

**SECTION II**  
**INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**

## **II. INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**

### **A. Introduction**

The Village of Athens' waterfront is along the Hudson River. This waterfront, in addition to approximately one-half mile of frontage along Murderers Creek, comprises the area within the Village's Coastal Zone. The Middle Ground Flats, an island in the middle of the Hudson River approximately two miles long and 1,200 feet wide, is also included in the Coastal Area. The Coastal Area is bounded on the west by NYS Route 385 except where the boundary extends inland approximately one-half mile to include the more developed section of the Village.

Although the Coastal Area includes only a small section of the Village, it contains a wide variety of land uses and physical features. The Village is densely developed, consisting primarily of older, single-family homes as well as commercial and industrial uses. Most of the coastal area lies within the Athens Lower Village Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places. See Map 1, Coastal Boundary and Reconnaissance, for an overview of the coastal resources.

The following inventory and analysis examines existing conditions and identifies issues of concern and opportunities for enhancement of the waterfront environment.

A Waterfront Questionnaire was distributed in the community to assess community valuation of existing and potential land use, recreational activities and community character. The Questionnaire and the responses received are found in Appendix A.

### **B. Existing Land and Water Uses (See Map 2)**

Within the Village, residential use predominates with smaller areas in commercial or industrial uses, as well as some forest/brushland.

The Village contains many historic buildings that provide a visible history of its development. A Multiple Resource listing on the National Register of Historic Places includes the Athens Lower Village Historic District, the Brick Row Historic District and three individual structures, the Albertus Yan Loon House, the DelVecchio House, and the Zion Lutheran Church. (See Map 3). The Hudson-Athens Light-house is also listed on the National Register.

The majority of the store fronts in the central business area are now unoccupied while the others have been converted into apartments. The former opera house which had been converted into a mill, is now vacant. A branch office of Key Bank and the Post Office as well as the remaining private businesses do bring people into the Village core. Provision of adequate parking, perhaps through public use of the private parking lot on North Franklin Street, and promotional activities could support a rejuvenation of the business district. New business should be encouraged to locate in this central core.

Highway oriented strip commercial development exists along Route 385 north of Market Street. This strip development consists mainly of unsightly open storage of automobiles and parts. Industrial uses are located on the waterfront and consist of petroleum storage tanks, manufacture of road surfacing products, metals fabrication, and electronics manufacture. The petroleum and road surfacing businesses receive delivery of materials by barge.

The public and semi-public uses include several churches, the Little League Field, Athens Recreation Association swimming pool, the Rainey Field softball field and the Athens Riverfront Park. The area's only commercial marina/restaurant, Hagar's Harbor, is located in the northeast sector of the Village, behind "Brick Row", a line or row of houses that formerly housed railroad workers in the 1800's. Stewart House Restaurant and Bed and Breakfast

capitalizes on its waterfront location. Businesses for docking, storing and servicing boats are also located on Water Street.

A very large recreational subdivision north of the Village, Sleepy Hollow Lake, although outside the Coastal Boundary, has potential to greatly alter the future character of the Athens Coastal area. Centered around a large man-made lake, the Sleepy Hollow Development Corporation has mapped out some 1,600 small parcels being marketed for recreational or seasonal second home development. To date, only 30 or 40 such homes have been constructed. A resurgence of lot sales has recently occurred, however, with approximately 400 lots sold in the latter half of 1984. The bulk of the Sleepy Hollow property is situated west of Route 385, extending from the northern end of the Village all the way into the Town of Coxsackie. As development progresses, demand for services and other "spin-off" effects will increase. New strip development could develop in response.

**C. Water-Dependent Uses**

The following water-dependent uses exist in the coastal area:

Peckham Materials and Amos Post: Both have oil storage facilities which receive materials by water and are located just south of Murderer's Creek.

Hagar's Harbor: This is the only commercial marina in the coastal area. Located north of Murderer's Creek, it provides docking space, boat rentals and supporting facilities in addition to a restaurant.

State Boat Launch: Located on Murderer's Creek, this facility is actively used and provides river access for residents and non-residents. It is operated by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

Athens Riverfront Park: This small riverside park has picnic tables, a small dock and parking for a few cars. The park is used mostly for passive recreation and is also the site of the Annual Athens Riverfront Festival. The filled land at the park is beginning to erode making the improvement of the dockage difficult and creating shallow water conditions.

The Hudson River provides a portion of the water supply for fire fighting in the Lower Village area. Fire trucks drive into the park to pump water from the River. A stand pipe and hydrant would alleviate this situation making the job for the fire fighters easier, especially when there is ice on the River, and removing an unattractive driveway from the park landscape.

Village Sewer Treatment Plant: The plant is located in the commercial section of the Village. At the site, there is sufficient land for a secondary use. Benches, lawns and a small beach area provide visual and physical access to the river.

Boat Storage Facility: This site located just north of the ferry slip is used for the winter storage of boats and a ramp for launching boats stored there. The facility is not large and could be expanded.

**D. Underutilized, Abandoned or Deteriorated Sites**

The following underutilized, abandoned or deteriorated sites exist in the coastal area:

Deep Water Sites: Two underutilized deep water sites exist within the Village. One is located on the Teicher Metals grounds. The other is found just behind Van

Valkenburg's Garage adjacent to vacant property on Water Street. These two areas are excellent sites for new water-dependent uses.

Ferry Slip: The Athens-Hudson Ferry which operated until 1947 used the ferry slip at the foot of Second Street adjacent to the park. The slip has deteriorated and has been filled by silt. If dredged, the slip could be used for public boat docks.

Barges: A group of abandoned barges and other vessels between the two oil storage facilities are a visual blight and prevent use of the adjacent shoreline. As they deteriorate further, they will become a navigation hazard.

#### **E. Fish and Wildlife Habitat**

The Hudson River is renowned for its rich and abundant fish and wildlife resources, particularly the fishery which once supported a thriving commercial industry. The River is a major flyway for migratory waterfowl and provides a breeding grounds for a variety of wetland wildlife species. The section of the Hudson adjacent to Athens is known to be a spawning area for several anadromous fish species including American Shad, Striped Bass, Herring and the endangered Shortnose Sturgeon, as well as a variety of resident freshwater species (see Map 3).

The Department of State has designated Vosburgh Swamp and Middle Ground Flats as a Significant Habitat (see Appendix B). The habitat extends for approximately four miles along the western shore of the Hudson River, upstream from the Village of Athens. The area is located in the Towns of Coxsackie and Athens, Greene County (7.5' Quadrangle: Hudson North, NY). The fish and wildlife habitat encompasses approximately 1,200 acres, comprised primarily of extensive mudflats and shallows, off-channel open water areas, hardwood swamp, and spoil bank islands. The habitat also includes Murderer's Creek, upstream approximately 0.5 miles to Sleepy Hollow Lake dam, which is the first impassable barrier to fish. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation recommends that the Coastal Area boundary be extended inland to include this segment of the creek.

