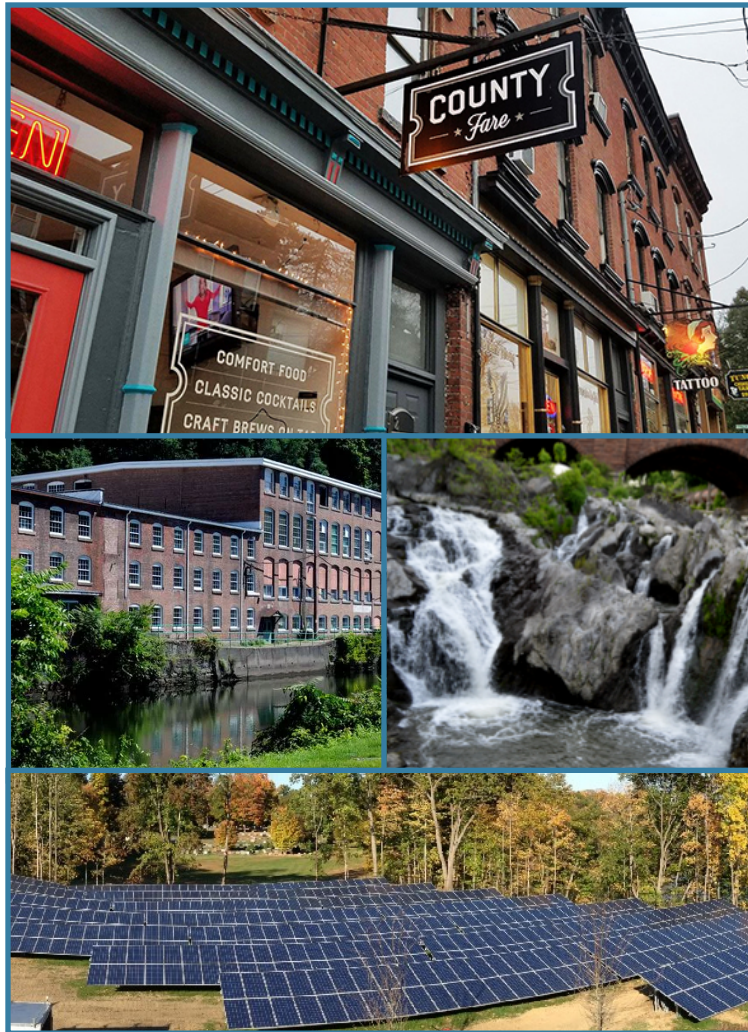


VILLAGE OF WAPPINGERS FALLS *Comprehensive Plan*



VILLAGE OF WAPPINGERS FALLS, DUTCHESS COUNTY, NY

ADOPTED: March 8, 2023

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



VILLAGE OF WAPPINGERS FALLS, NY

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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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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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 the growth and development of the Village for the next 10 to 20 years. It takes into account recent planning initiatives as well as new concerns about the environment and climate change. The *Comprehensive Plan* will also guide the Village’s priorities as it continues to invest in capital improvements.

Wappingers Falls last adopted a *Comprehensive Plan* in 2001. Since that time, the Village has undertaken numerous planning initiatives. 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 Wappinger Lake, Creek and Falls, and the steep slopes along their shores. Significant changes that have occurred in the Village since 2001, the decline in home-ownership, the deterioration of Wappinger 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 2023 *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*

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:

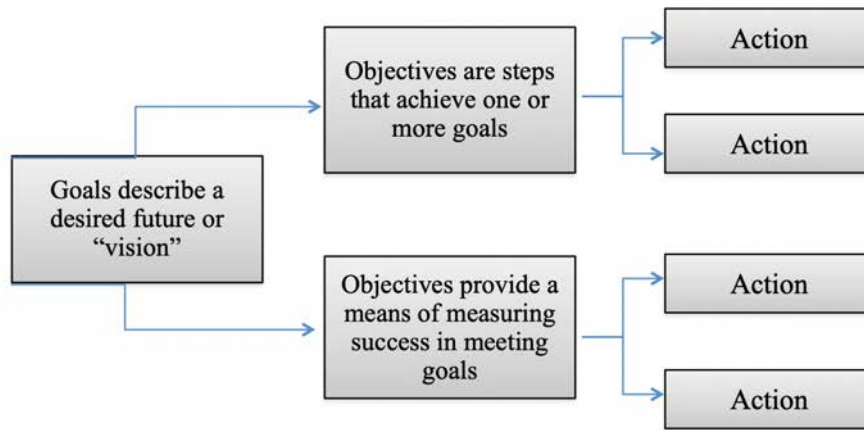


Figure 1: Goals, Objectives and Actions

The *Comprehensive Plan* focuses on seven 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 2023 *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 and 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.

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:

- 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.

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 2023 *Comprehensive Plan*.

1.F KEY PRIORITIES

While the *Comprehensive Plan* makes numerous recommendations, the following issues have been identified as crucial to securing the Village's prosperous future. All actions recommended by the *Comprehensive Plan* that implement these issues are of the highest priority.

1. **Amend the Zoning Law.** The most important step to ensure that the vision of the community is implemented is to amend the Zoning Law to reflect the goals and objectives of the *Comprehensive Plan*. This will encourage the orderly and efficient layout and appropriate uses of land in the Village consistent with historic development patterns.
2. **Modernize and Improve Village Communications,** particularly through the Village website and social media. The Village website should be made easier to navigate and to maintain so it is always up-to-date. Its functions could be expanded to serve as a “virtual village,” highlighting Village events, elections and candidates, plans and reports, volunteer opportunities, and issues of public interest.
3. **Restore Wappinger Lake** both for environmental purposes and as a valuable recreational resource. Wappinger Lake should be restored and maintained so it can be a source of enjoyment for residents and visitors. Remove invasive species from the lake and the creek, and develop lake/creekside properties for public and private use.
4. **Improve Aesthetic Character** to encourage investment. Ensure the Building Department has the resources it needs to ensure code compliance and to address properties in disrepair. This will improve the overall aesthetic of the Village and send a message to potential investors that the Village is a desirable place to invest.
5. **Preserve and Enhance Historic Character.** Our historic resources make the greatest contribution to the unique quality of the Village. The traditional

development patterns and architectural features of the Village must be a guide to historically-appropriate development in the future.

6. **Enhance Walkability and Bicycle Safety.** While the Village is designed to be walkable, with its narrow streets and sidewalks, the speed and amount of vehicular traffic has congested streets and made pedestrian and bicycle travel less safe. The use of traffic calming techniques, such as raised crosswalks, and the recent state law permitting villages to impose area speed limits as low as 25 mph, which could apply to all Village streets, present opportunities to slow vehicles, which may discourage through traffic and make walking and bicycling safer. The Village should focus efforts on increasing bicycle safety and creating an attractive environment for pedestrians.
7. **Continue to Revitalize Main Street and the Bleachery** with small local businesses. Implement the recommendations to use the Village’s many desirable assets—including its waterfront, views, architecture, history, and arts—to attract new businesses to the downtown, and encourage the adaptive reuse of the Bleachery with arts- and recreation-based uses.

1.G SUMMARY

A community is developed over the years by hundreds of individual and group 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. 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.

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. Implementation of the *Comprehensive Plan* requires the cooperation of many people and agencies acting on the recommendations of the *Plan*.

Table 1 at the end of this chapter is an Action Plan that summarizes all actions in the *Comprehensive Plan*. The actions listed in the Table are excerpted from the Plan’s chapters, and the reader is advised to consult the relevant chapter for more information and additional context for each action listed.

The Action Plan includes the responsible agency, the timeframe for implementation, and the level of priority. Short-term actions should be completed within one to two years, mid-term actions should be completed within three to five years, and long-term actions should be completed within six to 15 years. On-going action should remain a constant priority of the Village.

