

Hamlet of Wallkill

Strategic Economic Development Action Plan



Submitted by:

HUDSON VALLEY
PATTERN *for* PROGRESS

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INTRODUCTION

This plan is a Strategic Economic Development Action Plan (SEDAP) for the Hamlet of Wallkill (the hamlet). The purpose of this plan is to provide a series of actionable recommendations to improve quality of life and strengthen the local economy in the hamlet. The goals and recommendations in this plan are rooted in community input, analysis of local metrics, and a clear vision for the hamlet established and adopted in the 2021 Town of Shawangunk Comprehensive Plan Update.

This plan was designed with the express intent of being a functional resource, not just a list of aspirational ideas. To that end, this plan includes an implementation strategy to facilitate the completion of the recommended actions.

This plan was prepared by Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress (Pattern) in collaboration with the Town of Shawangunk and guidance from a steering committee of local residents and stakeholders. This work was funded by a Strategic Planning and Feasibility grant from Empire State Development secured by Pattern through the New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) process in 2023. Work commenced on this plan in early 2024 and concluded in December 2024.

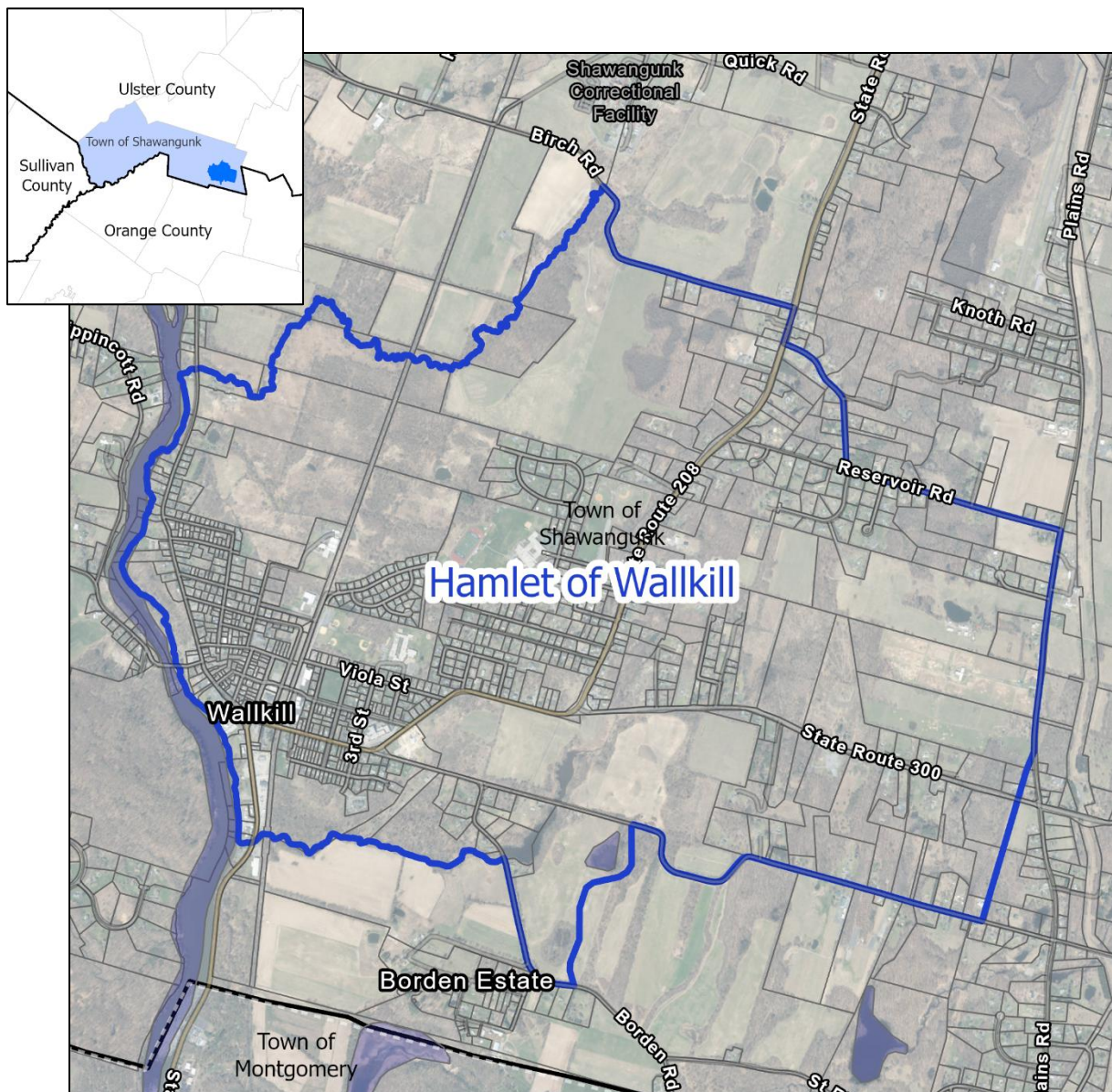
SEDAP Steering Committee:

Ken Ronk	Town Supervisor
Joe LoCicero	Town Councilman
Donna Barczak	President, Vision of Wallkill
Sal Patella	Wallkill Lions Club
Mike Horodyski	President, Wallkill Valley Savings & Loan

I. LOCAL CONTEXT

The Hamlet of Wallkill

The Hamlet of Wallkill is an approximately 3 square mile hamlet located in the Town of Shawangunk in southern Ulster County along the border with the Orange County. As a hamlet, Wallkill is a census-designated place, but it does not have its own municipal government separate from the Town. All local laws and ordinances governing the hamlet are established and enforced by the Town. The map below shows the boundary of the Hamlet of Wallkill as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. While the census-defined boundary for the hamlet is useful for analyzing local data specific to the hamlet, the focus of this plan is predominantly on the southwest corner of the hamlet. This area can be considered “downtown Wallkill” as it is the hub of local government services and represents the highest concentration of small businesses in the hamlet.



Infrastructure

State Route 208 is the primary arterial road into the hamlet, connecting Wallkill to Gardiner and New Paltz to the North, and Walden and Montgomery to the south. The hamlet is also accessible via State Route 300 which continues east out of the hamlet to the City of Newburgh and provides connections to I-84 and I-87. The Hamlet of Wallkill is the only area in the Town served by public sewer and water infrastructure.

Demographics

The total population in the Hamlet of Wallkill has remained relatively steady in the past decade, hovering around 2,000 residents. Like much of the Hudson Valley region, the population is getting older, and school enrollment is declining.

Key Metrics:

- Enrollment in the Wallkill School District has decreased by 24% since peak in the 2003-04 school year. District enrollment in the 2003-04 school year was 3,662, in the 2023-24 school year it was 2,793, a decrease of 869 students. (source: NYS Education Department)
- In the past decade the population of the Town of Shawangunk and the Hamlet of Wallkill both decreased by 6%. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2013 & 2023)
- In 2013, approximately 30% of the hamlet's population was under 20 years old. A decade later, in 2023, the under 20 population accounted for only 15% of the hamlet's population. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2013 & 2023)

Income & Economy

In the past decade the unemployment rate has fallen in both the Town of Shawangunk and Hamlet of Wallkill. In the same time period, household income increased in both the Town and the hamlet, but these gains have been all but wiped out by inflation.

Key Metrics:

- The unemployment rate in the Hamlet of Wallkill fell from 5% in 2013 to 3% in 2023. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2013 & 2023)
- The median household income in the hamlet increased from \$71,887 in 2013 to \$76,908 in 2023, a 7% increase over 10 years. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2013 & 2023)
- Over that same time period, inflation in the United States rose by an estimated 31%. This means that despite increases in income, household spending power in the hamlet actually *decreased* due to the rising cost of goods and services. (Source: Bureau of Labor Statics CPI Inflation calculator)

Housing

The housing stock in the hamlet is relatively old. Some of the older buildings date back to the days of Borden Farm, for which the houses were originally built as company homes. Older homes are associated with higher heating and cooling costs, more expensive maintenance costs, and greater health risk due to exposure to hazardous materials like asbestos and lead paint. Rising costs and stagnating wages have substantially increased the financial burden of paying for housing, especially for renters.

Key Metrics:

- 47% of the housing stock in the hamlet was built before 1980, and 20% was built before 1940. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2023)
- In the hamlet approximately 40% of households are renters, and 60% are homeowners. This is significantly different from the rest of the Town where only 12% of households are renters. About half of all renter households in the Town are located in the Hamlet of Wallkill. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey 5-year Estimates 2023)
- One-third of renter households in the hamlet (approximately 100 to 110 households) spend more than 30% of their household income on housing costs (rent and utilities). Included in that group are 17% of renter households in the hamlet (approximately 50-60 households) that spend more than half of their income on housing costs. (Source: HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy Data)

Places and Projects of Interest



Popp Memorial Park

Popp Memorial Park is a Town Park on the banks of the Wallkill River in the southwest corner of the hamlet. This approximately 3-acre park features a large pavilion, public restrooms, and a gravel parking lot. This park is one of the only ways the public can access the Wallkill River in the hamlet. The Town recently secured funding to make improvements to the pavilion and install a boat launch.

Town Hall Annex

The Town Hall Annex is a former fire house next to Town Hall. This property is owned by the Town and is currently being used for Town storage. The structural integrity of the building is sound, but the HVAC system and roof are in need of repair or replacement.

Wallkill Commons

Wallkill Commons is a new 30-unit residential development under construction at the time of this plan. These new apartments are being built on formerly vacant land in the middle of downtown Wallkill next to the Town Hall, Police Station, and Garrison Park.

Garrison Park

Garrison Park is a 1.4-acre town-owned park in the hamlet. Garrison Park is centrally located next to Town Hall and the Town Hall Annex. It is bordered by single family homes on two sides and is next to a new apartment building under construction. The existing homes and the new apartment building face the park, this arrangement gives the park a feeling of a “town square” in the middle of the hamlet.

Police Station

The Shawangunk Police Department is currently housed in a small 1-story building and a garage on a 0.32-acre lot on Bona Ventura Avenue. This town-owned property is located directly across the street from the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail.

Rail Trail

The Wallkill Valley Rail Trail connects the Village of Walden to the Hamlet of Wallkill via a 3-mile stretch of paved trail. The rail trail terminates on Bona Ventura Avenue across the street from the police station. The old rail trail right of way continues north through the hamlet, mostly along Railroad Avenue. There is a 1.3-mile stretch of unimproved trail leading north out of the hamlet and terminating at River Road, south of the Shawangunk Correctional Facility. north of the correctional facility the trail picks back up and continues through Gardiner and New Paltz to Kingston where it connects to the Empire State Trail.

Bus Depot

There are two large properties that operate as school bus depots and garages. These properties are owned by First Student Inc., a student transportation company. One property is located on the Wallkill River off Wallkill Avenue. The other is just down the road across the street from Popp Memorial Park.

Milk Factory Project

Less than a mile south of the hamlet is the site of a new redevelopment project called the Milk Factory at the site of the former Borden Milk Condensery. This project is in the Town of Montgomery, but it could have a significant impact on the Hamlet of Wallkill as it is located along the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail.

Correctional Facilities

Just north of the hamlet are two correctional facilities. The Wallkill Correctional Facility, built in the 1930s, is a medium security prison. Next to it is the Shawangunk Correctional Facility, a maximum-security prison built in the 1980s.

