

## SECTION IV      PROPOSED LAND AND WATER USES AND PROPOSED PROJECTS

### A.      Proposed Land Uses

#### A.1.      Introduction

The proposed land uses in the Waterfront and Downtown Areas are intended to implement the policies contained in Section III. They reflect a vision for the application of these policies to the existing land use patterns and to natural and constructed resources, taking into account development constraints as well as development potential. The proposed waterfront area land and water uses are illustrated in [Figure IV-1](#). The LWRP does not propose any changes to land uses in the areas of the Village not shown on this map. See [Figure II – 5](#) for an illustration of existing land uses in these areas.

The Village's first priority in developing a comprehensive master plan for its Waterfront and Downtown areas is to strengthen and maintain Dobbs Ferry's identity as a historic Hudson River village. Dobbs Ferry's rich river heritage is complemented by its unique physical characteristics. These include its long shoreline, the tiered patterns of land use that follow the topography from the highest elevation of the riverbank on Clinton Avenue down to the shore, and magnificent viewsheds. These characteristics, combined with a variety of natural and cultural resources, contribute to the strong sense of place that Village residents have always had and want to preserve for future generations. They also provide great potential for the development of new recreational and economic opportunities.

The LWRP furthers its objectives by sustaining and enhancing existing land use patterns throughout much of the Village that are consistent with the vision set forth in this document, utilizing existing infrastructure and resources wisely. At the same time, it proposes land uses adjacent to the waterfront that are consistent with this vision and with contemporary realities and suggests additional changes over a broader area that should be considered in the future. As a result, it is designed to establish a planning framework that will stimulate economic growth and revitalization for both the Waterfront and Downtown Areas. It is also the purpose of the LWRP to encourage a mix of uses on the waterfront that are consistent with the policies and will best serve the Village's needs.

As a result of the Inventory and Analysis of the Village's resources contained in Section II, and the identified policies of Section III, existing land use patterns can be broken down into two categories:

- Those that are predominantly stable, and
- Those suitable for or in need of development, redevelopment, stabilization and/or enhancement.

The LWRP's recommendations for both types of areas are described in Sections A.2. and A.3.

## **A.2. Areas of Stable Land Uses**

Land use patterns throughout the majority of the Village, including the fully developed residential areas east of the Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park, the Downtown commercial district on Cedar and Main Streets, and various park lands owned by the Village, County, and State, can be characterized as stable. In general, these areas do not seem to be subject to pressures that would lead to foreseeable major changes in land use or would likely significantly alter the character of these areas. This category also includes the fully developed residential areas in the General Waterfront Area as defined above. The LWRP does not propose any changes to the general land use patterns in these areas, many if not most of which are generally outside the area that is the primary focus of the LWRP. The LWRP does, nevertheless, proffer several recommendations concerning the legal infrastructure affecting these areas that are vitally important to the vision reflected in this Plan.

These LWRP recommendations are as follows:

### **A.2.a. Review and Revise Village Land Use Laws**

The Village's land use laws are, as a general matter, in need of a thorough review. The Zoning Code, which was first adopted in 1966, and has been subject to piecemeal revisions in the intervening years, does not appear to have ever been thoroughly reviewed or updated since that time. Even in areas of the Village where the land use patterns may be said to be essentially stable, there are numerous examples of significant disparities between day-to-day reality and what is permitted or forbidden by the language of the Zoning Code. Moreover, the Zoning Code inadequately addresses numerous issues that have assumed importance in Village life in the decades since its enactment. Outstanding among the examples of this are the issue of the appropriate size and bulk of residential structures and accessory structures and, more generally, the appropriate uses of residential structures.

The same can be said concerning Dobbs Ferry's other land use laws. For example, the Village Code has no provision at all regulating or limiting the coverage of lots with impervious surfaces; and the provisions concerning cluster development, a basic and widespread planning technique, are in need of extensive revision. Similarly, the law that creates and empowers the Board of Architectural Review should be reviewed to consider increasing community development pressures.

In short, the Village zoning and land use ordinances are in need of comprehensive review and possible revision. The generally accepted standards and practices for regulation of land use and building construction has developed and evolved significantly since these Dobbs Ferry laws were first enacted. There is widespread disparity between the existing land use patterns as approved in the Village Zoning Ordinance and the reality of land use in 2002. The Village should conduct an extensive review of its current land use laws to bring them into conformity with existing needs and realities and to reflect a consistent vision for the future. The creation of a Waterfront Zoning district, made as part of this LWRP, constitutes a good beginning to this process.

### **A.2.b. Develop and Adopt a Comprehensive Plan**

The Village Board should authorize the development of a Master Plan for the entire Village. This process has been started on several prior occasions, most recently in the early 1970s. However, the Village has never adopted such a Plan. While the LWRP functions essentially as a Comprehensive Plan for the area of the Village most closely associated with the Hudson River waterfront, it falls far short of a Village-wide Master Plan. The initiation of a Master Plan process would be a natural and positive sequel to the adoption of the LWRP and should be seen as directly furthering the policies and vision reflected in the LWRP. The Village should engage in a thorough and thoughtful analysis of land use trends, needs, and issues throughout Dobbs Ferry; articulate a consistent vision that addresses these matters; and develop a set of goals and techniques to achieve that vision. To do so will obviously build on and enhance the work of the LWRP in strengthening the identity and fabric of the Village as a thriving and vital historic Hudson River community.

In particular, future comprehensive review and revision of the Village Master Plan should recognize the uniqueness of Dobbs Ferry properties located adjacent to the east side of the Metro North train tracks. Future strategies for these parcels should incorporate mechanisms that protect scenic views to and from the river, natural resources and topography, relationships to important corridors (Broadway, the Hudson River, the Palisades, the Old Croton Aqueduct), and that develops access opportunities to and from these parcels. A recommended strategy to accomplish this goal is a Waterfront Overlay Zone that would include all parcels adjacent to the east side of the Metro North tracks from the Hastings border north to the Irvington border. The overlay zone would establish use and intensity guidelines, design guidelines, resource management strategies, and waterfront and trail access mechanisms such as easements.

### **A.2.c. Formal Designation of Public Parkland**

Village-owned open spaces are primarily parklands used for active and passive recreation. These are among the areas identified as having a stable pattern of land use. Particularly in view of the widely perceived sense that the Village has inadequate public recreational space, there is no reason to think these uses will come under pressure for substantial change. However, the Village Board could easily take a step that would clarify and confirm the commitment to maintain these spaces for the use and enjoyment of the general public. It can and should adopt a resolution formally dedicating these areas as public parks. In August 2002, Dobbs Ferry Local Law No. 6 of the year 2002 was passed amending Village Code, Chapter 230 Parks, in which Village parks are designated as parks. This law should be taken into consideration in any re-review of this subject. The Village does not have a Park zone in the Village Code. Local Law No. 6 may, however, be sufficient to designate the parks as parkland.

Under New York State law, once dedicated, public parks are impressed with a public trust. Their use for anything other than park purposes is prohibited in the absence of specific approval from the State legislature. It is the understanding of the LWRP Committee that the Village parks

would in all likelihood be found by the courts to have been dedicated by implication. Among other things, the Village has named and identified these areas as public parks, designated them as parks on Village maps, and maintained them for years through its Parks and Recreation Department personnel.

#### **A.2.d. Protect Scenic Vistas Throughout the Village**

A final recommendation concerning areas of the Village where land use patterns are essentially stable has to do with the protection and enhancement of the extraordinary scenic vistas that characterize so much of the Village with viewsheds looking out over the Hudson River. Scenic views define the character of Dobbs Ferry and have significant impact on private property values (and the resultant tax base). View protection is currently being addressed in the site plan review process, albeit indirectly, through enforcement of the Village's steep slopes law and tree ordinance, and through height limitations set forth in the Waterfront District zone. The Village should continue to explore new mechanisms to preserve and enhance viewsheds throughout the Village. View preservation should also be an important feature of any new master plan.

### **A.3. Areas Suitable for Development, Redevelopment, Stabilization and/or Enhancement**

Two areas of the Village are plainly suitable for development, redevelopment, and/or enhancement and require immediate attention. These are in the northern Gateway Area and the Shoreline Area. Two other areas or categories of land use may be characterized as in need of stabilization: numerous privately owned parcels that contain significant open space; and certain critically important aspects of the Downtown district. Each of these areas is addressed below.

#### **A.3.a. Northern Gateway – (Five point intersection at Broadway, Ashford Avenue, Walgrove Avenue, and Cedar Streets)**

Previous studies and extensive public discussion have identified commercial properties in the Broadway/Ashford Gateway area as suitable for development, redevelopment and/or enhancement. The need to address these issues and their relevance to the quality and character of the Village's future "persona" are widely recognized. Proposed land uses for this area are not included in the LWRP's Proposed Waterfront Land and Water Use Plan (Figure IV-1). However, some of the projects proposed in this section may have relevance to the Gateway area by virtue of its proximity to the General Waterfront Area.

