

## **SECTION II INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**

The Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) is being developed to assist the Village of Whitehall in the development of waterfront initiatives that are consistent with protection of their critical natural resources and historic character of the community. A LWRP is a comprehensive program that brings together local and State government, commerce and industry, environmental interests, private organizations, and community citizens to assess current problems and opportunities and to build a consensus on the desired future of the community's waterfront.

By preparing a LWRP, Whitehall has the opportunity to evaluate its waterfront resources and to devise and implement a management plan for the best use of those resources. Once the LWRP is completed and approved by the Secretary of State, Whitehall will have the local controls to guide future waterfront development and the legal ability to ensure that all actions proposed for the waterfront are consistent with the LWRP.

The LWRP, taken together with the numerous other initiatives taking place, such as improvements associated with the NYS Canal Recreationway Plan provides Whitehall with an excellent chance of re-energizing its residents and bolstering the local economy by creating many new businesses.

### **A. History of Whitehall**



The following discussion represents background information about how Whitehall was settled and why there is a present need for new economic revitalization.

Unlike many places that have lost most, if not all visible connection to their pasts, Whitehall's history is unmistakable. It is seen in the architecture, in the transportation routes, along the water's edge, and on its craggy slopes. Its history is at the heart of recent efforts to revitalize the depressed economy.

Long before Europeans arrived, Iroquois and Algonquins passed through the area on peace and war missions. The first white settler was Philip Skene, a British captain. He settled at the head of Lake Champlain in 1759 following the French and Indian War. Skenesborough, as it was called until 1786, was the first permanent settlement on Lake Champlain. Skene developed trade routes to the West Indies via Lake Champlain and Quebec, and to Vermont and Albany via the Poultney River and newly developed roads. The falls at Wood Creek and the lakeside location attracted the development of saw mills, grist mills, and an iron foundry.

### **Birthplace of the U.S. Navy**



In May, 1775, American troops captured Skenesborough in what was the first aggressive Revolutionary War action in New York State. The troops also captured Skene's trading schooner, Katharine, making it the first ship in the United States Navy. Colonel Benedict Arnold manned and armed this boat and used it to capture the British ship, Enterprise, later that month. In 1776, Congress ordered General Philip Schuyler to construct a fleet of ships to counter an

anticipated British invasion. A fleet of thirteen ships was constructed in Skenesborough Harbor to assist the Americans in the Battle of Valcour.

By the 1790s, Whitehall (as Skenesborough was renamed) was a prosperous center for commerce. Warehouses were used to store a wide variety of items. In 1806, Whitehall Harbor became a port.

The War of 1812 generated a renewed demand for ships. Ships that had been constructed following the Embargo Act of 1809 were put into service. Additional ships were constructed in Whitehall Harbor and pressed into service by Commodore Thomas Macdonough. In 1814, ships that were used in the Battle of Plattsburgh were moored in Whitehall and, when they became a threat to avigation, were scuttled in East Bay.

### **Lake Boat Era**

The years 1806 to 1874 constitute what is known as Whitehall's lake boat era. Large lake boats were used to transport both tourists and goods on Lake Champlain. Tourists passed through Whitehall on their way to and from the Adirondack Mountains. Goods were primarily moved from the north to the south. The growing commerce trade renewed interest in the development of a canal that would connect Lake Champlain and the Hudson River. This waterway was constructed and was opened as far as Fort Edward in 1819 and as far as Waterford in 1824. The Canal was improved and lengthened in 1832 and

relocated in 1912. The earlier canal is on the National Register of Archaeological Sites. The Champlain Canal represents the entrance to Lake Champlain and the northern entrance to the New York State Barge Canal System. The current lock, Lock 12, was completed in 1912 and replaced a triple lock system that had been in place since 1823.

Goods shipped on the Canal included lumber, hay, potatoes, ice, yellow ochre, marble, iron ore, and eels. In order to support trade along the Canal, various services became available alongside the new waterway. Horse and mule barns, livery stables, hotels, taverns, a sail loft, and grocery and clothing stores are examples of the many businesses that supported the shipping industry. For the most part, these buildings are made of brick from local brickyards and are three stories. Most of the buildings were built between 1862 and 1892 and were designed and/or built by A.P. Hopson. In 1974 these buildings, along Main Street and Williams Street, were designated a Historic District. They constitute the heart of Whitehall's present-day central business district.

Support structures for the Canal included, among others, a terminal building built in 1917. Today this building is home to the Skenesborough Museum. An addition to the building, built in 1976, houses the Urban Cultural Park Visitor Center.

### **Railroad Era**

In 1848, the Saratoga and Rensselaer Railroad arrived in Whitehall and initiated the railroad era. The Lake Station, built in 1850 just north of the Village, transferred travelers to Lake Champlain steamships. When the steamships stopped running, the rail line was extended to the Adirondack Mountains. A second rail line, the Rutland and Washington, traveled east to Vermont. At the height of this era, 76 trains left the Whitehall rail yard each day. A D&H station was built in 1892. Though not demolished, a new station was built on Main Street in the mid 1990s. The railroad era came to an end with the advent of the automobile.

### **Era of Decline**

Relocation of the Canal bed resulted in Riverside Park and Skenesborough Park. Skenesborough Park provides visual and physical access to the Canal and Wood Creek. The New York State Canal Corporation has a 99-year lease with the Town of Whitehall for this area.

The Village fell into a period of decline in the mid to late 1900s. As the importance of the rail and silk industries became less important, some people left Whitehall in search of more promising economic times. The increased availability of the automobile and the extent and quality of the road system enabled people to travel elsewhere to shop and seek entertainment. The development of highways and the associated drive-non-stop mentality likely reduced the number of people passing through the central business district. The Northway and State Routes 4 and 22 bypass the heart of the Village and minimize revenues generated from thru-traffic. Rail passengers also pass by without stopping.

## **Era of Rejuvenation (Current Planning and Development Initiatives)**

A core of Whitehall residents, fully aware of the Village's assets and potential, were not complacent. They researched ways and means to revitalize the Village economy and spirit. The successes are mounting. Listed below are the Village's community planning and development initiatives.

### Urban Cultural Park

In 1980 Whitehall was designated an Urban Cultural Park. An Urban Cultural Park is a State-designated area that has special significance in the State's history. An Urban Cultural Park Management Plan was prepared to guide the revitalization of the area while promoting preservation, education, recreation, and economic development.

The thirteen goals in Whitehall's Urban Cultural Park Management Plan pertain to the:

- Preservation of the Village's nineteenth century character;
- Preservation of the Champlain Barge Canal System and bridges;
- Enrichment and upgrading of the park environment;
- Education of park visitors;
  - Birthplace of United States Navy
  - Role in early history of the country
  - Development of water and rail transportation systems
- Development of promotional, public relations, and educational programs;
- Provision of passive recreational pursuits;
- Expansion of active recreational facilities;
- Strengthening of the economic base;
- Encouragement of private sector investment;
- Reduction of business operation costs;
- Expansion of the State and local tax base; and
- Encouragement of rehabilitation of vacant/substandard residential space

Many of the Plan's recommendations have been implemented.

The boundaries of the Historic District coincide with those of the Urban Cultural Park. The themes of defense and transportation are exhibited in this area's development patterns and architecture. Development and redevelopment projects in this area, depending on their nature, may be subject to the Village's Historic Preservation Law.

### Canal Harbor Center

In recent years, the New York State Canal Corporation, the entity that owns and operates the Canal, has initiated and begun implementing measures to revitalize economies along the Erie and Champlain Canals. Whitehall is one of seven designated Canal harbors due, in part, to the fact that Whitehall is the gateway to Lake Champlain and Canada. According to the New York State Canal

Recreationway Plan, these harbors, when redeveloped, will “best exemplify the recreational and economic potential of the Canal System” (page 8.1). As a designated harbor, Whitehall has been the subject of a concept plan for the Skenesborough Park vicinity based on months of meetings and public participation efforts. The concept plan and associated development program incorporate four basic elements:

- Canal infrastructure, facilities, site and other improvements which provide or enhance boater services and other recreational activities;
- Canalway Trail improvements and linkages;
- Economic development and community revitalization elements, and private-sector participation; and
- Public open space, visitor information and interpretive components.

#### Skenesborough Museum and Park

Public, private and not-for-profit groups have become involved in a wide array of smaller scale efforts, each intended to benefit residents and/or visitors. An early example is the Skenesborough Park Museum, located in a 1917 Canal terminal building. The building was vacant when, in 1959, the museum was opened in celebration of the Village’s bicentennial and the tricentennial of Henry Hudson’s trip down the Champlain. In 1991, the Village received money through the Environmental Quality Bond Act to renovate a wing of the Canal terminal as an Urban Cultural Park Visitor Center. In addition, the exterior was painted and a tile roof established.

In 1982, the Village received a Federal Land and Water Conservation grant for improvements to Skenesborough Museum Park. These improvements included a picnic shelter, barbecue pit, and picnic tables. The local Navy Sea-Bee unit and volunteers coordinated efforts to erect a replica of an 1892 bandstand in Riverside Park. In 1989, Department of Housing and Urban Development and Urban Cultural Park monies were used to replace a section of canal wall that had fallen. This project included a stairway to link the Canal and Main Street.

The Village also received a New York State Canal Grant of \$45,000 in 1991. This grant was to establish a walkway connecting the Museum parking lot to a stairway linking the Canal and Main Street. Monies were used to rehabilitate the site of the Newberry store and enhance the streetscape along Main Street.

Recent design plans for Skenesborough Park offer increased and enhanced opportunities for visual and physical access. Project components include, but are not limited to, a boat launch, a promenade along the Canal wall and through the Park, a bicycle trail, picnic shelter, recreation center, stage area, benches, plantings, and landscaping.

## Champlain Canal Byway

The proposed Champlain Canal Byway (formerly known as the Canalway Trail) will pass directly through the Village. The Byway is a 64-mile expanse from Waterford to Whitehall that proposes to link current and proposed scenic byways along key transportation routes in New York State. The Byway seeks to provide information about the area's important local history and landmarks and highlight the recreational opportunities along this route.



## HUD Canal Corridor Initiative

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development is overseeing a Canal Corridor Initiative. Whitehall prepared a grant application and received funds to replace part of the Canal wall, to beautify the local streetscapes, to expand the pedestrian circulation network, and, to provide additional parking. Implementation of the project is underway. As part of the Canal Corridor Initiative, the Village is authorized to issue Section 108 loans for economic development projects that will result in new jobs. HUD subsidizes the interest rate. The Village has the authority to issue \$1.4 million in loans.

HUD also oversees a Microenterprise Loan Program for economic development projects that do not exceed \$25,000. The Village has approximately \$150,000 in funds.

In addition, in the 1980s and 1990s, the Village received two HUD Small Cities grants. One grant led to the rehabilitation and sale of a historic structure on Main Street. The other grant entailed housing rehabilitation and water line and storm drainage improvements along Broadway and west of Broadway.

## Skene Manor

One of the area's predominant buildings and sites, Skene Manor, operates as a tourist attraction. Built in 1874 on the side of Skene Mountain, it was the home of State Supreme Court Justice Potter. Today it is owned by a not-for-profit organization. Revenues are used to restore the building to its original condition. It is on the National Register of Historic Places.

