

Village of Cooperstown Phase II: Comprehensive Plan & Downtown Revitalization Strategy September 27, 2016

Sponsored by the Village of Cooperstown and



This document is intended to be printed double-sided on letter size paper.



Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Public Engagement	3
Downtown Revitalization Strategy	9
Vision, Goals and Recommendations	33
Implementation Matrix	91



SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

What will the Village of Cooperstown look like ten years from now? What steps does the community need to take to make life in Cooperstown the best it can possibly be? The Comprehensive Plan is a vehicle through which a community can respond to these questions. It enables residents to set a vision for their community's future and then outline the policies and projects required to achieve that vision. It includes any and all aspects of community life. Through its policy recommendations, it can foster new ways to make a living, protect open space, and revitalize neighborhoods.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

Comprehensive plans are one tool municipalities can use to set a course for the future, by addressing a variety of aspects of community life. Specifically, a comprehensive plan:

- Provides an occasion to formally consider the need for village-wide changes in development patterns on a community-based and community-driven basis;
- Systematically identifies and creates a public record of community assets, opportunities, and needs;
- Produces a vision for the future of the community that is shared across a variety of community perspectives, including neighborhoods, businesses, institutions, and environmental interests;
- Outlines specific actions to achieve that shared vision; and,
- Establishes a framework for community-wide collaboration on plan implementation.

The most recent Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Cooperstown was adopted in 1994. The plan included a historic overview of the Village, detailed community characteristics, including demographics and community resources, and provided plans for economic stability, the environment, government operations, infrastructure, planning and communication, and quality of life. Its adoption by the Board of Trustees established the document as the first official “Comprehensive Plan” for the Village under Section 7-722 of New York State Village law.

The purpose of this current plan is to update the 1994 Comprehensive Plan by recommending specific actions or policies that the Village should pursue related to neighborhoods, recreation, business and economic development, infrastructure, the environment and sustainability, government, and Doubleday Field.

How the Comprehensive Plan was Developed

In 2014, the Village of Cooperstown, in partnership with Otsego Now, undertook the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan and preparing a Downtown Revitalization Strategy. This project was completed in two phases. Phase I: Project Organization and Public Outreach was designed to gather community input on issues, concerns, and desires for the future. This phase of the project included extensive public engagement activities designed to give residents and visitors an opportunity to share what they like about Cooperstown, what issues or concerns they have, and what they would like the Village to be like in ten years.

Phase II of the project built on the information collected during the first phase. The committee of volunteers that directed this plan continually sought input and advice from all segments of the community. Every recommendation was carefully reviewed and extensively discussed by the committee. The resulting plan will not be a panacea for all of the challenges facing Cooperstown in the future. However, the plan does represent a community-wide effort to identify and address critical issues and opportunities facing the Village at this point in its history. At its core, this plan is intended to be a useful guide to public and private actions taken on behalf of the Village. The plan attempts to honor the community’s legacy while embracing the changing opportunities that shape the character of Cooperstown.



SECTION 2: PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

During Phase II of the planning process, the public was provided a number of opportunities to stay involved with the project. The Steering Committee hosted two Open Houses and maintained a project website to provide those with busy schedules and/or limited mobility an opportunity to stay involved .

Open House #1

On June 11, 2015, the community came together for a day-long open house at the Cooperstown Fire Hall. Representatives of the Steering Committee and Elan Planning and Design were on hand for the entirety of the day, helping guide participants through the various stations set up around the room. The Open House event had over 75 participants visit the 18 different stations set up throughout the room. Stations were set up in a fashion that moved participants through the room to learn some facts and figures about the Village and, more importantly, to share their thoughts and ideas about the future of Cooperstown. Stations were organized by topic areas including *Housing & Neighborhoods*, *Recreation & Environment*, *Business & Economic Development*, *Sustainability*, and *Places & Spaces*. The *Places & Spaces* stations asked participants for their thoughts about the revitalization of Railroad Avenue, Lakefront Park, and Doubleday Field.

A summary table of the most common themes identified during the Open House is presented on the following three pages.

Category	Community Feedback
Housing and Neighborhoods	<p>Affordable year-round housing needed</p> <p>Lack of long-term leases</p> <p>Need for senior housing, universal design or aging in place housing</p> <p>Village is walkable, safe, good place to raise a family</p> <p>Hospital parking is problematic, Basset needs more parking</p>
Recreation and Environment	<p>Promote lake to visitors before they get here</p> <p>Improve lake access and visibility</p> <p>Need access to the lake for non-boaters, lake access for swimming, walkable from Village</p> <p>Upgrade Village docks, more public lake access docks, boat rentals (non-motor boats)</p> <p>Bike racks, bike lanes, bike trails, make it a bicycle friendly community</p> <p>Promote environmental education</p> <p>Implement green infrastructure</p>
Business and Economic Development	<p>Need businesses that serve basic needs</p> <p>Encourage economic activity outside tourist season, some year round industry needed!</p> <p>Get back the movie theater</p> <p>Better internet service, need high speed affordable internet access</p> <p>Love to see our “coolness” factor increase, diversify options, more variety in restaurants</p> <p>Microbrewery, food hub</p> <p>High tech center with space for rental for individuals</p> <p>Non-baseball stores</p>

Category	Community Feedback
Sustainability	Education of residents and visitors to environmental issues True community garden—not kid garden at school Alternative transportation—bike racks and lanes, more bicycle and pedestrian friendly Explore alternative/renewable energy options—solar, hydropower Reduce pesticide use Recycling Community composting
Places and Spaces—Railroad Avenue	Hotel, restaurant, business space (professional) Mixed use— retail with apartment housing above Find use for Agway building Hotel Relocate Farmers’ Market here Apartments Need to bring foot traffic from Main Street to Railroad Avenue
Places and Spaces—Lakefront Park	Public dock, public access, access for swimming from Village Public pier with benches, rental canoes/paddle boats Landscaping—prune shrubs and trees to open up view to Lake Walking trail along the Lake that connects Village parks Plant more trees to address “sogginess” Install boat wash station Add educational/interpretive signage

Category	Community Feedback
Places and Spaces—Doubleday Field	Facility improvements needed—restore grandstand, improve bathrooms, and lights Need clearly marked pedestrian walkways, improve entrance from Main St. (pedestrian path) Replace ugly parking lot with an inviting area to approach the field, green entry to Doubleday Field Plant shade trees, turn completely into grassy park Create historical “room” to provide info on history of the field for visitors Improve pedestrian crossing at nearby Main and Chestnut Streets
Creative and Open Thinking	Restore 22 Main Street—needs attention Music venue/performing arts center Parking (employee, tourist, resident) Make Cooperstown a Village for residents again! Village needs a full time Planner to implement the Comprehensive Plan Acknowledge and celebrate the Clark Family Accept the reality of tourism and find a balance
From the Kids	Need a public playground Better winter activities More nightlife opportunities for teens Non-baseball kid’s stuff

Open House #2

On April 5, 2016, a second Open House was held at the Village Fire Hall. Community members were asked to reflect and provide feedback on the draft Vision Statement, Goals, and Recommendations. Attendees were invited to use colored dots, markers, pens, and post-it notes to indicate approval or disapproval of the draft recommendations and provide the Committee with additional feedback and ideas. As a result of the information provided at the Open House, a number of the Plan's goals and recommendations were modified. Approximately 80 residents, business owners, and organization representatives attended the event.





SECTION 3: DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

As part of the planning process, a Downtown Revitalization Strategy was prepared to analyze retail conditions and performance, identify retail development opportunities, and suggest strategies to strengthen and expand downtown Cooperstown's retail foundation. To accomplish this task the following steps were taken:

- **Site visit:** The consultant team, hosted by members of the Steering Committee, participated in a day-long tour of the community, the downtown district, and nearby commercial centers.
- **Demographic analysis:** Demographic information from the 1990-2010 US Census and the current American Community Survey was collected and analyzed to identify trends and characteristics likely to affect retail demand and consumer preferences.
- **Business mix analysis:** An inventory of businesses in the 13326 zip code was organized using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) to identify concentrations and gaps.
- **Estimates of consumer buying power and retail sales voids:** Using data from the ESRI, New York State, and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the retail buying power of Cooperstown residents, regional residents, downtown workers, tourists, and other relevant groups was assessed and compared with estimates of current actual sales in the 13326 zip code to identify sales leakages and sales surpluses. This helped identify product and service categories in which downtown Cooperstown might be able to expand retail sales, both by strengthening existing businesses and by developing new ones.

-
- **Identification of potential business and economic development opportunities:** Based on the research collected, specific business and economic development opportunities that might exist for downtown Cooperstown were identified. In addition, strategies for integrating economic development opportunities into the revitalization process for downtown Cooperstown were identified.

Site Visit

On June 3, 2016, the Cooperstown Community Engagement Committee hosted a site visit for the consultant team. In addition to meeting with the Committee, the team met with several small business owners to discuss their experiences operating a business in Cooperstown.



Demographic Characteristics and Trends

A variety of demographic data was assembled by a research intern at the SUNY College at Oneonta’s Center for Economic and Community Development in 2011 and this data is included in the Phase I report for this assignment. Rather than duplicating this data, we have updated and highlighted some of the data particularly relevant to the development of retail and other businesses. Of particular interest:

- Between 2010-2014, growth in median household income in Cooperstown outpaced that of Otsego County, increasing by 12 percent (versus a 5.5 percent increase in New York State and a 15.7 percent *decrease* in Otsego County). In most instances, household income is the most significant factor determining the amount of demand generated by residents for retail products and services.

	Cooperstown			Otsego County			New York		
	2010	2014	% ch	2010	2014	% ch	2010	2014	% ch
Population	1,852	1,856 ¹	0.2%	62,259	61,778	-0.8%	19,378,102	19,594,330	1.1%
Households	930	932 ²	0.2%	24,620	23,798	-3.3%	7,317,755	7,255,528	-0.9%
Median age	47.1	52.7	11.9%	40.9%	41.2%	0.7%	38.0	38.1	0.3
Average household size	1.97	1.99	3.0%	2.31	2.36	2.2%	2.57	2.62	1.9%
Median household income	\$ 49,419	55,417	12.1%	56,797	47,884	-15.7%	55,603	58,687	5.5%
Percent living in poverty	17.1%	13.1%	-23.4%	14.9%	16.4%	10.1%	14.2%	15.6%	9.9%

TABLE 1: Miscellaneous demographic characteristics of Cooperstown, Otsego County, and New York State (*sources:* 2010 Census of Population, 2014 American Community Survey).

¹ Population for the Village of Cooperstown in 2014 has been estimated based on the number of new building permits issued for housing units, less demolition permits, due to a data reporting error in the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey for 2014.

² Similarly, the number of households in the Village of Cooperstown in 2014 has been estimated based on net housing permits.

- Cooperstown has issued only a handful of building permits for new housing units since the 2010 Census of Population, and one residential demolition permit, meaning that the Village’s population has been relatively stable over the past five years.
- Cooperstown’s households became almost negligibly larger between 2010-2014, growing from an average of 1.97 persons per household to 1.99 persons in 2014. Average household sizes in the County and State also grew at modest rates.

Year	Cooperstown		Otsego County		New York State	
	Pop.	% change	Pop.	% change	Pop.	% change
1920	2,725		46,200		10,385,227	
1930	2,909	6.8%	46,710	1.1%	12,588,066	21.2%
1940	2,599	-10.7%	46,082	-1.3%	13,479,142	7.1%
1950	2,727	4.9%	50,763	10.2%	14,830,192	10.0%
1960	2,553	-6.4%	51,942	2.3%	16,782,304	13.2%
1970	2,403	-5.9%	56,181	8.2%	18,236,967	8.7%
1980	2,342	-2.5%	59,075	5.2%	17,558,072	-3.7%
1990	2,180	-6.9%	60,517	2.4%	17,990,455	2.5%
2000	2,032	-6.8%	61,676	1.9%	18,976,457	5.5%
2010	1,852	-8.9%	62,259	0.9%	19,378,102	2.1%

TABLE 2: Population of Cooperstown, Otsego County, and New York State, 1920-2010 (*sources:* Censuses of Population).

- The percentage of residents living in poverty declined by 23.4 percent in Cooperstown between 2010-2014, although the percentage of residents living in poverty increased in both Otsego County (by 10.1 percent) and New York State (9.9 percent).

- The number of Cooperstown residents employed in retail trade more than doubled between 2010-2014, vastly outpacing the rate of growth in retail employment in Otsego County (1.2 percent) and New York State (3.7 percent) during that time period. By contrast, the numbers of Cooperstown residents employed in the arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services industry grew by a modest 3.7 percent, and Otsego County actually lost workers in this category (a decrease of 8 percent).