#### **A.3.b. Shoreline Area**

The most obvious and significant area in the Village where there are parcels that are susceptible to development or redevelopment is in the Shoreline Area, the area where the Chart House Restaurant, Waterfront Park, the 145 Palisade Street complex, and the Landing's Nun's Beach area are currently located. This is the area where the Village's most dramatic evolution in land use patterns has taken place over the past century.

As a result of the LWRP process, a new Waterfront zoning district was established. The Waterfront District includes all land west of the tracks from the Chart House to and including Nun's Beach, as well as those portions of the 145 Palisade property that lie east of the tracks. The Waterfront District permits a mix of public and private waterfront recreational and commercial uses that would draw people to the waterfront and strongly encourage substantial water-related amenities and improved access. The district is designed to promote a revitalization of the waterfront, substantially enhance the public use and enjoyment of the area and provide a catalyst for economic development that is consistent with the policies and goals of the LWRP. The Waterfront District should materially enhance the redevelopment and revitalization of the entire Downtown Area by encouraging more people to take advantage of the amenities of Waterfront Park and by encouraging the development of economically productive commercial and residential uses on the privately owned parcels that will benefit the entire Village.

The Village-owned property immediately adjacent to 145 Palisade Street, the current DPW site, is also in the Waterfront District. This parcel has potential for redevelopment in a number of ways. Among a wide range of potentially suitable uses, it could provide a site for a non-water dependent recreational facility, e.g. tennis courts or skate park, and could effectively complement the proposed mixed uses for the new Waterfront District.

#### **A.3.c. Privately Owned Open Spaces**

Forty percent of the land area in Dobbs Ferry is open space. This is attributable to the existence of large tracts owned by educational and other tax-exempt institutions and a major private golf course. These open areas, particularly those around the perimeters of educational institutions, are subject to economic and development pressures created by the region's real estate market. The Westchester County real estate market is particularly aggressive for residential development opportunities. It is more directly influenced by New York City prices and demand than by upstate New York markets. Current zoning of these privately-owned open space properties permits residential use.

Several of these parcels, including portions of the Masters School, St. Christopher's, Mercy College, and even portions of the Ardsley Country Club, are located on embankments (bluffs) overlooking the Hudson River or enjoy scenic vistas of the Hudson River that are worthy of preservation and enhancement as discussed above. For the most part, however, the issues posed by these parcels are beyond the specific scope of the LWRP. They should be addressed in the context of the Village's continuing review of its land use laws and the development of a more comprehensive Master Plan that addresses the preservation of scenic vistas and open space vis a vis the demand for housing.

#### **A.3.d. Downtown Residential Use and Historic Character**

The Downtown district's identity as a mixed residential and commercial area seems to be fundamentally stable and possesses unique architectural and historic qualities that reflect the

Village's heritage and history. These qualities are central to Dobbs Ferry's character as a vital historic river village. Yet neither is firmly rooted or supported by existing land use laws and structures.

This section of the LWRP contains recommendations that could be implemented in the near future to work toward stabilizing these qualities and additional long term initiatives that should also be pursued. The current zoning ordinance is unclear as to the legitimacy of residential units in the Downtown Area. Under the most generous reading of the statute, it permits a maximum of three residential units above any commercial storefront in the district. In order to ensure the stabilization of existing mixed land use patterns in this area, the LWRP proposes changes to the Village Zoning Code that will legitimize residential uses to the extent they currently exist. In addition, a set of building guidelines should be developed to ensure the maintenance and preservation of the appearance and character of properties in this area and to protect the existing historic fabric from further deterioration and demolition. A professional inventory of Dobbs Ferry's historic architectural resources and enactment of a village historic district and/or landmark legislation is also recommended.

While pedestrian and vehicular access is adequate from the waterfront area and from Ashford Avenue and Route 9, north and south, a disproportionate amount of retail clientele seems to be limited to the immediate neighborhood and employees of local businesses, including those at 145 Palisade Street. Village projects proposed later in this section are aimed to draw more shoppers to the area, improve access from Route 9 and the waterfront, and mitigate the serious problem of vacant storefronts in the Downtown Area.

## **B. Proposed Water Uses**

Although there is much potential for water-dependent and water-enhanced uses in the Shoreline Areas, River frontages are underutilized. In the privately owned sections of waterfront, there are currently no water-dependent uses and the only water-enhanced use in these sections is waterfront dining at the Chart House restaurant. In Waterfront Park, water-dependent uses are limited to fishing off the rocks and informal launching of kayaks and canoes at the sandy cove area. Some passive park uses are water-enhanced, e.g., strolling, bench sitting, and picnicking. In an effort to make optimum use of the waterfront location, to make the waterfront more accessible and to stimulate economic development in the Waterfront and Downtown Areas, the Village should encourage development of water-dependent and water-enhanced uses for the waterfront.

The Village of Dobbs Ferry recognizes the need to manage near shore areas of the Hudson River and has integrated the Village of Dobbs Ferry Harbor Management Plan within the LWRP. A Harbor Management Plan addresses conflict, congestion, and competition for space in the community's surface waters and underwater lands. It provides the opportunity to identify various alternatives for the optimum use of the waterfront and adjacent water surfaces. There are currently no water use facilities nor formalized water uses in the village, hence no existing harbor management issues.

The Village recognizes the need to provide improved facilities and access for water-dependent recreational uses such as fishing and non-motorized boating. The Waterfront District identifies various alternatives for the optimum use of waterfront and adjacent waters, while preserving its scenic and historic character. The LWRP has identified the following locations as the best suited for water-dependent uses in the Waterfront District.

- Locations - Proposed and future development of water-dependent uses will be concentrated at the north and south ends of the Shoreline Area, i.e. areas near the Chart House and Willow Point to the south, and 145 Palisade to the north, leaving the main open area of the park for water-enhanced activities. The mouth of Wickers Creek should remain protected from potential impacts of these uses.
- Uses - A partial list of potential water-dependent uses includes a floating dock and/or pier for daytime boat access, fishing, and pedestrian access to and from the shore; a launch for non-motorized boats; and facilities for the repair, rental, and storage of non-motorized watercraft. Any proposed water-dependent uses in the Waterfront District will require provision of waterside and shore-side access. A hand launch for non-motorized boats requires a gentle slope to the water's edge, an area for firm footing in the water, and shallow water at the shoreline.

## C. Proposed Projects

### Introduction

The projects that are recommended in this section respond to the issues and opportunities identified in the inventory and analysis and comply with the coastal management policies. These recommendations seek to provide a balance of environmental, recreational, and economic development initiatives while preserving the unique natural and cultural character of Dobbs Ferry's Waterfront and Downtown areas. Specific elements of the proposed plan are outlined below ([See Figure IV-2, "Proposed Projects Map"](#)). It should be noted here that the Village of Dobbs Ferry is not bound to undertake any project that is proposed in this section. However, substantial funding opportunities are available for projects that are listed in the LWRP. Note: The LWRP does not include cost estimates for any of the proposed projects.

#### C.1. Shoreline Restoration and Stabilization

The shoreline stabilization in the Shoreline Area has lost its integrity in several areas, causing precious waterfront land and land side habitats to be eroded and adversely impacted by seawater encroachment. The area in most need of restoration and stabilization extends from Willow Point to the northern tip of Waterfront Park. The paved walkway along the river at the southern half of Waterfront Park is also deteriorated and presents a safety hazard to pedestrians. The shoreline at 145 Palisade Street and at the mouth of Wickers Creek is also deteriorated. The Village should make shoreline restoration and stabilization a priority project and should consider options that will incorporate the following recommendations:

- The shoreline should be natural wherever feasible. Options for marshland and wetland restoration or expansion should be explored at the two sandy cove areas of the shoreline and at the mouth of Wickers Creek.
- Improve the existing shoreline boulder rip rap in keeping with the natural character of the shoreline. Rocks should be of sufficient size to contain the shoreline given the weight of soil, strong tides and current, and weather-related conditions specific to the locations.
- Design and engineering should incorporate plans for a riverfront esplanade along the entire length of the Park. (See Riverwalk project later in this section.) To the greatest degree possible, the land surface adjacent to the shoreline should be compatible with shoreline estuarine habitats. Surfaces such as porous paving should be considered to avoid creating new drainage problems related to structures and impervious surfaces in other areas of the Park.
- Incorporate flat rock areas for sitting at the southern half of shoreline, and more natural sitting areas at the north end of the park, possibly by incorporating rocks and boulders.
- Recreate natural habitat at the north end of Waterfront Park to soften the shoreline, encourage new biota, and enhance future educational opportunities in this area.

