

# ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

## VILLAGE OF HANCOCK, NEW YORK



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 2 - GATEWAY & CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

CHAPTER 3 - HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

CHAPTER 4 - PARKS & RECREATION/CIVIC CENTERS

CHAPTER 5 - DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

CHAPTER 6 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CHAPTER 7 - LAND USE LAW CONSIDERATIONS

CHAPTER 8 - IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY AND TIMELINE

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - POPULATION & HOUSING TRENDS

APPENDIX B - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Maps:

Major Gateways.....	6
Neighborhoods.....	20
Pedestrian System/Sidewalk Conditions.....	23
Parkland & Trails.....	27
Empire Zone & Water System.....	49-50
Existing Land Use.....	56
Existing Land Use & Zoning.....	59

## Acknowledgements

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## Geographic Information Systems Mapping

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) maps for this Economic & Community Development Plan were prepared by staff members from the Delaware County Planning Department.

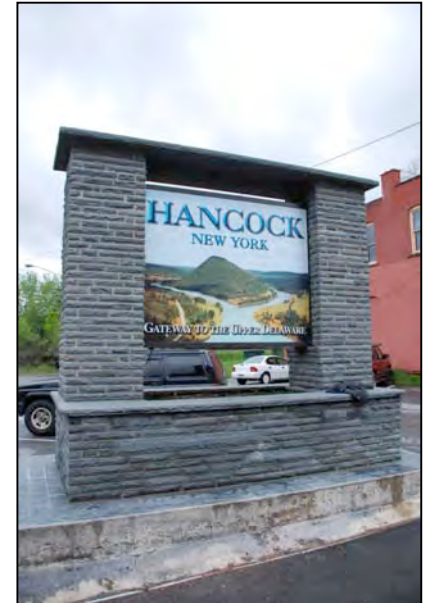


The Appalachian Regional Commission, The New York State Department of State, and the Southern Tier East Regional Planning Commission provided funding for this Plan, in part. The Village of Hancock and Hancock Partner’s, Inc provided the matching funding for this Plan.

## VISION STATEMENT

“In our Vision for the Village and Town of Hancock in the future, our sense of community is preserved, civic pride sustained and quality of life enhanced. In the coming years, we carefully manage new growth and development to *protect* the integrity of our village, its historic buildings, neighborhoods, downtown business district, public spaces, scenic vistas and natural resources; *preserve* historic buildings and important cultural & civic institutions, *conserve* scenic vistas; *enhance* the convenience of pedestrian access to services and facilities within the Village; *create* a regional trail system that provides public access to and from the East and West Branches of the Delaware River while linking public open spaces; *provide* sustainable public infrastructure and telecommunication services to meet growing community needs in a cost-effective manner; employment opportunities for our residents, housing opportunities for our seniors; and set quality design standards to ensure that new growth and redevelopment enriches our community aesthetics and is in harmony with the existing fabric of our community.”

*Hancock Economic & Community Development Plan Committee*



**Above:** One of the welcome signs for the Village of Hancock with the slogan “Gateway to the Upper Delaware.”



# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The *Hancock Economic & Community Development Plan* is intended to help guide public and private investment in the Village of Hancock in a manner that strengthens our economic and community vitality. By working together to address deficiencies and to build upon our strengths, we will make our community a more attractive place to live. This in turn will make our community more attractive to private investment that is necessary for our community to grow and prosper.

This Plan provides both a detailed summary of deficiencies or issues and recommends action plans for critical elements of the Village that serve to define Hancock. It is understood that the Village, its residents, not-for-profit organizations and business community – along with County, State and regional agencies- must work together to address each of these critical elements to ensure the future vitality and image of our community. The following critical element areas all affect our quality of life and attractiveness as a place to do business:

- Gateway Entrance/Corridors;
- Housing and Neighborhoods;
- Parks & Recreation;
- Community Facilities;
- Economic Development;
- Downtown Revitalization; and
- Land Use Laws.

## Planning Process & Public Participation

The Hancock Economic & Community Development Plan is the result of an active citizen participation process. Through this process, awareness about specific community needs was raised and possible strategies and action plans that could help the community to address these needs were developed.

Through the planning process and Community Character Survey, the seven (7) core issues listed above were identified as being an essential part of this Economic & Community Development Plan. The following summarizes the initial issues brought forth during the community meetings beginning with citizen input at the initial Visioning Session held on November 14, 2007 along with public input during a goals setting exercise held on January 16, 2008. A summary is provided below:

## Gateway Entrances/Corridor Improvement Issues

- Unattractive Larimer & Norton Plant at NYS Route 17 Exit 87 eastbound;
- Unattractive NYSDOT buildings at Exit 87 westbound;
- The gateway to the Upper Delaware and the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway from NYS Route 17 needs to be defined and improved;
- The West End gateway lacks definition or character and there is a great inconsistency in building design and signage placement creating visual clutter;
- Gateways contain numerous eyesores;



**Above** (top to bottom): The *Louise Adelia Read Memorial Library* on Read Street; *Bluestone Grill* on West Main Street; and the new *Hancock House* on East Front Street. The *Read Memorial Library* is an important cultural amenity to the Greater Hancock Community. All of these entities are important anchors that also draw visitors into the Village of Hancock.

- The West End gateway lacks a well-defined edge to the streetscape due to poorly defined curb cuts; lack of street trees and sidewalks along the south side of corridor;
- The West End gateway needs more consistency in landscaping to soften the appearance of the corridor;
- Pennsylvania Avenue Gateway [also New York State Gateway] is marred by the presence of a dilapidated Village-owned building and poorly maintained property;
- Pedestrian-scale period lighting is recommended along this gateway to help define the sense of entry and improve pedestrian safety; and
- Brooklyn Gateway benefits from presence of new East Branch Bridge, however, several properties within this corridor are poorly maintained.

### **Housing & Neighborhoods Issues**

- There is a need for better code enforcement of some residential properties that have become dilapidated;
- The conversion of single-family housing to multiple unit apartments is creating concerns related to overcrowding, off-street parking and property maintenance;
- Absentee landlords are not reinvesting money into their buildings and allowing them to become eyesores;
- General increase in absentee ownership that threatens the integrity of neighborhoods;
- There are some positive trends with new owners restoring older homes;
- Many neighborhoods need new sidewalks;
- There are no neighborhood parks or playgrounds;
- There is a desire to retain the historic character of residential properties and the unique neighborhoods within the Village;
- Where financially feasible to do so, bluestone sidewalks should be encouraged as bluestone is a local industry;
- New housing should complement the surrounding neighborhoods; and
- Period street lamps are desired in residential neighborhoods.

### **Parks & Recreation Issues**

- There is no public recreation space within the Village [e.g. park] other than that provided at the Hancock Elementary School and Hancock Central School High School;
- There is a lack of river access and a strong desire for public access to the West and East Branch of the Delaware River;
- There is a need for a Youth Center within the community;
- There is a need for a Senior Center that is growing as the community's population is growing older;
- The community would like to have more walking and bike paths for local residents and visitors to utilize;
- There is a desire to create a riverwalk along the East Branch of the Delaware River;
- Residents desire to have a integrated pedestrian system that makes it convenient and safe to walk throughout the Village without have to walk on roads; and
- The physicians at the Lourdes Hospital Clinic are trying to get their patients to walk more to improve their health.

### **Community Facilities and Infrastructure Issues**

- The Village's water and sewer plants need new commercial and industrial users to help off-set operating costs;
- The Village-owned property on Pennsylvania Avenue on the West Branch of the Delaware River contained an dilapidated building that has become an eyesore;
- Need better access to *high-speed internet* service;
- The *Lourdes Hospital Clinic* within the Downtown Business District is a community asset, however, they need to find a development site on which to construct a new health clinic so that it can continue to effectively meet the health care needs of the community;
- Declining enrollment is a threat to the sustainability of the Hancock Central Schools and the community needs to retain and/or attract residents; and
- Proposed New York Regional Interconnection (NYRI) power line threatens Hancock and its eco-tourism industry.

**Economic Development Issues**

- The high taxes within New York State are a deterrent to attracting new investment;
- There is a lack of good-paying jobs for area residents;
- There is only one grocery store within the Village of Hancock;
- The community does not adequately support local businesses;
- No availability of fiber optic communications;
- Declining population to support new business growth;
- Underutilized Becton, Dickinson & Co. Plant; and
- There is no coordinated effort to market Hancock.

**Downtown Revitalization Issues**

- Lack of community-wide promotion or public gathering space with the Downtown Business District;
- There are many dilapidated buildings within the Downtown Business District;
- The sidewalks within the Downtown Business District are in need of maintenance and repair;
- There are limited retail offerings within the Downtown Business District that would appeal to second homeowners;
- The lack of period street lamps [pedestrian-scale lighting] make the Downtown Business District less attractive after sunset;
- The long-vacant Great American site in the heart of the Downtown Business District has become a blight on the entire business district and community;
- Brown Field issues related to the redevelopment of the Great American site must be addressed;
- The business owners in the Downtown Business District do not work together to market the district as a destination to area shoppers; and
- The lack of activities for area youth results in children hanging out on the street that can be a deterrent to new investors or potential customers.

**Land Use Laws**

- The community does not have in place design guidelines to ensure that new development strengthens the integrity of the Downtown Business District;
- The zoning laws need to be strengthened to prevent inappropriate development from adversely affecting the Village's neighborhoods;
- The list of permitted uses in the Downtown Business District includes uses that are incompatible with a vibrant mixed use business district such as car washes, gas stations, kennels and vehicle sales; and
- There is a need to create a mixed-use business district to encourage appropriate infill development within the Downtown Business District.

Subsequently, goals, strategies and action plans were developed for each issue with the assistance of the planning consultant, Town and Village officials, and the members of the Plan Committee. The following are some of the assets and opportunities that were identified by the Committee.

**Gateway Entrances/Corridor Opportunities**

- The Village is the northern gateway to the *Upper Delaware Scenic Byway* and that needs to be promoted;
- There is a Village-owned site situated on the West Branch of the Delaware River that would make a great public park or boating/fishing access point;
- The West End from Exit 87 off of NYS Route 17 is the entrance to the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway and funds may be available through NYSDOT to make needed improvements within this corridor;
- Funds through the Scenic Byway program may be available for highway improvements on the Brooklyn Side; and
- The East End Gateway would benefit from new sidewalks and period lighting to help define this entrance.

### Housing & Neighborhoods Opportunities

- *Bed & Breakfast* establishments are a good fit within the residential neighborhoods and the restoration of homes for such use should be encouraged; and
- The *Zoning Law* could be revised to prevent the conversion of single-family homes to multiple-unit apartment houses.

### Parks & Recreation Opportunities

- There are great opportunities to create rail-trails throughout the Town of Hancock along the former O&W Railroad bed;
- There is an opportunity to create a *Hancock Fitness Trail* that would link the East and West Branches of the Delaware River through the heart of the Downtown; and
- There is an opportunity to create a *Lenape Trail* walking trail along the southern banks of the East Branch of the Delaware River from the Brooklyn neighborhood to the Village's Waste Water Treatment Plant.

### Community Facilities and Infrastructure Opportunities

- The water and sewer plants have excess capacity that can accommodate new growth within the community;
- The presence to the railroad through the community is an asset that needs to be capitalized on;
- The *Fire Department* is an asset to the community with a state-of-art facility and excellent response time;
- *Lourdes Hospital* is looking for a development site to build a new clinic in the Downtown Business District;
- The architecture of its religious buildings and other institutional buildings such as the *Louise Adelia Read Memorial Library* are very attractive and help to define a strong sense of community; and
- The *Hancock Elementary & High School* are important community institutions that can attract new residents; and
- The *Oprah House* is a cultural anchor that needs to be marketed to attract more people to the business district.

### Economic Development Opportunities

- The underutilized *Beckton, Dickenson & Co. Plant* is a quality warehouse/light industry building that would make a good home to a variety of light industry uses;
- The Village of Hancock within the vicinity of the Becton, Dickinson & Co. Plant has access to *natural gas* service and *three-phase* power;
- The community has access to freight rail service; and
- The Delaware County Empire Zone (EZ) covers the Becton, Dickinson & Co. Plant and areas south of the Village and the EZ Benefits make the area more attractive to perspective tenants.

### Downtown Revitalization Opportunities

- The Hancock Partner's Inc., have secured \$200,000 in grant funds through the *New York Main Street (NYMS)* to assist property and business owners with façade and interior building renovations;
- The new *Hancock House Hotel* - in the heart of the Downtown Business District - is drawing visitors to the business district who are potential customers to other local businesses;
- The Village recently installed a new section of sidewalks in the vicinity of the Hancock House on East Front Street making it easier for pedestrians to walk throughout the business district; and
- There is the potential opportunity to redefine the Delaware County Empire Zone so that it encompasses Downtown.

### Land Use Laws

- The *Zoning Law* could be revised to prevent inappropriate land uses in the Downtown Business District; and
- A new MX - Mixed Use District, coupled with design guidelines, will ensure that infill development strengthens the fabric of the Downtown Business District.



## CHAPTER 2 GATEWAY & CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

The Village of Hancock is situated at the confluence of the east and west branches of the Delaware River and rightly lays claim as the “Gateway to the Upper Delaware.” It is also the northern gateway to the *Upper Delaware Scenic Byway* that runs along NYS Route 97 from the Village of Hancock to Port Jervis, New York.

One need only take a few minutes walking around the community to enjoy scenic vistas of these rivers, surrounding hilltops and its beautiful civic buildings. Without question, it is located in one of the most scenic natural settings in Delaware County. While the natural setting is quite appealing, there are aspects of the man-made environment that are unappealing – especially along some of the major entrance points leading into the community.

The Village has four (4) main entrance points:

1. West End (West Main Street);
2. Pennsylvania (Pennsylvania Avenue);
3. East End (East Front Street); and
4. Brooklyn (NYS Route 97) (see Map #1).

Improvements to key entrance points will help to provide a sense of arrival, signify an authentic community identity and portray an inviting and distinctive image for the Village of Hancock.

Such improvements will not only make the Village a more appealing place in which to live, but it will also make it a more attractive place to visit. Such improvements will also make it more likely that the business community will be attracted to invest in the Village of Hancock.

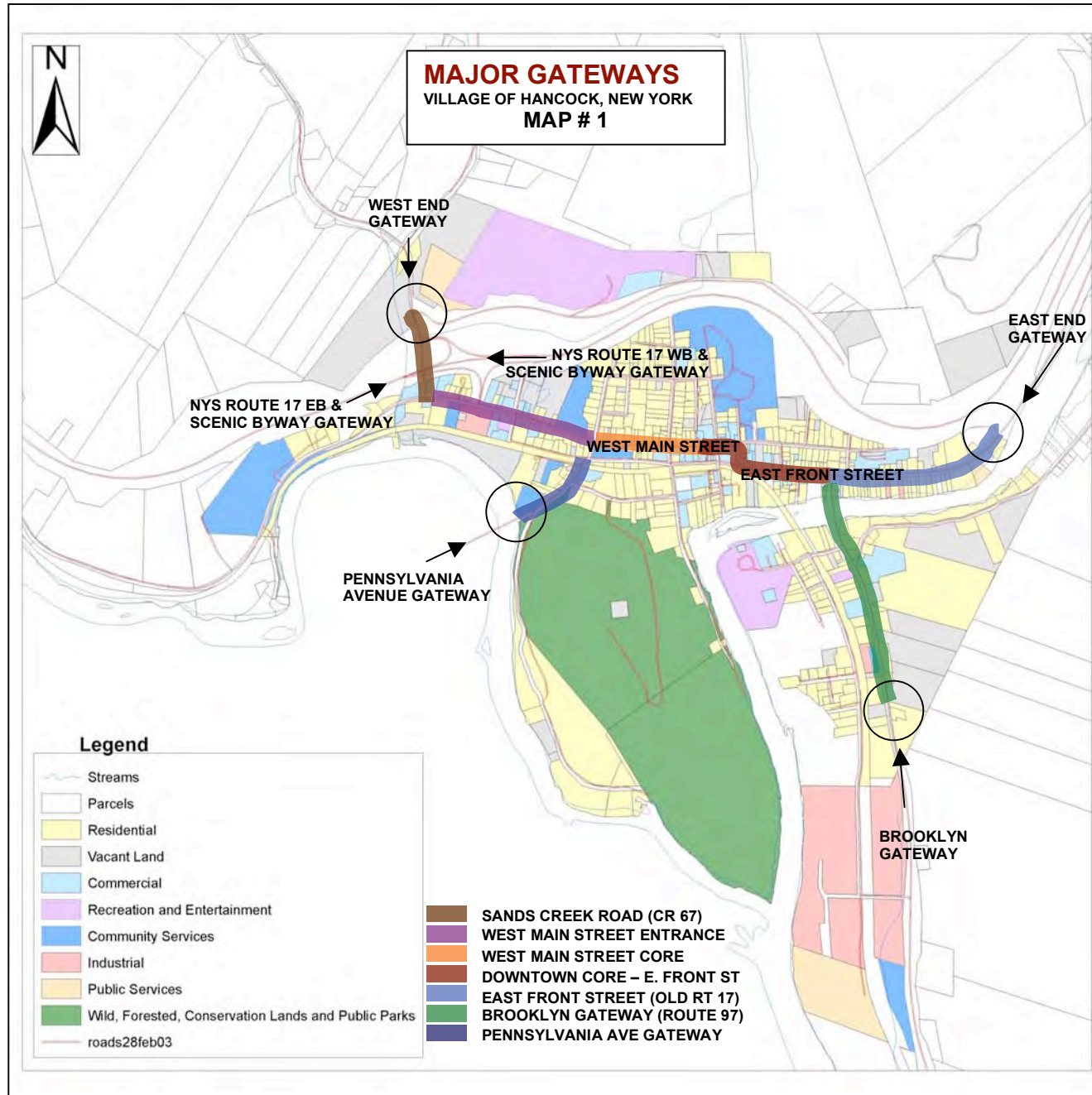
### 2.1 West End Gateway

The primary access to the West End of the Village is from Exit 87 off of New York State Route 17 (Future I-86). This exit is also the gateway to the *Upper Delaware Scenic Byway* and the most heavily traveled entrance point leading into the Village of Hancock. As the gateway to the Scenic Byway, it is critically important that this gateway is visually appealing and inviting since it is the first impression that visitors get of the community and the byway.

The westbound exit off of NYS Route 17 terminates at a T-intersection with Sands Creek Road. Directly across from the stop sign is the NYSDOT highway garage and yard along with wayside signs directing the traveling public to local services and the Scenic Byway. Although the NYSDOT facility is well-maintained and kept neat, the grey buildings and chain link fence surrounding the facility stand in stark contrast to the natural landscape. The Village/Town should work with NYSDOT to create an expression of a “Gateway” through the construction of an inviting gateway sign at this location (see pages 7 & 8) along with complementary plantings to screen the highway yard from public view.



**Above** (top to bottom): Upper Delaware Scenic Byway signage; aerial view of NYS Route 17 east and westbound (WB) exits leading to Scenic Byway and NYSDOT facility at the intersection with WB exit and Sands Creek Rd.





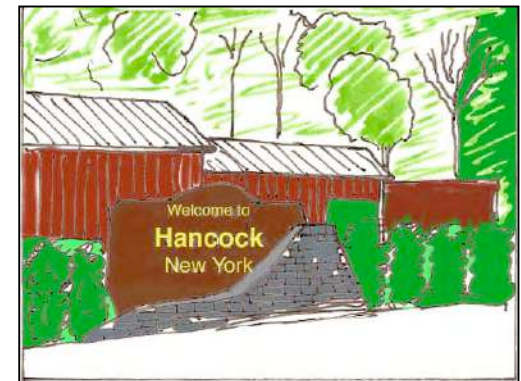
As visitors enter the Upper Delaware from NYS Route 17 (Future I-86), the first thing they see is the NYSDOT maintenance facility at the end of the westbound off-ramp (see photo to right). The existing view does not convey the sense of arrival to the Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River Park or the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway. The only thing conveying the message that you are entering a scenic area is the lone Upper Delaware Scenic Byway sign that is lost in the midst of a multitude of other directional and informational signage at the end of the exit ramp.

Making matters worse, the NYSDOT buildings at the end of the ramp are unappealing and surrounded by a chain link fence that is equally uninviting. There are several things that can be done to dramatically improve this gateway to the Upper Delaware. To begin, the NYSDOT buildings could be painted with earth tone colors. Presently, the galvanized steel siding stands in stark contrast to the natural landscape. It is also recommended that the chain link fence be moved back further from the edge of the road so that landscaping and a well-designed monument sign can be placed at the end of the exit ramp.

Measurements taken out in the field indicate there is ten (10) feet between the road and the shoulder of the road. A total of eight (8) feet width will be needed for the proposed “Gateway to the Upper Delaware” sign and additional plantings around the base of the sign and on either side of the sign (see illustration to right).

The proposed improvements will require the cooperation of the Village, Town, NYSDOT, National Park Service and Upper Delaware Scenic Byway (UDSB) Board to implement the goal of creating a well-designed welcome sign at this location. The NYSDOT will have to agree to provide the right-of-way needed to accommodate the welcome sign and to move its chain link fence away from the edge of pavement to make room for the welcome sign and plantings. It will also have to agree to paint its buildings as recommended herein.

It is recommended that the National Park Service and UDSB be invited to contribute ideas for the design of the sign. The Village and Town of Hancock should play a leading role in bringing these entities together for the purpose creating an aesthetically pleasing gateway to the community. There are a variety of potential funding sources that could be obtained to help implement this project. To begin, there is funding associated with the I-86 Interchange improvements. Some of this funding is being used to upgrade exit ramps and might be used for this project. Other sources of funding are the annual NYSDOT Scenic Byway Grant Program or the semi-annual Transportation Enhancement Program. There may also be some funding through the National Park Service. By working together, the entities listed above can identify the best source of funding for the proposed project. Creating an attractive gateway will enhance the experience for the traveling public and improve the image of the community. Other recommendations follow.



Above (top to bottom): Existing view upon entering the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway from NYS Route 17 Exit 87 westbound; illustration of existing Exit 87; and conceptual rendering of new Gateway Sign to the Village of Hancock and the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway intended to instill a sense of entry.

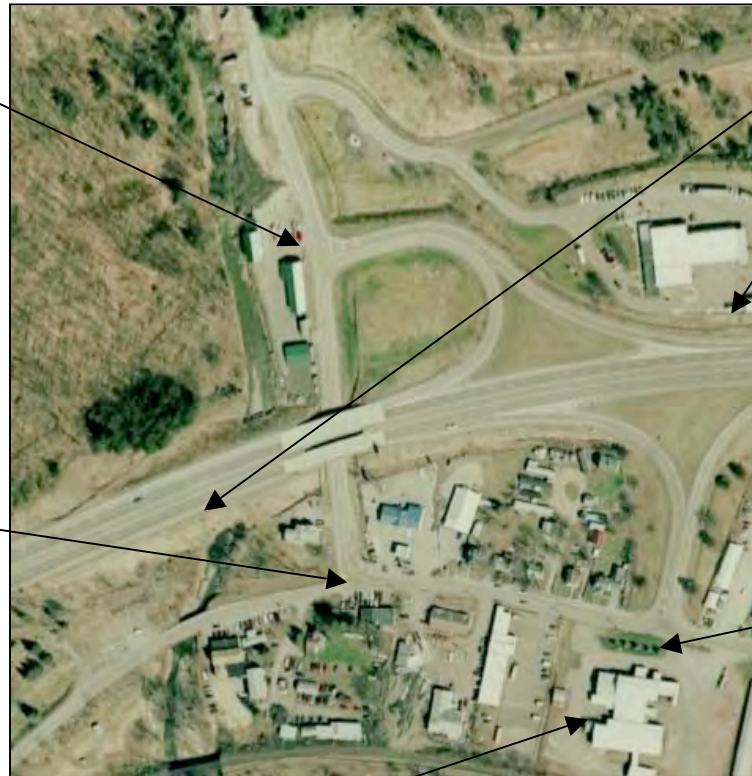


**Action:** Create an attractive gateway to *Upper Delaware Scenic Byway* with a “Welcome to Hancock” sign along with complementary plantings to screen NYSDOT buildings and chain link fence.



**Action:** Work with property owners to screen vehicles being worked on behind buildings or within enclosures to keep them out of the public view.

**Action:** Create a Façade Grant Program for the West Main Street Corridor in order to encourage property owners to improve the appearance of their buildings and to provide more aesthetically pleasing signage within the Gateway to the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway.



**Action:** Create a *Hancock Heritage Center* that would “act as a gathering place for local residents for community activities, and as a center for information and education about the natural, historic, and cultural resources of the Hancock area for visitors.” SUNY EFS “Feasibility Study for the Hancock Heritage Center.” Illustration to left SUNY ESF.



**Action:** Secure funding through the NYSDOT Scenic Byway Program to install Scenic Byway Gateway Signs on the eastbound and westbound exits to NYS Route 17 (Future I-86).



**Action:** Potential site for an *Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Visitors Center* or *Hancock Heritage Center*. The *Larimar-Norton building* is historically significant and could be redeveloped to house a *Byway Visitors Center*.



The first segment of the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway is along West Main Street (NYS Route 97) within the Village of Hancock. Development within this corridor is typical of automobile-dependent strip retail that developed across the United States during the 1950’s and 1960’s. While there are scenic vistas from West Main Street to the surrounding hillsides these views are marred by the manmade environment along this corridor.

The elements of the man-made environment that detract from the natural beauty of the area include the presence of dilapidated buildings, excessive signage that creates visual clutter, lack of design standards for commercial buildings and sparse landscaping to soften the view of commercial properties. Taken together these factors result in a unappealing strip commercial corridor instead of an inviting gateway corridor to the Village and the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway. There are several steps that can be taken to address these issues and create a visually appealing and vibrant gateway to the community.

To begin, new sign regulations should be adopted to better regulate the height, size and placement of signs in order to reduce visual clutter along West Main Street. The aesthetics of this corridor would also be improved with the planting of street trees. Street trees help to define the edge of the streetscape, provide shade and help to define the separation between the pedestrian and vehicular environment.

The goal for the West Main Street corridor is to make this area the “Gateway to the Upper Delaware” – an attractive, inviting and unique commercial corridor that welcomes visitors to the community. This can be accomplished by creating a design vocabulary for the West End Gateway that includes selected tree plantings to enhance the road edge, the placement of period style lighting, installation of curbing and sidewalks along the south side of corridor.

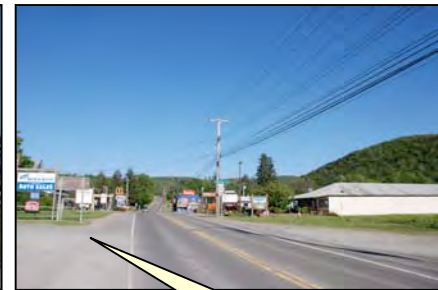
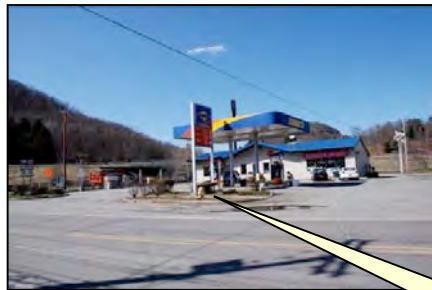
While the cost of implementing these improvements could be quite substantial, there are a variety of funding sources from State and federal agencies that could be used to help pay for these improvements. To begin, West Main Street (NYS Route 97) is a State Highway. There are funds through NYSDOT’s annual Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that can be used to fund “betterments” or off-road improvements such as sidewalks, street lamps or street trees. Another potential source of funding is the annual NYSDOT-FHWA funded Scenic Byway funds. Finally, there is the semi-annual Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) that provides funding for a variety of multi-modal transportation projects. The latter funding source could also be used to create a Scenic Byway Visitor’s Center in the former Larimar-Norton building that is located opposite the eastbound off-ramp from NYS Route 17. This would transform an eyesore into a visually appealing gateway. These concepts are described and illustrated in the following pages.



