

## **SECTION II      INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**

### **Introduction**

The Inventory and Analysis Section of the LWRP presents a comprehensive inventory and analysis of existing conditions in Dobbs Ferry for the purpose of identifying important resources, problems and opportunities. This section represents a remarkable public participation effort in the Village. Hundreds of hours of research and writing was collectively performed by a dedicated group of Dobbs Ferry volunteers over a fifteen-month period from December 2000 to February 2002. Volunteers worked in eleven inventory subcommittees: history/archaeology, natural resources, commercial resources, recreation/waterfront resources, scenic resources, open space, transportation, public access, public infrastructure, land use and zoning, and educational resources. They gathered information from several sources including public documents, online and library research, interviews with local officials and residents, field investigation, input from public meetings and surveys, and a photographic inventory. These volunteers are to be congratulated for their accomplishment. In many cases, this section contains only a partial text of the inventories. Full texts are available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.

### **A.      Historic and Archaeological Resources**

#### **A.1.    History of Dobbs Ferry**

The history of Dobbs Ferry -- the how, why, and by whom it was settled; the activities that took place in this riverfront community through the centuries; and their role in the history of the region and the nation -- holds the key to what makes Dobbs Ferry a unique Rivertown in Westchester and in the nation. Dobbs Ferry's physical and cultural history provides the foundation from which the LWRP Steering Committee developed its recommendations for a comprehensive master plan for the waterfront area.

A narrative history of Dobbs Ferry, from the pre-colonial era through the twentieth century, was written for the LWRP by Village Historian Judith Hazard Holzer and is available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall. In the interest of space, this body of work is not included in the main text of this document.

The following sections, Historic Physical Attributes and Archaeological Resources, represent selections from these two inventories that are an integral part of the LWRP planning process and are referenced in subsequent sections of the document. Their full inventories are available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.

#### **A.2.    Historic Resources**

Information for the following text has been drawn from the Westchester County Archives, the archives of the Dobbs Ferry Village Historian, the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society, the Westchester County Historical Society, the New York Public Library and from private collections of historic materials.

While Dobbs Ferry is not dominated by water uses, the Hudson River and its tributaries have determined settlement, development, and transportation patterns. The historic “reach” of the Hudson in shaping the village’s character extends well beyond the riverbank. The discussion of surviving physical features is organized in the following categories: Village fed by watershed, Village as point on timeline of architectural legacy, transportation routes, shoreline, and Village as host. A complete history of the historic uses and structures on the waterfront and throughout the Village is available on file as “Historic Inventory and Recommendations Report” at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.

### **A.2.a. Architectural Legacy**

The following is a sampling of Dobbs Ferry's resources, based on committee observations, those of the LWRP Historical Resources and Scenic Views Sub-Committee, and walking tour fliers of the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society. Given the rich architectural resources of the village, this inventory requires extensive further study.

#### ***Colonial and 18th Century***

- Scattering of isolated colonial and 18th century residential buildings, outbuildings, and stone walls tucked within later settlement.



***Photo 1 - Estherwood Mansion on the Masters School campus***

#### ***19th Century***

- Substantial collections of modest and not-so-modest 19th century residences and many fine examples of “pattern book” house styles that originated in the Hudson Valley and were copied throughout the country.
- Business District - especially Main Street - with much of the 19th century fabric (if not architectural style) intact and several buildings of special note:

- Oceana Press building (1890's) at corner of Main and Chestnut Street.
- Present public library, at Cedar and Main, remodeled by noted architect Bertram Goodhue c. 1910.
- Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.
- Dobbs Ferry Playhouse on the corner of Main and Elm Street (Washington Theatre - converted into a movie house in the first decade of the 20th century, but housed in a 19th century structure).
- Landmark 19th century structures, some of which are on the National, State or Westchester Historic Registers, some in public view, some buried in their neighborhoods. These include:
  - Overseer's House on the Aqueduct at Walnut Street (1845).
  - Ingleside at St. Christopher's School, built 1854-55, from designs by Alexander Jackson Davis.
  - Estherwood at the Masters School, built 1894-95; c. 1880 carriage house on the same campus. (See Photo 1)
  - Draper Lane Caretaker's House in the Draper Lane condominium complex on lower Cedar Street.
  - Mead House on Elm Street, c. 1845 with later remodeling.
  - A sampling of private houses: e.g. a Calvert Vaux house commissioned by Charles Loring Brace and the 1864 county seat owned by East India trader R.M. Olyphant, listed on the Westchester County register.
- Historic Churches:
  - Zion Episcopal Church, completed 1834.
  - South Presbyterian Church, erected 1867.
  - Summerfield Methodist Church (now a private property), completed 1895.
  - Sacred Heart Church, dedicated 1896.

### ***20th Century***

- A wide variety of suburban residences; most suburban development occurred in the 20th century.
- High School, Middle School, Springhurst.

- Movie Theater on Cedar Street.
- Post Office.
- Railroad Station, built c. 1900 from design by Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge Architects of Boston, Mass.; remodeled in 1975 by Rosario D'Agrosa (AIA).
- Places of Worship: Our Lady of Pompeii, built 1926; Greenburgh Hebrew Center, significant remodel 1992.
- A scattering of notable examples of 20th century modernism - the Tabernacle of Prayer (formerly the Church of Christ Scientist) being the most obvious; also a cluster of houses designed by Frank Lloyd Wright Disciple, David Hankin, on Villard Hill.

### ***Stucco and Stones - the look of Italy in Dobbs Ferry***

The influence of Italian immigrants who settled Dobbs Ferry from 1890 on is conspicuous, especially on Main and Palisade Streets. The "Palazzo" at 10 Main Street and Our Lady of Pompeii Church, both built by Dominic Altieri, are the most finely crafted examples of an architectural approach that has infused the Village with qualities of an Italian hill town. Many 19th century frame buildings have been applied stucco; pockets of open space have been converted into tiny productive gardens and courtyards; walls, plinths and gates are examples of Italian craftsmanship.

As seen from the partial inventory above, Dobbs Ferry has an impressive collection of architecture, both "designed" and "vernacular." This legacy is intrinsic to the character of the community and can form a strong base for actions to improve economic life in the Village and deepen residents' pride in the community.

### ***Preservation and Restoration Neglected***

It must be noted, however, that to date preservation and restoration in the downtown have been largely neglected. Many buildings have lost architectural detail, have been poorly maintained, or have undergone "new look" fix-ups, often with shoddy materials and workmanship. Merchants select strip mall style façade treatments and signage that undermine the character of the Dobbs Ferry. Salvaging the underlying architectural resource will be a significant challenge.

In residential areas, a new, bigger-better fad has produced new construction and remodeling that is destructive to some established stylistically eclectic neighborhoods whose harmony depends on mature planting and some commonality of building size and shape.

### **A.2.b. Historic Uses Fed by Watershed**

Water flowing toward the Hudson played an important role in survival, settlement, and economic development. Wickers Creek nourished the earliest cultures living on the Hudson shore and supported the Lenape Indians encountered by the first European settlers. The watershed served European colonial farming. Waters south of Wickers Creek served a hoe factory (1835 map) at what is now the 145 Palisade property. The 1835 map also shows a snuff mill, likely on the south branch of Wickers Creek near its conjunction with the north branch.

A ca. 1860 map places an unidentified factory east of the culvert carrying the Creek south branch under the aqueduct—present Firemen’s Housing open space. Ponds on the south branch are “Schmidt” property, with no mill or factory listed. At 145 Palisade, the Biegen Brewery has three ponds and a total of 5 acres.

In 1867, a piano stool factory appears to replace the 1835 snuff mill on the northwest bank of the south branch of Wickers Creek, behind present Draper Lane apartments. Further west, on the north bank where the creek branches combined, J. Wilder had an unidentified mill. By contrast, an 1869 map shows the snuff mill still at the south fork, the hoe factory continuing at the 145 property, and a gristmill north of the combined creek waters. A brewery was located by a finger of water south of the public landing between present Livingston Avenue and the shore.

By 1889, at the 145 Palisade site, then named Anchor Brewing Company, an Anchor Brewery Park and Pavilion featured the utilitarian ponds that served the hoe factory and the growing brewery operations now incorporated into an ornamental water park. (See Photo 3) George A. Remseyer, M’F’R Piano Stools, was proprietor of the streamside factory with “Hilly ground all sides of mill. Stone Dam.”



***Photo 2 – Methodist Book Concern building as it looks today at 145 Palisade Street***

Today's roads, culverts and development limit access to the historic streams. However, part of Wickers Creek still sees daylight. Recommendations for protection, stabilization and restoration of its westernmost reach are in Section IV of this document.

Early maps and drawings show an evolution of the waterfront area, up to the present era that has given us the augmented area of commuter parking lot and Waterfront Park. They show changes in dock and fill locations, riverfront uses, waterfront access routes, and streams and ponds (when mapped).



*Photo 3 – Pond at 145 Palisade Street*

#### **A.2.c. Village as Point on Transportation Resources**

Historically, river, road, and train traffic connect Dobbs Ferry to the nation. While the village can claim few nationally momentous historic episodes, residents have been witnesses to events that have shaped the nation. The following elements represent historically important physical points in Dobbs Ferry.

- East-West Native American trail - launching point for river crossing.
- Hudson River shore - landing place for North-South and East-West river traffic.
- Central Village - Point on the valley road linking New York City with settlements to the north-the New York-Albany Post Road.
- Depot on the Hudson Line - railroad following the low, eastern bank of the Hudson River.
- Old Croton Aqueduct - the 19th century engineering marvel that flows through the village, paralleling the Hudson River in the Westchester river towns communities.
- Overseer's House - hub for management of the Croton Aqueduct.

The railroad, completed in 1849, added another avenue for freight, increased commercial activity on our waterfront, and put our peaceful hillsides within commuting distance of New York City. The railroad was



the transportation of choice for campaigning politicians. The Hudson Line connected rich entrepreneurs, in deluxe private railroad cars, with their estates and up-river country places.

#### **A.2.d. Village as Host**

Business travelers have rested in Dobbs Ferry, and day-trippers have visited our shore. Maps show a hotel near the southern landing below the village from the last quarter of the 19th century and continuing to 1911. The Greenburgh, Emmett, Union, and Hauptman Hotels, all with saloons, are shown on an 1889 map along with Temperance R'oms in the Elm to Chestnut blocks of Main Street, suggesting competition for the leisure time of visitors and locals. The beer garden and dancing platform at the brewery to the north was a destination for day-trippers. The 1894 Souvenir of Celebration offers sightseeing tips: "The tourist who glides up the beautiful Hudson on one of her floating palaces, or rushes past the Village drawn by the restless energy of the iron horse, has leisure to observe the great wall of traprock on the west bank is broken by a broad ravine, a most admirable point of communication between the west and east bank of the river." In the same publication, Mrs. M. Peterman, Proprietress of the Hudson River Hotel down by the steamboat landing, advertised fourteen comfortable rooms with a "homelike" atmosphere, and a well-stocked bar with beer, wines, ales, liquors, and cigars. Also, advertising in 1894, English's Orchestra, with headquarters at the Resolute Hotel, offered music for all occasions.

#### **A.2.e. Analysis of Historic Resources**

Dobbs Ferry is one of thirteen Westchester riverfront communities that comprise the Historic River Towns of Westchester (HRTW), an inter-municipal agreement that focuses on the historic resources of the river towns to encourage waterfront and downtown revitalization in the region. Dobbs Ferry's history -- both natural and cultural -- is rich, so the potential resources to reinforce its identity as a waterfront community and to enhance the quality of life of its residents are many. The Village's participation in the sweep of events in the Hudson Valley and the metropolitan region gives opportunities to attract visitors who can contribute to the economic life of the downtown. The lacework of streams flowing into the Hudson and the Saw Mill River that played an important role in the economic and recreational life of former residents is largely buried in dense residential development and culverts. Those streams and ponds that still see the sky should be inventoried and protected. Information describing the importance of these waterways to bygone residents will deepen our understanding of the complex ways native peoples and European settlers, farmers, and industrialists took advantage of Dobbs Ferry's strategic location on the Hudson.

For example, colonial settler and Village namesake Jan Dobbs ran his ferry service directly across to Sneden's Landing just south of where the Palisades slowly descend to the shoreline, allowing passengers to continue travel to points east and west.

### **A.3. Archaeological Resources**

In Dobbs Ferry, Wickers Creek, a steeply sloped creek that flows into the Hudson River, is the site of an Archaeological Area of Significance (See Figure II – 1, "Historic and Archaeological Resources"). In the

1980s, a mandatory pre-construction archaeological dig of the site discovered significant archaeological findings. The site is believed to be an ancient Native American oyster midden (oyster shell heap). It is theorized that the Native Americans were drawn to this location due to the abundance of oysters in the area. Located on a bluff approximately 50ft from the river, the site is estimated to have contained over 18,000 artifacts (arrowheads, utensils, shells, etc.) at one time, some dating back as far as 6,000 years ago.

The anecdotal reports of people who grew up in Dobbs Ferry regarding the abundance of arrowheads and shells found in the upper layers of soil in the Wickers Creek watershed support the conclusion that this is an extraordinarily rich archaeological site.

A 1988 study concluded that no other excavations were needed and development could proceed on the midden site. Many residents, however, believed the site to be a significant place for the Village and that it should be preserved and open to the public. In 1998 the Village obtained a conservation easement on the land. Development of the midden site as a public space, and developing an access plan to the site remain a priority for the Village. [Figure II-1, "Historic and Archaeological Resources Map,"](#) illustrates the location of the Wickers Creek archaeological site.

## **B. Natural Resources**

### **B.1. Physical Resources**

Dobbs Ferry's physical features are not unique to the Village. The geological history of the Hudson River has greatly impacted the physical characteristics of the entire Hudson Valley. Essentially built on a riverbank, Dobbs Ferry shares physical attributes - slopes, soils, bedrock, and water resources - that are unique to the near region. These features have, in turn, played an important role in determining the agricultural, commercial, recreational, and cultural character of the region, and they continue to impact the sustainability of upland, shoreline, and aquatic ecosystems as well as the water quality of the Hudson River and its tributaries. The full natural resource inventory prepared by the LWRP Committee and the biological assessment of Wickers Creek prepared by the LA Group of Saratoga Springs, New York, respectively are available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.

#### **B.1.a. Topography**

The area within the Village boundaries has varying topography. Elevations range from 0 feet above mean sea level at the shores of the Hudson River to 417 feet above mean sea level on Judson Avenue. Throughout the Village, slopes vary from greater than 25 percent along the Saw Mill River, to many areas where slopes range between 10 percent and 25 percent. Streets and housing are terraced into the slopes. The area west of the Old Croton Aqueduct and east of the Metro-North Railroad tracks is characterized by steep slopes. A few areas, notably Wickers Creek, are characterized by steep ravines secured by mature hardwoods: oaks, tulip trees, basswood, and elms. The topography provides spectacular views of the Hudson River from many areas in the Village. [Figure II-2, "Slope Map,"](#) illustrates both the slopes and topography throughout the Village.



### **B.1.b. Geology**

The entire Hudson Estuary was scoured by the advance of the Wisconsin Ice Sheet approximately 15,000 years ago. The lower Hudson Valley and Long Island Sound became a freshwater lake when water from the Great Lakes and Champlain Basins became impounded by dams of glacial material left by the melting ice during the last ice age. The estuary was created when the morainal dam was breached at Verrazano Narrows and the ocean flooded the Hudson Valley. Since then, sea level rise and sedimentation due to erosion from the surrounding uplands have made smaller changes to the landscape.

The bedrock of the area is part of the Westchester Highlands physiographic Province/Manhattan Prong that extends south from the Hudson Highlands. The rock that makes up the prong underlies the Triassic age rock on the western side of the Hudson River, including the diabase outcrops that form the Palisades. The rocks forming the Manhattan prong consist of highly metamorphosed sequence gneiss, schist, and marble. The sequence is intensely deformed with complex folds and block and reverse faults. The site is underlain by two rock types of this sequence: the Inwood marble of the Ordovician Cambrian age (500 million years old) and the Fordham gneiss which is PreCambrian (570 million years old) in age. Inwood marble is typically a dolomite marble with interbeds of calcschist, granulite, and quartzite. The Fordham gneiss is typically a biotite-quartz-feldspar gneiss with some hornblende and garnet.

### **B.1.c. Soils**

Information about soil composition and characteristics is extremely useful in making land use decisions and in determining suitability for septic systems and development. Unstable soils are vulnerable to erosion, especially on streambanks and steep slope areas such as Dobbs Ferry, and need to be carefully managed through conservation techniques. Stormwater runoff is a major cause of soil erosion, loss of topsoil, degradation of landscapes, and the buildup of silt and sediments in our streams and rivers.

In general, the soils in the Village area are classified as Charlton loam, Chatfield/Charlton Complex, Riverhead Loams, Knickerbocker sandy loams, and Udorthents. These types of soils possess a variety of characteristics, but they mainly consist of very deep to moderately deep, well-drained, medium-textured soils that can exist on the sides and tops of glaciated hills, or as Riverhead Loams in floodplains. These soils formed in glacial till derived from granite, schist and gneiss. The presence of silt planes on banks near the railroad and river has resulted in some instability and erosion.

### **B.1.d. Water Resources**

The entire Village of Dobbs Ferry is in the Hudson River watershed. Water resources in the Village of Dobbs Ferry are shown in [Figure II – 3, “Water Resources Map.”](#) The Village area is actually composed of two smaller watersheds or sub-basins. The larger sub-basin drains, by way of the north and south branches of Wickers Creek, directly into the Hudson River. A smaller sub-basin to the east drains into the Saw Mill River, a Hudson River tributary which feeds into the river at Yonkers.

Dobbs Ferry's most significant waterway extant is Wickers Creek. Because of this Hudson River tributary's natural, Native American, and post-European settlement history, it deserves a high level of protection from encroachment by neighboring development. The biological inventory of Wickers Creek, described in this section, helps to reveal the extent of land and water resources to be considered for protection, restoration, or interpretation. A professionally-guided ecological restoration plan should focus on maintaining the fragile relationship between Wickers Creek and the Hudson River and a sensible policy to enhance water quality through stream bank stability and habitat restoration. See Section IV, C.11.a. for the LWRP recommendations regarding a Wickers Creek management plan. Other incidental water bodies warranting scrutiny and possible measures of protection include the intermittent waterfall above the railroad station (from stormwater) and the pond at 145 Palisade Street (from groundwater).

#### **B.1.d.(1) Hudson River**

Dobbs Ferry's most significant regional water resource is the Hudson River. The Hudson River is one of America's most important commercial and recreational waterways and is recognized as an estuary of national importance. From its source at Lake Tear of the Clouds to the Verrazano Narrows in New York Harbor, the Hudson River is over 315 miles long, traveling through 19 counties.