## **C.2. Waterfront Park Enhancement and Redesign**

The Village of Dobbs Ferry has an opportunity to make its Waterfront Park an outstanding example of riverfront design. The Village's first priority in re-designing the layout of Waterfront Park shall be to improve access and enhance connection to the River. Waterfront design should define certain areas for passive and active activities. All manmade features shall be sensitive to the river's presence and its natural ecosystem.

### **C.2.a. A Note about Athletic Fields**

In January 2000, the former Waterfront Committee (chaired by Trustee Frank Farrington) that is now incorporated into the LWRP Committee, recommended that the undeveloped northern area be developed as a natural landscaped area for shoreline habitat, passive enjoyment, and education. This area, formerly used as a composting facility for the Village, abuts the 145 Palisade property on the north, the Metro North tracks on the east, the river on the west, and the commuter parking lot and park on the south. This undeveloped stretch of shoreline represents only six percent (6%) of the entire Dobbs Ferry shoreline from Hastings to Irvington. It is the only portion of the Village's shore that has not been developed for residential, commercial, transportation, or recreational uses. The Waterfront Committee's recommendation to develop this parcel as a natural habitat evolved from an extensive process of analysis and public feedback, and represented a strong consensus by the Village, even before the LWRP Committee began its work. Consistent with this recommendation, the Fall 1999 Village-wide survey by the Waterfront Committee favored passive recreational opportunities and a natural setting at Waterfront Park.



In the intervening time, however, the shortage of athletic facilities in the Village has become the focus of considerable attention and, as a result, there has been extensive discussion about using open areas of Waterfront Park, and in particular the undeveloped northern area, as a playing field of some kind. The LWRP Committee acknowledges the Village's need for athletic facilities and supports the use of all Village resources to address the shortage of open space for playing fields. However, the Committee is committed to the idea that the park should be available in the first instance to people of all ages, at all times of the year, for general water-dependent and water-enhanced recreational uses. As a general matter, organized athletic activities have no particular relationship to the waterfront, being neither water-dependent nor water-enhanced uses. If adequate alternative areas were readily available, it is the LWRP Committee's sense that everyone would agree that the waterfront is not an ideal location for such facilities. The unpredictability of weather conditions, often more severe at the waterfront, makes informal recreational use more appropriate than scheduled athletic uses. Moreover, use of the waterfront for organized athletic activities could not come close to solving the basic problem of inadequate athletic field space in the Village.

It is the Committee's understanding that no area of Waterfront Park is large enough to accommodate a regulation size field for baseball or softball, football, or soccer, and that discussions to date have focused on its potential use for youth soccer leagues. Based on American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) standards, the dimensions of the northern undeveloped area of the park could accommodate a youth soccer field for ages up to 12 years old; a "junior high" sized soccer field could conceivably be squeezed in, although to do so would require virtually the entire area and even then the recommended margins might not fit. In no event could a soccer field for ages beyond junior high be accommodated in this area. By comparison, the large open area of Waterfront Park adjacent to the commuter parking lot and just south of the northern undeveloped area could be made to accommodate regulation soccer play by children up to 10 years of age.

The LWRP Committee strongly recommends against such a use of the northern undeveloped area of Waterfront Park. This extraordinary and unique parcel offers the last apparent opportunity for the re-creation of a natural riverfront habitat in the entire Village, which would be open for the use and enjoyment of all citizens year-round. The question is whether this opportunity should be passed up so that the parcel can be used instead as a playing field suitable for quite limited purposes, even for a limited period of time. If a field is built on the northern parcel, all residents will be denied the opportunity for a natural habitat suitable for active and passive enjoyment and available as an educational resource on a year round basis.

If any area of the Waterfront Park is to be used for organized athletic facilities, there are certain minimum criteria and restrictions that the LWRP Committee strongly believes should apply. Any such use of any area of the park must provide sufficient linear allowance for an esplanade along the waterfront (see the Riverwalk project description later in this section), and sufficient buffer/security on the north and east sides to provide protection from the tracks and the driveway at 145 Palisade. Moreover, any such use must not be restrictive. It must be done in

such a way that, when the athletic activities are not in progress, everyone else may enjoy the space. The space should be viewed as a “great lawn,” capable of being marked off and used for organized sporting events, and then reverting to open and universally accessible park spaces. A lawn/field near the front Mercy College parking lot is currently used for softball and under-10 soccer in this way. Under no circumstance should permanent structures, such as fences, lighting, backstops, goal posts or running tracks be constructed on these park areas. Such structures would render the affected area essentially dedicated to the particular athletic use and deprive everyone else of the ability to use and enjoy the property when games are not in session.

The following LWRP recommendations for the enhancement and redesign of Waterfront Park remain consistent with the recommendations of the former Waterfront Committee and the preliminary design submitted by Vollmer Associates. Additional development and refinement are necessary, however, before implementing the park plan. The LWRP Committee’s recommendation in this section attempts to accommodate, if only temporarily, the active recreational needs of the Village while proposing long term projects that will enhance the natural character of the park and recreational opportunities for all age groups.

### **C.2.b. Park Layout**

Waterfront Park should be redesigned to encourage and support activities in three distinct areas of the park: the Southern Area, Central Area, and the Northern Area.

#### ***C.2.b.(1) Southern Area***

The Willow Point and adjacent sandy cove areas are currently a gathering spot for a variety of recreational uses. Benches line the waterfront at Willow Point for passive enjoyment of the river, e.g. sitting, sunbathing, bird watching. The beach area, although not appropriate for swimming, is used as an informal launch for canoes and kayaks. Enhancement and development of this area should enable continuation of both passive water-enhanced activities and active water-dependent uses. These include:

- A strolling, viewing deck at Willow point. Include a stationary telescope and interpretive signage regarding the areas being viewed, highlighting their past cultural history as well as current significance (e.g. the site of Jon Dobbs’ ferry service).
- Fishing Pier/ Floating Dock, with handicapped access, should be located at the south end of the park to support water-dependent and educational activities.
- An informal, low-impact launch for kayaks, canoes, and shells for skulling should be located at the south end of the sandy cove to concentrate active use in this one area and leave the remaining beach area for passive enjoyment.
- More benches should be added along the water and under trees at Willow Point and adjacent to the sandy cove.

- The sandy cove area should be cleaned and restored to tidal shoreline habitat, and access to the cove area should be improved while minimizing impacts to the sensitive shoreline area. Access should include accessibility for the disabled. Balance with recommendations for hand boat launch improvements.
- Recreational parking in the southern area of the commuter parking lot should be expanded on weekends and after commuter hours to support the concentration of active uses in this area.
- A park service/maintenance building should be located at the south end of park, away from the river and close to the overpass.
- An inventory of tree cover in the area should govern decisions to remove, augment or reconfigure plantings with consideration for framing or exposing views of the Hudson River.

**C.2.b.(2) Central Area**

The wide middle area of the park, from the southern park entrance to the north end of the parking lot, is currently used for a variety of active and passive recreational activities. It is large and open enough to accommodate both formal and informal open play and activities, public gatherings, a children's' playground, and park related structures. The south central area, which is tree-shaded and closer to the train station, should accommodate more concentrated passive recreation, e.g. concerts, picnics, playground. All or some of the following elements could be incorporated into the design of this area.

- Provide restrooms and water fountains at the park entrance across from the train station to complement existing amenities at the train station.
- Multi-purpose concession/pavilion for shaded picnicking and snack bar. Or, as an alternative to this permanent structure, the Village might consider reserving four or five spaces at the edge of the park adjacent to the parking lot where licensed vendors could be stationed during hours of park activities.
- Relocate the children's' playground further south, near the park entrance, for convenient proximity to the concession, restroom, and water fountains. Design playground for compatibility with the park setting, with ample shaded areas and seating.
- Integrate the playground with a surrounding playful sculpture garden setting.
- Upgrade picnic facilities and locate near the children's' playground.

- Locate a gazebo/bandstand structure suitable for a variety of uses, and provide electricity and storage.
- Rehabilitate/upgrade Train Station, following best historic preservation practices, to serve as a gateway to the waterfront and to the Village above, and to incorporate many Village, commuter and waterfront services/resources. Enhance existing kitchen/snack bar/vendor facility with tables and chairs, extend hours for services, and restrooms.

The north central area provides a "great lawn" area for active recreation and may serve to partially relieve the present need in the community for additional playing fields. This area should be enhanced to allow for more open playing fields for organized team sport use as well as pickup games. Should this or any area of the park be used for team sports, there shall be no fences, viewing stands, lights or other obstructions to river views or to other forms of passive or active recreation.

