



**Village of Cooperstown
Comprehensive Plan &
Downtown Revitalization Strategy
Phase I: Project Organization &
Public Outreach
January 2015**

Sponsored by the Otsego County IDA and the Village of Cooperstown

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



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Project Overview



The Village of Cooperstown, in partnership with the Otsego County Industrial Development Agency, is in the process of updating its Comprehensive Plan and preparing a Downtown Revitalization Strategy. This project is being completed in two phases. Phase I: Project Organization and Public Outreach is designed to gather community input on issues, concerns and desire for the future. This phase of the project included extensive public engagement activities designed to give residents and visitors an opportunity to share what they like about Cooperstown, what issues or concerns they may have, and provide a vision for what they would like the Village to be like in ten years. This report is a summary of the key findings identified during Phase I.

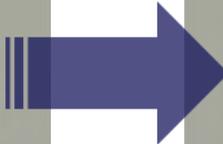
Phase II of the project will build on the information collected during the first phase, and includes the development of a Comprehensive Plan and a Downtown Revitalization Strategy. The goals of this project are to: identify desired future land use patterns throughout the Village; identify realistic opportunities for business investment, retail and business recruitment; and, identify potential projects that will build off recent improvements and enhance Upper and Lower Main Street and the surrounding areas such as the Railroad Avenue District and the Village Waterfront. Both Phase I and Phase II Plans can be used to obtain grant funding for identified projects.

It is estimated that Phase II of this project will be completed by the end of 2015.

Phase 1: Building a Base

- Initial Research
- Extensive Public Outreach
- Summary

August – December 2014



Phase 2: Developing the Plan

- Economic and Demographic Analysis
- Physical Enhancement Strategy
- Comprehensive and Downtown Revitalization Plan
 - Vision
 - Goals
 - Recommendations
- Implementation Strategy

January – December 2015

Project Organization

Study Area

For the purpose of this project, the study area follows the Village boundaries, as shown in *Figure 1: Project Base Map* provided on the following page.

Outline of Report

Phase I of this project was designed to take a cursory look at existing conditions in the Village of Cooperstown and conduct extensive public outreach to gain a better understanding of the community's strengths, weaknesses and focus areas for improvement.

An overview of existing conditions, including the Village's natural and cultural resources, as well as demographics, is provided in Chapter 2 of this report.

For a planning process to be effective, it must take into account public desires for the future of a community. The project team, working with the Cooperstown Community Engagement Committee, conducted the following public outreach activities as part of this phase of the project:

- Attendance at Various Community Events
- Consumer Intercept Surveys of Residents and Visitors throughout the Downtown
- Stakeholder and Focus Group Interviews
- Multi-Day Design Charrette for the General Public
- Project Website

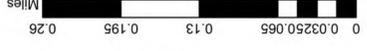
The public participation process and key findings are more thoroughly discussed in Chapter 3.

**Village of Cooperstown, NY
Cooperstown Comprehensive Plan &
Downtown Revitalization Strategy**

Figure 1: Base Map
DRAFT



Legend
Village Boundary



Village of Cooperstown
Otsego County

Date: October 2014

Prepared by:



Data Sources:
Otsego County Planning Department



Existing Conditions

To gain a better understanding of the existing conditions in the Village of Cooperstown, the project team reviewed existing land use conditions, natural and cultural resources, and demographics utilizing existing federal, state and local data, as well as local regional planning studies.

During Phase II of this project, the team will conduct a more detailed inventory and analysis of existing conditions, which when combined with input from stakeholders, the Cooperstown Community Engagement Committee and the public, will help to identify and shape the Village's long-term vision, goals and strategies.

Existing Resources

As part of the planning process, the project team reviewed the following local planning studies, maps and legislation:

- 1994 A Comprehensive Plan for the Village of Cooperstown
- 2003 Economic Activity in Downtown Cooperstown, Center for Social Science Research
- 2007 The Notre Dame Cooperstown Charrette
- 2010 Zoning Map for the Village of Cooperstown
- 2011 Cooperstown Facts and Figures: Population, Income, Housing Values and Municipal Finances

Land Use

The Village of Cooperstown, which covers approximately 1.8 square miles, is located in Otsego County, New York.



For Phase I of this project, the team prepared Land Use and Zoning maps to assist in visualizing the Village's physical features. Copies of the maps are provided on the following pages.

Figure 2: Land Use Map, illustrates that the primary land use in the Village is residential. Most commercial and community service land use designations can be found along Main and Pioneer Streets, and Railroad Avenue. A significant number of parcels

located near the Village borders are classified as either vacant or forest land.

As illustrated in *Figure 3: Zoning Map*, the Village is predominantly zoned residential, with clusters of business and commercial districts located along Main, Grove and Chestnut Streets. A waterfront development overlay, designed to protect the sensitive waterfront areas, is present along the shore of the Otsego Lake and the Susquehanna River.

Natural Resources

Otsego Lake

One of the Village's greatest natural resources is Otsego Lake, nicknamed "Glimmerglass" by James Fenimore Cooper in his *Leatherstocking Tales*. The lake, which is a recreation destination for local and regional visitors, is approximately 9 miles long with a maximum depth of 167



View of Otsego Lake from Lakefront Park

feet. There is a boat launch with a ramp located at the south end of the lake, near Lake Street in the Village, and a car top launch on the north east side of the lake at Glimmerglass State Park.

In addition to providing recreation opportunities, Otsego Lake also serves as the primary source of drinking water for the Village.

**Village of Cooperstown, NY
Cooperstown Comprehensive Plan &
Downtown Revitalization Strategy**

Figure 2: Land Use Map
DRAFT



- Legend**
- Village Boundary
 - Park and Forest
 - Public Service
 - Industrial
 - Community Service
 - Recreation
 - Commercial
 - Vacant
 - Residential
 - Agricultural



Village of Cooperstown
Otsego County

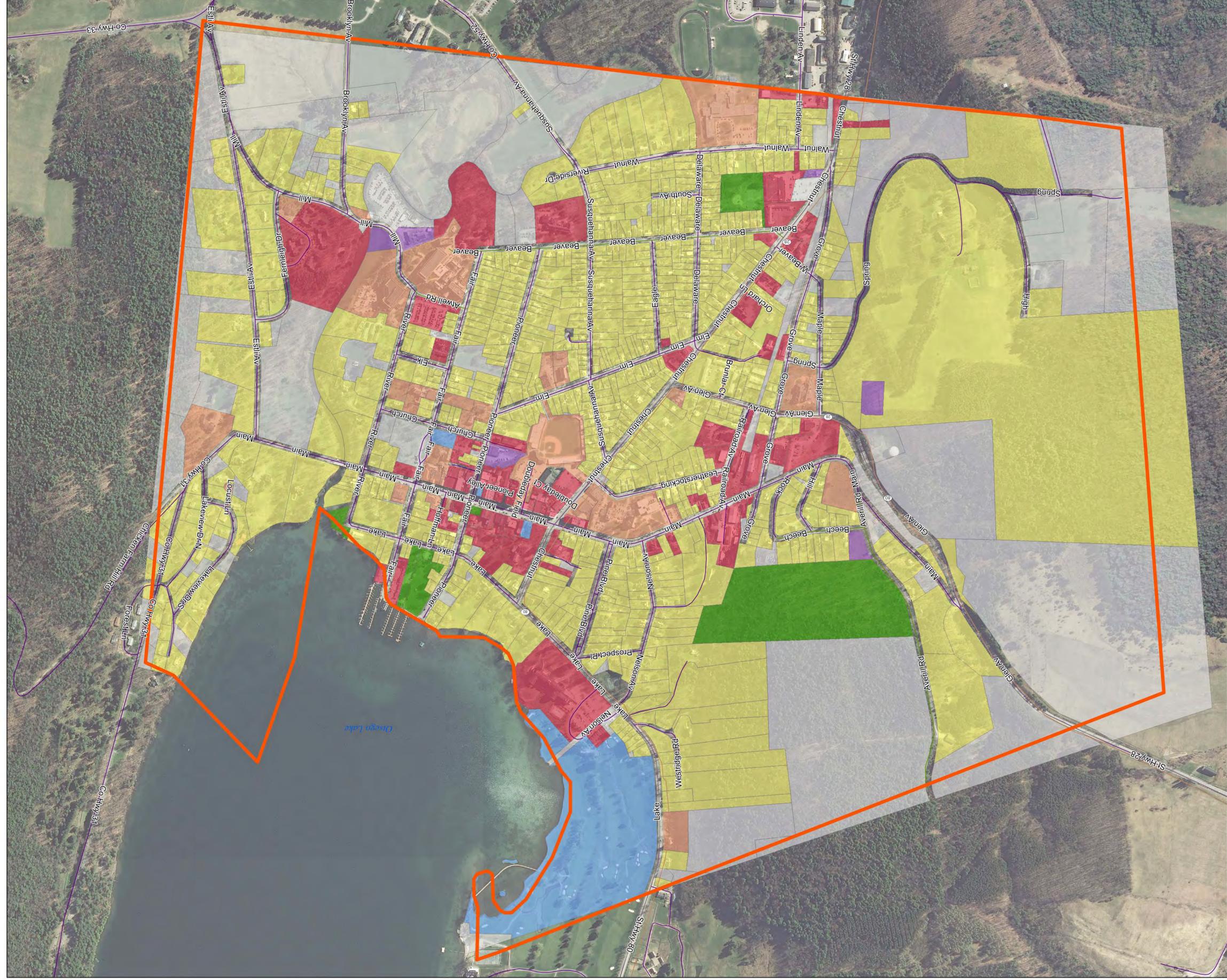
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Otsego County Planning Department

