



A DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR HILLSDALE HAMLET

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Introduction

In September 2009, The Town of Hillsdale and its Hamlet Committee engaged Project for Public Spaces, Inc. (PPS) to conduct a community-based planning process to create a Design and Development Plan for the Hillsdale Hamlet, the commercial heart of the Town. PPS gathered information through interviews and focus groups, and facilitated a Placemaking Workshop to look at the strengths and weaknesses of the Hamlet through the eyes of the people who live and work there. PPS, together with the Hamlet Committee, has developed a vision for the Hamlet that includes making it more walkable, creating great places, attracting new businesses and enhancing private properties. All of the recommendations are based upon the local knowledge of Hillsdale's residents and PPS's 35 years of experience in what makes a great place and a great community.

Background

The purpose of this Design and Development Plan is to present a framework for the Hamlet's future growth and development – both physical and economic – that reflects the needs and desires of Hillsdale residents, helps the Town respond to development pressures and maintains the Hamlet's unique

character. The Town of Hillsdale's latest Comprehensive Plan Update and changes to the zoning ordinance set the stage for this plan by focusing renewed attention on the Hamlet, recommending that new residential and commercial development be concentrated in the traditional hamlet centers in order to enhance social and economic interaction and preserve the rural character of the countryside.

The new sewer infrastructure that was completed in 2008 in Hillsdale Hamlet solved the serious environmental problems that the Hamlet had long experienced and that had limited new development. While the sewage treatment facility now serves a limited number of commercial and residential property owners, it can be expanded to accommodate future growth within the Hamlet.

The "Hamlet Siting Guidelines" and "Building Form Guidelines," which were formulated as part of the zoning law, illustrate how new development should be consistent with the historic development pattern of the Hamlet rather than "engulfing it in suburban sprawl." All of this good work serves as the starting point for the Design and



Cullin Park on Route 23



Church at the crossroads of Routes 22 and 23

Development Plan.

The Town seeks not just “smart growth” in the future, but strategies that it can implement right away to attract new businesses, increase its tax ratables, and provide a range of housing choices and recreational opportunities.

This Plan is also intended to help Hillsdale Hamlet become a more vital center for the Hillsdale community, serving the needs of a diverse local population as well as attracting visitors from around the region. Town residents would like the Hamlet to be a place where they can shop locally for many of their necessities, meet their neighbors and run into their friends, and enjoy community celebrations and cultural activities.

Hillsdale’s superlative location, at the junction of two state highways, on the way to the Berkshires, and close to major recreational attractions -- Bash Bish Falls, Catamount Ski Area and Adventure Park, Harlem Valley Rail Trail and the Roeliff Jansen Park, along with the beauty of its rural landscape and pastoral setting, all work toward creating a huge opportunity for it to become

a small tourist destination in its own right.

Hillsdale Hamlet’s historic character and handsome architecture are also important starting points for its revitalization. The Hamlet’s recent designation as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places will provide the stimulus that its citizens need to restore its architectural gems and historic charm. The stage is set for it to become what PPS calls a great Place.



The Crossroads of Routes 22 and 23



Maple Street

About PPS

Project for Public Spaces is a non-profit corporation that has worked in over 2000 communities in the United States and abroad to improve public spaces and communities so they are more active, usable, and attractive destinations. PPS has become widely known for its innovative approach to community revitalization that focuses on the behavior, expressed needs and collaborative visioning of community members. In our 35 years of experience, the same theme has come up repeatedly, especially in the last few years: more and more people are feeling a loss of community and a lack of control over, and connection to, the changes taking place in their public environments. PPS is working actively to engage communities in the planning process in order to bring a sense of community and a sense of place back to our cities and towns.

Placemaking Principles

A great public space or commercial district is like a magnet for people. People go there not only because they must pass through on business, but because it is just pleasant to be there. What makes an otherwise ordinary plaza, street or downtown into a magnet for people? Project for Public Spaces has found that four key attributes typically characterize a good public space.

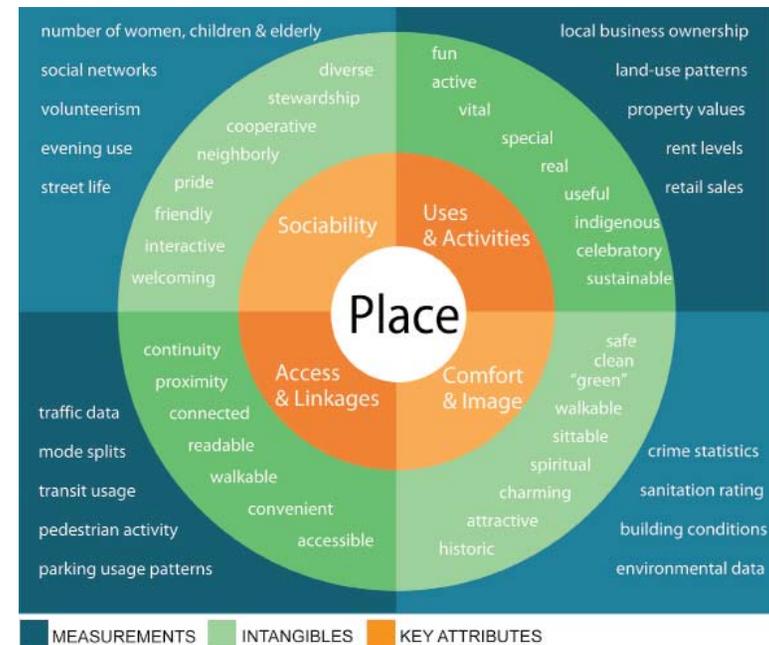
The first of these is **Comfort and Image** – users describe the place as “safe,” “clean,” “green,” “charming,” “attractive” and “historic.” There is comfortable seating; the space feels sheltering and comfortably scaled; walking into and through it is appealing and safe.

The second feature of a good public space or neighborhood is a variety of **Uses and Activities** that make the place interesting. Users describe the space as “fun,” “special,” “vital” and “real.” Food vending and other retail activities may go on in the space; celebrations occur; children play there.

A third attribute is **Access and Linkage** – the space is visibly

connected to other spaces, to transit facilities, to streets, to parking. There are no dead ends; the function and connections can be understood at a glance, and the space is designed and located for convenience.

And last, a good public space has **Sociability** – seniors sit and chat; chess or other board games are ongoing activities; people meet acquaintances and stop to visit; the entire community gathers there. There is a sense of ownership and pride in the place.



Place Diagram

The Planning Process

Project for Public Spaces, Inc. worked with the Hillsdale Hamlet Committee to conduct a thorough study of existing conditions in the study area, reviewed existing plans and guidelines, and elicited the community's suggestions for making improvements. The process was designed both to bring forth needed information and to help build enthusiasm and commitment among the area's diverse businesses and residents for the positive potential for improvement.

This process included several key components that contributed to the findings in this report:

- *Initial meetings with the Hamlet Committee* to identify goals, stakeholders, issues and opportunities.
- *On-site observations* of vehicular and pedestrian use of specific streets, intersections, and other public places throughout the Hamlet.
- *Photographic documentation of existing conditions*, including streets, sidewalks, buildings, signs, street-level uses, popular uses and activities, pedestrian paths, etc.

- *Resident and merchant surveys* were prepared and analyzed by PPS to ascertain perceptions, sensitivities, desires and needs concerning issues such as pedestrian comfort, safety and security, retail needs, events and programs, and appearance and character of the study area.
- *A Community Placemaking Workshop* was held on November 7, 2009 to learn about issues that are considered most pressing, brainstorm ideas for improvement, and outline specific potential actions. The workshop included a slideshow illustrating Placemaking examples from other towns to begin the brainstorming process, stimulate new thinking, and generate interest and participation. PPS then facilitated a "Place Game," during which teams of stakeholders evaluated the study area and drew their own conclusions about the challenges and potential solutions in those spaces.
- *The economic market potential and the demographics* of the area were studied to determine what user groups make up the potential customer base, what the competition is in the trade area and what niches Hillsdale could reasonably fill.



Placemaking Workshop, November 7, 2009



Site Tour

Planning Goals for Hillsdale Hamlet

The Placemaking process produced a great number of specific recommendations that are described in the body of this report. More than that, though, a consensus emerged around improving the quality of life in Hillsdale Hamlet so that it becomes a vibrant community destination and economically viable business district. This vision will guide the course of the recommendations and the future of the Hamlet, preserving and enhancing it as the Town of Hillsdale's charming town center.

There was consensus among participants in this study that the goals for the Hamlet's revitalization should include:

- **Create a well-defined and vibrant commercial district that is a destination for residents, week-enders and visitors**
- **Make the Hamlet walkable**
- **Create key destinations within the Hamlet that will be lively, well-programmed places**

- **Build off of current and future attractions in the area**
- **Attract development that is focused on the Rail Trail and on small, hamlet-scale infill**

These goals, if carried out throughout the Hamlet, will result in a vibrant community and regional destination and an economically stimulated business district.



The Former Aubergine Restaurant



The Mt. Washington House Restaurant and Inn

Making Hillsdale Walkable

Streets as Places

Making Hillsdale Hamlet more walkable will do more to transform it into an inviting commercial hub and community center than any other single improvement. If the two state highways do not become safe and attractive streets, Hillsdale Hamlet will never be more than a crossroads. Residents and business owners all stressed how critical this is to the future of the Hamlet, and the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) agreed.

Pedestrian safety is a very real concern. While some sidewalks do exist in the Hamlet, they are in poor condition, narrow and discontinuous. Pedestrians often walk only a foot or two away from fast moving traffic or literally in the road. In addition, transforming the roads into places will give the Hamlet a welcoming and comfortable new identity; instead of a place that people just pass through, it will be a place where people feel like stopping. Here are some guidelines for creating successful streets:

Think of streets as public spaces

The streets should be designed to be as comfortable and enjoyable as public gathering places. Great

streets have a variety of activities and destinations, active edge uses, a positive image and active management. Hillsdale's streets should encourage people to get out of their cars and experience the Hamlet on foot or by bike. Furthermore, thinking beyond the pavement to emphasize appropriate land uses and destinations that people want to and are able to reach on foot will give pedestrians a reason to be there.

Plan for people and places, not cars and traffic

Transportation should be planned to be consistent with a community's goals – like economic activity and social engagement. The vision for the community – its people and places – should take precedence over vehicular levels of service.

Design for appropriate speeds

Streets should be designed in a way that induces traffic speeds for their particular context. Whereas the highways should accommodate higher speeds, once they enter the Hamlet they should be designed for people, too. Desired speeds can be attained with a number of design tools, including changes in roadway width, intersection layout and landscaping.



Narrow sidewalks force pedestrians to walk in the road as traffic moves past



Lack of crosswalks make it difficult and unsafe to cross Route 23

Sidewalks and Crosswalks

A sidewalk project is already underway in the Town and the proposed sidewalks were approved by the Town Council on January 19, 2010. NYSDOT has put Hillsdale Hamlet on the list for the NYS Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) which means that the project will likely be funded within the next 12 years. The Town can speed up the process if it seeks additional funding on its own, and approves a sidewalk and traffic safety plan as part of its Comprehensive Plan.

The Town has proposed to build new sidewalks on both sides of Route 23 from Brady Lane on the west to the Four Brothers Plaza on the east. On Route 22, sidewalks would extend on both sides from the Post Office on the south to the intersection of Routes 22 and 23, and then on the west side northward to the Fire Station. (See Diagram 1)

Sidewalk Design

The NYSDOT requires that sidewalks on state roads be at least 5' wide and separated from the street by a 3' minimum planting strip. A 1' to 2' curb offset should separate the travel lane from the curb. Travel lanes

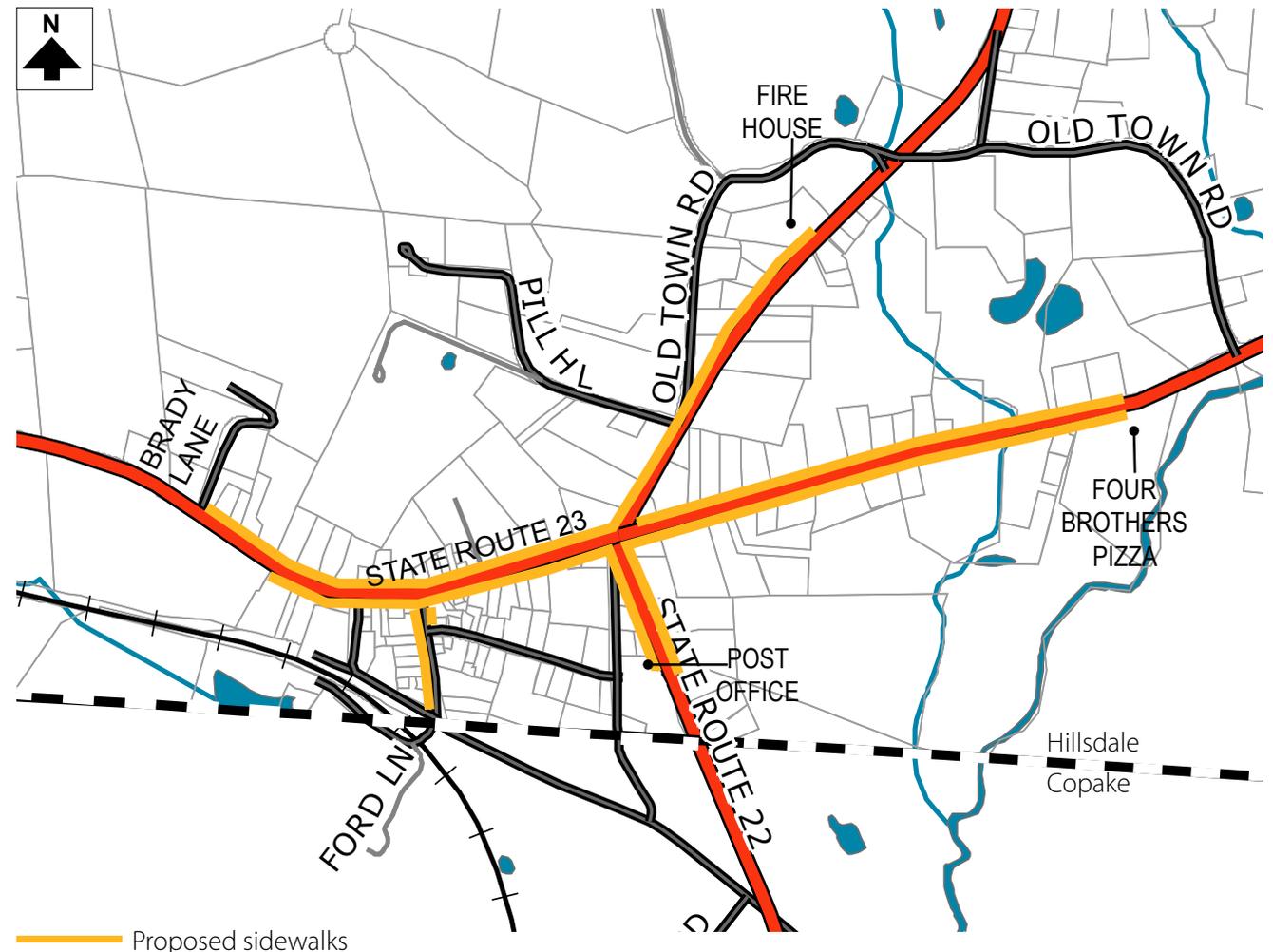


Diagram 1: Extent of New Sidewalks

should be at least 11' wide. These minimum sizes can be increased as necessary. For example, sidewalks should be wider in areas where there are amenities, outdoor dining or more pedestrian traffic. Sidewalks should be concrete or other hard paving material to accommodate the disabled as well as strollers, and comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations. Curbs should be outfitted with curb ramps at crosswalks to meet ADA regulations.

To distinguish between the urban character of the commercial hub of the Hamlet and the more rural areas outside the center, sidewalks should vary in design. The sidewalk treatment of Route 23 should be different from that of Route 22 to give it more of a "Main Street" character. Anthony Street, a county road, also needs new sidewalks, but here the scale should be smaller – no planting strips, smaller scale plantings – to reflect that it is a narrower street with less traffic:

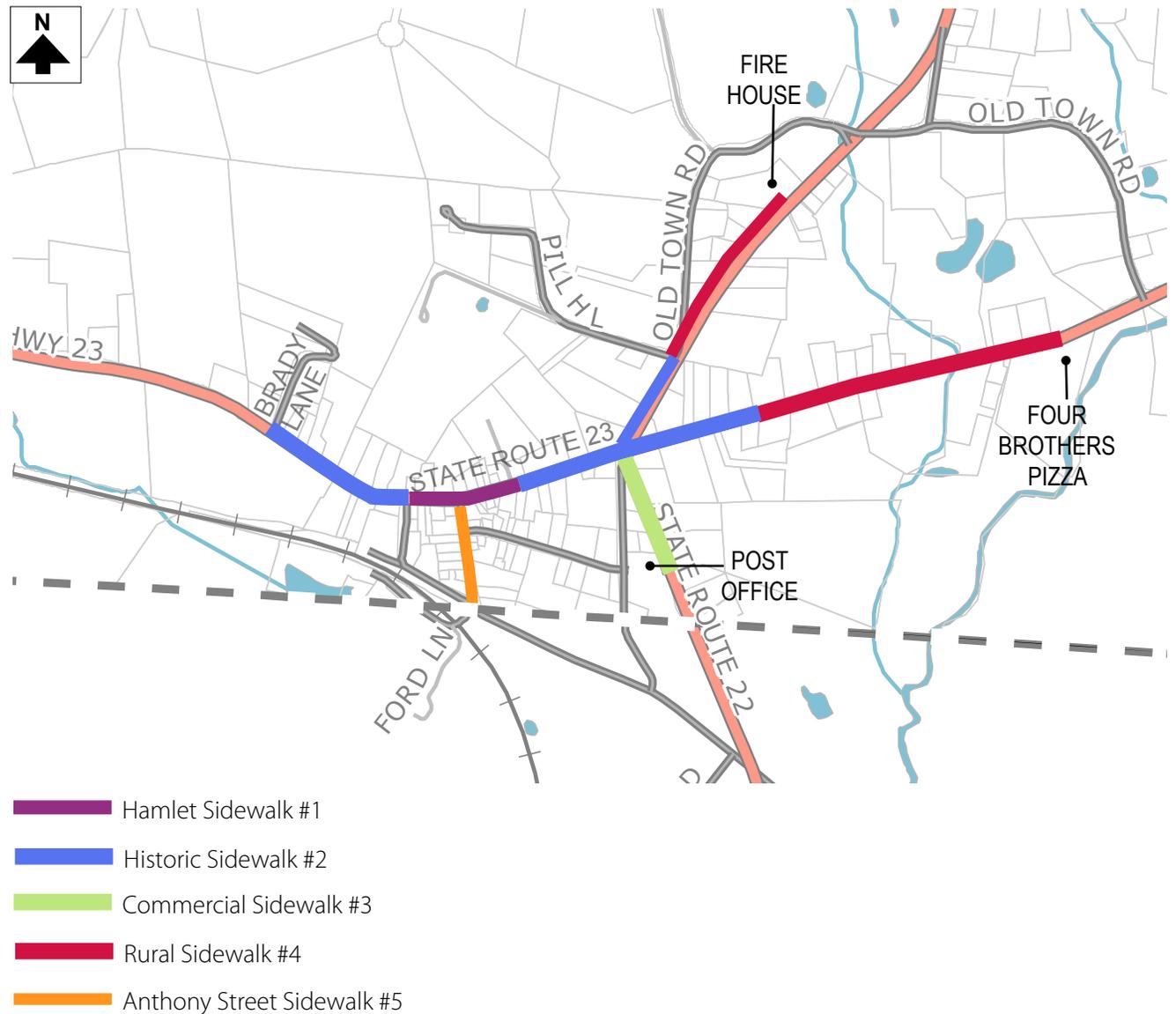


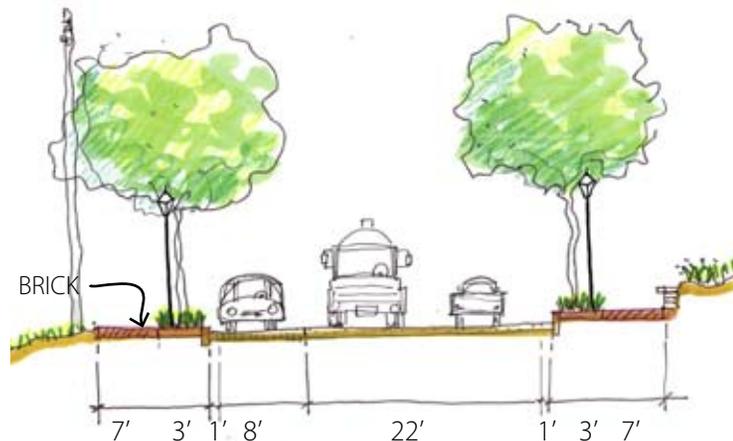
Diagram 2: Sidewalks Types

Hamlet Sidewalk --#1

To enhance the historic identity of the commercial hub of the Hamlet on Route 23, sidewalks should be paved with brick pavers, if the budget allows, and the streetscape should be more urban in character, with historic-style street lamps, large shade trees, where possible, and benches.

In the Cullin Park area, in the heart of the Hamlet, sidewalks should accommodate more pedestrians, amenities and, in some places, outdoor dining. Therefore, the planting strip recommended elsewhere should be replaced with brick in a different pattern or stone pavers, such as blue-stone, to contrast with the sidewalk.

Curbs should be of granite, a more durable material than concrete. On-street parking should be provided in areas where high parking turnover is desired, especially near the IGA and Cullin Park area. Historic-style street lighting and large shade trees on approximately 40' centers will set this area apart as the "Main Street" of Hillsdale.