Terms and acronyms used in Table 1 are presented below.

Term	Description
Short-term	One to two years
Mid-term	Three to five years
Long-term	Six to 15 years
On-going	No predetermined start or end time

Agency	Acronym
Village of Wappingers Falls Agencies:	
Village Board	VB
Village Building Department	VBD
Village Department of Public Works	VDPW
Village Fire Department	VFC
Village Justice Court	VJC
Village Planning Board	PB
Village Police Department	VPD
Village Water Board	VWB
Wappingers Greenway Committee	WGC
Wappingers Falls Business and Professional Association	WFBPA
Other Agencies:	
Dutchess County Department of Public Works	DCDPW
Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority	DCWWA
Federal Emergency Management Agency	FEMA
General Service Administration	GSA
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation	NYSDEC
New York State Department of Transportation	NYSDOT
New York State Energy Research and Development Authority	NYSERDA
Town of Poughkeepsie	TP
Town of Wappinger	TW
Tri-Municipal Sewer Commission	TMSC
Wappingers Central School District	WCSD
Wappinger Intermunicipal Council	WIC

Table I: Action Plan

Action	Responsible Agencies	Time Frame
CHAPTER 3: NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION		
Village Water Supply		
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that groundwater meets Safe Drinking Water Act quality standards.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Address magnesium levels, and identify and establish a backup water source supply.	VB, VWB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to include an aquifer and wellhead protection overlay district.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the CEA designation to include properties within the source water protection area.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Protect lands within the source water protection area through ownership or easements.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Ask the TP to consider impacts on water supply when reviewing projects in the source water protection area.	VB, TP	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Enact the recommendations of the Source Water Protection Plan and Nine Elements Watershed Plan.	VB, VWB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete the Drinking Source Water Protection Scorecard annually and remedy deficiencies.	VB, VWB	On-going
Wappinger Lake		
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperate with neighboring municipalities to develop a comprehensive storm water management strategy to restore the water quality of Wappinger Lake.	VB, WIC	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to establish a buffer area adjacent to Wappinger Lake.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a Bathymetric Study and Sediment Analysis to determine feasibility of dredging the Lake.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Explore methods for limiting the growth of invasive species.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Explore options for returning an aquatic weed harvester to Wappinger Lake.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Increase fish stocks in the Lake.	VB	On-going
Wappinger Creek		
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to include a Stream Corridor Overlay District to protect Wappinger Creek.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Buffer wetlands and flood-prone lands from development to protect water quality and enable recreational access.	VB, PB	Short-term, on-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Designate the lower Wappinger Creek an Estuary Conservation Area.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize flood mitigation in new development, and encourage upstream communities to do the same.	VB, PB, WIC	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program for the Village.	VB	Long-term

Action	Responsible Agencies	Time Frame
<input type="checkbox"/> Require approval of erosion control plans by the Village Planning Board or Code Enforcement Officer before any building permits are issued.	PB, VBD	On-going
Water Quality in the Wappinger Creek Watershed		
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to participate in the WIC and the Dutchess County MS4 Committee.	VB, WIC	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Participate in the development of a regional stream corridor management plan.	VB, WIC	Mid-term, on-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Create an intermunicipal agreement to designate the entire Wappinger Creek a CEA under SEQRA.	VB, WIC	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Implement the recommendations of the Nine Element Watershed Plan.	VB, WIC	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to work with TMSC, the TW, TP, and other upstream communities, to address aging sewer systems and septic systems.	VB, TMSC, TW, TP, WIC	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Require use of innovative stormwater management techniques for all new development and retrofits.	PB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Consider conveying management of the municipal water and wastewater systems to the DCWWA.	VB, VWB, DCWWA	Long-term
Topography and Soils		
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to control development in areas of steep slopes.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to include a Stream Corridor Overlay District.	VB	Mid-term
Contaminated Sites		
<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage NYSDEC to complete its Site Management Plan for the Three Star Anodizing property.	VB, NYSDEC	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Lobby for cleanup of contaminated sediment in the Lower Wappinger Creek through the EPA Superfund.	VB, NYSDEC	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Actively market the site to developers to provide economic benefits without adverse environmental impacts.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete the work scope of the Brownfield Cleanup Program Assessment Grant.	VB	Mid-term
Hazard Mitigation		
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to implement the recommendations of the Dutchess County Hazard Mitigation Plan .	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Implement the recommendations of the Wappingers Falls Climate Smart Planning Assessment to improve the Village's resilience to flooding and climate change.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Locate new development outside current and future flood-prone and other hazard areas, wherever possible.	PB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Work with FEMA to explore relocating residential properties out of the floodplain.	VB, FEMA	Long-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage use of green infrastructure techniques in all development to help prevent flooding.	PB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Require and enforce "zero runoff" for development in all areas of the Village.	PB, VBD	On-going

Action	Responsible Agencies	Time Frame
Energy Efficiency		
<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage the use of renewable energy in development plans.	PB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage adoption of a Village-wide “green building” standard based on LEED Green Building rating system.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Village Code to require that all new buildings be built to the EPA’s Energy Star Standards.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Arrange for NYSERDA to conduct energy audits on Village buildings, and implement recommendations.	VB, NYSERDA	Mid-term, on-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Use the Village website to promote green building techniques and ways to reduce energy use.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Require that projects developed with public funding make use of green building techniques.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Establish a committee to study and report on energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt a green building guidebook describing energy-efficient and environmentally-sensitive building techniques.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Install electric vehicle charging stations in municipal parking lots.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to include criteria for electric vehicle charging stations (EVCS), and to require installation of EVCS in larger new developments.	VB	Short-term
CHAPTER 4: HISTORIC PRESERVATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to create an Historic Overlay (HO) District that is coincident with the Wappingers Falls Historic District.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to require PB review of alterations, new construction, demolition in the HO District.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Establish a Design Review Committee to assist the Planning Board with reviews in the HO District.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Promote the Federal and State Historic Preservation Tax Credit for renovation of eligible properties.	VB, PB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage the restoration and adaptive reuse of historic properties,	VB, PB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Study additional areas of the Village to determine their eligibility for inclusion in the Historic District.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Create a Local Historic District to encompass areas of the Village which are locally significant but which do not contain all of the resources to be considered eligible for inclusion on the National Register.	VB	Long-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Include any locally-designated historic districts in the HO District.	VB	Long-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Verify OPRHP’s inventory of historic properties in the Village and supplement, if necessary.	VB	Long-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Nominate historic structures for listing on the State and National Registers, and create criteria to govern local historic designation.	VB	Long-term

Action	Responsible Agencies	Time Frame
<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt a Pattern Book to be used by the PB and applicants as a guide to historically-appropriate development.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Require projects in the Wappingers Falls Historic District to be consistent with the Pattern Book.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide Planning Board members with training on review of historic architecture.	VB, PB	Short-term, ongoing
CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY CHARACTER ENHANCEMENT		
Site Layout, Streetscape, and Building Design		
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to ensure infill development conforms to the prevailing setback on the block.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to include building design standards and frontage types.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to include illustrated standards for frontage types.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> 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 neighborhood, with the exception of the Bleachery.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to prohibit franchise architecture in all areas of the Village.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to prohibit formula businesses and drive-thru businesses in all areas of the Village except the Route 9 commercial corridor.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt a Pattern Book identifying key building forms and architectural features consistent with Village character.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Require planting of street trees in the tree lawn between the sidewalk and the curb whenever possible.	VB, PB	Short-term, on-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Establish a tree protection law, and create a management plan for trees along roads and on Village properties.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Work with NYSDOT, DCDPW, VDPW, and local public utilities to minimize the cutting of street trees.	VB, NYSDOT, DCDPW, VDPW, utility companies	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Establish a Village policy to cut lower limbs of trees for sight distance, as opposed to cutting down trees entirely.	VB, VDPW	Short-term, on-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Apply to become a Tree City USA Community.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Formalize a tree replacement policy.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognize and honor individuals and companies that take the lead in planting and protecting trees.	VB	On-going
Site Specifics		
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to include provisions for landscaping , signs , parking lots , lighting , street trees , and waste collection , consistent with the recommendations of the Greenway Guides,	VB	Short-term

