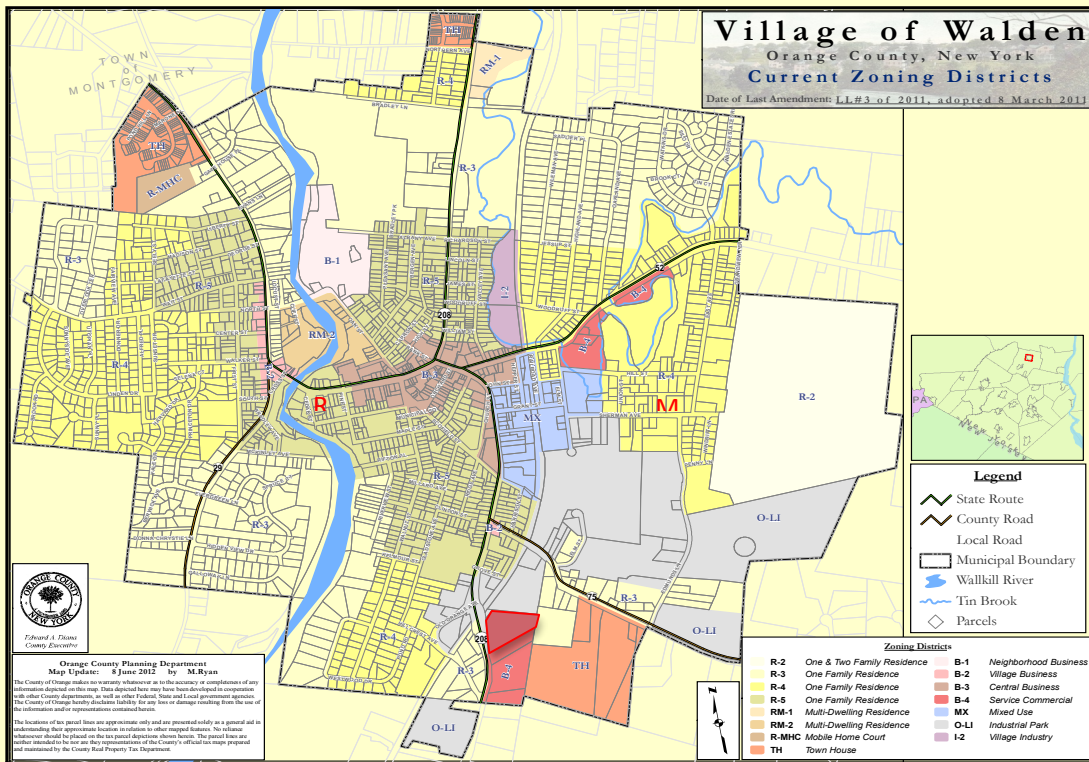


Generic Environmental Impact Statement for the Village of Walden Comprehensive Plan 2012



Prepared for:

The Village of Walden

Prepared by:

Planit Main Street, Inc.



2012 Comprehensive Plan

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Acknowledgments

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PROPOSED ACTION.

This document is a Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS). This DGEIS assesses the potential impacts, which may result from implementation of the recommendations contained in the Village of Walden’s 2012 *Draft Comprehensive Plan*. Prepared in accordance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), the “Proposed Action” examined in this DGEIS is the acceptance or adoption of the Village of Walden 2012 *Comprehensive Plan Update* by the *Village Board of Trustees* of the Village of Walden hereafter referred to as the Village Board.

B. SUMMARY OF DGEIS.

Pursuant to §7-722 of New York State Village Law, a village comprehensive plan, or amendment thereto, is subject to the provisions of the State Environmental Quality Review Act under Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law and its implementing regulations. In accordance with NYCRR §617.4(b) (1) of the SEQRA regulations, the adoption of a municipal land use plan constitutes a Type 1 Action. The Village Board is the Lead Agency with regard to the adoption of the proposed 2012 *Comprehensive Plan*, which is an update for the 2005 Comprehensive Plan.

Pursuant to §7-722 of New York State Village Law and NYCRR §617.10(b) of the SEQRA regulations, a village comprehensive plan may be accompanied by a generic environmental impact statement prepared pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act. In accordance with NYCRR §617.10(a) of the SEQRA regulations, generic environmental impact statements may be broader and more general than site- or project-specific environmental impact statements and should discuss the logic and rationale for the choices advanced. Generic environmental impact statements may be based on conceptual information or may include an assessment of specific impacts if such details are available. Further, generic environmental impact statements may present and analyze, in general terms, a few hypothetical scenarios that could and are likely to occur.

NYCRR §617.10(c) of the SEQRA regulations recommends that Generic EIS’s and their findings set forth specific conditions or criteria under which future actions will be undertaken or approved, including requirements for subsequent SEQRA compliance. In accordance with §7-722 of New York State Village Law, no further compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act may be required for site-specific actions that are in conformance with the conditions and thresholds established for such actions in the generic environmental impact statement and its findings.

Consistent with this, the DGEIS evaluates the various recommendations contained in the *Draft 2012 Comprehensive Plan* to varying degrees of specificity. Certain issues, such as the proposed rezoning of properties from the RM-2 to the R-5 Zoning District or the proposed modification of the OLI-Office Light Industry district boundary are evaluated to a more significant degree of specificity since relatively detailed information was available on the areas involved and since the *Draft 2012 Comprehensive Plan* specifically identifies these recommended zoning boundary amendments on *Map 9-3 Precise Plans*.

It is noted any proposed development discussed in this DGEIS would be subject to its own environmental review under SEQRA when such development is proposed in order to evaluate potential project-specific impacts and to identify necessary project-specific mitigation measures (such as site-specific stormwater and traffic improvements).

