

Village of Chatham Comprehensive Plan Update



Comprehensive Plan Committee Final Draft

June 8, 2015

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Acknowledgements

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Village of Chatham, NY Comprehensive Plan Update



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Section 1. Introduction

Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan Update

The Village of Chatham most recently prepared a comprehensive plan in 1995. The 1995 Plan established goals and recommendations for revitalizing downtown, increasing pedestrian amenities and diversifying the local economy. In addition, the 1995 Plan recommended enhancing open space and recreational opportunities, as well as improving the condition and appearance of buildings, especially historic structures. An update to the 1995 plan is required to review progress the Village has made in implementing recommendations and to consider current needs and issues that should be addressed in a comprehensive nature.

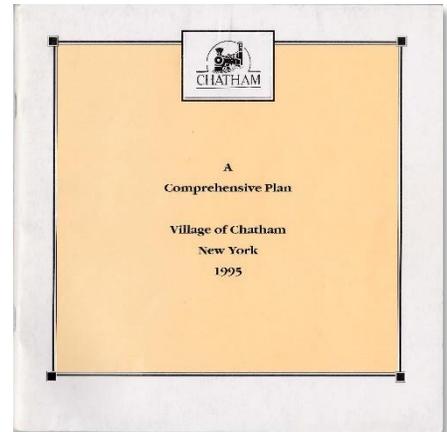
This new Plan is being prepared to provide elected officials, residents and business owners in the Village with a framework from which they can work together in the coming years to guide future growth and enhancements throughout the entire community, with a special focus on downtown. The recommendations make up the principal document outlining the community's direction, policy and action for the future and provides a flexible framework for adapting to real conditions over time.

This Plan has been developed with the general purpose of guiding and implementing coordinated development of the community in accordance with existing and future needs, while best promoting the general welfare of the citizenry.

Properly used, a comprehensive plan is the basis for decision-making by the Village Board as well as the Planning and Zoning Boards. The Plan will also guide the private sector toward sustainable and beneficial activities that help to improve the community for generations to come.

The objectives of the Plan Update are as follows:

- Understand changing economic conditions, past and present;
- Identify community attitudes on key issues;
- Identify attainable goals and actions to implement a step-by-step process for improving economic and social conditions;
- Identify and describe potential funding sources which may include a wide variety of state, federal, and private sector sources including state grants through the Consolidated Funding Application Process; and
- Serves as the basis and foundation for selecting eligible projects for subsequent applications to the funding sources identified by the planning process.



This Plan is being prepared to provide elected officials, residents and business owners in the Village with a framework from which they can work together in the coming years to guide future growth and enhancements throughout the entire community, with a special focus on downtown.

Preparing the Comprehensive Plan Update

The Village of Chatham initiated the process of updating the 1995 Plan in 2013. A working committee was formed and charged with beginning the update process with assistance from Ellen Jouret-Epstein from the Columbia Land Conservancy. The first steps included a series of public meetings to obtain feedback and information on a variety of issues.

Committee members conducted meetings with a variety of stakeholders including the Chatham Area Business Alliance (CABA), representatives from the Columbia County Agricultural Society (owns the Fair Grounds); along with stakeholders representing business, senior citizens, and millennials (a term referring to residents born between 1982 and 2004), and the arts communities. The Committee, under the direction of Ellen Jouret-Epstein, conducted a half-day community workshop during which a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (or SWOT) analysis was conducted. The Village also invited Norman Mintz to lead conduct a community workshop. Mr. Mintz is the Senior Director of Main Streets and Downtown with the Project for Public Spaces.

Based upon these public and stakeholder meetings and workshops, the Committee obtained important information regarding the current state of the Village: what is working well and what is not, what needs to be changed or improved, along with new services and stores desired, among other important issues discussed.

Upon the completion of the public outreach process, the Village organized all of the comments received by topic area including, but not limited to recreation, infrastructure, jobs and the economy, arts and entertainment, housing, government, downtown business district and economic development. The full summary by topic area of the public comments is located in Appendix A.

The next step involved a detailed evaluation of the 1995 Plan. The Committee reviewed each goal and strategy from the 1995 Plan. Based upon this review, the Committee noted which goals and strategies were implemented and which ones were not. For those that have not been implemented, the Committee evaluated possible reasons why and considered if the recommendations were still valid. In addition to the Committee's local knowledge and understanding of the issues, the information obtained during the public information meetings assisted with the evaluation of the 1995 Plan. The detailed results of the 1995 Plan review are provided in Appendix B.

Comprehensive Plan Vision and Goals

Using the public meeting results and findings of the 1995 Plan review, the Committee prepared a draft Vision Statement and Goals.

The Vision Statement is the description of the Village's end state on which the goals and Plan recommendations are based. It serves as a description of where the community will be, what it will look like and how day-to-day life will be impacted when the recommendations are implemented and goals are achieved.

Vision Statement (written to reflect how a resident or visitor would describe the Village upon the implementation of a majority of the Plan's recommendations)

"The Village is characterized by many locally-owned businesses located in buildings consistent with the small-scale character of the Village. These businesses serve the daily needs of residents and visitors with

easily-accessible parking and the ability for pedestrians to safely travel between stores, services, their residences and other destinations. Mixed-use buildings with residential and commercial uses on upper floors add to the vitality of downtown. The residential neighborhoods are a mix of older well-kept homes and new construction that adds value, promotes continued investment and infill growth and meets the housing needs of a diverse community. Recreation and open space areas are key asset the Village promotes and encourages residents and visitors to enjoy. A combination of tourism, arts, recreation, close-knit neighborhoods and home-grown businesses set the Village of Chatham apart from other communities.”

Goals embody the ends towards which implementation efforts are to be directed. As such, the goals are the principal elements by which the Vision for the Village of Chatham is to be fulfilled. The advancement of the Village towards the stated Vision requires considerations be made across a wide range of elements that represent the areas of most need in the community. The goals, in order to be effective in achieving the community vision must have three common qualities:

1. Be derived from the input of Village residents, business owners and other key stakeholders commenting on the strengths and weaknesses of the community, along with the opportunities to build upon these strengths while addressing the weaknesses;
2. Be understood through a detailed existing conditions analysis and confirmed by the Working Committee; and
3. Be comprehensive in scope by providing meaningful, prescriptive guidance relating to each element of community life in the Village.

As a result, the Goals presented below address six (6) key priorities derived from the public and stakeholder input process, Working Committee discussions and a detailed analysis of the Village’s existing land use, demographic and economic conditions.

Goals

Towards achieving the Vision, the Committee identified the following Goals.

Goal A: Retain, expand and attract new commercial businesses with a focus on small, locally-owned enterprises and those catering to the daily needs of residents and visitors.

Goal B: Enhance existing downtown open space and encourage additional public events and entertainment opportunities.

Goal C: Continue to enhance and preserve the historic and small town character of the Village while facilitating compatible reinvestment and redevelopment opportunities.

Goal D: Continue to maintain the pedestrian-friendly character of Chatham.

Goal E: Encourage and support opportunities to diversify housing styles, prices and configurations towards increasing overall affordability.

Goal F: Continue to maintain, expand and invest in Village parks and recreational infrastructure.

These Goals were then used to guide the Committee in preparing detailed recommendations which are provided in Section 3 of the Plan.

Section 2. Inventory and Analysis – Key Findings

A detailed Inventory and Analysis was conducted for the Village that reviewed the community's history, evaluated current land use and development patterns and socio-demographic conditions; and included a preliminary market analysis. The full Existing Conditions Analysis can be found in Appendix C, while the Preliminary Market Analysis is located in Appendix D.

The following is a summary of key findings from both the Existing Conditions Analysis and the Preliminary Market Analysis.

Existing Conditions Analysis

History

The Village of Chatham was incorporated in March of 1869, with earlier settlement of the area dating back to the early 1700s. The Stony Kill provided early residents with ample water supplies and power. By 1831, the first railroad was constructed through the community. Eventually, more than 100 trains a day passed through or stopped in Chatham. Each railroad company also owned their own station.

While the railroad serviced local mills and businesses, it also brought passengers into the community. Due to the growing railroad and industrial presence, several restaurants, hotels, taverns, shops and rooming houses were constructed to accommodate passengers and workers. Eventually, Chatham became a popular summer stop for tourists on their way to vacation homes along the Hudson River. ⁱ

Given the diminished popularity of the railroad after World War II combined with the long-term national downward trend of traditional manufacturing, the local and regional economies began to suffer. Despite the economic challenges, the Village has evolved over the years into a family-oriented community with several unique shops along Main Street serving residents and visitors. While no longer a major employment center, the Village has a growing performing and visual arts presence with an award-winning historic downtown shopping district.

Village Land Use and Development Patterns

The Village of Chatham is located in northern Columbia County, approximately 25 minutes northeast of the City of Hudson and about 30 minutes southeast of Albany. At slightly over one square mile, the Village is surrounded by both the Towns of Chatham and Ghent.

A land use inventory and data analysis was conducted for the entire Village using 2014 parcel data from the Columbia County Real Property Tax Service. The full land use analysis along with the Current Land Use, Existing Zoning and Environmental Features maps are found in Appendix A of this Plan. The analysis provides a snapshot of current land uses, development patterns and the effectiveness of the existing land use regulations. The following contains a summary of key findings from the land use analysis.

Table 1 Village of Chatham Land Use Breakdown (on following page), identifies the total acreage occupied by the different land use classifications.

Residential

Within the Village, land classified as residential accounts for about 45% of all classified property for a total of 318 +/-acres, the largest land use category in the Village by acreage. Properties classified as residential include one-family, two-family and multifamily (three or more family homes) homes. Based upon the data provided, there are 407 lots classified as one-family or 80% of the total, 73 classified as two-family (14%), and 29 classified as multifamily (6%).

Table 1 – Village of Chatham Land Use Breakdown			
Land Use Class	Number of Parcels	Total Acreage	Percent of Total
Residence (1-Family)	407	279.04	39.4%
Residence (2-Family)	73	25.38	3.6%
Residence (3+-Families)	29	13.61	1.9%
Vacant	76	118.66	16.8%
Commercial	116	69.18	9.8%
Recreation and Entertainment	4	36.61	5.2%
Community Services	27	74.81	10.6%
Industrial	3	17.37	2.5%
Public Services	13	43.38	6.1%
Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands and Public Parks	4	2.89	0.4%
Unknown – No Property Class Code Given	34	24.63	3.5%
Unknown -- On Border of Towns of Ghent and Chatham	21	2.31	0.3%
Totals	807	707.87	100.0%

Based upon the analysis, it was determined that the Residential Zoning District, which regulates many of the Village’s neighborhoods, should be evaluated during a future zoning update. Specifically, the Residential District allows for outdoor storage as a conditional use.

The Village Zoning regulations define an outdoor storage area as “any space used for the storage or keeping of equipment, building materials, machinery, vehicles, parts thereof or similar items that are not associated with a residential use.” Outdoor storage may be necessary when a building is under constructed or an existing one is being renovated. However, allowing outdoor storage as it is defined may adversely change the character of neighborhoods within this zoning designation.

A review of the outdoor storage use in the Residential Zoning District, for Hudson Avenue and all areas of the Village zoned Residential, especially gateway corridors is recommended to determine if modifications are necessary to avoid unintended adverse impacts to community character.

Vacant Lands

Vacant land accounts for almost 17% of the land in the Village, the second highest land use category, at just under 119 acres. The majority of existing development in the Village has taken place on relatively developable lands, with little to no environmental constraints. Wetlands and steep slopes make it difficult to permit development without resulting in adverse environmental impacts. State and federal regulations may also significantly restrict or prohibit development in these areas.

A large portion of vacant lands within the Village have steep slopes. Other areas are within the 100-year flood plain of Stony Kill, with other lands containing intermittent streams and possibly wetlands. Therefore, it is recommended that the Village consider evaluating the land use regulations to ensure they adequately guide future growth on lands with environmental constraints.

Vacant lands that are likely to see commercial development pressures are located in the southern gateway of the Village across from Chatham Plaza. Refer to *Figure 1-Southern Gateway Vacant Parcels* for their location. There are two key vacant parcels contiguous to and north and south of the existing Trustco Bank. The property fronting on Hudson Avenue is zoned Residential Commercial, which allows outdoor storage uses.

Continuing to allow outdoor storage uses should be evaluated. As a key gateway of the Village, allowing outdoor storage without requirements to screen views from public rights-of-way may lead to a deterioration of the corridor’s character.

Furthermore, these parcels are likely to see increased commercial development pressures due to the recent completion of the new Price Chopper grocery store just south of the Village boundary, a small portion of which is located in the Village. It is recommended that the RC zoning be closely evaluated to determine if changes are needed to preserve the character of the gateway and corridor while also allowing future compatible economic growth. Design guidelines and standards for the gateway and corridor are also recommended.

