

Villages of Montour Falls & Watkins Glen

∨ Downtown Improvement Strategy ∨



Prepared For: Schuyler County Partnership For Economic Development (SCOPED)
Prepared By: Bergmann Associates • RKG Associates • Steinmetz Planning Group
Date: August 2005



Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Introduction

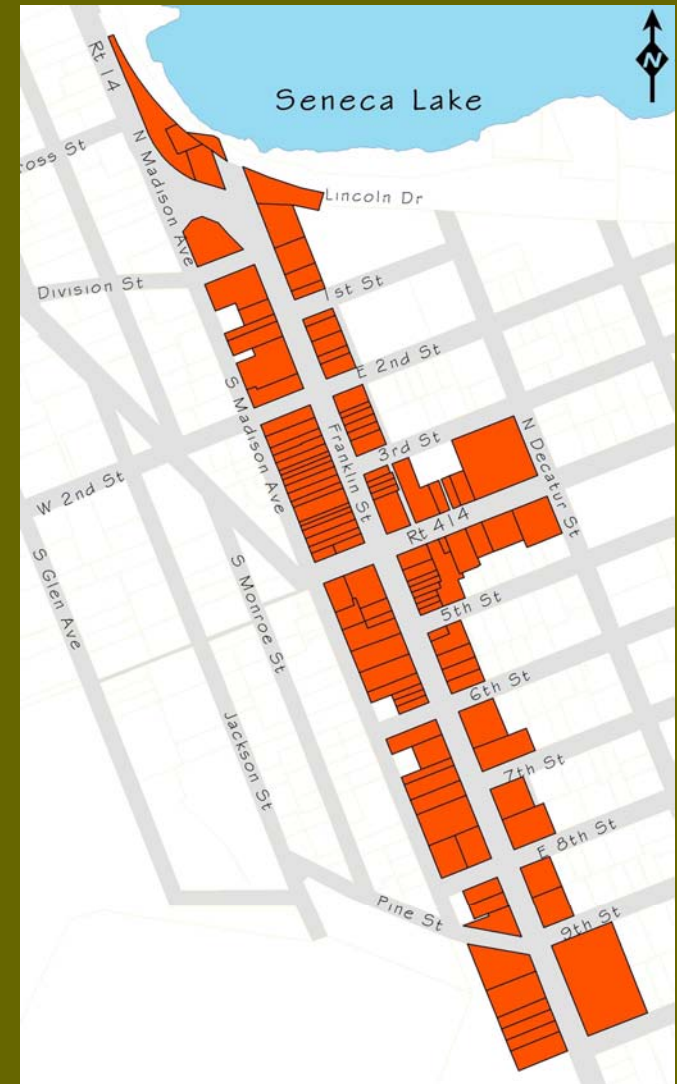
In August 2004, the Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development (SCOPED) received a grant from the federal Appalachian Regional Commission and the New York State Governor's Office for Small Cities to develop a business district improvement strategy for the Villages of Watkins Glen and Montour Falls, New York. Specific issues to be addressed and studied during the project included:

- The current retail, recreational and entertainment mix
- Physical infrastructure, including parking and signage
- Traffic flow
- Key shopping sectors for residents, regional residents, sports car enthusiasts and tourists

Montour Falls Business District



Watkins Glen Business District



Executive Summary

- Retail growth opportunities presented by visitors to local wineries, the growing number of lake residents and overnight visitors
- The impact of regional retail plazas and the new Wal-Mart shopping center on the business district
- Strategies to occupy vacant storefronts
- Resources to promote the districts, including special assessment Business Improvement Districts or other organizational structures
- Appropriate roles for project participants in short–and long-range revitalization efforts

Process

The process was guided by an Advisory Committee including business and resident representatives from both districts, as well as representatives from the following agencies and organizations:

- Village Boards
- Schuyler County
- SCOPED
- Schuyler County Chamber of Commerce
- Schuyler County Office of Planning and Community Development
- The Watkins Glen District Management Association (WGDMA)
- The Montour Falls Improvement Association (MFIA)

SCOPED and the Downtown Advisory Committee commissioned Bergmann Associates, RKG Associates and the Steinmetz Planning Group to develop a downtown improvement strategy with four key tasks:

- 1) Identify the key issues and create a mission
- 2) Assess the available market opportunities
- 3) Evaluate the infrastructure constraints and opportunities
- 4) Develop realistic implementation items

Each of these tasks was accomplished with a significant amount of public input. The consultant team aimed to guide the planning process, helping to facilitate the process of establishing vision and objectives for the districts. Input was obtained through a variety of methods including interviews, surveys, and public meetings.

The first public meeting was the Joint Community Forum, held on November 16th, 2004. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project team, provide an overview of the project tasks, and most importantly to hear the perspective of local residents on the state of the two village business districts. Over 90 participants from both villages attended the meeting, which included an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) facing both downtown areas.

Mission Statement and Approach

The Mission Statement and main strategies of this plan were based on this SWOT analysis. After the Community Forum, the consultant team summarized the key issues, which fell into the following five categories:

1. Design & Appearance
2. Marketing & Promotion
3. Community Leadership
4. Infrastructure
5. Economic Development

During the late winter and early spring, RKG Associates conducted a marketing study which reviewed economic indicators, demographics, the real estate market and consumer income and spending potential. In addition, 500 surveys were distributed and tabulated from employees of local establishments, merchants and consumers.

The second public meeting was the Design Downtown Workshop. The workshop was an all day, hands-on, interactive and educational meeting held on Saturday January 29, 2005. The purpose of this workshop was to gauge local attitudes towards various types of design and identify specific projects that could be undertaken to improve the overall appearance and operation of both downtown areas.

Finally, the Downtown Preview Open House was held on April 7, 2005 at the Seneca Harbor Wine Station in Watkins Glen. The event offered an opportunity to show the refined concepts to the public, present the draft report and solicit comments on the overall planning process and end products.

This plan recommends that the DAC use the Main Street Approach as a model to achieve its mission. The DAC will facilitate and coordinate all of the various groups and tasks that need to be formed and completed while offering a forum for communication.

Strategy Framework

The plan has five key elements, which provide varying levels of detail and address the short and long terms needs of the business districts:

1. Mission Statement: Describes the purpose of the Business District Advisory Committee; it is an end towards which all actions are aimed.
2. Strategy: Supports the mission by addressing a particular area or issue facing a downtown. Strategies should not dramatically change over time but rather be consistent throughout the planning horizon.
3. Objective: A statement of a measurable activity to be accomplished in pursuit of the strategy; it refers to some specific aspiration which is reasonably attainable. Uses action verbs such as "increase", "develop", or "preserve."
4. Implementation Items: A specific proposal to do something that relates directly to accomplishing an objective; it can take the form of a plan, project, or program.

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1. Measure: A specific measure that relates directly to accomplishing the objectives; it identifies how, when, and amount to be done. Think in terms of, “how do we tell if our objectives are working?”

Recommendations

This planning effort identified the following five strategy areas to focus efforts. Each strategy is intended to function as part of this document or to be used as stand alone work plan that can be taken out, copied, and assigned to a committee to undertake.

1. Economic Development: The goal of this strategy is to increase revenues of existing business owners while identifying new enterprises that may be beneficial to the downtown areas. An example of an objective in this strategy is to promote the use of upper floor space for office and residential uses. An implementation item for this objective are surveying property owners who may be interested in conversion of upper story space to residential units. The DAC could also provide information regarding projects in other communities who have been successful in enhancing the downtown residential base. A measure of the success of this strategy is the number of residents living in the study area. The Economic Development Strategy is described in detail in Section III of this report.

2. Marketing & Promotion: The goal of this strategy is to increase the popularity of the downtown areas to

local residents and visitors through image development and special events. An objective of this strategy is to develop a marketing campaign for the villages. An implementation item for this objective is to develop a vision statement, logo, and theme; prepare a description of community assets; compile relevant market data; develop a business wish list; create promotional material and develop a district web site. A measure of the success of this strategy is the number of hits on the district web site. The Marketing & Promotion Strategy is described in detail in Section IV of this report.

3. Design: The goal of this strategy is to act as a catalyst to improve the physical appearance and function of the district. An objective of this strategy is to increase the quality of business and directional signage. An implementation item for this objective is to develop welcome and directional signage that is all a consistent color and style. A measure of the success of this strategy is the number of signs that achieve the basic design principles. The Design Strategy is described in detail in Section V of this report.

4. Infrastructure: The goal of this strategy is to facilitate the ongoing investment in the facilities necessary to operate a successful downtown area. An objective of this strategy is to ensure that convenient and adequate parking is available in both districts. An implementation item for this objective is to perform an updated parking management study that identifies and quantifies available public parking for the commercial districts. A measure of the success of this strategy

is the number of parking spaces per 1,000 square foot of floor area. The Infrastructure Strategy is described in detail in Section VI.

5. Community: The goal of this strategy is to ensure the ongoing operation of the program, such as human (staff and volunteers) and financial (funding) resources. An objective of this strategy is to increase volunteerism in the community. An implementation item for this objective is to develop a public outreach program within the community to educate potential volunteers on the mission and importance of the program. A measure of the success of this strategy is the number of volunteers in the downtown improvement project database. The Community Strategy is described in detail in Section VII.

Commonly Used Acronyms

There are numerous agencies and organizations referenced throughout this document, The following list provides the acronyms for the most commonly used names and titles.

- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)
- Business Improvement District (BID)
- Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE)
- Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)
- Department of Public Works (DPW)
- Downtown Advisory Committee (DAC)
- Downtown Development Manager (DDM)
- Elmira Chemung Transportation Council (ECTC)
- Montour Falls Improvement Agency (MFIA)
- New York State (NYS)
- New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)
- Schuyler County (SC)
- Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development (SCOPED)
- Southern Tier Central Regional Planning & Development Board (STC)
- State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR)
- Watkins Glen District Management Association (DMA)
- Watkins Glen International Raceway (WGI)

Introduction



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Appendix B	Key Issue Summary
Appendix C	Community Preference Survey Results
Appendix D	Design Downtown Workshop Scrapbook

Introduction



Plan purpose

In August 2004, the Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development (SCOPED) received a grant from the federal Appalachian Regional Commission and the New York State Governor's Office for Small Cities to develop a business district improvement strategy for the Villages of Watkins Glen and Montour Falls, New York. Specific issues to be addressed and studied during the project included:

- The current retail, recreational and entertainment mix
- Physical infrastructure, including parking and signage
- Traffic flow
- Key shopping sectors for residents, regional residents, sports car enthusiasts and tourists
- Retail growth opportunities presented by visitors to local wineries, the growing number of lake residents and overnight visitors
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Project Context

The Villages of Watkins Glen and Montour Falls are located in the Finger Lakes region of New York State (see maps on page 5). Watkins Glen, which is on the southern tip of Seneca Lake, was founded in 1794 when Dr. Samuel Watkins built a gristmill and sawmill at the site of what is today the Watkins Glen State

Park (Klees). Montour Falls, formerly known as Havana, is 3 miles south of Watkins Glen.

Outside the villages, the majority of Schuyler County is forested, with scattered wineries, farms and residences. The largest private sector employers are Schuyler Hospital, Cargill Salt, Wagner Lumber, and U.S. Salt (Schuyler County Comprehensive Plan 2004).

In recent years, the region has experienced little to no population growth and rising unemployment, with a 3% increase in residents over ten years and a 2% decline in employment in the past two years. In 2002, per capita personal income in Schuyler County was \$22,099, which was a 17% increase over 1999 but almost 40% lower than the New York State per capita personal income.

Mirroring the region, the commercial business districts in Watkins Glen and Montour Falls, on North Franklin Street and West Main Street, respectively, have been affected by a stagnant population, struggling regional economy and a changing global economy. In 2003, a Wal-Mart store opened less than a 1/2 mile from the Watkins Glen business district, creating increased competition with district establishments.

