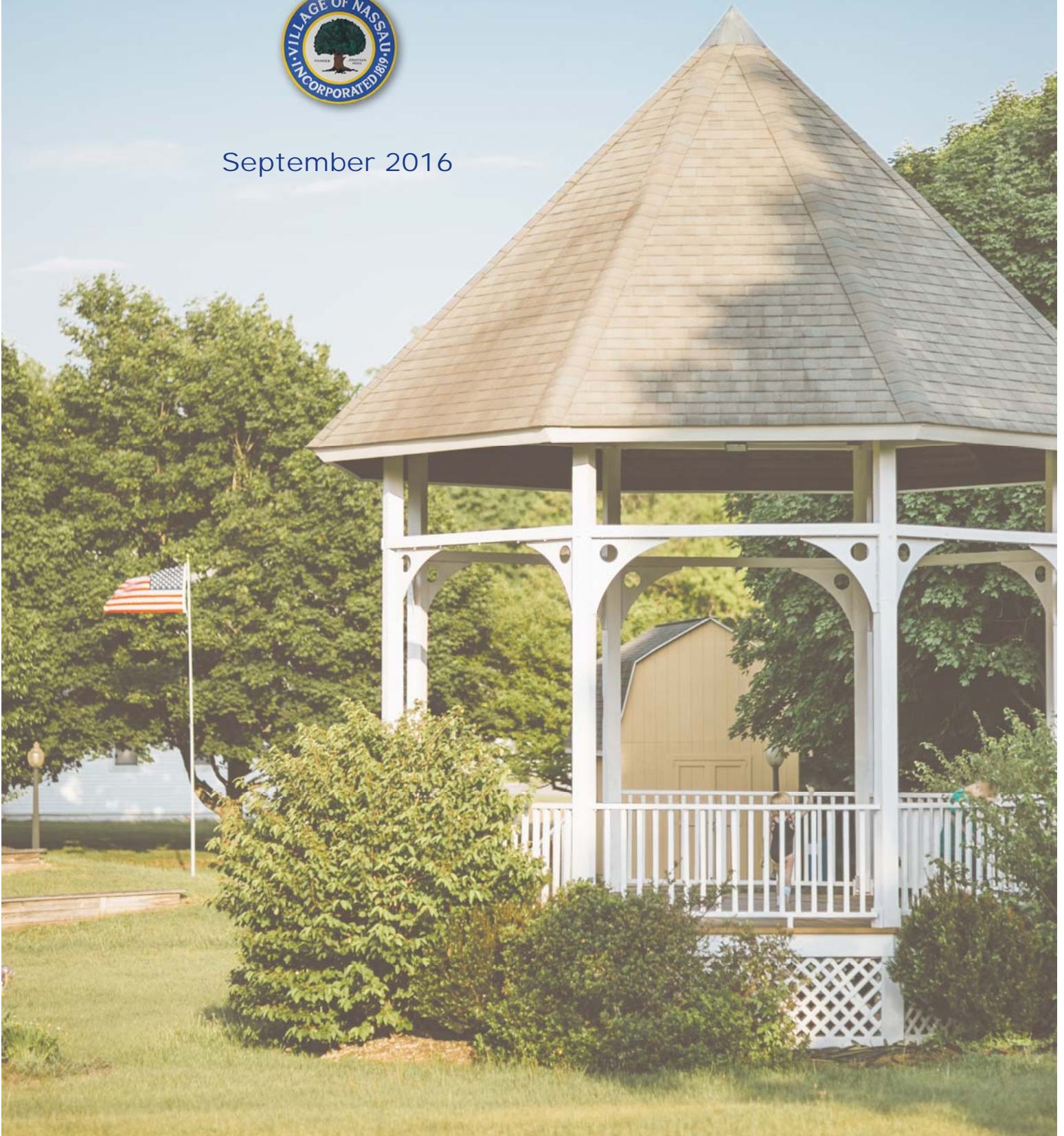


VILLAGE OF NASSAU, NEW YORK

# Master Plan



September 2016



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VILLAGE OF NASSAU, NEW YORK

# Master Plan

**Adopted by the Village Board of Trustees**

on

**September 14, 2016**

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# Vision

The Village of Nassau looks to the future as a community that offers the modern amenities and thriving commerce required for the well-being and prosperity of its residents, while preserving our friendly, small-town atmosphere and honoring the history upon which our community was built. We will protect the integrity of our drinking water and adapt our infrastructure to be more resilient, while expanding and improving options for safely living, recreating, and doing business within our borders. In short, we are committed to enhancing the quality of life and fostering opportunities for all who live here, both now and in the future.

- Master Plan Advisory Committee

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# Acknowledgments

## Mayor

Robert W. Valenty

## Village Board of Trustees

Gaetano J. Forte III  
Randy M. Howarth  
David Scaccia  
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## Master Plan Advisory Committee

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## Special Thanks:

Lori Clark, Priscilla Sherman, Susan Keegan, Tim Mooney and Tom Mooney, Adam Schnell, Rocky Ferraro and Dan Harp (Capital District Regional Planning Commission), and to the Nassau Ambulance and the Nassau Free Library for providing meeting space.

• *In memory of Jerry Uhr* •

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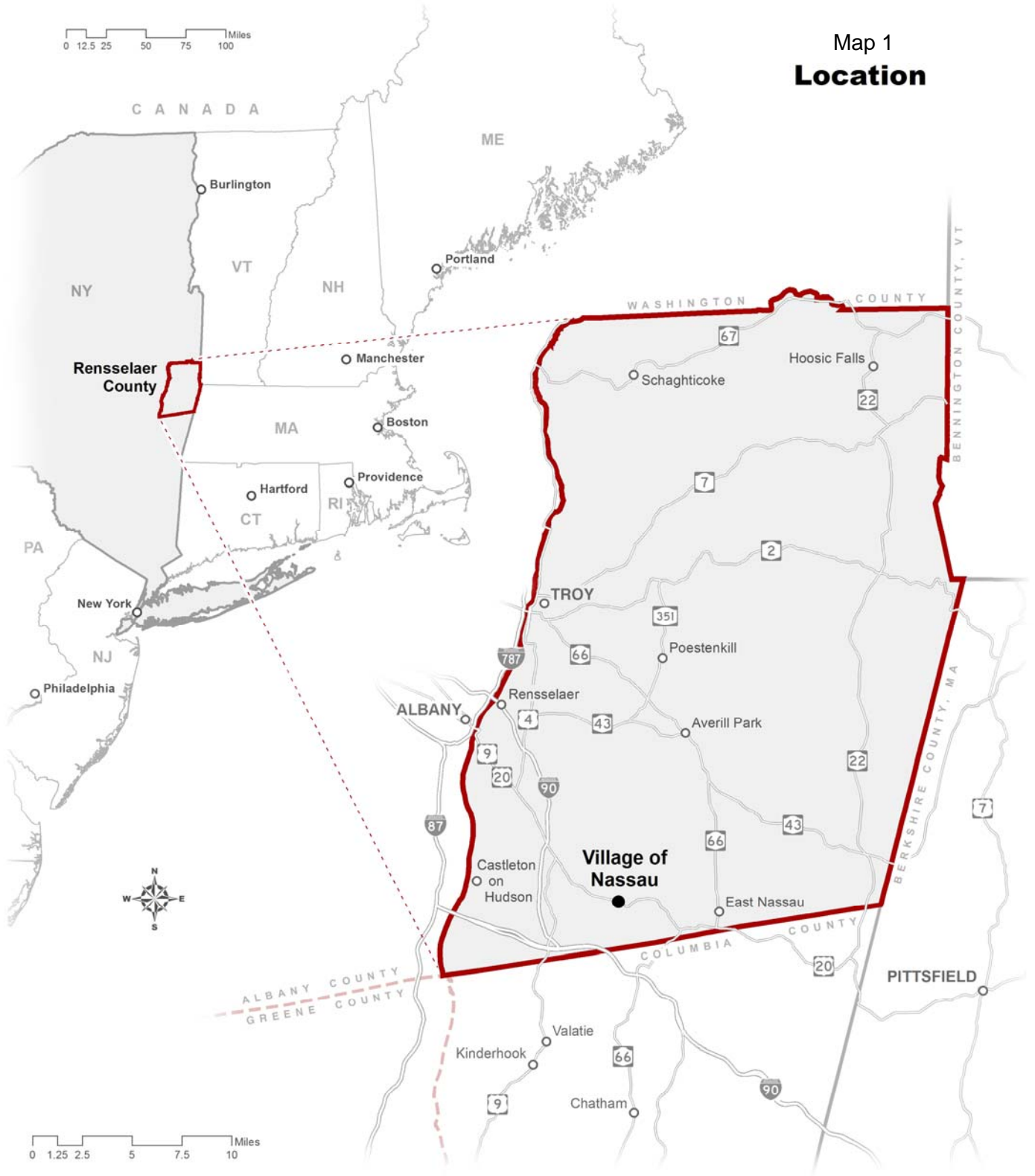
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# Map 1 Location



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# Introduction

## *Regional and Historical Setting*

The Village of Nassau is situated near the southern border of Rensselaer County within both the Towns of Nassau and Schodack. Although incorporated as a Village in 1819, Nassau’s history dates back to pre-European settlement when members of the Mohican Nation inhabited the area. Later explored and settled by the Dutch, Nassau began to grow as a community after the damming of the Valatie Kill in 1792. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, various industries came and went, including the Grubb and Kosegarten Piano Works Factory and the Albany-to-Hudson electric railroad.



In addition to its rich history, Nassau is also a progressive community that looks to build a better future for its citizens. The desire to preserve our unique heritage while planning for tomorrow is the impetus for the drafting of this Village Master Plan.

## *Purpose*

### **What is a Master Plan?**

A Master Plan—also called a Comprehensive Plan—is a conceptual roadmap used by a community to fulfill a set of goals related to future growth and development. It is a clear statement of a community’s needs, and provides a strong foundation for the development of programs, policies and future actions in support of those needs.

The Village of Nassau is authorized by Village Law §7-722 to undertake “comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens.” As such, the Village has produced this Master Plan to set forth goals and objectives that reflect the vision of its residents and the quality of life they desire.

### **What the Plan Does Not Do**

While comprehensive in scope, this Master Plan does not provide the level of detail required to implement many of the strategies recommended within. The Plan strives to define the ideal future state of the Village, but it does not identify the exact path or timing of events that will lead to the future. The order in which the recommendations of this

plan are implemented will depend on various other factors, many of which are not possible to identify at this time. Therefore, the implementation of the Master Plan should be considered a dynamic process that is achieved through the periodic evaluation of current opportunities.

The Master Plan does not address the topic of taxes. At this time, municipalities in the State of New York are limited by a 2% tax increase per year. The “tax cap” imposes an obvious limitation on the scheduling and implementation of certain objectives of this Plan. Even if the tax cap did not exist, all recommendations are subject to the fiscal constraints of Village government. The Plan does not advocate for increased taxes to meet objectives nor does it consider the financial impact if all objectives were to be implemented with local tax dollars. It is the hope of the Master Plan Committee that outside sources of funding and creative methods of financing will be explored to limit any tax burden potentially created from the recommendations set forth.

## ***Planning Process***

### **Previous Master Plan**

A previous Master Plan for the Village was adopted in 1993 after several years of careful drafting, review and debate. A number of the recommendations brought forth in that Plan have either been implemented or addressed, including:

- Zoning regulations have been reviewed and amended in some areas;
- Senior citizen housing was developed in the Village;
- Signage regulations were put in place;
- Beautification Committee was formed and remains active;
- Problematic water mains have been replaced;
- Membership in the Eastern Rensselaer County Solid Waste Management Authority (ERCSWMA) continues;
- Cost effective solid waste collection system was put in place;
- Storm drainage systems were upgraded in certain areas of the Village;
- Provisions for police, fire and ambulance services that meet the public need were promoted; and
- Support for the public library remains strong

### **Current Planning Effort**

The previous Master Plan was adopted over 20 years ago. Ongoing problematic conditions that have not been addressed and new concerns or trends within the Village have prompted the drafting of this updated Master Plan. The current process required no less thought and attention to the needs and wishes of its community members. Every

effort was made to involve the residents and business community in the re-drafting of this document and the goals set forth in its pages.

In September of 2013 a committee comprising members of the Village Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and interested citizens convened for the first time. On November 13, 2013, the Village Board adopted a resolution to update the 20-year-old Master Plan and formally appointed the Master Plan Advisory Committee to create a vision for the future. The first step in the process was to disseminate a public opinion survey to residents with the purpose of gauging public sentiment on such areas as code enforcement, police services and public safety, housing trends, economic development and the general provision of services. The surveys were mailed to all residential and business landowners, as well as made available at Village Hall and on the internet via a service called Survey Monkey. One hundred completed surveys were returned to the Committee, which formed the basis for many of the recommendations found in this Plan (see Appendix 1).

Two separate Information Sessions were conducted to solicit further public comment. Local business owners were invited to a third meeting (see Appendix 2), which specifically focused on their concerns and ideas for economic development within the Village. Valuable information was gained from all three meetings. Committee members visited local businesses armed with questionnaires as a second effort to gain their input.

With all this information in hand, the Committee met regularly to draft a document that encompassed the public sentiment toward the future. A “S.W.O.T.” analysis was used to organize the focal points of the Plan. By compiling an extensive list of Nassau’s current Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, the Committee set about to craft future goals, and to identify the objectives and strategies needed to obtain those goals.

In June of 2016, the Committee released a Draft Master Plan for public review and comment, and a public hearing was held at Village Hall on June 30. The meeting was well attended and all of the comments received were supportive of the Draft Plan.

## **Recommendations**

The Plan, as written, recommends strategies for addressing the areas of particular concern to Village Residents, which are:

- Infrastructure (sidewalks, sewer system, water supply, stormwater management, municipal parking, etc.);
- Housing;
- Public services;
- Public image and community character;

- Business development and business district viability;
- Zoning;
- Code Enforcement;
- Open Space and Recreation;
- Transportation; and
- Community and Natural Resources

There are no easy answers or solutions to problems on which every Village resident will agree. There is, however, a desire by the majority of the citizens of this Village to improve their surroundings and the quality of life for themselves and future generations. It was the intent of the Master Plan Advisory Committee to examine those core problems the Village faces going forward and to set forth a realistic plan to make the necessary changes and improvements.

The Master Plan as presented is the culmination of nearly three years of discussion, debate and compromise. It is hereby offered to the Village Board for their adoption and implementation. The Committee recommends that the Master Plan be updated periodically as needed but that it be thoroughly reviewed and redrafted within 20 years from its adoption. The Committee also recommends that the goals presented herein be the focus of our local government's efforts until these goals are brought to fruition.

### **State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR)**

In New York State, many activities proposed by a local government, including the drafting of a Comprehensive Plan (or Master Plan), require an environmental impact assessment as prescribed by Part 617 of New York's Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations (6 NYCRR), also known as the SEQR regulations. The Village Board, assisted by the Master Plan Advisory Committee, conducted this assessment by filling out the Environmental Assessment Forms provided by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). Upon completion of the forms, the Board concluded that the adoption of this Master Plan will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment, and has therefore issued a Negative Declaration (see Appendix 3). The notice of Negative Declaration was published in the Environmental Notice Bulletin (ENB) on August 24, 2016.



# Community Character

## Current Conditions

### Setting

The Village of Nassau is a historic community located in the rolling hills of southern Rensselaer County. It consists of a small central business district, a Village center, and commons with a bandstand surrounded by residences and pocketed neighborhoods. The Village is a walkable community that includes a public school, parks, playgrounds, a library, churches, and other cultural resources. Many of the homes near the Village center were constructed in the early to mid-1800s. Some still include a small barn at the back of the property from a time when horses and other farm animals were an important part of life. Most of these buildings have been well maintained and several buildings are included in one of three registered national historic districts in the Village. Extensive historical and genealogy records in the library, Village Hall, and churches contribute to a sense of place and history for Village residents.

The Village is surrounded by farms, forests, and open land and serves as a commercial hub for the Town of Nassau and the eastern part of the Town of Schodack. The Village provides limited shopping, fuel, motor vehicle repair, computer repair, and personal services. Both the Town and Village Offices are located within the Village proper, thus facilitating participation in two levels of local government. Finally, the Village is located on busy US Route 20, a major highway linking the city of Albany with Pittsfield, Massachusetts. This location adds customers to Village businesses and provides easy access to employment, shopping, educational opportunities, and cultural attractions of a large metropolitan area and the cultural and natural resources of the Berkshires.

### Community Profile

The estimated Village population between 2010 and 2014 was 1,103, a decline of 5.0 percent since 2000. Median resident age was 41.7 years. Estimated median household income was \$56,932. The median value of owner-occupied homes was \$158,000, which is below the state average<sup>1</sup>, while unemployment was 5.4 percent in 2014, which is significantly below the state average<sup>2</sup>. Crime rate in the Village is well below the national average.

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<sup>1</sup> *American Community Survey*, US Census Bureau, 2010-2014 estimate.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.city-data.com/city/Nassau-New-York.html>

Citizens include long term residents whose families have lived in or near the Village for generations and a mix of new residents attracted to the Village by its rural character, small-town atmosphere, affordable housing, and proximity to the Albany Metropolitan area. This mix of residents leads to a certain vitality that supports many volunteer civic organizations that maintain and improve the quality of life in the Village.

### Challenges

As with many communities in the Northeast, the Village does have challenges. Overall appearance has deteriorated, especially in the business district. Some roads, sidewalks and utility infrastructure have become unsightly. A conspicuous number of buildings are in poor condition and with the downturn of the national economy beginning in 2008, the number of vacant buildings has increased. There has also been a long-term trend in which some larger, previously single-family residences have been converted to low-income multifamily dwellings, many with absentee landlords. This trend has been exacerbated by poor building code enforcement on the part of local government. Litter near streets can also be a problem in some areas. The downside of being located on a major highway is the additional commercial and commuting traffic through the Village center. It is suspected that many of the tractor-trailers passing through the Village are intentionally avoiding Interstate 90 to avoid paying tolls. Traffic intensifies on summer weekends when the Lebanon Valley Speedway to the east of the Village is open. Finally, as described in more detail in the Public Services section (Police), the entire region, including Nassau, is facing a growing problem with drug addiction.

Changes that would improve overall community character have been hampered by inadequate knowledge of available resources and the means necessary to pursue grants and other outside support. Poor regional economic conditions also strain the abilities of citizens to maintain residences while longer term economic and social trends have reduced the time available to contribute to civic organizations and community activities.

Preservation of a stable and productive Village population is impeded by the perception that Nassau is a dilapidated community in decline. This is not helped by the presence of the former Dewey Loeffel toxic waste landfill approximately 4 miles northeast of the Village. This location is now designated as an EPA superfund site. The threat of an industrial sized natural gas pumping station, its associated air pollution, and a gas pipeline north of the Village could further detract from the Village's character and livability. As of this writing, the pipeline project is on hold and is the source of local and regional opposition.

### Zoning

Zoning is the mechanism in which a municipality regulates certain aspects of land use, such as the siting and density of development. It is also a way for a community to

identify land uses (i.e. residential, commercial, etc.) that are compatible with each other and the neighborhoods in which they exist. As such, zoning is the best tool for preserving and enhancing community character, and the identification of land use goals within a Master Plan can provide the groundwork for adopting or amending future zoning regulations.

The Village of Nassau first adopted a zoning law in 1970. The 1993 Master Plan identified multiple issues with the law that were not consistent with the overall character of the Village and that led to challenges with enforcement. The zoning code was subsequently amended in 1995, based in large part on recommendations found in the Master Plan. See Map 2 for existing zoning districts.

While the 1995 zoning code amendment may have intended to maintain community character, it is unintentionally creating an adverse impact on community character in the General Business District in two ways. First, recent applications for development have demonstrated that in order to conform to the zoning, applicants must sometimes request variances and, in extremes situations, purchase and demolish adjacent buildings, even those with historic value.

Secondly, only businesses with significant capital are able to make the required modifications to structures and properties in order to become compliant with the zoning, while “mom and pop” businesses may not be able to afford that option. With fewer companies able to begin or remain in business, more buildings within the Business District become and/or remain vacant. This lack of investment in the Village’s business center is one of the leading causes of degradation to community character at this time.

Additionally, in many locations the current zoning districts do not follow property boundaries (lot lines). This causes some properties to fall within two zoning districts. As the code is currently written, properties in this category are allowed to follow the requirements of the less restrictive district “beyond the district boundary lines for a distance not exceeding 35 feet.” Because the Village has not historically experienced high development pressure, this “loophole” alone has not been a significant problem. Left in place, however, this provision of the zoning code could contribute to the further decline of community character already seen over the last several decades by allowing uses that are incompatible with their surroundings.