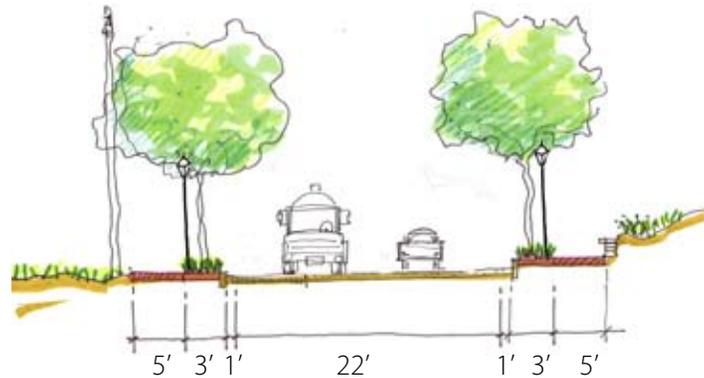


Hamlet Sidewalk

Sidewalk	
Width	10'
Material	Brick and stone pavers
Curb	
Material	Granite
Tree Pit	4' x 4'
Tree Spacing	40' on center
Under power lines	Flowering trees (See appendix)
No power lines	Shade trees (See appendix)
Street lights	
Height	10' - 12'
Style	4-sided, historic
Spacing	30' - 50'
Benches	See appendix

Historic Sidewalk --#2

The historic identity of the Historic Row, and the area to the north and east of the main intersection on Routes 22 and 23, should also be enhanced with sidewalks of brick pavers. Here, planting strips should be treated more formally with a verge of turf or ground cover, or cottage-style flower beds. Street trees and historic lighting should be similar to that of the Hamlet Sidewalk --#1.



Historic Sidewalk

Sidewalk	
Width	5'
Material	Brick pavers
Curb	
Material	Granite
Tree Pit	4' x 4', or continuous trench
Tree Spacing	40' on center
Under power lines	Flowering trees (See appendix)
No power lines	Shade trees (See appendix)
Planting strip	
Width	3'
Material	Flower beds or groundcover
Street lights	
Height	10'-12'
Style	4-sided, historic
Spacing	30'-50'
Benches	See appendix

Commercial Sidewalk -- #3

Route 22 south of the crossroads is characterized by more highway- and car-oriented businesses. The proliferation of curb cuts creates unsafe walking conditions and therefore, when sidewalks are added, redundant access should be reduced.

While sidewalks and planting strips are critical to encourage pedestrian mobility, sidewalks here could be concrete with simpler planting strips than on Route 23. Streetscape should include street trees, where possible, but no historic street lights. Sidewalks should be continuous, and ramped down at driveways and entrances. Curbs may be of concrete.

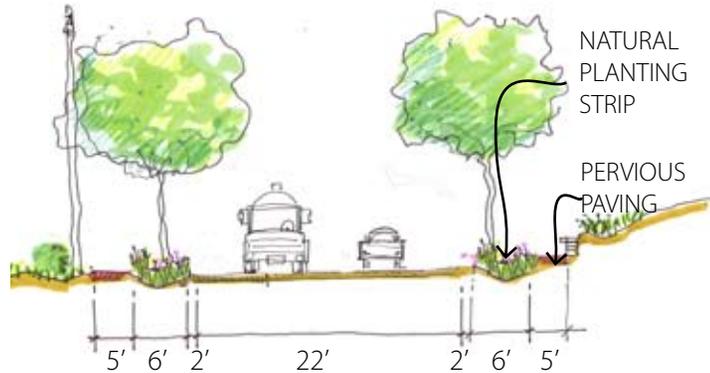


Commercial Sidewalk

Sidewalk	
Width	5'
Material	Concrete
Curb	
Material	Concrete
Tree Pit	4' x 4' or continuous trench
Tree Spacing	Where possible; avoid curb cuts
Under power lines	Flowering trees (See appendix)
No power lines	Shade trees (See appendix)
Planting strip	
Width	3'
Material	Turf or groundcover
Street lights	Cobra Heads (existing)

Rural Sidewalk -- #4

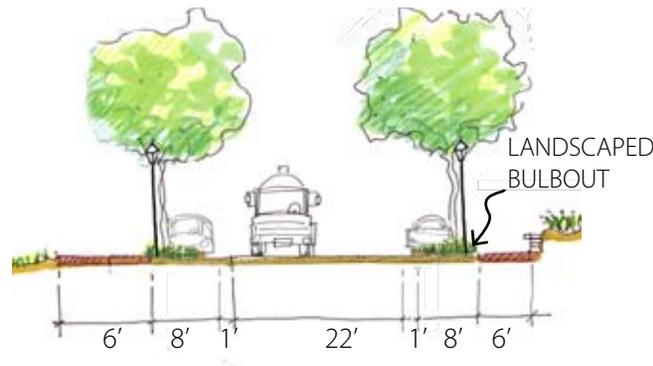
Sidewalks in the outlying areas of the Hamlet should encourage pedestrian use, yet be compatible with the more rural character of these areas. West of White Hill Street, and north and east of the Hamlet gateways (see below), the sidewalks should be no more than 5' wide and made either of concrete or a pervious material such as decomposed granite. Planting strips should be wider -- 6' or more -- with natural, low-maintenance planting. Curbs are not required in these areas, especially where the planting strip can be used for stormwater retention. The planting strip could be designed as a bio-retention swale that retains and filters runoff from the road.



Sidewalk	
Width	5' max
Material	Concrete or pervious material
Curb	Not required
Tree Spacing	Informal clusters
Under power lines	Flowering trees (See appendix)
No power lines	Shade trees (See appendix)
Planting strip	
Width	6'+
Material	Natural, low-maintenance for storm water management
Street lights	None

Anthony Street Sidewalk -- #5

New concrete sidewalks should line the west side of Anthony Street to the Town border and the east side from Route 23 to Cold Water Street. Because of the smaller, more residential scale, no planting strips are needed and the sidewalks can be limited to 5' wide in the residential area. Sidewalks can be wider, if space allows, in the commercial area north of Cold Water Street. Historic street lights and smaller scale street trees, where space allows, should be included to help reinforce the connection between Route 23 and the Rail Trail area.



Sidewalk	
Width	6'
Material	Concrete
Curb	
Material	Concrete
Planting Strip	None except at bulbouts
Tree Spacing	At bulbouts
Under power lines	Small flowering trees (See appendix)
No power lines	Shade trees (See appendix)
Street lights	
Height	10'-12'
Style	4-sided, historic
Spacing	30'-40'

Crosswalks

There is currently one unsignaled crosswalk in the Hamlet, at the intersection of Route 23 and Anthony Street. At the one signaled intersection – the crossroads of Routes 22 and 23 – crosswalks have faded and there is no pedestrian signal. The lack of crosswalks and safe pedestrian crossings means that the state roads and the main intersection in the Hamlet effectively act as barriers separating the two sides of the street and the four quadrants of the Hamlet. It limits the ability to park once and walk around town to do one's shopping, and reduces Route 23's role as a shopping street. The shortage of crosswalks also creates a safety hazard because it forces local residents to jay walk.

Traffic volumes do not warrant additional signals in the Hamlet, but in order to prevent unsafe crossings, motorists must be required to stop at unsignaled crosswalks when pedestrians are present, a tall order in New York State. Yet, just across the border in Massachusetts, pedestrians' right to cross state highways is respected. To ensure safe, unsignaled crosswalks, we suggest the following:

- Crosswalks should be highly visible and motorists should receive plenty of warning. Changing the paving material to brick, where appropriate in the Hamlet, will alert drivers with a different texture and color. Retroreflective paint or markings should be used to outline the brick pavers. Where brick is not appropriate, crosswalks should be broad, zebra stripes of retroreflective paint. Yellow cones and signs should warn drivers that they must stop for pedestrians.
- Crosswalks may be distinguished with special landscape treatments, bump outs and vertical elements.
- Traffic should be slowed before it reaches the crosswalks.

Crosswalks and pedestrian signage are needed at the following locations and as shown in the diagram:

- Intersection of Anthony Street and Route 23: Two crosswalks (one existing) on Route 23 and one on Anthony Street; brick-paved with retroreflective paint outlines; pedestrian signage
- Intersection of White Hill Street



Crosswalks

and Route 23: One crosswalk on Route 23 and one on White Hill Street; brick-paved with reflective paint outlines; pedestrian signage

- Routes 22 and 23 Crossroads : Four crosswalks at the intersection; brick paved with reflective paint outlines
- Route 22 at the Post Office: Zebra striped in retroreflective paint; pedestrian signage
- Anthony Street and Cold Water Street: stop sign on Cold Water Street; brick-paved with retroreflective paint outlines; pedestrian signage

Green Streets

Where there are no culverts, storm sewers or other provisions for stormwater runoff, the planting strips can double as stormwater retention areas. Curbs can be designed with openings, or even be omitted, to allow water to flow into bio-retention swales on both sides of the road. These planted swales can capture and retain the water, or allow it to be cleaned by the plants and slowly released. Such swales are particularly appropriate in the rural areas (Sidewalk #4).

Sidewalk Management and Maintenance

Road and sidewalk maintenance will have to be clarified amongst the Town, the State, the County and the property owners. Currently, property owners are required to maintain, shovel and clean their sidewalks, although this rarely happens. The Town now plows Anthony Street, a county road. The Town should consider plowing and maintaining the sidewalks in the center of the Hamlet to ensure continuous pedestrian access. It can seek grant money from the State to buy equipment to plow sidewalks and should consider adding snow removal to its budget.

Transit

While Hillsdale currently has no bus service, residents expressed a desire for service to Hudson, Great Barrington and the Metro North Station in Wassauc. As residents age in place, more and more people will have no cars and public transportation may become a necessity.



Green Streets

Streetscape and Amenities

Amenities such as benches, street trees, planters, trash receptacles and bike racks enhance the pedestrian experience and comfort, and encourage walking, but their design and placement can go further to enhance placemaking. Locating amenities in groups can create “triangulation:” creating a sense of place by clustering elements in such a way that they complement each other, offer more things to do in one place and create public gathering places. Amenity placement is discussed further in the chapter, “Placemaking Opportunities at Key Destinations.”

The following is a description of the most important amenities (described in more detail in the Appendix).

- Historic-style street lighting
- Benches and seating
- Street trees
- Trash receptacles
- Planters
- Information kiosk or notice board
- Bike racks
- Dumpster screening

Traffic Calming

Many residents fear walking on Routes 22 and 23 because of the proximity of fast-moving traffic. Without slowing the traffic moving through the Hamlet, new sidewalks may be a waste of money. The noise created by trucks braking suddenly at the intersection was also a frequent cause of complaint among residents and merchants who live or work on the state roads. Therefore, it is imperative that a slow speed zone be created and enforced within the center of the Hamlet, and a transition zone should be added to give motorists and trucks time to slow down. As mentioned above, the roads should be designed to induce lower speeds, as speed limits are not sufficient to do the trick.

Slow Speed Zones

Zone 1 will be an area where traffic is slowed from 55 mph to 40 mph. Speed limit signs will be supplemented with changes to the road design. The road should transition from a rural highway with wide shoulders, wide lanes and no sidewalks to one with narrower lanes, narrower shoulders or curb offsets, and in certain areas, sidewalks. (See Diagram 3)

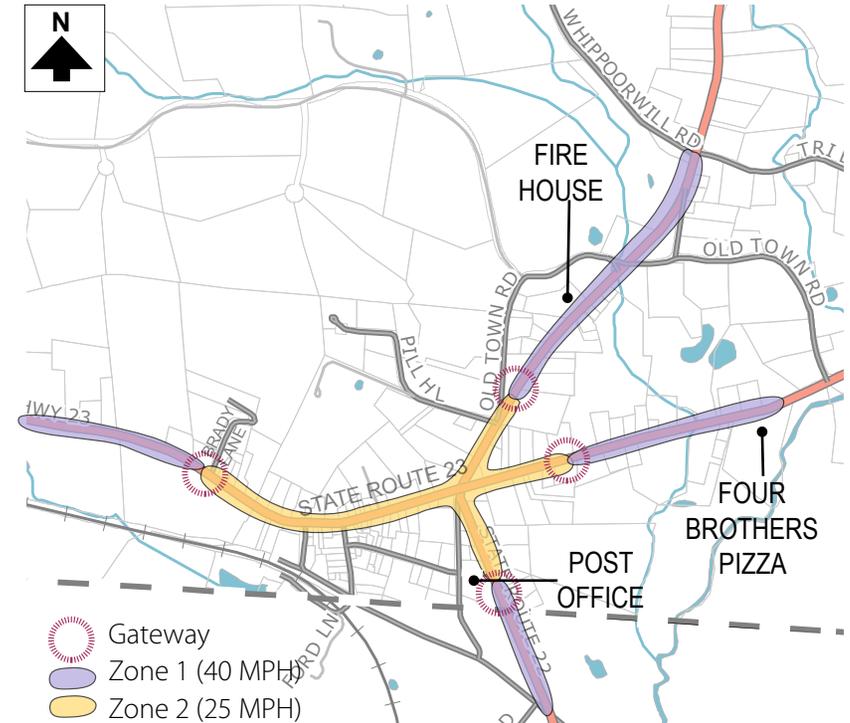


Diagram 3: Slow Speed Zones



Bulb-outs calm traffic and reduce distance at this intersection

Zone 2 will require 25 mph speeds to encourage more pedestrian activity in the center of the Hamlet. The slower speed will be introduced at specially designed gateways that will include a “Welcome to Hillsdale” sign (relocated from their current locations), special planting and a stone wall. Here more formal, brick-paved sidewalks will be introduced along with more densely planted street trees, historic street lights and more formal planting, or no planting, in the strips. On-street parking could further calm traffic in key areas.

The Crossroads

The crossroads of Routes 22 and 23 is the most heavily traveled intersection in the Town of Hillsdale. It is currently a sea of asphalt with wide turning radii that allow vehicles to make their turns at high speeds and provides no crosswalks for pedestrians. Motorists can see the signal from a long way off and often speed to make it through the green light. Pedestrians are intimidated – and rightly so -- to cross here. Maple Street opens into the intersection, creating a particularly dangerous situation: southbound motorists sometimes mistake it for Route 22 (as it once was, explaining the confusing alignment) and northbound

drivers enter the intersection in an awkward location. It also contributes to the overly wide roadway.

A Smaller Intersection

The intersection can be made safer and more attractive by reducing the amount of asphalt and the distances for pedestrians to cross, closing the end of Maple Street and reducing the turning radii. Corners can be “bumped-out” where possible to slow traffic and reduce crossing distances. Large tractor trailer trucks will still be able to negotiate the intersection. A pedestrian signal should be added with a pedestrian-only cycle that could be activated by a pedestrian. Crosswalks should be paved with brick pavers, but be highly visible with retroreflective paint.



Reduce turning radii to create tighter intersection



Smaller intersection

Access Management

Curb cuts and driveways have proliferated over the years as car-oriented businesses have been added to the Hamlet. Many of these access points are redundant and can be eliminated. The NYSDOT voiced concerns about traffic safety in the Hamlet due to the lack of access management. Design guidelines for new or renovated buildings should minimize these curb cuts, and the site plan review process should stringently enforce these guidelines. Shared parking, as discussed below, and cross access between parking lots will help to alleviate this problem.



Pedestrian safety is compromised by wide access areas

At the crossroads, pedestrian safety is particularly compromised by the wide access areas at the Cobble Pond Service Station/convenience store, the Hillsdale Country Diner and at other commercial uses on Route 22. With the new sidewalks and a reconfigured intersection, these should be reduced and the parking lot buffered by planting areas. In areas with head-in or angled parking, sidewalks should continue adjacent to the buildings.

Parking

Successful, walkable commercial districts usually provide a “park once” strategy where shoppers and visitors can readily find a lot where they can park once and walk to all of their destinations. Usually, but not always, this is in one or more conveniently-located municipal lots. Retail businesses and restaurants under a certain size are often not required to provide parking for their customers. In the past, Hillsdale Hamlet has developed along the suburban model of each business providing its own parking, and often in front of the business. This has created the abundance of curb cuts that make continuous sidewalks so difficult. It has also discouraged “park once” behavior among Hamlet customers.

Municipal Lots

The Town should actively seek to partner with private property owners to either lease areas for public parking, or to purchase a lot or portions of lots to create its own municipal lot.

North of Route 23

The Town should investigate acquiring, through lease or purchase, a lot that fronts on Route 23, or land on one or several lots behind existing businesses in the center of the Hamlet, near Cullin Park. Lots are deeper on the north side of Route 23 and thus could be more readily converted to parking without a significant loss of street frontage.

Rail Trail Parking

Use of a completed Harlem Valley Rail Trail would be significantly increased by public parking adjacent to the trail. Millerton has done this and has profited greatly from being known as a starting point for cyclists and walkers.



Parking buffer



Parking buffer in North Adams, MA

The Harlem Valley Rail Trail

The Rail Trail offers a huge opportunity to the Town and Hamlet of Hillsdale to become a regional destination for cyclists and walkers, just as Millerton, New York has. The trail is a paved bicycle/pedestrian path on the railroad bed of the former New York Central line that ran from New York City, up the Harlem Valley, to Chatham. The trail right-of-way spans 46 miles from Wassaic to Chatham, and the completed trail covers 14 miles, in two segments. The southern segment runs 10.6 miles from Wassaic to Millerton with an 8 mile break before the northern segment resumes at Undermountain Road from which it runs an additional four miles to Copake Falls.

The Rail Trail is operated by a non-profit organization, the Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association, in partnership with the New York State Dept. of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The State Parks Dept. has secured all the property for the trail to continue through the Town of Hillsdale, but it currently lacks the funds to construct the trail. It would be to the Town's advantage if it and the Hamlet Committee assisted the

State in raising funds through grants or private donations, to build the trail through the Town, and provided political support through its state representatives.

Benefits of the Rail Trail

The residents and businesses of the Village of Millerton are delighted with the Rail Trail. It has helped to revitalize the downtown, bringing many more visitors throughout the year: for example, between 1800 and 2000 people come to town just for the Harlem Valley Ride (an annual series of bike races). New shops have opened, empty storefronts have filled, bike racks have been installed all over town, and inns and B&B's are doing well. Millerton was listed recently among the top ten small towns in the country by Fromer. Not only cyclists use the trail; people on roller blades, with strollers and in wheelchairs enjoy it, too.



Existing view of Rail Trail area



Cyclists at Millerton Diner

Paths for Walking and Biking

New sidewalks and the construction of the Rail Trail through the town will significantly improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility through the Town and Hamlet. To complement these efforts, the Town should consider acquiring property through purchase or easements, to extend walking paths through areas where there are no roads to create short-cuts and convenient connections between destinations. For example, a “desire path” already exists from the end of Cold Water Street, across private property, to the Post Office on Route 22. This path could be formalized through an easement with the property owner and better maintenance by the Town. Alternatively, the Town could create site improvement requirements in its Site Plan Approval that require a property owner who is improving his/her property to provide and maintain a public right-of-way in key areas. Paths can remain simple and unpaved, but covered with a pervious material such as wood chips or decomposed granite, and indicated with signs.

Paths should be considered in the following areas (See Diagram 4):

- Cold Water Street to Route 22
- To link the Herrington Parking Lot with the IGA Parking Lot
- To link Anthony Street to the Hamlet Park (for bikes and walkers) over the sewer easement
- After Maple Street is closed, to link the crossroads with the Hamlet Park

While bike lanes would be an attractive improvement, particularly to encourage Rail Trail users to enter the Hamlet, most roadways are not wide enough within the Hamlet. Nevertheless, opportunities to create separate bike paths and to add amenities for cyclists (bike racks, bike pumping stations, etc) should be considered.

Alternate Roadways

As the Hamlet grows, consideration should be given to creating new roads that provide alternative routes to the state highways. The “Building Siting Guidelines” recommends creating networks of streets in new developments that are interconnecting, rather than creating dead ends or cul-de-sacs. This is preferable for a number of reasons: it creates a more walkable street grid, it reduces congestion on the state highways and other major streets, and it provides better access for emer-

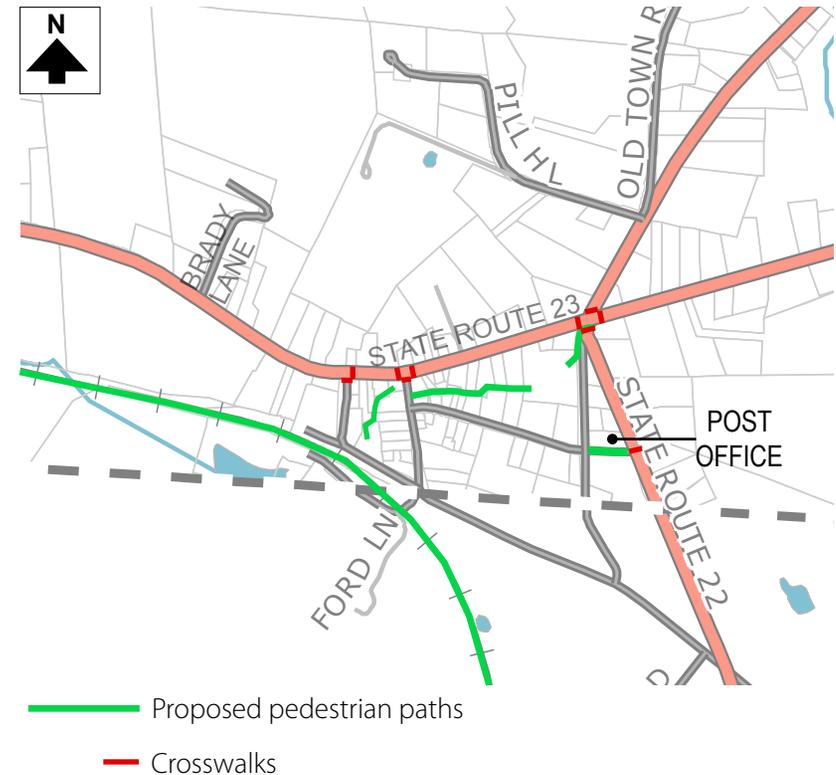


Diagram 4: Pedestrian Paths and Crosswalks

gency vehicles. If some of these streets provide shortcuts or alternate routes for residents to avoid Routes 22 and 23, this will take some of the pressure of the highways and the main intersection, with the added benefit of reducing traffic and noise, and improving walkability on the main roads. While this runs counter to the way suburban subdivisions have been designed, it is preferable in a denser, village-type setting.

Placemaking Opportunities at Key Destinations

Placemaking in communities is not about defining just one or two anchors or destinations; it is about creating a number of great places or destinations that connect to and complement each other. Placemaking is based on the recognition that great places are more than the sum of their parts. For example, Hillsdale Hamlet should have a number of great destinations – ten would be ideal – so that residents and tourists alike could find enough things to do to spend an entire day in the Hamlet. And each of these great places should have a variety of things to do. A public space could have a fountain, but a fountain next to a playground and a food vendor is better. If there is a bike trail, a bus stop and an ice cream parlor near the fountain, most people would consider this a great place.

Stakeholders and workshop participants identified a number of great destinations in Hillsdale, as well as potential ones. Some are public spaces, such as the Hamlet Park, that could simply be improved through physical changes and more programming. Others, such as Cullin Park, Anthony Street and Historic Row, are now just a collection of disparate buildings in various states of repair. However, with the right mix of commercial uses, consistent building renovations and street enhancements, these areas could become really attractive and visually coherent places that, when seen as a whole, function and feel like a commercial district.