The region is also home to several major regional attractions, such as the Seneca Lake Wine Trail, Watkins Glen State Park and Watkins Glen International raceway. In recent years, an increasing number of lake residents and overnight visitors

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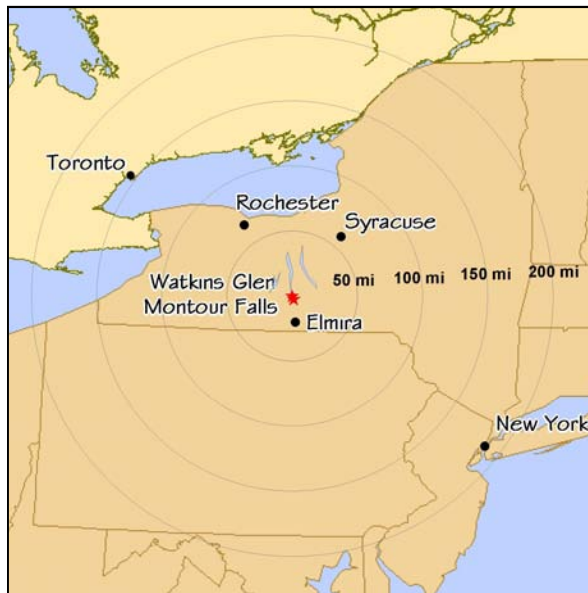
have created new demand for retail and restaurant businesses.

The villages are located 80 miles from Syracuse, 85 miles from Rochester, 240 miles from Toronto and 250 miles from New York City. With close proximity to larger population centers, the community recognized a need to explore a strategy to improve the districts for residents and visitors.

Planning process

The process was guided by a Downtown Advisory Committee (DAC) including business and resident representatives from both districts, as well as representatives from the following agencies and organizations:

- Village Boards
- Schuyler County
- SCOPED
- Schuyler County Chamber of Commerce
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- 1) Identify the key issues and create a mission
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Each of these tasks was accomplished with a significant amount of public input. The consultant team aimed to guide the planning process, helping to facilitate the process of establishing vision and objectives for the districts. Input was obtained through a variety of methods including interviews, surveys, and public meetings.

The project team met regularly with the DAC, and also conducted three meetings to seek input from the general public. The project took place over eight months and is outlined in the project schedule on page 6.

The first public meeting was the Joint Community Forum, held on November 16th, 2004 at the Montour Falls Fire Hall. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the project team, provide an overview of the project tasks, and most importantly to hear the perspective of local

Project schedule

Oct 2004	Project initiation meeting
Nov 2004	Joint Community Forum
Dec 2004	Key issue summary
Jan 2005	Design Downtown Workshop
Mar 2005	Market analysis results
Mar 2005	Workshop concepts refined
Apr 2005	Draft plan
Apr 2005	Downtown Preview Open House
May 2005	Final plan

Montour Falls Business District



Watkins Glen Business District



Introduction

residents on the state of the two village business districts. Over 90 participants from both villages attended the meeting, which included an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) facing both downtown areas. Highlights from this analysis are included on this page.

The Mission Statement and main strategies of this plan were based on this SWOT analysis. After the Joint Community Forum, the consultant team summarized the key issues, which fell into the following five categories:

1. Design & Appearance
2. Marketing & Promotion
3. Community Leadership
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During the late winter and early spring, RKG Associates conducted a marketing study which reviewed economic indicators, demographics, the real estate market and consumer income and spending potential. In addition, 500 surveys were distributed and tabulated from employees of local establishments, merchants and consumers.

The second public meeting was the Design Downtown Workshop. The workshop was an all day, hands-on, interactive and educational meeting held on Saturday January 29, 2005. The purpose of this workshop was to gauge local attitudes towards various types of design and identify specific projects that could be undertaken to

Joint Community Forum overview

STRENGTHS

- History, specifically the buildings and architecture
- Walkable neighborhoods and downtown areas
- Name recognition of Watkins Glen
- Regional destinations such as the race track, the State Park, wineries

OPPORTUNITIES

- Empty storefronts
- Utilize upper floor occupancy of downtown buildings
- Create year-round anchor such as a hotel and conference center
- Racing heritage & wine tours
- Improve connection to

WEAKNESSES

- Poor appearance of some storefronts and streetscapes
- Hodge podge signage
- Parking is poorly identified and sometimes inadequate
- Too much traffic in Watkins Glen, not enough in Montour Falls

THREATS

- Lack of design guidelines
- Poor code enforcement
- Competition from other destinations
- Loss of NASCAR
- Demolition of older buildings

improve the overall appearance and operation of both downtown areas.

The Downtown Preview Open House was held on April 7, 2005 at the Seneca Harbor Wine Center in Watkins Glen. The event offered an opportunity to show the refined concepts to the public, present the draft report and solicit comments on the overall strategy and end products.

About this plan

The strategies and recommendations that follow are intended to be relevant for a period of approximately ten years. A notable exception to this is the market data and analysis. Due to the fluctuation of our economy, the economic data and recommendations made in this document are applicable for the next three to five years at most. Over the next decade, this document should be referred to often to guide the decision-making of the DAC as well as other community groups and local governments. Each of the strategies were written in such a way that they can be used as a stand alone document for anyone interested in the various elements of the downtown revitalization effort.

Design Downtown Workshop & Downtown Preview Open House Participants



Our Mission and Approach



Our Mission Statement

The mission of the Downtown Advisory Committee (DAC) is to foster creation of vibrant downtowns in Watkins Glen and Montour Falls that meet the needs of County residents and serve as four-season destinations for visitors. To accomplish this, the Advisory Committee will focus public and private sector efforts to provide and maintain:

- Opportunities for rewarding economic development (see Section III Economic Development Strategy)
- Successful downtown marketing plans and promotions (see Section IV Marketing and Promotion Strategy)
- Attractive mixed-use districts (see Section V Design Strategy)
- Infrastructure investments that meet downtown needs (see Section VI Infrastructure Strategy)
- A positive, creative and involved community (see Section VII Community Strategy)

These elements form the basis of a downtown revitalization strategy that will guide decision-making with our partners over the next decade.

Our Approach

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has developed the Main Street Approach to facilitate the revitalization of traditional downtown areas across the nation. The National Trust has also established the Main Street Institute to serve as a leader and resource for communities such as Montour Falls and Watkins Glen. The DAC acknowledges the success of the Main Street Program in numerous communities cross the country and the state. One of most notable within the Southern Tier Central Region is Corning, New York.

It should be noted that a New York Main Street Alliance is being formed in collaboration with Cornell University's Community and Rural Development Institute to assist in the re-development of downtown areas.

Main Street Institute

The DAC or SCOPED should become a member of the Main Street Institute. Membership gives the DAC access to an extensive library of Main Street resources as well as to staff of the institute. When funding permits, at least one member of the DAC should attend the introductory training provided in Washington, DC by the Main Street Institute. To learn more about the Main Street Institute, visit their website at www.mainstreet.org.

Our Mission and Approach

It is recommended that the DAC use the Main Street Approach as a model to achieve its mission. The Downtown Advisory Committee should continue to exist and fulfill the role of an Executive Committee for both downtown areas. The role of the Executive Committee is to facilitate and coordinate all of the various groups and tasks that need to be formed and completed while offering a forum for communication. This planning effort has identified the following areas on which the DAC will need to focus its efforts:

1. Economic Development –To increase revenues of existing business owners while identifying new enterprises that may be beneficial to the downtown areas. (see the Economic Development Strategy in Section III)
2. Marketing & Promotion –To increase the popularity of the downtown areas to local residents and visitors through image development and special events (see Marketing & Promotion Strategy in Section IV)
3. Design –To act as a catalyst to improve the physical appearance and function of the district (see the Design Strategy in Section V)
4. Infrastructure –To facilitate the ongoing investment in the facilities necessary to operate a successful downtown area. (see the Infrastructure Strategy in Section VI)
5. Community –To ensure the ongoing operation of the program, such as human (staff and volunteers) and financial (funding) resources. (see the Community Strategy in Section VII)

In communities with a larger population base, each of these efforts would be overseen by a separate committee. However, the limited population of both Villages requires the sharing of human and financial resources (this is described in

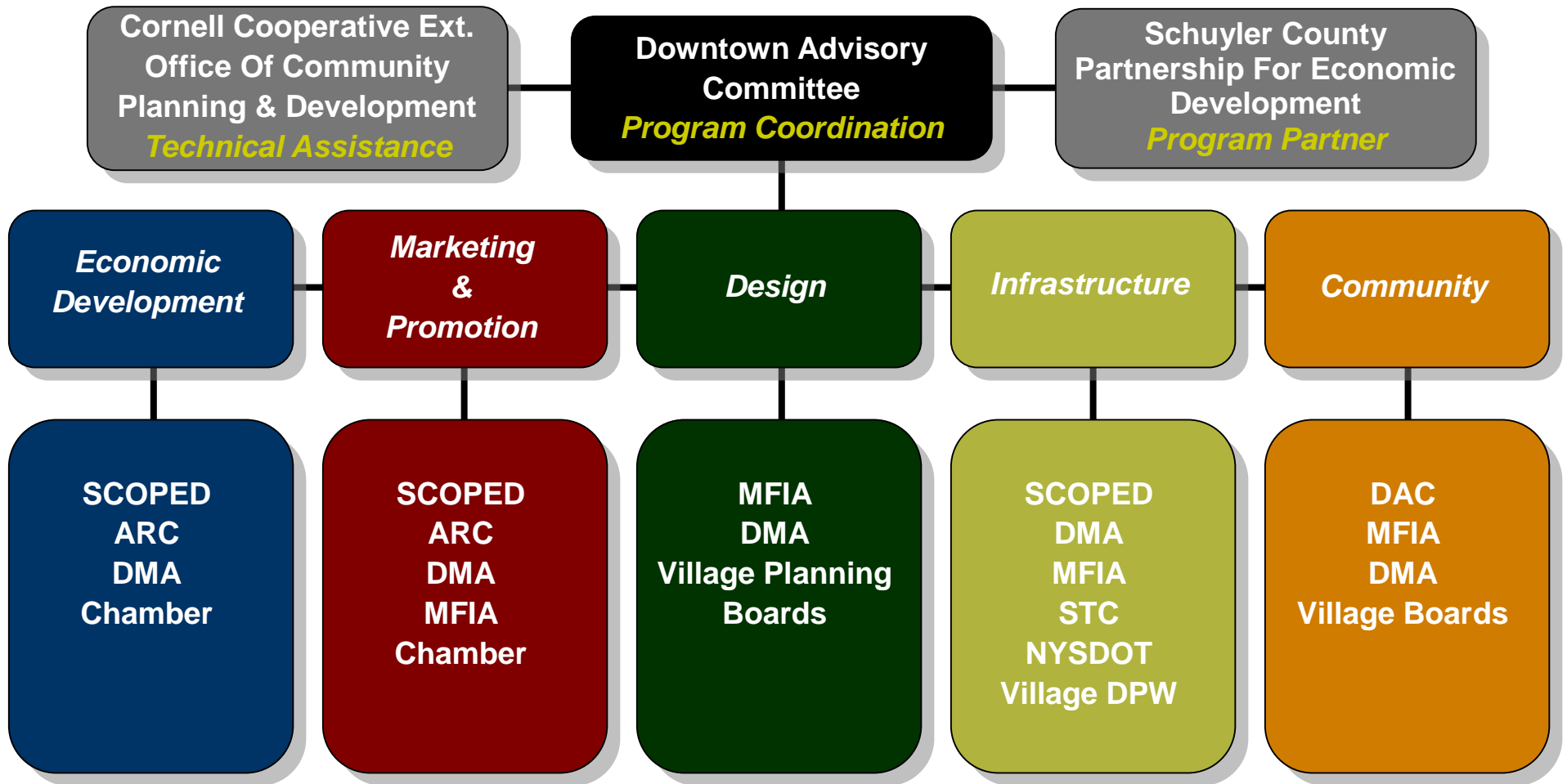
greater detail in Section VII). The organization chart on the following page illustrates how responsibilities may be shared to maximize the available resources and successfully implement the Montour Falls and Watkins Glen Main Street Program.

As shown in the chart, the DAC will serve as the program coordinator or Executive Committee. For the first years of the program it is anticipated that the DAC will be responsible for each of the five tasks described above. (Each of these tasks is represented by a different color box in the chart.) It is also anticipated that the DAC will also serve as the Community Committee for the program for the foreseeable future.

The Economic Development and Marketing & Promotion component of the program should be led by SCOPED. A committee could be formed for both tasks with representation from the DAC as well as from groups such as the Montour Falls Improvement Association (MFIA) and the Watkins Glen District Management Association (WGDMA). As the program matures it may make sense to separate the tasks into two committees instead of one.

Any infrastructure related improvements that need to be made will ultimately be the responsibility of the two Villages. However, SCOPED and the MFIA and the WGDMA can assist in identifying needed improvements and in obtaining potential grant money to complete the improvements. The Infrastructure Committee should be formed fairly early on in the program (year one or two) with representatives of the Villages, SCOPED, MFIA, and the WGDMA.

