Public Hearing Draft
March 31, 2021

Ossining **Tomorrow**

The Village of Ossining
Comprehensive Plan

# Village of Ossining Comprehensive Plan

## Public Hearing Draft

Public Hearing Date: March 31, 2021

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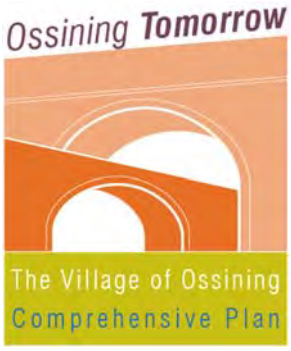


# Ossining Tomorrow

## 2021 Comprehensive Plan Update

Public Hearing Draft

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*Prepared for*

The Village of Ossining

*Prepared by*

The Village of Ossining Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

*With*

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The Steering Committee voted to transmit the Comprehensive Plan to the Board of Trustees on January 28th, 2021.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction, Public Outreach Process, and Planning Goals

## Introduction

The Village of Ossining is a vibrant and diverse community with significant assets that benefit existing residents while also creating ever increasing development pressures. As the Village continues to evolve it became apparent that it was time for an update to Ossining's 2009 Comprehensive Plan to ensure that the community can continue to thrive while supporting existing residents, businesses, and the community as a whole. The principle goal of this plan is to build on the Village's strengths and create an even better tomorrow for the people who make up the Ossining community.

One of Ossining's greatest assets is its racially and economically diverse community. However, like many Hudson Valley communities, the decline of the local manufacturing sector has hampered growth of new employment within the Village. As a result, the Village's tax revenues are disproportionately comprised of residential property tax revenue. At the same time, growth in service sector jobs offers limited opportunities for economic mobility and social benefits. The need for additional economic development in Ossining has led to few opportunities for lower-income residents to find better paying jobs within the Village. As housing costs rise around the region, some of Ossining's residents struggle to meet costs of living. Homeowners also confront rising residential property taxes without sufficient balance from commercial tax revenue.

However, Ossining has also become a hub for entrepreneurial retail businesses, demonstrating one example of a pathway to diversify the local economy. Recent investment in downtown includes new restaurants and a brewery, retail, and a co-working space. The Comprehensive Plan sets the stage to ensure that Ossining's spirit of entrepreneurship continues to thrive in a marketplace that is especially challenging for bricks and mortar retail. Competition from online retail has only accelerated due to the COVID-19 pandemic, forcing a creative look at how traditional main street retail must evolve, and what new types of businesses can support a vibrant commercial market in the Village.

In addition to recent business investment in the Village, Ossining has increasingly attracted new residential development, with recent buildings constructed and new projects in the pipeline, including a mixed-income, mixed-use development at the former Village DPW site. Investment in and improvement of existing properties, along with targeted new development, are both needed components going forward for a Village that continues to improve quality of life and housing for current residents, continues to attract new residents, welcomes investment, and grows tax revenues. The primary emphasis in the downtown is to improve existing buildings and encourage upgrades to existing properties to create a more walkable and attractive downtown. This plan emphasizes that the Village of Ossining remains committed to providing housing for people of all income levels to guard against the displacement of current residents and to maintain the diversity of the population.

This plan also seeks to build on Ossining's wide array of environmental and open space resources. From the Hudson River waterfront, to the Croton Aqueduct Trail, and Crawbuckie Park, Ossining's natural features and green space assets are critical resources for people in the community. The plan is mindful of the need to prepare for the impacts of climate change and sea level rise. This challenge requires that the Village leverage the Hudson River waterfront as an asset for the community, while also making sure that residents and businesses are protected from projected sea level rise. Ossining Tomorrow incorporates principles of sustainability throughout, acknowledging strides that Village has already begun to take in making Ossining a regional leader in environmental sustainability.

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Ultimately, this plan is about the people that make up the Ossining community. The tools of local government—policies, regulations, or new development—are only as successful as their ability to improve the lives of the people of Ossining. Ossining Tomorrow is focused on preserving neighborhoods, ensuring that residents can stay in their community, and that community services and cultural facilities provide the resources and quality of life that Ossining's residents need to thrive.

Ossining Tomorrow seeks to find the right balance for the Village, by supporting entrepreneurs, providing jobs for local residents, attracting new investment, and ensuring the people of this Village are able to remain a part of this vibrant community. The plan also seeks to boost the economy in commercial areas, such as downtown, the waterfront, Croton Avenue, and other neighborhood commercial areas—while also continuing to value the historic character of the Village.

**PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS:**

Although the preliminary public outreach process for the Comprehensive Plan began in 2019, the Village has been diligently undertaking a series of planning studies since adoption of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan to carry forward many of the community's priorities. These include the Downtown Redevelopment Working Committee, community input on the Market Square and Post Office lots, the Downtown and Waterfront Access Trail Plan, Housing Needs Assessment Technical Reports conducted by Kevin Dwarka, and the Village's application for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative in 2019.

All of these planning studies led up to the preliminary public outreach process in 2019, led by the Pace Land Use Law Center. The Public Participation Plan that Pace created for the Ossining Comprehensive Plan provided an overview of strategies and tools to engage residents and stakeholders throughout the planning process. However, this report was produced before that COVID-19 pandemic required a different approach to community engagement. The process developed for this plan is described in greater detail below, but it was adapted to maintain the spirit of community involvement in the process, while ensuring that participants could take part safely via remote means.

The Village of Ossining began the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan in 2019 with a preliminary series of community input sessions. These sessions, along with input from Village staff and members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, helped to develop a framework of key issues that this plan should address.

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The next step in the process was to establish a framework of objectives in the Request for Proposals (RFP). At the outset of the planning process, Ossining sought to develop a plan that builds on the Village's existing strengths, lays out a pathway for economic growth and development, and addresses community needs such as environmental sustainability and preservation of the Village's socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic diversity. To achieve this vision, the Village established the following objectives for the Plan:

- Drive inclusive economic development and increase tax base
- Enable construction of multifamily housing where appropriate to support transit oriented development and walkability
- Address parking, transportation and mobility
- Preserve and develop quality, affordable housing options and market rate development

These objectives continued to evolve during the planning process in response to further public participation. The focus of the plan grew to ensure an approach that emphasizes a balance between

growth and preservation, new development and resources for existing residents, additional investment and the need to strengthen existing resources and services.

The planning process officially kicked off in January of 2020, with a consulting team led by BFJ Planning. In many ways, the world felt like a different place at the beginning of this process. Since the Village's Comprehensive Plan process began, we have faced a generational crisis with the COVID-19 pandemic. Adapting to life during the pandemic has changed all of our lives. Residents of Ossining—and around the country and the world—adapted to social distancing measures and sought out ways to care for our families and support frontline healthcare workers. Meanwhile, the ways in which we communicate with family, friends, and coworkers shifted overnight.

2020 also saw nationwide protests in response to violence against the black community and in support of civil rights. Ossining residents—led by high school students and recent graduates—gathered in protest and to develop a plan of action to improve racial justice issues in the community.

While the COVID-19 pandemic and racial justice protests drive conversations that go beyond the scope of the Comprehensive Plan, they helped to shine an even brighter light on the key objectives of this planning process. Although the world feels like a different place in 2021 as a result of the historic events of 2020, the objectives laid out during preliminary public outreach in 2019 and development of the Request for Proposals are more important than ever. Even during these unique times, the Village felt that it was critical to begin planning for the new normal that emerges in 2021 as vaccines begin to roll out and the Village of Ossining can continue to thrive.

This was the genesis of the name of this plan: Ossining Tomorrow.

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### *What is a Comprehensive Plan?*

A Comprehensive Plan states where a community has been, where it is now, and where it hopes to go in the future. The plan establishes a series of goals, objectives and strategies to help guide the community to achieve its vision and goals for the future.

While the plan itself is not a regulation, it does provide a foundation for future decisions on development and zoning, capital budgeting, and general policy decisions. Any new or amended land use regulations, such as zoning code changes, must be in accordance with a well-reasoned plan.

Many communities seek to update their Comprehensive Plan every 10 years to ensure that it reflects current demographics, recent planning efforts, and the overall development context and trends. Ossining's last plan was updated in 2009, so the time is right for the Village to evaluate the prior plan and develop and updated Comprehensive Plan that reflects current priorities.

The plan itself is the result of a wide range of types of input. Perhaps most important is an extensive public outreach process to ensure that the priorities expressed in the plan are consistent with the community's vision for the future. In addition, the planning process includes analysis of current data showing land development trends and issues, community resources, and other public needs, such as housing policy, sustainability, and transportation. This balance of community priorities, data analysis, along with the direction of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and Village staff, all help to inform the focus of the plan. Ultimately, a Comprehensive Plan provides a roadmap for the Village to prioritize and track implementation of the goals, objectives, and strategies outlined in the plan.

### *Organization of Ossining Tomorrow*

Ossining Tomorrow is organized into 10 chapters:

1. Introduction, Public Outreach Process, and Planning Goals
2. Village and Regional Overview
3. Land Use and Zoning
4. The Waterfront
5. Economic Development
6. Transportation
7. Sustainable Infrastructure
8. Housing and Neighborhood Preservation
9. Cultural and Historic Resources
10. Action Agenda and Implementation

Overall, the plan follows the organization of the Village's 2009 plan, allowing for Ossining Tomorrow to build on planning work completed in the past. However, there are two key additions to this plan that were not included in 2009. First, this plan includes a chapter on Land Use and Zoning. The Land Use and Zoning chapter builds on recent work by the Village to identify key zoning challenges and collects Ossining Tomorrow's recommendations related to land use and potential zoning changes. Upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the Village Board of Trustees will also be in a position to adopt key zoning recommendations included in the plan.

Second, Ossining Tomorrow concludes with an Action Agenda and Implementation chapter. This final chapter provides a roadmap for how the Village can implement Objectives and Strategies in the plan to achieve the plan's goals.

Each chapter begins with a planning goal to set the foundation for the objectives and strategies included in the chapter. These goals outline broad aspirations to further the Village's priorities and to address issues and opportunities identified during the planning process. Objectives and strategies that conclude each chapter should be consistent with the planning goal.

Following the planning goal, each chapter proceeds with a description of existing conditions and current trends impacting the Village and the region, providing context for issues that the plan should address and opportunities to build upon.

A section on issues and opportunities follows the existing conditions section. Issues and opportunities describe a series of strengths and weaknesses in the Village. This section continues the narrative established by existing conditions and serves as a bridge between current trends and action items to achieve the planning goals.

Finally, each chapter concludes with a series of objectives and strategies. Objectives are conceptual ideas that respond and/or relate to ideas first brought up in the issues and opportunities section. Then the objectives organize a series of related strategies. Strategies are specific actions, policy changes, or projects that the Village can undertake to carry out the objective and planning goals.

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*Planning Process*

The process of creating Ossining Tomorrow began in March 2020. The approximately 14 month process was led by a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, which was made up of two members of the Board of Trustees, a member of the Planning Board, and local residents and community leaders. The Steering Committee was also assisted by a consulting team. The Steering Committee met on a monthly basis to provide guidance to the consultants, discuss input from the community, and review drafts of the plan. The process included substantial public outreach, adapted to a virtual format during the COVID-19 pandemic, described in more detail below. The public outreach process gathered input from the community to develop the planning goals, identify issues and opportunities, and formulate objectives and strategies for the plan.

The Steering Committee finalized their draft of the plan in January 2021, at which point the draft was sent to the Village Board of Trustees, as the sole agency with jurisdiction over adoption of the plan. The Board of Trustees were closely involved during development of the draft plan, initiative review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and held a public hearing on March 31, 2021 before finalizing the Comprehensive Plan for adoption.

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## Public Outreach Process

The public outreach process for Ossining Tomorrow was designed to engage members of the community as broadly as possible. Over a period of more than a year, the Village solicited public input on existing issues, potential opportunities, and the community's aspirations for the future. Guided by a Steering Committee made up of a cross-section of village representatives, the planning process intended to ensure that the Village of Ossining Comprehensive Plan is a truly collaborative product that reflects the vision and priorities of the Ossining community.

Members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee included:

- Melissa Banta co-chair
- Patrick Yost co-chair
- Omar Lopez Village Board Trustee
- Manuel R. Quezada Village Board Trustee
- Jeff Gasbarro Planning Board Member
- Sheila Vereen-Massengale
- Rebecca Fahey
- Ro Moran
- Frank Buddingh'

Village staff, the Steering Committee, and planning consultants developed a broad, robust, and responsive public engagement program to guide the process of gathering meaningful input from the community. The public outreach strategy was adapted as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with a greater emphasis on virtual tools and additional meetings with key stakeholders, rather than in-person events. The strategy included a wide range of opportunities for public input throughout the process, all of which were intended to be interactive and iterative.

Through a series of briefings with the Board of Trustees, a virtual Village Hall meeting, online interactive tools, a public survey, and meetings with six subcommittees, the public outreach program was designed to provide a clear overview of the process, offer numerous and varied opportunities for public participation, and identify the community's priorities to guide implementation of the plan. Effective public outreach requires multiple methods of reaching diverse members of the community—as well as flexibility to respond to the unique qualities of the Village of Ossining and the challenges of conducting a public process during the pandemic. The public outreach strategy was tailored for the Village based on collaboration between the planning consultants, Steering Committee, Village staff, and Board of Trustees.

The public outreach process included the following activities:

### *Steering Committee Meetings*

The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee played a critical role in guiding the development of Ossining Tomorrow. Members of the Steering Committee were involved in crafting the Request for Proposals and were instrumental in outlining key objectives at that early stage in the process. During development of the plan, the Steering Committee held a total of nine meetings, on a monthly basis. Meetings were held virtually due to the pandemic and were open to the public. In addition to the public sessions, the Steering Committee also conducted a series of study hall meetings. The study halls provided an opportunity for members to have in depth discussions among themselves about draft chapters and content of the plan.

### *Board of Trustee Briefings*

The consulting team briefed the Village Board of Trustees regularly throughout the planning process. A total of 12 briefings were held [ten as of March 2021, two additional briefings anticipated], providing ongoing opportunities for updates on project status, discussion of key topics in the plan and potential zoning code updates, and an overview of the environmental review process.

### *Subcommittee Meetings*

Due to the limited opportunities to meet in person with members of the public, Village Staff convened a series of Subcommittees organized around critical topics in the plan. The six subcommittees were made up of over 60 unique individuals. Subcommittees first met during the summer of 2020, before draft chapters had been developed. After the consulting team and Steering Committee posted initial drafts online for public review, the Subcommittees each met a second time in November/December 2020. The initial meeting provided an opportunity for key stakeholders to provide direction of important issues and opportunities for the plan to address. During the second meeting, discussion was focused on the initial drafts and whether the objectives and strategies captured the necessary issues for each chapter. Discussion at these meetings was critical in developing objectives and strategies for the plan.

Topics areas for each subcommittee included:

- Economic Development
- Waterfront/Environmental Organizations

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- Infrastructure and Municipal Services
- Housing
- Cultural and Historic Organizations
- Community Services

In addition to the above Subcommittee Meetings, there was an additional meeting and presentation to the School Board to initiate a discussion and ensure that the Comprehensive Plan is coordinated with priorities of the School District and does not create a burden for public schools in the district.

*Interactive Online Tools*

### Project Website

The consulting team developed a project website, www.OssiningTomorrow.com, in consultation with Village Staff and the Steering Committee. The project website provided a centralized location for information related to the process. The website was regularly updated with announcements about upcoming events and opportunities to get involved, including other online tools. Draft chapters of the plan and other documents were posted to the website as they were completed and reviewed by the Steering Committee.

### Online Ideas Wall

The Ideas Wall was a visioning exercise intended to gather input from the public early in the process. Open from May 15, 2020 through September 14, 2020, participants were asked to place a virtual "sticky note" in one of six categories (Housing and Neighborhoods, Transportation, Economic Development, Culture and History, Municipal Facilities, and Sustainability). Posts on the Ideas Wall initiate a discussion about the community's vision and key issues to address. There were a total of 142 posts and comments on the Ideas Wall.

### Online Public Survey

An online public survey was developed to seek input on a broad array of questions. There were more than 450 survey responses while the survey was open from July 10, 2020 through August 28, 2020. The survey was available in both English and Spanish. The survey reached a substantial proportion of Ossining residents, business and properties owners, and other interested parties. The survey included a mix of multiple choice questions and open-ended questions to gather more qualitative feedback.

### Online Interactive Map

The Interactive Map provided an opportunity for participants to provide input on issues and opportunities that the Comprehensive Plan should address, as well as feedback on preliminary strategies in draft chapters. Participants were asked to place a pin on the online map. Pins were organized by seven themes based on the chapters in the plan: Land Use and Zoning, the Waterfront, Downtown and Economic Development, Transportation, Sustainable Infrastructure, Housing and Neighborhood Preservation, and Cultural and Historic Resources.

Once a participant placed their pin on the map, they were able to leave a comment and/or attach a photo demonstrating the issue they were identifying or a potential opportunity to make an improvement in the Village. The Interactive Map was live from August 10 through September 14 and received 46 comments.

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*Virtual Village Hall*

With limited ability to gather for in-person workshops, the planning process included a Virtual Village Hall meeting on April 29. The meeting began with a brief presentation, followed by comments and questions by members of the community.

*Walking Tours*

The Steering Committee, Board of Trustees, Village Staff, and consultants participated in two walking tours of the waterfront area, downtown, and the Croton Avenue corridor. Walking tours were a productive way for participants to meet in person, albeit outside, socially distant, and with masks on. The two walking tours focused on two chapters of the plan that merited an up close look at existing conditions to understand key issues and opportunities. The waterfront walking tour helped to identify the need for improved connections and opportunities to consolidate parking and expand Louis Engel Park. The downtown and Croton Avenue walking tour was focused on helping participants understand the potential benefits of adopting a form-based overlay for those areas.

*Social Media Posts*

The Village posted updated about the planning process on a weekly basis to the Village Facebook page. Posts were thematic and were meant to engage residents and encourage all members of the community to share their input using the online engagement tools (Ideas Wall, Public Survey, and Interactive Map).

## Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

Each chapter of the plan begins with a planning goal and concludes with a series of objectives and strategies. Planning goals are the guiding framework for the Plan based on public input. They reflect the community's values and priorities for the future. Objectives and strategies are specific actions, policy changes, and projects to achieve the Goals of the Comprehensive Plan. As a summary of the action items in the plan the goals, objectives, and strategies for each chapter are outlined below.

*Chapter 3: Land Use and Zoning*

Goal

Maintain and promote Ossining's downtown and Croton Avenue Corridor as mixed-use neighborhoods by encouraging economically viable development that meets the highest design standards and improve Ossining's residential areas by protecting existing housing and reducing barriers to investment and renovation.

Objective 3.1: Create and adopt a form-based overlay zoning district for downtown that is contiguous with the existing VC-District.

Strategy 3.1.1: Increase the maximum allowable building height in the downtown from four-stories / 48 feet to five-stories / 58 feet so as to provide greater incentive to developers. The affordable housing requirement would still apply.

Strategy 3.1.2: Allow residential uses above the second story as a permitted principal use in the downtown (i.e. remove the conditional use status for residential that presently exists).

Strategy 3.1.3: Develop a fee for infrastructure in exchange for the bonus for the increase in additional development height (i.e. the differential between four- and five-stories) to alleviate potential impacts to key Village priorities such as schools, parking, etc.

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Objective 3.2: Create and adopt a form-based overlay zoning district for Croton Avenue that is contiguous with the NC-2 District between Clinton Avenue and Roosevelt Square.

Strategy 3.2.1: Increase the maximum allowable building height along Croton Avenue from three-stories / 36 feet to four-stories / 48 feet so as to provide greater incentive to developers. The affordable housing requirement would still apply.

Strategy 3.2.2: Allow residential uses above the second story as a permitted principal use (i.e. remove the conditional use status for residential that presently exists).

Strategy 3.2.3: Develop a fee for infrastructure in exchange for the bonus for the increase in additional development height (i.e. the differential between three- and four-stories) to alleviate potential impacts to key Village priorities such as schools, parking, etc.

Objective 3.3: Address code maintenance issues and existing incongruences in the Village Zoning and Code.

Strategy 3.3.1: Review issues identified in a 2018 memo and make necessary changes to reduce definitional inconsistencies across various elements of the Village Code. This should be conducted under the leadership of Village Staff and Corporation Council.

Objective 3.4: Address known zoning challenges related to the T-District, including outdated zoning and pre-existing non-conforming properties.

Strategy 3.4.1: Allow two-family residences as a principal permitted use in the T-District.

Strategy 3.4.2: Allow three-family units as conditional use in the T-District.

Strategy 3.4.3: Reduce side yard setbacks to alleviate non-conformity for undersized lots in the T-District.

Strategy 3.4.4: Allow one additional parking space in the Front Yard in the T-District.

Objective 3.5: Create a new MF-3 zoning district text, which could be mapped in the future, to accommodate multi-family or townhouse infill development in some areas of the T-District or areas adjacent to downtown. This text would not apply to any single-family district.

Objective 3.6: Revise the S-75 zone to reduce the large degree of pre-existing non-conformities and reduce barriers for properties owners to improve their homes.

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*Chapter 4: The Waterfront*

Goal

Maintain and promote Ossining's waterfront as a mixed-use neighborhood by encouraging economically viable development and leveraging existing assets, while pursuing climate adaptive interventions to protect the built environment and provide public benefits.

Objective 4.1: Plan for climate adaptation and flood mitigation measures, and identify targeted solutions for the waterfront area.

Strategy 4.1.1: Create a Climate Adaptation and Flood Mitigation Plan.

Strategy 4.1.2: Develop flood mitigation design guidelines for new developments and major renovations.

Strategy 4.1.3: Seek grants from State and Federal agencies to implement studies and/or fund climate adaptation projects for infrastructure and public amenities.

Strategy 4.1.4: Close coordination with MTA for potential future resilience work on the railroad tracks.

Strategy 4.1.5: Promote the implementation of flood mitigation design guidelines for buildings in the northern waterfront area.

Strategy 4.1.6: Leverage the presence of the Village-owned sites in a way that ensure public benefits and more productive uses, while implementing flood mitigation interventions.

Strategy 4.1.7: Explore area-wide structural protective measures for the land west of the railroad.

Strategy 4.1.8: Promote the implementation of flood mitigation design guidelines for the Central Waterfront area, east of the railroad tracks.

Strategy 4.1.9: Incorporate flood mitigation solutions to future development.

Strategy 4.1.10: Explore area-wide structural protective measures for the Sing Sing / Wastewater Treatment Plant area.

Strategy 4.1.11: Monitor the impacts of seal level rise and flood events in the future, and evaluate potential living shorelines strategies for the southern waterfront area.

Objective 4.2: Promote development in strategic areas of the Central Waterfront, while retaining a mix of uses, and leveraging existing assets.

Strategy 4.2.1: Use the DPW site development as a catalyst project to attract diversified users to the Central Waterfront.

Strategy 4.2.2: Encourage mixed-use and commercial activities throughout the Central Waterfront area.

Strategy 4.2.3: Continue the Sing Sing Kill Greenway to Water Street / Station area.

Strategy 4.2.4: Consider consolidating surface parking areas into a parking structure.

Strategy 4.2.5: Build upon existing recreational and cultural attractions and organizations, and continue to permit and promote additional cultural uses.

Objective 4.3: Improve connections to and throughout the waterfront.

Strategy 4.3.1: Explore options to minimize conflict between drop-offs and traffic flow by Ossining Station.

Strategy 4.3.2: Implement the Complete Streets Policy throughout the waterfront area.

Strategy 4.3.3: Improve Westerly Road conditions to make it attractive for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Strategy 4.3.4: Investigate potential changes in the road circulation to and from the waterfront area.

Strategy 4.3.5: Continue the RiverWalk trail at any available opportunity, and explore opportunities for new trails and connections.

Strategy 4.3.6: Improve wayfinding and signage throughout the waterfront area.

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Strategy 4.3.7: Work with NY Waterway to explore the possibility of ferry service from Haverstraw during summer weekends and in conjunction with Ossining events.

Strategy 4.3.8: Explore funding options and feasibility for a shuttle bus between Ossining Station and downtown.

Objective 4.4: Maximize opportunities to increase public access to the waterfront.

Strategy 4.4.1: Work with current property owners/tenants to create opportunities for increased public access to the waterfront.

Strategy 4.4.2: Explore ways to expand Louis Engel Park.

Strategy 4.4.3: Recognize long-term opportunities for increased access to the waterfront.

*Chapter 5: Economic Development*

Goal

Strengthen Ossining's local economy and create a regional attraction in downtown and attract investment throughout the village to expand the tax base, diversify the local economy, and attract new residents, businesses, and visitors to the Village.

Objective 5.1: Reduce barriers to expanding existing businesses and opening new businesses

Strategy 5.1.1: Make Ossining more welcoming as a place to do business.

Strategy 5.1.2: Streamline the permitting approval process for businesses looking to expand or open in Ossining.

Strategy 5.1.3: Conduct a Study to Evaluate Forming a Business Improvement District (BID).

Objective 5.2: Establish Ossining as a unique dining and shopping destination to attract residents and visitors.

Strategy 5.2.1: Celebrate locally-owned businesses.

Strategy 5.2.2: Take a targeted approach to tenant recruitment.

Objective 5.3: Enhance the public realm in downtown, the waterfront, Highland Avenue, and Croton Avenue

Strategy 5.3.1: Create a Form-Based Overlay for Downtown and Croton Avenue to ensure that new development creates a positive experience in the public realm.

Strategy 5.3.2: Create a lively downtown experience by expanding outdoor dining.

Strategy 5.3.3: Create a pedestrian and customer-friendly environment with streetscape and façade improvements and civic space.

Strategy 5.3.4: Consider Creation of a Village green.

Strategy 5.3.5: Improve the aesthetics of Route 9 (Highland Avenue) and Route 133 (Croton Avenue).

Objective 5.4: Diversify the tax base and expand the local job market

Strategy 5.4.1: Adopt zoning changes to increase investment in existing housing stock, incentivize infill and mixed-use development, adaptive re-use of existing buildings, and increase flexibility for property owners to grow the Village's tax base.

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Strategy 5.4.2: Expand access to local jobs.

Objective 5.5: Tourism

Strategy 5.5.1: Explore strategies to market Ossining as a year-round tourism destination

Objective 5.6: Transformative Opportunities

Strategy 5.6.1: Adaptive Reuse of 200 Main Street.

Strategy 5.6.2: Study of Downtown Parking Structures.

Strategy 5.6.3: Consider infill buildings on the existing market square and post office lots at intersection of Spring and Main Streets.

Strategy 5.6.4: Partner with providers to expand broadband and prepare for 5G.

*Chapter 6: Transportation*

Goal

Improve traffic conditions and roadway safety throughout the Village, increase pedestrian and bicycle opportunities, and support cost effective transit improvements.

Objective 6.1: Support a State DOT Study to improve Route 9A (Briarcliff-Peekskill Parkway) in terms of safety and capacity.

Objective 6.2: Coordinate with the State on further Route 9 (Highland Avenue) upgrades to improve the safety and functioning of the roadway.

Objective 6.3: Better connect downtown and the waterfront.

Strategy 6.3.1: Improve traffic circulation at Secor Road and Main Street: Turn Main Street into a one-way westbound roadway.

Strategy 6.3.2: Establish a shuttle service from downtown to the station area and waterfront.

Objective 6.4: Upgrade and extend the Village's sidewalk system and pedestrian infrastructure.

Strategy 6.4.1: Enhance sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure downtown.

Strategy 6.4.2: As a priority area, ensure that sidewalk and cross-walk conditions surrounding public facilities and parks are adequate.

Objective 6.5: Create a parking plan and possible parking garage downtown.

Objective 6.6: Explore the opportunity to construct a parking facility at the railroad station.

Objective 6.7: Improve the Village's bicycle infrastructure.

Strategy 6.7.1: Consider studying bicycle circulation opportunities to inform where bicycle infrastructure can best be integrated in a cost-effective fashion.

Strategy 6.7.2: Utilize the Village's Complete Streets policy to further support the integration of bicycle infrastructure and amenities.

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*Chapter 7: Sustainable Infrastructure*

## Goal

Continue the efforts to improve the Village's water system and management of stormwater; explore improvements to municipal facilities and public safety services where needed; ensure educational, cultural and recreational facilities and programs are accessible to all, and meet the needs of the Ossining community.

### Objective 7.1: Expand capacity of the Village's water system

Strategy 7.1.1: Increase water supply capacity during peak summer usage in the short-term.

Strategy 7.1.2: Increase water supply capacity during peak summer usage in the long-term.

### Objective 7.2: Improve the Sanitary Sewer System

Strategy 7.2.1: The Village should consider upgrades to the sanitary sewer collection system to address inflow and infiltration and implement relining, as needed.

### Objective 7.3: Improve Stormwater Management

Strategy 7.3.1: Improve stormwater management regulations, and use technology to inventory and upgrade stormwater problem areas.

### Objective 7.4: Adopt backup solutions to improve power supply reliability and explore solar installation options.

Strategy 7.4.1: Consider a backup power supply for the Village Municipal Building.

Strategy 7.4.2: Consider a municipal solar installation.

### Objective 7.5: Consider improvements and backup services to telecommunication systems

### Objective 7.6: Ensure Fire Stations can safely operate and efficiently serve the entirety of the Village, while considering consolidation opportunities.

Strategy 7.6.1: Review and update the 2009 needs assessment report.

Strategy 7.6.2: Build a new Northside fire station.

Strategy 7.6.3: Relocate the Monitor Hose Company to the new Northside fire station.

### Objective 7.7: Consider incorporating sustainable design, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources within Village-owned properties.

Strategy 7.7.1: Consider developing a sustainability plan for the Village.

Strategy 7.7.2: Explore options to become eligible for State grants for sustainable design, energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, such as participating in the NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Program.

Strategy 7.7.3: Consider the installation of solar panels on Village-owned buildings and properties where feasible.

### Objective 7.8: Explore ways to efficiently use centrally-located municipal buildings and community facilities while provide for improved public access.

Strategy 7.8.1: Explore ways to provide more multi-purpose meeting spaces that are centrally-located within the Village.

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Strategy 7.8.2: Study different options for the reuse of the Ossining Visitor Center space / Sing Sing Prison Museum exhibit space at the community center, if the space becomes available.

Strategy 7.8.3: Consider improvements to the public library parking lot and sidewalk area.

Objective 7.9: Explore creative ways to provide expanded services at the public library

Strategy 7.9.1: Ensure sufficient broadband service to meet increased online programs and services.

Strategy 7.9.2: Consider adding social service personnel at the public library through partnerships and/or collaborations with universities.

Objective 7.10: Ensure all community members have access to parks and recreational facilities that meet their needs.

Strategy 7.10.1: Fix and upgrade existing parks and recreational facilities to good standards.

Strategy 7.10.2: Ensure the RAB report is regularly updated to identify needs for upgrades or new recreational fields/facilities.

Strategy 7.10.3: Consider further consolidation of Department of Recreation and Parks services between the Village and the Town.

Objective 7.11: Ensure open space and natural resources are recognized and protected.

Strategy 7.11.1: Develop an open space and natural resources inventory for the Village.

*Chapter 8: Housing and Neighborhood Preservation*

Goal

Maintain diversity of the housing stock in the entire Village, preserve neighborhood quality, and continue programs to help with housing affordability to preserve housing resources for people who live and work in the Village.

Objective 8.1: Preserve and Upgrade Existing Housing

Strategy 8.1.1: Facilitate the preservation and upgrade of existing affordable units.

Strategy 8.1.2: Create a strategy for more consistent enforcement of building code violations.

Strategy 8.1.3: Maintain a current inventory of affordable units in the Village.

Strategy 8.1.4: Continue to utilize the Landlord/Tenant Relations Council.

Objective 8.2: Create New Affordable Housing

Strategy 8.2.1: Continue to attract new development that provides affordable housing.

Strategy 8.2.2: Consider permitting accessory dwelling units in all single-family and two-family districts, or some sub-set of zones.

Strategy 8.2.3: Consider trade-offs between increasing the affordable housing set-aside and increasing development incentives to encourage investment.

Strategy 8.2.4: Create opportunities for affordable homeownership.

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Objective 8.3: Create opportunities to provide "missing middle" housing.

Strategy 8.3.1: In the Two-Family (T) Districts, allow two-family as-of-right and three-family by special permit.

Strategy 8.3.2: Create a new MF-3 zone to allow low-density multi-family and townhomes in neighborhoods near downtown.

Objective 8.4: Attract Market-Rate Development to Attract New Residents to Ossining

Objective 8.5: Preserve the Unique Qualities of Ossining's Neighborhoods

Strategy 8.5.1: Consider designation of Neighborhood Preservation Districts.

Objective 8.6: Monitor Housing & Community Trends that Change as a Result of COVID-19

*Chapter 9: Cultural and Historic Resources*

Goal

Support the growing number of cultural organizations and make Ossining a regional attraction for the arts and culture scene; promote tourism; continue protecting Village's historic resources.

Objective 9.1: Support and facilitate the growth of local artists and cultural organizations.

Strategy 9.1.1: Build momentum around the Sing Sing Prison Museum.

Strategy 9.1.2: Explore the idea of creating a coordinating entity for arts & culture in Ossining.

Strategy 9.1.3: Update and build upon the inventory of arts and culture resources created by the OAP.

Strategy 9.1.4: Create a cultural venue downtown that would both benefit from and support a restaurant cluster.

Strategy 9.1.5: Make the waterfront a prime location for outdoor events.

Strategy 9.1.6: Increase public art displays and showcase the talent of local artists.

Objective 9.2: Encourage preservation and adaptive reuse of historically and architecturally significant buildings.

Strategy 9.2.1: Gather funding for historic preservation efforts.

Strategy 9.2.2: Publicize the availability of federal and state funding for privately-owned historic structures.

Strategy 9.2.3: Promote and facilitate adaptive reuse of historically and architecturally significant buildings.

Objective 9.3: Celebrate Ossining's cultural and historic resources through tourism promotion.

Strategy 9.3.1: Assess the viability of developing a historic and cultural tourism program for the Village.

Strategy 9.3.2: Identify possible central venues to host the Ossining Visitor Center.

Strategy 9.3.3: Promote "The Museum on the Streets" initiative.

Objective 9.4: Continue supporting community services organizations.

Strategy 9.4.1: Ensure community organizations are listened to and supported.

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# Chapter 2: Village and Regional Overview

This chapter provides a snapshot of the Village of Ossining, from its history, to its role within the New York Metropolitan region, to the existing assets and special features that have made the Village of Ossining known in the region and beyond. Additionally, relevant socio-demographic characteristics are analyzed in order to provide a clear picture on existing conditions and trends within the Ossining community, while contextualizing the results through comparisons across time and geographies. The findings of this section form the basis for the strategies included in the following chapters. In fact, the Plan itself is made for the residents and workers of Ossining, hence people's characteristics and needs are the foundation for the Plan. Lastly, a brief overview of the relevant local and regional planning studies is provided to reinforce the importance of prior planning efforts, which inform and complement this Comprehensive Plan.

## History

Prior to the arrival of Europeans, a Mohegan Tribe called the "Sint Sinck" inhabited the Ossining area. The name "Sint Sinck," which translates to "stone upon stone," refers to the beds of marble found in the southern part of the Village. In 1685, the Sint Sincks sold their land to Frederick Philipse, who owned a much larger territory extending from the northern tip of Manhattan to the Croton River (just north of the Village). The land was leased to tenant farmers of Dutch, French, and English origin. After the American Revolution, the State of New York confiscated the land of the Royalist Colonel Frederick Philipse, and sold off his land to tenant farmers. This area became known as Sing Sing, a reminiscence of the first inhabitants Sint Sincks.

The history of Ossining is closely connected with its geographic location. Built along the Hudson River, approximately 30 miles north of New York City, early European settlers farming the Village lands leveraged the presence of the river to ship produce down to New York City. By the turn of the 19th century, Sing Sing was a successful port and in 1813 it became the first State-chartered incorporated village in Westchester County.

In 1825, the construction of the prison began, and it officially opened a year later. Initially called Mount Pleasant Prison—but quickly associated with the village name (Sing Sing Prison)—the prison became notorious for the harsh conditions that inmates were subjected to in the 19th century. For this reason, in 1901 Sing Sing residents decided to change the village name to Ossining, in an effort to disassociate the prison from the Village. The Hudson River was instrumental for the operation of the prison as well: convicted criminals in these early times, traveled by boat to Sing Sing; the phrase "up the river" became a euphemism for "going to prison". Commerce and industry flourished throughout the 1800's. The industrial growth included a shoe factory and a stove foundry, both of which relied on convict labor. Geographically, the construction of the prison created a physical barrier on the riverfront, which still divides Sparta (the southernmost neighborhood of the Village) from the rest of Ossining.

In the mid-19th century, the railroad began to substitute the role of the river for transportation and shipping of goods. When Ossining Station opened in 1849, further industrial development flourished along the waterfront. Industries that were active at the time and benefitted from the presence of the railroad included the marble quarries at Sing Sing Prison and the patent medicine works of Dr. Benjamin Brandreth (known as "the pill factory"). The construction of the railroad created another barrier within the Village: the waterfront was separated from the rest of Ossining by the train tracks. However, both the waterfront and the developed uplands (modern-day Downtown) experienced growth between mid-19th century and the turn of the 20th century. If the waterfront was the industrial engine and shipment hub of Ossining, upland Main Street (known as "the Crescent") became a vibrant area with many street-level businesses

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and residences above. The historic character of Main Street is still visible today in its beautiful characteristic 19th century buildings. Another pattern that reflects the ancient roots of the Village is reflected in the layout of the streets: rather than a classic grid, Ossining features winding streets that follow the topography.

As the railroad substituted the waterways in the 19th century, so the highways eventually began to replace the role of railroads. The first half of the 20th century followed a pattern that was common for many municipalities in the Hudson River Valley and more generally in the United States. Goods began to travel via truck instead of rail, requiring uses such as warehouses and industries to relocate close to the major arterial roads. In the 1950s, the availability of the automobile for the masses shifted people's preferred shopping location from Main Street to outer shopping centers with more parking options available. Across the country, Main Streets started a period of disinvestment and neglect.

Population grew exponentially between the beginning of the 20th century and the 1970s. Before 1900, the population of the Village was approximately 7,000 people, while by 1950 that number had risen to 16,000. According to Westchester County Department of Planning, in 1970 the population reached 21,659 residents. Main Street experienced a revival thanks to immigrant communities moving to the area and opening businesses in the downtown. The diverse immigrant community of Ossining, which more recently has been welcoming immigrants from Latin America, is one of the main assets for the Village.

## Regional Context

The Village of Ossining is a historic village located on the eastern shore of the Hudson River, in Westchester County, New York. The Village, which is part of the Town of Ossining, is bordered by the unincorporated areas of the Town of Ossining to the north and east, with the Village of Briarcliff Manor to the south, and with the Hudson River to the west (Figure 1). Midtown Manhattan, in New York City, is located approximately 30 miles south of Ossining. The Village is included in the New York State Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation Heritage Area System, in recognition of the Village's historic and cultural significance.

Ossining is situated in a key location with regard to regional transportation. The Village is served by the Metro-North Commuter Railroad (Hudson Line), which provides both local and express southbound service to Grand Central Station in New York City Northbound service travels to Croton-Harmon and Poughkeepsie, as well as local stops. The train station is located on the riverfront, less than half mile from downtown Ossining.

The Taconic State Parkway and the Briarcliff–Peekskill Parkway (New York Route 9A) serve as the main north-south highways connecting the Village to the rest of the region (Figure 2). Route 9, or Highland Avenue, is a State north-south artery that passes through the Village, connecting Ossining to several riverfront Villages such as Croton-On-Hudson and Tarrytown. Croton Avenue (Route 133) is a key east-west corridor that serves as the main route to access the parkway system. Most roads in the Village converge into Croton Avenue, which also serves as an important commercial corridor for the area.

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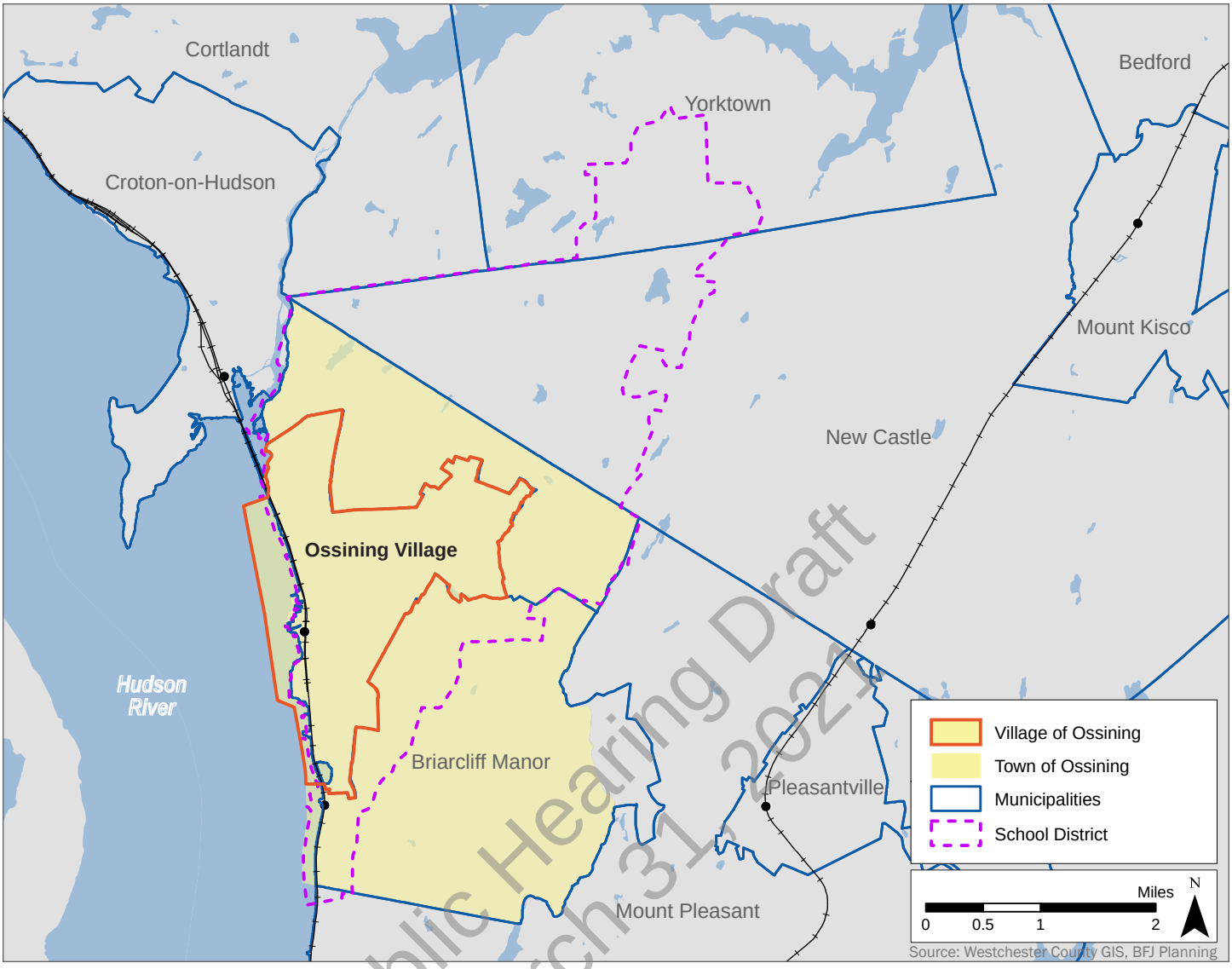


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Figure 1: Village of Ossining, Town and School District Boundaries

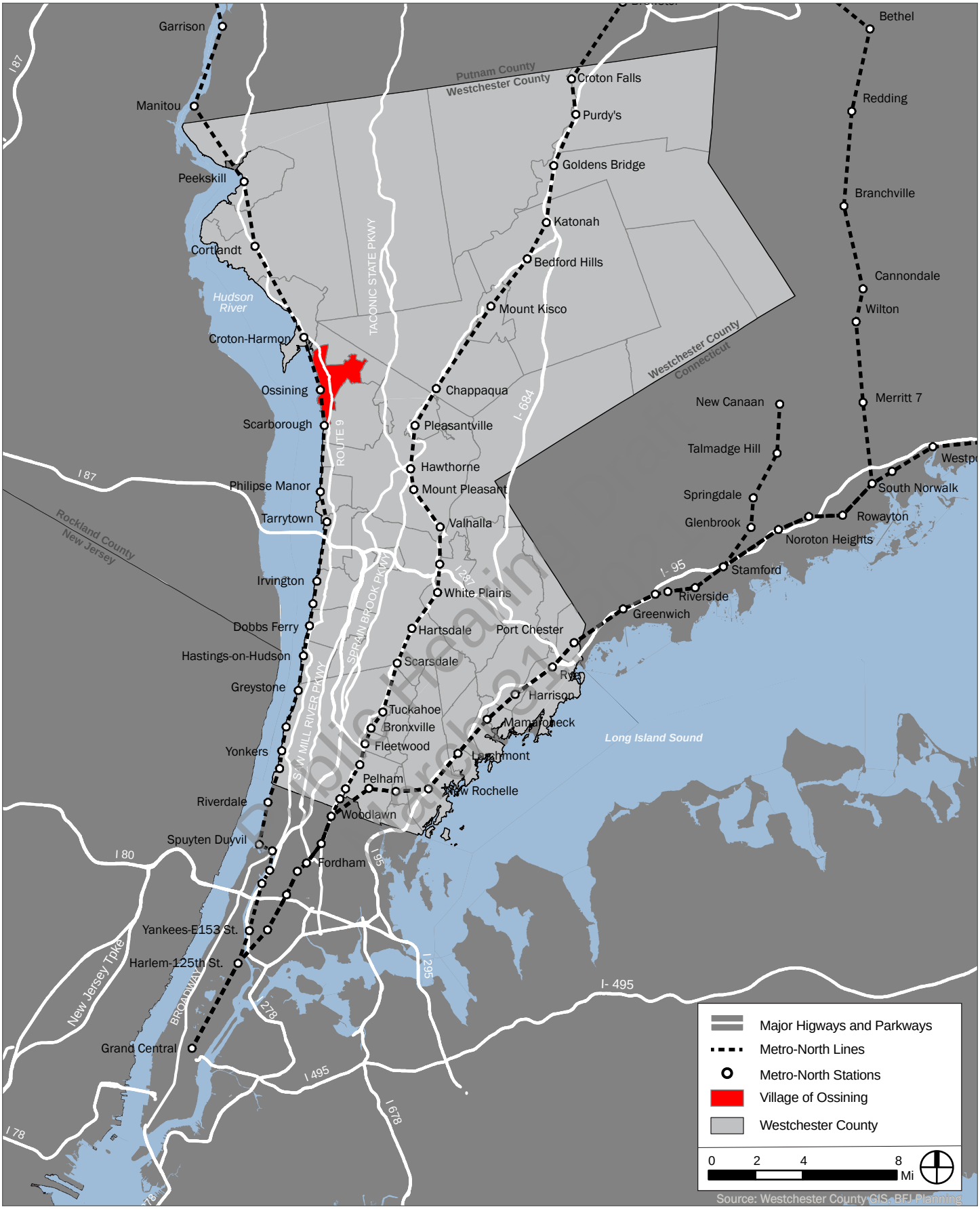


**Figure 2: Regional Context**

*Relevant Regional Policies and Resources*

Although land use and planning decisions are made at local level, regional policies provide the framework to guide local municipalities in terms of regional planning strategies and issues. Interconnected areas of concern such as the environment, transportation and economic development can often be addressed by coordinated efforts at every level of government. The Village of Ossining considers the regional policies and plans provided by entities such as Westchester County and the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council. A brief description of the most relevant regional plans is provided below.

### Westchester2025

Westchester2025 is the main policy document for planning guidance in Westchester County. It includes a framework and web-based resources to assist municipalities in the development of local comprehensive plans. The framework, called "2025 Context for County and Municipal Planning and Policies to Guide County Planning" was adopted by the County's Planning Board in 2008, and amended in 2010. This "Context and Policies" substituted the corresponding section of "Patterns for Westchester: The Land and Its People (Patterns)", which is still the adopted plan since its creation in 1996 for all the other sections.

Westchester 2025 sets forth the context for planning in Westchester County, as well as the long-range land use policies of the County, by balancing economic growth and environmental concerns. These policies range from supporting development while preserving permanently affordable housing, to protecting historical and cultural resources, to preserving natural resources and assuring interconnected open space.

In terms of growth, the solid and still relevant foundations of "Patterns" recognized the basic premises of sustainable planning, which encourage commercial and residential growth where infrastructure already exists (from water and sewer infrastructure to transportation corridors) and preserving open space. The Village of Ossining is identified in "Patterns" as an intermediate center within the region, served by a well-developed infrastructure system and Metro-North railroad.

### The Westchester County Compact Plan: "The Greenprint for a Sustainable Future…the Westchester Way" (2005)

"Greenprint" is the Westchester County Greenway Compact Plan that was adopted by the Village of Ossining in 2006. By being a participating "Greenway Community", the Village supports the five "greenway" principles:

- Natural and cultural resources protection;
- Economic development, including tourism, agriculture, and urban redevelopment;
- Public access;
- Regional planning;
- Heritage and environmental education.

As a "Greenway Community", the Village receives support by the Hudson River Valley Greenway for implementing projects and initiatives related to the above goals.

Following the approach of "Patterns" in terms of regional strategy, "Greenprint" promotes economic development through leveraging natural, cultural and historic resources (and their preservation), and increasing opportunities to access the Hudson River. The Village of Ossining promotes the "Greenprint" policies in its strategic planning actions and long-term vision.

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### Hudson River Greenway Water Trail

The Hudson River Valley Greenway ("Greenway") is a state sponsored program created by the Hudson River Valley Greenway Act of 1991. Initiated through the collaboration of 13 counties and 264 communities along the Hudson River, the Greenway seeks to find strategies to preserve scenic, natural, historic, cultural and recreational resources while encouraging compatible economic development at the regional level.

The Water Trail is one of the Greenway's initiatives that aims at establishing a trail that provides access to canoes, kayaks, and small boats along a 256-mile stretch of the Hudson River, from the Adirondacks to the tip of Manhattan. In addition to recreation, activities like education and heritage tourism are promoted as important assets for participating communities such as the Village of Ossining.

### Westchester RiverWalk Trail

The Westchester RiverWalk is a planned 51.5-mile multi-use trail running parallel to the Hudson River. The RiverWalk spans 14 municipalities in the County, and, when completed, it will connect these participating communities via a network of trails, esplanades and boardwalks. Local municipalities, in coordination with other entities and private developers, are advancing this project by constructing the missing sections of the RiverWalk trail.

In 2011, the Village of Ossining studied potential routes along its waterfront to align with the existing or proposed RiverWalk trails north and south of Ossining. Additionally, the Village identified potential interconnections with existing trails such as the Old Croton Aqueduct and paths in the Crawbuckie Nature Preserve.

### The Fourth Regional Plan for the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Metropolitan Area (2017)

The Forth Regional Plan provides a broad picture of the economic, housing, public institutions and infrastructure status of the New York, New Jersey and Connecticut region. Created by the Regional Plan Association (RPA), which is a non-profit organization producing reports for the Tri-State area, the Plan sets forth a series of recommendations informed by the core values of equity, health, prosperity and sustainability. The suggested strategies span from public transportation improvements, to climate change preparedness, to affordable housing creation.

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## Local Context

The Village of Ossining is an intermediate center, which encompasses an area of about 3 square miles. Diverse land uses are distributed throughout the Village, providing residents with several public amenities, parks, and retail and community services. Mostly known in the past for the presence of the Sing Sing Correctional Facility, the Village's waterfront has partially transformed in the past two decades. Today, it contains a number of different uses, from recreational to residential to industrial.

The Village of Ossining features a variety of natural attractions, which provide opportunities for recreational activities such as exploring the natural features of the Sing Sing Kill's gorge and creek, or admiring the Double Arch Bridge of the Old Croton Aqueduct, one of the largest public health infrastructure works of the 19$^{th}$ century. Nature walks such as the Old Croton Aqueduct trail (extending from Yonkers to the New Croton Reservoir) and the Sing Sing Kill Greenway are popular and attract visitors from all over the region. Ossining's three-mile long waterfront, which reveals the outstanding beauty of the Hudson Palisades across the river, is another asset that draws people to the Village.

The attractiveness of the Village of Ossining does not end with its natural features. A built environment of historical and cultural relevance characterizes Ossining, with buildings of particular significance still

standing since the Revolutionary War Era. The downtown block of Main Street, better known as the "Crescent", is particularly attractive for the many intact 19th century buildings, which are a testament to the glorious past of Ossining. Today, the beautiful Victorian buildings along Main Street host renewed cafes and restaurants that offer a variety of cuisines to residents and visitors. Another area of historic importance is represented by the Sparta neighborhood, which has been designated by the Village as a Historic and Architectural Design District for historic preservation purposes.

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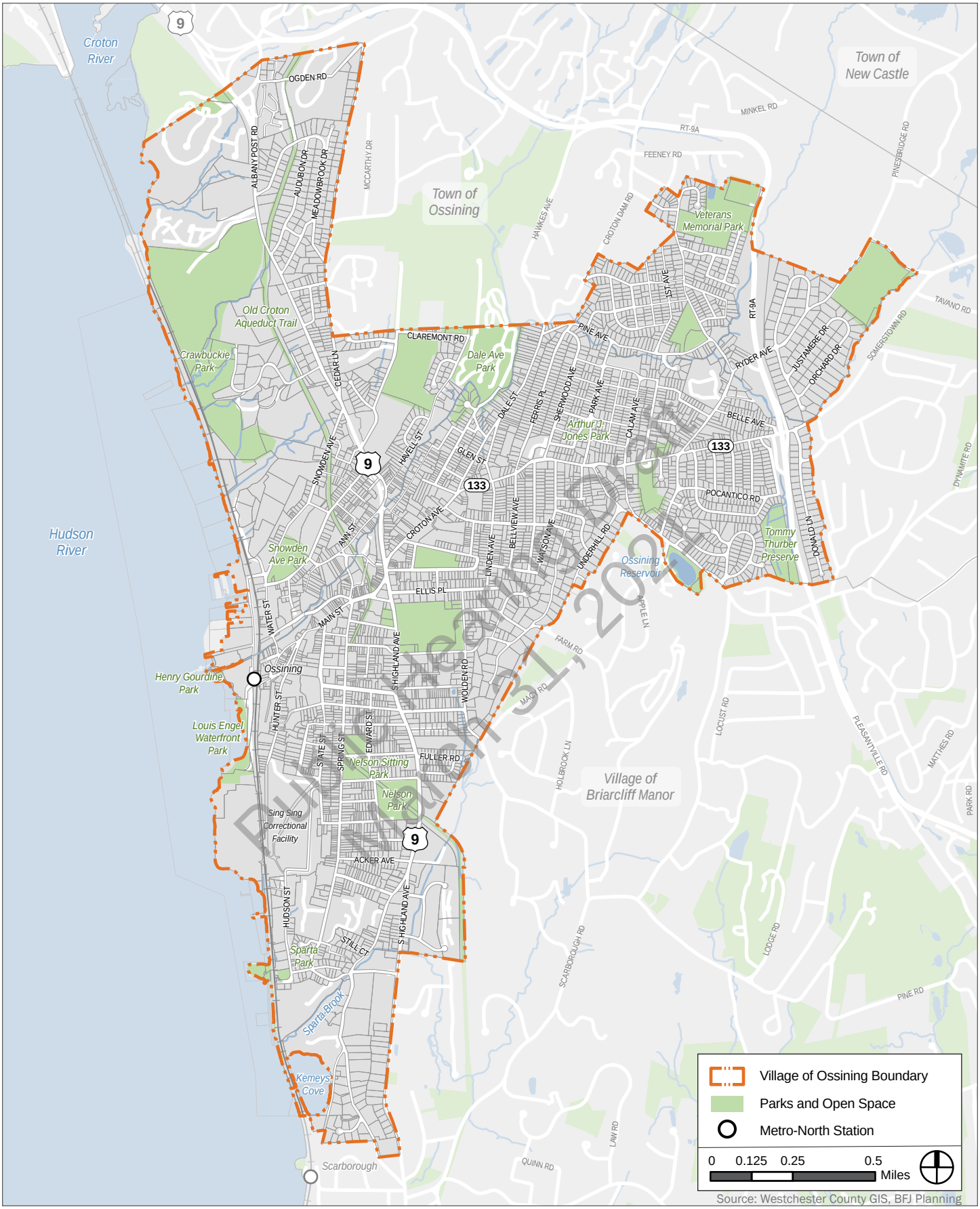


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**Figure 3: Village of Ossining**

*Local Planning Studies and Resources*

### 2009 Comprehensive Plan

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan, structured in eight chapters organized by topic (Waterfront, Downtown, Transportation, Infrastructure, Housing, Neighborhood Quality of Life), had wide-ranging objectives and strategies. Each chapter had its overarching objectives defined and, for each of these, a list of the proposed strategies was included. Zoning changes and other actions by various Village agencies were recommended in order to implement the recommendations set forth.

### Village of Ossining's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)

The Village of Ossining's LWRP, adopted in 1991 and most recently amended in 2011, offers strategies for redevelopment and land conservation along the three miles of Village's shoreline. Eight sub-areas are identified to provide strategies and policies that are tailored to the needs of different neighborhoods. Four macro-issues are also identified in the LWRP: public access to waterfront lands, railroad station parking and circulation to and from the railroad station, redevelopment, and protection from erosion.

Section III of the Village's LWRP proposes wide-ranging policies that concern development, fish and wildlife, flooding and erosion, public access, recreation and water and air resource policies. Proposed land and water uses (including private projects) are also listed in the LWRP. All these resources seek to ensure strategic and viable revitalization of the Ossining's waterfront, while ensuring environmentally sound approaches to land redevelopment.

### Ossining Downtown Redevelopment – Final Report (2017)

In 2017, the Village Board of Trustees appointed a working committee to envision the revitalization of Downtown. The committee, composed by community members from diverse backgrounds and expertise, engaged various groups of stakeholders including business owners and Village residents to explore issues and opportunities in the Downtown area. This effort led to the creation of five subcommittees on the following topics:

- Placemaking, Open Space, and the Built Environment
- Transportation and Parking
- Innovative Ideas
- Outside Groups and Consulting
- Comprehensive Plan Review

This work built upon existing studies and resources to provide a full picture of where the Village is, and what can be done to move forward. Each subcommittee reviewed case studies from other communities and provided tailored recommendations. Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan Review subcommittee provided an update on the status of each of the strategies that were included in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. The final report is a collection of the work that each subcommittee has done, and has become a key informational piece for Ossining's decision-making process.

### Market Square and Post Office Parking Lots – Community Input Results (2015)

In 2015, the Village of Ossining Department of Planning engaged the Village's residents to share their vision and priorities on a central asset of the Downtown: Market Square and its surrounding parking lots. The purpose of this web-based survey informed the Department of Planning on the needs and priorities of Ossining residents with the regard of the potential development of the parking lots at Market Square. The results of the public survey, which had 208 participants, highlighted a strong preference for the presence of public space as a component of any potential development, a desire for

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high quality and cohesive architecture, and a need to address parking availability for any potential development.

### Housing Studies (2016-2018)

Over the past decade, the Village of Ossining has commissioned a number of planning documents and reports on the topic of housing. A substantial amount of research and feedback from organizations, residents and community stakeholders went into these studies, which offered a comprehensive assessment of housing community needs, and common issues. Recommendations, policies and strategies elaborated by these housing studies are critical for the decision-making process on planning and future development strategies. Some of these studies were commissioned to evaluate the possible adoption of Emergency Tenant Protection Act (ETPA) regulation for the Village of Ossining, in an effort to expand affordable housing options.

Key municipal documents include the following housing studies:

- "Connecting the Dots: Working toward Comprehensive Community Development", 2018.

Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, IFCA Housing Network, and the Village of Ossining collaborated to conduct a series of charrettes and community engagement sessions focusing on housing and revitalization efforts in the Village. The findings of these charrettes, which showed consistency with previous studies, informed a number of recommendations that included updating the 2009 Comprehensive Plan, ensuring consistency between zoning and the comprehensive plan, and creating an economic development strategy for Main Street and the surrounding neighborhood.

- "Housing Vacancy Rate Analysis", 2018.

The Collective for Community, Culture and Environment provided an analysis of housing vacancy in the Village for buildings with six or more units, built before 1974. These buildings would be eligible for ETPA provisions, if the Village were to adopt such provisions. The result of the survey, which included 64 parcels with 1,503 units, showed a vacancy rate of just over 3% - a rate that would allow the Village to declare a state of housing emergency according to the NYS ETPA.

- "Housing Needs Assessment", 2017.

In February 2017, the Village of Ossining commissioned Kevin Dwarka LLC to analyze the Village's housing needs, review best practices and identify a set of housing policy strategies. The housing study, which included substantial input from the community, resulted in the completion of four technical papers:

  - Technical Paper #1: Quantitative Analysis
  - Technical Paper #2: Regulatory Assessment
  - Technical Paper #3: Community Engagement Record
  - Technical Paper #4: Policy Framework

Eight housing policy strategies came out from the in-depth study, including increasing citizens' awareness of building code regulations, updating the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Regulations to enable the construction of multi-family housing in strategic areas and adopting State Rent Stabilization Law to eligible multifamily buildings.

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### Waterfront Access Trail Plan (2011)

Recognizing the importance of the Ossining waterfront as a public recreational resource, in 2011 the Village's Waterfront Visioning Committee created the Waterfront Access Trail Plan. The plan builds upon some existing resources such as the 2009 Comprehensive Plan and the Village's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. The Waterfront Access Trail Plan focuses on three strategic objectives: identification of potential alignments for segments of the Westchester RiverWalk trail (including linkages to sites of interest and wayfinding); site-specific recommendations for improvements to waterfront recreational resources; and cost estimate, permits requirements, and potential funding sources for recommended waterfront and trail improvements. The plan was supported by grants from New York State Hudson River Valley Greenway and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Hudson River Estuary Program.

### Streamlining the Land Development Approval Process (2014)

In 2014, the Land Use Law Center of PACE University analyzed the current land development process that the Village of Ossining had developed over time. The evaluation involved conducting meetings with the relevant bodies involved in the approval process (departments, boards, etc.), as well as with other stakeholders/applicants and their professional consultants (architects, attorneys, etc.), in addition to reviewing the Village's zoning code and other provisions.

The final report highlighted that lack of information and lack of financial resources to engage professionals cause some of the complaints regarding the land development review and approval process in the Village. Some of the recommendations focus on increasing the informational material available for the public and increase staff capacity for the Building and Planning Departments. Additionally, other strategies recommended to streamline some development processes included exempting certain projects from the Board of Architectural Review approvals and adopting a local Type II list (actions that do not have significant impact on the environment) for environmental reviews under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

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## *Plans from Neighboring Communities*

### Town of Ossining

The Town of Ossining is in the process of developing a new Comprehensive Plan with Sustainability Elements. The Town's current Comprehensive Plan is from 2002, with updates to its "Vision Plan" section in 2015. The Town's Comprehensive Plan focuses on the unincorporated areas of the Town, which extend north-east of the Village of Ossining boundary, as the Town's planning and zoning powers are limited to such portion and excludes the Village of Ossining.

The 2002 Comprehensive Plan serves as a vision document and a blueprint for the Town's future. It contains goals, implementation strategies and recommendations that would guide decision-makers on identified issues and opportunities, such as ensuring housing options, preserving natural resources and historic sites, improving community services and events, and maintaining good quality of life for the residents.

The development of the new plan is partially funded by the State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Climate Smart Communities Grant Program. The Town of Ossining's goal is to include sustainability elements throughout the Plan and have a specific section on Planning and Infrastructure for Bicycling and Walking, in addition to the traditional Comprehensive Plan topic areas.

### Briarcliff Manor

The Village of Briarcliff Manor adopted its Comprehensive Plan in 2007, and a more recent addendum was developed in 2017. The 2007 Plan provides strategies and recommendations to implement the community vision for 20 years and beyond. Building upon the 1988 Briarcliff Manor Comprehensive Plan, the 2007 Plan reaffirms the following guiding principles while addressing concerns of recent developments:

- Preserve open space throughout the Village.
- Manage future growth along the Scarborough Road Corridor and promote development that would maintain the corridor's existing character; and
- Strengthen the Central Business District (CBD), linking both sides of the CBD separated by Route 9A and encouraging appropriate redevelopment.

## Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Trends

*Methodology and Data Sources*

This section provides an overview of key demographic and housing indicators to describe current conditions and trends for the Village of Ossining. To identify trends and changes over time, three different periods in time have been analyzed: 2000, 2010, and 2018. Unless otherwise noted, the datasets utilized in this analysis are the 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS) for contemporary data, and the Decennial Census for year 2010 and 2000. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan used data from the 2000 Decennial Census, which enables for appropriate trends analysis. Additionally, a comparison across geographies, using Westchester County and the Town of Ossining (only the unincorporated part of the Town, excluding the Village of Ossining and Briarcliff Manor), has been provided to put socio-economic changes and demographic trends happening at the Village level into a broader, regional context

It is important to note that datasets from the 2000 Census did not include socio-demographic information regarding the Sing Sing Correctional Facility population. In fact, Census tract 133.03 (now Census tract 9820) did not provide any data such as population count or race/ethnicity breakdown for the year 2000. More recent datasets of 2010 Census and 2018 ACS provide such data. However, in order to compare data across different datasets and understand overtime changes that may require adjustments in Village's services, the Sing Sing Correctional Facility tract is excluded from the socio-demographic analyses, unless otherwise noted.

Another important factor while analyzing socio-demographic data is recognizing the issue of undercounted population in the Census data, which other Westchester County communities such as Yonkers, Mount Vernon and Port Chester have been experiencing too. Historically, the Census has had difficulties to reach some categories of population, hence the enumeration for some categories of population is likely to be less accurate than other categories. For example, it is believed that foreign-born population, especially recent immigrants, are one of the "hard-to-count" groups[1]. Given the relatively high percentage of foreign-born population living in the Village of Ossining, it is likely that there have been undercounting issues in all the Census datasets cited in this chapter.

*Population*

Following the rapid growth of the mid-20th century, Ossining experienced steady growth from the 1980s until 2000 (source: Westchester County Population Change). However, the population trend has changed

[1] "Differential Undercounts in the U.S. Census. Who is Missed?", William P. O'Hare, Springer Briefs in Population Studies, 2019.

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since 2000, and a slight decline in the Village population has been recorded between 2000 and 2018 (-2.2%, Table 1). On the contrary, in the same timeframe, Westchester County population has increased (+4.9%), while the Town's population has remained steady.

**Table 1: Population Trends, 2000 to 2018. Not including Sing Sing Correctional Facility population.**

| | 2000 | 2010 | 2018 | Percentage Change 2000-2018 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Village of Ossining (*)** | 24,010 | 23,311 | 23,472 | -2.2% |
| **Town of Ossining** | 5,514 | 5,406 | 5,516 | 0.0% |
| **Westchester County** | 923,459 | 949,113 | 968,815 | 4.9% |

** Population residing at the Sing Sing Correctional Facility (Census Tract 9820, ex 133.03) is not included in this table.*
*Sources: 2000-2010 Decennial Censuses, 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.*

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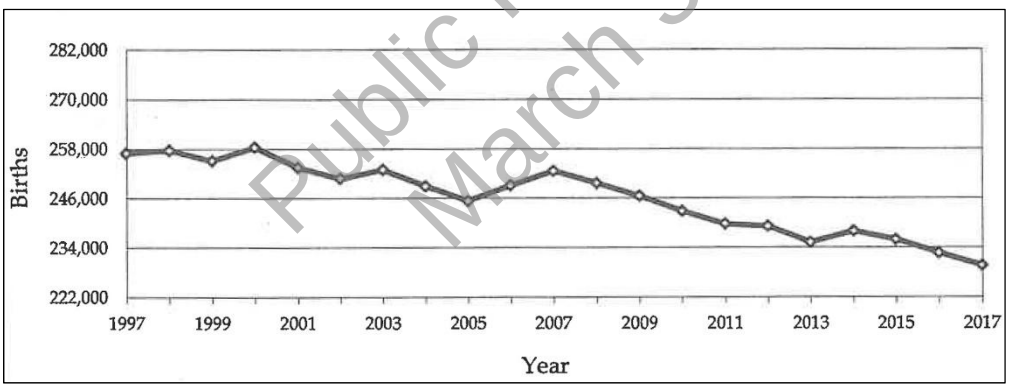
Population numbers are driven by two factors: immigration and new births. At the national, state and county level, birthrates have been declining for more than 10 years. In 2018, the birthrate in the United States per 1,000 women ages 15-44 fell to 59.0, the lowest ever recorded.[2] In New York State, the number of births are steadily declining since 2007 (Chart 1), while in Westchester County births are decreasing since 2000 (Chart 2). This may account, in part, for the slight decline in population that the Village has experienced between 2000 and 2010/2018.

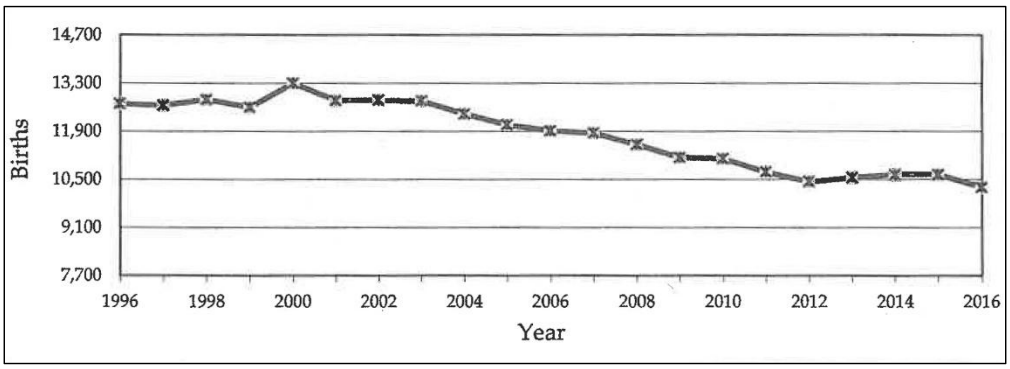
**Chart 1: New York State Births, 1997-2017**




*Source: Western Suffolk BOCES.*
*Note: 2017 data are provisional*

[2] "U.S. Births in 2018 Hit 32-Year Low", The Wall Street Journal, May 15, 2019.

**Chart 2: Westchester County Births, 1997-2016**




*Source: Western Suffolk BOCES.*
*Note: 2017 County birth data is not yet available.*

### *Race and Ethnicity*

In 2000, the Village of Ossining was more racially diverse than both Westchester County and the Town of Ossining. The diversity in the Village is even more pronounced today, although the racial/ethnicity share in the Village has undergone some shifts. The Hispanic/Latino community has increased from 27.7% of the total population share of the Village in 2000, to 46.7% in 2018 (+19%) (Chart 3). While Westchester County also experienced an increase in Hispanic/Latino population between 2000 and 2010, the Hispanic/Latino population in the Village grew at a faster rate (+15% compared to +6.2% of the County). Recent data from 2018, however, reflect a slowdown in the growth rate of the Hispanic/Latino population in the Village (+4% from 2010 to 2018).

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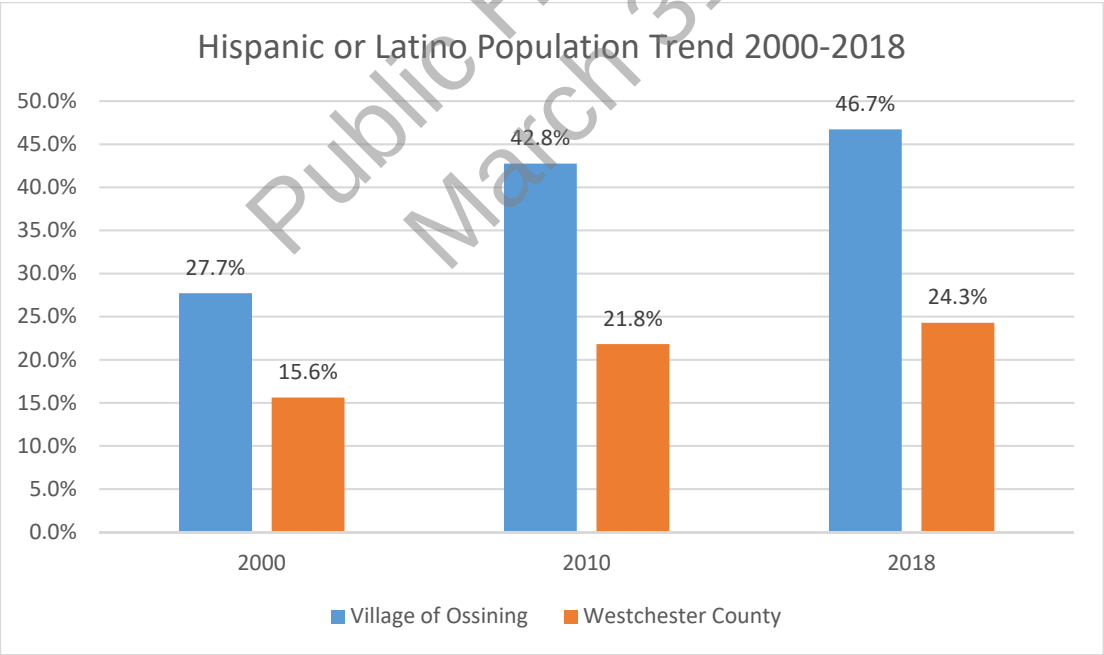
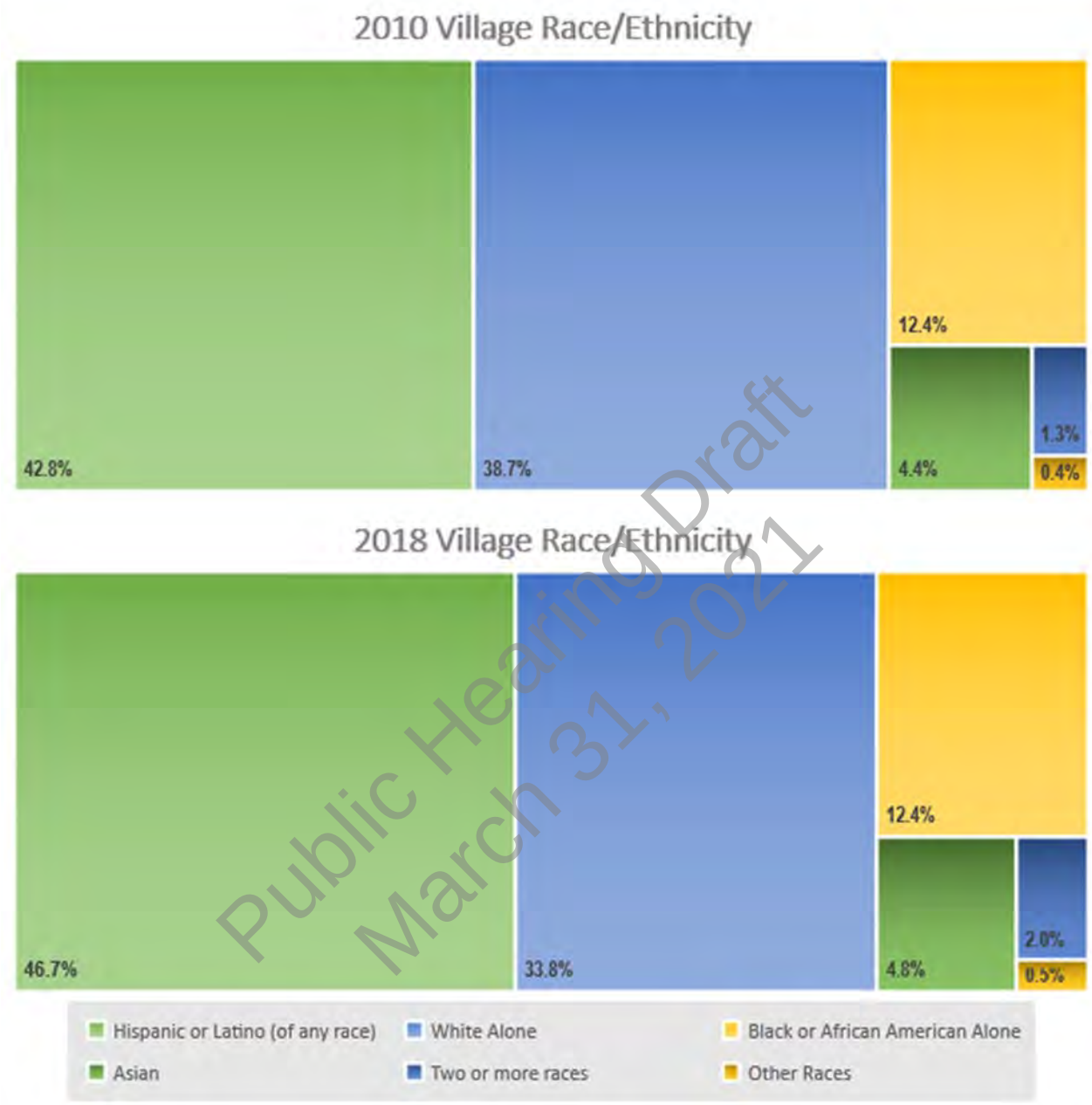
**Chart 3: Hispanic or Latino Population Trends, Village of Ossining and Westchester County.**




*Source: 2000-2010 Decennial Censuses, 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.*

**Chart 4: Village Race/Ethnicity Composition, 2010 and 2018.**

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*Source: 2010 Decennial Census, 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.*

*Age*

In the last two decades, the Village has seen an increase of its share of young population (under 18), from 20.7% in 2000 to 24.2% in 2018. The number of people under 18 has increased by more than 700 children/teenagers. The opposite trend is occurring at the County level: between 2000 and 2018, Westchester County experienced a decline in under 18 population; from a share of 25.0% in 2000, it has declined to 22.4% in 2018, which is a smaller share compared to the Village's 24.2%.

**Table 2: Population Under 18 and 65 and Over, Trend 2000-2018.**

| | 2000 | | 2018 | | Change 2000-2018 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Village** | **County** | **Village** | **County** | **Village** | **County** |
| **Under 18 years old** | 20.7% | 25.0% | 24.2% | 22.4% | 3.5% | -2.6% |
| **65 years old and over** | 11.0% | 14.0% | 13.9% | 16.4% | 2.9% | 2.4% |

*Source: 2000-2010 Decennial Censuses, 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.*

The median age of the Village population does not reflect the increase in younger population described above. In fact, the median age has actually slightly increased, from 35.8 in 2000 to 36.8 in 2018. This may be a result of an increase in the "senior" population (65 and over) in recent years, combined with the general slight decline in population. The Village's median age is still higher than the County's, which has been experiencing an increase in median age at a much faster rate than the Village.