Key Destinations



- 1. CULLIN PARK AREA
- 2. ANTHONY STREET COMMERCIAL
- 3. MAIN STREET HISTORIC ROW
- 4. THE CROSSROADS
- 5. HAMLET PARK
- 6. MIXED USE RAIL TRAIL "ARTS VILLAGE"



Key Destination: The Cullin Park Area

Cullin Park is the historic name of the small green with the large war memorial that is viewed by many as the heart of Hillsdale Hamlet. Once Hillsdale's hospitality hub, surrounded by a general store, the Hillsdale House Restaurant and former inn, and across from the Mt. Washington House, it marks the intersection with Anthony Street, which historically led to the train station. Its role today is enhanced by the adjacent IGA Supermarket and the B&G Gourmet and Wine shop. With the move of the Town Hall into the former library across the street, the revival of the general store, new retail uses, and new streetscape and amenities, Cullin Park can regain its position as the THE community gathering place at the center of the Hamlet.

Challenges

LACK OF SIDEWALKS



There is no continuous sidewalk along the south side of Route 23. A large evergreen tree blocks views and access to the monument.

ROUTE 23 IS A BARRIER



Pedestrians have a difficult time crossing the street to shop on both sides of Route 23, hurting commercial uses.

SUBURBAN-STYLE PARKING



With no public parking area or on-street parking, each business is forced to provide its own parking, leading to a proliferation of curb cuts and small parking lots, and inhibiting walking.

NO COHERENT "MAIN STREET" LOOK



The Cullin Park area is a collection of free-standing buildings, with nothing knitting them together as a commercial hub.

LACK OF COMMERCIAL VISIBILITY



Although the Mt. Washington House is a handsome landmark in the Hamlet, a lack of visible activity discourages stopping as at other commercial establishments.

LACK OF WAYFINDING SIGNAGE



Motorists are not directed to key destinations such as the commercial uses on Anthony Street, Goliath or Hamlet Park.

Key Destination: The Cullin Park Area

Pocket park with a focal point to serve as a meeting/gathering place

Outdoor dining in front of Mt. Washington House

Gathering place at Cullin Park

Continuous sidewalks with shade trees



****This is a concept rendering. It is not drawn to scale nor are all details necessarily accurate**

Enhance pedestrian link between the Herrington Parking Lot and the IGA Parking Lot

Crosswalks with clear pedestrian signage

Temporary plaza that is sometimes closed to parking to allow for festivals, small performances and outdoor dining.

Key Destination: The Cullin Park Area

Recommendations

The Cullin Park Area and its green should be more than a monument viewed only in passing. It could be the most visible commercial hub in Hillsdale, inviting visitors to stop and explore its cafes, restaurants and shops. The community can gather on the green, socialize outside the Hillsdale House and dine outdoors at a number of eating establishments. Slower car speeds will allow these activities to occur without being drowned out by traffic noise. Property owners whose buildings face Cullin Park should work together to create a sense of place around the green. While it is important to continue to allow parking in front of the businesses, the area could look like and function as an attractive plaza. It could occasionally be closed for festivals, small performances and outdoor dining. Even when open to cars, a wide area in front of the businesses could be separated from parking by bollards or planters to allow for outdoor dining throughout the summer months.

The new Town Hall will occupy a strategic position at the west end of the Cullin Park commercial and civic hub. A pocket park with a focal point such as a small fountain or a

PROVIDE CONTINUOUS SIDEWALKS



New sidewalks will help to knit the area together as a coherent commercial hub while allowing shoppers to park once and visit a number of destinations.

BETTER CROSSWALKS



A highly visible crosswalk with clear pedestrian signage where motorists stop when pedestrians are in the crosswalk is of critical importance to help join the two sides of Route 23 together as one commercial and civic area.

STREET TREES AND STREET LIGHTS



Street trees spaced no more than 40' apart and historic street lights will create a pedestrian-oriented atmosphere and alert passersby that this is an historic downtown.

PLACEMAKING AT CULLIN PARK



A small "pocket park" with benches and amenities such as trash receptacles and planters will encourage people to linger in the Green.

TEMPORARY PLAZA



The paved area around the green at Cullin Park could be paved with stone or brick pavers to function as a temporary plaza that is closed occasionally to allow for festivals, small performances and outdoor dining.

OUTDOOR DINING



The Mt. Washington House and B&G could work with the businesses across the street to create attractive outdoor dining areas in front of their buildings facing the street.

Key Destination: The Cullin Park Area

clock surrounded by benches and an information kiosk will create a meeting place next to the Town's key civic building.

Municipal parking that is readily available, visible and well-marked is critical in this area to encourage walking in the Hamlet. While we do not recommend creating large gaps in the rows of buildings lining Route 23, a narrow lot (minimum 60') could be acquired by the Town and lead to a new parking lot running perpendicular to Route 23 and buffered by attractive landscaping. Alternatively, a shared parking lot could be created on private property behind businesses on Rt. 23. It could be owned and operated by the Town or created as a shared privately-owned lot through a partnership of property owners.

While Route 23 is too narrow to allow continuous on-street parking, small pockets of on-street parking should be encouraged. Parallel parking for 2-3 cars will encourage motorists to stop near businesses and will help to buffer pedestrians from traffic on the state road.

PLACEMAKING AT THE TOWN HALL



A focal point next to the Town Hall will encourage spontaneous and programmed community gatherings.

WAYFINDING SIGNAGE



Cullin Park, and the intersection of Route 23 and Anthony Street, is an important location for signage directing both motorists and pedestrians to Anthony Street commercial uses and the Rail Trail.

MUNICIPAL PARKING



A municipal parking lot should be easy to find, yet screened by landscaping from the sidewalk.

ON-STREET PARKING



Small pockets of on-street parking should be encouraged whether in the public right-of-way or on private property.

LIGHTING



Along with pedestrian-scaled street lighting and well-lit signs, commercial property owners should strive to increase their visibility by lighted storefronts and even lights on the historic buildings.

Key Destination: Anthony Street

Hillsdale Hamlet was once a farm center for the surrounding area, its train station the focus of agricultural trade and transport. With the demise of the railroad, Anthony Street lost its traditional role as the connection to the train station and the warehouses, milk depot and light industrial uses that were located around it. Anthony Street was also the other “Main Street” for Hillsdale, with a Post Office, shops and services. While residential uses – single and multi-family houses – occupy its southern end, the area from Cold Water Street north still retains some of its commercial character.

Challenges

NO REASON TO WALK



Anthony Street no longer provides access to an important destination in the Hamlet. The lack of safe, continuous sidewalks also discourages walking.

LIMITED COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY



The loss of the train station and the Post Office reduced commercial activity on the street, but offices, services and a gallery still attract local residents.

SUBURBAN-STYLE PARKING



Shops and services have created head-in parking in front of their businesses which discourages walking.

Key Destination: Anthony Street

Recommendations

Anthony Street could once again become an important part of the Hamlet's commercial district, with shops and services that particularly cater to residents. Its intersection with Route 23, at Cullin Park, should draw people down the street with signs that indicate what they will find. Anthony Street will also be the link to the new Rail Trail and the cluster of activities that will be built around the entrance to the trail. The street will look like a small "Main Street" with sidewalks and streetscape on a smaller scale than that of Route 23. The area to the north of Cold Water Street should allow a wide variety of commercial uses, and residential above, while south of Cold Water, limited commercial uses and offices could be allowed on the ground floor of residential buildings and the residential character should be maintained.

PROVIDE CONTINUOUS SIDEWALKS



5' sidewalks without planting strips should be built on both sides of Anthony Street with historic lighting and small-scale planting. Sidewalks can be extended to create bulb-outs at corners.

ON-STREET PARKING



Parking on both sides of the street will give the street a more urban, commercial feel. Curb cuts for driveways should be minimized.

INCREASE COMMERCIAL USE



The north end of Anthony Street should allow a wide variety of commercial uses with residential above.

CLOSE THE STREET FOR EVENTS



Anthony Street should be the focus for downtown fairs and festivals. It could be closed for Community Day celebrations, sidewalk sales, art fairs or other events.

LINK STREET TO HAMLET PARK



The Town could acquire an easement to create a path for pedestrians and bicyclists to connect to the park without using Route 23.

Key Destination: Main Street Historic Row

One of Hillsdale Hamlet's most underutilized assets is the row of historic homes that line Route 23. These beautiful mid-19th century houses constitute some of the most significant historic architecture in the Hamlet and a key component of the Historic District. However, their need for rehabilitation, parking in the front yards and vacant lots all work to detract from the Hamlet's image. While residential uses are not inappropriate, commercial uses on the ground floors would help to draw pedestrians down the street and extend the commercial district.

Challenges EMPTY GAPS IN THE ROW



On the south side, gaps mar the continuity of the row. On the north side of Route 23, a large house was removed creating a large empty space.

HISTORIC GEMS THAT NEED ATTENTION



Many of the historic houses need ongoing maintenance to preserve their value and enhance the entire Hamlet.

FEW COMMERCIAL USES



The Hamlet is effectively divided into two commercial areas and a pedestrian connection is ineffective because the historic row lacks commercial uses.

Key Destination: Main Street Historic Row

Consistent edge created by planting flowers gardens in front yards

Shared parking lot

New retail or office buildings that are residential in character to fill in the empty gaps along the row



***This is a concept rendering. It is not drawn to scale nor are all details necessarily accurate*

Key Destination: Main Street Historic Row

Recommendations

The architectural gems in the Historic Row will be shown off to their greatest advantage if they are seen as a coherent whole; with their common setbacks and rhythmic spacing, they could form a lovely ensemble. A consistent treatment of streetscape, gardens, porches and colors will all help to tie the buildings together. The National Registry listing will open up the opportunity for tax credits and grants to renovate these resources, as discussed below. With the addition of commercial uses on their ground floors, they can form an important link between Cullin Park and the intersection of the two highways.

Gaps should be filled and houses should be replaced with new buildings that recreate the scale, spacing, setbacks, height and character of the existing houses, on both sides of Route 23. It could even be possible to move historic homes from areas where they are slated for demolition. The site on the north side of Route 23 could be filled with three or four small buildings that are residential in character and could be an extension of an inn at the former Aubergine, retail shops with apartments above or even small office buildings.

The Town's Historic Preservation Committee is dedicated to helping homeowners in the Hamlet receive grants for restoration work and materials and to apply for Historic District tax credits.

ENCOURAGE INFILL DEVELOPMENT



Gaps should be filled with new buildings that are residential in scale and compatible with their context.

ENCOURAGE HISTORIC DETAILS



Guidelines should be created to help homeowners recreate important details and materials, choose paint colors that create a harmonious ensemble and provide landscaping that complements the historic architecture.

ENCOURAGE COMMERCIAL USES



Gradually, over time, the Historic Row could become part of the commercial Main Street of Hillsdale, but at a residential scale that mixes well with existing residences.

CONTINUE STREETScape



Sidewalks, planting strips, street trees and lamp posts should be similar to those in the Cullin Park area to maintain continuity and pedestrian character to the highway intersection.

ENCOURAGE PARKING BEHIND BUILDINGS



Owners and tenants should park behind houses and curb cuts should be kept to a minimum. Front yards could be filled with flower gardens that create a consistent edge.

Key Destination: The Crossroads

Reconfiguring the intersection and improving safety for pedestrians and motorists, as discussed above, will go a long way to increasing its attractiveness as a gateway and hub of circulation in the Hamlet, but it still lacks the activities that could transform it into a destination. This “100%” intersection with the best exposure in the entire Town is underutilized as a commercial hub. While reviving Aubergine and adding activity to the corners may be a long-term goal, much can be done in the short-term to beautify the corners, improve directional signage at the intersection and announce Town-wide activities. If traffic is slowed at the intersection, motorists will have time to orient themselves and read directional signage.

Challenges

VACANT PROPERTIES



The former restaurant, Aubergine, has been vacant for a number of years. The southeast corner, while hosting a veterans’ memorial, serves no purpose.

ENDLESS CURB CUTS



Parking in front of commercial businesses and wide driveways create an environment that is not pedestrian friendly. The commercial uses on Route 22 are car-oriented and inhibit pedestrian mobility.

WIDE EXPANSE OF ASPHALT



The intersection is oversized and lacks crosswalks, encouraging drivers to speed and discouraging pedestrians.

LACK OF WAYFINDING SIGNAGE



No directional signs direct motorists to the commercial area or other important resources.

Key Destination: The Crossroads



Key Destination: The Crossroads

Recommendations

The crossroads is an ideal gateway to the commercial district and a great place to orient passersby to the resources the Hamlet offers. Views up and down the state roads should give a clear picture of what lies ahead – a walkable commercial district, a historic residential area, etc., and signage can be used to great advantage here.

The Methodist Church and the former restaurant hold great potential as anchors in the Hamlet and activity should spill out their doors, creating a welcoming identity for the Hamlet. While it is critical that a tenant be found for the former Aubergine, and preferably a restaurant that could become a destination in the Hamlet once again, the Methodist Church could also provide more activity both indoors and out. For example, the historic assembly room could hold as many as 200 people for concerts, lectures and community meetings. Its front yard could be enhanced with benches and plantings to create a comfortable seating area.

Sidewalks are recommended for both sides of Route 22 heading south from the intersection and on the west side heading north. These

should include planted buffers as on Route 23. Driveways and curb cuts should be minimized to make walking safe and comfortable. Parking should be located behind buildings wherever possible. For example, the Country Diner has space behind for a small parking lot and a small amount of parking for the disabled should be located in front. Curb cuts could be reduced in size and an attractive landscaped buffer should separate the sidewalk from the parking.

ACCESS MANAGEMENT ON ROUTE 22



Parking should be behind buildings wherever possible, curb cuts should be minimized to promote walking and parking areas should be buffered from the street by landscaping.

WAYFINDING SIGNAGE



Motorists should be directed from the intersection to key destinations in the Hamlet, such as the Hamlet Commercial District, the Hamlet Park, the Town Hall and the Rail Trail.

ENTRANCE TO HAMLET PARK



Once Maple Street is closed, the corner space could be used to create an attractive gateway arbor and sign, visible from the intersection, into the park.

AN INFORMATION KIOSK OR BANNER



Signage designed to be read by motorists stopped at the intersection could be added to the empty southeast corner amid landscaping. This could provide information regarding upcoming programs.

BEAUTIFY CORNERS



While reducing the speed and improving the crossing for pedestrians, the intersection can be enhanced with attractive landscaping and flowerbeds.

Key Destination: Hamlet Park

The 2.7 acre park in the Hamlet is home to the popular Farmers Market, a Little League Baseball Field, a basketball court and a small playground. Residents are concerned that the new Roeliff Jansen Park will compete with the Hamlet Park for programs and activities. This need not be the case if the two parks are viewed as complementing each other, and park managers coordinate their programs. Roeliff Jansen will eventually be an active park with sports fields, diverse outdoor recreational uses and large gatherings. The Hamlet Park should be a more passive area, serving the Hamlet community as a Town Green and complementing its businesses.

While residents love the Hamlet Park, they feel that there are not enough reasons to be there. The park is not used by a diverse cross-section of people. Seniors, youth and people without children do not view it as a destination. Even parents said that there is not enough to keep their children busy for very long.

Challenges LACK OF VISIBILITY AND ACCESS



The sloping hill hides the park from Route 23 and buildings block views of the park. Parking is not visible from these roads.

PLAYGROUND IS HIDDEN



Mothers with small children feel less secure in remote play areas.

TOO FEW THINGS TO DO



A large expanse of lawn serves well for the Farmers Market and the annual Flea Market, but there are few day-to-day activities.

Key Destination: Hamlet Park

***This is a concept rendering. It is not drawn to scale nor are all details necessarily accurate*



Transform log cabin into a visitor center and cafe that opens into the park with outdoor dining/seating

New driveway from Route 22 provides emergency vehicles access to a relocated Maple Street and direct vehicular access into Park.

Create outdoor dining options around Hillsdale Country Diner

Key Destination: Hamlet Park

Recommendations

The Hamlet Park should become the Village Green of the Hamlet, a small jewel of a park whose attractive gardens and pavilions will be visible from Routes 22 and 23, enhancing the entire Hamlet, and programmed year-round with activities. Closing Maple Street will give the Town the opportunity to bring the Hamlet Park right to the intersection of Routes 23 and 22, and provide direct access off of Route 22. Motorists will be able to see into the park from the intersection and prominent features, such as a garden and gateway arbor or pergola, could be located there. A new driveway could be created from Route 22, giving emergency vehicles access to Maple Street and providing direct access to the Park.

All parks and squares profit from a symbiotic relationship with uses surrounding them, whether commercial or civic. The restaurant or café on Route 22 (in the log cabin or on its site) or on Route 23 (the former Town Hall) with outdoor dining on the park would take advantage of views into the park, provide eyes on the park and create triangulation among uses. Even a small kitchen and indoor recreational space in the basement of the former Town Hall could be used in conjunction with

an outdoor play and picnic area.

A small stream runs in a culvert under Route 23 and under the park, eventually emptying into Roeliff Jansen Kill. The water quality has improved since the sewer district was created, however the stream does receive stormwater runoff directly from the streets. New regulations require that municipalities protect water quality in natural waterbodies by reducing and cleaning nonpoint source pollution. The Town has the opportunity to help filter the stormwater in the stream through biofiltration and create an attractive feature in the park at the same time. The stream could create an attractive waterfall next to the Veterans' Memorial on Route 23, plunging into a small pool at the base of the hill where the water is filtered before re-entering the culvert under the park.

IMPROVE VISIBILITY AND ACCESS



The entrance to the park should be visible from the Crossroads and enhanced with a small plaza and flower garden.

ACTIVATE EDGES



A café that opens into the park, near the playground, would put eyes on the park and offer something for parents while their kids are playing.

CREATE A WATER FEATURE



A little waterfall would create an attractive feature on the hill leading down to the park.

INCREASE PASSIVE USE



Seniors and Hamlet residents would be attracted to the park as a meeting place if an attractive landscaped plaza with a focal point such as a fountain is created in a visible location near other uses

Key Destination: Hamlet Park

More needs to be done to activate the park day-to-day. A variety of active uses have been suggested to attract residents and visitors to use the park regularly:

- Basketball court: while already there, more pick-up games and classes could be held there
- Handball court: whose wall could double as a movie screen
- Baseball and softball: Little League could share the field with youth and adult softball
- Ice skating: a temporary skating rink could be created in the field with skate rental in the basement of the former Town Hall and a kiosk to buy hot chocolate and snacks
- Community garden: a small community garden could offer plots to residents in apartments
- Larger, more visible playground: the playground is a popular destination for families with toddlers, but a larger play area with more adventure-style equipment (small climbing walls, swings) would attract older children.

The playground should be located near picnic tables and even a small café to give parents a place to gather while watching their children.

- Picnic pavilion. A multi-use pavilion could serve as a shelter for the Farmers Market, a stage for performances as well as a party and event space.



Key Destination: Hamlet Park

A year-round program of activities could help to draw residents to the park during the day and in the evening, on weekdays and weekends. Programs could be coordinated with Roeliff Jansen Park so they take place in both parks. The annual Flea Market, the bi-weekly Farmers Market and Little League games in the summer are a good start, but residents mentioned a wide variety of new activities to try, some in conjunction with closing Anthony Street:

- Outdoor performances: small concerts
- Outdoor movies
- Art festivals
- Fun Run
- Festivals in conjunction with events on Anthony Street
- Harvest Festival
- Garden expo: in conjunction with Taconic Valley Garden Center and Herrington's
- Weddings and fundraisers: private events could be held here in conjunction with the church or local restaurants. Fees could be charged to support park maintenance.



Key Destination: Rail Trail Village

An extension of the Harlem Valley Rail Trail could provide a huge economic boost to the Hamlet. Just as the rail road once played an important role in Hillsdale, connecting the Town to the region, the future Rail Trail offers a similar opportunity. As Millerton, NY has demonstrated, a popular bike and walking path can attract visitors from a broad area to not only pass through, but to stop to dine, drink and shop. With a parking lot adjacent to the trail, it could become a starting point and a terminus, and like the train station, support commercial uses around it and throughout the Hamlet. The Goliath Art Gallery and School in an old woodframe warehouse represents a wonderful starting point for additional development and art-related uses.



Future site of the extension of the Harlem Valley Rail Trail.



The Harlem Valley Rail Trail near Millerton, NY.



The Goliath Art Center could be the catalyst for other cultural uses.



The Harlem Valley Rail Trail uses existing roads as well as a dedicated trail.

Key Destination: Rail Trail Village

Recommendations

The trail is an ideal spot for a small-scale, mixed-use development providing housing for a range of incomes and retail uses on the ground floor. The development should look and feel like a small village, with parking in small pockets behind the buildings and pedestrian lanes winding between the buildings. Co-housing communities, such as Pioneer Valley outside of Amherst, MA, are good models because of the safe walking environment they create.

ASSIST THE STATE



Land has been set aside for the Rail Trail, but the State lacks the funds to build the trail. The Town of Hillsdale can help raise the funds to build a trail that connects to Copake Falls and extends to the west into the Audubon Society's conservation area.

SMALL-SCALE HOUSING



Small-scale housing for a mix of incomes could create a village-like atmosphere.

RECRUIT A BIKE AND SPORTS SHOP



A sports shop that offers bikes and bike rentals near the trail could also cater to the skiing crowd in the winter.

BUILD ON THE ARTS



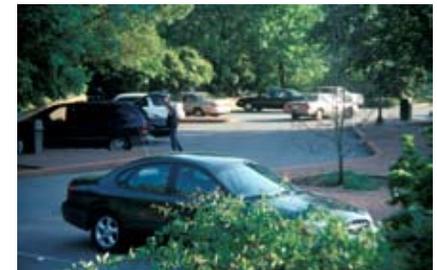
While Hillsdale may be too small to support an arts district, the arts could be an important part of the mix, with galleries and shops building off of the presence of Goliath, along with art programming such as art fairs and outdoor performances.

MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT



The development should include commercial uses on the ground floors in some locations.

PARKING AREA



Parking for the public and for the residents should be in small pockets as opposed to one large lot. Pervious paving should be used to reduce run-off.

Wayfinding

Wayfinding is a system of signs, symbols, maps, and other informational, directional, and architectural elements that serve to guide people to and through a town or a destination. A comprehensive and integrated wayfinding system will help to create a sense of identity for the Hillsdale Hamlet and will help connect the important destinations. In addition, historic landmarks, and popular recreational or civic destinations, will become more visible and accessible with a well developed signage system.

