed future upgrades. Regardless of the outcome of this grant, the Village and the Town of Wappinger should continue to work together to attract funding for this project.

The decommissioning project could extend further upstream to include Quiet Acres (a subdivision on the banks of the Creek with aging private individual septic service), the Dutchess County Airport, the Route 376/All Angels Road intersection business area, and the Airport Industrial Park. All of these sites threaten to add treated sewer flows into the watershed upstream of the Village and Town drinking water sources. The Village and Town should continue to work together with other watershed stakeholders to address all water quality threats in a strategic manner.

Other potential sources of contamination that must be addressed include:

1. Fertilizer runoff from densely-developed suburban neighborhoods along the Creek.
2. Private septic systems on the northwestern side of the Creek (for example, lands south of Vassar Road which are not presently connected to the municipal sewer service).
3. Failing sewer plants upstream of Wappinger and Poughkeepsie.
4. Pleasant Valley' and LaGrange's private septic service and densely developed Creek banks.
5. Millbrook's sewer system.
6. Agricultural runoff.
7. Quarries upstream.
8. Mobile home parks located on floodplains.

The Village is a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) community, which requires additional permitting and implementation of a stormwater management program to minimize the impacts from stormwater runoff. In addition to its involvement in the WIC, the Village is an active member of the Dutchess County MS4 Committee. Both organizations are opportunities for intermunicipal discussion regarding water quality and runoff. Both have had success in funding studies and projects that, when implemented, will improve water quality in the watershed.

### Important Planning Concern:

*Point and non-point sources of pollution that enter Wappinger Creek or Wappinger Lake have the potential to affect the water quality of the Lake, the aquifer that intersects the Lake, and potentially the Village's water supply.*

**Objective: Protect and enhance the water quality of the Wappinger watershed to ensure a safe and adequate water supply for Village residents.**

#### **Actions:**

- Continue to participate in the Watershed Intermunicipal Council and the Dutchess County MS4 Committee.
- Participate in the development of a regional stream corridor management plan, with highest priority given to stormwater management, setbacks for buildings and construction, habitat and viewshed protection, and with specific recommendations to prohibit clearcutting and water impoundments and to limit subdivision and development in proximity the corridor.
- Create and implement an intermunicipal agreement to designate the entire Wappinger Creek a Critical Environmental Area under SEQRA, beginning with the lower Wappinger Creek.

- Implement the recommendations of the *Nine Element Watershed Plan*, with the participation of upstream communities and other stakeholders, to prevent pollutants and nutrient-laden sediment from entering the Wappinger Creek.
- Continue to work with Tri-Municipal Sewer Commission, and the Towns of Wappinger and Poughkeepsie, as well as other upstream communities, to address aging sewer systems, both privately- and publicly-owned, as well as septic systems of all sizes; decommission them where appropriate; and further consolidate sewage treatment so that the possibility of illicit discharge from these systems is minimized as much as possible.
- Require use of innovative stormwater management techniques such as those that increase local infiltration rates, reduce runoff from impervious surfaces, improve groundwater recharge, and reduce flooding and pollution problems for new development and for retrofits, whenever possible, as described by the Low Impact Development (LID) Center at [www.lid-stormwater.net](http://www.lid-stormwater.net).

### 3.E TOPOGRAPHY AND SOILS

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 land that 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 percent to 6 percent in the southern three-quarters of the Village, and slopes of 5 percent 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 percent to 2 percent slopes. Hoosic soils, with slopes ranging from an undulating 2 percent to 6 percent, to a hilly 15 percent to 30 percent, to an extremely steep 25 percent to 45 percent, predominant 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. The location of steep slopes in the Village can be seen on Figure 4 at the end of this chapter.

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

#### 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.*

**Objective: Control development on steep slopes in proximity to the Wappinger Creek and Falls to minimize sedimentation of these important water resources.**

**Actions:**

- Amend the Zoning Law to control development in areas of steep slopes, either by completely prohibiting development in these areas, or by permitting a degree of development related to the amount of slope involved, construction techniques, soils data and vegetation cover and runoff.
- As discussed previously, amend the Zoning Law to include a stream corridor overlay district which would require additional setbacks for buildings and construction to buffer water resources from ground disturbance along their banks.

### **3.F CONTAMINATED SITES**

The Village of Wappingers Falls has two identified contaminated sites: Three Star Anodizing (Site 314058) and the Lower Wappinger Creek (Site 314127). Three Star Anodizing was a metal plating operation located in the Market Street Industrial Park (aka the “Bleachery”). 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.” Adjacent to this site and extending downstream toward the Hudson in the Towns of Poughkeepsie and Wappinger, the Lower Wappinger Creek was added to the EPA Superfund in 2016; its primary contaminant is mercury.

The Three Star Anodizing site operated as a coal gasification facility during the late 1800s and early 1900s. 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/rinse water 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. 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 New York State groundwater standards. These contaminants may have discharged into Wappinger Creek during periods of high flow, and from there into the Hudson River. The Creek flows through the site and into the Hudson 1½ miles downstream.

In 2009, the DEC completed a [\*Record of Decision for the Three Star Anodizing Site # 314058\*](#), which outlined the contamination and their proposed remediation at a cost of \$10.5 million.

In 2013, DEC awarded a contract for the remediation work and finished the field work in October of 2013; the raceway/lagoon was the major focus of the 2013 remediation. As of 2021, the Village is still waiting for the *Site Management Plan* to be completed by the DEC, which would detail future responsibilities regarding the maintenance and protection of the monitoring system for the remediation which was completed on the site. During the remediation project, a Village drinking water main, which was privately owned by Three Star Anodizing (but publicly used for distribution throughout the Village), broke and caused a 600,000 gallon per day leak in the system. Because it was a large main which traveled under the Axton Cross Building in the Bleachery in a maze-like configuration, and because it also served as a “pass through” service to other residents in the Village, the Village declared a state of emergency and worked with the DEC and the Dutchess County Board of Health to restore water service to the Bleachery and points beyond, remove the potential contamination of the public water supply, and re-locate the service in a private roadway with an easement for both water and sewer; this work was completed in 2013 with funding from Dutchess County.

The Village has been active in advocating on behalf of the site’s cleanup and its ultimate re-use by working with the County, State and Federal governments on the cleanup, needed infrastructure, visioning and marketing, using the 2011 [\*Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Strategy\*](#), the *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study* (2019), an assessment grant from the EPA, and County Economic Development support. In 2014, the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Committee put the Bleachery on its list of priority projects and was awarded \$800,000 in funding from the Empire State Development Corporation to construct a sewer force main and provide publicly treated sewer collection service to the Bleachery for the first time in its history. This project was completed in 2017.

In 2013, the Village was awarded a \$333,000 grant to nominate the Village as an Opportunity Area to attract additional public funding and private investment to promote the adaptive re-use of underutilized properties. In 2014, the Village was also awarded a \$240,000 grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to assess likely development sites where environmental contamination may be present. This was considered particularly important for the Bleachery since the 2013 remediation done by the DEC did not address the soil under the Axton Cross Building. If that building were to be redeveloped or demolished, it is unclear what future remediation would be required.

### Important Planning Concern:

*The Village should use its significant investments in remediation and infrastructure to promote future adaptive re-use of these properties conducive to the sustainability and economic well-being of the community.*

**Objective: Continue to encourage the cleanup and adaptive reuse of contaminated sites at the Bleachery.**

**Actions:**

- Encourage the DEC to complete its *Site Management Plan* for the Three Star Anodizing property.
- Continue to vigorously support and lobby for the cleanup of contaminated sediment in the Lower Wappinger Creek through the EPA Superfund.
- Actively market the site to developers for uses that would provide economic benefits without adverse environmental impacts.
- Complete the work scope of the Brownfield Cleanup Program Assessment Grant.

### **3.G HAZARD MITIGATION**

The severe sedimentation of Wappinger Lake that has occurred over the past 40 years has led to a large number of secondary hazard concerns. The decrease in water levels has affected the Village's natural flood storage, has damaged the local drinking water's only aquifer recharge, and has caused wear and tear on the walls of the gorge, which hold up Route 9D and the central business district. If this problem goes unchecked, the Village will have no clean drinking water, no flood storage, and a dangerously corroded Main Street corridor.

Many of the drainage issues associated with Wappinger Lake are exacerbated by storm events caused by climate change. In April 2007, the Village had to evacuate 45 people from their homes during the "Tax Day Storm," a flooding event that occurred in the Village's largest drainage area. In 2013, with funding from the Green Innovative Grant Program through the Environmental Facilities Corporation, the Village was successful in constructing an ecosystem which addressed both flood resiliency as well as water quality by managing runoff from the Village's largest area of runoff.

Land along Wappinger Creek is prone to flooding, particularly in the lower Wappinger basin, where greater urbanization has aggravated flood hazards. The increased volume and speed of stormwater runoff in these areas overloads storm drainage capacity of low lands along the Creek and Lake. Within the Village, areas which are designated as a Special Flood Hazard Zone by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are limited to a narrow portion of the shoreline around Wappinger Lake and Creek. The notable exception is the area in the Industrial Park, which is susceptible to flooding. This may play a role in the future development of this area, should new structures be located within the floodzone. These structures would be subject to the local application of the National Flood Insurance Program. Despite the low vulnerability to flooding, the Village pursues flood mitigation opportunities, including education and new regulations, where applicable or beneficial.

A greater hazard in the Village are severe storm events that have caused damage in the Village and have been costly to clean up. In 2010, the Village suffered heavy snow falls in February and December, resulting in a total of approximately \$30,000 in storm-related costs for snow removal. The Nor'easter in October 2011 forced the closure of West Main Street from Clinton Street to North Street, and cost the Village approximately \$38,000 in clean up and response. During Hurricane Irene in 2011, the Wappingers Falls Fire Department received 49 calls regarding flooding. A house on South Gilmore Boulevard experienced a partial collapse due to flooding, and 40 people were evacuated to Wappingers Junior High School from the Brookside Apartment complex. The dam experienced \$350,000 worth of damage, requiring resurfacing. Total clean-up costs in response to Hurricane Sandy in 2012 equaled \$4,000, and Wappinger Lake experienced increased sedimentation due to upstream runoff. These are just a few instances of severe hazards that have occurred in recent years in the Village.

Hazard mitigation is the first step in reducing risk and is the most cost effective way to reduce costs associated with natural disasters. The Village of Wappingers Falls has participated in the preparation of the 2015 [\*Dutchess County Hazard Mitigation Plan\*](#), which includes an assessment of the Village's vulnerability to various disasters and the actions that can be taken to reduce or eliminate potential risks. The Village has also participated in the Climate Smart Planning Assessment with Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County to identify opportunities to improve resilience to flooding and climate change within the Village's plans and ordinances. A disaster-resistant community can rebound more quickly from a natural disaster with less loss of property or human injury, and at a much lower cost.

**Objective: Increase the Village's resilience to the manifestations of climate change.**

**Actions:**

- Continue to implement the recommendations of the [\*Dutchess County Hazard Mitigation Plan\*](#) to lessen the Village's vulnerability to natural hazards.
- Implement the recommendations of the Wappingers Falls Climate Smart Planning Assessment prepared by Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County (March 15, 2019) to improve the Village's resilience to flooding and climate change.
- Locate all new development outside current and future flood-prone and other hazard areas, wherever possible.
- Work with FEMA to explore relocating residential properties out of the floodplain.
- Consider municipal acquisition of waterfront properties as they become available.
- Encourage use of green infrastructure techniques in all development to help prevent flooding.
- Require "zero runoff," where the rate of runoff is the same or less after the completion of a development than it was before construction began, for all areas of the Village, together with appropriate enforcement mechanisms.

### 3.H ENERGY EFFICIENCY

As discussed above, climate change is resulting in more intense and frequent storms, heavier rainfall events, and snowpack melting that can cause stormwater inundation and localized flooding, erosion and sediment loading. Changing climatic conditions are anticipated to alter the long-term function of the natural systems that are vital to the Village's economy, environment and quality of life. The Village is anticipated to experience warmer temperatures and more extreme weather events with changing precipitation patterns that have the potential to cause stormwater inundation and localized flooding. These changes may degrade water quality by increasing stormwater runoff, overflows of separate and combined sewer systems, and stream bank erosion. Community facilities, including drinking water and wastewater treatment facilities, may be at risk due to more frequent and severe flooding. Reducing energy use is critical to minimize or ameliorate the impacts of climate change on the Village. The Village has adopted the Climate Smart Communities pledge acknowledging the threat that climate change presents to the economy, ecology, health and safety of citizens and communities, and partnering with New York State to build a resilient, low-emission future.

Vehicle miles traveled is one of the greatest contributors to greenhouse gases, which directly impact air quality and ground level ozone. The impacts of buildings on energy usage—through heating, cooling, lighting and appliances—is even greater. Many recommendations throughout this *Comprehensive Plan* will minimize impacts of climate change, such as encouraging use of public transit, walking and bicycling to reduce vehicle miles traveled, and retaining vegetation and tree cover to enhance local air and water quality. By its very design, the compact, mixed-use Village is more sustainable since it encourages walking. This section of the *Plan* focuses on actions to reduce consumption of fossil fuels through the increased energy efficiency of green building design.

**Objective: Minimize impacts of climate change through green building design to reduce consumption of fossil fuels that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.**

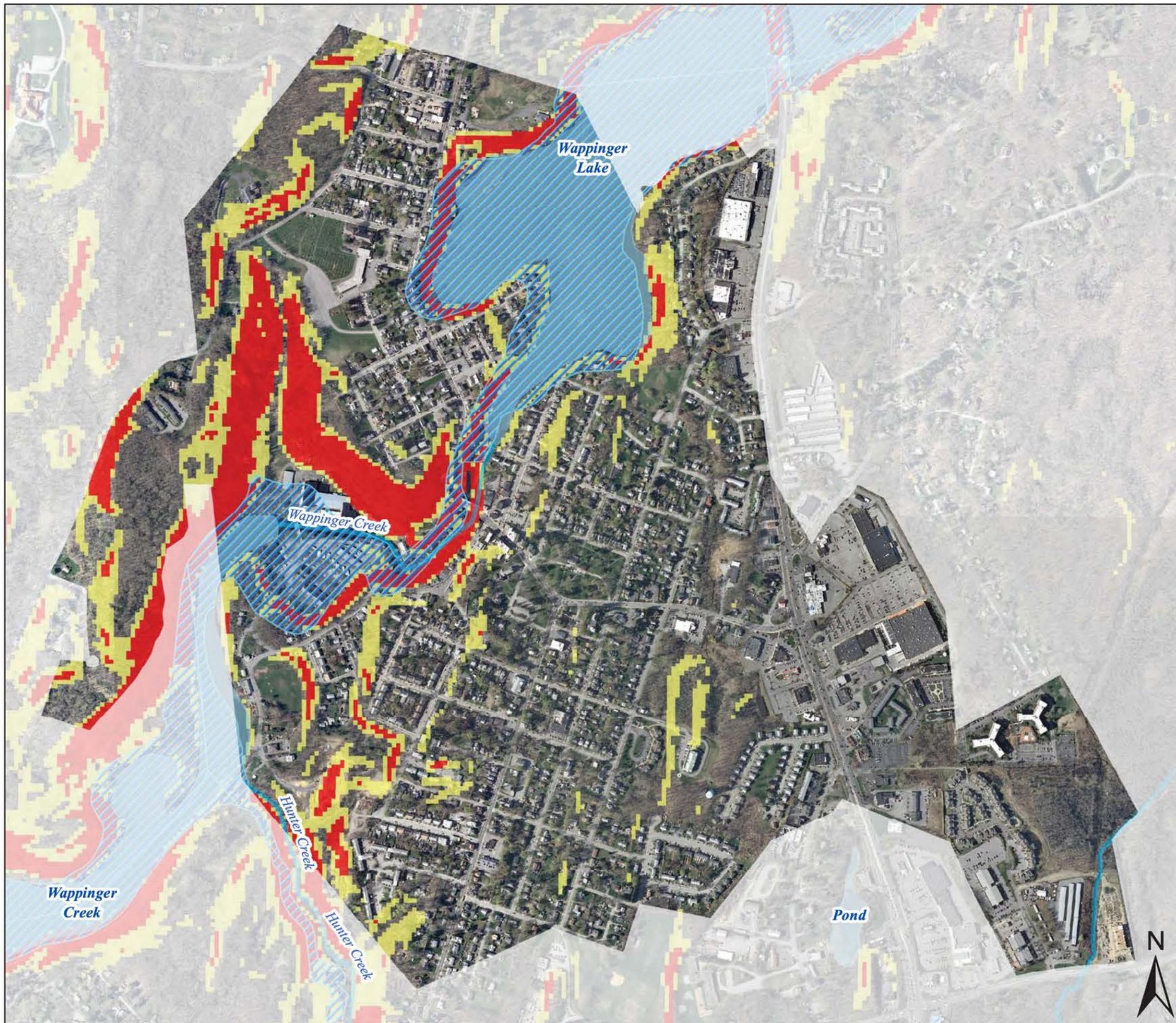
**Actions:**

- Encourage the use of renewable energy in development plans.
- Encourage adoption of a Village-wide “green building” standard based on the U.S. Green Building Council’s “Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building rating system.
- Consider amendments to the Village Code to require all new residential and non-residential buildings to be built to the U.S. EPA’s Energy Star Standards.
- Arrange for the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to conduct energy audits on Village buildings, and implement recommendations where feasible.

- Use the Village website to educate residents about green building techniques and how to reduce energy use through highly-efficient lighting, appliances, insulation, and HVAC systems.
- Require that projects developed with public funding, including all Village projects, make use of green building techniques so that such projects serve as both models and test cases for private development.
- Establish a committee to study and report on energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities.
- Adopt a green building guidebook that describes energy-efficient and environmentally-sensitive building techniques that would pass Village inspection.
- Install electric vehicle charging stations in municipal parking lots.
- Amend the Zoning to permit electric vehicle charging stations as an accessory use in parking lots and parking structures.

# Village of Wappingers Falls Comprehensive Plan

## Figure 4: Natural Resources and Environmental Features



### Legend

- Streams
- Waterbodies
- Special Flood Hazard Area

### Steep Slopes (Grade)

- <15%
- <25%

Note: According to the NYS Department of Conservation's Environmental Resource Mapping Application and the NYS GIS Clearinghouse there are no freshwater wetlands within the Village of Wappingers Falls.

0 0.25 0.5  
Miles

Prepared by:



Prepared for:



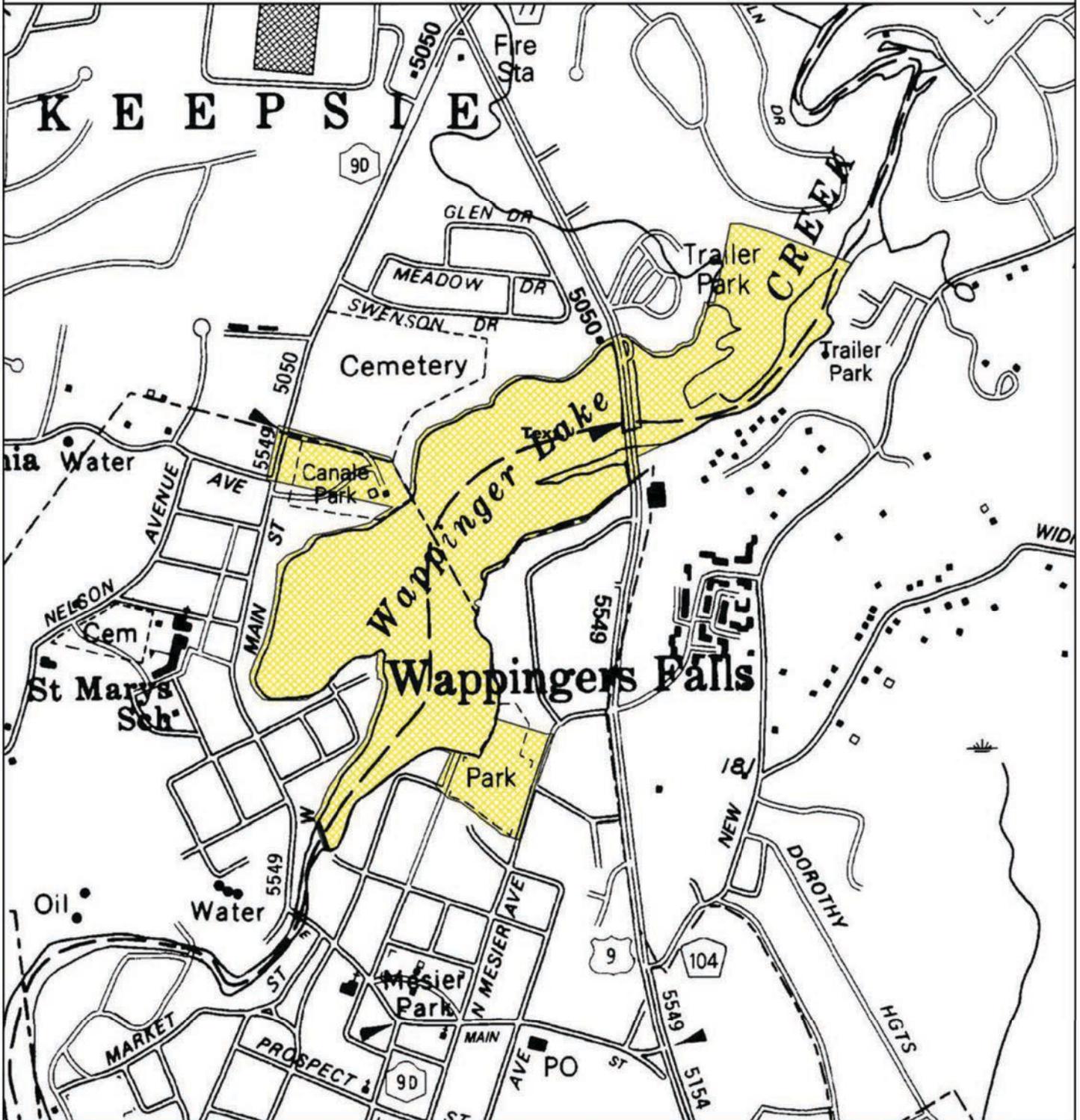
Date: May, 2016

Source: ESRI Online, NYS GIS Clearinghouse, NYSHPO

# Figure 5: Wappinger Lake Critical Environmental Area

Effective Date of Designation: 6-29-98

Designating Agency: Village of Wappinger Falls

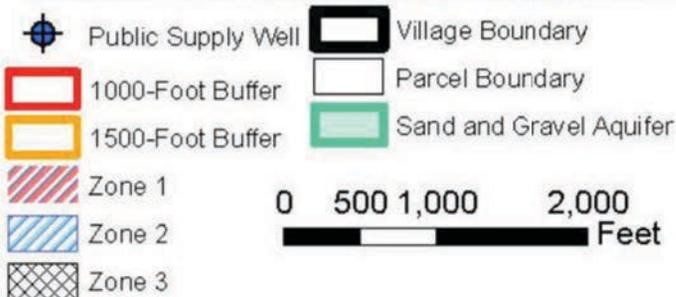
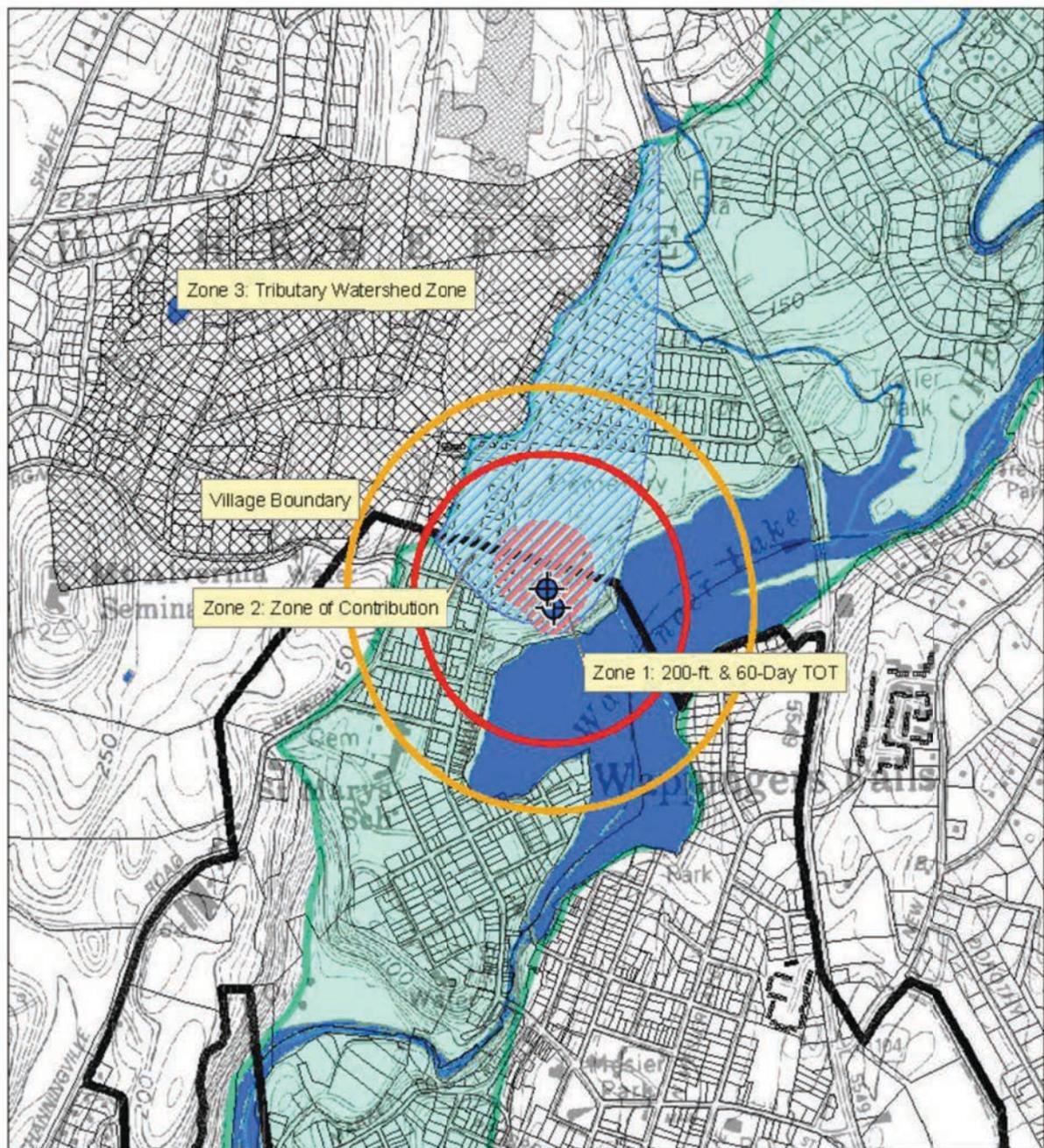


## Legend

 Wappinger Lake CEA

Base Map: DOT 1:24,000 Planimetric Images

Disclaimer: This map was prepared by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation using the most current data available. It is deemed accurate but is not guaranteed. NYS DEC is not responsible for any inaccuracies in the data. Please contact the designating authority for additional information regarding legal boundary descriptions.



**Figure 6:**  
**Village of Wappingers Falls**  
**Source Water Protection Area**

# Chapter 4: Historic Preservation

## Community Goal

**Protect and restore the buildings, districts and resources that provide tangible links to the Village's rich historic, architectural and cultural heritage.**

### 4.A BACKGROUND

Wappingers Falls is significant as one of the most extensive historic factory villages surviving in New York State. The hydropower generated by the Falls, after which the Village is named, gave the Village its industrial start in the early 1700s and attracted heavy industrial development at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> 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 degrees of status within the community. The commercial district and workers' 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 19<sup>th</sup> industrial village.

In 1984, a 90-acre section of the 755-acre Village was listed on the State and National 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 Falls Historic District, four properties have been individually listed on the National Register. Two of these properties, the Mulhern House (destroyed in a gas explosion in 1994) and the Dutchess Company Superintendent Residence, are related directly to the industrial history of the Village. The third, the Bain Commercial Building, is a distinctive example of a Second Empire-style free-standing commercial building, while the fourth, the former Post Office on South Avenue, is one of several fieldstone post offices built in the county during the Depression in the Dutch Colonial Revival style championed by President Roosevelt. Historic and archaeologically significant areas in the Village are shown on Figure 7 at the end of this chapter.

The buildings in the Wappingers Falls Historic District were constructed from the 1740s to the 1930s, but the predominant building types date from the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century

when industrial activity was at its peak. Notable structures include the picturesque 18<sup>th</sup> century Brewer-Mesier House, the distinctive shingle-style Grinnell Library, the 19<sup>th</sup> 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. Also remarkable because of their 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. In November 2012, one of these buildings, Goring Hall, partially collapsed and the entire building was demolished the following month. In June of 2017, a fire destroyed the interior of four more of these buildings and one carriage house located in the rear (which had been converted to residential use). The façades of these buildings remained and the buildings are being restored.

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 1860s, and the Bain Commercial Building, face the street. 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.

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 in the originally-built portion of the Village and expansion has occurred on vacant land, the community has not been affected by the wholesale demolition that occurred with the urban renewal of other Hudson River Valley cities. Although many incompatible alterations to historic buildings in the Village have taken place over the years, these buildings could be restored. Fortunately, modern highway construction bypassed the Village to the east, thereby contributing to the preservation of a historic village setting. Village residents continue today to appreciate their cultural history.

### Important Planning Concern:

*In the 2008 [Vision Plan](#), the 2011 [Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Strategy](#), and the 2019 [Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study](#), residents confirmed the findings of a public opinion survey conducted in 1998 for the 2001 [Comprehensive Plan](#) when 83 percent of the respondents rated maintaining and enhancing historic buildings in the Village as either important or very important.*

## 4.B RECOMMENDATIONS

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's (OPRHP) inventory of historic properties in the Village should be verified and supplemented, if necessary. OPRHP has completed a database of all identified cultural resources in the Village, which can be found on the New York State Cultural Resource Information System.

In a 1998 public opinion survey cited in the 2001 *Comprehensive Plan*, the majority of residents responding said that the Village should have control over the alteration or demolition of historic buildings. After the partial collapse of Goring Hall in 2012, and the 2017 fire that destroyed the roofs and interiors of four East Main Street historic structures, Village residents confirmed the importance of retaining the historic character of the Village. Restoration of historic structures within the Village, both listed and otherwise, also should be encouraged.

The Zoning Law should include an Historic Overlay District that is coincident with the Wappingers Falls Historic District and any locally-designated historic district that the Village Board may establish. The purpose of the district would be to provide for the protection, enhancement, perpetuation, and use of buildings, structures, and features of historic or architectural significance within the Wappingers Falls Historic District, and any locally-designated historic district, to link the community to its heritage and contribute to the aesthetic character of the Village. The Planning Board currently acts as an Architectural Review Board, and the *Comprehensive Plan* recommends that its responsibilities be expanded to include reviews of new construction in the Historic Overlay District, and of alterations and demolition of any structure within the district that is individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is listed as a contributing structure to the Wappingers Falls Historic District, or has been locally designated as historically significant by the Village Board. This would give the Planning Board the preservation tools necessary to oversee proposed changes within these historically significant areas. To aid the Planning Board in its architectural reviews, the Village should consider creation of a Design Review Committee composed of representatives of disciplines such as architecture, history, planning and historic preservation.

The Tax Act of 1986 provides incentives for the rehabilitation and restoration of historic buildings. This includes a 20 percent investment federal tax credit for the certified rehabilitation of certified historic commercial, industrial or income-producing residential buildings, and a 10 percent allowance for nonresidential buildings in service before 1936. The Village also is eligible for a matching 20 percent refundable New York State tax credit. To qualify for the historic tax credit, properties must be listed on the National Register of Historic Places or be a contributing building in a National Register Historic District.

**Objective: Protect and enhance historic buildings and structures in the Wappingers Falls Historic District and any locally-designated historic district.**

**Actions:**

- Adopt an Historic Overlay District that is coincident with the Wappingers Falls Historic District and any locally-designated historic districts
- Using the Model Historic Preservation Law prepared by New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation as a guide, amend the Zoning Law to require Planning Board review of alterations, new construction, and demolition in the Historic Overlay District to ensure that historic buildings and structures are preserved and restored, and new buildings are architecturally consistent with these historically significant areas.
- Establish a Design Review Committee to assist the Planning Board with architectural review in the Historic Overlay District.
- Promote the Federal and State Historic Preservation Tax Credit for the renovation of eligible properties.
- Encourage the restoration and adaptive reuse of historic properties.

**Objective: Identify and protect additional historic resources that contribute to the Village's historic character.**

**Actions:**

- Study additional areas of the Village to determine whether they are eligible for inclusion in the Wappingers Falls Historic District.
- Create a Local Historic District to encompass areas of the Village which are locally significant and which support the Wappingers Falls Historic District but which do not contain all of the resources to be considered eligible for inclusion on the National Register listing.
- Include any locally-designated historic district in the Historic Overlay Zoning District.
- Verify OPRHP's inventory of historic properties in the Village and supplement, if necessary.
- Nominate historic structures for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Where historic structures do not qualify for such designation, create criteria to govern local historic designation.

**Objective: Provide the Planning Board with tools and training necessary for historic preservation.**

**Actions:**

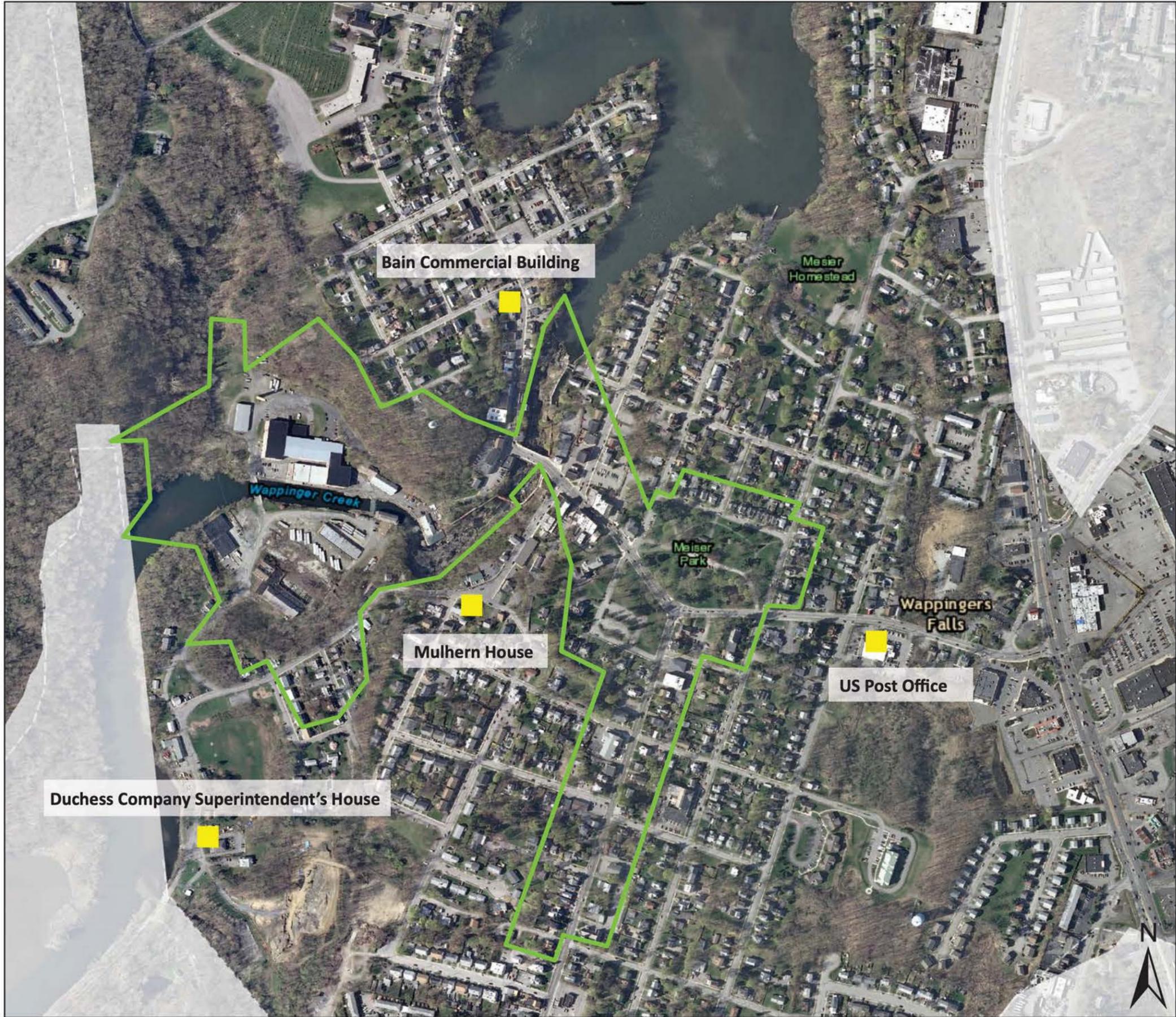
- Adopt an illustrative *Pattern Book* identifying key development patterns and architectural features of the Village, to be used by the Planning Board and applicants

as a guide to historically-appropriate development throughout the Village, and require that projects in the Historic Overlay District to be consistent with the *Pattern Book*.

- Provide Planning Board members with training on review of historic architecture.

# Village of Wappingers Falls Comprehensive Plan

## Figure 7: Historic and Archaeologically Significant Areas



### Legend

-  Wappingers Falls Historic District
-  National Register Historic Sites



Prepared by:  
**ELAN**  
Planning / Design / Landscape Architecture PLLC

Prepared for:  
 **Department of State**

Date: May, 2016

Source: ESRI Online, NYS GIS Clearinghouse, NYSHPO

# Chapter 5: Community Character Enhancement

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## Community Goal

**Ensure that new development is compatible with the existing character of the neighborhood and enhances the visual environment of the Village, consistent with the recommendations of the *Greenway Guides*.**

### 5.A EXISTING CONDITIONS

As Wappingers Falls continues to grow, it must ensure that new development is in keeping with the community character it wishes to present. Garish signs, obtrusive lighting, vast expanses of asphalt, and a proliferation of standardized franchise design and formula businesses, can quickly turn a charming village into “Anywhere

USA.” In 2001, the Village adopted *Greenway Connections: Greenway Compact Program and Guidelines for Dutchess County Communities* (“*Greenway Guides*”) as a statement of land use policies, principles and guides, thereby becoming a participating community in the Greenway Compact. As a Greenway community, the Village is eligible for grants, planning assistance, state liability protection, and other benefits. *Greenway Connections* was developed by the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development as a guide to integrate development with the natural and cultural environment. The Village should use the recommendations of this important guide to preserve and enhance its community character.

In a public opinion survey conducted in 1998 and cited in the 2001 *Comprehensive Plan*, 69 percent of respondents said they were in favor of more stringent regulation of commercial signs and lighting to provide a more aesthetically pleasing business environment; 73 percent felt that, as the Village continues to grow, maintaining and enhancing trees was important or very important; and 85 percent felt that enhancing the streetscape was important or very important. This concern for the Village’s visual environment was reiterated in the 2008 *Vision Plan*, the 2011 *Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Strategy*, and the 2019 *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study*. The latter two plans also document support for more well-designed commercial development along the Route 9 corridor, and infill development in the Village commercial center. Clearly the visual environment of new development in the Village is important to Wappingers Falls residents.

### 5.B Site Layout, Streetscape, and Building Design

If properly designed, the street is the most important public space in a village. The secret to good street design is to think of the street as an outdoor room, with the principal buildings serving as the walls, and a canopy of trees as the roof. Defining the public space of the street as an outdoor room encourages walking. The relationship of buildings to the street is

key to creating this effect. Principal buildings should have a uniform front yard setback. New development that fills in vacant lots along existing developed streets should conform to the prevailing setback on the block. To give priority to pedestrians, garages should be detached and/or set back from the front building facade.

The appearance of the streetscape is also impacted by features such as the scale and height of buildings, the shape and slope of roofs, the number, shape, and location of windows on the façade facing the street, and the inclusion of frontage elements such as a front porch, stoop, or shopfront. New development should generally conform to existing patterns on the block. If the majority of principal buildings on a block are two-story, with gables facing the street and large front porches, new buildings will look like they belong if they follow these patterns.

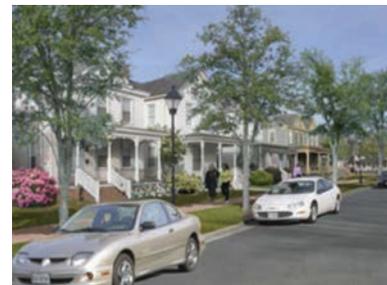
The Village’s [\*Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Strategy\*](#) recommends that the Zoning Law include shallow front and side yard setbacks to promote a dense, traditional development pattern consisted with the historic Village, and to ensure that new development fits with existing building patterns. It also recommends that the Zoning Law include site design standards governing the location of structures on the site, landscaping, parking, signage, pedestrian amenities, lighting etc., and building form standards regulating the configurations, features and functions of buildings that define and shape the public realm. These sections of the Zoning Law, commonly known as form-based standards, will clearly convey the community’s vision and streamline the planning review process.



Existing Conditions



Infill construction compatible with the existing architectural character and setbacks of the street



Street trees protect pedestrians on the sidewalk and, when mature, will create a canopy over the street

**Figure 8: Compatible Infill Development and Streetscape Design**

**Objective: Ensure that the layout and design of new development throughout the Village is consistent with the character of the existing neighborhood.**

**Actions:**

- Amend the Zoning Law to ensure that infill development conforms to the existing prevailing setback on the block and contributes to the physical definition of the street as a public space that encourages walking.
- Amend the Zoning Law to include building design standards so that new development is compatible with neighborhood buildings in terms of building height,

mass, scale, roof forms, proportions for facades and window openings, materials, textures and colors, and other architectural features.

- Amend the Zoning Law to include detailed, illustrated standards for frontage types such as porches, stoops, shopfronts, officefronts, and galleries.
- Amend the area and bulk requirements in the Zoning Law to ensure that the height and scale of new buildings are consistent with existing buildings in the district, with the exception the Bleachery where taller buildings can be accommodated without adverse impacts to neighbors.
- Amend the Zoning Law to prohibit franchise architecture in all areas of the Village.
- Amend the Zoning Law to prohibit formula businesses and drive-thru businesses in all areas of the Village except the Route 9 commercial corridor.
- Adopt an illustrative *Pattern Book* that identifies key building forms and architectural features consistent with the character of the Village to assist applicants and the Planning Board with the review of development projects.

**Objective: Maintain and enhance the canopy of trees that form the “roof” of the streetscape on Village roads.**

**Actions:**

- Require that street trees be planted in the tree lawn between the sidewalk and the street curb whenever possible to provide a buffer for pedestrians on the sidewalk.
- Establish a tree protection law and create a management plan for trees along roads and on Village properties.
- Work with NYSDOT, County DPW, the Village DPW, and local public utilities to minimize the cutting of street trees.
- Establish a Village policy to cut lower limbs of trees to ensure drivers’ sight distance, as opposed to cutting down trees entirely.
- Apply to become a Tree City USA Community through the Arbor Day Foundation to protect and enhance the Village’s urban forest and the canopy of trees along its streets.
- Formalize a tree replacement policy that plants a tree for each tree that is felled for new development and within right-of-ways.
- Recognize and honor individuals and companies that take the lead in planting and protecting trees.

## **5.C Site Specifics**

Good design of site-specific features such as lighting, landscaping and signage can have a tremendous positive effect on community character. The Village should continue to require lighting that is adequate but never excessive (based on recommendations of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America or IESNA), utilizes full cut-off fixtures to prevent glare off-site and into the night sky, as recommended by the International Dark-Sky

Association, and is human-scale. The current lighting provisions in the Zoning Law should be amended to include the new BUG rating for outdoor lighting fixtures to address backlighting, uplighting, and glare, and to include limits on color temperature for LED lamps; color temperature should be warm white (a maximum of 2700K is ideal) so lighting is not harsh or overly bright and does not adversely impact human circadian rhythms and migratory wildlife species. Street trees should be spaced close together in areas with slow speed limits, and farther apart 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 throughout the Village. Electronic message signs, which use illumination systems or other similar electronic components to display a message that can be electronically modified, can distract drivers and have adverse impacts on safety. These types of signs should be prohibited, except in the case of gasoline station pricing and drive-thru menu boards outside the Village center, where the frequency of changing the sign should be limited.

The Village is fortunate to have numerous mature trees, particularly in Mesier Park. However, many of these trees require 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. In 2014, the Village used a DEC grant to compile a tree inventory, tree supplement, and management program to ensure the Village maintains and enhances its “urban forest.”