Industry	Cooperstown			% change, 2010-2014	
	2010	2014	% change	Otsego Co.	NY State
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining	0	3	n/a	-7.3%	0.4%
Construction	14	17	21.4%	- 6.0%	- 4.9%
Manufacturing	31	44	41.9%	14.8%	- 8.0%
Wholesale trade	11	3	- 72.7%	- 53.1%	- 10.2%
Retail trade	64	134	109.4%	1.2%	3.7%
Transportation + warehousing; utilities	9	26	188.9%	- 13.3%	- 3.4%
Information	10	14	40.0%	- 35.7%	- 6.3%
Finance + insurance; real estate + rental + leasing	50	55	10.0%	6.3%	- 4.1%
Professional, scientific, and mgmt.; admin. + waste mgmt. services	90	51	- 43.3%	3.5%	5.4%
Educational services; health care + social assistance	408	520	27.5%	- 5.2%	4.3%
Arts, entertainment, recreation; accommodation + food services	135	140	3.7%	- 8.0%	9.9%
Other services, except public administration	26	52	100.0%	- 12.9%	2.0%
Public administration	12	14	16.7%	- 24.3%	- 3.5%

TABLE 3: Industries in which working Cooperstown residents 16+ years of age were employed in 2010 and 2014, with comparisons to Otsego County and New York State (*sources:* 2010 Census of Population, 2014 American Community Survey).

Business Mix

An inventory of business entities³ within the 13326 zip code area (which includes Cooperstown and some nearby areas) was compiled and organized by their North American Industry Classification System two-digit code number.

As of July 2015, there were 632 business entities in the 13326 zip code area, employing a total of 7,645 people. A few highlights:

- “Healthcare and social assistance” is the largest business sector – and also the largest employer – accounting for 25.2 percent of all businesses and 33.2 percent of all jobs.⁴
- Retail trade accounts for the next largest business sector (13.4 percent of businesses), responsible for 7.3 percent of jobs.

³ “Business entities” includes public agencies and nonprofit organizations as well as for-profit businesses.

⁴ Data was verified with Basset Healthcare’s Human Resources office that approximately 2,000 of its workers are based in Cooperstown.



NAICS	Industry group	% of businesses	% of workers
11	Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	1.4%	0.4%
21	Mining, quarrying, and oil/gas extraction	0.2%	0.0%
22	Utilities	0.2%	0.0%
23	Construction	3.5%	1.0%
31-33	Manufacturing	1.3%	0.9%
42	Wholesale trade	0.9%	0.7%
44-45	Retail trade	13.4%	7.3%
48-49	Transportation and warehousing	1.4%	3.5%
51	Information	1.4%	0.8%
52	Finance and insurance	4.0%	1.5%
53	Real estate and rental and leasing	3.3%	1.3%
54	Prof., scientific, and technical services	4.9%	1.7%
55	Mgmt. of companies and enterprises	0.2%	0.3%
56	Administration + support; waste mgmt. + remediation services	1.7%	6.4%
61	Educational services	2.1%	8.0%
62	Health care and social assistance	25.2%	33.2%
71	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	2.2%	3.8%
72	Accommodation and food services	12.2%	11.8%
81	Other services (except public administration)	7.8%	5.4%
92	Public administration	12.2%	12.1%
99	Not classified	0.6%	0.0%
TOTALS:		632	7,645

TABLE 4: Businesses in the 13326 zip code area, grouped by two-digit North American Industry Classification System code number (*source:* InfoUSA).

Competitive Retail Context

There are six shopping centers (one regional mall and five neighborhood business district (nbd) centers) within 30 miles of downtown Cooperstown, with a total of 599,914 square feet of commercial space.

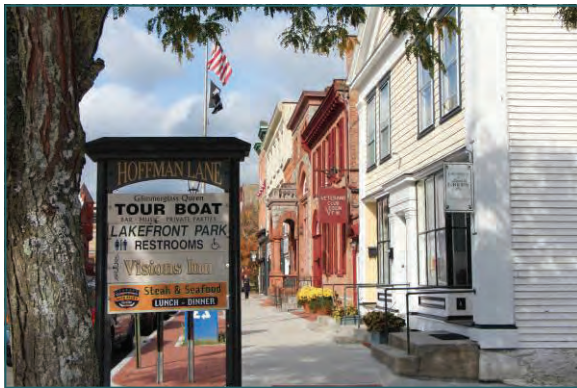
In addition, there are numerous big-box stores and freestanding retail shops and restaurants— particularly in Oneonta, including Walmart (in Oneonta, Herkimer, and Cobleskill), BJ’s Wholesale Club (Oneonta), Home Depot (Oneonta), Lowe’s (Oneonta, Herkimer), Sears Hometown Store (Oneonta), Dick’s Sporting Goods (Oneonta, New Hartford), Petco (Oneonta), Kmart (Herkimer), Best Buy (New Hartford), and many more. Utica is just a few miles further, with at least a million additional square feet of retail space, and Albany and other major population centers are within easy reach.

Dist	Type	Name/address	SF	Representative tenants
4.0	Open-air nbd center	Cooperstown Commons 5 Commons Dr, Cooperstown	55,489	Family Dollar, Subway, NBT Bank
11.4	Open-air nbd center	Price Chopper Plaza – Richfield Springs 1 W Main St, Richfield Springs	51,900	Price Chopper, Subway
18.4	Regional mall	Southside Mall 5006 St Hwy 23, Oneonta	225,663	JCPenney, GNC, Cinema Theater, Office Max
22.4	Open-air nbd center	Palatine Center 6025 Rt 5, Palatine Bridge	61,150	Price Chopper
23.0	Open-air nbd center	Price Chopper Plaza 795 E Main St, Cobleskill	110,932	Tractor Supply, T-Mobile, Subway, FedEx
29.6	Open-air nbd center	Price Chopper Plaza 2 Main St (Rt 10), Delhi	94,780	Price Chopper, Ace Hardware, Rite Aid
			599,914	

TABLE 5: Shopping centers within 30 miles of downtown Cooperstown (*source:* International Council of Shopping Centers).

Retail Sales Voids

Sales void analysis measures the difference between the amount of money that the residents of a given area are likely to spend on products and services, based on their demographic characteristics, and the sales that businesses within that given area are attracting. Generally speaking, a negative value represents sales leakage – meaning, for example, that residents are shopping in other communities or online. A positive value represents a sales surplus – meaning, for example, that shoppers who live outside the given area are making purchases within that area.



NAICS	Store category	Cooperstown			Otsego County		
		Supply	Demand	Void	Supply	Demand	Void
441	Motor vehicle + parts dealers	26,450,000	5,011,000	21,439,000	189,291,000	121,582,000	67,709,000
442	Furniture + home furnishings stores	193,000	655,000	-462,000	10,404,000	13,722,000	-3,318,000
443	Electronics + appliance stores	0	869,000	-869,000	11,430,000	18,955,000	-7,525,000
444	Bldg mat'l, garden equip + supply stores	233,000	838,000	-605,000	31,826,000	19,591,000	12,235,000
445	Food + beverage stores	5,356,000	4,975,000	381,000	102,496,000	111,866,000	-9,370,000
446	Health + personal care stores	4,806,000	2,086,000	2,720,000	33,671,000	47,993,000	-14,322,000
447	Gasoline stations	510,000	2,224,000	-1,714,000	39,200,000	54,756,000	-15,556,000
448	Clothing + clothing accessories stores	621,000	1,998,000	-1,377,000	61,812,000	41,101,000	20,711,000
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book + music stores	104,000	559,000	-455,000	18,925,000	13,083,000	5,842,000
452	General merchandise stores	248,000	2,833,000	-2,585,000	133,007,000	63,768,000	69,239,000
453	Miscellaneous store retailers ⁵	2,359,000	775,000	1,584,000	21,319,000	18,505,000	2,814,000
454	Nonstore retailers ⁶	2,356,000	3,055,000	-699,000	34,050,000	69,095,000	-35,045,000
	TOTAL RETAIL TRADE	43,236,000	25,878,000	17,358,000	687,431,000	594,017,000	93,414,000
722	Food services + drinking places	8,331,000	2,874,000	5,457,000	76,430,000	60,441,000	15,989,000
	TOTAL RETAIL + FOOD/DRINK	51,567,000	28,752,000	22,815,000	763,861,000	654,458,000	109,403,000

TABLE 6: Retail sales void analysis for Cooperstown (the 13326 zip code area) and Otsego County (*source:* ESRI).

⁵ “Miscellaneous store retailers” includes florists, used merchandise stores, pet stores, office supply stores, gift and souvenir stores, art dealers, tobacco stores, and mobile home dealers.

⁶ “Nonstore retailers” includes businesses that sell products and services via venues other than traditional stores, such as by mail order, door-to-door sales, in-home demonstrations, or vending machines, or by making direct deliveries, as is the case with home-delivered newspapers or heating oil.

Not too surprisingly, the 13326 zip code area (which includes Cooperstown, plus some of the surrounding area) is experiencing sales leakages in almost all store categories. If not for its large sales surplus in the “motor vehicle and parts dealers” store category (a category which, in addition to car dealerships, includes boat dealerships and other recreational vehicle dealers, plus parts and accessories), the 13326 zip code area’s overall retail and restaurant sales surplus would be just slightly more than \$1.5 million. And, without tourists, whose presence is particularly obvious in the village’s strong sales surpluses in the “food services and drinking places” and “miscellaneous store retailers” store categories, the village would have a substantial overall sales leakage.

Otsego County fares slightly better. It also has significant sales leakages in many major store categories – but many of these are accounted for by its \$69 million surplus in the “general merchandise stores” store category, which has displaced sales from other store categories, thus causing the apparent leakages store categories such as “furniture and home furnishings” and “health and personal care stores”.

In addition to looking at sales voids in the 13326 zipcode area and Otsego County, we also examined sales voids within 5-, 10-, and 15-minute drive-times of the downtown information kiosk.

The drive-time sales void analysis shows that leakages persist – and increase – within 15 minutes of downtown Cooperstown, not yet absorbed by stores and shopping centers in the Oneonta area.

Sales surpluses and leakages, while informing the overall economic picture, can be tricky data to act upon. For example, if a product category shows a sales *surplus*, there might nonetheless still be opportunities to attract even more sales (and further increase the surplus) by drawing more people to the community. Alternatively, while a sales leakage often highlights a potential business opportunity, there are many circumstances that might make it difficult to pursue. Surpluses and leakages must be assessed within the context of the quality, selection, and price of other stores in the area, and they must take into account customers’ preferences and established shopping patterns.

NAICS	Store category	Drive-time area (from downtown information kiosk)		
		5-minute	10-minute	15-minute
441	Motor vehicle + parts dealers	22,612,000	18,942,000	13,229,000
442	Furniture + home furnishings stores	-406,000	-912,000	-1,525,000
443	Electronics + appliance stores	-792,000	-1,601,000	-2,533,000
444	Bldg mat'l, garden equip + supply stores	-116,000	-624,000	-1,390,000
445	Food + beverage stores	4,572,000	6,202,000	4,078,000
446	Health + personal care stores	3,410,000	2,125,000	-304,000
447	Gasoline stations	-2,033,000	-4,155,000	-6,305,000
448	Clothing + clothing accessories stores	-1,222,000	-2,971,000	-5,109,000
451	Sporting goods, hobby, book + music stores	-369,000	-747,000	-1,264,000
452	General merchandise stores	-2,204,000	-4,416,000	-7,365,000
453	Miscellaneous store retailers ⁷	1,690,000	1,192,000	466,000
454	Nonstore retailers ⁸	1,082,000	-247,000	-3,693,000
	TOTAL RETAIL TRADE	26,224,000	12,788,000	-11,715,000
722	Food services + drinking places	5,634,000	5,657,000	5,156,000
	TOTAL RETAIL + FOOD/DRINK	31,858,000	18,445,000	-6,559,000

TABLE 7: Retail sales void analysis for the areas within 5-, 10-, and 15-minute drive-times from downtown Cooperstown (*source:* ESRI).

⁷ “Miscellaneous store retailers” includes florists, used merchandise stores, pet stores, office supply stores, gift and souvenir stores, art dealers, tobacco stores, and mobile home dealers.

⁸ “Nonstore retailers” includes businesses that sell products and services via venues other than traditional stores, such as by mail order, door-to-door sales, in-home demonstrations, or vending machines, or by making direct deliveries, as is the case with home-delivered newspapers or heating oil.

Retail Buying Power of Cooperstown-Area Residents and Visitors

Using data from the US Census Bureau’s 2014 American Community Survey and from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Consumer Expenditure Survey, we estimate that the 7,645 people who work in the 13326 zipcode area spend approximately \$40 million on retail products and services annually.⁹

There is no precise estimate of the number of visitors Cooperstown attracts – but, with the Baseball Hall of Fame, Doubleday Field, the Fenimore Art Museum, The Farmers’ Museum, The Glimmerglass Festival, and Otsego Lake attracting visitors from throughout the northeast and, to a lesser extent, from throughout the nation and world, it is reasonable to assume that it attracts at least half a million visitors annually (according to data provided by the National Baseball Hall of Fame, the Hall of Fame alone attracts roughly 300,000 visitors annually). For the sake of illustration, we have used this number to estimate the retail buying power of Cooperstown-area visitors. We estimate that the retail buying power of one-half million visitors is approximately \$2.9 billion.¹⁰

The \$2.9 billion in retail buying power that Cooperstown-area visitors’ households represent is a very tempting number – but, realistically, visitors are likely to spend most of this money closer to home. For example, while they might buy some specialty food products while visiting Cooperstown, visitors are likely to buy almost all of their groceries from stores in their home communities. The \$40 million that the households of workers in the 13326 zip code area spend annually is, in many ways, a more obtainable target.