Extensive tidal mudflats and shallow littoral zones are relatively rare in the Hudson Valley region of New York. These habitat types, along with the emergent wetlands and open water areas, make the Vosburgh Swamp and Middle Ground Flats area very attractive to many fish and wildlife species. The mudflats and littoral zones in this area provide vital feeding and resting habitat for large concentrations of waterfowl during the fall and spring migrations. Approximately 10,000 canvasbacks, along with various other waterfowl species, have been reported in the area during seasonal migrations. When open water is available, this area is also one of the most important waterfowl wintering areas in the upper Hudson Valley region, especially significant for redhead and canvasback ducks. Several spoil bank islands on Middle Ground Flats provide unique vertical sand banks that have been colonized by bank swallows. This is one of the few locations in this section of the Hudson River where this species has been confirmed to be breeding. A heavy concentration of American shad utilize the littoral zone areas surrounding Middle Ground Flats for spawning. This area, including Murderer's Creek, is also utilized as a spawning, nursery and feeding area by striped bass, alewife, blueback herring, white perch, and most of the resident freshwater species. A population of mud turtles (T) has been reported to reside in Vosburgh Swamp.

Human use of the Vosburgh Swamp and Middle Ground Flats area is of regional significance. The area receives very heavy waterfowl hunting pressure during the fall migration period. In addition, one of the northernmost commercial shad fisheries is established in the vicinity of Middle Ground Flats. An Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation boat launch is located on the south side of Murderer's Creek, providing access for recreational fishing throughout the area.

Impact Assessment: Any activity that would degrade water quality, increase turbidity or temperature, or alter depths in the Vosburgh Swamp and Middle Ground Flats habitat could affect fish and wildlife species using the area. Disruption of the freshwater or tidal flows in these areas could have major consequences to the littoral zones and mudflats which contribute significantly to the value of this habitat. Elimination of productive wetland and littoral areas, through dredging, filling, or bulkheading would have significant impacts on the fish and wildlife resources of the area.

From Black Rock south are located wetlands locally known as Minerly's Swamp. This area is also used extensively by hunters. This area should be considered for designation as locally important wetlands.

**F. Freshwater Wetlands**

Areas designated as Freshwater wetlands by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation occur in a few major riverfront areas - the West Flats at the northern edge of the Village, the area where the powerlines cross the river, and a small area to the north of where Murderer's Creek joins the Hudson (see Map 3). There are also undesignated wetlands near Black Rock that should be considered for designation as locally important wetlands. Much of the Middle Ground Flats are listed. Linear stretches, tidal in nature, these areas require a permit to be developed and should be retained as much as possible as open space or conservation areas.

New York State identifies Freshwater Wetlands based on vegetation cover type, and size (12.4 acres and above). The many benefits derived from wetlands include flood protection, fish and wildlife breeding areas, assimilation of pollutants, and the recreational opportunities they provide. Some wetlands are owned privately, and others are included as the Hudson River.

**G. Flood Hazard and Flood Prone Areas**

Map 4 shows those areas which are prone to flooding. Flooding in the Village's Coastal Area is infrequent and normally not damaging. The most severe flooding occurs as a result of ice jams on the Hudson River or during periods when high water is driven by winds from the south. The damage from the ice jams is limited to the immediate shoreline.

**H. Vegetation**

Vegetation often serves as a visual buffer between two conflicting land uses. The vegetation on Middle Ground Flats acts as visual screening between the Athens Coastal Area and industrial sites located in the City of Hudson. The vegetation screening consisting of deciduous trees is best during the summer months. Such screening is beneficial in maintaining the aesthetic value of the river view from the Athens side of the river.

**I. Water Quality Classifications**

Water quality in the Hudson River is classified by New York State as "A", the highest classification - suitable for human consumption. Considerable concern has been expressed over the possibility of elevated levels of PCB contamination in Hudson River sediments occurring should upriver highly contaminated "hot-spots" erode and be carried downriver to the Greene County vicinity. Small tributaries to the Hudson are classified as "C" - fishing and trout and non-trout propagation. Since the Significant Habitat Narrative above includes Murderers Creek and states that the creek is a spawning, nursery and feeding area, the classification of Murderers Creek is appropriate but upgrading the classification may be desirable since the tributary empties into Class A waters of the Hudson River.

**J. Important Surface and Ground Water Resources**

According to the Greene County Comprehensive Public Water Supply Study prepared in 1967 by Alex Diachishin Engineers, the Hudson Valley section of Greene County does not have any bedrock capable of any moderate or large groundwater yields, and no soils that appear capable of supplying groundwater. Impoundment of surface waters is the only means of providing municipal water supplies.

Sleepy Hollow Lake, a man-made lake created by damming Murderer's Creek, is an emergency water supply for the Village. The Village's main water supply is Hollister Lake several miles inland. Deteriorated water transmission lines between Hollister Lake and the Village are limiting the amount of water available and may cause undependable delivery of water in the future. The lines need to be replaced.

A regional landfill is proposed for land over the northern tributaries of Murderer's Creek, north of Sleepy Hollow Lake. Potential impacts on the water quality of the Creek, Lake and Hudson River must be carefully evaluated. Adjacent to the northern bank of Murderer's Creek is the site of a former Town landfill. Part of the site has been developed into Rainey Park, a softball field.

**K. Soils and Bedrock Formation (see Maps 5 and 6)**

Soils within the Coastal Area are primarily deep Hudson silt loams or silty clay loams characterized by high water capacity, low permeability and medium or high lime content. Where slope is steep directly along the Hudson River, the surface layers are often substantially depleted by erosion. Small areas of Rhinebeck soils, which are good agricultural soils, are also located within the zone. Small sections of "Udorhents" (miscellaneous land types excavated and smooth for construction sites) may also be found. In the wetlands are tidal marsh and Carlisle Muck soils which are shallow to very deep organic or silt soils, and in the case of tidal marsh, are flooded daily. Areas adjacent to the river that are level are prone to flooding and are included in the federally-designated flood hazard boundary.

The Coastal Area is underlain by bedrock of the Deepkill and Normanskill formations. These formations consist of shale and sandstone with local complex folding and faulting. These types of bedrock exist from the sandstone, shale, chert and thin-bedded limestone. This area yields small, moderate supplies of commonly hard water with an average well yield of 6 to 10 gallons per minute.

**L. Steep Slopes**

A major factor which determines an area's suitability for development is the slope (steepness) of the land. For the purposes of this study, areas of excessive slope are defined as land sloping 15 percent or more. Development in such areas would require the removal of the natural vegetation, considerable regrading, and would involve a substantial risk of erosion and silting problems. Also it is difficult to farm land which has slopes exceeding 15 percent. The steep slopes map (Map 4) shows that most of the land in the Village has suitable slopes for development.

**M. Public Water and Sewer Service Areas**

Public water and sewer service is limited to the center core of the Village of Athens and Brick Row. In addition, the Brick Row sewage treatment facility owned by the Village is used by the Sleepy Hollow development because there are not enough housing units to run the private system.

The central treatment plant serves the center core as far west as the Coastal Area extends, north to Union Street and south to Franklin Street. The main plant operates at about half of its 400,000 gallons per day capacity.

The municipal water supply is essentially limited to the Village center core. The water systems of Sleepy Hollow Lake and the Village are connected; however, the Sleepy Hollow supply is only a back-up system to the main Village system. The Village's source is Hollister Lake approximately 6 miles northwest of the Village. The system capacity is limited to 300,000 gallons per day by the old, under-sized transmission line from the reservoir. The condition and capacity of the Village water line, if not corrected, could limit development. The transmission lines are old and frequent breaks are experienced because used pipe was installed in the 1920s.