## Bridge Theater

One of the more recent efforts entails the development of the Bridge Theater on the bridge near Lock 12. The Arts and Recreation Committee of Whitehall, NY, Inc. is overseeing this project. The Bridge Theater re-opened in 2000.

***Table 1 Summary of Applications for Funding***

NYS Bond Act- Renovate Museum/Visitor Center	\$450,000
Canal Corridor Initiative- Canal Improvements	\$850,000
TEA-21- Bike Trail & Other Canal Improvements	\$392,500
EPF-NYS Heritage Program- Canal Improvements	\$250,000

## **B. Water Resources**

### Champlain Canal

The Village of Whitehall is bounded by water on three sides and, therefore, is very rich in water resources. The Champlain Canal is the major water resource. The Champlain Canal is an integral part of one of the longest and most scenic multi-use trail systems in the nation. The Canal, which once played a primary role in the local economy, divides the community literally down the



middle. This section of the Champlain Canal is considered to be the gateway into Lake Champlain. Today, Whitehall has a very high economic potential associated with the Canal because it is literally the last stopping-off place for boaters who would have at least 20 miles to travel to find gas, food and lodging after passing north beyond Lock 12. The area around Lock 12 to Cooke's Island is known as Whitehall Harbor. "The Narrows" area follows to the north and, just north of Cooke's Island, the Champlain Canal becomes what is known as the "Head of Lake Champlain," or East Bay. In this region, the lake becomes a narrow band of waterway until it reaches Putnam Station on the west side just south of Ticonderoga.

## South Bay

The Waterfront Revitalization Area follows the Village boundary to the railroad bridge where it abruptly turns south into South Bay. South Bay is a natural extension of Lake Champlain. It is a body of water roughly 4.5 miles in length and about one-half a mile wide at its widest point. Its primary use has historically been for fishing although, in recent years, South Bay has experienced a significant decline in this recreational pastime.

### **C. Water Dependent Uses**

Both water-dependent and water-enhanced uses exist along the Canal and shores of Lake Champlain. [Map 3, "Recreational Water Uses,"](#) identifies these uses. Water dependent uses are those that depend upon the water for their existence. Water enhanced uses are those that do not depend upon water, but are enhanced by their proximity to the water.

## Champlain Canal



The Canal and Lock 12 are the most significant water-dependent uses in the Water Revitalization Area. Completed in 1912, the current lock replaced a triple lock system that had been in place since 1823. Lock 12 represents the entrance to Lake Champlain and the northern entrance to the New York State Canal System. Pleasure and commercial vessel traffic

through the lock has been increasing in recent years. Table 6, "Pleasure and Commercial Vessel Traffic, Lock 12, 1996-1999," found in Section 3, depicts figures for this period.

Water depths in the Canal range from 9 to 10 feet. Other physical structures in the Canal include lock and bridge abutments, the canal wall, and several private docks including Lock 12 Marina, The Liberty Eatery, and the Whitehall Marina. Water depths in the Whitehall Harbor range from 11 to 15 feet. The Canal is generally not a good resource for recreational swimming. It tends to be muddy with a fair amount of suspended clay solids. In addition, the water quality is suspect in many locations due to runoff from urbanized areas and streams. There appear to be no water-based conflicts. The Canal is actively utilized for ice fishing in the winter. The area adjacent to "The Elbow" on the east side of the Village often becomes a virtual "shantytown" of fishing shacks in the wintertime.



The Albany Field Office of the Army Corps of Engineers in Troy is responsible for monitoring navigation and flood control of the Hudson River and Narrows of Lake Champlain. They have prepared the dredging plan for the project located just east of Cooke's Island completed during 2000. The project is needed to ensure safe navigation of the waterways connecting Lake Champlain and is considered to be essential to the long-term economic vitality of the Whitehall Canal corridor. In recent years, several large boats have become lodged on sandbars and there are very few nearby resources to handle towing and repair related to this problem.

There are public boat tie-ups available along both sides of the Canal north and south of Saunders Street. From these points, boaters can access public open space areas, nearby sidewalks, and several restaurants. For example, stairs linking the Canal to Main Street and Williams Street are on the west side of the Canal north of Saunders Street and on the east side of the Canal south of Saunders Street, respectively. Similarly, land-bound people can access the open areas along the Canal for land-based recreational purposes.

### Marinas



Additional water-dependent uses in Whitehall Harbor include the Lock 12 Marina and the Whitehall Marina. The Lock 12 Marina is on the Harbor's eastern shore. Road access is via North Williams Street. It has dock space for approximately 40 boats. Available services include

gasoline, mechanical services (via Frere & Company of Whitehall), ship store, restrooms, showers, laundromat, and wine shop. Additionally there is a pool, children's play area, picnic tables, and barbecue area. Patrons can rent canoes and small boats and launch them from the property. The rate of use of this equipment is approximately 80 percent in July and August. In May through June and September through October, the rate of use drops to approximately 20 percent.

Across the Harbor from the Lock 12 Marina is the Whitehall Marina. Road access is via Main Street. It has dock space for 35 to 40 boats and dry storage space for 40 to 50 boats. In addition to a dry storage facility, the marina provides a shrink-wrap service to protect boats from winter's elements. Whitehall Marina offers gasoline, full mechanical service, restrooms and showers. During the height of the season, the owner estimates an 85 percent to 90 percent rate of use

for his equipment. Four dock spaces are reserved for transient use. This business has recently closed and is presently offered for sale.

Frere & Company is a marine hardware and accessories business opposite Whitehall Marina. It serves boaters and provides mechanical services to the Lock 12 Marina.

### Public Boat Launch



Until recently, a car-top boat launch has been available for the public at Skenesborough Park. Parking, though undesignated, is available along the Park's internal roadway. Plans for Skenesborough Park call for the upgrading of this boat launch and its relocation to an area closer to Poultner Street. The Canal Corporation is presently overseeing the construction phase of this project. The launch will be free and open to the public and will allow boats up to a width of 15 feet to safely launch. This feature is a great asset, having the potential to bring new business into the community. The closest launch site with similar amenities is at Ticonderoga to the north.

### Cruise and Charter Boat Companies

A commercial operation, Carillon Cruises, offers interpretive boat tours of the Canal, Lock 12, the Elbow and South Bay. Cruises are available in July and August and depart from the Skenesborough Museum. Private charters and sunset cruises are also available. One in particular, Blue Heron, LLC, has begun an enterprise offering "Hireboating" or self-drive boating in Whitehall operating from the Lock 12 Marina. Blue Heron has started a fleet of 2 -34 foot cruisers fully customized with luxury amenities. The service offers customers six days and nights aboard a self-contained, modern cruiser to go wherever they please. Alternative cruise routes are to the Canadian border, connecting with the Chambly Canal and the St. Ours Canal on the Richelieu River, onward to the St.

Lawrence and Montreal, or out to sea. Southward, cruising opportunities lead to the Erie Canal or down the Hudson River to New York City and beyond.

### Champlain Canal Byway

Formerly known as the Canalway Trail, the Champlain Canal Byway corridor is proposed to link current and proposed scenic byways along key transportation routes in New York State. The Champlain Canal Byway runs 64 miles between Waterford in Saratoga County to Whitehall in Washington County. An Enhancement Plan has been developed by the Byway Steering Committee to bring together recreational and cultural regional opportunities that will ultimately result in significant positive economic benefits for communities along the Canal corridor.

## **South Bay**

### State Boat Launch

Land-based, water-dependent uses are non-existent in South Bay except for the South Bay State Boat Launch located on the northwest side of the Route 22 Bridge. The launch gets a tremendous amount of use in both the summer and winter months. Each March, over 500 people use the launch for a fishing derby and, in June, a major bass tournament brings several thousand people to the launch each day. These activities give an annual economic boost to the Village Whitehall during times of the year when there is little other activity. In turn, merchants support the tournaments by donating gifts and services as prizes. Waterfowl hunters also utilize South Bay in the fall. Recreational boaters do not use South Bay as a destination because it is normally very turbid and has an average depth of less than 15 feet. South Bay is also choked with beds of water chestnuts in many locations making boat navigation virtually impossible. Despite high usage at certain times during the year, South Bay is considered by DEC to be significantly underutilized.

The State Boat Launch realized \$335,000 in improvements in 1999 due to funding available through the Environmental Bond Act. Residents and regular users of the launch are lobbying for additional amenities such as picnic tables and grills.

### Pier

The pier located just north of the Route 22 Bridge adjacent to the launch burned some years ago and is proposed as a special site to be developed for wheelchair-accessible fishing access. Funding was allocated with the launch improvements, but cost over-runs at the launch have caused this project to be delayed indefinitely. The Town and Village of Whitehall in a joint application for funding are also exploring fishing access for the wheelchair-accessible from the east pier.

### Access to South Bay

Boaters have access to South Bay via the State Boat Launch or the Lake Champlain extension of the Champlain Canal. When Lake Champlain is at a lake level of 93 feet, the Railroad Bridge that crosses South Bay at this entrance has a height clearance of 11 vertical feet. Reasonable clearance in the summertime is approximately 10 feet. The clearance at the Route 22 Bridge is slightly less at 9 vertical feet. Many of the larger new boats cannot make the clearance at the Railroad Bridge and mistakenly launch at the Route 22 Bridge and then cannot make it out into the Champlain Canal. The next closest public launch site is 25 miles north at Ticonderoga. The new launch presently under construction along Skenesborough Park will eliminate this need to launch so far north and draw many more boaters into the downtown Whitehall area.

### **Constraints**

South Bay is losing much of its appeal to fishermen and waterfowl hunters due to the fact that the walleye fish population is dramatically reduced in recent years and water chestnut beds are making many areas impassable by boat and dangerous to hunting dogs. There is also a great deal of concern regarding the potential for the spread of exotic species from South Bay to “uninfected” regions. The water chestnut, Eurasian water milfoil, and zebra mussels are believed to be migrating from one region to another by hitchhiking to boats.

Several activities are scheduled to combat the growing water chestnut populations and the deep layers of silt which have caused South Bay to become shallower. NYS DEC committed for the purchase and operation of a weed harvester that will operate on Lake Champlain. The area between the Railroad Bridge and the Route 22 Bridge is considered the top priority in terms of harvesting.

### **D. Public Access and Recreation**

#### **West Side of the Canal**

Much of the land along the west side of the Canal is under public ownership and accessible by the public.

#### Skenesborough Park

Skenesborough Park overlays the old Canal and provides physical and visual access to the present Canal and Wood Creek. This park has informal open space area, picnic tables, pavilion, restrooms, and cartop boat launch. The New York State Canal Corporation has a 99-year lease with the Town of Whitehall for this area. This Park is also home to



the U.S.S. Ticonderoga. This vessel played a role in the War of 1812, was scuttled in East Bay in 1815, and raised in 1958. A Whitehall skiff is also on display here.



### Harbor Center Plans

The New York State Canal Corporation is overseeing a project that, for the most part, is limited to Skenesborough Park. The project has fully been constructed and includes the following improvements:

- relocated boat launch (the new launch is now just north of the Poultney Street bridge)
- Floating docks parallel to the Canal wall
- Decorative promenade along the Canal wall and through the Park
- Bicycle trail adjacent to the promenade
- Recreation center
- Picnic shelter
- Stage area
- Gazebo
- Benches and bicycle racks
- Plantings and landscaping

### The Skenesborough Museum

The Skenesborough Museum is housed in a 1917 Canal terminal building adjacent to Skenesborough Park. Its collection of Canal and railroad artifacts and Revolutionary War memorabilia depict the more prominent times of Whitehall's past. A new wing of the building, built in 1976, houses the Urban



Cultural Park Visitor Center. Its exhibits also to inform visitors about Whitehall's historic past.