\* \* \*

**GOAL: To preserve and enhance the vibrant, small-town character and appearance of the Village.**

- ***Objective 1: Maintain the overall physical layout and improve the physical appearance of structures and infrastructure.***

**Strategies:**

- Implement strategies in the Master Plan sections on infrastructure, business district viability, open space & recreation, transportation, housing, historic resources, and environment and natural resources;
  - Develop an adopt-a-highway program for Routes 20 and 203;
  - Establish building design standards for the Village;
  - Provide tax credits for maintaining properties in historic districts;
  - Obtain main street grants offered by the State for façade, infrastructure, and other improvements in the business district;
  - Encourage maintenance of remaining open space;
  - Develop community volunteer teams to assist residents in completing residential improvement projects; and
  - Use Village website and library to provide education to residents regarding funding and tax credit opportunities for property improvement investments
- ***Objective 2: Enhance and expand the existing sense of community in the Village.***

**Strategies:**

- Implement strategies in the Master Plan sections on public services and cultural resources;
- Develop and improve methods for communication between Village residents and Village government and organizations. Examples include an expanded and regularly updated Village web site and a method to send e-mails to residents;
- Publicize innovative community improvement programs and activities;
- Initiate planning for a community center that could be used by Village residents for meetings and civic functions;
- Increase the frequency of Village cleanup days; and
- Improve appearance of existing Village square

- **Objective 3: Maintain a diverse mix of active civic and volunteer organizations in the Village.**

**Strategies:**

- Develop an information packet for new residents that provides information on organizations and Village government and committees; and
- Publicize available meeting space and scheduling contacts on the Village website and other public locations

- **Objective 4: Attract and maintain a stable and diverse population of productive residents.**

**Strategies:**

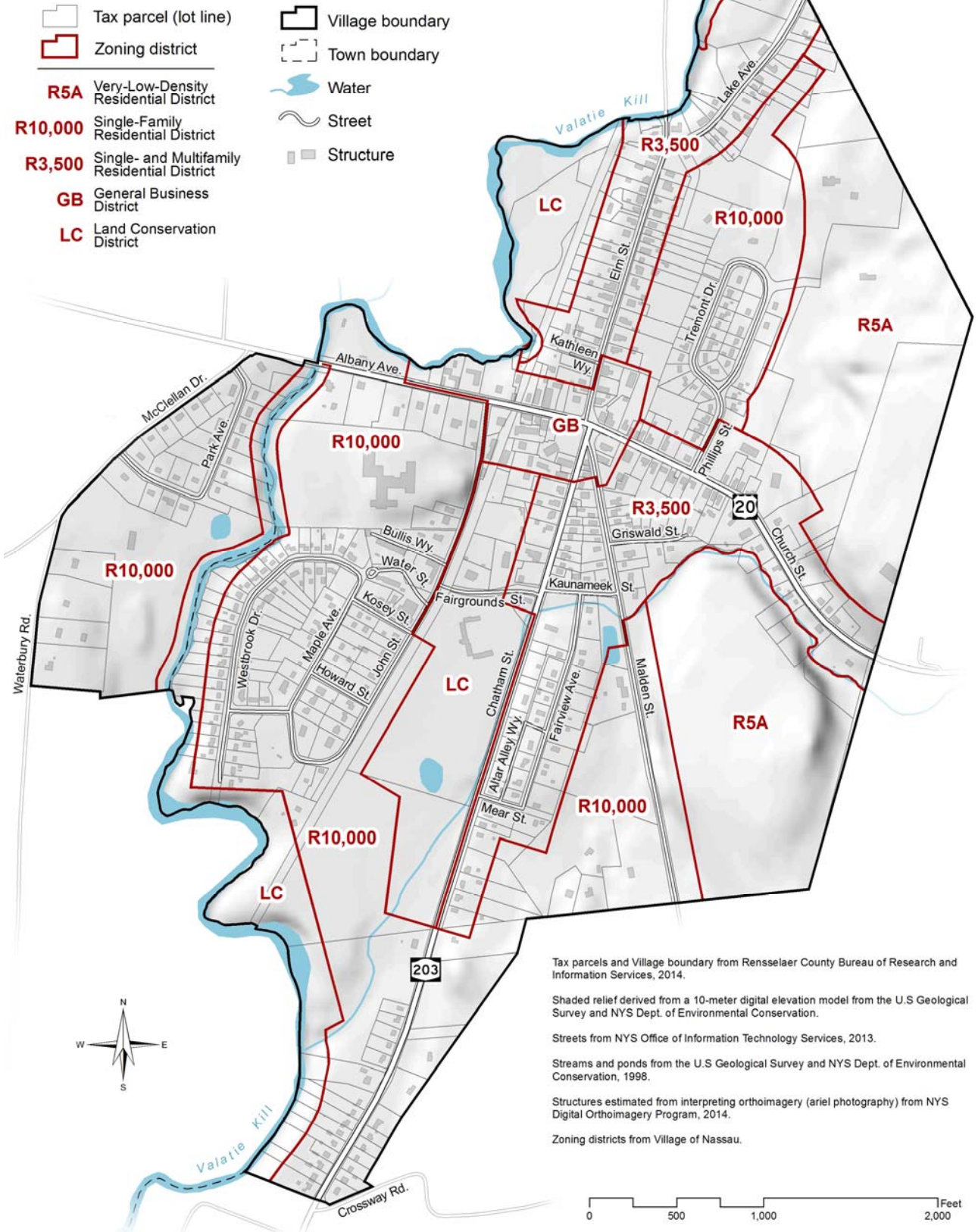
- Promote Nassau as a location that offers affordable housing, country living, convenience to Albany, recreational and cultural opportunities, and a low crime rate;
- Expand publicity for Village activities and festivals, as well as cultural, civic, and volunteer organizations; and
- Support ongoing EPA efforts to clean up the Dewey Loeffel toxic landfill

- **Objective 5: Review and update zoning code to encourage improvement to the community character of the Village.**

**Strategies:**

- Align zoning districts with parcel boundaries (lot lines)
- Revise General Business District provisions to continue to ensure preservation of community character but also make the Village a more desirable location for a wide variety of businesses.

## Map 2 Existing Zoning



# Housing

## Current Conditions

Nassau contains primarily older homes and buildings. The three historic districts (see Historic Resources section) consist of properties dating back to the early 1800's, many with attractive architectural features of that era. Elm and Church Streets, and Albany Avenue represent the bulk of the historic districts while other older structures are scattered throughout the Village. Three tracts in the Village represent post World War II era construction with bungalow style single-family homes as the predominant component. These areas are Chatham Street, Tremont and Phillips Streets, and the Westbrook Drive area. Although there are other areas with homes dating from the post WWII era, very limited new construction has occurred in the Village in the last 40 years. A noticeable percentage of these older homes are in need of modernization and upgrading.



According to the latest U.S. Census 5-year estimate (2010-2014), there were 581 housing units in the Village. Of these homes, 63.2% were single-family and 36.8% were multi-family, which includes duplex homes up to and including apartment buildings. Owners occupied 58.5% of the homes, while renters occupied the other 41.5%<sup>3</sup>.



A significant number of the larger homes and commercial properties have been converted to renter-occupied housing consisting of two or more apartments, some without the issuance of permits or certificates of occupancy (COs). Many of these are owned by absentee landlords.

As with the majority of the Country, the economic downturn starting in 2008 has had a noticeable impact on homeownership and property maintenance. Abandonment and foreclosures of existing homes has created a serious problem for the Village. Most of these properties are not being maintained and pose health and safety risks. This creates

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<sup>3</sup> American Community Survey, US Census Bureau, 2010-2014 estimate.

a negative impact on property values when neglected, unsightly properties are interspersed with well-maintained homes. The situation also impacts public image and raises quality of life issues.

Reduced incomes of some homeowners during the economic crisis have resulted in the limited ability to maintain or invest in their homes. This has further fueled the erosion of the Village’s overall “curb appeal”.

These trends are an indication of the instability in the local housing market and represent a shift away from single family, owner-occupied residences in the Village. The result of these various problems—physical, economic, and demographic—has diminished the likelihood that the Village will attract a new generation of homeowners willing to invest in a future in Nassau. This is of great concern. Since a majority of homes are currently owner-occupied, preservation and improvement of the current housing stock should be a major focus of local government.

\* \* \*

**GOAL: To preserve and enhance Village neighborhoods that are aesthetically appealing, predominantly owner-occupied, and foster a sense of place.**

- **Objective 1: Stem the deterioration of residential neighborhoods.**

**Strategies:**

- Enforce current Property Maintenance laws and increase code enforcement efforts throughout the Village (Robust Code Enforcement);
- Initiate programs and incentives to encourage owners to maintain their properties;
  - Provide a clearinghouse of information for programs such as weatherization and revitalization grant opportunities; and
  - Create a “trust fund” to assist homeowners with improvements and down payments for the purchase of existing vacant single-family homes. These could include no- or low-interest loans, block grants, or matching funds
- Discourage the segmentation of homes and businesses into multi-family units by strengthening building codes and local laws;
- Review development projects for their compatibility with existing neighborhoods;



- Discourage any further commercial/business expansion into predominantly residential neighborhoods; and
  - Improve the appearance of commercial and retail areas of the Village to improve the overall appeal of the Village.
- **Objective 2: Rehabilitate Vacant, abandoned, and foreclosed properties.**

**Strategies:**

- Obtain grants for improvement projects related to creating and improving housing stock;
  - Lobby County Government to assist the Village in rehabilitating tax-held properties to promote;
    - Quicker disposition of tax-held properties;
    - Better maintenance of properties awaiting tax sale; and
    - Increased sales to owner-occupying buyers or developers willing to rehabilitate properties as single-family
  - Actively seek developer(s) to rehabilitate deteriorating properties;
  - For properties owned by lenders:
    - Require lenders to aggressively maintain vacant, foreclosed properties until sold;
    - Compel lenders to reduce prices on foreclosed properties within the Village to accelerate the turnover process; and
    - Set standards for maintenance of vacant properties and compel strict adherence to these standards
  - Review and amend any existing zoning laws that may encumber the purchase and rehabilitation of vacant properties
- **Objective 3: Encourage single-family, owner occupied development.**

**Strategies:**

- Plan any future development to be in keeping with the unique Village Character;
- Obtain grants and funding to create a Village-wide Housing Plan;
- Creatively use any vacant property owned by the Village;
- Encourage development of clustered “small-lot homes” that appeal to first time homebuyers; and
- Undertake a public relations campaign to educate potential residents on the appealing amenities and character of the Village

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# Infrastructure

## Sidewalks

### Current Conditions

While some of the neighborhoods in the Village have sidewalks, not all streets have them and some existing sidewalks are in poor condition. The Village is small enough to be fully walkable and the business district is frequently walked by residents. However, Route 20 can only be crossed safely and legally at one location. Streets that are currently without sidewalks are capable of having sidewalks added. The width and materials of the existing sidewalks are inconsistent (see Map 3). In addition, property owners do not consistently keep sidewalks clear of snow and vegetation.



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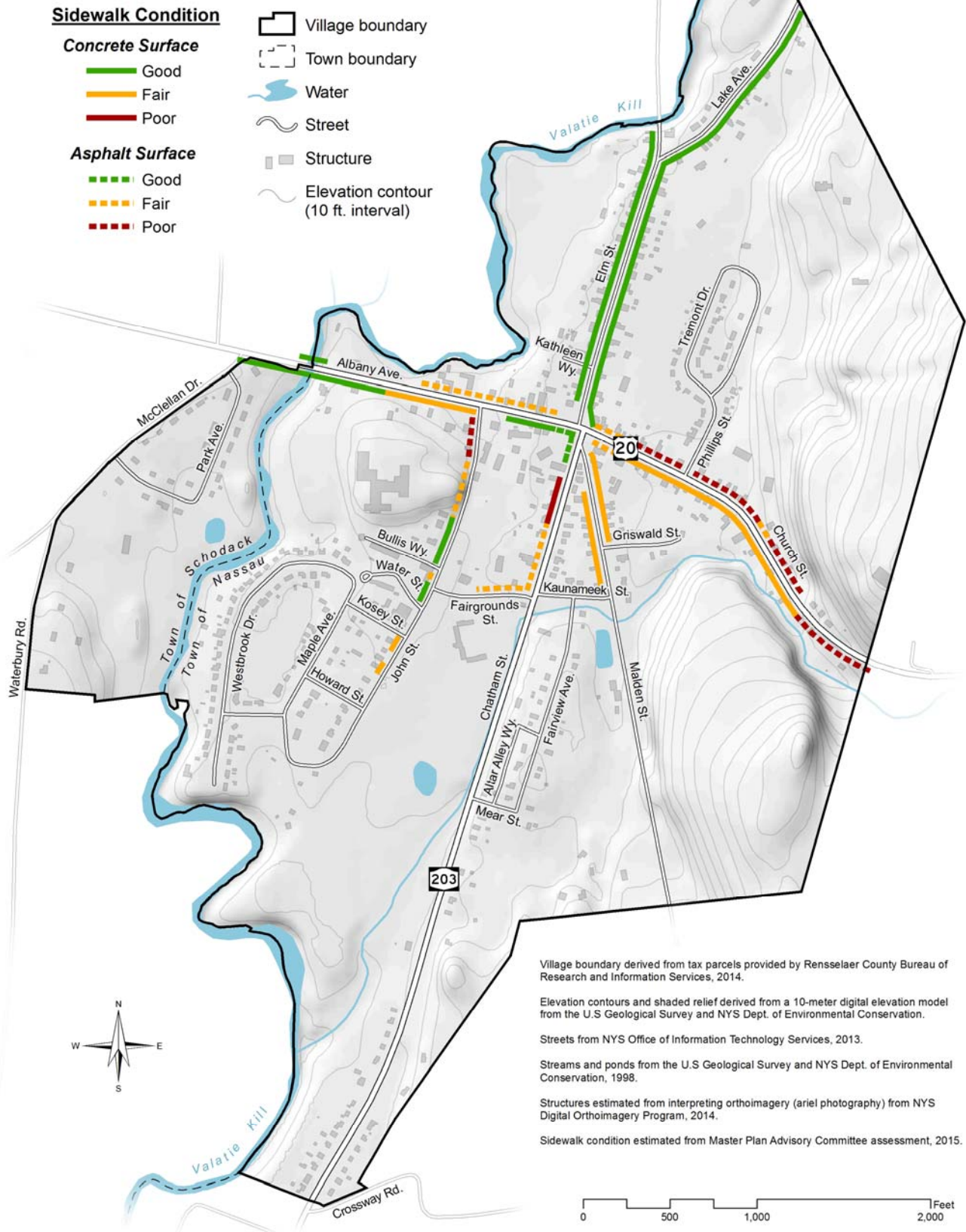
**GOAL: To make all neighborhoods within the Village safe and enjoyable for walking.**

- **Objective 1: Improve the quality and presence of sidewalks throughout the Village.**

#### **Strategies:**

- Explore expansion of sidewalks throughout Village;
- Develop priority list of sidewalk repairs for existing sidewalks;
- Explore expansion of maintenance department to clear snow from sidewalks;
- Explore grants for decorative improvements, e.g. tree plantings. Identify locations where trees would be suitable; and
- Enforce codes related to homeowner maintenance of sidewalks

### Map 3 Sidewalks



## *Sewage Disposal*

### **Current Conditions**

The Village of Nassau does not have a sewer system to treat its waste. Instead, Village residents and businesses depend on private septic systems. While there is no burden of a sewer tax or costs associated with maintaining a sewer system, several disadvantages are evident with a lack of a Village-wide sewer system. Many existing septic systems are old, which can lead to issues with sanitation and replacement costs for landowners. The density of parcels in the Village makes it challenging for many residential and commercial properties to comply with the current setback codes for septic system designs. This leads to the regular issuance of variances—or a lack of compliance—leading to the use of dry wells instead of leach fields. The cumulative use of these dry wells is an environmental threat, especially to the Village’s drinking water. This limitation is also a significant constraint on the ability of many types of businesses to exist, and is therefore a deterrent to business development.

The issue of sewage disposal was a major concern in the 1993 Master Plan, and unfortunately the situation has not changed since then. As discussed in the Plan, in the 1960’s Federal and State money was available to assist municipalities in developing sewer systems. A 1967 study entitled “Comprehensive Sewerage Study: Village of Nassau, Town of Schodack and Environs” concluded that a need existed for sewage treatment in the area and proposed two alternatives for their development. The first alternative proposed a system that would service the Village of Nassau, the area around Nassau Lake, and a part of the Town of Schodack. The second alternative was proposed for just the Village.

In 1970, a survey was conducted for residents in the Village of Nassau, the Town of Nassau and the Town of Schodack to determine if residents would support either alternative of the 1967 study. Of the 401 respondents, only 102 responded in support of a municipal sewage treatment system, while 283 said they would not support such a system. The cost of implementation was thought to be the reason for the opposition, despite the State and Federal assistance that would have been available. Today, as in 1993, those funds have all but disappeared.

\* \* \*

**GOAL: To effectively and safely treat sanitary waste generated within the Village**

- ***Objective 1: Provide residents and businesses access to a municipal sewage disposal system.***

**Strategies:**

- Continue to seek opportunities for funding and developing a sewer system. A pressurized sewer system could be more economical to install than a standard gravitational system (no sewer taxes, no costs for maintaining sewer system).  
The Village owns land that could be used for a sewage treatment facility; and
- Seek opportunities to partner with other municipalities to achieve economies of scale in system implementation. Participate in cross-municipality planning if opportunity arises.

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## **Natural Gas**

### **Current Conditions**

The Village of Nassau does not currently have natural gas service as an available option for heating, cooking and hot water generation. The utility provider, National Grid, does not extend gas service to this area. The irony is that the Town of Nassau was recently being considered as a viable route for a natural gas pipeline that would not actually provide gas service to the region.

Although not as environmentally sound as renewable sources of energy such as solar and wind, natural gas is a cheaper alternative to fuel oil, propane, or electric. Residents would likely benefit financially if properties could be converted to natural gas for heating and other purposes. Money saved by using natural gas (as opposed to more expensive alternatives) could be diverted to home maintenance and improvements, to pay property taxes or reduce personal debt. It would also be an incentive for businesses to locate within the Village by allowing cheaper operating costs.

\* \* \*

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**GOAL: To provide affordable energy options for all residents and businesses.**

- **Objective 1: Provide natural gas within the Village**

**Strategies:**

- The Village Board should work with the County and other local governments to function as a unified group to pressure utility providers to offer natural gas service to our area;
- Should the gas pipeline proposal become a certainty, the County and local governments should insist on natural gas availability as a prerequisite for completion of the project; and
- The Village Board, County and other local governments should lobby the Public Service Commission to not approve any further utility tariff increases without viable plans for expansion of natural gas service into Rensselaer County

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## **Water Supply**

### **Description and Condition**

A large portion of the Village of Nassau is located on an aquifer. There are two wells drawing from this aquifer that provide the Village's municipal water supply. The approximate depth to groundwater is 25 feet. The wells are located immediately south of the end of Maple Avenue. Water is stored in a 225,000-gallon water tank, installed in 2010, located at the end of Water Tower Way. Propane-fired emergency generators are installed at the well site and water tank site to power the systems at each site in the event of a power failure.

Consumption of water ranges from 98,000 to 133,000 gallons per day. Based on current population estimates, this would indicate an average daily consumption per capita of 88 to 121 gallons, which is similar to the national average<sup>4</sup>. Capacity of the Village's wells is believed to be 1,000,000 gallons per day. Considering the Village's population is not projected to grow in the coming years, the Village's supply of water should continue to meet daily demand.

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<sup>4</sup> *United States Geological Survey Water Science School*, <http://water.usgs.gov/edu/qa-home-percapita.html>, 2016.

The Village of Nassau is known for its excellent quality drinking water. The Village was recognized in 2015 as having the best tasting drinking water in Rensselaer County. Testing for coliform contaminants is performed twice per month as per Rensselaer County regulation. The water system is tested for other potential contaminants on an annual basis, including Nitrate, Radium, and other naturally occurring elements.

The current contamination treatment system at the Dewey Loeffel Landfill Superfund Site in the Town of Nassau poses a potential threat to the Village's water system. A number of toxic and/or carcinogenic materials are being released into the Valatie Kill approximately 2 miles upstream from the Village's aquifer. The Valatie Kill runs through the Village and directly over the aquifer. In 2015, on several occasions, unsafe levels of contaminants, including 1, 4 dioxane, were released into the Valatie Kill through the treatment system and allowed to continue to be released even after the failure of the system was acknowledged.

Aside from the emergency generators, the Village water system has no backup. Should there come a time when the underlying aquifer no longer can produce enough water to meet Village consumption, or if it becomes contaminated, some other solution will be required.

The existing water distribution system has mains that range from 4" to 10". Periodic improvements to the water system have been made in order to keep the system functioning. Most of the water mains have been replaced within the past 20 years. Most recently, the Village replaced the mains along Albany Avenue and made upgrades at the far east end of Church Street in order to strengthen sections of the water distribution system that experienced a large number of water main breaks in the Winter of 2014/15. These upgrades and replacements also increased the fire protection capacity in the vicinity of the new water main and relocated the replaced pipe from under the crumbling roadbed of Route 20.

The water mains on Chatham Street, especially the southern end, are a known weak point in the water distribution system. There is a known chokepoint along the mains there. This area should be prioritized for a future upgrade.

Overall, the water system is an incentive to attracting both business development and homeowners.

## Financing

Residential property owners pay a flat fee for water based on the number of residents at the property. The base rate is for a family of two, with a rate increase for each additional person in the housing unit. Commercial users of the water system are charged based on type and size of the business. In addition, on each bill through June 30 2025, a charge



of \$50 is added in order to pay off a bond that was used to purchase new water tanks in 2010. Currently, the individual housing unit water use is unmetered. The lack of a metered system is an incentive for waste or inefficient use. It also generates some resentment among residents when they believe someone else is using more water than they are without being charged more.

The water system budget for the last five years is as follows:

<u>2011/12</u>	<u>2012/13</u>	<u>2013/14</u>	<u>2014/15</u>	<u>2015/16</u>
\$234,548	\$234,216	\$245,785	\$236,365	\$240,526

\* \* \*

**GOAL: To continue to provide high-quality, affordable drinking water to residents and businesses**

- **Objective 1: Improve the water delivery system.**

**Strategies:**

- Identify weak points in water main and replace;
- Explore connection to Schodack water system as an emergency backup;
- Update map of water system; and
- Explore alternative well sites

- **Objective 2: Strengthen financial health of water system.**

**Strategies:**

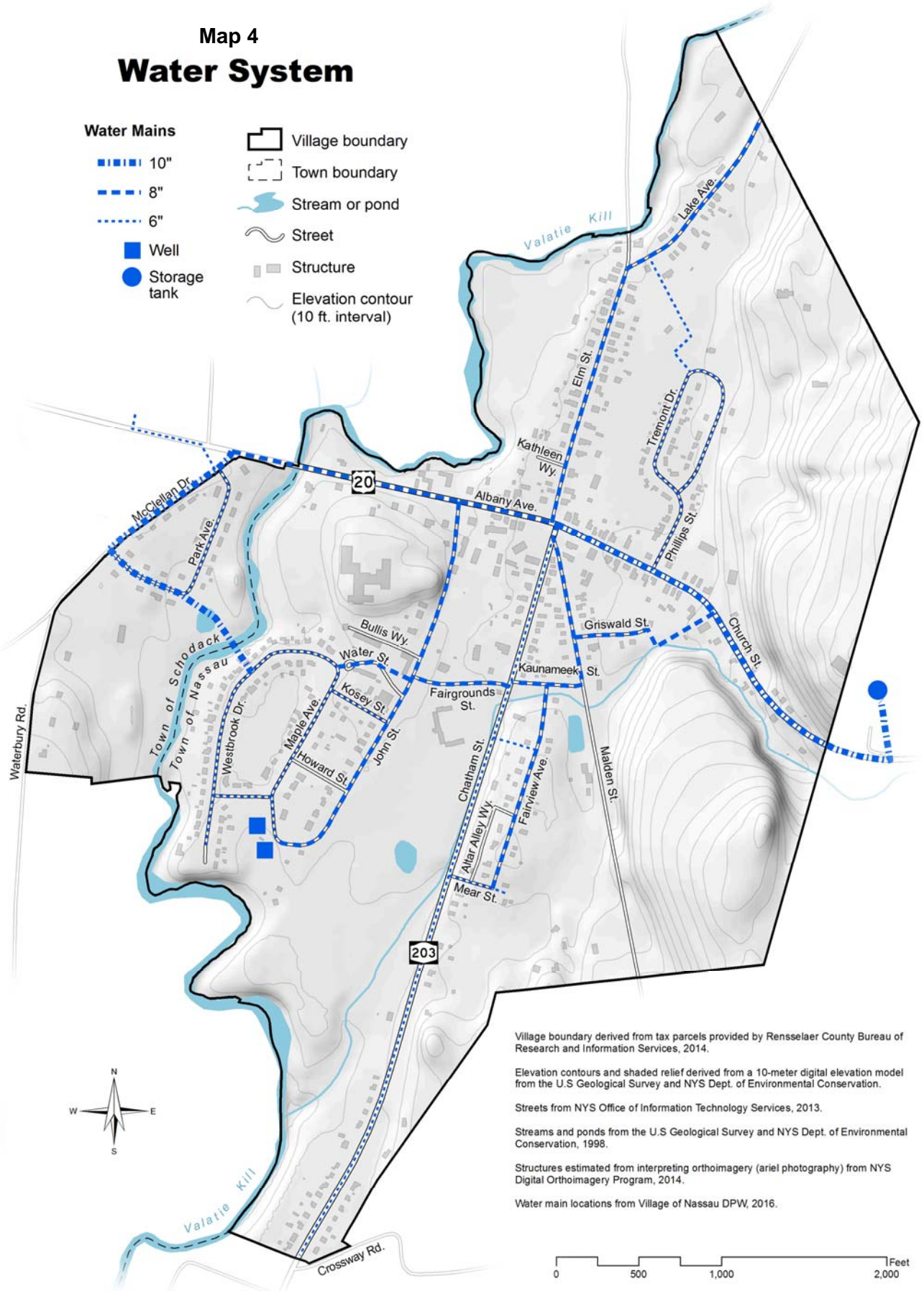
- Expand current system by selling water/providing service to outlying areas;
- Investigate the viability of implementing the metering of water; and
- Increase code enforcement. Enforce existing regulations for reporting the number of residents in each residential property for the purpose of calculating water charges

- **Objective 3: Maintain consistently high water quality.**

**Strategies:**

- Review and update current well-head protection plan;

## Map 4 Water System



- Petition EPA to require General Electric to perform regular water testing of the Valatie Kill near the source of the Village water system; and
- Encourage EPA to limit excessive discharge of toxins from the treatment system at the Dewey Loeffel site

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## Parking

### Current Conditions

Most residential properties have off-street parking. There is a lack of consistency concerning parking regulation enforcement, and overflow parking is informally allowed. As discussed in more detail in the Business District Viability section, the absence of municipal parking is a threat to the viability of existing businesses and a deterrent to new business development. The high density of the Village restricts parking availability. In addition, the shortage of public transportation results in a greater reliance on automobiles.

