

VILLAGE OF OSSINING,  
NEW YORK  
COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN







**VILLAGE OF OSSINING  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

VILLAGE OF OSSINING,  
WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK

Prepared for:  
The Village of Ossining

Prepared by:  
**Village of Ossining Comprehensive Plan  
Steering Committee**

With:

**Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.**  
Planning and Real Estate Consultants  
434 Sixth Avenue  
New York, New York 10011

July 2009

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Village of Ossining Board of Trustees  
Mayor William R. Hanauer  
Janis Castaldi  
Marlene Cheatham  
Michael Curry  
Susanne Donnelly  
Village Manager Linda G. Cooper

Village of Ossining Department of Planning  
Valerie Monastra, AICP, Village Planner

Village of Ossining Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee  
John Codman, III, Chair  
Joyce M. Lannert, AICP, Vice Chair  
Joy Solomon, Secretary,  
Environmental Advisory Committee  
Gordon D. Albert, Former Director,  
Interfaith Council for Action  
Catherine Borgia, Former Village Trustee  
Karen D'Attore  
Antonio DaCruz  
John W. Fried  
Jerry Gershner, President, Greater Ossining  
Chamber of Commerce, Inc.  
Reverend Stephen Holton, St. Paul's-on-the-Hill  
Episcopal Church  
Alice Joselow, Board of Education Trustee  
Dana Levenberg, Board of Education Trustee  
Linda Levine, Interfaith Council for Action, Inc.  
Rose Marie Parisi  
Elaine White  
Bobby Williams

Affordable Housing Sub-Committee  
Valerie Monastra  
John Codman, III  
Gordon D. Albert  
Linda Levine  
Rose Marie Parisi  
Elaine White

Infrastructure and Transportation Sub-Committees  
Valerie Monastra  
Karen D'Attore  
Reverend Stephen Holton  
Alice Joselow  
Dana Levenberg

Downtown, Waterfront and Economic  
Development Sub-Committee  
Valerie Monastra  
Joyce M. Lannert  
Joy Solomon  
Antonio DaCruz  
John W. Fried  
Jerry Gershner

Neighborhood Quality of Life Sub-Committee  
Valerie Monastra  
John Codman, III  
Alice Joselow  
Dana Levenberg  
Rose Marie Parisi

In cooperation with:  
**Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.**  
Elizabeth Leheny, Project Director  
John Shapiro, Principal-in-Charge  
Charles Starks, Zoning Specialist  
Namiko Kimura, GIS Specialist  
Elizabeth Jordan, Graphic Artist

**Stantec**  
**Stephen Tilly Architect, Inc.**

# Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. VILLAGE OVERVIEW	7
3. THE WATERFRONT	17
4. THE DOWNTOWN CRESCENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	41
5. TRANSPORTATION	61
6. SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE	73
7. AFFORDABLE HOUSING	81
8. NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE	97

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Population Trends, 1990 To 2005 9

Table 2: Family Trends, 1990 to 2000 9

Table 3: Population and School Enrollment Trends, 2000 to 2006 9

Table 4: Tenure by Year Householder Moved Into Unit, 2000 10

Table 5: Overall Ossining Population by Race and Origin, 1990 and 2000 10

Table 6: Median Household Income in The Village and County, 2000 10

Table 7: Employment Status For Population and Over, 2000 11

Table 8: Employment by Industry for Population and Over, 2000 11

Table 9: Breakdown of Land Uses in the Crescent 43

Table 10: Downtown Parking Supply 54

Table 11: Current Hours and Charges for Parking in the Village 56

Table 12: Recommended Changes to the Existing Business Zoning 59

Table 13: Area Median Income Per Households in Westchester County, 2007 85

Table 14: Workforce Wages vs. Homeownership Costs (Housing Costs Gap Analysis) for a Four-person Household 85

Table 15: Affordable Housing Needs for the Village of Ossining 88

Table 16: Existing Affordable Housing in the Village of Ossining 89

Table 17: Westchester County Affordable Housing Allocation—Percentage of Residents Living at or Below 80 Percent of Area Median Income and County Affordable Housing Obligation for the Village of Ossining, Neighboring Towns and Westchester County 94

Table 18: Ossining Landmarks on the State/National Registers of Historic Places 99

Table 19: Ossining Parks and Open Spaces 104

Table 20: Comparison of Ossining’s Active Recreational Facilities Compared to Need on the Basis of

**LIST OF MAPS**

Existing Land Use 12

Existing Zoning 13

Proposed Parks and Greenways in the Waterfront Area 25

Steep Slopes 28

Proposed Traffic Circulation in the Waterfront Area 31

Existing Zoning 33

Proposed Zoning 39

Downtown Opportunities 51

Downtown Parking Supply 55

Proposed Traffic Circulation in the Downtown Crescent 57

Proposed Zoning 60

Indian Brook Reservation 75

Percentage of Houses with more than One Person Per Room (by Block Group) 86

Houses without Plumbing Facilities (by Block Group) 87

# 1. Introduction





The Village of Ossining is proud of its historic, scenic and socially diverse character. It is quite unlike the homogeneous majority of Westchester County. Although only situated within three square miles, Ossining has a population of approximately 24,000 people and contains an assortment of land uses, social diversity and an abundance of public amenities. The Village is almost completely developed and offers a good quality of life. The Village, located on the eastern shore of the Hudson River 30 miles north of New York City, is also one of a number of river towns with older industrial/waterfront and historic/downtown areas in need of investment and poised for a revival complete with significant public amenities. To the north and northeast, the Village borders the Town of Ossining and to its south and southeast it borders the Village of Briarcliff Manor. The Hudson River forms the western boundary of the Village of Ossining and provides three miles of Riverfront land. Spectacular views of the water and the pristine Hudson Palisades are offered throughout the Village, even in locations remote from the River's shores.

Ossining was incorporated as the Village of Sing Sing in 1813, but changed its name to Ossining in 1901 to distance itself from the already infamous prison that still dominates the Village's waterfront. Though Ossining has periodically updated its zoning code over the years, a comprehensive plan for its development has not been prepared since 1959. There have been other planning initiatives throughout the



years including:

- Comprehensive Development Plan for the Village of Ossining, 1969.
- Urban Renewal Plan for the Central Renewal Area, 1971.
- Rehabilitation Feasibility and Historic Preservation Study of the Crescent-Main Street Area, 1975.
- Waterfront Redevelopment Plan, 1977.
- Village Center Planning Program Central Renewal Area, 1977.
- Architectural Lifelines: Working with Historic Buildings in Ossining, NY, 1978.
- An Urban Cultural Park Management Plan, 1985.
- Proposed Land Use Plan for the Village of Ossining, 1987.
- A Local Waterfront Redevelopment Plan, 1991.



- A Main Street and Waterfront Plan, 1994.
- The Downtown Ossining Vision Plan, 1998.

However, in view of the market, real estate and demographic changes of the past decade, Village leaders decided that the preparation of a comprehensive plan should at last be undertaken.

### **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

Ossining is not just a special place historically, topographically and socially; it has a special sense of community. This plan recognizes and builds on that sense of community. It is truly a co-venture between the consultants (as out-of-towners) and the residents (as the true experts). The goal is to draft a plan that captures the enthusiasm of Ossining as a community, and can hold the Village in good stead for decades to come.

In 2005, the Village of Ossining created a Comprehensive Plan Committee whose charge it was to help provide community insight into the development of the Comprehensive Plan (“the Plan”). In May 2006, the Village of Ossining Planning Department mailed Community Surveys to 11,500 residents of the Village seeking input on housing, shopping, recreation, the local economy, Village services, redevelopment, quality of life, and other community topics; in addition to residents’ level of community involvement and some demographic information. Many questions afforded opportunities to respond and comment,

with an additional unrestricted comment page. Typically, the response rate for mail surveys is fairly low (around 2 percent), though Ossining gave cause for optimism given the 4 percent response rate for the Village-wide recreation survey conducted in 2001. Of the 11,500 surveys mailed, 1,436 were returned accounting for an excellent response rate of nearly 13 percent. Of those 1,436 surveys, more than half of the people took time to fill out the “Additional Comments.”

In summer 2006, the Village Board of Trustees selected Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc. (PPSA) to serve as the comprehensive plan consultants. PPSA began with gathering background data and information, aided by the Village Planning Department, which provided Geographic Information System (GIS) data on existing land uses, environmental constraints, and residential density; and provided prior planning reports. Demographic and economic information was obtained. The Planning Department gave PPSA walking and driving tours in which critical issues were highlighted. PPSA then met with a number of Village entities, including the Building Department, Parks and Recreation Department, Village Manager, the Village Treasurer, and other Village officials as well as activists.

With this baseline of information, and over the next nine months, PPSA worked in an iterative process with the Comprehensive Plan Committee and the Planning Department. PPSA began by conducting a S.W.O.T. analy-

sis with the Comprehensive Plan Committee where participants were asked to identify Ossining’s strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities, threats and ideas for the future. PPSA and the Committee subsequently led a community-wide S.W.O.T. analysis. The results of both analyses revealed that four major topic areas were of utmost importance to the Village:

- Waterfront, downtown and economic development.
- Traffic and infrastructure.
- Affordable housing.
- Neighborhood quality of life.

The Comprehensive Plan Committee subdivided into four Sub-Committees devoted to each of these four topics. PPSA, the Sub-Committees and Village staff conducted additional research.

A brainstorming workshop was then conducted on each of the four topics. The workshops were publicized in local newspapers, distributed in the backpack flyer program through the Ossining Union Free School District, posted on the Village website, and placed on the Village message boards. Attendance at the workshops included the Comprehensive Plan Committee and representatives of the relevant Sub-Committees. The public was invited to review major issues associated with each topic and to discuss proposed strategies to address these issues. The single-purpose agenda for each workshop, preceded by research and tours, provided the opportunity to delve deep into the potential recommendations. Copies of the PowerPoint presentations for each workshop were posted on the Village website.

The topical workshops were as follows:

- On January 4, 2007 in the Joseph G. Caputo Community Center: over 100 people attended the first workshop devoted to affordable housing in the Village, particularly the preservation and creation of affordable housing.
- On March 1st in the Park School Cafeteria: over 60 members of the public attended the second workshop held focusing on infrastructure and transportation.
- On March 29th in the High School Library: over 50 people attended the third workshop spotlighting the economic development of the downtown and waterfront redevelopment.
- On April 26th in the Community Center: over 60



people attended the fourth workshop centered on neighborhood concerns, architecture, and historic preservation.

From the outset, priority was placed on outreach to Ossining’s substantial, but too often under-represented minority and immigrant communities, in addition to merchants – all of whom do not normally attend evening workshops. The surveys were distributed in Spanish as well as English; as were invitations to workshops. Some of the downtown merchants were interviewed as part of the downtown land use survey. In the winter of 2006, the Planning Department led five “focus group” sessions with participants from:

- The Ossining Chamber of Commerce.
- The Ossining High School Participation in Government classes.
- The Ossining Golden Agers (a Seniors club).
- The Star of Bethlehem Baptist Church (which has large African-American participation).

- The St. Ann’s Catholic Church (which has large Hispanic participation).

After each workshop, PPSA drafted recommendations based on all of the research and public feedback to date. The recommendations were reviewed, distilled and revised by each Sub-Committee. Then on June 4th and 11th of 2007, PPSA presented the resulting joint recommendations at two community workshops attended by over 50 people each. The first workshop reviewed recommendations for Affordable Housing and Infrastructure (including Water Resources, Traffic, and Transportation); the second workshop presented recommendations for Waterfront and Downtown Development and Redevelopment, Historic Preservation; and Neighborhood Quality of Life (including Overcrowding and Residential Zoning Requirements). The Planning Department provided paper copies of the recommendations at each workshop and posted the recommendations on the Village website, as well as PowerPoint presentations from each workshop. A public comment period for approximately one month followed these recommendations’ workshops. Residents sent 27 separate correspondences (with 140 signatures) to the Planning Department. A draft of the Comprehensive Plan was made available to the public in November 2007 and was the subject of two additional public presentations held at the Ossining Public Library on November 29, 2007 and December 3, 2007.

## DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

The next chapter provides background information on the Village’s existing demographics and land use. The remainder of the Comprehensive Plan is comprised of six chapters addressing the following topics:

- Waterfront.
- Downtown.
- Transportation.
- Infrastructure.
- Housing.
- Neighborhood quality of life.

As noted, these topics were selected early on by the Village of Ossining as the elements around which the Comprehensive Plan should be organized, instead of the typical plan elements such as land use, transportation and community facilities. This approach enabled in-depth analysis of the most pressing issues facing the Village and allowed for the review of the proposed strategies to approach these issues including:

- Guidelines for waterfront redevelopment to provide a mix of land uses that economically support the Village, maximize public access to the riverfront, and preserve view corridors.
- Revitalization strategies for downtown that build upon the existing diverse, successful restaurant offerings that draw people from all over the Village and Westchester County.
- Traffic management techniques along arterials, traffic-calming along residential streets, and throughout the Village, improvements to the pedestrian and bicycling experience and public transportation system.
- Environmentally and fiscally sound tools to increase the capacity of Ossining’s aging infrastructure to meet the future needs of the Village, with particular focus on water quality and quantity.
- Affordable housing policies, with equal emphasis on maintaining and upgrading existing units while working to create new units in combination with market rate housing.
- Methods to protect the quality of life in residential neighborhoods in order to preserve those unique qualities that drew residents to the Village.

Each chapter includes the approach to implementation of the many recommendations set forth. These include recommending zoning changes to the Village’s Zoning Code, as well as actions that should be taken by various Village agencies and other entities.

## SUMMARY BY TOPIC

### WATERFRONT

*Vision: To redevelop the waterfront area by maximizing the Hudson River as the Village’s defining visual, open space and recreational amenity, while at the same time promoting mixed-use development that will supply economic support to the community.*

#### Objectives:

- Maximize public enjoyment of the waterfront.
- Make Ossining a destination, especially for low-impact boating and other water-oriented uses.
- Provide amenities, services and attractions that will draw people to the waterfront.
- Ensure environmentally smart development.
- Preserve public views of the Hudson River and Palisades.

- Preserve the historical architectural features in the area.
- Improve circulation to and through the waterfront area.
- Rewrite the zoning for the waterfront areas.

#### **DOWNTOWN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

*Vision: To increase visitors to the downtown Crescent by building on its historic architecture, soaring views of the Hudson, pedestrian-friendly scale and ethnic and socio-economic diversity.*

##### **Objectives:**

- Promote Ossining as a desirable place to do business, focusing on regulatory reform and capacity building.
- Create a unique dining and shopping destination to attract residents and visitors, both during the day and at night.
- Promote and enhance downtown amenities and character.
- Address perceived and actual parking problems.
- Promote economic development outside the Crescent area.
- Update existing business district zoning by creating new zones.

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

*Vision: To modify roadways, enhance pedestrian qualities, and improve public and local transit to make Ossining more environmentally sustainable and better able to offer its residents alternatives to a car-dependent lifestyle.*

##### **Objectives:**

- Improve traffic conditions throughout the Village, particularly on Route 9.
- Enhance walkability and bike-ability throughout the Village.
- Improve mass transit options.

#### **INFRASTRUCTURE**

*Vision: To ensure that land and building development in the Village of Ossining are environmentally sustainable.*

##### **Objectives:**

- Maintain quality and expand capacity of the Village’s water system.
- Improve stormwater management.

#### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

*Vision: To protect Ossining’s social diversity by providing housing opportunities for young families, long-time residents, people employed within the Village and Seniors.*

##### **Objectives:**

- Preserve and upgrade existing housing.
- Create new affordable housing.
- Provide for the administration of affordable units.
- Create an affordable housing fund.
- Be strategic in regional affordable housing needs and support.

#### **NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE**

*Vision: To protect the physical and social qualities that make Ossining a safe, diverse, affordable, and pleasant community.*

##### **Objectives:**

- Protect the Village’s valuable historic resources.
- Preserve the unique qualities of Ossining’s neighborhoods.
- Protect Ossining’s existing parks and open space, and plan for more.
- Make Ossining more “green.”
- Alleviate Ossining’s residential overcrowding problems.
- Address inadequacies in the current zoning.

The Comprehensive Plan provides an overall vision for the Village of Ossining for the next ten to twenty years, in order to enhance the attractiveness and desirability of Ossining as a place to live. A number of actions need to be taken by various entities for this vision to become a reality. Responsibility for each recommended strategy is provided in the succeeding chapters. The Village Board will commit to reexamining the Comprehensive Plan and its contents every five years, in order to assess and address the continued relevance of the Plan. In addition, the funding for various recommendations draws from a variety of sources, not just the Village of Ossining. That said, given the fact that markets change and some circumstances cannot be foreseen, the Village Board should commit to reexamining the Comprehensive Plan and its contents every five years, in order to assess and address the continued relevancy of the Plan.

# 2. Village Overview



## HISTORY

Due to its location and topography, Ossining benefits from a rich heritage – much of which remains in its built environment, place names, and lore.

Prior to the arrival of Europeans in the seventeenth century, present day Ossining was inhabited by a Mohegan Tribe named “Sint Sinck,” which translates to “stone upon stone” and 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 the much larger Manor of Philipsburg that extended from Spuyten Duyvil at the northern tip of Manhattan in the south 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, for the Sint Sincks. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the Sing Sing hamlet was a successful port, and in 1813, Sing Sing became the first State-chartered incorporated village in Westchester County. The construction of a prison which came to be known as Sing Sing on the shores of the Hudson River in 1825 led most outsiders to conflate the Village with the infamous prison. So, in 1901, the Village of Sing Sing changed its name to Ossining to distinguish itself.

During the nineteenth century diverse manufacturing developed. The best known was the patent medicine works of Dr. Benjamin Brandreth, “the pill factory.” Many Italian immigrants settled in the Village to work in the marble quarries. Swedish immigrants also found their way to Ossining during religious “revivals” held during the summer. After 1900, the population of the Village surged. By the end of the nineteenth century the Village was home to just over 7,000 people; by 1950 that number had risen to 16,000 people, and today is over 24,000 people. Throughout, Ossining has been a diverse community—quite unusual in Westchester County—welcoming immigrants first from Europe and more recently from Latin America. Ossining also has a thriving African-American population that has called Ossining home for many generations.

## CURRENT POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Since 2000, the population of the Village of Ossining has seen a slight decline, but has still seen overall growth since 1990. The population of the Village saw a 6 percent increase between 1990 and 2000, but has declined 2 percent since 2000, with a 2005 population of approximately 23,500 people (See Table 1). The Village population at first grew at a faster rate than the County, but has since declined markedly in comparison to the County.

The discrepancies between the population changes of the 1990s and 2000s (thus far) are illuminated in Table 2, which shows the total change between 1990 and 2000 in number of families (up by 4 percent); average family size (up by 3 percent); and number of school-aged children (up by 23 percent). An examination of how the respective numbers compare relative to total populations indicate that the proportion of families living in Ossining declined slightly in the 1990s (less than 1 percent), but the number of school-aged children in the population increased (by about 2 percent). These changes suggest that the size of families was larger in Ossining in 2000 than 1990, which is further corroborated by the increase in average household size. When comparing Ossining to Westchester County the Village is consistent with the County in percent increase in number of families.

Behind the gross changes are significant changes in the composition of Ossining’s population. Table 4 indicates that over 65 percent of the Village’s 8,200 households in 2000 moved to the Village in the 1990s.

Ossining has a remarkably diverse population in terms of race, which became more evident over the course of the 1990’s. As noted in Table 5, in 1990 approximately 70 percent of the population described themselves as white. By the year 2000, that number decreased to 60 percent. The African-American population seemed to decrease in the 1990s from 23 percent to 20 percent. Meanwhile, the Hispanic-Latino population underwent a significant increase from 16 percent at the start of the decade to almost 28 percent by the year 2000. In all likelihood, the African-American population was really stable, and the Hispanic-Latino population grew even more. This is because the new “Other Races or Two or More Races” category of the U.S. Census cap-

**Table 1: Population Trends, 1990 To 2005**

	1990	2000	Percentage Change	2005	Percentage Change
Village of Ossining	22,582	24,010	+5.95%	23,547	-1.97%
Westchester County	874,866	923,459	+5.26%	940,807	+1.84%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, Census 1990; and Westchester County Data Book.

**Table 2: Family Trends, 1990 to 2000**

	1990 Total	Percent of 1990 Population (22,582 persons)	2000 Total	Percent of 2000 Population (24,010 persons)	Percent Change of Totals 1990-2000	Percent Change Relative to Population Size 1990-2000
<u>Village of Ossining</u>						
Families	5,157	22.8%	5,343	22.3%	3.6%	-0.6%
Average Family Size	3.09	N/A	3.17	N/A	2.5%	N/A
School-Aged Children (Aged 5 to 17 years old)	2,813	12.5%	3,474	14.5%	23.5%	2.0%
	1990 Total	Percent of 1990 Population (874,866 persons)	2000 Total	Percent of 2000 Population (923,459 persons)	Percent Change of Totals 1990-2000	Percent Change Relative to Population Size 1990-2000
<u>Westchester County</u>						
Families	227,827	26.0%	235,201	25.5%	3.2%	-0.6%
Average Family Size	3.16	N/A	3.21	N/A	1.6%	N/A
School-Aged Children (Aged 5 to 17 years old)	132,551	15.2%	166,555	18.0%	25.7%	2.9%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 Population Estimates, Census 2000, 1990 Census

tures a significant number of people who would otherwise describe themselves as either African-American or Hispanic.

As shown in Table 6, Ossining’s median household income of \$52,200 in 2000 was approximately 18 percent less than Westchester County’s median of \$63,600. Table 6 reveals that most households earning less than the median income are households younger than 35 years old and households older than 65 years old. This statistic later underlines the point of focusing on workforce and senior affordable housing strategies (which does not necessarily involve new construction).

**Table 3: Population and School Enrollment Trends, 2000 to 2006**

	1999-2000	2005-2006	Percent Change
Total Population of the Village of Ossining	24,010	23,578	-1.80%
Total Enrollment at the Ossining Union Free School District	3,864*	4,179	8.2%

\*Note: The enrollment numbers differ slightly from the Census 2000 numbers listed above in Table X due to the fact that children enrolled in school may be under 4 years old or over 17 years old.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 Population Estimates, Census 2000; and the Ossining Union Free School District Proposed 2007-2008 General Fund Budget.

**Table 4: Tenure by Year Householder Moved Into Unit, 2000**

	Village of Ossining	Westchester County
Owner-occupied:	4,287	202,765
Moved in 1999 to March 2000	458	16,605
Moved in 1995 to 1998	1,017	44,657
Moved in 1990 to 1994	672	31,927
Subtotal for 1990 to 2000		
Moved in 1980 to 1989	900	42,201
Moved in 1970 to 1979	597	31,859
Moved in 1969 or earlier	643	35,516
Renter-occupied:	3,940	134,377
Moved in 1999 to March 2000	1,272	30,337
Moved in 1995 to 1998	1,470	47,888
Moved in 1990 to 1994	518	21,094
Subtotal for 1990 to 2000		
Moved in 1980 to 1989	384	16,397
Moved in 1970 to 1979	241	10,882
Moved in 1969 or earlier	55	7,779
Total for owner- and renter-occupied	8,227	

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.



**Table 5: Overall Ossining Population by Race and Origin, 1990 and 2000**

	1990		2000		Change	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Village population	22,582	100.0%	24,010	100.0%	1,482	6.3%
White	15,836	70.1%	14,520	60.4%	-1,316	-8.3%
Black or African-American	5,214	23.0%	4,858	20.2%	-356	-6.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	430	1.9%	1,007	4.0%	577	134.1%
Other races/two or more races*	1,102	4.8%	3,625	15.0%	2,523	228.9%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)**	3,692	16.3%	6,654	27.7%	2,962	80.0%

\*The category "two or more races" was not available prior to the 2000 Census.

\*\*Many people describe themselves as Hispanic or Latino and White/Hispanic or Latino and Black

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 and Census 1990.

**Table 6: Median Household Income in The Village and County, 2000**

Median Household Income, 2000	
Village of Ossining	Westchester County
\$52,185	\$63,582

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

**Table 7: Employment Status For Population 16 and Over, 2000**

	<i>Village of Ossining</i>	<i>Westchester County</i>
In labor force	11,618	452,517
Employed	11,218	432,600
Unemployed	400	19,817
Unemployment rate	3.44%	4.38%
Not in labor force	8,008	263,735

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

**Table 8: Employment by Industry for Population 16 and Over, 2000**

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	16	0.1
Construction	978	8.7
Manufacturing	655	5.8
Wholesale trade	312	2.8
Retail trade	982	8.8
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	333	3.0
Information	608	5.4
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	956	8.5
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	1,603	14.3
Educational, health and social services	2,681	23.9
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	749	6.7
Other services (except public administration)	860	7.7
Public administration	485	4.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

Based on the 2000 Census, a total of 11,600 residents were in the workforce and among them 3.4 percent were unemployed, almost a full percentage point lower than the County rate (See Table 7).

Table 8 indicates that close to 25 percent of the total employed population works in educational, health and social services. Close to 15 percent work in professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services. The unemployment rate is relatively low—nearly all of Ossining’s working population is employed.

**LAND USE**

Ossining is essentially fully developed, though there are opportunities for redevelopment. There are limited vacant parcels throughout the Village, but obsolescent uses and infill sites are concentrated on the waterfront and in the downtown. A map showing existing land uses in Ossining in 2006 is included on the following page. A map showing the Village’s existing zoning follows the land use map. Approximately 94 percent of the total area of the Village is classified residential; 4 percent is classified as open space; and 2 percent is classified as non-residential.

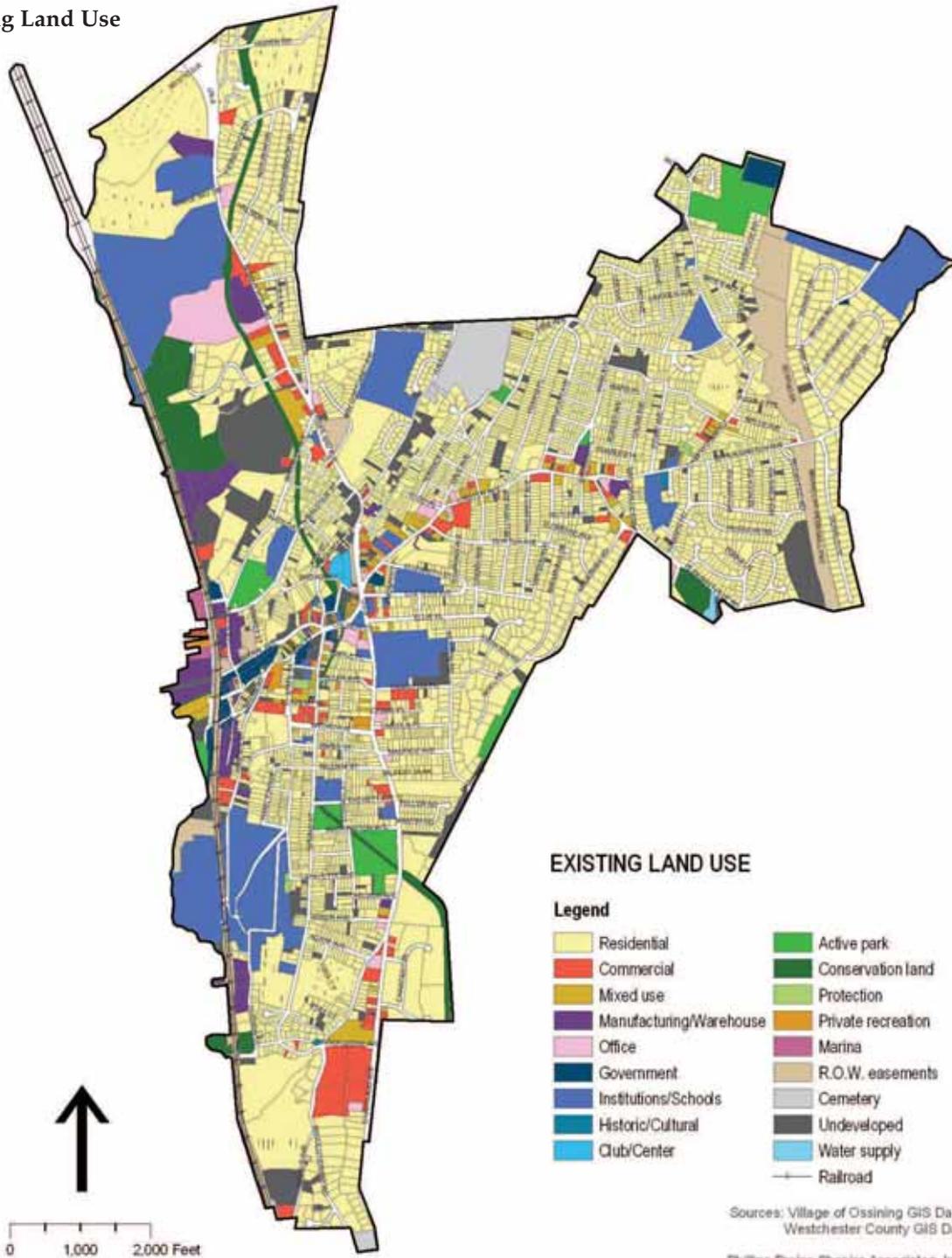
There has been an increase over the last decade in subdivisions of single-family homes to two-family homes and multifamily apartments. Some of these conversions are legal, others are not. Enforcement issues related to these illegal units are detailed in the Neighborhood Quality of Life chapter.

**CONSISTENCY OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WITH OTHER PLANNING INITIATIVES**

Other urban planning initiatives in which Ossining participates include the following:

- The Village of Ossining is a member of the Historic River Towns of Westchester (HRTW), a consortium of 13 municipalities along the east bank of the Hudson River including (from north to south): Peekskill, Cortlandt, Buchanan, Croton-on-Hudson, Town and Village of Ossining, Briarcliff Manor, Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown, Irvington, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings-on-Hudson and Yonkers. The HRTW is a non-profit organization comprised of representatives of the municipalities to coordinate comprehensive plans and tourism marketing efforts. Westchester County produces technical support and funding for HRTW tourism related activities. (The Comprehensive Plan calls for continued membership and participation in HRTW in the Waterfront chapter.)
- In the 1980s, the Ossining Urban Cultural Park (UCP), now known as a State Heritage Area (SHA), was one of eighteen such parks designated by the State of New York. Included within the boundaries of the SHA were portions of the Croton Aqueduct including the historic weir chamber and double arches, the downtown Crescent area and the water-

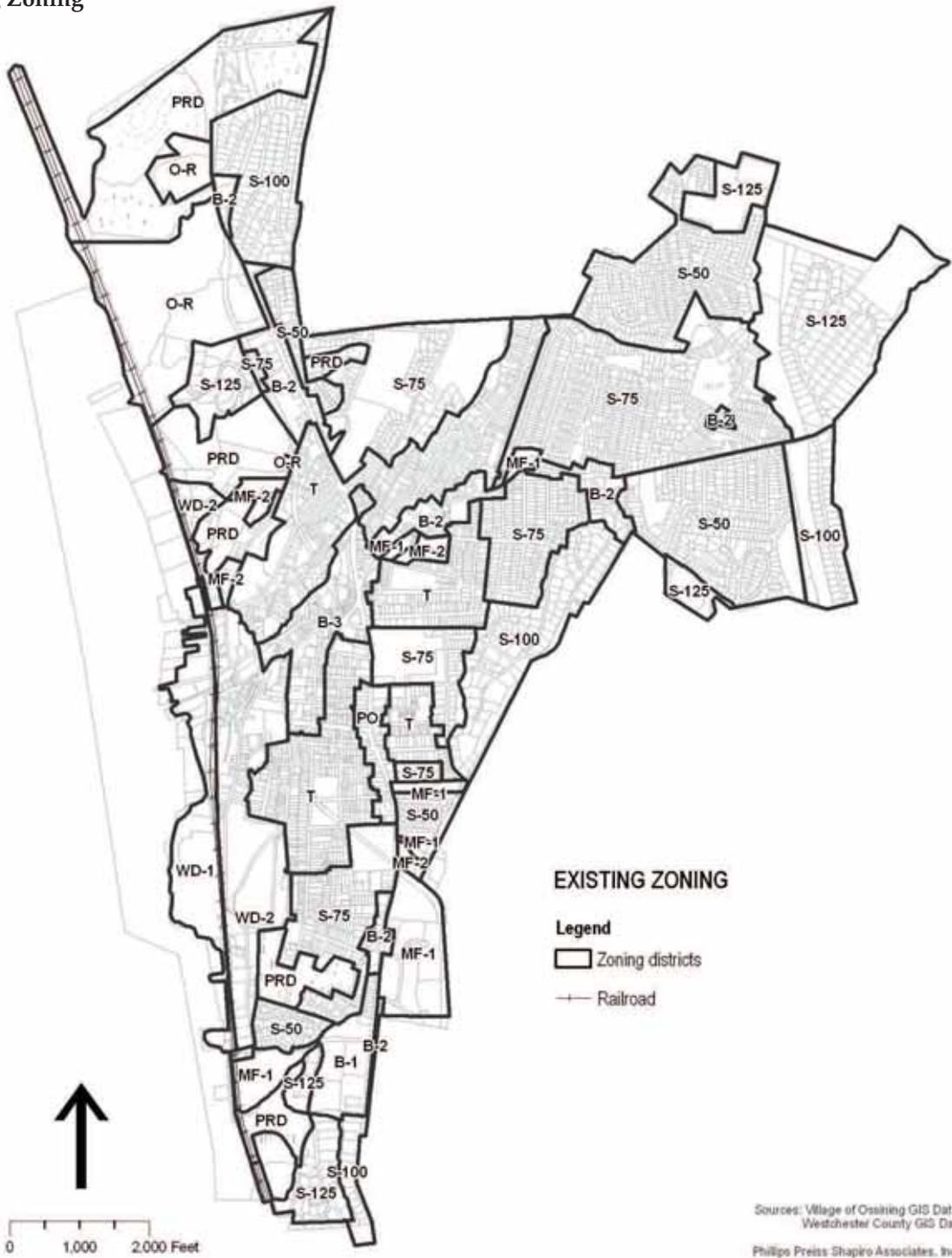
Existing Land Use



front area from the train station south to Sing Sing Correctional Facility incorporating the 1825 cell-block. The unifying theme of the Ossining SHA was “the role of reform in the growth of urban America as exemplified by New York City — the need for water for the City which led to the con-

struction of the Old Croton Aqueduct (public health reform and municipal service reform); the need for prison reform as a result of social upheaval which led to the construction of Sing Sing Correctional Facility.” The plan for the area called for public access to these sites, to spur tourism and

Existing Zoning



Sources: Village of Ossining GIS Data  
Westchester County GIS Data  
Philip Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.

to raise civic pride. (The Comprehensive Plan concurs with these plans in the Waterfront chapter.)

- In 1991, Ossining produced a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), which is both a planning document prepared by the community, as well as the program established to implement the

plan, and was created in partnership with the New York State Division of Coastal Resources. In connection with LWRP, a municipality develops community consensus regarding the future of its waterfront, and refines State waterfront policies to reflect local conditions and circumstances. The LWRP is a

locally prepared, land and water use plan and strategy for a community’s natural, public, working, or developed waterfront through which critical issues are addressed. Once approved by the New York Secretary of State, the LWRP serves to coordinate State and federal actions needed to assist the community in achieving its vision. As a program, a LWRP is the organizational structure, by which local laws, projects and on-going partnerships that implement the plan. (The Comprehensive Plan integrates the LWRP into its recommendations in the Waterfront and Downtown and Economic Development chapters.)