PPS was charged with evaluating the existing signage and proposing a wayfinding signage program as part of the Hamlet Design and Development Plan. We are proposing concepts and organizational ideas that could become the foundation of a wayfinding system, rather than a design.

Goals

Goals for the wayfinding system for the Hamlet should be to:

1. Help to transform the Hamlet into a year-round destination, with day-time and night-time uses, and not just a place to pass through.
2. Enable everyone -- pedestrians and motorists, residents and week-enders, but especially first-time visitors -- to find their way around the Hamlet.
3. Indicate important resources that are not visible from Routes 22 and 23, such as the Rail Trail and Anthony Street retail.
4. Facilitate walking and biking in the Hamlet.
5. Clarify the parking opportunities. Directing visitors to off-street, municipal parking facilities could help reduce the suburban-style parking habit (parking in lots in front of businesses) that inhibits walkability.
6. Express community pride and give impression that people care about the Hamlet.

Getting Started

Before hiring a designer to implement a wayfinding program or ordering signs, we recommend that the Town undertake the following steps that will help to ensure the success of the program:

1. Identify the key resources and the elements that will make up the system. Key resources are the Hamlet itself and the destinations within it. The incorporation of other landmarks—striking or significant elements such as unique architectural landmarks, focal points or important public sites such as the veterans’ memorials—can also be included as functional elements of the wayfinding system. The more memorable the elements, the more the public can be engaged in the process of finding their way to a destination.
2. Organize the public’s experience of the Hamlet. This step involves organizing the environment, or establishing a geographic pattern, around a hierarchy of elements and the routes people will likely take. Good organization will help with legibility, including the reduction of sign clutter, an important part of the wayfinding system’s functionality.

3. Establish a management protocol for the wayfinding program. The wayfinding system should be driven by a well organized vision for the Hamlet, including a management strategy. While the Town should establish the overall vision, program and policies, it should partner with other organizations (e.g. the Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association, the Hamlet Park Committee, local businesses) that will be a part of the program and may need to develop their own signage as a part of the overall system.

Functionality

A good signage system can perform multiple functions. On the most basic level, it provides effective information and direction for people to find their way around a downtown, a building, park, or other public space. It can also encourage learning experiences; create and maintain an image for a place; communicate rules; and provide a sense of place and local pride by incorporating history or cultural details.

Signs can meet specific needs and target certain areas, but their location is key. Placing signage in con-

junction with other amenities such as benches, cafes, restrooms, and phones, or places where paths cross, can create mini-“destinations” or places-within-a-place. Elements that are “triangulated” in this way have a bigger impact together than they would separately, and allow users to attend to several needs at the same time and place. When they are well-located, signs can help to create a comfortable and social place where people can relax and spend time.

There are a number of sign categories which are commonly used for wayfinding, guidance, and Information. Below, we will define these categories, evaluate existing signage and propose changes as well as new concepts that can be incorporated into a wayfinding program. We are not proposing to clutter the Hamlet and its surroundings with many new signs; rather, we believe that a well-organized and clear signage program should reduce the necessity of many signs.



Guiding sign



Guiding sign for local businesses



Historic house sign

1. Safety Signs

The signs on the heavily trafficked state roads are geared to the needs of motorists. Adding and moving the speed limit signs to improve walkability in the Hamlet was discussed earlier, but other signs are needed to make the Hamlet safe for pedestrians. Adding new crosswalks where people tend to cross, providing warning signs and cones to indicate pedestrian crossings, and enhancing the visibility of crosswalks, will encourage pedestrian crossing and improve safety.

Parking Signs

There are currently no municipal parking areas, except at the Hamlet Park, and few on-street parking spaces. Future parking lots and on-street parking should be indicated.

EXISTING SAFETY SIGNS



Speed limit signs are not effective because they are not enforced, street design does not support slower speeds and they are not in the right places.

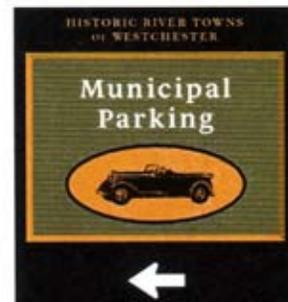


Motorists southbound on Route 22 sometimes confuse Maple Street with the state highway because signage is not clear.



Little warning is given to motorists to slow down for upcoming crosswalks and to stop for pedestrians.

PROPOSED SAFETY SIGNS



Parking lots can be indicated with signs that tie into a tool kit of signs for the Hamlet.



Crosswalks should be clearly indicated with cones and pedestrian signage.

2. Directional Signs

Directional signage that would indicate resources and encourage motorists to stop in the Hamlet is almost non-existent. Street signs exist but are in poor condition. Regional destinations – other towns – are well indicated at the crossroads of Routes 22 and 23 thanks to a green highway-type sign provided by the NYS Department of Transportation and this helps motorists leave Hillsdale, but does not give them reasons to stay.

EXISTING GUIDING SIGNS



State highway signs help motorists leave Hillsdale. Single resource signs can be organized.



Too many signs can be distracting and reduce effectiveness. Some of these are scaled for drivers, others for pedestrians.



Dark signs are hard to read.

Guiding Signs

Signage is needed at key locations to guide motorists and pedestrians to important destinations. Intersections are the primary locations for these, but sometimes motorists need warning before reaching the intersection that they may want to turn. These can be single resource signs or sign posts that indicate a variety of resources. These types of directional signs can be designed to be read only by pedestrians, and thus are smaller and more detailed, or by motorists, or by both. If the speed is limited to 25 mph, motorists are more likely to be able to read more detailed signs. At higher speeds, only large signs are legible.

PROPOSED GUIDING SIGNS



A single resource sign can be unique or part of an overall system.



Sign posts are usually designed at the pedestrian scale, but can be large enough to read by motorists as well.



A number of resources can be clustered on one sign and be large enough to be read easily by motorists.

Identification Signs

The Hamlet has attractive welcome signs that could be moved closer to the heart of the Hamlet to indicate arrival at a slower speed zone. Alternatively, a different welcome sign could be used to designate the historic district in the Hamlet. Other signs that identify a street, or a resource or public use once you get there (such as the Hamlet Park) exist but are inconsistent in their style and condition. Each of these is a category that should be looked at in context with the entire wayfinding program. For example, street signs could use similar fonts and colors as directional signs. An entire tool kit of signs can be developed for the Hamlet. Visibility and legibility are extremely important.

EXISTING IDENTIFICATION SIGNS



Welcometo Hillsdale signs are attractive but could be located closer to the center of the Hamlet to create a gateway.



Street signs are in poor condition and are inconsistent in design.



The Hillsdale Community Park sign is difficult to read from the street and includes too much information.

PROPOSED IDENTIFICATION SIGNS



A community tool kit of signs can be developed for a variety of wayfinding needs.



Individual destinations can be identified within a system of signs.



Hamlet sign could be different from Town sign and indicate historic district.

3. Information Signs

Wayfinding systems often include additional information that is provided to supplement the directional signage, and is consistent with the nomenclature and design of the directional signs. Hillsdale could provide maps, directories, information boards or kiosks at key public gathering places, and these can help with placemaking, along with seating and other amenities. Another type of information sign announces an upcoming event and can be a colorful addition to the streetscape.

EXISTING INFORMATION SIGNS



An information board at the Town Hall is used to describe upcoming events.



Temporary signs announce upcoming events, but are not always legible or placed in a central location.



Temporary event signs are often too small to be read by passing motorists.

Maps

A map can be a very important tool in the wayfinding system. Maps can be placed on walls, boards or kiosks in visible locations, but they could also be found on a website or brochure-handouts. They should be simple, consistent and easy to read.

Directories

The Town could partner with local businesses in providing a directory of local shops, restaurants and services. These could be part of the map of the commercial district or be a separate sign that is updated more frequently as businesses come and go.

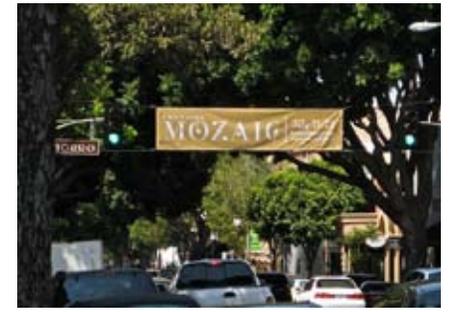
PROPOSED INFORMATION SIGNS



Maps, such as this one in Carmel, CA, can orient visitors from a central location.



A business directory can be updated more frequently than a map.



A banner over the street or at the crossroads corner can announce upcoming events.

4. Ornamental Signs

Banners, murals, landmarks, public art, and monuments also serve to provide information and orientation in the environment and are often integrated into or referenced in way-finding systems.

ORNAMENTAL SIGNS



Ornamental banners on street lights can announce upcoming events.



Colorful banners can create festive atmosphere.



Mural depicting local figure or historical event can help activate blank wall.

5. Historic Signs

Signs and related elements that provide educational information, and/or descriptions related to historic and cultural sites enrich the experience of the pedestrian or visitor. As a historic district, Hillsdale should celebrate its important architectural or historic buildings with signage that expresses the Town's pride in its historic legacy and attracts history buffs who like to visit historic sites.

HISTORIC SIGNS



Directory can describe historic resources.



Directory with a map describes historic walking tour.



Important historic landmarks can be described.



1 Welcome to Hillsdale



2 Motorist-scaled sign



3 Pedestrian sign listing shops



4 Municipal Parking



1 Welcome to Hillsdale

2 Rail Trail
Anthony Street
Municipal Parking

3 Pedestrian sign listing shops

4 Municipal Parking

5 Roeliff Jansen State Park
Hamlet Park
Library

6 Hamlet Park

7 Town Hall
Hillsdale Shops
Rail Trail

8 Town Hall
Hillsdale Shops
Rail Trail

9 Town Hall
Hillsdale Shops
Rail Trail
Hamlet Park
Roe Jan Park
Library

Diagram 5: Wayfinding Diagram

Enhancing the Character of the Hamlet

The overall physical character of Hillsdale Hamlet is derived from the predominance of free standing, two-story, pitched roof, wood frame structures dating from the turn of the 19th century. The buildings are now used for either commercial or residential purposes, or a combination of both. In any case, the buildings give the hamlet a “comfortable” personality and desirable human scale. The qualities of “being friendly”, “small town feeling” are terms that have been repeatedly mentioned in the many interviews conducted by PPS. These qualities are perfectly suited to the direction that is outlined throughout this report and form the basis of this section dealing with building rehabilitation recommendations.

When heading into the center of the hamlet on route 23, whether from the east, or west, nearly every building meets the structural form as described above. (Those characteristics are also described in the “Building Form Guidelines” section of the Comprehensive Plan, as prepared by Tate and Shakespeare architects). Because of the strong and welcome influence these building types have on the character of Hillsdale, every effort should be made to protect and enhance these buildings when-

ever possible.

Perhaps the easiest way to ascertain what direction to follow in this regard, is to travel to neighboring communities around Hillsdale and find similar residential structures that have successfully been adapted for commercial use. South Egremont, Ma., Rhinebeck, Tivoli, and Kinderhook, NY, are ideal locations to see. All have achieved the desired result through a minimum of constructional intrusion. The same approach should happen in Hillsdale when changes are contemplated. (See the “Building Form Guidelines” for information on making alterations).



Historic houses in Hillsdale



Commercial use in Rhinebeck



Commercial use in Rhinebeck

Building Rehabilitation and Design Review

In most cases, renovations should be kept simple. This will keep costs to a minimum and allow the building to serve a variety of future businesses. Improvements can be as basic as a new paint job, the addition of an attractive awning, new signage or even a colorful window display. Simple cosmetic improvements are not likely to require a building permit and are therefore not subject to site plan or design review. However, property owners should be encouraged to comply with Design Guidelines, if enacted, even if it is not mandatory.

When rehabilitation work does require a Building Permit, it is imperative that all applicants receive "Building Form Guidelines" when beginning the application procedure. We recommend that a Building Design Guidelines Group be established to assist Hamlet residents with Building Permits to ensure that they understand, and seriously consider the merits of, the Town's Guidelines prior to submission of the application.



Storefront before paint



Storefront after paint



Storefront before awning



Storefront after paint



Historic buildings on Route 23



Historic house in Kinderhook

Commercial Signage

Key to the transformation of the commercial district in the Hamlet is the use of commercial signage. Good signage should follow the provisions in the zoning code and be suited to advertise the business, while contributing to the positive image of the Hamlet. There are a number of excellent examples of signs already in Hillsdale.

We recommend that an additional section on commercial signage be added to the “Building Form Guidelines” that illustrates examples of good design and basic graphic principles to follow. Such information would indicate proper sign proportion, location, size, materials, typefaces and clarity of message. While signs can take a variety of forms, business owners should make sure that they are communicating to pedestrians as well as motorists. For example, signs that are perpendicular to a façade are more visible to pedestrians than signs above a storefront, although both may be required.



Effective signage in Hillsdale



Effective signage in Hillsdale



Perpendicular signs In Millbrook



Sign in South Egremont

The Benefits of a Historic District

Being placed on the National Register of Historic Places is a huge honor for Hillsdale, with those responsible for the work in getting the application completed deserving of enormous credit. Not only does being placed on the Federal and State Register bring pride to the community, it provides financial incentives for property owners through various programs. The recently passed New York State Historic Residential Properties Tax Credit Program is now available to qualified owners who can take substantial savings when improving their homes and the Federal Government has recently made changes to their tax savings program for historic commercial properties to make it easier to receive these benefits.

It is recommended that information about these programs be included in the revised "Building Form Guidelines" document. As prospective tax credit applicants must receive approval from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the more information they can receive prior to preparing their alteration or

improvement plans, the easier it will be to receive SHPO permission to proceed.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Historic Preservation Committee establish and promote a Building Design Guidelines Group with the capability to assist homeowners and commercial property owners in the application process and help ensure that the application is looked upon favorably by both State and Federal reviewers.

Of major concern for the Hamlet is the poor condition of several historic buildings within the Historic District. The current tax credits can be of help to the owners who are able to take advantage of them. As additional rehabilitation incentives, the Historic Preservation Committee should pursue with the Town Board the approval of laws which enable a Tax Assessment Abatement Program for designated Historic Properties. In addition, the Committee should research grants specifically targeted to the rehabilitation of Historic properties.

It is important to note that along with the financial benefits derived from being an officially recognized Historic District comes the added recognition that Hillsdale is indeed



Historic house in Hillsdale



Historic library in Hillsdale: future Town Hall

a very special place. This recognition can be of enormous value in the promotional efforts to attract visitors or those traveling through Hillsdale. It has been shown in numerous case studies that people are drawn to places that are officially designated as "historic." For example, much of the appeal of Corning and Hudson, New York, could be attributed not just to the restoration of individual buildings but to their identity and status as well-preserved historic districts. The attractiveness of a place that has historic buildings, cohesive neighborhoods and "wayfinding" markers that denote historic events has great appeal to visitors. It is an added incentive to stop and stay awhile. It is therefore highly recommended that these qualities be marketed and promoted wherever possible. Walking tours, informational maps, wayfinding signage, promotional brochures, advertising, window displays, events, etc., can all capitalize on the historic designation distinction.



Hudson, NY Historic District



Corning, NY Historic District

Economic Development Opportunities

Hillsdale's diverse potential customer base, which includes full-time residents, weekenders and tourists, creates an exciting opportunity for economic development in the Hamlet. However, Hillsdale's Hamlet businesses face competition in all directions, including the vibrant commercial districts of Hudson and Catskill to the west and the Berkshires to the east.

If the Hamlet is to become a robust main street that can differentiate itself and thrive in a setting with significant competition, the town must strive to create and foster a strong identity to give customers with many choices a compelling reason to come to Hillsdale to do their shopping. Currently the Hamlet of Hillsdale does not have a clear and distinct identity of its own – a "brand" around which it can market itself. However, the existing mix of businesses, as well as the demands and interests of its potential customer base, suggests three potential niches that should be developed. These include:

Recreational Tourism

The development of the rail trail and expansion of the Catamount season,

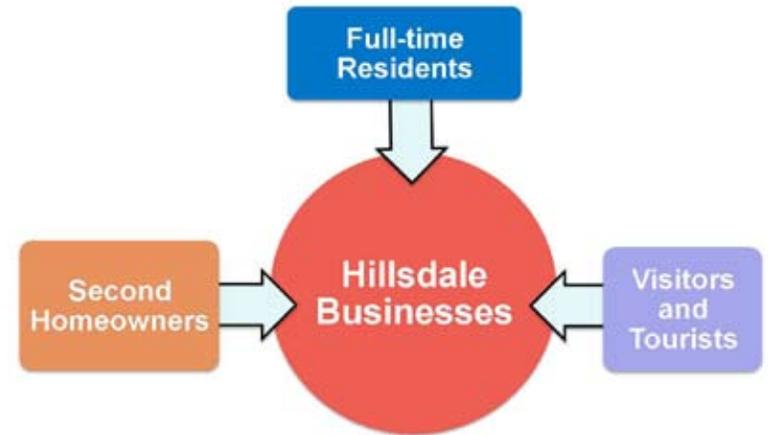
combined with the proximity to the Berkshires, the Roeliff Jansen Park, scenic roads and extensive hiking and biking opportunities will build on the appeal of Hillsdale to recreational visitors and tourists. These attractions create an opportunity to position the hamlet as a tourism hub – a center from which to explore the offerings of the region. Working with organizations such as the Columbia County Tourism Board and the Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association, the hamlet could become a hub for recreational tourism, possibly hosting a visitor's center as well as events geared towards outdoor recreation.

Specific business types that are compatible with the recreational tourism theme and should be encouraged within the hamlet include:

Bed and breakfasts and other lodging places; a ski and bike outfitter; an equestrian tack shop; fly fishing outfitter; a variety of eating establishments from casual to formal sit-down; and unique shops conducive to browsing.

Arts Hamlet

The Hudson Valley and the Berkshires both are known as arts



Hillsdale's Customer Base



Bicyclists on the Harlem Valley Rail Trail

centers, and Hillsdale is proximate to a number of destinations, including sculpture parks, museums, dance venues, theaters, and galleries. Furthermore, Hillsdale itself is home to several galleries, including the new Art Goliath and Neumann Fine Art, and there is an interest among residents in promoting arts within the hamlet. Using special events and marketing to promoting Hillsdale as an arts center is compatible with the recreational tourism theme and will help to create a unique and compelling mix of attractions to bring people to the hamlet.

Community Center

Although the population within the market area is relatively small, there is still a demand for everyday goods and services such as groceries, banking, and laundry. Indeed, the IGA Supermarket, B&G Gourmet Foods and Wine, Herrington's, Taconic Valley Lawn and Garden, the library, post office and the barber shop are already meeting some of this demand. Additional stores and services establishments such as a pharmacy, a laundry and dry cleaner, a florist, coffee shop and ice cream parlor would enhance the ability of the hamlet to meet the everyday shopping needs of both residents



and visitors to the area, creating true "one-stop shopping." Non-retail professional offices and a variety of housing types will create a stronger, more consistent market for these retail establishments and should also be encouraged to locate in the hamlet.

The three niches suggested above all respond to the specific needs of both current and potential customers. Together, these three themes represent a unique and appealing hamlet "brand," and should be used to inform and direct the implementation of the economic development recommendations presented below.



Local Folk Festival



Community destination

Recommendations

Create a business-friendly environment

- Consider creating a position for a business liaison in Town Hall who would be responsible for providing information and support for Hillsdale's business community, and for conveying the needs of the business community to the town board.
- Provide one-stop-shopping for new and existing businesses at Town Hall – easy access to what they need to get the required approvals to open for business or to expand. This could be accomplished by creating a library of business resources available in town hall and on the town's website, including simple brochures that outline the steps that businesses must take to obtain the various permits and approvals necessary to do business in the hamlet.
- Offer technical assistance to Hamlet businesses as needed to help with a range of issues, from façade design to market plans. This could be provided in-house by a Main Street Manager

or through referral to existing sources of inexpensive or free assistance, such as the New York Small Businesses Development Corporation or SCORE.

- Look into the potential of providing small grants or a small revolving loan fund to assist small businesses with expenses related to façade improvement and other similar needs.
- Promote local businesses through the town's website – offering free listings if possible.
- Demonstrate the Town's support of Hillsdale businesses by procuring food and other supplies (as possible) from local vendors for all town-sponsored events.

Focus on business recruitment

- Develop an inventory of available properties within the hamlet and make it available on the Town website. Work with property owners to keep the inventory as accurate, comprehensive, and up-to-date as possible.
- Create a brochure outlining the benefits to businesses in the Hamlet, including information about the customer base and a description of support services and marketing opportunities



Recruit a bike shop



Recruit a drug store

offered by the town.

- Work with the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce and other regional organizations to identify and recruit new businesses to Hillsdale.
- When working with potential businesses, direct them to appropriate locations within the Hamlet. For example, the larger parcels and vacant commercial spaces on the east side of the Hamlet would be appropriate for a drug store, laundry and other uses that require convenient parking and larger spaces, whereas vacancies on Anthony Street might be more appropriate for a small gift shop.
- Focus recruitment efforts on businesses that will fill critical gaps in the retail fabric and that are consistent with the business niches identified, including those mentioned in the descriptions of the three niches. For example, an outdoor equipment store that offers ski and bike sales and rentals near the bike trail would be an ideal addition to the business mix within the hamlet.
- In order to fill specific needs, look to regional independent

businesses and encourage them to consider expanding their businesses by opening additional locations in the hamlet.

Promote services and amenities to encourage the tourist market

- Advocate for the development of the Harlem Valley Rail Trail and promote development around the rail trail hub.
- Find a central location for a permanent visitors' center, ideally close to the rail trail and visible from one or more state highways. If possible, keep the center staffed by volunteers on weekends and during the summer.
- Encourage lodging facilities within and in close proximity to the hamlet to work together to advertise the relatively large number of rooms and range of lodging options in the immediate area.
- Look for opportunities to increase the number of rooms available to visitors by promoting the development of bed and breakfasts and expansion of existing inns.
- Use signage to highlight historic buildings and other interesting



Encourage local artists



Focus on new businesses that fill gaps

sights within the hamlet.

- Find opportunities to work with Columbia County Tourism on efforts to attract visitors to Hillsdale.
- Consider events such as bike rallies, road races, a winter festival, and others that would be consistent with and enhance the recreational tourism theme.