**Above** (top to bottom): View of West Main Street looking west from the McDonald’s toward the NYS Route 17 Exit and Sands Creek Road; Sunoco Gas Station on West Main Street; and view of West Main Street looking east. The West End Gateway includes an eclectic mix of building styles without any street trees to help define the street edge.

# Village of Hancock

# Gateway & Corridor Improvements



**Problem:** Storage of vehicles in front of business creates unsightly entrance to Village of Hancock.

**Problem:** Pole signs create 'visual clutter' within corridor.

**Problem:** Lack of 'road edge' definition creates a feeling of an overly wide right-of-way. Poorly defined curb cuts reinforce the sense of clutter throughout this section of West Main Street and create unsafe and conflicting turning movements.

**Problem:** No sense of scale or relationship due to the lack of vegetation, curb cuts, sidewalks, or streetlights that would help define the edge of the street.



**Problem:** West End Gateway lacks definition or character and there is a need for some expression of "gateway" to provide a 'sense of arrival.'

**Asset:** Adaptive reuse of house for real estate office that retains integrity of structure.



**Problem:** The vacant Larimar & Norton Building and cluttered signs creates an unattractive gateway. This site needs to be redefined as the gateway to the *Upper Delaware Scenic Byway*. The brick portion of building would make an ideal *Visitor's Center*.





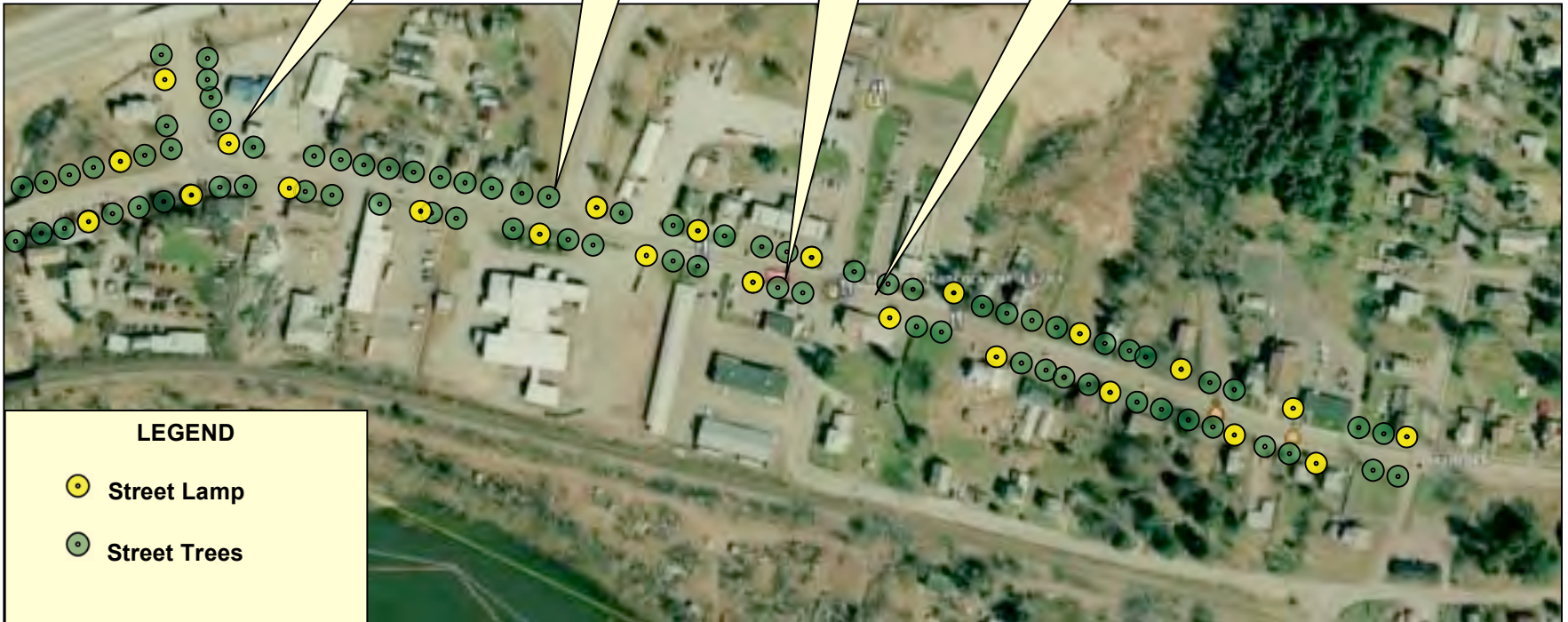


**Proposal:** Create a design vocabulary for the West End Gateway that includes selected tree planting to enhance the road edge, the placement of period style lighting [see examples to left – right], installation of curbing and sidewalks on south side of corridor.

**Proposal:** Make this the “Gateway” to the *Upper Delaware Scenic Byway*. Create a ‘Visitors Center’ for the Scenic Byway at this location and create a beautifully landscaped median-welcome sign at the end of the ramp to create a sense of arrival for visitors.

**Proposal:** Minimize the number of curb cuts to increase safety and present cleaner and more cohesive image upon arrival. Create curbing and landscaped medians to better control ingress and egress from commercial sites and to soften the appearance of this important gateway into the Village.

**Proposal:** Install curbing and sidewalk along entire length of the south side of West Main Street to facilitate a pedestrian connection on the this side of the corridor. Adopt Design Guidelines for the West End that control building placement, architecture and signs.



2.2 Pennsylvania Avenue Gateway

The West Branch of the Delaware River forms the boundary between New York State and Pennsylvania. The bridge that crosses the West Branch connects Pennsylvania Route 191 to Pennsylvania Avenue within the Village of Hancock. The Pennsylvania Avenue Gateway is not only significant as a key gateway to the Village of Hancock, but it is also an important gateway to New York State.

The view upon entering New York State is one of contrasts. To the right lies the picturesque *Point Mountain* that defines the gateway to the Village upon entering New York State. To the left lies a Village-owned property that is an eyesore due to a dilapidated building, sewage pump station and poorly maintained grounds. But for the appearance of the Village-owned property, this gateway to the community has all the elements of a visually appealing gateway including a charming iron bridge, views of the West Branch and Point Mountain.

Recognizing that the appearance of the Village-owned property had become an eyesore, the Village Board took the first steps in 2008 to improve this diamond-in-the-rough. It did so by applying for an *Upper Delaware Scenic Byway Grant* in the amount of \$14,000 to improve the boat launch at the Pennsylvania Avenue Access; create a park with three (3) picnic tables on concrete pads, install river signage, eradicate knotweed and improve landscaping on the site.

In June of 2008, the Village received the \$14,000 grant from the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway to make these improvements. It is envisioned that these improvements are the first step toward creating the Village’s first-ever public park on the Village-owned property.

This Plan strongly supports the creation of a public park at this location. Doing so will transform an eyesore into a beautiful waterfront park that will improve public access to the West Branch of the Delaware River while providing recreational amenities for residents and visitors. As important, transforming this property into a park will greatly improve the viewshed as you enter the community from Pennsylvania.

In addition to the improvements cited above, it is recommended that other amenities within this park should include designated off-street parking area, restrooms, a riverwalk, NYSDEC designated boat launch, picnic pavilion, fitness station and children’s playground. It is recommended that the existing building either be redeveloped for another recreation-related use or removed from the site altogether to provide space for other recreational amenities such as the picnic pavilion.

This Plan envisions the proposed “West Branch Park” to be the western terminus of a “Hancock Fitness Trail” that will run along Pennsylvania Avenue and through the Downtown with an eastern terminus on the East Branch of the Delaware River in the vicinity of Maple Avenue.



**Above** (top to bottom): Gateway to the Village of Hancock and New York State upon crossing the bridge over the West Branch of the Delaware River; unsightly Village-owned property with dilapidated building that lies to the right of the “Welcome to New York Sign”; view of bridge looking toward Pennsylvania. The Bridge provides an aesthetically entrance into the Village. The Village-owned property should be redeveloped as a waterfront park.



**Proposal:** Work with the NYSDEC to create a public boat ramp & fishing access point within the proposed "West Branch Park" to facilitate safer ingress and egress for boaters. A knotweed eradication effort is also needed in this vicinity to improve access to the river.

**Proposal:** Explore opportunities to reuse the existing Village-owned building for recreation-related uses including boat storage. If reuse is not warranted, secure funding to remove the existing structure to make way for a picnic pavilion and other recreational amenities.

**Proposal:** Create a designated off-street parking area, boat ramp, install picnic tables on pads, and enhance the landscaping throughout the site to create the West Branch Park. It is also recommended that the existing sewer pump station be better screened with shrubs and other landscaping to soften its appearance.

**Proposal:** Install curbing and sidewalk along entire length of the west side of Pennsylvania Avenue to facilitate a safe pedestrian connection from nearby neighborhoods to the waterfront park. This sidewalk system should continue through the Downtown and onto the East Brach to form the Hancock Fitness Trail.

**Proposal:** Create a design vocabulary for the Pennsylvania Gateway that includes welcome sign, selected tree plantings to enhance the road edge, the placement of period style lighting, installation of curbing and sidewalks along the west side of corridor.



**Above** (top to bottom): Gateway to the Village of Hancock and New York State upon crossing the West Branch of the Delaware River; Village-owned property with dilapidated building that lies to the right of the "Welcome to New York Sign"; and houses and businesses along Pennsylvania Avenue as one enters the Village from Pennsylvania. The Village-owned property has waterfront access and should be redeveloped for boating & fishing access.

2.3 East End Gateway

The East End Gateway extends from NYS Route 18 Exit 87A to the Downtown Business District. For Visitor’s traveling west on NYS Route 17, Exit 87A is the gateway to the *Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River* that is clearly identified through National Park Service gateway signage. The first segment of this gateway provides a panoramic view of the East Branch of the Delaware River and the rolling hills that surround the Village of Hancock.

As the traveler continues along East Front Street and enters the Village, they are met with the man-made environment that consists of an eclectic mix of single-family homes, industrial and commercial uses. The south side of the street is situated along the northern banks of the East Branch and is densely developed. The north side of the street includes areas with steep slopes and is thus less densely developed. Overall, the East End Gateway provides an appealing entrance into the Village of Hancock. However, there are measures that can be taken to enhance the appearance of this gateway while also improving pedestrian access for residents that live within the East End Neighborhood.

From the Circle E Diner to the Downtown Business District there is an existing sidewalk system running along the south side of East Front Street. Many of the houses and commercial buildings in this area are built up to the sidewalk.

The edge of the south side of East Front Street is well defined due to building placement and the presence of the sidewalk and curbing. The north side of East Front Street is poorly defined with many properties lacking curb cuts. There is also little in the way of a sidewalk system along the north side of East Front Street.

It is recommended that a sidewalk system with curbing be created along the north side of East Front Street from the Circle E Diner to the Downtown Business District. Creating a sidewalk system within this area would help to define the street edge, improve pedestrian safety, and make it easier for residents in the East End to walk downtown or other residents to walk to the Circle E. In addition to improving the sidewalk system along the East End Gateway, it is recommended that pedestrian-scale period lighting be installed to enhance aesthetics, improve pedestrian safety and reduce excessive glare from cobra lights. It is recommended that the lighting fixtures that are selected include brackets to hold banners or hanging baskets. The banners could be used to promote special events or to define the East End Neighborhood.

Providing these improvements will require the cooperation of property owners, the NYSDOT and the Village Board. Potential sources of funds include NYSDOT Scenic Byway Grants, Multi-modal grants, NYSDOT Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding and the Transportation Enhancement Grant program. Detailed recommendations are provided below.



**Above** (top to bottom): The Circle E Diner on East Front Street (Old Route 17) as one leaves the Village limits; view of East Front Street and East End residences heading west toward the Downtown Business District; and Valero Gas Station at the corner of East Front Street and Old Bridge Street on the edge of the historic Downtown Business District.





**Proposal:** Create a design vocabulary for the East End Gateway that includes selected tree planting to enhance the road edge, the placement of period style lighting [see examples to left – right], installation of curbing and sidewalks on south side of corridor.

**Proposal:** Work with NYSDOT to improve pedestrian system throughout the East End Gateway. Priority should be given to establishing a sidewalk system from the “Circle E” Diner to Downtown to help facilitate pedestrian travel and reduce the necessity for vehicular trips. It is likely that a retaining wall will be need to create room for a sidewalk in front of the homes directly across from the Route 97/East Front Street Intersection.

**Proposal:** Extend the New York Main Street Program to include commercial businesses within the East End Gateway. There are a variety of early 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings that – if restored to their original architecture – would dramatically improve corridor aesthetics.

**Proposal:** Install curbing and sidewalk along entire length of north side of East Front Street from the “Circle E” Diner to Downtown to help facilitate safe pedestrian movement along this corridor. Also install period street lamps with pedestrian scale lighting that is more in keeping with residences.



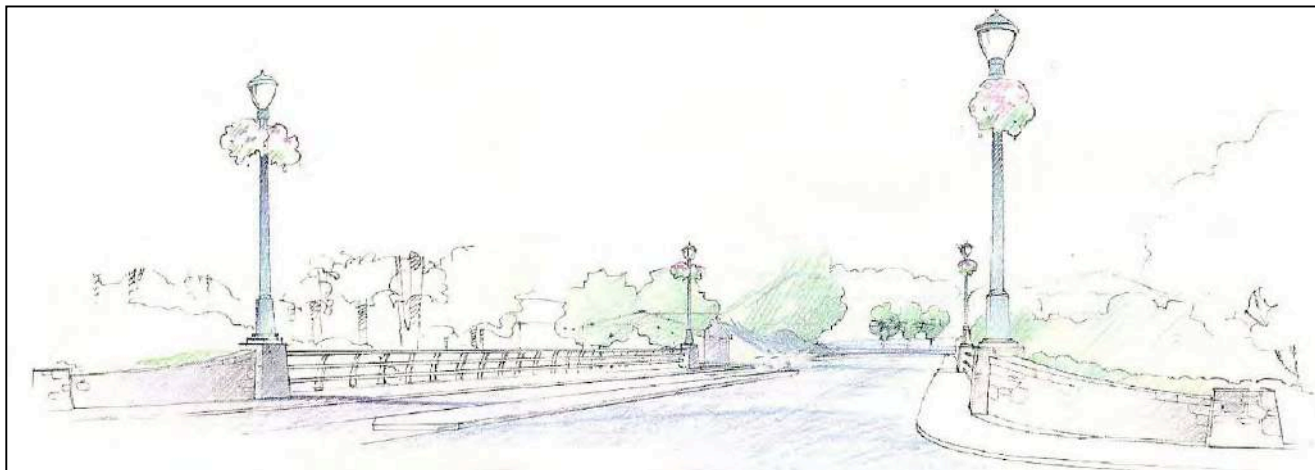
2.4 Brooklyn Gateway

The “Brooklyn-side” of the Village of Hancock is the neighborhood that lies southeast of the East Branch of the Delaware River. The Brooklyn-side consists of single-family neighborhoods, a variety of commercial businesses and the community’s largest industrial complexes.

As a traveler enters the Village of Hancock along NYS Route 97 they pass through the “Brooklyn-side” of the Village. The development along Route 97 includes a mix of single-family homes, commercial businesses, institutional uses (such as the Hancock Fire House) and historically significant buildings such as the Brooklyn District #14 Schoolhouse on the corner of Peas Eddy Road and NYS Route 97. Unfortunately, there are also several dilapidated properties that detract from the Brooklyn-side Gateway.

The new NYS Route 97 Bridge over the East Branch connects the Brooklyn-side to the rest of the Village. The new bridge includes sidewalks that make it easy to walk across the river to the Downtown Business District. From the bridge pedestrians can enjoy panoramic views of the natural scenic beauty that surrounds the Village.

Recommended improvements within the Brooklyn Gateway include the installation of curbing, sidewalks, and period lighting from the bowling alley to Maple Street. It is also recommended that the new bridge be embellished with period lighting and stonework to create an attractive and inviting gateway to the Downtown Business District. It is recommended that the period lighting include brackets for banners or hanging baskets and that bluestone be used to accentuate the base, where feasible. Graphic depictions of these improvements are provided in the illustration below.



**Above** (top to bottom): Hancock Firehouse on NYS Route 97 as you enter the Village from the south; railroad crossing and homes on Maple Avenue leading into the Hancock Volunteer Fire Department-owned riverfront park; and recently constructed bridge over the East Branch of the Delaware River that links the Brooklyn-side of the Village to East End.



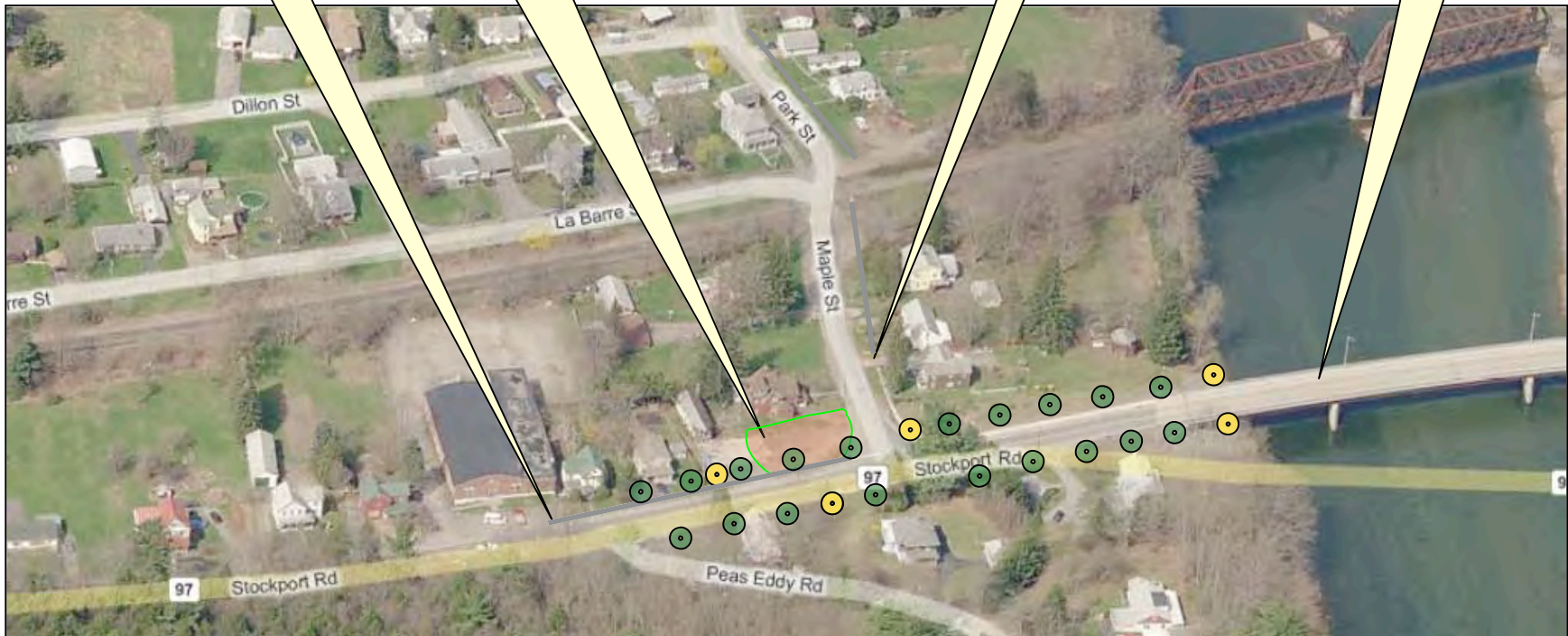
**Proposal:** Create a design vocabulary for the Brooklyn Gateway that includes selected tree planting to enhance the road edge, the placement of period style lighting, along with the installation of curbing and sidewalks from the bowling alley to Maple Street

**Problem:** There is a dilapidated building at the corner of Maple Street and Route 97 that detracts from the Brooklyn Gateway.  
  
**Proposal:** Secure state funding to clean up and acquire this site in order to create a parking area for the *Hancock Fitness Trail*. This site could also house an information kiosk for *Upper Delaware Scenic Byway* visitors.



**Proposal:** Extend sidewalks along Maple Street to help facilitate safe pedestrian travel from the neighborhoods to the sidewalk system along NYS Route 97 that extends into the Downtown Business District. Improve pedestrian lighting along Maple Street and improve pedestrian crossing at the railroad tracks.

**Asset:** The new bridge includes lighting and sidewalks that make it easy for pedestrian to travel between the Brooklyn-side to the Downtown Business District with relative ease.  
  
**Problem:** Once you cross into the Brooklyn-side the sidewalk system ends at Maple Street.



**2.5 Funding Sources**

There are a variety of grants that are available to help fund these efforts. Summaries of the more likely sources are provided below.

*NYS DOT Transportation Enhancement Program*

Every other year, the NYS DOT issues a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) that provides millions of dollars annually for a variety of multi-modal transportation and transportation related projects. In June of 2008 – as this Plan was being written – the Village of Hancock submitted a grant application to the NYS DOT through the TEP Program to fund the *Hancock Fitness Trail*. If successful, the Village will be able to obtain up to 80% of the projected project cost with the 20% local match being provided in the form of in-kind services and potentially other state funding sources. The Village should pursue TEP funds during the next round of funding in 2010 for the proposed gateway improvements identified in this Chapter. [www.nysdot.gov](http://www.nysdot.gov)

*FHWA Scenic Byway Grant Program.*

The West End Gateway also happens to be the gateway to the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway. Each year the FHWA announces a round of Scenic Byway Program grants to eligible municipalities or not-for-profit organizations within designated Scenic Byways. Byway grant can be used to acquire property, develop visitors or interpretive centers, create scenic overlooks, creative interpretive materials and to make multi-modal transportation improvements that enhance the safety and experience of the Scenic Byway Traveler. The Village of Hancock and Hancock Partner’s Inc. are eligible recipients for these grants. Scenic Byway funds could be used to fund improvements to the West End and the proposed Hancock Heritage Center. [www.bywaysonline.org/grants](http://www.bywaysonline.org/grants)

*NYS DOT Transportation Improvement Program*

The New York State Department of Transportation has a five-year capital improvement program for all State highways that is referred to as the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). TIP funds can also be used for – “betterments” – or improvements beyond the edge of pavement such as sidewalks, street lighting and in some instances tree plantings. TIP funds should be pursued.

**2.6 Summary**

The gateways leading into a community provide the first and often lasting impression in visitor’s minds. Well-defined gateways give visitors the sense that they have “arrived” to the community in which they are visiting. Such gateways also offer a visually appealing experience that complements the natural and man-made environment within the greater community.

There are a variety of measures that can be taken to enhance the aesthetics and function of the Village’s gateways. The Village Board must work with NYS DOT and other regional, State and federal agencies to secure the funding needed to implement these improvements. Doing so will not only make the Village a more appealing place in which to live, but it will also make it a more attractive place to visit.

In Chapter 3.0 – Housing & Neighborhood Revitalization we focus on measures that can be taken to help strengthen the Village’s housing stock and protect the integrity of the Village’s neighborhoods.

“THE VILLAGE BOARD MUST WORK WITH NYS DOT AND OTHER REGIONAL, STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES TO SECURE FUNDING NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT THESE IMPROVEMENTS. DOING SO WILL NOT ONLY MAKE THE VILLAGE A MORE APPEALING PLACE IN WHICH TO LIVE, BUT IT WILL ALSO MAKE IT A MORE ATTRACTIVE PLACE TO VISIT.”



## CHAPTER 3.0 HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

Maintaining the integrity of Hancock’s neighborhoods and the quality of its housing stock is an important goal for the Village. The various neighborhoods have their own unique identity that reflects their history, geography and sense of pride of its residents. Strong neighborhoods are the cornerstone of a healthy and vibrant community. The Village of Hancock should support and enhance its neighborhoods through new infill housing units that complement existing homes, the rehabilitation/preservation of any deteriorating housing stock, strict enforcement of its building and zoning codes and sidewalk improvements. The latter will greatly enhance pedestrian circulation from residential areas to the commercial, institutional and recreational facilities making the community a better place in which to live.

The Village of Hancock has two distinct residential types:

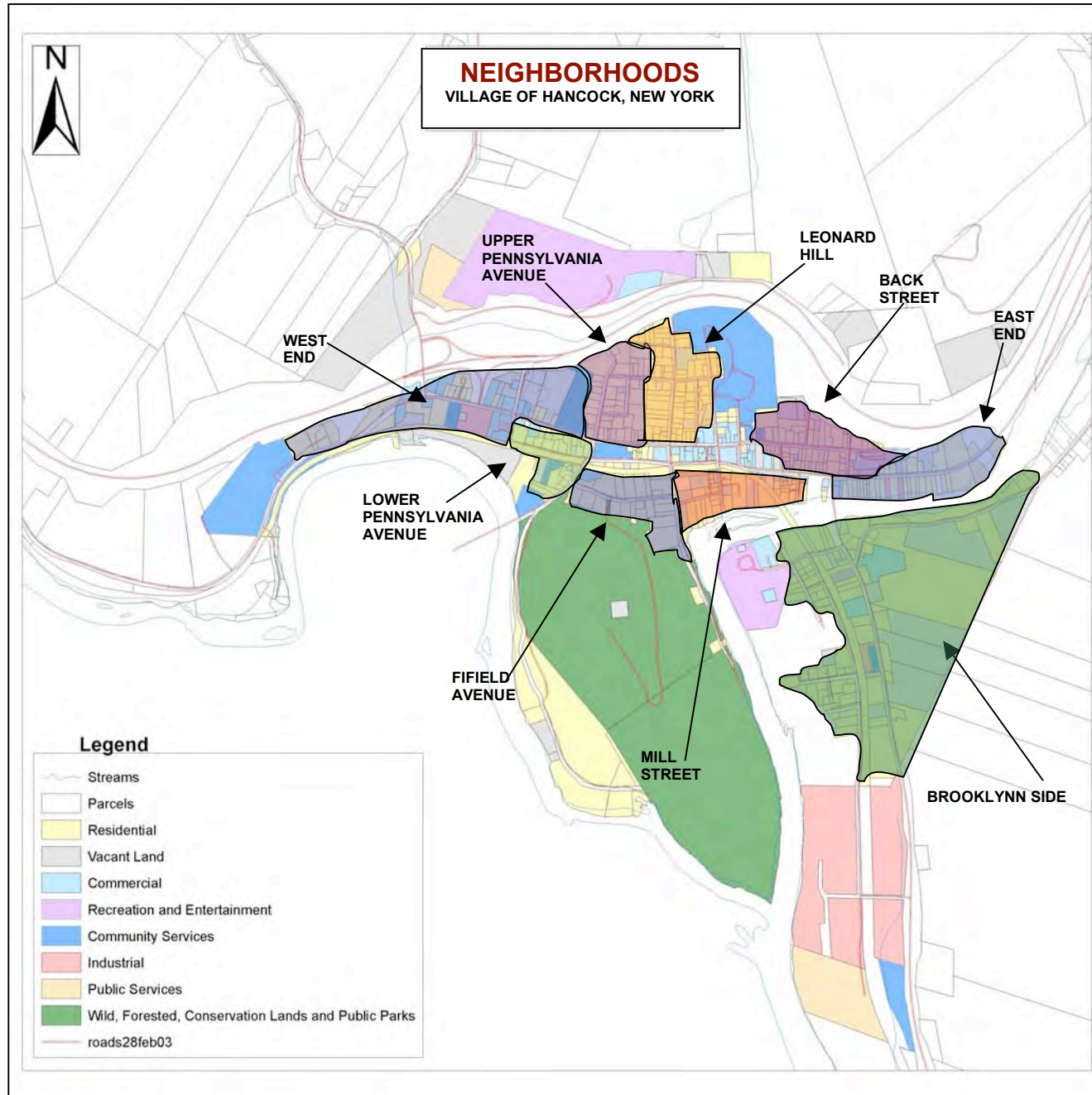
- Older established neighborhoods located in close proximity to the downtown area or older industrial areas; and
- Newer suburban style subdivisions located further away from downtown along Fifield Avenue, the northern reaches of the Village or within the Brooklyn-side of the community.