A proposed regional landfill located in the watershed of Sleepy Hollow Lake should be carefully examined to determine the impacts of the landfill on Sleepy Hollow Lake and the Coastal Area.

The Coastal Area's electricity needs are met by Central Hudson Gas & Electric Corporation.

**N. Traffic and Transportation**

NYS Route 385 is the primary transportation artery in the Coastal Area.

The New York State Thruway can be accessed in both Catskill and Coxsackie, each entrance being within a fifteen minute drive. State Route 9W lies two miles inland and carries most of the north-south local traffic.

Although no rail service exists in the Coastal Area, 20 minutes away by automobile is the Hudson Amtrak station, where connections can be made to Albany and New York City.

Private bus service is provided on weekdays to Albany, Coxsackie and Catskill for commuters and shoppers. In addition, public bus service is provided by a county operated bus once a week on request. This bus provides transportation to the Village of Catskill. A daily bus also runs between Albany and Newburgh, making stops along Route 385.

The Hudson River is used as a transportation artery for both commercial and pleasure boating. The Amos Post and Peckham Materials both receive shipments of materials via barges. Pleasure boating is on the upswing on the River and Athens' only marina, Hagar's Harbor, is beginning to feel the pressure. Waterborne travelers also stop at the Riverfront Park sometimes remaining overnight, and walk to stores in the Village for supplies. Larger, more secure docking is needed for these transient vessels.

As riverborne tourism increases, facilities for docking tour boats and other large vessels will be in demand. The Village is interested in developing such facilities at the Waterfront Park. In the future a ferry connecting the Amtrak station in Hudson, Athens and the Hudson/Athens Lighthouse may be possible as a tourist attraction. Before the construction of the Rip Van Winkle Bridge in Catskill ferries ran regularly between Hudson and Athens.

**O. Recreation (see also item R, Public Access Areas.)**

Recreation facilities include the swimming pool operated by the Athens Recreation Association, the Little League Field, the ball fields at the Athens Elementary School and Rainey Field, the Riverfront Park, the State boat launch and the private marina. A siltation problem in Murderers Creek which developed after the construction of the Sleepy Hollow Dam prevents the use of the State launch at low tide. At low tide Murderers Creek is navigable by canoe to the base of the dam, but at high tide access to the creek is difficult because of the low highway bridge. Recreational opportunities exist along the creek for bird watching.

The Greene County Senior Citizen Center and the meeting rooms and gymnasiums in the Community Center provide space for meetings, lectures, and other activities. The Community Center is used for gallery and studio space by the Greene County Arts and Crafts Guild and individual artists.

Results of the Community Survey show public support for developing the riverfront park, creating hiking trails along the White Elephant Railroad right-of-way, and extending Rainey Park to the River. Snowmobile owners use the railroad right-of-way in the winter, keeping the trail clear of trees.

A significant portion of the Village residents are elderly and/or low income and the densely developed hamlet provides few yards in which children can play. The open space and views from parks along the River and at the elementary school are important to the neighborhood because they provide recreational opportunities and a spaciousness to a thickly settled area. "Enjoying the view" is the most popular recreational activity, according to the Community Survey. Fishing off the bulkhead and docks is also enjoyed by many people.

There is a swimming pool in the western part of the Village core which is operated by a not-for-profit organization. Membership to the swimming pool is open to everyone, but rising operating costs put the cost of membership out of the reach of many families. Development of a safe beach on the Hudson River would provide an alternative swimming facility. The Community Survey identified a need for swimming facilities.

The Middle Ground Flats, a large island two miles in length and approximately one-quarter mile wide, is situated in the middle of the Hudson River directly east of the Village and is owned by New York State. Once considered for park development by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the island was recently cleared of some squatter cabins. It is readily accessible from the State boat launch in Athens. However, the State Office of General Services has no plans for its future. Swimming now occurs along the sandy shores of the Flats.

Fishing, boating and duck hunting opportunities exist all along the shores of the Hudson River, where appropriate.

#### **P. Scenic Resources**

The River can be seen from throughout the Village at the end of most of the streets. The Hudson-Athens Lighthouse, the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, Mount Merino and the lights of Hudson, wildlife in the marshes, and the myriad types of river traffic and trains on the eastern shore provide an active and varied scene.

The streetscape of the Village includes stately trees, slate sidewalks, interesting alleyways framed with gardens, and a range of architectural styles from the Eighteenth Century on. Entrance signs welcome visitors with planting maintained by the Garden Club. Athens can be seen from the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, the Amtrak trains, Mount Merino, Promenade Hill in Hudson, and from the Hudson River. These views are of a primarily rural landscape framing the Village which begins at the River's edge and clings to a gradual rise westward. Several homes of significant architectural value are prominent in these views. Front porches and steps, wrought iron fences and gates and brickwork bordering building foundations are other important visual elements. Treatment by the Department of Transportation of the NYS Route 385 right-of-way through the Historic District should reflect the existing streetscape elements.

In Brick Row the planting of street trees and resetting of the slate sidewalks would enhance the visual character of the neighborhood.

Several unattractive visual elements are in the Coastal Area including the two storage tank complexes and large overhead transmission lines crossing the River just south of the Village. An area at the foot of Union Street contains several abandoned dilapidated vessels and barges which should be removed. Screening of the storage tanks could be accomplished with planting along Route 385.

On Route 385 adjacent to the Sewage Treatment Plant lies a parcel of riverfront land owned by the Village. Currently used for materials storage and parking of large privately-owned trucks, the lot could be landscaped to screen the uses from the highway and the River.

The dredge spoil disposal area south of Black Rock supports some vegetation, but the planting of appropriate vegetation would improve the character of the area. Since this is private property, the cooperation of the landowner is necessary.

Any future disposal of spoils in the Coastal Areas should involve site restoration.

## **Q. Cultural and Historic Resources**

The Village was founded in 1810, but the area has been occupied since pre-historic times. Black Rock was an Indian ceremonial area listed as an archeological site contained within the Historic District. The Looneburg Patent was granted in 1667 to Jan Van Loon whose land extended through most of the existing Coastal Area and beyond.

Robert Juet, crewman on Henry Hudson's Halfmoon, told in his diary of running around on the flats and trading with the Indians. He describes the beauty of the landscape.

The early settlers were farmers. The 1706 home of Jan Van Loon on Route 385 is the earliest house remaining in the Village.

In the Village area two communities developed. The southend was called Loonenburg; the northern, Esperanza. In 1800 Isaac Northrup purchased both and incorporated them as the Village of Athens in 1805. He laid out the Village in a grid plan in anticipation of its becoming the Capital of New York State. A master plan showing the proposed location of the capitol building on the top of the hill hangs in the Village Offices.

The Zion Lutheran Church is the oldest Lutheran parish in the United States. Its ministers used to service satellite churches throughout the Hudson Valley. Some property owners near the church still pay a rent to the glebe. The Church records, written in Dutch, were translated in the 1970s and contain records of the early families.

