

TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

LOCAL WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PROGRAM & HARBOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

Bethlehem, New York

October 2007

Balance



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DRAFT
For Community Review
November 7 Community Meeting

Introduction and Overview

Located along the western banks of the historic and famed Hudson River, the Town of Bethlehem, New York, is faced with an outstanding opportunity to fully capitalize on one of its major assets: 10 miles of riverfront. Upon preparation of the Comprehensive Plan in 2005, it was recommended that the Town develop a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program.

The Town of Bethlehem, New York has long been an attractive community in the Capital Region, recognized time and again for its superb quality of life. The Town's long history, exemplified in its natural beauty and proximity to the State Capitol, make it the envy of many communities within the Capital District of New York State. From a cultural perspective, it maintains a small town feel and sense of kinship that gets lost in many of the sprawling suburbs around the region. There are few places that remain in Bethlehem that still hold the potential to have a meaningful impact on the quality of life offered by the Town; the ten miles along the Hudson River, in many respects, are the last remaining lands for the Town to enhance the quality of life offered in the region. An appropriate balance between development and public access will be an important element for the Town as it seeks to further enhance its well-deserved reputation in the 21st Century.

The Bethlehem Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) and Harbor Management Plan (HMP) have been developed to guide the future of Bethlehem's riverfront areas. With the recent adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, along with the Route 9W Linkage Study currently underway, the time is appropriate to fashion a new approach to the integration of Bethlehem's waterfront for the next generation of development. With a study area generally stretching from the Hudson River westward to the Thruway, the LWRP seeks to establish a vision and policies to appropriately guide future investments and development, both public and private.

The LWRP defines a framework to integrate various investments and efforts within the waterfront revitalization area boundary. In general, the LWRP looks to create a balance between future development and the protection of the unique environmental and heritage expressed along the riverfront. Preferred development areas are identified, an approach to both environmental and heritage protection is outlined and connections to regional trail systems are proposed. The plan outlines regulatory tools that will help bring about the envisioned future for the waterfront as well as an implementation schedule with some financing mechanisms for consideration. Bethlehem plays an important role to the region for commerce, culture and tourism. It is the intent of this plan to further enhance this role as a community that promotes the identity of the region while still providing for the needs of its residents.

What is an LWRP?

New York State's *Waterfront Revitalization of Coastal Areas and Inland Waterways Act* is a unique waterfront tool that encourages a local, home-rule decision-making process for waterfront management. A Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) is a comprehensive waterfront management plan developed under the authorization of the Act by local municipalities. Bethlehem's LWRP formulates waterfront development objectives by adapting statewide legislation and policies to the unique and individual

requirements of the Town. The LWRP also outlines strategies that will compliment the Town's recently completed Comprehensive Plan and provides a Master Plan for the Henry Hudson Park.

The LWRP process involves cooperation with State, County, local, and private agencies as well as an appointed LWRP Advisory Committee that includes local business owners, municipal, and state officials and Town of Bethlehem residents. The LWRP outlines specific projects and policies to encourage environmental protection, foster economic development, protect valuable water resources, and improve public waterfront accessibility. The LWRP will enable Bethlehem officials to play a role in determining that federal, state and local actions proposed within the waterfront revitalization area is conducted in a manner consistent with the policies of the LWRP and the vision of the community.

One of the components of the LWRP is the identification of long-term uses and specific projects along the waterfront and related lands. These uses and projects, in conjunction with an established management program, significantly increase Bethlehem's ability to attract and manage development activities that complement the unique cultural and natural characteristics of its waterfront. Projects proposed within this document will create a new waterfront destination for both residents and visitors to the Town.

The LWRP provides Bethlehem with the local controls to guide waterfront-related development. More importantly, the LWRP is designed to establish a process to ensure that *all* actions proposed for the Town's waterfront area occur in a fashion prescribed by the LWRP. This "consistency" provision is a strong tool that is intended to create dialog and encourage cooperation between federal, state and local governments, as well as private sector interests, to build a stronger economy and a healthier waterfront environment.

A Vision for Bethlehem's Riverfront Areas Statement

In the year 2020, Bethlehem's Riverfront Areas, as defined by the Town's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, are a peaceful, safe and desirable destination that provide enhanced connectivity and access to the riverfront for all people to live, work, recreate, and experience history, culture and the environment in beautiful and inspiring spaces that respect our natural resources and heritage for future generations.

Value Statements

The residents of Bethlehem expressed a relatively consistent premise to build on the assets that already exist in the riverfront areas and to enhance Bethlehem's already high quality of life. Balance was a consistent theme. The following themes capture the views expressed on important issues regarding the riverfront areas. These value statements should be used as a guide for decision-making when evaluating policies, programs and projects within the Riverfront areas.

Sense of Place: The riverfront areas will continue to be a special place in Bethlehem; they are the connection between town and river. They are places where residents will experience the beauty and diversity of Bethlehem. The riverfront areas will be developed within the context of Bethlehem's history and heritage. The quality of architecture and design elements will enhance and interpret this unique sense of place.

Recreation, Connectivity & Access: The riverfront areas will be available from both the land and the water. Multi-use recreational amenities will be accessible with safe, integrated connections that allow people to fully experience Bethlehem’s riverfront areas. Diverse events and attractions will allow people of different ages and abilities to get a full riverfront experience.

History and Heritage: The riverfront areas should be an important expression of the rich history of both the Town and the region. This history and heritage is important to interpret for future generations to understand the roots of the Capital Region. The heritage buildings, artifacts and historic traces of the riverfront areas express the richness of how the community was created and used. Opportunities for interpretation should be expressed in all new development that occurs within the riverfront areas.

Stewardship: The ecological value of the riverfront areas should be maintained and restored in all projects. Unique habitats should be protected. Opportunities to connect with and interpret the environment should be appropriately included in all projects. Unique and special scenic viewing areas should be respected and opportunity should be provided for all to experience these areas. Efforts should be made with our regional community partners to improve the environmental integrity of the Hudson River.

Growth and Development: The riverfront areas are places to live, work, and recreate with a wide diversity of uses and a range of visually interesting experiences. To reflect the diversity of its users, there should be a range of fiscally responsible built and “green” environments and opportunities appropriately designed and located for passive and active uses.

Regional Coordination: As the Capital Region and Hudson River Watershed communities continue to grow and evolve, it will be important that all projects be evaluated within a regional context, especially the nearby waterfront communities of Troy, Albany, Rensselaer, East Greenbush, Castleton-On-Hudson, Coeymans and Schodack.

Section 1 – Waterfront Revitalization Area

Description of Proposed Waterfront Revitalization Area Boundary

The Town of Bethlehem Waterfront Revitalization Area (WRA) shall be composed of the following described areas within the Town. The WRA shall include all lands west of the Town's eastern municipal boundary, which is the centerline of the main channel of the Hudson River, with the following delineation:

Beginning at the southern municipal boundary, the WRA begins at the eastern edge of Interstate 90; thence continuing north following the eastern edge of Interstate 90 to the northern municipal boundary with the City of Albany, this being the end point of the described line.

See Waterfront Revitalization Area Map following Page 1.2.

Description of Existing Coastal Boundary

Bethlehem's Coastal Area Boundary is defined by Section 1455(d)(2)(A) of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 administered by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Ocean Services, Office of Coastal Resources Management. Generally, the boundary follows well-defined features such as roads, railroads or shorelines as defined in 19 NYCRR Part 602, unless otherwise indicated.

Beginning at the southern municipal boundary, the Coastal Area Boundary follows Route 144 north to its intersection with Barent Winne Road; thence east following Barent Winne Road to its terminus; thence north generally following the shoreline to Wheeler Road; thence west to its intersection with Route 144; thence north along Route 144 to its intersection with Bask Road; thence west to its intersection with the existing rail line; thence northeast following the rail line to a point generally north of Smultz Road; thence directly north to its intersection with Glenmont Road and Anderson Lane; thence east following Anderson Lane to its intersection with Route 144; thence north following Route 144 to the northern municipal boundary with the city of Albany, this being the end point of the described line.