Citizen comments from the Assets & Challenges exercise and Committee meetings indicate that residents are concerned with the quality of the housing stock as well as the potential demise of individual neighborhood identities if the single-family integrity of homes is not preserved. Several field surveys were conducted to better ascertain specific housing and neighborhood needs. The general issues identified as a result of citizen input, field surveys and the review of U.S. Census Data are described below:

- Each of Hancock’s neighborhoods contain some deteriorating housing units;
- There appears to be a trend of converting older, larger homes, into apartments;
- Homes that are being converted to rental units are not being properly maintained;
- Pedestrian access in many residential areas is poor or does not exist;
- Homeownership in the Village is declining – down to 60% of all housing units according to the 2000 Census data;
- In 2000, 5.1% or 30 dwelling units, were described as “seasonal dwelling units;”
- There are instances of poor housing conditions associated with larger architecturally significant homes reflecting the financial inability of some homeowners to maintain their property;
- Multi-family infill development is too dense for surrounding neighborhood; and
- The Zoning Law does not afford any historic property protection or incentives for preservation/restoration.



**Above** (top to bottom): Well-maintain single-family residence at the northwest corner of Wheeler Street and Vestal Avenue; brick home on Leonard Street; and recently restored residence on West Main Street adjacent to the Blue Stone Grill. Well-maintained properties are an important part of a healthy neighborhood and community.



**Above** (top to bottom): A single-family home at the corner of Wheeler Street and Vestal Avenue; single-family homes along Maple Street on the Brooklyn-side of the Village; and a stately home on the southwest corner of Maple Street and Labarre Street also on the Brooklyn-side of the Village. There is a need for a expanded sidewalk system on the Brooklyn-side of the Village.



3.1 Housing Conditions

For the purpose of assessing the condition of Hancock’s housing stock, we used the following definitions:

Housing Condition	Description
<i>Sound:</i>	No deficiencies.
<i>Minor Deficiencies:</i>	Some repairs beyond regular maintenance.
<i>Major Deficiencies:</i>	Requiring substantial rehabilitation.
<i>Dilapidated:</i>	Unsuitable for rehabilitation warranting clearance.

Fortunately, the vast majority of the housing stock with the Village can be classified as being “sound.” However, there are a number of single-family homes and apartment buildings throughout the community with minor to major deficiencies along with a number of dilapidated structures. Unfortunately, it only takes one or two homes with major deficiencies or one dilapidated home to detract from the entire neighborhood.

A case in point is two single-family homes at the base of Leonard Hill that were converted to apartments [see photos to right]. While these homes appear structurally sound, each has major deficiencies ranging from siding that is need of substantial rehabilitation, poorly maintained porches and deficient property maintenance. What is otherwise a street consisting of stately single-family homes is marred by the presence of these poorly maintained housing units with major structural deficiencies.

There are a variety of factors that have contributed to the existing condition of these buildings. One has to do with the fact that absentee landlords are not properly maintaining their rental properties. However, the Village has a Building Code and it is recommended that strict *Code Enforcement* be implemented for all residential properties to protect the health, safety and welfare of residents and the values of adjacent properties.

Probably the single greatest threat to the integrity of the Village’s single-family residential neighborhoods is its *Zoning Code*. The single-family residential neighborhoods within the Village are located within the R-1 or R-2 Residential Zoning District. Both districts allow the conversion of single-family homes to 3 or 4 family apartment houses with a Special Permit. This provision in the Zoning Code encourages the purchase of single-family homes by absentee landlords since the conversion to apartments ensures a significant return-on-investment. For the adjacent homeowner, the only thing this ensures is a reduction in their property value.

Typical problems associated with the conversion of single-family homes to more than two apartments include overcrowding, lack of off-street parking, solid waste disposal and general property maintenance. Allowing the conversion of single-family homes to four-unit apartments is tantamount to rezoning the neighborhood. It is recommended that conversion of single-family dwellings be limited to two (2) apartments.



**Above** (top to bottom): Poorly maintained rental apartments at the base of Leonard Street; view of back yards of rentals; and poorly maintained rental on Leonard Street. These structures have *major deficiencies*.

The R-1 Residential District doesn't allow multi-family dwellings. This provision of the Zoning Code is strongly supported by this Plan as it will prevent multi-family infill development that is too dense for the surrounding neighborhood from being developed. The Village's R-2 Residential District permits multi-family units. The R-2 District encompasses a small area on East Main Street and *Point Mountain*. There are existing garden apartments in the R-2 District on East Main Street. These stand in sharp contrast to nearby single-family residences. A photo of the multi-family apartments is provided below.



It is strongly recommended that the R-2 Residential District that encompasses *Point Mountain* be replaced with a new *REC-1 Residential District* due to the environmental constraints on the site and the fact that it is an important viewshed for the community. The recommended zoning of Point Mountain is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 7.0 – Land Use Law.

### 3.2 Pedestrian Connections

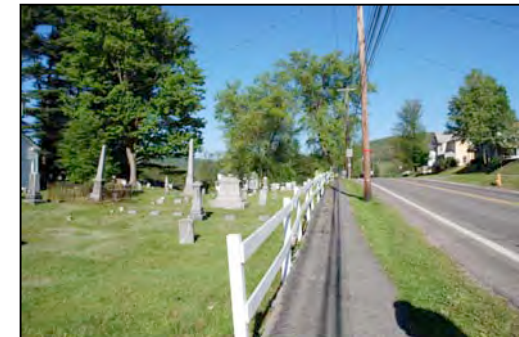
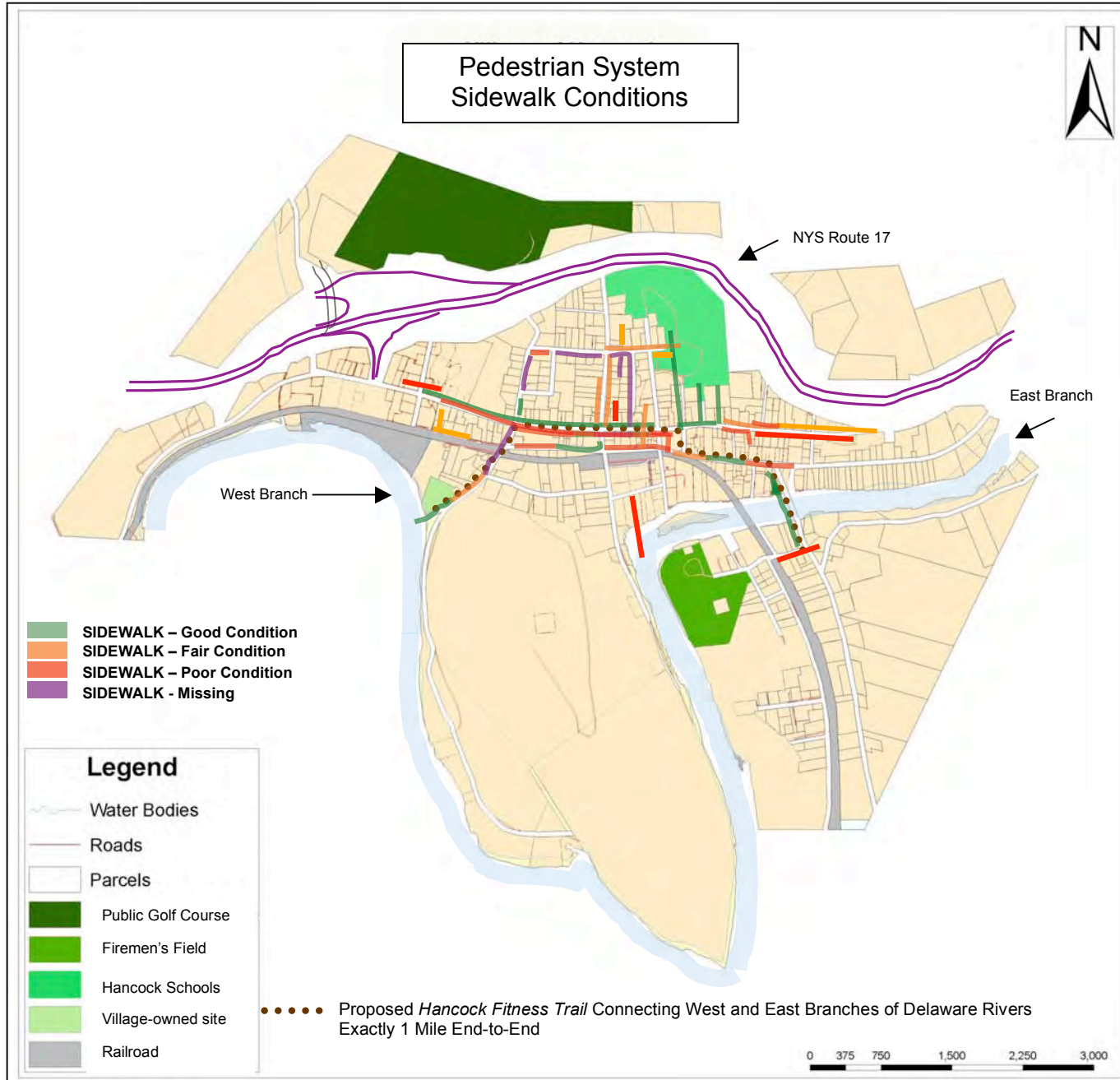
A common deficiency in many of the Village's residential neighborhoods is the lack of a comprehensive and well-maintained pedestrian circulation system. In many instances the existing sidewalk system is poorly maintained. There are also many residential streets that do not have any sidewalks at all. A comprehensive sidewalk system can help to strengthen the integrity of residential neighborhoods. It does so by encouraging people to walk that increases the opportunities for neighbors to interact with one another. When neighborhood residents grow accustomed to walking, they also increase the security of the neighborhood as more eyes are placed on the street throughout the day.

Based upon the field surveys of the residential neighborhoods, those areas where sidewalk improvements or sidewalk construction was needed to create an effective pedestrian system were identified. These areas are graphically illustrated on the Pedestrian System map on page 23. While there are segments of the sidewalk system that are in good condition, the vast majority is in either "fair" or "poor" condition. When sidewalks are not well maintained it makes it difficult for pedestrians to walk. Another deficiency in the Village's sidewalk system are the considerable number of gaps that cause residents to walk in the street to get from one place to another in the community. The development of a comprehensive sidewalk system is needed to strengthen neighborhoods.



**Above** (top to bottom): Beautifully restored Queen-Anne house on Leonard Street that is one of a number of large single-family homes that are being restored in the Village; small Cape on Upper Pennsylvania Avenue with some minor deficiencies; and dilapidated house on Wheeler Street (south of railroad tracks) that is a blight on surrounding properties and should be removed.





**Above** (top to bottom): Good condition sidewalks that were installed with new bridge over the East Branch of the Delaware; poorly maintained and constructed sidewalks on West Main Street looking west; and poorly maintained and constructed asphalt sidewalks on West Main Street looking east. A standard 5-foot wide sidewalk with curbing is recommended in the Downtown and 5-foot sidewalk with a grass median in residential areas of the Village.

**3.3 Plans of Action**

There are a variety of strategies that can be employed to improve Hancock’s housing stock while protecting the character of its neighborhoods. Proposed actions include:

- ❑ Housing Rehabilitation Program – Provide financial assistance to restore both owner occupied and investor owned housing.
- ❑ Blight Removal - Acquisition and demolition of substandard vacant dwellings “unsuitable for habitation” to remove blight and create opportunities for single-family infill development.
- ❑ Code Enforcement – Strictly enforce the Building Code to protect character of neighborhoods.
- ❑ First-time Homebuyer Program – Create a program that provides down payment assistance and below market rate financing programs.
- ❑ New Infill Housing Incentive Program – Provide a 5-year tax abatement program [50% reduction stepped down 10% each year] for those who build a new house on an infill lot.
- ❑ Sidewalk Improvement Program – Secure State Member Item funds to construct new sidewalk segments in the residential neighborhoods with the goal of creating a comprehensive sidewalk system within the Village.
- ❑ Design Standards – For new infill housing.
- ❑ Zoning Code Amendments – Amend regulations to reduce the conversion of large single-family residential homes into multi-family apartments.
- ❑ Encourage reuse of large homes for B&B’s.

**3.4 Funding Sources**

In New York State there are a variety of funding sources that are available to assist communities with housing and neighborhood revitalization efforts. A summary of some of the more likely sources of funding is provided below.

*Governors Office for Small Cities CDBG*

The GOSC Community Development Block Grant Program provides funding to eligible units of local government through a competitive grant process to address community development needs including housing and infrastructure. These funds can be used for housing rehabilitation programs for Low-Moderate Income (LMI) residents as well as infrastructure improvements that may include water, sewer and sidewalks. The Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) is announced in January of each year with applications typically due in April. The Village is eligible to seek up to \$400,000 annually.

*The United State Department of Agriculture*

The USDA Rural Development program offers financial assistance for LMI individuals and families in a number of ways to pursue homeownership and rehabilitation. These programs include Homeownership Loans (Section 502) Direct Loan Program in which the Rural Housing Office offers direct financial assistance to LMI persons with home loans at affordable rates. Under the Single-Family Loan Guarantee Program, Rural Housing Services guarantees loans made by private sector lenders to enable LMI individuals to qualify for home loans.

*NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal.*

Offers a variety of housing rehabilitation programs and weatherization programs to assist senior and low-moderate income residents. Delaware Opportunities, Inc. is the local Community Based Housing Organization.



**Above** (top to bottom): Beautiful Craftsman – style house in the Upper Pennsylvania Avenue neighborhood; Point Mountain B&B on Yendes Street; and stately Queen-Anne home on East Main Street. There are a number of historic homes throughout the Village and the preservation and restoration of these homes should be encouraged to protect the integrity of Hancock’s neighborhoods.



## CHAPTER 4.0 PARKS, RECREATION & CIVIC CENTERS

The Village of Hancock is situated at the confluence of the east and west branches of the Delaware River and nestled between the rolling hillsides that surround the community. Within a short distance of the Village there are a variety of recreational activities such as Upper Delaware Scenic & Recreational River; Tommanex State Forest; various NYSDEC fishing access points along the east and west branches of the Delaware River; French Woods Golf Course and the Hancock Public Golf Course. However, within the Village there is very little in the way of public recreational resources.

The Village of Hancock maintains a public access point on the West Branch of the Delaware River near the Village Sewer Plant. The access area is quite beautiful and the Village has recently installed picnic tables along the river [see photo to right]. However, the only practical way to reach the site is to drive to it – making it inaccessible for a number of local residents. The Village also owns a waterfront property along Pennsylvania Avenue that has direct access to the West Branch of the Delaware River. This site is within a few feet of nearby residences and would make a wonderful location for a public park and playground. The School District and the Fire District own the most accessible recreation facilities within the Village.

### Village of Hancock, New York

However, these facilities are not open to the general public and the Village needs to provide recreational resources that its residents can enjoy year round. The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) established standards and guidelines for community parks and recreational needs. These standards are based upon population size and are used to determine parks and recreational needs. The table below provides an overview of recreation facilities that are needed based upon population size.

Table 4-1 Recreational Demand			
Facility Type	Standard per 1000 persons	Need	Village of Hancock Provided
Neighborhood Park	1 acre	1 acre	0
District Park With restrooms, playfield & tot lots.	2 acres	2 acres	0
Field Games	3 acres	3 acres	0
Tennis Courts	1 per 2,000	1	0
Basketball Courts	1 per 5000	1	0
Trails	1 per community	1	0
<b>PARKLAND</b>	<b>10 acres</b>	10 acres	1 - DEC access pt.

Ten (10) acres of parkland per 1,000 residents is the commonly accepted standard. The Village of Hancock doesn't meet any of the NRPA standards for recreational facilities listed above.

“A RIVER IS MORE THAN AN AMENITY. IT IS A TREASURE. IT IS A NECESSITY OF LIFE THAT MUST BE RATIONED AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE POWER OVER IT.”

Oliver Wendell Holmes



Above (top to bottom): Village-owned public NYSDEC access point to the West Branch of the Delaware River near the Village Sewer Plant; and Village-owned property on West Branch off of Pennsylvania Avenue.

Based upon NRPA standards at least one (1) acre of parkland should be devoted to a neighborhood park within the Village. Another two (2) acres should be devoted to a district park and at least three (3) acres devoted to field games. There are also a variety of active recreational amenities that are typically provided in communities like Hancock including playgrounds, basketball courts or tennis courts. With the exception of the public access point near the sewage treatment plant – the Village of Hancock does not own or operate park facilities.

There is clearly a strong *need* to provide recreational amenities for Hancock residents. From an economic development perspective it is also important to develop recreational amenities that will also appeal to visitors. The following are recommended actions that the Village Board can take to provide additional recreational amenities for area residents and visitors alike.

**4.1 Hancock Fitness Trail**

Through the public participation process we learned that citizens had a strong desire to create public recreation space within the Village. Of particular importance was the goal of establishing public access to the east and west branches of the Delaware River along with a river walk. A variety of ideas were discussed during the Committee meetings that culminated in the concept of creating the *Hancock Fitness Trail* - a linear park that will link the east and west branches of the Delaware River.

The proposed Hancock Fitness Trail gained broad community support since it is intended to meet a multitude of community goals and needs. The proposed *Hancock Fitness Trail* will measure exactly one mile from end-to-end while providing new public access points on both the east and west branches of the Delaware River. It is also intended to enhance the traveling experience for those visiting the *Upper Delaware Scenic Byway*. The trail will also encompass a scenic overlook and fitness stations.

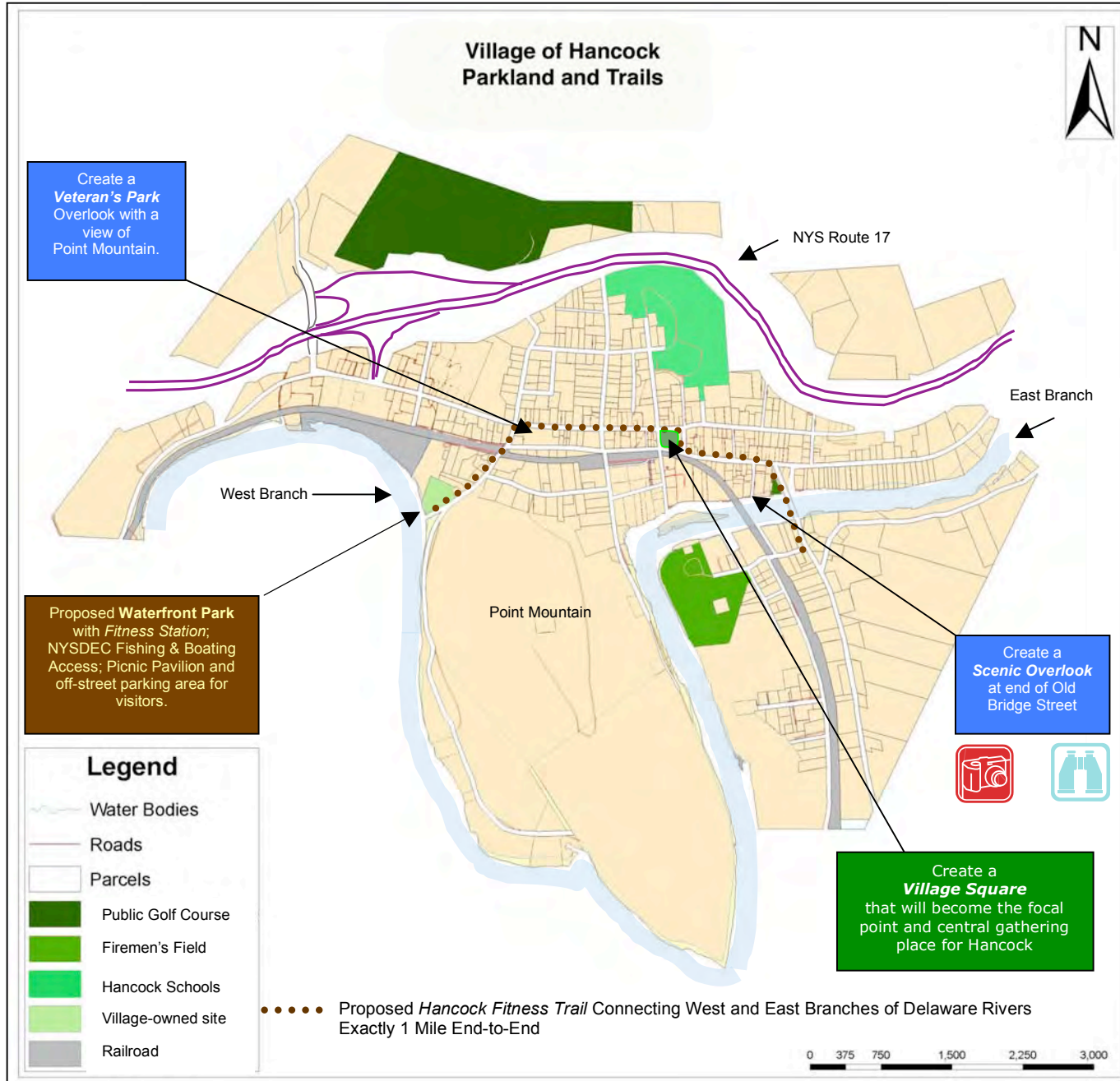
The *Scenic Overlook* at the end of Old Bridge Street will transform an abandoned overgrown bridge abutment into a premiere scenic recreational amenity for residents and visitors. The Village owns the site of the proposed Scenic Overlook as well as the waterfront parcel that is intended to be gateway to the Hancock Fitness Trail on the West Branch of the Delaware River. The concrete sidewalks for the fitness trail will, in most instances, be constructed within existing rights-of-way. In this respect, the trail will also improve pedestrian safety by providing an uninterrupted sidewalk system through the heart of the Downtown Business District.

Another facet of the Hancock Fitness Trail will involve the creation of fitness stations within the proposed West Branch Park and in strategic locations along the linear park. The proposed linear park will enhance pedestrian safety, improve the health of area residents, provide waterfront access and enhance the social and economic vitality of Downtown.



**Above** (top to bottom): View of new Pennsylvania Avenue looking south across the West Branch to Pennsylvania; view of Village-owned building and land with frontage on the West Branch of the Delaware River; and view of Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge looking toward Pennsylvania. The Village-owned parcel would make an ideal location for a Waterfront Park and could also serve as the western gateway to the Hancock Fitness Trail.





Above (top to bottom): View of new East Branch Bridge and Railroad Bridge from end of Old Bridge Street followed by the current view of the overgrown bridge abutment at the end of Old Bridge Street. It is recommended that the bridge abutment be converted into a *Scenic Overlook* that would be part of a larger pedestrian system designed to serve residents and visitors. This site could also provide waterfront access and public parking is available within a few yards of this site.

4.2 Blueway Trail System

Blueways are small boat and paddling routes that combine recreation and environmental awareness and allow users to travel to and between designated stops that link New York’s greenways, historic resources, scenic byways, and revitalized community centers. It has long been recognized that individual projects along blueways can be catalysts for local economic development while intermunicipal blueway corridor initiatives can contribute to regional economies. In this respect, it is recommended that the Village and Town work together to create a regional blueway trail system.

The Village of Hancock is uniquely situated to be the gateway to a regional *Hancock Blueway Trail System* due to the abundance of natural resources that surround the community and its location at the confluence of the east and west Branches of the Delaware River.

The creation of the *Hancock Fitness Trail* as described above could be the first step in creating a regional blueway trail system. Once completed, it is recommended that the property owners along on the Brooklyn-side of the Village (including the Fire Department, Mallery Lumber and the owners of the Becton-Dickenson Plant) be asked to help create the river walk. The *Hancock River Walk* would link with the *Hancock Fitness Trail* and extend south along the banks of the Delaware River down to the Village-owned fishing access point.

Collectively, these two segments of the blueway trail system would extend nearly three (3) miles and include multiple fishing and boating access points on the east and west branches of the Delaware River. It would extend through the heart of the Downtown Business District helping to further downtown revitalization efforts.

Throughout the Town of Hancock, the opportunities for blueway trails are endless. One of the most promising opportunities that should be more thoroughly explored by the Village, Town and Delaware County is the creation of an *O&W Rail-Trail* along the former railroad right-of-way that runs along the East Branch of the Delaware River connecting the hamlets of Peas Eddy, Fishs Eddy and East Branch. Although portions of the former railroad r-o-w were converted to the O&W Road – this road could still become part of a blueway trail as it offers incredible views overlooking the river below. A branch line also connects to the 991-acre *Tomannex State Forest* near Harvard.



**Above** (top to bottom): Former O&W railroad trestle in East Branch on the O&W Road; view from Village of Hancock fishing access and picnic area on the West Branch of the Delaware River south of the Village; and view of Erie Railroad Trestle as seen from Yendes Street in the Village of Hancock. The Village is perfectly situated to be the gateway to a regional Blueway Trail System.



There are certain segments of the railroad r-o-w that are abandoned and could be converted to rail trails. In other instances, the former railroad r-o-w was consumed by the construction of NYS Route 17. In these areas, the blueway trail could be diverted to Old NYS Route 17 that is in itself an incredibly scenic road. The semi-annual NYSDOT Transportation Enhancement Grant is the most likely source of funding available to acquire the railroad right-of-way and create the O&W Rail Trail. By working together, the Village and Town of Hancock – along with Delaware County – could create a regional Hancock Blueway Trail System that would serve local resident needs for recreation while attracting visitors to the communities along the blueway helping to stimulate the economy.

4.3 Civic Institutions

Civic institutions are an important part of a vibrant community. They provide residents with a place to share common beliefs, work together to address common needs and a place for social interaction. The Village of Hancock has a variety of active civic institutions including churches, a public library, community museum and fraternal organizations such as the VFW on West Main Street. Each one of these institutions is within walking distance to most residences further contributing to the quality of life in the community. The Village of Hancock is fortunate that the architecture of each of these institutions is very appealing, helping to define a sense of place that is both unique and inviting.

The location of these institutions within the heart of the community helps to add social and economic vitality to the community as it draws residents downtown. One thing that the community lacks, however, is a central gathering place for community events and strong consideration should be given to creating a civic gathering space in the heart of the Downtown Business District that is centrally located within the community.