- The Village of Ossining is also a Greenway Compact Community. The Greenway planning approach is to think regionally / plan locally. The Greenway was established by the State of New York by the Hudson River Valley Greenway Act of 1991, to facilitate the development of a voluntary regional strategy for preserving scenic, natural, historic, cultural and recreational resources while encouraging compatible economic development and maintaining the tradition of home rule for land use decision-making. The Greenway is a voluntary regional cooperation among 242 communities within 13 counties bordering the Hudson River. Communities join the Greenway Compact by adopting the regional Greenway Compact prepared for their area. The Greenway has designated the counties as the basic planning areas for the development of the Greenway Compact. In June 2005, the Hudson River Valley Greenway approved the Westchester County Greenway Compact Plan, The Greenprint for Sustainable Future. (The Comprehensive Plan integrates the Greenway Compact Plan into its recommendations in the Waterfront and Neighborhood Quality of Life chapters.)
- The Village of Ossining is also part of the Greenway Water Trail. In 2001, the State granted the Hudson River Valley Greenway monies to



establish a Hudson River Water Trail stretching from Battery Park in the upriver Village of Waterford to Battery Park City at the southern tip of Manhattan. The trail will provide access for kayaks, canoes and small boats along 156 miles of the Hudson River. This program recognizes and designates communities that protect and celebrate their heritage, use their historic assets for economic development and community revitalization and encourage people to experience and appreciate local historic resources through education and heritage tourism programs. (The Comprehensive Plan calls for all of the above in the Waterfront, Downtown and Economic Development, and Neighborhood Quality of Life chapters.)

- Westchester County Patterns, now Westchester 2025, is an initiative of the County Planning Department and the Westchester County Planning Board to respond to the challenge of working within the multi-jurisdictional and sophisticated environment of Westchester County by promoting intergovernmental cooperation and urging participation of County municipalities in regional and sub-regional planning efforts. The County Planning Board adopted a document entitled “Context for County and Municipal Planning in Westchester County and Policies to Guide County Planning”. The document contains the 15 major policy goals that underlie the recommendation for Westchester 2025. They are as follows:

- Channel development to centers.
- Enhance transportation corridors.
- Assure interconnected open space.
- Nurture economic climate.
- Preserve natural resources.
- Support development and preservation of permanently affordable housing.
- Support transportation alternatives.
- Provide recreational opportunities to serve residents.
- Protect historical and cultural resources.
- Maintain utility infrastructure.



- Support vital facilities.
- Engage in regional initiatives.
- Define and protect community character.
- Promote sustainable technology.
- Track and respond to trends.

(The Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the current Westchester 2025).

- Westchester County Affordable Housing Allocation Plan 2000-2015 was released in 2004 and assigns each municipality a number of affordable units to provide by the year 2015. The County’s allocation methodology revolves largely around smart growth principles, assigning affordable units in areas with jobs and bus transportation. The specific five factors taken into consideration include:
  - Land area of the municipality.
  - Municipal employment growth over the past ten years.
  - Relative wealth of its citizens.
  - Number of overcrowded units.
  - The availability of public transportation, meas-

ured by Bee-Line bus mileage as a percentage of County-wide mileage.

(The Ossining Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the recommendations of this Plan, although exception is taken with the Plan’s methodology as is detailed in the Affordable Housing Chapter.)

In sum, the Village of Ossining Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the above plans, in nearly all their particulars.

**CONSISTENCY OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WITH NEIGHBORING COMPREHENSIVE PLANS**

The Town of Ossining’s Comprehensive Plan which is a vision for the growth of its community contains the following goals:

- Neighborhoods are maintained and housing opportunities made available.
- Natural resources, open space, scenic attributes and historic sites are preserved.
- An array of appealing services, parks and events

are provided.

- Business areas and activities are thriving in a vibrant atmosphere.
- The transportation network addresses the needs and safety of vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle travel.
- Quality of life is maintained, including allocating resources to protect it.

The Proposed Action compliments the recommendations and visions of this plan.

The Village of Briarcliff Comprehensive Plan has the following goals as part of its Comprehensive Plan:

- 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.

The Proposed Action compliments the recommendations and visions of this plan.

# 3. The Waterfront



Image from the Hudson Valley Arts and Science Inc. [www.ossining.org](http://www.ossining.org)

## Vision

*No longer dependent on the Hudson for commerce, industry or transportation, residents are now drawn to the river for recreation, relaxation and contemplation. Careful planning for the redevelopment of the waterfront must maximize public enjoyment of and recreation along the riverfront; protect the vulnerable aesthetic, historic and natural features of the area; preserve upland as well as riverside views of the river and Hudson Palisades; provide public parks and esplanades; encourage water-dependent and water-related uses; ensure attractive and appropriately scaled architecture; provide a mix of uses that supplies economic support for the Village; and address community concerns for affordable housing.*





## INTRODUCTION

The Hudson River forms the western boundary of the Village of Ossining, providing three miles of riverfront land. Spectacular views of the water and the pristine Hudson Palisades are offered throughout the Village even in locations remote from the river’s shores. In the Community Survey and workshops, residents cited proximity to the Hudson River as the most popular reason for residents to choose to live in Ossining, and the waterfront was identified as the most significant “special place” in the community.

The story of Ossining is, in many ways, the story of its waterfront. Historically, the river was a place for trade, commerce and recreation, as well as institutional penalization. These diverse, at times contradictory, uses resulted in a waterfront area that was spliced up, parceled off, and left disjointed – the ramifications of which are still felt today.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, cattle, agricultural and other goods were brought from farms around the area down Main Street to the water’s edge in the vicinity of the present day train station for shipment by boat to New York City and beyond. Just to the south was the thriving community of Sparta, with its own busy dock located north of where Sparta Brook empties into the Hudson. The nineteenth century also saw the village and its waterfront areas become a des-



tinuation for regional Methodist revivals in “camps” during the summer. The frame houses currently found on Campwoods Road are vestiges of these camps.

In 1825, these two riverfront destinations were peremptorily split by the construction of Sing Sing Correctional Facility which eventually took over 55 acres of prime riverfront real estate. The introduction of the railroad through Ossining in 1849 separated the upland community from the river, both physically and economically. The railroad – not the river – became the primary carrier of goods and people and further encouraged the development of industry and warehousing along the rail line and river. Among the best known was the patent medicine works of Dr. Benjamin Brandreth, who operated out of his pill factory on Water Street.

Due to the presence of the railroad and industry, residents had (and still have) sparse opportunity to use the

river for fishing, canoeing, sailing or swimming. Although at-grade railroad crossings were initially common, the increase in rail traffic and speed through the years necessitated that the railroad be fenced off. It is only traversed via two vehicle bridges at Secor Road and Broadway, and by a pedestrian-only footbridge at the Scarborough Station south of Sparta. Currently, enjoyment of the river for recreational purposes is available only on a few parcels: Engel Park, the Ossining Boat and Canoe Club, Shattemuc Yacht Club, and Westerly Marina. Respondents to the Community Survey stated that public waterfront access is the most important requirement of any redevelopment plan, despite the fact that, or maybe because only a small percentage of respondents indicate that they now utilize the river.

In the past five decades, in Ossining as throughout the northeast, trucks have taken over from trains and barges as the main carriers of manufactured goods in the United States. Industry and warehousing now seek highway locations. Railroad lines on river locations are no longer necessary, and survive mainly by inertia or the lack of alternatives. This in turn opens up the opportunity for the redevelopment of waterfronts for recreational, commercial, and especially residential uses – which are of high value thanks to the greater interest of suburbanites in mixed-use environments with transit, park and other assets within walking distance. In Ossining, the proof is in the One Harbor Square project, a new mixed-use development that includes 150 new residential units, 10,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space, a park and promenade. Many residents have expressed the fear that this project is a forewarning of a future where access to and views of the waterfront would be blocked by private development.

Sometimes lost in all of the concerns and pressures for riverfront redevelopment is the fact that the area holds some of the most environmentally sensitive lands in the Village – including land prone to floods, steep slopes, freshwater ravines, marshland, and lands contaminated by years of industry. While largely obsolete for industrial uses, the riverfront has a trove of nineteenth century structures worthy of preservation, if for no other reason than they lend the area its authenticity.

Directly downhill from downtown and historic Sparta, and anchored by two train stations, the riverfront can be the key to further vitalization of upland neighborhoods, especially downtown. The Village must maximize opportunities for public access to and enjoyment of the riverfront and ensure that any new development be appropriate to its site, not significantly interfere with others’ enjoyment of the river, conserve as much of the historic and natural character of the area, be environmentally sensitive, link the waterfront to Ossining’s downtown, and preserve the existing water-dependent uses.



**OBJECTIVE 1:  
MAXIMIZE PUBLIC  
ENJOYMENT  
OF THE RIVERFRONT**

Public access to the waterfront is impeded by the railroad tracks, the State-run Sing Sing Correctional Facility (“Sing Sing”), the County wastewater treatment plant, and other development that does not provide for public enjoyment of the waterfront.



The railroad is the single largest barrier between the Village and the waterfront. The railroad was largely constructed on fill placed along the water’s edge and only in a few places is there enough land west of the tracks for buildings or recreational uses. These uses are reached via two vehicular bridges: one at the base of Broadway, and the other at the base of Secor Road at the Ossining train station. The Ossining train station is sited so as to be one full story above the level of the tracks. The purpose was to eliminate the danger of crossing the tracks at-grade.



### SIDEBAR: RiverWalk

The Westchester County RiverWalk is a planned 46.6-mile pathway paralleling the Hudson that links village centers, historic sites, parks and river access points via a connection of trails, esplanades and boardwalks. It spans 14 municipalities in Westchester, from the Town of Cortland border with Putnam County south to the City of Yonkers border with New York City, and is part of the Hudson River Valley Greenway system. RiverWalk will be developed through a series of projects constructed by the County, local municipalities and other entities, including private developers. Due to riverfront obstructions such as Sing Sing and the County Treatment Plant, as well as the ownership of private property along the water, the County planned for RiverWalk to travel through Ossining along the riverfront, where possible and along the existing Aqueduct trail and Village streets, where riverfront land was currently inaccessible to the public.



Since the old Croton Aqueduct, a linear park, already runs through the Village there are many alternatives for the path of RiverWalk because the RiverWalk can link to the Old Croton Aqueduct at any point throughout the Village. The Village is still in the process of defining the path of RiverWalk through the Village. The County Plan intends for the portion of the trail to begin at the north end of the Village at the "Crossing" bike/pedestrian path over the Croton River outlet to the Hudson River. The trail would continue south along the west side of Route 9 and the intersection near Audubon Drive, where the trail begins to follow the historic Old Croton Aqueduct south for 1.2 miles to the Main Street intersection in Downtown Ossining.

Preliminary Village plans, based off of the original County Plan, has the trail continuing from Route 9 and heading towards the Mariandale Conference and Retreat Center of the Dominican Sisters of Hope, who, in 2006, started working with the Village and the County to create a 20- to 30-foot wide easement around the perimeter of their property for RiverWalk, and connect with the Crawbuckie trail. The trail at the Mariandale property would also connect with the Old Croton Aqueduct trail in the northern end of the property, which one could take to Main Street. The

southern connection would traverse through Crawbuckie and connect with either Water Street or Snowden Avenue. It would then cross over the Metro-North tracks at the intersection of Snowden Avenue. The trail would go south on Westerly Road, pass through the future public park at the One Harbor Square development, then cross over the railroad tracks at the Ossining Metro-North train station to Main Street. There is also a link to the existing promenade at Louis Engel Park, but the existence of the prison facility and wastewater treatment obstruct further development of the promenade at this time and, to avoid these two land uses, the current route would essentially stop at Engel Park and loop back to Main and eastward to Hunter Street, before running south again. The Village is looking at alternatives that would hopefully include RiverWalk along Sing Sing and the Westchester County Wastewater Treatment Plant properties in the future. This would include a potential alternate route directly on the waterfront, south of Engel Park through the wastewater treatment plant, Sing Sing Correctional facility and Metro-North lands to Sparta Park. This alternate route would require construction of a new bridge to cross over MTA's property from the Sparta Park waterfront to Liberty Street, as well as an agreement with the New York State Department of Corrections to use its waterfront property.

From the Ossining station waterfront area, the route would proceed south along Hunter Street, then winds down the Sing Sing Correctional Facility Perimeter Access Road. At State Street, the route would continue south along Lafayette and Spring Streets to Liberty Street and Sparta Park. The County planned for the trail to continue from Sparta Park along Hudson Road, Liberty Road, Rockledge Avenue, Revolutionary Road and Kemey Avenue to the Village line near Scarborough Station. However, the Village is investigating to see if a portion of RiverWalk can be developed between the railroad tracks and the River along the shoreline between Scarborough Station to Sparta Park.

*Source: Westchester County Department of Planning and Village of Ossining Department of Planning.*

Sing Sing and the County wastewater treatment plant also present barriers along the riverfront. The State-owned Sing Sing holds 20 acres along the river on the east side of the railroad tracks (which had not yet been laid when the prison began construction). Adjacent to the prison is the Ossining Wastewater Treatment Plant, which was completed in 1983, which is County-owned and operated. The two facilities represent a significant disruption for any riverfront walkway, including the County's own proposed RiverWalk and State's proposed Hudson River Valley Greenway.

Putting aside these three barriers beyond the Village's control, new development or substantial redevelopment should provide as much public access to the waterfront as is practicable. There are four main parks in the waterfront area: Crawbuckie Nature Area in the northern waterfront; Snowden Park in the middle waterfront north of Ossining station; Engel Park in the middle waterfront south of Ossining station; and Sparta Park and Dock in the southern waterfront which is a Village-owned park. Sparta Dock can only be reached by water. If these parks could be connected by walks that weave along and away from the river's



edge, they could be part of a riverfront park system of abiding value to the upland neighborhoods in particular, and to all Ossining residents in general.

**Strategy 1.1:**

**Continue RiverWalk at Every Available Opportunity**

Any new development or substantial redevelopment on the waterfront should try to provide for a continuation of the RiverWalk along the Hudson.

The Village Board and Planning Board should:

- Continue to pursue developing RiverWalk within the Village boundaries at every possible opportunity by negotiating with current landowners or developers during site plan reviews.

**Strategy 1.2:**

**Provide Access Over the Railroad Tracks to Sparta Dock**

The railroad is a major barrier to the accessibility of the Hudson River for recreational use. Sparta Dock, otherwise known as Sparta Park, is 3.25 acres of waterfront land plus 0.75 acres of underwater land that is divided into two pieces by the rail tracks. The historic on-grade crossing at the tracks is long gone, and crossing the tracks is impossible at this point due to Metro-North fences and the dangerous “third rail”. To the east of the tracks is slightly over 1.5 acres of Village-owned park land bounded by private property to the north, Hudson Street to the east, Liberty Street to the south and the railroad tracks to the west. Efforts to rebuild a pedestrian bridge over the tracks to Sparta Dock have been stymied due to the exorbitant price of constructing a bridge that is compatible with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The Village Board should:

- Create zoning incentives for developers along Hudson Street to construct or maintain a pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks.

**Strategy 1.3:**

**Provide Access Over the Railroad Tracks to Engel Park**

Engel Park is a Town-owned park that is accessible via the Secor Road railroad bridge at the Ossining Station. Residents in the neighborhoods around Hunter and State Streets must follow a circuitous route down to the riverfront in order to reach Engel Park. Within the past few years, the Village took steps to provide a path through these neighborhoods to a ridge to the west of Hunter Street. However, privately-owned, industrial parcels, including Metalized Carbon (in addition to the railroad), obstruct a direct passage from this path at Hunter Street to the waterfront. Construction of a bridge leading from these neighborhoods to Engel Park would link these communities to the river – and Metro-North train station – much more directly than is now the case. The Village should also look at means to improve the current path. In effect, all of the Hunter and State Streets neighborhoods would gain from easy access to the Village’s key riverfront and transit amenities.

In the event that the Metalized Carbon property is ever redeveloped, the Village should:

- Encourage the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), which operates the Metro-North railway, to construct a parking garage for the train station at this location.
- Employ design criteria that reduces any negative visual impacts from the garage. On the west, the garage should be nestled within the hill, and confined to a height that does not obstruct views from upland homes. On the other frontages, part of the significant savings represented by open ventilation could be employed for state-of-the-art green walls. (SIDEBAR: The Vertical Gardens)
- Consider zoning for non-industrial mixed-use development on the site.
- Provide incentives for the construction of a pedes-

trian bridge that would lead from the existing path at Hunter Street through the Metalized Carbon property and over the railroad, providing a direct link between the Hunter Street neighborhood, the waterfront, and the train station. (From the MTA’s perspective, this is about enhancing rail station access and parking. From the Village’s and neighborhood’s perspective, it is about Transit Oriented Development and another gateway to the riverfront.)

- Allow residential and/or commercial/office space above the garage up to a height that would not obstruct views of the river from the Hunter Street neighborhood.
- Make the main entrance to the parking on Secor Road at the entrance to Barlow Road and opposite the proposed plaza at the foot of Main Street. Consider a secondary parking entry (perhaps only for the development’s residents or workers) at the higher Hunter Street elevation. These parking entries would reduce the traffic going across the tracks, while not adding vehicular traffic to the Hunter Street neighborhood.
- Include incentives for shared parking (commuter, riverfront visitor, and the possible tenants) in the garage. Note that the peak usages overlap better if residential – rather than offices – are built on the site.
- Promote public uses or retail at the northern grade level of the garage and/or along the trail. These might include stores, viewing platforms, health clubs, etc. Such uses would enliven the pedestrian experience and augment public safety.

**OBJECTIVE 2: MAKE OSSINING A DESTINATION FOR LOW-IMPACT BOATING AND OTHER WATER-ORIENTED USES**

Currently, there are only a few uses that are wholly dependent on their riverfront location: the Paradise Oil tank farm, Ossining Boat and Canoe Club, Shattemuc Yacht Club, Westerly Marina, and the Boathouse Restaurant, as well as Engel Park with its beach and boat launch. Industrial uses should be discouraged along the waterfront and water-dependent uses which increase residents’ enjoyment of the river should be encouraged.

**SIDEBAR: The Vertical Garden**

Vertical Gardens are greenery which can be affixed to the side of a building without doing structural damage to the building’s materials. The plants grow without any soil, and watering and fertilization are automatic. Pioneered by Patrick Blanc, the gardens use a three-part system consisting of a polyvinyl chloride layer, felt, and metal frame, providing a soil-free, self-supporting system weighing less than 30 kilograms per square meter. The benefits include improved air quality, lower energy consumption and the provision of a natural shield between weather and inhabitants.

Source: [www.verticalgardenpatrickblanc.com](http://www.verticalgardenpatrickblanc.com).



**Strategy 2.1:**

**Permit and promote water-dependent and water-related uses on the waterfront**

The Village should:

- Encourage a proper balance of water-oriented uses including access to and enjoyment of the waterfront area that will be compatible with other waterfront uses and objectives, and will promote the overall vitalization of downtown and Ossining as a residential community. These uses include marinas, boat storage, ship repair, kayak/canoe rentals, and water-oriented restaurants and retail (e.g., fish tackle stores).
- Discourage industrial uses, especially those uses that are responsible for pollution and/or interfere with public enjoyment of the riverfront area.



**SIDEBAR: Bridge of Flowers.**

The Bridge of Flowers in Shelburne, MA is a bridge that was originally constructed in 1908 to carry trolley tracks across the Deerfield River. When trolley service was ended in 1928, the bridge was neglected and soon became an eyesore. The bridge was later purchased by the local fire department and one of the town residents and his wife embarked on a fundraising drive to turn the bridge into a beautiful garden pathway. Today, its upkeep still depends largely on donations from the public and the hard work of the volunteers. About 15,000 people stroll its blooming expanse each year.

Source: [www.shelburnefalls.com/attractions/bridge.html](http://www.shelburnefalls.com/attractions/bridge.html).

**OBJECTIVE 3: PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT THAT PROVIDES AMENITIES, SERVICES AND ATTRACTIONS THAT WILL DRAW PEOPLE TO THE WATERFRONT**

**Strategy 3.1:**

**Provide Opportunities for Waterfront Recreation**

Many respondents to the Community Survey expressed a desire for more opportunities for boating, fishing and other waterfront recreation. Any new development or substantial redevelopment on the waterfront should provide for public access to and enjoyment of the riverfront regardless of the land use.

The Village Board should:

- Create zoning to encourage, through incentives, developments to provide waterfront recreational opportunities on their properties, regardless of the land use of the parcel, and to provide public access to those recreational activities and spaces when possible.

**Strategy 3.2:**

**Provide parks and recreational space wherever possible**

Existing parks and open space in the waterfront area are indicated below, from north to south:

- The Old Croton Aqueduct trail runs through the northern section of the waterfront area in a north-south direction. The aqueduct land is under the protection of the New York State (NYS) Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.
- The Crawbuckie Nature Area is a 12-acre parcel of dedicated passive park land located at the end of

Beach Road on the Hudson River side of the roadway. In 2006 the Village expanded the park with (1) a 12-acre NYS Department of Transportation property; and (2) a 15-acre parcel, 95 percent of which is underwater and of value for fishing, and the remainder consists of a small piece of sandy land above the high-water mark. Immediately to the east of the railroad is a marsh area, and east of the marsh is a steeply sloped, heavily wooded area which extends as far as Beach Road. Crawbuckie is located at the bottom of Beach Road and can be reached on foot by way of the Old Croton Aqueduct Trail or by car via Route 9.

- The Village-owned Snowden Park offers active recreational space for the neighborhoods around the park including the 124-unit Snowden House and the residential units at the Vireum building.
- The One Harbor Square project will bring with it approximately 2.5 acres of public park including fishing pier and kayak launch, and a waterfront esplanade that can be tied into RiverWalk.
- The Town-owned Louis Engel Park is a 600-foot park, totaling 1.5 acres, with a paved walk along the River’s edge. There are also two observation decks, a boat launching ramp, Ossining Boat and Canoe Club, a playground, a sandy beach-like area, and a comfort station.

In order to increase open space and recreation space in the waterfront area, the Village Board should (again, from north to south):

- Expand Snowden Park with the catty-corner, Village-owned 7 North Water Street parcel. This was the site of the former Water Street sewage

treatment plant but now lies vacant. It is just large enough to accommodate a playfield. Traffic calming, specifically crosswalks, speed bumps, and reduced speed limits, etc. could be employed to ease access between the two park elements.

- Make improvements to the Broadway Bridge so that it is more park-like and pedestrian-friendly. Through the addition of benches, sidewalks and greenery this bridge could serve not only as a connection over the railroad tracks for RiverWalk, but also as a park-like link between the proposed enlarged Snowden Park and riverfront promenade and recreation amenities. (SIDEBAR: Bridge of Flowers).
- Create a park on the tank farm owned by Paradise Oil Company, and formerly owned by Mobil Oil. The seven tanks are approximately fifty feet in height, and are currently used as a waste oil recycling transfer station whereby barges deliver oil to the tanks from New York City and trucks pick up the oil for transport upstate. The site lies within the 100-year floodplain and may require remediation, making future development costly. Future plans for a park and section of RiverWalk at One Harbor Square would tie in nicely with a park and a section of RiverWalk on this parcel which would border Quimby Street.

The Village should continue to actively support and pursue the potential expansion of the Village Dock to create the ability to provide for more waterfront recreational and tourism boating opportunities.

The Village Board should create zoning incentives for the development of parkland on two particular parcels:

- The 47 Hudson Street pier: Testwell-Craig Laboratories located at 47 Hudson Street has a right-of-way bridge over the railroad tracks to a parcel of land that juts into the river, which was formerly used as a pier and most recently as a helipad. This helipad parcel is small in size (0.25 acres) and located in the 100-year floodplain making it virtually unsuitable for development. Consistent with other goals, incentives should be offered to developers of this site to create a public park on the river accessible via a public easement involving the existing pedestrian bridge; as well as design guidelines, to assure that public views from

the adjoining road be maintained. (In addition, the size of any development should be limited mindful that the site is at the very end of a circuitous road network that would be easily taxed by major new development.)

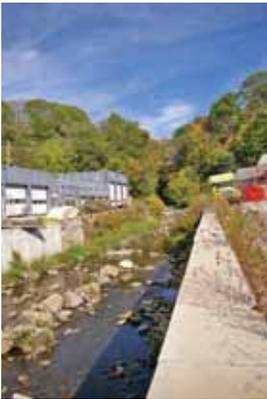
- The Kill Brook on the former Village Department of Public Works (DPW) site. East of the railroad are steep slopes and occasional deep ravines, the deepest of which is the Sing Sing Kill. The Kill can sometimes be turbulent and flows between steep, lightly wooded banks, carrying silt from its upper reaches down to the Hudson River where it forms a delta. The Kill Brook is currently not utilized by the general public because it is physically inaccessible and in need of a clean-up. If it were made physically accessible through the development of a trail, and if it were cleaned up in order to enhance its appearance, it could serve well as a nature trail linkage between the Main Street area and the waterfront. In the past, the Village has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the site and any future construction should take advantage of the natural beauty of the gorge. Developers should be offered incentives to create a public trail along the Kill Brook which would also enhance opportunities to reach the waterfront from downtown Ossining.

### **Strategy 3.3:**

#### **Make Sing Sing Correctional Facility an asset rather than a liability**

Sing Sing Correctional Facility is world-renowned, with a rich history dating back almost 200 years. The prison was established in 1825 and took its name from the neighboring Village of Sing Sing. Prisoners mined the local quarries, the products of which went into the construction of the Calvary Baptist Church on St. Paul's Place, as well as the wall on Route 9 in front of Ossining High School. The growth of the Village as an industrial center depended on local businesses, which relied heavily on convict labor.

Yet even from its early days, the most famous landmark in Ossining has engendered an ambivalence from its host community. Around 1900, the Village officially changed its name to Ossining in order to distance itself from the notorious prison and to deal with the problem that a then-recent boycott of prison-made goods that



mistakenly encompassed privately-manufactured products also made in the Village. Even today, as the community has grown more suburban, residents have mixed feelings. Traveling by train to the Village, the barbed wire fence and towering walls of Sing Sing Correctional Facility presents an unsightly and foreboding introduction to historic, suburban Ossining. Along the waterfront, the State-owned prison is a major obstacle in the plans for both County and State

river trail plans. From the upland neighborhoods, the massive, unsightly prison dominates the foreground view, detracting from the otherwise spectacular views of the river and Palisades; the sprawl of warden trailers is particularly unsightly.

As to solutions: in community workshops and surveys, residents expressed conflicting opinions. Some were adamant that the State should shut the prison down,

while others enjoyed the history and “gritty cachet” that the presence of the prison provided the Village. Some felt that the historic value of the prison could become a tourist attraction for the Village and the riverfront, while others thought the idea distasteful. Yet, in the workshops and subsequent task force meetings, a consensus seemed to emerge, mindful that what is practicable in the short term may be very different from that which is possible in the long term.

In the short term there is the potential to offset its inevitable negative impacts by incorporating the prison into the Village’s plans for attracting visitors to the waterfront area and bolster the local economy.

To start, the Village Board should:

- Seek the opportunity to discuss with the State the unsightly warden trailers and potentially replace these trailers with housing that is affordable to the employees of the prison.
- Continue to explore a possible Sing Sing Historic Prison Museum in the “1825 cell block,” which Sing Sing’s early prisoners constructed and remains the oldest part of the prison. The 1825 cell block borders the west side of the railroad tracks and is accessible from Westerly Road. The museum would help promote tourism on the waterfront and add to the historic preservation and economic development efforts in the Village. It will also complement the current RiverWalk efforts, and could share parking with the commuter railroad station, which enjoys weekday peek usage and would compliment the museum’s weekend peak usage. The Village should ensure that the design and program of a Sing Sing museum would show the utmost respect and sensitivity to the current prisoners and their families and not attempt to glorify, denigrate, or commodify the prisoner experience. This could represent the first phase of a larger and more radical vision, as discussed next.

In the long-term, the Village Board should:

- Plan for the redevelopment of the Sing Sing area. Although the State has no plans to close the prison, it may eventually occur, most likely beyond the 10 to 20 year horizon of this Comprehensive Plan, but it is not too soon to think about that contingency.

Clearly, the site’s redevelopment or substantial change should be consistent with other plans for the waterfront. These not only include the extension of RiverWalk along or through the site, but also preservation of historic structures including the walls, and reuse for large-scale tourism, consistent with what has been accomplished at the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, PA and Alcatraz in San Francisco. This would greatly boost the viability of Ossining as a stop on rivertown tours, as it would tie into other existing riverside tourist attractions that are, under a variety of plans, to share marketing and boat access.

#### **Strategy 3.4:**

##### **Create a Destination at Station Plaza, across from the Metro-North train station**

The main routes to the central riverfront – Main Street, Central Avenue and Secor Road, as well as the Metro-North train station, end with a whimper, rather than the bang that should create a sense of arrival and place. A number of modest changes to the built environment plus some radical ideas for “placemaking” can create a mixed-use public place that invites Ossining residents, commuters and visitors to come and spend time in this historic meeting place. The same elements that make the place unpleasant represent hidden assets waiting to be exploited: redundant roadbed that can be turned into café space and short-term parking; poorly maintained historic buildings that can be reused and restored and obsolescent industrial buildings and sites that could be creatively reused if only there were more public and private investment. The vision is that of the Rondout in Kingston, NY; Stone Street and the Meatpacking District in Manhattan; and Black Rock’s Captain’s Cove in Stamford. The idea is to create an attractive, but still authentic, place that people view as a destination.

The Village Board should pursue a mix of zoning, infrastructure, streetscape and roadway improvements that create a destination, including:

- Reconfiguring selected roadways to serve pedestrians and bicyclists more than or equal to vehicles. Three options should be selectively employed, either alone or together: (1) close the portion of Main Street between Water Street and Secor Road

**SIDEBAR: Philadelphia’s Eastern State Penitentiary and San Francisco’s Alcatraz**

The **Eastern State Penitentiary** is a former state prison located in Philadelphia, PA. Designed by John Haviland and opened in 1829, Eastern State’s radial design and practice of solitary confinement revolutionized the incarceration system in the United States. The Penitentiary was intended not simply to punish, but to move the criminal toward spiritual reflection and change. The prison was closed and abandoned in 1971. The City of Philadelphia purchased the property and, in 1994 it opened to the public for historic tours. Today, the Eastern State Penitentiary operates as a museum and historic site, open from April 1 through November 30, and holds many special events throughout the year.



Source: [www.easternstate.org/](http://www.easternstate.org/).

**Alcatraz Island**

Alcatraz Island is a small island located in the middle of San Francisco Bay in California. It served as a lighthouse, then a military fortification, then a military prison, followed by a federal prison until 1963, when it became a national recreation area. Today, the island is a historic site supervised by the National Park Service as part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and is open to tours. It was listed as a National Historic Landmark in 1986.



Source: [www.nps.gov/alcatraz/](http://www.nps.gov/alcatraz/).

to vehicles, except at rush hour and /or (2) use special pavers to create a road where cars drive slowly and pedestrians, outdoor cafes, etc. are more pleasant; and (3) provide street trees, wider sidewalks, pedestrian-scaled lighting, ambient lighting, and design guidelines to make walking the area comfortable at night as well as during the day. The new streetscape should respond to the historic character of the area, but perhaps with a more industrial motif. The Downtown chapter details such streetscape improvements, with the Crescent’s upgrading as the prime precedent. Strategy 7.1 below explains the circulation improvements that might make the pedestrianization of the Plaza more realizable.)

- Reconfiguring the Station Plaza parking lot, should the Metalized Carbon Property be made available for commuter parking. Substantial short-term parking could be provided to non-commuter train users, visitors to the Plaza’s restaurants, artists / artisans, and other uses (e.g., a market or antique

**SIDEBAR: The Rondout, Kingston, NY**

Kingston’s Rondout Creek waterfront is an area with many recreational activities and dining possibilities, especially during the warmer months of the year. The Rondout has undergone a period of revitalization and its waterfront park is now lined with restaurants, bars, boutiques and galleries. Two river tour operators provide access to the river, and a nearby park and beach are wonderfully picturesque locations to spend an afternoon. Kingston’s Hudson River Maritime Museum is also located in the Rondout area.

Source: *Bond Brungard, “Kingston Waterfront Comes Alive,” The Poughkeepsie Journal, 23 August 2001.*

**Stone Street, NYC**

Stone Street is a narrow, cobblestone alley first developed by Dutch colonists in the 1600s, which rests among the concrete canyons of skyscrapers and multi-tier parking garages of the Financial District in New York City. With its two neat rows of picturesque, Federal-style row houses and old-fashioned lighting fixtures, the centuries-old pathway recalls the magic and ambience of nineteenth century New York. The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) designated it as a historic landmark in 1996. Today, the historic neighborhood has reinvented itself, attracting upscale restaurants and shops and once again becoming a popular destination for tourists and New Yorkers.



Source: [LowerManhattan.info](http://LowerManhattan.info).

**Captain’s Cove, Bridgeport, CT**

Since 1982, Captain’s Cove Seaport has grown from a vacant lot and a handful of slips to one of Connecticut’s premier tourist attractions and seaport complexes. Located on Historic Black Rock Harbor, it is an active maritime and amusement center. There are quaint shops that line the boardwalk, selling everything from kites to tattoos to paintings to handmade trinkets. Also offered: scenic harbor cruises and several sea-worthy maritime exhibits, night entertainment and bands every Sunday afternoon, and lots of festivals and special events.



Source: [www.captainscoveseaport.com/](http://www.captainscoveseaport.com/).

auction house / store/ warehouse in the Metro-North transformer building at the north end of the Plaza, should it be vacated by the MTA).

- Providing zoning for renovation, adaptive reuse, and infill development, rather than land assemblage for large-scale development that would undermine the pedestrian scale of small-scale development on small parcels.



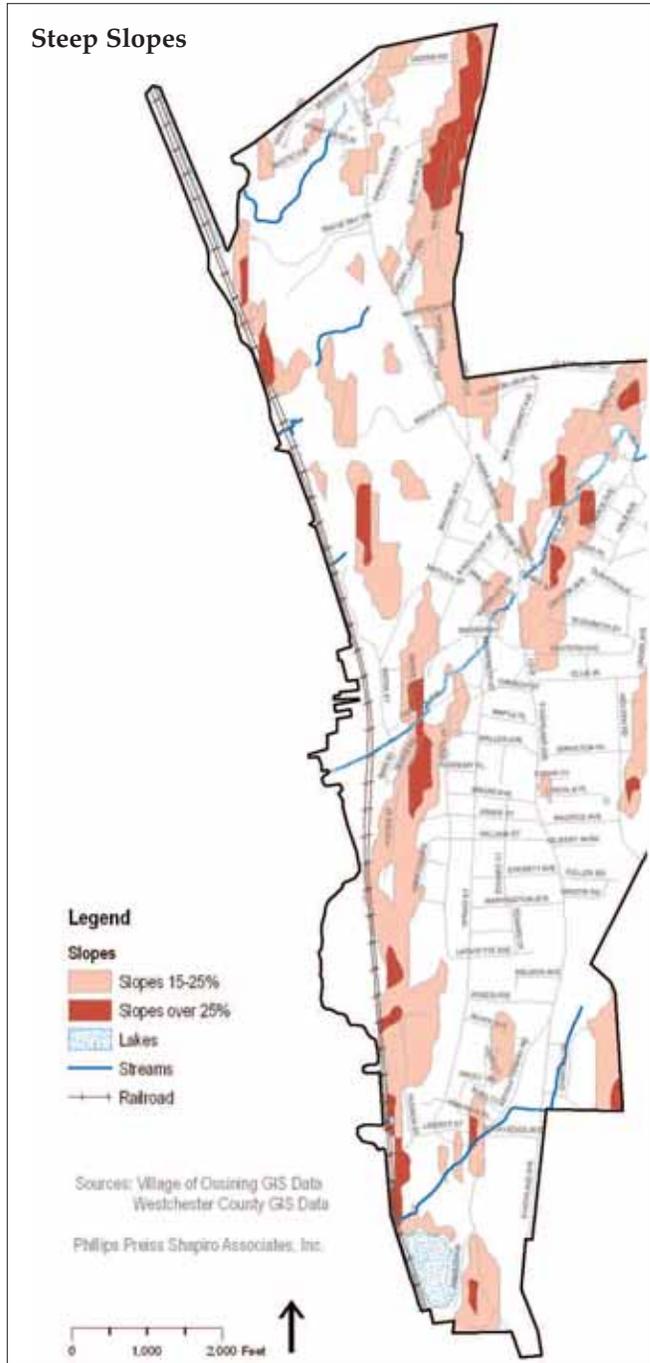
**OBJECTIVE 4: ENSURE ENVIRONMENTALLY SMART DEVELOPMENT**

The waterfront area holds some of the most environmentally sensitive land in the Village including steep slopes, wetlands, flood plains, fresh water ravines, as well as lands contaminated by years of industrial uses.

