

Village of Hoosick Falls

**Local Waterfront Revitalization Strategy &
Comprehensive Plan**



September 2019

Hoosick Falls
Local Waterfront Revitalization Strategy & Comprehensive Plan
Village of Hoosick Falls, Rensselaer County, New York

September 2019

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BACKGROUND

The Waterfront Revitalization of Coastal Areas and Inland Waterways Act (Article 42 of New York State Executive Law) was enacted in 1981 by the New York State Legislature in order to execute the Coastal Management Program at the state level. With a partnership between local communities and the New York State Division of Coastal Resources, the program strives to protect natural coastal resources; advance economic development opportunities; and enhance waterfront opportunities and experiences. The Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) is the comprehensive waterfront management planning process developed under the Act to allow local communities to prepare waterfront development objectives by adopting statewide policies to the individual circumstances of each community. Once the process is completed and approved by the New York State Secretary of State, the LWRP provides the Village of Hoosick Falls with the local controls necessary to guide waterfront development.



Figure 1 Hoosick River

This document constitutes a Local Waterfront Revitalization Strategy and Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Hoosick Falls. This “Strategy” is a component of an LWRP that contains analysis, community visioning, and recommended actions but lacks the waterfront and water-based policies and regulatory implementation that is part of a fully DOS-adoptable Local Waterfront Revitalization Program. It is recommended that the Village pursue this formal adoption in future phases.

Furthermore, this document will act as the Village of Hoosick Falls' first Comprehensive Plan and will act as a guide for land development regulations, planning and zoning board decision-making, and capital improvement planning for the Village Board of Trustees.

Public Participation

One of the most important elements of completing this LWRS was having an involved public participation process. When working with Hoosick Falls, it was imperative that the residents of the Village and the surrounding communities contributed their ideas and input in the Plan. Their involvement shaped the narrative and helped them accomplish the vision they had for their community. To have an involved public participation process, a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program Committee was established and held multiple meetings, there were also two Public Information Meetings, and one Visioning Workshop.

The meetings and workshop had an immense impact on the recommendations in this LWRS. Residents were able to provide community specific information that could be used to generate plausible recommendations. The Committee then reviewed the recommendations and provided further input on whether ideas should be pursued or re-worked. Summaries of the meetings and workshops can be found in *Appendix A*.

Benefits of Adopting a Full LWRP Approved by the Secretary of State



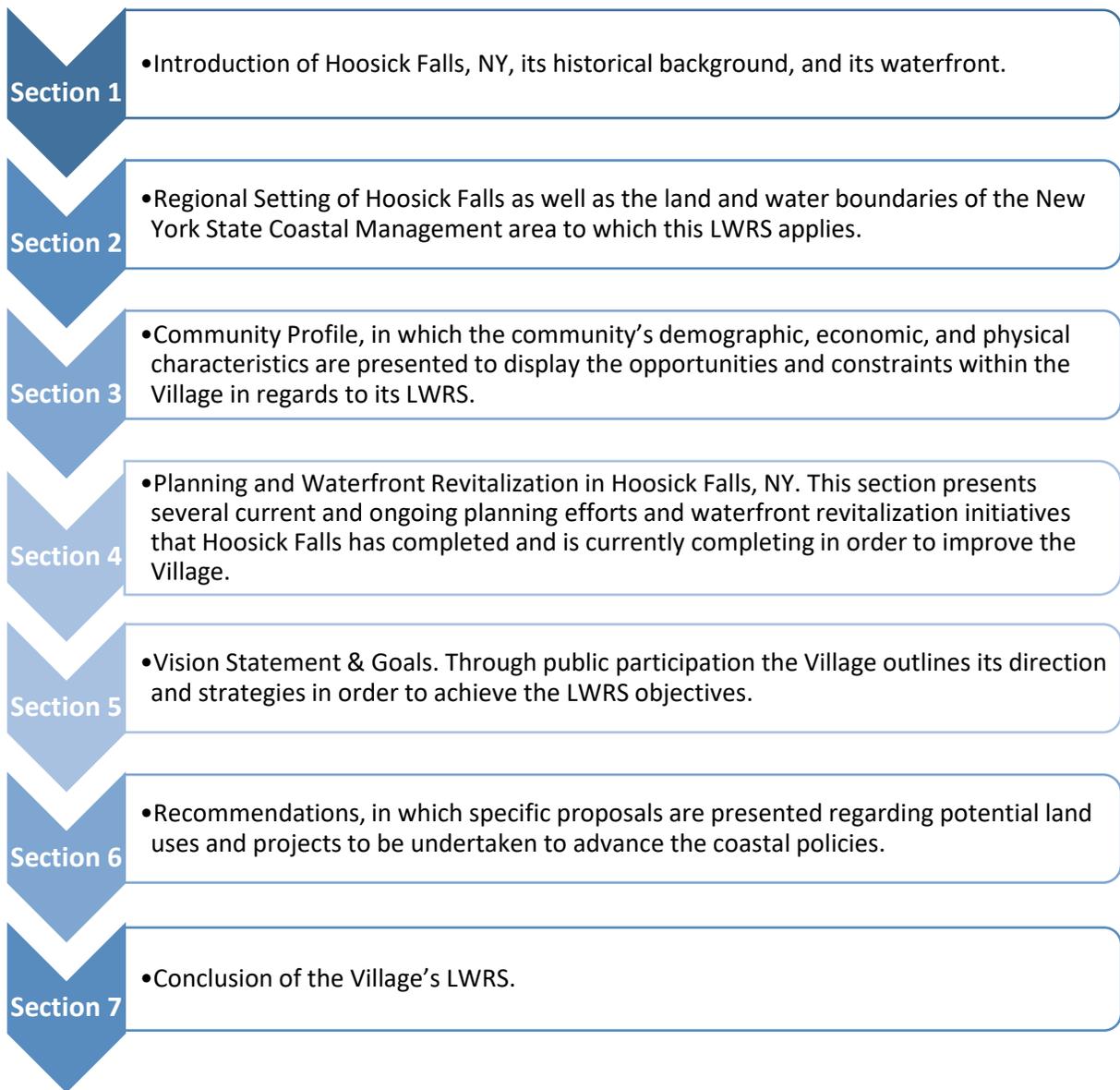
An LWRP reflects community consensus and provides a clear direction for appropriate future development. It establishes a long-term partnership among local government, community-based organizations, and the State. The Waterfront Revitalization Act also ensures 'consistency.' The process of the program allows the State an adequate opportunity to determine that the local program advances State coastal policies so that with State approval, the LWRP can act as a guide for State actions to ensure their consistency with the local program. Additionally, another benefit to the Village of Hoosick Falls is the financial assistance through the Department of State Coastal Management Program. Once the Program is approved, grants are available on a competitive basis for research, studies, design development, and other necessary activities which serve to implement the various projects identified in the Program.

Organization of the LWRS

The organization of a document is often best explained by first understanding the objectives and aspirations of the project. The overall goals of the Village of Hoosick Falls LWRS Strategy are as follows:

- Establish a vision for the community focused on riverfront revitalization and resiliency that will act as a Comprehensive Plan for the Village
- Develop a list of project recommendations in support of this vision
- Prepare the Village to carry the recommendations of the plan forward including future implementation of a fully Department-of-State-adoptable LWRP

To fulfill these goals, the planning process and assembly of the LWRS strategy document took the form of the following sections:



SECTION 1.

INTRODUCTION

As part of the Village of Hoosick Falls' long term revitalization strategy, the Village has undertaken a Local Waterfront Revitalization Strategy (LWRS) in order to establish a unified vision for the community and spur redevelopment. The Village recognizes the importance of its Hoosic River and the value of having a guide to the development and conservation of the historic waterway. This LWRS has been a result of a culmination of public meetings in which a vision, goals, and recommended actions were established in order to make a comprehensive plan centered on environmental, recreational, and economic relationships to the river.

As the Village evolves, the community is looking toward continued enhancements of its waterfront areas and the surrounding land use and aesthetics. An LWRS will position the Village to have guidance over the future use of the river and the value that it offers to the community. This project provides the Village with the opportunity to fortify its commitment to sustainable development and to attract potential riverfront investors. It also provides opportunities for inter-governmental cooperation and private/public partnerships that will help achieve the objectives of the LWRS.



Figure 2 Welcome sign in the Village of Hoosick Falls

1.1 Community Background

The Village of Hoosick Falls has experienced the typical throes of a rust belt city. During the 19th century, the Village was a center of industry leveraging power from the Hoosic River and capitalizing on transportation opportunities provided by railroads. The Hoosac Tunnel, in nearby North Adams, Massachusetts, enabled an east-west railway to cut through the mountain ranges of western New England and through Hoosick Falls. Its location on a main east-west railroad line through New York State and New England allowed the Walter A. Wood Mowing and Reaping Machine Company to become the world's manufacturing center for reapers, binders, and farm machinery from 1853 to 1924. At its peak, the company employed 2,000 workers and produced more than one million farm machines.

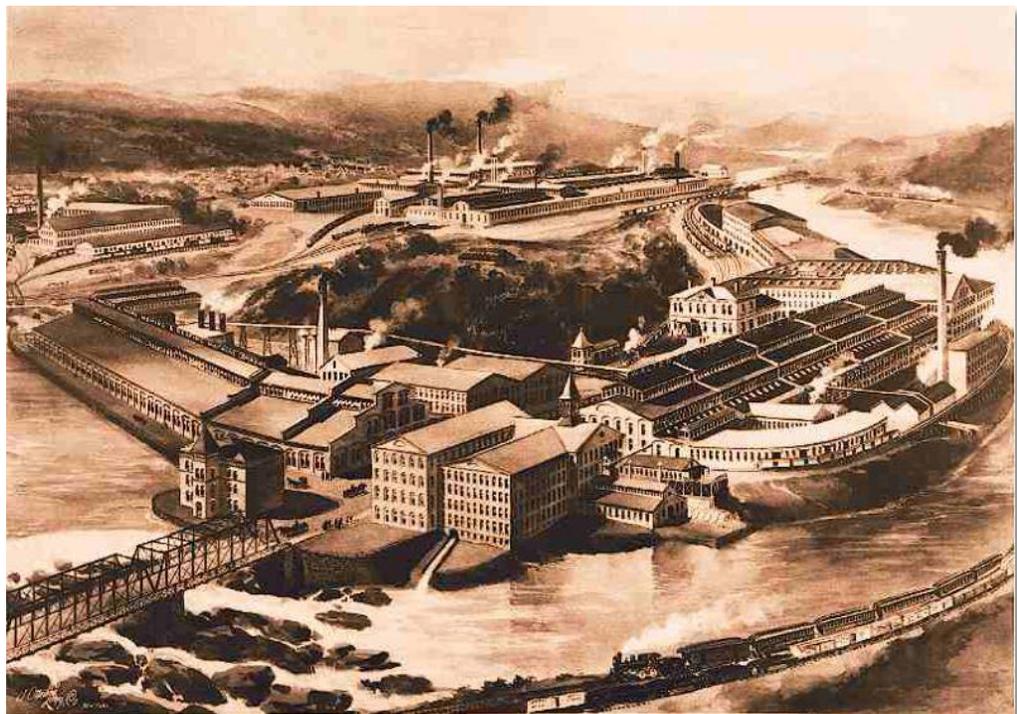


Figure 3 Walter A. Wood Mowing & Reaping Machine Company

With the gradual migration of the U.S. population and industrial economy to the south and west, Hoosick Falls' population growth lingered and its economy shifted towards service based firms and away from the manufacturing industries that were the pillars of the Village. While performance plastics and other industries still remain today, the Village is largely a bedroom community where residents appreciate the small town atmosphere, but work elsewhere in the Albany-Schenectady-Troy metropolitan statistical area (MSA).

1.2 Hoosick Falls Waterfront

Due to the importance that the Hoosic River had to manufacturing, there are numerous abandoned and former manufacturing facilities and warehouses situated along the River. Environmental issues associated with the abandoned building structures along the River poses a health hazard to the nearby residents and have curtailed interest to purchase and redevelop the properties.

However, such properties and facilities offer the opportunity to grow recreational amenities and encourage waterfront commercial investment geared for the 21st century. Rehabilitating and reusing the facilities as well as expanding waterfront access aligns with the mission of the LWRS which includes enhancing the physical and visual public waterfront access opportunities, protecting the community's industrial character, and improving river-related tourism.

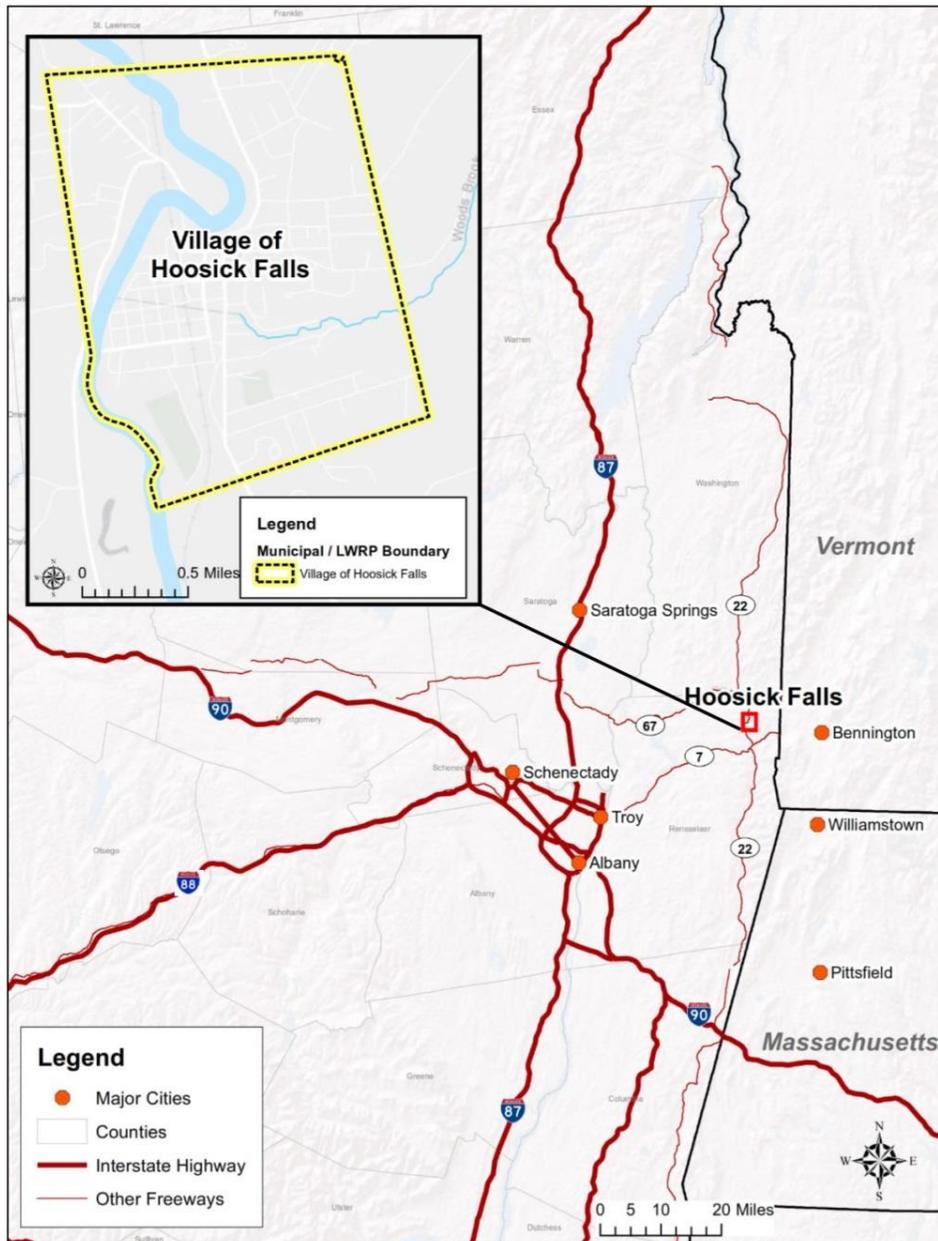
The LWRS also builds upon previous planning waterfront revitalization initiatives. The previous planning initiatives include the *2003 New York Parking and Pedestrian Project*, the *2006 Envisioning Hoosick Falls*, the *2013 Dissolution & Alternatives Study*, the *2015 Zoning Update*, and the *2017 Land Use Inventory*. The previous waterfront initiatives include the *Waterworks Park Revitalization*, the *Woods Brook Flood Mitigation*, and various *Hoosic River Greenway* improvements. More details on these initiatives can be found in Section 4 this plan.

SECTION 2.

REGIONAL SETTING

2.1 Introduction

The State's Coastal Management Program established statewide designated waterway boundaries in accordance with the requirements of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 and the rules and regulations that were subsequently issued. The program determined the Hoosic River as a designated inland waterway and this plan has included the entire Village of Hoosick Falls as the land and water boundary.



Map 1 Proximity of Hoosick Falls to Population Centers

2.2 Regional Context

The Village of Hoosick Falls is located in the Town of Hoosick, on the northeastern edge of Rensselaer County. The Village comprises 1.7 square miles, is surrounded by the Town on all borders, and makes up 50% of the Town's population. The Village is situated on both sides of the Hoosic River and is a commercial, cultural, and social center of a largely rural, agricultural area. It is served by County and State routes including NY Route 22 connecting north and south of the Village and NY Route 7 to points east and west. County Routes 101 and 95 also provide access to rural areas east and south of the Village center.