II. A VISION FOR THE HAMLET OF WALLKILL

In 2021 the Town of Shawangunk adopted a comprehensive plan update. This plan established a community-driven vision for the Town and its hamlets. The plan identifies four overarching themes that are reflected throughout the document:

- Responsible economic growth and revitalization
- Environmental stewardship
- Smart growth
- Flexibility, creativity and a collaborative spirit

The comprehensive plan includes a dedicated section that specifically lays out a vision, goals, and objectives for the Hamlet of Wallkill. The vision for the Hamlet of Wallkill reads:

In the next 10 years, the Wallkill hamlet will be revitalized to be a family-friendly, vibrant, attractive, and well-kept community. The Town will have a bustling and lively “main street” along Wallkill Avenue and the gateways into the hamlet with restaurants, small businesses, food stores, entertainment uses and family friendly gathering spaces, mixed with residential uses. Wallkill will be served by sidewalks that connect the residential neighborhoods to its commercial “main street” and to its schools, parks, and major recreational facilities, including the Wallkill riverfront and a completed rail trail. A connected riverfront walk along the Wallkill River will link, through a linear park, to a farmer’s market, cafes, restaurants, family-friendly entertainment venues and other gathering spaces attractive to local residents and visitors alike.

Shawangunk’s adopted comprehensive plan is an official policy document that establishes the community’s goals, priorities, and vision for the future. By law, municipal zoning codes in New York State must be in accordance with the local comprehensive plan. This SEDAP was developed in alignment with this vision and the broader themes of the Town’s comprehensive plan. The goals and recommendations in this SEDAP are not binding in any way and they do not supplant the goals and recommendations in the comprehensive plan. Rather, the contents of this SEDAP are designed to complement and advance the vision established in the Town’s comprehensive plan.

III. COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Summary of Community Input Efforts

During the development of this plan, Pattern solicited input from the Wallkill community to inform the goals and recommendations. Pattern also relied on the findings from the community engagement efforts undertaken as part of the 2021 comprehensive plan update. Understanding that there is a well-established vision for the Hamlet of Wallkill in the 2021 comprehensive plan, the community engagement for this project was more focused on specific opportunities in the hamlet for positive change. Community engagement was focused on these core areas of interest:

1. Ideas about what should change in the Hamlet of Wallkill in the next 5-10 years.
2. Ideas for redeveloping the Town Hall Annex
3. Ideas for redeveloping the Police Station
4. Ideas for supporting and improving the business district on Wallkill Avenue
5. Ideas to better integrate the Wallkill Valley Rail trail with the hamlet.
6. Ideas to improve Garrison Park and Popp Memorial Park

There were three primary opportunities for the community to provide input:

Weekend of Wallkill – With the help of Vision of Wallkill, Pattern was present at the Weekend of Wallkill on September 21, 2024. At this event Pattern collected ideas for the future of the hamlet through conversations and a comment box. This was also an opportunity to spread the word about the SEDAP project and invite members of the community to continue to participate in the process.

Online Survey – Pattern published a simple online survey comprised of three questions about the future of the hamlet. Respondents were asked what changes they would like to see in the next 5 to 10 years, and what redevelopment ideas they had for the Town Hall Annex and the Police Station. The survey was opened on September 21, 2024, and advertised at the Weekend of Wallkill. The survey was closed on December 1, 2024.

Community Visioning Session – Pattern hosted a community visioning session on the evening of Thursday, Oct. 10, 2024, at the Wallkill Fire House. At this session there were three stations dedicated to a specific area in the hamlet for discussion. Attendees were split into three groups that rotated to each of the three topic stations. Each group spent 15 minutes at a station before rotating to the next one until every group had visited each station. At the end of the session all the attendees were reconvened for a summary of the findings at each station. The topics at each of the stations were:

1. Town Hall Annex and Garrison Park
2. The Police station and the entrance to the rail trail
3. The Wallkill Avenue business corridor and Popp Memorial Park

Community & Stakeholder Findings

Town Hall Annex

There was broad agreement that the Town Hall Annex is currently underutilized given its desirable centralized location in the hamlet. Local residents shared several specific ideas for the use of this site. Their ideas included the following general themes:

- **Community space** – Many of the ideas for this site centered around community-based uses that provide a public benefit. Specific ideas included multipurpose community room, youth center, senior center, expansion of the library, and event space with a stage.
- **Synergy with Garrison Park** – Many people think the future use of site should complement the adjacent Garrison Park. Specific ideas included bathrooms, water fountains, recreation-based business, a business similar to a recently closed business called “Gear Up,” which included things like youth sports clinics and batting cages.
- **Flexible business space** – Similar to the idea of providing multipurpose community space, several people would like to see this site become a place for business. Specific ideas included facilities for pop-up businesses, facilities for food trucks, shared commercial kitchen space, and a place capable of hosting a farmers’ market or similar type of multi-vendor market.
- **New Police Station** – This site has been floated as a potential new home for the Police Department. Many people think this site would be a good location for the police department as it is owned by the Town, centrally located, and near other municipal services at Town Hall.

Garrison Park

Many people reported that Garrison Park is a well utilized park largely because it is centrally located, and other nearby playground options are limited. The prevailing sentiment about Garrison Park is that it is a great asset for the community, but the park needs to be redesigned and improved. People generally like the location of the park but would like to see it upgraded with certain improvements.

- **Safety** – One of the primary concerns related to Garrison Park is alleged criminal behavior taking place in the park, especially at night. There have been a handful of instances of vandalism in the park in recent years. There was a desire for more lighting and prominent cameras to deter this type of behavior.
- **Shade** – Several people who regularly use Garrison Park expressed a desire for more shade in the park. All the trees in the park are too small to provide a place to rest in the shade.
- **Equipment Improvements** – There were many people who said they would utilize Garrison Park more if the playground and sports equipment was upgraded. Many people noted that the existing equipment is outdated and, in some cases, breaking down. Several participants also expressed a desire for playground equipment suitable for a range of ages and abilities, including individuals with disabilities.

Police Station

There was broad agreement that the site of the Police Station could be repurposed into something with a higher and better use, particularly because of its location at the entrance to the rail trail and as an entrance to “downtown” Wallkill. It was also made very clear that nothing new should happen on this site unless the Town of Shawangunk Police Department finds a suitable location for a new headquarters that is agreed upon by both the community and the police department. If this site was repurposed into something new, there was strong agreement that the property should be used to complement the rail trail, and act as a gateway to the hamlet and its recreational amenities. Some of the most common themes included:

- **Expanded Rail Trail Entrance** - A small area that has tourism brochures or a map of other things to do in the Wallkill River Valley / Shawangunk Ridge. Local residents also suggested a bike rental shop, and open space to sit with benches and tables, and perhaps additional parking for the rail trail.
- **Walk-in Food and Drink Establishment** – A restaurant or some kind of novelty food store that caters to pedestrians on the rail trail, with places to sit and enjoy the food or drink. Ideas included: a café/coffee shop, something with a walk-up window to take advantage of rail trail traffic, a food shop that adjusts seasonally (e.g. ice cream in the summer and hot cocoa in the winter), a breakfast & lunch restaurant (e.g. Café Mio in Gardiner).
- **Coffee shop / Cafe** A coffee shop was by far the most common type of business suggested for this location. Many people expressed interest in a coffee shop that includes tables and outdoor places to sit. The prevailing interest was for a pedestrian oriented coffee shop that synergizes with the rail trail, but there was also some interest in exploring the feasibility of a drive-thru coffee shop as well.
- **A “Gateway” Building for Businesses** – Several people suggested the site should be used for a unique structure that incorporates local businesses into an extended rail trail. One such concept called for an “archway” through which rail trail visitors could walk, run or bike, with businesses on either side. If the rail trail eventually extends to the north, this gateway structure would bring users through a small open-air plaza where businesses offer bike rentals, coffee, food, tourism information, and other goods and services that link the trail to the surrounding community. (A similar concept is being used to extend the Heritage Trail into the City of Middletown in Orange County.)

Rail Trail Improvements & Integration with the Hamlet

The rail trail was widely viewed as a significant asset for the hamlet, but the community is not yet tapping into the full potential of the trail. Many people expressed interest in seeing the rail trail extended down Railroad Avenue through the hamlet to the end of CE Penny drive, where it then goes into the woods and terminates before the prison property. The most common themes related to the rail trail were:

- **Signage** - People expressed the need for signs coming off the rail trail to point people toward the hamlet business district, parks, the high school / track, etc. There was also a desire to have signage on the rail trail pointing users in the direction of Wallkill, especially if it is extended north to Gardiner and connected to the larger existing rail trail network.
- **Rail Trail Connectors** – Local residents shared many ideas about how the rail trail could connect to assets within the hamlet and to nearby points of interest. People were excited by the Milk Factory project just south of the hamlet. This food, event, and tourism destination will be connected to the hamlet via the rail trail. If the trail is extended through the hamlet, people expressed a desire for strategic design choices that would entice users to explore into the hamlet. Many people saw an extended rail trail and an improved Garrison Park as part of an important recreational confluence.
- **Upkeep** - Some folks mentioned that maintenance is needed on the rail trail. The bollard that is at the rail trail entrance now is blighted and not flush with the ground. Several people mentioned that the Montgomery/Walden end of the rail trail is better maintained. They specifically mentioned brush maintenance that is done on the shoulders of the rail trail. They said Shawangunk should seek to do the same, at least once a year.

Popp Memorial Park

Popp Memorial Park is one of the few places in the hamlet with a full view and access to the Wallkill River. People generally like the flexibility of the existing pavilion at the park and the proximity to the river, but people also feel that there is room for the park to improve. The key points of conversation related to Popp Memorial Park and access to the Wallkill River include:

- **Boat Launch** – Many people expressed an interest in locating a public boat launch in Popp Memorial Park. It was pointed out that other nearby communities on the Wallkill River have boat launches.
- **Wallkill Riverwalk improvements** – there is an existing short pedestrian footpath along the Wallkill River beginning at Popp Memorial Park and ending just north of McBee's hair salon. People wish this trail could be improved and extended, but the bus depot on the banks of the Wallkill River prevents the trail from continuing.
- **Farmers Market** – Several people indicated that Popp Memorial Park would be a good location for a farmers' market as it could take advantage of the existing pavilion and bathroom facilities.

Wallkill Avenue Business District & Local Businesses Climate

People generally expressed frustration about the lack of businesses in the hamlet, particularly along the Wallkill Avenue business district. However, there was also a strong desire to support the local small businesses that do exist in the community. Many wish to see more small businesses move into the hamlet to strengthen the local economy and community vibrancy. Other common ideas and feedback related to the business district included:

- **Local Business Networking & Support** - People believe that the local business community would benefit from some organized networking and advocacy, the type of services typically provided by a chamber of commerce.
- **Business Friendly** - Many people expressed the opinion that the Town does not have a business-friendly reputation, citing a perceived general lack of support for small businesses. There is a perception that new businesses will not last long in downtown Wallkill. It was also shared that there aren't many suitable buildings for small businesses to move into, even on Wallkill Avenue. Additionally, new construction is stymied by a development review process that some believe to be overly burdensome and lengthy.
- **Resident-Focused Business** - While the public shared many ideas about what types of businesses people would like to see in the hamlet, one overarching theme that emerged is a desire for businesses that provide essential needs and services to residents. Examples include grocery stores, laundromats, or a dollar store.
- **Other New Businesses** – Other new businesses that people would like to see include a deli / bodega, brewery, donut shop, toy shop, boutique hotel, movie theater, and a bowling alley.

