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Maps prepared by Orange County Planning Department unless otherwise noted.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VISION STATEMENTiv

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....1

CHAPTER 1 – Introduction2

CHAPTER 2 – Historical & Regional Context.....4

CHAPTER 3 – Population and Housing10

CHAPTER 4 – Natural Resources15

CHAPTER 5 – Transportation30

CHAPTER 6 - Cultural & Historic Resources.....41

CHAPTER 7 – Open Space & Recreation52

CHAPTER 8 – Community Services60

CHAPTER 9 – Land use Regulations68

CHAPTER 10 – Plan Implementation80

Appendix A: Parks Master Plan

Appendix B: Railroad Place Design Guidelines

VISION STATEMENT

This Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Walden looks to define the attributes that give Walden its unique sense of place, including its place within the region, and to provide a clear vision for guiding future growth and development in a manner that respects the Village's character, so that its unique sense of place within the region is enhanced, its historic, cultural, and natural resources protected, and its social and economic vitality ensured for years to come¹.

¹ For the purposes of the Walden Comprehensive Plan, the following definitions are provided to further clarify the Vision Statement:

Community Character - Those attributes of the Village of Walden that make it unique in terms of its natural resources, built environment and its population. *Unique Sense of Place* – 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. *Quality of Life* – A statement that summarizes perceptions about physical, social, health, economic and environmental features of life. It is a composite measure that integrates many considerations about life, and is usually qualitative, not quantitative. Quality of Life is therefore a contextual concept, having no independent or absolute value. It is a statement about the relative well-being of an individual or group – in this case the Village of Walden.

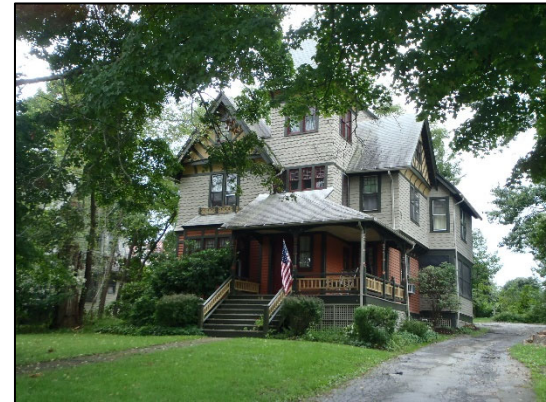
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Village of Walden adopted an overhaul of its Comprehensive Plan in 2005 with minor updates in 2010 and 2020. As the Village evolves, the concerns and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan must be periodically reviewed and updated as necessary. For these reasons, and others, the Village has undertaken another periodic review of its plan. A Comprehensive Plan Review committee was formed for the plan's review in 2024 to lead the effort to update and continue to build upon the previously adopted Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan forms the basis for future land use regulations and subsequent zoning or subdivision revisions that may be necessary to implement the recommendations contained within this Plan. It is also intended to help guide other Village policies related to recreation, open space preservation, housing, historic preservation and business development. This Plan is intended to respond to challenges facing the Village today and during the next five to ten years.

Public participation in the development of this Comprehensive Plan update was encouraged through a variety of public meetings, visioning sessions, and public hearings and public participation has been key in each of the Village's plan updates.

The Comprehensive Plan Review Committee recommended updates to the Comprehensive Plan, which are reflected in land use policies intended to achieve the broad goal of preserving the character of the Village including its traditional neighborhoods, central business district and historic buildings while encouraging economic development and seeking infrastructure improvements to continue to improve the overall quality of life. These policies are discussed in the context of specific goals and objectives, which are discussed in greater detail below. Specific policies or actions, which are intended to help implement this Plan is provided in Chapter 10 – Plan Implementation.



Above (top to bottom): The Walker Building on Main Street within the Central Business District; single-family residence on Ulster Avenue; and view of High Falls and electric power generating plant on Wallkill River.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Village of Walden's Comprehensive Plan was originally adopted in 2005. The Plan recognized that community planning is an ongoing process and recommended additional action plans and detailed studies to pursue recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. The 2005 Plan also recommended periodic updating of the Comprehensive Plan to incorporate results of subsequent plans and studies and to reflect any unanticipated events or new issues.

In 2010 and 2018 the Village Board appointed Comprehensive Plan Committees to lead the effort in updating the Comprehensive Plan and has reconvened a 12-member committee in 2024. These updates of the Village of Walden Comprehensive Plan have not been new departures. Rather they have incorporated and built upon goals, recommendations and policies set forth in the 2005 Plan; they should not be viewed as a change of direction but, rather, as a refinement of a course already established.

This Comprehensive Plan was prepared in accordance with New York State Village Law, §7-722(2)(a) that states that the plan will “identify the goals and objectives, principals, guidelines, policies, standards, devices, and instruments for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development.” The creation of a Comprehensive Plan is not required under NYS Village Law, §7-722(2)(a), but once adopted, all subsequent land use regulations must be in accordance with a community's adopted Comprehensive Plan.

Three distinct phases were involved in the development of the Village of Walden's updated Comprehensive Plan: 1) update of baseline data including population, housing, natural resources, community facilities, open space, and infrastructure, etc., 2) identification of issues facing the Village based upon baseline data, a review of existing land use regulations, monthly Comprehensive Plan Committee meetings, along with public input, and 3) the review and refinement of the Village's broad goals, objectives and policies.

An analysis of baseline conditions along with public input was used to identify a list of challenges facing the Village. These include:

- Protecting the Village's water supply wells through wellhead protection measures with the Town of Montgomery;
- Zoning for commercial and industrial uses to enhance the tax base;
- Providing more off-street parking in the Central Business District through improvements to existing municipal parking lots or the creation of new lots;
- Sustaining a vibrant business community within the Downtown Business District;
- Maintaining the pedestrian-friendly feel and expanding the sidewalk network;
- Providing community services to serve growing community needs;
- Natural resource protection and open space preservation; and
- Providing housing opportunities for a range of household incomes.



Above (Top to bottom): Local businesses including Millspaugh Furniture on Main Street; Sohn's Appliances, and Walden Savings Bank which all serve as important anchors in the Central Business District or "Downtown."

1.1 Purpose of Plan

This Comprehensive Plan is meant to build upon the 2019 Comprehensive Plan and is intended to guide the Village's growth for the next 5 to 10 years. The Comprehensive Plan serves as the Village's official policy document, providing a general set of planning principals relating to land use; natural, and historic resources; housing, parks & recreation, downtown revitalization and other related issues. The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to realize the community's vision for the future and to guide growth in a manner that fosters orderly, coordinated and beneficial development. It should also be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure that it continues to reflect the long-range goals of the community.

1.2 Implementation

In order for this Comprehensive Plan to be effective, the Village of Walden must actively apply the policies that are contained within this Plan. Furthermore, its Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals must use the Plan as a framework to guide their decisions with respect to the review of development proposals. Certain recommendations contained herein will require the subsequent action of the Village Board in order to enact recommended revisions to the Zoning Code and other land use regulations such as the Village's sign regulations or subdivision regulations and/or the creation of design guidelines for commercial development.

Other actions such as the preservation of historic resources, transportation improvements, or the development of park facilities or bicycle travel lanes will require the collaboration between the Village, Town, County, State and not-for-profit entities. These actions are outlined in Chapter 10 – Plan Implementation of this Plan along with the party responsible for taking a leadership role in the implementation of the policy or program.

Each member of the Village Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals should have a copy of this Comprehensive Plan. The Village Board may want to appoint a Comprehensive Plan subcommittee to spend time each month reviewing progress on the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan and coordinating efforts with other entities where necessary.

The Village of Walden has a long-established tradition of respecting its history and protecting its historic resources. Its rich sense of history is defined by its residents, neighborhoods, institutions, parklands, business community, and community events such as Walden Harvest Fest that define its unique sense of place today.

In order to properly plan for the future, it is important to have an understanding and appreciation for the past. In Chapter 2 – Historic & Regional Context a brief summary of the Village's history and its relationship to the surrounding region is provided to help set the stage for the future of the Village of Walden.

VISION STATEMENT

This *Comprehensive Plan* for the Village of Walden looks to define the attributes that give Walden its unique sense of place, including its place within the region, and to provide a clear vision for guiding future growth and development in a manner that respects the Village's character, so that its unique sense of place within the region is enhanced, its historic, cultural, and natural resources protected, and its social and economic vitality ensured for years to come.

~Comprehensive Plan
Committee

2.0 HISTORIC & REGIONAL CONTEXT

Native Americans were the first inhabitants along the banks of the Wallkill or Paltz River in the vicinity of present day Walden. These inhabitants followed the receding glaciers into the Wallkill River Valley, which was a transportation and trading route for early inhabitants as well as a place of settlement.

Europeans began to arrive within the Wallkill River Valley as early as the 1650's. By the early 1700's, Europeans began to establish homesteads and permanent settlements along the Wallkill. "On the east bank of the Wallkill, the first settlement was established in and around the high falls of the Wallkill. Henry Wileman received a grant of 3,000 acres of land upon which Wileman Town was built after 1713."²

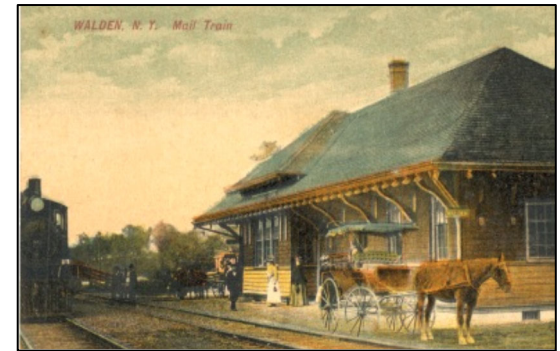
Most of the early settlers were farmers, craftsmen, or traders. By the mid-18th century, the Wallkill River in the vicinity of the high falls was being harnessed for her waterpower. In 1813, Jacob Treadwell Walden, a New York City entrepreneur began purchasing land on both sides of the Wallkill to develop a manufacturing settlement that would harness the water power of the high falls of the Wallkill River.

Thereafter, maps were prepared, for a *planned community* of industrial, business and residential

sites called the Village of Walden. "By the 1820's, Jacob T. Walden's mill was creating cotton and woolen cloth for New York consumers through the power of the mighty Wallkill."³ By the 1840's Walden was a major woolen manufacturing center in Orange County. The focus of production shifted from textiles to cutlery when in 1856 the New York Knife Company moved to the idle cotton factory. Walden would see the establishment of two more knife factories with the Walden Knife Company in the 1870's and Schrade Cutlery in 1904.

Soon thereafter, Walden would earn its title as the "Little Sheffield" as it became the cutlery capital of the United States. Cutlery remained a major industry until the 1950's when Schrade Cutlery was relocated to Ellenville. Vestiges of the knife industry remain, from the dam at high falls to the McKinley Statue. In the 1930's and 1950's Walden was also a center for the garment industry with sewing facilities on the upper floors of the Walker Building, the Wooster Building and other sites. Women comprised 90% of the garment workforce with workspace on upper floors of buildings.

Walden is located within the town of Montgomery, in Orange County, New York. In 1855, Walden was incorporated as a Village. During the 1870's, rail service also



Above (top to bottom): Post Card showing Walden Train Station in its original location (relocated to Wooster's Grove); view of President McKinley Statue and the historic Walden House circa late 1700's.

² Source: Marc Newman: Images of America Walden & Maybrook, Arcadia Publishing, 2002.

³ Source: Marc Newman: Images of America Walden & Maybrook, Arcadia Publishing, 2002.

came to Walden, providing both passenger service for residents and freight access to markets for its manufacturing industries. By the early 1900's, Walden came into its own as a center for manufacturing, commerce, banking and retailing.

The early 1900's were a period of prosperity for the Village. During this time, the dense residential development pattern of single-family homes on small lots, coupled with residences above-the-store within the Downtown was established. Public buildings such as Municipal Building were constructed during this period along with the Soldier's, Firemen's & McKinley monument's and the Volunteer Memorial. These architectural and cultural resources contribute to the vitality of Walden to the present day.

Throughout the 1940's, Walden continued on its path as a center for industry and commerce, serving not only the surrounding agricultural areas, but the greater region and national markets. In 1958, Walden's dominance as an industrial center began to decline as a result of competition from other markets. By the 1950's, the Village's last cutlery producer, Schrade Cutlery, moved its facility to Ellenville, New York. Even with these changes, the Village remains a center for manufacturing with such companies as Truffa Seed Co., AMPAC, CICOR and American Lumber.

These industries rely upon Walden's skilled workforce and access to markets using the Norfolk Southern freight rail line and proximity to major

transportation corridors such as NYS Routes 52 and Route 208. The ease of mobility wrought by the rise of the automobile and the construction of the New York State Thruway and more recently I-84 meant that the Village had to compete with new and emerging automobile-oriented retail centers in the region. During the 1980's and 1990's, the Village saw an increase in the vacancy rate in the Central Business District and a loss of market share.

During the 2000's, the business community adapted to regional shifts in consumer spending patterns. Significant streetscape enhancements and incentives for business owners through the New York Main Street program helped business owners to retain, expand or create business enterprises in the Central Business District. Walden Savings Bank and Wallkill Valley Federal Savings and Loan – along with retailers like Sohn's Appliances and Millspaugh Furniture – continue to anchor the district by serving local and regional demands.

Certain areas in Walden – such as its Central Business District, turn-of-the-century mill buildings along Elm Street and older neighborhoods nestled along the Wallkill River – look much like they did 100 years ago. Even though new development has grown around its historic core over time, Walden has sustained its unique sense of place. This Plan is intended to help retain its community character while preparing for future growth.



Above (top to bottom): Fireman's Square with Library and Municipal Building in the background; former mill building on Elm Street, which was home to Nelco Industries; and single-family homes on Railroad Avenue in the vicinity of industrial buildings. The Village's rich history is reflected in its historic buildings.

2.1 Regional and County Plans

The Village of Walden is located within the metropolitan New York and Hudson Valley Regions. Regional agencies have developed long-range plans for these regions, which are advisory in nature.

In developing the Walden Comprehensive Plan, these plans were reviewed to provide insight into how the Village could best fit into this regional framework while preserving its unique character. A brief overview of the Regional Plan Association's (RPA) third plan, Hudson River Valley Greenway and Orange County Comp Plan are provided below:

2.1.1 Town of Montgomery Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Montgomery adopted a new Comprehensive Plan in 2021. Based on the Town's plan, the Town wishes to remain comprised of farmland, open space and rural density residential development with commercial development located along state roads and on the periphery of the Town's three Village's. Recommendations related to the Village include drinking water protection areas around rivers and streams that flow through the Village as well as the Village's public water supply, coordination with the Village on the Climate Smart Community Program and recommendations for additional commercial development along the State Route 52 and 208 bordering the Village.

2.1.2 Hudson River Valley Greenway

In 1991, the Hudson River Valley Greenway was established through the passage of The Hudson River Valley Greenway Act. The Greenway covers the areas of Bronx and New York counties, the

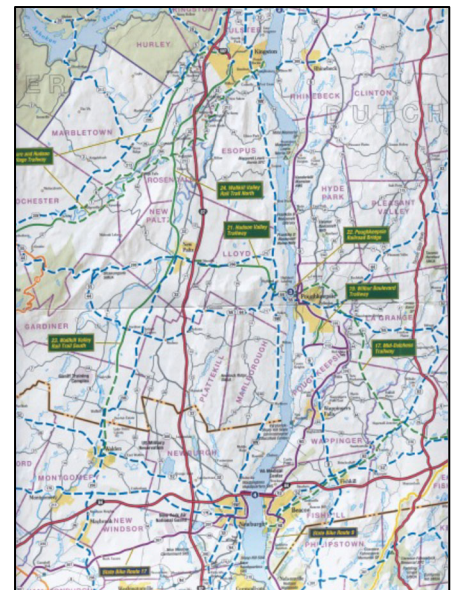
counties of Westchester, Rockland, Putnam, Orange, Dutchess, Ulster, Columbia, Greene, Albany, Rensselaer and in Saratoga County the Town and Village of Waterford, but excluding any area of Greene and Ulster counties within the Catskill park.

In 2001, the Village of Walden voluntarily joined the Greenway's Community Council and officially became a Greenway Community. There are five (5) principles that Greenway Communities subscribe. What follows is a brief summary of Walden's plans for incorporating these principles into its Comprehensive Plan. In 2016, the Village of Walden adopted site specific plan for the Maple Street Boat Launch intended to implement the principals of the Compact.

2.1.3 Natural and Cultural Resource Protection- Through the Comprehensive Plan update, the Village will inventory its existing Natural and Cultural Resources and develop goals and objectives for preserving these resources.

2.1.4 Regional Planning – The Village of Walden, Town of Montgomery and Town of Shawangunk worked together to complete the Walden-Wallkill Rail Trail, which opened on May 2, 2009. This Plan supports on-going coordination with the Town of Montgomery to improve wellhead protection for the Village's wells, which lie within the Town.

Economic Development- The Village of Walden recognizes that the preservation and marketing of its natural, historic, civic and cultural resources could be the catalyst for tourism and economic development. Resources include: the Wallkill River with upper and lower falls, municipal squares, statues, historic Downtown; private, parochial and public schools; religious centers, quaint neighborhoods and an



Above (top to bottom): Regional Plan Association's Greenward Map showing areas within the metropolitan New York Region where growth is recommended and where a greensward of lower density development is recommended; and New York State Department of Transportation's *Hudson Valley Bikeways and Trailways System Map*, which includes bikeways within Walden.

outstanding public park and library system. Walden is also at the crossroads of two State Highways, Route 52 and Route 208.

Public Access - Opportunities to enhance public access to the HRVG Trail System are being implemented. The Walden-Wallkill Rail Trail has made Walden the southern terminus of the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail South providing a direct link to two of the HVRG Countryside Corridors and the Hudson River via Kingston. The southern section of the trail, completed in 2009, is paved and stretches about three miles from Wooster Grove Park in the Village to Route 208 in the Hamlet of Wallkill.

The Village of Walden is pursuing efforts to create new public access points along the Wallkill River in the vicinity of Bradley Park and with a new boat launch at Maple Street. These efforts are also supported by Orange County's Wallkill River Water Trail Project. Orange County is also pursuing creation of a continuous bike lane from Campbell Hall to Walden (9 miles) along the rail line connecting to the Village's existing Wallkill-Walden Rail Trail. This Comprehensive Plan supports continuing efforts to enhance public access and use of trails.

Heritage and Environmental Education – The policies noted above will help to preserve the history of Walden and create opportunities to market the Village to those interested in heritage tourism and natural resources such as the Wallkill River.

2.1.5 NYSDOT Regional Trail Plan

NYSDOT Region 8's proposed Hudson Valley Bikeways and Trailways System includes major bikeways and rail-trails in the Village of Walden. These include bikeways along NYS Route 52 and

208. This Plan supports the creation of such bikeways provided measures are put in place by NYSDOT to ensure bicyclist and motorist safety.

2.1.6 Orange County Comprehensive Plan

Orange County last updated its Comprehensive Plan in 2023. That plan retained the Priority Growth Area concept which recommended concentrating sustainable development in and around “centers” such as cities, villages, hamlets – which have public utilities and sufficient transportation infrastructure -- in order to maintain the County's rural countryside. The Village of Walden is within the identified Priority Growth Areas.

2.1.7 Orange County Open Space Plan

The Orange County Open Space Plan was adopted in June of 2004 and is incorporated into the County's Comprehensive Plan. The recommendations for open space preservation, trail development, and parkland development contained within the County Open Space Plan are supported through the recommendations contained within this Plan.



Above (top to bottom): Handicap Accessible access to the Walden-Wallkill Rail Trail from Woodruff Street; view of Wallkill River looking northwest from Westwood Drive; and view of public beach at James Olley Park off of Sherman Avenue, which leads to Wanderling Park Drive.

2.2 Conclusions

The Village of Walden's rich history as a regional employment center, proximity to other employment centers, availability of natural resources and parks, and ease of access to the regional transportation network including: the NYS Thruway, I-84, rail, and Stewart International Airport all combine to make Walden a very attractive place to live and do business. The greatest evidence of this is the steady population increase, new housing growth and the establishment of new religious buildings such as the Buddhist Temple on Edmonds Lane.

Additionally, Walden is experiencing continued reinvestment in its Central Business District. Many downtown business owners have participated in the New York Main Street Grant Program which has resulted in façade and interior building renovations, which have enhanced the vitality of the Central Business District. The New York School of Music, on Municipal Square, is providing an important cultural anchor within the downtown.

This new investment reflects the desirability of Walden as a place to live and do business. As Walden plans for growth and redevelopment, this Plan supports a pattern of sustainable development at a scale and density, which complements Walden's built environment. Such measures will ensure the unique desirability of Walden is maintained for years to come.



Above (top to bottom): The Village's Main Street Business District, the recently updated Sechen Kunchab Ling, Temple of All-Encompassing Great Compassion; and the Walkill River as viewed from the Village's Upper Bridge.

3.0 POPULATION & HOUSING

3.1 Population Characteristics

Between 1960 and 2010, the Village's population increased from 4,851 to 6,978 persons – a forty percent increase. This was lower than the two-fold population increase of Orange County during this period of time but was still a significant increase. Recent Census data shows the Village's population grew by 13.2% between 2000 and 2010, due, in part, to outward migration of the New York Metropolitan area and a huge influx of new housing being constructed in the County and slightly declined between 2010 and 2020 as the housing market and economy slowed. Since this time population has been fairly stable.

Between 2000 and 2010, the Village was the fastest growing municipality in the Town of Montgomery with a growth rate of 13.2% and in contrast, the Village was the only village to lose population between 2010 and 2020. Between 2010 and 2020, the unincorporated Town's population grew by approximately 4.7%, the Village of Maybrook by 6.5% while the Village of Montgomery stayed relatively flat (see Table 3-2).

Walden's population by age group is comparable to that of Orange County (see Table 3-3) with the median age in the Village slightly higher at 39 versus 37 in Orange County. Roughly 11.6% of the Village's population is 65 years of age or older. As this population ages, services to meet the needs of its senior population will grow. Conversely, 22.7% of the population was under 18 years of age suggesting the existing need for services and amenities for children and young adults.

Table 3-1 Population Trends				
Year	Village of Walden		Orange County	
	Population	Percent Change	Population	Percent Change
1970	5,659	-	221,657	-
1980	5,536	7.2%	259,603	17.1%
1990	5,836	3.1%	307,647	18.5%
2000	6,164	5.6%	341,367	11.0%
2010	6,978	13.2%	372,813	9.2%
2020	6,818	-2.3%	401,310	7.6%
2023	6,871	0.78%	407,470	1.5%

Source: 2020 U.S. Bureau of the Census with 2023 estimate from the American Community Survey

Table 3-2 Population Change 2010-2020		
	2020 Population	% Change 2010-2020
New York State	20,201,249	4.3%
Orange County	401,310	7.6%
Village of Maybrook	3,150	6.5%
Village of Montgomery	3,834	0.5%
Village of Walden	6,818	-2.3%
Town of Montgomery* (Exclusive of Villages)	9,321	4.7%

Source: US Bureau of the Census with unincorporated Town population estimates from ESRI

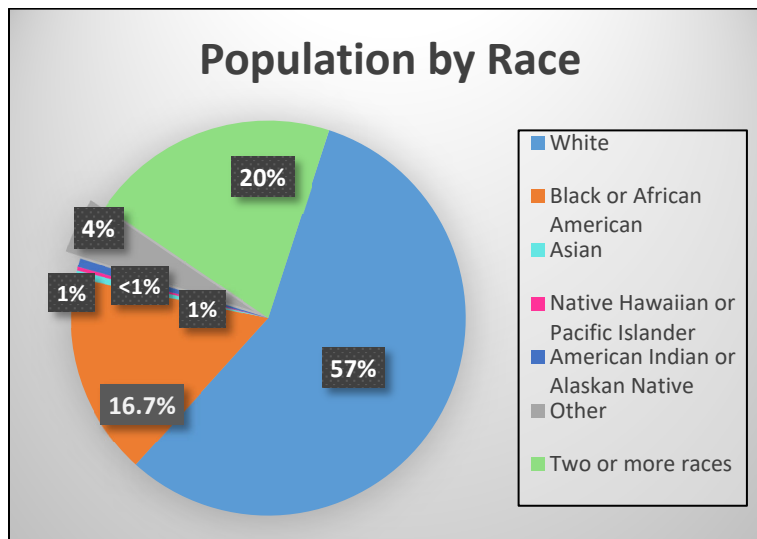
Looking ahead, the Village of Walden is likely to experience slow to moderate population growth during the next decade due to the slow recovery of the housing market and the quality of life that the Village offers its residents. Walden's access to the metropolitan New York region, coupled with its historic charm, excellent park system, low cost of living compared to many surrounding areas and quaint neighborhoods make it an attractive place to reside.

However, it will be increasingly important to focus on the design of new development as the few remaining vacant sites are built upon. How these properties are designed will affect the future character of the Village and whether it remains an attractive destination for new residents. Ensuring new buildings complement historic properties will help to preserve Walden's charm. Further discussion regarding design is provided in the Chapter on Land Use & Zoning.

The Village of Walden is becoming more diverse with respect to Race & Hispanic Origin. It is estimated that 57 % of the Village's population is white (see chart, right). This number has been steadily decreasing over the past three decades. The Village's racial distribution generally mirrors the County's population. According to the 2022 American Communities Survey, 22% of the Village's population is of Hispanic Origin, also up from 2010. This is consistent with the County where 23.7% of the population were of Hispanic Origin in 2022. This growing diversity is a strength, which enriches the fabric of the Village.