The Schoharie Turnpike was an important road into the interior. Some of its sections located outside the Coastal Area are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Athens was once a bustling harbor. The earliest ferries were Indian canoes. The first official Hudson-Athens ferry made its initial run in 1786; the last operated until 1947. Passenger steamboats stopped at the Village dock where Peckham Materials is now located. One steamboat, the Swallow, sank at what is now called Swallow Rock, losing 40 of her passengers.

In the late 1800s, Athens had a volume of shipping greater than the capital city of Albany. A contributing factor was the Saratoga and Hudson River Railroad, built by Cornelius Vanderbilt in 1867. It was dubbed the White Elephant Railroad nine years later when a spectacular fire burned the docks, depot and offices. Its railbed remains from Hagar's Harbor north to Four Mile Point, as does Brick Row, the housing built for the railroad workers.

Many industries thrived in this community including shipbuilding and ice houses, brick yards, ice tool manufacture, and pottery kilns. Athens pottery is part of the collection at the Cooperstown Museum. Shipbuilding continued through World War II.

Structures from all development periods remain, displaying a myriad of architectural styles. Some were built with ballast bricks from the ships that called at this port. A Multiple Resource listing on the National Register of Historic Places includes the Athens Lower Village Historic District, the Brick Row Historic District, and three structures in the upper Village; the Zion Lutheran Church, the Albertus VanLoon House and the DelVecchio House.

The Hudson-Athens Lighthouse is also listed on the National Register. Built in 1874, it is an aid to navigation operated automatically. The residence section has been leased from the U.S. Coast Guard by the Hudson-Athens Lighthouse Preservation Association, a bi-county group, to be restored and opened to the public as a museum. This is an opportunity for public-private cooperation to preserve and develop this resource.

The Athens Museum in the Community Center contains a valuable collection of pottery, ice tools, documents, photographs and other evidence of Athens history. Models of ferries and other Hudson River vessels are displayed in the bank on Route 385. The Community Center itself is a former high school adapted to the new uses of government offices, commercial space, gallery and meeting rooms.

Several structures in the Historic District have been lost to fire, the majority caused by wood stoves. Other structures are deteriorated and suffering from neglect. Programs that assist rehabilitation of private property are needed.

The community has lately attracted artists, photographers, writers and musicians from New York City who divide their time between Athens and the New York Metropolitan area. This trend bodes well for preservation of the historic structures, but the resulting real estate speculation and sharply rising housing prices may bring about gentrification and a need for affordable housing.

## **R. Public Access Areas**

The following list summarizes existing public access areas, type of access and permitted uses:

Athens Riverfront Park: This area at the foot of Second Street on the Hudson River was the site of a large factory. The area has been partially landscaped and is now used for picnicking and fishing. The Riverfront Park provides views south to the Rip Van Winkle Bridge, north to the end of Middle Ground Flats, and east to the Flats, parts of Hudson, Mount Merino and the Hudson-Athens Lighthouse. Band concerts and the Athens Street Festival are held here in summer.

Isabella Rainey Park: Located just north of the State Boat Launch, the park contains one ball field for girls softball. Between the ball field and the River lie state-protected freshwater wetlands. The field was built by volunteers on the site of a former landfill.

Village Treatment Plant: Located on the Hudson River at the foot of Union Street, the Sewage Treatment Plant has benches, a lawn and a gravel beach. Landscaping could be expanded into the adjacent lot to the north which is owned by the Village and is used for materials storage and parking of large trucks.

South Franklin Street: A triangular shaped park located at the end of South Franklin Street has a beach and provides a view of the Hudson-Athens Lighthouse, Mount Merino and the Rip Van Winkle Bridge. The park is a memorial to veterans of the World Wars.

**Fourth Street Informal Boat Launch Area:** Located at the foot of Fourth Street, this is an unimproved area owned by the Village. Used by residents in the area, there is no parking for vehicles and boat trailers. The adjacent embankments are eroding and need to be stabilized.

In addition, several private waterfront properties have private ramps and docks, including the boat storage business on Water Street. Small boats can be carried into the water at the Sewage Treatment and at several street ends.

**S. Commercial Fishing Facilities, Coastal Erosion Hazard Areas, Air Quality Maintenance Areas**

There are no commercial fishing facilities, coastal erosion hazard areas or air quality maintenance areas in the Village; however, there is an erosion problem at the riverfront pads. Filled land is eroding from a deteriorating bulkhead, causing loss of park area and reduction of the water depth adjacent to the bulkhead. Correction of this problem may allow large vessels to dock near the bulkhead.

**T. Major Waterfront Issues and Opportunities**

This Local Waterfront Revitalization Program addresses many aspects of the coastal area and its use and preservation. Among the issues of greatest concern, as indicated during discussions of the Waterfront Advisory Committee, at public meetings and as expressed in response to the Waterfront Questionnaire (See Appendix A) are the following:

1. **Preservation of the Natural Waterfront Environment While Allowing Public Use and Enjoyment**

There are four publicly owned parcels within the village boundaries. Only three, the State Boat Launch, the Village Park, and the Sewage Treatment Plant are water-dependent uses. Although not ranked as high by residents, providing additional access can enable Athens to tap a valuable resource for recreation and economic development. In the Waterfront Questionnaire, Question #2, "Enjoying the View," was the most frequently checked recreational activity. Protection of these views should rank high on the list of priorities.

The resolution to these two related issues of preservation and development requires enforcement of appropriate standards for resource protection while also developing criteria for use of waterfront property in accord with its characteristics and limitation.

2. **Restoration of the Village Center**

The Village has a close physical and historical relationship to the water. The decline of the retail area in recent years has resulted in vacancies and some deterioration. A reorientation of business activity, restoration of historic properties and enhancement of facilities such as the Village's Waterfront Park can strengthen this area's role as the center of the community.