**Table 3: Median Age Trends, 2000-2018.**

| | 2000 | | 2018 | | Change 2000-2018 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Village** | **County** | **Village** | **County** | **Village** | **County** |
| Median Age (years) (*) | 35.8 | 37.6 | 36.8 | 40.8 | 1.0% | 3.2% |

*(*) For the Village, the median age is calculated as the average median age between the five tracts considered (Tract 9820 is excluded).*
*Source: 2000-2010 Decennial Censuses, 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.*

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### *Educational Attainment*

In the village, both the percentage of high school graduates and Bachelor's or higher degree holders have increased between 2000 and 2018. These percentage increases in high school graduates in the Village is higher than the County's and the Town's percentage increase; however, with 78.2%, the Village has a smaller share of people that graduated from high school than the County's (87.8%) and the Town's (95.3%).

### *Household size*

The Village has experienced a slight increase in the number of households between 2000 and 2018, from 8,227 to 8,418 households. This trend is aligned with the County's and the Town's. In terms of household size, the Village experienced a very slight decline in recent years, from 2010 to 2018. Although the Village's 2018 average household size is greater than the County's (2.77 and 2.71, respectively), differently from the Village's pattern, the County's household size has been steadily increasing since 2000.

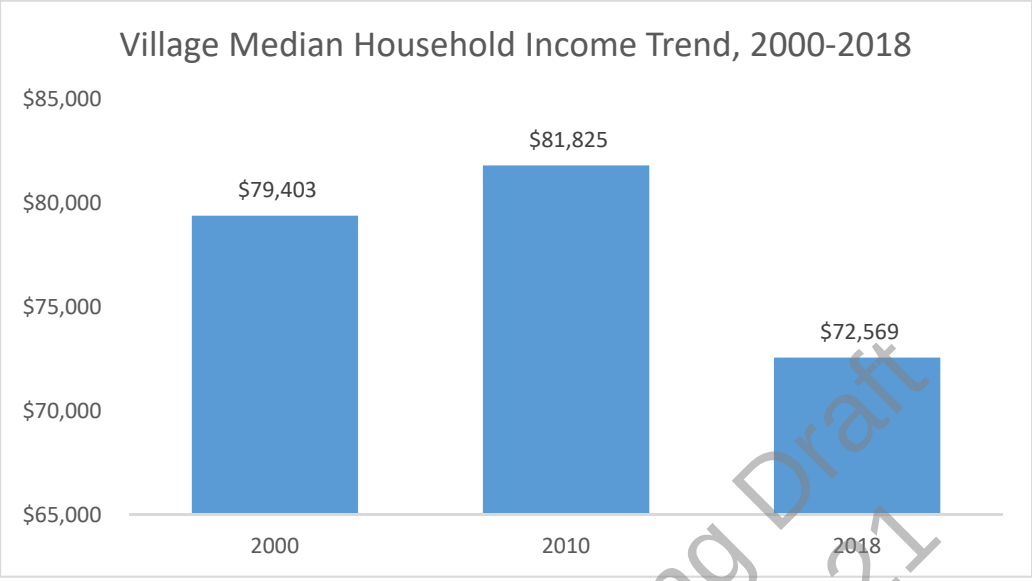
### *Household Income*

The median household income (MHI) of the Village was $52,681 in 2000, $71,055 in 2010, and $72,569 in 2018. An inflation-adjusted MHI, in 2018 dollars, has been calculated in order to understand trends across time within the Village, and compare those trends across geographies (County and Town). In 2018 dollars, the Village MHI slightly increased between 2000 and 2010 (+ 3%), while it significantly decreased between 2010 and 2018 (- 11.3%).

This trend is not consistent with the Town and the County. The Town experienced a significant decrease in MHI between 2000 and 2010 (-14%), and an even more significant drop between 2010 and 2018 (-28.7%). On the other hand, the County has experienced the opposite trend than the Village: after a 4.3%

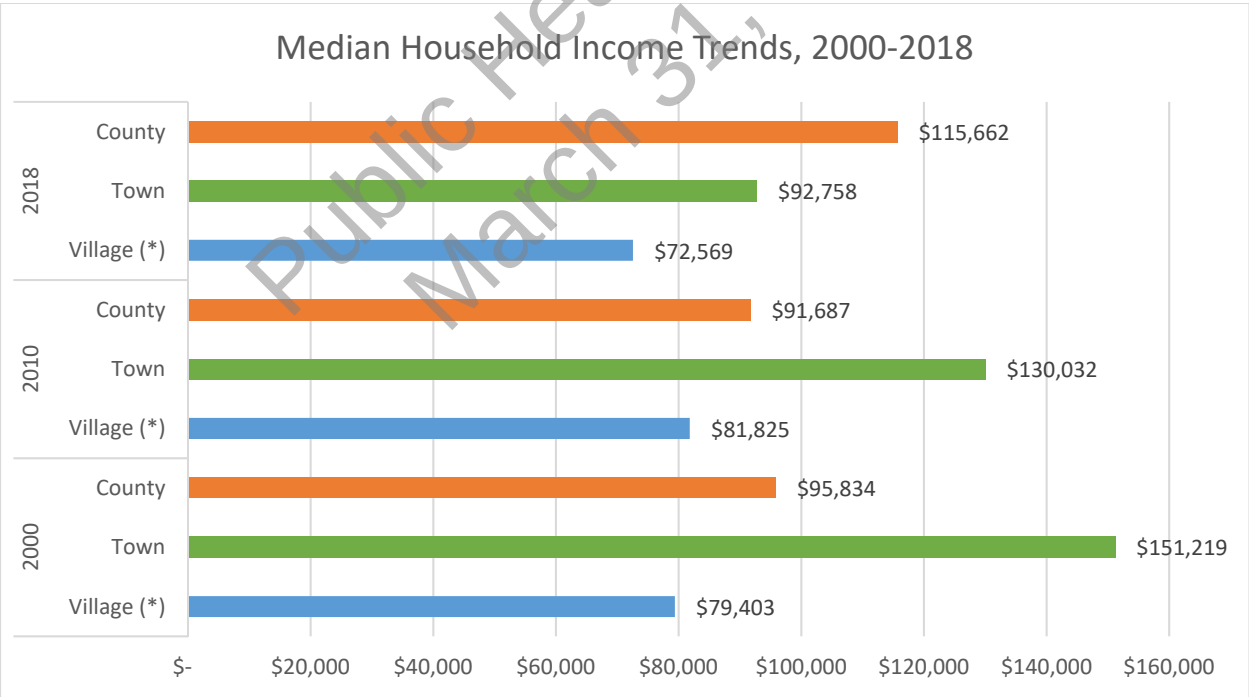
drop in MHI from 2000 to 2010, the County's median household income has significantly improved to $115,662, which represents an increase of 26.1% from 2010 to 2018.

**Chart 5: Village Median Household Income Trend, 2000-2018 (in 2018 $).**




*Source: 2000-2010 Decennial Censuses, 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.*

**Chart 6: Median Household Income in the Village, Town, and Westchester County, 2000-2018.**




*(*) For the Village, data above show average median household between the five Census Tracts considered. Source: 2000-2010 Decennial Censuses, 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.*

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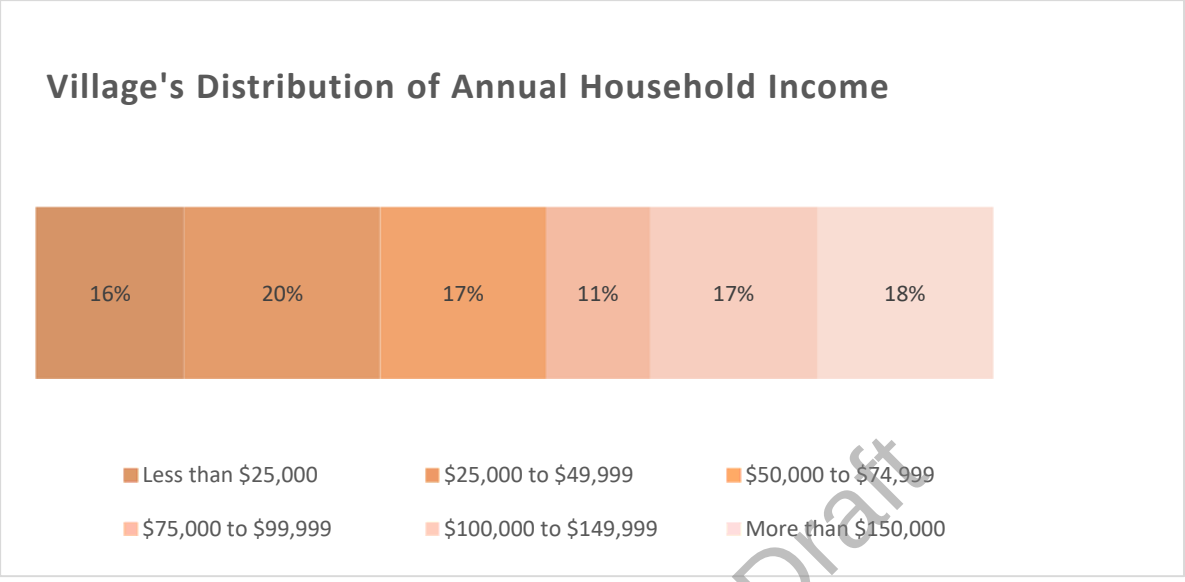
**Chart 7: Distribution of Annual Household Income in the Village, 2018.**




*Source: 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.*

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### *Families*

In the Village, the number of families and the average family size have both increased between 2000 and 2018. In this timeframe, the number of families in the Village has gone up by 5.5%, while in Westchester County the number has increased by only 1.9%. A similar trend is happening in the average size of families in the two geographies: the numbers are similar – 3.33 average family size in the Village and 3.31 in the County – but the increase in average family size within the Village has been slightly more pronounced than the County's between 2000 and 2018 (+5% and +3.1% respectively).

**Table 4: Family Trends, Village of Ossining and Westchester County, 2000-2018**

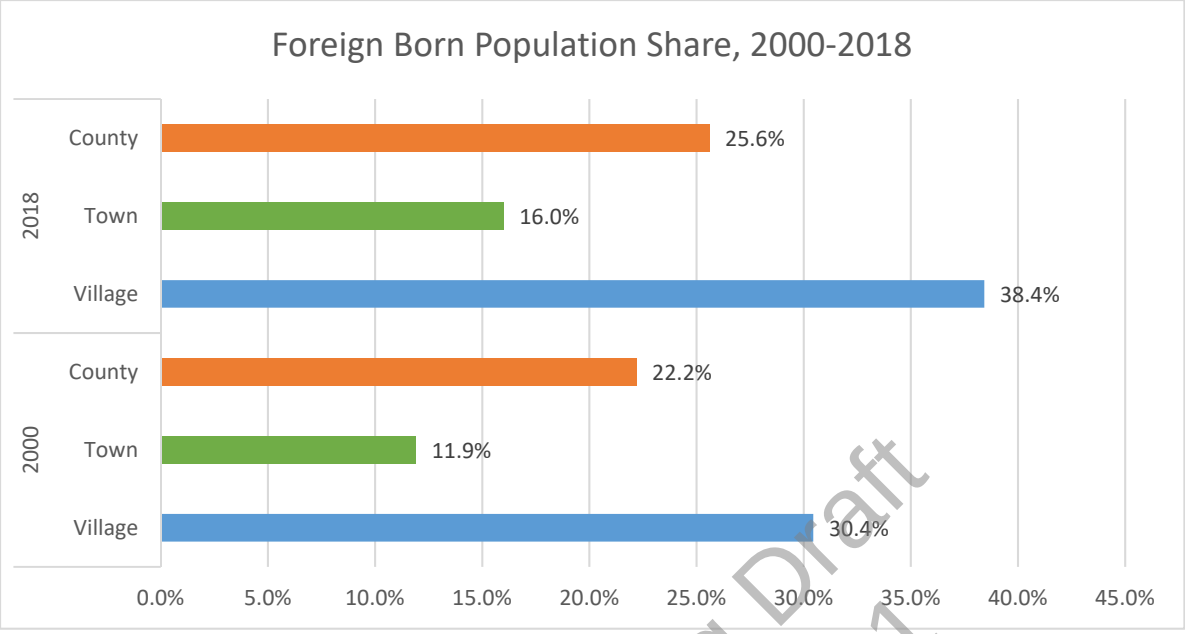
| | 2000 | | 2010 | | 2018 | | Change 2000-2018 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Village** | **County** | **Village** | **County** | **Village** | **County** | **Village** | **County** |
| **Total Families** | 5,343 | 235,201 | 5,555 | 236,419 | 5,636 | 239,615 | 5.5% | 1.9% |
| **Average Family Size** | 3.17 | 3.21 | 3.28 | 3.23 | 3.33 | 3.31 | 5.0% | 3.1% |

*Source: 2000-2010 Decennial Censuses, 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.*

### *Foreign-Born Population and Language Spoken at Home Other than English*

The number of foreign-born residents in the Village has steadily increased from 2000 to 2018, reflecting the trend of increased diversity that has been described in the Race/Ethnicity section. At 38.4%, the percentage of the Village foreign-born population in 2018 is much higher than both the County's (25.6%) and the Town's (16.0%).

**Chart 8: Foreign Born Population Trends, 2000-2018.**




*Source: 2000-2010 Decennial Censuses, 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.*

In 2018, more than 50% of the Village population (population 5 years old and over) does not speak English at home. The percentage at the County and the Town level is much lower (33.3% and 24.5%, respectively). The Village of Ossining has seen a sharp increase in population that speaks a language other than English at home between 2000 and 2010 (+10%), while between 2010 and 2018 the number increased but at a slower rate (+2.9%). Of the 51.9% of people that do not speak English at home, more than 83% speaks Spanish.

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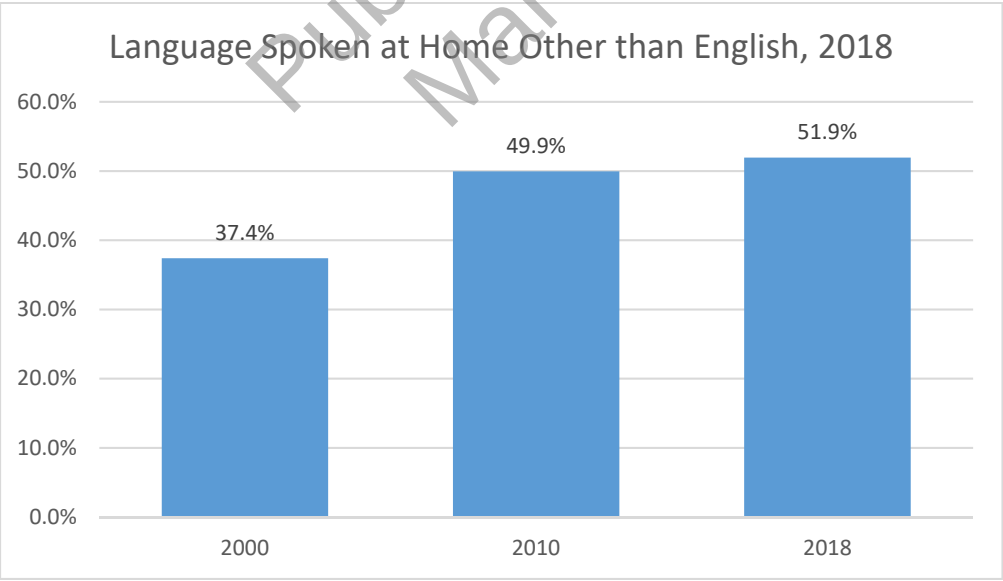
**Chart 9: Language Spoken at Home Other than English, Village of Ossining, 2018.**

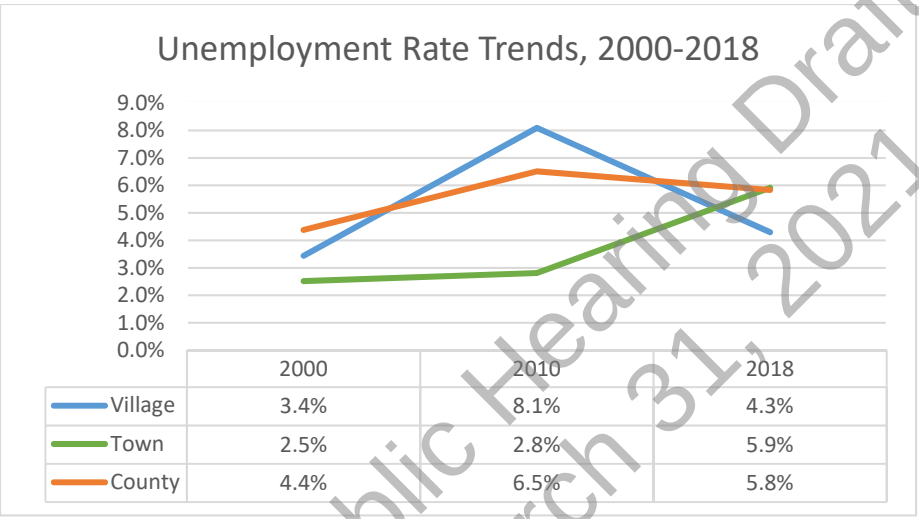



*Source: 2000-2010 Decennial Censuses, 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.*

*Employment Status*

The unemployment rate in the Village is generally lower that the County's, with the exception of 2010, when the Village had seen a percentage of unemployed population greater than the County (8.1% and 6.5%, respectively). This could be a sign that the 2008 recession hit Ossining's economy harder than the average Westchester County municipality. The Village unemployment rate in 2018 was 4.3%, which is aligned with the US unemployment rate in that year. A 4.3% unemployment rate is considered by most economists to be close to full employment. It represents a healthy employment picture for the Village. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has also had a significant impact on employment during 2020. Jobs recovery in certain industries may take months or years to fully recover to pre-pandemic numbers. Also, the impact of COVID-19 has been different on different sectors of the economy. The service sector, which tends to have lower income jobs, has been more affected by COVID-19 than white collar sectors including office and financial employment.

**Chart 10: Unemployment Rate Trends, 2000-2018.**




| | 2000 | 2010 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Village | 3.4% | 8.1% | 4.3% |
| Town | 2.5% | 2.8% | 5.9% |
| County | 4.4% | 6.5% | 5.8% |

*Source: 2000-2010 Decennial Censuses, 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.*

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*Employment by Industry*

The "Educational services, health care and social services" industry category employs the largest percentage of the Village's residents with 23.9%, followed by "Construction" (15.6%) and "Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services" (12.4%). The percentage of Villagers employed in the construction sector is significantly higher than the Town's (5.4%) and the County's (6.6%). Other discrepancies between the Village's and the County's industry data concern the substantially lower percentage of residents working in the "Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing" industry (5.9% and 10.2%, respectively), and the considerable higher percentage of Villagers working in the "Other services, except public administration" category (9.8% for the Village, vs. 5.6% for the County).

The Village employment base has a high percentage of construction and service jobs and a low percentage of finance, insurance and real estate (FIRE). The construction and service sector jobs normally pay less than those in the FIRE sector. This may account, in part, for the lower incomes in the Village when compared to the Town and County.

**Table 5: Employment by industry for the civilian employed population over 16 (2018).**

| | Village | Town | County |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining** | 0.5% | 0.0% | 0.2% |
| **Construction** | 15.6% | 5.4% | 6.6% |
| **Manufacturing** | 3.0% | 4.6% | 3.8% |
| **Wholesale trade** | 2.4% | 1.9% | 2.5% |
| **Retail trade** | 8.5% | 4.8% | 8.8% |
| **Transportation and warehousing, and utilities** | 3.4% | 4.2% | 4.2% |
| **Information** | 3.2% | 4.8% | 3.2% |
| **Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing** | 5.9% | 11.9% | 10.2% |
| **Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services** | 12.4% | 15.0% | 14.5% |
| **Educational services, and health care and social assistance** | 23.9% | 32.3% | 27.7% |
| **Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services** | 7.4% | 6.1% | 8.8% |
| **Other services, except public administration** | 9.8% | 6.3% | 5.6% |
| **Public administration** | 3.9% | 2.6% | 3.8% |

*Source: 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.*

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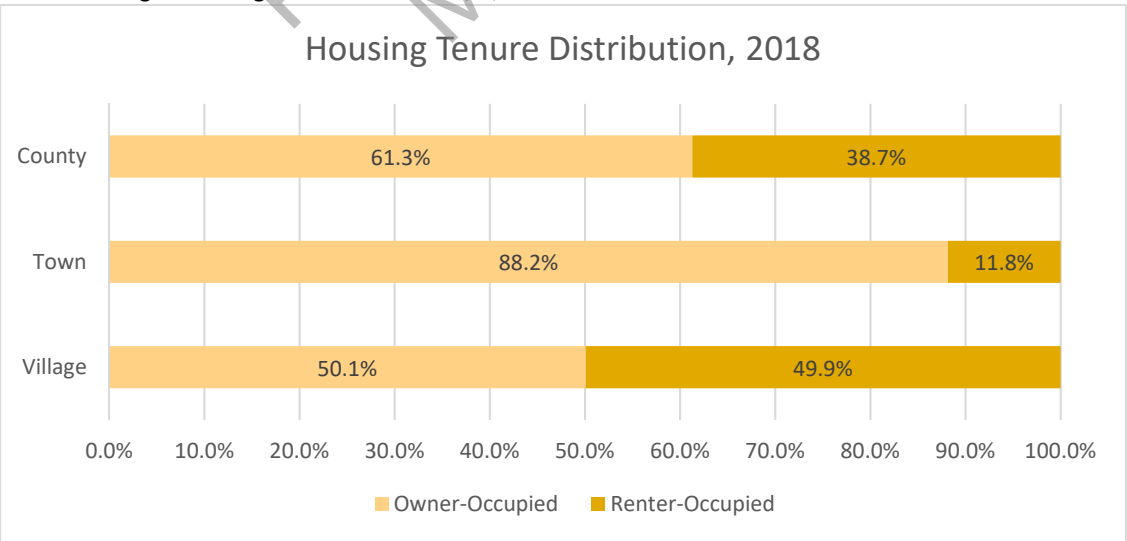
### *Housing Tenure*

In 2018, approximately half of the Village's occupied housing units were rental units (Chart 11). This pattern differs from Westchester County and the Town of Ossining, as they have a much lower percentage of rental units (38.7% and 11.8% respectively). In the Village, the percentage of renter-occupied units has been much higher that the County and the Town since at least 2000, when rental units made up 47.9% of the occupied housing.

More detailed housing data and trends are included in Chapter 8: Housing and Neighborhoods Preservation.

**Chart 11: Village's Housing Tenure Distribution, 2018.**




*Source: 2000-2010 Decennial Censuses, 2014-2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates.*

# Chapter 3: Land Use and Zoning

## Goal

Maintain and promote Ossining's downtown and Croton Avenue Corridor as mixed-use neighborhoods by encouraging economically viable development that meets the highest design standards and improve Ossining's residential neighborhoods by protecting existing housing and reducing barriers to investment and renovation.

## Existing Conditions

### *LAND USE*

The Village of Ossining covers approximately four-square miles (2,565 acres) with land uses following a traditional pattern of development for Hudson Riverfront towns with the center of the village surrounded by residential neighborhoods. The village center is the commercial hub of the village, but commercial and mixed-use land uses stretch from the center down to the waterfront. This land is commercial/mixed-use in character with commercial, residential, institutional uses and some vacant/underutilized land. More broadly, the center is surrounded by residential neighborhoods, while the north and south of the village show multi-family/single-family development supported by neighborhood/corridor commercial uses. Figure 4 shows existing land uses in the Village of Ossining in 2020.

According to current data from Westchester County Department of Planning, approximately 43 percent (1,109 acres) of the total area of the Village is classified residential; 25 percent (632 acres) is classified transportation/utilities (including roads, parking, etc.); 12 percent (297 acres) is classified institutional (including schools, churches, convents, etc.); 10 percent (244 acres) is classified open space (including parks and cemeteries); four percent is classified commercial/retail/office; one percent is classified industrial, and less than one percent is classified as mixed-use. Approximately five percent of the village is listed as vacant/undeveloped. Acreages and percentages are summarized in Table 6 below.

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**Table 6: Summary of Land Use by Acreage and Percent of Total Acreage in Village of Ossining, 2020**

| Land Use | Acres | Percent of Total |
|---|---|---|
| Residential (all densities) | 1,109 | 43.0% |
| Transportation/Communications/Utilities | 632 | 25.0% |
| Institutional & Public Assembly | 297 | 12.0% |
| Open Space (Parks, Nature Preserves, Cemeteries, etc.) | 244 | 10.0% |
| Commercial/Retail/Office | 112 | 4.0% |
| Industrial/Manufacturing | 38 | 1.0% |
| Vacant/Undeveloped | 119 | 5.0% |
| Mixed-Use | 13 | 0.5% |
| **TOTAL** | **2,565** | **100%** |

Source: *Westchester County and Town of Ossining GIS*

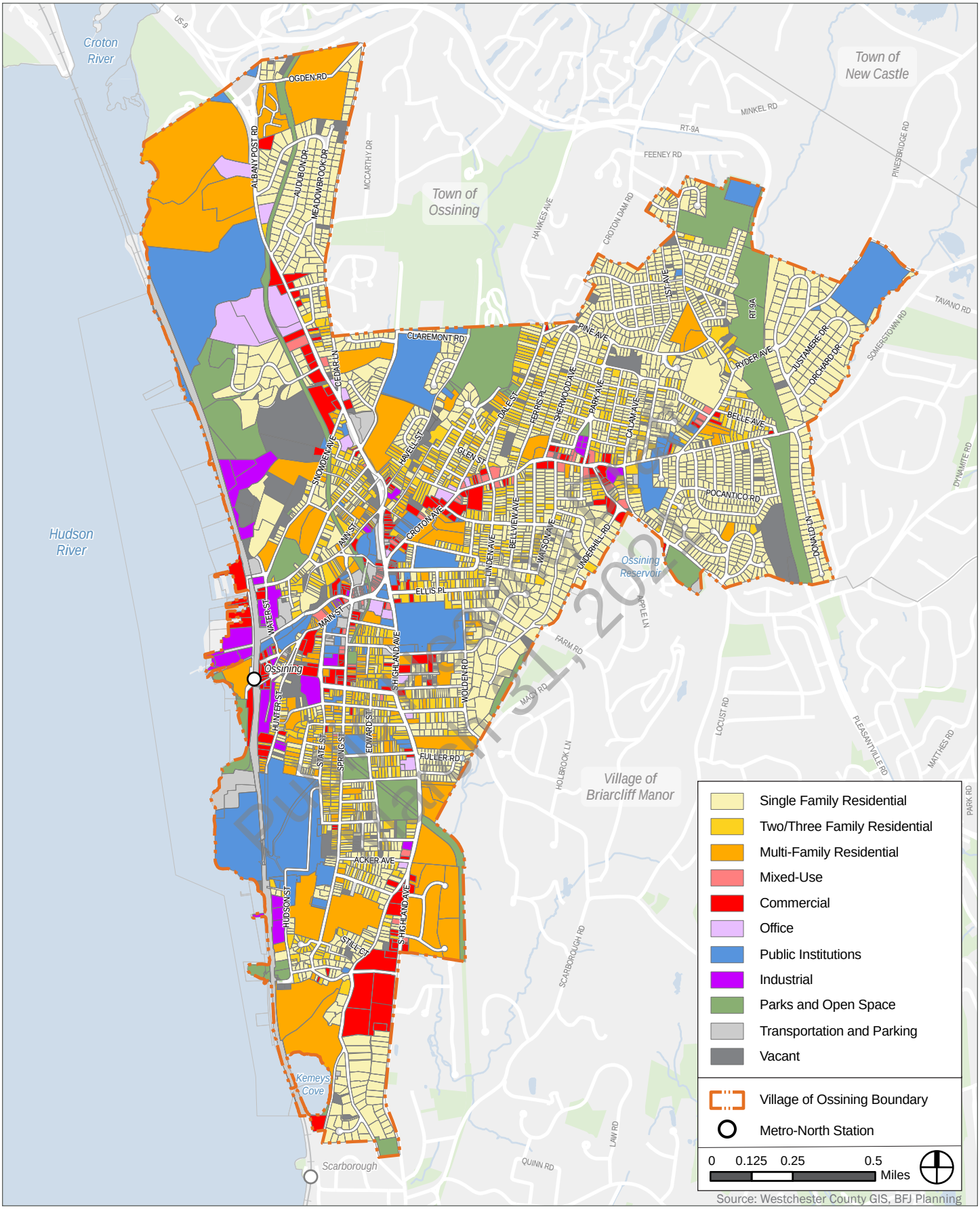


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**Figure 4: Land Use**

*Vacant Land*

Ossining is essentially fully developed, and while some new development has occurred since adoption of the 2009 comprehensive plan, especially along the waterfront and the village center, there remain limited vacant parcels throughout the Village where new development could occur. While approximately 119 acres (or five percent) of the total land in the village is classified vacant/undeveloped, approximately a third of this land is comprised by 10 parcels, some of which are unlikely to accommodate any significant amount of future development due to zoning, slopes and ownership related to conservation purposes (Figure 5). These conditions suggest that future development, especially that which could contribute positively to the Village's tax base, will likely have to occur as redevelopment on smaller existing infill sites, some of which may be already built upon and/or contaminated as former industrial sites. Therefore, opportunity for new development lies primarily with redevelopment of existing under-developed sites rather than with vacant land. Accommodating new development on such land will require a careful approach to planning (including incentives and flexibility).

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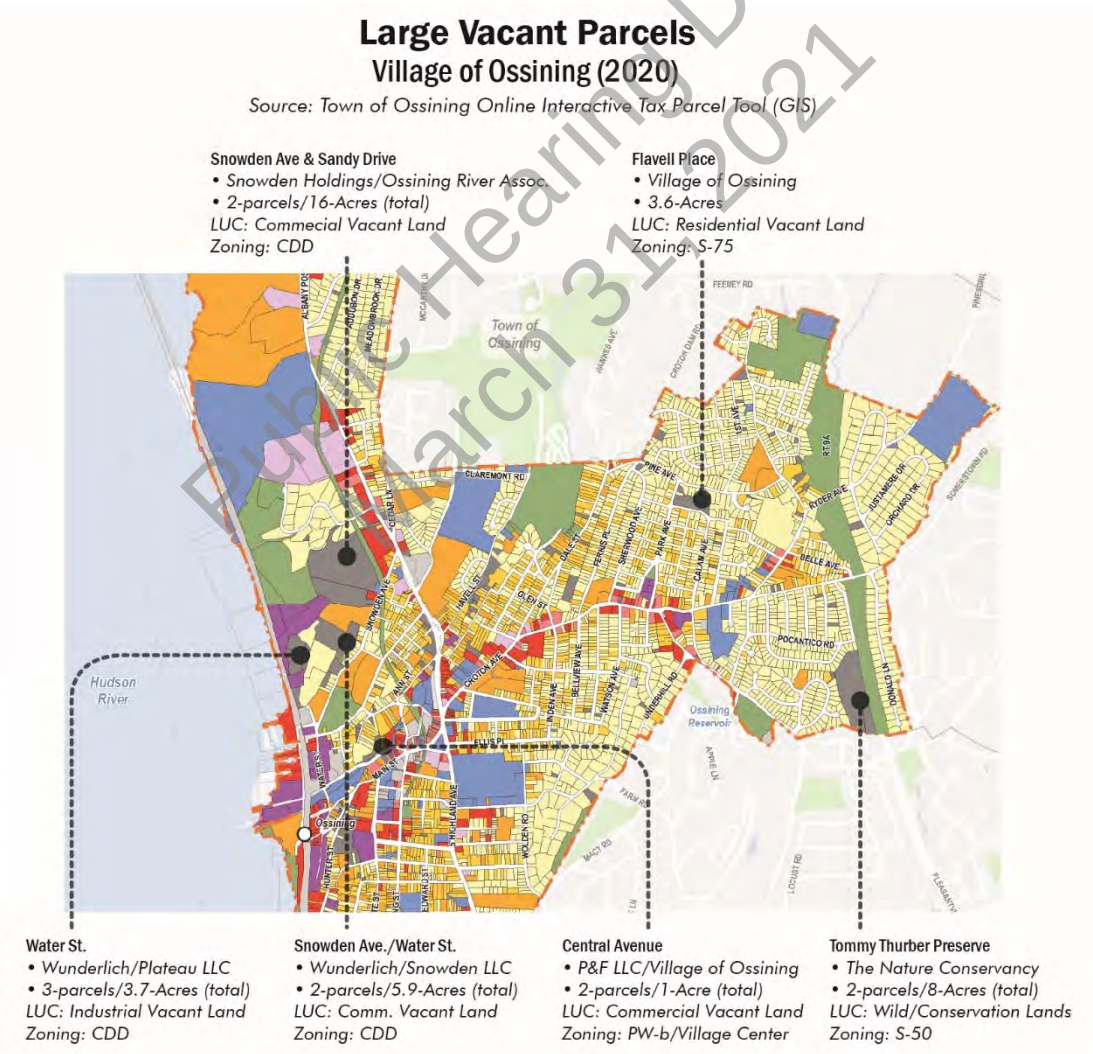
**Figure 5: Large Vacant Parcels**



*ZONING*

Zoning regulations are the Village's primary means for controlling the development and redevelopment of land. The role of the zoning code is to regulate which types of land use are permitted or prevented in specified areas of the Village. Zoning also controls density, scale, and design of buildings. The Ossining zoning code has 25 different zoning classifications. There are eight residential districts and 17 business/mixed-use districts. The residential districts include four single-family residential districts (S-125, S-100, S-75 and S-50), a two-family residential district (T-District), two multi-family districts (MF-1 and MF-2), and a planned residential district (PRD). The 17 business/mixed-use districts allow for a wide range of uses, including two specialized overlay districts governing (1) planned waterfront and railway development and (2) historic and architectural design (see Table 7 and Figure 6).

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**Figure 6: Zoning**

**Table 7: Summary of Zoning Districts by Acres and Percent of Total Land Area, Village of Ossining, 2020**

| District | District Name | Area (Acres) | Percent of Village | Number of Parcels | % of Total Number of Village's Parcels |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Residential Districts** | | | | | |
| S-125 | Single-Family Residence District | 169 | 8% | 171 | 4% |
| S-100 | Single-Family Residence District | 137 | 7% | 315 | 7% |
| S-75 | Single-Family Residence District | 315 | 15% | 1,137 | 25% |
| S-50 | Single-Family Residence District | 185 | 9% | 889 | 20% |
| T | Two-Family Residence District | 219 | 11% | 1,219 | 27% |
| MF-1 | Multi-Family Residence District | 85 | 4% | 25 | 1% |
| MF-2 | Multi-Family Residence District | 12 | 1% | 7 | 0% |
| PRD | Planned Residence District | 193 | 9% | 60 | 1% |
| | **TOTAL** | **1,315** | **64%** | **3,823** | **86%** |
| **Business/Mixed-Use Districts** | | | | | |
| PC | Planned Center District | 16 | 1% | 4 | 0% |
| NC-1 | Neighborhood Center District 1 | 16 | 1% | 49 | 1% |
| NC-2 | Neighborhood Center District 2 | 22 | 1% | 95 | 2% |
| VC | Village Center District | 38 | 2% | 203 | 5% |
| GB | General Business District | 24 | 1% | 49 | 1% |
| P-O | Professional Office District | 14 | 1% | 50 | 1% |
| O-R | Office-Research District | 132 | 6% | 12 | 0% |
| CDD | Conservation Development District | 126 | 6% | 30 | 1% |
| SP-N | Station Plaza North District | 2 | 0% | 33 | 1% |
| SP-S | Station Plaza South District | 1 | 0% | 1 | 0% |
| RDD | Riverfront Development District | 174 | 9% | 24 | 1% |
| PW-a | Northern Waterfront Subdistrict | 16 | 1% | 8 | 0% |
| PW-b | Central Waterfront—Transit-Oriented Subdistrict | 21 | 1% | 45 | 1% |
| PW-c | Central Waterfront—Hillside Subdistrict | 13 | 1% | 30 | 1% |
| IR | Institutional/Redevelopment District | 113 | 6% | 15 | 0% |
| | **TOTAL** | **728** | **36%** | **648** | **14%** |
| **Overlay Districts** | | | | | |
| PWRD | Planned Waterfront and Railway Development District (overlay) | | | | |
| HADD | Historical and Architectural Design Districts and Historic Landmarks (overlay) | | | | |
| Source: *Westchester County and Town of Ossining GIS* | | | | | |

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*Residential*

The Village of Ossining has a total of eight residential zoning districts, including four that allow only single-family residences as-of-right, with minimum lot sizes ranging from three dwelling units per acre (S-125) to eight dwelling units per acre (S-50). The term "as-of-right" means a principally permitted use under zoning that does not need any discretionary approval except for site plan approval from the Planning Board. Applicants proposing an as-of-right use need not seek special approval such as a variance or conditional use permit to build the project. Single family zones are mapped at the Village's northern, eastern, and southern boundaries (see Figure 7). Collectively, these single-family residence districts cover

approximately 800 acres or about 39 percent of the village's land area (see Table 8. Summary of Existing Zoning Districts: Residential).

Notably, the T District and the S-75 District have a high number of parcels (1,219 and 1,137, respectively), which makes for over half of the total number of parcels in the Village, while they cover a relatively small area of the territory (26% of the Village's area). This means that these two districts contain a significant portion of existing residential units within the Village.

**Table 8: Summary of Existing Residential Zoning Districts, Village of Ossining, 2020.**

| | District | Minimum Lot Area | Required Yards | | | Building Height | Max. Impervious Surface | Maximum Building Coverage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Front | Side (one) | Rear | | | |
| Single- and Two-Family | S-125 | 15,000 sf | 45 ft | 30 ft | 45 ft | 2.5/35 ft | 30% | 20% |
| | S-100 | 10,000 sf | 30 ft | 20 ft | 40 ft | 2.5/35 ft | 35% | 25% |
| | S-75 | 7,500 sf | 30 ft | 12 ft | 30 ft | 2.5/35 ft | 40% | 30% |
| | S-50 | 5,000 sf | 30 ft | 8 ft | 30 ft | 2.5/35 ft | 40% | 30% |
| | T | 7,500 | 25 ft | 12 ft | 30 ft | 2.5/35 ft | 40% | 30% |
| | PRD | 3-acres | 20 ft | 20 ft | 40 ft | 2.5/35 ft | 60% | 30% |
| Multi-Family | MF-1 | 40,000 sf | 40 ft | 30 ft | 35 ft | 2.5/35 ft | 60% | 20% |
| | MF-2 | 40,000 sf | 40 ft | 30 ft | 25 ft | 2.5/35 ft | 60% | 20% |

Source: *Village of Ossining Code, Chapter 270, Zoning*

The village has two districts for multi-family (MF-1 and MF-2), and one district for one- and two-family residential uses (T-District). Multi-family districts are designed to accommodate the need for denser and more compact housing types in appropriate locations within the Village, and therefore tend to be smaller, pocketed districts. These districts are mapped north and south of the downtown between the single-family districts and the T-District (Two-Family Residence District), which borders the village center to the north and south. The MF-1 and MF-2 Districts also allow a range of housing types as-of-right, including single-family and two-family detached and attached housing (e.g. townhouses, rowhouses, etc.). The T-District covers approximately 11 percent of the village land area and permits single-family residences as-of-right and allows two-family residences by conditional approval only. Thus, despite its name, this district operates as a de facto single-family residential district.

The Planned Residential District (PRD) is a specialized residential district designed to maintain existing and accommodate future larger residential development. The PRD District is mapped in two locations in the northern portion of the village and two areas in the southern reaches of the village, and generally along the Hudson River. The PRD District is intended to encourage innovative residential development plans that meet the needs of senior citizens through creative arrangement of land use that preserve and enhance environmental features. The PRD District thus allows a range of housing types as-of-right, including single-family and two-family detached and attached housing (e.g. townhouses, rowhouses, etc.), although attached housing is available only through incentives. Multi-family residential is not permitted. The district includes provisions to help preserve the natural features of development sites, including wetlands, steep slopes, hilltops and ridgelines, views to and from the Hudson River, trees, outstanding natural topography, significant geological features and other areas of scenic, ecological and historic value.

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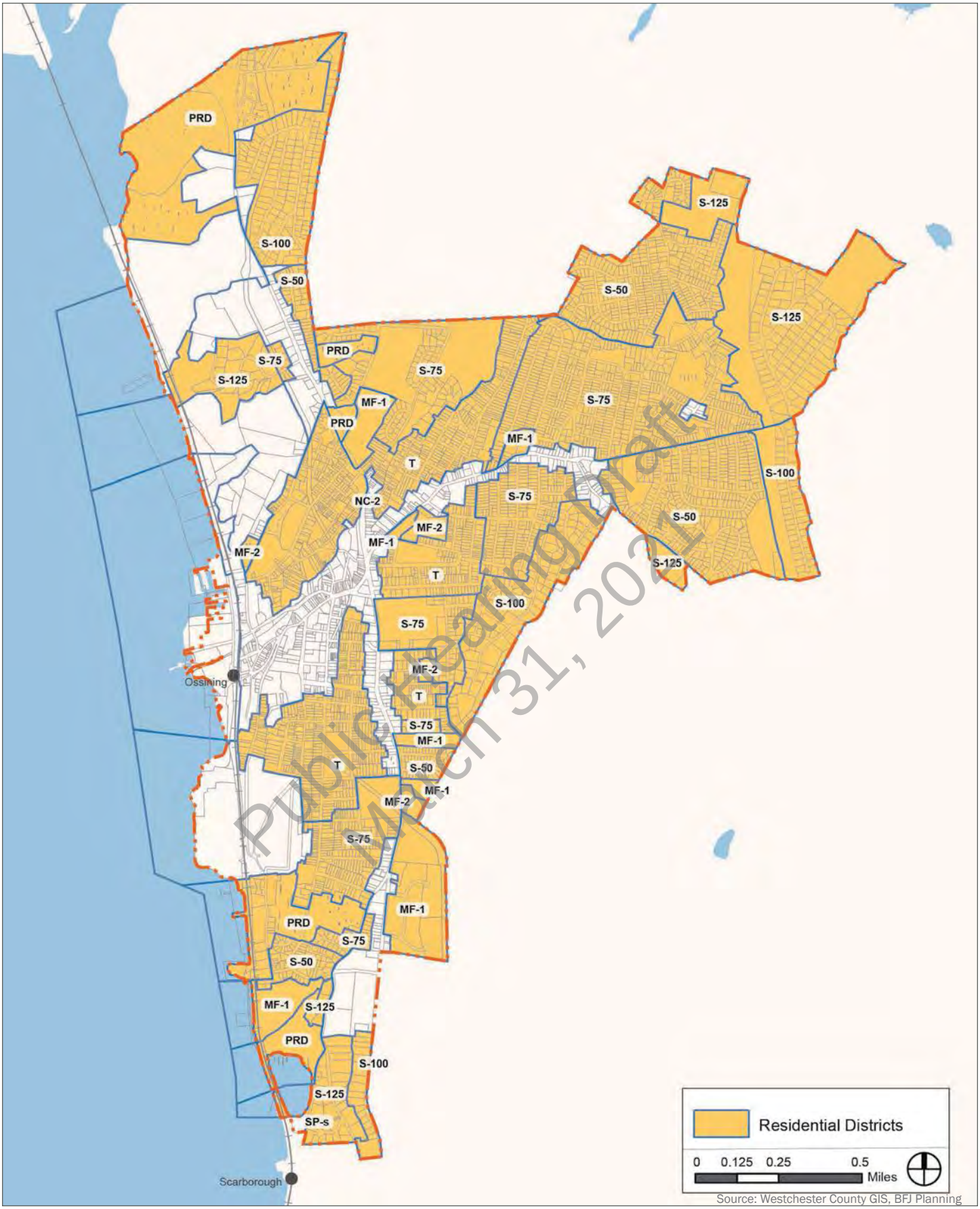


Source: Westchester County GIS, BFJ Planning

**Figure 7: Location of Residential Zoning Districts, Village of Ossining**

*Commercial*

The Village of Ossining has 15 business/mixed-use districts, excluding the two design overlay districts (PWRD and HADD). In total, these districts cover approximately 728-acres or 36 percent of the total village area. These districts are designed to allow for a wide range of commercial uses depending upon location. Lands mapped for business/mixed-use zoning include the village center and those stretching down to the waterfront, along the village's primary corridors (Croton Avenue, North and South Highland Avenues, and along the waterfront.

The Planned Center (PC), Neighborhood Center-1 and -2 (NC-1, NC-2), Village Center (VC) and the General Business (GB) Districts are the most permissive zoning districts in terms of use. The VC District is mapped in the downtown and is supported by NC-2 along the corridors leading into downtown from the east (Croton Avenue) and north (Route 9/Albany Post Road/North Highland Avenue). The PC District regulates corridor commercial development in the southern and northern portions of the village, e.g. along South Highland Avenue near Rockledge Avenue (e.g. the Arcadian Shopping Center) and in the north along North Highland Avenue near Cedar Street. They each allow as principal uses general and medical/dental offices, retail sales and personal service-oriented stores, outdoor entertainment or recreation uses (outdoor); animal- and vehicle- related uses, specialized educational uses, municipal and infrastructure uses, general artisan workspaces, drive-through facilities, private garages and off-street parking & loading facilities. Notable differences between these zoning districts include that restaurants are permitted in the both the VC and PC Districts, while vehicle-related uses are allowed only in the VC and GB districts. Further, the NC-1, NC-2 and VC districts allow for residential development by conditional approval, while residential development is not permitted in the PC and GB Districts. In fact, nine of the 15 business/mixed-use districts in the village allow residential uses by conditional approval (see Table 9 below).

Like the Village Center District, zoning districts along Ossining's waterfront around the Ossining Metro North Railroad Station also allow for higher intensity business and mixed-use development intensity. Two zoning districts are mapped in this area: Station Plaza North (SP-N) and the Planned Waterfront District with three subdistricts: PW-a (Northern Waterfront Subdistrict), PW-b (Central Waterfront - Transit-Oriented Subdistrict) and PW-c (Central Waterfront – Hillside Subdistrict). These allow for a broad range of uses and some of the highest density development in the village. For example, the three planned waterfront districts permit building heights of four stories or 48 feet, with PW-a and PW-b requiring minimum one-acre lots and PW-c requiring minimum of quarter-acre (10,000 sf) lots. As-of-right allowable uses include restaurants, retail sales, repairs and personal services, educational uses, municipal uses, artisan workspace facilities, and clubhouses/community centers. All three waterfront zoning districts allow for residential and office uses by conditional approval. But PW-a and PW-b allow for a slightly broader range of uses through conditional approval, including warehouses, and self-storage facilities. PW-a also allows light manufacturing by conditional approval.

The Station Plaza Districts North and South (SP-N and SP-S) operate in a similar fashion as the PW districts, allowing a wide range of uses, but the SP-S district encourages business development at a lower scale than in the SP-N District. For example, SP-N is mapped northeast of the Metro-North Ossining Railroad Station and specifies no minimum lot size and allows for building heights of four-stories or 48 feet. Residential and office uses are allowed in the SP-N District by conditional approval provided entrances are separated and that the residential uses are above non-residential uses. The SP-S District is mapped in the southern portion of the village and is designed to increase business on properties near the Scarborough Metro-North train station but at a lower scale than that which is permitted around the Ossining Station. The SP-S District specifies minimum lot size of one-acre and building heights of no more than two-stories

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or 24 feet. Further, SP-S is focused more toward commercial activity in that it does not permit residential or office uses at all.

The Riverfront Development District (RDD) is designed to establish a mixed-use redevelopment plan along Ossining's riverfront by providing open space, recreation, amenities to draw people to the area and encourage public use and enjoyment of the area. This district also allows a wide range of principal permitted uses and encourages appropriate uses to preserve and enhance mixed-use of old industrial buildings to attract creative small businesses, artisans and entrepreneurs. The RDD requires minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet (basically one-acre) and permits building heights of three-stories or 36 feet. The zoning includes provisions for ensuring the waterfront remains open and accessible (e.g. a 50 feet setback from waterfront), maximizing open space, preserving view corridor, and minimum dwelling unit size.

There are two lower-intensity business/mixed-use districts: Conservation Development District (CDD) and the Institutional Redevelopment District (IR). The IR is the lowest density business/mixed-use district with a minimum lot size of 5-acres and is mapped around the Sing Sing Correctional Facility area to implement the planning goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan (2009) and the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (2012). The CDD is mapped in two places in the Village: north of Snowden Avenue and west of the Croton Aqueduct trail. The CDD provides for development that is low density with a minimum lot size of 2-acres to protect the aesthetics, natural resources and environmental features of the remaining undeveloped lands within the CDD District, including preserving natural features of development sites such as wetlands, steep slopes, hilltops, ridgelines, views to and from the Hudson River, trees, outstanding natural topography, significant geological features and other areas of scenic, ecological and historic value. Residential development is permitted by conditional approval in both the CDD and IR District.

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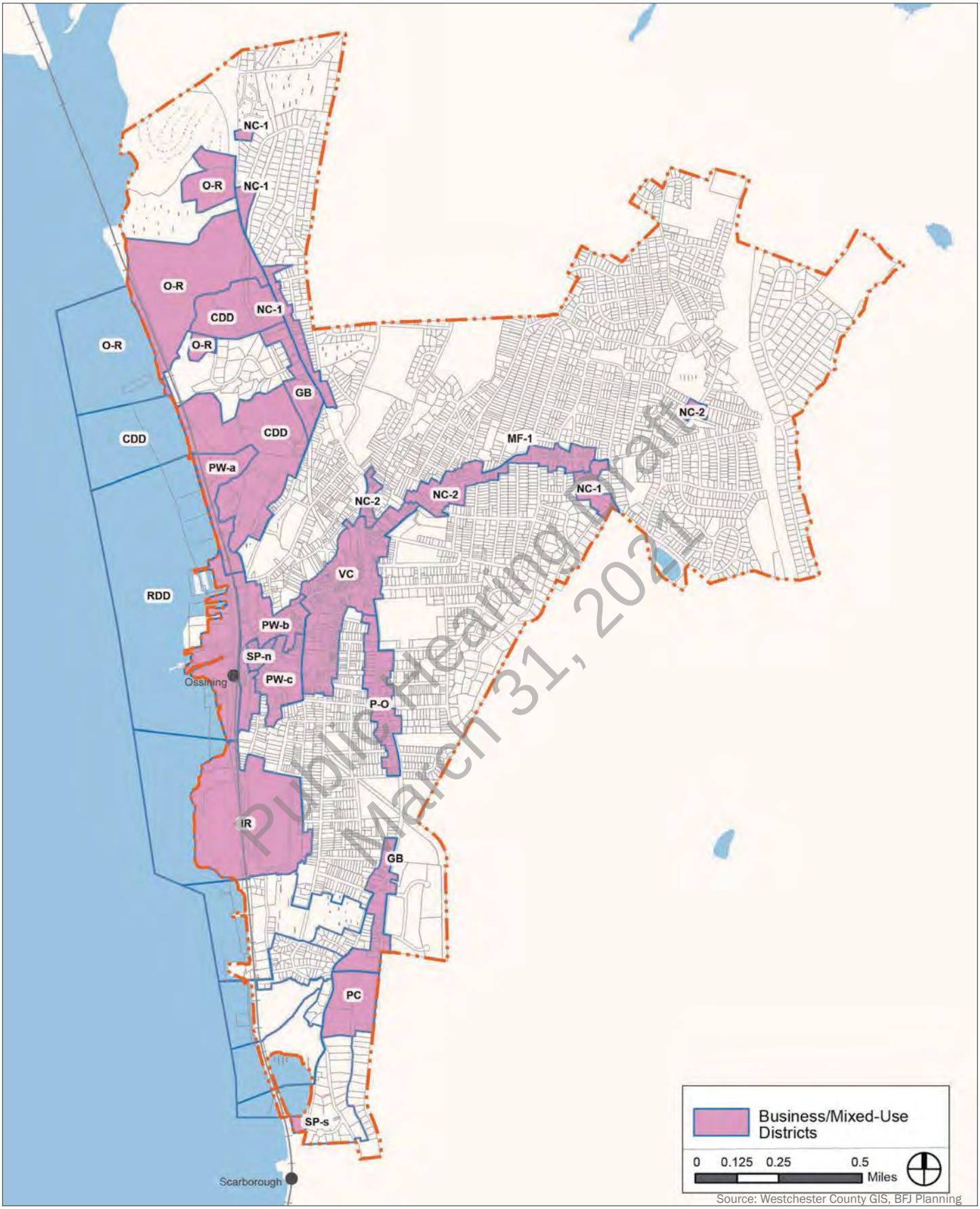


Figure 8: Location of Business Mixed-Use Zoning Districts, Village of Ossining

*Special Overlay Districts*

The Village of Ossining has three special overlay zoning districts covering these areas. Planned Waterfront and Railway Development District (PWRD) and two Historical and Architectural Design Districts (HADD) – the Downtown Ossining HADD and the Sparta HADD (see Figure 6 above). Overlay zoning creates a special zoning district, placed over an existing base zone, which identifies special provisions in addition to those contained in the underlying base zone. Regulations or incentives are often attached to the overlay district to protect a specific resource or guide development within a special area.

Planned Waterfront and Railway Development District (PWRD)

The Planned Waterfront and Railway Development District (PWRD) is mapped along the riverfront west of the Metro-North Railroad tracks, north of Secor Road and south of Central Avenue. This mixed-use overlay subdistrict within the Riverfront Development District (RDD) allows for new development through a special permit process, which provides greater density (a building height not to exceed 80 feet and up to 48 residential units per acre) and broader flexibility in terms of design and uses than would be otherwise permitted through the standard provisions of the RDD. These developer benefits are permitted in exchange for a variety of provisions that enable development of more desirable living and working environment in the area.

Historical Architectural Design Districts (HADDs)

Ossining is enriched by a large number of intact, extant historic buildings. These resources are preserved and protected through two overlay districts. Additional oversight for the downtown is provided by a National Register Historic District:

- Sparta Historical and Architectural Design District (HADD)
- Downtown Ossining Historical and Architectural Design District (HADD)
- Downtown Ossining National Register Historic District

The purpose of these overlay districts in these areas is to preserve, protect and enhance historic resources, including historic landmarks. The overlays provide regulations that require additional design review for development and building renovation/restoration projects in these historic districts.

*Downtown Ossining Historical and Architectural Design District (HADD)*

The Downtown Ossining HADD is mapped in the village center and is bounded approximately by Croton Avenue to the north, Emwilton Place to the south, Route 9 to the east and State Street to the west. The Downtown Ossining HADD is practically but not precisely coterminous with the Downtown Ossining National Register Historic District. This area is colloquially referred to as the "Crescent." Most of the Crescent's buildings are two- or three-story masonry structures mainly dating from the second half of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century. This area has approximately 55 properties, all of which except five have contributing structures. These include some of the most prominent buildings in the Village, notably the:

- First Baptist Church.
- First Presbyterian Church.
- Trinity Episcopal Church.
- United Methodist Church.
- First National Bank and Trust Company.
- Ossining National Bank, which shares the Barlow Block with several Italianate structures.
- Ossining Savings Bank.

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*The Sparta Historical and Architectural Design District*

The Sparta Historical and Architectural Design District is located in the southern and oldest portion of the village and is bounded approximately by Spring Street to the north, Revolutionary Road to the south, Still Court to the east and the Hudson riverfront to the west. The Sparta HADD, designated in 1975, includes approximately 60 properties, 41 of which have contributing structures. This historical district reflects the Village's rural origins and was first settled during the early 18th century by tenant farmers of various national backgrounds. The buildings in Sparta seem to reflect the irregularities of the landscape and a casual willingness to adopt buildings to changing needs. There are also some notable archeological sites in this area, including subterranean chambers on the waterfront.

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**Table 9: Summary of Existing Business/Mixed-Use Zoning Districts, Village of Ossining, 2020**

| District | Principal Uses | Minimum Lot Area | Required Yards | | | Building Height | Max. Impervious Surface | Maximum Building Coverage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Front | Side (one) | Rear | | | |
| PC | Offices (general, medical/dental); restaurants; retail stores/services (sales- and service-oriented); retail sales/service (repair-oriented); animal-related uses; vehicle-related uses; educational uses (specialized); infrastructure uses; municipal uses; artisan workspace (general); garages (private); off-street parking & loading; [Residential NOT permitted] | 2-acres | 20 ft | 20 ft | 20 ft | 3.0/36 ft | 50% | 80% |
| NC-1 | Offices (general, medical/dental); retail stores/services (sales- and service-oriented); animal-related uses; retail sales/service (repair-oriented); educational uses (specialized), infrastructure uses; municipal uses; artisan workspace (general); garages (private); off-street parking & loading; + **[Residential by conditional approval]** | n/a | 10 ft | 10 ft | 20 ft | 3.0/36 ft | 40% | 70% |
| NC-2 | Offices (general, medical/dental); retail stores/services (sales- and service-oriented); retail sales/service (repair-oriented); animal-related uses; educational uses (specialized); infrastructure uses; municipal uses; artisan workspace (general); garages (private); off-street parking & loading; + **[Residential by conditional approval]** | n/a | 15 ft (max.) | 10 ft | 20 ft | 3.0/36 ft | 50% | 80% |
| VC | Offices (general, medical/dental); retail stores/services (sales- and service-oriented); retail sales/service (repair-oriented); animal-related uses; educational uses (specialized); infrastructure uses; municipal uses; artisan workspace (general); drive-through facilities; garages (private); off-street parking & loading; + **[Residential by conditional approval]** | n/a | 10 ft (max.) | n/a | n/a | 4.0/48 ft | 100% | 100% |
| GB | Offices (general, medical/dental); restaurants; retail stores/services (sales-oriented); retail stores/services (sales- and service-oriented); entertainment or recreation uses (outdoor); animal-related uses; vehicle-related uses; educational uses (specialized); infrastructure uses; municipal uses; artisan workspace (general); drive-through facilities; garages (private); off-street parking & loading; [Residential NOT permitted] | n/a | 15 ft | 10 ft | 20 ft | 3.0/36 ft | 50% | 80% |
| O-R | Offices (general, medical/dental); animal-related uses; lodging uses (hotels); infrastructure uses; municipal uses; water-related recreational facilities; garages (private); off-street parking & loading; [Residential NOT permitted] | n/a | 50 ft | 50 ft | 100 ft | 3.0/36 ft | 30% | 50% |
| SP-N | Offices (general); restaurants; retail stores/services (sales- and service-oriented); animal-related uses; educational uses (specialized); infrastructure uses; municipal uses; artisan workspace (general); garages (private); off-street parking & loading; + **[Residential by conditional approval]** | n/a | 10 ft (max.) | n/a | n/a | 4.0/48 ft | 100% | 100% |
| SP-S | Offices (general); restaurants; retail stores/services (sales- and service-oriented); animal-related uses; educational uses (specialized); infrastructure uses; municipal uses; artisan workspace (general); garages (private); off-street parking & loading; [Residential NOT permitted] | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2.0/24 ft | 70% | 90% |

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**Table 9: Summary of Existing Business/Mixed-Use Zoning Districts, Village of Ossining, 2020 (continued)**

| District | Principal Uses | Minimum Lot Area | Required Yards / Setbacks | | | Building Height | Max. Impervious Surface | Maximum Building Coverage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Front | Side | Rear | | | |
| CDD | Offices (general, medical/dental); restaurants; animal-related uses; lodging uses (hotels); educational uses (elementary or secondary); infrastructure uses; municipal uses; water-related recreational facilities; artisan workspace (general); clubhouses, community centers; drive-through facilities; garages (private); off-street parking & loading; + **[Residential by conditional approval]** | 2-acres | 30 ft | 30 ft | 30 ft | 4.0/48 ft | 50 | 30 |
| RDD | Offices (general); restaurants; retail stores/services (sales- and service-oriented); entertainment or recreation uses (outdoor); animal-related uses; lodging uses (hotels); retail sales/service (repair-oriented); educational uses (elementary or secondary); municipal uses; artisan workspace (general); clubhouses, community centers; drive-through facilities; garages (private); off-street parking & loading; [Residential NOT permitted] | 40,000 sf | 15 ft | 10 ft | 10 ft | 3.0/36 ft | 70% | 50% |
| IR | Offices (general); restaurants; retail stores/services (sales- and service-oriented); retail sales/service (repair-oriented); entertainment or recreation uses (outdoor); animal-related uses; lodging uses (hotels); educational uses (elementary or secondary); municipal uses; artisan workspace (general); clubhouses, community centers; drive-through facilities; garages (private); off-street parking & loading; + **[Residential by conditional approval]** | 5-acres | 30 ft | 30 ft | 30 ft | 4.0/48 ft | 60% | 40% |
| PW-a | Offices (general); restaurants; retail stores/services (sales- and service-oriented); retail sales/service (repair-oriented); entertainment or recreation uses (outdoor); animal-related uses; educational uses (elementary or secondary); municipal uses; artisan workspace (general); clubhouses, community centers; drive-through facilities; garages (private); off-street parking & loading; + **[Residential by conditional approval]** | 40,000 sf | 20 ft | 20 ft | 20 ft | 6.0/72 ft | 60% | 40% |
| PW-b | Offices (general); restaurants; retail stores/services (sales- and service-oriented); retail sales/service (repair-oriented); entertainment or recreation uses (outdoor); animal-related uses; lodging uses (hotels); educational uses (elementary or secondary); municipal uses; artisan workspace (general); clubhouses, community centers; drive-through facilities; garages (private); off-street parking & loading; + **[Residential by conditional approval]** | 40,000 sf | 20 ft | 20 ft | 20 ft | 4.0/48 ft | 60% | 40% |
| PW-c | Offices (general); restaurants; retail stores/services (sales- and service-oriented); retail sales/service (repair-oriented); entertainment or recreation uses (outdoor); animal-related uses; lodging uses (hotels); educational uses (elementary or secondary); municipal uses; artisan workspace (general); clubhouses, community centers; drive-through facilities; garages (private); off-street parking & loading; + **[Residential by conditional approval]** | 10,000 sf | 15 ft | 10 ft | 20 ft | 4.0/48 ft | 70% | 50% |

Source: *Village of Ossining Code, Chapter 270, Zoning*

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*Village of Ossining Affordable Housing Law*

In October 2009, the Village adopted the Affordable Housing Law (Chapter 62 in Village of Ossining Code). This law requires new or substantially rehabilitated residential and mixed-use developments involving the construction or substantial rehabilitation of six (6) or more new dwelling units to include 10 percent of the dwelling units aimed at individuals and families of 80 percent or less of the Westchester County median income as determined by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) annually in rental or purchase housing, or, in the alternative, to make payments to an affordable housing fund. Units shall be generally distributed throughout the project, not be distinguished as a class from the market-rate housing, be distributed among one-, two- and three-bedroom units in same proportion as market-rate housing, and have a floor area of not less than 80 percent of the market-rate units.

For complying with the affordable housing law, applicants receive a density bonus equal to the number of units of affordable housing being proposed and agreed upon by the Planning Board. The law allows for an additional bonus depending upon whether the affordable units are affordable to low-income households, and/or whether the units are for purchase versus rental. The law also provides an off-site option or a payment in-lieu to a dedicated affordable housing fund option if an application can show undue hardship. While generally not permitted, the Planning Board has some discretion to allow any bonus applied in single- and two-family districts may to exceed permitted heights and/or lot coverages.

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## Issues and Opportunities

### *Introduction*

A variety of issues and opportunities related to land use and zoning were identified through the course of the planning process for updating the Village of Ossining Comprehensive Plan. These were identified through discussions with Village officials, members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, review of previous studies and the 2009 Comprehensive Plan, and field observation. For the purposes of this plan update, these issues fall broadly into two categories:

1. Code Maintenance Issues
   Code maintenance issues relate to seemingly minor, yet very important, incongruences in the Village Zoning and Code. These include definitional inconsistencies or those related to consistencies between various parts of the Village's suite of regulations. For the Village of Ossining, a range of such issues was identified in 2018 and should be addressed by Village Counsel/Staff.

2. Comprehensive Plan Issues and Opportunities
   Comprehensive plan issues are those that address larger and more pressing zoning and land use challenges facing the Village as it updates its comprehensive plan. These issues relate to and are aimed at supporting the future vision set forth in the Comprehensive Plan. Therefore, these should be discussed within the Plan and recommendations should be made as part of the planning process.

For the purposes of this chapter, Comprehensive Plan Issues and Opportunities identified include those related to strengthening the Village's downtown (i.e. the Village Center zoning), resolving issues of non-conformity in various residential districts, but most apparent in the T-District (Two-Family Residence District), and those that seek to expand the Village's economic well-being, while improving health, safety and quality of life for all residents. After a brief review of zoning ideas presented in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan and another recent study, these districts are discussed in greater detail below.

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### *Zoning Issues/Ideas Presented in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan*

The 2009 Village of Ossining Comprehensive Plan identified a wide range of zoning issues. In fact, a cursory review of the Plan found more than 50 zoning recommendations. These range from creating new zoning districts along the waterfront, promoting greater opportunities for mixed-use, allowing residential development in the downtown, developing design guidelines for the downtown and historic districts, and passing affordable housing legislation. It is to the Village's full credit that a majority of the zoning proposals in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan were acted upon.

As a highlight of a few of the more prominent changes since 2009, the Village adopted new mixed-use zoning for the waterfront with three subdistricts (PW-a, PW-b and PW-c), including the Planned Waterfront and Railway Development District (PWRD) overlay district that enabled redevelopment of the Harbor Square property. New zoning was also adopted for the downtown with the creation of the Village Center District, which allowed for greater density and residential uses above the ground floor by conditional approval. In 2011, the Village also adopted design guidelines to help ensure compatible development standards would be met for new development and/or renovations in the downtown, Sparta and adjacent neighborhoods. And in October 2009, the Village adopted the Affordable Housing Law (Chapter 62 in Village of Ossining Code). This law requires new or substantially rehabilitated residential and mixed-use developments involving the construction or substantial rehabilitation of six (6) or more new dwelling units to include 10 percent of the dwelling units aimed at individuals and families of 80

percent or less of the Westchester County median income as determined by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) annually in rental or purchase housing, or, in the alternative, to make payments to an affordable housing fund.

### *Zoning Issues/Ideas Presented in the Dwarka Report (2017)*

Despite the remarkable effort by the Village to update and modernize its zoning, several challenges identified in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan remained, including non-conformity and housing issues in certain parts of the village. In 2017, the Village commissioned a study of the village's most pressing housing issues ("Dwarka Report" 2017). Presented in a series of four chapters and involving substantial community outreach, this study identified a range of housing issues primarily situated in the T-District, including zoning non-conformity, poor property maintenance, overcrowded living spaces, and construction without a building permit. Ultimately, the report made a series of process-oriented recommendations (e.g. hiring additional code enforcement staff, increasing inspections, greater outreach and dissemination of the rules and regulations, working more closely with community residents and landlords) and several zoning recommendations aimed at alleviating housing challenges facing village residents. These zoning recommendations included:

- Reduce and/or remove the minimum lot size in single- and two-family (T) district to reduce number of legally non-conforming structures and permit accessory dwelling units by conditional use or as-of-right;
- Permit two-family and townhouse residential units as-of-right in two-family (T), Village Center, General Business, Professional Office, Neighborhood Center, Planned Waterfront and Station Plaza districts;
- Include livable floor area requirements for "micro units" in districts that allow multi-family housing development;
- Increase the maximum building coverage in two-family (T), Multi-Family Residential, Neighborhood Commercial, Planned Residential Development and Planned Waterfront districts (again to alleviate non-conformity but also to expand redevelopment opportunity);
- Expand the amount of land designated for Multi-Family Residence Districts (to accommodate more compact housing types); and
- Increase density bonuses or maximum units per acre in Multi-Family Residential and Planned Residential Development districts.

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Given that the Dwarka report was submitted only two-years prior to the current updating of the Comprehensive Plan, these recommendations remain ideas for consideration only and the Village took no further action. However, many of the issues that spurred the Village to commission the report remain, include those relating to non-conformity in the T-District (and to a lesser degree in other single-family residence districts), the need to expand housing opportunity and choice across the village and expand the Village's tax base. The following two sections discuss issues in relation to the downtown (i.e. the Village Center District) and to the T-District specifically.

### *Zoning Focus: Downtown & Village Center District*

***Description/Parameters***

The purpose of the VC-District as provided in §270-15 of the Village Zoning Code is as follows:

- To preserve historic downtown Ossining as the center of village life;

- To promote increased business activity in downtown Ossining by permitting uses and levels of intensity that are greater than elsewhere in the Village; and
- To provide opportunities for residential uses in downtown Ossining to encourage street life during the day and evening.

General parameters of the VC District are provided in Table 10 (below). In summary, the district allows for mixed use development with full lot coverage and a maximum building height of four-stories or 48 feet. Development in the VC District must provide affordable housing pursuant to the requirements of the Affordable Housing Law of the Village of Ossining, Chapter 62, Affordable Housing (discussed above), and this may allow for additional building height and density in exchange for the affordable housing units.

**Table 10: General parameters for the VC-District (Village Center District), Village of Ossining, 2020**

| Required Element | Dimension |
|---|---|
| Min. Lot Area | N/A |
| Min. Lot Width | N/A |
| Min. Front Yard Setback | N/A |
| Max. Front Yard Setback | 10 ft. |
| Min. Side Yard Setback (each) | N/A |
| Min. Rear Yard Setback | N/A |
| Min. Setback for Parking/Loading | N/A |
| Max. Building Height | 4.0 stories/48’ |
| Max. Building Coverage | 100% |
| Max. Impervious Surface | 100% |
| Buffer for rear yards abutting residential district | 10 ft. |
| | |
| Source: Table B-1: Bulk Requirements in Business Districts, Village of Ossining (2010) | |

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The VC-District is very much a mixed-use downtown district permitting a range of uses either as-of-right or by conditional use permit. Principal permitted uses include Animal-related uses, Office uses/live-work, Medical and dental offices, Restaurants and retail/personal/repair services, Specialized educational uses, Infrastructure and municipal uses, and notably Artisan general industrial uses. **Residential and parking uses are allowed through conditional permit only**, as well as are funeral parlors, community and day-care centers, higher education uses, places of worship and senior living facilities.

Residential uses are restricted to the second floor and above and the Village Code sets minimum habitable floor areas for dwelling units by number of bedrooms as follows: studio (450 sf), one-bedroom (600 sf), two-bedroom (750 sf) and an additional 250 sf per additional bedroom in units with three or more bedrooms. Residential uses in the VC-District must provide affordable housing in accordance with the Village’s Affordable Housing Law.[3] The Village Center District permits wide range of accessory uses

[3] §62-1 (Affordable Housing Law): New or substantially rehabilitated residential and mixed-use developments involving the construction or substantial rehabilitation of six (6) or more new dwelling units be required to include 10 percent of the dwelling units aimed at individuals and families of 80 percent or less of the Westchester County median income as determined by Housing and Urban Development (HUD) annually in rental or purchase housing or, in the alternative, be required to make payments to an affordable housing fund to assist in the development of housing opportunities for individuals and families of those economic means.

appropriate for an active mixed-use district, including Home-based businesses and occupations, outdoor dining, storage and displays, and signage.

Beyond the zoning regulations associated with the VC District and the affordable housing legislation (discussed above), Ossining's downtown is governed by a suite of well-intentioned policies. These include those relating to the Downtown Ossining HADD (discussed above) and The Village of Ossining Architectural Design Guidelines (2011). The Guidelines provide a historical foundation for design and cover the two HADD subject areas (downtown and Sparta), the neighborhood adjacent to these subject areas as well as the village's commercial corridors. The Guidelines discuss various appropriate architectural styles, building elements and some landscaping guidelines. These serve to inform property owners and their professional consultants when it comes to designing in the subject areas, but also as guidelines for review for the Planning Board and Historic Preservation Commission.

There is one parcel that is currently located in the VC District that may be more appropriate in the T-district. The parcel in question is located on Aqueduct Street, and sits just north of the Ossining Community Center. The remaining sites on Aqueduct are all located within the T-district. Given the area and bulk requirements in VC district, the Village could explore rezoning this parcel so that it's zoning designation matches the adjacent properties on Aqueduct Street.

*Issues/Challenges/Ideas*

Several challenges related to the T-District were raised during the planning process. These are listed below. One of these issues, the degree of non-conformity to the zoning code, also exists in the S-75 District. Despite the Village's efforts to both encourage investment, improvement, and development in the downtown and to reasonably regulate the design of such improvements, challenges still remain. For example, while design is reviewed and regulated, it involves a lengthy (and sometimes duplicative) review process across the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Historic Preservation Commission. Another challenge, or at the very least question, is whether the combination of review and requirements (for design, for affordable housing) are in appropriate balance with incentives offered. This may be evidenced by the fact that little new development has occurred in the downtown since adoption of these policies. Finally, another concern heard during the planning process has been whether the development process is working and whether it is producing the "right" results.

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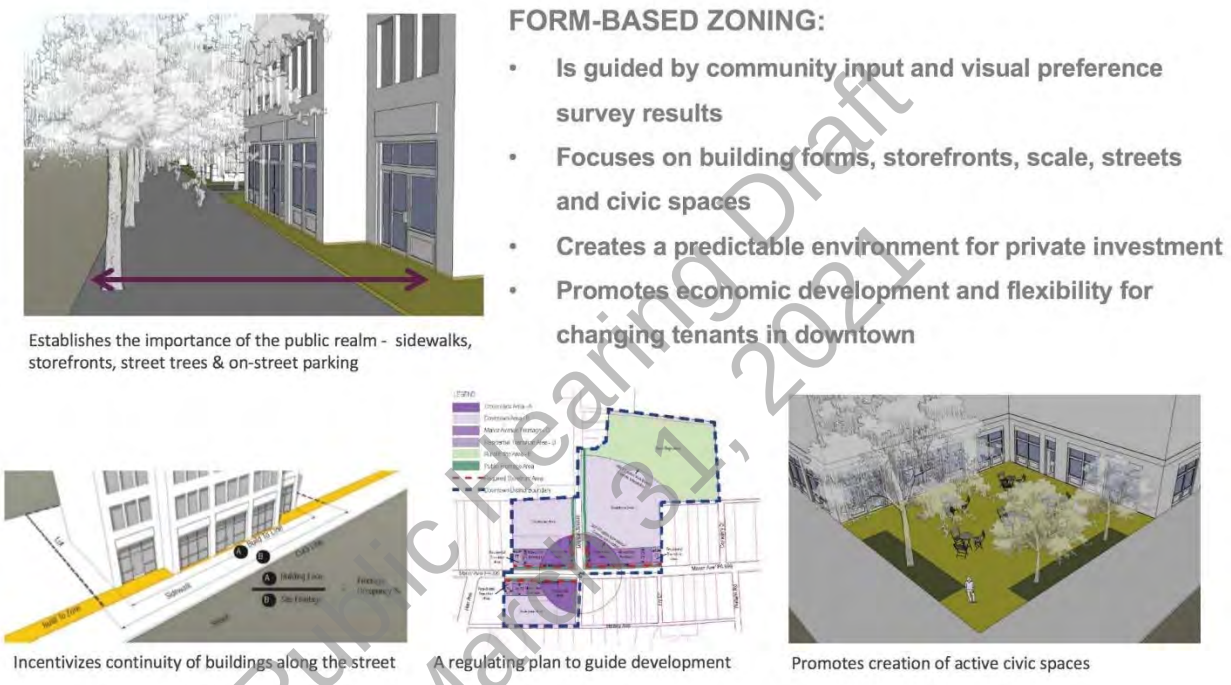
In relation to these concerns, several ideas were raised during discussion with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee and the various subcommittee meetings. These include developing a new form-based zoning regime for downtown that builds upon the existing VC District regulations and selective design parameters outlined in the Village of Ossining Architectural Design Guidelines. While there are a variety of approaches that the Village could take to regulate land uses in downtown, including rezoning or simply adjusting the existing zoning parameters, this plan recommends, however, that the Village create a downtown overlay district to incentivize contextual mixed-use development according to form based standards. This approach is preferred because it would help ensure improved and more proscriptive and consistent development outcomes relative to the design principles outlined the Village of Ossining Design Guidelines, as key parameters of the guidelines would become codified in zoning. This would not make the Guidelines obsolete, as they would still be used by the Historic Preservation Commission in their reviews for certificates of appropriateness. But by having key parameters codified such as building massing and height, maximum and minimum setbacks, locations and frequency of entrances and other parameters related to building-street relationship, etc., a form-based approach, or hybrid thereof, would reduce the need for review of (and therefore uncertainty about) the most important design elements.

Form-based zoning operates differently than regular zoning in that it is concerned more with building form (i.e. the shape of the building and most importantly a building's relationship to the public realm) than with use. Form-based zoning begins with a regulating plan, which regulates the kinds of building frontages usually by street type or location. Therefore, where a more active frontage is desired to activate a street or a civic space to complete a connection is desired, form-based zoning includes location specific regulations to ensure that future development meets these expectations. The overall effect would be development that would be contextual to the existing downtown environment and harmonious with the vision articulated by the public process for this plan. Figure 9 provides a basic overview of form-based zoning.

**Figure 9: Basics of Form-Based Zoning**

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A new form-based zoning code could not only help improve design outcomes and streamline the review process, if designed appropriately, it should also prioritize and incentivize what is important, as expressed through the planning process for the Comprehensive Plan update. The following ideas have been suggested thus far:

- Increase the maximum allowable building height in the downtown from four-stories / 48 feet to five-stories / 58 feet so as to provide greater incentive to developers. The affordable housing requirement would still apply;
- Develop a fee for infrastructure in exchange for the bonus for the increase in additional development height (i.e. the differential between four- and five-stories) to alleviate potential impacts to key Village priorities such as schools, parking, etc.; and
- Allow residential uses above the second story as a permitted principal use in the downtown (i.e. remove the conditional use status for residential that presently exists).

Structuring the above as an incentive overlay option to developers would accomplish two important outcomes. First it would provide additional and necessary incentive to encourage developers to build in the downtown, thus providing opportunity to increase the Village's tax base, while helping to fund

potential impacts of concern (e.g. parking and school district funding). Second, as the additional story (and associate infrastructure fee) would be optional, existing property owners would be held harmless: existing buildings and property owners could continue as they are without becoming non-conforming. Finally, it should be noted that the general idea for taking a form-based zoning approach for the downtown is nothing new: it was an idea recommended by the Ossining Downtown Redevelopment Working Committee in 2017.