**Objective: Improve community character through site-specific features consistent with the recommendations of the *Greenway Guides*.**

**Actions:**

- Amend the Village’s Zoning Law to incorporate provisions for landscaping, signs, parking lots, lighting, street trees, and waste collection, based on the recommendations of publications such as the *Greenway Guides*, to improve the visual character throughout the Village.
- Continue to require that lighting is adequate but never excessive and is human-scale.
- Amend the lighting provisions in the Zoning Law to require full cut-off lighting fixtures, to include a maximum color temperature for LED lamps, and to reference the IESNA BUG rating to limit backlighting, uplighting, and glare.
- Amend the Zoning Law to ensure that signs enhance community character, and to encourage monument signs along the Route 9 corridor; to allow electronic message signs only for gasoline station pricing and menu boards in the CMU District, subject to restrictions to minimize impacts of such signage; and to ensure that the sign regulations are consistent with the 2015 Supreme Court decision in *Reed v. Town of Gilbert*.
- Amend the Zoning Law to establish landscaping standards for street trees, landscaped buffers, and parking lots; to require incorporating existing landscaping,

- particularly mature trees, into site plans whenever practical; and to encourage generous use of non-invasive, low-maintenance native plants.
- Make information about [native](#) and invasive plants available at Village Hall and on the Village website, and provide this information to developers during project reviews by the Planning Board.
  - Ensure that landscape plantings near roads and sidewalks are hardy varieties tolerant of soil compaction and salt, drought resistant, and free of objectionable droppings such as seed pods.
  - Continue to utilize the inventory of significant trees in the Village, and create a replacement, supplementation, and management plan for them.
  - Use an “arboretum” approach when selecting new trees for Mesier Park so that a mix of specimen trees can be added to the landscape.
  - Appoint a “Shade Tree Commission” to assist the Planning Board in recommendations for urban tolerant trees and to assist the Village in tree conservation efforts.
  - Inventory tree species on Village roads and properties to ensure that a wide variety of species are planted.
  - Adopt an illustrative *Pattern Book* that provides clear design standards for architectural compatibility, scale and form, signage, landscaping and lighting for all development in the Village.
  - Amend the Zoning Law to identify nonconforming features that must be brought into conformance with the terms and conditions of the Zoning Law within a specified period of time, including signs, lighting, landscaping and other site issues.

# Chapter 6: Land Use

## Community Goal

**Encourage the orderly and efficient layout with appropriate uses of land in the Village, while respecting historic development patterns, to promote the health, safety and welfare of all residents and to leave future generations a desirable place to live, work and play.**

Although the Village of Wappingers Falls is nearly fully developed, there remain a few vacant parcels available for development, as well as opportunities for the redevelopment of underutilized properties. This chapter of the *Comprehensive Plan* makes recommendations for a future land use plan for the Village, including recommended amendments to the Village’s Zoning Law. These recommendations are based on the

goals and objectives outlined in the various planning documents that the Village has prepared since the previous *Comprehensive Plan* was adopted in 2001. As outlined in the Executive Summary, the Village has prepared numerous plans during the last 20 years, and each plan was the result of an extensive public participation process, including workshops, meetings, and public hearings. The 2021 *Comprehensive Plan* is the result of that extensive public participation process.

### 6.A EXISTING CONDITIONS

After deducting the 89 acres of streets and rights-of-way in the Village, and the 51 acres that comprise Wappingers Lake and Creek, the remaining land area in the Village totals 615 acres. Approximately 106 acres of this land is undeveloped. There may appear to be an abundance of vacant land in the Village. However, much of this land is constrained by steep slopes and other natural features, such as waterfalls, making it unbuildable, as shown in Figure 4. These natural features, which are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, enhance the character of the Village and present opportunities for recreation and tourism, two key components of the economy and future land use for the Village. But they also limit other forms of development, such as residential and commercial opportunities.

### 6.B MAJOR LAND USE CHANGES SINCE 2001

This section summarizes the major land use changes that have occurred in the Village since the last *Comprehensive Plan* was adopted in 2001. As discussed in Chapter 2, 53 acres of vacant land were developed during this twenty-year time span, the majority of which (51 acres) were converted to multi-family residential use. Three minor subdivisions that resulted in five new single-family lots, and the construction of eight new single-family dwellings account for the remaining two acres. In terms of commercial uses, a new mall (Patriot’s Park) was

constructed on the site of existing commercial uses, which were demolished, on the corner of East Main Street and Route 9, and an industrial use on Delavergne Avenue converted to retail. Existing lands uses appear on the Existing Land Uses Map (Figure 9), which was prepared for the *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study* in 2017.

<b>Table 8: Land Uses 2018</b>		
<b>Land Use Category</b>	<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>Percent of Total Area</b>
Single- and Two-Family Residential	202.69	26.8%
Multi-Family Residential	94.61	12.6%
Commercial	99.48	13.2%
Industrial	24.28	3.2%
Community Service	56.37	7.5%
Recreation	15.52	2%
Water	51.2	6.8%
Public Service/Utilities	15.85	2.1%
Roads and Rights-of-Way	89	11.8%
Vacant	106	14%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>755</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 6.C TYPES OF LAND USES

### Residential

In 2001, 32.4 percent of the Village’s total acreage was residentially developed. This included 200.59 acres of single-family two-family dwellings, and 43.58 acres of multi-family development. Between 2001 and 2020, the Village saw an increase of 12 single-family dwellings and 303 multi-family units. These developments comprise 51 of the 53 acres of vacant land that were developed during this twenty-year time span.

Residential structures in Upper Ward 3, north of East Main Street and east of Wappingers Lake, are predominantly single-family. The single-family homes in this area are generally in very good condition, probably due to their relatively new, 1960s 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 is in good condition.

Other single-family residential areas in the Village are in Ward 1 north of West Street; Ward 2 south of East Main to Lower Henry and Clapp Avenue; and Lower Ward 3 between South Avenue and South Remsen Avenue.

Larger townhouse and multi-family residential developments constructed prior to 2001 include the Oakwood Park and Wenliss Terrace townhouses built in the 1950s and 1960s; the 32-unit DiMarco Place apartment complex for senior citizens constructed in the same area in 1997; the Wappingers Falls Owners Corporation multi-family development (previously known as Ashley Gardens) at 1548 Route 9 built in the early 1960s; Berkley Square constructed east of Route 9 in 2000; a large co-operative apartment development, Imperial Towers, located on the east side of Route 9; and Oak Tree Gardens (1969) located in the Channingville Road area in the northwesterly portion of the Village. Since the adoption of the 2001 *Comprehensive Plan*, a number of new multi-family residences have been constructed, including: a three-story apartment building with 32 units on DiMarco Place in 2004; Riverbend I (2007) and Riverbend II (2014), with 124 units and 54 units respectively, on the east side of Route 9; the 48-unit Creekside Springs apartment building complex constructed on Alexander Lane in 2014; a 6-unit building constructed in 2017 (West Academy Street) to replace a 5-unit building destroyed by fire; a 24-unit two-story apartment building constructed on Marshall Road in 2018; and another 15 units on Market Street and Delavergne Avenue.

## **Commercial**

Wappingers Falls has four major types of commercial land uses: general business, local business, office, and industrial. Together these comprise about 16 percent of the total land area in the Village.

General business includes highway-oriented businesses with a regional market. Most of the 73 acres of general business use in the Village are located along Route 9. Businesses in this area include the shopping plazas, big box stores, strip malls, and national retail chains located on the east side of Route 9. The west side of Route 9 includes free-standing general commercial uses, several auto-related businesses and fast-food restaurants, as well as a bowling alley. A few older, existing general businesses are scattered throughout the Village on West Main Street between Delavergne Avenue and Clinton Street and in Ward 2 on South Avenue and off of Fulton Street.

Local commercial uses are intended to serve the surrounding neighborhood and tend to be smaller independent proprietorships. In total, Wappingers Falls has eight acres of local commercial uses. Their primary concentration is in the Village commercial center. The rest are scattered north of the commercial center along East and West Main Streets, South Avenue and Delavergne Avenue.

Office development totals 16 acres and is primarily found in converted houses along East Main Street and South Avenue, as well as along West Main Street.

The Market Street Industrial Park is the only traditional industrial area in the Village. The focal point of the Industrial Park is the former Bleachery, a series of historic loft-type buildings. Industrial uses comprise approximately 24 acres.

Prior to 1999, expansion of the Market Street Industrial Park was limited by the inadequacy of the only bridge providing access to the site. To address this, the new Fedigan's Bridge was constructed using State funding, and opened in Spring 1999. It has encouraged more light-industrial firms to locate in the Industrial Park, bringing more jobs to the Village. Some structures on the site are underutilized, and the Village has taken several actions to encourage increased usage of the site. The Village secured funding for the DEC cleanup of the site, which was completed in 2013. However, as of 2018, the final management plan has not been received from the DEC. In 2013, the Village replaced the water main formerly under the Axton Cross Building. Later in 2013, the Village was awarded a Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program Grant to study underutilized properties in the Village, including those in the Industrial Park, and to develop a plan for their future development. In 2017, the Village completed a new sewer force main to encourage future development of the Industrial Park. In 2016, the Village was awarded a \$200,000 Brownfield Cleanup Assessment Grant for future cleanup needs.

### **Public Services and Community Services**

Public service and community service uses include facilities used by government and non-profit organizations respectively.

Public service uses occupy approximately 16 acres of land and consist of the Village administrative buildings in and near Mesier Park including: the Village Hall and Justice Court at 2582 South Avenue, which was purchased and renovated in 2013; the Village Police Department in the former Post Office at 2628 South Avenue; the Village Highway Department Garage and Yard; and the Wastewater Treatment Facility on Market Street; the well fields at the Water Treatment Facility on Canale Way; three Village water storage facilities; and two Village Fire Stations. Additional acreage is used for utilities.

The majority of the 56 acres of land used for community services 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. St. Mary's School has recently closed, and amendments to the Zoning Law should be considered to allow for adaptive reuse of this structure for uses such as a day care center or community center. Other tax-exempt 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 South Remsen Avenue, Zion Episcopal Church on East Main Street, and Bethel Baptist Church on South Avenue.

## **Recreation and Open Space**

Public recreation lands in the Village total 15.52 acres, as discussed in detail in Chapter 8. There are also other privately-owned open space lands that contribute to the character of the Village, such as the Zion Episcopal Church Park located on the south side of East Main Street. This park and the 5.5-acre Mesier Park and Homestead, located directly opposite, create the focal point of the Village and form a traditional “village green.” Community facilities, including a Village meeting hall and the Grinnell Library, front on this green.

## **6.D RECOMMENDATIONS**

The future pattern of land use and community character in the Village of Wappingers Falls will be affected by the regulatory land use decisions made in the near term. The *Comprehensive Plan* includes a Proposed Land Use Map to set forth a pattern of preferred land use and development intensity in the Village in order to encourage appropriate development and redevelopment consistent with historic development patterns, and the goals, objectives and actions of this *Comprehensive Plan*. The Proposed Land Use Map, which appears as Figure 10 at the end of this Chapter, is based upon the existing land use analysis and the demographic and socio-economic profile presented in Chapter 2. The actual mapping of the zoning districts and the establishment of regulations governing permitted uses and dimensional standards (as well as the procedural practices for reviewing land development applications) would occur as part of the process of developing Zoning and other local laws and regulations to implement the *Comprehensive Plan*.

### **The Residential Area**

Large areas of the Village are primarily single-family neighborhoods. These lands are proposed to be included in the Residential land use category, as shown on Figure 10. This area would permit single-family dwellings and residential accessory uses such as home occupations.

The primary purpose of the Residential land use category is to preserve the character of existing pedestrian-friendly, moderate density single-family neighborhoods. Building height and front yard setbacks in this district are consistent on each block face. Single-family homes have front porches or stoops and are located on narrow lots. Streets generally have curbs, sidewalks and street trees. While almost exclusively residential, some civic functions such as day care centers and community centers, and parks are also complementary to the character of this district.

In order to prevent the conversion of single-family homes to multifamily dwellings which, as discussed in Chapter 2, has already limited opportunities for home ownership in the Village, other types of housing besides single-family dwellings would not be permitted in this district. However, to provide more affordable housing options, and to make single-family

home ownership more economically viable, accessory dwellings should be allowed, subject to various restrictions on parcel size, accessory dwelling unit size, owner-occupancy of one of the dwelling units, and location of the accessory dwelling within the principal building.

### **The Village Residential Area**

Residential neighborhoods with a greater variety of housing types and generally smaller lots than in the Residential area are proposed to be included in the Village Residential (VR) land use designation, as shown on Figure 10. The primary purpose of the VR area is to provide for pedestrian-friendly residential neighborhoods with a variety of housing types, including single family, two-family, and townhouses, some civic functions (such as day care centers and community centers) and parks. Lots in this area are compact and narrow. Shallow front yard setbacks and a consistent build-to line and building height on each block face serve to define the public realm of the street and encourage walking. Most homes have front porches. Streets with curbs, sidewalks and street trees define medium-sized blocks.

To minimize impacts to neighbors due to the small lot size in the VR area, more intensive home occupations should only be allowed for single-family detached dwellings in this area. However, live-work dwellings with small-scale commercial uses, such as specialty retail and business or professional offices, should be allowed for properties in the VR District with frontage on Route 9D, as long as they do not impact the residential character of neighborhood. Continued use of some of these properties solely for residential purposes is challenging given the increased traffic on the State road.

Much of Upper West Main Street and South Avenue are proposed to be included in the VR land use category. The Wenliss Terrace/Stuart Avenue subdivision and the Gilmore/Oak Park Terrace development located west of Route 9 on the southern edge of the Village, have been completely developed with two-family dwellings and townhouses, and these entire neighborhoods should be included the VR area as well, including the portion that is located directly on Route 9.

The portion of South Remsen from Prospect Street to one parcel south of East Main Street on the east side of the street, approximately 205 feet back from road, should also be included in the VR District, as shown in Figure 10, to maintain the residential character of the neighborhood and allow for a wide variety of housing types.

To prevent the conversion of single-family dwellings to multifamily dwellings in order to promote more home ownership in the Village, multifamily dwellings would not be permitted in this area. Many of the lots in the VR area are too small to accommodate the additional off-street parking that would be required for multifamily dwellings in any case. However, to provide more affordable housing options, and to make single-family home ownership more economically viable, accessory dwellings should be allowed in the VR land use category, subject to various restrictions on parcel size, accessory dwelling unit size, owner-occupancy

of one of the dwelling units, and location of the accessory dwelling within the principal building.

### **The Residential Mixed Use Area**

Although the Village wishes to prevent the conversion of existing single-family homes to multifamily dwellings, there is still a need for more multifamily units in the community. The *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Program* included a Market Analysis which concluded that the Village could support 150 to 300 new residential units over the next five to ten years. The majority of these units would be in multi-family dwellings since these are the most attractive to the younger (millennials) and older (“empty nesters”) households, which are projected to increase in number over the next decade. The Residential Mixed Use area would provide opportunity for this new development.

The primary purpose of the Residential Mixed Use (RMU) land use designation is to provide for a mix of clustered garden-style apartments and limited commercial uses, such as professional offices, for the convenience of neighboring residents. Front and side yard setbacks may be variable. In the Channingville Road area, the intent is also to preserve significant areas of open space, particularly along the road frontage, on lands that are constrained by topography.

This category includes a large area of the Village along Channingville Road, an area along the lower Wappinger Creek, and residential lands east of Route 9. Much of the land identified for inclusion in the RMU area east of Route 9 is already developed with large multifamily developments, including Riverbend I & II, Marshall Road, Imperial Gardens, Berkely Square, and the multi-family development at 1548 Route 9 (previously Ashley Gardens). A large multi-family development called Creekside Springs, and a few smaller 4-unit developments are located along the lower Wappinger Creek.

Much of the Channingville Road area is constrained by steep slopes, 15 percent or greater. There is currently one apartment complex, Oak Tree Garden Apartments, on the east side of Channingville Road. The RMU designation would allow for clustered garden-style apartments near the New Hamburg Train Station, while preserving a large percentage of open space on the existing large undeveloped lands in these areas. New housing should be set deep into the property here so it can be hidden from view of the road by existing trees, and clustered to retain large areas of open space consistent with the hundreds of acres of open space surrounding Mount Alvernia, Scenic Hudson, the Reese Audubon Sanctuary and Bowdoin Park.

Since some of these sites could also incorporate small-scale commercial uses such as professional offices it is proposed to be a mixed-use district.

## The Village Mixed Use (VMU) Area

The primary purpose of the Village Mixed Use (VMU) area is to provide for pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods with a mix of housing types and some small-scale commercial uses that primarily serve the local community. Lots are compact and narrow, and building height and front yard setbacks are consistent on each block face in order to define the public realm of the street and encourage walking. Streets with curbs, sidewalks and street trees define medium-sized blocks. On East and West Main Street, the VMU area additionally serves as a gateway to the Village, to slow traffic and provide a transition between the large commercial uses on busy Route 9 and the walkable village center. The proposed VMU area is shown on Figure 10.

Land in the vicinity of Delavergne Avenue includes a variety of uses ranging from single-family residential to commercial. The 2001 *Comprehensive Plan* recommended that Delavergne Avenue be studied with a goal to including properties in this area in a single zoning district to minimize land use conflicts and create an attractive gateway to the Village. The area was originally included in four separate Zoning Districts. As the northern gateway to Wappingers Falls, this area and should present a welcoming visual image of the Village's distinctive character. The *Comprehensive Plan* recommends that the one block area of Delavergne Avenue and land in the immediate vicinity be included in the VMU land use category, which would allow for a mix of residential and small-scale commercial uses, as currently exists, but would prohibit industrial uses, which are not compatible with the uses in the area. Currently, there are no industrial uses in this area.

The *Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Nomination Study* includes an area plan for the Upper West Main Street Corridor indicating a number of properties that could be developed with mixed-use buildings. A second concept plan that appears in the BOA illustrates a potential redevelopment plan for the former Thornton's Gas Station site. These plans appear as Figures 11 and 12 at the end of this Chapter. The Zoning Law should be reviewed to ensure that the land uses identified on these plans are allowed. Although these plans are not mandatory development plans, applicants and the Planning Board should consider them when reviewing development projects proposed in this area.

Similarly, East Main Street is the eastern gateway to the Village, and has always served as a transition between the large commercial uses on busy Route 9 and the smaller, neighborhood-scale businesses in the village center. The [\*Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Strategy\*](#) recommends that East Main Street create an attractive, pedestrian-friendly entrance to the Village from Route 9 and connect the portion of the Village east of Route 9 to the downtown. Street trees, sidewalks, and locating buildings close to the road in this area will create a more Village-like feel and slow traffic as it enters the community. The *Comprehensive Plan* recommends that East Main Street from South Avenue to Moran Avenue be included in the VMU land use category. This will allow for smaller-scale commercial activity located near

residential areas. It would also allow for the adaptive reuse of the Post Office if it were ever to leave that location.

A small area on West Main Street above Clinton Street includes a concentration of businesses which represent a break in the residential pattern along West Main in this area. Similar areas can be found on South Avenue below Reserve Place and in the vicinity of Franklindale Avenue. It is proposed that these areas also be included in the VMU land use category.

### **The Village Commercial (VC) Area**

Downtown is the heart of the Village, the traditional center of commerce, civic activity, and community life. It is characterized by a dense concentration of land uses and is designed to encourage walking, with buildings set close to the sidewalk and to each other, and shops located on the ground-floor of two- and three-story historic brick buildings, which, as noted in the Village's *Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Strategy*, gives Main Street its charm. West Main Street includes the popular County Players Theater, while East Main Street has thriving businesses in addition to community amenities such as the Grinnell Library, Zion Episcopal Church and Mesier Park. Mill Street and Market Street are secondary roads which intersect East Main Street and include a mix of commercial and residential uses in single-use and mixed-use buildings.

Downtown Wappingers Falls originally included a three block area located around the intersection of East Main and Mill Streets. Over the years the district has been expanded to accommodate additional shops and services. The VC area should be concentrated in the heart of Village south and west of Mesier Park, which serves as a traditional village green, as shown on Figure 10.

The primary purpose of the Village Commercial (VC) land use category is to provide for a vibrant, walkable downtown with higher density mixed-use buildings that accommodate a range of retail, service, entertainment, and office uses on the ground floor, and apartments above or below the ground floor. Infill development is designed to reinforce the existing well-defined urban character of the Village's historic downtown area. Streets have curbs with consistent street tree plantings, relatively small blocks, and wide sidewalks that accommodate outdoor dining while providing for comfortable strolling and easy view of retail merchandise. Buildings are set very close to the sidewalk in order to define the public realm, with frontage types that encourage substantial pedestrian activity.

The 2019 *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study* includes a Village Center Area Plan, which appears as Figure 13 at the end of this chapter, with additional features intended to make the commercial center more vibrant. The Zoning Law should be reviewed to ensure that the Village's land use regulations permit this development, with the exception of the

conceptual proposal for townhouse development on High Street as the VC land use category will not permit ground floor residential development.

### The Commercial Mixed Use (CMU) Area

The Route 9 corridor is dominated by highway commercial uses, including auto-oriented fast food restaurants, shopping centers, and auto-related establishments. This is the most heavily traveled corridor in the Village and special attention should be given to how it looks and develops. The recommendations of the Greenway Guides for [commercial strip redevelopment](#), [highways into greenways](#), and for the site specific features discussed in Chapter 5 (landscaping, lighting, signage, etc.) should be incorporated into the Zoning Law so that the Route 9 corridor can be redeveloped as a more contained center with shared driveways and parking, and higher quality landscaping, signage and architecture.

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

- 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 congestion, 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.
- 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.



Existing Conditions



New street trees and sidewalk



Sidewalk-oriented shopfronts



The commercial strip redeveloped as a Main Street shopping area

**Figure 14: Commercial Strip Redevelopment**

The primary purpose of the Commercial Mixed Use area is to redevelop the Route 9 corridor as a more contained sub-center with shared entrances and parking; higher quality landscaping, signage and architecture; sites that are upgraded with sidewalks, street trees, internal service roads; and development that fills in the fronts of large parking lots with small, closely spaced storefronts to build a street frontage with courtyard parking behind. Development form supports a high-quality commercial character, with one-story back buildings in the rear of the lots, and two- to three-story mixed-use linear buildings close to road frontages. Linear buildings conceal parking lots, and include ground floor commercial uses, a uniform setback, and wide sidewalks to increase pedestrian activity in the area. The proposed CMU land use designation is shown on Figure 10.

### **Bleachery (B) Area**

The Bleachery, a 19<sup>th</sup> century former industrial complex, is one of a number of historic factories in the Hudson Valley that is finding new life through adaptive reuse. Now known as the Market Street Industrial Park, the site includes a series of historic loft-type buildings that currently house many small businesses, with a particular emphasis on art and design. It also includes a vacant 14,000 square foot 19<sup>th</sup> century mill building which could be restored and adaptively re-used for new commercial uses. With its unique characteristics and potential, the Bleachery should have its own zoning designation.