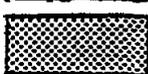
3. **Affordable Housing**

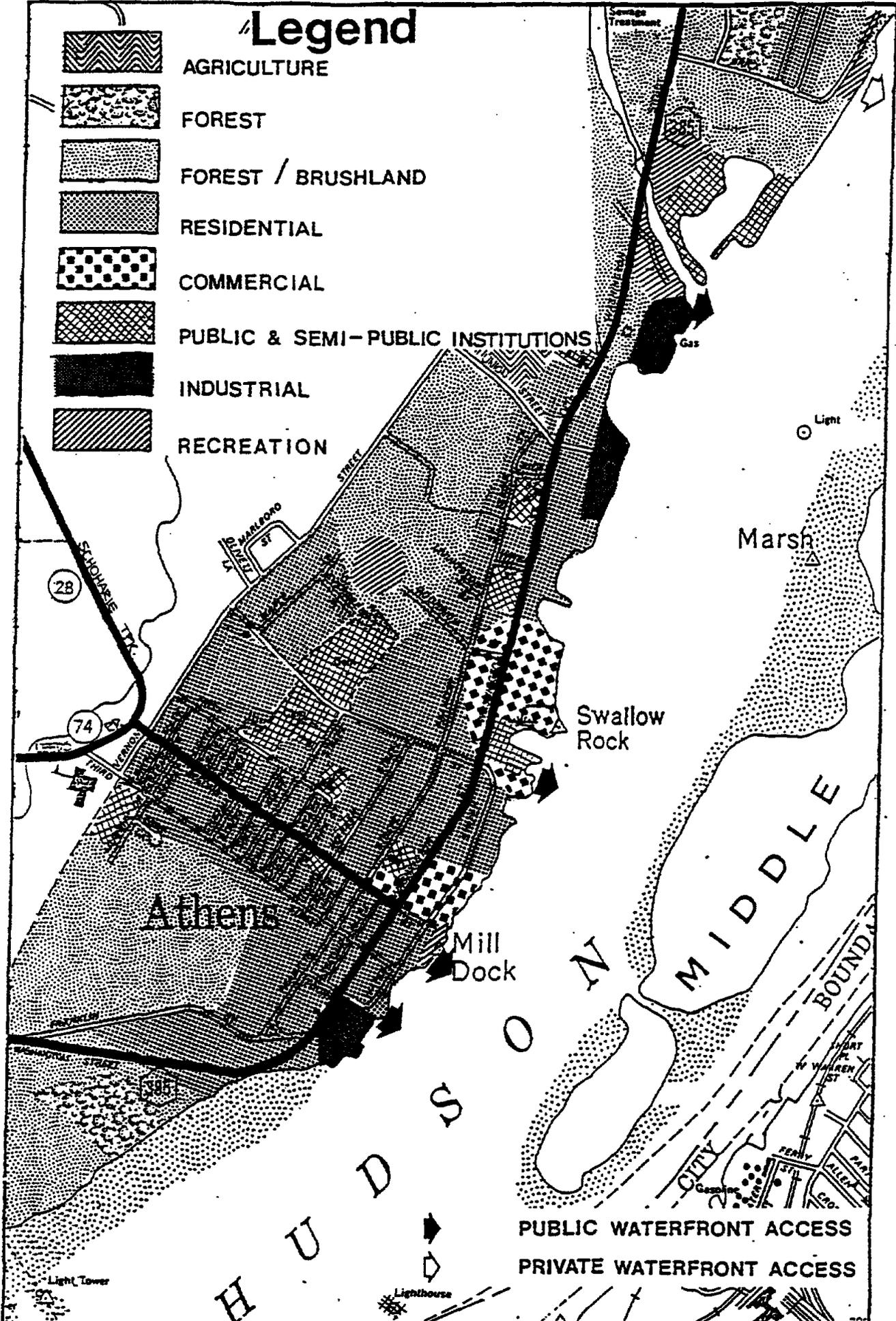
A third issue for the community is the spiraling housing costs caused by the purchasing of historic homes and land for second homes by metropolitan New York City residents and speculation by the real estate industry. The provision of affordable housing for the large population of elderly residents and for

children of the traditional extended families in the community has become an issue of concern in recent years.

The three issues discussed above are quite closely related and, as they are addressed, require a careful balancing or measures to preserve existing features and actions to promote new opportunities. In general, however, the greatest challenge for the Athens Waterfront is to maintain the balance of natural and urban waterfront features that are its prime asset. Retaining the community character while accommodating development will require a delicate balancing of interests by local government.

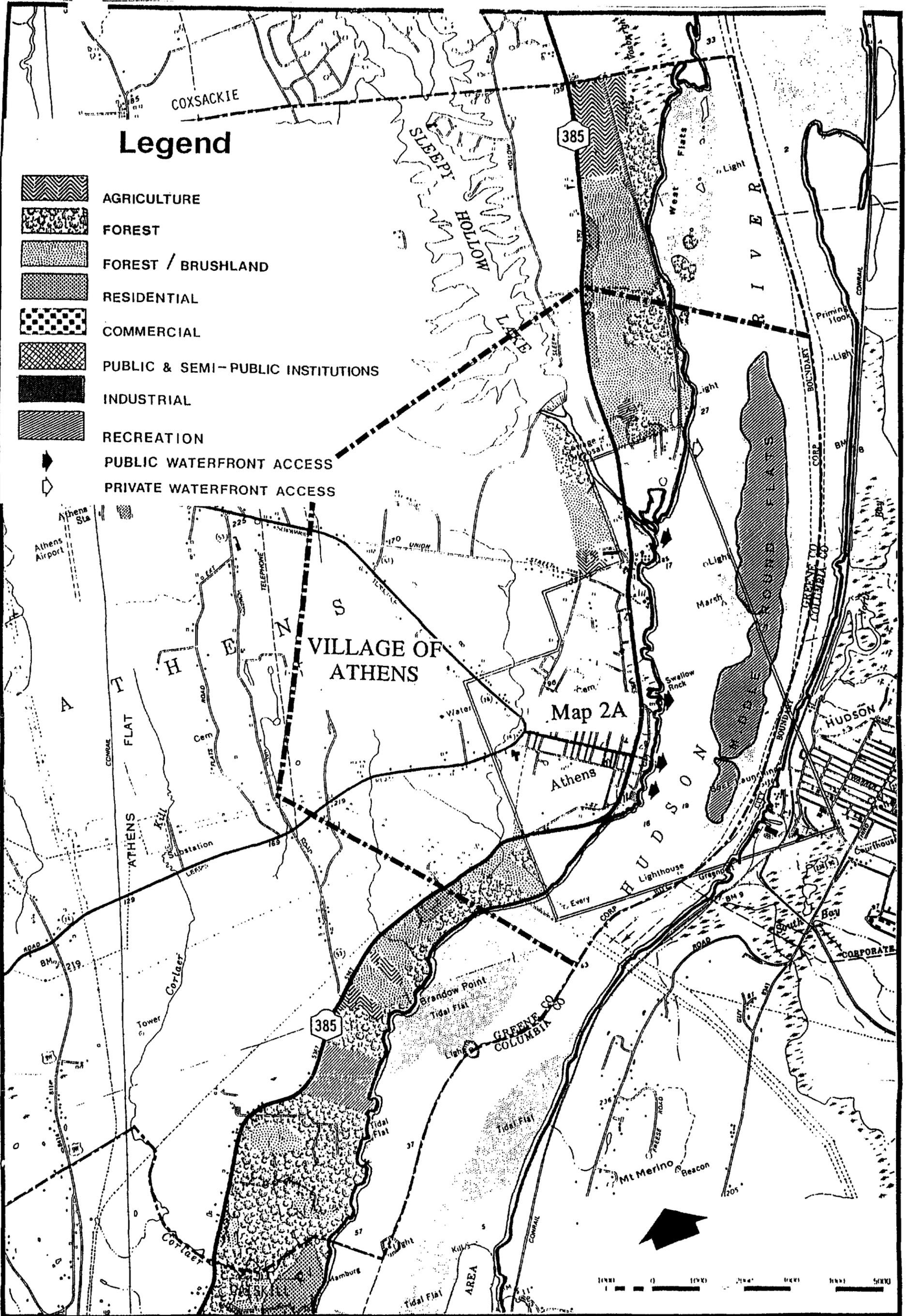
# Legend

-  AGRICULTURE
-  FOREST
-  FOREST / BRUSHLAND
-  RESIDENTIAL
-  COMMERCIAL
-  PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
-  INDUSTRIAL
-  RECREATION



# Legend

-  AGRICULTURE
-  FOREST
-  FOREST / BRUSHLAND
-  RESIDENTIAL
-  COMMERCIAL
-  PUBLIC & SEMI-PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
-  INDUSTRIAL
-  RECREATION
-  PUBLIC WATERFRONT ACCESS
-  PRIVATE WATERFRONT ACCESS

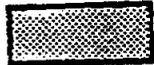


Local Waterfront Revitalization Program  
**VILLAGE OF ATHENS**  
 Prepared by Greene County Planning Department.