Organizational chart



For definitions of acronyms, see the list on page vi.

Our Mission and Approach

The design strategy should be led by a group of people that are sensitive to design related issues. This can include members of the Village Planning Boards as well as any residents with a background in architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, or engineering. The members of the Planning Board can serve as liaisons between the Main Street Program and the planning boards as a whole. This is critical because most of the design related decisions in a community are made by its planning board.

Over time new organizations may emerge within the Villages or the County that may be helpful in implementing the mission. This may include Business Improvement Districts (BID) or local development corporations. (A more detailed discussion of a BID is contained in Section VII).

Strategy Framework

Any successful approach to downtown revitalization must be developed and implemented on multiple levels. It must address the short and long term needs of an area as well as provide varying levels of detail. In an effort to accomplish this, this plan has five key elements.

1. **Mission Statement:** A general statement that describes the purpose of the Business District Advisory Committee; it is an end towards which all actions are aimed. The Mission should not dramatically change over time but rather be consistent throughout the planning horizon. Ideally, the Mission contained in this plan should be useful for the 10-year planning horizon.
2. **Strategy:** Similar to a mission in that it is a general statement of a future condition towards which actions are aimed. However, the scope of a strategy is much more narrow. It should support the mission by addressing a particular area or issue facing a downtown. Strategies should not dramatically change over time but rather be consistent throughout the planning horizon. Ideally, the policies contained in this plan should be useful for the 10-year planning horizon.
3. **Objective:** A statement of a measurable activity to be accomplished in pursuit of the strategy; it refers to some specific aspiration which is reasonably attainable. Think in terms of actions such as "increase", "develop", or "preserve". The general lifespan of an objective is 6 to 12 years.
4. **Implementation Items:** A specific proposal to do something that relates directly to accomplishing an objective; it can take the form of a plan, project, or

program. The lifespan of an implementation item can vary from one to 10 years depending on the item.

5. **Measure:** A specific measure that relates directly to accomplishing the objectives; it identifies how, when, and amount to be done. Think in terms of, "how do we tell if our objectives are working?" Measures should be reviewed every one to two years to determine if the objectives are effective. The measures included in this plan are more general and do not specify a time frame and amount to be accomplished. The Villages should work to establish the baseline condition for all the measures in this plan and then determine the level and timing that is desirable. (It should be noted that interns are a good resource available to communities in gathering this type of information.)

Each strategy is intended to function as part of this document or to be used as stand alone work plan that can be taken out, copied, and assigned to a committee to undertake.

Economic Development Strategy



Introduction

The primary objective of this economic development strategy is to increase jobs and tax revenue in both villages, while creating a sense of activity. A successful economic development should have two or three niches that draw consumers from different destinations and market segments.

Schuyler County has a population of just over 19,000 people and also entertains close to 2 million people per year who come to visit Watkins Glen State Park, the Finger Lakes wineries and Watkins Glen International. As a result, for every Schuyler County resident, there are 100 tourists. This is an extremely high ratio of visitors to residents, and their presence is indicated in local tourism spending. In 2001, annual tourism spending in Schuyler County increased by 18%, totaling \$37.16 million. This included a \$2.1 million increase in the purchase of retail goods and wines. Consumer spending demand is estimated to be about \$93.1 million, with tourism spending representing 30% of this figure. In a time when both villages have experienced slow population growth, a shrinking labor force and declining number of jobs, untapped tourism demand holds promise. A bulk of the tourism activity will be focused in and around the downtown areas.

Today, Watkins Glen and Montour Falls cater to both residents and tourists. Both districts include businesses used regularly by residents, such as the US post office, Napa Auto Parts, attorney offices, pharmacies and the County and Village government offices. The districts also serve tourists with restaurants, souvenir shops and wine shops featuring Seneca Lake wines. Several restaurants and businesses, such as Wildflower Café, Country

Harvest Antiques and O'Susannah's Quilts & Gifts, serve both markets.

The villages' history, 19th century architecture and the proximity to natural amenities provide a unique setting. The DAC should pursue business development in several ways, by strengthening businesses that exist today, cultivating new local entrepreneurs and attracting businesses from outside the area. The next section lists objectives for the economic development strategy and indicates techniques for implementation.

Economic Development Strategy

Our Strategy

It is the Strategy of the District Advisory Committee to aggressively pursue the development of businesses that contribute to the existing blend of goods and services while capitalizing on downtown's history, architecture, and proximity to natural resources. Priority will be placed upon growing existing businesses first, establishing new companies run by local entrepreneurs second and finally, recruiting investors and operators from outside the area.

Our Objectives

- A. Maintain basic goods and services for residents within the downtown area
- B. Foster the existing entrepreneurial spirit that exists within the community
- C. Ensure that parking supplies keep pace with economic activity
- D. Develop a downtown anchor to attract visitors throughout the year
- E. Promote the use of upper floor space for office and residential uses
- F. Increase the capture rate of visitors to existing destinations (such as WGI, the wine trail, etc.)
- G. Ensure development efforts do not diminish the environmental quality and the scenic beauty of the area
- H. Utilize natural resources to create attractions for residents and visitors
- I. Pro-actively pursue appropriate development opportunities

Our Measures

1. Residents living in the study area
2. Stores that cater to local residents versus non-local visitors
3. New business start-ups each year
4. Occupied storefronts within the study area
5. Businesses that take advantage of incentive programs

Maintain basic goods and services for residents within downtown area

The Watkins Glen business district includes numerous establishments frequented regularly by local residents. According to a survey conducted as part of this planning process, the most commonly desired types of new or additional businesses in Montour Falls are grocers, department stores, chain restaurants, dollar stores and, to a lesser extent, book stores and sporting goods stores. In Watkins Glen, store types identified were electronics, appliances, bookstores and clothing stores.

Considering the size of the small land parcels, grocery or department stores are not viable, although the demand is supported by an analysis of sales leakage. There may be opportunities to combine smaller parcels to create larger spaces which accommodate department-type stores. This possibility should be further explored. Smaller, specialty food services, such as butchers, bakeries and coffee shops, could be successful, since these types of stores require less physical space and would be in keeping with a compact commercial district.

There are several tasks the DAC can do to help maintain goods and services for residents in the villages. First, the DAC should prepare an inventory of existing businesses to help identify where gaps are present. Secondly, it should provide the Corning Community College Small Business Development Center (SBDC) contact with survey data documenting what types of businesses are desired by residents. Third, identify what businesses are appropriate for the downtown areas. Finally, the DAC should develop a marketing program that

targets local residents with promotions and advertising. Additional information about marketing and promotion is included in Section IV. These steps should be repeated at least every five years to ensure local needs are being met.

Both districts include businesses and services used regularly by residents, such as the US post office, Napa Auto Parts, attorney offices, and County and Village government offices.



Economic Development Strategy

Foster the existing entrepreneurial spirit that exists within the community

Small businesses are the core of the national, regional and local economy. They generate jobs and revenue and demonstrate the American tradition of self-reliance and innovation. Despite the prevalence of entrepreneurs, many aspiring business owners are not connected with financial resources. Information, technical support and loan opportunities can make a difference in whether local businesses flourish or fail. In collaboration with SCOPED, the Corning Community College Small Business Development Center (SBDC) has a history of supporting local entrepreneurs through business plan review and funding identification. The SBDC services, which are housed at the SCOPED offices, should continue to encourage formation and growth of local business ventures through a wide variety of management and technical resources and assistance. The DAC should work with the SBDC to develop a “one-stop-shop” approach that includes the DMA, MFIA, Chamber of Commerce and SCOPED.

The DAC, WGDMA and MFIA should work with SCOPED and the SBDC to create a seminar program for local entrepreneurs. Additionally, the New York State SBDC offers seminars and classes around the state on issues that affect small business, often in conjunction with local experts. The DAC should survey local business owners to determine what topic would best serve their needs for this seminar.

An example of this type of event is held annually by the South Wedge Planning Committee, a Neighborhood Preservation Corporation in nearby Rochester, NY. The Urban Enterprise Forum is an annual daylong conference that brings entrepreneurs together to exchange ideas and learn from guest speakers and from one another. Typical sessions include Business Plan Basics, Starting Off Right and Small Business Marketing. The event is sponsored by the Enterprise Foundation, United Way, the local utility company, area banks and insurance companies. One potential discussion item could include the results of the information gathered in the first objective.

An example of a community-sponsored educational seminars for local small business owners

Save the Date
 Meet, Learn & Grow
 Your Business at
The 4th Urban Enterprise Forum
 Friday, April 15, 2005
 8 a.m to 12 noon
 One HSBC Plaza, Rochester, NY

The DAC should work with SCOPED and the SBDC to connect business owners with existing incentives, such as the SCOPED revolving loan fund and the REDEC loan fund. If existing incentives do not match the needs of entrepreneurs, there may be an opportunity to develop a new loan fund or tax credits.

Finally, the DAC should collect and distribute strategies for co-existing with mass merchandisers, such as Wal-Mart, to independently owned business in both districts. A concise summary of a strategy for competing with mass merchandisers, written by Dr. Kenneth Stone, is included in the marketing study for this

planning process, which is in the appendix. There are several marketing and merchandising strategies to compete with big box stores, such as:

- Look for voids in the mass merchandisers inventory
- Adjust merchandise selection to sell different brands than mass merchandisers
- Consider upscale merchandise since not all customers desire or demand lower priced merchandise
- Sell singles instead of multi-pack merchandise
- Focus advertising on competitive advantages
- Emphasize expert technical advice and personalized service
- Offer delivery and pick up service where appropriate

ENSURE THAT PARKING SUPPLY KEEPS PACE WITH ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

In order to encourage visitors from out of the area to support businesses in Montour Falls and Watkins Glen, there must be sufficient parking accommodations. Parking needs to be visible, accessible, easy to find, in close proximity to downtown attractions, safe, and well maintained. A parking evaluation study should be undertaken to formally evaluate the villages' existing and future on- and off-street parking conditions. The study results should include a parking inventory, identification of current deficiencies, an analysis of current parking demand and, if needed, recommendations for future improvements in the form of a parking management policy. This policy should be based on an approach to provide adequate number of spaces (new lots) as well as how to maximize the utilization of existing spaces. For more information on parking, see Section VI Infrastructure.

On-street parking in Watkins Glen



Economic Development Strategy

Develop a downtown anchor to attract visitors throughout the year

Anchors are large, well-known attractions that usually draw customers to a business district, and, in turn, to smaller nearby stores. Usually the term anchor refers to retail establishments that attract customers, but an anchor can also be a single store or establishment, a collection of establishments, or a natural resource.

In the case of both Montour Falls and Watkins Glen, there are several existing unique natural amenities which serve as downtown anchors. In Montour Falls is She-Qua-Ga Falls and in Watkins Glen it is Seneca Lake on the northern end and Watkins Glen State Park to the south. In order to draw visitors to the area, these anchors should be improved, promoted and advertised. For more on Marketing & Promotion, see Section IV.

There is also the potential to develop retail anchors. In Watkins Glen, an 85-room non-branded hotel complex, including an on-site restaurant and possible convention facilities, has recently been proposed. This would serve as a year round draw by bringing in large numbers of visitors and conferences to the downtown area.

Community surveys indicated some potential and desire for an increased presence of antique dealers in Montour Falls. There are a few antiques stores in the business district currently. This concept should be researched and evaluated further to determine if it is viable.

Promote the use of upper floor space for office and residential uses

A strong residential component is key to a prosperous downtown. Downtown residents enjoy close proximity to entertainment venues, restaurants, and shopping. They often expand the market by creating additional demand for products and services. Finally, downtown residents ensure that a district has activity, even after business close shop.

There is a clear potential to increase activity through the development of residential apartments or condominiums on upper floors in both commercial districts. The zoning ordinance in Watkins Glen was recently changed to allow residential and office on second floor, however upper floor spaces are mostly vacant right now. The DAC should take advantage of this space by developing it for residential or office use.

The DAC might approach this project by first surveying property owners who may be interested in conversion of upper story space to residential units. Upper level residential use is permitted under current zoning and should be encouraged. The DAC should provide information regarding projects in other communities who have been successful in enhancing the downtown residential base.

The potential also exists for a limited number of mid- to upper-end waterfront condominiums along Seneca Lake in Watkins Glen. Conversations with area realtors suggest that there continues to be strong demand for lakefront properties in Schuyler County and in Watkins Glen indicating that 1,500 SF condominiums could sell for \$250,000 to \$300,000. The potential for an assemblage of sites along Seneca Lake should be further explored.