Table 3-3 Population by Age, 2023			
	Village of Walden		Orange County
Age Groups	Number	% of Overall Population	% of Overall Population
0-4	414	6.0	6.7
5-17	1,250	18.2	18.9
18-24	659	9.6	10.1
25-34	850	12.4	11.9
35-44	925	13.4	12.8
45-64	1957	28.5	24.7
65-74	412	6.0	9.0
75-84	232	5.0	4.6
85+	63	0.9	1.4

Source: 2023 American Communities Survey



“We are a nation
Of communities...
a brilliant
diversity spread
like stars,
like a
thousand points
of light in a
broad and
peaceful sky.”

~George H.W. Bush

3.1.1 Employment by Industry

The Education and Health Services remained the largest employment sector in both the Village and County. While the Village saw a decline in finance, insurance, real estate and retail trade, the Village saw significant growth in Manufacturing, Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities, and Wholesale Trade.

This reflects several new warehouse employers in the Village. At the County level, the only significant gains occurred within the Finance Sector reflecting new employers such as Touro College, Garnet Health Medical Center, Crystal Run Healthcare, United Natural Foods, Inc. and United Parcel Service.

Also addressed in Table 3-5 is the Village and County employment. Both the Village of Walden's and the County's unemployment rates have significantly decreased since the 2016 figures of 9.1% and 6.7% respectively. These numbers reflect the county-wide recovery from national economic downturn of the mid-2000s

The Village has still been able to retain a vibrant Central Business District (CBD) in the face of growing competition. Millspaugh Furniture's expansion and that of the New York school of Music speak to the attractiveness of Walden as a place to do business. However, if Walden's business district is to remain competitive, public/private efforts to promote and market downtown to customers and businesses alike must be sustained in the future.

3.1.2 Occupation

Table 3-4 provides a breakdown of the Village of Walden's workforce (persons 16 years of age and over) by occupation from the 2023 American Communities Survey. As shown, the largest percentage of Village residents are employed in Management or Professional occupations (39.2%). This remains consistent with 2016 data from the previous plan.

A total of 15.9% of residents were employed in Services Businesses and another 20.9% in Sales and Office jobs. Approximately 14.3% of residents worked in Natural Resources, Farming and Construction with another 9.6% employed in Production and Transportation.

Table 3-4: Occupations of Village Residents, 2023		
Occupation	Number	Percentage
Management, Business, science and arts	1,261	39.2%
Service	513	15.9%
Sales and Office	676	20.9%
Natural Resources, Farming, Construction and Maintenance	460	14.3%
Production and Transportation	310	9.6%

Table 3-5: Labor Force and Employment by Industry								
Employment Characteristics (age 16 and Over)	Village of Walden 2022			Orange County 2022				
Total In Labor Force	3,270			197,533				
Unemployment Rate	5.8%			2.8%				
Industry	2022 #	2022 %	2016 %	2022 #	2022 %	2016 %	% Change Village	% Change County
Educational & Health Care Services	880	28.6	25.2	50,397	27.3	25.7	3.5	6.2
Retail Trade	289	9.4	15.9	26,908	14.6	13.9	-40.8	5.0
Manufacturing	165	5.4	3.1	11,256	6.1	7.5	60.2	-12.6
Public Administration	156	5.1	4.9	9,532	5.2	6.9	-6.6	-20.0
Professional, scientific and management Services	367	11.9	10.2	16,978	9.2	9.0	6.3	9.8
Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities	443	14.4	9.5	12,538	6.8	6.3	51.6	7.9
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation & Food Services	256	8.3	10.2	12,553	6.8	8.2	-18.6	-10.8
Wholesale Trade	91	3.0	2.0	3,311	1.8	3.3	33.8	-41.8
Other Services (except public administration)	113	3.7	4.5	9,028	4.9	4.6	-26.2	13.4
Construction	195	6.3	5.8	11,165	6.0	5.7	-1.0	13.7
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	61	2.0	6.5	14,219	7.7	5.7	-72.4	44.5
Communications and Info	49	1.6	2.0	1,526	3.1	2.5	-29.0	-64.7
Agriculture, Forestry and Mining	16	0.5	0	1,187	0.6	0.7	100	4.2

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 2022 American Communities Survey

3.2 Housing Characteristics

In 2022, the Village of Walden had a total of 2,935 housing units. The majority of these housing units, 57.8%, are single-family detached dwelling units. This share of the Village's housing stock has decreased since 2016 while the number of multi-family units in buildings with 10+ units in a building has increased from 5% to 9.5%. (see Table 3-6). Owner occupied units accounted for 63% of the occupied housing stock. This number has been relatively consistent since 2010 in the Village and at the County level.

The Village's housing vacancy rate has decreased since 2010 having gone from 8.4% in 2016 to 6.9%. This rate has decreased across Orange County as the pandemic caused people living in more densely populated areas such as New York City to move north to Orange County. This influx of population coupled with existing housing stock shortages has caused increases in housing value and rents. Median housing value in the Village was estimated at \$208,242 in 2019 while the 2022 American Community Survey projects this value has increased to \$331,800. Median monthly rent in Walden also increased to \$1,292. This total remains lower than the Orange County median of \$1,565.

Table 3-6: Housing Units in Structure, Village of Walden and Orange County				
	Walden		Orange County	
	#	%	#	%
Total Housing Units	2,935	-	149,895	
1-unit, detached	1,696	57.8%	91,811	61.3
1-unit, attached	300	10.2%	10,204	6.8
2-4 units	425	14.5%	18,326	12.2
5-9 units	207	7.1%	8,738	5.8%
10 or more units	278	9.5%	17,593	11.7%
Mobile home	30	1%	3,223	2.2%

Source: 2022 American Communities Survey with additional data from the Village Building Department

Table 3-7: Selected Housing Characteristics, 2022				
	Walden		Orange County	
		% of Total		% of Total
Total Housing Units	2,935		149,895	
Housing built before 1939	882	30.1%	27,656	18.5%
Housing built 2020 or later			2,398	1.6%
Vacancy Rate	6.8%		6.7%	
Owner-Occupied Units	+/- 1,726	63%	94,037	67.3
Median value	\$331,800		\$371,600	
Occupied rental units	+/- 1,050	38.4%	45,720	32.7
Median monthly rent	\$1,292		\$1,565	

Source: 2022 American Communities Survey

Summary

As the Village's population continues to grow, so too will the demand for community services such as fire, police, ambulance, water, and sewer services. New residential construction will likely increase the demand for public education that may necessitate capital improvements in the Valley Central School District. Continued competition from regional retailers will require ongoing cooperation between the Village and the local business community in order to maintain a vibrant Central Business District.

As the community's population grows so too will the demand for parks & recreational services. It is important that the increase in demand for such services are anticipated and carefully analyzed during the environmental review process for development projects. The Village can use the environmental review process to assess such impacts and to ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to mitigate potential adverse impacts to the community.

As is the case in most communities, the most suitable sites for development in the Village of Walden were the first to be developed. These sites are becoming increasingly scarce – leaving less desirable sites (i.e. those with environmental or other site constraints) for development. Development on such sites will require careful review to protect natural resources such as steep slopes, wetlands, and water resources. In some cases remediation may be necessary.

Care must also be taken to protect important vistas, scale and character that help to define Walden's small-town appeal and to ensure new housing is compatible with the existing Village. New infill buildings should respect the mass, scale, setbacks, sidewalks and character of the traditional building stock to maintain continuity along the street. The desirability of the Village (demonstrated by its strong population growth) will continue to put pressure on the housing market. Looking ahead, policies to ensure that housing opportunities are made available to meet the needs of a variety of household incomes in the community (including volunteer fire department & ambulance corps members, teachers, and its growing workforce) may be necessary.

The Village has many assets and with careful planning it is well positioned to grow in a manner that will strengthen the community's economic and social vitality for years to come. The following chapters provide a broader discussion of natural resources, transportation, cultural and historic resources, parks and recreation, community facilities and downtown revitalization. Each of these chapters will frame the challenges facing Walden in the years ahead as well as policies that it can put in place to help the Village of Walden to meet these challenges.



Above (Top to Bottom): Recently developed single family and multi-family dwellings in the Village.

4.0 NATURAL RESOURCES

The Village of Walden has a rich and diverse natural environment that offers its residents an abundance of open space and recreational opportunities. The physical characteristics of land are some of the most important factors, which will influence land development. Physical characteristics such as topography, drainage, or soil conditions will control or limit both the rate and intensity of growth.

It is for these reasons that the Village of Walden's natural resources need special consideration in helping to determine the manner in which development should be controlled or limited in various areas of the Village. One of the key goals of this Comprehensive Plan shall be to avoid disturbance of environmentally sensitive lands, to preserve important vistas and other natural resources and to guide growth in areas that are best suited for development.

This chapter provides a brief overview of the Village's many natural resources and those areas with environmental constraints. It also includes a variety of policy recommendations to guide land use decisions in order to conserve and protect these natural resources while allowing for growth. The terrain and rivers within the Village of Walden provide a dramatic backdrop to the built environment. The natural resource discussion begins with an overview of elevation and terrain.

4.1 Elevation and Terrain

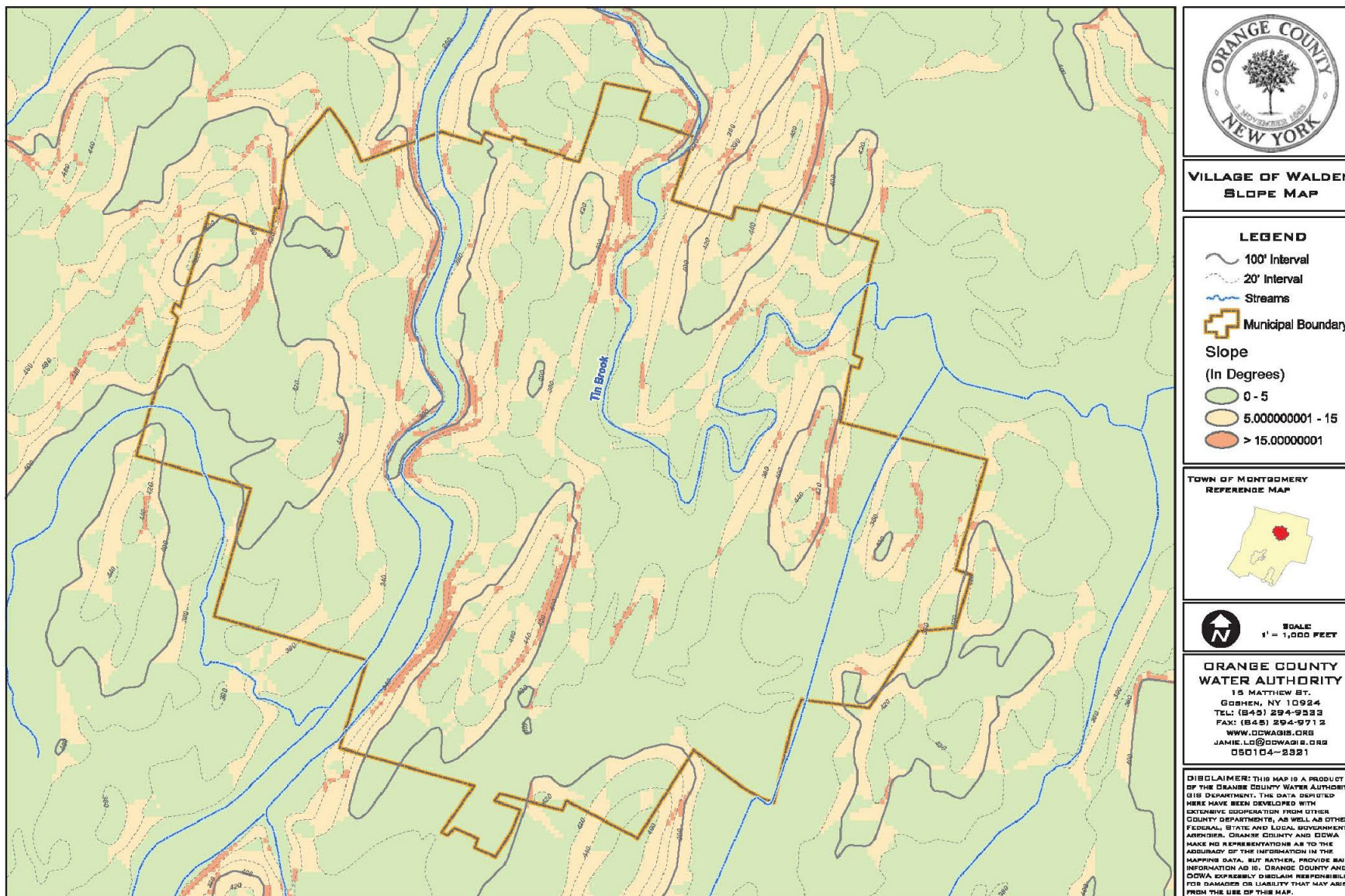
Topography is defined as the relief of land surface describing terrain, elevation and slope. An important measure of topography is range of elevation. In the Village of Walden, the range of elevation is 260 feet. The lowest point is 260 feet above mean sea level (msl) in the vicinity of Bradley Park along the Wallkill River. The highest point is 520 feet above msl in the vicinity of Overlook Terrace. In recent years, low-lying areas along the Wallkill River and Tin Brook have been more susceptible to periodic flooding than previously realized. Care must be taken with respect to any development, which is proposed in these low-lying flood-prone areas.

4.2 Steep Slopes

Comprehensive slope information is an essential element in the planning process. Relating land use to topography can help to minimize damage to the environment and to avoid extensive site alterations that can cause destabilization of banks and soil erosion. Development on slight slopes usually presents the fewest limitations allowing land to be developed with few engineering challenges or harm to the environment. In contrast, development on steep slopes can mean higher construction costs due to the need for major regrading and alternation of the landscape which creates the potential for changes to drainage patterns, unstable soils, and sewage disposal problems. Development on steep slopes should be avoided to mitigate the potential for erosion and impacts on water quality due to erosion and sediment runoff. This is particularly true within riparian zones.

“A river is more than an amenity. It is a treasure. It is a necessity of life that must be rationed among those who have power over it.”

~Oliver Wendell Holmes



Slope indicates the percentage of incline of the land. Those areas with a slope of greater than 8.5° or 15% are generally considered to be too steep for development purposes.

Within the Village of Walden, there are many areas with slopes that are greater than 15%. These are found along the Wallkill River, Tin Brook and in the vicinity of Overlook Terrace. There are also steep slopes to the west of NYS Route 208. The steep slopes are shown in orange on the Slope Map on the preceding page. Those areas with slopes greater than 35% are found along the Wallkill River. Disturbance of such areas, including existing vegetation, should be avoided. Three of the most common difficulties associated with disturbance of steep slopes are:

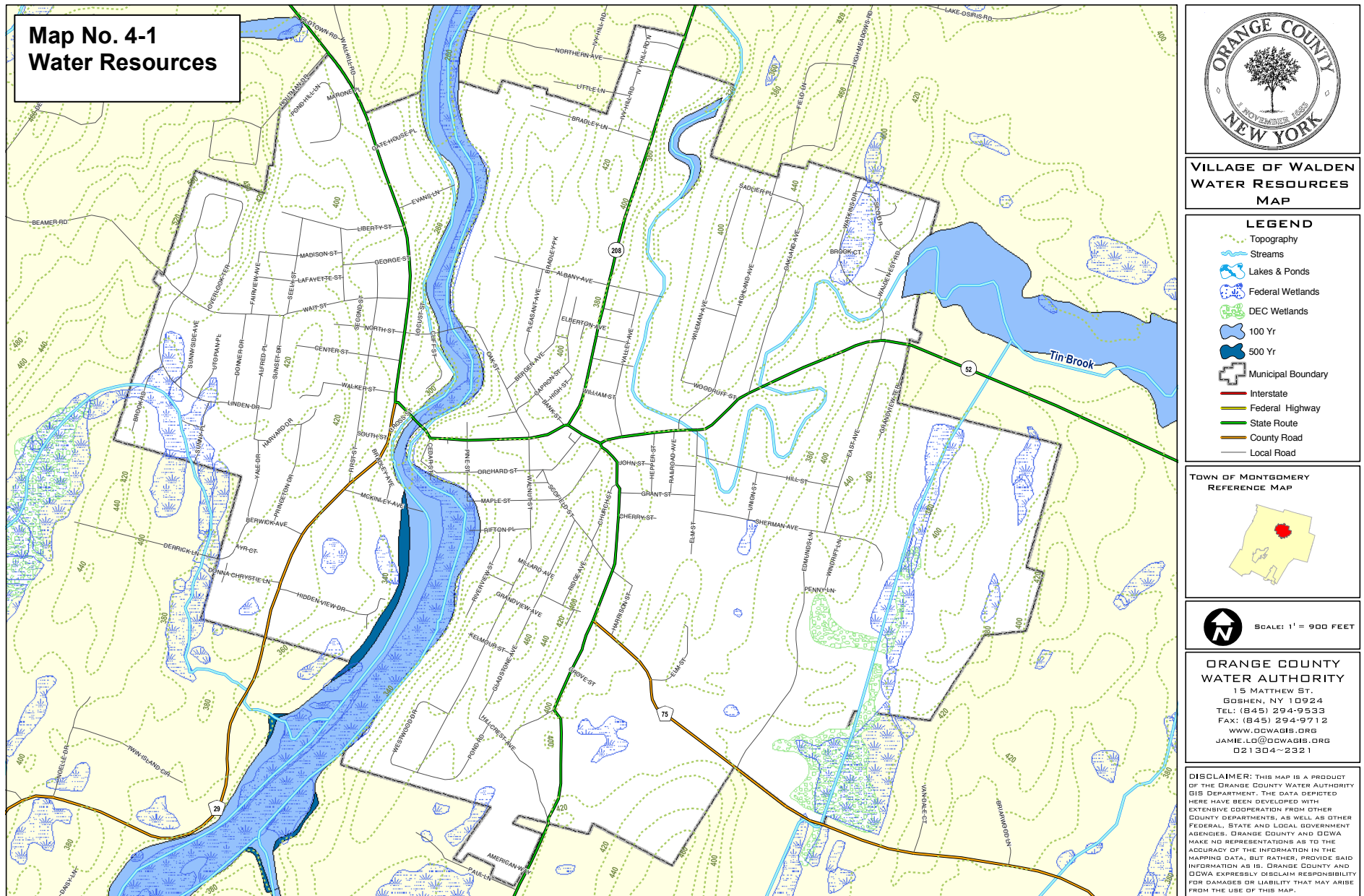
- 1) Sewage disposal – soils on steep slopes are shallow, making it impractical to install subsurface disposal systems.
- 2) Drainage – the removal of trees, grading, and erection of buildings will destabilize the bank while increasing runoff. These factors contribute to erosion and sediment control problems; and
- 3) Driveway and street layout – as a general rule, the slope of driveways and roadways should not exceed 6.8° or 12%. Development on steep slopes makes alignments and safe intersections very difficult. They also may result in rapid runoff onto adjoining roads causing erosion and icing problems in the winter.

4.3 Water Resources

The Wallkill River is the primary surface water body in Walden and it flows from south to north through the center of the Village. The Wallkill River is classified as a “Class B” stream by the NYSDEC, meaning it is suitable for swimming and other forms of primary contact. The Tin Brook is a major tributary to the Wallkill and meanders through the northeast quadrant of Walden. Both the Wallkill River and Tin Brook are also considered Federally Regulated wetlands. There is also an unnamed tributary to the Wallkill, which traverses the Village’s southwest quadrant and includes a wetland complex located off Linden Drive which enters the Wallkill just south the Village.

The Village obtains its potable water supply from wells, which are situated in the Town of Montgomery. Local Law 15 of 2022 adopted by the Town limits various activities within 300 feet of the public wells including outdoor chemical or road salt storage, landfills, hazardous waste disposal and septage discharge.

This Plan supports efforts by the Village Board to work with the Town of Montgomery to improve wellhead protection and aquifer protection overlay districts in the vicinity of its wells. Land uses around the wells must be carefully regulated in order to avoid contaminants from being unintentionally introduced into the groundwater through both stormwater runoff and industrial spills. It is also of critical importance to protect wetlands in the vicinity of the wells. Wetlands serve as a point of absorption for ground water reserves and aquifers on which many public and private water supplies depend. The Village should carefully monitor development in the Town which may impact the Village’s groundwater resources and should advocate for the continued protection of these resources. A more detailed discussion on wetlands follows in Section 4.3.1.



4.3.1 Wetlands

Wetlands are perhaps the most critical of all water resource considerations due to their extreme sensitivity to development. These areas are subject to periodic or continual inundation by water and are commonly referred to as bogs or marshes. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation has mapped these resources and regulates these water resources as well as land within 100 feet of them. In addition to NYSDEC wetlands, there are also Federal wetlands that are protected under Section 404 of the Federal Clean Water Act. These are regulated by the United States Army Corps of Engineers and are shown on the National Wetland Inventory maps.

In Walden, there are several NYSDEC regulated wetlands as well as a number of federally regulated wetlands. These wetlands are located along the banks of the Wallkill, Tin Brook, and other tributary rivers to the Wallkill and along the eastern edge of the Village, particularly in the vicinity of James Olley Park (see Map No. 4-1 Water Resources).

These wetlands provide natural wildlife habitat for a variety of birds, waterfowl, amphibians, and other plant and animal species. The enforcement of the Village's land use regulations and concurrent SEQR review must be the primary tools used to protect these resources. Allowing clustered development on sites to avoid disturbance of these sensitive areas is one measure, which could be encouraged to mitigate impacts on wetlands.

Wetlands serve an important water quality function. They also serve a vital function in flood mitigation by

retaining large amounts of runoff during the spring thaw and major storm events. In this respect, wetlands help to reduce peak flood flows and decrease flood damage. All proposed development within the vicinity of NYSDEC and federal wetlands must comply with the regulation of the respective authority. Within the Village, both types of wetlands are found. The Planning Board must ensure that applicants adhere to these standards when reviewing site plans or subdivision proposals that are in the vicinity of regulated wetlands.

4.3.2 Flood Hazard Areas

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has identified potential flood hazard areas in the Village of Walden. Areas in the Village that are subject to flooding include those lands adjoining the Wallkill River and Tin Brook where flooding results from snow melt, heavy rains or other weather conditions. By identifying these areas, it is possible to restrict development to open space uses, including passive recreation, which don't obstruct water flow and are tolerant of flooding.

It is important to do this in order to mitigate both financial loss and the potential loss of life that might occur as the result of periodic flooding. FEMA defines the likelihood of flooding into two broad categories: 1) lands within the 100- year floodplain; and 2) those within the 500-year floodplain.

Lands within the 100-year floodplain have a 1% probability of a flood exceeding a certain depth in



any given year. Where the threat exists, the construction of houses and other buildings, including civic buildings, should be avoided.

It is recommended that the Village Planning Board factor in the presence of floodplains when they review site plans and subdivision applications. The Planning Board must insist on appropriate mitigation measures for any development within floodplains.

4.3.3 Stormwater Management

Stormwater is water that accumulates on land as a result of storms or melting snow. The porous and varied terrain of natural landscapes like forests, wetlands, and grasslands trap rainwater and snowmelt and allow it to slowly filter into the ground. Runoff tends to reach receiving waters gradually. In contrast, nonporous landscapes like roads, bridges, parking lots, and buildings don't let runoff slowly percolate into the ground. Water remains on the surface, accumulates and runs off in large amounts.

The Village's stormwater management system includes its storm sewers and ditches that are designed to quickly channel runoff from roads and other impervious surfaces. These devices are important to control high flows that may be a threat to public safety. Unfortunately, there are adverse environmental impacts associated with traditional stormwater management.

Runoff gathers speed and can collect trash, bacteria, heavy metals and other pollutants which are on road and roof surfaces. During storm events, large volumes of high velocity runoff can erode streambanks, damage streamside vegetation and

widen stream channels. In turn, this will result in lower water depths during non-storm periods, higher than normal water levels during wet weather periods, increased sediment loads and turbid water and higher water temperatures. It is thus important to control and treat stormwater runoff associated with development.

In New York State, any construction operation that will disturb or expose one or more acres of soil requires a State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) Permit for Stormwater Management Discharges from Construction Activity. Soil disturbance includes clearing vegetation, grubbing, filling, grading, excavation, demolition and any current or proposed construction activity. Nonresidential projects proposing over one acre of disturbance and single family residential projects proposing over five acres of disturbance will also require the development of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). A SWPPP addresses both construction and post-construction activities. During construction activities, erosion & sediment control devices such as silt fences are used to prevent silts from soils from be carried off the site during storm events. Detention and retention basins are used to ensure that post-development runoff rates from a site do not exceed pre-development rates. The most recent NYSDEC stormwater design manual requires the use of green treatment practices such as bioretention basins, rain gardens, green roofs, bioswales and the use of porous pavement. The EPA defines Green Infrastructure as “us(ing) vegetation, soils, and natural processes to manage water and create healthier urban environments. . . . At the scale of a neighborhood or site, green infrastructure refers to stormwater management systems that mimic nature by soaking up and storing water.” Preservation and supplemental planting of mature vegetation can also play an important role in stormwater management on a site as well as reducing pavement temperatures though shading to keep stormwater cooler as it enters the storm sewer system.

Rain gardens are shallow vegetated basins that collect and absorb runoff from rooftops, sidewalks, streets, lawns, and parking lots. Rain gardens mimic natural hydrology by allowing infiltration and evapotranspiration of runoff, and can be installed in almost any unpaved area. Bioswales are vegetated, mulched, or xeriscaped channels that provide treatment and retention as they move stormwater from one place to another. Detention basins are dry basins that fill with water

during a storm event. They work by delaying the stormwater so that it is released at a rate that mimics predevelopment flow. Retention basins hold water in a pool and release water through an overflow spillway during storm events. These basins provide for the release of runoff at controlled rates to protect the quality of surface waters and to prevent flooding during storm events.