Action	Responsible Agencies	Time Frame
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to require that lighting is adequate but never excessive, and is human-scale.	VB, PB	Short-term, on-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to require full cut-off lighting fixtures, a maximum color temperature for LED lamps, and to include the BUG rating.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to ensure signs enhance community character, and conform with Reed v. T. Gilbert.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to establish landscaping standards for street trees, buffers, and parking lots.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Make information about native and invasive plants readily available, and provide to developers.	VB, PB	Short-term, on-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to require urban tolerant landscape plantings near roads, sidewalks, and parking lots.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to utilize the tree inventory and create a replacement and management plan for them.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Use an “arboretum” approach when selecting new trees for Mesier Park.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Appoint a “Shade Tree Commission” to assist the PB in recommendations for urban tolerant trees.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Inventory tree species on Village roads and properties to ensure that a wide variety of species are planted.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt a Pattern Book that provides standards for architectural compatibility, signage, landscaping, and lighting.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to identify nonconforming features that must brought into conformance within a specified period of time.	VB	Short-term
CHAPTER 6: LAND USE		
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Map based the Proposed Land Use Map, and amend the Zoning Law to include the design standards and other recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to include purposes for each Zoning District.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to include illustrations for design standards layout and site specific standards.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Include the four concept plans from the BOA in the Zoning Law to serve as guides during review of proposals.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Review and amend permitted/special permit uses to ensure that they are appropriate for the Zoning Districts.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to establish regulations for home occupations, live-work units, and short-term rentals.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to include separation distances between uses that generate noise and other uses.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to regulate “adult uses” to minimize secondary adverse effects on the neighborhood.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to regulate wireless telecommunications facilities, and include design standards for 5G.	VB	Short-term

Action	Responsible Agencies	Time Frame
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to include provisions for medical and adult use cannabis dispensaries.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Diligently enforce the Village Code to improve aesthetics and implement the future land use plan.	VB, VBD	On-going
CHAPTER 7: TRANSPORTATION		
Roads and Vehicular Traffic		
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify areas in the Village that would benefit from traffic calming techniques and seek funding to implement.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Work with NYSDOT to improve the safety of selected intersections along Route 9D between East Main Street and the Village’s southern boundary.	VB, NYSDOT	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Oppose any plans to widen Route 9D to accommodate increased traffic.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Require traffic calming techniques in new development.	PB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage the development of a secondary road from New Hackensack Road to Myers Corners Road.	VB, PB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Oppose any plans to widen Route 9 to accommodate increased traffic.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Require developers to create internal service roads, interior access to connect parking lots, and shared accesses, where possible, on future commercial development and redevelopment.	PB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage pedestrian access to commercial areas from nearby residential areas by requiring the installation of sidewalks at the time of site plan review.	PB	On-going
Walking and Bicycling		
<input type="checkbox"/> Adopt a Complete Streets program to ensure that streets and sidewalks are designed to be safe, convenient and comfortable for people of all ages and abilities using a variety of transportation modes.	VB	Short-term, on-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Work with the Dutchess County Transportation Council to identify and prioritize sidewalk and crosswalk improvements through a Pedestrian Plan.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Lower the speed limit on Village streets to 25 miles per hour.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Implement the recommendations of the Vision Plan and Action Plan to improve pedestrian conditions.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Work with the NYSDOT to design pedestrian improvements for Route 9, including pedestrian crossings.	VB, NYSDOT	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Work with NYSDOT to eliminate or combine signs along Route 9D to reduce clutter and improve safety.	VB, NYSDOT	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Install “Yield to Pedestrians” and “Bikes Share the Road” signs at major intersections & along bicycle routes.	VB, NYSDOT	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that all new development is pedestrian-friendly.	PB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to require that all new development projects install and/or repair sidewalks.	VB	Short-term

Action	Responsible Agencies	Time Frame
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to require that all applications for site plan review for properties on Route 9 install a sidewalk along the Route 9 frontage.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Create off-street walking and bicycle paths, as opportunities arise, to link neighborhoods with the downtown.	PB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Construct a pedestrian bridge across the Creek from High Street to West Main Street and Franny Reese Park.	VB	Long-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Work with NYSDOT to install a sidewalk from North Mesier Avenue north along the west side of Route 9 to Wappinger Lake, and to add a pedestrian path on the west side of the Wappinger Lake Bridge.	VB, NYSDOT	Long-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide bicycle racks at all municipal buildings and public facilities in the Village.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Village's parking standards to include standards for bicycle parking.	VB	Short-term
Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee		
<input type="checkbox"/> Create a Pedestrian and Bicycle Committee to implement recommendations to improve pedestrian and bicycle transportation.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Promote bicycling and walking by identifying routes in a Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan brochure.	VB	Mid-term
Parking		
<input type="checkbox"/> 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.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to permit mixed-use parking structures in the VC area, with commercial uses on the ground floor facing a street.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Consider permitting mechanical parking behind buildings that front on the road in the VC area.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Create a Parking Plan for the Village Center.	VB, WFBPA	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Continually assess parking inventory and needs against current and future development, using both the parking inventory and the 2018 Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study as a reference.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to allow for shared parking by businesses with different hours of operation.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Allow for access between parking lots by eliminating fences and other barriers.	VB, private owners	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate with Zion Church and the Knights of Columbus to create shared public parking.	VB, Zion Church, Knights of Columbus	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to ensure that on-street parking along East and West Main Streets is clearly delineated.	VB, NYSDOT	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a smartphone app. that identifies the location of available parking in the Village Center.	VB	Mid-term

Action	Responsible Agencies	Time Frame
CHAPTER 8: PARKS AND RECREATION		
Existing Parks		
<input type="checkbox"/> Make improvements to existing parks, e.g. equipment replacement/upgrading, maintenance, landscaping.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Support youth activities through recreation programs and partnerships with other agencies.	VB	On-going
Proposed Parks		
<input type="checkbox"/> Seek grants to design and construct Galucci Park.	VB	Long-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Decide whether to develop Falls View Park with public funds, or to allow private development of the site with public access.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete construction of Bain Park.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Seek grants to fund park acquisition, development and improvements for new neighborhood parks.	VB	Long-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend the Zoning Law to require the reservation of parkland or payment of a recreation fee as a condition of signing an approved Site Plan or Subdivision Plat.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Periodically review the Village recreation fee and adjust as needed to reflect the actual costs of providing recreational services incurred by new residential growth in the Village.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Amend Chapter A154 of the Village Code to establish the Village's fee schedule by resolution.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Explore funding opportunities to improve water quality, remove invasive species, and dredging of the Lake.	VB	Short-term, on-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Add boat launches to improve Lake access.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Identify waterfront access points with signage.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Support WGC's efforts to seek funding to further develop the Greenway Trail.	VB, WGC	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Work with NYSDOT to create a pedestrian walkway along the west side of the Wappinger Lake Bridge to complete the ten-mile loop of the Wappinger Greenway Trail.	VB, NYSDOT	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Extend the Greenway Trail from Bain Park to Reese Park in the Town of Wappinger.	VB, WGC	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Secure easements to connect the Market Street Industrial Park with the Scenic Hudson property.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Extend the Greenway Trail to include a "Workers' Walk" from Givans Avenue to McKinley Street.	VB, WGC	Long-term
CHAPTER 9: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES		
Facilities		
<input type="checkbox"/> Consolidate space, increase renewable energy options, and share databases by connecting computers.	All Village Boards	On-going