Commercial

Lands classified as commercial make up approximately 9.8 %of land within the Village. At just under 70 acres, Commercial represents the fourth largest classification. Commercial properties include, but are not limited to restaurants, bars, service and gas stations, retail services (regional and neighborhood shopping establishments), along with banks and offices and mixed-use buildings including downtown row buildings – attached and detached.

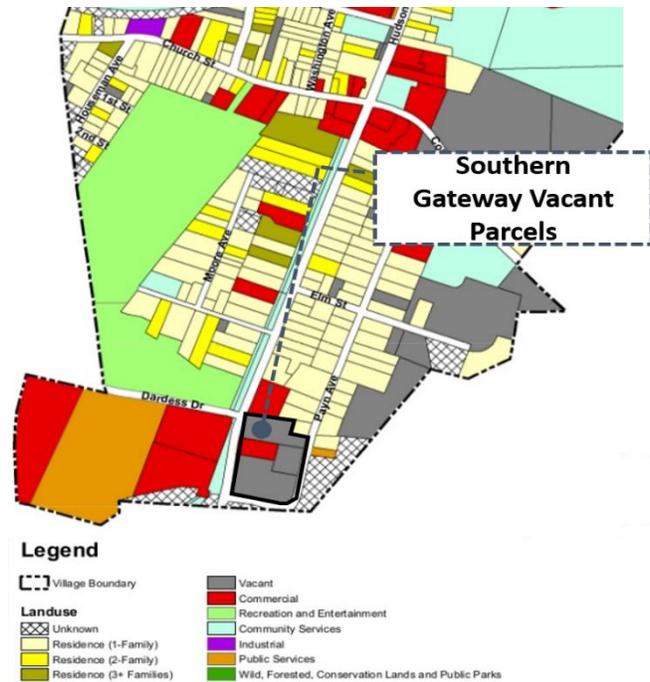


Figure 1-Southern Gateway Vacant Parcels

Downtown Chatham

Chatham’s Downtown contains the primary cluster of commercial lands as depicted in *Figure 2 – Downtown Commercial* (on following page). The majority of Downtown is within the Commercial 1 (C1) and within the Historic District Overlay.

Within the C1 District, lodging facilities are not permitted. According to the zoning regulations, a tourist house, inn, boardinghouse and a bed-and-breakfast are considered lodging facilities. The

Village may want to consider the benefits of allowing bed-and-breakfasts downtown. This may require redefining the term “lodging facilities” to permit only those uses desired for downtown. Also within the C1 District, gasoline stations, repair garages and car wash businesses are permitted as conditional uses as are outdoor storage areas and used car lots. Given the limited acreage downtown, continuing to allow potentially incompatible uses such as outdoor storage areas, used car lots, auto repair facilities and car wash businesses should be reviewed during the zoning update process.



Downtown Chatham

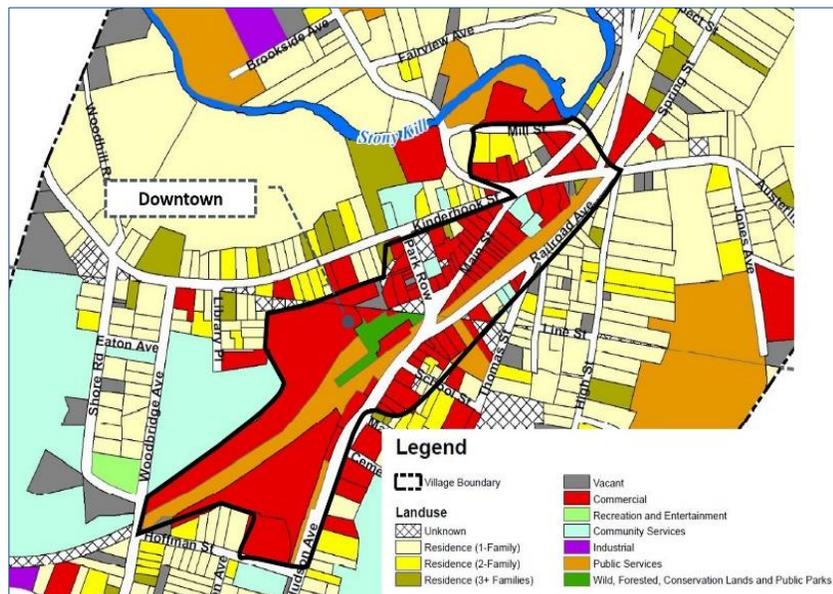


Figure 2 Downtown Commercial

The Historic District Overzone follows the boundaries of the C1 District and the Residential Commercial (RC) District (bordered by Railroad Avenue and Thomas Street) within Downtown as depicted on *Figure 3 – Downtown Zoning Districts*. According to the Village Zoning Regulations, the Historic Overzone is

intended to provide for the preservation of historic sites, areas, buildings and landmarks located in the Village of Chatham beneficial to the general welfare of the community.

The Historic District Overzone regulations require that all plans for the construction, alteration, and change in exterior color, repair, and moving or demolition of structures shall be first submitted to the Village Planning Board for site plan approval. The Board shall review all such exterior features of the structure as are visible from public streets, sidewalks, greens, parks or alleys. The regulations provide the Board with very general standards from which to review projects. In addition, the regulations refer to illustrated design guidelines “if any have been adopted.” No design guidelines or standards have been prepared to guide applicants and the Planning Board in reviewing projects in the Historic District.

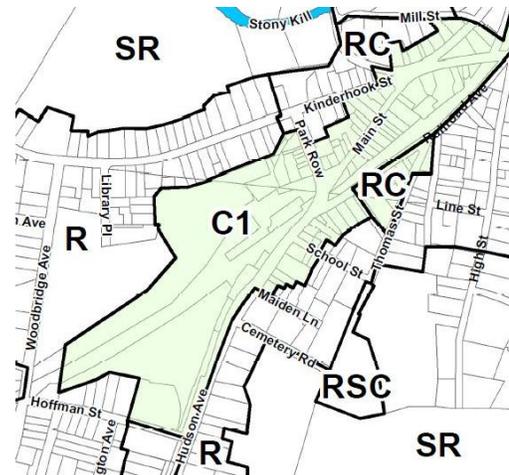


Figure 3 Downtown Zoning Districts

It is recommended that appropriate guidelines and standards be developed to assist in enhancing and protecting Chatham’s Downtown. In addition, a full review of the Historic District Overzone regulations should be reviewed to ensure they are properly protecting the Village’s historic resources and not inadvertently prohibiting compatible growth.

Blue Seal and Adjacent Properties

The largest parcels classified as Commercial within Downtown Chatham include the former Blue Seal facility at 6.5 acres, along with a 7 acre parcel occupied by Herrington’s Lumber. The former Blue Seal property is currently vacant while the majority of the Herrington property is being utilized as the lumber yard and driveway accessing Woodbridge Ave. Together, these parcels present possible opportunities for new investment and development within the Village’s downtown.



These properties are privately owned and any future development will be under the direction of the owners. However, due to the combined size of the properties and their development potential, the Village may want to consider evaluating opportunities for future compatible growth in partnership with the owners. A coordinated approach with the land owners may facilitate development consistent with the character and vision of the community and promote continued infill and growth of the Downtown area.

The CSX rail line runs through the center of the Downtown creating a barrier between Downtown and the former Blue Seal property. Future development at the Blue Seal property is strongly encouraged to include safe and efficient pedestrian access to and from the remaining sections of Downtown.



View of Blue Seal Property from Access Drive

Southern Commercial Nodes

The southern commercial nodes include the intersection node of Coleman/Church Streets and the Chatham Plaza node – see *Figure 4-Southern Commercial Nodes*. As depicted on *Figure 5-C2 Zoning at Coleman and Church Street Intersection*, the Coleman/Church Streets Node is zoned Commercial 2 (C2). The C2 District encompasses the intersection and extends north along the western side of Hudson Avenue north to Hoffman Street.

According to the Village zoning regulations, C2 is a district that allows additional commercial uses more oriented toward automobiles, while remaining subordinate to C1 District (Downtown) as a business center. Due to the areas location on Hudson Avenue, which serves as a key gateway for the Village, implementing design guidelines and standards for new development should be considered.

The Chatham Plaza Node includes commercial properties located at the intersection of Hudson Avenue and Dardess Drive. Recently, a new larger Price Chopper was constructed to the south. The majority of the new store is located in the Town of Ghent, with a small portion of the building within the Village of Chatham. Behind the Chatham Plaza is the NYSEG building which also contains a medical facility. Further west on Dardess Drive is the Highpoint Senior Apartments complex.

This area is zoned Commercial – 3 (C3), as shown in *Figure 6 – Chatham Plaza Node Zoning*, and is intended to permit the establishment of commercial and light industrial businesses. Several commercial uses are allowed including restaurants, offices, used car lots, gasoline stations, automobile repair facilities, car wash businesses, along with certain other retail and service businesses. Recreational facilities are also permitted, while residential uses are prohibited.

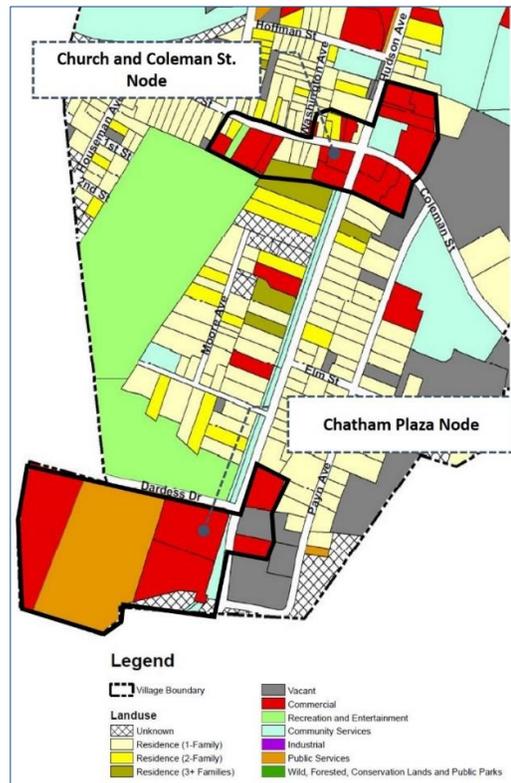


Figure 4-Southern Commercial Nodes

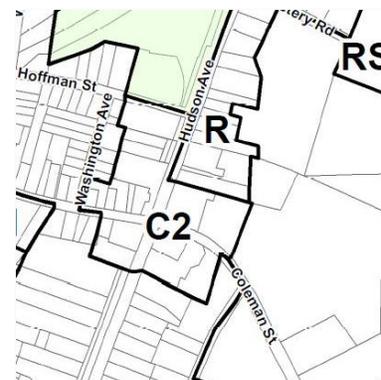


Figure 5-C2 Zoning at Coleman and Church Intersection

An auto repair station and Trustco Bank are located on the east side of Hudson Avenue. The bank is surrounded by vacant land as previously discussed in more detail above. With the recent construction of the new Price Chopper, these vacant lands are likely to see increased commercial development pressure.

Both the C3 and RC zoning districts in the southern Village gateway should be closely evaluated to ensure future incompatible uses are prohibited and desired uses are allowed under the proper review processes. The properties on both sides of Hudson Avenue offer visitors a first impression of the Village of Chatham. Preserving the architectural and small-scale character of the Village has been identified as a major goal by the Community during the public outreach process. In an effort to preserve and enhance the Village character, a combination of design guidelines and standards may be considered to facilitate new development consistent with the architectural and small-scale character of the Village.

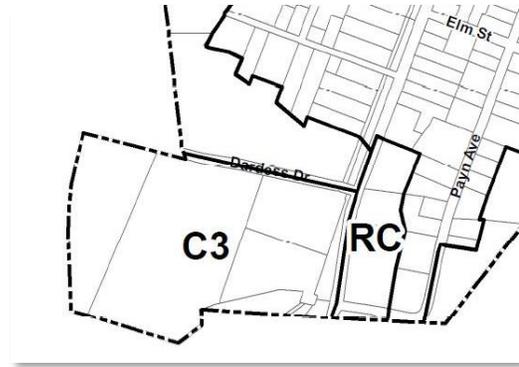


Figure 6 Chatham Plaza Node Zoning

Socio-Demographic Analysis

Examining Chatham’s socio-demographic characteristics is important to better understand past and current growth trends; the economic situation of residents, housing affordability and accessibility; and to assist in establishing policies to address areas of concern.

To benchmark this information, Village of Chatham data is evaluated against nearby communities of comparable size such as the Villages of Kinderhook and Philmont. In addition, data from the surrounding communities of Chatham and Ghent have been included to obtain a better understanding of the characteristics of their residents who likely visit, shop and travel through the Village. In addition, data from Columbia County and New York State has also been included for certain evaluations to provide regional comparisons. Finally, data from the City Hudson is being evaluated due to the fact that Hudson’s downtown has undergone a revitalization of popular arts and entertainment, two topics relevant to this Plan update. These communities are referred to as “comparables” throughout the analysis.