Justification for Amendment to the Existing Coastal Boundary

As noted above, the existing Coastal Boundary generally follows well-defined features such as roads, railroads or shorelines as defined in 19 NYCRR Part 602. The proposed boundary has been expanded to include areas further inland because the overall goal of this LWRP is to facilitate enhanced connections to the waterfront; the expanded areas influence future waterfront connections. While the existing boundary provides for a very focused area to concentrate LWRP efforts, it does not allow for the Town to develop programs and projects within the areas that will be most affected by waterfront-related development; the proposed boundary allows for broader community-wide revitalization resulting from waterfront investments.

Section 4

4.1 INTRODUCTION

With this Local Waterfront Revitalization Program, the Town of Bethlehem is prepared to take on the challenges of the 21st Century—to embrace change and further enhance the Capital Region’s growing reputation as a highly desirable place to not only live and work, but also to visit and experience history, culture and the environment. The program outlined here provides a framework to build a strong system of connected, high-quality private investment areas intertwined with distinctive public spaces; the program establishes a blueprint that connects neighborhoods, cultural and environmental areas and commercial establishments, while preserving, protecting and expanding access to the Hudson River. The intent is to form a basis for first-rate public and private development that connects neighborhoods, cultural and environmental areas and commercial establishments, all while enhancing the environmental beauty and cultural opportunities provided here.



*The future belongs to those who believe
in the beauty of their dreams.*
- Eleanor Roosevelt

To help achieve the vision outlined in the Town’s 2005 Comprehensive Plan, Bethlehem has turned its energy and resources to one of the region’s unique and valuable assets—its broad and diverse riverfront. From its passive recreation opportunities available at Henry Hudson Park to its active port-supporting industries, from its small hamlet areas to its unique environmental and cultural amenities, Bethlehem is reconnecting with its roots and managing future growth pressures to protect the uniquely high quality of life offered in the riverfront areas. For many in the community, the Town’s riverfront areas represent the future, an opportunity to capitalize on existing strengths and opportunities, while chartering a new course and achieving new heights. Others recognize these areas as special and unique to the region. This LWRP is the unifying element that will guide local decision makers and weave together these various expectations.

The proposed uses and initiatives outlined here have the potential to stimulate reinvestment in the riverfront areas for a variety of uses. The North Riverfront will be an area of higher intensity uses, while the South Riverfront will provide significant opportunity for passive recreational, environmental and heritage interpretation, all while safeguarding and enriching the right of the public to access the riverfront. The Central Riverfront shares many of the same characteristics of the South Riverfront District and will be an important transition area. Because of the heavy industrial nature of the North Riverfront District, the environmental constraints of the South Riverfront District, and the relatively undeveloped and unconstrained lands of the Central Riverfront District, the Central Riverfront District is the most likely District to experience development pressures over the coming decade. With that, it will be critical that the Town leadership remain committed to the vision outlined

in this LWRP and hold true to creating high-quality development that respects the natural environment and heritage for future generations.

Bethlehem's "new" riverfront will strike a balance—ensuring above all that the Town's riverfront is an inviting place for people to unwind and enjoy civic activities, while also providing important new places and opportunities for innovative residential, commercial and professional activities.

The Town of Bethlehem's Local Riverfront Revitalization Program conveys a strong and clear vision for the future of the Town's riverfront that is compelling and inspiring, imagining possibilities that at first thought may be inconceivable, but will be possible over time with a continued focus on the future. While this program seeks to propel the areas of Bethlehem's riverfront in new directions, it is also highly focused on achievable initiatives, which are based in reality and flexible enough to respond to market conditions and unique opportunities. This LWRP also recognizes that Bethlehem is a community of peaceful, safe and desirable neighborhoods and aims to improve the quality of life experienced by the residents. A firm commitment by municipal leadership will be necessary to achieve the vision outlined in this plan.

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Preparation of the Bethlehem LWRP is taking place at a key time for the Town; the Town is currently in the process of developing plans for a potential bypass that could connect to the riverfront. If this occurs, then appropriate redevelopment around the intersection with Route 144 will be a critical component of the continued success that Bethlehem is experiencing. This is a challenging opportunity for the Town to consider this area in the context of continued reinvestment in the community and riverfront areas and to define how it can best fit into the broader context of community renewal and support the residents of the community. The challenge will be to establish high standards for what will become a highly valuable area and to ensure successful, quality redevelopment with the greatest positive impact for the community as a whole. It will be a delicate balancing act. This LWRP establishes the criteria by which future redevelopment should be evaluated.

While the Local Riverfront Revitalization Program recognizes a few specific sites as important to continuing to build and enhance the quality of life offered in Bethlehem (such as the Jobs Corps site and adjoining Town-Owned property, the Bohl Excavation site and the Baker Farm site), it also recognizes broader programs and projects that transcend individual sites. Bethlehem's Local Riverfront Revitalization Program builds on the community's rich cultural and economic diversity by embracing development principles that recognize the delicate, and often difficult, interaction among community, environment, and economic progress. To accomplish much of what is outlined in this Program, the leadership of Bethlehem must work to be certain that new growth and development occur in a manner that is consistent with the vision set forth in this Program. In a society that is

becoming increasingly mobile, the opportunities afforded by Bethlehem combined with its cultural and recreational amenities will become progressively more important.

Bethlehem has always been a special place, and continues to remain as a place that is faithful to its heritage; this is one of Bethlehem's greatest assets. The challenge will be to balance this authenticity with new ideas as new residents continue to move into the community. It is hoped that this Program will facilitate that dialog and guide the appropriate investment in the community.

4.2 PROPOSED LAND USE

The future character of the riverfront as a whole will reflect the riverfront's unique identity of today. Bethlehem's Waterfront Revitalization Area (WRA) includes one of the nation's unique settings: it encompasses the only stretch of the National Heritage estuary without railroad or commercial development on either side and akin to the what Henry Hudson and his crew members likely saw when they arrived in 1609. The areas visible from the water will be maintained and preserved in essentially its present visual context, maintaining the natural shoreline to preserve views.

Based on existing land use patterns and environmental constraints, Bethlehem's riverfront areas have been divided into three (3) districts. The South Riverfront District will remain bucolic and natural; land uses will focus on expressing the rich history in the Town and the region as well as the ecological value of the riverfront.

While the Central Riverfront District also provides unique historical and ecological value, it will be an important transition area between the South Riverfront and North Riverfront Districts. The Central Riverfront has large tracts of flat undeveloped lands without environmental constraints. The current character of the district will be maintained with its open, quiet, historic and bucolic feeling; new development will be sensitive to this and incorporate the existing character into its designs. Consequently, it will be important to pay close attention to the location and quality of development in this area as development pressures begin to emerge. Land uses will include a range of development opportunities from recreation and interpretative opportunities to residential and commercial development that must be held to high quality design guidelines clearly reflecting the unique sense of place of the Central Riverfront District. Additionally, new development will take the form of Hamlet development, as defined in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan. New development will be required to provide meaningful open space, bike and pedestrian connections and include expressions of the areas historical significance.

Over time the North Riverfront District will reemerge as a mixed-use commercial, professional, and high-density residential district, with marina facilities. Special attention will be given to the quality of architecture and design in the district. The transition of the district will involve long-term transition to bring positive change and could be subject to policy intervention, such as preparing the land for redevelopment then land banking until there is a critical mass of property available for large-scale redevelopment.