### *Zoning Focus: T-District (Two-Family Residence District)*

***Description/Parameters***

The purpose of the T-District as provided in §270-10 of the Village Zoning Code is as follows:

- To maintain the character, scale and density of existing two-family neighborhoods in the Village of Ossining consistent with the protection and promotion of public health, safety and general welfare; and
- To encourage property owners to maintain and improve their properties in keeping with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

General parameters of the T-District are provided in Table 11 (below). Because the T-District is a designated residence district, it permits primarily residential uses, but also allows by special permit a number of non-residential uses.[4] Residential uses include single-family residences as-of-right, and two-family detached dwelling units by conditional permit. Two family detached dwelling are defined in §270-4(2) as "a detached building containing two dwelling units only in which the units are separated by vertical or horizontal partitions and not by a party wall." No other residential uses are permitted in the T-District including single-family attached (e.g. townhouses/rowhouses), two-family attached (duplexes) or multi-family units, although analysis suggest that these dwelling unit type exist in the T-District (Table 12).

An applicant for a residential use in the T-District must provide affordable housing pursuant to the requirements of the Affordable Housing Law of the Village of Ossining, Chapter 62, Affordable Housing. Notably, a project utilizing any of the density bonuses above cannot increase height or lot coverage in single- and two-family districts. Generally, this is to protect the residential scale of residential neighborhoods in the village. The planning board may, however, waive the variance requirement for projects with purchase affordable units if the density bonus results in smaller than allowable minimum lot sizes and/or setback requirements.

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[4] Table A-3: Permitted, Conditional, and Special Permit Principal Uses in Residential Districts [Amended 8-2-2011 by L.L. No. 3-2011; 1-20-2016 by L.L. No. 1-2016]

**Table 11: General parameters for permitted uses in the T-District (Two-Family Residence District), Village of Ossining, 2020**

| Required Element | Dimension |
|---|---|
| Min. Lot Area | 7,500 sf |
| Min. Lot Width | 75 ft. |
| Min. Front Yard | 30 ft. |
| Min. Side Yard (one) | 12 ft. |
| Min. Side Yard (both)* | 28 ft. |
| Min. Rear Yard | 30 ft. |
| Min. Floor Area | 800 sf |
| Max. Building Height | 2.5 stories/35’ |
| Max. Impervious Surface | 40% |
| Max. Building Coverage | 30% |
| | |

*Note: Lots with a greater width than the minimum lot width must have both side yard setbacks equal to 40% of the lot width with each side yard equaling a minimum of 45% of both side yard setbacks.
Source: Table B-2: Bulk Requirements in Single-Family and Two-Family Residence Districts
[Amended 1-17-2018 by L.L. No. 1-2018]

Implied (calculated) allowable Floor Area Ratio (FAR), which is the ratio of a building’s total gross area to the size of its lot, based on parameters above: 0.5

**Table 12: Residential Units in the T-District**

| Residential Use Type | Number of Units |
|---|---|
| Single-Family | 401 |
| Two-Family | 440 |
| Three-Family | 114 |
| 3+ Family, Apartment, Condo, Coop | 141 |

*Zoning Focus: S-75 District (Single-Family Residence District)*

*Description/Parameters*

The purpose of the S-75 District as provided in §270-10 of the Village Zoning Code is as follows:

- To maintain the character, scale and density of existing single-family residential neighborhoods in the Village of Ossining consistent with the protection and promotion of public health, safety and general welfare.
- To encourage homeowners to maintain and improve their properties in keeping with the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

General parameters of the S-75 District are provided in Table 13. As all the single-family residential zones in the Village, the S-75 only allows single-family detached dwellings as a principal permitted use. A few other civic and institutional uses are allowed by special permit or conditional use permit. Although no other residential uses are permitted in the S-75 District, analysis suggest that other types of dwelling units exist within the district (Table 14).

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**Table 13: General parameters for permitted uses in the S-75 District, Village of Ossining, 2020**

| Required Element | Dimension |
|---|---|
| Min. Lot Area | 7,500 sf |
| Min. Lot Width | 75 ft. |
| Min. Front Yard | 30 ft. |
| Min. Side Yard (one) | 12 ft. |
| Min. Side Yard (both)* | 28 ft. |
| Min. Rear Yard | 30 ft. |
| Min. Floor Area | 850 sf |
| Max. Building Height | 2.5 stories/35’ |
| Max. Impervious Surface | 40% |
| Max. Building Coverage | 30% |
| | |

**Table 14: Residential Units in the S-75 District**

| Residential Use Type | Number of Units |
|---|---|
| Single-Family | 765 |
| Two-Family | 213 |
| Three-Family | 37 |
| 3+ Family, Apartment, Condo, Coop | 26 |

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*Issues/Challenges/Ideas*

Several challenges related to the T-District were raised during the planning process. In some instances, these challenges extend to limited areas within the Village’s single-family residence districts, in particular to the S-75 District. As such, some of the ideas presented below could also be adapted and/or applied to residential areas outside of the T-District where similar challenges exist.

Outdated Zoning – Non-Conforming Lots

The most evident issue facing the T-District is that the zoning seems very out of date relative to extant conditions observed on the ground. For example, approximately 70 percent of lots in the T-District are non-conforming by size, meaning that most lots are smaller in area or some other dimensional parameter (e.g. required frontage, yard, parking, etc.) than is legally permitted under current zoning. This issue extends to certain pockets of other residential districts as well in the village: Data provided by the Ossining Planning Department suggests that approximately 40 percent of residential lots village-wide are dimensionally non-conforming (see Figure 10).

A more in-depth analysis performed by the Planning Department and members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee provides detailed information about non-conformities within the T and the S-75 Districts. In particular, findings indicate that 84% of non-irregular (i.e. not a flag or corner) S-75 parcels and 94% of T parcels are non-conforming in either width, size, or impervious coverage. This high percentage of properties that are non-conforming to at least one parameter is likely a result of the fact that most of the buildings were built prior to the implementation of current bulk regulations in 1960. Most buildings date back to the 1930s and earlier.

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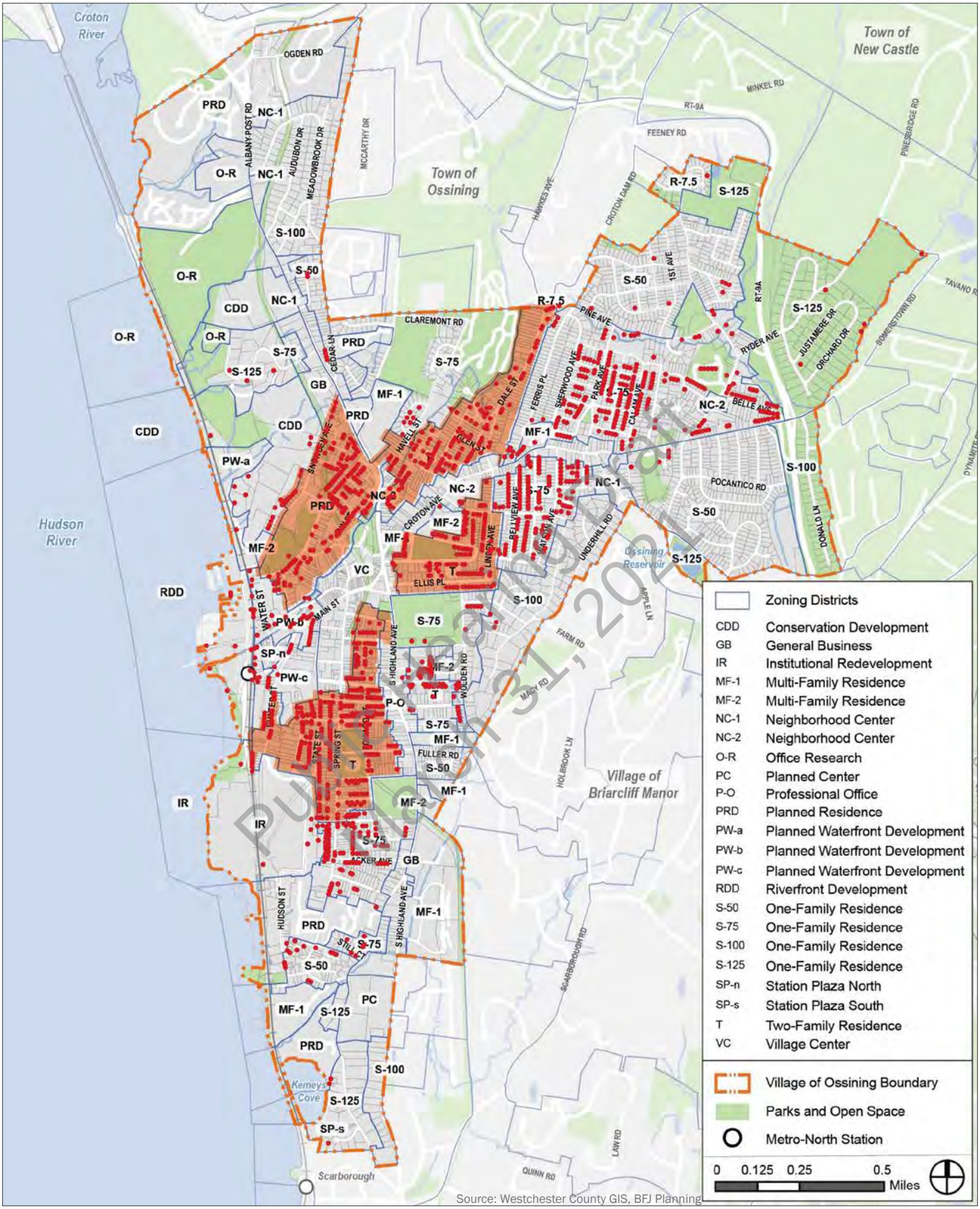


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Figure 10: Non-Conforming Residential Lots, Village of Ossining

Presently, the minimum required lot width in the T-Zone is 75 feet. Side yard requirements are 12 feet for one side, and a total of 28' for both. For a conforming 75' wide lot, the yards would consume approximately 37 percent of the lot width. The Zoning Code provides a provision (adjustment) for lots that exceed the minimum of 75': Lots with a greater width than the minimum lot width must have both side yard setbacks equal to 40 percent of the lot width with each side yard equaling a minimum of 45 percent of both side yard setbacks. This suggests that for 100' foot wide lot, total minimum side yards must total 40 feet, and no one side yard could be less than 18 feet.

The Zoning Code, however, provides no side yard provision (adjustment) for lots less than the minimum lot width of 75 feet, although a detailed review of parcels in the T-Zone suggest that many are narrower (see Figure 11). In fact, more than 66% of the parcels in the T-District do not meet the minimum required lot width of 75 feet. This means than any alteration or renovation requires the property owner to seek a variance before the Zoning Board of Appeals, which incurs costs in time and money for the property owner and adds workload to the Building Department and the ZBA's agenda.

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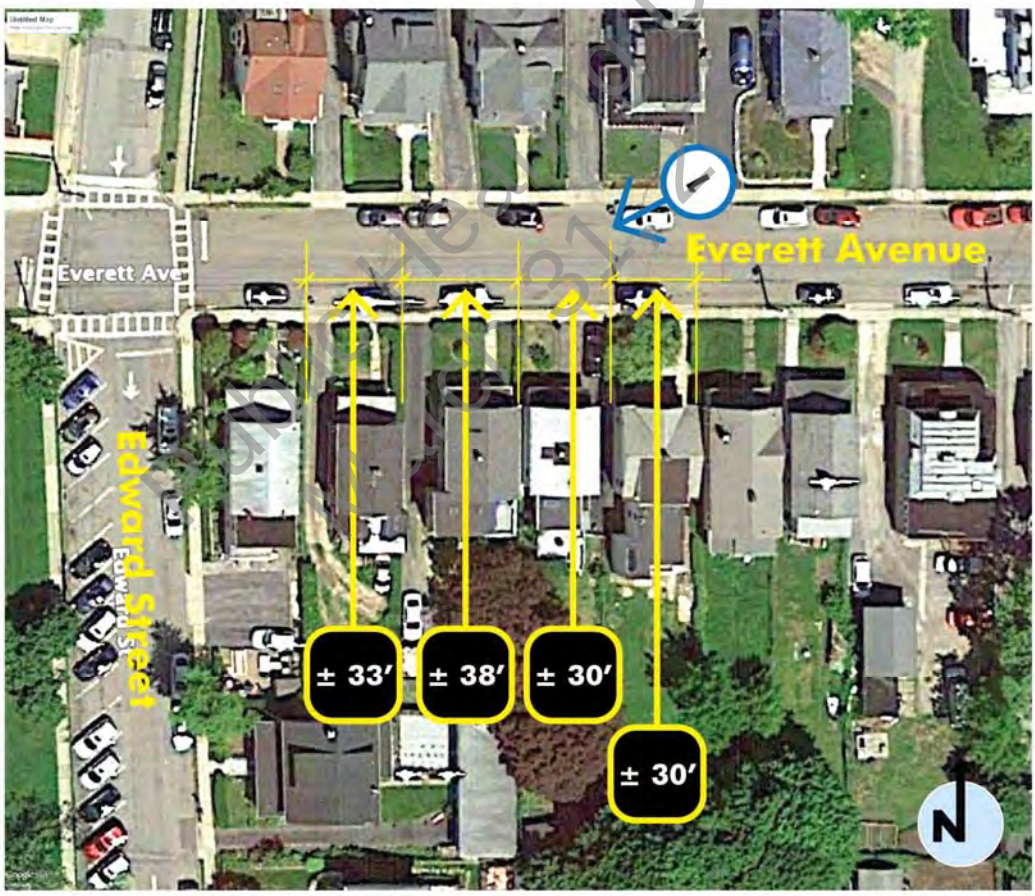
**Figure 11: Example of non-conforming lots on Everett Avenue.** These lots have narrower than required 75' street frontage.



Similar to the T-District, analysis performed by the Planning Department shows that almost half of the lots in the S-75 do not meet the minimum required lot width of 75 feet. Again, this means property owners of these non-conforming lots need to apply for area and bulk variances to the ZBA in order to improve their homes. The goal of the following proposed changes is to allow existing single-family homes to be improved/renovated without the need for a costly and time-consuming variance from the ZBA.

**S-75 District Proposed Changes:**

1. Easing some of the bulk requirements. For instance, the required lot width of the S-75 zone could match the S-50 zone, which requires a 50-foot minimum width. This would encourage investment and upkeep of existing properties that currently have a lot width narrower than 75 feet, while preserving the single-family nature of the district.

**T-District Proposed Changes:**

While there are no easy answers to deal with non-conforming lots in the T-District, several ideas emerged through the planning process.

1. The first idea is to allow all pre-existing undersized, non-conforming lots, essentially allowing them to legally exist. This approach could target particular aspects of the non-conforming properties (e.g. the side yards, lot widths, etc.) thus forgiving the requirement for the property owner to appear before the ZBA when redevelopment or minor remodels (such as like-kind porch replacements) are undertaken. This change will make it easier to invest in property – improving properties across the Village
2. A second idea discussed is to adjust the parameters of the T-District zoning, i.e. reduce the minimum lot size and frontage requirements in the two-family (T) district. A precedent for this approach can be found in the zoning code for the City of Rye (NY)[5], which includes the following provision:
    - For each foot by which a lot, at the time of enactment of this chapter, is narrower than the required width in the district in which it is located, one inch shall be deducted from the required width of any side yard and two inches from the required sum of both side yards, provided that no side yard shall be narrower than eight feet in any R, RS, RT or RA-1 District or six feet in any other district. This provision shall not apply to apartments in RA-1 Districts.

    Any such provision like the above example would have to be designed and written to accommodate Ossining's particular needs. Making these appropriate changes would further simplify the improvement of properties without changing the character of the zones.
3. A third idea discussed during the planning process is to allow two-family as of right and three-family residences by conditional use permit in appropriate locations (based on the availability of off-street parking, and lot size restrictions) in the T-District. It seems illogical that the T-District, defined as a "Two-Family Residence District," does not allow as-of-right two-family residences as-of-right. Additionally, because extant conditions suggest that housing structures with three-family and in some instances four-family living arrangements exist in the T-District, allowing these by special permit would not only alleviate non-conformity, and but also provide opportunity for new residential development to occur. Handled with care, this approach could

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[5] § 197-56 Reduction of Side Yard Widths

target specific sub-areas of the T-District suitable for additional density, and only apply when and where off-street parking requirements could be met (see the next section regarding off-street parking issues in the T-District).

4. Finally, a fourth idea relating to the T-District discussed during the planning process is a multi-family rezoning (i.e. changing the zoning) for appropriate areas within the T-District to allow apartment buildings (multi-family structures). For example, Aqueduct Street and Yale Avenue may be prime areas for mixed-income multi-family development. These streets, just to the east and west of North Highland Avenue (Route 9), have a substantial number of non-conforming lots and uses (i.e. structures with more than two-families). Beyond this, many of the buildings are in poor repair, and the economic reality is that the costs to repair and bring the units and buildings up to code outweighs the return on investment. In short, landlords could not demand rents high enough to make the repairs worthwhile. Thus, this partially explains why these units perpetuate and receive minimal investment by landlords, many of whom are absentee.

   Under these conditions, these two streets could be considered "sites subject to change," those ripe for redevelopment. However, presently, the T-District Zoning does not permit multi-family development. New units could be multi-family with tuck under parking, especially along the east side of Aqueduct Street and west side of Yale Avenue, which offer potential views of the kill and where the lots are deeper. There exists a model for this development density with the four-story apartment building located on the northeast corner of Aqueduct Street and North Highland Avenue. This building evokes a traditional style of building in Ossining, and future development could follow this as a design lead. Traditional rowhouse development is another building style that could be appropriate for these areas, especially on the narrower lots along the street. Whatever style of development might be proposed for these streets, it should be informed by traditional and historical precedents such as Philadelphia rowhouses and imagery from the Ossining Historical Society. Under the Village's Affordable Housing legislation, any new development would include affordable units, and thus result in mixed income development offering both market rate and affordable units. Data from Ossining and elsewhere suggest that such development can be fiscally positive for both the Village and school district.[6]

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To some degree, the third and fourth ideas above suggest an approach that, for certain appropriate areas, breaks up the T-District, either by rezoning areas or possibly creating T-District subdistricts to alleviate issues and/or accommodate new development.

**Parking in the T-District**

Another issue identified in the T-District is that there is not enough parking to accommodate cars for residents of the district. The key issue is that too many cars need to be parked on the street because there is limited off-street parking. Parking requirements in the T-District require a minimum of two off-street parking spaces per dwelling unit.

Other districts have the following minimum parking requirements for residential uses:

- 1.25 spaces for an efficiency or studio;
- 1.5 spaces for 1 bedroom; and
- 2 spaces for units with 2 or more bedrooms

[6] For example, data from Harbor Square on the waterfront and adjacent to the Hudson River in Ossining This is a 188-unit building with 19 affordable units. The 19 affordable units produce 10 school children and the 169 market-rate units produce 13 school children.

However, many housing units in the T-District accommodate more than one household (i.e. two-family and three-family units). For a two-family unit, the minimum number of off-street parking spaces would be four. Field observation suggests that under present dimensional requirements of the zoning, driveways of many housing units in the T-District cannot accommodate this number of vehicles. The result is that occupants must find parking on the street.

While there are no easy answers for demand for on-street parking, several ideas emerged through the planning process. One idea is to allow limited parking within the front yard of housing units. Such an allowance could be permitted provided it doesn't block (i.e. is not placed in front of) the house's main entrance and that certain design guidelines are followed such as requiring the additional parking to be partially screened. Two relevant precedents were found for this thinking:

- New York City allows limited additional front yard parking by exception for undersized lots in certain Residence Districts (R4 - R4 Infill - R4-1 - R4A - R4B). These regulations allow cars "*to park in the side or rear yard, in the garage or in the front yard within the side lot ribbon…"* The unique feature in the NYC approach is the use of the "side lot ribbon," defined as an 8- to 10-foot-wide strip that extends along the length of the side lot line of a zoning lot. The ribbon is wider than the minimum requirement for a side yard and is not required to be open to the sky. Therefore, it can theoretically extend through a house set along the side lot line to the rear of the property. In R3, R4 and R5 districts, if a zoning lot is less than 35 feet wide, parking must be located in a side lot ribbon thus defining and controlling where additional parking should be located.
- The City of Raleigh, NC allows limited additional front yard parking through overlay zoning.[7] The purpose of the ordinance is to simultaneously allow for some additional parking in front yard, but also limit that to a reasonable degree. The ordinance provides the following parking parameters:
  - Parking must be limited to the driveway plus an area to accommodate two additional parking spaces of 380 square feet or 40 percent of the front yard area, whichever is less.
  - Vegetative screening is required for new parking spaces that face the side property line. Screening is required along the side of the parking space parallel to the street.
  - Applicants are required to pay a fee and submit an application and scaled drawing for the Building Department review. This is an over-the-counter permit with an expected processing time of approximately two business days.[8]

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[7] Special Residential Parking Overlay District (Ordinance TC-7-09)

[8] https://raleighnc.gov/business/content/PlanDev/Articles/Zoning/FrontYardParking.html

## Objectives and Strategies

The following objectives and strategies respond to substantive zoning issues raised throughout the comprehensive planning process. These suggestions seek to resolve issues in an efficient manner with a focus on ease of implementation and are presented as options for consideration after the adoption of the comprehensive plan.

*Objective 3.1: Create and adopt a form-based overlay zoning district for downtown that is contiguous with the existing VC-District.*

A new form-based zoning overlay for the downtown would help improve design outcomes and streamline the review process. Structuring the above as an optional overlay with incentives would encourage developers to build in the downtown to higher standards of space and walkability, while also allowing existing buildings and property owners to remain in conformance with the existing underlying VC-District zoning. For instance, to ensure better walkability, the form-based overlay standards require a minimum of 15-foot curb-to-building setback for a Primary Commercial Street frontage, which would allow for a wider sidewalk overtime, as future redevelopments are implemented. The following strategies should be considered:

Strategy 3.1.1: Increase the maximum allowable building height in the downtown from four-stories / 48 feet to five-stories / 58 feet so as to provide greater incentive to developers. The affordable housing requirement would still apply.

Allowing an extra story (and 10 feet of building height) provides a development bonus, or incentive, to encourage a developer to opt-in to the form-based overlay. The incentive is needed because the form-based overlay requires a developer to comply with other criteria that are beneficial to the community. Further, because development under the form-based overlay may produce some additional residential units, such development would also provide additional affordable housing.

Strategy 3.1.2: Allow residential uses above the second story as a permitted principal use in the downtown (i.e. remove the conditional use status for residential that presently exists).

Although residential is currently allowed in the VC District as a conditional use, this revision removes a barrier to both renovation of existing buildings and development of new buildings on infill sites in the downtown. Encouraging upper floor residential units in both existing and new buildings in the downtown will provide a benefit to the Ossining business community. More downtown residents within walking distance of downtown businesses will help support the vibrancy of the area.

Strategy 3.1.3: Develop a fee for infrastructure in exchange for the bonus for the increase in additional development height (i.e. the differential between four- and five-stories) to alleviate potential impacts to key Village priorities such as schools, parking, etc.

It is acknowledged that an increase in development height may produce an increase in residential units than is currently allowed today. By instituting a fee for infrastructure in exchange for development bonus, the Village can establish a fund that can be used to alleviate the potential impacts associated with new development in the form-based overlay district. For example, the infrastructure fund may be used to expand and/or consolidate public parking downtown.

*Objective 3.2: Create and adopt a form-based overlay zoning district for Croton Avenue that is contiguous with the NC-2 District between Clinton Avenue and Roosevelt Square.*

Similar to Objective 1, a new form-based zoning overlay for Croton Avenue would help improve design outcomes, namely protect and further enhance this important corridor into the village by ensuring a more

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pedestrian friendly approach to interactions between street and building. Structuring the new zoning as an incentive overlay option would encourage developers to meet those goals, while also allowing existing buildings and property owners to remain in conformance with the existing underlying NC-2 District zoning. The following strategies should be considered:

Strategy 3.2.1: Increase the maximum allowable building height along Croton Avenue from three-stories / 36 feet to four-stories / 48 feet so as to provide greater incentive to developers. The affordable housing requirement would still apply.

Strategy 3.2.2: Allow residential uses above the second story as a permitted principal use (i.e. remove the conditional use status for residential that presently exists).

Strategy 3.2.3: Develop a fee for infrastructure in exchange for the bonus for the increase in additional development height (i.e. the differential between three- and four-stories) to alleviate potential impacts to key Village priorities such as schools, parking, etc.

*Objective 3.3: Address code maintenance issues and existing incongruencies in the Village Zoning and Code.*

Code maintenance issues relate to seemingly minor, yet very important, incongruencies in the Village Zoning and Code. These include definitional inconsistencies or those related to consistencies between various parts of the Village's suite of regulations. For the Village of Ossining, a range of such issues was identified in 2018 and should be addressed by Village Counsel/Staff.

Further incongruencies may include mismatches between existing land uses and zoning designation. A few locations where a future rezoning may be appropriate, based on existing uses, have been identified by the Steering Committee. Two examples include: the south section of Hunter Street, which is mapped in the two-family residential district (T District), where there are many industrial/automotive uses (not allowed in the T District); and, a large parcel at Snowden Avenue and Matilda Street, which is currently mapped in the T District, where there are townhome-style multi-family buildings (multi-family use is not allowed in the T District). Addressing these mismatches between existing uses and zoning would reduce existing non-conformities and remove barriers for property owners to invest on their properties. This type of zoning changes should be addressed by Village Counsel/Staff after a careful review of existing conditions and zoning provisions.

Strategy 3.3.1: Review issues identified in a 2018 memo and make necessary changes to reduce definitional inconsistencies across various elements of the Village Code. This should be conducted under the leadership of Village Staff and Corporation Council.

*Objective 3.4: Address known zoning challenges related to the T-District, including outdated zoning and pre-existing non-conforming properties.*

The following strategies are designed to reduce the incidence of non-conforming properties, improve off-street parking and alleviate the burden on property owners wishing to improve, renovate and/or rebuild property in the T-District. In some instances, these issues extend also to limited areas within the Village's single-family residence districts. As such, some of the strategies presented below could, with further study, also be adapted and/or applied to residential areas outside of the T-District where similar challenges exist. The following strategies should be considered:

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Strategy 3.4.1: Allow two-family residences as a principal permitted use in the T-District.
The Village's "Two-Family Residence District" presently allows two-family residences as a conditional use. As discussed with Village staff and the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, the T-District, we suggest allowing two-family residences as a principal permitted use in the T-District. This would alleviate some existing non-conforming parcels and allow for future infill residential development to meet market demand.

Strategy 3.4.2: Allow three-family units as conditional use in the T-District
The Village's "Two-Family Residence District" should allow three-family units as a conditional use. This would allow existing three-family units to legalize and provide a legal pathway for future new construction or conversions provided the Planning Board deems such a development appropriate. Provision of sufficient off-street parking will likely be an issue of interest that the Planning Board could examine during site plan review process under such circumstances.

Strategy 3.4.3: Reduce side yard setbacks to alleviate non-conformity for undersized lots in the T-District
Presently, the minimum lot width in the T-District is 75 feet with side yard requirements of 12 feet for one side yard and 28 feet for sum of both side yards. Many parcels in the T-District are far narrower than the minimum, and therefore non-conforming. The Village should reduce the required minimum side yard dimensions from 12 feet to eight (8) feet for one side yard and from 28 feet to 20 feet for the sum of both side yards. This would provide relief to many existing non-conforming parcels in the T-District. The Village could also consider reducing required driveway setbacks in the side yard to make it easier to extend a driveway to the back yard behind the building for parking.

Strategy 3.4.4: Allow one additional parking space in the Front Yard in the T-District.
A lack of sufficient off-street parking throughout many parts of the T-District has resulted in an abundance of on-street parking. Presently, Village Code prohibits parking in the required front yard except in the PC District (see §270-30.A(5)). Property owners in the T-District who seek relief must apply for a zoning area variance. Often, such applications are further complicated by the fact that a majority of lots in the T-District are presently non-conforming due to lot width or by other parameters. To provide relief to such property owners, and help alleviate crowded on-street parking and reduce non-conformity the Village should allow by Special Permit to the Planning Board placement of one parking space in the front yard either in a "lay-by" (side-by-side) configuration or a perpendicular configuration (see Figure 12 below). Either would provide additional off-street parking without increasing the number of curb cuts, thus preserving existing on-street parking. The lay-by configuration would not likely place parking directly in front of the building's primary pedestrian entrance. There is a possibility on very narrow lots that the perpendicular parking configuration could encroach on the primary entrance. This would depend upon actual lot width and location of the primary entrance. Individual site conditions would be examined and considered by the Planning Board during the review process.

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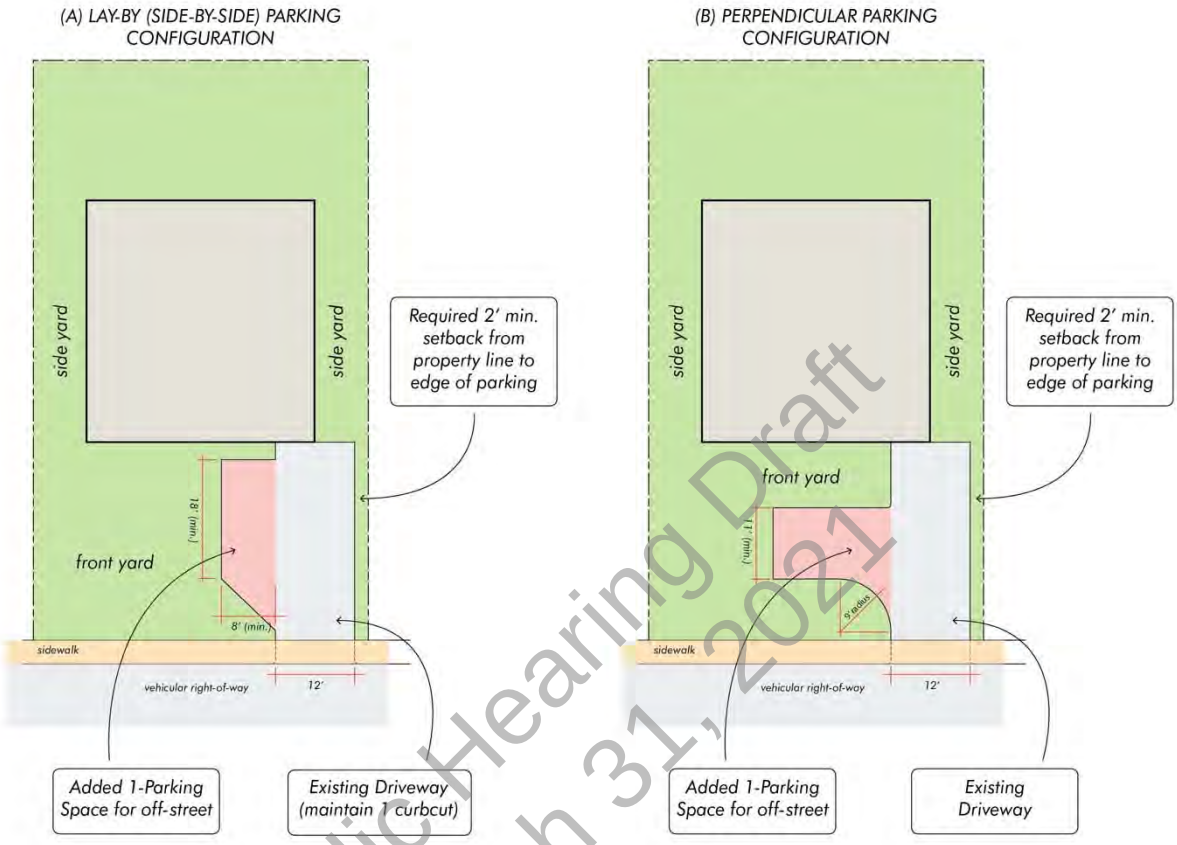
**Figure 12: Two proposed conceptual configurations for providing one additional off-street parking space in the front yard in T-District.**

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*Objective 3.5: Create a new MF-3 zoning district text, which would be mapped in the future, to accommodate multi-family or townhouse infill development in some areas of the T-District or areas adjacent to downtown. This text would not apply to any single-family district.*

Creating a new MF-3 zoning district would allow for placement of smaller, multi-family and/or townhouse/rowhouse development to fill a market niche, the "missing middle," that is presently unbuildable in the Village's existing multi-family districts (MF-1 and MF-2). These districts have large lot and setback requirements, and are therefore appropriate for more traditional, larger apartment projects. A new MF-3 District should seek to encourage investment through infill development in key areas around the center of the village where the highest density exists and fill residential demand between these two existing zoning districts to expand housing choice. In June 2020, a field visit was conducted with BFJ Planning and the Village Manager and Village Planner to observe, document and discuss extant conditions firsthand in two areas (Aqueduct Street & Yale Avenue) where application of the MF-3 may be appropriate. Field observations noted a prevalence of absentee landlord conditions and an aged building stock that would require investment beyond what rents would pay to renovate to expected market demand and bring such buildings into code conformance. It is hoped that a creation of a new zoning district would facilitate more local-ownership and on-site landlord occupancy. Therefore, proposed MF-3

text should allow for a residential accessory unit in townhomes by special permit so the Planning Board and Board of Trustees can evaluate any project on a case-by-case basis. It is not recommended that the MF-3 District be mapped in any current single-family zoning district. The MF-3 should be developed as a text change to the code, to be mapped in specific appropriate locations at the discretion of the Board of Trustees, after adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. At that time, mapping the new zoning would require its own environmental review (SEQRA) process.

*Objective 3.6: Revise the S-75 zone to reduce the large degree of pre-existing non-conformities and reduce barriers for properties owners to improve their homes.*

As part of the Comprehensive Plan discussion, the Planning Department has worked in coordination with the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to develop possible changes to some of the area and bulk requirements of the single-family S-75 zone. The purpose of this is to reduce the large degree of nonconformity in this zone, and to make it easier for homeowners to improve their homes without having to go to the Zoning Board of Approvals. These potential changes focus on adjusting side and front yard setbacks and building and impervious surface coverages and would be developed for consideration by the Planning Department after adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The Village could also consider reducing required driveway setbacks in the side yard to make it easier to extend a driveway to the back yard behind the building for parking.

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# Chapter 4: The Waterfront

## Goal

Maintain and promote Ossining's waterfront as a mixed-use neighborhood by encouraging economically viable development and leveraging existing assets, while pursuing climate adaptive interventions to protect the built environment and provide public benefits.

## Introduction

### *Brief role of the waterfront, historically and today*

The waterfront has always been one of Ossining's greatest assets. From playing a major role as a transportation and shipping route in the early days of the Village, today the waterfront is well-positioned to become an established recreational resource for its residents and visitors. Recent upgrades to the waterfront parks and trails, as well as new developments such as Harbor Square, have highlighted the potential for such interventions to work in synergy to provide public benefits such as expanded access to the waterfront. While these projects have improved the waterfront area, there are still areas that require thoughtful planning and enhanced coordination among stakeholders in order to achieve the Village's vision for its waterfront. Additionally, the last decade has highlighted the increased vulnerability of the waterfront because of flooding due to sea level rise and extreme weather events such as Superstorm Sandy in 2012.

### *Connection challenges and opportunities*

Steep hills that surround the riverfront area make connections to the waterfront challenging, especially for pedestrians and bicyclists. Additionally, the railroad has created a barrier between the shoreline and the rest of the Village. Two bridges that cross over the railroad tracks, one at Secor Road and the other at Snowden Avenue/Westerly Road, provide access to sites on the Hudson riverfront.

On the other hand, the Metro-North rail line provides excellent public transit service to and from other communities along the Hudson River, including New York City. Ossining Station is located in the central part of the waterfront, walking distance from the waterfront parks and less than a half-mile from the downtown. The southern end of the Village's waterfront features another Metro-North station, Scarborough, which provides rail service to the Sparta neighborhood.

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### *Natural resources and risks*

In addition to maximizing its potential in terms of connections and uses, the Ossining waterfront deserves full attention for its role as a natural buffer between the river and more developed areas of the Village. Issues like shoreline erosion, sea level rise, flooding, and storm surge events call for specific policies to integrate resilience features into the planning and design of any development, as well as hazard mitigation measures for disaster prevention. Moreover, previous or current industrial uses are potential brownfield sites, therefore environmental investigation and/or remediation would be required prior to new development in some locations. The presence of steep slopes and natural waterways flowing into the Hudson River contribute to the complexity of these environmentally sensitive areas that require careful planning. Ossining's natural resources are addressed in Chapter 7: Sustainable Infrastructure.

### *Existing plans and climate change related studies*

Existing plans about the Ossining waterfront include the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) – which was last updated in 2011, the Village's Waterfront Access and Trail Plan (2011), the County's RiverWalk trail (2005), and Hudson River Greenway Water Trail (2001). The objectives and strategies listed

in these resources have been considered in this Plan, and some existing recommendations are reflected in this document. It is important to underline that this Comprehensive Plan and the above mentioned resources share the same overarching goal: promoting strategic and viable revitalization of the Ossining waterfront, expanding public access to the Hudson River, and ensuring environmentally sound approaches to land redevelopment.

In 2019, the Climate-Adaptive Design (CAD) studio of Cornell University picked the Ossining waterfront as their subject for research on innovative landscape design and engineering solutions to climate change. In partnership with the Hudson River Estuary Program of NYS DEC, the CAD studio investigated different design options to accommodate the raising level of the Hudson River, while maintaining and encouraging public access to the waterfront, water-dependent use of the shoreline property. The focus of the studio was primarily on long-term, landscape/engineering proposals combined with nature-based strategies to redesign portions of the Ossining waterfront. The students proposed different holistic approaches to deal with a high projection of sea level rise in 2080s, in an area that included the State-owned Sing Sing Prison and the County's Wastewater Treatment Plant. Lastly, the final product of the studio (the "Look Book") provides a list of federal and state funding opportunities for resilience projects, which could be used for future reference.

## Existing Conditions

*Geographical description*

From north to south, the Ossining shoreline extends from the southern edge of the Croton River estuary, to Kemeyes Cove to the south (immediately north of Scarborough Station). Most of the areas immediately inland feature ridges and steep hills, creating difficult conditions for development and connections, but also providing opportunities for enhanced vistas of the Hudson River and the Palisades. As development is unfeasible on some of the steeper hills, opportunities for natural environmental conservation have emerged. For example, a big portion of the northern waterfront area features a 26-acre nature preserve named Edward M. Wheeler Crawbuckie, the largest parkland in the Village.

*Flood risk, sea level rise and shoreline erosion*

All areas west of the railroad tracks are located within the 100-year floodplain, as well as some portions of low-lying areas east of the railroad tracks (Figure 13). The current floodplain area includes a relatively small portion of the Village, as most of Ossining – including downtown and most residential areas – is built on higher topography. However, floodplain boundaries are projected to expand inland in the future, as sea level is expected to rise. Projections by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) on sea level rise and floodplain expansion are estimated for five different scenarios, from a Low Projection to a High Projection.

The Columbia University Center for International Earth Science Information Network (CIESIN) has produced a tool to evaluate projected flood risk with the help of data visualization. The Hudson River Flood Impact Decision Support System[9] allows users to select a range of sea level rise and storm surge scenarios to estimate projected impacts due to sea level rise. This tool produces maps with projected inundation levels and flood zones for sea level rise scenarios. The tool uses LiDAR data from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to produce flood depth estimates (NYSDEC projections

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[9] http://www.ciesin.columbia.edu/hudson-river-flood-map/

are shown in Table 15). The Flood Impact Decision Support System uses dynamic water flow modeling that combines tides, storm surges, sea level rise, and tributary freshwater inputs to the Hudson.

The Columbia University Hudson River Flood Impact Decision Support System Mapper provides the extent of the expanded flooding risk for the different scenarios. In the Lower Hudson Region, which includes Ossining, the Medium Projection scenario estimates a sea level rise of 16 inches in 2050, from the baseline level (years 1971-2000). In the same scenario, sea level rise is projected as high as 30 inches by 2080 (Table 1). Maps for both medium and high projections, for 2050s and 2080s scenarios, are included in the Appendix. These maps are also available for visualization on the Hudson River Flooding Decision Support System mapping tool provided by Columbia University.[10]

**Table 15: New York City/Lower Hudson Region Sea Level Rise Projections.**

| Time Interval | Low Projection | Low-Medium Projection | Medium Projection | High-Medium Projection | High Projection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2020s | 2 inches | 4 inches | 6 inches | 8 inches | 10 inches |
| 2050s | 8 inches | 11 inches | 16 inches | 21 inches | 30 inches |
| 2080s | 13 inches | 18 inches | 29 inches | 39 inches | 58 inches |
| 2100 | 15 inches | 22 inches | 36 inches | 50 inches | 75 inches |

Source: http://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/103877.html

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Although timeframes for development scenarios and comprehensive plans typically considers 30-year out projections (as longer-term projections tend to be less reliable), this plan includes considerations for 2080s flood risk projections as well. In terms of specific impacts to the Ossining waterfront, sea level rise projections for the 2050s and 2080s convey a clear message that areas west of the railroad tracks are the most at risk in terms of future inundation and flooding events. As a result, the strategies put forward in this chapter call for no further new development west of the railroad tracks, as well as flood mitigation and climate-adaptive actions for all areas in the expanded floodplain, regardless of the specific amount of future inundation. Climate-adaptive reuse of existing buildings could also be explored as a way to leverage the existing (and often historically-relevant) building stock, ensuring flood-resilient adaptive design. Lastly, it is important to recognize the need for the Village to regularly review updated sea level rise projections and related official data sources in order to adjust flood mitigation guidelines and regulations accordingly.

According to the DEC Medium Projection scenario, as early as the 2050s coastal inundation (which is calculated as the water level at high tide) is predicted to affect some areas west of the railroad track, such as the Westerly Marina and the oil storage facility area (Figure 18). Additionally, the 100-year flood plain is projected to expand. In particular, some Village-owned parcels are expected to be at higher flood risk compared to today's conditions (e.g. 7 Water Street, parking areas at the Ossining station). In Figure 19, the eastern side of the waterfront is shown to depict the extent of potential future floodplain expansion for key areas such as the DPW site. In the worst possible scenario (high projection in 2080s), which is

[10] To visualize the flood risk projections by Columbia University: http://www.ciesin.columbia.edu/hudson-river-flood-map/

consistent with the scenario studied by Cornell University's students, the DPW site would only be marginally affected by the expansion of the floodplain, on the north and west edges of the site.

All these factors must be taken into consideration in the early phases of any new development process, to be able to anticipate potential flooding impacts and make decisions for sound, long-term investments. Additionally, shoreline erosion control is a very important measure to implement, as the land between the railroad and the river was mostly made with fill-in material and is threatened by erosion. Solutions that reflect a location-based evaluation of different flood resilience solutions are included in the Objectives and Strategies section below.

Sea level rise projections show that the Metro-North railroad Hudson line will be significantly affected by coastal inundation and storm flooding, especially in the 2080s high projection scenario. Although MTA Metro-North does not currently have plans for addressing future climate change issues for the Hudson Line, the most logical solution is arguably to raise the rail tracks to higher elevations to reduce the railroad's exposure to the rising, combined storm surge and sea level rise risks. This "berming" or "terraced levee" climate adaptive solution was taken into consideration by the Climate-Adaptive Design (CAD) studio of Cornell University (see image below). The raised berm would protect areas east of the railroad from storm surge and sea level rise, reinforcing the recommendation that these eastern areas could be safely developed. New development, instead, should be avoided on the more-exposed, west side of the railroad tracks.

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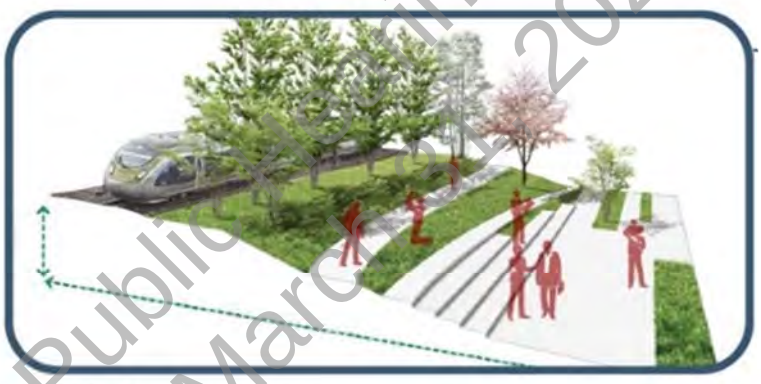

This drawing depicts a proposed terraced levee system for raising the railroad tracks to limit increased risk of flooding due to sea level rise.

*Source: Climate-Adaptive Design Studio 2020 "Look Book"*

Moreover, emergency evacuations out of the west side of the railroad tracks are challenging due to a lack of safe evacuation routes. As mentioned in the introduction, only two bridges (at Secor Road and Westerly Road) cross over the railroad, making it difficult for safe and quick evacuations out of the western waterfront areas for a large number of people. For storm surge and other coastal hazard events, the Village should consider emergency response policies to improve preparedness in case of future hazard events.

One existing regulatory tool for development in specific areas at risk of flooding is the Flood Damage Prevention section in the Village's Code (Chapter 141). This section requires a floodplain development

permit for all construction and other development to protect citizens from increased flood hazard and ensure proper construction measures to minimize properties' damage. Additionally, the waterfront zoning requires a 50 feet buffer for any building, structure, or parking/loading area from the normal high-water line of the Hudson River.

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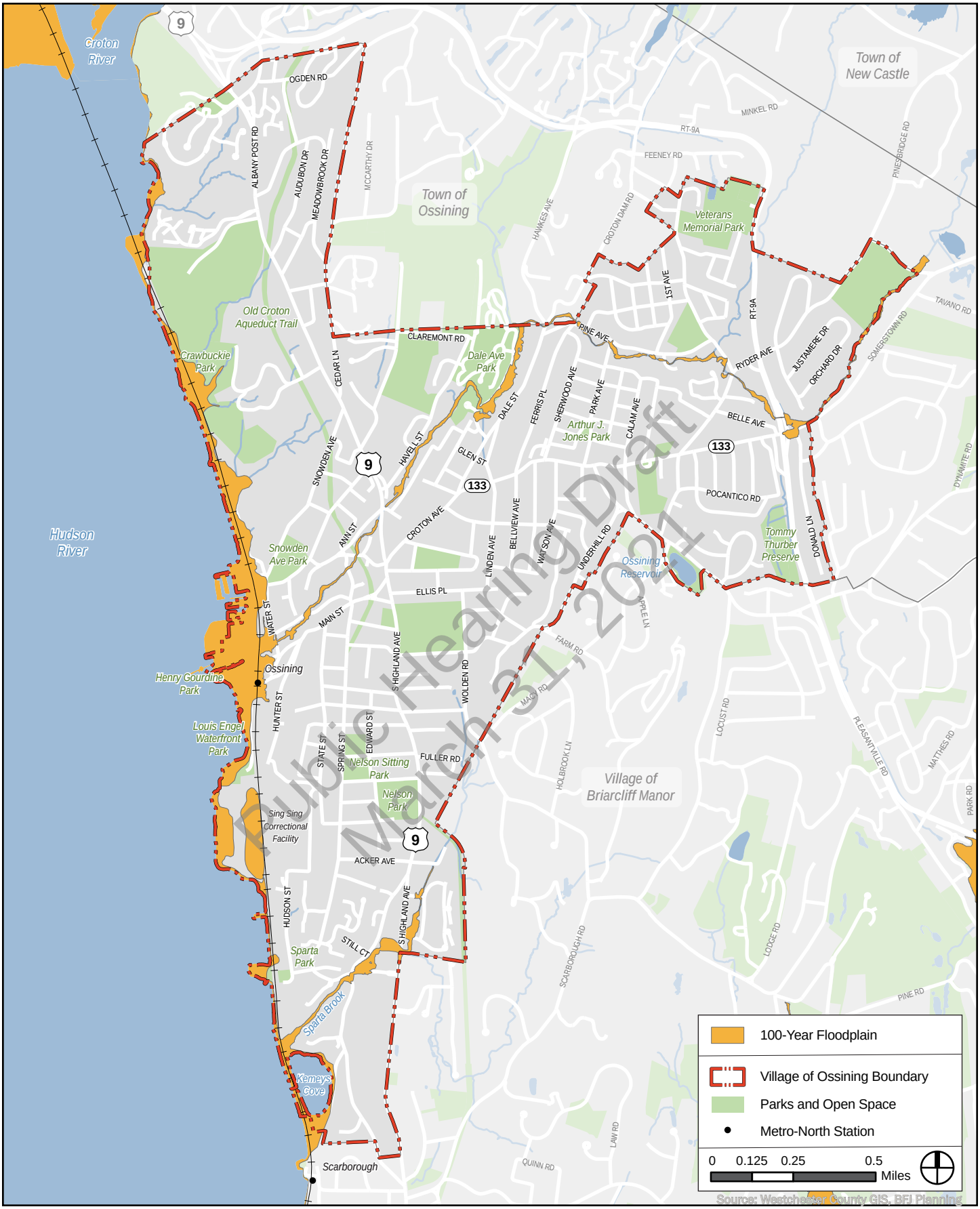


Figure 13: FEMA 100-Year Floodplain

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Figure 14: Northern Waterfront - Floodplain and Sea Level Rise DEC Projections 2050s

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Figure 15: Southern Waterfront - Floodplain and Sea Level Rise DEC Projections 2050s

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Figure 16: Northern Waterfront - Floodplain and Sea Level Rise DEC Projections 2080s

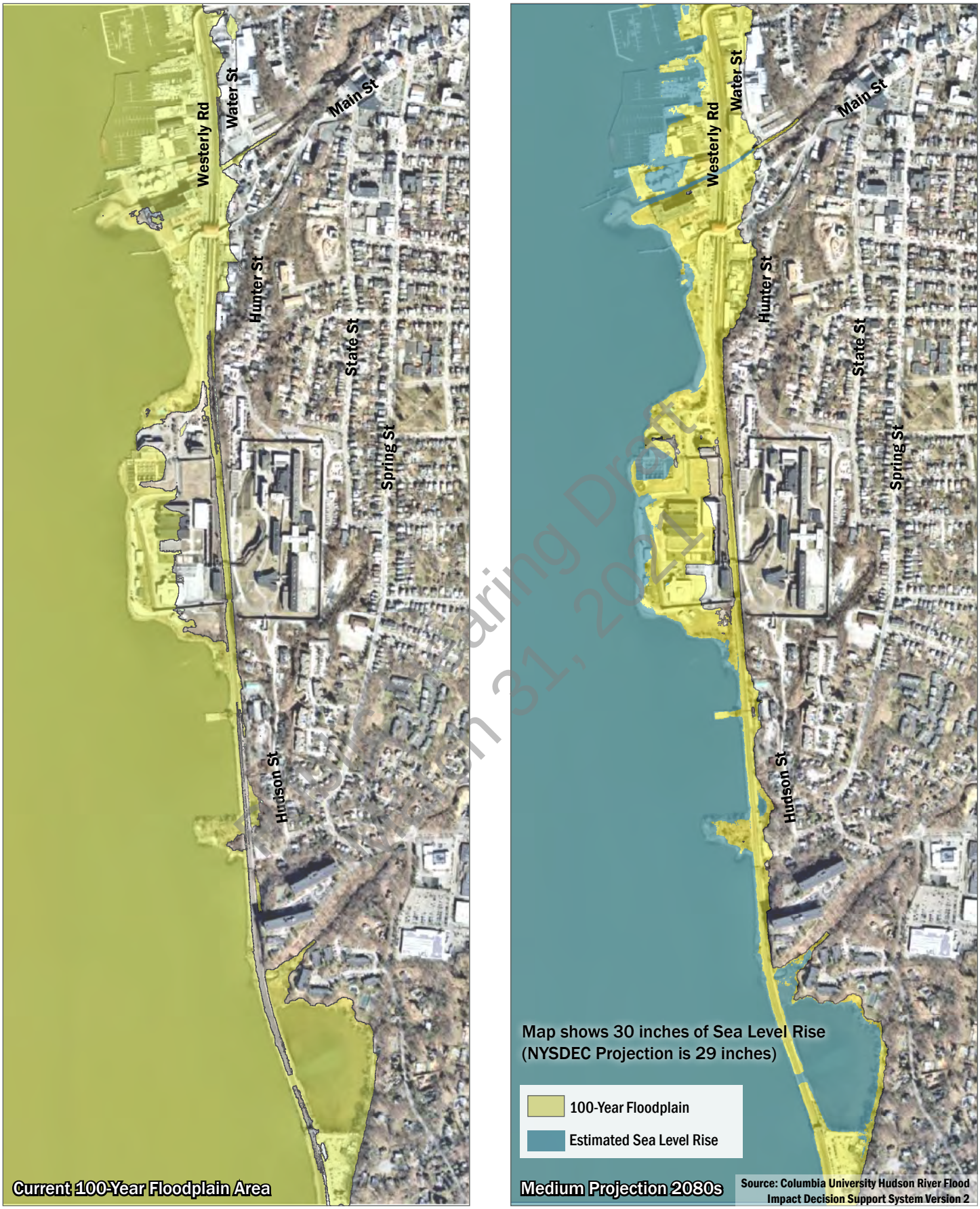


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Figure 17: Southern Waterfront - Floodplain and Sea Level Rise DEC Projections 2080s

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Figure 18: Northern Marina (top) and Central Marina (bottom) - Floodplain and Sea Level Rise DEC Projections

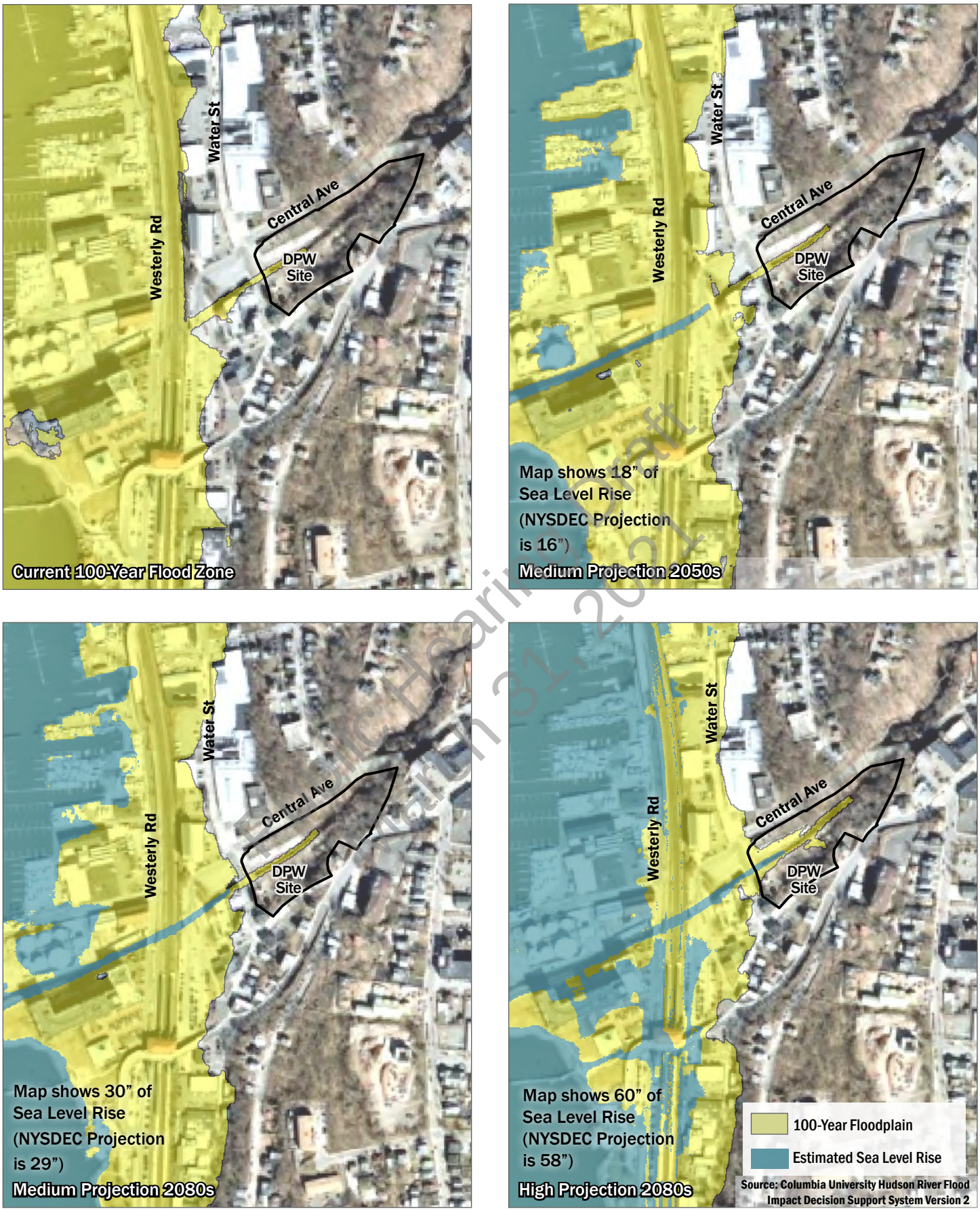


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Figure 19: Central Waterfront - Floodplain and Sea Level Rise DEC Projections

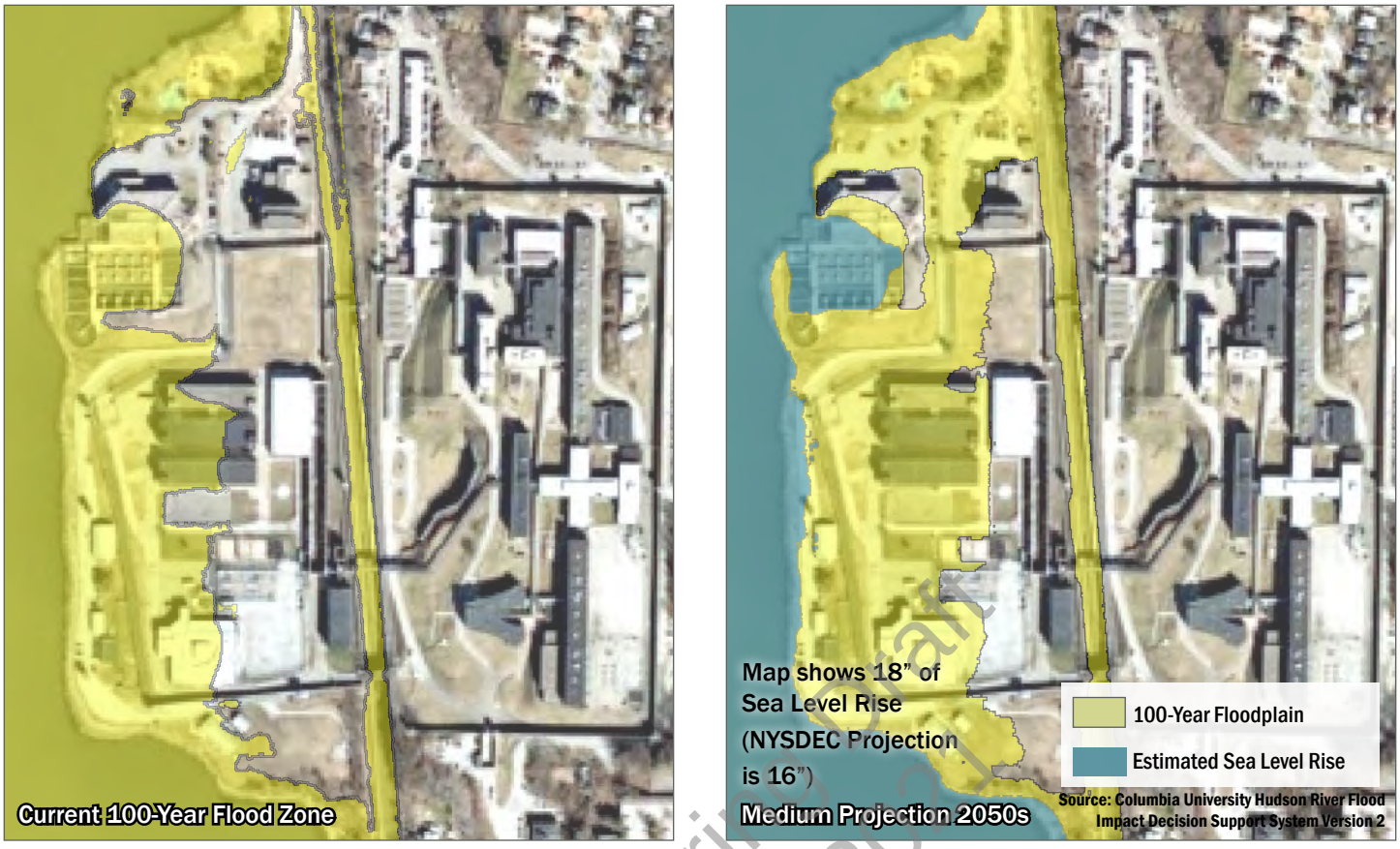


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Figure 20: Sing Sing Area - Floodplain and Sea Level Rise DEC Projections

*Recent and pipeline developments, and Village-owned parcels*

The waterfront features a variety of land uses, ranging from open space to residential to industrial. One recent waterfront development built just west of Ossining Station, Harbor Square, has transformed a previously underutilized, industrial lot that extends into the river. The Harbor Square development, completed in 2016, features 188 luxury residential units, including 19 affordable housing units at 80% of County's Area Median Income (AMI), and a restaurant. The surrounding area has been transformed into a public park, complete with a playground, a promenade that extends the Westchester County RiverWalk, and a dock that serves the NY Waterway Haverstraw-to-Ossining commuter ferry. Harbor Square is an example of development that provides public benefits to Village residents and expands public access to the waterfront.

Hidden Cove is an approved project for a multifamily residential development at 36 Water Street (the former Brandreth Pill Factory site, see Figure 19). The proposed project would feature a six-story building with 137 units, including 14 affordable housing units (at 80% of County's AMI). The development is planned to achieve LEED Silver certification for environmentally sustainable building practices. In addition, the developer is required to build a trail extension to connect to the existing trail network at Crawbuckie Park. The Hidden Cove development could be a catalyst to attract more activity to the northern area of the waterfront, making it an extension of the more heavily utilized central waterfront area.

The former DPW site is a 2.25 acre Village-owned site located between Central Avenue and Main Street at Water Street (Figure 21). The site was the subject of a "Request for Site Concepts & Developer Qualifications" issued by the Village in July 2019. Wilder Balter Partners, Inc. was identified as the preferred developer and, in June 2020, the developer entered an agreement with the Village to finalize an acceptable plan for redevelopment of the site. The initial site concept included 70 to 110 residential mixed-income units, with a broader range of affordable units at 40-90% of the Westchester County AMI. The former DPW site sits in a central, prominent position that may provide further public benefits such as the continuation of the Sing Sing Kill Greenway and improved connections between downtown and the waterfront.

Additional projects that are in different design stages include cultural attractions such as the Sing Sing Prison Museum and its Preview Center, with the latter anticipated to open in 2021. The Sing Sing Prison Museum is expected to become a regional attraction, therefore providing economic development opportunities for the Village, including new jobs and increased revenues for local businesses. Another project that is anticipated to attract visitors and residents to the waterfront is the deep-water pier extension project. The extended pier, currently only utilized for the Ossining-Haverstraw commuter ferry line, would accommodate increased public access to the shore and the docking of historic boats such as the Clearwater, further promoting Ossining as a destination for water-related uses. Additionally, the pier would have the potential to facilitate the arrival of visitors coming from NYC via ferry/boat to visit the Sing Sing Prison Museum.

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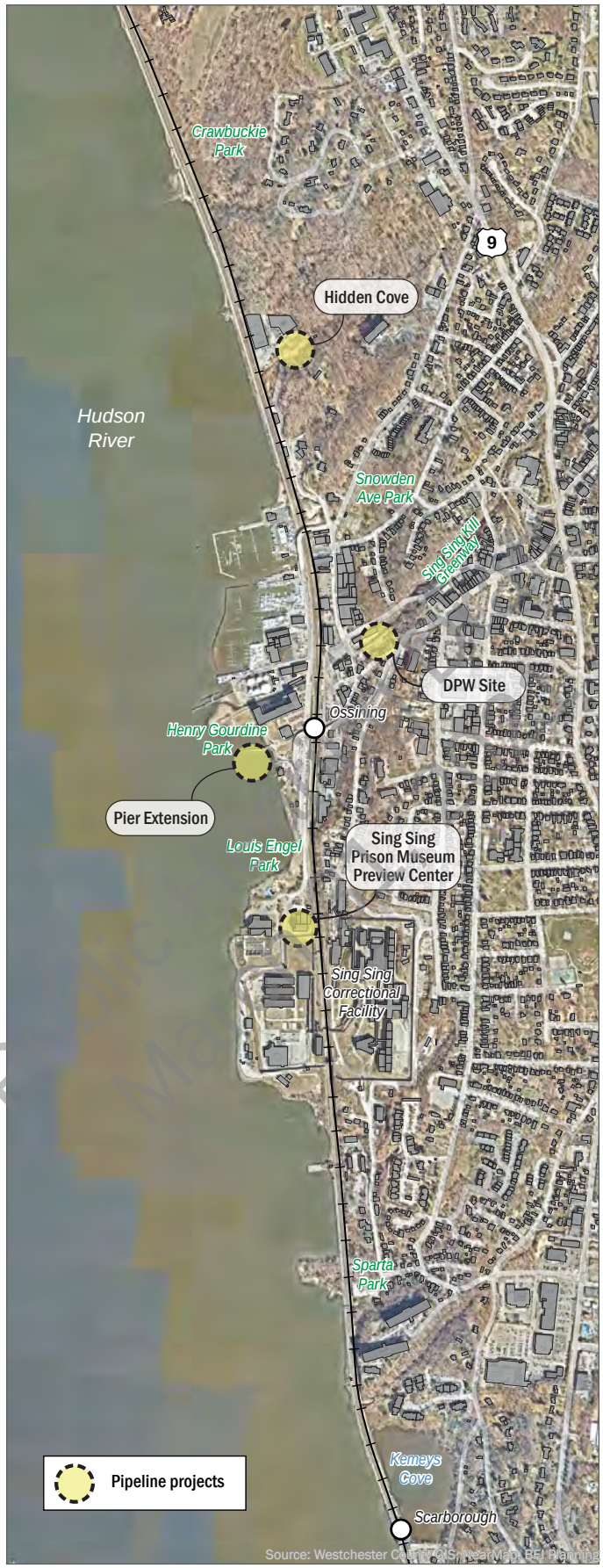


Figure 21: Village of Ossining Waterfront and Pipeline Projects

*Water-dependent uses and public access to the waterfront*

There are few locations west of the railroad tracks that have direct access to the Hudson River (Figure 22). These are concentrated in the central waterfront area, which includes some water-dependent uses such as the Shattemuc Yacht Club, the Westerly Marina, and the Ossining Boat & Canoe Club. These activities provide recreational services on a membership basis. The Boathouse restaurant, which shares its premises with Ferry Sloops Sailing Club, provides boaters with options for dock & dining. Docking options for transient boats are also available at the Shattemuc Yacht Club. Waterfront areas that are set aside for public usage include:

- Henry Gourdine Park: located in the middle waterfront, directly west of Ossining Station. It was created in conjunction with the Harbor Square project (described above). It is partially Village-owned and partially privately owned but publicly accessible.
- Louis Engel Park: located in the middle waterfront, south of Ossining Station, Engel Park is owned by the Town of Ossining. It is one of the most popular parks for the Village residents, especially in summer months. Public amenities include a beach, fishing area, playground, and picnic area.

*Existing land uses*

The northern waterfront area is made up of large parcels that include cluster residential developments such as Mystic Pointe, a religious institution, and Crawbuckie Park nature preserve, as well as industrial and vacant properties along North Water Street.

Further industrial and commercial properties are located in the central waterfront area, across from the railroad tracks and the Marina, as well as directly north of Harbor Square (i.e. oil storage facility). The Ossining Metro-North Station is accessible at Secor Road, from the top of the bridge, as well as through staircases from the north and south Village-owned station parking lots. Some other Village-owned parcels are also present in the area, and most of them are currently underutilized or vacant (Figure 23). The former DPW site represents the largest of these Village-owned parcels, sitting in a prominent location between the waterfront/station area and the downtown. To the east of the Ossining Station northbound platform, there are further industrial and commercial lots.

Along the shoreline, directly south of Engel Park, the Sing Sing Correctional Facility takes up several acres of the waterfront area, expanding as far east as State Street. Sing Sing creates a visual and physical barrier of the Ossining waterfront, impeding waterfront access for the public and preventing the creation of a continuous waterfront trail. Another use that creates similar barriers, although on a smaller scale, is the Westchester County Sewage Treatment Plant, located northwest of the prison.

The southernmost area of the Ossining waterfront includes the Sparta neighborhood, which features mostly residential uses and Sparta Park. Almost the entire south waterfront area lies east of the railroad tracks, which represent a barrier between the neighborhood and the waterfront. The only exception is Sparta Dock, a dedicated parkland west of the railroad tracks that extends into the Hudson River. This park has been unutilized since the previously exiting at-grade crossing at the tracks – no longer permitted due to MTA safety regulations - was removed.

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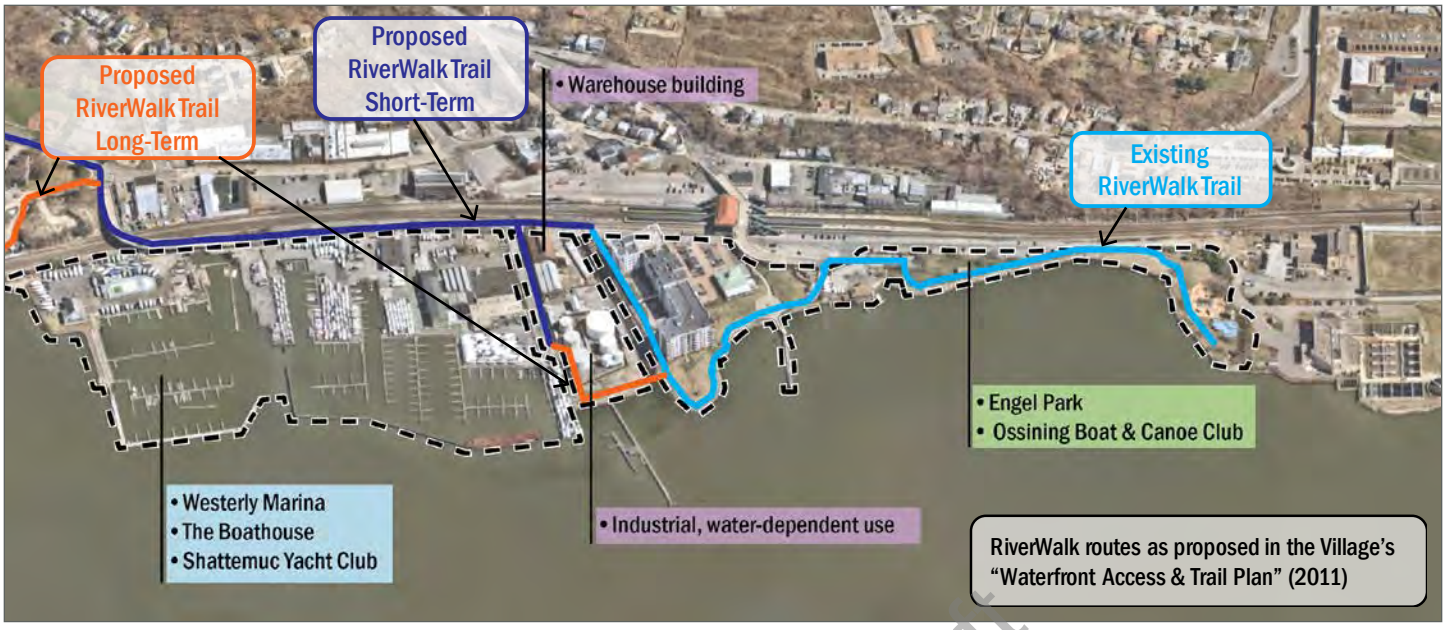


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Figure 22: Central Marina - Uses and RiverWalk Village's Proposall

Figure 23: Waterfront Parcels Public Ownership

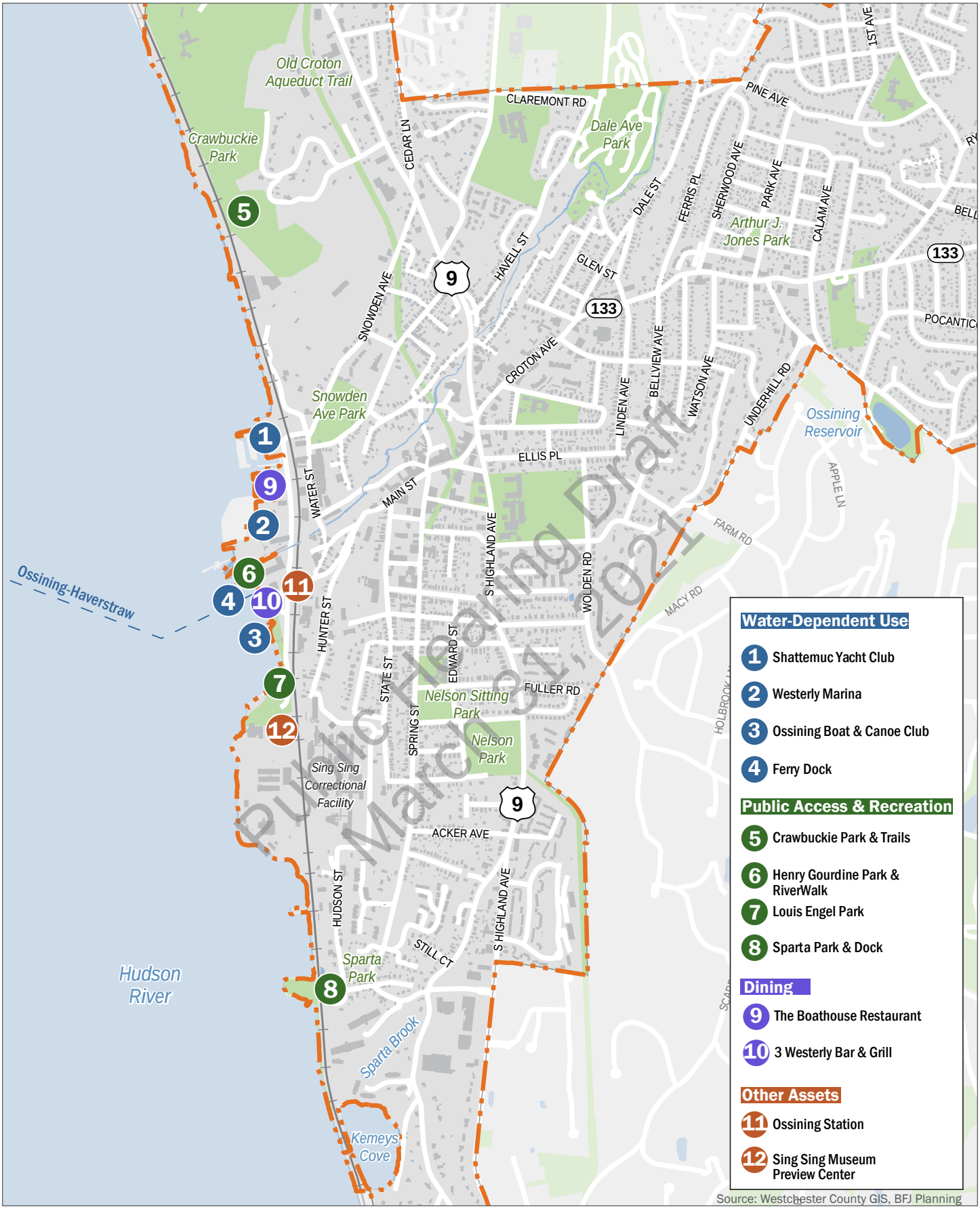


Figure 24: Waterfront Assets

## Issues and Opportunities

### *Climate change and resilience measures*

Some areas of the Ossining waterfront are poised to be affected by climate change related impacts in the future. Inundation and increased flood risk are the two most prominent issues that need to be considered when it comes to envisioning the future of this area. Inundation is a phenomenon caused by sea level rise, which would affect Ossining's low-lying areas near the Hudson River shoreline. Although the rate at which sea level rise will impact the waterfront is not known with precision (projections vary from low to high sea level rise increment scenarios), this phenomenon is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. Increased flood risk means that areas that are not currently in the 100-year floodplain will become part of the floodplain in the future. The expanded floodplain area will affect low-lying areas that are further inland compared to the current floodplain.

Potential solutions to these two issues can be divided in three categories: retreat from the shoreline, flood proofing of structures/buildings, and area-wide structural protective measures. Retreat, which entails leaving an area undeveloped and/or moving development inland, is typically sought when the level of inundation by sea level rise is expected to be substantial, and where other mitigation measures are infeasible or too costly. Flood proofing of buildings is a building-scale solution that could be implemented through specific design standards that aim at mitigating flood disruptions. Flood proofing could be applied both to new construction or as adaptation of existing buildings. Lastly, building structural protective measures are area-wide strategies like raising bulkheads or building berms that would reduce flood risk in specific areas and/or protect specific large assets.

If done well, climate adaptation and mitigating measures also have the ability to improve communities. New development and renovations, in fact, can and should provide solutions for accommodating the raising water level – or mitigating flooding events, and the Village should encourage property owners to implement resilient measures on their properties. Leveraging new climate-adapted development would provide increased protection for the surrounding areas as well – for example, through a combination of increased on-site stormwater retention, more green space, and landscapes that include berms where needed. These improvements, which should be integral of any new development in at-risk areas, would not only provide protection for the development itself and its users, but also for the waterfront community at-large.