Ossining is built on hills. East of the railroad and Water Street are steep slopes, some above 25 percent. These slopes are subject to serious erosion, such as the steep embankment between Hunter Street and Barlow Lane that was the site of a landslide in the 1980s. Two ravines cut through these steep slopes, the Sing Sing Kill and Sparta Brook.

The flatland along Water Street and westward to the river is all within the floodplain, subject to a base flood elevation of 8 feet above the high-water mark of the river. This area would be underwater in the event of a “100 year storm” – which is a term for a storm that has a 1 percent chance of occurring in any given year over the course of a century. Eight feet is roughly equivalent to the ground floor of a building. Because the Hudson is tidal, Ossining’s shoreline depths vary from 2 to 9 feet, and while tides average 3 feet, they are as much as 5 feet during the spring and autumnal equinoxes.

There are wetland areas which border both sides of the railroad track between Scarborough Station and Sing Sing Correctional Facility including along Kemey’s Cove in Sparta and scattered throughout the northern portion of the waterfront north of Snowden Avenue, including along the rail lines and two acres of marshland, which is part of Crawbuckie Nature Area.



Wetlands function as a natural means of flood control, a means of water filtration, and a habitat for endangered plant and animal species.

The presence of formerly, heavily used industrial parcels dating before national and State environmental laws and standards must be taken into account in any redevelopment plan, as most of these sites likely include costly remediation of contaminated soils or “brownfields”. Garages, parking lots, paved plazas, and sometimes even other uses sited above structured parking or capping usually entail far less remediation than offices and retail, which in turn entails far less remediation than parks and housing.

Finally, a significant portion of Ossining’s shoreline is fill brought in when the railroad was constructed, which increases construction costs, especially when buildings are taller than a few stories.

Protecting water quality, streams and watercourses leading into the Hudson River, fish and wildlife, scenic views and natural vegetation should be of the utmost concern for any redevelopment plans for the waterfront, and natural, aesthetic resources should be safeguarded and enhanced to the greatest extent feasible.

The Village Board should adopt new zoning that will:

- Require the use of best management practices with respect to the protection of water quality, stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, and construction on or re-grading of steeply sloped areas. These practices include on-site water retention (e.g., green roofs) and pervious paving.
- Provide restrictions on construction on steep slopes. Construction or regrading of steep slopes greater than 15 percent but less than 25 percent should be minimized. Construction on slopes greater than 25 percent should be severely limited.
- Reconsider currently zoned permitted uses, bulk, and density in areas where brownfield redevelopment is most likely. Higher densities will be necessary in these areas to offset the potential costs of remediation and allow for viable redevelopment.
- Regulate when and how development will occur in the Village’s floodplains. Land below the minimum high-water mark of the Hudson River shall

not be deemed developable for the purposes of calculating lot area, density or coverage. All construction must meet the requirements of Chapter 142, Flood Damage Prevention.

- Mandate riverfront setbacks. No building or parking should be allowed within 50 feet of the normal high-water line of the Hudson River.

#### **OBJECTIVE 5: PRESERVE PUBLIC VIEWS OF THE HUDSON RIVER AND PALISADES**

The very slopes that provide environmental constraints for development assure stunning views of the Hudson River and majestic Hudson Palisades throughout the Village, including locations fairly distant from the shoreline itself. Any development in the waterfront area should avoid blocking views of the River and Palisades from publicly accessible, upland areas, as well as other natural environments such as Crawbuckie Nature Area. This assures that the value of the riverfront is not captured by only those few properties closest to it and that residents of (and visitors to) Ossining continue to view it as a riverfront village.

The Village Board should adopt zoning that will protect views of the Hudson by regulating:

- Building Width. The total width of buildings and the total width of development allowed on a parcel should be restricted in order to preserve view corridors. At its simplest, this argues for narrow buildings oriented in an east-west direction, though this will vary widely by site.
- View corridor preservation in site plan review. Protection of important, publicly accessible views identified by the public or Planning Board should be considered as part of the Planned Development Site Plan review process. Site layout and design should reflect these considerations and a view corridor analysis from public vantage points should be provided for Planning Board review. Eventually, the Village should survey and map all of the significant view corridors, as has been done by nearby Dobbs Ferry. Where appropriate, specific guidelines should be created to preserve these important views, thus providing applicants (and the public) with more predictable outcomes.



**OBJECTIVE 6: PRESERVE THE HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES IN THE AREA**

The waterfront is home to several historic, former industrial buildings that are currently vacant or under-utilized. These buildings currently have no local historic preservation protection. Included among them are:

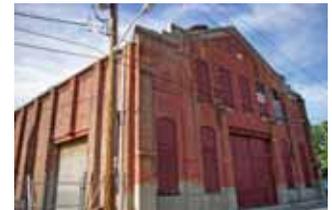
- The Brandreth Pill Factory.
- The former Mobil Oil warehouse, now used for storage by Ossining Hardware.
- The Hudson Wire Building.

There has been successful adaptive reuse of historic buildings in the waterfront area in recent years, including the Vireum property at the intersection of Snowden Avenue and Water Street. This 1870 Mansard Roof Building was once a military school, training young men for the entrance exam into West Point and Annapolis; it is now a condominium building.

The Village Board should encourage:

- The adaptive reuse of these buildings.
- The incorporation of these structures into larger redevelopment schemes.
- The adoption of preservation regulations that would protect the buildings.
- The designation of these buildings as historic and subject to local preservation laws.
- The adoption of zoning density bonus incentives for the protection and reuse of these buildings in redevelopment plans.

(Refer also to the Quality of Life chapter for details on these and other recommendations addressing historic preservation and adaptive reuse.)

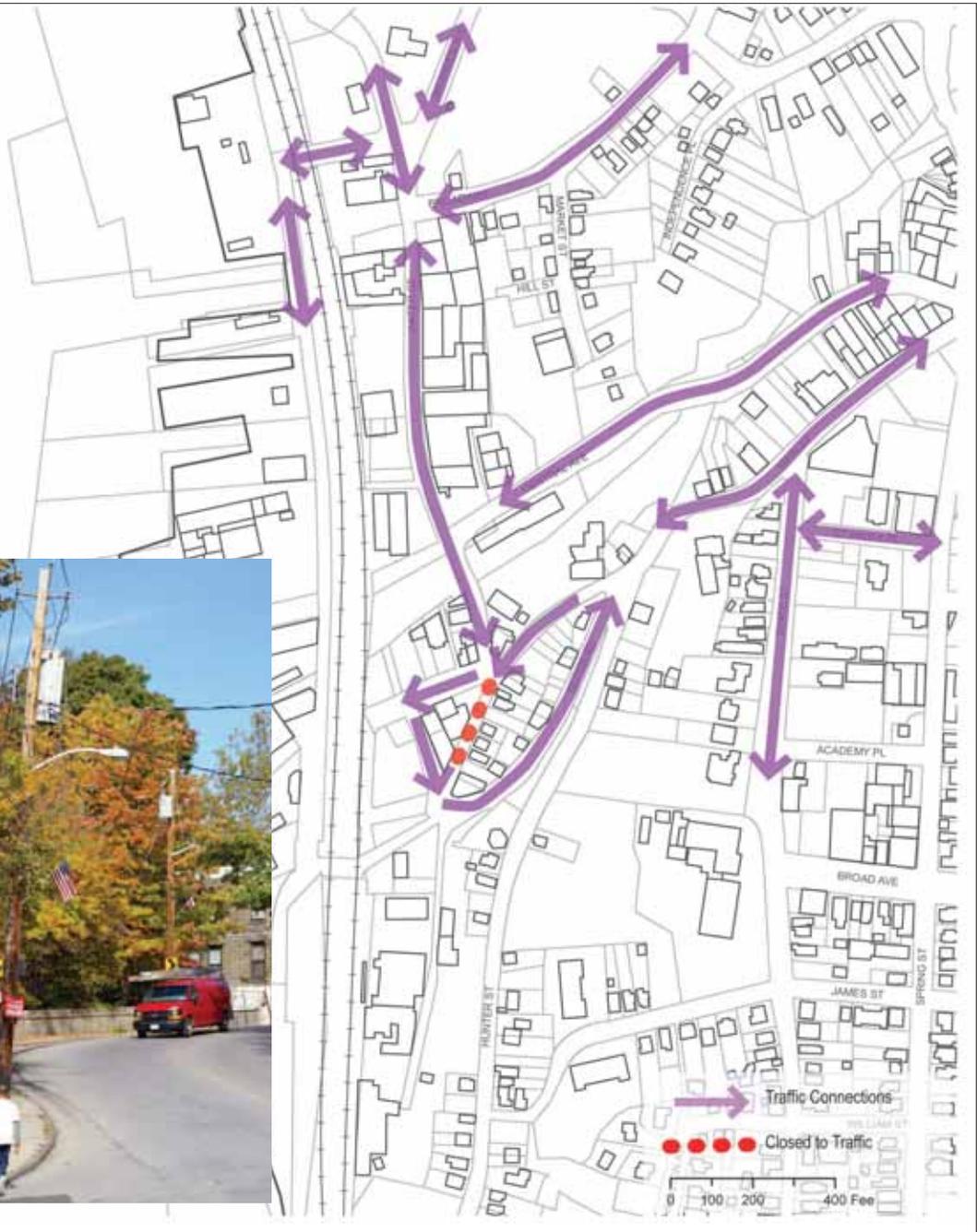


**OBJECTIVE 7: IMPROVE CIRCULATION TO AND THROUGH THE WATERFRONT AREA**

Vehicular access to the central Ossining waterfront is by way of several hilly, east-west streets. The four main arterials connecting the waterfront with downtown and/or Route 9 are Broadway, Main Street (which aligns with Secor Road just short of the riverfront), Central Avenue, and Snowden Avenue. The change in grade from Route 9 to the train tracks is over 120 feet, at times producing challenging driving conditions for motorists and daunting and unpleasant walking conditions for pedestrians. Main Street / Secor Road is the main route linking the riverfront to downtown as well as Route 9. Snowden Avenue and Main Street/Secor Road are particularly important as they align with the only vehicular bridges that cross the railroad tracks.

All four arterials accommodate two-way traffic, except for one block of Main Street between Secor Road and Water Street, which was recently made one-way west-bound in order to eliminate dangerous sightlines and turning movements. Despite this improvement, the circulation to, from and around the waterfront area could be further improved.

**Proposed Traffic Circulation in the Waterfront Area**

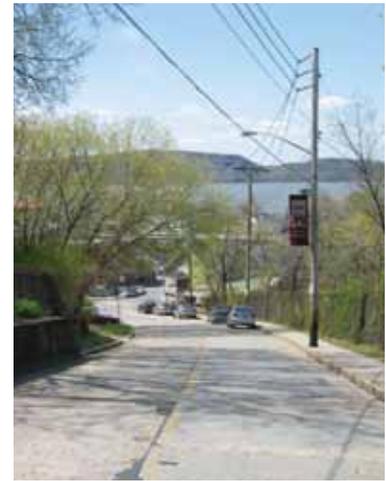


**Strategy 7.1:  
Alter the circulation of streets leading to and from the Ossining station**

In order to enhance vehicular circulation between the waterfront and the downtown area, the Village should undertake changes to these streets that would create a one-way loop that would improve access to and from the waterfront, simplify street patterns, and provide the room and ambiance needed for the redeployment of uses and public spaces. A traffic and pedestrian cir-

ulation study will be needed, but as a point of departure, the Village Board should explore the following ideas:

- Make Main Street (west of the uphill Secor Road intersection) a one-way street heading westbound, away from downtown and towards the train station and Secor Road bridge (which would remain two-way).
- Make Secor Road a one-way street heading eastbound, away from the train station (and two-way



bridge) and towards the downtown (just short of which it would join with the two-way Main Street).

- Make one block of Water Street (between Main Street and Secor Road) one-way heading southwest (instead of northeast, as is now the case).
- Close the one block of Main Street between Secor Road and Water Street to vehicles (per Strategy 3.4).
- Provide benches at periodic intervals for the four main arterials, starting with Main Street / Secor Road. Add plantings to make the four arterials more park-like and pedestrian friendly. The streets should take advantage of the views of Kill Brook.
- Investigate the feasibility of a shuttle bus/jitney that would bring people from the train station to downtown. (See Transportation Chapter.)

Note: In addition to what is laid out above, it is important to highlight what has not been recommended. No major arterial changes are recommended for the Sparta roadway leading down to the waterfront and Scarborough train station. Circuitous, narrow and bending roads make this waterfront area even more difficult to get to. Additional traffic volume and/or road widening/straightening would be to the detriment of the residential areas in Sparta. The low traffic volumes, prevailing low car speeds, and prevailing single-family housing character of the area obviate the need for the type of roadway and sidewalk improvements charted out above. Moreover, the central area has the most to gain and deal with when it comes to access, as the most intensive uses are here already and are expected to remain so well into the future, by plan as well as by opportunity.

## OBJECTIVE 8: RE-WRITE THE ZONING FOR THE WATERFRONT AREAS

### EXISTING ZONING

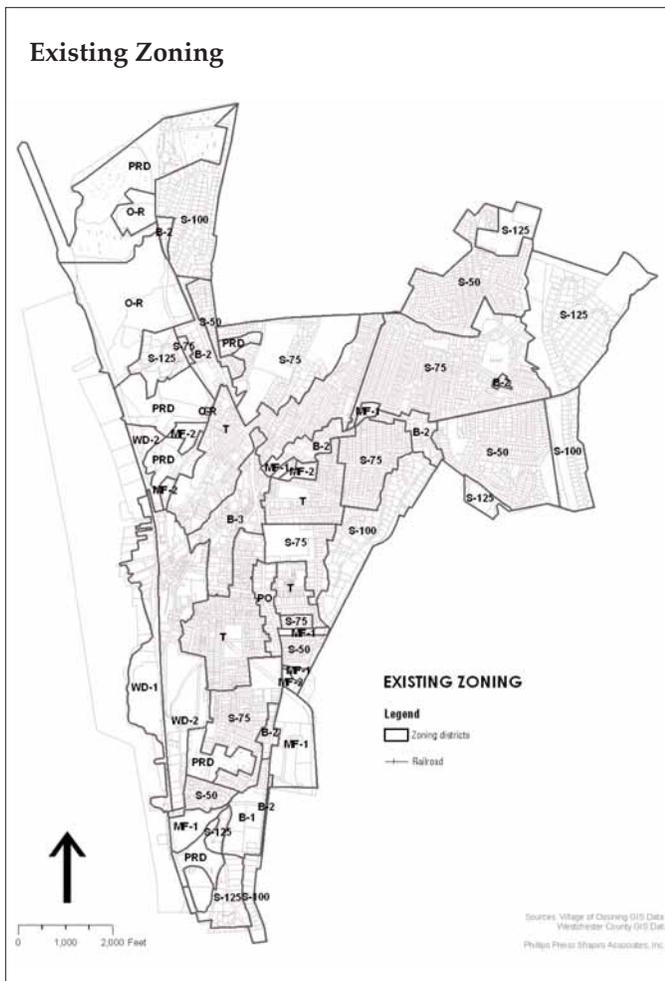
Much of the Ossining waterfront lies within one of two zoning districts: (1) the WD-1 (Waterfront Development) district located on the westerly side of the railroad tracks, and (2) the WD-2 district on the easterly side of the tracks.

The purpose of the WD-1 zoning, as stated in the zoning code, is to “permit a variety of intensive riverfront-related land uses,” “encourage a mix of such uses while further encouraging public access and use of the riverfront area,” and “promote land assemblage of sites and redevelopment of areas with uses more appropriate to this strategic location within the community”. There are no as-of-right, permitted uses in the WD-1 districts. Conditional uses include:

- Restaurants.
- Parks and recreational facilities.
- Marinas and related uses.
- Commercial fishing.
- Marine educational uses.
- Housing in existing buildings with unit size up to two-bedrooms.

WD-1 uses permitted by special permits include:

- Retail and professional service establishments.
- Office buildings.
- Mixed-use development.
- Membership clubs.
- Motels/hotels.



- New residential construction with units up to two bedrooms.
- Planned waterfront and railway development (PWRD).
- The minimum parcel size in the zone is 40,000 square feet, maximum density is 16 dwelling units per acre and the maximum height of buildings is 2.5 stories or 35 feet.

The only incentive or requirement for open space or public access refers to all “nonresidential development shall, where it is deemed reasonable, practical and appropriate by the permitting authority.” Residential development is exempt from this requirement. The non-residential development is supposed to provide:

- (a) Continuous improved pedestrian access along or through the site.
- (b) Improved public access, except where limitations are required for security purposes, to persons other

than residents of the WD district, along the water’s edge, including pedestrian walkways, open space areas and promenades.

- (c) Uses open to the public, such as dockside restaurants, shops or marinas.

Furthermore, there is no requirement for open space as part of any development and only if a parcel is three acres or more and abuts the Hudson River does the WD-1 district require any water related uses.

The purpose of the WD-2 district on the east side of the railroad tracks is “to permit a variety of intensive riverfront-related land uses in Ossining, including residential and certain nonresidential uses, and to encourage a mix of such uses, thereby maximizing the potential of the area.” The WD-2 was also created to assure that riverfront development is an asset to the community as a whole, and to further encourage public access and use of the riverfront area for residents. Like the WD-1, the zone encourages the assemblages of parcels for redevelopment by employing a minimum parcel size of 40,000 square feet for development. The maximum density is 18 dwelling units per acre and the maximum building height is six stories or 72 feet. Mixtures of residential and certain nonresidential uses at relatively high densities are considered more likely to be appropriate in this portion of the Village. In addition to the conditional uses allowed in the WD-1 district, the WD-2 conditional uses include:

- Manufacturing.
- Commercial research or testing.
- Public utility buildings or structures.

The only time mixed use is required is when a site is greater than a five-acres. Furthermore, there are no open space or public access requirements or incentives.

Not all of the waterfront is zoned WD. Other zones in the waterfront area include the MF-1 and MF-2 (Multi-Family) districts, the PRD (Planned Residential Development), and the O-R (Office Research) zones. In the MF-2 multi-family districts, permitted uses are single- and two-family residences, while multiple dwellings are conditional uses. The maximum density in the Multi-Family-1 zone is approximately 43 dwelling units per acre with a maximum height of 6 stories or 70 feet.

Permitted uses in the Planned Residential District (PRD) are one- and two-family residences. The purpose of the PRD zone is to encourage cluster development. Cluster development is a means of permanently protecting open space and important environmental resources in new housing developments, while providing homeowners with the opportunity to develop their property. Cluster developments group the residential structures on a portion of the available land, reserving a significant amount of the site as protected open space. The minimum parcel size in the existing PRD zone is five acres. Unfortunately, most parcels in these zones do not meet the minimum requirements.

In the O-R Office-Research District all uses are conditional uses and they include office buildings for business and professional use and commercial research laboratories engaged exclusively in the pursuit of technological research and the development of manufactured, processed or compounded products, public utility buildings, motels/hotels, membership clubs, and light manufacturing. Accessory uses include overnight lodging, indoor/outdoor recreational facilities, private garages, maintenance and utility shops, assembly halls, training schools, storage facilities, and assembly halls. Minimum parcel size is 2 acres and 35-foot building heights are permitted.

Current WD zoning limits industrial uses in the Village to WD-2 zoned property on the waterfront, thus appropriating water-dependent or water-related uses for industrial uses. Current WD, MF, and PRD design requirements result in single uses due to setback requirements that are inconsistent with the mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented form of development appropriate for an active, pedestrian-oriented area. The waterfront area contains the parameters one would essentially need to develop under smart planning principles, which include a location near public transportation and a location adjacent to a central business district. One of the original intents of the waterfront district zones was to have a developer assemble parcels and create a mixed-use development. That is why there are requirements for mixed-uses for lots in the WD-1 greater than 3 acres and WD-2 greater than 5 acres. Since the adoption of the waterfront zones back in 1990 there have been very few assemblages and no new

mixed-use development. The closest has been Harbor Square, which was developed under the PWRD. Acreage requirements and setbacks further threaten the many historic buildings with demolition and incorporation into large developments. The existing zoning should be examined and re-written to address the inadequacies in the current zoning, including a reexamination of bulk standards including height and setbacks, provisions for permitted uses, view preservation, public access, RiverWalk, open space, shoreline and streambank stabilization, waterfront recreation, affordable housing and historic preservation, all of which have been identified as a priority in the redevelopment of the waterfront area by the public meetings and survey, but are not incorporated into the current zoning regulations.

The Village should encourage:

- A carefully designed and orderly development plan for the riverfront area.
- The protection of the quality of the natural environment.
- Recreational, open space, commercial, business and residential uses that will benefit from and, in turn, enhance the unique aesthetic, recreational, historic and environmental qualities of the waterfront area.
- The provision of amenities, services, attractions, and destinations that will draw people to the riverfront and encourage public use and enjoyment of the area.
- Water-dependent and water-related uses of the area.
- Opportunities for public ingress, egress, access to and enjoyment of the riverfront area and shoreline, including the river itself.
- The protection of the water quality of streams and watercourses leading into the Hudson River, including fish, wildlife and natural vegetation, and should require:
  - The use of best management practices with respect to protection of water quality;
  - Stormwater management;
  - Erosion and sediment control;
  - Minimizing construction on or re-grading of steeply sloped areas greater than 15% but less than 25% and limiting construction on steeply



sloped areas greater than 25%; and

- Enhancing the aesthetics of these natural resources to the greatest extent feasible by protecting scenic views.
- The protection of the sensitive aesthetic, recreational, historic and environmental features that exist in the waterfront.
- The preservation of views of the Hudson River and Hudson Palisades for maximum enjoyment and benefit of the community as a whole.
- The development of attractive, appropriately scaled mix of uses that will provide economic support for the Village while protecting the sensitive aesthetic, recreational, historic, and environmental features that exist in the waterfront.
- A proper balance of water-oriented uses including access to and enjoyment of the waterfront area that will be compatible with other waterfront uses and objectives and will encourage the overall development of the Ossining waterfront area, to the benefit of the entire Village.
- The appropriate uses of this area, to preserve and enhance mixed use of old industrial buildings that bring creative small businesses, artisans and entrepreneurs to the community and support the Village's economy.
- A suitable mix of development, both commercial and residential.
- An increase in current permitted densities in order to: encourage the redevelopment of and account for the cost of remediation of brownfields; encourage the provision of public amenities as part of proposed developments; and encourage developments that take advantage of locations adjacent to the train station that offer spectacular views of the Hudson.

- The appropriate location and screening of parking, utility installations and accessories, lighting, and sign locations.
- The provision of various housing opportunities that help meet the needs of the community, including affordable housing and senior citizen housing.

By way of detail, the Village Board should:

- Provide incentives for developers to provide:
  - Affordable housing
  - Publicly accessible open space
  - Connections to RiverWalk
  - Protection of view corridors
  - Preservation of historic buildings
  - Connections to the waterfront over the railroad tracks
- Consider adopting new waterfront development zones, all of which should have to go through Site Plan Approval process which includes ample opportunity for community feedback.

#### **Strategy 8.1:**

##### **The Conservation Development District**

This area consists of office, single- and multi-family development, open spaces, and wooded hills. The zone is located by the Crawbuckie Nature Area south to Snowden Avenue. The western boundary is the Hudson River and the eastern boundary is at varying points along the Croton Aqueduct Trail and Snowden Avenue. All of the land is east of the railroad tracks, and much of the land is wooded and extremely steeply sloped, including the Crawbuckie Nature Area. The Old Croton Aqueduct runs through this section of the waterfront in a north-south direction. All of the properties in this area are easily reachable from Snowden



Avenue and are within close proximity to the Ossining Railroad Station. Current zoning in this area includes the PRD and MF-2 zones. The zoning for this district should:

- Encourage open space and small multiple story buildings in order to make cluster development possible, but in turn restrict height to preserve views to and from the river.
- Preserve the area's unique, natural environmental features by not allowing wetlands to be considered developable land, minimizing development on steep slopes, and having a lower permitted density than the rest of the waterfront districts.

**Strategy 8.2:**

**The Riverfront Development District**

The proposed district would run from the Shattemuc Yacht Club in the north to the southern tip of Louis Engel Town Waterfront Park along a 0.6 mile stretch of land west of the railroad tracks that can be reached via two vehicular bridges. (One of the bridges is at the base of Broadway, which links to Westerly Road and leads to the private Shattemuc Yacht Club; Westerly Marina; Quimby Street, the site of the former Quimby Dock; Paradise Heating tank farm and a warehouse that is now used for warehousing and storage by Ossining Hardware; and the future Harbor Square Development.) The other bridge is at the base of Secor Road which passes by the Ossining station house, which is fully one story above the tracks and leads to: a parking area for the train station; Ossining Boat and Canoe Club; the Town owned Engel Park; and Sing Sing Correctional Facility. This land contains the Louis Engel Waterfront Park, some private marinas and small industries. This is the only land west of the railroad tracks within the Village which is easily and safely accessible to the public. Most of the land in this area is fill.

The zoning for this district should:

- Maximize opportunities for waterfront recreation and parks, and encourage construction of portions of RiverWalk.
- Allow low rise development by restricting the heights for new construction to only a few stories in order to preserve the current community character of the waterfront as well as the views to and

from the Hudson River.

- Setback new buildings from the river to minimize flood damage.
- Orient new buildings to preserve and provide views towards the Hudson River and Palisades.
- Encourage reuse of historic buildings, such as the Mobil Oil warehouse.
- Allow for a mix of commercial, residential and recreational uses.

**Strategy 8.3:**

**The Station Plaza North and Station Plaza South Districts**

The historic buildings near the westerly intersection of Main Street and Secor Road have an interesting character and excellent potential for adaptive reuses which would better utilize their existence. The current land area located adjacent to the Scarborough Train Station is underutilized and the existing single-family zoning does not compliment the surrounding transit uses.

The zoning for this district should:

- Protect the prevailing existing building form around the intersection of Main Street and Secor Road, which is for small-scale structures with shallow yards. Any redevelopment should protect this form to the greatest extent possible.
- Encourage commercial uses in both areas that would be appropriate gateways to the train stations.
- Permit residential units atop nonresidential uses but not allow residential units on the ground floor or in the basement in the Station Plaza North and require that buildings have a main entrance to the outside that is separate from any other entrance used for non-residential use.

**Strategy 8.4:**

**The Northern Waterfront District**

The Northern Waterfront District would lie primarily in an industrial, low lying area east of the railroad tracks between the tracks and Water Street. This area relies solely on Water Street for access. Plateaus located approximately 65 feet above Water Street separate and act as a buffer between these industrial areas and the more wooded, residential area adjacent to Beach Road and Snowden Avenue. Some of the industrial buildings in this area have historic significance including extant buildings from the



Brandreth Pill Factory Complex on the North Water Street Extension. Current access to this area is through narrow and steep roadways and over property easements.

The zoning for this district should:

- Permit greater density on large land parcels as incentive to provide public amenities.

- Encourage a mix of commercial, residential and recreational uses, but discourage industrial uses.
- Regulate heights of buildings so as not to obstruct views of the Hudson from the plateaus.
- Encourage the reuse of historic buildings including the Brandreth Pill Factory.

**Strategy 8.5:**

**The Central Waterfront – Transit Oriented District**

This area includes the Ossining Metro-North Station which includes stops on the Bee-Line bus service and Ossining-Haverstraw ferry; the Hudson Wire Building and former Department of Public Works; and Metallized Carbon and the Sing Sing Kill. Steep hills lead from the Crescent business area down to the railroad tracks. Portions of the area are low-lying and tend to flood. Although once prone to landslides, the hillside between the train station and Hunter Street has been stabilized. Many parcels in this area could be assembled for larger-scale development.

Currently, the type and amount of development near the Metro-North Station does not contain the density nor the land uses to take significant advantage of the transit services. Ossining has an opportunity to create a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) surrounding the Metro-North station and Ossining Dock by in-filling with diverse land uses, and reorganizing the circulation systems. Structured parking and relocation of bus services and stops will likely be required to create a true TOD. Metro-North should be sought as a partner in the creation of a transit oriented development on Metro-North owned lands. No existing train station parking should be lost.

The zoning for this district should:

- Take advantage of its location adjacent to the train station by increasing densities and decreasing parking requirements. (Any new development should market accessibility to transit and views.)
- Limit heights of new buildings to be contextual with adjacent, existing architecture except when topography allows for greater heights that will not obstruct view corridors, but will provide expansive views of the Hudson.
- Allow for greater densities on larger land parcels in exchange for amenities, as long as the design of any project adapts to the steep slopes that are present

### **SIDEBAR: Transit Oriented Development (TOD)**

What is a TOD?

- Development within 1/4 mile to 1/2 mile of Transit Stop (5 to 15 minute walk)
- Designed so that pedestrians and cars may coexist; reduces overall auto-dependency
- Diversifies housing opportunities for a variety of ages and income levels
- Includes densities appropriate for surroundings
- Provides economic development opportunities
- Mixed-use residential uses generate fiscal positives in a transit oriented village environment
- Market sustainability requires a mix of residential/commercial/office development



there.

### **Strategy 8.6:**

#### **The Central Waterfront – Hillside District**

The Hillside zone is a steeply sloped area located south of Main Street between Hunter Street and State Street north of James Street and is currently in the WD-2 zone. The area sits on a ridge which offers panoramic views of the Hudson River and Hudson Palisades. The parcels are generally larger than those in the surrounding residential neighborhoods, but the location is not quite appropriate to be a part of the central business district like the downtown Crescent area.



The zoning for this district should:

- Require mixed use as part of any development.
- Protect the slopes and view corridors by limiting heights and restricting development on steep slopes.
- Allow for greater densities on larger land parcels in exchange for amenities.

The zoning for this district should:

- Ensure that, in the event that Sing Sing Correctional Facility is ever closed, future plans for the site are consistent with other plans for the waterfront and consistent with the intent and guidelines for the waterfront area iterated above.

### **Strategy 8.7:**

#### **The Institutional / Redevelopment District**

The Sing Sing Correctional Facility dominates this section of the waterfront with its massive buildings and towering concrete walls. The prison owns 20 acres of land west of the MTA tracks that are not subject to flooding. There are another 35 acres on the east side of the tracks in a series of steep slopes topped with flat plateaus, each with a panoramic view of the Hudson. Between the east and west sections of the property, the railroad tracks are recessed, which has the effect of making them much less obtrusive.







## 4. The Downtown Crescent and Economic Development



# Vision

*“The once and future downtown.... The downtown Crescent is the heart of the Village, despite the fact that most residents do their shopping in strip malls along Routes 9 and 133, or in malls or shopping districts outside of the Village. However, in workshops and the Community Survey residents expressed a wish to spend more of their time and money downtown. This is entirely true to the national trends: mixed-use development of residential uses above office and retail (which adds life to the streets after the shops close); infill development (which stymies sprawl); appreciation and incentives for the historic (and recognition that it is actually the “greenest” thing that can be done); new immigrants adding vitality (and providing new types of businesses); the demise of industrial waterfronts creating new development and recreational opportunities; and new support (both in terms of ridership and funding) for mass transit. All of these factors are evident in Ossining. This plan builds on downtown’s scenic, central and historic resources to take advantage of all of these trends to make the downtown Crescent the true life source of the Village.”*

## INTRODUCTION

The story of Ossining's downtown follows a narrative similar to many of America's Main Streets. Ossining's Main Street was originally the primary connector between the region's two major thoroughfares: the Albany Post Road (now Route 9) and the Hudson River. The earliest settlers delivered cattle and produce from Ossining farms to the waterfront for shipment to New York City. When the railroad came through the Village in the mid-nineteenth century, rail became the primary carrier of goods and people. Street-level businesses with residences above rose along Main Street and its environs to serve the many people who passed through every day. This prosperity is recognizable in the handsome edifices that line Main Street to this day.

However, the advent of the automobile economy after World War II put an end to the boom. Whereas the nineteenth century shopper preferred a Main Street with closely placed stores, the twentieth century shopper sought retail opportunities on major vehicle routes. Auto-related businesses sprung up on undeveloped land outside the village center, along Croton and Highland Avenues, and in shopping centers along major arterial roads that provided abundant parking, such as the Arcadian Shopping Center on Route 9. In comparison, traditional downtowns seemed congested and lacked adequate parking. Main Streets across the country, including Ossining, experienced disinterest and disinvestment.

In recent years, across America and in Ossining, newly arrived immigrants rediscovered downtowns, taking advantage of the inexpensive rents and the opportunity for upstairs living and family-run business ventures. At the same time, many consumers turned away from the homogeneity of the suburban shopping mall, and complement their internet and catalogue shopping with an appreciation of the sociability of an historic downtown—the walkability, the human scale of the buildings, the varied building forms and historic architecture—which contribute to a unique sense of place.

At this juncture, Downtown Ossining is in a position to make itself into a distinctive destination in Westchester County by building upon existing businesses, including ethnic retail and singular restaurants, a landscape

that offers panoramic views of the Hudson Palisades and an exceptional, intact historic streetscape of nineteenth century buildings. In order for Ossining to increase visitors to Downtown, it must build on its assets—authentic historic architecture, soaring views of the Hudson, pedestrian-friendly scale, ethnic and socio-economic diversity—to create and market its Downtown as a unique destination unlike any other in the region.

Ossining's downtown district is located in the area roughly bounded by Sing Sing Kill, State Street, Broad Avenue, and Route 9 (Highland Avenue). The heart of historic downtown Ossining consists of the long, curving block of Main Street known as the "Crescent," which stretches from Route 9 west towards the waterfront. Ossining's dramatic topography places downtown on a ridge plateau over 100 feet higher than the river plain of the Hudson. This steep grade difference is both an obstacle and an advantage for the Village business district—pedestrians arriving by train face a daunting climb from the waterfront train station to downtown's shops and restaurants; however in downtown, pedestrians enjoy soaring views of the river and Palisades.

The north side of Main Street exhibits an architectural cohesiveness of form and style that downtowns around the country are struggling to recreate and emulate. Fires in the 1870s led to a massive rebuilding of downtown and thus much of the extant building stock originates from that time. Most buildings are three to four stories tall and twenty-five feet wide; most have residences above ground-level storefronts. Façades meet the edge of the sidewalk and there are few sideyards, placing all of the building ornamentation onto the front façade including metal and wood cornices displaying building dates and/or names. Landmarks that help define the boundaries of the historic area include the looming spires of the First Baptist Church and the state-ly triangular facade of the National Bank Building. Downtown Ossining is a showcase of late nineteenth century Italianate style commercial architecture, and is listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.



The south side of Main Street, however, suffers still from urban renewal clearance during the 1970s and 1980s, particularly the parking lots at the intersection of Main and Spring Streets and at the Post Office. These parking lots create a lopsided retail corridor with commercial establishments along only one side of the street – harming the historic ambiance of the district, and damaging business since stores are only located on one side of the street. Despite resident complaints in our workshops about unsightly parking lots, many residents note a reluctance to shop downtown because of an expectation that they will not find parking.

Disinvestment and vacancies can be found in areas along the Crescent, including at present the “We Can Do It” site at 147-153 Main Street. Renewed interest in the downtown is evident in plans for these two sites, which include ground floor commercial with residences above. This new redevelopment has also raised concerns about creating stricter historic preservation guidelines in order to protect the historic fabric that remains downtown and to avoid large-scale demolition as was seen on the south side of Main Street. (The State and National Registers of Historic Places provide incentives for preservation but no restrictions on private redevelopment.)

Various land uses are located downtown, but business dominates. Over 40 percent of businesses are retail oriented, of which half are eating and drinking establishments (See Table 9). There are no chain stores downtown and most businesses are locally owned “mom and pop” establishments. Some businesses are renowned in the county, including Doca’s Portuguese restaurant, Melita’s home furnishings, and R.I.M.