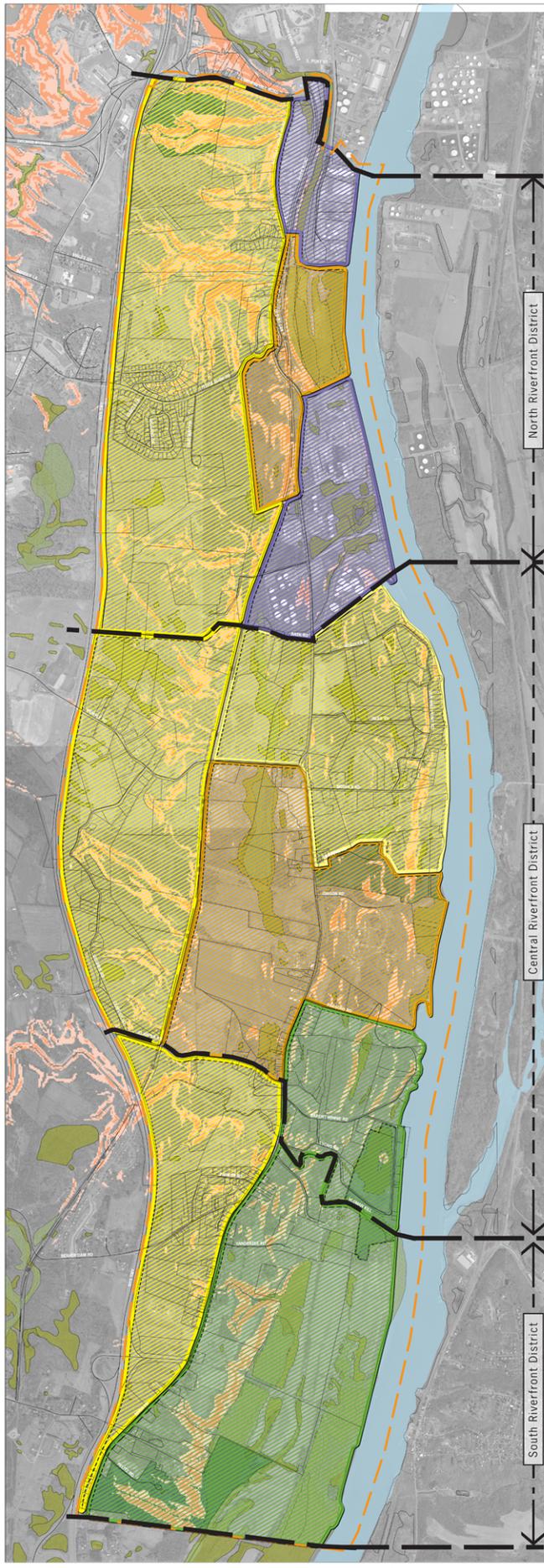
The space between these districts will include appropriate transition areas that smoothly blend the waterfront into one complete experience and will be high quality and fiscally responsible. This means that future development will create and sustain an atmosphere of partnership between the public and private sectors that recognizes their joint roles in investing resources to stimulate economic growth and success while recognizing the need to protect and enhance valuable cultural and environmental resources that make the Town's riverfront areas unique. In general, all new development should be built in a way that smoothly integrates the natural and heritage elements of these riverfront areas. A riverfront integrated bike and pedestrian network will link the ten miles of waterfront, in some places following the river's edge, and in others following existing roadways. These districts are illustrated on the page following *LWRP Framework*.

4.3 PROPOSED WATER USE

The eastern municipal boundary for the Town of Bethlehem is officially recognized as the centerline of the main channel of the Hudson River. Within the Town of Bethlehem, various water-dependent uses and the associated infrastructure are proposed to continue within the jurisdictional waters of the Town. These uses include heavy industrial shipping, recreational boating, and water-based entertainment (such as the potential for tourist boats and visiting ships and naval vessels). This includes enhanced docking areas as the Town continues to strive to attract recreational boaters from the Hudson River.



LWRP Framework



TOWN OF BETHLEHEM
 Local Waterfront Revitalization Program
 October 2007

- KEY**
- WMA BOUNDARY
 - DISTRICT BOUNDARY
 - SLOPES 14-25%
 - SLOPES 20%
 - PARKS / CONSIDERATION LANDS
 - NON WETLANDS
 - NYS DEC WETLANDS
 - POTENTIAL GREENWAY TRAIL SYSTEM



This map is computer generated using data originally Swagala Associates and Swagala Associates and is subject to the accuracy, completeness and reliability of the data provided. Swagala Associates and Swagala Associates are not responsible for any errors or omissions in this map or any other information provided by Swagala Associates.

BETHLEHEM
 LWRP

4.4 PROPOSED PROGRAMS & PROJECTS

For the ease of the user, the following programs and projects have been grouped into districts based on an existing land use patterns, dividing the riverfront into three (3) distinct areas, each with sub-areas. These include the following areas and sub-areas

1. North Riverfront

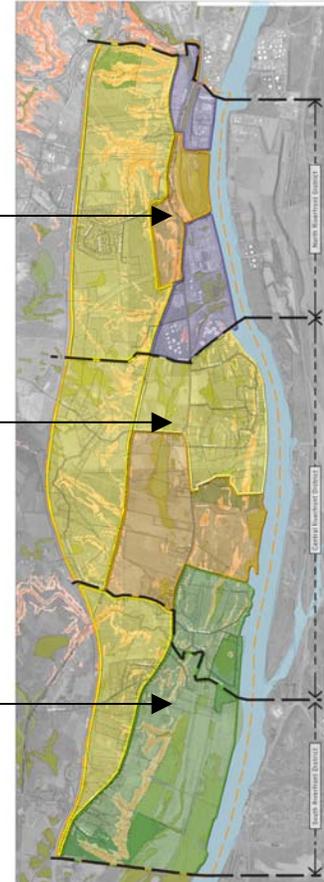
- a. Sub-Port
- b. North Harbor
- c. South Harbor
- d. Corning Hill

2. Central Riverfront

- a. Van Wies point
- b. Riverfront Core
- c. Lyon
- d. Taconic Viewshed

3. South Riverfront

- a. Flats



When reviewing each of these recommendations it is important to keep in mind that the key component of the Program is to achieve balance within the community and the region. The Comprehensive Plan recognized balance as the need to find the equilibrium between urban, suburban and rural perspectives; the need and desire for economic growth, for tax base expansion and diversification, and the short-term and long-term health, safety and welfare of the community. In the context of the LWRP, we recognize balance as the need and desire for economic growth and the stewardship of finite land and cultural and environmental resources within the river influenced areas.

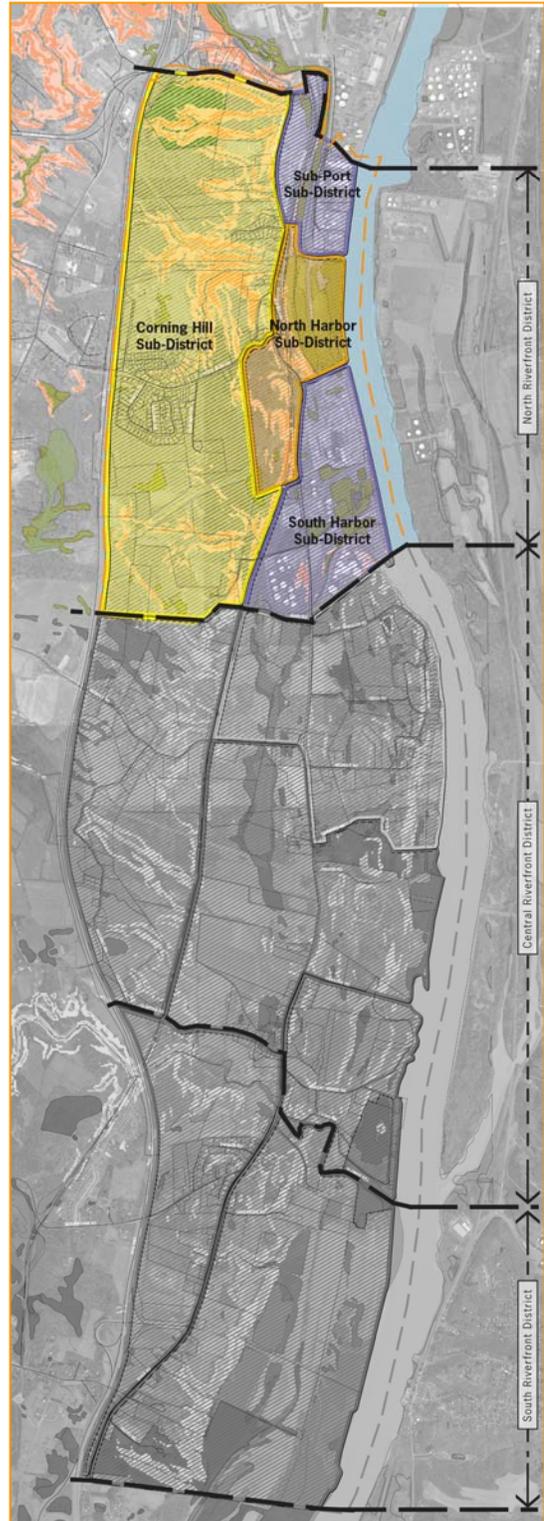
North Riverfront District

The North Riverfront District has a strong connection to the City of Albany via its industrial, port-related activities. Redevelopment of this district will involve a series of economic diversification projects over an extended period of time. First, a more complete strategy will be developed to incrementally rebuild the area and properties will be identified, as catalysts for redevelopment. Investments in infrastructure, such as sewer, water and access will take priority in the short-term. As changes take place over time, some properties will transition from heavy industrial uses to more modern commercial and light industrial uses. The vision for these same properties, especially projects east of the Route 144 corridor, is to take on a character reflected in a stronger sense of urban and industrial form being developed through a higher density of buildings than on the rest of the riverfront. As opportunities develop and environmentally challenged properties are reclaimed, the character of the area will integrate the working waterfront with new mixed-use redevelopment. West of the Route 144 corridor, the character of the area will generally be defined by its natural features, with educational and interpretation activities and new residential development further west and opportunities for light industrial development closer to the Route 144 corridor. This long-term revitalization of the North Riverfront District must be approached systematically and include a series of regular consecutive additions which will ultimately result in a renewed North Riverfront and not compromise water quality or odors in neighboring properties and communities.