⁹ The Consumer Expenditure Survey reports data on the expenditures of US households, rather than of individuals, as households make purchases in more predictably similar ways. Based on Otsego County’s average household size of 2.36 persons, the 13326 zip code area’s 7,645 workers would represent 3,239 households. But because it is likely that some of these households consist of more than one person working in Cooperstown, we have conservatively estimated that only 80 percent of these are unique households, for a total estimate of 2,592 households. We then based our estimates of these households’ consumer buying power on household income levels for Otsego County.

¹⁰ We have based this estimate on New York State’s average household size of 2.62 persons, meaning that one-half million visitors would represent 190,840 households.

Product/service category	Retail buying power	
	Workers	Visitors
Food and beverages consumed at home	\$ 7,861,000	\$ 578,921,000
Food and beverages consumed away from home	4,529,000	333,467,000
Housekeeping supplies	1,156,000	85,146,000
Furniture and home furnishings	2,357,000	173,428,000
Apparel and footwear	2,929,000	215,733,000
Transportation	13,670,000	1,006,650,000
Medical supplies and equipment	1,322,000	97,294,000
Entertainment	4,649,000	342,418,000
Personal care	1,032,000	75,960,000
Reading materials	176,000	12,958,000
School and other education-related supplies	287,000	21,133,000
Tobacco products/smoking materials	40,000	2,936,000
TOTAL	\$ 40,008,000	\$ 2,946,944,000

TABLE 8: Estimates of the retail buying power of Cooperstown workers and Cooperstown-area visitors (*sources:* US Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Expenditure Survey; CLUE Group).

Year	Attendance
2007	352,000
2008	301,755
2009	289,000
2010	281,000
2011	265,817
2012	262,000
2013	253,649
2014	294,435

TABLE 9: Visitors to the National Baseball Hall of Fame (*source:* Baseball Hall of Fame)

Observations

STRENGTHS: Cooperstown has many assets of which most other communities would be envious.

- Cooperstown has a national reputation for its association with baseball and for being the home of the Baseball Hall of Fame.
- It also has a regional reputation for arts, culture, and its pristine environment.
- Downtown Cooperstown has a cohesive core of historic commercial buildings, a very important asset in differentiating the district from other shopping and recreation options within the region and in creating/maintaining a distinctive visual identity for the community.
- Cooperstown conveys a high quality image in its architecture, urban design, natural environment, and businesses.
- The community's substantial tourism base augments the buying power of local residents and offers the opportunity to support businesses for which local market demand alone would not be sufficient.
- In addition to the substantial number of people who visit Cooperstown's baseball-related attractions, the community attracts a significant number of other visitors. The 13326 zip code area's worker population is 3.5 times that of its resident population, for example, and Basset clocks 470,000 outpatient visits annually. These groups represent a more solid opportunity for downtown Cooperstown to expand its sales and broaden its business mix than tourists represent.
- The areas within five- and ten-minute drive times of downtown Cooperstown are experiencing overall retail sales surpluses, reflecting the impact of visitors – but the area within a 15-minute drive time is experiencing an overall retail sales leakage, suggesting a potential opportunity for Cooperstown businesses to attract new sales to regional residents.

-
- Median household incomes are relatively high within the community and environs, suggesting that private capital might be available to support and sustain new business development and expansion of existing businesses.
 - There is an international pool of hundreds of thousands of people with an affinity for Cooperstown and its attractions, and it might be possible to tap this pool for potential entrepreneurs.

CHALLENGES: Cooperstown’s dependence on tourism provides several substantial benefits – but also several substantial challenges.

- There are very few opportunities for local “comparison” shopping. The community’s businesses, as a group, either meet convenience needs (groceries, pharmaceuticals, etc.) or serve as specialty and/or destination businesses.
- Visitors currently have a greater impact on shaping downtown Cooperstown’s retail mix than locals.
- Many of Cooperstown’s businesses – particularly its downtown businesses – are only open during baseball season, leaving very few off-season shopping opportunities for area residents.
- Seven-day minimum-stay requirements from some lodging establishments and tourist accommodations discourage some would-be tourists looking for shorter stays.
- The economic impact of the Baseball Hall of Fame is tremendous – but its exact impact is unknown. The Hall of Fame reports attracting roughly 300,000 visitors annually, with an economic impact of \$160 million, or approximately \$533/visitor, attributable to the Hall of Fame and Doubleday Field. However, a 2010 report by Tourism Economics, *The Economic Impact of Tourism in New York: 2010 Calendar Year, Central New York Focus*, concluded that tourism contributed \$148 million to Otsego County overall that year. The disparity between these numbers makes it impossible to realistically assess what the impact of Cooperstown’s baseball-related attractions actually is.

Recommendations

1. **Diversify downtown Cooperstown’s business mix.** This is particularly important on Main Street because it is downtown Cooperstown’s highest-visibility street.

The people who visit Cooperstown spend enough to support downtown Cooperstown’s baseball-oriented and baseball-themed businesses, to the extent that the ground-floor businesses are able to generate enough rental income to make it possible for their commercial landlords to sustain the buildings without much need for income from upper-floor uses.

This formula might work well enough for the property owners – but it does not work well for the overall district or for the community. As many national surveys have concluded, people who visit historic communities like to patronize businesses that are popular with local residents. Heritage visitors like to experience what it is like to live in and be part of a community with historic resources. But Cooperstown’s Main Street offers very little to local residents, plus the relatively high percent of vacant and underused upper-floor spaces means that the district lacks the support of district residents and workers that many comparable historic downtowns enjoy.

Somewhat ironically, the fact that Cooperstown attracts a large number of visitors means that the district could support many types of businesses that resident sales alone could not otherwise support. Cooperstown is a small town and, collectively, its residents don’t generate much demand for retail products and services. But, because its downtown businesses *could* sell products and services to residents, visitors, and online customers, downtown Cooperstown could, with good management, support many businesses that local retail demand alone could not support.

We recommend prioritizing development or recruitment of these types of businesses:

- Apparel-related businesses that function as destination businesses by offering products and services different from those available in chain apparel stores
- Home furnishings businesses that function as destination businesses
- Additional coworking space , providing a shared work space and opportunities for collaboration to Cooperstown-area residents who currently work from home offices, workshops or “a la carte” workspace
- Small artisan manufacturers
- Specialty foods and beverages

All of these offer products and/or services that would appeal to both locals and visitors.

In terms of price points, there appears to be unmet market demand for goods and services at moderate price points. There is *some* unmet market demand for goods and services at higher price points. By augmenting sales to area residents and workers with sales to visitors, downtown Cooperstown would be able to support businesses that its own residents alone would not be able to support.

We recommend using this litmus test for prioritizing and selecting new businesses:

- Does it serve locals?
- Will it fill in significant voids in the district’s retail and service offerings?
- Can it operate year-round?
- Does it offer an authentic experience?
- Does it highlight aspects of Cooperstown’s history and culture *other* than baseball?
- Does it offer something different within the region?

2. **To do this, play an active, aggressive role in guiding retail development.** There are essentially two ways to achieve this:

- By persuading downtown property owners to lease space to priority businesses, and/or
- By controlling downtown property.

Some specific recommendations:

- a. Broadly distribute the downtown business development strategy: Ensure that everyone who might serve as a point of contact for a potential new downtown business is familiar with the list of priority businesses and with the tools and incentives available to support new business development. This list should include property owners, realtors, commercial building contractors, commercial lenders, local and regional economic development professionals, and owners of existing downtown businesses.
- b. Offer incentives for high-priority businesses: In particular, we recommend offering the following incentives:
 - **Forgivable loans**: Forgivable loan programs help provide seed capital to new businesses, with loan repayment forgiven over a period of several years. The forgivable loan program offered in downtown Waterville, Maine, for example, provides loans of up to \$50,000 to high-priority businesses. Interested businesses must match the forgivable loan on at least a 1:1 basis. Businesses that are awarded forgivable loans pay interest only for five years, after which the loan principal is forgiven. The program is capitalized by Tax Increment Finance funds and program-related fees (such as application fees) – but there are many potential funding sources that could be used.
 - **Deferred loan repayment**: Deferred loan repayment programs are particularly useful in attracting businesses with high start-up costs (such as restaurants and others that need expensive equipment). By deferring loan repayment for two years, businesses are able to establish themselves and build clientele without steep loan payments. For example, the deferred loan repayment program in downtown Winston-Salem, North Carolina, which focuses on new restaurants, is administered by the City, which uses CDBG funds to cover loan repayment to participating banks during the two-year deferment period; restaurants then repay those two years of loans to the City at the end of the primary loan term. The Village could partner with Otsego Now to explore this idea.

-
- **Private investment and community capital:** Many small businesses throughout the country have multiple owners, making it easier to capitalize a business. With the advent of crowdfunding, tapping into community capital is becoming an even more practical option for starting and sustaining downtown businesses. In some instances, businesses might operate as coops, with community members paying annual membership fees in exchange for an annual dividend or periodic rebates on purchases. In other instances, businesses might offer equity shares to community members – a practice that has grown quickly in the past several years due to passage of the JOBS Act in 2012.

We recommend that businesses taking advantage of these incentives agree to follow certain guidelines:

- Operating throughout the year, not just during baseball season
- Maintaining business hours for at least 48 hours per week
- Changing storefront window displays at least once per month

Downtown business development incentives such as these could be administered by the Village, by a new nonprofit downtown management organization (such as a Business Improvement District or Main Street organization), by a nonprofit development corporation (see #c, immediately following), or by a coalition of downtown stakeholder organizations.

-
- c. Consider creating a non-profit development corporation to acquire, rehabilitate, and lease key downtown properties. By owning downtown property, the development corporation would have direct control over building occupancy, ongoing maintenance, and periodic rehabilitation. This could offer many other benefits, in addition to controlling occupancy. For example, by generating income from upper-floor housing or office tenants, the development corporation could offer ground-floor space to high-priority businesses at a discounted rate. And, the development corporation could create economic efficiencies by providing shared elevators for multiple buildings, bundling properties together to make efficient use of federal and state historic rehabilitation tax credits, and reducing certain rehabilitation costs. We recommend that the development corporation focus particular attention on buildings at intersections and other high-visibility locations and on buildings whose rehabilitation and tenancy might offer maximum benefit for nearby buildings (e.g., by providing a shared elevator, or by housing an anchor or catalyst business).

The development corporation might be structured and function much like a Community Development Corporation, but with a focus on downtown building rehabilitation, building management, and leasing. Its administrative expenses would likely need to be covered by contributions from key public- and private-sector entities for its first few years (the Village, County, Otsego Now, Chamber of Commerce, financial institutions, regional foundations, etc.). After its first 3-5 years, it might be able to support itself in part or whole through earned income (e.g., development fees) or through revenues from a downtown Tax Increment Financing district¹¹ or Business Improvement District.¹²

¹¹ Tax Increment Financing uses new property taxes generated by rehabilitated buildings and redeveloped land for activities needed to stimulate rehabilitation and redevelopment. The amount of tax revenue that results from building improvements or infill development, above and beyond what the municipality already collects, is the tax “increment”. It isn’t a new tax, or a higher tax rate; it’s simply that because the property’s value has increased due to the improvements, the prevailing property tax rate generates more revenue.

¹² Business Improvement Districts are districts in which a majority of property owners volunteer to pay an annual assessment to provide for certain services above and beyond that normally provided by local government. Services might include marketing, security, parking management, business attraction, or other related activities benefitting the overall district. Assessments are typically based on property value, street frontage, or other characteristics. Funds are collected by local government on behalf of the Business Improvement District, which is managed by a board consisting of district property owners.

In addition to acquiring, redeveloping, and leasing key downtown buildings, the development corporation could also serve as the entity that administers the incentive programs mentioned above for high-priority businesses. It could also serve as a master developer, working with other district property owners to redevelop and lease downtown space on a fee basis.

d. Protect the district from new commercial development large enough to displace sales from existing businesses. A small – but growing – number of towns and cities have enacted ordinances that require developers of commercial properties over a certain size (typically 25,000 or 50,000 square feet) to demonstrate that there is sufficient *unmet* market demand to support a new commercial entity of that size. Typically, local governments require that the developer covers the cost of an impact analysis for the proposed new development, but the consultant who conducts the impact analysis is selected by the local government.

3. **In the meantime, animate storefront display windows.** During the months when seasonal businesses are closed, their vacancy creates the illusion of an inactive district – which discourages shopping and window-shopping. We strongly recommend that the Village create an ongoing program to animate downtown storefront display windows, particularly the storefront windows of vacant and seasonally-vacant buildings. Animation might include displaying merchandise from one or more open, active businesses; artwork (see, for example, downtown Evanston, Illinois’s “Art Under Glass” program); video displays; live theatre; etc. Cultural organizations, schools, and civic clubs might all be good candidates for helping animate storefront windows.