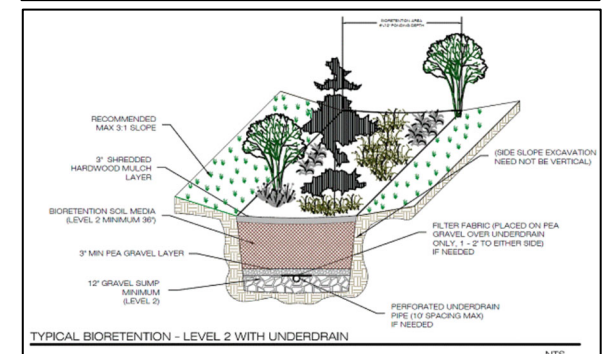
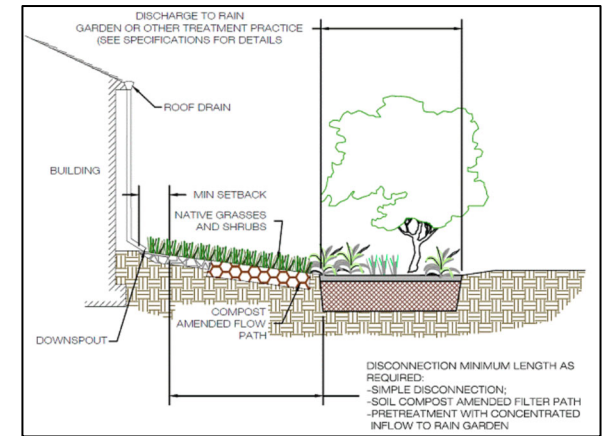
Detention and retention basins are also important stormwater treatment systems. Stormwater treatment is the capture and reduction of pollution in stormwater runoff prior to discharge into receiving waters such as the Wallkill River and groundwater aquifer. By capturing the runoff, the basins allow particulates to settle to the bottom that removes pollutants from the runoff before it is discharged.

Within off-street parking areas, catch basins are used to retain and filter contaminants before they leave the site. Other measures that can be employed include the use of infiltration trenches that capture runoff and treat it through a soil medium and pea gravel filter layer before it is discharged. Bioretention basins are a variation of these systems, with planting intended to also absorb nutrients. As the Planning Board reviews development applications it must ensure that appropriate stormwater management measures are put in place. Such measures will help to protect water quality and mitigate potential damage during major storm events.

4.4 Soils

Proper siting of development must include an analysis of soil types within a community. Soils differ according to variations in composition, particle-size gradation, and compaction; factors which control permeability, porosity and strength. Each of these factors and depth to bedrock is important in determining how much and what kind of development the land is capable of supporting and how to properly treat stormwater as discussed above. Soil porosity and permeability is a major consideration in determining development capability. Hydric soils have poor potential for building development since wetness and frequent ponding are severe problems that are difficult and costly to overcome. Soils associated with steep slopes are also not well-suited to development as they are prone to erosion.

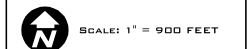
The U.S. Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources Conservation Service has mapped and classified soil types (see Map 4-2 and Map 4-3). However, these soil classifications are not site specific. It is useful to consider the specific soil conditions in a community in directing growth to areas that can support development without high construction costs. Therefore, any classification system needs to allow for detailed on-site soils testing by engineers for purposes of finding pockets of more suitable soils for development. A detailed description of the soil groups within the Village of Walden is available in the USDA Orange County Soil Survey.



Above (top to bottom): Illustrations showing bioretention systems which are intended to absorb nutrients from runoff. *Source:* Illustration from Virginia Department Conservation & Recreation.

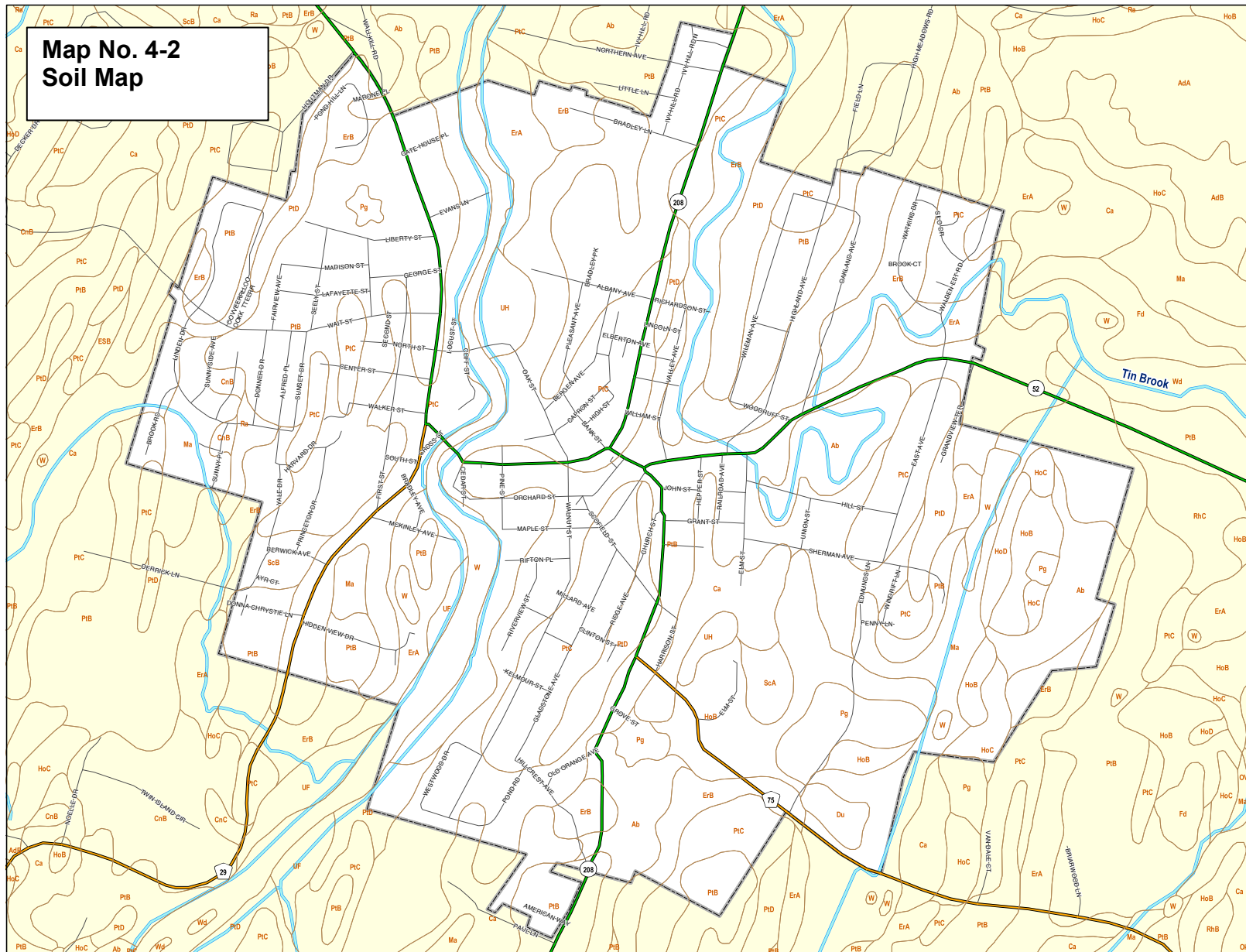
LEGEND

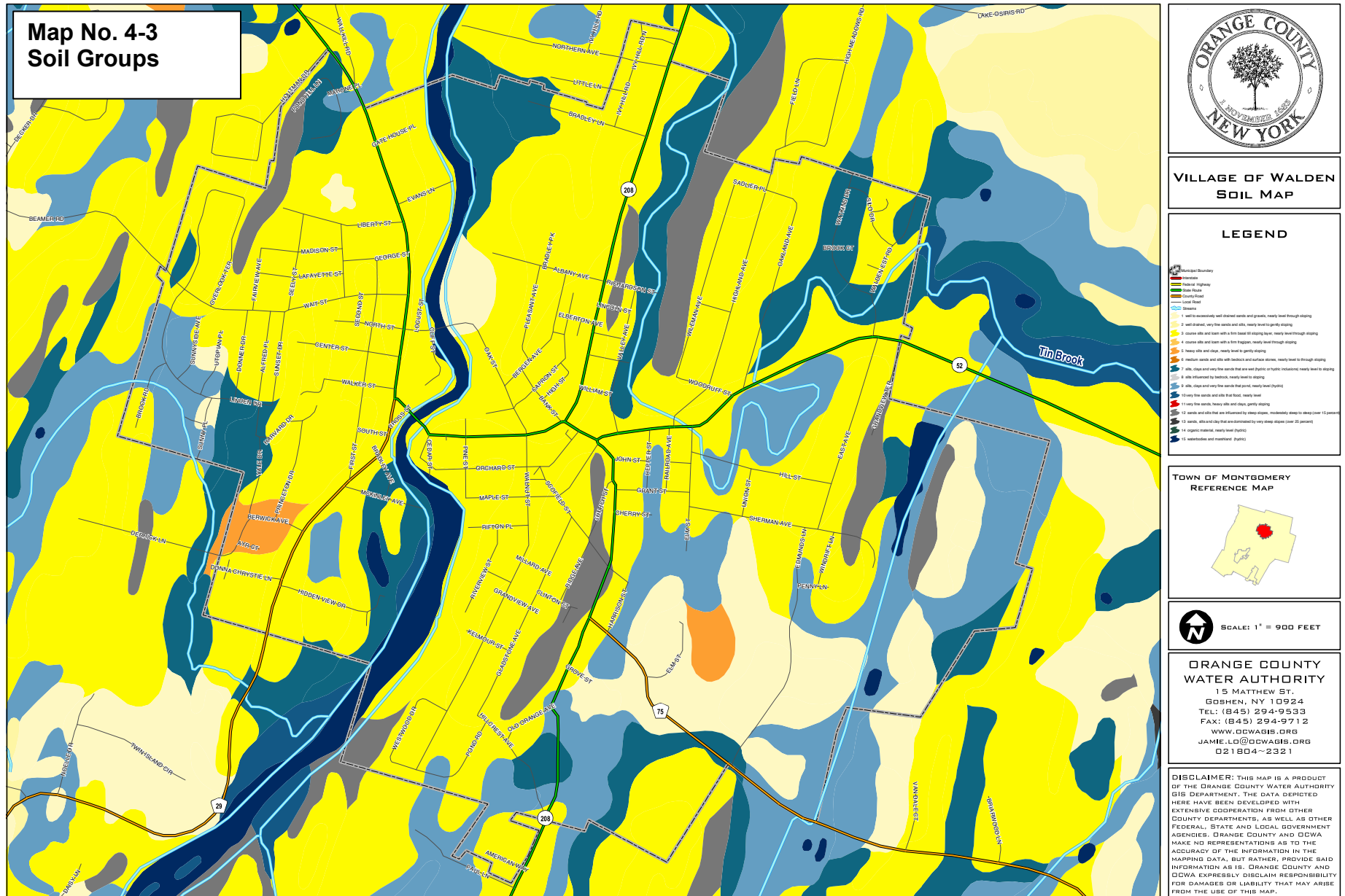
- Interstate
- Federal Highway
- State Route
- County Road
- Local Road
- Soils
- Streams
- Municipal Boundary
- Lakes & Ponds



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DISCLAIMER: THIS MAP IS A PRODUCT OF THE ORANGE COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY GIS DEPARTMENT. THE DATA DEPICTED HERE HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED WITH EXTENSIVE COOPERATION FROM OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS, AS WELL AS OTHER FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES. ORANGE COUNTY AND OCWA MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS AS TO THE ACCURACY OF THE INFORMATION IN THE MAPPING DATA, BUT RATHER, PROVIDE SAID INFORMATION AS A SERVICE. ORANGE COUNTY AND OCWA EXPRESSLY DISCLAIM RESPONSIBILITY FOR DAMAGES OR LIABILITY THAT MAY ARISE FROM THE USE OF THIS MAP.





4.5 Riparian Zones

A riparian zone is the border between land and a flowing surface water body that is densely populated with plant species. There is a well-defined riparian zone along the Wallkill River and Tin Brook within the Village of Walden.

Perhaps one of the most important qualities of the riparian buffer zone is its ability to control erosion, and thus, to prevent sediment pollution. In a stream surrounded by a riparian zone, sediment pollution is controlled. Riparian zones are densely populated with plant species and thus have intricate root systems that prevent erosion and undercutting of banks. In addition, the woody stems and grasses help to physically trap sediment by slowing down the water runoff from the surrounding area, allowing the sediment to settle out.

The branches, stems and leaves of these plants absorb the impact of raindrops. Decaying leaves and low-growing vegetation form a ground cover that further lessens the erosive force of raindrop impact. This groundcover slows runoff, increasing the amount of water absorbed into the soil and then released slowly into the stream, groundwater, or atmosphere. The water that is absorbed may contain nutrients, pesticides, and other pollutants that will eventually be taken up by plants or broken down over time. By slowing runoff, trapping sediments, and increasing absorption, these plants act as a living filter to protect water quality.

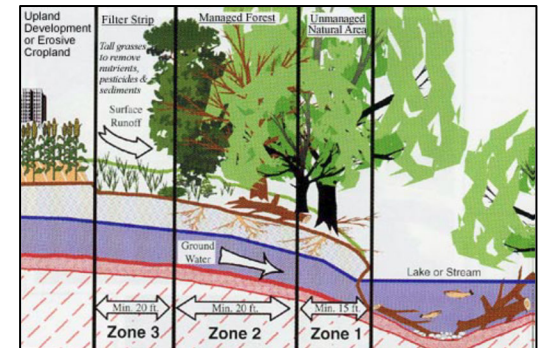
The riparian zones along the Wallkill River and Tin Brook thus play a vital function in helping to protect the water quality in these streams. The riparian zones

also play a very important role in helping to prevent excessive erosion of the stream banks during periodic flooding. With the onset of Hurricane Irene in 2011, the Tin Brook experienced severe flooding and the riparian zone helped to reduce erosion along the stream.

Waterfront vegetation also enhances habitat for wildlife and increases opportunities for wildlife viewing. Plants along waterways provide food and shelter for a variety of insects, amphibians, reptiles, songbirds, mammals and fish.

Maintaining or developing an attractive riparian zone can:

- Increase property values;
- Reduce property loss from excessing erosion;
- Protect water quality by filtering sediments and other contaminants;
- Discourage geese congregation;
- Enhance wildlife habitat by providing shade that reduces water temperature;
- Contribute to the natural beauty of the land;
- Dissipate noise from traffic, roads, and nearby properties;
- Reduce maintenance time and related costs;
- Provide privacy;
- Screen unsightly views; and
- Enhance scenic views.



Above (top to bottom): Illustration showing unmanaged natural zone, managed forest zone and filter strip (i.e. Zone 1, 2 and 3) and aerial views of riparian zones along the Wallkill & Tin Brook.

Research shows riparian zones are instrumental in water quality improvement for both surface runoff and water flowing into streams through subsurface or groundwater flow; particularly the attenuation of nitrate or denitrification of the nitrates from fertilizer. Riparian zones can play a role in lowering nitrate contamination in surface runoff from athletic fields, which runoff would otherwise damage ecosystems and human health by potentially infiltrating groundwater.

This plan supports the adoption of a local law to implement a mandatory riparian zone along the Wallkill River and the Tin Brook, of at least 30 feet from the bank, in all development projects in order to protect the quality of these streams.

4.6 Tree Preservation & Conservation

Trees, shrubs and other plant materials add four season living color, texture and visual interest to the landscape of the Village of Walden. Street trees, landscaped lawns, shrubs and other plantings throughout the community help to define the Village's small town charm and make it an attractive community in which to live and visit. It is thus important that the Village Board play an active role in conserving this natural resource and encouraging new tree plantings.

Throughout the Village, mature street trees are the most prominent form of plantings along the street. Street trees help to soften the hard surfaces of sidewalks, off-street parking areas and streets and help to define the pedestrian right-of-way by providing a buffer between the street and the sidewalk.

Over time the Village has lost a number of street trees due to age, disease and excessive pruning of branches away from overhead utilities. Trees were also lost with recent sidewalk improvements, but new street trees were planted with the new streetscape improvements.

On residential streets, street trees should be planted within a planting strip between the sidewalk and the curb. When selecting a tree species, consideration must be given to the size of the mature canopy and root system, so that trees will not compete for light or nutrients. Species must also be selected that are hardy and tolerant of road salts deposited during the winter months.

Street trees provide many community benefits. There are studies that show that drivers tend to drive slower on streets that are lined with street trees. The trees provide a canopy that encloses the street that creates a calming effect. Street trees also help to protect air quality by absorbing carbon dioxide from automobiles and releasing oxygen. A large mature canopy of leafy deciduous trees also helps to absorb noise generated from traffic that in turn reduces ambient noise levels within the Village. Trees also add to the natural beauty of the Village. Street trees also provide a physical and psychological buffer between the sidewalk and the street that makes pedestrians feel safer which encourages walking. Specific recommendations for conserving trees and encouraging new plantings are included in the summary of this chapter.



Above (top to bottom): Tree lined streets within the Village serve to provide a separation between vehicles and pedestrians on top of the environmental benefits.

4.7 Energy Conservation & Climate Change

4.7.1 New York Climate Smart Communities

The Climate Smart Communities (CSC) program began in 2009 as an interagency initiative of New York State. The original focus of the program was on encouraging local governments to commit to act on climate change by passing a resolution containing the 10-point CSC Pledge. In July of 2019, the Village Board adopted the Climate Smart Pledge which is the first step to joining the program. In order to be designated a Certified Climate Smart Community, a municipality must go beyond the CSC Pledge by completing and documenting a suite of actions that mitigate and adapt to climate change at the local level.

The Climate Smart Communities (CSC) Certification program comprises more than 100 actions for which a local government can earn points toward being designated as a Certified Climate Smart Community. The Village has created a CSC Task Force, completed a Greenhouse Gas Inventory and also recently installed an electric vehicle charging station with a grant from the NYSDEC. The Village should continue to work towards completing the criteria to become a designated CSC and seek any grants which could offset costs of various programs.

4.7.2 LEED

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System is a voluntary standard for developing high performance, sustainable buildings. Members of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), representing all segments of the building industry, developed LEED. LEED standards have been developed for new commercial construction, major renovation projects,

existing building operations and commercial interior projects.

LEED defines quantifiable measures for rating development projects based upon the number of points achieved by a project, out of a 69 possible.

Within the rating system six (6) general LEED categories: Sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, and innovation in design. Each of these categories impacts the overall LEED score.

The Village should encourage the use of LEED technologies in the design of new buildings. The Planning Board when reviewing developments should ask applicants to consider the placement of new buildings in a manner that maximizes energy efficiency and sustainability. The Village should provide education and outreach regarding LEED techniques in order to raise community awareness of its benefits.

4.8 Night Sky

The inappropriate or excessive use of artificial light – known as light pollution – can have serious environmental consequences for humans, wildlife, and our climate. Components of light pollution include:

- **Glare** – excessive brightness that causes visual discomfort
- **Skyglow** – brightening of the night sky over inhabited areas
- **Light trespass** – light falling where it is not intended or needed
- **Clutter** – bright, confusing and excessive groupings of light sources

A number of residents have also spoken of the night sky as a natural resource that must be protected. The Planning Board can do its part to preserve night sky by ensuring that lighting is sufficient for the proposed land use but not excessive. To this end, it is recommended that lighting be limited to 2.0 foot-candles within off-street parking areas and that lighting be designed in a manner that keeps the light entirely on the subject site, away from adjoining properties, and out of the night sky.

To accomplish this goal, the Planning Board should require developers to install lighting fixtures with a horizontal cutoff lens so that light is directed to the ground and not into the night sky. The Village should also encourage its residents and businesses to employ night sky friendly lighting techniques such as adding hoods to area floodlights, replacing existing yard lights with those fixtures that include an opaque reflector and using downlit lighting for signage.

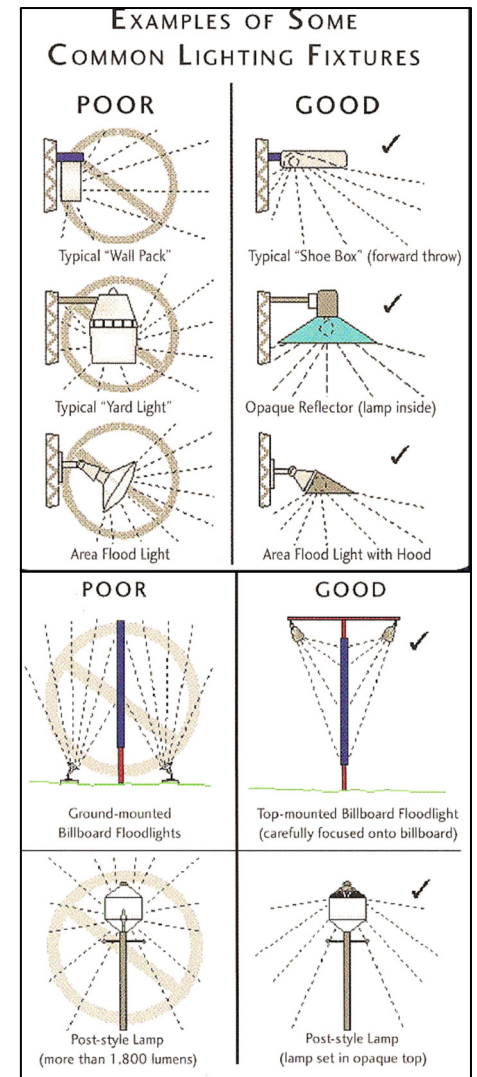
The Otsego County Conservation Association has developed a pamphlet that addresses light pollution called “Starry Nights in Otsego County.” The Planning Board is encouraged to use the illustration from this pamphlet as a guide.

4.9 Invasive Plants & Animals

It is a policy of this Plan to support invasive plant and animal eradication efforts. Invasive species are non-native species that can cause harm to natural ecosystems resulting in a wide range of environmental, recreational and economic impacts. The NYSDEC has identified invasive species as a significant threat to the State’s biodiversity - second only to habitat loss.

The Village’s economy is dependent on the health of its ponds and streams that provide boating, fishing and swimming opportunities. Once introduced into water bodies, aquatic invasive plants spread rapidly, congest waterways and disrupt native fish populations. Invasive animals could decimate local fish populations. Once infested, ponds and rivers can become unusable and this could adversely affect the local economy as the quality of these natural resources is diminished.

It is recommended that the Village Board work with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to identify threats related to invasive species. Examples include Japanese Knotweed, Purple Loosestrife and other invasive plants. When identified, the Village Board should reach out to partner with the NYSDEC to secure funding through their Invasive Species Eradication grants to help eradicate invasive species. State funds can be used to pay for up to one half of the total costs of a selected eradication project.



Source: Otsego County Conservation Association, “Starry Nights in Otsego County”

4.10 Recommendations

There are a variety of land use policies that the Village can employ to protect its natural resources including the following:

4.10.1 Steep Slopes

Identify steep slopes (over 15%) as part of a site assessment prior to developing the building site and road design in order to acknowledge and maintain the hillside character and natural features of the site. This approach can help to minimize site grading and retain the natural and topographic character of the site.

4.10.2 Water Resources

Follow NYSDEC requirements to maintain a 100-foot setback between development and adjacent wetlands. During the site plan and special permit review process, applicants must be required to show existing wetlands delineated by a qualified professional and any required setbacks on plans and provide appropriate water quality mitigations to ensure long term protection.

Restrict the development of buildings and impervious surfaces within the 100-year floodplain. Carefully review applications for development in the 100-year floodplain. Participate in FEMA programs to help prevent future loss of property and life due to flooding.

Require Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP) in accordance with the current NYSDEC stormwater management design manual. SWPPP's help to ensure that post-development runoff rates from a site do not

exceed predevelopment rates. Such plans provide for treatment of runoff and release of runoff at controlled rates to protect the quality of surface waters and prevent flooding from storm events. Encourage the use of bio-retention basins and other green practices as a part of the overall site plan or subdivision plan and ensure long term maintenance is established and agreed to by the developer.

4.10.3 Soils

Where proposed development involves grading of the site or cutting and filling operations require a Sediment & Erosion Control Plan. Generally, development on sites should work with the topography of the site and avoid excessive grading of the site. Where grading is proposed, a sediment & erosion control plan should be provided.

4.10.4 Riparian Zones

Restrict the cutting of trees and brush along the banks of the Wallkill River, Tin Brook and other major surface water resources and adopt a mandatory setback from the banks of these resources during the development process. The clearing of trees on the banks of the Wallkill River should be prohibited. Create a public information brochure regarding the importance of retaining the riparian zone along the Wallkill River and Tin Brook and consult the Wallkill River Watershed Conservation Management Plan for best management practices and recommendations for developments in these sensitive areas.

4.10.5 Tree Preservation & Conservation

Enforce landscaping and street tree standards for new developments. Developers are required to provide a landscaping and street-tree plans for the development and redevelopment of properties per Section 305-75 of the zoning code. All applicable landscaping and tree removal laws should be strictly enforced. Developers should provide a tree survey showing all trees in areas to be developed with a caliper of over eight (8) inches when seeking site plan or subdivision approval. The Planning Board should use this tool to conserve as many mature trees on site as possible.

4.10.6 Participation in Climate Smart Communities Program

The Village should continue participating in annual events aimed at public education on emergency conservation and green-house gas emissions, continue working towards getting certified as a Climate Smart Community and the Village should specifically look at replacing streetlights with LED fixtures.

4.10.7 Night Sky

Require developers to install lighting fixtures with horizontal cutoff lenses and require lighting plans to be provided for Planning Board review so potential impacts can be evaluated. This will protect night sky by directing light to the ground and avoid the spillover of light onto adjoining properties or into the night sky.