An economic and market analysis included in the Village's *Local Waterfront Revitalization Strategy* concludes that the Bleachery offers exceptional opportunity for small-scale artisan manufacturing with a retail component. This type of use would be too intensive for the downtown area, but it could attract visitors who stop to shop or dine downtown. Moreover, in conjunction with its historic buildings, the properties that comprise the Bleachery contain one of the largest parcels of developable land located along the Wappinger Creek waterfront. As such, the Bleachery has tremendous tourism and recreational potential. The historic loft-type buildings are an attraction in themselves. Moreover, the site 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's *Local Waterfront Revitalization Strategy* and *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study* recommend converting the former Three Star Anodizing property in the Bleachery into a vibrant commercial complex with a contemporary market place, collaborate spaces for light manufacturing of artisan products (a "makerspace"), educational programs, renewable energy alternatives, and an indoor/outdoor event space. Emphasis should be given to more intensive uses that cannot be accommodated in the downtown. Light manufacturing should emphasize artisan and craft products, cabinet makers, media production, handicraft industries, and other related artisan industries. Waterfront recreation could include scenic overlooks, trails, a boat launch, and a multi-purpose recreation and entertainment area. The Zoning Law should ensure these uses would be permitted in this area. As noted in the *Local*

*Waterfront Revitalization Strategy*, the topography of the Bleachery area would allow for taller architecturally compatible buildings in this district with little impact to surrounding neighborhoods. The 2019 *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study* includes a concept plan for the Bleachery which appears as Figure 15 at the end of this chapter. The proposed Bleachery area is shown on Figure 10.

The primary purpose of the Bleachery land use category is to revitalize the former Dutchess Bleachery into a vibrant contemporary market place with small-scale artisan manufacturing, collaborative makerspaces, start-up or incubator businesses, recreation-based uses, craft beverage manufacturing, and tourism-support businesses, through the adaptive reuse of historic industrial buildings and construction of new architecturally compatible buildings. Increasing waterfront access and recreational opportunities in the district, and reestablishing the pedestrian connection between the Bleachery and downtown, will attract tourism, encourage private investment in new economic development and employment opportunities, and support downtown businesses.

### **Overlay Districts**

Three overlay districts are proposed. The Aquifer and Wellhead Protection District is discussed in Chapter 3, and the Historic Overlay District is discussed in Chapter 4.

The Manufactured Home Overlay (MH-O) District would permit manufactured home parks to be located in an area west of Franklindale Avenue, on properties in the underlying VR and RMU Districts, as shown on Figure 10. The purpose of the MH-O District would be to promote orderly planned development of manufactured home parks through designs that foster a pleasant, attractive, safe environment while preserving the benefit of relatively low cost housing traditionally associated with manufactured homes. The district would preserve and protect the residential character of the manufactured home park, and ensure compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods.

**Objective: Amend the Village’s Zoning Law and Map to reflect the goals and objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan* to encourage the orderly and efficient layout and appropriate uses of land in the Village consistent with historic development patterns.**

#### **Actions:**

- Amend the Village’s Zoning Map based on the Proposed Land Use Map (Figure 10), and amend the Zoning Law consistent with the purposes for each land use category outlined in this chapter, and the design standards and other recommendations of this *Comprehensive Plan*.
- Amend the Zoning Law to include purposes for each Zoning District, as outlined in this chapter.

- Amend the Zoning Law to include illustrations for design standards, layout, and site specific standards, to assist applicants and the Planning Board in implementing the Zoning and to streamline the review process.
- Include the five concept plans from the *Brownfield Area Opportunity Nomination Study* in an Appendix to the Zoning Law to serve as a guide for applicants and members of the Village Board, Planning Board, and Zoning Board of Appeals during the review of development projects proposed in these areas.

## 6.E Specific Land Uses

The Village should carefully review the current permitted principal and special permit uses in the Zoning Law to ensure that they are appropriate for the Zoning Districts in which they are allowed. Some uses, such as home occupations, can be incorporated into residential neighborhoods as long as they have clearly defined limitations in the Zoning Law to ensure that they are compatible with the district and do not disrupt the residential neighborhood character. Other uses, such as bars, are noisy and should not be permitted within or adjacent to residential neighborhoods or near schools and churches; the Zoning Law should be revised to include separation distances between these types of uses. To protect the character of residential neighborhoods and properties, the Zoning Law should require that commercial and other large uses provide a landscape buffer adjacent to residential uses to minimize impacts on residential properties. For other uses, such as drive-throughs and parking structures, the Zoning Law should be amended to include use-specific standards to ensure compatibility with purpose of the district.

Some uses, such as adult uses, are particularly incompatible with the Village’s vision to preserve its historic character, promote tourism, and ensure quality of life for Village residents and should be carefully evaluated. The Village should also consider how to regulate new uses, such as 5G wireless telecommunications facilities and short-term rentals, to ensure their compatibility with the goals of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

### Adult Uses

Sexually-oriented adult uses are essentially self-defined as enterprises that exclude minors, or which are required by law to do so, in order to allow the sale of sexually-related materials or services. Examples include adult bookstores, adult video and/or novelty stores, topless/nude bars, adult hotels and motels, adult movie theaters, escort agencies, massage parlors, peep shows, and the like.

The content of the materials or services offered by these businesses is constitutionally protected under the First Amendment and not subject to regulation. However, the regulatory concerns with adult uses are the undesirable secondary effects that these businesses can have on residents and community character. 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 are able to use land use controls to regulate the locations of adult uses to minimize secondary adverse effects.

There are currently no lawfully-existing adult use businesses in Wappingers Falls. However, adult uses are appearing with increasing frequency in Hudson Valley communities. If the Village wants to avoid the negative secondary impacts, it should restrict the permitted locations of adult use businesses. 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 *Comprehensive Plan* recommends that the Zoning Law be amended to regulate adult uses to minimize their secondary adverse effects.

### **Telecommunications Towers**

Similarly, telecommunications towers should be regulated to ensure that their location 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 first telecommunications antenna in the Village was mounted on the water storage facility at Wenliss Terrace in 1999. Another antenna was approved for Wenliss in 2017. 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.

### **Small Cell Wireless Telecommunications Facilities (5G Technology)**

With the rapid increase in cellular use, the existing 4G network is almost at capacity. 5G, the next generation of data technology, which relies on higher-frequency waves transmitted over small cell antennae placed throughout a municipality, is already in use in densely populated places. As an urban area, it is anticipated that Wappingers Falls will see applications for small cell infrastructure in the near future.

Municipalities can regulate 5G facilities on both private and public properties, including the local, County and State street and highway rights-of-way. While regulating 5G installations on private property is more straightforward, most small cell nodes will likely be placed on existing utility poles. As zoning applies to both private and public properties, the Village should amend the Zoning Law to include standards regulating small cell wireless installations, and should notify all streetlight and utility pole owners to make them aware of

the new regulations. Particular attention should be given to community character and Village's Historic District to ensure that new 5G facilities complement local character in an unobtrusive way. Municipalities must comply with the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which forbids them from prohibiting the provision of personal wireless services, and with the Federal Communications Commission Order of September 2018, which streamlines the process for the rollout of infrastructure for broadband services. These laws preserve local authority over land use and zoning decisions, but impose limitations on that authority. Municipalities may regulate small cell equipment to protect the integrity of their historic, cultural and scenic resources as long as the regulations are reasonable and do not have the effect of prohibiting the service.

### **Short-Term Rentals**

A short-term rental is a dwelling unit, or a portion thereof, that is rented for a short duration, usually less than 30 days, to transient guests. Short-term rentals can take different forms. Some consist of a bedroom or two rented out in an owner-occupied dwelling to supplement the property owner's income. In other cases, the whole house is rented out and the owner is not on-site during the rental.

Short-term rentals present challenges for municipalities. On one hand, they can have economic benefits by providing extra income for homeowners, affordable and flexible lodging options, and increased tourism. On the other hand, the increase in noise, traffic, garbage, and overcrowding resulting from short-term rentals can adversely impact quality of life of the surrounding property owners, and by taking housing off the regular market, they can impact housing affordability.

The Village should develop regulations for short-term rentals, based on a careful evaluation of the different types of short-term rentals, that will balance the interests of the homeowners who desire to rent portions of their homes for short periods against the rights of the surrounding property owners and public of quiet enjoyment and safety.

**Objective: Ensure that new uses are compatible with the overall character of the Village.**

#### **Actions:**

- Review and amend the current permitted principal and special permit uses to ensure that they are appropriate for the Zoning Districts in which they are allowed.
- Consolidate highly specific and narrowly defined commercial uses, such as retail, service, and recreational uses, into more inclusive categories.
- Establish regulations for home occupations live-work units, and short-term rentals, where appropriate, and establish regulations for these use to to ensure that they do not have adverse impacts on nearby residential properties and neighborhoods.

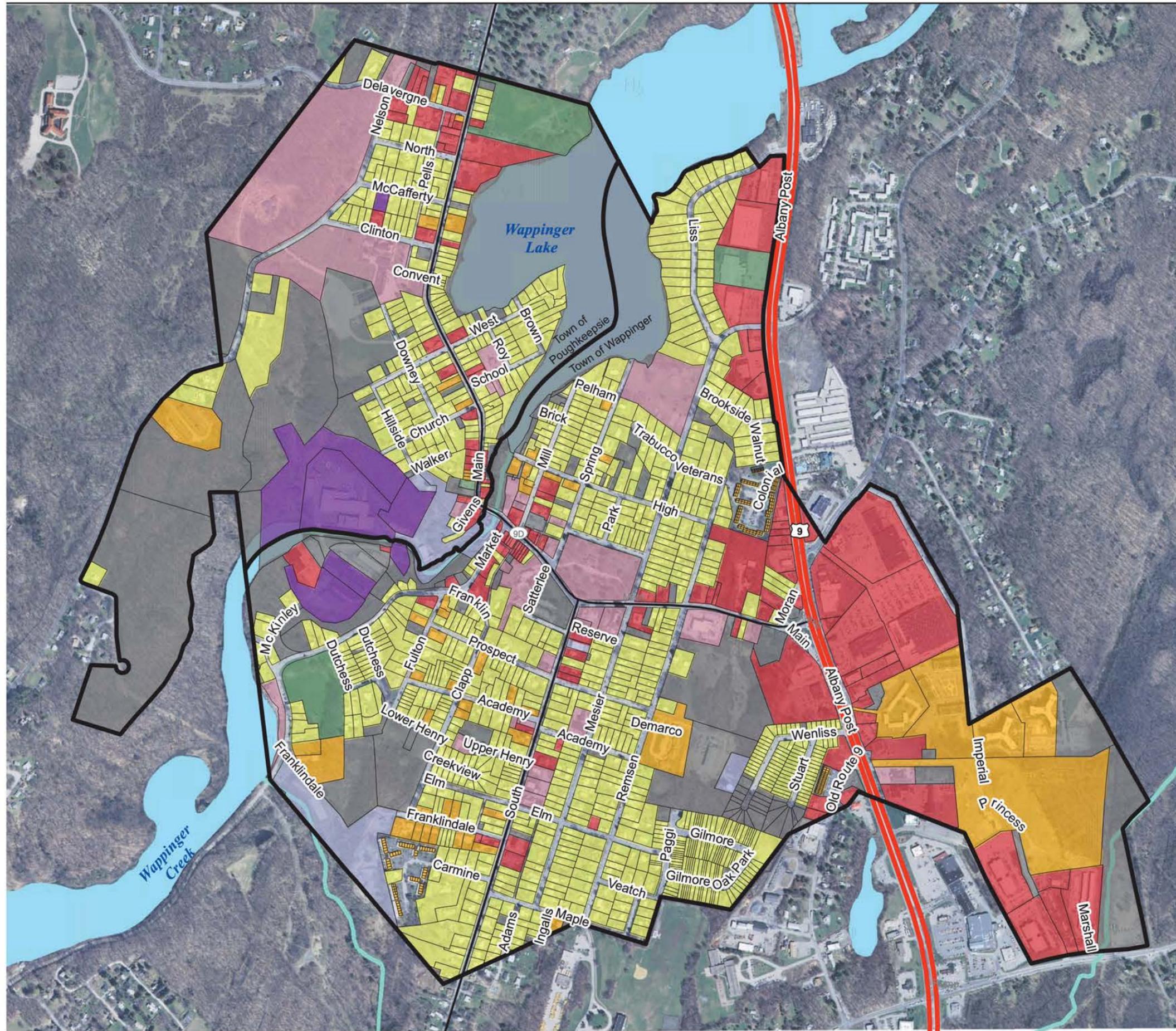
- Amend the Zoning Law to include separation distances between uses that generate noise and residential neighborhoods, schools and churches.
- Amend the Zoning Law to regulate land uses that could be classified as “adult uses” to minimize their secondary adverse effects on the neighborhood.
- Amend the Zoning Law to include provisions to regulate telecommunication towers and to encourage them to co-located on existing tall structures such as water towers to minimize their visual impact.
- Amend the Zoning Law to regulate small-cell wireless telecommunications facilities to minimize impacts on community character, historic districts, and aesthetics.

## **6.F 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. Amending the Zoning Map as outlined in this chapter, strengthening the Zoning Law with design standards, and diligently enforcing the Village Code will be the most effective tools to implement the future land use plan for the Village.

# Village of Wappingers Falls Comprehensive Plan

Figure 9: Existing Land Use Map



### Legend

Village Boundary

### Major Roads

Highways

Secondary Roads

Parcels

### Land Use

#### Property Class Code

- Residential
- Vacant
- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Recreation
- Community Service
- Industrial
- Public Service
- Waterbodies
- Streams

Prepared by:



Prepared for:



Date: January, 2017

Source: ESRI Online, NYS GIS Clearinghouse, Dutchess County GIS

# Village of Wappingers Falls Comprehensive Plan

Figure 10: Proposed Land Use Map  
May 24, 2022

## Legend

- R- Residential
- VR- Village Residential
- VMU- Village Mixed Use
- VC- Village Commercial
- RMU- Residential Mixed Use
- CMU- Commercial Mixed-Use
- B- Bleachery District
- Historic Overlay \*
- Manufactured Home Overlay
- Aquifer & Wellhead Protection Overlay

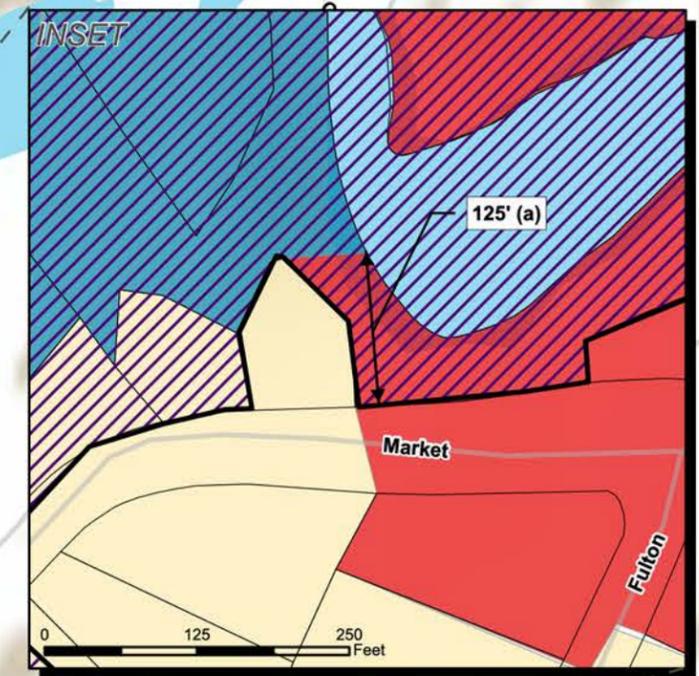
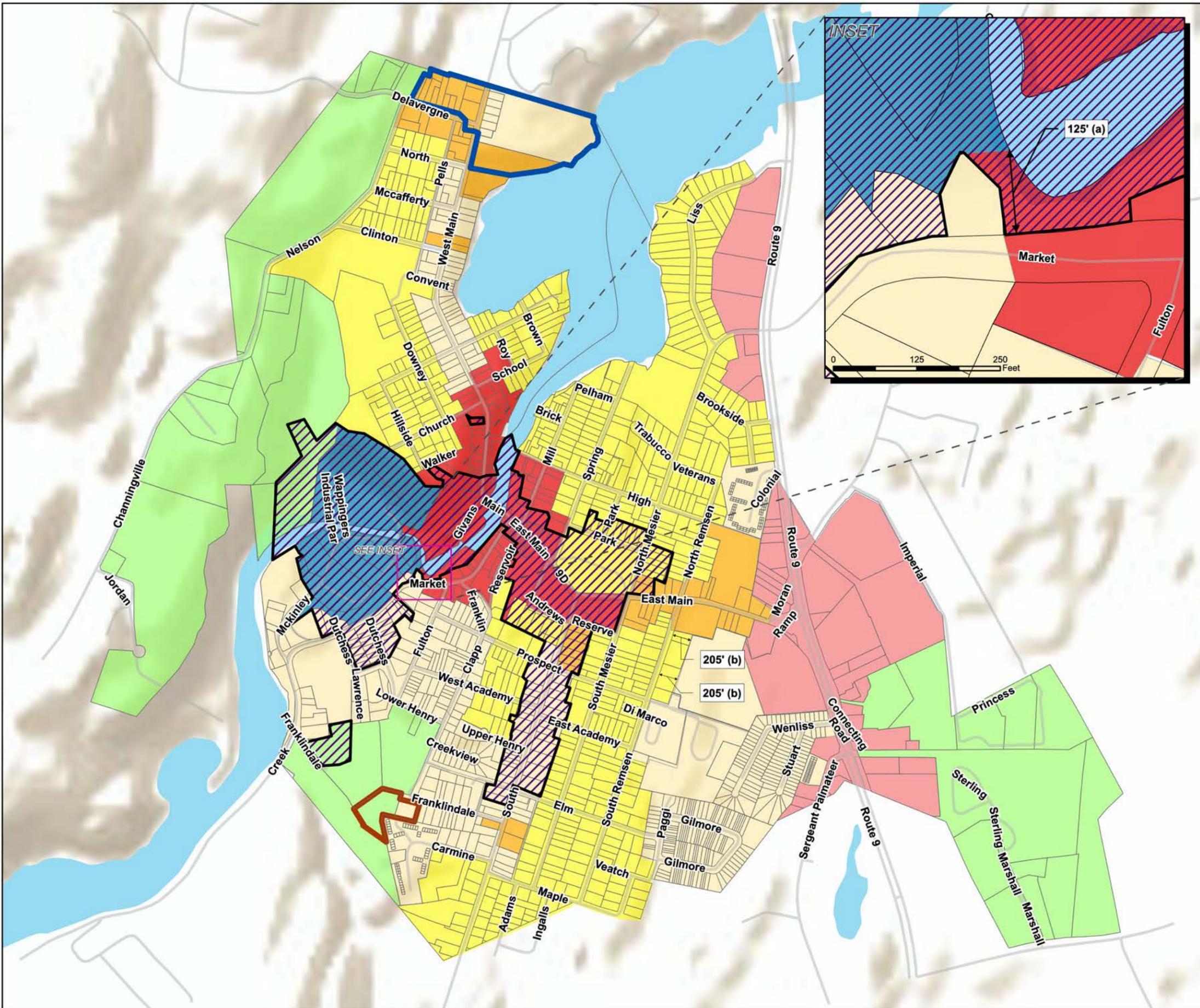
\* Coterminous with the Wappingers Falls Historic District, as listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

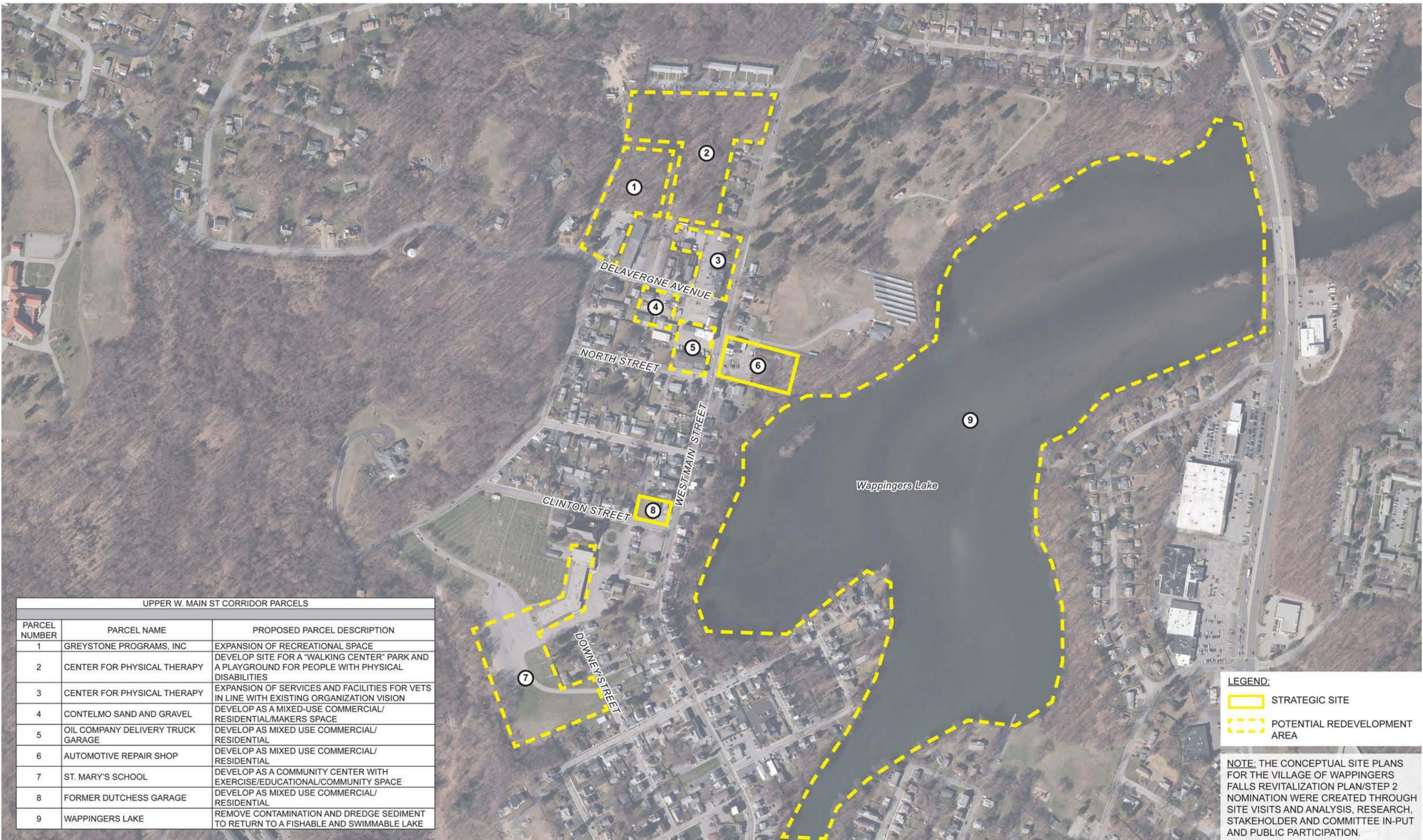
### Map References:

- (a) 125 feet from the front lot line on Market Street
- (b) 205 feet from the front lot line on South Remsen Avenue



Prepared by:





UPPER W. MAIN ST CORRIDOR PARCELS		
PARCEL NUMBER	PARCEL NAME	PROPOSED PARCEL DESCRIPTION
1	GREYSTONE PROGRAMS, INC	EXPANSION OF RECREATIONAL SPACE
2	CENTER FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY	DEVELOP SITE FOR A "WALKING CENTER" PARK AND A PLAYGROUND FOR PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES
3	CENTER FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY	EXPANSION OF SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR VETS IN LINE WITH EXISTING ORGANIZATION VISION
4	CONTELMO SAND AND GRAVEL	DEVELOP AS A MIXED-USE COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL/MAKERS SPACE
5	OIL COMPANY DELIVERY TRUCK GARAGE	DEVELOP AS MIXED USE COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL
6	AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR SHOP	DEVELOP AS MIXED USE COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL
7	ST. MARY'S SCHOOL	DEVELOP AS A COMMUNITY CENTER WITH EXERCISE/EDUCATIONAL/COMMUNITY SPACE
8	FORMER DUTCHESS GARAGE	DEVELOP AS MIXED USE COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL
9	WAPPINGERS LAKE	REMOVE CONTAMINATION AND DREDGE SEDIMENT TO RETURN TO A FISHABLE AND SWIMMABLE LAKE

**LEGEND:**  
 STRATEGIC SITE  
 POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT AREA

**NOTE:** THE CONCEPTUAL SITE PLANS FOR THE VILLAGE OF WAPPINGERS FALLS REVITALIZATION PLAN/STEP 2 NOMINATION WERE CREATED THROUGH SITE VISITS AND ANALYSIS, RESEARCH, STAKEHOLDER AND COMMITTEE IN-PUT AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

**Figure 11: UPPER W. MAIN ST CORRIDOR**  
 Wappingers Falls Revitalization Plan/Step 2 Nomination  
 Village of Wappingers Falls, Dutchess County, New York

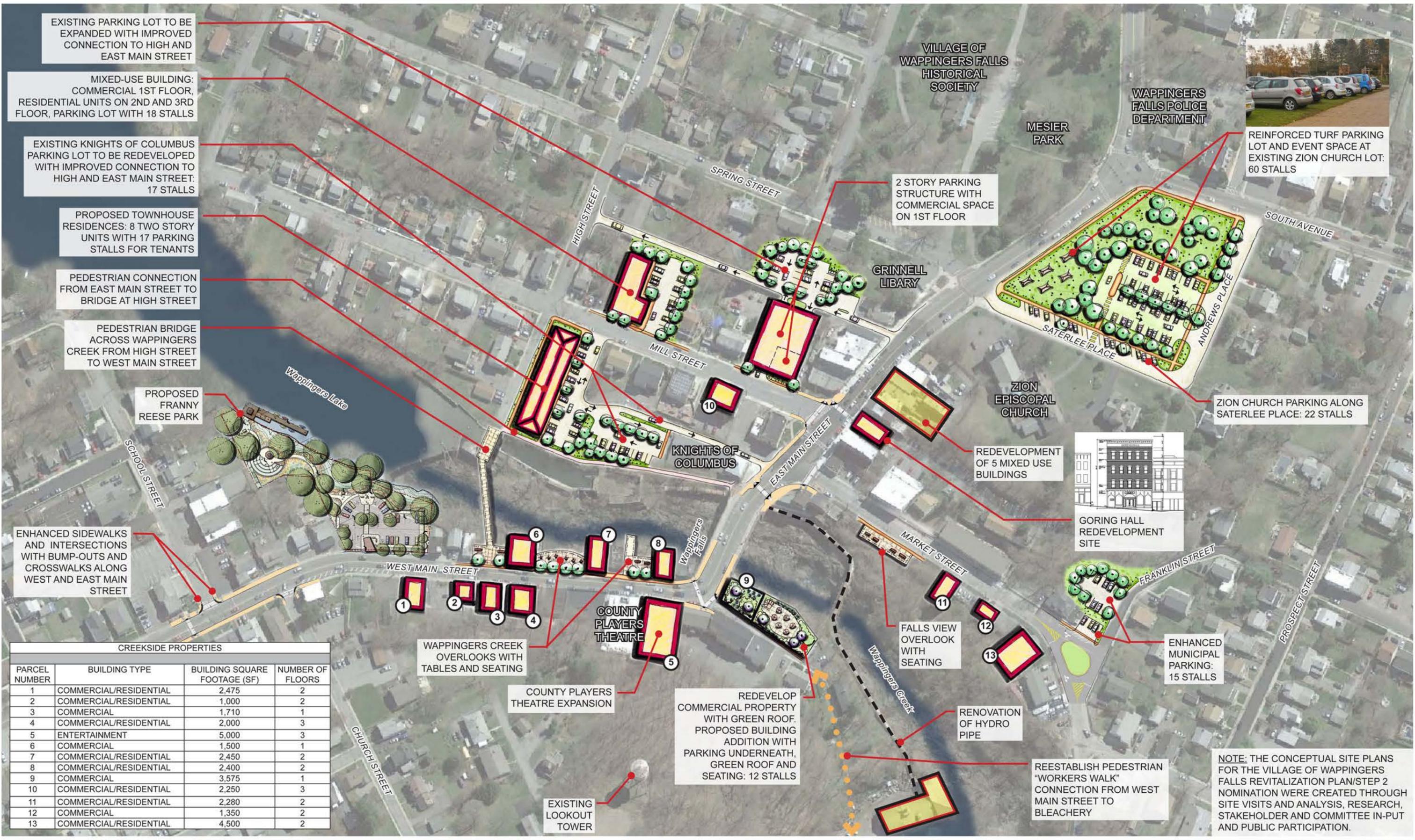


SCALE: NTS

Date: April 2018



**Figure 12: THORNTONS GAS STATION SITE PLAN**  
 Wappingers Falls Revitalization Plan/Step 2 Nomination  
 Village of Wappingers Falls, Dutchess County, New York



**Figure 13: VILLAGE CENTER SITE PLAN**

Wappingers Falls Revitalization Plan/Step 2 Nomination  
Village of Wappingers Falls, Dutchess County, New York



Date: April 2018



**Figure 15: BLEACHERY SITE PLAN**  
 Wappingers Falls Revitalization Plan/Step 2 Nomination  
 Village of Wappingers Falls, Dutchess County, New York

# Chapter 7: Transportation

## **Community Goal**

**Encourage alternative modes of transportation to reduce vehicular traffic, and provide sufficient but not excessive off-street parking in residential neighborhoods and commercial districts.**

**T**ransportation 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 a village. A successful streetscape becomes the social center of a community, the place where people interact informally and benefit from chance encounters with friends and colleagues.

Transportation refers to the movement of people, goods, services, and information. It is a term that encompasses 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 Village commercial center;
- Unsafe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists;
- Parking problems;
- Excessive commercial truck traffic in and through 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, such as widening roads, to meet existing demands. However, this type of program will only improve traffic conditions in the short term, 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* recommends alternative modes of transportation, such as walking and bicycling, along with traffic calming techniques and use of public transit to reduce reliance on the automobile and alleviate traffic problems. It also recommends construction of new parking facilities in the Village commercial center. This chapter of the *Comprehensive Plan* describes the existing transportation networks in the Village and makes recommendations for their improvement.

## 7.A ROADS AND VEHICULAR TRAFFIC

The character of Wappingers Falls has been greatly affected by the regional transportation network. For the most part, major roads bypass the Village. Regional multi-lane highways in Dutchess County are located 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 because they carry the heaviest traffic loads and provide access to other communities in the County and region. The effect of each of these two major roads on the Village system is vastly different, however. Whereas Route 9 tends to act as a barrier that divides the east and west portions of the Village, Route 9D tends to unify and pull together the older Village area. The primary reason for this is that Route 9 is designed as a multi-lane regional highway, whereas the portion of Route 9D that runs through the Village is designed as a village street, with sidewalks, street trees, and a lower speed limit.

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 commercial center and its significant civic structures are located along East and West Main Street. The number of civic structures in this area 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 at Mesier Homestead and Park. Another major transportation artery, Market Street, parallels the course of the Creek into the gorge through the Village's predominant industrial area.

Route 9D's Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) count for 2015 indicates that approximately 12,384 vehicles per day pass through the center of the Village, a 14 percent decrease from the 1998 AADT count of 14,430. An analysis of past traffic counts shows that traffic has been decreasing steadily over the past 17 years. There are a few possible explanations that could account for this, such as the intense period of road re-construction that occurred between 2013 and 2018, and the Village's increased traffic enforcement measures. The Village has also installed traffic calming features, including a bump-out where traffic enters the business district at Spring Street and East Main Street (Rt. 9D), and a traffic circle on Market Street, which encourage trucks bound for the industrial park that formerly used Market Street to use Creek Road instead.

In the last twenty years, Route 9, which traverses the eastern boundary of the Village, has been the site of the Village's most intensive development and has undergone significant

changes. When the Village's 2001 *Comprehensive Plan* was adopted, Route 9 had 202 fewer residential units than it has today.<sup>3</sup> The increased population has been accompanied by an increase in traffic. While portions of Route 9D have seen a small decrease in traffic in the last decade, traffic has increased on Route 9. In 2015, the AADT for Route 9 was 46,029 vehicles, compared to 40,913 in 2003, a 13 percent increase. Although it is projected that millennials will drive less than previous generations, more people will continue to move into Dutchess County from outside areas, further increasing traffic.

In 2013, NYSDOT finished a pavement conservation project on Routes 9 and 9D, and consequently the pavement condition of these roads in Wappingers Falls are currently in very good condition. A long-term priority of the Village is to improve selected intersections along Route 9D (i.e., South Avenue) between East Main Street and the Village's southern boundary, in particular the intersection of Route 9D and Prospect Street, Upper Henry Street, Elm Street, Franklindale Avenue, and Maple Street.

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. Specific problems with local roads is detailed in the 2019 *Capital Infrastructure Plan*. There are also a number of gaps in the Village's sidewalk network, which is addressed later in this chapter.

The main problem with certain roads in the Village, such as Route 9D, is that they are currently serving functions for which they were not originally designed. Although Route 9D has recently experienced a reduction in vehicular traffic, this road was originally intended for small quantities of local traffic, not traffic making regional connections. The result is that Route 9D experiences considerable congestion. 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 Village commercial center, and not feasible due to the existing pattern of growth, with shallow front yard setbacks, and the unavailability of suitable rights-of-way. Moreover, continually widening roads and further promoting automobile dependency is expensive and environmentally degrading. For these reasons, priority should be given to promoting alternative modes of transportation and utilizing traffic calming techniques in the Village.

Reducing vehicular 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 from reduced traffic since automobiles are a major source of pollutants in the Village. Local businesses also will benefit because the Village is likely to become a more popular place for shoppers. A pedestrian-oriented environment can attract customers who may wish to shop

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<sup>3</sup> This includes Riverbend I and II, accounting for 124 and 54 units respectively, and the 24-unit apartment building on Marshall Road.

in the Village, but go elsewhere due to traffic 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, and senior citizens. Improvements in transportation alternatives to the automobile are necessary or the mobility of a large proportion of the population will be impaired. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Village has experienced an increase in both younger and middle-aged segments of the population, and both millennials and baby boomers are seeking walkable communities in which to live, work and play.

To reduce traffic congestion on Route 9 and encourage walking and bicycling, the Village should encourage the development of a secondary road running from New Hackensack Road to Myers Corners Road, as shown on Figure 16 at the end of this chapter. If private investors and public funding could be acquired, the underlying infrastructure could also be addressed to improve water and sewer service while providing an alternate to Route 9 congestion as it passes through the Village. The Village has indicated to the Town, County and State that if this project were to be pursued, East/West cross streets could be formed between this secondary road and Route 9 at East Main Street and the Old Route 9 “Sergeant Palmateer Way,” creating a grid which would increase the accessibility for vehicle, pedestrian and bicycle traffic, improve access to residential and commercial development east of Route 9, and create additional frontage for new businesses in the CMU District. Recently, the Village has discussed working on this concept with the Town and County, phasing the project beginning with a bicycle path from Route 9 to Roy C. Ketcham High School.

In the late 1990s, NYSDOT planned to widen Route 9 from Liss Road to Meyers Corners Road. After the 2008 economic downturn, the project was shelved. If DOT reinstates the highway widening program, the Village should conduct public meetings to determine whether residents support the project. If they do, the Village should participate with the DOT in the design of the roadway improvements to ensure that they are consistent with the recommendations for improving the overall appearance of the Route 9 corridor discussed in Chapter 5 of this *Comprehensive Plan*, and with the NYS Complete Streets Act to provide safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, people with disabilities, and others. Complete streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work, and are a vital part of a livable, attractive community. The *Greenway Guides* for converting “[\*Highways into Greenways\*](#)” should also be used in the design of any road widening and improvements.

Finally, to reduce traffic on the main arterials and to create a safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists, the Planning Board should require interior connections between commercial properties and encourage shared access where possible on future commercial development along Route 9.

### Important Planning Concern:

*Route 9D draws heavy pass-through traffic, including commercial truck traffic, that detracts from the Village's central shopping district and imperils pedestrian safety.*

**Objective: Reduce vehicular traffic on Route 9D to create a more walkable environment and promote the central business district.**

**Actions:**

- Promote alternative modes of transportation and utilize traffic calming techniques to reduce vehicular traffic on Route 9D.
- Improve selected intersections along Route 9D between East Main Street and the Village's southern boundary, in particular the intersection of Route 9D and Prospect Street, Upper Henry Street, Elm Street, Franklindale Avenue, and Maple Street.
- Oppose any plans to widen Route 9D to accommodate increased traffic.

**Objective: Encourage development of alternative routes and roads designed as "complete streets" in the vicinity of Route 9 to reduce traffic impacts of new development in this area.**

**Actions:**

- Encourage the development of a secondary road from New Hackensack Road to Myers Corners Road.
- The Planning Board should review Figure 16 when reviewing development proposals east of Route 9 to ensure they are consistent with the plans to construct a secondary road and east/west cross streets in this area.
- Participate with NYSDOT to ensure that any proposed Route 9 road widening between Liss Road and Meyers Corners Road is fully consistent with the NYS Complete Streets Act, with the recommendations for improving community character in this area found in Chapter 5 of this *Plan*, and with the Greenway Guide "[Highways into Greenways](#)."
- Require that developers create internal service roads, interior access to connect parking lots, and shared accesses, wherever possible, on future commercial development and redevelopment along Route 9.
- Encourage pedestrian access to commercial areas from nearby residential areas by requiring the installation of sidewalks at the time of site plan review.

## 7.B PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION AND BICYCLING

### Pedestrian Circulation

As noted in Chapter 2, the Village of Wappingers Falls is the one of the most densely populated communities in Dutchess County, second only to the City of Poughkeepsie.

The high density of people living in close proximity to businesses, employers, services, and activity centers makes Wappingers Falls one of the most pedestrian-oriented communities in the county. The Village also has a lower rate of car-ownership than other municipalities, so the availability of other transportation options are even more important. According to the 2015 American Community Survey, 10.7 percent of Wappingers Falls households have no automobile, one of the highest rates in the county.

Due to its high population density, which has historically encouraged walking, Wappingers Falls has a significant network of sidewalks. Throughout the Village commercial center and in the adjacent residential neighborhoods, sidewalks line both sides of the streets. Since the adoption of the previous *Comprehensive Plan* in 2001, the Village has obtained funding to improve pedestrian safety in the Village with the installation of bulb-outs (curb extensions that reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and encourage drivers to slow down), better crosswalk designs, rectangular rapid flashing beacons, and street lights. However, these improvements have occurred entirely downtown. Unsafe conditions for pedestrians plague the rest of the Village, particularly on Upper West Main Street, East Main Street (east of South Avenue), South Avenue, and on Route 9. The existing crosswalks connecting sidewalks are inadequately marked, and traffic calming techniques in these areas are negligible or non-existent. Many of the intersections where crosswalks exist are overly wide or poorly aligned. Other critical intersections along Route 9D do not have crosswalks at all. In the Village commercial center, the sharp steep turn on Route 9D, as it descends into the gorge, reduces visibility and imperils 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. The Village's [Vision Plan](#) and [Action Plan](#) outline improvements that should be made to the downtown, including schematic designs for streetscape improvements, intersection improvements, and traffic calming.

The Dutchess County Transportation Council (DCTC) recognizes that traffic on Route 9D in the Village of Wappingers Falls creates problems for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists trying to maneuver in the village center. Concerns about safety and accident rates have also been raised. The majority of 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 2001 DCTC's [Wappingers Falls Transportation Plan](#). According to *Walk Bike Dutchess 2014*, the Village has the third highest pedestrian crash percentage in Dutchess County. Most of the incidents analyzed between 2007 and 2011 happened along Route 9D from the Bridge north to Delavergne Avenue or along Route 9, primarily between East Main Street and the Bridge over Wappinger Lake. As of 2016, the Village has the highest bicycle crash rate in Dutchess County at 0.68 crashes per 1,000 people. This number sharply increased from 0.25 crashes per 1,000 people in 2014. In fact, the number of bicycle crashes in 2016 surpassed the combined pedestrian and bicycle crash rate of 0.58 crashes per 1,000 people reported in 2014.

The 2001 study indicated where pedestrian improvements, such as high-visibility crosswalks, sidewalks and/or refuge islands, were needed, and these recommendations were used as the basis for a number of grant applications through NYSDOT from 2007 to 2015. In 2019, the Village began construction on a Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant funded project in the amount of \$700,000 to improve the crosswalks in the Village Center, and enhance visibility of crosswalks at Mill Street, Market Street, Givans Ave, Church Street, and School Street where they intersect with Route 9D. This project is funded by both State and Federal funding. The Village should continue to improve pedestrian crosswalks on Upper West Main Street, East Main Street and South Avenue, and all Village streets should be inspected for more opportunities to improve safety.

As noted above, stretches of Route 9 lack sidewalks. In particular, sidewalks are needed from North Mesier Avenue north along Route 9 to Wappinger Lake, and a pedestrian walkway is needed across the tip of the Lake to complete the ten-mile loop of the Wappinger Greenway Trail. The Village should work with the NYSDOT to design pedestrian improvements for Route 9.

To enhance the pedestrian environment, the Village Highway Department should maintain an inventory of 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. The Village Board should promote the safety and convenience of pedestrians by enhancing existing pedestrian crosswalks and providing new pedestrian crosswalks where necessary.

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, eliminated or combined to reduce visual clutter to improve safety. “Yield to Pedestrians” signs and “Bikes Share the Road” signs should be placed at all major intersections in the Village and along bike routes. Requiring the installation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be incorporated into the site plan requirements of the Zoning Law.

### **Bicycling**

Routes 9 and 9D have been designated by the State as major bicycle routes, and the NYSDOT 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.

While the *Comprehensive Plan* is not advocating the construction of wider shoulders on existing Village streets, the Village should encourage wide paved shoulders where possible on State and County roads, along with signage announcing that bicycles share the roadway.

The installation of bicycle and pedestrian facilities should be incorporated into the site plan requirements of the Zoning Law, and the Planning Board should consider the potential for pedestrian and bicycle movement when reviewing development projects. Moreover, the Village 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.

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.

**Objective: Ensure that walking and bicycling are integrated into the Village transportation system to encourage these alternative modes of transportation and reduce traffic congestion and vehicle miles traveled.**

**Actions:**

- Guide all Village actions that may affect traffic and circulation by the basic principle of “pedestrians first.”
- 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.
- Request that the Village Highway Department maintain an inventory of the existing pedestrian facilities in the Village, with particular attention to missing links in the sidewalk network that may impede pedestrian circulation. Install sidewalks to fill these gaps.
- Implement the recommendations of the Village’s [Vision Plan](#) and [Action Plan](#) to improve pedestrian conditions in the Village center, particularly along East Main Street.
- Identify additional intersections and other potential vehicle/pedestrian conflict areas in the Village to determine whether structural or other solutions would be feasible.
- Enhance existing pedestrian crosswalks and install new pedestrian crosswalks where necessary.
- Work with the NYSDOT to design pedestrian improvements for Route 9, including but not limited to safe and appropriate pedestrian crossings.

- Include wide paved shoulders on arterial routes to accommodate bicyclists, and signage announcing that bicycles share the roadway.
- Eliminate or combine signs along the Route 9D corridor to reduce visual clutter to decrease driver distractions and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety.
- Install “Yield to Pedestrians” signs and “Bikes Share the Road” signs at all major intersections in the Village and along bicycle routes.
- Ensure that all new development is pedestrian-friendly.
- Amend the Zoning Law to require that all new development projects install and/or repair sidewalks to current standards.
- Amend the Zoning Law to include a requirement that all applications for site plan review for properties on Route 9 install a sidewalk along the Route 9 frontage.
- Create off-street walking and bicycle paths, as opportunities arise, to link neighborhoods with the downtown. Coordinate this effort with the work of the Wappingers Greenway Trail Committee, as discussed in Chapter 8.
- Increase pedestrian connectivity to the downtown through construction of a pedestrian bridge across Wappingers Creek from High Street to West Main Street and Franny Reese Memorial Park.
- Install a sidewalk from North Mesier Avenue north along Route 9 to Wappinger Lake, and add a pedestrian path along the tip of the Lake to complete the 10-mile Wappinger Greenway Trail.
- Adopt design standards for bicycle routes for Village streets.
- Provide bicycle racks at all municipal buildings and public facilities in the Village.
- Amend the Village’s parking standards to include standards for bicycle parking and encourage the Planning Board to consider whether to require bicycle racks during Site Plan review of projects.

## 7.C TRAFFIC CALMING

The majority of Village residents who responded to a 1998 public opinion survey for the 2001 *Comprehensive Plan*, saw a need to improve pedestrian safety in the Village, and specifically recognized the need for traffic calming techniques on Route 9D. This sentiment was confirmed again in the public meetings held for the 2008 *Vision Plan*, the 2011 *Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Strategy* and the 2019 *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study*.

Traffic calming techniques are used to slow automobile traffic and provide a safer street environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. Some of the most common traffic calming techniques are: raising or inverting pedestrian crosswalks; narrowing roads (especially at crosswalks) with extended curbs, bulb-outs or flared sidewalks; changing the road surface texture or color at crosswalks; installing highly visible pedestrian 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, also are considered traffic calming techniques. Some

of these techniques are illustrated in Figure 17 at the end of this chapter. Although it is not specifically a traffic calming technique, locating buildings close to the road with shallow front yard setbacks narrows the “field of vision” and makes the roads seem narrower, which also slows motorists.