Action	Responsible Agencies	Time Frame
<input type="checkbox"/> 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.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to seek funding opportunities to restore the entire Mesier Homestead, both exterior and interior.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Seek an opportunity to build a community center either in Mesier Park or in Veteran's Park overlooking the Lake.	VB	Long-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Consider acquiring the American Legion building, with the provision that the Legion may use the property.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Consider acquiring the parking lot associated with the American Legion building.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to work with the American Legion to rehabilitate and renovate the building for use as a community center and public meetings or alternatively, plan for its adaptive re-use in a way best suited for the Village.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Work with the Post Office to improve the appearance of the fence facing East Main Street.	VB, GSA	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> If the East Main Street Post Office is no longer need, consider purchasing the property or work with developers to adaptively re-use the facility in a manner that would best serve the Village.	VB	Long-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Work with the Town of Wappinger and the WCSD on after-school programs and a dedicated community center.	VB, TW, WCSD	On-going
Services		
Police Department		
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to assess whether the former Post Office building is best suited as a Police Department.	VB, VPD	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Seek funding for needed improvements to Police Department building roof.	VB, VPD	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Increase community policing through bicycle patrols, Neighborhood Watch, and House Watch.	VB, VPD	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Investigate increased use of technology in the Police Department.	VB, VPD	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Seek grants to help defray the costs of community policing, administrative help, and new technology.	VB, VPD	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to evaluate manpower requirements as population in the Village increases.	VB, VPD	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue police and dispatcher training for domestic violence and opiate addiction.	VPD	On-going
Fire Department		
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to support the Fire Department through the Service Awards Program.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Seek grants to upgrade firefighting equipment.	VB, VFD	Mid-term

Action	Responsible Agencies	Time Frame
<input type="checkbox"/> Include replacement of firefighting equipment and ongoing maintenance of the fire stations in the Village Capital Improvements Program.	VB	On-going
Water Department		
<input type="checkbox"/> Include all of the Capital Improvements listed in the Annual Drinking Water Quality Report in the Village's overall Capital Improvements Program.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Continuously search for alternative funding to finance the Water Department's Capital Improvements.	VB, VWB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Continuously evaluate the efficiency of existing computer systems.	VB, VWB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Enhance water towers with murals depicting the Falls.	VB VWB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Continue to protect the Village water supply, and seek a second source of water as a backup source.	VB, VWB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Address increases in manganese either with filtration or by finding a second source of water.	VB, VWB	Mid-term
Public Services		
<input type="checkbox"/> Annually review and regularly update projections in a comprehensive Capital Improvements Program by surveying each of the Village Departments and Commissions to establish project priorities and cost estimates.	All Village Departments	On-going
Village Garage		
<input type="checkbox"/> Construct a salt storage shed on the highway garage site.	VB	Short-term
Justice Court		
<input type="checkbox"/> Seek grants to upgrade the current Justice Court facilities.	VB	Mid-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that Justice Court has adequate storage and investigate electronic storage of court related document.	VB	Short-term
Public Participation		
<input type="checkbox"/> Modernize and improve Village communications, particularly through the Village website and social media.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Create a "Welcome to Our Community" page on the Village website with information for new residents.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Include all Village plans and reports on the Village website, along with Village events.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage residents to subscribe to Village emails to expand the reach of online communication.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a program of municipal volunteerism to encourage residents to participate on a range of committees.	VB	Short-term

Action	Responsible Agencies	Time Frame
<input type="checkbox"/> 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.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Recognize the significant volunteer commitment of all Village-appointed board members.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Develop a Village-wide program for rewarding special service and volunteer activities.	VB	Short-term
<input type="checkbox"/> Reward volunteers by publicizing their achievements on the Village website and in local newspapers.	VB	On-going
<input type="checkbox"/> Create a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee to ensure the plan’s recommendations are achieved.	VB	Short-term

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 2: 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 dyeing textiles, and the company then became known as the Dutchess Bleachery. By the late 19th century, industrial and commercial growth in the Village had subsided, and most construction was limited to infill housing along South Avenue and on the former Mesier property, which had been subdivided. The Depression caused the dramatic decline of aging plants, including the Bleachery. An opportunity may have existed for industrial revitalization of the Bleachery if management had not discouraged the 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 and types of employment; and housing.¹ The data and trends discussed in this chapter provide the basis for developing strategies to address the needs of Wappingers Falls residents and businesses in the future.

Trends in Village Population

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 2020 population of 6,103 residents represented 2.1 percent of the county’s total. The population density of Wappingers Falls is 5,172 persons per square mile, second only to the City of Poughkeepsie, which has a density of 5,540 persons per square mile. Density in other Dutchess County villages ranges from 617 persons per square mile in Tivoli (the lowest of any village in the county) to 2,435

¹ Data Sources: US Decennial Census for total population, race and ethnicity, and housing units; US Census, 2020 American Community Survey 5-year estimates for all other data unless otherwise specified.

persons per square mile in the Village of 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.

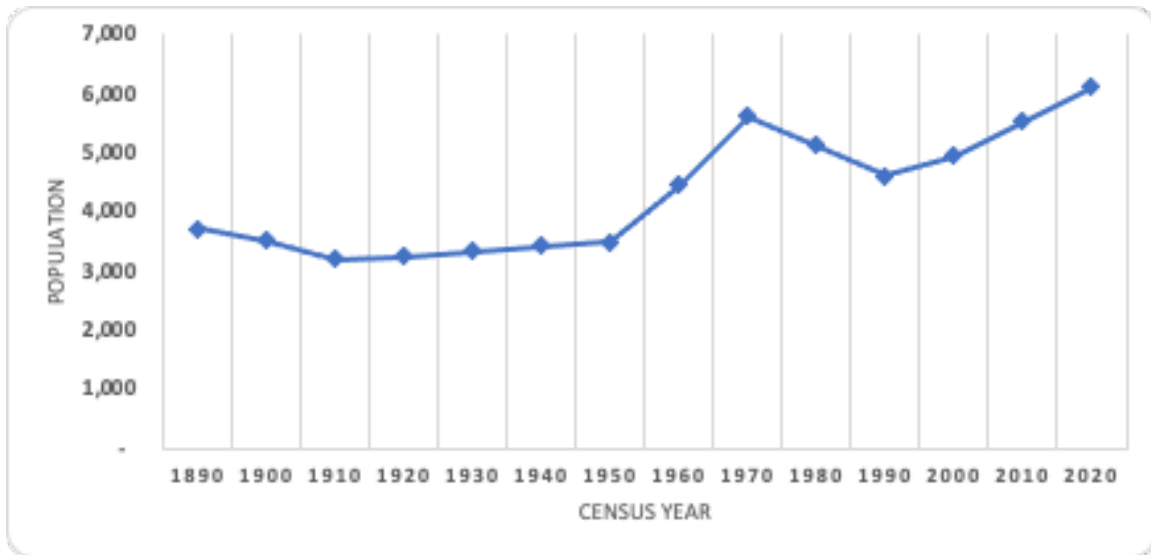


Figure 3: Population Trends, 1890 to 2020

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. Large increases in population occurred between 1950 and 1960 (21.5 percent), and between 1960 and 1970 (20.6 percent), resulting from the post-World War II “baby boom,” along with the establishment of IBM’s engineering headquarters in Poughkeepsie during the early 1950s, and the expansion of its operations in the 1960s. However, the Village experienced a significant decline in population between 1970 and 1990, from 5,607 residents to 4,605 residents.