4.10.8 Invasive Plants & Animals

Support local efforts to eradicate invasive plants and animals. Invasive species can adversely affect the natural ecosystem if left unchecked. When identified, it is recommended that these species be eradicated before they spread and cause greater harm to the local ecosystem. There are a variety of grant opportunities through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) to assist communities with the eradication of invasive species.

5.0 TRANSPORTATION

The Village of Walden's transportation system is comprised of its highways, streets, freight rail line, sidewalks, and recreational trails. The existing transportation system is highly effective in moving goods, vehicles and people within and through the community. Together, these transportation systems have helped to shape the character of the Village and will continue to influence its development into the future.

The components of the Village's transportation system often share the public realm across the entire public right-of-way resulting in the frequent interaction between pedestrians and drivers [e.g. streets and sidewalks]. It is thus important that all components of the transportation system be considered in relation to one another to ensure a safe and efficient transportation system.

We begin the transportation discussion with a focus on highways and streets. Each and every highway and street plays an important role in moving goods and people within and through the Village. The regional highways that traverse the Village (e.g. NYS Route 52 and NYS Route 208) are designed to carry traffic through the entire region. Its local streets are intended to channel traffic from local residences to collector streets. The function of each of the Village's highways and streets is discussed in Section 5.1.

5.1 Roadway & Highway Classifications

Highways are generally described by their functional classifications. The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) has created a functional classification system for roadways that is described below.

Interstate and Limited-Access Highways: This type of highway moves large volumes of traffic at relatively high speeds to and from locations outside the region. Such highways have limited access via designated exits with no at-grade intersections. Examples include Interstate 84 and the New York State Thruway.

Arterial: The function of an arterial is to carry medium-to-heavy volumes of traffic at moderate to high speeds and provide access to major traffic generators. Examples include NYS Route 52 and NYS Route 208.

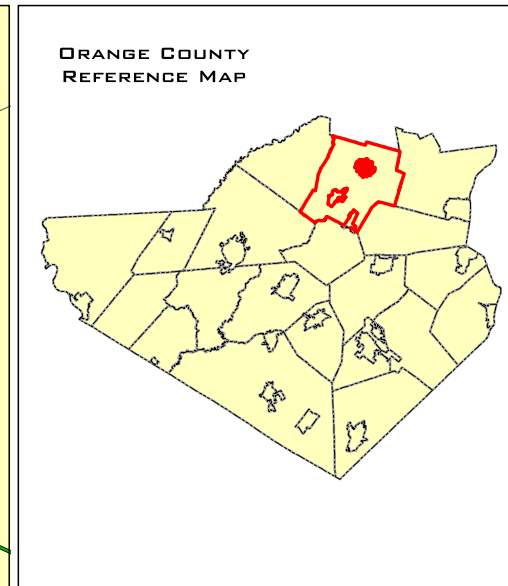
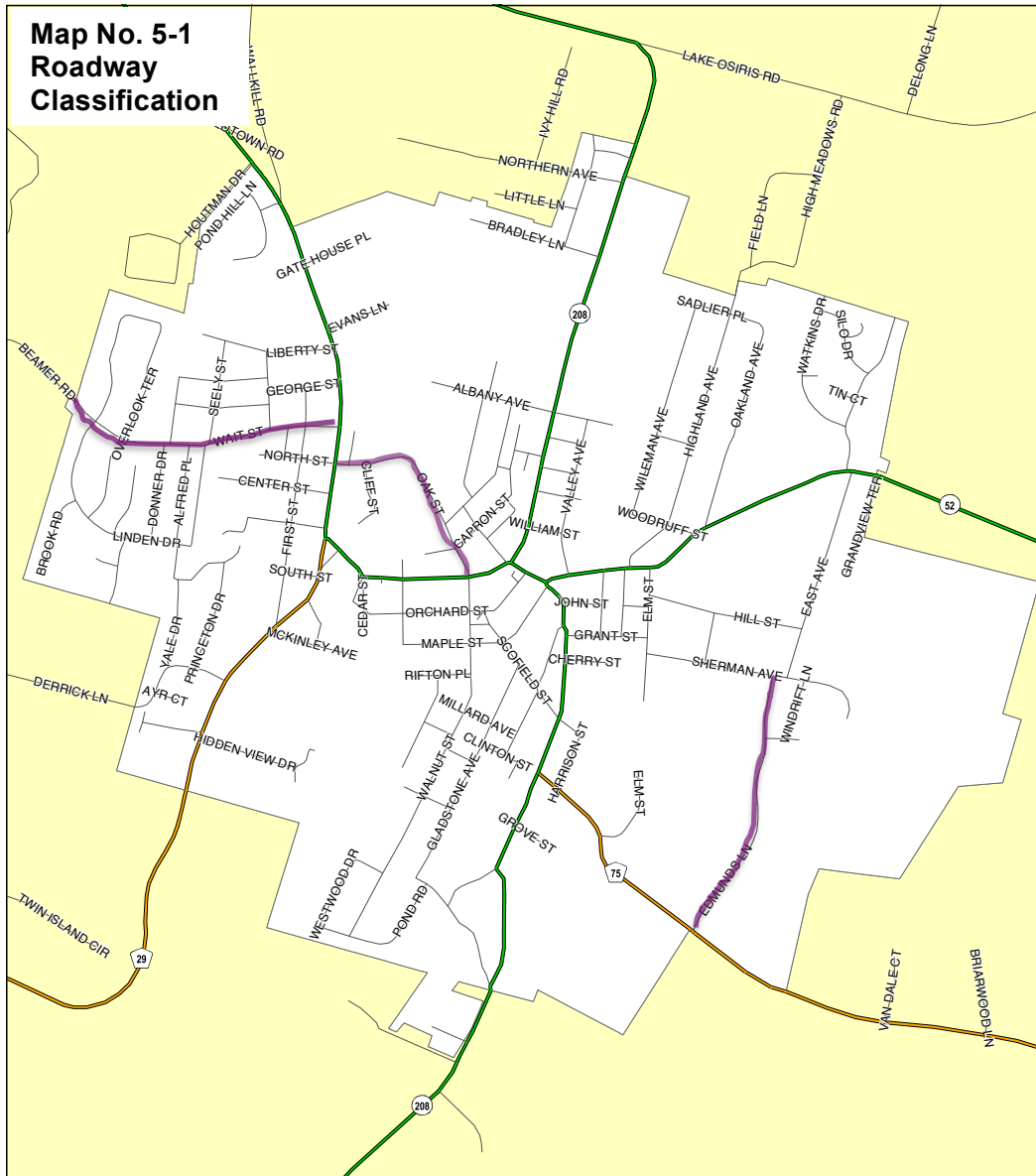
Major Collector: Provide connections between arterials and local roads at relatively higher speeds (e.g. Coldenham Road).

Minor Collector: These roads provide connections between arterials and local roads at comparatively slower speeds and carry moderate volumes of traffic. Edmunds Lane, Oak Street and Wait Street are examples.

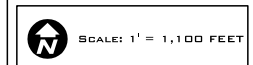
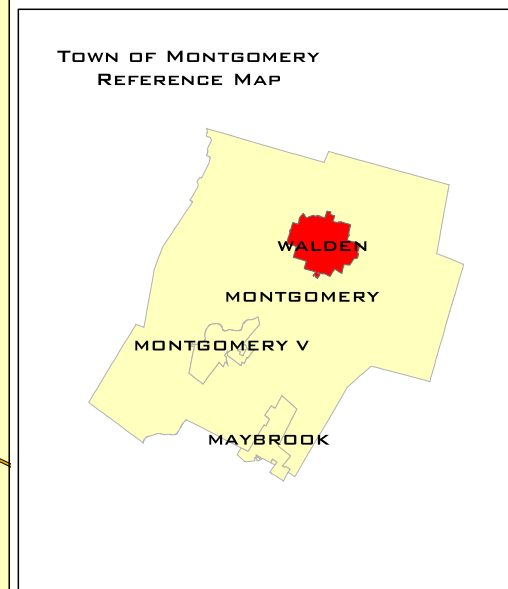
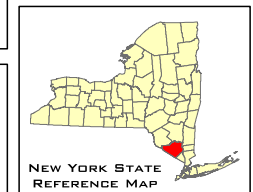
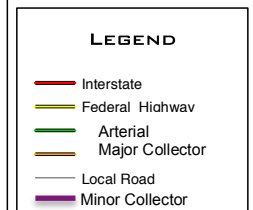
Local: This type of road provides direct access to abutting properties and channels local traffic to collector roads (e.g. residential streets).



Above (Top to bottom): Aerial view of NYS Route 52 and Route 208 intersection; view of Wait Street and an aerial view of Village of Walden's well-defined grid street system.



**VILLAGE OF WALDEN
CONTEXTUAL MAP**



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WATER AUTHORITY**
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Understanding the Village's roadways in the context of the ITE system is helpful when analyzing transportation needs. For the purpose of this Comprehensive Plan, we have analyzed the major roadways from the perspective of the Village's existing land use regulations in order to ascertain whether zoning amendments and/or revisions to subdivision regulations are warranted. The goal is to ensure that specific land uses are directed to roadways that best serve their transportation needs.

5.2 Level of Service

The ITE Highway Capacity Manual provides a description of how well traffic flows along highways and roadways that is referred to as Level-of-Service (LOS). The LOS on roadways is described in accordance with a six-step scale from A-F. The LOS A represents the free flow of traffic and a LOS F represents traffic congestion on an area roadway.

LOS A: Free traffic flow, with low traffic volumes and speeds at the posted speed limit.

LOS B: Is in the zone a stable traffic flow, with operating speeds beginning to be restricted somewhat by traffic conditions, however, drivers still have reasonable freedom to select their speed and lane of operation.

LOS C: Is in the zone a stable traffic flow, but speeds and maneuverability are more closely controlled by higher traffic volumes.

LOS D: Approaches unstable flow, with tolerable operating speeds being maintained though

considerably affected by changes in operating conditions due to traffic volumes.

LOS E: Level of Service E cannot be described by speed alone, but represents operations at even lower speeds than Level D, with volumes at or near the capacity of the highway. Flow of traffic is frequently interrupted with stop & go motion.

LOS F: Describes forced flow operation at low speeds, frequent stop and go motion, with high traffic volumes at capacity of the roadway. The number of travel lanes alone does not dictate traffic flow.

In 2011, a Traffic Impact Analysis was conducted for the Overlook at Kidd Farm Townhouse Development. Data from the study reveals the level-of-service (LOS) at several intersections is generally satisfactory (see Table 5-1). However, two intersections will experience diminished LOS under No-Build conditions due to projected growth in traffic volumes.

In 2009, 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. Aside from paving which occurred last in 2023, no changes have occurred at this intersection since 2009. It is unlikely any changes have occurred to Level of Service at this intersection.

Morning Peak Hours:

6:45 AM – 9:30 AM

Evening Peak Hours:

3:30 PM – 6:15 PM

**“Streets and
their sidewalks
– the main
public places
of a city – are
its most vital
organs.”**

~Jane Jacobs

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 poor level-of-service at this intersection is also influenced by poor roadway geometry. This intersection should also be monitored in the future to determine if signalization would be warranted. In order to reduce truck traffic and the associated congestion and road damage, the Village of Walden designated truck routes in the Village code whereby trucks and tractor trailers in excess of 10,000 pounds are excluded and prohibited from traversing all Village streets except for specifically designated routes including Route 208, Grant Street, Elm Street and certain sections of Oak Street and Woodruff Street.

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.

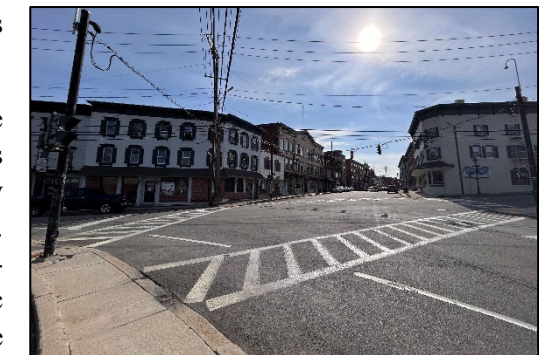
The above referenced traffic study analyzed how this intersection would perform with signalization and it was determined it would operate at a LOS “C” or better with a signal. This Plan recommends ongoing coordination between the Village and NYSDOT to monitor these intersections for measures to improve traffic flow in the future.

5.3 Traffic Impact Analyses

State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process should be utilized to effectively evaluate potential traffic impacts associated with development along with the appropriate mitigation measures. The Planning Board should require traffic impact analyses by an independent engineer for any application involving an activity likely to generate a significant traffic volume.

The Planning Board should approve the scope of the traffic study in advance with the final product incorporated into the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) submission. The Planning Board should also identify key intersections, which are more likely to be adversely affected by a development based upon their local knowledge of the community and understanding of traffic flow. The traffic impact analysis should then analyze the LOS at these key intersections under existing, no-build and build conditions. The guidelines set forth for such studies by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) should be followed in each case.

In addition to assessing existing and future LOS, the traffic impact analyses should also identify factors contributing to diminished LOS such as roadway geometry or the need for signalization. Recommended measures to mitigate potential traffic-related impacts should be provided within the traffic impact analysis. Such measures might include roadway or signalization improvements, which the developer would help to fund.



Above (top to bottom): Views of the Route 52-Route 208 unsignalized intersection and crosswalks at the intersection of Ulster Avenue and Route 52/East Main Street.

5.4 Traffic Calming & Access Management

The Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) defines traffic calming as the combination of mainly physical measures that reduce the negative effects of motor vehicle use and improve the conditions for non-motorized street users. Traffic calming includes the “three E’s” – education, enforcement and engineering.

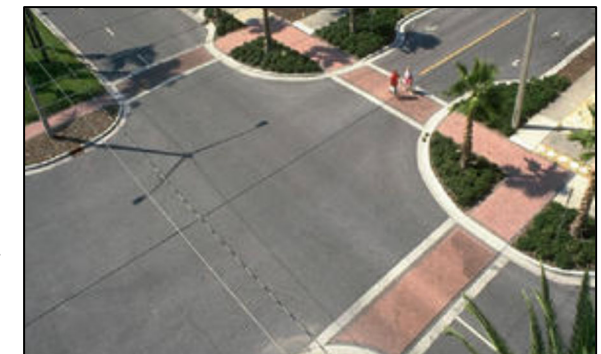
Education involves public outreach programs that are intended to raise public awareness of traffic calming measures being employed within a community and why such measures are needed. Traffic calming policies – such as yielding to pedestrians - are enforced by the Village’s Police Department. Engineering measures include a variety of traffic calming devices that can be built into developments proposals or public improvements. Such measures are used to reduce traffic speed and volume. The engineering aspects of traffic calming are also intended to control driver habits.

Other traffic calming measures include raised crosswalks or textured surfaces that are used to alert drivers when they are approaching a pedestrian crossing. Raised crosswalks are speed humps with flat tops marked for pedestrian crossings. They are designed to slow traffic down as they approach a crosswalk. Textured surfaces are installed flush with the roadway surface and are used to accent the pedestrian crosswalk. These are usually used in conjunction with electronic crossing signals.

Access management is a tool, which is used to improve the flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic within a community. For example, if you provide an opportunity for drivers to travel between adjacent sites you can effectively reduce traffic volume on area roadways and simultaneously reduce the number of vehicle conflicts on roads.

One of the most effective means of affecting access between adjacent sites is through the provision of cross access easements. Cross access easements provide a mechanism to link adjacent parking lots to one another via a shared driveway, which allows traffic to flow between sites without going back out onto the public right-of-way. Other access management techniques include consolidation of existing driveways, prohibition of left turn out of driveways and dedicated turning lanes into sites. The Planning Board should identify opportunities where traffic calming and access management measures could be employed within a proposed commercial or residential development. Such measures will help to ensure that new development does not significantly reduce traffic safety and traffic carrying capacity along the arterial roadways.

This Plan recommends the painted crosswalks in the Downtown be upgraded with textured surface crosswalks to both improve pedestrian safety and to enhance aesthetics. Traffic calming measures should also be included in Municipal Square to improve pedestrian safety.



Above (top to bottom): A mini round about, textured surface crosswalks which alert drivers when they are approaching a pedestrian crossing and view of a midblock median island with textured surface crosswalk.

5.5 Pedestrian Policy

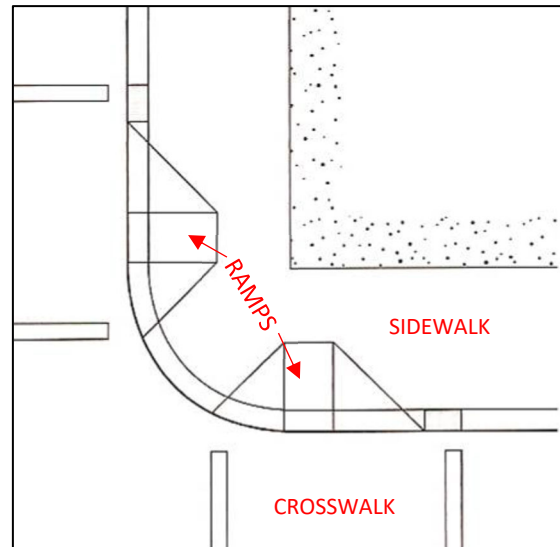
The Village of Walden is a very pedestrian-oriented community. This can be attributed, in part, to its higher density of development in which most neighborhoods are only a short walking distance from the Downtown and/or to local institutions or parks. It can also be attributed to an extensive sidewalk system that provides a comfortable and safe environment for pedestrians to travel. Village residents also enjoy an extensive trail system (including the Walden-Walkill Rail Trail), which provides opportunities for walking, biking, strolling or hiking. The sidewalks and trails provide a safe and comforting environment for the pedestrian.

It is important that pedestrians are able to move safely throughout the Village and one of the best ways to ensure safe movement of pedestrians is through a well-maintained and comprehensive system of sidewalks. Sidewalks share the public right-of-way with the street and the walkability of the street relies on the pedestrian's comfort.

There are a number of measures that can be employed to enhance pedestrian comfort. For example, street trees can be planted in a median between the street and the sidewalk to provide a buffer between the pedestrian and motor vehicles. In more urban spaces, planter boxes can be placed along the edge of the sidewalks to help distinguish the pedestrian and vehicular environments. Each of these measures will increase the pedestrian comfort and sense of security.

It is also important that the Village's sidewalk system be accessible to persons with disabilities. To

this end, curbing at intersections should be ramped to provide access to wheelchairs as is shown in the illustration below.



Most of the sidewalks within the Downtown have ADA compliant ramps and crosswalks. However, there are many areas within the residential neighborhoods where ADA compliant ramps are needed. An inventory should be conducted of those intersections where ADA compliant ramps are needed so they can be upgraded over time.

Wherever feasible, new developments should include new sidewalks. As development occurs, these sidewalks should be integrated into the Village's existing sidewalk system. Doing so will ensure that the Village retains a pedestrian-friendly environment in the future.



Streets and sidewalks that are accommodating to pedestrians enhance the liveliness of the street, encourage people to walk and enhance the sense of community. Sidewalks also provide a space for public gathering and social interaction.

Providing more benches and planters throughout the Downtown can enhance the streetscape. Street furniture such as benches increases pedestrian comfort by providing opportunities for pedestrians to rest and to sit and interact with other people. The Village should also coordinate with NYSDOT to install textured surfaces for its crosswalks on NYS Route 52 and 208. The contrast in texture and color, which are a different color from the road surface will draw attention to the crosswalks and better define the pedestrian realm.

The illustration to the right shows the ideal streetscape where the pedestrian and vehicular environments are well-defined, street trees provide shade and street furniture is provided to give pedestrians a place to rest and congregate. In this illustration, adequate space is reserved within the sidewalk width for the pedestrian as well as persons with disabilities. The use of an awning also helps to enhance pedestrian comfort by providing shade and shelter during inclement weather. As improvements in business areas are made, careful attention should be paid to incorporate these principles into the design of street improvements. Doing so will enhance the pedestrian environment and vitality of the Downtown Business District.

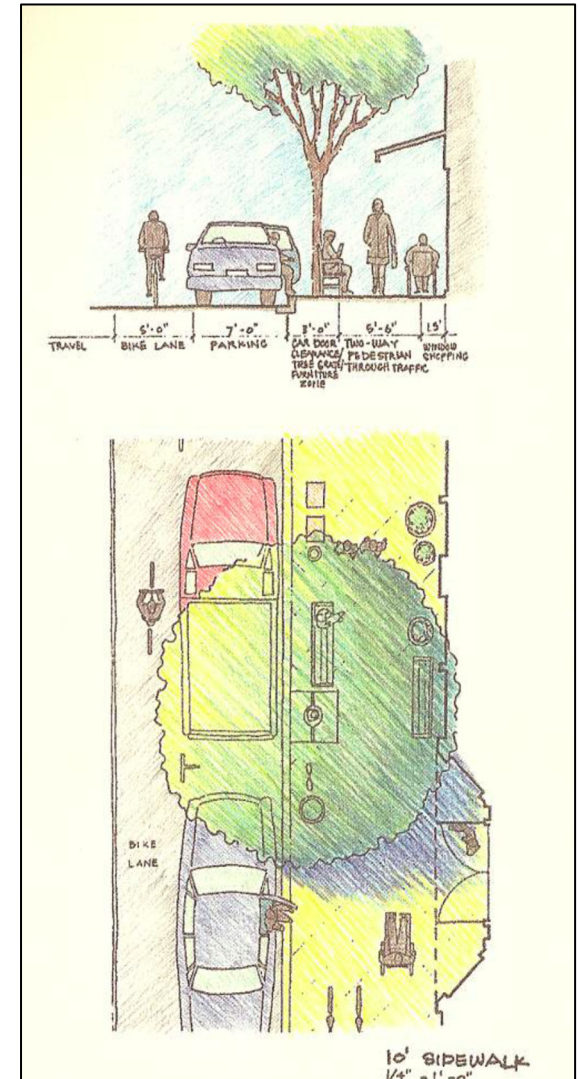
5.6 Bikeway and Trailway Policy

The Village of Walden, Town of Montgomery and Town of Shawangunk collaborated to fund and construct the Walden-Walkill Rail Trail, which opened on May 2, 2009. The rail-trail is widely utilized by residents and visitors since its completion. The Orange County Bikeway Vision adopted in 2023, sets forth a long-term goal of connecting the Walden-Walkill Rail Trail with a new trail from Campbell Hall. This Plan encourages the expansion of bikeways and recreational trails within the community and through cooperation with state and local governments.

The NYSDOT has proposed designated bikeways along Route 52 and Route 208, which would be accommodated by widening the shoulders along these roadways. The provisions of well-defined bikeways within the community will enhance the safety of bicyclist. This Plan supports efforts by the NYSDOT to create bikeways along NYS Route 52 and 208.

There are opportunities within James W. Olley Community Park and Bradley Park to create extensive trail systems. Efforts to expand the trail system within the Village of Walden should be supported. Trails established in the Village could then be linked with trails within neighboring communities in order to create a regional trail network. Such cooperation benefits all communities involved.

Specifically, this Plan supports efforts to act cooperatively with neighboring communities to



Source: *Creating Livable Streets – Metro 2002, Portland Oregon*

continue to improve and expand the Walden-Wallkill Rail Trail with the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail so one day the rail trail connects Walden to the City of Kingston.

5.7 Public Transportation

Presently, public transportation within the Village is very limited. There are Dial-A-Bus and Senior Bus services that are primarily used by senior residents. Short Line (Coach USA) provides local bus service that allows residents to travel to nearby Scotts Corners, various destinations in the City of Middletown, as well as Route 17K/Broadway in the City of Newburgh (see www.ridetransitorange.com for schedules). However, the frequency of service is very limited making it impractical for commuting or shopping needs. The Short Line Company provides a George Washington Bridge Express. The express route provides weekly commuter service to New York City, Paramus and Ridgewood with stops at Scotts Corners and the Villages of Maybrook and Montgomery.

Enhancing the provision of public transit would benefit its residents. As the Village's population grows and its population ages so too will the need for public transit. The expansion of service to Orange County and regional destinations is needed. It is recommended the Village Board coordinate with Orange County Transportation Council (OCTA) and Short Line to identify opportunities to expand public transportation service to serve commuters and senior residents.

A bus shuttle service to nearby train stations, such as Beacon or Campbell Hall, should also be pursued with OCTC and MTA. The Village should also explore grant opportunities to expand these bus services.

5.8 Rail Service

Norfolk Southern presently provides freight rail service to Walden along the former New York Central rail line. The freight line operates from Campbell Hall and terminates in Walden just to the south of NYS Route 52. As was described in previous chapters, Walden has a number of long established and presently operating industrial and manufacturing companies including: Truffa Seed Co., AMPAC and American Lumber. Presently, freight service along this line is provided three days a week: Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The freight rail line to Walden provides a competitive advantage for certain industries that other communities do not have. It is thus important that the Village work with Norfolk Southern to maintain this vital industrial link to ensure the future viability of its few remaining manufacturing industries.

The Orange County Transportation Council and MTA-Metro North funded a Passenger Rail Feasibility Study to assess the feasibility of reestablishing passenger service on the Wallkill Valley Branch Line runs from Campbell Hall to the Village of Walden. If passenger service were to be re-established, significant improvements would be required to bring the tracks and signals up to modern standards. Additionally, a new train



Above: At-grade rail crossings along Grant Street in the Village.

station platform would have to be created as well as an area for off-street parking. This Plan supports efforts to re-establish passenger service.

5.9 Recommendations

The primary goal of the following transportation policies is to facilitate smooth traffic flow, ensure pedestrian safety and ample parking.