The Village is in close proximity to major cities and state borders (as depicted in Figure 3). It is less than ten (10) miles from the Vermont border, less than twenty (20) miles from the Massachusetts border, and less than an hour drive from Albany, the capital of New York State. Major employment centers within an hour drive can also be found in Troy, Schenectady, and Saratoga Springs, NY along with Pittsfield, MA and Bennington, VT – which is less than 20 minutes away.

In addition to being strategically located adjacent to a pair of state borders, the Village is also less than a four-hour drive to major cities such as New York City (180 miles), Boston (160 miles), Montreal (210 miles) and less than a three hour drive from major New York cities such as Syracuse (170 miles), and Utica (120 miles). Day trips for business or leisure can be made to each of these destinations.

2.3 Land and Water Boundaries

Due to the small size of the Village and the winding paths of the two waterways (Hoosic River and Woods Brook), it was determined that waterfront development considerations impacted the entire Village. Therefore, as illustrated in Figure 3, the LWRS boundary encompasses all 1.5 square miles of Village area, including the Hoosic River Greenway and all right of ways. This also includes 4.4 miles of shoreline on both sides of the Hoosic River.

Within the Village are 1410 individual parcels, 1,359 are privately owned while 51 are publicly owned. Many of the publicly owned parcels run along the Hoosic River. This enables the opportunity to incorporate access points and waterfront enhancements along the river. The private/public ownership map is included in Map 2.

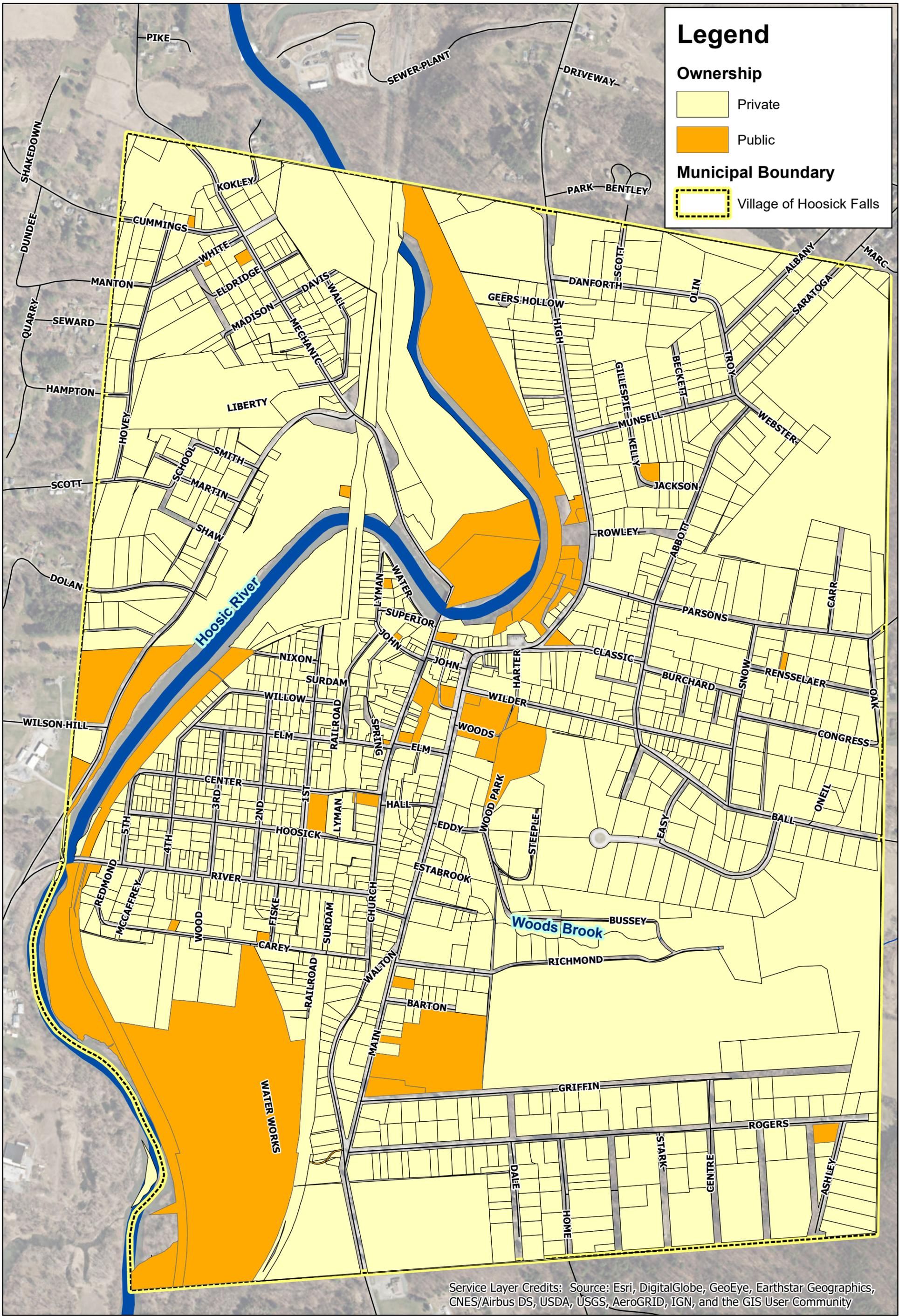
Legend

Ownership

- Private
- Public

Municipal Boundary

- Village of Hoosick Falls



Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community



1 inch = 600 feet

SECTION 3.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

3.1 Introduction

Planning for appropriate land use development within the waterfront program requires a clear understanding of a community’s demographic, economic, and physical characteristics. An analysis of demographic and economic characteristics will identify trends within the Village and how they compare to Rensselaer County and New York State. An inventory of the Village’s physical resources can reveal areas of inconsistent land use and zoning as well as areas of potential development or conservation. Analyzing these resources and characteristics will help identify a community’s strengths and weaknesses and will assist in future land use and waterfront policy recommendations.

This section provides a detailed analysis of the demographic changes and market trends that have taken place locally and regionally from 2010-2016.

Demographics include population (age and education) and household characteristics (age of housing stock, vacancies, housing tenure, and cost burden), while economic trends look at income, employment status, and industry. All data was obtained from *American Community Survey 2010 & 2016*.

It will be evident through this analysis that the Village of Hoosick Falls lags behind County and State benchmarks of societal well-being indicators. Specifically, these areas include education and income. The Village has also been experiencing issues with land use in regards to nonconforming uses. Identifying and analyzing these characteristics have influenced the recommendations in Section 6. As recommendations are implemented and accomplished it is of high importance to revisit and re-analyze the Village’s demographic, economic, and physical characteristics in order to maintain appropriate plans for the future.



Figure 4 Hoosick River looking northward from the Church Street Bridge.

3.2 Population

The Village of Hoosick Falls has historically had a declining population since the beginning of the 20th century due to the gradual migration of the U.S. population to the south and west, and the decline of its manufacturing industries which were the pillars of the Village’s economy. From 2010 to 2016, the Village’s population decreased 1.7% while the County’s has increased 0.8% and the State’s has increased 2.4%.

The number of households within the Village grew more than the population from 2010-2016 with an 11.7% increase, while the County’s grew 1.2% and the State’s grew 1.7%. These figures may be due to the prevalence of conversions from single family to multi-family homes. A decrease in population and an increase in households can be viewed as a negative attribute, but this trend can have a positive effect on housing affordability. Recognizing these trends and conditions and addressing them within an LWRS can position the Village promote diverse housing opportunities in Hoosick Falls as well as maintaining its position as a desirable place to live.

Table 1 Population and Households			
	Village of Hoosick Falls	Rensselaer County	New York State
Population (2016)	3,445	159,959	1,9697,457
% Change in Population (2010-2016)	-1.7%	0.8%	2.4%
Households (2016)	1,587	71,760	8,191,568
% Change in Households (2010-2016)	11.7%	1.2%	1.7%

Age - Although the overall population has been decreasing, age groups 35-49, 50-64, and 65-80 have been increasing. The populations under the age of 34 and the over the age of 80 have been decreasing. It is vital to the Village's longevity to retain the younger age groups, especially 20-34 year olds and provide appropriate housing for the aging population. Promoting affordable housing opportunities and a variety of employment opportunities through this LWRS will help accomplish this task.

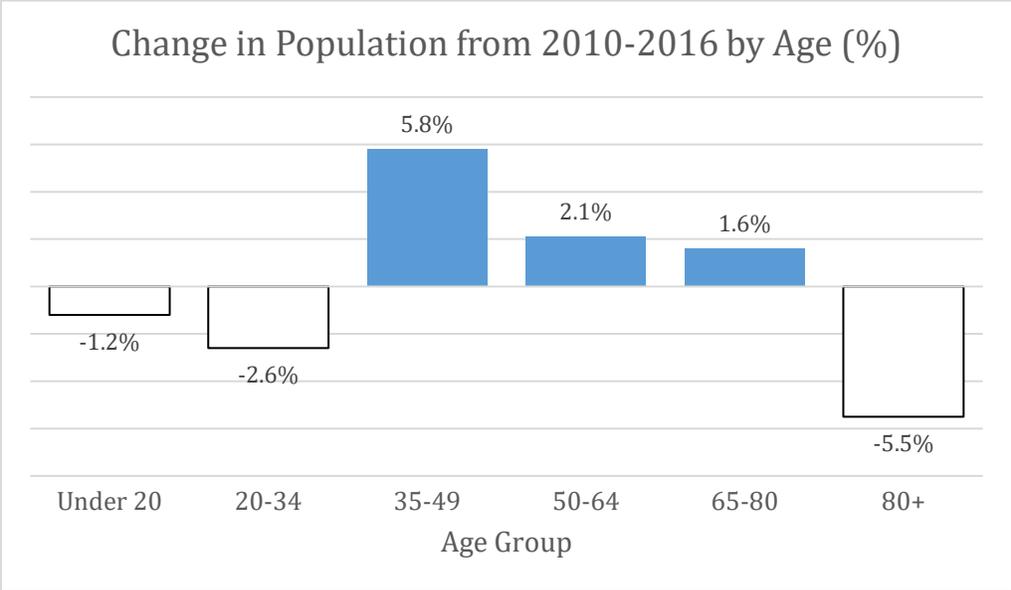


Figure 5 Change in Population - Village of Hoosick Falls

Education - The population with a high school degree is higher in Hoosick Falls compared to the County and State while the population with a bachelor’s degree is lower in Hoosick Falls and has been decreasing since 2010. This could be due to factors such as the increase of people in the manufacturing industry in the Village, as well as the decrease of people between the ages of 20-34. Hoosick Falls is in a region with many colleges and universities. Retaining and attracting a well-educated workforce is an important goal for the Village.

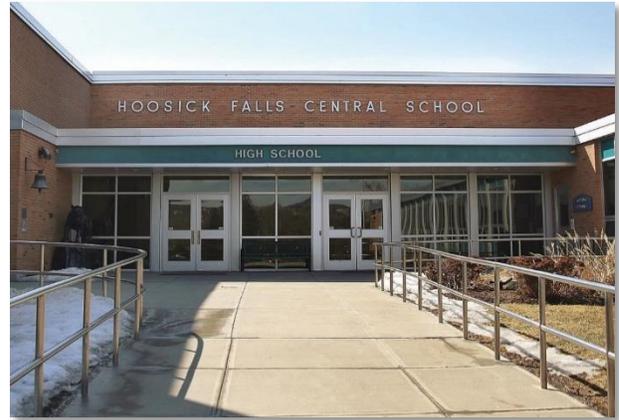


Figure 6 Hoosick Falls Central School

Table 2 Education				
		Village of Hoosick Falls	Rensselaer County	New York State
Population over 25 yrs - High School (HS) graduate or higher		93.5%	91.3%	85.9%
Population over 25 yrs - Bachelor's degree (BA) or higher		22.9%	29.3%	34.8%
% Change from (2010-2016)	HS	7.6%	2.1%	1.5%
	BA	-3.4%	2.6%	2.6%

3.3 Economy

The presence of income diversity within a community contributes to the overall stability and health of a community. This ability is linked, in part, to earnings and job security. This section will examine the income characteristics of the Village of Hoosick Falls between 2010 and 2016. These characteristics include household income, employment status, employment by industry, and poverty rate.

Income - Median household income in Hoosick Falls is lower than the County and State’s median household income, but the Village has seen a 25.6% increase in income since 2010. This significant increase could be due to the positive market trends as well as the increase of the 35-49 year old age group covered in the previous section. It may also be a reflection of the increased labor force and decreased unemployment rate which will be covered in the next section. Nonetheless, the Village’s median household income is on the upswing and can have a positive impact on the community’s revitalization.

Table 3 Income			
	Village of Hoosick Falls	Rensselaer County	New York State
Median Household Income (2016)	\$54,516	\$63,553	\$60,741
% Change in Income (2010-2016)	25.6%	0.1%	9.2%

Employment Status - Employment status figures cast a positive light on the economic climate of Hoosick Falls. There has been increased labor force participation and a slight reduction in the unemployment rate. In 2010, Hoosick Falls' unemployment rate of 7.4% was lower than the national average which was 9.6%. From 2010 to 2016 the Village's unemployment rate dropped to 5.1%, but in this case it was higher than the national average of 4.8%. Nonetheless, the Village's unemployment rate has been dropping and is between 4%-6%, a range which is considered 'healthy' by the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Table 4 Employment Status		
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	2010	2016
In Labor Force	1,612	1,655
Employed	1,492	1,571
Unemployed	120	84
Not in Labor Forces	1,115	1,124
Unemployment Rate	7.4%	5.1%

Industry - More than a quarter of the Village of Hoosick Falls' labor force is employed in education, healthcare, or social assistance services. The percentage of the population engaged in that sector has stayed almost the same since 2010 while manufacturing, the next largest employment sector, has increased 5% since 2010 settling at 23% by 2016. The Village's high manufacturing industry numbers compared to the county reflect its history as a manufacturing community. Incorporating this attribute into the LWRS will help the Village maintain community character.



Figure 7 Interface Performance Materials, in the Clay Hill Neighborhood of Hoosick Falls

Table 5 Industry						
INDUSTRY BREAKDOWN	2010		2016		Rensselaer County 2016	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	1492	-	1,571	-	80,239	-
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0	0%	0	0%	416	0.5%
Construction	65	5%	15	1%	5,678	7.1%
Manufacturing	265	18%	355	23%	5,970	7.4%
Wholesale trade	0	-	34	2%	1,817	2.3%
Retail trade	180	12%	125	8%	8,383	10.4%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	57	4%	60	4%	4,087	5.1%
Information	20	1%	12	1%	1,513	1.9%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	58	4%	29	2%	4,571	5.7%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	123	8%	87	6%	7,727	9.6%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	508	34%	544	35%	21,694	27.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	98	7%	94	6%	6,207	7.7%
Other services, except public administration	24	2%	137	9%	3,487	4.3%
Public administration	94	6%	79	5%	8,689	10.8%

Poverty - The poverty rate in the Village of Hoosick Falls is higher and growing faster than that of the County and the State. Higher poverty levels can negatively impact the education of the youth due to the psychological stresses it can have on a student and their ability to perform well academically. Poor health is also associated with those who are living in poverty. A successful LWRS should improve the economic outlook of Hoosick Falls by showcasing the Village’s unique culture and history, and providing a boost to its economy.

Table 6 Poverty			
	Village of Hoosick Falls	Rensselaer County	New York State
Families below the Poverty Level, 2016	11.4%	8.4%	11.3%
Change in poverty 2010-2016	4.1%	-0.1%	0.5%

3.4 Households

Age of Housing Stock - Based on data in Table 7, the majority (61%) of Hoosick Falls’ housing stock was constructed prior to 1940. Throughout the 1800s & 1900s, factories were the main employers of residents in the Village and many multifamily lots were developed near the factories as lower income workforce housing. Today, these lots do not conform to the current zoning code in the Village and has caused multiple (192 instances) pre-existing nonconforming land use issues.

Updating the existing code would ensure compatibility for future development patterns and resolve issues associated with nonconforming uses. Updating zoning districts to allow 2-family dwellings and multi-family dwellings would resolve a majority of the nonconforming conflicts and be beneficial to future development that will result from this LWRS.

Table 7 Age of Housing Stock				
YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT	2010		2016	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total housing units	1,587	-	1,421	-
Built 2005 or later	19	1%	10	1%
Built 2000 to 2004	-	-	16	1%
Built 1990 to 1999	64	4%	45	3%
Built 1980 to 1989	78	5%	110	8%
Built 1970 to 1979	69	4%	61	4%
Built 1960 to 1969	213	14%	76	5%
Built 1950 to 1959	169	11%	143	10%
Built 1940 to 1949	14	1%	82	6%
Built 1939 or earlier	961	61%	878	62%

Tenure - Housing in the Village of Hoosick Falls consists of more homeowners than renters even with a recent down-tick in homeownership. The homeowner occupied rate fell by 30% from 2010 to 2016. Again, part of this can be due to homeowners converting their homes to multifamily units and renting out the units. Other explanations may be homeowners moving in order to downsize.

This type of trend has the potential to provide lower housing costs to younger age brackets that have been leaving Hoosick Falls. It can also have an impact on older age brackets, 80 years and up, who are interested in downsizing their living spaces.