Since 2000, the Village has experienced a 23.8 percent increase in population, from 4,929 residents in 2000 to a peak of 6,103 in 2020, making the Village one of the fastest growing municipalities in the county. In comparison, population in Dutchess County as a whole increased only 5.6 percent during the same time period. During the covid-19 pandemic (2020 to 2022), people seeking more indoor/outdoor space fled to the Hudson Valley. No data are available yet on the net population impact of residents relocating to Wappingers Falls from the NYC area during the pandemic. However, demand for housing remains robust in the Village, as recent and pending applications before the Planning Board indicates.

Table 2: Population Change, Village of Wappingers Falls and Neighboring Municipalities 2000-2020

Place	2000	2010	2020	Change 2010-2020	Change 2000-2020
V/Wappingers Falls	4,929	5,522	6,130	10.5%	23.8%
T/Poughkeepsie	41,800	44,090	44,544	1.0%	6.6%
T/Wappinger	22,322	22,468	23,040	2.5%	3.2%
T/East Fishkill	25,589	29,029	29,707	2.3%	16.1%
T/Fishkill	17,521	20,878	22,060	5.7%	25.9%
Dutchess County	280,150	297,488	295,911	-0.5%	5.6%

Composition by Age

Consistent with Dutchess County, New York State, and the US as a whole, population in the Village is aging. In 2000, 13.1 percent of residents were 65 and older, compared with 14.6 percent in 2020. At the same time, the population of children and youth (age 18 and under) has declined, from 24.4 percent in 2000 to 18.2 percent in 2020. The aging of the population is also reflected in the median age, which has increased from 33.8 years in 2000 to 37.8 years in 2020, and has resulted in other demographic shifts, such as more single person households.

Table 3: Population Age, Village of Wappingers Falls, Dutchess County, and New York State, 2000-2020

Place	2000 % Pop 65+	2000 Median Age	2020 % Pop 65+	2020 Median Age
V/Wappingers Falls	13.1%	33.8	14.6%	37.8
Dutchess County	12.0%	36.4	17.6%	42.5
New York State	12.9%	36.0	16.5%	39

Composition by Race, Ethnicity, and Language Other than English

Although the Village remains predominantly White (58 percent), it has become more diverse since 2000. In 2020, five percent of residents identified as Asian, 11 percent as Black or African American, 15 percent as some other race, and 11 percent as two or more races. In comparison, in 2000, 74 percent of the population was White. Twenty-seven percent of the 2020 population is Hispanic or Latino (of any race), an increase from 15 percent in 2000. The Village's increased diversity is consistent with national trends, which have seen a first-time decline in US White population, and rising racial and ethnic diversity among millennials and younger groups, which are now a majority of US residents.²

² Changes between 2000 and 2020 may also reflect an increased ability and willingness in respondents to select multiple race categories, newly introduced by the Census in 2010.

Twenty-five percent of people living in the Village spoke a language other than English at home, compared with 17 percent in Dutchess County. Spanish was spoken by 25 percent of Village residents, compared with eight percent of county residents.

Household Size and Composition

The number of households in the Village has increased from 1,980 in 2000 to 2,601 in 2020. However, the average household size has declined from 2.45 persons per household to 2.31 persons. Married-couple family households comprised 39.4 percent of all households in the Village, and 51.2 percent of family households were single parent.

The decline in household size is a local and national trend that is attributed to several factors: people are living longer, and are living longer in their own homes; policies like NYS’s Enhanced Star tax credit allow seniors to remain in the home where they raised their families; and lifestyle choices, 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.³

Table 4: Number of Households and Average Size, 2000, 2010, and 2020

Place	Number of Households				Household Size			
	2000	2010	2020	% Change 2000-2020	2000	2010	2020	% Change 2000-2020
V/Wappingers Falls	1,980	2,225	2,601	31.4%	2.45	2.43	2.31	-5.7%
T/Poughkeepsie	14,190	14,895	15,463	8.9%	2.58	2.55	2.53	-1.9%
T/Wappinger	8,228	8,474	8,976	9.1%	2.70	2.65	2.56	-5.2%
T/East Fishkill	8,207	9,512	10,206	24.4%	3.11	3.05	2.91	-6.4%
T/Fishkill	5,911	7,578	7,945	34.4%	2.43	2.41	2.35	-3.3%
Dutchess County	99,536	107,965	111,927	12.4%	2.63	2.57	2.49	-5.4%

Number and Type of Housing Units

The Village offers a wide variety of housing options, from single-family detached houses and two-family dwellings, to medium sized multi-family homes, and large apartment complexes with amenities. The number of housing units in the Village increased substantially between 2000 and 2020, from 2,119 units (1,980 of which were occupied) to 2,750 units (of which 2,601 were occupied). Forty-eight percent of these new units were in multi-family dwellings. Since 2000, 303 new apartments were constructed in the Village, mainly in large multifamily complexes. (In contrast, only five single-family detached homes have been constructed in the last decade.) Construction of 13 new apartments in a mixed-use building (West Village Lofts) was recently completed, and another 200 units are proposed in a large multifamily complex on Channingville Road.

³ Source: Plan On It, October-December 2021 e-newsletter, Dutchess County Planning Federation.

Currently, the majority of the housing stock in Wappingers Falls is multi-family, accounting for more than 51 percent of the Village’s total dwelling units.⁴ 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 percent of housing in the Village is in single-family detached dwellings, and 13 percent is two-family dwellings. The number of manufactured homes has declined from 17 in 2010 to five today. Historically, the Village included a much greater number of single-family detached dwellings. However, over the years, many of these structures have been converted to two-family and multi-family dwellings.

Table 5: Number and Type of Housing Units, 2022

Housing Type	Number of Units	Percentage of Total Units
Single-Family	806	29.5
Two-Family	355	13.0
Multifamily	1395	51.1
Unclear	173	6.4
Total:	2729	100.0

Home-Ownership Rate

The 2020 home-ownership rate in the Village is 32 percent, one of the lowest rates of any municipality in the county, compared with 73 percent in Dutchess County as a whole.⁵ While 70 percent of all housing units in Dutchess County are single-family dwellings, and the dominant housing arrangement in the county has been ownership of a single-family home, over 50 percent of dwellings in the Village are multifamily units that are rented.

Household Income and Poverty

In 2020, the median household income in the Village was \$52,006, significantly lower than the county (\$88,051) and New York State (\$74,314). An estimated 5.3 percent of households had income below \$10,000 a year, and 4.1 percent had income of \$200,000 or more. In 2020, 13.2 percent of the Village population lived in poverty, compared with 9.7 percent of Dutchess County and 13.9 percent of New York State.

⁴ Source: Dutchess County Parcel Access land use codes. The difference in the total number of housing units cited in Tables 4 and 5 is the result of different data sources.

⁵ Home-ownership rates in surrounding communities range from 65 percent in the Town of Wappinger to 93 percent in the Town of East Fishkill.

Place	Household Median Income	Poverty
V/Wappingers Falls	\$52,006	13.2%
T/Poughkeepsie	\$85,322	8.3%
T/Wappinger	\$90,707	5.4%
T/East Fishkill	\$124,632	3.0%
T/Fishkill	\$85,999	6.0%
Dutchess County	\$81,051	9.7%
New York State	\$74,314	13.9%

Housing Affordability

The median value of an owner-occupied single-family dwelling in the Village in 2020 was \$244,400, and the median monthly owner costs with a mortgage was \$2,105. Median gross monthly rent in 2020 was \$1,241. In 2020, a remarkable two-thirds of renters in the Village were estimated to be cost-burdened, meaning they spent more than 30 percent of income on housing costs, along with about a quarter of homeowners. This compares with approximately 48 percent for both renters and homeowners who were cost-burdened in 2010.⁶ Strong buyer demand resulting from the covid-19 pandemic has driven housing prices even higher since 2020; the median sales price of a home in the county, for example, increased from \$300,000 in 2020 to \$410,000 in 2022, a 36.6 percent increase.⁷

Employment Trends

Table 7 shows the distribution of civilian employees 16 years and over by occupation category. While a direct comparison with the 2000 data is difficult due to changes in the Census classifications over the decades, between 2000 and 2020, there has been an increase in service occupations from 24 percent to 31 percent, and an approximately 50 percent decline in occupations involving natural resources, construction, extraction and maintenance.