\* \* \*

**GOAL: To provide sufficient parking for residents and visitors to shop, recreate, and utilize alternative transportation.**

- **Objective 1: Expand municipal parking capacity.**

**Strategies:**

- Investigate availability of properties for municipal parking;
- Perform study to determine municipal parking needs; and
- Explore on-street parking for the business district on Route 20

---

## Stormwater Management (Drainage)

### Current Conditions

Stormwater runoff is precipitation (rain or snowmelt) that flows across the land. Stormwater may infiltrate into soil, discharge directly into streams, water bodies, or drain inlets, or evaporate back into the atmosphere. In the natural environment, most precipitation is absorbed by trees and plants or permeates into the ground, which results in stable stream flows and good water quality.

This situation can be quite different in areas dominated by impervious surfaces such as concrete and asphalt. Rain that falls on a roof, driveway, parking lot, patio or sidewalk runs off these surfaces more rapidly, oftentimes picking up pollutants as it travels. Since this water is not able to naturally infiltrate into the ground, stormwater runoff flows into storm drains that discharge into waterways like the Valatie Kill. During extreme precipitation events, stormwater drainage systems can become overloaded. When this happens, runoff cannot be conveyed sufficiently and significant flooding occurs.

As shown on Map 5, the Village of Nassau routinely experiences stormwater-related flooding in several locations: 1) just east of the intersections of Route 20 (Church Street) and Route 203 (Chatham Street), 2) west of the intersection of Route 20 and John Street, 3) along the south side of Kaunameek Street, and 4) at the end of Phillips Street and Tremont Drive.

While the ultimate fix to this problem is to upgrade the storm drainage system along State Route 20 and increase its capacity, the cost to undertake such a project would likely be significant. However, another potentially viable option is to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff entering the drainage system.



There are a number of “green infrastructure” activities that can be undertaken by homeowners, churches and commercial businesses located along the Route 20 corridor to reduce stormwater runoff. Green infrastructure activities are relatively easy to complete and can be extremely low cost. These include directing gutters and downspouts away from driveways and sidewalks and onto pervious surfaces such as lawns and/or rain gardens; capturing runoff from downspouts and gutters with rain barrels; and removal of impervious surfaces, replacing them with pervious pavers such as stone, concrete or brick laid with space in between to allow infiltration of water. Other types of green infrastructure projects can be installed within the Route 20 proper or in the immediate right-of-way.

\* \* \*

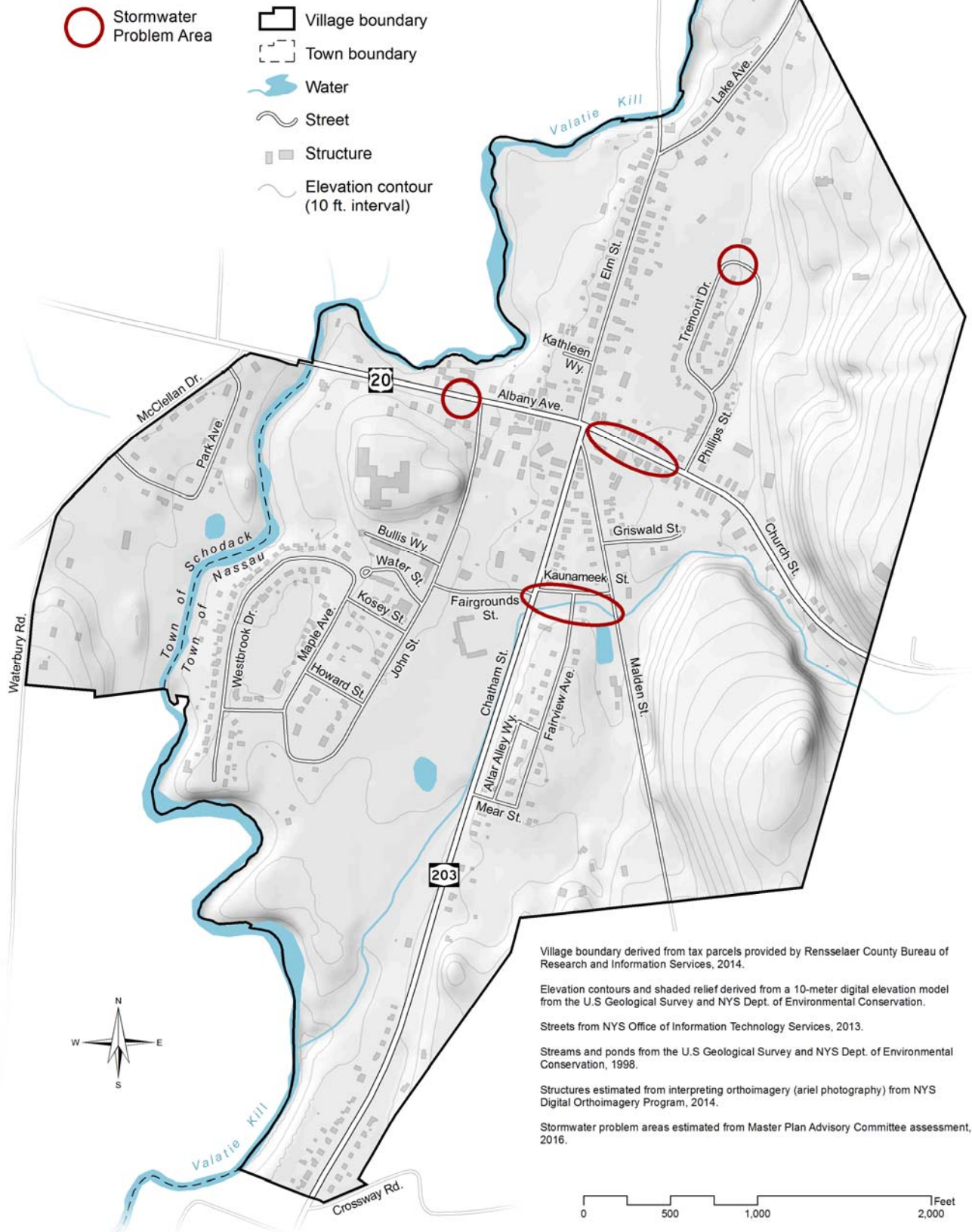
**GOAL: To provide for the efficient, safe, and environmentally sound drainage of stormwater.**

- **Objective 1: *Improve stormwater management infrastructure along roadways.***

**Strategies:**

- At the time the water system is replaced or improvements to Route 20 are undertaken, the Village should request the storm drainage system be replaced or appropriate stormwater best management practices be put in place along the road or within the right-of-way by New York State Department of Transportation to reduce flooding;
- Work with residents, not-for-profits and businesses along Route 20 to identify opportunities for implementing Green Infrastructure projects;
- Remove berms and dredge materials upstream of Malden Street to allow stream access to floodplain and wetlands and reduce pressure on culvert; and
- Re-engineer stream flow of unnamed stream from Malden Street to Route 203 to accommodate higher rainfall events

# Map 5 Stormwater Problem Areas



# Public Services

## *Police*

### Introduction

The Nassau Police Department is located at 40 Malden Street in the Village Municipal Building. It was established to provide for the safety and welfare of the residents of Nassau. The department handles local concerns and enforces all local, state, and federal laws.

### Current Conditions

The department consists of eight part time officers, including an Officer-in-Charge who acts as the administrative head of the department and supervisor of the other officers, as well as performing patrol duties. All of the officers have successfully graduated from a New York certified police academy as required by the New York State Department of Criminal Justice, are firearms qualified annually, and trained in Taser use. The department has two patrol vehicles. One of the vehicles, a 2011 Ford Crown Victoria, was obtained through a federal Byrne Jag grant in 2011. The other, a 2016 Ford Police Interceptor Utility, was purchased under a municipal lease-purchase agreement in 2015 and will be fully paid off in 2018. The department also has a K-9 unit. The K-9 unit is trained in drug detection and tracking.

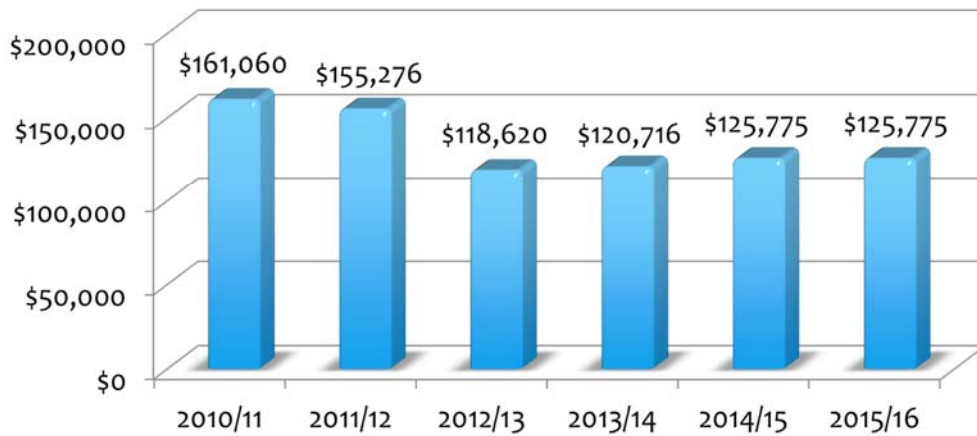
The department provides 72 hours of patrol per week, eight hours each day with an additional eight hours on Friday and Saturday. The department places a high priority on two main issues affecting the Village – enforcement of vehicle and traffic laws and enforcement of drug laws. In addition to law enforcement, the department also provides instruction to residents on home security and property checks for vacationing/out-of-town homeowners. Moreover, the department is also charged with acquainting local young people with the friendly role of a community police officer. Bicycle rodeos, school class tours of the police station, and K-9 skill demonstrations have helped to meet this objective.

Residents can contact the police department by calling 911 or 766-3388. County dispatchers then dispatch the department, which has an inter-municipal agreement with 4 police agencies—Schodack, East Greenbush, North Greenbush, and Rensselaer—to share resources in the following areas: community emergency response team (special weapons and tactics), hostage negotiations, crime scene investigation, accident investigation, training, and communications. The department also supports other emergency agencies, including local fire and ambulance agencies, providing scene clearing and security services. Annually, the department receives grants from both

Rensselaer County and New York State for traffic safety and driving while intoxicated (DWI) crackdowns. The department maintains a website ([www.nassaupd.com](http://www.nassaupd.com)), a police blotter ([www.nassaupd.com/blotter/](http://www.nassaupd.com/blotter/)), a Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/nassaupd](http://www.facebook.com/nassaupd)), and a Twitter feed (@NassauPD). All crime data are uploaded daily to RAIDSONline and can be viewed here: <http://www.raidsonline.com/?address=Nassau,NY>.

## Budget Information

**Figure 1: Police Department Budget, 2010-2016**



**Figure 2: Police Department Budget as a Percentage of Entire Village Budget, 2010-2016**



The current operating budget of the police department is \$125,775. In the past, the department's budget has been as much as \$161,000. In 2012, the Village Board voted to drastically reduce the department budget in response to a public opinion survey about the department conducted earlier that year. As a percentage of the entire Village



General Fund, the department currently accounts for 17.7% of the budget. This figure is down from earlier years in the decade. The budget includes funds for personnel, equipment and contractual expenditures, as well as an annual deposit of funds into a bond account for vehicle replacement. Depending on the availability of funds, this recurring deposit amounts to \$3,500 to \$4,000 per year. In the past, grant monies were available for police vehicles, and the department took advantage of those opportunities. The current vehicle replacement cycle is about 8 years.

**Figure 3: Police Department Revenue Fines and Forfeited Bail**



Through its enforcement activities (fines, forfeited bail) the department generates some revenue. Historically, the Village has been able to retain between 40% and 60% of the revenue collected. The remainder is passed through to the State of New York.

For many of its equipment purchases, from vehicles to computer systems to communications systems, the department has historically relied on grant funds. Below is a table of the equipment grants to the police department over the last 20 years.

**Table 1: Police equipment grants since 1996**

Equipment	Source	Year	Amount
Computers	NYS	1996	\$3,500
1999 Jeep Cherokee, Speed Trailer, Tint meter, Alco-sensor	Byrne JAG (federal)	1999	\$47,000
Datamaster Breathalyzer	DCJS (NYS)	2000	\$6,300
2001 Crown Victoria, 4 portable radios, Tint meter, Alco-sensor	Byrne JAG (federal)	2001	\$52,000
Server and mobile data terminals	Rensselaer County	2003	\$25,000
2003 Crown Victoria patrol vehicle	Town of Fishkill	2007	\$7,000
TraCS computer system and mobile data terminals	NYS	2009	\$13,430
Alco-sensor FST pre screening device	Rensselaer County	2010	\$680
License plate reader	Byrne JAG (federal)	2010	\$16,950
2011 Crown Victoria patrol vehicle	Byrne JAG (federal)	2011	\$32,635
In-car digital video camera	Rensselaer County DA	2012	\$2,500
Mobile radio equipment	Rensselaer County	2014	\$80,000
Ballistic and stab protective vest for K9 unit	Vested Interest in K9s, Inc.	2014	\$950

## Need for Department

The Village is bisected by NY highway Route 20. This road is the major non-Interstate route between Pittsfield, MA and the Capital District. Route 20 also connects with the truck route connecting Northern NY with the Capital District (Route 22). As such it is a heavily traveled route. As of the last NYSDOT traffic study of Route 20, nearly 9,075 vehicles travel on Route 20 through the Village each day. In addition, another 1,502 vehicles travel on Route 203 within the Village. The speed limit on Route 20 in the Village is 35 mph, while outside the Village limits, the speed limit increases to 55 mph heading east and 45 mph heading west. Vehicles routinely fail to adjust their speed when driving into the Village. In September 2014, the Village installed speed indicator signs on the east and west ends of Route 20 in the Village. Data from these signs indicate that approximately 40% of vehicles are traveling above the speed limit when they pass the signs.

There is also a drug epidemic in upstate NY affecting many areas, including the Village and other parts of southern Rensselaer County. Heroin, prescription opiates and other painkillers, a wide array of hallucinogenics, rock cocaine, as well as marijuana are among the drugs with high use rates in the region. Drug overdoses, especially with the precipitous decline in the price of heroin, have escalated among teens in recent years. Within the past several years, at least two fatal drug overdoses have occurred in the Village. Drug incidents are on a major uptick in the region. Data on drug-related arrests in the Village demonstrate the trend. Along with being a major thoroughfare between Pittsfield, MA and other parts of Western MA, the Route 20 corridor is also a major drug transport route both from New York City north and from Pittsfield MA west.

**Table 2: Arrests, 2010-2015**

Arrest Type	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Driving while intoxicated (alcohol or drugs)	14	16	19	10	9	23
Drug/Narcotics related	17	10	22	23	22	21
All other	99	98	71	80	81	69
Total	130	124	112	113	112	113

**Table 3: Traffic Infractions, 2010-2015**

Infraction Type	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Seatbelt violations	26	36	15	53	31	30
Unregistered vehicle	17	53	26	27	53	46
Consumption of alcohol in motor vehicle	6	12	17	14	17	7
Use of mobile phone/electronic device while operating vehicle	71	85	176	137	175	159
Disobeying a traffic control device	49	57	53	77	136	49
Unlicensed operation of a motor vehicle	65	74	68	88	102	79
Uninspected motor vehicle	49	67	38	64	84	78
Total	283	384	393	460	598	448

## Public Opinion

In 2012, the Village Board appointed an ad hoc committee to survey the residents of the Village about the performance of the Police Department and its budget. 150 completed surveys were received. Overall, the department was rated above average by those who chose to provide a rating. The only function where the department was rated below average was in community outreach and education. It should be noted, however, that for all evaluations, a sizable portion (in some cases more than half of the respondents) gave the response of “Don’t Know.” About 45% of respondents reported being somewhat or very satisfied with the performance of the department compared with 36% who reported being somewhat or very dissatisfied.

About 40% of the respondents reported that they would prefer outside police agencies exclusively to provide police services in the Village. Sixty percent reported that they would prefer the Village Police Department to provide these services. About half of the respondents reported that too many hours were devoted to patrols in the Village. Further, a sizable portion reported that the budget of the department be reduced.

In response to this information and a lively Village Budget Hearing in the spring of 2012, the Village Board reduced the Department's personnel budget by \$30,000 and patrol hours to the current weekly number (72 hours). It should be noted that this decision was not universally popular. Many expressed the opinion that the budget had been reduced too much.

In the Master Plan survey conducted in 2014, similar opinions were reported. To the question of whether the Village needs its own Police Department, 42% reported that they agreed there is a need for a department, while 43% reported that they did not agree there is a need. Further, 61% reported agreement that police services are adequate in the Village, while 19% reported that they did not agree that police services are adequate.

\* \* \*

**GOAL: To efficiently provide for the public safety of Village residents.**

- **Objective 1: Maintain the quality of police department performance.**

**Strategies:**

- Continue current re-certification and continuing education efforts for police officers; and
- Encourage professional development for police officers.

- **Objective 2: Foster improved trust and local public opinion of police department.**

**Strategies:**

- Where economically feasible, continue to include police department in community events;
- Encourage police department to develop new community outreach and education activities; and
- Periodically poll community on police department performance

- **Objective 3: Continue economic frugality for police department budgeting.**

**Strategies:**

- Encourage police department to explore grants to fund employment of police officers;
- Encourage police department to explore grants for equipment replacement;

- Continue to use grant monies from New York State and Rensselaer County for traffic safety and DWI enforcement activities; and
  - Develop and follow a formal capital equipment replacement plan
- 

## Fire

### History

The fire department and rescue squad provide important services to residents of the Village of Nassau, and also to residents of the Towns of Nassau and Schodack. The fire company dates back to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and began as a department of the Village of Nassau. The Village Board oversaw the policies and procedures of the fire department, approved the election of officers and managed the finances of the department including the purchase of fire trucks and equipment. Nassau Hose Company No. 1 provided the manpower, leadership and training to respond to emergencies.

The Village Board maintained fiscal control of Nassau Hose through the Village Budget. Trucks and equipment used and maintained by the Hose Company were legally the property of the Village and considered assets of the Village. A company budget was required and submitted annually to the Village board for approval. As with all other functions of Village government such as public works and police, the Nassau Hose's ongoing expenditures were



*Nassau Hose Company No. 1*

tracked through the Village accounting system and were reviewed in the monthly and annual financial reports. For several years, tension grew between the rank and file of the fire department and the Village Board concerning approved budget allocations and the degree of fiscal control exerted by the Village Board. At the same time, the Nassau Hose was expressing indignation over the breach of established territorial boundaries by adjacent fire departments. Hoags Corners had recently established a fire district and set their district boundaries so as to encompass certain areas within the Nassau township that traditionally were serviced by the Nassau Hose Company.

In the early 2000's, in order to obtain fiscal control and to stem the encroachment of service territory, members and officers of the Nassau Hose and other concerned citizens petitioned the Village and Town governments to allow the establishment of a Fire District. After public hearing and debate, both governments approved the establishment

of a fire district. In 2005 the Nassau Fire Department became Nassau Fire District No. 1, governed by a Board of Fire Commissioners. The Fire District comprises the area of the Town and Village of Nassau previously covered by the Nassau Fire Department and continues to contract with the Town of Schodack. The Board of Fire Commissioners has taken over all the duties previously performed by the Board of Trustees of the Village of Nassau.

### **Current Conditions**

Currently the Nassau Fire District operates three Engine Tankers, one utility vehicle, one Ice Rescue trailer, and one Special Operations multi-use trailer. The Nassau Hose Company No. 1 continues to supply manpower, leadership and training to an all-volunteer department. Since the forming of the Nassau Fire District, it has expanded its expertise into vehicle extrication, ice rescue, and confined space rescue assistance.

Aside from the obvious benefits of fire protection, the Nassau Fire Department functions as a pillar of the community. It provides its members with a place where they can learn valuable skills, develop a sense of community and experience civic responsibility through helping others. Its physical location within the Village has an added benefit of lowering homeowner's insurance costs and decreasing response times.

Despite the benefits, certain precautions need to be taken when a Fire District is established and becomes its own taxing entity. There can be less public input and fiscal control. As the number of services that have taxing authority increases (fire, ambulance, library, Village, Town, County, School), the overall cost to taxpayers can become inflated. Each entity sees a part of the whole but not the end result. Expansion increases the tax burden and the potential for lack of oversight. The Village and Town government took this into consideration when agreeing to the establishment of the Fire District by maintaining control of who sits on the Fire District's governing board. As terms expire, the Village and Town governments alternately approve replacements, thereby retaining limited oversight.

In the 1990 Master Plan Survey Fire and Ambulance Services ranked first in importance to Village residents followed by Water Quality and Street maintenance. The 2014 Master Plan Survey (Appendix 1) showed 87% of the respondents agreed the Nassau Fire District provides adequate fire protection services.

\* \* \*

**GOAL:** To ensure continued level of fire protection service for Village residents and businesses.

- ***Objective 1: Maintain the quality of service provided by the Nassau Fire District.***

**Strategy:**

- Continue to support the Nassau Fire District in their current operations and service to the Village

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## **Ambulance**

### **History**

Nassau Fire Department Ambulance was first organized as a department of the Nassau Fire Department in 1953 but it operated independently. The organization purchased its own equipment and vehicles, and manpower was drawn from the firefighter pool to respond with the ambulance in emergency medical situations.

In 2007 Nassau Fire Department Ambulance separated from the newly formed Nassau Fire District No. 1 to become Nassau Ambulance Inc.

### **Current Conditions**

Nassau Ambulance Inc. is now an independent, not-for-profit organization operating in the Towns of Chatham, Nassau and Schodack. It is comprised of local volunteers, and manages its own members in leadership and training, providing well-qualified persons to respond to emergency medical situations. Due to a lack of volunteers, Nassau Ambulance Inc. contracts for staffing for one ambulance during the day shift Monday – Friday. Night shifts and weekends are staffed by volunteers.



Nassau Ambulance operates a station at 498 McClellan Road in the Village of Nassau that also serves as a short-term emergency shelter and area EMS Training facility. Due to population growth over the last twenty-five years, Nassau Ambulance now operates two ambulances to handle the increased volume of calls.



In the 1990 Master Plan Survey Fire and Ambulance Services ranked first in importance to Village residents followed by Water Quality and Street maintenance. The 2014 Master Plan Survey showed 86% of the respondents agreed that Nassau Ambulance, Inc. provides adequate emergency medical services.