Population

The Village of Chatham experienced a 4% decrease in population between 1980 and 1990. From 1990 to 2000, the Village’s population dropped another 8.4 percent to 1,758. The 2010 Census indicates a slight population increase and a possible leveling off with a recorded population of 1,770. The 5 yr. 2012 American Community Survey (ACS) population estimates indicate that there was a potential increase of 2.8% to 1,808. Adjacent and nearby communities also experienced declines in population.

While data indicates the Village of Chatham has experienced relatively high declines in population over the last several decades, the decline appears to be slowing and trends are indicating a more notable increase by the year 2020. In addition, Chatham is the only Village that recorded growth between the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census. Further, the Village has comparably fared much better than many other population centers in the County.

Based upon the Village’s 1995 Comprehensive Plan, between 1980 and 1990, there was a 15% drop in school-age children (5-19 years) and a 27% drop in the 55 to 64 age group. Conversely, there was a recorded increase of 19% in the 30 to 54 age group. The 65 and over population remained steady.

Despite a continued decline in the population of school-age children, the decline has slowed significantly as compared to the 2000 Census figures. This population cohort also represents 20 percent of the Village’s total population, a figure above all comparable communities except Philmont which recorded 21 percent. The fact that the Chatham Elementary School is located within the Village and the Middle-High Schools being located on the Village’s western border are certainly playing a role in the high percentage of school-age children in the community. This is further observed by the increase in the 20 to 34 year population, which was not seen in the comparables.

A conclusion that can be drawn from these results is that the Village of Chatham appears to be a popular community to raise children. Therefore, it is recommended that the Village build upon this strength, and continue supporting the schools where feasible. In addition, the Village could work with existing partnerships and consider forming new ones to support extra-curricular activities for children and their families. Recreational opportunities are just as important to these age groups as is providing a clean and welcoming community with numerous amenities and opportunities.



Families Enjoying Music at the Gazebo – Fall 2014
(Source: Village of Chatham Facebook Page)

The Data also demonstrates that a higher percentage of the population in the Towns of Chatham and Ghent are above 55 years old when compared to the Village. This population, which includes retirees, generally has larger disposable incomes. Due to the fact that the Village of Chatham serves as the “downtown” for these areas, targeting this age group is likely to benefit the economic health of downtown and the remainder of the community.

Educational Attainment

Understanding the Village’s educational attainment levels is important when examining the “rate of return” to education and occupational projections. The rate of return to education is the percentage increase in annual earnings associated with each additional year of schooling.

Based upon the 2008-2012 5-Year ACS data, the Village of Kinderhook’s population had a higher percentage of residents with graduate or professional degrees followed by the Town of Chatham and the Village of Chatham. The Town of Chatham recorded the highest percentage having Bachelor’s Degrees, followed by the Village of Kinderhook and the Village of Chatham.

In addition to focusing on strategies for increasing high-paying employment opportunities, the Village should continue to enhance the attractiveness of the community. A community or region with high quality employment opportunities must also offer employees, employers and their families an attractive community. These characteristics include good schools, pedestrian and bicycle friendly infrastructure, recreational activities, arts and entertainment opportunities, and a genuine community character.

Income Characteristics

The Village of Chatham’s median family income was \$66,406 according to the 2008-2012 5 Year ACS, which exceeds the City of Hudson and is equal to the Village of Kinderhook. Both Columbia County and New York State had median family incomes exceeding the Villages. Despite this figure, the Towns of Chatham and Ghent recorded the highest median family income of the communities evaluated with the Town of Chatham well exceeding the county and state levels. These are important statistics as the Village is surrounded by the Towns of Chatham and Ghent.

Poverty Levels

Approximately 9% of families living in the Village of Chatham had incomes below the poverty level according to the ACS. The City of Hudson had the highest percentage at 22.8, with the Towns of Ghent and Chatham having the lowest at 2 percent and 4.2 percent respectively. The Village of Chatham has a lower percentage than New York State, but higher than the county by approximately 3 percent. The poverty rates are generally consistent with median family income rates discussed previously.

It is important to note that ACS data are estimates with a relatively high margin of error due to the sampling size for the Village. Therefore, these figures must be interpreted together with all of the data presented within this report. The upcoming discussion on housing provides additional information on the breakdown of household income and demonstrates that there is a notable percentage of families within the Village that are struggling to cover housing costs.

Employment Indicators

Available data demonstrates that residents in the Village have been transitioning away from industrial and manufacturing employment to public, retail, food service, arts, recreation and entertainment sector jobs. The high percentage of and the growing food service, arts, recreation and entertainment sector jobs are a significant strength that should be capitalized upon. It is recommended that the Village continue to support and where practical, help contribute to this growth.

Housing Characteristics

Homeowners in the Village of Chatham are finding their housing costs more affordable than residents who rent. More renters living in the Village of Chatham are considered to be struggling economically than those in the Town of Chatham, City of Hudson, Village of Philmont and the county as a whole. Only the Town of Ghent and the Village of Kinderhook registered higher percentages of struggling families who rent.

Based upon vacancy rates, the Village may have a tight rental market with the problem compounded by a significant percentage of families spending more than 30% of their income on rent. As a result, not only are a large percentage of renters experiencing hardships, these conditions are likely limiting the ability of future renters from moving into the Village. In addition, while a lower percentage of families



Homes along Hudson Avenue

that own their homes are struggling, the very low vacancy rate for owner-occupied homes may further be restricting housing opportunities in the Village.

As a result, strategies to increase the affordability of rental properties and increase the availability of owner-occupied housing should be considered and pursued in the Village. However, a more regional approach that includes the Towns of Ghent and Chatham may help solve what appears to be an issue not isolated to the Village.

Preliminary Market Analysis

Introduction

A preliminary market analysis (hereinafter referred to as the “market study”) was conducted as an initial step to assist the Village of Chatham in identifying potential economic development opportunities. The full report is found in Appendix B.

A market analysis is a tool typically used by the private sector to test where there is sufficient opportunity in a given trade area to warrant future investment. As indicated in the full report, this preliminary market analysis is not intended to replace a full market analysis which would be necessary to obtain a more detailed understanding of potential new economic development opportunities. The purpose of this initial study is to provide the Village and potential partner communities with a starting point to begin understanding local economic conditions and potential key market areas.

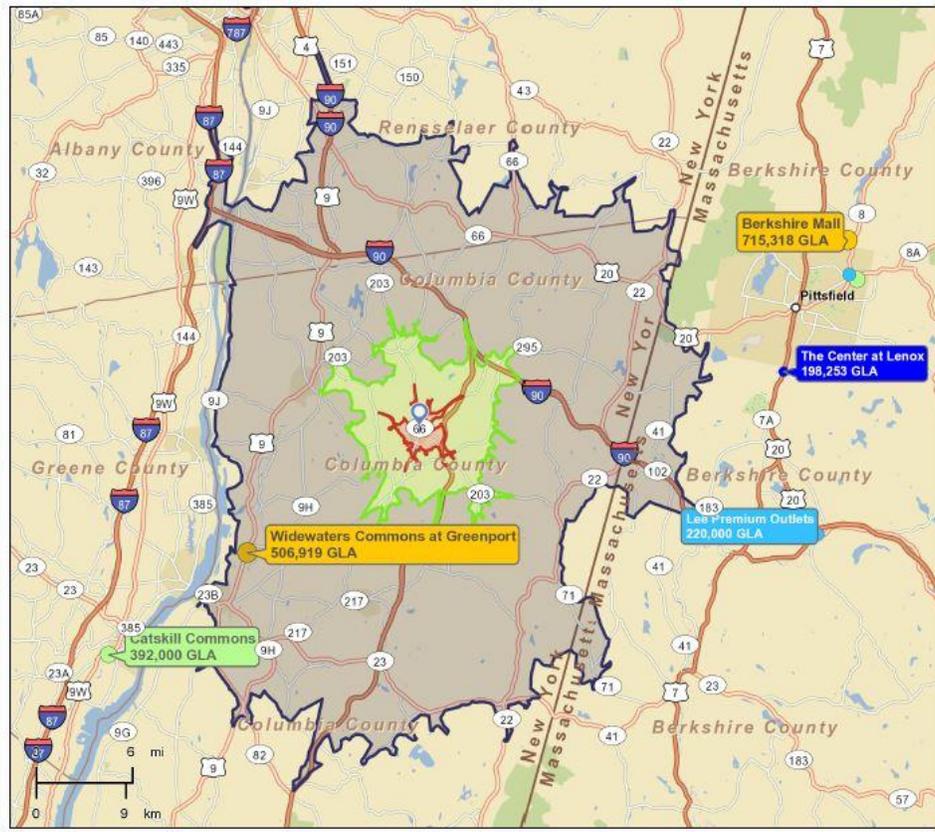
Trade Areas

Communities generally have convenience and destination trade areas. The convenience trade area represents an area in which people purchase products and services needed on a regular basis such as gasoline and groceries. The destination trade area is based upon the purchase of larger products such as appliances, furniture or products that are deeply discounted. Customers are more likely to travel longer distances for larger ticket items, do comparison shopping or shop in bulk at large retail centers.

Knowing the size and shape of each trade area allows for the measurement of the number of potential customers, their demographics and associated spending potential. Together, this information provides key details about the Village of Chatham’s customer base and allows for the estimation of potential demand for new stores, products and services.

For Chatham, three trade areas were identified as depicted on *Figure 7-Village of Chatham Trade Areas* (located on following page). The 5 and 10 minute trade areas are considered the convenience trade areas with the 25 minute being the destination trade area.

Figure 7-Village of Chatham Trade Areas



Key Findings

- The demographics of the 0-5 and 0-10 minute trade areas are more attractive due to the large percentage of residents with advanced degrees, higher median incomes and home ownership rates along with notable second and seasonal home populations. Collectively, within 10 minutes of Chatham’s downtown represents a key area of significant purchasing power to draw from.
- Beyond 10 minutes, daily shopping needs may not be the primary attraction of the population. The farther from the Village visitors travel, the more likely they will want to visit more than one store or destination including taking in a movie.
- Strategies for marketing to the population beyond 10 minutes should be different than strategies for the population within 10 minutes of the Village. Therefore, it is recommended that multiple activities, unique stores, restaurants and other attractions continue to be encouraged along with opportunities for new compatible ones. New lodging choices are suggested to provide visitors traveling long distances with the opportunity to extend their stay.

Market Potential

After the trade areas were identified and demographics for each analyzed, a retail leakage and surplus analysis was conducted. Also known as a retail gap analysis, this evaluation can assist the Village with the following:

- Determining how well retail needs of local residents are being met;
- Uncovering unmet demand and possible opportunities;
- Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the local retail sector; and
- Measuring the difference between actual and potential sales.

The analysis identifies retail sales leakage and surplus. A leakage means local demand for a specific product or service is exceeding the local supply, thereby requiring residents to leave the trade area for their purchases. A surplus occurs when sales of a product or service exceeds the local demand, indicating customers are traveling from outside the trade area to shop in the community.

Key Findings

5 Minute Trade Area

- Grocery stores, particularly specialty food stores and full service restaurants all have sales exceeding the local demand, meaning that sales are being made to customers traveling from outside the 5 minute area.
- Additional demand may exist for health and personal services, sporting goods, hobby and musical instrument stores. It must be noted however that many of these products and services are readily available at large-scale retailers.

10 Minute Trade Area

- There may be sufficient additional demand within the 10 minute trade area for additional clothing stores provided the appropriate target market is served. While the Village currently has clothing stores, additional diversification and the avoiding saturation of existing products may allow for new stores to be competitive.
- Full service restaurants may also be able to take advantage of an apparent leakage.
- Family restaurants are in demand for both lunch and dinner with a higher demand seen on weekdays.
- The data does not necessarily mean that there is sufficient local demand for additional restaurants, only that demand does exist and one or more restaurants of a particular style or format may succeed. This success will likely be closely tied to the success of a broader economic development strategy which would increase the number of visitors from outside the trade area.
- The new Price Chopper is likely drawing in additional customers to the Village. These customers should be capitalized upon. Specifically, other opportunities should be provided and maintained to encourage these shoppers to stay in the Village. Diverse restaurants and specialty stores are key examples. The increased number of customers traveling to the area would be expected to translate into higher sales for existing businesses in the Village.
- Additional signage directing people into downtown could be installed.
- A partnership with Price Chopper for non-competing downtown shopping opportunities could also be considered.

25 Minute Trade Area

- Customers traveling up to and in excess of 25 minutes are more likely to purchase a significant amount of goods during their trip, making large-scale retailers more attractive.

- Grocery stores continue to have leakage in the 25 minute trade area, and the Village should expect to see a growing number of customers traveling to the new Price Chopper.
- With this increased customer base, Village businesses should target their marketing accordingly.
- Opportunities may include specialized stores, diversified clothing stores and full service, specialty and family restaurants.