File Location: Z:\Projects\2014\10\10 Cooperstown Comprehensive and DOT Revitalization Plan



**Village of Cooperstown, NY
Cooperstown Comprehensive Plan &
Downtown Revitalization Strategy**

Figure 3: Zoning Map
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Village of Cooperstown
Otsego County

Date: October 2014

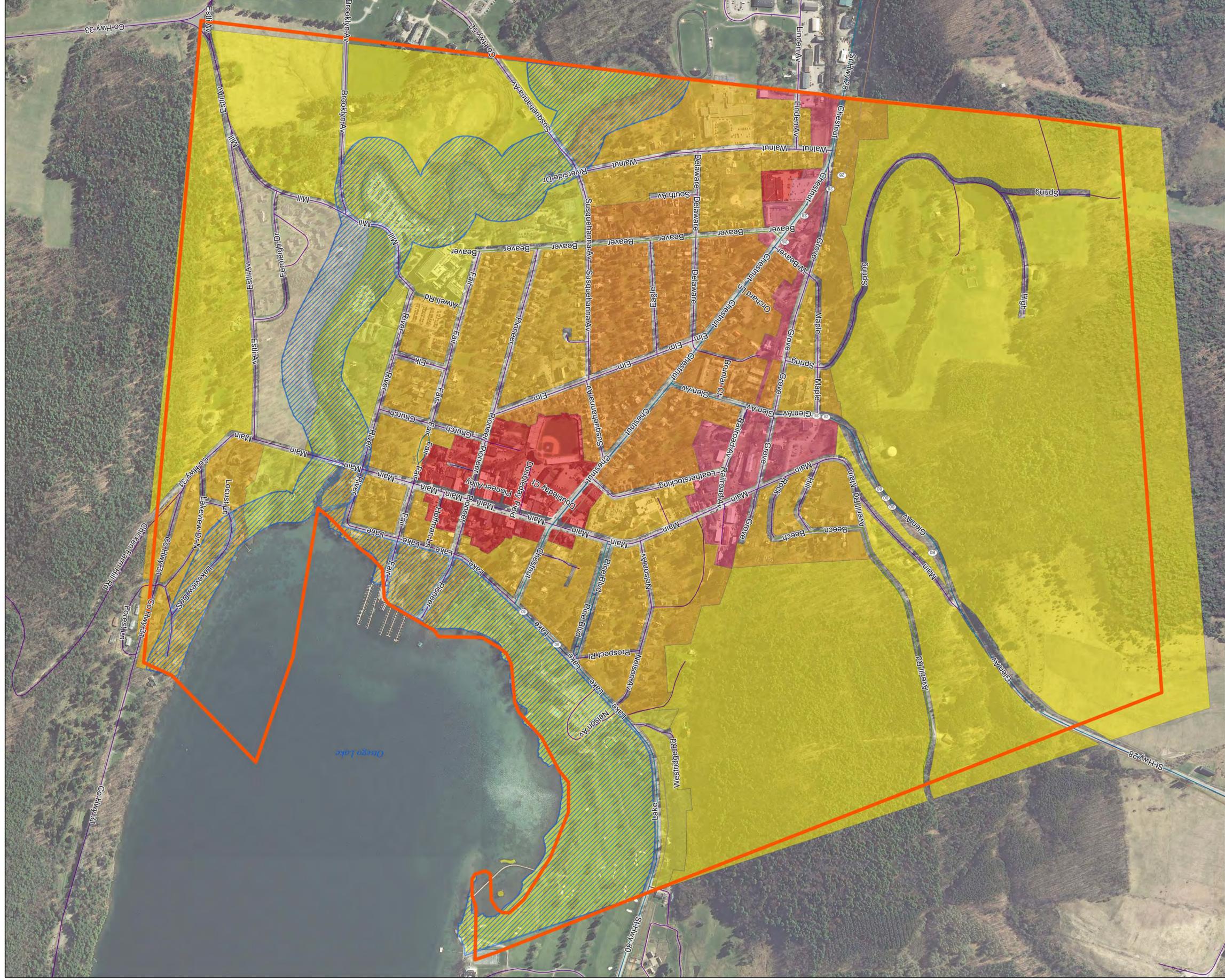
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Data Sources:
Otsego County Planning Department

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- Zoning Districts**
- WD: Waterfront Development Overlay
 - B: Business
 - C: Commercial
 - CD: Coordinated Development
 - R-1: Single Family Residential
 - R-1A: Single Family Residential
 - R-2: Light Multiple Residential
 - R-3: Medium Multiple Residential
 - Road
 - Village Boundary



Parks and Recreation

Cooperstown has six village owned parks, four of which are located on Otsego Lake.

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

The region is also home to Glimmerglass State Park which is located at the North end of Otsego Lake. The Park is open year round and provides opportunities for hiking, biking, fishing, swimming, picnicking, cross country skiing and snowshoeing. Park visitors can also tour Hyde Hall, a fifty room country house that overlooks the lake. Hyde Hall, which was built in 1817, is one of the few surviving works of Philip Hooker and was designated as a National Historic Landmark in June of 1986.

Civic

The Village also owns the facility at 22 Main Street which houses the village offices, police station, Cooperstown Art Association (CAA) and the public library. The building, along with the Baseball Hall of Fame Museum, anchors the east end of Main Street.

Cultural and Recreation Resources

Baseball Hall of Fame

Cooperstown is probably best known as the home of the *National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum*. Dedicated in 1939, the museum celebrates the history of baseball and those legends who made it America's favorite pastime. The Museum features over 38,000 baseball-related artifacts, video and audio presentations, and interactive computer displays that test the patron's knowledge of baseball.

In 2012, the Museum attracted approximately 262,000 visitors. This number has been steadily declining from record high attendance (400,000) set back in the early 1990's. Some have attributed this decline to the economic recession, and others state that visitors to Cooperstown Dreams Park, a week long baseball camp, have slowed ticket turnover. Despite this decline, according to a White House Press Release dated May 22, 2014, the Museum, "drives more than \$160 million into the economy of Otsego County each year. In fact, it is projected that each Hall of Fame visitor generates an estimated \$500 in spending into the regional economy."



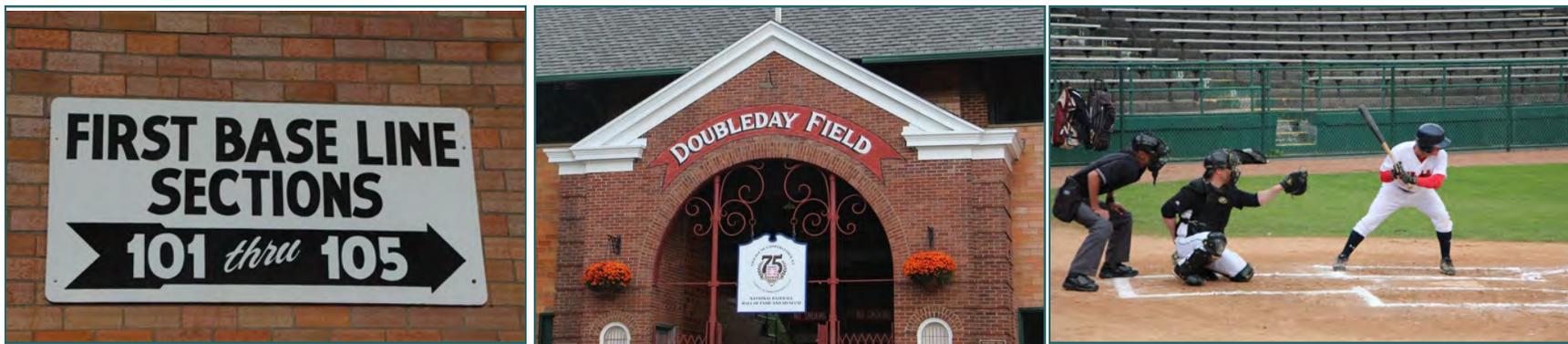
Doubleday Field

The Village is also home to the iconic Doubleday Field. The baseball field, which is dedicated to the mythical founder of baseball, Abner Doubleday, was first established in 1920. In 1924, a wooden grandstand was added so that spectators could watch the games. The stadium was enhanced again in 1939 as part of the Work Project Administration (WPA) with its current brick façade. Concrete and aluminum bleacher seating was added in later decades, and the field can now accommodate 9,800 fans. Today, the historic ball park remains a popular venue for amateur and professional games, but like many other historic structures, the facility is in need of some major upgrades and repairs in order to be competitive. Currently, the village pays for repairs to the facility, including support to the bleacher infrastructure.