IV. SEDAP GOALS

The following goals were established in response to an analysis of local conditions and metrics, and the findings from stakeholder and community engagement.

A. Improve synergies between the Hamlet and the Rail Trail

The rail trail that currently terminates on the southern end of the hamlet is a unique asset that provides recreational opportunities to local residents, connects the hamlet with communities to the south, and brings visitors into the hamlet. The Open Space Institute is actively pursuing plans to extend the trail through the hamlet and north to New Paltz, connecting Wallkill into a network of hundreds of contiguous miles of pedestrian and bike trails.

B. Improve the look and feel of the Hamlet

Architectural design standards, façade improvements, and other streetscape beautification measures can improve the experience of being in downtown Wallkill. These improvements can apply to existing buildings, infrastructure, and any potential new development.

C. Improve housing opportunities for residents

Housing that is safe and affordable is a foundational component of a healthy community and local economy. Improving quality housing opportunities in the hamlet will help maintain long-standing social connections, improve educational and health outcomes, and provide much needed housing for the local workforce and a growing senior population.

D. Improve the planning and development process

A successful planning and development process is one that stays true to the values and vision of the community, while also providing a clear and consistent process for potential developers. Improving the Town's planning and development process will help ensure that Wallkill can maintain its community character without missing out on opportunities to strengthen the local economy and community vitality.

E. Increase foot traffic downtown

More foot traffic downtown can generate more business for local stores, reduce incidences of minor crimes such as vandalism, and improve the overall vitality of the hamlet as a place that is bustling with activity.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Update Zoning: Design Guidelines

Design guidelines are a planning and land use tool with the purpose of providing additional visual and design preferences on top of regulations established in the zoning code. Design guidelines can be particularly useful for ensuring that development fits in with the surrounding landscape or built environment. Design guidelines are often employed in historic neighborhoods where the visual conformity is particularly important. The Town of Shawangunk's zoning code includes a reference to design guidelines for the Small Scale (SB) zone.

Excerpt from the Town of Shawangunk Zoning Code

Article II - Use Regulation

§177-6. Purposes of zoning districts; use regulations

I. Small-Scale Business (SB)

(page 19)

(5) Design Guidelines

All uses in the SB district should comply with applicable design guidelines. Until such time as specific design guidelines are adopted by the Town of Shawangunk, the New York Planning Federation's "*Community Design Guideline*" may be used as an example of acceptable design guidelines.

The Town of Shawangunk does not have any adopted design guidelines. However, the "Community Design Guideline" publication referenced in the code was published over 30 years ago in 1993 and is not readily accessible online. This issue was identified in Shawangunk's 2021 comprehensive plan but has not yet been addressed in the code. The 2021 comprehensive plan also discussed survey results from the 2019 community survey that demonstrate support for the implementation of design standards. Additionally, the Hamlet of Wallkill was the one area in town where the majority of survey respondents supported design guidelines. Respondents also expressed that the design guidelines need to be reasonable and clearly articulated at the beginning of the development process and not applied in an ad-hoc manner.

The 2021 comprehensive plan recommends that the Town should adopt design guidelines for the Hamlet of Wallkill. In the absence of adopted design guidelines, the comprehensive plan recommends that the Shawangunk Planning Board should refer to a 2012 publication from the Shawangunk Mountains Regional Partnership titled "Scenic Resources in the Shawangunk Mountains Region: A Guide for Planning Boards" or the 2017 "Ulster County Community Design Manual" from the Ulster County Planning Department. While both documents contain relevant and valuable design principles, they have not been officially adopted into the zoning code and there is no indication as to which parts of these documents should be applied by the planning board.

The favorability of design guidelines, specifically in the Hamlet of Wallkill, speaks to a desire to establish a consistent look and feel of the community that aligns with the historic look of brick-and-stone structures that were built by the Borden Family. However, referring to an outdated and inaccessible publication is not an effective way to accomplish this goal. The current status of the zoning code does not make it clear which design guidelines are applicable, if any at all. This is in clear conflict with both the recommendations of the 2021 comprehensive plan and the results of the 2019 community survey.

Actions:

- Remove the outdated reference to the “Community Design Guidelines.”
- Adopt clear design guidelines specific to the Hamlet of Wallkill.
- If design guidelines are to be used from existing documents such as the Ulster County Community Design manual, make it clear which parts of the document should be referenced in specific zoning districts or development scenarios. Do not simply reference the entire document.

Advances Goals:

- Improve the planning and development process (SEDAP).
- Improve the Look and Feel of the Hamlet (SEDAP).
- W5 - Beautify the Hamlet (Comprehensive Plan).
- W8 - Streamline the site plan review and planning process for existing buildings (Comprehensive Plan).

Potential Funding Sources:

- **New York Main Street Grant Program** – up to \$20,000 in grant funding is available for technical assistance to create design guidelines.
- Removing the outdated design guidelines can be done in-house at no cost.
- Adding design guidelines that reference existing documents can be done in-house at no cost.

Update zoning: Incentive Zoning

Shawangunk's zoning code contains an incentive zoning provision (page 53) that outlines incentives that can be awarded to development projects by the Town Board in exchange for project features that provide a community asset.

Excerpt from the Town of Shawangunk Zoning Code
Article III – Supplementary Lot, Height and Yard Regulations
§177-17. Incentive zoning
(page 53)

A. Purpose.

The purpose and intent of these provisions are to offer zoning incentives or bonuses to land development applicants to provide certain specified amenities or community benefits in certain areas of the Town that will assist the Town to implement specific physical, cultural and social policies as generally described in the comprehensive plan of the Town and as supplemented by the local laws and ordinances adopted by the Town Board. Incentive zoning may be pursued only in the sole discretion of the applicant but, if pursued, the final decision shall rest at all times with the Town Board in its sole discretion.

B. Amenities or Community Benefits for which incentives may be offered:

(1) The following amenities or community benefits may be located either on or off the site of the subject application or may be both on and off the site.

1. Open space.
2. Affordable housing for persons of median/moderate income.
3. Central water and/or sewer facility construction, enhancements, improvements and/or extensions.
4. Public highway construction or improvements, enhancements or extensions.
5. Any combination of these specific amenities and/or cash in lieu thereof.

The current incentive zoning section does not provide guidelines or details related to most of the incentives, leaving interpretation up to the Town Board. This loose framework can be detrimental as developers are less likely to take advantage of incentives if everything is at the discretion of the Town Board with few guidelines related to the scope and scale of what they must provide and what they get in return.

The incentive that is most in need of refining is the density bonus awarded for providing affordable housing. There is both a need for more affordable housing in the Town and local support for incentivizing density in the Hamlet of Wallkill as demonstrated in the 2019 Survey results. The Hamlet of Wallkill is an ideal place within the town to incentivize density and build affordable housing as it reduces development pressure on valuable open space and other parts of the Town with less existing infrastructure capacity and access to services. This is consistent with the Town's commitment to smart growth planning principles.

Actions:

- Within the incentive zoning section, remove reference to goals from the 2003 comprehensive plan, and revise this section to reflect the 2021 goals.
- Clearly define what qualifies as “affordable housing” for the purposes of the incentive zoning.
- Clearly define the density bonuses that will be awarded based on the affordable housing provided.
- Consider revising the rest of the incentive zoning section of the zoning code to provide more details and clarity for potential developers.

Advances Goals:

- Improve the planning and development process (SEDAP).
- Improve housing opportunities for residents (SEDAP).
- W4. Allow expansion of the hamlet’s residential neighborhoods in a building pattern consistent with the existing hamlet pattern (Comprehensive Plan).

Potential Funding Sources:

- Removing the outdated references to goals from the 2003 comprehensive plan can be done in-house at no cost.
- Updating the incentive zoning section of the zoning code to clearly define affordability and other terms could be done in-house, but the Town should consider seeking input from a professional planner, especially if the entirety of the incentive zoning section is to be revised.
- **NY Department of State Smart Growth Community Planning Program** – This program provides funding to communities to develop or update local comprehensive plans, area plans or **zoning codes** that emphasize and integrate Smart Growth principles. The minimum award amount is \$75,000 and there is no maximum award amount.

Update Zoning: Apartments Above Ground Floor Commercial in the SB Zone

One of the permitted uses in the Small Business (SB) zone is “Apartment above ground floor businesses.” The word “apartment” in this context can be interpreted in the narrowest way to mean one single apartment. It can also be interpreted more broadly to mean that apartments are a permitted use on the second floor, and more than one apartment is allowed provided they meet the relevant building codes and standards.

The Town should change the word “Apartment” to “Apartments” to clarify the ordinance and allow for more than one apartment above ground-floor uses. This is particularly important at a time where commercial space can be difficult to fill with a long-term tenant. Building owners often rely on the more reliable revenue generated from renting second floor apartments to cover the costs associated with the building like maintenance, insurance, and taxes. Allowing more than one apartment can also create an opportunity for a business owner to live in an apartment above their business and rent out another apartment in the building, providing more financial stability.

Allowing more than one apartment is unlikely to result in an influx of new units being built in the SB district. Rather, it will allow for more than one apartment unit in a handful of buildings where the size and layout of the building make sense, and the building owner has the desire and means to build it.

Actions:

- In the Small Business (SB) zone section of the Town zoning code change the permitted use “Apartment above ground floor business” to “Apartments above ground floor commercial.”

Advances Goals:

- Improve the planning and development process (SEDAP).
- Improve housing opportunities for residents (SEDAP).
- W4. Allow expansion of the hamlet’s residential neighborhoods in a building pattern consistent with the existing hamlet pattern (Comprehensive Plan).
- W8. Streamline the site plan review and planning process for existing buildings (Comprehensive Plan).

Potential Funding Sources:

- This minor update to the zoning code can be done in-house at no cost.

Modernize the Zoning Code

The Town of Shawangunk's laws and ordinances are currently hosted on the Town's website as a series of links to PDFs. This includes the Town's zoning code, which is only available as a scanned PDF without word search functionality. While this is adequate, the code would be more accessible and easier to update if it was hosted ecode360.com or similar sites. For a fee, these websites host town codes and ordinances organized with chapters links and search function.

In addition to digitizing the existing zoning code, the Town should also consider overhauling the zoning code to improve functionality and consistency with the 2021 comprehensive plan. There are a number of specific zoning code changes recommended in this plan, but the Town would benefit from a more thorough and complete update to the zoning code. This represents a significant undertaking that would require the assistance from a professional planning consultant.

Actions:

- Update the zoning code to improve functionality and consistency with the town's comprehensive plan.
- Digitize the zoning code on a website like ecode360.

Advances Goals:

- Improve the planning and development process (SEDAP).

Potential Funding Sources:

- **NY Department of State Smart Growth Community Planning Program** – This program provides funding to communities to develop or update local comprehensive plans, area plans or **zoning codes** that emphasize and integrate Smart Growth principles. The minimum award amount is \$75,000 and there is no maximum award amount.

Become a Pro-Housing Community

The Pro-Housing Communities Program is a New York State certification program aimed at incentivizing municipalities to be “pro-housing” in the face of rising housing costs and a statewide housing shortage. As of 2024, municipalities must be a certified Pro-Housing Community to be eligible for a number of important state grants including the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI), NY Forward, NY Main Street, and more. Several of these grant programs are relevant to goals in the Hamlet of Wallkill.