Summary

The historic character of the entire Village, especially downtown and the architecturally rich Hudson Avenue corridor are key assets that should be protected and capitalized upon economically. The Village is centrally located and surrounded by several rural communities that do not have a “downtown business district” that provides pedestrian accessibility to stores, attractions, restaurants and entertainment. Chatham’s downtown provides all of these opportunities and more.

In addition to serving as the downtown for Village residents, Chatham serves as a downtown for over 7,000 people within a 10 minute drive and has more than 66,000 people located within a 25 minute drive. Furthermore, a notable percentage of full and part-time residents within the trade areas have comparably high incomes and significant spending power.

The preliminary market analysis identified potential strengths in the local business community. The new Price Chopper is expected to draw shoppers from within the 10 minute trade area and beyond. Capitalizing upon this customer base by drawing shoppers further into the Village will have positive economic benefits. Demand is seen for specialty food stores, family restaurants and other unique offerings.

The potential demand for new businesses and services combined with the significant high-income population within a short distance and the historic character and pedestrian friendly amenities of the Village, are all key assets that should be explored further by an economic development and marketing strategy. This will require a coordinate approach among all stakeholders, public and private and could involve a partnership among two or more interested communities.

Section 3. Plan Recommendations

These recommendations are a result of Committee meeting discussions, comments gathered during the public outreach process, and the review of the 1995 Plan implementation progress and the Existing Conditions and Preliminary Market Analyses.

Economic Development and Tourism

Goal A. Retain, expand and attract new commercial businesses with a focus on small, locally-owned enterprises and those catering to the daily needs of residents and visitors.

1. Establish a formal partnership with local stakeholders to develop and implement a long-range economic development and marketing program.

The Village of Chatham is a member of the Chatham Area Economic Development Committee that includes the Towns of Chatham, Ghent, Canaan, and Austerlitz. The Committee meets on a quarterly basis to discuss opportunities to leverage new economic growth and redevelopment to improve the region. This existing Committee is an important initial step for the Village and surrounding communities.

Joining forces with surrounding communities will help offset some costs associated with implementing an economic development program. For many communities, it is difficult to adequately budget for “economic development services.” Reasons for this are due, in part, to a lack of available funds and the fact that some economic development initiatives may not produce results as immediate and tangible as investments in new sidewalks, playgrounds, street repairs and other capital projects.

Going forward, it is recommended that a more formal economic development partnership led by the Village of Chatham be established. The Village serves as the residential and economic hub of northern Columbia County. Therefore, it is appropriate for the Village of Chatham to initiate and lead a coordinated economic development program. The initial details of the economic development program are outlined next.

Local economic development requires ongoing efforts and flexibility to adapt and respond to regional, national, and global changes. In addition to the initial economic development recommendations provided in this Plan, a long-range economic development and downtown marketing plan is recommended to establish specific goals and strategies to improve and strengthen the local economy

Potential goals of the economic development and marketing plan could include:

- Provide initiatives and methods that will encourage diversity of the Village’s economic base, tap into opportunities for economic expansion, and help to create a sustainable and vibrant community;
- Retain, expand and attract viable and compatible commercial and industrial businesses;
- Guide the future development of vacant and underutilized properties; and
- Expand municipal revenue sources through new private development.

One particular focus of the economic development plan could be Chatham’s concentration of visual and performing arts such as the Crandell Theater, Performance Spaces 21 (ps21), The Mac-Haydn Theater

and numerous local artists, along with the Ghent Playhouse and the OMI International Arts Center, both in the Town of Ghent.

Chatham's Crandell Theater is a not-for-profit organization owned by the Chatham Film Club, and a significant local resource. The theater is also Columbia County's oldest and largest movie theater which plays host to the FilmColumbia Festival. FilmColumbia, which just completed its fifteenth year, is an international film festival that attracts thousands of film enthusiasts to the Village every fall.



Crandell Theater – Chatham, NY

According to the Report titled *Leveraging Regional Assets for a Vibrant Future: Captivate The Capital Region's Creative Economy*, Columbia County has 2,164 jobs in creative industries. In addition, there are only two U.S. counties having a higher concentration of independent artist than Columbia Countyⁱⁱ.

With this concentration of independent artists, existing arts and performance facilities; organizations and resources, the Village is well positioned to begin crafting an economic development strategy focused around the visual and performing arts.

2. Prepare and adopt a Village or regional branding initiative.

The Village of Chatham has a very distinctive downtown with the clock tower building, unique shopping and entertainment opportunities along with its railroad history. Based upon a review of existing marketing efforts and the character of downtown, a consistent brand and identity for Chatham should be established.

Through a partnership with local stakeholders, an integrated branding plan should be prepared. This effort can also be combined with the recommended long-range economic development and marketing plan previously discussed. Proactive communities brand themselves to be distinctive and to be destinations of choice for businesses, industry, visitors, residents, families and others. The branding plan can also assist in the preparation of wayfinding signage to ensure consistent style and use of the Chatham logo/brand. Therefore, the Village should consider initiating the branding process shortly after the Plan is adopted.

An integrated branding plan for the Village of Chatham could result in:

- A shared brand identity for the future of the Village among residents, businesses, government, and community groups;

- A consistent and compelling theme along with a focused message to create interest in Chatham as a destination for businesses, visitors, families and events; and
- Community brand tools for everyone to use with a consistent look, feel and message that preserves identities and missions that are unique.

An initial method to get the community involved in the marketing and branding process is to hold a brand and logo contest. This process has the ability to integrate the community at various levels and ages. Local residents and business owners have a better understanding of their community and are able to establish a “homegrown” brand and logo that is more likely to gain local support and remain unique to the area.

The Village of Chatham and numerous local businesses were recently recognized by the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce and the Register-Star. The Village was presented with the award for the Best Block to Shop and several downtown businesses received individual Best of Columbia County accolades. This type of region-wide recognition should be utilized in marketing materials and capitalized upon to increase awareness of the Village’s achievements and distinction as a destination for entertainment and retail.

3. Encourage and actively recruit desired businesses and attractions.

During the initial public meetings and workshops, many desired businesses were recommended. While the Village’s ability to pick and choose businesses to locate downtown or elsewhere in the community may sometimes be limited, the Village does have the ability to actively encourage and recruit desired and potentially interested businesses.

This recommendation can be implemented at various levels including:

- **Passive Approach:** Have an inventory of available spaces, clear regulations of what is and is not permitted; transparent review process, and be prepared to answer questions from interested developers.
- **Aggressive Strategies:** Actively contact and meet with potential developers and business owners; seek and establish funding sources and mechanisms to help facilitate new development; and prepare long-term development plans, associated flexible regulations and “shovel-ready” sites to incentivize potential developers.

Having a clear understanding of the types of development a community desires and taking concrete steps towards attracting them is an integral part of a successful long-range economic development program. CABA could be a logical partner with this aspect of the plan.

During the extensive public outreach process and Committee discussions, numerous businesses, services and other uses were identified as being desirable for the Village. For those recommended uses already present, the Village is encouraging them to remain and grow. Furthermore, the following list is not an



Village Mayor Thomas Curran Accepting “Best Block to Shop” Award – Summer 2014

(Source: Village of Chatham Facebook Page)

exhaustive summary of possible future uses, and the Village should not discourage new opportunities not included below:

- Clothing stores
- Green grocery/local produce/“whole foods” type store
- Arts and crafts studios
- Artist live/work spaces
- Bakery
- Museum
- Sporting goods
- Stores that provide basic needs and services to residents, visitors and downtown employees
- Crafts
- Office supplies
- Antique stores
- Lodging (hotels/motels) and B&Bs
- Art galleries
- Diverse ethnic restaurants
- Light industrial and technology-related businesses

It is important to note that this list is not based upon a market analysis demonstrating a need and market for these uses. When deciding on attracting new investment, the Village will need to consider how each may fit with the Village’s Vision, this Plan and future plans. In addition, the economic feasibility of new investment must be foremost in the consideration.

Businesses and other uses recruited for downtown and adjacent areas should be pedestrian oriented, but not necessarily pedestrian reliant. Chatham’s downtown is both a walking and driving showcase for the community. All businesses and uses recruited to downtown and adjacent commercial areas should reflect the “small town character” and values that Chatham residents desire to maintain for future generations to enjoy.

4. Consider engaging an economic development/recruitment specialist.

The services of an economic development/recruitment specialist may prove helpful with the implementation of Village or regional economic development initiatives. Initially, an economic development/recruitment specialist may not be necessary. However, when the economic development program (recommended above) begins to generate positive momentum and achieves a level of measurable success, the need for a dedicated position to coordinate the overall program may be necessary. In addition, as the program begins to mature and become more complex, with multiple active projects involving various funding sources, a professional manager may become a necessity to ensure the program’s continued success.

Ultimately, the chosen individual would be responsible for organizing and managing programs and initiatives to retain and grow private investment and business development in the Village. Programs and initiatives include marketing, communications, promotional activities, assistance with improvements to downtown and adjacent properties; and assistance to the Village regarding streetscape improvements.

Other responsibilities for this individual could include, but would not be limited to, formulating and updating initiatives and programs, assist in the implementation of recommendations from any prepared comprehensive and economic development plans as well as other project and programs; serve as a liaison between the Village and the downtown community; and would help with organizing downtown festivals and events.

In addition to spreading the costs of this investment among regional partners, grants and other funding streams may be needed to assist in covering the costs.

5. Recognize community members for building improvements, aesthetic enhancements and business investments.

In an effort to bring attention to community members who have taken the initiative to improve the appearance of their buildings, expand or invest in new businesses, and make other aesthetic improvements, the Village could consider awarding them with a certificate, plaque of appreciation or similar commendation of their hard work. This gesture will not only recognize the recipients for their contribution to continued downtown enhancement and other commercial locations, but will also bring attention to the rest of the community of the improvements being made and perhaps incentivize others to do the same.

6. Create and maintain a coordinated business and community information website.

The internet continues to increase marketing opportunities for businesses of all sizes as well as communities and downtown business districts. An example of an internet marketing resource is BerkshireMenus.com which provides up-to-date information and menus for restaurants in and around the Berkshire region. This type of site allows residents and visitors to easily explore local dining and entertainment options on the run.

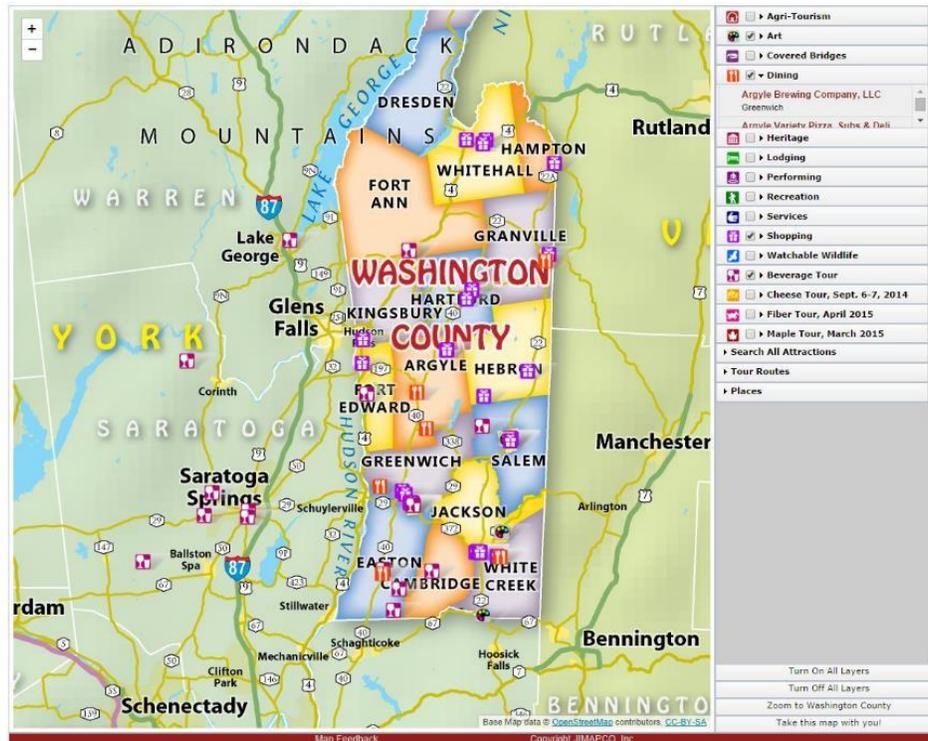
While the Village of Chatham is listed on BerkshireMenus.com as a searchable community, no local businesses appear in search results. The site is an advertising service and businesses do need to pay for this service. Local restaurants and related entertainment venues may consider using BerkshireMenus.com to increase their marketing reach.

An alternative to or in addition to the BerkshireMenus.com website, a local or regional partnership of businesses and the Village could establish a similar website focusing on Chatham/Ghent-area businesses, attractions, entertainment opportunities along with community and government information.

An example of a similar website that is user-friendly and integrates up-to-date mapping is the Washington County interactive web-based map. (See the following link: <http://www.iimapco.com/maproom/washingtonnycounty/>).

