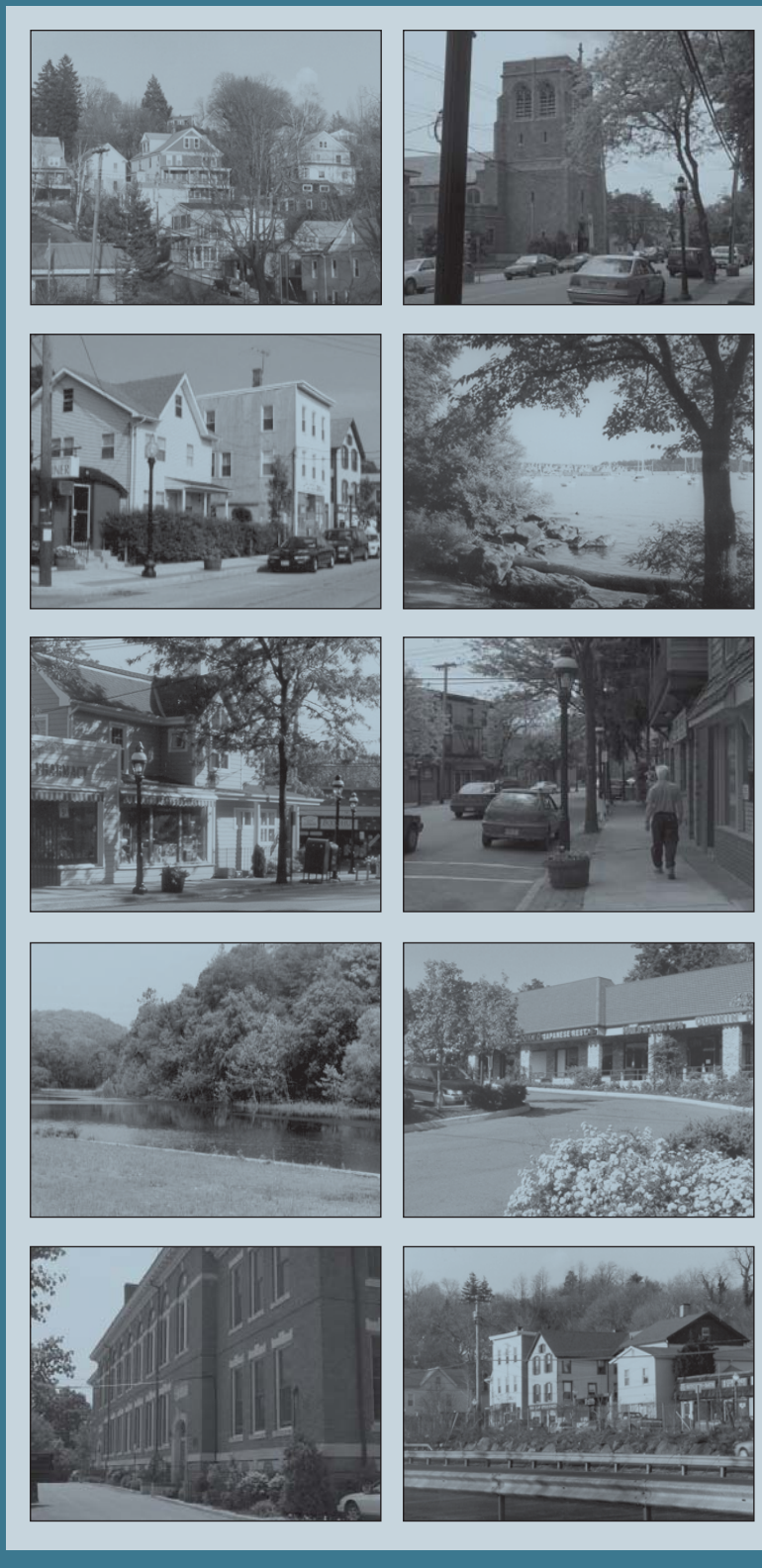

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Village of Croton-on-Hudson

January 2003

VILLAGE OF CROTON-ON-HUDSON

2003 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Prepared for the
Comprehensive Plan Committee
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose and Function of the 2003 Comprehensive Plan

Comprehensive plans are variously described as cookbooks, toolboxes, and blueprints, all providing guidance and strategies for a community's future. As defined in NYS Planning and Zoning Law, a village comprehensive plan is a means to guide "the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the Village." The comprehensive planning process involves a variety of research and assessment tasks: review of past plans and objectives, analysis of historical trends and current conditions, identification of issues of concern, and formulation of recommendations for problem areas and opportunities. This work occurs in conjunction with public participation and outreach efforts (workshops, hearings, surveys), to assure that public opinion and input are an integral part of the planning process. To be effective as guidelines for future direction, the recommendations presented in the comprehensive plan should be framed by an overall vision for the community. This "vision" is also developed through review of past planning efforts, public input, and consultation with local officials and agency heads.

The 2003 Comprehensive Plan was developed during a 16-month planning process, incorporating ideas and recommendations of Village officials, residents, and the Comprehensive Plan Committee. Extensive input from Croton-on-Hudson residents was obtained from three public workshop discussions and a mail survey of all Village residents. The public input, along with the research on existing conditions within the Village, helped define the guiding vision and the particular issues which the Plan will focus on.

The Plan's usefulness is therefore twofold: both in the decision-making and consensus building process that is involved in the creation of the Plan, and as a policy document guiding the future direction of Croton-on-Hudson. In order to serve as an effective guide, the Plan's future land use recommendations are framed by a set of policy objectives. These policy objectives are designed to shape the future of the Village's physical development.

Although the 2003 Plan sets forth recommendations for the future of Croton-on-Hudson, it is not, in itself, a regulation. Recommendations made in the Plan are implemented through zoning laws and other land use regulation tools. However, all village land use regulations must be in accordance with an adopted plan. This Plan also incorporates several revisions to the zoning code; these will help reinforce the recommendations of the Plan.

1.2 Previous Comprehensive Planning Efforts in Croton-on-Hudson

In 1977, the Village of Croton-on-Hudson adopted a comprehensive zoning plan, known as the Master Plan, to regulate land development throughout the Village. Although the Village experienced substantial changes in building construction and development over the next two decades, no comprehensive review or update of the Master Plan was undertaken. However, numerous strategic plans and studies focusing on specific topics or areas of the Village have been prepared in recent years, including waterfront feasibility studies, traffic calming studies, Upper Village design/market studies, a North End zoning study, open space inventories, Environmental Conservation policies, the Trailway Master Plan, water capacity and stormwater management studies.

In 1992, the Village adopted a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) reflecting more recent development possibilities, and created policies to govern them. Since all of the land in Croton-on-Hudson falls within the New York State Coastal Zone, the LWRP and its policies effectively translated into a land use plan for the entire Village. In addition to its stated objectives for open space, parks, environmental protection, waterfront access, the LWRP recommended updating the 1977 Master Plan to provide for consistency with the Coastal Zone policies.

The Hudson River waterfront has been the focus of recent intensive planning efforts, with a ***Greenway Vision Plan*** proposing conceptual land use plans and design scenarios; in 1997 this plan was formally incorporated into the Village's Master Plan. The ***Feasibility Study for the Village Waterfront Property*** (Imbiano Quigley Landscape Architects, AKRF, 2000-01) focused on Croton-on-Hudson's underdeveloped Hudson River waterfront property (former Seprieo site). The first (March 2000) draft of the feasibility study prepared four alternative proposals for the recreational use of the site, which were presented to the community and to the NYS Department of State. The report was finalized in September 2001 with a single preferred alternative. It is currently under review by the Village Board. This proposed waterfront development plan is discussed in detail in Section 3.8.

In 1999, the Village Board of Trustees created a Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) to review, update, and revise the Village's Master Plan to address current conditions and current needs. The establishment of the Comprehensive Plan Committee was prompted by the Village's concern about land use and development trends in the Village, County, and region, and by the Village's intent to

update and revise its local laws and regulations (including zoning) to conform to a revised Master Plan.

1.3 Citizen Based Planning Process

Critical to the comprehensive planning process is citizen involvement, which ensures that the vision and recommendations put forth in the plan incorporate the ideas and concerns of Village residents. The public participation process for the Plan solicited input on a broad range of topics from Village residents and employees:

Workshop Participants, August 2000

Interviews with Village staff and members of the Board of Trustees. Beginning in May 2000, BFJ conducted a series of interviews with directors of Village departments, members of the Board of Trustees and several Village organizations. Interviewees were asked to identify Croton-on-Hudson's main assets, the major problems confronting the Village, tasks to be accomplished over the next five years and to articulate a vision for the Village.

Public Workshops. Three public workshops were conducted between August 2000 and March 2001. The workshops, which were advertised in the local paper, on the Croton-on-Hudson website and on local access television, each had an impressive turnout of between 40 and 60 residents. Participants divided into discussion groups to focus on particular topics. Within each group, participants discussed their specific concerns and made preliminary recommendations which were recorded and presented to the entire assembly at the close of the workshop.

March 2001 Workshop

Resident Survey[1]. In September 2000, the Village mailed 3,799 surveys, eliciting residents' input on a range of topics relevant to Croton-on-Hudson's character and future development. The response rate was a high 25%. The survey consisted of twelve questions concerning the Village's character, commercial and retail amenities, public and recreational facilities, Village objectives and spending priorities and future development.

The commitment of local residents to sharing their vision of Croton-on-Hudson was evidenced in the high level of participation in the planning process. All three workshops were well attended and the rate of return for the residential surveys was exceptionally high. The ideas, concerns and recommendations which evolved from these outreach efforts help ensure that the Plan focused on issues that are

[1] Although school district-related growth and planning issues were not in the mandate of this Comprehensive Plan, the survey developed information that could be of use to the school district. This information is available to be shared with the district.

of central importance to local residents. As a result of comments received at the Comprehensive Plan Committee's Public Hearing, the committee added and further refined its recommendations.

In addition to these outreach efforts, the Plan is presented at a public hearing for further comment prior to its adoption. SEQR review is also undertaken to evaluate any potentially significant environmental impacts that could result from the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

1.4 Guiding Goals of the Comprehensive Plan

The research and public participation stages of this comprehensive planning process provided the context for defining the scope and nature of issues and opportunities to be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. Although numerous viewpoints and objectives have been presented, the vision for the Plan shared by most participants emphasizes the following overall goals for the future of Croton-on-Hudson:

- ***preserving traditional qualities***
- ***strengthening assets***
- ***protecting resources.***

To realize these goals, the Plan emphasizes protecting, maintaining and enhancing Croton-on-Hudson's unique features to the greatest extent possible: the waterfronts; parks, open space and trails; the low key, small-town quality; historic qualities and character; convenient transportation and pedestrian access; economic diversity and expanding the tax base. These goals and the Plan recommendations are discussed in more detail in Section 4.0***.***

1.5 Format of the Comprehensive Plan

This document is structured in four major sections. This first section consists of the introduction to the Plan and the process. Section 2.0 describes Croton-on-Hudson's history and past planning efforts. Section 3.0 describes the "existing conditions": the Village's physical environment, land use, zoning, population, housing, transportation, and community services, facilities, and utilities. Special planning areas (commercial districts and the Hudson River Waterfront) are also delineated. Section 4.0 describes the public participation process in more detail, and outlines the goals, objectives, and issues defined during the comprehensive planning process. That section also outlines specific recommendations for each issue area.

2.0 CROTON-ON-HUDSON HISTORY AND PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

2.1 Croton-on-Hudson History

Croton-on-Hudson was formally incorporated as a village in the Town of Cortlandt in 1898, but its history begins much earlier than that. Croton-on-Hudson's colonial-era history dates back to the 17th century, and archaeological evidence indicates that it was populated by Native American Indians as early as 4950 BC. The Kitchawanc tribe, part of the Wappinger Confederacy of the Algonquin Nation, was native to the area and was responsible for several of the place names known in Croton-on-Hudson today. The Kitchawanc called the marsh separating Croton Point from Croton Neck "Senasqua," a name later used for the park further north. Croton itself is believed to be named for the Indian chief of the Kitchawanc tribe, Kenoten, which means "wild wind."

Etching of Croton Bay and environs, circa 1760, by T. Cornu; Source: History of Croton-on-Hudson

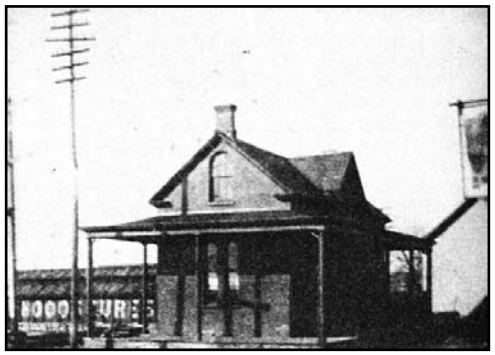
A plaque on a rock at Croton Point Park marks the spot where a peace treaty was signed in 1645 between the Dutch and the Kitchawanc, under an old oak tree. More Dutch arrived in the following decades, at first to trade and then, by the 1660s, to settle in the area. In 1677, Stephanus Van Cortlandt, who later became the first native-born mayor of New York City, began acquiring land to create a manor and in 1697, a Royal Patent was issued designating the estate as the Manor of Cortlandt.

Van Cortlandt Manor
Source: History of Croton-on-Hudson

The Village of Croton-on-Hudson thus evolved as an enclave of the Van Cortlandt Manor. Originally known as Croton Landing, its early Dutch residents were involved with agriculture and trade. A 1718 census counted 91 inhabitants in the Manor, including the Dutch settlers and English Quakers, who settled around Mount Airy and the Croton Valley. Many of Croton-on-Hudson's early settlers were farmers or worked on the mills that were developing along the Croton River. By the 19th century, farming, shipping, ship-building and flour and brick manufacturing had become the predominant industries, along with work on the railroad and construction of the Croton and New Croton Dams and the New Croton Aqueduct.

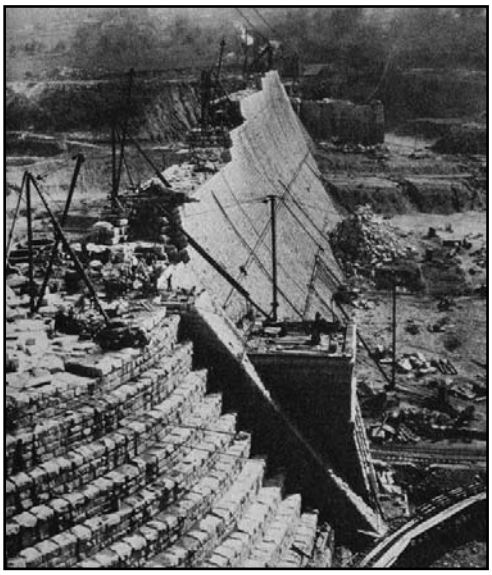
These major public works projects in the 19th century – the railroad, the dams and the aqueduct - played a pivotal role in shaping Croton-on-Hudson's demographic development and cemented its importance in the region. The construction of these projects brought an influx of German, Irish and Italian immigrants, who came to work and then settled with their families in the area. The influx of immigrants significantly increased the population of the Village and the surrounding areas so that by the time of its incorporation in 1898, the Village's population had grown to 1,000 and to over 1,700 in the early 1900s.

The advent of the railroad had a tremendous impact on the growth of Croton-on-Hudson and served as an economic engine for northern Westchester. Construction of a rail line to Poughkeepsie via Croton-on-Hudson began in 1846, when Poughkeepsie merchants advocated for an improved link to their city from New York City. In 1903, electric trains began operating out of the old Grand Central Terminal and construction began on a steam terminal at Croton Point where trains would switch over from electric to steam power to continue north past Croton-on-Hudson. Most of the land acquired for the engine terminal was purchased from Clifford Harmon, a real estate developer, who took title to the Van Cortlandt family farm when electrification plans were announced in 1903. He stipulated in the deed to the property to NY Central Railroad that the station on Croton Point must always bear his name, hence the Croton-Harmon Station.



Croton Railroad Station, Riverside Avenue, 1849; Source: History of Croton-on-Hudson

The terminal for steam locomotives was completed in 1913, heralding a new era for Croton-on-Hudson as a railroad town. Since the New York Central rail line stopped in Harmon to change engines, it became a destination point for metropolitan area travelers. A shopping district developed around the railroad, creating a railroad village that became a focal point and source of employment in northern Westchester. In addition, once the engine terminal and repair facilities were completed, Croton-on-Hudson became home to many employees of the New York Central railroad. It is unofficially estimated that after World War II, one-third of the paychecks in the Village came from New York Central Railroad.



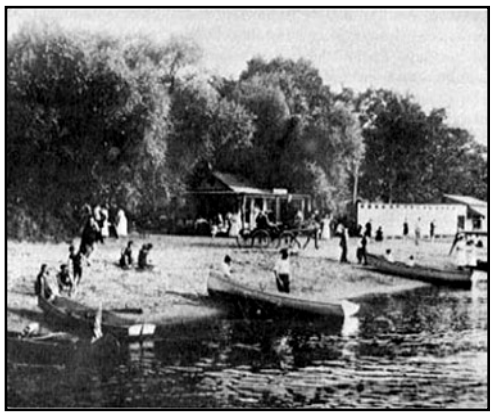
Construction of New Croton Dam, 1901 Source: History of Croton-on-Hudson

Like the railroad, the construction of the Croton and New Croton Dams and the New Croton Aqueduct played an important role in shaping Croton-on-Hudson's development. Construction began on the Croton Dam in 1837 after several water crises in New York City made clear the need for a steady supply of potable water. The project provided many jobs for Irish immigrants who had emigrated to escape the potato famines and it is estimated that at one point 10,000 laborers were working on the project. The New Croton Aqueduct was completed in 1890 and the New Croton Dam, designed to meet the ever-increasing demands for fresh water from New York City, was completed in 1907 after 15 years of construction.

In 1932, two separate communities, Mount Airy and Harmon, were incorporated into the Village. Each area had a distinct identity that contributed to the cultural richness of the Croton-on-Hudson community. Mount Airy had remained a Quaker enclave into the 1800s but evolved in the early 1900s into a summer colony that attracted many Greenwich Village artists and writers. Poet Edna St. Vincent Millay and actress Gloria Swanson both resided in Croton-

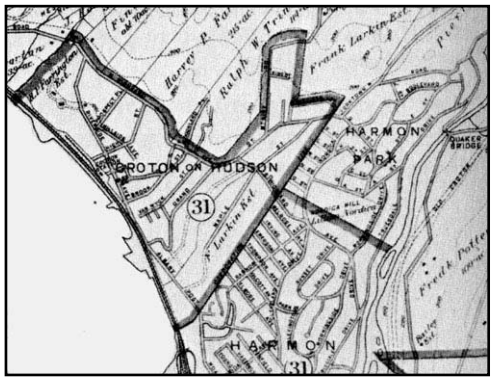
on-Hudson, and Elizabeth Duncan, sister of Isadora Duncan, founded a dance school there, using two homes along Glengary Road as studios. Many noted members of the American Communist party lived and organized there as well. The area continued to attract writers and artists through the mid-1900s.

Harmon was founded in 1903 by real estate developer Clifford Harmon with the goal of developing a rural enclave for artists, writers and musicians. The developer constructed a playhouse on Truesdale Drive, where ballets and concerts were performed, and also the Nikko Inn, which became a fashionable place for stage and government notables. Both are now private residences. Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks both lived in Harmon as did writers, journalists, teachers and college professors. By the 1920s, as the railroad expanded its services, Harmon had become a residential neighborhood for railroad workers and commuters to New York City.



Croton Point Beach, 1910
Source: History of Croton-on-Hudson

Following World War II, Croton-on-Hudson's importance as a railroad town diminished as diesel replaced steam engines and long-distance passenger service was gradually discontinued. However, it continued to expand in size and population as American serviceman returned from the war and settled in the community. An area known as "GI Valley" developed below Grand Street around 1945 and Wolf Road was developed in 1947. Many homes in the Harmon area were also constructed around this time. After World War II, the Village became more of a commuter suburb, with many residents commuting to workplaces in New York City and other employment centers outside of Croton-on-Hudson.



1911 Westchester County Map, showing Harmon and Croton-on-Hudson; Source: History of Croton-on-Hudson

In 1976, when the Village published ***The History of Croton-on-Hudson***, the recorded population was 7,500 residents. Although by 1990 its population had declined slightly to 7,018, the Village has grown to 7,606 residents as of the 2000 Census. Croton-on-Hudson has continued to evolve as a suburban village with a thriving artistic community and has retained the rich cultural diversity that dates back to its early settlement.

2.2 Summary of Previous Planning Studies: 1977-2000

a. 1977 Master Plan

The first comprehensive planning document for the Village, the 1977 Master Plan, is a short (70 page) document that reviewed existing land use patterns and trends and recommended zoning changes for the Village. The Village was not fully built out at that time, with over half of the land area undeveloped. The population was concentrated in the central and southern parts of the Village, while the area north of Grand Street, which constituted two-thirds of

the total land area, was largely undeveloped. Recognizing the likelihood of future population growth and development, the 1977 Master Plan focused on ways to manage this growth so that the Village's character and density could be preserved. The central vision of the Master Plan is found in its emphasis on the Central Village (the "core"), which the plan describes as "the keystone to the master plan" (page 11), as well as the avoidance of sprawl and regional shopping facilities, which "would be destructive of the essential elements of the character of the Village" (page 12).

Noting that the park and recreation areas in Croton-on-Hudson were then inadequate for the entire population, the Master Plan recommended the preservation of the entire Croton River Gorge for park and water-oriented recreation, with scenic easements over privately owned lands. Small recreational areas and clustering were recommended for housing developments in the north end of the Village. The preservation and enhancement of the Hudson River waterfront were described as "essential to the maintenance of the character and distinct life pattern of our Village." The plan also stressed protection of the Hudson River and its shallow bays (Croton Bay at the mouth of the Croton River, and Haverstraw Bay), as key elements in the ecology of the Hudson River Valley. Protection of lands underwater, limitation (through zoning) of the types of industrial uses "consistent with the welfare and tranquility of our Village," provision of recreation-conservation areas, as well as public access to the shoreline, were the waterfront recommendations.

The Introduction to the Master Plan outlined general objectives (described as "value judgments") to guide the future development of the Village, and noted that while the Master Plan was "not completely free of contradictions, it does in the opinion of the Planning Board express an overall vision of the sort of community that our Village is, or ought to strive to become." The stated objectives of this vision are summarized as follows:

Preserve low-density residential character. The Master Plan maintained that essential single-family residential character of Croton-on-Hudson should be preserved, although with some flexibility in permitting modest increase in townhouses, attached dwellings, and small apartments. It was estimated that when fully developed the Village could support a population of 15,000 residents. The Master Plan's zoning recommendations for residential areas therefore focused on ways to limit the projected growth in population to this estimate.

The Village should have an identifiable "core," containing the greatest density of commercial and residential uses. The Master Plan defined the Upper Village and the Riverside Avenue shopping

area as the two ends of this core, which together formed the larger Central Village. This area was to be preserved and enhanced as the focal point of Croton-on-Hudson identity, characterized by commercial and office uses, municipal facilities, and higher density residential structures. In its emphasis on the core, the Master Plan sought to avoid sprawl and scattering of uses in unrelated parts of the Village.

Preserve areas of open woodland through clustering of residential units.

Protect waterfront assets. Control the development of Hudson River waterfront, and preserve as essentially undeveloped the Croton River waterfront.

Encourage commercial/industrial development to increase tax base. The Master Plan noted that it "does not envision Croton-on-Hudson becoming a regional or semi-regional shopping center, and does not encourage the proliferation and scattering of retail stores throughout the Village, at the possible expense of the economic survival of the Central Village."

b. Preliminary Market Analysis and Design Study, Upper Village, June 1981

Raymond, Parish, Pine & Weiner, Inc. was retained to prepare an economic market study of the Upper Village area to analyze how this area functions, its trade area, its strengths and weaknesses, and to identify opportunities for public and private actions to preserve and build upon the charm, scale, and atmosphere of the area. The primary goal defined in the study, is "to preserve and build upon the special scale, charm, and atmosphere of the Upper Village." The recommendations of the study included stabilizing existing businesses and attracting a limited number of compatible new ones, especially specialty stores, boutiques, personal services, and small offices. Improvements to the streetscape, façades, and to the overall image of the Upper Village (e.g. through the use of a logo), would help achieve these goals.

c. Croton-on-Hudson Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), 1992

The Croton-on-Hudson LWRP was adopted in March 1992 by the Village's Board of Trustees, and later approved by the NYS Secretary of State (June 1992) and the U.S. Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (August 1992). The coastal zone in Croton-on-Hudson extends to the eastern boundary of the Village, because the LWRP "considers the entire Village of Croton-on-Hudson to have a direct and significant relationship with both the Croton and

Hudson Rivers…the topography of the Village is such that inland areas contain primary viewsheds of the Rivers and waterfront and provide an important visual identity of the Village with the River." (LWRP, page I-3). Since all of Croton-on-Hudson lies within the Coastal Zone, the land use policies set forth in the LWRP apply to the entire Village. In addition to the 44 statewide and 49 local coastal zone policies described in detail, the LWRP outlines a series of local objectives including linking parks and waterfront areas, improving waterfront access, expanding existing recreational areas, protecting scenic views, and updating the Village's master plan for consistency with the LWRP and the development goals for the Village. (See Section 3.2g for a more detailed description of these policies).

Several projects are listed in the LWRP to implement the above objectives, including trail improvement, waterfront improvement, and additional environmental and traffic studies, as well as the "amendment of the 1977 Master Plan to ensure consistency with LWRP." (see Section 3.2.g. of this Plan).

The LWRP specifically notes that the creation of an updated Master Plan or Comprehensive Plan (which itself will be consistent with LWRP policies) will help "ensure that the planning and development guidelines and documents for the Village are consistent."

d. Trailway Master Plan, Croton Trails Committee, 1993

This plan, adopted by the Board of Trustees as an addendum to the Village's Master Plan, establishes and maps an interconnected Village-wide network of existing and proposed trails that link open space sites.

e. Open Space Inventory, Conservation Advisory Council, November 1996

This inventory of all open space (public parks, nature preserves, institutions and private recreation, vacant undeveloped lands, and utility sites) outlines specific Conservation Advisory Council strategies for vacant parcels and other key open space areas. It also identifies sites that are critical to providing the necessary linkages to complete the Village's trailway system.

Recommendations in the Inventory include specific strategies for resource protection, conservation easements, maintenance and minor improvements for all open space parcels, private and public. Recommendations for the larger public open space parcels include:

Village waterfront property: Recommends development for passive recreation and educational uses, with waterfront trail along the Hudson River, as per the Trailway Master Plan, with provisions to ultimately link it along the shoreline north to Oscawana Island County Park in Cortlandt. Trail easements or other access should be obtained from Metro North (with fencing to separate trail from tracks) to facilitate these shoreline connections.

Croton River waterfront. Establish a Croton Gorge Park to ensure future protection of the public lands along the north bank of the Croton River; these form a Croton Gorge "greenbelt" which extends from Black Rock Park to Silver Park.

Other general recommendations include improving access to the waterfront and other open space resources, with signage, improved linkages, circulation of the Open Space map, and limited parking improvements in specific areas.

f. Environmental Conservation Policy, Conservation Advisory Committee, 1997

The overall objective of the Village's environmental conservation policy, as developed by the Conservation Advisory Commission and adopted by the Village, seeks to "conserve, improve and protect its natural resources and environment, and to control water, land and air pollution, in order to enhance the health, safety, and welfare of the people of the Village and their overall economic and social well being." To accomplish these goals, the policy recommends coordination of various environmental plans and programs of the Village (described in detail in Section 3.2(g) of this Plan), in coordination with other government entities, public and private organizations, and concerned citizens.

g. Greenway Vision Plan for the Croton-on-Hudson Waterfront, 1997

As part of the Greenway Program established under the 1991 Hudson River Valley Greenway Act, Croton-on-Hudson established a Greenway Committee and prepared a Greenway Vision Plan. This study provided an overview of existing conditions, uses, and constraints along the Hudson River waterfront, and established goals and objectives for vacant waterfront land. Conceptual land use plans and general design guidelines were developed for the waterfront area. Design recommendations included improvements to a main access road along Half Moon Bay parcel, to the Senasqua tunnel for pedestrian and bike use, renovation of Senasqua Park, improvements to Croton Yacht Club and Croton Bay boat launch, including improvements of roadway connecting Senasqua Park to the yacht club, and permanent closure at at-grade railroad crossing.

Other design alternatives included developing esplanades and plazas for outdoor dining, and public viewing, small-scale water dependent uses, expanding mass transportation options including a small ferry dock and terminal, additional pedestrian overpass connections and additional parking for restaurant use.

Several alternative development scenarios were studied for the Village Parcel, including the New Netherland Museum and Interpretive Arts Center. Both schemes incorporated proposed North Cove facilities for passive recreation, including a fishing dock and small boat launch, with beach restoration, scenic overlooks and nature trail. Buffer planting between trail and train tracks.

The Greenway Vision Plan was formally adopted as an amendment to the 1977 Village Master Plan in December 1997.

h. Croton-on-Hudson Feasibility Study, Village Waterfront Property, Imbiano Quigley Landscape Architects LLP, AKRF, 2000-2001.

The first draft of this study (March 2000) considered four alternative scenarios for the 13.4-acre Hudson waterfront study area. The March 2000 draft presented four alternative scenarios: Passive Recreation; Passive Recreation with water dependent uses (barge restaurant, marina, boat launch); Waterfront Recreation with land-based restaurant, cultural center, and marina development; Active Recreation (ballfields, tennis courts, children's play area, trails).

The final version of the study, dated September 2001, describes a preferred alternative, which incorporated recommended features from the original four alternatives. Section 3.8 describes these waterfront planning efforts in more detail.

i. Aquifer and Hydrogeology Studies

Several reports have been prepared assessing the capacity of the Village well fields, and reviewing protection of the aquifer providing the Village's ground water. These include three recent studies by Geraghty & Miller: ***Availability of ground-water resources at the Croton-on-Hudson well field, 1988; Aquifer protection plan, Croton-on-Hudson well field, 1989; Installation of Well 4, Croton-on-Hudson well field, 1992.***

j. Traffic Studies

Traffic Calming Study, Various Roadways, February 2000, Pennoni Associates Inc., evaluated traffic issues along four roadway segments, and a multiple leg intersection, and identified specific

problems at intersections and roadways. To address these, the report provided traffic calming recommendations, including: curb bulb outs, chokers, realignments, traffic islands, as well as supplementary signage.

k. Stormwater Management Studies

The Village has authorized the consulting engineers, Dvirka and Bartilucci to undertake the development of a phased stormwater plan to address drainage, flooding, and stormwater runoff/hydrology conditions in priority areas of the Village. This study is slated for completion in 2003.