Increase the capture rate of visitors to existing destinations

While 2 million people visit Schuyler County annually, they do not all stop and shop in Watkins Glen and Montour Falls. The business districts need to create a sense of hustle and bustle to attract tourists. The strategy to increase the capture rate of visitors should focus on marketing, signage, wayfinding and creating a sense of activity.

Whether through posting a calendar of events with hotels, inns and motels or providing marketing material at the Historical Society, Watkins Glen International or area festivals, the business districts need to advertise themselves as additional attractions.

Providing a user-friendly destination for visitors by adding district gateway treatments, signage and wayfinding described in Section V Design. Gateway treatments will signal to visitors

Devices should be designed to help visitors navigate to and from the following areas:

- Watkins Glen State Park
- Watkins Glen International
- Seneca Lake Wine Trail
- Seneca Lake
- Catharine Valley Trail
- Watkins Glen Business District
- Proposed Route 414 Scenic Byway

that they have arrived at a destination. In the case of Montour Falls, it will also cause vehicular traffic to turn and explore the district, which is just off the beaten path of NYS Route 14.

Highly visible, legible wayfinding devices help visitors navigate their way around an unfamiliar area. These devices should be designed to help visitors navigate to and from major local attractions.

Consider providing standardized "you are here" maps of the area on kiosks throughout the Villages that include an overall map and more detailed maps of specific areas.

Increasing the capture rate of visitors will ultimately happen as more activity takes place in the business districts. In her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), planning author and critic Jane Jacobs writes:

... the sidewalk must have users on it fairly continuously, both to add to the number of effective eyes on the street and to induce the people in buildings along the street to watch the sidewalks in sufficient numbers... Large numbers of people entertain themselves, off and on, by watching street activity (35).

As vacant retail spaces are filled, as upper story floors become occupied and as more tourists stop to have lunch or shop in the business districts, they will become an attraction in and of themselves, stimulating more people visiting the area to do the same.

Economic Development Strategy

Ensure development efforts do not diminish the environmental quality and the scenic beauty of the area

While increasing activity in the business districts will provide financial benefits to the community, it will be important to preserve the environmental quality and the scenic beauty of Watkins Glen and Montour Falls. In an effort to proactively pursue appropriate development, the DAC should review and

Sidewalk activity in Watkins Glen is increased by sidewalk sales and outdoor seating at local restaurants.



monitor projects in the Villages and Schuyler County to ensure that new developments follow sound development practices.

The process used in New York State to protect the environment is guided by the 1978 New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). SEQRA was established to incorporate the consideration of environmental factors of actions that are undertaken, funded or approved by local, regional or state agencies. Through a systematic review, projects can be modified to avoid adverse impacts on the environment features such as water resources, air quality, visual resources and community character.

If possible, DAC members should consider becoming involved with Village Planning Boards. Additionally, the DAC could sponsor SEQRA training for a business owner or interested member. The NYS Department of State provides training regarding basic SEQRA, advanced SEQRA, training for municipal officials and "hot button" issues. Once educated about the process, the DAC will work with the Environmental Management Council to monitor development.

Utilize natural resources to create attractions for residents and visitors

There are multiple natural attractions which provide activities and attractions in Montour Falls and Watkins Glen:

- The She-Qua-Ga Falls serve as an anchor for the commercial district in Montour Falls.
- The Watkins Glen State Park attracts hundreds of thousands of people each year.
- The Catharine Valley Trail (CVT) is a 12-mile, multi-use trail that will connect Watkins Glen State Park and Mark Twain State Park in Horseheads, NY. A five-mile section of trail between Montour Falls and Millport has been completed.
- Seneca Lake is a regional attraction for boating and fishing. Seneca is known for lake trout, rainbow trout, landlocked salmon, smallmouth bass and yellow perch.
- Finger Lakes National Forest is comprised of 16,032 acres in Hector, NY. The Forest is the only national forest in New York State and has over 30 miles of interconnecting trails that traverse gorges, ravines, pastures and woodlands.
- W.W. Clute Memorial Park is a 35-acre park on the southern tip of Seneca Lake that includes tennis courts, soccer field, swimming and bathhouses, picnic tables, fireplaces, children's playground, ball field and skate park.

In an attempt to build awareness and appreciation for the many natural assets surrounding Watkins Glen and Montour Falls, as well as attract visitors and residents alike to enjoy different aspects of the region, the DAC should support existing organizations to sponsor special events and educational programs for residents and visitors.

The She-Qua-Ga Falls creates a Montour Falls attraction



Economic Development Strategy

Some ideas include:

- Birdwatching and nature walks with the Schuyler County Bird Club, Cornell Ornithology Laboratory or Chemung Valley Audubon Society at the Catharine Valley Trail, Watkins Glen State Park or Finger Lakes National Forest. This event could attract other regional birding clubs with advertising through the New York State Ornithological Association.
- Seneca Lake cruises on the Stroller IV or Columbia.
- Guided fishing tours and hunting trips.
- Finger Lakes bike tours, with visits to wineries and dinner in the villages.
- Cross country skiing and snowshoeing in the area parks
- Tours to highlight and interpret the marsh and waterfalls between the two villages.

Additional events are listed in Section IV Marketing & Promotion Strategy under the objective to “Create events that attract visitors to the area.”

Proactively pursue appropriate development opportunities

As highlighted in Section V Design Strategy, there are several opportunities for redevelopment in both Montour Falls and Watkins Glen. Appropriate development opportunities for the DAC should seek to leverage existing assets while capitalizing on natural, cultural and historic strengths. The ARC provides funding for asset-based development, an approach originally developed by John Kretzmann and John McKnight in their book *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*. Asset-based development pursues policies and activities are based on the capacities, skills and assets of local individuals, organizations and institutions. The ARC supports the concept of leveraging local resources and is a potential source for technical guidance, loans and grants.

Another option to consider is the creation of a Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA), which could serve as a catalyst for site assemblage and redevelopment, particularly for underdeveloped properties, parking lots and vacant or underutilized seasonal properties. A Redevelopment Authority could also facilitate the development of a lakefront hotel property or condominium offering; pursue selected properties for redevelopment, such as the gateway in Montour Falls; investigate the feasibility of funding sources in order to develop shared municipal parking; and engage in other marketing and promotional activities.

The responsibilities of such a Redevelopment Authority would

include not only master planning and facilitating land assemblage but also defining goals, identifying partners, managing redevelopment projects through the regulatory process, working to secure financing, negotiating private sector involvement and structuring deals to assure various jurisdictional objectives are met. There is no single model of how to structure and operate a successful Redevelopment Authority, since each community is unique in its needs and resources. However, SCOPED is currently well-positioned to take on such responsibility, because they are relatively independent of the political process, have skilled professional resources and have representation from the local business community.

Another strategy to successfully reposition the commercial districts would be to hire a Downtown Development Manager (DDM). This person would integrate and implement the actions recommended in this analysis and provide a full-time, focused effort. In essence, a professional manager is needed to keep redevelopment efforts moving forward, procure grants, interact with the merchants and business community and be active in targeted business recruitment. It may be possible that a DDM could be hired under the umbrella of a larger, existing entity, such as SCOPED, which has a broader mission than the village commercial districts.

Economic Development Strategy



strategic Plan

The tables on the following pages:

- Summarize the steps discussed within this section;
- Quantify the length of time necessary to complete each item;
- Designate a responsible party to lead the effort; and
- Identify the partners that will be required to ensure the items successful implementation.

This table is a guide. It is reasonable to assume that opportunities may arise to complete some items sooner than planned. On the other hand, due to unforeseen circumstances, some short term projects may be delayed.

Maintain basic goods and services within the downtown area

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Explore opportunities to combine parcels			uuu	SCOPED	MFIA, DMA (if created LRA, DDM)
2. Inventory of existing businesses	uuu			DAC	SCOPED, MFIA, DMA (LRA, DDM)
3. Provide SBDC with survey data		uuu		DAC	SCOPED (DDM)
4. Develop marketing program for residents		uuu		DAC	MFIA, DMA, SCOPED (DDM)

Foster existing entrepreneurial spirit within the community

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Develop "one stop shop"		uuu		DAC	SBDC, DMA, MFIA, COC, SCOPED
2. Host seminar for local entrepreneurs			uuu	DAC	SBDC, DMA, MFIA, SCOPED
3. Connect business owners with incentives		uuu		DAC	SCOPED, REDEC
4. Strategies for mass merchandisers	uuu			DAC	SCOPED

Ensure that parking supplies keep pace with economic activity

Implementation Item	Short term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Undertake parking evaluation for WG		uuu		SCOPED	DAC, DMA, MFIA
2. Develop parking management policy		uuu		DAC	Village Boards, MFIA, DMA

Economic Development Strategy

Develop a downtown anchor to attract visitors throughout the year

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Improve, promote & advertise anchors		uuu		DAC	Villages, SCOPED, DMS, MFIA
2. Marketing & promotion plan		uuu		SCOPED	DAC, DMA, MFIA
3. Explore MF antique district			uuu	DAC	MFIA, SCOPED

Promote the use of upper floor space for office and residential uses

Implementation Item	Short term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Develop space for residential/office use		uuu		DAC	SCOPED, MFIA, DMA, LRA,
a. Survey property owners		uuu		DAC	SCOPED, MFIA, DMA
b. Case studies of other locations		uuu		DAC	SCOPED, MFIA, DMA
2. Assemblage of sites for waterfront condos			uuu	SCOPED	SCOPED, LRA

Increase the capture rate of visitors to existing destinations

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. District gateway, signage, wayfinding	uuu			DAC	Villages, MFIA, DMA, SCOPED
2. Standardized "You are Here" Maps		uuu		Villages	SCOPED, MFIA, DMA, NYSDOT

Ensure development efforts do not diminish environmental quality

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. DAC involvement w/ Village Planning Boards	uuu			DAC	SCOPED, SC, CCE, MFIA, DMA
2. Sponsor SEQRA training	uuu			DAC	SCOPED, CCE
3. Monitor and comment on development	uuu			DAC	SCOPED, SC, CCE, MFIA, DMA

Utilize natural resources to create attractions

Implementation Item	Short Term	Time Frame	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Support existing organizational events	uuu			DAC	SCOPED, MFIA, DMA

Proactively pursue appropriate development opportunities

Implementation Item	Short Term	Time Frame	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Leverage existing assets	uuu			DAC	SCOPED, MFIA, DMA, CCE
2. Create a Local Redevelopment Authority		uuu		SCOPED	DAC
3. Hire a Downtown Development Manager		uuu		SCOPED	SCOPED, MFIA, DMA

Marketing and Promotion Strategy



Introduction

Image and concept marketing are important aspects to any improvement strategy. Three separate audiences were surveyed as part of this planning process regarding what improvements would add to the retail and economic vitality of the commercial districts. Respondents ranked various types of improvements on a scale of one, meaning that any improvement would have little impact, to five, meaning that positive impacts would be high. Across all three surveys, including merchants, employees and consumers, investments in marketing to attract more and varied businesses was perceived as having a high return.

Forty percent of the merchants surveyed as part of this planning process stated that they either had no annual advertising budget or spent less than \$1,000 annually on advertising. However, nearly 45% indicated that they maintain a mailing list and nearly 70% stated that they maintain a website.

The marketing & promotions strategy for the business districts should provide a healthy mix of events and promotions that reflect different aspects of the region, including village history, nearby natural amenities, cultural heritage and quality of goods and services. A multifaceted showcase of unique places to see and things to do will keep people coming back. Each district should market and promote their unique identity, collectively and individually. The next section lists objectives for the marketing & promotion strategy and indicates techniques for implementation.

Signs announcing grand openings & sandwich boards indicate what's new in the district



Marketing and Promotion Strategy

Our Strategy

It is the strategy of the District Advisory Committee to continually market and promote the downtown areas of Montour Falls and Watkins Glen collectively and individually. In order to be successful, our approach consists of 1) creating and marketing an image and theme for the two villages, 2) generating interest in specific properties for re-use or re-development, and 3) promoting the offerings of the existing businesses within the downtown areas and in the region.