It is recommended that the Village Board continue to coordinate with the leaders of its civic institutions to address their needs so that these entities continue to operate in their present locations. There may be instances where one of these entities will need to expand its facilities to meet growing needs. When this occurs, it is recommended that the Village Planning Board proactively work with these institutions to get through the site plan review process. By working with these institutions, needless delays and costs can be avoided helping to ensure their continued presence in the community.

The *Louise Adelia Read Memorial Library* on Read Street is presently going through this process as it seeks to expand its building. The proposed expansion will require more off-street parking and there appears to be opportunities to reconfigure off-street parking between the library and adjacent church. A shared parking lot could provide more off-street parking to serve each entity. Where feasible, joint parking should be encouraged between adjacent institutions.



Above (top to bottom): Emery United Methodist Church on East Main Street; Hancock Baptist Church on Wheeler Street; and Presbyterian Church on West Main Street. Each of the Village’s religious institutions are located on the edge of the Downtown Business District that helps to maintain the social and economic vitality of businesses by attracting residents downtown.

Another important civic institution is the *Old Capital Theater* on East Front Street in the heart of the Downtown Business District. The Old Capital Theater is home to the *Little Victory Players* who perform a variety of plays throughout the year. The Old Capital Theater also hosts bands and variety shows bringing culture and fun-filled activities to the area.

Many not-for-profit civic institutions, such as the Old Capital Theater, rely upon State and federal grants to make necessary capital improvements. It is strongly recommended that the Village Board provide letters of support to these entities when they are seeking grants since these civic institutions greatly contribute to the vitality of the community. Potential sources of funding for the Old Capital Theater include the New York Main Street grant program that provides up to \$500,000 for cultural anchors in downtowns; the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway small grants; and the New York State Council of the Arts (NYSCA) annual grant program.

**4.4 Youth Center**

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, a total of 24.6% of the Village of Hancock’s residents were under the age of 19. Youth between the age of 5 and 14 comprised 13.6% of the Hancock’s population. During the public participation process a number of residence echoed the need for a youth center within the community. Without public parks in the community, there is little for youth to do.

This problem becomes more acute during the winter months when outdoor recreational activities are limited. To address this need, *The Hancock Education Foundation* is in the process of creating a youth center in the community. This Plan strongly embraces the concept of creating a youth center for Hancock’s children and recommends that the Village Board offer letters of support should this entity seek State or federal funding. It is further recommended, that the Planning Board take a proactive role to work with the youth center group to secure the necessary site plan and environmental permits to allow the construction of the project to proceed. Potential sources of funding include the Community Development Block Grant Program and a variety of programs through the USDA.

**4.5 Senior Center**

There is also a need for a Senior Center within the Village of Hancock. According to the 2000 Census, 34.4% of the Village’s population was over the age of 55. As the Village’s population continues to age, so will the demand for a senior center in which older adults come together to fulfill many of their social, physical and intellectual needs. Many senior centers offer daily exercise and nutrition programs. They also help to educate seniors about programs that are available to help them. This Plan recognizes the need for a senior center within the community. Potential sources of funding include the Community Development Block Grant Program and a variety of programs through the USDA.



**Above** (top to bottom): The Louise Adelia Read Memorial Library on Read Street; the 1909 Opera House [aka Old Capital Theater] on East Front Street; and Post Office on Wheeler Street are important civic institutions within Downtown. Having these civic institutions Downtown enhances the vitality of the business district.



4.6 Health Center

The Village of Hancock is fortunate to have Lourdes Primary Care Health Clinic within the community. The Health Clinic has a full-time doctor on staff and provides a variety of primary and long-term healthcare needs for residents of the Village of Hancock and surrounding communities. Without the Health Clinic, residents would have to travel up to forty (40) miles to Binghamton, NY or Honesdale, PA for their primary healthcare needs.

Having the Lourdes Primary Care Health Clinic in the Village of Hancock is a real asset that enhances the quality of life for all residents. The location of the health clinic – in the heart of the Downtown Business District – also benefits local businesses as it attracts visitors to the community from the surrounding region. There are also synergies between the health clinic and the local Rite Aid Pharmacy since prescriptions can be called into the pharmacy and picked up by patients after leaving the clinic.

The greatest evidence of the community’s need for the health clinic is the fact that Lourdes has outgrown its present location. Over the past year, they have been working with the Hancock Community Health Alliance to find a site in which to build a new *Hancock Community Health Care Center*. This Plan strongly supports the efforts by the Health Alliance to situate a health care center in Hancock within the Downtown Business District.

If the new Hancock Community Health Care Center is located Downtown, it will continue to have the synergies that it presently enjoys with local businesses. The Downtown is very accessible to most residents and with the construction of the proposed Hancock Fitness Trail will have the added benefit of encouraging long-term care patients to walk to the clinic.

It is recommended that the Village Board play a proactive role in helping the Hancock Community Health Alliance to identify a suitable site for the Hancock Community Health Care Center. It is also recommended that they work with the alliance to ensure the new building is designed and situated in a manner that complements the Downtown Business District to the greatest extent practicable. To this end, a two-story building that is built to the sidewalk should be strongly encouraged. It is also recommended that the new health center include large windows on the first floor to maintain the aesthetics of the business district.

It is further recommended that the Village Board reach out the Delaware County Zone Administrative Board to inquire whether the Empire Zone Boundary in Hancock could be amended to include the Downtown Business District. If it were, the Health Care Alliance might become eligible for *Zone Capital Credits*. These provide a 25% tax credit for personal or corporate income tax payers for eligible contributions to approved community development projects – such as the health clinic.



**Above** (top to bottom): Lourdes Primary Care Health Clinic on East Front Street; the Hancock Central High School on Read Street; and NBT Bank in the heart of the Downtown Business District. The Village of Hancock is still the financial services, health care, and educational center for the greater Hancock Area. The Village Board needs to take a proactive role to assist Lourdes to build a new health clinic Downtown.

The Zone Capital Credits could help Hancock Community Health Alliance to raise funds to acquire a development site and the build the new *Hancock Community Health Care Center*.

Another potential source of funding for the proposed health clinic is the Appalachian Regional Commission’s (ARC) *Health Care* grants. ARC health care grants can be made in special cases for renovation and construction of facilities. The ARC health program focuses on the development of rural *primary care* networks in distressed counties and areas. Eligible activities include support of rural health clinics and small hospitals; of programs that eliminate gaps in the delivery of health services, especially to children and the elderly; of projects that address infant mortality reduction, oral and mental health, and health planning activities; of telemedicine networks as a means of universal access to comprehensive health care; and of projects that increase the availability of health care workers.

The needs within the Village of Hancock mirror the eligibility criteria for the ARC Health Care Grants. In 2007, the ARC awarded Basset Healthcare \$150,000 for primary care services. The Village Board can play an active role to support the development of the *Hancock Community Health Care Center* by reaching out to Delaware County with respect to Zone Capital Credits and to the ARC with respect to providing a strong letter of support for requested grants.

#### 4.7 Village Square

There are a variety of parks, recreation and civic center improvements that are recommended to improve the quality of life for local residents. Each one of these projects plays a significant role in the revitalization effort for the Village of Hancock. The one thing that is missing, however, is the centerpiece that pulls all these improvements together. A place that will become the focal point of the community, a central gathering space for community events and a green space in the heart of the stark Downtown Business District.

To this end, it is recommended that a “*Village Square*” be developed within the Downtown Business District. The former Great American Supermarket site would make the ideal location for a Village Square. The site is presently vacant, however, it is also the subject of an environmental cleanup that is ongoing. Assuming the clean up is satisfactorily addressed, the creation of a Village Square in this location would dramatically improve the image of the community.

Removing the blight of the Great American site would, in itself, be a dramatic improvement to the Downtown. Creating a Village Square in its place would provide an aesthetically pleasing centerpiece within the business district as well as a central gathering place for the community that could host festivals, special events a farmers market and other activities.

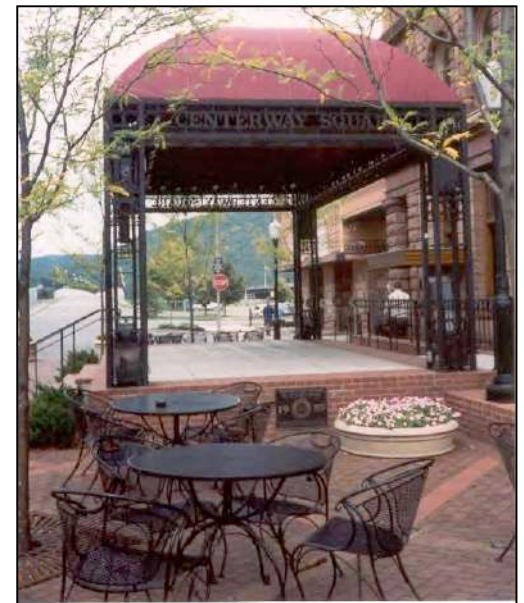


**Above** (top to bottom): Former Great American Supermarket Building that has become a blight on the Downtown Business District; view of Great American site looking from East Front Street to West Main Street; and view of Great American Site looking from West Main Street toward Read Street. This site, or a portion thereof, would make the ideal location for a Village Square.



The Village Square could take many forms. The conceptual “Village Square” illustrated below is meant as a starting point for further discussion. In this example, the Great American site is transformed into a multi-purpose year-round gathering space for a variety of community events and activities. It is anchored by a pavilion that will function as a band shell for concerts, includes areas with brick pavers (brown) intended to be used for farmers markets and a

circular stage seating area that will double as an ice skating rink in the winter. The crosswalks around the square will incorporate brick pavers to calm traffic. Wheeler Street would be designed so that it could be closed during street fairs to accommodate vendors and allow pedestrians to move freely. The Village Square would also include a large lawn, groves of trees and bushes and street trees to provide a lush green oasis in the heart of Downtown.



Above (top to bottom): Downtown business directory in Corning, NY; and Centerway Square pavilion within the heart of Downtown in Corning, New York.

4.8 Plans of Action

There are a variety of strategies that can be employed to improve recreational, civic, and cultural opportunities in Hancock. Proposed actions include:

- ❑ Hancock Fitness Trail – Create fitness trail that will link the east and west branches of the Delaware River through Downtown.
- ❑ Old Bridge Street Scenic Overlook – Create a scenic overlook on Old Bridge Street bridge abutment along with interpretive kiosk.
- ❑ Hancock River Walk – Work with Hancock Fire Department, Mallery Lumber and owners of Becton-Dickenson Plant to create a river walk from Maple Street to the Village-owned fishing access point on the Delaware River.
- ❑ Hancock Blueway Trail System – Work with the Town of Hancock and Delaware County to create a regional blueway trail system along the former O&W railroad right-of-way.
- ❑ Civic Institution Enhancements – Provide letters of support for grant applications for these entities.
- ❑ Youth Center – Support efforts by local not-for-profit group to establish a youth center.
- ❑ Senior Center – Apply for CDBG and USDA grant funding to create a Hancock Senior Center.
- ❑ Health Center – Support efforts by the Hancock Health Alliance to build a new Hancock Health Care Center in the Downtown Business District.
- ❑ Village Square – Create a Village Square to serve as the focal point and public gathering space.

4.9 Funding Sources

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

*ARC Health Care Grants*

ARC health care grants can be made in special cases for renovation and construction of facilities. The ARC health program focuses on the development of rural *primary care* networks in distressed counties and areas. Eligible activities include support of rural health clinics; of programs that eliminate gaps in the delivery of health services, especially to children and the elderly; and health planning activities; of telemedicine networks as a means of universal access to comprehensive health care; and projects that increase the availability of health care workers. Not-for-profits are eligible to apply. [www.arc.gov](http://www.arc.gov)

*NYS DOT Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP)*

Eligible projects include facilities for bicycles and pedestrians; safety activities for pedestrians and bicyclists; acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites; scenic or historic\* highway programs (including provision of tourist and welcome center facilities); preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including conversion and use for pedestrian and bicycle trails) and establishment of transportation-related museums. Municipalities are eligible applicants for TEP grants. [www.nysdot.gov](http://www.nysdot.gov)

*New York State Council of the Arts (NYSCA)*

NYSCA makes over 2500 grants each year to arts organizations in every arts discipline throughout the state. NYSCA's goal is to bring high-quality artistic programs to the citizens by supporting the activities of nonprofit arts and cultural organizations. The Old Capital Theater could be an eligible applicant. [www.nysca.org](http://www.nysca.org)



**Above** (top to bottom): Exiting buildings along Wheeler Street; traditional mixed use buildings along West Main Street; and existing buildings along Read Street that surround the Great American Block win the heart of the Downtown Business District. The West Main Street block has retained its character. Infill buildings on Read and Wheeler are only one (1) story where two stories buildings are recommended instead.



*New York Main Street (NYMS)*

The following activities can be funded in part through the NYMS Program:

Downtown Anchors - Grants of up to \$500,000 per building, but not exceeding 33% of project cost, can be provided to owners to help establish or expand cultural, civic or business anchors that are identified in a local plan as key to the revitalization effort. Developments that incorporate residential units on the upper floors receive priority for funding [e.g. *The Old Capital Theater*].

Streetscape Enhancement - Grants of up to \$25,000 for programs to plant trees and other landscaping, install street furniture and trash cans, provide appropriate signs in accordance with a local signage plan, and other appurtenant activities. Street lighting may be eligible for funding where applicants can satisfy all feasibility issues. A streetscape enhancement grant will only be awarded if it is ancillary to a program providing building renovation or downtown anchor grants. This program could be used to help with the streetscape improvements associated with the Hancock Fitness Trail and or Village Square project. Hancock Partner's, Inc. is the Local Program Administrator (LPA) for this program in the Village.

[www.nymainstreet.org/grants/grantguidelines.php](http://www.nymainstreet.org/grants/grantguidelines.php)

*Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Scenic Byway Grant Program*

Each year the FHWA announces a round of Scenic Byway Program grants to eligible municipalities or not-for-profit organizations within designated Scenic Byways. Byway grant can be used to acquire property, develop visitors or interpretive centers, create scenic overlooks, creative interpretive materials and to make multi-modal transportation improvements that enhance the safety and experience of the Scenic Byway traveler. The Village and Hancock Partner's Inc. are eligible recipients for these grants. [www.bywaysonline.org/grants](http://www.bywaysonline.org/grants)

**Village of Hancock, New York**

**4.10 Regional Threat (NYRI)**

The Village of Hancock is situated at the confluence of the east and west branches of the Delaware River. The community has many aesthetic, civic, cultural, historic and natural resources that provide a strong foundation on which to stimulate future growth in the eco-tourism and heritage tourism industries. It is thus important to protect these resources in order to grow the community's economy and to protect the community's outstanding quality of life.

There is, however, a regional proposal that poses a direct threat to all of these resources and the character of the Village of Hancock. That threat is the New York Regional Interconnection, Inc. (NYRI) electric transmission line that is proposed to run from upstate New York to Rock Tavern in Orange County, New York. The proposed route of the 110-foot high NYRI transmission towers will traverse the southern portion of the Town of Hancock. The proposed transmission towers will mar the landscape and adversely affect scenic vistas throughout the Town/Village of Hancock. It will also ruin scenic vistas to and from the Upper Delaware National and Scenic Recreational River.

This Plan recognizes the regionally significant natural and scenic resources that exists within the community and puts in place policies to protect and promote these resources. *Accordingly, this Plan strongly opposes the proposed construction of NYRI within the Greater Hancock community.*



**Above** (top to bottom): Conceptual layout of Village Square on the Great American site with bandstand, ice skating rink and public gathering space; view of square looking from Wheeler Street to West Main Street; and view of square looking from West Main Street to Read Street. A new square would provide a focal point for the community and a green oasis in the bleak downtown. **35**

**CHAPTER 5.0  
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION**

The Village of Hancock’s Downtown Business District runs along West Main Street and East Front Street. There are a variety of stores in the Downtown Business District that serve the needs of local residents as well as the surrounding region. These include but are not limited to a bank, barbershop, bed & breakfast establishments, café, fitness center, furniture store, grocery store, hair salon, hardware store, health clinic, hotel, personal service establishments, pharmacy, professional offices, restaurants, retail stores, and sporting goods store. Downtown is also the civic and cultural center of the community where Village Hall, the Post Office, churches and cultural institutions such as the *Old Capital Theater* are located.

The Downtown Business District is the center of daily life for community residents providing many of the services they need along with opportunities to interact with friends and neighbors. Maintaining a vibrant Downtown Business District is vital to maintaining the health of the Village of Hancock. While the Downtown has many positive attributes it also faces a number of challenges. Among these are needed improvements to the sidewalk system throughout the Downtown Business District. In many cases sidewalks are cracked and poorly maintained. New sidewalks are needed to provide an aesthetically pleasing, comfortable and safe pedestrian environment.

**Village of Hancock, New York**

The Village has struggled to make needed improvements to the sidewalk system throughout the business district due to a declining tax base. Yet, the attractiveness of the Downtown Business District as a place to do business is directly related to the integrity of its sidewalk system and the attractiveness of the streetscape. Thus the Village is faced with a “Catch 22.” It doesn’t have the tax base to fund needed streetscape improvements – yet such improvements will help to attract new investment that will in turn strengthen the community’s tax base. The only way to overcome this Catch 22 is with an infusion of State and federal dollars to enable the community to make these needed improvements.

Hancock also needs to attract businesses to fill a number of vacant storefronts throughout the business district. To this end, it needs to attract businesses that complement the existing retail and service mix through the provision of services that appeal to local residents and visitors alike. Doing so will help to strengthen the economic and social vitality of the business district.

Downtown Hancock has many positive attributes including a safe shopping environment, attractive businesses and a unique sense of place. This Chapter provides a framework for how the public, private and not-for-profit sectors can work together to create an environment that attracts new investment to the Downtown so that it remains a vibrant part of the community for years to come.



**Above** (top to bottom): Business along East Front Street that include a variety of retail and professional service establishments along with Village Hall; recently renovated B&B Furniture Store and Radio Shack (complements Hancock Partner’s Administrated NYMS Façade Grant); and businesses along West Main Street. Streetscape improvements are needed to complement these buildings.



5.1 Civic and Cultural Anchors

Successful downtowns are not only places where people shop, but they also are places where many civic and cultural activities occur and where the public can gather at community events. There are a variety of civic and cultural anchors in Hancock’s Downtown including *The Old Capital Theater* that is home to the Little Victory Players. The Hancock Museum, Louise Adelia Read Memorial Library, Village Hall, Hancock Central Schools, US Post Office, VFW Post and three (3) churches are also located downtown.

These civic and cultural anchors help to encourage commercial activity and continued investment in the area. They do so by drawing people to the business district thereby improving consumer and investor confidence in the Downtown. Efforts to keep these civic and cultural entities within the Downtown Business District are strongly encouraged. Any effort by the US Postal Service to move the Post Office out of the Downtown [as they have done in other communities] should be strongly resisted.

5.2 Promotion

The Village Board and business community must work together to promote a positive image of Downtown. The effort to install decorative banners throughout the business district should continue. A local business directory and the promotion of special events throughout the year to attract visitors Downtown is also needed.

Together, these activities help to promote a positive image of business district that will encourage residents, customers and entrepreneurs to live, shop, work and invest Downtown. While the Village Board can play a supporting role in helping to promote a positive image of the Downtown, it is the local business community that needs to take the leading role in promoting of positive image of their business district. They can do this by sponsoring *special events*, conducting joint advertising campaigns that promote the entire business district and creating advertising campaigns that market the unique characteristics of the business district in order to attract customers Downtown. Business owners also need to work together to ensure the highest quality shopping experience for their customers. For example, it is important for the business community to coordinate their hours of operation so that businesses are open when customers are available to shop. Activity breeds activity and the coordination of business hours will benefit the entire business district.

The business community should also work together to create seasonal marketing campaigns and special events to draw customers to the business district. Doing so will require the cooperation of the local business community but will strengthen the business district as a whole. The business community must reach out to prospective entrepreneurs to encourage them to open complementary businesses to fill vacant spaces or replace closing businesses. Doing so will make the business district more attractive.



Above (top to bottom): U.S. Post Office on Wheeler Street; Lourdes Primary Care Clinic on East Front Street; and NBT Bank on West Main Street. Each of these entities provides important services that are used by the general public on a daily basis. They draw customers to the Downtown Business District on a regular basis that in turn helps to support local business that benefit from the additional pedestrian traffic.

Other measures that can be taken to promote Downtown include the creation of special attractions within the business district that are designed to draw people downtown. What is needed is a central gathering place for such activities. The creation of a *Village Square* with a multi-purpose pavilion on the former site of the Great American supermarket would be an ideal setting for such activities. The site is situated in the center of the business district and is large enough to still provide some off-street parking. A pavilion could provide cover for summer concerts, a farmer’s market and a variety of other year-round activities that would help to draw consumers’ downtown. The *Hancock Area Chamber of Commerce* should take a leading role in sponsoring and promoting such events.

The Village could also work with the local business community to install a *business directory* with a map that graphically illustrates the layout of blocks and stores within Downtown (see example page 33). A directory would make it easier for shoppers to navigate the business district. It should be located in a central location within the business district and be oriented perpendicular to the street to serve pedestrians. It is recommended that a marketing brochure be designed as a companion piece to the business directory and that smaller way-finders be placed throughout the business district to guide shoppers. The Village should work with the business community to achieve the above. Doing so will help to promote commercial activity and investment in the business district.

5.3 Design

Creating an attractive streetscape requires a careful focus on design. The Village’s historic buildings must be restored in a manner that respects their original architecture and the pedestrian environment must provide a sense of cleanliness, comfort and security. This can be accomplished by having well-maintained sidewalks, planting street trees, installing streetlights and street furniture that will provide comfort and security for pedestrians. Downtown businesses must also create an inviting atmosphere. This can be accomplished through a variety of measures including attractive window displays, visually appealing facades, appropriate signage, pleasing displays of merchandise and good quality merchandise. It is also important that new infill development within the Downtown be well-designed so that it complements the architecture of the historic buildings that are located in the business district. A careful focus on design will enhance the social and economic vitality of Downtown.

5.3.1 Façade Renovations

Renovations to historic buildings within the business district must respect the architecture of the buildings. To this end, renovations that remove historic elements of buildings should not be permitted. Also, façade renovations that mask the historic architecture of historic buildings should be avoided. The removal of false facades should also be encouraged.

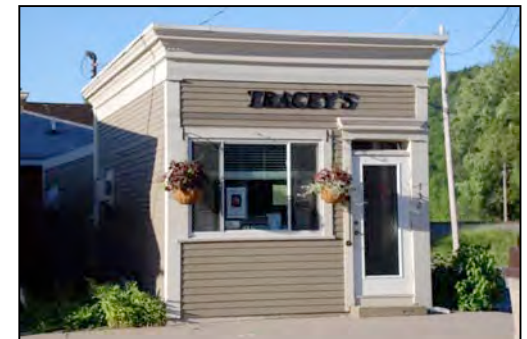


**Above** (top to bottom): Conceptual layout of Village Square on the Great American site with bandstand, ice skating rink and public gathering space; view of square looking from Wheeler Street to West Main Street; and view of square looking from West Main Street to Read Street. A new square would provide a focal point for the community and a green oasis in the bleak downtown.

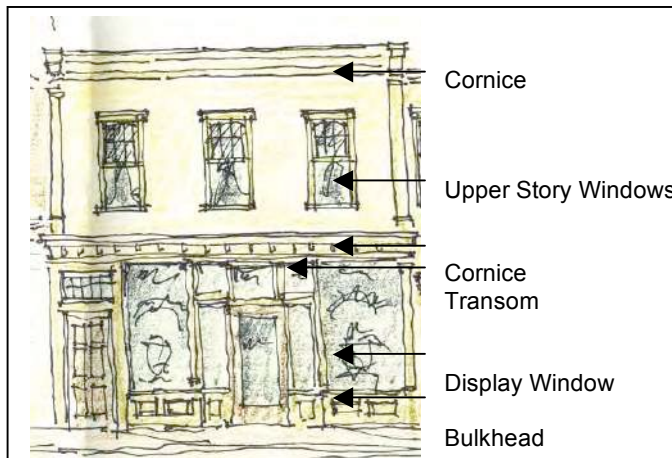


The photos to the right are examples of building facades within the Downtown Business District that respect the original architecture of these historic buildings. The top building was recently renovated to restore original architectural elements that were concealed by previous renovations. Improvements included restoration of large display windows on the first floor along with retention of the recessed entry. Other improvements included the installation of new clapboard siding, sign panel, second-floor porch and the construction of a new upper cornice. The new signage fits within the new sign panel. The middle photo shows *Tracey's Hair Salon* on the East Front Street. Renovations to this building were made so that it better fit in with the architecture of other Downtown buildings. Improvements included new clapboard siding and the creation of the upper cornice. The photo to the bottom shows a façade renovation in progress with historic elements of the façade being repaired and restored.

Each of these buildings received funding through the *New York Main Street* grant program administered by Hancock Partner's, Inc. It is unlikely these renovations would have taken place without the grant funding.



Awnings Should Be Designed to Be Retracted



**Above** (top to bottom): New York Main Street funded projects. B&B Furniture – Radio Shack Building on East Front Street; Tracey's Hair Salon on East Front Street across front the new Hancock House; and façade renovation in progress on East Front Street. By improving the appearance of these buildings, the business district becomes a more inviting place for shoppers and investors - activity breeds activity.

## Village of Hancock

Hancock Partner's, Inc., funded the creation of *Design Guidelines* for its New York Main Street program along East Front Street. The Design Guidelines help to ensure that façade renovations preserve as much of the original building fabric as possible. For example, original windows, doors, cornices and building materials must be retained, when feasible. The use of vinyl or aluminum siding that masks the architectural features of a building is prohibited. *It is recommended that the Village Board adopt these guidelines for the Downtown Business District.*

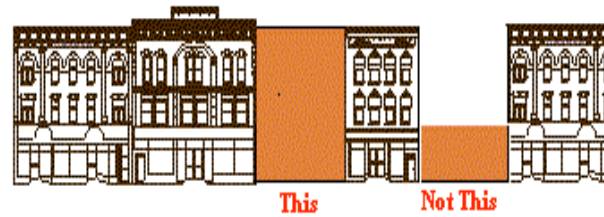
### 5.3.2 New infill development & chain stores

There are a number of sites within the Downtown Business District that have the potential to be redeveloped with new infill buildings. These include the Great American and Grand Union sites and a number of sites between West Front and West Main Street. A number of newer buildings in this area replaced historic buildings that were lost to fire or demolished. However, these newer buildings are poorly situated on these sites and out of character with the rest of Downtown.

This Plan encourages two-story buildings in the Downtown and recommends that infill buildings be aligned to the edge of the sidewalk in order to maintain a building line along the street. It is also recommended that roofs be pitched away from the sidewalk toward the rear of the building. Where off-street parking is feasible, it should be located to the rear of new buildings.