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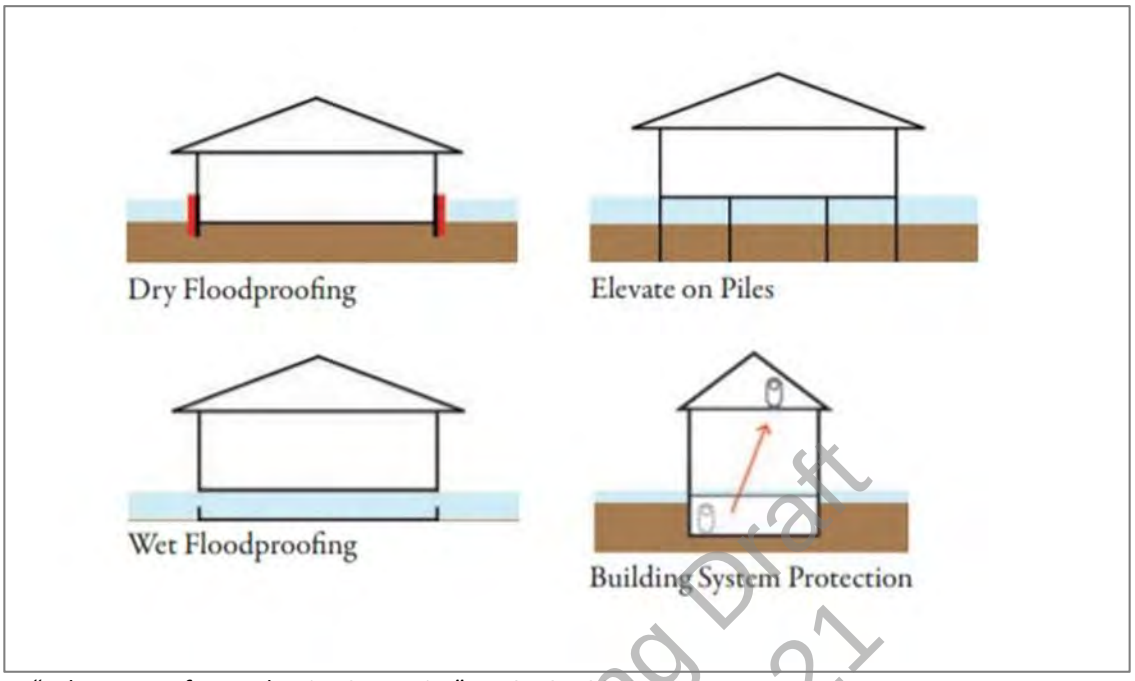
In terms of design standards for flood-proof buildings, the creation of flood mitigation design guidelines is recommended. The Village would need to evaluate whether the design guidelines should become voluntary or mandatory for properties in flood-prone areas. The design guidelines may recommend different strategies, such as: wet flood-proofing, dry flood-proofing, elevating the building, and elevating building systems (Figure 25). In addition to making buildings more resilient to flooding, an incentive to implement flood mitigation measures on buildings is the significant reduction in flood insurance premium cost. Flood insurance rates are based on the flood risk a property is exposed to; therefore, flood mitigation measures would result in a lower risk for the property, and a lower insurance cost for the owner.

**Figure 25: Diagrams of building-scale flood mitigation design strategies.**




*Source: "Urban Waterfront Adaptive Strategies", NYC DCP, 2013.*

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### *The Central Waterfront Area*

The portion of the waterfront east of the railroad tracks and west of Hunter Street / Water Street, bounded by the bridge at Westerly Road to the north and the industrial site along Barlow Lane to the south (Figure 26), hosts a number of different uses but it lacks a clear identity. Being in a strategic position, with recreational uses to the west and the downtown Crescent to the east, this area is well positioned to build upon its assets, which include the Ossining Metro-North Station.

Issues that prevent further investment in this area include physical barriers that make connections difficult, such as the railroad tracks to the west and steep hills to the east. The presence of topography to the south also makes this area disconnected from State Street and the Sparta neighborhood.

In addition to the strategic position and the presence of Ossining Station, other assets and opportunities set the central waterfront area in an advantageous position when it comes to economic development opportunities. The presence of underutilized Village-owned land provides the opportunity to seek new development with specified public benefits as part of public-private partnership agreements. Proposed redevelopment of the DPW site is a prime example of how the Village can leverage its assets to attract private investment. Another opportunity that could be explored is the consolidation of Village-owned parking lots that surround the station area. If some of the parking area can be opened up for redevelopment, the Village could consider different options for the reuse of such site.

Further assets are the presence of industrial historic buildings such as the former Hudson Wire Mill at 62 Water Street and the ex-warehouse brick building on Quimby Street which could spur opportunities for adaptive reuse connected to art and cultural activities. The presence of cultural organizations such as the Westchester Collaborative Theater on Water Street, and the Sing Sing Preview Center (and later the full Museum) could be leveraged to incentivize further art and culture activities in the waterfront area.

Figure 26: Central Waterfront Area

*Circulation and connectivity*

The Village's hilly topography creates a disconnection between the waterfront area and the rest of Ossining's neighborhoods that are at higher elevations. The steep hill between the train station area on the waterfront and the Downtown Crescent will always be there, but opportunities to improve connections for all users should be explored and implemented. The Complete Street Policy set forth in the Village's Code can serve as a resource to assess elements that are missing, or should be improved, to provide safe access for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit users.

Connections throughout the waterfront area are also challenging. The railroad that runs parallel to the shoreline creates a barrier between the properties located west of the railroad tracks and the rest of the Village. Only two vehicular bridges cross over the railroad tracks – one being the bridge at Secor Road that also provides the main access to Ossining Station. The location of the station access is also one of the major issues for users' safety and traffic flows.

In terms of north-south connectivity, the Sparta neighborhood remains separated from the rest of the waterfront because of the presence of the Sing Sing Correctional Facility. Additionally, Westerly Road needs changes in the street design to safely accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. The presence of some existing sections of the County's RiverWalk and the Village's Waterfront Access and Trails report will facilitate the prospects for new trails that would enhance connectivity along the waterfront.

Transportation services via water could also be expanded. The deep-water pier extension will increase opportunities for private boats and possibly ferries from NYC to dock in Ossining. Lastly, the NY Waterway commuter ferry line provides service across the Hudson River between Haverstraw and Ossining. The ferry service offers a link to connect communities that live on the west side of the river to the Metro-North train service in Ossining. The ferry dock is a short walk from Ossining Station.

*Waterfront Access and Parks*

As described in the existing conditions section, the Ossining's waterfront presents a number of barriers that limit public access to the waterfront. The biggest barrier is the MTA railroad that runs along the waterfront, impeding access to the shoreline for most of the north and south waterfront area. Other physical barriers are the County's Wastewater Treatment plant and the State-run Sing Sing Correctional Facility. The central waterfront, north of Sing Sing, is the only portion of the Ossining's waterfront that provides opportunities for public enjoyment of the Hudson River (Figure 27).

Existing waterfront parks include Henry Gourdine Park and Louis Engel Park, which are fully accessible to the public. Other properties such as the Westerly Marina and the Shattemuc Yacht Club provide water-related recreational opportunities for their members. The ferry dock is accessible to the public and is expected to be extended in the future. Parks that are not directly on the shoreline, but are part of the riverfront park system, include Crawbuckie Park, Snowden Park, and Sparta Park.

Improving and expanding waterfront pubic access is highly valuable for the Ossining community. Although opportunities are limited, the Village should consider every possible option to maximize access to the waterfront. Similarly, providing new or expanded parks in the waterfront area would not only improve Villagers' quality of life, but would also serve as flood mitigation and climate adaptation measure.

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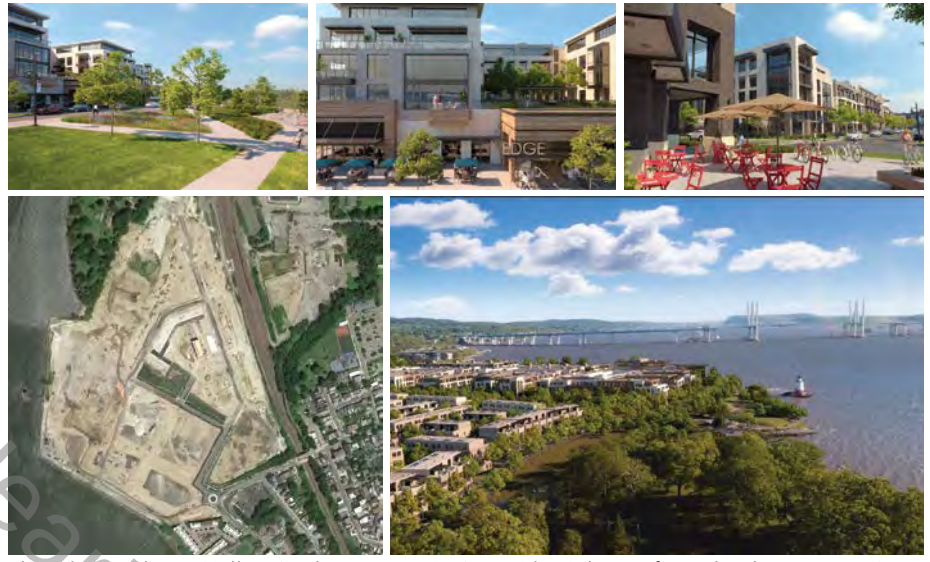
Figure 27: Ossining's Waterfront Access

# SIDEBAR: SURVEY OF SELECTED HUDSON RIVER WATERFRONTS

## Tarrytown, NY

*Residential waterfront development - 2-5 stories tall with limited mixed-use elements (restaurant, clubhouse, amenities, etc.). Publicly accessible green space along water's edge.*

## Sleepy Hollow, NY



*The Edge at Sleepy Hollow (under construction) - residential waterfront development - 5-6 stories tall with limited mixed-use elements and publicly accessible waterfront park.*

## Peekskill, NY

*Residential development located west of and uphill from the MNR tracks - 2-5 stories tall (Ginsburg Development). Peekskill Landing Park (public) and walkway along waterfront.*

## Yonkers, NY (Project Only)

*Resiliency Design Example - residential development (Avalon Yonkers) - 5-6 stories tall with first story designed to flood in storm event. Publicly accessible walkway along water's edge.*

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## Objectives and Strategies

*Objective 4.1: Plan for climate adaptation and flood mitigation measures, and identify targeted solutions for the waterfront area.*

Physical conditions, existing assets and flood/inundation risk are context specific, and therefore, an evaluation of different potential solutions (or a mix of those) is needed for different sites. For this reason, strategies from 1.5 to 1.11 are organized by location.

Strategy 4.1.1: Create a Climate Adaptation and Flood Mitigation Plan.

This plan could include an inventory of waterfront sites at inundation and/or flood risk, prioritize actions on the most vulnerable areas, and develop short- and long-term climate adaptation and flood mitigation strategies for different waterfront sites. Site-specific recommendations should be based on the latest sea level rise projections provided by state and federal agencies (NYS DEC, FEMA) and updated periodically. A Climate Adaptation and Flood Mitigation Plan would facilitate coordination among different Village department and other stakeholders (e.g. MTA) when it comes to planning for climate adapted development. For example, Village's land use tools and building code should be consistent with the plan.

Strategy 4.1.2: Develop flood mitigation design guidelines for new developments and major renovations.

Flood mitigation design guidelines could be developed as a standalone document that property owners and developers would use as a blueprint for building flood-proof structures. Alternatively, zoning designations could incorporate flood mitigation design guidelines in low-lying and flood-prone areas. Either way, these design guidelines should also include considerations for appropriate urban design features that would apply alongside the flood-proofing measures.

Strategy 4.1.3: Seek grants from State and Federal agencies to implement studies and/or fund climate adaptation projects for infrastructure and public amenities.

Closely monitor opportunities to apply for resilience and climate change grants from State and Federal governmental entities (NYS DEC, FEMA, etc.).

Strategy 4.1.4: Close coordination with MTA for potential future resilience work on the railroad tracks.

As of the writing of this Plan, MTA Metro-North confirmed to have no plans for flood mitigation works along their Hudson Line. However, in the likelihood that future flood mitigation plans will be considered by MTA to protect the tracks, the Village should engage in discussions with MTA for what concerns the Village's portion of the Hudson Line railroad. In the instance that MTA decides to elevate their railroad tracks, the waterfront area to the east of the tracks may benefit from it, as the elevated tracks may serve as area-wide flood protection infrastructure, especially in the case of storm surge events. However, this is likely to be a long-term planning strategy for MTA, and its impacts will affect many municipalities along the Hudson River.

Strategy 4.1.5: Promote the implementation of flood mitigation design guidelines for buildings in the northern waterfront area.

*Northern Waterfront Area*

The current floodplain area includes low-lying portions of Crawbuckie Park, parts of the industrial area off North Water Street, and the Metro-North railroad tracks. In these areas, the floodplain is projected to only slightly expand, as the topography presents steep hills just beyond the current floodplain zone. Inundation from sea level rise is expected to affect the sliver of land between the shoreline edge and the railroad tracks, portions of Crawbuckie Park, a small portion of the northern industrial area (by the

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riverbed of a small stream flowing into the Hudson River), and a portion of North Water Street just north of the Shattemuc Yatch Club.

As the area projected to be inundated in the next decades is not extensive, and it does not threaten any existing development, building-level flood proofing solutions may be implemented to prevent damages due to flooding. New development should follow flood mitigation design guidelines to ensure adaptation to future flooding events.

For the portion of North Water Street that, in the long term, is likely at inundation risk, site specific structural strategies may be pursued, such as raising the roadbed, in conjunction with stormwater management and green infrastructure interventions. The most critical infrastructure piece at inundation risk, however, is the railroad. All resilience strategies in this area would require coordination with MTA.

Strategy 4.1.6: Leverage the presence of the Village-owned sites in a way that ensure public benefits and more productive uses, while implementing flood mitigation interventions.

Village-Owned Property at 7 North Water Street
It is important to outline possible strategies for prime Village-owned land such as the 1-acre site located just east of the railroad tracks, between North Water Street and Broadway Bridge. The flood risk of this site is estimated to increase in the next decades, as the 100-year floodplain is projected to include the entirety of such property.

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan recommended the creation of a park at 7 North Water Street, to expand the nearby Snowden Park and increase the outdoor recreational space in the waterfront area. If the Village decides to pursue this strategy, the park should be designed to withstand major flooding events.

If the Village decides, instead, to develop the property, any new development should follow flood mitigation design strategies to ensure the resilience of any new structure. The site should also provide public benefits such as publicly accessible green space and improved sidewalks, crosswalk, etc. Lastly, this is a strategic location to bridge the recreational part of the waterfront to the south (public parks and docks) with the less utilized northern areas.

Strategy 4.1.7: Preserving areas west of the railroad from development, while considering area-wide structural protective measures for these lands.

Central Waterfront - West of the Railroad
The 0.6-mile stretch of area west of the railroad line is anticipated to be heavily impacted by inundation in the next decades. According to DEC projections, starting in 2050, portions of the Westerly Marina, the Shattemuc Yacht Club, and the oil storage facility will be affected by the rising sea level. In the following decades, the mentioned properties will be greatly impacted, and portions of the public waterfront at Engel Park are estimated to be inundated as well.

No new development should be considered for areas west of the railroad tracks, with the exception of climate-adaptive reuse of worthy buildings. One example of a building that would be appropriate for such adaptive-reuse is the old brick warehouse on Quimby Street. Refurbishment and renovation of existing buildings should be encouraged, provided that appropriate flood mitigation measures are pursued. For the riverfront properties' edges, raised bulkheads or berming around the properties are among the strategies that should be considered for these at-risk properties. For example, the Village could seek public-private partnerships with riverfront property owners (for example, the Westerly Marina, and Shattemuc) to provide certain flood mitigation projects in exchange for expanded public

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access to the shoreline (see Strategy 4.1). Berming or living shoreline solutions, instead, may be explored for the impacted areas of Engel Park.

The property occupied by the oil storage facility could be an exception to this strategy. If the owner decides to relocate due to the increased risk of inundation or for other reasons, then other options could be explore by the Village for such site. In any case, the property should be adapted to withstand regular inundation and extreme weather events.

Strategy 4.1.8: Promote the implementation of flood mitigation design guidelines for the Central Waterfront area, east of the railroad tracks.

Central Waterfront - East of the Railroad
The lands east of the railroad are not anticipated to be impacted by coastal inundation for the foreseeable time, but an expansion in the flood-prone zone is expected. The extended 100-floodplain is estimated to include most of the Village-owned parking lots by Ossining Station, as well as most of the commercial/industrial properties north and south of the station.

All new development should be built to adapt to flood events. Flood mitigation design guidelines at the building level should be promoted for existing buildings as well.

For the commuter parking lots, the Village should investigate areas that are at risk, and explore options for green infrastructure interventions such as bioswales and permeable pavers.

Strategy 4.1.9: Incorporate flood mitigation solutions to future development.

DPW Site
Given the potential redevelopment of the DPW site, potential solutions for climate adaptation development at this site should be closely explored. The Sing Sing Kill runs through the site, exposing the property to flood risk events. In fact, increased flood risk could result from an increase in heavy downpour events that may cause the Sing Sing Kill to flood adjacent areas.

Flood mitigation solutions may include some structural hardening of the edges of the stream, and/or building-scale flood mitigation design guidelines.

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Strategy 4.1.10: Explore area-wide structural protective measures for the Sing Sing / Wastewater Treatment Plant area.

Sing Sing Correctional Facility and Westchester County Wastewater Treatment Plant
The Sing Sing prison, a State property, is already partially in the 100-floodplain zone and is estimated to be entirely in the floodplain in the coming decades. Inundation due to sea level rise is anticipated to affect only the western portion of the property, impacting mostly road infrastructure and parking lots, and a few minor structures. The County's Wastewater Treatment plant, on the other hand, is already expected to be inundated with the current high tide levels. In the next decades, the level of inundation may become significant. It is important to note that the Wastewater Treatment plant facility is included in a County's study that will evaluate flood protection measures for 500-year flooding events (also mentioned later in this plan, under the Sustainable Infrastructure chapter).

Similarly to the Central Waterfront docks, raised bulkheads or berms to be built around the properties' major assets are among the strategies that should be considered for this area.

Strategy 4.1.11: Monitor the impacts of seal level rise and flood events in the future, and evaluate potential living shorelines strategies for the southern waterfront area.

Southern Waterfront / Sparta Area
Similarly to the northern waterfront, the major risk in this area is posed by flooding events. However, this area is not expected to experience a major floodplain expansion in the future. The current floodplain already includes two docks (a helipad and Sparta Dock), a portion of Sparta Park, and the railroad tracks. There are no buildings in the floodplain, except for one commercial property on Kemeys Avenue, just north of Scarborough Station. Potential inundation from sea level rise is projected to affect only natural areas, such as Sparta Dock and the surroundings of Kemeys Cove.

The most critical infrastructure piece at inundation risk is the railroad. All resilience strategies in this area would require coordination with MTA.

*Objective 4.2: Promote development in strategic areas of the Central Waterfront, while retaining a mix of uses, and leveraging existing assets.*

Strategy 4.2.1: Use the DPW site development as a catalyst project to attract diversified users to the Central Waterfront.
Village-owned parcels such as the DPW site provide a tremendous opportunity to boost the waterfront area. Located in a strategic location of the Central Waterfront - bridging the gap between the downtown area and the waterfront, the redevelopment of the DPW site has the potential to advance a number of Village's goals, including but not limited to the provision of affordable housing. An increase in foot traffic and basic services demand due to new residents is expected to be beneficial to existing commercial activities and attract new ones, allowing for an expanded Village's tax base. Additionally, train commuters and seasonal visitors would also benefit from the increased activities around the train station, and consequently businesses have the necessary customer base to succeed.

Strategy 4.2.2: Encourage mixed-use and commercial activities throughout the Central Waterfront area.
Some infill development and adaptive reuse of existing buildings should be encouraged throughout the Central Waterfront area. New climate-adapted development and renovations have the potential to make the waterfront area more resilient to flooding while improving quality of life for the neighborhood, in terms of provision of basic services at a comfortable walking distance, improved urban design and streetscape, etc.

Strategy 4.2.3: Continue the Sing Sing Kill Greenway to Water Street / Station area.
The developer of the DPW site should be required to build a section of the walkway along the Sing Sing Kill, which would connect to the existing path. A more direct connection from Ossining Station to the extended Sing Sing Kill Greenway would attract more visitors to the trail, as well as improve pedestrian connections between the waterfront/station area and downtown. Flood mitigation measures should be incorporated to the new section of the Greenway.

Strategy 4.2.4: Consider consolidating surface parking areas into a parking structure.
Village-owned parking areas occupy a large portion of the Central Waterfront area (Figure 28), making it less attractive for people on foot and missing opportunities to provide more productive uses on portions of the parking areas. As the Village gathers data from its mobility and parking study[11], an

[11] A "Mobility and Parking Management Study" has been commissioned by the Village, with estimated completion in early 2021.

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inventory of the number of surface parking spaces and their utilization should inform considerations of building a parking structure on a Village-owned parcel. Creative funding should be explored to pay for the parking structure, including public-private partnerships, infrastructure fee, or State funding (e.g. if the Village applies and gets accepted into the Downtown Revitalization Program). If the Village moves forward with the proposed expansion of Engel Park (see Strategy 4.2), then the parking structure should incorporate the parking spots by the waterfront that would be removed due to the expanded public park area.

If the Village moves ahead with a parking structure, the garage should be built to withstand flooding events and minimize damage. Additionally, sustainable interventions should be added on the structure, such as a green roof and/or a rooftop solar farm. A strategy to share these green resources with the community is recommended, such as creating a rooftop community garden and/or provide community solar power to the residents.

Strategy 4.2.5: Build upon existing recreational and cultural attractions and organizations, and continue to permit and promote additional cultural uses.

Located at a short walking distance from existing recreational assets such as Henry Gourdine Park and its sculpture area and waterfront trail, the east side of the Central Waterfront should provide options to expand recreational and cultural activities across the railroad tracks. As Ossining's cultural and artistic scene has recently experienced an upswing, the Village should encourage adaptive reuse of Central Waterfront buildings for artistic purposes and build upon successful examples such as the Westchester Collaborative Theater (located directly across the DPW site). Temporary or permanent public art installations could be placed on public property on the east side of the tracks, to show continuity with the existing sculptures on the waterfront park. Visitors that come to Ossining for the artistic scene would be incentivized to remain to dine, hence complementary activities such as restaurants, bars and food trucks could provide for expanded economic development opportunities.

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Figure 28: Station Area Village-Owned Parking Lots

*Objective 4.3: Improve connections to and throughout the waterfront.*

Although Chapter 6 will focus on transportation objectives and strategies for the entire Village, connections to and throughout the waterfront are included in this section as they are instrumental for the success of the waterfront area.

Strategy 4.3.1: Explore options to minimize conflict between drop-offs and traffic flow by Ossining Station.

The main train station access at the top of Secor Road bridge is less than ideal from a traffic flow standpoint. Space for pickups and drop-offs at the top of the bridge is very limited and cause unsafe conditions. Although any changes related to the train station require coordination with MTA Metro-North, the Village should explore whether traffic flows by Ossining Station could be improved. If the Village and MTA decide to move forward with a feasibility study, this would likely become a long-term action plan.

Strategy 4.3.2: Implement the Complete Streets Policy throughout the waterfront area.

The Village's adopted Complete Street Policy should be implemented for all public streets, with particular focus around the Ossining Station. The Village should make an inventory of roadway and sidewalk conditions, and prioritize areas where pedestrian access is poor. It is noted that although most areas of the waterfront have a sidewalk on at least one side of the road, sometimes the existing sidewalk is not wide enough or is in poor condition. ADA compliance should be sought for all sidewalks.

Strategy 4.3.3: Improve Westerly Road conditions to make it attractive for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Westerly Road is the only street that connects the westernmost areas of the waterfront. Being such a critical link between recreational areas and nature trails, it should provide safe access for all users. Opportunities to widen the sidewalk of Westerly Road between the north-east corner of the Harbor Square property – where the section of the promenade RiverWalk ends – and the north end of Westerly Road (by Broadway Bridge), should be explored. In particular, the sidewalk width should accommodate strollers and wheelchairs. Shared street markings (bike "sharrows") could be painted to indicate that bikers are welcome to use Westerly Road, although other safety measures such as decreasing the speed limit should be considered to improve bikers' safety. Streetscape improvements such as street trees, benches and rain gardens should also be considered for this segment of Westerly Road.

According to the Village's 2011 Waterfront Access and Trail Plan, the above-mentioned segment of Westerly Road is proposed to become part of the RiverWalk trail. If the Village decides to implement such proposal, the extension of the RiverWalk trail could be done as a sidewalk multi-use path with wayfinding signs included into the design.

Furthermore, the southern end of Westerly Road (just south of Engel Park) will serve the Sing Sing Prison Museum and Preview Center in the future. Some visitors are expected to arrive to the Museum by train. To improve pedestrian connections between Ossining Station and the Museum/Preview Center, a pedestrian pathway could be constructed along Westerly Road, to provide a safe, direct link for Museum visitors using the train (Figure 30).

Strategy 4.3.4: Investigate potential changes in the road circulation to and from the waterfront area.

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan recommended doing a traffic and pedestrian circulation study to improve access to and from the waterfront. As mentioned above, a mobility study is underway and, once complete, should be consulted before implementing any changes to streets circulation. Preliminary ideas proposed in the 2009 Plan included making a portion of Main Street and Secor Road one-way, so to create a one-way loop to improve access to the waterfront. All the suggestions included in the 2009 Plan should be carefully considered in light on the new mobility study.

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Strategy 4.3.5: Continue the RiverWalk trail at any available opportunity, and explore opportunities for new trails and connections.

The Village's 2011 Waterfront Access and Trail Plan highlights short- and long-term RiverWalk extension proposed routes. The Village should consider moving forward with the short-term trail extension in the following sections, which are all on public streets:

- Along Westerly Road, between the north-east corner of the Harbor Square property and the north end of Westerly Road Avenue (as mentioned in Strategy 3.3);
- From the Broadway Bridge ramp at Westerly Road and continuing north along Snowden Avenue;
- Along Quimby Street, up to the Westerly Marina property along the shore.

The Waterfront Access and Trail Plan should be considered when opportunities for redevelopment on the waterfront open up. The Village should negotiate the construction of the RiverWalk path with future property owners and developers, in case a waterfront redevelopment is particularly suitable to include the RiverWalk trail.

One of the long-term route options highlighted in the Waterfront Access and Trail Plan, is to extend the RiverWalk from north side of Harbor Square/Henry Gourdine Park to the Paradise Oil site, with a pedestrian/bicycling bridge over Sing Sing Kill/Kill Brook, which would then connect with the Quimby Street portion of the RiverWalk (short-term option mentioned above). If the oil facility decides to move out in the future, such property would be ideal for the continuation of the RiverWalk trail.

In addition to the RiverWalk trail, the Ossining waterfront area has some other opportunities to expand the trail network of the Village. The Village's 2011 Waterfront Access and Trail Plan describes in detail some site-specific recommendations for waterfront sites where new trails could be built. In 2018, the Millwood-Ossining Go (MOGO) Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity Plan provided an extensive proposal for a local bike path network, partially building upon existing plans created by the State and the County (such as the RiverWalk). A more detailed description of the MOGO Plan is included in Chapter 6: Transportation. The Village should use the 2011 Trail Plan and the MOGO Plan to assess what trail proposals should be prioritized and what the low-hanging fruits are.

Another consideration for prioritization of new trail connections is the opportunity to link different Village's assets and parks through trails. For example, opportunities to connect the Old Croton Aqueduct with other trails (e.g. Crawbuckie trail system), parks (e.g. Snowden Park) and other Village's assets should be sought in order to expand the Village's trail network and promote an active lifestyle. Lastly, for any new development, the site plan review process should include considerations on potential incorporation of trail components as part of the development.

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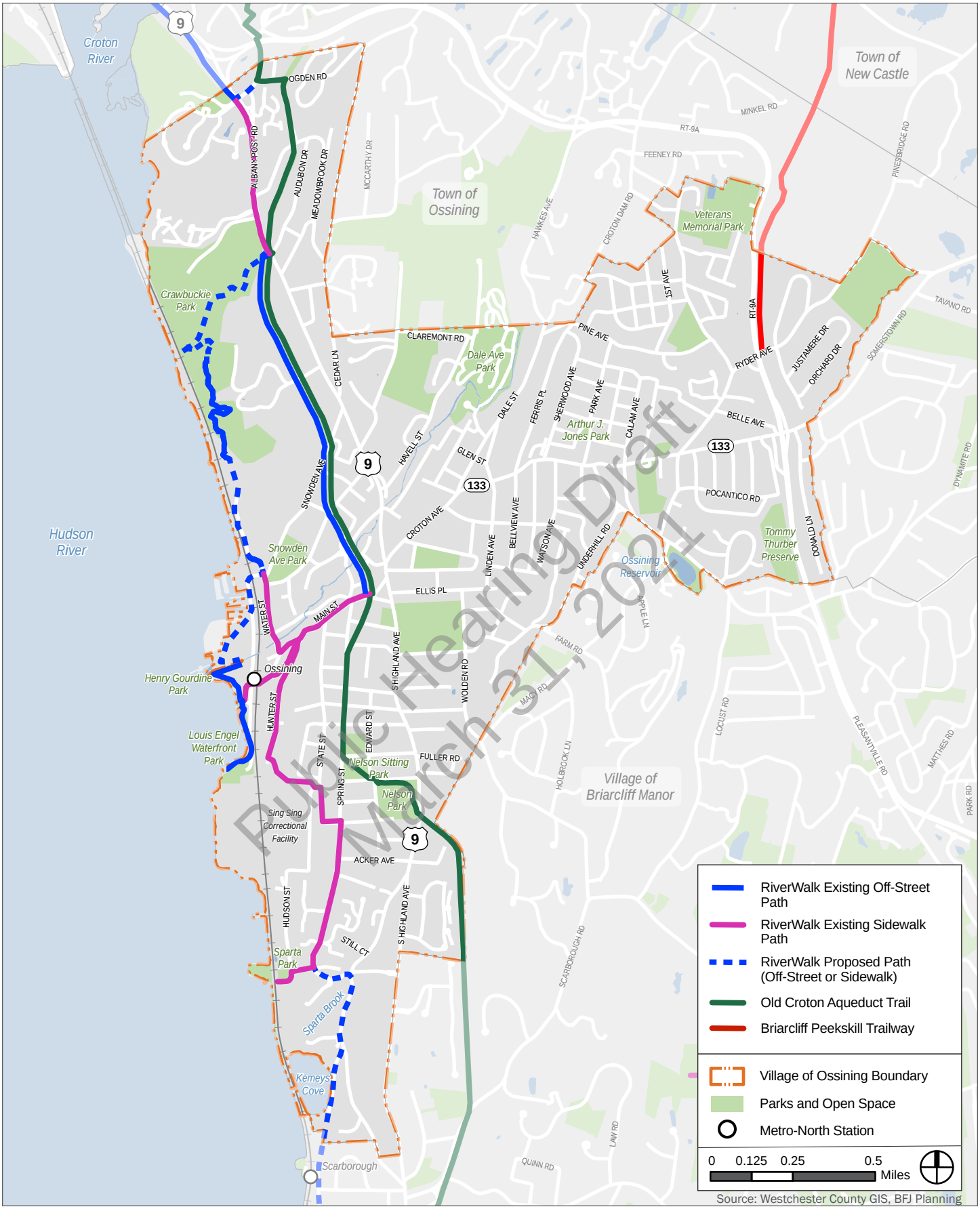


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Figure 29: Village of Ossining Trails

Strategy 4.3.6: Improve wayfinding and signage throughout the waterfront area.
The existing trails, parks, and cultural/recreational assets of the waterfront should be promoted through consistent wayfinding elements, which include maps, direction signs and other signage (including interpretive signage along trails) that guide and incentivize visitors to explore the Ossining waterfront. A critical piece of wayfinding strategy includes providing maps and directions at Ossining Station, but this strategy should apply also to areas that are less popular for visitors, such as the Sparta waterfront and Sparta Park.

Wayfinding is important also for visitors coming via ferry or private boat. The Ossining waterfront is, in fact, another entry point to the Village; as such, it should be considered as a gateway that provides an improved experience for those entering the Village via water.

Strategy 4.3.7: Work with NY Waterway to explore the possibility of ferry service from Haverstraw during summer weekends and in conjunction with Ossining events.
Ossining is positioned to attract regional visitors, especially during the summer. If the ferry service is extended to summer weekends and special events days (with proper advertisement) then it would open up opportunities for visitors from Rockland County to enjoy a quick ferry ride to come to Ossining. The free parking availability at the Haverstraw ferry terminal, as well as the fact that there is no need for new infrastructure, makes expanding the service for recreational purposes a worthwhile strategy. Weekend service could be tested out through a pilot program for a summer/fall season. Even in the case ferry riders come to Ossining to make the connection to the Metro-North line, an increased number of people from outside Ossining would walk from the ferry dock to the station, resulting in increased revenues for the waterfront businesses.

Strategy 4.3.8: Explore funding options and feasibility for a shuttle bus between Ossining Station and downtown.
The shuttle bus rides should be more frequent than the Bee-Line rides, and should be coordinated with train arrival/departure times. A shuttle loop could also include a stop at the Sing Sing Prison Museum/Preview Center, which may open up opportunities for shuttle service partnership between the non-profit cultural institution (the museum) and the Village. Further recommendations on the shuttle option are included in Chapter 6: Transportation.

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*Objective 4.4: Maximize opportunities to increase public access to the waterfront.*

Strategy 4.4.1: Work with current property owners/tenants to create opportunities for increased public access to the waterfront.
If the Village is interested in expanding public access to the waterfront, only a few locations could be appropriate to pursue such objective. This may change in the future, as changes in ownership of waterfront parcels may open up redevelopment opportunities. In the short-term, the locations where the Village may explore public access options are:

- Along Quimby Street dock: as already mentioned in Strategy 3.5 for a potential extension of the RiverWalk trail, Quimby dock could be reimagined as a public park. A small portion of it is currently used as a metered parking. The western end of Quimby Street dock, however, is fenced off and currently owned by the Westerly Marina (used for boats storage). If the Village is interested in further expanding public access up to the shoreline, an agreement for a public easement on the Westerly Marina's property should be shought.

- Along the Boathouse dock: also in this case, the Village would need to work with the property owner of this parcel to provide a public easement along the shoreline – which could also provide flood mitigation design features (e.g., permeable pavement, raised berms, etc.).

One notable project that would increase public access to the waterfront is the deep-water pier extension, which is – at the time of this writing - in the design phase. The Village should support such projects that provide multiple public benefits, in addition to boost economic development and tourism for the Village.

Strategy 4.4.2: Explore ways to expand Louis Engel Park.

As mentioned before, Engel Park is a well-utilized waterfront park that provides a number of recreational options for all residents. The Village, in collaboration with the Town, should consider expanding the middle portion of the park (currently the narrower section) into the commuter parking area (Figure 30). The expansion, in addition to providing increased recreational public space, would also allow for improved stormwater management and options to include nature-based resilience measures to reduce potential future inundation issues in the area. As mentioned in Strategy 2.4, the parking spots that would be removed to accommodate the park expansion should be incorporated into the parking structure by the train station.

Strategy 4.4.3: Recognize long-term opportunities for increased access to the waterfront.

In the long-term, the Village may want to consider connecting the Sparta neighborhood to Sparta Dock, across the railroad tracks, via pedestrian bridge. This project, recommended in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan and in the Village's LWRP, would require coordination and approvals from MTA, in addition to significant funding.

If the State's Sing Sing Correctional Facility is ever to cease operations, at least for the portion of the facility facing the Hudson River, the redevelopment of the site should be consistent with other plans for the waterfront, and in particular should provide climate-adapted public access to the riverfront.

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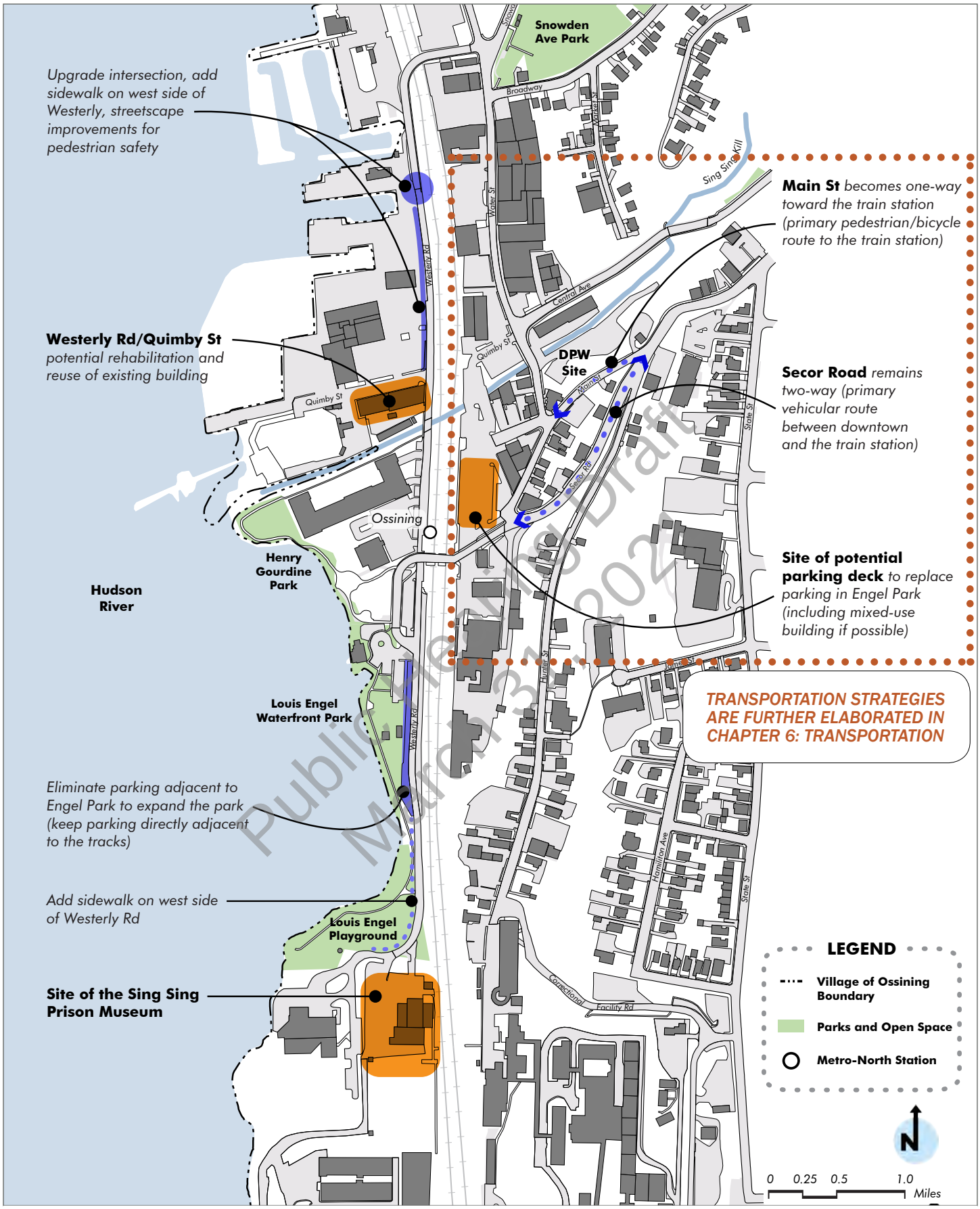


Figure 30: Waterfront Conceptual Site Plan

# Chapter 5: Economic Development

## Goal

Strengthen Ossining's local economy and create a regional attraction in downtown and attract investment throughout the village to expand the tax base, diversify the local economy, and attract new residents, businesses, and visitors to the Village.

## Introduction

The Village of Ossining has economic assets that it can build upon, but the Village also faces challenges in growing the tax base and boosting the local economy. Ossining historically has been a commuter village, and the historic downtown, Metro-North train station, and proximity to job centers in New York City are all strong assets that the Village shares with other communities in Westchester County. Ossining also draws visitors to the Croton Aqueduct Trail, Crawbuckie Park, and the Hudson River Waterfront. Community events such as the farmers market and seasonal street festivals bring in visitors from the region as well. While the Village has a growing arts scene, it lacks a major cultural anchor that would serve has a draw for visitors as well as a benefit for local residents.

This chapter, which focuses on Ossining's Downtown and Economic Development, examines existing economic trends in the Village to identify strategies that Ossining can pursue to strengthen the tax base, grow the local economy, create local job opportunities, and attract more residents and visitors from around the region. There are several recent plans and studies focused on these objectives and this plan is able to build upon this work. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan was a starting point, but many priorities have evolved and some local, regional, and national economic trends have changed in the previous decade.

Ossining Tomorrow is also being developed in the midst of generational public health challenges and social movements. The COVID-19 pandemic has already had major impacts on Ossining's local economy. Even as the Village responds to help businesses open up and weather the crisis, this plan also considers how the Village can bounce back from the economic hit in the medium-term, while also adapting to emerging trends in response to COVID-19, such as an expected growth in remote work situations.

This chapter looks at issues and opportunities in three general categories: national economic trends, local and regional economic trends, and three geographic focus areas within the Village: Downtown, Gateway Corridors, and Neighborhood Commercial Nodes. The Downtown is the area generally bounded by South Highland Avenue, Broad Street, State Street, and the Sing Sing Kill. Gateway Corridors include Upper Croton Avenue, North Highland Avenue, South Highland Avenue, and the waterfront. These gateways are often the first view that residents and visitors have of the Village when they enter; they also provide auto-oriented commercial that serves the surrounding neighborhoods. Neighborhood Commercial Nodes include Roosevelt Square and Arcadian Shopping Center.

Ossining's downtown provides an opportunity to create a regional attraction in the Village of Ossining, bringing in visitors, but also new businesses to diversify and boost the local economy, expanded earnings for the local business community, and provide employment opportunity for local residents as well as potential new residents. But Ossining's economic well-being is not just about the Downtown. The waterfront is a major attraction while Gateway Corridors and Neighborhood Commercial Nodes provide resources for Ossining's neighborhoods as well as locations for businesses to open and expand.

This chapter seeks to address a series of critical issues facing the Village of Ossining, including:

- The tax burden for Village residents is among the highest in Westchester County.

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- New investment in the Village is one avenue to reduce the tax burden. This should be done in a way that also recognizes potential impacts on the school district.
- Improving livability for existing residents.
- The waterfront area is one of the Village's key assets, with the Metro-North station, tourism resources, and development opportunities; but the waterfront is also at risk due to sea level rise, so new development must account for these risks. The future of Ossining's waterfront area must be adaptive to sea level rise, account for industrial contamination, expand access to the Hudson River, and create a sustainable business environment that attracts new investment to the Village.

## Existing Conditions

*Characteristics of Ossining's Commercial Areas*

### Downtown

Downtown Ossining is a walkable, pedestrian-friendly area located on a ridge plateau over 100 feet in elevation above the Hudson River shoreline. The steep grade from the waterfront to the downtown is both an obstacle and an advantage. Like many Hudson River towns, the topography creates a daunting climb for pedestrians arriving by train to walk up to the shops and restaurants in downtown. However, the elevation also creates soaring views of the Hudson River and Palisades.

The north side of Main Street is architecturally cohesive, with historic buildings and a pedestrian-friendly street wall that many communities around the country would seek to replicate. Fires in the 1870s led to a massive rebuilding of downtown and much of this building stock dates to that time. Most of these buildings are three to four stories tall, with residences above ground-level storefronts. Building facades meet the edge of the sidewalk and there are few side yards. Landmarks that help to define the character of downtown include the First Baptist Church and the National Bank Building. Downtown Ossining is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

However, Main Street feels incomplete on the south side, where the historic buildings were lost to urban renewal clearance during the 1970s and 1980s. The parking lots on the south side of Main Street create a lopsided retail corridor with commercial establishments along only one side of the street. In addition to the Market Square and Post Office parking lots, there are also several Village-owned parcels and vacant sites that represent additional opportunities in the downtown. These include the municipal parking lots on Brendreth Street and Leonard Avenue.

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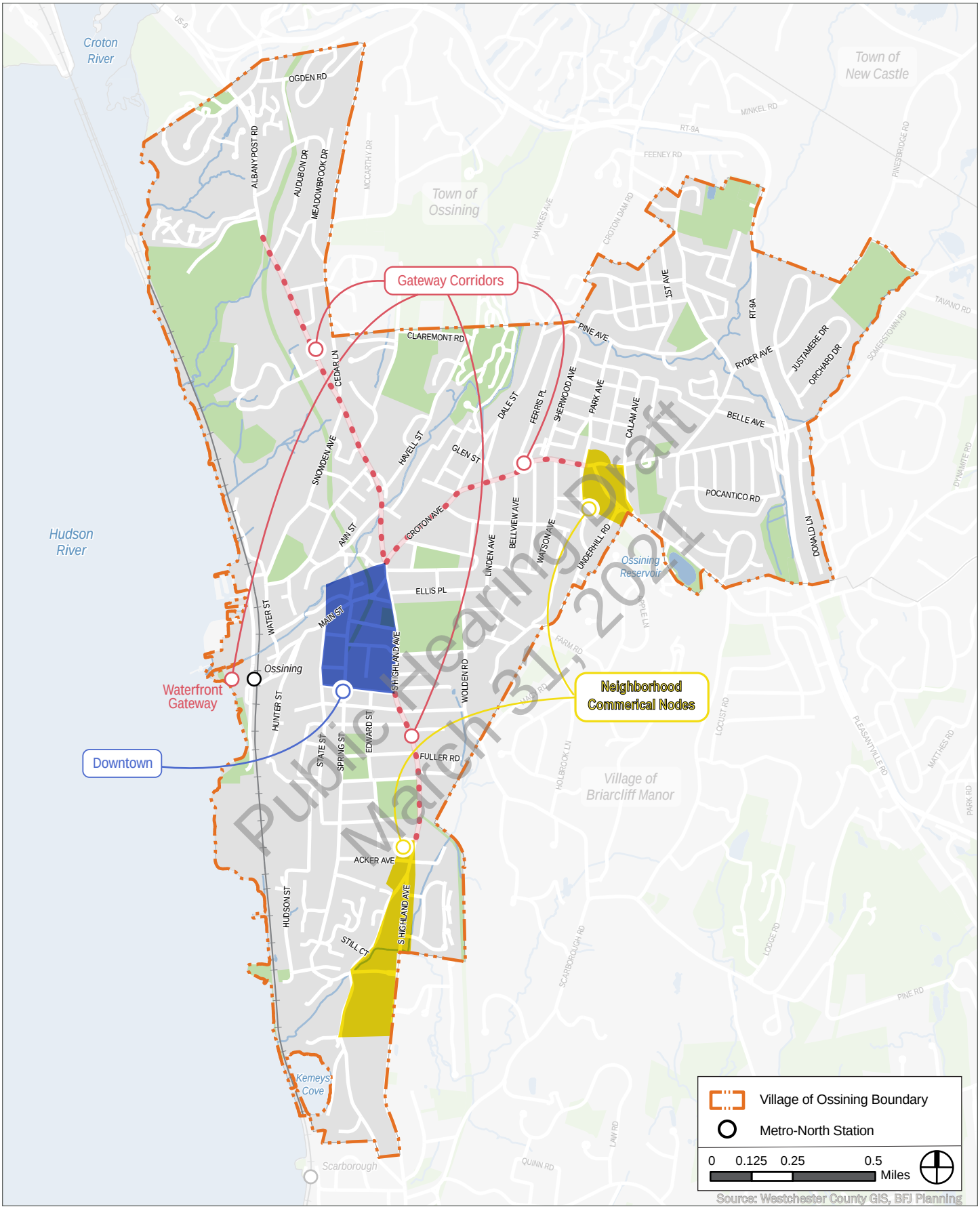


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**Figure 31: Key Commerical Areas**

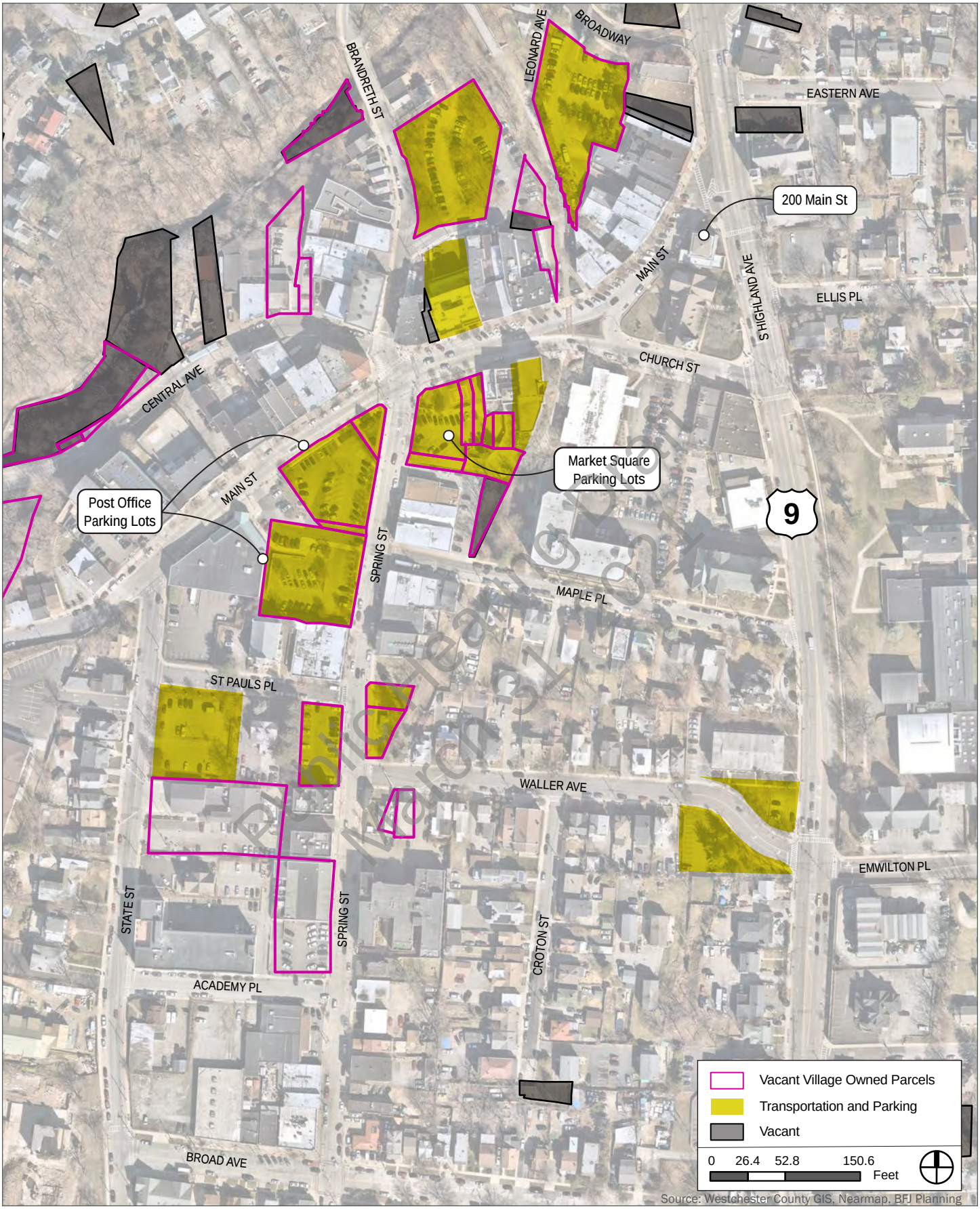


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Figure 32: Village Owned, Surface Parking, and Vacant Sites in Downtown

### Gateway Corridors

Upper Croton Avenue (Route 133) is the primary route into the Village from the east for drivers travelling on the Taconic State Parkway, Route 9A, and Pleasantville Road. From Pleasantville Road to Route 9 in Downtown Ossining, Upper Croton is predominantly commercial in character. There are scattered residential uses, but most of the development along this corridor consists of commercial uses in a wide range of building types: strip retail, older buildings built up to the sidewalk, and homes that have been converted into professional uses and shops. This corridor also includes a shopping center with a supermarket at Dale Avenue, Village Hall, and the Ossining Public Library. In some areas, buildings built up to the sidewalk support a pedestrian friendly environment, however much of the development along this corridor is more auto-oriented, with parking lots in front yards.

North Highland Avenue and South Highland Avenue (Route 9) provide north-south gateways into the Village. South Highland Avenue is largely residential, except for a commercial area north of Arcadian Shopping Center. North Highland Avenue is more commercial in nature, with a series of auto-oriented restaurants and retail stores.

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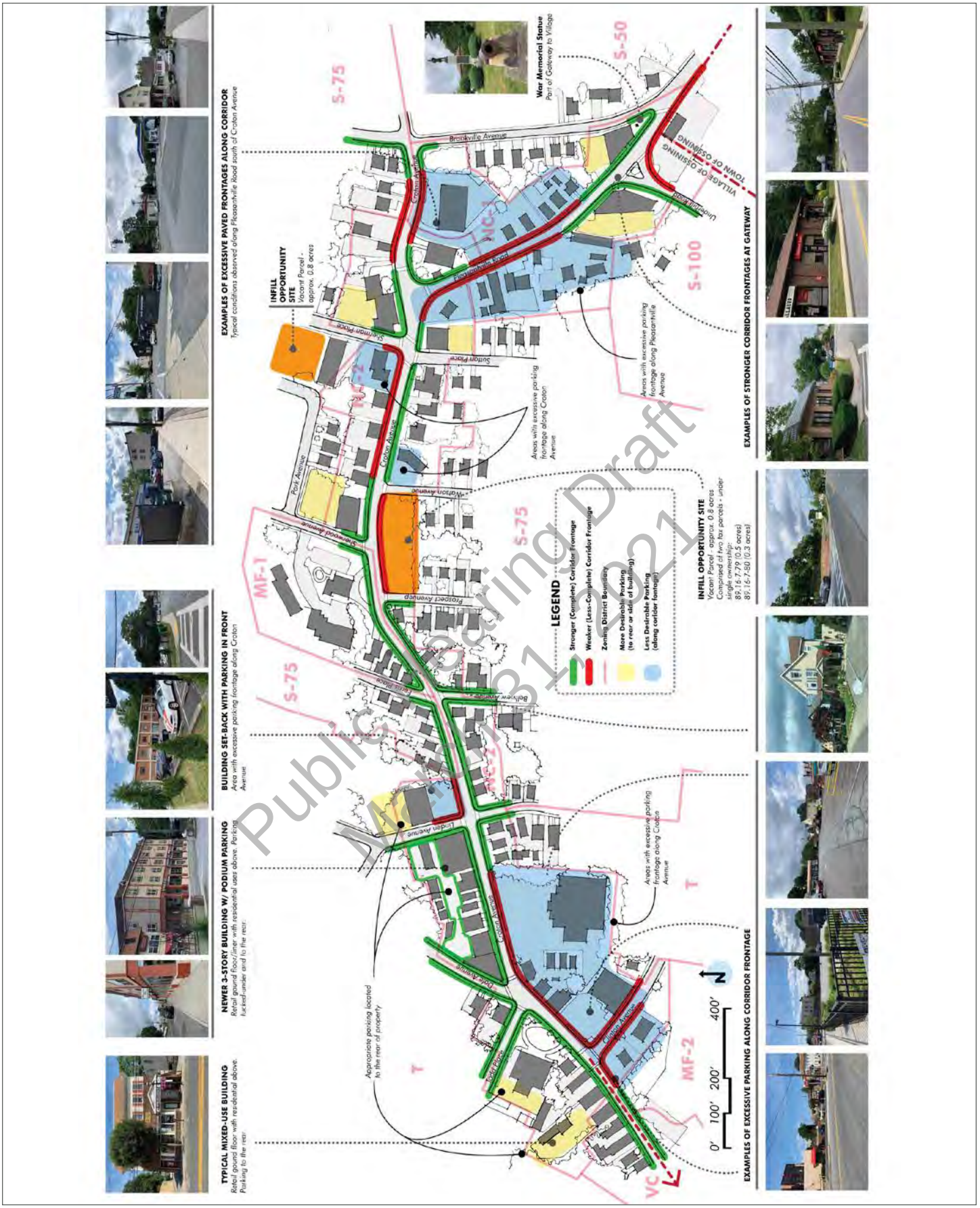


Figure 33: Diagram of Existing Conditions on Upper Croton Avenue

### Neighborhood Commercial Nodes

In addition to the Gateway Corridors, there are also two key Neighborhood Commercial Nodes that provide retail and services for Ossining residents. Roosevelt Square is an area on Pleasantville Avenue, between Croton Avenue and Underhill Road/Brookville Avenue. This commercial district has banks, small commercial offices, and convenience retail such as a barbershop and gas station. Buildings are generally one to two stories, with a mix of single-family residential homes in the area. Some of the professional offices are in converted single-family homes. The streetscape formed by the buildings here is varied—in some cases, buildings form a pedestrian-friendly street wall, such as the Citibank building at Pleasantville and Underhill; in other cases, buildings are set back from the street, creating a more-auto-oriented streetscape.

### *Employment Patterns*

Ossining has seen relatively stable employment patterns over the course of the past 20 years. As in 2000, the largest industry sector by number of jobs in 2018 was Educational, health and social services, which accounted for nearly 24% of workers employed in Ossining (Table 16). The industry sector that saw the largest increase in jobs was Construction, which nearly doubled from 8.7% in 2000 to more than 15% in 2018.

While there were no other substantial changes, there are several industry sectors that have seen notable declines over time. Manufacturing dropped from about 6% to 3%, indicating fewer decent-paying jobs for working class residents. There were also declines in Information (-2.2%); Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing (-2.6%); and Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (-1.9%). While declines in these sectors were relatively minor, collectively they represent a decline of more than 650 well-paying jobs in the Village (overall, there are 1,640 more jobs in Ossining in 2018 than in 2000).

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**Table 16: Employment by Industry for Population, 2000 - 2018**

| | 2000 | | | 2018 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Industry** | **Number** | **%** | | **Number** | **%** |
| Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining | 16 | 0.1% | | 59 | 0.5% |
| Construction | 978 | 8.7% | | 2,002 | 15.6% |
| Manufacturing | 655 | 5.8% | | 392 | 3.0% |
| Wholesale trade | 312 | 2.8% | | 314 | 2.4% |
| Retail Trade | 982 | 8.8% | | 1,097 | 8.5% |
| Transportation and warehousing, and utilities | 333 | 3.0% | | 439 | 3.4% |
| Information | 608 | 5.4% | | 414 | 3.2% |
| Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing | 956 | 8.5% | | 764 | 5.9% |
| Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services | 1,603 | 14.3% | | 1,588 | 12.4% |
| Educational, health and social services | 2,681 | 23.9% | | 3,074 | 23.9% |
| Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services | 749 | 6.7% | | 956 | 7.4% |
| Other services (except public administration) | 860 | 7.7% | | 1,260 | 9.8% |
| Public administration | 485 | 4.3% | | 499 | 3.9% |
| *Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, 2018 ACS 5-year Estimates..* | | | | | |

### *Major employers*

Major employers in Ossining help to stabilize the local economy. The largest single employer in the Village is the Sing Sing Correctional Facility, with about 1,000 employees.[12] Other major employers include the Ossining Union Free School District, Open Door, Metallized Carbon Corp (located on Barlow Lane), the Ossining Public Library, Bethel Nursing Home, and the Ossining Children's Center. These largest employers in the Village represent institutions, non-profit organizations, and the private sector. Village-wide commutation patterns are shown in Figure 34.

### *Employment Status over Time*

Ossining's population in the labor force increased from 2000 to 2010, but has since leveled off in 2018 (Table 17). By contrast, both the Town of Ossining and Westchester County have seen their population in the labor force increase from 2010 to 2018. However, the Village's unemployment rate shows a better picture for Ossining. Although the Village's unemployment rate spiked much higher than the Town and County in 2010 (following the recession), the Village has also rebounded more strongly and now has a lower unemployment rate of 4.3%, as of the 2018 ACS. As previously discussed, COVID-19 has tended to impact the service sector more than higher-paying industries.

**Table 17: Employment Status, 2000 - 2018**

| | 2000 | | | 2010 | | | 2018 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Village | Town | County | Village | Town | County | Village | Town | County |
| Population in labor force | 11,618 | 2,898 | 452,517 | 13,884 | 2,703 | 483,490 | 13,473 | 3,042 | 509,611 |
| Population unemployed | 400 | 73 | 19,817 | 1,124 | 76 | 31,490 | 579 | 180 | 29,722 |
| *Percentage unemployed* | *3.4%* | *2.5%* | *4.4%* | *8.1%* | *2.8%* | *6.5%* | *4.3%* | *5.9%* | *5.8%* |
| *Source: US Census 2000, US Census 2010, 2018 ACS 5-year Estimates* | | | | | | | | | |

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### *Commutation Patterns*

Like many Villages in Westchester County, Ossining is largely a bedroom community for residents who commute to job centers in New York City or other major commercial hubs in the county, such as White Plains (Figure 34). According to the U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program, there are 8,788 employed residents of Ossining, but the vast majority of them (8,070) work outside of the Village. Meanwhile, of the 3,615 people who are employed within Ossining, 2,897 live elsewhere and commute in to the Village.

This pattern is typical in Westchester and is reflective of the asset of being located in proximity to major job centers. Even given that reality, it could be an objective of the Village to increase the number of jobs that are available to local residents. Increasing the number of residents who both live and work in Ossining would have the benefits of reducing commute times and keeping more residents in the Village during the daytime, expanding the customer base for local businesses.

The goal of increasing local jobs for residents could carry an even greater emphasis in the post-COVID era. Economic trends have long pointed toward an increase in working from home, co-working, and other non-traditional work settings. This presents an opportunity for the Village to welcome such non-traditional work practices to encourage more local residents to stay in the community during the workday.

[12] ArcGIS Business Analyst, January 2020

**Figure 34: Commutation Patterns in Ossining, 2018**

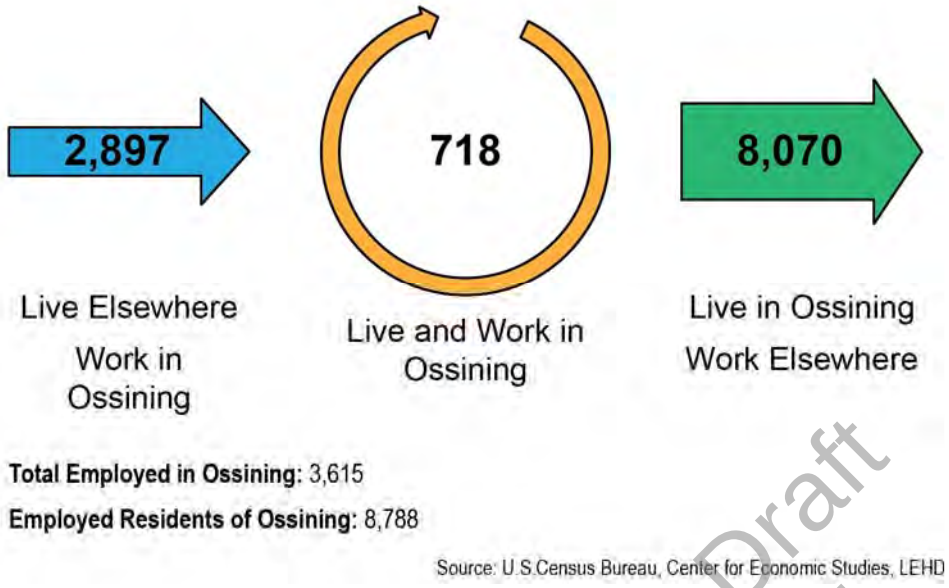


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**Table 18: Commuting Characteristics**

| | |
|---|---|
| Workers 16 years and older | 12,530 |
| Worked in place of residence | 24.9% |
| Worked outside place of residence | 75.1% |
| | Source: 2018 ACS 5-year Estimates |

### *Development Studies*

There have been several development studies in recent years that this plan builds upon. These recent studies have provided critical context for Ossining Tomorrow, as well as guidance in developing objectives and strategies. Where recommendations from these prior plans are still applicable, they have been carried forward into this plan as well.

#### Downtown Revitalization Initiative Application (2019)

The Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) program is a New York State program that provides funding to municipalities for capital projects that will boost economic activity. Each year, the state awards ten million dollars each to ten municipalities throughout the state (one in each of the 10 Regional Economic Development Councils). Ossining's 2019 application was unsuccessful, but it provides direction for the Comprehensive Plan about capital project priorities in the Village.

As an overall objective, Ossining's DRI application seeks to turn the page on the past mistakes of urban renewal, bring Village-owned properties back on the tax rolls to generate more revenue, and attract private investment to under-utilized and vacant sites. The application identifies some of Ossining's key assets that would have made it an ideal candidate to maximize DRI funds, including a historic streetscape, scenic views of the Hudson River, pedestrian trails and walkability, and a diverse mix of restaurants and shops.

The principle objective of the DRI application was to attract new investment—both public and private—while minimizing displacement of current residents. The application identified three transformational capital projects, each of which would require some public contribution in order to attract private investment.

1. 200 Main Street Adaptive Reuse

   200 Main Street is located at one of downtown Ossining's key intersections, located on the triangular point between Main Street, Church Street, and Route 9. The Village acquired the former bank building in 2004 and undertook repairs to prepare the building for adaptive reuse.

   The 1908 Beaux-Art building would be an attractive location for a cultural destination to bring residents and visitors to Main Street. The DRI application anticipates 200 Main being used as a showcase for local craft businesses, with a local market, teaching kitchen, meeting space on upper floors, incubator space to foster entrepreneurship, and gallery space to exhibit the work of local artists.

2. Parking Restructuring

   The Brandreth Street and Broadway parking lots currently house 107 spaces of public parking, but provide an opportunity to consolidate parking that is currently located on other Village-owned sites, while still providing enough parking in downtown to support a regional downtown. The DRI application considers an additional 200 parking spaces in a multi-level structure on these sites, along with wayfinding signage directing shoppers to the lots, and a rooftop gathering space.

   The Village is currently in the process of undertaking a study of parking and transportation improvements in downtown Ossining, which may help to further develop ideas to consolidate parking in the Village.

3. Station Plaza Placemaking

   The Station Plaza area is an industrial and residential neighborhood near the Metro-North train station. This business district has historically been home to many African-American-owned businesses, but has also been overlooked by many improvements over the years. Station Plaza requires improvements to the built environment so that it is more inviting to residents, visitors, commuters, and investors. Improvements described in the DRI application include new sidewalks, streetscaping, decorative lighting, and wayfinding/interpretive signage. The objective of this work is to catalyze private and public investment in adaptive reuse of existing industrial buildings.

### Ossining Downtown Working Committee Report (2017)

The Downtown Working Committee was a group of 20 community members from diverse backgrounds and age groups, including business owners, local not-for-profit leaders, commuters, and government officials. The group met over the course of 90 days in order to create a report that reimagines, reignites, and reinvigorates Downtown Ossining. The report includes a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) and analyses of the downtown in the following categories:

- Placemaking, Open Space, and the Built Environment
- Transportation and Parking
- Innovative Ideas
- Outside Groups and Consulting

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- Comprehensive Plan Review

The report includes recommendations within each of the above categories, as well as a series of concluding recommendations. Some of the key ideas considered by the report include:

- Explore the feasibility of a Downtown Development engine, including a CDC/Private/Non-Profit Organization.
- Explore changes to current zoning, particularly in regards to form-based zoning versus traditional/Euclidean zoning.
- Realignment/restriping of Route 9.
- Introduce a shuttle service.
- Commission more public art.
- Provide free Wi-Fi access downtown.

### Market Square and Post Office Lots: Web-Based Community Input (2015)

In 2015, the Village conducted an online survey to gauge consensus about the future of three strategic Village-owned surface parking lots in the Downtown. The three sites are the Market Square parking lot and two parking lots adjacent to the Post Office on Main Street. The survey gathered input on community members' preferences for building heights, architectural elements, public space and amenities, parking, preferred business types, and the need for residential units downtown.

#### *Barriers to Accessing Downtown*

Ossining has several physical barriers that separate Downtown from the Village's neighborhoods, Gateway Corridors, Neighborhood Commercial Nodes, and Waterfront. Isolating each of these economic engines makes it more difficult for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers to travel between the Village's retail stores, restaurants, and other attractions. Significant topographic change from the waterfront to the downtown make for a challenging walk from the train station.

Although Route 9 and Route 134 provided direct roadway access from the Gateway Corridors (North Highland, South Highland, and Upper Croton), better pedestrian crossings are needed. It is particularly challenging for pedestrians to cross Route 9 from Croton Avenue into the Downtown. This limits the ability for shoppers on Main Street to quickly access stores just around the corner on Croton Avenue or access the Library or Villlage/Town Hall. Further, the Gateway Corridors themselves are generally highway oriented—even where distances are walkable, these stretches of roadway are not always welcoming to pedestrians.

#### *Recent Economic Development Activity*

Ossining has built up a great deal of momentum, through both public and private investments that will continue to boost the local economy. Public investments such as streetscape improvements on Main Street, Secor Road, and Central Avenue have improved the pedestrian experience and provided ADA sidewalks in the downtown. The Sing Sing Kill Greenway has transformed downtown with a unique trailway—with development of the DPW site and extension of the trail, this trail will create a critical connection between downtown and the waterfront. The Village is also in the process of extending the public dock on the Hudson River, which will open the waterfront to day boaters, small tourism vessels, and fishing.

Recent private projects will contribute to job growth in the Village. Open Door is constructing a new 27,000 square foot facility, which will be described in greater detail in Chapter 7: Sustainable

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Infrastructure. The Ossining Extension Center of Westchester Community College provides workforce development programs with a particular focus for those seeking careers in healthcare.

Ossining Innovates! was founded in 2019 to provide tools to start-ups and small businesses by teaching entrepreneurial skills. OI! has adapted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to provide resources for businesses navigating this unprecedented economic challenge. Speak Easy Creative Coworking was founded in 2019 to provide flexible workspace for those seeking out non-traditional workspaces. Additionally, the Sing Sing Prison Museum is expected to employ 27 people.

## Issues and Opportunities

### *National Economic Trends*

#### Economic Impacts of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic is a generational challenge that will require coordinated local, state, and federal response. The Village and the local business community has been proactive in responding to the immediate requirements of social distancing as New York State has carefully reopened. Since the comprehensive plan is meant to provide medium- and long-term objectives, this plan does not provide short-term solutions for businesses who are trying to navigate the pandemic. In many cases, these short-term solutions have already been implemented or they will continue to be developed even as the comprehensive plan is still in process.

However, we can certainly anticipate that COVID-19 will leave behind substantial economic impacts and this plan attempts to identify strategies to help Ossining's business community bounce back. At this moment, we can only speculate about the ongoing public health impacts of COVID-19 and whether social distancing strategies will prove to be necessary for only a brief period of time—or whether they will be required in some measure into the future. Either way, it is critical that even when the COVID-19 pandemic is resolved, the adaptations that are identified in the Comprehensive Plan should help the Village be more resilient for other unforeseen disasters.

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If the long-term impacts of COVID-19 are limited, responses should be flexible and should achieve other critical objectives such as supporting the local economy and mitigating impacts of climate change. One objective that would help to achieve those goals is creating a stronger emphasis on local connectivity—seeking to create complete neighborhoods in the Village of Ossining could serve the community by requiring less travel and commuting to other places in the region. This objective is also supported by accelerating shifts toward remote working models, a trend that was slowly gaining traction before COVID-19 and seems like to remain even after the pandemic is brought under control.

The pandemic has accelerated some urban trends that had been slowly taking hold. Remote work has increased by necessity during stay at home orders, which has changed how many of us use our homes and our neighborhoods. Implications for the plan include:

- The need for flexible land use regulations to allow a variety of work from home scenarios.
- Increase in delivery services, which may require a change in how street space is allocated.
- Even greater demand on broadband networks, creating disparities between those with high speed access and those without, both for workers and students.
- Change in demand for commercial office space, which may require an evaluation of existing office zoning to ensure that land use regulations are flexible enough to allow for other uses, such as residential or light industrial.

### Planning for Main Street Retail—Experiential Retail/Entertainment and Leisure destination

Main Street retail in traditional downtowns such as Ossining's have been facing challenges for decades, as the rise of regional malls attracted shoppers away from village centers. These retail centers are now facing new competition as online shopping has begun to dominate the retail market. This trend has only been reinforced in 2020, as shoppers shifted further toward online purchases as a way to stay home during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, while the age of Amazon.com will continue to pose challenges for traditional downtowns, it does not mean that Ossining's commercial areas should be abandoned. There are models for retail and commercial uses that cannot be replicated with an online experience. The Village must ensure that land use regulations are flexible enough to allow for new types of in-store experiences so that new businesses are welcomed and encouraged to open up in the Village.

Experiential retail is a type of store where customers are offered amenities beyond just purchasing goods. This could include a café inside a shop, art displays, live music, or a maker space that also sells products on-site, among many other creative models. This type of retail can provide a contrast to online shopping because it provides an experience that cannot be replicated online. Ossining has already developed a thriving restaurant scene and has a burgeoning community of artists and performance spaces. These are also examples of experiential spaces that, even as Amazon dominates the retail space, cannot be replaced with an online experience.

### Interest in Compact Downtown Living/Complete Neighborhoods

Maintaining a thriving retail environment is critical for supporting another ongoing trend—a renewed interest in downtown living. According to the Urban Land Institute Emerging Trends Report (2019), urban population growth is being driven primarily by Baby Boomers and Millennials. Older Americans are looking to downsize while still leading an active lifestyle, while Millennials are seeking out transit access to job centers and proximity to restaurants and retail environments. Both of these groups can find what they are looking for in Downtown Ossining, which provides the Village an opportunity to retain existing residents as they age and attract new residents/visitors to help support local businesses and boost the economy.

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### Growth in Flexible work arrangements

Non-traditional work arrangements, such as co-working, telecommuting, flexible hours, and freelance have also been on the rise. These types of flexible work arrangements have long been touted as the future of the workplace. Although they have not yet transformed offices in the United States, the trends are notable. For example, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of employees who telecommuted increased by 115% from 2005 to 2015. Ossining's first co-working space opened in 2019. For many workers, these flexible work arrangements have allowed them to continue working during the COVID-19 crisis, while also demonstrating that telecommuting can be an effective model. While many offices are expected to reopen as stay at home orders are eased, we can expect the trend in flexible work arrangements to continue to grow.

This trend is an opportunity for Ossining to increase the number of residents who remain in the Village during the workday, with secondary benefits such as reducing traffic on the roads and keeping locals in town to help support local businesses during the daytime. Coworking spaces, coffee shops, restaurants catering to business lunches, and convenience retail could all benefit from an increased daytime population in the Village.

To plan for and to encourage these trends in Ossining, the Village will have to consider land use regulations that remove barriers to telecommuting. A home office for a sole telecommuter is currently allowed under

the Village code, but there are other areas where greater flexibility could be considered. For example, the Village could allow a limited number of employees in a Home Occupation or could allow Home-Based Businesses and Live-Work units in additional parts of the Village.

### *Local and Regional Economic Trends*

#### Grow the Tax Base to reduce Ossining's High Tax Burden

The Village of Ossining is one of the highest-taxed municipalities in Westchester County. There are many factors that contribute to this tax burden, including school district taxes and water taxes. Even given these different factors, one strategy that the Village can tax is to broaden the tax base, both through diversification and attracting more taxpayers. Efforts to diversifying the tax base would include attracting new retail or light industrial uses to the Village. Challenges to main street retail were addressed above, especially due to growth in online shopping. Therefore, this strategy requires coordination with local business groups to attract experiential retail that cannot be replicated online. Light industrial could be a strategy to revitalize the waterfront area with maker spaces and creative commercial businesses that are also compatible with existing residential and the Village's growing arts and culture scene.

Attracting new taxpayers can also help to ease the tax burden. To do this, the Village must identify the right balance of development density to ensure that new investors will come to Ossining. Key to this strategy is looking at existing underutilized lots that can be returned to the tax rolls, such as vacant Village-owned parcels, surface parking lots, and infill sites. Adaptive reuse of existing underutilized buildings and sites could create opportunities for housing, retail, indoor recreation, arts and culture, or other activities that will help create a regional attraction in Ossining while contributing to the tax base. There are limited opportunities in Downtown Ossining to attract substantial new development, so these opportunities should be maximized while enhancing the Village's historic feel. The Village can also explore opportunities to consolidate municipal services where appropriate to reduce the extent of non-taxable property.

#### Plan for Economic Equity

Social justice movements in the United States have brought to the forefront the need for the planning process to highlight opportunities to improve social and economic equity throughout our communities. While Ossining as a whole has largely recovered from the Great Recession, with unemployment rates dropping below those of the Town and Westchester County, those economic gains have not been felt across the entire community. For example, according to the 2018 U.S. Census American Community Survey, the median income for White, non Hispanic or Latino households was $84,855. Black or African American households had a median income of $69,375 and Hispanic or Latino households had a median income of just $52,266.[13]

Planning for an equitable economy requires a comprehensive view that examines a wide range of issues, from providing workforce training and supporting local entrepreneurs and small business owners, to ensuring that the Village has equitable land use regulations and access to green space and public transit. According to the American Planning Association, equitable development is development that "expands choice and opportunity, encourages sustainable outcomes, and improves quality of life while mitigating impacts from activities that society considers beneficial."[14] Underserved communities in Ossining should

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[13] 2018 ACS 5 year Estimates.

[14] https://planning.org/pas/memo/2017/mar/

be served with housing that is affordable, transit options that connect to job centers, technical assistance and workforce training, entrepreneurship resources, and opportunities to build wealth.

### Celebrate Ossining's Diverse Business Community

Ossining has thriving Latino and African American business communities, which are an asset for residents and the local economy. These business communities are an integral part of the Village's culture, and they can also be viewed as an attraction for visitors from the region. Restaurants, bakeries, and shops owned and operated by Latino and African American business owners could be marketed to Westchester County and the region as a diverse but cohesive cultural experience.

In order to support entrepreneurship and business expansion among Ossining's diverse business communities, the Village should seek to remove barriers to business establishment and expansion. The Village can also expand working with local businesses along with local and regional business advocacy groups to ensure that businesses have a voice. The Greater Ossining Chamber of Commerce is one such organization that provides resources to businesses in the community, educational programs to members and the public, and serves as liaison to local government. Other options could include forming a Merchant's Council focused specifically on businesses in the Village of Ossining that are owned by people of color, which would serve as an advocate for businesses in the community. Another alternative is creating a Business Improvement District (BID). If a BID is established in Ossining, it is important that businesses owned by people of color have a primary seat at the table.

### Create Local Job Opportunities

As a bedroom community, Ossining has a large number of commuters leaving the Village to work elsewhere. However, the prospect of creating more local jobs would provide additional opportunities to increase incomes of local residents, diversify and grow the tax base, and make incorporate complete neighborhood principles into the Village. Considering strategies to expand local hiring, especially for low- and moderate-income residents, can help to expand opportunities and reduce transportation costs. The Village and local business groups could work with local employers to encourage local hiring policies that benefit Ossining residents. Also, attracting new businesses and providing opportunities for existing businesses to expand can also help increase local employment.