Dreams Park

In 1996, Cooperstown Dreams Park was established. This tournament facility provides players ages 12 and under the opportunity to attend a week long baseball camp/tournament.

The park, which is located approximately 5 miles outside of the Village, attracts nearly 17,000 players plus their families between Memorial Day and Labor Day each summer.



It is important to note that tourism in Cooperstown isn't limited to baseball. The Village has a rich history and a variety of attractions that appeal to the cultural heritage tourist. Visitors travel from all over the country to visit destinations like the Fenimore Art Museum, The Farmers' Museum, the Glimmerglass Festival, the Cooperstown Art Association (CAA), Hyde Hall, and the New York State Historical Association (NYSHA) museums. Outdoor recreation enthusiasts enjoy the natural beauty of the area and are drawn to amenities like Glimmerglass State Park, Otsego Lake, and the Leatherstocking Golf Course.

The Village is also home to a number of popular culinary attractions including unique restaurants, resorts, the Farmers' Market, and the Cooperstown Distillery. Once the hops-growing capital of North America, the Village is part of the Cooperstown Beverage Trail: A New York State Cuisine Trail. The 37-mile long trail, which runs through Otsego County, features local attractions like the Bear Pond Winery, Cooperstown Brewing Company, Brewery Ommegang, the Fly Creek Cider Mill, Rustic Ridge Winery, and Butternuts Beer & Ale. It is estimated 20,000 visitors explored the trail last year.



Another popular tourist attraction is the Cooperstown Historic District, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. The District, which encompasses the Village boundary, covers approximately 4,100 acres and over 500 buildings. In 1999, the boundaries were significantly expanded to ring Otsego Lake from ridge to ridge as the Glimmerglass Historic District.

Tourism continues to be a major economic development driver in the Village of Cooperstown. According to Cooperstown's Tourism Director, the Village averages approximately 425,000-450,000 tourists per year. This creates jobs, supports local businesses, and in 2013, tourists generated approximately 23.1% of the County's \$1.4 million bed tax revenue.



Demographics

The following demographic summary was created using the *2011 Cooperstown Facts and Figures* report prepared by the Center for Economic and Community Development at SUNY Oneonta. A full copy of the report is provided in Appendix A.

Population

The Village of Cooperstown's population has declined by 15% over the past two decades. According to US Census data, the population has decreased from 2,180 residents in 1990 to 1,852 in the year 2010.

During this time period, there was an overall decline in every age cohort, with the exception of 50-59 years olds. This age group grew by 49% from 181 in 1990 to 269 in the year 2009. The sharpest decline was seen in the 30-39 year old age group, which dropped by 47%.

School Enrollment

Between 2000 and 2009, the Cooperstown Central School District experienced a 295 student (29%) loss in school enrollment. In the Spring of 2008, there were 94 graduating seniors, with only 51 kindergartners entering into the system in the Fall of 2009. Data provided by the NYS Department of Education indicates that the surrounding communities of Cherry Valley and Richfield Springs had similar losses of 28% and 24% respectively.

Income

While population and school enrollment have been declining in Cooperstown over the past two decades, median household income rose 56% from \$30,000 in 1989 to \$47,005 in 2009. According to US Census data, residents of the Village of Cooperstown have a similar median household income of those living in the towns of Otsego and Hartwick.

During this same time period, those living in the villages of Milford and Richfield saw a decrease in median household income.

Housing

In 1990, the U.S. Census reported that 979 (88%) of the 1,116 housing units were occupied in the Village of Cooperstown. Twenty years later, this percentage has declined slightly to 930 (80%) of the Village's 1,166 housing units being identified as occupied, and 236 units (20%) being reported as vacant.

The value of occupied housing shifted between 1990 and 2010. In 1990, the U.S. Census reported that most houses were valued below \$200,000. According to City-Data.com, the estimated median house value in 2012 was \$313,1476. This represents an increase from the \$146,300 reported in 2000. It is of note that the value of occupied housing in the surrounding villages has stayed at a level similar to what was reported in 1990.

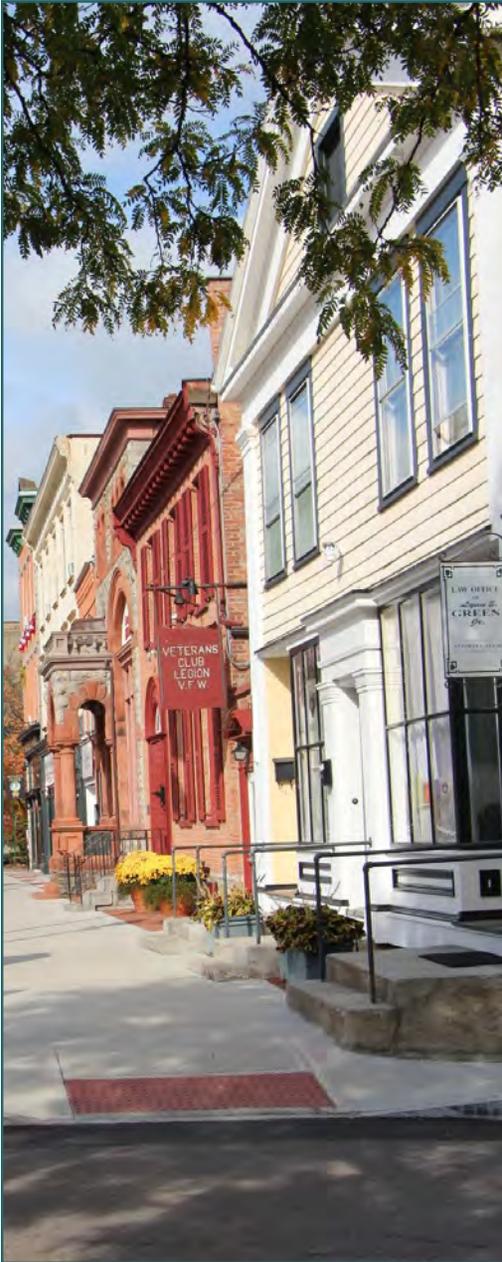
Median rents rose drastically between 1990 and 2010 as well. In 1990, the U.S. Census reported that over 50% of the gross rent in the Village was less than \$500/month. In 2010, less than 10% of gross rent was less than \$500 and there were no rental units available for less than \$400/month. City-Data.com reported that median gross rent in 2012 was \$807/month. Median gross rent for the nearby Village of Cherry Valley was reported at \$695/month for 2012.

Occupations

Between 2008-2012, the top male occupations in the Village of Cooperstown were: Physicians and surgeons (12%), Other management occupations except farmers and farm managers (7%), and Top executives (7%).

The top female occupations were identified as: Other management occupations except farmers and farm managers (11%), Secretaries and administrative assistants (7%), and Information and record clerks except customer service representatives (7%).

Public Participation



“Community Building” involves the community leadership, the general public, the private sector, and other organizations that are involved with community betterment and revitalization. Having the support of residents and business owners when developing a Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Revitalization Strategy will ensure its long-term success and may unearth a wealth of ideas and resources that could prove critical to the future of the Village. The goal of public participation during this project was to foster communication, create a sense of ownership and build trust between the public and the Village of Cooperstown. Citizen participation provides an opportunity to compile the public’s knowledge of the community and understand the public’s hopes, concerns and desires for the future of the Village.

To gather public input, the project team worked closely with the Cooperstown Community Engagement Committee. Public outreach methods included:

- Attendance at Community Events
- Consumer Intercept Surveys
- Stakeholders and Focus Group Interviews
- Multi-Day Design Charrette
- Project Website

Cooperstown Community Engagement Committee

In the summer of 2014, the Cooperstown Community Engagement Committee comprised of representatives from local government, business and not-for profit organizations was assembled. This committee was tasked with overseeing Phase I of the Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Revitalization Strategy: Project Organization and Public Input.