\* \* \*

**GOAL: To ensure continued level of ambulance service for Village residents and businesses.**

- **Objective 1: Maintain the quality of service provided by the Nassau Ambulance Inc.**

**Strategy:**

- Continue to support the Nassau Ambulance Inc. in their current operations and service to the Village

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## ***Solid Waste and Recycling***

### **History**

When the 1994 Master Plan was drafted, disposal of solid waste had become a major problem due to regulated closures of landfills around the region and the state. Disposal costs increased dramatically as landfill options declined. The Eastern Rensselaer County Solid Waste Management Authority (ERCSWMA) was created in July 1989 for the purpose of managing solid waste within the Eastern Rensselaer County region. At that time, the Authority's stated objective was to develop and operate a solid waste composting facility within the County, which would provide a cost-effective solution to the refuse disposal problem for its members. Within a short period of time, political and regional opposition grew as siting of the facility became a "hot potato". After signing 25-year membership contracts in ERCSWMA and as development costs mounted, a number of municipalities opted out of their contracts. Litigation ensued with the ruling going in favor of the departing municipalities. This left a handful of towns and villages remaining in the Authority, one of them being the Village of Nassau.

The Authority re-focused efforts toward a solid waste plan for the remaining members. It took on the role of negotiating waste hauling contracts, finding alternative landfill space, creating recycling markets, sponsoring household hazardous waste collection events, and generally assisting municipalities in reducing disposal costs. Another major service of ERCSWMA was to track the amount of solid waste/recyclables being produced and to

educate the citizens on how to reduce, recycle and reuse. ERCSWMA obtained an on-going grant from NYS Department of Environmental Conservation for education, the most notable benefit being the distribution of annual calendars specifically designed for each municipality, showing collection days, events, meeting dates and tips on reducing waste. The Authority also sponsored the Eastern Rensselaer County Community Warehouse, which is a reuse center where usable, discarded or donated items are sold, thus diverting the items from landfills.

Over the years, the problem of what to do with our municipal waste and where it can be landfilled has not been resolved, only postponed. ERCSWMA-generated solid waste has been shipped across the State, and even out of state, to landfills with available capacity. The Village has been able to reduce the amount of discarded waste, mainly through recycling efforts that include curbside pick-up. The amount of waste produced annually by the Village is again on the rise and costs for waste hauling and disposal are estimated to dramatically increase. Landfill capacities continue to be of growing concern, as do the environmental impacts of burying increasing amounts of garbage.

### **Current Conditions**

As of this writing, the Village's waste hauling contract is due to expire and estimates for a new contract are steep. ERCSWMA is only able to assist with the bidding process; the Authority appears powerless to effect cost reductions for the Village. Also, the Village's 25-year contract with ERCSWMA expired in 2015 and was renewed for one year.

\* \* \*

**GOAL: To provide the most environmentally sound and cost-effective methods for managing Nassau's solid waste.**

- **Objective 1: Continue to secure the best available refuse collection service for the Village.**

**Strategy:**

- Evaluate ERCSWMA's cost benefit to the Village at present and going forward. Postpone any additional contract renewal with the Authority until such an analysis is completed

- ***Objective 2: Continue to work with Village residents and businesses to implement best practices for solid waste disposal.***

**Strategies:**

- Educate Village residents on the need and importance of solid waste management, especially the need to recycle. This effort should be ongoing. Residents should be made aware of the problems and expense the Village faces in dealing with solid waste, and the need for compliance with the established disposal/recycling program. Mandate that ERCSWMA take the lead in this effort by providing educational materials, events and strategies to improve recycling and reduce solid waste;
- Explore strategies to enforce existing refuse limits such as reducing the size of standard collection bins and enforcing the requirement of additional fees for excess capacity; and
- Continue to offer special events such as Village Clean-up and Household Hazardous Waste disposal opportunities

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# Transportation

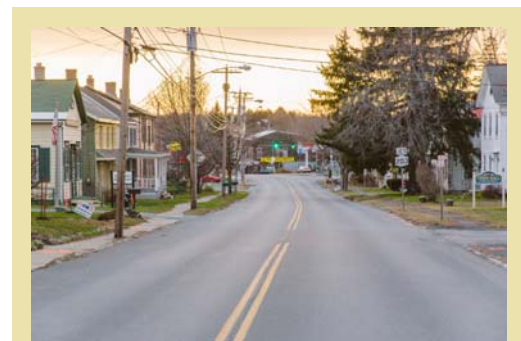
## *Introduction*

The economic health of the Village is dependent upon the functional viability of the transportation systems used to service the area including but not limited to roads, bridges, sidewalks, mass transit, and trails. Roadways and sidewalks are critical pieces of infrastructure for a community, allowing its residents to access their homes, businesses and workplaces. A community’s street network provides the framework for future growth and development and should accommodate all modes of traffic while being visually appealing and safe for use.

## *Current Conditions*

### Roadways

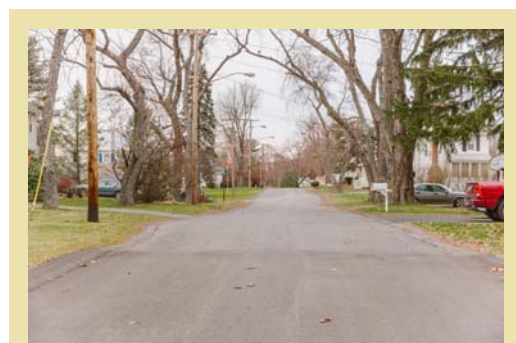
The Village of Nassau’s main access is from US Route 20 and New York State Highway 203. Route 20 is a major route traveling east to west across the United States. This is a medium to large volume roadway with the current ADT (Annual Daily Traffic) of 9,075 entering the Village from the west based on the NYS Traffic Data Viewer 2013 data (see Map 6). The intersection of US Route 20 and NYS Highway 203 serves as the northern terminus of NY 203.



*U.S. Route 20*

The secondary roadways within the Village are used by residents to access their homes and local businesses. Malden Bridge, Elm Street and McClellan Road are additional

roadways that don’t terminate within the Village and provide access to the surrounding areas. The remainder of the Village roadways begin and end within the Village limits.



*Fairview Avenue - a Village street*

All Village roads except Alter Alley—which was dedicated in 2015—have been paved in the last 10 years, and the Village has a dedicated roadway crew responsible for maintenance and plowing of the Village roadways.

## Public Transit

The Capital District Transportation Authority (CDTA) operates an unofficial park-and-ride at the center of the Village on Malden Street behind Sunoco and Phelps Insurance with other bus stops located along Elm Street. CDTA's Nassau Express offers quick and reliable service to downtown Albany from the Village on a limited weekday basis. While access to the park-and-ride is easily accessible to pedestrians, its long-term viability is uncertain, as it is located on private property.



## Bicycles

Bicycle facilities such as bicycle lanes are a great way to promote public health, reduce automobile traffic and improve safety for residents. The existing Village roadways do not provide the space to add bicycle lanes. Currently only US Route 20 has an identified bike lane for a small portion of the Village. The former trolley tracks located through the center of the Village would be an ideal location for a shared-use path.

Younger generations are not depending on individually owned automobiles and are seeking walkable communities with easy access to goods and services. The development of the street, sidewalk and transit systems along with recreation facilities should together focus on pedestrian ease of use and traffic calming measures to allow the Village to develop into a viable community (see Open Space and Recreation section for more discussion).

\* \* \*

**GOAL: To create, maintain and improve the transportation system for the Village that allows easy access for all users to local businesses and residences as well as public transit options.**

- **Objective 1: Improve infrastructure system's ability to provide safe and efficient circulation of pedestrian and automotive traffic.**

### **Strategies:**

- Consider intersection improvements and traffic calming measures for Route 20 within the Village to reduce traffic speeds and create safer pedestrian accommodations. Of particular importance is the

- 
- intersection of Route 20, Route 203, and Malden Street (see figures 1 and 2);
  - Work with NYS DOT to create crosswalks on US Route 20 that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
  - Identify and evaluate roadways lacking sidewalks within the Village and construct ADA compliant sidewalks; and
  - Work with NYS DOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to identify possible funding for installation of sidewalks within the Village limits
- **Objective 2: Improve and maintain the reliability and capacity of the Village transportation system.**

**Strategies:**

- Identify locations for municipal parking facilities where an official park and ride could be established to promote use of public transportation;
- Establish a repair and replacement program for local sidewalks and roadways;
- Establish a program to replace old streetlights with more energy efficient lighting with increased illumination;
- Analyze the off-street parking conditions and develop a plan to solve the associated parking problems with official on-street parking locations, new curbs and sidewalks;
- Continue to maintain and enhance the curbing throughout the Village;
- Establish Village standards for curbing, sidewalks and driveways within the Village Code so new developments will be consistent with the aesthetics of the Village; and
- Develop former Trolley tracks into a shared-use trail for recreation and alternative transportation purposes

**Figure 4: Concept for the intersection of Routes 20 and 203**



**Figure 5: Concept for the intersection of Routes 20 and 203 (alternate view)**









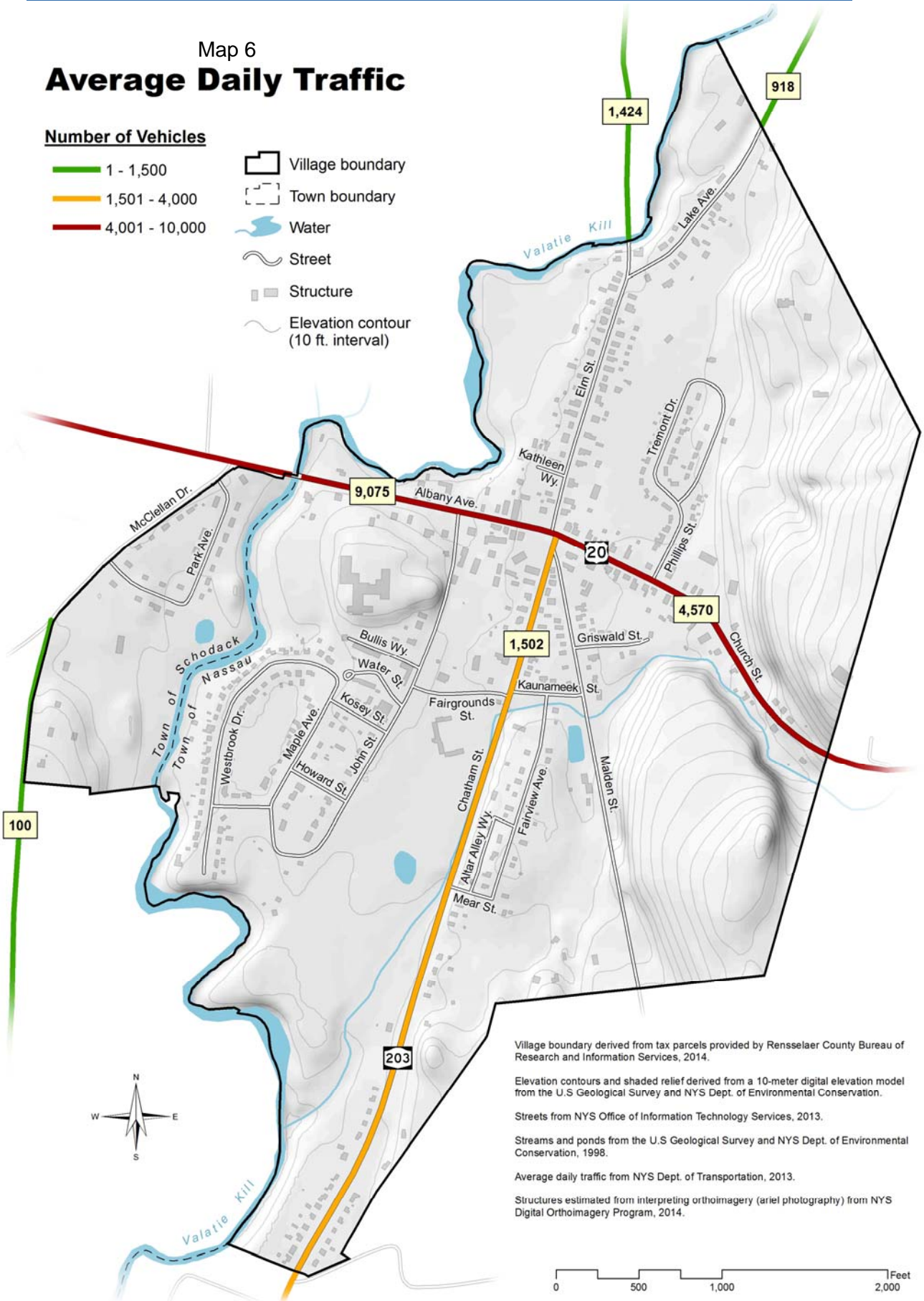


# Map 6 Average Daily Traffic

## Number of Vehicles

- 1 - 1,500
- 1,501 - 4,000
- 4,001 - 10,000

-  Village boundary
-  Town boundary
-  Water
-  Street
-  Structure
-  Elevation contour (10 ft. interval)



Village boundary derived from tax parcels provided by Rensselaer County Bureau of Research and Information Services, 2014.

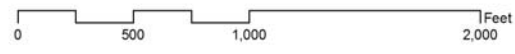
Elevation contours and shaded relief derived from a 10-meter digital elevation model from the U.S Geological Survey and NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation.

Streets from NYS Office of Information Technology Services, 2013.

Streams and ponds from the U.S Geological Survey and NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, 1998.

Average daily traffic from NYS Dept. of Transportation, 2013.

Structures estimated from interpreting orthoimagery (aerial photography) from NYS Digital Orthoimagery Program, 2014.



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# Business District Viability

## Introduction

The business district of the Village of Nassau serves both functional and symbolic purposes for the community. Functionally, the business district is responsible for meeting the commercial needs of Village residents, residents of nearby communities and travelers passing through the Village. Symbolically, the business district creates a first and lasting impression to visitors and continually reinforces residents' sense of pride for the community that they call home.

Results of the survey of residents (Appendix 1) reveal a clear consensus with regard on both of these aspects of the Route 20 business corridor through the Village. With regard to the symbolic, aesthetic quality of the business district, residents resoundingly called for improvement. The poor condition of buildings (“unattractive,” “dilapidated,” “horrible,” “lousy,” “poor,” “dumpy,” “unappealing,” “awful”) and the abandoned gas station at the corner of Albany Street and Elm Street were the most commonly criticized aesthetic aspects of the business district. The need to improve sidewalks and plant trees along the corridor was also cited.



*Abandoned gas station on the corner of Route 20 and Elm Street*

The survey also revealed a desire for more businesses located in the Route 20 corridor and specifically for more small-scale shopping and service businesses like repair shops, professional services and personal services. Residents who responded to the survey also expressed a preference for locally-owned independent businesses over national chain branches.



*Recently redeveloped Cumberland Farms on the corner of Route 20 and Route 203*

Several businesses in the Village have struggled or failed in recent years. While the reasons are assuredly numerous, and in many cases specific to the individual businesses, there are also community factors that affect the

viability of individual businesses within the business district and, as such, impact the health and viability of the business district as a whole. In order to support the development of a vibrant business community within the Village, those factors that

impact the viability of small retail businesses and that are primarily or exclusively under the control of the community at large need to be identified, and strategies to address them need to be formulated.

Among the factors that significantly affect the types of retail businesses that are desired by residents are:

- **Market:** Is there a customer base of sufficient size within proximity of the business location to support the business? Does the business fulfill a need that exists in the market area?
- **Traffic:** Is there sufficient foot traffic from which the business can attract customers? (This is particularly important where the business thrives on impulse purchases.) Is there sufficient auto traffic and visibility of businesses to that traffic?
- **Accessibility and parking:** Can customers easily get to the business location? Is there sufficient parking in close proximity to the business location and is it easily accessible? Is the availability of parking apparent to passing traffic? Are there any impediments to the use of the parking such as meters, private parking restrictions, lack of accommodations for people with disabilities, etc.?
- **Competition:** Are the needs of the target market for a business already met by successfully operating businesses in the area? Is the market area saturated with similar businesses?
- **Proximity to complementary businesses:** Do the businesses within close proximity complement each other, drawing upon a similar customer base but addressing different needs?
- **Image and history of the location:** Does the location have a reputation that supports the business community? Are customers drawn to the area based on a general image that the location has? Does the location actively promote its image in a manner that supports the business community? Are there features in or near the location that encourage positive promotion by the media (e.g., local press, travel media, governmental and pseudo-governmental agencies tasked with promoting tourism, etc.)?
- **Ordinances and zoning:** Do the local zoning regulations create an environment that is supportive to conducting business successfully in the location? Does the zoning support development of modern structures (through renovation and new construction) to meet the demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century consumers? Do zoning regulations adequately prohibit nearby properties from becoming detrimental to the business (either from undesirable development or unmitigated deterioration)? Are there any local ordinances that prohibit or overly regulate the intended

business or discourage customers from purchasing goods or services from the intended business in the location?

- **Functional adequacy of building stock:** Are the structures in the commercial areas functionally adequate for conducting business in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Do the buildings have code-compliant plumbing and electrical systems? Are the buildings accessible by people with disabilities? Do the buildings have structures and layouts that are consistent with the needs of modern retailers?
- **Utility availability and cost:** Are water, sewer, electricity, natural gas, telephone, internet service, cable TV service, and high-speed fiber optic digital services all available to the business location? Are costs for each of these services competitive; is the cost for any of the utility services prohibitive to successfully competitive business operations?

## Current Conditions

### Market

The size of the Village business district and the individual parcels within it prescribe a local market composed of Village residents, residents of immediate surrounding areas, and travelers through the Village (primarily along Route 20). The population size and density of the Village and the surrounding area also factor into the determination of the general market for the Village business district.

The population of the Village of Nassau as of the 2010 census was 1,133. The population of the neighboring Town of Nassau, excluding the Village of Nassau, was 3,656. The population of the neighboring Town of Schodack was 12,794 although only the eastern third of the Town of Schodack should generally be considered part of the market area for the Village of Nassau. Many of the vehicles that travel through the Village on Route 20 each day are likely Village residents or residents of nearby locations. However, there are also many commuters from Western Massachusetts, Stephentown and New Lebanon that pass through the Village each day.

Due to the limited population of the market area of the Village, businesses that address basic needs and/or a variety of needs will generally be more successful than businesses catering to very specific customer needs.

### Traffic

On average, 9,075 vehicles pass through the Village of Nassau each day on Route 20. Foot traffic is almost exclusively limited to Village residents (except during the Village-wide garage sale in June and on Halloween). Redevelopment of the old trolley line into

a “rail trail” recreational feature would create more foot traffic, adding to the customer base.

### **Accessibility and Parking**

There is currently no public parking in or near the business district. On-street parking is currently prohibited throughout the business district and there is no municipal parking lot in the Village. While a few businesses provide ample and visibly available parking (e.g., Cumberland Farms, Nassau Merchandising), most businesses in the Village lack the real estate to provide sufficient parking for their customers.

### **Competition**

There are several convenience stores and gas stations in and around the Village of Nassau. The Village is currently served by three of these: Cumberland Farms, Grampy’s, and Stewarts (which recently relocated from its Village location at the corner of Albany Street and John Street to a new location just outside the Village on the corner of Route 20 and New Road). In addition, there is a fourth gas station at the corner of Albany Street and Elm Street that has been closed for approximately 10 years.

### **Proximity to Complementary Businesses**

There is currently no coordinated synergism among businesses in the Village; the businesses each operate independently with little apparent attempt to recognize and exploit complementary needs of common customers. Existing businesses in the Village, most notably the antique stores (Antiek, Bailey’s, Marks’s and Two Feathers), provide an opportunity for the development of complementary businesses.

### **Image and History of the Location**

The Village of Nassau has a rich history, although it does not currently play a part in promoting the businesses in the Village. The most prevalent image of the Village is that of a speed trap.

### **Ordinances and Zoning**

The Village of Nassau has had zoning regulations in place since 1970, which provide structure and stability. These zoning laws have been periodically reviewed and were updated in 1995.

Current zoning regulations are not consistent with much of the existing land use. This is primarily due to property development that occurred prior to the establishment of the zoning regulations. It is also recognized that a lack of enforcement of the zoning regulations in certain instances makes future enforcement more difficult. As described in

the Community Character section, the current zoning can be prohibitive to new business as it is challenging to comply with.

### **Functional Adequacy of Commercial Property Improvements**

Most of the property in the General Business District is functionally obsolete. (Functional obsolescence is a reduction in the usefulness or desirability of an object because of an outdated design feature, usually one that cannot be easily changed. For instance: electrical wiring that does not conform to current National Electrical Code with regard to such items as the number of outlets in a room, spacing between outlets, or GFCI protected circuits; plumbing that is not up to current code; building structural design that does not accommodate current expectations for open floor plans.)

### **Utility Availability and Cost**

The properties in the General Business District are served with water supplied by the Village, electricity provided by National Grid, telephone service provided by Fair Point Communications, and internet service and cable TV service provided by Time Warner Cable. Water use rates are comparable to or lower than those in most locations in the region. National Grid electric rates are consistent throughout the region. Land line telephone service and DSL internet service are provided by Fair Point Communications. Cable TV and broadband internet services are provided by Time-Warner. Pricing varies for telephone and internet services depending on the specific features purchased.

Sewer, natural gas, and high-speed fiber optic digital services are not available to the properties in the General Business District zones of the Village.

### **Occupancy**

There are currently a significant number of vacant commercial properties in the business district. Properly addressing the aforementioned factors as they relate to each of the vacant properties would go a long way toward solving the low occupancy rate in the Village Business District.

\* \* \*

**GOAL: To create a vibrant business district that supports the needs of the community.**

- ***Objective 1: Improve parking and visibility of available parking to provide improved access to businesses in the Village and encourage travelers to patronize local businesses.***

One of the most significant factors to commercial success in the Village of Nassau is parking. Businesses with available parking have generally succeeded while those with little or no available parking have struggled. Access to parking is a key element of “access-convenience” which, in turn, is a major factor in a consumer’s decision-making process. Simply put: If there is no apparent conveniently accessible parking located in close proximity to a commercial establishment, most consumers will choose to drive by. This may be particularly true for businesses that cater to people travelling through the Village and that provide convenience goods and services.

It is not enough to have parking available. The parking must be obvious and it must be easily accessible.

**Strategies:**

- Reconfigure Route 20 to provide on-street parking. If necessary, additional space for parking lanes may be achieved by eliminating curb strips and setting utility poles back. Offsetting driving lanes is a strategy that would support the creation of parking on a single side of the roadway;
  - Locate and obtain property in order to develop a municipal parking lot; and
  - Negotiate public/private partnerships to allow public use of private parking lots
- ***Objective 2: Create infrastructure to improve the accessibility of the Business District to patrons and create a more fertile environment for business success.***

Reducing auto traffic speed and improving pedestrian access will improve accessibility to and attractiveness of the business district. Traffic calming is the implementation of specific physical attributes that result in the slowing of traffic speeds. Stop signs are the simplest tool for slowing traffic. “Narrowing the real or



apparent width of [a] street”<sup>5</sup> has a significant impact on reducing vehicular speed on that street. “The sense of enclosure resulting from parked cars, the articulated appearance of parked cars, the entry/exit vehicular maneuvers, and the pedestrian traffic generated by occupants of parking/departing vehicles, all contribute to traffic calming on streets with parking.”<sup>6</sup>

The Village currently suffers from a number of infrastructure deficiencies that significantly impair development of the business district to its fullest capability. The lack of a public sewer system places practical limits on density. The lack of public natural gas service limits heating fuel choices and acts as a further deterrent to commercial development. The lack of a fiber optic cable network in the Village limits competitive choices for high-speed internet service.

The Village should also consider infrastructure as an opportunity to differentiate the business district from competing locales.