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, would benefit from traffic calming. Many of the Village intersections are poorly marked and do not have pedestrian signage. 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. A number of intersections in the Village are in need of traffic calming, as described in detail in the 2001 [Wappingers Falls Transportation Plan](#) and the 2008 [Vision Plan](#).

Installing traffic calming devices to improve pedestrian safety will also enhance the economy of the Village commercial center and promote tourism.

**Objective: Use traffic-calming techniques to slow traffic speeds and create a safer environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.**

**Actions:**

- Identify areas in the Village that would benefit from traffic calming techniques and seek funding to implement.
- Require traffic calming techniques in new development to reduce traffic speeds and make roads more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly.

## **7.D PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

Public transportation is another important way to reduce vehicular traffic. In the Village of Wappingers Falls, several alternatives exist to the use of individual cars.

### **Bus Service**

The Dutchess County LOOP Bus System provides daily service to the Village with stops on Route 9D at Mesier Park and Route 9 at Imperial Plaza. At present, these are the only two county bus stops in the Village. This bus service gives Wappingers Falls’ residents access to all points in the County, as well as to the Metro-North stations at New Hamburg, Beacon, and Poughkeepsie. Many Dutchess County LOOP buses run only two or three times per day. The Village should encourage the County to provide more frequent fixed-route transit services in the Village. Improvements including providing a bus shelter in front of the Grinnell Library might encourage more people to use public transportation.

The LOOP system connects with Poughkeepsie Transit, Adirondack Trailways, Arrow Bus, and Short Line bus services. Leprechaun Bus Lines also makes stops in Wappingers Falls. Inter-county bus service is provided on Leprechaun Lines to White Plains, on Short Line 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 on-demand services, Dial-A-Ride and the LOOP Paratransit Service, also are available to senior citizens and the disabled in Wappingers Falls. Both services provide direct transportation from an individual's residence 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 ¾ mile is available for ADA-eligible individuals. In 2008, Dutchess County Public Transit eliminated Berkeley Square and DiMarco Residences (two of the Village's subsidized senior citizen living communities) from its LOOP route. The residents of both buildings, which have a high percentage of ADA riders, would like to have his service returned, and the Village should encourage the County to restore bus service to these sites.

### **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. Metro North reported on January 23, 2017 that its 2016 ridership had more than doubled since 1983.

### **Airports**

Wappingers Falls is ideally located near two airports. Dutchess County Airport is immediately adjacent to the Village in the Town of Wappinger. It is the largest airport in the County, and is owned and operated by the County. It serves private aircraft.

New York Stewart International Airport is located across the Hudson River in Newburgh. The airport is easily accessible to Wappingers Falls from Interstate 84 via Routes 9 and 9D. 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. It has also just begun international flights to Northern Europe.

**Objective: Encourage greater use of public transit to reduce traffic congestion and vehicle miles travelled.**

**Actions:**

- Encourage Dutchess County to provide more frequent fixed-route transit services in the Village.
- Work with Dutchess County Public Transit to restore LOOP bus service to Berkely Square and DiMarco Residences.
- Provide a bus shelter in front of the Grinnell Library.

## **7.E ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

Implementation of many of the recommendations in the preceding sections and in the Village's [Transportation Plan](#), [Vision Plan](#) and [Action Plan](#) could be overseen by a Village-appointed 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 public transit, pedestrian, and bicycle transportation to minimize vehicular traffic volume. The Committee could also work with the State and County to seek an alternative route for truck and through traffic that will by-pass the downtown. The Committee should work closely with the Wappinger Greenway Trail Committee and with the agencies responsible for transportation.

**Objective: Promote alternative modes of transportation to reduce vehicular traffic.**

**Actions:**

- Create an Alternative Transportation Committee to implement the recommendations of the Village's plans to improve public transit, pedestrian and bicycle transportation.
- Promote bicycle and walking by identifying routes in a Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan brochure.

## **7.F PARKING**

In certain areas of the Village parking is a problem, particularly in the commercial center. In 2019, the Village prepared a *Parking Study of the Village Commercial (VC) District*. The study determined there is a significant shortage of parking in the VC District as a whole, and in the area west of the bridge at East and West Main Street in particular. There are currently 406 private off-street parking spaces in the VC District, which the study determined was less than half of what was needed to serve the various uses in the area. Moreover, the Village's current required off-street parking minimums for the VC District are less than half of those typically recommended by planners.

Some existing residential uses have no private off-street parking, particularly in the western portion of the district. It is believed that, during the day, existing residential uses with no private off-street parking use a substantial portion of municipal and on-street parking that would otherwise be available for commercial uses, which is impacting the economic vitality of the downtown. Moreover, as the district continues to be developed, the shortage of parking likely will force cars to park on residential side streets, inconveniencing those residents of the Village and expanding the parking problem further.

The study recommends the adoption of more stringent parking requirements for site redevelopment (as opposed to repurposing existing sites) and new development in the VC District. Provision of adequate off-street parking is especially important for residential uses due to the snow ordinance, which prohibits on-street parking overnight from December until April, and the dearth of available overnight parking in municipal lots. Adequate parking should also be provided for commercial uses, bearing in mind that less parking is required in the VC District than in the CMU District since people can park once and walk to a number of different destinations in the more densely developed downtown. In the long term, however, a lack of available parking will discourage commercial activity.

The Village currently owns and maintains four municipal parking lots located on Mill Street, Spring Street, Reservoir Place, and Franny Reese Park. A number of private lots also exist that serve community organizations, such as the Knights of Columbus, the VFW, and various churches. On-street parking is allowed on both sides of the street in most areas of the Village commercial center on Main Street.

The *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study* recommends that parking be increased downtown in new lots planned for the American Legion and 3 Spring Street. The study also recommends that the Village work with the Wappingers Falls Business and Professional Association and private landowners to establish easements to allow 80 existing private parking spaces to become public or semi-public spaces; likely candidates include the Zion Episcopal Church, Knight's of Columbus, and 32 Market Street. It also recommends construction of mixed-use parking structures, with commercial uses on the ground floor and parking on upper stories; the Zoning Law should be amended to include this use.

To further enhance parking availability in the Village Center, the sharing of lots by businesses and other establishments with different hours of operation should be allowed. Access should be created between lots that are currently separated by fences and other barriers. Village businesses could organize into a Local Development Corporation (LDC), which would control parking lots in the core area. CDBG funding could be used to finance part of the effort and the LDC could lease lands and pay for insurance. In addition, parking spaces along East and West Main Streets should be maintained with their delineated curb markings to ensure more efficient use of these areas for parallel parking.

**Objective: Increase off-street parking opportunities in the Village Center to encourage commercial activity.**

**Actions:**

- Amend the Village's parking standards to ensure there is adequate but not excessive off-street parking in the Village Commercial (VC) area, particularly for residential uses. To balance the need for more parking with the need to encourage economic development, existing buildings and replacement buildings on the same footprint and the same size in the VC area should not be subject to the off-street parking requirements, as long as any off-street parking that exists on the lot to serve such structures and uses is not reduced.
- Amend the Zoning Law to permit mixed-use parking structures in the VC area, with commercial uses on the ground floor and parking on upper stories.
- Consider permitting mechanical parking behind buildings that front on the road in the VC area.
- Work with the Wappingers Falls Business and Professional Association and private landowners to create a Parking Plan for the Village Center.
- Continually assess parking inventory and needs against current and future development, using both the parking inventory as well as the 2018 *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study*.
- Encourage shared parking by businesses with different hours of operation
- Allow for access between parking lots by eliminating fences and other barriers.
- Coordinate with Zion Church and the Knights of Columbus via a Memorandum of Understanding to create shared public parking and event space.
- Apply for CDBG funding to assist Village businesses to organize into a Local Development Corporation to increase parking availability.
- Maintain delineated curb markings for parking spaces along East and West Main Streets to ensure more efficient use of these areas for parallel parking.
- Develop a smartphone application that lets people know where parking spots are available in the Village Center.



### Secondary Street System:

- North-south street connects New Hackensack Road to Myers Corners Road
- East-west connections including to East Main Street and Old Route 9
- Northern connection from New Hackensack Road to N. Mesier Avenue (not shown)
- Tree-lined, slow-speed streets with sidewalks
- Secondary system displaces traffic on Route 9 and improves access to residential and commercial buildings east of Route 9

### Route 9 Improvements:

- Remove 1-2 traffic signals, 4 or more left turn lanes, and 10 driveways
- Reduces conflict points from turning vehicles
- Improves traffic flow
- Improves walkability along Route 9
- Planted median and street trees within Village limits calms traffic

### Internal Connections Between Businesses:

- Reduces need for individual driveways
- Reduces traffic on Route 9
- Creates additional frontage for new businesses

### Walkable, Mixed-Use Development:

- Opportunities for infill commercial (shown in red)
- Potential housing sites (shown in brown)
- Developers could help fund secondary street system
- Underground utility upgrades could be incorporated

**Village of Wappingers Falls  
Comprehensive Plan**  
Figure 17: Examples of Traffic Calming Techniques



Traffic Circle



Curb Extension



Chicane



Choker



Speed Hump



In Lane Tic Marks



# Chapter 8: Parks and Recreation

## Community Goal

**Provide a wide range of recreational opportunities that meet the current and future needs of all members of the community.**

When people are asked where they would prefer to live, they invariably select communities with an abundance of trees, open spaces, and places to relax. 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, livability, and feel. A large part of that character is defined by its parks.

The Village currently owns and maintains approximately 15.52 acres of developed parkland within its boundaries, and 2.86 miles of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail runs through the Village. However, in the last two decades, the Village has also lost significant recreational resources. Since 2001, the Village has lost the baseball fields on Canale Field to comply with Homeland Security and to secure the Village Water Treatment Facility. Additionally, ballfields at St. Mary's Church, which the Village used to maintain, were lost when the cemetery was expanded. This represents a total loss of approximately 16 acres of recreational lands, more than half of the parkland in the Village. A *Recreation Needs Assessment* conducted by the Village in 2020 determined that the Village is currently underserved with parks and recreational facilities in comparison to other similar municipalities. As discussed in this chapter, the Village has been actively pursuing opportunities to expand its recreational opportunities.

### 8.A EXISTING PARKS

Existing public parks and recreation areas in the Village are discussed below. The location of the Village's existing parks, and the Greenway Trail, can be seen on Figure 18 at the end of this chapter.

- **Mesier Homestead and Park** is a 5.5-acre park that can only be used for passive recreation according to the deed restriction which accompanied its donation to the Village. Its location on East Main Street, surrounded by the American Legion Hall and Grinnell Library make it a natural focal point for the Village. The Mesier Homestead is the Village's earliest residential dwelling and most important landmark. It is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places as a contributing property in the Wappingers Falls Historic District. The Village is committed to restoring and preserving this significant structure for use by present and future generations.

- **Veterans’ Memorial Park** on North Mesier Avenue in Ward 3 is a 5.8-acre park that abuts a portion of the east shore of Wappingers Lake. Developed after World War II at the request of returning servicemen, this park includes an all-purpose playing field, a basketball court, a playground with a playset, and picnic tables.
- **James J. Temple Memorial Park (“Temple Field”)** is a 2.5-acre park located within a portion of the 5.2-acre highway garage site at Market and McKinley Streets in Ward 2. This park includes a small soccer field, a play area with a new playset installed in 2014, and a basketball court.
- **Canale Memorial Park** is located at the north end of West Main Street in Ward 1. This 0.1-acre park is located on a portion of the Village well field parcel on the northwest portion of Wappinger Lake. The park has minimal playground equipment consisting of a small playset. It is the only play area in Ward 1.
- **The Major Joseph W. McDonald MIA Park** is a  $\pm$  0.4-acre park located in the NYSDOT right-of-way at the intersection of Route 9 and East Main Street in Ward 3. The park includes two monuments—one to honor Village native, Major Joseph W. McDonald, Jr. Missing in Action (MIA) in the Vietnam War since May 3, 1972, and a second monument to military personnel who were declared MIA in Vietnam. This park has the distinction of being the first park dedicated to MIAs in New York State.
- **Fisherman’s Park** on Liss Road is a small  $\pm$  1.2-acre park adjacent to Wappinger Lake that provides lake access for fishing and non-motorized boating. It is located on land in the Town of Wappinger. The park has no improvements other than a small parking lot.
- **Mary Ross Park** located on the northeast corner of Mill Street and East Main Street in Ward 3 is a 0.02-acre pocket park that includes a bench, community information board, and landscaping. The Village Board has discussed the possibility of selling this park to a private landowner so it could be made available for commercial use downtown, and dedicating the revenue derived from the sale toward another park.
- **Franny Reese Memorial Park** is a new waterfront park on approximately 0.8 acres of land located on West Main Street that the Village purchased in 2016. Approximately half of the park’s 450 feet of waterfront is on Wappinger Lake, and the other half is located after the dam, on the gorge which contains Wappinger Creek before it descends to the Falls. Franny Reese Memorial Park is named after the environmentalist who was a descendent of the Mesier family and a patron of many Wappingers Falls organizations. The park includes a scenic overlook of Wappinger Lake, and a waterfront performance space (a terraced amphitheater) that overlooks the Lake and historic dam. Capitalizing on the Falls’ recreational and tourism

opportunities will support and further encourage commercial development in the Village Commercial District.

- **Darrigan Park** is a waterfront park abutting 900 feet of the Wappinger Creek that is currently under construction. The 0.9-acre property, which was formerly the Village highway garage, stretches from the intersection of McKinley and Market Streets to the southerly Village line. It is located across the street from Temple Field, and a portion of the Wappinger Greenway Trail runs adjacent to it. At the northern end of the property is a 19th century brick building, which was once a box factory before it served as the Village highway garage from 1955 to 2013. The property's location on the Creek and its historic 3,000 square foot building make it an ideal opportunity for aquatic recreation. The former highway garage is currently being renovated for use as a boathouse and community center, and small, non-motorized boats will be able to launch from the site. The proximity to Temple Field may promote better utilization of that park as well.
- **Wappingers Greenway Trail.** In addition to the parks discussed above, a portion of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail runs through the Village. The 2.86-mile portion of the "figure 8" loop of on- and off-road trails that is located in the Village links historic, cultural, natural and economic resources in the Village, including existing Village parks and the central business district. In 2014, a developer donated a portion of his site to the Village to be used as an addition to the Wappinger Greenway Trail, connecting the proposed Bain Park to Reese Park in the Town of Wappinger. The trail passes within one block of the Metro North train station in New Hamburg, allowing tourists who arrive by train to walk or bicycle from the station to the Village. The Wappinger Greenway Trail Committee completed the 40-segment, 2.86-mile trail in 2003, and maintains the trail.

Over the past 10 years, many of the Village parks have been improved with new equipment and additional landscaping to enhance their overall appearance. However, more improvements are needed, and the the buildings and equipment in all of the parks need to be continuously repaired, maintained, and upgraded.

**Objective: Continue to maintain and enhance existing parks and recreational facilities.**

**Actions:**

- Begin needed improvements to existing parks, including equipment replacement, upgrading and maintenance, and additional landscaping to improve overall attractiveness.

- Support youth activities through recreation programs and partnerships with other agencies, and specifically explore opportunities to partner with non-profit youth agencies in a contractual agreement to manage youth activities.

## **8.B PROPOSED PARKS**

Recognizing the shortfall of recreational resources presently serving its residents, the Village of Wappingers Falls has actively sought to secure more land for parks, and has prepared plans to develop these lands for recreational purposes. In the last decade, based on extensive public participation including surveys, workshops, meetings and public hearings, the Village has prepared a number of reports to assess the recreational needs and desires of Village residents. These include the [\*Veterans' Memorial Park Master Plan Report\*](#) (2009), the [\*Village of Wappingers Falls Local Waterfront Revitalization Strategy\*](#) (2011), and the *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study* (2019). The Village is actively working to develop these new parks, and to extend the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail. In addition, Wappinger Creek and Wappinger Lake, 51 acres of which are located in the Village, have the potential to become major recreational attractions. The location of the Village's proposed parks, and the Greenway Trail extension, can be seen on Figure 18 at the end of this chapter.

Many of the proposed parks (and recently constructed parks) focus on the Village's stunning water resources, including Wappinger Lake, Creek and Falls, which have significant untapped potential for water-dependent and water-enhanced recreational uses. Wappinger Creek, which bisects the Village, makes a dramatic plunge over a series of Falls, totaling 75 feet in height, in the Village commercial center. While no longer the focus of industry, the Creek and Falls make a significant contribution to the Village setting and have the potential to promote economic development as a key tourist attraction. The Village recently competed two waterfront parks and proposes to create additional parks to take advantage of the recreational value of these resources. Capitalizing on the recreational and tourism opportunities of Wappinger Falls and Creek will further encourage the revitalization of the Village commercial center. Similarly, Wappinger Lake has significant recreational potential if it can be cleaned, dredged, and cleared of invasive species.

Parkland acquisition and development can be funded through recreation fees required for new residential development. The Village requires that new residential development provide land for parks or recreational facilities or, if a suitable park cannot be properly located on the property, payment of a fee to a general park fund to offset the costs of providing sufficient parkland and recreational opportunities incurred by new residential growth. Recreation fees could also be used to provide opportunities for open space preservation in a park dedicated for that purpose. The *Recreation Needs Assessment* established the need for additional recreational facilities in the Village.

## **Galucci Park and Falls View Park**

Galucci Park on the east side of West Main Street will 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. The land for Galucci Park, which was acquired by the Village in 1972, consists of two parcels that total 0.034 acres. A concept plan for Galucci Park appears in Appendix A of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

A second park, Falls View Park, has been proposed for a 0.17-acre parcel owned by the Village on the east side of the Creek on Market Street. This park would offer the best view of Wappingers Falls in the entire Village. A plan has been developed for this park (see Appendix B), but it has not been implemented due to the estimated cost. The Village is considering whether to commit public funds to develop this park, or whether to allow private development of the site on condition that public access to view the Falls be provided.

## **Bain Park**

Bain Park is located west of Franklindale Avenue and Clapp Avenue in Ward 2. This six-acre park was formerly the Village landfill. In 2017, the *Draft Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study* presented a concept plan for the property, depicting workforce housing near the street frontage on Clapp Avenue and Lower Henry Street, with the remainder of the property proposed as a park. Although the draft concept plan was initially embraced by the community, subsequent additional public input expressed opposition to the idea of additional housing in an already densely-developed neighborhood, and the plans for housing were therefore abandoned. In the Spring of 2018, the Village and Dutchess County met to prepare a plan for the park, which will be outfitted with a universally-accessible playground, a track, and a multi-purpose field for users of all abilities. Between 2016 and 2019, the area of the property proposed for the park was gradually filled with clean fill from Village street renovation projects in order to level the site. The first phase of development (construction of the playground) will commence in 2021 contingent on receipt of funding. The Village anticipates that enhanced recreation amenities at Bain Park will help to attract additional private investment in the area and enhance the quality of life of residents. A concept plan for development of Bain Park was included in the 2019 *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study* and appears in Appendix C of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

## **Hillside Avenue Park, Community Center at Methodist Church, Shared Recreation Field.**

In addition to the proposed parks outlined above, which have detailed plans for development, the Village is also considering three additional parks which are in the initial planning phase. These include a playground in a park planned at the end of Hillside Avenue;

acquisition of the Methodist Church parcel and conversion of the building into a community center; and a recreation field shared between the Village and the Town of Wappinger, at a site to be determined.

**Objective: Develop dynamic new waterfront parks that take advantage of the recreational value of Wappinger Creek for water-dependent and water-enhanced uses.**

**Actions:**

- Seek grants to to design and construct Galucci Park.
- Consider whether to commit public funds to develop Falls View Park, or whether to allow private development of the site with a public access.

**Objective: Develop new parks that serve the needs of the immediate neighborhood.**

**Actions:**

- Develop Bain Park using the concept plan prepared for the 2019 *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study* as a guide (see Appendix C of this plan).
- Seek grants to fund park acquisition, development and improvements for new neighborhood parks such as the Hillside Avenue Park, Community Center at Methodist Church, and the shared recreation field.

**Objective: Ensure that sufficient park and recreation facilities exist to meet the demand created by new residential development**

**Actions:**

- Amend the Zoning Law to require the reservation of parkland or payment of a recreation fee in lieu thereof in accordance with the Village’s Fee Schedule as a condition of signing an approved Site Plan or Subdivision Plat.
- Periodically review the Village recreation fee schedule and adjust as needed to reflect the actual costs of providing recreational services incurred by new residential growth in the Village.
- Amend Chapter A154 of the Village Code (entitled “Fees”) to establish the Village’s fee schedule by resolution so that in the future, the fee schedule, including the recreation fee, can be amended by resolution.

## **8.C WAPPINGER LAKE**

Wappinger Lake has the potential to be the Village’s greatest recreational resource. However, as discussed in detail in Chapter 3, public use of the Lake is significantly impaired by aquatic weed overgrowth, sedimentation, and pollution. As a result, the Lake has lost its recreational value for fishing, boating, and swimming.

Approximately half of Wappinger Lake lies within 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 for recreational use in 1966 with New York State Parks funding assistance through the Environmental Protection Fund. Since the Lake was purchased with State Parks funding, the Village is eligible for a 75 percent grant to improve this resource. In 1998, the Village designated the Lake a Critical Environmental Area (CEA) under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). The designation highlights the issue of the Lake's water quality, and has also facilitated obtaining funding for dredging the Lake to further its cleanup.

Since most of the Village is already developed, opportunities for the creation of additional recreational space are limited. Full advantage should be taken of the recreational opportunity presented by the Lake, centrally located in the Village. The Village should continue to pursue water quality improvement and lake dredging activities to restore the quality and experience of Wappinger Lake as a recreational resource. Additional boat launches are also needed to improve Lake access.

**Objective: Restore Wappinger Lake as a recreational resource.**

**Actions:**

- Continue to pursue funding opportunities to improve water quality, remove invasive species, and lake dredging, as outlined in detail in Chapter 3, to restore the quality and experience of Wappinger Lake as a recreational resource.
- Add boat launches to improve Lake access.
- Identify waterfront access points with signage.