**C.2.b.(3) Northern Area**

As a long-term plan, the undeveloped area north of the parking lot should be developed as a natural area, consistent with shoreline ecosystems, and reserved for passive recreational and educational activities consistent with the natural habitat. This restoration effort—illuminating the natural history of the Hudson’s banks—deserves attention. The Village can make a trailblazing contribution to understanding the ecology of a post-industrial river through a re-creation of a pre-development ecosystem in the northern reaches of the village park. Possible short-term uses for this area include temporary development as a multiple use "great lawn" area for active recreation.

The following recommendations apply to any future permanent use of this area:

- Plant the area with native species of vegetation. Landscaping and plantings should be designed to buffer the areas to the north (145 Palisade) and east (tracks), and to limit use of the area by Canada geese whose presence has generally plagued the waterfront in recent years.
- Provide a low impact trail linking the area to a riverfront walkway (see Riverwalk later in this section.) and to the commuter parking lot.
- Provide a remote picnic area to the north.
- Long-term - Designate the area as a natural area with interpretive signage.
- Long-term - Include a Nature Center for river-related educational activities in the natural area (see C.3.a. Land/Marine Structures and Facilities.)

**C.2.c. Preservation of Waterfront Park’s Scenic Resources**

The waterfront area is the centerpiece of and integral to the most precious village views. In order to maintain and enhance this extraordinary Village asset, the following principles should guide the management and stewardship of this area.

- C.2.c.(1)** *To protect the Village’s investment in the new parking lot, Village maintenance of materials and landscaping needs to be improved.*
- C.2.c.(2)** *No new tree planting or changes in landscaping should be undertaken by the Village until a professionally prepared plan for the area is in place that considers open space, views, goose management, tree species, wildlife habitat, windbreaks, and desirable shade.*
- C.2.c.(3)** *The directive given by the former Waterfront Park Committee to Vollmer Associates to establish and maintain a vegetation barrier screening the parking area from upland public space and private properties should be honored by the Village. Unscreened parking degrades scenic views.*
- C.2.c.(4)** *Vollmer Associates did not follow the recommendations of the former Waterfront Park Committee to install glare cut-off lights for the parking lot. In the next round of park improvements, this mistake should be corrected. The present installation falls far short of DEC. guidelines for the reduction of light pollution; present lot lighting has a negative impact on nighttime perceptions of the river from both upland and river vantage points and wastes energy.*
- C.2.c.(5)** *The committee recommends that new construction at the waterfront—signage, path lighting, furniture, walkways, play equipment, gazebo/band shell, environmental study center, fishing pier, and other contemplated improvements--be designed not to detract or distract from the overwhelming natural beauty of the River. While good design cannot be legislated, our general recommendation would be to favor low (but safe) lighting levels, natural materials, and sparing use of bright colors.*

**C.2.d. LWRP Waterfront Coordination**

In order to ensure the implementation of the projects, guidelines, and programs adopted and approved in this LWRP, the Village should establish a new position of Waterfront Coordinator and otherwise commit to the following goals and objectives.

- C.2.d.(1)** *LWRP Waterfront Coordinator*

The LWRP recommends creation of a new part-time or full-time Village staff position to be titled LWRP Waterfront Coordinator to:

- Work with the Village Administrator, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Police Department, and appropriate Village Boards and Committees;
- Implement the Waterfront Park redevelopment projects and programs set forth in this document;
- Coordinate waterfront activities and programs with local and regional organizations and schools; and
- Research and apply for funding to implement projects and programs identified in the LWRP.

Note: The Waterfront Coordinator position could be combined with the Downtown Business Coordinator position (see C.6.a.), or could be shared with a neighboring Village.

**C.2.d.(2) *Park Maintenance and Supervision***

- All improvements and proposed uses should be incorporated in close coordination with an achievable maintenance and security plan involving, among others, Village staff and police.
- Park planning should include strategies for controlling unauthorized uses, parking, noise, and other activities that interfere with residents' safe and comfortable enjoyment of the park.

**C.2.d.(3) *Develop Village programs at the Waterfront***

In addition to water-dependent and water-enhanced active and passive recreational activities, uses of the waterfront should reinforce its educational, cultural, commercial, and historical connections to the Village and neighboring communities. The following types of activities, and others, are recommended at the waterfront:

- Environmental education programs about the river's fish, birds, habitats, and geology developed by local schools and environmental organizations. The inclusion of a nature center/shelter at the north end of the park would support these activities.
- Cultural/historical programs about economic activity on the river: transportation, shipping, the Hudson's significance in New York and national economic progress. This programming might meet State Board of Education requirements for instruction in state and local history.

- Art shows, theatrical productions, dance and music concerts sponsored by the Rivertowns Arts Council, local art galleries, and schools.
- Waterfront related activities for all ages.

### **C.3. General Recommendations for Improvements to the Waterfront District**

#### **C.3.a. Land/Marine Structures and Facilities**

The developed environment of the waterfront area should also reflect and preserve the natural character of the Hudson River.

- All structures should have an open feel with river views, for safety as well as aesthetic purposes.
- New structures should relate to the tradition of Hudson Valley architecture and landscape design and local history, but should not be so narrowly interpreted as to exclude the possible contributions of contemporary environmental designers or artists.
- Incorporate energy saving devices and alternative energy sources wherever possible to decrease stress on existing energy infrastructure.

#### **C.3.b. Landscaping**

Landscaping in the Waterfront District should serve to enhance the experience of being at the waterfront.

- Native plants should be used wherever possible. Include drought resistant species, those that tolerate heat and dry conditions, and plants for a high water table.
- Use landscaping methods to discourage the geese population.
- Native wildlife habitats should be enhanced and encouraged wherever possible in Waterfront Park and at Wickers Creek and Nun’s Beach.
- Preserve as many existing large trees as possible, subject to a professional assessment of their desirability and survivability, and continue to add trees as needed.
- Use trees to screen active areas for noise and to protect areas from sun and wind.

### **C.4. Improve Access to the Waterfront and Downtown Areas**

The following projects are all designed to improve waterfront access for pedestrians, cars, public transportation, and other modes of travel to connect destination points in the Waterfront and Downtown Areas. The following projects and recommendations address an array of access opportunities.

#### **C.4.a. Develop Dobbs Ferry Section of Westchester County Riverwalk**

In cooperation with the Westchester County Planning Department's Riverwalk Plan, the Village will develop plans for a promenade/river walkway (Riverwalk) to extend, where feasible and through easement where necessary, along the entire Village waterfront from the Chart House point to the Irvington border. The Riverwalk will keep the river in view at all times and will be located as close to the river as public safety, environmental protection, and public and conservation easement requirements will allow. The Riverwalk should be developed in the following three phases:

- Phase I: North from the Chart House point to the northern boundary of Waterfront Park.
- Phase II: From the north border of Waterfront Park, along the 145 Palisade Street shoreline (through easement, purchase, or other option), to the mouth of Wickers Creek.
- Phase III: A footbridge over Wickers Creek and north (connecting to the Conservation Easement at the Landing) along the shoreline of Nun's Beach to, and across, the railroad footbridge (when repaired) and north on the east side of the tracks along Mercy College property (through easement) to the Irvington border where connections can be made to the Ardsley-on-Hudson train station and the Old Croton Aqueduct Trailway.

The south end of the Riverwalk will link to the Old Croton Aqueduct State Park by way of High and Walnut Streets to enable connections to Hastings-on-Hudson and points south. At this time, it is not feasible for the Riverwalk to follow the river edge south of the Chart House. There is no land west of the Metro North tracks and the land to the east is privately owned by several entities, is heavily wooded, and has steep slopes.

Development of the Riverwalk should be a top priority. It will significantly enhance the attractiveness and continuity of the shoreline and encourage increased use and enjoyment of waterfront assets. The need to preserve a sufficient right of way for the Riverwalk to be constructed should be a guiding (and limiting) factor in all other waterfront development planning.

#### **C.4.b. Link the Waterfront and Downtown Areas to facilitate pedestrian access**

##### ***C.4.b.(1) Improve and connect pedestrian pathways in the Village:***

Develop a pedestrian access plan that makes street crossings easier for pedestrians. Evaluate the condition of all Downtown and Waterfront Area sidewalks and develop a plan to upgrade where necessary.



Increase pedestrian access to and from the river by developing trail and sidewalk connections from the Riverwalk to the Downtown Business area, the Old Croton Aqueduct, and the South County Trailway.

Connect the Chart House to Waterfront Park and the train station by way of a pedestrian walkway (see Riverwalk above).