Use events and marketing to enhance Hillsdale’s arts offerings

Arts and culture are a major part of the regional identity, and bringing these into Hillsdale will enhance its appeal to residents and visitors alike. Options that should be considered include:

- Hold music and arts festivals in the hamlet park and on the sidewalks.
- Bring student art to the hamlet – encourage businesses to display the work of students from local schools, including Taconic Hills, Hawthorne Valley and Columbia Greene Community College.
- Allow and encourage installation artwork throughout the Hamlet.

- Sponsor an “art walk,” placing local artists in restaurants and shops throughout the Hamlet and holding a weekend long “gallery” opening.

Develop a unified marketing strategy that promotes Hillsdale’s businesses to visitors and residents alike

- Initiate a “Shop Hillsdale First” campaign.
- Keep the Hillsdale business directory updated, and make it easily available on the Hillsdale website.
- Work with local businesses to assist them in creative joint marketing. For example, one merchant suggested a village-wide scavenger hunt that includes all local businesses.
- Encourage Hillsdale’s retail community to develop programs to engender loyalty, such as frequent shopper cards and related programs.

Use community events to promote local businesses

- Invite businesses to participate in all community events. For example, food booths at events should feature foods from local



Hillsdale Farmers Market



Music event in Great Barrington

restaurants and markets.

- Encourage attendees of community events to patronize local businesses through distribution of coupon books and posting of advertisements for businesses at events.
- Consider planning events so that attendees are required to walk past businesses in order to get from the parking area to the event itself.
- Coordinate with Hillsdale businesses to ensure that event schedules are compatible with businesses' hours of operation, and that private parking lots are not used for events during peak hours.

Promote non-retail businesses, including professional offices, in the hamlet to provide employment opportunities and increase the daily population of the Hamlet.

- Encourage the development of flexible office space with shared facilities that would allow small businesses to start and to grow in Hillsdale. One potential location may be the former and now vacant Independent office building.

- Review the zoning ordinance to ensure that home businesses are permitted throughout the town.
- Work with the library to provide business services that cannot be realistically met by in-town businesses.
- Allow and encourage office space above retail in both existing and new development in Hillsdale.
- Ensure that sufficient high-speed internet and telephone services are available to local businesses.
- Investigate the possibility of hamlet-wide wi-fi.
- Promote recreational activities and events in the Hamlet and partner with the private sector.
- Coordinate the planning and programming of the Hamlet Park with that of the Roeliff Jansen Park to ensure that they complement, and do not compete, with each other.
- Look for opportunities to integrate commercial uses and private partners – cafes, bike rental, vendors, sports instructors, event catering, beer gardens, music production companies, etc. – into public parks so that parks are more vibrant and local busi-

nesses benefit from the activity and programming.

- Partner with nearby Catamount Ski Area in both winter and summer programming: e.g. ice skating, cross country skiing, bike races, etc.



Partner with Catamount Ski Area

The Need for Affordable Housing

Providing affordable housing within the hamlet is a priority for the Town of Hillsdale. Provision of housing that is affordable to seniors who want to downsize as well workforce housing that is affordable to those who live and work in the area will allow Hillsdale to maintain a mix of residents that leads to an interesting and vibrant town.

There is not one solution to providing housing that is affordable, and a multi-faceted approach will maximize the potential for meeting the affordable housing demand. Such housing can and should be dispersed throughout the community and take many forms, including:

- Individual infill development of one- and two-family units on single vacant lots in established neighborhoods.
- Conversion of older large homes to multi-family while maintaining the integrity of the structure and appearance as a single-family residence.
- Accessory units, in both residential and accessory buildings, which provide the dual purpose of providing a rental unit while also allowing the resident of the main unit to

defray their own housing expenses with the rental income.

- Residential units on the upper floors above retail uses.
- Small cluster developments, often referred to as “cottage clusters,” where slightly larger lots are available for development. These developments consist of small single-family units, generally under 1,200 sf, clustered around a common green. Parking may be behind the units or should be located in a shared parking lot or structure. (Applicants must comply with the Hamlet Siting Guidelines in the zoning ordinance.)
- In order to facilitate the development of the full range of housing types described above, a range of strategies should be employed, including regulatory measures, homeowner and renter assistance and possibly a community land trust.

Use regulatory measures to promote the development of a range of affordable housing types throughout the Hamlet

- Consider replacing the existing density bonus for cluster developments with a requirement to



Infill housing on single vacant lot



Infill housing on single vacant lot

include affordable units. Currently the zoning provides a 2-unit per acre bonus if those two units are affordable, but a developer has the option not to take the bonus and thus not provide any affordable units. In order to ensure that the hamlet continue to include less expensive housing, the town should consider requiring all new residential development that includes 5 or more units (either attached or detached) to include 20% affordable units.

- Hillsdale’s zoning currently limits the size of affordable units to no more than 1000 square feet. The limitation should be removed as it may inhibit the development of affordable units appropriate for families with children.
- Accessory units, which are permitted in the hamlet, are a natural source of affordable housing. In order to promote development of accessory units, the zoning should be simplified so that homeowners are able to easily obtain approval for an accessory unit.
- Ensure that the Town’s zoning ordinance permits the development of small multi-family development, especially in the

proposed Rail Trail Village, which is intended to be developed in a relatively dense fashion.

Promote homeowner and renter assistance programs

There are a number of programs available for home improvement and for first-time homebuyers. The town should consider providing assistance to residents and property owners within the hamlet to determine eligibility for certain programs and assist those who are eligible with the application process. Two examples of programs that should be promoted are:

- The RESTORE program administered by the New York Department of Housing and Community Resources to assist low and moderate income households with home maintenance and improvement projects.
- The Acquisition and Rehabilitation Program, run by the New York State Affordable Housing Corp., which provides downpayment assistance for first-time homebuyers within certain income guidelines.



Cottage cluster: small single-family units around green



Cottage cluster: small single-family units around green

Concentrate new development initially within the existing Sewer District

The Sewer District and waste treatment facility that were completed in 2008 solved a long-standing environmental problem in the Hillsdale Hamlet. The concentration of old septic systems in the Hamlet was polluting streams and threatening the aquifer that provides water to the Town. The new Sewer District 1 has a limited amount of additional capacity, which could potentially include areas targeted for infill development in the Hamlet and new development at what is designated as the Rail Trail Village. Any proposed development would have to be carefully studied to ensure that the sewer capacity is sufficient. New development outside of the Sewer District 1 boundaries, particularly in the eastern and northern parts of the Hamlet, would require the creation of a new sewer district and expansion of the existing waste treatment facility. This would most likely be at the expense of the private property owners or developers who would benefit from the sewer expansion.

Many of the affordable housing

options recommended above may be out of the question without a sewer system in place. In order to ensure that a development pattern conducive to affordable housing is permitted, the Town may wish to review the capacity of the sewage treatment plant with this in mind and seek funding to expand the plant, or partner with a private developer in creating a second sewer district.

Review and address the implications of the Aquifer Study

Concern has been expressed that the Town-wide aquifer study restricts new development within the Hamlet. While it does pose some challenges to continuing the dense development pattern typical of a hamlet such as Hillsdale's, these challenges are not insurmountable, and must be addressed in order to permit affordable housing development. The aquifer study reveals that dense development is not possible in the Hamlet without the benefit of a municipal sewer system, a fact that is already reflected in the zoning for the Hamlet.

In addition to a potential expansion of the sewage treatment plant,



Mix of uses in old industrial building



Mix of uses in old industrial building

Hillsdale should consider a municipal water system for the Hamlet district. According to the author of the aquifer study, additional development within the hamlet could increase the demand on the underlying groundwater to the extent that it would threaten the ability of the groundwater to recharge. However, the introduction of a municipal water system would alleviate this issue and remove any concern regarding the impact of hamlet-scale development in the Hamlet.

Implementation and Phasing

The recommendations made in this report are so numerous that one can be overwhelmed by their scope. The list seems endless; improvements to roads and traffic, ideas for pedestrianization, landscaping, Placemaking, creation of new destinations, wayfinding systems, building improvements, development opportunities, promotion and marketing ideas, etc. can be endless in their possibilities. The big question now is, how to get them implemented? This may be considered the most challenging part of the revitalization process.

A Management Strategy

It is first of all imperative to understand that the success of the Hamlet as a busy commercial hub and an active civic gathering space will depend, to a large degree, on its management. Even without the physical changes that we recommend, this small crossroads can grow into a true town center if it is actively programmed and managed in a coordinated way by its stakeholders. To be successful, it should also be shared by a broader group of users and stakeholders: new and current residents from the Hamlet and the surrounding area; visitors from near and far; commercial tenants and business owners; and cultural and civic organizations. In addition, the programming and design

of the Hamlet should blur the division between indoors and outdoors, and between public and private space, making seamless integration of management responsibilities among the public and private sectors, as well as civic organizations, essential. Just as the planning of this project has relied on input from a wide array of stakeholders, its on-going management should continue to seek outside input and build partnerships. This will ensure that Hillsdale Hamlet successfully meets the growing and evolving needs of the Hillsdale community and the region.

In addition to the activities mentioned above that promote local businesses and attract new customers, other management tasks will need to be considered if the Hamlet is to become a destination:

Maintenance. The more used and loved a street or public space is, the more maintenance it requires. Keeping maintenance standards high will be critical to the success of this park and the surrounding development. Prompt attention to items that could be easily deferred, such as a broken fountain or an empty tree pit, will show that someone is a steward for the space and that the area is respected. A coordinated cleaning and maintenance policy is critical in any downtown, and is often viewed as

the most visible benefit of an organization such as a Business Improvement District.

The State now plows state roads Route 23 and Route 22 north of the Route 23. The County plows Route 22 south of the crossroads. Sidewalk maintenance (cleaning, not repair) and snow removal are the responsibility of the property owner, but are often overlooked. Better coordination of these tasks, or even making them the responsibility of one entity, is a key consideration, especially once new sidewalks are in place throughout the Hamlet.

Traffic Enforcement and Security.

Since the Town has no police force, enforcing speed limits within the Hamlet and other security needs are left to the State Patrol and the County Police. Many residents complained that enforcement is sorely lacking and pointed to the Town of Copake which effectively enforces its speed limits with its own police force. As the Hamlet grows, the Town of Hillsdale may find it necessary to have a police force, or as many towns are doing, share services with a neighbouring town, such as the Town of Copake. New York State Department of State offers grants to municipalities to investigate and implement such shared services.

Programming. “Programming” refers to the wide variety of planned activities and to all the facilities and equipment related to them:

- scheduling performances and events that will take place throughout the year
- producing regular concert, movie and speaker series
- coordinating festivals and markets
- creating and executing a retail program, including vending carts and seasonal activities
- hosting community gatherings and civic events

Programming a public space successfully is an entrepreneurial art; the programmer drives the content the way a curator does in a museum. Active programming requires staffing capacity, but assistance can be provided by partner organizations, such as civic and cultural organizations, public entities, event coordinators, or by retail operations that are contracted to vendors, such as outdoor food carts or kiosks.

Marketing and Promotion. Promoting the events and activities that take place in the Hamlet and its public spaces will be an important adjunct to programming, particularly as the Hamlet begins

programming and building a name for itself. To help “build the brand” and establish the programming, a commitment to marketing and promotion, and the special skills it requires, will be needed right away. This is an activity that can be contracted or shared with local civic and cultural organizations that may be using the spaces.

Fundraising. The Hamlet Committee has been very successful in raising funds to support its projects through donations and grants. It could continue to target special projects, such as construction of the the Rail Trail or wayfinding signage. However, raising money to support on-going operations and maintenance of the public spaces from a variety of funding sources will be essential to creating a vibrant, well-maintained commercial area in the future. While the Town could focus on grants for larger projects and capital improvements, the Hamlet Committee or another non-profit organization could pursue grant money and donations, which in addition to raising money from event sponsorships and rentals, will be important to supplement dedicated funding for the public spaces.

Parking Management. Parking for any downtown requires careful coordination and management in order to meet the

diverse needs of different users. On-street and short-term parking must be balanced with the long-term needs of residents, business owners and tenants. Convenient public parking is critical to the success of the Hamlet as a walkable, commercial area, but it also requires ongoing coordination between the Town, the business owners and event managers to accommodate peak demand and keep operations functioning smoothly. For example, large events can put pressure on parking areas used daily by shoppers, so alternative parking areas may be needed to accommodate a large influx of visitors. In addition, hamlet employees should not park all day in areas needed for convenient, high turnover parking for shoppers.

An Organizational Structure

Coming up with the appropriate organizational and management structure is key to turning the recommendations in this plan into reality over the long run. The Hillsdale Hamlet Committee has made a noble start. Its members’ dedication, spirit, imagination and amount of time spent on moving the revitalization process along is commendable. The amount of citizen support they have been able to build has been amazing. It is time now to study the plan, live with the ideas, discuss the findings and

decide what actions to take to implement the recommendations. This can be a very rewarding experience, but is by no means an easy task.

It must be realized from the beginning that implementation may call for a new, different type of organization. That can be decided upon at a later date. For the moment, the Hamlet Committee should list all of the recommendations and place them into various categories. Most difficult of all will be to prioritize the recommendations. Above all, consideration must be paid to what funding is in place or can be received, what needs to be done immediately, what will have the biggest impact, what is easiest, what is most difficult, what can be achieved later, what can be done now? We have made our recommendation below as to the phasing of the improvements, but these must be reviewed by the Hamlet Committee and the Town Council.

Upon completion of the above, consideration should be made as to whether the Hamlet Committee should be the organization that carries out the implementation, alone or in conjunction with a Business Alliance or Chamber of Commerce. Various committees already exist, and more could be formed to carry out the management tasks, but it should be realized that an organization based

on volunteerism has its limitations. Are current members willing to take on a continuing commitment? Or is looking into a professional staff or consultants the appropriate way to proceed? One must remember that one of the keys to a successful organization is sustainability. Should the forming of a Business Improvement District (BID) be considered? What about a Local Development Corp. (LDC)? Should the organization attach itself to a local or regional Chamber of Commerce, such as the Columbia County Chamber of Commerce? (Similar to what "Heart of Catskill" did in Catskill, NY.) Is hiring a Main Street Manager the right route? (Our recommendation is that the role of a Main Street Manager should be seriously considered.) If so, should it be a full, or part time position? Would other staff members be necessary? Should it have its own website and, if so, who will maintain it? Should there be an office? Of course, the biggest question of all--where does the money come from to pay for such an entity? Obviously that is a very serious consideration.

The Benefits of a BID

While Hillsdale Hamlet is too small to support a Business Improvement District or BID (a mandatory, self-taxing management district), a non-profit downtown management entity or "business alliance"

could be set up that could play much the same role, with revenues from voluntary donations, federal or state subsidies, local government funds, revenues from sold goods and services, event sponsorships and grants. The entity could be a partnership of businesses, municipal officials, Hamlet Committee members and local residents. To get started on implementing the tasks right away, however, the Hamlet Committee, with specific sub-committees, may be the best answer, but eventually a non-profit could facilitate the fundraising.

In some cases, when a municipality is too small or cannot muster support for a BID or another type of non-profit entity, the municipality can step in to begin to assess property owners for common benefits. The Hamlet of Chappaqua, New York, for example, has a parking authority to which property owners are required to contribute to help maintain the municipal parking lots used by shoppers. In the future, a program for sidewalk improvements, new lighting, trash pick-up and other hamlet-wide enhancements could be similarly established through legislation.

Implementation

Implementation is a step by step process. It should be based on common sense and an honest understanding of the realities of the day. What are the political challenges? What about the social implications? What is really achievable? An important organizational recommendation at this time is to limit the number of projects--perhaps two to three -- for the first year, with the addition of other projects in subsequent years. Selecting a project or two that is "easy and doable," along with a more difficult project, is the recommended way to go. Reading of the book, "Cities Back from the Edge," will put much of this into perspective. Bringing in professionals or others with direct experience is also recommended. Perhaps a series of speakers or informational forums can be put organized.

Above all, the momentum needs to continue. Hillsdale Hamlet has made an impressive and successful start. It is up to all of the stakeholders to continue the process and make the dream of a revitalized Hillsdale a shining reality.

Phasing

Based on our experience in other communities and our knowledge of the Hillsdale community, we suggest phas-

ing the project so that the Town builds organizational capacity before undertaking anything else. Along with forming implementation sub-committees, partnerships should be built with a variety of agencies and stakeholders, including NYS DOT, the Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association, NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the Roeliff Jansen Park Committee, the County Chamber of Commerce and the business community along with others.

As mentioned above, the final prioritization of implementation tasks will be based on a host of factors – the economic situation, social and political realities, available talent, and, above all, the ability to find funding.

The Phasing chart below is just a suggested starting point for the Town and the committees. The Hamlet Committee can work with the Town Council and other stakeholders, as mentioned above, to begin to prioritize the tasks and phases.

PHASING OF HILLSDALE HAMLET IMPROVEMENTS				Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 +
	Project Elements	Responsible Party	Partner or Funder	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Organization								
	Establish Implementation Committees	Town	Hamlet Committee					
	Create Hamlet Park and Joint Parks Committees	Town	Roe Jan Park Committee					
	Create Business Alliance	Local businesses	Hamlet Committee, Town					
	Website development and oversight	Town	Hamlet Committee					
	Establish Building Design Guidelines Group	Preservation Committee	Town					
Planning/Land Use Legislation								
	Approve plan as Comprehensive Plan Update	Town	Hamlet Committee, Town					
	Plan parks in coordinated way	Town	Hamlet Committee and Roe Jan Park					
	Amend Zoning Ordinances	Town	Hamlet Committee					
	Planning for Rail Trail Village District	Town	Hamlet Committee					
Funding								
	Raise funds to complete Rail Trail	Town	Hamlet Committee					
	Raise funds for events and programming		Hamlet and Parks Committees					
	Seek funds for sidewalks	Town	Hamlet Committee, Town					
	Fund for Historic Building Rehabilitation	Town	Preservation Committee					
	Raise funds for municipal lot	Town	Hamlet Committee, Business Alliance					
	Raise funds for public spaces	Town	Hamlet committee					
	Raise funds for business improvement grant program	Business Alliance	Town					
Economic Development								
	Inventory available commercial space and maintain database	Business Alliance	Town					
	Develop new business brochure	Business Alliance	Town					
	Promote events that increase daily population and support local businesses	Business Alliance	Town					
	Review and update zoning to allow for office development	Town	Business Alliance					
	Improve business services and infrastructure	Business Alliance	Town					

PHASING OF HILLSDALE HAMLET IMPROVEMENTS				Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 +
	Project Elements	Responsible Party	Partner or Funder	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
	Develop "one-stop-shop" for new and existing businesses	Town	Business Alliance					
	Initiate a business recruitment program	Business Alliance	Town					
	Initiate a unified marketing program	Business Alliance	Town					
	Implement business assistance (e.g. grant program for façade improvement, etc.)	Business Alliance	Town					
Housing Development								
	Encourage development in the existing sewer district	Town	Housing Committee					
	Look at implications of Aquifer Study: the need for a municipal water system	Town	Natural Resources					
	Enact regulatory measures to promote the development of a range of affordable housing types	Town	Housing Committee					
	Promote homeowner and renter assistance programs	Town	Housing Committee					
Sidewalk/Streetscape								
Routes 22/23								
	Restripe Crosswalks	Town/NYS DOT						
	Pedestrian signage/cones	Town/NYS DOT						
	Traffic calming/Restripe lanes	Town/NYS DOT						
	Design of sidewalks	Town/NYS DOT						
	Construct sidewalk/ streetscape	Town/NYS DOT						
	Street trees/landscape	Town/NYS DOT						
Intersection 22/23								
	Closing end of Maple St.	Town	NYS DOT					
	Restripe Crosswalks	Town/NYS DOT						
	Traffic calming/restripe corners	Town/NYS DOT						
	Redesign intersection	Town/NYS DOT						
	Construct intersection	Town/NYS DOT						
Anthony Street								
	Design of sidewalks	County	Town					
	Construct sidewalk/ streetscape	County	Town					
	Restripe parking	County	Town					
Wayfinding Signage								

PHASING OF HILLSDALE HAMLET IMPROVEMENTS				Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 +
Project Elements	Responsible Party	Partner or Funder		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Guiding signs	Town	NYS DOT, Hamlet Committee						
Pedestrian-scaled signs indicating shops	Business Alliance	Hamlet Committee						
Information Kiosk/Board	Town/ Business Alliance							
Banners at corner	Town/ Business Alliance							
Hamlet Park								
Hamlet Park Design	Town	Hamlet Park Committee						
Program new events and festivals	Hamlet Park Committee	Town						
Acquisition of property	Town	Hamlet Park Committee						
Reconstruction of park entrance	Town	Hamlet Park Committee						
New parking lot	Town	Hamlet Park Committee						
Regrading/landscape	Town	Hamlet Park Committee						
Create visitors' Center	Town/County	Hamlet Park Committee						
Municipal Parking Lot								
Acquisition of property	Town	Hamlet Committee/Business Alliance						
Construct parking lot	Town	Hamlet Committee/Business Alliance						
Town Hall								
Acquire property	Town							
Sale of existing Town Hall	Town							
Renovate building	Town							
Design Plaza	Town							
Improve Parking Lot	Town							
Construct Town Hall Plaza	Town							
Cullin Park								
Plaza and Park design	Town, Private owners							
Regrade/re-landscape	Town, Private owners							
Construct plaza (parking area)	Town, Private owners	Town						
Construct park	Town	Private owners						

Appendix 1: Landscape Materials and Amenities

Trees and Landscape Materials

The roads passing through Hillsdale Hamlet were once lined with beautiful shade trees arching overhead. Over the years, they succumbed to disease (possibly Dutch Elm Disease), road widenings, curb cuts and overhead utility lines. Although planted by NYS DOT, maintenance of new trees will be the responsibility of the municipality. Therefore, the Town should give careful consideration to the selection and siting of trees to ensure their survival and ease of maintenance. Consideration should be given to a number of factors when selecting and planting street trees, such as the function of the trees (shade, aesthetic enhancement, habitat creation, landscape restoration, etc.), the location – whether urban or rural, the location of overhead utility lines and underground utilities, the width of sidewalks and planting strips, a preference for native species and so on. The presence of overhead utility lines does not preclude trees; if space allows, low crowning or finely branched trees may be feasible. Larger shade trees may be planted where there are no overhead wires, and where there is sufficient sidewalk space for large or linked tree pits. Alternatively, taller species with large crowns could be planted at the back of the sidewalk or on adjacent private property.

Shade Trees for Streets



Red Maple
Acer Rubrum



American Elm
Ulmus Americana
Disease resistant cultivars.