Fortunately, the process for becoming a certified pro-housing community is relatively straight forward. The steps are:

1. Submit an official letter of intent to New York Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) indicating the Town’s intent to become a Pro Housing Community
2. Use the template provided on the HCR website to provide a summary of the Town’s zoning code.
3. Use the template provided on the HCR website to demonstrate that the town has either:
 - a. Issued permits over the last year that increase the Town’s housing stock by at least 0.33%.
 - OR
 - b. Issued permits over the last three years that increase the Town’s housing stock by at least 1%.

Municipalities that have not experienced housing growth in the last few years can still be certified as a Pro-Housing Community by submitting the above information and having adopting [the Pro-Housing Resolution](#) from HCR.

Given the low barrier to entry and the access to important grants that it unlocks, the Town of Shawangunk should complete the steps described above to become a certified Pro-Housing community.

Actions:

- Designate a Pro-Housing point person to coordinate the Town’s effort to become a pro-housing community.
- Submit a letter of intent to HCR.
- Apply to become a Pro-Housing Community using the steps described above.

Advances Goals:

- Improve housing opportunities for residents (SEDAP).
- Indirectly advances several goals in from the SEDAP and the comprehensive plan as it unlocks access to key state grants that could be crucial funding sources to achieve these goals.

Potential Funding Sources:

- This recommendation does not require funding.

Join the Ulster County Housing Smart Communities Initiative

The Ulster County Housing Smart Communities Initiative (HSCI) is a housing program administered by the Ulster County Department of Planning. This program provides technical support and incentives to help Ulster County municipalities address their local housing needs and affordability challenges. HSCI is a certification-based program modeled after the structure of the statewide Climate Smart Communities program. Participating municipalities complete eligible “housing smart actions” to become a certified housing smart community. Completing smart housing actions upgrades the tier of certification (bronze, silver, gold, and platinum), and unlocks additional incentives and support from the County.

By simply joining the USCI program the Town would achieve bronze-level certification and immediately gain access to valuable technical support and potential grant funding from Ulster County to address local housing needs. The four primary steps to join the HSCI are:

1. Pass a municipal resolution to formally acknowledge the Town’s intent to participate in the HSCI. A model resolution is available on the [HSCI website](#).
2. Designate a Housing Smart Community Coordinator who will serve as the point of contact for the Town and oversee the documentation and communication necessary for the certification process. The coordinator can be a municipal staff member, elected official, or local volunteer.
3. Establish a Housing Task Force. The task force will hold regular meetings to discuss local issues, educate the community about local housing needs and solutions, prioritize the Town’s response to housing issues, and lead the effort to complete housing smart actions.
4. Register as a housing smart community through the Community Submissions page on the HSCI website. To register, the Town will submit information demonstrating that the above steps have been completed.

After joining the program and achieving bronze-level certification, the next step is for the designated housing task force to begin establishing a community outreach and educational campaign on the importance of developing a range of housing options.

The USCI has a robust website with detailed information about the benefits of the program, the certification process, eligible housing smart actions, and other helpful resources. As a preliminary step, the Town should reach out to Ulster County Department of Planning for additional guidance or information about the certification process. At the Town’s request, a representative from the Ulster County Department of Planning may provide a presentation about the program for the Town Board.

Actions:

- Reach out to the Ulster County Department of Planning to express interest in joining the Housing Smart Communities Initiative.
- Join the HSCI using the steps described here and on the HSCI website.

Advances Goals:

- Improve housing opportunities for residents (SEDAP).

Potential Funding Sources:

- This action does not require any funding.

Redevelopment of Town-Owned Property

A Request for Proposals (RFP) is a process by which a municipality can solicit proposals for a specific project or service. Respondents to an RFP will provide information about their relevant qualifications and a detailed explanation of their plan to complete the project or provide the service set forth in the RFP. An RFP can sometimes be preceded by a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) or a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) which are ways to gauge interest and narrow down the list of qualified respondents before asking for a full proposal.

The RFP process is most often used by municipalities to procure services, but it can also be used to transform underutilized town-owned property into a community asset. An RFP can be used to find a developer to purchase or sign a long-term lease and develop the property. The details of the RFP ensure that the development is what the municipality wants, and by extension, what residents want. These types of projects can be attractive to developers because they know up front that this is something the town has requested, so the planning and review process should be smooth. This approach provides an opportunity for a municipality to have a strong influence over the development of projects while still utilizing private development.

Redevelopment of municipally Owned Land: Local Case Studies

City of Middletown

The City of Middletown has successfully redeveloped several City-owned properties in recent years through the use of RFPs and RFQs. The most recent example of this approach is 11-15 King Street, a vacant 4-story building in downtown Middletown. The City's Office of Economic and Community Development issued a Request for Concepts / Qualifications for this site in April of 2024 seeking developers interested in rehabilitating the building into a mixed-use project. A review committee comprised of the mayor, the City's economic development director, the City's public works commissioner, a city attorney, and the Common Council President reviewed the submitted bids and selected a winner. In December the Middletown Common Council approved the sale of the building for \$500,000. The selected purchasers plan to transform the building into a mixed-use development with ground floor commercial space and approximately 15 apartments on the upper floors.

City of Hudson

The City of Hudson recently used an RFQ and RFP to redevelop a city-owned lots into affordable housing. In the years preceding the issuance of the RFQ and the RFP, Hudson engaged in a housing needs assessment and an affordable housing development plan. This planning work demonstrated a strong need for more affordable housing in the city and identified these City-Owned sites as good opportunities for the creation of affordable housing. The [RFP](#) issued by the City in 2022 established clear development standards and selection criteria. A proposal from Hudson River Housing and the Kearny Group was the selected winner. The result is a proposed 21-unit affordable condo development project and a 70-unit affordable apartment building, both of which are in the planning and design phase. These developments will provide much needed housing on formally underutilized City-owned property.

Lessons Learned

The cities of Middletown and Hudson are examples of how RFPs can be successfully used to redevelop underutilized municipally owned land. Some key takeaways from their experience are:

- Make sure the zoning permits the type of project that is being requested in the RFP.
- Run a title search on the property to make sure the property is free and clear of unknown easements or other potential encumbrances.
- Consider including development milestones as a condition of the sale that require fees to be paid if the conditions are not met. This ensures that the property will be developed as intended once it is no longer owned by the municipality. The Town could also hold a mortgage on the property until the development is finished, giving the Town the authority to take back the property if the chosen developer blatantly sits on the property and doesn't take the required actions.

There are two Town-owned properties in the Hamlet of Wallkill that the Town of Shawangunk should consider redeveloping using the RFEI/RFP process described above. Any potential RFP should be strongly influenced by the goals and vision for the hamlet in the comprehensive plan feedback received from local residents about what they want in the hamlet and what they want to see developed on these two specific sites. The two sites are the Shawangunk Police Station on Bona Ventura Ave, and the Town Hall Annex next to Town Hall.

Shawangunk Police Department Redevelopment

The Shawangunk Police Department is currently housed in a small 1-story building and a garage on a 0.32-acre lot. If this property were to be redeveloped through an RFP process, it should only be done if there is another suitable location for the police department to relocate, and ideally with the support of the department.



This property is on Bona Ventura Ave, directly across the street from the current entrance to the rail trail that extends south out of the hamlet and into Orange County. If the rail trail is ever extended north into the hamlet, it would run right next to this lot. Its proximity to the rail trail and one of the main arterials in the hamlet makes it a valuable location in terms of visibility and accessibility. Any redevelopment of this site should consider how it relates to users of the rail trail and the new apartment building being built next to it. Redevelopment of this site would likely entail demolishing the existing structures and building new.

A number of ideas for this site were collected as part of the community engagement and stakeholder outreach efforts for this plan. The most common ideas for this site include:

- **Expanded Rail Trail Entrance** - Rail trail parking, A small area that has tourism brochures or a map of other things to do in the Wallkill River Valley / Shawangunk Ridge, bike rental, an open space to sit with benches and tables.
- **Walk-in Food and Drink Establishment** – A restaurant or some kind of novelty food store that caters to pedestrians on the rail trail with places to sit and enjoy the food or drink. Ideas included: a café/coffee shop, something with a walk-up window to take advantage of rail trail traffic, a food shop that adjusts seasonally (e.g. ice cream in the summer and hot cocoa in the winter), a breakfast & lunch restaurant (e.g. Café Mio in Gardiner).
- **Coffee shop / Cafe** A coffee shop was by far the most common type of business suggested for this location. Many people expressed interest in a coffee shop that includes tables and outdoor places to sit.
- **A “Gateway” Building for Businesses** – Several people suggested the site should be used for a unique structure that incorporates local businesses into an extended rail trail. One such concept called for an “archway” through which rail trail visitors could walk, run or bike, with businesses on either side. If the rail trail eventually extends to the north, this gateway structure would bring users through a small open-air plaza where businesses offer bike rentals, coffee, food, tourism information, and other goods and services that link the trail to the surrounding community. (A similar concept is being used to extend the Heritage Trail into the City of Middletown in Orange County.)

Actions

- Ensure that the Shawangunk Police Department has a suitable location to relocate to.
- Seek grant funding to demolish or rehabilitate the police department building and garage.
- Create and issue an RFEI or RFQ for the redevelopment of the site to gauge interest and narrow down the list of qualified respondents before asking for a full proposal. Development standards and potential uses should be significantly informed by community input and consistent with the goals of the Town’s comprehensive plan.
- Create and issue and RFP.

Advances Goals:

- **Improve synergies between the hamlet and the Rail Trail**
- **Increase foot traffic downtown.**
- Improve the look and feel of the hamlet.
- W2 revitalize the hamlet gateways.
- W3. Create destination “Main Street” for Wallkill.
- W5. Beautify the hamlet.
- W6 Expand and enhance pedestrian connections throughout the hamlet.

Potential Funding Sources:

- **Restore NY** – This program provides funding to municipalities to demolish, deconstruct, rehabilitate and/or reconstruct vacant, abandoned, condemned, and/or surplus. This program can also fund ancillary site development needs such as water, sewer, and parking. The Town of Shawangunk would be eligible for up to \$1 Million in grant funding with a minimum 10% local match.

Town Hall Annex Redevelopment

The Town Hall Annex is a former fire house located directly next to Town Hall. The lot is bordered by the Town Hall to the south, Central Avenue to the west, Main Street to the north, and Park Avenue to the east. The Parkview House Restaurant and Tavern is across the street on the corner of Central Avenue and Main Street. Garrison Park is across the street to the north, and a new row of apartment buildings is going up across Park Avenue.



The Town Hall Annex is currently being used by the Town of Shawangunk for storage. Its centralized location and proximity to community services and assets make this site a good candidate for redevelopment into a higher and better use. While the structural integrity of the building is sound, the HVAC system is in need of repair or replacement. A redevelopment of this site could make use of the existing structure, but the HVAC system would need to be addressed either by the redeveloper or preemptively by the Town of Shawangunk.