EXISTING LAND  
 AND WATER USES

Map No.  
**2**

# Legend



FRESHWATER WETLANDS



HISTORIC DISTRICTS



PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS



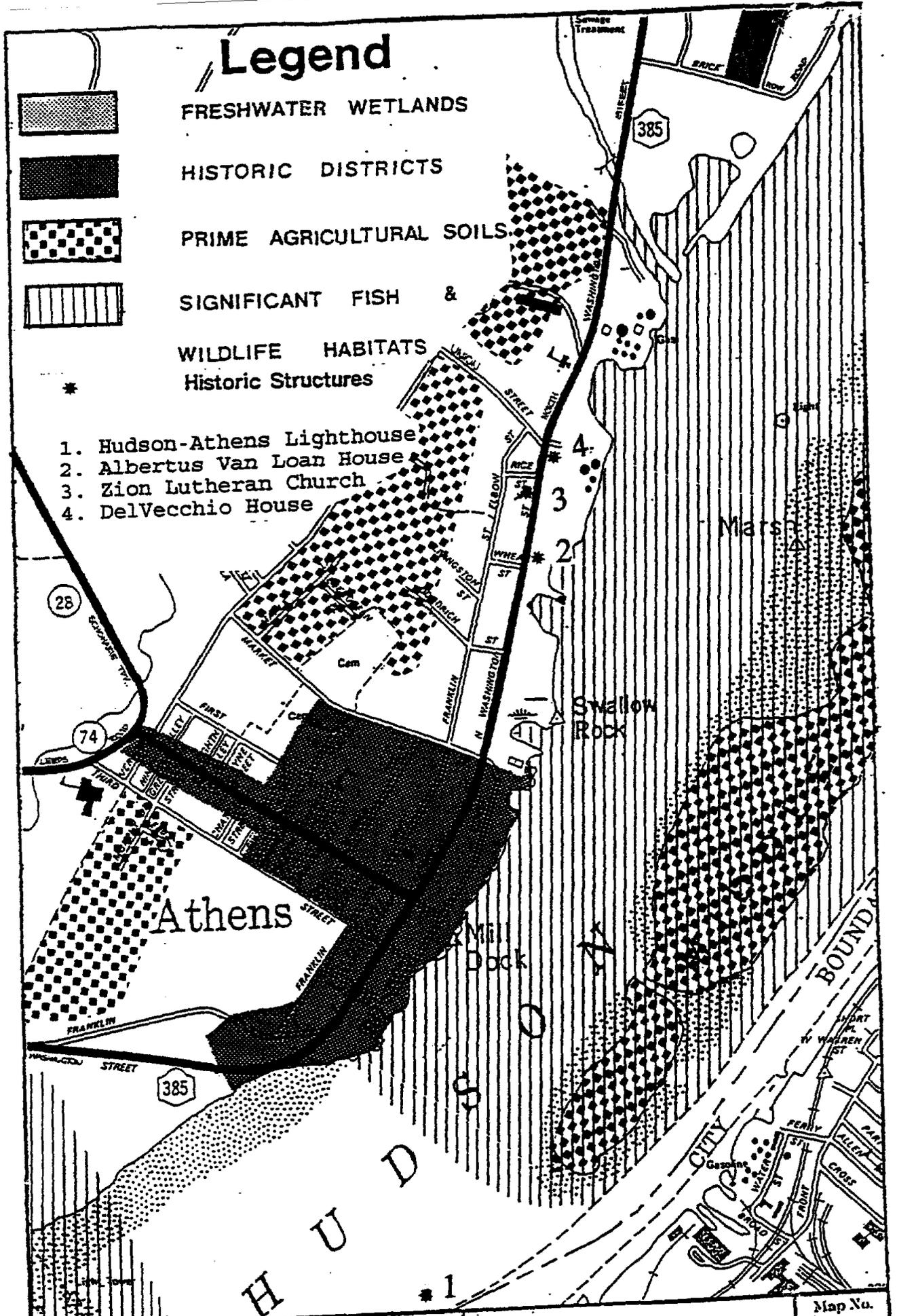
SIGNIFICANT FISH &

WILDLIFE HABITATS



Historic Structures

1. Hudson-Athens Lighthouse
2. Albertus Van Loan House
3. Zion Lutheran Church
4. DelVecchio House



Local Waterfront Revitalization Program  
**VILLAGE OF ATHENS**  
 Planning Consultants