Table 8 Housing Tenure				
HOUSING TENURE	2010		2016	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Occupied housing units	1,421	-	1,278	-
Owner-occupied	1321	93%	805	63%
Renter-occupied	100	7%	473	37%

Cost Burden - The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines cost-burdened families as those who pay more than 30% of their income for housing. Families who are cost burdened may have trouble being able to afford everyday necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care. As higher income households maintain high housing costs as a lifestyle choice, lower income households may find it difficult to meet their non-housing needs should rent/mortgage payments exceed 30% of household income.

Data in Table 9 and 10 show that housing affordability in the Village of Hoosick Falls is improving as of 2016. According to Table 9, the total number of households paying more than 30% of income on housing has decreased from 213 to 90 since 2010. According to Table 10, 28% of households in Rensselaer County pay more than 30% of household income toward their mortgage while in Hoosick Falls only 17% of households pay more than 30%. These figures reflect a positive trend in housing affordability when compared to Rensselaer County's data.

Table 9 Mortgage Payment as % of Household Income					
Mortgage Payment as % of Household Income for Hoosick Falls, 2010-2016	2010		2016		2010-2016
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Change in %
Less than 20.0 percent	236	39%	248	46%	7%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	114	19%	99	18%	-1%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	38	6%	102	19%	13%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	59	10%	8	2%	-9%
35.0 percent or more	164	27%	82	15%	-12%

Table 10 Mortgage Payment as % of Household Income				
Mortgage Payment as % of Household Income	Village of Hoosick Falls 2016		Rensselaer County 2016	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
Less than 20.0 percent	248	46%	11,981	44%
20.0 to 24.9 percent	99	18%	4,079	15%
25.0 to 29.9 percent	102	19%	3,558	13%
30.0 to 34.9 percent	8	2%	2,026	8%
35.0 percent or more	82	15%	5,544	20%

3.5 Land Use

This section provides an understanding of the existing land use in order to guide potential redevelopment scenarios for the Village of Hoosick Falls. Examining the current land use and zoning of the Village will also help identify areas in the code that need improvement or revisions. Ultimately, this section will guide how the LWRS fits into the Village's existing urban fabric and also what the Village can do to be better prepared for the program.

As previously mentioned in section 4.2.2 *Age of Housing Stock*, throughout the 1800s & 1900s factories were the main employers of residents in the Village. Most of the factories were in the center of the Village and along the Hoosic River. As a result, multifamily lots were developed as lower income workforce housing near the factories. Today, these lots do not conform to the current zoning code in the Village.

There are 192 instances of land uses conflicting with zoning districts in the Village of Hoosick Falls. 81% of the nonconforming land uses are due to 2-family and 3-family residential lots being prohibited in five (5) out of the Village's six (6) zoning districts. Since the boundary of the LWRS encompasses the entire Village, these zoning restrictions will have an impact on the program.

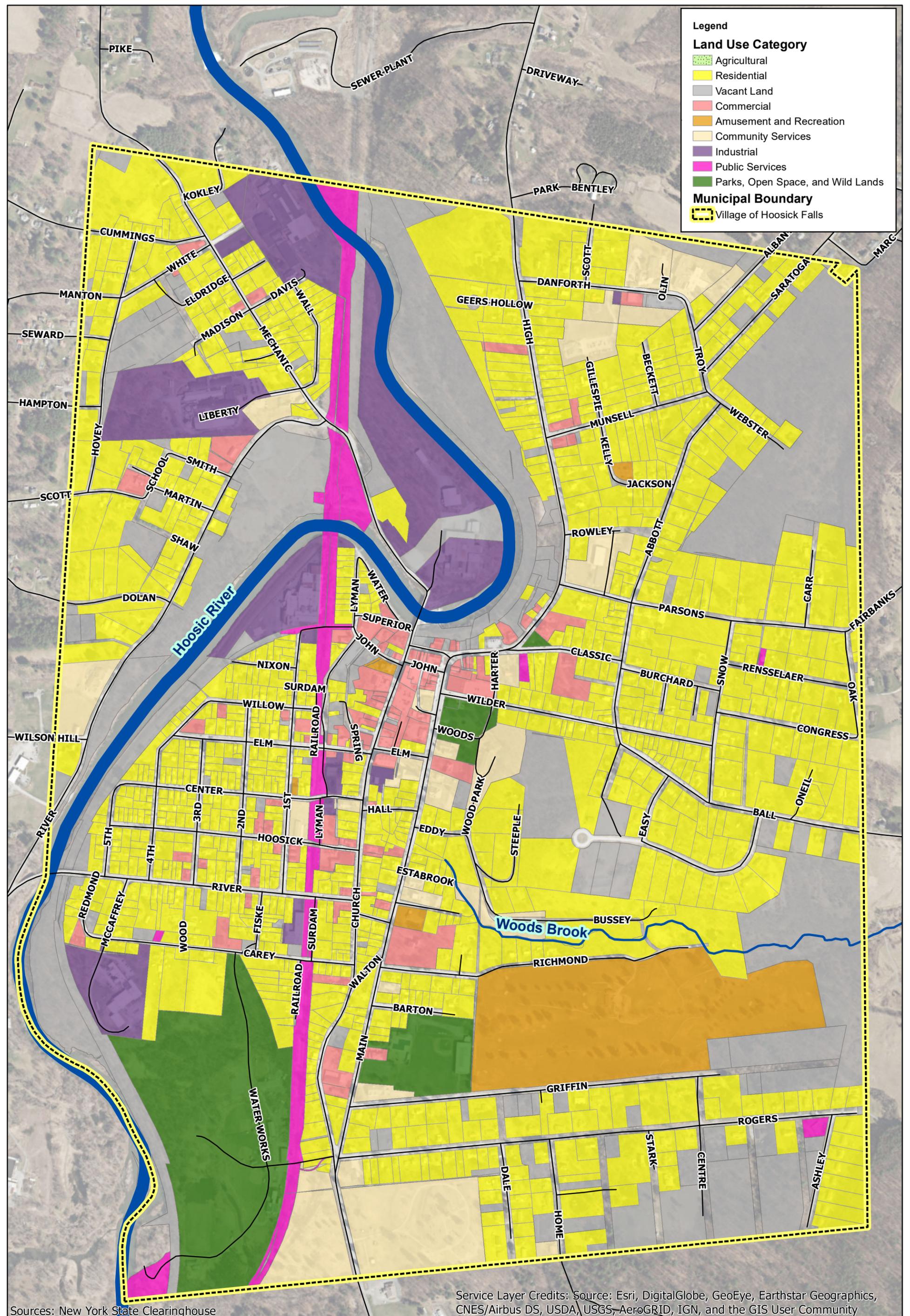
Updating the existing zoning map and text is recommended to ensure compatibility for future development patterns and resolve issues associated with nonconforming uses. Without having mechanisms in place to ensure proper standards, the converted properties become unsellable as banks will not finance them and thus they remain vacant, negatively impacting the property values of the neighborhood. In some cases, banks foreclose on these properties and cannot resell them leaving them as vacant "Zombie Properties." It is recommended that the Village's zoning districts be revised to reduce the prevalence of pre-existing nonconforming uses.

The following maps include the Village's Land Use Map, Zoning Map, Nonconforming Map, Open Space, Recreational and Cultural Resources Map, Environmental Resources Map, and a Transportation Map.



Figure 8 "Zombie properties", those in vacant, deteriorated small homes whose owners are behind on their mortgage payments in the midst of the foreclosure process, dot several neighborhoods in Hoosick Falls

Land Use Map – The vast majority of the parcels and acreage in the Village of Hoosick Falls is classified by the Rensselaer County Property Assessor’s Office as residential. This is common in villages. Commercial uses are clustered on Church, John, and Main Streets. Industrial uses are located along the Hoosic River which is also commonplace among riverside, mill-based communities in the northeastern United States. There is also a sizable percentage of land classified as vacant along the riverfront which will be advantageous for preserving the beauty of the Hoosic and for developing appropriate water-based amenities and supporting uses.



Legend

Land Use Category

- Agricultural
- Residential
- Vacant Land
- Commercial
- Amusement and Recreation
- Community Services
- Industrial
- Public Services
- Parks, Open Space, and Wild Lands

Municipal Boundary

- Village of Hoosick Falls

Sources: New York State Clearinghouse

Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community



1 inch = 600 feet

Village of Hoosick Falls
Land Use Map

Rensselaer County September 2018 New York

Map 3
Project No. 1677.008

3.6 Zoning

Existing zoning districts within the Village include: Residential 1, 2, and 3 (R-1, R-2, R-3), Downtown Commercial (DC), Commercial-Industrial (CI), and Industrial (I).

- R-1, R-2, R-3 have an identical use schedule in terms of permitted, conditional, and non-permitted uses. In general, R-1, R-2, R-3 allow one-family dwellings and prohibit two-family and multifamily dwellings. These districts differentiate from each other in the area and bulk schedule. The R-1 District has a minimum lot size of 10,000 sq. ft., R-2 has a minimum lot size of 6,000 sq. ft., and R-3 has a minimum lot size of 3,600 sq. ft.
- The DC District allows more dense residential development by permitting one-family, two-family, and multi-family dwellings. It is the only district that permits more than a one-family dwelling. It is also the only district that permits commercial uses such as a retail shops, restaurants (including fast food), bars, nightclubs, and theaters/concert halls. DC has the smallest minimum lot size permitted with 3,000 sq. ft.
- The CI and I Districts have an almost identical use schedule with the exception of supermarkets and shopping centers. CI permits supermarkets and shopping centers while they are not permitted in I. In terms of the districts area and bulk schedule, CI has a minimum lot size of 4,000 sq. ft. while I has a minimum lot size of 10,000 sq. ft.

Residential Districts 1, 2, and 3 (R-1, R-2, R-3) only permit single family dwellings by-right. This has caused 128 instances of 2-family residential lots conflicting with the zoning code in those districts. 84% of all the 2-family dwellings in the Village were built before 1930 and 93% of the 2-family dwelling conflicts are in R-2 and R-3 zoning districts. The R-2 and R-3 districts are in the older areas of the Village with a higher density of dwellings compared to the R-1 District. Updating the zoning code by permitting 2-family dwellings in appropriate residential districts would reduce nonconforming use conflicts and improve the property transaction and site plan review process.

29 out of the 33 land use conflicts in R-1 involve mobile homes. As previously mentioned, clarification in the definition of mobile homes and where they are permitted is recommended and would reduce the conflicts in the R-1 district. The Downtown Commercial (DC) district is the only district to allow 2-family and multi-family dwellings. The DC District is the only district to have zero (0) land use conflicts.

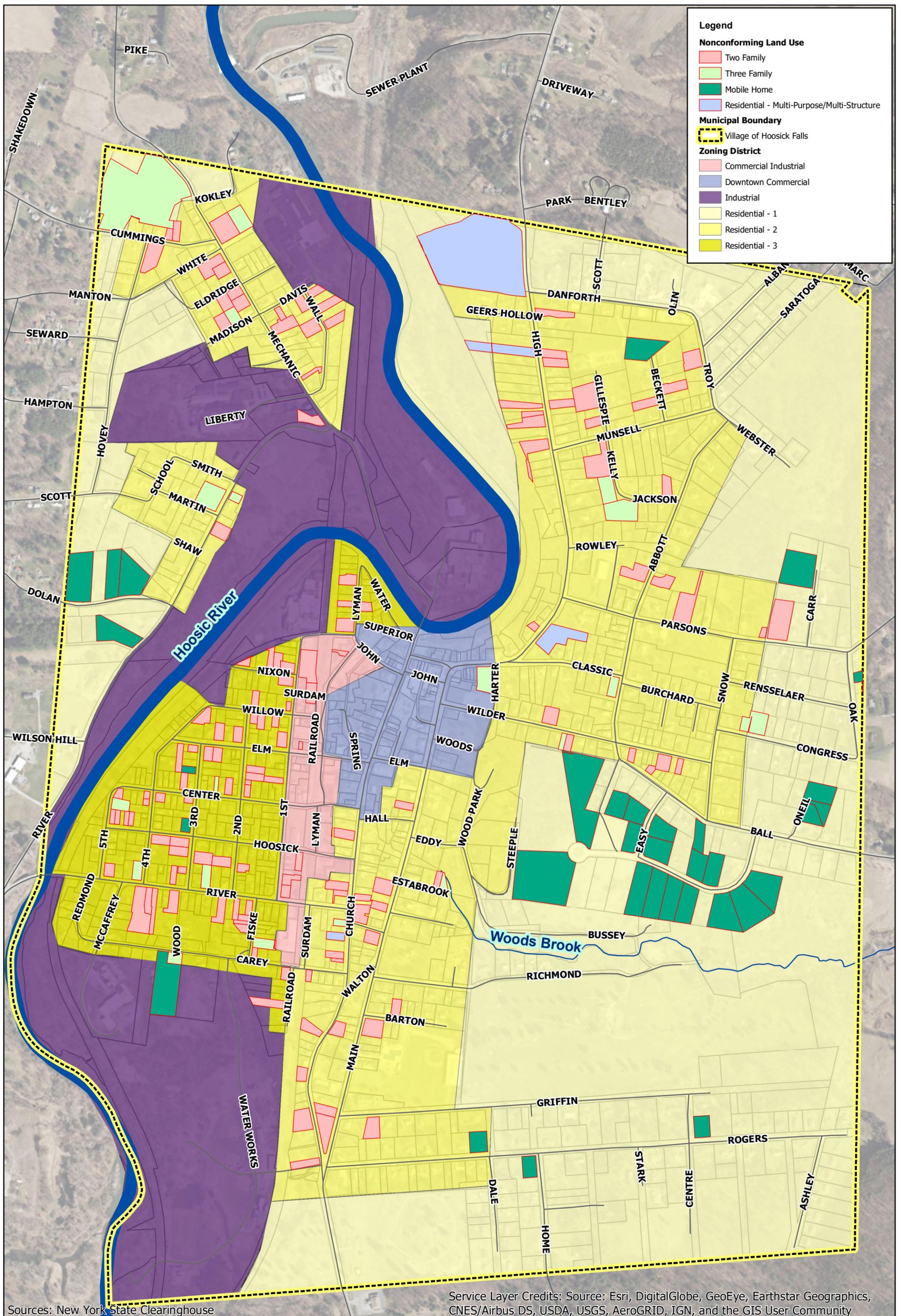
Nonconforming Map – The Nonconforming map displays the specific parcels that do not conform to the zoning district they fall within. As previously mentioned, there are 192 instances of land uses conflicting with zoning districts in the Village of Hoosick Falls. Zoning regulations may require updating to reduce the prevalence of pre-existing nonconforming uses.

The majority (71%) of the nonconforming land uses are due to 2-family residential lots being prohibited in five (5) out of the Village’s six (6) zoning districts. The next leading cause of land use conflicts (18%) are mobile homes. Mobile homes are not mentioned in the code as being permitted or prohibited. “Mobile Home Parks” are in the code and are allowed under conditional approval subject to the “Mobile Home Park Ordinance of the Village of Hoosick Falls.” Clarification in the definition of mobile homes and within which zoning districts they are permitted is recommended.

Without having mechanisms in place to ensure proper standards, the nonconforming properties become unsellable as banks will not finance them and thus they remain vacant, negatively impacting the property values of the neighborhood.



Figure 9 An example of a nonconforming structure in Hoosick Falls, where the structure does not conform to the zoning district it falls within.



Sources: New York State Clearinghouse

Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community



1 inch = 600 feet

3.7 Cultural, Educational, and Emergency Resources

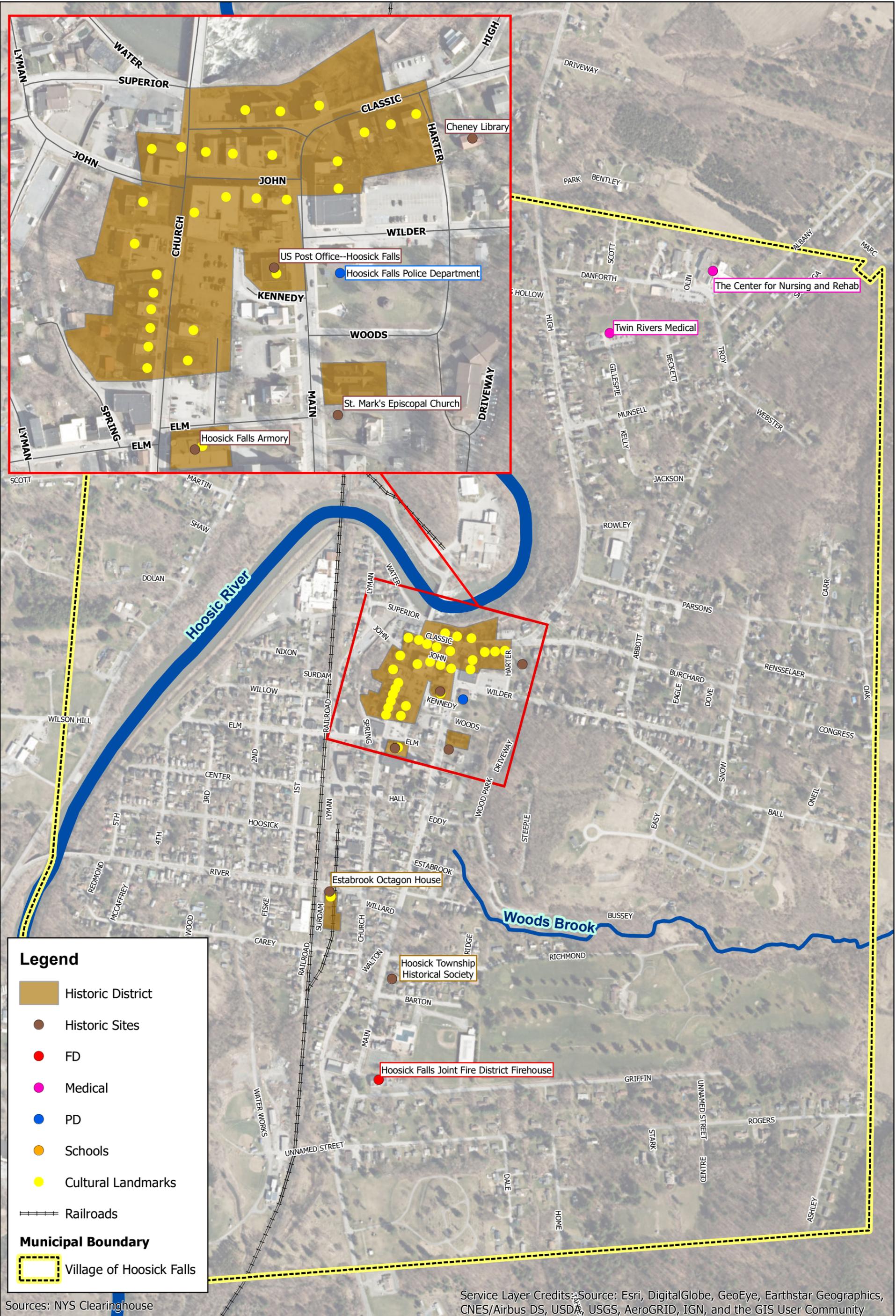
The Village of Hoosick Falls has eleven (11) acres, mostly in the center of the Village, that are listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The majority of the space is along the northern part of Church Street and the eastern end of John Street. The districts are comprised of forty (40) buildings that are a part of the historic registry, as well as six (6) which are outside of the designated historic districts. In order to maintain these districts as a historic and cultural resource to the Village, proposed recommendations for this area focus on maintaining character, rehabilitating historic structures, allowing economic development, and improving waterfront access at the northern part of the main district.