### Riverside Park

Riverside Park is on Skenesborough Drive north of the Whitehall Volunteer Fire Company. It is village-owned and dates back to 1914. Like Skenesborough Park, it overlays the old canal. Its Veterans' Memorial flanks the canal side of the Park. A granite wall contains the names of Whitehall residents who served in several of this nation's wars. A bandstand, benches, fountain (once a horse watering trough), flagpole, and flowered walkways adorn the area. There are several examples of war weaponry on permanent display. Free summer concerts take place at the bandstand. There is a significant open space area along the Canal enabling people to sit, walk, picnic, and otherwise enjoy the area.

### Other Access Points

North of Saunders Street there is access to additional open space along the Canal. A stairway links the Canal to Main Street.

### **Opportunities**

This area of Whitehall is fortunate for its present and soon to be enhanced public uses. There will be the potential for significant increased economic activity resulting from the new boat launch. There is better linkage to the Canal itself, which contributes to its visual appeal and allows people to see future possibilities. There will be an ability to launch winter activities from the park areas as, well. Activities on a larger scale such as festivals with a regional theme will be easily accommodated.

### **Constraints**

The size of the area and availability of parking will be the limiting factor for events and festivals that take place along the west side of the Canal. The success of drawing tourists to downtown will depend on an excellent marketing plan. It will not be enough to have all the right resources in place. The community will need to participate in a regional recreation plan that connects regional assets and markets them as a complete package. All renovations to both parks are limited by the location of the original canal walls. The walls are considered historically significant and cannot be removed or altered.

## **East Side of the Canal**



South of Saunders Street there is open space land. Boaters can tie-up their boats along the Canal wall and access the street/sidewalk via a stairway at the bridge. Similarly, pedestrians can enjoy this area for informal recreation purposes. Due to the successful grant application submitted in August 1999 through the Heritage Area System, the Village of Whitehall will have an additional \$250,000, partially which will provide much improved public and pedestrian access to the recreation fields, downtown Historic District, museum, railroad terminal and the Champlain Canal.

### Water-Enhanced Uses

Just north of Saunders Street, the canal runs behind several eateries. The Times Scoop Ice Cream Parlor has a patio with tables overlooking the Canal. Next door, the Liberty Eatery has a deck just above water level with tables for customers. The Finch & Chubb Restaurant, affiliated with the Lock 12 Marina and located further north, overlooks the Harbor. Patrons can arrive at all of these establishments by water or land.

### **Opportunities**

The water is central to Whitehall's economy. The uses on the water and along the water are similar to land uses along primary road corridors. In order to attract visitors, the uses must be functional and attractive. Given the number of buildings that overlook the Canal, potential exists for additional water-dependent and water enhanced uses. The Water Revitalization Area's water dependent and water-enhanced uses are presently unspoiled by haphazard or excessive development. There appear to be numerous opportunities for business related development especially along the section of downtown buildings facing the Canal. The visual appeal of the buildings, water and related waterfront activities is very strong. One of the most enjoyable aspects of the canal side area is that there are places that are unstructured and informal. The preservation of at least some of this space will permit continued unstructured use.

### **Constraints**

There is presently no feeling of linkage or connection of the various opportunities along the waterfront. There is a need to provide safe, attractive and interesting continuous access between the Canal and the downtown region. The challenge is

to maintain this unspoiled atmosphere in the wake of anticipated increased visitation and use due, in part, to the Skenesborough Park plans.

**E. Existing Land Use**

**Overview**

Much of the land area within the Village’s boundaries does not resemble the typical village setting. In fact, over half of the land area in the Village is assessed as Wild, Forested, Conservation Land and Public Parks. Much of the land use within the defined Water Revitalization Area along the canal more closely resembles a pattern typically associated with a village setting – relatively dense development and a diversity of land use types. Land use associated with the remainder of the waterfront revitalization area, including the Canal portion known as the East Bay and the eastern portion of South Bay down to the Village line is quite rural in character. The South Bay section, in particular, is isolated with rough access by dirt road or by boat.

**Table 2 Current Land Use by Real Property Assessment**

<b>Land Use Type</b>	<b># of Parcels</b>	<b>Area (in acres)</b>	<b>% of Total Land Area</b>
Agricultural	3	127.9	9.80
Commercial	111	2.2	3.37
Community Service	43	52.8	4.05
Forestry	9	254.6	19.51
Industrial	4	14.7	1.13
Public Service	33	253.6	0.4
Recreation/Entertainment	4	5.6	0.43
Residential	-606	281.9	21.60
Vacant	150	226.2	17.34
Water	3	637.7	0.00
Unspecified	3	43.5	3.33
	969	1942.5	
<b>Total Parcels &amp; Acres in Coastal Zone</b>		2402.4	
<b>Balance Outside Coastal Zone</b>		4344.9	
<b>Total Acres in Village</b>			

Source: Washington County Planning Department, The LA Group



## Residential



Close to two-thirds of all parcels in the Waterfront revitalization Area in the Canal region are designated residential. Residential uses occur throughout the area and encompass 22 percent of the total land area comprising the Waterfront Revitalization Area. Most of the 553 residential parcels in the Canal zone are developed with single-family dwellings. There are close to 90 two-family dwellings and a few multi-family dwellings and seasonal dwellings. With the exception of a few large

parcels, most residential parcels are less than 20,000 square feet. Table 3, below, itemizes residential land uses by type, number of parcels and land area for parcels in the Canal area.

Land use along the eastern shoreline of South Bay is nearly all residential with a scattered mix of mostly seasonal camps and a few year-round residences. Lot sizes are generally very large. There are three lots that are zoned agricultural on the northeast shore of South Bay. Access is severely limited to most of the area due to the lack of paved roads. There are several rough private roads and jeep trails that provide access from Route 22 just east of the bridge. Access by boat is available via the State boat launch just north of the bridge.

**Table 3 Residential Land Uses**

<i>Type of Residence</i>	<i># of Parcels</i>	<i>Area (in acres)</i>
Single-family	454	84.9
Two-family	87	12.4
Three-family	6	0.7
Seasonal	3	1.8
Mobile home	2	0.1
Multiple residences	1	0.1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>553</b>	<b>100.0</b>

*Source: Washington County Planning Department, The LA Group*

## **Commercial**

Though commercial uses are concentrated along Routes 4 and 22, Broadway, and Main Street, they also occur along North and South Williams Streets and on Mountain Street. Businesses are diverse. They include commercial retail businesses, lodging facilities, eat-in and take-out food establishments, professional/business offices, and marinas. In recent months, a gym, fish market, sign painting shop, antique shops, and the Harbor side Market have opened. Several businesses are enhanced by their waterfront location. The Times Scoop Ice Cream Parlor, the Liberty Eatery, and the Finch & Chubb Restaurant are all on the Canal and offer their patrons Canal-side seating.

If one looks solely at the current land uses on Maps 4a and 4b, it appears that the Village has no central business district. Non-residential uses occur along many of the Village's roads. While non-residential development has increased along Routes 4 and 22 south of the Village, the central business district has been along Main Street and Williams Street for over 150 years. It makes sense, from several perspectives, that it remains there. It is in close proximity to a population center, which enhances its pedestrian-friendly qualities. Walking or biking from home to the central business district is not unreasonable. This type of environment reinforces the sense of community as acquaintances meet on the sidewalks and in area businesses. The first floors of many central business district structures are designed for commercial or office uses.

The development of non-residential uses along the area's major travel corridors has had several results. The sense of arrival one experiences upon arriving in Whitehall has not changed significantly in many years. There is, however, a decreasing visual distinction between the Town and the Village. Instead of passing from open country to village as one does at other entrances, there is a strip development feel as one approaches the Town/Village line from the south. Typically, this type of development appears somewhat haphazard with little or no consistent standards for site planning. This type of development has had the positive effect, however, of triggering the renovation or reclamation of several old dilapidated buildings along the Route 22 corridor.

Route 22 (Broadway) as it extends north through the Village, historically and at present, represents an important component to the Village and commercial base. Land uses consist of a variety of commercial business and residential buildings. This commercial area does not have the historic or architectural significance of the "downtown business district" which fronts on the canal, but that does not diminish its importance to the Village. This commercial and residential area bisects the Village and has a significant amount of local and through traffic. Visually, this area is not attractive. Many of the structures on Broadway are in need of repair and improvement and some of the businesses appear marginal. The sidewalks, curbs, and the public ROW in general, are in a state of disrepair and are in need of repair and/or replacement.

This area will continue to be a key component of the Village's residential and commercial environment. It's high visibility and deteriorating appearance and

conditions require that village redevelopment efforts include this area. Its visibility and high traffic are in direct contrast to the historic district or “downtown business district” which is on “Main Street” and fronts directly on the canal.

The downtown business district is an entirely separate problem. Travelers’ perceive Routes 22 and 4 as the main street area and do not look further for other businesses. Routes 22 and 4 also effectively separate Whitehall’s residential neighborhoods from the downtown area. These are very busy roads that are not encouraging for pedestrian crossings. Another constraint for the downtown area is the Champlain Canal’s division of Whitehall’s downtown into two distinct regions. On the negative side, this splits and spreads out the downtown area. On the positive side, it provides twice the waterfront opportunities for the downtown community.

Signage is a real problem in the Village. There are too many signs and structures vying for the individual driver’s attention. In particular, the signage at the intersections of Route 4 and South Williams Street and Route 22 and High Street have a cluttered look and do not portray public information clearly nor concisely. There is a real need to create a signage plan that consolidates information about downtown and presents it in an attractive and engaging way.

### **Multipurpose**

Parcels designated multipurpose have more than one land use. For example, a structure housing a commercial operation on the first floor and apartments on the upper floors is multipurpose. Most of the multipurpose buildings in the Water Revitalization Area are clustered along Main Street between Saunders and Clinton streets. They also occur on Broadway, just north of Poultney Street, and North Williams Street. These are primarily commercial on the first floor and residential on the upper floors.



Broadway has a wide mix of uses in structures representing a diversity of architectural styles positioned to generate a wide range of setbacks. The extent of these differences can be visually confusing. This road segment would benefit from the addition of one or more elements to unify its appearance.

The Water Revitalization Area’s multipurpose buildings have a potentially significant role in the revitalization of Whitehall’s waterfront. Businesses or offices on first floors generate traffic and street activity during regular business

hours. With upper story residents coming and going and with the signs and sounds of life emanating from upper story windows, multipurpose buildings contribute more to street life than single purpose buildings. They enhance the level of activity on the street and add to the area's overall vitality round-the-clock. Many structures along Main Street and North and South Williams Streets are historically multipurpose buildings. Several of them retain this multipurpose function. These buildings, as part of the National Historic District and local historic district, are significant.

Several historically multipurpose buildings have lower and/or upper stories that are vacant or underutilized. Their full utilization would further efforts to revitalize the area.