3.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

3.1 Regional and Local Context

The Village of Croton-on-Hudson is located on the eastern side of the Hudson River, in the northwest corner of Westchester County, approximately 40 miles north of New York City. The western boundary of Croton-on-Hudson extends to the middle of the Hudson River, coincident with the boundary of Westchester County. The eastern boundary of the Village is also the eastern boundary of the New York State coastal zone (see Figure 3.1).

The 4.9-square mile village lies within the Town of Cortlandt, which also includes the Village of Buchanan. Surrounding municipalities are the Town of Cortlandt to the north and east, the Town of New Castle to the east, and the Town and Village of Ossining to the south. The Hudson River forms the Village's western boundary with Haverstraw across the River, and Croton River serves as part of its eastern one. Together, the rivers contribute to the beautiful vistas for which Croton-on-Hudson is known.

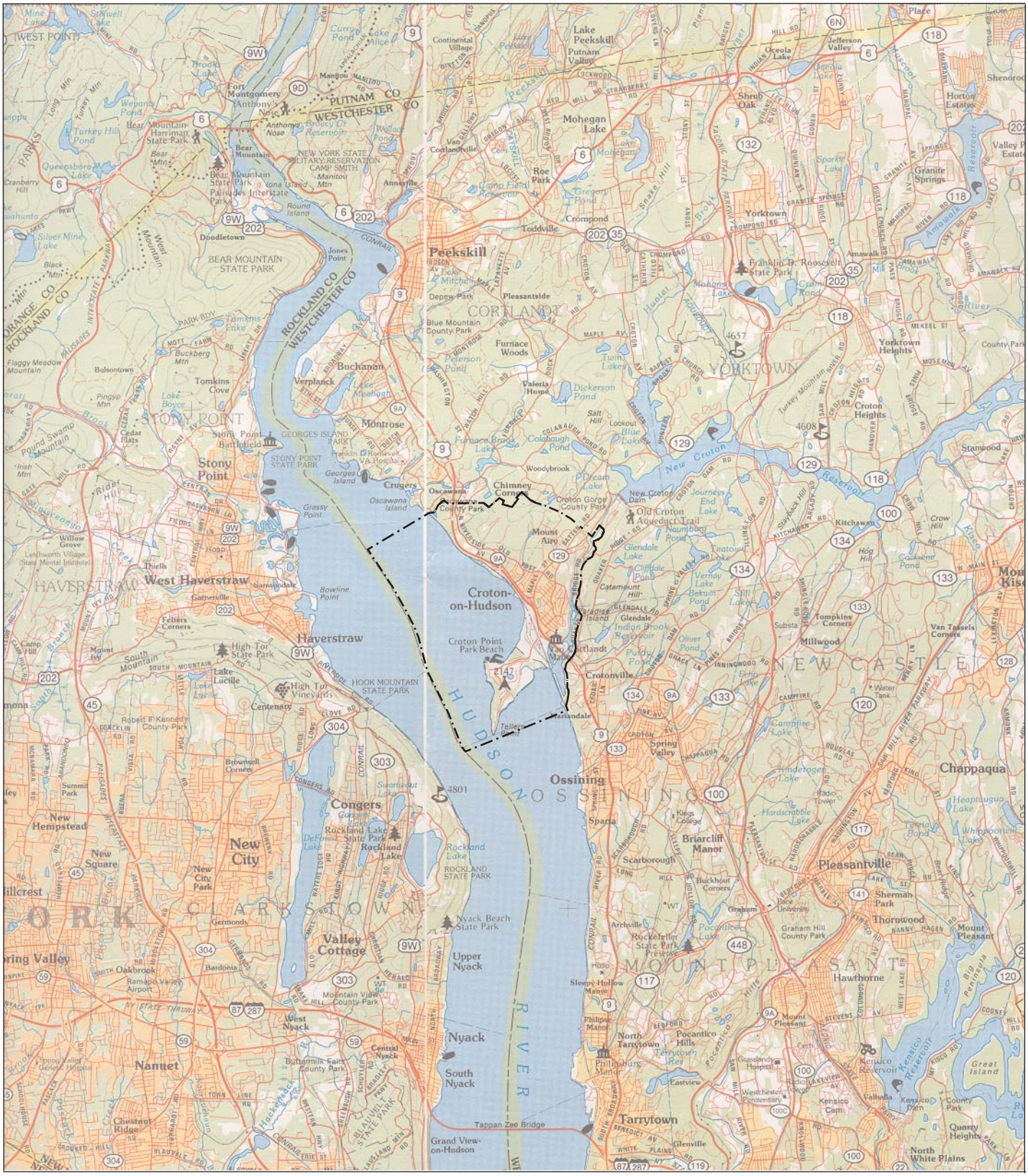
The Village is situated along regional highways and rail lines. US Highway Route 9 and New York State Highway Route 9A run along the western perimeter of the Village, providing north-south access through Croton-on-Hudson; State Route 129 provides access across Westchester in an east-west direction. Metro-North Railroad's Hudson line runs from Grand Central Station to Croton-on-Hudson and beyond to Poughkeepsie. Amtrak stops in Croton-on-Hudson as well en route south to New York City and north and west to cities as far as Albany, Buffalo, Toronto and Montreal. This makes the Croton-Harmon station a regional transportation hub.

3.2 Natural Environment, Parks, and Open Space Resources

Croton-on-Hudson's natural features include its extensive riverfronts, hilly topography, natural areas, and expansive views. The topography of the Village affords dramatic views of the Hudson River to the west; along the Croton River gorge, steep banks lead down to the River's edge. The scenic views of the two rivers are enhanced by the riverfront parks and extensive wooded areas throughout the Village.

a. Geology

Croton-on-Hudson is located within a bedrock complex approximately 480 million years in age. Known as the "Manhattan prong," this series of metamorphic rocks extends from southwestern



Village of Croton-On-Hudson, NY

Figure 3.1. Local Context

Village Boundary

0 12500 25000 ft

BFJ Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart, Inc.

Source: New York State Atlas and Gazetteer, DeLorme Mapping Company

Connecticut, northern Westchester County, south to the southern tip of Manhattan Island. The valleys are principally marble and more easily eroded than the schists and gneisses of this unit's higher elevations. The hills are primarily erosion-resistant and tightly folded metamorphic rocks, mostly gneisses and schists with some local deposits of quartzite, overlain with till and coastal plain deposits; they represent the vestiges of ancient, worn-down mountain ranges.

Croton-on-Hudson's high points, and most of the exposed rock, are made of Manhattan Schist, a rock type that is the product of dynamic metamporphism dating back over 360 million years ago. Other outcrops in the Village include Fordham Gneiss, with Inwood Marble in the lower, flatter areas. In addition to these features, glacial erratics, or boulders left in place after the glacier melted, can be found all over the Village. Remains of glacial kettles, or kettle ponds, are present in the Croton-on-Hudson area as well.

The present configuration of Croton-on-Hudson's land and the present course of the Hudson River were formed over the last 1.5 million years. There were four periods of glaciation in the Hudson River Valley during this era, with each period involving numerous advances and retreats of the continental ice sheets. These glaciers were the source of many streams in the area, and also deposited glacial sediments (moraines) as they retreated. Croton Point was formed during the Pleistocene era as a glacial-alluvial delta, created by the runoff from the glacial streams following the glacial retreat, at a time when the water level of the Hudson River (then a swollen "Lake Hudson") was approximately 100 feet higher than the current water level.

In general, depth to bedrock tends to increase as one goes downslope, leading to alluvial deposits that form the banks of the Croton and Hudson Rivers. In addition, due to the collapse of the original Croton dam during construction during the mid-19th century, damned water broke free, rushing massive quantities of soil, sediment, trees, and even houses, downstream. During this mini-flood many thousand tons of sediment were moved from the Croton River channel to the mouth of the Croton River.

b. Topography and Drainage Areas

Croton-on-Hudson's topography includes low lying areas along the Hudson River, Route 9, and the railroad tracks, a fairly deep ravine along the Croton River, and a plateau along its northern boundary that in some areas reaches elevations up to 500 to 600 feet within a mile of the Hudson River. This steep terrain has formed a series of ravines and the following watershed drainage areas within the Village:

- Hudson River Basin: draining to the Hudson River to the west
- Croton Gorge Basin: draining to the Croton River and Bay to the south and east.
- Furnace Brook Basin: draining to the north where the drainage terrain is less steep and flows to lakes and streams, including the Furnace Brook and Lake in Cortlandt.

Croton-on-Hudson's topographical features also create dramatic views that orient most of the Village toward its two riverfronts: the steeper elevations in the northern section of the Village slope down to more level ground to the west along the Hudson and to the southern portion along the Croton River.

c. Soils

Soils within the Village of Croton-on-Hudson are typical of those in Northern Westchester, due to similar bedrock structure and glacial activity. In general, the Village is composed of upland soils associations, with glacial outwash, and organic materials along the Hudson River shoreline. Most of Croton-on-Hudson's soils are glacial in nature, consisting primarily of till (soils containing rocks and pebbles of irregular size), finely sorted soils (pebbles and stones of regular size), and fine outwash sands. The shoreline of the Hudson River is a mixture of glacial soils, alluvial deposits, and organic materials. As noted above, Croton Point was formed as a remnant of a glacial delta.

Given the irregular bedrock in the Village, trees and ground covering plants are crucial for slope stabilization. The unstable slopes in the Village can result in "slumping," which produces cracks and gaps in sidewalks, retaining walls, and railroad ties; many Village roads show the results of frost heaving in the late winter and early spring.

d. Water Resources

The water resources of the Village define much of its natural character: Hudson River and Croton Rivers and associated freshwater wetlands, the ponds at the north end of the Village, and several smaller streams that run from the higher elevations to the lower rivers, and their wetlands. The Croton Water Control Commission reviews all construction within 120 feet of a water body (which includes wetlands).

The entire Village falls within the New York State Coastal Zone. Its extensive coastal areas include the following designated environmental areas: the Lower Hudson River Estuary, New York

State classified Significant Habitats, Hudson River Critical Environmental Area, and State-designated wetlands. A portion of Croton-on-Hudson is situated in the Westchester County-designated Critical Environmental Area.

Lower Hudson River Estuary

Croton-on-Hudson is one of the many communities located along the Hudson River estuary, which has long been recognized as a valuable state and local resource, as well as an important part of the North Atlantic coastal environment. The Hudson River is regionally significant as a productive estuary and is one of only a few major tidal rivers on the North Atlantic coast of the United States. The lower Hudson supports regionally significant fish populations as well as populations of wintering and migratory birds that feed on the rich fish and benthic resources. This is the primary nursery and overwintering area for striped bass in the Hudson River estuary, and striped bass from the Hudson account for an impressive portion of the total North Atlantic population.

The estuary contains important spawning and nursery grounds for many commercially valuable fish and shellfish species as well as significant acreage of tidal freshwater wetlands within the State. These wetlands, along with the river's brackish tidal wetlands and stands of submerged aquatic vegetation, contribute essential nutrients which support the Hudson's complex web of life.

Over 16,500 acres in the estuary from Albany-Rensselaer to Rockland-Westchester Counties have been inventoried and designated Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitats, jointly by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and Department of State (NYSDOS). Two of these significant habitat areas are located along Croton-on-Hudson's shoreline: Croton River and Bay, south of Croton Point Park, and Haverstraw Bay (which includes Senasqua Cove) north of Croton Point Park.

Significant Fish and Wildlife Habitats

Significant coastal fish and wildlife habitats are under the jurisdiction of the New York State Coastal Management Program. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) evaluates the significance of coastal fish and wildlife areas, and upon recommendation from NYSDEC, the New York State Department of State designates and maps significant areas. Croton-on-Hudson's LWRP describes these habitats and their fish and wildlife values, and elaborates upon the state protection policy with more detail in its local coastal zone Policies 7A-G.

Croton River and Bay Significant Fish and Wildlife Habitat

This habitat includes an approximate one-mile segment along the Hudson River, and an approximate 1,200-acre shallow bay and mudflat south of Croton Point. The Croton River is a relatively large fresh water stream, draining an area of over 375 miles, including portions of the Croton watershed. During periods of State-declared drought emergency, the freshwater flow can be diverted out of the Croton River for municipal water supplies. To help preserve the quality of this freshwater flow, the tidal portion of the Croton River is included in the protected habitat.

View of Croton River

The Croton River and Bay have been subject to considerable habitat disturbance, including filling of wetlands for waste disposal at the Croton Point Landfill, discharges of stormwater runoff from developed areas and roads, residential and industrial uses along the River and Bay, and road and rail crossings.

This habitat includes one of the largest shallow bay areas in the lower Hudson River, sheltered from strong currents; this area functions as a productive year round habitat for resident fish species. As a result, the Croton River and Bay are very popular for recreational fishing; it is one of the recognized hot spots for striped bass in the Hudson River. Locally significant numbers of waterfowl can be seen in the area during spring and fall migrations.

Haverstraw Bay Significant Fish and Wildlife Habitat

Haverstraw Bay encompasses both sides of the Hudson over a six-mile reach, in the widest section of the Hudson River estuary. The Bay includes extensive shallow areas and is a place where the freshwater from the upper river mixes with the salt water from the Atlantic, producing a predominantly brackish water habitat. Despite various disturbances (including dredging, filling, bulkheading, waste disposal, and pollution from both sides of the river), Haverstraw Bay remains one of the most important fish and wildlife habitats in the Hudson River estuary.

Hudson River Critical Environmental Area

The Village property (former Seprieo site) along the Hudson River is located within the Haverstraw Bay Significant Fish and Wildlife Habitat, as described above. The property is also designated a Critical Environmental Area (CEA) because of the history, ecology, scenery, and recreational opportunities associated with the shoreline.

Groundwater Resources

The Village is also located immediately adjacent to the Croton and Kensico Watersheds of the Croton Aquifer System. The Croton River, which forms the southern boundary of Croton-on-Hudson, has a drainage area of 375 square miles; this river is the

predominant source of groundwater supply for the Croton-on-Hudson well system. The Village's wells tap into sand and gravel aquifers along the Croton Basin, just northeast of Black Rock Park; this groundwater provides a local source of clean water.

Floodplain

Low lying areas adjacent to the Hudson River and the Croton River and Bay are within the 100-year floodplain of the Village, which falls below elevation 8. The potential for flooding of these areas must be taken into account during any development/construction of these areas.

e. Scenic Resources

Croton-on-Hudson is located within the Hudson Highlands Scenic Area of Statewide Significance (SASS), which encompasses Orange, Putnam, Rockland and Westchester Counties. Designation as SASS provides protection from potentially adverse Federal or State actions which may impair the scenic quality of the resource. Under NYS Department of State's Coastal Management Program, six such areas have been designated in the Hudson Valley.

f. Open Space, Parks and Recreational Resources

The extensive network of parks, trails and open space throughout Croton-on-Hudson takes up almost one-half (45%) of the Village's land area. Although not all open space is available for public recreation or use (utility and transportation sites, privately owned vacant undeveloped lands, and common space areas at residential developments), this extensive and varied network of open space contributes to the semi-rural character and open vistas of the Village (see Figures 3.2: County and State Roads and Parks and 3.3: Existing Parks and Open Space).

Looking south along Hudson River, from Village waterfront property

Table 3.1: Croton-on-Hudson Open Space Acreage

Type of open space	***Acres***
Village parks and public spaces	54.5
County parks (Croton Point Park and Paradise Island)	526.0
Nature Preserves	133.2
Institutional Space (includes schools, libraries, Municipal Building, Temple Israel, Bethel Cemetery, and Van Cortlandt Manor)	109.0
Private recreational space (includes Hudson National Golf Course, and common open space within private residential developments)	297.0
Utilities and transportation rights-of-way (Con Ed power lines, Metro North Right-of-way, village well sites and utility site)	152.0
Vacant undeveloped lands	110.0
TOTAL OPEN SPACE ACREAGE	***1,381.7***

Village of Croton-On-Hudson, NY

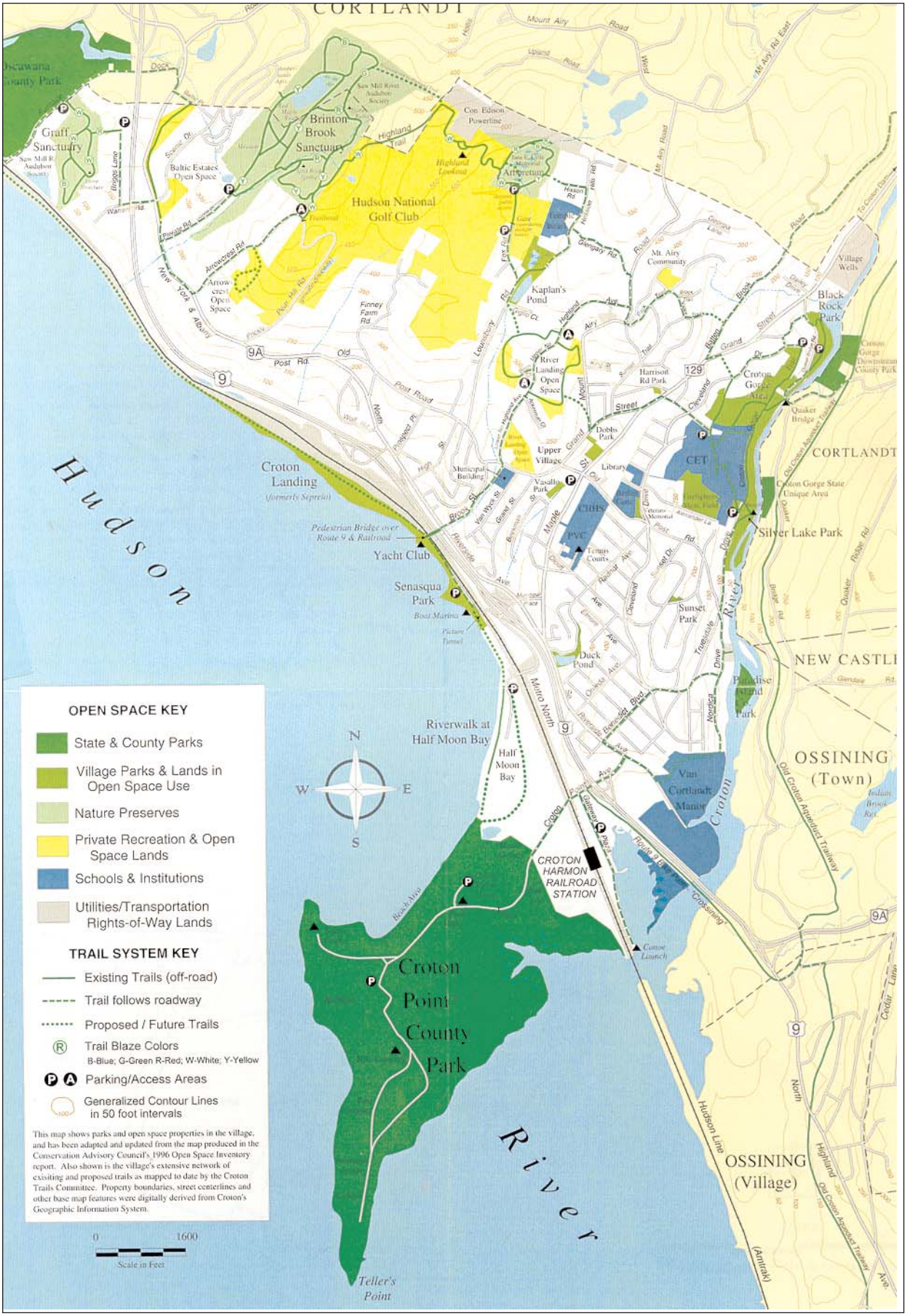
Figure 3.2. County and State Roads and Parks

- County Parks and Parkway Lands
- State Parks and Parkway Lands
- Local Parks and Open Space[1]
- Nature Preserves
- Private Recreation
- Public Institutions
- Private Institutions
- Public Non-Park Lands
- Cemeteries
- Farms, Stables & Nurseries[2]
- Water Supply Lands
- Major Water Bodies

0 1.0 2.0 miles

BFJ Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart, Inc.

Source: Westchester County Major Open Spaces Map



Village of Croton-On-Hudson, NY

Figure 3.3. Existing Parks and Open Space

Source: Croton Conservation Advisory Council 2000

Village- and County-owned parks, private nature preserves, private recreational facilities and open space linked to educational and religious institutions constitute 35% of existing open space in the Village. Another three percent (3%) consist of vacant, currently undeveloped lands.

Parks and Recreational Facilities. The following tables illustrate the diversity of existing park and recreational facilities in the Village, including Village- and County-owned facilities, nature preserves and private recreation.

Table 3.2: Village and School District Parks and Recreational Facilities

Name and Location	***Size (acres)***	***Special Features and Activities Offered***
Dobbs Park Maple Street/Route 129	1.9	• baseball field • basketball court • playground
Duck Pond Park Bungalow Road, off S. Riverside Avenue	2.7	• baseball field • basketball court • playground • ice skating on pond in winter
Senasqua Park Waterfront park along Hudson River	4.6	• boat launch ramp • movies and evening concerts during the summer • picnicking • windsurfing • playground
Senasqua Boat Basin Adjacent to Senasqua Park	N/a	• provides mooring and storage space • sailing lessons available with Croton Sailing School
Silver Lake Truesdale Drive	13.5	• freshwater river, open for swimming
Sunset Park Playground Sunset & Lexington Drive	0.4	• playground

Dobbs Park, Upper Village

Table 3.2 continued:
Village and School District Parks and Recreational Facilities

Name and Location	*Size (acres)*	*Special Features and Activities Offered*
Harrison Street Park Harrison Street	0.3	• playground
Black Rock Park Quakerbridge Road, along Croton River	10.5	• fishing • walking • picnicking
Vassallo Park Upper Village	1.1	• outdoor stage • open grass area
PVC Tennis Court PVC Middle School, Olcott Avenue	N/a	• three clay tennis courts
Kaplan's Pond Lounsbury Road	8.5	• small pond • wetland area • natural preserve
Village waterfront property (Southern end of former Seprieo site)	12.2	• passive recreation (new improvements planned for 2001-02)
Croton Bay Boat Launch	1.2	• boat launch • fishing
Skatepark	0.2	

View from Silver Lake Park

Table 3.3: Westchester County Parks

Name/Location	*Size (acres)*	*Special Features and Activities Offered*
Croton Point Park	503.8	• camping • fishing • picnicking • children's play area • hiking • concerts, craft shows, and guided walks held throughout the year • swimming
Paradise Island	22.2	• undeveloped island in Croton River accessible by boat

Village Trailway System. The Croton Trails Committee completed a Village Trailway Master Plan in 1993, establishing and mapping an interconnected Village-wide network of existing and proposed trails that link open space sites, and connect to the Old Croton Aqueduct Trailway that runs through Cortlandt and Ossining.

Table 3.4: Preserves and Sanctuaries

Name/Location	*Size (acres)*	*Special Features and Activities Offered*
Brinton Brook Sanctuary Albany Post Road	84.9	• owned by the Audubon Society • three miles of hiking trails
Graff Sanctuary Furnace Dock Road or Briggs Lane	27.9	• owned by the Audubon Society • walking trails
Jane E. Lytle Memorial Arboretum Fox Road	20.4	• Village land managed by the Croton Arboretum & Sanctuary • walking trails • handicapped-accessible wetlands • boardwalk and outdoor classroom

Jane E. Lytle Memorial Arboretum

Parks, Recreation and Trails Improvement Projects.
Several improvement projects have recently been completed or for the Village's parks and recreational facilities.

Table 3.5: Completed Capital Improvement Projects

Facility	*Improvement*	*Completion Date*
Dobb's Park	• Playground equipment replacement • Basketball court resurfacing	1999
Sunset Park	• Playground equipment replacement	2000
Croton Gorge Trail	• Construction of one mile trail	1998
Village Waterfront (Seprieo property)	• Brush clearance	1997-1998
Silver Lake	• New roofs for bathhouse and pavilion	1996-1997
Senasqua Park	• Pavilion reconstruction • Installation of new playground	1999
Ballfields	• Irrigation and sod replacement at Dobb's Park, Firefighter's Memorial Park, Alexander Lane and Duck Pond	1999
Croton-Ossining Walkway	• Construction of walkway	1999
Senasqua Park	• Sewer line replaced and extended to Yacht Club	2000
Harrison Street Playground	• Equipment improvements	2002
Croton River	• Boat launch, south of Municipal garage	2001

g. Environmental Policies and Programs

Village Environmental Conservation Policy

The Conservation Advisory Committee developed the Environmental Conservation Policy, adopted by the Village, to outline goals and objectives, define the specific laws, and documents relating to natural resource policies, and outline actions to conserve, improve, and protect the local environment. The Village goals and objectives include:

1. Conserve, improve, and protect its natural resources and environment, and to control water, land, and air pollution.
2. Coordinate the environmental plans and programs of the Village, with Federal, State, regional and local governments, other public and private organizations, and concerned individuals. As trustee of the environment for present and future generations, the Village shall also develop and manage the basic resources of water, land and air.
3. The Village shall create, foster, promote, and maintain conditions under which man and nature can thrive in harmony, while achieving economic and technological progress for present and future generations as follows:
    a. Assuring surroundings that are healthful and aesthetically pleasing
    b. Guaranteeing that the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment is attained without risk to health, safety, or unnecessary degradation
    c. Promoting patterns of development that minimize adverse impact on the environment
    d. Preserving the unique qualities of resources such as the Croton River and estuary, and Hudson River and its shoreline.
    e. Taking care of air, water, and other resources that are shared with other local and regional bodies, as a good neighbor.

The Environmental Conservation Policy document lists the laws, codes, government entities, and documents that embody much of the environmental policy of the Village:

- Wetlands and Watercourses Law, 1988
- Erosion and Sediment Control Law, 1988
- Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, 1992
- Tree Law, 1984
- Water Supply Protection Law, 1989
- Park, Recreation, and Education Zoning Districts, 1988
- Village of Croton-on-Hudson Master Plan, 1977
- Trailways Master Plan, 1993
- Open Space Inventory, 1996
- Greenway Vision Plan, 1998
- Conservation Advisory Council, 1978
- Visual Environmental Advisory Board, 1979
- Water Control Commission, 1988

In addition, Croton-on-Hudson's environmental policy has been carried out through the following regional programs and accomplishments:

Hudson River Valley Greenway Act

The Hudson River Valley Greenway Act of 1991 created regional connections and cooperation within New York's 10-county, 3 million acre Hudson River Valley. The Act built upon the work of two existing organizations-the Hudson River Valley Greenway Council and the Heritage Task Force for the Hudson River Valley-and gave them a new focus and a new mandate. The directives of the program include working with local governments in the establishment of a Hudson River Trail System east and west of the Hudson; developing a strategy that would allow the Hudson River Valley to promote itself as a single tourism destination area; and working with the agricultural community to promote and protect the industry of agriculture in the Hudson River Valley.

The Hudson River Valley Greenway Program is guided by the following key principles:

- Open space networks
- Natural and cultural resource protection
- Local planning undertaken in a regional context, and regional planning undertaken in a local context
- Economic development, including agriculture, tourism, and urban redevelopment
- Reclamation of the waterfront and access thereto
- Public education with regard to Greenway principles and conservation.

There are 10 "model" Greenway projects underway in the Hudson Valley involving 23 communities. The Greenway planning process involves the creation of a local Greenway committee, the development of a community planning profile, and the subsequent development of a vision based upon several public meetings. Some of the Greenway programs have been developed jointly between communities. Two Greenway cities - Newburgh and Beacon - have developed a cross-river partnership that has incorporated planning, a cross-river "Trail of Two Cities," and the proposed reinstitution of ferry service. Croton-on-Hudson and Ossining have also developed a common trail and tourism strategy.

One of the keys to the success of the program has been the idea that, as a broad community vision is developed, small, feasible physical projects should be identified and implemented to give substance to the planning process.

Croton-on-Hudson has been recognized as a model community for its efforts to develop, protect, and reclaim the waterfront, in cooperation with other municipalities along the Hudson River. As described in Section 2.2, Croton-on-Hudson created a Greenway Vision Plan in 1997, which was incorporated into the existing Master Plan.

Westchester County has developed a Greenway Compact Plan that includes a regional economic development strategy for the Historic River Towns of Westchester ("HRTW") that promotes tourism while incorporating protection of natural, cultural, and historic resources, main street revitalization, and increased access to the Hudson River. The Plan includes such projects as the Hudson RiverWalk, a promenade that will stretch from Yonkers to Cortlandt, and a Route 9 signage program to draw people to downtowns, historic sites, parks and trailways. The Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council adopted the Greenway Plan in June 2001. The Village of Croton-on-Hudson adopted the Plan in November 2001, making it the second one to be adopted in the 13-county Hudson River Valley region.

Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area

Croton-on-Hudson and Westchester County are also part of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area, a designation that acknowledges the scenic, historic and cultural resources of the area.

Local Waterfront Revitalization Program

The Village of Croton on Hudson is entirely located within a state-designated coastal zone (see Figure 3.4), and is therefore subject to the New York State Coastal Zone Management Program, established in 1981 by the Waterfront Revitalization and Coastal Resources Act, and administered by the New York State Department of State Coastal Management Program (CMP). The principal function of the CMP is to provide a framework for government decision-making in the coastal area. It includes 44 policies grouped in ten categories that address: development, fish and wildlife, flooding and erosion, public access, recreation, historic resources, visual quality, agricultural lands, energy and ice management, water and air resources.

A Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan was developed for Croton-on-Hudson, and adopted by the Village, the NYS Secretary of State, and the U.S. Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, in 1992. As previously discussed in Section 2.2(c) of this Plan, the LWRP describes specific state and local coastal zone policies in detail, and outlines the following overall objectives for Croton-on-Hudson's future:

- link waterfront parks and waterfront recreational areas

- increase recreational facilities within the Village and improve waterfront access
- redevelop or restore underutilized coastal area lands
- improve the parking situation at the Croton-Harmon rail station
- assess the air quality of the Croton-on-Hudson area
- study the stormwater system of the Village
- protect scenic views of and to the Village
- study the traffic and roadway conditions within the Village
- facilitate the planning process by updating the Village's master plan for consistency with the LWRP and the development goals for the Village.

The LWRP lists a series of projects to help implement these policies, a number of which have been completed or are currently underway:

- Croton River Gorge Trail – create walking trail from Silver Lake to Black Rock
- Investigate additional/alternative sites for waterfront recreation areas (including purchase at fair market value of private property)
- Improve Croton Bay Boat Ramp & Village-owned land south of Metro-North parking areas (public access of village-owned land for recreational uses)
- Installation by DEC of Air Quality Monitoring Station
- Study of Village Stormwater system (discharge into coastal waters)
- Designation of Route 9 (in Croton-on-Hudson) as NYS Scenic Road
- Traffic & Roadway conditions study (identify improvements to facilitate traffic flow)
- Amendment of 1977 Master Plan

The preparation of this Comprehensive Plan in itself meets a key LWRP objective: amendment of the 1977 Master Plan to ensure consistency with LWRP. Proposed projects that address LWRP objectives are discussed further in Section 4.3, Recommendations for Natural Resources, Trails, and Open Space.

h. Environmental remediation

Due to its previous industrial uses, several waterfront areas of Croton-on-Hudson have required environmental remediation. Two formerly polluted sites have been remediated, the landfill at Croton Point and the PCB-contaminated lagoon at the Metro-North repair yard. Both were federally-designated Superfund sites.