4. **And, help existing businesses – particularly those open year-round – expand their sales.** As internet-based sales continue to grow, it is increasingly imperative that downtown businesses use multiple channels to reach customers and make sales. Some examples:

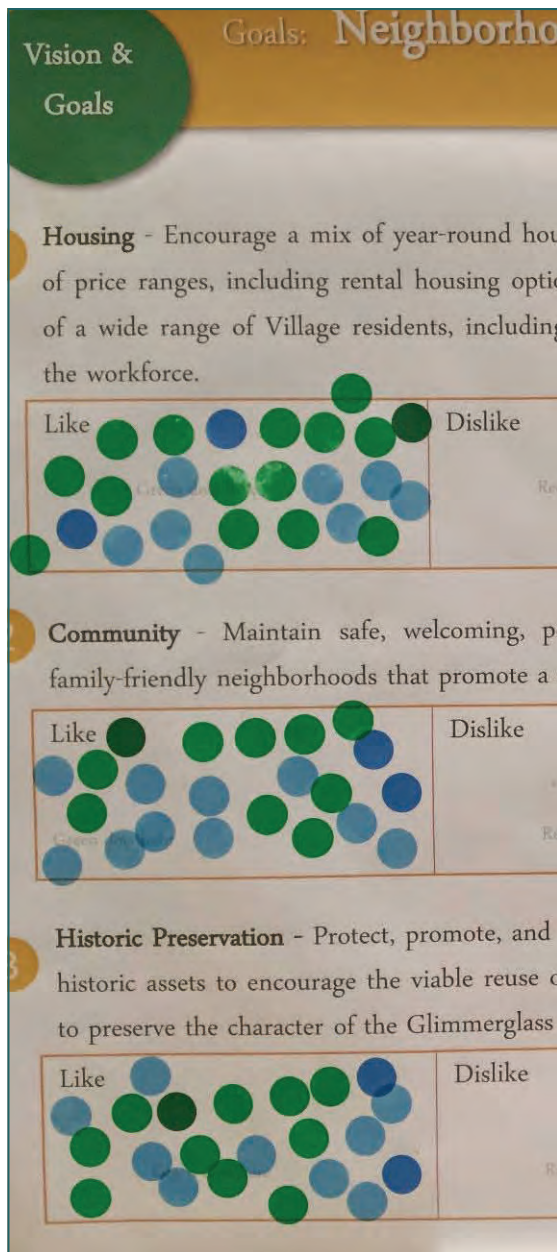
- Online sales, through an online storefront (web-based services like Shopify.com and Volusion.com make it easy and affordable for independently owned businesses to launch and manage online storefronts)

-
- Online sales through sales platforms such as eBay and Amazon
 - Renting a small amount of square footage inside a compatible business (either locally or in another community) and selling merchandise there, with sales managed by the host business
 - Offering local deliveries
 - Mobile vending, via a kiosk, pushcart, truck, or even vending machine to reach customers in other communities
 - Wholesaling a unique product to other retailers regionally or nationally

Cooperstown attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year and is known throughout the world. It has a unique opportunity to parlay its visibility into ongoing commercial relationships with one-time and occasional visitors.

5. **Create more workforce housing.** Cooperstown is quickly becoming a community in which some of its workers cannot afford to rent or buy a home. Fortunately, the upper floors of some downtown Cooperstown’s buildings – which appear to be underutilized – could provide affordable workforce housing. And, by combining federal and state historic rehabilitation tax credits with federal low-income housing tax credits, property owners and developers could recoup as much as 50 percent of their building rehabilitation costs in the form of federal and state income tax credits (or, through partnership with an investor, in the form of project equity). Having multiple sources of rental income from a downtown building also relieves financial pressure for the property owner to derive all of a property’s income from the ground-floor tenant. And, developing upper-floor housing improves property value, which generates more property tax revenue for local government – and without significant new infrastructure costs.

The process of creating workforce housing could be managed by a nonprofit development corporation, as suggested above, or it could be managed by another type of downtown management entity (such as a Business Improvement District or Main Street program) working with one or more consultants who could provide specialized expertise in tax credits.



SECTION 4: VISION, GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Steering Committee prepared a vision statement for the Comprehensive Plan & Downtown Revitalization Strategy based on input received at public workshops, stakeholder interviews, and conversations with residents and business owners. The vision statement summarizes the community's ideal future—a future that focuses on enhancing the quality of life for residents.

Vision Statement

Cooperstown is and will continue to be an attractive, vibrant, year-round community that provides an excellent quality of life. The Village of Cooperstown is committed to:

- **protecting** its natural and cultural resources
- **recognizing** the important role that art, history, and tradition play in the community's character
- **encouraging** a range of housing options accessible to people of all ages, incomes, and abilities
- **continuing** to improve, while preserving the authenticity of, neighborhoods, municipal properties, infrastructure, and commercial districts
- **attracting** and **retaining** a diverse mix of year-round retail shops, businesses, and restaurants that cater to both residents and visitors
- **being** a model for environmental sustainability, with a focus on energy efficiency, renewable resources, alternative transportation, and reuse of historic properties
- **fostering** a climate in which local government is inclusive and responsive to the needs of residents and businesses

GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve this vision, the Steering Committee developed a series of Goals and Recommendations for the following categories:

- A. Neighborhoods
- B. Recreation
- C. Business and Economic Development
- D. Infrastructure
- E. Environment and Sustainability
- F. Government
- G. Doubleday Field

The recommendations detail specific actions or policies the Village should pursue to accomplish the plan goals. It should be noted that the recommendations are the suggested method to accomplish the vision, but they may not be the only approach. The intent is to provide the Village with options to address the issues and concerns that were identified during the comprehensive planning process.



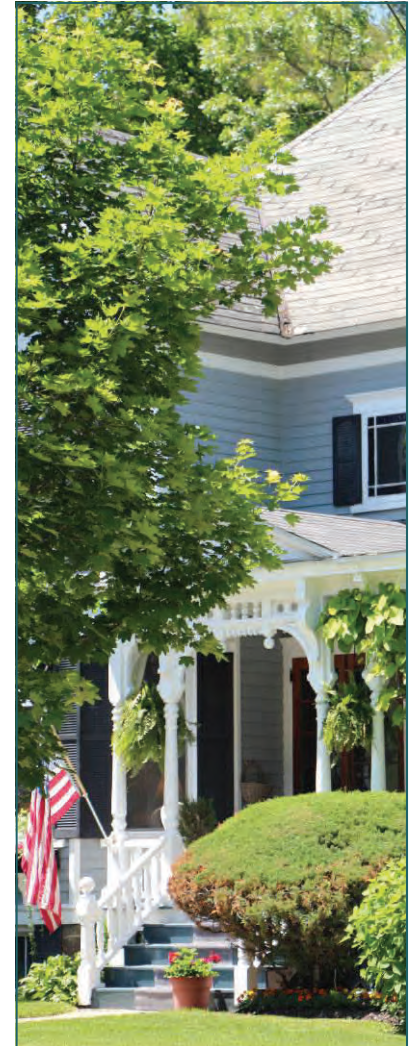
NEIGHBORHOODS

Successful communities are populated by a variety of residents of different ages, economic situations, and social needs who are at different stages in life and have different needs and desires. In order to accommodate this variety of residents, a community must have and allow for a variety of housing types within the community. Cooperstown is mostly composed of single-family homes and has a high rate of home ownership. Seasonal homes are a common occurrence here, as the community serves as a vacation and summer destination for people from many different areas.

During the public engagement process, many residents expressed concern over various housing issues. Affordability of home ownership and year-round rentals, careful monitoring of conversion of year-round residences to summer rentals, and reasonable housing options for young families and seniors were all issues that the public wished to address during the comprehensive plan process. The recommendations in this section are intended to assist the Village in remaining a community that can welcome all who hope to live here while retaining the small town character that makes Cooperstown special.

Neighborhood recommendations are organized according to the following topic areas:

- Housing
- Community
- Historic Preservation



Housing

Goal

Encourage a mix of year-round housing types in a variety of price ranges, including rental housing options, to meet the needs of a wide range of Village residents, including families, seniors, and the workforce.

Recommendations

A.1 Promote current property tax incentives for mixed-use development to encourage the rehabilitation of downtown buildings to enhance upper-floor residential uses.

The presence of a mix of uses in the downtown is an asset and will ensure the long-term viability of the area. Allowing renovation and re-use of structures for apartments, studio space, retail establishments, and other uses in underutilized buildings provides more opportunities for different activities within the Village.

In 2013, the Village of Cooperstown adopted § 485-a of the New York State Real Property Tax Law. Benefits under this exemption apply to non-residential real property that is converted to a structure used for both residential and commercial purposes.

A.2 Update zoning and planning regulations to ensure that a diversity of housing types is permitted within the Village.

The zoning ordinance is perhaps the most important land use tool available to a municipality. As such, many communities update specific provisions within the ordinance on a piecemeal basis, in response to issues that arise periodically. However, this can result in a confusing ordinance with many cross references and in worst-case situations can create conflicting regulations.

Cooperstown should perform a thorough review and revision of the zoning ordinance, so that it is consistent with the vision, goals, and recommendations of this plan. This review would involve the following:

-
- *Review the Zoning Map:* The village should review the Zoning map to ensure the Zoning Districts and District boundaries are consistent with the goals of the comprehensive plan.
 - *Districts and District Purpose:* Refine the “Purpose” of each Zoning District to be consistent with the comprehensive plan.
 - *District Uses:* Refine and/or change the allowable/compatible uses for each district. Ensure that the ordinance adequately addresses newer uses, such as alternative energy facilities, telecommunication towers, and related uses including associated parking requirements.
 - *Review Procedures and Administration:* Continue to regularly review the procedures and checklists for site plan review and special use permits. The goal should be to ensure that the processes are easy to understand for applicants, while providing review boards with the information they need to make informed decisions.

In addition, the ordinance should be reviewed to make it an organized, user-friendly document. Definitions should be examined to make sure they are accurate and useful, and the language should eliminate unnecessary “legalese.” Copies of the final document, including the zoning map, should be readily available on the Village’s website and /or at Village Hall.

A.3 Enforce registration procedures for tourist accommodations and take violators to court, ensuring that short-term rentals do not overrun residential options.

In 2014, the Village passed a local law regulating short-term tourist accommodations. The Tourist Accommodation Registration is a licensing process for all tourist accommodations, which is intended to ensure that accommodations are owner occupied, have adequate parking, and meet all fire and safety and taxation requirements. The licensing process requires that registrants provide proof of payment of the Otsego County bed tax, a list of emergency contacts where applicable, and a fire safety inspection certificate for the accommodation from the Otsego County Codes Office. The Village’s Zoning Enforcement Officer is responsible for issuing permits and conducting inspections of the properties.

A.4 Conduct a Housing Needs Assessment.

During the public engagement process, residents stated that one of the biggest challenges facing Cooperstown residents is the lack of market-rate workforce housing, year-round rental properties, and housing for seniors. To understand current market and conditions and projected changes that will influence future housing needs, the Village should seek funding to conduct a housing needs assessment.

In 2014, Otsego County conducted a Housing Needs and Opportunities Study. This study provided a great deal of information about changing demographics, employment characteristics, and trends expected over the years ahead, but the strategies and recommended actions were designed to address problems at a regional level. Because housing is an issue that needs to be addressed at the local level, Cooperstown would benefit from a Village-wide housing needs assessment.



Community

Goal

Maintain safe, welcoming, pedestrian-oriented, and family-friendly neighborhoods that promote a sense of community.

Recommendations

A.5 Enhance neighborhood quality of life by coordinating and promoting more community-building events.

Whether it is through event attendance or donating volunteer hours, working side by side with neighbors, community events enhance the Village's positive image, promote a sense of community, provide opportunities for residents to interact socially, and boost community pride within the Village.

The Village of Cooperstown currently hosts a number of community-building events including the Growing Community's Fall Harvest Supper, Winter Carnival, and Main Street Cooptoberfest. The Village should coordinate with local community organizations and volunteers to support existing programs, as well as work with event organizers to promote new community-wide events.



Historic Resources

The Village of Cooperstown is known for its authentic, historic charm. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century historic and architecturally significant buildings reflect a rich local heritage. The Village has established a strong historic preservation program that includes recognition of the Glimmerglass Historic District, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999, Certified Local Government (CLG) status, and an active Historic Preservation and Architecture Review Board. The unique identity created by Cooperstown's historic resources contributes to a sense of overall stability and pride within the Village and serves as an important attraction for visitors, potential residents, and businesses. Historic resource preservation and public education efforts are vital to the Village's continued growth and success. The Village's status additionally provides a means to leverage state and federal tax credits for rehabilitation projects.

Goal

Protect, promote, and enhance Cooperstown's historic assets to encourage the viable reuse of historic buildings and to preserve the character of the Glimmerglass Historic District.

Recommendations

A.6 Increase awareness of local historic resources, strategies for making historic buildings more sustainable, and the availability of historic homeowner tax credits through public education.

Public education regarding the benefits and incentives associated with preservation is a powerful tool to ensure preservation of historic and architecturally significant resources. The Village could partner with the Cooperstown Graduate Program to sponsor a series of seminars designed to educate the public about the value and treatment of local historic resources and the availability of and preparation for historic homeowner tax credits.

A.7 Work with the Otesaga Resort Hotel to distribute the hotel’s self-guided walking tour brochure beyond the hotel.

As heritage tourism continues to grow in popularity, there has been increasing interest within communities to develop self-guided historic resource walking tours. These walking tours may be of the downtown area’s historic buildings and related heritage sites, or for a community's historic district. The Village should work with the Otesaga Resort Hotel to make its existing walking tour brochure available throughout the Village.