## Village of Hancock, New York

## Downtown Revitalization



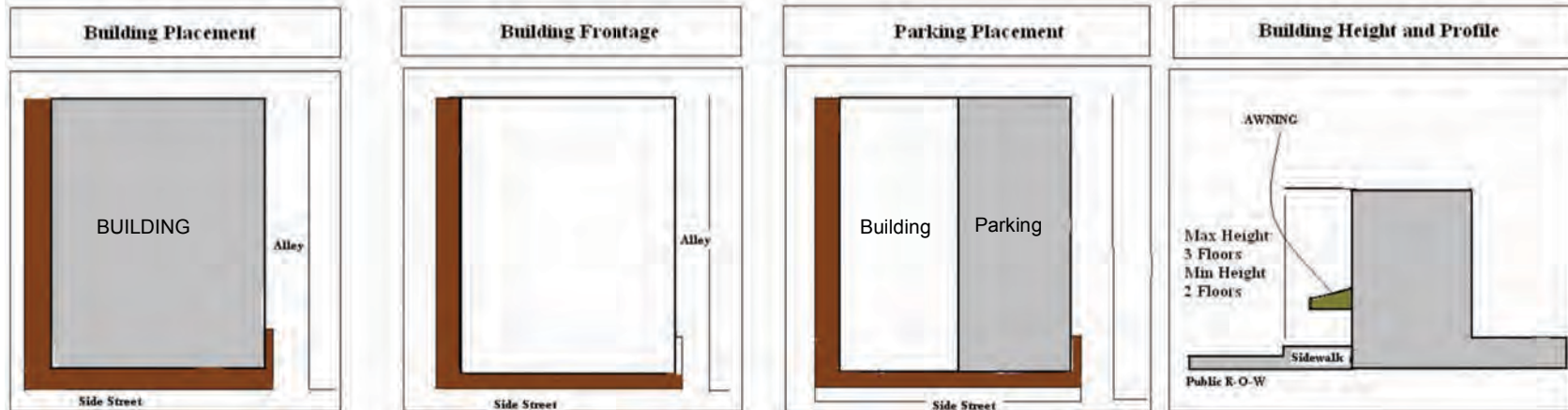
**Above** (top to bottom): Illustration showing appropriate scale of infill buildings within the Downtown; Photo showing the poorly situated Great American Supermarket with the building set back from the sidewalk and a parking lot surrounding the store; and perfectly situated new "Hancock House" that is built to the sidewalk, appropriate in height for East Front Street and architecturally compatible with surrounding buildings.



**Above** (top to bottom): Rite Aid Pharmacy in Camden, ME as an example of chain store that respects character of this historic community; existing Rite Aid Pharmacy in Hancock; and Rite Aid Pharmacy in Lake Placid, NY. There is little that can be done to address how the existing Rite Aid is situated, however, a façade renovation and new signage that incorporated elements of the Lake Placid Store would be more in keeping with character of Hancock, NY.



GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING PLACEMENT AND SITE DESIGN



Setbacks:

Buildings shall be located within the grey shaded area as shown in the above diagram. The building footprint shall be built to the sidewalk line when facing a public street in the CBD.

Within the DB-Downtown Business District, a building can have a zero setback on the front, side and rear yards. A setback to provide sufficient sight distance on corner lots is required pursuant to Section 115-20 of the Village of Hancock Zoning Code.

Front Setback: 0' Min.  
 Side Yard: 0' Min.  
 Corner Side: 0'  
 Rear Setback: 0' Min.

Encroachments Allowed:

Pursuant to Section 115- 36 of the Village Code, perpendicular signs may encroach over the public sidewalk, but not over the public street right-of-way.

There are a number of existing perpendicular signs in the Downtown Business District and such signs are encouraged since they make it easier for pedestrians to navigate the business district.

Perpendicular signs should be well-maintained and care should be taken to ensure that an 8 foot high clear walkway is maintained in all instances and public access along sidewalks is unobstructed.

Parking Requirements:

Within Downtown Business District, it is recommended that applicants should be permitted to meet their off-street parking requirements in one or more of the following manners: 1) spaces located on-site, 2) available municipal spaces within 500 feet of site, or 3) an exemption or waiver that should be provided for in Village Code Section 115-35. Off-street parking should only be allowed in the rear yard.

Alleys: Where feasible, access to off-street loading should be provided from designated alleys that are at least 15 feet in width. It is also recommended that the Hancock Fire Department have input regarding access to alleyways.

Maximum Height & Profile:

Within the DB-Downtown Business District, the maximum building height is 35 feet. The following are recommended guidelines for new infill buildings.

Minimum Height: 2 stories  
 Maximum Height: 3 stories

Rooflines: Horizontal or gable rooflines should be incorporated into new buildings. The use of a parapet to rise above the roofline and an upper cornice should be provided.

Infill Buildings: Shall respect adjacent buildings with respect to height, materials, and building placement.

5.3.4 Window Displays & Merchandising

Many merchants in the Village have a good understanding of merchandising and the business of running a store. The challenge is to impart enthusiasm for the customer and to provide quality shopping experience. Doing so helps to establish a loyal customer base for the business district. The design of window displays and merchandise display plays an important role in defining the quality of the shopping experience.

Window displays should be attractive to the eye and display something of interest that encourages the shopper to enter the store and shop. It is also important that the windows remain free of visual clutter (such as temporary sales signs) since such signs block the view of the merchandise within the store. Temporary sales and banner signs also convey an image of cheapness – not quality. Any business within the Village can make their windows interesting. As more and more storeowners invest time creating inviting window displays the overall shopping experience in the business district will be enhanced.

As building facades are renovated, building owners must retain the transparency of the storefront by maintaining the large display windows. Large display windows provide a great setting for window displays but also allow shoppers to see the merchandise from the street. When well designed, the store is inviting. If the merchandise is well-displayed, it too becomes and aesthetically pleasing part of the storefront.

Attractive storefronts helps merchants to attract customers into their stores. Collectively, they help to create a vibrant business district that is more likley to attract customers to Hancock for years to come.

It is recommended that the Village Board adopt Hancock Partners, Inc’s *Design Guidelines* for the entire Downtown Business District to provide a framework for facade renovations and infill development. Doing so will not only help to ensure that the historic integrity of buildings is preserved, but it will also help to ensure that the social and economic vitality of the business district is sustained. The Village should discourage business owners from making modifications to any of the storefronts that would reduce the transparency of the storefront. It should also limit the placement of temporary signs on storefront windows. Temporary window signs should be limited to a small number of seasonal events during the year for a short duration. Even then, the percentage of the storefront window on which these signs are placed should be limited to no greater than 25% of the total window area.

5.4 Parking

Within the Downtown Business District, few businesses have a designated off-street parking area. Section 115-35 (A) of the Village Zoning Law exempts existing buildings and uses from providing off-street parking. As a result most of the parking for businesses is on-street.



Above (top to bottom): *Hart’s Pharmacists* in Williamstown, MA – an example of nice window display and transparent windows; *General Store* in Williamstown, MA where the merchandise display and transparency of the storefront window create an inviting appearance; and *Capital Wine & Spirits* on Lark Street in Albany.



Presently, the on-street parking spaces in the Downtown Business District are well-utilized. However, there were few instances where all spaces were taken. However, this will change as revitalization efforts continue and vacant storefronts and buildings are occupied with new businesses. As this occurs, more off-street parking will be necessary. The Village has an off-street parking area on East Front Street. It is conveniently located in the center of Downtown. Parking patterns were observed during several weekdays. During weekdays, the parking lot is well-utilized but spaces are still available. In the evening hours, it is underutilized.

There are limited opportunities to provide new off-street parking areas within Downtown Business District and the demolition of buildings to make way for off-street parking should be avoided at all costs. Instead, it is recommended that the Village continue to evaluate its parking needs to better assess peak demand for parking for various land uses in the business district. Doing so will pave the way for better utilization of the existing parking areas by encouraging *shared use* of existing off-street parking areas.

For example, banks and churches have well-defined business hours. When the spaces are not needed for their use, they could be made available for other businesses through a *shared parking agreement*. A parking study would identify such opportunities and the Village could encourage business owner participation in a shared parking program.



There are several areas within the Downtown, where, *shared parking agreements* between adjacent properties might be used to increase the overall number of off-street parking spaces without having to build new parking lots. The area behind *Marino's Outdoor World* and *Village Hall* sites is one example. If the haphazard off-street parking behind the buildings was consolidated to develop an off-street parking area – more parking could be provided for both uses. This is an example of an opportunity for a public/private partnership to add parking spaces. Additional opportunities exist Downtown.

**Above:** Through shared parking agreements, the number of parking spaces within some of the existing off-street parking areas could be increased through the consolidation of parking lot entrances and improved layout of the off-street parking spaces.

One area where this might be practical is in the vicinity of Marino's Outdoor World off-street parking area and behind Village Hall and the apartment building on Read Street. The redevelopment of these off-street parking areas to create a uniform off-street parking lot would provide an opportunity to add off-street parking in the Downtown without to removal of buildings.

5.5 Streetscape Enhancements

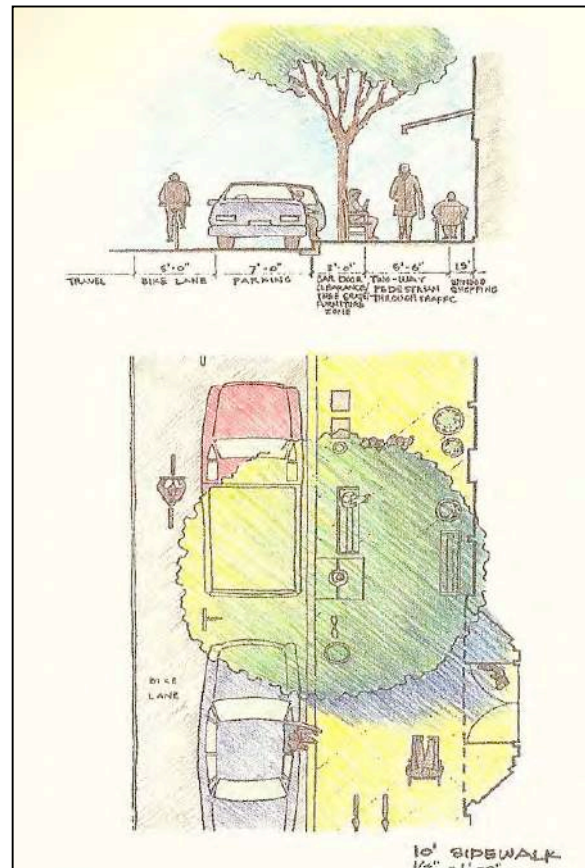
The Streetscape throughout much of Hancock’s Downtown Business District is grey and stark. The streetscape is devoid of street trees, the sidewalks are poorly maintained, and there are few areas for pedestrians to rest. At night, the business district doesn’t feel as safe as it should since there are no pedestrian-scale street lamps to light sidewalks and off-street parking areas.

In order to create an inviting shopping environment, Hancock’s pedestrian environment must provide a sense of cleanliness, comfort and security. This can be accomplished by having well-maintained sidewalks, planting street trees, installing streetlights and street furniture that will provide comfort and security for pedestrians.

The illustration to the right shows how well maintained sidewalks along with the planting of street trees help to create a safe and inviting environment for pedestrians. Street trees are important for comfort in that they provide shade. They also add greenery to the streetscape to soften the impact of asphalt roadways and concrete sidewalks. More importantly, street trees demarcate the separation between the vehicular and pedestrian environment and provide a sense of enclosure within the pedestrian space between the store and the edge of the road. Where feasible, it is strongly encouraged that street trees be planted Downtown. It is also recommended that benches be provided for pedestrian comfort.

*“STREETS AND THEIR SIDEWALKS, THE MAIN PLACES OF A CITY, ARE ITS MOST VITAL ORGANS.”*

**Jane Jacobs**



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



**Above** (top to bottom): View of West Font Street behind the Great American Site where the sidewalk consists of a grey strip of asphalt and not street trees; view of streetscape along West Main Street that is completely void of any street trees; and view from West Main Street looking toward Read Street. The grey streetscape provides a stark contrast to the lush green hillsides that surround the Village. Street trees are needed downtown.



5.6 Overhead Utilities

Within the Downtown Business District, the presence of overhead utilities detracts from the streetscape. This plan supports efforts to place these utilities underground should future work be necessary to replace other underground infrastructure such as water and sewer pipes. In the interim, it is recommended that the Village work with New York State Electric & Gas to identify measures to improve the aesthetics of the overhead utilities within the Downtown. Measures that should be explored include the bundling of wires coupled with moving wires higher up the poles to reduce visibility. It is also recommended that the exiting “Cobra” lights be replaced with a fixture that is more in keeping with historic character of the Downtown Business District and that period lamps be installed to make the streetscape more visually appealing (see example to right).

5.7 Economic Development Incentives

It is often necessary to offer incentives to attract new investment within communities that have experienced a period of decline such as Hancock. The business community looks at their return-on-investment (ROI) to determine whether or not to invest in a community. They factor in such variables as cost of business start-up, operating costs, debt service, and real property taxes. They may also look at proposed community investments and the likelihood that their investment will appreciate over time.

Often the decision of whether or not to invest is triggered by incentives that are offered by economic development agencies. The following is a brief description of some programs that should be offered to prospective businesses within the Downtown Business District to help stimulate new investment that will help to strengthen the vitality of the business district and expand the Village tax base.

5.7.1 New York Main Street (NYMS)

The New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) makes available up to \$500,000 annually for downtown revitalization efforts. In 2005, Hancock Partner’s Inc., received a \$200,000 grant from DHCR to establish a NYMS program in the Village of Hancock. The Partner’s are the Local Program Administrator (LPA) and responsible for administering the NYMS funds.

New York Main Street funds are available to entrepreneurs in the form of small grants for façade renovations, interior building renovations and/or the creation of cultural anchors. For façade grants, the Partner’s can provide 50/50 matching grants up to \$10,000. Through the interior renovation grants, the Partner’s can award up to a \$50,000 - 50/50 matching grant. These funds can be used for first and upper floor renovation including the creation of apartments over the store. When residential units are created there is an affordable housing provision that is required for a seven (7) year period.



Above (top to bottom): Even with existing overhead utilities and Cobra lights there is an opportunity to install period street lighting within the Downtown Business District as was done in the Village of Liberty, New York. To reduce the visibility of the overhead utilities, the wires were raised higher and bundled.

It took a while for Hancock Partner’s Inc., to develop the organizational capacity to administer the New York Main Street program. However, it now has a few successes and its façade renovation program is off to a good start. The *B&R Furniture Store-Radio Shack Building* and *Tracey’s Hair Salon* were two of the first project completed and other projects are underway. The before and after photos clearly show the positive impact that this program is having on the Downtown Business District. Without, NYMS funds it is unlikely these improvements would have been completed.

The New York Main Street Program also provides funding the creation or expansion of cultural anchors. Through the Downtown Anchor component of the NYMS Grant program, up to \$500,000 [not exceeding 33% of project cost] can be made available for interior building renovations for the creation or expansion of a downtown anchor. This is in addition to the \$10,000 façade grant. The Old Capital Theater would be a good candidate for the Downtown Anchor grant. The theater is a well-established entity in the heart of the business district and the building is historically significant (circa 1909).

The Village Board should continue to support efforts by the Hancock Partners Inc. to secure additional funds through the NYMS program so that it can expand its program to provide small grants to entrepreneurs that are interested in opening or expanding a business in the Downtown Business District.

**Village of Hancock, New York**

5.7.2 Empire Zone

The Empire Zone (EZ) was developed to help economically distressed communities to attract new investment. It does so by providing a variety of economic development incentives including a 10-year real property tax credit (not to be confused with an abatement), wage tax credits for the creation of new jobs, sales tax abatements on building materials, and investment tax credits. In order for a business to qualify for these incentives it must first be located within a Designated EZ – Hancock’s EZ does not include the Downtown.

The EZ benefits are quite substantial and a powerful incentive to attract new investment within a community. This is especially true when coupled with other incentives such as the New York Main Street program. Unfortunately, Hancock’s EZ does not include the Downtown Business District. It is recommended that the Village Board reach out to the Delaware County Empire Zone Administrative Board (DCZAB) to secure a Empire Zone boundary amendment to re-allocate a portion of its EZ to cover the Downtown. Doing so will make the EZ benefits available to perspective investors—greatly increasing the likelihood of stimulating new investment. The *Real Property Tax Credit* gives investors a 100% credit against real estate taxes paid to the Village. The State pays the RPTC while the Village expands its tax base through new investment. The Village Board must embrace use of the NYMS and EZ Programs.



**Above** (top to bottom): New York Main Street funded projects. B&R Furniture – Radio Shack Building on East Front Street; Tracey’s Hair Salon on East Front Street across front the new Hancock House; and façade renovation in progress on East Front Street. By improving the appearance of these buildings, the business district becomes a more inviting place for shoppers and investors - activity breeds activity.



**5.8 Action Plan**

There are a variety of strategies that can be employed to revitalize the Downtown Business District. Proposed actions include:

- ❑ Keep civic and cultural anchors within the Downtown Business District.
- ❑ Work with the businesses community to create a Downtown Business Directory & Brochure.
- ❑ Formally adopt *Design Guidelines* for the Downtown Business District in order ensure that renovations to historic buildings are done appropriately and that new infill development strengthens the fabric of the business district.
- ❑ Amend the *Zoning Code* to prohibit certain uses in the Downtown Business District such as gas stations, kennels and dwelling on the first floor of mixed-use retail/commercial buildings.
- ❑ Amend the *Zoning Code* to allow living-over-the-store dwellings and theaters Downtown.
- ❑ Secure NYSDOT TIP, TEP and FHWA Scenic Byway Funds to make needed streetscape enhancements throughout Downtown.
- ❑ Create a *Village Square* within the Downtown.
- ❑ Encourage the creation of *shared parking* agreements.
- ❑ Work with New York State Electric & Gas to improve the aesthetics of its utilities within the Downtown Business District.
- ❑ Support efforts by Hancock Partner’s Inc. to expand the *New York Main Street Program*.

**5.9 Funding Sources**

*New York Main Street Grant Program*

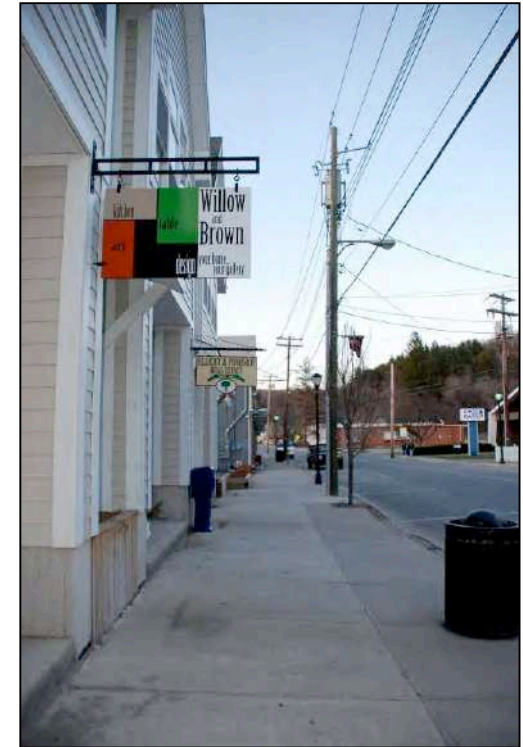
The New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal makes available up to \$500,000 to local governments or not-for-profit organizations for Downtown revitalization efforts. These funds that go to the local government or not-for-profit agency are made available to entrepreneurs in the form of small grants for façade renovations, interior building renovations, minor streetscape enhancements and the creation of cultural anchors. The Village Board should continue to support on-going efforts by *Hancock Partners Inc.* to secure funds through the NYMS program so that small grants can be made available to entrepreneurs that are interested in opening or expanding a business within the Downtown Business District. [www.nymainstreet.org](http://www.nymainstreet.org)

*NYSDOT Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP)*

Eligible projects include facilities for bicycles and pedestrians; safety activities for pedestrians and bicyclists; acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites; scenic or historic highway programs (including provision of tourist and welcome center facilities); preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including conversion and use for pedestrian and bicycle trails) and establishment of transportation-related museums. Local governments are eligible applicants for NYSDOT TEP grants

*NYSDOT Multi-modal funding*

Every year there are Member Item funds available of multi-modal projects including sidewalk and streetscape improvements. The Village Board secured a \$50,000 from Senator Bonacic in 2005 and needed improvements were recently made along East Front Street. The Village Board should continue to apply for such funds and it is recommended that these funds be earmarked for the Downtown Business District. [www.nysdot.gov](http://www.nysdot.gov)



**Photo:** View of Main Street in the hamlet of Livingston Manor in Sullivan County. The revitalization effort in the hamlet began with leadership from the local business community along with strong support from the Town of Rockland and the Sullivan County Planning Department. The new sidewalks and streetlamps were funded through NYSDOT Multi-modal funds and Empire State Development Corporation funds. Business owners were able to secure matching grants of up to \$10,000 for façade renovations along with \$5,000 matching grants for interior renovations. Finally, the Downtown Business District was placed within the Sullivan County Empire Zone enabling investors to obtain a 10-year Real Property Tax Credit. Collectively, these incentives – coupled with strong support from the business community and local government has helped to stimulate millions of dollars in new investment and expanded the tax base.

**CHAPTER 6.0  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

For the Greater Hancock Area to prosper, future growth within the community has to involve new investments within the Downtown Business District, its commercial gateways and underutilized industrial plants. Within the Downtown and gateway areas, careful attention must be given the placement and design of new commercial buildings so that each enhances rather than detracts from the aesthetics of the community. New investors are also needed to rehabilitate vacant and underutilized buildings within the Downtown Business District.

The Village & Town of Hancock need to take a proactive role in working with the Delaware County Economic Development Office and the owners of the former Becton-Dickinson Plant to find a viable reuse of this industrial complex. This property has considerable competitive advantages including Empire Zone designation, natural gas service, availability of municipal water & sewer and the opportunity to establish a rail siding from the adjacent Erie Railroad line. However, without a concerted effort by local, County and State agencies to work with business owners its unlikely the economic development needs will be addressed. Hancock has difficulty retaining and attracting viable businesses, in part, because it lacks an economic development plan along with the necessary capacity to spearhead economic development efforts.

**Village of Hancock, New York**

**6.1 Competitive Advantages**

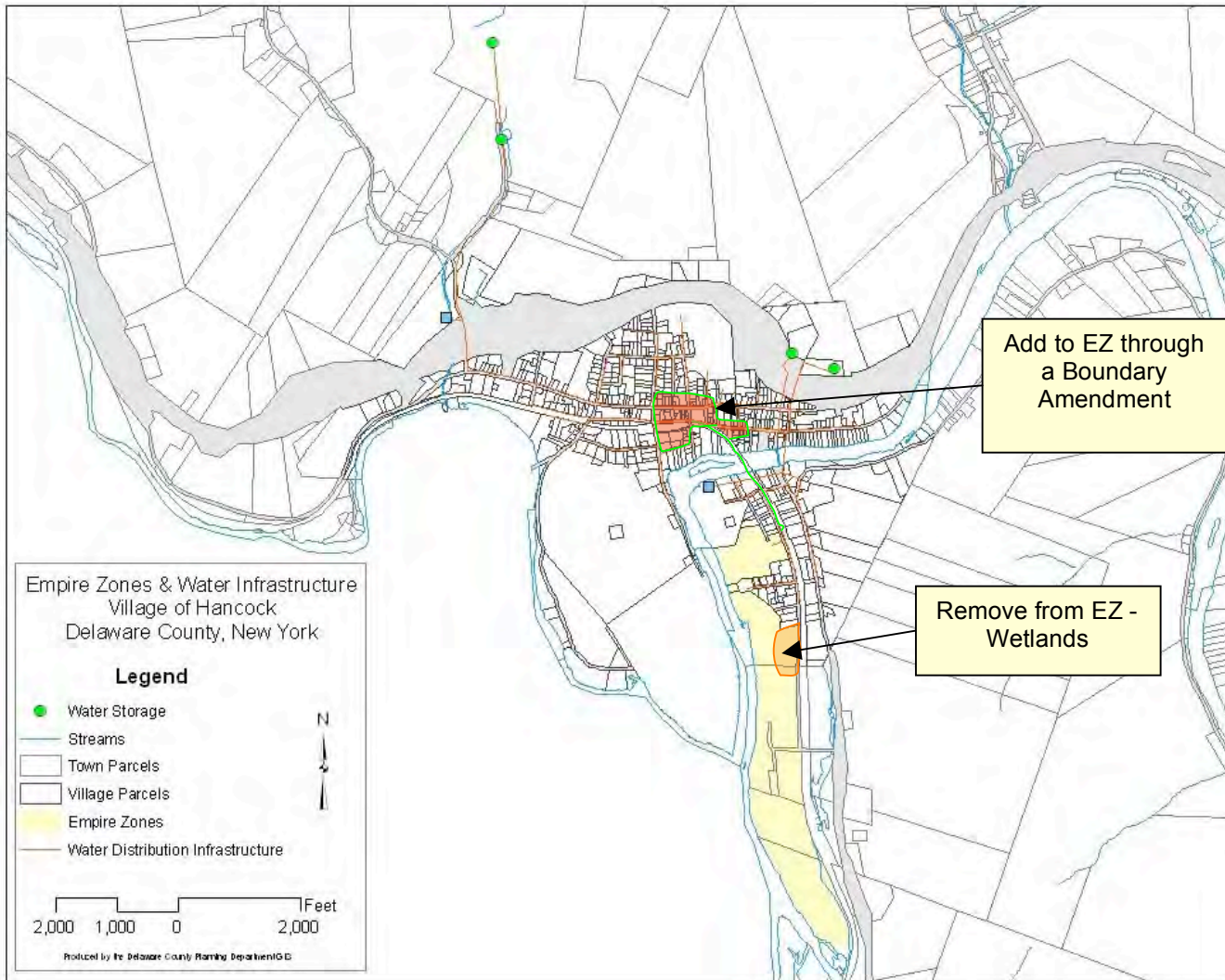
The Greater Hancock Community enjoys a number of competitive advantages that should be used to attract new investment within the community. New investment may come from existing residents and business owners, second homeowners or outside investors. Some of the more important competitive advantages that Hancock enjoys are as follows:

- *Empire Zone* designation;
- *Lower overall operating costs*;
- *Transportation access* to NYS Route 17 at Exit 87 and Exit 87 A and active freight line along the *Erie Railroad*;
- *Natural gas* service through the Village and the industrial sites;
- *Public water & sewer* with excess capacity to accommodate new growth;
- Proximity as the northern gateway to the *Upper Delaware Scenic Byway*;
- Northern gateway to the *Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreational River*;
- Location at the confluence of the east and west branches of the *Delaware River*;
- *Proximity to nearby golf courses* such as *Hancock Golf Course* (public course) and *French Woods*;
- *Hancock Central Schools* in the Village along with the *Family School* just south of the Village of Hancock;
- *Lourdes Primary Care Health Clinic*; and
- A *New York Main Street* program administered by Hancock Partner’s Inc.



**Above** (top to bottom): The new Hancock House Hotel an example of an appropriate infill development project in the heart of the Downtown Business District; underutilized Becton, Dickinson & Co. Plant; and the Hancock High School on Read Street. Education & Health Services; Manufacturing; Professional Services; Retail Trade; and Arts, Entertainment & Recreation were the top industries in Hancock according to the 2000 Census.