**Strategies:**

- Convert the intersection of Albany Street and John Street to an all-way stop to provide safer pedestrian crossing, traffic speed control, and better traffic flow;
- Convert the intersection of Church Street and Phillips Street to an all-way stop to contribute to speed control on Route 20 and provide safer pedestrian crossing;
- Reduce speed limit on Route 20 through the business district to 25 or 30 mph. This will create a safer environment for pedestrians and will create an environment where drivers and passengers in slower moving vehicles are more likely to take notice of the businesses in the business district;
- Add on-street parking as described under Objective # 1, to reduce vehicular traffic speed via traffic calming (in addition to providing needed parking);
- Create well-marked crosswalks at the intersections of Albany Street and John Street, Albany Street/Church Street and Elm Street/Chatham Street, and Church Street and Phillips Street;
- Obtain grant funding to repair and replace damaged sidewalks and curbs in the business district;
- Evaluate options, feasibility, and benefit of metering the water delivered to commercial customers to provide cost equity;

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<sup>5</sup> *Massachusetts Department of Transportation Design Guide*, 2006 Edition. 16-1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 16-13.

- Aggressively seek grants and/or other funding sources to finance the installation of a municipal sewer system;
  - Identify opportunities to incentivize National Grid to install natural gas service in the Village;
  - Identify opportunities to incentivize Verizon or Fair Point Communication to install high-speed fiber optic cable in the Village; and
  - Evaluate feasibility of installing a municipal broadband internet service in the Village, differentiating the Village from all other business locations in the Capital District region
- **Objective 3: Improve the visual appeal of the business district.**

Improving the visual appeal of the business district will create a greater incentive for people to patronize local businesses. As described in the Iowa State University publication *Visual Merchandising: A Guide for Small Retailers*, “The quality of a store front is a major determinant for a customer, particularly a new customer, and should not be underestimated. The exterior appearance of one store, a block of businesses or a cluster, silently announce what customers can expect inside.... How a store visually welcomes customers has a lot to do with whether or not they enter the store.”<sup>7</sup>

Improving the visual appeal of the Village business district is a joint responsibility of the Village and the individual business owners. The Village needs to work with the business owners to transform the business district into an attractive, inviting, charming and enticing locale.

### **Strategies:**

- Develop a cohesive vision of an inviting, quaint, small Village setting (such as a “Norman Rockwell setting”) and update zoning regulations to guide future development toward that vision.
- Obtain grant funding to replace existing street lighting in the business district with street lamps that contribute to a quaint, small Village atmosphere and improve Village appeal as a place to shop and dine.
- Obtain grant funding to plant appropriate trees along the Albany Street business corridor.

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<sup>7</sup> Holly Bastow-Shoop, Dale Zetocha and Gregory Passewitz, *Visual Merchandising: A Guide for Small Retailers*, (University Publications, Iowa State University, 1991). 3.

- Obtain grant funding to provide incentives to business owners to improve the facades of their properties.
- Obtain grant funding to repair and replace damaged sidewalks and curbs.
- ***Objective 4: Improve the mix of businesses in the Village to create a synergistic business environment where businesses are mutually complementary.***

Grouping of retail businesses that complement each other, satisfying different needs of a common customer base, increase the appeal of the overall business location and provide a leveraged opportunity for each business in the group to attract new customers from the customer bases of the neighboring businesses.

**Strategies:**

- Leverage the antique stores in the Village by identifying complementary businesses (by surveying antique store customers both in Nassau and in other locations identified as model locations) and then implementing proactive strategies to attract complementary businesses. For example, an upscale casual dining establishment that coincides with and adds to the quaint Village atmosphere specified in Objective 2 above would complement and support an antique store “destination” and simultaneously meet an existing pent up demand of residents.
- Survey customers of other existing businesses to identify needs of these customers that present opportunities for complementary businesses.
- Identify commercial needs of commuters and travelers that are not currently met by existing businesses and promote the development of these types of businesses to leverage the traffic that flows through the Village each day on Route 20.
- Promotion of the Village development strategy should be a basic element of the overall strategy for attracting complementary businesses. Use of incentives should be carefully considered and, if identified as appropriate, need to be very carefully structured to achieve the beneficial results while minimizing unintended negative consequences such as the generation of resentment on the part of existing business owners.

- ***Objective 5: Improve the image of the Village and the Village's business community.***

The initial and most prominent image of a potential destination significantly contributes to the decision a person makes on whether to visit that destination. For a business that provides goods and services that are subject to deliberate purchase decisions, the image of the Village is a primary element influencing the decision of a potential customer regarding whether or not to patronize that business.

The first and most crucial step in correcting any problem is acknowledging the problem. To improve the image of the Village of Nassau, the Village must first identify and accept the image that exists. To do this in an unbiased manner, the Village should conduct surveys in the region to identify the impressions that people have of Nassau.

**Strategies:**

- Conduct surveys in the region to identify the predominant images people have of Nassau.
  - Take substantive actions to change those issues that generate legitimate negative images of the Village.
  - Conduct public relations campaigns to correct inaccurate negative images.
- ***Objective 6: Leverage Village history to promote the Village and the business community in the Village.***

Historical attributes of a locale, both major and minor, present promotional opportunities. The history of the Village of Nassau has been well researched and documented and provides a fertile source of promotional material.

**Strategy:**

- The Village should include a summary of novel historical attributes of the Village in its sponsored promotion of the Village business district to spur creative marketing concepts for both existing businesses and prospective ventures.

- ***Objective 7: Strengthen zoning code to be more business friendly without compromising community character, health and safety, or property values of neighbors.***

Current zoning may drive commercial property development to a more suburban model with fewer, larger buildings and greater setbacks. This may be considered necessary with the current infrastructure, specifically a lack of public sewers. Installation of a public sewer system would support the maintenance of the current dense, small Village layout.

**Strategies:**

- Review zoning regulations to identify those regulations that create significant deterrence to commercial development without providing specific substantial benefits or protections to the Village and revise or remove those regulations.
  - For zoning regulations that hinder commercial development but also provide necessary protections, seek alternative strategies to achieve these same protections.
  - Obtain grant funding to finance the installation of sewers. Consider a phased approach, if financing dictates, by installing a public sewage system first in the central business corridor. Once sewers are in place, revise the zoning regulations in the commercial zones to eliminate existing commercial development regulations that are in place to assure adequate functioning of private septic systems.
- ***Objective 8: Encourage development that addresses demand of the local community.***

The results of the survey of Village residents (see Appendix A) clearly identify a demand for a local grocery store. Restaurants were identified by some survey respondents as a need. A coffee shop, laundromat, Chinese restaurant, and medical doctor were also specifically identified as needs in the survey results.

**Strategies:**

- Explore the market potential for attracting a grocery store to the Village. Evaluate the feasibility of a small scale “grocery basics” retailer and promote the Village to potential entrepreneurs.
- Promote the development of restaurants and coffee shops, integral or individual. Promote redevelopment of land along the old trolley line, including the old Stewarts property, for these purposes.

- Explore the market demand for self-service and full service laundry businesses and actively promote the Village as a market for a business providing such services.
- Explore the feasibility of attracting medical services to the Village, perhaps as an auxiliary office of an established practice.

# Cultural Resources

## *Current Conditions*

### Religious Institutions

The Village has five religious institutions within its boundaries:

- Nassau Reformed Church;
- St. Mary’s of the Nativity Church;
- Grace United Methodist Church;
- New Hope for Life Ministries; and
- Nassau Synagogue



These institutions provide not only a place of worship but also a sense of community. Each one has outreach efforts within the community and also organizes social events throughout the year. St. Mary’s has a parish hall that is used for both church and community events, and New Hope for Life Ministries operates a thrift store and food pantry in the Village called the Gathering Place. The Nassau Reformed Church operates the Nassau Resource Center

which provides food, clothing, referrals, and advocacy for Nassau area residents in need.

### Donald P. Sutherland Elementary School

Built in 1936, the Donald P. Sutherland (DPS) Elementary School currently enrolls students from kindergarten through 5th grade. Many generations of current and former Nassau residents have been educated there. DPS is a part of the East Greenbush Central School District, which was ranked 5<sup>th</sup> out of 84 school districts in the Capital Region according to the Albany Business Review’s 2015 Schools Report rankings. Although not officially sanctioned, Village residents use the playground facilities when school isn’t in session and also use the hills around the property for sledding in winter.



## Nassau Free Library

The Nassau Free Library has been in the Village since 1881 and in its current location since 1893. It offers paper and electronic books and magazines as well as movies and internet access. As a member of the Upper Hudson Library System, it provides patrons



with access to paper and electronic resources throughout the upper Hudson Valley. The library also houses a collection of historic photos and maps of Nassau through the years, historic papers related to the Nassau area, and the Ralph Phillips Genealogy Collection that traces family histories in the Village. A variety of programs are held throughout the year, including movie nights, educational lectures, author visits and club meetings. The library

also provides meeting space for a variety of Town and Village organizations.

## Veterans Memorial

The American Legion maintains a small memorial for service members from the Town of Nassau in the triangle of land between the intersection of Malden Street, Chatham Street (Route 203) and Church Street (Route 20). The memorial consists of a small plaque, a flagpole, a spruce tree and other small landscape plants. Because streets surround it, the site is both challenging and unsafe to access, and is too small to accommodate



more than a few people at a time. The spruce tree will soon have to be cut away from nearby utility lines because it has outgrown its location.

## Nassau Beautification Committee

The Village Beautification Committee ([www. Nassau12123.com](http://www.Nassau12123.com)) was formed in the late 1980's as a group of volunteer residents and friends working to improve the quality of life in the Village by organizing and hosting free community events, maintaining seasonal plantings in public spaces, and communicating with each other through a printed newsletter called "The Village Green."

Annual events hosted by the Beautification Committee include:

- Village-wide Yard Sale (June);
- Gazebo Concert (July);



- Chicken Bar-B-Que (August);
- Nassaufest (September); and
- Oktoberfest (September)

## Other Community Organizations

There are other organizations within the Village that serve a variety of purposes for the community. The Nassau Community Band performs at various functions throughout the year, including parades and festivals. Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops serve to educate Village youth and help them give back to the community through volunteering. The Nassau Sunshine Fund is a charitable organization that provides no-interest loans to Nassau residents who are faced with financial emergencies. The Historical Society of Esquatak was founded in 1971 to identify and preserve the historical resources of the Towns of Nassau and Schodack. Activities include research, lectures, presentations, tours and other educational programs. The Nassau Baseball Association, which is a significant recreational resource in the Village, hosts an annual parade every spring to kick off its Little League season.

## Nearby Attractions

The Village is in an ideal location near cultural venues in Albany, Troy, Saratoga Springs and western Massachusetts that are within an hour's drive. It is also less than 3 hours from New York City and Boston. There are numerous large event spaces in the area that attract major groups and acts, including the Times Union Center, Revolution Hall, Upstate Concert Hall, the Saratoga Race Track, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and Tanglewood, with many smaller spaces as well. Major museums in the area include the New York State Museum, the Albany Institute of History and Art, the Normal Rockwell Museum, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, the Berkshire Museum and the Clark Art Institute, among many others.

## Municipal Facilities

### *Village Commons*

Dedicated in 1992, the Village Commons serves as the classic "Village Center" where most Village-sponsored events and activities occur. Located on John Street, the Commons include a gazebo (shown on cover) and a large, open lawn area suitable for a variety of activities. The Commons is also available for use by other organizations.



*Village Commons*

### ***Village Hall and Town Hall***

In addition to hosting official business, both the Village Hall and Town Hall are available as public meeting places.

\* \* \*

## **GOAL: To enhance the cultural and community character of the Village.**

- **Objective 1: Assist community organizations in carrying out their missions.**

### **Strategies:**

- Utilize the Village website as source of information for community organizations; and
  - Create one or more social media accounts (e.g. Facebook, Twitter) and/or a Village email list to notify residents of official Village and community organization news and events.
- **Objective 2: Cultivate a sense of community among Village residents.**

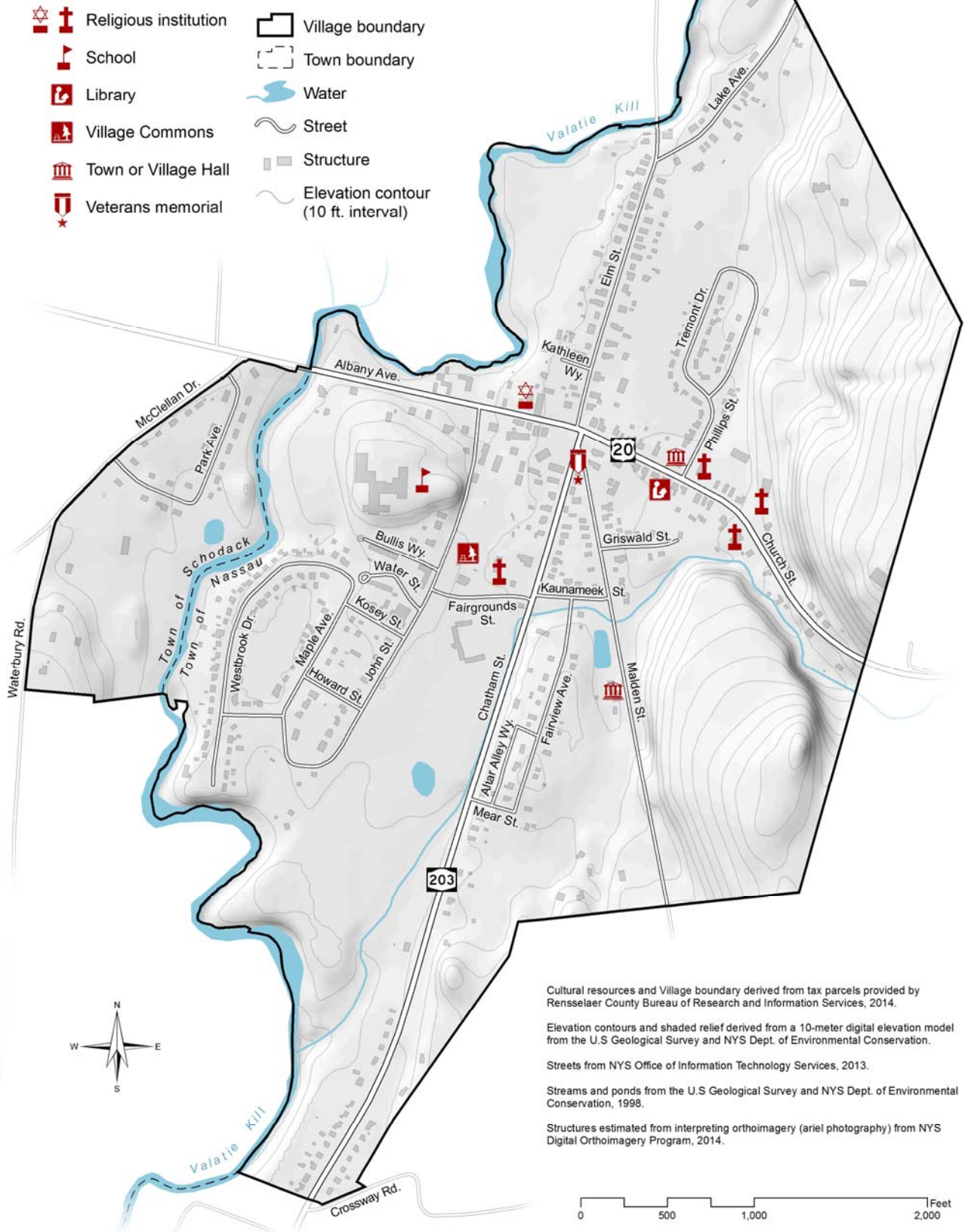
### **Strategies:**

- Institute and promote additional Village-sponsored gatherings such as block parties, St. Patrick's Day parade, etc;
  - Create events to leverage existing large gatherings during the Memorial Day parade and Village-wide Yard Sale;
  - Open up the Village-wide Yard Sale and Memorial Day parade to outside vendors as a way to draw more visitors and promote the Village; and
  - Create a community center in the Village to bring residents together and give them a common place to gather
- **Objective 3: Find a more suitable location for the Veterans Memorial.**

### **Strategy:**

- Work with the American Legion to identify a location that is safer to access and within a setting more appropriate for a memorial.

# Map 7 Cultural Resources



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# Open Space and Recreation

## Introduction

On the public opinion survey, participants consistently indicated that they value recreational facilities, open space, and the preservation of Nassau’s rural character. As described in the following paragraphs, however, several of the recreational facilities and opportunities that do exist within the Village are either restricted or not officially recognized or allowed by the underlying landowner. As such, the future use of these areas remains uncertain. Additionally, recreational corridors such as sidewalks and trails are incomplete and undeveloped in places, and Routes 20 and 203 are severe barriers to safe connectivity between Village neighborhoods.

## Current Conditions

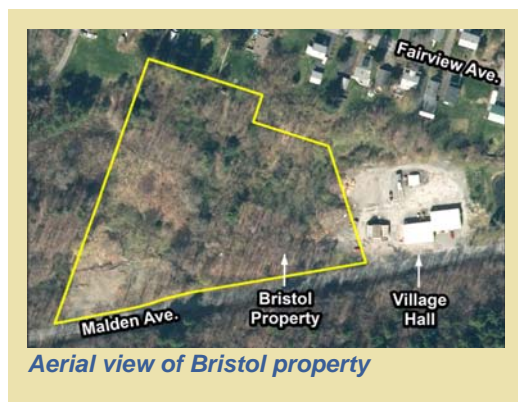
### Stanley Park

Located at the corner of Kaunameek and Malden Streets and adjacent to Village Hall, Stanley Park is a 0.75-acre Village facility and the only park with playground structures that are open to the general public. The park also has a pond that is open for fishing and is popular for ice-skating in winter.

New playground equipment and a new fence were recently installed at the park.



### Bristol Property



This 5-acre property is adjacent to the Village Hall property on Malden Street, and was acquired by the Village in 2009. Named after its previous owners, the land is vacant today with no official recreational purpose. Future uses for the property have been considered, such as passive recreation and a municipal composting facility, but no steps have been taken towards developing a concept with public input at this time. Much of the property

is covered by a wetland, which could be an interpretive element of any future recreational use.

## Village Commons

As described under the Cultural Resources section, the Village Commons is where most Village-sponsored events and activities occur. It is adjacent to both the Nassau baseball field and the old trolley line, and as such is ideally situated as a recreational hub that supports these other facilities. There is also a volleyball court on site, although it is rarely used and not currently maintained for this purpose.

## Nassau Baseball Field

Adjacent to the Village Commons on John Street, the Nassau Baseball Field is on land owned by Nassau Hose Company Number 1 and managed by the Nassau Baseball Association as a Little League facility. The field is only used for official Association games and practices, and is not available for use by the general public, however all are welcome to attend games.



## Old Trolley Line

The old trolley line is a linear corridor that runs from Albany to Hudson. Within the Village, the line runs parallel and to the west of Elm and Chatham Streets, crossing Route 20 near John Street. As the name suggests, the corridor is an old railroad, with gradual curves and a generally flat grade. Today the land is owned by National Grid and



used for electrical transmission lines. In many locations throughout the Village, landowners adjacent to the corridor have cleared away vegetation and in some instances, mow the grass on a regular basis. Near the Route 20 business district, much of the corridor is paved and used as a right-of-way by neighboring landowners for access to their properties. As such, it is possible to walk nearly the entire length of the corridor within the Village boundary. The Valatie Kill blocks access

across the Village boundary at both the northern and southern end of the Village. National Grid does not officially authorize public use of their land, but doesn't actively prevent non-motorized uses such as walking, bicycling, and horseback riding. The

Village police have been asked to issue trespassing warnings and/or violations to those using motorized recreational equipment such as all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). The old trolley line abuts large wetlands in several locations within the Village, providing opportunities for wildlife viewing and enjoyment of the last remaining large tracts of open space within the Village.

For the past several years, an effort has been underway to formally open the old trolley line as a public rail trail, also known as the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail. A feasibility study for the section between the Columbia/Rensselaer County line to the City of Rensselaer was completed in 2011, which provided cost estimates, an inventory of physical and environmental obstacles, and a general alignment for the trail. Efforts are currently underway to secure funding for planning and engineering work, which National Grid requires prior to entering into an agreement for recreational trail development.

### **Donald P. Sutherland Elementary School**

By far the largest area of recreational space in the Village, the grounds of Nassau's only public school provide area residents of all ages with a variety of year-round recreational opportunities. Sports fields, a track, two playgrounds, and a large area of asphalt—used for bicycling and skateboarding—are used throughout the warmer months. A large hill behind the school is a popular sledding destination when enough snow is on the ground. Passive activities such as dog walking are also common. Despite its popularity for these uses, there is the obvious limitation of only being available during periods when students are not present, and neither school nor district officials have indicated any level of permission for the general public to use the facilities, most likely for liability concerns. Organized sports teams with insurance are usually given permission to use the fields for games and practices.



### **Sidewalks**

As mentioned in the Infrastructure section, sidewalks can serve many purposes for pedestrians, including walking and jogging for leisure or exercise. The surface of the sidewalks varies from location to location and includes concrete and asphalt. The condition of the sidewalks ranges from excellent to poor, with the asphalt sections generally being in worse condition.

## Recreational Programs

In addition to recreational facilities, there are also recreational programs offered by various entities within the Village. The previously mentioned Nassau Baseball Association hosts the local Little League and is open to boys and girls between the ages of 4 and 12. The Village Youth Committee sponsors events, often in conjunction with the Town of Nassau Youth Committee, including the Easter egg hunt, bike rodeo, tie-dye, ice-skating and drum circle. As mentioned under the Cultural Resources section, the Nassau Library offers programs throughout the year, including a monthly Lego night and movie night.

## Undeveloped Land

As with most incorporated villages in New York, Nassau's primary land use is residential, with commercial and civic institutions also being common. There is currently no commercial agricultural activity in the Village, and undeveloped, forested land is generally limited to areas that are inaccessible because of wet or steep conditions (see Map 8).

\* \* \*

## **GOAL: To realize the full potential of recreational facilities within the Village.**

- ***Objective 1: Continue to support Village park and recreational programs and facilities at a level sufficient to meet the recreational needs of Village residents.***

### **Strategies:**

- Identify and implement opportunities for bringing Village facilities in line with residents' needs;
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of existing facilities, such as the volleyball court at the Village Commons, and consider changes in recreational use where opportunities exist; and
  - Develop Bristol property into a facility that meets multiple objectives, including passive recreation (i.e. hiking trails, picnic tables), and interpretive elements (e.g. wetland biology)
- Should existing facilities under control of the Village be deemed to be insufficient for certain recreational activities, pursue formal agreements with other local institutions for use of their facilities.