A.8 Maintain the Village’s participation in the federal Certified Local Government (CLG) program and use designation to leverage funding.

The Certified Local Government Program of the National Park Service encourages municipalities to enact laws that provide for local review of development proposals that impact historic buildings. By maintaining the Village’s CLG status, Cooperstown is eligible for grant monies that can be used for research on properties and education about historic preservation.

A.9 Reinvigorate the existing recognition program for privately-owned historic buildings.

One way to promote public appreciation and civic pride in Cooperstown’s history is to reinvigorate the historic property plaque program. The revised program could include development of a house history and a newly designed bronze plaque, which commemorates the building. Necessary data is already available in the Florence Ward files at the research library of the New York State Historical Association that could be compiled by CGP students or volunteers. The history usually includes a written narrative, deed search, and relevant maps. The property owner pays a fee to cover the expense of the historic plaque and the house history.



RECREATION

The Village contains several active and passive municipal recreation parks, which feature a wide variety of amenities for local residents and visitors. Cooperstown has six village-owned parks, four of which are located on Otsego Lake.

- Three Mile Point
- Fairy Spring Park
- Lakefront Park
- Council Rock Park
- Pioneer Park
- Badger Park

Cooperstown is also home to a variety of recreational amenities not associated with a specific park or playground. These provide opportunity for boating, hiking, fishing, kayaking, multi-use trails, scenic byways, golfing, and more. These recommendations are targeted toward the improvement and expansion of recreation in the Village and region.

Recreation recommendations are organized according to the following topic areas:

- Waterfront Access
- Recreation Facilities and Programming
- Lakefront Park



Waterfront Access

Goal

Foster public access to and awareness of Otsego Lake and the headwaters of the Susquehanna River.

Recommendations

B.1 Evaluate existing Village boat launches for motorized and non-motorized boats on Otsego Lake.

The Fair Street boat launch is used by the public for both large and small watercraft. The boat launch itself is in need of a number of changes in order to be safe and user-friendly. The Village should evaluate what improvements are needed to enhance access and parking at the Fair Street boat launch, as well as the nearby launch at Fish Road and non-motorized access at Fairy Spring and Three Mile Point Parks to increase utilization of Otsego Lake for recreation.



B.2 Explore avenues to link existing neighborhoods, open space, and recreational areas including Fairy Spring and Three Mile Point Parks via public transit and safe pedestrian and bicycle access.

Access to parks, open space, and recreational areas, including trails, enhances the livability of a community and contributes to the well-being of its residents. These amenities provide residents and visitors with both active and passive recreation options, while also helping to preserve open space, wildlife habitat, and natural resources. One way to enhance public access to Cooperstown's waterfront while increasing recreation opportunities for residents and visitors is to explore the feasibility of linking existing neighborhoods to recreation areas via trails and public transit.

B.3 Provide better visual and pedestrian access to waterfront within the Village of Cooperstown for non-boaters of all ages and abilities.

To enhance physical and visual access to and along the waterfront for public use, the Village could:

- Improve veiwsheds and walkways from Main Street to waterfront, especially along Hoffman Lane, which provides direct access to Lakefront Park.
- Provide a means for non-boat owners to further enjoy Otsego Lake at Lakefront Park through the construction of a walking pier, which could also be used for fishing.

B.4 Increase informational and directional signage along Main Street to increase visitor awareness of Otsego Lake.

The Village has a wealth of natural recreational assets, which are cherished by residents. The Village should design and install a unified signage system for all existing parks in the community. The signs could include a multilingual QR (quick response) code. This would allow visitors to use their smartphones to read the QR code and retrieve the translation in their own language. In addition, the Village could actively promote the lake to increase the user base. This will become increasingly important as growth in residential units also increases demand for regional outdoor recreation facilities. One option would be to create a brochure to highlight the parks in the Village, and then make this available in printed and digital form. This could be coordinated with other efforts to reach out to the local and regional real estate community, so that the Village could capture some of the many young professionals looking to Cooperstown as a residential and recreational destination.

B.5 Partner with local and regional organizations to promote Otsego Lake as a destination.

During the Design Charrette, workshop participants were asked to identify the Village's most popular destinations and icons. One of the top responses was the Otsego Lake waterfront. To foster tourism and increase public awareness of Otsego Lake, the Village should partner with local and regional organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Destination Oneonta, and Otsego 2000 to promote Otsego Lake as a destination.

B.6 Assess feasibility of seasonal slip rentals at Fairy Spring Park.

Fairy Spring Park is a municipal recreation area located along the east side of Otsego Lake. The site, which can be accessed from County Highway 31, includes a swimming area, picnic tables, and a pavilion. To foster public access to Otsego Lake, the Village should seek funding that would allow it to assess the feasibility of seasonal slip rentals at the park.

Recreation Facilities and Programming

Goal

Provide a variety of outdoor recreation and programming opportunities throughout all four seasons to accommodate the needs of residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

Recommendations

B.7 Update the *Village of Cooperstown Parks & Recreation Plan*.

To guide the growth and development of the Village's park system, the 1988 Parks and Recreation Plan should be reviewed and updated. The revised plan should include recommendations and an implementation strategy that will assist the Village Board when making decisions and securing funding for the acquisition, development, and management of municipal parks, open space, and recreation programming.

B.8 Assess the demand/feasibility of creating a municipal dog park within the Village.

The Village of Cooperstown maintains a wide variety of recreation facilities. However, these should not be viewed as static but rather flexible, evolving to meet the changing needs of the population. The Village should evaluate opportunities to increase the type and variety of features at the Village's parks and recreation facilities, including a dog walk or a dog park. According to a 2015 report from the Trust for Public Land, off-leash dog parks are now the fastest-growing segments of municipal parks. The Village Parks Board should work with a group of interested community residents to assess the demand for a municipal dog park, discuss potential locations, and identify similar projects implemented in other communities.

B.9 Partner with neighboring communities and appropriate agencies to identify possible winter trail routes and connections.

The Village of Cooperstown should work locally with neighboring communities and regionally with the Otsego County Planning Department to achieve a connected winter trail system.

B.10 Work with existing public and private entities to promote both summer and winter recreation activities including boating, fishing, wildlife enjoyment, sledding, ice skating, and ice fishing.

To promote Cooperstown as a year-round recreation destination, the Village should partner with organizations like Otsego 2000, the Clark Sports Center, and Glimmerglass State Park to promote existing winter activities including cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobile trails, ice skating at Badger Park, and opportunities for ice fishing and winter hiking.

B.11 Investigate opportunities to expand and/or relocate the public ice rink.

The Village of Cooperstown creates and maintains a skating rink at Badger Park (located off Beaver Street) during the winter months. Hockey is scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:30 to 9:00 pm and weekends from 10:00 am to noon. Figure skating is scheduled for weekends from 12:30 to 3:30 pm. The rink is used for mixed use skating during the remainder of the time.

An opportunity exists to evaluate use and demand to determine if hours can be further expanded or if a more visible location might promote greater use.

B.12 Continue to work with local merchants to explore the feasibility of establishing recreation equipment rentals (kayak, canoe, bike) within the Village.

To encourage residents and visitors to engage in outdoor recreation activities, the Village could work with private businesses to provide kayak, paddleboard, canoe, bicycle, and ice skate rentals at various locations throughout the Village including the downtown and waterfront parks.

Lakefront Park

Goal

Enhance the use of Lakefront Park by promoting cultural and culinary events, as well as recreational opportunities throughout the year.

Recommendations

B.13 Further enhance the view shed and access to Lakefront Park from Main Street.

Workshop participants noted that Otsego Lake was one of their favorite places to visit, view, and walk. To enhance public access to the lake, it is recommended that the Village:

- *Ensure that views of the lake are not hampered by vegetation.*
- *Provide pedestrian access to existing sidewalks.*
- *Explore the development of waterfront walking paths and a pedestrian/fishing pier.*



B.14 Encourage use of Lakefront Park for existing or new special events.

Lakefront Park can continue to serve as the home for various existing events such as Winter Carnival, 4th of July fireworks, and various races/triathlon by keeping permit fees low for community (public) events and better promoting opportunities. The Village could also partner with the Chamber and local restaurants to develop new events at the Park, like a “Taste of Cooperstown” or relocating portions of existing events like Cooptoberfest to the park.

B.15 Continue to offer Concerts in the Park during the summer season.

During the summer months the Village of Cooperstown offers free concerts every Tuesday night at the historic bandstand in Lakefront Park. In 2015, the Village expanded the series by including the showing of a family-friendly movie after three of the concerts. The Village should continue to offer this type of recreation programming, as the Lakefront Park Concert series enhances the cultural life in the community for residents and visitors alike.

B.16 Continue to promote existing municipal day slips.

The Village of Cooperstown currently has 91 boat slips for rent plus an additional 4 day slips on the two Lakefront docks, as well as two temporary day spaces at the Fair Street launch. To encourage boaters to visit the businesses located along Main Street, the Village should capitalize on this resource and partner with existing marketing and tourism groups to promote the fact that Cooperstown has lakeside municipal day slips located within a short walking distance of the Main Street.



Business and Economic Development

The Village of Cooperstown's economy is primarily driven by tourism and the health care industry. As a tourist destination, Cooperstown is dependent on its restaurants, retail, and commercial businesses to not only offer a quality downtown experience to visitors, but also to provide jobs for residents and generate the sales tax revenues, which partially support critical public services and maintain the Village's infrastructure. Additionally, to remain sustainable, downtown must cater to the needs of residents as well as tourists during the entirety of the year, not just the summer months.

During the public engagement process, residents and visitors identified a number of challenges and opportunities as they relate to employment, growth and expansion of businesses, quality of life of all residents, the tax base, and the promotion and development of Main Street and Railroad Avenue.

The Steering Committee reviewed the public input, along with the quantitative data provided in the Downtown Revitalization Strategy Analysis, and developed a series of goals and recommendations designed to position the Village as an attractive place to live and work.

Business and Economic Development recommendations are organized according to the following topic areas:

- Business Diversity / Year-Round Business
- Business Attraction, Expansion, and Retention
- Railroad Avenue



Business Diversity / Year Round Business

Goal

Encourage diversity in year-round retail, service, and commercial business scaled to meet the needs of Village residents and visitors alike.

Recommendations

C.1 Encourage businesses to stay open year-round and to remain open during the evening in the summer.

During the planning process, one of the challenges identified by the public was the lack of consistent hours and seasonal closing among businesses located along Main Street. Inconsistent business hours weaken retail density and undermine the downtown's attractiveness to a wider customer base. According to the Downtown Idea Exchange, Americans are eating later at night, shopping later, and want vibrant downtowns filled with activity, shopping, and entertainment. In fact, research indicates that: 1) 70% of all consumer retail spending (brick & mortar stores) take place after 6:00 pm., 2) if businesses extend their operations by two hours, the average retailer works 20% less, and 3) profits from extended hours will exceed increased expenses by a minimum of 16%.

In addition to remaining open during evening hours in the summer, residents need to have businesses located along Main Street that are open year-round. The Village, in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce, should continue to work with existing businesses to coordinate hours, so there are enough stores open to attract and keep customers on Main Street during the evenings, and seek to retain and attract year-round businesses that will meet the commercial needs of residents.

C.2 Use comprehensive plan and zoning law to market the Village to attract and recruit businesses that will serve residents as well as visitors and provide a mix of products and services.

The public outreach process identified the need for a more diverse mix of stores, entertainment, and restaurants that cater to the needs of Village residents as well as visitors. An opportunity exists for the Village to now use this information to recruit the desired commercial sectors to Cooperstown.

C.3 Develop a program to make unoccupied/seasonal storefronts active and more appealing through actions such as the installation of public art.

To reinforce the commercial node and create a concentration of retail offerings while reducing physical gaps along Main Street, the Village could connect property owners with artists to activate empty facades and storefronts with permanent or temporary uses (i.e., art installations, pop-ups, community events, etc).

C.4 Consider establishing a Downtown Business Association to encourage a cohesive Main Street business group.

Downtown business associations are typically membership-driven, not-for-profit organizations whose mission is to promote their communities' downtowns as dynamic places to live, work, and do business. To improve local capacity to organize downtown businesses requires an entity with sufficient resources to manage events and marketing, coordinate on behalf of existing merchants, and advocate for strategic investments in the downtown. The Village should work with private and public sector partners to develop and execute efforts to promote the downtown as a commercial and entertainment destination for residents, local employees, and visitors alike and encourage the formation of a downtown business association.

C.5 Promote Cooperstown as a year-round destination and business community.

To drive visitation and attract tourists to Cooperstown year-round, the Village should work with the Destination Marketing Corporation for Otsego County (DMCOC) to enhance and implement marketing programs and events that will brand Cooperstown as a year-round community. The Village should continue to work in partnership with local and regional tourism organizations to promote activities and events that reinforce the strategic position of Cooperstown as a "year-round destination" and coordinate with local merchants so they benefit from increased visitation.

C.6 Work with property owners and real estate professionals to analyze, improve, and market existing commercial spaces.