**C.4.b.(2)            *Link 145 Palisade to the Downtown and Waterfront Park***

To facilitate pedestrian access between the Downtown, Waterfront Park, and 145 Palisade Street, the Village should study the feasibility of securing public access to the 145 Palisade Street shoreline:

- Access from Palisade Street to the waterfront - A deteriorated sidewalk runs along the driveway from Palisade Street and terminates before the bridge overpass. Development of a new or improved pedestrian walkway to the buildings at 145 Palisade on both sides of the tracks would provide safe pedestrian passage for employees as well as shoppers and other visitors.
- Access along the 145 waterfront - Investigate the feasibility of acquiring public access to the shoreline area of 145 Palisade Street in order to extend the Riverwalk from Waterfront Park to the mouth of Wickers Creek. Once public access is secured, this parcel will provide opportunities for a number of recreational and commercial joint ventures. This will help to ensure the future continued use of this area of the shoreline by the public, while creating a continuous connection from Waterfront Park to areas north.
- As an alternative, the Village should study the advantages and disadvantages of acquiring a portion of this property (145 Palisade Street west of the tracks) as parkland.

**C.4.b.(3)            *Improve Multi-Modal Access***

A fundamental principle of livable communities is the importance of safe, convenient, affordable, and pleasant means for people to get around without dependency on automobiles. Following are guidelines for improving mobility within the Village and the region:

- Integrate multi-modal and inter-modal transportation within the region. This means including rail, land-based and water-based mass transit, bicycles, and vehicular and pedestrian movement within the capacity of the existing or upgraded systems.

- Extend use of Village Commuter Jitney service to provide passage between the Downtown and Waterfront Park during non-commuter hours on weekdays and on weekends.
- Meet with Historic Rivertowns of Westchester (HRTW) Trolley regarding the addition of stops to the Dobbs Ferry downtown and waterfront areas.

**C.4.b.(4) Enhance the Village Trail System**

Dobbs Ferry has many trails that are used by residents and non-residents to get between places within the Village and to neighboring villages. These include the Old Croton Aqueduct Historic State Park Trail and the South County Trailway, as well as a number of informal trails leading into and out of the Juhring Estate, Hillside woods, and the Masters School woods. Implementation of the following steps would enhance public use of trails in the Village of Dobbs Ferry and in the surrounding region.

- Develop interconnections among the trailways and linkages to other points of interest and to the waterfront, including possible easements and/or land acquisitions to span existing gaps in the trail network.
- Create linkages to adjacent communities, as part of a continuous pedestrian trail.
- Make certain physical improvements and perform regular maintenance of trails, including the clearing of debris and vegetative overgrowth from trails, and the implementation of erosion control measures.
- Create a trailway signage system within the Village and other tools, e.g. trail map, to promote public awareness of the trail system.

**C.4.b.(5) Improve Recreational Parking**

Use of the waterfront commuter parking lot should be modified to permit greatly expanded recreational parking on weekends and after commuter hours on weekdays. Additional recreational parking spots could be designated for non-residents at Station Plaza and on Palisade Street on weekends and after commuter hours. This could be accomplished through a recreational permit system that includes annual permits for residents and per-diem permits for non-residents.

**C.4.c. Improve Signs from Gateways to and from the Downtown and Waterfront Areas**

The LWRP supports the Village's efforts to coordinate signs across the Village and encourages appropriate signs for all local cultural, historic, and recreational resources; waterfront access; and waterfront activities. Signs from the northern and southern gateways to the Waterfront and Downtown Areas should be improved to be:

- Consistent with the Historic Rivertowns of Westchester (HRTW) signage program.
- Sequential from the northern and southern Gateway areas to Downtown and Waterfront.
- Creative signs (with a Dobbs Ferry Waterfront theme and logo) that direct vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists through the Downtown to the waterfront.
- Posted at all approaches to the northern and southern Gateway areas, Broadway south of Livingston, from the Saw Mill Parkway, and other areas within the Village.

The Railroad Station is also a gateway. Attractive signs should be posted directing visitors from the waterfront to downtown shops, restaurants, etc.

### **C.5. Department of Public Works (DPW) Site (Cedar & Palisade)**

The Village-owned property at the corner of Cedar and Palisade Streets, currently used by the DPW, will become available when the new DPW facility is completed. Once this property becomes vacant, the Village should demolish all DPW structures on this site and convert the site to new uses that will serve the Village. If new uses include residential redevelopment, the new residential use should be compatible in style and density with existing residential development on Palisade Street. Among the possibilities for uses on this site are:

- Year-round tennis courts, skating park and/or other recreational facilities.
- Parking structure for recreational users and shoppers, with recreational facility on top or at street-level.
- Park-like landscaping to outline the site's special view of the river.

### **C.6. Downtown Revitalization**

One of the primary objectives of the LWRP is to facilitate the revitalization of the Village's Downtown Area. The recommendations in this section are aimed at developing a downtown business strategy that fosters community spirit and collaborative efforts within the Village's business community. They are as follows:

#### **C.6.a. Downtown Business Coordinator**

The LWRP proposes that the Village establish a full-time or part-time professional position, Downtown Business Coordinator, to work with the Village boards and committees to coordinate the implementation of the business strategies proposed in this section. These strategies include all of the following:

- Develop a targeted Business Recruitment Program.
- Develop a tourism strategy for the Downtown

- Organize the existing businesses, help to locate new businesses that would be an asset to Dobbs Ferry and work to strengthen the existing Chamber of Commerce.
- Act as liaison to all Village Boards and Committees regarding Downtown/Waterfront matters.
- Form a joint Advertising Campaign for local businesses/restaurants/services.
- Develop new Public Transit Utilization incentives to bring newcomers to the Village.
- Develop a Joint Downtown Coordination Strategy with the villages of Hastings and Irvington including a Joint Downtown Committee.
- Develop a Business District Newsletter.
- Coordinate efforts with LWRP Waterfront Coordinator to ensure unity of purpose and ongoing implementation of the LWRP.

Note: The Downtown Business Coordinator position could be combined with the LWRP Waterfront Coordinator position (see C.2.d.(1)), or could be shared with a neighboring Village.

**C.6.b. Develop Funding Resources**

- Identify funding sources for development and improvement of commercial areas.
- Establish a “Foundation” to allow individuals to donate benches, garden spaces, fountains or services for public spaces.
- Evaluate the use of tax incentives as a catalyst for change within the commercial district
- Form a Business Improvement District (BID).
- Develop a retention and new business incentive package.

**C.6.c. Develop Waterfront Commercial Opportunities**

- Highlight the connection of Downtown and Waterfront areas by identifying and developing new mutually beneficial business alliances in Downtown and Waterfront areas (Chart House, 145 Palisade).
- Develop commercial opportunities relating to the Waterfront for local merchants: e.g.: coffee house/café, food concessions during the summer

months or in connection with the waterfront concerts and other events, services for commuters, canoe/kayak rental, and jitney service.

#### **C.6.d. Develop Downtown Design Guidelines**

In conjunction with a broad review of applicable zoning provisions, the Village should:

- Develop design guidelines for downtown structures that recommend appropriate architecture and urban design in keeping with the height, scale, density, and character of the Village. Include well-designed pedestrian amenities and gathering places.
- Work to make the downtown area more appealing by developing facade guidelines, making available design and technical assistance to landlords and shopkeepers, and planning areas for people to congregate.
- Develop guidelines for Downtown historic preservation and restoration projects.

#### **C.6.e. Develop Tourism**

Since Dobbs Ferry is primarily a residential community (not agricultural or industrial), economic development should focus on reinvigorating our downtown and heritage tourism. As a group, heritage tourists are affluent travelers, with money to spend in the communities they visit. Dobbs Ferry has a supply of potential visitors through the coordinated efforts of the Historic River Towns and the draw of Historic State Parks, including the Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park, the National Trust and Historic Hudson Valley sites in Dobbs Ferry and neighboring communities. With the popularity of local restaurants and galleries as a base, the Village can build on its demonstrated track record for offering community hospitality. Our waterfront is a remarkable resource to share along with our historic downtown and significant architecture. Planning a way to accommodate visitors at the river and draw them up to our shops, galleries, and restaurants is a challenge that villagers in previous centuries seem to have handled well.

Some tourism development goals are:

- Define what is unique about Dobbs Ferry while strengthening its Historic Rivertown identity and making connection with other HRTW's.
- Improve commercial/public signage to build continuity in Downtown Areas.
- Riverwalk should provide connections with other river Villages and be available for walkers, joggers, bikers, rollerbladers, and strollers.
- Develop tour packages both in town and on the river.
- Encourage Bed and Breakfast for tourists (for visitors by boat also).