This mapping resource developed by JIMAPCO, Inc. offers an interactive user experience that provides detailed information on local amenities such as dining, lodging, services, attractions, tourism, arts and walking and biking tours. The map is also available for mobile devices. It is strongly recommended that the Village consider a resource like this. Additional information about Village government, services and other civic-related information could be made available on the map.

*Screenshot of Washington County Interactive Tourism Map
(Credit: JIMAPCO, Inc.)*



7. Construct one or more informational directory kiosks downtown.

Informational kiosks can assist residents and visitors with navigating to and from businesses and amenities throughout downtown and Village-wide. Kiosks come in a variety of types and styles. Digital kiosks are becoming more popular as they can provide real-time interactive information for the user and may be linked to the internet and mobile devices.

Non-digital kiosks can be just as effective and more affordable for some communities. In addition, if an interactive web-based map is created as recommended above, this map could be linked to a digital kiosk. Alternatively, a non-digital kiosk could incorporate paper-based maps in the style similar to the web-based map for consistency and cost-savings purposes.

Kiosks typically provide maps, bulletin boards, and other information on local businesses, attractions, events, walking tours and other community information. The design of the kiosks should match the overall character of the community and become an interesting streetscape element in itself.

In keeping with the Village’s railroad history, a kiosk could be modeled after the train crossing guard house that used to sit at the railroad crossing in downtown Chatham. The photograph to the right is from 1941 showing the original guard house.

Possible locations for kiosks in Chatham include the Village Green and another prominent location on Main Street such as near the Tracy Memorial Village Hall. Ideally, locating the kiosks next to public parking areas will be key to increasing their effectiveness.

Many communities have started using QR code technology as an additional method to provide information about local history, activities and other information a community would like to convey to visitors and residents.ⁱⁱⁱ The Village of Chatham could consider using QR codes to provide information on attractions, events, businesses and local history. The Village’s railroad history may also be a popular theme for an interpretive program.



Kiosk Examples



*The Crossing Guard: 1941
Historic Photograph of the Crossing Guard House in
Downtown Chatham
(Source: Shorpy.com)*

Goal B: Enhance existing downtown open space and encourage additional public events and entertainment opportunities

Strategies:

1. Coordinate and hold additional downtown events.

Chatham does sponsor and hold downtown events including Summerfest. The Village also held “Music at the Gazebo” every Sunday afternoon during September and October in 2014.



Music at the Gazebo – September 2014
(Source: Village of Chatham Facebook Page)

Many communities have found that more regularly occurring outdoor events contribute to the vitality of their downtowns. While not intended to be strictly an economic development generator, additional events such as weekly concerts can help draw residents and visitors downtown on a more consistent basis. Specifically, weekly or semi-monthly concerts are a good method to consistently increase downtown traffic. Park Row could also be a significant resource for downtown events by temporarily closing it for concerts and other events, which has been done in the past, and considered successful.



Music on Main Street
(Source: villageofchatham.com)

Outdoor Performances

The Village may also consider coordinating with the numerous local performing arts venues, including, but not limited to PS21 and The Mac-Haydn Theater to hold performances at the Village Green/Gazebo. In order to effectively accommodate increased usage, it is recommended that the Village Green be expanded as recommended below.

Public Art

The Village of Chatham has had prior success in displaying public art throughout the community. As seen in the adjacent photographs, the Village previously displayed outdoor sculptures along Hudson Avenue, providing a walking art tour. Many communities have utilized public art projects to enhance downtown character and generate more interest in walking and touring the community. With the concentration of local artists as previously discussed, Chatham could consider a collaborative effort to establish a long-term public arts campaign.



Public Art located along Hudson Avenue
(Source: Thomas Curran)



Public Art located along Hudson Avenue
(Source: Thomas Curran)

2. Make improvements to the Village Green.

Since the adoption of the 1995 Comprehensive Plan, the Village has constructed a new gazebo surrounded by green space for public gatherings and small events. In addition, the former rail station has been renovated and anchors the southern gateway into downtown.

- a) Initial short-term improvements around the gazebo could include the construction of new benches and an information kiosk that provides details on downtown businesses and attractions.
- b) Coordinate with the National Union Bank of Kinderhook to discuss the possibility of placing interpretive panels along the former platform. This space has been restored and could be a significant asset for downtown. It is currently an underutilized asset and could be enhanced.
- c) Consider enhancements to the informal open space located south of the gazebo and bounded by the railroad tracks to the west and Hudson Avenue to the east. The Potential Southern Gateway Improvement Area is depicted on *Figure 9 Southern Downtown Potential Improvements*. While there is a park bench, the area could be improved to provide additional attractive open space and to enhance downtown’s southern gateway. Suggested improvements include additional shade trees and plantings, park benches, along with interpretive signage regarding the history of the Village, railroad and the restored station. The existing foundation could either be removed or incorporated into the areas overall



Restored Train Platform



Southern Gateway Open Space

improvements. Due to the fact that this property is owned by CSX Transportation, Inc., coordination with CSX will be necessary to determine feasibility and obtain permission.

- d) Expand the size of the Village Green to provide additional open space for public events and to create a downtown focal point. *Figure 8-Southern Downtown Potential Improvements* depicts the approximate area to consider for expanding the Village Green and the area owned by CSX that could be reclaimed for new bank parking to offset spaces lost.

Additional public parking could be provided in this location as well. This expansion would include an outdoor performance space and additional space for public events and festivals centrally located. The expanded green could be designed to reflect railroad history. Specifically, a new performance area could be designed in the style of a “roundhouse” with other railroad-related enhancements. This recommendation will require close coordination and agreements with the bank.

3. Encourage the establishment of a Farmer’s Market at the Village Green.

The benefits of farmers’ markets vary from community to community, although a key element is the awareness the markets generate regarding the benefits of local agriculture. Not only does it draw much needed attention to this industry that can play a significant role in a community’s economy, farmers’ markets also provide a unique opportunity to draw residents and visitors into a downtown.

In a study by Project for Public Spaces, 60% of customers surveyed stated that they had or would visit other stores in the market area, with 60% of those customers stating that they would only visit those stores on market day. In addition to generating foot traffic for local stores, farmers’ markets have also been observed to be responsible for incubating and creating opportunities for new small businesses.

The existing Village Green could accommodate a farmers’ market by closing off part of the parking lot in front of the bank. This is a centrally located and highly visible location, with easy access and parking. In addition, all of the downtown stores and attractions are within walking distance for most people.

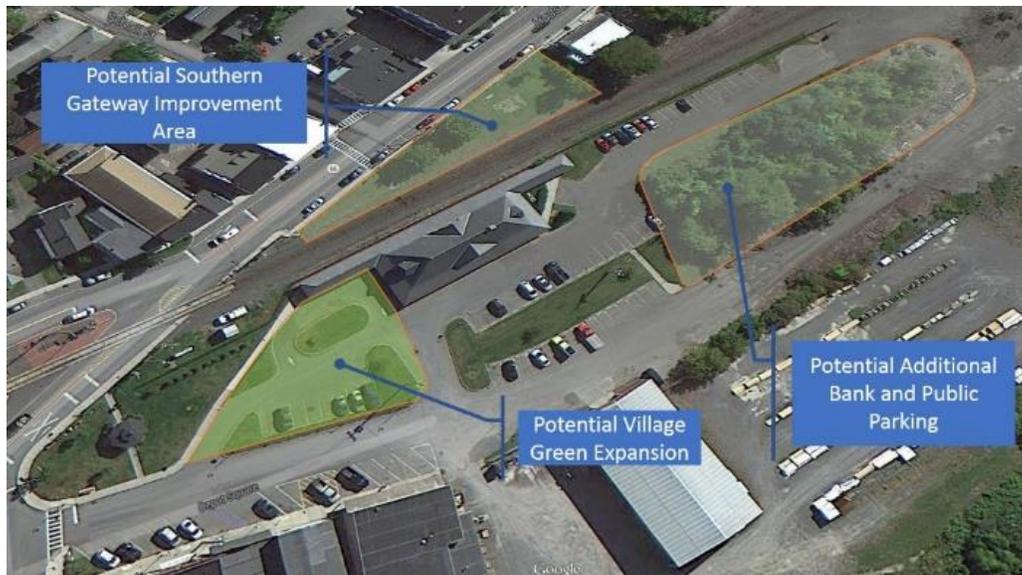


Figure 8 Southern Downtown Potential Improvements

Recognizing the popularity of farmers' markets and the fact that there are existing markets elsewhere in the region, the Village may consider a partnership approach. The Village could coordinate with existing markets to evaluate the feasibility of rotating locations. Downtown could host a market on a rotating schedule with other locations.

Goal C. Continue to enhance and preserve the historic and small town character of the Village while facilitating compatible reinvestment and redevelopment opportunities.

1. **Collaborate with CSX and NYSDOT (as necessary) to improve the aesthetic appearance of lands along the railroad tracks within and adjacent to downtown.** (Refer to *Figure 9-Downtown Aesthetic Improvements* for additional information on the following recommendations).
 - a) The railroad crossing of Hudson Avenue serves as a highly visible gateway into Downtown. The Village encourages CSX to properly maintain this crossing and avoid storing material and debris that may detract from the gateway.
 - b) Public parking is permitted on the lot south of the bank. The exposed views of the former rail yard and the abandoned Blue Seal property detracts from the character of this section of downtown. A suggestion is to screen this view with a combination of vegetation and an extension of the wrought iron fencing currently located along the eastern section of the parking lot. Vehicle access may still need to be maintained into the property owned by CSX. Coordination with CSX and the Bank will be necessary.
 - c) Railroad Avenue should be a priority corridor for the Village to improve overall aesthetics and to better integrate the road with the rest of downtown. An initial recommendation would be to improve the maintenance of vegetation along the existing fence. A longer term recommendation would be to replace the existing fence with a wrought iron fence consistent with the style of fence currently located in front of the bank and associated public parking lot. Decorative hanging plants could also be placed on the fence to help enhance the corridor's aesthetics. If the opportunity arises and funding is available, the overhead utility lines should be buried. Coordination with CSX will be necessary.
 - d) Due to potential safety concerns, the right turn lane at the intersection of Railroad Avenue, Main Street and Hudson Avenue was blocked by metal poles to prevent access. This area now collects debris and detracts from downtown's aesthetic appeal. It is recommended that the metal poles be removed and replaced by planter/bollards. The brick work should also be extended to the sidewalk to complete the improvements. Coordination with CSX and NYSDOT will be necessary.



Example of planter/bollards

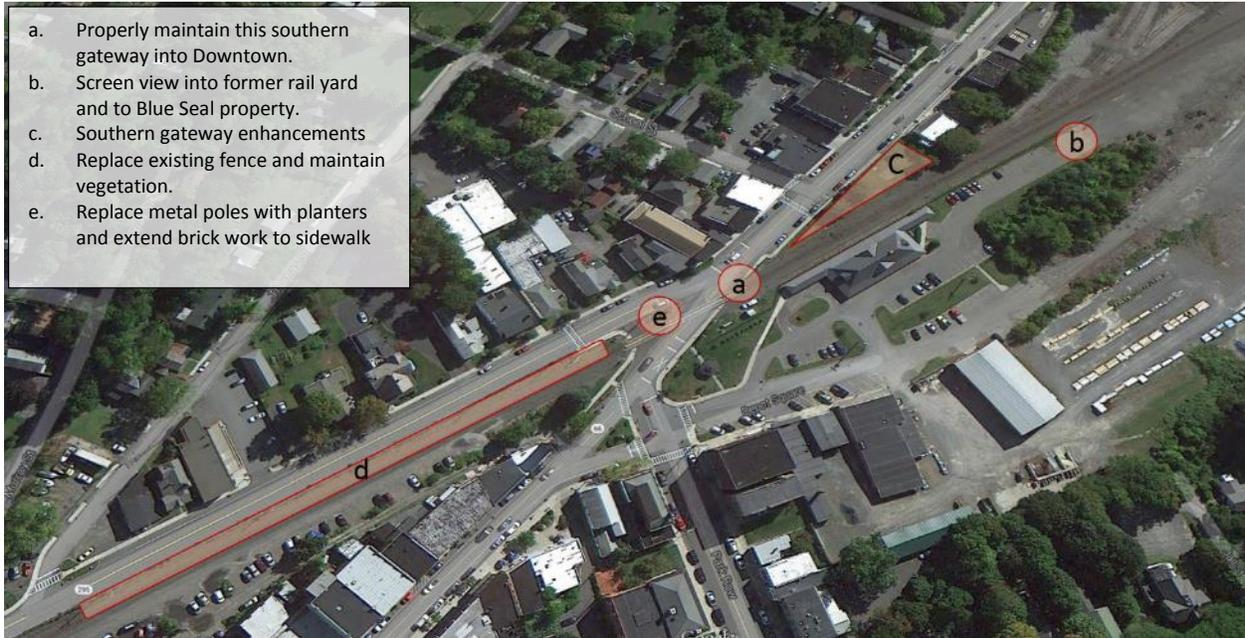


Figure 9-Potential Downtown Aesthetic Improvements



2. Facilitate the compatible redevelopment of the former Blue Seal property.

The former Blue Seal property represents the largest vacant and underutilized area within the Village well positioned for redevelopment. In addition, its current vacant state and high visibility from downtown detracts from the surrounding aesthetics. To facilitate redevelopment through compatible infill, the Village may consider taking proactive steps.