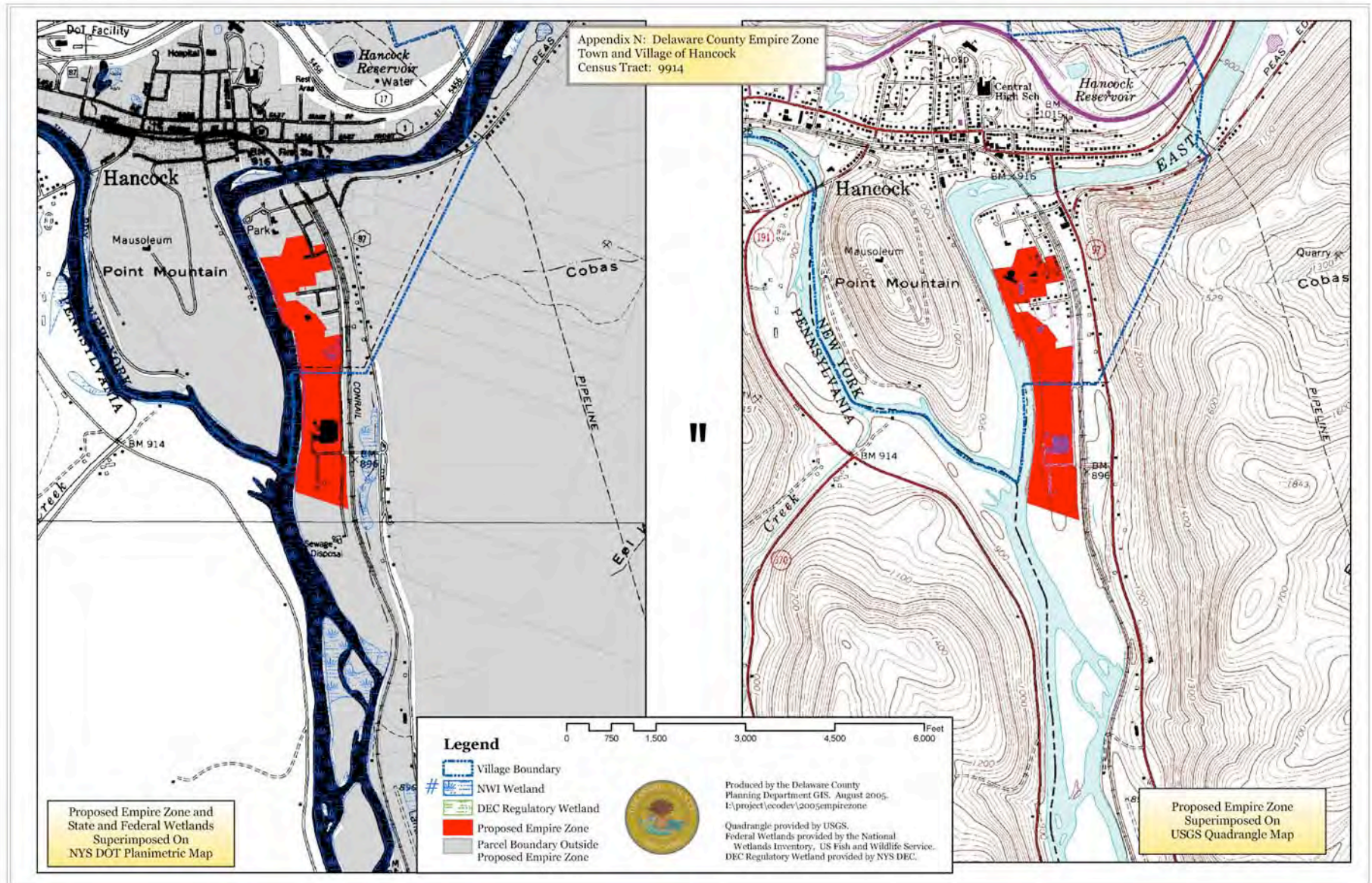




**Above:** The map above shows the Village’s water storage and distribution system. The Village of Hancock provides municipal water & sewer services throughout the community and the Becton-Dickenson Plant within the Town of Hancock. The sewer system is designed for 350,000 gallons per day (gpd). It currently collects and treats only 120,000 to 150,000 gpd, leaving substantial unused capacity available for new users. The Village water system has capacity to produce 1,000,000 gpd of water supply, subject to its current pumping capacity, which is about 650,000 gpd. Current water usage is only 280,000 to 350,000 gpd, leaving an approximately equal amount available for new users with no significant additional capital expense. Many communities simply do not have excess capacity to accommodate new growth.

**Above** (top to bottom): Lourdes Primary Care Health Clinic on East Front Street; the Hancock Telephone Company on Read Street; and NBT Bank in the heart of the Downtown Business District. The Village of Hancock is still the financial services, health care, and educational center for the greater Hancock Area. Each of these businesses is an important anchor to the Downtown Business District.







6.1.1 Incentive Programs

As was discussed in Section 5.7 of this Plan, there is a successful New York Main Street program administered by Hancock Partner’s, Inc. for businesses along East Front Street. This program needs to be expanded to encompass the entire Downtown Business District and the Village Board must continue to support efforts to secure more State funds to expand the program.

The Village/Town of Hancock are also part of the Delaware County Empire Zone. However, the existing boundary does not encompass the areas within the Village that are most likely to see significant new investment - the Downtown Business District and West End Gateway. It is thus recommended that the Village Board reach out to the Delaware County Zone Administrative Board (ZAB) to secure an EZ Boundary Amendment to include these areas of the community.

This can be accomplished by removing lands within the existing EZ that contain wetlands and that are located within the floodplain. Once the EZ Boundary is amended, those businesses within the EZ Boundary will become eligible to apply for EZ Benefits helping to stimulate investment in these areas.

Having the EZ benefits is a significant incentive but does little good if it is not effectively marketed to perspective businesses. Someone needs to lead the marketing effort.

Village of Hancock, New York

To this end, it is recommended that a not-for-profit economic development entity be created to spearhead economic development initiatives within the Village. The agency would take a more proactive role than a traditional Industrial Development Agency – working with local business leaders and elected officials to retain existing businesses and to attract new investment in order to diversify the economic base.

6.1.2 Transportation Access

The Village of Hancock will soon have direct access to the interstate highway system when NYS Route 17 is converted to Interstate-86. Proximity to the interstate highway system is often a prerequisite for transportation companies and like companies with a strong need for transportation access such as warehouse distribution companies. Freight access that is growing in importance to warehouse distribution and manufacturing companies due to rising fuel costs. Having access to freight is a competitive advantage that is most applicable to the large industrial sites south of the Village. These are assets that need to be marketed to prospective businesses.

6.1.3 Energy

The Millennium Gas Pipeline runs through the Town of Hancock and in close proximity to the Village of Hancock. Natural gas service is available throughout the Village and the industrial sites within the Town of Hancock.



Above (top to bottom): Hancock enjoy superior transportation access to the surrounding region; railroad trestle; and Brisbee Lumber & Supply Company on Yendes Street.

Companies that rely upon uninterrupted supplies of natural gas should be attracted to Hancock. One example is large *commercial greenhouses* that favor natural gas with ease of access to markets. The Greater Hancock Area might be attractive to such industries due the lower land & labor cost, an abundant supply of natural gas, available public water supply and the ability to get their products to market by rail or truck.

6.1.4 *Water & Sewer Capacity*

The Village of Hancock operates public water and sewer systems serving the community. The sewer system is designed for 350,000 gallons per day (gpd). It currently collects and treats only 120,000 to 150,000 gpd, leaving substantial unused capacity available for new users. The Village charges \$118 per quarter for every 18,000 gallons generated, equal to an annual charge of \$472 per equivalent dwelling unit (EDU), assuming each EDU represents 200 gpd. The rates are competitive with regional rates. Rates for large users are subject to negotiation.

The Village water system has capacity to produce 1,000,000 gpd of water supply, subject to its current pumping capacity, which is about 650,000 gpd. Current water usage is only 280,000 to 350,000 gpd, leaving an approximately equal amount available for new users with no significant additional capital expense. Once again, commercial and industrial rates are subject to negotiation. These are competitive advantages that can be marketed.

**Village of Hancock, New York**

6.1.5 *Telecommunications and Internet Access*

Telecommunications and Internet access is an increasingly important resource that companies depend upon to communicate with their customers. In the Village, access to cell phone service is very good, but the options for high-speed internet service are limited. This is one area where new investments are needed enable Hancock to compete in the increasingly global marketplace.

6.1.6 *Recreation*

An important factor in business location decisions is the quality of life in the community. There are many factors that help to define a community’s quality of life but one of the more important factors is the availability of recreational amenities such a parks and trails.

There are a variety of outdoor recreational activities within the Greater Hancock Area. There include fishing and boating on the east and west branches of the Delaware River, golfing at the Hancock Golf Course or the nearby French Woods Golf Course, hiking at nearby State parklands and biking along the NYS Route 17 Bikeway. The latter runs through the heart of the Village of Hancock along NYS Route 97 – aka the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway. There are many outdoor recreational opportunities for local residents and visitor’s, however, more needs to be done to improve public access to the rivers and to create a public trail system.



**Above** (top to bottom): Village reservoir at the end of the Golf Course Road Extension; another view of reservoir; and view of Village-owned Waste Water Treatment Plant at the end a LaBarre Street south of the Village. The Village has excess capacity to accommodate new growth the water and sewer lines already serve the area where growth is likely to occur.



There are many opportunities to expand recreational opportunities within the community and these are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.0 – Parks, Recreation and Civic Centers. The existing recreational opportunities, coupled with the proposed enhancements to the parks and recreation system will make Hancock a more inviting place to live. In turn, these amenities will make the community a more inviting place to conduct business.

6.1.7 Public & Private Schools

The Village of Hancock is home to the *Hancock Central Schools* and the Town of Hancock is home to *The Family Foundation School*.

The *Hancock Central School* is located in the Village in an architecturally pleasing and picturesque setting that is central to the community. School facilities for all grades are located on the same campus and include a Junior-Senior High School and Elementary School. The former serves a combination of New York and Pennsylvania school students. The School District had a total enrollment of approximately 450 students in grades K-12 for the school year. The average class size ranges from 15-18 students with an average graduating class size of 45 students.

The *Family Foundation School* is a college preparatory boarding school for teens at risk. It serves grades 9 through 12, and a separate middle school serves grades 6, 7, and 8.

The school is registered with New York State Board of Regents and accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Present enrollment at The Family Foundation School is approximately 230 students. The Greater Hancock Area provides access to a very good public education system along with private school for teens. These educational institutions are an important asset to the community in terms of educational and employment opportunities. The community is also fortunate to have a private foundation that supports education.

*The Hancock Community Education Foundation* is a not-for-profit organization that currently provides ten (10) educational and social programs for school age children. The mission of the Foundation is to “increase as rapidly as possible the number of Hancock High School graduates who go to college.” Since the Foundation’s start in the year 2000, it has invested over \$1,000,000 in Hancock. Of this, \$336,000 was invested in scholarships and the rest in educational support programs for students and adults. The foundation employs 44 part-time educators and tutors as well as a full-time Executive Director.

Having the Hancock Community Education Foundation is an incredible resource for the Greater Hancock Community. One of the long-term goals of the Foundation is to build a *Youth Center* for school age children. The creation of the Youth Center is strongly supported by this Economic & Community Development Plan.



**Above** (top to bottom): Clubhouse at the Hancock Public Golf Course just off of NYS Route 17 Exit 87; picture of the public golf course; and view of Delaware River looking south from the Village’s public access area. There are a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities for local residents to enjoy but more needs to be done to create a public trail system to link open spaces.

6.1.8 Health Care

When families are looking at relocating to a new community, they often take into consideration the availability and proximity of primary health care services. Lourdes Hospital – based in Binghamton, New York – has a primary care clinic within the Village of Hancock. The Primary Care facility is open from 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM Monday through Friday. A board certified physician is on staff along with a Nurse Practitioner. Having the Lourdes Primary Care facility is an important asset for the community.

As was discussed in Chapter 4.0 – Parks, Recreation and Civic Centers the Lourdes Clinic on East Front Street has outgrown its present location and is looking to build a new facility Downtown. This Plan strongly supports locating the proposed *Hancock Community Health Care Center* in the Downtown Business District. The proposed facility will provide important health care services for the community, create employment opportunities and strengthen the social and economic vitality of the business district by attracting patients to the Downtown Business District.

The *Hancock Community Health Care Center* will also strengthen the important role that Hancock already plays in providing health care services to the rural communities in New York and Pennsylvania that rely upon the Lourdes Primary Clinic in the Village of Hancock for their health care needs.

6.2 Emerging Markets

The U.S. Census Data shows that between 1990 and 2000, the Greater Hancock Area experienced growth in three sectors of the economy: Educational & Health Services (14.3%); Agriculture, Forestry and Mining (66.7%) and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (550%). The percentage growth in the latter was due to a low base number, however, the number of jobs created in this industry (33) was greater than the number of jobs created in the other two industries combined (see Table A-7).

Since 2000, anecdotal evidence suggests that these industries have continued to grow in the community. Within the Village of Hancock there are a number of new services businesses such as Alma Yoga and the Bluestone Grill. There has also been growth in the accommodations sector with the addition of the new *Hancock House Hotel, Point Mountain Bed & Breakfast and Cranberry Cottage B&B*. The Village Board must work with the Hancock Area Chamber of Commerce and Hancock Partner’s, Inc. to nurture continued growth in the Arts, Entertainment & Recreation industry in order to create jobs for local residents.

There are many recommendations contained within this Plan that will help to strengthen the Arts & Entertainment Industry by making Hancock a more enjoyable place to visit. There are also federal and State funds available to help implement these improvements.



Above (top to bottom): The Bluestone Grill restaurant; Alma Yoga; and Cranberry Cottage B&B. The Village has long provided accommodation and dining services to travelers. The new Hancock House and several Bed & Breakfasts within the Village have helped to sustain growth in the accommodation sector. Complementary businesses have recently opened in the Village such as the Bluestone Grill and Alma Yoga.



These include the creation of the *Village Square*, *Hancock Fitness Trail*, *Scenic Overlook* and *West Branch Park* – along with streetscape improvements along the *Village’s gateways* and throughout the Downtown Business District. The Village Board and business community must work together to implement these improvements and to promote a positive image of the community to prospective residents, second homeowners and businesses. Doing so will help to strengthen the community’s tax base while creating jobs for local residents.

Another sector of the economy that the Village Board must work with its business community to support is the *Education & Health Services Industry*. In 2000, this industry employed 112 residents and today the number is even greater. The development of the Hancock Community Health Care Center will help to solidify the Village’s place as a health care services center for the Greater Hancock Area. The development of this center must be a priority of the Village-Town of Hancock’s Economic & Community Development initiatives.

There may also be opportunities to attract certain niche industries to the community such as large *commercial greenhouses*. The competitive advantages that Hancock has include availability of labor, access to natural gas, lower land costs and transportation access via Future I-86 or the Erie Railroad. While business attraction should be a part of Hancock’s economic development efforts - it should not be the sole focus.

### 6.3 Summary

Between 1990 and 2000, Hancock experienced job losses in the manufacturing, professional services and construction industries - among others. The downturn in manufacturing was further exacerbated when Becton, Dickinson & Co., closed its 200-employee manufacturing facility in 2000. One lesson that can be learned from the closing of that plant is the need for the community to diversify its economic base.

There are a number of positive trends in the local economy such as recent Downtown Revitalization efforts. The Village Board, Town Board and local business community must work together to support growth in emerging industries and strive to retain existing businesses while attracting complementary businesses. Commercial greenhouses are included herein as but one example of an industry that might be attracted to the community based upon the needs of the industry and the competitive advantage Hancock offers – others should be explored.

*More often economic growth in a community comes not from outside investment but rather from investments by local residents and business owners.* While the Village Board and economic development agencies should pursue business attraction efforts it is even more important to pursue business retention and expansion efforts. Hancock must also strive to provide a *business friendly environment* that encourages reinvestment within the community.



**Above** (top to bottom): Commercial greenhouses that grow flowers and orchids for commercial markets in the metropolitan New York area. Such facilities rely upon availability of labor, lower operating cost and access to markets. Hancock has a number of competitive advantages that might appeal to this industry.

6.4 Action Plan

The initial step for Hancock is to hire a full time *Economic & Community Development Coordinator* that will also serve as the “Downtown” coordinator. The individual would facilitate and drive Hancock’s economic development activities by implementing the following duties:

- ❑ Organize an economic development advisory team consisting of local government officials, business leaders and local residents that are proactive advocates of economic development;
- ❑ Create public/private partnerships to further development of targeted properties;
- ❑ Secure economic development funding, coordinate the work, and streamline the communication among different local, state, and federal agencies including surrounding localities;
- ❑ Build strong relationships between municipalities and private entrepreneurs to assist in bringing new employment and investment opportunities;
- ❑ Serve as the mediator to resolve problems and concerns between various stakeholders;
- ❑ Spearhead business retention efforts;
- ❑ Create marketing resources to assist Hancock in promoting private investment and business development;
- ❑ Bring stakeholders of all interest to the bargaining table to support communication efforts and help mediate various points of view on particular projects;
- ❑ Provide accurate and up-to-date economic and demographic information to prospective developers, property owners and businesses;
- ❑ Help develop business plans for new or expanding businesses; and
- ❑ Assist the Hancock Area Chamber of Commerce in planning and promoting special events.

It is recommended that the *Economic & Community Development Coordinator* be an employee of the Hancock Partner’s, Inc. a local not-for-profit 501(C)(3) that is presently administering the New York Main Street program. As a not-for-profit entity, Hancock Partner’s Inc. is eligible to apply for the *ARC’s Leadership Development and Civic Capacity Grants* to offset the cost of this position.

Eligible activities include training for citizen leaders, local officials and management staff from nonprofit community organizations; organizational support for community organizations, and other activities that help build a community’s capacity to mobilize resources, gain leadership experience, and strengthen community institutions and partnerships.

One tool that can be used to promote Hancock as a place to do business is through a well designed *website*. It would provide information on available incentives (e.g. Empire Zone, IDA or New York Main Street program), demographic information, directory of available buildings and sites, list of leading local employers, information on the community’s target industries, information on quality of life and local schools. The business community would take the lead in developing a website with this economic development focus. The Economic & Community Development Coordinator would be responsible for maintaining and updating the website and using it as a tool in the Hancock’s business attraction efforts.



**Above** (top to bottom): T & A Home Center on West Main Street with well-designed window displays; view from second floor porch of the new Hancock House looking west along East Front Street; and Becton-Dickinson Plant off of LaBarre Street. The new Hancock House is a great example of the type of new investment that should be encouraged downtown in terms of design and economic impact on the community.



6.5 Funding Sources

ARC Business Development and Entrepreneurship

ARC makes a wide range of grants to public and private nonprofit organizations to help firms create and retain jobs in the Region. Examples of grants include: industrial site development; business incubators; special technical assistance and training; and expansion of domestic and foreign markets. ARC also capitalizes loan funds that improve access to capital for Appalachian businesses and can support other activities that foster entrepreneurship. Business development grants typically include participation of other federal agencies. In distressed areas, ARC assistance may provide up to 80 percent of the total cost of a project. [www.arc.gov](http://www.arc.gov)

ARC Leadership Development and Civic Capacity

Eligible activities include the development and implementation of community-based strategic plans; training for citizen leaders (both adult and youth leaders), local officials, and management staff from nonprofit community organizations; organizational support for community organizations, and other activities that help build a community's capacity to mobilize resources, gain leadership experience, and strengthen community institutions and partnerships.

New York Main Street Grant Program

The New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal makes available up to \$500,000 to local governments or not-for-profit organizations for Downtown revitalization efforts. These funds that go to the local government or not-for-profit agency are made available to entrepreneurs in the form of small grants for façade renovations, interior building renovations, minor streetscape enhancements and the creation of downtown anchors. In September of 2008, the NYMS program was revised to increase the funding available to each community from \$200,000 to \$500,000.

Funding for the following activities is now eligible:

Building Renovation: Grants to building owners for renovation of first floor commercial or civic space up to \$30,000 per building, plus up to an additional \$30,000 for each renovated residential unit; not to exceed 75% of the total project cost or \$120,000 per building.

Downtown Anchors: Grants to building owners up to \$500,000 per building, but not exceeding 33% of project cost, to help establish or expand, civic or business anchors that are identified in a local plan as key to local revitalization efforts.

Streetscape Enhancements: Grants of up to \$25,000 for streetscape enhancement activities such as: planting trees and other landscaping; installing of street furniture and trash cans; providing appropriate signs in accordance with a local signage plan in order to enhance NYMS target area. The Village Board should continue to support on-going efforts by *Hancock Partners Inc.* to secure funds through the NYMS program so that small grants can be made available to entrepreneurs that are interested in opening or expanding a business within the Downtown.

Website: [www.nymainstreet.org](http://www.nymainstreet.org)

HANCOCK NEEDS TO CONTINUE TO DIVERSIFY ITS ECONOMIC BASE BY FOCUSING ON BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION AND NURTURING GROWTH IN EMERGING INDUSTRIES. THE FOCUS CANNOT BE TRYING TO REPLACE THE LOSS OF BECTON-DICKINSON, CO.

“THEY’RE CLOSING DOWN THE TEXTILE MILL ACROSS THE RAILROAD TRACKS....FOREMAN SAYS THESE JOBS ARE GOING BOYS AND THEY AIN’T COMING BACK TO YOUR HOMETOWN.”

Bruce Springsteen  
My Hometown

## CHAPTER 7.0 LAND USE LAW

### 7.1 Land Use

Land-use refers to how individual parcels of land are used. Generally, land-use is divided into broad categories including forested, residential, commercial, office, manufacturing, warehousing, institutional, parkland and vacant land. The density of housing that is developed on such sites further defines residential land uses. The Village’s existing land uses, by parcel, are shown on the Land Use Map on page 59. Having a clear picture of the Village’s existing land-use pattern is very useful when planning for its future development.

The areas with the highest residential densities include a garden apartment complex off of East Main Street within the Back Street neighborhood. The Village’s traditional single-family neighborhoods have a relatively low residential density. Its Downtown Business District is along West Main Street and East Front Street and includes both commercial and mixed-use (e.g. commercial with residential above) buildings. There is commercial development along West Main Street near the NYS Route 87 Interchange and along NYS Route 97. Industrial land uses (shown in pink) about the Erie Rail Line and/or are located on LaBarre Street. Point Mountain is classified as Wild, Forest and Conservation lands.

An analysis of the existing Land Use Map shows that a very high percentage of the Village is already developed. Many of the vacant parcels have environmental constraints in terms of steep slopes, wetlands or floodplains. The Village’s development pattern is pretty well defined and it is important that development on the few remaining undeveloped sites be integrated into the fabric of the community rather than isolated from it. To do so, a traditional development pattern should be encouraged on infill sites as well as the large tracts along the waterfront south of the railroad tracks.

Development on infill sites should complement adjacent properties in terms of building placement, scale, height and the types of building materials that are used. Development on the large redevelopment sites should complement adjacent neighborhoods and the community at large. Where mixed-use development is proposed, it should include a mix of home types that complement the Village at large. Where it is feasible to do so, new streets should be interconnected into the existing streets.

The Village Board needs to put in place the appropriate land use tools to guide new development within the community in accordance with this Economic & Community Development Plan. In this respect, there are some zoning law amendments that are recommended herein – along with the enactment of design guidelines. These are discussed in more detail in Section 7.2 of this Plan.

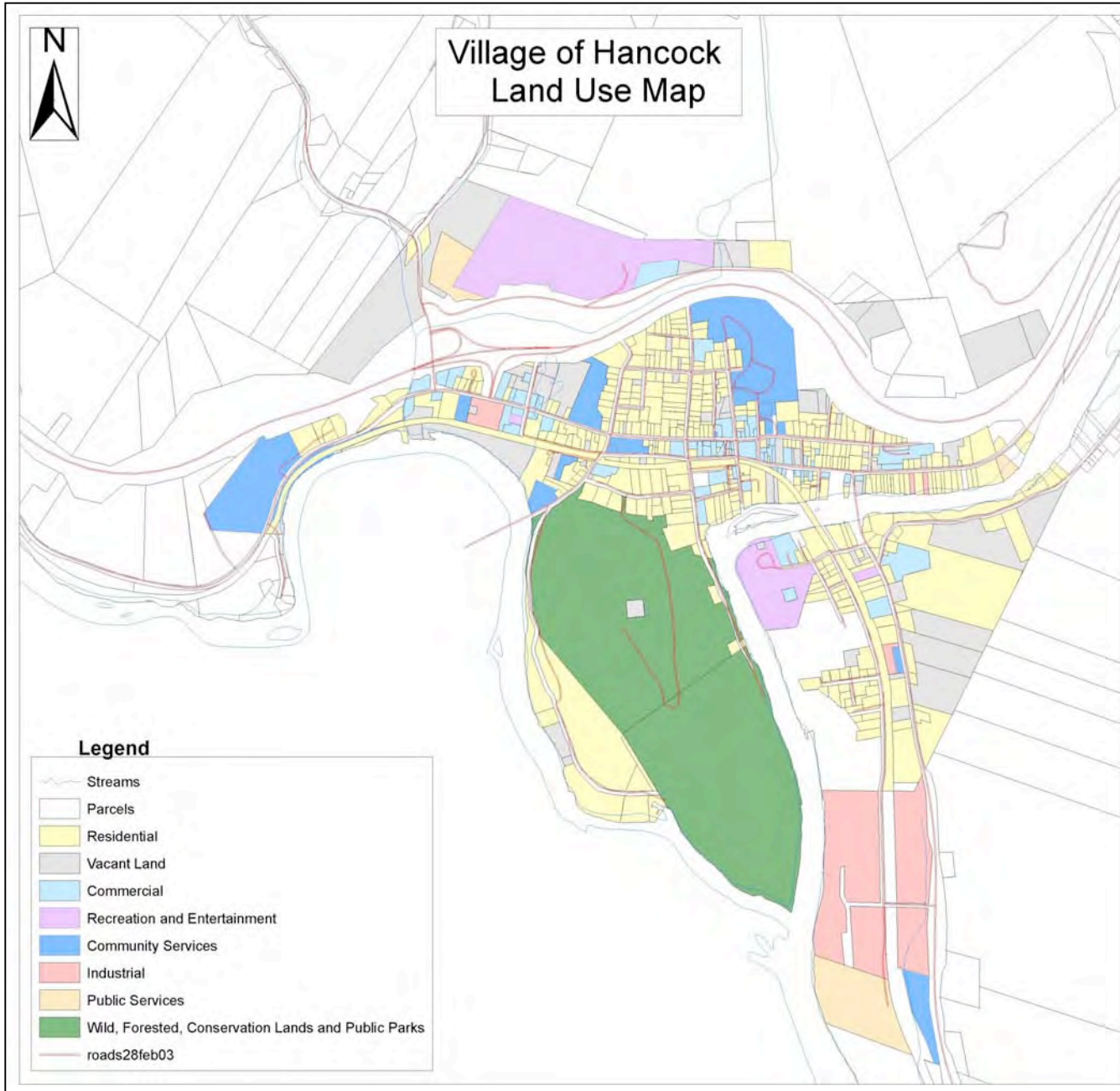
**“WE SHAPE  
OUR  
BUILDINGS  
AND  
AFTERWARDS  
OUR  
BUILDINGS  
SHAPE US.”**

Sir Winston Churchill



**Above** (top to bottom): The Louise Adelia Read Memorial Library and the Hancock Central High School are two civic buildings that help to define the Village of Hancock.





**Above** (top to bottom): Nicely restored painted-lady on Leonard Street; view of the Roadhouse Restaurant & Tavern on West Main Street near the NYS Route 17 – Exit 87 ramps; and view of Hancock Liquor Store on West Main St. As you can see from the land use map, the Village’s residential, commercial and industrial areas are well-defined. Certain zoning text amendments are recommended to maintain the integrity of these areas.