To increase occupancy rates of commercial properties in Cooperstown, the Village could maintain regular contact with property owners and real estate professionals to understand market issues related to vacant properties and help minimize barriers to development. Specifically, the Village could support the distribution of information related to sites and locations capable of accommodating a targeted activity and/or tenants. Available properties could be listed on the Village website as well as in industry databases, along with a list of available incentives.

Business Attraction, Expansion and Retention

Goal

Encourage the retention and expansion of existing businesses and support entrepreneurial and new business development, making Cooperstown competitive in small business growth.

Recommendations

C.7 Continue to be a business-friendly community.

The Village should continue to be a business-friendly community in order to attract and retain businesses. In an extremely competitive environment, the community with the procedures and policies that are perceived to be most accommodating to businesses will ultimately have a significant advantage. To create a more business-friendly community, the Village should consider the following action steps:

- *Continue efforts to streamline the zoning and permitting processes to make it easier to open a business in Cooperstown.*

Streamlining the development process further reinforces the message that the Village of Cooperstown is a business-friendly community. Village government should periodically review its development approval procedures to clearly define the roles of every board, and identify specific points in the process and criteria that trigger their respective reviews of a proposal.

- *Create a Village Business Welcome Kit.*

The Kit could include a list of contact information for Village Hall departments, existing local and regional economic development programs, contact information for local business associations, such as the Chamber, and financing resources.

- *Create a permit and license application system that allows for online application together with online issuance of permits/licenses, as appropriate.*

-
- *Designate a liaison to guide applicants through the regulatory process.*

The process of starting a new business can be daunting. Appropriate real estate must be located, a market must be identified, and local, regional, and state regulations must be considered. The Village should assist new and existing business owners in navigating this process. Designating a point person would allow for “one-stop shopping” for people interested in starting a business in Cooperstown.

C.8 Continue dialog with the Bassett Healthcare Network as it adapts to changing needs in medical education, healthcare, and its physical plant.

The Bassett Medical Center, located in the Village of Cooperstown, is a 180-bed, acute care inpatient teaching facility. The Center, which is headquarters of the Bassett Healthcare Network, is the largest employer in the Village of Cooperstown. As the face of healthcare continues to change at a rapid pace, Bassett will need to continue adapting to meet evolving needs to remain a leader in the field.

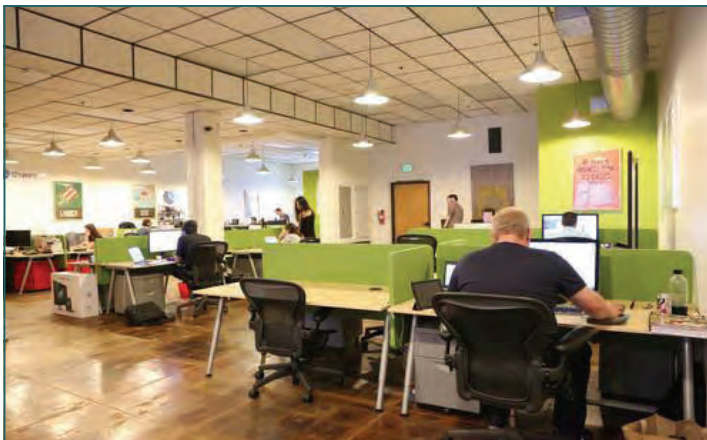
The Village recognizes that the Bassett Medical Center is an important community resource and is critical to the economic vitality of Cooperstown. The Village should continue to work with representatives of the Bassett Healthcare Network to ensure that Bassett’s plans are harmonious with those of the Village, and vice versa.



C.9 Promote existing, and encourage private entities to establish and support, shared workspaces and/or makerspaces within the Village.

“Shared” or “co-working” space are terms used to describe communal workspaces where independent business professionals, entrepreneurs, freelancers, and startups can rent workspace by the day or monthly. Similarly, a makerspace (also known as a hackerspace) is a physical location where people can gather to share resources, network, and work on projects. Makerspaces, which provide tools and space in a community environment like a library or community center, are typically associated with technical fields such as engineering, computer science, and graphic design.

The Village should encourage private entities to create additional co-working spaces and/or makerspaces within the Village to provide work space for people who work from home-based businesses and/or who would like to collaborate with others. Additionally, the Village should work with the public library, which is housed within Village Hall, to identify spaces that would allow the library to pursue this type of programming.



Coloft, a shared workspace, located in Santa Monica, CA



Makerspace at the College of San Mateo Library

C.10 Partner with private and not-for-profit entities to provide educational resources concerning marketing, finance, technology, web design, and other related business topics to encourage entrepreneurship.

The Village could partner with the Chamber of Commerce, higher education institutions, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) office located in Otsego County, and SCORE (formerly known as the Service Corps of Retired Executives) to host a series of information sessions that provide potential entrepreneurs with tips on online marketing, how to prepare a business plan, and local financing options.

In addition to educational resources, the Village could partner with established organizations to promote an entrepreneurs network. *Strong Towns*, a national media nonprofit, recently posted an article entitled, "How to encourage entrepreneurship in your town." The article identified a series of steps communities can take to attract entrepreneurs and to start growing small businesses, including recommendations that private and not-for-profit entities can use to encourage entrepreneurship in their towns. One of the easiest ways to get started is to "Get Social."

Programs such as 1 Million Cups (1MC), Business After Hours, and Start-up Drinks are great ways to help entrepreneurs network, share, and be inspired by one another. 1MC is a free, national program designed to educate, engage, and connect entrepreneurs. Developed by the Kauffman Foundation, 1MC is based on the notion that entrepreneurs discover solutions and network over a million cups of coffee. For more information, visit: <http://www.1millioncups.com>.

C.11 Continue to provide and expand opportunities to create a vibrant Main Street atmosphere including outdoor dining, public art, and activities such as music and entertainment in public spaces, including Pioneer Park and the lawn at 22 Main.

The Village recognizes that residents and tourists alike are attracted to vibrant, culturally alive places. A vibrant Main Street can attract people downtown and spur the opening of restaurants and other supportive amenities. The Village should continue to work with existing businesses and cultural organizations to support activities and programs that celebrate the arts and create a vibrant downtown.

C.12 Encourage creation of new business development in areas such as home offices and small craft shops within residential areas.

The Village should encourage appropriately-sited home-based businesses and live/work uses. Action items could include:

- *Continue to review existing zoning regulations and other regulatory processes to ensure that appropriate businesses can be easily permitted in residential areas.*
- *Continue to review, and if necessary, update zoning regulations to allow home-based business uses in residential zones, provided that they meet neighborhood needs with minimal impact.*
- *Continue to encourage and allow small craft manufacturing businesses provided that neighborhood impacts are minimized.*
- *Continue outreach to sole proprietors and small businesses owners to encourage greater participation in civic activities.*

C.13 Continue to participate in Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council and other regional economic development discussions.

In 2011, Governor Cuomo established ten Regional Economic Development Councils that he tasked with developing long-term strategic plans to guide economic growth in their respective regions. The Village of Cooperstown is part of the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council (MVREDC). To ensure that Cooperstown's unique tourism and economic development challenges and opportunities are addressed, the Village should continue to participate in discussions with the MVREDC and other regional economic development planning organizations.

C.14 Seek funding to conduct a hotel/conference/entertainment center feasibility study.

During the multi-day Design Charrette, community residents and business owners identified the need for a hotel/conference/entertainment center in the Village of Cooperstown. To determine the market potential and viability of developing such a facility, the Village could conduct a feasibility study that analyzes local market conditions, industry trends and best practices, competitive/comparable facilities, market demand, supportable programs, and potential development options within the Village.

There has been a local movement to have a movie theater downtown. The feasibility study should include an assessment to see if there is demand in Cooperstown to support such a project.

Railroad Avenue

Goal

Promote greater and more diverse business development activity in the Railroad Avenue district.

Recommendations

C.15 Work with local business and property owners to determine current needs and opportunities for future development.

Local involvement leads to a sense of ownership of community improvements, redevelopment, and activities. This, in turn, leads to implementation. Cooperstown has a strong community spirit, as evidenced by well-attended public meetings, year-round community activities, and the many volunteer organizations in the Village. These efforts have created and will continue to support a thriving community. Utilizing this spirit, the Village should facilitate a meeting with current business and property owners to focus on current needs and identify future development opportunities along Railroad Avenue that have the potential to increase activity within the district.

C.16 Partner with Otsego Now to explore potential redevelopment opportunities.

During the public engagement process, the community identified Railroad Avenue as a high priority redevelopment opportunity area. The Village should partner with Otsego Now to examine the current uses of the properties within the Railroad Avenue District, conduct a full market analysis for their uses and potential reuses, identify potential streetscape & lighting improvements to create a more pedestrian and business-friendly environment, and discuss potential branding schemes for the area. The entire process should involve substantial community and stakeholder engagement as to ensure that any proposed redevelopment scenarios are in keeping with Cooperstown's vision for the future.

Goal

Link the Railroad Avenue District to a thriving Main Street to create a more diverse and larger business area, improving connectivity by emphasizing alternative forms of transportation.

Recommendations

C.17 Provide a trolley stop in the Railroad Avenue District as needed in the future.

Birnie Bus operates a successful trolley program in the Village that runs from Memorial Day through Columbus Day. The trolley system includes three perimeter parking lots (red, yellow, and blue) that provide visitors with a fun and inexpensive way to get to major attractions in Cooperstown while avoiding downtown traffic congestion. The Village should explore the feasibility of adding a trolley stop in the District in the future that would improve connectivity to/from Railroad Avenue and local tourist attractions and create additional foot traffic for District businesses.



C.18 Work with the County to better develop the County building, property, and parking lots as a link between Main Street and Railroad Avenue.

There are several Otsego County properties, including the Court House and County Office Building, located along Main Street between the central business district and Railroad Avenue. The Village should partner with the County to identify action steps to establish these properties as a linkage to connect visitors to Main Street to the Railroad Avenue District.



C.19 Use the rail trail to provide walking and bicycling corridor from Blue Trolley Lot to the Railroad Avenue District.

The Village should explore the feasibility of using the existing rail line as a pedestrian/bicycle corridor to connect the Blue Trolley Lot (located off Route 28 just south of the Village) to the Railroad Avenue District.

C.20 Develop a walking map that illustrates connections between Main Street and Railroad Avenue.

Despite the fact that Railroad Avenue is located only one block away from Main Street, the public engagement process identified that many visitors were unaware of a second commercial district within the Village. A walking map that illustrates the connection between Main Street and Railroad Avenue could advance retail and commercial growth in the district. The map could also feature District businesses and attractions, as well as connections to the trolley system.



Infrastructure

A well-planned and maintained infrastructure, including developed streets, parking, broadband, and the availability of water and sewer facilities plays a critical role in the daily lives of residents, and helps both retain the existing economic base and attract new business and industry to a community.

Infrastructure can also play an important role in forming first impressions and welcoming visitors and residents alike to a community's downtown. Visitors are drawn to Main Streets that feature safe pedestrian crossings, as well as streetscape enhancements including lighting, benches, street trees, and plantings. In 2014, the Village of Cooperstown undertook a large-scale Main Street renovation project that included new sidewalks, the use of pervious asphalt to pavers, and rain gardens.

Cooperstown's physical infrastructure can present a challenge as the Village plans for its future. Like many communities in Upstate NY, systems are aging, and the financial resources needed to manage and maintain infrastructure are greater than before. Careful planning of the Village's infrastructure needs will help assure that the community's goals are met.

Infrastructure recommendations are organized according to the following topic areas:

- Parking
- Supportive Infrastructure



Parking

Goal

Work with the public and private sectors to ensure that the supply of convenient parking spaces meets the demands of residents, employees, and visitors.

Recommendations

D.1 Conduct a Parking Study and Demand Analysis to assess existing conditions and year-round demand.

The number one issue identified by community residents and businesses during both phases of the planning process was parking. People commented that it is difficult to find on-street parking during the tourist season, and there is a limited number of all-day parking spaces for employees and residents. Conducting a Parking Study and Demand Analysis would allow the Village to identify the current parking challenges and opportunities, and to develop a parking master plan that includes short- and long-term recommendations designed to meet the needs of residents, visitors, downtown merchants, and employees.

D.2 Ensure that information is available for residents and visitors about the Village's parking rules, including parking permits, and policies.

The Village's Streets Committee, working closely with the Chamber of Commerce, downtown businesses, and lodging providers, should develop and implement a public awareness campaign to inform residents and visitors about parking policies and enforcement practices. The information could be made available on the Village's website.

D.3 Continue annual evaluation of paid parking regulations and regular enforcement of all parking laws.

No one likes parking tickets, but fair enforcement of the Village’s parking regulations can help keep Cooperstown’s streets safe and facilitate availability of high demand parking spaces near Main Street, which supports local businesses and events. Enforcement should be consistent and universal.

The Village Board of Trustees should continue to review parking laws, particularly those related to paid parking, on an annual basis, seeking input from residents, downtown businesses, Bassett Healthcare Network, and tourist attractions.

D.4 Explore economic feasibility of building municipal or private garage parking structures.

Parking in the Village of Cooperstown can be challenging. While the Village encourages alternative modes of transportation, parking will continue to be needed to support business and employers. Parking areas, whether lots or parking structures, should be attractively constructed and conveniently located to meet resident and visitor needs. If possible, parking areas should connect to the broader transportation network, including the Village trolley.