Through this process, the potential impacts described in this DGEIS would be mitigated to the maximum extent practicable. Thus, while those potential impacts have been described conceptually herein, reference to them in this DGEIS is not intended to be a substitute for a site-specific environmental review, which will still be required on a case-by-case basis at the time an application for development approval is submitted.

Where appropriate and necessary, the DGEIS recommends when supplemental SEQRA review for site-specific impacts, not adequately addressed or analyzed in the DGEIS, should be conducted. Other recommendations in the *Plan*, such as the recommended construction of an *outdoor community theater* at Bradley Park are more conceptual in nature and would need to be evaluated in greater detail once more detailed information on the cultural and entertainment facility is established (e.g. capacity, target audience, etc.).

After the DGEIS is accepted by the Lead Agency (Village Board) for public review and circulated to other Involved and Interested Agencies, it is anticipated a public hearing will be scheduled by the Village Board to discuss the contents of the DGEIS. There will be a comment period of at least ten (10) days after the close of the public hearing, which shall end no sooner than thirty (30) days after circulation of the Notice of Completion of the DGEIS.

Upon review of the comments, the Village Board will either prepare a Negative Declaration, thereby ending the SEQRA process, or will order the preparation of a Final GEIS (FGEIS) which would respond to all substantive comments received on the DGEIS. After the FGEIS is accepted by the Village Board and circulated, the Village Board will then prepare and adopt a Statement of Findings. The SEQRA process will then be completed and the Board can make a decision on the Proposed Action itself.

C. PURPOSE, NEEDS AND BENEFITS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A Comprehensive Plan is a document prepared for the Village Board, which establishes an overall plan and recommended actions relevant to the current and future needs of the area. The primary reasons why the Village Board decided to initiate this planning process were:

- The Village's planning documents were becoming outdated and did not clearly identify the Village's current conditions and current vision, nor did it contain specific initiatives to help achieve the vision;
- The Village Board wanted to have a vision, plan and guidelines for the community to refer to when addressing potential uses and proposed zoning actions; and
- The Village Board wanted to be pro-active in dealing with regional and inter-municipal issues, protecting its resources, and planning for community needs.

The *Comprehensive Plan* is a policy document, which outlines a vision for the future of the Village of Walden. It focuses on protection of the Village's natural resources, current and long-range growth and development that is compatible with the Village's quality of life. The Plan also provides guidance to decision makers, residents and organizations.

The Village's last Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2005. The 2005 Plan specifically recommended periodic updating of the Comprehensive Plan to incorporate results of subsequent plans and studies and to reflect any unanticipated events or new issues. This 2012 update of the Village of Walden's 2005 Comprehensive Plan is not a new departure. Rather it incorporates and builds upon goals, recommendations and policies set forth in the 2005 Plan. *Therefore, it should not be viewed as a change of direction but, rather, as a refinement of a course already established.*

The *2012 Comprehensive Plan* is intended to provide a blueprint for the community's future and contains the goals and objectives applicable to various subject matters ranging from community services, natural resource protection to land use regulations, which would guide public and private decision makers in the short and long term. In addition, the *2012 Comprehensive Plan* identifies numerous specific planning recommendations and implementation strategies, which the Village, residents, businesses, property owners and/or organizations can initiate to help achieve the future vision for Walden.

The *Comprehensive Plan* also contains a Precise Plan – Map 9-3, which is a map intended to serve as a general guide for future development in the Village of Walden, in terms of uses (e.g., residential, commercial, or industrial) and density of development. The anticipated benefits of the *2012 Comprehensive Plan* include the implementation of the goals and objectives contained in the document. The overall goals are as follows:

- Promoting a balanced pattern of land use, which is intended to help Walden retain its unique sense of place while preparing for future growth.
- The preservation of open space, scenic and environmental resources, such as water bodies, wetlands, floodplains, aquifers, steep slopes, and scenic vistas.
- Addressing the Village's housing needs and providing for a diversity of housing opportunities for the Village's growing and changing population.
- Maintaining the quality of life in the Village by enhancing and preserving the character of Walden's neighborhoods and commercial corridors, maintaining the high quality of community services and facilities provided to Village residents, and providing an integrated and efficient transportation network.
- Sustaining a vibrant business community within the Downtown Business District.
- Providing community services to serve growing community needs.

II. ALTERNATIVES.

SEQRA requires that alternatives to the proposed action be examined as part of the environmental review process. There are two alternatives to the proposed action: the “No Action” alternative and the “Partial Implementation” alternative.

Under the “No Action” alternative, no action would be taken by the Village Board to implement the recommendations in the *2012 Comprehensive Plan*. This would include no action on the recommendations regarding the expansion of the B-4 District along NYS Route 208 (e.g., the rezoning from OLI-Office Light Industry to B-4). It would also include no action on other beneficial proposals recommended in the *2012 Comprehensive Plan*, including the proposed creation of an *outdoor community theater* at Bradley Park or strengthening of the Village's environmental regulations. The potential impacts of the “No Action” alternative are evaluated in Part VI, *Evaluation of Alternatives*, in that, where ever possible, the potential impacts of each of the proposed actions are compared either to existing conditions and/or to potential impacts that could result from development in accordance with existing zoning.

Under the “Partial Implementation” alternative, the Village Board would decide to implement some, but not all, of the recommendations in the *Plan*. The potential impacts of the “Partial Implementation” alternative are also evaluated in Part VI, *Evaluation of Alternatives*, in that impacts of each of the proposed actions are compared either to existing conditions and/or to potential impacts that could result from development in accordance with existing zoning. For example, if the Village Board were to decide to implement only the recommendation to rezone certain OLI-zoned properties, the impact of the “Partial Implementation” alternative would be represented by the impacts resulting from development permitted under the existing zoning of these properties (as well those resulting from *Plan* recommendations the Village Board chooses to implement).