## **C.7. Scenic View Preservation**

The extraordinary scenic views throughout the Village are at the heart of the Village's identity. The Village should do all it can to preserve, feature, maintain and expand them. Village efforts to promote view preservation and enhancement fall into two categories: C.7.a., regulations that govern private land use, and C.7.b., Village actions on municipal property to improve and enhance visual access to the river from public and private space.

### **C.7.a. Regulations**

In the regulatory sphere, views are currently addressed indirectly through existing Village laws that deal with such areas as site plan regulations, lot coverage, building envelope, steep slopes, tree removals, and planting plans. Special attention, however, 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.7.a.(1) View Preservation Ordinance***

In addition to strengthening existing local laws to preserve views, the committee recommends the development and adoption of a Dobbs Ferry View Preservation Ordinance specifically dedicated to this important resource. The ordinance would require a review of all new exterior construction within a Village area determined after careful study of the Committee's view inventory. The area governed by this ordinance, the View Preservation District, should include all properties that can interrupt public or private visual access to the Hudson River. The scenic view inventory discussed in Section II defines an area of important river views 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.

A view preservation ordinance would not dictate preservation of all views. Rather, it would give residents and the representative reviewing body the opportunity to consider the impact of proposed construction on neighbors' views and views accessible to the general public, and to explore, if necessary, alternate design approaches that would minimize negative impacts to existing views. While the applicant would be required to show a good faith effort to minimize the impact of new construction on neighboring views, the right to maintain economic value for private property within the permitted zoning envelope would be preserved.

#### ***C.7.a.(2) Site Plan Review: Proposed Landscaping***

Village site plan review should give attention to species and growth habits of proposed plantings in sensitive scenic areas. Within the View Preservation District, applicants seeking site plan approval should be required to demonstrate the impact of proposed

landscaping on neighboring properties and public vistas and be prepared to modify plans in response to comments from the reviewing body.

**C.7.a.(3)      *Tree Ordinance***

Another Village regulation that deserves attention is the Village Tree Preservation Ordinance that should be reviewed by the Conservation Advisory Board as part of the preparation of a scenic view preservation ordinance. This issue is complex. Appropriate implementation 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. Tree removals should be carefully scrutinized and viewed in the Village context, since Dobbs Ferry's handsome mature trees play a major role in relieving the visual density of the community and contribute significantly to village character, beauty, and environmental health. However, improvement of visual access to the River should be one significant factor among several in deciding to permit tree removals.

Other factors to be weighed are the condition of the tree; the value of its species; its role in the neighborhood as a screen, a windbreak, and source of energy-saving shade; and its function in preventing erosion on slopes and in providing habitat for wildlife. "Topping-off" trees to improve views is not a sound practice. It threatens the health of some trees, produces weak (and therefore potentially dangerous) new wood, and must be repeated frequently (if the tree survives) as the tree pushes new growth to compensate for leaf loss in the crown.

In summary, the Village should revise the current tree ordinance, with the consultation of a qualified, certified arborist and a landscape architect/environmental planner. It should prohibit "topping-off" trees but permit selective branch or tree removals on private property for the purposes of view improvement as long as other factors mentioned above weigh in the deliberation. The efficacy of a tree ordinance depends upon the competence of the commission evaluating applications and the Village's commitment to enforcement.

**C.7.b.              *Village Actions on Village-owned property***

The view inventory revealed numerous opportunities for Village improvements on land it owns and manages. Direct Village actions on Village-owned property should involve improvement of street tree maintenance and pruning; selective removal of street trees where views are unnecessarily obstructed; possible development of sidewalks and amenities to improve public access to views; reduction of and improvement of signage to minimize impacts on views; a program to reduce or eliminate overhead wires, poles, cable paraphernalia. Future designs for the present DPW site should include maximizing visual access to the Hudson River down Cedar Street.

**C.7.b.(1) Memorial Park**

Both levels of Memorial Park could have magnificent year-round view windows to the river. The committee recommends that the Village retain the services of a landscape architect /environmental planner to develop an integrated plan (to be reviewed by the Conservation Advisory Board) covering:

- Selective clearing of trees and underbrush to create views of the River from upper and lower developed Memorial Park areas
- Recommendations for appropriate native species shrub cover to hold slopes disturbed by tree removals and to discourage re-growth of view-blocking trees
- Recommendations for an ongoing maintenance regime to preserve these cleared areas
- Recommendations for sitting areas with benches and other park amenities oriented to take advantage of the new view windows
- Suggested phasing plan if improvements must be made over time

Factors to be considered in the development of this plan include but are not limited to:

- Preservation of mature oaks and other native trees and shrubs and preferred removals of Norway and sycamore maples and other invasive exotic species;
- Selection of native shrub species to provide cover and food for wildlife, especially birds on the Hudson River flyway;
- Protection of the privacy of neighboring properties;
- Minimization of afternoon sun-glare for Little League games;
- Attempt to maximize the positive impact of selective tree removals at the Embassy Community Center and private residences on Hudson Terrace;
- Sun-shade and wind-protection for newly created sitting areas;
- Fencing upgrade.



**C.7.b.(2) Views for special regulatory protection and special Village maintenance**

As has been described above, the Scenic Resources Committee has identified an area of the Village to be governed by a View Preservation Ordinance. Eight public vantage points deserve even stronger protections. They are:

- Views toward the Hudson 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 have been singled out because of their 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. The view preservation ordinance should provide an additional measure of protection for these views.

**C.7.b.(3) Other Open Space Views**

The Village's Conservation Advisory Board has completed an inventory of Dobbs Ferry's open space, and in November 2001 Village residents approved a \$3 million bond to acquire land to be retained as open space for the purposes of preservation and recreation. The LWRP recommends 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.

**C.7.b.(4) Coordination with the Old Croton Aqueduct State Historic Park**

New York State's linear park provides extraordinary scenic benefits to its users. 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. The special protections and Village actions described above for Cedar, Oak, Elm, Chestnut, and Walnut Streets will enhance the Aqueduct experience. View preservation guidelines within the View Preservation District should help to protect river views now enjoyed

from the Aqueduct. The Aqueduct's status as a State Historic Park and a National Historic Landmark legally mandates careful attention to the impact of public or private development on this regional scenic and recreational resource. The Village's local review processes should reflect that obligation, and applicants should be made aware of the Aqueduct's special status.

**C.7.b.(5)      *Stewardship of Village Properties***

One relatively easy action that the Village could take to enhance visual access to the River would be to adopt environmentally sound policies and practices in the maintenance and management of Village-owned property. Both levels of Memorial Park, for example, could have magnificent year-round views of the River. The Village should retain the services of a landscape architect/environmental planner to develop an integrated plan (to be reviewed by the Conservation Advisory Board) covering:

- Selective clearing of trees and underbrush to create views of the River from the upper and lower developed park areas.
- Recommendations for appropriate native species shrub cover to hold areas disturbed by tree removals and discourage re-growth of view-blocking trees.
- Recommendations for an on-going maintenance regime to preserve these cleared areas.
- Recommendations for sitting areas with benches and other park amenities oriented to take advantage of the new view windows.
- Suggested phasing plan if improvements must be made over time.

## **C.8.    *Historic and Archaeological Preservation Programs***

Dobbs Ferry has a rich natural and cultural history. It has the potential resources to reinforce its identity as a waterfront community and to enhance the quality of life of its residents. The Village's participation in the sweep of events in the Hudson Valley and the metropolitan region provides opportunities to attract visitors who can contribute to the economic life of the downtown. Residents' responses to LWRP public surveys, however, indicate that very little is known about local history or Dobbs Ferry's role in the history of the region or of the nation. These recommended projects are designed to satisfy the needs identified in the history inventory and analysis sections of this document.

**C.8.a.    *Highlight Village's Architectural Legacy***

Dobbs Ferry has architectural riches that are not understood and that, therefore, bring scant benefit to the Village. The LWRP has identified the following projects to encourage understanding and enjoyment of Dobbs Ferry's architectural heritage:

**C.8.a.(1) Public Education**

The LWRP proposes public education projects for all age groups, coordinated through the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society, the Village Historian, Historic River Towns of Westchester, and local volunteers to promote public awareness of the historic resources present in the Village. This can be accomplished through a number of measures, including:

- A funded project to identify, study, describe, and promote the importance of the Village's architectural heritage through publications, exhibits, markers, signage, and self-guided walking tours like the outstanding series done by the Dobbs Ferry Historical Society years ago.
- Programs to highlight Village's role in development of transportation routes. Dobbs Ferry's position on a heritage river, a namesake ferry service, a major historic train line, a post road as old as European settlement, a linear historic State park, and on the now-vanished trails of Native American residents yields countless opportunities to enrich resident and visitor experience. The transportation routes are both "the story" and the way people come to experience the story.
- Signs - History can deepen the experience of the waterfront through interpretive signs and panels, statues, and installations representing bygone waterfront and shipping activities. Markers or timelines along the shoreline coordinated with interpretive materials in the Depot (train station) Cultural Center can acquaint residents and visitors with Dobbs Ferry's journey through history to the present.
- Information kiosks in the Dobbs Ferry business district to provide information regarding historic buildings and events that took place in the immediate area.
- A historic map of Dobbs Ferry illustrating the Village's historic resources and the connections between them and other points of interest in the Village and the region.