- **Objective 2: Convert the old trolley line to the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail.**

**Strategies:**

- Seek professional and financial resources to complete the required planning and engineering needed to advance the project to the next stage;
  - Appoint a Rail-Trail Committee tasked with project oversight in the Village, and to represent the Village in the regional effort to complete the trail; and
  - Seek opportunities to expand recreational opportunities to wetland areas adjacent to the rail-trail, including wildlife viewing and interpretive trails
- **Objective 3: Have all Village neighborhoods connected, year-round, through a network of safe, enjoyable pedestrian corridors**

**Strategies:**

- Evaluate Village neighborhoods without sidewalks for safety and connectivity with other Village neighborhoods. This includes identifying opportunities to connect neighborhoods to the Albany-Hudson Electric Trail;
- Evaluate surface condition of existing sidewalks for safety. Pursue grants and other funding opportunities to install and/or update sidewalks where needed;
- Amend Village code to require concrete when new sidewalks are installed;
- Evaluate code-compliance of landowners in their maintenance of existing sidewalks, including snow removal and clearing of vegetation. Where code violations exist, pursue enforcement; and
- Work with the State DOT to install crosswalks across Routes 20 and 203 in locations that will connect neighborhoods with each other and to the business district

\* \* \*

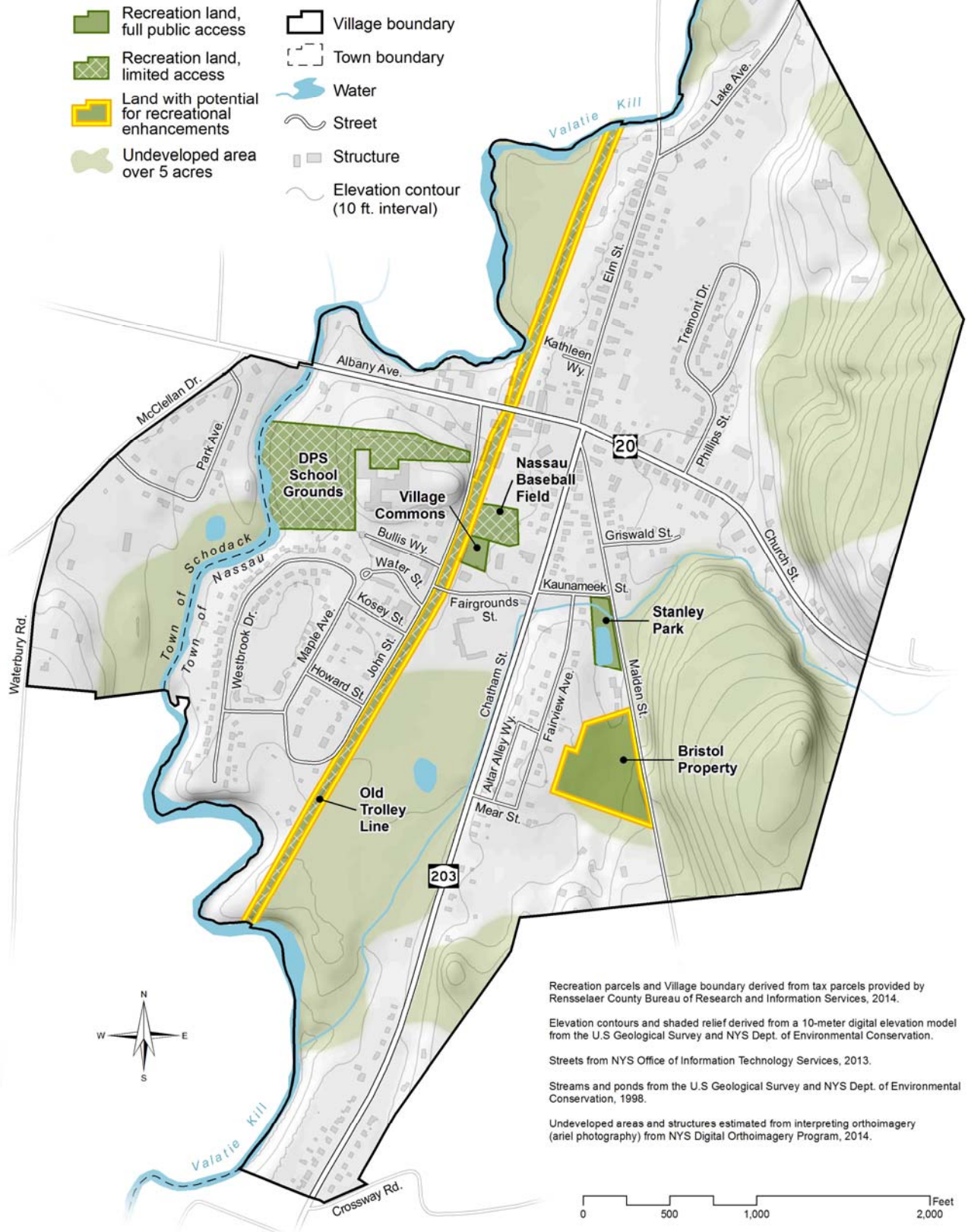
**GOAL: To preserve the character of the remaining open space within the Village.**

- ***Objective 1: Protect environmentally sensitive and other constrained lands as open space or very low-density development.***

**Strategy:**

- Strengthen the zoning code to protect steep slopes, floodplains, and wetlands.

# Map 8 Open Space and Recreation



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# Historic Resources

## Introduction

The Village of Nassau has a rich history, and many of the Village's buildings date to the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The feeling within the Village's core certainly is one of a historic community, albeit with a severely deteriorated business district.

On the public opinion survey (see Appendix 1), 83% of respondents indicated that the Village's history and architecture are worthy of preservation. The historic character of the community remains an attraction for potential new residents and would likely draw more visitors if there were more amenities within the business district.



The Nassau Free Library is currently the only location where the public has access to any significant documentation of the history of the Village of Nassau. There is no local history museum.

There are currently three National Historic Districts within the Village. The Albany Avenue National Historic District includes the homes on the south side of Albany Avenue from John Street to the Valatie Kill. The Church Street National Historic District includes the buildings on both sides of Church Street. The Chatham Street Row includes several homes on the west side of Chatham Street. These Districts were designated in 1978.

The Village of Nassau has designated Historic Districts which coincide with the National Historic District designations. Buildings within these districts must obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic Resource Commission before alterations are completed so that the historic character of these buildings is not diminished.

## Current Conditions

### Historic Resources

In accordance with New York State law, the Village of Nassau has a Village Historian. However, there is no job description or training for this position and the position is unfunded. It is the responsibility of the Village Historian to be aware of historic resources that are available to the public but not to collect artifacts or complete research.

The Nassau Free Library does have a significant genealogy collection and has some local history information and a limited collection of artifacts related to the history of the Village. Part of the library's mission is to foster local history. However, the library has limited space and resources.

The Historical Society of Esquatak does not have a permanent location and does not have a collection of documents or artifacts. Rather, they are an interest group consisting of people interested in history from the towns of Schodack and Nassau. The Rensselaer County Historical Society, located in Troy, does maintain a research library and museum, but space for additional materials is limited.

The churches and synagogue within the Village maintain their own records which are invaluable sources of genealogical information. Additionally, records such as Vestry records can be important records of businesses that once thrived in the Village and are now gone. These records should be carefully preserved in fireproof vaults and when possible should be digitally copied so they might be available for wider scholarship and insurance against their potential loss.

Other organizations and businesses have records that should be similarly preserved and copied as well.

## Business District

Many of the buildings within the business district are as old as the buildings within the National Historic Districts, but are generally in need of repair and have been altered over time, masking their original historic appearance.



*View of the trolley station formerly located on southern side of Albany Ave. and John St. Photo courtesy of Village Historian.*

If these buildings were restored or rehabilitated they would dramatically improve the character of the Village and provide a link between the existing National Historic Districts (see Map 9).

Late 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings within the business district were not designed to blend with the historic character of the earlier buildings and were constructed on larger sites

to accommodate customer parking. While this characteristic makes those businesses more economically viable than the historic buildings which preceded them, they are visually incongruous with the feel of a historic community.

## Historic Housing

Many of the Village's homes are either located within one of the National Historic Districts or would be considered historic if District boundaries were re-drawn today. The difficulty with owning an historic home is that they tend to be high maintenance and have higher-than-average energy costs. The advantage is that the homes are generally well constructed and have fine details making them visually appealing if maintained properly.

As described in the Housing section, deferred maintenance and the decreasing number of owner-occupied homes have noticeably affected the condition of our housing stock, both historic and otherwise. Deferred maintenance is more costly to property owners over the long term and reduces property values of both the subject

property and neighboring properties. Every effort should be made to encourage property owners to maintain and improve the historic homes because of their intrinsic value and value to the surrounding community.

Several funding sources are available to assist home and business owners in the maintenance and restoration of historic properties, including:

- Main Street grants – these are available to assist commercial property owners with façade improvements and are applied for by the municipality.
- Sacred Sites program - this program by the New York Landmarks Conservancy is for religious properties.
- Environmental Conservation Fund - Not-for-profits and municipal entities are eligible for grants for rehabilitation of historic buildings through the NYS Consolidated Funding Application (CFA)
- Preservation League of New York State and the New York State Council for the Arts (NYSCA) – Not-for-profits and municipalities may be eligible for funding towards professional design services through grants administered by these organizations

\* \* \*



*Residence within the Albany Avenue Historic District. Photo by Mark Thaler.*

**GOAL: To preserve and maintain the historic resources of the Village.**

- ***Objective 1: Document and preserve the history of the Village for future generations.***

**Strategies:**

- Develop an oral history program that collects the personal accounts of previous times in the Village's history.
  - Record stories through audio or video and digitally archive for future study. This could be conducted in conjunction with Esquatak Historical Society, the Rensselaer County Historical Society, or StoryCorps which archives oral histories with the Library of Congress. Selected histories could also be showcased on the Village website.
  - Develop a booth or room at the Nassau Free Library where people can record their own oral histories.
- Promote the expansion of the genealogy collection at the Nassau Free Library for families that have lived in the Village of Nassau.
  - Working with the Nassau Free Library, Esquatak, and Donald P. Sutherland Elementary School, develop a children's program that promotes their sense of connection to the Village and its history.
- Collect and preserve artifacts that help tell the story of the Village's history.
  - Identify or develop an appropriate location to store and display artifacts, photographs, and/or documents which tell the story of our Village. Exhibits can be located within both public and retail buildings where the public has exposure.
  - As today's events will become tomorrow's history, collect modern artifacts that represent current events within the Village.
  - Explore the potential of a local history museum.
- As required by the State Historic Preservation Act, include photographic documentation as a condition on building permits, prior to demolition of historic structures



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- **Objective 2: Maintain and rehabilitate the Village’s historic buildings.**

- **Strategies:**

- Aggressively enforce the Village Property Maintenance Law and NYS Property Maintenance Code.
  - Organize a “Helping Neighbor” committee that can coordinate residents who are willing and able to assist their neighbors with property maintenance with those who may not be able to adequately maintain their properties because of health, financial, or other reasons.
- Explore the creation of a Land Bank that can take control of tax-foreclosed properties and package them for resale to responsible developers or potential owner-occupants in a way that advances the goals of the Village.
- Educate owners of historic buildings within the National Historic Districts of the availability of the New York State Historic Homeownership Rehabilitation Tax Credit and the New York State Rehabilitation Tax Credit for Commercial Properties. These credits can be provided against the cost of needed repairs or renovations and upgrades to historic buildings provided the work is approved by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP).
- Expand the area within the Village that is eligible to utilize Rehabilitation Tax Credits.
  - Expand or create a National Historic District to include Elm Street, the Business District and other areas which may be determined eligible for listing OPRHP.
- Identify and apply for additional funding sources for rehabilitation of historic properties and assist property owners in obtaining such grants.
- Maintain a grants committee or coordinator within Village government to take advantage of current grant opportunities
- Become a Certified Local Government (CLG) with OPRHP.
  - Municipalities that become a Certified Local Government are eligible for additional grant opportunities.

\* \* \*

**GOAL: To enhance the historic character of the Village.**

- ***Objective 1: Encourage re-development and new construction that is harmonious with Nassau's historic character.***

**Strategies:**

- Improve the streetscape along US Route 20 and NYS Highway 203 with new sidewalks, historical street lighting, and tree plantings.
- Create a focal point, such as a clock or monument, at the intersection of US Route 20 and NYS Highway 203 that reinforces the historic character of the Village for residents and travelers alike.
- Develop design standards for new infill-building construction, renovations of existing buildings, and hardscape elements such as sidewalks, site lighting, fencing, and signage within the historic core of the Village that enhance the historic character of the Village and create a sense of place.
- Develop an awards program for the Village to acknowledge noteworthy improvements to properties. Through sponsorships the award could even provide some incentive.

\* \* \*

**GOAL: To promote the history and historic character of the Village.**

- ***Objective 1: Foster pride within the community.***

**Strategies:**

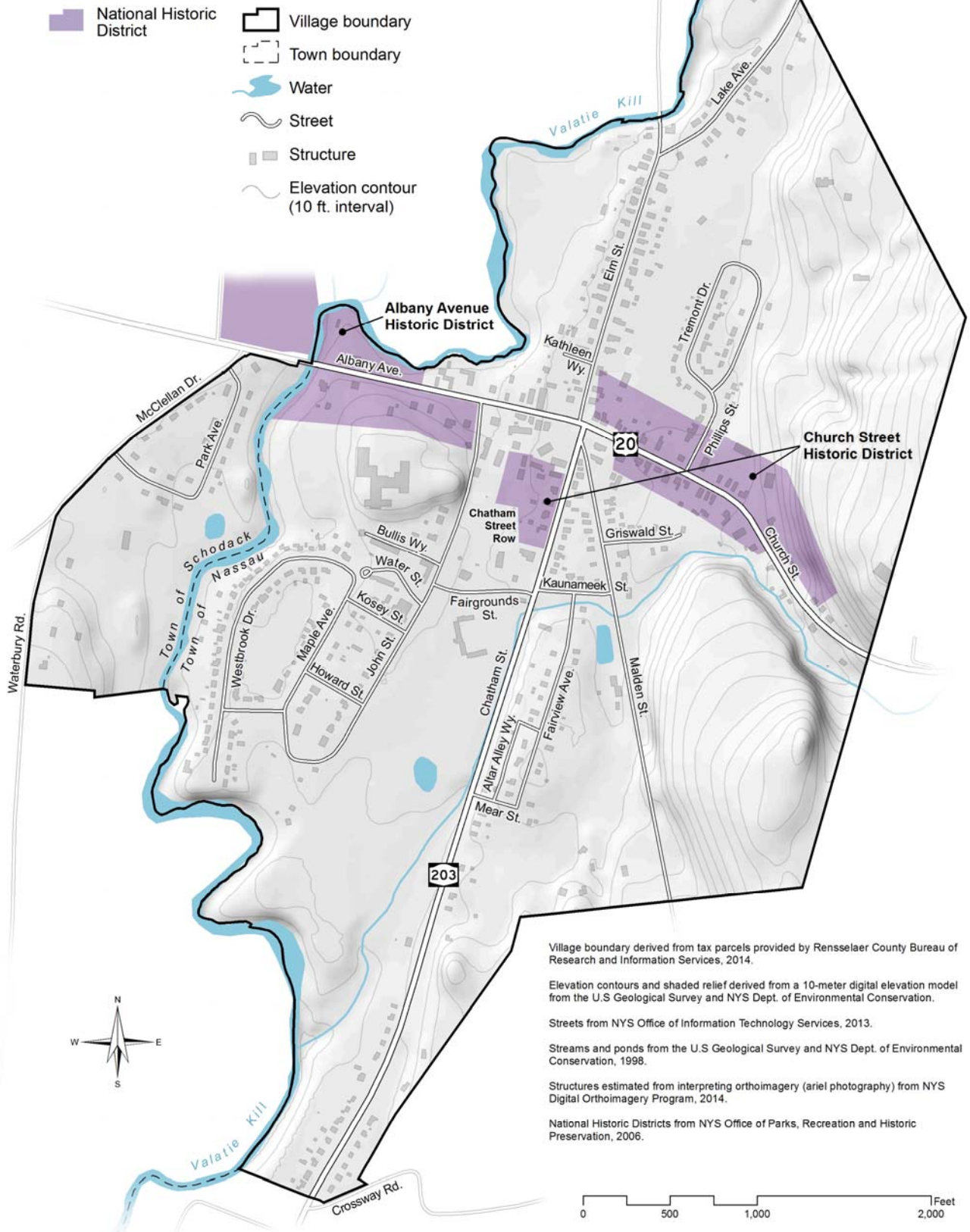
- Develop programs in relation to the Village's bi-centennial in 2019.
- Develop programs with Donald P. Sutherland Elementary School which explore the history of the community and students' place in that history.
- Create an annual Heritage Day event which attracts both residents and tourists.

- ***Objective 2: Brand the Village as livable historic community.***

**Strategies:**

- Coordinate with state and regional tourism efforts to announce public events.
- Develop articles about the Village that can be provided to media outlets and posted on the Village website.

# Map 9 National Historic Districts



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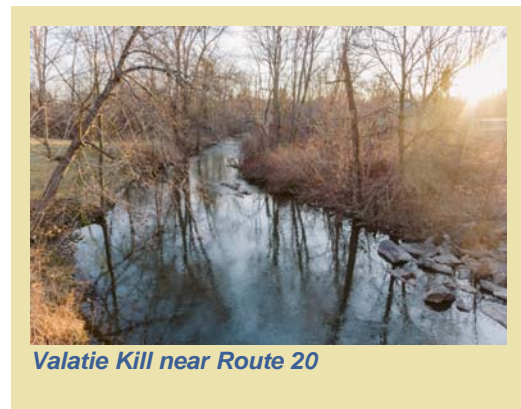
# Environment and Natural Resources

## Streams and Watercourses

### Current Conditions

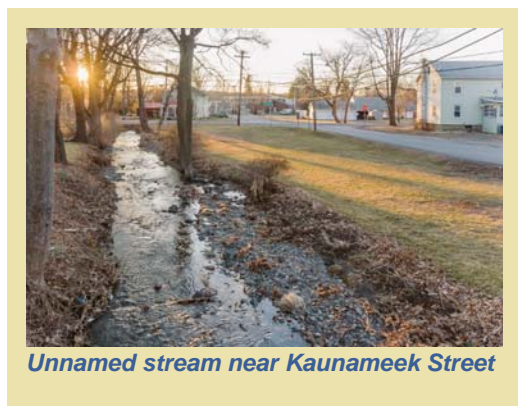
The most prominent stream in the Village of Nassau is the Valatie Kill, which flows through the Village from north to south originating from Nassau Lake and ultimately flowing into Kinderhook Creek. According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the Valatie Kill is classified as a C(t) stream, which means this stream supports a trout fishery<sup>8</sup>.

The Valatie Kill is also identified on the Section 303(d) List for being impaired due to priority organics, including polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs. The source of this contamination is from a landfill located on Mead Road in the Town of Nassau, otherwise known as the Dewey Loeffel site. The site was recently designated as a federal Superfund Site by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).



Given the contamination of the Valatie Kill with PCBs, there is a fish consumption and recreation advisory for this portion of the stream. Fish consumption in this portion of the Valatie Kill is impaired due to a New York State Department of Health (DOH) health advisory that recommends eating no more than one meal per month of American eel,

bluegill and redbreasted sunfish because of elevated PCB levels. This advisory applies to the entire segment of the Valatie Kill from Kinderhook Creek to Nassau Lake.



Another small, mostly intermittent stream flows through the eastern side of the Village of Nassau. This stream crosses Malden Street near Stanley Park and flows parallel to Kaunameek Street, then under Route 203

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<sup>8</sup> New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 2008. Priority Waterbodies List for Valatie Kill, Upper, and tribs ( 1310-0024), <http://search.usa.gov/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&affiliate=nysdec&query=Valatie+Kill+Creek+PWI>.

where it empties into the large wetland by the old fairgrounds. The pond in Stanley Park and the wetland on the Bristol Property also drain into this stream.

As described in the Infrastructure section, this stream is prone to flash flooding during moderate to high precipitation events and will oftentimes flood its banks. Much of this flooding is further exacerbated due to a large berm located behind and along the side of the auto repair business located on Malden Street, directly across from Kaunameek Street. In addition, a berm has also been created on the opposite side of the stream, further disconnecting the stream from its natural floodplain. Gravel and sediment routinely build up just upstream of the culvert that flows under Malden Street, and this material has been previously dredged and side-casted directly next to the stream into a small wetland area.



This situation would be improved by installing a larger culvert pipe that is properly sized for the drainage area and by removing the berms and dredge material.

\* \* \*

## **GOAL: To ensure high quality surface waters within the Village**

- **Objective 1: Reduce contamination of the Valatie Kill.**

### **Strategy:**

- Support the EPA efforts to clean up the Dewey Loeffel toxic landfill and contaminated sediments of Nassau Lake.

- **Objective 2: Restore function of streams and waterbodies.**

### **Strategies:**

- On unnamed stream, remove berms and dredge materials upstream of Malden Street to allow stream to flow into the floodplain and wetlands during overflow events;
- Re-engineer stream flow of unnamed stream from Malden Street to Route 203 using a natural stream design;
- Control development in and encroachment of Valatie Kill floodplain by neighboring residential properties and businesses; and

- Encourage updating of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain maps for Rensselaer County and once developed, provide them to the Village Code Enforcement Officer and Planning Board.

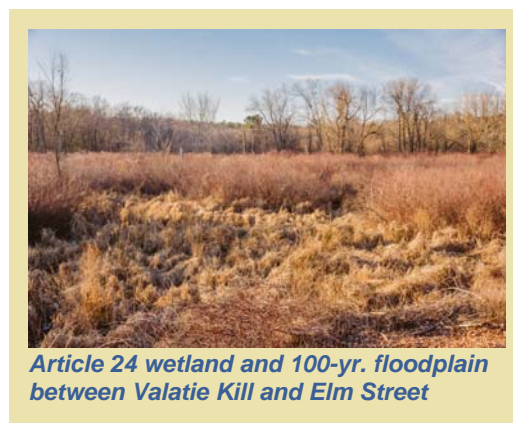
## ***Wetlands and Floodplains***

### **Current Conditions**

#### ***Wetlands***

Wetlands provide numerous benefits that include flood and storm water control, water supply resources, wildlife habitat, open space and aesthetic beauty, and recreational opportunities. In New York State, wetlands are regulated by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) (through the Freshwater Wetlands Act of 1975) and at the federal level by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) through the Section 404 Dredge and Fill program. DEC protects wetlands that are 12.4 acres (i.e., 5 hectares) and greater and provides for a 100 foot regulatory buffer zone surrounding the wetland. The Corps also has regulatory jurisdiction regarding the alteration of wetlands, and its jurisdiction applies to all wetlands, regardless of size.

Within the Village there are two very large DEC-regulated wetlands along with several other wetlands identified on the National Wetlands Inventory (see Map 10). By law, development cannot occur within a 100-foot boundary of an Article 24 freshwater wetland without a permit from the DEC. A permit would also be required from the Corps for any disturbance within these wetlands. The Corps does not regulate activities within the 100-foot boundary of a DEC-regulated wetland. Copies of the official DEC-regulated Freshwater Wetlands Maps depicting the approximate boundary are kept on file at the Village Clerk’s office.



*Article 24 wetland and 100-yr. floodplain between Valatie Kill and Elm Street*

The Village-owned Bristol property also contains a wetland that captures, stores and treats runoff from Malden Bridge and the area along the southeastern portion of the Village. This runoff then passes through the remainder of the Bristol property and flows into a culvert pipe directly into the pond in Stanley Park. The preservation of this

wetland is critical to protecting water quality within the pond and reducing flooding to the Village Hall and homes located along Kaunemeek Street and Fairgrounds Street.

### ***Floodplains***

The Valatie Kill has been mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) on the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). A portion of the Village falls within the SFHA and is subject to inundation by flood water from a 100-year flood event or greater (see Map 11). If development is being considered within a SFHA, the Village building inspector must review the development to ensure that construction standards have been met before issuing a floodplain development permit. Non-structural development within a SFHA is also subject to a local floodplain development permit.

Development occurring within the limits of the SFHA could reduce the capacity of the Valatie Kill to safely convey floodwaters and result in increasing floodwater elevations further downstream. This could potentially flood other parts of the Village and subject residences and businesses to potentially dangerous and destructive situations in the future, particularly if current climate change patterns continue into the future as expected.