III. OTHER SEQRA ANALYSES.

A. UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The adoption of the *2012 Comprehensive Plan* will, in and of itself, not have any direct unavoidable adverse environmental impacts. However, implementation of certain recommendations contained within the *Plan* (e.g. development of an *outdoor community theater* as recommended in the *Plan* and the rezoning of certain OLI-Office Light Industry zoned properties to B-4 and R-3 Residential) could have certain adverse environmental impacts that would require mitigation. Implementation of other *Plan* recommendations, however, such as the preservation of open space and protection of steep slopes, would be expected to have beneficial impacts to the environment.

The potential future development of land within the Village would likely result in unavoidable adverse impacts typical of any development, such as: construction-related impacts, construction vehicle traffic on surrounding roadways, localized air quality impacts related to construction vehicle emissions and increased dust levels resulting from construction activity, and increased noise levels near construction sites due to the operation of vehicles and machinery; the clearing of vegetation; the displacement of some wildlife; the disturbance of soil; the alteration of drainage flow; an increased demand for community services; an increase in solid waste generation, water use and sewage generation; changes in existing views; and an increase in traffic and potential related air quality impacts.

These changes would occur under any zoning designation, whether currently permitted or as recommended in the *Plan*. However, development planned under recommended land use policies such as those that encourage mixed commercial/residential development would have less of an impact because it would reduce vehicular traffic and encourage greater pedestrian movement.

It is noted any proposed development discussed in this DGEIS would be subject to its own environmental review under SEQRA when such development is proposed. Through that process, the potential impacts described above would be mitigated to the maximum extent practicable. While those potential impacts have been described conceptually herein, reference to them in this DGEIS is not intended to be a substitute for a site-specific environmental review, which will still be required on a case-by-case basis at the time that an application for development approval is submitted.

B. COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES AND EFFECT ON THE USE AND CONSERVATION OF ENERGY

The adoption of the *2012 Comprehensive Plan* does not irreversibly or irretrievably commit the Village's own municipal resources, nor does it promote the irreversible commitment of any other natural resources. Rather, the Plan's policies promote thoughtful, balanced land use, which protects the Village's character and resources, consistent with a reasonable use of land as envisioned in the Plan. However, to the extent that development activity may be encouraged by implementation of the recommendations in the *Plan*, certain resources relating to building and development will be committed. Such resources include, but are not necessarily limited to: timber, concrete, steel, earth, land, labor, and the consumption of fossil fuels in the operation of construction vehicles and equipment. After construction, completed developments will require electricity, water, sewage treatment, solid waste disposal, and fossil fuels.

Typical irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources associated with development include the commitment of land resources and the associated loss of vegetation and wildlife; manpower for construction of subdivisions; building materials such as wood, concrete, and glass; energy resources such as gasoline, diesel fuel, and electricity; and water for domestic use and irrigation. These resources would be used whether the affected properties are developed as permitted under existing zoning or as recommended in the *Plan*.

Furthermore, the Planning Board will evaluate the specific solid waste and water & sewer impacts of a given land use during its local permit and SEQR review process. The Plan recommends the Village require developers to contribute to the upgrade of existing facilities to ensure sufficient service is available to meet the Village's needs in the future. The Plan also recommends the Village adopt *performance standards* for new users to ensure the Village can maintain sufficient water and sewer capacity to serve existing residents and businesses. The solid waste and recycling issues will be coordinated with the Orange County Department of Public Works, which handles and disposes of all solid waste produced in Orange County, where large scale development is proposed.

Any proposed buildings would be constructed in accordance with the New York State Energy Conservation Code, which provides standards and requirements for the incorporation of energy conservation techniques, materials and equipment into building design and construction. Sound construction practices limiting the commitment of energy resources would be maintained. The Plan also includes polices, which encourage *Leadership in Energy Conservation and Design* (LEED) technologies in the design of new buildings and exterior lighting that is *International Dark Sky* (IDA) compliant.

Overall, the Village Board believes choosing an appropriate level of land use densities and pursuing quality community objectives, as described in the Plan and supported by the Orange County Plan and Hudson River Valley Greenway will benefit all residents and business owners in the Village of Walden.

C. GROWTH INDUCING IMPACTS.

The proposed 2012 Comprehensive Plan does not induce growth overall, but rather is a carefully considered, comprehensive set of policies designed to address the future development in the Village and balance its growth. The proposed Plan is not a response to growth, rather it is a future-oriented set of policies designed to address future development and redevelopment in the Village through a set of comprehensive land use policies consistent with §7-772 a of New York State Village Law.

Potential impacts of the *Comprehensive Plan* would result both from projects directly encouraged in the *Plan* and from growth stimulated by those projects. Induced growth of certain uses and services could be expected to result primarily due to the increase in population potentially resulting from implementation of the recommendations in the *Plan*. Such an increase in population could be expected to create a proportional increase in the uses and services that serve the population. For example, increased population would expand local purchasing power and would likely increase the demand for goods and services in the local area. In addition, the demand for other services that serve the population, such as places of worship and public and private schools could also be expected to increase proportionally with any increase in population resulting from the recommendations in the *Plan*.

The creation of an *outdoor community theater* at Bradley Park would likely induce additional traffic within the Village by creating a *cultural destination, which* would attract visitors to the area. This new traffic would likely occur along the State Highways within the Village [e.g. NYS Route 208 and NYS Route 52] where existing infrastructure is largely in place to handle the additional traffic that might be encouraged by the new Plan. However, before any steps are taken to implement the recommendation to develop the outdoor community theater, a site-specific traffic impact analysis would be undertaken to ensure potentially significant traffic related impacts would be mitigated to the maximum extent practicable. The creation of a new cultural venue in the Village of Walden would also have a positive impact on the community.