### **Recreation/Entertainment**

Two of the four parcels designated recreation/entertainment are connected with the Village Recreation Building, Recreation Fields and Senior Center off South Williams Street. Other parcels include the Elks Lodge on North Williams Street and the rod and gun club off Main Street. [Map 5a, "Recreational, Cultural and Educational Uses,"](#) identifies parcels used for these purposes.

Whitehall's areas of open space are a true asset, and include the following:

- Skenesborough and Riverside Parks offer both visual and physical access to the Canal.
- The informal open space areas on the east side of the Canal south of Saunders Street and on west side of the Canal north of Saunders Street also provide access.
- The recreation fields off Williams Street provide multiple opportunities for village youth and young adults.

### **Community Services**

These uses are for the public's general benefit. They include libraries, schools, places of worship, health facilities, government-owned buildings, public parking lots and some cultural/recreation facilities. Within the Water Revitalization Area, there are 44 parcels designated Community Service. These are scattered throughout the Water Revitalization Area and include the Village Hall, the Town Hall, churches, emergency rescue services, Skene Manor, the Skenesborough Museum, Riverside Park, and Cooke's Island.

**Skene Manor** is an impressive Gothic style building constructed in 1874 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. It is run as a not-for-profit corporation and is presently under renovation. Tours of the structure and grounds and a gift shop are available year-round. Skene Manor is identified as a recreational resource on [Map 5a, "Recreational, Cultural and Educational Uses."](#)

**Cooke's Island** (presently undeveloped) is considered recreational for the purposes of determining the actual present or planned land use. These places are also depicted as recreational resources on [Map 5a](#).

### **Industry**

- The largest parcel designated Industrial in the Water Revitalization Area is EB Metal Industries off Poultney Street. This business manufactures vending machines.
- Smaller parcels designated industrial are on Mountain Street, off Skenesborough Drive, and the corner of School and West streets
- The building on Mountain Street is currently vacant.
- The parcel off Skenesborough Drive is developed with fuel storage tanks and related structures. The tanks are empty and the parcel is not being actively used and is, in fact, presently for sale.
- The industry on the corner of School and West Streets is Darilee Industries. It produces high-end audio speakers.

### **Public Services**

This category includes, but is not limited to, parcels used in or as a necessary adjunct to the provision of public utility services. Two small parcels in the northwestern corner of the Water Revitalization Area and one parcel on South Williams Street near the railroad are designated public service. These are control buildings for various utilities.

Within the Water Revitalization Area, New York State Canal Corporation lands are categorized as public service. Skenesborough Park is on Canal Corporation land that is being leased to the Town under a 99-year agreement. For the purposes of clarifying actual land use from assessed land use, Skenesborough Park, the entire Champlain Canal, and South Bay included is depicted as a recreational resource on Maps [5a](#) and [5b](#), "Recreational, Cultural and Educational Resources."

### **Agricultural**

There are three parcels representing a total of 128 acres that are actively farmed. All are located near the east shore of South Bay near Route 22. The Village of Whitehall should assess the potential for non-point source pollution to South Bay from agricultural operations in the Waterfront Revitalization Area.

### **Vacant**

Some of the Water Revitalization Area's most significant, attractive and centrally located parcels are vacant, abandoned, or underutilized. The appropriate development and/or occupation of these properties would benefit the landowners, benefit the Village residents, and attract visitors.

Vacant parcels encompass more land area than any other land use. One-third of the Waterfront Revitalization Area is designated vacant. The greatest vacant land

area is near the Elbow. This area, north and west of North Williams and Doig Streets, is within the 100-year floodplain and a State-designated wetland. The land area west of the Narrows is also vacant, within a floodplain and a wetland. There are several vacant parcels of significant size in the southern part of the Waterfront Revitalization Area in the areas near the railroad and Wood Creek. Vacant parcels along the east side of North Williams Street and west and north of Cliff Street are on very steep terrain. Vacant parcels are also interspersed throughout primarily residential areas east and west of the Canal.

The Waterfront Revitalization Area encompasses 150 vacant parcels totaling 226.2 acres. This represents approximately five percent of the Waterfront Revitalization Area. It also encompasses hundreds of structures. Currently, the Village's regulations that ensure that new development, redevelopment, or alterations complement existing development are not enforced to their fullest. The cumulative impact of this neglect may be the loss of the very traits that make Whitehall unique. Maintenance of the Waterfront Revitalization Area's heritage is critical to the Village's chances for renewed prosperity.

Some of the vacant properties are not suitable for intensive development. They may, however, be suitable for development that is non-intrusive and environmentally compatible. Potential uses include education (e.g., environmental, historic) and passive recreation (e.g., nature observation, photography).

There are several vacant parcels that are suitable for development. Any new development should be architecturally compatible and proportioned with regard to adjacent and nearby development. There are many vacant developed and abandoned parcels. Unfortunately, the structural integrity of these buildings is deteriorating. The reasons for each building's demise are different. Factors including absentee landowners, lack of funds, lack of interest, and lack of awareness are to blame. A requirement that presents a seemingly insurmountable obstacle to some is the fact that all renovation and rehabilitation efforts must comply with the State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code. This is oftentimes cost prohibitive and difficult when older structures are concerned.

In terms of land use planning, vacant parcels can be considered in the following ways: undeveloped, abandoned and underutilized. The following definitions are used for the purposes of describing these parcels. Vacant parcels are those parcels that are owned and maintained but not in use. These parcels have been identified via a combination of real property class codes and site visits. There are two types of vacant parcels, undeveloped and developed. Vacant undeveloped parcels have no physical structures or improvements. Vacant developed parcels have physical structures or improvements. Abandoned parcels are developed parcels that appear as if they are no longer maintained. They may be owned and taxes may be paid, but the properties are not being visibly maintained. These have been identified during the course of site visits. Underutilized parcels are developed parcels that are not fully occupied. With two notable exceptions, judgments regarding the current use of the parcels and whether they are the best use for the parcels were not made. These, too, have been identified during the

course of site visits. [Map 6, “Vacant, Abandoned and Underutilized Parcels,”](#) identifies these various parcels.

### **Vacant Undeveloped Parcels**



Vacant undeveloped parcels are scattered throughout the Waterfront Revitalization Area. All of the larger parcels appear to have probable or identified constraints to substantive development. The following list describes the most significant vacant undeveloped parcels.

- **D&H Property.** This 40-acre piece of property is located along the Route 4/22 corridor in the southern part of the Waterfront Revitalization Area. It is an abandoned railroad yard that may have environmental problems. At one time, the Village expressed an interest in purchasing this property contingent on D&H conducting an environmental assessment. To date, D&H has shown little interest in this idea. This property may qualify as a hazardous waste site depending on the outcome of soil testing at the site. For this reason, potential developers of the site may be discouraged. At the same time, it also makes it an important site for the community to clean up. The site may have potential for Brownfields development under the Environmental Bond Act. It is an excellent lot for a significant industrial or commercial business
- **Wood Creek/Mud Brook Parcels.** This description applies to two parcels in the southern part of the Water Revitalization Area that are surrounded by the railroad, the Canal, Wood Creek and Mud Brook. One is 5.8 acres and owned by EB Metal Industries. The other is 8.2 acres and individually owned.
- **The Elbow.** This 106-acre parcel is almost entirely State-designated wetland. It is under private ownership. It is a significant habitat area for birds, fish, beaver and other small mammals. It also has the potential for passive recreational opportunities associated with future planned uses on Cooke’s Island, such as nature observation. The non-navigable part of the elbow can be reserved for canoeing and kayaking.
- **West of Cooke’s Island.** This 22-acre parcel is also almost entirely State-designated wetland. It is a significant habitat area for birds, fish, beaver and other small mammals. It also has the potential for passive recreational opportunities associated with future planned uses on Cooke’s Island, such as

nature observation. The non-navigable part of the elbow can be reserved for canoeing and kayaking.

- **Cooke's Island.** Much of this island is State-designed wetland. In the past and at present, it has been utilized as a site for the disposal of Canal dredging spoils. The elevated area of the Island is largely due to this activity. This material has been tested by the Canal Corporation and found to be non-hazardous.

Cooke's Island is presently privately owned, with active negotiations underway to donate this land to the Village of Whitehall. Whitehall has proposed the site for a recreational area with trails and an interpretive center.

- **North Williams Street Parcels.** There are several vacant parcels fronting North Williams Street. One is split by a Niagara Mohawk right-of-way. With the exception of land close to North Williams Street, steep slopes prevail.
- **Parcel Adjacent to Northern Insuring on Main Street.** This site has no identifiable constraints to development and could be adaptable to virtually any small commercial business. It is strategically located in the central business district. It is also within the National Historic District and future development of the site will have to comply historic preservation laws.

### **Vacant Developed Parcels**

There are several vacant developed parcels in the Water Revitalization Area that have interesting pasts but uncertain futures. The greatest concentration of these is along Main Street north of Saunders Street. This area is within both the National Historic District and the Urban Cultural Park.

- 90 Main Street (Edwards J. Williams Agency, The Bank Building). This is one of the two oldest bank buildings in Whitehall. The third floor has the remains of the Music Hall Theater ticket office of the 1920s. This structure is intended to be a multipurpose building with commercial/office space on the first floor and apartments on the second and third floors. It appears to be in good condition. It faces the Canal and is for sale.
- 48 Main Street (Chase's). This building's triangular shape is unique in Whitehall. Built in 1829, it appears as if a business recently closed. The first floor appears suitable for two businesses while the second and third floors would accommodate residential uses. It overlooks the Canal.





- 42 Main Street (Chase Grocery, Martindale Market Building). This building site is one of the earliest in the Village. The current building was constructed in the 1860s. This three-story structure is adjacent to the triangular-shaped building. The Martindale Market was the most recent commercial use. It appears that the entire building is vacant. It faces the Canal.
- 140 Main Street (Newsroom Building). This building is smaller than many of those around it. Originally a newsroom, it was converted into apartments. It appears vacant. It was built in 1891 at the height of the canal and railroad industries.

### **Abandoned Parcels**

These parcels are located in some of the more important and visible sites in the Water Revitalization Area.

- **Oil Tanks.** This parcel is located at the northeast corner of the Poultney Street/Skenesborough Drive intersection. It fronts the Canal and is immediately adjacent to Skenesborough Park. Thousands of people pass this parcel each day as they travel Route 4. It is located at a principal entrance to Skenesborough Park and the central business district. The property is 1.4 acres in size and is presently for sale. It may represent a potential local opportunity for a Brownfields Redevelopment Program. Because of its past use as a petroleum storage facility, there are likely significant costs related to the clean-up of the property. This property may represent a hazardous waste site.

The Village of Whitehall would ideally like to market this property to a developer for a motel. There is an expressed need for motel rooms in the community and business leaders feel that there are dollars being lost from the

community because there are not enough accommodations. It is also felt that this parcel is at an important crossroads since it is visible from Route 4 and leads right into the downtown area. The fact that the parcel is located next to the Park and the new boat launch is an added benefit.