As shown in Table 8, the largest percentage (27 percent) of the employed population works in educational services/health care, consistent with Dutchess County as a whole, followed by 17 percent in retail, and 13 percent in arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food service. According to the most recent projections from the New York State Department of Labor, the highest projected long-term openings for occupational employment in the Hudson Valley for 2018 to 2028, will be in the fields of office and administrative support; food preparation and serving; sales; and personal care and service. These projections should guide the economic development strategies employed by the Village.

⁶ Source: American Community Survey, 2010 and 2020.

⁷ Source; Pattern for Progress Regional Housing Market Report Q2, 2022.

Occupation for Civilian employed population 16 years and over	Number	Percent
Management, business, sciences, and arts occupations	908	32.2
Service occupations	881	31.3
Sales and office occupations	686	24.4
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	200	7.1
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	142	5.0

Industry	Percentage
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	27.1%
Retail Trade	16.6%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	13.1%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	10.7%
Construction	7.2%
Public Administration	6.7%
Other services, except public administration	6.2%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5.4%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	4.3%
Manufacturing	1.6%
Wholesale Trade	1.0%
Information	0.0%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining	0.0%

Key Findings and Conclusions

- The Village is the second most densely populated community in Dutchess County and has a distinctly urban character.
- Population increased significantly (24 percent) between 2000 and 2020, making the Village one of the fastest growing municipalities in the county. Population has also become more diverse.
- Village population is aging, with more seniors, fewer children under 18, and an increase in the median age to 37.8 years.
- There has been an increase in the number of households in the Village, but a decline in average household size. To meet the need for smaller households, over 300 new multifamily dwelling units have been constructed in the Village in the last 20 years. The majority of the housing stock in the Village is now multi-family, accounting for

51 percent of the Village's total dwelling units. Only 30 percent of dwellings are single-family.

- The Village has a very low rate of home-ownership compared to surrounding municipalities and the county as a whole. While the dominant housing arrangement in the county has been ownership of a single-family home, over 50 percent of dwellings in the Village are multifamily units that are rented.
- The Village has a significantly lower median household income than the county and the state. Combined with escalating housing values, this has resulted in an increase in the number of cost-burdened households since 2010, particularly among renters.
- The Village should continue to provide smaller, more affordable housing options while stabilizing the home-ownership rate. Since the majority of the Village is already built out, there are fewer opportunities for construction of new single-family dwellings, and the provision of more multi-family units will primarily occur in large housing complexes. There is also some limited opportunity for triplexes in the Village Residential District, and for upper story apartments in the Bleachery and Village Center Districts.

Chapter 3: Natural Resource Protection

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, are the Falls which generate electricity at the hydro-electric power plant located in the Bleachery, an important “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 19th 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.

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 majority of the Village's population (6,103 people) 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.

At present, water quality is considered good. However, there is concern about the level of magnesium in the water. Although the level is acceptable with the current demand, the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health has notified the Village that no increased demand on the system will be allowed until the magnesium issue is resolved.

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, and to address areas in the Village where there is currently inadequate pressure and water volume, which limits future development. 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 backup 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.
- Address magnesium levels, and identify and establish a backup 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. Village residents have consistently identified Wappinger Lake as an important natural resource to maintain and enhance. The 2011 [*Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Strategy*](#) recommends 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 \$925,000 grant 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 abut 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 wetlands and flood-prone lands from development to protect water quality and scenic beauty, and enable recreational access.
- Designate the lower Wappinger Creek an Estuary Conservation Area.
- Prioritize flood mitigation in new development to positively affect water quality in the Wappinger Lake, and encourage upstream communities to do the same.
- Adopt a *Local Waterfront Revitalization Program* for the Village.
- Require approval of erosion control plans by the Village Planning Board or Code Enforcement Officer before any building permits are issued.

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 to 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.
- Consider conveying management of the municipal water and wastewater systems to the Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority.

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 2023, 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 sever 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.

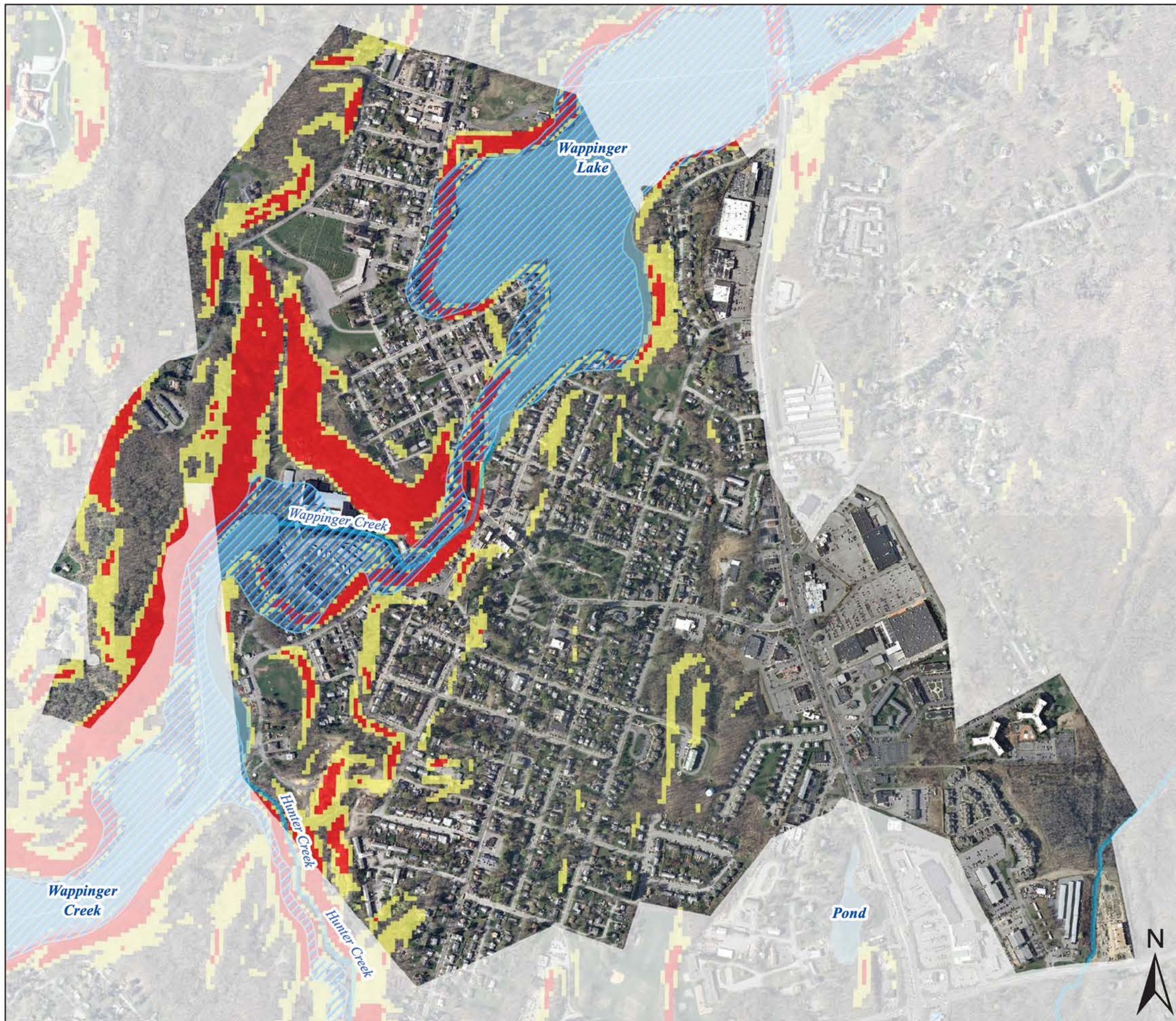
Actions:

- 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 amending the Village Code to require all new residential and non-residential buildings be built to the 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 promote green building techniques and ways 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 (EVCS) in municipal parking lots.
- Amend the Zoning Law to include criteria for EVCS as an accessory use, and to require installation of EVCS in larger new developments.