Our Objectives

- A. Capitalize on the regional location and the name recognition of Watkins Glen
- B. Develop marketing campaign for the Villages
- C. Create events to attract visitors to the area
- D. Target existing tourists from attractions such as Watkins Glen International, the wine trail, and the outdoor recreational opportunities
- E. Focus outreach efforts on regional population centers such as Ithaca, Corning, and Syracuse

Our Measures

1. Direct mailings or media advertisements
2. Coupons or promotional offers returned to local merchants as well as the home zip code of the person using the coupon
3. Hits on the web site
4. Responses to consumer feedback surveys or questionnaires
5. Editorial placements in tourism and business publications
6. Number of location consultants reached

Marketing and Promotion Strategy

Capitalize on the name recognition and the regional location of Watkins Glen

A first step in marketing and promotional effort should be to increase the visibility of the business districts by capitalizing on existing connections to the area. The DAC should take advantage of the full reputation of Watkins Glen - its setting in the Finger Lakes, racing history and the increasing notoriety of Seneca Lake wineries. Early in the promotional effort, the DAC should develop a unified look for promotional material to sustain and strengthen the name recognition of the area.

Develop a marketing campaign for the villages

In November 2004, SCOPED hired the economic development and tourism marketing firm Development Counsellors International (DCI) to develop a county-wide marketing campaign, conduct prospect development for prospective businesses and promote Schuyler County through public relations.

The two business districts will likely benefit from implementation of the county-wide recommendations, but a comprehensive marketing campaign that focuses on the two village districts should be prepared in order to heighten awareness on the districts and attract investment. The campaign should include the following elements:

- A Vision Statement will clarify the type of business environment the DAC envisions. This statement will help develop the theme, logo, target audiences and it will also help the business districts to distinguish themselves from other nearby shopping districts.
- A 3-4 word name for the Main Street Program
- A logo and theme will provide both an insignia that unifies

residents and a calling card for visitors. A business district logo should be used for signage, unifying the two village business districts. DCI will suggest and provide thematic concepts to market Schuyler County. The DAC should review these concepts and determine if a related concept for the village districts. For Montour Falls, a theme or logo might be related to the concept of an artisan and antique district or the falls.

Program Name & Logo

One of the first tasks that the DAC should undertake is to develop a recognizable name and logo for its Main Street Program. The examples are shown below include Corning's Gaffer District, the Fairport Village Partnership, Port Townsend, and the 14th Street Heights Main Street Programs.



Marketing and Promotion Strategy

- A Description of Community Assets, including existing retail, service, dining, housing, office and lodging in the district, as well as major employers and regional attractions.
- Market Data, including descriptions of target market segments currently served, trade area geographic information, sales figures, tourism data, information on past openings and closings of businesses and vehicle and pedestrian volumes.
- Business Wish List of businesses that would be well-suited to fill gaps in the existing business mix. Issues to consider are the space opportunities, target market segments, market demand and compatibility with the marketing goal statement.
- Promotional Material with the theme and concept. Include a description of recent public investments, such as streetscape improvements or public parking, as well as a record of positive press coverage and visitor feedback to highlight success stories and capture testimonials.
- Summary of Incentives and Assistance, such as loan funds or tax credits for new, existing or expanding retail and other commercial businesses. Additional funding may be available through NYSEG, which offers incentives in the form of rate discounts and funding assistance, and the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), through the ARC Entrepreneurship Initiative.
- District Web Site to advertise businesses. Approximately 40% of the merchants surveyed stated that they had no annual advertising budget or spend less than \$1,000 annually on advertising. However, nearly 70% stated that they maintain a web site. The DAC should develop a

“virtual village” to market the commercial district. This website should include a GIS-based map with a virtual walking tour through the districts with descriptions, advertisements and links to merchant web sites. The site should also provide information about vacant and available properties and links to area realtors, brokers, developers, the Chamber of Commerce, the Seneca Wine Trail, the Finger Lakes Wine County and Watkins Glen International.

Funding and implementation of such marketing campaign is best suited for a Business Improvement District (BID). In practical terms, a BID is an administrative entity created by State and local legislation that empowers local property and business owners to develop management, marketing, promotional and regulatory strategies in order to improve the business environment. The BID acts as a collective and legal entity and is funded by a self-imposed tax.

Target existing tourists from attractions such as Watkins Glen International, the Wine Trail and the outdoor recreational attractions

The DAC should promote the business districts to tourists visiting the region. Promotions and sales during major events at Watkins Glen International, wineries and outdoor events will encourage visitors to explore the districts. The DAC may consider chartering a shuttle bus to and from area attractions and the business districts. They should also explore establishing relationships with wineries to sell district goods at wineries and thereby promote the district. Additionally, there may be opportunities to attract prospective investors, companies, and

site location consultants through special events. The DAC should also schedule and promote events discussed previously in order to coincide with existing events.

Continue to track customer preferences

A final element of the marketing and promotion strategy is the development and implementation of an annual consumer survey to gather information about consumer behavior, such as how often they use the business districts and how much money they spend, and perceptions, such as what shops or goods and services are needed in the commercial districts. The data from these surveys will help the DAC to redirect and redefine this district improvement strategy.



Marketing and Promotion Strategy

Create events that attract visitors to the area

A successful attempt to draw more tourists will include a full calendar of events. The DAC should attempt to capture revenue from visitors visiting regional amenities, such as Watkins Glen International, the Watkins Glen State Park, Catharine Valley Trail, and the Seneca Lake Wine Trail.

The DAC should create a calendar of existing local events, such as the sound and light show at the Watkins Glen State Park, and Watkins Glen International schedule. They can also be a sponsor additional events.

A helpful way to brainstorm potential events is to create a list of local assets and strategize potential market segments that might be attracted to events and seasonal activities associated with these local assets. See the table at the bottom of this page for examples of potential activities.

Additional ideas centering upon the region's natural amenities are listed in Section III under Utilize natural resources to create attractions for residents and visitors.

Benefiting from community assets through marketing & promotion

Asset	Target Market	Type of Event	Time of Year
Marshes & Waterfalls	Nature lovers	Guided tour	Spring/Summer/Fall
Watkins Glen Walk of Fame	Racing enthusiasts	Contest to find all placards	Summer
Architecture	Potential investors	Open house to showcase renovations	Anytime
Local Artisans	Arts & Crafts collectors	Arts and Crafts Festival	Spring/Summer/Fall
Local Parks	Music lovers	Concerts and performances at parks	Summer/Fall
Business Districts	Thrifty Shoppers	Sidewalk Sales	Summer/Fall
	Holiday Shoppers	Holiday decorating in the Districts	Winter
Watkins Glen International	Racing enthusiasts	Information Booth at Wine Festival	Summer
Catharine Valley Trail	Nature lovers, hikers	Nature walk & bird watching	Spring/Summer
Seneca Lake	Boating enthusiasts	Wood Boat Show	Summer
Business Districts	Tourists	District Street Festival	Summer or Fall
Seneca Lake	Bicyclists	Bike tour around the Lake	Summer or Fall
	Tourists	Lake cruises and fishing trips	Summer or Fall
Seneca Lake Wine Trail	Wine connoisseurs	Dinner for participants Spring Wine & Cheese Weekend Dinner	Summer

Focus outreach efforts on regional population centers

The DAC should focus outreach efforts to residents of regional population centers, with a focus on seasonal residents. The DAC should purchase advertising in local newspapers and on radio stations to attract visitors from Corning, Elmira, Ithaca, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo. The DAC should also consider advertising to visitors from Canada who travel to the United States on the Rochester Fast Ferry.

Since seasonal residents are already familiar with the business districts, it would also be a good idea to identify them through the real property assessment tax roll and send an annual "Welcome Wagon" mailing to introduce them to new businesses and restaurants and encourage them to patronage them.

An final recommendation would be to identify regional chains with other locations in similar districts to that might be interested in expanding and opening store in Watkins Glen or Montour Falls, given the name recognition and seasonal tourist influences.

Market specific development sites and opportunities

Using the promotional material developed from the marketing campaign, the DAC should package development sites and opportunities for target business acquisitions and investors. Informational material to include in these materials consists of:

- Property owner information
- Total square footage
- Description of the property and/or building
- Zoning
- Maps and photos
- Sale price
- Rent/square foot
- Operating expenses, including utility rates and taxes

This information should be made available on the DAC and SCOPED web site and sent to real estate development firms around the northeast.



Marketing and Promotion Strategy



strategic Plan

The tables on the following pages:

- Summarize the steps discussed within this section;
- Quantify the length of time necessary to complete each item;
- Designate a responsible party to lead the effort; and
- Identify the partners that will be required to ensure the items successful implementation.

This table is a guide. It is reasonable to assume that opportunities may arise to complete some items sooner than planned. On the other hand, due to unforeseen circumstances, some short term projects may be delayed.

Marketing and Promotion Strategy

Capital ize on the name recognition and l ocation of Watkins gl en

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Develop unified promotional material		uuu		DAC	SCOPED, MFIA, DMA

Devel op a mar keting campaign for the vil l ages

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Review County wide DCI Marketing report		uuu		DAC	SCOPED, DMA, MFIA
2. Prepare district-focused marketing campaign			uuu	DAC	SCOPED, DMA, MFIA

Target existing tourists from attr actions such as wgi and wine trail

Implementation Item	Short term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Promotions & sales events during events at WGI	uuu			SCOPED	DAC, DMA, MFIA, COC
2. Host special events for investors, companies & site location consultants		uuu		SCOPED	DAC, MFIA, DMA, COC
3. Schedule events to coincide with existing activities		uuu		DAC	SCOPED, MFIA, DMA

Marketing and Promotion Strategy

Continue to track customer preferences

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Annual consumer survey		uuu		DAC	SCOPED, DMA, MFIA (DDM)
2. Redirect and redefine improvement strategy with survey data			uuu	DAC	SCOPED, DMA, MFIA (DDM)

Create events that attract visitors to the area

Implementation Item	Short term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Create a calendar of local events	uuu			DAC	SCOPED, MFIA, DMA, (DDM)
2. Capitalize on assets; target market segments		uuu		DAC	SCOPED, MFIA, DMA (DDM)

Focus outreach efforts on regional population centers

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Purchase advertising with regional newspapers & radio	uuu			DAC	MFIA, DMA, CoC SCOPED
2. Advertise to visitors from Canada		uuu		DAC	SCOPED, MFIA, DMA, CoC
3. Identify regional chains who might expand			uuu	DAC	MFIA, DMA, SCOPED, CoC

Market specific development sites and opportunities

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Package development sites for investors			uuu	DAC	SCOPED, MFIA, DMA
2. Post on SCOPED web site & with DAC	uuu			SCOPED	DAC, MFIA, DMA

Design Strategy



Our Strategy

It is the strategy of the District Advisory Committee to create downtown areas that are attractive, safe, and comfortable for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The turn of the century scale and character shall be maintained through ongoing stewardship of the individual properties and appropriate re-development practices. While, the Committee recognizes that many of the design issues facing the two villages are similar, it desires each village to implement unique design solutions in order to create two distinct destinations that will serve as a source of pride for each community.

Our Objectives

- A. Improve the appearance of buildings & storefronts
- B. Preserve historic structures & architectural features
- C. Increase the quality of business & directional signage
- D. Maintain and expand the mixed use pattern of the central business district
- E. Enhance the existing gateways & streetscape
- F. Connect downtown Watkins Glen to Seneca Lake
- G. Maintain public access to Seneca Lake
- H. Create elements along Route 14 that visually connect the two villages

Our Measures

1. Façade improvements completed that achieve the basic design principles
2. Signs that achieve the basic design principles
3. Seminars or presentations on good design
4. Decorative light poles placed in the study area

Design Strategy

Our Preferences

As stated in the introduction, there was a Design Downtown Workshop held in January, 2005. The purpose of this workshop was 1) to gauge local attitudes towards various types of design and 2) to identify specific projects that could be undertaken to improve the overall appearance and operation of both downtown areas. In order to accomplish the first item those in attendance were asked to participate in a Community Preference Survey (CPS). This survey consisted of residents, property owners, business owners, and community leaders ranking images of various types of development on a scale from 1 to 10. The detailed results of the survey are contained in the appendix. A summary of the results are shown on the following pages.

Basic Design Principles

Based upon the Community Preference Survey results and from feedback received at the Design Downtown Workshop, the following design principles should be applied in both downtown areas.