Pin Oak
Quercus Palustris



American Hornbeam
Carpinus caroliniana

Shade Trees for Parks



Eastern White Pine
Pinus strobes



Shagbark Hickory
Carya avata



Eastern Red Cedar
Juniperus virginiana



River Birch
betula nigra

Flowering Trees for Streets or Parks



Florida Dogwood
Cornus Florida



Serviceberry
Amalanchier canadensis



Cherry
Prunus Sargentii



Eastern Redbud
Cercis canadensis

Other considerations include sight lines, irrigation and maintenance requirements, branching characteristics, low-pollen requirements, and soil constraints. The crowns of trees in commercial areas should not block storefronts or signs. This can often be accomplished by limbing trees up to 8'-10'. In the rural parts of the Hamlet, natural clusters of native trees are preferable to a formal alley of street trees. Trees recommended here are primarily native species that are hardy in the Hillsdale area.

Shrubs for Parks



Northern Spicebush
Lindera benzoin



Arrowwood Viburnum
Viburnum dentatum



Mountain laurel
Kalmia latifolia



Red Osier Dogwood
Cornus sericea

Shrubs and grasses planted in parks and along roadways should be non-invasive species to protect the ecology of the region. Restoring and planting with native plants will help to reduce the threat of invasive species that crowd out the natives, destroying habitat and diversity.



Black Chokeberry
Aronia melancarpa



Azalea
Azalea prinophyllum



Spiraea latifolia



Spiraea tomentosum

Flowering shrubs that also provide food for birds and wildlife serve both aesthetic and habitat functions. Grasses and groundcover can be used in place of lawns, where use allows, reducing water and maintenance requirements.

Bio-retention swales along roads and parking lots can be planted with grasses and shrubs that are both attractive and help to filter storm-water runoff before it seeps into the ground.

Native Grasses to Replace Lawns



Appalachian Sedge
Carex appalachia



Indian Grass
Sorghastrum nutans



Little Bluestem
Schizachyrium scoparium



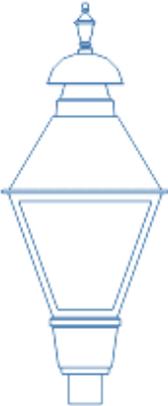
Silver Sedge
Carex platyphilla

Streetlights

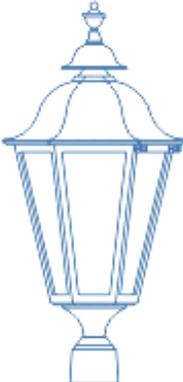
Decorative, pedestrian-scaled street lighting is recommended on Route 23 and Anthony Street to create a comfortable pedestrian environment, to indicate the commercial district and to enhance the historic character of the Hamlet. Decorative street lights should replace or supplement highway-scaled cobra-head street lights.

The small, residential scale of the Hamlet and its rural character call for simple luminaires on 10'-12' posts. Smaller lights require closer spacing to ensure sufficient light. The Town should consider specifying lighting that allows for LED lamps to save on power and relamping costs. Light posts can be used for hanging flower baskets and signage.

HISTORIC STREETLIGHTS



*Clearwater Square Luminaire
Spring City Inc.*



*Allard Hexagonal Luminaire
Spring City Inc.*



*William and Mary Octagonal, LED Luminaire
Spring City Inc.*



*Four-sided luminaire TR25
Antique Street Lamps*

Seating

Benches should be placed where people will use them -- to people watch, enjoy the shade, eat ice cream or simply rest -- especially in high traffic areas, facing activity nodes and clustered with other amenities. People enjoy watching people more than cars, so benches on sidewalks should face the sidewalks. Backless benches will allow for greater flexibility in some locations. Seats should be made of wood for comfort in all seasons (metal can get too hot to sit on in summer and too cold in winter).

Movable seating gives people the opportunity to choose where they want to sit. Tables and chairs, like those in Bryant Park, offer even more flexibility -- to work, eat, play games, read or chat.



Bench for four



Movable seating in Luxembourg Gardens



Bistro table in Bryant Park



Victor Stanley C-10



Victor Stanley FR7-1



Fermob Luxembourg Chairs

Bring Paris to your backyard!



Fermob French Bistro Table and Chairs



Arthur Lauer Brockden Teak Bench



Arthur Lauer Backless Bench

Amenities

BIKE PARKING

Bike parking is of particular importance in Hillsdale if business owners hope to capture the cycling market created by the Harlem Valley Rail Trail, once it is constructed. Parking near the rail trail and in the commercial district, near restaurants and cafes, will be needed. In addition, hotels should consider secure, covered bike parking in the future to attract overnight visitors. Bike racks should be securely anchored to sidewalks and be located in high-visibility, public spaces.

BIKE PARKING



Covered bike parking



*Victor Stanley
Cycle Sentry™ Series*



*Victor Stanley
Cycle Sentry Series*



*Victor Stanley
Cycle Sentry Series*

TRASH RECEPTACLES

Trash and recycling receptacles should be provided in pocket parks and higher traffic areas near benches and shade trees. Containers should be designed with small openings to reduce dumping of household trash and the actual receptacle can be located inside decorative enclosures. The smaller, 25 gallon receptacles are the right scale for the Hamlet. Artist-designed enclosures around recycling containers in Great Barrington are a welcome addition to the sidewalks.

TRASH RECEPTACLES



*Victor Stanley
Production Series*



*Victor Stanley
Ironsites Series*



*Recycling Container
(artist designed)*

Appendix 2: Information Gathered

- a. Summary of Workshop
 - b. Summary of interviews
 - c. Survey Results
 - d. Market Analysis: Economic Findings
 - e. Need for Affordable Housing
-

Summary of Workshop

November 9, 2009

The Town of Hillsdale, NY and the Hillsdale Hamlet Committee sponsored a Community Placemaking Workshop on November 9, 2009 to provide community input for the Hillsdale Hamlet Design and Development Plan. There were approximately 75 residents or stakeholders in attendance. Following a presentation by Meg Walker of PPS on the qualities of great public spaces and successful downtowns, the workshop attendees were broken into five groups that each focused on one of the following locations:

- 1) Intersection of Routes 22 and 23
- 2) Hillsdale Hamlet Park
- 3) Cullin Park (on Route 23)
- 4) Anthony Street
- 5) Rail Trail/White Hill Street

A number of specific programming and design ideas emerged from the workshop. The following is a summary of each group's comments and the comments as recorded on the Place Game forms and flip charts. **These notes are not to be viewed as the consultant's recommendations.** They are a portion of the data that PPS is collecting from the community as part of Phase I of the Hamlet Design and Development Plan.

Site 1- Intersection of Routes 22 and 23

Participants were generally concerned with pedestrian safety at the intersection and on Route 22, especially the lack of crosswalks and sidewalks. Calming traffic at the intersection, using strategies such as a roundabout, wider sidewalks or bump outs, and narrower traffic lanes could create a unified walking and cycling environment. There was also concern about Maple Street's connection to the intersection; many southbound drivers confuse Maple St. with Route 22 and speed down Maple Street. People liked the idea of closing the end of Maple Street to traffic, narrowing Route 22 and reducing the speed limit on it. Reducing the amount of asphalt, and the number and size of curb cuts, at the County Diner and the Cobble Pond Station would create a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Better pedestrian accessibility in this area, and in general, could eliminate the overuse of cars and the need for parking. Many in the group would like to see the shortcut behind the Post Office become an official path. Some suggested extending sidewalks all the way to Roe Jan Park to create a better pedestrian connection.

Positives

- Traffic: turn into a plus
- Two perfect historic structures
- Clean and well maintained
- Open space
- Historic view-shed
- Historical buildings

Opportunities and Improvements

- Streetscape improvements
- Improve sidewalks
- Restore historic view-shed of Taconic Hills/Berkshires
- Correct pruning of trees could open up views
- Roundabout around a memorial
- Cross walks, better pedestrian access
- Pedestrian signs/signals at intersection
- Plantings
- Directional signage
- Benches or gazebo/info booth at the empty corner
- Reduce parking lots on Anthony Street – widen walking areas
- Prevent on-street parking on Cold Water and at Cullen Park
- Open up more parking behind buildings
- Improve entrance from Anthony to IGA grocery store
- Bury electrical wires
- Improve lighting
- Reduce curb cuts at Cobble Pond and Diner
- Extend sidewalks/bike path to RJP and Library
- Slow traffic exiting and entering the Hamlet (calming)
 - narrow road
 - reduce speed limit
- Modify Maple/re route
 - Eliminate entrance at intersection
- Commercial uses on 22 (South) should remain
- Restore access between Route 22 and Cold Water Street
- Town service: Clean up job
- Extra lane for right turn from Anthony

More “appropriate” native trees along Main Street
Fix up houses on Main Street

Parks
Revitalize Memorial Park at intersection
Extend Hamlet Park to Route 22 and add new access road
Connect RJP + Hamlet

Low income affordable housing for seniors

Businesses/Activities

Nail Salon
Laundry
Pharmacy
Dry Cleaners
Coffee/tea
Arts Center
Outdoor Films
Concerts
Kid friendly place
Hamlet triangulation
Historic Kiosk/info
Use of Old/ Current Town Hall
 Senior Citizens
 Historic info
Kid Center
Café
Multi-use

Partnerships/local talent

School district
Transportation expertise
Architectural expertise/review
Community organizers

Models

Wyndham, Green County
South Egremont –parts of
Claverack-well maintained homes
Philmont’s Main Street Grant

Site 2 - Hillsdale Hamlet Park

The Hamlet Park has great potential to become a year-round destination. With better signage and visibility, people would identify this park as a destination. The existing log cabin on Route 22 could become a Visitor’s Center with information about walking and biking tours, etc. Workshop participants particularly stressed the importance of pedestrian connections and traffic calming so that the park would be better integrated into the neighborhood and be more accessible to the park users. Along with encouraging retail, restaurants and businesses to open near by, they suggested introducing more child- friendly activities such as ice skating, carousel rides, outdoor movies, concerts in a shed, and renovating the existing basketball court to attract younger visitors. Developing strong edge uses is vital in generating activity in the park and allowing triangulation to occur.

Positives

Space by Traina Estate
 Sculpture Park
Memorial – well maintained

Opportunities/Improvements

Image

Tear down buildings that do not reflect the “historic Hillsdale”
Move existing stores into the older structures
Consistent signage and more of it

Hamlet Park – “give folks a reason to stay longer”

Increase year round activities
Summer movies
Skateboard Park
Carousel
Light Ball Field
Hillsdale Day
Winter activities: Ice Skating
Gazebo with music

Internet café
Outdoor movies/concerts in the summer
Musicians in the park
Small pharmacy
Tourist info Center
Bookstore

Develop fringe areas
Increase parking
 Retail area
 Permanent Farmers’ Market
 Affordable Housing
 Flowers
Supporting the Park
 Walking path to Anthony Street, Cullen Park

Maple Street
 Slow traffic
 Pocket park at end of Cold Water Street
 Chess tables
 Seating
 Improved path to P.O.

Info Kiosk

Businesses/Activities

Bring Hillsdale History Day back – Historic map and walk

Turn Town Hall into a community center, a public meeting space, café and ice skating rink

Encourage some restaurants/cafes/businesses to open nearby (i.e. Town Hall, gas station, log cabin)

Farmers Market - lots of different types of people mingling and children playing

Improve basketball court and baseball field
-transfer all ball sports activities to big park

More bike/sports type shopping/services

-Biking center for bike riding in the Berkshires, NY/CT/MA

Develop surrounding edge, shrinking down space for more urban uses for kids and seniors

Attract more children

Children as members of the board to oversee park

Make a youth center- new equipment

“Biking Center for Berkshires”

Supporting the park

Town Hall

Community Center

Coffee shop

Outdoor tables

Nature Center

Log Cabin

Integrate with Hamlet Park

Bike shop

Information Center

Cold Water Street

Annual Sledding Night

Cobble Pond

Integrate with Park at the back

Limit highway access to 22

Models

Chatham

Spencertown

Salisbury, Connecticut

Small New England towns

Hamilton, NY- beautiful park, active farmers’ market

Site 3 – Cullin Park, Route 23

The area around the intersection of Anthony Street and Route 23 has great potential to become a pedestrian friendly center. A wider array of retail in this area could easily create a popular destination filled with street activity. There was debate amongst the group’s members about closing the parking lot at Cullin Park and turning it into a pedestrian-only area. Workshop attendees strongly supported the widening of sidewalks along Route 23 and introducing bike lanes to slow car speeds and to encourage multi-modal transportation. Streetscape improvements along with landscape treatments were recommended to enhance the aesthetics of the site, as well as define smaller spaces. In addition to landscaping, amenities such as outdoor seating, an information kiosk and historical signage could make the street environment more comfortable and welcoming to tourists. In general, people agreed that IGA would benefit from a marketing and visual perspective by having window and/or

sidewalk displays.

Positives

Quaint

Historic character of community

Mountain views – natural beauty

Beautiful park

Great potential

Mt. Washington House

Small

Management

Library

People – Business proprietors and patrons

Opportunities/Improvements

Streetscape improvements

Amenities: Outdoor seating, benches, Info kiosk

Clean up front of houses/businesses-

- Paint IGA/ new siding

- Plantings around IGA-evergreens

- Hide dumpster

- Bury power lines

- Change delivery at IGA

- Reside back of gas station

- Upstairs at B&G Wine and Gourmet

Widen sidewalks

Crosswalks with signage and cones

Landscaping and planting, flowers

Improve parking – change configuration: parallel parking on one side

Bike lane to slow things down

Enforced speed limits- speed bumps, green stripe

Historic signage upon entering the town and

signs/plaques to explain each historic building

IGA improvements:

Display cabinets in the blank windows

- Less monolithic

- Use punchouts to break it up
- Community display
- Marketing possibility
- Pottery, art

Park at vacant lot on Route 23

Close Anthony Street for events- Anthony Street as a pedestrian center

Activities, Businesses

Performance space for play/concerts

Specialty food store

Drycleaners

Small stores catering to residents (placed in existing buildings)

Coffee shops, cafe

Bakery

Movie theater

Fun gift shops

Movies-outdoor

More restaurants

Drugstore

Wellness center + yoga studio

Natural foods

Bookstore

Sidewalk/art shows/event from local artist organizations

Goliath, new gallery

Close Anthony street – summer/fall art day

“Arts in Hillsdale”

Ice cream

New town Hall

Historical Gallery + info

Partnerships

Create Hillsdale Chamber of Commerce to act as clearinghouse for grants etc.

Artists and crafts people

Residents

Business community

Town Government

3-way partnership with IGA, Mt. Washington House and Hillsdale House

Models

South Egremont-visual cohesiveness

Great Barrington –rows of trees, sidewalk, crosswalks

Chatham – vital, fun gift shops, movie theater, restaurants etc

Lambertville, NJ

Site 4 – Anthony Street

Workshop attendees were enthusiastic about developing Anthony Street into Hillsdale’s commercial Main Street and as an important connection to Rail Trail-related activities. Extending Cullen Park to Anthony Street could anchor the north end of the street with year round activity and uses. People agreed that there was a need for a wayfinding system to improve the overall identity of the street. In addition to better signage, they want to see unifying elements such as lighting, plantings and street furniture to enhance the comfort and image of the area. Participants were also excited about the Goliath Gallery and the potential for art-related development in that vicinity, including a sculpture park or outdoor display area, which could potentially anchor the south end of Anthony Street. Street closure for town festivals was suggested to encourage street activity. Connectivity to the rest of the town was stressed, specifically in terms of walkability. Signage and bike paths were recommended to build these connections to the Rail Trail, IGA and the Post Office. In addition, a public transporta-

tion system could be implemented as a means to connect people and places, particularly the elderly and parents with children. People were generally unclear about the mix of commercial and residential uses on Anthony Street and would like zoning guidelines to ensure more commercial uses.

Positives

Monument at Cullen Park

Goliath Art Gallery

Feeling of Village Green-Cullen Park

Supermarket

Potential for artist community/area

Classic example –white building

Hillside House-well maintained historic building

IGA brings people to Anthony Street

Anthony Street as Hillsdale’s Main Street

Qualities of Main Street, architecture, scale, quiet, calm

Character of some of the buildings are typical of Victorian Main Street

Curve of street, trees and buildings are attractive

Artists have carved out a corner and can develop an artist community.

Opportunities/Improvements

Image

Need for identification of the street through a

Sign and Wayfinding System with art, town news

Overall image poor

Difficulties of finding Anthony Street.

Not apparent to drivers on Route 23

Cullen Park as Main Street Park

Improve appearance of IGA building

- Ideas for IGA change of look: a cupola, clock tower or trellis on building
- Hide dumpster. Smell in summer

Too much asphalt
Beautiful hostas along passageway from IGA to Anthony Street
See old former garage building transformed as they did in Philmont (Local 111)
Break up large area of macadam
More than drive through town

Streetscape improvements

Slow traffic on Route 23
Crossing from Library to IGA is dangerous for children, elderly and handicapped
Concern of overhead wires- difficulty in removal
Continue and add new sidewalks.
Repair sidewalks
Paint façades
Slow traffic – put in numerous crosswalks and barriers

Access and linkages

Walkability –connections
Public transportation needed –Trolley for seniors, moms with kids and disable to get to town
Bike path to connect to other areas through signage
Beautify and add signage to pathways that join town
Unify street with signage, (street and buildings), lighting, planters, trees, wayfinding logo, benches
Anthony Street as center for linkages - to IGA, Post Office, Rail Trail
Remembrance of old Post Office location - thought of bringing Post Office back
Entrance from Rail Trail

Goliath
Encourage Goliath Galley/Art Center
Goliath as south end anchor

Vacated oil storage area for outdoor sculpture
More public/outdoor art
Encourage Goliath and other artists to move here

Masonic Temple
Make Masonic Temple into a Community and Activities Center
Masonic Lodge art collection as focal point
Use of area in front of Temple for parking.

Commercial vs. Residential
Division of residential + commercial poor/mix unclear
Concern for zoning to ensure commercial use
Rental vs owner-occupied

Activities/Businesses

Walk and bike-Wayfinding Tour
Street fairs and town events
Mix of commercial and residential
Focal point
Café
P.O.
Clock Tower
Masonic Temple
Cullen Park as prominent center

Sculpture Park
More banks
More cafes
Walking tour of historic homes- archive photos, civil war memorial
Flea market
Historic house tours

Partnerships

Town, Herrington's and local builders to improve the buildings
Create an arts committee to encourage artist and

artisans
Create a chamber of commerce for retailers

Models

Egremont – White Buildings
Philmont Local 111
Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin

Site 5 – Rail Trail/White Street

The area along the future Rail Trail could be a wonderful opportunity for entertainment and tourism. Workshop participants agreed that introducing more commercial retail that would support the Rail Trail, biking and hiking, and arts related activities would create a major destination. Participants suggested youth-oriented activities for the public spaces and in adjacent developments, specifically uses that would attract teenagers and young adults. An arts complex that includes a movie theater, café and retail could bring a vibrant youthful spirit to Hillsdale. Currently there is ample parking in the Herrington's lot, which could support the parking demands of new commercial infill. People considered turning this lot into a municipal parking lot, with enhanced landscaping, and plenty of opportunities for benches and outdoor table seating. Pedestrian and bike access to Anthony Street and IGA, as well as Roe Jan Park from the Rail Trail was stressed. Generally, participants welcomed opportunities for clustered housing in the area but envisioned the area more as a tourist and entertainment hub.

Positives

Art Gallery-Goliath
Rail Trail
Open space along Rail Trail
Parking/Openness/Vacant
Views –Rheinstrom Hill*
Old house on hill
Adequate parking

Opportunities and Improvements

Image
Landscaping and shrub clean up
Improve sidewalks
Enhance Parking lot by planting trees, adding benches, tables for eating
Beautify Herrington Building
 - municipal lot?
 -organize and reduce
Large street trees
Beautify back of IGA
Revitalize park behind Cobble Pond
Landscape area between Herrington and Rail Trail
Fill empty building spaces
Paint
Signage
Lighting
Architecture guidelines
Better parking
Sidewalks
Underground utilities
Façade improvements
Bury utility wires
Landscaping
Maximize green spaces

Entertainment and Tourism

Entertainment and activities for youth
Theater, café, retail (arts complex)
Night activity
Encourage development of gallery
Sculpture park- Park opposite Goliath for open air seating, artwork, etc
Bring in businesses that people currently go to Hudson or Great Barrington to visit.
Develop Anthony Street
-More retail
Complete Rail Trail

Access and Linkages
Walkway to IGA/Access to Anthony Street
Police patrol to slow excessive speeders on Rt. 23
- Traffic control
Traffic flow – limit at White Hill Street
Develop Anthony Street commercial access from Rail Trail

Housing
density/cluster
Affordable

Businesses/Activities

Bike rental
Walking
Café
Laundromat
Pharmacy
Theater
Fast food restaurant (ex. Dunkin Donuts)
Outdoor seating
Arts, gallery, theater, music
Display space, windows
Ice skating
walking, biking

Places to eat breakfast/lunch-cafés, bistros, coffee shop
Outdoor umbrellas and tables – European style square
Kids' activities

Partnerships

H.V. Rail Trail Association
Goliath Art Gallery
 -including art classes
Herrington's
IGA
Hillsdale House Owners (relinking to parking)
Mt. Washington House
Volunteers
Dennis Wedlick, architect

Models

Egremont (traffic)
Chatham (retail, theater, narrow streets)
Great Barrington (art, retail variety)
Millerton (walkable, theater, restaurants)
Kinderhook (historic preservation)
Sheffield

Summary of Interviews and Stakeholder Meetings (October 19-20, 2009)

Interviews to collect information and identify opportunities for the Hillsdale Hamlet Design and Development Plan were conducted by Meg Walker, Norman Mintz and Sarah Crowell. This summary represents a compilation of the most frequently mentioned issues and ideas that emerged from the interviews, as well as unusual ideas that we deemed important to convey, and **should not be viewed as the consultant's recommendations.** This information comprises just one component of the data that PPS is collecting as part of the Hamlet planning process. Information from the community is also being gathered through Resident and Business-Owner Surveys, as well as a Community Workshop.