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:



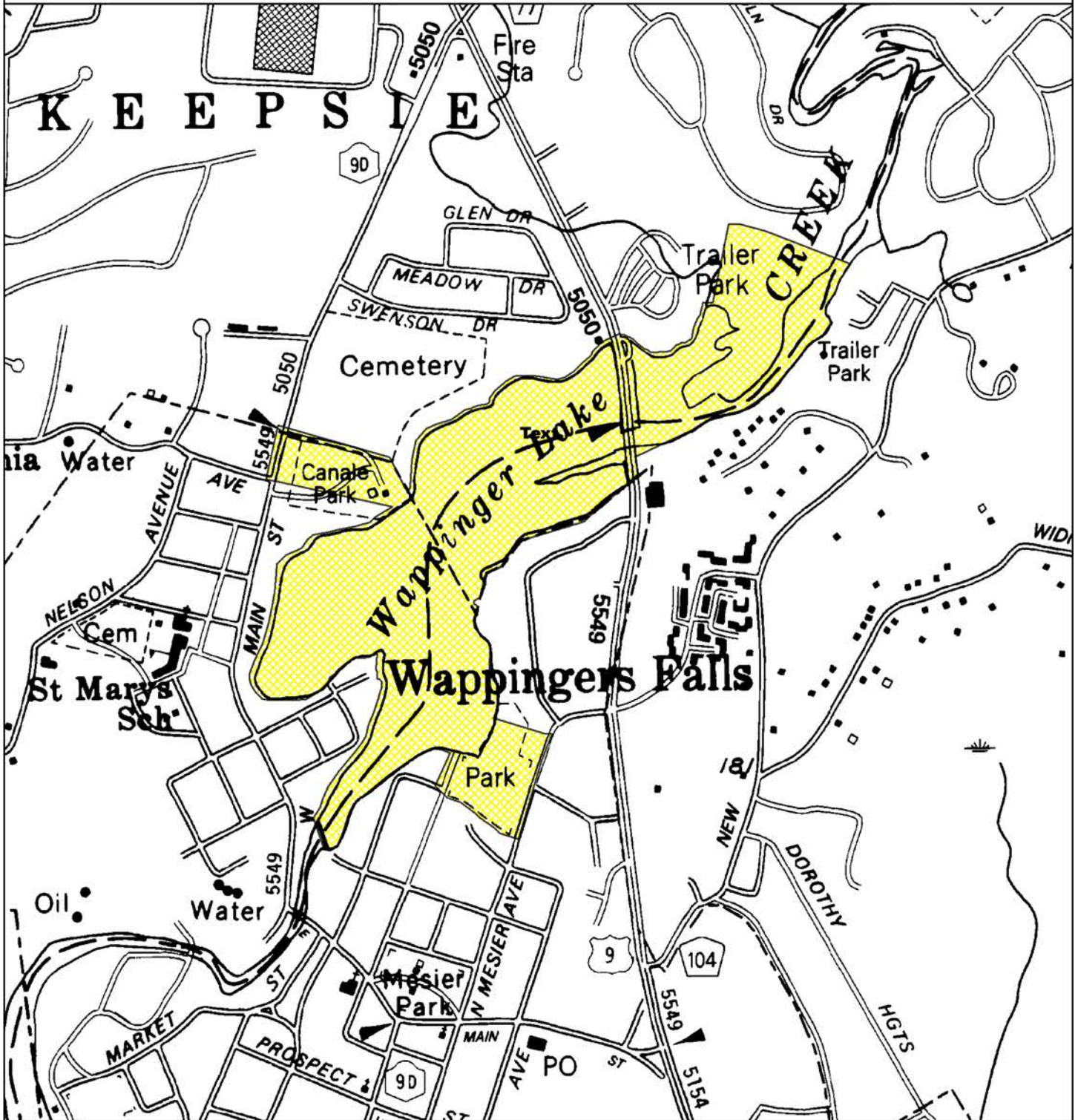
Date: May, 2016

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



1 inch equals 1,000 feet



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.

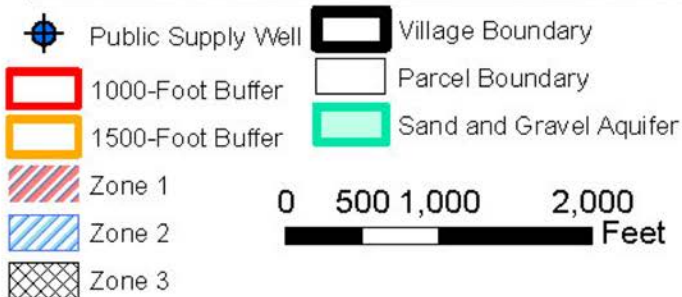
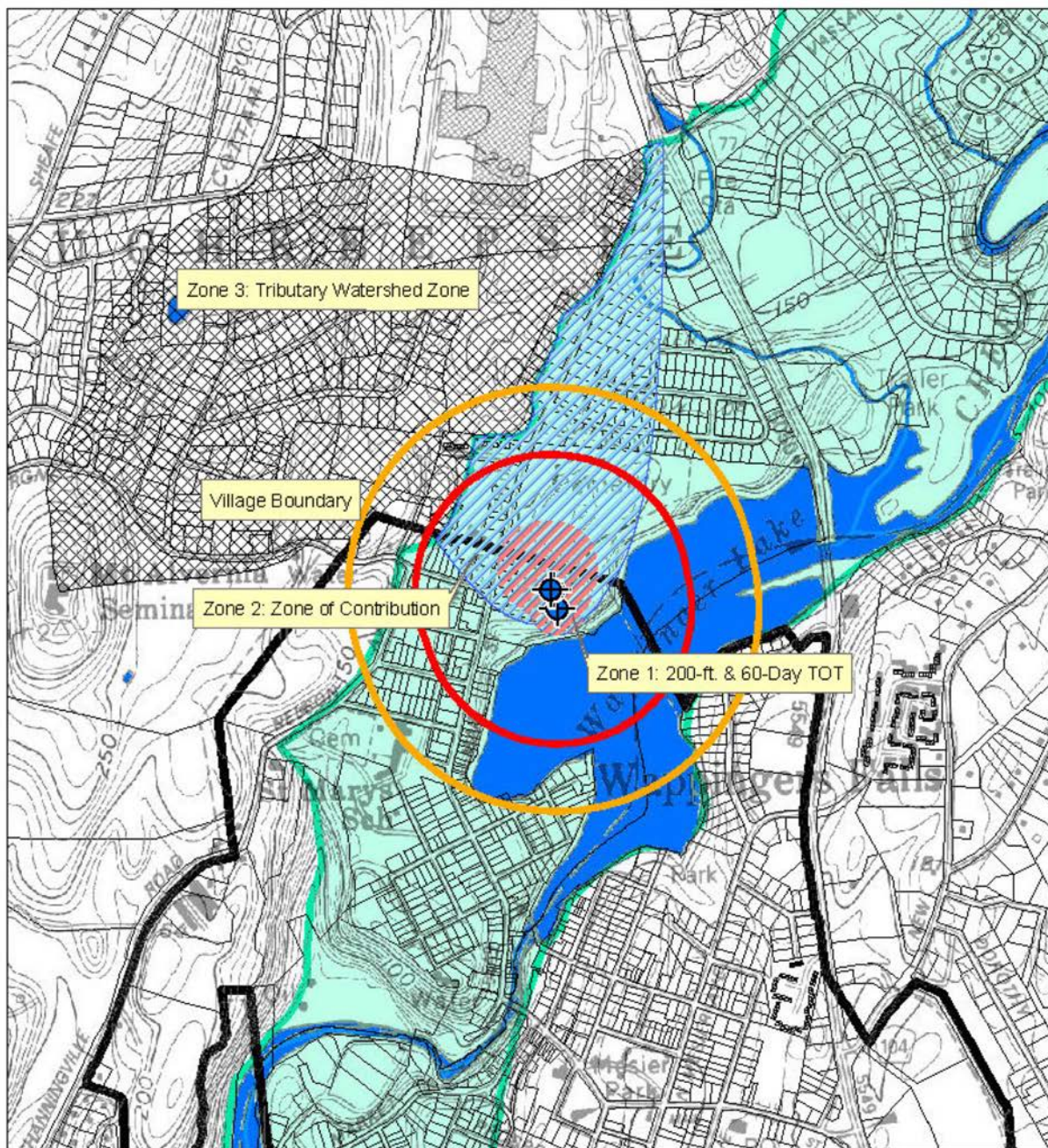