To ensure that residents, employees, and visitors have access to safe, convenient parking, the Village should work with local economic development organizations and large employers to assess the economic feasibility of constructing one or more parking structures to better accommodate current and future parking demand.

Supportive Infrastructure

Goal

Continue to seek revenues via grants, user fees, donations, and avenues other than taxation to share the burden of maintaining Village infrastructure.

Recommendations

D.5 Continue to pursue funding for infrastructure improvements.

The Village should pursue monies through the NYS Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process, other grants and governmental funds, and private donations to fund infrastructure improvements including, but not limited to:

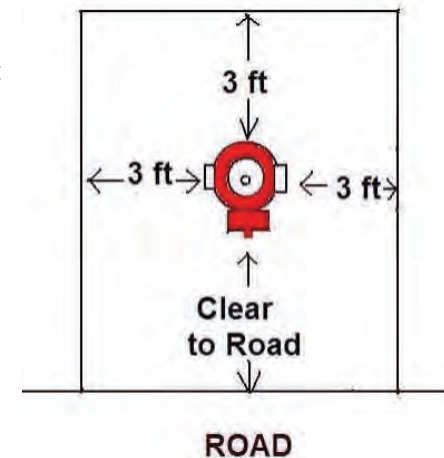
- Upgraded pedestrian crossings along Chestnut at the intersections with Main, Elm and Beaver Streets
- Upgrades to aging water and sewer lines
- New sewer plant
- Stormwater management
- Street surfacing and curbing
- Parking facilities
- Willow Brook
- WiFi hot spots

D.6 Engage volunteers to clean rain gardens and storm drains and to clear snow from fire hydrants.

The Village of Cooperstown recently installed 37 rain gardens along Main Street, as well as permeable pavers adjacent to the concrete sidewalk and porous asphalt along the curb. The rain gardens and permeable surfaces all will help improve water quality locally in Otsego Lake and throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The rain gardens capture water that sheets off the sidewalks, while the porous asphalt at the curb helps filter water from the street as well as rain garden overflow.

To ensure that the rain gardens and storm drains function properly, the Village should engage volunteers to commit to cleaning the rain gardens and storm drain grates on a regular basis.

The Village should also continue to engage volunteers to assist with fire hydrant maintenance. Residents, business owners, organizations, and others are invited to commit to shoveling the snow three feet around their adopted fire hydrant during the winter months. This will ensure that in the event of a fire, firefighters can quickly access water to extinguish it.

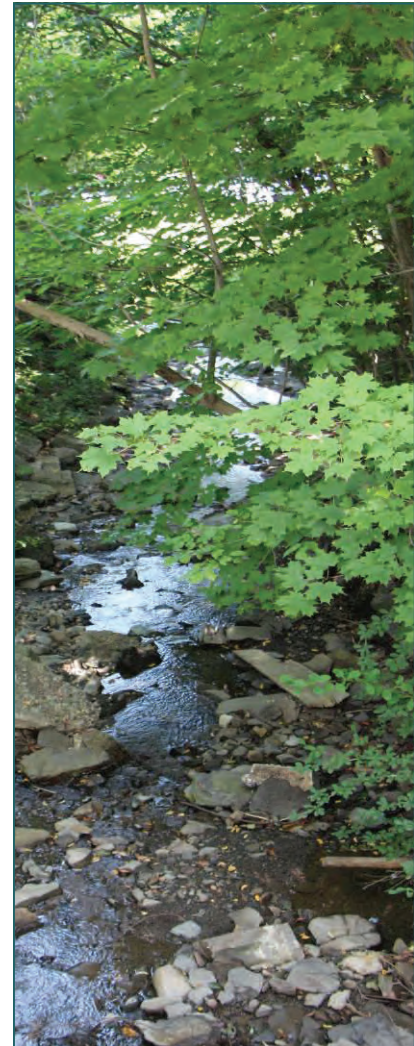


Environment and Sustainability

Cooperstown recognizes the critical role that the environment and sustainability play in the future of the Village. In 2015, the Village adopted a broad based resolution to "take prompt and effective measures to rapidly address climate change by promoting and encouraging a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels and their associated infrastructure." As a Climate Smart Community, the Village is demonstrating its commitment to increasing the use of renewable energy, realizing the benefits of recycling, reducing greenhouse gas emission, decreasing auto use and associated parking problems by promote walking, bicycling and public transit as preferred modes of transportation within the Village, and reducing the Village's carbon footprint.

Environment and Sustainability recommendations are organized according to the following topic areas:

- Sustainable Practices
- Environmental Health
- Bicycle and Pedestrian
- Alternative Transportation



Sustainable Practices

Goal

Encourage practices that reduce energy consumption, encourage the reuse of existing resources, make use of local products, and transition away from fossil fuels in both public and private projects.

Recommendations

E.1 Continue efforts to reduce dependence on fossil fuels within the Village.

To reduce dependence on fossil fuels and decrease the carbon emitted into the atmosphere, the Village could:

- *Review, and if necessary update, existing zoning and parking policies to identify how and where public charging stations could be installed.*
- *Develop partnerships with for-profit entities to establish public charging stations for electric vehicles.*
- *Explore vehicles that use alternative fuels to replace the current village fleet and trolleys.*
- *Encourage increased use of transit, bicycling, and walking in addition to alternative fuels and technologies.*
- *Explore renewable energy, especially solar, to provide electric needs for lighting.*
- *Explore feasibility of converting municipal street lighting to LED .*
- *Identify strategies to address lighting in buildings, heating efficiencies, weatherization strategies, and ways to reduce fuel usage in pumping water from the water plant.*

E.2 Identify and continue to implement best practices for energy efficiency in municipal buildings.

To increase energy efficiency in municipal buildings, the Village could implement the following best practices

- *Explore replacement of inefficient heating and lighting equipment.*
- *Use solar energy to meet municipal electricity needs via a power purchase agreement, community solar project, or other solar programs advantageous for municipalities.*
- *Conduct a blower door analysis to identify and correct areas of heat loss.*
- *Encourage use of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards for new construction and rehabilitation of municipal sites.*

The U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is a third-party entity that sets sustainability standards for "green buildings." LEED certification is based on a system of points, awarded for improvements ranging from certain types of plumbing features (such as faucets that turn themselves off) to energy-efficient appliances and HVAC systems. Different certifications are possible, depending on the number of points earned. Building to LEED standards reduces operating costs and minimizes strain on the municipal infrastructure needed to support it, such as wastewater treatment. Building to LEED standards can be undertaken for local government facilities and can also be encouraged in the entire municipality

E.3 Enhance public education regarding environmental sustainability practices.

To preserve Cooperstown’s natural and cultural assets, the Village should work with partners to develop programs that educate residents and business owners about the benefits of sustainable practices, both for the purposes of sustainability and cost savings. Sustainability practices include those that reduce energy consumption, encourage the reuse of existing resources, make use of local products, and transition away from fossil fuels in both public and private projects. Action items could include:

- *Partner with existing state, local, and not-for-profit organizations to educate the public in ways to conserve energy and use renewable energy to meet residential and business needs.*
- *Provide information about the use of “green” materials and technologies for residential construction, along with careful site design.*
- *Educate homeowners about the benefits of natural landscaping.*
- *Educate prospective developers and landowners about environmentally sustainable construction materials, energy options, and design possibilities for new home construction, as well as home expansions and renovations.*
- *Provide links and contact information to appropriate entities on the Village’s website.*

E.4 Continue to support the Economic Development and Sustainability Committee in its efforts.

The Village should continue to support the Economic Development and Sustainability Committee’s efforts to promote Cooperstown as a place to live and do business as well as to reduce energy consumption, encourage the reuse of existing resources, make use of local products and businesses, and transition away from fossil fuels in both public and private projects.

E.5 Support efforts to operate a boat washing station by organizations promoting lake stewardship.

According to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, invasive species and fish diseases from other parts of the world have been accidentally introduced to water bodies in New York State, oftentimes at the expense of valuable native species. Most of the time, these invasives are moved from water body to water body by anglers and boaters. This can occur when boats and fishing equipment are not properly washed, disinfected, and given time to properly dry.

The Village should support efforts to operate a boat washing facility at Lakefront Park that will help reduce risk of further introduction of aquatic invasive species and fish diseases from entering Otsego Lake.

E.6 Consider and implement a community garden as a way to improve access to sustainable, healthy food, improve social connections, and offer expanded recreation and education opportunities.

Over the past few years, interest in sustainable agriculture and local food systems has increased dramatically. Once the sole dominion of large cities, community gardens have emerged as an important component of smaller communities. As a way to promote healthy residents and a sustainable environment, Cooperstown should explore the possibility of establishing a community garden in the Village. Partnerships with other governmental agencies and private institutions including the Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Cooperstown Central School District, local businesses, and civic organizations may help increase support for a community garden.



Producing food locally greatly reduces the greenhouse gas emissions related to transportation of food. Photos: The Creek Top Community Gardens in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Environmental Health

Goal

Emphasize the community's role as a responsible steward of Otsego Lake, the headwaters of the Susquehanna River, and other important natural resources.

Recommendations

E.7 Enhance communication between the Village and environmental groups.

Village officials should continue to interact with representatives from local environmental organizations, such as OCCA, Otsego 2000, Otsego Land Trust, and the Otsego Lake Association, as well as federal and state agencies, to enforce regulations, educate the public, and be a voice for the following environmentally sensitive areas:

- *Stormwater runoff*
- *Sewer discharge*
- *Invasive species*
- *Pesticide, fertilizer, and herbicide use*
- *Environmentally responsible boat cleaning and maintenance*

Bicycle and Pedestrian

Goal

Encourage bicycling on well-maintained roads and walking on well-maintained sidewalks.

Recommendations

E.8 Implement the Village’s newly adopted Complete Streets policy.

“Complete Streets” are streets for everyone. A Complete Streets program encourages a community to take into consideration the safety needs of all users including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, those with mobility impairments, the elderly, and transit riders when improvements are made to local roadways. In 2015, the Village of Cooperstown adopted a Complete Streets policy to guide infrastructure improvements.

E.9 Install additional bike racks throughout the Village to promote bicycle riding as an alternative form of transportation.

To promote bicycling as an integral part of daily life in Cooperstown, the Village and its partners should provide short-term and/or long-term bicycle parking in commercial districts, along main streets, in employment centers and multifamily developments, at schools and special events, in recreational areas, and at intermodal passenger stations.



Examples of a sharrow and bike racks



E.10 Partner with Otsego Regional Cycling Advocates (ORCA) to promote the county’s Bike to Work Day program in Cooperstown.

Each Spring communities across the country sponsor events celebrating bicycling as a clean, fun, and healthy way to get to work. In recent years, ORCA has organized a Bike to Work Day to encourage Otsego County residents to choose an alternative “green” mode of transportation – biking, walking, or even skateboarding – to get to work or school, to run errands, or just for fun.

To encourage bicycling as a healthy and safe alternative to driving in Cooperstown, the Village should partner with ORCA to promote the annual Bike to Work Day on the Village’s website, in the *Village Voices*, and through social media.

E.11 Develop a Sidewalk Maintenance and Improvement Plan that includes an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self Study.

Investing in better sidewalks and crosswalks will increase safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Plan components should include:

- *Inventory and condition assessment of public sidewalks and public crossings within the Village.*
- *Identification of gaps.*
- *Development of an ADA self study.*
- *Identification of pedestrian improvements to be addressed as part of the upcoming capital and standalone projects.*

Alternative Transportation

Goal

Encourage alternative forms of transportation in the Village.

Recommendations

E.12 Support taxis and vehicle sharing programs, within the framework of state legislation.

To encourage alternative forms of transportation for residents and visitors to Cooperstown, the Village should:

- *Investigate the possible advantages of a system for the registration of taxis operating within the Village.*
- *Stay abreast of state legislation concerning ride share programs.*

E.13 Reassign the tasks of the Trolley Committee to the Streets Committee to encourage multi-modal considerations.

The Streets Committee should be tasked with developing and promoting public transit (bus and trolley), rideshare, and pedestrian and bicycle programs. In addition, the Committee should conduct an annual review of the trolley route and make revisions to the route as necessary.

E.14 Partner with Otsego Now to explore the feasibility of bringing passenger rail access to Cooperstown.

The Cooperstown & Charlotte Valley (C&CV) Railroad provided passenger rail service to the Village until 1934. Reviving passenger rail service between Cooperstown and Milford, and possibly as far south as Oneonta, could increase tourism in Cooperstown, and could provide transit to many who commute to Cooperstown for work. The addition of passenger rail service to the Village could increase heritage tourism in Cooperstown, while helping to decrease traffic and parking congestion in the downtown.

Government

Throughout the public involvement process and from input by the Steering Committee and municipal officials, a number of items related to enhancement of infrastructure and administrative improvements were identified. The following recommendations are intended to assist Cooperstown in implementing portions of the vision set forth in this comprehensive plan and to continue to provide high quality municipal services to residents.

Government recommendations are organized according to the following topic areas:

- Efficiency
- Communication



Efficiency

Goal

Enhance the overall quality and efficiency of municipal services in Cooperstown.