**Table 9: Breakdown of Land Uses in the Crescent**

<i>Business Type*</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>% of Total</i>
Retail:	43	41%
(Eating & Drinking Places)	(22)	(21%)
Services	31	29%
Finance	6	6%
Public Administration	3	3%
Other	2	2%
Vacant	19	18%
Residential-Only Buildings	2	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100% *</b>

*Source: Village of Ossining Department of Planning Survey, February, 2007.*

*\*Discrepancy due to rounding.*

Plumbing. Most businesses downtown are located on the ground floor with office, storage, and residential uses above.

Residents living in neighborhoods adjacent to the Downtown represent the primary trade area for the district because they are most likely to frequently patronize the retail and service establishments. These neighborhoods are stable, with median home values consistent with the rest of the Village. The neighborhoods are characterized by a population of long-time African-American residents and, since the 1990s, a larger influx of Latino residents. As a consequence, businesses catering to these populations have thrived in recent years, from coffee shops to convenience stores to hair salons.

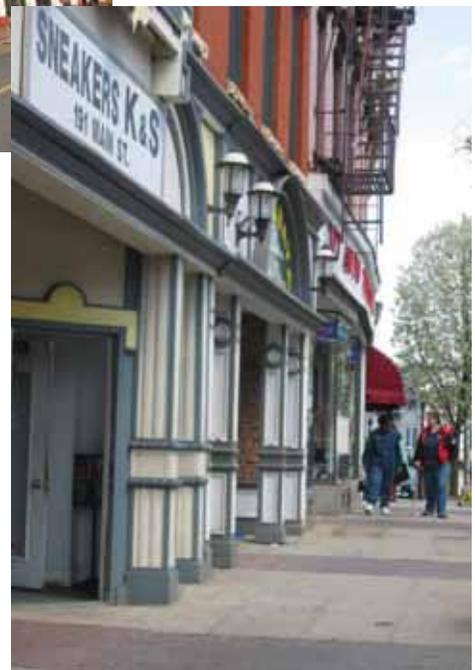
The larger, secondary trade area includes all of Ossining, and presents an additional potential customer base. The tertiary trade area extends to the towns adjacent to Ossining. Together these trade areas offer a mix of ethnicities and economic levels, which is advantageous to supporting a variety of retail and is unique in Westchester County where communities tend to be more homogenous. Ossining also offers relatively low (compared to neighboring towns) ground-level retail rents, which puts it at a competitive advantage for attracting entrepreneurs, particularly those just starting out.

Despite renewed interest in downtown and the approval of residential projects that will add new residents to the downtown and waterfront area, there are still many vacancies (close to 20 percent of all buildings). Furthermore, in the resident survey and workshops, people commented on their general unhappiness with the present selection of businesses in Ossining and expressed a desire to have bigger names or upscale stores locate in Ossining to help generate revenue and attract residents and visitors to shop in the Village. People expressed a desire for more stores that met residents' needs, including clothing and shoe stores, antiques shops, friendly family establishments, restaurants, museums, theaters, music and book shops, an art center, and venues for live music. Expanded store hours or a "night-life" was

also identified as lacking in the Village, as was the enhancement of outdoor spaces, including the creation of sidewalk cafes and attractive public spaces. Merchants and residents alike would like to see the introduction of businesses or a cultural institution that would serve as a "downtown draw" both for Village residents and visitors from outside.

The geography and location of Ossining's downtown present a unique set of challenges. As noted, the steep slope from the train station to the Crescent is challenging on foot. In addition, Highland Avenue (Route 9) limits pedestrian traffic to downtown and draws customers away from the Main Street area. The strip-mall look of Route 9, with its unsightly lots and strip retail provides some outsiders with their only exposure to the Village, and many motorists simply pass through unaware of the historic downtown to the side of the Route 9 strip. Many survey respondents and workshop participants expressed a desire to have big-name, chain

retailers locate in Ossining – such as Wal-Mart, K-Mart, Home Depot, the Gap, or Old Navy. However, Ossining is at a competitive disadvantage for these stores for compounding reasons: (1) chain stores like to cluster together;



(2) they do not like to "pioneer" (i.e., be the first one in the cluster); (3) they gravitate to locations proximate to greater wealth and/or highway convenience; (4) the Hudson River

cuts the potential trade area down to a semi-circle rather than a full circle, and thus river towns are at a disadvantage compared to inland locations; and (5) there are other business centers nearby with these clusters. Finally, many chain stores have prototypes which they can “plug into” various locations with few variations. It would be a mistake for Ossining to sacrifice its valuable historic downtown buildings to accommodate a national chain store’s square footage and display window specification requirements.

Therefore, in order for Ossining to increase visitors to downtown, it must build on the assets it does possess— authentic historic architecture, soaring views of the Hudson, pedestrian-friendly scale, ethnic and socio-economic diversity—to create and market its downtown as a unique destination unlike any other in the region.

**OBJECTIVE 1: PROMOTE OSSINING AS A DESIRABLE PLACE TO DO BUSINESS, FOCUSING ON REGULATORY REFORM AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

In order to enhance Ossining’s reputation as a desirable place to do business, the Village must be proactive and reach out to local and regional business owners to both better coordinate existing businesses and attract viable new ones.

**Strategy 1.1:**

**Make Ossining more welcoming as a place to do business**

The Village Board and Planning Department should:

- Act as a resource of information for prospective business owners.
- Reach out to regional business organizations that



provide information to outside businesses looking for a place to locate.

- Create a Village-run website that contains pertinent business information and links to other local organizations for additional information, such as the Chamber of Commerce who provides listings for job openings in local businesses and other useful information.
- Create and distribute publications, such as brochures, on doing business in Ossining, (e.g., a small business information guide, etc.)
- Streamline the permitting approval processes for businesses looking to locate in the Downtown. Currently, many of the typical commercial uses in all of the business districts are conditional uses and require Planning Board approval. Developing permitted uses and flexible parking requirements will help streamline the process.
- Provide design guidelines for renovation, new construction, etc. to offer or allow more predictability for applicants and developers.
- Provide statistics on Ossining (in both hard copy and digital format) such as: local demographics, transportation systems, the school system, etc. that might be useful to prospective business owners.
- Work with Westchester Community College in Ossining to provide business classes or classes related to local businesses so that Ossining has trained workers for these businesses. For example, WCC offers many healthcare classes to serve the variety of healthcare businesses in the Village and surrounding communities.
- Modify zoning to provide expiration dates for site plan approvals so that property owners are encouraged to develop or redevelop lots.

**Strategy 1.2:**

**Improve coordination in the downtown business community**

Results of a S.W.O.T. analysis conducted with the Greater Ossining Chamber of Commerce (“the Chamber”) revealed the desire for better coordination and communication within the business community. The Chamber works to develop, promote and protect retail, industrial, professional and civic interests. Its website is linked to the Village homepage and provides a list of tourist attractions, a schedule of local events, a roster of local businesses, community news, job open-

ings, and informational videos (e.g., how to borrow money for your business, financial planning). The benefits of membership include networking, a listing on the website, regular meetings, and workshops (including some in Spanish). The Chamber runs the Ossining Fair in the spring and a December holiday party. Other nonprofit business organizations in the downtown include the Alliance for Downtown Ossining (ADO) which is a private, non-profit economic development corporation whose mission it is to revitalize Ossining’s historic downtown business district by providing business owners and their employees with information and educational programs; work with local organizations to support events in the downtown; promote historic preservation downtown; promote market rate and affordable housing downtown; promote parking solutions; encourage cultural institutions; and help keep downtown clean.

The Village Board and Planning Department should:

- Help coordinate efforts with the Chamber of Commerce and other local business organizations.

**Strategy 1.3:**

**Appoint staff as a “Main Street Manager”**

The Village Board should:

- In the short term, appoint an existing staff person to help coordinate efforts among the local business organizations and in the long term hire a “Main Street Manager,” in order to help coordinate the already existing downtown efforts of the local not-for-profits and work toward implementing a plan that would move all efforts forward.

The role of the “Main Street Manager” would be to:

- Organize additional events, such as festivals, concerts, parades, etc. to bring people to the main shopping area and take advantage of the Village’s unique community assets: history, cultural festivals, local artists and craftspeople. This is particularly important for reaching out to the downtown’s secondary and tertiary market populations.
- Work with the Chamber of Commerce, ADO or other non-profit that would be interested in developing and administering a small grants program for business assistance.
- Work with property owners, local non-profits, and

the real estate community to actively recruit target tenants and make sure Downtown is being maintained.

- Create a mentorship program between members of the Chamber of Commerce and/or ADO with new entrepreneurs. This might include brown-bag lunches, round-table discussions, one-on-one counseling, etc.
- Improve outreach to businesses located in downtown which might not be familiar with organizations like the Chamber of Commerce or ADO. This would entail undertaking an active membership recruiting process focused on Downtown businesses, particularly those geared towards Spanish-only speakers.
- Hold roundtable discussions aimed at helping owners boost their bottom line and keep everyone involved in the Village’s growth.

**Strategy 1.4**

**Promote 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 elect to make a collective contribution to the maintenance, development and marketing/promotion of their commercial district. BIDs typically provide services such as street and sidewalk maintenance, public safety officers, marketing, capital improvements, etc. The services provided by BIDs are a supplement to the services already provided by the municipality. Among the advantages of BIDs is that a BID helps to organize tenants and creates a revenue stream for property owners for improvements, including urban design. However, BIDs can be controversial propositions because membership requires property owners to contribute fees to a BID district management association which is elected by the property owners and controls how money is spent. If Ossining were to establish a BID in the Crescent area, the Village would have to undertake a public education effort to convince property owners of the benefits of membership. Examples where BIDs have been used include: Village of Westbury, NY; Sleepy Hollow Downtown Revitalization Corporation, Peekskill Business Improvement District.



In the long term, The Village Board, “Main Street Manager” or Planning Department should:

- Work with the Ossining business community to encourage the creation of a BID in Ossining.

A BID in Ossining would:

- Focus primarily on the downtown Crescent area but expand the BID boundaries (if practical) to include Route 9, Route 133, and waterfront businesses. This is useful since it also expands the BID’s revenue stream (downtown per se is too small to support a BID on its own). More importantly, downtown’s fate is wrapped up in what happens along the Route 9 corridor and on the waterfront, and vice versa.
- Facilitate a working partnership among downtown organizations, especially the Chamber of Commerce and ADO for: (1) marketing purposes, (2) joint advertising and promotions, and (3) a branding campaign for the Crescent area based on recommendations in tenanting.
- Help fund, fundraise for, and provide technical assistance in connection with, streetscape improvements that are consistent with the Crescent’s historic character (in the downtown), a more landscaped quality along Route 9, and a mixed-use environment (in all three areas but especially the waterfront). Potential improvements include: storefront beautification, signage improvements, street and sidewalk cleaning, graffiti removal, beautification projects (e.g., flower-planting), tree planting, and holiday decorations. Façade

improvements can be expensive, so priority should be given to anchors and landmarks with upstairs living.

- Work with local community groups on neighborhood linkages and improvements.
- Develop an ambassador program where you have (1) a “greeter” on the streets to provide directions, check in with merchants, and submit incident reports to the BID or not-for-profit; and (2) provide a sense of safety and welcome for business owners and visitors.
- Organize events (e.g., festivals, concerts, parades) to bring people to the main shopping area.
- Focus on unique community assets: history, cultural festivals, local artists and craftspeople.
- Consider shared staff and facilities, e.g., with the Chamber of Commerce and in connection with the Village’s “Main Street Manager”, who might even serve as an unpaid staff member if not the executive director of the BID.
- Apply to be part of the New York Main Street Program (Note: a BID only action).

**OBJECTIVE 2: CREATE A UNIQUE DINING AND SHOPPING DESTINATION TO ATTRACT RESIDENTS AND VISITORS, BOTH DURING THE DAY AND AT NIGHT**

The stores featuring what are known as comparison goods, i.e., food, clothes, gifts, furniture, do best when clustered together. Many times these clusters feed off of one another and lead to spillover businesses, i.e., a home furnishings cluster might lead to a demand for

cafes or restaurants; restaurants may lead to “after-dinner drinks” venues; and so on. Currently, the Crescent area has two emerging clusters: one for restaurants and one for home furnishings.

Over 20 percent of all businesses downtown are devoted to eating (both sit-down and take out) and many of those have a distinct ethnic identity. This ratio can be as high as 40 percent in traditional downtowns. Ossining has place advantages for restaurants, including the fact that there is an existing cluster; there is an availability of sizable, well-located land parcels; and there is pass-by visibility on the way to and from the train station. Furthermore, there is a demand for restaurants and nightlife. Following the example of other restaurant clusters like Tarrytown, Port Chester, and White Plains, which have a “Downtown Restaurant Row” – Ossining could become a destination for authentic, ethnic diversity dining, i.e., Doca’s, Churrasqueira Ribatejo, Isabella’s, Mauro’s, La Mitad Del Mundo, Quimbaya, etc. Restaurants should offer a unique culinary experience (i.e., no chains), whether it be eating Portuguese food while the AC Porto football match plays in the background; or sipping coffee in the Quimbaya’s Colombian Coffee House. To augment their draw, restaurants would do well to add take-out (especially valuable for passing by train commuters) or even a retail component (e.g., gift items, coffee supplies).



**SIDEBAR: The Downtown Frederick Partnership, Frederick, MD**

The Downtown Frederick Partnership is charged with enhancing, promoting and preserving the vitality of Downtown Frederick. In 2001, the Partnership was designated the managing organization for Frederick’s Main Street Program. The Main Street Program is a preservation-based, downtown revitalization approach sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. Leading Downtown Frederick Partnership is a broad-based, volunteer Board of Directors, representative of business owners, property owners, residents and elected officials. The Partnership enhances, promotes and preserves the vitality of Downtown Frederick through the work of four committees: Design, Economic Restructuring, Organization and Promotion. Each committee represents one of the “four points” of downtown revitalization called for in the Main Street Program, an initiative of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Volunteers and investors provide critical support to the activities of the Board and committees. Among the events sponsored by the Downtown Frederick Partnership are:

- A progressive dinner to celebrate the vibrant culinary offerings found in Downtown Frederick and help raise funds for the Downtown Frederick Partnership. Groups of diners move from restaurant to restaurant enjoying a different course at each location.
- First Saturday Gallery Walk where participants enjoy an evening of exhibit openings, guest artists and live entertainment designed to showcase the best of Downtown Frederick the First Saturday of every month. More than 80 shops, galleries and restaurants are open until 9PM or later.
- Summer Concert Series that provides free concerts at the local bandshell downtown.

Source: [www.downtownfrederick.org](http://www.downtownfrederick.org).

**Strategy 2.1:**

**Expand the ethnic restaurant cluster and build on opportunities for niche shopping**

The Village, in cooperation with other downtown entities, such as the Chamber, ADO or proposed BID, should:

- Expand the ethnic restaurant cluster through marketing and tenant recruitment efforts to add differentiated ethnic dining (i.e., French, Indian, Japanese, Thai, Middle Eastern, Caribbean, etc.).
- Capitalize and build on opportunities for niche

shopping/dining through marketing and tenant recruitment efforts.

**Strategy 2.2:**

**Promote and enhance downtown amenities and social character**

Nothing invites people to park, stroll and partake as

much as outdoor dining. It also expands the revenue potential of restaurants. This is an early-implementation measure that should yield fast and positive results. Requirements for sufficient sidewalk space and other protections should be included.

The Village Board should:

- Reform the Sidewalk Café law and include outdoor dining as an accessory use in all business districts.

**Strategy 2.3:**

**As another part of the restaurant niche strategy, promote more night-life in downtown**

The Village, in cooperation with other downtown entities, such as the Chamber, ADO or proposed BID, should:

- Arrange for new and existing events that highlight local culinary treats. For example, in a progressive dinner for the restaurants downtown, participants would pay a flat fee and be able to partake in appetizers at one restaurant, entrées at another, and a taste of dessert at a third. Furthermore, the “spillover” effect of restaurants could create much needed nightlife venues currently undersupplied in the River Towns.

**Strategy 2.4:**

**Expand the home furnishings cluster**

Several downtown home furnishings stores have emerged as providers of unique wares, including Melita’s and R.I.M. Plumbing. With a burgeoning waterfront residential population, the demand for home furnishings will most likely only increase.

The Village Board, in cooperation with other downtown entities, such as the Chamber, ADO or proposed BID, should:

- Work with local business entities to expand the home furnishing cluster through marketing and tenant recruitment efforts.

**Strategy 2.5:**

**Attract Chain-Lets to Ossining’s Downtown**

The Village, in cooperation with other downtown entities, such as the Chamber, ADO or proposed BID, should:

- Seek out smaller local “chain lets” for downtown,

such as Lefteris Gyro restaurant, Wondrous Things gift store, Jean-Jacques caterers, etc. These smaller chains would be more likely to settle in Downtown than larger, national chains because they are:

- Unable to compete in rents with larger competitors.
- Can see and adapt to opportunities where larger operators cannot.
- More likely to want to be a part of something that is emerging.
- More likely to be emotionally invested in the success of the downtown; and
- Require less space.

**Strategy 2.6:**

**Take a targeted approach to tenant recruitment**

This is a time-consuming effort, in which the work is not necessarily commensurate with the results. The Village, in cooperation with other downtown entities, such as the Chamber, ADO or proposed BID, should:

- Target “Main Streets” that have similar demographics, topography and architecture to Ossining, as well as a downtown that is one step ahead of Ossining in terms of its thriving restaurants, stores, and nightlife spots. Some business owners, like those in Nyack, NY will be interested since it allows them to expand in a new trade area. Others, like business owners in Tarrytown, NY will be interested as rising rents where they are now prompts interest in less expensive space within the same trade areas.

**Strategy 2.7:**

**Create a cultural venue downtown that would both benefit from and support a restaurant cluster**

A demand for nightlife in Ossining was voiced at the public meetings and in the residents’ survey. While nightlife venues may emerge as a consequence of the restaurant cluster, the Village, in cooperation with other downtown entities, such as the Chamber, ADO or proposed BID, should:

- Work to establish a cultural destination that would attract visitors to the downtown during nights and weekends. This venue would tie in nicely with the emerging restaurant cluster and could create a destination to potentially attract customers from places beyond Ossining’s borders. This venue may



be used to provide a showcase for the Village’s burgeoning artist population or perhaps provide a showcase for Ossining’s diverse cultures. One building to consider for such use is the former fire station on Central Avenue.

**Strategy 2.8:**  
**Showcase the talents of the artists who live in the Village by exhibiting their work in the Village**

The Village, in cooperation with other downtown entities, such as the Chamber, ADO or proposed BID, should:

- Work to provide gallery space in the Community Center or future cultural venue for local artists. Storefront windows downtown could display artists’ work with “opening night” receptions held on the sidewalk in front of the building.

**Strategy 2.9:**  
**Promote mixed use and residential living above ground level commercial / retail space**

Adding residents to a downtown adds to the street life, which in turn can increase safety and provide additional customers for businesses. Currently, residential use in the downtown requires a special permit.

The Village Board should:

- Adjust the zoning code so that residential is encouraged as a conditional use. However, residential use should not be permitted on the ground

floor. The same concept should also be incorporated into the Croton Avenue business district and some of the areas along Route 9 as well (See Objective 6).

**Strategy 2.10:**  
**Promote office uses above ground level commercial / retail space**

The addition of office workers would increase the number of people downtown during the day on weekdays. Office uses also would help balance the mix of downtown commercial uses in terms of the need for services and would have a positive impact on tax ratables. Providing additional office space downtown would increase the possibility of existing small professional businesses in Ossining remaining in the Village as they grow. Office use should be a permitted use in all of the business districts.

The Village, in cooperation with other downtown entities, such as the Chamber, ADO or proposed BID, should:

- Actively market to and recruit office tenants in the downtown.

**Strategy 2.11:**  
**Promote small-scale overnight accommodations in or near downtown and other business or mixed-use districts**

The Village should:

- Incorporate Bed and Breakfast establishments into

the Zoning Code as either a permitted, conditional, or special permit use in the various business and mixed-use zones throughout the Village of Ossining. There should be stringent requirements on such establishments to ensure that the design is consistent with the surrounding area and any potential negative impacts are minimized.

**OBJECTIVE 3: PROMOTE AND ENHANCE DOWNTOWN AMENITIES AND CHARACTER**

**Strategy 3.1:**

**Create a pedestrian and customer-friendly environment**

The Village, in cooperation with other downtown entities, such as the Chamber, ADO or proposed BID, should:

- Ensure there is adequate night-lighting, including, in addition to the current standards, ambient light from building lighting, especially along the Crescent and the downtown’s edifices. (This is a top priority given the emphasis on restaurants in the plan and the fact that most people will enjoy downtown after dark.)
- Create a cohesive streetscape including landscaping and street furniture maintenance.
- Ensure that there is effective and appropriate signage, historic and contextual renovation and development, etc.
- Develop convenient opportunities for parking, even valet parking.
- Have volunteer (or paid by a non-profit or BID) “Downtown Ambassadors” who greet visitors, provide directions, and other pertinent information.
- Provide sanitation (in addition to the sanitation services already provided by the Village) which would be administered and financed by a BID or non-profit.

**Strategy 3.2:**

**Create 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.

The Village Board should:

- Create a Village Green on a portion of the Village-owned parking lot at the southwest corner of Spring and Main Streets. The Green will be the visual and “mental” focus of Downtown and signal to people that they have “arrived” in Downtown. It would keep open the views of the outstandingly historic north side of the Crescent. It would also serve as the place for the popular farmer’s market in the spring, summer and fall. The space should be dignified with a gazebo, fountain, flag pole, or sculpture. Furthermore, the Green will provide park space for neighborhoods adjacent to Downtown. Parking spaces could exist along the southern end on Village-owned property and/or under the Green itself, as is common in Europe.

**Strategy 3.3:**

**Consider infill buildings on the existing market square and parking lots at intersection of Spring and Main Streets**

The Village should:

- Consider development of infill buildings along the Market Square lot and along Spring Street. All infill should have commercial/retail on the

ground floor and residential/office uses above. This infill development will fill the gap in the streetscapes along Main Street. The farmers' market should be moved to the parking lot section that remains on the Village Green site, offering synergistic benefits to both uses.



**Strategy 3.4:**  
**Strengthen the Village's historic preservation regulations and adopt design guidelines for the downtown**

The Village should:

- Expand the boundaries of the existing historic district, make the district boundaries more clear through signage and easily available maps, and adopt clearer and new regulations. The decisions of the Historic Preservation Commission should be made binding. In addition, current draft design guidelines written for use by the Board of Architectural Review and the Historic Review Commission should be improved and become a formal reference document in the Village of Ossining. These guidelines should ensure that infill buildings and renovations are compatible with the overall design presentation of the downtown. (See the Neighborhood Quality Of Life chapter)

**Strategy 3.5:**  
**Promote compatibility in scale, density, and orientation between new and existing development**

To help ensure the general continuation of a walkable, historically scaled building pattern, the Village Board, should:

- Establish new maximum setback, maximum building coverage, and minimum height requirements for downtown development which augment current requirements. The new regulations should:
  - Mandate that buildings face the street.
  - Amend the bulk, scale, and density in the downtown area, and other business districts as well. Currently, a number of the current requirements do not allow for the scale of buildings that are currently in the downtown

or other business districts to be developed. Instead variances are needed in order to be able to develop in the business districts. This is counterproductive to encouraging redevelopment and revitalization of the business districts.

**Strategy 3.6:**  
**Provide a consistent palette of lighting, signage, landscaping, and sidewalks throughout downtown's public domains**

The downtown needs a coordinated and consistent urban design including: viable, accessible, centralized, safe and convenient parking; sidewalks; street lighting; street trees and landscaping; and banners. The Village of Ossining has initiated a number of streetscaping efforts in the business districts that include sidewalks, benches, street lighting, and flower baskets. These efforts should continue and expand. For downtown Ossining, the gateways are at the intersection of Main Street and Route 9, but also include Spring Street and State Street north of Broad Avenue, and the approach to downtown from the waterfront and train station. These gateways should welcome and orient visitors. Similarly, high-quality design, a farmers market, and other public uses (including an outdoor café) should signal that people have "arrived" when they come to the Crescent and proposed Green.

The Village, in cooperation with other downtown entities, such as the Chamber, ADO or proposed BID, should:

- Continue to provide a consistent palette of lighting, landscaping, and sidewalks throughout downtown's public domains. These include pedestrian-scale lighting, benches, trash receptacles, street



trees, granite curb cuts, etc. These streetscape elements should adhere to and respect Ossining’s rich architectural heritage. The core area to initially target for these elements is Main Street from Route 9 down to the waterfront, as well as the small cross streets within one block of both Main and Church Streets. Eventually, these elements should be extended along Route 9 and Route 133.

- Encourage better but still varied signage. A mix of signs adds to the charm of downtown, but within certain boundaries. The internal use of neon signs should be permitted subject to guidelines, and altogether prohibited on the exterior of buildings. Signs blocking window displays and views into stores should be discouraged. In short, the Village should employ a handful of prohibitions, and advisory guidelines to promote varied but tasteful signage.

**Strategy 3.7:**

**Connect the downtown Crescent to the waterfront area**

The Hudson River is Ossining’s most important natural resource and one of its primary identifying characteristics. Maintaining and improving visual connections to the river from downtown will help remind visitors of the waterfront connection. It will also remind visitors of why Ossining, as a riverfront community, is different from inland communities and downtowns.

The Village, in cooperation with other downtown entities, such as the Chamber, ADO or proposed BID, should:

- Provide safe, attractive, well-lit, and landscaped walkways throughout the area. Sidewalks and

walkways are particularly important to connect to destinations, the waterfront. Shade trees and pedestrian-oriented lighting should be provided.

- Enhance views of the Hudson River from Main and State Streets, as well as Central Avenue, by providing viewing areas and maximizing public views of the Hudson River and Palisades.
- Use signage to direct visitors to the waterfront. Despite the short distance from the downtown Crescent area to the waterfront, there is little to indicate the connections between these two areas. As noted above, the connection to the Hudson River is part of what makes Ossining special. A synergy between waterfront uses and downtown will enhance both areas, and provide reasons for visitors to stay in Ossining longer. (See the Waterfront and Transportation chapters)

**Strategy 3.8:**

**Improve the aesthetics of Route 9 (Highland Avenue) and Route 133 (Croton Avenue)**

The Village, in cooperation with other downtown entities, such as the Chamber, ADO or proposed BID, should:

- Require (by code) buffer areas between commercial and residential development, as well as between other possibly non-compatible land uses. The nature of the mix of uses along Route 9 is different than that in the downtown Crescent. Whereas downtown is pedestrian-oriented and densely developed, much of the development on Route 9 and Route 133 is spread out and auto-oriented. Many of the particular types of uses that should be located along Route 9 and Route 133 have impacts due to large parking areas and high turnover of vehicular traffic. Adequate buffering should be provided between these types of uses and residential properties. The zoning regulations could require different buffer types for different uses and lot sizes.
- 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 in 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 which focus on landscape buffers, setbacks and signage. The lighting, signage, landscaping, and sidewalks in the downtown Crescent should eventually extend along Route 9 and Route 133.

**OBJECTIVE 4: ADDRESS PERCEIVED AND ACTUAL PARKING PROBLEMS**

Downtowns such as Ossining will never have convenient parking that many consumers would find at venues like a mall. It is impractical since malls and shopping centers have two square feet of parking to every square foot of retail – something that can only be accomplished at great expense in cost or to the detriment of the downtown’s historic assets. Results from the various workshops indicated that many residents avoid downtown because they fear they will not find a place to park. But the reality is more complicated (See Table 10).

**Strategy 4.1**

**Move the discussion to the reality of how much parking is really needed**

The Village Board should:

- Commission a parking study for the Village to accurately understand the demand for parking and whether the current supply does in fact present a shortage of spaces or if this shortage is more of a perception.

**Strategy 4.2:**

**Continue efforts to expand public parking**

The Village Board should consider:

- Making the three-level parking deck on Brandreth Street, as now proposed by the Village, or structured parking at another location a reality. The Brandreth Street lot would yield an increase of 180 spaces (250 new spaces replacing the 70 at-grade



**Table 10: Downtown Parking Supply**

Parking Areas	# Spaces
Total Municipal Lots*	359
Total On-Street, Metered Spaces	398
Total Private Lots	189
Rounded Present Total	950
Brandreth Street Parking Deck (net gain)	180*
Adjusted Future Total	1,130

Source: Village of Ossining Department of Planning.

\* There are 70 parking spaces in the Brandreth lot that would be replaced with 250 spaces in the three-level Brandreth deck, yielding the net gain figure employed above.

spaces there now). With regard to the Village Green, the Village should look to an underground parking facility (in fact entered at grade from its lower western side). As a likely scenario, the current 40 at-grade spaces would likely be matched by the number of decked spaces. These structured parking opportunities are emphasized by virtue of their convenience – Brandreth Street to both the Community Center and the Crescent, and the Village Green right at the heart of downtown. But given the prior impact of urban renewal on the urbanity of downtown, no situation is presently foreseen where a parking facility (especially if at-grade) should replace buildings (especially those that are historic).

**Strategy 4.3:**

**Employ a parking management strategy for downtown**

The Village Board should:

- Adopt a parking management strategy prior to the construction of the Brandreth Street garage. The essence of parking management is to emphasize the where (convenient location), the what (safety-minded design features), and the when (shared

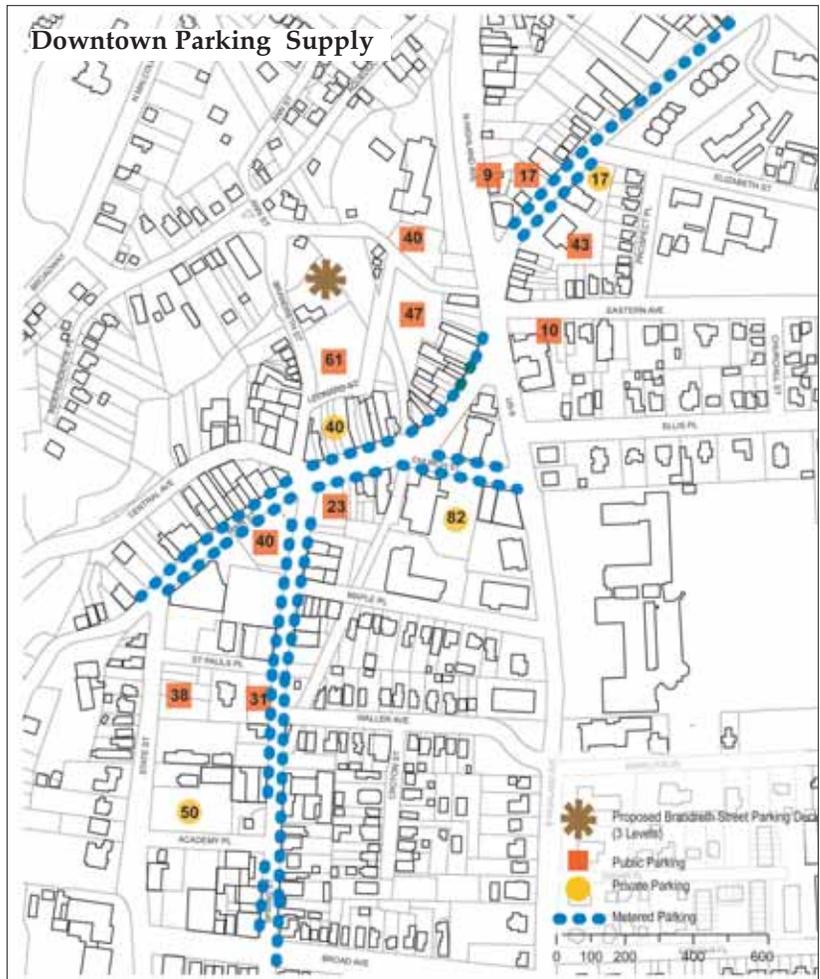
parking arrangements), in addition to the how much (costs). Some strategies are indicated in the text that follows.

**Strategy 4.4:**

**Examine current parking rates and charges**

The Village Board should:

- Revisit parking rates and charges on a bi-annual basis. The long-term goal is to make sure that the most convenient spaces are available to shoppers (e.g., merchants don't park in front of their stores), and that the less convenient spaces are used by people who park all day (merchants, workers, and even upstairs residents). The current state of the art is to charge "market" prices for curb parking, which are generally accepted to be the price that achieves an average 85 percent occupancy (See Table 11). The impacts of "market pricing" for parking would likely be as follows:
  - Anyone willing to pay can find an on-street space within a block of his or her destination.
  - There are more on-street parking spaces for shoppers and diners.
  - There is reduced cruising for parking.
  - Long-term parkers gravitate to the off-street facilities, which increases the utilization of such facilities and reduces the risk that the facilities will not pay their own way.



**Strategy 4.5:**

**Set up a fund specifically for downtown parking and pedestrian improvements**

The Village Board should:

- Set up a fund that would be used to improve downtown parking and pedestrian improvements. Note that without a pedestrian-friendly environment, people generally walk only 400 feet to their destination, which should be within direct sight; this grows to 1000 or more feet if the walk is shaded, passes shops and dining, and is in a traffic-calmed environment.



**Table 11: Current Hours and Charges for Parking in the Village**

	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Charge- Short Term</i>	<i>Charge- Long Term</i>
On Street	400	\$0.25 for 20 minutes up to 2 hours	\$35 per year for first car in household; \$7 each additional car
Off Street	120 Public	None	None
Off-Street	245 "Tag Spaces"		\$200 per year for daytime parking \$50 per year for overnight parking

Source: Village of Ossining Department of Planning.

**Strategy 4.6:**

**Proactively address the spillover impact of customer parking in residential neighborhoods**

The Village Board should:

- Consider issuing residential permits, i.e., non-permitted cars would not be able to park on the street in residential neighborhoods during certain hours.

**Strategy 4.7:**

**Improve circulation downtown by making Spring Street two-way at all locations**

Currently, Spring Street is one-way heading north from St. Paul’s Place to Main Street; Main Street is one-way heading west between Route 9 and Church Street; and Church Street is one-way heading east.

The Village Board should:

- Make Spring Street two-way in order to compel customers to drive by a business twice, thereby increasing its visibility. Lost on-street parking spaces would be made up by changing regulations on the adjoining streets.