Croton Point Park. The remediation and restoration of 125 acres formerly in use as a landfill was completed in 1996.

Former Seprieo Site (Village Waterfront Property). Testing at this location in 1986 indicated the presence of heavy metals and other contaminants in soils, presumably due to the former asphalt plant at that site, and the nearby railroad tracks. The contaminant levels were not high enough to require immediate remediation; however, further soil testing is recommended if any excavation or grading activities that could disturb soils is to be undertaken as part of the waterfront park development.

Metro-North repair yard lagoon. Many years of Metro-North railroad repair yard operations have resulted in contamination of its wastewater treatment plant lagoon and pond system, the surface soils located adjacent to the lagoon, and components of the original Wastewater Treatment Plant for the facility. Remediation of these elements was undertaken and substantially completed by May 1996. Subsequent investigation and feasibility studies determined that the non-aqueous phase liquid (NAPL) located around the former wastewater treatment plant lagoon is the only remaining environmental media requiring remedial action. Remediation of this area was underway as of the writing of this Plan.

3.3 Zoning and Land Use

a. Land Use and Zoning District Categories

The Village covers an area of 4.9 square miles of land, most of it zoned for residential use. The predominant non-residential uses consist of: open space and park areas; commercial districts located in the Upper Village and along North and South Riverside Avenues and Maple Street; and industrial/transportation areas associated with the Metro North facilities, Metro Enviro, and the tire distribution center located west of Routes 9 and 9A. Several small office districts are located in the Upper Village, North Riverside, the Municipal Place area, and at the north end of the Village.

A brief description of land uses and zoning districts is summarized below and shown in Figures 3.4: Existing Land Uses and 3.5: Existing Zoning.

Residential Uses. Croton-on-Hudson's pattern of development is typical of many villages: the highest density neighborhoods (those with more houses per acre of land) are situated closer to the commercial centers, with the density decreasing farther away from these centers. The neighborhoods situated closest to the Village's four commercial centers – Harmon, the Upper Village, North Riverside and the Municipal Place area – consist primarily of single family homes built on 5,000 and 9,375 square foot lots. These neighborhoods also contain the majority of the two- and multi-family residences in the Village. Moving away from the commercial centers, the lot sizes increase to 25,000 and 40,000 square foot lots. Section 3.5: Housing Trends covers Croton-on-Hudson's housing characteristics in greater detail.

Table 3.6: Residential District

District	*Permitted Lot Size*
RA-5	5,000 square feet
RA-9	9,375 square feet
RA-25	25,000 square feet
RA-40	40,000 square feet
RB	2,500 square feet per dwelling unit
RC	4 acres or 3,000 square feet per d.u.

Single Family Housing. Croton-on-Hudson has four single-family residential zoning districts: RA-5, RA-9, RA-25 and RA-40. The districts range in density, as shown in Table 3.6, permitting from homes built on 1/8th acre lots (RA-5) to homes on one acre lots (RA-40).

The northern area of the Village is zoned primarily for RA-40 lots, with the exception of a small RA-25 district and an office district in the northwest corner of the Village. The density increases closer to the commercial centers and south of the Upper Village, with lots ranging from 5,000 to 25,000 square feet.

Multi-family Residential. The Village has two zoning districts permitting multi-family residential: RB (two-family residences) and RC (multi-family residences). These districts are limited to the Upper Village and North Riverside Avenue. The Village has two

Village of Croton-On-Hudson, NY

Figure 3.4. Coastal Zone Designated Area: Existing Land Uses

- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Open Space / Parks
- Institutions
- Utilities / Transportation
- Vacant Lots

0 2000 4000 ft

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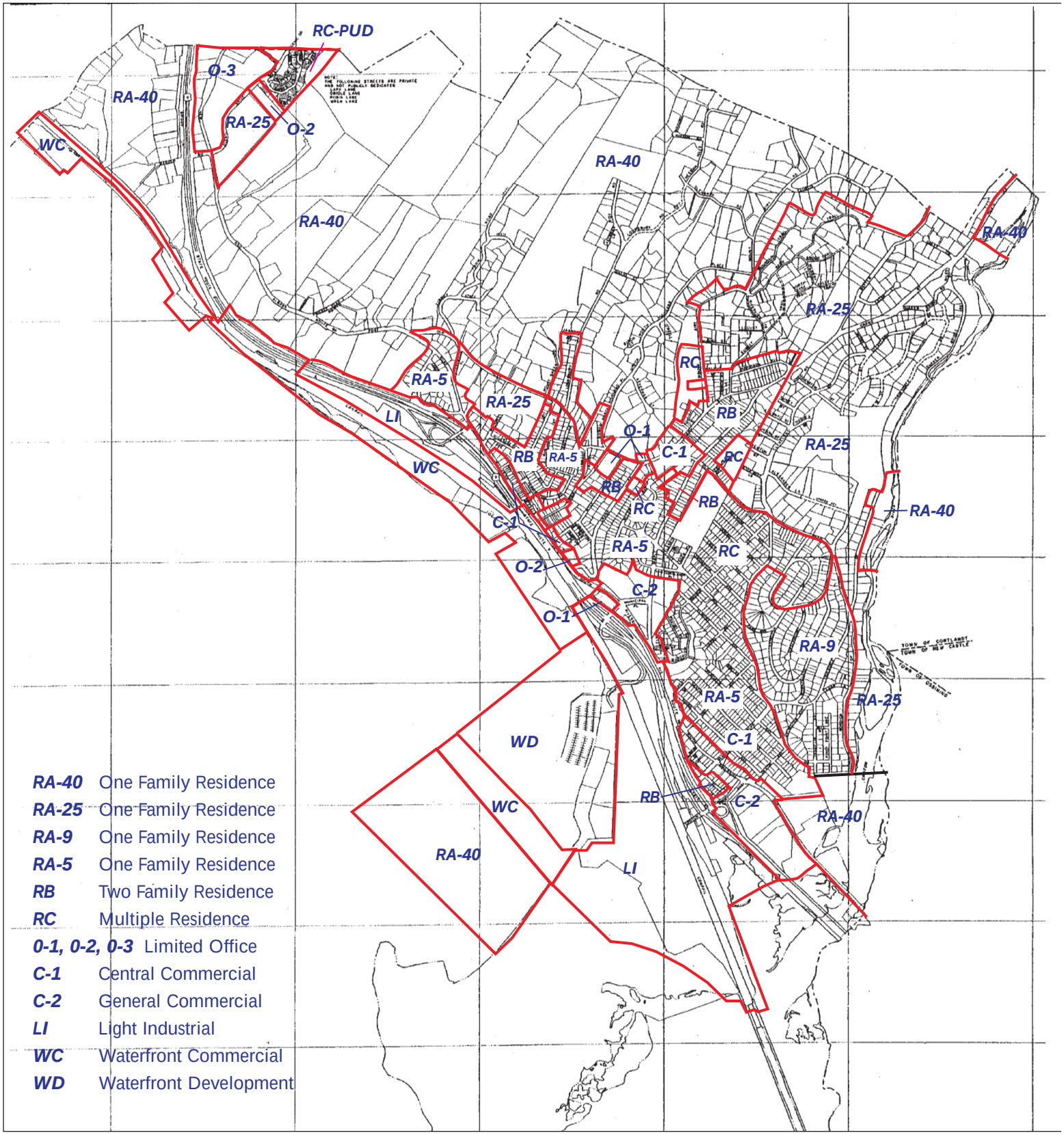

Village of Croton-On-Hudson, NY

Figure 3.5. Existing Zoning

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apartment buildings, both located in the Upper Village. The WD district along the Hudson River between Croton Point and Senasqua Park also permits multi-family development. The Half Moon Bay condominium development is located in that area.

Commercial Centers. The Village has four commercial centers: the Upper Village, North Riverside, the Municipal Place area, and the South Riverside/Harmon shopping area, which use approximately 2% of Village land uses. These districts are zoned C1 and C2, for central commercial and general commercial uses respectively. C1 commercial districts are zoned for a floor area ratio (FAR) of 2.0, which reflects the development in older commercial areas such as the Upper Village and North Riverside. C2 districts have an FAR of 0.5, which reflects the existing bulk in those areas.

There were previously three C1 districts in the Village: the Upper Village, the Municipal Place area, and South Riverside/Harmon. Since two of these C1 districts adjoined extensive C2 districts (at the Municipal Place area, and South Riverside/Harmon), these were recently rezoned to C2 to create more uniform zoning in those commercial areas, and more accurately reflect the existing bulk and uses.

The South Riverside/Harmon shopping area extends from the south boundary of the Village between Route 9 and Route 9A (South Riverside Avenue), to just north of Oneida Avenue in Harmon. This area is zoned C2, and is bisected by Croton Point Avenue, which connects it to the nearby train station.

The C2 district along North Riverside was recently rezoned to C1 zoning, reflecting its scale and building type (higher effective FARs) similar to that of the Upper Village. The Upper Village and North Riverside are now the only C1 commercial districts in Croton-on-Hudson.

The commercial districts are described in greater detail in Section 3.8 Special Planning Areas: Commercial Districts. The commercial establishments within these districts are mostly retail, service and professional businesses designed to serve the local Village population.

Croton Professional Building along Riverside Avenue

Office Districts. Most of the office space in Croton-on-Hudson consists of small-scale offices and home office use. The Village has five small office districts, found in the North End area of the Village (zoned O-1); North Riverside (O-2); the Municipal Place area (O-1); Route 9A/Grand Street (O-1); and South Riverside/Municipal Place (O-1). These office districts comprise approximately 0.5% of Village land.

The existing office districts have little available space. Additional land dedicated to office uses could relieve the pressure for home offices. For example, the Upper Village, which has two office districts, is ideal for business uses due to its proximity to services, retail and government. However, there are parking constraints, since residents and businesses compete for a limited number of available spaces.

Waterfront Commercial (WC) zoning was created "to enhance and develop to the maximum extent extrinsic and intrinsic values of the areas in the Village adjacent to rivers, streams, lakes and other bodies of water. Uses in this district should promote the public interest in the values of those areas for purposes of recreation, conservation and development of aquatic resources, giving proper recognition to the rights of owners to develop their properties commercially in a manner compatible with said values." (From Zoning Code § 230-19). The Village's Hudson riverfront area, from the northwestern tip of the Village to the area just south of Senasqua Park is zoned WC. The land uses in this district include Senasqua Park, a Village-owned park, the Croton Yacht Club, and the former Seprieo property, acquired by the Village for waterfront recreational uses. The requirements of this zoning include a provision for public waterfront access.

Waterfront Development (WD) zoning is a new riverfront development district which applies to a number of parcels on the Hudson River; has lower density than the previous RDU (Riverfront Development) district that was rescinded in the early 1990s; and has a provision for affordable housing and for maximum building height and length. WD districts were created in 1999 to facilitate the development of property along the Hudson River that is consistent with the Village's Master Plan, Local Waterfront Revitalization Program and the Greenway Vision Plan. WD-zoning results in development projects that enhance and strengthen the waterfront's physical integrity and economic viability; and expand the use and public accessibility for purposes of recreation, leisure and year-round residence. As possible, WD zoning requires larger tracts of land to be developed as single, unified and comprehensive projects. Permitted uses in WD districts include recreational facilities (swimming, ice skating, tennis, picnic areas) and residential uses. Uses permitted by special permits include restaurants, marinas, ferries and cultural uses (theater, bandshells and museums) (from Zoning Code § 230-31). The Half Moon Bay condominium development (discussed further in Section 3.5) is located there***.***

Parks Recreation and Education (PRE) districts were created in 1988 to "preserve natural resources, scenic beauty and other land and community resources whose retention is necessary for the continued maintenance of the quality of the environment. It is

designed to provide for public parks; recreational activities including all types of athletic activities; schools and other educational facilities; nature preserves; bird and wildlife sanctuaries; and similar uses." (From Zoning Code § 230-20. [Added 9-6-1988 by L.L. No. 6-1988]). Several natural areas, including the Jane E. Lytle Arboretum, Kaplan's Pond and the Village owned land in the Croton Gorge have been recently designated PRE districts.

Multiple Development Use (MDU) districts were added in 1982 to accomplish the following:

a. Facilitate development consistent with the Comprehensive Master Plan of the village
b. Achieve variety and flexibility in land development
c. Encourage efficiency in the use of land
d. Preserve features of unusual historic or scenic value.
e. Permit development of larger tracts of land as a unit.

Industrial and Rail Transportation Uses. Industrial and rail transportation uses are entirely located along the Hudson River waterfront. The Croton Harmon railroad station, located just west of Route 9 and adjacent to Croton Point Park, is one of the key regional stations on the Metro North commuter railroad and Amtrak's New York State service. The entire railroad facility occupies approximately 100 acres, dominating the central section of the waterfront with numerous switching yards, as well as the Harmon rail yards where Metro North trains are sent for repair. Metro Enviro, a solid waste transfer station, and the Goodyear tire distribution center, are also located in this area.

Parks/Open Space. Croton-on-Hudson's network of parks, open space (including Hudson National Golf Course), nature preserves and trails, comprises approximately 30 percent of the land area of the Village. A detailed description of the parks and their facilities is provided in Section 3.2(e). Many of these open space areas are located within residentially-zoned districts.

3.4 Population and Demographics

a. Population Trends, 1970 - 2000

The 2000 Census shows Croton-on-Hudson's population at an all-time high of 7,606 persons. The population has remained close to 7,000 persons since 1970, although the Village experienced an 8.4 percent decrease in the 1970s. In the past two decades, the population has grown steadily, recovering and surpassing its previous high of 7,523 persons in 1970. Even with this increase, the population growth has fallen far short of the 1977 Master Plan's expectations, which projected a population of 15,000 in 2000.

Croton-on-Hudson's population growth has been proportionately greater than that of Town of Cortlandt and Westchester County. Within the last decade, the Town of Cortlandt's population grew by 3 percent and Westchester County's population by 5.6 percent. Many factors influence the growth rate, including the rate of migration to the Village, an increase in housing starts, and the birth rate.

Table 3.7: Croton-on-Hudson Population Fluctuations, 1970-2000

Year	Population	Percent Change
1970	7,523	
1980	6,889	-8.4
1990	7,018	1.9
2000	7,606	8.4

Source: U.S. Census; Westchester County Department of Planning

Table 3.8: Population Growth, 1990 – 2000

	Total Population		Percent Change
	1990	2000	
Croton-on Hudson	7,018	7,606	8.4
Town of Cortlandt	37,357	38,467	3.0
Westchester Cty.	874,866	923,459	5.6

Source: U.S. Census; Westchester County Department of Planning

b. Age and School Population

In 2000, the Village's median age was 40 years, an increase from the 1990 median age of 37.3 years. This increase is consistent with regional and national trends, with the aging of the "baby boom" generation. As in many suburban municipalities, Croton-on-Hudson's population is concentrated in the 25 to 54 age groups, with the greatest growth over the past decade occurring in the 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 age brackets.

The share of the population over the age of 65 decreased between 1990 and 2000, from 14.6% to 13.6%. However, as the 35 to 54 age groups shift to a higher age bracket in the coming decades, the 65+ age group can be expected to gain an increasing share of the population. In many municipalities, the shift in age distribution across the population has led to a re-examination of priorities, as issues such as affordable housing for seniors have become more pressing.

Concurrent with the increase in median age, the Village has participated in the county and regional "echo boom" trend, with an increase in the birth rate in the Village between 1980 and 2000.

Table 3.9: Age Comparison, 1990 - 2000

	1990	2000	
	Percent Share	Percent Share	Change in Share
under 5	7.1	7.8	0.7
5 to 9	5.1	7.9	2.8
10 to 14	6.1	6.5	0.4
15 to 19	5.8	4.9	-0.9
20 to 24	5.7	3.1	-2.6
25 to 34	15.8	10	-5.8
35 to 44	17.5	20	2.5
45 to 54	12.9	16.6	3.8
55 to 59	4.4	5.7	1.3
60 to 64	5.1	3.8	-1.3
65 to 74	7.6	6.4	-1.2
75 to 84	5.4	4.8	-0.6
85 +	1.6	2.4	0.8
Median Age	**37.3**	**40**	

Source: U.S. Census, 1990 STF3A and 2000 data

This increase, combined with a high housing turnover rate and the construction of new homes in the Village, has resulted in an increase in the school-age population in the Village.[2] Between 1990 and 2000, the share of the population under 18 increased by from 22% to 26%; enrollment in the Croton-Harmon school district increased during this time as well by 32%. According to the Croton-Harmon Union Free School District, increased enrollment in the school district is expected to continue over the next six years with a peak district-wide enrollment projected for 2006.

Table 3.10: Croton-Harmon Union Free School District Enrollment Projections, K – 12

Year	*Enrollment*	*Percent Change*
1990	1039	-
1997	1248	20.1
2000 (projected)	1374	10.1
2007 (projected)	1533	11.6

Source: Croton-Harmon UFSD Comprehensive Long Range Planning Study, April 1998

Table 3.11: Birthrate per Thousand Residents, 1980 - 1996

	1980	*1990*	*1996*
Croton-on-Hudson	12.19	13.39	15.70
Cortlandt	7.45	9.32	9.77
Westchester County	11.29	15.13	14.21

Source: Croton-Harmon UFSD, Comprehensive Long Range Planning Study, April 1998, using New York State Dept. of Health data

[2] The Croton-Harmon UFSD estimates that the district, which encompasses 95% of the Village, had a housing turnover rate in 1997 of 3.6%. The majority of home buyers (approximately 72%) in the Croton-Harmon UFSD have children under the age of 18, compared to approximately 52% of sellers in the district, resulting in a growing number of children in the district. Source: Croton-Harmon UFSD, Comprehensive Long Range Planning Study, April 1998, based on ***Experian Property Data Research*** and ***The Western Suffolk BOCES Planning Team Survey of New District Residents***.

c. Race and Ethnicity

As of the 2000 decennial census, 93% of Village residents were Caucasian. Asians and African-Americans each comprised 2% of the population, and Native Americans and other ethnicities comprise 3%. These proportions are relatively unchanged from the 1990 census, although the Caucasian population decreased slightly (-1.5%). The most significant change has been in the growth of the Village's Hispanic population, which more than doubled over the past 10 years and now constitutes 7% of the population.[3]

Table 3.12: Race and Ethnicity, 1990 – 2000

	1990	*2000*	*Percent Change*
	Percent Share	*Percent Share*	*Change in Share*
Caucasian	94.5	93.1	-1.4
African-American	1.9	1.9	0.0
Asian, Pacific Islander	2.5	2.1	-0.4
Hispanic Origin	3.7	7	3.3
Native American	0.2	0.3	0.1
Other/More than One Race	1.1	4.3	3.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990 and 2000 data

d. Households

According to the 2000 decennial census, Croton-on-Hudson has 2,798 households, an increase of 8.6% from 1990. The average household size increased from 2.5 to 2.65 during this time and the average family size grew from 3.06 to 3.11.[4]

Households are subdivided into family and non-family households. In Croton-on-Hudson, families comprise the majority of household types, constituting 73.3% of households. However, the share of families as a proportion of total households decreased slightly over the last ten years by approximately 1.7%. This decrease is consistent with regional and national trends, in which decreasing rates of marriage and increasing divorce rates have contributed to a growth in non-family households.

Table 3.13: Croton-on-Hudson Households and Families, 1990 - 2000

	1990	*2000*	*Change*
Total Households	***2,577***	***2,798***	***8.6%***
Families	1,933	2,052	119
Share of Total Households	***75%***	***73.3%***	***-1.7%***
Non-Family Households	644	746	102
Share of Total Households	***25%***	***26.7%***	***1.7%***
Average Household Size	2.5	2.65	0.15
Average Family Size	3.06	3.11	0.05

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 data

[3] Residents of Hispanic origin may be of any race

[4] According to the US Census Bureau, a ***household*** is defined as "all persons who occupy a housing unit," while a ***family*** is defined as "a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together." The household classification contains both the family and non-family subgroups.

According to the 2000 Census, 85% of Croton-on-Hudson families are headed by married couples, and 15% by single householders. Most single householder families are headed by women. More than half of all families have children under the age of 18.

Among the non-family households, 83.3% have a single occupant; of those householders living alone, 35% are over the age of 65.

Table 3.14: Types of Households, 2000

Family Households:	
Married-Couple Families	1748 ***(85.2%)***
Female-Householder Families	229 ***(11.2%)***
Male Householder Families	75 ***(3.6%)***
Families With Own Children under18	1,082 ***(52.7%)***
Non-Family Households:	
Living Alone	622 ***(83.3%)***
65 and Over	215 ***(34.6%)***

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 data. Note: number in parentheses denotes percent of total family and non-family households from Table 3.13a

e. Education, Income and Employment

Croton-on-Hudson's rate of educational attainment is very high. In 1990, approximately 88% of Village residents 25 years and older had obtained a high school diploma. By comparison, Westchester County's overall rate was 80% in 1990.[5]

Median household and family income has been increasing in Croton-on-Hudson as well and has been consistently above the Westchester County medians. In 1989, the median family income in Croton-on-Hudson was $74,472 and the median household income was $65,031.[6] Two-thirds of Croton-on-Hudson households (65%) had incomes of $50,000 and up, with the majority within the $50,000 to $100,000 range. By comparison, Westchester County's 1989 median incomes were $58,862 for families and $48,405 for households. In 1996, Croton-on-Hudson's median household income levels were estimated to have increased to $83,108, $21,000 more than Westchester County's median household income of $61,861.[7]

According to 1990 US Census data, approximately 1.6% of Croton-on-Hudson residents lived in poverty. Of these residents, 75% were female and 25% were male. Among Croton-on-Hudson's senior population, 45% of householders age 65 years and older had annual incomes below $25,000, compared to 49% of Westchester County overall.[8]

The rate of participation in the labor force increased for Croton-on-Hudson between 1980 and 1990. In 1980, 65% of the Village's population over 16 was employed or actively seeking employment. By 1990, the total participation rate had increased to 70.5%. The proportion of women participating in the labor force increased as well during this decade, from 53% in 1980 to almost 61% in 1990.

[5] Source: U.S. Census Bureau data, 1990 and Westchester County Department of Planning

[6] Family income is typically higher than household income due to the presence of dual incomes and the generally more stable finances of families.

[7] Source: Westchester County Department of Planning

[8] Source: Westchester County Department of Planning

3.5 Housing Development and Trends

a. Residential Development Patterns

The diversity and character of Croton-on-Hudson's housing stock were characterized as assets by many Village residents in their survey responses. The range of housing types and historic resonance of many homes lend an eclectic sensibility to the Village's residential areas and contribute to the quaint character of the Village.

Fieldstone house on Old Post Road

Pre-1977 Housing Development

Most of Croton-on-Hudson's housing stock was built before 1969, with the majority built before 1939. When the original Croton Master Plan was written in 1977, most of the residentially-zoned land to the east, west and south of the Upper Village had already been developed. Most of these older residential neighborhoods are in higher-density zoning districts permitting development on lots ranging from 5,000 to 25,000 square feet and contained the largest population concentrations in the Village. As of 1977, only 15% of the Village's population was estimated to live in the northern parts of the Village.

Two of the oldest residential neighborhoods were originally separate communities: Mt. Airy and Harmon. Harmon, initially established in the early 20th century as an enclave for artists and writers, became home to railroad workers and commuters to New York City in the 1920s due to its proximity to the railroad station and railroad yards. A portion of Harmon is known as the "flats" due to the regular street grid and the flat topography, in contrast with the more winding street layout and varying topography of other parts of the Village. Harmon was largely built out by the late 1940s in the post-World War II housing boom.

Mount Airy, which began as a Quaker enclave, was by the early 1900s a summer colony that attracted many Greenwich Village artists and writers. The area continued to attract writers and artists although it is now mostly populated by professionals. To the east of Mount Airy Road is the informally-named Trails section of Croton-on-Hudson, situated roughly between Mount Airy Road and Batten Road northeast of Grand Street. The homes in the area were originally built in the 1920s as summer cottages and bungalows but are now year-round residences, set on small lots in this wooded, hilly section of the Village. A network of narrow, winding roads, with street names such as Sunset Trail, Park Trail and Brook Trail, runs through the area and gives the area its name.

Trails section of Mount Airy neighborhood

Housing Development, 1980 - 2000

In the past 20 years, new housing has been developed in the northern part of the Village (north of the Upper Village) and along the Hudson waterfront north of Croton Point Park. All of the subdivisions in the northern part of the Village have been single-family homes while along the waterfront the Half Moon Bay condominiums were designed as a cluster subdivision. Over 600 permits for residential units were issued in the Village between 1980 and 1999, primarily for single-family residential homes, increasing the number of units and allowing the Village to expand in population.[9] The subdivisions completed during this time period are described below:

Half Moon Bay condominiums

- ***Georgia Lane subdivision.*** 30 single-family homes constructed - in the early 1980s in the northeast portion of the Village, along Georgia Lane off Mount Airy Road.

- ***Beekman Avenue/"The Draw".*** The Draw section of the Village was described in the 1977 Master Plan as the area between Old Post Road and Grand Street, Wells Avenue and Riverside Avenue. It was subdivided in the mid-1980s into 65 parcels, the majority of which were developed for residential purposes.

River Landing Development

- ***Half Moon Bay.*** Half Moon Bay is a condominium development along the Hudson River north of Croton Point Park. Development has been divided into five phases. Phases 1 and 2, which added 120 units, were completed in the late 1980s. Phases 3, 4, and 5 were approved in 1999 and are slated to begin construction. The last three phases will add 156 additional units to the subdivision for a total of 276 units.

- ***River Landing Development.*** River Landing development was constructed in the early 1990s, on 70 acres of land between Upper North Highland Avenue and Mount Airy Road. Thirty-two single-family homes were constructed.

Arrowcrest Development

- ***Arrowcrest Development.*** The Arrowcrest Development, situated on land adjacent to the Hudson National Golf Club off Albany Post Road, was subdivided in the mid-1990s to create 35 single-family homes on one- to three-acre lots. The development also includes a conservation easement.

- ***West Wind.*** West Wind is the most recent subdivision in Croton-on-Hudson. Situated in the northwest portion of the Village, off Scenic Drive and Albany Post Road, the property was subdivided in the mid-1990s to build 36 single-family

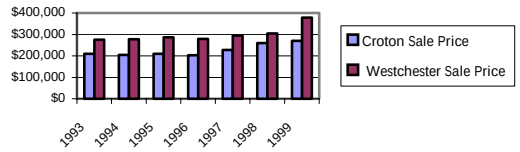
[9] Source: Croton-Harmon School District, Long-Range Planning Report, January 1999

homes. The subdivision also includes open space under a conservation easement.

b. Housing Trends

Detached single-family, owner-occupied homes have been the dominant housing type in Croton-on-Hudson. The 1977 Croton Master Plan estimated that there were 2,171 housing units, with an 80/20 ratio of single-family to multi-family units. This proportion of single- to multi-family units has been relatively stable: in 1990, the Village had 2,738 housing units, of which the majority (77%, or 2,587) were owner-occupied, single-family units. In 1990, the Village's vacancy rate was 5.5%, slightly higher than Westchester County's rate of 4.5%. Since 1990, 177 permits have been issued for residential units, 93% of which have been for single-family homes.

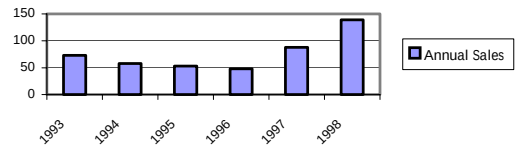
Table 3.15: Median Sale Price, Single Family Homes, 1993-1999



Source: Westchester County Department of Planning

The value and cost of single-family homes have risen in the past decade. In 1990, the median value for owner-occupied units was $226,600, and the median rent was $796. By 1998, the median value of homes had increased to $255,000. Both the median sale price and the number of homes sold increased between 1993 and 1999. Sales price increased by 29%, from $209,850 in 1993 to $269,625 in 1999. The number of annual sales increased by over 90% between 1993 and 1998, with the greatest number of sales occurring in 1997 and 1998.

Table 3.16: Annual Sales of Single Family Homes in Croton, 1993 - 1998



Source: Westchester County Department of Planning

The subdivisions completed in the last twenty years have provided needed additional housing units in the Village. However, with the exception of Half Moon Bay, these developments have provided only single-family homes best suited for families. At the same time, the demand for appropriately-sized, affordable housing for aging Croton-on-Hudson residents, young couples without children, and Village personnel is growing. The Village has worked with the Croton Housing Network to provide housing to meet these needs throughout the Village. To date, housing units, both rental units and individually owned homes, have been created on Bank Street, Brook Street, at Mount Airy Woods, in the Westwind Subdivision and at the Half Moon Bay condominium development. The Village should examine ways to encourage lower cost, smaller-sized single or multi-family dwellings in order to maintain the demographic diversity of the Village.

3.6 Transportation and Traffic Circulation

a. Transportation Networks

Highways and Roads

The functional classification of a municipality's roadways helps determine its traffic circulation patterns and the appropriate traffic measures in problem areas. Roads in a municipality are typically classified as arterials, collectors and local roads. A functional classification of Croton-on-Hudson's roadways has been developed for this Plan based on Westchester County road system and a review of the road network in Croton-on-Hudson, as described below and shown in Figure 3.6: Roadway Classification.

Croton-on-Hudson's roadways are classified as follows:

Limited Access Highways. U.S. Route 9 is the only limited access highway in Croton-on-Hudson. It passes through the Village along its western perimeter, forming a north-south regional travel corridor through Westchester County. Unlike other sections of Westchester County, this area is not served by a major interstate highway such as I-684 or I-287.