5.9.1 Transportation Improvements

Monitor L-O-S at key intersections to determine if signalization or dedicated turn lanes are warranted. The NYS Route 208 and Coldenham Road intersection should be monitored to determine if signalization is warranted. Similarly, the NYS Route 52 and 208 intersections should also be monitored.

Expand off-street parking opportunities. Identify opportunities and financing to expand municipal off-street parking within Downtown.

Develop pedestrian & vehicular improvement plan for Central Business District. These must enhance the pedestrian and vehicular realms.

5.9.2 Traffic Impact Assessment

Require a traffic impact analysis for uses with high-trip generation rates. Where such uses are likely to affect the LOS on a roadway, a traffic impact analysis should be provided.

Use the SEQR process to mitigate potential traffic impacts. When a proposed development poses significant adverse impacts to the transportation

system, require developer to contribute to improvements to mitigate impacts.

5.9.3 Traffic Calming

Create cross access easements. Where feasible, the Village Planning Board should require cross access agreements between adjacent commercial properties in order to reduce the number of curb cuts onto area roadways.

Use textured surfaces and reflective paint for crosswalks to draw motorist's attention to the crosswalk. When used in conjunction with electronic crossing signals, textured surfaces can enhance pedestrian safety as well as the aesthetics of the streetscape.

5.9.4 Pedestrian Policy

Continue to improve sidewalks as funding allows. Conduct an inventory and assess the conditions of all sidewalks in the Village. Rate the condition of sidewalk segments in order to establish a long term sidewalk improvement program based on an established upgrade and replacement schedule.

Wherever feasible, require new residential and commercial developments to construct sidewalks with ADA ramps which match existing sidewalks in the area.

Provide for a sidewalk along South Montgomery Street. These improvements would provide a safe pedestrian environment for local residents and schoolchildren. ~~Safe Routes to Schools~~ NYS Transportation Program grants could be sought for this purpose.

Improve sidewalks and curbs from Highland Avenue to fuel station along NYS Route 52. These improvements would provide a safe pedestrian environment for local residents. Integrate bicycle paths and walkways into a multi-modal trail system. A multi-modal pedestrian-bicycle system will reduce the dependence on driving while encouraging a healthy lifestyle for its residents.

“Great streets do not just happen. Overwhelmingly, the best streets derive from a conscious act of conception and creation of the street as a whole. The hands of decision makers are visible.”

~Allan Jacobs

5.9.5 Bicycle and Trail Policy

Work with Orange County, neighboring towns, and the NYSDOT to develop linear trails that tie into Village of Walden trail system. Expand regional trail system through inter-municipal cooperation with other municipalities.

Coordinate with Region 8 of NYSDOT to advance the plans for the NYS Route 52 and Route 208 bike routes. The Village could show its support for these efforts by reaching out to NYSDOT to help bring these projects to fruition.

Place bicycle racks in key locations within the Downtown and near community and institutional uses. Placement of bicycle racks will help to promote bicycle use.

5.9.6 Public Transportation

Coordinate with the OCTC and Coach USA to provide public transit which meets the needs of residents and businesses. The Village Board needs to play an active role in ensuring regional agencies provide necessary services to meet resident needs.

Coordinate with OCTC and MTA-Metro North to establish bus shuttle service to nearby train stations, such as Beacon or Campbell Hall. This will serve commuter needs short-term while efforts to re-establish rail service is pursued.

5.9.7 Rail Service

Recognize the importance of freight service to the economic viability of manufacturers and support efforts to upgrade service. Support efforts by

Norfolk Southern to secure funds to upgrade the freight rail line.

Coordinate with OCTC, MTA-Metro North and Norfolk Southern Railroad to bring passenger rail service to Walden along the Wallkill Valley Line. Pursue funding for Phase II Passenger Rail Feasibility Study for service along the New York Central R-O-W with Norfolk Southern and Metro North. This could be a catalyst for reinvestment.



Above (top to bottom): View of Walden's "Little Lombard Street," which is the ADA compliant trailhead to the Walden-Walkill Rail Trail at Woodruff Street; view of family enjoying a stroll along the rail trail; view of trailhead in Walden with benches.

6.0 CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES

Walden's unique sense of place is defined, in large part, by its cultural and historic resources. This Chapter provides a brief description of those resources along with recommendations for enhancing and protecting these resources in the future.

6.1 Cultural Resources

The Josephine-Louise Public Library is an important cultural resource within the Walden community. The library is centrally located and within walking distance of two local schools and most residents. It services the Village of Walden and remainder of the Town of Montgomery outside of the other Villages and a population of over 5,000 students from eight area schools.

The library is open to the public from 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday; from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Friday; and from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM on Saturday. The library is closed on Sundays.

In 1994, the library was restored to its original Georgian style with spacious open area with high palladium windows, a circular balcony and homey fireplace. Three former meeting rooms of the fire department were also incorporated into the library, providing additional space for the library. The total net area of the library is 4,420 square feet.

Presently, the library occupies the first and second floor of the east wing of the Municipal Building and

has its own separate entrance facing Scofield Street. The first floor accommodates new bestsellers, adult and young adult fiction, books-on-tape and videos. A spiral staircase leads to the second floor library.

The balcony displays magazines and newspapers and provides a reading area. The second floor accommodates the Children's, Non-Fiction, Reference sections and the Director's Office. In 1991, the Marie E. Crist Local History Section was established to house local historic materials and rare history books.

The library includes a permanent collection of contemporary and classic books. Its permanent collection is supplemented by the library's participation in the Ramapo-Catskill Library System, which allows residents to borrow books from 47 libraries in Orange, Rockland, Sullivan and Ulster counties. The library also provides public access to computers with internet access along with video and audio books. The library is a free WiFi hotspot, which enables residents to gain internet access on their own devices free of charge.

Throughout the year, the library hosts cultural events including story time for children, afternoon at the movies, continuing education programs, concerts and group book discussions. The Josephine-Louise Public Library is in many ways the cultural center of the Village of Walden.

The Library Board's Long Range Plan as of 2023 includes the following goals, which are



Above: The Josephine-Louise Public Library was originally opened March 1, 1901 and was subsequently incorporated in 1910. The library has been housed at its present location since 1916.

supported by reference in this Comprehensive Plan:

- Evaluate the physical [library building] structure and explore opportunities to make improvements, including HVAC and the use of green technology, and work with the Village to make said improvements.
- Facilitate the migration of new automated circulation systems and online public access catalogs;
- Maintain a website to provide public access to the catalog, databases, public announcements and ready-reference information;
- Maintain and improve the library's internet and computer workstations
- Incorporate new technology and social media to the library services
- Offer training to the public in how best to utilize technology
- Maintain an up-to-date collection of materials in multiple formats to inform, entertain and enlighten;
- Replace outdated materials;
- Continue to promote library resources and services in the community through the publication and distribution of library informational brochures, printed materials and social media, public informational bulletin board.
- Continue to provide community meeting space and tutoring space, enrich children's reading programs, and offer cultural programming.

There are a variety of other cultural resources within Walden. The New York School of Music is a full-service music school with classrooms for private lessons along with studio rehearsal rooms. Established in 1988, the Hudson Valley Conservatory of Fine Arts is an arts education group where children and adults can receive professional training in theatre arts, voice, music and dance.

The Jacob T. Walden House, built in the 1700's and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is the home of the Historical Society of Walden and the Wallkill Valley. The Historical Society hosts dinners, educational classes and tours, and also owns and maintains the Shafer House Museum on Wait Street.

In addition to these cultural institutions, the Village of Walden and the Walden Community Council routinely host a variety of community events, which enhance the quality of life for local residents, while also drawing visitors to the community. Some examples include the concerts in the park, Walden Harvest Fest, Halloween festivities, Christmas Celebration and many other events held throughout the calendar year.

The Walden Board of Trustees recognizes the importance that cultural establishments can have on the community's social and economic vitality. To this end, the Village of Walden has proactively embarked on developing cultural as well as economic opportunities to transform and make Walden an entertainment venue.



Above (top to bottom): View of the New York School of Music, on Orchard Street in the heart of Downtown; contributed photo from the Hudson Valley Conservatory of Fine Arts showing dance school; and the Walden House. Each of these cultural institutions adds to the cultural and social vitality of the Walden community.

There is a conceptual plan for the proposed placement of a 750-seat amphitheater at Bradley Park (see also Section 7.1.2 and Appendix A). The proposed amphitheater is intended to create a multi-purpose (music and performance arts) venue, which could draw a regional audience. This Plan strongly supports efforts to expand cultural and entertainment venues in Walden in order to enhance the social and economic vitality of the community. The Village Board should work with individuals and agencies to identify appropriate locations for cultural and performing arts. The Village Board should continue to support events that draw a regional audience, such as Walden Harvest Fest, and explore the creation of other arts and entertainment venues.

6.2 Historic Resources

The Village of Walden has a variety of 19th and 20th century architectural styles, which help to define its unique sense of place. There is a renewed interest and commitment to historic preservation within the community as its civic leaders and residents have come to realize the social and economic value of preservation efforts. The structures and public spaces that define Walden today reflect the values of its past. The preservation of these historic resources will help to shape the community's values in the future.

The interest in preserving historic structures reflects the value that Walden has a unique sense of place that is worthy of preserving. This Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance historic preservation plays in civic pride and in stimulating the local economy and encourages efforts to list **Village of Walden Comprehensive Plan**

individual properties and create historic districts, where feasible to do so.

The National Register of Historic Places is the United States government's official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects worthy of preservation. Today, six historic buildings within the Village are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Many, however, are not. The Village is also fortunate to have been granted several historic markers through the William G. Pomeroy Foundation which identify historic people, places and events. Markers are currently provided at the original locations of the NY Knife Co. (Orchard Street), Wooster & Stoddard Factory (Elm Street), the Walden Knife Co. (Oak Street), Schrade Cutlery (E. Main Street), Rider Engine Co. (later becoming Rider-Ericsson located on Grant Street), First Reformed, or Hill Church on Church Street, the 1915 Fire House which is currently used as Village Hall, and the Walden Methodist Church for its hosting of the first meeting of the Walden Woman's Club in 1909. There are no National or State Register Historic Districts in Walden. However, there are at least ten individual buildings and areas in the Village, which are eligible for National Register listing.

A Walden Historic Survey and Report (1982) recommended three historic districts as follows: 1) Church Street, 2) Ulster Avenue and 3) West Main Street. A subsequent Historic Survey, by Larsen & Fisher



Above (top to bottom): The First Reformed Church (also known as Hill Church) built in 1838; Second empire style residence on Church Street; brick residence with gabled roof, decorative dentil strip and front porch.

Associates, was conducted in 2006, which also supported the creation of these historic districts.

The Church Street Historic District would be centered on the First Reformed Church circa 1830. The reports noted “the quality of the homes and the early date of development give this district both architectural and settlement significance for the Village.” Architectural styles in this vicinity include: Second Empire and Greek Revival architecture. These structures remain largely intact and are without question worthy of preservation.

The proposed West Main Street District includes Italianate, Victorian and Queen Ann styling of architecture. The recommended Ulster Avenue district is comprised of architectural styles reflecting the early years of the industrial revolution, including Greek Revival, Italianate detail, Victorian, Federal, Dutch Colonial, Colonial, Eastlake, and Eastern Stick.

The 19th Century Rider-Ericsson Company Building and the Wooster Manufacturing Company Buildings near Railroad Avenue should also be considered for historic building designation. Each of these buildings are significant to the history of Walden and would be eligible for individual listing on the State or National Register of Historic buildings.

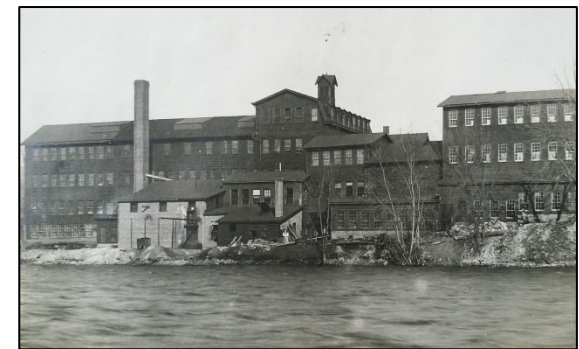
The Village of Walden Board of Trustees adopted a set of Design Guidelines for the Downtown, which provides standards to following in the renovation of historic building facades within the business district along with guidelines for the design and placement of new buildings. The Village

has also adopted Design Guidelines entitled “A New Traditional Neighborhood at Railroad Place,” which also provides general criteria to follow in the renovation of historic building in the vicinity of Railroad Avenue along with standards for the design and placement of new buildings.

Presently, the Village does not have land use regulations that address exterior alterations to historic structures outside of Downtown or the Mixed Use Zoning District surrounding Railroad Avenue. Although the Village of Walden has several residential neighborhoods, which are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, there is nothing in the way of standards to guide exterior alterations to historic residential properties. If the Village is to retain its unique sense of place in the future, some consideration of protecting the integrity of its historic properties through guidelines or historic district designation should be considered.

This Plan recommends the Village Board initially develop a set of voluntary Historic Preservation Guidelines to guide the homeowner decisions with respect to exterior alteration to their homes and to help building owners better understand historic preservation techniques.

The guidelines would outline the principles of design and preservation that homeowners and business owners could use when they are evaluating proposed changes to historic buildings. The guidelines would describe the types of renovations which are appropriate and specify the appropriate types of building

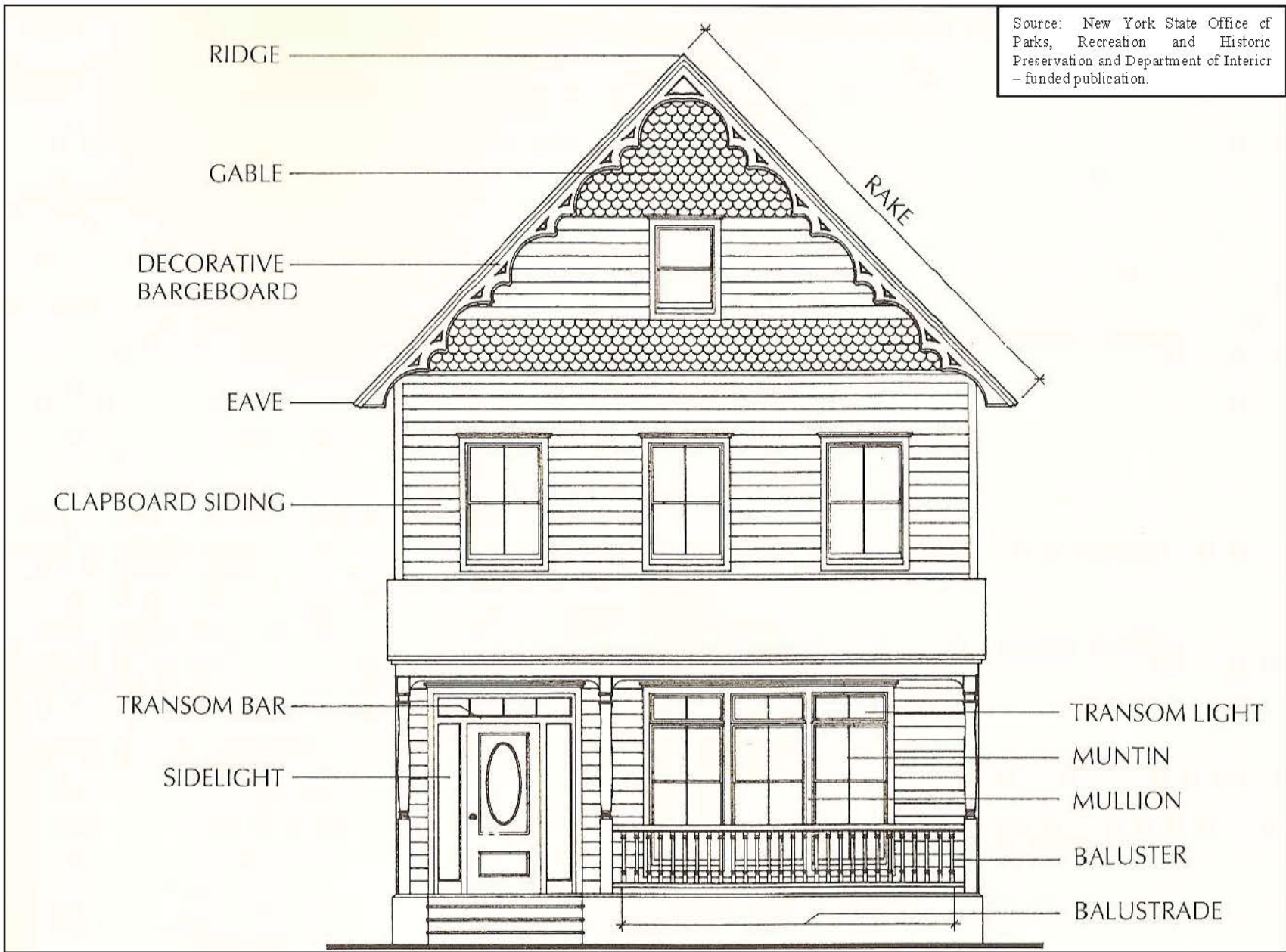


Above (top to bottom): The Rider- Ericsson Company (aka Package Lighting Building) circa late 1800's; the original Walden Knife Co. factory on Oak Street, and Wooster Manufacturing Company (aka Nelco Building) circa 1876.

materials to be used in building renovations. It would also describe the architectural elements to be preserved (see illustration on Page 47).

Guidelines will help to take the ambiguity out of the decision-making and ensure consistent quality of historic property renovations within the Village of Walden. Over time, these efforts will help to preserve the integrity of the historic buildings and enhance property values as buildings are renovated and the historic integrity of neighborhoods and business areas are enhanced. The creation of a set of Historic Preservation Guidelines is but one measure the Village Board can employ to protect the integrity of historic houses and commercial buildings within the community.

As restoration efforts within the Village of Walden take hold, the Village Board should consider the creation of a separate Architectural and Historic Review Board (AHRB) that would be charged with the review of proposed exterior renovations of structures within designated historic districts. One advantage of having an AHRB is that its sole purpose would be to review proposed renovations and/or new construction within historic districts.



The creation of an Architectural Historic Review Board (AHRB) would require the adoption of a Local Law by the Village Board. An AHRB would help to ensure the design of new buildings complemented the historic character of the Village rather than detract from it. Whether or not an AHRB is established, it is recommended that the scope of design review be expanded to include the review of exterior renovations or new construction in all business districts.

Long-term, the Village Board could work with property owners to seek the creation of a National Register-designated Historic District. The National Register listing symbolizes the importance of these areas and property owners in the districts are eligible for a 20% investment tax credit for the “certified rehabilitation of income producing certified historic structures.”

6.2.1 General Historic Preservation Guidelines

In general, the original architectural elements of a building (including type of materials used) are what give the building its historic significance. The following guidelines should be followed:

Respect Original Architecture of the Building.

- Determine which elements are essential to its character and preserve these; and
- Avoid masking over original materials.

Avoid removing or altering any historic material or significant architectural features or adding materials, elements or details that were not part of the original building.

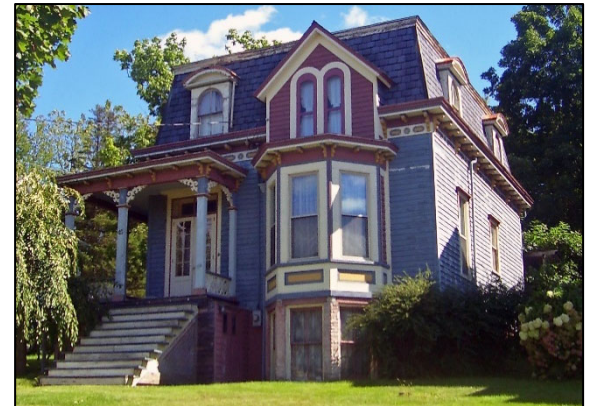
- Rehabilitation work should preserve and retain original wall and siding materials; and
- Details such as decorative millwork or shingles should not be added to buildings if they were not an original feature of that structure.

Maintain existing architectural elements of the historic building.

- The best preservation technique is to maintain historic features from the outset so that intervention is not required. Use treatments such as caulking, limited paint removal and reapplication of paint and rust removal;
- Repair only those architectural features that are deteriorated;
- Only replace those features that are beyond repair or missing; and
- Patch, piece-in, splice, consolidate or otherwise upgrade the existing material, using National Trust Preservation Standards.

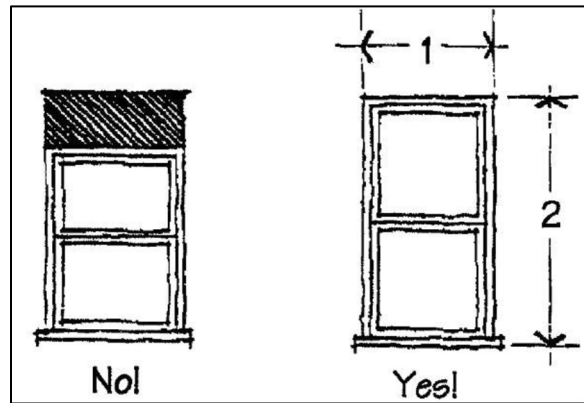
The original window openings, muntin and mullions should be preserved where feasible.

- Do not block down the original window openings to accommodate a stock window that does not fit the building;
- Where windows have previously been blocked down, allow replacement windows that will fit the original window opening.



Above (top to bottom): Walden House, circa late 1700's; Octagon House between Maple and Orchard Street; and nicely preserved workers row houses along Center Street. The Walden House is on the National Register of Historic buildings and the other buildings are eligible for listing on the National Register.

- Retain original window style when replacement is necessary.



Original building materials should be preserved and should not be covered with synthetic materials.

- Avoid removing siding that is good condition or that can be repaired;
- If portions of the wood siding must be replaced, be sure to match style and lap dimensions of the original;
- New building permit applications to install vinyl or aluminum siding should be prohibited; and
- Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced, whenever possible.

6.2.2 Preservation Policies Adjacent Areas

Presently, the Planning Board is only authorized to review exterior alterations to historic properties that lie within the Downtown or the Mixed Use MX-District. It does not have the authority to review extensive changes in the exterior design or

appearance of any existing structure or new construction in or adjacent to these designated districts.

The Planning Board should also be authorized to consider the appropriateness of exterior alterations or new construction in all zoning districts with particular attention to those properties which are within line-of-sight of Downtown, MX-District and/or individually listed National Register properties to prevent inappropriate changes, which would diminish the integrity of any property listed on the State or National Register of historic places.

The Village Board should also encourage property owners to voluntarily employ generally accepted historic preservation techniques when performing exterior renovations on their properties.

Information can be provided on the Village's website and links to other helpful resources and qualified contractors to help residents better understand measures they can voluntarily employ to retain the historic character of their homes. The Village Board of Trustees should also explore opportunities to secure grants to encourage property owners to do renovations in a manner that will protect the integrity of their homes. It should also raise awareness of the Historic Tax Credit program.



6.2.3 Other Preservation Policies

The Village can strengthen its preservation goals by becoming a state-designated Certified Local Government (CLG). The CLG program supports and strengthens local preservation activities by encouraging communities to develop an action plan in order to achieve their preservation goals. In New York State, the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation administers the CLG program.

The Village can be a CLG, once the SHPO determines that it meets state and federal standards, which include having enacted appropriate preservation legislation and appointed a qualified preservation review commission. Approvals are forwarded to the National Park Service for certification. All certified CLGs are eligible to receive a variety of services from the SHPO, including:

- Grant money designated exclusively for CLG projects. SHPO makes grant awards available through the CLG program;
- Membership in a national CLG network;
- Technical preservation assistance and legal advice;
- Direct involvement in SHPO programs, such as identifying properties that may be eligible for listing in the State and National Registers of Historic Places;
- Training opportunities that will enable communities to protect their historic resources and integrate them into short and long-term planning initiatives; and

- Ongoing support from the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

The CLG program could further the Village's preservation efforts by bringing needed dollars and technical expertise. It is recommended that the Village give further consideration to pursuing Certified Local Government designation.

The Village has a number of significant historic resources and has taken important steps to preserve these resources. It is recommended that the Village strengthen these efforts by implementing the policies, which are outlined above. Doing so will help to protect the Village's historic resources for future generations and also enhance the integrity of its existing historic properties.



Above (top to bottom): View of homes which appear to be eligible to be listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places and could also be part of a designated district with neighboring properties.

6.3 Summary of Recommendations

Continue to support the Josephine-Louise Public Library and keep this cultural institution in its present location in the heart of the Downtown. The library is an important cultural institution and anchor for the Downtown Business District.

Work with local cultural institutions to help them grow within the community. Support institutions as they seek foundation support and work with local chambers and business organizations to promote these institutions to residents.

Expand cultural and entertainment venues in Walden in order to enhance the social and economic vitality of the community. The Village Board should work with individuals and agencies to identify appropriate locations for cultural and arts venues.

Continue to support events that draw a regional audience such as Walden Harvest Fest, Halloween Christmas Celebration and Winter Carnival. The Village Board should continue to work with local organizations to support such events.

The Village Board of Trustees and Recreation and Parks Department should coordinate with State agencies and local not-for-profit entities to secure funding for the construction and operation of new arts and entertainment venues.

Develop a set of voluntary Historic Preservation Guidelines for local residents.

These would guide homeowner decisions with respect to exterior alteration to their homes and help them better understand historic preservation

techniques. Restoration techniques, appropriate window treatments and a list of pre-certified contractors and vendors that are trained in historic preservation work could also be provided.

Pursue National Register Historic District Designation of Districts Identified in 1982 and 2006 Historic Surveys. Reach out to gain building-owner support for such efforts.

Grant the Planning Board with the authority to consider the appropriateness of exterior alterations or new construction on properties within line-of-sight of the individually listed National Register properties.