Committee members include:

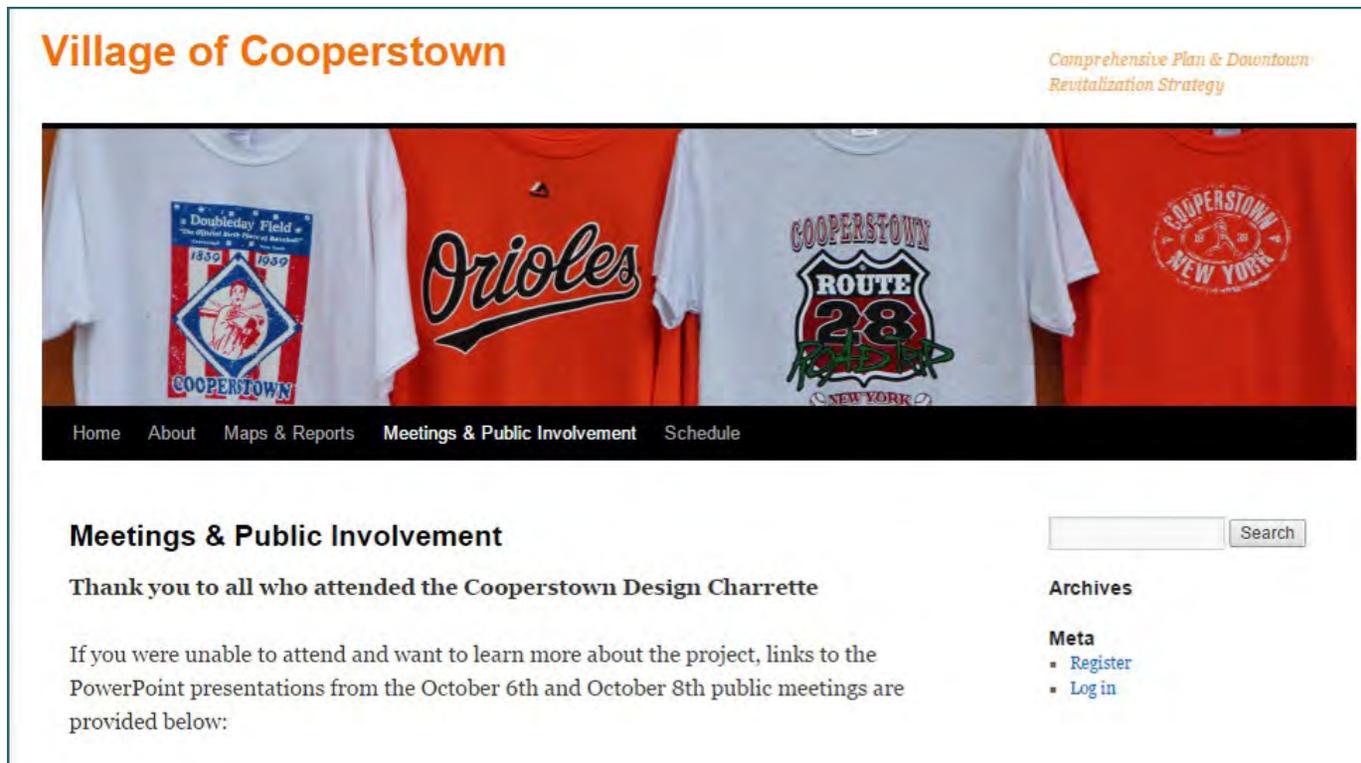
- Jeff Katz, Mayor
- Cindy Falk, Trustee and Co-chair
- Elizabeth Horvath, Co-chair
- Ellen Tillapaugh, Trustee
- Christopher Grady
- Matt Hazzard
- Marc Kingsley
- Ted Spencer



Project Website

The Cooperstown Community Engagement Committee recognized that not everyone would be able to attend the public outreach events, including the multi-day charrette. In response, a project website was created to provide those with busy schedules or limited mobility an opportunity to stay informed and provide project feedback. This website will remain active until the conclusion of Phase II.

<https://coopplan.wordpress.com/>



Village of Cooperstown

Comprehensive Plan & Downtown Revitalization Strategy

Home About Maps & Reports **Meetings & Public Involvement** Schedule

Meetings & Public Involvement

Thank you to all who attended the Cooperstown Design Charrette

If you were unable to attend and want to learn more about the project, links to the PowerPoint presentations from the October 6th and October 8th public meetings are provided below:

Search

Archives

Meta

- Register
- Log in

Community Events



As part of the public outreach process, the project team from Elan Planning and Design went “mobile” and attended a number of community events to collect input from residents and visitors alike. The team manned a booth at the Farmers’ Market, Pioneer Park and Cooperstown Field Day, which was held on October 4, 2014.

Attendees were asked to complete a Consumer Intercept Survey. The survey was designed to collect input from residents and visitors regarding their perception of the downtown, shopping characteristics, and what stores or services they felt were needed in the area. In addition, the survey asked for people to provide their zip code. This information provided information regarding their hometown and how far they traveled to visit.

A summary of the key findings, with particular relevance to future retail development downtown, is provided on the following pages.



Lisa Nagle of Elan (right) with the winner of the survey drawing.

Would you please help us?

The Village of Cooperstown is creating a plan for revitalizing our downtown and bringing in new businesses. A minute of your time to answer the following questions will help us to gather the information we need.

What brought you to Cooperstown today?

What businesses do you regularly patronize in the Village?

What additional shops, restaurants or services would you like to see in our downtown?

What is your favorite aspect of the Village of Cooperstown?

What is your zip code?

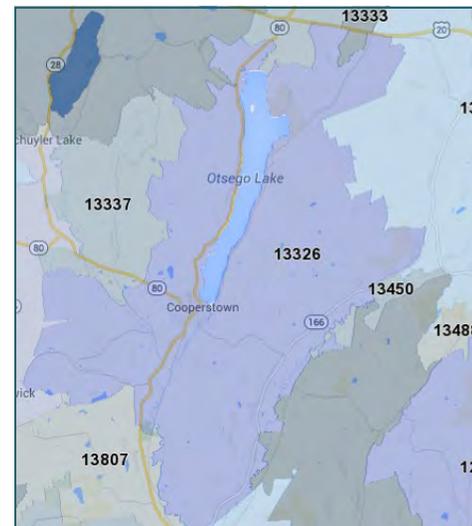
Farmers' Market

On Saturday, August 23, 2014, the project team from Elan attended the Cooperstown Farmers' Market. The reason for attending an event prior to Labor Day was to capture feedback from both residents and summer visitors alike.

Of the 55 people who completed a survey at the Farmers' Market, 38% responded that they live in the 13326 zip code (which includes the Village of Cooperstown and the immediate surrounding area) indicating that the Farmers' Market is a huge draw from outside the area.

In addition to the Farmers' Market, respondents reported that they frequent restaurants, clothing, gift and art stores in the downtown. Only two of the responders indicated they visited the Baseball Hall of Fame, and two stated that they frequent anything BUT baseball-related venues. When asked what additional shops, services or restaurants they would like to see in the downtown, responders indicated that they want more ethnic restaurants, locally owned variety businesses, clothing, service-oriented businesses and non-baseball related shops.

When asked what they like best about the area, respondents reported the quaint, small town historical atmosphere, the people, the scenic beauty, local shopping, and walkability.



13326 Zip Code Map

Images from the Farmers' Market



Pioneer Park

After attending the Farmers' Market on Saturday, August 23, 2014, the Elan team set up a table in Pioneer Park, near the Information Booth, to talk with visitors and residents walking along Main Street, as well as families with children participating in Dreams Park.

Only one of the respondents surveyed in Pioneer Park reported living in the 13326 zip code. Most of the people surveyed were from out of town and traveled to Cooperstown to participate in baseball-related activities.

Survey respondents stated that they frequent Cooperstown's restaurants, the Farmers' Market, clothing stores and gift shops.

This group stated that they would like to see more restaurants, more Farmers' Market and grocery options, clothing, gift and art stores and hotel options.

Overwhelmingly those who took part in the survey liked the Village's quaint, small town atmosphere. Respondents also noted the friendliness of the people, the shops, the walkability and the proximity of the Lake.



Cooperstown Field Day

The Elan team returned to Cooperstown on Saturday, October 4th to participate in Field Day. This inaugural event was hosted by the Cooperstown Chamber of Commerce, with Brewery Ommegang and Preferred Mutual Insurance Company serving as the event's presenting sponsors. The event was held on Main Street and featured live music, a corn hole tournament, and a "food and beer pairing" tasting event.

A total of 35 attendees completed a survey during the Field Day event. When asked "What brought you to Cooperstown today?", 29% of respondents indicated that they either live or work in the Village. Other popular responses included shopping, visiting and the Country Craft Show.

When asked what businesses do you frequent, the most popular response (71%) was restaurants. This was followed by shopping (grocery/general/drug store), gift shops and baseball and non-baseball related venues.

This group would like to see more clothing stores, ethnic restaurants, more shops but not baseball oriented, art and craft galleries, and movie theaters and entertainment venues.

Those that took part in the survey liked the quaint small town historical atmosphere about equally with the shops and the scenic beauty of the Lake. The friendliness of the people, convenience and walkability of the Village, and attractions are also appreciated.

A summary of all Consumer Intercept Survey responses is provided in Appendix B.



Consumer Intercept Survey

The Consumer Intercept Survey was also made available to the general public, including those who rode the Cooperstown Trolley, patrons of local retail establishments and restaurants, including Stagecoach Coffee and the Glimmerglass Queen Tour Boat, as well as the Village Hall.



Cooperstown Trolley

Fifty-four Cooperstown Trolley passengers completed the Consumer Intercept Survey. When asked “What brought you to Cooperstown today?”, 78% responded baseball. Other responses included general tourism and the Farmers’ Market.

Survey participants responded that they most frequently visit restaurants in the downtown followed by: clothing stores, gift shops and baseball-related venues and museums.

This group of survey respondents stated that they would like to see more restaurants, more shops but not all baseball oriented, antiques and art galleries, hotels, more parking and a day spa.

When asked, “What is your favorite aspect of the Village?”, survey respondents stated that they liked the small town feel, the friendliness of the people, the historic atmosphere, architecture, and cleanliness of the Village, the scenic beauty, baseball amenities, the Lake, attractions, and, of course, the trolley.