Intersection of Routes 9A and 129

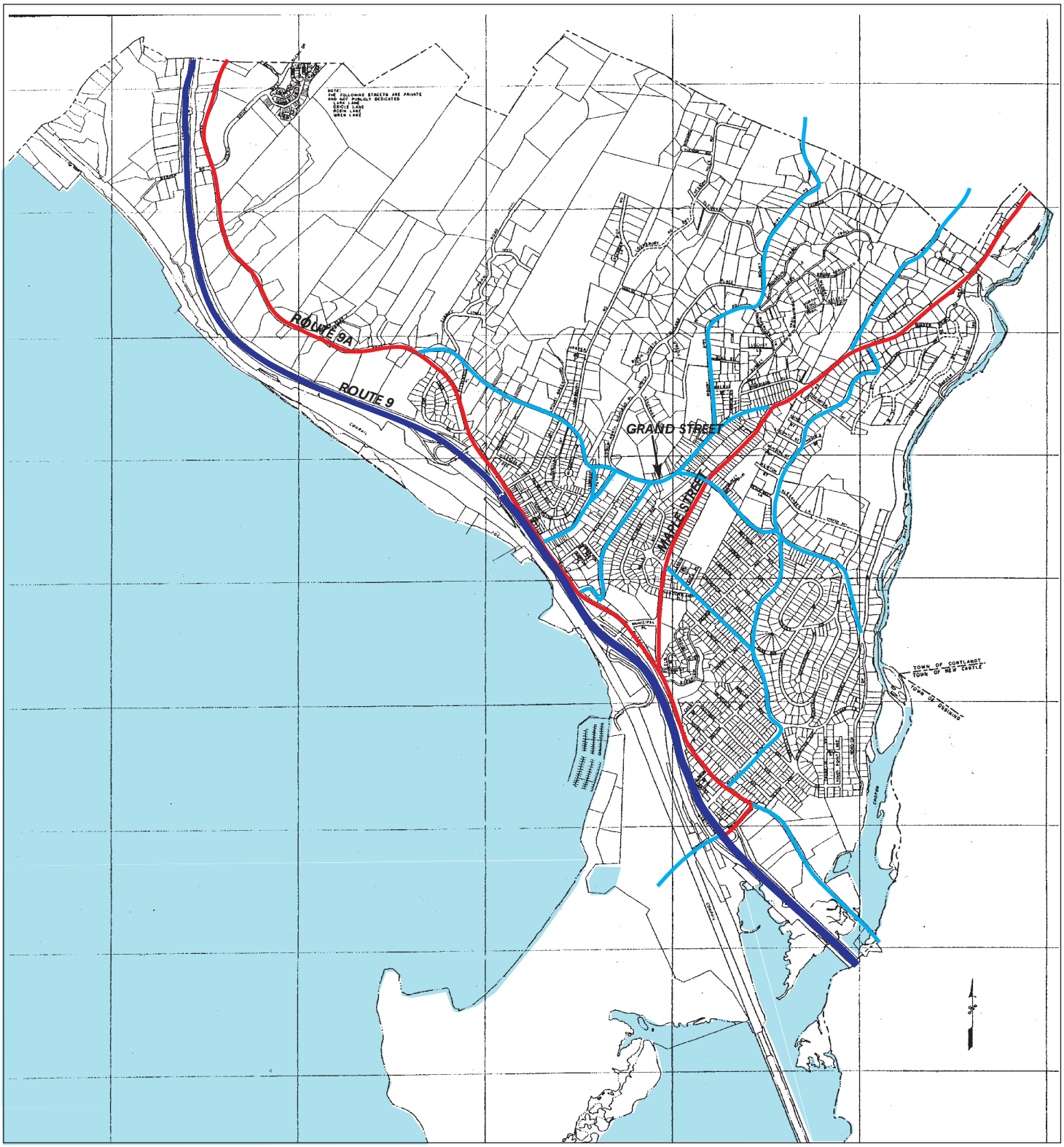
Arterials are designed to move traffic within the municipality and between the municipality and surrounding communities, as well as provide access to adjacent properties. Two arterials, both of which are state highways, traverse Croton-on-Hudson:

1. State Route 9A (the original New York Albany Post Road). Route 9A parallels Route 9 at the north end of the Village. At Old Post Road it becomes North Riverside Avenue and then South Riverside Avenue south of Brook Street.
2. State Route 129 (Maple and Grand Streets). Route 129 runs east-west through the Village, connecting with Routes 9 and 9A at the western end of the Village and running east through Cortlandt and Yorktown.

Brook Street funnels traffic to and from Route 9A

Collectors are roads that act as connecting links in the street system, carrying traffic from local streets to arterials. Intersections between arterials and collectors are often signalized whereas intersections between collectors and local streets are controlled by stop signs. The following roads are classified as collectors:

1. Mount Airy Road
2. Old Post Road North and South
3. Brook Street
4. Terrace Place
5. Grand Street between South Riverside Avenue and Maple Street
6. Batten Road



Village of Croton-On-Hudson, NY

Figure 3.6. Roadway Classification

- Limited Access Highway
- Arterials
- Collectors

0 2000 4000 ft

BFJ Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart, Inc.

7. Cleveland Drive between Benedict Boulevard and Jacoby Street
8. Jacoby Street
9. Benedict Boulevard between South Riverside Avenue and Cleveland Drive
10. Olcott Avenue
11. South Riverside Avenue, south of Croton Point Avenue (County Road 305)
12. Croton Point Avenue (County Road 74)

Local roads, Mount Airy neighborhood

Local Streets are roads which provide direct access to the properties along them. All streets in the Village that are not classified as collectors or arterials are local streets. Croton-on-Hudson's local roads vary in width and condition but many are narrow and winding, retaining the character of country roads.

Traffic circulation in the Village is generally good; however, residents attending the public workshops and comments in the resident survey indicated several problem areas. Residents identified heavy traffic and some delays at two intersections: Croton Point Avenue and Route 9A, with train-related traffic, and Municipal Place/Maple Street. They also noted noise and speeding traffic along Route 9A, which serves as the main street through the North Riverside and Harmon/South Riverside commercial centers, and Route 129, which runs along the eastern boundary of the Upper Village. These commercial centers accommodate pedestrians and local drivers as well as the higher speed through traffic, requiring enforcement of speed limits and the possible implementation of additional traffic calming and pedestrian safety measures.

Rail Access

The Croton-Harmon railroad station at the south end of the Village is a regional rail transportation center, providing local commuter service to New York City via Metro North, and service to points north including Albany, Buffalo, Toronto, Montreal, and Chicago via Amtrak. Over 100 Metro-North trains stop daily at the Croton-Harmon Station en route to or returning from Midtown Manhattan's Grand Central Station. The commute between Croton-Harmon and Grand Central ranges from 45 to 70 minutes depending on the time of day.

Commuter parking, Croton-Harmon Railroad Station

The Croton-Harmon Railroad Station is the most heavily used station of all three Metro-North railroad lines. An estimated 2,860 commuters board trains at Croton-Harmon during peak AM commuting hours en route to Grand Central Station; almost 7,100 passengers board or disembark at Croton-Harmon each day.[10] The majority of commuters are from Westchester municipalities (including Croton-on-Hudson, Ossining, Cortlandt Manor and

[10] Based on Metro-North Railroad's estimated 2000 ridership figures

Yorktown Heights) although commuters from Putnam, Dutchess and Orange Counties use the station as well.

The Village provides a 2,000 vehicle commuter parking facility at the station, with 1,600 spaces reserved for monthly permit holders and 400 daily spaces. The majority (70%) of parking permit holders live outside of the Village.

Bus Service

The Westchester County Bee Line provides the following bus service in the Village:

- Route 14 (Peekskill-Ossining-White Plains) provides local daily service in Croton-on-Hudson stopping at South Riverside Avenue and Croton Point Avenue
- Route 10 (Croton Commuter) provides bus to rail service via Grand Street to the Croton-Harmon train station, Monday through Friday during peak AM and PM commuting hours
- Route 11 (White Plains-Ossining-Croton) provides service to the Croton-Harmon Station from municipalities south of Croton, Monday through Friday during peak AM and PM commuting hours.

The Bee-Line routes provide access to surrounding municipalities and the train station. However, residents have noted that the routes are limited for those who depend on public transportation for mobility (see Figure 3.7: Public Transportation Routes).

b. Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

Croton-on-Hudson's small town character and natural beauty make walking and bicycling attractive options for travel and recreation within the Village. Walking trips are convenient for traveling short (1/4 to ½ mile) distances and both walking and bicycling can serve as viable alternatives to local auto travel.

There are sidewalks within the Village's four commercial centers and in some of the residential neighborhoods. However, pedestrian links between residential neighborhoods and commercial centers are limited, making pedestrian travel between neighborhoods and to commercial areas difficult. In the resident survey and public workshops conducted for this Plan, many residents cited the condition and lack of sidewalks as a problem within the Village, raising as particular concerns safety and accessibility. Residents also cited the need to improve the demarcation of crosswalks, especially in commercial areas.

Sidewalk condition, Upper Village

Designation of bicycle paths in park areas and the installation of bike racks at the Croton Station would encourage bicycling as an alternate means of local travel.

Village of Croton-On-Hudson, NY

Figure 3.7. Public Transportation Routes

Metro-North Rail Line

Bee-Line Bus Routes

0 2000 4000 ft

BFJ Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart, Inc.

3.7 Community Services and Utilities

a. Police

The Croton-on-Hudson Police Station is located in the Stanley H. Kellerhouse Municipal Building, at One Van Wyck Street. The Village's police force consists of 21 full-time officers, including two detectives, as well as two parking enforcement officers, five crossing guards and two dispatchers. The full-time force is supplemented by the volunteer Auxiliary Police, who assist the Police Department with crowd and traffic control at special events.

The Department has a five-officer Dive Team and a six-officer Emergency Response Team as well as a Youth Officer who is available to work with youths in the community. Programs sponsored by the Police Department include DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) and a "Dark House List," designed to protect vacant homes from burglary.

At all times, the Police Department has two officers patrolling Croton-on-Hudson by car and one available for dispatching at headquarters. Emergency response time throughout the Village is approximately three minutes. Patrol cars are equipped with automated electronic defibrillators, and full first aid kits and all officers are trained in C.P.R. and first aid. By 2002, laptop computers will be installed in all patrol cars with a link to headquarters so that police reports can be filed on-site and downloaded directly into the station computer.

b. Fire-Fighting and Emergency Medical Services

Croton-on-Hudson's Fire Department is a volunteer organization that provides fire-fighting and emergency medical response services to the Village. The approximate emergency response time to all points in the Village is five minutes. The Department has three fire stations and five companies, and approximately 220 volunteers, including fire fighters and emergency medical technicians. The three fire-fighting stations, located throughout the Village, are:

- Harmon Engine Company, located at Benedict Boulevard and Wayne Street. The reconstruction of the station was completed in the spring of 2002.
- Grand Street Firehouse, located on Grand Street in the Upper Village. The original building, which is over 100 years old, is being expanded to accommodate a ladder truck.
- Washington Firehouse, located on North Riverside Avenue at High Street.

Village residents in need of medical care can be brought to one of the following four medical centers, depending on the nature of the care needed:

- Phelps Memorial Hospital Center, in Sleepy Hollow, NY (7 miles)
- Hudson Valley Hospital Center, in Peekskill, NY (6 miles)
- Northern Westchester Medical Center, in Mount Kisco, NY (8 miles)
- Westchester Medical Center in Valhalla, NY (11 miles)

c. Religious Institutions

There are six places of worship in Croton-on-Hudson:

1. St Augustine's Church (Episcopalian)
2. Temple Israel of North Westchester
3. Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church
4. Asbury United Methodist Church
5. Chapel of The Good Shepherd (Roman Catholic)
6. Holy Name of Mary Church (Roman Catholic)

d. Educational Facilities

The Village of Croton-on-Hudson is served by two school districts: the Croton-Harmon Union Free School District and the Hendrick Hudson School District. The Croton-Harmon District encompasses most of Croton-on-Hudson as well as parts of Cortlandt and Yorktown. The northern-most portion of Croton-on-Hudson is served by the Hendrick Hudson School District.

Croton-Harmon Union Free School District (UFSD)

The Croton-Harmon UFSD covers approximately 95 percent of the land area of the Village of Croton-on-Hudson, as well as portions of the towns of Yorktown and Cortlandt. The District has three schools, all located in Croton-on-Hudson: Carrie E. Tompkins Elementary School, Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School, and Croton-Harmon High School, over 100 teachers and serves approximately 1,350 students, as of 2002. Approximately 75% of its student body lives in Croton-on-Hudson.

Table 3.17: Enrollment in Croton-Harmon UFSD Schools

Public Schools	*Grades*	*Enrollment 1990 - 2000*	*Capacity*	*Percent of Capacity*
Carrie E. Tompkins Elementary School	K-5	716	602	119%
Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School	6-8	278	292	95%
Croton-Harmon High School	9-12	357	424	84%

Source: Croton-Harmon UFSD Long Range Planning Study, April 2000 Update

The District's student population has been growing steadily. According to a planning study by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), District enrollment will increase by approximately 230 students – 17 percent – in the coming years. The demographics wave will crest at different times in the three District schools: Carrie E. Tompkins' enrollment is expected to peak in 2002 at 753, Pierre Van Cortlandt's in 2005 at 373, and Croton-Harmon High School in 2009 at 504.

Based on class-size recommendations issued by BOCES, Carrie E. Tompkins Elementary School will need eight to ten additional classrooms to accommodate this increase, in addition to increased space for administrative services. The elementary school is already operating above capacity; the school uses hallways, a stage, and a prefab annex for classroom space. Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School and Croton-Harmon High School have more available capacity. However, according to BOCES, Pierre Van Cortlandt Middle School is expected to need at least three additional classrooms, as well as enhancements to its cafeteria, athletic, and music facilities, while Croton-Harmon High School will need four new classrooms.

A total of 155 students from within the District, or 10 percent of the total, attended non-public schools in 1999-2000. The percentage attending non-public schools has varied between 8 and 11 percent over the last decade.

Hendrick Hudson School District (HHSD)

The northern-most tip of Croton-on-Hudson is served by the Hendrick Hudson School District. The HHSD has almost 2,800 students, from the municipalities of Montrose, Verplank and Buchanan as well as parts of the City of Peekskill and Cortlandt Manor. As of the 2000-2001 school year, only 85 students, or 3 percent of HHSD's student body, lived in Croton-on-Hudson. A total of 152 students in the HHSD, or 5.4 percent, attend non-public schools.

Table 3.18: Enrollment in Hendrick Hudson School District

Public School	*Grades*	*Enrollment 1999-2000*	*Capacity*	*% of Capacity*
Buchanan-Verplank Elementary School	K-5	449	552	81
Frank G. Lindsay Elementary School	K-5	556	648	86
Furnace Woods Elementary School	K-5	371	480	77
Blue Mountain Middle School	6-8	673	984	68
Hendrik Hudson High School	9-12	729	900	81

Source: Hendrick-Hudson School District

The HHSD student population is beginning to stabilize after a period of growth in the early 1990s. The increase in population will reach the high school by 2005, when it is expected to grow to approximately 920 students. To accommodate the increase in population, the district undertook several school expansions: Blue Mountain Middle School completed an expansion project in early 2001 and the construction of additional classrooms and science labs is expected to begin at the high school is 2002.

e. Cultural Resources and Programs

Historic Resources

The Village has several properties which have been listed on the National and Westchester County registers of historic properties.

Van Cortlandt Manor. A National Historic Landmark, the Van Cortlandt Manor is situated at the southern end of the Village, just east of South Riverside Avenue along the Croton River. The Manor was developed in the 18th century on lands owned by the Van Cortlandt family, a prominent merchant and political family who played a significant role in the development of colonial New York. The Manor buildings include the stone manor house, an 18th-century tavern and a reconstructed tenant dwelling. The Manor once encompassed over 2,400 acres but almost all of this land was sold or divided among family heirs over the years. Today, the Manor is open to the public as a working estate and museum, on five acres of land. It is owned and operated by Historic Hudson Valley, an organization devoted to historic preservation in the Hudson River Valley.

Croton North Railroad Station. The Croton North Station, constructed in the 1890s, is located on the west side of Route 9 south of Brook Street. The Station served as the second Metro-North railroad stop in Croton-on-Hudson until the mid-1900s. The site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

126 Old Post Road North. 126 Old Post Road was built in 1905 in the English Cotswald style. The fieldstone house was built from the same stone used in the construction of the Croton Dam. The house is one of a network of structures that were part of the former Wyndhurst Estate and is listed on Westchester County's inventory of historic places.

Baker House, 35 Old Post Road North. The Baker House was constructed in 1927 of the same material used in the Wyndhurst Estate houses. The house, listed on Westchester County's inventory of historic places, is constructed of the same stone used for the Croton Dam.

Bethel Chapel, Old Post Road South. Built in the late 1700s, the chapel was home to Croton-on-Hudson's Methodist congregation until it moved into the Asbury Church in 1883. The adjoining cemetery contains the graves of several Revolutionary War soldiers and Indians. The Chapel is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Relevant Historic Preservation Programs

Historic River Towns of Westchester (HRTW) is a consortium of 12 municipalities along the east bank of the Hudson River, including Peekskill, Cortlandt, Buchanan, Croton-on-Hudson, Town and Village of Ossining, Briarcliff Manor, Sleepy Hollow, Tarrytown, Irvington, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings-on-Hudson, and Yonkers, as well as Historic Hudson Valley. These communities participate in joint activities (including the popular Hudson Heritage Festival in the fall) to promote the historic and cultural heritage of the area.

As previously discussed in Section 3.2.g, HRTW has worked with the Westchester County Planning Department and Hudson River Valley Greenway since 1996 on a variety of initiatives relating to tourism and economic development, including the preparation of a Greenway Compact Plan. HRTW and New York State Department of State are currently working with Westchester County on a Regional Signage System Study.

Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. National Heritage Areas are National Park Service designations involving cohesive and important American landscapes with distinctive scenic, historic, and cultural resources. They involve voluntary partnerships among federal, state and local governments rather than land acquisitions and regulation.

Legislation to establish the Hudson River Valley as a National Heritage area was first introduced by Congressman Maurice Hinchey of Saugerties in 1994. An amended version of the

legislation passed in 1996 and was signed by President Clinton in November. At the time, eight other heritage areas were designated.

The legislation defines the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area as all of Albany, Orange, Rockland, Putnam, Ulster and Westchester counties and parts of Rensselaer, Columbia, Greene and Dutchess. It authorizes $10 million in implementation funding over a 15-year period, as well as $5 million in program support. It names the Greenway Council and Greenway Conservancy as the Heritage Area Management Entities for the program.

Under the legislation, the Greenway, working with the National Park Service and the counties and communities in the Hudson Valley, is to develop themes relating to such topics as the Revolutionary War, the Hudson River School of Art, the Industrial Revolution and patterns of rural landscape and agriculture. The themes will be linked together in an overall Heritage Area plan designed to encourage tourism, recreation, preservation of community character and linkages of physical and cultural resources.

American Heritage River. The Hudson has the distinction of being an American Heritage River, one of only ten rivers designated by the President in 1999 as part of a program to help communities restore and revitalize waters and waterfronts. The American Heritage Rivers Initiative integrates the economic, environmental, and historic preservation programs and services of federal agencies to benefit communities engaged in efforts to protect their rivers. A full time contact from a federal agency, called a "River Navigator," helps match community needs with available resources from existing programs. The Natural Resources Conservation Service has been chosen as the lead agency for the Hudson River.

f. Community and Cultural Resources

The Croton Council on the Arts, a non-profit group founded in 1976, promotes the arts in Croton-on-Hudson and sponsors events featuring local and visiting artists. The CCoA organizes several annual events, including Photographers of Northern Westchester, the "Local Color" Exhibition and "Arts***Jam."*** The photography exhibit, co-sponsored by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship in Croton-on-Hudson, features works by professional and amateur photographers from Northern Westchester. The "Local Color" show, held each Spring in Ossining, exhibits art work by CCoA members and Arts***Jam***, also held in the Spring at Senasqua Lodge, is a festival featuring arts exhibitions, music and spoken work performances.

The Croton Chamber of Commerce organizes several community events each year in conjunction with the Village Recreation Department, including Summerfest in June, Winterfest in December, and several holiday programs over the course of the year. Summerfest is held each year on the first Sunday in June. The festival includes a firemen's and community parade, followed by a street fair with food, children's rides and local vendors along the streets of the Upper Village. In December, Winterfest is held in Vassallo Park in the Upper Village, consisting of a tree-lighting ceremony and caroling.

Each December, Villagers are invited to participate in the holiday decorating program in December, in which Village residents and businesses "adopt" and decorate the holiday trees that line the Upper Village; in October, residents can decorate Upper Village windows in the Halloween spirit.

Broadway on Hudson is held each year, where Broadway stars donate time to perform for the Village. The ***Hudson Stage Company***, a Cortlandt-based group, gives staged readings at the Croton Free Library. The ***Croton Teen Theater*** offers a summer theater program for local teens. At the end of the summer, the group performs a musical at the high school. The ***Croton Children's Theater*** also meets and performs plays each summer at the Croton-Harmon High School.

Musical groups include the ***Croton Chorale***, which performs seasonal religious music, and the Hudson Bells, affiliated with the Asbury Methodist Church.

The ***Croton-Harmon School District*** runs an Adult Education Group, offering classes ranging from exercise to cooking to wine tasting.

Recreation Programs. The Village's Parks and Recreation Department offers a range of programs for adults, teens and children, operated on a seasonal basis (Fall, Winter/Spring and Summer) throughout the year. Adult programs include exercise classes, music and art studies. Some classes are reserved for senior citizens. Youth programs include sports and dance classes and music instruction. In the summer, the Department hosts the Croton Day Camp (for elementary school-aged children), Tiny Tots camp and a variety of activities for teens. The Department also sponsors special events each season such as a Goblin Walk and Spring window painting contests and a Summertime Concert Series each year in Senasqua Park.

Village events and seasonal activities are held in schools and parks around the Village. However, in the resident survey and public workshops, an interest was expressed in seeing a Village community

center developed that would serve as a central location for events, and provide activities for teens and senior citizens.

g. Croton Free Library

The Croton Free Library, located at 171 Cleveland Drive, has a collection of 75,000 books, 5,000 audio-visual materials and 170 subscriptions to periodicals and newspapers. In addition to these holdings, the library has computer terminals to provide internet access and can be accessed on-line by Village residents. The library also participates in an inter-library loan program through the Westchester Library System.

Croton Free Library, 171 Cleveland Drive

The library organizes and hosts a variety of programs for Village residents from story-telling and music programs for children to theater, staged readings, arts and cooking programs for adults.

Founded in 1938, the library began as a room in the Croton High School and then moved to the second floor of the Municipal Building before moving to its present location in 1965. The library has undergone two expansions since its construction; the first in 1988-89 and the second in 1997, which added a program room.

h. Public Works and Utilities

Water Resources. Although Croton-on-Hudson is situated close to the Croton Aqueduct System and borders the Croton River, it does not tap into the reservoir system for its water. Instead its water supply comes directly from sand and gravel aquifers pumped from three deep wells under the Croton River Basin. Well water provides a very pure source of water because it requires only a minimum amount of treatment and avoids the potential problems with pollution run-off that are associated with surface water from the reservoir system.

The Village's three active wells are located on Route 129 (a fourth well is inactive). The wells can produce up to 1.8 – 2 million gallons of water per day; the average daily water consumption is 1 million gallons per day. The automation of the well pumping system was completed in 2001. Water pumped from the wells is stored in a network of four reservoir tanks located throughout the Village; two tanks in the Mount Airy area, one on Hessian Hills Road and the fourth on the Hudson National Golf Course. The four tanks can hold a total of 2.3 million gallons of water. By tank, the capacity is as follows:

1. Upper North Highland:	1,250,000
2. North Highland underground:	400,000
3. Hessian Hill Road:	500,000
4. Hudson National Golf Course:	150,000
	2,300,000 gallons

The installation of this fourth reservoir tank at the golf course in the early 1990s, coupled with a water main extension completed in early 2001, connected neighborhoods in the northern part of the Village – Scenic Ridge, Westwind, and Arrowcrest – to the Village water system. These areas had previously been served by the Town of Cortlandt's system.

The sloped topography of the Village makes regulation of water pressure very important. The Village has invested in new pressure reducing valves to improve regulation of water pressure, allowing water to be moved quickly from the upper to the lower end of the Village in the event of a fire or other high demand on the water system.

Although the current three-well system serves the Village adequately, if a well were to be taken out of service, the supply to the Village would be significantly reduced. As such, the Water Department has requested funds to install a fourth well, to ensure adequate supply of water if one of three wells is out of service.

Sewer System. The Village utilizes a sanitary sewer system in the most densely populated areas of the Village, and septic system systems in the less dense areas. Most of the Village's sanitary sewer system was installed during the 1920s and 1930s, connecting already constructed houses to the sewer system. Subdivisions constructed more recently by private developers also have sewer connections, as the Village required private developers to install sanitary sewers. However, houses developed after the 1930s by individual residents in the outlying areas of the Village on single lots were often not connected to the system. These homes are served by private septic systems.

Most of the Village's sewer lines are between 70 and 80 years old and are beginning to show signs of age. Some lines are cracking and need to be re-lined or replaced. The Village invested $100,000 in 2000 to rehabilitate several manholes and sewer lines and has focused efforts on sections of the lines that have problems. A proactive effort to reline the sewer lines before the conditions worsen could help preempt further problems.

3.8 Special Planning Areas: Commercial Districts and Hudson River Waterfront

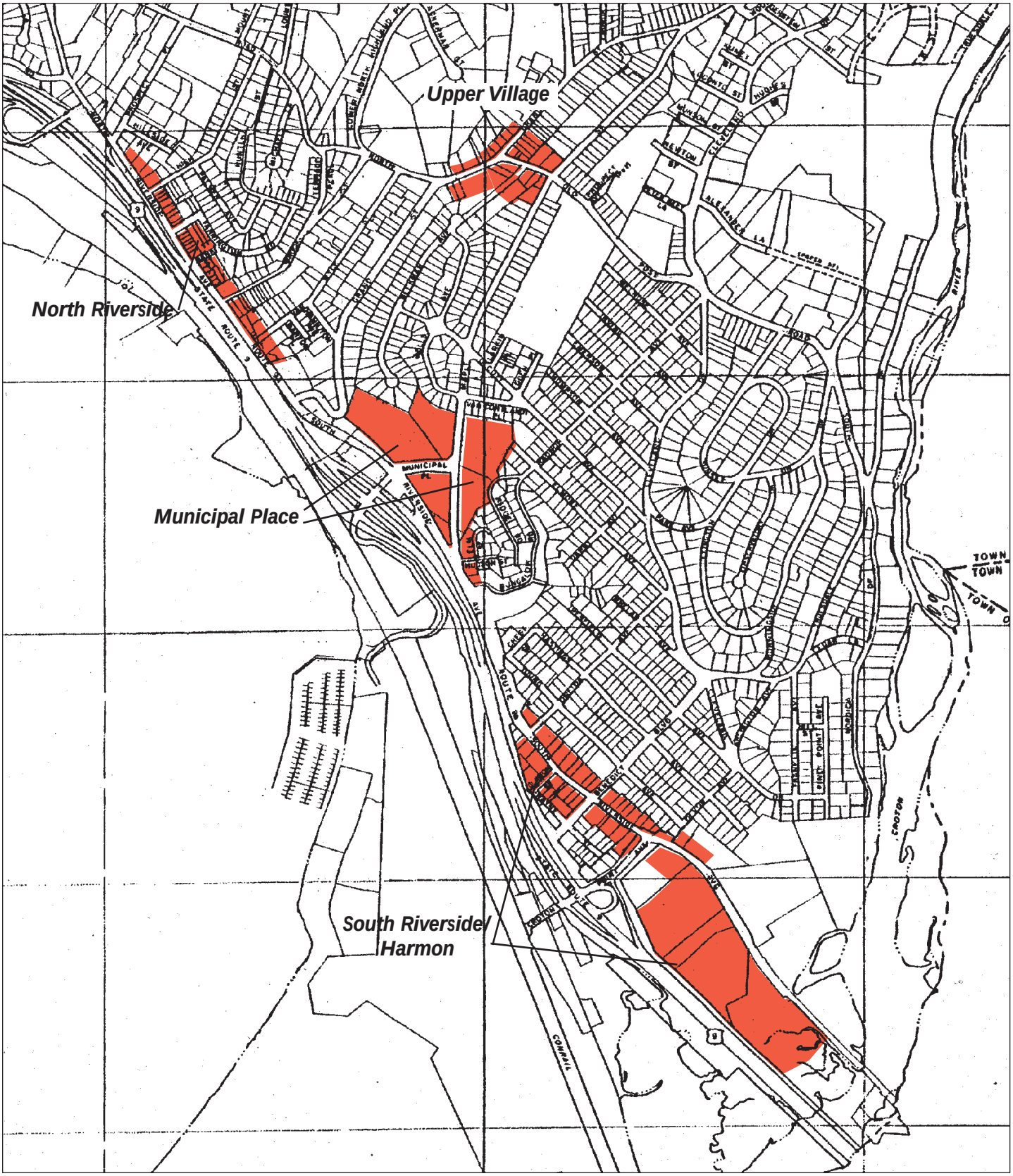
a. Commercial Districts

Due to its historical development as the separate communities of Mt. Airy and Harmon, and the nature of its transportation systems, Croton-on-Hudson has a patchwork of several distinct commercial retail and office areas: the Upper Village, North Riverside, the Municipal Place shopping centers (including the auto dealership, Post Office area, Croton Commons and Van Wyck II shopping plaza), and the South Riverside/Harmon shopping area, which developed around the railroad stop at Harmon (see Figure 3.8). North Riverside was located close to the original Croton North train station, and the Upper Village at the crossroads of Grand Street and Old Post Road.

With the exception of the Upper Village, all of these commercial centers are located along the Route 9/9A corridor. The North End area is the entryway into the Village from the north along both Routes 9 and 9A. North Riverside is linked via Brook Street to the Upper Village. The Municipal Place shopping area is bisected by Maple Street, which runs north to the Upper Village. The Harmon/South Riverside/Harmon shopping area is located at the approach to the train station from Croton Point Avenue, with access to the nearby Harmon residential area.

The customer base for each of these commercial centers is local, drawing shoppers from within the Village rather than from the Northern Westchester region. Croton-on-Hudson has made an effort to prevent sprawling commercial development and to maintain the local orientation of these districts. However, the general consensus in the Village is that the types of establishments need to be diversified to better meet the needs of residents and encourage local shopping, and that higher quality aesthetic standards will help attract shoppers to these areas.

Croton-on-Hudson's commercial centers play a dual role in the Village, as sources of retail and services for residents and as defining "images" of certain areas of the Village. The retail composition of these centers determines whether local demand for shopping and services is being met; at the same time, the appearance of these centers is key to the image of the Village for residents and to visitors. As such, recommendations for improvements to the centers must take both of these roles into account. The function and character of the four commercial centers are described below. Chapter 4.0 presents recommendations for improvements to several of these centers, as zoning district "overlays" for image-defining gateways.



Village of Croton-On-Hudson, NY

Figure 3.8. Commercial Areas

uses, reinforce the role of the Upper Village as a central location and the symbolic "core" of the Village.

Upper Village

In the survey conducted for this Plan, most residents identified the Upper Village as the heart of Croton-on-Hudson. The Upper Village includes frontage along Grand Street, Maple Street and Old Post Road between Van Wyck Street to the west and the intersection of Old Post Road and Maple Streets to the east. In addition to its commercial district, the Upper Village contains two- and multi-family residential districts and low-scale office uses (including the Municipal Building). The mix of uses and building scale contributes to the area's historic sensibility and quaint character.