**C.8.a.(2) Enhance the Historic Character of the Downtown**

Momentum for enhancement of historic character often follows the realization that shopping strips provide many of the goods and services that used to be the mainstay of downtown. Merchants realize that to survive, they have to attract specialty shoppers from beyond Village limits. The character of the Village itself becomes the draw. To succeed as a viable downtown, Dobbs Ferry needs desperately to protect its existing historic fabric from further deterioration and demolition. Recommended mechanisms that support that endeavor include:

- The National Main Street Center, sponsored by The National Trust for Historic Preservation, helps downtowns build strong economic development programs through historic preservation. Through the Main Street Center, Dobbs Ferry can get guidance on such issues as storefront improvement programs, historic tax credits, and “placemaking on a budget”.
- Tax credits are presently available for exterior improvements to income-producing properties in designated historic districts. At both State and Federal levels, legislation is proposed to provide similar tax credits for residential properties.
- Grants to fund studies and activities are available from the State and from regional preservation organizations such as the Preservation League of New York.

**C.8.a.(3)      *Historic Preservation Legislation***

The Village should review the feasibility and desirability of enacting a local historic preservation law to establish a procedure for preserving important local historic structures and sites. Such a law, if deemed to be advisable, would:

- Regulate development that may affect designated historic and cultural resources
- Establish procedures for local designation of historic buildings and landmarks,
- Set up a Historical Preservation Commission (or other suitable entity) to recommend structures and sites that merit preservation due to historic or archaeological value.

In order to be successful, such a regulatory approach requires:

- A consortium of proactive local property and business owners committed to the idea that the historic character of a district can increase shopper traffic and sales.
- A professional inventory of Dobbs Ferry’s historic architectural resources followed by recommendations on structures, landscapes, and districts eligible to be protected.
- A professionally prepared manual explaining the historic context and significance of the protected building or area and setting forth explanations of permitted and prohibited actions pertaining to demolition, new construction, additions, and remodeling for use by the review board, the applicant, and his or her architect and builder.

- A well-informed and conscientious (historic district) architectural review board backed by strict enforcement procedures.
- An ongoing Village committee actively researching, preparing, and presenting materials to illuminate the community's history for residents and visitors. The stories behind the protected architecture and landscape need to be told.

This mechanism for reviving downtowns is in wide use across the country—not just museum re-creations like Colonial Williamsburg. Close to home, Irvington is contemplating guidelines to improve its Main Street neighborhood. Cold Spring in Putnam County; Kingston, New York; Plainfield, New Jersey; and East Hartford, Connecticut have very different guidelines tailored to their particular needs and heritage. To justify the ongoing vigilance involved in successful preservation regulations in Dobbs Ferry, other efforts to promote our historic character and to link downtown to the waterfront, such as many described above, need to be vigorously pursued.

**C.8.a.(4)      *Wickers Creek Archaeological Site***

The site is located on the private property of The Landing Home Owners Association where the Village has acquired a permanent easement to walk to and view the Wickers Creek Archaeological site in the south western area of the property. The easement includes pedestrian access to the site by way of the Wickers Creek corridor and Nun's Beach.

Public understanding and enjoyment of this significant site and its role in the history of Dobbs Ferry, the region and the entire nation can be developed through the cooperative efforts of the Village of Dobbs Ferry; the Landing Home Owners Association; the Friends of Wickers Creek Archaeological Site (FOWCAS); and local, county, regional, and state historical organizations. A plan should be developed to design and implement the following:

- Access to the site - Phase II of the proposed Riverwalk should address the opportunities for public access to the site along the waterfront from Waterfront Park and/or 145 Palisade Street, over a footbridge at the mouth of Wickers Creek to Nun's Beach and the footbridge over the Metro North tracks.
- Design and maintenance of the site - The Village will seek the services of a landscape architect to design a site plan that is sensitive to the historical/archaeological identity of the site as well as to the natural and manmade environment surrounding the site.
- Educational programs - The Dobbs Ferry Historical Society and the Dobbs Ferry School District will work together to develop an education program for adults

and children including onsite information, brochures/materials, walking tours, videos, etc.

## **C.9. Management of Private and Public Open Space Resources**

There are a variety of ways for local municipalities to preserve open space or lands, habitat, wetlands, and other natural resources within New York State. For the purposes of this discussion open space and open lands are defined as those lands which have not yet been subdivided into lots and dedicated to residential, commercial, or industrial use. The Village can play an important role in local open space conservation through implementation of the local planning and land use controls discussed in Section IV.

Much of Dobbs Ferry's open space is, and should remain, in private ownership. The LWRP advocates that the Village develop several alternative strategies designed to encourage continued revenue-producing private ownership of open space in the Village while retaining the public values of that land, i.e. natural resource conservation, scenic view preservation, public access, and recreational use.

In November 2001, the Village of Dobbs Ferry passed a \$3 million Open Space Bond to be available over the next thirty years for acquisition of properties identified for purchase. Consideration should be given to the use of these funds to facilitate actions recommended in the LWRP, especially in the waterfront district. The LWRP recommends the following Village actions in conjunction with the passage of the Open Space Bond:

### **C.9.a. Open Space Criteria**

The Village should develop a set of criteria to evaluate its inventory of public and private open space land. These criteria will be consistent with coastal policy standards and address environmental features, preservation and use goals, planning implications, economic implications, and acquisition issues. Among these criteria will be the potential impact of public ownership on the Village's tax revenue. The Village's tax base should be preserved wherever feasible. Therefore, tax exempt properties should receive a higher priority for acquisition, and acquisition of property that is currently on the tax roles should be considered only as a last resort after all other options have been explored for obtaining the desired use of said property.

### **C.9.b. Research options**

The Village should study available options to negotiate the public use of privately owned lands for conservation and recreational purposes, including tax incentives, easements, transfer of development rights, or lease. Acquisition of private land by the Village should only be considered as a last resort.

### **C.9.c. Consultant**

The LWRP recommends that the Village retain the services of a local land trust, conservation, or preservation organization, e.g. The Westchester Land Trust (WLT), to assist the Village in

developing an open space strategy and negotiating on behalf of the Village with regard to future Village land transactions.

#### **C.9.d. Open Space Committee**

The LWRP recommends that the Village appoint a permanent Open Space Committee to assist the Village in making decisions regarding the purchase of open space parcels. The Open Space Committee would be responsible for developing and applying evaluation criteria for these parcels to determine their value to the Village and the feasibility of their use by the Village.

#### **C.9.e. Village financial resources**

The LWRP recommends that the Village use this local source of open space funding in conjunction with county, state, and federal matching funding resources to conserve important open space resources in the Village.

### **C.10. Public Environmental Education Programs**

The Village should work with Westchester County and local and regional educational organizations to develop environmental education programs for all ages. Public education efforts should be developed with respect to the environmental impacts of human actions such as:

- removal of established vegetation and other development activities in areas of steep slopes and stream corridors;
- improper use, storage, and disposal of household hazardous waste;
- excessive application of fertilizer and turf chemicals;
- excessive use of deicers on sidewalks, driveways, and streets;
- use of pesticides and herbicides.

### **C.11. Proposed Water Resource Management Plans**

The lacework of streams flowing into the Hudson River, Wickers Creek, and the Saw Mill River that played an important role in the economic and recreational life of former residents is now largely buried in dense residential development and culverts.

- Those open water streams and ponds should be inventoried and protected. Markers describing the importance of these waterways to by-gone residents will deepen our understanding of the complex ways native peoples and European settlers, farmers, and industrialists used water and water power.
- The intermittent waterfall above the railroad station and the pond behind 145 Palisade Street are among other incidental water bodies warranting scrutiny and possible measures of

protection. A complete inventory will reveal the extent of resources to be considered for protection, restoration, or interpretation.