Shuster Associates

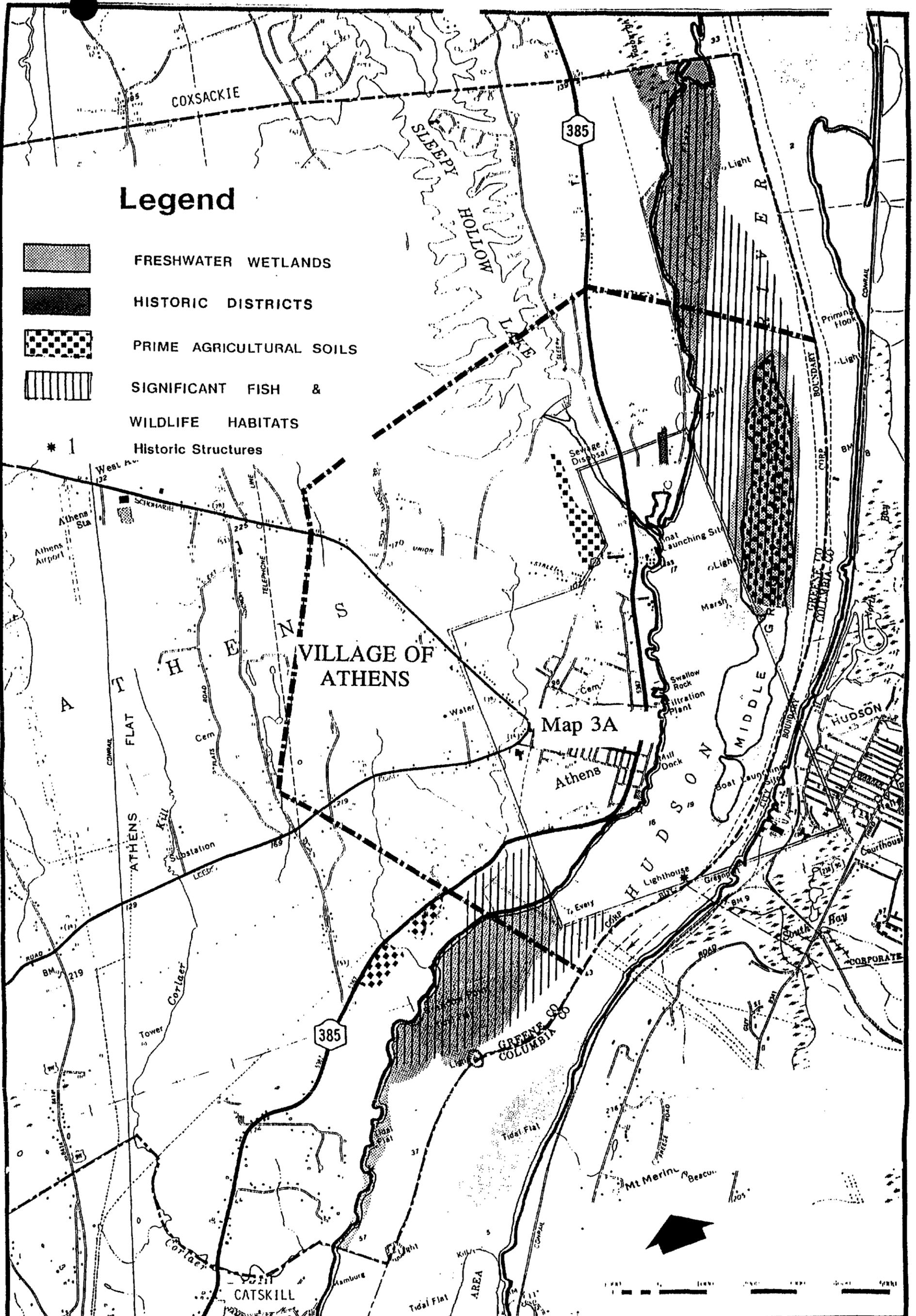
NATURAL AND CULTURAL  
 FEATURES

Map No.

3A

# Legend

-  FRESHWATER WETLANDS
-  HISTORIC DISTRICTS
-  PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS
-  SIGNIFICANT FISH & WILDLIFE HABITATS
- \* 1 Historic Structures



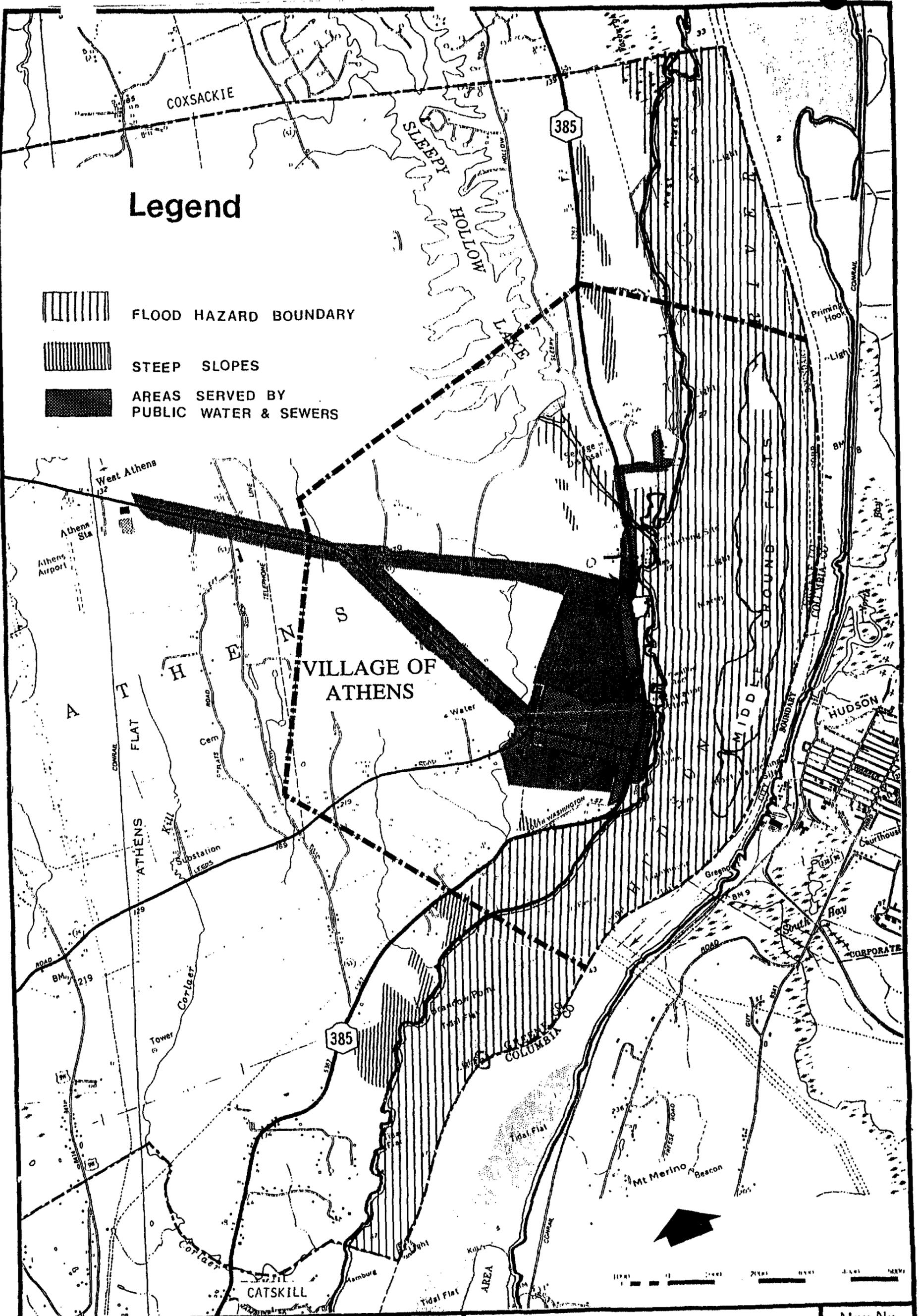
Local Waterfront Revitalization Program  
**VILLAGE OF ATHENS**  
 Prepared by Greene County Planning Department.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL  
 FEATURES