**Strategy 4.8:**

**Investigate and formally study the viability of a Village shuttle bus/jitney service**

The Village Board should:

- Commission a study of a possible shuttle bus/jitney service. The steep topography of the Village makes it difficult to travel between the waterfront and downtown. A Bee-Line service does travel this route, but times are not currently coordinated with the Metro-North schedules. A shuttle bus service connecting the Metro-North station with the downtown, as well as residential and possibly cultural and other commercial areas within a small radius

(three miles, for example), could be beneficial. It could address various commuter concerns, allow car-less mobility, and aid the downtown parking issues. Residents and visitors would be able to travel throughout the Village to many popular attractions without the use of a car or by only needing to park once. The bus service could expand the traditional downtown to include areas that are beyond normal walking distance. (See Transportation chapter)

**OBJECTIVE 5: PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE OF THE CRESCENT AREA**

**Strategy 5.1:**

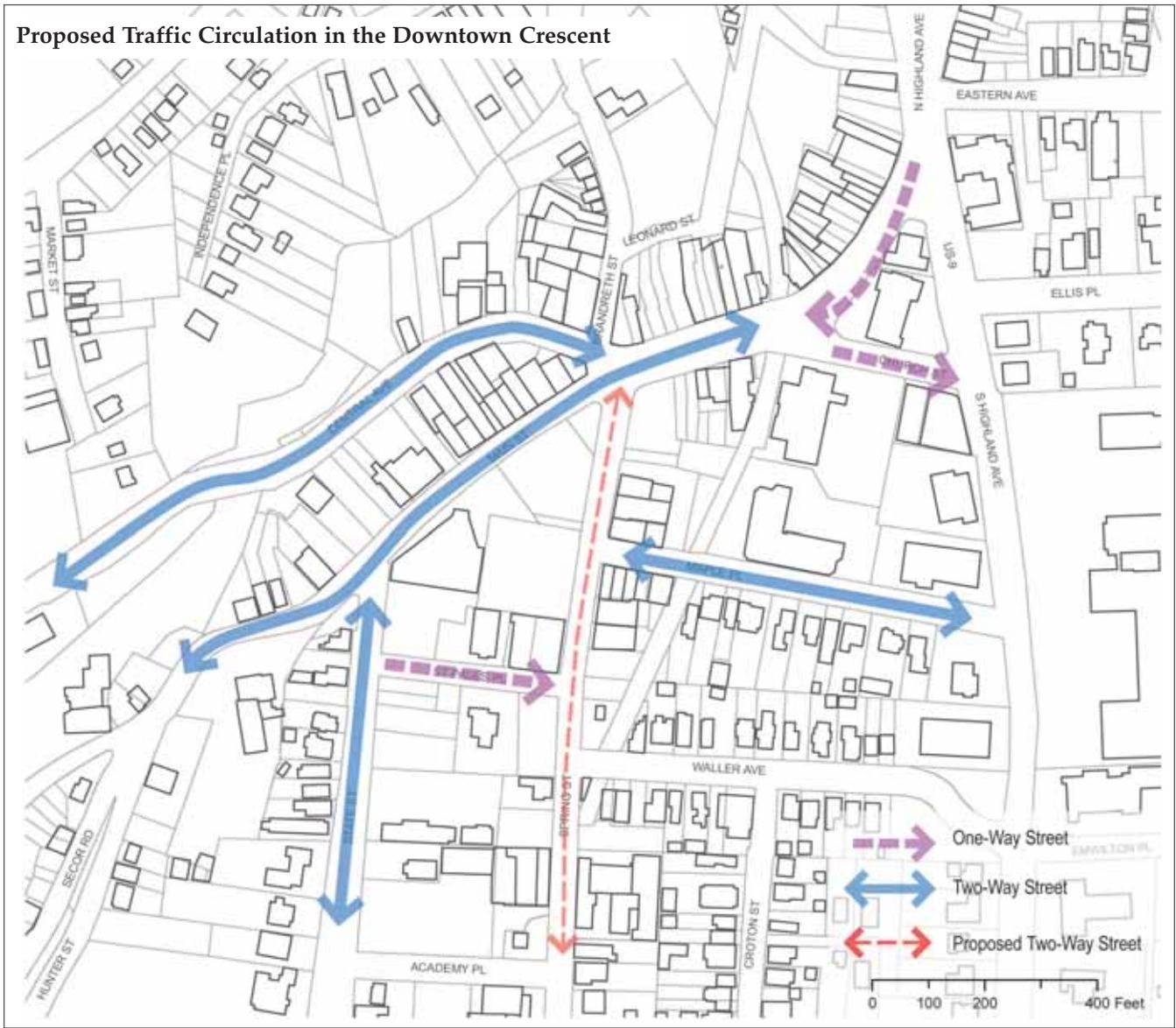
**Focus convenience goods and services on Route 9 and Route 133**

Convenience goods and service retail include stores such as dry cleaners, grocery stores, and pharmacies. Tenants with these types of businesses seek locations that are most convenient for the customer. These types of businesses usually are near a larger anchor store, preferably a supermarket, along a major arterial road, and provide an abundance of in-front parking. Downtown Ossining has formidable competition from within Ossining for these types of tenants, i.e., the Arcadian Shopping Center with Stop & Shop as an anchor, strip malls along Route 9, and Croton Avenue which has anchors such as Four Seasons grocery store and the new library. Therefore, Routes 9 and 133 are much better positioned for convenience retail.

The Village Board, in cooperation with other downtown entities, such as the Chamber, ADO or proposed BID, should:

- Focus marketing efforts and tenanting efforts for convenience goods retailers along these roads.

**Proposed Traffic Circulation in the Downtown Crescent**



**OBJECTIVE 6: UPDATE EXISTING BUSINESS DISTRICT ZONING BY CREATING NEW ZONES**

Currently, Ossining has three general business zones: the B-1, B-2 and B-3 zones, which, upon examination, appear to require significant amendment to adjust to the contemporary development context. The existing zones are based on a paradigm of single business uses on each lot, each having its own parking, with no provision for mixed use, and a wide variety of business types allowed in each zone. The intent of this type of zoning is to strictly separate business activities from dwellings. Ironically, because most of the business zones (with the exception of the downtown) are small in size, the existing zoning has actually enhanced the



potential for conflicts with nearby residences by encouraging the intensive use of land for various commercial purposes, rather than pedestrian-oriented neighborhood business.

**Strategy 6.1:**

**Create new Planned Center zone (See Table 12)**

The Village Board should:

- Change the existing B-1 General Business District that currently covers an area near the southern boundary of the Village, including the Arcadian Shopping Center, the adjacent drug store, and an auto repair business. The only permitted use in the zone is a shopping center. It is recommended that a new zone district, titled Planned Center, be adopted for this location, and that its boundaries be restricted to the shopping center area. The zone would be designed to allow the continued use of this property for a shopping center, but would also include provisions to facilitate the redevelopment of this property into a more balanced, mixed-use commercial center, with retail on the ground floor and offices above.

**Strategy 6.2:**

**Update the B-2 Neighborhood Business District (See Table 12)**

The Village Board should:

- Change the existing B-2 Neighborhood Business District that currently covers lands along Route 9 near the northern and southern ends of the Village, as well as much of the Croton Avenue commercial strip and a small crossroads on Campwoods Road. Although all of these areas are in the same district, conditions on the ground vary significantly between the areas. The southern end of Highland Avenue/Route 9 and the properties on the west side of the northern section of Route 9 are more highway oriented, while those on Croton Avenue are pedestrian oriented. The east side of northerly Route 9 is also highway oriented, but many of the lots are very small, steeply sloping, and border a residential neighborhood to the rear. Different zoning strategies are needed for these areas.

It is recommended that the west side of northerly Route 9, and all of the properties along southerly Route 9, except the Arcadian Shopping Center, be zoned in a new General Business district, which would include the widest range of businesses—including such intensive uses as repair shops and automotive sales. This zoning will encourage the reservation of these areas for

commercial activity to provide essential services to the Village. The east side of Route 9, meanwhile, would be zoned in a new NC-1 Neighborhood Center/Corridor district, which would allow a narrower range of businesses and would also permit residences as a conditional use. Croton Avenue and the Campwoods crossroads would be zoned into a new NC-2 Neighborhood Center/Corridor district, which would have similar permitted uses as the NC-1 District, but would have bulk standards designed to reinforce the pedestrian realm that already exists in these areas, with buildings close to the street and a fine-grained pattern of development. The intent is to encourage neighborhood-serving businesses, with the possibility for residential development on the upper stories of the commercial buildings, in order to enhance the vibrancy of the neighborhood centers. Businesses that are not primarily neighborhood serving and cause nuisances, such as repair shops, should be encouraged to move to the General Business zones.

**Strategy 6.3:**

**Revise the B-3 Central Business District (See Table 12)**

The Village Board should:

- Revise the existing B-3 Central Business District to encompass downtown Ossining. It is recommended that this district be renamed Village Center to recognize the mixed-use nature of the district, and that residences be permitted on upper stories (a condition that already exists in many buildings anyway). Bulk standards should be amended to encourage a finely grained, pedestrian-oriented pattern of development, and encourage continuous architectural detail and business activity at street level. Overall, the intent is to capitalize on and enhance the qualities that give downtown its unique sense of place in order to encourage more activity there and make downtown a place people want to be. (It is also recommended that a portion of the hillside between Main Street and Central Avenue to the west of downtown be included in the Waterfront district rather than the downtown district because, from a development perspective, it has more in common with the other hillside properties in the waterfront area than with the downtown.)

**Table 12: Recommended Changes to the Existing Business Zoning**

<i>Proposed Zone</i>	<i>Intent</i>
PC Planned Center District	<p>To provide for a location for retail complexes anchored by large-format stores such as a supermarket or department store.</p> <p>To encourage the upgrading of existing shopping centers within the PC district in a manner that promotes the economic vitality of the Village and provides residents with essential retail sales and services.</p> <p>To provide appropriate standards for non-retail/office uses so as to allow a broader mix of uses such as within a shopping complex while maintaining the economic viability of retail as the primary use.</p> <p>To provide a process for the redevelopment of existing shopping center sites in the PC district as planned mixed-use commercial complexes.</p>
VC Village Center District	<p>To preserve historic downtown Ossining as the center of Village life.</p> <p>To promote increased business activity in the downtown by permitting uses and levels of intensity that are greater than elsewhere in the Village.</p> <p>To provide opportunities for upstairs residences or offices in the downtown so as to encourage street life at all times of the day and evening.</p>
NC-1 and NC-2 Neighborhood Center Districts	<p>To provide locations for neighborhood-serving businesses in close proximity to residential districts so as to minimize the need for travel to run daily errands.</p> <p>To encourage neighborhood-serving businesses to cluster along designated corridors within the Village so as to promote business corridor identity and facilitate comparison shopping.</p> <p>To provide for a diverse range of housing types within neighborhood centers while retaining businesses as the main uses in NC districts.</p> <p>To aid in the implementation of a parking strategy for each NC district so as to minimize the impacts of vehicular traffic in and around residential districts.</p>
GB General Business District	<p>To provide locations for businesses that are incompatible with residential development.</p> <p>To help ensure that adequate land is available for businesses by providing a district that is exclusively for business use.</p>

Source: Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.

**Strategy 6.4:**

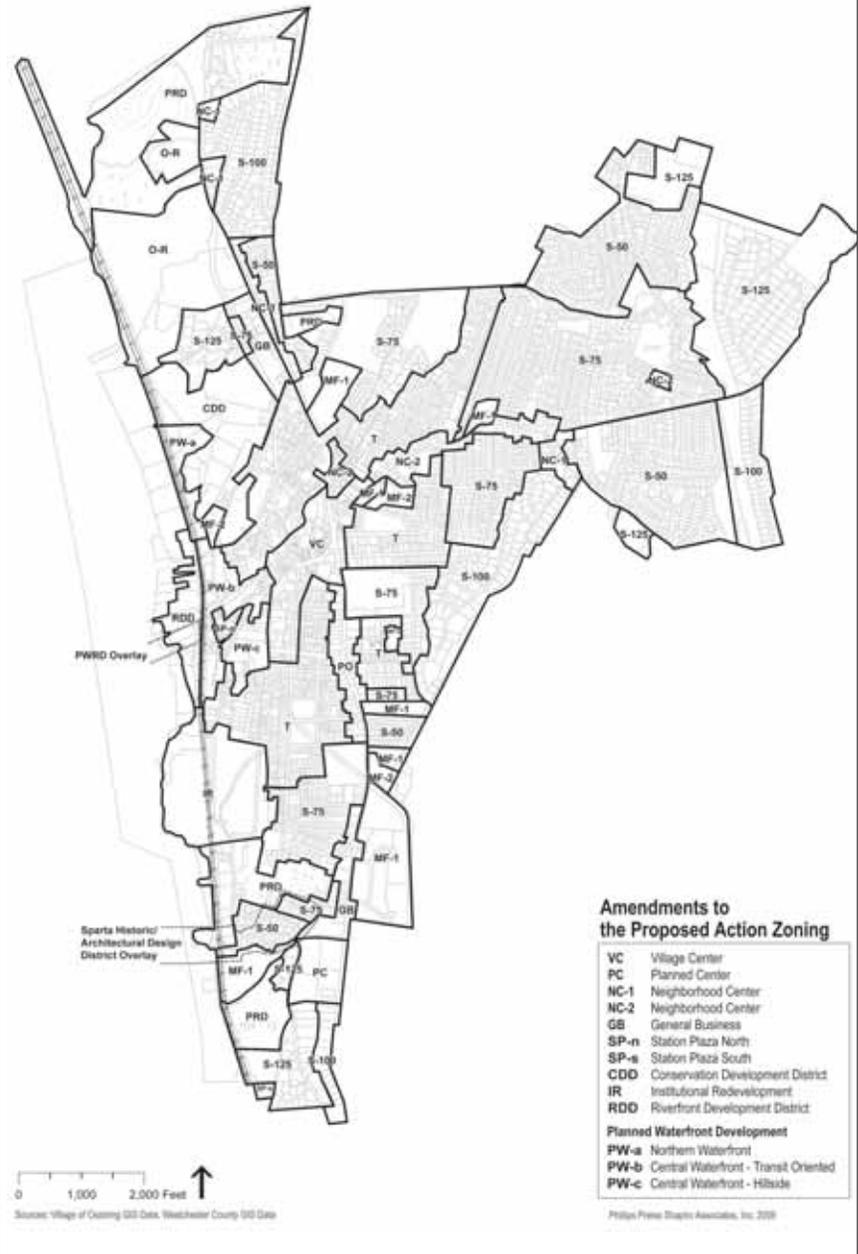
**Revise zoning to promote economic development in the Village Center district**

The Village Board should write zoning for the Village Center District to:

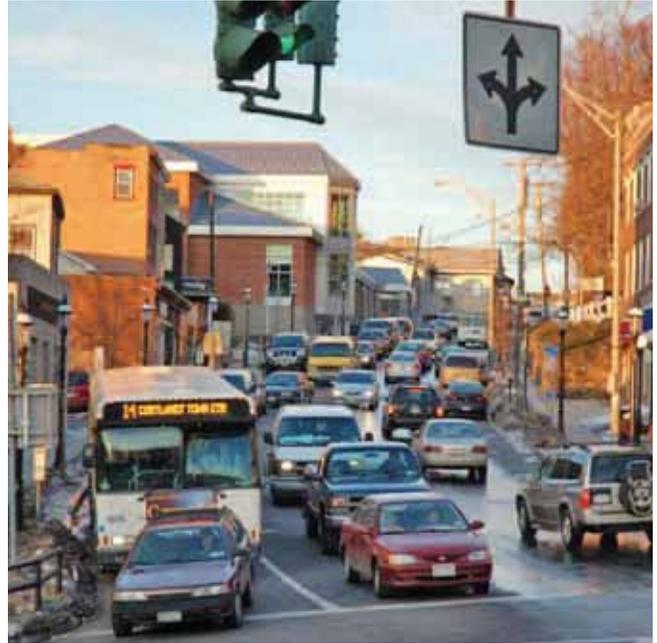
- Streamline the permitting approval processes for businesses looking to locate in the downtown.
- Reform the Sidewalk Café law and include outdoor dining as an accessory use in all business districts.
- Promote mixed use and residential living above ground level commercial/retail space.
- Promote office uses above ground level commercial/retail space to help expand the businesses in the Village.

- Promote small-scale overnight accommodations in or near downtown and other business or mixed use districts.
- Strengthen the Village's historic preservation regulations and adopt design guidelines for the downtown.
- Amend the current business district's bulk requirements to promote compatibility in scale, density, and orientation between new and existing development.
- Provide for flexibility for parking requirement.

### Proposed Zoning



# 5. Transportation



## *Vision*

*Modify roadways, enhance pedestrian qualities, and improve public and local transit to make Ossining more environmentally sustainable and better able to offer its residents alternatives to a car-dependent lifestyle.*



## INTRODUCTION

Ossining’s street network and its rail and bus systems have been dictated by the steep topography of the Hudson River Valley. Regional road and rail links are strongly north south biased – as the Hudson River runs along the western edge of the Village and east-west routes must overcome steep grade differences and narrow, historic roadways. The River itself was originally the major thoroughfare, followed by the railroad along its side, until both gave way to highways and arterials in the twentieth century.



In Ossining as in much of the nation, downtown and waterfront industry gave way to locally and regionally dispersed services and employment. In Ossining, 62 percent of residents commuted to work alone by private vehicles; 14 percent carpooled; and only 17 percent commuted via public transportation or on foot.<sup>1</sup> The average number of trips per household has doubled in the past three decades, from six to twelve car trips per day, and Ossining appears to fit into that pattern.



The consequences of increased car ridership have been extreme, and include:

- Inefficient use of land.
- Blacktopping, leading to stormwater and flooding consequences. (Roadways typically take up 15 percent, of a Village).
- Streets that cater to motor vehicles, not pedestrians, with greater preference given to road widening than streetscaping, crosswalks and other pedestrian accommodations.
- And of course, contributions from car exhaust to air and water pollution.

The environmental sustainability ramifications of continuing these inefficient land use and transportation trends have led the Village to seek strategies that will:

- Improve transit availability and ridership, both within the Village and to places beyond its borders.
- Improve pedestrian circulation, especially between the waterfront, with its Metro-North train station, and the downtown, with its adjoining higher-density neighborhoods.
- Relieve the increasing traffic congestion along the Village’s roadways.

- Alleviate the stop-and-go quality of the Village’s major arterials, to reduce “road rage” and reduce the temptation for motorists to use residential roads to bypass these congested arterials.

- Employ “traffic calming” in neighborhoods around schools,

and especially downtown, to improve pedestrian safety and comfort, and to change the behavior of motorists who would otherwise use residential roads to bypass congestion on the major roads.

- Employ additional “traffic calming” measures along Route 9 that would improve pedestrian safety and create a better link between the east and west side of Route 9. That would also change the behavior of motorists who intend just to travel through Ossining to use alternative major thoroughfares such as Route 9A.

The strategies indicated above are addressed in this chapter. However, a wealth of other strategies deals with the same trends and ramifications. These include:

- Forestalling future sprawl (and protecting neighborhood character) through a series of environmentally minded regulations dealing with devel-

1. Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.

opment on steep slopes, ground cover, use of impervious blacktop, traffic calming and stormwater management. (See Quality of Life chapter.)

- Concentrating future commercial and residential development within an easy walking distance of the train station and bus routes. (See Waterfront chapter.)

### **OBJECTIVE 1: IMPROVE TRAFFIC CONDITIONS THROUGHOUT THE VILLAGE, PARTICULARLY ON ROUTE 9**

New York State Route 9 (Highland Avenue) is the primary north-south arterial extending through Ossining and eventually connecting with the New York State Thruway via the Tappan Zee and Beacon-Newburgh Bridges. This four-lane, State road parallels the river at an elevation approximately 120 feet above the waterfront. East-west connections between Route 9 and the River at Broadway, Snowden Avenue and Main Street (as well as Central Avenue and Secor Road which branch off of Main Street) are characterized by narrow, steep, winding roadways that are treacherous in bad weather. Route 9 also intersects with Route 133, Route 9A and Route 134 in the Village.

There are no other roads within the heart of the Village which can efficiently and safely serve as bypasses to Route 9. Recent years have seen expanding traffic volumes and congestion on Route 9. The frustration of stop-and-go traffic had led some motorists to seek alternative routes through adjacent residential neighborhoods – many with street patterns characterized by short lengths, narrow, winding widths, steep slopes, and offset intersections. The alternate routes cited by residents in community workshops include: Broadway, Emwilton Place, Ferris Place, Linden Avenue, Revolutionary Road, Rockledge Avenue, Scarborough Road, Spring Street, Snowden Avenue, and Underhill Road.

The New York State Department of Transportation (DOT) revealed plans in 2001 to re-stripe Route 9 within the Village boundaries, in order to provide for “traffic calming” and pedestrian safety on the busy route. (“Traffic calming” is described in detail later in this chapter; but involves roadway design modifica-



tions to moderate vehicular speeds and improves pedestrian safety and comfort without increasing congestion or decreasing road usage per se.) The Village and DOT are currently revising plans.

As to the Village’s other arterials: New York State Route 9A is a four-lane arterial that runs north-south along the outer rim of the Village. It joins Route 9 in the northern portion of the Village near the Croton-Harmon train station, and provides access to the Saw Mill River Parkway through Briarcliff. Route 9A does carry some of the north-south volume, but the road runs along the perimeter of the Village far from the Downtown and other higher-density areas of the Village. Furthermore, although Route 9A is designed to relieve some of the congestion on Route 9, it too has experienced increasing use in recent years leading motorists to opt for Route 9 instead.

The fact that the most populated parts of the Village lie far to the west and northwest of any major highways puts pressure on not only Route 9, but also the New York State Route 133 (Croton Avenue), which runs between Route 9 and the Taconic State Parkway. In addition to Route 133, other major east-west arterials (to the east of Route 9) include New York State Route 134 (Dale



Avenue/Hawkes Avenue, Croton Dam Road), Pleasantville Road, Underhill Road, and Campwoods Road.

The intersection of Route 133 and Route 9 has long been particularly problematic as there is no exact alignment with a road to the west of Route 9. 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. This poor alignment leads to a confusing and awkward transition from Croton Avenue, across Route 9 to the downtown and waterfront areas. Pedestrians also must wait to cross over Highland Avenue until the walk sign in the crosswalk is illuminated. It is difficult for pedestrians to cross over Croton Avenue at this intersection as the crosswalk distance is long and there is limited time to make it across the road.

In recent years, a stoplight was added to the third right-turn-only lane on the northbound side of Route 9, at its intersection with Croton Avenue. In community workshops residents complained that in the mornings and evenings the stoplight caused major backups past Church Street on Highland Avenue. Observations of the intersection affirmed residents' complaints and revealed that the vehicular and pedestrian problems were limited to morning and evening peak-hour traffic; the pedestrian phase on the crosswalk causes back-ups; the westbound queue of cars does not fully clear in one cycle of the stoplights; and the eastbound queue forms on the hill at the entrance to Croton Avenue as cars must wait to make left turns until the westbound traffic clears.

The topographically constrained road grid and increasingly congested roads have exasperated Village motorists who try to avoid Highland and Croton Avenues as much as possible, preferring to shop outside of the Village or commute to work from the

Croton-Harmon Station accessible via Route 9A, rather than the Ossining or Scarborough stops which are only accessible down narrow, congested Village roads.

**Strategy 1.1:**

**Generally support but further examine the State's proposed re-striping of Route 9**

Absent any traffic study from the State that analyzes the future projected volumes with respect to the re-striping plan, a preliminary analysis with adjusted traffic signal timings and coordination using existing signal timing and traffic volume data from 2001 and 2004 indicate that adjustments to the signals along Route 9 at Croton, Main, and Church Streets are likely to at least partly mitigate any longer queues caused by the re-striping. However, the queues along southbound Route 9 approaching the Church Street intersection are likely to double, and assuming that traffic volumes have increased since 2004 or that they will increase in the future, the queues could reach Main Street. Actual future projected traffic volumes, as well as proposed signal timings would be needed to confirm these determinations.

DOT proposes a new traffic light at the intersection of Aqueduct Street and Route 9. Based on preliminary analysis, the new signal would measurably improve traffic conditions along both Aqueduct Street and Denny Street approaching the intersection, mitigating the increased delay that would otherwise be caused by the re-striping plan. Synchronization of this signal with the one at Croton Avenue would further help minimize the delay to Route 9 traffic.

Yet the benefits of improvements along the line of those contemplated by DOT are the right move at this time. The cost of the alterations is borne by DOT; the road will be re-stripped prior to any permanent changes; the plans are consistent with the philosophy in traffic calming; and its long-term benefits will be to make the village a safer place for pedestrians.

The Village Board should:

- Commission further studies on the effects any proposed re-striping will have on the current traffic signal timings, which could potentially lead to changing the traffic signal timings and synchronization along Route 9 at Croton Avenue, Main Street and Church Street.

- Continue to pursue the proposed addition of the new traffic light at the intersection of Aqueduct Street and Route 9 and adjusting of Route 9 throughout the Village.
- Stay alert to the potential need for future modifications. However, the intent of the traffic calming should remain paramount. Moderate traffic effects are typically a part of traffic calming; not so much that using side roads as bypass routes becomes rampant, but certainly enough to improve the pedestrian experience, especially on the parts of Route 9 corresponding to the downtown Crescent.

**Strategy 1.2:**

**Minimize use of Route 9 bypass routes**

Examining morning and evening peak hour traffic along both north- and south-bound congested Route 9 revealed the use of alternate by-pass routes often through dense residential neighborhoods with pedestrian school-bound sidewalk traffic. Any narrowing of Route 9 will make neighborhood streets even more vulnerable to traffic attempting to bypass Route 9.

The Village Board should:

- Consider studying these alternative routes to determine the effects of bypass traffic on pedestrian safety and nearby uses, particularly schools, with the re-striping of Route 9. If the studies demonstrate that there is indeed an increase of bypass traffic from re-striping of Route 9, then decisions should be made about how to deal with these diversion trips. Options raised by residents in the workshop and traffic engineers include: making the diversion routes one-way in the contra-peak hour flow direction, banning truck traffic through both signage and enforcement, and making these potential bypasses less attractive through traffic calming. For example, the Village has recently posted school zones as a means of reducing the speed and volume of traffic near the local public schools.

**Strategy 1.3:**

**Implement traffic data collection and infrastructure inventory throughout the Village**

Gathering traffic data would help reduce the chances that a potential problem manifests itself, or that some



section of the Village is overlooked during Village-wide improvements.

The Village should:

- Implement a regularly scheduled traffic data collection program and infrastructure inventory to better manage traffic in the Village. Traffic data would be collected via automatic traffic recorders at appropriate locations at regular intervals and then analyzed.
- At the same time, implement an inventory of the conditions of all roads (pavement, lane markings, cross-walk striping, etc), signs, and sidewalks – to be placed into a database to track and identify when repairs or upgrades are needed.

**OBJECTIVE 2: ENHANCE WALKABILITY AND BIKE-ABILITY THROUGHOUT THE VILLAGE**

The pedestrian and bicycling experience is an important factor in creating a vital community because:

- It is an alternative to driving.
- It is needed if transit is to work, since otherwise people will drive and seek parking near bus and train station stops.
- It reduces trips to go shopping.
- It provides health benefits.
- It is essential for kids, as well as for parents who are otherwise forced to carpool everywhere all week and especially all weekend long.
- It is important for seniors for whom walking is the main and most expedient form of exercise.

Other communities are waking up on this point by implementing trails, traffic calming, greenways, etc. and Ossining is in a good position to make improvements to an existing transit system.

## Strategy 2.1:

### Improve pedestrian circulation throughout the Village

#### *Route 9 and the Downtown*

Negotiating Route 9 and the downtown Crescent on foot can be at times confusing. The unaligned streets cause crosswalks to be longer than usual in places, such as the intersection of Route 9 and Main Street, as well as the intersection of Spring, Brandreth and Main Streets.

There is considerable consensus on the need for improvement, with various ideas proposed by DOT and by residents in the community workshops. However, further study is needed to confirm which alternatives would work best, and which improvements are most pressing.

Focusing on the major arterials, the Village Board should consider commissioning a study (which could be an extension of the Route 9 re-striping studies called for above) that further evaluates the following recommendations for pedestrian-minded improvements at these specific roadways and intersections:

- *Croton Avenue and Route 9 intersection.* The whole intersection needs to be studied in more detail. Some suggestions include opportunities to “tighten” the intersection by implementing the bulb-out and re-striped crosswalk outlined in DOT’s Route 9 re-striping plan, but with potential modifications as follows: move the southbound stop-bar closer to the center of the intersection; create a right-turn lane from Croton Avenue to Route 9; and consolidate the bus stop from the bottom of the hill (where westbound Croton Avenue intersects Route 9) with the bus stop higher up the hill (closer to the Ossining Public Library).
- *Route 9 and Main Street intersection.* Reducing the radii of the curbs along the western half of the intersection of Route 9 with Main Street will both slow down vehicles making the turn from Route 9 onto Main Street and create a shorter crossing distance for pedestrians.
- *Main Street and Spring/Brandreth Street intersection.* The north crosswalks are currently configured to guide pedestrians back across Brandreth Street and then Central Avenue which is cumbersome and seldom followed. The signals are timed such that there is opportunity for a safe crossing directly from one corner to the other, therefore a new crosswalk should be striped to accommodate this crossing.



- Evaluate all intersections within 150 feet of a school. Children should be encouraged to walk to and from school as much as possible. That said, their safety is paramount. Adequate and safe crossings and sidewalks that adhere to safety codes should be provided, especially in the vicinity of school buildings and other places where children frequent.
- Other prominent intersections in the downtown and Route 9 area. These should also be studied for further improvements needed for pedestrian safety (without compromising vehicular traffic circulation).



*Other Village Roadways*

The Village Board should:

- As part of the future traffic and pedestrian studies mentioned above, place special emphasis on both vehicular and pedestrian routes to and around the schools for both circulation and safety issues. Improvement plans could be drawn up possibly including any of the following: widening sidewalks, providing more and/or better crosswalks, adding bike routes and racks, traffic calming, additional traffic regulations such as speed restrictions, street closures, expanded pedestrian walkways, access roads, new drop-off areas, crosswalks that adhere to standard safety codes, etc. Of course this effort entails the full participation of the Ossining School District.
- Consider hatched striping where driveways meet main roads, such as the public parking lot access along Croton Avenue and the library. This will reinforce the continuity of sidewalks as experienced by pedestrians and alert drivers to the existence of the driveways and possibility of pedestrians.
- Consider a study of all of the sidewalks and crosswalks in the Village. A study of this nature would identify where additional improvements to pedestrian circulation may be needed. The study, and corresponding recommendations, should involve local residents as well as pedestrians and stakeholders (e.g., the school principals and transportation director as well as law enforcement). The study should focus on pedestrian routes to and around major destinations in the Village, such as



the library, the community center, the waterfront area and major parks, as well as the public schools.

- Incorporate bicycle use into the redevelopment plans of the Downtown and waterfront, as well as a means of transportation throughout the Village. The present north-south Croton Aqueduct bikeway alignment should be expanded, particularly with east-west links to this spine and more comprehensive directional and information signage. Bike racks could be located in various locations throughout the Village, including schools, public

buildings, parks, the transportation center, major bus stops, the waterfront, and especially the Metro-North train station and the nearby ferry landing.

- Maintain open lines of communication with other governmental agencies and even neighboring municipalities, which are not bound by Ossining's local zoning regulations, to ensure that vehicular and pedestrian circulation impacts or necessary mitigation measures are incorporated into their overall plan.

The Village Board, Planning Board, or Zoning Board should:

- Take pedestrian circulation into account as part of any future site plan review. Necessary improvements to pedestrian circulation should be incorporated into the development plan whether initiated by a private developer or a publicly funded entity or government agency.
- As appropriate, consider as a mitigation measure pedestrian and traffic calming improvements in connection with any project that adds to the Village's population and traffic volume.

### **OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVE TRANSIT OPTIONS**

The Metro-North railroad of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) runs along the Hudson River and makes two stops servicing Villagers: one at Ossining Station in the center of the Village from north to south; and the other at Scarborough Station, 1.5 miles to the south at the border of Briarcliff Manor.

Train service to and from Ossining station is available on both express and local train routes. The commuter rail provides direct train service between Ossining and other Hudson River towns, as well as New York City (42 minutes away via express train). A total of 44 trains bound for Grand Central Station in Midtown Manhattan stop at Ossining Station each weekday. New York-bound trains arrive in Ossining Station roughly every 20 to 30 minutes over the course of the day, with exceptions during the 7:00 A.M. hour, when there are 5 arrivals, and after 10:00 P.M., when trains arrive every hour until shortly after 1:00 A.M. A total of 53 Poughkeepsie-bound trains stop at Ossining station each weekday. Trains originating from Grand Central Station arrive approximately every half-hour. Service is

more frequent during A.M. Peak hours (6:44 A.M. - 9:40 A.M.), when approximately 3 trains arrive each hour, and in the PM peak period (5:16 P.M. - 9 P.M.) when 4 to 5 trains arrive each hour. Service is less frequent after 10 P.M., when trains arrive every hour. On Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, a total of 39 New York-bound trains stop at Ossining Station. Service begins at 5:04 A.M., with two trains running every hour until 11:04 P.M., when one train stops per hour. Trains originating in New York City stop in Ossining starting at 7:19 A.M., with 2 arrivals per hour for a daily total of 39.

The Ossining Station lies approximately 2,000 feet west of and at an elevation roughly 120 feet lower than that of Route 9. Public parking at the station includes permits for 453 parking spaces and the Allright Parking Corporation offers an additional 80 metered spaces for \$3.75 for 16 hours or \$5.25 for 24 hours. The parking lots closest to the Ossining Station are usually full, with additional spaces at a distance. There are few amenities at the station: no dry cleaners, cafes, etc. that could potentially meet the needs of commuters short on time. The steep, winding roads leading from the Ossining station to Downtown and the rest of the Village present a daunting challenge to visitors and commuters arriving by train in the Village. Adjoining industry and the topographic disconnect with proximate residential areas forestall the type of transit-oriented community that is considered one of the principal ways to enhance rail usage and reduce congestion – regionally, as well as nationally.

A total of 30 trains bound for Grand Central Station from Scarborough Station are available each weekday between 4:50 A.M. and 1:06 A.M. Only one of those trains, a morning express train, does not also stop at Ossining station. A total of 44 trains bound for Poughkeepsie stop at Scarborough Station each weekday from 6:41 A.M. to 2:46 A.M. All of these trains also stop at Ossining Station. A total of 21 trains leave from Scarborough Station bound for Grand Central Station on weekend days between 5:06 A.M. and 1:06 A.M. A total of 22 trains leave from Grand Central Station to Scarborough Station on weekend days between 7:16 A.M. and 2:46 A.M.

Scarborough Station is the only passenger station on the Hudson Line in Westchester not constructed of masonry. It can be reached via the historic roads of Sparta which are narrow, winding and steep.

Additionally, there is a connection to Amtrak at Metro-North's Croton-Harmon Station just one stop to the north.

The Haverstraw-Ossining ferry is run by the MTA and operates from a dock located adjacent to the Ossining station. Begun in September 2000, the ferry carries approximately 470 passengers per day<sup>2</sup> between Haverstraw in Rockland County and Ossining. There are six crossings each way in the morning between 6:00 A.M. and 9:00 A.M. and nine more each way in the evening between 4:46 P.M. and 9:39 P.M., timed to meet the peak direction express trains to and from New York City. The cost for an adult, single ride is \$3, the cost for a monthly ticket is \$100. The combined ferry-train commute time to New York's Grand Central Station totals about 70 minutes. Free parking for ferry riders is offered in Haverstraw. Passenger capacity for each boat is 149 persons and boats are currently operating at 10 percent of capacity leaving many seats empty. Residents of Ossining expressed a wish to have the ferry operating more frequently on the weekend and to travel to other river towns in addition to Haverstraw. However, the feasibility of extending the ferry service based on the existing low demand seems unlikely, especially in light of the track record of other weekend services throughout the region.

The Bee-Line Bus Service is operated by the Westchester County Department of Transportation, which operates four bus lines. Of these, two bus lines originate/end at the Ossining Station. All four connect at Spring Street and Waller Avenue, which offers a covered, but not enclosed shelter for passengers to wait for buses Downtown.



Bus coverage is generally good in the Ossining area, which includes:

- Route 11: White Plains-Ossining-Croton (Limited) along Route 9, which runs express between White Plains and Croton-on-Harmon, with stops in Ossining.
- Route 13: Ossining-Tarrytown-Port Chester from the Ossining Train Station south along Route 9, east to White Plains, ending in Port Chester.
- Route 14: Peekskill-Yorktown-White Plains, which travels east along Croton Avenue, then south along Pleasantville Road and Route 9A, and ending in White Plains.
- Route 19: Ossining-Katonah, which travels west from the Ossining Train Station along Pleasantville Road to Route 117, then into Mount Kisco and Bedford Hills, ending at the Katonah Train Station.

While coverage is good, timing and frequency are poor. The Route 11 (express) has only two trips per day per direction.

While two routes (#13 and #19) originate/end at the Ossining Train Station, the connections are poor between bus and train services. The buses meet with only three of ten morning peak-hour trains; and buses meet with only six of seventeen evening peak-hour trains. The wait-times for a bus at a midday train

were not any better: approximately half the wait-times were 20 minutes or less; the remaining wait-times were up to 40 minutes or one hour. In addition, the buses only run between 7:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M.

During the community workshops, residents complained about bus frequency and timing; that the schedules and routes of buses are difficult to ascertain; and about the location and comfort of bus stops. Workshop participants even suggested bus service at the train station, not knowing that current bus routes already do travel to the station.

2. These numbers were as of 2006.

**Strategy 3.1:**

**Consider establishing a Village Shuttle Bus/Jitney Service**

A major constraint to the managed growth strategies proposed for the Village of Ossining is the lack of an effective mass transit link between the Ossining Station and Downtown and adjoining neighborhoods. The implementation of a properly scheduled shuttle would allow the river-edge Ossining Station and upland Downtown stop for all of Ossining’s buses to integrate regional commuter bus, rail, ferry service, and also local taxi and bus service. This connection would address various commuter concerns, allow car-less mobility, and aid the downtown parking issues.