Upper Village, looking east along Grand Street

The Upper Village commercial district is zoned C-1, for central commercial uses, with two small areas zoned 0-1, for Limited Office Use. The district has a FAR of 2.0, which permits a floor area of twice the total square footage of a given lot and reflects the higher density, compact nature of the Upper Village. The small size of the lots in the Upper Village (approximately 1/8th of an acre) limits the permissible size of buildings to its historic scale, typical of its older structures. Some of the commercial building stock consists of former single-family homes. The buildings range in height from one- to three-story buildings, some with a mix of ground floor commercial and residential on the upper floors. Most buildings have a minimal or shallow setback from the sidewalk creating a sense of connection with the street.

Mixed-use buildings, Upper Village

The predominant commercial uses are small-scale convenience retail, restaurants and personal service establishments. Customers arrive both by car and on foot. The Upper Village is viewed as the most pedestrian friendly commercial area in Croton-on-Hudson, with sidewalks with brick-like paving, street lights, and manageable street crossings.

Parking is provided by two municipal lots, plus some private non-residential spaces and on-street parking. Shoppers share parking spaces with Upper Village residents and business owners in the district. The lack of convenient parking for shoppers using the Upper Village stores was raised as a concern during the public workshops for this Plan.

Municipal Building, Upper Village

Residents are also drawn to the Upper Village for non-shopping purposes. The Municipal Building, located between the upper ends of Van Wyck and Brook Streets, houses the Village government and administrative offices, and provides space for Village meetings and events. Dobbs Park, situated between Grand and Maple Street east of Old Post Road, hosts recreational and other local events. These public uses, combined with the mix of residential and commercial

1. North Riverside

2. Upper Village

3. Croton Commons/Grand Union

4. Harmon

Village of Croton-On-Hudson, NY

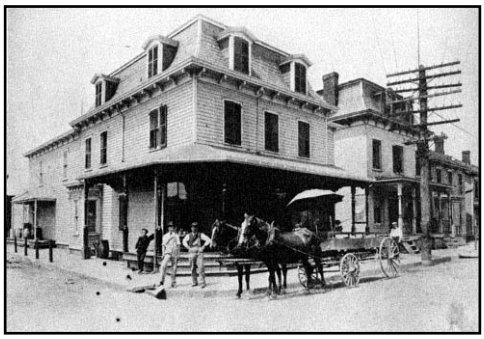
Figure 3.9. Commercial Centers: Land Uses

- ***Retail Stores***
- ***Restaurants/Food-Related Uses***
- ***Personal Services***
- ***Offices/Business and Medical Services***
- ***Housing***
- ***Government and Institutions***
- ***Auto-Related Uses***

uses, reinforce the role of the Upper Village as a central location and the symbolic "core" of the Village.

North Riverside

The North Riverside commercial center extends along the east side of North Riverside Avenue/ Route 9A, approximately from Prospect Place to just south of Grand Street. A small O-2 office district interrupts the commercial area just north of Grand Street. The center is bounded on the east by residential neighborhoods (two-family and RA-5 single family) and on the west by US Route 9.



North Riverside and Brook Street, 1900

North Riverside is approximately 8.5 acres and is zoned C1, for general commercial uses with a permitted FAR of 2.0. As with the Upper Village, lot sizes are small and buildings are close together. Many of the commercial buildings are former single-family homes. Some buildings contain mixed uses, with ground floor commercial and residential uses above.

The uses in the North Riverside commercial district are a mix of commercial, residential, office, restaurants and personal service establishments. A medical suite is located in the office district north of Grand Street. The Washington Firehouse is located just north of High Street.

North Riverside, pedestrian scale and mixed uses north of Bank Street

As with the Upper Village, North Riverside is accessible by foot and car, although parking is limited to on-street spaces. The district has benefited in recent years from the installation of brick sidewalks, pedestrian-scale streetlights and planters. The orientation and setback of buildings improve the area's "walkability," especially north of Bank Street, where buildings are set flush with the sidewalk line and front onto North Riverside Avenue, creating a street wall and enhancing accessibility for pedestrians. South of Bank Street, however, the building orientation is mixed, with some buildings fronting on side streets and more varied setbacks. Uses in this section are more varied as well, with a mix of businesses and services, and there appear to be several vacant lots. Consequently, this part of the North Riverside commercial district is less inviting to pedestrians and appears separated from the rest of the district.

North Riverside between Brook and Bank Streets

North Riverside plays an important role as a commercial area and as a link to both the Upper Village and the Hudson waterfront. North Riverside provides pedestrian and vehicular access to the Upper Village via Brook Street and Grand Street. The Hudson River is visible from North Riverside and can be accessed on foot via the Brook Street pedestrian bridge.

Municipal Place Shopping Area

The shopping area located along Municipal Place and Maple Street includes the Croton Commons shopping plaza, the Van Wyck II stores, and the shopping plaza along Maple Street that contains the Post Office and several stores. The center is bounded to the north, south and east by single-family residential neighborhoods and to the west by Route 9. The southern tip of the shopping area, where South Riverside Avenue and Maple Street intersect, acts as a gateway leading into the Upper Village from Route 9.

Van Wyck II shopping plaza, on the east side of Maple Street

Municipal Place's shopping plazas contain a mix of convenience goods stores and service establishments, including restaurants and take-out places, pharmacies, nail salons, cleaners and other stores. Most commercial space is occupied, although a Grand Union supermarket closed in early 2001. The center also encompasses several stand-alone buildings: an automobile dealership is located on the northwest side of Municipal Place, a gas station at the intersection of South Riverside Avenue and Maple Street, and the Croton Diner just south of Hudson Street. A vacant, undeveloped parcel (the Katz property covering 2.4 acres) is situated adjacent to the automobile dealership.

The complex of shopping plazas along Maple Street are characterized by groups of single-story buildings set back from the street and fronted by surface parking lots. Although there is a pedestrian path on the east side of Maple Street, the layout encourages automobile use, and the lack of safe and attractive pedestrian connections discourages shoppers from walking from one plaza to another.

Croton Commons shopping plaza, on the west side of Maple Street

The vacant Katz property creates an important opportunity to create a focal point for this area. Given the proximity of the post office, restaurants and the mix of retail stores, this site could perhaps be established as a new center for the Village.

South Riverside/Harmon Shopping Area

The South Riverside/Harmon commercial center is situated along the east and west sides of South Riverside Avenue south of Oneida Avenue. The center is bounded on the north and east by residential neighborhoods. To the west is Route 9 and to the south is the Van Cortlandt Manor property, a five-acre historic estate.

The Harmon commercial area includes a mix of smaller-scale shops along South Riverside and a large (30-acre) shopping area south of Croton Point Avenue that includes the "Shop Rite Shopping Center." As with the other shopping areas in the Village, Harmon contains a mix of retail and service establishments. Notable in the area is the

concentration of auto-related uses: along South Riverside between Oneida Avenue and Croton Point Avenue are eight auto repair shops, car dealerships and gas stations.

Harmon also has numerous personal service establishments, including hair and nail salons, and professional services such as insurance and travel agencies and medical offices. The "Shop Rite" Shopping Center contains a Shop-Rite supermarket and a mix of service establishments such as salons, cleaners and laundromats, and retail establishments.

The location of the Harmon/South Riverside shopping area enhances its retail potential: it is accessible to pedestrians from surrounding neighborhoods and is a gateway to Croton from the Croton-Harmon Railroad Station, via Croton Point Avenue. However, sidewalks need to be improved and extended to increase pedestrian access to the Shopping Center and the nearby train station.

This area also lacks a strong architectural identity. Building form, façade design and site landscaping vary from one property to another. Utility poles and overheard wires on the east side of South Riverside Avenue dominate the landscape. In addition, many of the sidewalks are lined by unscreened surface parking lots.

Auto dealership, South Riverside Avenue

Shop Rite shopping plaza

b. Hudson River Waterfront

History of the Waterfront

The Hudson River, which forms Croton-on-Hudson's western boundary, is one of the defining features of the Village. The River was the impetus for Croton-on-Hudson's earliest settlements and industry, attracting Dutch traders in the 1600s and later supporting several industries, including shipping and brick manufacturing. In 1846, the tracks were laid for the Hudson River railroad line and in the early 1900s, an engine terminal was constructed close to Croton Point. The construction of the railroad reserved a large portion of waterfront property for utility and transportation uses, creating a barrier between the waterfront and the elevated parts of the Village, which were developing for residential and commercial uses. This barrier was reinforced with the construction of north-south US Route 9 in the 1960s and the closing of the Croton North railroad station near the Upper Village.

Today, the railroad continues to have a significant presence adjacent to the waterfront but the other waterfront industries have disappeared. Two parks – Westchester County's Croton Point Park at the southern end of the Village, and the Village's Senasqua Park – draw residents to the waterfront for recreational activities. In addition, several recent projects have created new residential and

recreational uses along the waterfront and reconnected this area with the rest of the Village. These projects include the creation of the Half Moon Bay condominiums, the construction of the Brook Street pedestrian bridge and the purchase by the Village of waterfront property ("Village parcel") in 1996.

Waterfront Land Uses

The Hudson River stretches the length of the Village's western perimeter. Although historically used for mostly industrial and rail-related purposes, the land along the riverfront today is primarily characterized as residential, recreational, and vacant. The major land uses are described as follows:

Croton Point Park, at the south end of the waterfront, is a 504-acre Westchester County park, located on a peninsula that juts out into the Hudson River. Road access is provided by Croton Point Avenue, which connects to Routes 9 and 9A. The park offers a range of amenities including camping, fishing, hiking, picnicking and play areas (see parks and recreation section).

Southeast of the park, at the mouth of the Croton River, is the ***Croton Bay Boat Launch***, which is used primarily for canoes and kayaks and other small boats, as well as fishing and passive recreation.

North of Croton Point Park is the ***Half Moon Bay*** condominium complex, which consists of 120 residential units in 18 buildings, plus a clubhouse, a common building, and pedestrian trails***.*** A public walkway, restricted to Croton-on-Hudson residents, stretches the length of the development along the riverfront. Completion of Half Moon Bay over the next two years will add 156 new units on 14 acres on the eastern portion of the site. Additional pedestrian trails, open to the general public, are planned for the final phases of the project, to connect Croton Point Park to Senasqua Park to the north.

Adjoining Half Moon Bay are ***Senasqua Park, the Croton Sailing School and the Croton Yacht Club.*** Senasqua Park is a 4.5-acre Village-owned park providing on-land recreational facilities, boat storage and mooring slips. Croton Sailing School and the Yacht Club are privately-owned businesses on Village-owned land. The Croton Yacht Club includes a modular building, a parking area, and several floating docks with slips for boats. These three sites make up the active recreational core of Croton's Hudson riverfront. Vehicular access to the sites is provided by either an at-grade crossing over the railroad tracks at Brook Street or through the one-lane tunnel at the western end of Municipal Place. Pedestrians can access the park through the tunnel or via a pedestrian overpass at Brook Street.

Village Parcel (Seprieo Property). The Village purchased this property in 1996 with funding from the Open Space Institute and the Lila Acheson and DeWitt Wallace Fund. Of the property's 30 acres, 14.3 are on land, the remaining acres are under water. The property is a narrow strip of land between the Hudson River and the Metro-North railroad tracks, beginning just north of the Croton Yacht Club. The 13.4 acres (both land and water) at the south end of the site have been the focus of recent planning studies for recreational options.

The north end of the Village Parcel, known as the Beaverkill Parcel, is a much narrower, 16.6-acre land parcel (both land and water) consisting of a breakwater, a small protected cove, and a beach area used for passive recreation and to launch small boats. The existing breakwater within this area creates the cove. An agreement between the Village and the Beaverkill Conservancy mandates that the Village must maintain the Beaverkill Parcel as a natural area for passive recreational uses that enhance waterfront access.

Recent Planning Efforts

Greenway Vision Plan

In 1996, the Village appointed a Greenway Committee to evaluate Croton-on-Hudson's role in the development of the Hudson River Valley Greenway. The Hudson River Greenway Act, passed in 1991, established a program for municipalities to develop a network of trails, parks, historic and cultural sites along the Hudson River. Croton-on-Hudson and Ossining submitted a joint application as Model Greenway Communities to receive financial assistance in the planning process.

This planning process began in early 1996 with an inventory of existing conditions along the entire Croton-on-Hudson waterfront and the identification of possible waterfront development scenarios. The Village's consultants, the firm of Imbiano Quigley Landscape Architects, and Allee King Rosen & Fleming (AKRF), prepared the inventory in close consultation with the Greenway Committee as well as with the Recreation Advisory Board, the Conservation Advisory Council, and the Waterfront Advisory Committee.

The result of this study was the ***Greenway Vision Plan***, completed in 1997, which reviewed potential uses and improvements to waterfront lands, and made recommendations concerning land use strategies for specific waterfront areas.

Land use and design recommendations for the waterfront included such elements as: designing the entrance to Half Moon Bay as a two-lane road with an adjacent sidewalk, signage, a boulevard

treatment and trees; buffering adjacent railroad facilities with solid screen and plantings; rehabilitating the "picture tunnel" for pedestrian access; creating a ferry dock and terminal; and restoring Senasqua Park as an active recreational facility. Several development schemes for the Village Parcel were reviewed, including a conceptual site plan for a generic Dutch settlement Village, a railroad museum, or an interpretive center. Mooring of various ships, including the Clearwater and a replica of the Half Moon ship, were considered.

The Greenway Vision Plan was incorporated as part of the Master Plan in 1997. Subsequent waterfront planning efforts have focused on the undeveloped waterfront property (Seprieo site), as described below.

Croton Waterfront Feasibility Study (2000-2001)

The Feasibility Study was prepared to examine potential recreational uses for the currently unused Village property north of the Croton Yacht Club (the former Seprieo property). The first draft of the study was undertaken to identify and evaluate alternative land use scenarios for the study area, and based on the analysis of environmental and socioeconomic issues, develop a preferred Waterfront Development Plan. It initially defined four alternative scenarios for the waterfront study area, described generally as follows:

- Alternative A: Passive Recreation with trails, picnic areas, possibly a visitors center
- Alternative B: Passive Recreation with water dependent uses (i.e., barge restaurant, marina, boat launch)
- Alternative C: Waterfront Recreation with on-land development, including restaurant, cultural center, marina, trails, and picnic area.
- Alternative D: Active sports recreation area with a ballfield, tennis courts, basketball, running track).

The four alternatives were reviewed by the community. New York State Department of State (NYSDOS) also reviewed and provided input and a preferred alternative was developed.

The following guiding principles were prepared for the formulation of the Proposed Waterfront Development Plan:

- Comply with the policies of the Village of Croton-on-Hudson LWRP
- Serve as a model of environmentally sensitive design
- Create a community-based resource

- Expand on and comply with the mandates and land use strategies set forth in the recently adopted Greenway Vision Plan
- Create a commons or gathering space centered on a band shell or gazebo
- Expand and improve parking areas, both paved and unpaved
- Create various recreational areas for all age groups, maintaining open spaces for flexible uses
- Enhance and improve an existing underutilized launch for boats
- Commence the closure of an existing septic system at the CSX building and connect the building's sanitary system to the new public sewer system and connect a new park building, if required, to the new system
- Eliminate an existing septic easement
- Install safety enhancements such as site lighting and continuous fence or barrier between the railroad and the park
- Comply with accessibility guidelines as specified in the Americans with Disabilities Act
- If possible, elevate the roadway to allow for emergency evacuation during flooding events
- Create a continuous waterfront access in the form of a trail or walkway

The final draft of the Croton-on-Hudson Feasibility Study for the Village Waterfront Property, September 2001, describes each of the four alternatives, evaluates the relative advantages and disadvantages of each presents the preferred plan, as follows.

Waterfront Development Feasibility Study, September 2001

The preferred alternative consists of the following key components:

- ***Passive recreation areas***: to include a picnic area, open lawns, a major flexible open space programmed for seasonal exhibits, outdoor sculpture, court games

- ***Multiple use trails***: jogging and walking trails to connect to the north cove to the north, and to the county trail system running from Croton Point Park north along the waterfront.

- ***Visitors Center***: conversion of the small building owned by CSX into a park-related building with Village and park information area, small offices, restroom facilities, snack bar or vending machines, bait shop, and storage of park equipment. A new small park building could be constructed in addition, or in lieu of, the converted CSX owned building

- ***A 3,000 square foot bandshell*** for cultural/community events

- ***Beach/boat launch:*** Enhancement of the small existing beach area for a boat launch for small non-motorized watercraft

- ***Stone Rip-rap:*** retention and enhancement of the existing stone rip-rap structure for shore stabilization.

- ***4,000-square foot fenced playground*** area with play structure

- Development of an adjacent area for court-type games targeted for the elderly (i.e., horseshoes and bocce).

- ***Above-ground stormwater management system***, including a series of natural storm water treatment devices

- ***Creation of several small parking areas***, including a main parking area west of the access road, and two smaller parking areas to serve as overflow parking and serve users of the north cove nature trails and fishing areas.

A future development option, not part of the preferred alternative, was also studied for the area between the main parking lot and the water's edge. A restaurant and a small marina are identified as possible uses for this site. The area of this possible development is recommended for a flexible, possibly temporary use such as a sculpture garden, dog run, or wildflower meadow.

Waterfront-Related Projects

Several waterfront related projects are underway that relate to the planned recreational use of the Village parcel. These include:

Half Moon Bay Condominiums Completion

As part of the build-out of the condominium complex, new pedestrian paths open to the public will be created; these will help link waterfront uses along the shoreline from Croton Point Park north to the Village Parcel, as part of a larger county trail system.

Closing of Brook Street Crossing and the Gateway Plan

To improve public safety, the NYS Department of Transportation and the Metro-North Railroad have proposed closing the Brook Street at-grade crossing to vehicular, bike, and pedestrian traffic. Vehicular access to the waterfront would be limited to the Senasqua tunnel (proposals have also been made to limit the Senasqua tunnel in the future to pedestrian and bicycle use) and the access road to Half Moon Bay condominiums.

The Gateway Plan proposes a new north-south connecting road to serve the waterfront, running from the Half Moon Bay condominium access road through the parking areas in Senasqua Park, to the Yacht Club, and the Village waterfront site to the north. This road would improve current substandard roadway conditions by accommodating two-way traffic and widening lanes for bicycle traffic.

Extension of Sewer Line

The sewer system main that serves Senasqua Park has recently been extended to the Yacht Club. This main could be further extended to the new park building and other possible facilities to the north.

3.9 Summary of Planning Issues

The planning issues that emerged from the public participation and research phases of the Comprehensive Plan are described below. The issues cover a range of topics, including natural resources, housing, transportation and commercial development. Underlying these issues is the common interest in preserving Croton-on-Hudson's small-town character and natural resources. The following chapter recommends strategies to address these issues.

Natural Resources, Parks and Open Space	• Maintenance and appearance of parks and trails • Preservation of Village's open space character • Accessibility to parks, especially waterfront
Housing	• Provision of affordable and age-appropriate housing • Increasing housing costs • Housing maintenance and code enforcement • High property taxes • Regulation of accessory apartments
Transportation	• Speeding along arterials routes (Routes 9A and 129) • Congestion in commercial areas and around train station • Need for sidewalks and crosswalks • Need for increased parking in commercial areas • Truck circulation and loading • Improved bus transportation services for seniors
Commercial Development	• Mix and quality of retail and services • Appearance and maintenance of commercial buildings • Improvements to pedestrian access • Encourage additional specialty stores
Community Facilities	• Expansion of recreation options • Need for community center for teens and seniors citizens • Absence of arts and cultural center

4.0 PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations draw on the results of the public workshops, resident survey and research conducted over the course of the comprehensive panning process. Throughout the public participation program, a common theme was identified among Croton-on-Hudson residents: that of an overall sense of comfort and satisfaction with the Village as it is today. Although many issues were raised and specific suggestions for improvements made by residents, the vision for Croton-on-Hudson shared by most residents emphasizes the following basic goals: ***preserving Croton-on-Hudson's traditional qualities, strengthening its assets, and protecting its resources.***

Many of these issues and goals expressed by Croton-on-Hudson residents are similar to those identified in the 1977 Master Plan for the Village. That Plan recognized that, "the essential character of Croton-on-Hudson is a community of individual house-owners, residing in single-family dwellings on separate lots." It stated that "this essential character should be preserved, with a modest increase in the number of town houses, attached dwellings and small apartments." It also deemed it "desirable that the Village have an identifiable 'core' and that this core contain relatively greater density of commercial and residential use, with such density gradually diminishing as the distance from the center increases." It also stated that "It is the conclusion of the Planning Board that the Village ought not to attempt to function as a regional, or quasi-regional focus for shopping, attracting shoppers from outlying towns or villages."

With one or two notable exceptions, the Village has generally adhered to those aspects of the original Master Plan's vision of the last quarter century and this updated Comprehensive Plan strongly endorses them. To continue to preserve those goals, this Plan makes specific recommendations for improving the Village's existing commercial amenities, residential areas and natural resources. The Plan also strongly recommends that the Village discourage any further large-scale residential developments and that, in the future, no rezoning should occur which would permit commercial development outside of those areas currently zoned for commercial development (with the possible exception of the eastern section of Grand Street, as indicated on page 83). Both recommendations are vital to preserving the Village's character, particularly as development pressure in northern Westchester has intensified.

4.1 Defining Goals, Objectives, And Issues Through Public Participation

One of Croton-on-Hudson's defining characteristics is the strong involvement of its residents in the life of the Village. The soliciting of public opinion throughout the comprehensive planning process was a critical feature in the development of the Plan. The research and public participation tasks of the first twelve months of the Croton-on-Hudson comprehensive planning process (including review of past plans, interviews, three public workshops, and analysis of residential survey results) provided the basis for the articulation of vision and overall goals for the Village's planning process.

a. Public Workshops

The first workshop on August 15, 2000, helped delineate a number of issues to be addressed in the Plan under the following topics:

- Environment, Open Space, Trails
- Transportation
- Residential Areas and Design
- Commercial and Office Areas
- Community Facilities and Services
- Visual and Historic Character
- Waterfront

The second workshop, held in January 2001, focused on the Village's commercial areas, developing specific recommendations for each area. The third workshop, held on March 8, 2001, followed up some of the concerns expressed in the surveys and the earlier workshops, and focused on housing, transportation (particularly traffic concerns), and parks and recreation. These open workshops for discussion on issues generated a useful profile of issues, strengths and weakness, objectives and initial recommendations on Plan topics.

b. Residential Survey

In addition to public workshops, a Village-wide survey of public opinion was undertaken. A survey questionnaire was mailed to all Croton-on-Hudson residential households in August 2000. The primary objectives of the survey were to gain the community's perspective on all aspects of the physical development and character of the village, opinions on the issues and problems that needed to be addressed by the comprehensive plan, and how to rank them as priorities for the plan. The 25% response rate was very high (typically such surveys average closer to a 15% response

rate, based on BFJ's experience with comprehensive plan surveys). The survey findings can serve as a reasonable (if not perfect) estimate of what the entire population of Croton-on-Hudson thinks about the following range of topics relevant to the Village's character and future development:

- Commercial areas and retail amenities
- Public facilities
- Recreational facilities
- Environmental issues
- Village objectives and spending priorities
- Strengths and weaknesses of Croton-on-Hudson

These survey responses provide an overall guide to residents' viewpoints and the local issues receiving the most attention. As a general indicator of public opinion, the survey can help further refine the issues and content of the Comprehensive Plan. The thoroughness of public involvement enabled Croton-on-Hudson residents to voice their concerns and ideas for community goals, and to advocate recommendations at critical points in the planning process.

4.2 Village Wide Recommendations

Although numerous issues, viewpoints, and objectives were presented over the course of the planning process, the vision for the Plan shared by most participants to date emphasizes the following basic goals: ***preserving traditional qualities, strengthening assets, protecting resources***. To realize these goals, the Plan emphasizes Croton-on-Hudson's unique features as key elements to be protected, maintained, and enhanced to the greatest extent possible: the waterfronts; greenery, open space and trails; low key, small-town quality; historic qualities and character; transportation and pedestrian access; economic diversity and tax base. The following village wide recommendations incorporate the key issues and opportunities to be addressed in the Plan:

1. ***Protect natural resources, maintain/improve parks, preserve natural character.*** These goals were generally viewed as paramount, since the natural environment was described as one of the defining features of Croton-on-Hudson, fundamental to the local quality of life. Other general recommendations include improving access to open space resources, with better signage, improved trails and links between these resources and the rest of the Village, and establishing a tree trail map.

2. ***Expand public recreation uses of the Hudson River waterfront park areas***, and improve access to the waterfront.

Although the acquisition of the Seprieo property has significantly expanded public waterfront parkland, access by auto and for pedestrians remains very limited.

3. ***Maintain economic diversity***. Part of the Village's unique character stems from the economic diversity of its residents. The Village should employ a balanced approach is made in selecting future spending programs, so that residents are not "priced out" of the Village through resulting tax increases.

4. ***Preserve the historic character of Croton-on-Hudson.*** The history and small town character of Croton-on-Hudson was viewed as central to its distinctive charm. Building upon Croton-on-Hudson's historic assets and character throughout the Village is a central objective, to be realized through historic preservation efforts including the sensitive renovation of older structures, and the creation of architectural review standards and preservation ordinances in commercial zones where appropriate. As part of the effort to improve the overall appearance of the Village, the Village should maintain and renovate its municipal structures, such as the Municipal Building and firehouses, in a way that is consistent with the design standards developed for commercial buildings.

5. ***Improvements to signage throughout Village.*** The existing signage regulations help protect the aesthetic qualities of the Village. This Plan recommends strict enforcement of these regulations after giving commercial owners sufficient time to comply with the requirements of the law. As an additional step, the Village should design and place informational and directional signs in strategic locations, such as the Gateway areas, to direct residents and visitors to shopping areas and points of interest.

6. ***Improve the visual quality of Croton-on-Hudson***, particularly in commercial districts and in the Upper Village as a means to create identifiable gateways and promote business attraction, as well as preserve the historic character and scale of the Village. Efforts should be made to reduce or eliminate "visual clutter" such as inappropriate, unnecessary or duplicated signs, overhead utility wires, and building designs that are not compatible with the character of the Village. The Village should also undertake the development and implementation of design guidelines for municipal and commercial buildings and consider, as a long-term option, the burying of utility wires in commercial areas, as discussed in Section 4.3.

7. ***Establish architectural review standards.*** As part of the effort to improve visual and built quality in Village, the Village should establish specific architectural standards to encourage good qualities of exterior building design and appearance, to relate such design and appearance to the site and surroundings of such structures, to permit originality and resourcefulness in building design and appearance which are appropriate to the site and surroundings, and to prevent such design and appearance as are unnecessarily offensive to visual sensibilities. The Planning Board should be given the powers of an Architectural Review Board to avoid redundancy in the application process. This power of architectural review should encompass all non-residential properties and also include new residential construction and major alterations in residentially-zoned districts.

8. ***Enhance the function of the Upper Village area, generally recognized as the "heart" of the Village.*** Although not the only commercial area, the Upper Village remains the historic and administrative center of the Village. Small-scale specialty retail and office development is suggested as a means to enhance the tax base, and provide greater diversity of shopping options.

9. ***Improve commercial areas.*** Croton-on-Hudson should not develop regional or semi-regional shopping centers, or attract more chain stores. However, there is a need for new stores in existing commercial areas meeting neighborhood shopping needs was identified, as was providing more retail diversity. Meeting these goals should co-exist with the character of the Upper Village shopping area (which might focus on certain types of specialty shops such as arts related activities). Increasing the variety and quality of retail shopping is viewed as an important step to keep local shoppers and spending within the Village.

10. ***Creation of additional appropriately-scaled office space***, especially space serving small businesses currently located at home, is viewed as important to sustaining such business activity within Croton-on-Hudson, and also to enhancing the tax base.

11. ***Enhance the pedestrian connections within the Village***, via additions to the trail system and new and/or improved sidewalks, and better crosswalks. Such pedestrian links are seen as ways to sustain Croton-on-Hudson's small town character and "walkability," as well as address pedestrian safety. Pedestrian improvements within certain shopping

areas were also recommended. Many cited the importance of linking different commercial areas to each other via more sidewalks, as well as creating better pedestrian connections between shopping areas, residential neighborhoods, schools, libraries, and parks and waterfronts. Of particular concern is safety for children near schools and libraries. Consistent with the goal of improving pedestrian connections to commercial centers and open space areas, the Village should identify parcels that serve as links to these areas and explore the possibility of securing pedestrian access along these parcels, either through easements or purchase of the property. Possible connections include a path between Beekman Avenue and Municipal Place, and a link along Newton Street (currently a paper street) from the library to Maple Street.

12. ***Improve traffic flow and parking.*** The absence of adequate parking in some areas is seen as a serious constraint, and traffic congestion is cited frequently as a problem, particularly in commercial areas***.*** One element to be addressed in this regard concerns the use of on-street parking spaces for the storage of vehicles. The Village should ensure that commercial vehicles, or vehicles undergoing repair, are parked on the premises of businesses. Addressing these issues is seen as important both for the success of retail and other businesses, and for pedestrian safety.

13. ***Upgrade older utilities***, especially sewer systems, as needed. The Village should review the possibility of extending the sewer system into certain areas with septic systems. In addition, the Village should evaluate drainage, flooding, and stormwater run-off conditions in priority areas of the Village and consider a plan to address these conditions based on the new EPA stormwater regulations on nonpoint source pollution.

14. ***Update of Village Zoning Code and Map.*** After adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the Village should examine the current Zoning Code for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan and implement updates where necessary. As part of this update, Croton-on-Hudson should explore rezoning certain areas of the Village to better reflect community goals. These areas include Croton Point Park (a county park) and Hudson National Golf Course, two major open space areas which are both zoned RA-40, as well as a parcel adjacent to Half Moon Bay that should be a part of the Waterfront Development District (WDD). For the golf course property, the Village should review the option of

upzoning the property to create larger-scale lots that take into consideration the topography and slopes of the site. The Village and County authorities should also explore the option of rezoning the Croton Point Park parcel as a Parks, Recreation and Education (PRE) district to reflect its use as a public recreation area. The Village should also consider rezoning the property owned by the railroad to limit or control future alternative development on the property. In addition, the Village should explore upzoning the permitted lot size in residential sections of the Village where there are numerous lots that are significantly larger than the minimum permitted lot size. Upzoning residential districts will help retain the development pattern and density of the neighborhoods; further study will be required to define the suitable lot size for these areas. A new official zoning map should also be created that reflects zoning changes made since the 1992 Map was adopted. The Village should also consider creatively encouraging property owners, over time, to conform to the zoning code. For example, this could be accomplished through the possible long-term amortization of certain uses.

15. ***Improve visual quality at the railroad station.*** The Village should consider landscaping and pedestrian improvements. Attention should be paid to reduction of excessive signs and visual clutter.

16. ***Energy conservation awareness.*** The Village should be cognizant of energy conservation strategies in considering plans for the future.