The Hudson River Estuary, the tidal portion of the river where fresh water from upstream tributaries mixes with the salt water from the ocean, extends 154 miles from Battery Park to the Federal Dam between Green Island and Troy, N.Y. The Hudson River Estuary is a rich ecological environment providing food and shelter to diverse plants and animals. It is the home of over 206 species of fish and a spawning ground for major species of Atlantic coast fish. The Hudson River valley is an important flyway for migratory birds and is home to many endangered and threatened species such as bald eagles and heartleaf plantain.

The Atlantic Ocean's tidal influence occurs in the Hudson River from its mouth to as far north as the Federal Dam at Troy. Salt water enters the Hudson at New York Bay and travels north during flood tides, while less saline, or brackish, water travels downstream and discharges into the bay on the ebb tides. Flood tide flow can be 10-100 times greater than the rate of fresh water ebb flow. Downstream fresh water flow varies seasonally, with the highest fresh water flows into the estuary in the spring and fall (due to snow melt and rains) and the lowest flows into the estuary in late summer. Two high tides and two low tides occur daily in the Hudson River Estuary.

The health of Hudson River estuarine ecosystems and their freshwater and saltwater habitats and food sources can be greatly impacted by the river's varying tides, wave action, winds, and salinity of the river. In addition, waterfront area development and shoreline structures such as rip rap, floating docks, piers, and boat launches can negatively impact water quality, estuarine species, and habitats if they are built without consideration of environmental ramifications. In Dobbs Ferry, development activity in the waterfront areas and in the Wickers Creek watershed

should be conducted in a manner to minimize potentially negative impacts on estuarine ecosystems and water quality in general.

**B.1.d.(2) Hudson River Management Initiatives**

There are a number of initiatives being pursued on behalf of the environmental integrity of the Hudson River. On the national level the Hudson River has been designated, along with 13 other rivers nationwide, an American Heritage River. This initiative is an innovative response to help river communities that seek federal assistance and other resources to meet some tough challenges. Without any new regulations on private property owners, state, local, or tribal governments, the American Heritage Rivers initiative is about making more efficient and effective use of existing federal resources, cutting red-tape, and lending a helping hand.

The American Heritage status supports the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation’s Hudson River Estuary Management Plan (HREMP) and is linked to other active programs along the Hudson River. These other programs include the NY/NJ Hudson Estuary Program, the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area Management Plan, the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve program, and the Hudson River Valley Greenway Council efforts. The HREMP is looking for federal collaboration on a number of river related initiatives that involve:



*Photo 4 - The Hudson River is Dobbs Ferry’s most significant water*

- River Access (fishing, swimming, boating, railroad crossings).
- Waterfront Redevelopment (sewer infrastructure, piers and docks, habitat friendly best management practices for bulkheads).

- USGS Water Quality data and report.
- Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve projects (benthic mapping, SAV mapping, habitat restoration).
- Rivers and Estuary Center on the Hudson (in the planning stages).
- Biodiversity Conservation and Research (conservation strategies, significant areas, inventory needs).
- Habitat Restoration (Croton Point restoration project, opportunities for additional sites).
- Removal of abandoned Barges (opportunities for federal coordination).
- Open Space (State Open Space Plan in the HRV).
- Piers and Docks Study on aquatic habitat (opportunity for coordination and defining of Best Management Practices).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also has an active wildlife habitat program and the Wildlife Habitat Council is working with private corporations on wildlife habitat development on private lands adjacent to the Hudson River.

#### **B.1.d.(3) Saw Mill River and Wickers Creek**

The Village is divided by the north/south ridgeline that divides the Hudson River and the Saw Mill River watersheds. The Saw Mill River and Wickers Creek and many small streams and wetlands comprise the drainage system for these two Hudson River tributaries. The Saw Mill River flows south from northern Westchester through the easternmost portion of Dobbs Ferry and Hastings before entering the Hudson River at Yonkers. Wickers Creek has its source in the higher elevations of Dobbs Ferry; the north branch of Wickers Creek originates in the golf course east of North Mountain Drive and flows on the northern side of the Village into the Hudson River north of Waterfront Park; the south branch originates at the Children's Village and flows under Broadway and meets the north branch just west of the Old Croton Aqueduct.

The health of Hudson River waters is directly related to the health of its tributaries. Local pollution prevention, stormwater management, and streambank stabilization programs are important to maintain water quality and wildlife habitats associated with these water resources. Currently, the EPA stormwater management guidelines are being used for Village review of both public and private development projects.



*Photo 5 – View looking west at low tide at mouth of Wickers Creek, Showing outlet under the Amtrak/Metro North Railroad*

#### **B.1.e. Wetlands**

Wetlands in the Village (See Figure II – 3, “Water Resources Map”) provide important wildlife habitats, opportunities for recreation, and valuable open space. They also play a key role in flood control and improving water quality because they act as natural filters that are able to absorb and store large quantities of runoff and filter out sediments and pollutants.

In 1975, New York State passed the Freshwater Wetlands Act in order to protect certain wetlands from activities that can have a negative impact on the wetland and, in turn, water quality. Wetlands 12.4 acres or larger in size and smaller wetlands with unusual local importance, are regulated by the State Freshwater Wetlands Act. Any proposed action within 100 feet of a designated wetland is required to obtain a permit from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).

Within the Village waterfront area there are three small wetland areas. The first, located east of the tracks near the mouth of Wickers Creek, is a freshwater wetland delineated as a wet meadow. A wet meadow is grassland with waterlogged soil near the surface but without standing water for most of the year. Also present is a riparian wetland adjacent to the north side of Wickers Creek. A riparian wetland is a wetland influenced by the adjacent stream, and is characterized by its linear form along the river. A riparian wetland acts as a large buffer for the stream from upstream systems. The third wetland is a freshwater tidal wetland, regulated by the New York State Tidal Wetlands Act, located at the mouth of Wickers Creek west of the railroad tracks. A freshwater tidal wetland is a freshwater marsh that is close enough to coasts to experience significant tides, but at the same time is not usually affected by oceanic saltwater.





*Photo 6 - Wet Meadow near Wickers Creek on the Southwest Side*

There are also several linear wetlands associated with the Saw Mill River corridor. All wetlands identified by the National Wetland Inventory are depicted in [Figure II-3, "Water Resources Map."](#) Currently, Dobbs Ferry has no regulations to protect wetlands.

Due to the existence of wetlands on the waterfront, all development and construction should be done in a manner to protect and preserve these wetlands. All three wetlands have been previously impacted by human disturbance. These impacts include the following: the effects of the rip-rap wall at the Waterfront Park, filling and dredging the river, introduction of fertilizers, petroleum products and insecticides through runoff, removal of natural vegetation, encroachment by or increased stormwater runoff from adjacent land use including development, and various recreational activities. All future activities should be conducted in a manner to minimize potentially negative impacts. Concern also should focus on the surrounding land use and potential future activities that may take place near the wetland. One effective way to protect wetlands is to preserve an undisturbed vegetative upland buffer around the wetland perimeter.

## **B.2. Biological Resources**

Historically, fish and wildlife and their habitats played a crucial role in local and regional economics of Hudson River communities. Today, the impact of these resources on the Hudson Valley economy is just as important. Successful tourism in the valley depends on the environmental sustainability of the region, the careful balancing of development and preservation, and the local involvement in the perpetuation of the enjoyment of the areas unique natural resources. The LWRP inventory and analysis of biological resources focuses primarily on the Hudson River and waterfront areas, Wickers Creek and the Saw Mill River.

### **B.2.a. Vegetation**

The primary indigenous vegetative type found in the waterfront area is the biome known as mesophytic hardwood forest that typically occurs in southeastern New York. Very little of this biome remains except as remnant fragments between developed areas. Tree species of the mesophytic forest include: red maple, linden, crab apple, sugar maple, hickory, locust, Norway maple, poplar, grey birch, tulip popular, white pine, red oak, white oak, and American beech.

Indigenous understory herbaceous plants that can be found in the area include witch hazel, sassafras, box elder, false Solomon's seal, Virginia waterleaf, garlic mustard, goldenrod, day lily and milkweed.

The dominant species is the tulip tree (The tallest hardwood in North America). Some of the tulip trees and some of the red oaks are 80 feet tall and more than 3 feet in diameter, qualifying them for inclusion in the Westchester County Big Tree Register. The woods also contain large old white and red oaks, sugar maples, white ash, and many other species of native trees, including spicebush and the small but striking Hercules' club. (Woodlands Environmental Education Laboratory, Proposal, February 1999).

Also present is a riparian wetland adjacent to the North side of Wickers creek. The western terminus of this wetland is approximately 50 feet east of the small wet meadow. This site is similar to the wet meadow dominated by wetland grasses and sedges but containing other plants such as jewelweed and torrey rush. These wetlands and adjoining uplands are also dominated by Japanese knotweed, which exists in dense patches along the western portion of Wickers Creeks north bank. (The Landing at Dobbs Ferry, Supplemental Final EIS, Nov, 1997).

Wildflowers in the waterfront area include: trout lily, Dutchman's breeches, bloodroot, and violet which come into bloom in the spring. In the summer blooming wildflowers include asters and goldenrod. Other species include vines (wild grape, Virginia creeper, poison ivy), ferns, mosses, and fungi. (Woodlands Environmental Education Laboratory, Proposal, February 1999).

### **B.2.b. Fisheries**

The Hudson River is home to many migratory fish such as the American shad, striped bass, American eel, Atlantic sturgeon, and large and smallmouth bass. The NYSDEC maintains a commercial fishery-monitoring program and conducts spawning stock surveys, both in an effort to monitor the status of the fisheries of the Hudson River.

The shortnose sturgeon, listed as endangered in New York State, may be present in the general vicinity of Wickers Creek and Waterfront Park. The sturgeon has been federally listed as endangered since 1967 due to loss of habitat and habitat degradation from dams, water discharges, river dredging, and waste disposal. In New York State, shortnose sturgeons are only known to occur in the Hudson River and possibly upper stretches of New York sections of the Delaware River.





***Photo 7 - View Looking East at the Mouth of Wickers Creek***

Fish Advisories - Due to elevated levels of PCBs (in finfish and blue crabs) and cadmium (in blue crabs), the New York State Department of Health (DOH) has issued specific advice for people to limit consumption of fish and crabs from the Hudson River. For the Hudson River in the vicinity of Dobbs Ferry, DOH currently advises that women of childbearing age and children under the age of 15 eat no fish of any species. Other people are advised:

- Eat no gizzard shad
- Eat no more than one (1/2 pound) meal per month of American eel, Atlantic needlefish, bluefish, brown bullhead, carp, channel catfish, goldfish, largemouth and smallmouth bass, rainbow smelt, striped bass, walleye, white catfish, and white perch.
- Eat no more than one meal per week of all other fish species.
- The advisories above also apply to the section of the Hudson River from Dobbs Ferry south to Greystone, except the advisory for American eel is to eat none.

These advisories are reviewed by DOH on a regular basis as new data become available. The DOH Center for Environmental Health encourages waterfront property owners to post DOH fish advisory signs to alert anglers.

### **B.2.c. Wildlife**

Due to the high-density urban nature of the Village of Dobbs Ferry, there is little suitable habitat for most species of wildlife. During a Wickers Creek Biological Survey (see section d. "Unique Areas and

Locally Significant Habitat”), small mammal live traps were set in order to identify species present along Wickers Creek. Results of the study yielded observations of the following mammals: gray squirrel, raccoon, short-tailed shrew, white-footed mouse, house mouse, meadow vole, and Norway rat. Residents in the area report the presence of skunk, woodchuck, rabbits, opossum and white-tailed deer.

The north-south orientation of the Hudson River Valley makes it a critical link in the migratory patterns of birds, insects, and fish. Monarch butterflies follow the north-south orientation of the river to link up with and then follow the Atlantic coastline south in the autumn and then reverse the process in spring on cross-continental migrations.

Numerous birds also were recorded, as the Hudson River is an important migration corridor for many species. The beach near the mouth of Wickers Creek provides an excellent stopover site for migrant birds. Here birds are able to feed on crustaceans, mollusks, worms, insects, and various plant species. Both migrant and resident birds use Wickers Creek for foraging, bathing, swimming, drinking, and nesting. It is also home to many resident birds throughout the year.

The Wickers Creek ravine and the Saw Mill River provide the only wooded stream corridor habitat in the area. It is critical to carefully restore the area and manage the corridor for birds and other wildlife. Preservation of the Creek and surrounding habitat in its natural state should be a focal point of the waterfront plan.

There was no formal survey for birds conducted at the Wickers Creek site. The observation period was after the annual spring migration. Bird species were recorded if heard or seen while traversing the creek during other surveys. A total of 38 species were thus evidenced between 21 and 25 May 2001 as part of the Wickers Creek Biological Study (available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.)

All of the birds documented during the Wickers Creek study are potential breeders in the area except a Brant (*Branta bernicla*) that was observed every day from 21 to 25 May 2001. The Brant, observed either feeding on the mudflats during low tide or swimming in the Hudson River was most likely a non-breeding migrant that did not continue flying north to its breeding grounds in the Hudson Bay region. Brant are often observed on the coast of New York during the winter (Root, 1988), but the species has been declining since the 1930s along the Atlantic coast when their most important food source, eelgrass, disappeared (Bellrose, 1980).

The Hudson River has long been an important migration corridor for many species of birds. The beach near the mouth of Wickers Creek may provide an excellent stopover site (including resting and foraging areas) for migrant birds, including Brant, that also feed on crustaceans, mollusks, worms, insects, and various plant species (Ehrlich et al., 1988). During the Wickers Creek survey, several species of crustaceans (crabs, crayfish) were observed at the mouth of the creek during periods of low tidal influence.

Numerous adult Canada Geese (*Branta canadensis*) were observed foraging on the beach at the mouth of the creek during both high tidal and low tidal periods during the day. In addition to adult geese, eight downy goslings were seen huddled in a group near debris at the high tide line. The Wickers Creek beach

area is likely supplying geese with mollusks and crustaceans, and possibly seeds and insects for forage. The beach area is relatively undisturbed, with the exception of an occasional human or dog (as evidenced by tracks) that may walk the beach during low tide.

Canada Geese have, in fact, become a nuisance at Waterfront Park as their droppings are ubiquitous throughout the grounds. During the past ten years, the Village of Dobbs Ferry has employed several strategies to discourage the geese population at the waterfront and is currently finding success with a border collie that chases the geese into the water whenever they come up on land. The problem has been reduced, but not solved.

Both migrant and resident birds use Wickers Creek for foraging, bathing, swimming, and drinking, and residents use its forested buffers for nesting. Two Mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) were observed swimming in the upper creek between the aqueduct and the calcareous boulders west of the confluence of the north and south branches of the creek.

Previous surveys of birds at Wickers Creek indicate a representative bird fauna is present (J. Huffman, 1988). The development that has since occurred on the north side of the creek, however, has decreased the amount of available suitable breeding and wintering habitat. Although the 1988 survey cannot be directly compared to the present survey, it has been shown that bird numbers decrease as habitat availability decreases. Thirty-two of the 73 bird species that were observed in 1988 were observed during the 2001 study. Six bird species were observed in 2001 that were not recorded in 1988 (Warbling Vireo, *Vireo gilvus*; Carolina Wren, *Thryothorus ludovicianus*; Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*; Turkey Vulture, *Cathartes aura*; Brant, *Branta bernicla*; and Black-crowned night heron, *Nycticorax nycticorax*). Several factors may enter into this comparison, however, such as the type, intensity, the time of year and time of day the observations took place (i.e., 21 of the birds observed in 1988 were probably early spring migrants and thus would not have been present in 2001).

According to the NYSDEC, no endangered, threatened or special concern wildlife species, rare plant, animal or natural habitats that would be impacted by human activities on the waterfront in Dobbs Ferry, including Wickers Creek, have been found within the LWRP boundaries. Additionally, the United States Department of the Interior has responded that no Federally listed or proposed endangered or threatened species have been identified within the project area. Both letters and the complete LWRP Natural Resource Inventory are available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.

#### **B.2.d. Unique Areas and Locally Significant Habitat**

##### ***Wickers Creek – Tributary of the Hudson River***

The Wickers Creek watershed is of particular significance to the Hudson River. As a tributary of the Hudson River, the two water bodies share water quality and habitat management issues. Through a grant from the New York State Hudson River Estuary Program, a biological assessment of Wickers Creek was conducted in May 2001. The assessment was performed to offer a complete understanding of the site's natural resources and to make recommendations for preserving and improving the conditions on-site. The study site included the stretch of

Wickers Creek from the Old Croton Aqueduct west to the mouth of the creek where it enters the Hudson River and the conservation easement property north of the creek that comes in direct contact with the Hudson River at The Landing property. In addition to the mildly to severely eroded portions of the streambanks, the study reported that the creek habitat is further degraded by the dumping of refuse. Results of the study are summarized on pages II-12 through II-18 of this Section.



***Photo 8 - Wickers Creek (shaded stream banks and cobble substrates in lower reaches)***

The area was inventoried for small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, aquatic macro-invertebrates, and vegetation. Also, basic stream habitat and stream bank assessments were conducted to make recommendations for preserving and improving the water quality condition of the stream. Results of the study showed high levels of erosion and sedimentation due to poor stream bank stabilization and a highly urbanized watershed. There was an absence of fish and amphibians, most likely due to the increased sedimentation of the stream as well as the presence of the Norway rat. See Section IV.C. 11.a. for LWRP recommendations. The complete biological assessment of Wickers Creek, its findings, and recommendations, is available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.

### **B.3. Environmental Issues**

#### **B.3.a. Areas of Critical Environmental Significance**

In the course of the inventory and analysis of existing conditions in Dobbs Ferry, the LWRP Committee was able to identify several environmental issues in the Village that deserve attention. They include issues of navigational difficulties; point and non-point source pollution of water resources; and erosion and flooding.