## **8.D WAPPINGER GREENWAY TRAIL EXTENSION**

The Village is actively working to extend the Wappinger Greenway Trail. It plans to create a “Workers’ Walk” from Givens Avenue to McKinley Street, and to extend the trail from Bain Park to Reese Park in the Town of Wappinger. The Village also is working with NYSDOT to create a safe pedestrian walkway along the west side of Route 9 crossing Wappinger Lake to complete the Greenway Trail loop around the Lake. In total, these projects would add approximately 0.65 miles to the trail system. There is also considerable interest in creating a “blue way” trail on the Lake itself. In the future, the Village intends to seek easements to connect the Market Street Industrial Park with the Scenic Hudson property, which would add another 0.2 of a mile to the trail network.

The Wappinger Greenway Trail has numerous benefits and achieves many of the goals of the *Comprehensive Plan*. It increases local recreational opportunities, provides public access to the Lake and the Creek, encourages economic development and tourism, protects natural

and cultural resources, and provides opportunities for interpretation of the historic uses of the Falls' power and the ecological significance of Wappinger Creek. Many studies demonstrate that greenways and trails increase nearby property values, and they 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. 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.

Establishment of the Greenway Trail has also created 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.

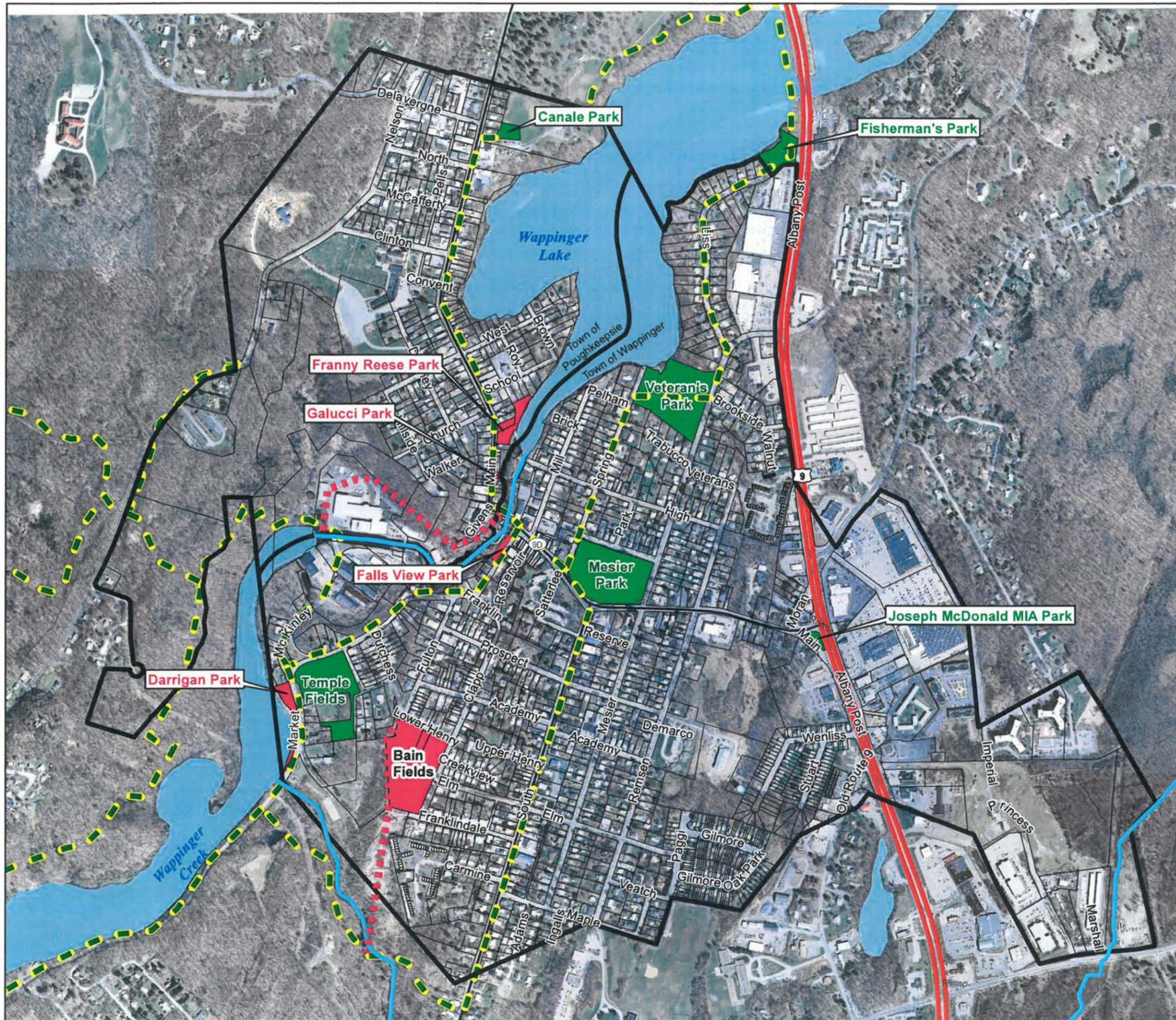
**Objective: Continue extending the Wappinger Greenway Trail to link neighborhoods to each other and to the Village commercial center.**

**Actions:**

- Continue municipal support of the Wappinger Greenway Trail Committee's ongoing efforts to seek funding for further development of the trail and related park development.
- Work with NYSDOT to create a safe pedestrian walkway along the west side of Route 9 crossing Wappinger Lake to complete the Greenway Trail loop around the Lake.
- Extend the Greenway Trail from Bain Park to Reese Park in the Town of Wappinger.
- Secure easements to connect the Market Street Industrial Park with the Scenic Hudson property.
- With funding and when planning for upgraded infrastructure, extend the Greenway Trail to create a "Workers' Walk" from Givans Avenue to McKinley Street to increase pedestrian connectivity between the Bleachery and the downtown.

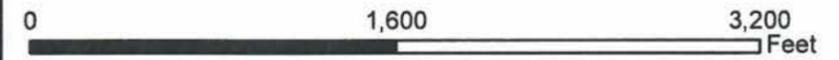
# Village of Wappingers Falls Comprehensive Plan

Figure 18: Existing and Proposed Parks



### Legend

- Village Boundary
- Wappinger Greenway
- Existing Parks
- Proposed Trails
- Proposed Parks
- Streams
- Waterbodies



Prepared by:



Prepared for:



# Chapter 9: Community Facilities and Services

## Community Goal

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

A critical element in a community is the effectiveness and quality of its local government services. 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.

### 9.A FACILITIES

**Public Facilities Objective: Continue to look for ways to reduce costs to Village taxpayers while striving to optimize the preservation, use and efficiency of historic and municipal spaces in the Village.**

#### Village Hall

Until September 2013, the offices of the Mayor, Village Treasurer, and Village Clerk were housed in the former Post Office located at the southeast corner of East Main Street and South Avenue, one of five post offices designed and commissioned by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The Village Offices were moved to that building in 1995 when they outgrew their previous quarters in Mesier Homestead.

In Spring 2013, the Village purchased 2582 South Avenue. The 6,000-square foot building was slightly modified to incorporate the offices of the Water Department, which had been moved from the Mesier Homestead to the former Post Office in 2007; the Planning and Zoning Office, which had previously been located at the American Legion at 7 Spring Street; and the Village Court, which had been located at 7 Mill Street.

Although 2582 South Avenue was only constructed in 2003, efficiency upgrades were needed to decrease its utility costs. The Village replaced incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs (reducing the cost of power by 67 percent), and upgraded the heating and cooling units from

80 percent efficient units to 97 percent efficient units, reducing expenses by more than \$7,000 per year.

### **Mesier Homestead**

The Mesier Homestead is the Village’s earliest residential dwelling and most important landmark. It is located within the 5.5-acre Village-owned Mesier Park. The Mesier Homestead was the original Village Hall. From 1914 to 2007, the large east room was used as a business office for the Water Department. For more than 50 years, from the early 1940s until the 1990s, the Village Police Department occupied the west room of the Homestead, in part to protect against



**Mesier Homestead**

vandalism on the Homestead and Park. Since 1970, the Wappingers Falls Historical Society has maintained the second floor of the Homestead as a museum. When the Water Department moved to the new Village Hall in 2007, the Historical Society assumed use of the entire building for the museum, which includes such artifacts as 18<sup>th</sup> century furniture, clothing, tools and documents, all of which originated within the Village, along with a photographic history of the Village.

The Mesier Homestead is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places as a contributing property in the Wappingers Falls Historic District. The Village is committed to restoring and preserving this significant structure for use by present and future generations. The Historical Society has worked with an architect specializing in historic preservation to determine the work that needs to be done to the Mesier Homestead in order to restore it. In 1996, the Village received funding from the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to restore the Mesier Homestead’s roof. In 2000, the Village received a State grant to complete the structural repairs and exterior restoration of the building. In 2008, the Village completed a series of drains to direct water away from the structure. Funding is currently being sought to renovate the Homestead’s original 1740 building, to be adaptively re-used as a museum. The Village should continue to apply for funding until the entire Mesier Homestead, both exterior and interior, 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 hosts functions such as “Concerts in the Park” and “Christmas in the Park.” In conjunction with the Wappingers Central School District, the annual “Festival of the Arts” is held in Mesier Park. On average, these functions attract more than 3,000 visitors to the Village, from more

than four states. Many of these visitors shop in the Village commercial center and contribute to its vitality. The Mesier Homestead is a true village green located in the heart of the Village.

According to historic preservation architect Marilyn Kaplan, early survey maps of the Mesier property indicate that a barn was at one time located on the southeast corner of Mesier Park. The Historic Society has considered replicating the barn in its original location in Mesier Park to be used for community activities.

### **Zoning Office/American Legion Hall**

The Village continues to lease a building located at 7 Spring Street from the American Legion, together with 15 parking spaces which the Village uses as additional parking for the Village commercial center. The building previously was used for the Building Department and Assessor's Offices. The large open space on the ground floor, which is still used as the American Legion Hall, also is used by the Village for meeting space, as well as by community groups. The building's location across from the Mesier Homestead keeps the Village offices in close proximity to each other--the Police Station is housed in the former Post Office at the opposite end of Mesier Park, and the Village Hall is located on South Street, four-tenths of a mile away.

### **Grinnell Library**

Although Grinnell Library is not owned by the Village, its public purpose and its location in the Village commercial center at 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 State and National Registers of Historic Places as a contributing property in the Wappingers Falls Historic District. For many years, only the second floor of the building was occupied by the library. In 1967, to celebrate its centennial, the library 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. In 2013, Grinnell Library became a public library district, with a Board of Trustees and the power to tax to ensure a more sustainable future. The Friends of Grinnell Library, a non-profit group of library supporters, holds their annual "Grinnell Gala" to raise funds for library projects. Many of the Village's historic records are also housed in the Grinnell Library; this information is managed by the Wappingers Falls Historical Society.

### **Post Office**

In 1989, the Post Office relocated from its original location in the historic fieldstone building at the junction of East Main Street and South Avenue to a new building on the southeast corner of East Main Street and South Remsen Avenue. Because the new 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 (GSA) was able to find a site that is still in the heart of the Village. However, the Village believes that the chain link fence and its barbed wire protection facing East Main Street are unappealing to people who approach the Village from this entrance. If the GSA continues to consolidate Post Offices and determines that this one is not needed, or that less space is needed, the Village should consider purchasing the property or work with developers to adaptively re-use the facility in a manner that would best serve the Village.

## **Schools**

The Village is served by the Wappingers Central School District (WCSD). 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. No public schools are located within the Village. However, two public schools are located adjacent to the south boundary of the Village: James E. Evans Elementary School, which occupies a 12-acre site, and the Wappingers Falls Junior High School, which is situated on an adjacent 35-acre site.

Evans Elementary School and Wappingers Falls Junior High School each were designed to accommodate significantly more students than are presently attending. The Elementary School was designed for 660 students, but had a 2015-2016 enrollment of only 365 students. The Junior High School was designed for 1,200 students but had a 2015-2016 enrollment of 822 students. On the other hand, Roy C. Ketcham Senior High School, which occupies a 55-acre site on Myers Comers Road, approximately three miles from Wappingers Falls, was designed for 1,500 students but serves more than 1,900 students.

Children who live near West Main Street in the north end of the Village, as well as students in the Second Ward, attend Sheafe Road Elementary School, located just north of the Village. Sheafe Road School's 2015-2016 enrollment was 505 students. The Village is interested in working with the Town of Wappinger and the WCSD on after-school programs and a dedicated community center.

The Village benefits from having schools within walking distance of its residents. However, because the WCSD serves several municipalities 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. The Village expressed concern to the District that increased traffic and congestion will cause undue hardship and negatively affect the Village. As a result, when the WCSD completed a garage expansion project, it agreed to have the school buses exit primarily onto Middlebush Road, using South Remsen only for Village students.

**Actions:**

- Consider ways to further consolidate space, increase renewable energy options, and share databases by connecting departmental computers, where appropriate.
- Encourage Grinnell Library and/or the Wappingers Falls Historic Society to secure a State grant for Historic Preservation Records Management, or seek a grant directly.
- Continue to seek funding opportunities to restore the entire Mesier Homestead, both exterior and interior.
- Follow the recommendations in the [\*2018 Existing Conditions Study and Restorations Recommendations\*](#) to restore Mesier Homestead.
- Continue to re-evaluate the community needs for public space and plan for adding needed space suitable for that use.
- Improve and update the Village website, highlighting Village events including Mesier Homestead events, and include all Village plans and reports on the site.
- Seek an opportunity to build a community center with indoor sports/gathering possibilities either in Mesier Park as a replication of the barn or in Veteran's Park overlooking the Lake.
- Consider the acquisition of the American Legion building, with the provision that the American Legion be given a forever use of the property.
- Consider the acquisition of the parking lot associated with the American Legion building.
- Continue to work with the American Legion to rehabilitate and renovate the building for use as a community center for youth, seniors, community groups, and public meetings or alternatively, plan for its adaptive re-use in a way that is best suited for the Village.
- Support Grinnell Library as a center of cultural, educational and social life in the Village.
- Work with the Post Office to improve the appearance of the fence facing East Main Street.
- If the GSA continues to consolidate Post Offices and determines that this one is not needed, or that less space is needed, the Village should consider purchasing the property or work with developers to adaptively re-use the facility in a manner that would best serve the Village.
- Work with the Town of Wappinger and the WCSD on after-school programs and a dedicated community center.

**9.B SERVICES**

**Services Objective: Continue to investigate ways to make the provision of emergency and municipal services more effective and cost-efficient.**

## **Police Department**

The Police Department occupies the former Village Hall. The facility includes an office for the Commissioner, a booking room, and areas assigned to the Lieutenant, the Sergeant, and the dispatcher. The location includes a kennel for the canine unit and a parking lot with spaces for about ten cars. In 2014, after the Village Offices were relocated to the new Village Hall, the Village constructed areas for a dispatcher, administrative offices and interrogation. The building will need a new roof installed at some point.

In August of 2017, the Village Board voted to abolish the local police force and contract for additional services from the Dutchess County Sheriff for eight full-time police officers to provide round the clock coverage seven days a week at a total cost of \$801,000, a 40 percent reduction of the cost of local police. The Village negotiated an agreement with the Sheriff for these officers to exclusively patrol the Village of Wappingers Falls and not be allowed to leave the Village limits. RBT LLP, a public accounting firm, reviewed the agreement and the Village's prior year spending on its own local police force and determined that the Village would save over \$700,000 in that year if it contracted with the Sheriff. This analysis was used in a request from the Municipal Restructuring Fund from the New York State Department of State, which would have provided funding of \$1 million for the Village had the referendum successfully passed. It was also projected that the Village would have been able to reduce taxes by 16 percent in the 2018/2019 fiscal year, and that liability would have shifted from Village residents to Dutchess County. However, the proposal was defeated in a mandatory referendum on January 6, 2018, and the Village Board then voted to hire more full-time police officers to address some of its chief concerns in filling shifts.

### **Actions:**

- Continue to assess whether the former Post Office building is best suited for the police personnel and the community as a Police Department.
- Examine ways to address the needed improvements to the roof and seek funding for this additional work.
- Increase community policing through bicycle patrols, Neighborhood Watch activities, and citizen education of police services like House Watch for owners who are away.
- Investigate increased use of technology in the Police Department.
- Seek grants to help defray the costs of community policing, administrative help, and new technology.
- Continue to evaluate manpower requirements as population in the Village increases.
- Continue police and dispatcher training for domestic violence and opiate addiction.

## **Fire Department**

The Village Volunteer Fire Department was founded in 1837 and provides 24-hour emergency fire and rescue response to Village residents. The Fire Department has two fire

stations: Garner Fire House #1, located on West Academy Street, and Johnson Fire House #2 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 House is equipped with one pumper (purchased in 2005) and one ladder truck (2013). Johnson Fire House is equipped with two pumpers (1995 and 2005) and one utility/rescue truck (1987). This equipment is antiquated and will soon need replacement. Beginning in 2009, the Fire Chief and the Mayor developed a Long-Term Capital Equipment List to be included in each year's budget package.

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 longer hours further from home, people who would like to volunteer for the Fire Department have found it difficult to do so. At the same time, the number of calls have been dramatically increasing. The result is that the Fire Department has 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 but provides significant savings to Village residents than having paid firefighters. The Village Board believes that 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.

In 2018 the capital improvements most requested by the volunteers are an addition to Garner Fire House and a replacement for the 1995 pumper truck for Johnson Fire House.

**Actions:**

- Continue to support the Village Volunteer Fire Department through the Service Awards Program.
- Seek grants to upgrade firefighting equipment.
- Include replacement of firefighting equipment and ongoing maintenance of the fire stations in the Village Capital Infrastructure Plan.

**Water Department**

Since the Village was incorporated in 1871, providing water to citizens has been one of the most important services it provides. According to the Annual Drinking Water Quality Report, in 2016 tap water in the Village met all State drinking water health standards. The

Village water system is overseen by the Water Department, which is responsible for the wells, storage facilities, treatment plant, and distribution system.

As of 2016, the Village water system served an estimated 5,605 people through approximately 1,525 service connections. The system consists of the water pumping station and wellfields located on an 8-acre site adjoining Wappinger Lake off West Main Street, two water storage facilities located on Wenliss Terrace and Delavergne Avenue (Hillside Avenue's tank is no longer used for water but is still used for radio equipment), and approximately 20 miles of pipe. Some of the pipe was laid in the late 1800s; much new pipe was installed by the Village between 2007 and 2017. During those years, the Village secured more than \$25 million in funding and constructed \$38 million of water and sewer projects. Three active wells were renovated in 2010. The Village has plans and grants to complete new water infrastructure projects for:

- East Main Street (Water Infrastructure Grant awarded 2016).
- Tank on East side of Route 9 (Water Infrastructure Grant awarded 2016).
- Water connection across Route 9 to Woodhill Green (applied for an Intermunicipal Water Infrastructure grant [IMG] in 2017).
- Inter-connection from/to Town of Wappinger Water supply (applied for IMG grant 2017).

In February 1997, an interconnection was completed on Delavergne Avenue that allows the Village water system to draw water from the Joint City/Town of Poughkeepsies' water system (which draws from the Hudson River) in an emergency.

In 2017, the Village's water plant had a total output of 182.6 million gallons, or approximately 500,334 gallons per average day, all of which was drawn from the Village well field. Estimated losses, municipal usage, and/or non-billed water theft accounted for 26 million gallons per year, or about 14.25 percent.

The Water Department is overseen by a board of three appointed commissioners, each of whom serve a three-year term, with the Mayor who serves ex-officio. The Water Department employs one full-time office manager/clerk, and one part-time clerk, two full-time water plant operators, and one full-time water system maintenance mechanic. The number of county, state and federal regulations that pertain to the Water Department increases yearly, and each year at a faster rate. Computer systems and software need to be continuously upgraded to meet the needs of the office. The Water Treatment Facility has a very sophisticated Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system, which controls the plant.

The Annual Drinking Water Quality Report for 2017 includes the following list of required Future Capital Improvements:

- Old mains and water infrastructure replacement under the Village Capital Infrastructure Plan.
- Roadway and utility replacement, including water infrastructure replacement on Spring Street, Fulton Street, North Remsen Avenue (between Elm and Prospect Streets). This work was completed in 2017.
- Industrial Park continuation of water line replacement.
- Wellhead and Aquifer Protection Programs.
- Continuation of backflow prevention programs.
- 300,000-gallon elevated storage tank on the east side of Route 9.

**Actions:**

- Include all of the capital improvements listed in the Annual Drinking Water Quality Report in the Village’s overall Capital Infrastructure Plan.
- Continuously search for alternative funding (such as grants) to finance the Water Department’s Capital Improvements.
- Continuously evaluate the efficiency of existing computer systems.
- Allow for the placement of additional telecommunications antennae on water storage facilitates and other appropriate existing structures to reduce the proliferation of cell towers throughout the Village.
- If funding can be obtained, enhance the water towers with murals depicting the Falls and other natural resources to reinforce the Village identity as intertwined with its water resources.
- Continue to protect the Village water supply and seek an alternative source of water, as discussed in Chapter 3.
- Although manganese is not currently over the allowable limits, there has been some increases and the Village should plan to address this either with filtration or by finding an alternative source of water.

**Public Services**

The Village is directly responsible for the maintenance and improvement of its streets, sidewalks, parks, and all buildings and infrastructure under its ownership or stewardship. These services are administered or coordinated by the Village Highway Department Supervisor or another contractor 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, the Village Board and its Engineers have developed a Capital Infrastructure Plan to project funding costs for potential infrastructure improvements and other needs. The allocation of funding for public improvements, whether for parks, recreational facilities, open space, roads, or municipal buildings, has a major effect on the development of a community.

### *Drainage and water quality structures*

Because Wappinger Lake is a prime asset which has been severely damaged by both contaminated runoff and illicit discharge, the Village has worked diligently to construct new infrastructure to protect the lake and the watershed (and the Hudson River which collects the outfall). It also has been necessary to maintain newly-constructed and existing infrastructure that collects drainage and treats it for water quality. Over the past 10 years, the Village has installed the following drainage and water quality structures:

- Vortech® filtration units on the northeast and southwest side of Furnari Bridge, installed with funding from the Water Quality Improvement Program and American Recovery Reinvestment Act funding. These structures collect sediment from Route 9 drainage that enters Wappinger Lake from the Furnari Bridge. They are maintained by a private contractor retained by New York State.
- An ecosystem designed to simulate a natural wetland was installed in 2013 on two acres of property owned by the Southern Dutchess News, funded by the DEC Green Innovative Grant Program. It treats runoff from an approximately a 140-acre area. This location was identified as the highest contributor of contaminated sediment in a study funded by the Hudson River Estuary Program. The system is maintained by the Village.
- Sedimentation filtration systems for Market Street Drainage were installed in 2015 to collect sedimentation from Market Street runoff. The systems are maintained by the Village Highway Department.
- Spring Street/Veteran's Park bio-swale was installed in 2017 to catch runoff laden with sediment at the end of Spring Street before it enters the lake.
- Catch basins have been regularly replaced as part of the pavement and utility work done from 2007 to 2017, and will be a part of the work done on East Main Street. Catch basins are on an annual maintenance schedule by the Village Highway Department.