A number of ideas for this site were collected as part of the community engagement and stakeholder outreach efforts for this plan. The most common ideas for this site include:

- **Community space** – many of the ideas for this site centered around community-based uses that provide a public benefit. Specific ideas included multipurpose community room, youth center, senior center, expansion of the library, and event space with a stage.
- **Synergy with Garrison Park** – many people think the future use of site should complement the adjacent Garrison Park. Specific ideas included bathrooms, water fountains, recreation-based business, a business similar to a recently closed business called “Gear Up” which included things like youth sports clinics and batting cages.
- **Flexible business space** – Similar to the idea of providing multipurpose community space, several people would like to see this site become a place for business. Specific ideas included facilities for pop-up businesses, facilities for food trucks, shared commercial kitchen space, and a place capable of hosting a farmers’ market or similar type of multi-vendor market.
- **New Police Station** – This site has been floated as a potential new home for the Police Department. There were many people that think this site would be a good location for the police department as it is owned by the Town, centrally located, and near other municipal services at Town Hall.

Actions

- Seek grant funding to fix the HVAC system in the Town Hall Annex
- Create and issue an RFEI or RFQ for the redevelopment of the Town Hall Annex to gauge interest and narrow down the list of qualified respondents before asking for a full proposal. Development standards and potential uses should be significantly informed by community input and consistent with the goals of the Town’s comprehensive plan.
- Create and issue an RFP.

Advances Goals:

- Improve the planning and development process (SEDAP).
- Improve the look and feel of the hamlet.
- W3. Create destination “main Street” for Wallkill.
- W5. Beautify the hamlet.

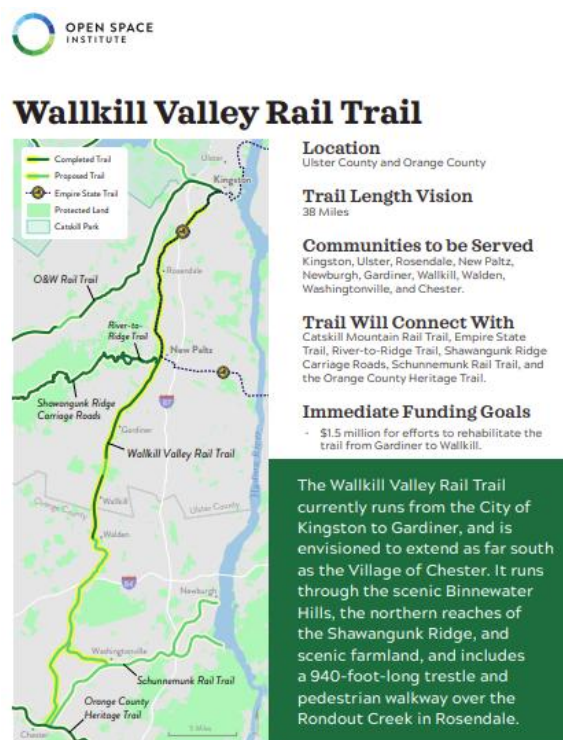
Potential Funding Sources:

- **Restore NY** – This program provides funding to municipalities to demolish, deconstruct, rehabilitate and/or reconstruct vacant, abandoned, condemned, and/or surplus. This program can also fund ancillary site development needs such as water, sewer, and parking. The Town of Shawangunk would be eligible for up to \$1 Million in grant funding with a minimum 10% local match.
- **Regional Council Capital Fund** this program supports capital-based economic development initiatives. Eligible activities include but are not limited to demolition and environmental remediation, new construction, and renovation. The minimum award amount is \$100,000. Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to reach out to their regional council to discuss projects before applying for this fund.

Rail Trail Improvements and Integration with the Hamlet

The Wallkill Valley Rail Trail Currently runs from the City of Kingston all the way down to the Town of Gardiner, terminating on Denniston Road, the border between the Town of Gardiner and the Town of Shawangunk. Just south of this terminus is the Shawangunk Correctional Facility and the Wallkill Correctional Facility. These facilities pose a challenge for the continuation of the rail trail as there are security concerns related to bringing a public path close to prisons. An unimproved trail picks back up again on River Road south of the correctional facility and extends 1.3 miles, connecting into the Hamlet of Wallkill and ending on Railroad Avenue. The trail picks up once more on Bona Ventura Avenue, extending south into Orange County and connecting with the Village of Walden. This 3-mile section between Wallkill and Walden is paved and maintained.

The Open Space Institute (OSI) is a nonprofit land conservation organization with the goal of protecting land for clean drinking water, public recreation, healthy communities, wildlife habitat, and climate protection. OSI, in collaboration with other organizations like the Wallkill Valley Land Trust, played an active role in building out the rail trail network in Ulster County and the Hudson Valley region. Since 2010, OSI has partnered with other local organizations to raise money and build out several miles of the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail, connecting Kingston to the Main Street in Gardiner. The break in the rail trail near the correctional facility represents the last missing link that would connect Wallkill into the vast rail trail network, including the Empire State Trail that extends from Albany to New York City. Connecting this gap in the trail is a priority for OSI.



The Town should continue to take a proactive approach to advocate for the extension of the rail trail through the hamlet and up to the Town's northern border. This means maintaining regular contact with representatives from OSI and the Shawangunk Correctional Facility to try to find a workable solution for extending the trail near the prison.

While there is optimism that the rail trail can be fully connected to the north, there is no guarantee that it will happen or how long it will take. In the meantime, the Town should also explore opportunities to improve just the section of the rail trail right of way in the Hamlet of Wallkill. Improving this section would help bring people off the rail trail and into the heart of the hamlet while simultaneously providing a safe walkable path as an amenity for Town residents.

Actions

- Maintain regular contact with representatives from OSI and the Shawangunk Correctional Facility to try to find a workable solution for extending the trail near the prison.
- Work through State elected officials to convene a meeting with the Town, OSI, and senior officials from the state Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, which oversees the prisons and their properties.
- Seek grant funding to extend the rail trail into the hamlet.
- Extend the rail trail into the hamlet along Railroad Avenue.

Advances Goals:

- Improve synergies between the hamlet and the Rail Trail
- Increase foot traffic downtown.
- Improve the look and feel of the hamlet.
- W2 revitalize the hamlet gateways.
- W3. Create destination “main Street” for Walkkill.
- W5. Beautifying the hamlet.
- W6 Expand and enhance pedestrian connections throughout the hamlet.

Potential Funding Sources:

- **Hudson River Valley Greenway Conservancy Trail Grant** - This program provides grants for planning, constructing, repairing, maintaining, and promoting trails. This program emphasizes connections to the Empire State Trail. Maximum awards are:
 - \$250,000 for trail construction
 - \$75,000 for trail design/planning
 - \$100,000 for trail rehab/improvements
 - \$25,000 for trail education/interpretation
 - \$250,000 for natural disaster recovery/reconstruction
 - \$25,000 for trail maintenance
- **Hudson River Valley Greenway Heritage Grant Program** – This program provides funding for programming, interpretation, and marketing projects that align with the goals of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. Up to \$7,500 are available for this type of work.
- **New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (OPRHP) Parks Program** – This program provides funding for the acquisition, development or planning of parks and recreational facilities open to the public to preserve, rehabilitate or restore lands, waters or structures for park, recreation, or conservation purposes and for structural assessments and/or planning for such projects. Examples of eligible projects include playgrounds, courts, rinks, community gardens, and facilities for swimming, boating, picnicking, hunting, fishing, camping or other recreational activities.
- **Open Space Institute** – OSI has demonstrated the ability to successfully work with local municipalities and organizations, raise funds, and implement trail improvement projects. The Town should collaborate with OSI for their technical expertise and potential access to additional funding for trail construction and improvements.

Improvements to Popp Memorial Park

As one of the only areas in the hamlet that provides public access to the Wallkill River, Popp Memorial Park is a significant asset for the Town. The existing pavilion provides flexible space for various community events in the park.

In October 2024 it was announced that the Town received \$75,000 to fund improvements to Popp Memorial Park. The funds were made available through an appropriation from New York Assemblyman Brian Maher. A total of \$50,000 will go toward the construction of an ADA-compliant boat launch, and \$25,000 will go toward a refrigeration system that will enable the Lions Club Pavillion to be reliably transformed into an ice-skating rink without the need to rely on naturally occurring cold temperatures.

A public boat launch was the most common idea for Popp Memorial Park cited during community engagement and stakeholder engagement efforts for this plan. While there were other ideas for improving the park such as paving the parking lot, improving the riverwalk, and improving the bathroom facilities, the Town should focus on constructing the boat launch before addressing these other ideas.

Actions

- Construct a boat launch.
- Install the ice-skating rink improvements.
- Upon completion of the improvements that already have funding, re-evaluate the need and priority for additional park improvements.

Advances Goals:

- Improve synergies between the hamlet and the Rail Trail.
- Improve waterfront access and utilization.
- W1. Celebrate the Wallkill River.
- W3. Create destination “main Street” for Wallkill.

Potential Funding Sources:

- **New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (OPRHP) Parks Program** – This program provides funding for the acquisition, development or planning of parks and recreational facilities open to the public to preserve, rehabilitate or restore lands, waters or structures for park, recreation, or conservation purposes and for structural assessments and/or planning for such projects. Examples of eligible projects include playgrounds, courts, rinks, community gardens, and facilities for swimming, boating, picnicking, hunting, fishing, camping or other recreational activities.
- **Hudson River Valley Greenway Heritage Grant Program** – This program provides funding for programming, interpretation, and marketing projects that align with the goals of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. Up to \$7,500 are available for this type of work.

Improvements to Garrison Park

The Town is currently undertaking an effort to make improvements to town parks, including Garrison Park. These improvements are funded through a combination of local recreation fees and grant funding from Ulster County. Garrison Park is slated to receive \$150,000 that will primarily be used to upgrade playground equipment appropriate for a range of ages. Improving the existing playground equipment was one of the primary suggestions for Garrison Park from the community and stakeholder engagement efforts of this plan.

Aside from outdated playground equipment, the other two top-requested improvements to the park were safety and shade. There was a desire for more lighting and prominent cameras to deter vandalism that has occurred in the park at night in recent years. There was also a desire to create more shade in the park as none of the trees or existing equipment provides enough shade for relief on hot and sunny days.

The Town has retained the services of Parkitects, a playground construction company, to design and construct the new playground equipment. The Town should consider whether shade and lighting considerations can be integrated into the planned upgrades. The budget may not be large enough to include these elements without significantly impacting the planned playground equipment upgrades, or the Town may be too far along in the planning process to make changes. If either scenario is true, the Town should complete the planned improvements and look for other avenues to provide shade and lighting.

Garrison Park represents an opportunity to create a unique “town square” with high quality amenities and accessibility. Investing in key public spaces such as this can simultaneously improve local quality of life and catalyze nearby improvements and private investment. Given the important role Garrison Park could play in the future of Wallkill, the Town should consider developing a Garrison Park master plan that goes beyond installing specific equipment and instead provides a more wholistic plan for landscaping, community amenities, and integration the nearby services and amenities.

Actions

- If possible, integrate shaded seating and lighting into the planned upgrades for Garrison Park. Maintain the existing small trees to ensure they can grow tall enough to provide a source of shade.
- If it's not possible to provide shading and lighting within the existing budget or contract agreement, replace the existing playground equipment as planned.
- If the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail is extended through the hamlet, consider how Garrison Park can connect to the trail through signage and streetscape design.
- Develop a Garrison Park Master plan.

Advances Goals:

- Improve the look and feel of the hamlet (SEDAP).
- Improve synergies between the hamlet and the Rail Trail (SEDAP).
- W3. Create destination “main Street” for Wallkill (Comprehensive Plan).
- W5. Beautify the hamlet (Comprehensive Plan).
- W6. Expand and enhance pedestrian connections throughout the hamlet (Comprehensive Plan).