North Riverfront District-wide Recommendations

Consider use of the State's Brownfield Opportunity Area Program

The Brownfield Opportunity Areas (BOA) Program is designed to assist communities foster redevelopment and return dormant and blighted land into productive and catalytic areas while restoring environmental quality. This program provides municipalities and community-based



organizations with resources to address local brownfields providing area-wide brownfield redevelopment planning, access to expert environmental and economic analysis, and environmental site assessment for strategic redevelopment parcels.¹

Participation in the State's BOA program should be considered in the North Riverfront District to determine the highest and best use for some key properties in the District. The BOA program takes a holistic approach to brownfields redevelopment in that it does not examine an individual site, but instead identifies a specific district for redevelopment. After the study area is defined and key properties are identified as potential brownfields through Step 1, Step 2 in the process includes a market analysis to give direction regarding the types of redevelopment opportunities that exist in the study area. Finally, in Step 3, the State provides funding to characterize the potential contaminants on those sites identified as brownfields. This process, and the information developed, is a good starting point to help inform the Town with both the transportation access and infrastructure improvements outlined below.

Transportation access improvements

As a whole, the North Riverfront District benefits from its proximity to the city of Albany, the Albany Port Authority and the Thruway. One of the key issues being faced by many of the sites in the North Riverfront District is the need for improved accessibility, particularly those on the east side of Route 144. For any redevelopment to be successful on this corridor these issues relating to accessibility will need to be addressed.

Route 144 in Bethlehem experiences significant impacts due to high traffic volumes, visual character and noise from regional automobile and truck traffic. Improvements are currently being evaluated for much of the Route 9W Corridor, but the study area stops just short of this area at the intersection with Route 32. Access to the North Riverfront District is generally from Albany and the New York State Thruway (via Corning Hill Road). A potential access improvement may include capacity improvements along Corning Hill Road to bring vehicles more efficiently and directly from the Thruway at Exit 23 via US Route 9. Access will also need to be addressed to the sites along the river. Overall transportation access improvements to the North Riverfront Area will lead to improved economic development potential and support the intent of directing new growth and development to already developed areas. In order to best understand how and where these improvements should be made, the Town should develop an access improvement plan for the North Riverfront District. Special attention should be made to uncover improved access to the properties east of the Route 144 corridor.

Manage, maintain and reinvest in public infrastructure

Managing, maintaining and reinvesting in the sewer and water services provided in the North Riverfront District will be an important ingredient to encouraging private sector re-investment in this district. Investing in sewer and water infrastructure has the power to transform the future of the riverfront as a whole. Further, investments in the sewer and water systems in the North Riverfront

¹ http://www.nyswaterfronts.com/grantopps_BOA.asp

District will be critical in the implementation of the LWRP to support redevelopment in the district, allowing for the type of new development that is compatible here, and help to ensure that the proper type of development patterns are fostered in the Central and South Riverfront Districts by encouraging redevelopment of the North Riverfront District. The Town must develop a program that addresses the infrastructure needs of the district, and prioritizes needed investments. Some areas need maintenance, while others need connections to public sewer and water systems. Investments made in the sewer and water network in this district should be coordinated with any transportation access improvements, as identified in the access improvement plan recommended above. Public infrastructure is the backbone of economic growth and private sector investment for the North Riverfront District.

Consider redevelopment of properties along the Riverfront as the Bethlehem Venture Center

Located along the Hudson River, the Bethlehem Venture Center would have a significant effect on both the Town and the regional economic foundation. The Bethlehem Venture Center would provide an opportunity to bring enhanced learning, social interaction, and trade and industry opportunity into an area that is currently underutilized with its premier location on the Hudson River. It is recognized that the area needs improved vehicle access, but it does have good water and rail connections. While the Venture Center has not been



specifically located in the North Riverfront District, it would be a good fit for properties in the North Harbor Sub-District and benefit not only the residents of the Town, but also the region as a whole. The reuse of underutilized and vacant areas would help Bethlehem renew the image of the area while providing a wide range of creative and educational enriching programs to community and regional residents. The Center could feature uses related to emerging environmentally based technologies, fully integrating public post-secondary educational facilities with private sector research and development functions. The Center should be committed to fostering links between community residents and industry, and provide opportunity to gain the skills necessary to contribute to the long-term success of the region. The Bethlehem Venture Center would help attract other residents as well as visitors from outside the Town and facilitate a strengthened connection to the riverfront and the emerging New Economy.

Potential uses in the Bethlehem Venture Center could include:

- > Research and development (perhaps environmental and ecologically-based and/or energy related)
- > Business incubation center
- > College outreach
- > Restoration trades school
- > Boat building/handling school



The development character of the facility should engender a campus-like setting with landscaped paths and sidewalks connecting the various buildings. Buildings would be built new to give distinctiveness to the Bethlehem Venture Center and add to the visual integrity of the area. Zoning revisions may be necessary that support this type of redevelopment and should be addressed if the Town pursues participation in the State's Brownfield Opportunity Area program.

Sub-Port

The Sub-Port District provides the greatest opportunity for marine-based industrial activities that support port activities. Port-related activities will be the primary activities within the Sub-Port District.

Gateway Improvements

Gateways play an important role in forming first impressions and welcoming visitors and residents alike. Both the form and the character of a gateway can influence the overall experience of a particular area. When arriving into Bethlehem along the Route 144 corridor, the land uses are industrial in nature. Nonetheless, some design interventions can be taken to lessen the impact of the industrial nature of this gateway and help to foster redevelopment of some key sites.



Gateways are important in forming impressions about what the traveler will experience; they can also be effective traffic calming areas and provide for safe pedestrian crossings.

A line of trees might be introduced along the road. In some key areas a double row of evergreen trees could be introduced along the roadway with evergreen shrubs to screen the industrial areas from view. Shrubbery should be set back from the curb a sufficient distance to retain a path along the roadside, possibly a future sidewalk or dedicated bike lane.

Strengthen and improve industrial design policies with performance standards

The Town's current zoning code includes design guidelines for both Heavy Industrial and Rural Light Industrial Zoning Districts located in the Sub-Port District. However, these policies should be updated to include additional requirements that enhance performance of these sites. For instance, Green Building Technologies should be considered that encourage environmentally sustainable building design. This could mean the use of energy efficient materials, solar energy, and structural and mechanical components that save utility costs over the life of the structure and have minimum impact on the environment. These performance standards would be consistent with the overall vision for the Riverfront to develop spaces that respect our natural resources and heritage for future generations.

Opportunity Area: Bohl Excavation Site

The Bohl Excavation site is generally located between Retreat House Road and Route 144 covering approximately 37 acres. Over time, the area could become a powerful focal point that enhances further redevelopment in the North Riverfront District around which new mixed-use development could be based. In the short-term, the site should be put to a higher use with ventures that will make the site more active and appealing. This could involve commercial operations that supply the building industry with retail space for the general public or could become a low-intensity manufacturing, processing, assembly and distribution uses. Longer-term, the site could be redeveloped for those activities that offer the greatest positive community impact by reinforcing connections to the waterfront as a special place in the Town and by strengthening its relationship with the riverfront. Redevelopment of the site could emphasize the need to provide an enhanced environment by building a critical mass of activities that strengthens the riverfront area as a destination for residents and visitors, provides new professional employment opportunities, offers retail establishments and provides new housing prospects. Redevelopment of the Bohl Excavation site could also provide the opportunity for further redevelopment across Route 144, connecting with the Hudson River. The Town should consider working with the property owner to examine the potential for redevelopment and then determine the public sector improvements necessary for redevelopment. The State's Brownfield Opportunity Area Program would be a good option to engage in this examination in coordination with the property owner.