The Hoosick Falls Central School District serves the Town and Village of Hoosick Falls. It is located outside the Village at 21187 NY Route 22. The school serves 1,099 students in grades Pre-K and K-12. A private school known as the Hoosac School is located in the nearby Town of Hoosick as well as serves grades 8-12. An essential element for a community's strategy for waterfront revitalization is gathering input from the local schools and the students. Students can express how they would like to see future improvements within the Village and along the waterfront. Through interpretive signage, the Village's waterfront programming can also enhance the students' educational experiences by providing the historical significance of the river and the impact it had on the Village.

The Village has emergency resources including a police department, fire department, and medical facilities. The police department serves the entire Town of Hoosick Falls and the office is located at Village Hall. The Hoosick Falls Joint Fire District serves the Village from a new station on Main Street.



Figure 10 Hoosick Armory Youth Center and Community Coalition



Legend

- Historic District
- Historic Sites
- FD
- Medical
- PD
- Schools
- Cultural Landmarks
- Railroads

Municipal Boundary

- Village of Hoosick Falls

Sources: NYS Clearinghouse

Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community



1 inch = 600 feet

3.8 Environmental Resources

The Village of Hoosick Falls contains many important natural features that contribute to its scenic beauty. The natural resources have a critical impact on overall development patterns and on the decisions between conservation and development alternatives. Natural resource characteristics are considered in order to gain a better understanding of existing conditions within the LWRS boundary and to identify areas of potential development or areas to be retained as a natural or improved open space. This subsection will cover environmental resources including the Hoosic River, Woods Brook, floodplains, and wetlands.



Legend

-  Freshwater Emergent Wetland
-  Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
-  Freshwater Pond
-  River
-  500-year Floodplain
-  100-year Floodplain

Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community



Waterbodies – The Hoosic River is the main waterbody running through the Village of Hoosick Falls. The Hoosic River is a designated Inland Waterway under Article 42 of the NYS Executive Law (Waterfront Revitalization of Coastal Areas and Inland Waterways). Even though it is a smaller waterbody in the Village, the Woods Brook recently produced significant flood damage that has affected private property and municipal infrastructure.

Hoosic River

The Hoosic River is a tributary of the Hudson River and runs from the southwest border of Hoosick Falls through the middle of downtown and then north out of the Village. The River's width within the Village's boundary ranges from 60 feet to 200 feet. The designation of the Hoosic River as an Inland Waterway allows adjacent communities, including the Village, to receive the benefits of Article 42 including technical assistance from the NYS Department of State, increased opportunities to apply for state financial assistance, and review of state agency actions for consistency with a fully adopted LWRP.

There are currently no formalized waterfront access points to the River within the Village. There are access points north of the Village at Sewer Plant Road and Kokley Avenue and there are access points south of the Village off of Route 22. Although there are not any access points to the river, there are various access points to the Hoosic River Greenway Trail which runs along the eastern part of the river. The trail access points begin at the northern trail head on Sewer Plant Road and include Church Street, Water Street, Nixon Street, McCaffrey Street, and Water Works Road. The recommendations section of this LWRS presents areas for formalized waterfront access and recreational opportunities along the River.

Woods Brook

Woods Brook runs from the eastern boundary of the Village toward downtown and into the Hoosic River. The river is day-lighted from the eastern boundary and then is conveyed into a closed culvert system from Estabrook Ave to the Hoosic River. The most significant areas of historical flooding issues in the Village are within the Woods Brook watershed between Route 22 and the Hoosic River. There have been repetitive catastrophic property and infrastructure damage occurring in this area since the 1860's. The most frequently damaged areas are Main Street, Church St., Spring St., Hall Street, and Elm Street.



Figure 11 Woods Brook

The Village has received funding from FEMA and various grants with the aim of reducing flooding around the brook. The LWRS has taken these studies into consideration and there are limited recommendations of development around the brook.

Floodplains - A floodplain is the level land along the course of a water body. To mitigate the effects of a flood during times of high water levels (after a large rain or snowmelt), the Federal Emergency Management Agency controls and protects the areas located within these federally designated floodplains.

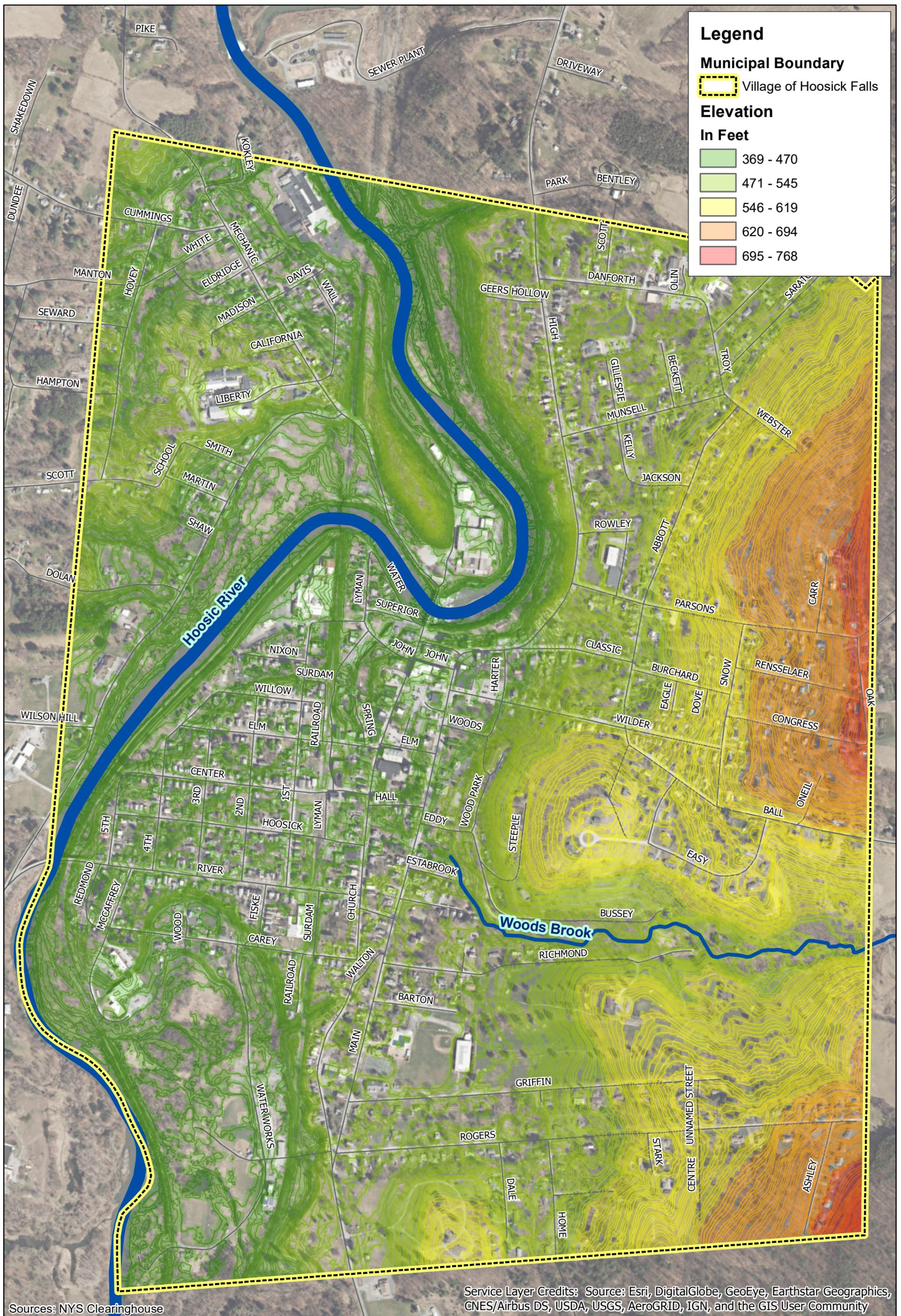
One of the most significant naturally occurring characteristics of Hoosick Falls is a strong vulnerability to flooding. As mentioned in the previous section, significant flooding has occurred around Woods Brook since the 1860s and as recent as July 2017. As a result of these events, funds have been designated for flood relief and future flood prevention. It is essential that the LWRS takes into account the Village's flood risk and is cognizant in recommending a balance of conservation which relieves flooding and development which could exacerbate it.

There are 100-year floodplains around Woods Brook and some around the Hoosic River, mostly on the western part of the river. The 500-year floodplain is not as significant on the eastern part of the Hoosic River compared to the western part. Many of the recommendations are on the eastern part of the river and should not have a significant impact on the floodplains. Nonetheless, potential development on the 100-year and 500-year floodplains should be done with great consideration of the associated risks.

Wetlands - New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) wetlands must be at least 12.4 or more contiguous acres. Additionally, land within 100 feet of each NYSDEC wetland is protected by the State. Wetlands are determined not only by the presence of standing water but by certain vegetation that thrive in wet soils and indicate the presence of moisture over a period of time. The Federal Army Corps of Engineers protects wetlands that may be smaller than NYSDEC wetlands as long as they are connected to navigable waters.

In Hoosick Falls, wetlands are located around the Woods Brook and along the Hoosic River at the north end and at the southwest end. The most prevalent type of wetland in the Village is the *freshwater forested/shrub wetland*. A *freshwater forested/shrub wetland* is an area with 50% areal coverage of trees over a shrub layer with a 60% areal coverage.

Topography - Much of the older part of the Village along the river and downtown is flat. Elevation tends to increase at the eastern boundary of the Village when going east up Parsons Ave/Fairbanks Road and Ball Street. Steep slopes generally indicate areas where development should be avoided due to unstable soils.



Legend

Municipal Boundary
 Village of Hoosick Falls

Elevation
In Feet

-  369 - 470
-  471 - 545
-  546 - 619
-  620 - 694
-  695 - 768

Sources: NYS Clearinghouse

Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

Barton & Loguidice



1 inch = 600 feet

Village of Hoosick Falls
Topography: Elevation
 Rensselaer County September 2018 New York

Map 8
 Project No. 1677.008

3.9 Public Space & Recreational Resources

Hoosick Falls has 10.5 acres of parkland spread over four (4) public parks. Town Park is the largest of the four (4) parks, followed by Wood Memorial Park, Jackson Street Park, and Monument Park. The Village also has the Hoosic River Greenway which runs through the north and south boundaries. The greenway is 2.5 miles long going along the east part of the River and it is a protected trail except for a .1 mile stretch which goes along Water Street. There are trail access points beginning at the northern trail head on Sewer Plant Road as well as access points at Church Street, Water Street, Nixon Street, McCaffrey Street, and Water Works Road. The recommendations section of this LWRS discusses enhancing specific access points by improving parking and improving staircases to the trail.

There are 42 acres of land designated for Recreation and Entertainment, 40 of those acres are the Hoosick Falls Country Club. 255 acres are dedicated to Public Utilities and Services. These parcels are mostly made up of the railroad but also include electric and water supplies. Community Services make up 134 acres of parcels. These parcels include cemeteries, community centers, health centers/hospitals, and public buildings such as the schools, the post office, and police and fire departments.

The Village should continue to maintain the parks, recreational resources, and public services while also looking to improve these systems. This LWRS proposes many recreational opportunities along the river and these opportunities could bring about the expansion of the Village's park system by designating new parks along the river and trail.



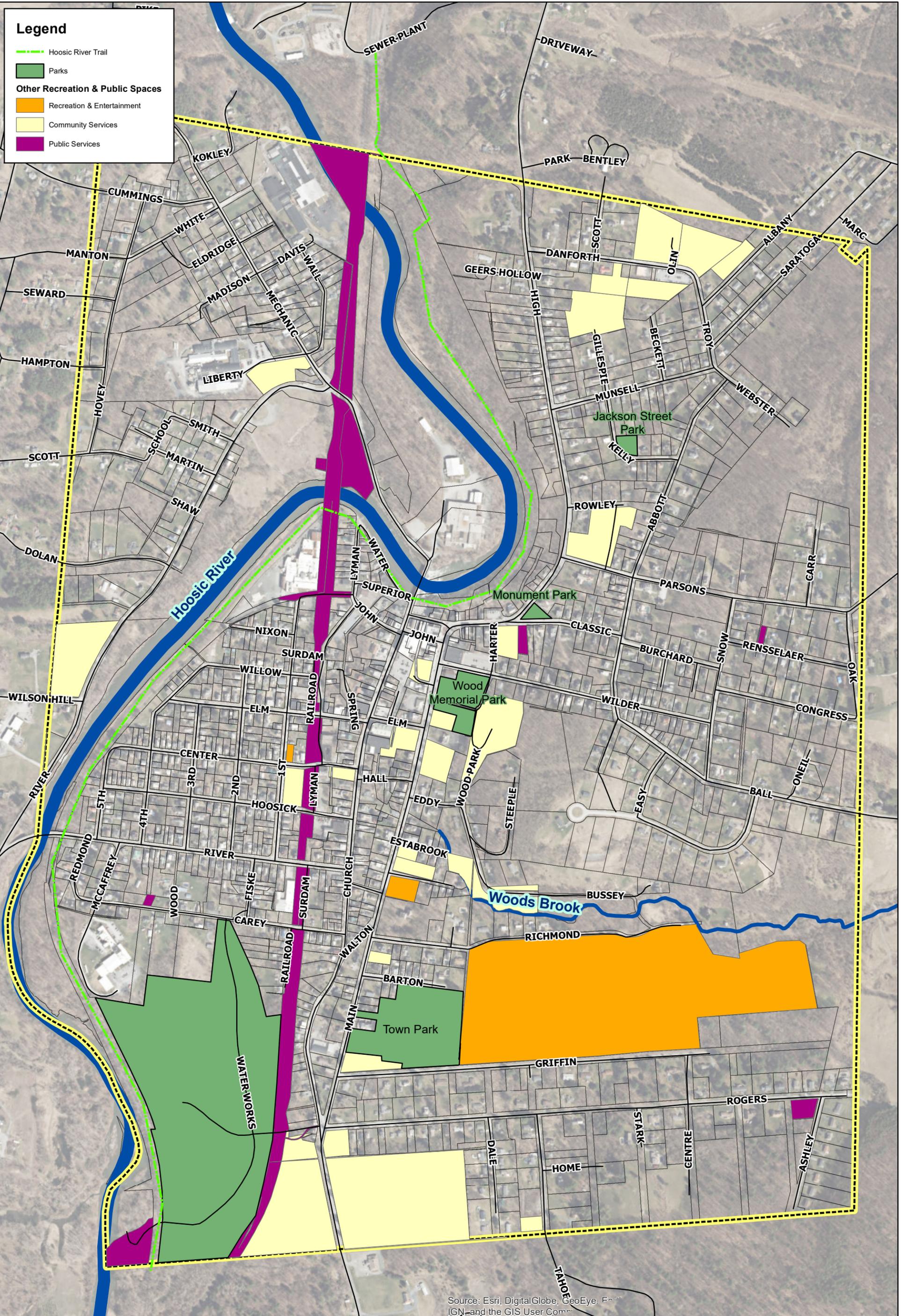
Figure 12 Hoosic River Greenway

Legend

- Hoosic River Trail
- Parks

Other Recreation & Public Spaces

- Recreation & Entertainment
- Community Services
- Public Services



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar, IGN, and the GIS User Community



1 inch = 600 feet

3.10 Transportation

The Village of Hoosick Falls is linked to other areas by Route NY-22, County Routes 101 and 95, and local roads such as Wilson Hill Road and Cummings Street. Route NY-22 runs north/south connecting to other major state roads such as NY-67 at the north and NY-7 at the south. County Route 95 runs north/south also connecting to NY-7 at the south. County Route 101 runs east/west connecting to County Route 102 to the west. Cummings Street turns into County Route 104 when heading west while Wilson Hill Road hits County Route 103 when heading west. The PanAm Southern railroad line runs north/south through the Village.