A shuttle bus service connecting the Metro-North station with Downtown, and potentially with neighborhoods, schools, cultural and other attractions within a small radius (three miles, for example), would be beneficial in other ways. Ossining’s Downtown would take on all the sustainable characteristics of a self-supporting, mixed-use community. The bus service would expand the traditional downtown to include areas that are beyond normal walking distance. Residents and visitors would be able to travel throughout the Village to many popular attractions without the use of a car or by only needing to park once.

Several communities in the metropolitan area have shuttle bus services focused on the local train station. Among the shuttle systems currently in place:

- Riverdale, New York: Hudson RailLink service at the Spuyten Duyvil and Riverdale Metro-North stations carries people to and from nearby residential and commercial districts.
- Maplewood, New Jersey: “The Jitney” at the New Jersey Transit (NJT) station is highly popular, in a municipality with size and demographic features akin to Ossining; this is only one of a number of communities that take part in the NJT Community Shuttle Program

The Village should:

- Examine communities where the shuttle bus/jitney service has been successfully implemented to understand the logistics and ridership patterns of the service and how these conditions coincide or vary from those of Ossining.

- Work with the Village Board in determining whether a shuttle bus/jitney service would be successful in Ossining.

**Strategy 3.2:**

**Improve transit service**

The Village should join with the MTA and Westchester County DOT to undertake the following:

- Provide transit signage and information. Locations where buses or taxis are available should be clearly marked, with directional signage to lead people to those locations. Scheduling and contact information for all services should be posted at the bus stops and taxi stands. A pamphlet and website should list all of the transit options and connections available in Ossining with references and links to learn about traffic congestion on the highways.
- Re-time Bee-Line Bus service to improve connections with Metro-North service in particular. The shorter waits will increase the attractiveness of using the bus to access the train. The next step would be to increase bus service until a bus meets every train.
- Provide a Downtown intermodal transit station at or near the existing stop at Spring Street and Waller Avenue. In the short term, the existing station should be enclosed and improved with climate control and paper schedule racks. In the long term, there is the option to provide an improved stop or even a new Intermodal Station in connection with

**SIDEBAR: CIRCULAR TROLLEY SYSTEM, KENOSHA, WI**

The Town of Kenosha shares similar traits as Ossining, including a waterfront community with a commuter rail station and an active downtown with development and parking challenges. They implemented a fixed-rail trolley that acts as a circulator between the waterfront, residential, rail station, downtown, and other destinations. The trolley operates every 15 minutes and has transformed Kenosha’s lakefront from waste to beauty. The system runs five former PCC trolley cars from Toronto, Ontario. Each of the trolley cars have been painted to represent a different transit company including Chicago, Pittsburgh, Johnston, PA (also Kenosha) and Shaker Heights and one car still has the original Toronto maroon and cream colors.

A shuttle bus service similar to Kenosha’s trolley service seems like the closest match to what is desired for Ossining.

Source: [www.umcycling.com/kentran.html](http://www.umcycling.com/kentran.html).



any new development in the Station Plaza (See Waterfront chapter).

- Improve access to and visibility of the expanding trans-Hudson ferry services. With greater patronage, the ferry landing should incorporate a weather-protected pavilion with ticketing, scheduling, waiting area and ADA accessible rest rooms. Also, extending ferry service to weekends will benefit tourism, especially if tied in with a Village shuttle bus service to various local historic and recreational destinations. Signage showing the location and schedule for the ferry should also be improved.

**Strategy 3.3:**

**Improve the experience at the Ossining Transit Station**

At present, the area around the Ossining Train Station presents a hodgepodge of mainly industrial and quasi-commercial uses, unsafe and daunting (especially to pedestrians) circulation patterns, and unattractive and/or poorly maintained buildings – though many buildings retain historical features or a scale hailing to the time when this was a busy juncture of road, rail and shipping.



Ossining has an opportunity to create a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in this area by in-filling with diverse land uses, reorganizing both the pedestrian and vehicular circulation systems, and safeguarding the area’s best buildings and views. Shared and structured parking, as well as relocation of bus and taxi stops will likely be required to create a true TOD. Increasing TOD in the waterfront can lead to improvements to local roads and certainly to the pedestrian experience of the area, regardless of the success that

such a development may have in terms of transit mode share. Careful planning – especially with regard to traffic and building masses – is necessary for its success. For additional examples of appropriate transit oriented development see the Waterfront chapter.

The Village Board should:

- Amend the current zoning parking regulations in the waterfront area adjacent to the Ossining station to focus on “shared parking” principles that would reduce the number of parking spaces required.

## 6. Sustainable Infrastructure



# Vision

*The Village of Ossining is committed to environmentally sustainable land and building development. During the community workshops, 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 water quality, treatment, and distribution and stormwater collection and treatment.*



Image from Hudson Valley Arts and Science Inc. [www.ossining.org](http://www.ossining.org)

## INTRODUCTION

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 Plan.

Nothing radical is suggested. Rather, the recommendations presented below draw on low-cost, increasingly common water protection strategies.

### OBJECTIVE 1: MAINTAIN QUALITY AND EXPAND CAPACITY OF THE VILLAGE’S WATER SYSTEM

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. In 2006, 37 percent of Ossining’s drinking water came from the Indian Brook Reservoir, and 63 percent from New York City’s Croton Reservoir. Between the two water systems, the daily average of water treated and pumped into the distribution system

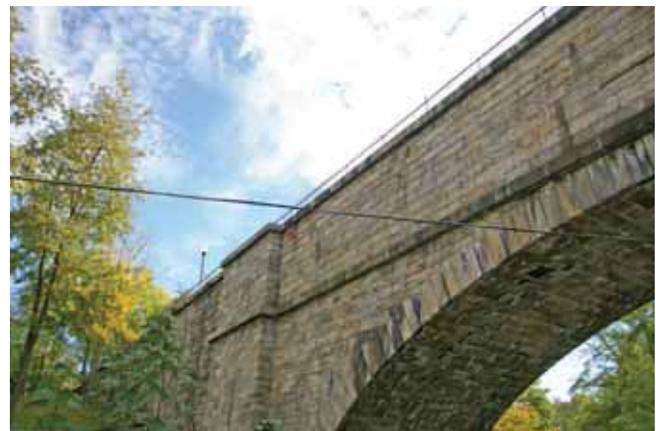
is 3.6 millions of gallons per day (MGD) and total capacity is 6 MGD. The highest single-day reading was 4.56 MGD.<sup>3</sup> The total waste water produced in 2006 was approximately 1,300 MGY (millions of gallons per year).

The Village’s water system serves approximately 30,000 people through approximately 6,000 service connections. In 2006, water customers located within the Village were charged \$11.84 for the first 748 gallons and \$3.87 for each additional 748 gallons of water. All other water customers were charged \$17.76 for the 748 gallons and \$5.81 for each additional 748 gallons of water. Approximately 1.28 billion gallons of the 1.30 billion gallons produced were charged to paying users. The remaining water is attributable to flushing mains, fighting fires and miscellaneous leakage.

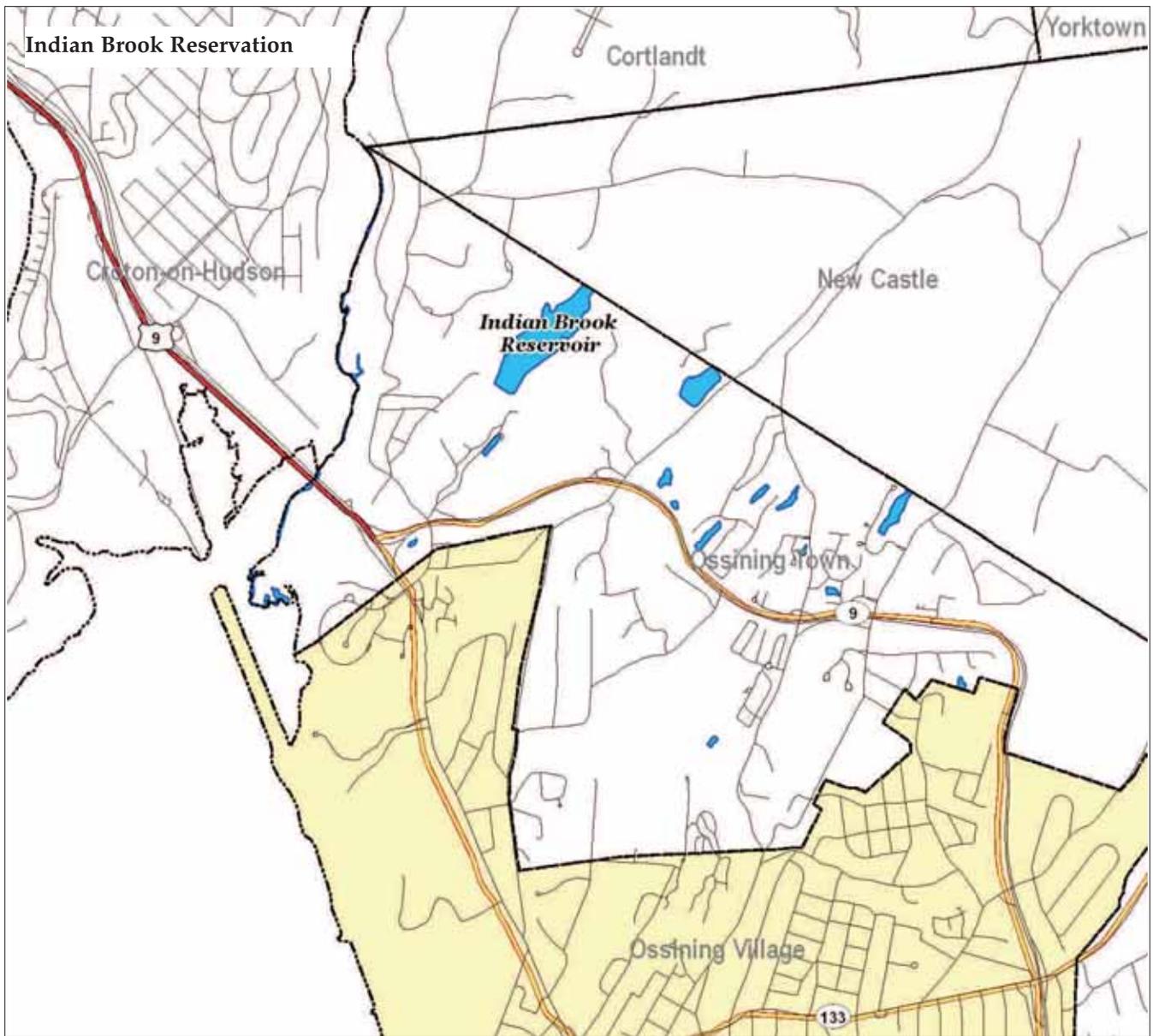
### OLD AND NEW CROTON AQUEDUCT

The Village of Ossining has the capacity to withdraw water from the Croton Reservoir through the Old Croton Aqueduct, as well as the capacity to draw water from the New Croton Aqueduct (NCA) from its connection to Shaft No. 4. Its NCA connection is capable of pumping 4.6 MGD from the aqueduct, but it is used as backup only through the use of two deep-well pumps installed in the shaft. This water is adjusted for chlorine content and treated for corrosion control.

New York City charges \$720 per million gallons, which rises to \$2,800 per million gallons if local per capita consumption exceeds 140 MGD. The Village has to rely more



3. Annual Drinking Water Quality Report for 2006, Village of Ossining Water System, 2006.



on the Croton Reservoir water and its associated fees during a dry summer where normal reservoir recharge of 1.2 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 \$200,000 a year.<sup>4</sup>

#### 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 101 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.<sup>5</sup>

4. Information is based on conversations with Andrew W. Tiess, Superintendent of Water and Sewer for Village of Ossining, October 2006.

5. Annual Drinking Water Quality Report for 2006, Village of Ossining Water System, 2006.

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 Village recently upgraded and expanded the filtration plant (in 2005-06) at the dam end of the reservoir. 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 six 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.<sup>6</sup>

While the overall water quality rating<sup>7</sup> for the reservoir is good, there are reasons for concern:

- Portions of the Indian Brook run parallel to Glendale Road and stormwater runoff from the road drains directly to the brook, contributing pollutants into the water source. There are also two drainage pipes on Glendale Road discharging untreated stormwater directly into the brook. The first discharge pipe drains runoff from Glendale Road and the second collects runoff from surrounding residences.
- Other segments of the Indian Brook are located in private backyards that can also receive stormwater runoff and pollutants associated with landscape management activities. The reservoir would be at risk from soil, petroleum and fertilizer runoff and other by-products of suburban living.
- Similarly, the Village has very limited property ownership around the reservoir and many of the surrounding lots are privately-owned. Some of these parcels are large and have the potential to be subdivided further, raising the concerns about stormwater runoff into the reservoir. Moreover, these parcels are not subject to Village regulations, as they lie within the Town of Ossining.
- Steps should be taken in the event these lands are developed to ensure that stormwater management

practices are constructed to treat the maximum practical volume of runoff and are maintained in accordance with a practical and feasible operation and maintenance plan. Otherwise, the water quality of the reservoir may be degraded.

- Finally, stream bank erosion was identified along the northern inlet stream of the reservoir. This erosion can contribute to increased turbidity and silting of the stream.

With the potential for a lot of development and redevelopment in the coming years, appropriate voluntary and / or mandatory conservation measures have become an issue. Per capita water usage has been growing, as have the size of homes and meticulously landscaped lawns. Given these trends, as well as the charges in connection with the New York City water supply, the Village must maximize opportunities to strategically improve, increase or diversify the water supply capacity.

**Strategy 1.1:**

**Increase 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, in the short term:

- Continue to invest in improvements to the filtration plant:
  - De-stratify water at the intake structure. Reservoir circulators and aerators can help improve releases of thermally stratified reservoirs by destratifying the reservoir in the immediate vicinity of the intake structure. Water pumps have been used to move surface water containing higher concentrations of dissolvable oxygen downward to mix with deeper waters as the two strata are entering the turbine.
  - Add variable frequency drives for the pumps. A variable-frequency drive is an electronic controller that adjusts the speed of an electric motor by modulating the power being delivered. Variable-frequency drives enable pumps

6. Information is based on conversations with Andrew W. Tiess, Superintendent of Water and Sewer for Village of Ossining, October 2006.

7. Hudson River Estuary Program Indian Brook-Croton Gorge Watershed Conservation Action Plan. Westchester County Department of Planning. Draft-November 2006.



to accommodate fluctuating demand, running pumps at lower speeds and drawing less energy while still meeting pumping needs. The drives allow more precise control of processes such as water distribution, aeration and chemical feed.

- Continue to work with the municipalities that are part of the Indian Brook Watershed to help maintain its current water quality, including implementing the recommendations of the Indian Brook-Croton Gorge Conservation Action Plan. The Indian Brook Basin municipalities should seek funding to acquire land surrounding the reservoir that would serve to increase the buffer area around this important drinking water source. Potential partners might include local land trusts and state and county government. Land could be purchased outright or development rights (conservation easement) could be acquired.

In the long term, the Village Board should:

- Raise the Indian Brook Reservoir water elevation to increase its capacity, through increasing the dam and spillway elevations.
- Develop a secondary water quality treatment center at Shaft 4 (New Croton Aqueduct).
- Negotiate with New York City’s Department of Environmental Protection, Water Supply Division, to increase the old Croton Aqueduct capacity available to Ossining.

- Upgrade and increase the present filtration plant and pump capacities.
- Negotiate with adjacent municipal water companies for shared capital improvements to help cover capital costs associated with the above water supply recommendations.
- Raise water rates.
- Raise hook-up fees for water and sewer.

**Strategy 1.2:**

**Establish land use regulations to protect the reservoir**

Steps must be taken within the Indian Brook Sub-Watershed to carry out effective stormwater management. Otherwise, the water quality of the reservoir will be degraded. This has fiscal as well as environmental consequences, as the Village would need to expend more money to expand water treatment and/or rely more heavily on the more expensive water available from the City of New York’s Croton System.

The Village Board, should:

- Work on an inter-municipal agreement as identified in the Indian Brook-Croton Gorge Conservation Action Plan with the Town of Ossining to implement an overlay zone to protect surface runoff around the perimeter of the Indian Brook Reservoir, in order to protect the water quality. The overlay zone should limit impervious coverage, establish buffers, prevent steep slope development and protect environmentally sensitive

areas surrounding the reservoir.

- Establish a 220-foot buffer around the reservoir which requires residential lots of less than one acre to have pipe connections to municipal sanitary sewer trunk lines. This could also be the basis for an overlay zone.
- Require water conservation measures and regular discussions with the County Department of Environmental Facilities as part of site plan review, especially when new developments are proposed in the Village of Ossining.

## **OBJECTIVE 2: IMPROVE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT**

Non-point source (NPS) pollution, unlike pollution from industrial and sewage treatment plants, comes from many diffuse 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.

NPS 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 and often discharge occurs onto steep slopes, causing erosion. 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, crop and forest lands, and eroding stream-banks.
- Salt from irrigation or de-icing practices and acid drainage from abandoned mines.
- Bacteria and nutrients from livestock, pet wastes, and faulty septic systems.
- The adverse impacts of these pollutants includes

closed beaches, beach and shoreline litter, fish consumption bans, silt accumulation in marinas and shipping channels, habitat/wetland degradation, and stream bank erosion.

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.
- Streets. Stormwater flows off of paved streets and is made more polluted by the use of sand and salt treatments.
- The lack of a Phase II Stormwater Management site plan approval process for lots less than 1 acre, which includes most of central Ossining. (See discussion of Phase II below).

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.

### **Strategy 2.1: Improve stormwater management regulations**

The Village should:

- 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.
- Develop a stormwater law that takes into account stormwater best management practices and targets lots smaller than the required 1-acre threshold.
- Take into account and require any needed upgrades on the current stormwater infrastructure during development approvals.



**SIDEBAR: USEPA Six-Part Stormwater Management Program**

The 1999 final United States Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) Phase II regulation requires that the owners and operators of the storm sewer systems develop and implement a stormwater control program involving six minimum measures. These measures include programs for:

- Public education and outreach on the impacts of stormwater runoff;
- Public involvement and participation in developing and implementing stormwater control programs;
- Detection and elimination of illicit and illegal connections to storm sewer systems;
- Control of runoff from construction sites disturbing more than 1 acre;
- Post-construction stormwater controls or treatment from new developments and redeveloped sites; and
- Pollution prevention and good housekeeping practices as part of regular or routine operations and maintenance of storm sewer systems.

Source: [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov).



**Strategy 2.2:  
Use technology to inventory and upgrade stormwater problem areas**

The Village Board should:

- Develop and adopt a stormwater infrastructure monitoring and maintenance program to ensure that existing stormwater infrastructure is operating effectively. Establish 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.

- Develop and adopt stormwater infrastructure data management standards. The Village should establish a GIS-based stormwater infrastructure data collection system. Data should 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.

- 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.



# 7. Affordable Housing

## *Vision*

*The Ossining community is passionate about keeping the Village socially diverse, and about providing a place where all residents can reside comfortably, including its aging population, families, and municipal employees. This social diversity contributes to and enhances the quality of life in the Village which many residents cite as an important factor in their decision to move to Ossining. The Village provides opportunities for mixed-income, multi-family housing development in places with excellent transit and walkable services, and the Village government places equal emphasis on developing new and bolstering the condition of the current affordable housing. The Village believes that not only should there be a sizable number of affordable housing units, they should also contribute to the health of the Village's downtown, waterfront areas, and neighborhoods.*



## INTRODUCTION

During the various workshops conducted throughout the community, including specific housing and recommendation workshops, a vast number of residents expressed concern that there was insufficient housing opportunities for various components of the Ossining community, particularly senior citizens and young professionals who grew up in the Village, but can no longer afford to live in their own community. This “affordability gap,” defined as the discrepancy between median income and median home price, is due to a variety of factors that come down to the basic fact that increases in household incomes have not kept pace with housing costs; and that the amount of land suitable for affordable housing has become scarce. Additional reasons cited were: rising rents; insufficient supply of rental housing as a result of the pressure to convert these units to condominiums; and expiring affordability controls on existing affordable units. Despite the passion expressed in the workshops, the development of affordable housing is a divisive issue. In the Community Survey nearly half of respondents indicated that they felt there was no need for more affordable housing, while nearly 40 percent thought there was, and a large proportion of both groups believe that there is a significant need for senior housing in the Village. In the workshops it was also evident that whatever the view on new affordable housing (or development), there was widespread support for upgrading existing affordable and low-cost housing.

The diversity of Ossining’s population, both racially / ethnically and socio-economically, is a hallmark of the community and a rarity among Westchester communities. Many residents boasted of this diversity throughout the public participation processes of the Comprehensive Plan and concluded that it was an asset to the Village worth preserving. To do so, the Village must continue its work on diversifying its housing stock both in types of housing available and the economic levels the housing serves, from affordable to market-rate housing.

Since market conditions alone do not necessarily encourage housing diversity, the Village Board of Trustees recognized a need to use proactive targeted incentives and other strategies to ensure housing opportunities exist for persons with diverse income levels. These policies are spelled out in the Village’s Affordable Housing Policy

(“the Policy”) adopted by the Village Board of Trustees in April 2006. These strategies include the upgrading, rehabilitation, and preservation of Ossining’s existing affordable units, as well as the construction of new affordable units. The Policy places particular emphasis on providing housing opportunities for current residents, including the elderly, school district employees, police, firefighters, EMS volunteers, municipal workers and others who work within the Village. This Policy is designed to promote market-rate housing, while at the same time correcting the market imbalance that makes it difficult for long-time Ossining residents to remain in the Village. The Policy further recognizes that a variety of housing types are needed in order to encourage an economically diverse community and permit people in all stages of life to live and stay in the Village. A mixed housing stock is extremely important in maintaining the economy of a community.

In order to address the need for a balanced housing stock that meets the Ossining community’s diverse housing needs, the Ossining Plan recommends a number of strategies for providing affordable housing. These recommendations are listed below and are consistent with the adopted Affordable Housing Policy for the Village of Ossining. Below is a fuller discussion of what we mean by affordable housing.

### WHAT IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

Affordable housing provides a stepping stone for young families, a smaller, more manageable home for seniors, and creates housing for the local workforce. One particular subset is known as “workforce housing” designed for working members of the community, such as teachers, police officers, firefighters, municipal employees, and shopkeepers. However, a broad range of lifestyles requires affordable housing, including people who no longer work and are on fixed incomes, like senior citizens.

Affordable housing can be ownership or rental, a single-family house, two-family house, townhouse, or typical multi-family apartment units. Typically, “affordable” means that the housing unit must cost no more than 30 percent of the monthly household income for rent and utilities (or mortgage, taxes and insurance for ownership

## **SIDEBAR: Answers to Common Questions**

### **Q: *Who Needs Affordable Housing?***

A: By definition, a household earning 80 percent of an area's median income (AMI) is considered "low income", based upon the County's home ownership guidelines. Westchester County's extraordinary affluence means that a family of four can earn as much as \$73,100, be classified as "low income" and qualify for affordable housing. The lack of housing units affordable to low and moderate income employees causes some families to bypass Westchester and to seek employment and housing elsewhere.

### **Q: *How will affordable housing affect property values in my neighborhood?***

A: Research conducted by numerous independent groups has regularly documented that contemporary affordable housing has no impact on nearby property values, and in some cases actually contributes to increases in property values. Why? Because contemporary affordable housing combines attractive design with professional tenant and property management.

### **Q: *Why do we need affordable housing in my community?***

A: As public workers and service volunteers move away and are not replaced, Westchester's local governments have difficulty recruiting employees and enlisting personnel for services traditionally handled by volunteers, placing a greater burden on local taxpayers. Communities also lose an important fraction of consumer spending when employees of local enterprises are unable to find suitable rental or homeowner units in the county. Small business and corporations benefit from the availability of competitively priced employees. Affordable housing helps build the supply of employees and keeps businesses in the County.

### **Q: *Will affordable housing be compatible with my neighborhood?***

A: Yes. Affordable housing proposals are required to undergo design review and comply with all local planning and building codes. In fact, many affordable housing developments have won design awards because they reflect the character of the surrounding neighborhood, enhance the natural environment, and preserve local traditions.

### **Q: *Will affordable housing residents be good neighbors?***

A: Yes. Affordable housing residents are very much like their neighbors. They want to live in safe, attractive housing in good neighborhoods. Often, they are persons who already work in the community, young families who grew up in the area or seniors who have lived in the community for years. Residents of affordable rentals sign leases which commit them to be responsible tenants. Professional property management is responsive to community concerns that may arise. Affordable home ownership, like all home ownership, gives residents a stake in the community. They also pay taxes and want to keep their community a good place to live.

### **Q: *How are neighbors concerns about affordable housing considered?***

A: Affordable housing developments must meet local code requirements, which are intended to anticipate neighbors' concerns. Affordable housing proposals are subject to the same public review processes as market rate housing—including public hearings before local boards. Developers may also consult with neighborhood organizations or hold community meetings to get input or to involve neighbors in the design process.

### **Q: *How will affordable housing affect my taxes?***

A: Affordable housing owners pay taxes the same as all property owners. Making certain that affordable housing is available to persons interested in volunteer services, such as volunteer fire departments and emergency rescue programs, helps communities avoid the high cost of paying for these services.

### **Q: *Will affordable housing cause traffic noise and parking problems?***

A: Traffic, noise, parking, and similar issues are controlled by local codes just as in any other development project, and are reviewed in the environmental and design stages by the community planning boards, environmental review boards and city/town councils. Developments with potential significant adverse impacts are required to mitigate (or reduce) these impacts to acceptable levels. Regional traffic can be reduced when housing is located near public transit or residents' jobs.

### **Q: *How are the demands on the city's services and infrastructure handled by the development?***

A: Affordable housing developments, like all developments, are required to pay for infrastructure and other impacts of the development.

*Source: Westchester County Department of Planning.*

housing); the rent or mortgage is less typically set at 80% or less of Westchester County Area Median Income; and it must have a guaranteed affordability term for a set period of time. To be sustainable over a long period of time and to overcome the resistance of persons who live in market-rate housing adjacent to or integrated with affordable housing units, affordable housing must be designed to fit with the character of the neighborhood, using high-quality construction and professional management. It must be subject to the same building code requirements and restrictions as market-rate housing. Professional management includes stringent tenant selection and quick responses to maintenance requests.

Affordable housing may be developed by private developers, non-profit organizations, or through governmental assistance programs—or a combination thereof. Affordable housing construction is often spearheaded by non-profit organizations, many of which are local community or faith based organizations, using a combination of rental income, private financing, income from sales and government subsidies. Non-profits may also administer and maintain affordable units. Other affordable housing is developed by the private sector through a regulatory system of mandatory requirements and incentives. Funding and technical assistance are also available from private lenders and the sale of ownership units. Westchester has created a “Housing Implementation Fund”, a “New Homes Land Acquisition Fund”, and a Westchester Housing Land Trust Inc. to assist with the development of affordable housing in the County.

#### **WHO CAN AFFORD TO LIVE IN OSSINING?**

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines “affordable housing” as a home or rental unit within the means of a household income that is 80 percent or less than the prevailing median income in the area. The Westchester County AMI for a household of four people is \$96,500 in 2007. Therefore, in Ossining, a household of four people which has earnings that do not exceed 80 percent would have to make less than \$77,200 per year. Income limits are published annually by HUD. The current limits are detailed in Table 13.

Households making 80 percent or less of the AMI will have a difficult time finding a home they can afford to buy in the Village. Given the median single-family home

price in Ossining in 2007 of \$430,000, yielding an average monthly mortgage cost of about \$2,500 exceeding what many members of the local workforce can reasonably afford (see Table 14).

A more complex picture emerges for rental housing. In 2007, Ossining’s typical monthly rent for an apartment was about \$1,200 for a one-bedroom; \$1,600 for a two-bedroom and \$2,000 for a three-bedroom. Unlike most other Westchester communities, Ossining does have rental housing that is relatively affordable for Village employees. For a household of one or two people based on average wages, Ossining’s policemen, clerks, and teachers can afford to rent one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments. If the household is a four-person household based on average wages, Ossining’s policemen, clerks, and teachers can afford to rent only a two-bedroom apartment and many of its other employees such as maintenance, plumber or safety inspector cannot. With a salary of \$37,547 and \$45,046 a first-year policeman and a first-year teacher with a Bachelor’s Degree would not be able to afford even a one-bedroom apartment. (See Table 14.)

#### **WHAT IS OSSINING’S CURRENT NEED FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING?**

Determining Ossining’s current need for affordable housing involves four estimations: the number of overcrowded units; the number of substandard units; the number of households on the affordable housing waiting list; and the number of affordable units set to expire between 2006 and 2011. Overcrowded units were estimated from Census 2000 data and recent violations data that suggest overcrowded conditions. A proxy for substandard units in need of rehabilitation is a lack of plumbing facilities indicated in the 2000 census. The number of families on the waiting list and the expiration dates of affordability controls were provided by the Village.

Based on these factors, it can be reasonably estimated that there are approximately 1,455 units of current housing that need rehabilitation, modification, or replacement and / or new affordable housing controls, representing 18 percent of Ossining’s 8,250 households. More precisely: roughly 1,000 units are estimated to be overcrowded, 65 are estimated to be substandard, and 130 units are set

**Table 13: Area Median Income Per Households in Westchester County, 2007**

Income Limits	1-Person Household	2-Person Household	3-Person Household	4-Person Household	5-Person Household	6-Person Household
100% AMI	\$67,550	\$77,200	\$86,850	\$96,500	\$104,200	\$111,950
80% AMI	\$54,050	\$61,750	\$69,500	\$77,200	\$83,400	\$89,550
60% AMI	\$40,560	\$46,320	\$52,140	\$57,900	\$62,520	\$67,140
50% AMI	\$33,800	\$38,600	\$43,450	\$48,250	\$52,100	\$55,950
40% AMI	\$27,000	\$30,900	\$34,750	\$38,600	\$41,700	\$44,800
30% AMI	\$20,250	\$23,150	\$26,050	\$28,950	\$31,250	\$33,600

Source: United State Department of Housing and Urban Developers

**Table 14: Workforce Wages vs. Homeownership Costs (Housing Costs Gap Analysis) for a Four-person Household**

Occupation	Average 2007 Annual Wage*	Max Affordable Monthly Housing Cost**	Typical Monthly Rent, 2BR Apt.***	Gap	Typical Monthly Rent, 3BR Apt.***	Gap	Monthly Mortgage Amount for 2007 Median Home****	Gap
Police Officer/Support Staff	\$77,021	\$1,926	\$1,600	\$326	\$2,025	(\$99)	\$2,552	(\$626)
Parks Department	\$50,054	\$1,251	\$1,600	(\$349)	\$2,025	(\$774)	\$2,552	(\$1,301)
Street Maintenance	\$52,283	\$1,307	\$1,600	(\$293)	\$2,025	(\$718)	\$2,552	(\$1,245)
Safety Inspection	\$62,225	\$1,556	\$1,600	(\$44)	\$2,025	(\$469)	\$2,552	(\$996)
Clerks (Data Processing)	\$68,693	\$1,717	\$1,600	\$217	\$2,025	(\$308)	\$2,552	(\$835)
Teacher*****	\$77,930	\$1,948	\$1,600	\$348	\$2,025	(\$77)	\$2,552	(\$604)
Area Median Income (2007)*****	\$96,500	\$2,413	\$1,600	\$813	\$2,025	\$388	\$2,552	(\$140)
80% of AMI (2007)	\$77,200	\$1,930	\$1,600	\$330	\$2,025	(\$95)	\$2,552	(\$622)
60% of AMI (2007)	\$57,900	\$1,448	\$1,600	(\$153)	\$2,025	(\$578)	\$2,552	(\$1,105)

\* Source: Village of Ossining, 2007 Adopted Budget. An average of all annual wages in occupation was used.

\*\* Affordability defined as 30 percent of income.

\*\*\* Data Source: Typical rents given by realtor, Eric Schatz. Phone conversation, week of December 4, 2006. Took an average of the range he provided and increased by approximately 7 percent based upon rental advertisements for September, 2007.

\*\*\*\* Median 2007 Sale for single-family home equals \$430,000 (Source: NYS ORPS). Mortgage terms: 30 years; 7.25 percent interest; 10 percent down payment; 3 percent closing costs.

\*\*\*\*\*Source: New York State Education Department via www.myshortpencil.com.

\*\*\*\*\*Area Median Income for Westchester County (household income) 2007 from HUD.

to expire by 2011. This number is not all that surprising, since approximately 4,000 households (48 percent of the Village's total) make less than 80 percent of the Westchester AMI (See Table 15).

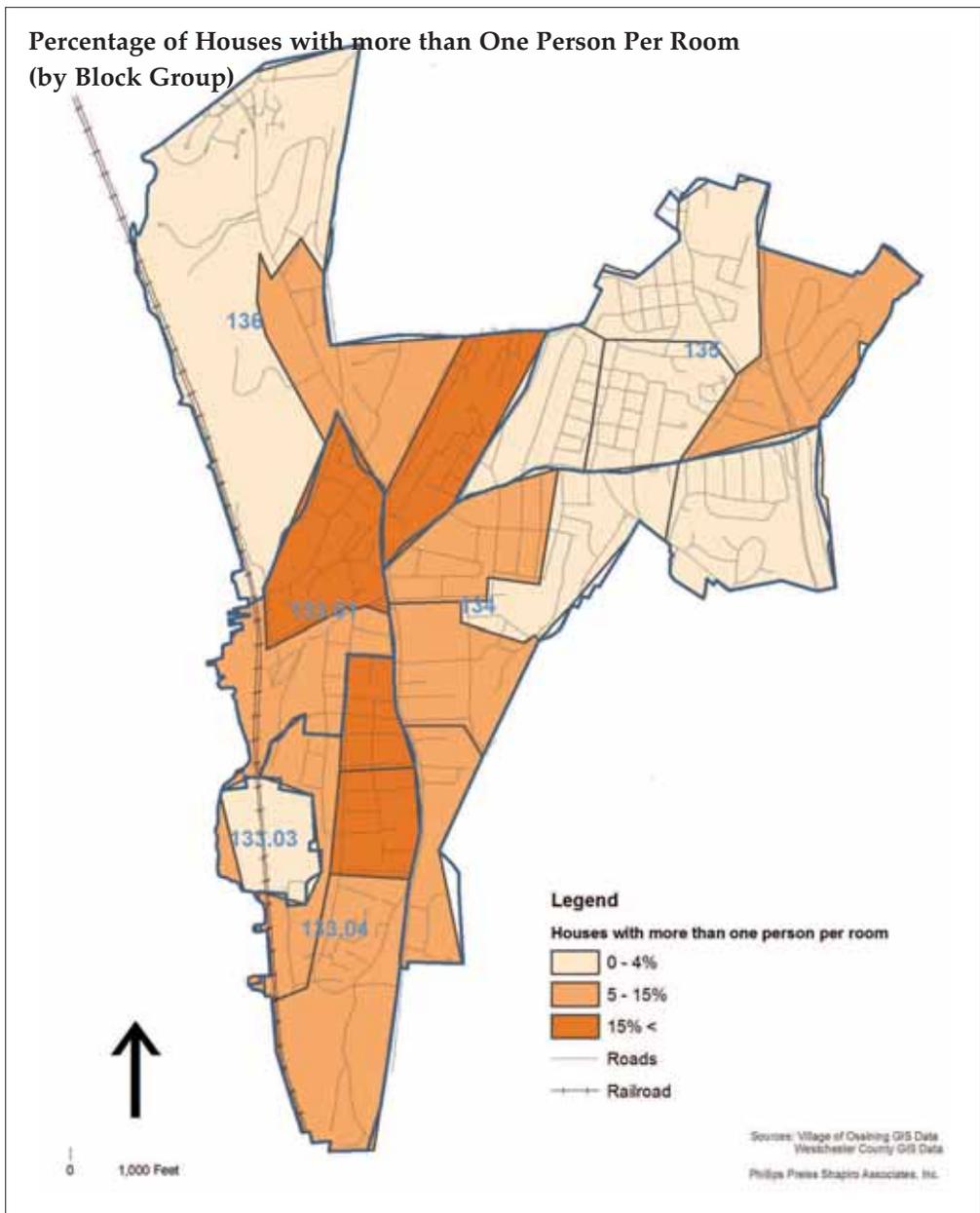
Mapping 2000 census data on overcrowding and sub-standard units does not show a clear pattern as to where these issues are most pronounced. There is a demand for existing affordable units and a shortage of supply. There are 873 units of designated affordable or low-income housing in the Village as follows:

- 78 units administered by IFCA, (Interfaith Council for Action, Inc.) a community based non-profit hous-

ing organization.