Recommendations

F.1 Make the Village Hall a Main Street anchor by fostering committed partnerships with businesses, as well as local arts and culture organizations.

Cooperstown's Village Hall is housed in the historic, neo-classical revival style structure located at 22 Main Street. The building, which was designed by New York City architect Ernest Flagg, was constructed in 1898 by the Clark Family to house the library, YMCA, and museum. In 1939, the building was donated to the Village. Today, 22 Main Street is home to the Village government offices, the Police Department, the Village library, and the Cooperstown Art Association. To ensure that the Village Hall is easily accessible to all residents, improvements should be made to 22 Main that include handicap-accessibility, egress measures to increase the allowed occupancy, and the creation of additional community space(s).

F.2 Ease review process for those interacting with the Village by continuing to assess local laws, policies, and procedures.

To ensure that Cooperstown is a desirable place to start a new business or build a new home, local laws, policies, and procedures should be reviewed and updated as necessary. This includes actions that ensure a streamlined local review process, consistent project reviews, and land use controls that support the vision of this Comprehensive Plan.

F.3 Seek additional opportunities for shared municipal services and consolidation of resources.

As municipalities continue to look for ways to make operations more cost-efficient, sharing services with neighboring communities, school districts, and the County is a logical step. The Village already shares some services, facilities, and equipment with the County, neighboring towns, the City of Oneonta, and the school district.

These efforts should be continued and intensified, and the Village should actively seek other opportunities to work together with these and other agencies and municipalities to increase efficiency.

F.4 Continue to review the Village’s organizational structure and administrative leadership.

Currently, the Village of Cooperstown is governed by a seven member Board that includes a Mayor, Deputy Mayor, five Trustees, and a Village Administrator. According to the NYS Department of State Local Government Handbook, a Board is typically responsible for approving mayoral appointments, managing village finances and property, and approving a budget. The Mayor, who is generally the chief executive of the village, is responsible for enforcing laws and supervising employees.

To ensure that the Village is operating efficiently, regular review should be conducted of the Village’s organizational structure and administrative leadership.

F.5 Actively recruit and support funding for volunteer fire service and emergency medical services (EMS).

Since 1815, the Cooperstown Volunteer Fire Department has provided residents, businesses, and visitors with high quality public safety services. During the Open House the community noted the important role that the fire department and EMS play in the community. To ensure quality fire and emergency medical service in Cooperstown, the Village should continue to support funding for and partner with the Cooperstown Volunteer Fire Department to cross promote recruiting opportunities, including placement of notices on the municipal website and announcements in the *Village Voices*.

F.6 Continue to ensure local law enforcement presence.

The Cooperstown Police Department in cooperation with the State Police and County Sheriff protects the life, individual liberty, and property of residents and visitors within the Village. To ensure a continued local law enforcement presence in Cooperstown, the Village should evaluate the present level of police protection, ensure officers are trained to work effectively with the diverse residential and tourist population, and provide for equipment appropriate for use in the local community.

Communication

Goal

Improve communications between local government and the public regarding Village policies, events, and other activities.

Recommendations

F.7 Continue to broadly distribute the *Village Voices*.

The *Village Voices* is a quarterly newsletter that is distributed with municipal water bills. The newsletter is designed to keep residents and businesses informed with updates from the Mayor's Office and various government departments. The Village should explore additional distribution venues in addition to the direct mailing to keep residents and property owners well-informed about Village rules, projects, and events.

F.8 Assess usability and clarity of the Village's website and social media outlets.

The Village needs to assess its current website and social media outlets to make sure they are user friendly and providing the type of information users are expecting to find on the sites.

F.9 Enhance the Village's website and social media outlets as appropriate to ensure that the site can provide up-to-date information about Village events, development projects, public works, and other policies.

Today, municipal websites act as digital gateways, and can often create positive or negative impressions for visitors before they step foot in a community. Residents and business owners have come to rely on municipal websites to provide a variety of services and information, including agendas, meeting minutes, application forms, calendar items, links, and contact information, at a minimum.

Cooperstown’s website already contains a wealth of information. The availability of information should be maintained and expanded, and the Village should continue to work to improve the user friendliness of the site. In addition, the Village should work with local and regional groups and agencies to ensure consistent and up-to-date links. This will increase the usability of the website and benefit the residents, visitors, and business owners in the community.

F.10 Explore the feasibility of enhancing the Village’s website to include on-line permit applications.

The Village should seek grant funding to determine the feasibility and cost associated with developing an on-line permit system. The system should allow residents and businesses to complete forms online and allow for coordination of the permit process with the Zoning Enforcement Officer to improve efficiency and records management.

F.11 Provide regular press releases to print, radio, and television news outlets in Cooperstown, Oneonta, and the Mohawk Valley.

To help citizens stay informed about Cooperstown projects and activities, it is important for the Village to continue to provide regular press releases to the print and electronic media.

F.12 Increase public notification, beyond legal requirements, to ensure awareness of public hearings for zoning issues and the passage/ amendment of local laws.

The Village should consider using press releases, social media, public message boards, and other non-traditional means such as yard signs to ensure that Village residents are aware of public hearings related to zoning and local law amendments.

F.13 Develop a “Cooperstown Welcome ” link on the Village website.

People are increasingly becoming more accustomed to finding the information they need online. The Village’s website can serve as a powerful tool to get quick answers to questions about living and working in Cooperstown. The Village should develop a “Cooperstown Welcome” tab on its existing website that directs new residents and business owners to information about Village government, including contact information, parking rules, zoning regulations, and community events.

Doubleday Field

Doubleday Field is an iconic baseball stadium and community gathering place located along Main Street in the Village’s historic downtown. The site, which was once Elihu Phinney’s pasture, has been used for baseball since 1920. In 1924, a wooden grandstand was built for spectators. This was replaced in 1939 by a steel and concrete grandstand by the Works Progress Administration. Over the years, the seating capacity has been increased to accommodate almost 10,000 spectators.

Today, the infrastructure, field and building are in need of improvements in order to keep the facility competitive and to help draw in high caliber, national baseball teams. Improvements include addressing the structural failings of third base bleachers, lack of locker rooms, restroom renovations, and the addition of a concession stand.

During the public workshop, participants stated that the facility needs an improved “front yard.” The current view from Main Street to Doubleday Field is that of a parking lot. Participants recognize that, while parking is in high demand and needed, it is perhaps not the ‘highest and best use’ of the area in front of Doubleday Field. Toward this end, it was recommended that the Village should explore the feasibility of developing a concept that blends parking with green/open space, new retail, and housing.

Doubleday Field recommendations are organized according to the following topic areas:

- Destination
- Building Preservation/Improvements



Destination

Goal

Work with public and private entities to promote and enhance Doubleday Field and the surrounding area as a nationally recognized destination that residents and visitors can safely access by foot, private vehicle, or public transportation.

Recommendations

G.1 Provide a safe route for pedestrians to access Doubleday Field from Main Street and from Chestnut Street.

One of the issues identified by the public during the planning process was the need to enhance pedestrian safety downtown, with a particular focus along Main and Chestnut Streets. When making improvements to Doubleday Field and the surrounding area, the Village should focus on creating a safe pedestrian route from Main Street to the Doubleday Field grandstand and also provide pedestrian access from Chestnut Street.

G.2 Make the Sandlot Kid area a welcoming public space.

In 1940, Victor Salvatore’s bronze sculpture of a young barefoot boy preparing to hit a baseball was installed in front of Doubleday Field. Today baseball teams, families, and even Hall of Famers flock to the Doubleday Field entrance to have their picture taken in front of the “The Sandlot Kid” statue, which is located near the Main Street entrance. In the short term the Village should consider making the statue area more welcoming for visitors.



As plans are further developed for a parking lot and field, the Village should consider relocating the statue to a more central location.

G.3 Work with local business and property owners to gather input on the current needs and opportunities for future development.

Throughout the Comprehensive Plan public engagement process, residents, business, and property owners provided valuable feedback regarding what they see as challenges and opportunities for future development and revitalization of Cooperstown. The Village should continue to engage property owners and local businesses located near Doubleday Field to identify current needs and opportunities. A facilitated SWOT Analysis could help identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of doing business in downtown Cooperstown particularly in the Doubleday Field Area.

G.4 Partner with Otsego Now and local developers to explore the feasibility of mixed-use (retail/parking/residential) development in the vicinity.

The Village, in partnership with Otsego Now, should work with private property owners to explore the feasibility of redeveloping properties located near Doubleday Field. During the Comprehensive Plan public engagement process, residents, businesses, and property owners identified the properties located in the vicinity of Doubleday as an opportunity area for development. Possible uses could include a multi-level parking structures to address the parking shortage downtown and/or a mixed use building that could include additional parking, ground-level commercial space, and year-round rental units and condominiums. Because the properties are located in the historic downtown, any future development would be done in a manner consistent with the existing character of the area.

G.5 Explore the feasibility of developing and marketing Doubleday Field as an event venue for outdoor entertainment, sporting events, community events, and weddings.

Currently, games are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis, and applications are processed through the Village Clerk's Office. The cost of individual baseball games range from \$400 to \$550 per game. An opportunity exists for the Village to streamline the application process via automated scheduling.

To expand revenues for the maintenance of Doubleday Field, the Village should explore the feasibility of using the facility as an event venue. The Village could partner with not-for-profits and private event planners to market the facility for community events, weddings, sporting events, and outdoor entertainment including small concerts.

A baseball stadium might be one of the last places one would think of for a fairytale wedding, but records show that over the past decade more and more baseball fans have been choosing to celebrate their nuptials at major league ballparks. According to Philly.com, Fenway Park has 25 to 30 wedding events a year; Citi Field, five or six; Turner Field, 13 to 18; and four to five are held at U.S. Cellular Field.

G.6 Explore additional historic designations for Doubleday Field.

The Village could explore historic designation under the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s National Treasures Program, becoming a part of the National Park system, or a National Historic Landmarks designation.

A National Historic Landmarks (NHL) is a building, site, structure or district that represents an outstanding aspect of American history or culture. It is recommended that the Village explore NHL designation for Doubleday Field. According to the National Park Service, designation as a National Historic Landmark:

- *Ensures that stories of nationally significant historic events, places, or persons are recognized and preserved for the benefit of all citizens.*
- *May provide the property's historic character with a measure of protection against any project initiated by the Federal government.*
- *May ensure eligibility for grants, tax credits, and other opportunities to maintain a property's historic character.*

G.7 Determine how to best quantify the number of visitors to Doubleday Field.

Doubleday Field is open from mid-April through Columbus Day in October. It is estimated that tens of thousands of visitors come to see the stadium each year during this five month window, but no official count has been recorded. The Village should start to identify and assess the economic impact that Doubleday Field and associated tourist activity could have on the revitalization efforts of the Village’s downtown by determining visitation numbers.

Building Preservation / Improvements

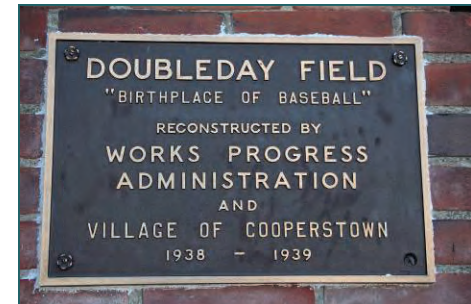
Goal

Pursue opportunities to enhance and develop facilities at Doubleday Field, making it more usable and marketable, while preserving and promoting its historic character.

Recommendations

G.8 Seek funding to develop a Master Plan and rehabilitate Doubleday Field.

Doubleday Field is an iconic piece of Cooperstown's history. Each year thousands of visitors flock to Cooperstown to tour the National Baseball Hall of Fame and then make their way down Main Street to visit Doubleday Field. Some come to watch a game, while others travel with their baseball teams and arrive in uniform ready to hit the field. To make sure that Doubleday Field is well maintained and the facility can provide the amenities that teams are looking for, the Village in partnership with Friends of Doubleday and the National Baseball Hall of Fame, should continue to seek public and private funding to rehabilitate the historic Doubleday Field.



G.9 Develop a Master Plan to inventory and prioritize infrastructure, field, and building improvements.

The Village should develop a Master Plan that prioritizes infrastructure, fields, and building improvements that will keep the facility competitive and help draw in high caliber, national baseball teams while maintaining historic integrity. Improvements could include building locker room facilities, renovations to existing bleachers so that they provide more comfortable spectator viewing, restroom upgrades, and development of a "mini museum" to educate visitors about the field's history.

G.10 Design and install interpretive signage to educate residents and visitors about the history of Doubleday Field.

Interpretive signage is an effective way of telling the story of a historic attraction or site. According to the Nova Scotia Guide *Connecting People and Places*, interpretive signage, "...turns information into a theme or experience that captures visitors' interests, provokes their curiosity, and gets them emotionally and even actively involved with the objects, artifacts, landscape, and location. It makes them feel as if they are part of the story and allows them to understand the significance of the site."

The Village has an opportunity to educate both residents and visitors about the history of Doubleday Field through the design and installation of interpretive signage. Signage related to Doubleday Field is planned as part of the next phase of the Main Street project, funded through the Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP). Additional signage could be incorporated into the recommended upgrades and improvements to the field, or in any future redesign of the property surrounding the facility.