Of the 54 people who completed the survey, no one reported that they live in the 13326 zip code.

Stagecoach Coffee

Consumer Intercept Surveys were made available at various retailers, including Stagecoach Coffee located on Pioneer Street in the village downtown.

A total of sixty-nine surveys were filled out by Stagecoach patrons. When asked “What brought you to Cooperstown today?”, 36% reported that they live or work here, another 29% stated they were visiting (Baseball Hall of Fame, Glimmerglass Festival or general tourist visit), and the remaining respondents reported that they were downtown for either shopping, the Farmers’ Market or a hospital visit.

Survey respondents indicated that they like to frequent restaurants in the downtown, as well as clothing stores, the Farmers’ Market and food stores, gift shops and baseball-related venues.

When asked “What additional shops, restaurants or services would you like to see in our downtown?”, the most popular response was a restaurant or brew pub (33%), followed by anything non-baseball (22%). Other respondents indicated they would like to see crafts, art galleries, clothing and jewelry stores, a movie theater, parking, hotel rooms and basic services (shoe repair, dry cleaners).

Those that took part in the survey indicated that they liked the quaint small town historical atmosphere about equally with the friendliness of the people and the scenic beauty of the Lake. The convenience and walkability of the Village is also appreciated.



Christopher Grady, Stagecoach Coffee Owner and Village Resident

Stakeholder and Focus Groups Interviews

As part of the public outreach process, the Cooperstown Community Engagement Committee identified over forty organizations and key stakeholders to be interviewed. The project team reviewed the list and then invited representatives from the identified organizations to attend one of the following focus group meetings:

- Environmental Groups
- Arts Community
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Education

In addition to these focus group meetings, the project team met with a representative from the Village's largest employer, Bassett Healthcare, as well as several downtown businesses.

Environmental Groups

Invitations were extended to representatives from Otsego 2000, the Otsego County Conservation Association (OCCA), Sustainable Otsego, the Mohican Farm, and the Otsego County Soils and Water Conservation District.

Group discussion included an overview of each organization's mission, current environmental initiatives, and what steps can be

taken to make Cooperstown a more vibrant and sustainable community.

Focus group discussion included:

- There is a universal desire to see "green infrastructure techniques" (rain gardens, permeable pavement, tree plantings) implemented in streetscape enhancement projects.
- The group would like to see more bike lanes and an education campaign to encourage people to walk or bike instead of driving. Nothing in the Village is more than $\frac{3}{4}$ mile away; people need to be reminded of how close everything is.
- The vegetative buffer at Lakefront Park isn't working. The area is "soggy" – groundwater from hill and high water table.
- The Village lacks an Environmental Commission.
- The Village would benefit from having a disaster preparedness plan. The Village Board is on board, but they lack a staff person to prepare the plan.
- There is a need for affordable housing for young professionals. Representatives stated that it is difficult to find an affordable 12-month lease in the Village. Most landlords will rent for 9 months, and then switch to weekly rentals during the summer months to accommodate Dreams Park visitors.

- The Village needs to celebrate and promote the year round outdoor activities that are available in the area – especially to Bassett recruiters. For example, in 5 minutes you can be on a trail cross-country skiing or in the summer you can bike around the lake.
- An opportunity exists to create an outdoor education classroom in Cooperstown.

Arts Community

The Cooperstown Engagement Committee identified a number of arts organizations to include in the focus group interview. Invitations were extended to representatives from the Cooperstown Art Association (CAA), Smithy, Glimmerglass Festival, Fenimore Art Museum, The Farmers’ Museum, New York State Historical Association (NYSHA), and the Cooperstown Graduate Program.

Highlights from the group discussion included:

- There is an incredible wealth of artists in the Cooperstown area.
- The arts are not valued as highly as baseball — one attendee stated “we are a town with a baseball problem”.
- A visible arts presence on Main Street is needed. Could add art themed mini-banners to light poles, public sculpture, etc.



Cooperstown Art Association Galleries at 22 Main Street

- Because retail store fronts’ rents are so expensive, most artists’ start-up businesses can’t survive.
- The group would like to see the tourism shoulder season strengthened and expanded into the winter months.
- Joint marketing among arts organizations has resulted in increased attendance. For example, a recent cross-promotion campaign between the CAA and Glimmerglass Festival resulted in a 20-30% increase in attendance for both organizations.

Hospitality & Tourism

The Hospitality and Tourism Focus Group included the largest number of organizations ranging from attractions like the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, Brewery Ommegang and the Clark Sports Center to hotels and B&Bs, including the Otesaga Resort.

The group stated that an opportunity exists for Cooperstown to become a four season community/destination. Most agreed that if year-round activities could be increased, then businesses in the Village could afford to stay open during the winter months. Currently, the winter population shrinks to about 800 people.

Other key findings include:

- Hotel occupancy rates drop during the winter months. According to Smith Travel, the occupancy rates for hotels located along the Route 28 corridor were 26% between November 2013 and January 2014.
- Recreation opportunities are underutilized—need improvement in infrastructure (kayak, canoe, bike).
- Labor is a huge problem for the hospitality and tourism industry. As the 0-17 and 65+ age cohorts are growing, the employable age group is declining. A representative from the Otesaga Hotel

stated that he could employ up to 400 people during the peak tourist season, but was only able to attract 310 employees.

- Participants reported that it is hard to attract young families to the Village. It is expensive to live in the Village and there is no space to build workforce housing.

Cooperstown Central School

Stakeholder interviews were conducted with school administration, as well as members of the student body. The information provided by the stakeholders and students support the demographic data reported by the U.S. Census. Key findings from the focus group meeting include:

- School age enrollment has decreased 25% in the Cooperstown Central School district since 1999.
- One of the issues facing the Village is the limited housing opportunities available for low- to middle-income young families.
- As the Combined Wealth Ratio (CWR) of the Village increases, the percent of state aid to the school district has decreased to 32%.

-
- Despite the drop in state aid, the school district has not had to make any cuts to academic, athletic or arts programs.
 - 92% of graduating high school seniors go on to college, but few return to Cooperstown immediately after college graduation.
 - Students report that they would like to return to Cooperstown when they are ready to settle down and raise a family, but finding a professional job that isn't related to health care is difficult.

Bassett Medical Center

The Bassett Medical Center is the “hub” of the Bassett Healthcare Network. The Center is a 180-inpatient bed, acute care teaching facility. The Bassett Clinic, which provides outpatient services and specialty care, is also located in the Cooperstown Campus.

The Bassett Medical Center employs 3,400 people, making it Cooperstown's largest employer. While the Center has no difficulty recruiting employees to fill its medical and technical positions, it does have a tough time retaining service employees (entry level, food service, etc.).

As a thriving organization and regional driver, Bassett provides much needed services. As such, it is are looking to expand on, adjacent, or



within the village in order to meet its growth projections and to continue to provide the highest quality health care. In evaluating options for growth, the impact on the community should continue to be evaluated.

Another item that would assist this facility to stay within the Village is to upgrade the electrical service to the Village. Currently there is only one transformer operated by NY State Electric and Gas that services the Village. If a high speed/high volume fiber optic system were to be installed, this would ensure continuity of operations during a power outage. This type of infrastructure upgrade could also be beneficial to the entire Village by providing better access to the telecommunications infrastructure.

Design Charrette

The Cooperstown Community Engagement Committee hosted a multi-day charrette in October of 2014. The charrette was designed to provide multiple ways in which the public could share thoughts, ideas, and concerns regarding the future of Cooperstown and downtown revitalization.

Charrette components included:

- First Night Public Workshop
- Two-Day Design Studio
- Final Evening Work-in-Progress Presentation

To publicize the event, flyers were also posted by local businesses and not-for-profit organizations, a series of email blasts were distributed to various community organizations and a press release was sent to all media outlets. A copy of the charrette flyer is provided on the following page.

Public Workshop

On Monday, October 6th, a public workshop was held in the Cooperstown Central High School cafeteria from 6:00—8:00 pm. Over 110 community residents and business owners participated.

The workshop included a brief presentation by Elan Planning and Design that outlined the project approach, a review of existing conditions, and a summary of initial public outreach. This was

followed by an interactive workshop where participants were divided into small groups and then invited to participate in two exercises.

For the first exercise, each group elected a facilitator to record responses to the following questions:

1. In one word, describe Cooperstown today.
2. What do we want Cooperstown to be in 10 years?
3. What issues need to be addressed to get us there?
4. What actions should be taken to get us to the preferred future?

The following pages summarize the community input received during this exercise.