To best understand how the site can contribute to the short-term and long-term health, safety and welfare of the community, while helping to change perceptions of the area, a more detailed study of the site should be developed.

North Harbor

The North Harbor District will transform from traditional industrial uses to more modern, cleaner industrial uses. The district will take on a maritime character, with marine-based mixed-use investment, including boat building and repair operations, residential, commercial, entertainment, and professional uses. In the future, there will be opportunities for recreational motorboats to access and moor at this area. Beacon Harbor, a current project under review, embodies many of these principles.

South Harbor

Its heavy industrial character on and off the riverfront defines the South Harbor District. The area abuts the Van Wies Point neighborhood, one of Bethlehem's unique neighborhoods. However, with existing vegetation and the natural slopes of the land, this neighborhood is fairly well buffered from the industrial activities of the South Harbor District. In the event that these older industrial uses are phased out, these areas will be investigated for environmental contamination and replaced with modern industrial uses. New uses will need to be evaluated against the Value Statements made in this Plan.

Corning Hill

The Corning Hill District is an important gateway to the Town from the NYS Thruway and the City of Albany. Much of the development in the district is defined by the steep sloping nature of the topography. The district also includes a unique ecological interpretation opportunity on Old Route 9W with the Bio Preserve with the potential for expansion. Opportunities exist for compact residential development to be woven into various pockets within the district.

Support potential expansion of the Bio-Reserve

The Bio-Reserve currently occupies sixty-eight acres along Old Route 9W. A natural haven for wildlife and educational and scientific opportunities are being created and maintained on the reserve. The property's character is typical of the Corning Hill Sub-District with steep slopes and ravines. Expansion of the reserve will aid in maintaining the natural features of the area as well as provide opportunities for education and interpretation. The Town should work with the property owner to support this initiative to expand the program offered as well as the lands include in the Bio-Reserve.

Examine potential for new compact residential development

Within the Corning Hill District buildable most land has reached optimum building density. However, there is some opportunity for continued residential growth in a few small pockets in the district. Residential development should act sensitively to the existing natural areas and involve environmentally and culturally friendly design techniques including a public center, compact development, and walkability. Development projects ought to be connected and include mixed housing types.



Example of compact, walkable, residential development.

Provide safe bike and pedestrian connections to the waterfront

Pedestrian connections should exist between developments as well as to other areas within the WRA. Specifically, safe pedestrian connections are necessary in the Corning Hill District to move residents from the neighborhoods to the waterfront. These connections should be considered as part of the capacity improvements proposed below.

Make intersection improvements at Rt. 32 and Rt. 9W and improve capacity along Corning Hill Rd.

It has been clearly noted that the north Riverfront District has a number of accessibility issues that need to be addressed in order for it to reach its full economic potential. Route 9W provides the North Riverfront District with an important connection to the New York State Thruway and I-787. However, when Route 9W intersects with Route 32 the connection becomes dangerous and inefficient. As part of the transportation access plan proposed above, the Town should consider how this intersection could be improved to provide improved access to Route 144. Further, as part of this analysis, it will be necessary to understand the capacity improvements necessary along Route 32 to facilitate a clear and efficient connection to Route 9W. This analysis should also consider how bike and pedestrian connections could be incorporated into any redesign of Corning Hill Road.

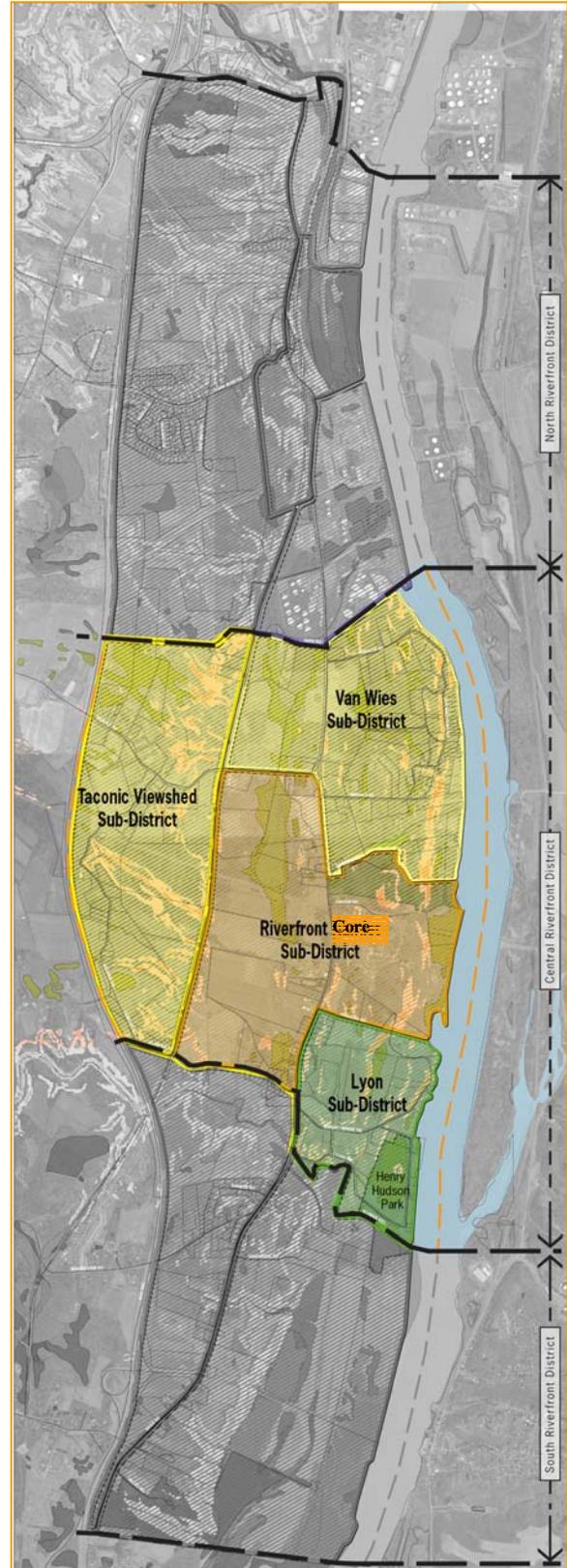
Central Riverfront District

The Central Riverfront has a number of defining characteristics and is an important transition between the North and South Districts. The district can be viewed as the fulcrum providing balance within the Riverfront Areas, where character transitions from higher density, industrial and maritime activities to open, quiet, and bucolic spaces. The district includes several opportunities to connect with and interpret the environment as well as unique and special scenic viewing areas. The district includes a range of development opportunities that must be held to high quality design guidelines that clearly reflect the unique sense of place of the Central Riverfront District.

Central Riverfront District-wide Recommendations

Provide opportunities for public access and use of the Riverfront

The Town of Bethlehem has ten miles of Riverfront with only one public access point, Henry Hudson Park. The Value Statements for this LWRP call for multi-use recreational amenities to be accessible with safe, integrated connections that allow people to fully experience Bethlehem's riverfront areas. The Central Riverfront District provides a good opportunity to begin to establish a waterfront trail because it includes both the Henry Hudson Park and the Town Owned property along Simmons Road. This also complements the South Riverfront District, where passive recreational and interpretation opportunities are being developed. The natural setting of the area should be preserved as best as possible. Amenities such as benches, interpretive signage, and designated fishing access points should be provided. In an effort to create community-wide connectivity, the Town should work with a professional engineering firm to determine an appropriate route for a trail network



along the riverfront. Cost estimates could also be provide to give an order of magnitude and the types of issues the will likely emerge as a master trail plan is implemented.

Van Wies

The Van Wies Point District is a well-established, unique neighborhood with distinctive views of the Hudson River. Natural features buffer the district from the higher intensity industrial uses of the North Riverfront District. Maintaining the interface between the North Riverfront District with these natural buffers is essential to the future integrity of Van Weis Point neighborhood. Future land uses within the district will support the continued success of this neighborhood.