Interviewees

Town Officials/Staff

Art Baer, Hillsdale Town Supervisor
Peter Cipkowski, Town Board, Chair, Park and Rec. Committee
Augie Sena, Town Board
Craig Norton, Zoning Board of Appeals Chair
Hank Henward, Chair of Planning Board
Patti Rohrlich, Hillsdale Planning Board
Caroline Stewart, Friends of Roe-Jan Park, Hillsdale Farmers Market, Hillsdale Economic Development Committee
Richard Briggs, Highway Superintendent for the Town
Ruth Dodds, Zoning Board Secretary
Lex Lalli, Former Chair, Historic Preservation Committee
Janis Smythe, Chair, Green Solutions Group

Hamlet Committee

Amelia Robedee-Sydlosky, Hamlet resident, Day Spa
Robina Ward, Hamlet resident and current chair of the Historic Preservation Committee and Hamlet Committee member
Mike Dvorchak
Bart Ziegler
Matthew White

Local Business Owners

Tony Avenia, owner of B&G Wine and Gourmet
Jim Chambers, Organic farmer
Kelly Fox, Mt. Washington House
Joe Hanselman, owner of Taconic Valley Lawn and Garden,
Ed Herrington, Herrington's Lumber
Mary Lou Kersten, Realtor
Ben Tritt, Goliath Art Gallery
Chuck Weldon, IGA Supermarket

Hamlet Residents

Gaye Hoffman, Hamlet resident
Cynthia & Ken Magyar

Affordable Housing

Ellen Levy, Chair of the Housing Committee
Tony Hoetzel, Housing Action Council consultant to the Housing Committee

A summary of the results of these interviews has been organized under major themes:

Economic Development

A. Destinations

Existing destinations -- interviewees listed the following important places in the Hamlet:

Herrington's Lumber Yard is one of the largest employers in the county, employing over 100 people. It was the only lumber yard in the county until Lowes opened in Hudson.

IGA Supermarket is the second most popular destination. The IGA is the main attraction for people of all incomes, whether locals or second homeowners.

Restaurants: Hillsdale House, Hillsdale Country Diner.

Small shops are popular with local residents, but have a high turnover.

Farmers Market, held every other week in the warmer months, is a gathering spot for the community, but its high prices discourage many locals from shopping there.

Goliath Art Gallery is a great opportunity and could become a magnet for the artist community. It could bring people into the community and become part of a vibrant arts-oriented district.

The Roeliff-Jansen Library is an important destination in the Hamlet that will be moving to new quarters across from Roe-Jan Park.

Taconic Valley Lawn and Garden is also a popular seasonal destination for many second homeowners.

Other shopping destinations outside Hillsdale:

For major purchases, most Hillsdale residents drive to Great Barrington or Hudson, and sometimes they go to Millerton and Chatham.

B. Economic Development Strategies

Tourism

The county's and Hillsdale's economic development strategies revolve around tourism, building on visitors who are drawn to Hillsdale's rural character and its B&B's, and to Catamount for skiing and its adventure park. In addition, hikers visit the Taconic State Park and Bash Bish Falls, and bikers enjoy the quiet country roads. Many tourists simply drive through Hillsdale Hamlet on their way to these destinations, so they must be given reasons to stop, to shop, dine and stay overnight.

Hillsdale could become a center for biking once the Rail Trail is completed, attracting new commercial development related to biking such as shops, restaurants and more B&B's. Millerton is a good example of a local town that built a new economy around rail trail visitors and the races held there. A challenge is that tourism tends to be seasonal and weekend-focused, with fewer people coming during the week or during off-peak seasons in the spring and fall.

Roe Jan Park, in conjunction with the Hamlet Park, could become an event venue. Visitors could be attracted to hold weddings, fundraisers, festivals and markets in both parks, thus bringing business to local restaurants and B&B's in the Hamlet.

Second Homeowners

Catering to the needs of second homeowners is the next largest economic driver for Hillsdale and its Hamlet. These part-time residents have energized the real estate market, keeping housing prices higher than they would otherwise be. They are the primary market for construction materials (Herrington's Lumber Yard), garden supplies (Taconic Valley), gourmet foods (B&G Gourmet Foods and Liquor) and local restaurants and high-end shops. Although they seek other dining opportunities, and arts and cultural destinations, there are several challenges to serving this market: competition from Hudson and the Berkshires; not enough critical mass to keep a luxury restaurant like Aubergine or more than a handful of restaurants and shops going year-round; like tourists, the second homeowners are weekend focused. Hamlet-wide WiFi was often mentioned as a way of attracting people to the Hamlet.

Regional partnerships

Hillsdale should partner with other viable economic destinations in the area, such as Millerton and Amenia, to market itself as part of a regional tourist destination. Hillsdale should push the Rail Trail to completion faster in order to connect to towns to the south. It could then become part of a regional biking and recreational network.

Historic District/ Renovation of Existing Buildings

Many see the new Historic District designation as a catalyst for revitalization of the Hamlet and, consequently, as a way to attract new investors. As in Kinderhook, Hudson and Corning, existing property owners may be encouraged to restore

their buildings through historic tax credits on the cost of renovation (e.g. 20% federal credit, 6% state credit on commercial properties) and loan programs, leading to outside interest in the Hamlet. New commercial uses could be attracted to historic buildings such as the Town Hall, the former Aubergine Restaurant, the former Electronics Store and even the Library.

New Residential Development

With the completion of the new sewer, some hope that new residential or mixed-use development will be attracted to the Hamlet. Interviewees saw this in a variety of forms: senior housing; affordable or mixed-income housing; mixed-use with retail or artisans' studios and housing; and, an "artists' colony." New senior or other residential development would need more shops and services, and create more local jobs. Hillsdale is not an ideal location for senior housing or assisted living as there is no hospital nearby and no pharmacy, but many older residents would like to sell their homes and downsize, while staying in the Town. Salisbury, CT Housing Trust is a good model managed by a local non-profit that finds tenants who can get a mortgage. The housing trust retains control of the property to keep it affordable. Canaan and Salisbury also have good models of continuing care retirement communities.

A developer, proposed creating a "Tuscan Village" of 200 units on White Hill. The higher density would have required a zoning variance, but many people felt it was too upscale and dense for the Hamlet.

The Arts

Arts are beginning to play a big role in the Hamlet with the opening of Goliath Gallery and Michael and Eileen Cohen's purchase and renovation of the Masonic Temple as an art storage facility. Goliath could be the anchor around which an arts district forms with galleries, studios, artist live/work spaces, artisans' workshops, a cinema and boutiques.

Home Improvement Businesses

New commercial businesses could be attracted to the Hamlet because of Herrington's popularity. Interior decorating shops, antique shops and furniture stores could build off of Herrington's as an anchor. The challenge is that Hudson and Great Barrington may have this market cornered.

Local Foods/ Local Agriculture

Many hope that the recent interest in organic farming in Hillsdale and the popularity of the Farmers Market could help to transform the Hamlet into a magnet for foodies seeking fresh produce and locally produced foods. Roe Jan Park could become a focus of education in organic and biodynamic farming, as well as a venue to teach kids and youth about gardening through community gardens. Area institutions such as Hawthorne Valley Farm and School, Bard College and Camp Hill Village could partner with the Town and non-profits to make this happen in Hillsdale. Attracting a culinary institute like the CIA or the French Culinary Institute, or Blue Hill farm-to-table, could help to put the Hamlet on the map and revive the Aubergine Restaurant.

Major Commercial or Institutional Anchors
Stimulating investment in major anchors (old

and new) could change the economic environment. For example, an educational facility or sports related development could be considered. Within the core of the Hamlet there are two sites that could be developed as commercial hubs: the area around Herrington's and the area behind Mt. Washington House, which could possibly be subdivided to create lots for commercial development. Currently the Four Brothers Plaza and the former Independent building are underutilized anchors. They could be redesigned to include more "highway business" uses. However, to some, they represent the kind of development – car dependent, not in the Hamlet or walkable from other destinations – that is outmoded and not economically viable in the future.

C. Commercial Needs

Interviewees listed the following commercial uses that they would like to see in the Hamlet:

Bookstore
Pharmacy (especially to serve senior population)
General store
Coffee shop
Sandwich shop
Bank
Another upscale restaurant like Aubergine, with catering hall
Day care center
Car wash
Florist
UPS store
More restaurants
Bike shop or bike rental
Tea shop

Inn with catering
Farm stand or public market
Jiffy-lube
More B&B's
Shared office incubator

Circulation

There was unanimous sentiment that speeding and truck traffic discourage people from walking and businesses from locating in the Hamlet. There is generally a strong demand for improved sidewalks and a more walkable Hamlet, and many felt that decreased car dependence and better parking will attract new businesses to the Hamlet.

Pedestrian improvements

People want to be able to walk to many destinations in one trip. Poor or non-existent sidewalks, along with the volume and speed of traffic on Routes 22 and 23, create an unsafe pedestrian environment. The crosswalk on Route 23 should be better marked and signed (or signaled) to allow for safer crossing, and a similar crosswalk should be added on Route 22 near Stewart's. The intersection of 22/23 should be more pedestrian-friendly and the popular short-cut to the Post Office should become a good pedestrian path. Sidewalk maintenance (cleaning, shoveling snow, making sure they are clear of weeds, etc.) is the property owner's responsibility in Hillsdale, while repair (patching and reconstruction) comes under various jurisdictions (County, Town, etc.) depending on the road. These policies and responsibilities need to be clarified and enforced to make sure that the work is getting done.

Traffic calming

Hillsdale Hamlet is the gateway to Berkshires, and may even be on the most popular route to get there, but traffic usually speeds through and seldom stops. Some drivers pass through the town at 50mph if they get a green light at the intersection. There is a need to enforce lower speed limits (e.g. 30 mph) in the whole hamlet, but drivers should be particularly encouraged to slow down as they approach the Hamlet, first to 45 mph and then to 30 mph. On Route 23, engine brakes on trucks make a terrible noise when the trucks slow down suddenly.

Besides sidewalks, there is also a need for a designated bicycle lane, which will not only narrow travel lanes, but also act as a traffic calming method. The 23/22 intersection could be better designed with a roundabout and a beautiful monument in the middle to lower speeds. The end of Maple Street should be closed at the intersection and a new access street added further to the south.

Streetscape improvements/Amenities

New sidewalks with curbs on all state roads and on Anthony Street

Route 23 should be lined with street trees to beautify the street and slow traffic.

The number of curb cuts should be reduced.

Remove dumpsters from street view.

Directional (wayfinding) signage should be improved.

Add an information kiosk or notice board in front of Hillsdale House.

Sidewalk maintenance and repair policies clarified.

Better street lighting.

Benches and seating.

Bike racks.

Public Transportation

Currently, there is no public transportation to serve the needs of the community. People, especially seniors, would like to be able to hop on a bus and go to Hudson. The introduction of buses will provide a great opportunity to improve the connectivity between destinations within the Hamlet and regionally (e.g. from Catamount to Hudson). A possible bus route could run along Route 23.

Parking

The lack of parking is discouraging businesses from locating in Hillsdale. Interviewees were unanimous in agreeing that a municipal parking lot is needed, especially for customers so they can park once and walk around. Possible locations include: Herrington's Lumber Yard parking lot; empty lots on Route 23; next to future Town Hall (former Library); behind Mt. Washington House.

Parks, Recreation And Open Space

Roeliff Jansen Park

The Roeliff Jansen (Roe Jan) Park is managed by the Town of Hillsdale, but is located in Copake. To maximize uses and programming, and create a better connection between destinations, Roe Jan Park and the Hamlet Park should be planned and managed together.

It is hoped that Roe Jan Park will be used for

more active recreation than Hamlet Park. The sheds and barns there could be rented for weddings, barn dances, birthday parties, performances and environmental education. This could attract people to other destinations in town such as stores and restaurants. Many felt that eventually all the ball fields/courts could be concentrated in Roe Jan Park and it could host Little League games, etc. Nature walks, trails, a dog park and a community garden could also draw people to the park. There are many opportunities for programs that could engage more of the community: e.g. the firemen could host a town BBQ, a "folk Tanglewood" could be located there, farmers could take classes in organic farming, etc. It was suggested that a participatory planning process be conducted for Roe Jan Park, and that its planning and programming be coordinated with that of the Hamlet Park.

Hamlet Park

Currently the Hamlet Park is mainly used for the Farmers Market, as a baseball field for Little League and as a toddler playground. The Memorial Day Tag Sale was held there and it was a huge success. It could be more integrated into the Hamlet in terms of visibility, signage and access. A more attractive playground, and beautiful garden atmosphere with trees and shrubs, could make it into a lovely place for seniors and for young children. An intimate performance/amphitheater space, such as that in Camden, Maine, or on the Bryn Mawr campus, could complement a larger outdoor performance space at Roe Jan Park for music festivals and other performing arts events, as well as outdoor movies. A structure or pavilion could be added for picnics and events. The basketball court draws younger people and

should stay but could be better utilized if it was lit at night. Currently people have to travel out of town to play tennis and this was an active use that was suggested for the Hamlet Park to replace the ballfield. A skatepark was also mentioned as a good use to draw youth to the park.

Programming and Management

Currently, there are an organized holiday tree lighting and Santa visit, as well as an Easter Egg hunt in the Hamlet Park. However, there is a strong desire to engage the local talent that lives in the hills to generate more interest and create new events and programs in both parks. Programs in the Hamlet Park, in the Hamlet and possibly on a closed street (e.g. Anthony Street) could include the traditional Memorial Day Tag Sale, bringing back Community Day (in the Hamlet), a 4th of July celebration, outdoor movies, ice cream vending, and street dancing at night. People are eager to involve kids and youth in these programs. A Youth committee could be formed to manage many of these events. There is little for youth to do in the Town (and most of the youth programs are run by the Town), so some viable options, run by the kids themselves, would be welcome.

Other outdoor public spaces

Despite challenging topography, the Hamlet could certainly turn into a vibrant downtown with a great plaza surrounded by great retail and adequate parking. The loop at Cullen Park could be closed to traffic in the summer with outdoor tables and seating. A little pocket park could be created at the entrance to the path to the Post Office and it could potentially have a community info/events board or a kiosk.

Rail Trail

The state has bought this property and there is a wide support for extending it through Hillsdale as soon as possible. The Town needs to think of the Rail Trail as a way to knit destinations together in the town, county and region. The Rail Trail should connect to the Hamlet Park and Roeliff Jansen Park. A separate path should be built linking the rail trail to the new library, and under or over Route 22 and the stream to the facilities on the other side. Future uses around the Rail Trail could revolve around arts, tourism, and entertainment. With ample parking close by, this could become a restaurant or arts district. The Rail Trail in Millerton attracted people to open restaurants and shops, and now over 1000 people come to town to compete in the races.

More gathering opportunities

The Farmers Market is a good example of the type of use that creates a sense of community and many people would like to see more such community gathering opportunities. The Hamlet should be an “all-year-round version of the Farmers Market.” If you meet the needs of the Hillsdale residents by providing a “stimulating environment with local flavor” you will also attract tourists. There is no need to cater to tourists first. The Hamlet Park could offer more opportunities for the community to get together and a General Store would also provide a venue for spontaneous interaction. “Strip malls are not successful in attracting people.” “There is a need to draw people off Route 23 year-round with a larger sense of community.”

Community Character

Interviewees stressed the following ways to enhance the Hamlet’s identity:

Rural quality

People generally value Town’s rural, bucolic character and its beautiful setting. Preserving the open space around the Hamlet is of particular importance to everyone, and some felt that by increasing the density within the Hamlet and its economic viability, this could more successfully achieved (a Smart Growth principle). Many felt that new development outside of the Hamlet, which would threaten the rural character, should be discouraged. Some felt it is equally important to preserve farmland in the Town.

Historic character

Hillsdale is a designated historic district and is going for federal designation. Preserving the historic character of Hillsdale is the highest priority. Many people choose to live in Hillsdale because of its attractive architecture and small-town character. There is a general dislike of the architectural character of the IGA in contrast to the historical quaintness of the Hamlet, and some proposed ways to improve or hide it.

Building conditions

There were complaints about the condition of buildings in the Hamlet, although it is hoped that the historic district designation will encourage people to fix up their buildings. We were told that many property owners are afraid their taxes will go up if they paint or upgrade their buildings. Storefronts and commercial signage were also mentioned as needing improvement.

Beautification/ landscaping

Short-term beautification of the Hamlet's public spaces could include adding barrels of flowers, flower beds, street trees and tree planting in the park. Individual residences could be greatly enhanced by simply painting the fronts and mowing the lawns. A long-term recommendation that was frequently mentioned was burying the power lines.

Zoning, Land Use And Tax Issues

Zoning and Planning Boards

There should be better integration and coordination between the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning Board. Some said that Hamlet residents should be better represented on the boards and committees, and communication to Hamlet residents could be improved, although it was also stated that efforts have been made to increase Hamlet representation. "One of the most difficult issues is getting the word out to people who might want to attend meetings." Property Maintenance Laws were mentioned as a way to ensure that buildings be kept up in the Hamlet, but these would have to be effectively enforced.

Community involvement and support

Many local residents react negatively to newcomers and second-home owners and feel they are "changing the face of the town." Although the Town's power structure is changing dramatically into a more open system, there is a large group of 100-150 people who still feel left out.

They are often against zoning changes because they feel that their rights as property owners are being restricted. In addition, the majority of people living in the Hamlet are on or below the poverty line, and their needs are completely different from many of the other affluent residents and second-home owners. They may have property, but no disposable income.

The "first step [in making any changes] is to get the community on board." Most of the landlords in the Hamlet don't have the resources to fix up their properties, but "if a variety of stakeholders and activities get on board, the idea of upgrading properties could take off." Some felt that by working together toward common goals, for example the Veterans' Memorial, these barriers can be overcome. For some, the lack of community support for some kinds of development and commercial businesses is also a barrier to achieving economic development goals. There is a disconnect between what people want and what is economically viable.

Design Guidelines

Most interviewees familiar with them like the Siting and Design Guidelines that were included in the comprehensive plan. However, some argued that the intention is sometimes overlooked when you follow the "letter of the law." For example, the original plan for the IGA was better than what was eventually built, but it was not set back from the street with parking behind, so the proposed plan was not accepted by the Zoning Board. There has been quite a bit of controversy regarding the IGA that was built even though it meets the Design and Siting Guidelines. "It was intended to be a little Main Street strip, but did

not come out that way." Residents are unhappy with the location of the dumpster and the loading dock which requires tractor-trailer trucks to block Anthony Street. It was suggested that an Architectural Review Board could ensure compliance with the Design Guidelines and, if made up of design professionals, could be better suited to review architectural plans.

There are currently no Historic District guidelines, however, if commercial entities within the district take advantage of federal and state tax credits, they will have to agree to design oversight by the State Office of Preservation.

Property taxes and assessments

A deterrent to the upgrading of properties is the misconception (or not?) that a landlord's property taxes will increase if the building is painted, renovated or even maintained. Many people mentioned this fear as a major issue in the Hamlet. The Sewer Assessment is also viewed by some property owners as a burden, and the way the fee is determined seems inequitable to some.

Civic Buildings And Uses

Library

The Library is moving south of the Hamlet to a new building adjacent to Roe Jan Park. Many people interviewed were sorry to see the facility leave the Hamlet as it has been an important destination for decades and complements the other uses in the Hamlet. However, the new Library will serve Hillsdale, Copake and Ancram so its new location makes sense to others. The new library should have educational and retraining opportunities for youth and adults.

Town Hall (old and new)

There were mixed feelings about moving the Town Hall to the former library. Some felt the building should house a commercial use. The library, for others, is suitable for the Town Hall because it already has a large room that can accommodate 80-100 people, plus two large offices on the main floor and the basement can become shared office space. In the future, it can be expanded without compromising the building.

The existing Town Hall could become a community building linked to the Hamlet Park: a youth center with pool tables, arts and craft programs, board games, or a Recreational Center that accommodates after school space with playgrounds and even some commercial use. The Town Court may remain in the existing building. The VFW also needs a building and the Historical Society could use display and storage space for its archives.

Former School Building

While it is not in the Town of Hillsdale, many people regretted that a new use had not been found for the old school building. Suggestions included community-oriented uses that will also bring people to the Hamlet, such as senior housing, a private school or a community college. The building is well-loved and people would like to see it preserved.

Survey Results

The majority of respondents were between the ages of 46 and 65 and lived outside the Hamlet, but in the Town of Hillsdale part time. Very few residents have teenage children but mentioned a desire to encourage their grandchildren to spend time in Hillsdale through more youth oriented programming and activities.

Residents surveyed were eager to see more restaurant choices at affordable prices, new cafes with outdoor dining and gathering places and generally more cultural uses in Hillsdale. Small retail shops such as a coffee shop, a gourmet food store, a bakery, a bookstore, an ice cream parlor, a dry cleaners, a clothing shop, a pharmacy, an antique shop, bike shop and craft store were emphasized and thought to attract locals as well as visitors to spend more time in the Hamlet.

When asked what activities, uses or events residents would like to see in the Hamlet Park, popular suggestions included ice skating, a children's play area, a dog run, a garden area for seniors, a picnic area, enhanced visibility of the stream near the memorial, food festivals, art fairs, frequent outdoor movies, theater, concerts, music, dance and a weekly farmers market.

Major improvements the residents would like to see are more attractive storefronts and building facades, better sidewalks and beautification of the streetscapes, including more street trees and attractive landscaping.

The majority of the residents did not feel that the Hamlet was a pleasant place to walk and were very much concerned about pedestrian safety, lack of wayfinding and crosswalks. Implementing slower traffic speeds throughout the town, wider and continuous sidewalks and crosswalks along Route 23, pocket parks or gathering spaces, signage and pedestrian paths connecting businesses were recommended to improve the walking environment. Many respondents expressed a general dislike of the dilapidated homes along Route 23 and proposed repainting the facades.

Market Analysis: Economic Findings

Market Potential: The Customers

The Hamlet of Hillsdale relies on several market sectors. Local year-round residents, regional residents, second-homeowners, tourists and drive-by traffic all are potential customers for hamlet businesses. None of these groups, in isolation, is sufficient to support business development in the hamlet. The key to the future economic success of Hillsdale’s traditional downtown core lies in encouraging and directing commercial growth in such a way as to cater to the shared demands of the various customer groups. Each market sector brings with it its own set of requirements, preferences and spending patterns. Each sector also presents the hamlet with a challenge to meet its needs, as well as an opportunity to benefit from its spending potential. This document characterizes the existing market segments and delves into the implications for potential development in the hamlet. This information will help guide efforts to strengthen and stabilize the hamlet and secure its position as a destination within Columbia County and the Berkshire region.