The positive impacts would include the benefit to local residents having a greater variety of entertainment opportunities in the community. Benefits would also likely accrue to local businesses that would benefit from the influx of visitors during scheduled events at the outdoor community theater. Likewise, the construction of a pedestrian bridge over NYS Route 52 to connect the Walden-Wallkill Rail Trail to the MX-Mixed Use District along Railroad Avenue would likely stimulate more investment in this commercial area (e.g. bike rental) as cyclist would be attracted to this area.

Again, specific projects proposed in accordance with the recommendations of the Plan would require their own site-specific SEQRA review.

IV. POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES.

Any zoning, subdivision, aesthetic or environmental regulations developed based on the Comprehensive Plan would have to be in accordance with this Plan. SEQRA issues addressed in the Plan would be likely to cover zone changes and amendments in accordance with the Plan, but SEQRA still must be addressed. Any developments that occur must be considered in accordance with the Plan and current or future regulations. Since this GEIS is, by definition, generic and not site – specific, any future development proposal before the Planning Board or Village Board must fully address SEQRA and this document in no way inhibits any future SEQRA action of these boards in regard to future development proposals. Provided below is an analysis of the potential impacts to environmental resources, which might result from the implementations of the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan.

A. Open Space Preservation.

Overall, adoption of the *2012 Comprehensive Plan* by the Village of Walden will have a positive impact on open space resources in the Village. The Comprehensive Plan includes an inventory of the Village’s existing open space (including parklands and trails, etc.) and outlines a wide array of methods and tools to help enhance and conserve these valuable resources. Among these are: 1) the use of conservation/cluster subdivision provisions to conserve valuable open space, 2) reducing the permitted density on sites that have slopes greater than 15%, 3) protecting the riparian zones along the Village’s waterways, 4) tree preservation and conservation policies, and 5) the policies with respect to wellhead and aquifer protection zones.

No significant adverse environmental impacts are anticipated to result from the preservation of open space recommended in the Plan. The recommendations are intended to encourage open space preservation while providing additional opportunities to link existing open space resources. These provisions of the Plan would therefore be beneficial to the environment.

B. Recreational Resources

The Plan includes an inventory of existing recreational resources in the Village and recommendations for future improvements at each of the Villages parks. For example, the Plan recommends improvements to Bradley Park that include: replacement of a tire playground with new children’s playground; construction of new restroom facility, creation a new off-street parking lot, and the creation of a series of scenic walkways, which would provide views and access to the Wallkill River. At James Olley Park, the Plan calls for the a new community and senior center, comfort station, expansion of trail system within the passive portion of the park on the east side of the lake and provision of additional off-street parking areas. A variety of other upgrades to recreational resources are recommended at the other Village parks.

Wooster's Grove Park sustained considerable flood damage during the arrival of Hurricane Irene in the late summer of 2011. Many of the park buildings and recreational amenities were under water. The new Youth Center was inundated - with floodwaters rising to a level of four feet inside the building. Wooster's Grove Park is situated entirely within the 100-year flood of the Tin Brook and the recent severity in flooding pointed to the need to reassess where certain prominent recreational buildings should be situated within the Village's park system.

The *2012 Comprehensive Plan* supports continued use of the existing recreation buildings and facilities at Wooster's Grove Park. However, it also recommends these facilities should not be replaced at this location if future flooding requires their removal. The Plan further recommends facilities at Wooster's Grove should be relocated to either James Olley Park or Bradley Park, where they could be safely placed outside of the floodplain.

No significant adverse environmental impacts are anticipated to result from these open space and recreation recommendations, which would help to ensure the Village continues to provide recreational resources where they are most needed. These policies would lead to enhanced recreational opportunities for area residents and help avoid overcrowding at existing facilities. The Plan also calls for a new pedestrian bridge over NYS Route 52 to connect the Walden-Wallkill linear park to the MX-Mixed Use Zoning District in the Village of Walden. This five mile paved rail-trail provides Village residents with an outstanding new multi-purpose (e.g. biking, running, walking, strolling, etc.) *linear park*, which is also heavily utilized by many visitors from throughout the region.

No significant adverse environmental impacts are anticipated to result from the creation of the pedestrian bridge or expansion of linear parks, which is also recommended in the Plan. These recommendations are intended to encourage: 1) connections between existing recreational resources such as parklands, and 2) improved connections to regional recreational and open spaces resources. Expansion of linear parks would give residents an alternative mode of transportation as well as a direct pedestrian/bicycle link to regional recreational facilities, thereby reducing vehicular travel. This too would have a positive impact on the environment.

C. Cultural and Historic Resources

The generalized survey of Walden's historical resources was prepared in 1982. A subsequent Historic Survey was conducted in 2006, which supported the creation of historic districts in the following areas: 1) Church Street, 2) Ulster Avenue and 3) West Main Street. The 2012 Plan recommends the 2006 Historic Survey and report be used as a starting point for a more detailed investigation of these sites and potential future designation of historic districts. There are also numerous recommendations within the Plan calling for the renovation of historic structures to be done in a manner that respects the historic architecture of the Village. If followed, these policies would help to preserve the uniqueness of Walden's built environment as defined by its historic properties.

Furthermore, the Plan recommends implementation of recently adopted design review criteria to ensure new development respects the historic character of the Downtown. The *Downtown Revitalization Strategy and Historic Downtown Walden Design Guidelines*, which are part of the Plan by reference, include specific policies to help guide the Planning Board in their review of request to renovate historic building facades in the central business district. This Plan recommends such guidelines be adhered to and also recommends the Village Board continue to support low-interest loan and grant programs to assist property owners in renovating their properties in a manner that respects the original architecture of each building. Doing so will benefit the entire Downtown.