The current FEMA FIRM maps covering the Village of Nassau are fairly old. Having updated FEMA FIRMs would ensure that any future development is undertaken in a manner consistent with FEMA floodplain requirements. When FIRMs are updated for Rensselaer County, the Village should ensure this information is provided to the Code Enforcement Officer who is responsible for issuing floodplain permits and ensuring compliance with floodplain regulations, as well as the Planning Board.

\* \* \*

**GOAL: To ensure high quality wetlands and floodplains within the Village provide ecological services such as flood control and wildlife habitat.**










- **Objective 1: Protect Village wetlands and floodplains.**

#### **Strategies:**

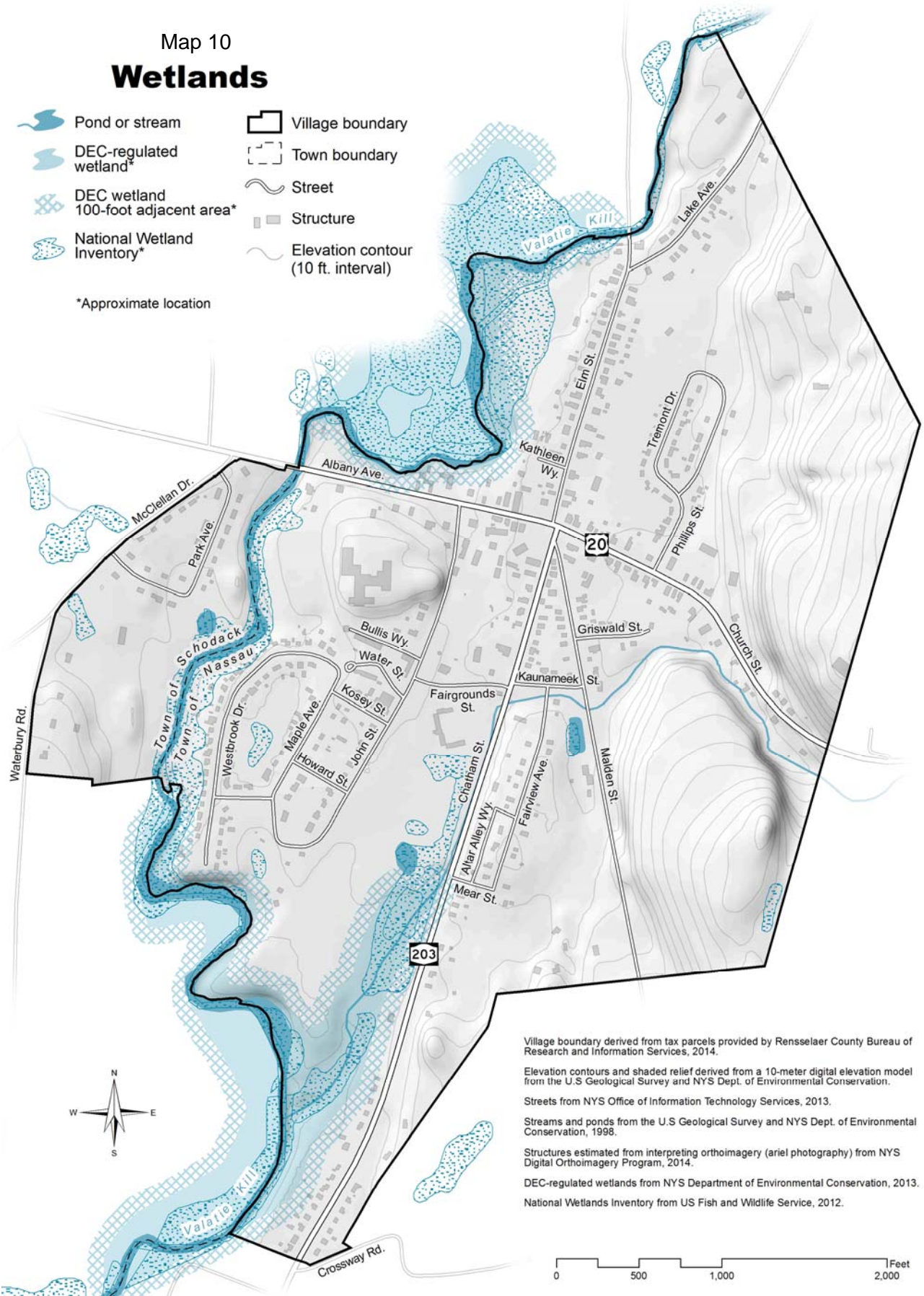
- Ensure that Village Code Enforcement Officer and Planning Board are aware of and enforce wetland buffer zones and floodplain restrictions; and
- Ensure future uses of the Bristol Property do not degrade the condition of the wetland on site.



Map 10  
**Wetlands**

-  Pond or stream
-  DEC-regulated wetland\*
-  DEC wetland 100-foot adjacent area\*
-  National Wetland Inventory\*
-  Village boundary
-  Town boundary
-  Street
-  Structure
-  Elevation contour (10 ft. interval)

\*Approximate location



Village boundary derived from tax parcels provided by Rensselaer County Bureau of Research and Information Services, 2014.

Elevation contours and shaded relief derived from a 10-meter digital elevation model from the U.S Geological Survey and NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation.

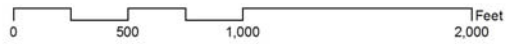
Streets from NYS Office of Information Technology Services, 2013.

Streams and ponds from the U.S Geological Survey and NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, 1998.

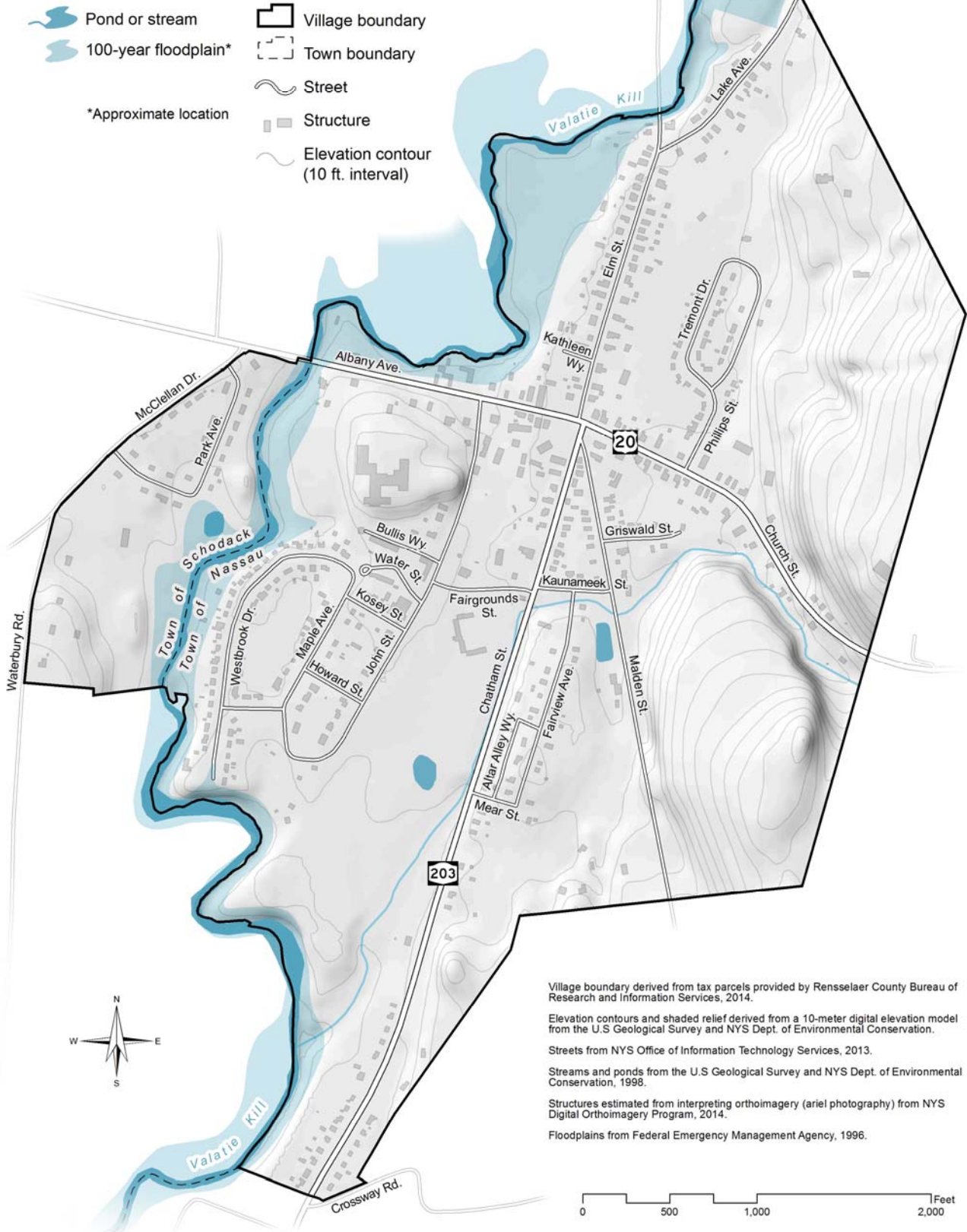
Structures estimated from interpreting orthoimagery (aerial photography) from NYS Digital Orthoimagery Program, 2014.

DEC-regulated wetlands from NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, 2013.

National Wetlands inventory from US Fish and Wildlife Service, 2012.



## Map 11 Floodplains



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## *Drinking Water Aquifer*

### **Current Conditions**

The Village of Nassau currently obtains its drinking water from two wells, which tap into the Valatie Kill Aquifer (see map 12). It shares this aquifer with the Town of Nassau. Water quality has been excellent. The town formally identified and protected this aquifer through the Aquifer Protection Law of the Town of Nassau in 2007 and the Town of Nassau Zoning Law in 2011. Both laws restrict activities within and near the aquifer that could compromise aquifer water quality. In 2015, Rensselaer County passed the Drinking Water Protection Law, which required those blasting within 1 mile of a drinking water well to test water in the well before and after the blasting. Any impairment in water quality following blasting would be assumed to be caused by the blasting organization, which would be liable. This law allowed local communities to opt out of the requirement.

Unfortunately, drinking water wells for Nassau are located within the Village and are not far from various potential contaminant sources such as residential developments, gasoline stations, and other local businesses. Village residents and most businesses still rely on private septic systems with dry wells to treat household waste. While these potential sources of contamination may not be an immediate threat to our public water supply wells, contaminant sources may go undetected for years until a water supply is already affected. Recent testing by the Rensselaer County Health Department detected Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) in Village water. This finding emphasizes the vulnerability of our aquifer.

The Dewey Loeffel landfill approximately 4 miles northeast of the Village on Mead Road is a potential future concern. This landfill received about 46,000 tons of liquid wastes between 1952 and 1980, including methylene chloride, trichloroethene, xylenes, toluene, chlorobenzene, benzene, phenols and waste oils containing PCBs<sup>9</sup>. Although containment and remediation have been attempted, groundwater monitoring has detected extremely high concentrations of volatile organic compounds within and outside the landfill boundary. The pollutants in the landfill have seeped into rock fractures beneath the disposal area and have traveled along these fractures with groundwater flow. Groundwater samples collected from private wells more than 0.5 miles south of the site show high concentrations of water-soluble volatile organic compounds such as benzene and trichloroethene. Since pollutants from the landfill have not been contained,

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<sup>9</sup> Protecting Nassau's Natural and Cultural Resources – A Report to the Town of Nassau Town Board, May 17, 2006, The Natural Resources Committee of the Town of Nassau.

the contaminant plume will continue to spread, possibly contaminating additional water supplies. The landfill is now a Federal Superfund Site.

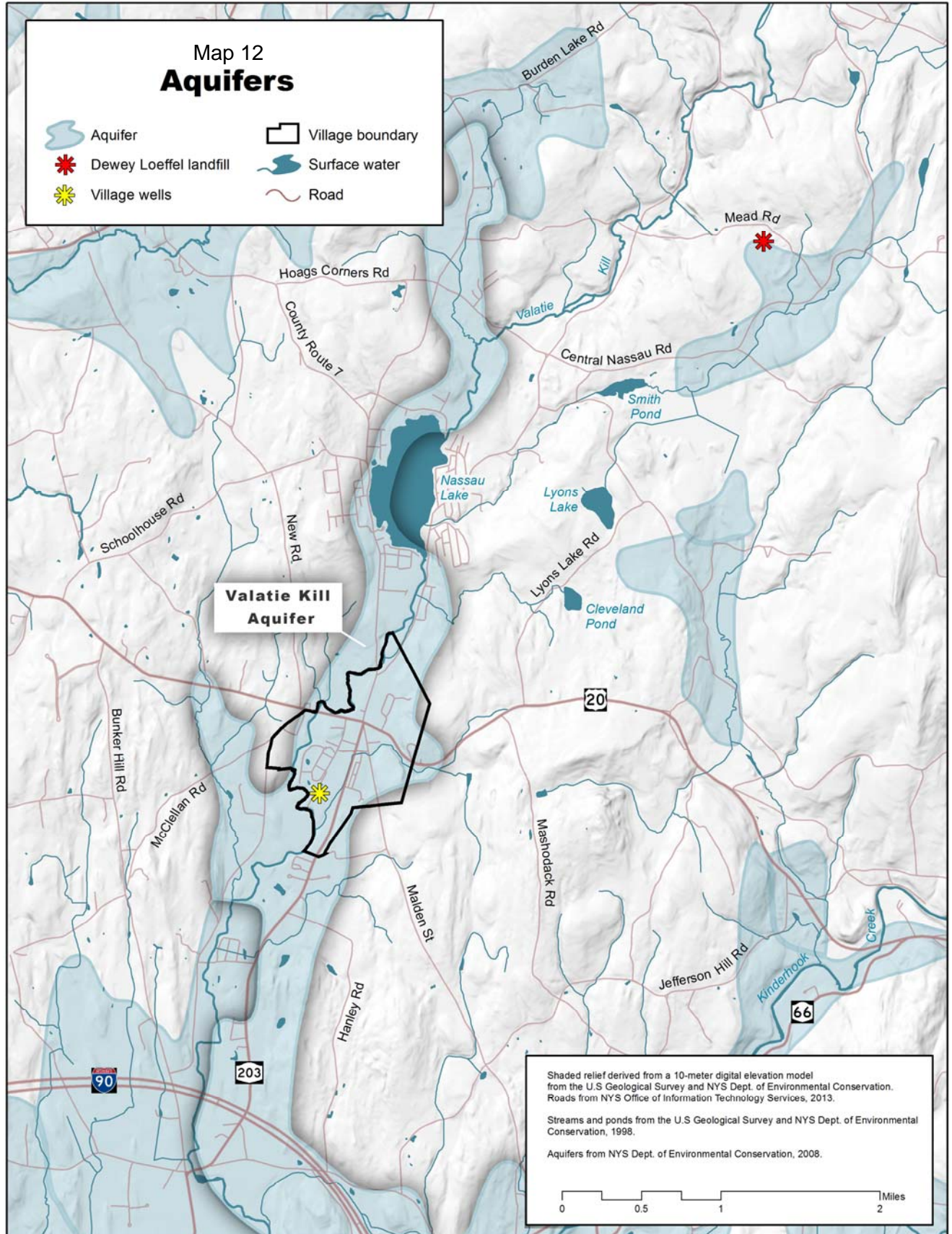
\* \* \*

**GOAL: To ensure high quality drinking water for the residents and businesses of the Village**

- **Objective 1: To protect the water quality of the Valatie Kill Aquifer.**

**Strategies:**

- Determine if the Town Aquifer Protection Law is enforceable within Village limits. If not, adopt appropriate restrictions from the Law.
- Ensure that the Village and Town of Nassau do not opt out of the Rensselaer County water protection law adopted in 2015.
- Support efforts by the Town to better delineate the Valatie Kill Aquifer and recharge areas.
- Periodically test for chemicals such as PFOA
- Support efforts by the EPA to remediate the Dewey Loeffel Landfill and eliminate continued groundwater contamination.
- Consider programs to educate residents on proper use and disposal of fertilizers, pesticides, and other toxic chemicals.
- Explore options for a Village sewage system (See Sewage Disposal in Infrastructure)
- Seek technical assistance and professional expertise in protecting the Valatie Kill Aquifer from the New York Rural Water Association, an organization whose mission includes assisting local governments with protecting public health and the environment in matters related to water quality.



## ***Soils and Steep Slopes***

### **Current Conditions**

#### ***Soils***

The United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) maintains soil surveys for all land within the United States. The soils of the Village of Nassau are described and identified within the NRCS publication "Soil Survey of Rensselaer County, New York" Sheet No. 25 of 29. The surveys are extremely useful because they contain maps of the various soil type(s) found in a particular area of interest, a description of these soil types, an analyses of the limitations and hazards associated with specific soils, improvements needed to overcome these limitations, and the impact of selected land uses on the environment. Soil surveys are a very effective planning tool that can be utilized by engineers, developers, property owners and planning boards.

Soil maps can be used to help identify suitable areas for development or identify site limitations/restrictions for particular types of activities (e.g., development or siting of a residential septic system). They can also be useful in identifying areas for conservation and/or preservation. The soil type is a key source of information that can be used to ensure that future growth and development within the Village of Nassau are undertaken properly and result in no significant environmental impact(s).

Wet or poorly draining soils in particular can be a significant constraint on many types of human activity. In particular, they can impede draining of stormwater and septic systems, and are generally unsuitable for the construction of roads and structures. See Map 13 for soil drainage classes within the Village.

#### ***Steep Slopes***

In addition to wet soils, highly erodible soils on steep slopes are another extremely important environmental consideration (see Map 14). In particular, development on steep slopes of 15% or greater should be avoided, if possible, to limit soil loss, erosion, excessive stormwater runoff and degradation of surface water quality.

There are four general areas within the Village that are constrained by either steep slopes or wet soils. These areas are as follows:

- The area north of Church Street and east of Phillips Street has both unfavorable soils and steep slopes;

- The area in the southeast corner of the Village, between Malden Street and Church Street has steep slopes and a portion of the area consists of poorly drained soils.
- The area along the Valatie Kill in the lowland adjacent to the stream has mostly poorly drained soils - the limiting factor here is wetness rather than steepness.
- The areas within the central portion of the Village including the fairgrounds and areas both to the north and south has mostly poorly drained soils, and since the land is quite flat, topography is not a problem. However, limitations of wetlands, as along the streams and near the fairgrounds, together with limitations of bedrock close to the surface still exist.



\* \* \*

**GOAL: To protect the integrity of the soils within the Village.**












- **Objective 1: *Ensure development is appropriate for associated soils.***

**Strategies:**

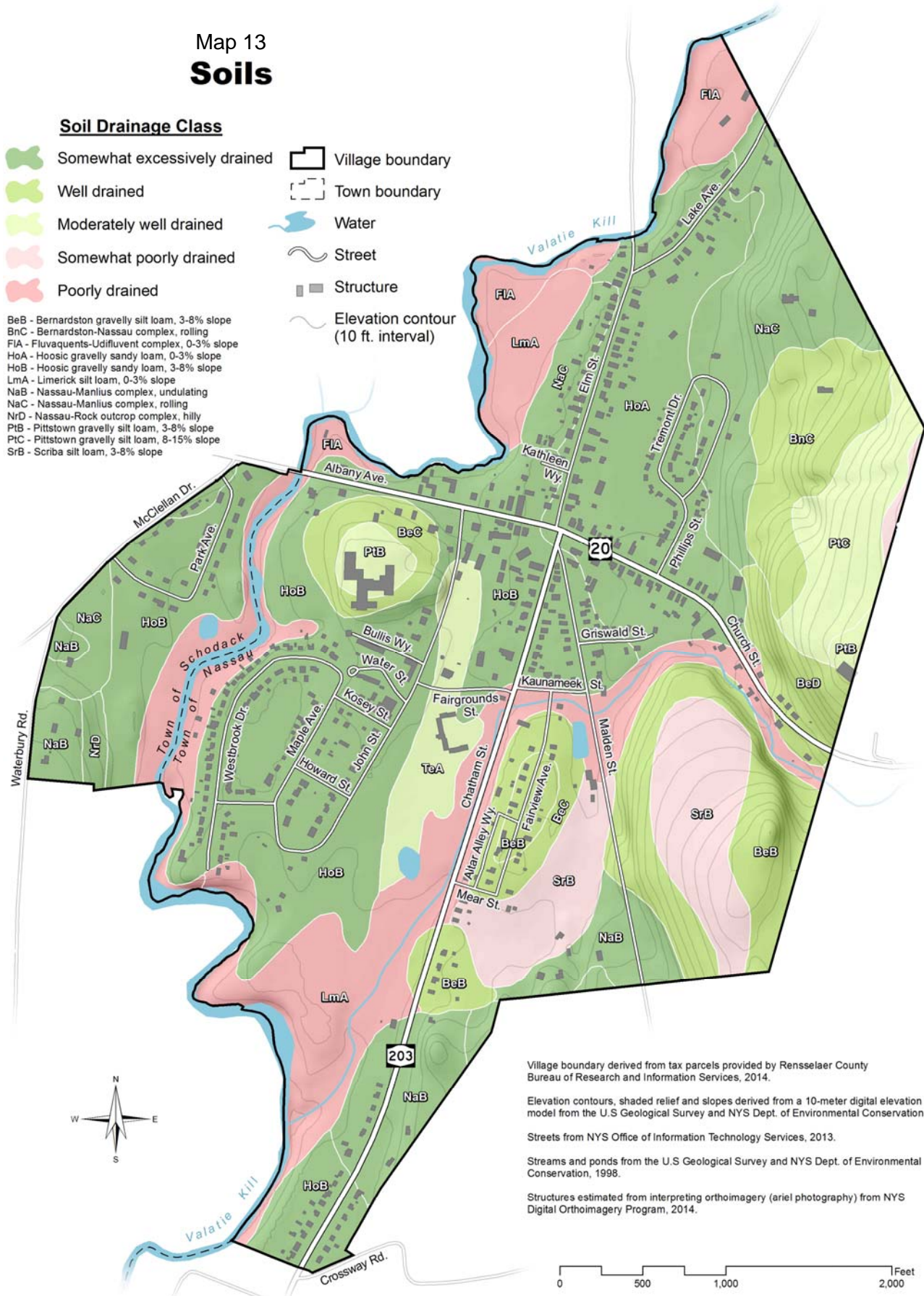
- Ensure that Village Planning Board is aware of soil characteristics within the Village and associated use limitations; and
- Consider changes to the zoning or other development controls in areas with sensitive soils and excessive slopes

### Map 13 Soils

#### Soil Drainage Class

-  Somewhat excessively drained
-  Well drained
-  Moderately well drained
-  Somewhat poorly drained
-  Poorly drained
-  Village boundary
-  Town boundary
-  Water
-  Street
-  Structure
-  Elevation contour (10 ft. interval)

- BeB - Bernardston gravelly silt loam, 3-8% slope
- BnC - Bernardston-Nassau complex, rolling
- FIA - Fluvaquents-Udfluent complex, 0-3% slope
- HoA - Hoosic gravelly sandy loam, 0-3% slope
- HoB - Hoosic gravelly sandy loam, 3-8% slope
- LmA - Limerick silt loam, 0-3% slope
- NaB - Nassau-Manlius complex, undulating
- NaC - Nassau-Manlius complex, rolling
- NrD - Nassau-Rock outcrop complex, hilly
- PtB - Pittstown gravelly silt loam, 3-8% slope
- PtC - Pittstown gravelly silt loam, 8-15% slope
- SrB - Scriba silt loam, 3-8% slope



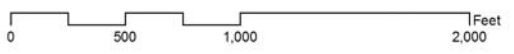
Village boundary derived from tax parcels provided by Rensselaer County Bureau of Research and Information Services, 2014.