Cooperstown

DESIGN CHARRETTE

Join your neighbors in planning the future of Cooperstown.
This workshop is a chance to bring **everyone** to the table.
You have a vision for your Village. *Share it!*

Schedule:

Monday, October 6

Public Workshop (6:00 - 8:00 pm)

Wednesday, October 8

Work in Progress Presentation (6:00 - 8:00 pm)

Meetings will be held at the Cooperstown Central School High
School Cafeteria , 39 Linden Ave , Cooperstown

For more information: www.CoopPlan.wordpress.com

This project is jointly sponsored by the Village of Cooperstown & Otsego County Industrial Development Agency

Preferred Future

To identify a preferred future, workshop participants were asked, “What do you want Cooperstown to be in 10 years?” A snapshot of their responses is provided below:

- Vibrant, but quaint
- Well-rounded
- Multi-dimensional: business, housing, arts, culture
- Diverse
- Thriving economy
- Year-round
- Sustainable: environmentally, socially, economically
- Harmony between businesses and residents
- Preserved
- Connected to the lake

During Phase II of this project, the Cooperstown Community Engagement Committee will utilize the thoughts and ideas presented during this exercise to develop a Vision Statement.



Workshop participants discuss their vision for Cooperstown.

Getting Us to Our Preferred Future

Once participants had identified their vision for Cooperstown, they were asked, “What issues need to be addressed to get us there?” The project team reviewed all of the responses and found several common themes, which have been listed below:

- Parking
- Greater diversity among business mix
- Infrastructure: sewer, water, roads, sidewalks, trails
- Improved public engagement and dialog to solve problems mutually
- Improved waterfront connectivity
- A reason to come to Cooperstown in winter
- Housing affordability: rental and ownership



Planning for our Future

The last question that workshop participants were asked during the visioning exercise was, “What actions should be taken to get us to the preferred future?”. The most common responses were:

- Build a parking deck
- Bring a movie theatre and performing arts center downtown
- Organize walking/biking trails to move throughout community
- Install community wayfinding signage
- Improve relationship between businesses and residents
- Emphasize lake as a destination
- Add new restaurants
- Create festival space for year-round events
- Build senior housing

Mapping Exercise

For the second exercise, each table was provided with a copy of the project Base Map, markers, and an instruction sheet. The purpose of the exercise was to get workshop participants to think about how Cooperstown looks and functions today, as well as potential uses that would work in the Village. Participants were asked to identify good and bad views in the community, destination and community icons (where do people visit), walking paths (where do people normally walk or where would they like to be able to walk), and those areas that are underutilized and/or need improvement.

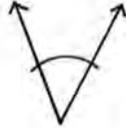


COOPERSTOWN FEATURES

The purpose of this exercise is to get you thinking about the Village of Cooperstown. Using the symbols and colors listed below, please record your table's thoughts on how the Village looks and functions today. After placing the symbol on the map, please provide a label.

Views

Show the good and bad views around the Village. Use a **red marker** to draw the symbol shown at right. Mark a "G" for good and a "B" for bad.



Destinations

Show the places in and around the Village that people go to such as a specific business, a park, gardens, etc. Label the area on the map with a **green marker**.



Community Icons

Show the features that you think best define the Village. These are often highly visible items such as water bodies, historic buildings, public art, or attractive bridges. Use a **blue marker** and draw the symbol shown at right.



What needs improvement?

Are there areas that are not fulfilling their potential? These can be vacant land and buildings or areas that need aesthetic improvement. Use **red marker** and draw the symbol shown at right.



Where do people walk?

Show the ways people normally walk around the Village. Include formal (sidewalk/roadway) and informal (across vacant land) pathways. If there are unpleasant places to walk, they should be shown as well with a brief explanation (too much traffic, bad sidewalks, etc.) Use the **green marker** and draw the symbol shown at right.



Mapping Exercise Instructions

Village of Cooperstown Potential Uses

A project is something that develops or redevelops buildings or properties. Examples may include a new building or park on vacant land, or a new business in a vacant building. A list of potential projects is shown below. Use the red marker to show the ideal location for these projects by placing the corresponding number on the map. You do not need to locate all of the project types, only those you think are appropriate for the Village. For uses not listed, use the blanks provided below.

1. Park or Trail
2. Crafts and Local Goods Retail Center
3. Craft Brewery & Pub
4. Restaurant
5. Mixed-Use Building (retail, residential, office in one multi-story building)
6. Parking Garage
7. Hotels/B&Bs
8. Family Activities (movie theater, bowling alley)

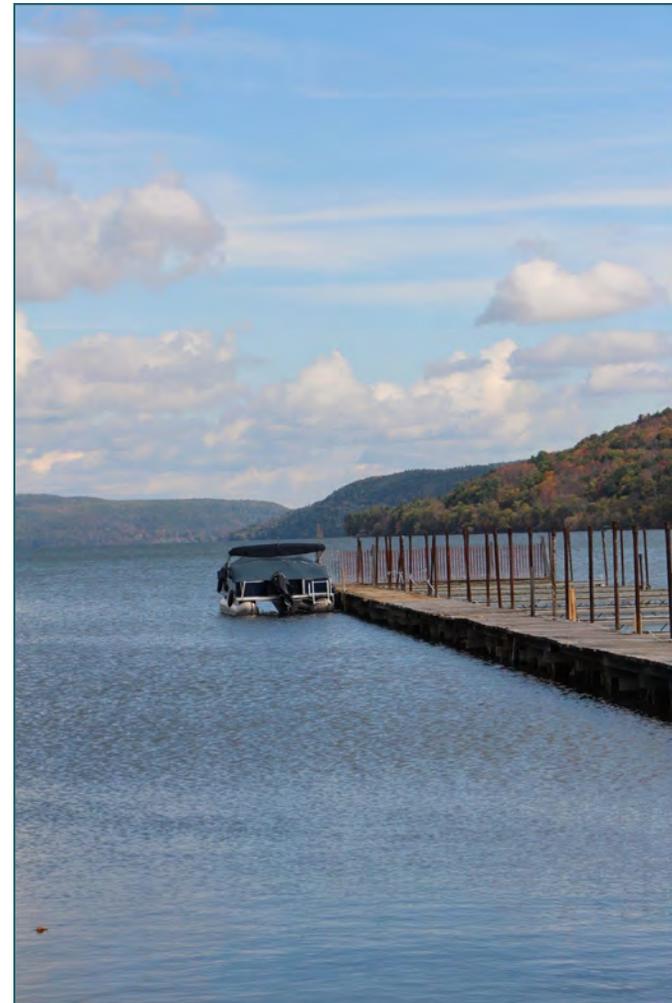
Other Uses: (Use the lines below for uses not listed above.)

9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

Mapping Exercise: Good Views

Workshop participants were asked to think about the Village of Cooperstown, and identify good and bad views. Overall, most of the views that were identified were good. Universal themes included:

- Water (Lake Otsego and Susquehanna River)
- Built environment such as Main Street with hills in the background
- Stone bridge
- Clark Sports Center



Mapping Exercise: Bad Views

The “bad” views of the Village included most parking areas and the area immediately surrounding the iconic Doubleday Field.



Surface parking lot located along Chestnut Street, adjacent to Doubleday Field



View of Doubleday Field from Main Street



Mapping Exercise: Destinations & Community Icons

Workshop participants were asked to identify those places in and around the Village where people go. The most common destinations and icons identified by the group include:

- Doubleday Field
- Waterfront
- The Otesaga
- Price Chopper Supermarket
- Bassett Healthcare
- The Baseball Hall of Fame & Museum
- Downtown (Main St from Chestnut to Fair)
- County Complex
- Farmers' Market
- Council Rock
- Nature Trails near the School
- Golf Course
- Cooperstown Distillery
- Cooperstown Central School
- The Farmers' Museum



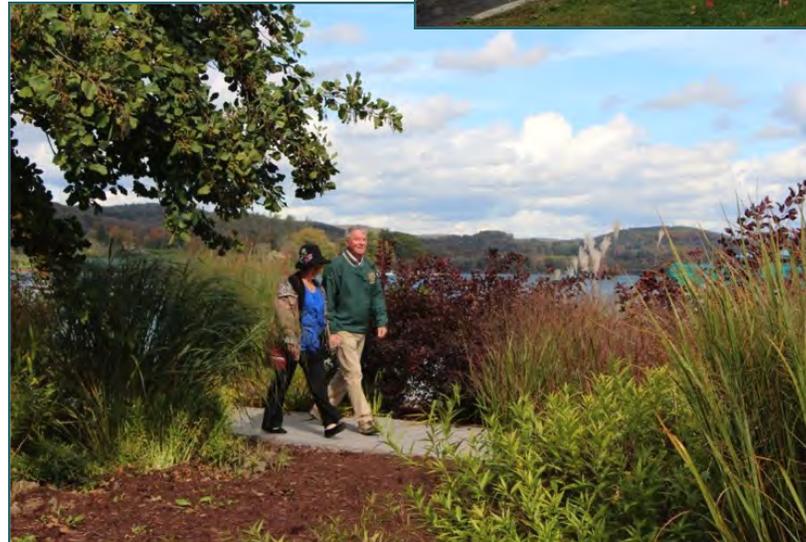
**Mapping Exercise:
Destinations & Icons**



Walking

Workshop participants identified the most common places people walk (or want to walk) in the Village. Their responses include:

- Near the water
- Along the Susquehanna River
- Sidewalk along Susquehanna Avenue to CSC
- Connect to Elementary School and Hospital
- County Route 31 to Natty Bumppo's Cave and Fairy Springs
- Hiking trails at school
- Estli Avenue
- Various "cut throughs"



Areas of Improvement

As a final step to the mapping exercise, workshop participants were asked to use a red marker and identify those areas in the Village that need improvement. The most common responses include:

- Sidewalks throughout the Village
- Buildings and area around Doubleday Field
- Railroad Avenue and Main Street Connector
- Waterfront
- Downtown facades
- Price Chopper parking lot
- Ice skating area
- Intersections along Chestnut Street
- Parking lot near the Chamber of Commerce

Composite/Common Themes Map

Based on the information gathered during the public workshop, stakeholder interviews, consumer intercept surveys and site visits, the project team prepared a *Composite/Common Themes Map*. The map illustrates the most commonly identified views (both good and bad), the destinations people visit the most, the places where people like to walk and where additional walking paths are needed, and those areas that need improvement. A copy of the map is provided on the following page.