#### **C.11.a. Wickers Creek Management Plan**

Dobbs Ferry's most significant surviving waterway is Wickers Creek. Because of its natural, Native American, and post European settlement history, it deserves a high level of protection from neighboring development. A professionally guided ecological restoration plan and implementation will help establish a policy for managing visitation so its fragile slopes suffer no further destruction. The Wickers Creek Biological Assessment Study, funded by the New York State Hudson River Estuary Program, looked at the biology and water quality of Wickers Creek and concluded that the Creek was in dire need of cleaning, banks require stabilization, and stormwater runoff needs to be mitigated. The LWRP proposes a Wickers Creek Management Plan for the Village that incorporates the recommendations of the study. Components of the plan are as follows:

- Clean-up – An initial clean-up program, followed by seasonal clean-up “sweeps”, will remove the scattered trash and debris along the Creek from the Aqueduct to the mouth of the creek, including the beach area. The clean-up program may be a volunteer effort that would produce immediate as well as long-lasting positive results. To complement the clean-up project, the posting of "No Dumping" signs along the upper reaches of the ravine is critical to maintaining a debris-free creek.
- Preservation of Coarse Woody Debris (CWD) - habitat for both vertebrate and invertebrate wildlife can be enhanced in Wickers Creek by leaving most coarse woody debris alone. This debris contributes to soil development and prevents streambank erosion. Trees that have become uprooted due to present erosion conditions and that fall into the creek naturally can be left alone if they are not diverting the stream flow so that it further erodes the streambank.
- Streambank Restoration - The unstable, regularly sloughing banks along many stretches of Wickers Creek likely contribute to an input of fine sediments that negatively impact amphibians, fishes, and some macroinvertebrates. Therefore, stream restoration techniques are of utmost importance to stabilize the streambank and restore the creek to its natural healthy state. Several steps are needed to perform this restoration.
- Potential Contaminants Mapping and Stormwater Management.
- Education - A final management recommendation includes educating landowners along the creek and in other areas of the watershed about the importance of the creek in both an ecological and cultural context.



### **C.11.b. Saw Mill River Management Plan**

The Village should seek funding for Bioassessment Study and Streambank Restoration of those portions of the Saw Mill River that run through Dobbs Ferry. The Village might also join with the Village of Hastings-on-Hudson and City of Yonkers to seek funding for a combined study and management plan for the Saw Mill River.

### **C.11.c. Stormwater Management Plan**

Under the provisions of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Final Stormwater Phase II Rule, pursuant to the 1987 Amendments of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (commonly known as the Clean Water Act), the Village of Dobbs Ferry is required to apply for a National Pollution Discharge elimination System (NPDES) permit for its stormwater drainage system by March 10, 2003. By the end of the first permit term, typically five years after issuance of the original permit, the Village will be required to implement a stormwater management program designed to reduce or prevent the discharge of pollutants into adjacent receiving waters. That program must incorporate a series of stormwater discharge management controls (best management practices), including the following six required minimum control measures:

- Public education and outreach
- Public Participation and involvement
- Illicit discharge detection and elimination
- Construction site runoff control
- Post-construction runoff control
- Pollution prevention/good housekeeping

Under the Phase II Rule, the Village will be required to establish a set of "measurable goals", defining target dates for the accomplishment of specific implementation activities for each of the six required minimum control measures.

### **C.11.d. Harbor Management Plan**

A harbor management plan addresses conflict, congestion, and competition for space in the use of a Hudson River community's surface waters and potentially its underwater land. It provides consideration of and guidance and regulation on the managing of boat traffic; general harbor use; optimum location and number of boat support structures, such as docks, piers, moorings, pumpout facilities, special anchorage areas; and identification of local and federal navigational channels. It also provides the opportunity to identify various alternatives for optimum use of the waterfront and adjacent water surface, while at the same time analyzing the probable environmental effects of these alternatives.

Harbor management programs are a required element for the approval of a LWRP. Pursuant to Section 922 of the New York State Executive Law, the Village of Dobbs Ferry invokes its authority to integrate its harbor management program within the LWRP. Dobbs Ferry's Harbor Management Plan considers many uses of Dobbs Ferry's waterfront area. These uses are discussed throughout this Section. A specific listing of the elements required in the Harbor Management Plan that are a part of this LWRP is as follows:

- The HMP boundary area is identified on [Figure 1-2](#).
- A complete inventory and analysis of existing uses in the HMP can be located in Section II of this LWRP.
- An identification and analysis of issues of local importance can specifically be found in Section II-B.4. and D.
- An identification and analysis of issues of regional importance can specifically be found in Section II-A.2., B.3., and C.4 and Section IV-C.12.
- A discussion of opportunities, long and short-term goals and objectives for the HMP are found in Section III-C. and E.
- An identification of the utilization of public underwater lands and navigable waters is located in Section II-B.3.b.
- A discussion of water dependent uses is located in Section II- C.3.
- The identification and discussion of economic, cultural, and social considerations regarding underwater lands and navigable waters can be found in Section III-A-D.
- A water use plan can be found in Section IV-B.
- A specification of policies concerning the management of underwater lands and navigable waters can be found in Section III. C. and IV-C. 11.D.
- Identification of capital projects necessary to implement the HMP can be found in Section IV.
- Specification of existing and proposed techniques to implement the LWRP can be found in Section V.
- Other applicable needs to describe the HMP can be found in discussions throughout the LWRP document.

Relevant details from the LWRP that pertain to the HMP are reported in the text below.

The harbor management issues of local and regional importance are discussed in Section II and include: the biological health of the Hudson River; the recognition and coordination of various management initiatives such as the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area Management Plan; and navigation and dredging issues. Dobbs Ferry presently does not have any public or private waterfront facilities that support surface water activities. The Village, therefore, does not have laws regulating surface water activities. Any activity involving the waterfront is subject to the Critical Environmental Area law and all potential environmental impacts must be explored.

Other applicable regulations in the Coastal Management Zone are imposed by NYSDEC and the ACOE. The NYSDEC requires a Protection of Waters Permit for the disturbance of the bed or banks of the Hudson River, the construction or repair of docks, platforms or installation of moorings, and the excavation or placement of fill in the Hudson River. The ACOE regulates the Hudson River under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 requiring permits for certain activities. These include requiring obtaining a permit for activities including the construction or placement structures and for the discharge of dredged or fill material into the Hudson River.

The proposed water uses, sites for water-dependent and water-enhanced uses, and the priority for land uses are identified for the waterfront above in Section IV-B. A list of potential water-dependent uses includes a floating dock and/or pier for daytime boat access, fishing, and pedestrian access to and from the shore; a launch for non-motorized boats; and facilities for the repair, rental, storage of non-motorized watercraft, and hand launch for non-motorized boats. For a fuller list of proposed permissible water-dependent, water-enhanced, and non-water related uses in the proposed new Waterfront District Zone, see Section V. C. of this document.

The Village of Dobbs Ferry invokes its authority to implement its Harbor Management Program, integrated within the LWRP.

## **C.12. Regional Planning - The Hudson River Valley Greenway Council**

The Village should identify the Hudson River Valley Greenway Council and Conservancy as partners in the implementation of the LWRP.

The Dobbs Ferry LWRP, through its policies and projects, furthers the goals of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council and the Greenway Heritage Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley. The Greenway encourages compatible economic development while preserving natural resources and the natural beauty of the Hudson River Valley, one of the main objectives of the LWRP.

The Hudson River Valley Greenway Principles are:

- Natural and Cultural Resource Protection
- Regional Planning
- Economic Development

- Public Access
- Heritage and Environmental Education

The records of the Hudson River Valley Greenway Council do not indicate that the Village of Dobbs Ferry has officially joined the Council by means of a resolution passed by the Village Board of Trustees in support of the Greenway Principles. It is recommended that a resolution to become a Greenway Community and to join the Westchester Greenway Compact be considered for adoption in the near-term in order to take advantage of the various forms of technical and financial assistance that are available to Greenway communities, including:

- Up to 50 percent grants for basic community planning and for any changes to local planning and zoning;
- A potential rating advantage over non-member communities for receiving competitive New York State funding for Greenway projects and for Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) grants;
- Streamlined environmental review process for activities which are consistent with regional Greenway plans; and
- Protection from lawsuits brought against communities because of the acquisition of land or the adoption of local land use regulations consistent with the regional Greenway Plan.

Besides basic planning, the grant monies through this program also are available for:

- Stewardship funding, to encourage community residents to take an active role in monitoring and maintaining their local trails, to help local partnerships generate interest in their trails, and to recognize the effort of their volunteers (e.g. free T-shirts, awards, picnics, and service mementos); and
- Funding to address landowners' issues, to obtain permission for public trails to cross privately-owned land, and to implement various measures to gain private landowner support for public trails, such as the installation of no trespassing and private property signs, fencing, and vegetative screening.

The recommendations in this LWRP are consistent with the guiding principles of the Hudson Valley Greenway Council. Membership in the Greenway Council and the Westchester Greenway Compact will provide the Village of Dobbs Ferry with the type of the technical and financial assistance necessary to implement many of the projects recommended in this document.