The Hudson River is recognized as one of the nation's most important estuaries. Its history and scenery, importance to the marine fishery, and vitality as a water recreational resource make the Hudson unique. The river's value is recognized in the Coastal Zone Management Program by the significant coastal fish

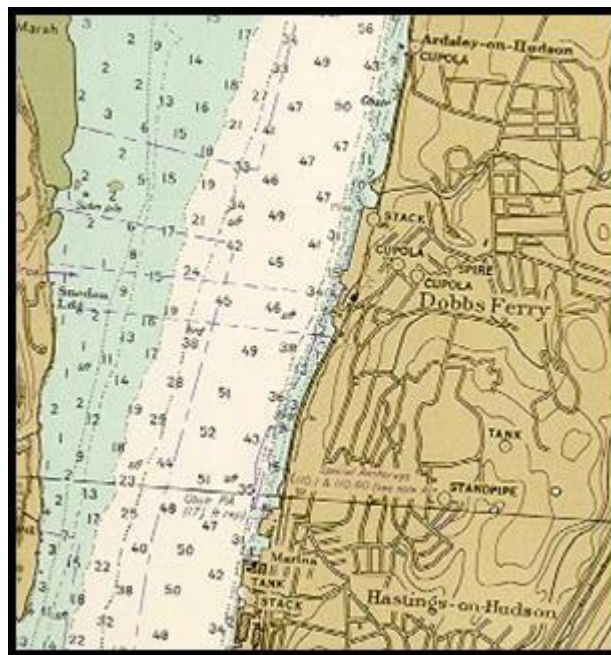
and wildlife habitat areas designated by the New York State Department of State. The entire estuary is further recognized by the state designation of the Hudson River Estuarine District. Westchester County recognized the Hudson River as a sensitive resource by designating the Hudson River and the immediate upland area as a Critical Environmental Area under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) regulations. This designation has the effect of requiring a higher level of scrutiny of unlisted SEQR actions and will assist the Village in LWRP consistency review.

### **B.3.b. Navigation and Dredging**

Waters off the Dobbs Ferry shoreline are extremely shallow, with the river depths just off shore that range from 1 to 5 feet, as illustrated by the map below. This shallow water makes the notion of swimming or docking boats at the existing shoreline very difficult.

Indeed, a 2001 Hudson River Estuary Swimming Feasibility Study indicated that the river bottom in this shallow area is cohesive mud and clay, creating problems for recreational use such as swimming and wading.

The study indicated that, although the area is accessible by kayak and canoe, much dredging would be necessary to dock boats or provide recreational opportunities for swimming near the shore. A channel would need to be dredged from the deeper water toward the shoreline to allow boats to approach; an additional channel would have to be dredged along the shoreline to make it possible for boats to dock along the waterfront. The current dredged navigational channel is located approximately 200 feet from shore



***Hudson River Water Depth***



### **B.3.c. Hazardous Waste Sites**

According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC Inactive Hazardous Waste Disposal Sites in New York), there are no hazardous waste sites within the Village of Dobbs Ferry. Due to the Village's prior use of the northern area of the waterfront as a local land fill/dump, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in March of 1986 designated the area a potential Superfund Cleanup Site. The site was assessed and inspected in September of 1986 and no serious threats were found. The site is currently classified as NFRAP (No Further Remedial Action Planned). The NYSDEC Division of Hazardous Substances designation, indicating that the Waterfront Park site possesses a minimal probability of a significant threat, is available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.

### **B.3.d. Point and Non-Point Source Pollution**

Point source pollution is pollution that comes from a specific, identified source such as industrial waste or sewage that is discharged directly into the river from known discharge points. Non-point source pollution, unlike pollution from industrial and sewage treatment plants, comes from many diffuse sources. Non-point source pollution may be caused when rainfall or snowmelt moves over and through the ground. As the runoff moves, it picks up and carries away natural and human-made pollutants, depositing them into lakes, rivers, wetlands, coastal waters, and underground sources of drinking water.

There are several point sources of pollution that release effluent or pollution into the waterfront area or upriver of the waterfront. There are five storm sewer outfalls into the Hudson River in Dobbs Ferry from pipes between 15" and 36" in diameter. These enter the River at various shoreline points at Waterfront Park. Stormwater runoff to these outfalls drains from many areas in the southwestern portions of the Village from the top of Clinton Avenue. Stormwater runoff from The Landing goes into a bio filter retention system before entering the River.

Several storm sewer outfalls enter Wickers Creek from the origins of the north branch (near the Ardsley Golf Course) and south branch (at Children's Village) to the mouth of the creek. These outfall pipes deliver stormwater runoff from all areas of the Village, discharging directly into Wickers Creek.

Several storm drainage outfalls into the Saw Mill River originate in the eastern sections of the Village, including Hickory Hill, Stanley, Lawrence, and Livingston Streets.

Non-point sources of pollution are a great concern to the Dobbs Ferry waterfront. Some of the common non-point sources affecting the waterfront area are stormwater run-off from lawns and the many impervious services within the watershed (e.g.: parking lots, roads, and buildings). The run-off can be polluted by and carry fertilizers from the residential and commercial lawn treatment, oil, gasoline, road salt or other automobile pollutants, sediment from erosion, various detergents, and/or many other pollutants. These pollutants are carried down to the waterfront area via Wickers Creek where they are deposited in the Hudson River. The pollutants eventually accumulate at the Dobbs Ferry waterfront. In recent severe winters, the unimproved Waterfront Park land to the north, and the north end of the improved park were used by the Village to receive salted snow from road clearing. The Village does not

have a permit to dump the snow directly into the river. However, the salts and other pollutants enter the Hudson River directly when the snow melts. This practice is unlikely to change.

The stretch of the Saw Mill River in Dobbs Ferry is also vulnerable to non-point sources of pollutants from stormwater runoff from the Saw Mill Parkway and other development along the steep slopes of the river corridor. Stormwater, including snow, can deliver a considerable load of road salts and automotive wastes from the hard surfaces of the Parkway and Village streets above the Parkway.

One of the ways to reduce the non-point source pollution is to ensure the installation of effective stormwater runoff catch basins at strategic locations in areas such as parking lots; along roads; and areas down slope of golf courses, institutional campuses, housing development, or other developments in order to catch run-off pollutants. In these catch basins, the pollutants will settle to the bottom and only the filtered water will continue to flow through the watershed. There are many other techniques that can be implemented to filter out pollutants from run-off, such as vegetative buffer strips, wetlands, and other non-structural means to prevent pollutants from entering the water column.

There are no sanitary sewer outfalls in the Village of Dobbs Ferry. All wastewater is piped, via Westchester County trunk lines, to the Yonkers Wastewater Treatment Facility. There are also no combined sewers in the Village of Dobbs Ferry. (These are illegal in Westchester County.) There are approximately 15 individual septic systems serving Dobbs Ferry homes at the top of Summit Terrace, Park Hill Terrace, and Birch Lane.



*Photo 9 - Point Source Pollution*

### **B.3.e. Flooding and Erosion Problems**

Flooding is an uncommon problem for Dobbs Ferry. There are, however, some areas that are labeled flood zones for 100 and 500-year flood events ([See Figure II-3](#)). These floodplains are located along Wickers Creek, the Saw Mill River, and along the shores of the Hudson River. This indicates that each



year these regions have either a 1/100 or 1/500 chance that there will be a storm event that floods the area. The 500-year storm event produces severe flooding.

Erosion is a considerable problem in areas that combine steep slopes and drainage collection such as the vicinity of the Saw Mill River and Wickers Creek. Water flowing over steep, un-vegetated slopes picks up soil particles and carries them into the water body. This continued siltation can strip a bank of soil and vegetation, make it unstable, undermine the trees and/or manmade structures, and increase suspended particles in the water column, thereby introducing a muddy opacity. Each of these erosion impacts has its own detrimental effects on the water quality of the Hudson River Estuary and its tributaries.

The first step that should be taken to manage erosion is to stabilize the banks to prevent any further erosion. For very steep slopes with extreme erosion, the embankment must be stabilized. Walls can be built with gabions or rip-rap can be used to add structural stability to prevent further undermining of the banks. Other slopes should be stabilized by armoring the toe of the slope with boulders or rock-filled gabions, baskets, or tubes. Then vegetative cover can be used to prevent further erosion of the slopes. Matting, live staking, or buried bundles of live sticks, will slow overland flow of run-off and hold the soil in place, allowing for vegetation to root. Roots will further stabilize the soil. The bank is revegetated with grasses, reeds, and saplings as the matting decomposes leaving a surface-stabilized, a vegetated slope.

Note: Vegetative cover is not a structural stabilization. It only stabilizes the surface to deter erosion. The entire bank could still fail if the “toe of slope” is not reinforced with a structural solution. Toe protection is the key element in creating structural stability.

### **B.3.f. Water Quality**

The DEC lists the water quality classification of the Hudson River at Dobbs Ferry as “SB.” The best usages of Class SB waters are primary and secondary contact recreation and fishing. These waters should be suitable for fish propagation and survival. However, restrictions on eating these fish still apply. See Page II-15.

A NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Swimming Feasibility Study studied the feasibility of utilizing the river for public recreational swimming including the development or redevelopment of beach areas. The study surveyed the Waterfront Park and mouth of Wickers Creek areas for their potential as swimming areas. The study found that the shallowness and deep mud were a real problem in the Waterfront Park area. Approximately 2.5 feet of mud and clay were found on the bottom using hand driven probes. Water clarity, due to turbidity, was noted as poor in this location. The study concluded that the Waterfront Park area is an unsuitable area for swimming.

The small sandy cove at the northern portion of the 145 Palisade property, adjacent to the mouth of Wickers Creek, is the result of a small sand delta. Depth is also an issue here, there being only 4 feet of water available at a distance of 69 feet from shore. Water depth at 228 feet from shore was measured at 10 feet. Bottom samples were of a silty sand mixture with small pebbles. The river currents are a significant issue in this area, even close to shore.

According to DEC, water quality data is not available for either Wickers Creek or the Saw Mill River. Wickers Creek is a Class D waterway for which the best use is listed as fishing. These waters do not necessarily support fish propagation although fish may survive there. The Wickers Creek Biological Study reported that Wickers Creek is essentially devoid of biological life and may not be able to support many of the creatures that would ordinarily be found in this type of waterway. This is possibly due to water pollution from stormwater runoff and a recent gasoline spill. Another likely possibility is that the Norway Rats cleaned out everything edible, including fish, causing collapses from which populations could not recover. Trapping and removal of the rats would be a pre-requisite to restoration of indigenous species.

#### **B.4. Analysis of Natural Resources Constraints**

Analysis of the waterfront's physical, biological, visual, and environmental resources brings to light many features that need to be taken into account when developing plans for the revitalization of the waterfront area.

The soils in the waterfront area can reasonably accommodate recreational uses. They are moderately deep to deep with adequate drainage. Building in the shoreline area may have serious limitations due to the fact that much of the land originated as a landfill. The slopes in the area present a restriction on future plans for development. The majority of the slopes exceed 15 percent making development in these areas very difficult due to soil instability and erosion control and stormwater management concerns.

Erosion is a serious issue in the area because of loss of soil and vegetation and increased sedimentation in Wickers Creek, Saw Mill River, and the Hudson River. The high level of silt and sediment being deposited from upstream sources is a major contributor to the shallow depths and mucky bottoms in this section of the river. Any projects on steep slopes need to be studied for their feasibility, given soil problems and potential negative impacts on the river. Approved construction projects must make use of erosion control techniques such as retaining walls, gabions, rip rap, erosion control blankets, silt fences, and sediment bales to reduce the amount of erosion and sediment entering the water bodies during and after new construction.

Another source of concern for the waterfront area, the Hudson River, Wickers Creek, and the Saw Mill River is non-point source pollution from runoff. This is discussed in Section 3.d. Continual efforts must be made to maintain stormwater catch basins and to keep them in proper condition to minimize the amount of pollutants that leak into rivers and creeks. This will help.

The steep slopes throughout the Village, although they create complications for development, provide scenic vistas that allow the Hudson River and surrounding areas to be viewed easily. They are therefore highly desirable in terms of residential development. The local Steep Slope Law was designed in the late 1980's to prevent destabilization of slopes. The land should be examined to see whether the law is indeed effective or whether it would benefit from revision.

Flooding is a hazard along the waterfront during periods of high tide and high rainfall events. In the spring, Waterfront Park is often subject to flooding from the Hudson River overflowing. While this is not

a significant concern, consideration should be given regarding the placement of street furniture and recreational equipment in this area.

In the waterfront revitalization area, there are three separate wetlands of varying classifications. The regulations protecting these wetlands restrict development options. They include leaving a suitable buffer strip to minimize any potentially negative impacts.

The presence of the shortnose sturgeon, an endangered fish, in the Hudson River increases the need for proper mitigation of any potentially negative environmental impacts due to development. Sport and commercial fishing has been significantly impacted by the restrictions due to pollution in the Hudson River. The EPA-ordered dredging of the PCBs in the Upper Hudson River above the City of Albany might eventually mitigate this situation.

The natural environment of the Dobbs Ferry waterfront is an important feature and one that attracts many visitors. Necessary steps should be taken to coordinate any plans for development with the protection of natural resources.



*Photo 10 - Sedimentation Evident on the Beach at Wickers Creek*

## **C. Human Cultural Environment**

### **C.1. Demographics**

Table II-1, “Demographic Profile,” gives an overview of the various population statistics for the Village. The Village of Dobbs Ferry has a total of 10,622 residents according to the 2000 Census. This number represents a 10-year increase of 682 people and a reverse of the population decline of 113 people experienced between 1980 and 1990 in the community.

### **C.1.a. Age and Race**

The median age in the Village is 37 years which is the same as the overall Westchester County average and slightly higher than the state average of 35.9 years. The Census provides some useful information for future planning for schools and senior facilities. There are 725 children of pre-school age and under, and 1,652 school-age children, indicating a need to plan for future increases in enrollment. A more refined analysis would help to target these increases and plan for future school enrollments as well as for Village services for pre-school and school-age children. In the adult population, the greatest numbers are between 35 and 44 years of age. There are 741 senior adults over the age of 75 years (6.8% of the population).

In terms of race, Dobbs Ferry is largely White (80.7%) with the remaining population primarily Black (7.4%), and Asian and Pacific Islander (7.7%). Residents of Hispanic origin (included as white) represent 7 percent of the population, a 54% increase from 1990.

### **C.1.b. Education**

Educational attainment is comparatively high for individuals over the age of 24. Approximately 44 percent of Village residents have attained bachelor or graduate level degrees. For all of Westchester County the average is 35 percent (1990).

Educational achievement appears to translate to higher family incomes. The 2000 Census has not yet released income data but the 1990 median household income estimate was reported at \$50,061, just above the Westchester County average of \$48,405, and well above the New York State average of \$32,965.

Employment statistics indicate that the greatest number of employed persons from the Village was in educational services, health services, other miscellaneous professional services, and the retail trades.

### **C.1.c. Housing**

The median housing value in Dobbs Ferry was \$325,000 in 2000, a 10% increase from the 1990 value. For the same period, the median value in Westchester County was \$325,000, a 16% increase from the 1990 value. In 2000, of the 3,941 housing units in the Village, 3,792 were occupied by owners, 1,573 were by renters, and 149 were vacant units.

A complete demographic profile for Westchester County is available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.

Table II-1 - Demographic Profile

Subject	Number	Percent	Subject	Number	Percent
Total population.....	10,622	100.0	<b>HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE</b>		
<b>SEX AND AGE</b>			Total population.....	10,622	100.0
Male.....	5,193	48.9	Hispanic or Latino (of any race).....	744	7.0
Female.....	5,429	51.1	Mexican.....	75	0.7
Under 5 years.....	565	5.3	Puerto Rican.....	228	2.1
5 to 9 years.....	786	7.4	Cuban.....	47	0.4
10 to 14 years.....	903	8.5	Other Hispanic or Latino.....	396	3.7
15 to 19 years.....	784	7.4	Not Hispanic or Latino.....	9,878	93.0
20 to 24 years.....	497	4.7	White alone.....	8,134	76.6
25 to 34 years.....	1,134	10.7	<b>RELATIONSHIP</b>		
35 to 44 years.....	1,778	16.7	Total population.....	10,622	100.0
45 to 54 years.....	1,647	15.5	In households.....	9,666	91.0
55 to 59 years.....	532	5.0	Householder.....	3,792	35.7
60 to 64 years.....	386	3.6	Spouse.....	2,077	19.6
65 to 74 years.....	760	7.2	Child.....	2,964	27.9
75 to 84 years.....	539	5.1	Own child under 18 years.....	2,260	21.3
85 years and over.....	311	2.9	Other relatives.....	431	4.1
Median age (years).....	38.6	(X)	Under 18 years.....	98	0.9
18 years and over.....	7,863	74.0	Nonrelatives.....	402	3.8
Male.....	3,601	33.9	Unmarried partner.....	126	1.2
Female.....	4,262	40.1	In group quarters.....	956	9.0
21 years and over.....	7,491	70.5	Institutionalized population.....	93	0.9
62 years and over.....	1,827	17.2	Noninstitutionalized population.....	863	8.1
65 years and over.....	1,610	15.2	<b>HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE</b>		
Male.....	627	5.9	Total households.....	3,792	100.0
Female.....	983	9.3	Family households (families).....	2,570	67.8
<b>RACE</b>			With own children under 18 years.....	1,308	34.5
One race.....	10,382	97.7	Married-couple family.....	2,077	54.8
White.....	8,572	80.7	With own children under 18 years.....	1,058	27.9
Black or African American.....	784	7.4	Female householder, no husband present.....	378	10.0
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	8	0.1	With own children under 18 years.....	202	5.3
Asian.....	803	7.6	Nonfamily households.....	1,222	32.2
Asian Indian.....	217	2.0	Householder living alone.....	1,045	27.6
Chinese.....	127	1.2	Householder 65 years and over.....	320	8.4
Filipino.....	57	0.5	Households with individuals under 18 years.....	1,367	36.0
Japanese.....	156	1.5	Households with individuals 65 years and over.....	955	25.2
Korean.....	161	1.5	Average household size.....	2.55	(X)
Vietnamese.....	-	-	Average family size.....	3.13	(X)
Other Asian <sup>1</sup> .....	85	0.8	<b>HOUSING OCCUPANCY</b>		
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	10	0.1	Total housing units.....	3,941	100.0
Native Hawaiian.....	-	-	Occupied housing units.....	3,792	96.2
Guamanian or Chamorro.....	8	0.1	Vacant housing units.....	149	3.8
Samoan.....	1	-	For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use.....	8	0.2
Other Pacific Islander <sup>2</sup> .....	1	-	Homeowner vacancy rate (percent).....	0.7	(X)
Some other race.....	205	1.9	Rental vacancy rate (percent).....	2.2	(X)
Two or more races.....	240	2.3	<b>HOUSING TENURE</b>		
<i>Race alone or in combination with one or more other races:</i> <sup>3</sup>			Occupied housing units.....	3,792	100.0
White.....	8,751	82.4	Owner-occupied housing units.....	2,219	58.5
Black or African American.....	862	8.1	Renter-occupied housing units.....	1,573	41.5
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	50	0.5	Average household size of owner-occupied units.....	2.83	(X)
Asian.....	897	8.4	Average household size of renter-occupied units.....	2.15	(X)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	23	0.2			
Some other race.....	302	2.8			

- Represents zero or rounds to zero. (X) Not applicable.

<sup>1</sup> Other Asian alone, or two or more Asian categories.

<sup>2</sup> Other Pacific Islander alone, or two or more Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander categories.

<sup>3</sup> In combination with one or more of the other races listed. The six numbers may add to more than the total population and the six percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.