The Village is in close proximity to major cities and state borders. It is less than ten (10) miles from the Vermont border, less than twenty (20) miles from the Massachusetts border, and less than an hour drive from Albany, NY. In addition to being strategically located by two (2) state borders and the New York state capital, the Village is also less than a four-hour drive to major cities such as New York City (180 miles), Boston (160 miles), Montreal (210 miles) and less than a three hour drive from major New York cities such as Syracuse (170 miles), and Utica (120 miles). See *figure 3*.



Figure 13 Looking at County Route 101 from County Route 102.

SECTION 4.

**PLANNING & WATERFRONT
REVITALIZATION**

Several planning efforts and ongoing initiatives in Hoosick Falls have occurred in relation to waterfront planning. Reviewing these projects and initiatives help understand the steps that the Village has already taken and is currently taking to improve the community planning and waterfront revitalization. This process also assists in identifying and understanding community and waterfront revitalization issues that the Village is trying to recognize and resolve. The following section identifies and summarizes eight (8) previous planning projects and how they relate to this LWRS.

4.1 Previous and On-Going Planning Projects

Village of Hoosick Falls, New York Parking and Pedestrian Project, 2003.

This study was funded by the Capital District Transportation Council. The study analyzed parking and pedestrian access downtown as it related to downtown revitalization. Recommendations included aesthetic improvements and the development of landscaped pedestrian linkages between major downtown public parking facilities. Recommended improvements included a boardwalk and stairway along the waterfront as well as other waterfront related improvements which have been incorporated into the Hoosic River Greenway. The study includes several concept plans for improvements to the parking lots and many specific amenity recommendations that could be incorporated into design standards for public parking lots and pedestrian pathways.

While this study was useful and parts of it have been implemented, the Village and transportation in general within the Village has changed. Due to these

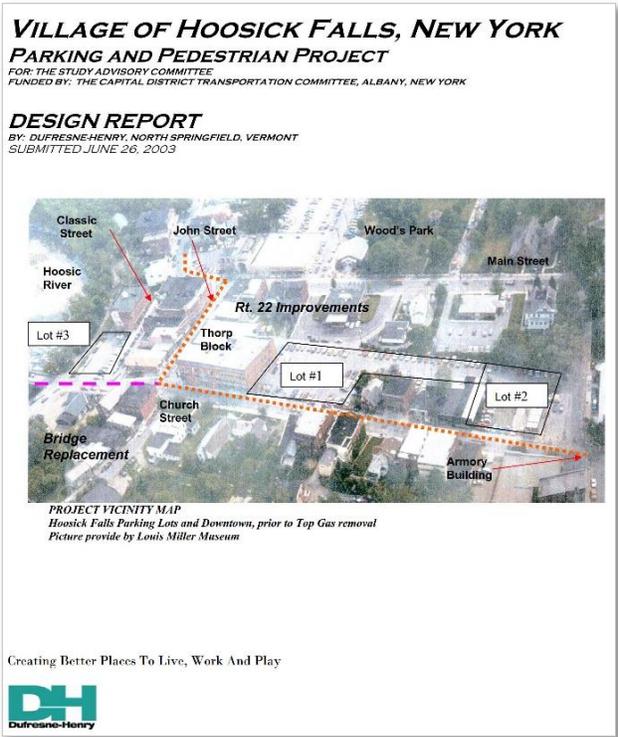


Figure 14 Cover of 2003 Parking and Pedestrian Report

changes as well as advances in green infrastructure, parking, and lighting technology, a new study is due. Such a study would benefit connections to the Hoosic River and the Greenway Trail, and could improve the safety, mobility, and infrastructure of various parts of downtown.

[Envisioning Hoosick Falls: Positioning for a Sustainable Future, September 2006.](#)

In a joint effort by the Village and Civic and Cultural Restoration Corporation (CIVICURE), this visioning project included a series of hands-on visioning workshops that resulted in several relevant opportunities and recommendations to be considered in zoning updates. The report considers zoning updates to:

- The potential for ‘Agri-Tourism’ in the community.
- Agri-business opportunities, especially related to organic farming, including the potential for packaging and shipping from downtown spaces.
- The potential to leverage proximity to cultural attractions and higher educational institutions nearby.
- Several recommendations were made in the visioning workshops regarding the Hoosic River Greenway and the related opportunities to enhance the Village quality of life.
- Establish an arts center that could serve as a public exhibition space and secondarily as a community center.
- The report specifically recommends, *‘The Village should establish zoning and design-guidelines that would promote and support a synergy of uses in the downtown. A diverse, mixed-use downtown can provide a wider range of services and living options that can attract and retain new residents and businesses. The downtown is a prime location for inexpensive housing options. Affordable and varied housing options of rental units and condominiums, can address the needs of the professionals who work near the downtown, the students who are looking for inexpensive apartments, and the seniors who no longer want the burden large-home maintenance.’*
- Another recommendation specific to the zoning update was included, stating, ‘Creating a mixed-use downtown complements the Hoosick Falls Community Strategic Plan recommendations for the downtown. A Central Business District (CBD) promotes an active downtown. A Recreational District (RDD) promotes tourism.

Many of these recommendations have been addressed since 2006 or are being addressed as recommendations in this LWRS. The unique agricultural, cultural,

and historical heritage in Hoosick Falls along with its waterfront creates tourism opportunities and the Village has been in the process of taking advantage of these opportunities. Development of the Hoosic River Greenway has been advanced within the Village and the North Trailhead Project (*covered in the Waterfront Revitalization Initiatives section of this document*) will establish a point of interest along the trail for the Town and Village. The LWRS also addresses expanding the trail north and south of the Village as a recommendation.

There have been efforts to update the zoning code in 2015 and in 2017. In 2015, a zoning code update was performed using funds from the Hudson River Valley Greenway grant (*see Hoosick Falls Zoning Update below*). In 2017, a Land Use Inventory and Analysis was initiated and is still on-going by the Village (*see Land Use Inventory below*).

Since 2006, CIVICURE has purchased Wood Block, located in the heart of downtown Hoosick Falls. The property is within a historic district that is a part of the State and National Registers of Historic Places and it is one of forty buildings in the Village that are a part of the Historic District. CIVICURE is restoring the theater with funding from the New York Main Street Program. In order to maintain the property as one of the Village's historic and cultural resources, the LWRS recommends supporting the rehabilitation of the building by continuing to secure grant funding.

[Options for Governmental Structural Changes Dissolution & Alternatives Study for Village of Hoosick Falls, NY, June 2013.](#)

This report analyzed the potential to combine Town and Village services including Planning and Zoning. The Village dissolution would force the need for revisions to the Town's zoning, this would address some of the code changes that are needed. The dissolution was not pursued but it was suggested that the need to explore opportunities to share services between the Village and other entities be kept in consideration.

While the dissolution of services in order to address code changes is not recommended in this LWRS, other recommendations from the 2013 dissolution study are applicable in order to improve the Village's zoning code. These recommendations include updating the code in order to address the issue of nonconforming parcels in the more dense residential areas in the Village. Updating the existing zoning map and code would promote compatibility with

future development patterns and resolve the issues associated with nonconforming uses.

Hoosick Falls Zoning Update, 2015

In 2015, the Village of Hoosick Falls recognized that its zoning code was outdated and had become a barrier to economic development. The need for a more consistent and easily enforceable code was identified and funding for a zoning update was provided by the Village and by a Hudson River Valley Greenway grant.

In addition to a reorganization of the Zoning Code and getting it posted online, a technical memorandum was prepared. The technical memorandum looked at zoning projects in other New York State municipalities and provided a strategy for reaching goals that the Village established. The memo compiled all existing zoning code amendments and incorporated them into the main code document. The final document provided a revised draft zoning code for the Village to review, revise as needed, and eventually adopt. The zoning code revision consisted of a reorganization of the code for simplicity and the removal of redundancies.

Land Use Inventory Memorandum, 2017

As a result of questions posed and issues raised during the 2015 Zoning Code Update, the Village pursued funding for an inventory and analysis of existing land use characteristics in the Village. The inventory was intended to support an anticipated comprehensive plan update and help guide zoning changes that were intended to better represent the existing community form and ensure more compatible future development patterns.

While still in the final draft form, the memo recommends updating the Village's existing zoning map and code in order to resolve issues associated with nonconforming uses. The continued prevalence of land use and zoning conflicts is problematic for existing property owners since those who are not in compliance may have difficulty selling their properties. Updating the existing zoning map and code is also recommended in this LWRS in order to promote compatibility with future development patterns and resolve the issues associated with nonconforming uses.

4.2 Waterfront Revitalization Initiatives

Waterworks Park Revitalization, on-going

Phase I of the Waterworks Park Revitalization project is already funded and includes developing an access point to the Hoosic River from Waterworks Road. The access point will be at the south end of the Hoosic River Greenway and is scheduled to be completed by summer 2020. Phase II of the project will design and implement an event/performance space, dog park, and it will reconstruct Waterworks Road in order to accommodate motor vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

The Waterworks Park Revitalization project is referenced multiple times throughout this LWRS as a project to support and build upon. The project improves accessibility to the river and creates a tourist point within the Village. This LWRS recommends continued support of the project by looking to secure future funding.

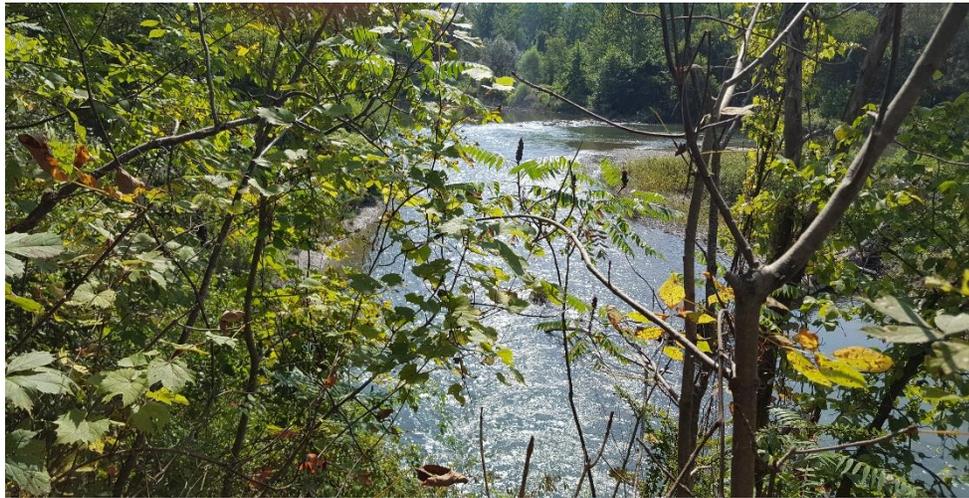


Figure 15 View of Hoosic River near Waterworks Park

Woods Brook Flood Mitigation

Woods Brook runs from the eastern boundary of the Village toward downtown and into the Hoosic River. The river is day-lighted from the eastern boundary and then is conveyed into a closed culvert system from Estabrook Ave to the Hoosic River. There have been many problems with flooding along the Brook and various grants have been awarded to address the flooding. In 2016, a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) in the amount of \$25,000 was awarded to the Village for a Drainage Study. In 2017, another CDBG grant for

\$900,000 was awarded to the Village to implement green infrastructure projects that would hold and slow flood waters upstream of the Village.

In order to address flooding concerns and improve the value of the Village's natural resources, daylighting Woods Brook is a recommendation in this LWRS. Daylighting the Brook would allow the waterway to be another valuable natural resource within the Village. If daylighting is feasible, it is recommended to surround it with resiliency measures in order to activate the Brook as a recreational resource. It is recommended to study the feasibility of adding a trail along the Brook and surrounding it with vegetation, scenic vistas, and wayfinding/interpretive signage. The Brook has the potential to connect to the Hoosic River Greenway through the Village's downtown core. This connection would create another trail access point, as well as another valuable recreational trail within the Village, and a potential resource that could boost the Village's downtown economy.

Hoosic River Greenway

The Village and the Hoosic River Greenway Committee have invested resources in establishing a rail trail along the old rail line along the Hoosic River since 2005. The Hoosic River Greenway is a trail that runs along the eastern part of the Hoosic River and goes through the north and south boundaries of the Village. The Greenway is currently 2.5 miles long, has access points throughout the Village, and is associated with various projects. This LWRS recommends extending the greenway north to the hamlet of North Hoosick and Brown's and Bennington Battlefield, as well as extending the greenway southward connecting into the Corkscrew Rail Trail, Ashuwillticook Rail Trail, and the Taconic Crest.



Figure 16 Hoosic River Greenway wayfinding signage

Extending the trail north and south can improve the Village's recreational resources and its economy. The recreational connectivity of the Village can be improved by connecting the trail to surrounding communities and other recreational points of interest. Extending the trail can increase its use which could help the Village's downtown economy since the trail runs through the Village's downtown core.

North Trailhead Project - The North Trailhead Project is located off of Sewer Plant Road and will connect the road to the Hoosic River Greenway which ends 700 feet south. By connecting the road to the greenway, Sewer Plant Road will serve as the north trailhead. The project also includes adding a 5-car trailhead parking lot.

This LWRS supports this project and has a few recommendations associated with it. One recommendation is changing the name of Sewer Plant Road to something more marketable. Another recommendation was creating a pedestrian bridge off of Sewer Plant Road over the Hoosic River connecting to Kokley Ave. This would open up the opportunity for more recreational waterfront activities to occur in that area of the Village as Sewer Plant Road is already an access point to the River upstream from a dam adjacent to the Sewer Plant. It will also provide better access to the Hoosic River Greenway for people west of the Hoosic River and it has the potential to create a scenic trail/bicycle loop for trail users if the Greenway is extended as a result of the pedestrian bridge.

SECTION 5.

VISION STATEMENT & GOALS

5.1 Vision Statement

Hoosick Falls is a rural, valley community that offers quality schools, social organizations, and employment opportunities all located in a beautiful natural setting along the banks of the Hoosic River. The Village is the center of economic and social activity for several surrounding communities in Northern Rensselaer County and provides a variety of attractive, multi-generational housing options. Residents and visitors alike partake in a range of locally-available outdoor pursuits on trails and waterways. Such shared values support a collective sense of community that makes Hoosick Falls a unique place to live, work, and visit.

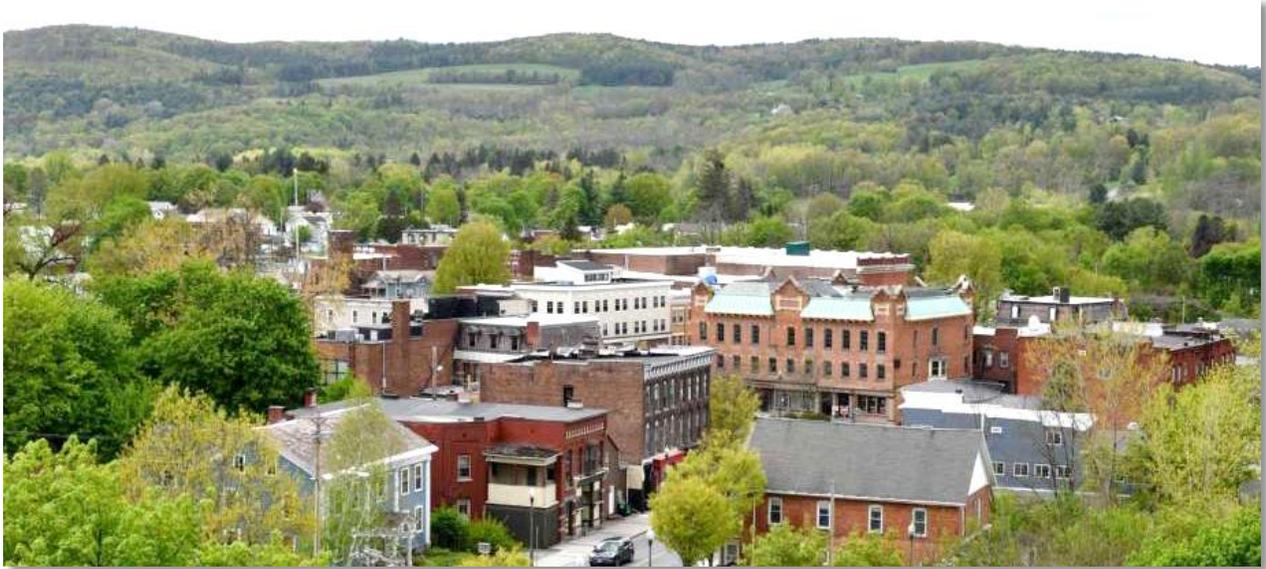


Figure 17 View of Downtown Hoosick Falls

Source: <https://www.timesunion.com/local/article/220-000-state-grant-for-Hoosick-Falls-water-costs-11136804.php>

5.2 Goals

To achieve this vision, the Village of Hoosick Falls established a set of goals to guide decision-making. These goals address a wide range of issues that have been raised throughout the public engagement process. The goals are as follows:

- Improve physical and visual access to the Hoosic River in order to make the river more of an everyday part of life in Hoosick Falls
 - Re-engineer Army Corps of Engineers flood protection measures downtown
 - Establish a wayfinding system of signage and multi-media platforms to better enable residents and visitors to interact with the Hoosic River
 - Establish fishing, kayaking, and canoeing access along the Hoosic River at several locations, including the west bank across from downtown
 - Link together and extend segments of the Hoosic River Greenway



Figure 18 Hoosic River looking northward from the Mechanic Street Bridge

- Foster economic development downtown
 - Revise and modernize the zoning code
 - Formation of a Waterfront Development District in the Zoning Code.
 - Efficiently and effectively maintain civic infrastructure to reduce municipal services burden on business community. Consider implementing an asset management system.
 - Rebrand the Village based on its connection to the Hoosic River



Figure 19 John St. looking east toward Main St.