Maintain low intensity residential character of the district while maintaining buffers

The Van Wies district is defined by its stable, low intensity, peaceful residences. These land uses should be maintained. Future redevelopment at either end of this district should include the appropriate buffers to maintain this neighborhood as one of Bethlehem’s unique neighborhoods. The potential for a trail network should be examined as part the riverfront trail network proposed above. Trail connections should also be sought to connect the neighborhood with redevelopment of the Town-owned property along Simmons Road.

Evaluate the need for improved sewer and water connections

While developing this LWRP, it was noted there might be the need to provide improved sewer and water connections to particular areas. Currently, a small area around the intersection of Route 144 and Mosher Road provides water connections. Further infrastructure upgrades should be studied within the Van Wies area.

Riverfront Core

The Riverfront Core provides an important expression of the region’s rich history and is an important transition between the North and South Riverfront Districts. Over the long-term, any development within the Riverfront Core will provide for environmentally sensitive development meeting high standards for environmentally responsible, sustainable development, and provide long-term green space and cultural and heritage interpretation opportunities. The Riverfront Core will also provide an opportunity for safe and easy access to the riverfront for a range of users. Combined with the Job Corps site, the adjacent Town-owned property on Simmons Road connects the community with the Hudson River, and thus will have a traditional and civic character, creating a desirable destination. Any new construction should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan’s goal for Hamlet areas to encourage compact, mixed-use commercial and



Over the long-term, any development within the Riverfront Core will provide for environmentally sensitive development and an opportunity for safe and easy access to the riverfront for a range of users.

residential centers on the west side of the Route 144 corridor. Future development in the district should provide for interpretation and protection of the cultural and environmental aspects of the area, while providing for the protection of open space. Further, development needs to be consistent with Smart Growth and LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) building and design principles and relate activity to the open space in the area and connections to the waterfront. The Riverfront Core can be seen as a central hub along Bethlehem's riverfront. The Riverfront Core is *not intended* to stimulate growth in the area, but rather to be a proactive, managed approach to future development associated with continued growth in the region. Any long-term, future development will be consistent with the desire to maintain the open, rural character and integrity of the area. As the Riverfront Core evolves, it will aim to ensure that open space and heritage interpretation opportunities are made available to current and future residents in a fiscally responsible manner and under consistent standards. At the time of development, public open space connections should be planned for or in place.

Review land dedication standards

To achieve this vision for an integration of green space, cultural interpretation and new development, the Town needs to review and amend its land dedication standards to address the need for the protection of and connections to a coordinated open space network plan for the Riverfront Core area. The Town may also consider developing a dedicated open space and recreation fund for projects proposed within the Riverfront Core area, using development to achieve some of the resource protection goals to be achieved with this Program.

Develop incentives for new buildings to meet LEED ratings

As part of this LWRP's holistic approach to respect natural resources for future generations, the Town should engage the private sector by encouraging new construction to achieve LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) ratings through various incentives. Many municipalities around the country are already doing this by providing tax breaks, density bonuses, grants, expedited permitting, and reduced fees and waivers for projects achieving LEED certification. These incentives would be consistent with overall vision of the LWRP and help to foster the type of development that has the lowest impact on the environment, both in construction and in operating costs.

What if the Selkirk Bypass is built?

Construction of the Selkirk Bypass is a long-term project (10 – 15 years from now) that is difficult to address with this LWRP. However, it is recognized that construction of the Bypass will have impacts on the way the Route 144 corridor functions, particularly on the land uses where it intersects with Route 144. It will likely result in new residential and commercial development. Proactively preparing for this new development will be an important step for the Town to take. This LWRP is a statement of intent, which recommends steps toward action. The vision, policies and recommendations outlined here are an important framework to evaluate future projects and programs against. Further, based on current zoning for the Mixed Economic Development District, new development greater than 5 acres proposed in this area will be required to develop a development master plan, which should include

phased development, that must be approved by the Town Board. It will be critical that Town leadership remain committed to the vision and spirit of this LWRP if the Selkirk Bypass is constructed.

To best understand what needs to be accomplished, the Town should sponsor a “Community Charrette” when it becomes more obvious that the Bypass will be constructed. The Charrette will lead to a coordinated vision and inform the Town leaders the actions necessary to provide for the type of development to prepare for as well as the character of the development.

What has been made clear in both the 2005 Comprehensive Plan and further supported by this LWRP, new development should be consistent with the principles outlined for hamlet development in the Comprehensive Plan. This LWRP further pushes for environmental and cultural sensitivity elements to be considered in any new development occurring in the Central Riverfront District.

What if the Selkirk Bypass is not built?

The area in which the Selkirk Bypass is being proposed holds significant development potential with or without construction of the Bypass. This same land also provides an important scenic amenity with its vast pastoral, open space characteristics. This LWRP, just as the Comprehensive Plan, seeks to achieve a balance between the need and desire for economic growth and the stewardship of finite land and environmental resources. The area is currently zoned MED Mixed Economic Development, which requires significant review of proposed projects. For any projects proposed in the area, the highest level of visual and architectural character should be aspired to. To achieve this, design standards should be developed for the area and/or a scenic overlay district should be established for the area. All projects should be evaluated against the Vision Statement and Value Statements made in this LWRP. Just as noted above, the 2005 Comprehensive Plan recommends that new development should be consistent with the principles outlined for hamlet development and this LWRP further pushes for environmental and cultural sensitivity elements to be considered in any new development occurring in the Central Riverfront District.

Opportunity Area: Develop Master Plan for the Town-Owned Property along Simmons Road

The Town-owned property should be redeveloped as a community civic gathering and educational outreach space. A master plan should be developed that includes some or the entire Jobs Corps site. The Jobs Corps Site could become more public over time. Current security guidelines prohibit public access, but as time passes the site will likely become available for redevelopment and should be considered as part of a larger master plan for the town-owned property along Simmons Road.

The area will be a destination in its own right to complement the proposed Riverfront Core. The area should open out from the Riverfront Core and complement the waterfront experience. Within the recreational context, the design should develop the natural, arts, culture and heritage themes of the waterfront as a whole. The master plan for the Town-owned property and Jobs Corps site should be modeled after the Crossing’s of Colonie Park. The master plan should explore opportunities for artist space and related cultural activities, creating an active, “living culture” open to the public to

encourage participation by all people visiting and enjoying the riverfront. Potential cultural activities include environmental interpretation of the wetlands and wooded areas, weaving, decorative arts, building construction, carving and performing arts. Emphasis should be put on the pedestrian and bicyclist with multi-use trails connecting all areas and the Riverfront. The area should also have places suitable for informal gatherings as well as formal public events for both large and small groups. As noted earlier, Bethlehem's riverfront is one of the nation's unique settings, akin to what Henry Hudson and his crewmembers likely saw when they arrived in 1609. To the extent possible, the areas visible from the water will be maintained and preserved in essentially its present visual environment. A community-wide charrette should be held to better understand the programming potential for the area.

Lyon

The Lyon District provides the only public access to the riverfront at Henry Hudson Park. As part of this LWRP a Master Plan was developed for Henry Hudson Park. Large tracts of relatively undeveloped, natural lands largely define the district. While the district is dominated by private property ownership, its "natural" integrity provides an opportunity for expanded conservation initiatives that would complement the South Riverfront District.

Expand land conservation initiatives

The Lyon District provides an important transition to the South Riverfront District. Much of the property here has high natural and ecological value, and many of today's landowners in the district recognize this value. The Town should coordinate with landowners and conservation based organizations, such as the Conservation Advisory Council, Nature Conservancy, Mohawk Hudson Conservancy, and Scenic Hudson, to develop a land conservation plan for the area, a guide for future use and long-term management. The land conservation could contain recommended actions that preserve and enhance a range of beneficial public values, including outdoor recreation, sustainable forestry, agricultural uses, habitat protection, open space, and historic and traditional values.

Make Henry Hudson Park improvements in accordance with the Master Plan

Covering approximately 51 acres, Henry Hudson Park provides the only primary public access to the Hudson River in the Town of Bethlehem. Because of the quality of the park, it draws residents not only from the Town, but also from the nearby communities to fish, launch boats, picnic, recreate and simply enjoy the view of the River. Open spaces, woodlands, and park amenities are present. The park contains a softball field, a picnic pavilion, a lookout gazebo, and volleyball courts. The public boat launch draws crowds for the Striper season, mid-April to July. The Quadricentennial of Henry Hudson and Samuel de Champlain's voyage up the Hudson River will bring celebrations and a memorial to Henry Hudson Park in 2009.