Recognizing this property is privately-owned, the Committee understands that future redevelopment will be based on the owner's preferences and project approvability in accordance with relevant land use regulations.

Taking a long-term view of the property, desired reuse options include, but are not limited to: retail, hospitality, restaurants, offices, and residential. New buildings are strongly encouraged to include mixed-uses where practical. In addition to the above uses, the property is well positioned for an interpretive center or museum celebrating the Village's railroad history. A rehabilitated train passenger car could provide a unique dining experience. The property may also provide an opportunity to extend Main Street and expand the pedestrian resources of the Village.

Notwithstanding how the property is ultimately redeveloped, it will be critical to incorporate pedestrian amenities, connect with existing downtown sidewalks and serve as a welcoming gateway to the Village's historic downtown. The Harlem Valley Rail Trail's (HVRT) northern terminus is likely to be located adjacent to the Blue Seal property. Through coordination with the current property owners, the Village and HVRT, opportunities to integrate the property into the rail trail could be also be considered.

The first step could be the preparation of a property master plan with the direct involvement of the owners and other relevant stakeholders. The master plan process would provide a coordinated opportunity to evaluate the attractiveness, feasibility and impacts of certain design scenarios. The results of the master plan can then be translated into specific zoning changes that would facilitate the desired development and assist in attracting potential developers and investors.

Alternative approaches to a master plan includes conducting an evaluation of existing zoning regulations covering the property. The Historic Overlay District includes the former Blue Seal Property, and should be reviewed to ensure it is not unnecessarily restricting desired reinvestment there. In addition, the Village may consider establishing a planned unit development (PUD) district law overlay district with this property in mind. The PUD law would provide a Village-controlled process that allows for more flexibility in design while facilitating desired uses and character consistent with downtown character.

3. Facilitate the compatible redevelopment of the Central Square building.

The Central Square building anchors the northern section of Chatham's downtown. The building was built as the Park Hotel in 1815. It was later known as the Windsor Hotel and then utilized for a variety of other purposes including a cancer sanitarium, theatre, roller rink, and a factory and furniture store.^{iv} The building is currently empty and in need of renovations. There are various economic development grant programs that may be used in combination with private investment to assist in redeveloping the Central Square building.

The Village may consider working with the current or future owners to identify possible strategies to repurpose this key downtown building.

Based upon Committee discussions, desired new uses include, but are not limited to: artist creative and gallery space; a hotel, restaurant, mixed commercial and residential uses along with market rate apartments. A master plan of the Central Square building with the direct involvement of the owner may assist in identifying feasible and desired redevelopment alternatives.

A relevant example of the successful repurposing of an old building is the Shirt Factory in the City of Glens Falls, New York. The Shirt Factory currently provides space for more than 80 artists and 10 retail shops in the former McMullen-Leavens Shirt Factory.^v Refer to the following website for additional information on the current offerings at the Shirt Factory. <http://shirtfactorygf.com/>. Converting the Central Square Building into studio, gallery and associated artist retail space may be more cost-effective than the improvements necessary to meet building code standards as a hotel, restaurant or residential units.

4. Establish a façade improvement program.

To help property owners, particularly in downtown to make façade improvements, the Village may consider establishing a façade improvement program. This program could be funded, in part, through securing state and federal funds and should be linked to a set of design standards/guidelines (refer to the following recommendation regarding design standards/guidelines).

With funding assistance, property and business owners can be encouraged to improve the appearance of their buildings and storefronts. Such a program can be designed to provide assistance for downtown as well as residential neighborhoods. As buildings undergo improvements, nearby property owners may be encouraged to follow suit. In addition to the front façades of buildings downtown, the program may also target the rear façades visible from Railroad Ave.



Central Square Building



Shirt Factory, Glens Falls, NY
(Source: visit.cityofglensfalls.com)

5. Adopt a combination of design guidelines and standards to help facilitate new development consistent with the desired character of the Village.

Design standards and guidelines are intended to enhance the community's existing land use regulations. They are not a substitute for zoning regulations themselves, rather a complement of the regulations to address development character. Design standards/guidelines establish a level of quality that sets a precedent for future development. They also serve to enhance the value of property and protect the investment of landowners and developers.

The primary purpose of the standards/guidelines would be to encourage a mix of uses with an emphasis on improved site design, greater economic activity, and more dynamic social interaction. Specific recommendations could include the location of surface parking lots and public spaces along with details on building façades and architecture.



Yianni's Restaurant at the Chatham House with Preserved Historic Architectural Elements

Possible locations for design standards/guidelines could include, but not limited to: Downtown (area covered by the Historic Overlay District) and the Rt. 66 corridor (C2, C3 and RC Zoning Districts south of downtown).

The specific elements of the design standards/guidelines would be clarified and agreed upon during the comprehensive zoning update to follow the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The Committee has agreed that a combination of design standards and guidelines be implemented.

6. Encourage development that is consistent with the small-scale historic character of the Village.

The Village has so far largely maintained its 'small town' and pedestrian-oriented character consistent with the smaller footprints of older buildings. It is important for the Village to maintain this character and encourage alternatives to highway-oriented commercial development. Neighborhood-oriented, locally-owned and specialty stores along with modest-size retail spaces compatible with the existing Village-character should be promoted.

To further protect the character of the Village, in addition to preparing design standards/guidelines for commercial buildings as previously discussed, a maximum building footprint consistent with the overall character of the Village could be considered.

As a point of reference, the combined buildings on the east side of Main Street have a total footprint square footage of approximately 39,000 SF, while Chatham Plaza has a footprint of approximately 54,700 SF and the Sonoco-Crellin Building has a footprint of around 88,000 SF.



Grouping of Downtown Buildings Totalling 39,000 +/- SF

A specific site recommendation includes the future of Chatham Plaza. The recent relocation of Price Chopper to the new building next door, increases the potential for the redevelopment of Chatham Plaza. Should this be proposed, it is recommended that the new building be consistent with the prevailing Village character by positioning parking behind the building(s), allowing landscaping to dominate the site rather than parking and provide for enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connectivity with the rest of the Village.

In addition, it is recommended that a detailed evaluation of all zoning districts be conducted to ensure incompatible development such as oversized buildings and certain uses out of character with the Village are not inadvertently permitted by existing zoning regulations.

7. Evaluate the existing Historic Overlay District Regulations.

To ensure the rules are adequately protecting the historic character of the Village while not inadvertently prohibiting compatible development, it is recommended that the current Historic Overlay District Regulations be evaluated. The boundaries of the district should also be re-evaluated to ensure it covers areas in need of protection and does not regulate areas where historic preservation is not relevant.



Chatham's Union Station Building – Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

The current regulations direct the Planning Board to consider standards when reviewing projects. These standards include general language such as “New construction shall be appropriate in exterior appearance to the district in which it is located.” Additional language is included

throughout the regulations. What is missing are clear standards and guidance on what is considered compatible or appropriate. The introduction of visual graphics or design guidance to help convey desired architectural character for new buildings and renovations is recommended. In fact, the existing regulations state that the Planning Board shall reference “...illustrated design guidelines, if any have been adopted.” Due to this language, it was likely envisioned that illustrated design guidelines would eventually be prepared.

8. Evaluate various opportunities to consider adopting additional land use regulations for non-retail uses.

The Village of Chatham recognizes the importance of an economically healthy Main Street with a mix of independently-owned small businesses serving the needs of local residents and visitors. In order to provide shoppers with a positive experience, as a guideline, the Village encourages maintaining an approximate 70-30 split between retail and professional businesses at street level. Also, and when feasible, the Village encourages professionals to use space on upper floors in Main Street buildings for offices.

The intent of this recommendation is to avoid having non-retail uses dominate downtown storefronts and detract from the Village’s goal of encouraging downtown shopping and pedestrian activity. Professional uses, while necessary for a healthy mixed-use district, can sometimes inadvertently push out retail uses that serve the daily needs of residents, downtown employees and visitors.

In addition to strongly encouraging a healthy mix of retail and professional uses, amendments to zoning regulations for Downtown could be considered. Such potential changes could include requiring any non-retail uses such as offices, to ensure their front building façade is consistent with surrounding retail spaces, remains inviting, includes unobstructed windows looking into an interior space and/or otherwise incorporates elements that contribute to the desired downtown streetscape.

9. Improve gateway and directional signage.

New or enhanced “welcome to the Village of Chatham” signs should be considered. The current signage located at the different entrances to the Village are deteriorating and will need to be repaired or replaced.

Directional/way finding signage should also be considered at key locations to direct visitors to downtown, parks, public parking lots, stores and other attractions.

Directional signage similar to the one in the adjacent photograph are more effective if located at main intersections in the community’s business district. These signs are intended for pedestrians. For Chatham, a recommended location would be at the intersection of Main St. and Park Row and where Main St. turns into Hudson Avenue. The signage would provide information to pedestrians about the businesses and services on Park Row, Hudson Avenue south to Maiden Lane and along Railroad Avenue. Another key location would be near Village Hall and the public parking lot to identify businesses on Main Street, River Street, Center Street, and Kinderhook Street.



Example Business Directional Signage

In addition, public parking signage should be located at key gateway intersections in the Village. A sign at the intersection of Hudson and Railroad Avenues is recommended to direct travelers to the public parking lot behind Kinderhook Bank. A second sign should be located in front of the public lot south of Village Hall.

Goal D. Continue to maintain the pedestrian-friendly character of Chatham.

Strategies:

1. Continue to provide adequate public benches and trash receptacles throughout downtown.

The Village has numerous public benches and trash receptacles placed in key locations along Main Street and Hudson Avenue. Opportunities to place additional benches in appropriate locations should be considered when funding is available. Proper maintenance of the trash receptacles and benches is just as important as providing these resources in the first place. In addition to providing trash receptacles along both sides of Main Street, they should also be located near the two public parking lots and in close proximity to benches. Park benches should be located in areas that offer shade from the sun when possible.



Public bench and trash receptacle near Village Hall

2. Encourage downtown businesses to utilize the sidewalk in front of their establishments (when feasible and safe) for outdoor dining, sidewalk sales and other opportunities to contribute towards an activated and lively streetscape.

While narrow sidewalks in many locations along Main Street may prohibit the placement of outdoor dining and use of sidewalks to display merchandise, there are a few areas with suitable widths. One location includes the wide sidewalk near the southern portion of Main Street across from the Clocktower Toys and Gifts Store. Outdoor dining and other pedestrian gathering uses should be strongly encouraged for this and other appropriate locations.



Summerfest 2014
(Credit: Suzanne Sperl – Courtesy of CABA)

In order to properly facilitate the safe location of outdoor dining and other sidewalk uses, the Village zoning regulations should address such uses. The current zoning regulations do not provide regulatory or design guidance for outdoor dining or merchandise display.

Clear regulations addressing the location, size and appearance of outdoor dining areas are recommended. Ensuring there is space suitable for safe pedestrian movement around outdoor dining and retail display must also be included. Further, regulations can be implemented in concert with design standards and



Outdoor Dining in Albany, NY with appealing fencing and plantings that clearly delineate the allowed seating area.
(Source: alloveralbany.com)

guidelines that provide visual references of preferred architectural designs and materials.

Design standards/guidelines could establish requirements to safely permit outdoor dining areas that do not inhibit pedestrian flow and ensure the aesthetics of the Village are not negatively impacted by the inappropriate use of sidewalks.

3. Maintain a working relationship with the New York State Department of Transportation and CSX.

With a state route and busy CSX rail line running through the heart of the Village, it is imperative for the Village to maintain a working relationship with the NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and CSX. Future work is likely necessary along Route 66 by NYSDOT and the rail crossing over Hudson Avenue, specifically the now abandoned right-turn lane on Railroad Avenue leading to Hudson Avenue that crosses the rail line. CSX determined that this rail crossing was dangerous and placed thin metal posts restricting access. This issue was previously addressed in this Plan, which strongly recommended that a more aesthetic approach to restricting vehicle access be considered such as decorative bollards. In order to facilitate this approach, on-going dialogue with CSX and NYSDOT is necessary.

Another issue that will need to be addressed by NYSDOT is the deteriorating decorative brick work around the traffic circle. Ensuring the brick work is properly maintained before it becomes not only a hazard but also an aesthetic issue is important and a working relationship with NYSDOT will be key to facilitating proper long-term maintenance.