- **68 Main Street (Anderson Building/Anderson Hall).** This architecturally unique structure has an iron front, mansard roof with a slate face, and round arched windows. It was built in 1862.
- **Williams Street Parcel.** This four-story structure is between Stan's Appliance Store and the Library.
- **Intersection of Skenesborough Drive and Main Street (Flatiron Building).** This is a three-story brick structure opposite the Whitehall Volunteer Fire Company. It contains four apartments. The owner has stopped all work on the building and has been unreceptive to business propositions and Village efforts to communicate.
- **Troy Shirt Company (Mountain Street).** This parcel housed the Troy Shirt Company and the Town garage. It is unused now. Reportedly, it is a contaminated site.
- **Mountain Street (near Potter Terrace).** This 1.3 acre privately-owned parcel consists of a large building that is designated as an apartment building in the tax records. It appears abandoned.
- A two-acre vacant site located just south of the E.B. Metals Facility on Route 4 was classified in 1990 by DEC as a Class 2 site where hazardous waste presents a significant threat to the public health or the environment. A remedial investigation/feasibility study has been conducted to evaluate the alternatives for addressing the significant threats.

### **Underutilized Parcels**

Partially vacant structures abound in the Water Revitalization Area. In most cases upper stories, traditionally used as residences, meeting or entertainment rooms, are empty. The following list identifies some of the more significant examples.

- **EB Metals Industrial Building and Site Route 4.** This industrial site and facility was once a major employer in the Village. The site and building are now underutilized. The site and facility is one of the few large industrial properties and buildings in the Village and its full utilization could have a significant economic impact on the Village.
- **Chamber of Commerce Parcel.** The Whitehall Chamber of Commerce is located on Route 4/22 at the southern end of the Water Revitalization Area. This is a large parcel, 7.3 acres, which is occupied only by the prefabricated building.

- **Island Parcel, Poultney Street.** This parcel is one of two parcels on the island located at the confluence of Wood Creek and the Canal. It is likely State-owned. The only structure is a residential structure fronting Poultney Street. The balance of the parcel is unused. The Village is considering the possibility of linking the recreational fields to the parcel via pedestrian bridge so that it can be utilized for public access to the water.
- **6-8 North Williams Street (Times Scoop Ice Cream Parlor).** This structure is adjacent to the Village Hall. Its back is on the Canal. The lower level facing the Canal is the Times Scoop Ice Cream Parlor. The street level is a mercantile and the level above this is used for storage.
- **44 Main Street (The Barber Shop).** It appears that the first floor is vacant and the upper stories house occupied apartments. It was built in the 1880s. It overlooks the Canal.
- **58 Main Street (most recently Howie's Bar & Grill).** This building has been home to a bank, used furniture store and grill. It was built in the 1860s. Unlike other underutilized buildings in the Water Revitalization Area, this building's first floor is vacant while the upper story apartments are occupied. The owner has plans to renovate. It overlooks the Canal.
- **114-116 Main Street (Montgomery Ward/Renois Building).** This structure is on the northwest corner of Main Street and Saunders Street. It was built in the late 1860s and has housed a variety of uses. Today, Jami's Impressions, a retail operation, is on the first floor. The second floor is an occupied apartment. The third floor is being converted to an apartment. It is in the heart of the central business district and overlooks the Canal.
- **118 Main Street (Gray Building).** Originally a meat market, this 1908 structure now houses a laundromat on the first floor. The upper floors appear vacant. It overlooks the Canal.
- **122 Main Street (Pippo's Hardware).** This building is just south of the Main Street/Saunders Street intersection. It is currently across the street from Riverside Park. When built in 1877-1878, it was across the street from the original barge canal. Its bricks come from local brickyards. The first story is vacant and the third story appears vacant.
- **144 Main Street (Burns Insurance Agency).** This building was built in 1910, after the other buildings in this row. It was originally a drugstore. It appears that the upper story apartments are vacant. It is across the street from Riverside Park.

## **Conclusions**

*The Urban Cultural Park Plan of Whitehall, NY and the Whitehall Village Urban Cultural Park Management Plan* stress the importance of the area's image. The Waterfront Revitalization Area's appearance – its pattern of development and

architecture – is key to its economic revitalization. Key questions regarding revitalization and land use planning include:

- What are the overall goals for the Water Revitalization Area?
- How do you involve the property owners?
- How do you involve local financial institutions?
- How can the Village and property owners coordinate efforts so everyone benefits?
- What are suitable uses for these parcels?
- What, if anything, needs to be done to ready these parcels for identified uses?
- How do you market the parcels to potential users?
- What type of funding is available to assist in the process?

Village residents are already addressing some of these questions. A universal fondness for structures in the downtown was the impetus of creating the Village’s “Façade” program that offers grants for eligible building owners who can afford to contribute the required matching funds. All allocated funds in the amount of \$25,000 are presently committed. Individual awards are in the amount of \$3,000 and funds are intended to provide substantial improvement to the outside appearance of individual buildings. A problem with this program is that many building owners simply cannot come up with the matching funds and, therefore, cannot qualify for the program.

In order to preserve these facades and structures, an aggressive approach is necessary. Public/private partnerships; relationships with local and regional financial institutions; coordination with regional, State and Federal agencies; and, grant programs are examples. An example of a potential approach for several of the properties (D&H Railroad parcel and the abandoned Tank Farm) is to designate them as Brownfield Redevelopment sites. New York’s Brownfields Opportunity Areas Program offers grants to eligible communities to rehabilitate properties that have long been abandoned due to concerns over environmental contamination.

## **F. Zoning and Land Use Controls**

The Village of Whitehall adopted a Historic Preservation Local Law in 1985. The law designates the Historic District boundary and provides guidelines for the review of applications for minor and major alterations, demolition, new construction and signage in the district. The Village of Whitehall Zoning Regulations were adopted in 1996. Zoning districts include the following classifications: Residential Class A, Residential Class B, Commercial, Light Industrial, Planned Residential Development, Recreational Park, View Shed, and Wet Lands. These zoning districts closely follow existing land use and are depicted on Maps [7a](#) and [7b](#), “Zoning Map.”

The current zoning regulations may not be flexible enough to accommodate the kind of creative redevelopment needed to revitalize the downtown area. The regulations for historic preservation should also be reviewed so that the best opportunities can be realized without sacrificing the buildings themselves.

Specifically, this means creating allowances for appropriate mixed uses through zoning.

There are also situations where buildings are being substantially underutilized. Vacancy is often due to the fact that these buildings cannot meet new building and safety codes. It can also be simply due to the lack of demand for the kind of space offered. These buildings should be inventoried and assessed for their potential for reuse. A marketing strategy can then be developed to fill underutilized space.

Other than special permit uses, uses do not require site plan review. The Village of Whitehall will consider site plan review provisions for vacant, abandoned and underutilized parcels. And, application of architectural guidelines or standards to jurisdictional projects is also desirable.

### **Zoning in the Waterfront Revitalization Area**

Most of the lands adjacent to the Champlain Canal are locally zoned as Recreation/Park. The Village of Whitehall Historic Preservation Law governs this district. This law does not restrict the kinds of activities and structures that can be constructed, only that activities be consistent with the regulations and spirit of this law.

The remainder of the Canal section is zoned Commercial with the exception of a small Residential B section just to the north of Cooke's Island. The Commercial District allows for offices, banks, eating and drinking establishments, research laboratories, theaters, motor vehicle sales, stations and garages, retail stores, commercial recreation, hotels and motels, churches and schools, and convenience stores. Since the entire canal side Commercial district is also in the Historic District, it is also subject to the regulations contained in the Village of Whitehall Preservation Local Law. The Residential B District allows single family and two family residences. Under special permit conditions, certain other miscellaneous uses are allowed.

The lands along the entire South Bay shoreline are zoned View Shed. The View Shed District allows single family dwellings, general farming, nursery, and timber cutting and other forestry operations.

The Canal itself and Lake Champlain's South Bay are zoned Wet Land. The Wet Lands District permits only boating facilities, such as dock structures. There are no local regulations regarding the size, number or placement of docks. Any construction in the Canal requires a permit from the Army Corps of Engineers and/or the NYS Canal corporation.

## **G. Development Trends**

There have been few new structures erected in the Village in the 1990s. Data from the Washington County Department of Code Enforcement identify twelve new residential structures (including manufactured homes), three new commercial structures and three new industrial structures in the years 1991-

1998. Numerous permits were issued for miscellaneous work including storage facilities and pools. Permits for additions and alterations far outnumber permits for new construction. Most of these permits were for residential work. Visually, the greatest change has occurred along Routes 4 and 22 near the Village/Town line. At a time, not too long ago, the Grand Union was the only commercial enterprise along this segment of road. Now, a variety of franchise businesses occupy the roadside.

## **H. Significant Economic Activities**

Tourism has become more of a central focus for Whitehall since other industries over time have failed or had less presence in the community. The opportunity is strong considering the proximity of the Village to Lake George and the Adirondacks, the State's efforts to revitalize the canal, and the ever increasing numbers of people who make the Route 22/ Route 4 corridor to travel into Vermont. An effort to establish a realistic tourism strategy for the Village is underway and has been coined "Gateway Partnership". This effort was funded through Washington County and the Lake Champlain Byways Program. The Whitehall Chamber of Commerce and the Downtown Business Association are working on this effort with a consultant to define an economic strategy for the Village and county as a whole. This facet focuses on tourism and marketing.

The project is yielding a series of ideas for community and economic development planning, promotion and marketing, and cultural and aesthetic development. The next community challenge will be implementing these ideas in a logical sequence, locating creative funding mechanisms, and working together as a cohesive whole.

Whitehall's designation as a National Historic District and Urban Cultural Park are valuable for both tangible and intangible reasons. The intangible reasons relate to history, respect for family roots, scenic beauty, and one-of-a-kind character. The tangible reasons are the structures and sites themselves and the dollars that they can generate.

As set forth in the Urban Cultural Park Plan, rather than to change the character of the Village, or to restore or rebuild something that no longer exists, Whitehall's Urban Cultural Park Plan is designed to protect, revitalize and promote the valuable historic assets upon which the community's vitality depends. At the same time, the Plan will benefit the State of New York by encouraging visitors to spend time and money in this unique upstate community (page 2).

These designations and all that they symbolize are principal drawing cards for tourism development. The Urban Cultural Park Plan still guides the Village in its efforts to enhance the community.

### **Major Employers**

The Whitehall economy depends on more than tourism. Its residents are involved in many sectors of the economy. Major employers for Whitehall residents

include: General Electric (Rutland), International Paper Company, Great Meadow Correctional Facility, CP Rail, COT Plywood and local schools.

Close to 30% of those employed work for the local, State or Federal government. Almost half of these are State employees. Public sector employers include the Washington Correctional Facility at Comstock, Washington County, and area schools. Two-thirds of those employed are private for-profit wage and salary workers. Larger “local” private sector employers include General Electric, Irving Tissue, Decora, EB Industries, C.O.T. Plywood, and Darilee.

The prevalence of manufacturing companies is reflected in 1990 Census employment by industry figures. Thirty percent of those employed are employed in the manufacturing industry (including durable and non-durable goods). Twenty percent of those employed are in professional and related services such as health and education. Approximately sixteen percent of those employed work in retail and wholesale trade. Almost all of these are in retail trade.

The Washington County Local Development Corporation is very active in the Village of Whitehall. It has assisted several local businesses in their development efforts via three revolving loan funds and a micro-enterprise program.

## **I. Historic/Archaeological Resources**

[Map 8, “Historic/Archaeological Resources,”](#) identifies the Waterfront Revitalization Area’s historic and archaeological resources. The paragraphs below describe them.