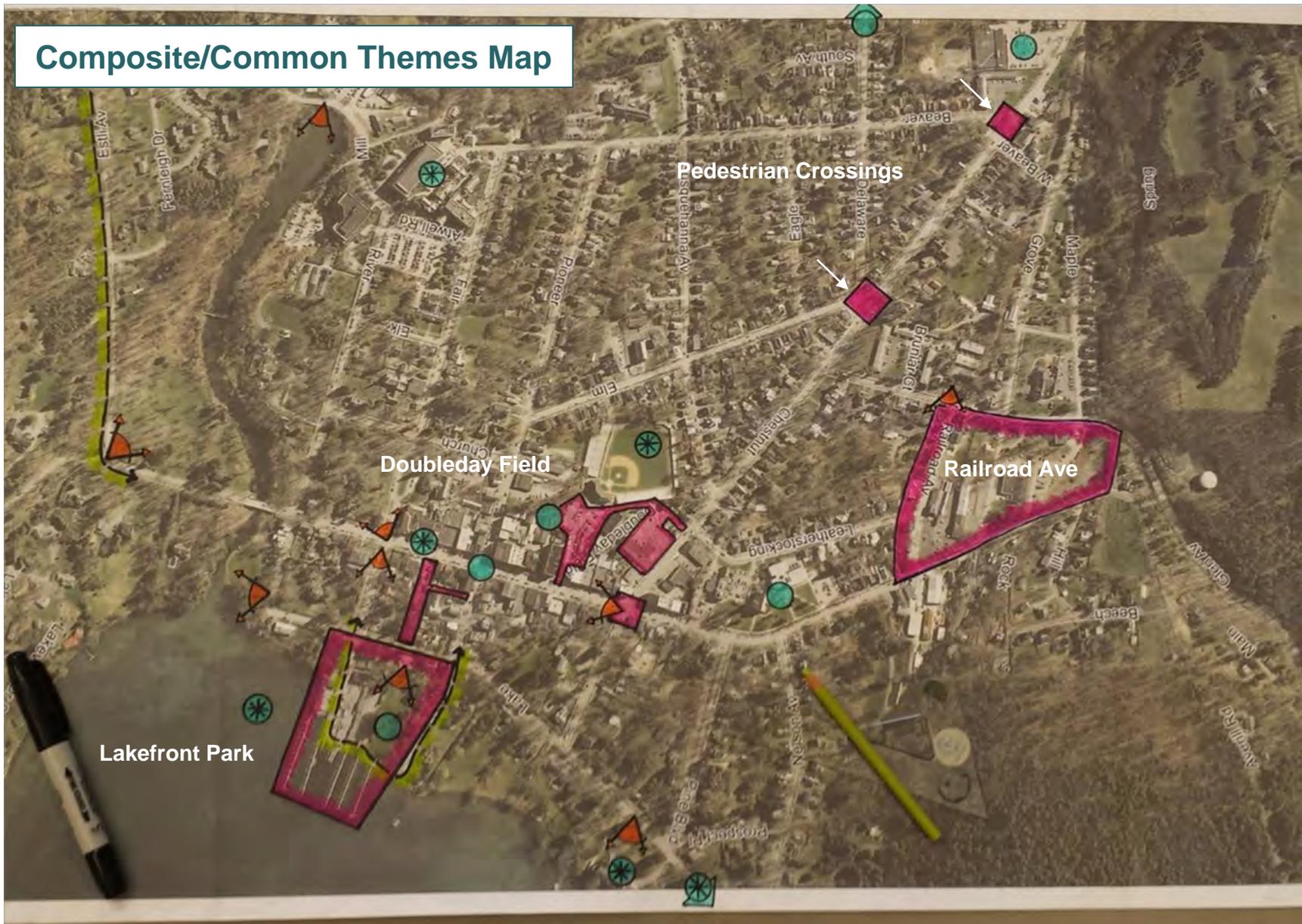
The map also identifies four initial focus areas for improvement:

- Pedestrian Crossings
- Lakefront Park
- Doubleday Field
- Railroad Avenue



The Elan team developed the Composite Map based on community input provided during the public workshop.

Composite/Common Themes Map



Pedestrian Crossings

The first focus area for improvement identified by the project team are three pedestrian crossing located along Chestnut Street.

- The intersection at Chestnut and Main Street
- The intersection at Chestnut and Elm Street
- The intersection at Chestnut and Beaver Street

To enhance pedestrian and motorist safety, the Village could increase pedestrian presence by implementing the following:

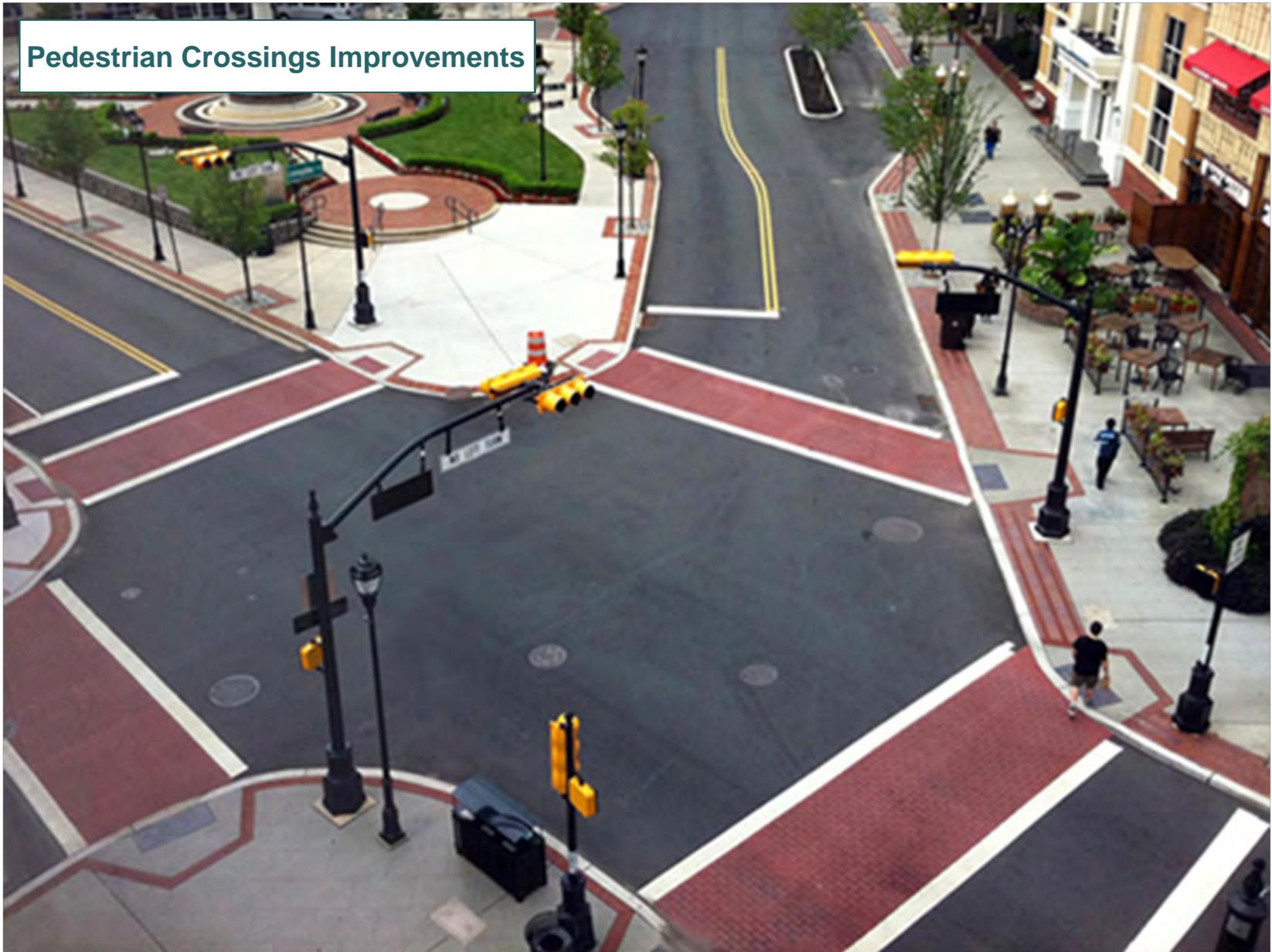
- New or refurbished highly visible crosswalks
- Redefined intersections with bump outs, where appropriate
- Handicapped access sidewalk openings with detectable warning strips
- Enhanced pedestrian-scale lighting

The graphic provided on the following page provides an illustration of what these pedestrian crossing enhancements could look like.