No significant environmental impacts are anticipated to result from these and other recommendations related to cultural and historic resources in the Village. The reuse and preservation of historic structures would enhance the social and economic vitality of the Village without the need to disturb undeveloped areas. Furthermore, maintaining the pedestrian oriented pattern of development within the Village would reduce the need for vehicular travel, which can help to mitigate traffic congestion. Anticipated impacts from these recommendations are presumed to be positive.

D. Natural Resource Protection

Chapter 4.0 Natural Resources within the 2012 Plan incorporates information and maps regarding environmental conditions and limitations within the Village of Walden. There are detailed descriptions of terrain, slopes, water resources, and soils provided for in the Plan as well as an analysis of each. The Plan goes on to recommend specific policies to protect these natural resources while balancing the need to allow for growth in the future. Measures to protect natural resources include: 1) reducing the permitted density by 50% for portions of sites with slopes greater than 15%, 2) requiring tree surveys and tree clearing permits, 3) ensuring sediment and erosion control plans are developed, 4) protection of wetlands and adjacent buffers, 5) vegetative maintenance to improve access, safety and views, 6) protection of riparian zones along the Village's waterways, and 7) use of conservation subdivision provisions where feasible.

The 2012 Comprehensive Plan also addresses new environmental regulations relating to stormwater management, which were not yet enacted when the 2005 Plan was adopted. Policies requiring preparation of Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP) in accordance with new NYSDEC regulations are incorporated into the 2012 Plan. Overall, the proposed Plan strengthens the mandate to protect hillsides, steep slopes, wetlands, and other natural resources in the Village and encourages cooperation with the Town of Montgomery to protect wellhead and aquifer recharge areas.

No significant adverse environmental impacts are anticipated to result from these recommendations and, in fact, these recommendations will have a beneficial impact to the environment. Furthermore, the Plan recommends the reuse of older industrial sites for mixed-use residential/commercial, which has the potential to enhance stream buffers and water quality in these areas of the Village.

E. Transportation

The 2012 Comprehensive Plan includes an analysis of the Level-of-Service (LOS) at key intersections in the Village of Walden, which were included in the Overlook at Kidd Farm DEIS Traffic Study conducted in 2011. The analysis provided in the study reveals the level-of-service LOS at several intersections is generally satisfactory. However, the study also found there were two intersections, which would experience diminished LOS under No-Build conditions due to projected regional growth in traffic volumes.

For example, the NYS Route 208 and NYS Route 52 unsignalized intersection was operating at a LOS “D” during morning peak hours and a LOS “D” during evening peak hours, in 2009. The LOS of this intersection is projected to diminish to a LOS “F” during morning peak hours and a LOS “F” during evening peak hours by 2014. The anticipated decline in the LOS is related to projected traffic volume increases on these roads.

Village of Walden, New York						
Table 5-1 Level of Service Summary						
Key Intersections						
Intersection		Control	AM Peak Hour		PM Peak Hour	
			2009 Existing	2014 Build	2009 Existing	2014 Build
NYS Route 208/Coldenham Road*		TW				
**						
AM peak period			D	D	D	D
PM peak period			D	D	D	D
NYS Route 208/Old Orange Avenue		TW				
AM peak period			C	C	C	C
PM peak period			C	C	C	C
Coldenham Road and Edmunds Lane		TW				
AM peak period			B	B	B	B
PM peak period			B	B	B	B
NYS Route 208 and Route 52		S				
AM peak period			C	D	C	D
PM peak period			C	D	C	D
NYS Route 208 and Route 52**		AW				
AM peak period			D	F	D	F
PM peak period			D	F	D	F
NYS Route 52 and East Avenue		TW				
AM peak period			C	D	C	D
PM peak period			C	D	C	D
AM peak period						
PM peak period						

* With a traffic signal, this intersection would operate at a level of service “C.”
 **Intersection should be monitored to determine if signal warranted.

KEY: NB, SB, WB, EB = Northbound, Southbound, Westbound, Eastbound intersection approaches
 TW, AW, S = Two-way stop controlled intersection, All-way stop controlled intersection, Signal controlled intersection.

Source: John Collins, Engineering, P.C. – Overlook at Kidd Farm DEIS Traffic Study 2011.

The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the potential future development of land within the Village or the surrounding region would likely result in unavoidable adverse traffic-related impacts at these intersections, but puts in place policies intended to help mitigate such impacts in the future.

For example, the poor level-of-service at the NYS Route 52 and NYS Route 208 intersection is also influenced by poor roadway geometry. Furthermore, there isn't a dedicated truck route to enable westbound truck traffic on NYS Route 52 to turn south on NYS Route 208 without having to go through the "Y" intersection near the McKinley monument. The result is traffic delays and periodic damage to McKinley Square, as trucks try to maneuver through the turn and end up riding over the curbing to make the turn. The Comprehensive Plan calls for a dedicated truck route to avoid this intersection and also recommends the intersection be monitored in the future to determine if signalization would be warranted.

The NYS Route 208 and Coldenham Road intersection is another part of the transportation system, where future improvements may be necessary to maintain an acceptable LOS. Coldenham Road intersects with NYS Route 208 at a "stop" sign controlled "T" intersection and all approaches consist of one lane. Presently, the intersection operates at a LOS "D" during AM and PM peak periods. The LOS here is anticipated to continue to operate at a LOS "D" based upon the 2014 No-Build traffic volumes. The 2011 Traffic Study by John Collins, Engineering, P.C. analyzed how this intersection would perform with signalization and it was determined it would operate at a LOS "C" or better with a signal. The 2012 Comprehensive Plan recommends on-going coordination between the Village and NYSDOT to monitor these intersections for measures to improve traffic flow in the future. The Comprehensive Plan also calls for the Planning Board to utilize the SEQRA Process to Mitigate Potential Traffic Impacts. Specifically, the Comprehensive Plan calls for developers to contribute to improvements to mitigate impacts, when a proposed development poses significant adverse impacts to the transportation system.