Strategies to expand access to local jobs should be mindful of the types of jobs that are needed and matching the skills of the workforce. A strategy that provides jobs to Ossining's working class residents is just as important as exploring opportunities for professional offices and expanding telecommuting, which may cater more to higher-income residents.

*Focus Areas*

### Downtown Core

- Need to attract more residents in downtown by allowing residential as a principal permitted use (cross reference zoning chapter).
- Improve livability and investment opportunities for existing residents.
- Limited parking downtown (cross reference ongoing parking study and transportation chapter).
- Enhance walkability and architecture of Ossining's historic downtown with new development that attracts private investment, new residents, and new businesses.
- Implement zoning revisions in the Village Center district that strikes a balance between encouraging private investment, adaptive-reuse and improvements, and ensuring that new development is contextual.

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Ossining Tomorrow explores the potential for a form-based zoning overlay for the Village Center district. Form-based zoning is a tool that ensures that new development creates a public realm that is beneficial for the community, including a walkable pedestrian environment and storefronts that create activity on the street. A form-based code for downtown would ensure that new development reinforces Ossining's existing historical development patterns in the downtown.

Form-based zoning can be implemented along with an incentive zoning model, which is the strategy that is under consideration in Ossining Tomorrow. In this case, a developer of a property in the VC district could choose to 'opt-in' to the form-based code. Developers would be incentivized to opt-in to the form-based code—for example they could be allowed to build up to five stories and 58 feet (existing zoning allows four stories and 48 feet). In exchange, the developed would have to comply with form-based requirements that create a positive public realm and would also pay into an infrastructure fund that the Village could use for other downtown improvements, such as parking, open space, and impacts on schools.

### Gateway Corridors

The gateways into the Village of Ossining have the potential to provide an improved experience for those entering the Village, both residents and visitors alike. Strategies to improve Ossining's gateways could include:

- Improve appearance of entry points into Ossining.
- Create walkable connections where possible, especially from Downtown to Upper Croton and from Upper Croton to Roosevelt Square.
- Create design guidelines that change development patterns over time, encouraging new development closer to the street with parking behind new buildings.
- Strengthen the neighborhood commercial nodes and corridors that exist in Ossining's gateways, such as Roosevelt Square and Upper Croton Avenue, Arcadian Shopping Center and South Highland Avenue, and North Highland Avenue. For example, improved landscaping, lighting, and signage.
- Build on Ossining's Downtown Revitalization Initiative application to improve Station Plaza, which is a key gateway to the Village for those arriving from Metro-North and the Hudson River. Improvements to Station Plaza will also create a more attractive commercial environment and facilitate improved pedestrian connections between Upper Main Street and the train station.

### Neighborhood Commercial Nodes

- Consider uses that best support the neighborhoods surrounding Roosevelt Square and Arcardian Shopping Development.
- Could these areas become mixed use nodes instead of solely commercial nodes?
- How much density/height can these nodes support?

## Objectives and Strategies

*Objective 5.1: Reduce barriers to expanding existing businesses and opening new businesses.*

This is a particularly challenging time for retail and commercial businesses, as a result of long-term economic trends and the recession due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to enhance Ossining's reputation as a desirable place to do business, the Village must be proactive in reaching out to local and

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regional business owners to reduce regulatory barriers, better coordinate existing businesses, and attract viable new businesses to Ossining's retail and commercial areas.

Strategy 5.1.1: Make Ossining more welcoming as a place to do business.

The Village should coordinate with local and regional business organizations to provide information to outside businesses looking to relocate. Strategies could include creating a Village-run website that contains information about opening a business and links to other organizations for other resources, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Ossining Business Alliance. Some municipalities have also undergone marketing campaigns to promote the local business community. Such a campaign could include a small business information guide and advertisement in regional publications. The Village can also continue to improve coordination with the Chamber of Commerce to increase communication with the local business community.

Strategy 5.1.2: Streamline the permitting approval process for businesses looking to expand or open in Ossining.

The Economic Development subcommittee identified challenges in starting a new business as one of the key barriers in boosting the local economy. The process for opening a new business was described as cumbersome and exclusionary, potentially driving new businesses to neighboring communities. The Ossining Chamber of Commerce has been a key resource for existing businesses, especially in providing assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the Chamber could also benefit from having a partner in Village administration.

One suggestion is to create a Department of Economic Development or appoint a Main Street Manager to help coordinate with local business groups, provide guidance to help new businesses open, and streamline the permitting process. Such a department or staff position could also maintain a database of information to help attract entrepreneurs, such as creating a comprehensive list of available properties. This role of this department or position could include:

- Organizing events in downtown to attract visitors and take advantage of the Village's community assets, such as history, cultural festivals, local artists, and craftspeople.
- Coordinating with local business groups to provide business assistance.
- Working with property owners, non-profits, and the real estate community to recruit tenants to vacant storefronts and commercial spaces.
- Improving outreach to business owners who are not familiar with the resources available through the Chamber of Commerce. This would include active outreach to businesses that are underrepresented by local business groups, such as African American- and Latino-owned businesses. This effort should also include helping businesses navigating the processes to obtain additional licenses or approvals (e.g. cabaret, outdoor space).

Strategy 5.1.3: Conduct a Study to Evaluate Forming a Business Improvement District (BID).

A business improvement district (BID) is a public-private partnership in which property and business owners of a defined area pay a self-assessment for maintenance, development, and marketing/promotion of their commercial district. BIDs create a revenue stream for neighborhood improvements, urban design, and planning. BIDs can be great tools to attract economic development, but they require members to contribute to a district management association, which controls how money is spent. If Ossining were to explore creation of a BID for Downtown, the waterfront, and Upper

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Croton Avenue, the Village would have to undertake a public education campaign to clearly articulate the benefits.

Creating a BID in downtown Ossining would also help to reinforce other efforts to promote economic development. The BID would serve as an advocate for reducing permitting barriers and could join with the Chamber in providing ideas to the Village on how to proceed. The BID would also establish a working partnership with the Chamber and the Village to conduct marketing campaigns, branding, and efforts at attracting new businesses. BIDs can also use funds for grant and businesses assistance programs, such as technical assistance, streetscape improvements, façade improvements, landscaping, storefront beautification, signage improvements, and holiday decorations. BIDs can also help to organize events and street festivals to bring more visitors to the downtown. If the Village establishes a Department of Economic Development or a Main Street Manager (see Strategy 1.2), the BID would be a critical partner and liaison to the business community.

Further, the COVID-19 pandemic has provided a case study in the benefits of establishing a local business organization, with a funding stream, in the Village. Many BIDs have been able to adapt their strategies during this crisis to provide assistance for local businesses. Hopefully the COVID-19 crisis will subside before long, but this adaptability in the face of unforeseen circumstances could provide Ossining's business community with additional resources for other types of disruptions in the future, such as an economic downturn.

*Objective 5.2: Establish Ossining as a unique dining and shopping destination to attract residents and visitors.*

The dominance of online retail has created challenges for traditional main streets throughout the country. Like other communities, Ossining's downtown and commercial areas must respond by promoting experiential businesses that can't be replicated online. This can include restaurants, maker spaces, cultural institutions, and retail businesses that help to create community.

Strategy 5.2.1: Celebrate locally-owned businesses.

Ossining is a hub of businesses that reflect the Village's cultural diversity. This creates an opportunity to highlight the Village as a destination for authentic ethnic dining and shopping. In cooperation with the Chamber and other local business groups, the Village should encourage expansion of cultural diversity of the local restaurant scene through marketing and tenant-recruitment efforts. This strategy could also include expanding nightlife options in the Village, where appropriate. Cultural events, music venues, gallery openings, and other evening activities will help create a lively atmosphere and also support spillover effect for restaurants and other shops.

Strategy 5.2.2: Take a targeted approach to tenant recruitment.

Taking a proactive approach to tenant recruitment can help to address vacancies in commercial districts. The Village currently may not have capacity to conduct this outreach, which emphasizes the need for coordination with the Chamber and the value of exploring creation of a BID. Both organizations would have more resources to seek out particular types of tenants for Ossining's distinct commercial areas. Downtown may be more suited for experiential uses, such as restaurants and galleries. Highland Avenue and Croton Avenue could support destination uses that are less dependent upon foot traffic, such as boutique shops and professional offices. The waterfront area may be most appropriate for convenience retail for commuters and businesses that combine light manufacturing with a retail or experiential component (such as a brewery).

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*Objective 5.3: Enhance the public realm in downtown, the waterfront, Highland Avenue, and Croton Avenue.*

Public realm improvements would make Ossining's commercial areas more attractive for visitors and new businesses. Ossining's scale makes it very walkable, however challenging pedestrian pathways and aging buildings can make it less likely that residents and visitors will walk. By emphasizing placemaking, the Village can begin to reinvent the public realm and strengthen connections that residents feel to the Ossining community. Placemaking builds on the community's resources to create a physical, cultural, and social identity. Some of the key physical components of placemaking include vibrant commercial areas, public parks and plazas, pocket parks, public art, and streetscape improvements.

Strategy 5.3.1: Create a Form-Based Overlay for Downtown and Croton Avenue to ensure that new development creates a positive experience in the public realm.

The Form-Based Overlay for Downtown and Croton Avenue is described in greater detail in Chapter 3: Land Use and Zoning. The objective of implementing a Form-Based Overlay is to ensure that future development in downtown Ossining helps to create a public realm that is welcoming to pedestrians and creates an experience that attracts residents, visitors, and new investment. The Form-based Zoning is designed to increase sidewalk widths at the two downtown parking lots, if they are developed in future. The proposed zoning would increase sidewalk widths by five feet.

Strategy 5.3.2: Create a lively downtown experience by expanding outdoor dining.

Outdoor dining creates activity on the street and attracts residents and visitors to enjoy commercial areas. It also expands the revenue potential of restaurants. The Village should explore strategies to permit outdoor dining as an accessory use in business districts, with requirements for sufficient sidewalk space to allow for ADA access. The Village has explored expanding outdoor dining as a response to COVID-19, which could provide a roadmap for creating permanent regulations that provide greater flexibility.

Strategy 5.3.3: Create a pedestrian and customer-friendly environment with streetscape and façade improvements and civic space.

Building design, signage, façades, and landscaping can all create a more inviting public realm that encourages foot traffic in commercial areas. The Form-Based Overlay (see Strategy 5.3.1 and Chapter 3: Land Use and Zoning) is one of the tools that can provide a high-quality public realm. Streetscape improvements could also include sidewalk improvements, traffic calming, bike lanes, and gateway signage. Civic space such as plazas and pocket parks can improve the downtown experience by creating space for vegetation, seating areas, programming, and events. Lighting is a key improvement that impacts aesthetics as well as perceptions of safety at night time.

Cohesive branding for street furniture, wayfinding signage, and historical signage all help to guide visitors around the downtown. Effective wayfinding and historical signage can help draw visitors from the train station into the downtown while telling the story of the Village's history. Coordinated urban design improvements would benefit the downtown, waterfront, Highland Avenue, and Croton Avenue. These commercial areas need coordinated and consistent urban design improvements, including centralized, safe, and convenient parking, sidewalks, street lighting, street trees, and landscaping. The Village should continue recent successes in improving sidewalks, benches, street lighting, and flower baskets.

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The Village should coordinate with local business groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce and proposed BID, to consider improvements to the public realm in commercial areas.

Strategy 5.3.4: Consider Creation of a Village green.

Urban renewal in the 1970s led to the demolition of buildings along the south side of Main Street at the intersection with Spring Street. The Post Office and accompanying parking lot were added on a portion of one renewal site. However, the remaining portion is occupied by a Village-owned parking lot at the south-west corner as well as a privately-owned parking lot. Across Spring Street is the Village-owned Market Square site and parking lot, which are a product of downtown plans completed in the 1990s.

On a walking tour of the downtown with the Steering Committee, a larger, central green space was suggested to create of civic space for the Village. As Ossining considers potential redevelopment on the Market Square and Post Office sites, the Village should consider the existing Market Square plaza and evaluate the need and potential for an expanded Village Green. The Green would serve as a central civic space in downtown, serving as a place for the farmer's market. The Green would provide park space for neighborhoods adjacent to downtown and a central gathering space for residents and visitors.

Strategy 5.3.5: Improve the aesthetics of Ossining's Gateway Corridors along Route 9 (Highland Avenue) and Route 133 (Croton Avenue).

Highland Avenue and Croton Avenue are the two primary gateways into the Village, but both are designed as auto-oriented corridors with poor aesthetics and limited pedestrian facilities. Although the Village has made great strides with its streetscaping plans, efforts should continue to be made to provide adequate sidewalks and walkways in light of the high volumes and speed of traffic along much of Route 9 and Route 133. These roads provide the main entrances into the Village and efforts should be made to beautify them through regulations that focus on landscape buffers, set-backs, and signage. The lighting, signage, landscaping, and sidewalks in the downtown should extend along Route 9 and Route 133. Such improvements should include encouraging the addition of trees and landscaping at the Arcadian Shopping Center, located on Route 9 and the southern gateway into the Village. Objective 5.4: Diversify the tax base and expand the local job market.

The Village of Ossining has a high tax burden compared to other Westchester County municipalities and should therefore seek ways to diversify the tax base to reduce this burden. This strategy could include divesting Village-owned property for private development, regulatory changes and economic development tools to attract private investment, boosting the local job market, and consolidating municipal uses (addressed in greater detail in Chapter 7: Sustainable Infrastructure).

Strategy 5.4.1: Adopt zoning changes to increase investment in existing housing stock, incentivize infill and mixed-use development, adaptive re-use of existing buildings, and increase flexibility for property owners to grow the Village's tax base.

Zoning changes can reduce barriers to new development and encourage infill development and renovation of existing buildings. Chapter 3: Land Use and Zoning includes detailed descriptions of proposed zoning revisions. This include:

- Revisions to the Two-Family (T) Zone and S-75 Zone to reduce pre-existing non-conformities.
- Creation of a new Multi-family (MF-3) infill zone to provide a moderate density option for transition neighborhoods outside of the downtown.
- Form-based overlay for downtown and Croton Avenue, which provides a modest height bonus in exchange for compliance with form-based regulations to improve the public realm.

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Strategy 5.4.2: Expand access to local jobs.
While many Ossining residents commute to other places for work, and most local workers live in other municipalities, strategies to expand local hiring will help to increase opportunities for low- and moderate-income residents, while also reducing transportation costs and increasing the local tax base. Expanding access to local jobs should benefit Ossining's working class residents as well as attracting more professional jobs that cater more to higher-income residents. The Village can explore strategies to encourage local hiring for projects that receive local incentives (e.g., PILOTs). In coordination with the Chamber of Commerce and other local business groups, the Village should also seek to attract new businesses to Ossining.

*Objective 5.5: Tourism*

Strategy 5.5.1: Explore strategies to market Ossining as a year-round tourism destination.

- Work with local business groups and cultural institutions to create a unified marketing strategy that capitalizes on Ossining's unique arts, cultural, and historic institutions.
- Create a coordinated campaign that promotes Ossining's tourism assets.

*Objective 5.6: Transformative Opportunities.*
Ossining has a series of opportunities to transform downtown with public investment and private development. The Village should seek out grant funding and private investment to achieve these key transformative opportunities to attract anchor institutions, new residents, and new tax revenue to benefit the Village.

Strategy 5.6.1: Adaptive Reuse of 200 Main Street.
Creating a cultural destination that attracts residents and visitors to Main Street will benefit from and support the restaurant cluster in Downtown. An anchor cultural institution at 200 Main Street will showcase the Village and create a gateway into Downtown. The Village should seek out an anchor tenant and/or private development partner for 200 Main Street, as well as grant funding as needed from New York State or other sources.

Strategy 5.6.2: Study of Downtown Parking Structures.
Adequate parking is essential for Ossining's continued retail growth and the success of other downtown opportunities, such as adaptive reuse of 200 Main Street. The Village is currently undergoing a study of downtown transportation and parking, which could include centralizing public parking in a parking structure. That study should serve as a guide for adding new parking and reorganizing downtown parking to ensure that there are adequate resources to attract visitors without negatively impacting surrounding neighborhoods.

Strategy 5.6.3: Consider infill buildings on the existing market square and post office lots at intersection of Spring and Main Streets.
The Market Square and Post Office parking lots are both Village-owned lots that create opportunities to fill gaps in downtown with mixed-use development. The Village should seek out private development partners to transform these surface parking lots with new ground floor commercial space, upper floor residential, public parking, and a central downtown civic space that connects to the existing market square and provides a home for the Village's farmer's market and other events.

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Strategy 5.6.4: Partner with providers to expand broadband and prepare for 5G.

Day to day activities, from business to education, relies more and more on high-speed internet. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the need for widespread gigabit internet, as more people work from home, while also exposing unequal access to internet for low-income students. In recent years, cities in Westchester County have partnered with internet service providers to expand high-speed broadband. Ossining should explore a similar partnership to ensure that the Village is competitive. Gigabit internet service will make it easier for Ossining residents to work outside the office, provide a resource for the Village to attract new businesses, and allow companies to innovate and attract a larger pool of workers within Ossining.

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# Chapter 6: Transportation

## Goal

Improve traffic conditions and roadway safety throughout the Village, increase pedestrian and bicycle opportunities, and support cost effective transit improvements.

## Existing Conditions

### *Commutation Patterns*

As discussed in Chapter 5, Ossining is predominantly a bedroom community for residents who commute to New York City and other employment centers in the region. Demographic data helps to further depict general commutation patterns and trends in the Village. Census data detailed in Table 19 show that the overall number of workers who commute to the Village as of 2017 decreased by 16% since 2002, whereas the number of residents who commute outside of the Village for work has increased.[15] As of 2017, 91% of residents commute to locations outside of the Village for work.

**Table 19: Village of Ossining Commutation Patterns, 2002 - 2017**

| | 2002 | | 2010 | | 2017 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Workforce Employed in the Village* | Count | Share | Count | Share | Count | Share |
| Employed in the Village | 6,531 | 100% | 5,738 | 100% | 5,384 | 100% |
| Employed in the Village but Living Outside | 5,311 | 81% | 4,873 | 85% | 4,463 | 83% |
| Employed and Living in the Village | 1,220 | 19% | 865 | 15% | 921 | 17% |
| *Workforce Living In the Village (Residents)* | | | | | | |
| Living in the Village | 10,138 | 100% | 9,659 | 100% | 10,370 | 100% |
| Living in the Village but Employed Outside | 8,918 | 88% | 8,794 | 91% | 9,449 | 91% |
| Living and Employed in the Village | 1,220 | 12% | 865 | 9% | 921 | 9% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies: 2002-2017 LEHD Origin Destination Employment Statistics (LODES).

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While the number of residents who work in the Village has overall decreased since the early 2000s, there have been gains since 2010 (Table 19). More recent American Community Survey (ACS) data shown in Table 20 below provides estimates that the share of Village residents who are working from home has modestly increased from just over 3.3% in 2010 to 4.6% in 2018.[16] [17] Consequential of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 there is a sense that the number of Village residents who work from home is expected to increase further. While the scale of this shift is difficult to predict within a long-term context, the Ossining Tomorrow public survey determined that 23% of respondents began working from home during the pandemic and plan to continue doing so into the future.[18]

[15] Note that this analysis is limited to Primary Jobs. A Primary Job is the highest paying job for an individual worker for the year of analysis. The count of primary jobs is the same as the count of workers.

[16] 2006-2010 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Estimates; 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Estimates.

[17] Further work-from-home trends tied to COVID-19 are discussed in Section 6.5

[18] This sample includes 432 responses.

**Table 20: Means of Transportation to Work for Workers 16 Years and Over, 2010 Versus 2018**

| | 2010 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|
| Drove Alone | 61.2% | 58.7% |
| Carpooled | 14.7% | 14.4% |
| Public Transportation | 16% | 13.8% |
| Walked | 4% | 7.8% |
| Other Means | 0.8% | 0.7% |
| Worked At Home | 3.3% | 4.6% |

Sources: 2018 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates; 2010 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

Table 20 indicates that the share of residents who drive, carpool or take public transportation to work has decreased between 2010 and 2018, while the share of residents who work from home or walk to work locally has increased. During this period, the Village's population has stabilized with only a minor increase. Such commuting trends are supported by ACS estimate data that reports household car ownership/availability in the Village fell slightly from 88% in 2010 to 86% in 2018.[19]

### *Roadway Overview and Functional Classification*

The NYSDOT functional classification system for roadways demonstrates traffic use patterns and jurisdiction differences across the Village's network. Refer to Figure 35 for classification of Village roadways. This tiered classification is predominantly determined by connectivity factors and traffic patterns. These classifications further have a role in determining the applicability of design and construction regulations as well as access to capital funding sources. Aside from designated local roads in the Village, four different roadway classification categories are present:

- Expressway/Parkway- *Route 9A*
- Principal Arterial- Route 9
- Minor Arterial- *Route 133 / Croton Avenue, Route 134, Main Street, Spring Street, State Street*
- Major Collector- *Underhill Road, Pine Avenue, Snowden Avenue, Emwilton Place, Water Street*

Most significant to regional connectivity and access, Croton Avenue (Route 133) is the primary corridor into the Village from the east for drivers travelling on the Taconic State Parkway, Route 9A, and Pleasantville Road. North Highland Avenue and South Highland Avenue (Route 9) provide north-south gateways into the Village. West of Route 9, the topography that defines that Village's natural environment and guides its built form presents particular challenges of traffic circulation, downtown-waterfront connectivity, and compromised walkability.

<u>New York State Route 9A (Briarcliff-Peekskill Parkway)</u>

Route 9A is the major regional road serving this area of Westchester County. It provides connections to the Taconic State Parkway, Interstate 287, and to White Plains and New York City. Route 9A merges into Route 9 near the Croton-Harmon train station, just north of the Village limits. Many local leaders have recommended to New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) that a major roadway study and upgrade should be conducted on Route 9A to better the roadway's functionality.

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[19] 2006-2010 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Estimates; 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year Estimates.

U.S. Route 9 (Highland Avenue)

Route 9 (Highland Avenue) is a north-south route that connects the Village to Peekskill in the north and Briarcliff and Tarrytown to the south. Within the Village, Route 9 is called North Highland and South Highland Avenue, respective to its intersection with Broadway in the Downtown area. The prominence of Route 9 in the Village provides transportation for residential and commercial access. Route 9 changes in width between two, three, and four lanes, depending on the location in the Village. Maintenance for Route 9 is responsibility of New York State DOT.

Route 133 / Croton Avenue

Route 133 traverses Westchester County with a southwest-northeast alignment. The roadway provides east-west connection within the Village, linking Routes 9 and 9A, and also intersects with the southerly terminus of Route 134. Within the Village, the roadway is considerably narrow and consists of two lanes. The route directly connects to the Taconic State Parkway as well as New Castle and Mount Kisco. Village maintenance jurisdiction begins west of Route 133's intersection with Pleasantville Road, while the eastern portion of Route 133 is maintained by the State.

Route 134

Route 134 stretches southwest-northeast connecting Ossining to the Taconic State Parkway, northeast of the Village. To its southern limit, Route 134 connects to Route 133 in the Village. New York State DOT has jurisdiction over Route 134.

Pleasantville Road

Although Pleasantville Road has a relatively minimal footprint in the Village, it supports connectivity across Westchester County. Pleasantville Road begins at its intersection with Route 133 and travels southward along Route 9A before traversing eastward to the Village of Pleasantville. Village maintenance jurisdiction begins at its north end, and ends south of the Ossining Reservoir.

Main Street

Main Street is a key local roadway and is representative of other downtown streets. Main Street provides critical east-west connection that stretches from Route 9 to the waterfront, connecting to the Metro-North station where it aligns with Secor Road. As with other local roads such as Broadway, Central Avenue, and Snowden Avenue, the steep topography from Downtown to the Ossining waterfront can complicate driving conditions as well as conditions for pedestrians and the feasibility of bicycling.

*Annual Average Daily Traffic Volumes*

Annual Average daily traffic (AADT) data provide a baseline context of roadway traffic volumes and is also shown on Figure 35. These data are also considered in funding decisions for roadway maintenance and improvement. Located on the eastern periphery of the Village, Route 9A experiences the highest AADT volumes with an estimate of over 33,300. Route 9 follows with the second highest volume estimates: the South Highland Avenue portion of Route 9 registers an AADT estimate at over 19,000 while North Highland Avenue estimates are less with 15,685. Table 21 summarizes the AADT volume estimates of the top ten highest trafficked roadways in the Village.[20]

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[20] Note: AADT estimate data are the total traffic volumes passing a point of a road in both directions for a year divided by the number of days in the year. This calculation requires data or data estimates from every day of the year.

**Table 21: Streets with Highest Average Annual Daily Traffic**

| | Street | Traffic Volume |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Route 9A (Briarcliff-Peekskill Pkwy.) | 33,360 |
| 2. | Route 9 (S Highland Ave.) | 19,052 |
| 3. | Route 9 (N Highland Ave.) | 15,685 |
| 4. | Pleasantville Rd. | 15,366 |
| 5. | Croton Ave. | 11,809 |
| 6. | Route 133 | 8,430 |
| 7. | Underhill Rd. | 6,805 |
| 8. | Main Street. | 5,973 |
| 9. | Campwoods Rd. | 5,637 |
| 10. | Emwilton Pl. | 5,368 |

*Source: NYSDOT Traffic Data Viewer, 2019 actual and estimate data*

### *Roadway Jurisdiction*

Within the Village's limits, the entirety of Route 9, Route 9A, and Route 134 are maintained by NYSDOT. State maintenance jurisdiction of Route 133 / Croton Avenue ceases at its intersection with Pleasantville Road. West of this intersection, roadway maintenance of Croton Avenue is the Village's responsibility. Notably, as with all State Routes within the Village, the entirety of Route 133 (Croton Avenue) that connects to downtown is eligible for Federal aid.

Westchester County roadway maintenance jurisdiction in the Village is limited to Ryder Avenue and a very small segment of Pleasantville Road on the Village's eastern limits (Figure 36). The Village assumes maintenance of the majority of remaining roadways, with the exception of private residential communities and private establishments such as Sing Sing Correctional Facility.

### *Traffic Safety*

Crash analysis was conducted to identify high occurrence locations and to depict related safety implications. These data are presented with the aim to highlight target areas for further analysis, as well as to pinpoint broader circulation challenges.

**Motor Vehicle Crash Analysis**

An inventory of motor vehicle crash data were obtained from NYSDOT for the most recent available three-year period, 2017 to 2019. The analysis is inclusive of on-street crashes within or along the border of the Village. The majority (62%) of all documented crashes occurred at an intersection and 14% of all crashes resulted in at least one injury. Figure 37 shows a heat map that accounts for all documented motor vehicle crashes within and outside of intersections between 2017-2019. The Route 9 corridor, the downtown roadway network, and Croton Avenue/Route 133 generally experience the highest rates of vehicle crashes in the Village. Notably, Figure 37 depicts the overall density of crashes on a per acre basis. Aggregating crashes in the downtown area based on intersection clustering and the number of crashes occurring outside of intersections highlights this area as a hotspot.

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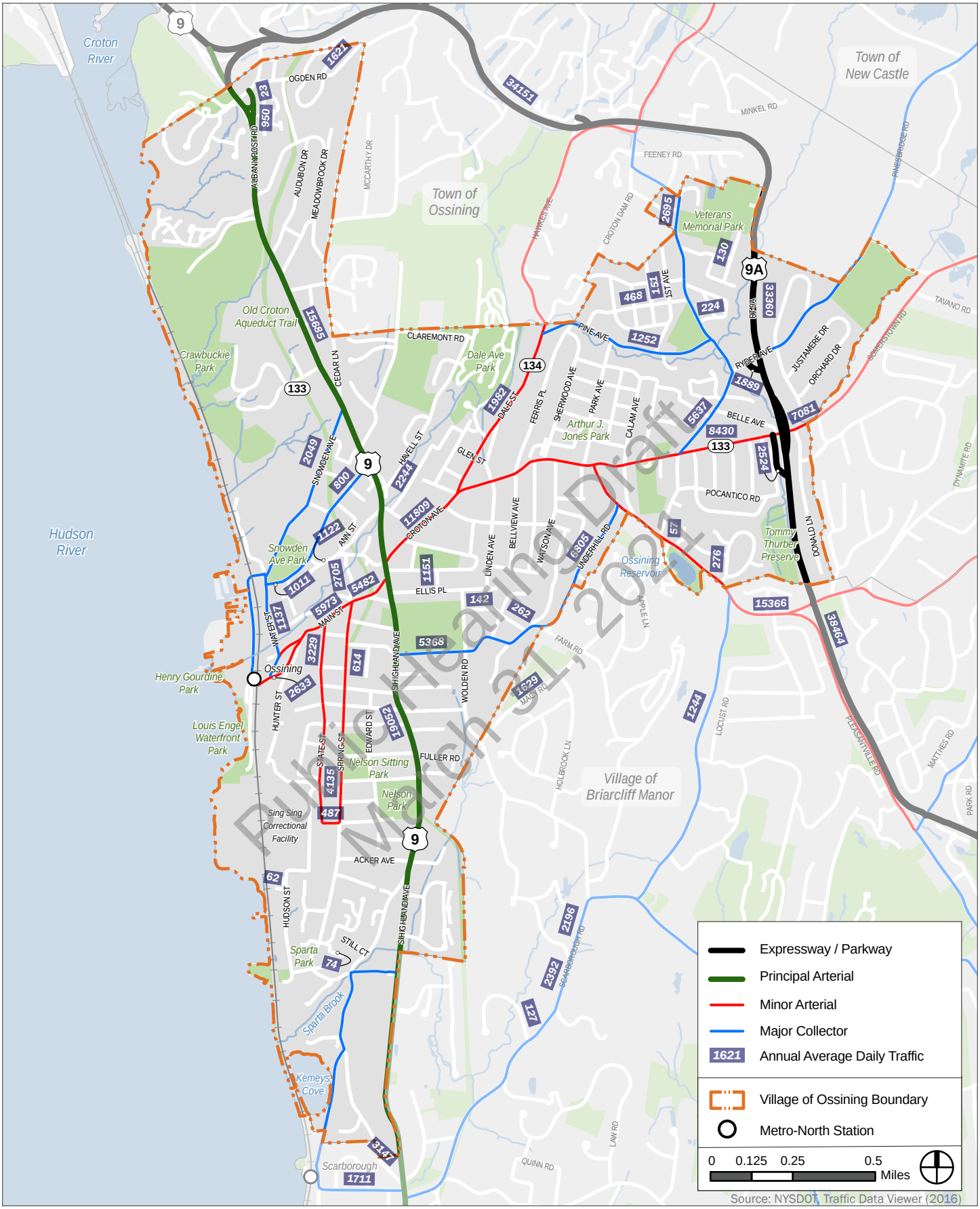


Figure 35: Functional Roadway Classification and Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Volumes

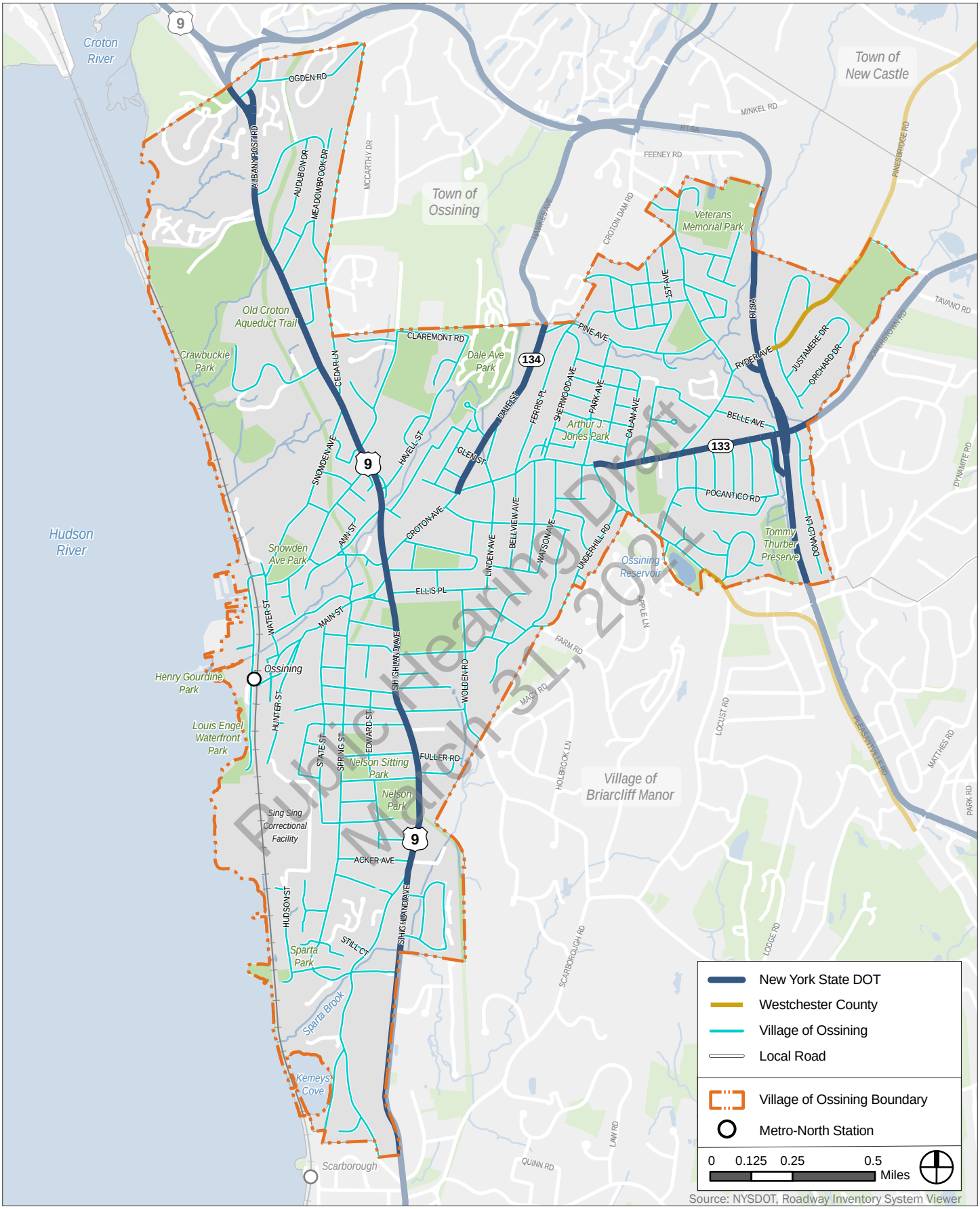


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**Figure 36: Roadway Jurisdiction**

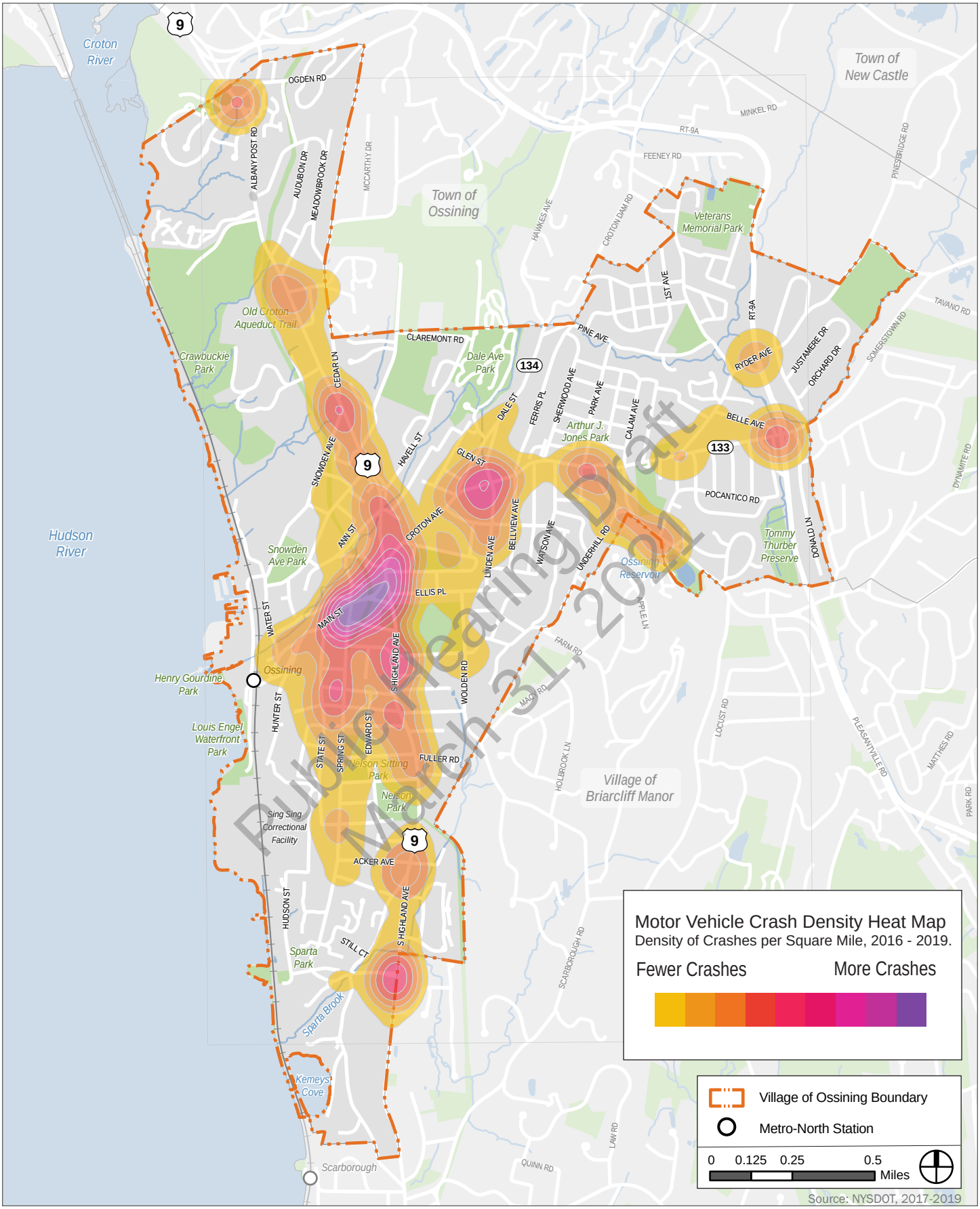


**Figure 37: Motor Vehicle Crash Density (By Total Number of Crashes), 2017-2019**

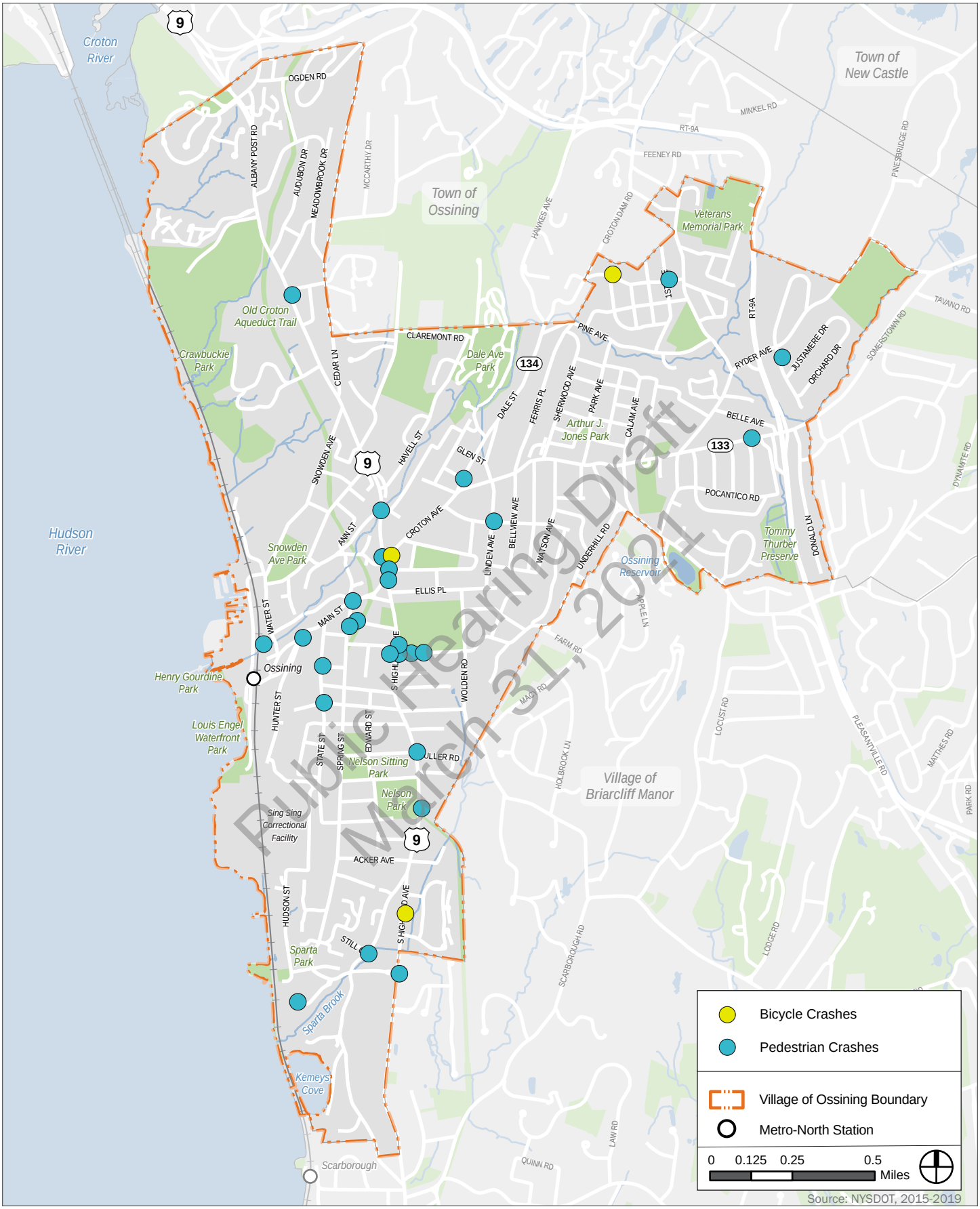


Figure 38: Vehicle Crashes Involving Pedestrians or Bicyclists, 2015-2019

Table 22 highlights further intersection crash data detail in the Village, ranked by total crash incidents. Also noted at the bottom of the table are intersections with a considerable share of crashes that resulted in at least one injury. Note that these data consider crashes that were documented as specifically having occurred at an intersection, but the number of crashes at each intersection's vicinity is larger.

**Table 22: Vehicle Crash Incidents at High Occurrence Intersections (2017-2019)**

| Intersection | Total Crashes | Crashes Resulting in Injury |
|---|---|---|
| Route 9 - Rockledge Ave. | 28 | 4 |
| Main St. - Spring St. | 26 | 4 |
| Route 9 - Emwilton Pl. / Waller Ave. | 25 | 5 |
| Route 9 - Mystic Dr. / Old Albany Post Rd. | 23 | 5 |
| Linden Ave. - Croton Ave. | 22 | 7 |
| Route 9 - Snowden Ave. | 21 | 3 |
| Route 9 - Croton Ave. / Broadway | 21 | 2 |
| Route 9 - Church St. | 20 | 3 |
| Route 9 - Acqueduct St. / Denny St. | 18 | 4 |
| | | |
| Pleasantville - Ramapo | 14 | 7 |
| Route 9 - Westview Ave. | 14 | 4 |
| Route 9 - Van Cortlandt Ave. / Montgomery St. | 10 | 4 |
| Route 9 - Everett Ave. | 11 | 4 |
| Pleasntville Rd - Underhill Rd. | 12 | 4 |

Source: NYSDOT (2017-2019)

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**Motor Vehicle Crashes Involving Pedestrians or Bicyclists**

Data of motor vehicle accidents that involved bicyclists and/or pedestrians were obtained from NYSDOT for a five-year period, between 2015 and 2019. During this period there were three reported crashes with bicyclists and 27 reported crashes with pedestrians. Figure 38 shows that, similar to overall vehicle crashes, there is a pattern of increased crash activity along Route 9 and within the downtown area. In particular, the intersection of South Highland Avenue and Emwilton place stands out with five documented crashes that involved pedestrians. Additionally, Route 9 between the Croton Avenue and Ellis Place intersections exhibit another clustering of reported accidents with total of four crashes.

### *Mass Transportation*

***Metro North Commuter Rail** (Figure 39)*

The Village is served by the Metro-North Commuter Railroad via the Hudson Line, which provides both local and express southbound service to Grand Central Station in New York City. Northbound service connects to Croton-Harmon and Poughkeepsie, as well as other local stops. The train station is located on the riverfront, less than a half mile from downtown Ossining.

With express service to Grand Central Station in under 50 minutes and trains that leave for New York City every 25 to 30 minutes, commuter ridership is a defining characteristic of Ossining's regional connectivity and employment patterns. In support of this commuter population, the station's commuter lot has 68

metered parking spots owned by Metro-North as well as 660 permit spots owned by the Village. The proximity of Metro-North service via the Scarsborough Station at the Village's southern limit and via Croton-Harmon to the north provides additional Metro-North access for Village residents, workers, and visitors. Notably, the Croton-Harmon station also serves Amtrak lines that operate via the Empire Corridor which connects to New York City, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester, and Buffalo.

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 drastically reduced Metro North ridership by approximately 80-85% compared to 2019 numbers. Metro-North's current priority is the restoration of ridership in coming years. Given such constraints, Metro-North reports that they have no capital budget plans for improvements in Ossining at this time.

### *Westchester Bee-Line Bus Service (Figure 40)*

While the Village generally has good bus route coverage, system timing and frequency present challenges. The Village is served by County Bee-Line routes 11, 13, 14 and 19 as shown in Figure 40.

- Route 11 provides limited service that stops twice during both the morning and afternoon peak hours. The route provides connection to White Plains and Elmsford.
- Route 13 entails the most frequent headway of the Village's routes with service roughly every 30 minutes. This line connects to Tarrytown, Port Chester, and Rye.
- Route 14 is a local route that connects to Peekskill and White Plains with hourly morning service and more limited afternoon service.
- Route 19 is a local route that stops once an hour during peak hours with connection to Mount Kisco and Katonah.

The existing schedule of these routes show, at best, 30 minute service for route 13 while other routes have service that is only once an hour. To provide ridership service that is attractive to people, 15 to 20 minute frequency is ideal. The Village's bus network generally follows the arterial roadways of Route 9 and Route 133. All four bus routes provide service to downtown, whereas only Routes 13 and 19 facilitate convenient connection to the Ossining Metro-North station. Topography differences between the Metro-North station and downtown makes connection from Metro-North to Routes 11 and 14 feasible but not convenient. Notably, Routes 11 and 14 more conveniently connect to Metro-North at the Croton-Harmon station. As a critical resource to certain individuals who depend on the bus network, the Village should support the County's future endeavors to improve service and targeted capital improvements.

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#### *Haverstraw-Ossining Ferry Service*

Ferry service connects the Villages of Haverstraw and Ossining, primarily as a resource for commuters. This ferry line receives subsidy from the MTA in order to provide such connectivity across the Hudson River. The service operates roughly every 30 minutes during weekday morning and afternoon peak hours. Passengers originating in Haverstraw can transfer to Metro-North or Bee-Line routes 13 and 19 at the Ossining station.

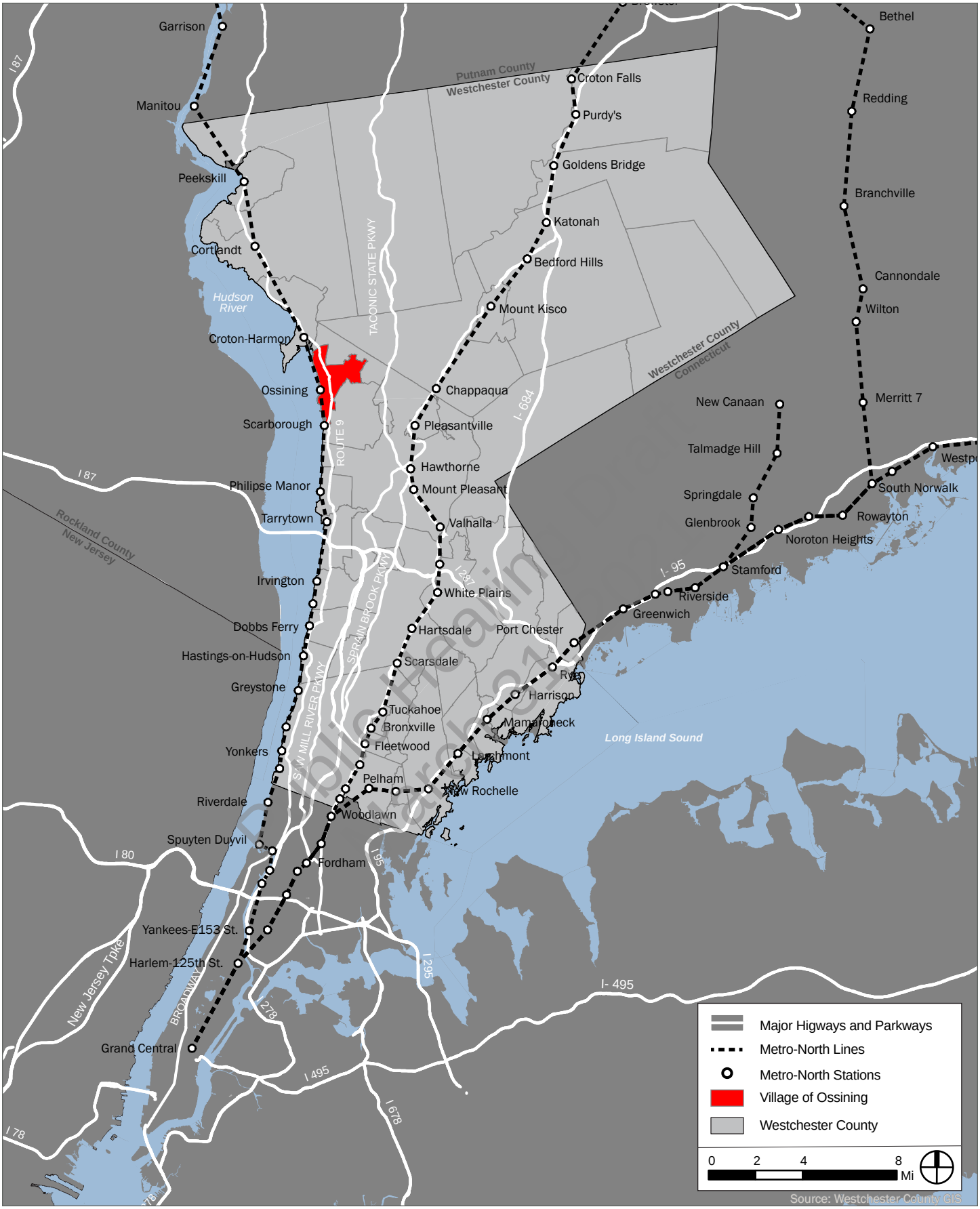


Figure 39: Metro-North Railroad, Regional Context

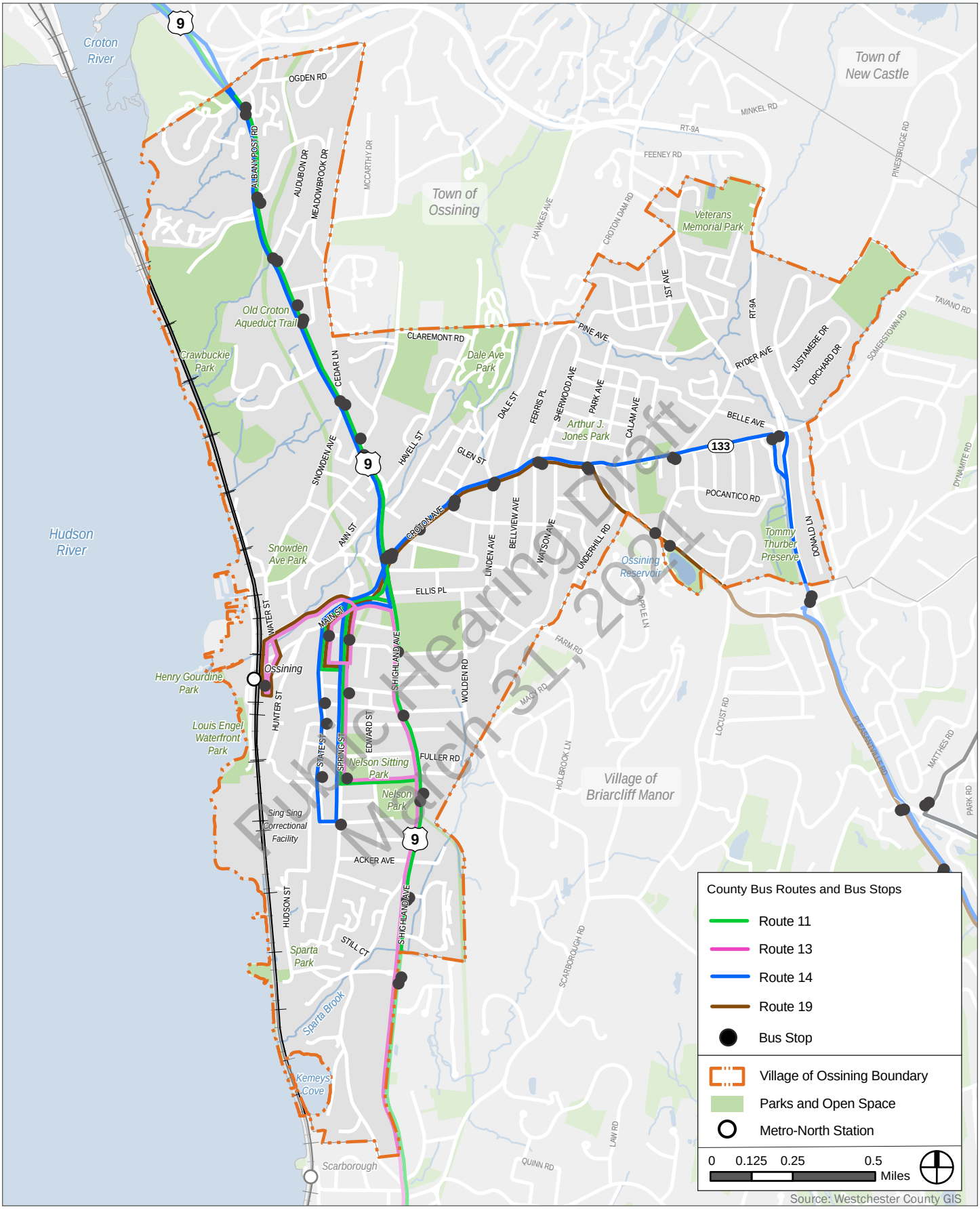


Figure 40: Westchester County Bee-Line Bus Routes and Stops

## Issues and Opportunities

### *Recent Plans with Transportation Recommendations*

**Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan (LWRP) (2011 Amendment)**

*Key Themes: Downtown parking, downtown-waterfront connectivity, station access and circulation*

The 2011 amendment to the Village's LWRP identified three major transportation-related issues affecting the Village's waterfront area: general public access to the Hudson River, parking availability in the downtown area and at the Metro-North station, and circulation to and from the station. The LWRP recommended that parking challenges can be addressed through measures such as the construction of a municipal parking structure downtown, and to investigate additional parking opportunities more broadly. Connectivity improvements were recommended for areas directly adjacent to the station, as well as continued improvements on the Main Street corridor which connects State Street to the Ossining Metro-North station (e.g. benches and sidewalk conditions).

**2015 Complete Streets Ordinance**

*Key Themes: Accessibility, street design, pedestrian conditions and bike-ability*

The Village of Ossining's complete streets policy was codified in 2015 with the mission to encourage convenient mobility and access for all users. This ordinance was passed with the recognition that Village streets are designed exclusively for vehicles and freight transport. Complete street policy facilitates and promotes a more balanced spatial configuration of streetscapes and roadways for users of all ages and abilities, including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and public transportation users. Complete streets design includes adequate sidewalks, the provision of bike lanes, and public transportation stops that provide basic amenities such as shelter and posted transit information.

**The Village of Ossining Downtown Redevelopment Working Committee (August 2017)**

*Key Themes: Village-wide access and connectivity, traffic circulation, Route 9 improvements*

This working group was appointed by the Village Board of Trustees to coordinate the vision and planning of Downtown Ossining. From previous efforts such as the 2009 Comprehensive Plan and 2011 LWRP, the committee reinforced objectives to: (1) Improve downtown and waterfront connectivity, (2) Develop the parking lots at Main and Spring Streets, (3) Expand the municipal parking supply, and (4) Improve traffic circulation throughout the Village.

Recommendations issued by the working committee include:

- Establish a jitney or shuttle service serving downtown
- Develop a public ride-sharing program with local Ossining taxi services to supplement the Bee-Line system
- Realign and restripe Route 9
- Determine new traffic circulation routes to mitigate traffic flow through the central Downtown

***Connecting the Dots* (August 2018)**

*Key Themes: Transit-oriented development, parking management, sidewalk conditions*

The Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress, Interfaith Council for Action (IFCA) Housing Network, and the Village of Ossining collaborated to study and evaluate ongoing planning efforts in the Village. This plan and engagement process further raised the importance to strategize housing, land use, and transportation policies in tandem. It is recommended that such policy considerations are furthered by the Village in order to guide new developments, especially in downtown and adjacent areas due to existing circulation and

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parking supply conditions. Through public engagement, members of the community acknowledged poor sidewalk conditions in many areas of the Village, as well as peak hour traffic congestion burdens.

**Route 9 Realignment & Restriping (2000-2005)**
Planning efforts and ongoing visioning for a safer and right-sized scale of the Village's portion Route 9 began in 2000 when the Village Board voted on a resolution for an independent firm to develop a pedestrian friendly design for the local stretch of the State Route. As the 2009 Village of Ossining Comprehensive Plan cites, this early visioning of a reconfigured Route 9 was further formalized by a DOT planning study. Measures to restripe and realign Route 9 aim to calm traffic and improve pedestrian safety conditions. Initially, temporary measures such as restriping portions of Route 9 in the Village were initiated along with efforts to re-synchronize traffic signals. DOT review of the 2000-2005 planning process provided concern with the extent of the Route scope. Consequently, the project scope was scaled back to focus on Route 9 intersections with Route 133 and Main Street. The 2009 Village Comprehensive Plan further called for renewed efforts to improve traffic conditions on Route 9.

Previous Route 9 planning efforts highlighted the challenge of effectively balancing two highly related goals: to improve roadway traffic and congestion while also improving conditions for pedestrians. Congestion on Route 9 would be worsened by lane reduction strategies that otherwise best-serve the interests of pedestrians. The issue of bypass traffic utilizing local roads in an effort to avoid Route 9 congestion is also expected to be exacerbated if the number of lanes on Route 9 were decreased in order to calm traffic and enhance intersection crosswalk conditions for pedestrians. Such trade-offs define Route 9 planning decisions.

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**Millwood-Ossining GO (MOGO) Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity Plan (2018)**
While portions of existing trails in the Village are utilized by some bicyclists, there are no existing designated bike paths in the community. Aspirations to improve bike-ability within the Village have been met by challenges related to topography and necessary capital planning to reconfigure roadways.

To-date, the most extensive proposal for a local bike path network was set forth in the 2018 Millwood-Ossining Go (MOGO) Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity Plan. The MOGO plan proposes a series of bike paths that aim to connect the Village of Ossining, the Town of Ossining, and the Town of New Castle. Within the Village there are three proposed pathways that lead to areas outside of the Village: (1) Route 133 / Croton Avenue beginning at Route 9 with extensions onto Campwoods Road and Pleasantville Road; (2) Acqueduct Street beginning at Route 9, leading through residential streets before veering onto Route 134 and then Pine Avenue; (3) Wallet Avenue at Route 9 to Emwilton Place and southbound on Wolden Road. The study recommended that a feasibility evaluation be conducted to further determine opportunities and challenges along these path proposals. Notably, the MOGO proposal also recommends that Class-1 pedal assist electric bicycles are encouraged and advocated for as a means to alleviate the burden of riding on hilly terrain.

*The Ossining Tomorrow Village Survey: Transportation Priorities*

As part of the comprehensive planning process, the Ossining Tomorrow public survey asked stakeholders which transportation improvement initiatives they view as the most important. Table 23 below summarizes the initiatives that stakeholders rated as the most critical for future improvements.

**Table 23: Share of Stakeholders that Deem Selected Transportation Improvement Initiatives as "Very Important".**

| | |
|---|---|
| Road improvements to reduce traffic congestion | 65% |
| Improved/extended sidewalks | 52% |
| More parking downtown | 46% |
| More crosswalks or signals | 38% |
| New transit options to serve downtown and the waterfront | 33% |
| New/improved bicycle routes | 31% |
| New/improved bus routes and stops (Bee-Line) | 20% |

*Source: Ossining Tomorrow Public Survey (2020)*

Through this engagement, it is determined that stakeholders are most concerned about Village roadways and sidewalks. Two-thirds of respondents (65%) report that they believe road improvements to reduce traffic congestion is the most important transportation need in the Village, while roughly half report that the improvement of sidewalks and downtown parking are also key. To a lesser degree, roughly one-third of the public believe that bicycle infrastructure and new transit options to serve the downtown/waterfront are needed. Improvements to the Bee-Line bus system was ranked as the least critical transportation initiative (20%).

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## Objectives and Strategies

*Objective 6.1: Support a State DOT Study to improve Route 9A (Briarcliff-Peekskill Parkway) in terms of safety and capacity.*

An upgrade of infrastructure conditions on Route 9A would achieve a better functioning parkway that could encourage a greater number of drivers to utilize it rather than to actively seek alternatives. Although the full scope of improvements to regionally-serving Route 9A spans outside of the Village limits, more efficient and safer conditions could alleviate some thru traffic that currently utilizes Route 9 (Highland Avenue) in the Village as an alternative. Adding to existing local advocacy, the Village's explicit support of a DOT study to improve Route 9A could help illuminate the pressing needs of Route 9A's overdue upgrades.

*Objective 6.2: Coordinate with the State on further Route 9 (Highland Avenue) upgrades to improve the safety and functioning of the roadway.*

Route 9 prominently bisects the Village with its high traffic volumes, yet there are no alternative roads within the Village's central core that can safely and efficiently enable bypass traffic to travel north-south. Despite this lack of viable alternative routes, congestion challenges on Route 9 cause many motorists to seek inefficient and often unsafe bypass routes through neighborhood streets that have short, narrow, winding segments, often with steep slopes and offset intersections. Alternative routes cited in the 2009 comprehensive plan include: Broadway, Emwilton Place, Ferris Place, Linden Avenue, Revolutionary Road, Rockledge Avenue, Scarsborough Road, Spring Street, Snowden Avenue, and Underhill Road.

Previous NYSDOT planning sought design modifications on Route 9, such as restriping, in order to improve pedestrian safety and to promote vehicular traffic calming. As pointed out in the 2009 Plan, traffic calming involves roadway design modifications to moderate vehicular speeds and improve pedestrian safety without increasing congestion or deceasing road safety.

A particular location of concern is Route 9's intersection with Route 133 (Croton Avenue) which serves as the Village's main east-west arterial. This node is particularly challenging as there is no exact alignment with a road to the west of Route 9. As pointed out in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan, Main Street and Church Street essentially form the western extension of Croton Avenue, but are located to the south approximately 300 feet and 500 feet, respectively. Such disjointed alignment leads to confusing traffic circulation from Croton Avenue to Route 9 and further into the downtown and waterfront areas. Pedestrians also face an intersection that is heavily dominated by vehicles with limited crossing times. The anticipated Mobility and Parking Management study led by Nelson\Nygaard (see Objective 5) will recommend conceptual improvements to this intersection to improve the connection with Downtown as well as pedestrians and bicyclists safety, while the anticipated Route 9 Road Diet study will examine it more closely in regards to traffic operations.

It is clear that Route 9 was not designed with a high priority consideration of pedestrians. Narrow sidewalk alignment is commonplace, and the Village's northern and southern areas lack full sidewalk coverage along the route. East-West connectivity across Route 9 is impeded by the corridor's width and challenged crossing conditions. Further Route 9 study and upgrades must balance traffic calming measures for improved pedestrian conditions while also limiting the impact of increased congestion, and, consequently, increased bypass routing. Lastly, streetscape improvements along Route 9 should include the addition of trees and shrubs wherever the street design allows for it.

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*Objective 6.3: Better connect downtown and the waterfront.*

Due to the Village's hilly topography, roadway circulation and street condition challenges between the station area/waterfront and downtown have historically hindered the safety and ease of moving between these adjacent Village areas. The inability for some individuals to walk or more easily travel this stretch is a challenge of Village access. The pursuit of more efficient roadway configurations, as well as alternative transit options to better connect individuals between the waterfront and downtown, should be pursued.

Strategy 6.3.1: Improve traffic circulation at Secor Road and Main Street: Turn Main Street into a one-way westbound roadway.

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan suggested that various streets leading from the Ossining station to downtown be reconfigured for improved connectivity. Most notably, since the 2009 plan was issued, improvements to the westerly sidewalk on Secor Road were made to allow for wider widths, new lighting, and new street furniture. It is suggested that the previous proposal to make Main Street one-way westbound from downtown to the station area be revisited, whereas it is suggested that Secor Road remain two-way. Refer to Figure 41 for a diagram of the proposed configuration. This reconfiguration will enable a wider sidewalk along this stretch of Main Street to provide additional amenities such a new lighting and street furniture, similar to the provisions on Secor Road. Additionally, one-way traffic on Main Street is expected to improve overall safety conditions at the Main and Secor intersection.

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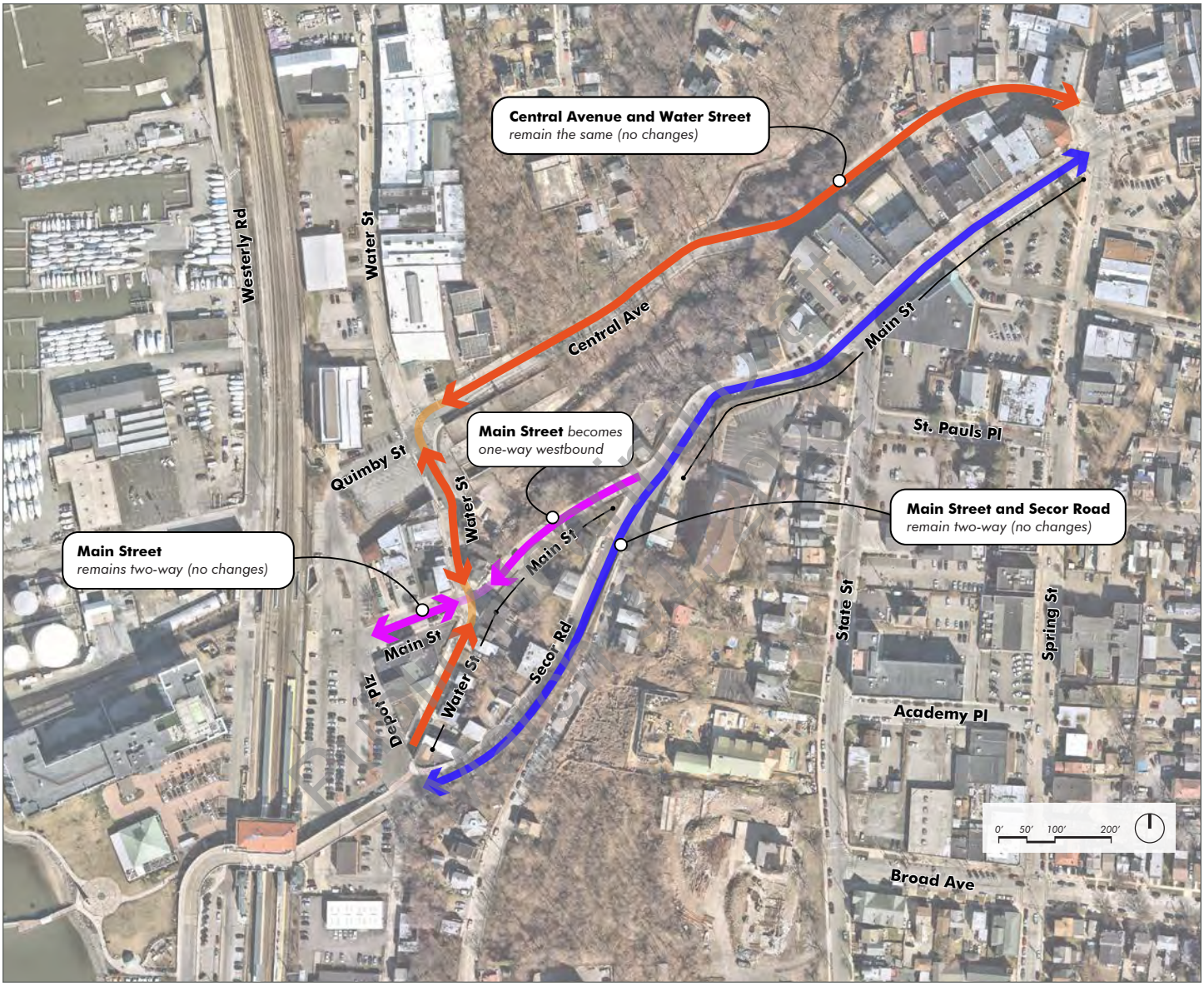


Figure 41: Proposed Main Street and Secor Street Improvement

Strategy 6.3.2: Establish a shuttle service from downtown to the station area and waterfront.
The provision of a shuttle bus/jitney service between the downtown and station/waterfront area would help provide a viable option for quick connection and alleviate the burdens and access barriers associated with steep topography. Further, a shuttle would help take some traffic off roads that connect the station to downtown.

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan's recommendation to create a Village shuttle bus/jitney loop for the downtown-waterfront loop has yet to be realized due to the costly nature of the project. Projected ridership and revenue are not anticipated to be enough to support the service. A Village shuttle service should be re-strategized with the support of local private and/or non-profit entities in order to make the project financially viable. Notably, through efforts lead by Historic Hudson River Towns, the proposed Sing Sing Prison Museum is a future non-profit institution that could provide catalytic potential for a Village shuttle service partnership. A 2017 transportation impact study was conducted on the Sing Sing Prison Museum by BFJ Planning and it was noted that such a shuttle could help efficiently transport museumgoers to the site while also encouraging individuals to visit downtown. A loop connection between Ossining station, the future Sing Sing Museum, and downtown could serve the future Museum's location off Westerly Road while also serving other users who specifically seek waterfront-downtown connection. This shuttle loop could also serve as an essential link that would provide users of all Village Bee-Line bus routes connection between downtown and the Ossining station.

*Objective 6.4: Upgrade and extend the Village's sidewalk system and pedestrian infrastructure.*
Sidewalk upgrades and targeted crosswalk improvements were cited throughout public engagement as a priority area for transit investment. While opportunities for improved sidewalks downtown can be investigated in order to target the needs of this area's activity, many other areas of the Village demonstrate the need for entirely new sidewalk infrastructure altogether. The lack of adequate sidewalk infrastructure perpetuates various challenges: it hinders opportunity for greater connectivity between Village areas, it further promotes car dependency and reduced physical activity, and it ultimately can risk the safety of pedestrians who navigate areas where sidewalks are non-existent or are below design standards.

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Strategy 6.4.1: Enhance sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure downtown.
While stakeholders referenced the need for wider downtown sidewalks, BFJ comparison of other Westchester downtown communities suggest that sidewalks here are generally wide enough at 10-12 feet. However, it is suggested that the proposed form-based zoning code for the downtown zoning district capitalize on the development opportunity of two city-owned lots (Market Square and the Post Office parcel), to establish an extra 5 foot setback of these buildings to facilitate wider sidewalks. This approach recognizes the otherwise limited opportunity to extend sidewalks in the downtown area.

The relative prominence of pedestrians on downtown sidewalks, and general advocacy here for streetscape improvements, positions downtown as a particularly opportune area to advance a more robust Complete Streets agenda. Right-sized complete streets amenities (e.g. bus shelters, benches, lighting) have the potential to be thoughtfully integrated when such spatial opportunity arises.

Note that the broader enhancement of sidewalk and pedestrian-minded improvements downtown will be explored in the Nelson\Nygaard Mobility and Parking Management study. This study will provide conceptual improvement opportunities with particular attention to pedestrian and bicycling safety, and parking access, in the Downtown area. These will include Main Street and Spring/Brandreth Street

intersection, as well as Main Street and Croton Ave intersections with Route 9, which will be studied with more detail in the Road 9 Road diet Study.

Strategy 6.4.2: As a priority area, ensure that sidewalk and cross-walk conditions surrounding public facilities and parks are adequate.
Sidewalk and crosswalk upgrades surrounding schools, parks, and community facilities should be prioritized in order to best protect the safety of children and families. It is suggested that an up-to-date Village-wide inventory of sidewalk conditions start with an account of access areas directly surrounding these uses in order to guide an initial capital plan for improvements.

It is further recommended that crash data be considered in an effort to best address intersections that might have below standard configurations, and therefore could be visually and technologically enhanced to safeguard pedestrian crossing conditions.

*Objective 6.5: Create a parking plan and possible parking garage downtown.*
Downtown economic and cultural activity are compromised by circulation and parking challenges. 38% of public survey respondents cited that a lack of parking hinders their household from shopping or dining downtown.[21] Such reliance on driving and parking to visit downtown further limits patronage of the area when parking capacity is at or near its limits. Sufficient parking, not only downtown but in other commercial areas of the Village, is important to maintain economic viability for commercial spaces. This relates to other areas, such as the Waterfront and its public parks.

The Village recently contracted Nelson\Nygaard to conduct a Mobility and Parking Management Study that will focus on the downtown. This study seeks to develop an action plan to implement new parking policies and strategize opportunities for better parking management. The call for this planning effort is driven by the desire to promote downtown Ossining for all user groups: residents, workers, and visitors. As parking demand downtown is cited as having increased in recent years, the study will gather new data on existing parking and traffic patterns and trends while also projecting future development needs. Strategies will be recommended for transportation, parking, and improved pedestrian connections.

Recommended mobility and parking management strategies for downtown are expected from this study in 2021 and they should reinforce objectives in the comprehensive plan where possible.

*Objective 6.6: Explore the opportunity to construct a parking facility at the railroad station.*
As discussed in Chapter 4, there is opportunity to consolidate Village-owned surface parking areas along the waterfront and station area into a newly constructed parking structure. Figure 42 demonstrates the ideal location of the proposed structure which is preliminarily envisioned to be built east of the station just north of Secor Road. The facility could be a two-three story deck with the capacity to hold an estimated 200-300 cars. This parking facility could also facilitate the expansion of Louis Engel Park. Currently, the Town-owned park cannot be expanded without eliminating some commuter parking. The parking deck could provide for such replacement parking to make this park expansion viable.

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[21] This question had a sample size of 383 respondents.

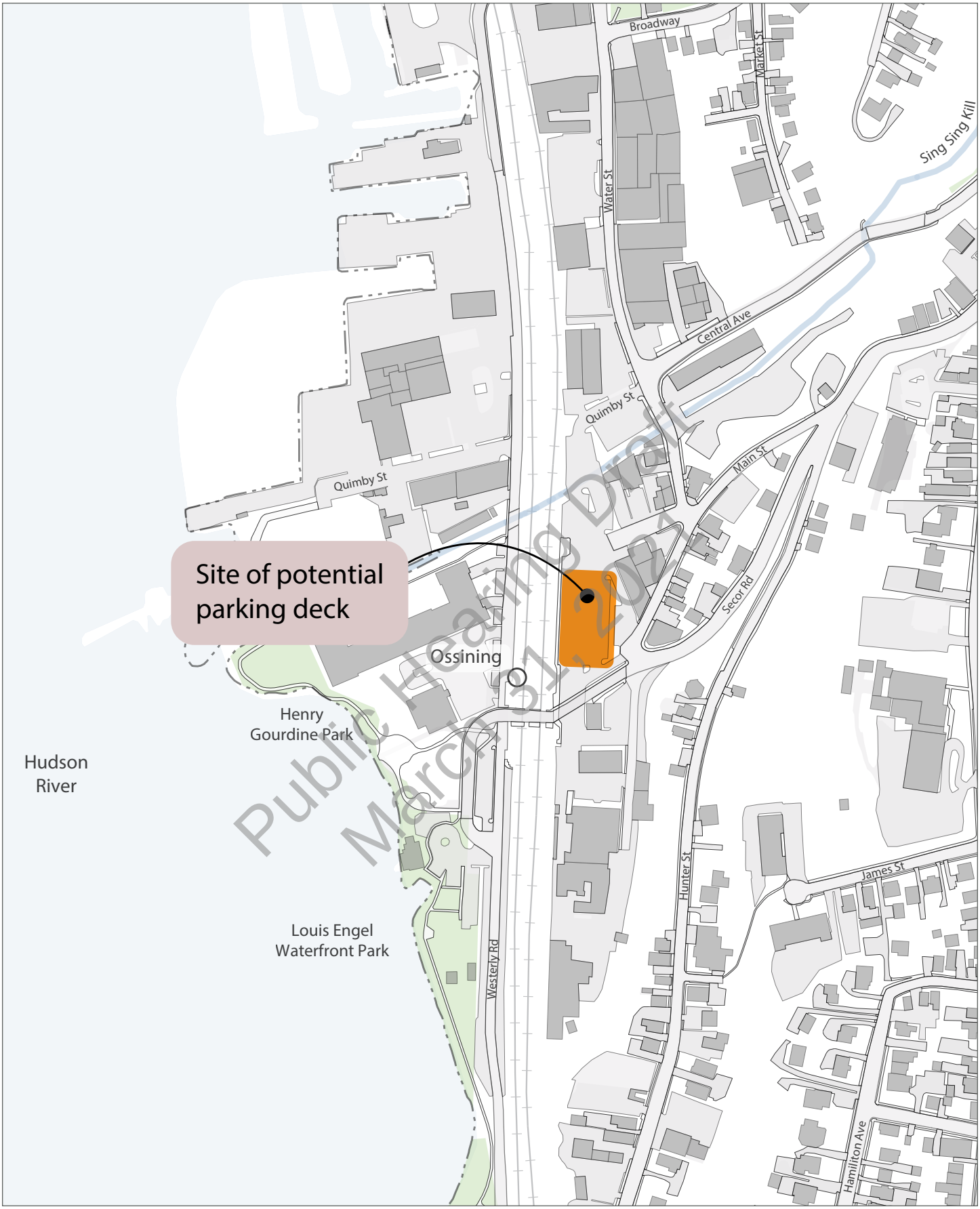


Figure 42: Proposed Parking Garage at Ossining Station

*Objective 6.7: Improve the Village's bicycle infrastructure.*

Roadways in Ossining were not constructed with bicycles in mind but stakeholders speculate untapped potential to improve bicycling conditions. The lack of bicycle infrastructure has led many residents to express interest in Village-led improvements. As cited by the public survey, nearly one-third of survey respondents consider the provision of new/improved bicycle routes as a "very important" transportation initiative for the Village.