Potential Funding Sources:

- **New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (OPRHP) Parks Program** – This program provides funding for the acquisition, development or planning of parks and recreational facilities open to the public to preserve, rehabilitate or restore lands, waters or structures for park, recreation, or conservation purposes and for structural assessments and/or planning for such projects. Examples of eligible projects include playgrounds, courts, rinks, community gardens, and facilities for swimming, boating, picnicking, hunting, fishing, camping or other recreational activities.
- **Hudson River Valley Greenway Heritage Grant Program** – This program provides funding for programming, interpretation, and marketing projects that align with the goals of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. Up to \$7,500 are available for this type of work.

Create a Housing Rehabilitation Program

Housing rehabilitation programs seek to improve local housing conditions by providing financial assistance and technical assistance to property owners to make repairs that improve the health and safety of the occupants. Housing rehabilitation programs can provide both individual and communitywide benefits by improving living conditions for individual households and improving and maintaining the quality of the local housing stock.

Successful housing rehabilitation programs have clearly articulated program goals and guidelines that are based on a solid understanding of existing housing conditions and community need. The stated goal of the program should substantially inform how the program is designed. There are many details to consider when creating a housing rehabilitation program, some the key elements to consider are:

Eligible Applicants

It is important to clearly define who is eligible to apply and participate in the housing rehabilitation program. Some programs are designed only for owner-occupied households, while others may include renter-occupied households. Many housing rehabilitation programs are designed to specifically assist low- or moderate-income residents. In these instances, only low- or moderate-income homeowners or landlords with low to moderate income tenants are eligible to apply to the program.

Eligible Activities

In general, eligible home repair activities should prioritize safety and livability improvements and not purely cosmetic upgrades. Typical eligible activities for residential rehabilitation programs include roof repair, weatherization improvements, lead abatement, asbestos abatement, energy efficiency upgrades, accessibility improvements for the handicapped, and structural repairs.

Type of Financial Assistance

The two basic types of financial assistance that are typically offered in a housing rehabilitation program are grants and loans. A grant would be a sum of money paid out to cover all or part of the rehabilitation costs. Grant programs often cover only a certain percentage of rehabilitation costs with the property owner required to cover the rest of the costs on their own. Instead of grants, some programs provide loans with favorable terms such as low or no interest. These types of loans can provide financing for home repairs that would otherwise be unavailable to program participants.

Program Administration

Housing rehabilitation programs need an assigned administrator with dedicated time to oversee the program and perform the tasks necessary for the program to function. Duties of the program administrator could include among other things: soliciting applications, reviewing applications, administering financial assistance, working with contractors and property owners, monitoring projects for compliance with program rules.

Potential Partnerships and Support

While the concept of a housing rehabilitation program is straight forward, successfully designing and administering such a program will require technical expertise and a significant dedication of time. If the Town chooses to pursue the establishment of a housing rehabilitation program, it should seek opportunities to collaborate or receive assistance from other organizations or municipalities to improve its capacity to design and administer the program.

Establishing a housing rehabilitation program is one of the eligible “housing smart actions” in the Ulster County Housing Smart Communities Initiative (HSCI) described in the recommendation above. Joining the HSCI would unlock potential funding and technical assistance from housing experts in the Ulster County Planning department with respect to designing, funding, and administering a successful housing rehabilitation program. The Town may also seek partnerships with housing-focused nonprofit organizations with experience administering housing rehabilitation programs and similar initiatives.

Actions

- Reach out to the Ulster County Department of Planning to express interest in joining the Housing Smart Communities Initiative.
- Join the Housing Smart Communities Initiative using the steps described here and on the HSCI website.

Advances Goals:

- Improve housing opportunities for residents (SEDAP).
- Improve the look and feel of the hamlet (SEDAP).
- W5. Beautify the hamlet (Comprehensive Plan).

Potential Funding Sources:

- **NYS HOME Program** - This program provides funding for housing rehabilitation, manufactured home replacement, homebuyer down payment assistance, and tenant based rental assistance. Up to \$750,000 is available per project, and up to \$65,000 per home.
- **USDA Rural Development Housing Preservation Grants** - This program provides funding to municipalities or organizations to provide grants or low-interest loans to eligible recipients to repair or rehabilitate housing. Grants can also go towards the rehabilitation of rental and cooperative properties that house very-low and low-income tenants.

Create a Downtown Façade Improvement Program

A façade improvement program would provide funding to property owners to make qualifying renovations to the exterior of their buildings. The primary goal of this program would be to improve the physical appearance of the business corridor on Wallkill Avenue by providing financial assistance to property owners in the form of grants or favorable loans.

Similar to the housing rehabilitation program described in the above recommendation, a successful façade improvement program requires a detailed framework of program goals, rules, and administrative procedures. While similar to a housing rehabilitation program, a façade improvement program will likely be more straight forward than a housing rehabilitation program to design and administer.

Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design and implement a Façade improvement program for downtown Wallkill.
Advances Goals:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase foot traffic downtown (SEDAP).• Improve the look and feel of the hamlet (SEDAP).• W3. Create a destination “Main Street” for Wallkill (Comprehensive Plan).• W5. Beautify the hamlet (Comprehensive Plan).
Potential Funding Sources:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New York Main Street Program – Funding for this type of work is available via a Traditional NYMS Target Area Building Renovation Project. Eligible activities include building renovations, streetscape enhancements.

Create a Signage & Wayfinding Plan

Consistent and clear signage and wayfinding is a small improvement that can make a big impact in a downtown area. While small communities like the Hamlet of Wallkill are relatively easy to navigate unassisted, signage and wayfinding can point visitors in the direction of key destinations in the community and drive foot traffic to local businesses. Signage designed to complement the look and feel of the hamlet can also improve local ambiance and a sense of place.

Signage and wayfinding could be particularly useful as it relates to the rail trail. Signage in key locations could both inform visitors to the hamlet that there is access to a rail trail and inform people coming off the rail trail where key locations are located in the hamlet. For example, someone who gets on the rail trail in Walden and enters Wallkill for the first time via the rail entrance on Bona Ventura Avenue will not know where any key destinations are located. The business district on Wallkill Avenue is a short walk away, but it's also around the corner and out of site from the rail trail entrance. Local parks like Garrison Park and Popp Memorial Park are also short walks away, but not readily visible when you first enter the hamlet from the rail trail. While it's true that most people have smart phones with maps that they can easily use to navigate a new place, good signage can inform people that there are destinations to navigate to in the first place.

Wayfinding Case study: Rosendale

In 2013, a 19th-century former railroad trestle above the Rondout Creek opened to the public as part of the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail. Recognizing the value this unique recreational asset provided to residents, visitors, and local businesses, The Town of Rosendale partnered with the Ulster County Department of Planning to a circulation and wayfinding plan. The “Finding Rosendale” plan was published in 2015 with the intent of:

- Improve linkages between parking, trails, and businesses.
- Provide better wayfinding.
- Provide safe pedestrian/bicyclist accommodations in appropriate locations throughout the Town.

The implementation plan included recommended locations and design standards for signage throughout the town. The result is a robust network of signs with consistent branding referencing the iconic railroad trestle.



Signage can also be used to enhance the sense of place. Simple things like uniform sign design and branding can be a visual cue to visitors that they have arrived in a distinct place. Signage can also be used to directly indicate arrival at a destination through the use of “Welcome to...” signs at gateways to the community.

Actions

- Develop a signage and wayfinding plan for the hamlet that prioritizes:
 - Wayfinding to and from the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail
 - Consistent design and branding
 - Denotating gateways into the hamlet
 - Integrating the town’s amenities and points of interest into existing or future trail maps, apps, and other similar tourism materials.

Advances Goals:

- Improve synergies between the hamlet and the Rail Trail.
- Increase foot traffic downtown.
- Improve the look and feel of the hamlet.
- W2 revitalize the hamlet gateways.
- W3. Create destination “main Street” for Wallkill
- W5. Beautify the hamlet.
- W6 Expand and enhance pedestrian connections throughout the hamlet.

Potential Funding Sources:

- **Hudson River Valley Greenway Heritage Grant Program** – This program provides funding for programming, interpretation, and marketing projects that align with the goals of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. Up to \$7,500 are available for this type of work.
- **Hudson River Valley Greenway Conservancy Trail Grant** - This program provides grants for planning, constructing, repairing, maintaining, and promoting trails. This program emphasizes connections to the Empire State Trail. Maximum awards are:
 - \$250,000 for trail construction
 - \$75,000 for trail design/planning
 - \$100,000 for trail rehab/improvements
 - \$25,000 for trail education/interpretation
 - \$250,000 for natural disaster recovery/reconstruction
 - \$25,000 for trail maintenance.

Opportunities on the Horizon

There are a handful of opportunities in the hamlet that don't rise to the level of a recommendation but still warrant mentioning in this plan.

Milk Factory

The Milk Factory is an adaptive reuse redevelopment project at the site of the former Borden Milk Factory just south of the Hamlet of Wallkill. This site will be transformed into a mixed-use development with a hotel, recreation, and shopping. While some of the site will be reserved for guests of the upscale lodging, there are plans for publicly accessible amenities and businesses. The town should proactively foster connections with the Milk Factory to create a mutually beneficial relationship where guests of the hotel are encouraged to utilize the rail trail, explore the hamlet, and spend money in the local economy, and Wallkill residents are encouraged to make use of the amenities on the site.

AHC Undeveloped Lot

Affordable Housing Concepts (AHC) owns a piece of undeveloped property among the new apartment buildings that are currently under construction next to Town Hall. This remaining undeveloped lot represents great potential as it is centrally located, next to Garrison Park, and next to the right of way for the rail trail if it was ever extended into the hamlet. This site could be developed in a way that connects a future rail trail with Garrison Park, Town Hall, and the rest of the downtown. This developer has expressed interest in building a mixed-use project with ground floor commercial and residential units above. If the Town completes the recommended zoning changes in this report, it will be in a better position to work with this developer on a project that takes full advantage of this site's strategic location.

Bus Depot

The Bus Depot/Garage on Wallkill Avenue is a site that could have a significant positive impact on the hamlet if redeveloped into a more appropriate use. The current use and layout of this site limits public access to the Wallkill River. The awkward positioning of the tail makes travel along the sidewalk especially challenging for senior citizens, parents with strollers, and disabled pedestrians. Town residents and Town leadership have expressed interest in redeveloping this site into something that provides access to the Wallkill River and is more suitable for its downtown location on Wallkill Avenue. The Town should remain vigilant for opportunities to work with the owner of this property to purchase the property and potentially help them find a suitable place to relocate.

Local Chamber of Commerce

A local chamber of commerce can play a valuable role in supporting local businesses. Chambers of commerce operate by collecting fees from participating businesses in exchange for creating programming, events, and initiatives that benefit those participating businesses. Chambers of commerce can also advocate for the business community with respect to local municipal laws and regulations that impact the business environment in Town.

In recent years there have been efforts to establish a chamber of commerce in Wallkill, most recently spearheaded by the local community group Vision of Wallkill. These efforts did not result in the creation of a chamber of a commerce due to a lack of interest from local businesses. This lack of interest may in part be due to the challenging business climate that currently exists in the Hamlet of Wallkill and much of the Hudson Valley, particularly for small businesses. Potential customers are facing record inflation and rising housing costs, leaving less discretionary income to spend in the local economy. At the same time, brick-and-mortar businesses are facing rising competition from online retailers. Given these difficult financial circumstances, it is understandable that business owners would be hesitant to pay into a new chamber of commerce without a guaranteed return on that investment.