Map No.  
**3**

# Legend

-  FLOOD HAZARD BOUNDARY
-  STEEP SLOPES
-  AREAS SERVED BY PUBLIC WATER & SEWERS

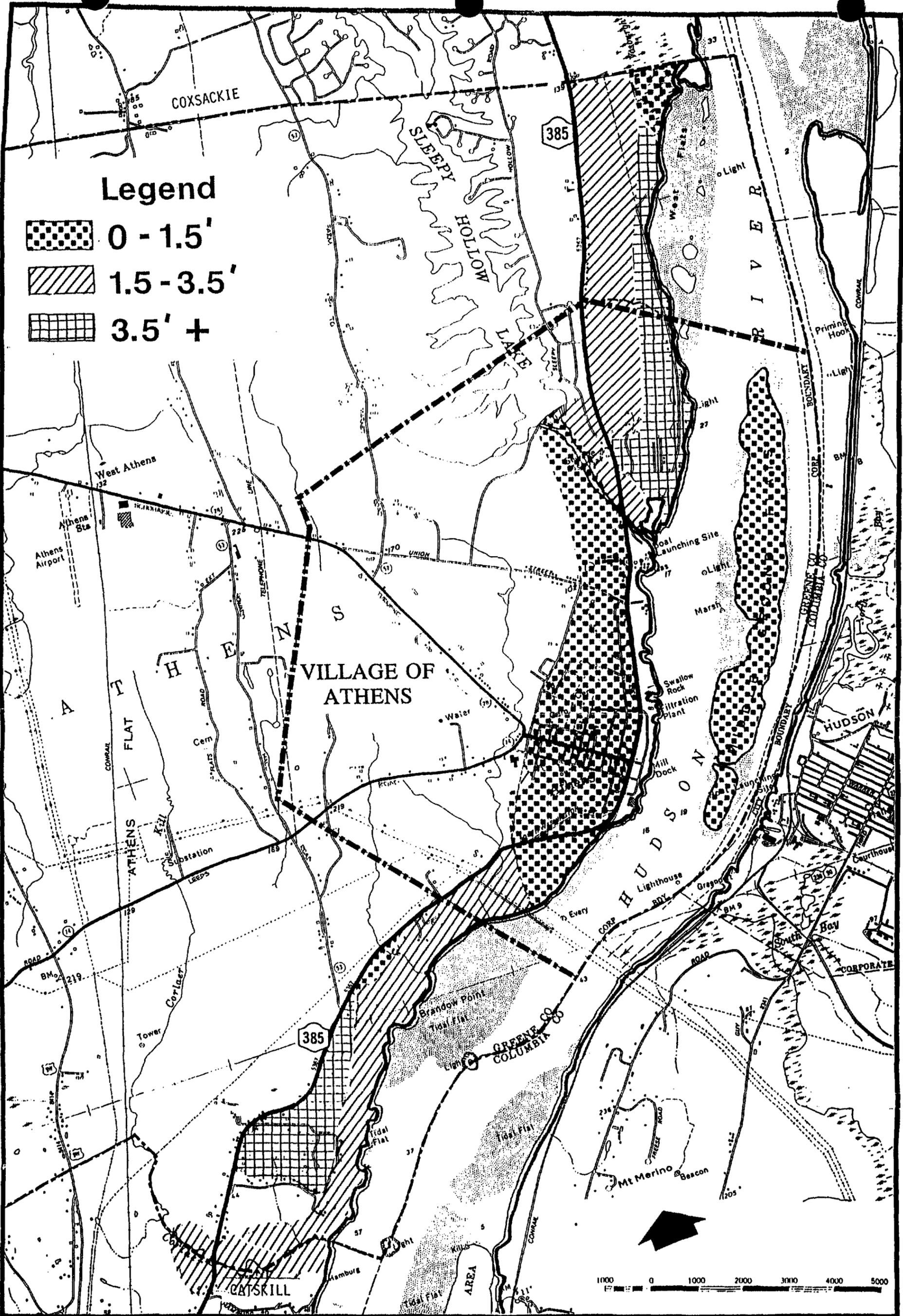


Local Waterfront Revitalization Program  
**VILLAGE OF ATHENS**  
 Prepared by Greene County Planning Department.

DEVELOPMENT  
 CONSIDERATIONS

Map No.

4



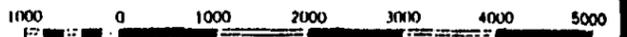
**Legend**

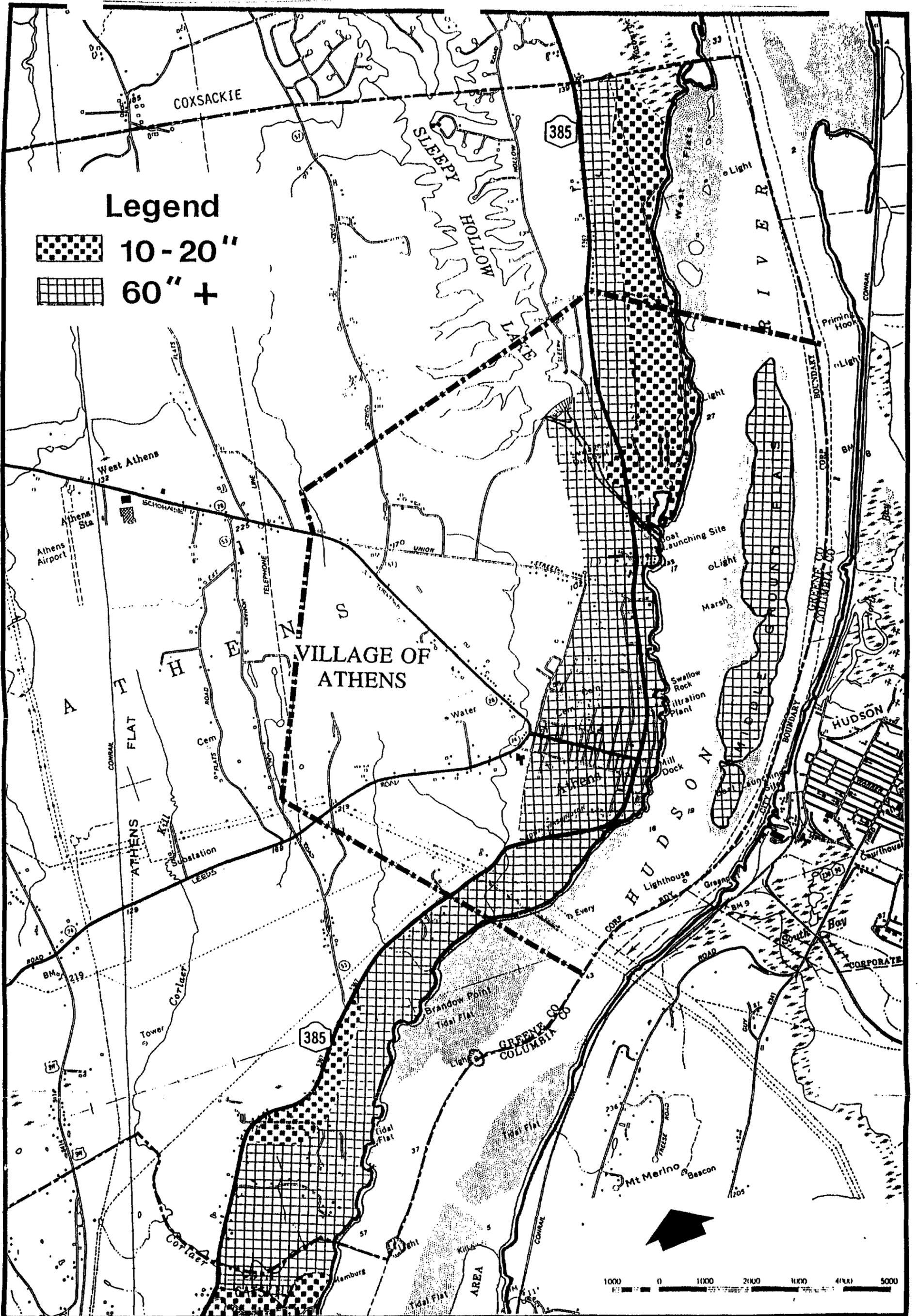
-  0 - 1.5'
-  1.5 - 3.5'
-  3.5' +

Local Waterfront Revitalization Program  
**VILLAGE OF ATHENS**  
 Prepared by Greene County Planning Department

DEPTH TO SEASONAL  
 HIGH WATER TABLE

Map No.  
**5**





Local Waterfront Revitalization Program  
**VILLAGE OF ATHENS**  
 Prepared by Greene County Planning Department.

DEPTH TO BEDROCK

Map No.  
**6**