Strategy 6.7.1: Consider studying bicycle circulation opportunities to inform where bicycle infrastructure can best be integrated in a cost-effective fashion.

The absence of opportune roads (e.g. conflicting roadway design elements and topography) has limited the opportunity for coherent bicycle infrastructure and connectivity as a Village-wide resource. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan suggested that bicycle path planning focus on expanding the north-south Croton Aqueduct bikeway alignment, particularly with east-west links. Additionally, although the 2018 Millwood – Ossining Go (MOGO) bicycle plan proposes a vision to provide the Village of Ossining with connection to outside communities, its proposed bicycle path alignment with Route 133 is faced with the challenge of narrow roadway conditions that could compromise safety.

A comprehensive bike study should keep key safety elements of bike lanes/paths in mind and investigate such issues critically. Generally speaking, the safest bike lane configurations are listed below in descending order :

1. Off-street bike lanes, including on trails or shared sidewalks
2. Striped or protected bike lane on a street where it is generally protected from traffic
3. Shared streets where bicyclists share the road with drivers with no demarcated bike lane

In addition, as bicycle safety is largely dependent on good design as well as adjacent traffic speeds and volumes, the following parameters are also suggested to keep in mind:

1. A safe and connected bikeway network can provide a viable option for shorter trips and recreation, including riding bikes to trails instead of driving.
2. Actual and perceived safety is dependent upon separation from high volume and high speed roadways.
3. Low stress bikeways include off street trails and sidepaths, protected bike lanes, and neighborhood greenways on very low speed and low volume streets. All of these treatments require careful design at intersections.

Notably, as related to the particular challenge presented by the Village's topography, the promotion and increased access of e-bikes through future bike-sharing endeavors may enhance the viability of overall bicycle usage for various users.

Strategy 6.8.2: Utilize the Village's Complete Streets policy to further support the integration of bicycle infrastructure and amenities.

Bicycle amenities such as bike racks should continue to be advocated for at locations most frequented by bicyclists, especially to meet the needs related to future construction or allocation of new paths/bike lanes. The Village's 2015 Complete Streets policy can be strategized to target bicycle infrastructure provision at key locations, such as new developments that fall under the review of Complete Streets guidelines.

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# Chapter 7: Sustainable Infrastructure

## Goal

Continue the efforts to improve the Village's water system and management of stormwater; explore improvements to municipal facilities and public safety services where needed; ensure educational, cultural and recreational facilities and programs are accessible to all, and meet the needs of the Ossining community.

## Introduction

This chapter contains a description and analysis of the existing conditions of key infrastructure systems such as utilities, water and sewer systems, and stormwater management. Population changes and new development patterns within the Village, as well as new technologies, must be considered while assessing the adequacy of Ossining infrastructure and making recommendations for the future. This section is written through the lens of sustainability, as we must ensure that Ossining's resources like water supply and natural features are used responsibly and in a sustainable way.

In addition to the more typical infrastructure systems, this chapter deals with the municipal services provided to the Ossining community, form public safety services to cultural and recreational facilities. These services, or "soft" infrastructure, are the backbones of the community: from fire to medical emergency response, and from educational to recreational resources, this Plan identifies what are the services that the Ossining community relies on, on a daily basis.

This section is developed after conducting interviews with Village staff, departments' Chiefs, Community Facilities Subcommittee, and Ossining School District. While the Sustainable Infrastructure chapter of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan focused on water supply and stormwater management recommendations, this updated chapter expands the scope to explore further opportunities for improvements to services that the Village offers to all residents.

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## Existing Conditions

### *Infrastructure and Utilities*

The Village of Ossining is committed to environmentally sustainable land and building development. The Village's infrastructure supports its residential and commercial uses. Often referred to as "grey infrastructure," it consists of man-made improvements that support human settlement, such as water and sewer systems and electric and telecommunication lines. This chapter addresses the major infrastructure systems within the Village and existing conditions and trends. Maintaining the infrastructure in Ossining is an important factor in preserving the Village's quality-of-life and economic development efforts.

The consideration of sustainable design principles focused particularly on the environmental impacts of both private and public infrastructure construction, maintenance, and operation. Case studies have documented that sustainable design provides tangible, measurable improvements in quality of life, while reducing life cycle costs and often first costs, as well. Two critical components of sustainable infrastructure about which the Village is particularly concerned are drinking water quality, treatment, and distribution and stormwater collection and treatment.

Sustainability is part and parcel of the objectives and recommendations laid out in other chapters of this Plan, including making the Village more walkable, improving public transportation, concentrating development near transit nodes and encouraging "green" building features.

The sustainability recommendations above largely have to do with human-made resources: energy, buildings, transportation. The natural environment is, of course, just as important, and the key ingredient is water quality—not just drinking water, but also the rich connectivity of wildlife with natural habitats that have water features. Water quality regulations may be the single most important tool available to a community to protect its natural resources and wildlife. Ossining must adopt policies that will, among other measures:

- Protect the quality of Ossining's drinking water.
- Safeguard its wetlands and watercourses.
- Minimize erosion and sediment control (including managing steep slopes).
- Minimize stormwater runoff discharges, particularly of new development.
- Increase capacity and efficiency at the Ossining Water Treatment Plant.

The recommendations presented below draw on low-cost, increasingly common water protection strategies.

### Water Supply

The Village of Ossining Department of Public Works operates a municipal water system that supplies water to the Village and sells water to the Sing Sing Correctional Facility, Briarcliff Manor, and the Town of Ossining. Water is obtained from two surface water sources: the Indian Brook Reservoir, located near Fowler Avenue and Reservoir Road, and the Croton Reservoir, which is part of the New York City Water System (Figure 43). In 2019, 25 percent of Ossining's drinking water came from the Indian Brook Reservoir, and 75 percent from New York City's Croton Reservoir. Between the two water systems, the current average daily demand of 3.01 million of gallons per day (MGD) of water is treated and pumped into the distribution system which has a total capacity is 4 MGD. The highest single-day reading was 4.86 MGD. Upgrades to the Indian Brook Water Treatment Plant, discussed below, will result in a design capacity of 6.5 MGD. This will exceed projected demands of 5.3 MGD (annual average) and 5.8 MGD (Peak Monthly Average) for the 2039 design year.[22]

The Village's water system serves approximately 32,000 people through approximately 6,000 service connections. In 2019, water customers located within the Village were charged $25.00 for the first 748 gallons and $8.67 for each additional 748 gallons of water. All other water customers were charged $37.50 for the first 748 gallons and $13.00 for each additional 748 gallons of water. Approximately 1.00 billion gallons of the 1.12 billion gallons produced were charged to paying users. The remaining water is attributable to flushing mains, fighting fires and miscellaneous leakage.

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[22] Indian Brook Water Treatment Plant project demand flows obtained from a 2014 demand analysis by Hazen & Sawyer.

OLD CROTON AQUEDUCT

The Village of Ossining has the capacity to withdraw water from the Croton Reservoir through the Old Croton Aqueduct.

New York City charges $1,888.06 per million gallons, which rises to $3,323.18 per million gallons if local per capita consumption exceeds 140 MGD. The Village must rely more on the Croton Reservoir water and its associated fees during a dry summer where normal reservoir recharge of 0.7 MGD is not occurring. Maximizing the use of the Village-owned Indian Brook Reservoir represents considerable savings to the Village. At present, the Village estimates that the use of the Indian Brook Reservoir, rather than the New York City reservoir, has saved the Village $500,000 a year.

INDIAN BROOK RESERVOIR

The Village-owned Indian Brook Reservoir is a 15-acre reservoir surrounded by forest. Three inlet streams to the reservoir and one outlet stream exist, and the reservoir traverses the borders of the Towns of Ossining, and New Castle. The Indian Brook and Indian Brook Reservoir are in the Indian Brook Reservoir Sub-watershed area of the larger Croton Bay Watershed area. The drainage area of the Indian Brook Reservoir contains 1.33 square miles and the Village estimates that recharge capabilities of the reservoir are 1.2 MGD. The reservoir capacity at spillway overflow is 100 million gallons. This storage capacity provides a 20-day summer supply if New York City shuts down the Village's connection to the Croton Reservoir.

Water from the Indian Brook Reservoir and the Croton Reservoir are blended together and treated at the Indian Brook Water Filtration Plant. The Village does its own water testing and reports results to the Westchester County Department of Health. The existing process works as follows; a low lift pump sends water into a filtration plant. Raw water from this reservoir is aerated, coagulated, filtered, chlorinated, and treated for corrosion control. The capacity of the treatment plant is 4 MGD. The treated water is then pumped into the distribution system for the public's use. The Village has instituted back-washing of the filters in the water filtration plant at the Indian Brook Reservoir resulting in a reduction of 760,000 gallons per day inflow into the County Wastewater Treatment Plant, which has a 4 MGD capacity. This 75 percent reduction of inflow frees up the capacity in the treatment plant for other development.

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Upgrades at the Indian Brook Water Treatment Plant and Reservoir have been ongoing for the last 19 years. Listed below are the capital project upgrades that have been made to the Treatment Works.

- Installation of New Up flow Clarifiers and Gear Reducers
- Installation of Air Structure to prevent organics and ice damage to all tankage and ancillary systems.
- Rehabilitation of Five Conventional Filters along with all valves. This was upgraded to air scour technology.
- Installation of Variable Frequency Drives to allow the Facility to operate at steady state flows. It also greatly reduced Demand Charges from our Electrical Utility.
- Installation of a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System (SCADA).
- Rehabilitation of all chemical feed Raw Water Systems.

- Installation of Three New Raw Water Pumps at the Low lift Pump station.
- Reestablish use of the existing Thickener System to allow for up to 3% backwash water to be recirculated to the head of the plant.
- Rehabilitated the Spillway for the Indian Brook Reservoir. This included all new reservoir intake and blow off valves, fully compliant with the NYS DEC DAM Safety Branch.
- The Village of Ossining signed a four-year agreement with the New York City DEP for a Water Demand Study. The goal was to reduce water consumption by 5% throughout the distribution system which was realized within the first few months after execution of the agreement.
- A leak detection study, paid for by NYC, was recently completed to detect any leaks throughout the distribution system. To date, this has yielded an additional occurring reduction of 600,000 gallons per day.

The Village is in the final stages for finishing the design of a new dissolved air floatation filtration plant, a process that started in 2016. The plant will include technologies such as Ultraviolet Disinfection along with process design modifications to treat Geosmin and Methyl-Isoborneol (MIB) in our Raw Water which was the main issue of taste and odor in late 2019 and early 2020. The last upgrade to the Water Treatment Plant footprint and major process was in 1986. The existing treatment plant does not have the ability to be increased in capacity along with adding these essential water quality modifications. The EPA along with the New York State department of Health has moved forward in Water Quality Standards since the surface water drinking rule of 1989.

The Village of Ossining has worked very hard to maximize the existing water assets and will continue to look decades ahead to constantly meet EPA standards.

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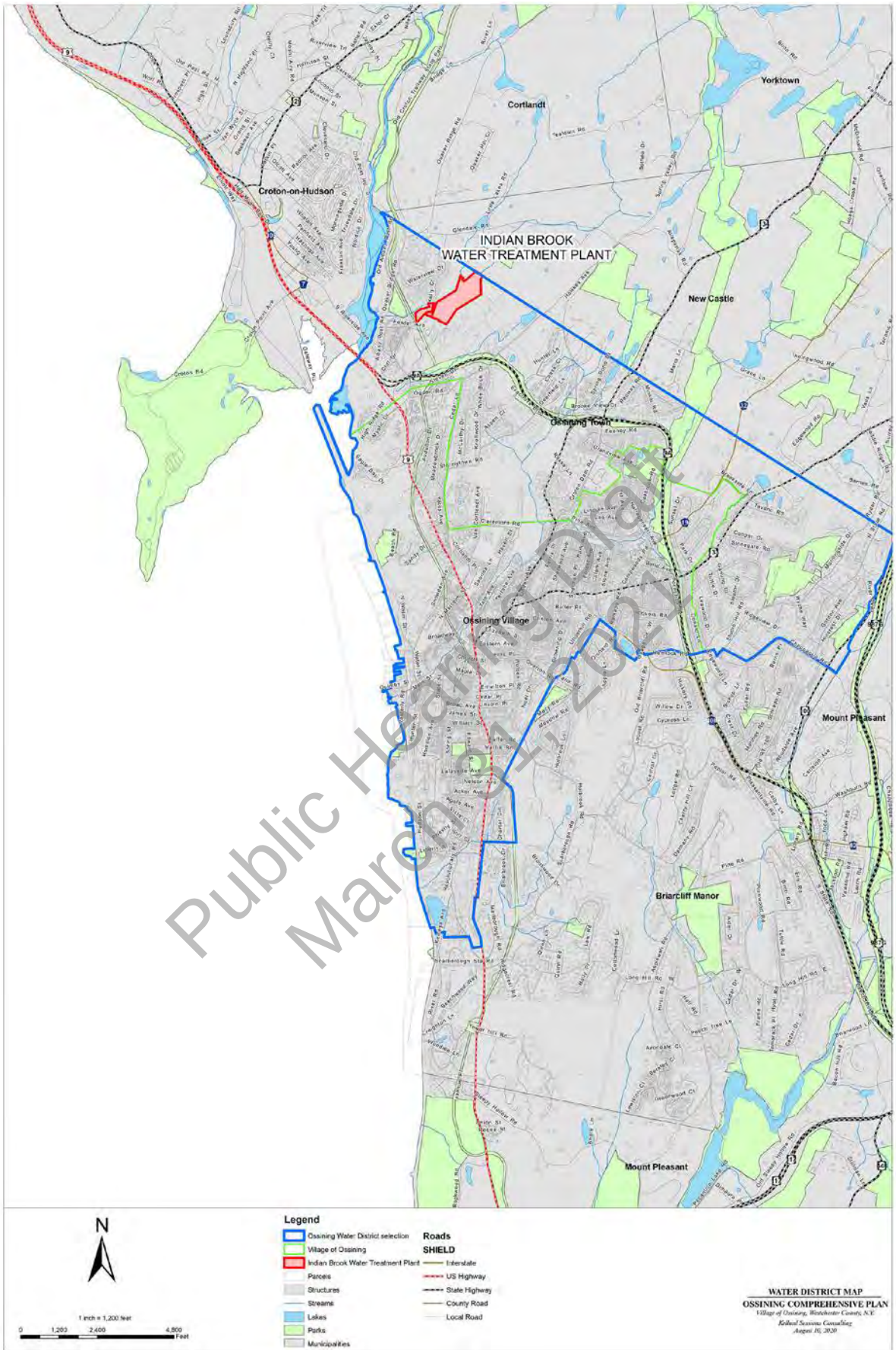


Figure 43: Ossining Water Supply

*Issues and Opportunities*

While the overall water quality rating for the Indian Brook Reservoir is good, the Village is in the process of developing bid documents for upgrades and improvements to the water treatment plant to solicit bids for construction in 2021. This is being pursued in anticipation of the increasing demand for potable water supply.

*Objectives and Strategies*

*Objective 7.1: Expand capacity of the Village's water system*

The most critical infrastructure issue facing Ossining is the need for additional water supply capacity during peak summer usage. To effectively increase the available Village water supply capacity, particularly during peak summer usage, the Village Board should implement short-term and long-term strategies.

**Strategy 7.1.1: Increase water supply capacity during peak summer usage in the short-term.**
The Village Board should:

a. Continue its investment and proposal to construct the upgrades and improvements to the Indian Brook Water Treatment Plant currently being designed.
b. Continue its efforts to replace and reline aged sections of existing water mains.
c. Continue its maintenance of the water system infrastructure; in particular, routine painting of the three (3) water distribution storage tanks.

**Strategy 7.1.2: Increase water supply capacity during peak summer usage in the long-term.**
The Village Board should:

a. Negotiate with New York City's Department of Environmental Protection, Water Supply Division, to increase the old Croton Aqueduct capacity available to Ossining.
b. Upgrade and increase the present filtration plant and pump capacities. (The plant upgrades are currently being designed with an anticipated 2021 build.)
c. Adjust water rates in anticipation of necessary capital improvements.
d. Encourage the harvesting of water for irrigation for both residential and commercial properties.

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Sanitary Sewer System

Ossining's residential and commercial properties are connected to the public sanitary sewer system located entirely within the Ossining Sewer District that is served by Westchester County Ossining Wastewater Treatment Plant located in the Village at the south end of Westerly Road (Figure 44).

The sewer lines within the Ossining sanitary sewer collection system are upgraded and relined, as necessary, to address infiltration and inflow (I&I) issues. Ossining's Department of Public Works (DPW) maintains the manholes and collection lines for the collection system which includes one (1) sanitary sewer pump station and an estimated 6,500 service connections.

The Village Engineer and DPW utilize the plan review process, through the Village land use boards, to identify and evaluate potential I & I projects for proposed development. Potential significant sources of sanitary waste are mitigated by the removal of I&I sources. In addition, the DPW has an annual root control program and jet-cleans and vacuums sanitary mains and service lines, as necessary. DPW also monitors, jet-cleans and vacuums select sanitary service lines that are candidates for grease buildup and associated blockage.

The Ossining Wastewater Treatment Plant has a permitted design capacity of 7 MGD with an average daily flow of 4.9 MGD. Westchester County currently has no plans or foreseeable need to upgrade the capacity of the treatment plant. As a result of Hurricane Sandy, the County has undertaken a planning study of all of their wastewater treatment facilities to determine whether upgrades or flood prevention measures are required. While multiple treatment facilities throughout the County experienced various levels of flooding, the Ossining Wastewater Treatment Plant did not experience any flood damage as a result of the hurricane. Regardless, the facility is included in the study, which will evaluate flood protection measures for the 500-year flood[23].

*Issues and Opportunities*

The Village continues its efforts to identify and eliminate sources of Inflow and Infiltration (I&I) to the sanitary sewer system. This results in additional available treatment capacity at the Westchester County Ossining Wastewater Treatment Plant without the need for added infrastructure.

*Objectives and Strategies*

*Objective 7.2: Improve the Sanitary Sewer System*

**Strategy 7.2.1: The Village should consider upgrades to the sanitary sewer collection system to address inflow and infiltration and implement relining, as needed.**

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[23] The 500-year flood corresponds to an annual exceedance probability (AEP) of 0.2-percent which is a flood of that size or greater having a 0.2-percent chance (or 1 in 500 chance) of occurring in a given year.

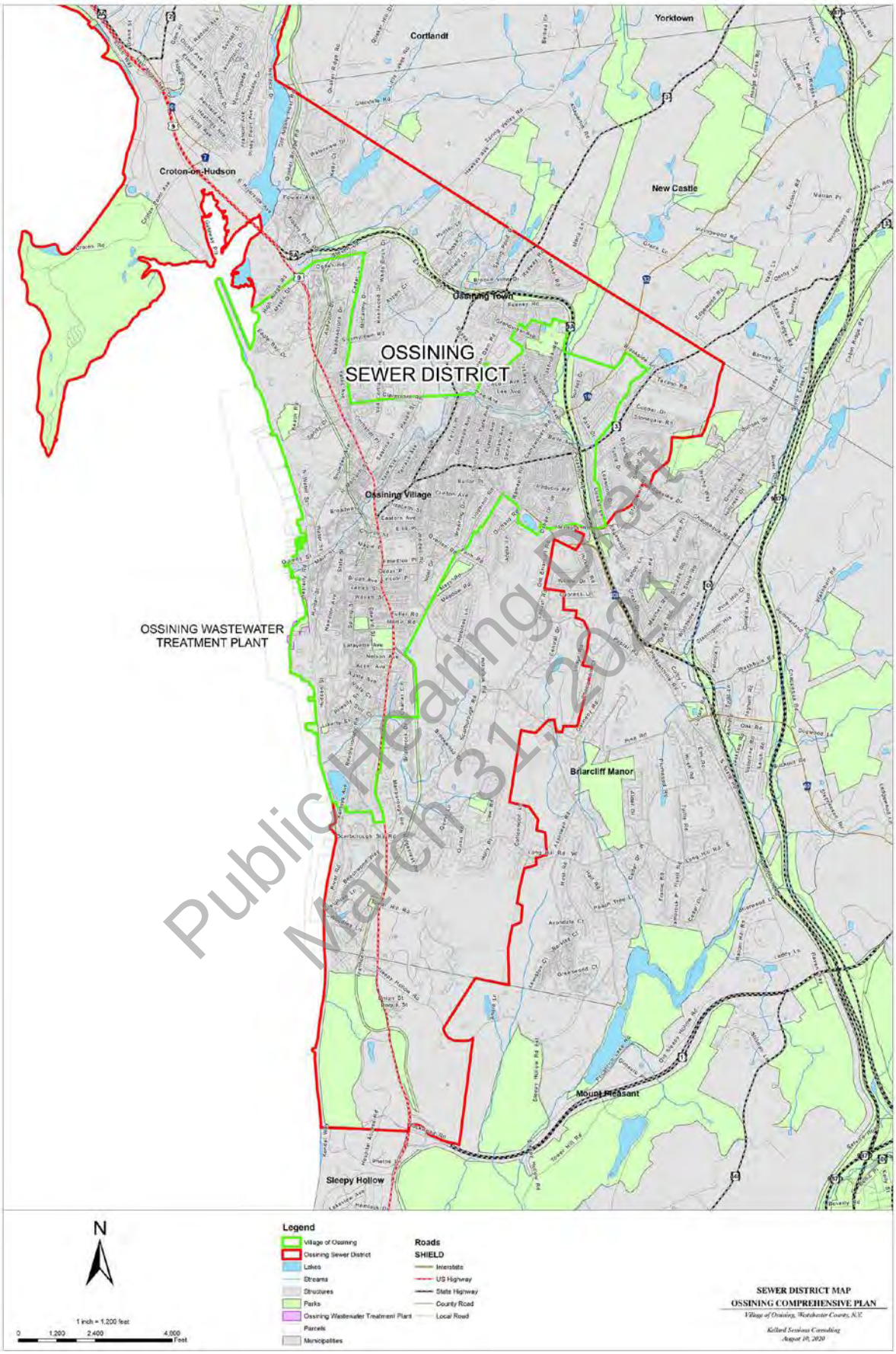


**Figure 44: Ossining Sewer System**

### Stormwater System and Floodplain Management

Non-point source pollution, unlike pollution from industrial sources and sewage treatment plants, comes from many different sources. Non-point source pollution is the leading remaining cause of water quality problems. The effects of non-point source pollutants on specific waters vary and may not always be fully assessed. However, we know that these pollutants have harmful effects on drinking water supplies, recreation, fisheries, and wildlife. A stormwater drainage basin map for the Ossining area is shown in Figure 45.

Non-point source pollution is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground. As the runoff moves, it picks up and carries away natural and human-made pollutants, finally depositing them into lakes, rivers, wetlands, coastal waters, and even our underground sources of drinking water. In addition, the Village of Ossining has stormwater outfalls that discharge directly into tributaries of the Hudson River and the Croton Bay. The stormwater is not pretreated. These pollutants include:

- Excess fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides from agricultural lands and residential areas.
- Oil, grease, and toxic chemicals from urban runoff and energy production.
- Sediment from improperly managed construction sites and forest lands, and eroding streambanks.
- Salt from irrigation or de-icing practices and acid drainage from abandoned mines.
- Bacteria and nutrients from pet wastes.

The adverse impacts of these pollutants include closed beaches, beach and shoreline litter, fish consumption bans, silt accumulation in marinas and shipping channels, habitat/wetland degradation, and stream bank erosion

New York State regulations require that regulated municipalities (including Ossining) obtain a permit from the Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) for the discharge of stormwater runoff into their surface waters. As a condition of the permit, municipalities must develop and implement a comprehensive stormwater management system that includes mandated programs and practices in the following categories:

- Public education and outreach on stormwater impacts.
- Public participation and involvement.
- Illicit discharge detection and elimination.
- Construction site stormwater runoff.
- Post-construction stormwater management in new development or redevelopment; and
- Pollution prevention for municipal operations.

One of the requirements of the State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewers (MS4s) is the preparation of an annual report that describes pollutants of concern and their sources and the steps being taken to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff.

- Some measures that Ossining takes to address stormwater management include:
- Conducting regular inspections of stormwater outfalls.
- Reviewing stormwater pollution prevention plans (SWPPPs) as part of construction project approvals.
- Maintenance of municipal facilities such as sweeping streets and parking lots, inspecting, and cleaning catch basins and avoiding the use of fertilizers or pesticides on parkland.

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Areas within Ossining that are prone to stormwater flooding include Water Street and Westerly Road due to their proximity to the Hudson River as well as properties adjacent to the Sing Sing Kill and Sparta Brook. These flood prone areas include FEMA regulated floodplain and floodway areas as illustrated on the flood insurance rate maps (FIRM Maps), effective September 28, 2007 (Figure 46). FEMA is currently in the process of updating the current effective maps. Advisory flood maps have been issued by FEMA in 2014 for information but are not yet effective. The floodplain areas, in many instances, has been elevated several feet above the current floodplain elevation and is used as source information by the Village in advance of adoption of the 2014 advisory maps.

Green Infrastructure

When implemented appropriately, green infrastructure can reduce runoff volume, peak flow and flow duration; improve groundwater recharge, protect water resources, reduce downstream flooding and property damage and provide water quality improvements. The NYSDEC Stormwater Management Design Manual provides guidelines for preservation of natural features and conservation design, reduction of impervious cover and infrastructure techniques for runoff reduction.

*Issues and Opportunities*

Address Stormwater Management and Flooding in the Downtown:

- Stormwater management issues in Ossining are caused by a variety of factors including:
- Common suburban activities. Pollutants can come from pet waste, pesticides and herbicides used in lawn care, and cleaners used in car washing, among other sources.
- Excessive use of impervious materials particularly for driveways and parking areas.
- Stormwater flows off of paved streets may become polluted if sand and salt treatments are not monitored properly.

As part of the Clean Water Act of 1972, the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) has implemented Phase II stormwater regulations directed at municipalities to control stormwater runoff discharges into waters of the United States "to the maximum extent practicable". The Village of Ossining has prepared an initial Phase II stormwater management program, mapped stormwater infrastructure and participates in the Westchester County's EPA Phase II Stormwater Regulations Public Education and Outreach Program funded through the NYS Environmental Protection Fund.

The Village should continue to facilitate the use of green infrastructure techniques, based on the NYSDEC Stormwater Management Design Manual. In this effort, as part of the upgrades to the Indian Brook Water Treatment Plant, the roof of the expansion is proposed to include green roof construction techniques.

*Objective and Strategies*

*Objective 7.3: Improve Stormwater Management*

**Strategy 7.3.1: Improve stormwater management regulations and use technology to inventory and upgrade stormwater problem areas.**

The Village should:

a. Formalize the site plan review process for lots of all sizes to include appropriate site planning and engineering review and approval sign-off of all system designs, as well as design calculations of storm flow and collection capacities.
b. Continue to implement the stormwater law that considers best management practices and requires mitigation efforts for proposed disturbances of greater than 2,500 square feet in size.

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c. Consider and require any needed upgrades on the current stormwater infrastructure during development approvals.
d. Limit impervious surfaces such as driveways, patios and pools on a given lot to minimize stormwater impacts for lots of all sizes. Regulations should encourage alternatives to impervious surfaces, such as pervious pavement, open pavers and gravel. Regulations should also include criteria and minimum standards for on-site retention and detention of stormwater and required connections to municipal collection systems.
e. Use technology to inventory and upgrade stormwater problem areas.
f. Continue to develop and operate a stormwater infrastructure monitoring and maintenance program to ensure that existing stormwater infrastructure is operating effectively.
g. Maintain a capital program for the prioritized rebuilding of catch basins, stabilizing steep slopes on public property and increasing the diameter of collection pipes as they are replaced. The infrastructure should not contribute unnecessary pollutants into the watershed due to clogging, erosion or malfunction.
h. Continue to develop and maintain stormwater infrastructure data management standards. The Village should continue its GIS-based stormwater infrastructure data collection system. Data is be collected and maintained in electronic form and geo-coded, enabling the data to be easily shared and incorporated into larger databases. Maintenance activities, such as daily log information for road sanding and salting activities, schedules for catch basin cleaning, and general maintenance and repair work programs, should be included.

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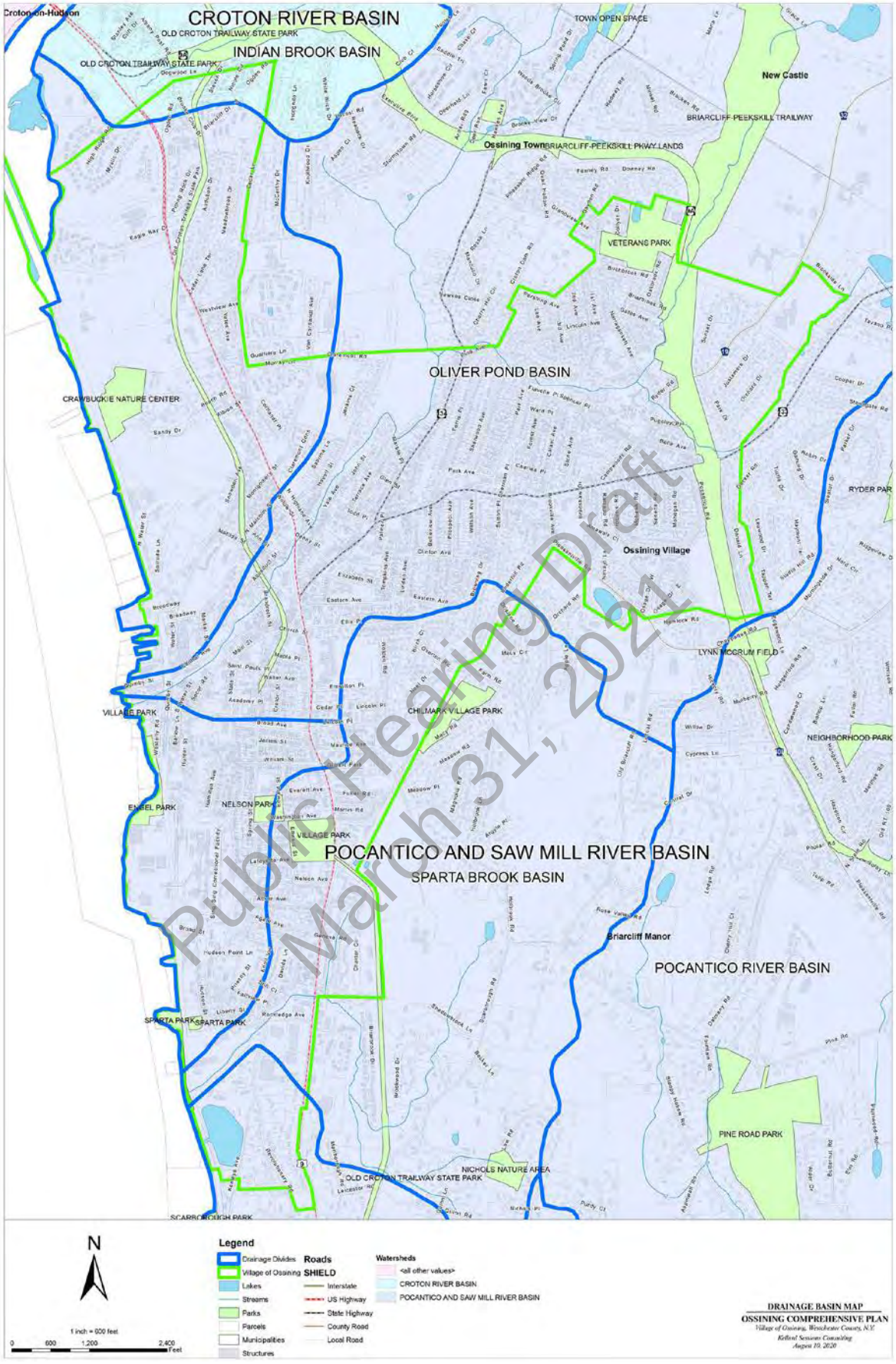


Figure 45: Stormwater Drainage Basins

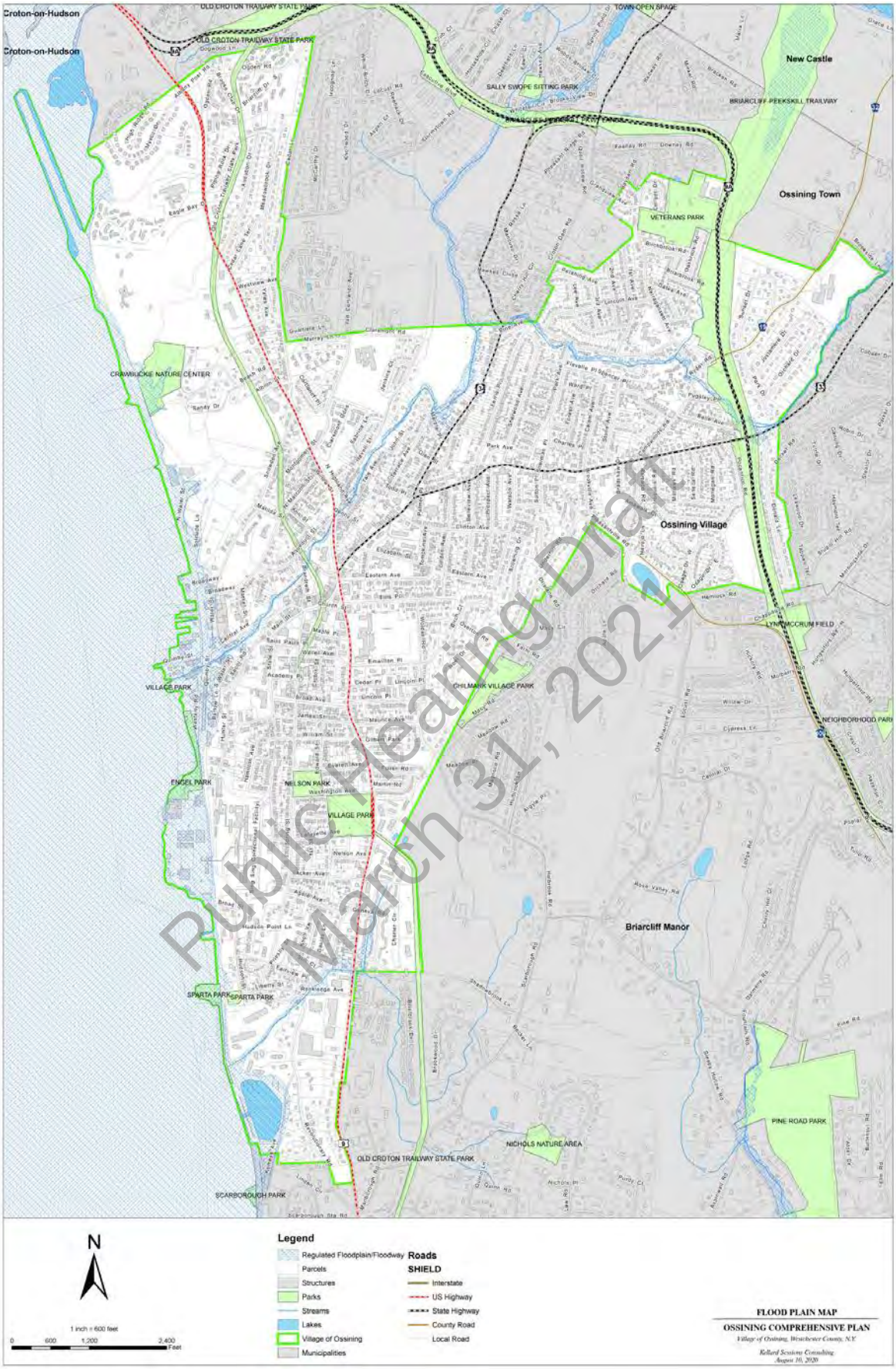


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Figure 46: FEMA Regulated Floodplain Map

### Solid Waste

Solid waste in Ossining is handled via the Charles Point Waste-To-Energy Facility located in Peekskill, NY. The Village of Ossining collected a total of approximately 27,110 tons of solid waste (recyclables and disposed), of which approximately 17,887 tons (66%) was recycled. There are no active municipal solid waste landfills in Westchester County.

The Ossining Department of Public Works provides twice-weekly removal services for trash and single stream (fully commingled) recycling in Ossining. Bulk materials are collected weekly, as well. Leaves, which must be in biodegradable bags, are collected by the Highway Department. Hazardous waste must be brought directly to the Westchester County Household Material Recovery Facility (H-MRF) in Valhalla. Once a year, Ossining organizes a village-wide cleanup day and provides pick-up bags and safety vests to volunteers.

### Electricity and Energy

Consolidated Edison, Inc. (Con Ed) provides electric power and natural gas to residents and commercial properties in this part of Westchester County. The Westchester service covers 925,000 people within the county's 450 square miles, 30,000 businesses and 350,000 housing units. There are 349,000 residential and commercial electric customers, and 232,000 residential and commercial gas customers.

Con Ed implemented a number of improvements in the wake of Super Storm Sandy in 2012, when Ossining experienced severe power outages due to downed trees during the storm. The utility installed taller and thicker poles and undertook a major tree clearing effort. In March of 2019, Con Ed imposed a moratorium on new gas services and upgrades / expansions to existing services.

In the event of a power outage, emergency power is provided at the Village's John-Paul Rodrigues Operations Center and Joseph G. Caputo Community Center via fuel-operated backup generators. Emergency backup power is not currently available at the Village Municipal Building.

Privately purchased fuel oil is delivered and stored in above or below-ground tanks. In-ground petroleum tanks with greater than 110-gallon capacity are regulated by the Westchester County Health Department.

*Issues and Opportunities*

Recent snowstorms in 2017 and 2018 indicated that Con Ed is susceptible to downed power lines, resulting in the extensive loss of power in Ossining. In coordination with utility companies as appropriate, the Village should explore ways to reduce the number, extent, and duration of outages, including resiliency measures and education of residents to encourage them to be proactive about tree trimming near power lines.

The Village, in 2015, replaced all existing streetlights and decorative streetscape lighting with LED fixtures.

The Village has identified three properties for consideration for inclusion in the New York Power Authority (NYPA) Westchester County Community Solar Partnership. The three locations identified include two Village-owned properties, the rooftops of the John-Paul Rodrigues Operations Center and the Joseph G. Caputo Community Center, and one MTA-owned property, the parking lot on the south portion of Westerly Road, adjacent to the railroad. This may potentially lead to a municipal solar installation as opposed to individual residential installations that presently exist in the Village.

Emergency power supply does not exist at the Village Municipal Building. Loss of power results in, among other things, a loss of internet access and associated communication via email and no backup source for

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the Indian Brook Water Treatment Plant SCADA system. Currently, battery backup systems have capacity to provide approximately 1 hour of use during an outage. The installation of an emergency generator provides what is known as "dirty power" and will also require an upgrade to the backup power supply which serves the communication system.

*Objectives and Strategies*

*Objective 7.4: Adopt backup solutions to improve power supply reliability and explore solar installation options.*

**Strategy 7.4.1: Consider a backup power supply for the Village Municipal Building.**
The Village should consider an emergency backup power supply for the Village Municipal Building. The installation of an emergency generator, however, provides what is known as "dirty power" and will also require an upgrade and reconfiguration to the backup power supply which serves the communication systems.

**Strategy 7.4.2: Consider a municipal solar installation.**
The Village has identified two Village owned properties for consideration for inclusion in the New York Power Authority (NYPA) Westchester County Community Solar Partnership. This may potentially lead to a municipal solar installation as opposed to individual residential installations that presently exist in the Village.

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Telecommunications

Verizon provides land-line telephone service to Westchester County. Both Verizon's FiOS service, which bundles internet, telephone and television over a fiber-optic communications network, and Cablevision's Lightpath / Optimum / Altice high-speed Internet service, are available throughout the county, including Ossining.

Cellular service is provided by various national carriers. Cell towers and transmitters are located on private, as well as government, property. The location and local government ability to regulate cell towers and antennas are subject to the Federal Telecommunications Act. As much as practicable, the Village promotes colocation of cellular facilities on existing infrastructure, such as on water towers.

*Issues and Opportunities*

New cell towers and similar infrastructure are unpopular due to visual impacts. The Village should continue to work with cellular providers to identify co-location opportunities for cellular infrastructure that minimize aesthetic impacts, and to explore the potential for alternative technology in place of

Cablevision's Optimum is currently the only source of telecommunication at Village-owned facilities. Optimum WiFi "hotspots" are available at the Operations Center and throughout the Village's downtown area. Verizon Fios, which could provide an alternative service to Optimum, is available but not active at the Municipal Building. Fios is locally available at the Community Center but not installed. There are no long-term plans to have FIOS available at the Operations Center.

The Indian Brook Water Treatment Plant and the Village's sanitary sewer pump station is only served by Optimum with no backup communication for its SCADA system.

Satellite telecommunication-communication services may present an alternative solution, however, current technology is too slow for the municipalities needs.

*Objective and Strategies*

*Objective 5: Consider improvements and backup services to telecommunication systems*
The Village should consider the following:

a. Facilitate the location of cellular infrastructure in appropriate locations.
b. Activate Verizon FIOS at the Municipal Building as a backup telecommunication source.
c. Install Verizon FIOS at the Community Center as a backup telecommunication source.
d. Consider long-term telecommunication backup service at the Operations Center and SCADA system.
e. Consider a cloud-based internet service to provide continued email and communication for municipal services.
f. Negotiate a contract with Verizon cell carrier to provide first responder and municipal employees with primary access to cell towers in the event of an outage.

## *Public Safety*

### Fire Protection

Officially established in May 4, 1812, the Ossining Fire Department (OFD) was the first volunteer fire department in Westchester County, and it is now one of the largest fire departments in the County that is run by volunteer members. The Fire Department responds to all fire emergencies and rescue-related issues. Total alarm responses in 2016 were 724. There are nine fire companies, housed in seven different locations throughout the Village, with approximately 460 active members (see Table 24).

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**Table 24: Fire houses locations, companies and main equipment.**

| LOCATION | FIRE HOUSE NAME / COMPANIES | MAIN EQUIPMENT |
|---|---|---|
| 21 State Street | Fire Headquarters /<br>- Senate Hook & Ladder Co. 1<br>- Fire Police | Ladder 41 & Rescue Squad 14 |
| 21 Snowden Avenue | Northside /<br>- Washington Hook & Ladder Co. 2<br>- Ossining Hose Company No.1 | Tower Ladder 42[24] & Engine 96 |
| 6 Waller Avenue | Cataract Hose Company No.2 | Engine 97 |
| 117 Main Street | Steamer Company No.1 | Engine 98 |
| 57 Central Avenue | Monitor Hose Company No.4 | Engine 99 |
| State St & Lafayette Ave | Holla Hose Company No.5 | Engine 100 |
| 3 Campwoods Road | Independent Hose Company No.6 | Engine 101 |

SOURCE: COMPREHENSIVE NEEDS ASSESSMENT SITE & FACILITIES ANALYSIS FOR FIREMATIC SERVICES, VILLAGE OF OSSINING, OSSINING FIRE DEPARTMENT, 2009.

[24] The Tower Ladder is currently housed at the Monitor Hose fire station (57 Central Avenue) for safety reasons.

The service area of the Ossining Fire Department includes the entire Village, and most of the unincorporated areas of the Town, with the exclusion of its southernmost portion. As highlighted in Figure 47, four of the seven fire houses are concentrated in the downtown area of the Village.

In 2007, the Village of Ossining commissioned a study to evaluate the needs of the fire department. The study[25], completed in 2009, was divided in two overall areas: (1) operational needs analysis; and, (2) physical facilities analysis. Among other things, the study included an evaluation of the seven existing fire stations to assess their condition and identify potential improvements. Common issues among the different fire houses were cramped bays, inadequate or unsafe egress pathways, and non-compliance with program requirements and codes. Some issues may stem from the fact that buildings like the Steamer and the Northside fire houses were built in the late 1800s/early 1900s.

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[25] "Comprehensive Needs Assessment Site & Facilities Analysis For Firematic Services", Village Of Ossining, Ossining Fire Department, 2009.

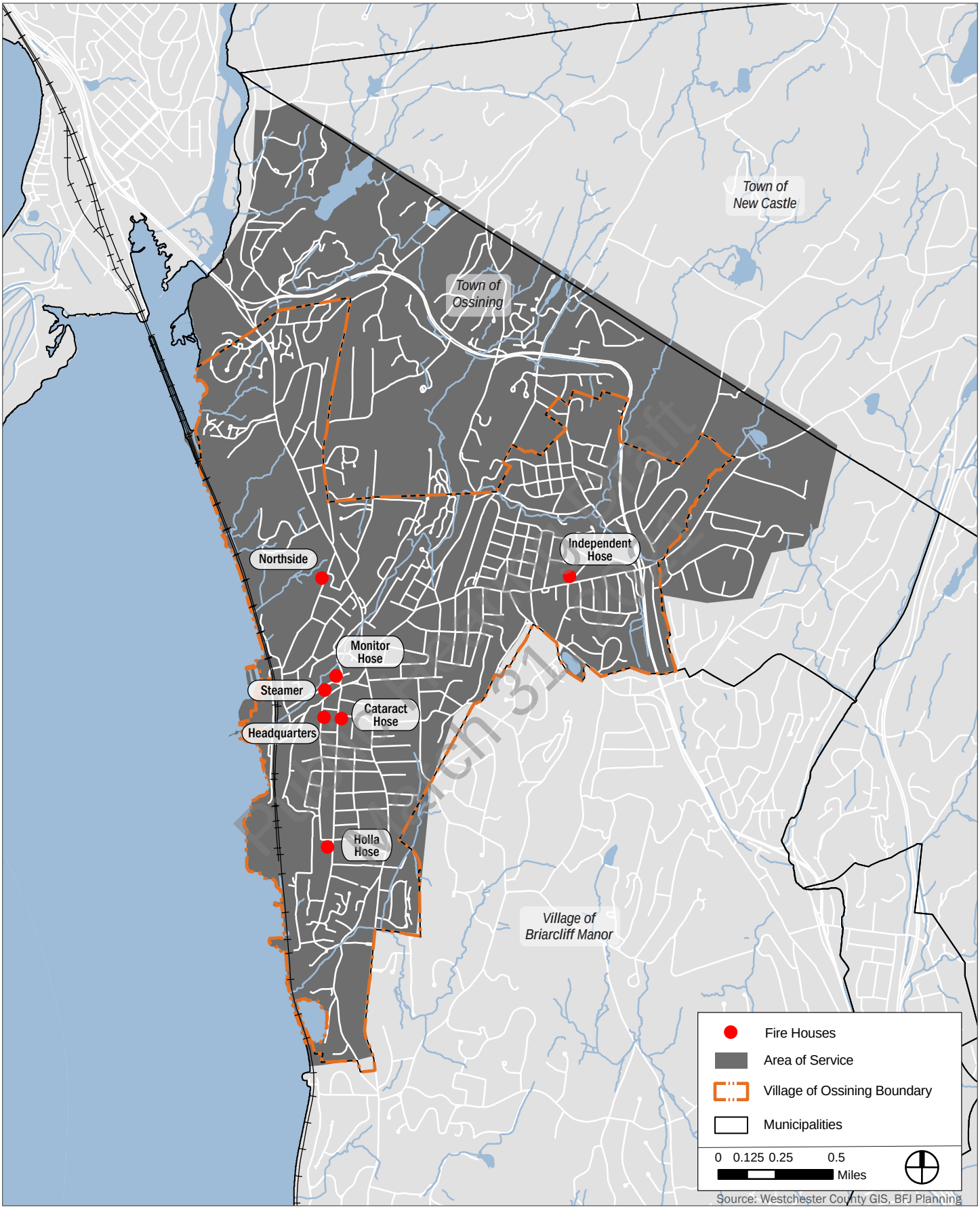


Figure 47: Ossining Fire District and Fire Houses

*Issues and Opportunities*

Fire protection, as well as police and ambulance services, are critical components of every municipality and should be evaluated regularly to ensure the community is well served in terms of public safety. As mentioned in the existing conditions, the Fire Department has undergone a comprehensive needs analysis, which was completed in 2009. The document is still valid today, as no significant projects or upgrades have been implemented in the last 10 years. While the needs assessment report highlights a number of issues that are not within the scope of this plan, there are key issues and opportunities that can be addressed as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

From an operational standpoint, the needs assessment report highlights how the concentration of apparatus in the downtown area "*saturate the Village Center*" (also evident from Figure 47), while the northern end of the fire district service area is the furthest from a fire station (although it is noted that the distance is not excessive by national standards).

Further recommended actions from the needs study included "(…) *finding a new home for Monitor Hose Company and a safe structure to house the ladder truck for Washington Hook and Ladder"* as high priorities. For the Northside fire station apparatus bays (house to the Washington Hook and Ladder Company), a concerning issue was that the existing slab may not be able to sustain the weight of modern ladder trucks (in addition to the existing tight apparatus bays). In the report, it was recommended not to use such bay slab to park modern fire trucks.

The opportunity to build a new fire house that would replace the inadequate Northside fire station would open up the possibility to consolidate the services currently offered from the Monitor Hose building downtown into the new Northside station. Currently, the Fire Department has temporarily relocated the Northside ladder truck to the Monitor Hose fire station at 57 Central Avenue for the above mentioned safety concerns. In addition to allowing for the reallocation of appropriate resources (i.e. the ladder truck) to the northern section of the service area, a new Northside station could be constructed in a way to house Monitor Hose Company as well. The Monitor Hose fire station is a Village-owned building that could open up for new uses in such a strategic and valuable location.

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*Objective and Strategies*

*Objective 7.6: Ensure Fire Stations can safely operate and efficiently serve the entirety of the Village, while considering consolidation opportunities.*

**Strategy 7.6.1: Review and update the 2009 needs assessment report.**
More than 10 years have passed since the fire department needs assessment report was completed. One recommendation is to update the report, while exploring potential for consolidations of fire stations. In particular, the concentration of fire houses in the downtown - where most buildings do not meet adequate standards for modern fire stations – should be considered for future consolidation options. Increasing the coverage on the outer areas of the Village is another improvement to consider.

**Strategy 7.6.2: Build a new Northside fire station.**
As stated in the 2009 assessment needs study, building a new, safe structure to house the ladder truck that serves the northern side of the Village/Town is high priority. A new Northside fire house should be built to meet modern standards and comply with current code regulations. The new fire station would also allow for better fire service coverage for the north portion of Ossining.

**Strategy 7.6.3: Relocate the Monitor Hose Company to the new Northside fire station.**
If a new Northside fire station is built, the Fire Department could consider relocating the Monitor Hose Company (currently housed at 57 Central Avenue, which is a Village-owned building) to the new Northside fire house. This would open up a downtown Village property, which could be reused for more productive uses, given the high-value central location of 57 Central Avenue.

### Police

The Ossining Police Department (OPD) is housed at the Birdsall-Fagan Police Court Facility at 86-88 Spring Street since 2001 (Figure 48). In 2014, through an inter-municipal agreement, Village and Town's police services were consolidated, and today the Ossining Police Department serves both the Village and the unincorporated areas of the Town of Ossining. The department staffs 61 police officers at this time, who ensure safety with a good response time. According to the police chief, crime rates as of early 2020 were decreasing.

Services provided by the Ossining Police Department include patrol (including bike patrol and on-foot control), special unit boat, and school resources. The department, often in collaboration with schools and organizations, conducts social work around schools and through events such as summer block parties, to provide education and resources to the community.

From conversations with the police chief, the Village-owned building on Spring Street is serving well the needs of the police department. Its central location within the Village downtown allows for efficient service in the denser areas of the Village. It is recognized that the existing office rooms and locker rooms are utilized at full capacity; however, there is no expectation to grow the number of staff, thus no renovations or capital plans for the current building are sought for the near future.

### Ambulance

The Ossining Volunteer Ambulance Corps (OVAC) provides emergency medical services to the Village of Ossining and surrounding municipalities. The OVAC area of service shares its boundary with the Ossining School District. As a results, it includes both the Village and the Town, as well as small portions New Castle, Briarcliff Manor and Yorktown. Since 2009, the ambulance service has been partially funded by the Town of Ossining; prior to that, the OVAC was entirely ran by volunteers and relied on insurance revenues only. The personnel represents a combination of career service staffs and volunteers, for a total of approximately 115 members. The number of OVAC personnel responding to calls within the Village is typically between 20 and 30 staff members.

OVAC operates from a centrally-located building within the Village of Ossining, at 8 Clinton Avenue (Figure 48). The OVAC owns the building, which includes a garage that accommodates up to three ambulance vehicles, as well as the parking lot located across Clinton Street. The central location within the Village allows the ambulance service to efficiently respond to emergency calls. This is also because around 75% of the emergency calls received by the OVAC come from within the Village. From an interview with the Chief /EMS Director, the number of calls have grown steadily in the last 10-15 years (in 2019, over 3,000 calls were handled by OVCA for its entire area of service). The steady increase in the number of calls may be due to an aging population, in addition to the presence of more assisted living structures.

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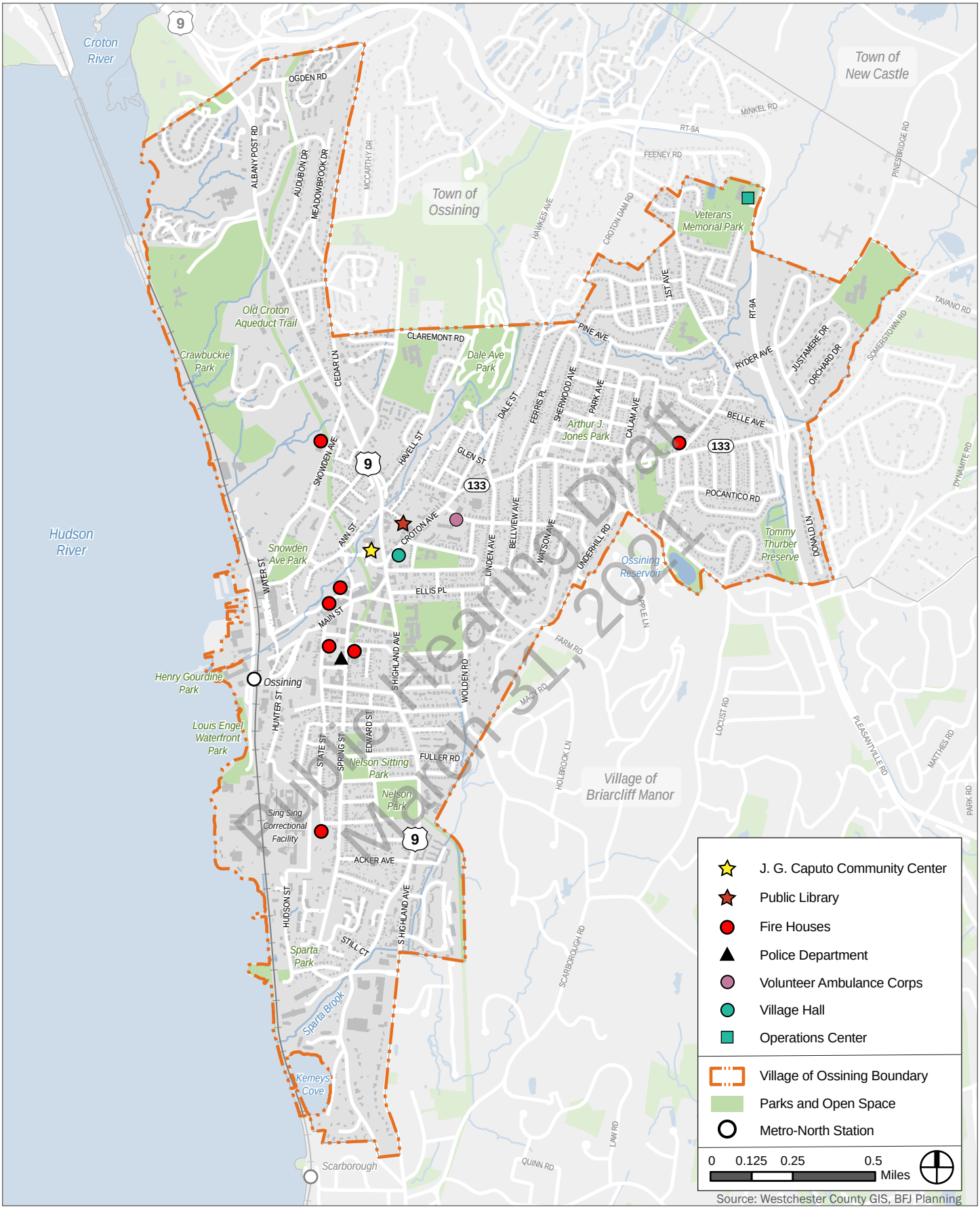


Figure 48: Community Facilities and Municipal Buildings

## *Municipal Facilities*

### Village Administration and Other Departments

In addition to the municipal building that hosts the Police Department (Birdsall-Fagan Police Court Facility at 86-88 Spring Street), most of the Village's various administrative services and departments are currently housed in three different locations (Figure 48):

- **Village Hall, 16 Croton Avenue**: Manager, Office of Emergency Management (under Village Manager's Office), Clerk, Corporation Counsel, Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program, Treasurer and Finance.
- **John Paul Rodrigues Ossining Operations Center, 101 Briarcliff-Peekskill Parkway (Route 9A),**: Building Department, Planning Department, Public Works.
- **Joseph G. Caputo Community Center, 95 Broadway:** Recreation and Parks Department (addressed in the next section on "Community Facilities").

While Village Hall is centrally located and easily accessible via bus, car and on foot, the Operations Center on Route 9A is removed from the Village Center and accessible only by car. Planning Board, Board of Architectural Review, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Historic Preservation Commission meetings, which are often open to the public, are held at the Operation Center.

*Issues and Opportunities*

Village staff from the Planning Department expressed the desire to use these multi-purpose rooms for Planning Board meetings, to make them more accessible to the public. The Operations Center along Route 9A, where Planning Board meetings are currently held, is removed from the Village Center and not accessible via public transit or on foot.

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*Community Facilities*

## Schools

The Village of Ossining is located within the Ossining Union Free School District, an area encompassing 11 square miles predominantly within the Town of Ossining, with smaller portions located in the Towns of New Castle and Yorktown. The District includes six facilities serving Pre-K to grade 12 with a rated capacity of 4,669 as of 2016[26] and 5,010 students enrolled in SY 2019-2020. Ossining High School has a significant overcrowding issue with inadequate facility space for more than a third of students. The Roosevelt Education Center serving 5th graders is also overcrowded. Students within the Village of Ossining attend all six facilities; there are no facilities serving communities at the sub-district level.

**Table 25: Ossining Union Free School District Facilities, Enrollment and Rated Capacity**

| School | Grades | Year of Construction | Rated Capacity (2016) | 2019-2020 Enrollment * | 2030-2031 Projected Enrollment** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Park Early Childhood | Pre-K & K | 1939 | 681 | 597 | 549 |
| Brookside School | 1-2 | 1955 | 800 | 684 | 659 |
| Claremont School | 3-4 | 1955 | 682 | 715 | 657 |
| Anne M. Dorner Middle School | 6-8 | 1965 | 1,187 | 1,077 | 991 |
| Ossining High School | 9-12 | 1929 | 1,130 | 1,560 | 1,507 |
| Roosevelt Education Center | 5 | 1922 | 189 | 377 | 330 |

Sources: Ossining Union Free School District, District Records, 2016, Obtained from the Ossining Union Free School District 2016 Series A School District Serial Bonds Statement, 11/1/2016. (*) Ossining Union Free School District 2019 Budget. (**) Forecasted by Urbanomics based on recent enrollment trends.

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[26] Urbanomics did not receive school facility capacity numbers from the District.

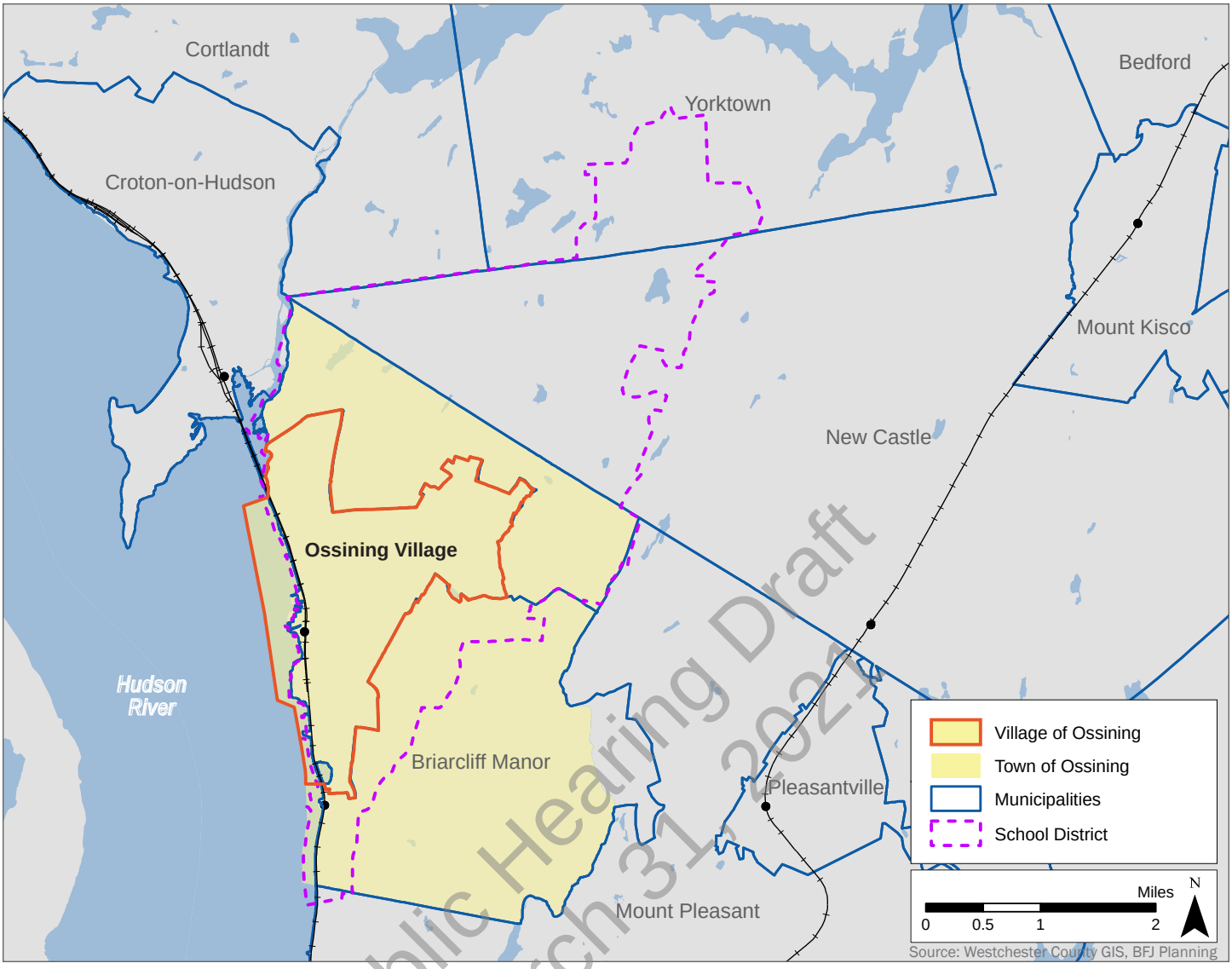


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Figure 49: Ossining School District Boundaries

**Figure 50: Village of Ossining Public Schools**

*Enrollment Trends*

A demographic and enrollment analysis prepared in November 2019 by Western Suffolk BOCES at the request of the District forecasted that the District was currently in a year of peak-enrollment with the number of students expected to decline by 2.9 percent (-138 students) through 2024 even as communities within the District add 765 new housing units in the form of apartments and condominiums. Western Suffolk BOCES noted that enrollment has remained stable for the last four years as births in the District had recently declined.

**Table 26: Ossining Union Free School District Enrollment Change by Grade Configuration**

| Grade Configuration | Students Gained/Lost | |
|---|---|---|
| | 2009 – 2019 Actual | 2019 – 2024 Projected |
| K – 5 | +186 (9.5 %) | -63 (-2.9 %) |
| 6 – 8 | +216 (24.8 %) | -49 (-4.5 %) |
| 9 – 12 | +189 (13.6 %) | -26 (-1.6 %) |
| Total | +591 (14.0 %) | -138 (-2.9 %) |

Source: Ossining Union Free School District, Demographic and Enrollment Analysis, 11/13/2019.

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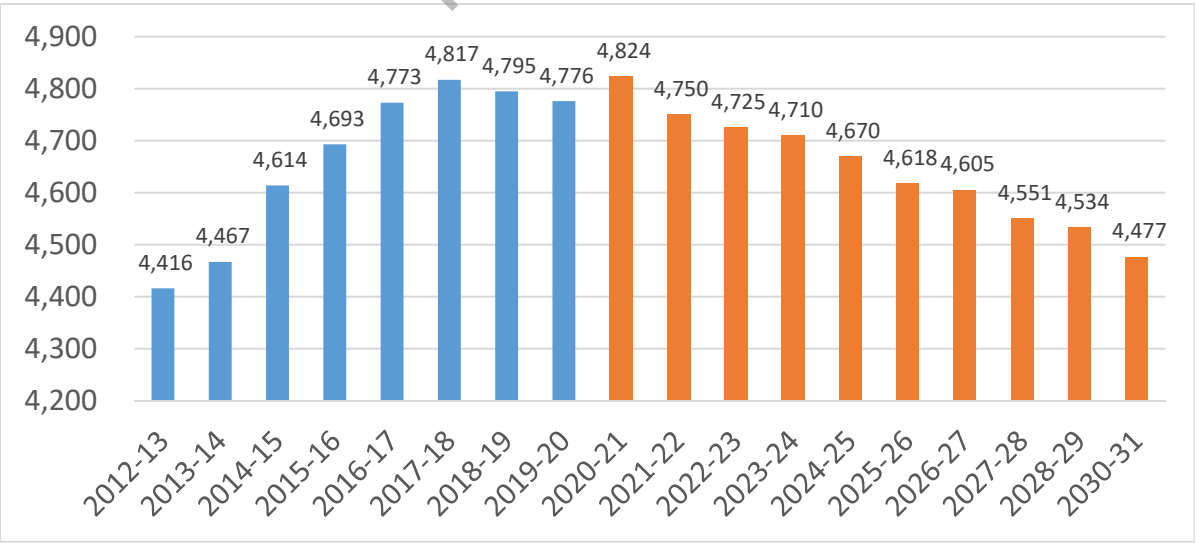
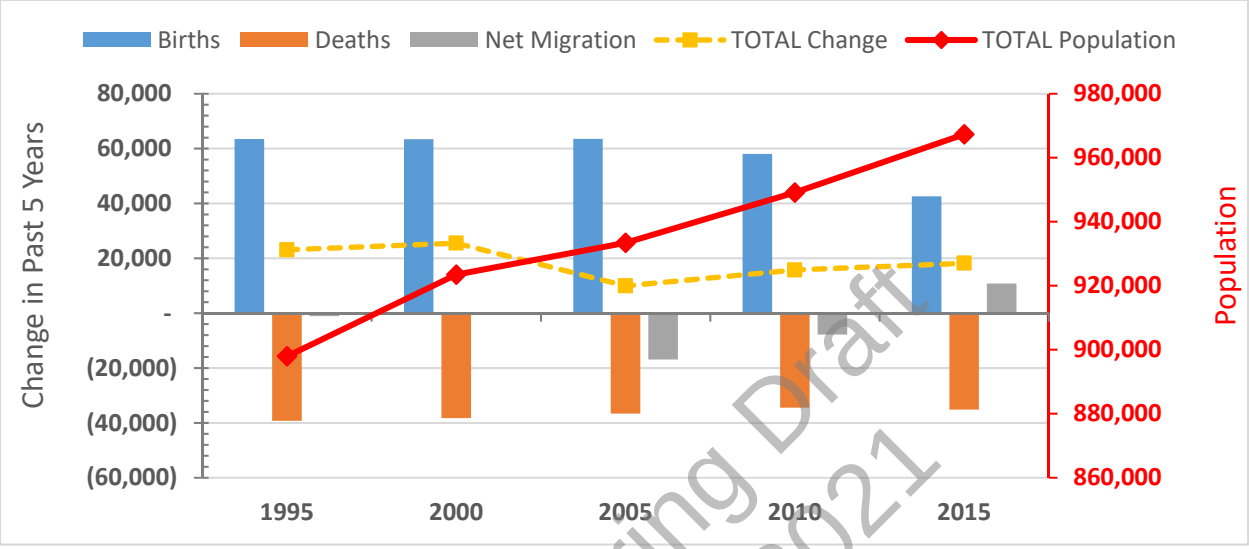
An independent analysis of enrollment trends by Urbanomics produced similar findings to the Western Suffolk BOCES study, but provided a longer 10-year projection which found facility capacity constraints to drop in the near-term, reaching 2013 levels by 2030. Enrollment was projected to decline through 2030-31, declining by 347 students (-7.2%) from 2020 to 2030. Elementary level enrollment in grades K-4 would drop by 7.6 percent (-161 students), middle school enrollment for grades 5-8 would fall by 7.5 percent (-106 students) while high school enrollment, where capacity constraints are most intense, would be reduced by 5.4 percent (-85 students).

**Chart 12: Ossining Union Free School District Historic and Projected Enrollment, SY 2012-13 to 2030-31**



In terms of population growth, net migration, not births, has driven residential growth in recent years within Westchester County. As the County's birthrate declined, the population continued to expand as new households moved into the County. The result of increased net migration is an aging population and a reduction in future countywide school enrollment.

**Chart 13: Westchester County Historic Population Trends, 1995-2015**




Sources: US Census Bureau, 1990-2010 Decennial Censuses, 2015 American Community Survey; New York State Department of Health, Vital Statistics of New York State; & New York Metropolitan Transportation Council.

The decline in birth rates is not unique to the District. National birth rates have continued to decline since 2007 and are currently at a record low (59.1 births per 1,000 females aged 15–44 in 2017). Similar trends are underway in New York State and Westchester County (both 57.1 births per 1,000 females in 2017). Births within the School District continue to decline with 2016 being notable for having the fewest number of births since 2002. In 2017 births were down nearly 20 percent form a 20 year peak of 542 births. The decline in District births is slightly greater than that of County which saw an 18.5 percent reduction since 2003.

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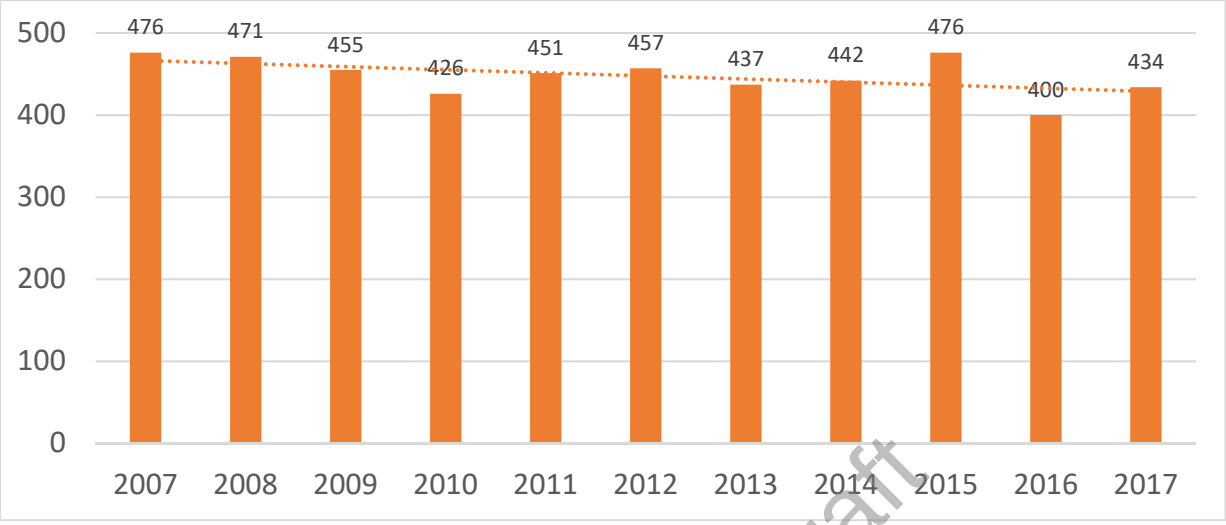
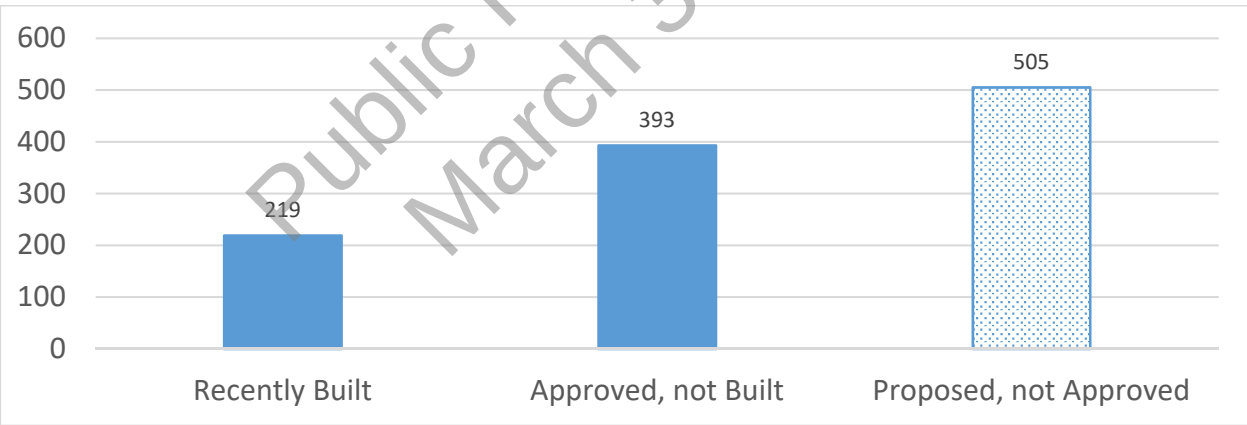
**Chart 14: Ossining Union Free School District Resident Births, 2007-2017**




Source: New York State Department of Health, Vital Statistics of New York State.

Recent development activity within the District is largely in line with past trends and unlikely to significantly impact student capacity in the District in the near-term. Since 2015, 219 units were constructed including 188 units at Harbor Square and 31 units at 147-155 Main Street.[27] There are another 393 units approved but not completed in the District as well as 505 units proposed but not approved. It should be noted that those projects lacking key development approvals are unlikely to be built at proposed sizing.

**Chart 15: Development Activity in the District**




Sources: Planning Department Staff of the Villages of Ossining and Briarcliff Manor as well as Towns of Ossining, New Castle, and Yorktown.

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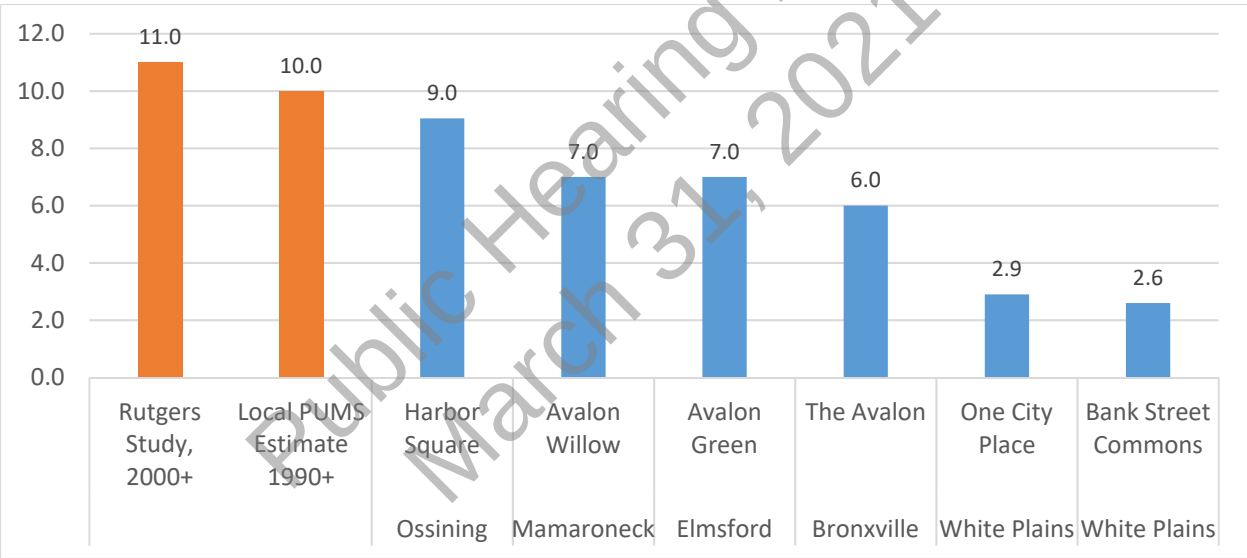
[27] During the month of April 2020, Urbanomics contacted all municipalities within the boundary of the District to obtain development activity information. Responses from municipal planning staff confirmed that residential development activity either recently completed or in the pipeline is located only in areas of the District containing the Town of Ossining and Village of Ossining. Just one project, Parth Knolls (53 units), was located in the Town but outside of the Village.

*Fiscal Impacts of Multifamily Development*

With reduced enrollment expected in the long-term future, Urbanomics evaluated the fiscal impacts to the School District, Village of Ossining and Town of Ossining of additional multifamily housing development in the Village.

Shown in Chart 16, the analysis evaluated Public School Child (PSC) generation rates of recent large multifamily buildings in the region and determined that relatively few school children reside in new apartment buildings within the broader area. Census data and Rutgers surveys generally reported slightly higher rates of school children than recent building surveys, from 10-11 PSC per 100 units in a typical new development. Building surveys of recent development in the County reported 2.6-9.0 PSC per 100 apartment units in buildings with 100-500 units. Harbor Square in Ossining has very large unit sizes and a mix of incomes which contributed to a sizeable number of PSC for the region. Fewer PSC were reported in the largest buildings located in White Plains. It is notable that according to the 2018 Who Lives in New Jersey Housing Study by the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University, attached single family townhomes built in the State of New Jersey after 2000 produced more children than multifamily apartment units.