People of Bethlehem wish to maintain the quiet and natural character of the park while improving upon the existing park amenities. Access to the woodland, the river, the Vloman Kill, and safe access along the roadways is needed. Future connections to other Bethlehem parks and to the Greenway Trails System will occur. Henry Hudson Park has the potential of becoming a great public space with

expansive views of the Hudson River and recreational and educational opportunities in its natural and historic areas. A Master Plan for the park was developed as part of this LWRP and is provided on the following page. The Master Plan includes both a short-term phase and a long-term phase. The short-term phase addresses more immediate needs of the park and responds to current funding sources already in place for various improvements. The long-term phase is more involved and will require significant investments into the park. It is expected that the long-term phase could take up to twenty years to be fully realized. This long-term plan builds momentum through smaller, incremental improvements. Each investment made will add to the over all vision for the long-term implementation of the concept outlined here.

Perform an Odor Control Study at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and Implement Recommendations

The recommendations made above for Henry Hudson Park reinforce the park as a significant public gathering space on the Hudson River. However, it has been repeatedly noted that the Wastewater Treatment Plant located immediately south of the park detracts from the experience at the park, particularly on weekends and holidays; offensive odor emissions associated with the treatment process is causing a nuisance to the public. The purpose of the Odor Mitigation Study is to quantify the odorous compounds associated with the treatment system, determine the significant odor source locations in the treatment system and to identify significant parameters which affect both the formation and release of odorants/odors from the system and provide useful baseline information for the selection of appropriate treatment technologies for odor reduction. Once the odors are fully characterized, an odor mitigation plan should be developed and implemented. One short-term solution might be to operate trucks for extended periods, particularly on weekends and holidays, until the appropriate mitigation measures are put in place.

Develop trail connection between Henry Hudson Park and the Town-Owned property on Simmons Rd.

Henry Hudson Park is currently the only notable public access point to the Hudson River. However, this LWRP also recommends that the town explore new opportunities for redevelopment at the Town-owned property along Simmons Road. Establishing a trail connection between these two parks will build upon and enhance the waterfront and the success of both areas, creating a larger, more cohesive system of open spaces and riverfront access. Specifically, this trail connection could offer nearly three miles of new parkland, river views, wildlife habitat, nature-based recreation and educational programs. Further connections should be explored to the South Riverfront District.

Consider developing a scenic overlay district

The Lyon District provides an important transition from the Central Riverfront District to the South Riverfront District. The district also includes some important community assets like Henry Hudson Park and the Vloman Kill. Its large residential lots, creating a feeling of being far from an urban environment, define the district. Future linkages to adjoining landscapes, specifically the South Riverfront District, are an essential component of the Lyon District.

Identifying the aesthetic value of scenic resources is a subjective process. Certain areas are distinguished because of special geologic formations, pristine landscapes, agricultural settings, natural

resources, and historic structures. Scenic roads are segments of roadway that contain natural, historic, or cultural resources in proximity or contain an area of concentrated scenic vistas. Scenic vistas are points along a roadway that have sweeping views of the landscape. Scenic resources may be depleted or overshadowed by inappropriate development activities.

To emphasize the importance of preserving Bethlehem's inherent scenic qualities in the Lyon District, the Town should consider establishing scenic overlay provisions to encourage compatible land uses that complement the existing rural character and provide protection of scenic vistas from roadways, gateways into the area, and overall scenic character of the district. The overlay district concept does not affect the underlying use, density, or area and dimensional requirements, nor is it intended to reduce the development opportunity within the area; however, applicants must provide a scenic resource map, visual analysis, and satisfy performance standards when proposing development within a scenic overlay district.

A scenic overlay district could be established as a tool to review proposals within a defined area and can foster development patterns consistent with the long-term vision for the Lyon District as an important link to the South Riverfront District.

Taconic Viewshed

The Taconic Viewshed District provides exceptional views of the Taconic Mountain Range to the east. Steep slopes, limiting future development opportunities, define much of the district. However, some opportunities exist to create some visually interesting experiences along the ridgeline.

Preserve and improve viewing opportunities of the Taconic Mountains

The Taconic Viewshed District provides some dramatic views of the Taconic Mountain Range to the east, particularly at Weisheit Road and Wemple Road and various locations along Clapper Road. Near the intersection of these two roads there is an opportunity to develop a small-scale scenic lookout park. This park could include a small pull-off area for vehicles to park as well as some picnicking facilities with tables, benches and shade trees. As an educational opportunity, an interpretive sign could be included that describes the view and discuss the geological history of the Taconic Mountain Range. The use of a scenic overlay district should be considered as a way to ensure that new development does not cut off the views of the mountain and river.

South Riverfront District

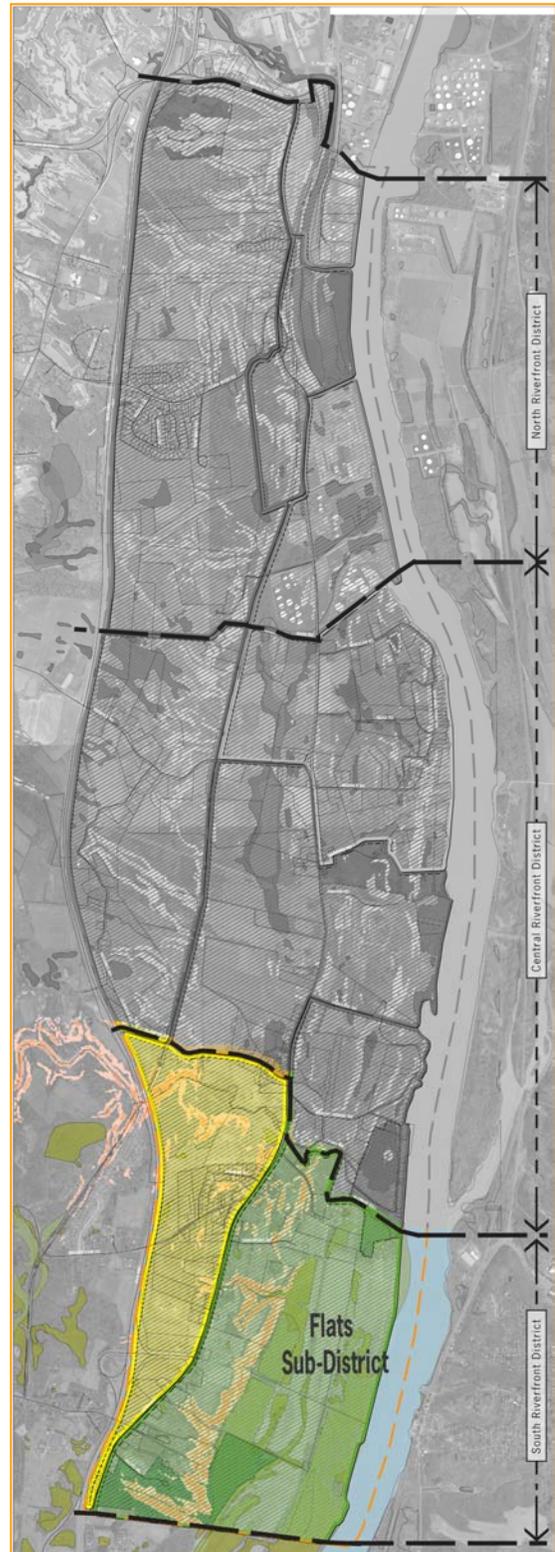
Defined by its peacefulness and diversity, the South Riverfront District is a unique place that provides an important expression of the rich history in both the Town and the region as well as the ecological value of the riverfront. The district is recognized for its long-term green space and cultural and heritage interpretation opportunities. The District is also easily accessible from the Thruway via Exit 22, which should be leveraged with future redevelopment opportunities. Future uses in the district should enhance interpretation and protection of the cultural and environmental aspects of the region, while providing for the protection of open space and the unique viewsheds offered here. Currently, Scenic Hudson is in the process of purchasing lands within the district for open space and natural protection, creating a unique habitat for future generations to enjoy.