Figure 20 Hoosick Falls Armory

- Enhance the aesthetics of the built environment including downtown and residential neighborhoods
 - Implement design standards/guidelines
 - Establish a land bank or work with an existing one
 - Work with property owners to maintain the appearance of their properties
 - Consider the protection of visual resources such as the agricultural landscapes that surround the Village. Consider inter-municipal cooperation.

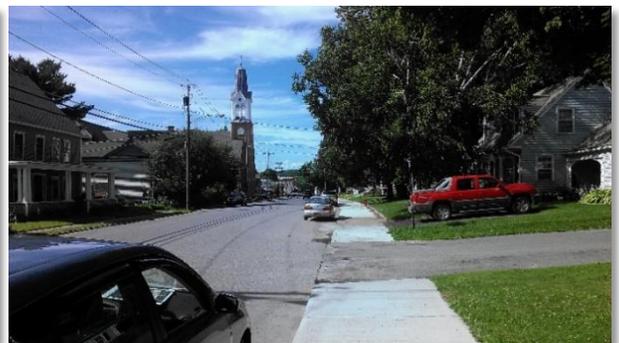


Figure 21 Design Guidelines would help reserve street character, such as the storefronts and neighborhood settings on Church Street

SECTION 6.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The waterfront in the Village of Hoosick Falls is an asset that affords the Village a significant opportunity to spearhead revitalization efforts. Empowered by the aforementioned community vision, the LWRP Committee was charged with generating projects in the plan that will improve economic development, waterfront recreation and access, and community aesthetics. Through public input received in one (1) visioning workshop and two (2) public workshops, twenty-three (23) recommendations were developed and prioritized by short (less than 3 years), medium (3-7 years), and long (7+ years) term. Some recommendations were broken into two phases: Phase A being a feasibility study and Phase B being the implementation phase. This chapter will address each recommendation in detail.

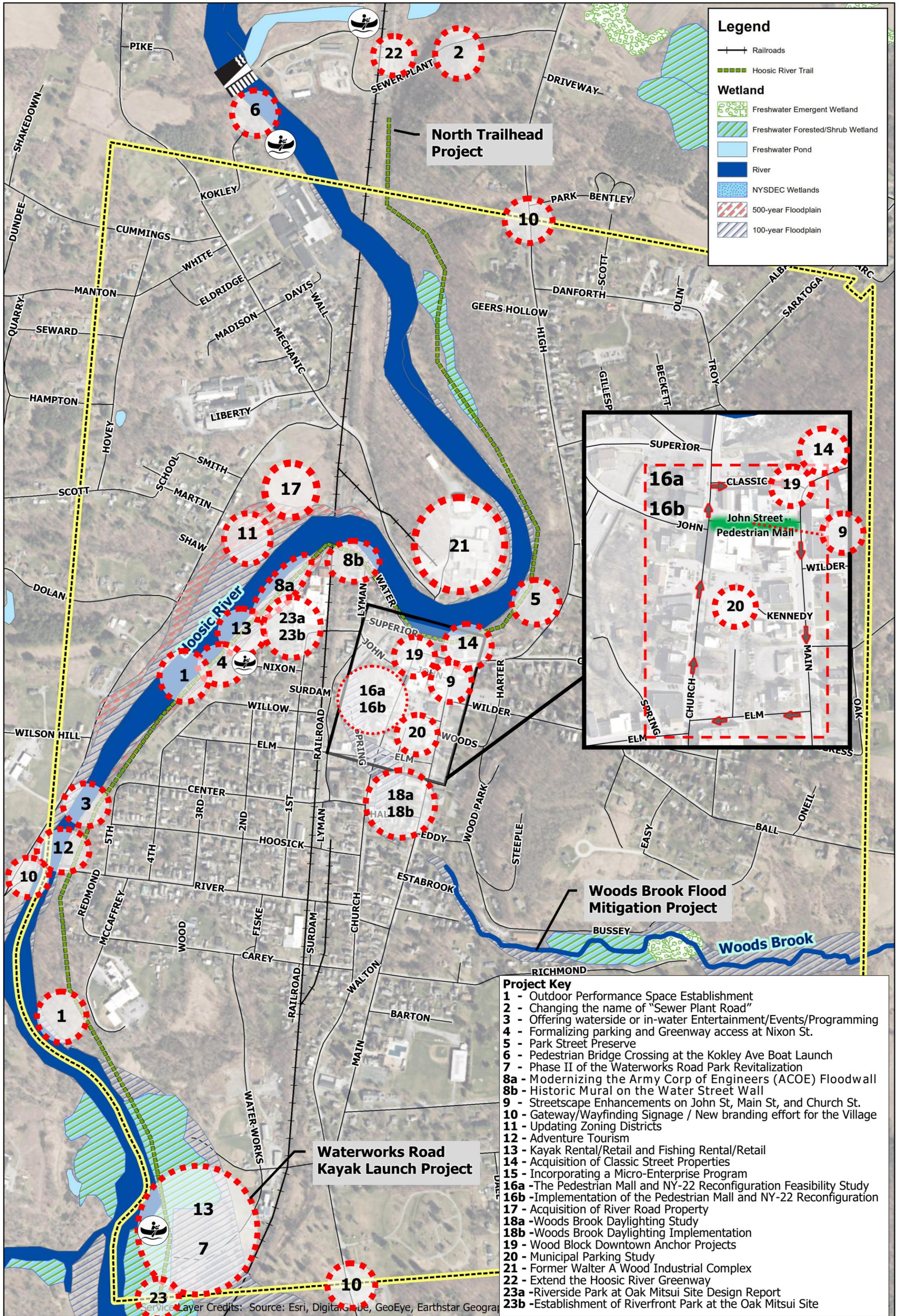


Figure 22a, 22b, 22c Project Recommendations were developed with public input at three public meetings held in May 2018, September 2018, and January 2019.



The twenty-three (23) recommendations include:

1. Outdoor Performance Space Establishment
2. Changing the name of 'Sewer Plant Road'
3. Offering waterside or in-water Entertainment/Events/Programming
4. Formalizing Parking and Greenway access at Nixon Street
5. Park Street Preserve
6. Pedestrian Bridge Crossing at the Kokley Ave Boat Launch
7. Phase II of the Waterworks Road Park Revitalization
- 8a. Modernizing the ACOE Floodwall
- 8b. Historic Mural on the Water Street Wall
9. Streetscape Enhancements: John Street, Main Street, Church Street
10. Gateway/Wayfinding Signage/ New Branding Effort for the Village
11. Updating Zoning Districts – Form-based Code and Design Guidelines
12. Adventure Tourism
13. Kayak Rental/Retail and Fishing Rental/Retail
14. Acquisition of Classic Street Properties
15. Incorporating a Micro-Enterprise Program
- 16a. Pedestrian Mall and NY-22 Reconfiguration Feasibility Study
- 16b. Implementation of the Pedestrian Mall and NY-22 Reconfiguration
17. Acquisition of River Road Property
- 18a. Woods Brook Daylighting Study
- 18b. Woods Brook Daylighting Implementation
19. Wood Block - Downtown Anchor Projects
20. Municipal Parking Study
21. Former Walter A. Wood Industrial Complex
22. Extend the Hoosic River Greenway
- 23a. Riverside Park at Oak Mitsui Site Design Report
- 23b. Establishment of Riverfront Park at the Oak Mitsui Site



Legend

- Railroads
- Hoosic River Trail
- Wetland**
 - Freshwater Emergent Wetland
 - Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland
 - Freshwater Pond
 - River
 - NYSDEC Wetlands
 - 500-year Floodplain
 - 100-year Floodplain

- ### Project Key
- 1 - Outdoor Performance Space Establishment
 - 2 - Changing the name of "Sewer Plant Road"
 - 3 - Offering waterside or in-water Entertainment/Events/Programming
 - 4 - Formalizing parking and Greenway access at Nixon St.
 - 5 - Park Street Preserve
 - 6 - Pedestrian Bridge Crossing at the Kokley Ave Boat Launch
 - 7 - Phase II of the Waterworks Road Park Revitalization
 - 8a - Modernizing the Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE) Floodwall
 - 8b - Historic Mural on the Water Street Wall
 - 9 - Streetscape Enhancements on John St, Main St, and Church St.
 - 10 - Gateway/Wayfinding Signage / New branding effort for the Village
 - 11 - Updating Zoning Districts
 - 12 - Adventure Tourism
 - 13 - Kayak Rental/Retail and Fishing Rental/Retail
 - 14 - Acquisition of Classic Street Properties
 - 15 - Incorporating a Micro-Enterprise Program
 - 16a -The Pedestrian Mall and NY-22 Reconfiguration Feasibility Study
 - 16b -Implementation of the Pedestrian Mall and NY-22 Reconfiguration
 - 17 - Acquisition of River Road Property
 - 18a -Woods Brook Daylighting Study
 - 18b -Woods Brook Daylighting Implementation
 - 19 - Wood Block Downtown Anchor Projects
 - 20 - Municipal Parking Study
 - 21 - Former Walter A Wood Industrial Complex
 - 22 - Extend the Hoosic River Greenway
 - 23a -Riverside Park at Oak Mitsui Site Design Report
 - 23b -Establishment of Riverfront Park at the Oak Mitsui Site

1. Outdoor Performance Space Establishment (*Priority Term: Medium*)



Figure 23 A durable yet attractive floodwall in Indianapolis, IN



Figure 24 A floodwall which doubles as an outdoor space in Troy, NY

Outdoor performance and event spaces are viewed as a critical missing component to waterfront revitalization in Hoosick Falls. Such an activity center could provide space for musical and theatrical performances, civic ceremonies, and special events. In conjunction with the proposed modification to the Army Corps of Engineers flood wall on Water Street that will be discussed later in this chapter, a terraced outdoor performance space at that location or near the former Oak Mitsui site (*see Appendix C*) would be ideal for bringing residents and visitors to the waterfront and downtown for entertainment. Secondary options for smaller bandstands or pavilions are also desired for the Park Street Preserve, Skorupski's Landing, or Waterworks Park.

2. Changing the Name of "Sewer Plant Road" (*Priority Term: Short*)

Sewer Plant Road provides access to the Hoosic River and the Hoosic River Greenway just to the north of the Village limits. However, this property is owned by the Village. The negative connotation of the road's name reduces the appeal of this access point to the two recreational points of interest. Changing the road's name would remove this negative



Figure 25 Current access to Sewer Plant Rd. from NY-22

association and improve promotional opportunities of the trail and the river access point. The Village will need to approach the Town of Hoosick and National Grid about changing the name.

Also, access to the Hoosic River just to the north of the sewer plant exists in an informed setting. However, kayakers, canoers, and tubers can enjoy an uninterrupted segment of the river from this location all the way to the Buskirk Red Covered Bridge, a distance of 6.6 miles.

3. Offering Waterside or On-Water Entertainment/Events/Programming (*Priority Term: Short*)

Waterfront programming is a valuable tool which can attract and increase waterfront use and change the way people interact with the local environment. Facilitating ways that the community can get involved with public spaces through entertainment and events can benefit the health and wellbeing of the residents. Offering waterside or in-water entertainment and events can be accomplished through regional coordination with organizations such as the Rensselaer Plateau Alliance, Bennington Battlefield, Rensselaer County Tourism, and Wild Center in Tupper Lake.

Some examples of waterside or in-water entertainment/ programming could include all season fishing contracts, kayak/canoe lessons, educational excursions including birding, flora/fauna, local history, and fundraisers such as the duck derby.

4. Formalizing Parking and Greenway Access at Nixon Street (*Priority Term: Long*)

Nixon Street is one of a few access points to the Hoosic River Greenway within the Village boundary. There is currently a gravel area where Nixon Street terminates and where trail users park their cars in order to access the Greenway and potentially access to the river itself in the future. There are no formalized parking spaces or clear signage about parking regulations. The Army Corp of Engineers and the DEC would be involved in the development of a formalized parking area.

Nixon Street lacks signage where it intersects with 1st Street and from higher traffic volume streets like River Street and Church Street. This signage would direct patrons to the trail and the parking area. Having designated parking areas along with signage which clearly states parking limits will give trail users confidence in using the parking area as an access point. Additional signage which directs people to the parking area will also promote trail use and trail accessibility.



Figure 26 Existing conditions of the parking area at the end of Nixon Street.

5. Park Street Preserve (Priority Term: Short)

Park Street Preserve is centrally located in the Village along the Hoosic River and intersecting the Hoosic River Greenway. Park Street is a little known public right-of-way leading down from High Street-Classic Street intersection. The Park Street Preserve could encompass several riverside properties along the right-of-way which are already owned by the Village of Hoosick Falls. The intent of the Park Street Preserve would be to capitalize on its secluded nature by providing passive recreational opportunities for camping, fishing, picnicking, and quiet walks. There is a nearby parking area at the insurance lot. This could serve as the initial parking area until a new one could be built within the Preserve.



Figure 27 Coles Creek State Park in St. Lawrence County, NY.
Source: <https://parks.ny.gov/camping/campsites/default.aspx>

6. Pedestrian Bridge Crossing at the Kokley Avenue Boat Launch (Priority Term: Short)

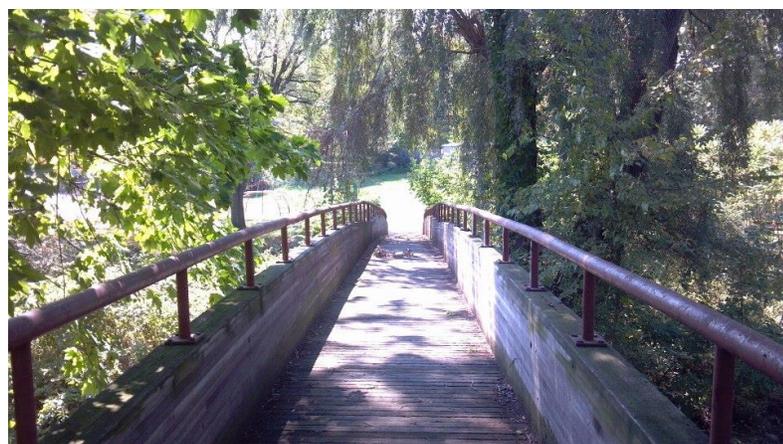


Figure 28 An example of a pedestrian bridge in Mechanicville, NY.
Source: Mechanicville Mile.

A pedestrian bridge at Kokley Avenue will create better access to the Hoosic River and the Hoosic River Greenway for residents of the Clay Hill neighborhood. A pedestrian bridge will connect Kokley Avenue to Sewer Plant Road and it would open up the opportunity for more recreational waterfront activities to occur in that area of the Village as Sewer Plant Road is

already an access point to the River upstream from a dam adjacent to the Sewer Plant. This is the only existing access point on the Hoosic between the two dams. It will also provide better access to the Hoosic River Greenway for people west of

the Hoosic River and it has the potential to create a scenic trail/bicycle loop for trail users if the Greenway is extended as a result of the pedestrian bridge.

7. Phase II of the Waterworks Park Revitalization (Priority Term: Short)

Phase I of the Waterworks Park Revitalization project is already funded and includes developing an access point to the Hoosic River from Waterworks Road. The access point will be at the south end of the Hoosic River Greenway and is scheduled to be completed by summer 2020. Phase II of the project will design and implement an event/performance space, fitness system, dog park, and it will reconstruct Waterworks Road. in order to accommodate motor vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.

8a. Modernizing the Army Corps of Engineers Floodwall (Priority Term: Long)

It is recommended that the Army Corp of Engineers (ACOE) floodwall along the bend in the Hoosic River be modernized into a more versatile stepped design which would provide views and accessibility to the water while still maintaining the flood control function. Older urban floodwall designs, while quite functional in containing rising waters, often created a barrier which separated people from the water. Today we recognize the importance of these waterways for our community, and seek to re-establish these connections to the water with more versatile engineering solutions. Examples of these more versatile designs can be found in numerous waterfront communities, including nearby Troy, New York which provides a series of tiers or steps down to the water instead of a vertical wall. The stepped arrangement offers a number of advantages. It can provide



improved community aesthetics, with better views, where sight-lines down to the water are not obstructed by abrupt vertical drops or walls. They also provide the potential for landscaping and plantings to be included in the tiers

Figure 29 – Example terraced, riverfront park in Troy, NY

down to the water, creating a more attractive setting. The improvements can also be functional, with a tiered system providing pedestrian access to the river via stairs or ramps, and the ability to accommodate trails or walking paths along the river. More elaborate designs can incorporate an outdoor performance space, with stepped tiers providing seating overlooking the water, banners, flags and interpretive signage to create a celebratory village space on the waterfront.