Intersection at Beaver and Chestnut Streets (top photo), Intersection at Delaware, Elm and Chestnut Streets

Pedestrian Crossings Improvements



Doubleday Field “Front Yard”

The current view from Main Street to the iconic Doubleday Field is that of a parking lot. You have to look over many vehicles before you see the historic Doubleday façade.

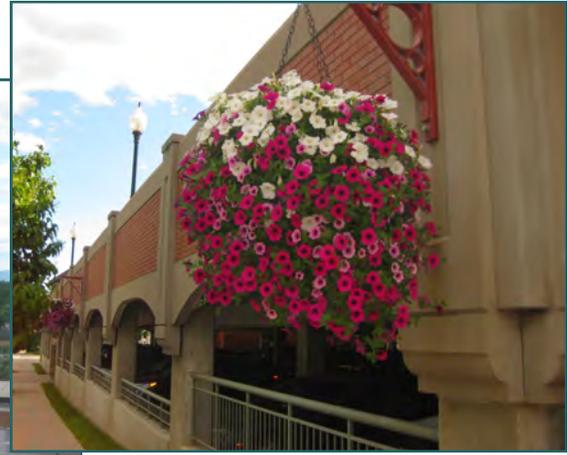
The concept for improving the “front yard” of Doubleday Field was of great interest during the public workshop. Participants recognize that, while parking is in high demand and needed, it is perhaps not the ‘highest and best use’ of the area in front of Doubleday Field. Toward this end, a concept was developed that looks to blend parking with green/open space, new retail and housing.

To enhance the visual gateway from Main Street to the front door of Doubleday Field, a wide pedestrian route could be created that would be lined with green grass, pedestrian scaled lighting, benches, and pennant flags leading up to the entrance of the ballpark. Immediately outside of the entrance to the ballfield, a ‘central green’ could be created providing an area for players to warm up by playing catch, pitching, playing hot-box, etc. This area could also incorporate public art celebrating the history of the ballpark. The idea is to bring part of the park ‘outside’ for visitors to experience this historic activity.



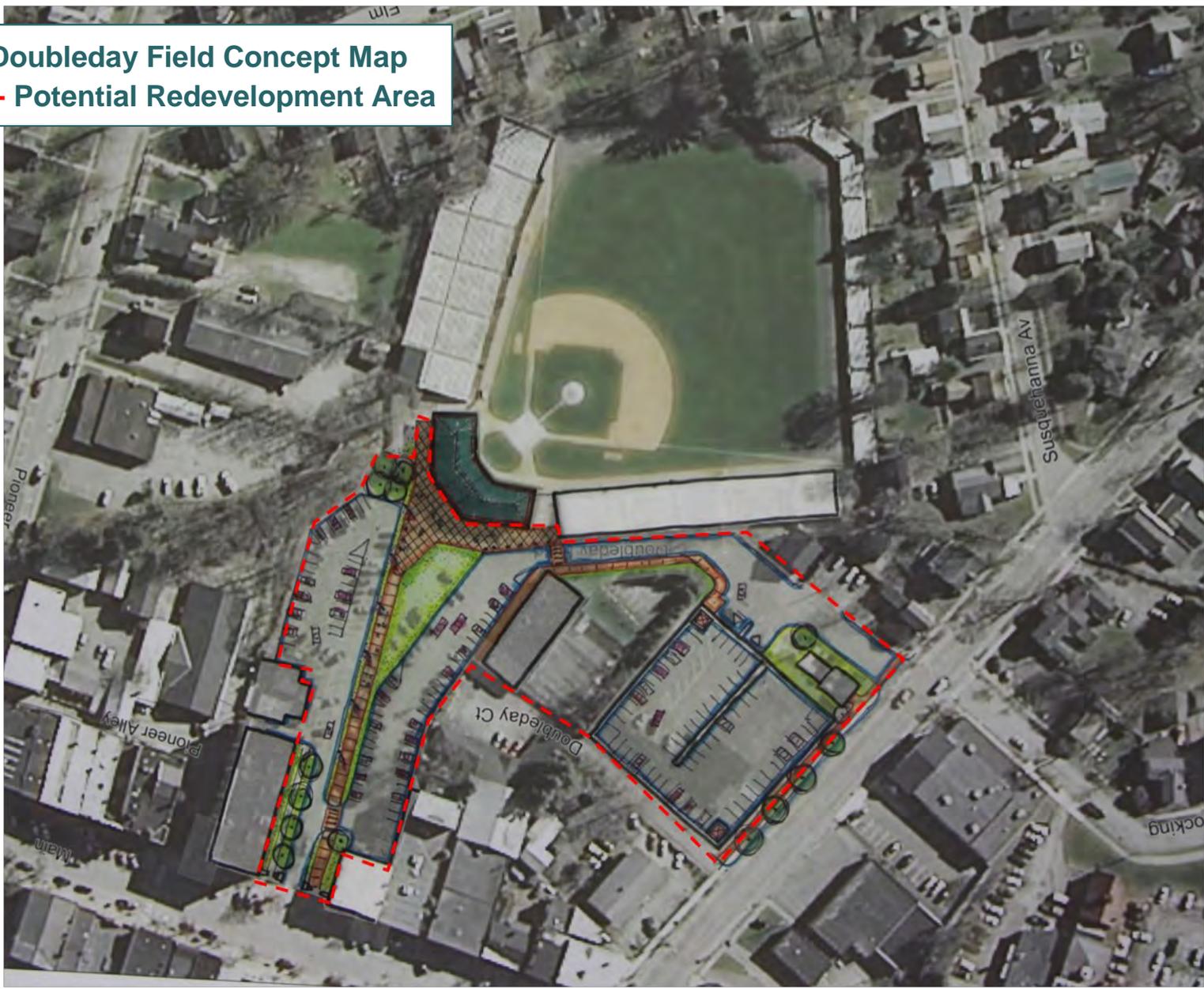
The current view of Doubleday Field from Main Street (top photo) and the surface parking lot off Chestnut Street.

The current parking lot in front of Doubleday field accommodates approximately 130-140 parking spaces. The proposed “green apron” would either take up the entire area or approximately 30-35 of those parking spaces. To compensate for the lost parking spaces, the Village could work with private property owners to explore the possibility of constructing a 5-6 story private parking structure on the current surface lot on Chestnut Street and the adjacent retail building housing the batting cages. The parking structure would be designed so as to fit into the historic nature of Cooperstown. It would contain baseball-related retail on the first floor, parking on floors 2-4, and contain rental units or condominiums on the fifth and sixth floors.



Examples of parking structures located in historic Saratoga Springs, NY

Doubleday Field Concept Map
- - - Potential Redevelopment Area



Lakefront Park

Workshop participants noted that Otsego Lake was one of their favorite places to visit, view and walk. To enhance public access to the lake, the project team developed a concept that focuses on making minimal changes to enhance what is already there.

Recommended improvements include:

- Opening up the existing view to the lake by pruning existing landscaping
- Transplanting larger existing trees out of the viewshed
- Working with private owners to establish a continuous walking path
- Connecting with existing sidewalk on Pioneer Street
- Construction of an 80—100' wooden dock

A copy of the Conceptual Map for Lakefront Park is provided on the following page.



Transplanting existing trees and pruning existing shrubs will open up the view of Otsego Lake from Lakeside Park.

Lakefront Park Concept Map



Railroad Avenue District

One of the questions raised during the public workshop was how can we enhance connectivity between Main Street and Railroad Avenue? The current walk between the two areas is nice with good sidewalks and plenty of shade, but few visitors venture north of Chestnut Street during their stay.

To enhance connectivity and increase pedestrian traffic to Railroad Avenue, the Village needs to create a draw or a reason to visit. By increasing the offerings along Railroad Avenue, a critical mass will be established. Several ideas were discussed during the public workshop including creating a new iconic structure, hotel or multi-use facility, reactivating the rail line to transport people between downtown and Dreams Park, and creating a civic space that would include meeting rooms and a stage and studio space that could be used for the arts. Several groups also mentioned that this would be

a good location for much needed senior housing.

In summary, it was generally agreed upon that creating more of a 12-month entertainment district would greatly enhance this area and draw existing residents and new visitors to Cooperstown.



Railroad Ave District Concept Map

- - - Potential Redevelopment District





Next Steps



In December of 2014, the Regional Economic Development Council announced that the Otesgo County Industrial Development Agency was awarded an Empire State Development Strategic Planning and Feasibility Study project grant to complete Phase II of the Comprehensive Plan and Downtown Revitalization Strategy.

Phase II project tasks include:

- Economic and Demographic Analysis
- Physical Enhancement Strategy
- Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Revitalization Strategy
 - Vision
 - Goals
 - Strategy
- Implementation Matrix

It is estimated that Phase II of this project will kick-off in late winter of 2015 and be completed by year end.