### **Main Street National Historic District**

The Main Street National Historic District originally encompassed thirty-seven buildings along both sides of the Canal. Fire and demolition over the years eliminated six of these buildings. Specifically, the district extends along Main Street and North Williams Street between Poultney Street and Saunders Street. Its location stems from the influences of water power and transportation. It was close to the early Canal and easily served the people who lived and worked on the Canal. This location is alongside the north-south continental route that predates the French and Indian War.

The District is three blocks in area. The buildings, built between 1860 and 1908, are mainly three-story and brick. Most of the brick came from two local brickyards. Originally, the buildings housed businesses on the first floor. Some businesses utilized the upper floors for residences. Others utilized them for meeting halls, entertainment rooms, or drill areas.

Many of the buildings were designed and/or built by A.P. Hopson between the years 1862 and 1892. His buildings often exhibit decorative brickwork.

### **Local Historic District**

This district's boundaries are the same as those of the Urban Cultural Park. The themes of defense and transportation are exhibited in this area's development patterns and architecture. Many projects within this district are subject to the provisions of the Village's Historic Preservation Law.

### **Champlain Canal – National Register of Archaeological Sites, Historic Structures**

The Champlain Canal, in and of itself, is a historic resource. Originally built in 1819, the Canal was used to ship many products including wood, wool, iron ore, yellow ochre, ice, potatoes, marble, and eels. The Canal was improved and lengthened in 1832 and relocated in 1912. The earlier Canal, now beneath Riverside Park, Skenesborough Park, and Skenesborough Drive, is on the National Register of Archaeological Sites. Most, if not all, of the bridge abutments, stream receivers and waste gates along the Canal date from the period 1823-1895 and are designated historic structures.

### **Skene Manor – National Register of Historic Places**

Skene Manor, built in 1874-1875, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. Its location 200 feet above the Village affords a spectacular view of the Village, the Canal, and the Adirondack Mountains. The Manor was home to State Supreme Court Judge Joseph H. Potter (1821-1902). Following multiple owners and multiple uses e.g., residences and restaurants, a group of residents formed a non-profit organization and purchased the building in 1995. The group sponsors tours and operates a tea room and gift shop to raise funds to restore the building to its original condition.

### **United States Post Office – National Register of Historic Places**

The post office, built in 1936, was put on the National Register of Historic Places in 1989.

### **Skuttled Boats in East Bay**

East Bay is home to remnants of three galleys from the War of 1812. In 1815, six galleys were intentionally sunk in an effort to preserve them. Of the six, one (either the *Confiance* or *Saratoga*) was later blown up and two (the *Linnett* and the *USS Ticonderoga*) were raised. The remnants of the *USS Ticonderoga*, which was raised in 1958, are on display in Skenesborough Park. The waters of the area may also be home to remnants of row galleys from the Revolutionary War. More specifically, during efforts to relocate the Canal, remnants of the *Gates*, *Revenge* and *Enterprize* were spotted.





### **War of the Rebellion Cannon**

The citizens of Whitehall erected this cannon atop Skene Mountain in 1898 as a memorial to those who fought in the Civil War.

### **Unlisted Historic Sites**

Buildings and sites that are historic but not on the National Register include:

- Skenesborough Museum: This building, built in 1917, originally served as a canal terminal building.
- Finch & Chubb Restaurant: The stone portion of this structure served as an ammunition warehouse during the War of 1812. During Prohibition, it served as smugglers' base of operations.
- Other structures: Numerous other structures in the Water Revitalization Area date back to the mid and late nineteenth centuries. The structure located at 18 Division Street ( The Café) is deemed eligible for listing on the National Register.

The existence and importance of the Water Revitalization Area's historic and archaeological resources are well documented. Many of them have received State and national recognition. Structure inventory forms, nomination forms, Urban Cultural Park plans, Canal projects, historic brochures, etc. are testimony to the public sector's awareness and appreciation of these irreplaceable resources.

There are two principal concerns. The first is that many of these historic resources are deteriorating. Many private property owners lack the funds or interest to maintain or enhance their properties and structures. Any significant repairs or renovations must comply with the State Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code. The cost of this can be prohibitive.

One possible reason for owners' lack of funds is lack of tenants/business. If properties are not generating income, it is difficult to pay taxes and maintain

properties. In the case of Skene Manor, a non-profit group was formed to work towards its preservation. Perhaps this is a model for other properties or areas in the community.

The first concern leads to the second concern, attracting visitors. Will visitors come if storefronts are vacant and facades are in disrepair? Will businesses open if there are too few visitors? These concerns are cyclical – like the chicken and egg puzzle. Which comes first?

Historic tourism is a growing segment of the tourism industry. Whitehall has a plethora of historic resources. In addition, the Canal has experienced increased tourism in recent years. Whitehall must tap into this market.

## **J. Natural Resources**

### **Water**



The surface water resources described in this section are identified in Maps 9a and 9b, “Water Resources.” The Champlain Canal is one of the Village’s more prominent visual features and its most prominent water feature. Opened in 1819, the Canal links the Hudson River and Lake Champlain. The Canal’s original purpose was to transport goods, including wood, iron ore and marble

from points north to point’s south. Today, the Canal is principally used for tourism and recreation purposes.

In Whitehall, the Champlain Canal is designated Class C water. According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), the best usage of Class C waters is fishing. Class C waters shall also be suitable for fish propagation and survival, and primary and secondary contact recreation although other factors may limit the use for these purposes (NYCRR, Part 701).

The Canal connects to Lake Champlain at Lock 12 in the heart of the Village. Just north of the Lock is Cooke’s Island. The section of water west of Cooke’s Island is called the Narrows. North and east of Cooke’s Island is East Bay. East Bay is a Class B water. Class B waters’ best usage’s are primary and secondary contact recreation. Class B waters shall be suitable for fish propagation and survival (NYCRR, Part 701). The Poultney River empties into East Bay in this area. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation reports

that most all of exotic species in Lake Champlain have been introduced through the Champlain Canal.

The Canal continues northwest towards the head of Lake Champlain. The Waterfront Revitalization Area follows the Village boundary along the Canal and then drops sharply south under the railroad bridge into South Bay. South Bay is the southernmost part of Lake Champlain. South Bay is primarily used for fishing but access to South Bay from the Canal is limited by the existing low railroad bridge which has a maximum height limit of 11 feet. Trailered boats have unlimited access due to the South Bay State Boat Launch on the north side of the Route 22 bridge. South Bay is a Class B water body suitable for contact recreation purposes. Water depth in the channel is about 15 feet and is approximately 20 feet at its deepest point.

Fishing is notoriously good in South Bay. The winter catch is typically crappies (strawberry bass) and white perch. Bullheads are the most commonly caught fish in the spring, walleye in May, and bass during the summer. There is no fish stocking in South Bay. The walleye catch has reportedly significantly reduced in recent years. DEC recognizes this fact, but is unsure of the specific reasons for the decline. Overfishing is not a suspected reason.

The non-native aquatic plant known as water chestnut (*Trapa natans* L.) is known to exist in several sections of South Bay. The water chestnut is an aggressive plant that has the ability to quickly out compete native vegetation. The result can be reduced oxygen levels and reduced access for boaters. The State of Vermont has an active mechanical control program to stop the spread of water chestnut in Lake Champlain. Since the primary way it is spread to other waterways is through hitchhiking to motorboat propellers, boaters are urged to clean their boats and trailers before leaving the area. The South Bay State Boat Launch does not have a boat wash facility, a known tool to manage invasive species.

Wood Creek meanders through the southern part of the Waterfront Revitalization Area and empties into the Canal. Its course and character were significantly impacted by the construction of the Champlain Canal. Wood Creek is a Class C water resource.

Mud Brook is another significant surface water resource in the defined Waterfront Revitalization Area. Its source is just east of the Village boundary. It empties into Wood Creek west of CR12 at the Village's southern boundary. Mud Brook is a Class D surface water. Class D waters' best usage is fishing. For one or more reasons, these waters do not support fish propagation. They shall, however, be suitable for fish survival (NYCRR, Part 701).

There are several unnamed streams that begin west of the Waterfront Revitalization Area, pass through the Village and abruptly end.

## **Geology, Soils and Topography**

The Village of Whitehall is at the junction of two physiographic areas, the Adirondack Mountains and the Hudson-Champlain Lowland.

Pre-Cambrian crystalline rocks known as the Grenville series underlie the Adirondack Mountains. The topography tends to follow a northeast-southwest line reflecting a series of faults that divides the Adirondack area into blocks that tilt downward to the northwest. Bedrock is frequently exposed and the soils are generally thin and of poor quality. The Hudson-Champlain Lowland is a broad depression that stems from the erosion of soft shale and limestone from the early Paleozoic Age. The Hudson-Champlain Lowland area is separated from the Adirondack Mountains by major high angle faults.

The Water Revitalization Area encompasses four soil associations:

1. The Vergennes-Kingsbury Association
2. The Farmington-Rock Outcrop Association
3. The Teel-Hamlin Association
4. The Saprists, Aquepts, and Aquepts Association

The Vergennes-Kingsbury Association-Formed in Glaciolacustrine sediments on lake plains and valleys and association occurs along the Route 4/22 corridor. Soils are deep, moderately well-drained and somewhat poorly drained, moderately textured and fine textured soils formed in calcareous lake or estuarine deposits high clay content.

Soils in this association include Vergennes silty clay loam, Kingsbury silty clay, Covington silty clay loam, and Orthents and Psammments. The Vergennes soils extend from just east of the Route 4/22 corridor to the western boundary of the Waterfront Revitalization Area. Limitations for development of homes, small to moderate scale commercial and industrial developments, and local roads/streets range from moderate to severe because of slope and shrink/swell potential. The Kingsbury silty clay soil occurs in a small area between the Route 4/22 corridor and the railroad at the southern end of the Waterfront Revitalization Area. This soil also presents moderate to severe limitations to development due to poor drainage and shrink/swell potential. The Covington silty clay loam also encompasses a small area, just north of the Kingsbury soil. Covington soil is poorly drained and presents severe constraints to development. Orthents and Psammments extend in a north-south line with the railroad corridor – site of the abandoned canal. They consist mostly of material dredged from the Barge Canal. The material is a variable mixture of dominantly fine gravel and sand and some silt and clay. The site-to-site variability of this mixture is so great that generalizations regarding development potential cannot be made.

The Farmington-Rock Outcrop Association-dominantly shallow soils formed in glacial till over bedrock on uplands. This association occurs in a relatively small area in the vicinity of Skene Mountain. It entails shallow, well-drained, medium textured soils formed in glacial till; and rock outcrop. The Farmington Rock

Outcrop Association presents severe limitations to development in Whitehall because of its slope and shallow depth to bedrock.

The Teel-Hamlin Association-deep soils formed in recent alluvium on floodplains. This association extends along both sides of the Canal and Wood Creek. These soils are deep, somewhat poorly drained through well-drained medium-textured soils formed in recent alluvium high in silt and very fine sand.