Figure 6:
Village of Wappingers Falls
Source Water Protection Area

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.

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 19th

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 19th 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 resources 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 19th century when industrial activity was at its peak. Notable structures include the picturesque 18th century Brewer-Mesier House, the distinctive shingle-style Grinnell Library, the 19th century industrial complex known as the Bleachery (Market Street Industrial Park), the

Art Deco movie theater owned by County Players, and the Depression era Colonial Revival Wappingers Falls Post Office. 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.A 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:

- Amend the Zoning Law to create an Historic Overlay District that is coincident with the Wappingers Falls Historic District and any locally-designated historic districts
- Use the Model Historic Preservation Law prepared by New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation as a guide to 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.
- Include any locally-designated historic districts 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.

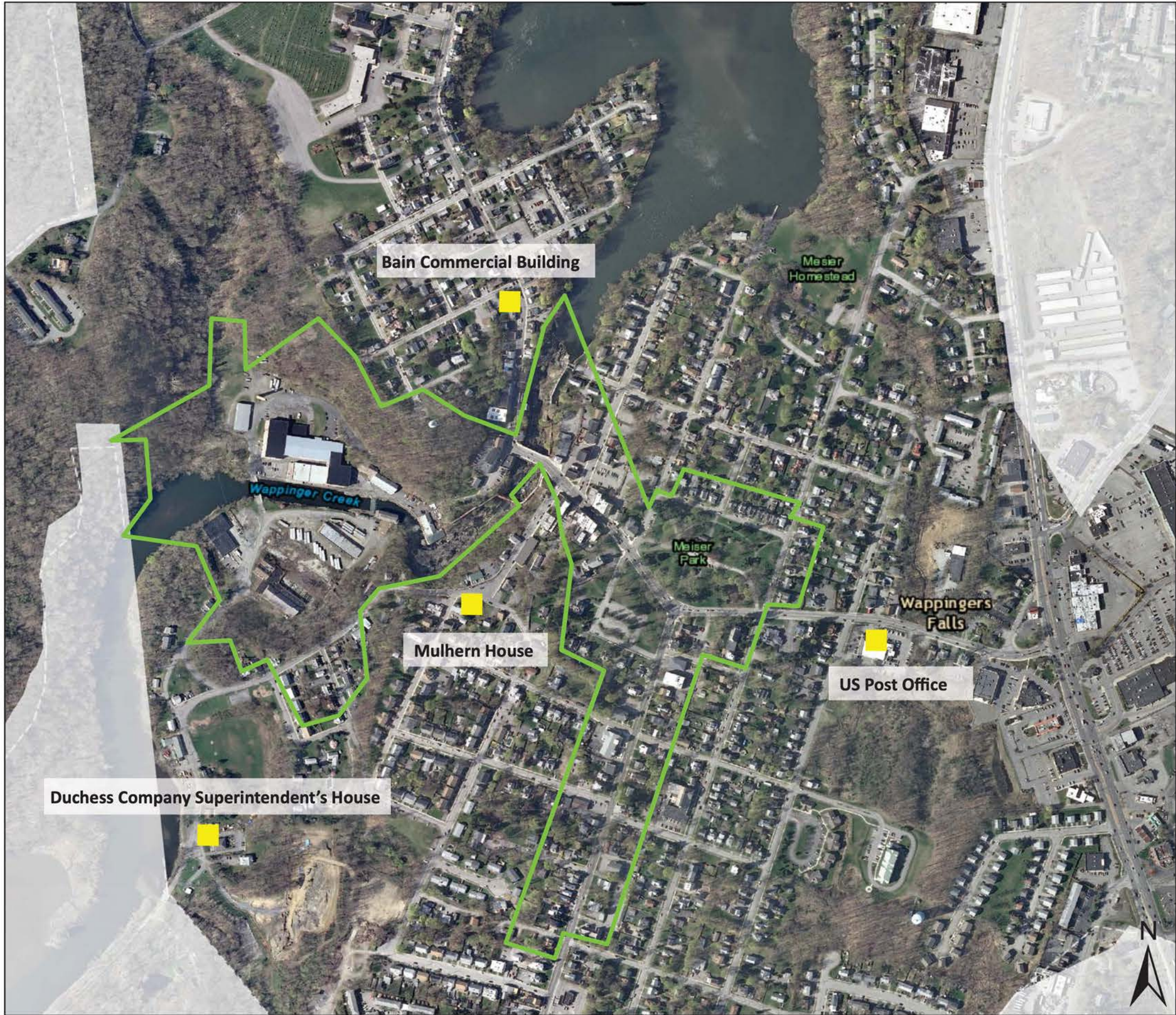
Objective: Provide the Planning Board with tools and training necessary for historic preservation.

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 Resources



Legend

- Wappingers Falls Historic District
- National Register Historic Sites

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles

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

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.

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.

Village residents have consistently expressed concern for the visual environment. The 2001 *Comprehensive Plan* noted that Village residents are in favor of stringent regulation of commercial signs and lighting to provide a more aesthetically pleasing business environment, and that preserving trees and enhancing the streetscape are 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.A 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.

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

Actions:

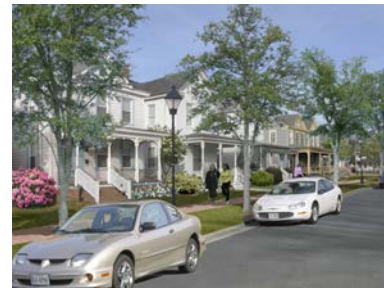
- Amend the Zoning Law to ensure that infill development conforms to the existing prevailing setback on the block and contributes to the physical definition of the street as a public space that encourages walking.
- Amend the Zoning Law to include building design standards so that new development is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



Existing Conditions



Infill construction compatible with existing architectural character and setback from 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

- Amend the Zoning Law to prohibit franchise architecture in all areas of the Village.
- Amend the Zoning Law to prohibit formula businesses and drive-through 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, 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.B 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-through 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 Zoning Law to include 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.
- Amend the Zoning Law to require that landscape plantings near roads, sidewalks, and parking lots 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 trees that are drought-resistant and tolerant of soil compaction and salt, 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.