**Chart 16: Public School Children Generated per 100 Units of Multifamily Housing**

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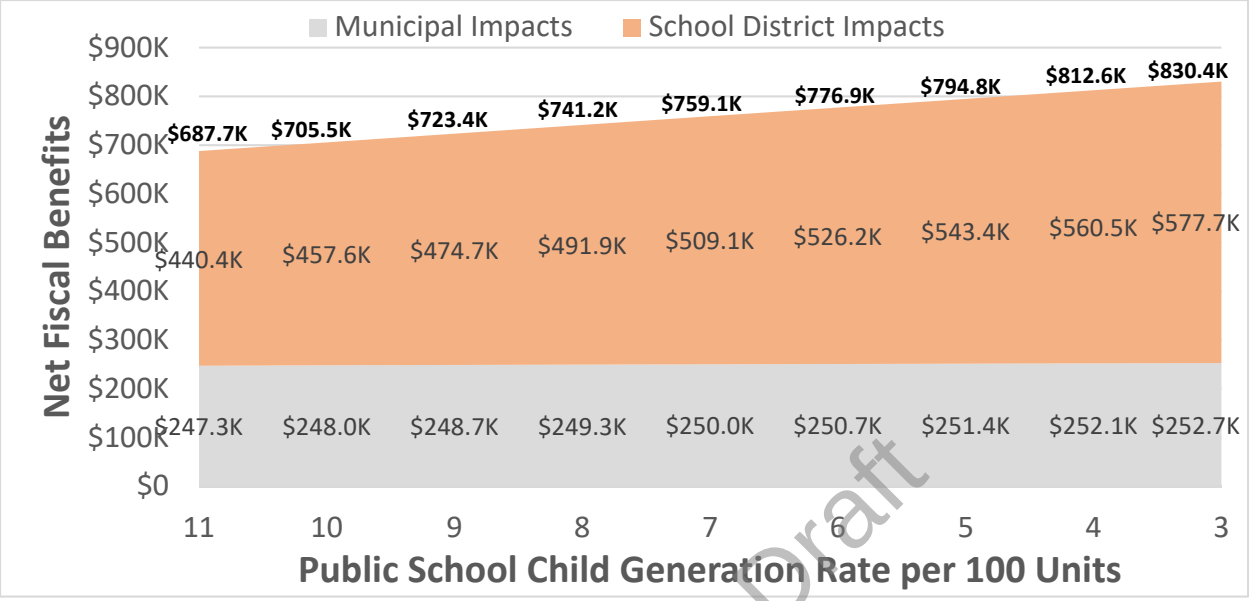
Sources: Rutgers Study: Who Lives in NJ Housing, 11/2018; PUMS Estimate: US Census Bureau, ACS 2014-2018, Ossining-Cortlandt-Peekskill-Mount Pleasant PUMA; Information for Harbor Square provided by Ossining Union Free School District, 9/3/2020. Hidden Cove Memo Response to Letter from Ossining UFSD to Ossining Planning Board, June 2018, (Ossining, Mamaroneck, Elmsford, and Bronxville Surveys); Avalon Bay Harrison, FEIS, September 2017, (White Plains Surveys).

Working with Ossining Town Assessor, Fernando Gonzalez, Urbanomics evaluated the fiscal impacts of a 100-unit multifamily development in the Village using a range of area child generation rates (see Chart 17). The results showed substantial net fiscal benefits were expected for Village of Ossining and School District under all PSC generation rates. Based on a conservative estimate of benefits derived entirely from property taxes, roughly $690K-$830K in net tax benefits were expected per 100 units. The School District was expected to receive $440k-$580k in net benefits while the Village, Town and County would retain roughly $250k in net benefits.

**Chart 17: Net Fiscal Municipal & Districts Impacts from a Newly Constructed 100-Unit Apartment Building**




Sources: Ossining Union Free School District 2020-2021 Budget, Village of Ossining Fiscal Year 2020 Adopted Budget, Town of Ossining 2020 Adopted Budget, Town of Ossining Assessors Office, & Urbanomics.

Based on fiscal modeling of hypothetical multifamily housing, it would be a net benefit to the Village, Town and School District to obtain additional tax revenue from some appropriately scaled additional multifamily residential development. District enrollment forecasts suggest that the District's current capacity concerns will subside in the near-term and the impact from an additional 100 units of multifamily housing would not strain the District's resources but rather provide additional net revenue. It is noteworthy that the school district does not receive the largest share of tax revenue from Village households. This is indicative of the low property values and relatively high tax rates and in the Village, which are among the highest in Westchester County.

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### Recreational Facilities and Parks

The Recreation and Parks Department is located at 95 Broadway, within the Joseph G. Caputo Community Center complex. The department manages a large inventory of fields and facilities both within the Village and the Town of Ossining. Due to an inter-municipal agreement between the Village and the Town, recreational facilities and programs are shared and coordinated across the two municipalities. This way, Village and Town residents can enjoy a greater number of recreational options. However, each municipality maintains their own parks.

Between the Village and the Town, there are roughly 150 acres of public parkland, among which approximately 50 acres are within the Village. Table 27 provides an overview of the existing parks (Village and Town), while Figure 51 highlights parks and open space within the Village, including institutional open space and cemeteries. One example of Town-owned park that is located within the boundary of the Village is Louis Engel Park by the waterfront.

**Table 27: Village and Town Parks, with size.**

| VILLAGE PARKS | SIZE (Acres) |
|---|---|
| Veterans Park | 15.5 |
| Crawbuckie Preserve | 9.4 |
| Nelson Park | 8.2 |
| Snowden Park | 5.6 |
| Richard Wishnie | 5.1 |
| Nelson Sitting Park | 2.6 |
| Sparta Park | 1.7 |
| Henry Gourdine | 0.7 |
| Arthur Jones Park (Triangle) | 0.5 |
| Dale Avenue | 0.4 |
| William Street Tot Lot | 0.1 |

| TOWN PARKS | SIZE (Acres) |
|---|---|
| Ryder Park | 53.9 |
| Cedar Lane | 25.5 |
| Gerlach | 9.0 |
| Louis Engel Waterfront | 8.9 |
| Buck Johnson | 1.8 |
| Sally Swope Sitting | tbd |

SOURCE: OSSINING RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD (RAB) 2019-2020 PARK REVIEW.

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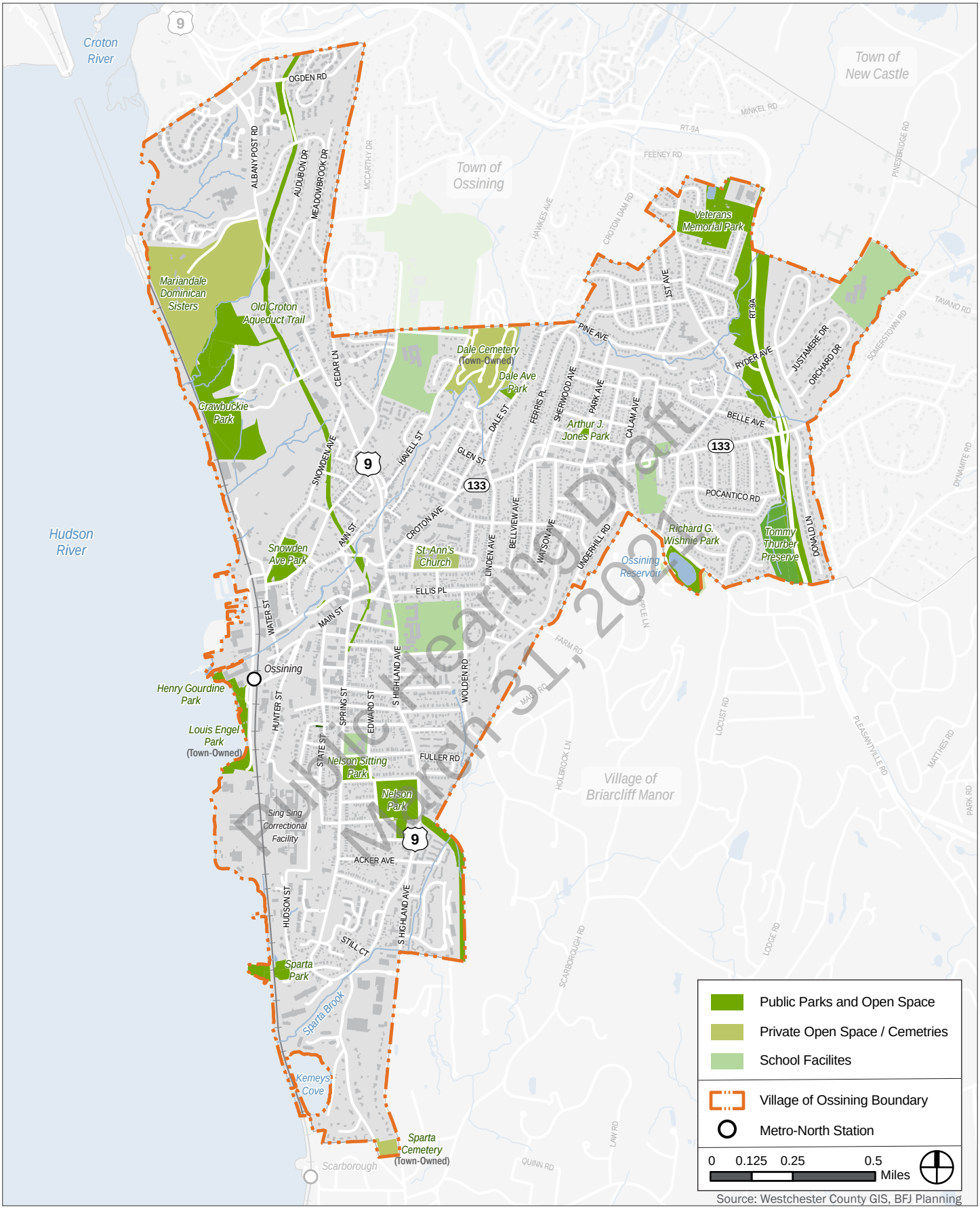
The Recreation Advisory Board (RAB) is an advisory group to the Village Board of Trustees on recreation-related issues and opportunities. As recreation resources are shared between the Village and the Town, the RAB is composed by a total of ten representatives from both municipalities (five members are appointed by the Village Board of Trustees, and five by the Town Supervisor). Between 2019 and 2020, members of the RAB, Village and Town Sponsors, and Parks Superintendent have visited most Ossining's parks to assess the status of existing recreational facilities and understand issues and opportunities for each different park. Furthermore, the survey allows to identify priorities for future capital projects and create a long term vision for Ossining's parks upgrades.

Information included in the parks review suggests that parks are generally in good shape and provide multiple recreation facilities, although there is variability in the level of maintenance. Some park locations are more heavily used than others; for example, Nelson Park is one of the most utilized parks, given its central location and variety of activities provided. The report also started to identify potential improvements for primary parks, which would include improving utilization, increasing public soccer access, and improving lighting. Safety issues and maintenance opportunities were identified as well.

From the Comprehensive Plan public survey, over 46% of respondents stated that the existing parks and recreation facilities meet their needs, while over 26% responded that the existing parks and recreational facilities could be improved.




Source: Westchester County GIS, BFJ Planning

**Figure 51: Village of Ossining Parks and Open Space**

### Public Library

The Ossining Public Library, located at 53 Croton Ave, is an example of green municipal building that set a good precedent for the Village. The library, constructed in 2007, was accredited by the U.S. Green Buildings Council's as a LEED Certified building. The sustainable features incorporated in the design included energy efficient design, responsibly sourced construction materials, and water use reduction features.

With over 231,000 total visit in the last fiscal year, the Ossining Public Library represents a heavily utilized cultural facility for the community, serving both the Village and the Town residents. Approximately 17,000 people have an active library card as of July 2020. Generally, families with small children and senior citizens are the most frequent users of the library.

The programs and services offered by the library target different age groups, from children to teenagers to adults. The programs/activities offered include but are not limited to: instructional programs (e.g. crafts), Spanish classes, ESL, computer lessons, cooking classes and TASC/GED program preparation, as well as more leisurely activities such as concerts. Yearly programs attendance is approximately 35,000 people. In addition to the library books' collections (including e-books), the library offers 45 computers for public usage, and free Wi-Fi. While no expansion or renovation plans are sought for the library at this time, a space planning study may be considered in the longer term, to accommodate more programs and activities.

Located in a central area of the Village, along one of the major corridors and close to municipal buildings, the Ossining library can be easily accessed on foot, by bus, and by car. Parking can be limited at times, especially when many programs run at the same time.

### Community Center

The Joseph G. Caputo Community Center is another important community asset that is heavily utilized by the Village residents. Open seven days a week, its facilities include: indoor pool, gym, game room, number of other multipurpose/program rooms. The building also hosts the Recreation and Parks Department, the Local Youth Bureau, and the Ossining Urban Park Visitors Center; the latter includes exhibits on the Sing Sing Prison Museum and the Old Croton Aqueduct.

A number of activities and programs are held regularly at the community center. These programs include: daily senior nutrition program, pre-school and after-school programs, and swim/fitness programs. Afternoon and evening activities draw a lot of people to the community center, often causing parking shortage. The after-school program alone counts around 120 children, from 3-6 PM on weekdays.

The Village of Ossining Local Youth Bureau is a recently added youth support program that offers services for the youth population of Ossining. Local youth bureaus are overseen by the County, which distributes state funding and approves development programs. The Youth Bureau offers supplemental services that fill the gaps of services provided by the schools, the library and the recreation center.

## *Natural Resources and Open Space*

Natural resources and open space provide the Village with important ecological services such as groundwater recharge, erosion control and habitats preservation. Additionally, they create aesthetic value, counteract climate change and offer opportunities for nature tourism. Identified below are some of these resources that the Village should recognize and protect.

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### Open Space

In addition to the parks identified in the Community Facilities section, Ossining has some private and institutional open space and preserves (Figure 51), which includes: Crawbuckie Nature Preserve (also a Village park), Old Croton Aqueduct Trail (New York State owned), Sparta and Dale Cemetery (both Town-owned), Tommy Thurber Preserve, and Mariandale Dominican Sisters property – just to name some of the larger open space areas within the Village boundary. Additional valuable green space within Ossining also includes other natural environments such as unutilized green spaces along valleys and streams, which are critical corridors for wildlife.

The Crawbuckie Nature Preserve, located on steep slopes overlooking the Hudson River and the Palisades, is the major open space in the Village. Crawbuckie is recognized as a nature preserve, as well as a Village park. Nature watching and hiking are the primary activities at the Crawbuckie Preserve, where visitors can observe heritage trees that are three/four feet in diameter, and enjoy views of the river. Another smaller preserve called Tommy Thurber is located on the southeastern boundary of the Village, next to the Route 9-A Parkway. This area is recognized as a State freshwater wetland and includes mostly forested/shrub wetland. It is owned by the Nature Conservancy nonprofit organization.

### Steep Slopes

Ossining is known for its hilly topography that allows for beautiful views of the Hudson River, but also limits development footprint and makes connections challenging. Protecting steep slopes from development (in particular slopes above 25 percent) serves to successfully maintain ecosystems and watersheds, as well as reducing risk of erosion and landslides. Steep sloped areas include most of the land directly east of the railroad, but also areas along the Sing Sing Kill ravine (Figure 52).

The Village's Zoning Code contains provisions for construction in steep sloped areas in Chapter 270.34. In particular, the Code prohibits "construction on or regrading of areas measuring over 500 square feet with steep slopes equal to or greater than 25%", unless specific conditions are met (subject to Planning Board approval). When development is approved (typically on areas with less than a 25% slope), construction practices have to follow applicable provisions of the Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control Law (Chapter 227).

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### Water Resources

The Hudson River is the predominant natural feature of Ossining. Its presence affects ecological systems, habitats and flooding patterns. The Hudson is a tidal estuary, which means shoreline depths vary from 2 to 9 feet and tides average 3 feet (although spring and autumn equinoxes cause higher tides of as much as 5 feet), and saline water mixes with freshwater. As a tidal river, the Hudson supports a biologically rich environment and provides important habitats for spawning and breeding grounds.

The two most significant free-flow streams in Ossining are the Sing Sing Kill and the Sparta Brook, which both flow into the Hudson River and feature a short tidal inlet before turning into purely freshwater upstream. Located just south of the Sparta Brook inlet, there is a tidal wetland area called Kemeys Cove, with no freshwater input and connected to the Hudson via railroad underpass. In 2016, there was a grant proposal to restore a previously existing connection between Sparta Brook and Kemeys Cove, as well as to eliminate the first barrier to fish migration upstream.

The water quality of the Sing Sing Kill has the potential for decline, primarily due to pollution sources such as erosion and sediment transport and potential illicit discharges from residential and commercial properties along the Sing Sing Kill. In an effort to reduce these pollutants and the potential adverse

effect to water quality, the Village continues to require that all proposed developments implement an erosion and sediment control plan as part of their construction plan. In 2016, the Village completed the Sing Sing Kill Greenway project which rehabilitated, relined and protected an existing sanitary sewer main line originally installed within the bed and banks of the Sing Sing Kill to further protect the water quality of the stream.

The Ossining Reservoir, located in the southeastern corner of the Village, not far from the above mentioned Tommy Thurber Preserve, is included within Richard Wishnie Village Park (formerly known ar Reservoir Park). The pond is no longer used as a reservoir but it offers opportunities for passive recreation and wildlife/bird watching.

As of October 2020, the Village is in the process of developing a local wetlands ordinance, which would be incorporated into the Village Code, and become effective in January 2021. Wetlands are ecosystems that are covered by water, either permanently or seasonally. Wetlands provide many benefits to the community and the environment, including but not limited to recharging groundwater and aquifers, controlling flooding and stormwater runoff, and providing unique habitats and breeding grounds for fish and wildlife. The wetlands ordinance will serve to "control, protect, preserve, conserve and regulate the use of wetlands within the Village" and to ensure benefits provided by the wetlands are preserved. Ossining's wetlands areas are concentrated along the Hudson River, and they include the previously mentioned Kemeys Cove, but also northern portions of the river shoreline and the Sing Sing Kill estuary (Figure 53).

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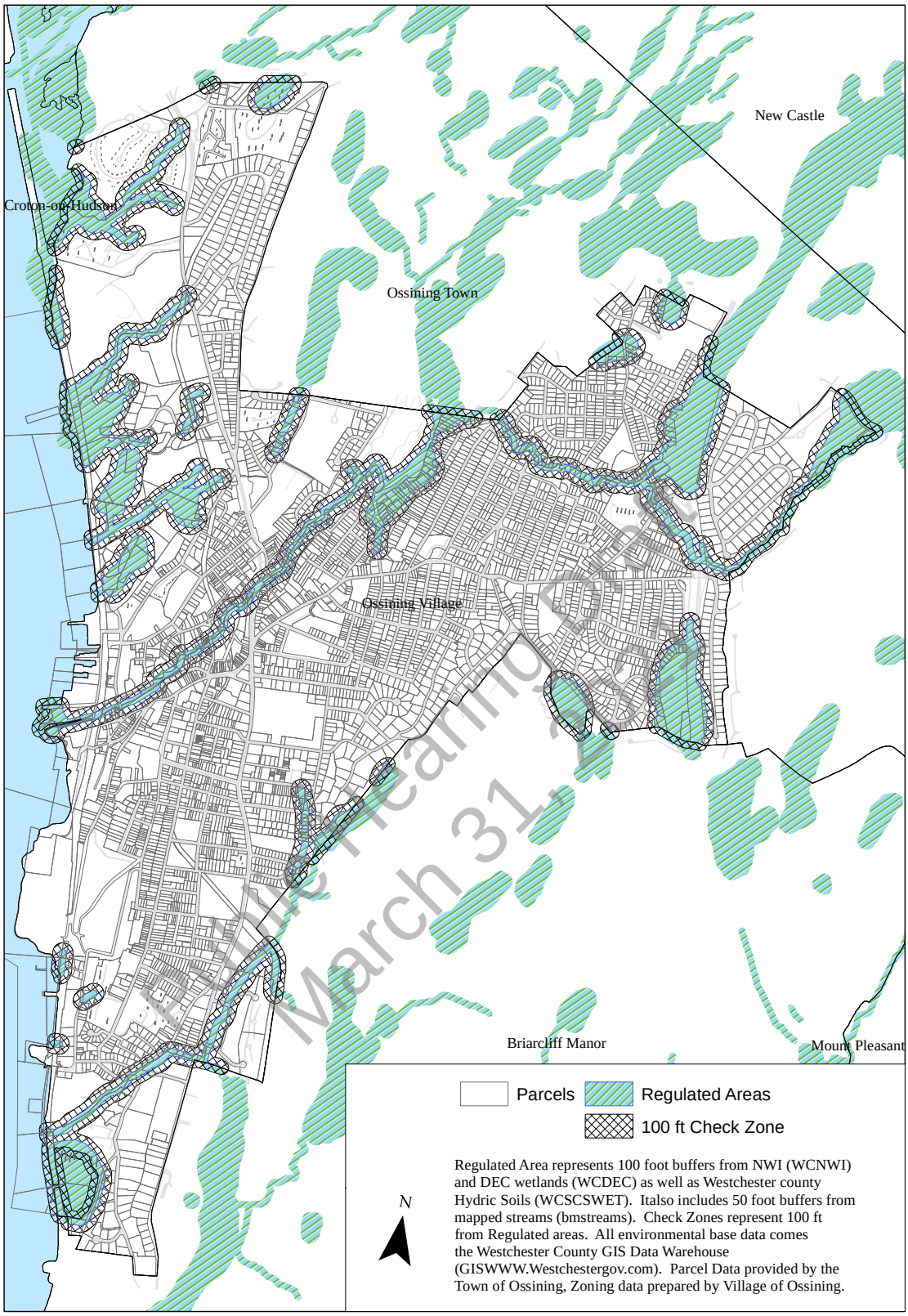
**Figure 52: Steep Slopes and Major Water Resources**

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# Village of Ossining
# Wetlands Regulated Parcels

Approved 11/17/2020
By the Village of Ossing
Board of Trustees

Figure 53: Village of Ossining Wetlands Ordinance Map

## Additional Issues and Opportunities

### *Municipal Buildings and Community Facilities Improvements*

Buildings

The 2009 Comprehensive Plan recommended implementing green building standards for new municipal buildings or renovations. While new construction or major renovations of municipal facilities are unlikely to happen in the near future, there are opportunities to incorporate sustainability features in some Village-owned buildings. Solar panels, for example, could be installed on municipal buildings' and community facilities' rooftops. State grants and/or incentives are often available for municipalities that decide to invest in clean energy sources. Sustainability upgrades could be coordinated with other maintenance projects that Village properties may need to undergo in the near future.

The public library and the community center are busy facilities that provide critical services for the Ossining community. Both facilities provide multi-purpose rooms that are used by the community and local organizations/entities for events, trainings, and recurrent meetings. From discussions with Village staff, it emerged that these multi-purpose rooms are in high-demand; opportunities to expand or increase the number of these rooms should be looked at in the future. For example, the community center may need to reconfigure spaces that currently host the Ossining Visitor Center, as the Sing Sing Prison Museum exhibit will likely be relocated at the Sing Sing Museum Preview Center when it opens to the public; this would be an opportunity to rethink such space and improve its utilization. In general, there seem to be demand for a centrally-located space within the Village that could host public meetings, whether it is a new space or space carved out from the community center and/or the library.

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Services

Public library services and programs attract a large number of Ossining residents. Opportunities for services improvements may include more online classes and programs, especially after the successful experience in the expanded virtual opportunities offered due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the library represents a critical educational space that offers in-person services to people coming from different backgrounds, representing a fundamental asset particularly for children and teenagers that come from disadvantaged socio-economic situations. The library's in-person classes and programs, as well as public access to computers and Wi-Fi, should remain priorities in the future. An expanded broadband service at the library could also serve to provide Wi-Fi in the immediate surroundings of the library, which may help especially in the short term, given the uncertainties related to indoor spaces and COVID-19 spread.

Further opportunities to add non-traditional services to the library should be considered, as Village residents' needs often go beyond educational and cultural opportunities, and tap more into the social services sphere. The public library director has indicated that some users go to the library to seek help on a variety of social service related needs. While the library currently does not have staff to provide such services, creative ways to add a part-time (at minimum) social worker should be explored through collaborations with nonprofits and universities.

Services targeting the youth population should also be supported. In particular, the recently developed Local Youth Bureau, based out the Department of Recreation and Parks, provides the opportunity to expand services dedicated to the youth population, potentially bridging the gaps in education and development opportunities across the various Ossining's communities.  Recreation and Parks

Access to parks and recreation options is one of the most important role of community facilities. There are several criteria to measure the amount of parkland available to the community. One of these criteria is residents' proximity to a park; ideally, all Village residents should live in close proximity (about 15 minute walk) from a park. The inter-municipal agreement between the Village and the Town allows all Ossining residents to enjoy both municipalities' parks, expanding the options especially for residents living on the northeast fringes of the Village.

The RAB parks assessment report represents a first step to creating an open space and recreation plan for the Village, which was recommended in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. The Department of Recreation and Parks has the opportunity to build upon such comprehensive report, and prioritize upgrades for parks that need it the most. Updating the RAB report should be done regularly, to properly assess needs for upgrades and opportunities for improvements. Furthermore, the study should assess if safe pedestrian access to parks is provided and signage is adequate, in addition to assessing the presence of wheelchair-accessible features and opportunities for ADA improvements.

In terms of recreational activities, it is important to ensure community needs are met. In particular, it is critical to recognize that families with lower incomes typically rely on public recreation facilities more than medium/high income families. Monitoring fields usage and maintenance status, as well as the availability of diverse programs and facilities, should be done while considering ways to bridge the divide between different communities' socio-economic statuses. For example, the Department of Recreation and Parks should continue seeking space for fields that are more in demand among the growing immigrant population. Nonetheless, other patterns within the Ossining community - such as an aging population trend - should be taken into account while planning for new programs and activities.

While the main objective of the Department of Recreation and Parks is to fix and upgrade the existing parks to good standards, opportunities to expand open space in the Village should still be considered. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan recognized the difficulty to purchase Village's land to create new parks, given the high price of land, but new development may present an opportunity to create public benefits agreements in which new publicly accessible open space is created at the developer's expenses. Additionally, the Village should investigate the feasibility of creating pocket parks, for example on vacant land. Lastly, opportunities for creating community gardens within existing parks - or on vacant lots – should be explored as a way to provide urban agriculture options to residents that do not own land suitable to cultivation.

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*Open Space and Natural Resources*

There are many opportunities to proactively preserve Ossining's natural resources. The New York State Climate Smart Communities' Certification Actions webpage[28], for example, lists specific actions that municipalities can implement to protect natural resources. The Climate Smart Communities (CSC) is a State program that helps local governments take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate (the Village is a Climate Smart Community member). Opportunities that the Village should consider to ensure preservation of environmentally-sensitive areas and habitats include creating a natural resources inventory and develop a local forestry or tree planting program.

[28] https://climatesmart.ny.gov/actions-certification/actions/

## Additional Objectives and Strategies

*Objective 7.7: Consider incorporating sustainable design, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources within Village-owned properties.*

Strategy 7.7.1: Consider developing a sustainability plan for the Village.
The 2009 Comprehensive Plan recommended that the Village "should be a model of Green Building." The integration of energy conservation measures were recommended for new/renovated municipal buildings. Although this strategy was not implemented in the last 10 years (also due to lack of new municipal buildings/renovations), a sustainability strategy for the Village should start with compiling a sustainability plan or check-list for sustainability improvements for their building stock, management practices, and vehicle fleet. There are also potential sustainable landscape strategies that could be incorporated in a Village plan. These may include phytoremediation to remediate contamination of brownfield sites using plants such as poplars that absorb heavy metals and could reduce costs of conventional remediation.

Strategy 7.7.2: Explore options to become eligible for State grants for sustainable design, energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, such as participating in the NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Program.
A growing number of municipalities across Westchester County and New York State have been designated "Clean Energy Communities" for their commitment to be more energy efficient and improve the environment. NYSERDA has identified ten high-impact actions that municipalities can take to reduce their footprint and save money.[29] Participating in these type of programs would open up State funding opportunities to "green" municipal buildings and community facilities.

Strategy 7.7.3: Consider the installation of solar panels on Village-owned buildings and properties where feasible. Parking facilities could also incorporate electric vehicles (EV) charging stations in the future.
The Village should study the feasibility of installing solar panels on its properties, by starting with an inventory of facilities where rooftops may allow for the installation of solar panels. In the near future, there may be instances when municipal buildings or community facilities need maintenance or replacement works on their rooftops. One example is the public library. In those instances, grants for solar panel installation should be sought on time to install the solar equipment while performing the maintenance/upgrade works on the roof.

Additionally, new parking facilities could include electric vehicles (EV) charging stations, as electric vehicles ownership is likely to go up in the future. The Village should closely monitor state and federal grants availability for EV charging installations, to leverage potential funding opportunities.

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[29] Clean Energy Community Program, NYSERDA
https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All%20Programs/Programs/Clean%20Energy%20Communities

*Objective 7.8: Explore ways to efficiently use centrally-located municipal buildings and community facilities while provide for improved public access.*

Strategy 7.8.1: Explore ways to provide more multi-purpose meeting spaces that are centrally-located within the Village.

Strategy 7.8.2: Study different options for the reuse of the Ossining Visitor Center space / Sing Sing Prison Museum exhibit space at the community center, if it were to become available.

Strategy 7.8.3: Consider improvements to the public library parking lot and sidewalk area.
While the entrance of the public library building provides an inviting environment for pedestrians, the entrance to the parking lot yields a more car-driven streetscape. Conflicts between pedestrians and traffic traveling in and out of the parking lot may arise. Additionally, more streetscape could be added to provide a better experience for library users; for example, some benches and tables could be added in the grassy areas, perhaps to be used as outdoor studying space. A bench could also be added by the bus stop.

*Objective 7.9: Explore creative ways to provide expanded services at the public library.*

Strategy 7.9.1: Ensure sufficient broadband service to meet increased online programs and services.
Work with ISP provider to ensure sufficient coverage for all library services for the medium-term, also considering the likely increase in online activities demand for the future. An improved broadband connection would also enable Wi-Fi coverage in the vicinities of the public library. The library therefore could serve as a "hotspot" for residents to connect to the internet for free.

Strategy 7.9.2: Consider adding social service personnel at the public library through partnerships and/or collaborations with universities.
In order to meet social service needs of library patrons, the Village should consider creative ways to provide such critical services. Other communities have explored collaborations between social work university departments and public libraries through placing social work students into internship positions at public libraries. Similar collaborations and partnerships should be explored for the Ossining Public Library.

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*Objective 7.10: Ensure all community members have access to parks and recreational facilities that meet their needs.*

Strategy 7.10.1: Fix and upgrade existing parks and recreational facilities to good standards.
Fixing existing safety concerns in the parks should be prioritized, while also ensuring the necessary steps are taken to maintain parks and their facilities up to good standards.

Strategy 7.10.2: Ensure the RAB report is regularly updated to identify needs for upgrades or new recreational fields/facilities.
The Department of Recreation and Parks should monitor the status of its recreational facilities and respond to community requests, in case there is a growing demand for certain activities. For example, the addition of programs or facilities for the growing "active senior" community should be explored, as well as the addition of fields that are more in demand among the growing immigrant population. Carving out some space for Village's community gardens may also be explored, given the increasing interest in urban agriculture.

Furthermore, the report could expand its scope and look at accessibility to the parks. An additional survey could focus on the surroundings of the various parks, to identify potentially dangerous situations for pedestrians, missing crosswalks and signage. ADA accessibility features and opportunities for wheelchair-access improvements should also be investigated.

Strategy 7.10.3: Consider further consolidation of Department of Recreation and Parks services between the Village and the Town.

For recreation and parks services, the current inter-municipal agreement between the Village and the Town involves sharing recreational facilities between the two municipalities. Maintenance of the parks, instead, is provided by the respective municipality. A fully consolidated department, which shares staff and maintenance responsibilities, may result in better outcomes in terms of parks and facilities upkeeping, also in light of the fact that the Recreation Advisory Board represents both Village and Town parties.

*Objective 7.11: Ensure open space and natural resources are recognized and protected.*

Strategy 7.11.1: Develop an open space and natural resources inventory for the Village.

Given that the Village is in the initial phase of creating an open space inventory, consider expanding the report to incorporate other natural resources and in particular water resources, fish and wildlife habitats, green corridors along valleys and streams, and other environmentally-sensitive natural assets. The inventory and mapping of natural resources would be instrumental to identify and address potential threats to ecosystems and natural areas, such as sources of water pollution and erosion-prone soils.

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# Chapter 8: Housing and Neighborhood Preservation

## Goal

Maintain diversity of the housing stock in the entire Village, preserve neighborhood quality, and continue programs to help with housing affordability to preserve housing resources for people who live and work in the Village.

## Introduction

The Housing and Neighborhood Preservation chapter provides a set of principles to accommodate a growing population, encourage investment in Ossining, encourage renovation and rehabilitation of existing housing units, and address overcrowding while limiting displacement of current residents. A key objective of this plan is to focus on preserving housing for people who live and work in the Village, avoiding housing displacement and increasing housing opportunities for existing residents. This objective also avoids any significant density increases in the Village and preserves all of the existing single-family zoning. A related objective is to remove existing barriers in the Zoning Code that prevent property owners from improving and renovating buildings without significant challenges. Strategies to remove these barriers are included in Chapter 3: Land Use and Zoning.

Ossining's diverse population is consistently recognized by community members as one of the Village's greatest assets and enhancements of quality of life. Ossining provides opportunities for a wide range of housing types, from suburban single-family homes, to mixed-income, multi-family development in the walkable downtown area, and near the train station. One of the key housing objectives is to strike an appropriate balance between bolstering the condition of the existing housing stock, especially affordable housing, and attracting new investment in the Village. This balance of new market-rate housing to help support the tax base while enhancing affordable housing strategies is critical to ensuring that the Village can continue to expand the services that it provides to residents, without displacing members of the community with unaffordable housing costs. Ensuring the availability of affordable housing options within Ossining would also preserve and encourage a diverse social fabric within the community.

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## Existing Conditions

### *Housing Trends*

#### Existing Housing Mix

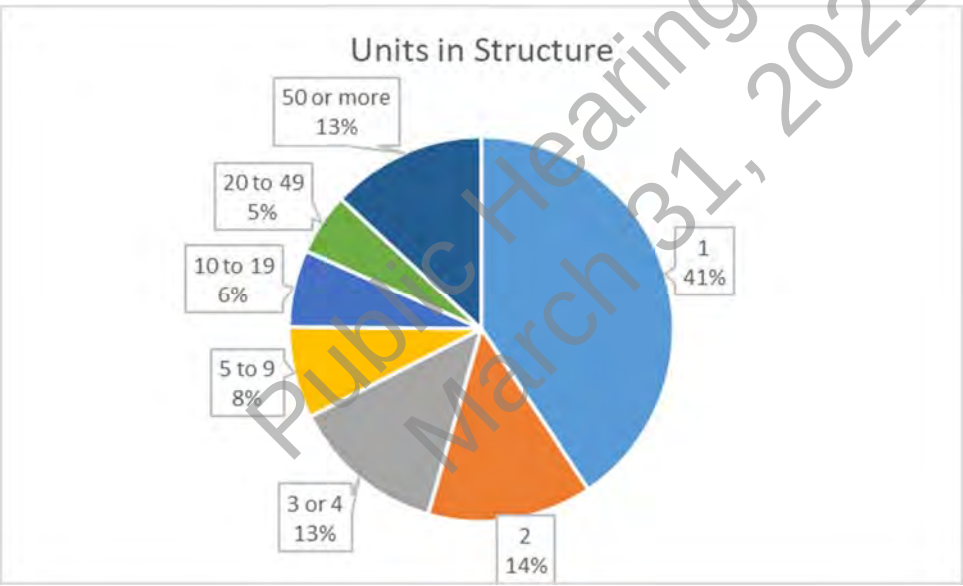
Although Ossining has a walkable downtown core, the vast majority of residential parcels are single-family homes (Table 28). This parcel-level analysis helps provide a sense of the overall character of Ossining's neighborhoods—the Village is generally known for its single-family neighborhoods. However, it is also notable that a substantial portion of residential parcels are also two- and three-family residential buildings, while the Village has relatively few multi-family parcels.

**Table 28: Residential Uses, Number of Parcels**

| Residential Uses | Number of Parcels |
|---|---|
| Single Family Residential | 2551 |
| Two Family Residential | 756 |
| Three Family Residential | 176 |
| Multi-Family Residential | 151 |
| Condominium | 172 |
| Mixed Use-Downtown Row Type | 16 |
| Mixed Use | 5 |
| Residential - Multi-Purpose/Multi-Structure/Multi-Residence | 21 |
| **Total Residential Parcels** | **3848** |

There are a total of 9,143 housing units in the Village. When looking at the total number of housing units in the Village, a plurality of 41% are in single-family homes (Chart 18). Units in two-family are the next most common, at 14%, with units in three- and four-family homes and units in large multi-family buildings of 50 units or more close behind at 13%.

**Chart 18: Units in Structure, 2018**




Source: 2018 ACS, 5-year estimates

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## Household Size and Median Income by Tenure

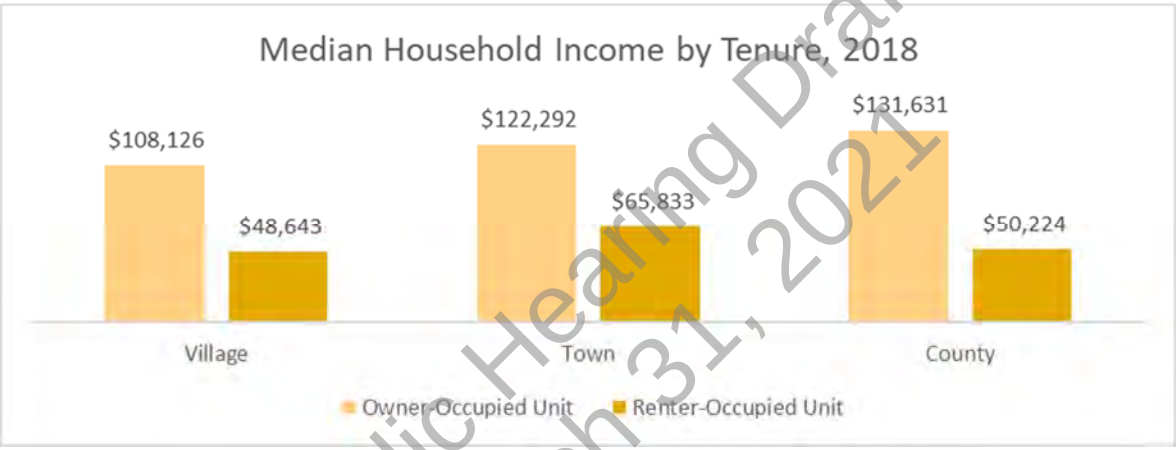
In the Village, renter-occupied units have a slightly greater average household size than owner-occupied units (Table 29). The County and the Town, instead, reflect the opposite pattern with owner-occupied units, which have a greater household size that renter-occupied. In the Village, however, numbers are similar between the two categories (household size of 2.73 for owner-occupied, and 2.81 for renter-occupied).

**Table 29: Average Household Size by Tenure, 2018**

| | Village | Town | County |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Owner-occupied units** | 2.73 | 2.38 | 2.81 |
| **Renter-occupied units** | 2.81 | 2.12 | 2.56 |

While analyzing the median household income by tenure, a consistent pattern emerge across the three geographies considered (Village of Ossining, Town and Westchester County). Median household income for owner-occupied units is generally double the income of households that rent their unit (Chart 19). For the Village, renter-occupied average median household income is $48,643, while owner-occupied average median household income is $108,126 in 2018.

**Chart 19: Median Household Income by Tenure, 2018**

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## Median Unit Value and Monthly Rent

In 2018, the median unit value for owner-occupied units, calculated as the average median value of the five Village Census Tracts, was $361,424 (Chart 20). This value is much lower than the Town's ($454,700) and the County's ($528,300).

**Chart 20: Median Unit Value for Owner-Occupied Units, 2018**

The average monthly rent in the Village, in 2018, was $1,563. This cost is slightly higher than the County's average ($1,493) but slightly lower than the Town's ($1,625). From the 2017 Housing Studies report by Kevin Dwarka (Housing Ossining Technical Paper #1, Quantitative Analysis), which compared housing data from 2000 and 2015, the median monthly rent in 2015 was about $50 higher than the County's. In 2018, the difference between the two is approximately $70. Another trend highlighted by the Dwarka Housing study is the Village median rent increase of approximately 60% between 2000 and 2015, which is consistent with the County's trend. This data also indicates a 5% increase in rent each year.

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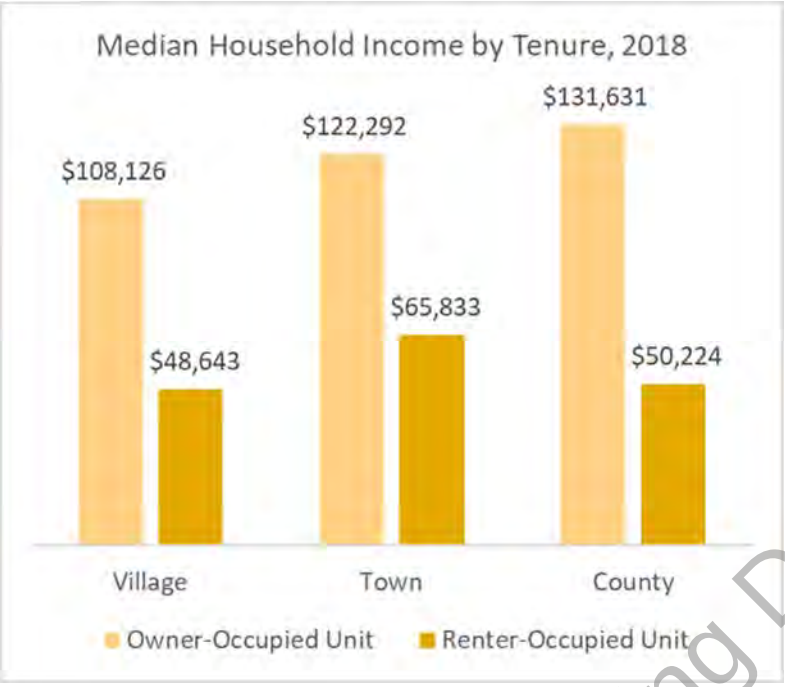
### Housing cost burden

In 2018, almost 60% of renter-occupied households in the Village experienced rent burden, with 59.5% of the total renters paying more than 30% of their household income on rent. The percentage of rent-burdened households is higher than the Town of Ossining (48.3%) and Westchester County (55.4%). Meanwhile, 51.6% of owner-occupied units (with a mortgage) pay more than 30% of household income on housing costs. Housing cost burden is not only an issue for renters. Although median household incomes are substantially higher for households in owner-occupied units (Chart 21), renters and owners alike can experience housing cost burden in the Village of Ossining.

**Chart 21: Median Household Income by Tenure, 2018**

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### Overcrowding

The number of occupants per room can be used to estimate overcrowding issues in Ossining. In 2018, 5.1% of the Village households had between 1.01 and 1.50 occupants per room, which is considered a situation of "moderate overcrowding" as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development[30] (Chart 22). 1.5% of units had more than 1.51 occupants per room, which is classified as "severe overcrowding." Compared to the County, the Village has almost double the percentage of moderately overcrowded units (5.1% vs 2.7%), whereas it shares a similar percentage in the category of severely overcrowded units (1.5% vs 1.4%).

The various degrees of overcrowding change depending on tenure (i.e., renter-occupied versus owner-occupied). 2018 data indicate a more concerning situation for renter-occupied units in terms of overcrowding (Chart 23). In particular, 2.5% of renter-occupied units in the Village have 2.01 or more occupants per room, which is substantially higher than the County's (0.6%).

[30] "Measuring Overcrowding in Housing", US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, 2007.

**Chart 22: Housing Units with More than 1 Occupant per Room, 2018.**

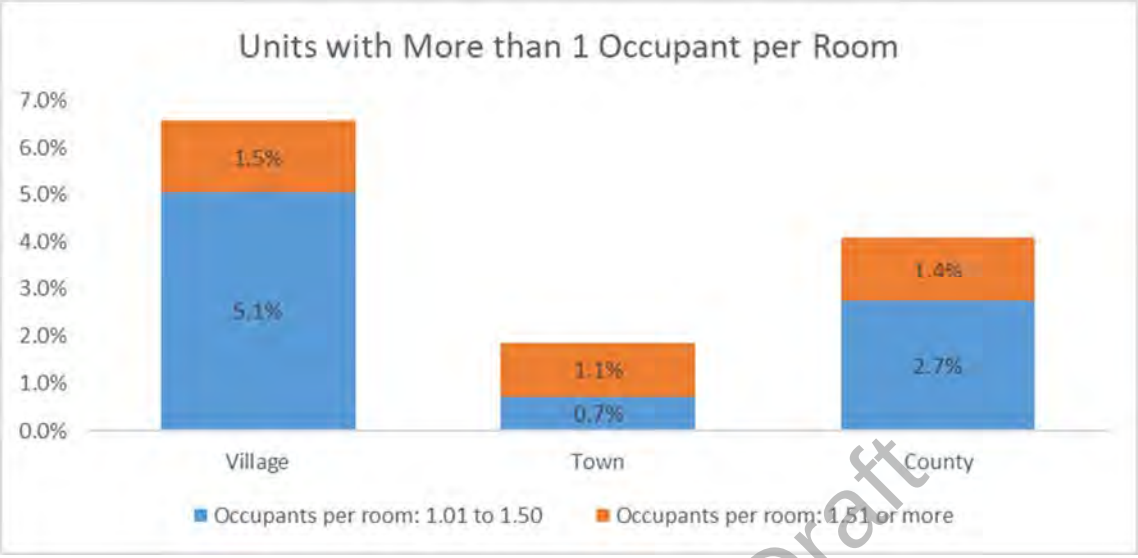
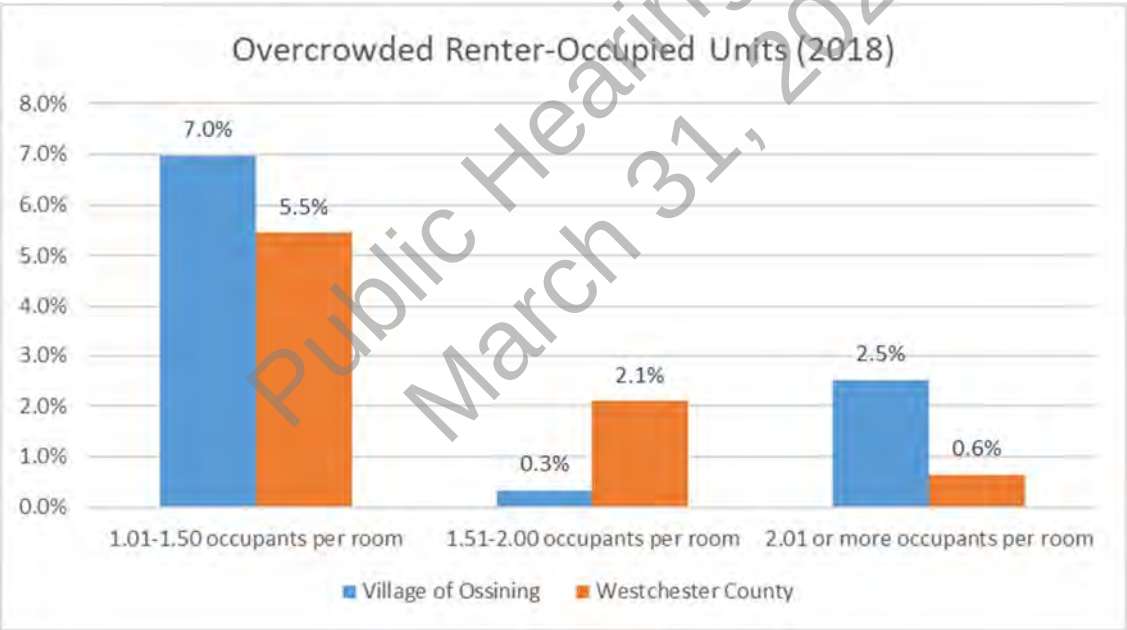



**Chart 23: Overcrowding in Renter-Occupied Units (2018)**

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## Housing Market in 2020

The housing market in Westchester County has taken an unanticipated turn during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has caused a recession that would typically result in a soft real estate market. However, suburban housing markets have been strong through 2020, in part resultant from relocations from New York City. Apartment vacancies doubled in downtown Manhattan during the summer of 2020 as demand shifts to suburban communities that offer more space and privacy. This trend has been fueled by a combination of factors. One factor is that low interest rates have made home purchases more

attractive for those looking to move from urban centers to the suburbs. Another is the ability for many office workers to work from home. Remote work has been a necessity during the pandemic, accelerating a trend that has been predicted to expand in the coming years.

Given the desire for greater space and privacy, this recent trend is more likely to be felt in Ossining's single-family neighborhoods, rather than in higher density areas like downtown, the T-zones, and the waterfront. This represents a shift away from medium-term trends that saw greater demand in walkable, transit-oriented, more traditional downtown areas. While one of Ossining's strengths is its walkable downtown, the current trend toward single-family homes is worth monitoring. If this trend proves to be sustainable, the Village will have to adapt by attracting telecommuters and those looking to establish home offices. It is unclear how long the current shift in demand in Westchester County will last. The housing market was strong before the pandemic hit, which may indicate that the robust market could continue. Ossining has an advantage as a community with distinct neighborhood typologies. The Village can attract residents seeking single-family homes located in close proximity to a walkable downtown center.

One key will be to respond to changing work patterns as well. Many residents are adapting to remote work during the pandemic. Although some workers will return to the office at some point, the trend toward work from home may also continue to grow. Home offices are allowed as of right as accessory uses in Ossining, but with limitations. Expanding the ability for small businesses to operate from home offices is one option to respond to changing real estate market trends in 2020.

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*Recent and planned residential development*

The Village of Ossining has seen two recent major residential developments completed, with a third potentially on the horizon. Harbor Square, completed in 2017, is a 188-unit rental development located on the Hudson River waterfront and within a short walk to the Metro-North station. 147 Main Street provides 31 apartments in the Village's downtown core. The former DPW site is located just east of the waterfront area. The village issued an RFQ to select a developer in 2019 and has since selected Wilder-Balter Partners as the development partner for the site. The planning and public outreach process for this project, which is projected to provide 110 residential units, is underway. Two other projects, Hidden Cove and Hudson Steppe are projected to provide a total of 326 units between them. While both projects have been approved, they are currently on hold.

**Table 30: Recent and Planned Residential Development**

| Project | # of Units | Status |
|---|---|---|
| **Hidden Cove** | 137 | Approved, Not Built, On Hold |
| **Hudson Steppe** | 189 | Approved, Not Built, On Hold |
| **DPW Site** | 110 | Proposed, Not Approved |
| **Harbor Square** | 188 | Built |
| **147 Main Street** | 31 | Built |

## *Village of Ossining Affordable Housing Policy*

### Affordable Housing Program

The Village of Ossining Affordable Housing Program was adopted in 2006 to "provide a framework within which the Village can address the affordable housing deficit and carry out its intent to foster the creation of new affordable units and the preservation of existing affordable housing to meet the housing needs of

the community." The program is codified as the Village of Ossining Affordable Housing Policy Statement (Chapter 62 of the Village Code.

This section of the Village Code also includes rules that require certain residential developments to provide affordable housing. The code requires that residential developments with six or more dwelling units provide a set-aside of at least 10% affordable housing units. Affordable units are reserved for households that earn less than 80% of the Westchester County median income.

The code also provides a density bonus for developments that provide affordable housing units. For developments that provide affordable housing units (80% of Westchester median income), the code provides a density bonus equal to the number of affordable units provided. There is an additional density bonus for developments that provide affordable units for very low income households. For developments that provide low-income housing units (60% of Westchester median income), the code provides an additional density bonus of 5% of the market-rate units being proposed. The affordable housing code allows a developer to buy out of providing affordable units. The buyout payment is currently set at $350,000 per unit.

### Landlord-Tenant Relations Council

The Landlord-Tenant Relations Council (LTRC) is governed by Chapter 24 of the Village Code. The LTRC was established in 2017 with the following objectives:

- Conduct research into community housing problems
- Formulate programs to improve landlord-tenant relations
- Accumulate statistical information on available housing accommodations
- Advise the Board of Trustees on landlord-tenant problems
- Resolve disputes between landlords and tenants through mediation

The LTRC is made up of nine members. The members of the LTRC are appointed by the Village Board of Trustees to two year terms. The code requires that three members represent property owner interests, three members are tenants, and three members are neither property owners nor tenants in the Village of Ossining.

### Housing Choice Voucher Program

The Housing Choice Voucher Program is a federal program that is administered locally. The program assists very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled to afford housing in the private market and is intended for households with incomes less than 50% of the county median income. Participants are free to choose any housing that meets the requirements of the program and is not limited to subsidized housing projects. There is currently a waiting list for the Village of Ossining Program of more than one year.

### *Affordable Housing Development and Advocacy*

Is addition to Village-operated housing programs, there are also private developers and non-profit organizations that provide affordable housing resources and advocacy in Ossining. In particular, IFCA provides affordable housing development, property management and supportive services to low and moderate income households. IFCA manages a total of 14 affordable rental properties, with 13 located in the Village of Ossining. By acquiring existing buildings and renovating them for affordable units, IFCA offers a model for preserving historic structures, investing in the Ossining community, while providing critical affordable housing resources.

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*Prior studies*

### Housing Vacancy Rate Analysis (2018)

In 2018, the Village of Ossining retained the Collective for Community, Culture and Environment to conduct a Report on the Housing Vacancy Rate Analysis. The report specifically evaluates vacancy rates for residential properties with six or more units. The study, which was conducted in June and July of 2018, found a vacancy rate of only 3%. According to the New York State Emergency Tenant Protection Act, the Village is eligible to declare a housing emergency because the vacancy rate is below 5%.

### Housing Ossining Technical Papers (2017)

The Housing Ossining Technical Papers were a series of four studies produced by Kevin Dwarka Land Use & Economic Consulting in 2017. The four papers in the series include:

- Quantitative Analysis
- Regulatory Assessment
- Community Engagement Record
- Policy Framework

The objective of the series was to conduct data analysis, evaluate current regulations, and conduct community engagement in order to develop a set of policy recommendations. The recommendations are organized around eight policy strategies, which contributed to development of objectives and strategies in the Comprehensive Plan:

- Policy Strategy #1: Increase Village Leadership in Economic Development
- Policy Strategy #2: Adopt a Proactive Approach to Building Code Enforcement
- Policy Strategy #3: Modify Village Development Incentive Program
- Policy Strategy #4: Expand the Village's Network of Local Housing Developers
- Policy Strategy #5: Revise Village Affordable Housing Policy
- Policy Strategy #6: Eliminate Regulatory Barriers to Housing Development
- Policy Strategy #7: Improve Transit Access and Reduce Automobile Dependency
- Policy Strategy #8: Apply State Rent Stabilization Law to Eligible Multi-Family Buildings

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## Issues and Opportunities

*Overcrowding in the neighborhoods adjacent to downtown*

Overcrowding is a particular issue in Ossining's neighborhoods directly adjacent to downtown, resulting from insufficient affordable and workforce housing throughout the region. Census data show that overcrowding is a greater problem in Ossining than in Westchester County as a whole. Overcrowding can be a sign that low- and moderate-income households are seeking solutions to housing affordability in an expensive housing market. Meanwhile, overcrowding can result in building code violations, reduced building safety, and quality of life issues.

Solutions to reduce overcrowding should seek to accommodate existing residents without displacement. However, it must also be acknowledged that overcrowding sometimes has dangerous implications, both to residents and public safety staff. Conversions of unsanctioned housing units without appropriate certificates of occupancy many not have adequate fire safety measures, ventilation, and egress. Overcrowding can also create quality of life impacts in dense neighborhoods, where off-street parking is limited and additional residents can further constrain on-street parking capacity.

Solutions to address overcrowding, such as stronger code enforcement, are important for public safety and quality of life issues. However, the one overriding cause of overcrowding is a need for housing that is affordable to a broad cross-section of Ossining residents. While reducing overcrowding is an important goal, solutions must also acknowledge the need for designated affordable housing and to incentivize legal conversions and building upgrades.

*Opportunity to rehab existing housing stock*

Ossining has a limited number of infill sites and large development sites. There are a substantial amount of opportunities to provide improved housing involves renovation and rehabilitation of existing buildings. There will continue to be targeted opportunities for new development, and those opportunities should be pursued where appropriate, but the Village should also seek to improve housing and neighborhood conditions among existing buildings.

There are currently barriers that limit renovation of existing buildings, especially in neighborhoods outside of the downtown. In particular, zoning regulations that limit minimum lot sizes, units per structure, and side yard setbacks create pre-existing non-conformities. These pre-existing non-conformities make it difficult for property owners to undertake renovations and for buildings to be sold with a mortgage. As a result, many of these small, multi-family rental buildings in the Village's Two-Family (T) District are unimproved. When these buildings are sold, oftentimes they change hands through cash transactions to absentee landlords. Removing these barriers to renovating existing buildings can improve safety conditions for tenants and improve quality of life in Ossining's neighborhoods.

Similar pre-existing non-conformance issues exist for the S-75 single-family zone. Increased flexibility on bulk requirements for the S-75 District, as described more in detail in Chapter 3: Land Use and Zoning, would make it easier to renovate existing homes, and encourage upgrades and upkeep of properties while preserving the character of the neighborhoods.

*Opportunity to coordinate with housing advocates and developers to provide new affordable housing*

Ossining's housing goals need to balance two key objectives—attracting new investment in the Village to expand the tax base while ensuring that current residents have adequate resources and are not displaced. While these objectives may appear to be at odds with each other, careful planning can ensure that the Village attracts new investment without pricing out low- and moderate-income residents. The Village has been proactive in efforts to growth the inventory of affordable housing stock to meet these goals.

For example, Ossining has promoted the LTRC to address tenants' issues. In addition, Ossining can leverage Village-owned assets to attract mixed-income development. One such project is in the planning phase at the former DPW site, but there are other Village-owned properties where Ossining has flexibility to ensure that potential development meets village-wide priorities, such as providing affordable housing. Further, the Village should promote the efforts of non-profit organizations, such as IFCA, to develop smaller scale affordable housing resources, while also preserving the existing scale and historical character of Ossining's neighborhoods. The Village should encourage local developers to participate in housing development opportunities.

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## Objectives and Strategies

### *Objective 8.1: Preserve and Upgrade Existing Housing*

#### Strategy 8.1.1: Facilitate the preservation and upgrade of existing affordable units

The Village should facilitate the preservation, renovation, and upgrade of existing affordable housing units, as well as sub-standard housing that currently lacks affordability controls. This could include removing barriers to rehabilitation of existing units, as well as providing technical assistance to property owners. Efforts should also be made to avoid displacing current tenants, even after renovations are completed.

In some cases, incentives may be required in order to encourage renovation or rehabilitation of existing units. If subsidies are provided as incentives, either through Village programs or by non-profit organizations, property owners should be required to set-aside units as affordable housing. The Village should continue working with non-profit organizations, such as IFCA, to expand affordable housing resources among existing buildings. Ossining can also consider a further centralized strategy for rehab of existing buildings, such as a community land trust. A community land trust could build on the work of other non-profit affordable housing advocates and developers by ensuring that upgraded housing units remain affordable for current Ossining residents.

#### Strategy 8.1.2: Create a strategy for more consistent enforcement of building code violations

Building code enforcement is important to ensure safety of the Village's housing stock and improve living conditions in Ossining's neighborhoods. Due to limited housing that is affordable for low- and moderate-income residents, some housing units have been converted to provide additional units that do not meet modern code standards. The Village has improved building code enforcement in recent years, but additional strides can be made. Safety concerns include fire protections, egress, and protections for first responders.

Enforcement of building code violations should be carried out in a way that is sensitive to Ossining's housing needs and encourages property owners to bring buildings up to code while limiting displacement of existing residents. Efforts to enforce building code violations should be paired with other strategies identified in this plan to expand the inventory of affordable housing, through new development and rehabilitation of existing buildings, to limit displacement.

#### Strategy 8.1.3: Maintain a current inventory of affordable units in the Village.

Keeping track of current affordable units in the Village, where they are located, and the status of their affordability controls will aid in the preservation of units because the Village will have time to take action on units before their affordability controls expire. The Village should explore creating an inventory of existing affordable units. This inventory should be reviewed and updated annually.

#### Strategy 8.1.4: Continue to utilize the Landlord/Tenant Relations Council

The LTRC should continue to serve as a resource in the Village to conduct research into challenges in the housing market, improve relations between property owners and tenants, counsel the Board of Trustees on housing issues, and mediate disputes between property owners and tenants.

### *Objective 8.2: Create New Affordable Housing*

#### Strategy 8.2.1: Continue to attract new development that provides affordable housing

The Village has an affordable housing code that requires a 10% set-aside for affordable housing in any new development greater than six units. New, mixed-income development that satisfies the set-aside

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is one avenue for providing new affordable housing. The Village can identify Village-owned parcels for an RFP process to attract developers, while also reaching out to the development community to encourage interest in the Village. Tax credit developments that have a greater percentage of affordable units should also be encouraged.

Strategy 8.2.2: Consider permitting accessory dwelling units in all single-family and two-family districts, or some sub-set of zones.

Accessory apartments are small residential units that can be included as secondary units on the same site as a single-family home. Allowing accessory apartments as accessory uses to single-family homes could improve affordability in two key ways. First, they could provide new housing units that are affordable to moderate-income residents in areas of the Village that are less dense, such as single-family districts. Second, they can also provide an option for single-family home owners to reduce their own housing cost burden. Accessory units can help to increase housing options in the Village's single-family residential neighborhoods without altering neighborhood character – allowing for 'in-law" and "parent" related units. When considering accessory units, the Village should investigate and appropriate means of regulating/monitoring these units such as a rental registry (has been considered before) or other tools. As accessory dwelling units are purely incidental to the main unit, a maximum accessory unit size could be set to ensure these units do not exceed, for instance, 20 or 25% of the main unit's floor area.

Strategy 8.2.3: Consider trade-offs between increasing the affordable housing set-aside and increasing development incentives to encourage investment.

In recent years, the Village Board has explored ideas about revising the Village's affordable housing set-aside to require more affordable units in new development. Inclusionary housing is one component of creating new affordable housing in the Village, but should be approached in a balanced way. The Village is also seeking to encourage investment and broaden the tax base. A balanced approach is key for attracting new development, which is necessary for providing inclusionary housing units as part of the affordable housing set-aside.

Strategy 8.2.4: Create opportunities for affordable homeownership.

Most affordable housing programs are focused on the rental market, however affordable homeownership models can provide an opportunity for low-income households to purchase a home and build wealth. Homeownership is one of the primary ways for families to build wealth in the United States, but rising home values often push homeownership out of reach, even for some middle class households. Owning an affordable home also provides stability and security, along with an ability to build and pass on a financial legacy. Strategies to expand access to homeownership can include technical assistance programs, down payment assistance, low interest mortgages, and deed restrictions on subsidized units.

*Objective 8.3: Create opportunities to provide "missing middle" housing.*

Strategy 8.3.1: In the Two-Family (T) Districts, allow two-family as-of-right and three-family by special permit

Currently, the Two-Family (T) District allows two-family buildings by special permit and does not allow three-family buildings. Many residential units that exist in the T District are pre-existing non-conforming units, meaning that they were developed with more than two residential units before the current code was adopted. Small multi-family buildings can be one resource for providing workforce housing and residential units that are affordable for moderate-income households. These households may not qualify for subsidized affordable housing units, but also may not be able to afford market rate units.

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This missing middle housing can be met in part by providing more diverse housing types and removing barriers that currently prevent smaller, infill developments from providing new units.

One recommendation that appears in the Land Use and Zoning chapter is to expand the type of housing that can be provided in the T District. Allow two-family buildings as-of-right (instead of by special permit) will make it easier for new infill buildings to be developed and existing single-family buildings in the T District to be converted to two-family buildings. Allowing three-family buildings by special permit will also provide another option for new infill buildings.

Even more importantly, these two changes will create an easier pathway to allow existing units to conform to the zoning code. Reducing pre-existing non-conformities will remove barriers that prevent property owners from renovating and improving existing buildings.

Strategy 8.3.2: Create a new MF-3 zone to allow low-density multi-family and townhomes in neighborhoods near downtown.

Another strategy for providing missing middle housing is allowing low- and moderate-density multi-family buildings and townhomes in appropriate areas and under appropriate conditions. These small multi-family buildings create an incentive to consolidate undersized zoning lots, reduce barriers to new development, and create an alternate housing type that can be used to provide workforce housing and housing that is affordable to moderate-income households.

*Objective 8.4: Attract Market-Rate Development to Attract New Residents to Ossining*

One of Ossining's objectives in this plan is to attract outside investment in the Village to grow the tax base, providing financial resources that the Village can use for services for Village residents. There are many pathways to increasing the tax base, but one key strategy includes attracting market-rate development. Ossining has a limited supply of large development sites, so a strategic approach to attracting new development can ensure that new investment is encouraged without creating an undue burden on stakeholders throughout the Village.

The Village should coordinate with community stakeholders to ensure that new development is sensitive to community concerns. In particular, Ossining should monitor the impacts of new housing on community services, such as the school district, utilities, and public safety agencies. Also, the Village should seek to attract new development that enhances the community without displacing current residents.

*Objective 8.5: Preserve the Unique Qualities of Ossining's Neighborhoods*

Strategy 8.5.1: Consider designation of Neighborhood Preservation Districts.

The Village of Ossining contains many distinct neighborhoods that, although they may not be worthy of historic district designation, nevertheless possess distinctive architectural qualities worth protecting. These neighborhoods could be designated as "Neighborhood Conservation Districts."

The Village could commission a building survey to identify unique architectural districts, record their physical characteristics and locations, and evaluate their importance. The information from the survey can then serve as a solid basis for determining whether some of these neighborhoods should receive Historic District designation, Neighborhood Conservation District designation, or should simply be noted but receive no special regulatory designation. If Neighborhood Conservation Districts are established, local enabling legislation will need to be added to the zoning code, parallel to the Historic District legislation.

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*Objective 8.6: Monitor Housing & Community Trends that Change as a Result of COVID-19*

The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have caused changing trends in the Westchester County real estate market. In recent years, data have suggested a shift in demand toward walkable downtown living. During the pandemic, there has been an increase in interest for more space and privacy. Just as with the pandemic itself, it remains to be seen if these are short term real estate trends, or if they will linger in the market for the medium or long term. It is also not yet clear if other patterns will emerge. For example, some evidence suggests that there is also increased interest in households moving from New York City to other downtown areas (not just suburban, single-family areas).

Ossining is well-placed to capitalize on changes in the real estate market that result from the pandemic. The Village has an attractive, walkable downtown, as well as quality single-family neighborhoods. As these patterns emerge over time, the Village should continue to monitor these trends and adapt as needed to continue serving the Ossining community.

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# Chapter 9: Cultural and Historic Resources

## Goal

Support the growing number of cultural organizations and make Ossining a regional attraction for the arts and culture scene; promote tourism; continue protecting Village's historic resources.

## Introduction

The Village of Ossining is full of history to recognize and celebrate. Historic and architectural heritage includes the water engineering system of the Old Croton Aqueduct, the signs of the industrial past along the Hudson River, and the historically and architecturally significant buildings on Main Street – just to name a few.

Today, the Village has a growing arts and culture scene. In recent years, many cultural entities have started their operations in Ossining, and are now becoming established assets of the Ossining cultural community. While these organizations are growing, the demand for cultural events is also increasing. This reflects a pattern that other Hudson River communities have been experiencing, and that is likely to continue in the near- and medium-term.

In addition the Village's historic resources and cultural institutions, this chapter also recognizes the essential role that community based organizations are providing to the Ossining community. Existing religious institutions, community groups and public health services are all resources that the Villagers rely on, and are critical to support the needs of the diverse population.

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## Existing Conditions

### *Cultural Events and Institutions*

Ossining has become a more vibrant arts and culture destination in the last few years. Cultural events such as the Village's Fair in the downtown, the Waterfront Concert Series on summer Fridays (organized by the Town), Green Ossining Earth Day Festival, and Ossining Jazz Festival have been quite successful in attracting local residents and visitors from nearby communities. There have been a few instances when events have drawn people from the broader region, such as "The Wait Room" performance organized by the Sing Sing Prison Museum in 2019.

Many cultural organizations and entities produce and promote arts and culture in Ossining. Among the "producers", theater groups such as Westchester Collaborative Theater and Theater O, but also dance academies and schools, are providing opportunities for artists and aspirants to perform (and learn) the arts within the Village boundary. Other organizations like the Ossining Arts Council, based out of the Steamer Firehouse Gallery on Main Street, support artists through promotion of their work. A few cultural spaces are located just outside the Village, in the unincorporated area of the Town. These include the Cedar Lane Art Center, which offers arts classes to kids and adults, and the Bethany Arts Community, which hosts programs and events, as well as artists' residencies opportunities.

In the near future, a major cultural space is expected to become a regional attraction for Ossining and its waterfront: the Sing Sing Prison Museum. Currently in the launching phase of its first portion, the Preview Center – which is slated to open in 2021, the full museum is anticipated to open to the public in 2025. The museum will include two buildings – one located outside the prison property (the former prison Powerhouse), and one located inside the prison property (the historic Cellblock built in 1825). The mission of the museum is to tell the story of 200 years of incarceration at Sing Sing, as well as presenting the status of the criminal justice system in the country, with the goal of being relevant to the current discussion on

social justice. Today, the Sing Sing Prison Museum exhibit is housed at the Ossining Visitor Center, within the Joseph Caputo community center.

The Ossining Historical Society Museum (OHSM), founded in 1931, is the main historical organization and museum in Ossining. The OHSM is located at 195 Croton Avenue, in the premises of the Richard Austin House, a historic landmark included in the National Register of Historic Places. The museum, open by appointment only, contains a permanent collection of photographs and artifacts that testify the history of Ossining. The Jug Tavern of Sparta, Inc., a nonprofit organization based out of the landmarked historic building of the Jug Tavern in Sparta, sponsors guided walking tours of the historic Sparta neighborhood (from April through October), as well as other programming events. Another historical organization is the Ossining Historic Cemeteries Conservancy (OHCC), which is dedicated to the preservation and cemetery enhancement of the Dale and Sparta Cemeteries.

In terms of institutional resources, the Ossining Arts Project (OAP) commission is a Village Board appointed committee with the mission of fostering organizations, individuals and programs to promote arts and culture in Ossining, while ensuring cultural diversity and accessibility. The OAP aims at creating links between arts groups and individual artists, as well as other synergies within the community to nurture the arts. Regarding municipal cultural spaces in the Village, the Ossining Visitor Center is housed within the Joseph Caputo community center. The Visitor Center currently hosts two self-guided exhibits, one on the history of the Sing Sing Prison Museum and one on the Old Croton Aqueduct. Another municipal cultural institution is the Ossining Public Library. Both the library and the community center are covered at length in Chapter 7: Sustainable Infrastructure.

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*Community Organizations, Religious Institutions and Public Health Services*

A number of local organizations work with the Ossining community to provide a variety of services, from social services to trainings to social gathering events. Some of these organizations include Neighbors Link, Hudson Link, Ossining CAP, Ossining Children's Center, IFCA, Ossining Food Pantry, Ossining Matters and the Portuguese Club of Ossining. These community groups are especially active with the Spanish speaking and undocumented communities, often providing crucial lifeline services. For example, Neighbors Link's mission is to "*strengthen the whole community by actively enhancing the healthy integration of immigrants*"[31]. Some of the activities and services provided by Neighbors Link are related to education and workforce development programs, legal services and advocacy, as well as English as a Second Language (ESL) education and academic support for school-age children of immigrants.

Ossining's religious institutions are also important assets for some community groups, especially the foreign-born population. Examples of the various religious institution include the First Presbyterian Church of Ossining, Trinity Episcopal Church, St. Augustine Roman Catholic Church, the Star of Bethlehem Baptist Church, the Briarcliff-Ossining Ministerial Association (BOMA), and St. Ann's Church. Many of these institutions are concentrated within or near the downtown area, where population density is higher.

In terms of public health resources, Open Door Family Medical Centers ("Open Door") is the only medical services facility in the Village. With its main location at 165 Main Street, Ossining's Open Door provides health related services to 300 patients per day on average. A federally qualified community health center, it largely serves the low-income community, given its mission of "*providing health care for everyone,*

[31] https://www.neighborslink.org/about-us

*regardless of their ability to pay*"[32]. Phelps Memorial Hospital, located in the nearby municipality of Sleepy Hollow, is the reference hospital for the Ossining community.

### *Historic Resources*

The rich history of Ossining is reflected in its built environment. The Village has been protecting its historical architecturally significant sites with various tools, which include: the Historic Preservation Commission (formerly Historic Review Commission) and the Board of Architectural Review. Additionally, two special overlay zoning districts, Historical and Architectural Design Districts or HADD, have been established for Downtown Ossining and Sparta. These regulatory tools are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3: Land Use and Zoning.

A number of buildings and sites within the Village are recognized into the National Register of Historic Places. Table 31 provides a comprehensive list of these properties, and Figure 54 highlights them on a map. The National Register of Historic Places, established as part of the National Historical Preservation Act of 1966 and overseen by the National Park Service, is the official list of the country's historic sites worthy of preservation. Listing in the National Register is the first step towards eligibility for preservation tax credits.

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[32] https://www.opendoormedical.org/about-us/mission-vision-values/

**Table 31: Village's Buildings and Sites included in the National Register of Historic Places.**

| Building/District | Location | Years of Significance | Function/Style |
|---|---|---|---|
| Downtown Ossining Historic District | Route 9, Main Street and Croton Avenue | 1825-1849; 1850-1874; 1875-1899; 1900-1924; 1925-1949 | Commerce/Italianate; Gothic Revival/ |
| First Baptist Church of Ossining | South Highland Avenue and Main Street | 1850-1874 | Religious structure/ Gothic |
| Highland Cottage | 36 South Highland Avenue | Constructed in 1872 | |
| Jug Tavern | Revolutionary Road and Rockledge Avenue | 1750-1799 | Commerce; trade; restaurant/ No style listed |
| Old Croton Aqueduct National Landmark | Between Croton and New York City | Constructed 1837-1842 | Transportation/water related |
| St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Rectory (a.k.a. Calvary Baptist Church and Annex) | St. Paul's Place | 1825-1849; 1850-1874 | Religious structure/Gothic Revival |
| Washington School | 83 Croton Avenue | 1900-1924 | School/Beaux Arts/ Architecture |

*Sources: National Register of Historic Places; Village of Ossining "Significant Sites and Structures Guide"*

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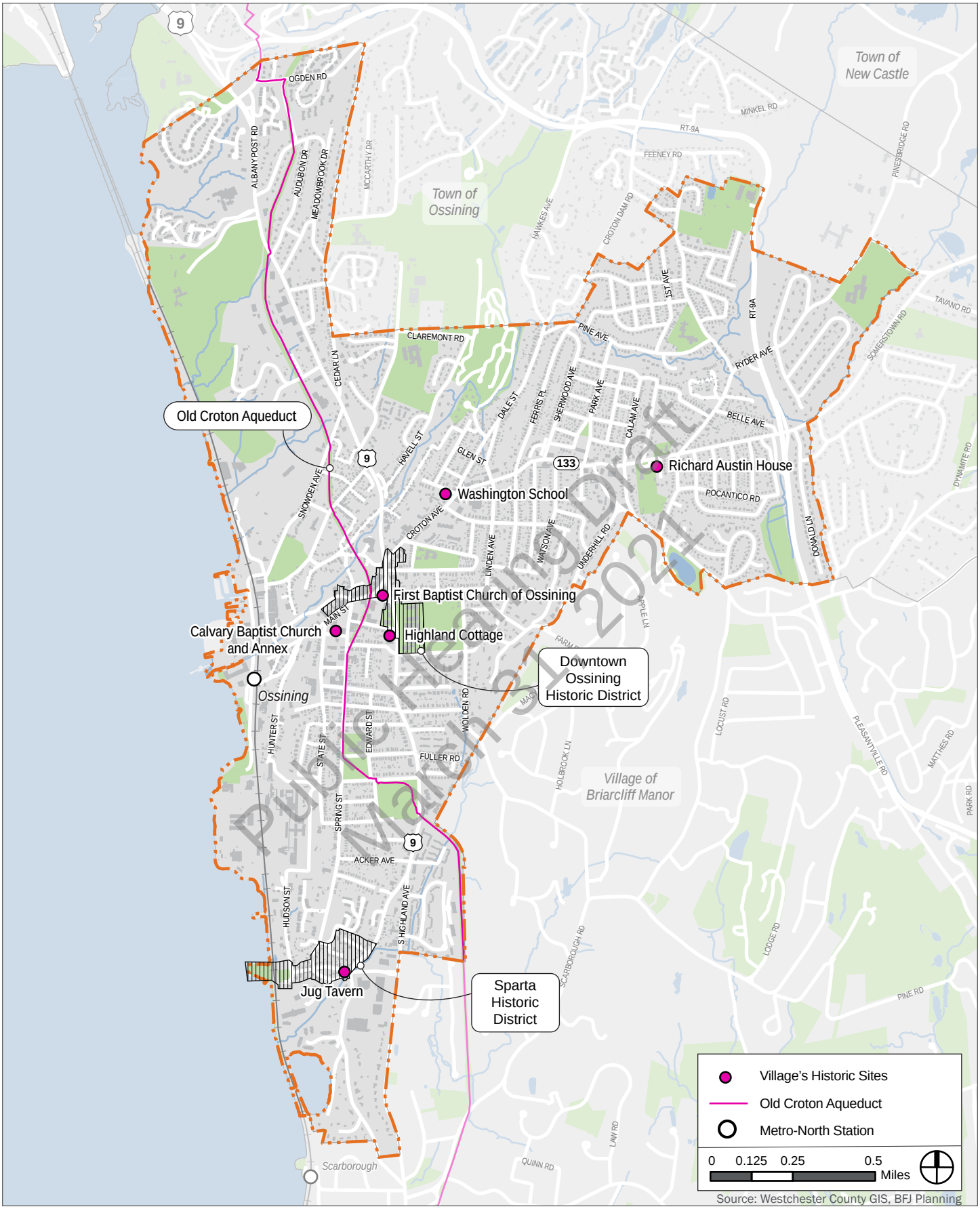


Figure 54: Sites and Structures included in the National Register of Historic Places

Amongst the nationally recognized historic places is the Downtown Ossining Historic District. Most of the buildings included in the downtown historic district are two- or three-story masonry structures, mostly dating from the second half of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century. In early 2013, the Downtown Ossining Historic District boundary, depicted in Figure 55, was officially expanded to include a few additional properties, some of which are historically significant buildings (or "contributing" buildings).