## C.2. Land Use and Zoning

### C.2.a. Existing Land Uses

The LWRP land use and zoning inventory and analysis is focused primarily on existing land use and development patterns and controls in the waterfront and downtown areas. These areas are most relevant to the priorities of the LWRP program: economic revitalization in commercial areas; maintaining and increasing water-dependent uses and public access to the waterfront; and preserving and enhancing all of those unique characteristics and environmental qualities that affect the vitality of the relationship of the Village with the Hudson River.

The Village has a development pattern that contributes to the Village’s small town feel and pedestrian walkability. The general development pattern consists of a small central business district or core surrounded by neighborhoods which radiate outward. The traditional character of the Village shifts, however, along the Route 9 corridor. Suburban-type strip commercial development has had a negative impact on the Village’s traditional character. Recognizing these negative impacts and a desire to change the situation was the impetus to develop the “Plan for the Gateway to the Downtown District” in 1997.

Table II-2 illustrates the approximate distribution of land uses in the following general categories: residential, commercial (including manufacturing and office), open space (including institutional, park, and cemetery lands), and water. Residential land uses represent one-half the land uses and commercial represents only 4 percent. Open space lands represent a substantial 43 percent of land in the community. Underwater land comprises the balance, or 2%.

### C.2.b. General Land Use

Table II-2

Land Use

Land Use	Total Acreage	Percentage
Residential	786	51
Commercial	67	4
Open Space	665	43
Water	31	2
Total	1549	100%

### C.2.c. Land Use Controls

#### Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance

The Village of Dobbs Ferry developed its first proposed Master Plan in 1962. This plan was never adopted, however. A second new proposed Master Plan was prepared in 1971 with a grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development under the Comprehensive Planning

Assistance Program authorized by Section 701 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1954. The Village Board also never adopted that document.

The Dobbs Ferry Zoning Code was first adopted in 1966. It has been revised on a number of occasions. The Zoning Code establishes use districts and regulates uses within these districts. It also establishes setback and density requirements; regulates the bulk and arrangement of buildings, lot area coverage, open space preservation, off-street parking, access, drainage, accessory uses, fences and walls, lighting, screening and plantings, swimming pools; protects steep slopes; and other similar issues normally addressed in zoning regulations.

The Village's Zoning Ordinance divides the Village of Dobbs Ferry into the following zoning districts:

OF -1 through OF 6 - one-family residence (40,000 sq. ft. minimum lot area (mla) - 5,000 sq. ft. mla)

TF - Two or Three Family Residences

TFS - Two and/or Three Family Residences with Stores

A-1, 2, 3 and AAA - Apartments

A5 - Apartments with Stores

OS - Office Buildings

DS - Designed Buildings

B - Business

LOD - Limited Office District

E - Educational

CC - Country Club

NH - Nursing Home

C – Convent

Waterfront District

The boundaries of these zoning districts are displayed in [Figure II-4](#) of this LWRP.

The Village's Zoning Code also contains Site Plan Review Law regulations. This provision requires site plan review for improvements to commercial properties and for residential developments. Site plan review is not required for single-family and two- and three-family detached residences and their accessory uses, so long as they are not part of a development. Once a subdivision plan



has been approved, site plan review is not required for individual lots, even in the case of a multi-lot development. It is required for cluster developments. The Planning Board may waive site plan review, except in cases involving environmentally sensitive areas or features. The Village Board approves site plans.

The Village's Zoning Code also requires compliance with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) and the implementing regulations promulgated by the Department of Environmental Conservation contained in Part 617 of Title 6 of the Official Compilation of Codes, Rules and Regulations of the State of New York. SEQR requires an agency to identify possible significant impacts of proposed actions on any aspect of the physical or human environment at the earliest possible stage and to require appropriate mitigating measures. The Environmental Quality Review Law requires all Village boards and agencies to comply with SEQR. The Conservation Advisory Board is the local board charged with overseeing Village compliance with the Environmental Quality Review Law.

### **Subdivision Regulations**

The Village has Subdivision Regulations that were first adopted in 1966. The regulations require the submission of proposed subdivisions of land to the Village Planning Board for review and recommendation to the Village Board for approval. They include standards for street layout, lot configuration, drainage improvements, provision of open space and recreational space, and the preservation of natural resources. Currently, clustered subdivisions are permitted in the Village under certain circumstances, but are not encouraged via zoning incentives to help preserve open space.

### **Flood Damage Prevention Regulations**

In 1986 the Village updated its code to enact a Model Local Law on Flood Damage Protection, which complies with the National Flood Insurance Program Flood Management Criteria for Flood Prone Areas. The purpose of this ordinance code is to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare and to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in specific areas by provisions designed to:

- Regulate uses which are dangerous to health, safety, and property due to water or erosion hazards or which result in damaging increases in erosion or increases in flood height or velocities.
- Require that uses vulnerable to floods, including facilities which serve such uses, be protected against flood damage at the time of initial construction.
- Control the alteration of natural floodplains, stream channels, and natural protective barriers which are involved in the accommodation of floodwaters.
- Control filling, grading, dredging, and other development which may increase erosion or flood damages.

- Regulate the construction of flood barriers which will unnaturally divert floodwaters or which may increase flood hazards to other lands; and Qualify for and maintain participation in the National Flood Insurance Program. In 1968, Congress created the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in response to the rising cost of taxpayer funded disaster relief for flood victims and the increasing amount of damage caused by floods. The NFIP makes Federally-backed flood insurance available in communities that agree to adopt and enforce floodplain management ordinances to reduce future flood damage. This is particularly important in riverfront communities.

The local law incorporated the flood maps promulgated by the Federal Insurance Administration and satisfied all of the basic floodplain management guidelines established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and NYS DEC.

### **Steep Slope Ordinance**

The Village of Dobbs Ferry enacted a Steep Slope Ordinance in 1989 in an effort to "protect environmentally sensitive lands, preserve the Village's natural resources and promote the orderly development of land...with excessively steep slope areas."

### **Sign Regulations**

The Village adopted a Sign Ordinance in 2000 for the downtown area. The Historic River Towns of Westchester (HRTW) is presently developing a sign plan for all Westchester communities along the Hudson River to adopt. The plan will attempt to standardize signage in this region and highlight the region's historic, cultural, and recreational links. Currently, the village ordinance does not incorporate the HRTW signage plan.

### **Architectural Review Board Law**

An Architectural Review Board Law was adopted in 1966. The purpose of the law is to judge excessive uniformity, dissimilarity, or inappropriateness of design in the exterior appearance of buildings. The law applies to structures erected or altered in or in the immediate vicinity of a residential neighborhood or in a commercial or industrial neighborhood. The law enables a review board to determine if a new design adversely affects the desirability of the immediate area and neighboring areas for residential, commercial, and industrial purposes and, by so doing:

- Impairs the benefits of occupancy of existing residential, commercial, and industrial property in such areas.
- Impairs the stability and value of both improved and unimproved real property in such areas.
- Prevents the most appropriate development of such areas.

- Produces degeneration of residential, commercial, and industrial property in such areas with attendant deterioration of conditions affecting the health, safety, and morals of the inhabitants thereof.
- Destroys a proper relationship between the taxable value of real property in such areas and the cost of municipal services provided.

### **Critical Environmental Areas**

In 1989, the Westchester County Board adopted a local law (16-1989) that established a number of critical environmental areas throughout the County pursuant to 6 NYCRR 617.4(h) of the SEQRA regulations. As such, the potential environmental impact of any Type I or Unlisted Action on the Critical Environmental Area is a relevant area of concern and must be evaluated as part of a determination of significance prepared pursuant to SEQRA. The Hudson River and immediate shoreline are designated as a Critical Environmental Area by this law.

In 1995, the Village of Dobbs Ferry designated the Jurhing Estate as a Critical Environmental Area pursuant to SEQRA regulations 617.4(h).

### **C.2.d. Waterfront Ownership Patterns**

Starting at the Village's south border with Hastings-on-Hudson, waterfront parcels are owned, utilized, and zoned as follows:

#### **Fairmead Area**

Fairmead is the southwestern most area of the Village (Fairlawn and Atilda Avenues). According to the current tax map there are several vacant building lots in this steeply sloped area on the riverbank on the east side of the Metro North tracks. This entire area is zoned OF6, a designation that permits single-family homes to be built on 5,000 square foot lots. There is also a larger undeveloped open space parcel, owned by and adjacent to St. Christopher's School, which includes the sloped river bank and a broad flat ridge area that extends east into the residential area that is already developed.

#### **St. Christopher's School**

St. Christopher's School occupies a parcel of approximately 11.6 acres east of the Metro North tracks and 2.7 acres west of the tracks. It is one of several Village properties zoned for Educational use. In such districts, the Village Code permits any use by or customarily associated with private educational institutions and, in addition, any use allowed in an OF1 district. OF1 is the Village's least dense single family zoning district, with a minimum lot area of 40,000 square feet, or approximately one acre. It would thus be possible for any property in an E zone to be sub-divided and developed as-of-right for residential purposes. Land use decisions pertaining to the St. Christopher's property are within the jurisdiction and control of the State Dormitory Authority, not the Village of Dobbs Ferry, at least so long as and to the extent that it is being

used by St. Christopher's for its institutional purposes. In the event this use of the property were discontinued, or if the owner decided to convey a portion of the property for development purposes, it may be that land in this parcel could be developed as of right into single family units on single acre lots. The entire parcel might thus be theoretically capable of accommodating about 11+ single family homes, although the total would likely be reduced by subdivision and site plan controls and requirements, including emergency access and steep slope limitations. The 2.7 acres west of the tracks, with waterfront, is cut off by the railroad and therefore not accessible.

### **Saint Cabrini Nursing Home**

This property consists of 11.7 acres located east of the Metro North tracks and 4.5 acres west of the tracks. It is located in a Nursing Home District in which the only permitted use is for a nursing or convalescent home for the care of elderly persons on a not for profit basis. Any alternative use would require a zoning change. The area west of the tracks is inaccessible.

### **Chart House**

The Chart House parcel, comprising some 3.2 acres, is zoned Waterfront District. This zoning designation permits recreational, open space, commercial, business and residential uses that will benefit from and, in turn, enhance the unique aesthetic, recreational, historic, and environmental qualities of the waterfront area. Access to the Chart House and its waterfront is allowed by the High Street vehicular bridge over the Metro North tracks.

### **Waterfront Park**

The Waterfront Park property, a Village-owned 12-acre parcel between the Chart house parcel and 145 Palisade Street, is zoned Waterfront District. In 2003, Waterfront Park was formally dedicated as a public park by the Village. An Act of the New York State Legislature would be required to authorize any non-park use. Access to Waterfront Park, the train station and the commuter parking lot is allowed via the High St. bridge over the tracks.



***Photo 11 - Waterfront Park***

### **Memorial Park**

Memorial Park, dedicated parkland, is a 4.6-acre parcel that extends from the American Legion Building at the base of Palisade Street up to the southwest corner of Palisade Street and Chestnut Street. It is zoned OF2. In addition to the areas currently developed for park uses, (the baseball field and basketball court on the lower level, the wading pool and children's playground on the upper level), this parcel includes an undeveloped, steeply sloped riverbank that is currently heavily wooded.

### **145 Palisade Street**

This parcel is comprised of some 9+ acres east of the Metro North tracks and 4.5 acres west of the tracks, for a total of 13.5 acres. It extends from Palisade Street to the Hudson River shore west of the Metro North tracks. Like the Chart House parcel, it is contiguous to Waterfront Park and is zoned Waterfront District. The 4.5 acres west of the tracks are accessible by a one-lane vehicular bridge at 145 Palisade Street.

### **DPW [SW Corner of Cedar and Palisade Streets]**

The 25,000 square foot parcel on which the Village's DPW garage is currently located is immediately contiguous with the 145 Palisade Property and is included in the Waterfront District zone.

### **Village Green Draper Lane**

The area north of 145 Palisade is now occupied by two multi-family developments, Village Green and Draper Lane.

### **Behind Dobbs Ferry Middle/High School, West of the Old Croton Aqueduct Trail**

A Dobbs Ferry School District-owned mostly wooded parcel of some 3.5 acres, located immediately behind the middle/high school, west of the Aqueduct, is zoned OF2, which allows single family dwellings on lots of approximately one-half acre. There are substantial issues concerning access that would make development of this parcel problematic. These include the slope, close proximity to Wickers Creek, ownership of access, and the crossing of a New York State Historic Park (Old Croton Aqueduct.)

### **The Landing**

This 40-acre parcel, with 9.2 acres of open space, is now zoned OF5. The Village holds an easement over a portion of this property, including the north bank of Wickers Creek and the area east and west of the tracks at Nun's Beach, to allow Village resident access to the archeological site which is located on the property east of the Metro North tracks. The easement includes a pedestrian bridge over the tracks which has been rebuilt by the Landing developers.

### **Mercy College**

This parcel consists of 28.2 acres situated in Dobbs Ferry and 19.9 acres in the Village of Irvington. A large part of the area east of the Metro North tracks to the Old Croton Aqueduct appears to have been re-zoned OF5, like The Landing parcel. A smaller area to the north is zoned Educational. Another area from the Aqueduct to Broadway is zoned OF5, except for the property occupied by Our Lady of Victory, which is also in an E zone; the area west of the tracks is zoned Waterfront District. This entire property could be developed as-of-right for residential use at a density permitted for OF5 and, as to the currently E zoned area, OF1, enhanced perhaps by the density theoretically permitted on the OF3 parcel that appears to be largely under water.

## **C.3. Water Uses and Access**

### **C.3.a. Water Uses**

Figure II – 5, “Land and Water Use Map,” shows various land use areas that exist in the Village of Dobbs Ferry. These land uses include residential, commercial, institutional/community services, park, and recreational trails.

The Village and the region offer residents and tourists a variety of water-related activities. From Wickers Creek to the Hudson River, these assets have potential to be invaluable recreational areas for the community. Recognizing this potential, the Village has sought to protect and improve access to these areas.

The waterfront is being used for two recreational activities: including canoe/kayaking and fishing. There are a growing number of canoe/kayakers who launch their boats at Waterfront Park’s sandy beach. By far the widest use of the waterfront is passive enjoyment including sitting and looking at the water, wildlife watching, and taking in the expansive scenic vista. Picnicking and community events such as the annual Fourth of July celebration and summer evening concert series are also very popular.



***Photo 12 - Railroad Tracks – View Looking Northwest***



The rail crossings at Waterfront Park, 145 Palisade Street and The Landing:

**C.3.b. Waterfront Access**

There are only four direct access points to the Hudson River in Dobbs Ferry. Two are at Waterfront Park. The other two are located on private land and are available only to tenants and patrons of the property. However, despite the direct access, railroad tracks must be crossed. Without special crossing designation areas, accessing the river can be very dangerous. The existing methods of access to these areas and noted access constraints are summarized in the following text.

**C.3.b.(1) Waterfront Park**

Waterfront Park is Dobbs Ferry’s gateway public access point to and from the Hudson River. While there are private waterfront locations that are used unofficially by the public, Waterfront Park is the main designated river access point in Dobbs Ferry and the only one to which the general public has waterfront access. The park has pathways, seating, and picnicking areas, a children's playground, designated recreational parking, and a multi-modal access (vehicle, pedestrian, public transportation) that makes the river easy to reach.

High Street Bridge: Primary waterfront access by automobile is from Broadway/Route 9 and Walnut Street, to High Street and the vehicular/pedestrian bridge over the Metro-North Railroad tracks at Dobbs Ferry railroad station area. This bridge makes the Park easily accessible by car, bus, or on foot from other streets in downtown Dobbs Ferry.



***Photo 13 - Waterfront Park – View Looking Southwest***

The Westchester Bee Line Bus System provides access via Routes 6, 1T, 1C, and 1W with the closest stop on Livingston Avenue, one to two blocks west of the Old Croton Aqueduct Trailway. Bus riders can walk down High Street, and either cross the vehicular/pedestrian bridge over the

Metro-North railroad tracks at Dobbs Ferry Station, or cross the Metro-North pedestrian bridge from Station Plaza.

Metro North Pedestrian Bridge: Waterfront Park is easily accessible on foot from Main Street and other feeder streets in downtown Dobbs Ferry. Primary pedestrian waterfront access is along sidewalks that parallel vehicle access and from the Aqueduct and Walnut Street, to Station Plaza, and across the Metro-North Railroad tracks via a pedestrian bridge at Dobbs Ferry Station or across the tracks via High Street sidewalk.

In addition, Waterfront Park is immediately accessible to Metro-North riders upon arrival at the Dobbs Ferry Metro-North Station, or to individuals who visit the Park via small craft (canoes, kayaks) at the waterfront.

**C.3.b.(2) 145 Palisades Street**

145 Palisade Street is a privately-owned property (multi-tenanted commercial building, several outbuildings and parking on both sides of the Metro North tracks) with direct waterfront access. It has a one-lane vehicle bridge across the tracks to waterfront land that houses several businesses. As the property is privately-owned, current access to the buildings west of the tracks and to the waterfront from the one-lane vehicular bridge is legally restricted to tenants, their visitors, and customers.



***Photo 14 - Railroad Crossing at 145 Palisade (Bridge does not include sidewalks)***

The access road to the property is a driveway feeding off Palisade Street, just south of Cedar Street. The property extends on both sides of the Metro North tracks from Palisade Street to the river. Access to the property by vehicle is by local streets and the privately-owned one-lane bridge over the railway tracks. Pedestrian access is via the driveway from Palisade Street to the

entrance of 145 Palisade and over the bridge. There are no sidewalks, however, on the driveway nor on the vehicular bridge which is currently the only pedestrian access to the 145 Palisade businesses west of the tracks.

### **C.3.b.(3) The Landing**

Pedestrian Overpass: New landside access to the waterfront is being built as part of The Landing development. A rebuilt pedestrian bridge will provide access to the Nun's Beach area. Because of a Village Conservation Easement on these lands, limited public access will be allowed to this part of the waterfront in the future.

Nun's Beach and the stretch of land on both sides of the Metro-North Railroad tracks extending north from the 145 Palisade property and Village Green is owned or controlled by several private entities including: 145 Palisade, The Landing, Tennessee Utilities, Village Green, and Metro-North Railroad. There is currently no designated access to this beach area, however, the footbridge over the Metro North tracks at the Landing connects the residential areas to Nun's Beach and the west side of the tracks. Future plans at the Landing include reopening of the footbridge to connect sections of the public easement on the property and to allow access to and from Nun's Beach and the Wickers Creek Archaeological site. Current access here, however, is at the user's own risk; it can be dangerous because of the Hudson River's tidal currents and movements, especially at the confluence of Wickers Creek and the river. Although it is part of the Wickers Creek Conservation Easement area, there are currently no public landside or waterside access points to Nun's Beach or Wickers Creek. The Wickers Creek Conservation Easement is available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.