- 641 other non-age restricted affordable or low-income units; and
- 154 units of affordable or low-income senior housing.

Applying a three percent vacancy rate on the 2000 Census data, only fifteen units would be available per year for those wait-listed households and others.



is “real” for close to 1,200 units, representing approximately 15 percent of Ossining’s total of 8,250 households.

The expiration of affordability controls is a particular concern for buildings created under the Mitchell-Lama Program<sup>8</sup>, which helps to provide housing for moderate-income residents through low-interest mortgage loans and property tax exemptions. When affordability controls expire, maintenance may suffer, either because net revenues from rent without incentives are so low, or because owners look forward to flipping vacant apartments: once low- and moderate-income tenants leave, the units become market rate. As of December 2006, affordability controls had expired on 30 housing units; and another 130 are set to expire within the next five years, representing a decline of nearly 20 percent

**OBJECTIVE 1: PRESERVE AND UPGRADE EXISTING HOUSING**

As indicated above, Ossining has residents living in apparently substandard housing conditions (units that are overcrowded, lack adequate plumbing), and many additional residents are on the affordable housing waiting list or live in units whose affordability mandates are set to expire by 2011. There is overlap in these categories, but it is fairly safe to say that the affordable housing need

of the Village’s stock of affordable housing (See Table 16).

While temporary extensions can sometimes be negotiated, it must be addressed on a case-by-case basis. As examples: Snowden House, a 124-unit Mitchell Lama building nearing the end of its affordability term, agreed to preserve the affordability of its units by adding a minimum of five years to the term of afford-

8. The New York State Mitchell-Lama Housing Program was created in 1955 for the purpose of building affordable housing for middle-income residents. In exchange for low-interest mortgage loans and real property tax exemptions for building owners, the Mitchell-Lama Law required limitation on profits, income limits on tenants and supervision by the New York State Department of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR). Developments are eligible to withdraw from the Mitchell-Lama program, or buyout, after twenty years upon prepayment of the mortgage. When developments buy out, they are no longer subject to DHCR regulation, and apartments need not be kept affordable for moderate-income families.

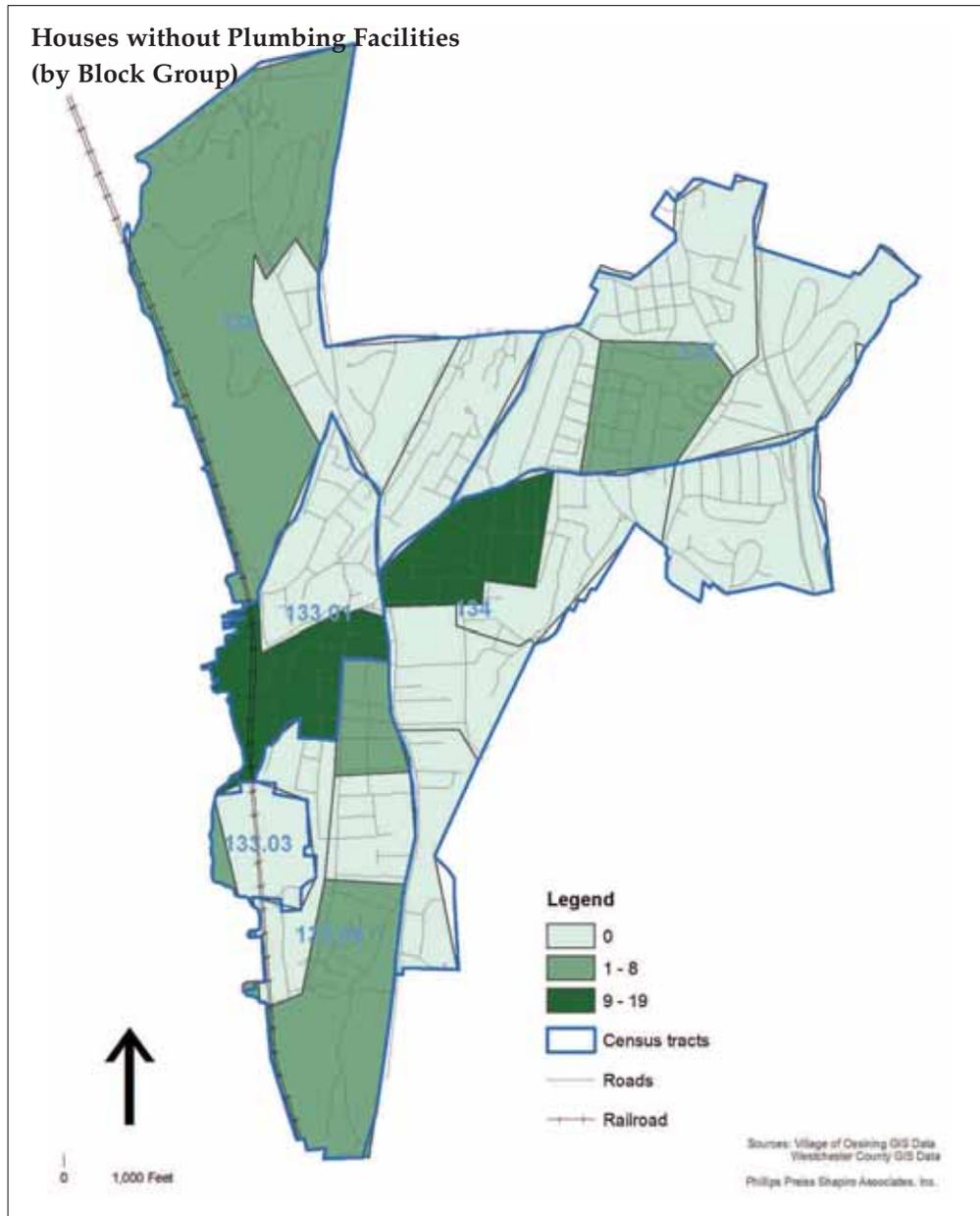
ability — to year 2011. Claremont Gardens, a 120-unit Mitchell Lama building whose term of affordability has expired, agreed to allow rents to remain affordable for existing tenants, though vacancies in the apartment building may be offered to the public at market prices.

**Strategy 1.1:  
Facilitate the preservation and upgrade of existing affordable housing units**

Preservation of existing affordable housing units is a strategy that should especially target those units whose subsidies and affordability requirements are about to expire.

The Village Board should:

- Facilitate the preservation, renovation, and upgrading of both existing affordable housing units (those units with affordability controls) and/or sub-standard units. This includes providing technical assistance to property owners to do so. Renovation refers to the upgrading of kitchens, bathrooms, windows, electricity, HVAC, etc.
- Make every effort during renovation, to complete renovations of units without displacing the tenant.
- Make every effort to perpetuate affordability controls.
- Negotiate for temporary affordability extensions on a case-by-case basis.



**Strategy 1.2:  
Maintain a current inventory of affordable units in the Village**  
Knowing what affordable units exist 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 Planning Department should:

- Maintain an inventory of affordable units in the Village.
- Review and update the inventory of affordable units at least every year.

**Table 15: Affordable Housing Needs for the Village of Ossining**

*Affordable Housing Need  
Housing Market Analysis for the Village of Ossining, NY Market Area*

	2000	2005	
<u>Step 1: Collect and analyze population data</u>			
a	Population	24,010	23,547
b	Group population	2,559	2,572
c	Household population (a-b)	21,451	20,975
d	Average household size	2.61	2.64
e	Number of households (c/d)	8,227	8,252
<u>Step 2: Collect and analyze housing data</u>			
f	Total housing units	8,515	8,541
g	Occupied housing units	8,227	8,252
h	Vacant units (f-g)	288	289
i	Vacancy rate $((h/f)*100)$	3.38%	3.38%
<u>Step 3: Determine housing demand</u>			
j	Change in number of households (2005-2000)		25
k	Overcrowded units	821	1,000*
l	Substandard units	65	65**
m	Affordable units set to expire 2011		130
n	Units lost that must be replaced (k+l+m)		1,170
o	Total units needed, 2000 to 2005 (j+n)		1,195
p	Housing starts, 2000 to 2005		26
q	Housing demand, 2000 to 2005 (o-p)		1,169
r	Estimate of Current Affordable Housing Demand		1,169

Source: U.S. Census 2000, Claritas Demographic Reports 2005, and Phillips Preiss Shapiro Associates, Inc.  
\*\*2000 census "units without plumbing."

**Strategy 1.3:**

**Better utilize the Village’s Tenant/Landlord Relations Council to the maximum extent possible**

The Village of Ossining’s Tenant/Landlord Relations Council consists of seven members. Three of the members represent tenant interests, three members represent landlord interests, and one member is impartial. Members are unsalaried and are appointed by the Village Board for a term not exceeding two years. According to Village Code, the Council is charged with:

- Conducting research into community housing problems.
- Formulating programs to improve landlord-tenant relations.
- Accumulating statistical information on available housing.
- Counseling on (and recommending solutions to) the Board of Trustees on landlord-tenant problems

and disputes.

- Mediating problems and disputes with regard to rent increases, especially to extend affordability controls.
- Helping develop programs to improve landlord tenant relations.
- Providing information for both displaced tenants and tenants from buildings with expiring affordability controls.

**Strategy 1.4:**

**Consider undertaking a study to evaluate the potential effects of adopting a local ETPA (Emergency Tenant Protection Act <sup>9</sup>) or other rent stabilization mechanisms**

Rent control is a controversial issue in the Village with passionate advocates for and against adopting a local ETPA.

The Village Board should:

- Take a closer look at the ETPA and consider whether adopting rent control measures will further the affordable housing goals of the Village’s Affordable Housing Policy and Comprehensive Plan.
- Consider the adoption of an alternative to the ETPA, such as a program that exists in Rye, NY. Rye has developed a program to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding between the Village and landlords which includes a voluntary commitment by owners to limit rent increases, which is:
  - Signed every two years.
  - Incorporated into every lease.
  - Includes a statement of basic tenant rights: (1) a right to lease renewal, and (2) a linkage between lease renewal and rising costs.

9. Outside New York City, rent stabilization applies to non-rent controlled apartments in buildings of six or more units built before January 1, 1974, in the localities which have adopted ETPA. Some municipalities limit ETPA to buildings of a specific size- for instance, buildings with 20 or more units, or 100 or more, but in any event, not less than six. The Act established a County Rent Guidelines Board which sets the rent adjustments for renewal and vacancy leases in ETPA covered apartments. In Westchester County, the ETPA has been adopted in Croton-on-Hudson, Dobbs Ferry, Eastchester, Greenburgh, Harrison, Hastings, Irvington, Larchmont, Mamaroneck (Village and Town), Mount Kisco, Mount Vernon, New Rochelle, Pleasantville, Port Chester, Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown, White Plains and Yonkers.

**OBJECTIVE 2: CREATE NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Affordable housing is frequently developed by the private sector through inclusionary zoning that provides incentives or requirements for affordable housing development. Inclusionary zoning not only expands the supply of affordable housing, it also fosters mixed-income communities through new construction which would otherwise only generate market-rate housing.

**Strategy 2.1:**

**Create affordable housing legislation and an affordable housing program**

The Village should:

- Create legislation to provide mandates and /or incentives for developers to set aside a percentage of all units for affordable housing. Ten percent is both politically feasible (it is done in many neighboring towns) and financially feasible. This will provide the profits to a developer and help maintain the level of services in the community through an adequate tax base.
- Investigate whether accessory apartments should be allowed by special permit in the S-125 and S-100 zones and whether such regulations would be an effective tool in helping the Village with its affordable housing goals.

The affordable housing legislation or its associated rules and regulations should include the following stipulations and provisions:

- The ten percent mandate and / or incentive should apply to a minimum unit count in all new development or major rehabilitations.
- As an incentive, a density bonus of 10 percent should be considered for all development proposing 10 percent Affordable Housing.
- An additional density bonus of 5 percent should be considered if a developer proposes to include housing

- for residents making less than 60 percent of AML.
- If applying the 10 percent rule results in a fraction, then the number of affordable units required should be as if the fraction were rounded to the higher number.
- The developer should submit an inclusionary housing plan during the development review process. The plan must address (1) the number, type, size, and income category target for each inclusionary unit, (2) a phasing plan to ensure that inclusionary units will be built in a timely manner, and (3) design planning

**Table 16: Existing Affordable Housing in the Village of Ossining**

PROPERTY ADDRESS	# OF UNITS	INITIAL OCCUPANCY	TERM OF AFFORDABILITY
<u>IFCA PROPERTIES</u>			
19 Hamilton Avenue	6	1990	2006
53-55 Hunter Street	5	1985	2009
49-51 State Street	4	1981	Perpetuity
235 Spring Street	4	1972	Perpetuity
223 Spring Street	6	1981	Perpetuity
273 Spring Street	17	1980	Perpetuity
138-144 Spring Street/14-16 Broad Ave	7	1987	2003
65 Hunter Street	3	1977	Perpetuity
2 James Street (part of 65 Hunter Street)	5	1977	Perpetuity
40 James Street	12	1977	Perpetuity
13-15 Edward Street	6	1981	Perpetuity
8 Broad Avenue	3	2006	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>78 *</b>		
<u>OTHER UNITS</u>			
The Birches, Snowden Avenue	16		2042
Snowden House (extended 5 yrs)	124	1979	2011
97 Croton Avenue	6		2041
49-51 Aqueduct/JF Realty	8		8/1/2000
Claremont Gardens**	120***	1974	6/27/05
83-85 Broadway/Samille Hammon	6		3/1/2003
The Pines	50 (for seniors)		
97 Main Street	2	2007	Perpetuity
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>332</b>		
<u>Section 8 or 202 HUD Funding</u>			
Section 8 Village Vouchers	235		
Maple House (202 HUD Funding)	104	1984	
Section 8 County Vouchers	122		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>461****</b>		

Source: Village of Ossining Department of Planning.  
 \*Out of the 85, 1 is WC Emergency Unit and 2 are disabled for repairs.  
 \*\*Fair Market Value, but currently getting voucher for difference of cost.  
 \*\*\* Actual number of units may vary due to the voucher system that is in place.  
 \*\*\*\*62 units of affordable housing in new developments have been approved but not yet constructed

showing how the units would be integrated within the development.

- The process of tenanting affordable units created on-site or through the Affordable Housing Fund (See discussion below) shall prefer, if possible, Village municipal employees, school district employees, and Village residents. (This can readily be done as long as no federal dollars are involved.)
- The preference should be for on-site development of affordable housing, particularly for multi-family housing or large-scale, single-family developments that are proposing to develop ten or more units.
- The developer should have to prove a hardship for not building the affordable units on site. If it is successfully argued, then the developer should be required to donate to the Affordable Housing Fund (see Strategy 4.1).
- If off-site units are to be created the affordable housing project must be constructed first, both projects must be done simultaneously, or create guarantees that ensure the affordable housing units will be built.
- In the event that a contribution to the Affordable Housing Fund is approved by the Village, the payment should be for the full cost of developing the equivalent number of affordable units otherwise required.
- A fee schedule for payments in-lieu of on-site or off-site affordable housing should be amounts set forth in the fee schedule established by resolution of the Village Board of Trustees. A fee schedule should address the costs attendant to building affordable units off-site (including land, construction, and soft costs). In calibrating the fee schedule, the size, type and number of units should be considered (i.e., square footage of units, floor area ratio, and number of bedrooms).
- For all phased developments where affordable housing is not built on site, the Village should consider either requiring that the affordable units be delivered first; creating guarantees that ensure the affordable housing units will be built; or creating the units in a staggered fashion linked with the overall progress of the project's development, as follows:
  - Twenty-five percent of the required affordable housing units should be produced by the time forty percent of the total units are produced.
  - Sixty percent of the required affordable housing

units should be produced by the time sixty percent of the total units are produced.

- Ninety percent of the required affordable housing units should be produced by the time eighty percent of the total units are produced.
- One hundred percent of the required affordable housing units should be produced by the time one hundred percent of the total units are produced.
- The interior and exterior appearance of affordable housing units should not distinguish them as a differing class from other units.
- Affordable housing units should generally be integrated and distributed evenly throughout the development. Affordable housing units should be distributed among one-, two-, three- or four-bedroom units in the same proportion as all other units in the development, unless a different proportion is approved by the Planning Board as being better suited to the housing needs of the Village.
- Affordable housing units should remain affordable "in perpetuity" to the extent the law allows.
- Deed restrictions should be put on all newly created affordable units as part of every ownership and rental transaction. The deed restriction should follow the restrictions outlined in the Affordable Housing Policy.
- Owners of affordable, multi-family, rental buildings should be required annually to certify to the third-party non-profit that the affordable units are rented to income-eligible tenants.

#### **Strategy 2.2:**

#### **Be strategic with regard to the balance of mandates and incentives**

Notwithstanding the inclusionary zoning rules described in Strategy 3.1, the Village Board should:

- Maintain flexibility in the affordable housing regulations to allow the Village to negotiate with developers to create housing units affordable to those earning below the 80 percent median income.
- Work closely with governmental and non-governmental agencies as well as developers and others interested in the execution of the affordable housing policy or projects.
- Look to housing trusts or any potential public or private grants that would help achieve this goal.

**Strategy 2.3:**

**Fairly tax projects and buildings with affordable housing components**

The Tax Assessor should:

- Assess affordable units taking into account the limited sales value of affordable housing units.

**Strategy 2.4:**

**Apply these policies to renovation and major rehabilitations, as well as new construction**

The Village Board should:

- Seek to adopt regulations on this requirement and create a definition for “major rehabilitation.”

**OBJECTIVE 3: PROVIDE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF AFFORDABLE UNITS**

**Strategy 3.1:**

**Adopt and implement the Village Affordable Housing Legislation**

The Village Board should:

- Adopt affordable housing legislation.
- Administer the affordable housing rules and regulations. The Village Board should implement the Village’s Affordable Housing Policy.
- Define affordability for each project. The current adopted 2006 policy is aimed at creating affordable units in the Village for households earning no more than 80 percent of the Westchester County (AMI). The Village should make efforts in the negotiation process to include households that make less than 80 percent of the Westchester AMI and make special considerations for seniors.
- Seek partnerships. The Village Board should continue to work closely with governmental and non-governmental agencies as well as developers and others interested in the implementation of the affordable housing policy or projects.
- Consider Land Trusts. The Village should look to partnering or utilizing the Westchester County Affordable Housing Land Trust (the intention of the Trust, a nonprofit organization, is to stockpile land through donations so that developers can build on a property without purchasing the land) and potentially investigate possibilities into developing a local affordable housing land trust.
- Receive funding. The Village Board would admin-

ister the Affordable Housing Fund (See discussion of Affordable Housing Fund below).

- Be a facilitating agency and resource directory. The Village Board would work with developers and others looking for help with affordable housing in the Village to:
  - construct new affordable units;
  - renovate/upgrade existing units;
  - acquire affordable units;
  - provide information on programs or organizations that supply down payment assistance; and
  - acquire sites.

**Strategy 3.2:**

**Partner with an independent third party entity**

The Village Board should:

- Appoint an independent third party entity to help administer the Village’s Affordable Housing Program.

Specific areas for partnering include:

- Make recommendations regarding affordable housing proposals and major rehabilitation of existing affordable units.
- Administer the affordable units. The third party would ensure that the affordable units get built. The third party would screen applicants for eligibility, conduct resident lotteries, maintain waiting lists and qualify households according to the affordability and preference list in the affordable housing policy. The third party would also monitor the marketing, sales and rentals of such units to ensure compliance with the Village’s affordable housing policy.
- Educate residents. The third party would provide workshops and counseling for first-time homebuyers.
- Work with the Village. The third party would submit regular written reports on its activities and results to the Planning Department or other Village designee.

The benefits of having an entity manage affordable units include:

- Expertise in evaluating affordable housing components of proposed development, initial sales of units, and re-sale and re-leasing of units.

- Further insurance of the privacy of applicants’ personal information.
- Lottery selections and waiting lists handled by an independent contractor will insulate the Village from the potential issue of “inappropriate favoritism” as part of the initial or resale/re-leasing process.
- An independent third party can be better prepared to handle large as well as small projects.

**Strategy 3.3:**

**Designate or hire person/persons to help administer the Affordable Housing Policy**

The Village Board should:

- Designate or hire person(s) working within or with the Department of Planning to coordinate affordable housing initiatives and work as a conduit between non-profit organizations and the Village.

**OBJECTIVE 4: CREATE AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUND**

The Village Affordable Housing Policy provides for discretionary Village Board approval, permitting developers to pay a fee into a Village Affordable Housing Fund in lieu of constructing affordable units on site only when the Village Board is satisfied that it is not feasible to construct affordable units on site or at another location.

There are a great number of restrictions on what the Village could do with money taken into an affordable housing fund. But by New York State Law, the use of such funds can be broadly applied to include but not be limited to these elements of affordable housing projects:

- Infrastructure improvements.
- Streetscape improvements.
- Recreational fees.
- Possible demolition costs.

**Strategy 4.1:**

**Create a Village Affordable Housing Fund**

The Village Board should:

- Create and administer an affordable housing trust fund as well as adopt rules and regulations concerning the payment into and disbursement from the fund. This includes administering all applica-

tions for disbursement of funds.

- Use a third party or person with expertise in the affordable housing field to: make assessments and recommendations to the Village Board for such disbursements, and if necessary, monitor developers’ compliance with the requirements for the use of funds.
- Investigate other legal means of helping to advance the Village’s affordable housing program or the new construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing units in the Village.

**OBJECTIVE 5: BE STRATEGIC VIS-À-VIS REGIONAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS AND SUPPORT**

The time is ripe for the Village to act on affordable housing. Westchester County recently launched several affordable housing initiatives including the Westchester Campaign for Affordable Housing and the Westchester County Affordable Housing Allocation Plan 2000-2015 both of which pertain to Ossining and both of which are detailed below. In addition, a federal lawsuit filed in January 2007 by the Anti-Discrimination Center of Metro New York charged that Westchester County should return \$45 million in federal grants for not doing enough to provide fair and affordable housing. The lawsuit contends that Westchester officials were to blame not only for the county’s lack of progress in providing affordable housing, but also for failing to reduce segregated housing in its municipalities.<sup>10</sup> (Ossining needs to convince the County, and courts, if need be, that, in effect, it is providing affordable housing in its community and is hoping to be able to provide more.)

According to the Westchester County Affordable Housing Allocation Plan 2000-2015 (see details in Sidebar on the next page), the Village of Ossining was required to provide 160 affordable units, which equals 2.16 percent of the County’s total obligation of 7,408 units. Briarcliff must provide 74 (1.00 percent), Chappaqua must provide 152 (2.05 percent), and Croton-on-Hudson must provide 99 (1.34 percent).

While this methodology seems good in theory, it is problematic in practice. For example, allocations were

based on miles of Bee Line Bus Service while Metro-North service was not considered. The emphasis on overcrowded housing conditions directs the obligation to communities with large low-income populations and fewer revenue resources. The net effect is that municipalities with great resources of land and tax dollars have a lower allocation number than municipalities that already have significant housing condition issues to contend with, less land, and fewer financial resources. The fact that land is generally less valuable also means that greater development incentives are needed, whereby in the more affluent communities, mandates would more likely suffice. This is all too evident in the comparison of the obligations and current standing of Ossining and its neighbors when it comes to affordable housing in Table 17 on the following page.

Ossining representatives should:

- Consider adopting the following strategies in light of Westchester County’s affordable housing campaign, allocation plan and lawsuit, and in light of the limitations in New York State law to provide villages with all of the tools possible to create more affordable housing units.

**Strategy 5.1:**

**Lobby now for improvements in State legislation**

Ossining has an opportunity to lobby the State with its concerns, especially in light of the County’s efforts for affordable housing, the County’s lawsuit described above, and a general sense that there is an affordable housing crisis in the region.

**Strategy 5.2:**

**Focus on legislation that allocates fair share obligations by wealth and number of jobs**

The New York Fair Housing Act should, akin to New Jersey’s Mount Laurel legislation, mandate that all municipalities should provide their fair share of housing. However, as in New Jersey, while the municipality would be required to fulfill its fair share, that allocation could be transferred to other municipalities and even applied to the rehab of existing substandard units, or to assure affordability in perpetuity for existing affordable housing units where the affordability requirement is about to expire.

10. Ford Fessenden, “County Sued Over Lack of Affordable Homes,” New York Times, 4 February 2007.

**SIDEBAR: Westchester’s Campaign for Affordable Housing**

The Westchester County Planning Commission recently introduced its Campaign for Affordable Housing. On its website, the Commission notes that “The lack of housing for working families with financial restrictions (our young people, our older residents, the employees of our corporations and our teachers, police and firefighters) – is one of the most critical issues facing our County.” This is attributed to a variety of factors:

- Increases in family incomes have not kept pace with housing costs.
- Conversion of rental units to cooperatives and condominiums or single-family homes in the 1980s resulted in the loss of rental units.
- The amount of land suitable for affordable housing has become scarce.
- Land values have continued to rise.
- The amount of financing (particularly federal) for infrastructure and related costs has dropped in the last two decades.
- The complexity of land use regulations has increased in recent years, diminishing the ability of developers to package and produce lower-cost housing.

Westchester County’s Campaign for Affordable Housing aims to create more affordable housing and is committed to providing rental subsidy and housing assistance to those in need.

*Source: Westchester County Department of Planning*

**SIDEBAR: Westchester County Affordable Housing Allocation Plan 2000-2015**

In 1991, Rutgers State University Center for Urban Policy and Research for Westchester, on behalf of the County Board of Legislators, quantified the need for affordable housing at 5,000 units to be built by the year 2000. Less than 3,000 units were actually developed by then. The study was updated in 2004 at which point the County released its Affordable Housing Allocation Plan assigning each municipality a number of affordable units to provide by the year 2015. The County’s allocation methodology revolves largely around smart growth principles, assigning affordable units in areas with jobs and bus transportation. The specific five factors taken into consideration include:

- Land area of the municipality.
- Municipal employment growth over the past ten years.
- Relative wealth of its citizens.
- Number of overcrowded units.
- The availability of public transportation, measured by Bee-Line bus mileage as a percentage of County-wide mileage.

*Source: Westchester County Department of Planning.*

**Table 17: Westchester County Affordable Housing Allocation—Percentage of Residents Living at or Below 80 Percent of Area Median Income and County Affordable Housing Obligation for the Village of Ossining, Neighboring Towns and Westchester County**

<u>At or Less Than 80 Percent AMI</u> <i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>% of Total Municipal population</i>	<i>% of County's Population Living Below 80 Percent AMI</i>	<i>Total Households</i>	<i>Equity Obligation Number</i>	<i>% of County Obligation</i>
Village of Ossining	3,987	48%	2.8%	8,252	160	2.16%
Briarcliff Manor	457	18%	0.3%	2,540	74	1.00%
Chappaqua	394	12%	0.3%	3,182	152	2.05%
Croton-on-Hudson	842	29%	0.6%	2,917	99	1.34%
Westchester County	140,855	41%	N/A	344,263	7,408	100%

\* Source for household and income data for 2005: "Household Quick Facts, 2005 Report," Claritas.com.

\*\* Source for equity obligation number assigned by County: 2004 Affordable Housing Allocation Plan.

**Strategy 5.3:**

**Seek legislation that allows alternative municipally-controlled funding mechanisms**

Legislation should be put in place for municipalities to create municipally controlled funding mechanisms similar to the New York City Housing Development Corporation (HDC). The NYC HDC is a supplementary and alternative means of supplying financing, including loans, for affordable housing that is independent of the City's capital budget.

**Strategy 5.3:**

**Seek recalibration of Westchester County's affordable housing allocations**

Consistent with the prior recommendation, and mindful that the allocation methodology used in the Affordable Housing Allocation Plan had unintended consequences that run counter to inclusionary housing principles. The main reason that Ossining should do this is to protect itself from potential lawsuits by builders that could result in the construction of inappropriate housing projects if ordered by a court.<sup>11</sup>

11. *Triglia v. Town of Cortlandt*. In assessing whether the zoning code of the Town of Cortlandt properly considered regional housing needs, the Court referenced the Westchester County Fair Share Housing Plan. Because of this allocation plan the court was able to determine that the Town's actions failed to consider regional housing needs.

### **SIDEBAR: Village Affordable Housing Policy**

On April 14, 2006, the Village of Ossining's Board of Trustees adopted an Affordable Housing Policy after concluding that current housing ownership and rental prices in the Village created a shortage of housing opportunities for current residents, including the elderly, school district employees, police, firefighters, EMS volunteers, municipal workers and others who work within the Village. The Village Board was also concerned about the loss of existing affordable units (i.e.: units which have, or will, in the near future, reach the end of their affordability terms). The Village Board expressed concern that:

- The diversity of people, which the Village is so proud of, will diminish. Providing a viable and growing mixed housing stock, which includes the creation of new affordable homeownership and rental units and preserving the affordability of existing affordable units will strengthen the Village.
- Children from the community are not able to afford to remain in the community as they enter the workforce and start their own families, and older residents have to leave the community, having no affordable housing alternatives as they retire from the workforce.
- The economic revitalization of the downtown will require workers to staff commercial establishments. Providing affordable housing will attract new businesses and reduce staff absences.
- The lack of affordable housing contributes to the overcrowding and deterioration of the Village's housing stock.

The purpose of the Housing Policy is 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." Among the strategies listed in the policy to fulfill the Village's goals are:

- The Village will work cooperatively with developers – not-for-profit and for-profit – in accessing governmental and other programs, funds and other resources to determine how a particular development can help meet the aims of the affordable housing policy.
- The Village will require the inclusion of a reasonable supply of affordable housing in all new single-family subdivision applications and proposed multi-family developments, including substantial rehabilitation developments.
- The Village Board will direct every Board, as part of the review process, to address the need for affordable housing units by requiring the inclusion of affordable units (10 percent rounded up to the nearest whole number)
- The Village will have a preference for on-site development of affordable housing. If the developer is able to establish that it is not feasible to create affordable housing units on site, the Village's second preference would be to create affordable housing units at another location in the Village.
- A reasonable developer's fee may be negotiated when deemed appropriate, wherein a developer who establishes to the satisfaction of the Village that it is not feasible to create affordable units on site or develop them at another location, may apply for and be granted an exemption which must be approved by and at the discretion of the Village Board, wherein a developer may be permitted to pay a fee into an Affordable Housing Fund.

*Source: The Village of Ossining Department of Planning.*

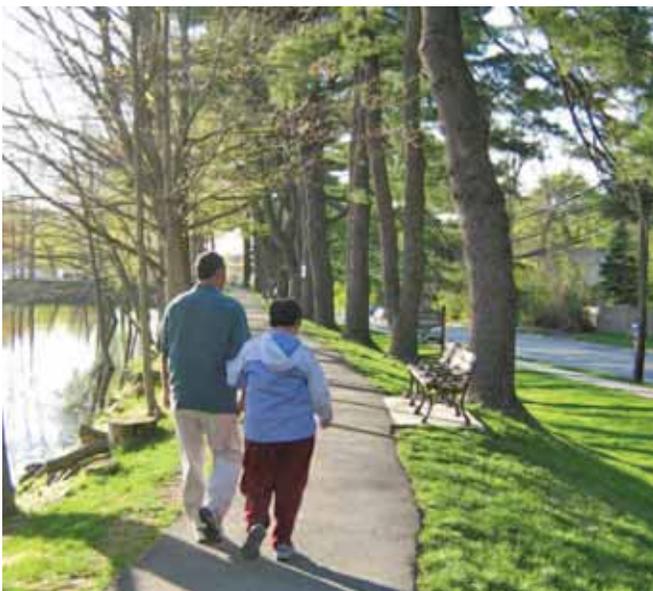


# 8. Neighborhood Quality of Life



## Vision

*Ossining is above all else a village of neighborhoods offering a fine but sometimes beleaguered quality of life; and the Comprehensive Plan is above all else about preserving and enhancing the quality of life of Ossining's neighborhoods. Whereas some growth is projected in the waterfront and Downtown to achieve substantial public benefits, the neighborhood plans are all about containing and righting the negative impacts associated with non-compatible development, traffic, and in some places disinvestment.*

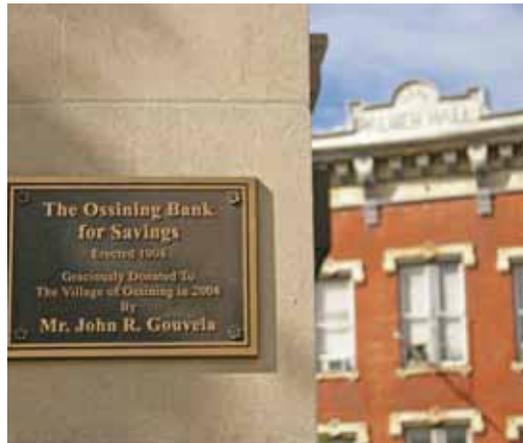


## INTRODUCTION

Throughout the community workshops and in community surveys, residents raised concerns about the quality of life in their neighborhoods. When asked about community assets, residents cited the Hudson River, local parks, historic architecture, charming neighborhoods, a strong sense of community, civic pride and involvement, and especially social diversity. However, residents cited as liabilities and threats traffic, noise from car horns, trash on the streets, insensitive additions and modifications to existing homes, vacant historic buildings, overcrowded and illegal housing, and inadequate building code enforcement coupled with the granting of too many construction variances. Residents also indicated that any future development should entail quality design and architecture, open space and parkland should be preserved, new and existing development should incorporate “green” design features, and waterfront access should be the most important priority of any redevelopment project on the waterfront.

This chapter focuses on four factors that impact the quality of life in Ossining’s neighborhoods:

- Historic preservation measures that improve local enforcement; expand designated districts; and set forth guidelines for the maintenance and renovation of historic buildings.
- Neighborhood conservation that protects the design of Ossining’s neighborhoods.
- Open space and environmental policies and regulations that preserve and provide for more parks and open space; preserve view corridors, particularly of the Hudson River and Hudson Palisades; and implement environmentally sustainable construction.
- Regulatory issues that address residential overcrowding, illegal residential conversions, and enforcement of the Village Code.



## OBJECTIVE 1: PROTECT THE VILLAGE’S VALUABLE HISTORIC RESOURCES

Respondents to the community survey overwhelmingly indicated a desire to preserve the Village’s historic and architecturally relevant structures, and even support the expenditure of local tax dollars to preserve the Village’s unique, historic places.

Ossining is fortunate enough to have a large number of intact, extant historic buildings. A number of these are located in the Village’s downtown Crescent area which is a designated historic district with both State and National recognition. Most of the Crescent’s buildings 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. The district boundaries roughly extend along the west side of

Main Street from Highland Avenue to just north of State Street; both sides of Highland Avenue between Emwilton Place and Croton Avenue; and both sides of Croton Avenue at its intersection with Highland Avenue. The area is on the State and National Registers. The district includes 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.

Downtown is not the only historic district in the Village. In 1975, part of Sparta was designated by the Village of Ossining as the Sparta Historic Architectural and Design District. (See sidebar on the Sparta Historic Architectural and Design District). There are also notable archeological sites. (See sidebar on the subterranean chambers on the waterfront.) A complete list of Village buildings and places listed on the State and National Registers is provided in Table 18.