Building Scale & Location

- Buildings should be adjacent to the sidewalk (0' setback)
- Buildings should be at least two stories in height
- One story structures should have the scaling of a small two story structure
- Buildings should appear to be no wider than 50' in width. Wider structures shall be broken up into smaller visual increments

Facades

- First floors should be mostly transparent (windows & doors)
- Awnings are encouraged but they should match the shape of the window opening. Multiple awnings should be used over more than one opening.
- Upper floors should have a lesser amount of transparency
- Where transparency is not appropriate, architectural features (recessed areas, etc) or other visual element must be used
- Wood, brick, or equivalent material are preferred

Parking

- Parking should always be screened from view (preferably behind a building)
- Parking between the building and sidewalk should be prohibited

Signage

- Two sign types are permitted flush mounted and perpendicular
- Flat sign faces are to be avoided (carving, raised lettering are to be encouraged)
- Signage should not interfere with visual access into the interior of the building
- Signs should be sized and placed in a manner that is consistent with the architectural features of the building
- Business signs should not be placed higher than the first floor

Community Preference Survey Summary



The higher scoring images are on the left hand side of the summary. As new construction occurs in the downtown areas, these types and styles of development should be encouraged. By comparison, the low scoring mages located on the right hand side should be avoided in the downtown areas.

Design Strategy

Community Preference Survey Summary (Con't)



Improve the appearance of buildings & storefronts

In order to accomplish this objective, the DAC must pursue an approach which includes governmental regulation along with technical assistance and financial incentives.

Governmental Regulation - A review of the zoning codes for both villages indicates that neither municipality has the necessary design regulations or process in place to ensure the appropriate level of design in the downtown areas. Montour Falls & Watkins Glen should adopt design guidelines and standards that should apply to the Business Center (BC) and Central Business (CB) districts respectively.

The DAC should facilitate the development of these guidelines with direct involvement from each Planning Board. It is common for smaller communities to utilize outside assistance in the form of a design professional to create the most appropriate design language. Any codification effort should build upon and re-enforce the basic design principles listed on page 40. Every effort should be made to ensure that the guidelines respect the different character within the downtown areas. For example, the design criteria for Watkins Glen may be different for the traditional commercial area north of fifth street than it is for south of fifth street where many of the businesses are in residential style structures.

Both Villages may also want to consider adding an architectural review function to the approval process within downtown. This will lay the legal groundwork necessary for reviewing the architectural details of any proposals. Many larger communities create a separate architectural review

board. The small populations of both Villages make establishing another board unrealistic. As a result, it is recommended that an architectural review function be added to the planning board's existing responsibilities.

Technical Assistance

It is recommended that the services of a design professional or firm be obtained to act as a community architect on an as needed basis. This architect would provide technical assistance to the Planning Boards during the approval process for projects within the downtown areas. The Villages have the ability to pass along the costs associated with the services of the community architect to the applicant/developer. (In order to do so, a provision must be added to their zoning code.) A second option to fund the architect is through the DAC annual budget. The DAC could also assist in the selection of the person or firm.

Financial Incentives

A façade improvement program should be developed by the DAC to facilitate the ongoing improvement of the buildings within the downtown area. A program typically involves offering financial assistance to the property owners in the form of a partial grant or low interest financing as well as design assistance. Possible sources of the grant funds include the DAC annual budget or from SCOPED. New York State recently offered financial assistance to develop façade programs under the New York State Quality Communities Grant Program. New York State also has the New York State Main Street Program that will fund up to 50% of façade improvements within communities that are awarded funding.

Design Strategy

Both the Main Street Program and the Quality Community Program are expected to continue over the next several years. The DAC should submit applications for both to help establish and finance building rehabilitations within the downtown areas.

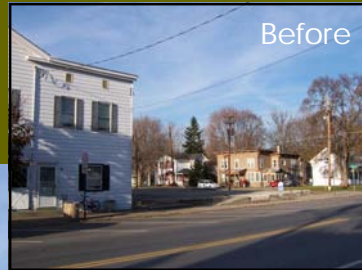
Storefront Rehabilitations & New construction

The before and after images on this and the next page are intended to serve as graphic examples of appropriate storefront renovations and new in-fill construction that could be accomplished in both Villages. Although, these are not detailed architectural renderings, they do convey the type of building that could be achieved using basic design principles.

Montour Falls



After



Before

New construction on the vacant, concrete pad in Montour Falls

Montour Falls



After



Before

Restoration of the first floor store fronts



Before

Building & façade improvements



After

Watkins Glen



After



Before

Storefront rehabilitation



After



Before

A new mixed use development on the Pudgies site



Before



After

A possible re-use of the fire hall as a café or artist display area / store



More attractive alternatives to boarded up windows include; installing real windows, paint plywood to look like windows, closed shutters, add awnings, or paint plywood with art or mural

Design Strategy

Preserve historic structures & architectural features

Montour Falls & Watkins Glen have a large number of historic residential and commercial structures throughout the community that actively contribute to the character of the both villages. The DAC, along with the DMA and MFIA, should pursue the long term preservation of the historic properties within the downtown areas. The most successful historic preservation efforts are those that are voluntary. As a result, the DAC needs to lead an outreach campaign to dispel the myths of historic preservation and promote the benefits.

The community may choose a more formal method of ensuring historic preservation. This could include adopting local landmark legislation and creating a Landmark's Commission to monitor preservation and redevelopment efforts.

The National Trust For Historic Preservation has a number of financial programs that would be valuable to any preservation effort within the villages. These include:

- National Preservation Loan Fund
- National Trust Small Deal Fund
- Banc of America Historic Tax Credit Fund
- New Markets Tax Credit Initiative

To learn more about these program go to the National Trust's web site at http://www.nationaltrust.org/community_partners/index.html.

Myths & Benefits of historic preservation

The most common misconceptions surrounding preservation of private property include:

- I won't be able to change anything about my house, such as paint color or landscaping or plumbing, without the approval of the "history police."
- I have to open my house for tours.
- I won't be able to sell my house.

None of those statements is true. No one from the local, state, or federal government is going to block the installation of a dishwasher or hot-water heater. Historic review boards may evaluate major projects but the homeowners have the opportunity to present their case for making changes. Though many people choose to open their homes to once-a-year neighborhood tours, no one has to give the public access. It is also becoming increasingly clear that being part of a historic district may actually improve property values and make it easier to sell your home.

In addition, preservation is actually a good business -- and a big one. A recent travel industry survey found that more than 40% of Americans made visiting a historic place (a building, battlefield or historic community) part of their vacations, and that these people spent nearly 40% more than the typical traveler. Communities participating in the National Trust's Main Street program, which revitalizes traditional commercial districts, have generated more than \$16 billion in private and public investment since 1980.

Source: National Trust For Historic Preservation

Increase the quality of Business & Directional signage

It is imperative that visitors can easily find their way to and from the destination. Studies have shown that once they have arrived in a downtown area for the first time, visitors typically do the following:

- Drive through the entire district in order to see the types of stores and activity that is available.
- Turn around and search for a place to park in a public or private parking facility.
- Once they have successfully parked their vehicle, every visitor embarks on foot.

As a result of this behavior, any successful directional sign program must adequately serve the needs of motorists and pedestrians.

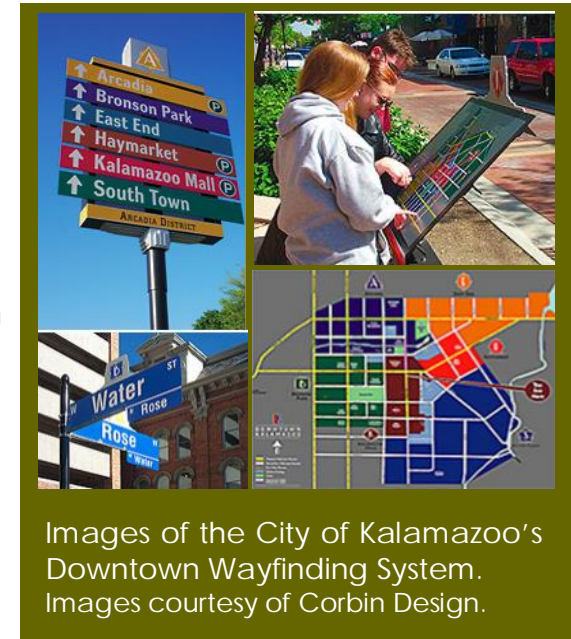
The directional sign program should start along the regional travel ways that lead to the downtown areas. For example, along NYS Route 14, signs promoting and directing tourists to the Historic Watkins Glen and Montour Falls Shopping Districts will help motorists locate the two villages. These signs will also serve as advertising to increase awareness of these areas to existing tourist populations, most notably, wine tasters and racing fans.

Once in the downtown area, all welcome and directional signage should be a consistent color and style. As the photos on the next column illustrates, the City of Kalamazoo Michigan with help from Corbin Design, has created a single, color coded system that serves both motorists and pedestrians through the use and placement of directional sign posts, street signs, and walking maps throughout the downtown area.

Business signage is much more difficult to ensure a high level of design is achieved for each operation. Common obstacles are the increased cost of a well designed sign and the knowledge that any approval is even necessary. One of the most common statements heard by local governments is “I had the sign made already, so I can’t make any changes to it.” Very rarely do smaller communities deny the owner the use of a pre-fabricated sign. It will be the ultimate responsibility of the Village Planning and Zoning Boards to ensure that signs are of the appropriate size, style, and are placed in the proper location. The community architect can offer assistance in this matter as well.

The Villages and the DAC should work towards a combination of three types of signage for each business; flush mounted, perpendicular, and window signs.

Flush mounted signs are placed directly on the face of a building. (Signs placed on the front of awnings would also fall into this category.) These signs are best viewed while walking along the opposite side of the street by pedestrians.



Images of the City of Kalamazoo's Downtown Wayfinding System. Images courtesy of Corbin Design.

Design Strategy

Perpendicular signs are placed at a right angle to the building. These signs are best viewed by motorists and pedestrians traveling either direction on both sides of the street.

Window signs are placed directly on the inside or outside of the glass windows. These signs should be kept to a minimum because they can limit the view into the building. Ideally, these signs are limited to open, closed, and hours of operation. They can also include special promotions or sales information.

The total business sign allotment should not exceed one (1) square foot of signage for every linear foot of building frontage. This can be applied to both sides of a corner building allowing the allotment to be one square foot for both frontages. Any proposed sign larger than the code allows in the downtown area should require Planning Board and Zoning Board approval.

Detached or monument signs, should be allowed only with special approval from the Planning and Zoning Board. These signs should be required to be mounted on the ground, ideally with a masonry base. Pole signs should be prohibited. A provision should be added to the Village codes that states, any existing pole sign that is abandoned, removed, or in need of complete replacement must be removed and replaced with a conforming sign structure.

Over time, these efforts will help to create an attractive and highly functioning downtown area that is not cluttered is excessive numbers or overly large signs.



Example of a flush mounted sign from Lake Placid.



Example of a detached sign from Batavia.



Examples of perpendicular signs from Corning. Signs should be creative and reflect the type of business inside the store such as the Brown Bag Gifts sign.

Maintain and expand the mixed use pattern of the central business district

Mixed use is simply defined as a building or development pattern that consists of a variety of uses in close proximity to each other. A mixed use building may have the ground floor occupied by a store while the upper floors are used as apartments. A mixed use district allows restaurants, retail, office, and residential uses to co-exist. The combination of uses creates a vitality that can extend into the evening hours and enables shared uses of resources such as parking.

As new development occurs in the downtown areas, the mixing of uses should not only be allowed by code but encouraged through the business recruitment efforts of the DAC or SCOPED.

Design Strategy

The following concept drawings were developed by attendees from both Villages at the Design Downtown Workshop held in January, 2005. These drawings along with the rest of conceptual illustrations in this section of the plan should be used to guide future detailed design efforts. The drawings should not be mistaken for a definitive recommendation on what specific areas of the downtown should look like.

Enhance the existing Gateways & streetscapes

Visually appealing gateways are critical to making a good first impression as people enter the downtown areas. A well designed gateway will also serve to draw people into the downtown area. This is especially critical in areas where Main Street is not located along a major highway such as in Montour Falls.

Montour Falls

The intersection of NYS Route 14 and West Main Street is the primary entrance into the downtown area. As the photos of the existing condition illustrate, the intersection is currently dominated by vehicular parking lots on three corners with no landscaping or screening. Three of the four buildings that frame the corner have little or no architectural merit. The only indication that there is a historic downtown area nearby is a small, blue Central Business District sign placed at the intersection.