4. Address public parking availability through a coordinated approach.

The Village currently has two designated public parking lots. The northern lot, next to Chatham Brewery, is shared with the Town of Chatham and provides approximately 25 spaces. This lot also provides vehicle access to employee parking spaces located between the block of Main Street buildings and the CSX rail line. The second lot is located at the southern end of Main Street near Kinderhook Bank. This lot has approximately 35 spaces with additional spaces reserved for use by Kinderhook Bank.

These two public lots provide upwards of approximately 50 free public parking spaces, a tremendous asset for the Village. As previously discussed, the first step to increasing the value of these public parking lots is to provide directional signage so that visitors can easily locate them. For the southern lot, improvements to the surrounding landscaping as previously recommended is also necessary.

The next step to improving public parking is to delineate on-street parking stalls with painted lines. Providing these designated parking areas will help limit vehicles from taking up more than one space and parking over crosswalks. The painted lines will also allow the Village to identify an accurate count of public spaces throughout downtown.

In addition to having an accurate count of available spaces downtown, being able to clearly delineate on-street spaces will allow the Village to determine if changes are necessary to improve downtown parking opportunities.



Vehicle parked over a crosswalk on Hudson Avenue

Clearly delineated spaces will also allow the Village to take a long-term approach of maintaining its public spaces and provide opportunities to periodically evaluate the use of each space, determine if additional spaces are needed and in which section of downtown. With this said, the provision of free public parking spaces will need to be balanced with proper pedestrian and bicycling amenities.

5. Facilitate the placement of bike racks in key locations.

Limited bike racks were observed Downtown during the summer of 2014. While bike racks located in front of every business is not necessary to provide sufficient space to safely secure bicycles, logical locations should be near the two public parking lots and at least two additional sets on both sidewalks along Main Street. In addition to Village-provided bike racks, certain store and restaurant owners could consider using portable racks that could be removed after hours. Sufficient regulations should be in place to guide business owners in properly siting portable bike racks and provide suggestions for appropriate styles and materials.



Example of a covered bike rack with air for tires

Once the Harlem Valley Rail Trail reaches the Village of Chatham, a covered bike rack should be considered in the southern portion of downtown near the trailhead.

Bike racks also provide opportunities to infuse creative art work with alternative styles of handcrafted and decorative racks.



*Examples of decorative bike racks
(Sources: washcycle.typepad.com and
bicycleparkingonline.com)*

6. Consider preparing a tree maintenance plan and integrating associated land use regulations.

Trees serve many functions including, but not limited to providing shade, a barrier between vehicles and pedestrians and aesthetic enhancements to residential neighborhoods and mixed-use areas. Properly locating trees and choosing the correct species are important to serve different functions for different sections of a community.

In general, a tree maintenance plan should include an inventory of trees on public and certain private lands that provide the desired benefits described above. The boundary of the study area should first be identified. The inventory will provide the necessary baseline conditions within the study area. The next step involves an evaluation to determine which trees need to be replaced due to disease or removed for safety reasons, and to identify new locations for trees to provide shade and aesthetic enhancements. Retaining a certified arborist to assist in the preparation of this plan is recommended.

The long-term maintenance plan should also include recommendations for tree regulations. Regulations can assist in maintaining trees within the Village in a healthy and nonhazardous condition through

accepted arboricultural practices, establish and maintain appropriate diversity of species and age classes; protect and enhance the character of the Village by facilitating decisions regarding the care and maintenance of trees are consistent with the Village and the Village Comprehensive Plan; prevent destruction or damage to shade, ornamental and other trees by preventing inappropriate cutting of these trees; prevent soil erosion and provide protection to air quality, vegetation, and enhance stormwater protection; and preserve the natural beauty and community character of the Village.

7. Consider an evaluation of alternative approaches to fund existing sidewalk maintenance and construction of new ones.

Sidewalks reach into most Village neighborhoods. However, maintaining these sidewalks are the responsibility of adjacent property owners. Some sections of sidewalks have fallen into disrepair which hinders pedestrian mobility. In addition, there are neighborhoods not served by sidewalks. The cost of making necessary repairs may be cost prohibitive to some property owners. The ability of the Village to pay for new sidewalk construction is also limited under the current system in place for managing the sidewalks.

Therefore, the Village should consider evaluating alternative approaches for funding sidewalk maintenance and new construction. This evaluation may include, but would not be limited to the following alternatives: Village pays for all maintenance and new construction; use of any available grants to assist property owners and the Village; and keeping the current sidewalk maintenance system in place

In addition to an evaluation of the financial aspect of different alternatives, the Village should take into consideration the pros and cons that each alternative might have on the ability for Chatham to offer high-quality pedestrian infrastructure.

8. Consider partnering with relevant stakeholders to evaluate traffic and pedestrian concerns on Woodbridge Avenue and the School access road.

While school is in session, traffic significantly increases on Woodbridge Avenue, especially at its intersection with the High School access road, primarily in the mornings and afternoons. The location of the CSX railroad tracks just east of this intersection further complicates the traffic situation. Woodbridge also provides access to Chatham Middle School.

In an effort to better understand the causes of the traffic situation and identify potential solutions, the Village may consider partnering with Chatham School District and other stakeholders.

Housing

Goal E. Encourage and support opportunities to diversify housing styles, prices and configurations towards increasing overall affordability.

1. Encourage and facilitate, when feasible, additional market-rate, affordable, senior and age-in-place housing opportunities.

- The first step will be to evaluate the existing zoning regulations to determine if they can be enhanced to increase opportunities for different forms of housing meeting all levels of affordability. Possible zoning modifications could include:

- Incentivizing affordable housing by offering density bonuses or other forms of flexibility in the development process for projects that include a certain percentage of units at a specified rate deemed affordable.
- Allowing for accessory (in-law) apartments.
- Establishing a Planned Unit Development law that could provide greater flexibility for applicants to design creative projects while the Village retains strong regulatory oversight.
- Consider redeveloping a portion of the Middle School (proposed to be closed) into market rate and affordable units.
- Identify other locations in the Village where additional housing options could be located.

2. Consider preparing a long-term affordable housing plan.

In an effort to fully understand both the local and regional housing situation, the Village may want to consider a long-term plan. This plan could also be prepared in partnership with the Towns of Ghent and Chatham. With a more regional perspective, more focused tools and techniques could be instituted to target the issues in each area.

The overall goals of a housing strategy could include, but would not be limited to:

- Conducting a thorough analysis of the housing situation to understand what sectors of housing are not being met, and why.
- Establishing a Village or region-wide affordable housing program for low- and moderate-income households.
- Expand housing opportunities for middle-income households.
- Explore innovative approaches to providing additional housing and a broader range of housing options, particularly for housing needs not being met by the market.

Parks, Recreation and Environmental Stewardship

Goal F. Continue to maintain, expand and invest in Village parks and recreational infrastructure.

Strategies:

1. Starks Pond Park Improvements

Starks Pond has the potential to serve as a unique Village park that could provide boating, fishing, hiking and picnicking opportunities. According to data provided by the Columbia County Real Property Tax Service Office, and as depicted in *Figure 11- Starks Pond Property Boundaries*, the pond and the entire shoreline within the Village is owned by the Chatham Central School District (NOTE: Ownership of the shoreline is being researched).

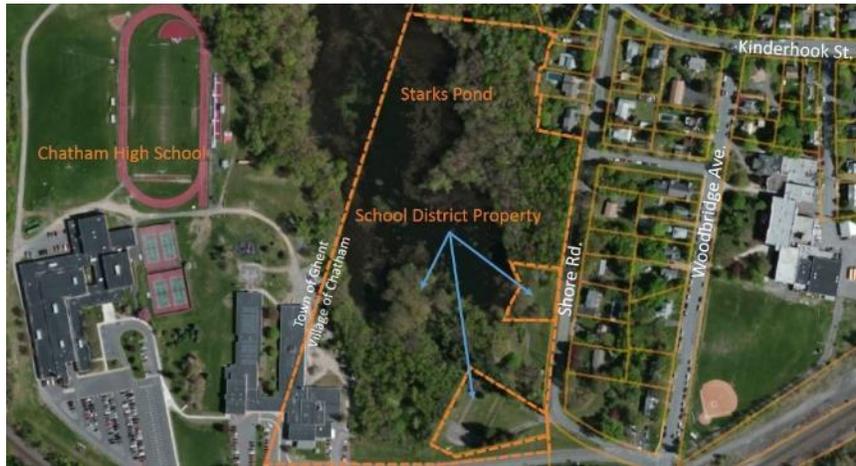


Figure 10-Starks Pond Property Boundaries

Access to the pond is provided via Shore Road. There is an unimproved access road leading down to a cleared area along the shoreline and a dock that is in disrepair (as of the writing of this report).

Due to the fact that the property is owned by the school district (NOTE: To be confirmed), coordination will be required prior to making any improvements.

While a long-term master plan for the pond is recommended, some initial recommendations could be implemented quickly and with limited investment in partnership with the School District.



Existing Dock at Starks Pond

As indicated in *Figure 11-Starks Pond Proposed Initial Improvements*, the following initial recommendations are provided:

- Designate a parking area away from the shoreline;
- Repair the lawn area damaged by vehicles;
- Install picnic benches and/or park benches facing towards the pond;
- Properly maintain the vegetation along the shoreline to preserve views;
- Replace the existing dock to permit safe use for kayaks, canoes and other motorless watercraft;
- Consider a separate dock for fishing that would not interfere with boaters; and
- Widen and maintain trails.



Cleared area leading to Starks Pond



Figure 11-Starks Pond Proposed Initial Improvements

Currently, the property appears to provide “unofficial” recreational opportunities. Prior to making any improvements, and actively encouraging residents and visitors to utilize the resource, the Village will need to confirm its liability insurance will cover the use of this park and the pond.

The proposed long-term recommendation is to prepare a master plan for the entire shoreline of Starks Pond that is publicly accessible. The School District owns a significant portion of the shoreline and has an opportunity for a series of trails and educational opportunities.

In addition to recreational opportunities, it is recommended that a long-term solution to the vegetation growth on the surface of the pond be investigated. The recreational benefits of the pond will continue to be diminished if a suitable, while at the same time affordable solution is not implemented.

Addressing the vegetation growth will require partnerships between the School District, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Columbia Land Conservancy.

2. Coordinate with the Harlem Valley Rail Trail.

The Village of Chatham is currently planned to serve as the northern terminus of the Harlem Valley Rail Trail. When completed, the trail is proposed to extend south 46 miles through Dutchess County to the southern trailhead at Wassaic Metro North Station. Since the first segment of the trail opened in 1996, several other segments have opened with the remaining sections still in various stages of planning.

The Village has the opportunity to begin facilitating the opening of the northern section of the trail, which could result in measurable economic impacts when completed. As a result, it will be important for the Village to coordinate with the Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association (HVRTA) to determine what assistance could be provided to initiate the planning, design and construction of the northern trailhead.

Towards this effort, Village representatives recently attended an initial meeting with HVRTA. The purpose of this meeting was to determine the degree of assistance the Village could provide towards the planning and design for the northern trail head. HVRTA has identified the land around the Green Shanty located on State Route 66 as the desired northern trailhead.

While the Village may not be in a position to directly contribute funding to the project, it could act as a local "champion" and assist in moving the project forward. It is recommended that the Village continue to coordinate with HVRTA to clarify how the Village can partner in the initial planning (including how the site can be procured for use) and perhaps assist in seeking out the necessary funding.

Planning for the trailhead should be integrated with previous recommendations relating to the future use of the Blue Seal property and the proposed expansion of the Village Green.

3. Collaborate with the Columbia County Agricultural Society to identify opportunities for increased year-round use at the Fairgrounds.

The initial public meetings as part of the Comprehensive Plan update indicated public support for increasing the diversity of uses at the fairgrounds including the possibility of adding lighted trails.

The fairgrounds facility is almost completely located within the Village, with three sides abutting residential neighborhoods. Formally integrating a portion of the facility into the Village's pedestrian walking routes could add additional value to the community.

Potential uses could include:

- Designated lighted walking trail, with interpretive panels on the history of the fair;
- Park and picnic benches;
- Construct a picnic pavilion near the pond at the entrance driveway. (the entrance road off Rt. 66 – refer to the Figure 12);

- Establish a designated area for a dog park (refer to Figure 12); and
- Locate a community center at the fairground.



Figure 12-Location of possible picnic area/dog park at Columbia County Fairgrounds

4. Evaluate opportunities to establish a new community center.

The Village would benefit from a new, state of the art community center that offers a wide range of uses, including but not limited to indoor recreation, meeting and performance space; an indoor pool, educational classes, rental opportunities for private events, along with a senior center and teen center.

Possible locations could include:

- Fairgrounds;
- Former Price Chopper space at Chatham Plaza;
- Integrated with the redevelopment of the former Blue Seal property;
- Retrofit a portion of the Chatham Middle School (if the school property becomes available); or
- Morris Memorial could undergo necessary improvements to allow for summer use (currently, there is no air conditioning in the building) and upgrade the overall building.