Support grant applications for funding through the NYS Office of Parks Recreation & Historic Preservation. Provide support letters to landowners who are seeking State or federal grants for historic preservation purposes.

Support the individual listing of properties on the National Register of Historic Places. Provide letters of support to homeowners who are seeking State or National Register listing of the properties.



Above (top to bottom): View of Downtown mixed use buildings on Main Street; view of recently renovated Millspaugh Furniture on Main Street with new upper cornice and large display windows; and view of renovations which respect the character of the existing structure.

6.4 Funding Sources

There are a variety of funding sources that are available to help fund these efforts. A summary of some of the more likely sources of funding is provided below.

New York State Council of the Arts (NYSCA)

NYSCA makes over 2500 grants each year to arts organizations in every arts discipline throughout the state. NYSCA's goal is to bring high-quality artistic programs to the citizens by supporting the activities of nonprofit arts and cultural organizations.

www.nysca.org

Federal Investment Tax Credit Program for Income Producing Properties

Owners of income producing real properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places may be eligible for a 20% federal income tax credit for the substantial rehabilitation of historic properties. The final dollar amount is based on the cost of the rehabilitation; in effect, 20% of the rehab costs will be borne by the federal government. The work performed (both interior and exterior) must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and be approved by the NPS.

<http://nysparks.state.ny.us/shpo/tax-credit-programs.gov>

NYS Historic Homeownership Rehabilitation Tax Credit

Rehabilitation work on historic residential structures may qualify for a tax incentive. The credit will cover 20% of qualified rehabilitation costs of structures, up to a credit value of \$25,000. Houses must be an owner-occupied residential

structure and be individually listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places, or a contributing building in a historic district that is listed on the state or National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the house needs to be located in a "distressed" census tract, defined as "targeted areas" under Section 143 (J) of the Internal Revenue Code. The project must spend at least 5% of the total on the exterior work and be approved by OPRHP prior to start of construction.

7.0 OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

The Village of Walden is unique in its very distinct edge between the “village” and “town.” This distinctive edge is defined, in part, by the dense development pattern within the Village, which stands in contrast to the rural development on its edge. Walden’s parks, public lands, institutions and open space, which is situated on the edge of the community, also help to define this distinctive edge. As you approach Walden, there’s a clear sense of arrival. This distinctive edge helps to provide an exceptional sense of place and is worthy of preserving. A primary goal of this Plan is to maintain the distinct edge of the Village of Walden.

Another goal of this Plan is to encourage the preservation, protection and enhancement of Walden’s open space, parks, and recreational facilities. Numerous studies have shown the presence of abundant, and publicly accessible open space and parklands increases community property values while contributing to economic growth by attracting new residents.

The Village of Walden manages seven public parks and offers a variety of recreation programs. In total, nearly 145 acres of land is designated as public parkland. This represents 11.25% of the Village land area of two square miles. A list of the Village’s parks follows along with the amount of parkland in each.

Walden is unique in that many of its public parks are conveniently linked to its densely developed residential areas by an extensive sidewalk system.

Table 7-1: Walden’s Public Parks	
Park	Acres
Mary Jean “Midge” Norman Park	0.23
Bradley Park	34.20
James W. Olley Community Park	98.90
Marcus Millspaugh Riverfront Park and Boat Launch	1.20
Martin Besdesky Playground	0.44
Veteran’s Memorial Park	0.66
Wooster Memorial Grove Park	9.40
McKinley Monument	0.02
Fireman’s Triangle	0.04
TOTAL	145.09

The addition of the Walden-Wallkill Rail Trail and other walking trails have further improved the linkages to the existing park system, while increasing the variety of outdoor recreational opportunities available to residents and visitors.

There are several types of open space and recreational resources, which need to be protected to preserve Walden’s sense of place. These include the preservation of natural feature open space such as riparian zones along stream corridors, wetlands and wildlife habitat (see Chapter 4.0). These also include the protection and expansion of Walden’s parks and trail system. The following is a brief description of Walden’s parks along with policies to preserve open space and expand recreational opportunities.



Above (top to bottom): Handicap accessible entrance to Walden-Wallkill Rail Trail leading up to Woodruff Street; Children’s Playground in Wooster Grove Park; and view of baseball field at Bradley Park.



7.1 Walden's Park System

The Village of Walden Recreation and Parks Department provides parks, facilities, and recreational programs to meet the needs of the Village residents. The Department operates and maintains seven (7) public parks, which offer a wide range of passive and active recreational opportunities for local residents (see Map 7-1).

The Village Board, in conjunction with the Department, is presently planning improvements to its park system. What follows is a brief description of each park, along with a discussion of proposed improvements.

7.1.1 Mary Jean "Midge" Norman Park

Midge Park, located on Alfred Place, is comprised of 0.23 acres of land. Though small, this park is important to the community in that it is the only active recreation park situated on the west side of the Wallkill River. The park contains a children's playground and a half basketball court. Proposed improvements call for the construction of full outdoor basketball court at this park.

7.1.2 Bradley Park

Bradley Park consists of 34.2 acres and is situated in the northern portion of the Village. Bradley Park contains four baseball/softball fields, two tennis courts, a scout cabin, pickleball court, a children's playground, skate park and a pavilion. Public soccer, tennis and flag football programs are offered at this park as well as a private lacrosse league.

The Walden Recreation and Parks Department has developed plans for the enhancement of the recreational facilities and other public amenities at

Bradley Park. Possible future improvements include creation of new outdoor community theater with seating for up to 750 persons; along with a series of scenic walkways, which will provide views and access to the Wallkill River. The proposed improvements are intended to transform this park into a multi-purpose recreational and cultural destination with an integrated system of natural, passive, active and linear recreation areas; along with cultural amenities, to serve a broader range of community interest and needs. Public access to the Wallkill River for fishing, boating and kayaking should also be considered at this park.

7.1.3 James W. Olley Community Park

James Olley Community Park is Walden's largest public park with a land area of 98.90 acres. Presently, the park contains a lakeside beach for boating with seasonal beach volleyball, fishing and swimming, paddle boats, a waterslide, newly constructed community center, children's playground, sledding hill, nature trails, nine-hole disk golf course, three pavilions, picnic tables and grills. The Village's Summer Recreation Program and Summer Playground Program, which run from July through August, meet here. There is room to accommodate more facilities in this park.

The Walden Recreation and Parks Department has a Master Plan for the enhancement of the recreational facilities at James Olley Community Park.

Future plans call for construction of exercise stations along the trail and expanded off-street parking.



Above (top to bottom): View of Midge Norman Park from Harvard Drive showing children's playground and basketball court; view of one of Bradley Park baseball fields; and view of Most Precious Blood Regional Catholic Elementary School, which abuts Bradley Park along Bradley Lane.

7.1.4 Marcus “Mickey” Millspaugh Riverfront Park and Boat Launch

The Village of Walden owns a 1.2-acre parcel of land on the eastern shore of the Wallkill River with access from Maple Street. There is a parking lot and a boat ramp at this location, which allows residents to obtain access to the Wallkill River, where they can boat, canoe, fish or kayak. The Village is currently improving this area with a sitting area, small, non-motorized boat launch/take-in and new signage with grant money obtained from the State.

7.1.5 Martin Besdesky Playground

Martin Besdesky Park consists of 0.44 acres and contains an existing children’s playground. The park is situated in the southernmost portion of Walden off of Pond Road. Only playground improvements are planned for this park.

7.1.6 Veterans Memorial Park

This 0.70-acre pocket park is situated on the western bank of the Wallkill River just north of Cliff Street. The park contains a flagpole, benches, commemorative brick pavers provided by local residents and a scenic overlook with views of the Wallkill River upper and lower falls. This is a passive public park with little area to add recreational amenities.

7.1.7 Wooster Memorial Grove Park

This 9.4-acre park is in the east central portion of Walden, just south of NYS Route 52. While modest in size, Wooster Grove contains the greatest variety of recreational facilities of any Village park. These include the John H. Howland Youth Center with an interior basketball court, two pickleball courts, two outside basketball courts, playground, picnic tables, two barbeque grills, and Walden-Wallkill Rail Trail Welcome Center.

Many recreational facilities in the park were completed through volunteer efforts of local residents and organizations. These include the Walden Rotary’s Bandstand and the Community Playground, which was completed by the Local Development Corporation and local volunteers.

Programs available at the park include adult gymnasium, after school programs, basketball league, exercise classes, indoor soccer, outdoor summer concerts and a teen center. The recreational programs offered at this park serve an important community need.

Wooster Memorial 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 underwater. The new Youth Center was inundated with floodwaters rising to a level of four feet inside the building.



Above (top to bottom): View of Veteran’s Memorial Park, which is situated on the west bank of the Wallkill River; view of beach and water slide at Olley Park; and view of bandstand at Wooster Memorial Grove Park with youth center and Walden Train Station Building in the background.

Most of the parks in Walden lie outside the 100-year floodplain. However, Wooster Grove Park is situated entirely within the 100-year flood of the Tin Brook and the recent severity in flooding, point to the need to reassess where certain prominent recreational buildings should be situated within the Village's park system.

This Plan supports continued use of the existing recreation buildings and facilities at Wooster Grove Park. However, these facilities should not be replaced at this location should future flooding require their removal. If this occurs, these facilities should be relocated to either James Olley Park or Bradley Park, where they can be safely placed outside of the floodplain.

7.2 Recreational Needs

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) established standards and development guidelines for community parks and recreational needs. These are based upon population size and are used to help communities plan for future needs. Walden meets NRPA standards for many recreational facilities listed in Table 7-2, but not all and there is still a growing need for parks.

Walden meets the minimum NRPA standards for baseball fields and utilizes a multi-purpose grass field at Bradley Park to accommodate additional field sports including flag football and soccer for which the Village offers summer programs.

As this field is located between the baseball diamonds, it can only be used when baseball is not in season. The Village should continue to pursue a more permanent solution for the provision of grass field space.

Table 7-2: Recreational Demand in the Village of Walden			
Facility Type	Standard per 1000 persons	Need (ac)	Provided
Neighborhood Park	1 acre	7	10.07 acres Midge Norman Martin Besdesky Wooster Grove Park
District Park with restrooms, playfields, tot lots, winter activities.	2 acres	14	131.1 acres Bradley Park and Olley Park
Field Games	3 acres	21	34.2
Tennis Courts	½ court	3.5	2
Basketball Courts	½ court	3.5	3.5
Baseball	1 per 5000	1.5	5
Soccer	1 per 10,000	1	1
Swimming Pool	1 per 20,000	<1	0
Trails	1 per region	1	Rail Trail

It is also noted that while the Village doesn't have a swimming pool, it has a beach and swimming area at James W. Olley Park. Based on the standards, the Village has demand for additional hard surface courts, but it is noted that the Village recently installed pickleball courts which have recently become extremely popular. Other needs that have been expressed through the public participation process have been a splash pad, community garden and lighting for baseball and softball fields at Bradley Park. The Village should seek input from the Valley Central School District to assess recreation needs of its students.

The Village addresses regular increases in recreation needs, in part, because of an existing policy requiring developers to contribute a *Payment-in-Lieu-of-Parkland* (PILOP) fee to mitigate impacts associated with an increase in the demand for recreational services.



Above (top to bottom): James W. Olley Park pond; view of Walden Community Playground at Wooster Memorial Grove Park and the Village's new Senior Center. Walden offers recreational opportunities for all ages and for all seasons.

The PILOP fee is based on the number of new residential units within a proposed development and may include reductions where a developer provides certain open space or recreational amenities on-site.

The payment-in-lieu-of-parkland fee is then set aside in a special reserve fund to be used solely for parkland improvements or acquisition of additional parkland. Without the payment-in-lieu-of-parkland fee, it is unlikely the Village of Walden would have been able to provide the recreational facilities needed to serve its growing population. This Plan strongly supports the requirement that developers contribute a payment-in-lieu-of parkland fee to help the community to meet its growing recreational needs and further recommends this fee is reviewed periodically to ensure the fee is consistent with modern parkland needs.

As the few large tracts of land in Walden are developed, the Planning Board should encourage development that affords the opportunity to preserve some open space as part of the overall development process.

In recent years, the Planning Board has approved single-family and multi-family developments that include the provision of conservation lands. Looking ahead, opportunities to provide new open space or to expand existing open spaces should be encouraged through the development review process.

Table 7-3: Recreational Facilities in the Village of Walden	
Park	Facilities
Mary Jean “Midge” Norman Park	Basketball Court (1/2) Children’s Playground
Bradley Park	Baseball/softball fields (5) Multi-sport grass field (1) Tennis Courts (2) Pickleball Court (1) Skate park (1) Children’s Playground Pavilion with (6) Tables
James W. Olley Park	Children’s Playground Pavilions (3) Picnic tables (20) grills (3) Beach with swimming Fishing pond Volleyball Court Nature Trail Community Center 9-hole Disk Golf Course
Marcus “Mickey” Millspaugh Riverfront Park and Boat Launch	Parking Lot and Boat Launch Seating area
Martin Besdesky Playground	Playground
Veteran’s Memorial Park	Flagpole, benches and scenic overlook
Wooster Memorial Grove Park	Recreation Building Basketball Courts (2) Picnic Tables (10) Grills (2) Youth Center w/ Interior Basketball Court Children’s Playground Pickleball Courts (2) Teen Center Walden-Wallkill Rail Trail Welcome Center
Fireman’s Triangle	Fireman’s monument Armed Forces Tribute Memorial Garden Chess tables

7.3 Summary of Recommendations

This Plan recognizes the need to encourage quality development, but also understands that such development must be balanced with protection of open space and the provision of recreational resources to meet the growing needs within the community. The following policies are proposed to protect and enhance the Village's open space and recreational resources.

7.3.1 Open Space Protection

Promote the preservation of open spaces near the municipal boundary to help maintain the distinctive edge of the Village of Walden. Through the development review process, encourage the preservation of open space near the municipal boundary line. With respect to the Village's parks, maintain open space buffers along the municipal boundary, where parks abut the boundary line.

Utilize parks and other open lands, institutions, the Walden-Wallkill Rail Trail and the preservation of natural features to form a well-defined edge around the Village. Several of the Village's parks are situated on the municipal boundary as are institutions such as the Most Precious Blood Regional Catholic Elementary School, which abuts Bradley Park along Bradley Lane. The riparian zones along the Wallkill River and Tin Brook also help to define the unique edge of the Village. Where feasible to do so, these features should be preserved.

Promote development which contributes to the protection or expansion of open space. Through the development review process, the Planning Board should look for opportunities to refine development plans in a manner that provides for some open space.

This can be in the way of common areas, buffer zones or the dedication of land for parkland.

Support efforts to conserve agricultural lands on the edge of the Village through the purchase-of-development- rights (PDR) program. The New York State Agriculture and Markets PDR program has already been successfully utilized to purchase development rights from farmers in the Town of Montgomery. A number of these farms are near the municipal boundary and their preservation helps to maintain the unique edge of the Village of Walden.

7.3.2 Recreational Resources

Continue with timely implementation of the Village of Walden Recreation and Parks Department's recommendations for parkland improvements as reflected in the Master Plan for the Village's Parks. As cited in Section 7.2, the Walden Recreation and Parks Department has prepared Master Plans, which illustrate proposed capital improvements to Walden's public parks. These improvements are in response to growing community needs and should continue to be a priority for systematic implementation by the Village Board. The Master Plans for each park are provided in Appendix A.

Require developers to contribute a payment-in-lieu-of-parkland fee to help the community to meet its growing recreational needs. Walden has existing legislation, which requires a payment-in-lieu-of-parkland fee to help mitigate the potentially significant adverse impacts a development would have on the community's park system. The Planning Board, through the



Above (top to bottom): View of Fireman's Triangle Park, view of northern gateway to the rail-trail in the Hamlet of Wallkill during the grand opening; and view of kayakers on the Wallkill River in Walden.

environmental review process, should document the potential adverse impacts and cite appropriate mitigation measures.

Pursue inter-municipal agreements and/or public/private partnerships to meet growing recreational needs of the community. For example, the Village Board could reach out to the Most Precious Blood Regional Catholic Elementary School to develop a public private partnership to develop athletic fields on the school site, which abuts Bradley Park. The Village Board could also work with the County or its neighboring communities (as it did on the Walden-Wallkill Rail Trail project) to further develop a regional trail system. Expand waterfront access to the Wallkill River in multiple locations to provide additional boating, fishing and hiking opportunities.

Develop a system of active and passive recreational areas and facilities, which are diverse and well-utilized due to their appropriate location and design. Build upon the existing park system and systematically upgrade the facilities in these parks to meet community needs.

Provide linkages between existing open spaces and recreational areas. For example, utilize bikeways trails and the protection of natural resources to tie together a system of open space.

Assess the feasibility of expanding recreational opportunities on other village-owned properties. The Village owns land on the west side of the Wallkill River at the end of McKinley Avenue. This property should be considered as a future access point to the Wallkill River. Additionally, the Village of Walden

owns a large tract of land north of Valley Avenue, which contains a sewer pump station. This site is adjacent to the Walden-Wallkill Rail Trail and may lend itself to trails and other passive recreation uses.

Ensure new recreational buildings are situated outside of floodplain. Relocate existing facilities to higher ground when they are replaced.

“Promote the preservation of open spaces near the municipal boundary to help maintain the distinctive edge of the Village.”

~Comprehensive Plan Committee

8.0 COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Village of Walden provides a variety of community services to meet the needs of its residents including police, fire and ambulance protection and public works. An elected Mayor and Board of Trustees govern the Village of Walden. The Village Manager oversees the Village's day-to-day operations while the Mayor and Board of Trustees, adopt the budget, authorize payments and establish policies.

The term "community facility" includes the physical improvements owned and maintained by a municipality on behalf of its residents. These include buildings, equipment, parkland, roads, water and sewer infrastructure and interest in other lands (such as easements). The purpose of this Chapter is to discuss the adequacy of the existing community services and facilities and to propose policies to ensure the needs of residents are provided for in the future.

8.1 Police Protection

The Walden Police Department provides police protection for the entire Village of Walden. The Police Department headquarters are located in Village Hall, occupying 1,600 sq. ft. on the first floor. The Department's Dispatch and Control Center has local and 911 receiving and sending capabilities along with a 1930's era holding cell to detain prisoners on a short-term basis.

The necessity to provide police protection is a matter of public policy and is also based upon the public's perception of security and their satisfaction with the response time of existing law enforcement entities.

The Village of Walden presently supports a 24/7 Police Department with a full-time Police Chief, three full-time Sergeants, twelve full-time Patrol Officers and capacity for fifteen part-time Officers although currently only 8 are employed. The department maintains six marked patrol vehicles, one unmarked vehicle and two Police bicycles. There has historically been seasonal foot and bicycle-patrols that are on pause until the department can increase staffing. There are three full-time and eight part-time Dispatchers that operate the Police Department's 24 hour a day Dispatch Center. Calls for service and arrests are both down in the Village. Trends in Police Department activity are provided in Table 8-1 below.

Table 8-1 Police Activity		
Year	Calls for Service	Arrests
2014	10,122	431
2015	11,268	394
2016	11,998	274
2017	10,156	284
2018	9,438	312
2019	8,286	187
2020	8,111	97
2021	7,722	109
2022	8,532	138
2023	6,412	119



As the Village's population continues to grow, the demand for Police Department services will likely increase. Identifying the needs of the PD will help to ensure the long-term quality-of-service for all Village residents. The following policies are recommended to ensure sufficient police services in the future.

- Continue to keep records and monitor trends in police activity so that existing resources can be utilized in the most effective manner.
- Ongoing coordination with State and County law enforcement agencies to respond to community needs, while reducing the cost to provide services locally.

8.2 Fire & Ambulance Protection

There are several Fire and Ambulance companies that operate within the Village limits. The Walden Fire District covers the entire Village as well as portions of the Town of Montgomery. The Walden Fire District provides fire protection to the residents out of two stations; the main station is located at 230 Old Orange Avenue and a sub-station located at the intersection of North Montgomery and Wait Streets. Its largest fire company is located on Old Orange Avenue and has five (5) bays.

There are four fire companies within the Village limits as follows: 1) Colonel Bradley Hose Company, 2) Enterprise Steamer Company, 3) Fearless Hook & Ladder Company, and 4) Orange Hose Company. Within the Village of Walden, there are over 200 volunteers among the ranks of its four fire companies.

The Village of Walden has a well-trained volunteer fire department as well as modern fire-fighting

equipment. The District uses three (3) engines, one (1) ladder truck, one (1) tanker, one (1) rescue, one (1) ATV kubota and one (1) brush truck to accomplish fire and rescue applications. The Walden Fire District participates in the County Mutual Aid Plan with seven fire companies in the Town of Montgomery. This arrangement allows the Village fire company to summon the assistance of the other seven fire districts, if it were needed in an emergency. This Comprehensive Plan recommends that calls for the Walden Fire District be monitored to ensure the equipment and facilities meet the needs of the Village's growing population base.

The Village contacts with the Town of Montgomery Ambulance (previously Walden Ambulance Corp.) for emergency medical services and Advanced Life Support (ALS). This is a non-profit organization with both paid staff and volunteers serving a 51 square mile area from a facility located at 22 South Montgomery Street on property that is owned by the American Legion. According to their website, the Corp responds to over 2,000 calls per year.



Above (top to bottom): View of Orange Hose Co. No. 1; view of Colonel Bradley Hose Company No. 2 Building on NYS Route 52 on the west side of the Village; and picture of Engine 238 from the Orange Hose Co. No. 2.

8.3 Schools Facilities

Walden lies within the Valley Central School District, which provides a high-quality education to its students with a 89% graduation rate in 2023- over the New York State average of 86%. The district includes students from the entire Villages of Walden and Montgomery, the majority of the Village of Maybrook, and portions of the Towns of Montgomery, Crawford, Wallkill, Hamptonburgh, Newburgh and New Windsor. Enrollment trends are provided below from the New York State Education Department. In recent years, enrollment in the Valley Central School District has decreased. The previous plan showed the 2016-2017, school enrollment of 4,239 students was down from 5,082 in the 2007-2008 school year and the 2023 figures reflect an additional 4.3% decrease.

Table 8-2: Valley Central School District Enrollment		
	Enrollment 2017	Enrollment 2023
Elementary (4 Schools, Grades K-5)	1,762	1,728
Valley Central Middle School (Grades 6-8)	1,040	982
Valley Central High School (Grades 9-12)	1,437	1,346
TOTAL	4,239	4,056

Source: NYS Education Department

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 Magnet 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).

Table 8-3: Most Precious Blood School	
Grade	Enrollment 2023
Pre-kindergarten	85
Grades K-5	74

Source: NYS Education Department

Without question, the location of these schools in the heart of the Village - where most students can walk to school - enhances the quality of life in the community. The location of elementary schools in the central business district also helps local commerce through the presence of teachers and other school employees who purchase goods and services in the Downtown.

This Comprehensive Plan strongly supports efforts to keep these educational institutions viable and to keep these facilities within the Village of Walden. The Village Board should play an active role in maintaining the viability of these institutions by regularly communicating with school boards to ensure their needs for community services continue to be met.

Also important with schools in the Village's downtown are sidewalks and crosswalks to ensure safe travel for children to and from schools. The Transportation Alternatives Program is a federal and



Above (top to bottom): Walden Elementary School on Orchard Street, Most Precious Blood School and Valley Central High School, in the Town of Montgomery. It is critically important that Walden retain an elementary school within the Village limits.

state effort to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school and to make walking and bicycling to school safe and appealing. In New York, as in other parts of this country, travel to school by walking and bicycling has declined dramatically over the past several decades. The adverse impacts of this trend includes both increased traffic congestion and adverse impacts on children's health. This plan recommends the Village pursue funding for targeted projects that improve pedestrian safety conditions in the vicinity of the Village's schools.

8.4 Public Works

The Village's Public Works Department (DPW) primary responsibility is to deliver facilities and infrastructure required to meet the needs of the community and comply with all applicable engineering standards. The Village's DPW has thirteen (13) full-time employees who collectively maintain the community's water, sewer drainage and street systems.

The Department fulfills its responsibilities through planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of the Village's capital projects and infrastructure, and also through plan review and permit processes to regulate and facilitate private development. The new expanded Department garage is located on Bradley Lane within Bradley Park. The proposed building was constructed in the same location as the existing facility which was demolished. The project constructed a new 13,000 square foot two story pre-engineered metal building to include eight drive-thru bays, a mechanical drive-thru bay, water department drive-thru bay and office

space for the DPW, Water Department and DPW Mechanic. The proposed building also included new water and sewer services, electrical services, mechanical systems and HVAC systems. The construction of the new facility enabled the Village to triple the available building space from 4,000 square feet to 13,000 square feet for the DPW vehicle storage, provide for office space, and associated ancillary facilities for operations and allowed for the sale of two other properties to return then to the tax roll.