Across the region other business communities are facing these same financial pressures. In nearby New Paltz, the New Paltz Regional Chamber of Commerce dissolved in 2021 after 66 years of operation, citing its declining membership and trends in online networking and marketing accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In a 2021 article from HV1, the Chamber's Board of Directors provided the following insight: "The way our community and our country conducts business is changing. With the continued evolution of technology and social media, this has changed the way in which businesses network, market and obtain information. This alone has certainly made an impact on participation and membership over the last several years, and even more in this year of the COVID-19 pandemic."

Although the conditions for starting a new chamber of commerce are challenging, there is still a desire within the Wallkill community for organized business support and advocacy. Existing local organizations such as Vision of Wallkill can provide some of these services, but it is not their primary mission.

VI. STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The following 3-year strategic implementation plan provides a guide for the implementation of the recommendations in this plan. This plan is not meant to be a rigid step-by-step plan followed to the letter. Instead, it is meant to provide a logical framework for implementation based on factors such as sequencing, local capacity, and grant application deadlines.

The implementation plan is broken up into three years. Even by the third year, the planning horizon becomes harder to predict as unforeseen circumstances, unexpected challenges, and new opportunities might alter the Town's priorities. This implementation plan should be used with the understanding that new information and circumstances will arise, and the Town will need to adjust its implementation strategies accordingly.

Years1-2

In years 1-2 the Town should focus on easily achievable actions that will lay the groundwork for future success.

The Town should immediately prioritize becoming a Pro-Housing community so it can access key state grant opportunities. The Town should also take steps to join the Ulster County Housing Smart Communities Initiative (HSCI). Joining the HSCI will unlock technical assistance and potential funding from the County and establish a local housing task force that. Both the HSCI and the Pro-Housing Community Program call for a point-person/coordinator to lead these efforts on behalf of the Town. One person could serve in both capacities and lead the Town's housing-related initiatives.

There are a number of recommended tweaks to the existing zoning code designed to improve the development process. These updates can be done with relative ease and within a short timeframe. In addition to these minor updates, the Town should apply for funding that will enable a more substantial overhaul of design guidelines and the zoning code as a whole. One of the potential funding sources to update the design guidelines in the New York Main Street Grant Program. The Town must be a certified Pro-Housing community to be eligible for these funds.

Both Garrison Park and Popp Memorial Park are slated for improvement projects with secured funding. With respect to these parks, the Town should focus on implementing these projects first, and upon their completion reevaluate the priority of additional improvements and upgrades. In Garrison Park, the Town should explore the possibility of adjusting the planned upgrades to include lighting and tree plantings or structures that provide shade. The Town should also explore how these improvements could be a prelude to a Garrison Park master plan.

Both the Town Hall Annex and the Police Station property represent great opportunities for the town to revitalize valuable centrally located properties in the heart of the hamlet. The Town should take the time to plan the best course of action for transforming these properties into a community asset. This plan discusses the possibility of using an RFQ/RFEI/RFP process to solicit interest from private developers. While this may in fact be a successful approach, there are some preliminary steps the Town should take to prepare these properties for redevelopment. First, a new location for the Police Department must be secured before redeveloping the current police station. The Town should apply for grant funding to demolish the police station buildings and rehabilitate the major systems in the Town Hall Annex. This intermediate step will make these properties more attractive and financially feasible for private developers as part of an RFP process. Importantly, it will leave the door open to the possibility of securing additional funding to redevelop one or more of these properties while maintaining town ownership. Redevelopment under Town ownership makes it more likely that these properties could be transformed into public spaces or other community-centric uses that are not primarily profit-driven.

Finally, the Town should continue to proactively engage in conversations with the Open Space Institute (OSI) and other entities that have an interest in completing the missing section of the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail through the Town of Shawangunk. Ideally this whole section of the trail would be completed as one project with the financial and technical assistance of an organization like OSI. The Town should work with its state representatives to schedule a meeting with senior

officials from DOCCS to reinvigorate collaborative discussions about a potential northward extension of the rail trail to ultimately get around prison property and connect it to remainder of the trail that re-starts in Gardiner. The Town should also ask DOCCS whether the former credit union building on its property might be available as a headquarters for the town police. If no progress is made in years 1-2, the Town may consider focusing just on the section of trail in the hamlet unaffected by the correctional facilities.

YEARS 1-2
At-a-Glance

Recommendations	Actions
Update Zoning: Design Guidelines	Remove the outdated reference to the “Community Design Guidelines.”
	Optional: Replace removed design guidelines with reference to specific sections of a relevant document like the Ulster County Community Design Manual
	Apply for a NY Main Street grant as a Technical Assistance Project to create design guidelines. Expected Application Deadline: July (CFA application)
Update Zoning: Incentive Zoning	Within the incentive zoning section, remove reference to goals from the 2003 comprehensive plan, and revise this section to reflect the 2021 goals.
	Clearly define what qualifies as “affordable housing” for the purposes of the incentive zoning. Clearly define the density bonuses that will be awarded based on the affordable housing provided.
Update Zoning: Apartments Above Ground Floor Commercial	In the Small Business (SB) zone section of the Town zoning code change the permitted use “Apartment above ground floor business” to “Apartments above ground floor commercial.”
Modernize the Zoning Code	Apply for a Smart Growth Community Planning and Zoning Grant to update the Town’s zoning code to better reflect the goals and recommendations adopted in the comprehensive plan and make the code easier to use. Expected Application Deadline: July (CFA application)
Become a Pro- Housing Community	Designate a Pro-Housing point person to coordinate the Town’s effort to become a pro-housing community
	Submit a letter of intent to HCR and apply to become a Pro-Housing Community.
Join the Ulster County Housing Smart Communities Initiative	Reach out to the Ulster County Department of Planning to express interest in joining the Housing Smart Communities Initiative
	Designate a Housing Smart Community Coordinator and establish a local housing taskforce
	Join the Housing Smart Communities Initiative using the steps described in this plan and on the HSCI website
Improvements to Popp Memorial Park	Construct the pavilion and boat launch projects funded by NYS Assembly appropriation
Improvements to Garrison Park	Upgrade playground equipment with the \$250,000 in funding from Ulster County and local recreation fees. If possible, add upgrades that provide shade and lighting.
Redevelopment of Town Owned Property	Ensure that the Shawangunk Police Department has a suitable location to relocate to.
	Apply for a Restore New York Grant to demolish the police department buildings and rehabilitate the vacant Town Hall Annex. Restore NY was not funded by 2025, but the program has broad support and is likely to return to in the coming years. Expected Application Deadline: December/Q4

* Green items denote suggested grants to apply for

Year 3

In Year 3 the Town should continue to build on the actions and momentum of years 1-2.

Contingent on successful grant funding, the Town should update its zoning code and design guidelines. Creating new design guidelines will likely involve additional community input and visioning sessions to supplement the findings in the 2021 comprehensive plan.

If discussions about completing the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail through the Town of Shawangunk have not substantially advanced by Year 3, the Town should consider seeking funding to plan and construct a rail trail through the hamlet. OSI and similar organizations may still be interested in partnering on a project of this scale. The Hudson River Valley Greenway Conservancy Trail Grant program provides funding for this type of work.

As a Pro-Housing community, the Town will be eligible to apply for a New York Main Street Grant program. The town should apply for New York Main Street grant to fund the creation of a downtown façade improvement program.

The Town's Pro-Housing Community Status will also make the Town eligible to apply for New York Forward. The New York Forward Program is highly competitive as each winner is awarded \$4.5 million dollars, and only two winners per REDC region are chosen each year. The funding can be used for a variety of different projects and many of the recommendations in this plan could be funded by the New York Forward Program. However, given the competitive nature of this program, the Town should not rely heavily on the expectation of winning a New York Forward grant.

The Town should take the time to carefully craft a strategy for creating a competitive New York Forward Application. Competitive applicants will demonstrate that they have already taken the initiative to advance downtown revitalization and are not just waiting to be awarded a New York Forward Grant. The deadline for this grant is typically in the Fall, so by waiting for Year 3 to submit a grant the Town will have had time to pursue other downtown revitalization initiatives.

In addition to a large award amount, New York Forward also provides funding for a variety of different project types. Eligible activities include public improvement projects, new development and/or rehabilitation of existing buildings, branding and marketing, and the creation of a locally managed fund to perform other downtown revitalization projects. Under this grant program, the Town could apply for funding for:

- Additional Park Improvements
- A downtown façade improvement program
- Signage and Branding for the Town / hamlet
- Redevelopment of town owned property (without the need to sell it)
- Other projects/initiatives not included in this

YEAR 3
At-a-Glance

Recommendations	Actions
Update Zoning: Design Guidelines	<i>(If awarded a NY Main Street Grant for Technical Assistance)</i> Create and adopt new design guidelines.
Modernize the Zoning Code	<i>(If awarded a Smart Growth Community Planning and Zoning Grant)</i> Update the Town's zoning code to better reflect the goals and recommendations adopted in the comprehensive plan and make the code easier to use.
County Housing Smart Communities Initiative	Work with the Ulster County Department of Planning and the Housing Task force to identify the eligible housing actions within the program that are both achievable and impactful to alleviate local housing challenges.
Rail Trail Improvements and Integration with the hamlet	Apply for a Hudson River Valley Greenway Conservancy Trail Grant for funding to plan and design the extension of the rail trail through the hamlet up to the correctional facilities and implement signage and wayfinding. Expected Application Deadline: January/Q1
Create a Downtown Façade Improvement Program	Apply for a New York Main Street Grant to fund the creation of a Façade improvement program. Expected Application Deadline: July (CFA application)
Redevelopment of Town Owned Property	<i>(If awarded a Restore New York Grant)</i> demolish the police department buildings and rehabilitate the vacant Town Hall Annex)
	Create and issue an RFEI/RFQ for the redevelopment of these sites to gauge interest and narrow down the list of qualified respondents
	If the RFEI /RFQ yields promising applications, create and issue and RFP
New York Forward Application	Apply to New York Forward to fund projects in the hamlet that work achieving the vision for the hamlet articulated in the comprehensive plan and this plan. The application could include plans for additional park improvements, a downtown façade improvement program, signage and branding, redevelopment of town owned property. Expected Application Deadline: October/Q4

* **Green** items denote suggested grants to apply for

Year 4

Contingent on successful grant funding, the Town should design and plan for the extension of the Wallkill Valley Rail Trail. A successful planning and development process could be followed up by another Hudson River Valley Greenway Conservancy Trail Grant to fund the construction and implementation of the plan. Completing this section of the trail may help build the necessary momentum and political will to arrive at a solution for building a trail near the correctional facilities.

If there is momentum for a rail trail extension, it may also be a good time to apply to implement a signage and wayfinding plan. Ideally signage will be throughout the hamlet and not just near the rail trail, but the status of rail trail improvements will significantly influence the placement and contents of the signage. This could be funded by a Hudson River Valley Heritage Grant.

Contingent on successful grant funding, the Town should design and implement a façade improvement program.