The following sections summarize the Plan Recommendations for five key elements of the Village: commercial districts, natural resources, transportation, residential areas, and community facilities and services.

4.3 Commercial Districts

A number of the underlying goals for the Plan, noted in Section 1.4, focus on the need to improve the quality, function, and appearance of the following major commercial retail and office districts in the Village, so that residents can be better served:

- Upper Village
- Municipal Place/Croton Commons
- North Riverside
- Harmon/South Riverside
- North End Office District

The specific planning strategies for these areas focus on business attraction, pedestrian access, retail mix, and visual quality. This Plan also recommends, as a broad goal for the entire Village, that no new rezonings occur that would permit commercial development outside of those areas currently zoned for commercial development, with the possible exception of the eastern section of Grand Street, currently zoned RB, where some of the properties are presently utilized for commercial purposes. A business consultant, retained to study this area, should make this possible rezoning one of its focus points. However, any study of this rezoning possibility should take into account the commercial interactions between the various commercial sections of the Village and the effects of this rezoning on other areas of the Village. If rezoning to commercial is done in the future, the scale and massing of the existing structures should be maintained. Specifically, the assembling of the multiple parcels which would enable large-scale retail development should be prohibited.

a. Gateway Districts

In addition to the general planning strategies, this section also addresses the commercial "gateway districts" to be established for several Croton-on-Hudson commercial areas. Gateways mark a sense of arrival, and connection to a community, and establish an image for the community. The defining characteristics of Gateway Districts in the Village include:

- Vehicular entry points into Croton-on-Hudson from Routes 9/9A
- Commercial uses oriented toward automobile traffic
- Guidelines and concepts for new development when and if opportunities arise

Based on these criteria, three existing commercial areas have been designated as Gateway Districts for Croton-on-Hudson. These are shown in Figure 4.1:

Village of Croton-On-Hudson, NY

Figure 4.1. Gateway Districts

- ***Harmon/South Riverside***, running along Croton Point Avenue between Route 9 and South Riverside Avenue, and along South Riverside Avenue between Croton Point Avenue and Benedict Boulevard. The area is an important link to the train station via Croton Point Avenue and to the Harmon neighborhood. It also joins historic Van Cortlandt Manor to the south.

- ***Municipal Place Shopping Area***, consisting of lots on the north and south sides of Municipal Place between Route 9 and Maple Street, and the commercially-zoned portion of the block on the east side of Maple Street. The Municipal Place Shopping Area is an important entrance to the Village from Route 9. It connects to the Upper Village via Maple Street and to the surrounding neighborhoods.

- ***North End of Village along Albany Post Road (9A)***, consisting of the eight lots between Routes 9 and 9A, the Village boundary and Warren Road. This area marks the entrance to the Village from the north along Routes 9 and 9A.

The primary purposes of designating these as gateway areas are: upgrading the image and function of commercial areas, defining the entry into the Village, strengthening the overall visual identity of the Village, and improving linkages to adjacent residential neighborhoods.

The site plan designs for the Gateway Districts are included in this Plan as Figures 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5. Any future development in an overlay district could follow the plan guidelines. The zoning code would reference the site plan guidelines as provided in the Comprehensive Plan.

Descriptions of the gateway overlay recommendations are discussed in context with the overall planning recommendations for all of the Village commercial areas on the following pages.

b. Upper Village

Most residents recognize the Upper Village as the "heart" of Croton-on-Hudson, and support the need to strengthen its identity and function as a local retail and community center. Historically the Upper Village has served as an important mixed-use area, with "over the store" apartments, single-family homes and local retail stores. The Upper Village has also more recently experienced an increase in the number of professional office uses, such as doctors' offices and real estate businesses. However, the physical

constraints of its small-scale buildings and the existing infrastructure have severely limited its ability to attract traditional retail uses. This suggests that the Upper Village should focus on an alternative strategy that encourages small-scale retail uses such as specialty stores, cafes, personal services and other uses that relate to the scale and character of the area's architecture and pedestrian ambiance. Revitalization of retail in the Upper Village should be the starting point for a business consultant retained to study this area, as recommended in Section 4.2. These uses would build on the existing modest base of specialty stores such as Wondrous Things, the Book Hut, the Cornelia Cotton Gallery, as well as the mix of cafes and small-scale restaurants that are clustered in the Upper Village area.

Overhead utilities in Upper Village mar the image despite other streetscape improvements.

Achieving this goal will require a commitment from the Village and from business owners to upgrade the appearance of the area in order to create a special and unique sense of place that reflects Croton-on-Hudson's history and character. The Village should retain a consultant to develop a specific plan to strengthen the identity, quality and commercial mix of the Upper Village. This plan should include proposals for:

- ***Placement of Utilities Underground***

Despite the Village's recent streetscape improvements, the overhead utility lines remain a dominant visual feature in the streetscape of this Upper Village. Pedestrian-scale streetlights are dwarfed by nearby utility poles and equipment. Engineering studies and an examination of potential funding sources should be undertaken to review the feasibility of placing utilities below grade. These studies, and any resulting improvements, could be a forerunner to a broader program of utility replacement along Route 9A.

- ***Extending Streetscape Improvements***

The existing streetscape improvements, including brick treatments for sidewalks and ornamental street lighting, are concentrated along Old Post Road South, between Maple Street and Grand Street. These improvements should be extended further west along Grand Street, past the Holy Name of Mary Church, and further east as far as Mount Airy Road, to connect with restaurants, the firehouse and other amenities (see Figure 4.2).

- ***Improving Quality of Façade Design, Store Window Display***

Businesses should be encouraged to upgrade facades and improve the quality of window displays in order to create a consistent and attractive image for the Upper Village area. The recently enacted signage ordinance should be vigorously enforced after giving merchants sufficient time to understand and comply with the ordinance.

Village of Croton-On-Hudson, NY

Figure 4.2. Upper Village Proposals

Buildings
Existing Trees
Existing Sidewalk Improvements
Cross Walks
Proposed Expansion of Streetscape Improvements

BFJ Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart, Inc.

- ***Improving Parking and Reducing Traffic Congestion***

Although the Upper Village shopping area has municipal parking lots and on-street parking, there is still a perceived shortage of parking spaces for shoppers. The Village should work in cooperation with business owners and merchants in the area to assess the extent of parking demand and develop solutions that will accommodate shoppers and provide business owners with needed employee parking. One possible solution is to designate specific merchant parking locations outside of the immediate Upper Village area to make more spaces available to shoppers. The Village should also consider creative acquisition of appropriate properties on both Maple and Grand (east of Dobbs Park) to create a one-way street that would provide circulation around the Upper Village. The road should be wide enough to provide parking on one side. The Village should also study parking opportunities in the middle area between Dobbs Park and Grand Street.

Traffic congestion on the roads through the Upper Village is also a deterrent to potential shoppers. Traffic is heaviest during rush hours, particularly during peak morning rush hours, when commuters travel to the train station and highways and store owners receive their deliveries. The Village should work with merchants in the Upper Village to coordinate merchandise deliveries to avoid conflicting with the heaviest traffic times.

c. Municipal Place Shopping Area

The Municipal Place shopping area is viewed by many residents as the major commercial hub of the Village, due to its central location within Croton-on-Hudson and the range of stores and services available, including the Village Post Office.

The Village has recently proposed designating this area as a "Gateway District" given its high visibility and convenient access to Route 9. However, the area's role as a potential "center" for the village as a whole has remained largely unfulfilled, due in part to the fragmented nature of the various plazas and adjoining commercial sites which lack a coordinated pedestrian network and/or consistent streetscape treatment.

The vacant Katz Property located on the north side of Municipal Place, adjacent to Maple Street, presents an important opportunity to create a focal point for the area. It may also be possible to upgrade other sites within this area due to vacancies and possible relocation of businesses. In particular, an opportunity exists in the shopping plaza across from the Katz property to alter the commercial-retail mix. The Grand Union supermarket located there closed in early 2001. The space is slated to be filled by the CVS pharmacy that currently occupies space in another part of the

shopping plaza, with the result that the CVS space will become available for additional retail use.

The following site improvements to the Municipal Place shopping area are recommended:

- ***Katz Property***

Significant upgrading of this gateway area could create an opportunity to develop needed community facilities, and the Village could consider purchase of this 2.4 acre site. Developing a portion of the site as a community center, possibly coupled with office use, would help establish this area as a mixed-use center. In addition, the development of a landscaped park would result in a conveniently located meeting place for Village residents. Figure 4.3 shows one possible layout for the site, incorporating community facilities and office uses, parking, and a landscaped park. To the extent necessary, this property should be rezoned to promote these recommended uses.

Figure 4.4 shows a possible site layout for this property and includes the following features:

- A mixed-use building on Maple Street that could include professional office as well as community facility space
- A park and meeting area oriented to the Municipal Place-Maple Street intersection
- Convenient pedestrian access to both the proposed building and park, and connecting via a crosswalk to the stores on the east side of Maple Street
- A landscaped parking area set back from Maple Street with buffer planting to isolate it from nearby housing.

- ***Create a Pedestrian Network***

The current layout of the Municipal Place shopping area discourages pedestrian access and instead requires shoppers to drive from one plaza area to another. A network of pedestrian routes should be established that provides safe and attractive links between the various shopping plazas and other commercial sites as well as other major destination points such as schools, the library, and recreation areas. These routes should link directly to store entrances and include landscaping, signage and seating areas that encourage pedestrian activity, as shown in Figure 4.3. As a first step in this program, the Village has already approved the construction of a sidewalk along the south side of Municipal Place, linked to new sidewalks along the east side of Riverside Avenue.

Village of Croton-On-Hudson, NY

Figure 4.3. Municipal Place Concept

Existing Buildings

Landscaped Plaza

Potential New Building

Pedestrian Routes

- ***Adapt Municipal Place Facility for Recreational Use***

The Municipal Place facility (recently used as a leaf composting area by Village residents) is located on the west side of South Riverside Avenue across from the automobile dealership. This area should be developed in a manner consistent with Gateway guidelines.

- ***Prepare Long Term Redevelopment Guidelines***

In the longer term, redevelopment opportunities may occur which could help establish Municipal Place as a more pedestrian oriented road with new buildings creating a more traditional "street wall," thereby screening parking lots to the rear (see drawing below). The Village should monitor potential redevelopment in this area and take advantage of opportunities that arise to re-orient this area from an automobile-based layout to one that better reflects Croton-on-Hudson's historic development and character.

Figure 4.4. Possible long-term redevelopment strategy for Municipal Place shopping area

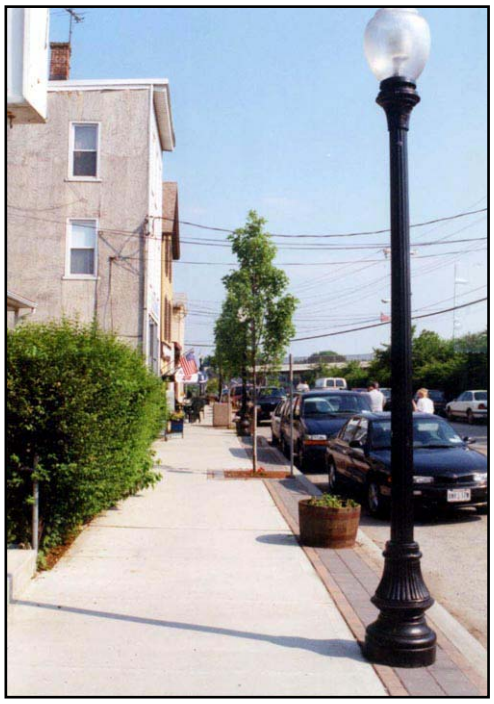
As illustrated above, the Municipal Place center would reflect the more traditional layout of buildings, open space and roads that occurs in older commercial areas such as the Upper Village. Lining Municipal Place with buildings and landscaped sidewalks would also establish an attractive entry road leading from Route 9 to Maple Street and the Upper Village area.

d. North Riverside

The importance of North Riverside as a local commercial center has been recognized in recent years by the installation of new sidewalks and lighting that have helped to emphasize the area's historic character. The proximity of the Brook Street pedestrian overpass and the nearby Senasqua Park, and a future waterfront park at the Village parcel, will allow the North Riverside district to play an increasingly important role as a link between the Upper Village and the Hudson River waterfront. New development or improvement should emphasize the area's proximity to the waterfront, and relate to the pedestrian scale of the existing streetscape and architecture without obscuring the views to the river from uphill locations. The Village should also consider acquiring and developing the land at the junction of Brook Street and North Riverside for development as a pocket park and off-street parking area, to improve pedestrian and car access to the shopping area and enhance links to the Upper Village.

Streetscape improvements on North Riverside

Future streetscape improvements should expand on the sidewalk, lighting and signage improvements already undertaken by the Village. A planted buffer between Riverside Avenue and NYS Route 9 is recommended. New informational signs and landscaping should be considered for the pedestrian approaches to the Brook Street overpass leading to Senasqua Park and the rest of the waterfront. Guidelines encouraging a more consistent quality in building façade design and signage should be developed and implemented by the Village. Future infill and renovation efforts should respond to guidelines that emphasize a marine-oriented theme, such as the use of clapboard and selection of streetscape furniture and other features that would give this area a distinctive character reflecting its close relationship to the river.



Improvements to North Riverside have included attractive, pedestrian-scale lampposts and brick pavers along the sidewalk

e. South Riverside/Harmon

The South Riverside/Harmon area acts as an important image-defining gateway to the Village due to its strategic location on Route 9A and its accessibility to the railroad station, Route 9 and Croton Point. A key section of this area is proposed as a "Gateway District" subject to special zoning district overlay regulations related to signage, landscape and other design requirements. This gateway district encompasses the lots fronting the north side of Croton Point Avenue east of Route 9, and properties on either side of South Riverside Avenue north of Croton Point Avenue to Benedict Boulevard.

The Plan recommendations for this area focus on improvements along South Riverside (Route 9A), given its role as a major access route into the Village. Route 9A's high visibility has led to the development of several service facilities as well as a mix of retail outlets. As a result, much of the street frontage is dominated by parking areas, driveways and service areas that are often unscreened from the roadway. The following improvements should be undertaken by the Village for this area:

- ***Streetscape Improvements***

A well-designed streetscape program should be initiated as a priority action for South Riverside to encourage pedestrian use and improve the image of this gateway district. Recommended streetscape improvements are listed below and shown in Figure 4.5.

- Additional landscaping including street trees and new planting and screening adjacent to parking and service areas.
- Sidewalk improvements should include paving treatments consistent with the sidewalk design incorporated in other Village commercial areas. The Village should explore the feasibility of installing sidewalks along the west side of South Riverside Avenue, south of Croton Point Avenue, to improve the pedestrian accessibility of this portion of Harmon/South Riverside. The Village should also consider installing crosswalks at the intersection of Croton Point Avenue and South Riverside Avenue (as indicated on Figure 4.5) to improve walkability.
- Reducing the number and scale of curb cuts where feasible in order to maintain stronger pedestrian path continuity.
- Encouraging the use of distinctive and attractive commercial signage.

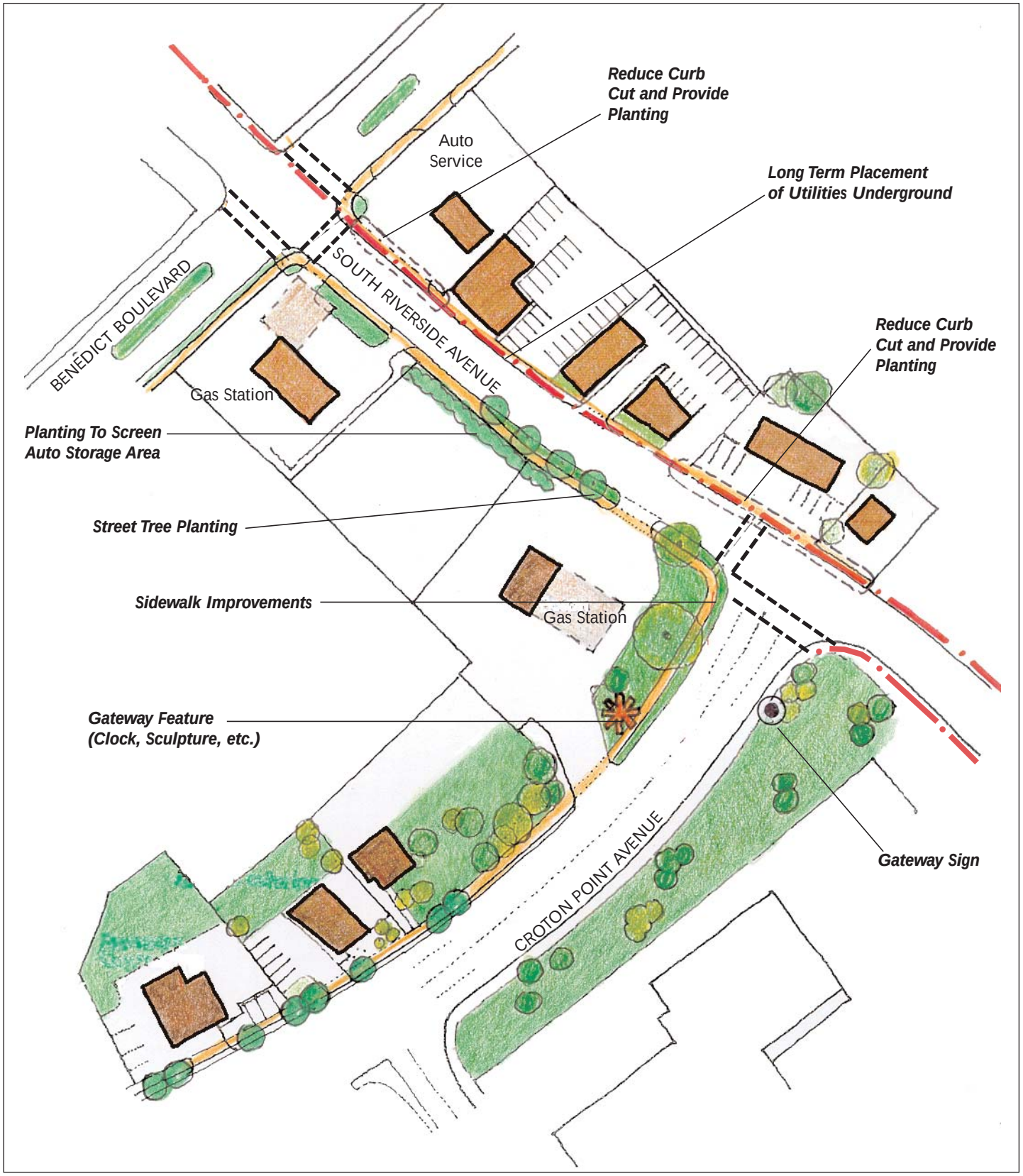
Overhead utility wires mar the streetscape along South Riverside Avenue.

In the longer term, the Village should undertake a study to determine the feasibility of placing the overhead utility lines that extend along Route 9A underground. This action would result in a dramatic improvement in the visual quality of the corridor, as illustrated in Figure 4.5.

Burying overhead utility wires and requiring landscaped buffers along parking lots would create a more attractive, pedestrian-friendly streetscape along South Riverside.

- ***Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Links***

Many residents of the Harmon neighborhood have noted the need for improved pedestrian and bike routes between the South Riverside/Harmon commercial district and nearby residential areas. The Village should also examine the feasibility of establishing a clearly identified bike route on both sides of Croton Point Avenue, including connections to the railroad station and to the shopping area south of Croton Point Avenue.



Village of Croton-On-Hudson, NY

Figure 4.5. South Riverside / Harmon Gateway Proposals

- ***Reinforce Gateway Identity***

The area's role as a major gateway should be reinforced through additional signage and other streetscape features. Consideration should be given to the placement of attractive gateway signage at the junction of Croton Point Avenue and Route 9A, and the addition of a distinctive feature within the landscaped area adjacent to the Exxon Gas Station to give prominence to the pedestrian link leading to the railroad station.

f. North End Office District

The office zone at the north end of Croton-on-Hudson is limited to the west side of Route 9A and is only partially developed. Additional office use should be encouraged given the good access provided by Route 9A and the attractive, wooded nature of this section of the Village.

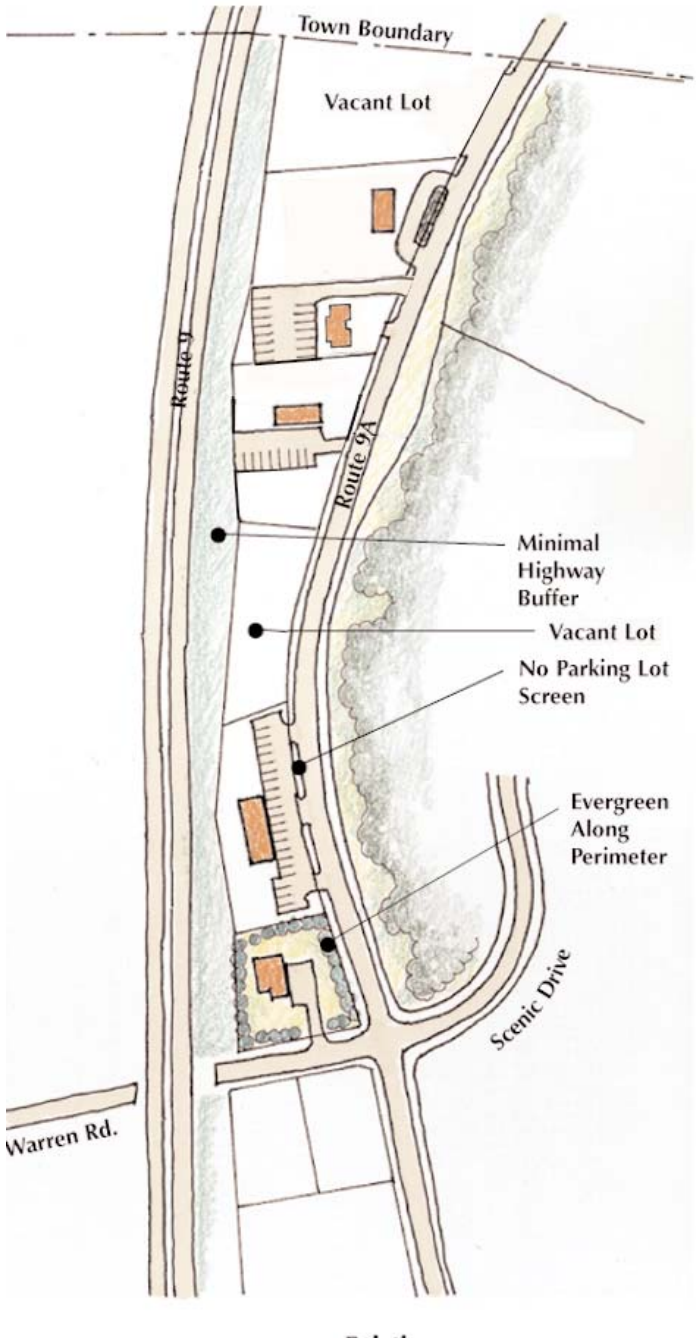
The Village should therefore ensure that future office development is appropriately sited and attractively designed, and that generous landscape planting is provided in order to maintain the rural quality of the area. The Matra Building along Route 9A (Albany Post Road) offers a good example of an office use that has been attractively integrated into the area. The use of low stone walls along property lines to screen parking should be strongly encouraged as a means of providing a special identity for this gateway area and visually linking the area to similar features south of Warren Road on 9A. In addition, the gateway overlay should include a provision for the continuation of the farmers' market, which is a valued feature of this section of the Village. Proposed streetscape and landscape improvements are shown in Figure 4.6.

g. Building Appearance and Maintenance

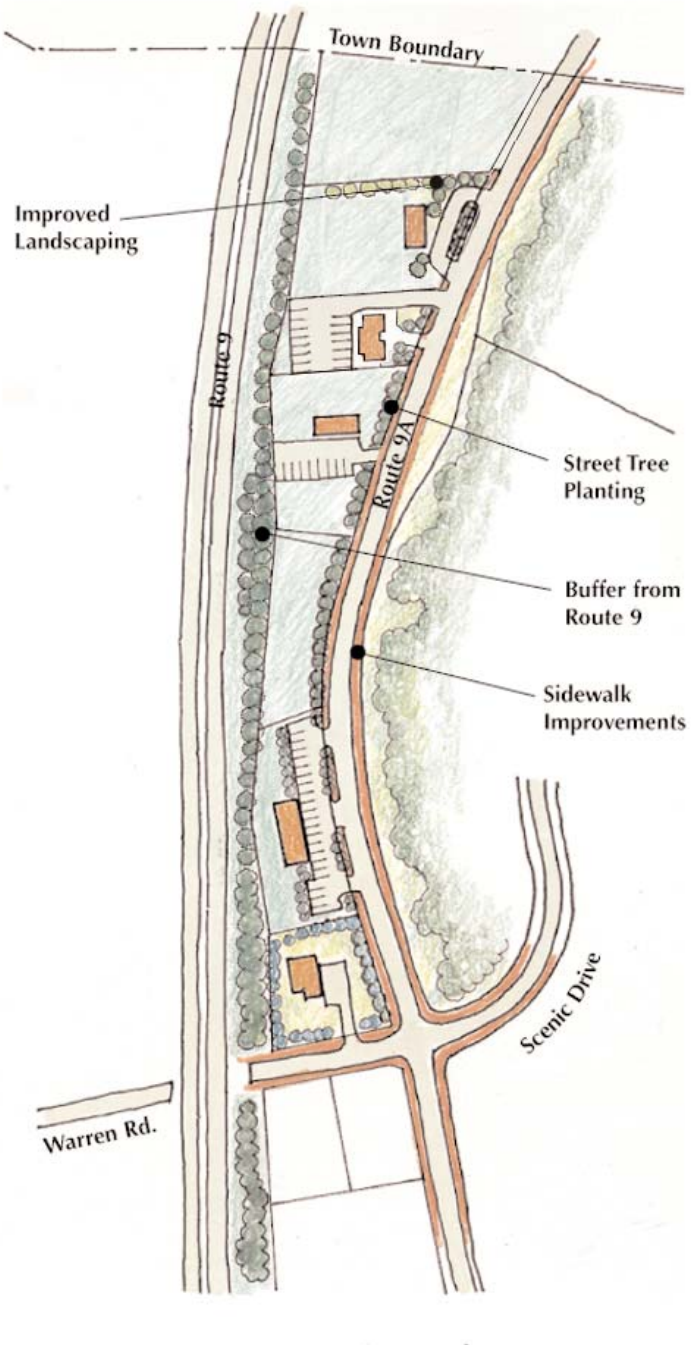
The revitalization plans described above will enhance and improve the character and appearance of the commercial and office areas. The Village can take several additional steps to further encourage the revitalization of these areas.

- ***Design Guidelines***

The Village should develop a set of design guidelines for its commercial areas that includes recommendations for building design and ornamentation, façade styles, preferred materials and renovation styles, and signage. The guidelines should provide a way to unify building appearance through common design elements but still have enough flexibility to allow the individual character of the business, building, and the neighborhood to come through. The Village should consider establishing an architectural review standards in commercial areas to develop guidelines and oversee implementation.



Existing



Proposed

Village of Croton-On-Hudson, NY

Figure 4.6. North End Gateway Proposals

- ***Façade Maintenance Incentives***

While façade maintenance and building improvements are the responsibility of private property and business owners, the Village can offer incentives to encourage and facilitate improvements that fit with the established design guidelines and revitalization plans. These incentives can take the form of monetary subsidies, such as grants or loans for building improvements, or procedural guidance with obtaining any necessary approvals. The Village can also help direct property owners toward private grants and loans that can assist with building renovation efforts.

- ***Architectural Review***

As discussed in Section 4.2, the Village should establish specific architectural standards to encourage good qualities of exterior building design and appearance, to relate such design and appearance to the site and surroundings of such structures, to permit originality and resourcefulness in building design and appearance which are appropriate to the site and surroundings, and to prevent such design and appearance as are unnecessarily offensive to visual sensibilities. These standards should be enforced by the Planning Board, which should be given the powers of an Architectural Review Board to avoid redundancy in the application process. This architectural review should pertain to all commercial properties and also include new residential construction and major alterations in residentially-zoned districts.

4.4 Natural Resources, Open Space and Trails

The natural features of Croton-on-Hudson are considered some of the defining elements of the Village: the waterfront, open space, trails, and parks. Many of the comments received addressed the natural landscape, and the importance of access, protection, and enhancement of these invaluable resources. As discussed in the Introduction to this Plan, the general recommendations of the Plan are as follows: protect natural resources, maintain/improve parks, preserve natural character. The following sections elaborate on these objectives, providing more specific recommendations, as follows.

Croton Point Park

a. Respond To and Expand Upon LWRP Objectives

The Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, adopted in 1992, describes specific state and local coastal zone policies in detail, and outlines the following overall objectives for Croton-on-Hudson's open space, recreation, and visual resources:

- link waterfront parks and waterfront recreational areas
- increase recreational facilities within the Village and improve waterfront access
- redevelop or restore underutilized coastal area lands
- protect scenic views of and to the Village
- facilitate the planning process by updating the Village's master plan for consistency with the LWRP and the development goals for the Village.

Other LWRP objectives address parking, traffic and roadway conditions, air quality, and stormwater:

- improve the parking situation at the railroad station
- assess the air quality of the Croton-on-Hudson area
- study the stormwater system of the Village

The following projects, noted in the LWRP, are currently being undertaken to implement the above objectives:

- ***Croton River Gorge Trail. C***reate walking trail from Silver Lake to Black Rock.

- ***Investigate additional sites for waterfront recreation areas.*** The Village property ("Seprieo") site north of the yacht club was purchased in 1996, and has been the subject of extensive planning studies. The Croton Waterfront Feasibility Report addresses this site, as discussed in Section 3.8

- ***Improve Croton Bay Boat Ramp and Village-owned land south of Metro-North parking areas*** (public access of village-owned land for recreational uses). This small area off Croton Bay has historically been utilized for boat access and passive recreation including fishing. A Concept Plan for Croton Bay Boat Launch was developed as part of the Greenway Vision Plan for Croton-on-Hudson, recommending cleanup of debris, weeds, secondary tree growth and stockpiles, improved vehicular and pedestrian access, and restoration with native plantings. These improvements have been undertaken.

- ***Installation by NYS DEC of an Air Quality Monitoring Station.*** The nearest monitoring station # 590204 ***is*** in White Plains.

- ***Study of Village Stormwater System*** to track discharge into coastal waters. A study of the entire Village's drainage areas into the Hudson and Croton Rivers and Furnace Brook is being conducted in 2002 by the firm of Dvirka and Bartilucci. It will result in specific recommendations for improvements to the stormwater drainage system.

- ***Designation of Route 9 (in Croton-on-Hudson) as NYS Scenic Road***

- ***Traffic & Roadway conditions study*** (identify improvements to facilitate traffic flow). A traffic calming study undertaken in 1999-2000 evaluated roadway conditions within the Village and recommended traffic calming measures.