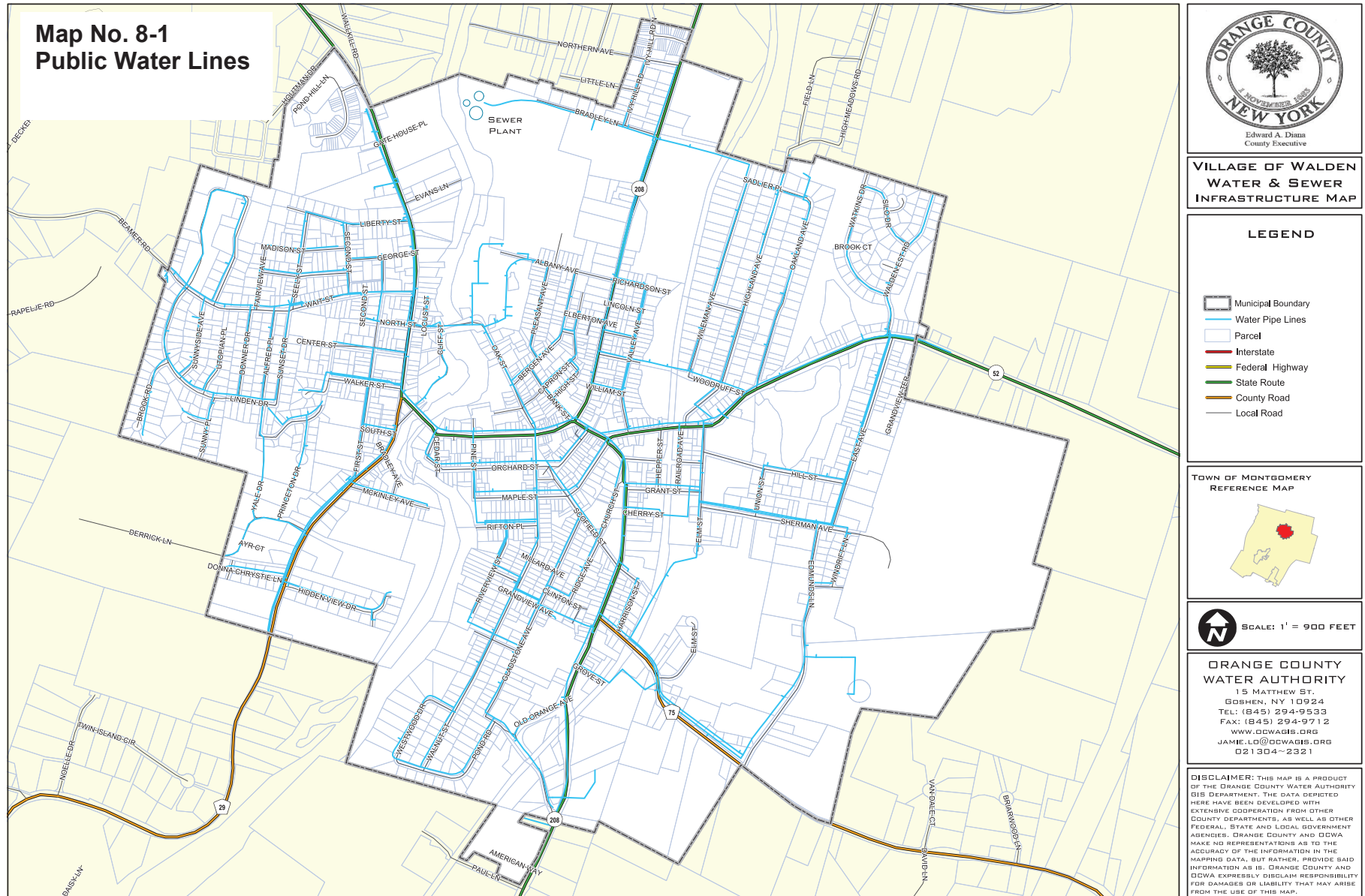
8.4.1 Public Water

Walden presently uses five (5) production wells that draw from an underlying sand and gravel aquifer to serve its potable water needs. Today, the five (5) production wells have a combined permitted capacity of 2.1 million gallons per day. The average daily water demand for the Village in 2023 was 540,000 gpd. The Village maintains twenty four (24) miles of water line, which are part of its water supply system.

The Village Board of Trustees has a well-established policy of supporting efforts to continually restore and upgrade the potable wells and distribution system to meet the growing needs of the community. In recent years, these efforts have included rehabilitation and replacement of well pumps for wells 4, 5 and 8 and continuation of the water meter replacement program. The Village has recently completed the process of inspecting and cleaning all four of the Village's water storage tanks.

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. 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. In 2009, the Village completed a Wellhead Protection Report, which was sent to the Town and in 2022 the Town adopted a law limiting various activities within wellhead protection areas.

It is imperative that the Town continue good stewardship of its ground water resources to prevent contamination of the groundwater aquifer, which feeds Walden's wells. Doing so will enable the Village to provide for its potable water needs today and into the foreseeable future. It will also allow for sustainable residential and nonresidential growth in the Village of Walden.



8.4.2 Public Sewer

The Village of Walden operates a Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) to serve all residential and commercial properties in the Village—approximately 2,400 service connections. Walden has a State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to operate this plant. The DEC has listed the capacity of the plant at 1.2 million gallons per day (mgd). The WWTP daily average use is approximately 900,000 gallons per day which would suggest some excess capacity. However, the excess capacity is being consumed by infiltration & inflow (I & I) of stormwater into the sewer system. There were several recent periods where the average daily flow from the WWTP exceeded 3 million gallons. The Village is actively working to address I & I through a variety of initiatives. By addressing the infiltration & inflow problem and ensuring proper operation & maintenance of the sewer system, the Village will be able to provide maximum service to residents and businesses alike while increasing the cost effectiveness of operating the WWTP.

Over the last ten years, the DPW replaced a major trunk line in the vicinity of the Thruway Shopping Plaza. It was believed that a large part of the infiltration & inflow was occurring in this area where the trunk line crosses the Wallkill River. The DPW also recently replaced sewer lines along NYS Route 208 (Orange Avenue) to address similar issues. Since this time the Village has been televising lines to determine other areas where I&I is negatively impacting the system. As a result of this

investigation, sewer mains were lined along Valley Avenue, Orchard Street, Pine Street, Main Street, and within the Tin Brook trunkline. This Plan recommends on-going actions to address I&I but ultimately the Village's WWTP does require an upgrade to comply with NYSDEC requirements and provide maximum service to residents and businesses alike. Plans for WWTP upgrades are currently in process with the Village Engineer and NYSDEC.

8.4.3 Street System

The DPW maintains approximately twenty four (24) miles of streets along with sidewalks, storm drains, street trees, and municipal signage. Most of the Village's streets provide designated rights-of-way for motorists and pedestrians. This Plan recommends a "Complete Street" policy through which streets are designed and operated to enable safe, attractive and convenient access and mobility by users of all ages and abilities including pedestrians, bicyclist, persons with disabilities, motorists and public transportation riders. Each community's definition of what a Complete Street will look like will differ depending upon a community's needs and wants. However, Complete Street roadway design typically includes sidewalks, lane striping, bicycle lanes, paved shoulders suitable for use by bicyclists, signage, crosswalks, pedestrian control signals, bus pull-outs, curb cuts, raised crosswalks, ramps and traffic calming measures. New York State adopted a policy of Complete Streets with the stated purpose of contributing to a "cleaner, greener transportation system" and



Above (top to bottom): Aerial of Walden's WWTP, Walden's new DPW Garage and workers replacing sidewalks along Wait Street in the Village.

for "more citizens to achieve the health benefits associated with active forms of transportation while traffic congestion and auto related air pollution are reduced." While certain Complete Streets aspects are required to be implemented for all NYSDOT projects and for all projects which receive state or Federal funding, the Village should look to incorporate aspects of Complete Streets wherever possible. Orange County has also adopted a Complete Streets policy and can offer assistance with implementation.

8.5 Summary of Recommendations

This Plan recognizes the need to provide community services to meet the growing needs of residents and businesses in a cost-effective manner. The following policies are proposed to help ensure the Village of Walden can continue to provide these services to its residents in a timely and cost-effective manner.

8.5.1 Police Services

- Continue to keep records and monitor trends in police activity so that existing resources can be utilized in the most effective manner;
- Ongoing coordination with State and County law enforcement agencies to respond to community needs, while reducing the cost to provide services locally.

8.5.2 Fire and Ambulance Services

- Monitor calls for Fire and EMS to ensure the equipment and facilities meet the needs of the growing population base.



8.5.3 School Policies

While the site location and planning of new public school facilities is within the jurisdiction of the Valley Central School District (VCSD), it is important for the Village to consider these plans and operations within its Comprehensive Plan. The following policies are recommended as a basis for discussion with the School Board:

- Encourage use of schools as multi-purpose community facilities with adult education classes encouraged;
- Maintain viability of the Walden Elementary School through on-going modernization of facilities to meet the demands of the VCSD;
- The Village will seek the cooperation of the VCSD to ensure a continued presence of an elementary school within the Village;
- School sites should be located in the heart of the Village or adjacent to the edge in order to provide safe and convenient access to all students;

- All schools should be linked to neighborhoods by sidewalks and the village should seek funding where available to improve these linkages;
- The Village will look for opportunities to jointly develop athletic fields within the Village to serve the needs of the VCSD; and
- Outdoor recreational facilities located at public school sites should be designed in a manner that makes them available for public use after school hours and on weekends.

- Identify and secure State and federal grants to help offset the cost of maintaining the Village's water & sewer infrastructure
- Work with the Town of Montgomery and Orange County Water Authority to identify aquifer protection areas.

Support a "Complete Street" policy through which streets are designed and operated to enable safe attractive and comfortable access and travel to all users including pedestrians, bicyclist, motorists and public transport. As improvements are proposed for streets, consideration should be given to better accommodating pedestrian and bicyclist needs. Streets within new developments should also incorporate Complete Street concepts.

8.5.4 Public Works

The following policies are recommended to help ensure the Village is able to provide needed community services into the future.

- Coordination with the Town of Montgomery to implement and monitor its Wellhead Protection Laws.
- New users shall evaluate their infrastructure demands during the site plan review process. Where system upgrades are needed, developers shall contribute to the upgrade of existing facilities to ensure sufficient service is available.
- A Capital Improvement Plan should be completed and updated every five (5) years to address the needs of the Village's water and sewer infrastructure. The Village's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) should continue to factor in the projected growth within the community;
- Continue to identify and reduce infiltration and inflow issues in the public sewer system.

9.0 LAND USE REGULATIONS

The Village of Walden has a land area of 2.08 square miles, of which 2.01 square miles consist of land and 0.07 square miles of water. The first step in planning for Walden's future involves an analysis of its current land use patterns. The second step of the analysis involves exploring how the community could grow under its present land use regulations (e.g. zoning, subdivision and site plan review regulations) through future development on vacant sites or redevelopment of developed properties within the Village.

9.1 Land Use

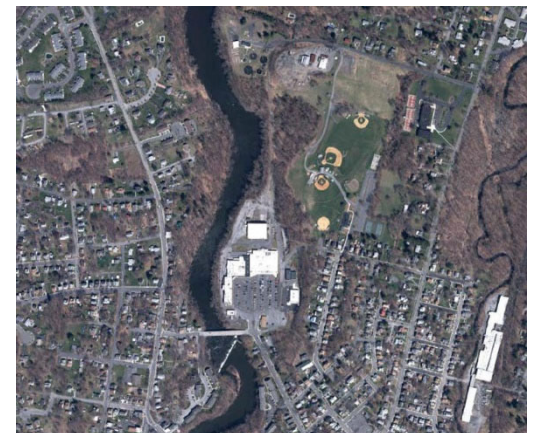
For the purpose of illustrating the Village's existing pattern of development and planning for future development, properties have been broken down by land use category. In Walden, the most predominant land use type is single-family residential. Neighborhoods that lie both east and west of the Wallkill River are primarily comprised of single-family homes on modest lots, which are 1/4 acre or even less in size. The small lot size, coupled with sidewalks, provides for a pedestrian friendly environment and makes it relatively easy to walk from any neighborhood in the Village to Downtown. Existing Land Use, Figure 9-1 has been developed to illustrate the land use patterns within the Village (see page 70).

Residential land use is shown in shades of yellow with single-family in pale yellow and multi-family closer to orange. Commercial land uses are shown in red. Professional offices are shown in pink. Industrial uses are shown in purple. Public

institutions include Village Hall, public schools, fire and police stations, etc. These are shown in dark blue. Private institutions include churches, temples, synagogues, mosques, parochial schools, and other private organizations; these are shown in light blue. Parkland is broken down into two categories: 1) active parkland [i.e. lands with ball fields, playgrounds, etc.], and 2) passive parkland [i.e. undeveloped parkland]. Active parkland is shown in light green, passive parkland in dark green. Public service uses including utilities, electric sub stations, etc., are shown in light grey.

Table 9-1: Village Land Use		
Land Use	Total Acres	Percent of Village
Single Family Residential	477.22	42.5%
Vacant	122.63	10.91%
Industrial	100.89	8.98%
Recreation	147.02	13.08%
Commercial	65.08	5.8%
Multi-family Residential	73.44	6.53%
Public Service	47.93	4.26%
Community Services	44.80	3.99%
Agricultural	36.41	3.24%
Total Acres*	1,124	100

*this total does not include rivers or public roads



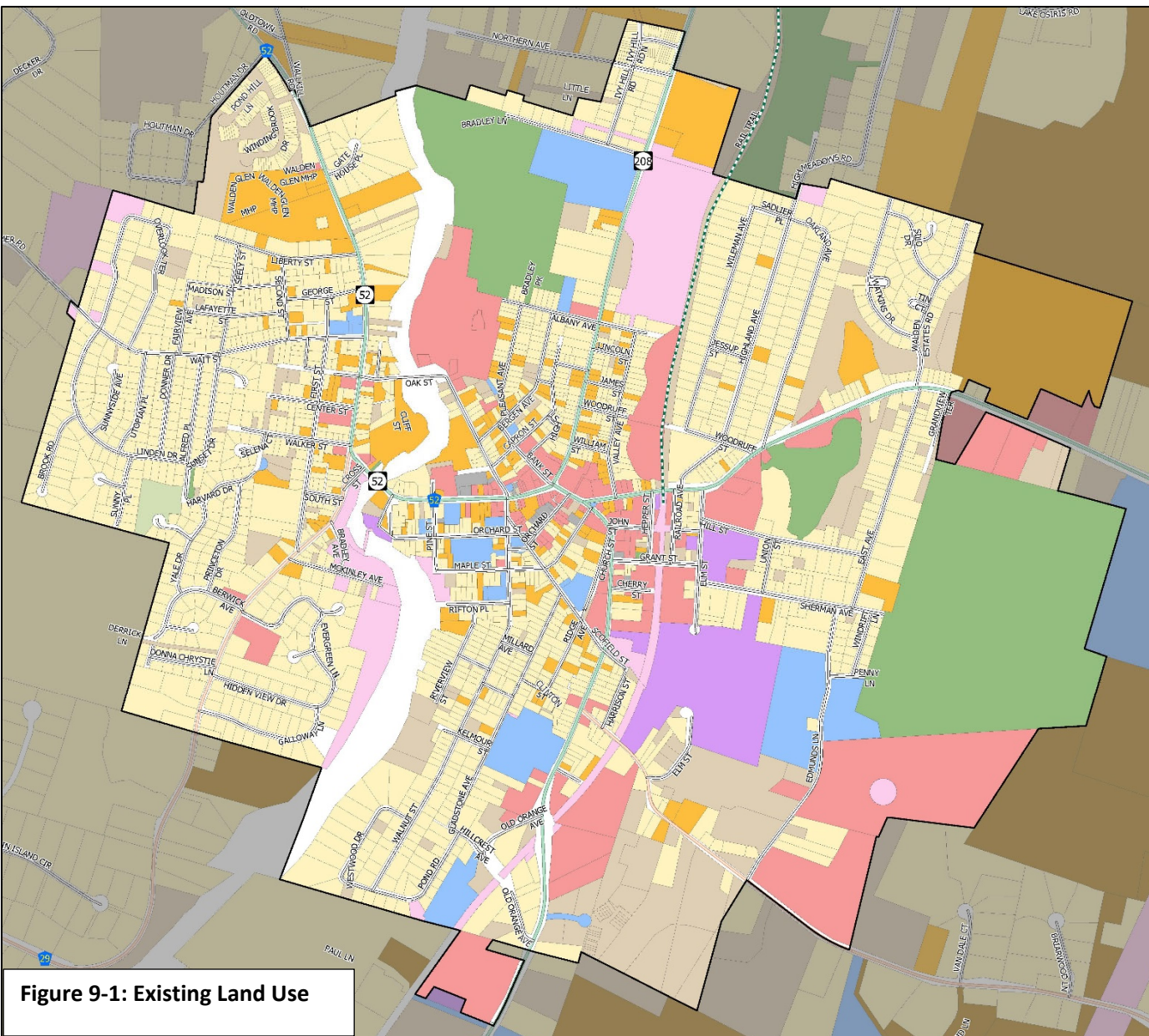


Figure 9-1: Existing Land Use

Village of Walden Existing Land Use

Land Use	Total Acres
Agriculture	36.413076
Commercial	65.077041
Community Services	44.79685
Industrial	100.897612
Office	6.90165
Parks	147.016295
Public Service	47.93083
One-Family Residential	477.219421
Multi-Family Residential	73.444855
Vacant	122.629092

- Agriculture
- Single-family Residential
- Multi-family Residential
- Vacant
- Commercial
- Parking
- Recreation
- Community Services
- Industrial
- Public Services
- Parks, Preserves, and Protected Open Space
- Municipal Boundary
- State Route
- County Route
- Local Road
- Walden-Walkill Rail Trail

DISCLAIMER: This map is a product of the Orange County GIS Division. The data depicted here has been developed with extensive cooperation from other County departments, as well as other Federal, State and Local government agencies. Orange County and OCGIS make no representations as to the accuracy of the information in the mapping data, but rather, provide said information as is. Orange County and OCGIS expressly disclaim responsibility for damages or liability that may arise from the use of this map.



9.2 Zoning

The Village of Walden has fifteen (15) different Zoning Districts. Eight (8) districts are residential; four (4) business districts intended for retail commercial and office; one (1) office light industry district; one (1) industrial district and one (1) Mixed Use Zone that allows retail, office and residential uses (see Map 9-2: Zoning). The following is a brief description of each of the existing zoning districts within the Village.

R-2 Residential 1 & 2 Family

This zoning district encompasses James Olley Park in its entirety and does not exist elsewhere within the Village. It is unlikely that this zoning district will be applied elsewhere in the Village. It is a recommendation of this plan that this zoning district be changed to a designated Public Parks and Recreation Zoning District.

R-3 Residential One-Family

This district is the predominant residential district in the Village. Single-family detached houses on lots with a minimum lot size of 20,000 sq. ft. are permitted without water & sewer. Water & sewer services are available throughout the Village. With water & sewer, the minimum lot size is reduced to 12,000 square feet. Home occupation and home professional offices are allowed in residential districts as accessory uses. Special Exception uses include: senior group residences, places of worship, golf course, nursery school, public buildings, schools and a variety of community facilities.

R-4 One-Family

This district is similar to the R-3 district, allowing by right the same uses but on smaller lot sizes of 8,000 sq. ft. for single-family residences. R-4 zones are located in the north, south, east and western corners of the Village.

R-5 One-Family

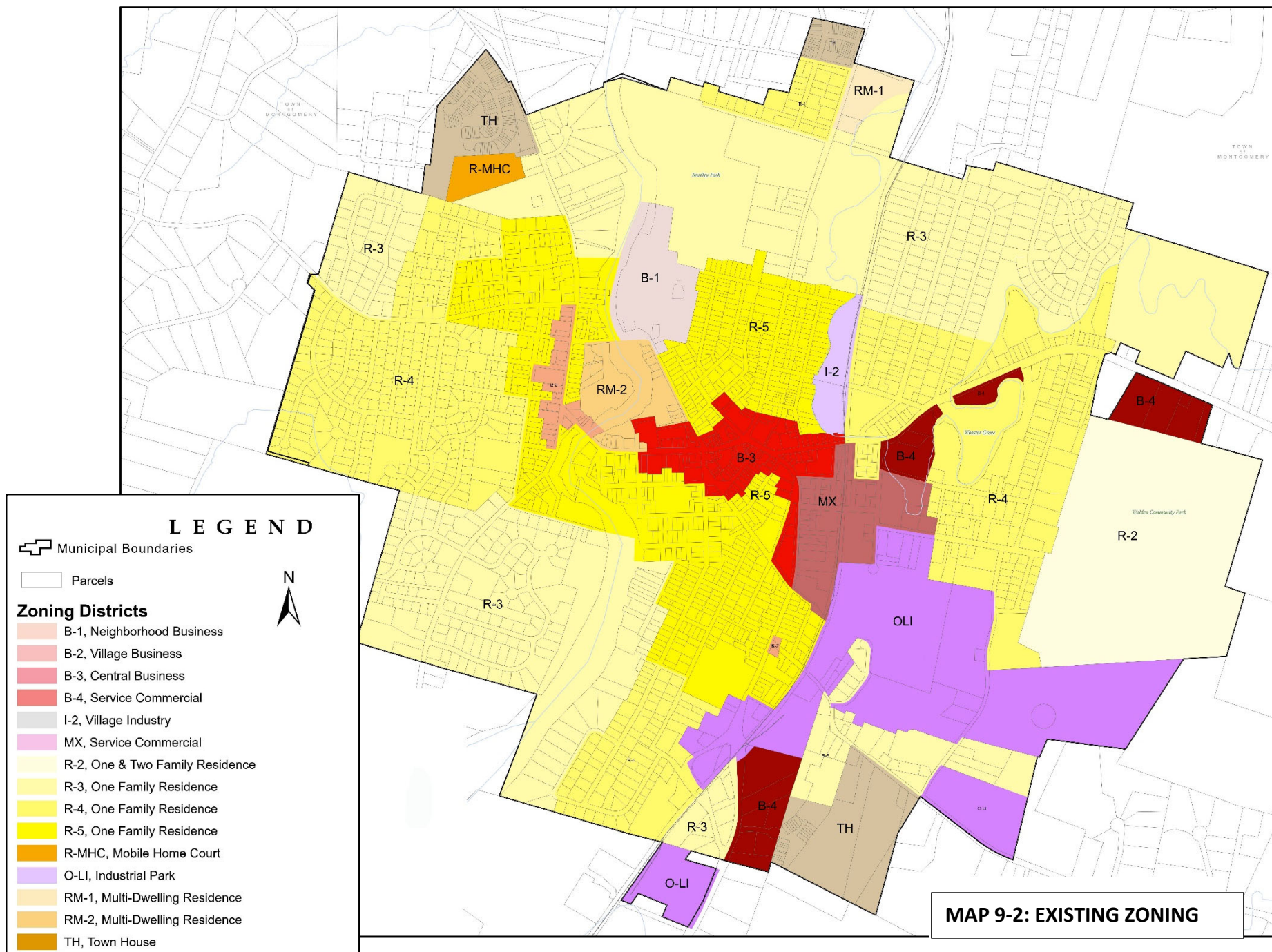
The R-5 districts are located in close proximity to Downtown. The R-5 zones reflect the older residential areas of the Village. As one might expect, the lot sizes in the R-5 district are smaller than the outlying areas with a permitted lot size of 5,000 sq. ft.. The R-5 district allows the same Special Exception (SE) uses as the R-3 and R-4 districts with the exception of planned residential developments and golf courses.

RM-1 Multi-Family

There is one area which remains zoned RM-1, consisting of the Squire Village Apartment Complex off Ulster Avenue in the northernmost section of the Village. Several areas previously zoned RM-1 were rezoned consistent with recommendations in the previous Comprehensive Plan. The minimum lot area per dwelling unit in the RM-1 zone is 4,000 sq. ft. Uses permitted as-of-right include single-family, two-family, multi-family dwellings and parks. Special Exception uses include: senior group residences, place of worship, nursery schools, day care centers, public buildings, schools and a variety of community facilities.



Above (top to bottom): View of single-family homes along Main Street, which are presently zoned R-5, single-family homes on the west side of Oak Street; and single-family home on Orchard Street, which lies within the B-3 district.



RM-2 Multi-family

The RM-2 district encompasses areas between the upper and lower falls along the east and west side of the Wallkill River. The RM-2 district allows multi-family housing on lots with a minimum area of 7,500 sq. ft. with 1,500 sq. ft. minimum square feet per dwelling unit. The RM-2 district is largely built-out with multifamily apartments along Oak Street and Cliff Street.

R-MHC Mobile Home Court

There is one R-MHC district located on the west side of the Village to the west of NYS Route 52. The R-MHC district allows by right single family detached dwellings and by Special Exception licensed mobile home courts. There is an existing mobile home court in this district. The R-MHC district also includes a variety of other Special Exception uses including: places of worship, senior group residences, schools, libraries, and Professional Offices. The minimum lot size per unit is 12,000 square feet.

TH - Townhouse

There are three (3) TH-Townhouse districts. One encompasses lands in the southeast quadrant of Walden off of Coldenham Road. The other two are situated in the north and west quadrants of Walden.

The TH district allows detached, single-family dwellings, two-family dwellings, single-family attached (townhouses) dwellings, and parks as permitted uses and senior citizen housing

developments, houses of worship, libraries and schools as SE uses. Winding Brook and Northgate Drive are examples of neighborhoods within the Townhouse District.

B-1 Neighborhood Business

The B-1 District encompasses the Thruway Shopping Center. The minimum lot area is 10,000 square feet with the maximum lot coverage of 30%. Uses permitted as of right include bakeries, banks, offices, personal service shops, funeral homes, restaurants, retail stores, taverns, health clubs, etc. Some Special Exception uses include: motor vehicle sales, drive-in eating establishments, and veterinarian offices. Residences are not permitted in the B-1 district.

B-2 Village Business

The B-2 Districts are located on the east side of the Village and at the corner of Route 208 and Coldenham Road. There is no minimum lot area; however, there is a minimum lot area per dwelling of 2,500 sq. ft. Dwellings are permitted as a Special Exception use in the B-2 Zone over the first floor of non-residential development. Permitted business uses mirror that of the B-1 zone, but also include vocational schools, home occupations and home professional offices. The maximum lot coverage of 80% is permitted.