By Year 4 the Housing Task Force assembled as part of the Ulster County HSCI should have a better understanding of both the housing needs in the community and the potential resources available to address them. Ideally the housing task force and Housing Smart Community Coordinator have been working with the Ulster County Department of Planning to identify and complete eligible housing actions within the program. With the housing knowledge and experience amassed among members of the Housing Task Force by Year 4, the Town should consider designing a housing rehabilitation program and apply for grants to fund it. Two possible grants for this type of work are the USDA Rural Development Housing Preservation Grant and the New York State HOME grant.

If the Town's New York Forward application from the previous year was unsuccessful, they should reevaluate and try again. The Town should request feedback from the state to understand what aspects of their application need to be improved to make them more competitive.

YEAR 4
At-a-Glance

Recommendations	Actions
Ulster County Housing Smart Communities Initiative	Continue to work with the Ulster County Department of Planning and the Housing Task force to identify the eligible housing actions within the program that are both achievable and impactful to alleviate local housing challenges.
Create a Housing Rehabilitation Program	Apply for a USDA Rural Development Housing Preservation Grant to fund the creation of a local housing rehabilitation program. Expected Application Deadline: July /Q3
	Apply for a New York State HOME grant to fund the creation of a local housing rehabilitation program. Expected Application Deadline: September/Q3
Rail Trail Improvements and Integration with the hamlet	(If awarded a Hudson River Valley Greenway Conservancy Trail Grant) Plan and design the extension of the rail trail through the hamlet up to the correctional facilities.
Create a Downtown Façade Improvement Program	(If awarded a New York Main Street Grant) Create and implement a Façade improvement program
New York Forward Application	<i>(if the New York Forward Application from the previous year is unsuccessful)</i> Reevaluate the unsuccessful application and reapply with adjustments. Expected Application Deadline: October/Q4

* Green items denote suggested grants to apply for

VII. ADDITIONAL GRANT FUNDING DETAILS

Smart Growth Community Planning and Zoning Grant

Grant Name
Smart Growth Community Planning and Zoning Grant
Grant Issuer
New York Department of State (DOS), Office of Planning Development, and Community Infrastructure (OPDCI)
Description and Eligible Activities
This program provides funding to develop or update comprehensive plans, area plans (such as Transit Oriented Development plan) or zoning ordinances that incorporate smart growth principles including promoting economically efficient and environmentally sustainable development patterns that optimize prior infrastructure investments.
Award Amount and Terms
The minimum award amount is \$75,000 and there is no maximum award amount.
Application Deadline / Funding Cycle
This program is part of The New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). The 2024 deadline for CFA application was July 31. The CFA application deadline is typically sometime in July every year.
Program Links
Smart Growth Community Planning and Zoning Grant Homepage

New York Main Street Program

Grant Name
Restore New York Communities Initiative
Grant Issuer
NYS Homes and Community Renewal
Description and Eligible Activities
<p>This program provides resources to invest in projects that provide economic development and housing opportunities in downtown, mixed-use commercial districts. A primary goal of the program is to stimulate reinvestment and leverage additional funds to establish and sustain downtown and neighborhood revitalization efforts. There are four primary eligible activities that can receive funding from this program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Assistance Project – funding technical assistance to create design guidelines or conduct a feasibility analysis. • Traditional NYMS Target Area Building Renovation Project – funding for building renovations, streetscape enhancements. • NYMS Downtown Anchor Project – funding for a standalone single site rehabilitation project that is a cultural, residential or business anchor. • NYMS Downtown Stabilization Project – funds for assisting with environmental remediation and associated construction costs, as well as other innovative approaches to stabilizing and developing a downtown, mixed-use project.
Award Amount and Terms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical Assistance Project – up to \$20,000

- **Traditional NYMS Target Area Building Renovation Project** - \$50,000 and \$500,000. Grant cannot exceed 75% of total project costs.
- **NYMS Downtown Anchor Project** - \$100,000 to \$500,000. Grant cannot exceed 75% of total project costs.
- **NYMS Downtown Stabilization Project** - \$100,000 to \$500,000. Grant cannot exceed 75% of total project costs.

Application Deadline / Funding Cycle

This program is part of The New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). The 2024 deadline for CFA application was July 31. The CFA application deadline is typically sometime in July every year.

Program Links

[NY Main Street Homepage](#)

[NY Main Street Program Guide 2024](#)

OPRHP Parks Grant

Grant Name

Environmental Protection Fund Grants Program for Parks, Preservation and Heritage (EPF)

Grant Issuer

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation (OPRHP)

Description and Eligible Activities

The Parks Program -provides funding for the acquisition, development or planning of parks and recreational facilities open to the public to preserve, rehabilitate or restore lands, waters or structures for park, recreation, or conservation purposes and for structural assessments and/or planning for such projects. Examples of eligible projects include playgrounds, courts, rinks, community gardens, and facilities for swimming, boating, picnicking, hunting, fishing, camping or other recreational activities. Eligible costs include: Pre-development planning and design, construction, administration, acquisition, and administration.

This program prioritizes projects that enhance, extend, or complement the Empire State Trail and/or other multi-use pedestrian and bicycle trails, and projects that enhance and/or create opportunities for walkable public spaces.

Award Amount and Terms

The maximum award amount is \$675,000. This program can fund up to a maximum of 50% of the total project cost, or 75% of the project cost if it is located in a high-poverty area

Application Deadline / Funding Cycle

This program is part of The New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). The 2024 deadline for CFA application was July 31. The CFA application deadline is typically sometime in July every year.

Program Links

[NY Main Street Homepage](#)

[NY Main Street Program Guide 2024](#)

Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail Grant Program

Grant Name
Hudson River Valley Greenway Conservancy Trails Grant Program
Grant Issuer
Hudson River Valley Greenway
Description and Eligible Activities
This program provides grants for planning, constructing, repairing, maintaining, and promoting trails. This program prioritizes funding for trail projects that facilitate connections to existing trails, the Hudson River, or other significant natural, historic, or cultural resources.
Award Amount and Terms
Maximum award amounts for 2025 applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$250,000 for trail construction• \$75,000 for trail design/planning• \$100,000 for trail rehab/improvements• \$25,000 for trail education/interpretation• \$250,000 for natural disaster recovery/reconstruction• \$25,000 for trail maintenance.
Application Deadline / Funding Cycle
The next application deadline is January 31, 2025
Program Links
Hudson River Valley Greenway Homepage Greenway Conservancy Trail Grant Guidelines December 2024 Hudson River Valley Greenway Grant Platform

Hudson River Valley Heritage Development Grant Program

Grant Name
Hudson River Valley Heritage Development Grant Program
Grant Issuer
The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area
Description and Eligible Activities
This program provides funding for programming, interpretation, and marketing projects that align with the goals of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area (HRVNHA). The mission of (HRVNHA) is to recognize, preserve, protect and interpret the nationally significant cultural and natural resources of the Hudson River Valley.
Award Amount and Terms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awards typically range from \$1,000 to \$7,500.• The award cannot fund more than 50% of the total project cost.• A local match may be provided as an in-kind service or other monetary contribution
Application Deadline / Funding Cycle
The next application deadline is January 31, 2025
Program Links
Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area Homepage Heritage Grant Guidelines - December 2024 Hudson River Valley Greenway Grant Platform

Restore NY

Grant Name
Restore New York Communities Initiative
Grant Issuer
Empire State Development (ESD)
Description and Eligible Activities
This program provides municipalities with financial assistance for the revitalization of commercial and residential properties. The program encourages community development and neighborhood growth through the elimination and redevelopment of blighted structures.
Award Amount and Terms
The maximum award for each funding cycle is \$1 million for one project. A minimum 10% local match is required.
Application Deadline / Funding Cycle
The deadline to submit an intent to apply for this program in 2024 was October 23. The application deadline was December 20, 2024.
Program Links
Restore NY Homepage Restore NY Guidelines (Round 9, 2024)

USDA Rural Development Housing Preservation Grants

Grant Name
Rural Development Housing Preservation Grants
Grant Issuer
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Description and Eligible Activities
<p>This program provides funding to municipalities or organizations to provide grants or low-interest loans to eligible recipients to repair or rehabilitate housing. Grants can also go towards the rehabilitation of rental and cooperative properties that house very-low and low-income tenants. Eligible rehabilitation activities include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repairing or replacing electrical wiring, foundations, roofs, insulation, heating systems and water/waste disposal systems• Handicap accessibility features.• Labor and materials• Administrative expenses
Application Deadline / Funding Cycle
Applications are submitted via the Federal Register. The 2024 application deadline for this program was July 29.
Program Links
Rural Development Housing Preservation Grants Homepage Rural Development Housing Preservation Grants Fact Sheet

New York State HOME Program

Grant Name
New York State HOME Program
Grant Issuer
Grants are allocated to New York State from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Renewal (HUD) and administered the Housing Trust Fund Corporation's (HTFC) Office of Community Renewal (OCR) New York State Office of Community Renewal (OCR).
Description and Eligible Activities
This grant program is designed to provide funding for projects that increase access to decent safe and affordable housing. This program provides funding for housing rehabilitation, manufactured home replacement, homebuyer down payment assistance, and tenant based rental assistance
Award Amount and Terms
For housing rehabilitation, the maximum award is \$750,000 with a per unit maximum of \$65,000 for stick-built homes, and \$30,000 for manufactured homes.
Application Deadline / Funding Cycle
The application window in 2024 opened on July 15 and closed on September 12.
Program Links
NYS HOME Program Homepage 2024 NYS HOME Program Request for Applications

New York Forward

Grant Name
New York Forward
Grant Issuer
The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area
Description and Eligible Activities
The New York Forward Program is a grant program designed to revitalize small to mid-sized communities in New York State. This highly competitive program represents an extensive commitment by both the state and participating communities to engage in community engagement, planning, and implementation. Eligible activities include public improvement projects, new development and/or rehabilitation of existing buildings, branding and marketing, and the creation of a locally managed fund to perform other downtown revitalization projects.
Award Amount and Terms
Each Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) in the state awards two \$4.5 Million NY Forward Grants in their region
Application Deadline / Funding Cycle
The deadline for New York Forward Round 3 was October 18, 2024. Funding has not yet been announced for New York Forward Round 4 but the deadline will likely be similar.
Program Links
NY Forward Program Homepage DRI & NY Forward Brochure

Regional Council Capital Fund Program

Grant Name
Regional Council Capital Fund
Grant Issuer
Empire State Development (ESD)
Description and Eligible Activities
<p>The Regional Council Capital Fund supports capital-based economic development initiatives. Grant funding under this program is available for the following types of capital projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquisition of land, buildings, machinery and/or equipment• Demolition and environmental remediation• New construction, renovation or leasehold improvements• Acquisition of furniture and fixtures• Commercial portion of mixed-use projects• Soft costs of up to twenty-five percent (25%) of total project costs• Other costs / expenditures deemed eligible by ESD. <p>Potential applicants are strongly encouraged to reach out to their regional council to discuss projects before submitting an application for this fund.</p>
Award Amount and Terms
<p>The minimum award amount for this program is \$100,000. There is no maximum award amount. Awards typically do not provide funding for more than 20% of the total project cost. Applicants must contribute at least 10% of the total project cost.</p>
Application Deadline / Funding Cycle
<p>For the 2024 funding cycle \$100 million in funding was available through this program on a continuous year-round basis, and \$50 million was available through the CFA process for Pro-Housing communities, and Small Manufacturer Modernization projects. The CFA application deadline is typically sometime in July every year.</p>
Program Links
Regional Council Capital Fund website