- ***Update of the 1977 Master Plan to ensure consistency with LWRP***

This 2003 Comprehensive Plan updates the 1977 Master Plan to ensure consistency with the LWRP objectives and other policies. This Plan also addresses the open space and recreation objectives of the LWRP, as described below.

b. Conserve and Protect Natural Resources

As discussed in Chapter 2.0, Croton-on-Hudson has undertaken extensive planning efforts to protect the local natural environment, and has participated in several national and regional programs, as follows.

Croton-on-Hudson's Environmental Conservation Policy

In addition to the above-cited policies of the LWRP, Croton-on-Hudson's Environmental Conservation Policy was adopted by the Village, to conserve, improve, and protect the local environment.

The specific policies emphasize the need to coordinate the environmental plans and programs of the Village, with Federal, State, regional and local governments, other public and private organizations. The policies note that patterns of development that minimize adverse impact on the environment, including such unique resources as the Croton River and its estuary, and the Hudson River and its shoreline, should be promoted.

Croton-on-Hudson is a model Greenway community. The Hudson River Valley Greenway Program is guided by the following key principles:

- Open space networks and natural, cultural resource protection
- Local planning undertaken in a regional context, and regional planning undertaken in a local context
- Economic development, including agriculture, tourism, and urban redevelopment
- Reclamation of the waterfront and access thereto

The recently completed Westchester County Greenway Compact Plan provides strategies for regional economic development, waterfront renewal and downtown revitalization. The Compact was adopted by Croton-on-Hudson in November 2001.

Croton-on-Hudson is a Tree City USA, a national designation. The trees throughout the Village reinforce the natural character of much of the Village, even in the Upper Village. A tree trail map is proposed to help reinforce the value of the local trees, and also help enhance their protection. Such a study is being prepared by the Conservation Advisory Council. It would also add to the existing trail system.

The Plan recommends preservation of the Croton River Gorge as a priority. The Village should also explore agreements with municipalities on the opposite side of the Croton River to protect the viewshed and its character.

c. Trails and Links

A common thread in comments in workshops and in the survey was the "walkability" of the Village, and the need to further enhance connections between parks, shopping areas, and residential neighborhoods. In addition to the poor condition of many sidewalks, there is also the safety concern where the lack of sidewalks forces pedestrians to walk along the side of busy roads. Improved pedestrian access to the waterfront was also frequently cited. New links should be created between existing trail segments.

The LWRP specifically notes that waterfront parks and recreational areas should be linked, and waterfront access improved. The Open Space Inventory, prepared in 1996, identifies links needed to expand the Village trailway system.

Upper Village pedestrian links

Croton-on-Hudson has two distinct areas with sidewalks: the Upper Village and Harmon. To continue the tradition of a "walkable community," the Plan recommends the following.

- ***Build upon existing connections within Village***

Safe pedestrian connections between shopping areas, residential neighborhoods, parks, and schools is particularly desirable; sidewalks and safe crosswalks should be created where appropriate. An overall pedestrian linkage study is recommended to review and define those areas most in need of such improvements. Recommended links from the 1996 Open Space Inventory should also be included.

- ***Complete Village trail network***

Complete trail links and connections to the open space network, particularly along the waterfront. As described earlier, the enhancement of the trail system requires the completion of several key links in the Village trail system. These should be identified and prioritized, and funds obtained to build these links.

- ***Improve sidewalk and trail maintenance.***

Residents should be encouraged to maintain the sidewalk areas adjacent to their homes. A maintenance plan for trails should also be developed.

- ***Improve trail system signage***

The trail map should be included in signs to help orient walkers. A schematic trail system map could be posted at sites throughout the system, providing specific location arrow ("you are here") and indicate the relationship of the trail to other links in the Village. Uniform signage (arrows, indicators) should be provided throughout the trail system and on key streets throughout the Village. The trail map could also be posted on the Village web site.

- ***Create better pedestrian/bike connections at RR station***

Install bike parking at the train station, and provide better signage and trail maps to help guide visitors arriving by train.

d. Improve Waterfront Access

A common thread in public comments was the need to improve access to the Hudson River waterfront. Although there have been some recent improvements (notably the Brook Street pedestrian

bridge), in general, access to the waterfront is limited, and unsafe in some locations. Recent waterfront projects at the north and south end offer some new opportunities to improve access for vehicles and pedestrians: Half Moon Bay second phase of condominium development, and the planned new waterfront park. The following recommendations build upon these projects.

- ***Create county trail providing access to Croton Point Park***

This trail would run from Croton Point Park, and connect to the Half Moon Bay trail running north. It would be developed in concert with the pedestrian paths to be constructed during the final phase of the Half Moon Bay condominiums.

- ***Develop proposed new Half Moon Bay access road***

A new access road off Half Moon Bay would provide another connection to the Half Moon Bay trail and Croton Point Park. This new roadway would run from the Municipal Place/Route 9/Half Moon Bay Condo Access Road intersection north to Senasqua Park and eventually to the new Village waterfront park. As recommended by the Gateway Plan (see Section 3.8), this new roadway would provide safer vehicular access than the present Brook Street at-grade railroad crossing (scheduled to be closed) and would free up the Senasqua tunnel for pedestrian and bike use only. The new roadway would be two-way and would accommodate bike traffic as well.

Since portions of the waterfront trail would be located along a new roadway, clear definition of road and pedestrian/bike paths is recommended to promote safety. The entire waterfront trail would also connect to Ossining to the south, utilizing the walkway portion of the Croton River Bridge. If possible, easements should be obtained to enable the trail to run north of the new waterfront park along the shoreline.

- ***Utilize Senasqua tunnel for bicycles and pedestrians only***

The one-lane Senasqua tunnel, located under the Metro-North tracks, is approximately eight feet wide with a vertical clearance of 6 feet 10 inches, which only accommodates standard-sized automobiles. It cannot be used for two-way traffic flow, and is subject to periodic flooding. With the construction of a new access road, the tunnel should be reserved for pedestrian and bicycle use, thereby improving safety and efficiency of use.

Senasqua Tunnel

e. Recommendations for new Waterfront Park

The Hudson River waterfront has been the focus of recent intensive planning efforts, initially with a ***Greenway Vision Plan*** (1997-98***)*** focusing on Croton's underdeveloped Hudson riverfront property north of the Croton Yacht Club.

This vacant site, formerly known as the Seprieo property, was previously used as an asphalt batching plant and as a snack bar/beer garden, although the narrow strip at the north end of the property remained mostly undeveloped. The southern portion is owned and controlled by the Village; the north portion is owned by the Beaverkill Conservancy, and is to be reserved as a natural area for outdoor recreation. This property, because of its natural resources, has been designated a Critical Environmental Area.

A feasibility study for the site entitled ***Feasibility Study for the Village Waterfront Property*** was prepared in 2001 by Imbiano Quigley Landscape Architects and AKRF. As described in Section 3.8.b of this Plan, the feasibility study evaluated four alternative recreational uses of the site, and developed a "preferred alternative" based on public input and review by the New York State Department of State. This Plan recommends a mix of (a) passive recreational uses as contemplated in the Preferred Alternative of the Waterfront Feasibility Study, and (b) waterfront-related uses.

4.5 Transportation (Traffic Calming, Pedestrian Facilities, Transit)

As was evident in the workshop discussions and survey responses, residents' concerns and issues relating to transportation in Croton-on-Hudson primarily focused on: speeding, pedestrian safety, the need for an improved and more extensive sidewalk and pedestrian networks, greater transit options, and improvements to the railroad station.

a. Sidewalks and Pedestrian Networks

Sidewalk Improvement Program

The Village has a sidewalk/walkway improvement program in place to upgrade the conditions of existing sidewalks and other paths and walkways. The sidewalk improvement program should be expanded in the future to focus on those parts of the Village where walking is most prevalent: the commercial districts, school areas, and the area surrounding the rail station. Areas within a quarter-mile distance from retail uses, schools, and the train station are prime candidates for improvements. In the commercial center these improvements can be combined with more off-site parking, thereby encouraging shoppers to park at an off-site location and walk to several destinations. New pedestrian links creating short cuts for pedestrians should also be studied.

Pedestrian crossings in Upper Village

Enforce Sidewalk Maintenance by Adjacent Sidewalk Owners

As required by Article IV, Section 197-24 of the Village Code, property owners are required to maintain the public sidewalk areas in front of their homes. This law should be enforced more rigorously. It is suggested that the Village undertake an information campaign informing all property owners of their obligations and establish a grace period to give property owners time to undertake any needed repairs. At the end of the grace period, the law should be more strongly enforced.

b. Road Network

Traffic Calming and Access Management along State Highways

Routes 9A and 129 are major arterials traversing the Village and acting to some degree as the commercial arteries. The following strategies are recommended for these arterials:

- Reduce speeds (without reducing capacities)
- Reduce the number of driveways
- Make arterials more pedestrian friendly

Neckdowns and pedestrian signage facilitate pedestrian crossing

To reduce speeds along these arteries, the effective and visual width of the roadways should be narrowed at key points of the Village.

Speed reduction can be accomplished by building "neckdowns" or entrance gates at the major entry points. These entrance gates act as "pinch points" and slow down traffic as they enter into the village core. Neckdowns (or curb extensions) can be provided at those locations with pedestrian crossings. Where there is on-street parking, the neckdown can extend the full width of the parking lane.

Where highway width allows, on-street parking can be encouraged along the commercial areas of these roads, as a means of traffic calming and reinforcing the commercial nature of those areas.

An access management program should be undertaken by the Village to reduce the number of driveways along the state highways. This program would make these arterials safer for vehicles and pedestrians and would also improve traffic flow. Whenever a commercial property owner applies to the Planning Board for a site plan approval or another type of application, the Planning Board should investigate opportunities to eliminate or consolidate driveways, and to provide vehicular and pedestrian connections between adjacent commercial properties.

Elevated crosswalks and speed humps slow traffic and improve safety

Traffic Calming along Collectors and Residential Streets

Traffic calming devices should also be considered for those residential streets and collectors that suffer from high traffic volumes and speeds. For these types of streets, other physical measures can be implemented such as speed humps (an elongated form of the older speed bumps that are bicycle friendly and can be plowed) or median islands and chicanes. All these devices force vehicles to slow down through changes in the horizontal or vertical alignment of the road. Speed humps are legal in public streets, and they have shown to be effective in reducing speeds and improving safety. Some municipalities have also developed one-way traffic circulation systems to reduce traffic congestion. However, one-way traffic circulation is not recommended for Croton-on-Hudson's traffic issues, as it can result in increased speeding and reduced access to shopping areas. Further study of collector and residential streets in the Village should be undertaken to identify where traffic calming measures should be implemented.

Reduce Congestion at Key Intersections

The key intersections in the Village where traffic congestion is prevalent should be reviewed for improvements. However, for the intersections in the Village core, the emphasis must remain on the pedestrian friendly nature of the location. Within the commercial centers of the Village, access and safety of pedestrians should be of the highest priority in any traffic improvement plan.

c. Public Transportation

Access to the Railroad Station

The Metro-North railroad station is an important asset for the Village. To minimize the negative impacts related to the commuter traffic to and from the station, the following improvements should be considered:

- ***Improve bicycle and pedestrian access to the station.*** Bicycle facilities (shoulders, lanes and paths) should be added to the major routes leading to the station and in the parking lot. Both sides of Croton Point Avenue should be improved to accommodate this type of traffic, provided that safety requirements are met. In addition, safe bicycle racks should be added at the station.

- ***Recommend adjustments to Beeline service.*** The communities that use the Croton-Harmon Metro-North station, including Croton-on-Hudson and adjacent towns, should recommend that the commuting needs of residents from these municipalities be reviewed. The residential origins of the commuters using the Croton-Harmon station should be plotted on a map compared to the Westchester Beeline service. Recommendations for more frequent Beeline service from the adjacent towns to the station should be made, tailored to the existing demand.

The above improvements will reduce the traffic impacts of the station, will reduce the parking demand at the station and will increase accessibility to the station and to the rail system. The Village should also ensure that any proposals for expanded parking facilities at the train station include a specific plan to redirect traffic away from the main arteries through the Village.

Improvements to Bus Service

The transit needs of the transit-dependent population should be assessed, including the needs of the elderly, low-income and young residents. The need for bus shelters should be reviewed for key locations, as well as the overall signage for bus service (indicating bus stops and schedules).

4.6 Residential Neighborhoods and Housing

In Croton-on-Hudson, the diverse and visually appealing housing styles, mature trees, and winding residential roads help create the sense of small town character and natural beauty for which the Village is known. Many Croton-on-Hudson homes have a historic or architectural significance as well, and serve as a visual link to the Village's history.

In the Resident Survey and public workshops conducted for this Plan, many residents cited preserving the Village's character and beauty as a priority for its neighborhoods and commercial areas. At the same time, residents expressed a concern over the cost of affordable housing for senior residents, young families and Village personnel. Recommendations for housing in the Village therefore focus primarily on two areas: maintaining the scale and character of Village neighborhoods, and exploring affordable housing opportunities.

a. Neighborhood Scale and Character

The strategies described in this section focus on preserving the scale and character of Croton-on-Hudson's neighborhoods. These specific strategies include:

1. Preserving historic and architecturally significant homes;
2. Ensuring renovations and new homes are appropriate to the style and scale of the neighborhood in which they are situated;
3. Issuing housing scale requirements to limit the bulk of new buildings;
4. Updating the home occupation provisions in the zoning code;
5. Updating off-street parking provisions for residential areas.

In Harmon, the compact, smaller scale of the homes and green quality of the streets contribute to the charm of the neighborhood.

This Plan also recommends that any further large-scale residential developments, other than the approved extension of Half Moon Bay, be discouraged, so that the existing development pattern in the Village can be preserved and that no further gated communities be approved.

Promote and Encourage Preservation Measures.
Critical to a successful preservation plan is the promotion of the historic and architectural heritage of the Village, so that residents are more aware of the overall historic character of their neighborhoods, and thus more motivated to participate in preservation efforts. A first step is to work with civic groups and community members to develop criteria for significant homes and buildings in the Village. These criteria can then be used to develop

a current list of historic and architectural resources, including buildings and neighborhoods. The federal, state and county lists of historic places, as well as the work of the Croton Historical Society, provide a valuable starting point and can be expanded to identify places of local importance.

For the property owner, historic preservation efforts focus on renovating and maintaining the buildings so that their historic or architectural integrity is preserved. It is recommended that participation be voluntary to avoid imposing extra costs on property owners. The Village can encourage participation by developing a set of design guidelines for renovating and maintaining historic buildings. The guidelines should describe the housing types found in the Village and detail building materials (such as for facades, windows, and ornamentation) and renovation styles that are appropriate to these housing styles. The Village should also consider offering financial incentives for preservation efforts.

Establish Architectural Standards

As part of the effort to improve visual and built quality in the Village, the Village should establish specific architectural standards to encourage good qualities of exterior building design and appearance, to relate such design and appearance to the site and surroundings of such structures, to permit originality and resourcefulness in building design and appearance which are appropriate to the site and surroundings, and to prevent such design and appearance as are unnecessarily offensive to visual sensibilities. The Planning Board should be given the powers of an Architectural Review Board to avoid redundancy in the application process. This power of architectural review should encompass all non-residential properties and also include new residential construction and major alterations in residentially-zoned districts.

In addition, the Village should also consider setting additional design guidelines to address building size and materials as well as design preferences for details such as building ornamentation, fencing, walkways and vegetation. As with historic preservation, adhering to design guidelines should be optional. General design guidelines can be developed as a separate handbook or combined with historic preservation guidelines.

Establish Housing Scale Requirements

Although Croton-on-Hudson's residential neighborhoods are substantially built out, there is concern about the size and scale of new homes built on the remaining lots as well as expansions of existing houses. In cases where large new residential structures have been erected within the Village, the visual and aesthetic integrity of the local neighborhood surrounding these large homes has been harmed and the individual lots look overwhelmed.

The current zoning code controls residential development through minimum lot sizes, setbacks for yards and accessory structures, and height controls. The Village should review the appropriateness of these standards in light of the recent trend in housing scale. The Village should also consider instituting bulk controls through a floor area ratio (FAR), bulk setback requirements, and lot coverage percentages. FAR refers to the total floor area of a building on a zoning lot divided by the lot area of that zoning lot. The benefit of using an FAR is that it continues to provide the property owner with flexibility and choice on how the property is developed while providing the village with stricter control over the building's bulk. Prior to implementing this approach, the Village needs to study the practical effects of instituting FAR and bulk setback requirements on both existing and potential structures in the Village.

Home Occupations

Croton-on-Hudson's zoning code includes definitions of customary home occupations and requirements for operating such in residential neighborhoods. With changes in work habits enabled by improvements in technology, including telecommunications and personal computer capabilities, more and more homeowners are in a position to conduct their business from their homes. The customary home occupation regulations should be revised and a new definition of home occupations created to reflect these current needs and current realities. The update should reflect the Village's priority of protecting neighborhoods against the negative impact of commercial enterprises in residential areas. Rather than specifying particular occupations that are acceptable, it should include standards that must be met to preserve the quality and character of residential neighborhoods. These standards should address the following:

- customer, visitor, and delivery traffic volumes
- parking coverage
- on-site parking of commercial vehicles
- signage
- exterior alterations to the home
- number of on-site employees
- permitted equipment

Limitations on the size of home occupations should be such that they minimize impacts on the surrounding neighborhood and encourage growing businesses to move to offices in mixed-use areas as more space is needed. There should be an amnesty period to provide an opportunity for existing non-complying businesses to come into conformity.

Update Residential Off-Street Parking Requirements

The Village should also review its residential off-street parking requirements for parking and storage of boats, trailers and commercial vehicles so that these vehicles can be parked without disrupting the appearance or character of a neighborhood.

Article VIII, §230-49 of Croton-on-Hudson's Zoning Code (Permitted Accessory Parking) contains requirements for parking of commercial vehicles and boats in residential areas. Commercial vehicle parking in residential areas is limited to one vehicle of no more than three-fourths ton capacity which can be parked within a private garage or on a lot. A provision should be added that prohibits the parking and storage of large-scale construction equipment (such as backhoes and cement mixers) on residential lots.

For boat storage on residential lots, the Code establishes a minimum distance from which the boat must be set from the rear and side lot lines. The provision should be amended to add a front yard restriction.

b. Affordable Housing

The concept of "affordable housing" relates to making housing available to individuals and families with an income equal to 50% or 80% of the median county income, adjusted for family size, assuming various formulae allocating approximately 40% to 50% of income for housing needs. Ensuring that housing is available for a range of income groups helps preserve the economic diversity and social fabric of the community and allows long-time residents to remain in the Village, even as their financial situation changes.

The Village of Croton-on-Hudson has long worked, in a variety of ways, to promote affordable housing in the community. Indeed, the Village has been in the forefront of those few municipalities to adopt and move to implement guidelines suggested by Westchester County for the creation of affordable housing. To that end, 20 units have already entered the marketplace, with four additional units now planned, towards the suggested goal of 32 units for the Village. The Village should build on its successes by continuing to maintain and improve on the existing economic diversity of housing stock

The Village, in partnership with the Croton Housing Network, has identified and employed a variety of opportunities to advance the creation of this affordable housing in the Village. These have included: new construction, Village-contributed land, developer-contributed land, homes built by developers, use of derelict Village property, and developer-included units. These strategies, along

with the possibilities for acquisition of existing buildings for conversion to affordable units should be identified and explored.

The population and income groups whose needs are not currently being met should be identified through the evaluation of currently available information and the independent acquisition of data by the Village. Creative study of the existing situation will aid in understanding the need for affordable housing in the future and in identifying opportunities for expansion of the affordable housing stock. Studies should be designed to identify the economic groups now living in the Village as well as their living conditions. This should include an inventory of existing rental stock, both legal and illegal under current rules, with a determination of the rents being charged and the income of the occupants. Analysis of this data will prove invaluable in the ongoing effort to identify and meet affordable housing needs.

Future planning for affordable housing in the Village should include exploration of opportunities to create choices allowing senior citizens to “age in place” and remain in the community as well as for new families to enter the community.

4.7 Community Facilities and Services

In the Resident Survey and public workshops conducted for this Plan, Croton-on-Hudson residents indicated that they were satisfied with the level of community facilities and services, praising Village services such as the police and fire departments, the library, and the beauty of the Village's parks and open space areas. However, residents noted the need for a community center and improvements to the parks system and water and sewer systems. Recommendations to address such improvements are described below.

a. Community Center

Croton-on-Hudson residents, particularly senior citizens, would be well-served by a community facility that provided a central place for meeting and activities. In addition, Croton-on-Hudson residents have expressed an interest in an arts and cultural facility that could showcase local artists and provide performance space.

Katz property at Municipal Place

As discussed in Section 4.2, and the Recreation Master Plan dated December 12, 2002, the Katz property in the Municipal Place/Croton Commons commercial area of the Village is one possible location for a community center. The 2.4-acre site, which is presently vacant, is centrally located on the north side of Municipal Place adjacent to the automobile dealership, within walking distance of the Harmon neighborhood and Upper Village. Development of the site for community use, possibly coupled with office use, would help establish the Municipal Place area as a mixed-use center. The Village could consider purchasing the site and developing it for these uses.

b. Parks and Recreational Facilities

Recommendations for parks and recreation focus on two areas: improving maintenance and accessibility at existing facilities, and expanding recreational facilities to meet additional demand in the Village.

Senasqua Park playground

Park Maintenance

Croton-on-Hudson's parks and open space areas are heavily used and valued by the community. To ensure the maximum enjoyment of the Village's open spaces and parks, the Village should commit to fully funding the maintenance of each of its existing and future parks. Maintenance plans at Duck Pond Park should be expanded to address improving the water quality of the pond and landscaping throughout the Park. At Senasqua Park, the dirt and noise caused by the large geese population should be addressed. At Black Rock Park, a plan for making it more user-friendly should be developed.

New Recreational Facilities

Residents are satisfied with the existing recreational facilities in Croton-on-Hudson but feel there is a need for additional facilities. In particular, interest in swimming facilities, bicycling trails, additional playing fields and an ice skating area was frequently expressed in the Resident Survey and public workshops conducted for this Plan. The need for skateboard facilities and additional fields for soccer and Little League practices was also expressed. Village government should work with the community and Recreation Department to prioritize needed facilities, identify new opportunities and evaluate their viability, in terms of location and cost.

c. Village Utilities: Water and Sewer Supply

The water and sewer systems adequately serve the Village at the present time. However, the demand for water and the age of the sewer system have prompted concerns over potential service stoppages. New upgrades, as described below, could pre-empt service problems and help ensure that the systems continue to operate in peak condition.

The Village's water supply is provided by a three-well water system (a fourth well is not active) that was upgraded in 2001 to add an automated pumping system. These wells are currently able to meet daily water demand, although peak demand during summer months brings the wells closer to capacity. If mechanical problems were to shut down one of the three wells, the supply to the Village would be significantly reduced. The Water Department has requested funds to install a fourth well, to ensure adequate supply of water if one of the three wells is out of service.

The sewer system is currently upgraded on a localized basis, addressing problems as they arise. However, most of the Village's sewer pipes are between 70 and 80 years old and are beginning to show signs of age. Some pipes are cracking and need to be re-lined. Portions of the Village rely on private septic systems instead of the Village sewer system.

The Village government should continue work in conjunction with the Public Works Department to address needed upgrades and evaluate the need to extend the sewer system. Capital improvements should be prioritized to ensure continually smooth operating of these systems and avoid the need for more capital-intensive work in the future.

4.8 Implementation of Recommendations

- ***Adoption of the Village Comprehensive Plan***

A necessary first step in implementing the Comprehensive Plan is its adoption as official Village policy by the Board of Trustees, once the SEQR process has been concluded (see below). Once the Plan is formally adopted, Croton-on-Hudson can begin to implement the wide range of Plan recommendations using multiple approaches, including changes to land use controls and zoning, recommended capital improvements, continuing planning efforts (including targeted studies of areas and conditions identified in the Plan), cooperation with other government agencies, special gateway district recommendations, private development where appropriate, and architectural review boards. Many of the Plan's recommendations are preliminary, since they recommend further study before a final recommendation can be pursued.

- ***Municipal Compliance with the SEQR Process***

By state regulation, in order for a comprehensive plan to become local public policy and a legal document, SEQR (State Environmental Quality Review) must be complied with as a part of the plan's implementation. The Village Board of Trustees will serve as lead agency for purposes of reviewing the plan under SEQR. They authorize the preparation of an Environmental Assessment Form, and based on their review of that document, will issue a negative or positive declaration on the potential impacts of the plan's recommendations. The negative declaration states that the impacts of the Comprehensive Plan are entirely beneficial to the social, economic, and physical environment of the village and that a generic environmental impact statement would not be warranted. A positive declaration would entail the preparation of a generic Environmental Impact Statement to identify any potentially significant impacts.

- ***Continuing Planning Efforts and Recommended Capital Improvements***

The Plan has identified a number of studies to be undertaken to continue to refine the recommendations of the Plan, including pedestrian/traffic safety, a pedestrian linkage study, the potential extension of the sewer system, existing housing conditions and need for affordable housing, and recreational facilities. The findings of these studies would provide the basis for specific capital improvements relating to Plan objectives.

- ***Zoning***

One of the most effective means of implementing a plan's objectives is through zoning. Following the adoption of the Plan, the Village will review the existing zoning code for consistency with Plan goals

and recommendations, and consider rezoning certain areas of the Village to reflect these, as appropriate.

- ***Public Improvements***

The plan recommends a series of public improvements, including the preferred alternative for the creation of a waterfront park on the Village property, and also recommends future studies to refine improvements, as noted above.

- ***Gateway District Recommendations***

Croton-on-Hudson's commercial districts play a dual role in the Village, as sources of retail and services for residents and as defining "images" of certain areas of the Village. The Plan presents recommendations for improvements to several of these centers, as zoning district "overlays" for image-defining "gateways" to the Village. To establish the guidelines for these special districts, the Plan includes site plan designs for the Gateway Districts as Figures 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5. Any future development in an overlay district must follow the appropriate site plan, which illustrates signage, landscaping, access, and design elements. The zoning code would reference the site plan as provided in the Comprehensive Plan.

- ***Visual Conditions***

The development of architectural standards for commercial properties, and for new construction and major alterations in residential areas, will help implement the Plan's recommendations for achieving a consistent and attractive streetscapes and neighborhoods. This would also be implemented by the development of general design standards for commercial and residential buildings, as well as creation of streetscape recommendations for specific neighborhoods.

- ***Involvement with Other Initiatives***

The Village is also the subject of other initiatives, programs, and plans which are referenced in the Comprehensive Plan. These include the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan, the Westchester County Greenway Compact Plan (adopted by Croton-on-Hudson in November 2001), Tree City USA, and the Feasibility Study for the Village Waterfront Property. These initiatives are consistent with the overall goals of the Plan, and thus the Village's continuing involvement with these programs and plans implements many of the recommendations of the Plan.

Report on Residential Survey for the Comprehensive Plan Update

Village of Croton-on-Hudson

Prepared for:
Comprehensive Plan Committee
Village of Croton-on-Hudson

Prepared by:
Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart, Inc.

November 8, 2000

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

As part of the effort to update its Comprehensive Master Plan, the Village of Croton-on-Hudson prepared a survey in conjunction with the consulting firm of Buckhurst Fish & Jacquemart, Inc. (BFJ), in order to elicit the opinions of Village residents on a range of topics relevant to Croton's character and future development. Opinions were sought on the following topics:

- Commercial areas and retail amenities
- Public facilities
- Recreational facilities
- Environmental issues
- Village objectives and spending priorities
- Strengths and weaknesses of Croton

The Village mailed a total of 3,799 surveys and received 956 completed surveys, for a 25% response rate. These responses provide an overall guide to residents' viewpoints and the local issues receiving the most attention. As a general indicator of public opinion, the survey can help shape the issues and content of the Comprehensive Plan.

1.1 Methodology

The purpose of the survey was to elicit resident opinions on a set of topics that will be addressed as part of the updated Comprehensive Plan. The topics were drawn from a series of interviews with Croton officials, Village employees, as well as the roundtable discussions the first Comprehensive Plan public workshop (held in August 2000). The survey was comprised of twelve (12) open- and close-ended questions concerning the Village's character, public and recreational facilities, amenities, objectives and future development. The survey also set up a rating system to prioritize Village objectives for the future of Croton. The survey also asked respondents to indicate their age, sex, years in Croton, size of household, neighborhood, in order to assess the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

The Village mailed 3,799 surveys, or one to each Croton household, in early September, 2000. The mailing list was based on a list of Croton households compiled by the Village that is used for official mailings to Croton residents. The return date specified in the survey was September 25, 2000, which was later extended by two weeks to October 12, 2000 to allow as high a return rate as possible. By the final cut-off date, the Village had received 956 completed surveys, representing a 25% rate of return. The 25% response rate is very high (typically such surveys average closer to a 15% response rate, based on BFJ's experience with comprehensive plan surveys). Since the survey results are based upon the responses of the 25 percent of households that answered, as a representative sample of the entire Village, its findings can serve as a reasonable (if not perfect) estimate of what the entire population of Croton thinks about the issues addressed in the survey.

Throughout the survey, the terms "respondent" and "resident" are used interchangeably. For purposes of this analysis, "resident" refers to those residents who responded to the survey, not to all residents of Croton. The term "frequency" refers to the number of respondents who selected a given choice.

2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Demographics

- Croton resident respondents were predominantly female. In addition, most respondents fall within the 25 – 65 age group and have lived in Croton for less than 10 years. The majority of respondents live in a two-person household, followed closely by a four-person household.

Resident Preferences

- Croton's most frequently cited strengths were: its Small Town Character (69%); the Hudson/Croton riverfronts (68%); and its Parks and Open Space (40%).

- Its most frequently cited weaknesses were: Sidewalk Condition/Lack of Sidewalks (39%); Rate/Pattern of New Development (36%); and Appearance of Commercial Area (32%).

- 95% of respondents were pleased with their Croton neighborhood. In all eight neighborhoods, the attractiveness of the area was cited as one of the most appealing aspects. Complaints about neighborhoods ranged in type, but lack of sidewalks, traffic and noise were mentioned frequently.

Commercial and Retail Development

- 67% of respondents placed the Village center in the "Historic Center."
- Residents were fairly evenly split over the matter of additional retail development (42% "yes"; 46% "no"), but many residents cited the need for improved retail amenities while maintaining Croton's small-town character.

Public Facilities and Village Priorities

- No clear public spending priority was apparent. The most frequently cited priorities were: Riverfront Development (22.3%); Sidewalks (21%); Parks and Open Space (19%).

- Public facilities all received positive respondent satisfaction ratings. Police and fire received the highest rating with 96% of respondents very or somewhat satisfied. Open Space and Parks, Library and Trash Recycling/Pick-Up faired well overall while Water/Sewer and Recreational Programs had the highest number of dissatisfied residents.