7.2 Zoning Code

Hancock’s business district has many historic buildings that give the community its unique sense of place. Over time – as buildings were lost to fire or neglect – the unique character of the Downtown was compromised by new development that is in sharp contrast to historic buildings that surround them. Left unchecked, the pattern of poorly designed infill development will destroy the character of Downtown making it a less appealing place to shop or invest.

What are the factors that have contributed to the pattern of poorly designed infill development? One is the nature of automobile dependent businesses and the desire for large expanses of off-street parking areas (e.g. Grand Union and Great American sites on West Main Street). Another is the choice made by the developers of these sites. However, the most important factors that contributed to inappropriate development within the Downtown are the Village Zoning Code and the lack of design guidelines.

7.2.1 DB-Downtown Business District

Chapter 115-Zoning of the Village Code establishes a DB-Downtown Business District that encompasses the entire Downtown Business District along West Main Street and East Front Street. The permitted uses include many business that are appropriate within a Downtown Business District such as banks, barbershops, beauty salons, bed & breakfast establishments,

business office, hotels, laundries, restaurants, retail commercial and taverns. However, it also allows a variety of uses that are inappropriate within a Downtown Business District including car washes, gas stations, drive-in facilities and kennels.

In addition to inappropriate land uses, the DB-District does not require infill buildings to be situated up to the sidewalk in order to maintain the building line within the Downtown Business District. Over time, historic buildings that were built to the sidewalk and that helped to define the building line were replaced with automobile-dependent businesses that were situated in a manner that have slowly eroded the streetscape - such as car washes and gas stations. In many cases, parking lots face the street with the building set back from the street (see Grand Union and Rite Aid to right). When this occurs, the pedestrian orientation of a downtown is lost.

It is recommended that the Village Board amend its Zoning Law to create very specific standards for development within the Downtown Business District. Only those land uses that are appropriate for a vibrant mixed-use business district should be permitted. A few other uses should be specifically provided for within a new MX-Mixed-Use District including living-over-the-store dwelling units and theaters. It is strongly recommended that dwellings on the first floor of mixed-use buildings should be explicitly prohibited within the Downtown as they interfere with the pedestrian shopping experience.



**Above** (top to bottom): The Grand Union site; Car Wash on West Main Street; and Rite Aid Pharmacy on West Main Street. The traditional building line along the street was lost due to the placement of the Grand Union building. If re-developed, buildings should be built to the sidewalk and parking placed in the rear yard. The architecture and placement of the carwash and Rite Aid are also out of character with the traditional development pattern on this street.



First floor space should be reserved for retail and service businesses. The shopping experience is interrupted when apartments are allowed on the first floor. The units on the corner of Read Street create the impression that the retail shopping district ends at Read Street. Having retail shops along Read Street would encourage pedestrians to walk from the new Hancock House up to West Main Street. An inviting shopping experience would include retail and services businesses running from East Front Street up to West Main Street without any vacancies or residential units that disrupt the shopping experience. While the Village cannot control vacancies, it can control whether or not residential units are allowed on the first floor. This Plan strongly recommends that residential units on the first floor should be prohibited.

Another important factor that must be considered with new infill buildings is the design of new structures. This matter is discussed briefly in Section 5.3.2 of this Plan. In 2006, Hancock Partner's Inc. – a local not-for-profit economic development entity – funded the creation of Design Guidelines for its New York Main Street grant program along East Front Street. These guidelines can also be used to guide façade renovations throughout the entire Downtown Business District and to help guide the design of new infill buildings.

It is strongly recommended that the Village Board adopt these *Design Guidelines* for the Downtown Business District as soon as possible.

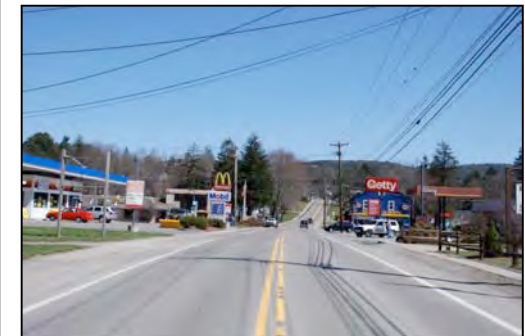
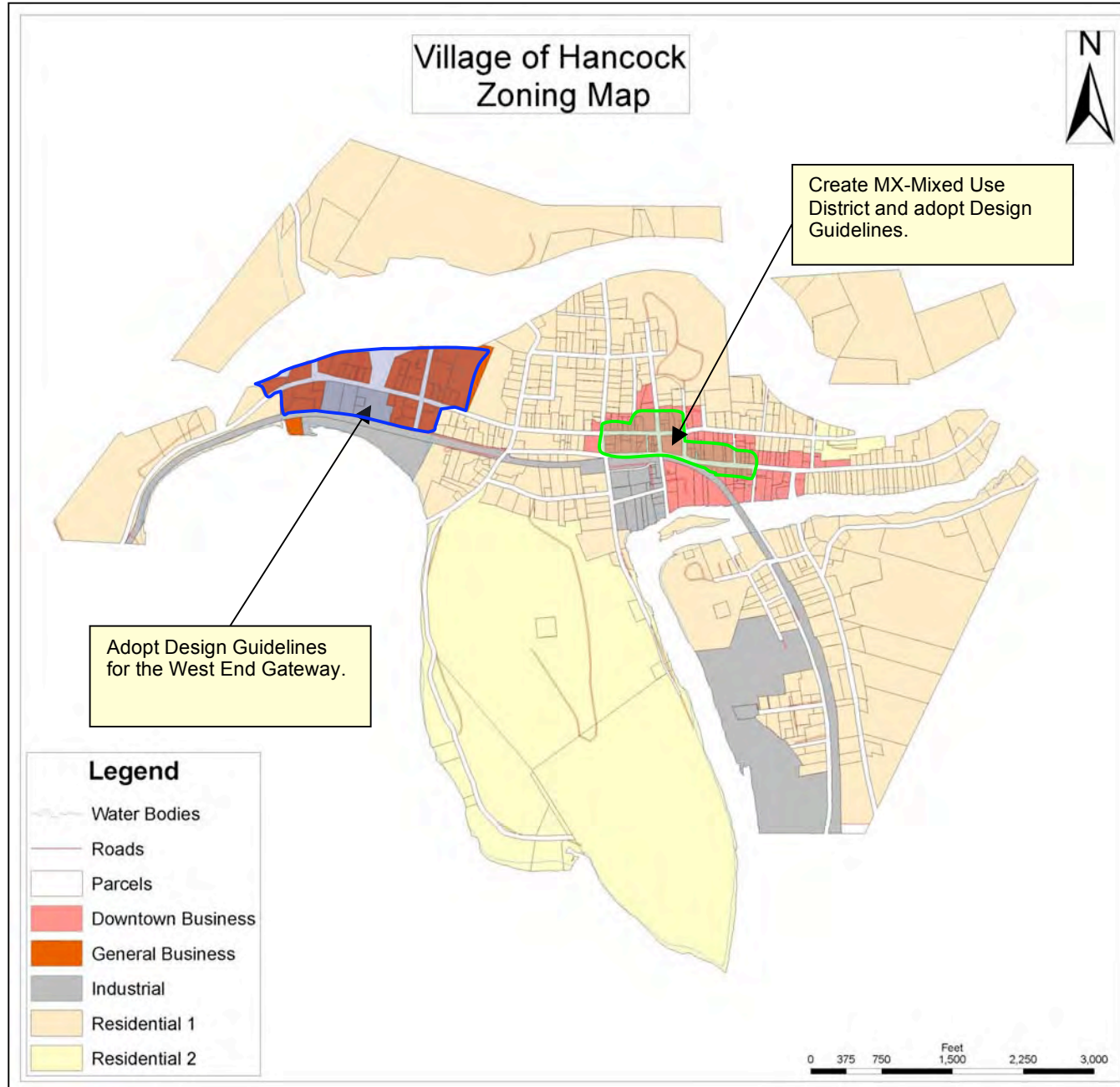
### Village of Hancock, New York

This is because there are so many sites within the blocks between West Main Street and West Front Street [from Read Street to Wheeler Street] that are ripe for redevelopment. The former Delaware Inn site and Great American site are examples. *There is a window of opportunity to ensure that these sites are developed in a manner that strengthens the fabric of the business district – like the new Hancock House did.* However, without recommended revisions to the Zoning Code and the adoption of Design Guidelines the community may get what its Zoning Code allows – a twelve pump gas station in the heart of the Downtown Business District.

While this Plan recommends that a Village Square be created on the Great American site – it is realized the creation of the square would necessitate acquisition of the property and subsequent cost of developing the site for public use. If the resources needed to create the Village Square are not available to bring that concept to fruition – then it is critically important that any subsequent development on this site strictly adhere to design guidelines as described above. Historically, there were hotels situated on this site with porches oriented to West Front Street – like the recently lost Delaware Inn. Any infill development on the Great American site must be designed in a manner that strengthens the Downtown Core. To this end, the design, placement and scale of buildings must be carefully considered. Off-street parking should be placed behind buildings and the development must provide room for sidewalks and street trees.



**Above** (top to bottom): T & A Home Center with nice window displays that is appealing to the pedestrian shopper within the Downtown Business District; nice display windows for the Border Water Outfitters store on East Front Street; and unappealing apartments on corner of Read Street and East Front Street with residential units on the first floor. Residential units should not be allowed on the first floor downtown.



Above (top to bottom): Well-established single-family residential neighborhood that is free of any commercial encroachment; view of commercial business on West Main Street that was built right next to a single-family home [this should be discouraged] without sufficient screening to buffer the residence; and view of strip commercial corridor along West Main Street within the West End Gateway. Design Guidelines are needed for the West End Gateway.



7.2.1 R-1-One & Two-Family Residential

Probably the single greatest threat to the integrity of the Village’s single-family residential neighborhoods is its *Zoning Code*. The single-family residential neighborhoods within the Village are primarily located within the R-1 Residential Zoning District. This district allows the conversion of single-family homes to 3 or 4 family apartment houses with a Special Permit. This provision makes it attractive for absentee landlords to buy single-family homes and convert them into apartments due to the potential for a significant return-on-investment. For the adjacent homeowner, the only thing this ensures is a reduction in their property value.

Typical problems associated with the conversion of single-family homes to more than two apartments include overcrowding, lack of off-street parking, solid waste disposal and general property maintenance. *Allowing the conversion of single-family homes to four-unit apartments is tantamount to rezoning the neighborhood.* It is recommended that the conversion of single-family homes be limited to two (2) apartments.

It is further recommended that the Zoning Code be revised to include criteria to guide the Planning Board’s decisions when reviewing applications for the conversion of single-family homes to two-family homes. In order to protect the integrity of the neighborhood, the two-family home should be difficult to discern from single-family homes in the neighborhood.

To help guide the Planning Board’s decisions, the following special permit criteria is recommended to be added to the Zoning Code:

- The gross floor area of the home is not increased;
- The total number of bedrooms in the structure is not increased;
- At least two (2) off-street parking spaces are provided for each dwelling unit;
- No parking space shall be allowed in the front yard or within 15 feet of any property line other than an existing driveway;
- Each dwelling units shall be equipped with complete bathroom and kitchen facilities for its exclusive use; and
- The exterior appearance of the home shall be altered only to the minimum extent necessary to accommodate the dwelling units.

7.2.2 R-2-Multi-Family Residential

The R-2 District encompasses a small area on East Main Street and *Point Mountain*. There are existing garden apartments in the R-2 District on East Main Street so the R-2 District here should remain. However, it is recommended that the R-2 Residential District that encompasses *Point Mountain* be replaced with a new *REC-1 Residential Zoning District* due to the unique nature of this property and its location at the confluence of the east and west Branches of the Delaware River.



**Above** (top to bottom): Poorly maintained housing on East Main Street some involving single-family homes converted to multi-unit apartments. Houses with major deficiencies such as poorly maintained steps, boarded up windows, peeling paint or other deferred maintenance detract from surrounding property values. These units stand in sharp contrast to beautifully maintained homes along this street.

7.2.3 REC-1 Residential District

Point Mountain helps to define the unique character of the Village of Hancock. From almost any vantage point throughout the Village, Point Mountain provides a scenic backdrop to the built environment. Presently, the Village’s Zoning Map designates all of Point Mountain as R-2 Residential Multi-Family. This district allows for garden apartments and higher density residential development. Due to environmental constraints, lack of public water & sewer and its importance as a scenic resource – it is recommended that a new zoning district be created for Point Mountain.

The recommended REC-1 Residential District could allow single-family homes and townhouses. However, it is recommended that that the application of conservation subdivision principles be encouraged for any development on the mountain to protect important vistas. Resort hotels could be allowed subject to special permit.

It is further recommended that development of any new housing development on Point Mountain include a Visual Assessment and that criteria be included in the Zoning Code to guide the Planning Board’s decisions. The goal is to allow for development on the mountain without destroying scenic views from public places. There are a variety of measures that developers-homeowners could employ to mitigate visual impacts and to protect the integrity of the Point Mountain ridgeline.

The following Visual Assessment criteria are recommended to be included in the Zoning Code:

- Clear cutting of home sites to open up views shall be prohibited;
- The applicant shall preserve natural vegetation around proposed home sites to the extent practicable;
- The exterior of the homes shall be muted colors and non-reflective materials so as to blend in with the natural background;
- Exterior lighting, if proposed, shall be no higher than fifteen (15) feet above the average finished grade within a twenty-five radius; and
- The light source shall be shielded from direct view above a line drawn from the lowest point on the light source to the ground at an angle of 45°.

The above are meant as a guideline for the Village Board and Planning Board to consider in developing criteria for a visual assessment overlay for Point Mountain.

7.2.4 MX – Mixed Use District

The Village’s DB District encompasses the area that should be zoned MX – Mixed Use. Unlike the DB – Downtown Business District that allows all uses in the GB-General Business District, the MX District would only allow uses that are appropriate for the Downtown Business District.



Above (top to bottom): View of Point Mountain from West Main Street in the vicinity of Pennsylvania Avenue; view of Point Mountain from the NYS Route 97 Bridge looking over the East Branch of the Delaware River with the Erie RR Bridge in the foreground; and view of Point Mount looking southwest from West Front Street. Point Mountain is visible throughout the Village.



A list of permitted uses within the Mixed Use District is provided in the following table.

Permitted Use	MX
<b>Residential Uses</b>	
Artist Loft - Live/Work Space	P
Bed & Breakfast	P
Dwelling Over First Floor	P
<b>Residential Community Facilities</b>	
Place of Worship	SE
Park or Playground	SE
Fire Station, Municipal Office	SE
School / Library	SE
<b>General Community Facilities</b>	
Philanthropic Organization	SE
Public utility structure	SE
Museum or Art Gallery	SE
<b>Business Uses</b>	
Assembly Hall	SE
Funeral home	SE
Bakeries	SE
Bank	SE
Hotel	SE
Medical and professional offices	SE
Office: business, professional	SE
Personal Service establishments	SE
Radio TV Broadcasting	SE
Repair Shops for Appliance	SE
Restaurant	SE
Retail	SE
Taverns	SE
Theater	SE

Like the DB-District, the MX-District would not require minimum lot sizes. It would however, require that new infill buildings be constructed to the sidewalk and that parking be placed behind buildings. The specific parameters of the Design Guidelines that would apply to the MX-Mixed Use District are described in greater detail in Section 5.3.2 of this Plan (see Pages 40-41).

7.2.5 Design Guidelines for West End

It is recommended that Design Guidelines also be developed for the West End Gateway in order to regulate building placement, architecture and signage in this corridor that is the northern gateway to the upper Delaware Scenic Byway. The Design Guidelines should be developed in the context of the streetscape enhancements that are recommended for the West End. A design vocabulary for the streetscape enhancements should be developed for the West End Gateway (See Section 2.1 for a more detailed discussion).

7.3 Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals is granted with the authority to interpret the Zoning Code and to issue area and use variances in accordance with NYS Village Law criteria. The ZBA should strictly follow the criteria outlined in NYS Village Law when rendering decisions regarding variances. There should be compelling reasons for granting variances – not mere convenience. Use variances can adversely affect the character of the community or neighborhood.



Above (top to bottom): Existing mixed use buildings shown to illustrate the appropriate placement and scale of buildings within the Downtown Business District.

For example, if a use variance was granted to allow a multi-family housing development in a single-family residential neighborhood where such use was not permitted – the character of the neighborhood could be adversely affected. This is especially true in instances where the lot size for a multi-family development is perhaps too small to accommodate stormwater management; off-street parking, recreational amenities for tenants, and open space to provide a transition between the multi-family housing and single-family homes. The Zoning Board of Appeals should generally not even consider use variances for non-residential uses in residentially zoned districts.

**7.4 Local Waterfront Revitalization Program**

A Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) is recommended for the waterfront along the east and west Branch of the Delaware River. An LWRP is both a plan and a program that is intended to manage development along the waterfront in a manner that provides for economic opportunities and the protection of natural resources. An LWRP focuses on waterfront redevelopment and land use; scenic resources, natural resources, flooding & erosion, fish & wildlife habitats and public access and recreation. Once adopted, a community can apply for 50/50 matching grants through the New York State Environmental Protection Fund's LWRP are available to implement Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs. This Plan strongly recommends an LWRP for Hancock.

**Village of Hancock, New York**

**7.5 Summary**

There are a number of measures the Village Board can take to improve its land use laws so the Planning Board will have the tools it needs to guide growth in a manner that enhances the character of the community. Having the appropriate regulations in place will give investors confidence that the investments they make will be strengthened by new development that occurs around them. For example, the construction of the new Hancock House has improved the value of surrounding properties.

With appropriate land use regulations, Hancock can ensure that the integrity of its Downtown Business District, gateways and neighborhoods are enhanced. However, it is critically important that these land use laws be enacted before inappropriate development is allowed to proceed.

With the proper planning tools in place, the Planning Board can better ensure that new development will strengthen the fabric of the community rather than detract from it. Without such regulations, the pattern of poorly defined infill development that has occurred in the Village of Hancock will continue to destroy the character of the Downtown Business District and its neighborhoods making it a less appealing place in which to live, shop, visit and invest.

*The Village has the power to regulate the character of new development. Left unchecked, new development will define the Village.*



**Above** (top to bottom): The historic Delaware Inn (sadly lost to fire in 2008); existing Grand Union supermarket on site of original Hancock House; and new Hancock House on East Front Street. In the Downtown, it is important to place building up to the street edge to define the building line along the street. The new Hancock House illustrates the appropriate placement of buildings downtown; the Grand Union inappropriate placement.



**CHAPTER 8.0  
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

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

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

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

The following pages provide a summary of the major recommendations that are part of this Plan. The recommendations are organized under the broad topic areas as follows: Gateway & Corridor Improvements; Housing & Neighborhood Revitalization; Parks, Recreation & Civic Centers; Downtown Revitalization; Economic Development; and Land Use Law Considerations.

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

Some recommendations should be implemented immediately including the recommended revisions to the Village’s Zone Code. Other measures will be implemented in the “short-term” within two (2) years of adopting this Economic & Community Development Plan. There are other recommendations that are “long-term” in nature - meaning they are anticipated to be completed over a 2-5 year timeframe. It is not reasonable to assume that all the recommendations contained herein will be implemented immediately. The implementation of the Plan is meant to be a process that will occur over a period of years. Setting priorities ensures the process will get underway.

“IN ORDER FOR THIS ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN TO BE EFFECTIVE, THE VILLAGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND ITS PLANNING BOARD MUST ACTIVELY APPLY THE POLICIES THAT ARE CONTAINED WITHIN THE PLAN.”

Village of Hancock Economic & Community Development Plan Implementation Plan				
No.	Recommendations	Action	Priority	Responsibility
<b>Gateway &amp; Corridor Improvements</b>				
1	Install Upper Delaware Scenic Byway <i>Gateway Signs</i> at NYS Route 17 Exit 87 [Section 2.1]. This action will need to involve the coordination between the Village Board, NYSDOT and Upper Delaware Scenic Byway (UDSB) Board.	Capital Improvement	Immediate	Village Board NYSDOT UDSB
2	Submit Transportation Enhancement Grant (TEP) for the <i>Hancock Fitness Trail</i> [Sections 2.2 & 4.1].	Grant Application	Immediate	Village Board Hancock Partner's
3	Create an attractive " <i>Gateway Sign</i> " for the Upper Delaware Scenic Byway at NYS Route 17 westbound exit [Sections 2.1]	Capital Improvement	Short-term	Village Board NYSDOT NPS
4	Develop new <i>Sign Regulations</i> for the West End Gateway [Section 2.1].	Local Law	Short-term	Planning Board Village Board
5	Create <i>Design Guidelines</i> to guide new development and redevelopment within the West End Gateway [Section 2.1].	Local Law	Short-term	Planning Board Village Board
6	Create a " <i>West End Park</i> " on the Village-owned site on Pennsylvania Avenue starting with funding received through the Upper Delaware Council [Section 2.2].	Capital Improvement	Short-term	Village Board UDC
7	Secure NYSDOT funding for <i>streetscape improvements</i> along West Main Street including sidewalks, street trees and lighting [Section 2.1].	Grant Application	Short-term	Planning Board NYSDOT Delaware County
8	Create <i>Design Guidelines</i> to ensure new development and redevelopment within the East End Gateway complement the aesthetics of the corridor [Section 2.3].	Local Law	Short-term	Planning Board Village Board
9	Secure NYSDOT funding for <i>streetscape improvements</i> within the <i>Brooklyn Gateway</i> including sidewalks, street trees and lighting [Section 2.4].	Grant Application	Long-term	Planning Board NYSDOT Delaware County
10	Extend the <i>New York Main Street</i> program to include businesses within the <i>East End Gateway</i> [Section 2.3].	Grant Application	Long-term	Hancock Partner's Inc.
11	Secure NYSDOT funding for <i>streetscape improvements</i> along <i>East End Gateway</i> including sidewalks, street trees and lighting [Section 2.3].	Grant Application	Long-term	Planning Board NYSDOT Delaware County
12	Secure funding for <i>Hancock Heritage Center</i> aka <i>Upper Delaware Scenic Byway (UDSB) Visitors Center</i> at Larimar-Norton site [Section 2.1].	Grant Application	Long-term	Village Board NYSDOT UDSB
<b>Immediate = 1 Year</b>		<b>Short-Term = 1-2 Years</b>		<b>Long-Term = 2-5 years</b>



Village of Hancock Economic & Community Development Plan Implementation Plan				
No.	Recommendations	Action	Priority	Responsibility
<b>Housing &amp; Neighborhood Revitalization</b>				
13	Strictly enforce the Village’s <i>Building Code</i> to address deficiencies in housing stock that threatens neighborhood vitality [Section 3.1].	Code Enforcement	Immediate	Village Board Code Enforcement
14	Amend <i>Zoning Code</i> so that single-family homes may only be converted to two-family dwellings within the R-1 District [Sections 3.1 & 7.2.1].	Local Law	Immediate	Planning Board Village Board
15	Develop criteria for the conversion of single-family homes to two-family dwellings to help guide Planning Board’s decisions [Section 7.2.1].	Local Law	Immediate	Planning Board Village Board
16	Secure funding through the Governor’s Office for Small Cities CDBG program to create a <i>Housing Rehabilitation Program</i> [Section 3.3].	Grant Application	Short-term	Village Board Delaware County
17	Secure “Member Item” funding for a <i>Sidewalk Improvement Program</i> within residential neighborhoods [Section 3.3].	Grant Application	Short-term	Planning Board Village Board
18	Create a new <i>REC-1 Zoning District</i> for Point Mountain [Section 3.1 & 7.2.2].	Local Law	Short-term	Planning Board Village Board
19	Remove blight and <i>dilapidated housing stock</i> that is unsuitable for habitation and abandoned [Sections 3.1 & 3.3].	Code Enforcement	Short-term	Village Board Code Enforcement
20	Secure funding through the USDA to create of <i>First-time Homebuyer’s Program</i> within the Village of Hancock [Section 3.3].	Grant Application	Long-term	Village Board Delaware County
21	Create basic <i>Design Standards</i> for new infill housing on vacant lots [Section 3.3].	Local Law	Long-term	Planning Board Village Board
<b>Parks, Recreation and Civic Centers</b>				
22	Submit Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP) grant application for the <i>Hancock Fitness Trail</i> [Sections 2.2 & 4.1].	Grant Application	Immediate	Village Board Hancock Partner’s
23	Coordinate with leaders of civic institutions to address their needs to better ensure these institutions remain within the Village of Hancock [Section 4.3].	Policy	Immediate	Village Board
24	Support local civic organization’s efforts to secure grant funding by providing <i>letters of support</i> for grant applications [Section 4.3].	Policy	Immediate	Village Board Hancock Partner’s Chamber
25	Strongly support efforts by the Hancock Community Health Alliance to build the new <i>Hancock Community Health Care Center</i> in Downtown Hancock by providing <i>letters of support</i> for grants [Section 4.6].	Policy	Immediate	Village Board Loures Hancock Partner’s
<b>Immediate = 1 Year</b>		<b>Short-Term = 1-2 Years</b>		<b>Long-Term = 2-5 years</b>

<b>Village of Hancock Economic &amp; Community Development Plan Implementation Plan</b>				
No.	Recommendations	Action	Priority	Responsibility
<b>Parks, Recreation and Civic Centers</b>				
<b>26</b>	Support efforts to create a <i>Senior Center</i> by offering letters of support for grant applications and applying for CDBG funds[Section 4.4].	Policy	Immediate	Village Board Chamber – VFW
<b>27</b>	Support efforts by the <i>Hancock Community Education Foundation</i> (HCEF) to create a <i>Youth Center</i> within the Village of Hancock by providing letters of support for grant applications [Section 4.4].	Policy	Immediate	Village Board Hancock Partner’s HCEF
<b>28</b>	Coordinate with Delaware County to secure <i>Empire Zone Designation</i> for the Downtown Business District in order to make available Zone Capital Credits for the proposed Hancock Community Health Care Center [Sections 4.6 & 5.7].	EZ Boundary Amendment	Immediate	Village Board Chamber of Comm. County Eco Dev
<b>29</b>	Strongly support efforts to create a <i>Village Square</i> at the site of the former Great American site in the heart of the Downtown Business District [Section 4.7].	Policy	Immediate	Village Board Hancock Partner’s
<b>30</b>	Create a <i>Scenic Overlook</i> at the end of Old Bridge Street to create an attractive waterfront amenity for local residents and visitors of the UDSB [Section 4.1].	Capital Improvement	Short-term	Village Board Hancock Partner’s Chamber
<b>31</b>	<i>Strongly oppose</i> construction of the New York Regional Interconnection (NYRI) electric transmission line through the Town/Village of Hancock [Section 4.10].	Policy	Immediate	Village Board Town Board
<b>32</b>	Work with Hancock Fire Department, Mallery Lumber and Owner’s of Becton-Dickenson Plant to create a <i>Hancock River Walk</i> from Maple Street to the Village-owned fishing access point on the Delaware River [Section 4.8].	Capital Improvement	Short-term	Village Board Hancock FD Property Owners
<b>33</b>	Submit Transportation Enhancement Grant (TEP) for the <i>Hancock Blueway Trail System</i> [Section 4.2].	Capital Improvement	Long-Term	Village Board County Planning
<b>34</b>	Create a <i>Veteran’s Park Overlook</i> in the vicinity of the VFW as a component of the Hancock Fitness Trail [Section 4.1].	Capital Improvement	Long-Term	Village Board Chamber – VFW
<b>Downtown Revitalization</b>				
<b>35</b>	Support efforts to retain important <i>civic and cultural institutions</i> within the Downtown Business District Section 5.1].	Policy	Immediate	Village Board Hancock Partner’s Chamber
<b>36</b>	Submit a <i>New York Main Street grant</i> application to secure \$500,000 for Downtown Revitalization efforts [Section 5.3.1].	Grant Application	Immediate	Planning Board Village Board
<b>37</b>	Formally adopt the <i>Design Guidelines</i> for the Downtown Business District that were developed for the New York Main Street program [Section 5.3.1].	Local Law	Immediate	Planning Board Village Board
<b>Immediate = 1 Year</b>		<b>Short-Term = 1-2 Years</b>		<b>Long-Term = 2-5 years</b>