Flats

The Flats District is an area with high scenic, recreational, natural and cultural resource value, and should be managed to protect, enhance and interpret these resources wherever possible.

Develop a heritage and nature-based strategy

Cultural and historic resources are essential in understanding an area's past settlement patterns and heritage. When protected and preserved, they can also make a significant contribution to the character of a community. The Flats District (and many sites in the Central District) has sites that hold a high value with regard to regional heritage and ecological systems. The Town should bring focused attention to the sites and capitalize on them for both the residents and use them as a way to build a small tourism base in the community. The Town should consider developing a landmark designation program specifically for the Flats District. The Town should also consider how these cultural and historic resources can be tied into a nature-based



program would also be a good asset for the community to learn about the natural environment and how ecosystems function at a regional level.

While Scenic Hudson has been making great strides and leading to protect the long-term ecological and heritage value in this District, their mission requires them to balance their time and resources between the needs of different communities. For this reason, the Town’s heritage-related and nature-based organizations (such as the Citizens Advisory Committee on Conservation) should work together to study the feasibility of creating an entity dedicated to preservation issues in the Flats District.

One of the most effective ways to protect natural and heritage resources is to strengthen the involvement of local governments in nature-based and heritage planning. Rather than addressing these issues as an afterthought in the Flats District, the Town should make nature-based, historic and cultural issues an integral part of the planning process for any project proposed in the District. One way to ensure that these issues get incorporated into the review process of any project proposed in the review process could be to develop a scenic and historic preservation overlay district.

Opportunity Area: Baker Farm Site

The Baker Farm Site provides a great deal of opportunity within the Flats District. It is located directly off the Thruway and provides dramatic, sweeping views of both the Taconic Mountain Range and the Hudson River. Because of its unique setting and accessibility, this site can provide a unique opportunity for a nature and heritage tourism-based venture, enhancing interpretation and protection of the cultural and environmental aspects of the region. A good example of a project that expresses and educates the public about the region’s heritage is a program that has been promoted (but not yet fully realized) by a Bethlehem Town resident known as *New Netherlands: An Exploration of Past and Present*. This program educates the public about who, what, why and how the Dutch settled in the region. Programs, like this, not only bring people in touch with the roots of the region, but can also contribute to the Town’s economic base by attracting visitors.



Some areas in the Flats Sub-District provide opportunity for both cultural and environmental interpretation.

Riverfront-Wide Recommendations

Assess the Route 144 corridor for targeted transportation improvements (Design guidelines for transportation improvements that consider preservation of historic, scenic and environmental values along with mobility, safety and economics)

For the majority of the Route 144 corridor the speed limit is 55 MPH. An important value of this LWRP is to create a sense of place by expressing the region's history and culture and to reflect quality in design. The Route 144 corridor forms important impressions about the Town. As the area grows into the vision and recommendations outlined in this LWRP, more visitors can be expected at key locations along the corridor. The goal then will be to move these visitors from their vehicles as drivers into the community as pedestrians to "experience" Bethlehem. It will be important that visitors "feel" comfortable outside their vehicles. Excessive vehicle speeds and movement conflicts between cars and pedestrians can detract from a potential visitor's desire to come to Bethlehem's attractions. Consequently, context sensitive traffic calming measures should be taken, particularly where pedestrian activity will be higher.

Encourage and support acquisitions and conservation easements

The Comprehensive Plan encourages the creation of a Purchase of Development Rights program for farmland and open space protection. Many areas within the Waterfront Revitalization Area include properties that would be good candidates for such a program. Further, the Comprehensive Plan survey found that seventy-three percent of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the town should buy land or purchase conservation easements to preserve open land.

Develop an integrated bike and pedestrian network the entire length of the corridor

The Town has 10 miles of Riverfront along the Hudson River. One of the Value Statements for this LWRP is to create a multi-use recreational network that allows people to safely move along the riverfront. This LWRP begins to outline a unifying identity for the riverfront that allows movement from passive, interpretive areas in the South Riverfront to more intensely developed areas in the North Riverfront. A priority connection to be explored should be to determine how Henry Hudson Park can develop a trail connection to the Town-owned property on Simmons Road. Further evaluation should also be made to continue south and connect with the emerging interpretive opportunities being created by Scenic Hudson's involvement in this area. A more comprehensive evaluation will be necessary in order to determine how the entire network is developed. In some places the trail will follow the water's edge, while in other areas it may be necessary to follow existing roadways to make connections.

Lead discussions with neighboring communities to coordinate/comment on development initiatives on the Riverfront

As the region continues to experience growth it will become increasingly important for the region's leaders to take a comprehensive, regional approach to both public and private sector initiatives. This means that intergovernmental communication, coordination, and cooperation will be necessary.

A good example of this need for communication, coordination, and cooperation is demonstrated in the three major projects that have been proposed within the region in the cities of Rensselaer, Troy and Schenectady. It is very possible that if all three projects are built within a similar time frame there could be a saturation of commercial and professional square footage and residential units along the region's waterfront. Intergovernmental planning would provide an opportunity to be proactive in decision-making and allow for a better understanding of how these projects can add value to the region as a whole. A regional approach to waterfront development will provide overall recommendations for local and overlapping jurisdictions to achieve visions for future growth and avoid inefficient or conflicting development patterns. Many of the recommendations in this LWRP, such as the riverfront trail, the scenic byway, the Bethlehem Venture Center, the redevelopment of the Town-owned property, and development at the Baker Farm, will be influenced by regional initiatives and will realize greater success if there is intergovernmental communication, coordination, and cooperation.

The overall message to the leaders of Bethlehem and neighboring governments is that planning should take the long view in approaching development and that coordinating between jurisdictions is not only more efficient, but more likely to yield development patterns that promote orderly growth. One way to foster greater communication, coordination, and cooperation between the regional government would be to establish inter-governmental agreements, particularly with the on-going discussions to address the combined sewer/stormwater outflows. Bethlehem should be a leader in establishing a dialog between neighboring communities to, at a minimum, understand the initiatives that are being considered for waterfront areas. Perhaps the best way to have this dialog is to schedule quarterly, informal breakfast or lunch gatherings to share current waterfront initiatives. These gatherings could also periodically include not-for-profit organizations like the Open Space Institute, Nature Conservancy, Mohawk Hudson Conservancy, and Scenic Hudson.

- ▶ **Participate in regional strategies to address combined sewer/stormwater outflows**
There is currently an on-going discussion, being led by the Capital District Regional Planning Commission, to address regional sewer and stormwater outflows into the Hudson River. The Town should continue to be a part of these conversations.

- ▶ **Consider partnering with regional municipalities to designate a portion of Route 144 as a NYS Scenic Byway**
New York State established its Scenic Byways Program in 1992 by Article XII-C of the State Highway Law. The law formed the Scenic Byways Advisory Board and designated certain New York State Scenic Byways. The State Scenic Byways legislation recognizes that a coordinated program can provide numerous benefits such as economic development and resources management. Therefore, the legislation encourages communities to make nominations to the Scenic Byways Advisory Board for additional designations.

State Scenic Byway designation offers participating communities the potential for numerous benefits. Byways are a focus of promotional efforts by local and state tourism officials. Byways offer an enjoyable way to understand the special character and history of our state and to develop a better appreciation of its varied resources. An objective along byways is to provide community and traveler services, such as rest areas and picnic facilities, as well as foodservices and accommodations. Developing a byway strategy is an opportunity to market and manage resources in ways that meet the needs of the types and amount of visitors to an area, while accommodating the desires of the host communities. Byways foster stewardship of the road and its rights-of-way. The key to achieving these benefits is proactive local leadership in the nomination, planning, and management of the byway. The Town should consider partnering with neighboring communities to designate a scenic byway that connects to other nearby byways.

Riverfront Gateway Improvements

While gateways from the roadside provide important first impressions, the Hudson River itself should also be considered an important gateway into the community. This historic river corridor and its bountiful resources represent an important slice of American heritage. Yet, exciting new developments continue to emerge. Whenever projects are proposed along the waterfront, the Town of Bethlehem should explore opportunities to restore the vibrancy of the area's natural landscape, particularly on the Central and South Riverfront District's, while preserving the legacy of the manufacturing industry, but improving the visual integrity, of the North Riverfront District.