B-3 Central Business

The B-3 district encompasses the historic central business district of the Village's Downtown. Uses permitted as of right include a similar broad mix as



Above (top to bottom): View of Winding Brook condominiums entrance on the west side of NYS Route 52, view of condominiums along Marone Place looking north and view of townhouses from end of cul-de-sac Winding Brook was situated within the R-3 and R-4 Zoning Districts, but the site was recently rezoned to TH-Townhouse.

the B-1 and B-2 District such as retail, offices, restaurants and personal services. Special Exception uses are similar to the B-2 District but also include hotels, theaters and printing plants. Dwellings on the first floor are prohibited but are allowed above commercial uses. The minimum lot size per dwelling is 1,500 sf. and maximum lot coverage is 80%.

B-4 Service Commercial

The B-4 districts are located on the east side of the Village along NYS Route 52 on either side of the entrance to Wooster's Grove Park and on the south end of the Village off 208. The minimum lot size is 10,000 sq. ft. and maximum lot coverage 50%. Permitted uses include banks, bowling alleys, funeral homes, offices, taverns, restaurants, repair shops, and printing plants. Special Exception uses also include: car washes, building contractor storage and equipment yards, wholesale businesses and public utility buildings, among others.

O-LI Industrial Park

The O-LI districts are located throughout the southeast quadrant of the Village. Minimum lot size is 40,000 sq. ft. and maximum lot coverage is 40%. Permitted business uses include agriculture uses, circus training facilities, banks, offices, radio and television broadcasting, repair shops, non-nuisance industry, wearing apparel manufacturing, vocational schools, and wholesale stores.

Special Exception uses industrial uses include: gas stations, hospitals, hotels, parking garage, restaurants, schools, dry cleaning plants, laundry plants, liquid petroleum gas storage, machinery repair or service plant, public utility buildings, contractor storage, research laboratory, self-storage facilities, warehouse and wholesale businesses.

I-2 Village Industry

The I-2 Village Industry districts are located off Woodruff Street along the Rail Trail. The I-2 District is a heavy industry zone. Permitted uses include: bakeries, offices, broadcasting facilities, repair garages and shops, vocational schools, wholesale store, non-nuisance industry, monument works, and warehouses. Special Exception uses include: car wash, contractor storage yard, fuel oil and liquid petroleum gas storage and transfer stations, breweries and wineries, research laboratory and truck stations. Active industries within the I-2 district include: AMPAC, Interstate Packaging Corp. and Truffa Seed Company, which have access to freight rail service. The minimum lot area in the I-2 district is 5,000 sq. ft. and the maximum lot coverage of 40%. Some of the uses permitted no longer reflect desirable uses as the Village has evolved over time. This Plan supports a reassessment of permitted uses in the I-2 district with the aim of removing harmful uses from the table.



Above (top to bottom): View of one of the J & G, LLP Law Office buildings on NYS Route 208; Thruway Shopping Center Plaza on Oak Street, and Sweeney's Tavern on NYS Route 208.

MX Mixed Use

There is one MX - Mixed Use District in the Village in the vicinity of Railroad Avenue, Grant Street and Elm Street. There is a set of Design Guidelines for this MX District, which is referred to as a Traditional Neighborhood Development at Railroad Place.

The MX District requires a minimum lot area of 5,000 square feet of a purely residential project and 10,000 square feet for non-residential or mixed use building. Dwelling units over the first floor, artist lofts and live-work spaces are permitted as of right, as well as a range of commercial uses. Special Exception uses include: senior group residences, schools, multiple dwellings, planned residential development and senior citizen housing developments, hotels, laundromats, taverns, repair shops and theaters.

The Village of Walden completed a Traditional Neighborhood Development at Railroad Place Study in December of 2010 as a follow-up to its 2005 Comprehensive Plan. The study evaluated the consistency of the existing MX district regulations with the Design Guidelines for a Traditional Neighborhood Development at Railroad Place, which resulted in a number of recommended amendments to the Zoning Law or Design Guidelines as follows: Section 305-52 (C)(41)(a) of the Zoning Law should be amended by addition of the following:

- In the event of a conflict between the provisions of this Chapter and those of the Design Guidelines for the Railroad Place Design District, the provisions of the Design Guidelines shall prevail.
- The Planning Board, during site plan review, shall be authorized to consider and approve waivers to the provisions of the Design Guidelines, as applied to existing buildings, at the request of the applicant. The Planning Board's decision shall be based on the specific circumstances of the subject building and the impact of the waiver on the design objectives of the MX district.

Since the 2005 Comprehensive Plan, there is a realization that the conversion of some of the former industrial buildings to mixed-use development may take longer than initially envisioned. While this Plan still supports mixed use development within the MX District and the application of the Design Guidelines for new buildings, it also recommends a range of permitted commercial uses be as flexible as possible to allow for a variety of uses which would encourage the redevelopment of these buildings while not having an adverse impact on future mixed-use developments within this portion of the Village. Auto-related and industrial uses which may deter mixed-use development should be avoided in the MX district.



Above (top to bottom): View of various older buildings within the Village's Mixed Use Zoning District. This plan encourages the adaptive reuse and redevelopment of this area and many of its buildings.

9.2.1 Recommended Zoning Text Amendments

- Allow a range of private commercial indoor and outdoor recreation uses such as mini-golf, laser tag, ax throwing or similar games, go-carts, golf simulator or other virtual games, batting cages or obstacle or ropes courses in the B-2 and B-4 Districts. A definition of this term and setback will also need to be created;
- Allow pet grooming businesses in all business zones;
- Clarify in the bulk table that roof-top solar panels are not permitted on historic buildings. Ensure an appropriate structural analysis is provided to the Building Inspector prior to installation and emergency power shut-off locations are coordinated with local fire departments.
- Expand ‘wearing apparel manufacturing’ to allow all types of light manufacturing—including Ag products;
- Add art galleries as a permitted use in B-1, B-2, B-3, B-4 and MX and allow galleries space as an accessory in other art related uses such as studios and performing arts venues.
- Expand radio and television broadcasting to also include film and television production studios.
- Change dwelling unit to units over commercial businesses;
- Review zoning definitions to ensure clarity and appropriateness.

- Add definition for care-taker unit which requires an individual to have contact information on file with the building department similar to landlords.
- Add definition for Bed-and-breakfast to differentiate it from a short-term rental.
- Allow electric vehicle charging stations as accessory uses in B-4 and O-LI Districts.
- Review both permitted and Special Exception Uses in the I-2 and OLI. Remove heavy industrial uses such as liquid petroleum or other fuel storage, temporary sand and gravel removal, truck filling stations from this zone.
- Remove temporary training quarters from OLI.

9.2.2 Recommended Zoning Map Amendments

- The Village should evaluate the creation of a park zone for the large parks and remove the R-2 designation.

9.3 Site Plan Review

Section 305-60 of the Village Code grants the Planning Board the authority to review and approve site plans. The provisions for site plan approval apply to all land uses that are listed as special exception uses in all zoning districts. It also applies to all permitted uses in the Village’s business, mixed use and industrial districts.

Site plan review is a powerful planning tool that the Planning Board can use to shape the



Above (top to bottom): Rite Aid built with design guidelines versus a Rite Aid built in a community without design guidelines; and a commercial plaza built with design guidelines which break up the mass of the structure and creates an inviting space.

process, the Planning Board can shape the character of new developments through its review of building placement, stormwater management, landscaping, signs, lighting, circulation, and off-street loading and parking. The Village's Site Plan regulations lay out applicability; procedures and requirements for site plan review. It also provides some basic review standards to help guide the Planning Board's decisions.

Additional standards to help guide the Planning Board's decision is recommended in certain areas such as landscaping and building design. Landscaping standards would establish minimum requirements for the landscape areas, the caliper of trees, percentage of landscaping within off-street parking areas, standards for landscaped buffers between residential and non-residential land uses, requirements for maintaining landscaping and other applicable standards. Currently specific regulations apply mostly to subdivisions and townhouse development only and should be expanded to apply to commercial site plans as well. The Village must strictly enforce its site plan review, landscaping and sign regulations to ensure that new development complements rather than detracts from the community's character.

9.4 Design Review

Presently, Walden has Design Guidelines for the Downtown Business District and the MX-Mixed Use zoning district titled "Design Guidelines: A New Traditional Neighborhood at Railroad Place".

The Village could enhance the effectiveness of its site plan review laws through the adoption of additional design review guidelines for all commercial and residential zoning districts.

Design guidelines are intended to help guide the Planning Board's decisions while giving developers a clear understanding of design requirements. Design standards would vary for different areas within the Village of Walden.

Most municipalities in New York State base their authority to establish design guidelines on General Municipal Law Section 96-a, which allows communities to place restrictions in order to protect or enhance "sites, buildings, or other objects having special character or aesthetic interest or value." Long-term, the Village Board could work with property owners to seek the creation of a National Register-designated Historic District. If the Board of Trustees moves forward to establish a National Register-designated Historic District, a Local Law should be adopted to establish an Architectural Historic Review Board. This Plan recommends that the newly established Architectural Historic Review Board would have the authority to review projects within the historic districts. However, this Plan also recommends the Planning Board would retain the authority to review design issues in conjunction with its site plan review powers for projects outside of the historic districts excluding signage. The creation of an Architectural Historic Review Board (AHRB)



Above: Village Hall on Municipal Square, Concerts at the Grove and Harvest Fest.

would require the adoption of a Local Law. An AHRB would help to ensure the integrity of the exterior of historic buildings is preserved, helping Walden to retain its unique sense of place. Whether or not an AHRB is established, it is recommended the scope of design review be expanded to include the review of exterior renovations of existing buildings or review of new construction in business districts.

9.5 Downtown Revitalization

Successful Main Streets are not only places where people shop, but they also are places where many civic and cultural activities occur where the public can gather at community events. The Village Board should keep its civic buildings Downtown and support private and not-for-profit sector efforts to establish cultural and entertainment anchors. The Village Board must also work with local civic organizations and the business community to promote the downtown business district. Promotion means selling the image and promise of Downtown to all prospects. 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 and more regional organizations such as the Business Council of Greater Montgomery, the Orange County Chamber of Commerce and the

Orange County Tourism Department. One of the challenges facing Walden in creating an effective promotional strategy is getting business owners to think of the business district as a whole rather than the sum of its parts. Business owners must work together to ensure the highest quality shopping experience for their customers. For example, it is important for the business community to coordinate their hours of operation so that businesses are open when customers are available to shop.

The business community should also work together to create seasonal and holiday marketing campaigns and other special events designed to draw customers to the Central Business District. It is also recommended the business community reach out to prospective entrepreneurs to open complementary businesses within the Central Business District.

Business attraction efforts are needed to fill vacant storefronts and are also needed to create a mix of retail, restaurants, professional services and cultural attractions that appeal to visitors and residents alike. The focus of business attraction efforts must be to create a vibrant downtown with a variety of goods & services, quality merchandise and appealing, pedestrian oriented settings. This Plan supports Walden's Downtown Revitalization Strategy and the on-going downtown revitalization policies contained therein including:

- Retaining vital services downtown, such as banks, schools, the post office, and library;
- Sponsoring and promoting special events;
- Strictly adhering to Downtown Design Guidelines for façade renovations; and
- Further developing incentives to encourage new investment through various grant programs and the Village's low interest revolving loan fund.

9.6 Annexation Policy

Request for an annexation should only be considered if it is in the “over-all public interest.” That is, that the request will not place an undue strain on Village resources or place an increased cost onto existing residents [e.g. neutral cost/benefit analysis]. The following basic principles should be considered before an annexation is approved:

- Can the annexation be accommodated using the existing capacity of the Village’s infrastructure?
- Any extension of Village utilities must be funded by the developer and appropriate studies should be done to ensure existing infrastructure will not be negatively impacted;
- New development on annexed land must be compatible in design with existing and likely future development in the surrounding neighborhood.
- The assessed valuation of the area and any proposed improvements should be sufficient to allow the area to pay its fair share of the cost of providing services.
- The area should contribute to the logical growth pattern of the Village and should encourage orderly growth.
- Irregular boundaries should be avoided.

- An assessment of community service needs (including police, fire, ambulance and parks) should be undertaken to confirm the Village can provide adequate services unless the developer pays for the necessary capital improvements.
- The cumulative effects of other annexations should be evaluated for long-term impacts on utility and transportation infrastructure.
- Sites that include historic properties should consider and encourage provisions for preserving historic structures on the site.
- The proposed use of lands to be annexed into the Village shall be resolved concurrently with the annexation agreement.

9.7 Summary & Recommendations

The Village of Walden’s buildings and pattern of development define its community character. It is important that new development occurs in a manner, which compliments the existing pattern of development within the Village of Walden. To this end, the following land use and zoning policies are recommended to help manage new growth in manner that enhances the character of the Village of Walden.

9.7.1 Land Use

Update the Table of Use Regulations for the Business, Mixed Use and Industrial Zoning Districts. Expand the list of permitted uses in the MX-district to allow for a variety of non-nuisance industries. Such use would include bakeries, breweries, yoga or martial arts studios, galleries, performing arts facilities, warehouse and other transitional uses that will enable building owners to derive income from their properties without having an adverse impact on mixed-use developments.

Reassessment of permitted uses in the I-2 district with the aim of removing harmful uses from the table. Presently the I-2 district allows

**“We shape our
Buildings and
Afterward Our
Buildings shape
us.”**

~Sir Winston
Churchill

laundry plants of more than 4,000 square feet as a use permitted-by-right subject to site plan review approval by the Planning Board. For example, fuel oil storage depots are allowed as Special Exception uses within the I-2 district and have the potential to adversely affect Village aquifers.

9.7.2 Zoning

Adopted recommended Zoning Map and Zoning Text Amendments as cited in Section 9.2.1 and 9.2.2 above.

9.7.3 Site Plan Review

Adopted more detailed landscaping standards as part the Site Plan Review regulations. Establish minimum standards for landscaping of commercial properties including tree planting, percentage of landscaping within off-street parking areas and landscape buffers between residential and commercial properties.

9.7.4 Design Review

Create an Architectural Historic Review Board (AHRB) through the adoption of a Local Law. If historic districts are established, an AHRB would help to ensure the integrity of the exterior of historic buildings is preserved.

9.7.5 Downtown Revitalization

Adhere and follow policies of Village's Downtown Revitalization Strategy and policies cited in Section 9.5 above.

9.7.6 Annexation

Follow annexation policy outlined in Section 9.5 above to ensure annexations do not strain existing services within the Village and necessary improvements are paid for by developers not Village tax payers.

10.0 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

In order for this Comprehensive Plan to be effective, the Village of Walden must actively apply the policies that are contained within the Plan. Furthermore, its Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals must use the Plan as a framework to guide their decisions with respect to the review of development proposals.

Certain recommendations contained herein will require subsequent action of the Village Board of Trustees in order to enact recommended amendments to the Village Code and other land use regulations. Other actions such as the preservation of natural resources, transportation improvements, or the development of programs to support historic preservation will require the collaboration between the Village, County, State and not-for-profit entities. These actions are outlined in implementation tables provided in this Chapter along with the party responsible for taking a leadership role in the implementation of the policy or program.

Each member of the Village Board, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals should have a copy of this Comprehensive Plan. The Village Board should appoint a Comprehensive Plan subcommittee to spend time each month reviewing progress on the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan and coordinating efforts with other entities where necessary.

The following pages provide a summary of the major recommendations that are part of this Plan. The recommendations are organized under the broad topic areas as follows: Natural Resource Protection, Transportation, Cultural & Historic Resources, Open Space & Recreation, Community Services and Land Use Regulations.

For each subject there is a list of specific recommendations, along with an indication of when the recommendation should be implemented and the party responsible for ensuring that the recommendation is followed. The Implementation Plan table is useful in helping the Village Board to set priorities for the subsequent actions that will be necessary to implement this Comprehensive Plan.

Some recommendations should be implemented immediately including the recommended revisions to the Village Code. Other measures will be implemented in the “short-term” within two (2) years of adopting this Comprehensive Plan.

There are other recommendations that are “longterm” in nature - meaning they are anticipated to be completed over a 2-5 year timeframe. It is not reasonable to assume that all the recommendations contained herein will be implemented immediately. The implementation of the Plan is meant to be a process that will occur over a period of years. Setting priorities ensures the process will get underway.

“In order for this Comprehensive Plan to be effective, the Village Board of Trustees and its Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals must actively apply the policies that are contained within the Plan”

Village of Walden Comprehensive Plan Implementation Plan

No.	Recommendation	Action	Priority	Responsibility
Chapter 4. Natural Resources				
1	Identify slopes (over 15%) as part of site assessment prior to developing the building site and road design.	Policy	On-going	Planning Board
2	Create wellhead protection and aquifer protection Overlay Districts	Policy	Short-Term	Village Board
3	Require mapping of wetlands, actively coordinate with permitting agencies and enforce NYSDEC requirements to maintain a 100-foot setback between development and adjacent wetlands	Policy	On-going	Planning Board Village Board
4	Restrict the development of buildings and impervious surfaces with the 100-year floodplain	Policy	On-going	Planning Board
5	Require Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPP) in accordance with NYSDEC Regulations. Encourage the use of bio-retention basins and other green practices and ensure long term maintenance is established and agreed to by the developer.	Policy	On-going	Planning Board
6	Require sediment & erosion control plans when a proposed development involves grading of the site or cut and fill operations.	Policy	On-going	Planning Board
7	Restrict the clearing of trees along the Wallkill River and other major surface water resources by enacting a minimum setback from these resources in zoning, in order to protect the riparian zone along the river.	Policy/ Zoning Amendment	Immediate	Planning Board Village Board
8	Educate the public about the importance of retaining mature vegetation within riparian zones and consult the Wallkill River Watershed Conservation Management Plan for best management practices and recommendations for developments in these sensitive areas	Policy	On-going	Planning Board Village Board
9	Require tree surveys to preserve existing trees and require landscaping, and street tree plans as part of the Site and Subdivision review process.	Policy	On-going	Planning Board
10	The Village should continue to work towards completing the criteria to become a designated CSC and seek any grants which could offset costs of various programs.	Program	Immediate	Village Board
11	Require developers to install lighting, which are International Dark Sky Association (IDA) compliant.	Policy	On-going	Planning Board
12	Implement invasive plant and animal eradication efforts to protect natural Ecosystems.	Program	On-going	Village Board DPW & Parks
Chapter 5. Transportation				
13	Continue to monitor Level-of-Service at key intersections with the NYSDOT to determine if signalization or dedicated turn lanes are warranted.	Policy	On-going	Planning Board Village Board NYSDOT

14	Expand off-street parking opportunities within downtown.	Policy	Short- term	Village Board
15	Develop a pedestrian and vehicular improvement plan for the Central Business District	Plan	Short- term	Village Board
16	Require a traffic impact analysis for uses with high-trip generation rates as part of the SEQR process and require developer to contribute to mitigation of impacts.	Policy	Immediate	Planning Board Village Board
17	Require cross access agreements between adjacent commercial properties	Policy	Immediate	Planning Board Village Board
18	Use textured and reflective surfaces for crosswalks to draw motorist's attention to the crosswalk	Policy	Immediate	Planning Board
19	Where feasible, require new residential and commercial developments to construct sidewalks	Policy	Immediate	Planning Board Village Board
20	Provide or improve sidewalks along South Montgomery Street and from Highland Avenue to the fuel station	Capital Improvement	Short-term	Village Board DPW
21	Work with neighboring towns, counties and the NYSDOT to develop linear trails that tie into Walden trail system.	Policy	Immediate	Village Board Parks
22	Coordinate with NYSDOT to advance plans for bike route along Routes 52 and 208.	Policy	Short-term	Village Board NYSDOT
23	Place bicycle racks in key locations within the downtown	Program	Short Term	Village Board DPW
24	Coordinate with the OCTC and Short Line (Coach USA) to provide public transit, which meets the needs of residents and businesses.	Policy	Immediate	Village Board Coach USA
25	Coordinate with OCTC and MTA-Metro North to establish bus shuttle service to nearby train stations, such as Beacon or Campbell Hall.	Policy	Immediate	Village Board OCTA- MTA
26	Support efforts to bring upgrade freight rail services and to bring passenger rail service to Walden	Policy	Immediate	Village Board OCTA- MTA
Chapter 6. Cultural and Historic Resources				
27	Continue to support the Josephine-Louise Public Library and keep this cultural institution in the heart of the Downtown	Policy	On-going	Village Board Library Board
28	Work with cultural institutions to help them grow and identify additional opportunities for expansion in order to enhance social & economic vitality of the community	Policy	On-going	Village Board
29	Continue to support events that draw a regional audience such as Walden Harvest Fest, Halloween, Christmas Celebration and Winter Carnival	Policy	On-going	Village Board Code Enforcement
30	Develop voluntary Historic Preservation design guidelines for local homeowners.	Plan/ Guidelines	Immediate	Village Board
31	Pursue National Register Historic District Designation of Districts Identified in 1982 and 2006 Historic Surveys	Program	Immediate	Village Board SHPO

32	Grant the Planning Board with the authority to consider the appropriateness of exterior alterations within line-of-sight of the individually listed National Register properties	Policy/ Zoning Amendment	Short-Term	Village Board Planning Board
33	Support the individual listing of properties on the National Register of Historic Places	Policy	Short-Term	Village Board
34	The Village Board should support grant applications through the NYS OPRHP for local preservation efforts.	Policy	On-going	Village Board Village Historian
35	Pursue Certified Local Government (CLG) designation through the New York State OPRHP	Policy	Short-term	Village Board SHPO
Chapter 7. Open Space and Recreation				
36	Utilize parks and other open lands, institutions, the Walden-Wallkill Rail Trail and the preservation of natural features to form a well-defined edge around the Village	Policy	On-going	Planning Board Village Board
37	Promote development, which contributes to the protection or expansion of open space	Policy	On-going	Planning Board Village Board
38	Support efforts to conserve agricultural lands on the edge of the Village through the (PDR) program	Policy	Immediate	Planning Board Village Board
39	Continue with timely implementation of Walden Recreation & Parks Department's recommended parkland improvements as reflected in the Master Plan for each Village Park	Policy	Immediate	Village Board Parks
40	Require developers to contribute a payment-in-lieu-of-parkland fee to help meet its growing recreational needs	Policy	Immediate	Village Board Planning Board
41	Pursue inter-municipal agreements and/or public/private partnerships to meet growing recreational needs of the community such as opportunities to jointly develop athletic fields to serve the needs of the VCSD while allowing fields to be publicly available after school hours or on weekends.	Policy	Short-Term	Village Board Parks
42	Work to develop regional trail systems	Policy	Short-Term	Village Board Parks
43	Expand waterfront access to the Wallkill River including the Maple Street boat launch to provide for new boating, fishing and hiking opportunities	Policy	Short-Term	Village Board Parks
44	Assess the feasibility of expanding recreational opportunities on other village-owned properties	Policy	Immediate	Village Board Parks
45	Provide and strengthen linkages between open space and recreational areas.	Policy	Immediate	Village Board Parks
46	Ensure new recreational buildings are situated outside of floodplain	Policy	Immediate	Village Board Parks

Chapter 8. Community Services				
47	As part of the Village's Capital Improvement Program, assess the facility needs of the Walden PD and Court-related facilities.	Policy	On-going	Village Board Police Department
48	Continue to monitor trends in police activity and coordinate with state and county law enforcement agencies.	Policy	On-going	Police Department
49	Monitor calls for the Walden Fire District to ensure the equipment and facilities meet the needs of the growing population base	Policy	Ongoing	Village Board Fire District
50	Support efforts to keep educational institutions viable through modernization and expanding multi-purpose facilities such as adult education	Policy	Ongoing	Village Board
51	Coordinate with the Town of Montgomery to implement the recommendations contained in the Village's 2009 Wellhead Protection Report is a priority of this Plan	Program	Short-Term	Village Board Town Board, DPW
52	Any new user to the Village's infrastructure systems shall evaluate demand requirements and where upgrades are needed, costs shall be borne by developers.	Policy	On-going	Village Board DPW
53	The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for community facilities should be updated every 5 years and continue to factor in community growth.	Policy	Ongoing	Village Board DPW
54	Continue to address the infiltration & inflow problem and ensuring proper operation & maintenance of the sewer system	Program	Ongoing	Village Board DPW
55	Identify and secure State and federal grants to help offset the cost of maintaining the Village's water & Sewer infrastructure	Policy	Ongoing	Village Board
56	Support "Complete Street" policy to enable safe, attractive and comfortable travel to all users including pedestrians, bicyclist, motorists and public transport	Policy	Short-Term	Village Board DPW
Chapter 9. Land Use Regulations				
57	Update the Table of Use Regulations for the Business, Mixed Use and Industrial Zoning Districts. Expand the list of permitted uses to allow for a variety of commercial and non-nuisance industries and remove uses which may be detrimental to surrounding commercial uses or overall development of the Village.	Zoning Amendment	Immediate	Village Board
58	Adopt more detailed landscaping regulations as part of the Site Plan review.	Policy	Immediate	Village Board Planning Board
59	Request for an annexation should only be considered if it is in the "over-all public interest". The SEQR process should include analysis to ensure annexations do not strain existing infrastructure and services.	Policy	Ongoing	Village Board
60	Review definitions and create new definitions for uses in the Use Table which are not currently provided in the code.	Zoning Amendment	Immediate	Village Board
61	Create an Architectural Historic Review Board (AHRB) through the adoption of a Local Law if historic districts established	Policy	Ongoing	Village Board

62	Retain vital services in the downtown such as banks, schools, post offices and the library, sponsor and promote local events and market the downtown business district in coordination with local and regional organizations.	Policy	Ongoing	Village Board
63	Adhere to Downtown Design Guidelines for façade renovations.	Policy	Ongoing	Village Board Planning Board
64	Further develop incentives to encourage new investment with low interest loans and grants for facade improvements	Policy	Long-Term	Village Board
65	Evaluate the creation of a park zone for the large parks and remove the R-2 zoning designation.	Zoning Amendment	Short-Term	Village Board
Immediate – 1 year Short-Term – 1-2 Years Long-Term - 2-5 Years				