**Table 18: Ossining Landmarks on the State/National Registers of Historic Places**

<i>Building/District</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Years of Significance</i>	<i>Function/Style</i>
Brandreth Mill Factory	Water Street	1825-1849; 1850-1874; 1875-1899; 1900-1924	Manufacturing Facility/Italianate; Greek Revival; Second Empire
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	Between Croton and New York City	Constructed 1837-1842	Transportation/water related
Site of Old Croton Dam Rohr, George Saloon and Boardinghouse	North of Ossining on NY 129 1-3 Highland Avenue	1825-1849; 1900-1924 1850-1874	Water works/no style listed Commerce and Hotel/Second Empire
Scarborough Historic District	Route 9	1750-1799, 1800-1824; 1825-1849; 1850-1874; 1875-1899; 1900-1924; 1925-1949	Religious structures, schools, residences/ late Victorian, mid 19th-century revival
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

*Source: National Register of Historic Places.*

Just north of the Crescent the Old Croton Aqueduct runs on a bridge over the deep gorge of the Sing Sing Kill. In crossing over Broadway, this aqueduct bridge forms a double arch with the Broadway Bridge, giving Ossining its beloved symbol. An overlook has been constructed to give views of these arches. At the north end of the aqueduct bridge stands a weir chamber that has been renovated to accommodate tour groups and provide access to the conduit of the aqueduct that 150 years ago carried fresh water from the Croton River to New York City. In addition, the area around the weir chamber has been reconstructed. The aqueduct land is under the protection of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

In the 1980s, the Ossining Urban Cultural Park (UCP), now known as a State Heritage Area (SHA), was one of eighteen such parks designated by the State of New York. Included within the boundaries of the SHA are portions of the Croton Aqueduct (notably the historic weir chamber and double arches just to the north of downtown), the waterfront area from the train station south to Sing Sing Correctional Facility (incorporating the 1825 cell block), and the Crescent area. The unifying theme of the Ossining SHA was “the role of reform in the growth of urban America,” as exemplified by the need for water for New York City leading to the construction of the Old Croton Aqueduct (public health reform and municipal service reform); and the need for prison reform as a result of social upheaval leading to the construction of Sing Sing Correctional Facility.

### **SIDEBAR: Sparta Historic Architectural and Design District**

"Sparta is the oldest part of Ossining and reflects most clearly the Village's rural origins. It was first settled during the early 18th century by tenant farmers of various national backgrounds who were attracted to the area by Frederick Philipse' short-lived promise of rent-free land. Though essentially agricultural in nature, the community has always had an important focal point at Sparta Dock, from which local farm produce and lime and marble from nearby quarries were transported downriver to markets in New York City and elsewhere.

As unlikely as it may seem in a tiny village of farmers, fishermen and small shippers, especially one situated in hilly terrain, an 18th century developer named James Drowley hatched a scheme in 1795 to impose a grid street pattern on the Village and create one of the first speculative subdivisions in the area. Liberty Street and its intersec-

tions with Hudson and Spring Streets are all that remain of this quixotic plan; the physical layout of the rest of Sparta was shaped much more by the natural terrain than by Drowley.... The buildings in Sparta seem to reflect the irregularities of the landscape and a casual willingness to adopt buildings to changing needs."

Source: Barry Benepe and Deborah Sample, *Architectural Lifelines: Working with Historic Buildings in Ossining, New York*, "November 1978.



In the Village, there is currently a Historic Review Commission to advise the Planning Board and Building Inspector on matters relating to applications for buildings or sites that are locally designated. The Historic Review Commission consists of five members appointed for five-year terms by the Village Manager, including, but not limited to, persons with "demonstrated interest or expertise in the field of architecture, planning or history." The Historic Review Commission meets monthly, and among its duties are:

- To regulate construction, reconstruction, alteration or demolition of landmarks and property within locally designated districts, so as to maintain their historical and architectural character.
- To develop a preservation plan for the protection, preservation and enhancement of places and features of architectural or historical significance in the Village.

At present, this Commission has an advisory role and may issue a certificate for a proposed action for historical building or building within an historic district that the Planning Board or building inspector refer to them.

Although in practice the Historic Review Commission has tended to restrict its activities to Sparta, the Village's only designated Historical and Architectural Design District (HADD), the intent of the code is to protect all buildings having architectural and historical value, not just those within designated districts. Section 270-24 (B) (7) of the Village Code states that, "the Historic Review Commission shall be empowered to develop a plan for the protection, preservation and enhancement of places and features of architectural or historic significance...", while Section 270-24 (B) (8) provides that, "in addition to the aforementioned powers, the Historic Review Commission shall conduct surveys of buildings for the purpose of determining those of historic and/or architectural significance and pertinent facts about them; formulate recommendations concerning the preparation of maps, brochures, and historical markers for selected historic and/or architectural sites and landmarks; cooperate with, and advise municipal agencies and officials in matters involving historical and/or architectural sites and landmarks".

The current regulations work to preserve architecture, but only to a point. The Historic Review Commission has little enforcement power. There are no design guidelines for building owners in completing the certificate of appropriateness applications.

#### **Strategy 1.1:**

##### **Endow the Historic Review Commission with expanded powers**

In order for the Historic Review Commission to have any real power, it should have more than just an advisory role.

The Village Board should:

- Create a Historic Preservation Commission that is staffed with preservation experts (architects, historians, professional preservationists), in addition to residents of designated Historic and Architectural Design Districts.
- Provide expanded powers to the Historic Review Commission to:
  - Hear applications for and recommend designation of historic landmarks and districts directly to the Village Board, without going through the Planning Board, though that board should

be invited to give its opinion to the Village Board.

- Hear and approve/disapprove applications for certificates of appropriateness. The Historic District's Commission's opinion should be binding, rather than advisory, although applicants should still have recourse to claim hardship.
- Develop and participate in public education programs to increase public awareness of the value of historic, cultural and architectural preservation.
- Specify in detail the historical and architectural design district boundaries by maps that are easily accessed by residents and other interested parties.
- Publish checklists and application forms that shall specify the materials required in each application for designation or for a certificate of appropriateness.

#### **Strategy 1.2:**

**Improve code enforcement of historic landmarks and building within historic districts to ensure owners are adhering to the intentions of the Historic Review Commission**

The Building Inspector should:

- Periodically inspect any work for which a certificate of appropriateness was issued.
- Issue a stop work order if work is not being done in accordance with a certificate of appropriateness.

#### **Strategy 1.3:**

**Publish design guidelines for historic landmarks and historic districts**

The Village Board, Planning Board, and Zoning Board should:

- Work with the Historic Review Commission to develop architectural guidelines for the Downtown Ossining Historic District and for infill buildings and redevelopment of existing buildings that will assist and educate property owners. When created, at a minimum, the guidelines should be adopted as Village policy.

#### **SIDEBAR: Architectural Design Guidelines**

There are draft design guidelines written for use by the Board of Architectural Review and the Historic Review Commission. The Village Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board are currently reviewing these guidelines and the guidelines should eventually be incorporated into the Village Code or adopted as Village policy. Some recommendations to improve the guidelines are provided below.

*Recommendations to improve draft guidelines:*

- Enlist the assistance of residents themselves.
- Explore and cultivate potential resources that could assist building owners who want to preserve or modify their properties (e.g., a staff person who meets with property owners to assist them in the design process.)
- Clearly define their purposes.
- Clearly define the geographical scope.
- Describe the architectural character(s) or style(s) of the subject area.
- Expand the use of photographs and illustrations that demonstrate directives.
- Expand the examples of illustrations distinguishing architectural features.
- Provide constructive advice for designing appropriate infill and guidance for those developing in areas surrounding the historic districts.
- Include a glossary.
- Include an appendix with sources of additional technical information, as well as local historical societies, related non-profit organizations, and any other relevant local resource.



#### **Strategy 1.4:**

**Adopt an historic district law for the Downtown Ossining Historic District**

In order for property owners within historic districts to understand the rules and regulations impacting their properties, the Village should:

- Consider the incorporation of the Downtown Ossining Historic District into the Village's Historic and Architectural Design District.

**Strategy 1.5:**

**Gather funding for historic preservation efforts**

There is funding for historic preservation out there. As a Preserve America community, and one of the first Urban Cultural Parks in the state, and the only one in Westchester, Ossining is in a good position to apply for such aid.

The Historic Review Commission should:

- Advise the Village Board with respect to the utilization of state, federal or private funds to promote the preservation of landmarks and historic districts.
- Advise the Board of Trustees on the donation of façade easements.
- The Commission should promulgate brochures and

other informational materials related to tax incentives and funding available for building owners of landmarks or buildings within historic districts.

- Work to make Ossining a Certified Local Government. The Village recently became a Preserve America Community.

**OBJECTIVE 2: PRESERVE THE UNIQUE QUALITIES OF OSSINING’S NEIGHBORHOODS**

With regard to their own neighborhoods, community survey respondents and community workshop participants indicated that the greatest threats to the quality of life in their individual neighborhoods came from:

**SIDEBAR: Funding Sources for Historic Preservation**

Tax Incentives

- The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives provides 20 percent tax credits for the certified rehabilitation (certified by the Secretary of the Interior) of certified historic structures. The program is jointly managed by the National Park Service and the Internal Revenue Service in partnership with State Historic Preservation Offices. A rehabilitation project must meet several criteria set up by the IRS, including:
  - The building must be depreciable.
  - The rehabilitation must be substantial (i.e., expenditures must be greater than \$5,000).
  - The property must be returned to use.
  - The building must be a certified historic structure when it is placed in service.
- A 10 percent tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of non-historic buildings built before 1936. This credit applies only to non-residential use properties. Projects which plan on utilizing this tax credit must meet several physical structure tests, including:
  - At least 50 percent of the building’s external walls which exist at the time the rehabilitation begins must remain in place as external walls.
  - At least 75 percent of the building’s existing external walls must remain in place as either external or internal walls.
  - At least 75 percent of the buildings internal structural framework must remain in place.

Source: [www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax](http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax).

New York State Certified Local Government (CLG):

- Program run by National Park Service (NPS) and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).
- Provides technical assistance.
- Eligible for matching grants.

Source: [nysparks.state.ny.us/shpo/certified/index.htm](http://nysparks.state.ny.us/shpo/certified/index.htm).

Preserve America Community (Ossining is a Preserve America community)

- White House initiative.
- Eligible for matching grants to support:
  - Heritage tourism.
  - Historic preservation education.
  - Historic preservation planning.

Source: [www.preserveamerica.gov](http://www.preserveamerica.gov).

New Historic Preservation Tax Credit Pending in New York State Legislature

A bill proposed before the New York State Assembly provides for an expanded rehabilitation tax credit program that includes increased incentives to support the rehabilitation of historic commercial and residential properties. Historic downtowns, main streets, historic theaters and residential neighborhoods across the state will benefit from this legislation. It will create an additional financial incentive to restore and reuse New York State’s rich legacy of historic buildings, and provide a critical new tool in efforts to bring businesses and residents back to revitalized community cores, bringing new investment back to municipalities throughout New York State. The Senate passed this legislation; it now needs to go before the State Assembly.

Source: *Historic Districts Council*.

increases in trash on curbs that blows into the streets; noise from car horns and radios; traffic speeding through neighborhoods and clogging major arterials; illegal conversion of single-family and two-family homes to multi-family homes; and inappropriate alterations to existing residences, such as excessive granting of variances. Residents also indicated that quality design and architecture, preserved open space and parkland, and neighborhood preservation must be among the priorities of any redevelopment project.

**Strategy 2.1:**

**Consider designation of neighborhood conservation 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 “Conservation Districts.”



The Village Board should:

- Commission a building survey. This survey will 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, Conservation District designation, or should simply be noted but receive no special regulatory designation. If Conservation Districts are established, local enabling legislation will need to be added to the zoning code, parallel to the Historic District legislation.

**SIDEBAR: Conservation Districts**

- **Definition:** Conservation Districts represent a zoning tool for preserving neighborhood character in communities across the nation. Unlike Historic Districts, historic preservation is not the sole goal (or criterion for designation) of Conservation Districts. They are a tool used by local governments to protect an area’s cultural, architectural, and aesthetic ambiance.
- **Design Standards:** New construction, alterations, and demolition are subject to review as much as in Historic Districts, but generally changes are not regulated as stringently as in Historic Districts. Most Conservation Districts provide specific standards to maintain architectural and aesthetic qualities within the District. The design elements may relate to such items as roof shape, building materials, textures, building massing, building siting, parking placement, and (if any) common design features (e.g., if Tudor or Colonial exists almost without exception in an area).
- **Purpose of Design Standards:** The purpose behind the design standards may be to maintain the status quo, stave off inappropriate development, regulate new development, or build strong neighborhood identity, pride, and cohesiveness.
- **Administration of Conservation Districts:** The ordinances usually require landowners within a district to submit applications for design review before beginning construction that modifies the building and/or landscape appearance. Conservation Districts can be administered by a local historical agency, zoning or planning board, or a non-governmental entity.

Ellis Place would be a possible example of a neighborhood conservation district. Ellis Place was developed during the middle and late nineteenth-century during the Victorian era, which emphasized the morally beneficial effects of living in a visually pleasing, well-ordered environment. The street was designed to provide expansive views of the Village and Hudson; it is lined with trees; and buildings are in an orderly line along the curb.

Several different architectural styles are evident on the street – notably a trio of wood frame houses with decorative verge-board stands on the north side of the street; and further west, there is another trio of wood-frame side-gabled houses with one-story front porches. This neighborhood is a true architectural gem and any infill development or redevelopment of existing lots should not detract from the architectural fabric.



Ellis Place is but one of many blocks throughout the Village which exhibit unique architectural qualities that should be preserved.

Ellis Place is but one of many blocks throughout the Village which exhibit unique architectural qualities that should be preserved.

Source: [www.scenic.org/planning/strategies\\_cd](http://www.scenic.org/planning/strategies_cd).

**OBJECTIVE 3: PROTECT OSSINING’S EXISTING PARKS AND OPEN SPACE, AND PLAN FOR MORE**

A majority of respondents to the community survey indicated satisfaction with the parks and recreation

**Table 19: Ossining Parks and Open Spaces**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Facilities</i>
Old Croton Aqueduct (State Historic Park)	Along Old Croton Aqueduct	14.9	Trailway and bicycle path along the right-of-way of the Old Croton Aqueduct. Includes visits to the weir chamber and aqueduct tunnel in June and October.
Veterans Park	Off Narragansett Avenue	16.0	Pavilion, soccer/football field, horseshoe pits, fishing, basketball courts, picnic area, rest rooms, ball fields, playground, bocce courts, roller hockey rink
Ryder Park (In Town of Ossining)	Off Morningside Drive	50	Soccer/football, fitness trail, horseshoe pits, pavilions, tennis courts, basketball courts, ball fields, playground, picnic area, rest rooms.
Snowden Park	Snowden Avenue	6.0	Ball fields, playground, tennis courts, basketball courts with lights
Nelson Park	Washington Street off Route 9	9.8	Ball field, playground, tennis courts, basketball courts with lights, soccer field
Nelson Sitting Park	Spring and Washington Streets	3.3	Several acres of open space with large maple trees, benches and open grass, playground
Louis Engel Waterfront Park (Town Owned)	Ossining train station	1.9	Sitting area, playground, beach area, picnic area, rest rooms
Cedar Lane Park (In Town of Ossining)	Off Cedar Lane	24.8	Large wooded area, walking/fitness trails, basketball courts, fishing pond, picnic area, restrooms, soccer field
William Street Tot Lot	Corner of State & William Streets	0.1	Sitting park, playground
Dale Avenue Park	Off Dale Avenue	0.4	Sitting park, playground, volleyball, benches
Gerlach Park (In Town of Ossining)	Off Old Albany Post Road	8.8	Pavilions, horseshoe pits, hiking/nature study, picnic area, rest rooms, softball field, playground, basketball hoops, access and parking for aqueduct
Buck Johnson Park (In Town of Ossining)	Off North State Road	0.4	Playground, basketball courts
Sally Swope Sitting Park (In Town of Ossining)	Off Hawkes Avenue	1.9	Sitting Park, benches, walking trails
Sparta Dock (Park)	Off Hudson and Liberty Street	3.5	Sitting park, picnic benches, views of Hudson River. (There is an additional 1.7 acres underwater on Hudson River)
Arthur J. Jones Memorial Park	Sherman Place & Park Avenue	0.5	New playground, basketball half court, benches, rose garden
Richard G. Wishnie Park (formerly known as Reservoir Park)	Off Pleasantville Road	5.8	1,600 foot linear park with paved walking track around the reservoir; sitting areas, picnic benches, seasonal ice skating and fishing
Crawbuckie Nature Area	Beach Road	17.7	Nature trails connected to Westchester County's RiverWalk. (There are an additional 15 acres underwater on the Hudson River.)
Joseph G. Caputo Community Center	Broadway	N/A	Swimming pool, basketball courts, administrative offices, multi-purpose rooms, rest rooms, art room, music room,
Kemey's Cove (Town owned)	Kemey's Avenue	5.77	Natural wetland area

*Source: Ossining Parks and Recreation Department.*

offered in the Village (See Table 19). However, residents also indicated that preserved open space and parkland must be among the priorities of any redevelopment project. The inference is that the community wishes to preserve what exists – which in their mind includes much privately-owned land that appears as open space, for example the Maryknoll property. There is one notable exception: the vast majority of residents placed high priority on a waterfront park and trail – as discussed at length in the Waterfront Chapter.

There is an inter-municipal agreement between the Village and the Town of Ossining to share recreation facilities. Ossining currently has 130 acres of parkland including those facilities that are part of schools. Six play areas are owned and operated by the Ossining Union Free School District including facilities at the Anne M. Dorner, Brookside, Claremont, Ossining High, Park, and Roosevelt Schools.

Recreation and community programs are also offered at the Joseph G. Caputo Community Center, 95 Broadway. The Parks and Recreation Department also runs the Ossining Community Sailing Club, which is a community-based non-profit organization the goal of which is to promote recreational sailing. The Department also works closely with the Ossining Boat and Canoe Club.

In September 2006, the Village Board dedicated 45 acres of parkland including: Arthur J. Jones Park, Crawbuckie Nature Area, Sparta Park, and the Richard G. Wishnie Park (formerly known as “Reservoir Park”). Approximately 2.5 acres of new riverfront parkland will be added to the Village’s inventory when the One Harbor Square development is completed. In addition, Westchester County’s new RiverWalk<sup>12</sup> envisions a waterfront walkway through the Village; and already in 2006, the Mariandale Convent of the Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor is working with the Village and the County to develop a 20- to 30-foot wide easement around the perimeter of their property.

**Strategy 3.1:**

**Assess current and future need for parks**

In order to provide the community with a sense of how the provision of Ossining’s active recreational facilities

**SIDEBAR: Joseph G. Caputo Community Center**

The community center is open from 9:00 AM to 9:45 PM, Monday through Saturday. Facilities within the Community Center include: art and music rooms, game room, multi-purpose room, gymnasium and pool. There is also a kitchen for a senior citizen meal program.

The Ossining Parks and Recreation Department offers programs for pre-schoolers and senior citizens in the mornings and early afternoons, after-school and summer programs for children, and adult evening programs such as social dance, yoga, and aerobics. Every Saturday and Sunday evening there is open gym and basketball.



In 2007, a 25-meter, 6-lane pool opened adjacent to the Community Center. The pool includes a deck, splashboard and locker rooms totaling approximately 7,900 square feet. There is a spray park with benches, water cannons and buckets. The roof of the pool is retractable for use during nice weather and there is also an outside patio area. Parks and Recreation Department programs include lap swim, swimming lessons, and classes for seniors and parents with tots.

Source: [www.villageofossining.org](http://www.villageofossining.org).



stack up against other communities nationwide, Ossining’s existing recreational facilities were compared with open space standards established by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA)<sup>13</sup>, considered to be the authoritative source on the subject. Based on NRPA standards, the Village appears to have sufficient active recreation facilities to meet the needs

12. See description of RiverWalk in the the Waterfront chapter.

**Table 20: Comparison of Ossining's Active Recreational Facilities Compared to Need on the Basis of National Standards**

Facility	NRPA* Standards	Requirements for Municipality Ossining's Size	Ossining (Town and Village)
Baseball Fields	1 per 5,000 people	6 per 30,000 people	8
Softball Fields	1 per 5,000 people	6 per 30,000 people	4 (3 adult, 1 youth)
Playgrounds	1 per 1,000	30 per 30,000 people	11
Tennis Courts	1 per 2,000	6 per 30,000 people	6
Basketball Courts	1 per 5,000 people	6 per 30,000 people	5
Soccer Fields	1 per 10,000 people	3 per 30,000 people	6
Swimming Pool	1 per 20,000	1 per 30,000 people	1
Community Center	1 per 25,000	1 per 30,000 people	1

\* Source: National Recreation and Park Association.

open space. However, parks and open space can be created out of concentrated, rather than spread-out development. The park expansion plan must be ingenious rather than about condemnation, given its unpopularity. As to public acquisition, the priority must remain on RiverWalk and the waterfront, which is consistent with community priorities voiced in the Community Survey and in community workshop.

of its residents for baseball, tennis, swimming, soccer and a community center (See Table 20). However, the Village falls slightly short in softball fields and basketball courts, and significantly short in playgrounds.

It should be noted that these standards are not differentiated by age or by the nature or size of the community (suburban versus urban, small towns versus large cities, etc.), and thus only provides a general framework within which to judge the adequacy of the provision of various active recreational facilities. The ratios are based upon the number of residents within a community.<sup>14</sup> In addition, recreational preferences differ between municipalities. Ossining might find that they do not have enough facilities to meet the residents' demand for one sport, but have an over-supply of facilities to meet the residents' demands for another sport.

The Village Board should work with the Parks and Recreation Department to:

- Write an open space and recreation plan for the Village. Although the Parks and Recreation Department received high praise in community workshops and the residents' survey, a long-range plan for recreational facilities and programs including demand for and utilization of existing parks, as well as parcels targeted for new parks should be included.

**Strategy 3.2:**

**Create new parks and open space**

Given the high price of land, it is difficult for the Village to purchase property outright for parks and

The Village should:

- Require an applicant for a residential development to provide as much on-site, public recreation and publicly accessible open space as possible; and that recreational fees (which can be paid in lieu of creating recreational space) can only be paid when an applicant is able to demonstrate that it is not practicable to develop on-site recreation/open space. This especially holds true for the waterfront developments.
- Adopt waterfront zoning that establishes maximum percentages of developable lot area.
- Continue to pursue developing RiverWalk within the Village boundaries at every possible opportunity by negotiating with current landowners.
- Look for opportunities to develop pocket parks within the Village's residential neighborhoods.
- Look for opportunities to create new public parks and open space as part of the site plan approval process on any large land parcels institutional or otherwise.

The Village Board should consider:

- Creating a park adjacent to Snowden Park, on the Village-owned lot at the corner of Broadway and Water Streets. This space appears to be just large enough to accommodate a multi-purpose field.
- Creating a park on the tank farm adjacent to One Harbor Square. This space might be considered for

13. National Recreation and Park Association, Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, 1996.

14. Recreational industry standards are not generally inclusive of employees. The demand for recreational facilities is typically generated by residents, as recreational activities are typically conducted where one lives, not where one works.

a soccer field or for passive open space.

- Creating a park on the Testwell-Craig helipad. This space is both extraordinarily scenic and relatively hard to get to, and would be best considered for picnic and other passive uses.
- Creating pedestrian connections to the waterfront and RiverWalk from the Hunter/James neighborhood (over the train station platform) and from downtown (via Kill Brook trail).

#### OBJECTIVE 4: MAKE OSSINING MORE “GREEN”

The Village of Ossining is committed to preserving and protecting the natural environment—wetlands, steep slopes, the riverfront area and other natural habitats. However, buildings are part of the environment, too. A huge portion of our natural resources are used for buildings, and a large part of our pollution and health-related problems result from buildings. The U.S. Department of Energy states that today’s buildings consume more energy than any other sector of the nation’s economy, including transportation and industry.<sup>15</sup> Studies indicate that Americans spend up to 90 percent of their day indoors and air quality inside buildings is sometimes two to five times worse than outside.<sup>16</sup>

Green buildings are building projects that are planned, designed, constructed and managed to: minimize adverse environmental impacts; conserve natural resources; promote sustainable development; and enhance the quality of life. This approach means different things for each project. It can include careful consideration of where the project is placed on the site in order to protect natural resources; incorporating energy and water efficient components; creating healthy indoor environments with plenty of daylight and ventilation and without toxic chemicals; reducing waste



#### SIDEBAR: Ossining Public Library

The new 47,000 square foot Ossining Public Library at 53 Croton Avenue is a “green” building powered by geothermal energy, landscaped with drought and pest-resistant native plants. The new library uses neither oil nor natural gas for energy needs, but rather geothermal energy is used at the heating/cooling source. Geothermal uses the constant temperature of the earth to both heat and cool by circulating water through deep well as much as 880 feet from below the ground and throughout the building, cooling in the summer and heating in the winter. This minimizes heating and air-conditioning bills. Large windows allows in streaming sunlight which provides as much as 90 percent of the light needed in the building. The insulation and overall weather-tightness of the building retains heat and cold. Materials used in the building process came from within 500 miles of the site to cut down on transportation costs, and to require fewer diesel-power vehicle miles for deliveries. There are computers which monitor the building’s systems, ensuring that even toilets that are not running longer than they should. Materials such as the type of paint and carpeting used were chosen to put as few toxic chemicals into the atmosphere as possible.

The library construction followed the U.S. Green Buildings Council’s procedures for accreditation as a LEED building. It is only the second LEED building in Westchester. The architect and construction management firm were selected based on expertise in green building and an environmental consultant firm monitored the specifications of the new building. The Science Club at the High School has used the new library to research different segments of the building’s environmentally sustainable features.\*

Joyce Lannert, Ossining resident and president of the library’s board of directors, said “The Board committed to a green building because it makes sense in today’s world to limit energy consumption. We committed to a green building because as a public body we wanted to set a good example in a very public building. And finally, we committed to going green because we want to be fiscally responsible to the District’s taxpayers — who put their trust in us by approving the bond referendum in the first place — by keeping operating costs low.”\*\*

\*Source: Greg Clary, “Green’ library providing new lessons in Ossining,” *The Journal News*, 11 November 2005.

\*\*Source: Joyce Lannert, “Environmental Goals of the Ossining Public Library,” *The Byline: A publication of the Ossining Public Library*, Winter 2004-2005.

during construction and building operation; or using materials that minimize the impact on the regional environment. But regardless of which tool(s) are used, a green building is one that’s healthy, comfortable, efficient, durable and low maintenance.

<sup>15</sup> New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*



**Strategy 4.1:**

**The Village should be a model of Green Building**

Energy conservation issues revolve around the global and national need to reduce the amount of carbon emissions and greenhouse gases. Strategies have been developed for communities and cities of various population densities, configurations, and transportation mode dependencies.

The Village Board should:

- Be the leader in going “Green”. New Construction and Renovation of municipal buildings should be Green. The Village should invest in hybrid or fuel-efficient vehicles when possible.
- Make existing municipal buildings more energy efficient. The Village Board should adopt energy saving measures in existing municipal buildings, namely:
  - Conduct energy audits.
  - Use energy efficient lighting and ballasts.
  - Utilize occupancy sensors on lights.
  - Provide recycling receptacles in each building.
  - Undertake an information outreach campaign on energy conservation. This campaign should provide information on energy efficiency; energy conservation; renewable energy; and cli-

mate change action. Potential methods of outreach include: literature displays; an energy conserving campaign web page; email notices; cable access television; energy fairs; event tables; CFL bulb sales; presentations to community groups; conferences and seminars for business partners with associations; projects/events in local schools.

The Village Board and Department of Public Works should:

- Investigate controlling water demand through a tiered fee structure based on actual usage via water meters.
- Continue and increase efforts to replace and add new trees to the public parks and in the Village at large. The Village should try to include native plantings in its landscape plans as much as possible. These landscaping efforts will not only become a carbon sink but by planting natives the use of irrigation and fertilizers also decreases.

**Strategy 4.2:**

**Consider adopting Village Code regulations that promote environmental sustainability**

Ossining is experiencing an exciting time of redevelop-

ment where many new projects could be built. The Village should make an effort going forward to make these new, potentially high-profile projects as “green” as possible.

The Village Board should consider:

- Incorporating into their Village Code environmentally sustainable and green public and private building design and site development standards based on both development densities and transit/vehicular access mode mix.
- Incorporating into their Village Code requirements for the use of energy efficient HVAC systems, insulation, windows, appliances, plumbing, fire protection, and security systems for all new development as well as major renovations.
- Incorporating into the Zoning Code limits on amounts of impervious surfaces on development parcels. Impervious surfaces are a leading cause of pollutants in stormwater runoff, which can be harmful to water bodies.
- Incorporating steep slope restrictions into the Zoning Code by promoting terrain adaptive architecture to fit buildings into the natural landscape. The Code should limit use of retaining walls and rearrangement of the landscape, and should limit the height of individual building walls.
- Encouraging developers to utilize reduced “embodied” energy in materials, manufacturing processes, transportation modes energy consumption (mass transit versus low occupancy car travel), and construction methods (labor and material intensive versus modular construction), as part of the site plan review process. This can include various levels of requirements based upon the scale of the development projects. Examples may include:
  - Requiring all new or substantially rehabilitated homes to be Energy Star® homes. (See sidebar)
  - Requiring large-scale development to be LEED Certified or a similar certification. (See sidebar)

**OBJECTIVE 5: ALLEVIATE OSSINING’S RESIDENTIAL OVERCROWDING PROBLEMS**

A large number of respondents to the Community survey specified that the most significant change in the Village impacting their neighborhoods was related to overcrowded housing, particularly illegal conversions

**SIDEBAR: ENERGY STAR® AND LEED CERTIFICATION**

Energy Star® is a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy which helps us all save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and practices. Energy Star® products use less energy and lower monthly bills. The savings come from increased insulation and air sealing; high performance windows and doors; high efficiency heating and cooling systems; and energy saving appliances and lighting. Americans, with the help of ENERGY STAR, saved enough energy in 2006 alone to avoid greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those from 25 million cars — all while saving \$14 billion on their utility bills.\*

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)\*\* Green Building Rating System, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) provides standards for environmentally sustainable construction. LEED is a voluntary, consensus-based national rating system for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. USGBC’s members, representing every sector of the building industry, developed and continue to refine LEED. LEED addresses all building types, including new construction, commercial interiors, core & shell, operations & maintenance, homes, neighborhoods, and specific applications such as retail, multiple buildings/campuses, schools, healthcare, laboratories and lodging. Based on well-founded scientific standards, LEED emphasizes state of the art strategies for sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality. LEED promotes expertise in green building through a comprehensive system offering project certification, professional accreditation, training and practical resources.

\*Source: [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov).

\*\*Source: [www.usgbc.org/LEED](http://www.usgbc.org/LEED).

**SIDEBAR: GREENBURGH, NY**

The Zoning Code in the Town of Greenburgh, NY requires that certain types of new residential construction must meet Energy Star® requirements. Relevant portions of the Greenburgh Zoning Code are provided below.

**NEW YORK ENERGY STAR-LABELED HOME** — Any new one- or two-family dwelling or multifamily dwelling of three stories or less... including townhouses, built to achieve a home energy rating of 86 or higher on a scale created under the home energy rating system established pursuant to the National Home Energy Rating Technical Guidelines issued by the National Association of State Energy Officials and dated September 19, 1999, and which meets the following two additional requirements:

- A. Includes a total of 300 kilowatt hours per dwelling unit of estimated annual savings from energy star-labeled lighting and appliances; and
- B. Includes the capability to deliver automatically controlled mechanical ventilation of at least 15 cubic feet per minute per dwelling unit plus an additional 15 cubic feet per minute per bedroom.

Source: *Town of Greenburgh Zoning Code*.

of single- and two-family homes into multi-family buildings. Participants in community workshops indicated that they felt that the illegal and overcrowded units were furthermore unsanitary and unsightly, lead to Building Code violations, and associated with nuisance crimes like noise, trash and graffiti, as well as inconveniences like parking shortages and congested roadways. Some feared that the influx of new residents put a stress on community services, particularly on the schools. Some expressed concern for their property values in light of all of the above. On a different note, some feared that the higher rental income generated by overcrowded units also leads to the displacement of long-time residents.

Putting aside the more incendiary concerns, the overcrowding, illegal conversion, and violation of the Village building code trends are more than perception: they are borne out by the numbers. The Building Department issued violations to over 250 separate addresses in 2005 and 2006 for lack of certificates of occupancy, as well as for other violations often associated with overcrowding: excessive trash accumulation, noise, and too many parked cars. Approximately 1,000 of Ossining's roughly 8,250 occupied housing units (according to Census 2000) were overcrowded – representing a significant 12 percent of all units.

Illegal conversions of single- and two-family homes are a clear violation of the Zoning and Building Codes. The Zoning Code designates certain neighborhoods for single- and two-family homes, and other neighborhoods for multi-family homes because the infrastructure of those neighborhoods is particularly suited for the type of housing that is meant to be there, e.g., adequate parking, and roads wide enough to accommodate traffic. Placing multi-family units in single- and two-family neighborhoods creates parking shortages and traffic congestion on streets that the Zoning Code anticipated to be less populated. Illegal housing is also a violation of the Building Code which, according to New York State law, mandates that a bedroom with one occupant must be at least 70 square feet, with two occupants the bedroom must be at least 120 square feet, with three occupants the bedroom must be at least 190 square feet. Bedrooms must have at least one window. Residents are not permitted, by code, to live in living rooms, hall-

ways, closets, kitchens, attics, etc. Inspectors from the Ossining Building Department can issue violations to landlords of buildings that are in violation of the State and local codes.

Many workshop participants felt that the problem could be solved through Building Code enforcement. However, the Ossining Building Department is limited in its legal authority to inspect one- and two-family homes, wherein the Building Department must be invited in to inspect. Access to multi-family units for inspection is easier as each unit in a multi-family building must have a fire inspection every three years.

If a building is found to be in violation of the Building or Zoning Code, the building inspector follows the procedure outlined in the codes.

#### **Strategy 5.1**

##### **Increase inspections**

The Village Board should:

- Hire more inspectors or staff that is identified by the Building Department to help them better achieve their department goals.
- Explore legal means of increasing inspections to ensure compliance with zoning regulations and approvals, where possible.

The Village Board should work with the Building Department to:

- Implement hand-held, Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, so that the Building Department can map complaints and violations from the street. Data should be collected and maintained in electronic form and geo-coded, enabling the data to be easily shared and incorporated into larger databases.

#### **Strategy 5.2**

##### **Increase the fine structure**

In order to get violators to correct their actions, the Building Department should be able to assess fines that are more than just nominal.

The Village Board should, in its overhaul of the zoning

code (see the next Objective):

- Adjust the fine structure for violations from \$100 minimums to \$5,000 maximums.

## **OBJECTIVE 6: ADDRESS INADEQUACIES IN CURRENT ZONING**

The Village of Ossining Code was last overhauled in 1990 and there are certain chapters that are in need of modernizing and upgrading, including outdated or murky definitions and code written for outmoded uses such as industrial uses, and deficiencies such as the lack of expiration on site plan approvals which has enabled some properties in the Village, with site plan approvals in place, to remain vacant for many years.

### **Strategy 6.1:**

#### **Update Village Zoning Code**

The Village Board should:

- Appoint a Zoning subcommittee as part of this process to update the Zoning Code.

The Zoning Subcommittee should consider the following changes to the existing code (consistent with a number of recommendations contained in this Comprehensive Plan):

- Put expiration dates on site plan approvals.
- Bring standards for variance grants into compliance with state statutes.
- Adjust permitted uses in business districts to encourage mixed-use and retail revitalization.
- Revise waterfront and planned residential districts based on recommendations to encourage the revitalization of the waterfront as a mixed-use destination in the Village and to encourage the creation of public open space.
- Implement energy conserving regulations.
- Revise residential zone districts to address overcrowding and affordable housing, particularly the Two Family (T) zones:
  - Make all two-family uses conditional including new homes;
- Re-examine requirements for height, setbacks and parking in light of actual conditions within existing neighborhoods. Encourage new development to mirror the built form of existing development.
- Review definitions in code of buildings, structures, yards, heights, lots, etc. Add illustrations to aid in



interpretation of these definitions.

- Add impervious coverage limits for residential districts; provide reasonable limitations on paving in yards.
- Look at zoning district boundaries and determine if current boundaries should be shifted to create more conforming lots.
- Re-examine permitted uses and accessory uses including home offices.