Montour Falls Eastern Gateway - Fall, 2004



Southwest Corner



Northwest Corner



Southeast Corner

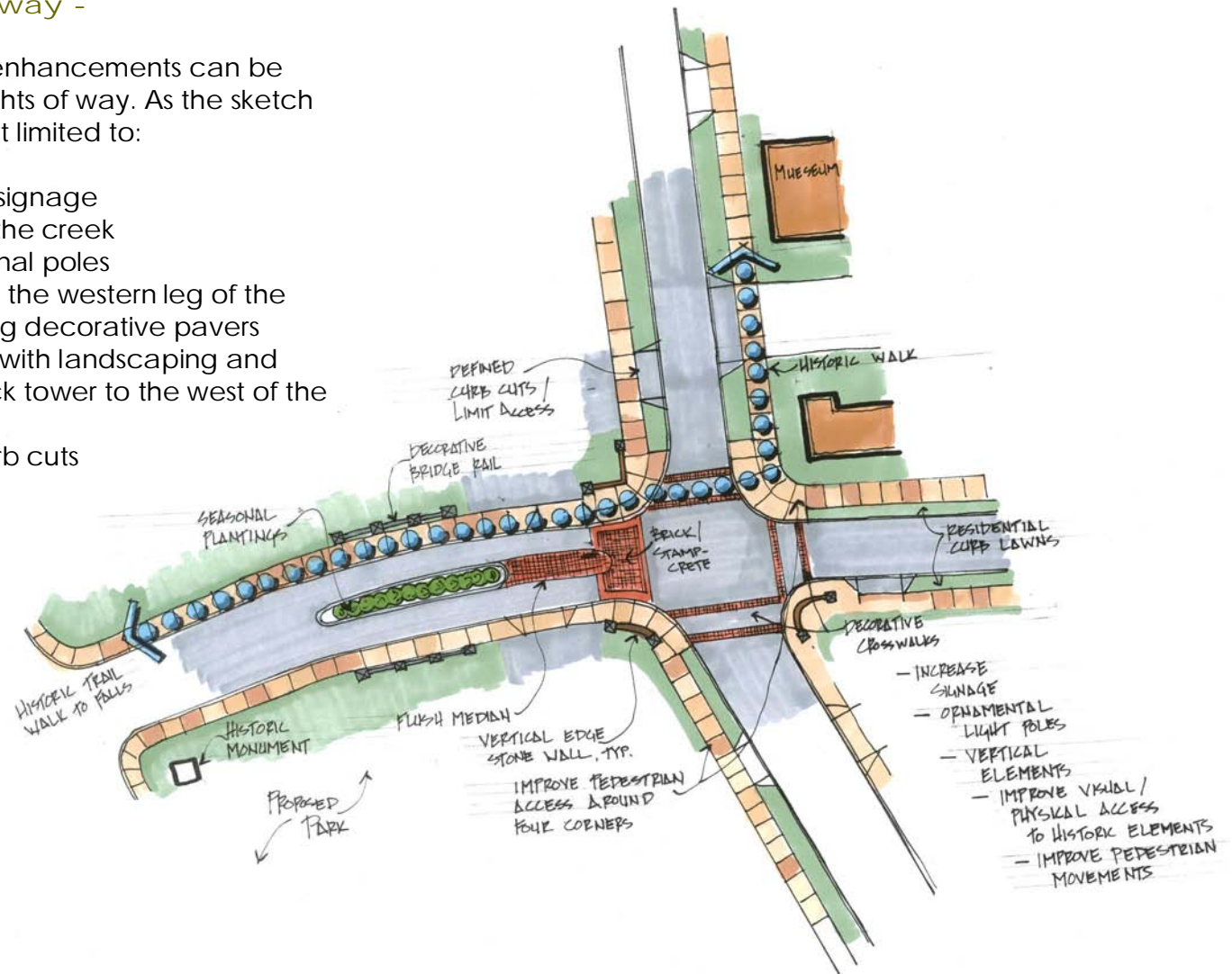
Montour Falls Eastern Gateway - Future Conditions

A significant amount of gateway enhancements can be accomplished within the public rights of way. As the sketch illustrates, these include but are not limited to:

- Textured crosswalks
- Stone walls at the corners with signage
- Decorative bridge railing over the creek
- Decorative mast arm traffic signal poles
- Placement of a flush median in the western leg of the intersection that is created using decorative pavers
- Placement of a raised median with landscaping and vertical element such as a clock tower to the west of the flush median
- Better defined driveways or curb cuts

Additionally, signage is needed south of the gateway, so that drivers are aware that they are approaching the district.

These improvements will not only make the intersection more attractive but also safer for motorists and pedestrians by calming traffic and reducing the number of conflict points experienced by people traveling through the area.



Design Strategy

Montour Falls Western Gateway & streetscape

The intersection of West Main Street and South Genesee Street is the western gateway into the downtown Montour Falls. This area boasts the falls as well as a number of historic homes and commercial, and civic buildings and is known as the "Glorious T". Due to the natural and architectural assets present at this location, the design challenge became how to make a great gateway even better.

The streetscape of Montour Falls can be divided into four distinct areas.

1. The entire south side is generally devoid of trees and buffering. In addition, the utility poles have been placed along the south side of the street, adding to its poor appearance.
2. The north side, east of Owego Street has no on street parking and few buildings to provide a sense of connection to the rest of downtown.
3. The north side, between Owego and Lee Street is the most attractive and well maintained portion of Montour Falls. Street trees and diagonal parking create a pleasant but short lived walking experience.
4. The north side, west of Lee Street is similar to the south side of Main Street in that it is devoid of trees and buffering.

Montour Falls Western Gateway & Streetscape - Fall, 2004



Western Gateway



North side Streetscape

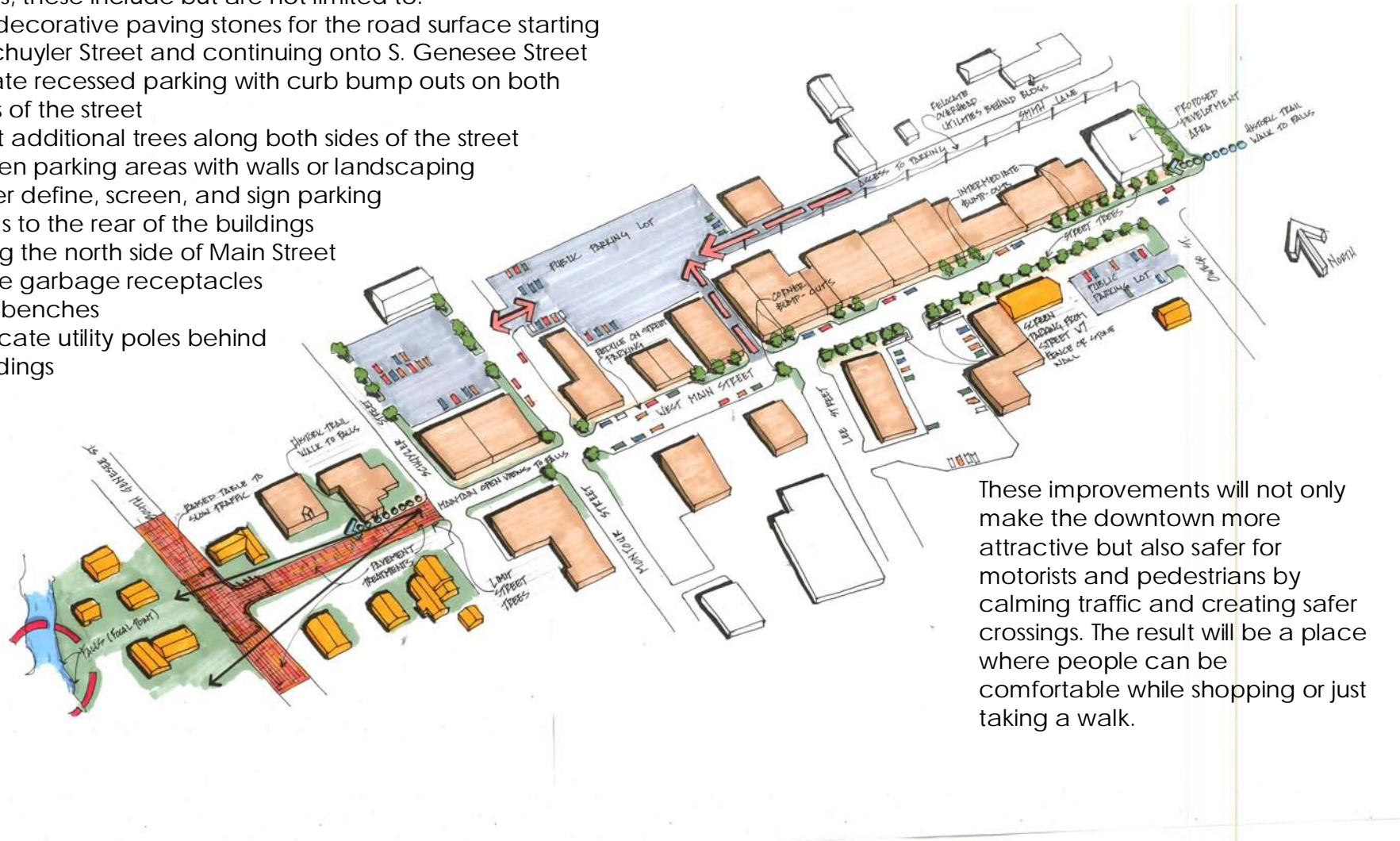


South side Streetscape

Montour Falls Western Gateway & Streetscape - Future Conditions

A significant amount of the necessary enhancements can be accomplished within the public rights of way. As the sketch illustrates, these include but are not limited to:

- Use decorative paving stones for the road surface starting at Schuyler Street and continuing onto S. Genesee Street
- Create recessed parking with curb bump outs on both sides of the street
- Plant additional trees along both sides of the street
- Screen parking areas with walls or landscaping
- Better define, screen, and sign parking areas to the rear of the buildings along the north side of Main Street
- Place garbage receptacles and benches
- Relocate utility poles behind buildings



These improvements will not only make the downtown more attractive but also safer for motorists and pedestrians by calming traffic and creating safer crossings. The result will be a place where people can be comfortable while shopping or just taking a walk.

Design Strategy

Watkins Glen Gateway & streetscape

The intersection of NYS Route 14 and Lincoln Drive represents the northern gateway into downtown Watkins Glen. As the photo to the right illustrates, this area is characterized by an excessive amount of pavement, a vacant building on a lot used for auto sales, and a gift shop that restricts views to the lake.

The drawing on the following page is a view looking south down Franklin Street. The addition of new multi-story structures on either side of the street, the existing SCOPED building, and a new clock tower on the right hand side help to create a strong sense of place as one enters or leaves the downtown area. The placement of landscaped medians help to better define the street and slow traffic as it comes down the hill heading south. The overall effect is an attractive and better functioning gateway with additional commercial and residential space available for sale or lease.

The Watkins Glen streetscape is inconsistent in its placement of trees, types of streetlights, curb extensions or “bump outs”, and presence of benches and trash receptacles (as shown in the photos to the right). The DAC and the Village should actively pursue an overall re-design of the streetscape. The design should indicate the proper placement of new trees, decorative light fixtures for motorists and pedestrians, and textured sidewalks and crosswalks. The cumulative effect of these are shown in the sketch on the bottom right of the next page. These improvements will create a more comfortable and safe walking environment for residents and visitors.

Watkins Glen Northern Gateway & Streetscape - Fall, 2004



Northern Gateway



East side Streetscape



West side Streetscape

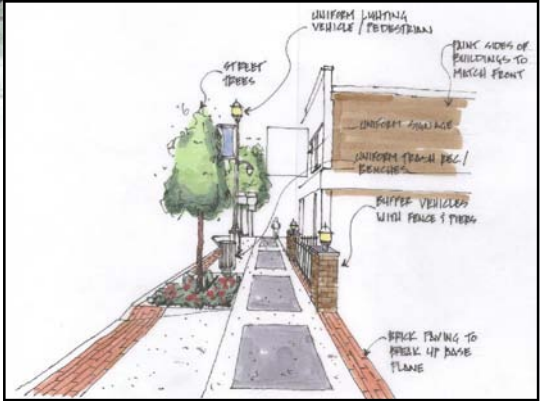


Before



Left Sketch: Looking south down Franklin Street at the intersection of NYS Route 14 and Lincoln Drive.

Bottom Sketch: Streetscape located on the east side of NYS Route 14 looking north.