Elevation contours, shaded relief and slopes derived from a 10-meter digital elevation model from the U.S Geological Survey and NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation.

Streets from NYS Office of Information Technology Services, 2013.

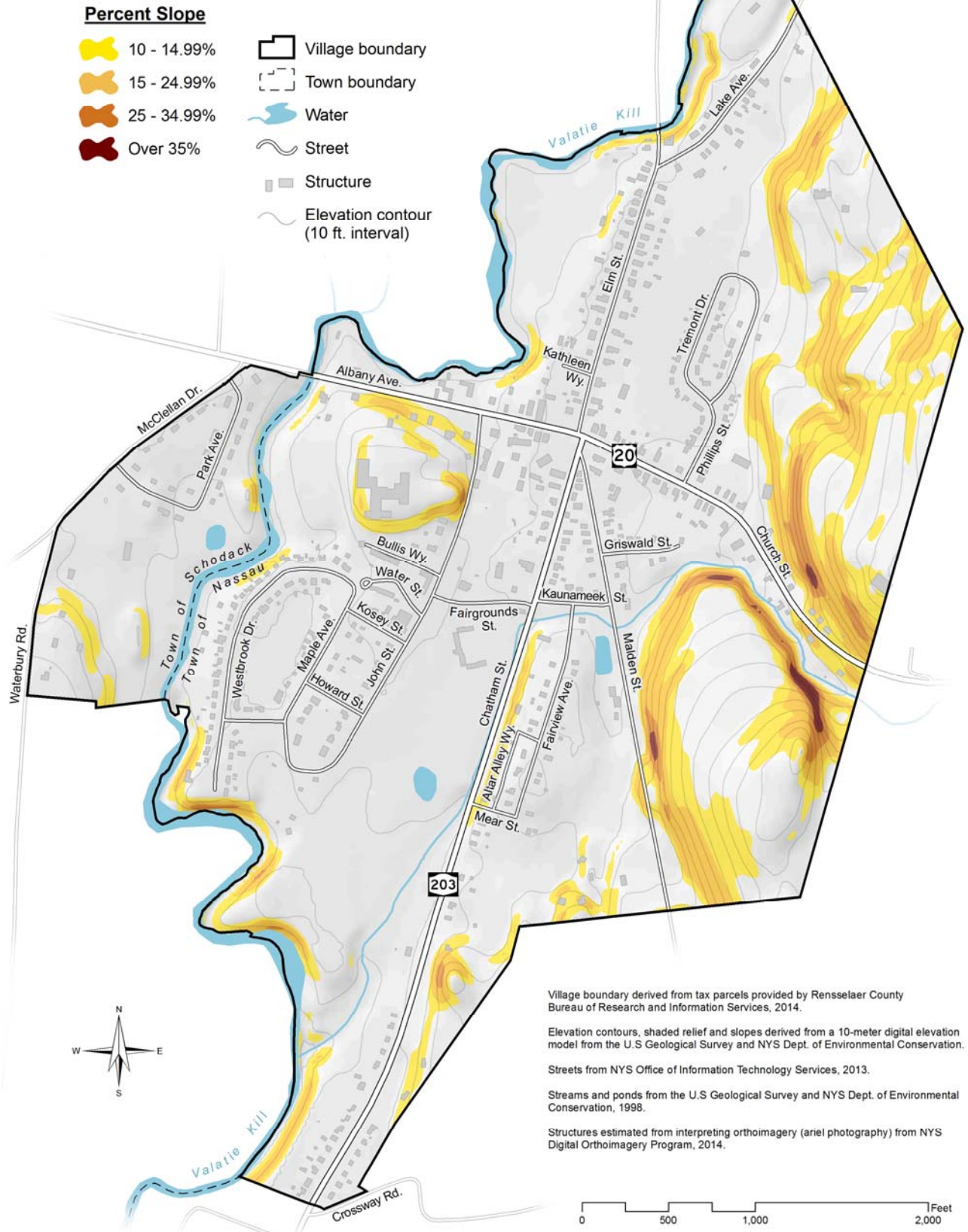
Streams and ponds from the U.S Geological Survey and NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation, 1998.

Structures estimated from interpreting orthoimagery (aerial photography) from NYS Digital Orthoimagery Program, 2014.





# Map 14 Steep Slopes



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# Appendix 1 – Public Opinion Survey

The Master Plan Advisory Committee mailed the following Public Opinion Survey to every property owner in the Village in March 2014. Additional copies were distributed to larger multi-family dwellings the following month, and a link to an electronic version of the survey—hosted by Survey Monkey—was available on the Village website during much of 2014. A total of 100 surveys were returned. The survey below is as it was presented to Village property owners and residents together with the number of responses to each question or statement (where applicable).

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion/Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>1. Community Character</b>					
The Village of Nassau’s small town atmosphere is a major strength.	36	42	6	13	3
The Village of Nassau should strive to be socially, culturally, and economically diverse.	35	40	18	5	2
Nassau should encourage opportunities for arts and culture.	35	46	15	3	1
The Village of Nassau’s history and architecture are worthy of preservation.*	41	42	9	5	2
The Village of Nassau would be better if it were more commercial.	9	28	19	32	11
The Village of Nassau is a safe and convenient community for pedestrians to walk in.	17	48	8	20	7
The overall appearance of commercial properties in the Village presents an attractive and inviting business environment.	1	18	6	52	23
The overall appearance of residential properties in the Village presents an attractive place to live.	7	37	15	35	6
Exterior design standards should be required for the construction of all new or renovated buildings.	16	41	14	16	14
Exterior maintenance standards should be required for all existing buildings.	34	41	9	12	4
	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Undecided
<b>To help guide us in developing recommendations for managing and addressing community resources, we would like your ideas on the importance of each of the following:</b>					
Water supply (municipal well protection)	77	17	4	0	1
Architecture and historic buildings*	24	41	28	6	1
Wooded areas	30	42	17	9	2
Open space	27	43	21	5	3
Parks with recreational facilities, picnic areas, public buildings and other public lands	38	42	13	5	1
Library	58	33	8	1	0
Trees along roadways	24	35	26	12	3
Village square (Veteran’s Memorial)	32	46	16	4	1
Wetlands and stream corridors	25	40	25	4	3
Storm water drainage	57	36	5	1	1
Village infrastructure (water distribution system, road maintenance/upgrades)	72	22	3	2	0

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion/Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>2. Business and Development</b>					
The Village of Nassau should encourage local independent businesses rather than national chains.	35	33	18	13	1
The Village of Nassau should discourage commercial strip development along roads.	17	34	18	22	9
A variety of housing for all income levels is needed in the Village.	17	49	16	13	4
The Village of Nassau should encourage more dedicated senior citizen housing.	15	37	33	10	5
The Village of Nassau should encourage businesses that serve the needs of its residents.	40	52	8	1	0
The Village of Nassau should encourage home-based businesses.	12	40	39	10	0
The Village of Nassau should become more developed.	8	34	25	23	11
The Village of Nassau should encourage the preservation of historic buildings and features.*	32	55	8	3	2
The Village of Nassau should preserve open space lands.	29	51	13	5	2
New development should aim to expand the tax base.	20	54	19	3	3
New development should maintain the Village character.	39	45	11	5	0
Any new development should make the Village of Nassau more attractive.	53	43	3	1	0
New development along Route 20 should be designed to be village-like and pedestrian friendly.	53	40	3	3	1
The buildings in the Village business district are well maintained.	3	18	11	48	19
The Village business district offers a pedestrian-friendly shopping experience.	5	26	21	33	15
The Village of Nassau should influence land use decisions in other municipalities that affect our quality of life.	12	48	31	5	3
The Village should promote Nassau as a place to do business.	23	61	10	4	2
The Village should use property tax incentives to attract new business.	7	39	27	15	12
The Village should use property tax incentives to promote the renovation of existing commercial buildings.	17	52	16	10	5
As long as new development is compatible with Nassau’s character, we need more:					
• Small-scale shopping	25	60	9	4	2
• Single-family housing	13	43	26	14	3
• Multi-family housing	2	17	26	37	19
• Townhouses or condominiums	1	22	23	27	26
• Business located on the Route 20 corridor	22	51	16	9	2
• Service businesses like repair shops, professional services, or personal services.	15	56	17	9	3
• Any commercial development that enhances the community	22	55	14	3	5
• Businesses that serve the needs of non-residents and brings in outside income	23	54	13	3	6

### 3. Housing

If you were to purchase or build a new home in the Village of Nassau, what would you consider an affordable price?

			Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion/Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7	Under \$100,000	7					
43	\$101,000 to \$150,000	1					
34	\$151,000 to \$200,000	9					
	There are housing opportunities for people of all income levels available within the village.		11	47	25	15	2
	The condition of existing residential buildings is good.		0	32	18	34	15
	The Village should encourage renovation of existing residential buildings.		33	50	11	4	2

### 4. Community Services and Transportation

			Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion/Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	Village roadways should be designed and maintained so that pedestrians and bicyclists can safely use them.		53	44	3	0	0
	New development in the Village should include facilities for pedestrians and public transit.		42	51	4	1	1
	The Village should provide recreational walking paths and biking trails.		33	40	17	8	2
	The Village should encourage development of the old trolley line as a rail-trail.		34	28	27	4	6
	The speed limit should be reduced on Route 20 within the Village.		14	5	14	34	33
	If it reduced costs, the Village should share services, such as road maintenance, with neighboring municipalities.		37	36	17	4	6
	The Village should work with neighboring municipalities to develop sewer services.		35	36	19	8	2
	The Village and local school districts should work together to provide recreational facilities.		23	57	18	2	0
	More recreational opportunities need to be provided for our youth.		27	40	27	4	1
	The Donald P. Sutherland elementary school is an important element in our decision to live in the Village.		29	21	34	6	10
	The school district should provide more up-to-date facilities for our children’s education.		7	15	61	13	4
	More services are needed for senior citizens.		16	34	43	4	2
	Public parking should be expanded in the Village.		23	33	27	13	5
	The Village is adequately served by public transportation.		8	33	30	16	13
	Nassau needs a Village police force.		19	23	14	16	28
	Police services are adequate in the Village.		12	48	20	15	4
	Ambulance services are adequate in the Village.		20	66	9	4	0
	Fire services are adequate in the Village.		22	66	7	3	2
	Road maintenance in the village is adequate.		14	52	9	20	5

## 5. Respondent Profile

Are you a resident of the Village?      90 Yes              9 No              1 I don't know

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If so, does your family own or rent a home?      90 Own              10 Rent

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Do you operate a business or organization in the Village?      5 Yes              95 No

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Approximately how many years have you lived in the Village?

11 0-5 years	16 16-25 years	23 More than 50 years
19 6-15 years	28 26-50 years	3 Nonresident landowner

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How many people of each age group are in your home?

___ 0 to 10	___ 18 to 25	___ 36 to 50	___ Over 65
___ 11 to 17	___ 26 to 35	___ 51 to 65	___ Retired

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What is your (respondent's) age group?

0 0 to 10	1 18 to 25	21 36 to 50	28 Over 65
0 11 to 17	10 26 to 35	32 51 to 65	24 Retired

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Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

45 Employed full time	0 Underemployed (would like more work)	41 Retired	1 Student
8 Employed part time	1 Unemployed	4 Stay at home	

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What is your household income?

13 Under \$25,000	19 \$50,000 to \$75,000	19 \$100,000 to \$150,000
14 \$25,000 to \$50,000	26 \$75,000 to \$100,000	9 Over \$150,000

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Please indicate where you work below.

7 Village of Nassau	2 State of Massachusetts	1 Schenectady County	7 Not currently employed
24 Albany County	5 Columbia County	0 Retired	
8 Northern Rensselaer County (incl. Troy)	7 Southern Rensselaer County	6 Other _____	
		1 City of Rensselaer	
		1 Castleton	
		1 Dutchess County	
		1 State of New York	
		1 New York City	
		1 Maine/California/etc	

## 6. Community Suggestions

What are your three favorite things about the Village? Why?

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What are your three least favorite things about the Village? Why?

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Additional comments:

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If you would like an opportunity to discuss any of the items on this survey in more detail, please leave your contact information here and a committee member will reach out to you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

\* New York State offers a 20% Homeowner's Credit for Historic Preservation against your state income tax for renovation of historic residences, including many maintenance items. This credit is available to homes in the Albany Avenue, Church Street, and Chatham Street Historic Districts within the Village. If you would like more information about this program, please provide your contact information above or contact Village Hall.

<p>Please return completed survey to the drop box in front of Village Hall, or by mail to the following address no later than <b>April 30, 2014</b>:</p>	<p><b>Village of Nassau Master Plan Advisory Committee P.O. Box 452 Nassau, NY 12123-9354</b></p>
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# Appendix 2 – Letter to Businesses

Dear Village of Nassau Business Owner:

The Village of Nassau is updating The Master Plan, which is our guiding document for future land-use and development within the Village. When completed, this document will be a guide for Village officials as they contemplate possible decisions on building maintenance standards, design standards, parking availability, pedestrian amenities, and many others issues facing us in the future. It is also expected that having a completed Master Plan will improve the Village’s ability to receive grants and other outside funding to help implement these decisions.

The Master Plan Advisory Committee has spent the last several months gathering input from the community in the form of a public opinion survey and two public information sessions recently held at Village Hall. The input received so far indicates there is renewed interest from Village residents for a **Healthy, Vibrant and Improved Business Community**.

Being part of this community, your thoughts and ideas about the current and potential business climate in the Village are very important to us. We would like to have the opportunity to learn more about the obstacles that affect your business, your experience operating a business in the Village, and to hear your ideas on how to improve the business environment.

To this end, the Master Plan Advisory Committee **invites you to participate in a discussion with Committee members, Village officials, and other business owners.**

We need to find a time that is most convenient for you and other members to attend this meeting, which is likely to be held at Village Hall. The Committee has set aside the dates of Thursday, July 24 (7:00 PM), Saturday, July 26 (9:00 AM), and Tuesday, July 29 (7:30 AM) as potential meeting times. You can let us know which dates and times you might be able to participate by visiting the following website: **<http://doodle.com/aidwsz92x2pp6e2h>**. You can also contact me directly by telephone at (518) xxx-xxxx or by email at xxx@xxxx. By letting us know your preferences, we can narrow down the potential dates and times for this important meeting. We fully understand the time constraints you must face with your business and personal life and we hope to accommodate your schedule as best we can.

The recent poll of Village residents made it clear - Nassau’s businesses are the backbone of this Village and we want to see them thrive and grow for the generations to come. We genuinely hope we can work together to help make this happen.

Sincerely,



Josh Clague  
Chair, Master Plan Advisory Committee

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# Appendix 3 – Environmental Review

**Full Environmental Assessment Form**  
**Part 3 - Evaluation of the Magnitude and Importance of Project Impacts**  
**and**  
**Determination of Significance**

Part 3 provides the reasons in support of the determination of significance. The lead agency must complete Part 3 for every question in Part 2 where the impact has been identified as potentially moderate to large or where there is a need to explain why a particular element of the proposed action will not, or may, result in a significant adverse environmental impact.

Based on the analysis in Part 3, the lead agency must decide whether to require an environmental impact statement to further assess the proposed action or whether available information is sufficient for the lead agency to conclude that the proposed action will not have a significant adverse environmental impact. By completing the certification on the next page, the lead agency can complete its determination of significance.

**Reasons Supporting This Determination:**

To complete this section:

- Identify the impact based on the Part 2 responses and describe its magnitude. Magnitude considers factors such as severity, size or extent of an impact.
- Assess the importance of the impact. Importance relates to the geographic scope, duration, probability of the impact occurring, number of people affected by the impact and any additional environmental consequences if the impact were to occur.
- The assessment should take into consideration any design element or project changes.
- Repeat this process for each Part 2 question where the impact has been identified as potentially moderate to large or where there is a need to explain why a particular element of the proposed action will not, or may, result in a significant adverse environmental impact.
- Provide the reason(s) why the impact may, or will not, result in a significant adverse environmental impact
- For Conditional Negative Declarations identify the specific condition(s) imposed that will modify the proposed action so that no significant adverse environmental impacts will result.
- Attach additional sheets, as needed.

Given the underlying intent of the Master Plan and the included proposed strategies are to benefit, rather than adversely impact, the environment, historical resources and community character of Nassau, no adverse impacts of any magnitude are anticipated for any of the resources enumerated in the EAF Part 2.

**Determination of Significance - Type 1 and Unlisted Actions**

SEQR Status:       Type 1                       Unlisted

Identify portions of EAF completed for this Project:    Part 1             Part 2             Part 3

Appendix 3 – Environmental Review

Upon review of the information recorded on this EAF, as noted, plus this additional support information

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and considering both the magnitude and importance of each identified potential impact, it is the conclusion of the  
Village of Nassau \_\_\_\_\_ as lead agency that:

A. This project will result in no significant adverse impacts on the environment, and, therefore, an environmental impact statement need not be prepared. Accordingly, this negative declaration is issued.

B. Although this project could have a significant adverse impact on the environment, that impact will be avoided or substantially mitigated because of the following conditions which will be required by the lead agency:

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There will, therefore, be no significant adverse impacts from the project as conditioned, and, therefore, this conditioned negative declaration is issued. A conditioned negative declaration may be used only for UNLISTED actions (see 6 NYCRR 617.d).


C. This Project may result in one or more significant adverse impacts on the environment, and an environmental impact statement must be prepared to further assess the impact(s) and possible mitigation and to explore alternatives to avoid or reduce those impacts. Accordingly, this positive declaration is issued.

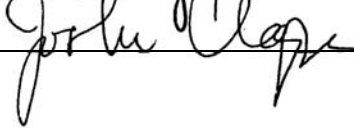
Name of Action: Adoption of Master Plan

Name of Lead Agency: Village of Nassau

Name of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency: Robert W. Valenty

Title of Responsible Officer: Mayor

Signature of Responsible Officer in Lead Agency:  Date: 7/13/16

Signature of Preparer (if different from Responsible Officer)  Date: 7/13/16

**For Further Information:**  
Contact Person: Robert W. Valenty  
Address: 40 Malden Street, PO Box 452  
Telephone Number: (518) 766-2939  
E-mail: clerk@villageofnassau.org

**For Type 1 Actions and Conditioned Negative Declarations, a copy of this Notice is sent to:**  
Chief Executive Officer of the political subdivision in which the action will be principally located (e.g., Town / City / Village of)  
Other involved agencies (if any)  
Applicant (if any)  
Environmental Notice Bulletin: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/enb/enb.html>

# Appendix 4 – Rensselaer County Review

RCBP # 16-84

Returned by Municipality \_\_\_\_\_

## NOTIFICATION OF ZONING REVIEW ACTION

TO: Robert Valenty MUNICIPALITY: Village of Nassau

APPLICANT: Village of Nassau

SUBJECT: Master Plan

LOCATION: Village Wide

Project Description: Village proposes to adopt updated Master Plan.

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Please be advised that the Rensselaer County Bureau of Economic Development and Planning has acted on the above subject as follows:

After having carefully reviewed the information submitted as part of the subject referral, the Bureau of Economic Development and Planning has determined that the proposal does not have a major impact on County plans and that local consideration shall prevail.

These comments do not necessarily require the Village to change the draft Master Plan, but should be taken into account - i.e. keep as an appendix.

Page 12, Objective 1, second strategy. Rensselaer County along with Rensselaer County Housing Resources has a homeownership program that provides closing cost and down payment assistance for low- and moderate-income families buying homes outside of the city of Troy. Rensselaer County Housing Resources Homeownership Center also runs a Homebuyers Club that provides training and counseling for future homebuyers.

Page 13, Objective 2, first strategy. The Small Cities program allows communities to apply for grant funds for housing rehabilitation for low- and moderate-income households who cannot afford to perform necessary repairs to their homes. The Village is eligible to apply for these funds and can work with a non-profit or consultant to run their program. The Small Cities program is run through New York State Homes and Community Renewal and is competitive.

Page 15, Sidewalks. Although they are mentioned later in the Transportation section, ADA requirements will become a major topic when it comes to sidewalks in the next few years. Sidewalks must be a minimum of 4 feet with 5 foot wide wheelchair passing areas every 250 feet, or 5 feet or more throughout, as well as have ramps and half domes at curbs. At minimum under ADA requirements when a road is being repaved, where the sidewalk meets the curb should be made ADA compliant - curb ramps and half domes. If the

Village owns the sidewalks, the upgrade of the sidewalks may also be required, especially if state or federal funding is used.

Page 18, Goal 1. Kinderhook Lake, which is fed by the Valatie Kill, has had a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for phosphorus adopted by the NYS DEC and US EPA. The TMDL requires that the load entering Kinderhook Lake through its water sources reduce the phosphorus loading by a certain percentage. Since septic systems are listed as a major source of phosphorus loading, the Village along with the towns of Nassau and Schodack on behalf of the Nassau Lake neighborhoods, may be able to score higher for funding to get a new sewage system installed to service this area. The Rensselaer County Water and Sewer Authority in the past has discussed working together with the Village and Towns of Nassau and Schodack to create a sewer system that covers the Nassau Lake area since the Authority covers all the area in Rensselaer County outside of the cities of Rensselaer and Troy.

Page 20, Water Supply. The new codes that New York State has adopted require multi-family housing to include sprinklers. Does the water system have capacity and pressure to support sprinklers in the Village?

Page 21, Objective 2, third strategy. The Village may want to apply for grants to install water meters to encourage water conservation.

Pages 22 and 23, Stormwater Management. The Kinderhook Lake TMDL will likely place the Village of Nassau into the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) SPDES permit program when the new MS4 SPDES permit becomes enacted next year. The MS4 program will require the Village to create a robust program to prevent pollution in stormwater as well as encourage the green infrastructure mentioned.

Page 43, Objective 2, first strategy. The possible park and ride sites should be identified in the parking plan proposed in the fourth strategy.

Page 43, Objective 2, fourth strategy. The Capital District Transportation Committee's Linkage program provides matching funding for transportation planning in respect to land use, including downtown parking and sidewalk/path planning.

Page 54 and 55, Objective 3. The Main Street Revitalization Program provides grants to a) plan the revitalization of downtown areas, and b) provide funding for projects such as facade rehabilitation. If the long-vacant gas station is vacant due to contamination concerns, the Brownfields Opportunity Area program helps investigate the possible contamination as well as plan out the future improvement of the possible contamination site(s) and surrounding area.

Pages 57 and 58, Objective 8. The encouragement of restaurants and Laundromats are much easier with public sewers, especially as the lot sizes in the center of the village are not sufficient enough for the septic systems of these uses.


Page 69, Objective 3, second strategy. When sidewalks are evaluated, they should also be evaluated for handicapped accessibility.

Page 69, Objective 3, third strategy. The Village may not want to limit sidewalks only to concrete as it would limit the use of permeable pavement, which can be used to preserve trees where roots pop up concrete sidewalks.

Page 75, funding sources list. Although it is not a grant, there are tax credits for rehabilitation properties in historic districts and properties listed in the National Historic Register when the property is used for commercial purposes.

Please return a report of the final action you have taken to the Bureau of Economic Development and Planning, This report is due within seven days after the final action. If your action is contrary to the recommendation of the County Bureau of Economic Development and Planning, Section 239-m of Article 12-B requires the adoption of a resolution fully setting forth the reasons for such contrary action.

Date 8/2/16

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ROBERT L. PASINELLA, JR, DIRECTOR  
Economic Development and Planning  
1600 Seventh Avenue  
Troy, New York 12180  
(518) 270-2914