This association consists of several soils including Saco silt loam; Saprists, Aqupets and Aquents; Limerick silt loam; and Teel silt loam. Some Vergennes silty clay loam and Farmington Rock Outcrop Association are also present. The Saco silt loam occurs in pockets between the Canal and Wood Creek. This soil experiences frequent flooding and is very poorly drained. Saprists, Aqupets and Aquents are in this same area but immediately adjacent to Wood Creek south of the railroad. These are low-lying level deposits of organic and mineral soil material. They are ponded with shallow water most of the year and, therefore, present severe limitations to development. Limerick silt loam is present in the area between the Canal and Wood Creek south of Route 4 and in the area between the Canal/Wood Creek and South/North Williams Street. This soil has severe limitations to development due to frequent flooding and poor drainage. The Teel silt loam, present between the Canal and Wood Creek, has severe limitations to development because of its susceptibility to flooding. The Vergennes silty clay loam and the Farmington Rock Outcrop Association, described above, occur along and east of North Williams Street.

The Saprists, Aqupets, and Aquents Association – soils formed in organic deposits and Saprists, Aqupets, and Aquents: This association is present on Cooke's Island and in the land area east and west of Cooke's Island abutting East Bay. These soils occur in low-lying areas ponded with shallow water.

In these areas Fluvaquents; Hollis-Charlton Association; and, Saprists, Aqupets and Aquents are present. Fluvaquents occur on the northern part of Cooke's Island. These are recent, unconsolidated deposits of alluvial material on floodplains that are frequently flooded, generally wet, and subject to frequent changes through overflow. Development limitations are severe because of flooding and poor drainage. The Washington County soils map indicates that soils associated with the Hollis-Charlton Association occur on the southern portion of Cooke's Island and on a small section of the northern portion of the Island. It is found on mountainsides in the Adirondacks. Its shallow depth to bedrock and slope determine its severe limitations to development designation. Saprists, Aqupets and Aquents, described earlier, encompass the area known as the Elbow.

Soils on the east side of South Bay are generally thin. The primary soil type is Saprists, Aqupets and Aquents along the south side of the railroad tracks, and Fluvaquents between the tracks and the Canal. Just south of this area is a group of Vergennes and Kingsbury silty clay soils on gently sloping lands. These soil patterns intermittently repeat to the 300 feet contour. Hollis-Charlton association of soils appears on the steeper slopes along with Hollis-Rock outcrop association. Hollis soils are generally shallow, excessively drained, and mainly

medium textured. The primary limiting factors to these soils are their forested rocky slopes.

Topography within the Waterfront Revitalization Area varies significantly. Elevations range from 100 feet at Lake Champlain to 564 feet at the peak of Skene Mountain (USGS Whitehall Quad). The land is level in the immediate vicinity of the Canal and gently slopes upward west of the Canal. East of the Canal much of the land is level with some upward sloping in an easterly direction. The slope of Skene Mountain, however, rises steeply from North Williams Street, adjacent to the east bank of the Canal. Topography along the eastern shore of South Bay ranges from approximately 95 feet at the shoreline to 300 feet at the eastern boundary. Refer to Maps 10a and 10b, "Topography."

A hazardous waste site exists within 500 feet of the Champlain Canal. The Poultney Street Inactive Hazardous Waste Disposal Site (ID#558019) requires remediation, including excavation and removal of contaminated sub-surface soils, groundwater monitoring, and institutional controls.

### **Wetlands**

The defined Water Revitalization Area contains all or part of two State-designated wetlands. These are illustrated on Maps 9a and 9b, "Water Resources". Wetland WH-2 encompasses three areas: (1) a significant portion of Cooke's Island; (2) the area between the railroad and the Narrows from a point approximately 300 feet north of Bellamy Street to Railroad Avenue; and (3) the area between the railroad and Route 22 from a point approximately 300 feet north of Bellamy Street to a point approximately 500 feet south of the Niagara Mohawk right-of-way. This is a Class I wetland.<sup>1</sup> It is approximately 70 acres.

Wetland WH-3 is approximately 110 acres and encompasses the area bounded by East Bay to the north, CR10 to the east, CR9 to the south, and, Lake Champlain to the west. It is also a Class I wetland.

The lower 1.5 miles of South Bay is designated as a deep-water marsh, which has been identified as an extremely complex and valuable marsh complex with excellent native species diversity. The area is threatened with several highly concentrated zone of the invasive exotic known as the water chestnut.

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<sup>1</sup> A Class I wetland possesses any of the following seven characteristics:

1. It is a classic kettlehole bog;
2. It is resident habitat of an endangered or threatened animal species;
3. It contains an endangered or threatened plant species;
4. It supports an animal species in abundance or diversity unusual for the State or for the major region of the State in which it is found;
5. It is tributary to a body of water which could subject a substantially developed area to significant damage from flooding or from additional flooding should the wetland be modified, filled or drained;
6. It is adjacent or contiguous to a reservoir or other body of water that is used primarily for public water supply, or it is hydraulically connected to an aquifer which is used for public water supply; or
7. It contains four or more of the enumerated Class II characteristics. The department (NYSDEC) may, however, determine that some of the characteristics are duplicative of each other, therefore do not indicate enhanced benefits, and so do not warrant class I classification.

No significant threats to existing natural resources have been identified. Wetlands perform a variety of important ecological functions related to flood control, water quality, and plant and wildlife survival. If permitted and designed properly, wetlands can be used for environmental education or other passive uses. Their many ecological functions, their beauty, and their unique species can be identified and interpreted in an interesting and environmentally sound manner.

### **Floodplains**

Within the Water Revitalization Area, there are flood hazard areas (100-year floodplains) associated with the Champlain Canal, Wood Creek, Mud Brook, and East Bay and South Bay of Lake Champlain. There is also a floodplain associated with an unnamed stream that flows through the area near Second and Third Avenues. These floodplains overlay a relatively small area of developed land. Waterfront Revitalization Area flooding occurred as recently as 1984 and 1977. Photographs of the flooding are on display at the Skenesborough Museum. The floodplains are depicted in Maps [9a](#) and [9b](#).

### **Vegetation and Wildlife**

Whitehall, which is part of the southern Lake Champlain valley, is home to numerous species of plants and animals. Several of these species, and the communities they inhabit, warrant special consideration.

Generally, species are those that are compatible with and adaptable to the habitats found: village, wetland, wooded, and rock outcrop. Vertebrate species that may be found in the area are listed in Appendix A.

The New York Natural Heritage Program identifies three rare communities and four threatened or rare plant species in the Waterfront Revitalization Area. The communities are described as deep emergent marsh, floodplain forest, and limestone woodland. The plant species are identified as the Canadian single-spike hedge, wiry panic grass, button-bush dodder, and downy lettuce. The locations of these communities and plant species is sensitive information and not available to the general public. Detailed information is on file in the Village Hall.

The Waterfront Revitalization Area includes significant natural communities and significant plant species. Due to the sensitive nature of this information, the Natural Heritage Program prohibits its release to the public. Their presence, and efforts to maintain if not enhance their presence, should be an integral component of project planning and development. The Southern Lake Champlain Valley as a whole has relatively intact systems and habitats. The Nature Conservancy has designated it a Last Great Place. The presence of water chestnut in South Bay places this area at risk for further loss of native aquatic vegetation. A specific long-range plan for its control should be developed.

Several invasive species of real concern are present within the Waterfront Revitalization Area – the zebra mussel, water chestnut and Eurasian water milfoil. Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) travel from one place to another

in the ballast or on the hulls of boats. Once present, they multiply rapidly. They impact water supplies, recreational and navigational boating, and recreation. Within the Waterfront Revitalization Area, their greatest impact is boating-related. The mussels can increase drag, reduce speed and increase fuel consumption of boats. Zebra mussels attach themselves to virtually any solid surface not protected by antifoulant paints. Zebra mussels can be transported in live wells, bilge water, marine toilets, water trapped in trailer frames and safety light compartments, inside the boat's decking, and in the engine's cooling water. Colonies of mussels on navigational aids may cause the devices to sink under the weight of the mussels. A build-up of mussels on docks and pilings can make it difficult for boaters to dock their vessels. The waste from the mussels can also accelerate the decay of docks and pilings. Lastly, mussel colonies can also negatively affect the operation of locks.

The water chestnut grows in the more shallow water of the Waterfront Revitalization Area. If allowed to spread, the plant may become tangled in boat engines utilizing the Canal and South Bay. The plant can be mechanically harvested before the fruits are dropped in the late summer or fall. This technique is presently being utilized to prevent the northward advancement of water chestnut in Lake Champlain. Since 1994, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation has been managing the control program, concentrating their efforts on containment along the northern edge of the water chestnut spread. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is initiating a program concentrating their efforts in South Bay. The Nature Conservancy considers South Bay and its environs to contain one of the two most diverse emergent marshes in New York State. The Conservancy, therefore, considers it a high priority for focusing its attention on the protection of native species and has formed a "Exotics SWAT Team" where volunteers can search for new infestations of invasive exotic species. The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation has a similar public awareness program called the "Milfoil and Chestnut Watchers Program." Eurasian water milfoil is also present in South Bay and may be already impacting the passage of boats. Sea lampreys may be present in South Bay, likely using the Mettawee River for spawning purposes.

A fisheries survey conducted in 1983 by Malcom Pirnie found the following species between Locks 11 and 12:

- Gar pike
- Redhorse sucker
- Silvery minnow
- Smallmouth bass
- Walleye
- Black bullhead
- Bluegill
- Brown bullhead
- Carp
- Freshwater drum



A fisheries expert from NYSDEC believes there may also be northern pickerel and rockbass. These waters are too warm to support trout or salmon populations.

Fishing in South Bay is notoriously good. The winter catch is typically crappies (strawberry bass) and white perch. Bullheads are the most commonly caught fish in the spring, walleye in May, and bass during the summer. There is no fish stocking in South Bay. The walleye catch has reportedly significantly reduced in recent years. DEC recognizes this fact but is unsure of the specific reasons for the decline. Overfishing is not a suspected reason.

### **Scenic Resources**

There are several locally important scenic resources in the Waterfront Revitalization Area. These views and their individual components are part of what make Whitehall unique. Scenic resources are not specifically regulated in the Village of Whitehall Zoning Regulations; however, the Historic Preservation Local Law does provide design guidelines for exterior architectural features in the Historic District. Identified locally important scenic resources are:



- View of the Canal and surrounding area from the driveway in front of Skene Manor;
- View of the Village from the Canal when approaching from the south;
- View of Lock 12 from Saunders Street bridge;
- View of the Canal, looking south, from behind the Whitehall Firehouse;
- Views from within the Historic District;
- View of the Canal and surrounding landscape along the northern route to South Bay and all points north and
- View of South Bay and the surrounding mountainsides looking both north and south.



These views are identified in Maps [11a](#) and [11b](#), “Scenic Resources.” The preservation and enhancement of identified scenic views, their components, and their viewing locations are critical to the successful implementation of this program. Coordination and communication with public agencies and landowners, local planning laws and regulations, and property/structural maintenance all have a role in the long term protection of these resources.