The proposed rezoning of a portion of the OLI-Office Light Industry District to B-4 Service Commercial along NYS Route 208 is unlikely to pose additional adverse impacts to the transportation system, since the area to be rezoned encompasses a relatively small geographic area. Still any proposed development on the rezoned site would be subject to a site-specific traffic impact analysis to ensure potential significant adverse impacts are avoided to the maximum extent practicable.

With or without new development in the Village, the transportation system (e.g. State Highways) will continue to see increased traffic volumes due to regional growth. These changes would likely occur due to any development in the Village under any zoning designation, whether currently permitted or as recommended in the Plan. However, the 2012 Comprehensive Plan puts in place a variety of strategies and policies, which would help to ensure such impacts are mitigated in the future while maintaining an acceptable LOS on area roadways.

F. Water and Sewer

Walden presently uses five (5) production wells drawing from an underlying sand and gravel aquifer to serve its potable water needs. The five (5) production wells have a capacity of 1.9 million gallons per day. The average daily water demand for the Village is 662,000 gpd. The Village Board of Trustees has a well-established *policy* of supporting efforts to bring new wells on-line to meet the growing needs of the community. In recent years, these efforts have increased the capacity of the water supply system from 916,000 gpd to 1.9 million gpd. The 2012 Plan supports the continuation of these policies.

Walden operates a Waster Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) to serve all residential and commercial properties and the NYSDEC has listed the capacity of the plant at 1.2 million gallons per day (mgd). In 2003, there were periods were the average daily flow from the WWTP exceeded 1.4 million gallons. The surge in flow was attributed to *infiltration & inflow* into the sewer system through its drainage systems. This Plan recommends on-going monitoring of infiltration & inflow issues to maximize capacity of existing sewer infrastructure and avoid the need for future expansion of the WWTP.

Zoning changes recommended in the Plan could result in a shift in future land uses within the Village. The shift would likely move from fewer heavy industrial users to more commercial and mixed use commercial/residential developments. It is anticipated the demand for water and sewer services as a result of this shift would vary on a case-by-case basis, depending on the nature of new development that is proposed. However, the Plan policy to assess performance standards as part of the review process would help the Village to ensure it maintains sufficient capacity to serve its residents. Where necessary, developers would be required to contribute to the expansion of these facilities. With respect to annexation, the Plan policy is “the annexed area should put no more demand on services beyond which the Village can provide unless the developer pays for the necessary capital improvements.”

No harmful impacts are anticipated as a result of Plan recommendations regarding water and sewer service. However, adverse impacts could occur if the Plan were not adopted.

G. Aquifer and Wellhead Protection

Walden’s wells are located in the Town of Montgomery where the Village does not have direct control over land use decisions, which could adversely affect its wells. While there is sufficient capacity to serve the community today, it is important to protect the wells from potential sources of contamination so future potable water supply needs can continue to be met. In 2009, the Village completed a Wellhead Protection Report, which was sent to the Town for review. The Report has yet to be implemented. The 2012 Comprehensive Plan strongly encourages coordination with the Town of Montgomery to implement the recommendations contained in the Village’s 2009 Wellhead Protection Report. The Plan also notes it is imperative these measures are put in place today to prevent contamination of the groundwater aquifer, which feed Walden’s wells.

The Plan includes a variety of policies to help ensure the Village can maintain sufficient capacity to serve its residents while accommodating new growth. For example, the Plan recommends performance standards be adopted when evaluating new users to ensure that no single user is placing a strain on its water and sewer infrastructure.

No significant environmental impacts are anticipated to result from these and other recommendations related to aquifer and wellhead protection. However, taking No Action could have an adverse impact since the recommended policies to protect the Village's wellheads and aquifers would not be enacted.

H. Schools

Walden lies within the Valley Central School District, which provides a high quality level of education to approximately 4,853 students. These enrollment figures include students from Walden, the Town of Montgomery, Crawford, Wallkill, Hamptonburgh, and Newburgh. Enrollment in the Valley Central School District is decreasing. In 2009, total school enrollment was 5,082 students in K-12. In 2009-2010, the K-12 enrollment had decreased to 4,853, a 229 or 4.50% decrease.

The *Walden Elementary School* is part of the Valley Central School District. This elementary school is located in the heart of the Village on Orchard Street. The Village is also home to the *Most Precious Blood Catholic Elementary School*, which is located on Bradley Lane in the north central portion of the Village to the west of New York State Route 208 (aka Ulster Avenue).

The proposed Plan does not create significant impacts on the Valley Central School District or on its facilities. The Plan calls for greater cooperation between the Village and School Board as it relates to planning for future school needs. It also encourages the district to maintain the existing elementary school in the heart of the Village, which greatly reduces the need for busing of students, many of whom can walk to school.

While recommendations in the Plan have the potential to increase the variety and number of housing units developed these would have little impact on enrollment in the school district. It is anticipated the market for living-over-the-store units in the new mixed use center would be largely occupied by seniors, empty nesters, and young professionals based upon national and regional trends.

The increase in the tax base from new residential construction, coupled with small demand for school services would actually benefit the school district by helping to maintain the viability of the district, which is experiencing declining enrollment numbers.