- Recreational facilities most frequently requested were: Swimming Facilities (50%); Bicycling (45%); and Ice Skating (35%). Generally, facilities oriented toward passive recreation were selected more frequently than those relating to active recreation (e.g. ball fields).

- 55% of respondents felt there should be increased design review of buildings; 17% said no and 28% were unsure.

- The five most frequently selected objectives for Croton were: Protecting the Natural Environment (58.5%); Preserving Croton's Historic Character (49%); Improving the Appearance of the Upper Village (35%); Providing Parks and Recreational Areas Along the Waterfront (34%); and Improving Access to the Hudson riverfront (32.5%).

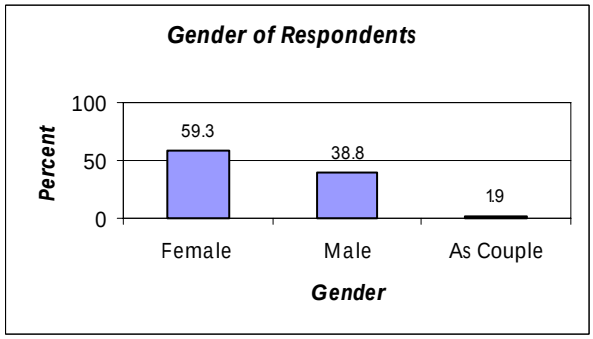
- The environmental concerns which residents most frequently selected were: Air Quality (64%); Hudson River Quality (55%); Well Water Quality (52%).

3.0 RESPONSE ANALYSIS

3.1 Demographic Profile

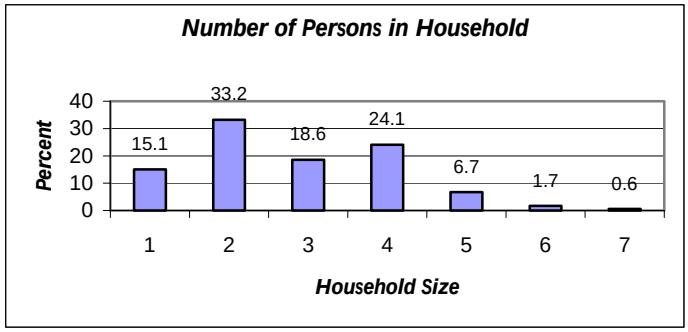
Gender

89.5% of residents responded to this question. A small number specified that they were responding as a couple. Below is a breakdown of respondents by gender:



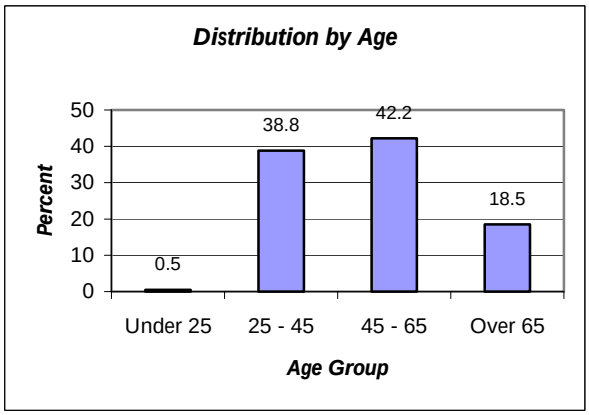
Household Size

Residents were asked to identify the size of their household. 97% of the respondents answered this question; most residents live in either a two- or four-person household.



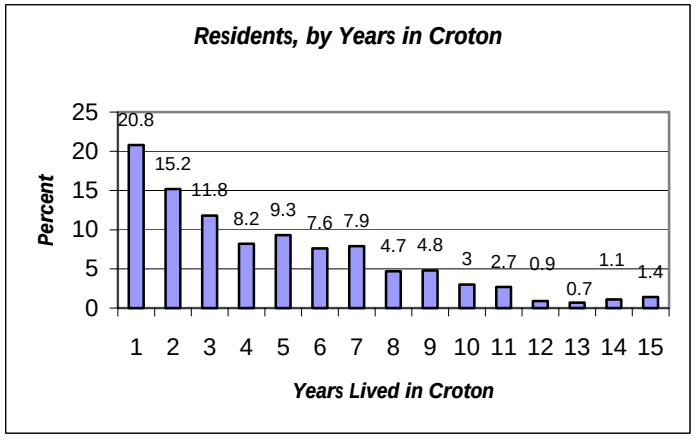
Age

Residents were asked to identify which of the following four age categories they belonged to: Under 25; 25 – 45; 45 – 65; Over 65. With 97% of residents responding to this question, the age distribution breakdown was as follows:



Number of Years in Croton

Residents were asked how long they have lived in Croton. To facilitate analysis, year categories were created of five-year increments. Of the 97% who responded, most (21%) have lived in Croton for less than five years, followed by 15% of respondents who have lived in the Village between five and ten years.



Key:

1 = 0 – 4.9
2 = 5 – 9.9
3 = 10 – 14.9
4 = 15 – 19.9
5 = 20 – 24.9
6 = 25 – 29.9
7 = 30 – 34.9
8 = 35 – 39.9
9 = 40 – 44.9
10 = 45 – 49.9
11 = 50 – 54.9
12 = 55 – 59.9
13 = 60 – 64.9
14 = 65 – 69.9
15 = 70 – 75

3.2 Resident Preferences

Residents were asked to identify what three characteristics of Croton they like the best and the least and to identify the reasons they like or dislike their part of the Village. Village character and open space amenities were cited most frequently as positive aspects of Croton, while sidewalks appears very frequently as a negative aspect on both a Village-wide and neighborhood level.

Croton Characteristics: What Do You Like Best About Croton?
950 out of 956 respondents (99% response rate) answered this question. Of the 12 choices offered, including a write-in option, the characteristics most frequently selected were:

Rank	*Characteristic*	*Frequency*	*Percent (%)*
1	Small town character	659	69.4
2	Hudson/Croton riverfronts	650	68.4
3	Parks & open space	376	39.6

The 274-person difference between the second and third ranked choices shows that village character and the riverfronts were overall more important than the category of Parks & Open Space. A close fourth to Parks & Open Space was Regional Rail and Road Access, selected by 373 (39%) of the respondents.

The remaining responses to this question are summarized below:

Rank	*Characteristic*	*Frequency*	*Percent (%)*
4	Regional rail & road access	373	39.3
5	Residents' volunteerism & participation	192	20.2
6	Artistic community	131	13.8
7	Diverse population	127	13.4
8	Greenery/Tree City USA	111	11.7
9	Water quality	105	11.1
10	Proximity to employment centers	67	7.1
11	Other	60	6.3
12	Cultural opportunities	17	1.8

Sixty respondents (6.3%) opted to write in a characteristic. Written responses were categorized as follows: accessibility/regional location; community facilities; environment/open space; housing; small town character; socioeconomic issues; village services; and visual appearance.

Accessibility/regional location, especially proximity to New York City, small town character, and community facilities were those write-in categories most frequently commented on.

Croton Characteristics: What Do You Like Least About Croton
941 out of the 956 respondents answered this question (98%). The characteristics most frequently selected are listed below. No clear majority was visible between the top two responses.

Rank	*Characteristic*	*Frequency*	*Percent (%)*
1	Sidewalk condition/lack of sidewalks	363	38.6
2	Rate/pattern of new development	341	36.2
3	Appearance of commercial areas	310	32.2

Below is a summary of the remaining choices.

Rank	*Characteristic*	*Frequency*	*Percent (%)*
4	Housing opportunities/rising costs	293	31.1
5	Quality of commercial uses and centers	286	30.4
6	Other	285	30.3
7	Lack of recreational facilities for kids	209	22.2
8	Speeding traffic	205	21.8
9	Older sewer and water systems	145	15.4
10	Inadequate car parking	105	11.2
11	Traffic congestion	83	8.8

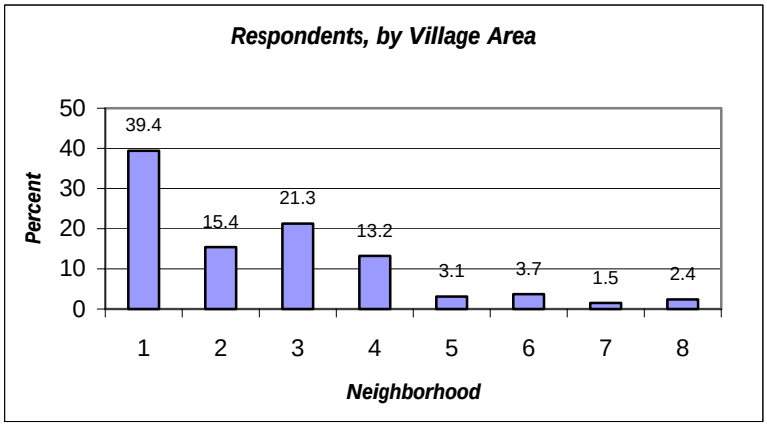
30%, or 283, of the respondents opted to write in their own responses. Write-in responses were grouped into the following categories: commercial amenities; community facilities; environment/open space; financial; government; housing/zoning; population diversity; rate/pattern of development; Indian Point; riverfront development; socioeconomic issues; tax rate; transportation/parking; village character; village services; visual appearance.

The write-in issue cited most frequently by residents was the high Village tax rate, followed by commercial amenities and issues relating to environment and open space. Residents complained of a lack of commercial diversity and amenities, noise from the train and highways and the deer population.

Village Neighborhood: Strengths and Weaknesses

Respondents were asked whether they liked or disliked their part of the Village and why. 938 residents responded (98%). A large majority of those who responded to this question (95% or 888 respondents) stated that they liked their part of the Village; only 5% said that they did not (47 respondents).

The responses to this question were categorized by respondents' neighborhoods to facilitate analysis of this question.



Key:

1 = Harmon
2 = Mount Airy/Trails
3 = Upper Village
4 = North End
5 = Route 129 Area
6 = North Riverside Area
7 = North Highland/Riverlanding
8 = Half Moon Bay

The 769 "yes" survey responses (the number of respondents who answered "yes" to whether they like their part of the Village) were then analyzed for the reasons for that response. Across all eight neighborhoods, the most frequently selected strengths were the attractiveness of the neighborhood and the proximity to open space and/or the waterfront. Convenience factors, such as proximity to schools or work, were often noted as well.

The three most frequently selected reasons are listed below by neighborhood. The number in parentheses reflects the number of respondents from that neighborhood.

Harmon (302): Attractive Area (67%); Close to Schools (52%); Near Community Facilities (45%)

Mount Airy/Trails (118): Attractive Area (85%); Rural Area (64%); Close to Open Space/Riverfront (37%)

Upper Village (165): Attractive Area (55%); Close to Open Space/Riverfront (49%); Near Community Facilities (47%)

North End (101): Attractive Area (78%); Close to Open Space/Riverfront (49%); Convenient to Work (26%)

Route 129 Area (24): Attractive Area (75%); Close to Open Space/Riverfront (58%); Rural Area (42%)

North Riverside Area (28): Close to Open Space/Riverfront (71%); Attractive Area (50%); Close to Family & Friends/Affordable Area tied (32%)

North Highland Riverlanding (11): Attractive Area (91%); Close to Schools/Close to Open Space & Riverfront tied (46%); Rural Area (36%)

Half Moon Bay (20): Close to Open Space/Riverfront (90%); Attractive Area (85%); Convenient to Work (50%)

Of the 47 residents who answered that they do not like their part of the Village, the majority (18 residents) came from Harmon; this breakdown reflects the overall geographic distribution of respondents (38% from Harmon). In Harmon, complaints included:

- crowding of houses and lack of open space
- lack of housing maintenance and code enforcement
- noise
- too many cars
- lack of sidewalks

From the Upper Village, the twelve (12) complaints focused primarily on speeding traffic and congestion, noise level, congestion and lack of shopping alternatives. Mount Airy and North End both cited speeding traffic and noise. Mount Airy also addressed poor road conditions and no local shopping; North End residents cited diesel engines and the lack of a local park.

3.3 COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL DEVELOPMENT

Several questions on the survey spoke directly to commercial issues. Residents were asked to identify the "village center" and whether Croton should actively pursue additional retail development. Other questions provided the opportunity to comment on a range of issues, and many respondents wrote in comments relating to commercial and retail opportunities. Following is a summary of these responses.

Village Center

The majority of respondents (more than 650 out of 956, or 67%) placed the center of the Village in the area we have termed the "Historic Center," encompassing Maple and Grand Streets, Old Post Road, Van Wyck Street, the Municipal Building, and other identifying landmarks in that area. [1] Residents often cited a particular place, such as Robbins Pharmacy, the "dummy" traffic light, or Wondrous Things. Other locations that appeared included Grand Union/Post Office and the Black Cow area. Twenty residents said they didn't know where the center was, and 32 replied that there was no center. The most unusual response, however, came from a resident who reminded us that the Village center is "in the hearts of people who love Croton."

Commercial and Retail Development

Residents were also asked whether Croton should pursue additional retail development. Responses were fairly evenly split among those who answered "yes" (42%) and "no" (46%); 12% said they didn't know. However, the need for careful retail and commercial development came across in responses to other questions.

For example, residents were asked to select three aspects of Croton they liked the least. Appearance of commercial areas was the third most frequently selected aspect (32%), while quality of commercial uses and centers was fifth (30.4%). Residents also had the opportunity to write in responses to this question, and 36 write-ins cited a commercial-related issue. Lack of quality restaurants, lack of retail and shopping, and absence of commercial diversity were the most common complaints.

The theme of controlled commercial development continued in the residents' comments section. Many residents wrote that the quality and variety of retail and commercial opportunities should be improved to better accommodate residents and allow for more local shopping, but that big-box and chain stores and other large complexes must be avoided. Some residents specified a lack of quality supermarkets, local greengrocers, bakeries and bookstores. Residents also suggested using expanded commercial development to broaden the tax base and reduce the tax burden on residents.

When asked to identify the five important objectives for Croton, preserving the Village's natural environment and historic character were cited most frequently, but residents also selected objectives relating to commercial development, including "improving mix of retail uses" (31%); "improving all commercial areas, with better signs and more variety" (18%); "encouraging small scale office development in commercial areas" (18%); and "increasing job opportunities in the village" (9%).

[1] Many residents called this area the Upper Village. Since the "Upper Village" is used to describe a residential area that has larger boundaries, the term "Historic Center" was chosen instead to avoid confusion.

3.4 Public Facilities and Village Priorities

The survey included several questions that addressed public facilities and Village priorities and objectives. Residents were asked to identify public spending priorities and Village objectives; to rate their satisfaction with public facilities; and to identify needed recreational facilities. Residents were also asked to rank their level of concern with environmental issues in the Village.

Public Spending Priorities

Respondents were asked to identify the area of public spending which should have the highest priority. 919 out of the 956 respondents answered this question (96%). The survey offered nine options for public spending, including a write-in option. Residents were asked to select one item, although some selected more than one. Responses were fairly evenly distributed and no clear majority can be identified, but the three most frequently selected areas are as follows:

Rank	*Spending Target*	*Frequency*	*Percent (%)*
1	Riverfront development	205	22.3
2	Sidewalks	192	20.9
3	Parks and open space	175	19

The remaining responses are summarized below:

Rank	*Spending Target*	*Frequency*	*Percent (%)*
4	Sewer and water improvements	162	17.6
5	Streets and Roads	155	16.9
6	Recreational facilities	150	16.3
7	Other	119	12.9
8	Library	78	8.5
9	Signs, façade improvements	65	7.1

Of the 119 respondents who selected "Other", the majority of responses centered on:

- Improvement of community facilities (38), especially schools
- Village services (20), especially sidewalks and street maintenance
- Finance/government (16), especially the tax rate

These responses ask for residents to identify the public spending item that should have the highest level of priority. "Highest" should not be construed to mean the "only" item to which public spending should be allocated. However, the frequency of items selected offers an indication of where Croton residents feel, overall, spending can be increased.

Responses were then examined from the standpoint of the age of respondents. These responses are categorized below. It should be noted that category totals are greater than 100%, as many respondents selected more than one choice.

- Within the 25-45 population group (39% of respondents), Recreational Facilities, Riverfront Development and Sidewalks were selected most frequently.

• The 45-65 population group constituted 43% of the respondents. They selected Riverfront Development most frequently (25% of respondents), followed by Parks/Open Space (20%), Streets/Road (19.5%) and then Sewer/Water Improvement (19%).

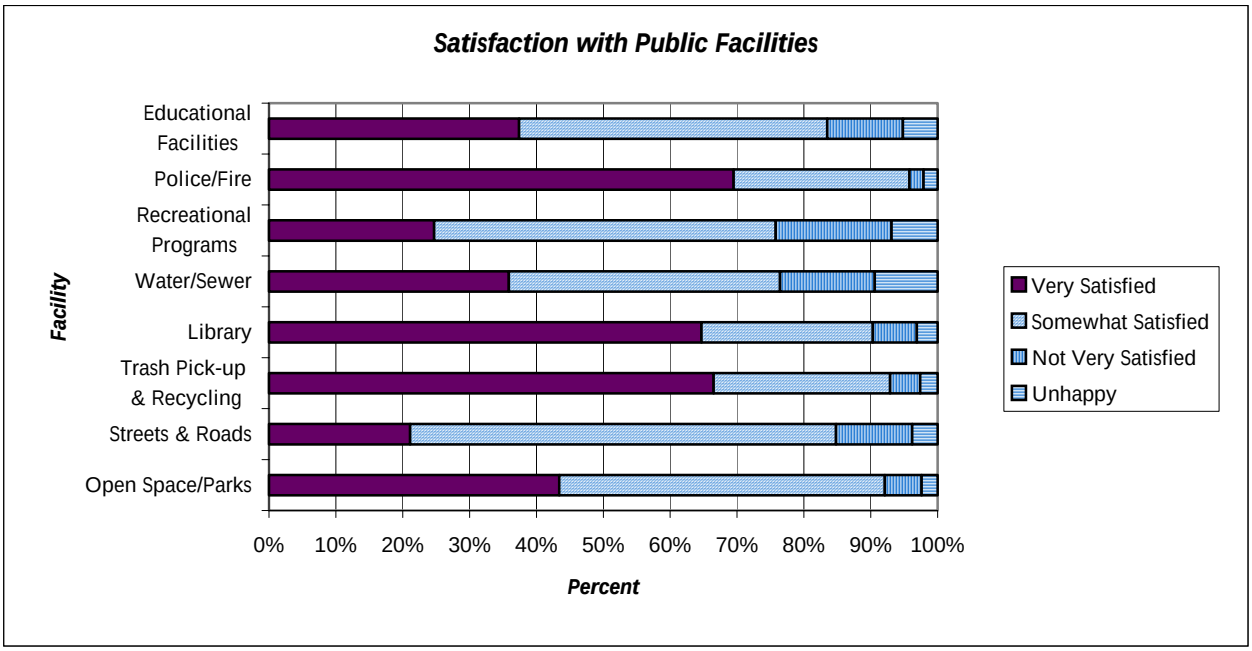
• The over 65 population group, representing 18% of respondents, selected sidewalks most frequently (31% of respondents), followed by Streets/Roads (25.5%), and then Sewer/Water Improvement (18.5%). Parks/Open Space and Riverfront Development followed at 17% and 18% respectively.

• Under 25: those respondents under the age of 25 (who only constituted .6% of the total respondents, or five respondents) selected recreational facilities most frequently.

Satisfaction with Public Facilities

Respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with public facilities in Croton, on a scale from Very Satisfied and Somewhat Satisfied to Not Very Satisfied and Unhappy. Response rates varied for each public facility listed, as some residents opted not to respond or selected "no basis to evaluate." Most responses were over 90% although two were in the 75-80% range (recreational programs and educational facilities).

As shown on the chart below, residents overall are more satisfied than dissatisfied with public facilities. Police and fire service received the highest level of overall satisfaction, as well as the highest level of "very satisfied." Trash recycling/pick-up, library and open space/parks also fare well in terms of overall satisfaction, with 90% or more of respondents reporting either "very" or "somewhat" satisfied. Over 80% of respondents report satisfaction with educational facilities and streets and roads; however, each of these facilities receives a low percentage of "very satisfied" responses. Recreational programs and water/sewer facilities receive the lowest percent of overall satisfaction responses.



Recreational Facilities

Residents were asked to identify how the Village could expand its recreational facilities. Residents were given 16 options (including a write-in option), from which they could select all that applied. 847 residents responded to this question, a response rate of 89%. Facilities that would accommodate outdoor individual and group passive recreational activities were selected more frequently than those relative to active recreation, such as soccer, football and baseball fields.

Of the choices offered, the three most frequently selected were:

Rank	***Facility***	***Frequency***	***Percent (%)***
1	Swimming	421	49.7
2	Bicycling	379	44.7
3	Ice Skating	295	34.8

The remaining choices are summarized below:

Rank	***Facility***	***Frequency***	***Percent (%)***
4	Tennis	252	29.8
5	Playground/Picnic	221	26.1
6	Other	173	20.4
7	Boat Launch	167	19.7
8	Fishing	152	17.9
9	Skateboarding	136	16.1
10	Horseback Riding	131	11.4
11	Soccer	91	10.7
12	Baseball	79	9.3
13	Softball	74	8.7
14	Basketball	69	8.1
15	Hockey	53	6.3
16	Football	24	2.8

20% of respondents chose to write in a response, focusing on a range of issues. Most frequently noted was the need for trails and paths with a focus on walking trails (24 write-in responses), hiking trails (9), bicycle (7), rollerblading (9), and jogging (3).

Also mentioned frequently in the write-ins was the need for community-oriented facilities such as children's recreation facilities and activities (13), a community center (6), and a senior facility and programs (2). Arts and entertainment, including an art and dance center, bowling alley and movie theater were requested.

Design Review of Buildings

Residents were asked whether there should be increased design review of buildings. A total of 855 residents responded, for an 89% response rate. Of those who responded, 55% said that increased review should be undertaken; 17% said no; 28% were unsure. The lower response rate and percent of respondents who were unsure may indicate that further discussion and elucidation may be needed.

Objectives for Croton

Residents were asked to identify the five most important objectives for Croton (note that respondents were not asked to rank these five objectives). Twenty options were offered on a variety of policy issues, ranging from traffic and transportation to Village character and appearance to commercial development to open space and environment. A total of 933 residents responded to the question for a 97% response rate.

The five most frequently selected objectives are listed below, followed by a summary of the remaining responses. Only protecting the natural environment received a majority (greater than 50%) response rate. In general, objectives related to Village character and the environment were selected the most frequently.

Rank	*Characteristic*	*Frequency*	*Percent (%)*
1	Protecting the natural environment	546	58.5
2	Preserving Croton's historic character	455	48.8
3	Improving the appearance of the Upper Village	326	34.9
4	Providing park/recreational areas along waterfront	316	33.9
5	Improving access to the Hudson riverfront	303	32.5

Remaining responses are summarized below:

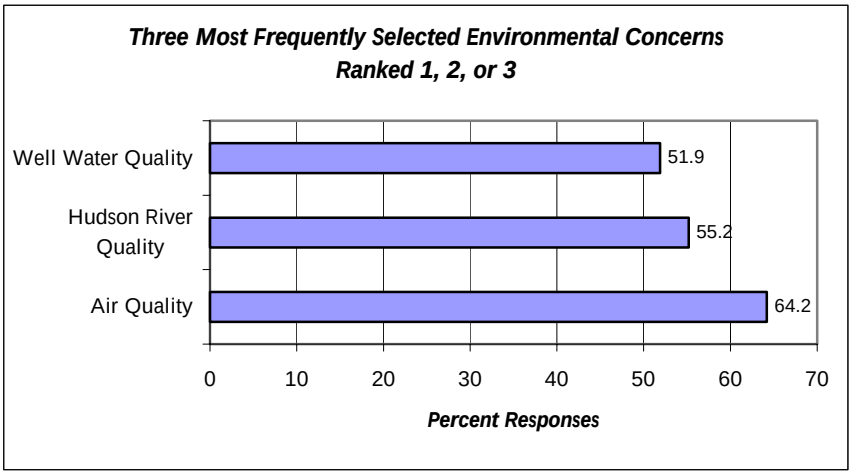
Rank	*Characteristic*	*Frequency*	*Percent (%)*
6	Improving mix of retail uses	289	31.0
7	Upgrading water system/sewer system	250	26.8
8	Improving the design quality of streetscapes and buildings	235	25.2
9	Expanding trails along Croton River	229	24.5
10	Supporting the arts in Croton	214	22.9
11	Implementing traffic calming/pedestrian safety improvements	191	20.5
12	Expanding parks & recreational facilities	180	19.3
13	Improving all commercial areas (better signs, more variety)	171	18.3
14	Encouraging small scale office development in commercial areas	171	18.3
15	Encouraging more affordable housing units	160	17.1
16	Improving transit connections to RR station	122	13.1
17	Increasing job opportunities in the Village	83	8.9
18	Rehabilitation of existing housing stock	83	8.9
19	Improving traffic circulation	80	8.6
20	Improving transit/bike connections at RR station	70	7.5

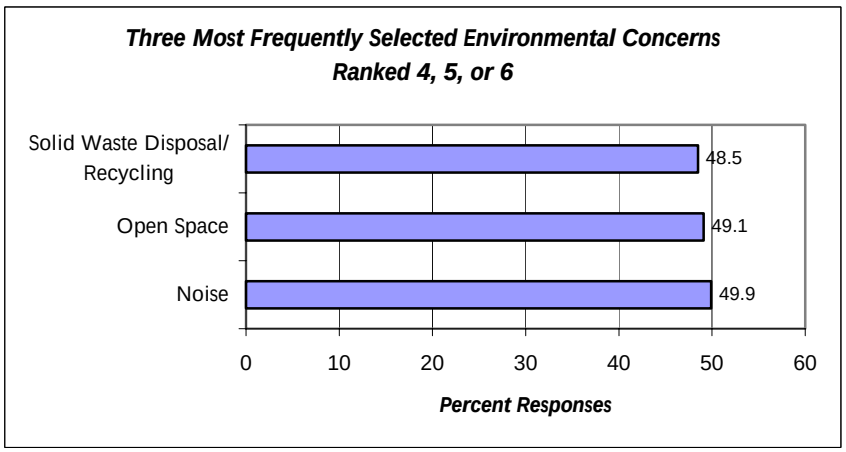
Environmental Concerns

Residents were asked to rank their concerns relating to open space and environmental issues on a scale from one to six, with one being the greatest concern. Six categories, plus a write-in option, were provided. These were:

- air quality
- Hudson River quality
- well water quality
- solid waste disposal/recycling
- noise
- open space

While 98% of respondents answered this question, only 75% ranked the concerns from one to six. Other respondents used a different ranking system to better express how they viewed the concerns. All responses were incorporated into the analysis. To facilitate analysis, responses were aggregated to show the concerns most frequently ranked 1, 2 or 3 and those most frequently ranked 4, 5, and 6. Only the top three in each category are shown.





3.5 Village Voice: Residents' Ideas

The survey included a section where residents were asked to provide their ideas on Croton's character and future development. Over 500 written responses were received which addressed a wide range of issues. While responses were too numerous to include in this report, a summary of responses by topic is provided below.

Accessibility
Recommendations focused on safe and easy access to riverfronts and free access to recreation facilities.

Commercial Development and Diversity
Many residents addressed this issue, focusing on the need to improve the diversity and quality of retail and commercial opportunities to better accommodate residents and allow for more local shopping. Some residents specified a lack of quality supermarkets, local greengrocers, bakeries and bookstores. Big-box and chain stores and other large complexes were viewed as undesirable. At the same time, some residents also suggested using expanded commercial development to broaden the tax base and reduce the tax burden on residents.

Community Facilities
Recommendations ranged from additional recreational (swimming, tennis, playgrounds) and youth and senior facilities to improved parks and designated dog parks. The need for improved maintenance at Duck Pond and Senasqua Parks was cited several times. The importance of educational facilities and the possibility of an arts and cultural center were raised as well.

Environment
Respondents emphasized preservation, including maintaining open space, minimizing tree cutting, and protecting the rivers and riverfronts. Residents also cited noise problems with the railroad station and highways.

Housing
A variety of recommendations were offered. The majority of recommendations focused on the need for affordable housing, especially seniors.

Infrastructure
Recommendations ranged from the need for sidewalks to improving lighting and access to recreational facilities, but most focused on the need for repaired and expanded networks of sidewalks and pedestrian linkages.

Development Patterns and Village Character
As with commercial development and environment, comments centered on preservation, maintaining the small-town and historic character of the Village and preventing overdevelopment, both along the river and throughout the Village. Residents stressed the need for maintaining the quiet, quaint rural nature of the town. On related comments about socioeconomic conditions, respondents cited concern over the cost of living and the impact on population diversity in the Village.

Local Government: Taxes and Spending and Code Enforcement
Overall, recommendations focused on the need for responsible fiscal planning, concerns about taxes and overspending as well as the need for more community input into local decision-making. Residents expressed concerns that Village codes were not being properly enforced, resulting in

more noise and parking than is permitted. Taxes were viewed as too high and burdensome to residents.

Transportation
Transportation comments ranged from traffic mitigation during rush hour, to improving parking options at the train station, including providing parking discounts to Croton residents, to alleviating speeding along all roads and reducing noise from highways and the train station.

Village Services
Respondents praised the highway department but stressed the need to improve Village appearance by increasing the frequency of garbage collection.

Village Appearance
Residents recommended improving the appearance of Village gateways, such as the train station, increasing landscaping and general maintenance of Village properties, providing better signage, improving the appearance of both commercial areas and private homes. Comments on this topic tended recommendations such as "the Village needs a makeover" or "a facelift."

Waterfront Development
Comments related to the waterfront focused on accessibility for residents, but ranged from emphasizing passive recreation to the suggestions of recreation, events, restaurants and retail that will bring residents to the waterfront. One residents recommended light industrial or commercial to shift the burden of real estate taxes.

Zoning
Zoning recommendations focused on limiting housing starts, restricting the construction of large homes on small lots, enforcing existing codes and preventing the conversion of single family homes to multifamily ones.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The survey provides a general overview of views held by Croton residents, but several specific conclusions about respondents' views can be drawn. Croton's small town character, historic charm and natural assets were of clear importance to many residents, as demonstrated in responses to questions pertaining to Village assets, future Village priorities and objectives, and in the write-in responses. At the same time, residents expressed a need for improved commercial and retail amenities that will better accommodate the population, keep spending within Croton and expand the tax base.

Responses to a series of questions relating to Village facilities suggest that sidewalk condition and lack of sidewalks are issues for residents throughout the Village, as are noise from highways and the train station, traffic congestion and speeding traffic in residential areas. Concern over high taxes and the burden of taxes on residents was voiced as well. The goals, priorities and objectives expressed by residents do not conflict but suggest the need for a balanced approach when considering development.

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