**K. Transportation**

**Roads**

The Village of Whitehall is 20-25 miles from I-87, the Adirondack Northway. The primary routes through the defined Waterfront Revitalization Area are Routes 4 and 22. Route 4 begins southeast of Albany in the Town of East Greenbush, Rensselaer County. It proceeds northward through the City of Troy. Near the City’s northern boundary, the route crosses the Hudson River into the Village of Waterford in Saratoga County. It then passes through the City of Mechanicville, the Village of Stillwater, the Saratoga National Historic Park, the Villages of Victory and Schuylerville before crossing the Hudson River eastward into the Town of Greenwich, Washington County. Continuing northward, Route 4 passes through the Villages of Fort Edward, Hudson Falls, and Fort Ann before arriving in the Village of Whitehall. At Whitehall, the road veers eastward and crosses into Vermont, eventually going to Rutland and points beyond. The traffic counts for Route 4 segments in Whitehall are provided in Tables 4 and 5.



*Table 4*

*Traffic Counts - US Route 4*

*Village of Whitehall Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts*

<i>Segment</i>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1989</b>
Route 4/22 Overlap	8,150	na	7,900*	7,850	7,800	8,650	na
Overlap to VT line	na	6,700	6,650	6,500	na	4,850	7,950

\* Estimated Figure – not actual count

*Source: New York State Department of Transportation*

Counts for the Route 4/22 overlap increased 4.5% between 1993 and 1997. This follows a decrease between 1991 and 1993. In 1997, the average annual daily traffic count was 8,150. Traffic counts for the segment that extends from the overlap to the Vermont line decreased significantly (39%) between 1989 and 1991, then increased 38.1%, to 6,700, in 1996.

Route 22 enters New York's Rensselaer County from Massachusetts. It travels northward near the western borders of Massachusetts and Vermont. It passes through the Village of Hoosick Falls before entering Washington County. The road continues northward through the Villages of Cambridge, Salem and Granville before veering west to merge with Route 4 at Comstock. Route 22 then travels north through Whitehall crosses South Bay and continues northward through Washington, Essex and Clinton Counties. On its way, it passes through Ticonderoga, Port Henry, Westport, Essex, Willsboro, Keeseville and Plattsburgh. It reaches the Canadian border. Traffic counts for Whitehall segments are provided in Table 5.

*Table 5*

*Traffic Counts - State Route 22*

*Village of Whitehall Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts*

<i>Segment</i>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1986</b>
Route 4/22 Overlap	8,150	na	7,900*	7,850	7,800	8,650	na
Overlap to CR6 (Dresden)	na	3,400	3,750*	na	3,550	3,450	2,500

\* Estimated Figure. Source: New York State Department of Transportation

Overlap figures are the same as in the previous table. Counts for the road segment north of the overlap increased from 2,500 to 3,750 (estimate) in the early 1990s. Then, the count decreased, by 9.3%, to 3,400 in 1996.

Road conditions for the State routes in the Waterfront Revitalization Area can be described as good. All roads in the Waterfront Revitalization Area except Route 22 are Village roadways owned and maintained by the Village. Route 22 is owned and maintained by the State of New York.

Where same-year traffic count data are available for Route 4 and Route 22, figures indicate that the majority of travelers are coming from or going to Vermont as opposed to coming from or going to northern New York. Most travelers, therefore, do not see Broadway north of Poultney Street. Most travelers miss the heart of Whitehall. A new signage program is being "tested" in Whitehall. Several signs identifying local amenities and services are strategically located along major travel corridors. Perhaps this will persuade some would-be thru-travelers or fast food consumers to visit the central business district.

## Water

Whitehall's relationship with water is as old as the Village itself. Trade routes in the mid 1700s included Lake Champlain, and Wood Creek.

During the Revolutionary War, vessels were constructed in the harbor. Whitehall became a port in 1806. In 1819, the Champlain Division of the New York State Barge Canal commenced operation to Fort Edward. By 1824, it extended to Waterford. Products including wood, iron ore, hay, potatoes, wool, and marble were shipped through Whitehall, on their way south as far as New York City.

Use of the Canal for commercial purposes decreased with the arrival of the railroad. Today, the Canal serves oil barges and pleasure boaters. Lock 12, the Canal's northernmost lock, allows boaters to enter/exit Lake Champlain.

The New York State Canal Corporation (NYSCC) maintains boat counts for each lock in the State Canal System. Data for the years 1996, 1997, and 1998 point to increasing pleasure and commercial vessel traffic passing through Lock 12. In 1999, commercial traffic increased substantially while traffic from pleasure boats fell back slightly to the 1997 level. Table 6 displays this data.



*Table 6*

*Pleasure and Commercial Vessel Traffic  
Lock 12 (1996-1999)*

	<b>1999</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1996</b>
<i>Pleasure vessels</i>	2,081	2,254	2,095	1,722
<i>Commercial vessels</i>	351	203	195	183
<i>Totals</i>	2,432	2,457	2,290	1,905

*Source: New York State Canal Corporation*

Pleasure boating is the predominant use of the Champlain Canal. Traffic has increased, but with smaller rates of increase each year. Of the locks north of Lock 6 (Fort Miller), Lock 12 has recently been the busiest.

As a point of entry, the waterways are just as important as the roadways. In one respect, the waterways are more important. Boaters cannot bypass the heart of Whitehall. They have no choice but to pass through the central business district. The challenge before the Village is to entice the travelers to tie-up their boats and spend time and money in Village businesses.

## **Rail**

The Village of Whitehall is also steeped in rail-related history. The Saratoga and Rensselaer Railroad came to Whitehall in 1848. The Lake Station, built in 1850 just north of the Village, functioned as a transfer point to Champlain steamships. Following the cessation of daily steamship service, the New York and Canada Railroad Company built a line to the Adirondack Mountains. The Rutland & Washington rail line went east from Whitehall to Vermont.

A D& H station was built on Broadway in 1892. This station operated through the early to mid 1990s when a new station was built on Main Street.

Rail represented the Village's largest industry for decades. At the industry's height, 76 trains departed Whitehall each day. Present day service is primarily freight. Amtrak's Adirondacker passenger train stops in Whitehall two times per day. One stop is northbound and one stop is southbound. Amtrak's Ethan Allen Express operates daily service between Rutland, VT, Albany and New York City, with connecting service to Washington, D.C. This train does not stop in Whitehall and offers direct motor coach service to the Killington Resort and Ski Area. Amtrak is making an obvious effort to market this particular train to skiers. A future opportunity may exist in getting the Ethan Allen to make a stop in Whitehall, especially during the fall and summer when marketing efforts turn to more diverse destinations.

It appears that relatively few people arrive in or depart from Whitehall by rail. This does not preclude the possibility of increasing these figures. Travel and tourism packages, perhaps in conjunction with other historic communities in New York or Vermont, may be an option. The Arts and Recreation Committee of Whitehall, NY is pursuing this idea.

## **L. Water Services**

The Village of Whitehall's water source is 6-acre Pine Lake, located approximately 5 miles northwest of the Village center. Water is gravity fed from Pine Lake and stored in a one million-gallon reservoir on old Route 22, approximately 1.5 miles north of South Bay. From there, it is gravity fed to the Village. There is also a storage tank east of the Village that serves C.O.T. Plywood and is available as a backup supply.

Pine Lake supplies water to the entire Village and part of the Town of Whitehall. There are 1,030 residential users and 76 commercial users. Average use is approximately 800,000 gallons per day. The Village must comply with new surface drinking water standards. The New York State Department of Health rescinded the Village's avoidance status and required the Village to build a filtration plant or develop acceptable new wells. The Village owns a sufficient amount of watershed area (200 acres) to protect Pine Lake. Major requirements for compliance, therefore, involved the provision of a floating cover on the reservoir, modernization of the chlorination facility and the installation of a permanent continuous monitoring equipment and chlorination management program. Problems related to the water storage include the repair/replacement of the Pine Lake and Pike Brook dams that impound the Village drinking water supply. The dams are old and deteriorating and are in need of repair or replacement to protect the Village's water supply.

Water quality is excellent and quantities are sufficient year-round. Problems in the water distribution system can be attributed to its age. The gravity feed generates pressures exceeding 120 pounds per square inch causing several pipes to break every year. Much of the line is in need of replacement and, in some cases, relocation. Upgrading of the water distribution system is a necessity, but will be dependent on future funding opportunities. First priority will be given to the replacement and upgrading of the line extending from the Ashe Rose Inn south to the Town line.

Future plans include the replacement of older pipes and, in some instances, the increase of the system's capacity.

There appear to be few problems with the Village's water supply. The periodic pipe breaks, however, do not present an immediate threat. The Village's water storage and distribution system is old and in many instances deteriorated and in need of repair or replacement.

#### **M. Sanitary Sewer Service**

The entire Village of Whitehall (approximately 1,100 residential and commercial customers) is served by a system encompassing 15 miles of sewer lines.

All wastewater undergoes secondary treatment at the plant on Riverside Drive and, once treated, is released into the Champlain Canal. The system is designed to treat 600,000 gallons per day. Under ideal conditions, average summer use is 300,000 gallons per day. Winter use is considerably less.

The system does experience significant infiltration from the Village's stormwater system, particularly during periods of heavy rainfall or snowmelt. During these periods, some sewer sections experience overflows and the Village is forced to shut down its aeration system.

The Village applied and was approved for New York State Bond Act money to upgrade the sewer collection system. This money is available contingent upon study results identifying points of infiltration. Specifically, Bond Act funding will

cover approximately 68 percent of the cost of rehabilitating approximately 5 miles of sanitary sewer collection pipeline and 35 sanitary manhole connections to correct the infiltration and inflow problems. Improvements to the wastewater treatment plant include a new fine bubble aeration system, waste sludge handling facility and a tertiary treatment phosphorus removal process. The project will substantially reduce the amount of stormwater inflow to the Village's sanitary storm sewer collection system. Public benefit of the project includes a substantial reduction in the point source phosphorus discharge from the secondary treatment facility into the Champlain Canal.

Bond Act Funds to the Village, in combination with 1 million in loan funds from the Environmental Facilities Corporation will not be sufficient to adequately address the Village's infiltration and flow problems associated with its sanitary sewer collection system. Additional work and additional grant funds are essential if the Village is to continue its comprehensive effort to repair and replace its aging and deteriorated collection system. Adequate public infrastructure to serve its residential, commercial, and industrial base is essential to the Village's revitalization efforts.

## **N. Stormwater Management**

The Village has a stormwater collection system. In certain sections of the Village, the stormwater collection system combines with the sewer collection system and receives the benefit of treatment before its release into the Champlain Canal. During periods of significant rainfall, the aeration system is turned off, and solids settle out into the tank and only partial treatment is achieved. Most stormwater, however, is released, untreated, into the Barge Canal.

The stormwater that is discharged directly through a pipe or some other source is called point source pollution discharge. It is unknown at this time how many point sources discharges there are in the Village of Whitehall. Stormwater includes a variety of contaminants including motor oil, gasoline, brake fluid, and particulates. Non-point source runoff occurs from non-discrete sources such as through groundwater or seepage. Both kinds of stormwater runoff have potentially large impacts on water quality.

To the extent possible, it is important to filter stormwater prior to its direct discharge into a surface water resource. The volume of stormwater is directly related to the impervious (e.g., developed) area. When planning for new development and redevelopment, it is important to consider measures to reduce runoff and direct discharge of runoff into the stormwater system. Landscaping, drainage swales, and retention basins are three methods to reduce the local contaminants entering surface water resources. The planned improvements to the sewer collection system will substantially reduce the amount of stormwater that infiltrates the sewer lines. The project will not, however, address stormwater treatment and this should be an issue the Village addresses in the near future.