It may also be beneficial to consider partnerships with the Towns of Chatham and Ghent regarding a new community center serving all three communities.

5. Evaluate further partnering opportunities with Morris Memorial to upgrade the facilities.

Morris Memorial is currently not open during the summer months due to a lack of suitable air conditioning. If air conditioning were to be installed, Morris Memorial could expand their services year round and increase opportunities for youth activities. Additional upgrades may also be beneficial to increase the benefits offered to the community.

In addition, dialogue between the Village and Morris Memorial should continue to determine how the Village can provide additional assistance to increase the effectiveness of the center.

6. Consider establishing a formal Village-wide on and off-road recreation trail system.

The Village is a very walkable community with numerous recreational resources both within and nearby the Village. Establishing a formal trail network that includes a combination of sidewalk, trail and road routes could further increase the benefits of the existing recreational resources and encourage more people to utilize them. In addition, designated routes that incorporate downtown and outdoor public art (previously recommended) and other local attractions may result in positive economic impacts.

The network should connect with key destinations within and adjacent to the Village including, but not limited to:

- Starks Pond;
- Borden's Pond Conservation Area;
- Downtown;
- Crellin Park;
- Fairgrounds; and
- The future Harlem Valley Rail Trail trailhead

An official trail and way-finding map could be created along with appropriately placed way-finding signage.

7. Village Water Source Protection

The Village is located over an aquifer, the main source for the Village public water supply. It is important to ensure the Village's water supply remains healthy and available. Therefore, the Village could consider, in partnership with relevant stakeholders, an evaluation of existing situations that may be adversely impacting the water supply and identify possible measures to further protect this key resource.

8. Flood Control

The Village of Chatham is bordered by moderate and some severe slopes to the northeast. As a result, runoff caused by snowmelt and severe storm events have resulted in flooding problems and property damage in the Elm Street, Payn Avenue and Hudson Avenue neighborhoods and other nearby locations. The intermittent stream downstream of the Borden's Pond Conservation Area has been identified as the primary waterbody contributing to the flooding.

In an effort to minimize or alleviate the flooding conditions, the Village could consider partnering with relevant stakeholders to evaluate and identify reasonable solutions. Possible partners could include the Columbia Land Conservancy and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Section 4. Implementation Strategy

The Village of Chatham Comprehensive Plan Update challenges the community to extend public, private and institutional coordination through partnerships and the pursuit of grants from federal, state, regional, private and community sources.

In order for many projects and programs outlined in this Plan Update to occur, the Village will look to a variety of funding sources and creative partnerships. While the Implementation Matrix below outlines potential funding sources, they are not the only sources for new investment in the Village; creative partnerships must be aggressively pursued.

In addition, the availability of state and federal funds through a variety of grant programs is always changing and continues to be a competitive environment. The NYS Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process has streamlined the process for communities and the Village should be prepared to submit for funding during each round of applications.

Whenever possible, the Village should look to engage regional partners in projects. Furthermore, initial investments made by the Village should develop into opportunities for public/private partnerships while leveraging complementary investments by other public entities and/or non-profits and institutions as well as private sources.

The following Implementation Plan Matrix lists each recommendation in order of priority for implementation along with recommended partners and possible funding sources.

Implementation Plan Matrix <i>In Order of Priority for Implementation</i>				
Plan Recommendations <i>(Cross-Referenced with Section 3)</i>	Timeframe to Begin Project	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources	
Economic Development and Tourism				
Goal A: Retain, expand and attract new commercial businesses with a focus on small, locally-owned enterprises and those catering to the daily needs of residents and visitors.				
3	Encourage and actively recruit desired businesses and attractions.	Ongoing	Village Board, CABA, Local Business Owners, interested nearby communities and volunteers	CFA Empire State Development Grant Funds, ESD Strategic Planning and Feasibility Studies
5	Recognize business and property owners in the commercial districts for building improvements and business investments.	Ongoing	Village Board, CABA and volunteers	Village
1	Establish a formal partnership with local stakeholders to develop and implement a long-range economic development and Marketing program.	0-1 Year	Village Board, CABA, nearby communities and volunteers	Market New York Funding

Implementation Plan Matrix <i>In Order of Priority for Implementation</i>				
Plan Recommendations <i>(Cross-Referenced with Section 3)</i>		Timeframe to Begin Project	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources
6	Create and maintain a coordinated business and Community informational website.	0-1 Year	Village Board, CABA and volunteers	Market New York, Regional Tourism Marketing Competition
2	Prepare and adopt a Village or regional branding initiative.	0-1 Year	Village Board, CABA, Local Business Owners, interested nearby communities and volunteers	Market New York Funding
7	Construct one or more informational directory kiosks.	2-3 Years	Village Board, CABA and volunteers	Market New York, Regional Tourism Marketing Competition
4	Consider engaging with an economic development/recruitment specialist.	3-5 Years	Village Board, CABA, Local Business Owners, interested nearby communities and volunteers	Main Street
Goal B: Enhance existing downtown open space and encourage public events and entertainment opportunities.				
1	Coordinate and hold additional downtown events.	Ongoing	Village Board, CABA and volunteers	New York State Council on the Arts – Arts, Culture and Heritage Projects
3	Encourage the establishment of a Farmer’s Market at the Village Green.	0-1 Years	Village Board, the Chatham Real Food Market Co-Op and volunteers	Market New York, Regional Tourism Marketing Competition
2	Make improvements to the Village Green.	2-3 Years	Village Board, DPW, Kinderhook Bank and volunteers	Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation – EPF Municipal Grant Program
Goal C: Continue to enhance and preserve the historic and small town character of the Village while facilitating compatible reinvestment and redevelopment opportunities.				
1	Collaborate with CSX and NYSDOT (as necessary) to improve the aesthetic appearance of lands along the railroad tracks within and adjacent to downtown.	Ongoing	Village Board, NYSDOT and CSX	NYSDOT and CSX
5	Adopt a combination of design guidelines and standards to help facilitate new development consistent with the desired character of the Village.	0-1 Years	Village Board, Planning and Zoning Boards, Village Attorney and volunteers	Village, NYSOPRHP

Implementation Plan Matrix				
<i>In Order of Priority for Implementation</i>				
Plan Recommendations <i>(Cross-Referenced with Section 3)</i>		Timeframe to Begin Project	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources
6	Encourage development that is consistent with the small historic character of the Village.	0-1 Years	Village Board, Planning and Zoning Boards, Village Attorney and volunteers	Village
7	Evaluate the existing Historic Overlay District Regulations.	0-1 Years	Village Board, Planning and Zoning Boards, Village Attorney and volunteers	Village, NYSOPRHP
8	Evaluate various opportunities to regulate first floor non-retail uses which could adversely impact the character of downtown.	0-1 Years	Village Board, Planning and Zoning Boards, Village Attorney and volunteers	Village
9	Improve gateway and directional signage.	0-1 Years	Village Board, Village DPW and volunteers	Village
10	Conduct a full evaluation of the Village land use regulations and make updates recommended in this Plan along with additional revisions identified as necessary during the evaluation.	0-1 Years	Village Board, Planning and Zoning Boards, Village Attorney and volunteers	Village
2	Facilitate the compatible redevelopment of the former Blue Seal property.	2-3 Years	Village Board, Planning and Zoning Boards and property owner	CFA Empire State Development Grant Funds, ESD Strategic Planning and Feasibility Studies
3	Facilitate the compatible redevelopment of the Central Square building.	2-3 Years	Village Board, Planning and Zoning Boards and property owner	CFA Empire State Development Grant, ESD Strategic Planning and Feasibility Studies and New York State Council on the Arts – Arts, Culture and Heritage Projects
4	Establish a façade improvement program.	2-3 Years	Village Board, Planning Board, Village Attorney and volunteers	Village, NYSOPRHP
Goal D: Continue to maintain the pedestrian friendly character of Chatham.				
1	Continue to provide adequate public benches and trash receptacles throughout downtown.	Ongoing	Village Board and Village DPW	Village
2	Encourage downtown businesses to utilize the sidewalk in front of their	Ongoing	Village Board, Planning and Zoning Boards, Village Attorney and volunteers	N/A

Implementation Plan Matrix <i>In Order of Priority for Implementation</i>				
Plan Recommendations <i>(Cross-Referenced with Section 3)</i>		Timeframe to Begin Project	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources
	establishments (when feasible and safe) for outdoor dining, sidewalk sales and other opportunities to contribute towards an activated and lively streetscape.			
3	Maintain a working relationship with the New York State Department of Transportation and CSX.	Ongoing	Village Board and Village DPW	N/A
5	Facilitate the placement of bike racks in key locations.	Ongoing	Village Board, Planning and Zoning Boards, Village Attorney, Village DPW and volunteers	Village, local businesses
6	Consider preparing a tree maintenance plan and integrating associated land use regulations.	Ongoing	Village Board, Planning and Zoning Boards, Village Attorney, Village DPW and volunteers	NYSDEC Urban Forestry Grant
7	Consider an evaluation of alternative approaches to fund existing sidewalk maintenance and construction of new ones.	2-3 Years	Village Board, Village DPW and Chatham Central School District	Safe Routes to School, NYSDOT,
8	Consider partnering with relevant stakeholders to evaluate traffic and pedestrian concerns on Woodbridge Avenue and the School access road.	2-3 Years	Village Board, Village DPW, NYSDOT, Chatham Central School District, CSX	Safe Routes to School, NYSDOT,
4	Address public parking availability through a coordinated approach.	3-5 Years	Village Board, Village DPW and volunteers	Village
Housing				
Goal E: Encourage and support opportunities to diversify housing styles, prices and configurations towards increasing overall affordability.				
1	Encourage and facilitate, when feasible, additional market rate, affordable and senior housing opportunities.	Ongoing	Village Board, Planning and Zoning Boards, Village Attorney and, Columbia County, Columbia County Habitat for Humanity and volunteers	Village, participating communities
2	Consider preparing a long-term affordable housing plan.	3-5 Years	Village Board, interested nearby communities, Columbia County, Columbia County Habitat for Humanity and volunteers	Village, participating communities

Implementation Plan Matrix <i>In Order of Priority for Implementation</i>				
Plan Recommendations <i>(Cross-Referenced with Section 3)</i>	Timeframe to Begin Project	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources	
Parks and Recreation				
Goal F: Continue to maintain, expand and invest in Village parks and recreational infrastructure.				
2	Coordinate with the Harlem Valley Rail Trail.	0-1 Year	Village Board, HVRT, Village DPW, Blue Seal property owners, Kinderhook Bank, CSX, NYSDOT and volunteers	Village and existing CFA grants awarded to HVRT
1	Starks Pond Park Improvements.	2-3 Years	Village Board, Chatham Central School District, Columbia Land Conservancy, NYSDEC and volunteers	Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation – EPF Municipal Grant Program
3	Collaborate with the Columbia County Agricultural Society to identify opportunities for increased year-round use at the Fairgrounds.	2-3 Years	Village Board, Columbia County Ag. Society, and volunteers	OPRHP
5	Evaluate further partnering opportunities with Morris Memorial to upgrade the facilities.	2-3 Years	Village Board, Morris Memorial, volunteers	New York State Council on the Arts – Arts, Culture and Heritage Projects
7	Village water source protection	2-3 Years	Village Board, Village DPW, volunteers, Columbia Land Conservancy, NYSDEC, NYSDOH	NYSDEC, NY Environmental Facilities Corp. (Green Innovation Grant Program)
8	Flood Control	2-3 Years	Village Board, Village DPW, volunteers, Columbia Land Conservancy, NYSDEC, NYSDOH	NYSDEC, NY Environmental Facilities Corp. (Green Innovation Grant Program)
4	Evaluate opportunities to establish a new community center.	3-5 Years	Village Board, volunteers	Village, private donors
6	Consider establishing a formal village-wide on and off-road recreational trail system.	3-5 Years	Village Board, Chatham Central School District, Columbia Land Conservancy, Village DPW, volunteers	Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation – EPF Municipal Grant Program

References

ⁱ Village of Chatham Comprehensive Plan 1995

ⁱⁱ Center for Economic Growth and the Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region. *Leveraging Regional Assets for a Vibrant Future: Captivate The Capital Region's Creative Economy*. November 2014.

http://cfgr.org/cms/upload/pdf/CAPTIVATE_NOVEMBER2014.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ The City of Saratoga Springs has recently introduced viewsaratoga.com, an interpretive website accessible by smartphones using QR codes. The City placed 7 poles throughout downtown, modeled after the red and white markers at the horse racing track. The codes will take users to viewsaratoga.com that provides information on the history of the City.

^{iv} Chatham Area Business Alliance, (n.d.), "Historic Walking Tour of Chatham" Retrieved from <http://chathambusinessalliance.org/Chatham.htm>.

^v The Shirt Factory, (n.d.), "What is the Shirt Factory?" Retrieved from <http://shirtfactorygf.com/>.