Trade Area Delineation

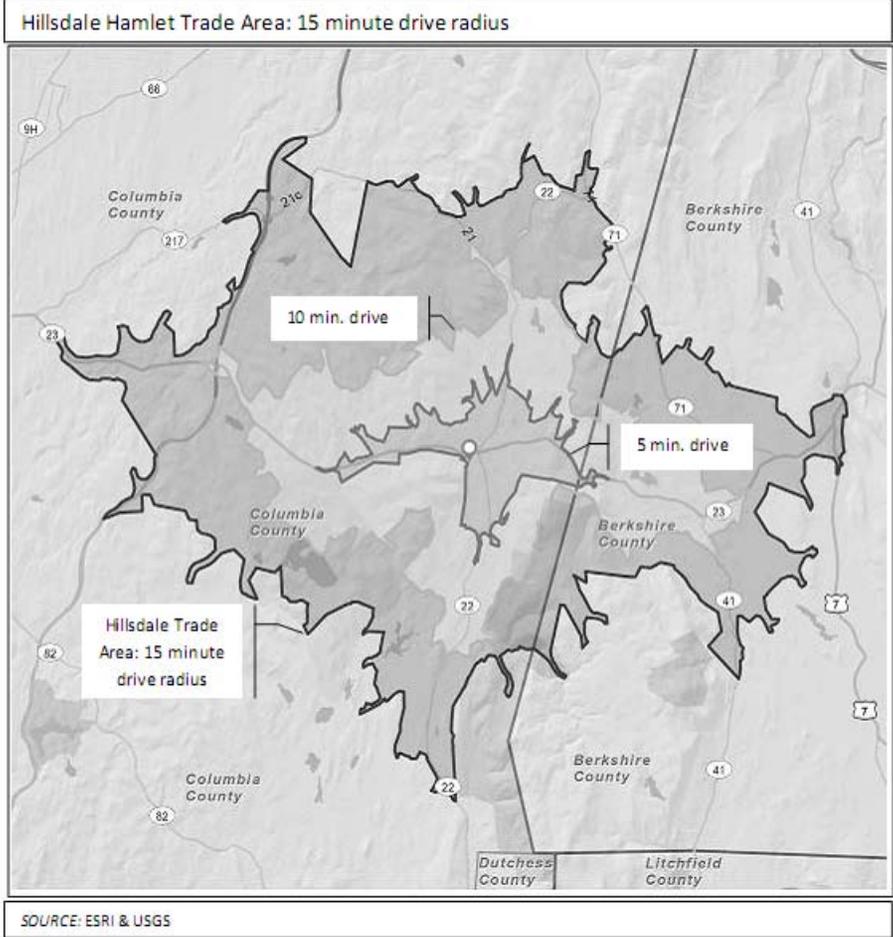


Figure 1: Hillsdale Hamlet Trade Area

In any market analysis, it is important to define the trade area, which is the geographic area from which the majority customers originate. The trade area for Hillsdale was determined based on interviews with several business owners, and takes into account the competition from neighboring commercial districts, most notably Great Barrington to the east and Hudson to the west. The primary trade area for the Hamlet of Hillsdale is defined for the purposes of this study as the area within a 15 minute drive of the center of the hamlet (See figure 1). For comparison purposes, two smaller areas (a 5 minute and 10 minute drive time) and a larger secondary trade area (Columbia County) were also included in this analysis. Those in the primary trade area are likely to visit Hillsdale for daily shopping needs, while those in the secondary trade area are less likely to shop in Hillsdale regularly but may visit for special events or specialty shopping.

It is important to note that the demographic and economic data available for this trade area is only representative of full-time residents as it is based on census data, which includes only those people who report their primary residence in the trade area. Therefore, the following section focuses primarily on year-round, full-time residents.

Year Round Residents

Demographics

Table 1: Hillsdale Hamlet Trade Area Population

Year	5 minute drive		10 minute drive		15 minute drive		Columbia County	
	2009	2014	2009	2014	2009	2014	2009	2014
Population	706	707	2,966	2,947	6,088	6,039	64,194	63,809
Households	284	287	1,244	1,247	2,715	2,713	25,874	25,899
Families	189	190	831	827	1,698	1,689	17,011	16,899

Source: ESRI

The population of the trade area is sparse. Approximately 6,000 people live within a 15 minute drive of the hamlet, emphasizing the importance of the multiple customer sectors. The full-time residents cannot alone support a commercial district. However, these residents do represent the most reliable customer group as they are in the area seven days a week and in all seasons and have fewer retail options outside of Hillsdale. Second homeowners, on the other hand, are primarily in the area on weekends and in certain seasons, and can choose to do their shopping either in the Hillsdale area or near their primary residence. The small population suggests that businesses must appeal to multiple customer sectors in order have a stable year-round customer base while at the same time attracting the volume of sales necessary to survive.

Area residents tend to live in smaller household groups than the general population (see Table 2) The small household size is due to the age of residents – they are older than average and have fewer children at home. Older consumers tend to purchase more health-related items and fewer large household goods, and tend to shop closer to home.

Table 2: Hillsdale Hamlet Trade Area Age and Household Size

	5 min drive	10 min drive	15 min drive	Co-lumbia County	New York State
Median Age	45.9	46.5	47.8	43.5	37.5
Avg. HH Size	2.49	2.37	2.23	2.38	2.61

Source: ESRI

Hillsdale residents' income levels are modest. As shown in Table 3, income levels tend to be lower in the immediate hamlet vicinity, and increase as the driving distance grows. However, in general, the trade area income levels are lower than those in New York State as a whole, suggesting a demand for affordable everyday items and services.

Table 3: Hillsdale Hamlet Trade Area Income

Year	5 minute drive		10 minute drive		15 minute drive		Columbia County		New York State	
	2009	2014	2009	2014	2009	2014	2009	2014	2009	2014
Per Capita Income	\$ 27,264	\$ 28,789	\$ 30,101	\$ 32,011	\$ 31,430	\$ 33,384	\$ 27,613	\$ 29,031	\$ 29,893	\$ 31,721
Median House-hold Income	\$ 48,915	\$ 50,609	\$ 52,722	\$ 54,182	\$ 51,464	\$ 53,261	\$ 53,257	\$ 54,159	\$ 58,747	\$ 62,337

Source: ESRI

Second Homeowners:

While little direct data is available for second homeowners, evidence strongly suggests a large and wealthy seasonal population. Vacancy rates are extremely high throughout Columbia County, and in particular in Hillsdale, where about one third of all housing units were classified as "vacant, for seasonal or occasional use" in the 2000 Census reports.

Table 4: Seasonal Housing Units, 2000

	5 minute drive	10 minute drive	15 minute drive	Columbia County	New York State
Occupied Housing Units	69%	66%	69%	88%	97%
Vacant Housing Units, for seasonal or occasional use	31%	34%	31%	12%	3%

SOURCE: ESRI & US Census

Furthermore, this population appears to be growing. Realtors report that their customers are almost exclusively second home buyers, a claim bolstered by real estate sales transfer data, which shows that of the 96 residential real estate sales recorded in the Town of Hillsdale between 2006 and 2009, one third of the buyers had New York City addresses.

If one assumes that one third of the housing units in the trade area are second homeowners, and that these households average the same size as the year-round residents, the population of the area may increase by as much as 2,700 people on weekends and holidays, resulting in a larger and wealthier customer profile during these times. However, the second-homeowners do not by themselves represent a consistent, year-round market. While they have significant

spending power, but they also have a wide range of choices when it comes to where to make their purchases, and may elect to do their shopping near their primary residence. On the other hand, with less price sensitivity, this sector is more likely to shop where they are comfortable; perceive that they are receiving personal, friendly service; and where they know they will find high quality and convenience.

Table 5: Residential Real Estate Sales 2006-2009

Buyer's Address	Number	Percent	Median Sales Price
Columbia County	38	40%	\$ 234,500
New York City	35	36%	\$ 411,000
Westchester County	5	5%	\$ 320,000
Connecticut	3	3%	\$ 475,000
California	3	3%	\$ 375,000
Long Island	3	3%	\$ 375,000
Elsewhere in New York State	2	2%	\$ 262,500
Unspecified	2	2%	\$ 460,000
New Jersey	2	2%	\$ 393,500
Massachusetts	1	1%	\$ 195,000
Georgia	1	1%	\$ 627,750
Arizona	1	1%	\$ 355,000
Total	96	100%	\$ 319,500

SOURCE: NYS Office of Real Property Services

A recent study of second homeowners in nearby Sullivan County found that second homeowners in that county do frequent shops and services near their vacation homes, and that their spending is generally focused on groceries, hardware, garden supplies, and dining out. They are less likely to purchase clothing, office supplies, and household furnishings, but it was noted that this could be due to the limited retail opportunities for these items in the area. The second homeowners in Sullivan County did express a desire for more bakeries and coffee shops with weekend hours and for more attractive shopping districts, a sentiment that has been noted in Hillsdale as well.

While no hard data exists to determine the amount of time second homeowners spend in Hillsdale, it is clear that, while this sector creates a strong market on weekends and holidays, there are many times when second-homeowners are not in the area. This erratic marketplace presents a unique challenge to local businesses to be flexible enough to meet the needs of the seasonal population while still being able to survive the off-seasons.

However, there is some evidence that second-homeowners may be spending more time in the area, and even converting their weekend residences to primary residences. This may be due to retirement or to technological advances that make telecommuting and remote workplaces more viable options. In both cases, demand will increase for both cultural activities and technological infrastructure such as high-speed internet and cell-phone coverage. Furthermore, there may be a latent demand for office space to ac-

commodate small businesses and telecommuters.

Visitors and Tourists

The hamlet of Hillsdale's location at the intersection of Routes 22 and 23, close to the Taconic Parkway and an easy drive from the Wassaic Metro-North train station make it a convenient destination for a weekend getaway from New York or Boston and the surrounding areas. The preponderance of bed and breakfasts in or near the hamlet and the range of attractions in the area, including Bash Bish Falls and Catamount ski resort make it an attractive destination.

Despite these factors, however, the hamlet is often referred to as a "crossroads," a place that is driven through rather than visited. And New York State DOT traffic counts do reveal a relatively significant average daily traffic count of over 4,000 vehicles on Route 23 and 3,000 on Route 22. According to local retailers, however, the hamlet is not benefitting from these travelers – they are simply driving through rather than stopping in Hillsdale to spend time and dollars. Making improvements that increase the ease and appeal of stopping in Hillsdale may increase spending by passers-by in the hamlet.

However, it is the rare business district that can survive on pass-through traffic as a primary customer group. It is critical to the success of Hillsdale's businesses that the focus is primarily on making Hillsdale a destination in and of itself, a central location from which visitors can experience the regional offerings that surround it. The potential economic benefit of tourist and visitors to the hamlet is significant, and is dependent on Hillsdale's ability to position itself as an

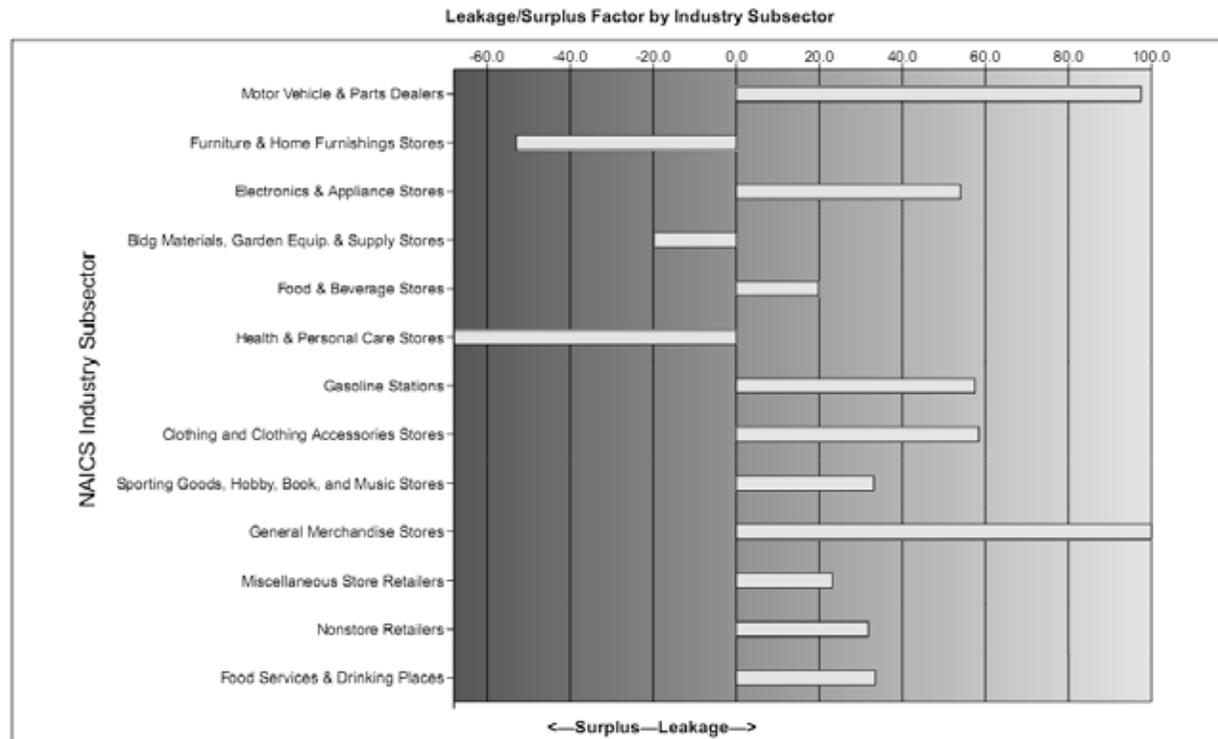
appealing destination for visitors and tourists. The area already includes a number of attractions, centered mostly on outdoor activities such as skiing, biking and hiking. Two major developments in this direction are likely to increase the appeal of the area as a destination for outdoor recreation. First is the addition of year-round activities at Catamount, the ski resort less than five miles from the center of Hillsdale. In its first full summer, the Catamount Adventure Park attracted over 12,000 visitors from May to October 2009, making the ski resort a year-round generator of day trippers and weekend visitors to the area. The second major development is the Harlem Valley Rail Trail, which passes directly through the hamlet. One needs only look to the nearby town of Millerton, which benefits from 300-400 visitors to the rail trail per weekend in good weather, to see the potential impact of the rail trail. Since becoming a hub for the rail trail approximately 10 years ago, Millerton's downtown has thrived, its stores and restaurants benefiting not only directly from the rail trail visitors, who come from all over the region to use the trail, but also from the increased visibility of the town as a result of being a rail trail hub. Attractions such as Catamount resort and the rail trail tend to bring day trippers and weekend visitors and create a demand for dining establishments (both eat-in and take-out), gift shops that appeal to "browsers," and stores that carry outdoor equipment and apparel.

Spending power analyses: Leakage and Capture Rates

Retail demand drives retail success: that is, the number and type of stores a trade area can support are directly related to the level of demand for specific product types in that trade area. By contrasting the demand for consumer goods by store type by the actual sales within the trade area, a general picture of the unmet demand and potential for retail development can be extracted. In the case of Hillsdale, however, it is im-

portant to note that consumer demand figures take into account only spending by year-round residents in the trade area. Neither second-homeowners nor visitors and tourists can be included in such an analysis as there is no reliable data readily available to characterize their spending. Categories that reveal a surplus (i.e., sales exceed typical spending) can be considered destination categories since it is obvious that those businesses are attracting spending that cannot be attributed only to residents within the trade

areas. Categories that reveal leakage (i.e., expected spending within the trade area exceeds actual sales) may represent opportunities for retail development. However, in some cases, the retail sales in those categories are being diverted to large shopping centers with which local businesses cannot compete. Thus, while the following spending power analysis can help inform planning and development, it should always be viewed in context of the larger economic environment.



Source: ESRI and infoUSA®

Figure 2: Leakage by Sector, Hillsdale Hamlet Trade Area

The leakage analysis for relevant retail categories is presented in Figure 2. As is illustrated in the chart, nearly every category shows a significant leakage of expendable dollars out of the area, even without taking the spending power of second homeowners and visitors into account. While some of the leakage is unavoidable due to the proximity of major regional shopping destinations such as Great Barrington and Hudson, the extent of the leakage does suggest a latent demand for a variety of businesses in the Hillsdale trade area.

The leakage analysis demonstrates room for growth in nearly every category. Of particular note is the leakage in three areas: Food Services & Drinking Places; Sporting Goods, Hobby Book and Music Stores; and Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores. All three of these retail categories are areas that appeal to visitors and second-homeowners as well as local, year-round residents, thus suggesting an even greater

demand than is identified in the leakage analysis. These retail categories represent significant potential for development in the hamlet of Hillsdale.

On the other hand, the Building Materials, Garden Equipment and Supply Stores category shows a surplus, which clearly shows that Hillsdale is a destination for such purchases. This is likely due to success of Herrington's and Taconic Valley Lawn & Garden, and also reflects spending that can be attributed to second homeowners in addition to spending by full-time residents.

Need for Affordable Housing

The price of housing in the town of Hillsdale is not consistent with the income levels of residents. In 2009, the median household income in Columbia County was approximately \$53,000, which would qualify the householder for a mortgage of not more than about \$75,000. Although housing prices have declined somewhat throughout Columbia County, the median sales price of a single family home in 2009 hovered around \$200,000, putting home ownership out of the range of affordability for a household living on the median income.

The limited rental market is no more helpful in meet the need for affordable housing. The entire town contains fewer than 200 rental units, none of which are currently listed for rent with area realtors. Furthermore, evidence suggests that the most affordable rental units suffer from deferred maintenance.

The Town of Hillsdale recently hired a consultant to characterize the demand for affordable housing and identify possible methods to meet this need. The draft affordable housing study identifies three categories of housing needed in the town:

Workforce housing: As described above, the median household income or approximately \$53,000 is not sufficient to purchase a median-priced house in the area. Young and entry-level workers and service industry employees are among those who are least likely to be able to afford to purchase a home. These employees, many of whom work for local hospitals, schools and retailers, create an unmet demand for moderately-

priced housing suitable for young families as well as couples without children.

Senior housing: According to the United States Census, the median age of a Hillsdale resident in 2000 was 42.7 and 17% were over 65 years of age. When compared to the whole United States, with a median age of 35.3 and only 12.4% over the age of 65, it is clear that Hillsdale is skewed towards senior citizens. Seniors, who tend to live on fixed incomes, require lower maintenance housing designed for more limited mobility. By allowing senior access to suitable housing, they will have the option stay in the community without having to contend with housing that is no longer appropriate for their stage of live.

Affordable rental: As the affordable housing draft reports indicated, there is a shortage of affordable rental housing available for full-time residents as indicated by the reported low number of units and even lower number of vacancies. This points to an unmet housing need in the town. Affordable rental housing is important as it allows families and individuals who are either not able or do not wish to purchase a house to find decent housing in the community.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEMAND IN THE HAMLET OF HILLSDALE

The hamlet of Hillsdale should be targeted for efforts to provide affordable housing options for a number of reasons. First, its dense development pattern and relatively lower cost of land and residential units as compared to the rest of the town

makes the hamlet an ideal setting for a variety of housing types that lend themselves to moderately-priced units. Second, encouraging residential life within the hamlet will help create a vibrant, diverse and active community. And third, senior citizens, families with young children, and households with limited access to vehicles, all of which are prime candidates for affordable housing, are likely to want to live in a hamlet setting where it is possible to walk to basic services and amenities.

OPPORTUNITIES

There is not one solution to providing housing that is affordable, and a multi-faceted approach will maximize the potential for meeting the affordable housing demand. Such housing can and should be dispersed throughout the community and take many forms, including:

- Individual infill development of one- and two-family units on single vacant lots in established neighborhoods.
- Conversion of older large homes to multi-family while maintaining the integrity of the structure and appearance as a single-family residence.
- Accessory units, which provide the dual purpose of providing a rental unit while also allowing the resident of the main unit to defray their own housing expenses with the rental income.
- Residential units on the upper floors above retail uses.
- Small cluster developments, often referred to as "cottage clusters," where slightly larger lots of three quarters of an acre or more

are available for development. These developments consist of small single-family units, generally under 1,200 sf, clustered around a common green. Parking may be behind the units or may be located in a shared parking lot or structure.

STRATEGIES

In order to facilitate the development of the full range of housing types described above, a range of strategies should be employed. Strategies suggested by the affordable housing consultant in the draft report include regulatory measures, homebuyer assistance and rehabilitation assistance. In addition to these, the town of Hillsdale might consider a community land trust as a mechanism to provide affordable housing in the hamlet and perhaps throughout the town as well.

Regulatory measures

By integrating affordable housing provisions in the town's zoning and subdivision regulations, developers can be encouraged to provide such housing within the town. Specific measures to be considered include those described below. Some elements of these are already present in the town's zoning code, but it is worth outlining the range of options. It should be kept in mind that a clear and precise definition of affordable housing should be integrated into the zoning ordinance in order to make any of these regulatory options effective. In addition, the zoning should be carefully reviewed to ensure that the types of housing described above are not prohibited either directly or indirectly.

Inclusionary zoning: Developers may be required to make a percentage of units affordable when undertaking a development over a certain

size. For example, any development that consists of 6 or more units may be required to include 10% affordable units.

Incentive zoning

Rather than requiring affordable units as above, developers may be offered bonuses in either an increased number of units and/or a relaxation of dimensional requirements in return for providing affordable units within their projects.

Accessory units

By ensuring that the zoning ordinance permits accessory units in residential areas of the hamlet, the rental housing inventory may be increased while also providing an additional source of income for the owners. Design and siting guidelines should be included so that accessory units are secondary in appearance and size to the primary unit.

Homeowner and renter assistance

The draft affordable housing report outlines several programs that are available to allow the town to provide assistance for home improvement and for first time homebuyers. Two examples of assistance programs are:

- The RESTORE program administered by the New York Department of Housing and Community Resources to assist low and moderate income households with home maintenance and improvement projects.
- The Acquisition and Rehabilitation Program, run by the New York State Affordable Housing Corp., which provides downpayment assistance for first-time homebuyers within certain income guidelines.

In order to effectively bring these programs to Hillsdale, an effort should be made to disseminate information to residents and provide assistance for those who are eligible to fill out applications in order to receive the benefits.

Community land trust

Community land trusts are not-for-profit organizations that pursue the following goals:

- provide access to land and housing to people who are otherwise denied access;
- increase long-term community control of neighborhood resources;
- empower residents through involvement and participation in the organization;
- and preserve the affordability of housing permanently.

A community land trust will own land and lease it for a nominal fee to households and individuals who own buildings on the land. By keeping ownership of the land, the land trust is able to maintain affordability of the units on that land while still allowing homeowners the same permanence and security as a conventional buyer. In addition, community land trusts often administer other programs, such as rental rehabilitation assistance and emergency repair funds, to maintain quality affordable housing.