I. Housing

The recommendations contained within the Comprehensive Plan may increase the number and variety of residential units that can be developed within the Village. Within the TH-Townhouse District new townhouse units will be developed, which will include affordable housing units. The proposed Overlook at Kidd Farm development has already been the subject of an environmental impact statement and the potentially significant adverse impacts would be mitigated. The potentially significant beneficial impacts include the provision of affordable housing units for local residents.

Within the MX – Mixed Use district at Railroad Place, additional living-over-the-store dwelling units could also be developed in the heart of the Village as well as multi-family dwellings. Like the Overlook at Kidd Farm development, any proposed development in the MX-Mixed Use District would be subject to its own site-specific environmental review under the SEQR process. The Comprehensive Plan also call for new residential development to contribute to the provision of new recreational resources to meet the demand generated by new development through the dedication of payment-in-lieu of parkland. Such policies would help to ensure the recreational needs of Village residents are met for years to come.

The result of the 2012 Comprehensive Plan land use policies would be an improved and enhanced variety of housing choices for Village residents and the addition of new affordable housing units. Overall, the housing policies contained within the Plan would have a positive impact on the community.

J. Industrial and Commercial

In developing the Plan, the Committee carefully considered the zoning of certain industrial – or commercially zoned properties – to ensure that future environmental impacts were mitigated. A portion of the OLI-Office Light Industry District along NYS Route 208 was deemed to be inappropriate due to the commercial nature of the street, the grade between the road and adjacent properties, and the amount of grading it would take to build industrial buildings on these sites. The Plan recommendation to rezone these properties to B-4 Service Commercial is consistent with the existing development pattern and is deemed to have a positive impact.

The existing MX-Mixed Use District in the vicinity of Railroad Place contains many vacant industrial buildings and vacant industrial sites. This district is also surrounded by residential and adjacent commercial uses. The Plan recommends the existing MX-Mixed Use District “Table of Permitted Uses” be expanded to encourage *non-nuisance industries*, which might be more economically viable and still compatible with surrounding land uses. These recommendations are anticipated to have a positive impact on the environment be encouraging reinvestment in buildings, which are largely vacant.

No significant environmental impacts are anticipated to result from these recommendations for the industrial and commercial areas within the Village. These changes, coupled with the recommended design standards and natural resource protection would have beneficial impacts to the environment.

K. Community Character

The Plan places a very strong emphasis on preserving the existing community character of the Village of Walden. The 2012 Comprehensive Plan defines Community Character as “*Those attributes of the Village of Walden that make it unique in terms of its natural resources, built environment and its population.*” The Plan further defines the Unique Sense of Place as “Locally special attributes, which differentiate the Village of Walden from other communities as expressed in its historic structures, public squares, civic and cultural resources and natural environment.”

To achieve these goals, such tools as conservation subdivisions, adoption of design standards, landscaping standards, street tree policies, and encouragement of well-designed mixed-use infill development is recommended. The Plan includes very specific recommendations to help guide the Planning Board in its review of new commercial developments and the reuse and renovation of historic properties. Taken as a whole, these recommendations will lead to reinvestment in the Village’s existing building stock and redevelopment of older commercial properties in a manner, which better respects community character. It would also result in new development of businesses and residences, which are more compatible in design with surrounding properties.

No adverse environmental impacts are anticipated to result from these recommended policies. In fact, these policies will help to conserve valuable historic resources, encourage the reuse of existing sites that might have otherwise remained vacant, and help to ensure that environmentally sensitive areas, including steep slopes and stream buffers are not adversely impacted.

L. Downtown Revitalization

The Village Board adopted a *Downtown Revitalization Strategy* in 2001 and adopted Design Guidelines for Historic Downtown Walden in accordance with recommendations from the 2001 Strategy. The 2012 Comprehensive Plan continues to incorporate the Downtown Strategy as an addendum and includes some additional recommendations to further the revitalization of the Village’s central business district or Downtown.

The 2012 Plan supports on-going downtown revitalization policies contained in the Downtown Revitalization Strategy including: 1) retaining vital services Downtown, such as banks, post office, and library; 2) sponsoring and promoting the Farmer’s Market and special events; 3) strictly adhering to Downtown Design Guidelines for façade renovations; and 4) further developing incentives to encourage new investment through the New York Main Street Program and the Village’s low interest revolving loan fund.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends the Village Board should keep its civic buildings Downtown and support private and not-for-profit sector efforts to establish cultural and entertainment anchors. It also recognizes the Village Board must also work with local civic organizations and the business community to promote the CBD. This involves marketing the unique characteristics of the business district to shoppers, investors, prospective businesses and visitors. It also involves the creation of a strategy to promote a positive image of the entire business district through advertising, special events and marketing events carried out by the business community along with the support of civic and cultural institutions. These efforts, coupled with the regulatory efforts to protect historic and aesthetic qualities of the Downtown, are anticipated to have a positive impact on the community and the environment.

No adverse impacts to the environment are anticipated to occur as a result of the Downtown revitalization recommendations contained in the Plan.

V. POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES CONCERNING RECOMMENDED ZONING TEXT AND MAP AMENDMENTS.

A. Rezoning of portion of OLI-Office Light Industry to B-4 Service Commercial

The 2012 Comprehensive Plan recommends a small portion of the existing OLI-Office Light Industry District along NYS Route 208 be rezoned to B-4 Service Commercial to reflect the existing development in the vicinity of these properties. There is an existing B-4 Service Commercial District to the south of the area to be rezoned, which is already developed with commercial properties. The proposed zoning map amendment would adjoin the existing B-4 District and would not result in a spot zone.

No significant adverse environmental impacts are anticipated to result from these recommendations and, in fact, these recommendations will have a beneficial impact to the environment.