The Sparta Historic District is a local historic district designated by the Village of Ossining in 1975. Most of the structures within the Sparta Historic District boundary reflect the Federal style of architecture (first decade of 19th century); one example of this architectural style is the Jug Tavern, one of the first structures built in the area in the 1780s and also included in the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2010, the Village released the "Significant Sites and Structures Guide", a document that provides information and historical background of all buildings, neighborhoods and other places within the Village that are of architectural, cultural, and historical significance. The catalogue identifies the different categories of significance for each identified site and structure, and their reference historic eras.

In the last few decades, some historically and culturally relevant structures within the Village have started to fall into disrepair. In some cases, property owners lacked the necessary funding to maintain the structures into a good state of repair, which often requires significant investment due to the age of the buildings. The Bank for Saving buildings at 200 Main Street is an example of an architecturally relevant building that, after being vacant for many years, is in need of substantial remediation works. In 2019, the Village secured grant funding to perform stabilization and environmental remediation works on the building.

Another trend that is becoming more apparent in recent years, which is consistent throughout the US, involves the decay of churches in these modern times[33]. Many religious institutions in Ossining are facing financial difficulties to properly maintain their structures, as well a growing decline in interest for religious spaces from younger generations. Today some churches may be at a crossroad between selling the building (which would likely imply a change in use), or lettin it go into decay. This issue could be addressed through extended opportunities for adaptive reuse of historically and/or significant buildings, which are described in greater detailed in the Issues and Opportunities section below.

In 2016, the Village completed "The Museum on the Streets" installation, which was made possible through a state grant. The Museum on the Streets consists of a series of panels located in front of historic sites and structures that contain a historic photo and brief story of the sites or structures. The panels seek to encourage self-guided walking tours throughout the Village, to create greater awareness of the historical assets of Ossining, and to foster economic development.

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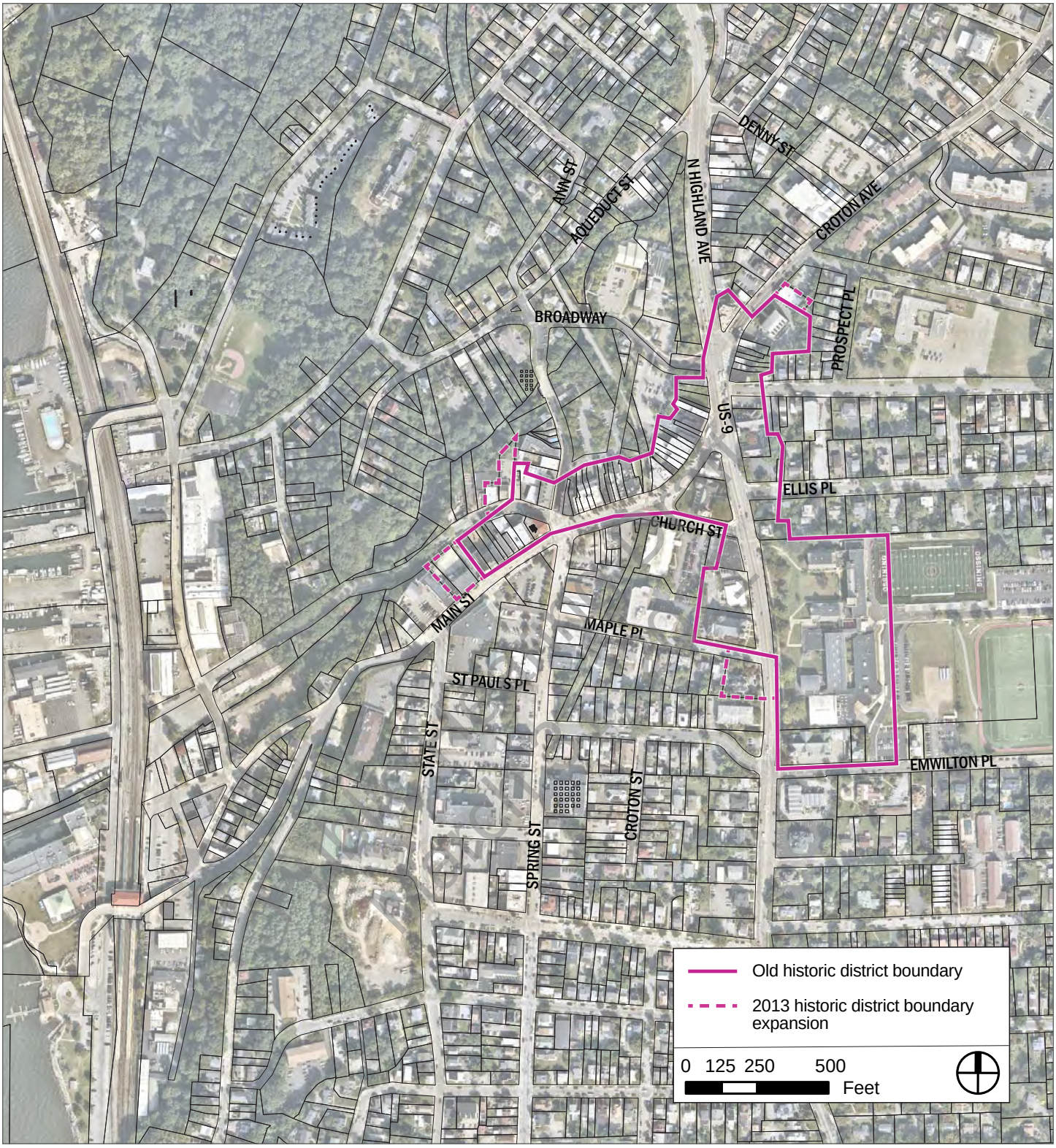
[33] https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/11/what-should-america-do-its-empty-church-buildings/576592/




Source: Westchester County GIS, National Register of Historic Places, BFJ Planning

**Figure 55: Downtown Ossining Historic District**

*Preservation Programs and Existing Funding Sources*

Ossining is one of the 19 communities in NY that has been designated part of the Heritage Area Program (formerly Urban Cultural Park System), a state-local partnership that aims at preserving and developing places with unique qualities of geography, history, and culture (Figure 56). The Heritage Program focuses on four heritage goals - preservation, education, recreation and economic revitalization – and provides funding and assistance to government, nonprofits and individuals interested in advancing these goals[34]. The Ossining Heritage Area shares a unifying theme of "the role of reform in the growth of urban America", which is exemplified by the water engineering works of the Old Croton Aqueduct (public health and municipal service reforms), and the construction of Sing Sing Correctional Facility (a result of the social upheaval that exposed the need for prison reform).

The Village is a "Preserve America Community" and a "New York State Certified Local Government" (CLG). The Preserve America Communities is a designation program that recognizes "localities that support preservation efforts through heritage tourism, education, and historic preservation planning"[35]. This federal initiative, which used to provide matching grants opportunities, is currently not funded but the program is still authorized in legislation. The CLG designation, instead, is a program run by the National Park Service in coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) that provides professional guidance and technical assistance to participating communities, as well as grants for eligible projects[36]. These grants can fund a wide variety of projects, including, surveys, National Register nominations, rehabilitation work, design guidelines, educational programs, training, structural assessments, and feasibility studies, to name a few.

Lastly, the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program, also known as Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit, provides a 20% tax credit for the rehabilitation of "certified historic structures"[37]. This federal program, run by the National Park Service and Internal Revenue Service in conjunction with SHPO since 1976, incentivizes private sector investment in the rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings. A rehabilitation project must meet several criteria to be eligible for the tax credit, which are specified on the National Park Service website[38].

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[34] https://www.parks.ny.gov/grants/heritage-areas/default.aspx
[35] https://www.nps.gov/preservation-grants/PreserveAmerica/
[36] https://parks.ny.gov/grants/certified-local-government/default.aspx
[37] https://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm
[38] Ibid.

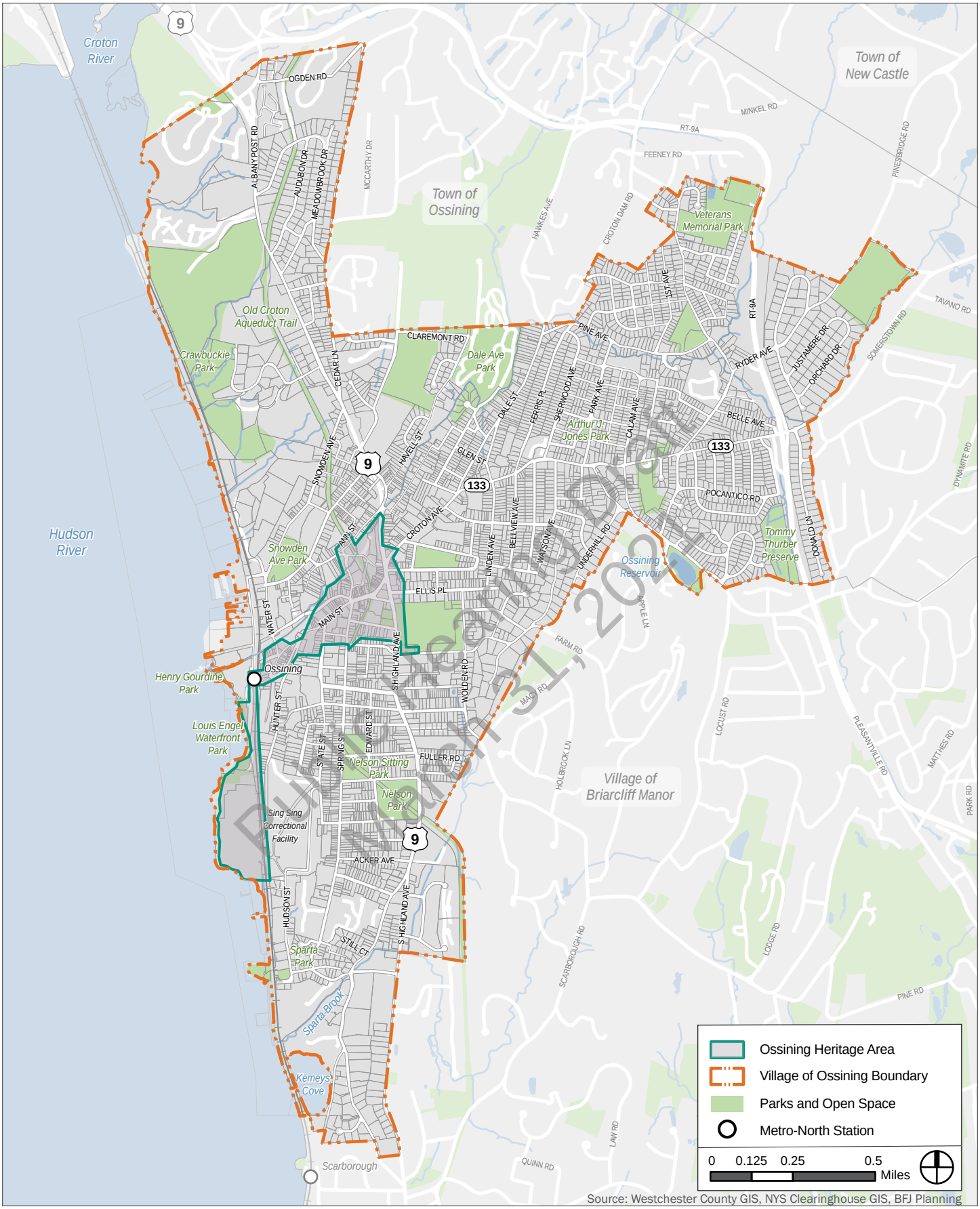


Figure 56: Ossining Heritage Area (NYS Program)

## Issues and Opportunities

### *The Ossining Arts & Culture Community*

Ossining has a growing arts community that is becoming more and more established. The number of events and activities offered by the cultural community has reached a point that may require improved coordination and more support. In fact, the Ossining arts and culture community is an asset that can grow further, and establish itself as a cultural and entertainment hub that is known beyond the Village boundaries. The Village has the opportunity to proactively support the existing arts and culture groups and institutions, in addition to make Ossining an attractive place for artists to live/work and exhibit their art. The recognition of Ossining's arts and culture assets is an important element of economic development[39], as many Hudson Valley municipalities have demonstrated in the last decade.

The most common issues recognized by the Ossining arts and culture community are the lack of coordination and collaboration among the different organizations, in addition to the lack of cohesive advertising strategy for events (especially targeting communities outside Ossining). Members of the historic and cultural resources subcommittee expressed a desire for a more comprehensive "cultural planning" approach by the Village, connecting different cultural assets and geographic areas, while incentivizing partnerships of cultural organizations with local businesses.

Currently, the Village does not have a cultural anchor institution – which is an enduring institution, typically not-for-profit, that is rooted in a specific geographic location. The lack of a cultural anchor institution generally prevents communities from fully leveraging their local creative assets and arts organizations. However, in the near future, the Sing Sing Prison Museum is expected to play that role, and become Ossining's most known cultural institution. The Village should support and facilitate the efforts of the Museum throughout the opening phase and initial launch. In addition to possibly becoming a regional touristic attraction, the Museum would also provide a unique opportunity to revitalize the waterfront and bring private investment to the area.

In terms of increasing the number of spaces for arts and culture, some ideas included the opportunity to reuse buildings that are currently vacant or underutilized for cultural activities. The Ossining waterfront is a prime example of a historically industrial area that includes aging industrial building stock that could benefit from adaptive reuse projects, such as interior conversions to maker spaces or indoor markets. Moreover, the waterfront area provides the opportunity for outdoor entertainment and cultural uses, given the presence of an outdoor stage venue at Engel Park and the abundant open space.

Pop-up public art installations and formal public art programs are becoming common in various communities across the state. Moreover, municipalities are frequently integrating public art into new facilities and infrastructure projects, setting a percentage of construction budgets for artwork. Public art can serve as a public realm enhancement strategy. Other communities along the Hudson River, such as Peekskill, have used their public spaces as a showcase of artists' work.

Lastly, it is important to recognize the multicultural community living in the Village. The rich cultural and socio-economic diversity of Ossining is one of the reasons that has driven arts organizations to make Ossining their home; however, some strategies should be considered to break barriers between different community groups and cultures (such as a language barrier). Ossining has the opportunity to make cultural

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[39] https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/online/How-Arts-and-Culture-Catalyzes-Economic-Vitality.pdf

activities more inclusionary, expand their reach into different communities, and give voice to under-represented cultures.

*Historic Resources and Adaptive Reuse*

As described in the Existing Conditions section, Ossining historic heritage is rich and exceptionally valuable. It is important to preserve historically and architecturally relevant structures, but it can be burdensome for property owners, as historic buildings often require significant investment to maintain the historic character and aesthetics of a place. At the same time, the original use of historic structures may have lost its appeal because of changing trends.

Preservation tools such as state and federal funding should be sought and leveraged to encourage investment into the historic building stock of Ossining. It is recognized that preserving the character and authenticity of communities contributes to the sense of place and spurs further investment into neighborhoods. Additionally, maintaining the charm and character of historically relevant areas would boost tourism and attract visitors to Ossining, supporting the spillover effect for restaurant and stores.

Adaptive reuse is another approach that could help breathe new life into historic buildings and, at the same time, spur economic development. Defined by the American Institute of Architects as "(…) *a method of protecting historically significant buildings from demolition*", adaptive reuse consists in repurposing buildings into uses that are different from the original purpose. Issues like abandoned churches, underutilized or vacant brick warehouses, as well as historic buildings that have been plagued by blight and disinvestment, are common in Ossining. Adaptive reuse of these buildings should be encouraged, made simple and appealing for property owners and developers. The Village should consider allowing adaptive reuse by Special Permit and make the process straightforward for property owners. Because it is sometimes cheaper to demolish a historic building and construct a new one, some municipalities have adopted "adaptive reuse ordinances" to make these conversions financially feasible. In fact, these ordinances could provide developers expedited approvals, tax credits, density bonuses and/or parking requirements reductions as incentives to take up often significantly costly adaptive reuse developments.

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# SIDEBAR: SELECTED EXAMPLES OF ADAPTIVE REUSE

**Hastings-on-Hudson, NY**
The Purple, Music Venue

**Zwolle, The Netherlands**
Church converted into a library

**Yorktown, NY**
The Winery at St. George

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*Historic Ossining as a Tourist Destination*

The Village has a lot of history to highlight. Although some efforts have been done in the past to make Ossining an attraction for local tourism, multiple coordinated approaches should be explored in order to effectively promote Ossining's tourism. As the Downtown and Economic Development chapter mentions, water-related uses along the Hudson River provide opportunities to attract visitors. The Sing Sing Prison Museum will also increase the number of visitors spending time in the Village. However, planning for tourism growth should have a more comprehensive approach that builds upon multiple assets – one being the history of Ossining, which is well reflected in its built environment. Ossining has the potential to attract multi-day visitors from New York City, tapping into the growing market of tourism in the Hudson Valley.

The Village should identify potential partners to collaborate with on a comprehensive tourism strategy, assess the effectiveness of past events or activities that aimed at boosting tourism, and develop a list of short- and longer-term actions that address the identified shortcomings. Low-hanging fruit opportunities include restoring walking tours, enhanced coordination of events and activities, and identify a prominent location for the Ossining Visitor Center.

*Support Community Services and Organizations*

High quality community services such as public health and social services are key for the well-being of the Ossining community. Given the high percentage of foreign-born population and the variety of socio-economic backgrounds, the Village should ensure community organizations and services have the resources needed to serve the local population. The Village should support anchor institutions such as Open Door and the Ossining Children Center , which both recently significantly invested into the Ossining community with new spaces, and their presence allows lower-income families to afford health care and childcare.

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## Objectives and Strategies

*Objective 9.1: Support and facilitate the growth of local artists and cultural organizations.*

Strategy 9.1.1: Build momentum around the Sing Sing Prison Museum.

The opening of the Sing Sing Prison Museum is a unique opportunity to showcase what Ossining has to offer in terms of history, culture and art. The Museum is likely to become the cultural anchor institution that could attract regional crowds to Ossining. The Village should support efforts by the Museum to establish itself as a must-go destination in Westchester County, which could benefit the Ossining waterfront, the businesses, as well as the local, niche-like arts and culture scene of the Village.

Strategy 9.1.2: Explore the idea of creating a coordinating entity for arts & culture in Ossining.

The coordinating entity could be the Business Improvement District (BID) if the Village moves forward with it (see Strategy 1.3 in Chapter 5: Downtown and Economic Development). The BID could help businesses and civic organizations to work together and begin collaborations, such as displaying local artists' work in stores and offices. As an alternative to the BID, the Ossining Arts Project (OAP) committee could fill up the role of implementing an increased coordination effort to effectively serve as a "local art agency"[40]. This would require increased funding to the OAP and hiring a staff person (likely

[40] "Americans for the Arts" defines a local arts agency (LAA) as a community organization or local government agency that supports cultural organizations, provides services to artists or arts organizations, and/or presents arts programming to the public. LAA's endeavor to make the arts part of the daily fabric of community living.

part-time) dedicated to creating and updating directories, newsletter and events calendar, and maintaining relationships with the Ossining arts community and arts-supporting businesses.

Strategy 9.1.3: Update and build upon the inventory of arts and culture resources created by the OAP.
The OAP website includes a list of resources for "artists and arts lovers" in and around Ossining. This list should be updated regularly and made it more prominent. A location map of these resources could also help visualizing potential synergies between organizations, artists and businesses. Store owners, for example, could have an interest in supporting artists through showcasing their artwork and/or hosting cultural events. Additionally, the list could be expanded to include announcements of spaces for rent that could fit the needs of artists (artisan workshops, live/work offices, etc.).

Strategy 9.1.4: Create a cultural venue downtown that would both benefit from and support a restaurant cluster.
While weekend night events may be happening in sparse locations throughout Ossining, a more central cultural venue downtown could help local artists and cultural organizations become more visible within and beyond Ossining. The central cultural venue could be shared among the various arts and culture organizations of the Village, providing opportunities to showcase work especially to independent artists and organizations that may lack space for events. The presence of a downtown cultural venue could also support the restaurant business, which, in turn, could make the cultural venue more attractive for visitors.

Strategy 9.1.5: Make the waterfront a prime location for outdoor events.
The waterfront area, and in particular Engel Park and Gourdine Park, make it a perfect space for warm-season outdoor events such as concerts, performances, arts and crafts markets and food events. The Village, in collaboration with the Town, should capitalize on such space, as the scenic, spacious setting could draw visitors from all over the region. If this strategy is implemented, the Village should incentivize the use of alternative modes of transportation (train, ferry, bike, walk, ride-sharing). If the parking structure by Ossining Station is ever built (see Transportation chapter), that would alleviate parking issues to visitors going to waterfront events.

Strategy 9.1.6: Increase public art displays and showcase the talent of local artists.
Either through formal public art programs or temporary public art installations, Ossining could increase the amount of art that is displayed in public spaces. In the past, the Ossining Arts Project (OAP) commission compiled a list of sites within the Village that could host public art. New municipal facilities and infrastructure could set a percentage of construction cost apart to fund public art installations. Additionally, municipal facilities such as the community center should continue showcasing local artwork in their premises, perhaps establishing a rotating plan to display art by different artists. Public art installations and public gallery spaces could be managed and coordinated by the BID (if one is created) and the OAP commission, in collaboration with the Village. Local artists should be given priority to display their work.

*Objective 9.2: Encourage preservation and adaptive reuse of historically and architecturally significant buildings.*

Strategy 9.2.1: Gather funding for historic preservation efforts.
As a Certified Local Government and a Heritage Area Program community, the Village should pursue applications for grants and other funding at every available opportunity. Federal and state funding

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sources should be leveraged to ensure the quality of historic districts and nationally recognized historic places is maintained and enhanced.

Strategy 9.2.2: Publicize the availability of federal and state funding for privately-owned historic structures.
The Historic Preservation Commission should promulgate brochures and other informational materials related to tax incentives and funding available for building owners of historic structures or buildings within historic districts.

Strategy 9.2.3: Promote and facilitate adaptive reuse of historically and architecturally significant buildings.
The Village should consider a flexible and streamlined land use review to encourage the adaptive reuse of eligible buildings. The Historic Preservation Commission could develop a list of eligible buildings, which typically includes buildings originally built for religious or educational uses. The adaptive reuse projects should be subject to Special Permit, in order for the Planning Board to review the proposed new use and potential variances needed. The Village may also consider developing an adaptive reuse ordinance in the future, especially if adaptive reuse proposals become more frequent.

*Objective 9.3: Celebrate Ossining's cultural and historic resources through tourism promotion.*

Strategy 9.3.1: Assess the viability of developing a historic and cultural tourism program for the Village.
A historic and cultural tourism program could include activities such as historic walking tours of the downtown, the Old Croton Aqueduct and the waterfront. Tours could also be related to the arts and culture scene, such as visits to art galleries, performing spaces and museums. Opportunities to coordinate local events with tourism activities should also be explored. Potential partners to get involved in this initiative include the Chamber of Commerce, the BID (if implemented), and existing Village's historical organizations.

Strategy 9.3.2: Identify possible central venues to host the Ossining Visitor Center.
Given the upcoming relocation of the Sing Sing Museum Exhibit to the new Museum on the waterfront, the Village should consider revamping the Ossining Visitor Center, and relocating it to a new location. In addition to the existing Old Croton Aqueduct exhibit, the Village could explore adding other themes and/or incorporate art galleries. The Visitor Center could benefit from being relocated to a prominent space downtown.

Strategy 9.3.3: Promote "The Museum on the Streets" initiative.
The preservation and celebration of existing historic assets also benefits from recognition. The Museum on the Street is a relatively recent initiative that should be promoted and leveraged through increased advertisement. The Local Historian and the Historic Preservation Commission could coordinate with local historical organizations to explore advertising options and promotion events, such as organizing walking tours and creating a digital App highlighting the featured structures and sites.

*Objective 9.4: Continue supporting community services organizations.*

Strategy 9.4.1: Ensure community organizations are listened to and supported.
The Village recognizes the essential role that community organizations play into the Ossining community, and especially among the underrepresented population. Ossining's community organizations, which range from well-established public health services (Open Door) to affordable housing development and related services (IFCA), should work in close collaboration with the Village and participate in decision-making processes when it comes to community needs. The Village should also ensure critical community and social services have the resources they need to support residents in

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need. For example, the Village could consider developing and regularly updating a needs assessment in coordination with community organizations.

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# Chapter 10: Action Agenda and Implementation

The previous chapters of Ossining Tomorrow established existing conditions in the Village, provided a policy discussion of issues and opportunities, and identified a series of objectives and strategies intended to further the Village's planning goals. Ultimately, however, the objectives and strategies can only be realized through purposeful action to implement the plan.

Ossining Tomorrow represents a critical public policy tool to guide the Village for the next 10 years and beyond, but the plan alone is not sufficient to affect change, enforce preservation, or promote other major objectives. The implementation tools, future land use plan, and action agenda that follow in this chapter provide a roadmap to help the Village in implementing this plan. It is acknowledged that the objectives and strategies contained in Ossining Tomorrow are aspirational and that implementation of the plan should be based on continuous review of the Village's priorities, availability of funding, capital budget decisions, and other factors that may come up along the way.

This plan was developed by a Steering Committee representing a wide range of interests in the Village, with input and participation from the Village Board of Trustees, other boards and commissions within the Village, six Subcommittees, Village staff, and guided by input from the public. A great deal of work went into producing Ossining Tomorrow, but as with any Comprehensive Plan, the hard work of implementing the objectives and strategies is yet to come. Therefore, it is recommended that the Village consider establishing a standing Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to provide an annual review and report of the status of plan implementation. The Steering Committee would advise the Board of Trustees on potential actions to further realization of the goals contained in the plan and suggest potential updates or revisions to the plan on an as-needed basis. Although implementation of most of the objectives and strategies in the plan will fall to the Board of Trustees, Village Staff, or other appointed boards and commissions, an advisory Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee dedicated to monitoring the progress of implementing the plan will help to provide continuity and institutional knowledge.

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## Implementation Tools

There are several key methods that the Village of Ossining can follow to ensure that the objectives and strategies of this plan are implemented in a way that furthers the Village's planning goals:

### *Legislation*

Ossining's zoning code is the primary legislative tool that can be used to implement the Comprehensive Plan. The Village would need to amend certain elements of its zoning code to execute many of the strategies described in the plan. Select zoning code changes that were included in this plan were anticipated to be adopted in close succession after the plan is completed. Those changes (creation of a form-based overlay district for downtown and the Croton Avenue corridor; and revisions to the Two-Family (T) district were evaluated in the Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) which was completed as part of this planning process. With the exception of the zoning code changes that are addressed in the GEIS, any future zoning code changes will be subject to their own approvals process. The Comprehensive Plan provides a framework for future zoning changes, with specific details to be finalized by the Board of Trustees and Village staff in the future. Any amendment to Ossining's zoning code should be consistent with this plan's goals, objectives, and strategies.

### *Capital Budget*

Ossining's capital budget is a critical tool for implementing the plan. Public spending on infrastructure, major equipment, municipal buildings, parks and open space, and programming all have a major impact

on quality-of-life, efficiency in day-to-day operations, sustainability, and fiscal health. Strategies that may have an impact on the Village's capital budget are included with an understanding of this potential fiscal impact. The Village should continue to evaluate strategies and prioritize capital expenditures based on impact, need, available funding, and the ability to seek outside sources of funds. Some strategies listed in the plan are intended to reduce long-term capital spending by improving the efficiency of municipal operations and expanding the tax base. Such actions may incur a short-term cost, but their potential for long-term savings could make them prudent investments in securing the Village's overall fiscal health.

### *Grants*

Ossining has been successful in recent years in obtaining New York State grants for planning and capital improvement projects. The Village will continue to seek grant funding from the State and other sources for planning and capital projects. Ossining may also engage in public-private partnerships as available and appropriate to meet the goals of this plan in a fiscally responsible way. This additional funding can supplement Ossining's capital budget, lessening the potential financial burden on taxpayers.

### *Future Planning Studies*

Some strategies in the plan may require additional study and analysis before detailed measures can be taken to advance implementation. In these cases, appropriate Village agencies should explore funding opportunities to produce supplemental analysis in order to move recommendations from the planning phase toward implementation.

### *Ongoing Planning and Partnerships*

Finally, the Village should continue working with adjacent municipalities, local non-profit organizations, private entities, and regional agencies to advocate on behalf of Ossining's interests and develop partnerships in furtherance of the goals listed in the Comprehensive Plan. Some of the strategies described in the plan would require public-private partnerships or agreements between the Village and private property owners. Others require action by a different local entity, such as a non-profit organization. Still others would be under the jurisdiction of regional agencies such as the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) or Metro-North.

Some strategies will require coordination with neighboring municipalities, especially the Town of Ossining. The Town is currently in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan as well. Both municipalities have been willing partners in securing their shared resources and these efforts should continue.

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## Future Land Use Plan

As a community that is largely built-out, most of Ossining's land has already been developed (with the exception of environmental/open space areas). However, future infill development of remaining vacant land and redevelopment of previously built sites can contribute to changes in the Village. The Future Land Use Plan is a map that provides a visual representation of general land use patterns in the Village. The map results from a combination of existing land use patterns and Ossining's zoning map. While the Comprehensive Plan recommends some zoning changes—and these are reflected on the Future Land Use Plan—the vast majority of the Village's land area is regulated by the existing zoning code.

The following criteria are used to create the Future Land Use Plan:

**Existing Land Use.** The Future Land Use Plan is generally consistent with existing land use patterns. The Comprehensive Plan does not propose any dramatic changes in land use. The one change reflected on the Future Land Use Plan is identifying the waterfront area, west of the Metro-North tracks, as a Waterfront Resilience Area.

**Existing and Proposed Zoning.** The Comprehensive Plan supports most of Ossining's existing zoning map. There are some targeted zoning recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan, including creation of a Form-Based Overlay zone for downtown and Croton Avenue, allowing two-family homes as-of-right in the Two-Family (T) District, and allowing three-family homes as a conditional use in the T District. However, these changes would produce development that is generally consistent with existing land use patterns in the affected areas of the Village.

**Environmental Considerations.** Natural resources requiring protection include steep slopes, scenic views, open space areas, wetlands, and the Hudson River waterfront. Ossining already controls development that may harm these resources, as does New York State through the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). Open space areas and parks are reflected on the Future Land Use Plan.

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### *Future Land Use Plan Elements*

The Future Land Use Plan shows generalized land uses in ten categories. The map is not intended to regulate development on individual parcels. Rather, it is intended to present a visual representation of the Village's objectives for zoning in different parts of the Village. The Future Land Use Plan does not replace Ossining's zoning map—it derives from the existing zoning map and proposed zoning changes; also future zoning map changes should be consistent with the Future Land Use Plan.

The ten categories are:

#### Conservation Residential:

This section includes the CDD zoning district. It is expected that future development patterns in these areas would be relatively low density and will preserve existing open space areas.

#### Single Family Residential:

These areas on the Future Land Use Plan include all of the Village's Single Family (S) zones (S-50, S-75, S-100, and S-125). These zoning districts differ in their minimum lot sizes, and there are other uses allowed within these districts. However, the general land use pattern in these areas is expected to continue to be single-family in nature.

### Two/Three Family Residential:

This area on the map follows the boundaries of the Two-Family (T) zone. The existing development pattern in the T-zones is already a mix of predominantly two- and three-family homes (although the T-zones also include single-family homes and some multi-family buildings). The Comprehensive Plan recommends removing barriers to development of two- and three-family homes, so this general character is expected to continue in the future.

### Multi-Family Residential:

Ossining's existing Multi-Family zones (MF-1 and MF-2) are mapped in sites around the Village to accommodate multi-family buildings that do not also include other mixed uses, such as retail or commercial. Some of the Planned Residential Developments (PRD) are also multi-family in character.

### Downtown Mixed Use:

This area follows the boundary of the existing VC district and the proposed Downtown Form-Based Overlay. The Comprehensive Plan recommends keeping the VC district in place, but also allowing property owners to opt-in to the Form-Based Overlay. The Overlay would provide an incentive (in the form of an existing story and ten feet of building height) in exchange for complying with form-based requirements that help to improve the public realm. Although the Overlay may result in a modest increase in density, the general land use pattern in this area will remain the same.

### Mixed Use:

Mixed Use areas on the Future Land Use Plan include areas that are currently characterized by a variety of land uses—and are likely to continue these varied patterns in the future. These include area covered by the Croton Avenue Form-Based Overlay, which follows the boundary of the NC-2 district along Croton Avenue. It also includes a series of zoning districts in the waterfront area (PW-a, PW-b, PW-b, and SP-n). This designation does not mandate that each individual building must be a mixed use building; rather, it is an acknowledgement that the existing and proposed zoning is likely to maintain these areas as mixed use districts.

### Commercial:

Areas identified as Commercial on the Future Land Use Plan include a series of zoning districts that allow commercial, retail, and business uses, with limited residential use allowed. These include the Neighborhood Commercial (NC), General Business (GB), Planned Center (P-C), Professional Office (PO), and the Neighborhood Commercial (NC-1 and NC-2) districts.

### Parks and Open Space:

Existing public parks and open space, even when they are located within other zoning districts, are likely to remain as open space. Therefore, the Future Land Use Plan identifies these areas as Parks and Open Space.

### Institutional:

Major institutional uses, even when they are located within other zoning districts, are likely to remain as institutional uses. This includes municipal buildings, public schools, and Sing Sing Prison.

### Waterfront Resilience Area:

The Comprehensive Plan recommends that the areas west of the Metro-North tracks see limited development in the future. This area is most at risk to sea level rise due to climate change and increased flood risk. There is also limited access and evacuations routes for this area, so substantial new development should be limited. There are some exceptions, such as the Sing Sing Prison Museum and

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adaptive re-use of existing buildings where appropriate. Also, this area would be consistent with the Village seeking Public-Private partnerships to increase resilience to climate change, expand water-dependent uses, and enhance public access to the Hudson River waterfront.

*Key Zoning Recommendations*

The Future Land Use Plan is reflective of the key zoning recommendations that are included in the Comprehensive Plan:

1. Create a Form-Based Overlay District for Downtown and the Croton Avenue Corridor
2. Revise the Two-Family (T) District to Reduce Barriers to Renovation of Existing Two- and Three-Family Buildings.
3. Revise the S-75 District to Ease Non-Conformity Issues and Reduce Barriers to Renovation of Single-Family Homes.

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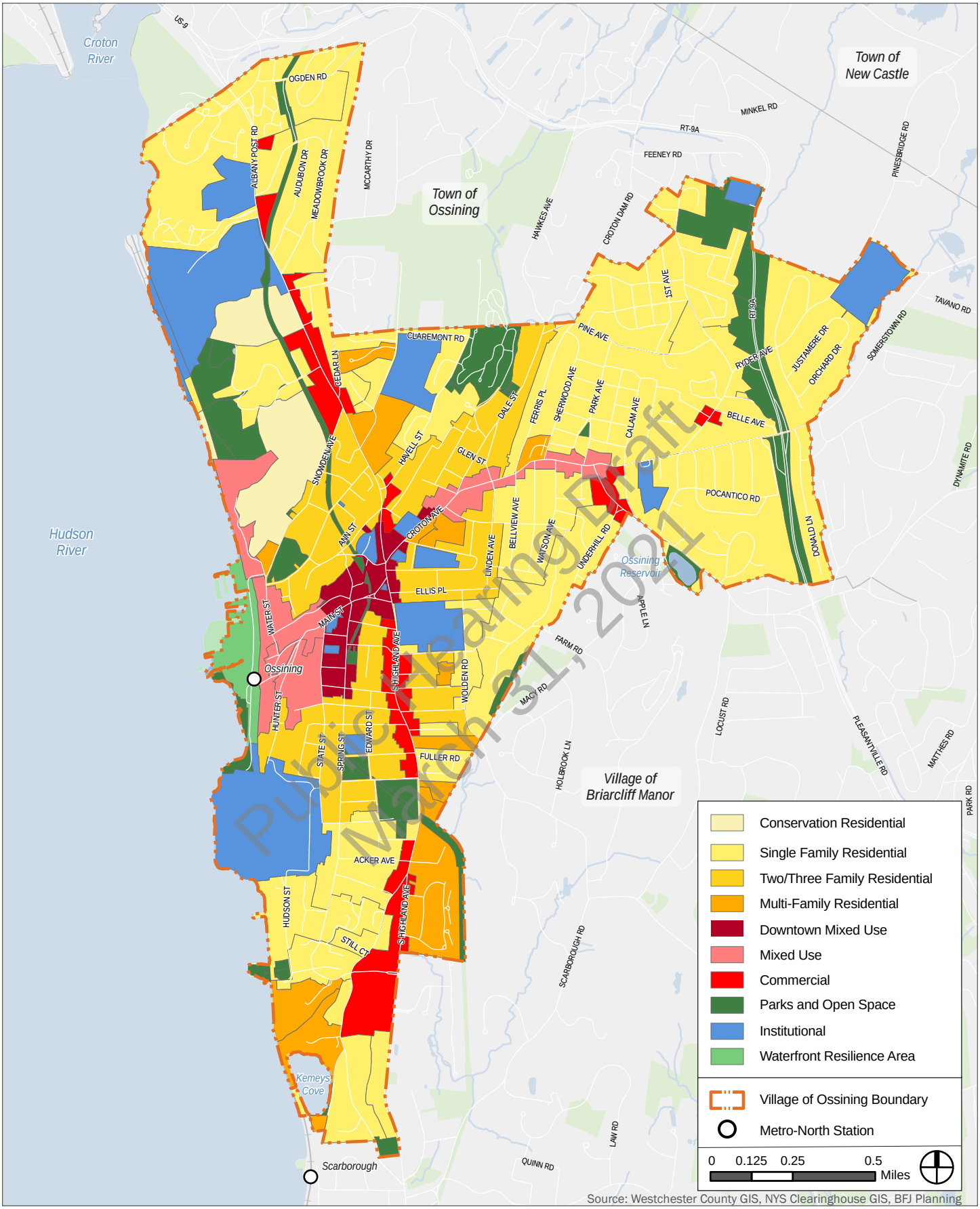


**Figure 57: Future Land Use Plan**

## Action Agenda

The following Action Agenda is intended as a guide to implement the objectives and strategies contained in the Comprehensive Plan. The Action Agenda categorizes each strategy by type, responsible party, and a general timeframe for implementation. The Action Agenda is intended to streamline the Village's ability to review progress on implementation of the plan on a regular basis and allows for convenient updating of the list of strategies as items are completed, priorities change, or new items are proposed.

While the Village of Ossining aspires to achieve implementation of all of the strategies in the plan, this Action Agenda should not be viewed as binding. As the Village prioritizes certain recommendations over others, as funding sources become available, or as the community's goals evolve, the Village and other responsible parties may choose to emphasize some recommendations or revise the timeframe for others to pursue in the future.

Types of Strategies include:

- Capital Project
- Policy or Regulation
- Future Study
- Programming or Partnership

The responsible party is the agency or organization that should spearhead implementation of a particular strategy. Some proposals may involve multiple agencies or entities.

The general timeframe for implementation is included to allow the Village and local residents to keep track of progress in implementing the plan.

- Short term (0 – 2 years): Generally includes changes to local laws or regulations, activities or policies that are currently in place, or capital budget items that the Village intends to fund in the next one to two years.
- Medium-term (3 – 6 years): Likely involves capital budget items that are not already planned for the short term. Many of these actions may have come forward as part of the comprehensive planning process, need to be inserted into future capital budgets, and may require outside funding such as State grants.
- Long-term (7 – 10 years): Includes actions that are important for the Village to consider but are not expected to be addressed in the next six years, in recognition of limited resource availability or jurisdictional constraints. These actions may require further study, advocacy, or partnerships before implementation can take place.
- Ongoing: Actions, advocacy positions, and initiatives that do not have a discrete date of completion. Some of these strategies may involve action that is outside of the local jurisdiction, so the Village does not have control to set a timeframe for implementation.

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**Chapter 3: Land Use and Zoning**

| # | Strategy | Type | Responsible Party | Partners | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective 3.1** | **Create and adopt a form-based overlay zoning district for downtown that is contiguous with the existing VC-District.** | | | | |
| Strategy 3.1.1 | Increase the maximum allowable building height in the downtown from four-stories / 48 feet to five-stories / 58 feet so as to provide greater incentive to developers. The affordable housing requirement would still apply; | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Short-term |
| Strategy 3.1.2: | Allow residential uses above the second story as a permitted principal use in the downtown (i.e. remove the conditional use status for residential that presently exists) | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Short-term |
| Strategy 3.1.3: | Develop a fee for infrastructure in exchange for the bonus for the increase in additional development height (i.e. the differential between four- and five-stories) to alleviate potential impacts to key Village priorities such as schools, parking, etc.; | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Short-term |
| **Objective 3.2** | **Create and adopt a form-based overlay zoning district for Croton Avenue that is contiguous with the NC-2 District between Clinton Avenue and Roosevelt Square.** | | | | |
| Strategy 3.2.1 | Increase the maximum allowable building height along Croton Avenue from three-stories / 36 feet to four-stories / 48 feet so as to provide greater incentive to developers. The affordable housing requirement would still apply; | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Short-term |
| Strategy 3.2.2 | Allow residential uses above the second story as a permitted principal use (i.e. remove the conditional use status for residential that presently exists); | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Short-term |
| Strategy 3.2.3 | Develop a fee for infrastructure in exchange for the bonus for the increase in additional development height (i.e. the differential between three- and four-stories) to alleviate potential impacts to key Village priorities such as schools, parking, etc. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Short-term |
| **Objective 3** | **Address code maintenance issues and existing incongruencies in the Village Zoning and Code.** | | | | |
| Strategy 3.3.1: | Review issues identified in a 2018 memo and make necessary changes to reduce definitional inconsistencies across various elements of the Village Code. This should be conducted under the leadership of Village Staff and Corporation Council. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department Corp. Counsel | Short-term |
| **Objective 3.4** | **Address known zoning challenges related to the T-District, including outdated zoning and pre-existing non-conforming properties.** | | | | |
| Strategy 3.4.1 | Allow two-family residences as a principal permitted use in the T-District. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Short-term |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 3.4.2 | Allow three-family units as conditional use in the T-District. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Short-term |
| Strategy 3.4.3 | Reduce side yard setbacks to alleviate non-conformity for undersized lots in the T-District. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Short-term |
| Strategy 3.4.4 | Allow one additional parking space in the Front Yard in the T-District. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Short-term |
| **Objective 3.5** | **Create a new MF-3 zoning district text, which could be mapped in the future, to accommodate multi-family or townhouse infill development in some areas of the T-District or areas adjacent to downtown. This text would not apply to any single-family district.** | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Medium-term |
| **Objective 3.6** | **Revise the S-75 zone to reduce the large degree of pre-existing non-conformities and reduce barriers for properties owners to improve their homes.** | | | | |

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**Chapter 4: The Waterfront**

| # | Strategy | Type | Responsible Party | Partners | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective 4.1** | **Plan for climate adaptation and flood mitigation measures, and identify targeted solutions for the waterfront area.** | | | | |
| Strategy 4.1.1 | Create a Climate Adaptation and Flood Mitigation Plan. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Town of Ossining | Medium-term |
| Strategy 4.1.2 | Develop flood mitigation design guidelines for new developments and major renovations. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Medium-term |
| Strategy 4.1.3 | Seek grants from State and Federal agencies to implement studies and/or fund climate adaptation projects for infrastructure and public amenities. | Capital Project | Board of Trustees | New York State | Medium-term |
| Strategy 4.1.4 | Close coordination with MTA for potential future resilience work on the railroad tracks. | Capital Project | MTA | Board of Trustees | Long-term |
| Strategy 4.1.5 | Promote the implementation of flood mitigation design guidelines for buildings in the northern waterfront area. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Medium-term |
| Strategy 4.1.6 | Leverage the presence of the Village-owned sites in a way that ensure public benefits and more productive uses, while implementing flood mitigation interventions. | Programming or Partnership | Board of Trustees | Property Owners<br>Planning Department | Medium-term |
| Strategy 4.1.7 | Explore area-wide structural protective measures for the land west of the railroad. | | Board of Trustees | Town of Ossining | Long-term |
| Strategy 4.1.8 | Promote the implementation of flood mitigation design guidelines for the Central Waterfront area, east of the railroad tracks. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Medium-term |
| Strategy 4.1.9 | Incorporate flood mitigation solutions to future development. | Capital Project | Property Owners | | Ongoing |
| Strategy 4.1.10 | Explore area-wide structural protective measures for the Sing Sing / Wastewater Treatment Plant area. | Capital Project | Westchester County | Board of Trustees | Long-term |
| Strategy 4.1.11 | Monitor the impacts of sea level rise and flood events in the future, and evaluate potential living shorelines strategies for the southern waterfront area. | Future Study | Planning Department | Board of Trustees | Medium-term |
| **Objective 4.2** | **Promote development in strategic areas of the Central Waterfront, while retaining a mix of uses, and leveraging existing assets.** | | | | |
| Strategy 4.2.1 | Use the DPW site development as a catalyst project to attract diversified users to the Central Waterfront. | Capital Project | Property Owner | | Short-term |
| Strategy 4.2.2 | Encourage mixed-use and commercial activities throughout the Central Waterfront area. | Capital Project | Property Owners | | Long-term |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strategy 4.2.3 | Continue the Sing Sing Kill Greenway to Water Street / Station area. | Capital Project | Property Owner | Planning Department | Short-term |
| Strategy 4.2.4 | Consider consolidating surface parking areas into a parking structure. | Capital Project | Board of Trustees | Town of Ossining | Long-term |
| Strategy 4.2.5 | Build upon existing recreational and cultural attractions and organizations, and continue to permit and promote additional cultural uses. | Programming or Partnership | Board of Trustees | Local Cultural Institutions | Ongoing |
| **Objective 3** | **Improve connections to and throughout the waterfront.** | | | | |
| Strategy 4.3.1: | Explore options to minimize conflict between drop-offs and traffic flow by Ossining Station. | Capital Project | Board of Trustees | MTA | Long-term |
| Strategy 4.3.2: | Implement the Complete Streets Policy throughout the waterfront area. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Medium-term |
| Strategy 4.3.3: | Improve Westerly Road conditions to make it attractive for pedestrians and bicyclists. | Capital Project | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Medium-term |
| Strategy 4.3.4: | Investigate potential changes in the road circulation to and from the waterfront area. | Future Study | Planning Department | Board of Trustees | Medium-term |
| Strategy 4.3.5: | Continue the RiverWalk trail at any available opportunity, and explore opportunities for new trails and connections. | Capital Project | Board of Trustees | Recreation and Parks | Long-term |
| Strategy 4.3.6: | Improve wayfinding and signage throughout the waterfront area. | Capital Project | Board of Trustees | Public Works | Medium-term |
| Strategy 4.3.7: | Work with NY Waterway to explore the possibility of ferry service from Haverstraw during summer weekends and in conjunction with Ossining events. | Programming or Partnership | NY Waterway | Board of Trustees | Medium-term |
| Strategy 4.3.8: | Explore funding options and feasibility for a shuttle bus between Ossining Station and downtown. | Future Study | Planning Department | | Medium-term |
| **Objective 4.4** | **Maximize opportunities to increase public access to the waterfront.** | | | | |
| Strategy 4.4.1 | Work with current property owners/tenants to create opportunities for increased public access to the waterfront. | Capital Project | Property Owners | Planning Department | Long-term |
| Strategy 4.4.2 | Explore ways to expand Louis Engel Park. | Capital Project | Town of Ossining | Board of Trustees | Long-term |
| Strategy 4.4.3 | Recognize long-term opportunities for increased access to the waterfront. | Future Study | Board of Trustees | | Long-term |

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**Chapter 5: Economic Development**

| # | Strategy | Type | Responsible Party | Partners | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective 5.1** | **Reduce barriers to expanding existing businesses and opening new businesses** | | | | |
| Strategy **5.**1.1 | Make Ossining more welcoming as a place to do business. | Programming or Partnership | Planning Department | Ossining Chamber of Commerce<br>Ossining Business Alliance | Ongoing |
| Strategy **5.**1.2 | Streamline the permitting approval process for businesses looking to expand or open in Ossining. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Short-term |
| Strategy **5.**1.3 | Conduct a Study to Evaluate Forming a Business Improvement District (BID). | Future Study | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Short-term |
| **Objective 5.2** | **Establish Ossining as a unique dining and shopping destination to attract residents and visitors.** | | | | |
| Strategy 5.2.1 | Celebrate locally-owned businesses. | Programming or Partnership | Ossining Chamber of Commerce<br>Ossining Business Alliance | | Ongoing |
| Strategy 5.2.2 | Take a targeted approach to tenant recruitment. | Programming or Partnership | Ossining Chamber of Commerce<br>Ossining Business Alliance | | Ongoing |
| **Objective 5.3:** | **Enhance the public realm in downtown, the waterfront, Highland Avenue, and Croton Avenue** | | | | |
| Strategy 5.3.1: | Create a Form-Based Overlay for Downtown and Croton Avenue to ensure that new development creates a positive experience in the public realm. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Short-term |
| Strategy 5.3.2: | Create a lively downtown experience by expanding outdoor dining | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Short-term |
| Strategy 5.3.3: | Create a pedestrian and customer-friendly environment with streetscape and façade improvements and civic space. | Capital Project | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Medium-term |
| Strategy 5.3.4: | Consider Creation of a Village green. | Future Study | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Medium-term |
| Strategy 5.3.5: | Improve the aesthetics of Route 9 (Highland Avenue) and Route 133 (Croton Avenue). | Capital Project | NYSDOT | Planning Department | Long-term |

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective 5.4:** | **Diversify the tax base and expand the local job market** | | | | |
| Strategy 5.4.1: | Adopt zoning changes to increase investment in existing housing stock, incentivize infill and mixed-use development, adaptive re-use of existing buildings, and increase flexibility for property owners to grow the Village's tax base | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Short-term |
| Strategy 5.4.2: | Expand access to local jobs | Policy or Regulation<br>Programming or Partnership | Ossining Chamber of Commerce<br>Ossining Business Alliance | Board of Trustees | Ongoing |
| **Objective 5.5** | **Tourism** | | | | |
| **Strategy 5.5.1** | Explore strategies to market Ossining as a year-round tourism destination | Programming or Partnership | Ossining Chamber of Commerce<br>Ossining Business Alliance | | Ongoing |
| **Objective 5.6** | **Transformative Opportunities** | | | | |
| Strategy 5.6.1 | Adaptive Reuse of 200 Main Street | Capital Project | Board of Trustees | | Short-term |
| Strategy 5.6.2 | Study of Downtown Parking Structures | Future Study | Planning Department | | Short-term |
| Strategy 5.6.3 | Consider infill buildings on the existing market square and post office lots at intersection of Spring and Main Streets. | Future Study | Board of Trustees | | Medium-term |
| Strategy 5.6.4 | Partner with providers to expand broadband and prepare for 5G. | Programming or Partnership | Board of Trustees | | Medium-term |

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**Chapter 6: Transportation**

| # | Strategy | Type | Responsible Party | Partners | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective 6.1** | Support a State DOT Study to improve Route 9A (Briarcliff-Peekskill Parkway) in terms of safety and capacity. | Future Study | NYSDOT | Board of Trustees<br>Planning Department | Medium-term |
| **Objective 6.2** | Coordinate with the State on further Route 9 (Highland Avenue) upgrades to improve the safety and functioning of the roadway. | Capital Project | NYSDOT | Board of Trustees<br>Planning Department | Long-term |
| **Objective 6.3** | Better connect downtown and the waterfront. | | | | |
| Strategy 6.3.1 | Improve traffic circulation at Secor Road and Main Street: Turn Main Street into a one-way westbound roadway. | Capital Project | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Medium-term |
| Strategy 6.3.2 | Establish a shuttle service from downtown to the station area and waterfront. | Capital Project | Shuttle Operator | Board of Trustees | Long-term |
| **Objective 6.4** | Upgrade and extend the Village's sidewalk system and pedestrian infrastructure. | | | | |
| Strategy 6.4.1 | Enhance sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure downtown. | Capital Project | Board of Trustees | | Long-term |
| Strategy 6.4.2 | As a priority area, ensure that sidewalk and cross-walk conditions surrounding public facilities and parks are adequate. | Capital Project | Board of Trustees | | Long-term |
| **Objective 6.5** | Create a parking plan and possible parking garage downtown. | Capital Project | Board of Trustees | | Long-term |
| **Objective 6.6** | Explore the opportunity to construct a parking facility at the railroad station. | Future Study | Board of Trustees | | Medium-term |
| **Objective 6.7** | Improve the Village's bicycle infrastructure. | | | | |
| Strategy 6.7.1 | Consider studying bicycle circulation opportunities to inform where bicycle infrastructure can best be integrated in a cost-effective fashion. | Future Study | Board of Trustees | | Medium-term |
| Strategy 6.7.2 | Utilize the Village's Complete Streets policy to further support the integration of bicycle infrastructure and amenities. | Capital Project | Board of Trustees | | Medium-term |

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**Chapter 7: Sustainable Infrastructure**

| # | Strategy | Type | Responsible Party | Partners | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective 7.1** | **Expand capacity of the Village's water system** | | | | |
| Strategy 7.1.1 | Increase water supply capacity during peak summer usage in the short-term. | Capital Project | Public Works | Board of Trustees | Short-term |
| Strategy 7.1.2 | Increase water supply capacity during peak summer usage in the long-term. | Capital Project | Public Works | Board of Trustees | Long-term |
| **Objective 7.2** | **Improve the Sanitary Sewer System** | | | | |
| Strategy 7.2.1 | The Village should consider upgrades to the sanitary sewer collection system to address inflow and infiltration and implement relining, as needed. | Capital Project | Public Works | Board of Trustees | Long-term |
| **Objective 7.3** | **Improve Stormwater Management** | | | | |
| Strategy 7.3.1 | Improve stormwater management regulations, and use technology to inventory and upgrade stormwater problem areas. | Capital Project | Public Works | Board of Trustees | Medium-term |
| **Objective 7.4** | **Adopt backup solutions to improve power supply reliability and explore solar installation options.** | | | | |
| Strategy 7.4.1 | Consider a backup power supply for the Village Municipal Building. | Capital Project | Public Works | Board of Trustees | Medium-term |
| Strategy 7.4.2 | Consider a municipal solar installation. | Capital Project | Public Works | Board of Trustees | Medium-term |
| **Objective 7.5** | **Consider improvements and backup services to telecommunication systems** | Capital Project | Public Works | Board of Trustees | Medium-term |
| **Objective 7.6** | **Ensure Fire Stations can safely operate and efficiently serve the entirety of the Village, while considering consolidation opportunities.** | | | | |
| Strategy 7.6.1 | Review and update the 2009 needs assessment report. | Future Study | Fire Department | Board of Trustees | Short-term |
| Strategy 7.6.2 | Build a new Northside fire station. | Capital Project | Board of Trustees | Fire Department | Long-term |
| Strategy 7.6.3 | Relocate the Monitor Hose Company to the new Northside fire station. | Capital Project | Board of Trustees | Fire Department | Long-term |
| **Objective 7.7** | **Consider incorporating sustainable design, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources within Village-owned properties.** | | | | |
| Strategy 7.7.1 | Consider developing a sustainability plan for the Village. | Future Study | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Medium-term |
| Strategy 7.7.2 | Explore options to become eligible for State grants for sustainable design, energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, such as participating in the NYSERDA Clean Energy Communities Program. | Programming or Partnership | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Short-term |

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| Strategy 7.7.3 | Consider the installation of solar panels on Village-owned buildings and properties where feasible. | Capital Project | Board of Trustees | Public Works | Medium-term |
| **Objective 7.8** | **Explore ways to efficiently use centrally-located municipal buildings and community facilities while provide for improved public access.** | | | | |
| Strategy 7.8.1 | Explore ways to provide more multi-purpose meeting spaces that are centrally-located within the Village. | Future Study | Board of Trustees | Public Works | Medium-term |
| Strategy 7.8.2 | Study different options for the reuse of the Ossining Visitor Center space / Sing Sing Prison Museum exhibit space at the community center, if the space becomes available. | Future Study | Recreation and Parks | Board of Trustees | Medium-term |
| Strategy 7.8.3 | Consider improvements to the public library parking lot and sidewalk area. | Capital Project | Ossining Public Library | | Medium-term |
| **Objective 7.9** | **Explore creative ways to provide expanded services at the public library** | | | | |
| Strategy 7.9.1 | Ensure sufficient broadband service to meet increased online programs and services. | Capital Project | Ossining Public Library | | Medium-term |
| Strategy 7.9.2 | Consider adding social service personnel at the public library through partnerships and/or collaborations with universities. | Programming or Partnership | Ossining Public Library | | Medium-term |
| **Objective 7.10** | **Ensure all community members have access to parks and recreational facilities that meet their needs.** | | | | |
| Strategy 7.10.1 | Fix and upgrade existing parks and recreational facilities to good standards. | Capital Project | Recreation and Parks | Board of Trustees | Medium-term |
| Strategy 7.10.2 | Ensure the RAB report is regularly updated to identify needs for upgrades or new recreational fields/facilities. | Future Study | Recreation and Parks | | Ongoing |
| Strategy 7.10.3 | Consider further consolidation of Department of Recreation and Parks services between the Village and the Town. | Programming or Partnership | Recreation and Parks | Town of Ossining | Medium-term |
| **Objective 7.11** | **Ensure open space and natural resources are recognized and protected.** | | | | |
| Strategy 7.11.1 | Develop an open space and natural resources inventory for the Village. | Future Study | Recreation and Park | Board of Trustees | Medium-term |

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**Chapter 8: Housing and Neighborhood Preservation**

| # | Strategy | Type | Responsible Party | Partners | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective 8.1** | **Preserve and Upgrade Existing Housing** | | | | |
| Strategy 8.1.1 | Facilitate the preservation and upgrade of existing affordable units. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department<br>Affordable Housing Developers | Medium-term |
| Strategy 8.1.2 | Create a strategy for more consistent enforcement of building code violations. | Policy or Regulation | Building Department | Board of Trustees<br>Planning Department | Medium-term |
| Strategy 8.1.3 | Maintain a current inventory of affordable units in the Village. | Policy or Regulation | Building Department | Planning Department | Ongoing |
| Strategy 8.1.4 | Continue to utilize the Landlord/Tenant Relations Council. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Landlord/Tenant Relations Council<br>Planning Board<br>Planning Department | Ongoing |
| **Objective 8.2** | **Create New Affordable Housing** | | | | |
| Strategy 8.2.1 | Continue to attract new development that provides affordable housing. | Programming or Partnership | Planning Department | | Ongoing |
| Strategy 8.2.2 | Consider permitting accessory dwelling units in all single-family and two-family districts, or some sub-set of zones. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Medium-term |
| Strategy 8.2.3 | Consider trade-offs between increasing the affordable housing set-aside and increasing development incentives to encourage investment. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Medium-term |
| Strategy 8.2.4 | Create opportunities for affordable homeownership. | Programming or Partnership | Affordable Housing Developers | Board of Trustees<br>Planning Department | Medium-term |
| **Objective 8.3** | **Create opportunities to provide "missing middle" housing** | | | | |
| Strategy 8.3.1 | In the Two-Family (T) Districts, allow two-family as-of-right and three-family by special permit. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Short-term |
| Strategy 8.3.2 | Create a new MF-3 zone to allow low-density multi-family and townhomes in neighborhoods near downtown. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Medium-term |
| **Objective 8.4** | **Attract Market-Rate Development to Attract New Residents to Ossining** | Programming or Partnership | Planning Department | | Ongoing |
| **Objective 8.5** | **Preserve the Unique Qualities of Ossining's Neighborhoods** | | | | |

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| Strategy 8.5.1 | Consider designation of Neighborhood Preservation Districts. | Policy or Regulation | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Medium-term |
| **Objective 8.6** | **Monitor Housing & Community Trends that Change as a Result of COVID-19** | Future Study | Planning Department | | Ongoing |

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**Chapter 9: Cultural and Historic Resources**

| # | Strategy | Type | Responsible Party | Partners | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective 9.1** | **Support and facilitate the growth of local artists and cultural organizations.** | | | | |
| Strategy 9.1.1 | Build momentum around the Sing Sing Prison Museum. | Programming or Partnership | Sing Sing Prison Museum | | Ongoing |
| Strategy 9.1.2 | Explore the idea of creating a coordinating entity for arts & culture in Ossining. | Programming or Partnership | Ossining Arts Project | Arts and Cultural Institutions | Medium-term |
| Strategy 9.1.3 | Update and build upon the inventory of arts and culture resources created by the OAP. | Programming or Partnership | Ossining Arts Project | | Medium-term |
| Strategy 9.1.4 | Create a cultural venue downtown that would both benefit from and support a restaurant cluster. | Capital Project | | | Long-term |
| Strategy 9.1.5 | Make the waterfront a prime location for outdoor events. | Programming or Partnership | Ossining Arts Project | Board of Trustees Town of Ossining | Medium-term |
| Strategy 9.1.6 | Increase public art displays and showcase the talent of local artists. | Capital Project | Ossining Arts Project | Board of Trustees | Long-term |
| **Objective 9.2** | **Encourage preservation and adaptive reuse of historically and architecturally significant buildings.** | | | | |
| Strategy 9.2.1 | Gather funding for historic preservation efforts. | Programming or Partnership | Board of Trustees | Historic Preservation Commission | Medium-term |
| Strategy 9.2.2 | Publicize the availability of federal and state funding for privately-owned historic structures. | Programming or Partnership | Board of Trustees | Historic Preservation Commission | Medium-term |
| Strategy 9.2.3 | Promote and facilitate adaptive reuse of historically and architecturally significant buildings. | Capital Project | Planning Department | | Medium-term |
| **Objective 9.3** | **Celebrate Ossining's cultural and historic resources through tourism promotion.** | | | | |
| Strategy 9.3.1 | Assess the viability of developing a historic and cultural tourism program for the Village. | Programming or Partnership | Board of Trustees | | Medium-term |
| Strategy 9.3.2 | Identify possible central venues to host the Ossining Visitor Center. | Future Study | Board of Trustees | Planning Department | Medium-term |
| Strategy 9.3.3 | Promote "The Museum on the Streets" initiative. | Programming or Partnership | Historic Preservation Commission | | Ongoing |
| **Objective 9.4** | **Continue supporting community services organizations.** | | | | |
| Strategy 9.4.1 | Ensure community organizations are listened to and supported. | Programming or Partnership | Board of Trustees | | Ongoing |

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# Appendix: Sea Level Rise Projections Maps

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Public Meeting Draft
March 1, 2021

Source: Columbia University Hudson River Flood Impact Decision Support System Version 2

Figure 1: Northern Waterfront - Current Floodplain and Sea Level Rise NYSDEC 2050s Projections

Public Meeting Draft
March 1, 2021

Source: Columbia University Hudson River Flood Impact Decision Support System Version 2

Figure 2: Northern Waterfront - Current Floodplain and Sea Level Rise NYSDEC 2080s Projections

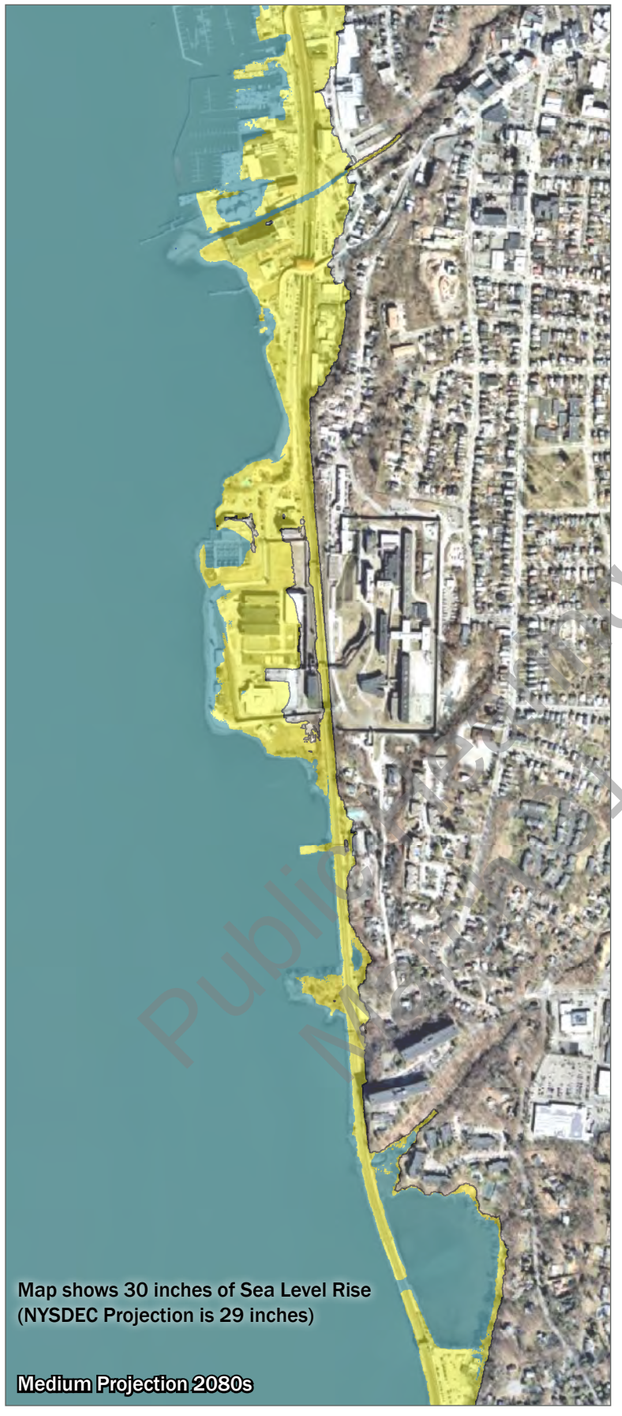
Public Hearing Draft
May 11, 2021

100-Year Floodplain

Estimated Sea Level Rise

Source: Columbia University Hudson River Flood Impact Decision Support System Version 2

Figure 3: Southern Waterfront - Current Floodplain and Sea Level Rise NYSDEC 2050s Projections



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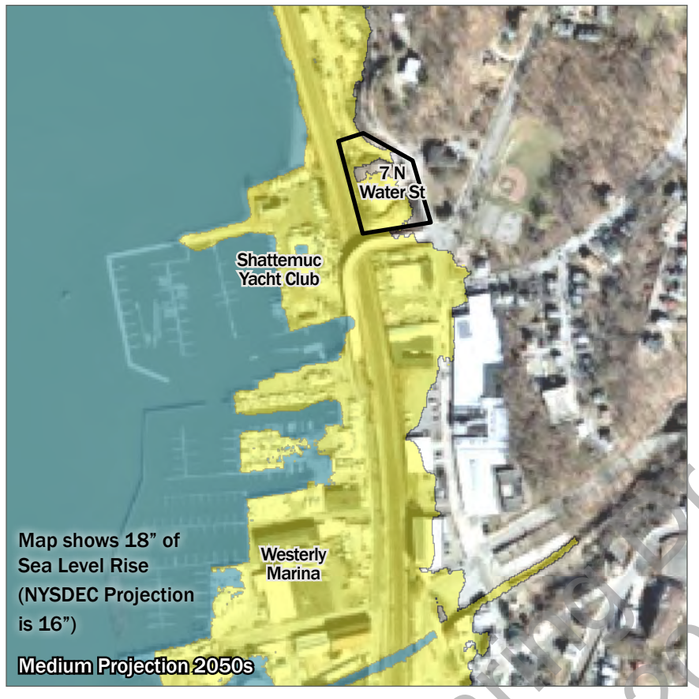
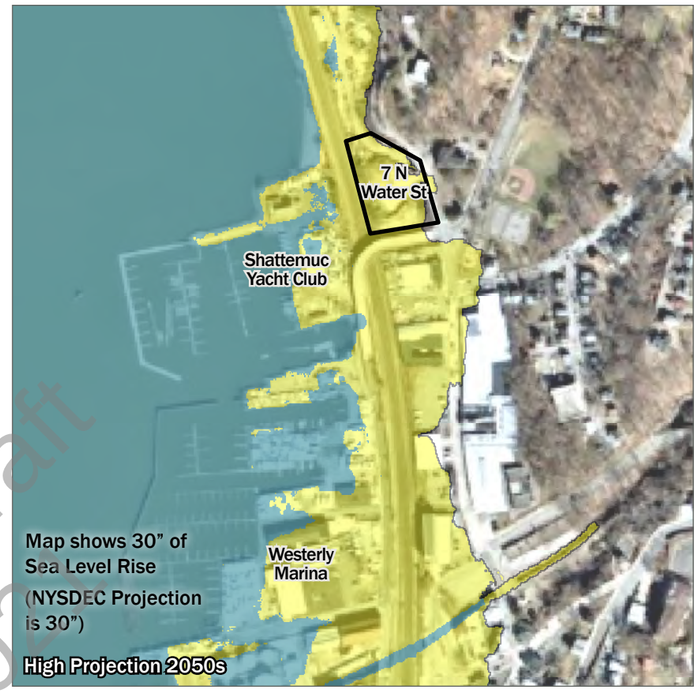
100-Year Floodplain

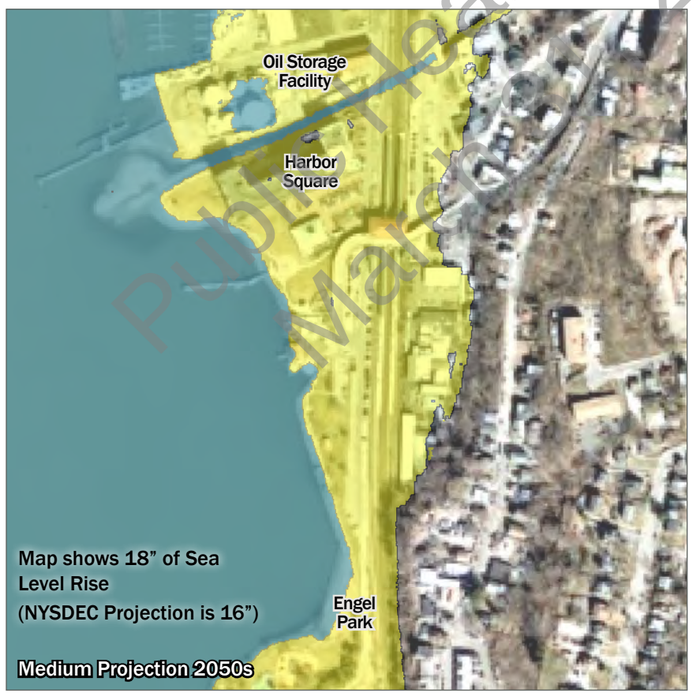
Estimated Sea Level Rise

Source: Columbia University Hudson River Flood Impact Decision Support System Version 2

Figure 4: Southern Waterfront - Current Floodplain and Sea Level Rise DEC 2080s Projections





Source: Columbia University
Hudson River Flood Impact
Decision Support System Version 2

Figure 5: Northern Marina (top) and Central Marina (bottom) - Current Floodplain and Sea Level Rise NYSDEC 2050s Projections

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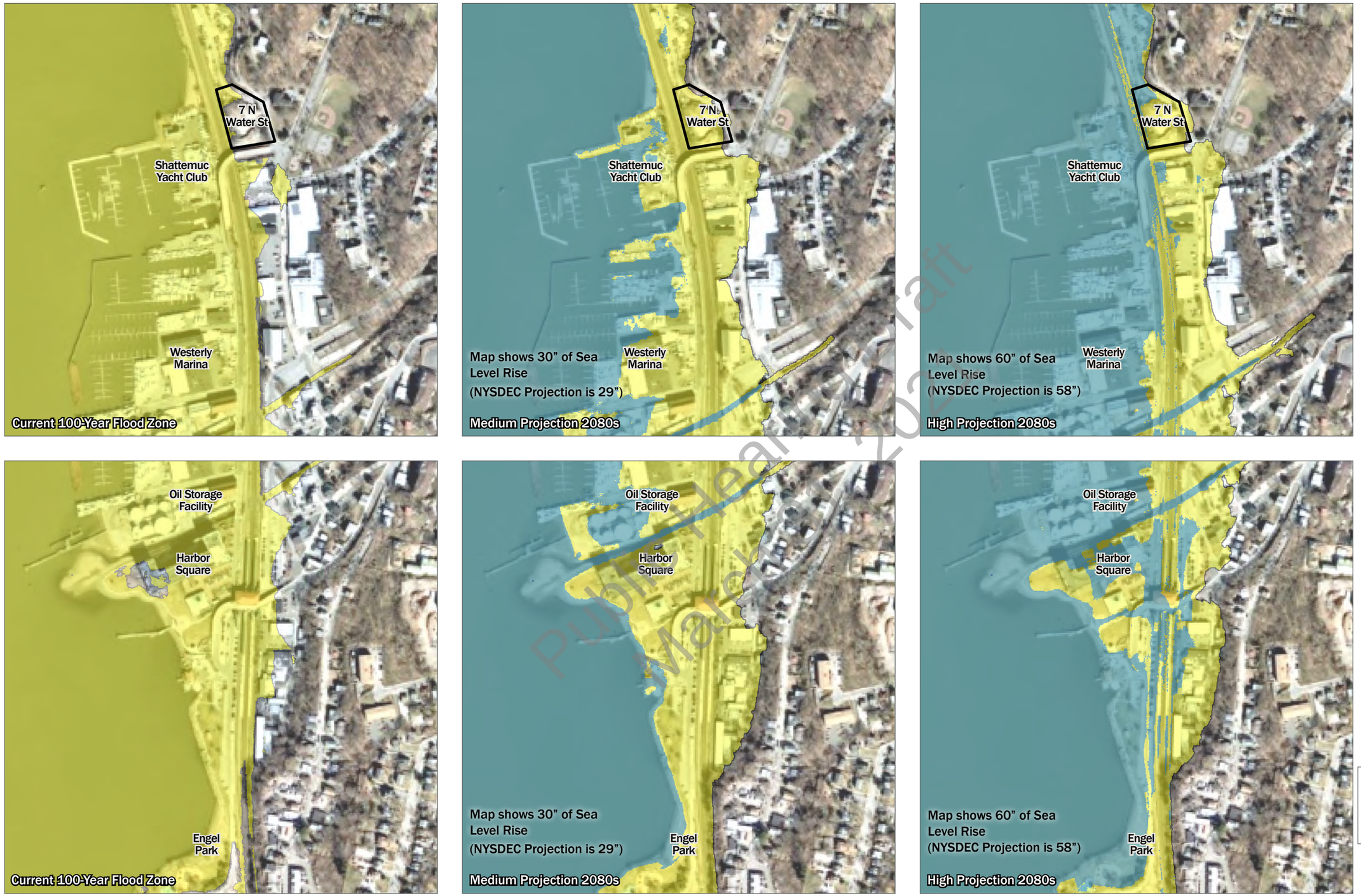


Figure 6: Northern Marina (top) and Central Marina (bottom) - Current Floodplain and Sea Level Rise NYSDEC 2080s Projections

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Figure 7: Central Waterfront (top) and Sing Sing Correctional Facility (bottom) - Current Floodplain and Sea Level Rise NYSDEC 2050s Projections

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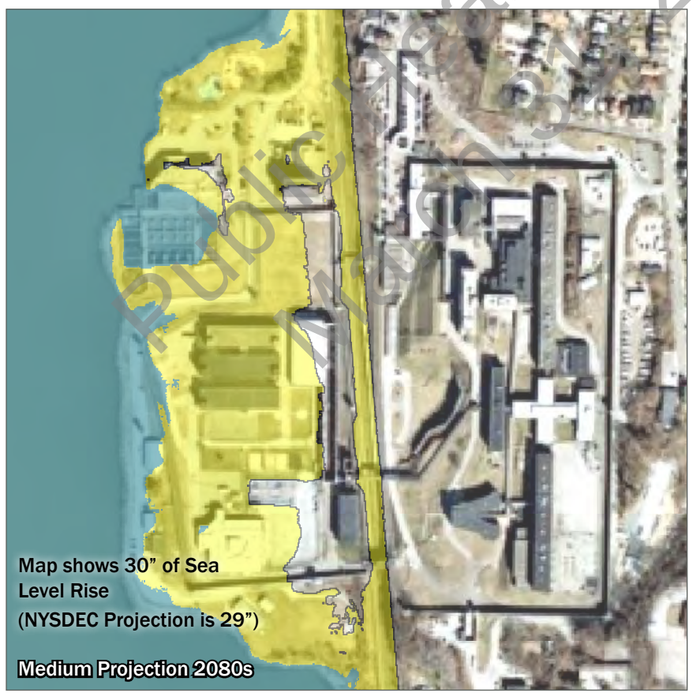
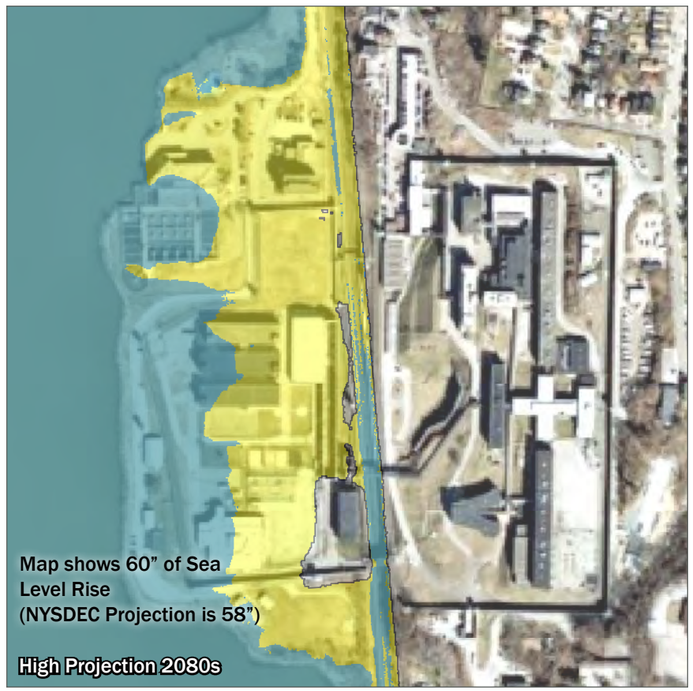
November 2021




100-Year Floodplain

Estimated Sea Level Rise

Source: Columbia University Hudson River Flood Impact Decision Support System Version 2

Figure 8: Central Waterfront (top) and Sing Sing Correctional Facility (bottom) - Current Floodplain and Sea Level Rise NYSDEC 2080s Projections

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