## **C.4. Scenic Resources and Visual Quality**

### **C.4.a. Scenic Vistas**

On clear days there are many locations throughout the Village of Dobbs Ferry that offer excellent panoramic views of both the Hudson River Valley and the New York City skyline. [Figure II – 6, “Scenic Resources Map,”](#) shows various vantage points within the Village. The Village has undertaken initiatives to preserve this important scenic resource. Two recent examples of their preservation efforts are the acquisition of the Wickers Creek Scenic Easement and the Scenic Resources Inventory. The complete Scenic Resources Inventory Report is available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.

### **C.4.b. Inventory of Important Views**

Understanding the life patterns of people in Dobbs Ferry has governed the inventory and analysis of views within the study area. Dobbs Ferry is a working and commuting town, not a vacation or retirement community. This means that while active direct waterfront activities and passive park use are important to many, the dominant “use” residents and visitors make of the River is visual. People connect with the River through views enjoyed while shopping, catching trains, driving to school, and for many, looking out of windows, working, and playing in yards. The value of property relates directly to views of the River. Dobbs Ferry's “principal product” is views.



***Photo 15 - Scenic View of Hudson River – View Looking Westward to the Palisades***

An informal review of public preferences—the popularity of river-view restaurants and waterfront concerts, the enthusiasm of Village visitors who come to Dobbs Ferry by train along the Hudson, the river facing windows and decks in numerous private houses, the welcome glimpses Aqueduct Trail walkers get of the river—emphasizes the fact that Dobbs Ferry’s river views are valuable in a variety of ways. They encourage economic activity, enhance public occasions, and give delight and solace to residents, local employees, and visitors alike.

#### **C.4.c. Scenic Views Analysis**

A systematic inventory of the entire Village from streets, parking lots, public buildings, commercial properties, paths, sidewalks, parkland, and a sampling of private properties yielded the conclusion that the Village has enormous, and in many cases unrealized, scenic potential. Because of the topographic richness of the Village and of its historic character, this potential is not limited to water-related views.

River views define the character of Dobbs Ferry and have significant impact on private property values (and the resultant tax base). River view preservation and enhancement should receive serious attention in the near future. View preservation should be an important part of any consideration of changes to zoning and planning regulations. It should also be an important feature of any new master plan.

Village efforts to promote view preservation and enhancement fall into two categories: regulations that govern private land use, and Village actions on municipal property to improve and enhance visual access to the river from public and private space.

In the regulatory sphere, views should be an important consideration in the development of new or amended zoning and building codes in such areas as site plan review regulations, lot coverage, building

envelope, tree removals, and planting plans. Special attention should be given to zoning and architectural review regulations in the central business district where there is a potential for Hudson River views that will connect the historic commercial strip with the river that brought the Village into existence.

#### **C.4.d. Other Important Open Space Views**

The Village Open Space Committee completed an inventory of Dobbs Ferry's open space, and Village residents have approved a bond act to acquire land. The Committee recommended that the scenic value of property carry substantial weight among other important considerations (such as wildlife habitat and adaptability for active recreation) governing land acquisition. Improvements such as structures, parking facilities and fencing proposed by the Village to adapt newly acquired open space for recreational use should be carefully controlled to minimize negative impacts on scenic values.



***Photo 16 - View from East Side of Tracks at Vehicular Bridge  
(Chart House is visible at shoreline)***

Once a conveyance structure for the New York City drinking water supply, the Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park -- New York State's linear park from Croton to New York City -- provides extraordinary scenic benefits to hikers. Views down the length of the trail and views out from the trail to local neighborhoods, to natural areas and to the River contribute immeasurably to the Village's character. View preservation guidelines within a "view preservation district" would help to protect river views now enjoyed from the Aqueduct (and from Cedar, Oak, Elm, Chestnut and Walnut Streets) and will enhance the Aqueduct experience. The Aqueduct's status as a State Historic Park and a national Historic Landmark legally mandate careful attention to impact of public or private development on this regional scenic and recreational resource. The Village's site plan review processes should reflect that obligation, and applicants should be made aware of the Aqueduct's special status.



#### C.4.e. Needs Analysis of Scenic Resources

With the exception of specific commercial district issues, the following issues apply Village-wide.

- Loss of historic character in the central business district: lack of architectural controls, weak sign regulations; erratic merchant and landlord commitment to reinforcing the historic character of the downtown and even to appropriate maintenance of property.
- Need to explore the potential of historic neighborhoods in residential and institutional areas and consider approaches to preserve and enhance their character.
- Overhead wires that clutter foreground and disrupt distant views.
- Inadequate street tree and park maintenance.
- Need to reassess public and private night-lighting levels and enact precise controls on new development to reduce unwelcomed glare Village-wide and promote better night views of the River.
- Need for vigilance in review of the location and regulation of cell towers, satellite dishes.
- Need for monitoring and public input in negotiations with DOT and Metro-North to reduce the negative impacts of some of their actions.
- Better Village review and scrutiny of Westchester County “free” park improvements to ensure they meet Dobbs Ferry’s requirements and can be maintained.

Similarly, the Village should require review of all new exterior construction within an area that includes all properties that can interrupt others’ public or private visual access to the River. The view inventory indicates the presence of important river views that would be affected by development between the riverfront and a line following Broadway south from the Irvington line to Clinton Avenue, and then following Clinton south to the Hastings line.

The Scenic Resources Committee identified an area of the Village that should be governed by a view preservation ordinance. Eight public vantage points providing Hudson River views looking west deserve even stronger protections. They are: views toward the River down Cedar, Oak, Elm, Chestnut, and Walnut Streets; the view toward the River down Main Street; the view panorama at the intersection of Main, High, and the end of Palisade Streets; the view from Broadway northwest toward Piermont at the intersection of Broadway and Livingston Avenue. These eight views are important because of their exceptional scenic qualities and their centrality to life in the Village through location and frequency of use. Views down Main, Oak, Elm, Chestnut and Walnut have additional cultural significance because 19th Century village architecture forms the foreground or frame for important Hudson River vistas.

Another Village regulation that deserves attention is the Tree Ordinance. Evaluation of a tree’s role in screening, framing or blocking views to the river is complex and requires a well-trained tree commission with members whose expertise extends beyond sound knowledge of planting and maintenance of trees



to include ecosystem dynamics and basic planning. Dobbs Ferry's handsome mature trees can play a major role in defining views, relieving the perceived density of the community, and contributing significantly to village character, beauty, and environmental health. Tree removals and types and placement of new trees should be carefully scrutinized.

## **C.5. Open Space and Public Recreation Resources**

The New York State General Municipal Law defines "open space" as:

"Any area characterized by natural beauty or, whose existing openness, natural condition or present state of use, if preserved, would enhance the present or potential value of abutting or surrounding development or would offer substantial conformance with the planning objectives of the municipality or would maintain or enhance the conservation of natural or scenic resources."

### **C.5.a. Open Space Resources**

Using the above definition, the terms "open area" and "open space" can be considered interchangeable. However, in developed urban and suburban areas, open space includes relatively small sites, both public and private, which provide a balance of developed and open areas and fulfill the function of providing physical and psychological relief from the concentrated aspects of dense settlement through active and passive recreational opportunities. This discussion focuses mainly on the area and description of Dobbs Ferry's open spaces, their uses, and their surrounding areas. The Dobbs Ferry Open Space and Recreational Inventory and Recommendations Report is available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.

Although casual observers driving through Dobbs Ferry on its major thoroughfares, Broadway and Ashford Avenue, or in the central business district, see the usual mix of commercial, residential, and small institutional properties, Dobbs Ferry's land use pattern is unique for a small village. In 1995, Westchester County reported that approximately forty percent of the Village's land area is open space. This anomalous situation is due to the existence of large open areas owned by tax-exempt educational institutions as well as a major private golf course.

The Village is situated between the Hudson River and the Saw Mill River open space corridors. The Metro-North railroad tracks separate the Village from the Hudson River and are adjacent to the river for approximately the south half of the Village's waterfront. The central waterfront area west of the tracks features the Village-owned Waterfront Park, train station, and commuter parking lot in addition to the privately-owned Chart House and 145 Palisade Street. Major institutional open space extends north by northwest diagonally from approximately the southeast corner of the Village to the business district and is owned by Children's Village and the Masters School. The other major stretch of open space, (institutional and private recreational properties), extends north across the Village's northern border into Ardsley-on-Hudson. The Village's eastern border in the Saw Mill River corridor includes the South County Trailway and the Saw Mill River and Parkway. The Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park trail runs the entire length of the Village from north to south. Village parks, public schools, smaller private institutions, and a few miscellaneous parcels make up the balance of the Village's open space inventory.

The open space inventory information in this section is summarized from the 1999 Open Space Inventory performed by the Dobbs Ferry Conservation Advisory Board. The document is available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall. [Figure II-5](#) illustrates the open space categories: Village parks, County and State parks and parkways, public and private institutions, private recreation areas, other private properties, and a cemetery.

#### **C.5.a.(1) Village Parks**

Although a substantial portion of Dobbs Ferry is in open space, only about seven percent (106.44 acres) of the Village's total acreage (1,548.8 acres) is in Village parkland. Dobbs Ferry's parks are described briefly below. Detailed description of each park's facilities (size, uses, who they serve, conditions, and problems) is available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.

##### **The Juhring Estate**

76 acres situated just west of the Saw Mill River corridor, is the Village's largest park and has been preserved in its undeveloped forested state as an area for passive recreation, including hiking and nature study.

##### **Gould and Memorial Parks**

8.1 and 4.6 acres respectively – are open areas comprised of ball fields and swimming facilities. Memorial Park also has wooded areas and steep slopes.

##### **Waterfront Park**

13 acres on the Hudson River shoreline is comprised of large open areas with unobstructed views of the River. The Village's commuter parking lot occupies the eastern border of the park along the Metro-North tracks. The park area, with approximately 1,800 feet of river frontage, was originally developed for rail frontage, industrial and commercial bulkhead uses. The bulkhead is now gone, replaced with boulder rip-rap and cement slabs for shoreline stabilization. Waterfront Park has been developed as an expansive lawn with occasional trees and is currently used for both active and passive recreation. The widest portion of the park, an undeveloped area at the northernmost end of the park and parking lot, the river and the Metro-North tracks, has approximately 400 linear feet of river frontage.

Fishing is a popular activity at Waterfront Park. But the park is primarily known for its children's playground. It is also used for bird watching, meditation, recreational walks, photography, painting, and education. Dobbs Ferry Schools, Beczak Environmental Center, and Dobbs Ferry Recreation all regularly use the Waterfront Park.



***Photo 17 - Fishing at Waterfront Park***

There also has been an increasing use of the waterfront for public events such as:

- Annual Summer Concert Series (10 concerts annually attended by over 1,000 people)
- July 4th Celebrations (attended by 3,000 to 4,000 people)
- High School Graduations (attended by 400 to 500 people)
- Annual American Legion Flea Market

A 2001 DEC study was conducted to determine the feasibility of swimming in the Hudson River and surrounding estuaries. The Hudson River Estuary Swimming Feasibility Study examined Dobbs Ferry Waterfront Park shoreline and Wickers Creek for the possibility of creating beaches and swimming areas. The study found the area unsuitable for use as a swimming beach. The deep mud and clay sediments at Waterfront Park make swimming at this location undesirable. The water remains very shallow even at far distances from the shore, making it difficult for motorized boats to use areas close to the shore. Wickers Creek also contains deep mud and clay sediments. The small sand delta at its mouth is a result of the creek pushing the sediments into the river. Additionally, the river currents create dangerous conditions for swimmers. This combination of conditions determined that the waterfront cannot be developed to accommodate swimmers. Therefore, waterfront use will remain a waterfront park and recreation area for people to enjoy on-site recreation, scenic Hudson River vistas, and other water-dependent recreational uses such as fishing, canoeing and kayaking.

### **Bramley and Chauncey Parks**

The two undeveloped smaller parks do not provide opportunities for public recreation. However, these two small wooded parcels, along with the Juhring Estate, slope eastward down to the Saw Mill River. Bramley and Chauncey parks serve as part of the larger greenbelt on Dobbs Ferry's eastern border along the Saw Mill River Parkway.

### **C.5.a.(2) State and Westchester County Parks and Parkway Land**

State and County Parklands occupy 70.8 acres. Of this, three regional linear parkland parcels – the Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park, the South County Trailway, and the Saw Mill River Parkway – provide public park space along the entire north-south length of the Village. These are all accessible by car, with designated parking in some instances. Sign placement is improving but needs attention. In addition, there is a small County-owned residual parkland, which connects two of the Village's small parks along the Saw Mill River corridor.

#### **The Old Croton Aqueduct**

This heavily used walking and jogging trail provides views of the Hudson River and the Palisades. The trees, wildflowers, and bushes along this 60-foot wide right-of-way provide habitat for songbirds and woodland animals. The NYS Legislature pronounced the Aqueduct Trailway, listed on the NYS and National Registers of Historic Places, a Scenic Historic Corridor in 1976. The Old Croton Aqueduct is owned by New York State and maintained by the NYS Dept. of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The trail, open to the general public, extends 33 miles from the Croton Dam to New York City.

#### **The South County Trailway**

Located on the right-of-way of the former Putnam Division Railroad, has a right of way 70 – 100 feet wide along its length. Part of a 14-mile trail from Yonkers to Eastview, the trailway parallels significant portions of the Saw Mill River – and important tributary to the Hudson River. The Saw Mill River runs under the Trailway three times in Dobbs Ferry. The South County Trailway is county-owned and maintained by the Westchester County Department of Parks. It is open to the public.

#### **The Saw Mill River Parkway (SMRP)**

A New York State highway, extends from the NYC border north to Katonah. Within Dobbs Ferry, it runs beside the Saw Mill River for a distance of 1 ¼ miles. The area of the right of way, excluding paved road areas, provides a linear park of 37 acres. The park is not open to the public except as an automobile route. Running parallel to the Saw Mill River and the South County Trailway and adjacent to Bramley Park and Chauncey Park (Village-owned), the SMRP provides a valuable greenbelt connecting open space in

Hastings, Dobbs Ferry, and Irvington. The Parkway, accessible to passenger cars only, is maintained by the NYS Dept. of Transportation.

**C.5.a.(3) Public Institutions**

The only public institutional open space in the Village, other than Village Hall and the DPW, is the property of the Dobbs Ferry School District. Both the Middle/High School and Springhurst Elementary School are adjacent to other significant open space areas in the Village. The former abuts the Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park and owns a parcel west of the Aqueduct, and the latter abuts the grounds of Children's Village and Masters School (see Private Institutions below). The High School/Middle School is in the northern part of the Village.

**The Dobbs Ferry Middle/High School Complex**

11.3 acres with 3.5 acres west of the Old Croton Aqueduct, is enhanced by its deep setback from Broadway and its wide expanse of lawn. There are paved areas for parking, tennis courts, and playing fields on the north and south ends of the complex. Future plans for school construction, however, will increase building size and reduce the amount of open space and playing fields at the north and south ends of the property. Construction will also eliminate two tennis courts from behind the Middle School and there are no plans to replace them. The wooded area west of the Old Croton Aqueduct, currently undeveloped, provides wildlife habitat and excellent resources for teaching natural science. The school has no current plans to develop that parcel.

**Springhurst School**

Located in a park-like setting comprised of 18.723 acres, the school property includes buildings, playing fields, open grass and gravel playing areas, lightly wooded areas, and a parking lot. A regulation-sized soccer field was constructed in 2001 in a previously wooded area on the perimeter of the property. Current construction to expand the school building will reduce the amount of open space on the campus. The open and wooded areas on the perimeter of the school provide wildlife habitat, excellent resources for teaching natural science, and a valuable connection to adjacent residential and institutional open areas (see Private Institutions below).

**C.5.a.(4) Private Institutions**

Tax-exempt private institutions occupy approximately twenty percent (20%) of the Village's total land area, and are major determinants of the character of the Village. Children's Village, Masters School, Mercy College, Our Lady of Victory Academy, St. Christopher's School, St. Cabrini Nursing Home, and Community Hospital at Dobbs Ferry all have considerable open lawn and wooded areas on their grounds. Many are adjacent to public open space parcels. Any proposal for change in the use of these properties should be subject to Village regulatory review. Potential land use issues relating to these properties are described below.

### **Children's Village**

154.7 acres, comprises the largest block of land in single ownership in Dobbs Ferry. The Village campus extends into Hastings. The land around the center of the Dobbs Ferry portion of the campus is wooded with rather steep slopes to the east. The major portion of the property has gentle slopes. Wetlands at the southwest corner of the property have been documented as important wildlife breeding grounds and flyways for migrating wild birds. The south branch of Wickers Creek, a tributary to the Hudson, originates in the northwest corner of the property. Although Children's Village property is not used by the public, Dobbs Ferry benefits indirectly from the unimproved portions of the land which form an important greenbelt when combined with property of the adjoining Masters School, Springhurst School and Hastings' Hillside Woods parkland.

### **Masters School**

68.1 acres, contains academic, residential, and recreational facilities for approximately 425 students (55% day/45% residents) faculty, and staff. Five rolling lawns contain many very large trees, including four specimen red maples. On the south side of the property is a heavily wooded, undeveloped area that is contiguous with other privately owned wooded areas behind Judson Avenue properties. The south branch of Wickers Creek runs down the east side of the school property. These areas create protective vegetative buffer for this tributary to the Hudson River, as well as habitat for wild birds and other small woodland animals.

### **Mercy College's Dobbs Ferry**

28.2 acres of the college campus are located on the Hudson River in Dobbs Ferry between The Landing residential development and the Irvington border. The campus, which affords magnificent views of the Hudson, is largely an open lawn area with several low buildings, athletic fields, and parking lots. Some of the parking lots are under-used and deteriorating. The Old Croton Aqueduct traverses the campus and there is a lighted footpath to the Ardsley-on-Hudson train station at the northwest corner of the property. The campus extends 19.9 acres into the Village of Irvington.

### **Our Lady of Victory Academy**

A private, Catholic High School for girls, located on North Broadway just south of Mercy College, the Academy occupies two connected multi-story buildings on 6.7 acres of open land. There is no river frontage.

### **St. Christopher's School**

11.6 acres, is located on the Hudson River at the southern end of Dobbs Ferry. Although the campus has several buildings for school, residences, and administration, a basketball court, and a softball field, the central area of the school contains a large number of trees



that contribute to its park-like character. The steep wooded slopes on the western portion of the site overlook the Hudson and are vegetated with a mix of native deciduous trees dominated by oaks. The wooded areas to the south of the school are inhabited by many species of wild birds and small woodland animals. Southern portions of the property are adjacent to private residential areas and have been subject to evaluation for sale and/or development.