B. Rezoning of RM-2 Multi-Family residential district to R-5 Residential

The Plan recommends the existing RM-2 Multi-Family residential zoning district on Orchard Street and Cedar Street be rezoned to R-5. *The proposed rezoning would better reflect the existing residential development pattern in this area of the Village and help to maintain the single-family character of this neighborhood.*

No significant adverse environmental impacts are anticipated to result from these recommendations and, in fact, these recommendations will have a beneficial impact to the environment by helping to maintain the single-family residential character of this neighborhood, which is in close proximity to the Walden Elementary School.

C. Proposed Minor Zoning Map Amendments

The Plan recommends a series of minor Zoning Map Amendments, which are intended to ensure the zoning district boundaries coincide with property boundaries. The area affected by the amendments is very small and no significant increase in development potential would arise from the proposed amendments to the district boundaries.

It is anticipated the proposed modifications would have no significant adverse impacts to the environment and will, in fact, help to ensure that development within these areas occurs in a manner, which is more compatible with the character of the Village and surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Again, any proposed development on these properties would still be subject to further environmental review in accordance with SEQRA.

D. Rezoning of OLI – Office Light Industry to Residential

The Plan includes a provision to give discretion to the Village Board to consider the rezoning of an approximately ten (10) acre parcel within the existing OLI-Office Light Industry District - in the vicinity of Edmunds Lane – to a Residential Zoning District (See Map 9-3 Precise Plans in the Comprehensive Plan). Specifically, the Plan states “*The Village Board may consider rezoning for residential development upon receipt of a Sketch Plan by a developer, which is consistent with adjacent residential zones.*”

The shape of this parcel is irregular and not readily suitable for a modern industrial building layout. Furthermore, the majority of adjoining properties and those in the immediate neighborhood are either residential or a not-for-profit religious use (e.g. single-family residential and the newly constructed Buddhist Temple). Finally, the irregularly shaped site would make it difficult to buffer an industrial use from residential and institutional uses.

Still, the Plan does not completely rule out that a use presently permitted in the OLI District might still be development in the site. However, the reality is the property is not being used for light industrial purposes, which deprives the Village of tax revenue and water and sewer fees it would otherwise receive from a use of the property, which might have more market acceptability (i.e. residential). Hence the reason for provide for flexibility in the future use of this portion of the OLI District.

Potential adverse environmental impacts of any development of the site (whether industrial or residential) would include additional traffic generation, stormwater runoff and increased demand for water and sewer services. Residential would also have the added potential impact on the demand for recreational resources, but this would be offset by payments-in-lieu of parkland fees. However, any proposed development on this site would still be subject to further environmental review in accordance with SEQRA.

To further ensure potentially significant adverse impacts area mitigated to the fullest extent practicable, the Comprehensive Plan recommends any proposed development on this site would still be subject to further environmental review in accordance with SEQRA. Furthermore, before the Village Board could consider the rezoning for the site from OLI to residential, the developer would have to submit a Sketch Plan for review so the Board could assess the compatibility of the proposed development with surrounding residential uses and zoning districts.

Since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan was adopted, the OLI site to the north of the subject site was developed and now houses a Buddhist Temple. The land use policy set forth in the Comprehensive Plan for this portion of the OLI District keeps open the option of continuing the OLI Zoning District designation or allowing of the rezoning to residential provided certain criteria are met. Given the transitional nature of the surrounding area allowing for flexibility with respect to future land use is reasonable.

VI. EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES

There are three (3) alternative actions the Village can pursue. These are:

1. Adopt the Comprehensive Plan as proposed
2. Partial Implementation of the Plan
3. Do not adopt the Comprehensive Plan “No Action Alternative”

Of the available alternatives, the adoption of the *2012 Comprehensive Plan* as proposed would provide the best combination of appropriately scaled growth, open space and natural resource protection, cultural and historic resource protection, opportunities for growth and the provision of affordable housing that Village residents desire. The Plan, as proposed, balances the Village’s need for growth while preserving its community character as defined in the Comprehensive Plan.

The adoption of an altered plan would unlikely result in all the goals and objectives of the community being achieved and would inevitably result in compromises, which could undermine the intent of the Comprehensive Plan. For example, adopting design standards for historic structures, but not for new infill buildings. Under this scenario, the insensitive design of new structures could adversely affect the context of historic structures. Another example would be adopting policies for wellhead protection and not adopting recommended annexation policies, which would require developer contributions to expand infrastructure when additional capacity is needed to accommodate growth. The 2012 Plan was developed in a holistic manner and should be adopted as such.

The last alternative is to simply take “No Action”. This means the Village Board would not adopt the 2012 Plan and instead rely on the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. The Village Board has put considerable effort into developing an updated plan that balances the need for the Village to grow while preserving its cultural, historic, and natural resources. Village residents have provided valuable input into the 2012 Plan and the document reflects their desires to guide growth and redevelopment in Walden.

The 2012 Comprehensive Plan also addresses many items that were not envisioned in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and issues with the existing zoning regulations that need to be addressed. The “No Action” alternative would mean the recommendations to better protect cultural, historic, and natural resources would not be implemented. The “No Action” alternative would mean the disinvestment in the vicinity of Railroad Place would continue and opportunities for additional non-nuisance industries would be lost.

Finally, the opportunities for future economic development in the Village the Plan would encourage would be lost. Simply stated, the “No Action” alternative could have an adverse impact since existing Village land use regulations are insufficient to protect cultural, historic and natural resources. The benefit of the Comprehensive Plan is that it proposes to grow the Village in a way that enhances its social and economic vitality and protects its valuable historic, cultural, and natural resources for generations to come.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, as proposed, would best ensure that the residents' multiple goals for the Village are realized.