A concept design developed for this waterfront area illustrates the potential for redesign in this area around the former Oak-Mitsui site (see *Figure 30/Appendix C*). The existing floodwall could be pulled back away from the river, creating a location for a stepped amphitheater just west of the railroad, looking northwest over the water. The Hoosic River Greenway trail could wrap around the back of this amphitheater, overlooking the water from above. There is the potential to also create a raised plateau or hill behind the amphitheater and floodwall along the railroad track which would allow people a view over the floodwall and to the river beyond—a potentially fun terrain feature. Other future site improvements here could include a driveway access from 1st Street, parking, picnic pavilion as well as open lawn areas, trees and play courts, as shown in the illustration.



Figure 30 Proposed Hoosick Riverfront Park on the former Oak Mitsui Factory site in Hoosick Falls

Such a design would restore personal connections to the water directly from the village again, providing opportunities for improved recreation and economic development. It is recommended that initial design concepts for this modernized floodwall be developed to identify the potential scope and length of design terrace required to provide functional public space in order to establish the potential budget. Early coordination with DEC and Army Corps of Engineers will be necessary, as well as Hoosic River Greenway. Any amenities or improvements within the tiered design area would be designed to be either exceptionally durable or expendable, as any flood event would likely destroy items within the floodway.

A modernized floodwall in such a stepped design would however require more land area than the current vertical floodwall, and would be a significant undertaking in terms of planning, permitting and construction. For these reasons, it is recommended that this project be viewed as a long-term objective.

8b. Historic Mural on the Water Street Wall (*Priority Term: Short*)



Figure 31 Floodwall on Water Street, part of Hoosic River Greenway. A raised sidewalk would allow views of the river but would also necessitate drainage provisions.

As noted in Recommendation #8a, while the ACOE floodwall has and continues to protect the Village from floodwaters in the Hoosic River, it is also an unappealing physical and visual barrier between the community and this important natural resource. #8a recommends modifying the flood berm to the west of the railroad bridge with a terraced amphitheater design while #8b addresses the cement-hardened stretch of riverfront to the east of the railroad

bridge. Due to limited public right-of-way between homes and the floodway, it is recommended that the Village pursue the establishment of a mural along the existing floodwall. The mural would offer the opportunity to bring in the local arts and education communities to showcase local history, ecology, and culture to users on the Hoosic River Greenway Trail. This is viewed as a short term priority because it will require comparably minimal financial investment and permitting to develop designs, procure painting materials, and execute the mural rendering. Independent artists and arts departments from Hoosick Falls Central Schools, the Hoosac School, and/or local colleges such as Hudson Valley Community College, Bennington College, or Williams College could be invited to participate.

9. Streetscape Enhancements on John Street, Main Street, and Church Street (Priority Term: Medium)

It is recommended that streetscape enhancements be pursued along the primary travel corridors through the village to help improve the visual aesthetics of downtown, promote tourism and encourage economic development. The primary focus of these improvements would be along the Main Street corridor from John Street south to Elm Street, continuing the prior streetscape renovations which have been implemented on the north side of the village.

Suggested enhancements would include: new sidewalks and crosswalks, granite curbs, street trees, pedestrian lighting (warm LED or high pressure sodium), banners, flags, decorative brick pavers and plantings as well as amenities such as benches, bicycle racks, trash and recycling bins. The improvements would allow for necessary ADA accessibility upgrades, particularly at crossing locations where there are no adequate ramps or tactile warning systems. A continuation of the same historic style pedestrian lights is recommended to create a consistent design along Main Street, however some design deviations from previous upgrades may be necessary, such as more durable crosswalk materials which are less likely to be damaged from the wear and tear of winter plowing. New pedestrian light poles should include pole-mounted GFI outlets to accommodate holiday lighting. Electrical outlets should also be considered at select street tree locations as well.

As part of these upgrades, a lifespan assessment of underground utilities is recommended to determine if they require replacement prior to roadway reconstruction.

Secondary streetscape enhancement areas include Classic Street, which provides a direct connection down to the river. In the event that the John Street Pedestrian Mall concept is not pursued, Classic Street should be considered for a sidewalk widening which would create a more attractive pedestrian route down the hill to the water. This option however would require the removal of any on-street parking on one side of the street.

Secondary sidewalk enhancements, which do not require the full streetscape treatment described above, could be considered for an additional stretch along Main Street from Elm Street, continuing south to Hall Street or Eddy Place.

Design and reconstruction work for these improvements would require a few years to complete. For this reason, it is recommended that this project be considered for medium to long-term priority consideration.



Figure 32 Example of streetscape amenities envisioned for Hoosick Falls

10. Gateway/ Wayfinding Signage/ New Branding Effort for the Village (Priority Term: Short)

It is recommended that a unified package of gateway signs and wayfinding signage be developed for the Village of Hoosick Falls that will help to reinforce the community identity, guide travelers and help stimulate local business. The gateway signs should be developed as part of a consistent theme, with an

updated logo that will identify with the history and character of the village. Preliminary community ideas for a new logo included images of the river, and the owl, and would ideally be incorporated into the wayfinding program to follow using natural materials such as wood and stone. Gateway signs would be located at key passageways into the community, such as Hill Road/Main Street; River Road; Clay Hill Road; High Street; Ball Street and Fairbanks Road.

It is recommended that the gateway signs be used as a starting point for the development of a consistent branding effort in the wayfinding signs overall throughout the village. As a first stage, these would be located along primary travel routes through the community to help capture or educate travelers who are unfamiliar with what Hoosick Falls has to offer, but could be expanded along secondary routes in later phases to provide further guidance. Priority identification should be given to services and features likely to attract visitors, including municipal parking. A central information kiosk, located on Main Street in downtown, should be included to provide further detail, maps and current events / announcements. A branding package should be developed which identifies colors, shapes, and sizes of how the signs would be displayed in different environments. In concert with the effort, it is recommended that the village work to update and coordinate its online map listings on popular search or navigation platforms such as Google Maps, Bing or Waze.

While the village could solicit the design help from outside specialists in the development of the logo and wayfinding design, it is suggested that the local arts community be invited to generate early conceptual ideas as part of the process. This process could be initiated relatively quickly and with relatively small amount of capital expenditure, and for these reasons it is recommended that this project be considered for short-term priority.

11. Updates to the Zoning Code – Form-based Code and Design Guidelines (Priority Term: Medium)

It is recommended that the Village of Hoosick Falls implement a series of zoning code updates to help enable and attract new waterfront business, correct code deficiencies, encourage infill development, and improve the aesthetic quality of the village. Ideally, the zoning updates would addressed on a number of levels, as follows:

1. Updates to the existing conventional zoning code language to address issues with allowable uses, particularly with regard to industrial districts, multifamily residences, and code process clarity;
2. Incorporation of new form-based codes in the most urbanized portions of the village to promote infill development which closely matches the historic urban form of the downtown with less restriction on uses;
3. Development of new design guidelines or standards; potentially incorporated into the form-based codes listed above, which promote improvements in commercial building facades, signs and parking areas as existing properties are upgraded or redeveloped.

Some preliminary recommendations for these items are listed below:

- Reconfiguration of the existing industrial zones along the waterfront. The existing waterfront areas, currently zoned only for the industrial enterprises which used to occupy the riverfront, should be opened up to the types of uses most desired along the water today. A variety of recreation, boat rentals, bike rentals, restaurants, and shops should be strongly considered for these areas. Conversely, the former industrial uses which no longer seem to be in demand today should be considered for removal.
- The existing residential zoning districts should be restructured to address current conflicts of pre-existing non-conforming multifamily housing emerging in single-family neighborhoods.
- Revise the allowable uses within the downtown commercial district to provide a mix of housing options combined with mixed-use commercial retail and services. Particular emphasis should be given to recreational/tourism uses, food and beverage service, and hospitality. Consider lowering or eliminating requirements for off-street parking in this district.
- Use the code update process as an opportunity to clarify code language where it has been a source of confusion among applicants and review boards, including helping to clarify what is expected during the review and approval process to reduce confusion or frustration for applicants. This might include a straightforward chart or table which lists the steps for different types of approvals and department in charge.
- Develop a system of fines to discourage abandoned or “zombie” buildings, with incentives to help bring these properties into compliance.

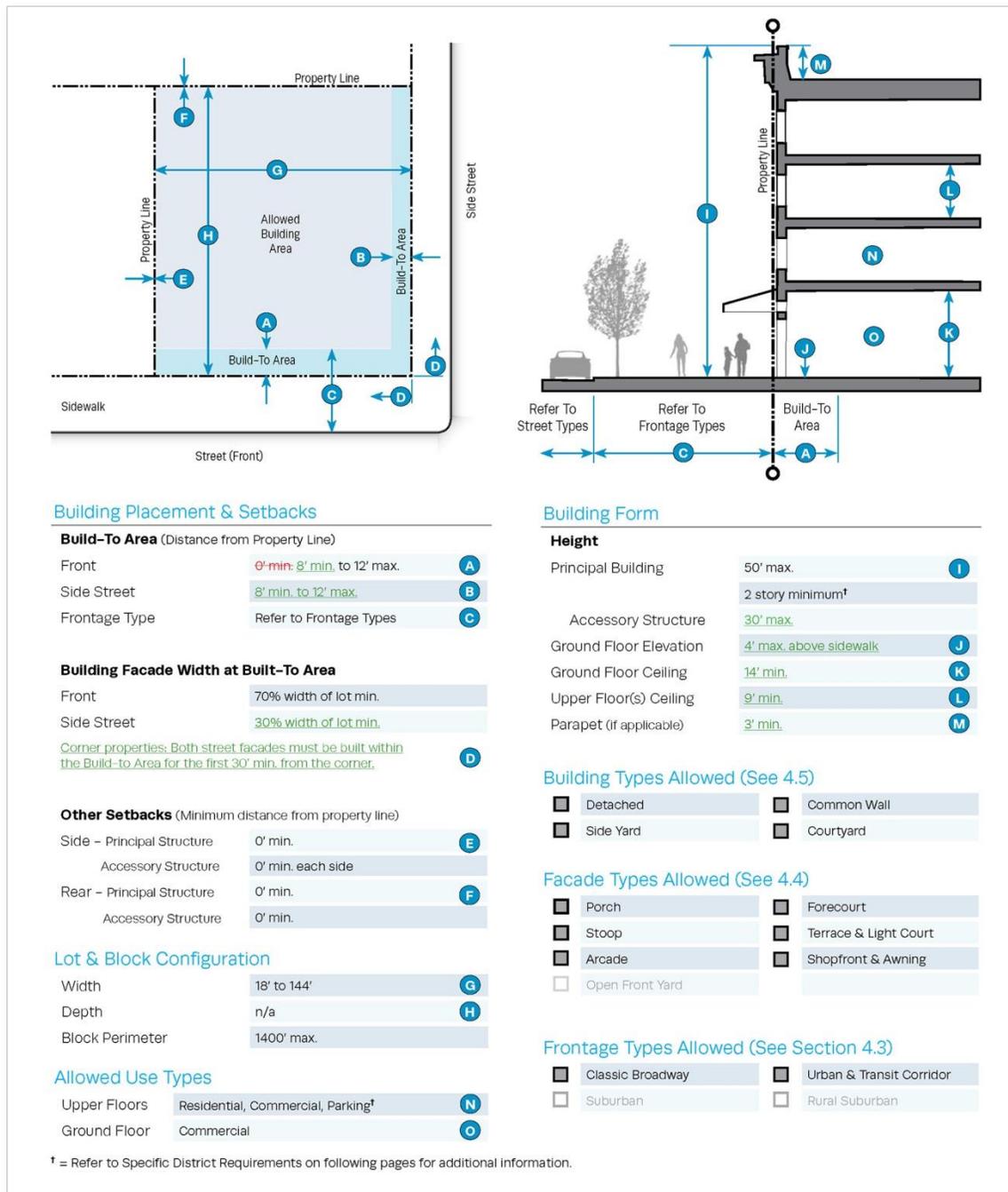


Figure 33 Example of form-based code site plan approval considerations

- Design improvements can be promoted through flexible, recommended “guidelines”, or through required “standards” where appropriate. It is recommended that more complex issues of existing façade improvements be handled with flexible guidelines while more straightforward elements such as landscaping or signs have required standards. Most elements would be addressed only if new or replaced, while signs could potentially be addressed as part of a seven or ten-year “sunset” provision by which they would need to be in compliance.
- The form-based codes should be limited only to new construction in the downtown commercial portions of the village where infill development needs to match the historic form, massing and scale of the buildings.

More specific recommendations regarding the different zoning districts and code are provided below for guidance.

Industrial District. The existing Industrial (I) zoning district is a crucial element of this plan because it encompasses a majority of the riverfront land along the Hoosick River, and therefore can potentially have the greatest impact on future waterfront uses and economic development potential. Currently, this district is largely limited to industrial uses, some of which are outdated or are unlikely to return in this more modern era. Opening up this district to more varied and publicly-accessible uses would greatly expand the potential of the waterfront. Some recommendations are provided below:

- Several uses currently **not permitted** in the industrial zoning district should be considered for a change as allowable uses, such as: farm; cultural facility; museum; art gallery; retail store shop; restaurant (not fast food); bar; nightclub; auditorium or theater (outdoor)
- Several uses currently only permitted as **conditional uses** should be considered as allowable uses, such as: membership club; community recreational facility; off-street parking not on the same lot (for public use, such as trailhead parking)
- Several distinct uses, which are **not specifically listed** in the allowable use table, should be reviewed to ensure they would be permitted for the industrial district as allowed or conditional uses, such as: recreational equipment rental (kayaks, canoes, bicycles, etc.);
- Review or clarify the zoning code to ensure that more modern and emerging uses and technology are included in the industrial zone, such as: breweries, brew pubs, distilleries, clean technology or solar collectors.

Downtown Commercial. The Downtown Commercial (DC) district is perhaps the second-most important district with regard to impact on local waterfront recreation and economic development. Reviewing this district to ensure varied and attractive uses would help to expand the potential of the village. Some recommendations are provided below:

- Uses currently **not permitted** in the downtown commercial zoning district should be considered for a change as allowable uses, such as: Home occupation.
- Uses currently only permitted as **conditional uses** should be considered as allowable uses, such as: neighborhood grocery store (it is not clear why a neighborhood grocery store would require a conditional use permit, while supermarket or shopping center is simply allowed by right);
- Review or clarify the zoning code to ensure that more modern and emerging uses and technologies are considered for inclusion in the downtown, such as: electric vehicle charging stations; short-term rentals; solar and geothermal energy installations;

A note about short-term rentals. Short-term rentals, which covers the emerging trend of companies such as AirB&B or HomeAway, can be both a blessing and a curse for some communities. Many highly popular tourist destination communities such as Lake Placid and Woodstock have found there is a need to strongly regulate how these rental operations work in their community because they have had a negative effect on the availability of affordable rental property. Conversely, these communities greatly benefit from the new tourism they can bring in. Many other New York State communities are just beginning to develop individual solutions to this, and more work is yet to be done in finding the correct balance of how to allow their use, but the technology is here to stay and will likely continue to grow for many years. As Hoosick Falls grows and evolves, it could greatly benefit from this trend in local economic development by bringing in additional visitors and shoppers who seek to enjoy the local attractions, however it may need to consider future regulation to ensure it does not eventually become a nuisance.

Commercial Industrial. The Commercial Industrial (CI) district is an important district with regard to how it begins to link the downtown areas of the village to the waterfront down below. Some recommendations are provided below:

- Uses currently **not permitted** in the downtown commercial zoning district should be considered for a change as allowable uses, such as: Home occupation; Multi-family dwelling; Cultural facility; Museum; Art gallery; Restaurant (not fast food); Bar; Professional business;
- Uses currently only permitted as **conditional uses** should be considered as allowable uses, such as: membership club; Community recreational facility;
- Review or clarify the zoning code to ensure that more modern and emerging uses and technologies are considered for inclusion in the downtown, such as: electric vehicle charging stations; short-term rentals; solar and geothermal energy installations.
- Consider general expansion of areas within the village where multi-family housing could be accommodated to help provide more diverse housing options.

Zoning Map. The village may wish to consider expanding the Downtown Commercial and/or the Commercial Industrial district to the northwest, in the vicinity of Nixon Street and the former Oak-Mitsui site, so that this commercial activity begins to directly link down to the riverfront. This would ultimately create a much stronger community connection to the river. Commercial expansion in this area, or an expansion of commercial uses in the Commercial Industrial district, should be accompanied by adequate buffers and use restrictions to prevent adverse effects of noise and light on the adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The contents of the zoning code and any form-based or design code additions are completely within the control of the municipality, and detailed discussions regarding this could be initiated within the community with little or no outside funding required. Changes to the code, once adopted, could have immediate impacts on local economic development, particularly along the waterfront. For these reasons, it is recommended that this project or specific sub-sets of it be considered as a short-term priority.

As stated earlier, according to NYS Department of State (DOS) scope, this report constitutes a Local Waterfront Revitalization “Strategy”. This document fails to meet the ‘fully DOS adoptable LWRP’ requirements that relate to development regulations and local policies. It is recommended that the Village pursue the required regulations and policies that would make this document fully adoptable

as a DOS LWRP when reviewing overall zoning code updates and design guidelines (see Appendix B)

12. Adventure Tourism (Priority Term: Medium-Long)

The unique agricultural, cultural, and historical heritage in Hoosick Falls along with its waterfront creates a tourism opportunity that the Village can tap into. The Village is in the process of implementing projects that will increase tourism; these projects include the North Trailhead Project and Phase I of the Waterworks Road Kayak Launch Project. Building upon the current projects as well as increasing accessibility to the river will help promote adventure tourism.