### **St. Cabrini Nursing Home**

Cabrini is located on the Hudson riverfront at the intersection of Livingston and Broadway. The many-roomed nursing facility and large paved parking areas have spectacular views of the Hudson River and Palisades escarpment. The grounds, which slope gently down from Broadway towards the River are well maintained and the black-topped paths that lead along the grass, trees, shrubs, and flower gardens are used in good weather by residents and their visitors. Many indigenous birds and small wildlife frequent the grounds. The property abuts Metro North tracks.

#### **C.5.a.(5) Private Outdoor/Recreation Resources**

One of Westchester's oldest golf courses, the Ardsley Country Club, straddles the Dobbs Ferry/Irvington border and abuts the Village's largest open space parcel, the Juhring Estate. The Club covers 125 acres, 67 of which are in Dobbs Ferry. There are many panoramic views of the Hudson River from its eighteen-hole golf course and main clubhouse. The north branch of Wickers Creek originates near the course's northeast border and flows through the fairways on its way to meet the south branch just west of the Old Croton Aqueduct. As with private institutional parkland space,, any proposals for change or development of the golf course area should be a matter of serious consideration, given its proximity to the north branch of Wickers Creek and the potential for erosion and runoff.

Private recreation facilities – the Ardsley Country Club and the Colonial Springs Pool Club totaling 68 acres – are available to members only and do not serve the active recreational needs of Dobbs Ferry's residents.

Tennis courts at the Masters School are used over the summer by the Clinton Avenue Tennis Club, a private membership organization. Additional tennis courts exist on the Mercy College campus.

#### **C.5.a.(6) Public Outdoor Recreational Resources**

Dobbs Ferry's location within the Hudson River Valley has provided its residents with access to regionally-scaled private and public recreational and cultural facilities. The historic house museums such as the Rockefeller Estate in Tarrytown, Lyndhurst and Sunnyside in Irvington, and Wave Hill in Riverdale all provide spectacular groomed estate grounds experiences to their visitors. Locally, Dobbs Ferry residents are served by a variety of public and private recreational

facilities. There are 370 acres of village, institutional, county, and state parks in public ownership and 251 acres of undeveloped land that is currently in private ownership.

The Old Croton Aqueduct State Park and the County-run South County Trailway are two north-south running linear open space corridors used by residents and visitors for walking, jogging, biking, and cross-country skiing.

Village-owned parks, although totaling over 106 acres, have limited resources for active recreational uses such as baseball, soccer, tennis, basketball, football, skating and other athletic activities. Although lawn and playing fields owned and maintained by the Dobbs Ferry School District and the numerous private educational institutions are shared for some youth league activities, they are not necessarily available to all Village-run or other public recreation programs.

**Table II-3  
Public Outdoor Recreational Resources**

Parks	Size
Waterfront Park	8.5 acres
Gould Park	8 acres
Memorial Park	3.5 acres
Bramley Park	0.9 acres
Springhurst School Site	18.7 acres
Trailways	Size
Croton Aqueduct	14.9 acres
South County Trailway	18.5 acres
Saw Mill River Parkway Lands (Potential)	37.0 acres
Open Space (Woods & Meadows)	Size
Juhring Estate	76 acres
Wickers Creek Conservation Easement	9.2 acres
Ardsley Country Club/Golf course (Private club on Village's northern boundary)	66.8 acres

**C.5.b. Needs Assessment of Open Space and Recreational Resources**

The U.S. Census 2000 reported a 7% increase in Dobbs Ferry's population over the past decade. This general increase, combined with the Village's growing school-aged population, puts a strain on local services and resources - including recreational facilities. In addition, the growing popularity of non-school related team sports available to both children and adults in the rivertowns region, e.g. AYSO youth soccer leagues and adult softball leagues, is increasing the demand for ball fields - not just in Dobbs Ferry but in the entire region.

To give us guidance on just how much outdoor recreational acreage is sufficient to provide an appropriate balance of developed areas and undeveloped areas in the Village of Dobbs Ferry, we have applied the standards of two nationally recognized parks and recreation associations. To assist local governments in their planning and budgeting for undeveloped land acquisition and recreation facilities, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and the American Academy for Parks and Recreation Administration (AAPRA) have established basic acreage standards for active and passive recreation based on population.

The NRPA recommends a total of 90 acres of park per 1,000 population. This total is organized into three categories: 10 acres per 1,000 for "urban recreation areas"; 65 acres per 1,000 population for "large parcels, parks and forested areas"; and 15 acres per 1,000 population for "other (or private) open space." Table II-4, "Open Space Standards," categorizes each open space parcel in Dobbs Ferry according to these three classifications, with only some Dobbs Ferry's parks classified as urban recreation areas. The Juhring Estate, Bramley Park, and Chauncey Park are classified as forested, natural areas.

**Table II-4  
Open Space Standards**

NRPA Park Type	NRPA Standards*	Acres in Dobbs Ferry	2000 Open Space Ratio**	2010 Open Space Ratio***
Urban Recreational Areas	10.0	88.1	8.3	7.9
Forest/Natural	65.0	244.8	23.1	22.0
Private Areas	15.0	250.7	23.6	22.5
Saw Mill River Parkway		37.0		
Total Open Space		620.6		
*NRPA Standards & Dobbs Ferry Ratios are in acres per 1,000 population **Based on 2000 Census population 10,622 ***Assumes 2010 population of 11,153 (5% increase)				

The NRPA standards compare nationally recognized standards to existing conditions in Dobbs Ferry. Using the Census 2000 population of 10,622 residents for Dobbs Ferry, the outdoor recreational ratios for Dobbs Ferry are 8.3 acres per 1,000 residents for urban recreation areas, 23.1 acres per 1,000 residents for forested, natural areas, and 23.6 for private undeveloped land and grounds. If the campus and playfield space provided at the Dobbs Ferry Middle/High School and at Springhurst School were not included in the Urban Recreation Areas, the ratio of Village-owned active recreation area to 1,000 population falls to 5.5 acres per 1,000, well below the NPRA standard of 10 acres per 1,000.

A second set of calculations was performed for projected population in 2010\*\*. If no additional park space is created by the year 2010, Dobbs Ferry's ratio of park space to 1,000 population will drop to 7.9 acres per 1,000 for urban recreation areas, 22 acres per 1,000 for forested, natural areas, and 22.5 acres per 1,000 for private campus space.

These ratios for Dobbs Ferry indicate that there is a deficit of approximately 18 acres of urban recreation area available to the public, and a considerable lack of forested/ natural areas. The 2010 projections show an even greater deficit of urban recreational and forested/natural areas. While the private campus space ratio is above the standard, these areas are available to the public on a limited basis or not at all.

It should be noted that these ratios do not reveal deficiencies or excess demand the currently exists for active recreational facilities such as ball fields and tennis courts. They do, however, point to potential short term and long term solutions to the problem of increased demand for recreational facilities.

- Village and School District should continue to share recreational facilities and should share in their maintenance and operation.
- Village should acquire additional undeveloped land for recreational uses. New parkland should be flat and easily accessible to the entire community.
- The Village may want to consider additional objectives with respect to new recreational facilities to ensure that the goals of the Village are being met.

\*\*The population estimate for 2010 (11,153) was calculated from Westchester County Planning Department's projection of five percent increase over Census 2000 count.

## **C.6. Waterfront Transportation and Parking**

The Village of Dobbs Ferry is largely a commuting town. The majority of its residents travel daily to New York City; therefore, a wide variety of transit options is available. Despite the close proximity of the Metro North Train Station and Waterfront Park, many of the available mass transit services do not service the waterfront. Pedestrians access the waterfront at the two overpasses that serve the park and station. Parking, both on-street and off-street, is available by both permit and meter. Locations of pedestrian and vehicular bridges, parking lots, and the train station are shown in [Figure II – 7, “Transportation and Parking Map.”](#)

### **C.6.a. Pedestrian Considerations**

For a variety of reasons, including close proximity, beautiful views, and parking constraints, many residents choose to walk to the Metro-North Station and the waterfront. Pedestrians cross the tracks at the station overpass from two direct routes from the center of the Village. The Main Street route takes the pedestrian by downtown shops, while someone walking the Palisade Street route passes through residential streets. Both routes give pedestrians stunning views of the Palisades escarpment.

Safe, well-maintained, attractive sidewalks are important to encourage a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere. The sidewalks in the business district (Main Street, Cedar Street) are adequate and well traveled. Many of the side streets that connect Broadway with the Old Croton Aqueduct and the downtown business area (and ultimately with the train station and Waterfront Park) are lacking sidewalks. In 2001, the Village Ad Hoc Sidewalk Committee evaluated these conditions and recommended to the Board of Trustees three streets - Oak, Elm, and Walnut – as candidates for sidewalk construction.

Metro North is currently making improvements to Dobbs Ferry pedestrian overpass facilities to make the passage accessible to handicapped persons, wheel chairs, and strollers. Improvements include relocation of the entire pedestrian overpass bridge to a point further north where Palisade Street meets Station Plaza. The overpass will feature stairways and elevators to deliver commuters to both the northbound and southbound platforms.

The five-point intersection of Main-Palisade-High-Livingston and Walnut Street has traditionally been very difficult to cross, especially for elderly people and children. Recently, this intersection has been made much safer for cars by adding 4-way stop signs at each intersection except Main Street. But this is still a very busy intersection, especially during the five minutes before and after a train arrives. Further traffic calming measures may be warranted.

### **C.6.b. Other Modes of Transportation**

Village Jitney - In 2001, the Village was awarded the use of a 20-passenger bus by Westchester County to provide Village commuters with Dobbs Ferry Train Station access. The initial route, to and from the northwest portions of the Village, was established based on commuters' responses to the Village-wide survey to identify areas in most need of jitney service as an alternative to commuting to the station by car. The commuter jitney, still operating in June 2005, remains free to all passengers.

The Westchester Bee Line #1 & #6 runs from Yonkers to White Plains twice an hour, passing through the Dobbs Ferry business district. Bee Line #66 serves Metro-North commuters with five daily buses during morning and evening peak hours to the Dobbs Ferry train station. Bee Line #66 runs through Greenburgh, Ardsley, Beacon Hill, Ogden Avenue, Ashford Avenue, Mercy College, and the business district.

With funding from Westchester County, the Villages of Dobbs Ferry and Ardsley share a mini-bus for senior citizens. The bus is used to bring seniors to the weekday nutrition program at Embassy

Community Center in Dobbs Ferry and to the Stop and Shop for Grocery Shopping. Rides are 25 cents and leave from designated bus stops.

Funded by the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District, the Children's Village bus meets the Children's Village residents and staff at the Dobbs Ferry train station when needed.

There are two local taxi companies that serve residents of the lower river towns (Dobbs Ferry, Hastings, Irvington, Ardsley) including Knapp McCarthy Taxi and Riverside Limo, Inc. Taxis typically wait at Station Plaza to meet peak hour trains, but commuters must call for a pick up at off-peak times. A pay-phone is available in the pedestrian overpass.

The Metro-North Hudson Line serves all river towns on the east side of the Hudson from Grand Central Station in Manhattan to Croton Harmon. Travel time from Dobbs Ferry to Grand Central is 44 minutes on the local train and 33 minutes on the express train. During the week, the peak travel schedule includes both local and express trains. Metro North also serves as a connection to the NYC Subway and Bus system, and to the Amtrak system based at Penn Station in Manhattan.

Amtrak train service to points south of New York City and north of Croton is available to Dobbs Ferry residents from two Amtrak stops: Yonkers and Croton-Harmon stations. These stations can be reached on the Metro-North Hudson line from Dobbs Ferry.

Commuter ferry service, run by NY Waterways, is available from Haverstraw, N.Y. to the Ossining Metro-North train station. Currently, the 25-minute ferry ride across the Hudson is scheduled in the mornings and in the evenings. NY Waterways is proposing a direct ferry service from Nyack to Manhattan. This is expected to slightly reduce commuter traffic congestion on the Tappan Zee Bridge.

### **C.6.c. Public Parking Resources**

#### **Train Station/Waterfront Parking Lot**

Unlike many Westchester communities with commuter parking shortages, Dobbs Ferry is fortunate to own its own commuter parking lot adjacent to the Metro North train platform at Waterfront Park. The Village has the authority to regulate its use to guarantee that there are sufficient spaces for residents. In addition, the Village has traditionally made a fixed number of non-resident permits available for commuters from areas without a train station or parking lot.

On weekends, Waterfront parking lot use is predominantly by residents with annual recreational parking permits - available to residents for \$5 per year.

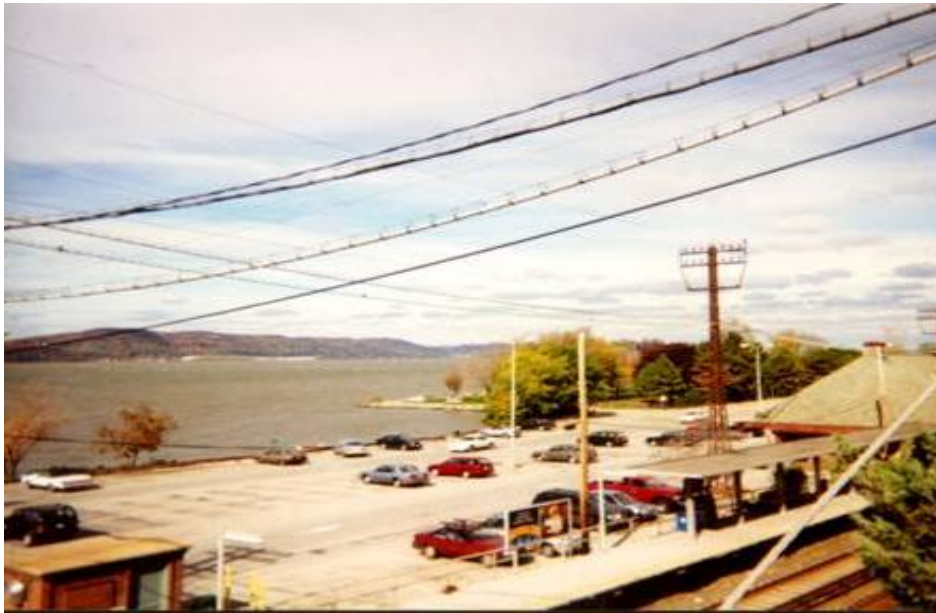
In July 2001, in response to increased demand for resident parking spaces, the Village completed reconstruction and expansion of the commuter parking lot. Pedestrian walkways were added, lighting was improved, and pick-up and drop-off points for cars and buses were enhanced. The number of official spaces was increased from 375 to 471 total spots available. The number of non-resident permits was reduced to 25, available by lottery for Ardsley



commuters only. The number of handicapped and resident recreational parking spaces was increased to 10 and 18 respectively, including one space reserved for handicapped/recreational.

Permit parking is also available at Station Plaza on the east side of the tracks at the train station. Some long-term metered parking is available on Palisade Street leading down to the train station.

In 2002, Metro North instituted a policy allowing non-residents to park at a designated area of the Village commuter parking lot when using the train. Currently, there are 24 commuter permit spaces owned by Metro-North available at Station Plaza.



***Photo 18 - Train Station Commuter Parking Lot***

### **Municipal Parking**

The Village-owned parking lot behind Village Hall and the US Post Office is available for short-term and long-term parking for US Post Office business, shoppers, storekeepers, businesses, and residents. There is a total of 83 spots available, both permit and metered parking. The outer perimeter of the lot is reserved for permitted parking only; the inside spots are available through a meter system. A kiosk-style meter serves the entire lot; users must enter their spot and desired time limit into the machine to pay for use of the spot. While long term permitted spaces are near or at capacity, short term spaces are always available.

Currently there are 40 twelve-hour and 18 two-hour on-street parking meters on Palisade Street between Chestnut Street and the intersection of Palisade and High Streets. Due to the close proximity of Palisade Street to the Metro-North Train Station, the metered on-street parking is used for commuters.

In addition, the southwest side of Station Plaza from the car overpass to the pedestrian overpass is reserved for taxis and buses, as well as passenger pickups.

There are on-street metered and un-metered parking spaces available on other streets near the waterfront and in the downtown area. Overnight on-street parking is allowed, but street cleaning and snow removal rules apply to these areas as well.



*Photo 19 - Metro North Train Station*

#### **C.6.d. Future Transportation and Parking Needs**

##### **Commuter Bus Links**

The Hudson Rail Link bus service is provided by Metro North to shuttle commuters to and from their neighborhoods on weekday mornings and evenings. Currently, the Hudson Rail Link serves commuters Riverdale and Spuyten Duyvil in the Bronx with nine buses to inbound trains and five buses from outbound trains on weekdays. There may be a future possibility of expanding this service to Westchester communities to supplement existing commuter bus and jitney services.

##### **Reduce burden on streets and parking**

The Village, e.g., by sponsoring a free local commuter jitney service, has begun to encourage commuters to walk, take the bus or carpool to the train in an effort to free up parking spaces and therefore eliminate the need to expand parking facilities. Many of Dobbs Ferry's two- and three-car households hold commuter parking permits for more than one car. The current system does not limit the number of permits a household can obtain, and a household's second and third permits cost the same as the first. The Village should consider a campaign to encourage people to walk to the station or take a bus whenever possible.

##### **Evaluation of Parking Alternatives**

A parking study was recently completed for the Village. Various recommendations were made regarding increasing the efficiency of existing parking and possible locations for new parking areas. An evaluation of the alternatives is presented in Table II-5, "Evaluation of Parking Alternatives." The Village is in the process of evaluating the report.