### *Public Sewer Service and Tri-Municipal Sewer Commission*

The Village has shared the sewer treatment facility located at 345 Sheafe Road with the Town of Poughkeepsie as co-owner since the 1980s, and the Town of Wappinger has been a tenant. Thirty-six percent of the capacity is allocated for Village use. The Village and Town of Wappinger are interested in increasing the capacity of the Tri-Municipal sewer treatment facility so that private and public sewage treatment facilities can be decommissioned and the wastewater sent to the facility to prevent it from adversely affecting water quality in the watershed.

**Actions:**

- Annually review and regularly update projections in a comprehensive Infrastructure Plan by surveying each of the Village Departments and Commissions to establish project priorities and cost estimates.

**Village Highway Garage**

The Village Highway Garage formerly was located at the foot of Market Street, where it occupied an approximately 5,000 square foot brick building built in the 1820s on one-third of an acre. The garage was inconveniently located in a primarily residential area, and the facility did not provide enough room for the Highway Department's vehicles. A new garage was constructed on the southern corner of the property where Temple Field was located and opened in the Fall of 2013.

Decades ago, the Village and Town of Wappinger shared the cost of a salt storage shed. Recently, the Village decided that savings could be realized by storing salt near its trucks in the new garage. It is considering adding an environmentally-responsible salt storage shed at that location.

The former Village Highway Garage is located across from Temple Field near Franny 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, including a community center and boathouse, as discussed in Chapter 8.

**Actions:**

- Construct a salt storage shed on the highway garage site.

**Justice Court**

The Village Justice Court occupies the first floor of 2582 South Avenue. Court is staffed by one elected and one appointed Judge (both of which are on call twenty-four hours each day), two full-time and two part-time court clerks, as well as 13 active court officers.

In 2017, Justice Court handled 9,407 cases or individual charges, more than triple the 3,016 matters that were handled in 1999. Of these, 8,190 were vehicle and traffic violations (increased from 1,206 in 1999), 1,153 were penal code violations (904 in 1999), and 85 were civil and zoning matters (301 in 1999). Fines and service charges collected by the Court produce approximately \$244,000 annually in revenue to the Village. The Court's caseload has been increasing at a rate of about 5 percent per year. Due to this increased workload, the availability of record storage space is an ongoing problem. Records are currently stored in three different locations since sufficient storage for all is not available at the Court.

**Actions:**

- Seek grants to upgrade the current Justice Court facilities.
- Ensure that Justice Court has adequate storage.

## **9.C PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

As noted in Chapter 2, the low rate of home ownership in the Village can result in a lack of commitment to the community, and a corresponding loss in leadership. To address this, the Village must find new ways to connect with its tenant residents and to bring information to them so that they can be more engaged in the community.

**Objective: Encourage effective public participation in the decision-making process among all residents of the Village.**

**Actions:**

- Develop a program of municipal volunteerism, in which residents are urged to participate on a range of committees in support of Village needs.
- Hold meetings in multiple locations, partner with existing groups and organizations, create events such as block parties and cultural celebrations, and hire bi-cultural and bilingual staff to involve more people in the community.
- Recognize the significant volunteer commitment of all Village-appointed board members.
- Develop a Village-wide program for rewarding special service, including awards presented ceremoniously for a broad range of volunteer activities.
- Reward volunteers by publicizing their achievements on the village website and in local newspapers.

# Chapter 10: Economic Development

## Community Goal

**Encourage an economically-vibrant and environmentally-sustainable commercial base, anchored by businesses that create jobs in skilled labor and that encourage tourism and downtown revitalization.**

For many years, Dutchess County experienced a net loss in population due to a higher cost of living and corresponding loss of employment opportunities. However, this trend appears to be changing. New York City, while benefiting from a long period of increased job opportunities and wealth, has experienced a

corresponding rise in costs of living. The 2008 housing crisis, which precipitated a five-year long recession, and the 2020 pandemic, further impacted City residents. As a result, since 2014, there has been a steady migration of metropolitan area residents looking for more affordable housing and places to settle. Wappingers Falls has a host of desirable assets that have been attractive to new residents, bringing new economic growth to the Village. These assets should be developed into a focused economic development strategy.

### 10.A VILLAGE ECONOMIC ASSETS

The following are the Village's key economic assets:

- **Waterfront** – The Village includes a portion of the 121.5-acre Wappinger Lake, an upstream Creek, a historic dam, dramatic gorge, waterfalls and the Lower Wappinger Creek, which is a Hudson River tidal estuary.
- **Views** – Upper West Main Street has views along the Lake from a 50- to 60-foot high bluff.
- **Architecture** – The Village commercial center is a collection of 19<sup>th</sup>-century brick and wooden buildings with period detail that have attracted many new small businesses over the decades with their reasonable rents.
- **History** – The Bleachery is a 19<sup>th</sup>-century industrial site which houses many small businesses with a particular emphasis on art and design. It has a vacant 14,000 square foot 19<sup>th</sup>-century masonry factory structure which can be restored and adaptively re-used as a business.
- **Accessibility** – The Metro North New Hamburg Train Station is located 1.5 miles from the Village boundary.
- **Culture** – County Players, a 60-year old community theater in the center of the Village, has 30 performances each year and sells almost 11,000 tickets annually.

- **Recreation** – Darrigan Park, with its boathouse and community center, once finished, will attract paddle-sport enthusiasts and provide meaningful recreational opportunities.
- **Dining** – Graduates from the Culinary Institute of America have found the Village to be an attractive place to open new restaurants.
- **Community** – Village events like the Halloween and Holiday Light Parades have shown a steady increase of patronage from regional visitors looking for events in the Hudson Valley.

## 10.B ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study

In 2012, the Village’s Economic Development Committee, comprised of members of the Wappinger Historic Society, the Wappingers Falls Business and Professional Association, and other interested residents, was designated as the Steering Committee to prepare a *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study*. The following year, the Village was awarded a \$333,400 grant to prepare the study. One of the primary objectives of the BOA is to identify specific areas of the community that could be redeveloped to provide employment opportunities, realize a strong and growing tax base, revitalize the downtown, and increase public access to the waterfront. The preparation of this study, which was adopted in 2020, has been the primary focus of the Economic Development Committee.

The following are the recommendations of the 2019 *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study*, many of which have been discussed in previous chapters of this *Comprehensive Plan*:

1. Explore mixed-use redevelopment opportunities for vacant/underutilized and creekside properties.
2. Support efforts to expand County Players Theatre.
3. Partner with Wappingers Falls Business and Professional Association to advance downtown revitalization.
4. Establish a public space or a park along Market Street and/or West Main to view the Falls.
5. Increase pedestrian connectivity from downtown to the Bleachery by re-establishing the “Workers’ Walk.”
6. Increase pedestrian connectivity downtown through construction of a pedestrian bridge across Wappingers Creek from High Street to West Main Street and Franny Reese Memorial Park.
7. Implement gateway and streetscape enhancements through the downtown.
8. Complete Franny Reese Memorial Park to provide public access to Wappingers Creek/Lake (this park has recently been completed).
9. Consider redevelopment at “Falls View Overlook.”

10. Formalize public parking by identifying areas to expand parking lots and/or construct new mixed-use parking structures.
11. Coordinate with Zion Church and the Knights of Columbus via a Memorandum of Understanding to create shared public parking and event space.
12. Partner with Dutchess County Community College or other institutions of higher education to redevelop the Bleachery with active commercial and recreation-based uses.
13. Continue to work with private property owners to refine a redevelopment plan for abandoned properties in the Bleachery.
14. Explore the feasibility of an artists-space and/or event space in the Bleachery mill building.
15. Enhance visual and physical public access to the Wappingers Creek.
16. Consider municipal acquisition of waterfront properties as they become available.
17. Work with FEMA to explore relocating residential properties out of the floodplain.
18. Investigate opportunities with New York State's Brownfield Cleanup Program.
19. Work with NYS DEC to complete the Site Management Plan for the Bleachery.
20. Determine the need for Phase II Environmental Site Assessments for the Bleachery and other parcels with suspected contamination, and secure funding as discussed in Chapter 3.
21. Continue participation in the Brownfield Opportunity Area Program by completing a Step 3 Implementation Strategy.
22. Establish the Wappingers Falls Revitalization Committee to oversee implementation of the Nomination.
23. Redevelop the Bain Parcel, Temple Field and underutilized downtown parcels.
24. Increase recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.
25. Streamline planning/permitting process to become a more business-friendly community.
26. Establish Wappingers Falls as a tourism destination by highlighting recreation and natural assets including the Lake and Wappingers Creek.
27. Identify and secure incentives to support redevelopment of the downtown and the Bleachery.
28. Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a Village Local Development Corporation to advance public and private initiatives.
29. Continue to implement the recommendations of the Village's [\*Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Plan\*](#).
30. As properties are redeveloped, encourage orientation toward the Lake, Creek, Falls, and Bridge.

## **Development Strategy**

Now that the *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study* has been adopted, the next step is to establish a Wappingers Falls Revitalization Committee to prepare a comprehensive

economic development strategy, utilizing the Village assets listed above, to bring about economic revitalization, job growth, and property improvement. The Committee should consider conducting a market analysis to identify opportunities for new entrepreneurs and local businesses seeking to expand in a way that is beneficial for both business interests and residents, with the least amount of environmental and neighborhood disturbance. To promote economic development, the Village should take advantage of the growth in food, entertainment, and tourism as top new business opportunities in the region. The economic development strategy should encompass the following planning topics:

- The recommendations of the 2019 *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study*.
- A Business Niche Target Plan.
- A Marketing Plan for investors, residents, and visitors to the Village.
- An Events Plan for parades and festivals.

The plans listed above should be presented at public hearings to residents and businesses for their input. Implementation strategies should be identified after the plans are finished, and regular meetings should be held to evaluate the strategies and their effectiveness.

The Village should continue to partner with the Wappingers Falls Revitalization Committee to enhance the Village commercial center through improved streetscape design, marketing the Village to attract new businesses, and encouraging tourism. Many of these strategies will be supported by other recommendations in this *Comprehensive Plan*, such as limiting the ground floor of buildings to commercial uses, as discussed in Chapter 6; improving pedestrian conditions and parking opportunities, as discussed in Chapter 7; and extending the Wappinger Greenway Trail and developing waterfront parks, as discussed in Chapter 8. The Village should work closely with the Wappingers Falls Revitalization 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 or a bicycle lane connecting the New Hamburg train station to various points along the Wappingers Trail to encourage tourism in the Village during the summer months.

**Objective: Enhance commercial opportunities in the Village Commercial Center.**

**Actions:**

- Implement the recommendations of the *Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study* listed above in section 10.B to revitalize the Village commercial center.
- Facilitate the work of the Wappingers Falls Revitalization Committee to revitalize the Village's commercial center and create a marketing strategy to promote economic development and tourism in the Village.

- Implement the streetscape enhancement recommendations of the Village’s [Vision Plan](#) and [Action Plan](#) to improve pedestrian conditions downtown.
- Encourage infill development to enhance the streetscape where buildings have been lost or damaged.
- Capitalize on the Village’s proximity to regional tourism attractions by encouraging lodging facilities such as inns, hotels, and other facilities serving tourists. Implement the recommendations of the [Local Waterfront Revitalization Study](#) to improve the gateways into the Village, and in particular, to use signage on Route 9 to direct travelers into the downtown.
- Install signage directing drivers to public parking.
- Explore the feasibility of alternative transportation opportunities such as trolley bus service or a bicycle lane connecting New Hamburg train station to the Village commercial center.

**Objective: Explore commercial and educational opportunities for the adaptive reuse of the Bleachery.**

**Actions:**

In addition to actions previously mentioned elsewhere in this *Comprehensive Plan*:

- Partner with Dutchess County Community College or other institutions of higher education to redevelop the Bleachery with active commercial and recreation-based uses.
- Continue to work with private property owners to refine a redevelopment plan for abandoned properties in the Bleachery.
- Explore the feasibility of an artists-space and/or event space in the Bleachery mill building.

**Objective: Encourage commercial opportunities along the Route 9 corridor, while improving its appearance and encouraging multi-purpose, mixed-use spaces where people live and work.**

**Actions:**

In addition to actions previously mentioned elsewhere in this *Comprehensive Plan*:

- Develop a Business Niche Target Plan and a Marketing Plan to encourage innovative commercial enterprises to locate along Route 9, and encourage development that is more in keeping with the character of the Village.

**APPENDIX A:**  
**GALUCCI PARK CONCEPT PLAN**



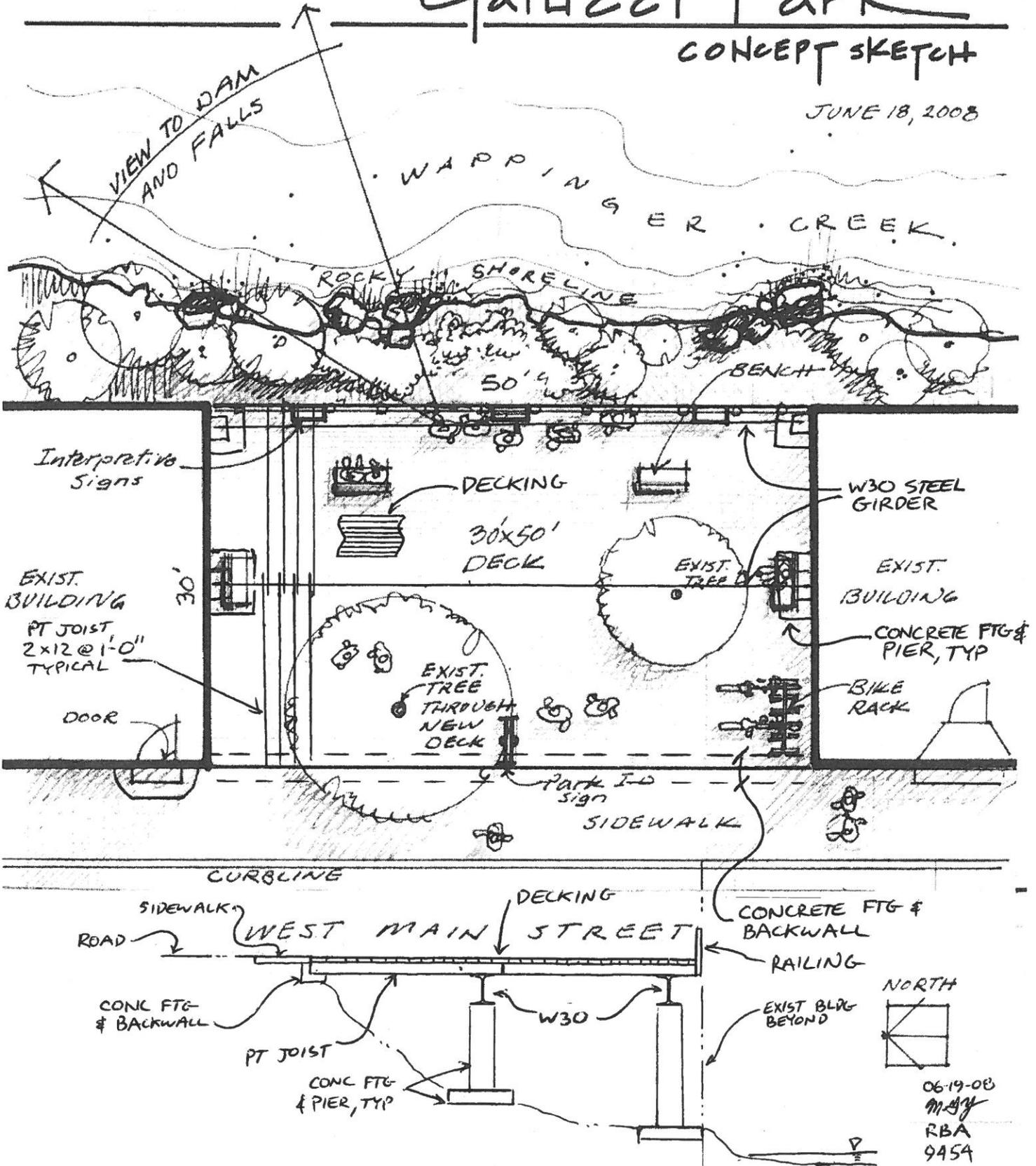
the LA group  
Landscape Architecture  
and Engineering, P.C

40 Long Alley  
Saratoga Springs  
New York 12866

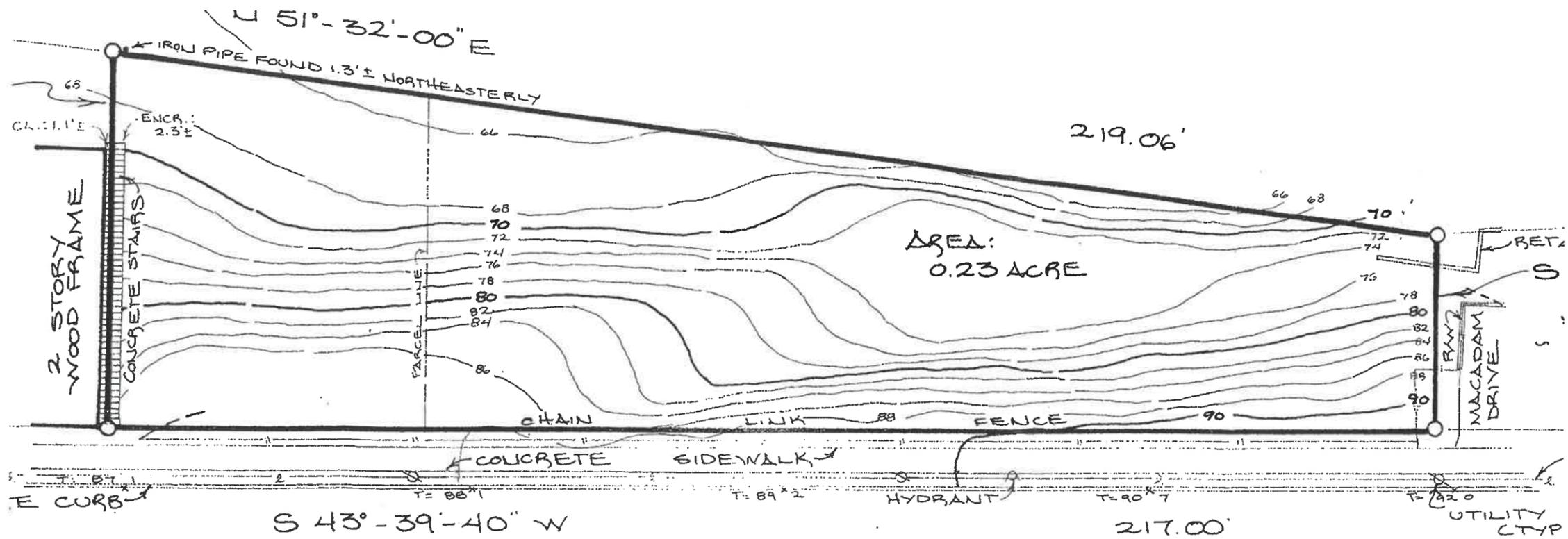
# Galucci Park

## CONCEPT SKETCH

JUNE 18, 2008



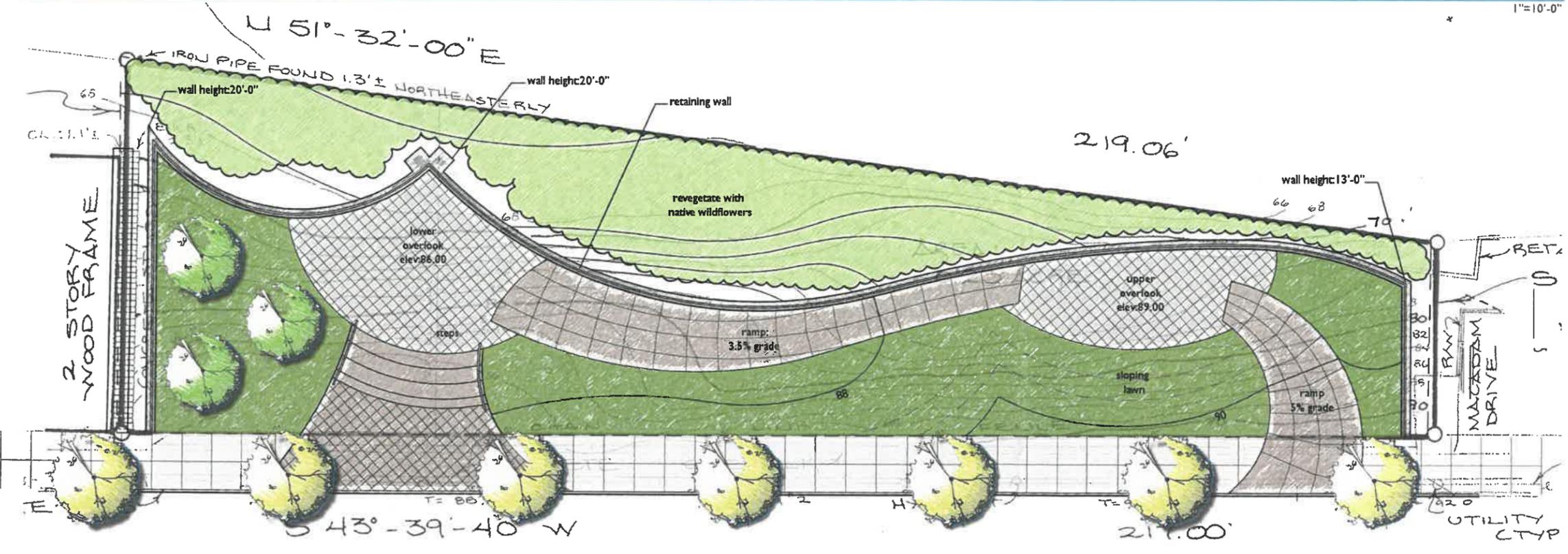
**APPENDIX B:**  
**FALLS VIEW PARK CONCEPT PLAN**



Custom Railing to Match Park Aesthetics

Existing Conditions

1"=10'-0"



Birdseye View from Northwest - Proposed

nts



Birdseye View from Southeast - Proposed

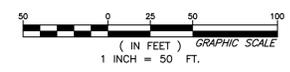
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Proposed Park Design

1"=10'-0"

**APPENDIX C:**  
**BAIN PARCEL CONCEPT PLAN**

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PROPOSED SITE PLAN  
FOR  
BAIN PARCEL  
VILLAGE OF WAPPINGERS FALLS  
DUTCHESS COUNTY, NEW YORK  
DATE: 6/26/18