<b>Village of Hancock Economic &amp; Community Development Plan Implementation Plan</b>				
<b>No.</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Downtown Revitalization</b>				
<b>38</b>	Amend the <i>Zoning Code</i> as it pertains to the DB-District to remove certain inappropriate uses from the list of permitted uses [Section 7.2].	Local Law	Immediate	Village Board Planning Board
<b>39</b>	Create a new <i>MX-Mixed Use Zoning District</i> for the Downtown Business District [Section 7.2.4].	Local Law	Immediate	Village Board Planning Board
<b>40</b>	Coordinate with Delaware County to secure <i>Empire Zone Designation</i> for the Downtown Business District in the Village of Hancock [Section 4.6 & 5.5.2].	Boundary Amendment	Immediate	Village Board Chamber of Comm. County Eco. Dev.
<b>41</b>	Promote the Downtown Business District through <i>seasonal marketing campaigns</i> and hosting <i>special events</i> [Section 5.2]	Business Promotion	Immediate	Chamber of Commerce
<b>42</b>	Create and install a <i>Business Directory</i> within the Downtown Business District to make it easier for patrons to navigate the business district [Section 5.2].	Install Business Directory	Short-term	Village Board Chamber of Comm. Hancock Partners
<b>43</b>	Create a <i>Window Display &amp; Merchandising Campaign</i> among local businesses within the Downtown Business District [Section 5.3.4].	Promotion & Marketing	Short-term	Chamber of Commerce
<b>44</b>	Coordinate with NYSDOT to secure funding through the TIP program or FHWA Scenic Byway Program fund <i>streetscape enhancements</i> [Section 5.5].	Grant Application	Short-term	Village Board NYSDOT County Planning
<b>45</b>	Explore opportunities to create <i>shared parking lots</i> behind existing buildings within the Downtown Business District [Section 5.4].	Capital Improvement	Long-term	Village Board Chamber of Commerce
<b>46</b>	Coordinate with NYSEG to identify measures that can be employed to improve the aesthetics of <i>overhead utilities</i> in the Downtown Business District [Section 5.6].	Capital Improvement	Long-term	Village Board Hancock Partner’s Chamber of Comm.
<b>Economic Development</b>				
<b>47</b>	Coordinate with Delaware County to secure <i>Empire Zone Designation</i> for the Downtown Business District in the Village of Hancock [Section 4.6 & 5.5.2].	Boundary Amendment	Immediate	Village Board Chamber of Comm. County Eco. Dev.
<b>48</b>	Strongly support efforts by the Hancock Community Health Alliance to build a new <i>Hancock Community Health Care Center</i> in Downtown Hancock by providing letters of support for grants [Section 4.6].	Policy	Immediate	Village Board Lourdes Hancock Partner’s
<b>Immediate = 1 Year</b>		<b>Short-Term = 1-2 Years</b>		<b>Long-Term = 2-5 years</b>

<b>Village of Hancock Economic &amp; Community Development Plan Implementation Plan</b>				
No.	Recommendations	Action	Priority	Responsibility
<b>Economic Development</b>				
<b>49</b>	Designate a not-for-profit <i>economic development entity</i> to spearhead economic development initiatives within the Village of Hancock [Section 6.1.1].	Policy	Short-term	Village Board Hancock Partner's
<b>50</b>	Secure funding through the <i>ARC Leadership Development and Civic Capacity</i> program to fund position for Economic Development Coordinator [Section 6.4].	Grant Application	Short-term	Hancock Partner's Village Board
<b>51</b>	Create position of <i>Economic Development Coordinator</i> within Hancock Partner's, Inc. to spearhead economic development initiatives [Section 6.4].	Create Job Position	Short-term	Hancock Partner's
<b>52</b>	Create a <i>Business Retention &amp; Attraction</i> program to be administered by the Economic Development Coordinator [Section 6.4].	Marketing Program	Long-term	Hancock Partner's Chamber of Comm.
<b>Land Use Laws</b>				
<b>53</b>	Formally adopt the <i>Design Guidelines</i> for the Downtown Business District that were developed for the NYMS program [Section 5.3.1 & 7.2.1].	Local Law	Immediate	Planning Board Village Board
<b>54</b>	Amend the <i>Zoning Code</i> as it pertains to the <i>DB-District</i> to remove certain inappropriate uses from the list of permitted uses [Section 7.2.1].	Local Law	Immediate	Planning Board Village Board
<b>55</b>	Create a new <i>MX-Mixed Use Zoning District</i> for the Downtown Business District [Section 7.2.4].	Local Law	Immediate	Planning Board Village Board
<b>56</b>	Amend <i>Zoning Code</i> so that single-family homes may only be converted to two-family dwellings within the R-1 District [Sections 3.1 & 7.2.1].	Local Law	Immediate	Planning Board Village Board
<b>57</b>	Develop criteria for the conversion of single-family homes to two-family dwellings to help guide Planning Board's decisions [Section 7.2.1].	Local Law	Immediate	Planning Board Village Board
<b>58</b>	Create a new <i>REC-1 Zoning District</i> for Point Mountain [Section 3.1 & 7.2.2].	Local Law	Short-term	Planning Board Village Board
<b>59</b>	Develop new <i>Sign Regulations</i> for the West End Gateway [Section 2.1].	Local Law	Short-term	Planning Board Village Board
<b>60</b>	Create <i>Design Guidelines</i> to guide new development and redevelopment within the West End Gateway [Section 2.1 & 7.2.5].	Local Law	Short-term	Planning Board Village Board
<b>61</b>	Create <i>Design Standards</i> for new infill housing on vacant lots within existing neighborhoods [Section 3.3].	Local Law	Long-term	Planning Board Village Board
<b>62</b>	Pursue the creation of a <i>Local Waterfront Revitalization Program</i> (LWRP) for the Village of Hancock Waterfront [Section 7.4].	LWRP	Long-term	Planning Board Village Board
<b>Immediate = 1 Year</b>		<b>Short-Term = 1-2 Years</b>		<b>Long-Term = 2-5 years</b>



**APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A POPULATION & HOUSING

### A.1 Population Characteristics

Between 1990 and 2000, the Village’s population decreased from 1,330 to 1,189 persons – a 10.6% decrease. During this period, Delaware County’s population grew by 1.8%. The 2006 Census population estimates show the Village’s population decreasing by 5.8% between 2000 and 2006, as compared to a countywide loss of 2.2%.

There are a variety of factors that have contributed to this population loss. Perhaps the greatest factor is the loss of employment opportunities for local residents. The closing of the Becton-Dickenson Plant resulted in one the most significant job losses in the community. With the loss of these jobs, area residents were forced to relocate to other areas of the country to seek employment. Another factor that has contributed to the loss in population is the “brain drain” in which area youth left the area to seek better paying and more skilled employment opportunities in more metropolitan areas.

These trends suggest the possibility of sustained population loss in the years to come, absent proactive measures by the community to reverse this trend. If the Village of Hancock continues to lose population, the remaining residents will face an increased financial burden to support existing infrastructure and community facilities.



Year	Village of Hancock		Delaware County	
	Population	% Change	Population	% Change
1960	1,830		43,540	
1970	1,688	-7.7%	44,718	2.7%
1980	1,526	-9.5%	46,824	4.7%
1990	1,330	-12.8%	47,225	0.9%
2000	1,189	-10.6%	48,055	1.8%
2006	1,120	-5.8%	46,977	-2.2%



Table A-2 clearly shows the “brain drain” phenomenon that is occurring in the community. In 2000, only 4% of the Village’s population fell within the 20-24 age cohort. A significantly higher percentage fell within the 15-19 year old age cohort and 25-34 age cohort. One factor contributing to this trend is the lack of employment opportunities for college graduates who might otherwise return to their hometown.

The Village’s population composition by age is similar to that of Delaware County, except with respect to senior citizens 65 years of age or older (see Table 4-2). Twenty four percent (24%) of the population is 65 years of age or older. The availability of health care services in the community will grow as the community’s population ages. Table A-3 shows trends in population over time. Since 1960 the Village has experienced a sustained population loss that must be reversed. This can only be done through proactive measures by all stakeholders.

Table A-2 Population by Age, 2000 Village of Hancock vs Delaware County				
	Village of		Delaware	
Years	Hancock	%	County	%
+0-4	52	4.4	2,469	5.1
5-9	77	6.5	2,966	6.2
10-14	85	7.1	3,477	7.2
15-19	78	6.6	3,770	7.8
20-24	47	4.0	2,372	4.9
25-34	110	9.3	4,730	9.8
35-44	162	13.6	6,798	14.1
45-54	168	14.1	6,938	14.4
55-59	60	5.0	3,016	6.3
60-64	60	5.0	2,621	5.5
65-74	162	13.6	4,668	9.7
75-84	95	8.0	3,092	6.4
85+	33	2.8	1,168	2.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,189</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>48,055</b>	<b>100.0</b>

“THE PERCENTAGE OF 20-24 YEAR OLDS IN THE VILLAGE WAS ONLY 4.0% IN THE YEAR 2000 REFLECTING THE “BRAIN DRAIN” OR LOSS OF AREA YOUTH WHO ARE MIGRATING TO OTHER AREAS OF THE COUNTRY TO SEEK EMPLOYMENT.”

Table A-3 Population Change 1960-2005												
	1960	1970	%Chg.	1980	%Chg.	1990	%Chg.	2000	%Chg.	2006	%Chg.	Persons per Sq. Mi.
New York State	16,782,304	18,236,967	8.7%	17,558,165	-3.7%	17,990,778	2.5%	18,976,457	5.5%	19,306,18	1.7%	
Delaware County	43,540	44,718	2.7%	46,824	4.7%	47,225	0.9%	48,055	1.8%	46,977	-2.2%	33.2
Wayne County, PA	28,237	29,581	4.8%	35,237	19.1%	39,944	13.4%	47,722	19.5%	50,929	6.7%	65.4
Village of Hancock	1,830	1,688	-7.7%	1,526	-9.5%	1,330	-12.8%	1,189	-10.6%	1,120	-5.8%	755.4
Town of Hancock*	3,907	3,604	-7.7%	3,497	-2.9%	3,384	-3.2%	3,449	1.9%	3,343	-3.1%	21.6
Town of Hancock**	2,077	1,916	-8.4%	1,971	-2.8%	2,054	4.2%	2,260	10.0%	2,223	-1.6%	14.3
Buckingham Township	593	578	-2.5%	672	16.2%	648	-3.5%	656	1.2%	685	4.4%	14.8
Preston Township	879	946	7.6%	1,036	9.5%	1,044	0.7%	1,107	6.0%	1,143	3.3%	22.3
Scott Township	447	604	35.1%	588	-2.6%	590	0.3%	669	13.4%	703	5.1%	15.3

Source: U.S. Census \*Town Population Count Includes Villages \*\*Reflects Town of Hancock Population less the Village Population.

The Village of Hancock is a fairly homogeneous community with respect to Race & Hispanic Origin. According to the 2000 Census; 98.5% of the Village’s population was white, 0.4% black, 0.4% American Indian, 0.2% Asian, and 0.4% some other race.

This mirrors the Town of Hancock’s racial composition. Delaware County is also fairly homogeneous with respect to racial composition (see Table 4-5). According to the 2000 Census, 97.4% of the County’s population is White while only 0.5% is composed of some other race. The total minority population in Delaware County was less than three (3) percent in the Year 2000.

Age Cohort	1990		2000	
	Population	%	Population	%
0-4	104	7.8	52	4.4
5-17 or 5-14(2000)*	261	19.6	162	13.6
18-24 or 15-24(2000)	113	8.5	125	10.5
25-44	349	26.2	272	22.9
45-54	124	9.3	168	14.1
55-64	162	12.2	120	10.1
65+	217	16.3	290	24.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,330</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,189</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Median Age</b>			<b>44.2</b>	

*Source:* U.S. Census Bureau 1990 & 2000  
\*Age cohorts recorded varied between 1990 & 2000

“THE VILLAGE OF HANCOCK IS A FAIRLY HOMOGENEOUS COMMUNITY. ACCORDING TO THE 2000 CENSUS; 98.5% OF THE VILLAGE’S POPULATION WAS WHITE, 0.4% BLACK, 0.4% AMERICAN INDIAN, 0.2% ASIAN, AND 0.4% SOME OTHER RACE. THIS MIRRORS THE TOWN OF HANCOCK’S RACIAL COMPOSITION.”

	Village of Hancock		Town of Hancock		Delaware County	
	Population	%	Population	%	Population	%
Total	1,169	100.0	3,409	100.0	47,580	100.0
White	1,152	98.5	3,335	97.8	46,346	97.4
Black	5	0.4	24	0.7	568	1.2
American Indian	5	0.4	18	0.5	149	0.3
Asian	2	0.2	21	0.6	257	0.5
Native Hawaiian or PI	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	0.0
Some Other Race	5	0.4	11	0.3	254	0.5
Hispanic**	39	3.3	82	2.4	983	2.1
Average Household Size	2.35		2.48		2.39	

*Source:* U.S. Census Bureau \*Town Population Including Village \*\*Description of ethnicity not race. A person may consider them self white/Hispanic, black/Hispanic, or other combination thereof. The percentages of all racial categories will add up to 100%.



Recent trends show a growing level of educational attainment among local residents. Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of residents with a high school diploma increased 6.5%. In 2000, the Census Bureau reported that 73.0% of Village residents had at least a high school diploma. Delaware County attainment was somewhat higher at 80%. While an attainment gap does exist between the Village and the County this gap has remained constant.

Between 1990 and 2000, the percent of Village residents with a Bachelors Degree or higher increased from 11.9% to 13.9%, representing a growth in number from 101 to 116. During this time period, County higher education attainment increased from 13.2% to 16.6%. Between 1990 and 2000, the percentage of Village residents with a Bachelor’s Degree or higher increased by 14.6%, compared to 26.3% in Delaware County.

Together these trends demonstrate an increase in educational attainment both in the Village and County. The most dramatic trend in educational attainment related to the percentage of persons possessing some college education. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of persons in the Village with some college education increased from 105 to 133, a 26.7% increase.

The percentage of residents with some college education increased from 12.3% in 1990 to 15.9% in 2000. Two factors have influenced improved educational attainment within the Village. The first factor is residents who may have pursued higher education between 1990 and 2000. The second factor is the educational attainment of new residents who have moved into the Village between 1990 and 2000. Both factors have contributed to an increasingly well educated population.

“THE PERCENTAGE OF VILLAGE RESIDENTS WITH A BACHELOR’S DEGREE OR HIGHER INCREASED FROM 11.9% TO 13.9% BETWEEN 1990 AND 2000.

Table A-6 Trends in Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment	Village of Hancock, New York Trends from 1990-2000				Delaware County Trends from 1990-2000				Percent Change	Percent Change
	1990		2000		1990		2000		VILLAGE	COUNTY
		%		%		%		%		
<b>Total Persons 25 Years and over</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>30,350</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>33,070</b>	<b>100.0</b>	-1.9	9.0
Less Than 9th Grade	112	13.1	64	7.7	2,620	8.6	1,885	5.7	-42.9	-28.1
9th-12th, no diploma	170	20.0	161	19.3	5,286	17.4	4,776	14.4	-5.3	-9.6
High school graduate	309	36.3	329	39.4	11,599	38.2	12,353	37.4	6.5	6.5
Some college, no degree	105	12.3	133	15.9	4,268	14.1	5,600	16.9	26.7	31.2
Associate’s degree	55	6.5	33	3.9	2,580	8.5	2,956	8.9	-40.0	14.6
Bachelor’s degree	53	6.2	62	7.4	2,367	7.8	3,139	9.5	17.0	19.2
Graduate or professional	48	5.6	54	6.5	1,630	5.4	2,361	7.1	12.5	14.7
Percent high school graduate or higher		67.0		73.0		74.0		80.0	8.5	8.0
Percent Bachelors Degree or higher		11.9		13.9		13.2		16.6	14.6	26.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau STF3 Data

4.1.1 Employment by Industry

In 2000, 24.7% of Village residents were employed in the Educational & Health Services Industry. This is comparable to Delaware County where 26.0% of its workers were employed in that industry. In 2000, 19.05 of the Village’s workforce were employed in the Manufacturing Industry. Another 10.4% of the workforce was employed in Professional Services.

The sectors with the largest percentage of growth were Agriculture, Forestry, and Mining; Communications and Information, and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation - increasing by 66.7%, 100.0%, and 550.0% respectively. Growth in the Agricultural, Forestry and Mining sector was likely focused in the Forestry and Mining sectors with recent growth in the bluestone industry and the production of log cabins within the vicinity of the Village.

“BETWEEN 1990 AND 2000, THE VILLAGE SAW A 550.0% PERCENT INCREASE IN THE ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY.”

Table A-7 Labor Force & Employment by Industry

Employment Characteristics (Age 16 and over)	Village of Hancock, New York Trends from 1990-2000				Delaware County Trends from 1990-2000				Percent Change	Percent Change
	1990	%	2000	%	1990	%	2000	%	VILLAGE	COUNTY
<b>Total</b>										
<b>Persons 16 Years and Over</b>	1,003	100.0	965	100.0	36,751	100.0	38,528	100.0	-3.8	4.8
<b>In Labor Force</b>	<b>594</b>	59.2	<b>488</b>	50.6	<b>21,900</b>	59.6	<b>22,230</b>	57.7	-17.8	1.5
Civilian Labor Force	594	59.2	488	50.6	21,862	59.5	22,216	57.7	-17.8	1.6
<i>Employed</i>	560	55.8	453	46.9	20,169	54.9	20,840	54.1	-19.1	3.3
<i>Not Employed</i>	34	3.4	35	3.6	1,693	4.6	1,376	3.6	2.9	-18.7
Not In Labor Force	409	40.8	477	49.4	14,851	40.4	16,298	42.3	16.6	9.7
<b>Industry</b>	560	100.0	453	100.0	20,169	100.0	20,840	100.0		
Educational & Health Services	98	17.5	112	24.7	3,967	19.7	5,420	26.0	14.3	36.6
Manufacturing	120	21.4	86	19.0	3,679	18.2	3,018	14.5	-28.3	-18.0
Professional Services	48	8.6	47	10.4	1,298	6.4	1,038	5.0	-2.1	-20.0
Retail Trade	126	22.5	46	10.2	3,584	17.8	2,138	10.3	-63.5	-40.3
Other Services (except public admin.)	57	10.2	39	8.6	1,176	5.8	1,069	5.1	-31.6	-9.1
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	6	1.1	39	8.6	191	0.9	1,460	7.0	550.0	664.4
Agriculture, forestry, and mining	21	3.8	35	7.7	1,396	6.9	1,284	6.2	66.7	-8.0
Construction	35	6.3	17	3.8	1,876	9.3	1,611	7.7	-51.4	-14.1
Public Administration	19	3.4	13	2.9	808	4.0	1,239	5.9	-31.6	53.3
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	13	2.3	6	1.3	557	2.8	764	3.7	-53.8	37.2
Finance, Insurance & Real Estate	9	1.6	5	1.1	808	4.0	755	3.6	-44.4	-6.6
Wholesale Trade	6	1.1	4	0.9	341	1.7	501	2.4	-33.3	46.9
Communications and Information	2	0.4	4	0.9	488	2.4	543	2.6	100.0	11.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau STF3 Data



From 1990 to 2000 significant shifts occurred in the local economy. During this time period the number of Retail jobs decreased from 126 to 46, representing a 63.5% decrease. Additionally, the number of Manufacturing jobs declined from 120 in 1990 to 86 in 2000, representing a 28.3% decrease. Three factors are responsible for the decline of Manufacturing and Retail jobs in Hancock. The closing of the Becton-Dickenson Plant resulted in a smaller local workforce to support local retail businesses. Growing competition from big box retailers in the Binghamton Area exacerbated the stress on local retailers. Contraction of the Manufacturing industry was also seen throughout Delaware County, which lost 18% of its Manufacturing jobs during the same time period. This shift mirrored national declines in the Manufacturing Industry as these jobs were shipped overseas.

Between 1990 and 2000 several industries in the Village increased their employment numbers, providing opportunities for workers who lost their jobs in the contraction of Retail and Manufacturing. Employment in the *Educational & Health Services Industry* grew from 98 jobs in 1990 to 112 jobs in 2000 – a 14% increase. Employment in the *Arts & Entertainment Industry* grew from 6 jobs in 1990 to 39 in 2000 – a 33-job or 550.0% increase. The historic character of the Village coupled with the recent designation of Route 97 as the *Upper Delaware Scenic Byway (UDSB)* provides an important opportunity for continued growth in the Arts & Entertainment Industry in years to come.

The Communications & Information industry, as well as Agriculture, Forestry, and Mining Industry also grew, providing additional job opportunities for local residents (see Table 4-7). Growth in the bluestone industry was likely the driving force behind growth in this sector, coupled with growth in Forestry. In 1990, the top three industries in the Village comprised 61.4% of all employment opportunities. In 2000, the top three industries provided 54.1% of employment, demonstrating a diversification of the local economy.

While many residents work within the Village, a large percentage commutes to work each day. The mean travel time to work for local residents is 28.2 minutes, somewhat higher than the average for Delaware County which was 24.0 minutes according to the 2000 Census.

4.1.2 Occupation

Table A-9 provides a breakdown of the Village of Hancock’s workforce (persons 16 years of age and over) by occupation. Thirty percent of Village resident’s are employed in Management or Professional occupations. This reflects community educational attainment as reported in Table A-6. A total of 22.7% of residents were employed in the Services industry and another 21.0% in Sales and Office jobs. Additionally, 16.1% of residents worked in Service industry with another 8.2% employed in Construction and Extraction. Less than two percent of Village residents were employed in the Farming, Fishing & Forestry industry.

Table A-8 Mean Travel Time to Work 2000 Village/Town vs. County		
Village	Town	County
23.8	28.2	24.0

“BETWEEN 1990 AND 2000, EMPLOYMENT IN THE EDUCATIONAL & HEALTH CARE INDUSTRY GREW BY 14.3%.”

Table A-9 Village of Hancock Occupation 2000		
	#	%
Management, professional	137	30.2
Production, Transportation	103	22.7
Sales and Office	85	18.8
Service	73	16.1
Construction, Extraction	37	8.2
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	8	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>100.0</b>

4.2 Housing Characteristics

In 2000, the Village had a total of 594 housing units. Single-family dwellings comprised the majority of the housing stock, representing 60.3% of all dwelling units (see Table A-10). With respect to occupancy, 85.0% of all dwelling units were occupied and 15.0% were vacant (see Table A-12). Seasonal units comprised 33.7% of all vacancies, with the remaining vacancies resulting from unoccupied or abandoned housing. Notably, the Village’s seasonal occupancy rate increased from 0.2% to 5.1% between 1990 and 2000, representing an increase in the second home market.

In 2000, the Village’s vacancy rate of 15% was significantly lower than the County rate that was recorded at 33.4% (see Table A-12). Delaware County’s vacancy rate is higher due to a larger percentage of seasonal homes as a component of its overall housing stock. The Village has seen an increase in second homeowners as some residents are looking to be close to services.

Housing Units In Structure 1990 - 2000	Village of Hancock, New York				Delaware County 2000		
	Year Round	1990 Units	%	2000 Units	%	2000 Units	%
1-unit detached		328	55.9	358	60.3	20,243	69.9
1-unit attached		2	0.3	7	1.2	366	1.3
2-4 units		143	24.4	120	20.2	2,497	8.6
5-9 units		50	8.5	26	4.4	565	2.0
10 or more units		0	0.0	28	4.7	413	1.4
Mobile Home		64	10.9	52	8.8	4,599	15.9
Boat, RV, Van, Etc.		0	0.0	3	0.5	269	0.9
<b>Total</b>		<b>587</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>28,952</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Year Round	Village of Hancock, New York Tenure by Occupied Units 1990 - 2000				Delaware County, New York Tenure by Occupied Units 1990 - 2000			
	1990		2000		1990		2000	
	Units	%	Units	%	Units	%	Units	%
Owner Occupied	318	63.5	307	60.8	13,077	74.1	14,596	75.7
Renter Occupied	183	36.5	198	39.2	4,569	25.9	4,674	24.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>505</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>17,646</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>19,270</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau SFT1 Data

Housing Characteristics	Village of Hancock, New York Trends from 1990-2000				Delaware County, New York Trends from 1990-2000				Percent Change	Percent Change
	1990		2000		1990		2000			
	Units	%	Units	%	Units	%	Units	%	VILLAGE	COUNTY
<b>Total</b>	<b>587</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>27,361</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>28,952</b>	<b>100.0</b>	1.2	5.8
Occupied	501	85.3	505	85.0	17,646	64.5	19,270	66.6	0.8	9.2
<i>Owner Occupied</i>	318	54.2	307	51.7	13,077	47.8	14,596	50.4	-3.5	11.6
<i>Renter Occupied</i>	183	31.1	198	33.3	4,569	16.7	4,674	16.1	8.2	2.3
Vacant	86	14.7	89	15.0	9,715	35.5	9,682	33.4	3.5	-0.3
<i>Seasonal</i>	14	0.2	30	5.1	7,950	29.1	7,700	26.6	114.3	-3.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau \* Seasonal units are part of the vacant unit count.



The 2000 Census also showed a trend away from owner occupied housing units within the Village. In 1990, 54.2% of all occupied housing units were owner occupied. By 2000, this number had decreased to 51.7%. In 2000 the Village's owner occupancy rate was comparable to the County owner occupancy rate of 50.4% (see Table A-12). A loss of 11 owner occupied units and a gain of 15 renter occupied units during this time period suggests that some owner occupied units were converted to rentals.

### **Summary**

The above trends suggest the possibility of sustained population loss in the years to come, absent proactive measures by the community to reverse this trend. If the Village of Hancock continues to lose population, the remaining residents will face an increased financial burden to support existing infrastructure and community facilities. There are opportunities though. The community has seen an increase in its Second-Homeowner market, along with growth in the Healthcare & Education and Arts, Entertainment and Tourism Industries. The Village of Hancock is now the northern gateway to the recently designated *Upper Delaware Scenic Byway* and with improvements in the Downtown Business District the Village may be able to foster sustained growth in the Arts, Entertainment & Tourism Industries. The new Hancock House hotel provides excellent hotel accommodations in the Heart of the Downtown Business District.

The silver lining in the prolonged period of decline is the Village of Hancock has an opportunity to redefine itself from a manufacturing community to one that is diversified and that builds upon its natural resources. Growth in tourism and healthcare holds promise to strengthen the social and economic vitality of the community. While there are challenges ahead, these can be overcome with a concerted effort by all stakeholders to work together for the good of the entire community.