**Table II-5  
Evaluation of Parking Alternatives**

<b>Solution</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
1. Better Management of municipal lot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Low cost</li> <li>-Immediate solution</li> <li>-Close distance to CBD</li> <li>-Better use of existing lot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Does not help if new business/residents move into CBD</li> <li>-Confusion over kiosk meter</li> <li>-Need for more signs; some residents against more signs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-High community involvement</li> <li>-Attractive signs</li> <li>-Part of gateway project</li> <li>-Develop walking tour</li> </ul>
2. DPW site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Village already owns</li> <li>-Proximal to residential area, and Memorial Park</li> <li>-Long term demand satisfied; makes more spaces available for short-term use.</li> <li>-Close to Bee Line bus stop at Cedar &amp; Main</li> <li>-Low cost without deck</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Steep grade of hill leading to lot</li> <li>-Sidewalks to lot will need to be repaired</li> <li>-Environmental concerns due to DPW site</li> <li>-High cost with deck</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Creation of village-wide jitney service; incorporate Metro North station, waterfront plans</li> <li>-Environmental concerns may be alleviated due to paving over dirt</li> <li>-Incorporated with waterfront plans, attractive walkway built to Riverwalk.</li> <li>-Develop walking tour</li> <li>-Possible employee/long term parking lot via permit.</li> </ul>
3. 145 Palisade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Large lot</li> <li>-Proximity to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Steep grade of hill leading to lot</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Combine lot with DPW lot</li> </ul>

Solution	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
	<p>residential area, Memorial Park</p> <p>-Under-utilized</p> <p>-Long term demand satisfied; makes more spaces available for short term use.</p> <p>Close to BeeLine bus stop at Cedar &amp; Main Streets</p>	<p>-Sidewalks will need to be repaired</p> <p>-Cost of buying lot/easement</p> <p>-Cost of improving and landscaping lot</p> <p>Takes lot off tax base</p>	<p>-Creation of village-wide jitney service; incorporate metro-north station, waterfront plans</p> <p>-Develop walking tour</p> <p>Possible employee/long term parking lot via permit.</p>
4. Vacant land on Cedar & Main	<p>-Satisfied short and long term demand</p> <p>-Cedar lot: satisfied cedar demand</p>	<p>-Very expensive engineering and construction costs due to steep grade.</p> <p>-Main lot: far distance from Cedar St., not beneficial for key parking demand locations.</p> <p>-High cost for few spaces.</p>	<p>-Incorporate walking tour, marketing strategy and jitney plan.</p>
5. Adding second deck to municipal lot	<p>-Close location</p> <p>-Can be built into the grade of the hill</p> <p>-Handicap accessible for historical society</p> <p>-Meets both short and long term demand</p>	<p>-Construction costs</p> <p>-Impact on view</p> <p>-Questionable return</p> <p>-Will displace existing parking during construction</p>	<p>-Incorporate new marketing strategy and walking tour</p> <p>-Central location</p>
6. Underutilized	-Close to proposed	-Access is through	-Area is not used by

Solution	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities
parking at Mercy College (western edge)	Riverwalk Trail & pedestrian overpass at The Landing  -Possible park & ride for Village jitney	Mercy College entrance  -Will need easement, purchase, or other agreement	college  -Parking will not disturb views  -Already built (needs repair)
7. Purchase private lots across from Village Hall	-Close location  -Satisfies short and long term demand	-Cost of buying buildings  -Construction costs  -Removes buildings/businesses off tax base  -High cost for few spaces	-Central location

## C.7. Public Services

Municipal public services in the Village include police, fire, sewer, water, and solid waste disposal. Other services such as the clerk’s office and Village administration are provided at Village Hall. A brief description of relevant services is provided below.

### C.1.a. Sewage Disposal

The entire Village is municipally sewered. All Village sewers are connected to two main gravity-fed Westchester County trunk lines. One runs north-south close to the Metro-North tracks and carries sewage from the Village of Irvington. The line accepts sewage from 145 Palisades Street, the train station and the Chart House. The sewage is then pumped through a pump house at the train station and conveyed to the Yonkers Joint Westchester Treatment Plant. The other sewer main runs east-west along Wickers Creek and is partially exposed in some locations. All sewage from this system is treated at the Yonkers Sewage Treatment Plant, a Westchester County-owned and -operated facility.

In addition, there are approximately 15 individual septic systems serving Dobbs Ferry homes at the top of Summit Terrace, and Park Hill Terrace, and Birch Lane.

### **C.1.b. Stormwater Management**

Stormwater is collected and treated at some level throughout much of the Village. There are, however, no oil separation basins in the Village. The treatment consists of trapping large debris and some waterborne sediments in catch basins and inlet grates. Generally, stormwater is conveyed through a system of catch basins and storm sewers to the creeks and tributaries in the Village, which ultimately discharge to both the Hudson River and the Saw Mill River. The Village goal is to clean out at least 10 percent of the 310 catch basin structures each year. Many of these are small, underground, closed structures. There are no combined sewers in the Village of Dobbs Ferry.

In several areas stormwater is collected and held in detention basins prior to discharge. These basins include Hunters Run, Walden Woods, Springhurst, and Castle Hill Close. The purpose of the detention basins is to reduce stormwater runoff from development sites to pre-development levels. The basins contain the first flush during a storm event, and store standing water by having the outlet structure set above the bottom of the detention basin. This allows settling out of waterborne contaminants, sediments, and debris; some infiltration back into the groundwater; and reduced volume of discharge during storm events and spring thaws.

There are five storm sewer outfalls into the Hudson River in Dobbs Ferry from pipes between 15" and 36" in diameter. These enter the River at various shoreline points at Waterfront Park. Stormwater runoff to these outfalls drains from many areas in the south western portions of the Village from the top of Clinton Avenue. Stormwater runoff from The Landing goes into an above ground, open bio filter retention system before entering the Hudson River.

Several storm sewer outfalls enter Wickers Creek from the origins of the north branch (near the Ardsley Golf Course) and south branch (at Children's Village) to the mouth of the creek. These outfall pipes deliver stormwater runoff from all areas of the Village.

Several sewered drainage outfalls into the Saw Mill River originate in the eastern sections of the Village, including Hickory Hill, Stanley, Lawrence, and Livingston Streets. These also serve as outlets to a stormwater management system as described.

Under the new U.S. EPA Phase II Stormwater Management Rules for small municipalities, the Village is working with other river towns to develop more effective and enforceable stormwater management policies and practices to address these issues. See Section IV. C.11.c for LWRP stormwater management recommendations.

### **C.7.c. Solid Waste Disposal**

The Village participates in a regional solid waste disposal program. Businesses and residents have their garbage picked up by a Village-run collection service at the curb. It is transported to the RESCO solid waste facility at Charles Point in Peekskill where it is incinerated. Since the Dobbs Ferry Department of Public Works (DPW) composting site at the waterfront has been reclaimed as parkland, the Village is in need of a composting site and is presently working cooperatively with neighboring communities on a



regional solution to the composting issue. The intention is to collect biodegradable yard waste such as grass clippings, leaves, branches, weeds, etc., and compost it for reuse as a soil amenity.

Dobbs Ferry also operates a recycling program for businesses and residents. On a weekly basis (more frequently for businesses), paper, cardboard, glass, metal, and plastics (1&2) are collected by the DPW and transferred to the Westchester County processing center in Yonkers where materials are prepared for sale. Large appliances (white metal) and other large items are picked up by the DPW by appointment.

## **C.8. Educational Resources**

All village residents benefit from learning about the natural and cultural history of their community and the Hudson River Valley region. This knowledge strengthens the Village's sense of place and its identity as a historic Rivertown by conveying its environmental and historical significance through legends, non-fiction stories, and historic preservation. Educational resources abound in the local educational system, and in the Hudson Valley. Whether in the public or private schools, the local Mercy College, the Beczak Environmental Education Center in Yonkers, or the Lamont Doherty Center in Palisades, the ecology and history of the River is an important focus of study. [Figure II – 8, “Cultural and Educational Resources Map,”](#) illustrates the locations of all area educational resources in the study area. These resources are described in terms of their relevance and connection to cultural, historic, and natural resources and to the Hudson River.

### **C.8.a. Village Educational Resources**

#### **Dobbs Ferry School District**

- The fourth grade includes study of the Hudson River in both its science (oceans and rivers) and social studies (New York State) curriculum.
- The seventh grade includes study of the Hudson River in its seventh grade science curriculum.
- A high school environmental science class includes river study, water monitoring, etc.
- Woodlands Environmental Education Laboratory. In 1999, a committee formed by the school superintendent put forth a proposal to develop a model environmental education program on four acres of woodland west of the old Croton Aqueduct behind (on the west side of) the high school. The Board of Education allotted funds for environmental education in its next budget, but no specific program was implemented. However, the Woodlands Environmental Education Laboratory proposal puts forward a methodology for integrating nature studies into the classroom and has the potential to be reactivated in some shape or form.

### **The Masters School**

The sixth grade includes detailed interdisciplinary study of the Hudson River Valley, newly introduced this year.

### **Mercy College**

Mercy College offers undergraduate environmental science, geology, and ecology courses, as well as an undergraduate program in environmental health and safety. Non-matriculated students can arrange to take courses or audit lectures.

## **C.8.b. Regional Educational Resources**

### **Croton Point Nature Center**

Operated by Westchester County, this facility is located at Croton Point Park, the largest peninsula on the Hudson River, with four miles of river access. It interprets history, flora, and fauna. The nature center houses interpretive exhibits focusing on the river, natural history, and local history. A variety of interpretive programs are offered to the public, school groups and other special-interest groups. Topics include beach exploration, brackish water ecology, bald eagles, the tidal story of the Hudson River, and seining. A Nature Study and Survival Skills camp for children entering grades 4-6 is offered during the Summer.

### **Westchester County**

The county Watershed Education Program offers annual Watershed Symposia that bring middle school and high-school students together to discuss the impact of real-life kinds of development on land use and water quality in local watersheds. At the symposia, students present their school's water quality project involving the monitoring of a local water body. They also participate in a mock land use hearing with community mentors based on issues relating to an actual development plan in their community. Additionally, there is a watershed fair featuring interactive exhibits displayed by various environmental agencies and organizations. In 2002, the Hudson Watershed symposium focused on future development of a contaminated industrial area along the Hastings waterfront.

### **BECZAK Environmental Education Center, Yonkers**

BECZAK is the only environmental center in all of Westchester County with its own beach right on the edge of the river. The purpose of BECZAK is to provide hands-on educational workshops about the ecological, cultural, and historic aspects of the unique Hudson River Estuary. BECZAK's Hudson River Education Program takes school groups out to the river to participate in a range of activities like beach treasure hunts, net fishing, and oyster gardening. BECZAK educators also visit schools and educational centers to introduce the river through slide shows, hands-on water pollution cleanup activities and live animal show-and-tell. BECZAK Director Bob Walters sees much potential for linking to the Dobbs Ferry school system via waterfront programs. Evening

programs for adults at BECZAK include lectures, which emphasize history, science, and environmental issues of the Hudson River; workshops on outdoor skills; arts and crafts; and nature education. Weekend programs for families include boat-building and hikes to local natural areas.

### **Hudson River Sloop Clearwater, Poughkeepsie**

Clearwater is an environmental education and advocacy organization that was established in 1969 by musician/activist Pete Seeger and friends. Committed to restoring the Hudson River for future generations, they built the sloop Clearwater, an historic replica of an 18th century Hudson River trade ship. The ship, widely acknowledged as the flagship of the environmental movement in the U.S. is a floating classroom on which over a third of a million people have sailed.

Today Clearwater offers an array of Hudson River environmental education offerings, including onboard sails, field trips to its On-Land Education Center in Ulster County, and in-school programs. The “Classroom of the Waves” program is a three-hour hands-on education sail aboard the sloop Clearwater or the schooner Mystic Whaler during which students learn sailing basics, heaving the mainsail, steering the boat, navigating with compass and chart, and setting and hauling a trawl net. In small groups, they visit learning stations to examine and touch the day’s catch, perform water chemistry tests, study plankton and other invertebrate life forms under magnifiers and microscopes. They discuss Hudson River history, environmental issues, wildlife, and transportation. 12,000 school children per year participate in this program, which is also offered for adults and special-interest groups.

Teacher training opportunities include intensive Hudson River studies courses, teacher workshops, and individual consultations. These can be tailored to specific needs and interests. In-school presentations include environmental assembly programs, pollution, tidal estuary, and watershed units. Urban outreach programs, Elderhostel programs for seniors, and a summer environmental day camp are also offered.

### **Hudsonia, Ltd., Annandale-on-Hudson**

Founded in 1981, Hudsonia is a non-profit organization that conducts environmental research, education, training, and technical assistance to protect the Hudson River Valley’s natural heritage. Its work includes basic and applied research on Hudson River wetlands, habitat, rare species ecology, and the study of non-native plants and other threats to biodiversity. Hudsonia’s base of operations is the Bard College Field Station. This is used by Bard’s undergraduate and graduate programs in environmental studies, as well as the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

### **Scenic Hudson, Inc., Poughkeepsie**

Scenic Hudson is a 37-year-old non-profit organization and separately incorporated land trust dedicated to protecting and enhancing the scenic, natural, historic, agricultural, and recreational treasures of the Hudson River and its valley. To date, its work has protected 15,500 acres of land in nine counties and created or enhanced 28 parks and preserves for public enjoyment. Scenic Hudson keeps people informed on Hudson River environmental issues by testifying at public hearings, lecturing on college campuses, speaking to citizen groups, appearing on talk shows, organizing volunteers, and making presentations at planning sessions and other public forums.

### **The Hudson Riverkeeper**

The Hudson Riverkeeper is an independent member-supported environmental organization dedicated to preserving the Hudson River. Since 1983, the organization has sponsored a riverkeeper to patrol the Hudson full-time. Working with a network of local fishermen, environmental experts and concerned citizens, the Riverkeeper has prosecuted over 100 environmental lawbreakers to date. The organization is part of a larger movement to protect the nation's waterways; there are now 50 Keeper programs across the country.

### **The Hudson River Foundation**

Educator Christopher Letts introduces seining techniques and Hudson River species at riverfront locations along the Hudson.

## **C.9. Local Economic Conditions**

### **C.9.a. Description of Commercial Areas**

Below are descriptions of the three major commercial areas in Dobbs Ferry: the business district at Cedar and Main Streets, commercial activity in the waterfront area, and the gateway areas.

#### **C.9.a.(1) Village Business District**

The Village's Business District offers a variety of small-to mid-scale commercial businesses that service both residents and visitors. The 1.7-mile district sits on the ridges overlooking the Hudson River lending itself well to exceptional views of the Palisades. Part of the charm of the downtown can be attributed to its non-linear streets and attractive two-story buildings. Apartments provide vitality on the streets, which makes the Business District seem inviting and attractive. Recent improvements to pedestrian crossings and sidewalks in the eastern gateway provide a clear signal that this community is dedicated to a pedestrian way of life. Cedar and Main Streets serve as the primary streets for the Central Business District.



**Photo 20 - Downtown Business District – View Looking Southwest on Main Street**

An inventory of the number and types of businesses in the downtown was completed in 2001 to better assess parking needs and available space. Specifics about individual businesses are available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall. The table below shows the breakdown and percentages of businesses in the downtown.

**Table II-6  
Types of Businesses**

Number of Businesses	#	%
Total # of Storefronts	118	
Total # of Businesses	105	
Types of Businesses		
Retail	41	34.7 percent
Insurance, Real Estate, Banks	6	5.1 percent
Food	20	16.9 percent
Service	38	32.2 percent
Vacancies	12	10.2 percent

The business climate in the downtown is one of a dynamic nature. There are several businesses that have been in the Village for many years, yet there are others businesses with a high turnover rate. There is no formal Business Improvement District or economic development strategy for the Village at this time.



**Photo 21 - Downtown Business District – View Looking South on Main Street**

**C.9.a.(2) Waterfront Commercial Areas**

Commercial development is located both north and south of the Waterfront Park. Several buildings associated with the location of 145 Palisade, just north of the Waterfront Park, are being utilized for a multiple and diverse number of uses. None of the present uses have any physical relationship to their Hudson River waterfront location. The Chart House Restaurant is located south of Waterfront Park directly on the waterfront. The restaurant is greatly enhanced by this location due to waterside views of the river but does not provide any physical interaction with the Hudson River such as docking. Current uses at 145 Palisade Street west of the tracks are not water dependent. Community Tree Services, for example, has stacked excess lumber along the shoreline, blocking precious views of the river. Such businesses should be relocated away from the waterfront area.

**C.9.a.(3) Gateways**

The gateways to the Village are key components of the Village's economic development because they serve as the northern and southern entrances into the Central Business District (CBD) and waterfront commercial areas.

**C.9.a.(3)1 Northern Gateway**

Broadway (Route 9) is the main north/south road serving the Historic River Towns of Westchester. Ashford Avenue, which is the main east/west road to the Saw Mill Parkway and eastern Westchester is also heavily traveled with the potential of delivering numerous customers to the business district and waterfront areas. The deteriorated condition of portions of the gateway area has been a major concern of the Village since the closure of Scott Chevrolet and the Power Test Service Station in the late



1990's. In 1997, The Village commissioned a gateway study to examine the intersection at Broadway and Ashford, recommend a land use plan for the area, and explore ways of drawing people onto Cedar Street. A summary of findings and recommendations of the Gateway Study is available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.



**Photo 22 - Northern Gateway – View Looking Northeast from Ashford Avenue**

**C.9.a.(3)2 Southern Gateway**

By contrast, the southern gateway to the CBD, at Livingston and Broadway, includes a dynamic view of an expanse of the Hudson and two historic markers recording Revolutionary war events. The gateway is characterized by the acute angled intersection with a small planting island. Livingston has excessive width where it meets Broadway. The area is primarily residential, with Cabrini Nursing Home and Rudy’s Beau Rivage Restaurant close to the intersection. The Hudson is viewed once again where Livingston ends in Main Street. At that point, the shops of lower Main Street and the new library come into view. The width of Livingston at the Gateway intersection and for one residential block at this southern entrance might be considered for boulevard treatment, extending the existing planting island, and keeping on street parking and striping a bicycle lane.

**C.9.b. Local Economic Development Programs**

There is no formal economic development strategy for the Village. Village residents have historically been able to support the existing and new businesses in the downtown without a planning effort. However, as the 1997 Gateway study recognizes, the Village has gone through a transition and resident spending patterns have changed significantly in recent years. The study found the following trends in

the Village that have an impact on the viability of the its commercial areas, and that can serve as a focus for future economic development efforts:

- A fragmented and mixed trade area.
- Higher priced single-family homes.
- Increased demand for upscale shopping.
- A rising singles population.
- Growing number of children, teenagers, and senior citizens.
- More commuter traffic.
- Majority retail spending on grocery and drug items.

Many, if not most, small Westchester villages have gone through similar economic shifts and are looking for ways to strengthen the viability's of their downtown business districts.

### **C.9.c. Regional Economic Development Strategies**

A variety of regional economic development strategies are available to assist Westchester towns and villages in strengthening their downtowns.

#### **C.9.c.(1) Hudson River Valley Greenway.**

The Hudson River Valley Greenway Act of 1991 created a process for voluntary regional cooperation among the 242 communities in the 13 counties in the Hudson River Valley.

The Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council, a state agency, was created to provide local communities with technical and financial assistance for economic development and planning. The Council works with local and county governments to enhance local land use planning and create a voluntary regional planning compact for the Hudson River Valley. The Council provides community planning grants and technical assistance to help municipalities develop a vision for their future and tools to achieve it. The Greenway works by balancing economic development and resource protection objectives. The economic development criteria encourage economic development that is compatible with the preservation and enhancement of natural and cultural resources with emphasis on agriculture, tourism, and the revitalization of existing community centers and waterfronts.

#### **C.9.c.(2) The Hudson Valley Tourism Development Council (TDC).**

The TDC is a public/private partnership of tourism interests in the 10-county Hudson River Valley Region. Its mission is to strengthen the region's economic base by coordinating and implementing tourism development efforts. The TDC is creating a cohesive whole-region

identity. It is promoting the Hudson Valley as a major tourism destination both domestically and internationally.