Some ways that the Village will address accessibility to the river include having start and finish locations for kayakers and canoers. This also includes assessing the river for obstructions and determining a location for an entrance/exit staircase. Coordination with Rensselaer County Tourism and the Rensselaer County Chamber of Commerce is imperative to the success of adventure tourism in Hoosick Falls. Equally important will be understanding the infrastructure and regulatory needs of the industry.

13. Kayak Rental/Retail and Fishing Rental/Retail (Priority Term: Medium)

Another way to build upon adventure tourism is facilitating the opportunity for kayak and fishing retail and rental. Phase I of the Waterworks Road Kayak Launch Project creates an accessible area with parking for kayakers to get to the Hoosick River and launch their kayaks and canoes. Another way to advance this project would be providing an opportunity for private businesses to have a space for



Figure 34 Kayak rental at Fish Creek in Saratoga Springs, NY.
Source: <https://cute.wordpress.com/2012/03/18/kayak-shak-on-fish-creek/>

kayaking and fishing retail and rental opportunities. This would promote adventure tourism in the area and improve the economic development of the Village.

An example of this can be seen at the Kayak Shack on Fish Creek in Saratoga Springs, NY. Pop-up or mobile rental facilities for

personal watercraft or fishing gear may provide a more flexible but less cost-intensive solution. The Village will want to consider adequate utility services, restroom facilities, parking capacity and layout, and lighting and security measures to accommodate temporary, pop-up rental services firms.

14. Acquisition of Classic Street Properties (Priority Term: Long)

Acquisition of strategic properties on Classic Street would allow the Village to take more proactive approach to fostering desired economic development. Partners in this acquisition could include LDC and Hoosick Rising. These properties also provide a visual and physical connection from Main Street to the Greenway and the river. The ultimate goal of this recommendation would be to work with potential developers to remove redevelopment barriers and achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.



Figure 35 Classic Street properties.

15. Incorporating a Micro-Enterprise Program (Priority Term: Medium)

The purpose of the Microenterprise Grant Program is to provide training and financial assistance to entrepreneurs, start-up businesses, and “relatively new” existing businesses that will create entrepreneurial opportunities or jobs for persons who are low-to-moderate income (LMI). The Program is especially interested in assisting entrepreneurs who are, or businesses that are owned by low-to-moderate income persons. (<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants>)

The Village must continue the push for small business assistance and has the potential to offer a pedestrian-oriented business environment but only if entrepreneurship and appropriate commercial networking is in place to fill store fronts. Funding through the USDA Revolving Loan Fund should be administered by the Village and the need for such financing persists in the local business community.

16a. John Street Pedestrian Mall / NY-22 Reconfiguration Feasibility Study (Priority Term: Short)

16b. Implementation of the Pedestrian Mall NY-22 (Priority Term: Long)

It is recommended that John Street be evaluated with different design options for conversion into a dedicated pedestrian mall, creating an inviting connection for people from Main Street down to Church Street and the nearby waterfront. This design should allow for exception for emergency vehicle access, and

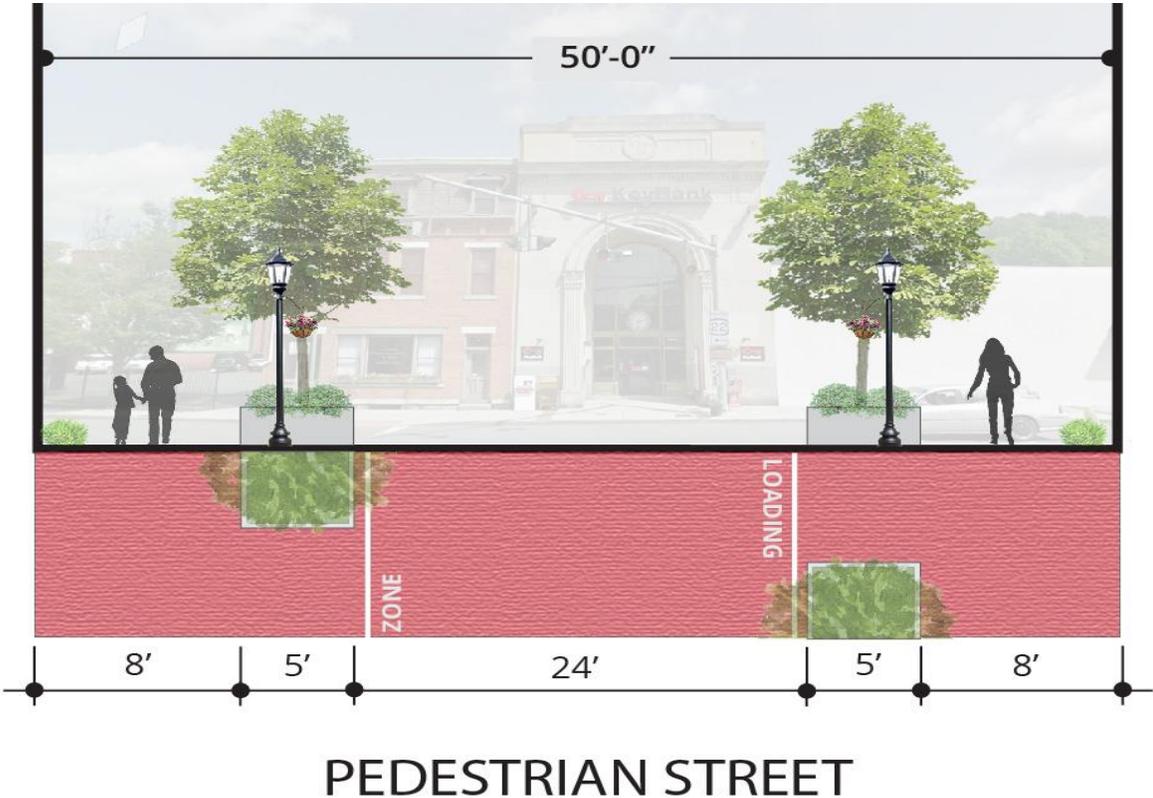


Figure 36 Potential street cross-section for John Street in Hoosick Falls

temporary access for delivery vehicles during selected hours of the day so as not to limit local businesses. Traffic control could be addressed with removable bollards. Large planters could be used to create a central "lane" where limited

truck deliveries occur that is separate from the pedestrian walking areas during those times for added safety. The potential alterations to traffic flow would need to be more carefully analyzed as part of a traffic study at the early stages of this evaluation, which include evaluation of truck turning movements and the need for any property acquisition. A potential circulation pattern would allow for vehicular traffic to come up the hill (east) on Classic Street, south on Main Street, West on Elm Street, and north on Church Street. It is recommended that any proposed design be tested as part of a temporary planned road closure where the community could experience how it might work, timed with local events which would make use of the pedestrian mall.

The design for the pedestrian mall should include a new enhanced streetscape, including new sidewalks, planters, street trees, amenities, decorations and special pavers which clearly identify the roadway as a “special” pedestrian way, while being durable enough to handle heavy truck traffic. Examples of similar pedestrian mall roadways include Jay Street in Schenectady. The pedestrian plaza could be used to highlight the connection down to the water as a very prominent “gateway” and host special outdoor events.

The full evaluation and design of this project would require a few years to complete, and would need to be carefully vetted with local businesses. For this reason, it is recommended that this project be considered for medium to long-term priority consideration.

17. Acquisition of River Road Property (*Priority Term: Long*)

The River Road Property is along the western bank of the Hoosic River on River Road and is currently in private ownership. The property currently has snowmobile trails running through it and it previously accommodated softball fields. The property is on 100-year and 500-year floodplains.

In order to protect the land and actuate it for the public’s use, it is recommended to pursue the acquisition of the property for the purpose of recreation and land conservation. In the event that acquisition is not feasible, the Village should pursue acquisition of an easement which would accommodate a riverside trail. Such an arrangement would connect Clay Hill to Village owned property along River Road just north of the River Street Bridge. Acquiring the property for recreation and land conservation will protect it as a natural resource from development. It will also protect the space from commercial development which would compete with Hoosick Falls’ downtown core.

As waterfront property, the land could also serve as a valuable public space. Similar to other public waterfront properties in the Village, there are a variety of recreational opportunities for the space. With the public’s input, this property could become another recreational point of interest within the Village.

18a. Woods Brook Daylighting Feasibility Study (Priority Term: Short)

18b. Woods Brook Daylighting Implementation (Priority Term: Medium)

(See section 4.5.5 Environmental Resources for an inventory of Woods Brook)

Woods Brook runs from the eastern boundary of the Village toward downtown and into the Hoosic River. After recurring flooding, several properties along the Brook are currently in the process of being publicly acquired to reduce flood risk and protect public infrastructure. Preliminary designs of the flood mitigation measures call for removal of structures, upstream stormwater detention, and culvert renovations. A full-fledged daylighting of the Woods Brook would not only strengthen flood mitigation further, but it would also provide a scenic, ecological, educational, and recreational resource for the Village.

The river is day-lighted from the eastern boundary and then is conveyed into a closed culvert system from Estabrook Ave to the Hoosic River. In order to address flood concerns and improve the value of the Village’s natural resources, it is recommended to perform a feasibility study focused on daylighting the brook.



Figure 37 Saw Mill Creek being grounded in 1922, Yonkers, NY.

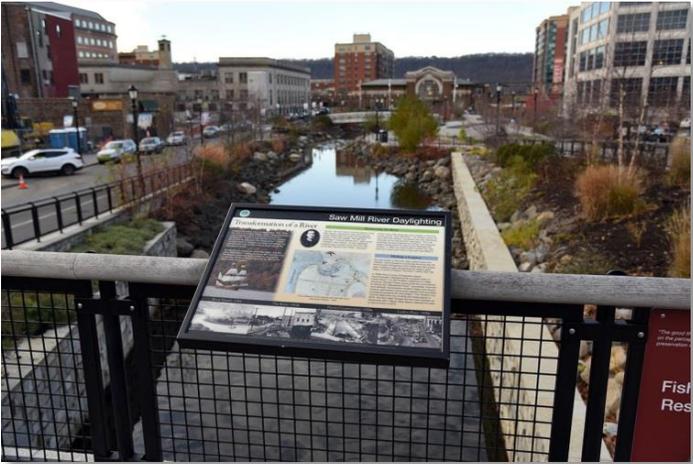


Figure 38 Saw Mill Creek was day-lighted in 2011, Yonkers, NY.

Daylighting Woods Brook could cause the waterway to be another valuable natural resource to the Village. If daylighting is feasible, it is recommended to surround it with resiliency measures and activate the brook as a recreational resource. The study will assess the feasibility of adding a trail along the brook and surrounding it with vegetation, scenic vistas, and wayfinding / interpretive signage. Brook-side trails could connect to the Hoosic River Greenway creating another access point and valuable recreational trail within the Village.

The Saw Mill River Daylighting Project in Yonkers, NY is a successful example of an urban stream daylighting project, albeit at a much larger scale. Images below show the “before” and “after” views of the subterranean culvert being installed in the mid-20th century as well as the restored path of the stream, streambanks, native vegetation, shoreline walking trails, and information panels. The project in Yonkers took several years to progress from design through multiple phases of construction.

19. Wood Block - Downtown Anchor Projects (Priority Term: Short)

Wood Block is in the heart of downtown Hoosick Falls, anchoring the northern end of Main Street between Classic and John Streets. Built in 1880, this massive masonry building is listed within the State and National Historic Registers of Historic Places as part of the downtown historic district.

Wood Block was purchased by Civic and Cultural Restoration, Inc. (CiviCure) in 2017 after a successful fundraising campaign. Their aim is to return this property to its former role as a center for the community and the arts. The stunning third-floor performance spaces of Wood’s Opera House will be returned to their former glory and the unoccupied second floor will be renovated to serve as gallery space, classrooms and workshops all in support of an arts-centered mission. CiviCure began this process by securing a NYS Main Street Grant in 2018. The funds will be used to replace the leaking roof.

In order to maintain the Wood Block as one of the Village’s historic and cultural resources, it is recommended to support future funding efforts by CiviCure.

20. Municipal Parking Study Update (Priority Term: Short)

The Village had a parking and pedestrian study conducted in the early 2000s with funding from the Capital District Transportation Council. While that study was useful and has been effectively implemented, the Village and travel in general

has changed since then and a new study is due. Such a study would benefit connections to the Hoosic River and the Greenway Trail.

21. Walter A. Wood Industrial Complex *(Priority Term: Medium)*

The Walter A. Wood Industrial Complex is located at the northern end of Church Street, across the Hoosic River from the Village's downtown core. The site used to accommodate the former Walter A. Wood Mowing and Reaping Machine Company until 1924. It is strategically located in the center of the Village with scenic views of the Hoosic River. The site is currently owned by the Rensselaer County Industrial Development Agency (RCIDA), it is industrially zoned, and not being utilized.

There are two recommendations that have been developed for the site; the site could be an indoor sports facility or it could be an emergency rescue/training facility. Both of these options may require zoning changes to accommodate their uses. It is recommended to market the site to companies that would fulfil the suggested uses.

22. Extend the Hoosic River Greenway *(Priority Term: Medium)*

The Hoosic River Greenway is a trail that runs along the eastern part of the Hoosic River and goes through the north and south boundaries of the Village. The Greenway is currently 2.5 miles long and has various access points throughout the Village. The northern trailhead is off of Sewer Plant Road and the southern trailhead is at Water Works Road. It is recommended to extend the greenway north to the hamlet of North Hoosick and southward connecting into the Corkscrew Rail Trail.

Extending the trail north and south can improve the Village's recreational resources and its economy. The recreational connectivity of the Village can be improved by connecting the trail to surrounding communities and other recreational points of interest. The greenway can be extended north to the hamlet of North Hoosick and Brown's and Bennington Battlefield. The greenway can also be extended southward into the Corkscrew Rail Trail, Ashuwillticook Rail Trail, and the Taconic Crest.

Extending the trail can increase its use which could help the Village's downtown economy since the trail runs through the Village's downtown core.

23a. Riverfront Park at Oak Mitsui Site Design Report (*Priority Term: Short*)

23b. Establishment of Riverfront Park at the Oak Mitsui Site (*Priority Term: Long*)

Beyond the prospect of establishing a riverfront terraced amphitheater as described in Recommendation #8a, the Village should consider the acquisition of the entire former Oak Mitsui site for the purposes of a Riverfront Park. In addition to the proposed amphitheater incorporating ACOE floodwall protection, the Riverfront Park would offer recreational and cultural space in the heart of the Village for nearby neighborhoods. Furthermore, the site's proximity to downtown businesses could help promote economic development and patronage. Amenities in the proposed park, such as a railroad history themed playground, will also help retain and attract young families and help stabilize the local workforce. Part A of this recommendation involves the feasibility analysis and design specifications of the proposed park while Part B will encompass land acquisition and construction of amenities and landscaping. (*see Appendix C for a Conceptual Map of the former Oak Mitsui site*)

SECTION 8.

CONCLUSION

The Hoosick Falls community has a long-standing tradition of collaboration in its development over time and the Local Waterfront Revitalization Strategy (LWRS) planning process represents that effort through a collective of voices mapping its vision for the future.

Hoosick Falls was built on our river, well before it was ever known by that name. From native peoples to early European settlers to industrial prominence of the 19th and 20th centuries, the Hoosic River was the critical characteristic in our evolving community. Hoosick Falls has been inspiring industrialists and artists alike for generations, including Grandma Moses who made the river the subject of her paintings.



Figure 39 Hoosic River and Downtown

Since the late 1940s, the river has been walled off and almost forgotten, excepting when there was an environmental disaster, human life tragedy or flooding emergency related to the river. The time has come to flip the script once again; our river should be a source of positivity as well as community, and economic growth. The prosperity of all communities that have existed here was based on the river. It should be a place for residents and visitors to gather for recreation and the appreciation of nature and its significance in our lives yesterday, today, and tomorrow. This plan was created with the belief that the river can once again be a source for social and economic growth.

Many plans have been crafted over the years and some have fallen into the dustbin of history. We hope that this plan does not meet that fate, but instead is referenced often as a guide for the direction the community wishes to move toward. This plan has some aspects that can be achieved today, while others may take a year or two, and still others could take a decade or more. Focus is

placed on both simple advances and some moonshot ideas, but all aspirations relate to the central tenant of recreation, community development, and economic development tied to the Hoosic River. Throughout the planning process, other proposed endeavors were considered by ultimately omitted, not for lack of being good ideas that should be explored, but because they do not fit with the scope and sequence of this plan.

Additionally, this plan was designed to be a living document that evolves and grows with the Village. The aggregate of ideas contained in this plan should be expanded and possibly altered over time.

This plan is a gift to our community, both present and future. It gives a nod to our past with our eyes on the future. It draws from our experiences over the years, and outlines a map for how to get to the next version of Hoosick Falls. A community is many things, but most of all it is the people who decide to call a place home. Hoosick Falls is special to us, and we have made a decision to be part of this community. Many mailboxes here have names on them which have been in this community for generations, and others are newer names. There are mailboxes that do not yet have names and we welcome new names to join our community and establish roots that grow deep for generations to come. We have a beautiful village with so much potential, and now we also have a comprehensive plan for how to be a place that people want to put down roots.

Welcome home to Hoosick Falls.

Respectfully submitted by the LWRP Committee



Figure 40 Corner of John Street and Church Street