**C.9.c.(3) Historic River Towns of Westchester (HRTW)**

A 13 community consortium of Hudson Riverfront communities has been involved in the preparation of a long-range sustainable tourism and economic development plan for the region. HRTW was established in 1994 by an inter-municipal agreement to conduct joint tourism and marketing activities. HRTW works with Historic Hudson Valley, a not for-profit organization that operates historic sites in Westchester County. The joint planning process has included the preparation of a Tourism and Economic Development Plan, Hudson River Waterfront Plan, Building Livable Downtown Plan, and Growing Smarter Together. The unique aspects of the process lead to its becoming a model for future plans to be prepared in the County and Hudson River Valley region.

HRTW efforts were reinforced by Congress's designation in 1996 of the Hudson River Valley as a National Heritage Area. Recent state initiatives to revitalize the Hudson River by formally establishing it as an American Heritage River and, by doing so, enhancing regional tourism and economic development opportunities have also reinforced the HRTW goals.

**C.9.c.(4) Hudson River Valley Greenway County Compact**

Westchester County has developed a Hudson River Valley Greenway County Compact plan that includes a regional economic development strategy for the Historic River Towns of Westchester (HRTW). The compact promotes tourism while incorporating protection of natural, cultural, and historic resources, main street revitalization, increased access to the Hudson River, and county-wide policy recommendations that promote Greenway criteria and principles throughout the county. The compact is based on Patterns for Westchester, a long-range land use strategic plan prepared by the County Planning Board.

**C.9.d. Analysis of Local Economic Conditions and Future Needs**

Dobbs Ferry's commercial resources in the downtown and waterfront areas give a mixed impression to prospective shoppers and business owners. The potential for opportunity is tremendous, but the Village currently lacks the expertise to manage their commercial resources and make those opportunities available. For example, the inventory reports an ongoing average vacancy rate of 12 storefronts or 10% of the commercial space in the downtown. Empty stores have a negative impact on other businesses due to the fact that potential new businesses are not confident of future success and therefore not willing to take the risk of failure resulting from location in a commercial area that consumers perceive as a failing area. Store vacancies give an overall negative impression to potential customers. The Village needs to allocate resources to the downtown to increase business stability and shopping opportunities. Inventory research, including public surveys about the Dobbs Ferry's commercial areas revealed other issues and opportunities. They are summarized here.

The Public Opinion Survey, available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall, found that residents want more variety in the types of shopping opportunities in the downtown. Residents noted that more attractive storefronts, services that stay open later, more pedestrian friendly streetscapes, improved access to parking, more trees and public spaces in which to gather, shuttle bus services between Rivertown Villages' shopping areas, all would go a long way to bring more economic vitality to the downtown and preserve the Village way of life.

Merchants suggest that the Village should adopt a more business-friendly approach and take a proactive stance on revitalizing the downtown. Some suggest that it would be helpful if the Village would streamline the permitting process for new construction and renovations, and provide tax reductions, or other incentives to help businesses adjust to new regulations.

The 1997 Gateway study suggests that there may be use for a downtown business manager who would oversee the needs of the merchants, campaign to attract new businesses and retain existing businesses, and improve the quality and character of the downtown. This is an important consideration given the fact that there is presently no Business Improvement District (BID) and the local Chamber of Commerce is not strongly supported. The Village therefore needs to find focus in terms of a local economic development strategy that coordinates well with the regional economic development strategy. This would include an implementation scheme to carry through the many ideas generated in the Gateway study, the surveys, and the LWRP.

The Village has the opportunity to take advantage of its strong visual and physical connection to the Hudson River. The train tracks are an access constraint to the Waterfront Park from the downtown, but this is not insurmountable. There are a number of ways to create more interaction between the waterfront areas and the downtown, especially since the Village is very walkable. Good signs, safe and convenient access, combined with good entertainment and programming at Waterfront Park, businesses in the downtown that appeal to families, will help to establish new pedestrian habits. In addition, there may be new commercial opportunities available in the Train Station or at the 145 Palisade St. property as a result of increased pedestrian traffic. Additional footpaths from the downtown to these areas would benefit business owners in the downtown.

The downtown has strong, small-scaled village appeal. There is clear evidence that small village settings are highly desired for shoppers and residents. Villages are favored as nice places to pass the time. The Village is interested in promoting the downtown to the point at which it is lively and all businesses are viable. It is interested in making the best of downtown's assets and maximizing the available opportunities in the downtown and the waterfront area. The downtown merchants and property owners should encourage local building codes that allow joint living and working spaces in the downtown. This would ensure a more consistent level of business.

New economic activity can come from a variety of sources including new tourists from outside the region, residents from nearby communities, and Dobbs Ferry residents themselves. Downtown businesses cannot subsist on present consumer activity from residents only and are committed to attracting more of its resident and residents from other communities, including New York City and

points north and south on Metro North, who enjoy dining and shopping in urban village settings. Heritage tourism is encouraged so as to fit in with the regional economic development strategy that promotes Dobbs Ferry's outstanding natural, historic, and cultural resources.

The Village of Dobbs Ferry recognizes the value of a cooperative approach for improved economic development. The regional vision that is being established through the Historic River Towns of Westchester (HRTW) efforts will assist the Village in strengthening its identity. Future initiatives will result in more effective programming and efficient use of limited financial resources by encouraging joint complementary events and eliminating local competition. The Village also realizes that the long-term sustainability of the Dobbs Ferry Business District is irrevocably linked to the success of the HRTW initiatives and the HRTW Villages' participation in those initiatives.

### **C.10. Local Public Opinion Survey Analysis**

The input of Dobbs Ferry residents throughout the LWRP process has provided clear direction to the LWRP Committee to define the goals and recommendations of the Dobbs Ferry LWRP for the waterfront and downtown areas. This section provides a summary analysis of several Dobbs Ferry resident surveys that were conducted over the past five years to determine public opinion on land use issues relating to the Gateway, Downtown, Waterfront, and Open Space. The combined analysis of these surveys has provided valuable guidance to the Committee in the completion of the LWRP Inventory and Analysis. Survey results have strengthened the Committee's findings for each inventory category and helped us to gauge public knowledge and interest in these areas of study. A brief summary of the findings of these surveys follows:

The results of the following surveys were used to prepare this summary. Survey methodology, questionnaires, and results of each of the surveys are available on file at Dobbs Ferry Village Hall.

- May 1997 - The Gateway to Dobbs Ferry Business District Study Survey by Project for Public Spaces, Inc. A village-wide survey.
- Fall 1999 - Waterfront Questionnaire conducted by the Dobbs Ferry Ad Hoc Waterfront Committee. A village-wide survey with a 10% return rate.
- Fall 2000 - Jitney Survey conducted by the Village of Dobbs Ferry. A village-wide survey with a 3% return rate. Survey was supplemented with a separate mailing to residents of The Landing.
- April 2001 - LWRP Inventory Worksheet Survey by the Dobbs Ferry LWRP Steering Committee. Survey Questionnaire at April 18 Public Meeting.
- June 2001 - Open Space Survey by the Dobbs Ferry Ad Hoc Open Space Committee. A village-wide survey with a 7% return rate.
- July-August 2001 - LWRP Summer Questionnaire by the Dobbs Ferry LWRP Steering Committee conducted at the Wednesday evening Jazz Series at Waterfront Park. 84 on-site respondents.

- April–June 2002 – House gatherings to discuss LWRP issues.

### **C.10.a. History/Archaeology**

One respondent wrote: The River connects us to the past and the future.

Most respondents had little or no knowledge of the history of Dobbs Ferry's waterfront, i.e. Native American, Early American, maritime, railroad, industrial/commercial, recreational and natural history. Respondents expressed, however, the need for more education and recreational programs, including a museum, to tell about Dobbs Ferry's natural and cultural history.

Respondents whose families have lived in Dobbs Ferry for more than one generation told of how their families used the waterfront in the past. Passive uses were similar to today's picnics, sitting, relaxing, and viewing the river and sunset. Swimming and crabbing were popular active uses before the river became polluted. Skating was also popular in the first half of the 20th century when the river froze over each winter.

### **C.10.b. Natural Resources**

Natural resources of particular importance to respondents are clean air and water, healthy rivers and tributaries, natural beaches, trees and native vegetation, wildlife habitats (including shoreline and wetland), open space and scenic views. Much interest in bird watching was indicated, as opposed to fishing which was hardly mentioned.

Health, tranquility, and heritage were cited among the reasons to preserve natural resources. These responses suggest that in many cases, a person's appreciation of the natural world is based more often on personal experience than on specific knowledge of the environment. In any event, it would behoove the Village to focus recommendations for natural resource preservation on projects and programs to enhance personal experiences in nature as well as increase knowledge of the environment.

### **C.10.c. Land Use**

The preferred land use at the waterfront was open space for both active and passive recreational uses. Many of the suggested recreational uses were water enhanced or water dependent, including low impact activities that may be well suited to the open areas and topography of the waterfront area, e.g., walking/jogging path, open area sports (croquet, frisbee, volley ball, etc.), concerts, non-motorized boat launch, fishing, and swimming beach.

83% of Open Space Survey respondents said that the Village should amend zoning and planning codes to limit development. Regarding any future waterfront development (residential, commercial, industrial), respondents overwhelmingly opposed further large scale development at the waterfront and preferred preserving the waterfront's remaining open space for public use. Suggestions for accomplishing this included restoration of land along the waterfront to a more natural state, and extending the park to include portions of 145 Palisade Street and Nun's Beach at the Landing.



Many also recognized potential opportunities for small business in the waterfront area such as cafés, small restaurants, bed & breakfast inns, artist studios, excursion ferry, or storage for non-motorized boats. In the LWRP Inventory Worksheet Survey, a majority of respondents felt that the waterfront commercial areas at the Chart House and 145 Palisade did not adequately serve the needs of Dobbs Ferry residents. This could mean poor accessibility (signage, parking and pedestrian walkways) or that residents wish for more variety of services and choices in these commercial areas. (See C.10.j. Business District). A small number suggested residential uses: attractive, affordable condominiums, and senior citizen housing.

#### **C.10.d. Waterfront Uses**

Most activities suggested by open space survey respondents were waterfront-appropriate, if not water dependent (boating, fishing, swimming, etc.) or water enhanced (walking, running, concerts, bird watching, etc.) Although some expressed a need for more athletic fields, there was a strong preference for quiet and passive recreation as opposed to field sports and other large group activities. Non-motorized boats were the vessel of choice, but many suggested an excursion ferry. The need for new and improved access points from land to get close to the water was mentioned often. There were many suggestions for public events at the waterfront, most involving music, art, and theatre; family activities, and environmental education.

#### **C.10.e. Scenic Resources**

Responses to the LWRP surveys indicated that scenic views, both of the Hudson River and non-river views, were very important to maintaining the quality of life and the character of Dobbs Ferry. Although river views from the waterfront and downtown were most popular, many of the favorite views listed by respondents were from private or institutional property.

All but two respondents were in favor of regulatory mechanisms such as view preservation zoning, building height limitations, and tree/vegetation management to protect and enhance the Village's scenic resources.

#### **C.10.f. Open Space**

Results from the LWRP and Open Space surveys adamantly support a strong stand from the Village of Dobbs Ferry to protect remaining open spaces. Respondents are in favor of preservation of open spaces, including on the waterfront, to preserve the character of Dobbs Ferry. Residents favored the limiting of future development and the provision of space for public recreation, and protection of scenic vistas and wildlife habitats. LWRP survey respondents commented that the Village should have as much control of waterfront open space parcels as possible for community uses: for public access, recreation, conservation, and education. Most respondents supported Village purchase of selected open space parcels (if and when they become available.)

### **C.10.g. Transportation**

Most Dobbs Ferry residents use a car to get to and from the downtown or the waterfront/train station. Very few carpool. Walking was the next most popular means of getting around town. Very few commuters use the Westchester Beeline bus system to get to and from the train station, mostly because it is inconvenient. Very few residents use bicycles because of heavy traffic, steep hills, and the lack of bike paths.

Although walking is popular in the Village and a significant number walk to the downtown areas, many complained about the lack of sidewalks on the tree streets (Elm, Oak, Walnut, and Chestnut) and about the dangerous conditions and long waits at intersections on Broadway.

Three surveys asked if residents would consider a local jitney or van as an alternative means of transportation through the Village and to/from the train station/waterfront. The 1999 Waterfront Committee Survey and the Village Jitney Survey both showed an overwhelming majority of respondents in favor of using a jitney/van as an alternative means of transportation. Most opposition to this idea is related to lack of early- and late-scheduled vans and not enough pickup/drop off locations. Perhaps this could be explored further.

Regarding parking in the Village, most car users prefer on- street parking to off-street parking. This could be only a perception, since on-street parking is not necessarily more convenient.

### **C.10.h. Public Access/Trailways**

Access to Waterfront Park: 92% of Village respondents to the Waterfront Committee's survey said that they visit the park and 24% visit often. When asked what keeps them from visiting the park more often, lack of parking was cited often, after locked bathrooms and teenage hangout problem.

Access by non-residents: The Waterfront Committee Survey asked specifically if Waterfront Park should be open to non-residents. 50% responded yes, 39% no, (11% did not respond). Of those in favor, 59% said "for public events only", 29% "occasionally", and 12% "always". In the two LWRP surveys, most respondents favored allowing waterfront access to the park by non-residents from land and from the river. An overwhelming majority of respondents favored increased general access to the riverfront at several points: 145 Palisades, Wickers Creek, the Landing, northern Waterfront Park, and Mercy College.

Improved access to the river for boating and swimming was strongly favored. In addition, respondents were very much in favor of improving Dobbs Ferry's multi-use trailway system to link to Hastings and Irvington through the major north-south routes (Old Croton Aqueduct, South County Trailway, and the future Hudson Riverwalk). The improved trailway would also create new linking trails to the waterfront.

The need for local bike paths was consistently mentioned in the context of a trailway system.

### **C.10.i. Watershed and Stormwater Management**

There were few responses to the LWRP survey questions regarding basement and street flooding and other drainage related problems. Most respondents reported no problem. All respondents were satisfied with Village snow removal services.

### **C.10.j. Business District**

Use: Shopping and eating are the two main uses of the Dobbs Ferry downtown business district by residents. According to the PPS 1997 survey, groceries and drug items make up 59% of retail sales. These and restaurants, take-out food, hardware and personal services are the types of shopping and services that residents take advantage of the most. Regarding 145 Palisade businesses, a small percentage of residents have ever visited the building(s). Perhaps improved signage and information kiosks could be placed in strategic locations in the downtown and the waterfront areas.

Most survey respondents would like to see fewer empty storefronts, more diversified businesses, more ethnic variety in restaurants, more upscale and unique shops, more art display space, more family-oriented stores and no big-box chains. A concerted recruitment effort by the Village is necessary to ensure that these needs are met. This could also be addressed through zoning.

Survey respondents suggested more attractive storefronts, awning/ signage/ storefront guidelines to add charm and preserve the character of the Village. This can be accomplished through the efforts of the local Chamber of Commerce or a Business Improvement District (BID) agreement among business/property owners in the business districts. Respondents also suggested later store hours, longer parking meters, more public spaces for gathering, and a regional shuttle bus service to and from other Rivertown shopping districts.

Similar responses were noted from the 1997 PPS Survey of business owners. In addition, existing security in the downtown area received a high rating from business owners.

### **C.10.k. Educational Resources**

All respondents to the LWRP surveys acknowledge that the Dobbs Ferry waterfront area provides a wonderful opportunity for education and that there is a real need for waterfront educational programs for all ages. Most mentioned were nature programs of all kinds as well as the development of a nature center. The importance of coordinating the resources of regional and local schools, agencies, and organizations was stressed.

## **D. LWRP Planning Goals**

Based on the findings of the inventory and analysis of local conditions and the information gathered through numerous public interviews and surveys, the LWRP Committee has identified a number of primary planning goals for the Village of Dobbs Ferry. These broad planning goals have shaped the

Committee's development of the policies (Section III) and recommendations (Section IV) of the Village's LWRP. They are as follows:

- Create a strong Historic Hudson Rivertown identity for Dobbs Ferry and encourage the preservation of Dobbs Ferry's cultural heritage.
- Preserve scenic views of the Hudson River and the natural character of the Dobbs Ferry waterfront and develop a visually and environmentally sensitive approach to waterfront development.
- Revitalize the Waterfront and Downtown Areas by fostering economic development initiatives that will ensure the long-term sustainability of these areas.
- Increase active and passive recreational opportunities at Waterfront Park and other waterfront locations. Expand opportunities for water-related activities.
- Improve public access to the waterfront and link Gateway areas, Downtown, and North-South routes to the Dobbs Ferry Waterfront.
- Provide zoning, planning, and building guidelines and long term planning policies for the appropriate development and preservation of Waterfront and Downtown Areas' resources.

### **Scenic Hudson Principles of Sound Waterfront Development**

The LWRP Committee finds the Scenic Hudson Principles of Sound Waterfront Development to be consistent with the local planning goals while providing clear guidance for future waterfront development in Dobbs Ferry. Scenic Hudson's Principles are as follows:

- Provide access and open space to and along the waterfront;
- Link waterfront areas with parks, nature preserves, historic and cultural sites, commercial main streets, and adjoining communities;
- Protect views to, from, and along waterfronts;
- Protect natural ecology, vegetation, and aquatic habitat;
- Facilitate water-based recreation such as fishing, sailing, kayaking, canoeing, swimming, and nature appreciation that is consistent with local site conditions and the protection and enhancement of natural resources;
- Relocate non water-dependent land uses such as industrial facilities, bulk storage, public works, and parking away from the water's edge;
- Promote a mix of uses to help revitalize existing communities and foster active, diversified, and sustainable waterfront development;

- Provide shoreline treatment to prevent erosion, protect water quality, and enhance public access appropriate to community and environmental needs;
- Prevent non-point sources pollution, particularly stormwater runoff;
- Promote consistency and continuity of new development with adjoining and/or surrounding neighborhoods;
- Provide appropriate architecture and urban design in keeping with the height, scale, density and character of adjoining neighborhoods, including continuous street networks and well-designed pedestrian and gathering spaces;
- Integrate multi-modal and inter-modal transportation including rail, land-based, and water-based mass transit, bicycles, and vehicular and pedestrian movement in accordance with the capacity of existing or upgrading systems;
- Create a safe and user-friendly environment with the use of traffic calming techniques such as narrower driving lanes, on-street parking, wide sidewalks, street trees, crosswalks, ample lighting, and attractive street furniture;
- Preserve, upgrade, expand, and adapt for re-use appropriate stock of existing residential commercial buildings;
- Maximize public participation in planning and development processes.