Design Strategy

Connect downtown Watkins Glen to Seneca Lake Maintain public access to Seneca Lake

The importance of Seneca Lake from an economic development, recreational, environmental, and design standpoint cannot be emphasized enough. Throughout the public input process numerous residents expressed a desire to maintain or increase public access to the lake. As development occurs the DAC should advocate for preservation and potential increases in public access to Seneca Lake.

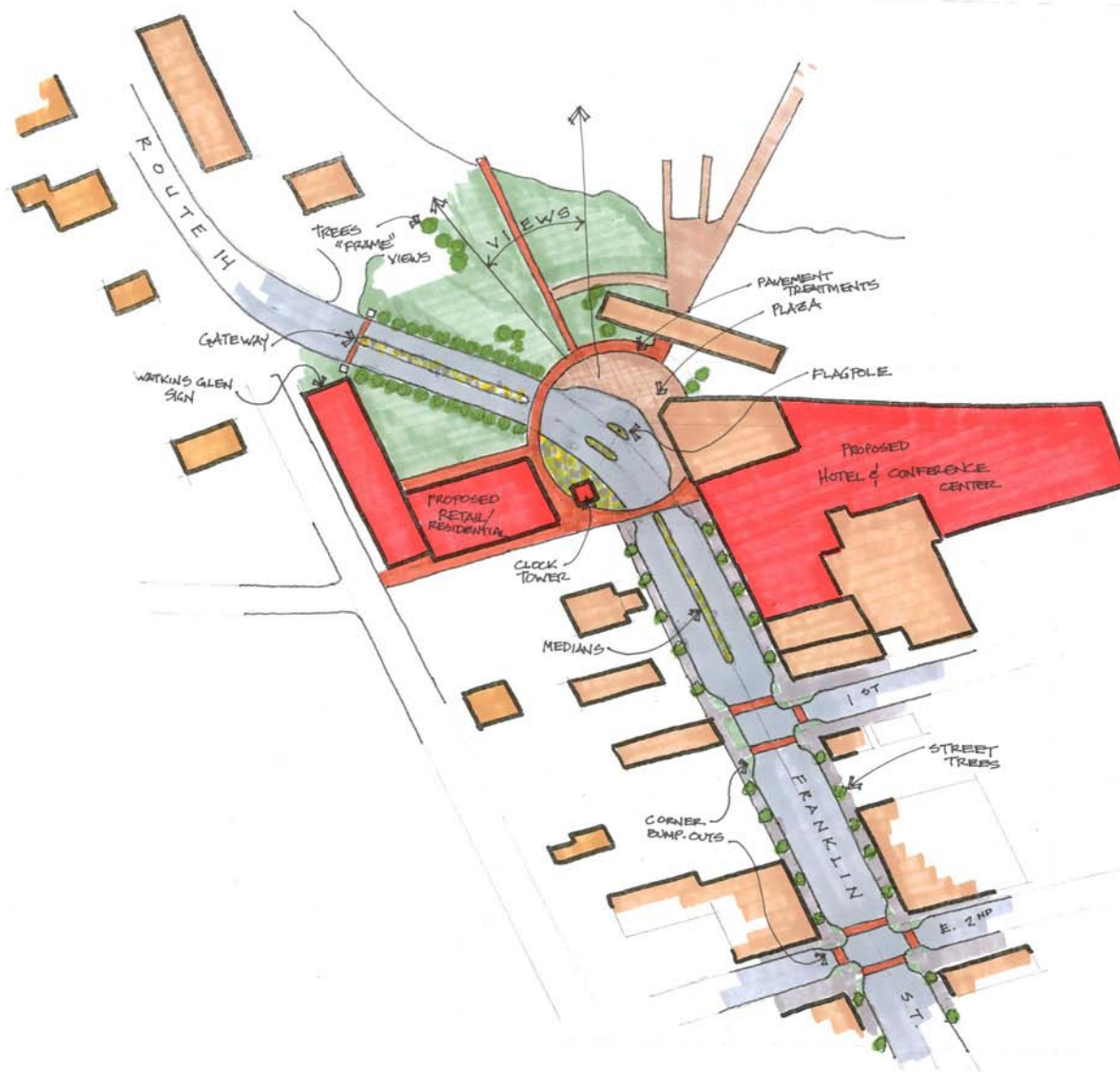
As the image to the right illustrates, there is not a strong visual or physical connection to Seneca Lake from Main Street. The sketch on the opposite page provides some design concepts to improve the connection and create a lakeside park for residents and visitors to enjoy.

In order to accomplish this, the existing Captain Bill's operation must be relocated. One solution is to relocate this establishment in the proposed building shown in red on the northern most parcel on the west side of Main Street. A more detailed sketch of this building is shown on page 55. This site would keep the gift store close to its current location and provide them and their customers with one of the best views in Watkins Glen.

If the gift store is relocated, the community park and seating area can be created. This spot could also be designed to accommodate a small festival or a part of a larger downtown celebration.

Watkins Glen Looking North towards Seneca Lake - Fall, 2004





The development of a new building on the northwest parcel and relocating Captain Bill's would most likely require the involvement of a local development authority.

In addition to the creation of a park, other streetscape improvements should be made to promote a connection between downtown and Seneca Lake. These include (some these items are also listed in the previous section of this plan):

- Curb extensions or "bump outs"
- Street trees
- Decorative lighting
- Banners
- Signage

In order to accommodate vehicular activity, a drop off loop could be constructed adjacent to the park. It should be noted that this plan does not assume that Lincoln Drive should be closed or remain open. The plaza shown could restrict vehicular traffic or accommodate over the plaza in the form of a speed table or textured paving.

Design Strategy

Create elements along Route 14 that visually connect the two villages

As the photos to the right illustrate, the NYS Route 14 corridor between the two downtown areas is a hodge podge of commercial uses, residential uses, and natural areas.

The DAC's mission is focused on the downtown areas. However, the DAC recognizes that there is an opportunity to create a pleasant experience for visitors traveling between both villages along NYS Route 14. If done well, this connection can foster trips to and between the two downtown areas.

In order to achieve this, the DAC will need to partner with the following groups or agencies:

- New York State Department of Transportation
- Village and Town of Montour Falls
- Village of Watkins Glen and Town of Dix
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
- Schuyler County

If successful, the ride between the two villages could become an attraction for motorists, bicyclists, or hikers.

NYS Route 14 south of Watkins Glen - Fall, 2004



Watkins Glen State Park



Suburban Commercial Uses



Suburban Commercial Uses

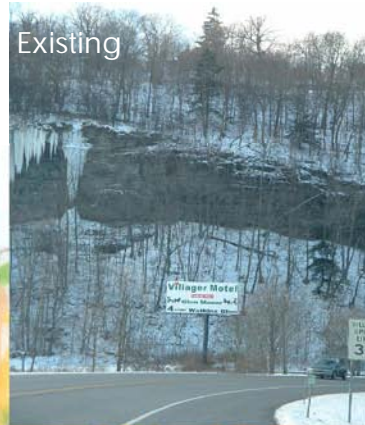
The creation of a multi use trail with viewing areas along the east side would create a safe, non-motorized link between the two villages.

Streetscape improvements such as signage directing traffic to the business districts, tree plantings, lights, and banners also could be added. Other ideas at the design workshop included:

- Illuminate rock outcroppings and waterfalls at night to create visual chain of water, rock, and light
- Reduce the size of billboards and make them fit character
- Reduce speed to 45 mph
- Place bird blinds in swamp, accessible from multi-use trail
- Create a shuttle between the two villages

Downtown Design Scrapbook

It should be noted that a complete collection of all the sketches and ideas generated at the Design Workshop are contained in a Downtown Design Scrapbook, which is an appendix to this plan. This document should be used as a reference as part of any future design efforts in the downtown areas.





Strategic Plan

The tables on the following pages:

- Summarize the steps discussed within this section;
- Quantify the length of time necessary to complete each item;
- Designate a responsible party to lead the effort; and
- Identify the partners that will be required to ensure the items successful implementation.

In general, changes to local codes and review processes should be accomplished first. These changes can be completed in a relatively short period of time with minimal costs to the Villages. Once in place, these changes should help to maintain the positive aspects of the downtown areas while requiring that new development be consistent with the size, scale, and style of existing buildings.

The remaining implementation items will require involvement of other groups and outside funding sources. As a result, a higher level of communication and coordination will be required. In order to be successful, these items will take longer to complete.

It should be noted that the table is a guide. It is reasonable to assume that opportunities may arise to complete some items sooner than planned. On the other hand, due to unforeseen circumstances, some short term projects may be delayed.

Improve Appearance Of Buildings & Storefronts

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Adopt downtown design guidelines	uuu			DAC	Village Planning Bds, MFIA, DMA
2. Architectural review function		uuu		Planning Bds	MFIA, DMA, SCOPED
3. Designate Village Architect		uuu		Village Bds	DAC, SCOPED
4. Financial incentives			uuu	DAC	SCOPED
5. Pursue grant funding	uuu			DAC	SCOPED, Cornell
6. Provide design training to boards	uuu			DAC	MFIA, DMA, SCOPED

Preserve Historic Structures & Architectural Features

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Establish outreach campaign		uuu		DAC	MFIA, DMA
2. Financial Incentives			uuu	DAC	MFIA, DMA, SCOPED
3. Modify demolition permit process	uuu			Village Bds	MFIA, DMA, SCOPED
4. Create landmark legislation & commission		uuu		Village Bds	MFIA, DMA, SCOPED, Cornell

Increase the Quality Of business & Directional Signage

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Develop regional sign system		uuu		DAC	SCOPED
2. Develop local sign system in downtown		uuu		DAC	MFIA, DMA, SCOPED
3. Modify sign requirements in zoning code	uuu			Village Bds	MFIA, DMA, SCOPED

Design Strategy

Maintain & Expand The Mixed Use Pattern Of the Central Business District

Implementation Item	Short term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Ensure that code allows mix of land uses	uuu			Village Bds	Cornell, SCOPED, MFIA, DMA
2. Recruit businesses that thrive in a mix use area		uuu		SCOPED	Village Boards, MFIA, DMA

Enhance The Existing Gateways & Streetscapes

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Review conceptual plans with NYSDOT	uuu			DAC	NYSDOT, SCOPED, DMA, MFIA
2. Refine plan & present to boards & public	uuu			DAC	NYSDOT, SCOPED, DMA, MFIA
3. Generate cost estimates	uuu			DAC	NYSDOT, Engineering consultant
4. Explore funding / implementation options		uuu		DAC	NYSDOT, Engineering consultant
5. Complete final drawings		uuu		DAC	NYSDOT, Engineering consultant
6. Construct improvements			uuu	NYSDOT	Engineering consultant

Connect Downtown Watkins Glen To Seneca Lake

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Conduct design workshop for area		uuu		DAC	NYSDOT, SCOPED, DMA, MFIA
2. Refine plan & present to boards & public		uuu		DAC	NYSDOT, SCOPED, DMA, MFIA
3. Generate cost estimates		uuu		DAC	NYSDOT, Engineering consultant
4. Explore funding / implementation options		uuu		DAC	NYSDOT, Engineering consultant
5. Work to re-locate businesses			uuu	SCOPED	DAC, DMA
6. Complete final drawings			uuu	DAC	NYSDOT, Engineering consultant
7. Construct improvements			uuu	NYSDOT	Engineering consultant

Create Elements Along Route 14 That Visually Connect The Two Villages

Implementation Item	Short term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Design multi-use trail between villages		uuu		DAC	ECTC, Schuyler County, NYSDOT
2. Complete multi-use trail			uuu	ECTC	DAC, NYSDOT, Schuyler County
3. Illuminate rock outcroppings		uuu		DAC	SCOPED, NYSDOT, NYS Parks
4. Reduce speed limit		uuu		DAC	NYSDOT, Village Bds, MFIA, DMA
5. Reduce size of billboards			uuu	DAC	SCOPED, Town & Village Bds
6. Create shuttle between downtown areas			uuu	DAC	SCOPED, ECTC, MFIA, DMA



Introduction

The physical character and aesthetics of the village is second only to the beauty of the surrounding Finger Lakes region. A clean, attractive, inviting, and well-maintained village downtown is vital in capturing the tourist to stop and spend time and money.

Developing an infrastructure strategy for the villages of Watkins Glen and Montour Falls will enable the villages to identify ways to systematically plan and fund improvements and maintenance of their infrastructure as opportunities arise. Having a plan in place will allow the villages to thoughtfully take advantage of any new development proposals or NYSDOT upgrades, and will equip them to with the necessary tools to seek other funding or grant sources.

In addition, the plan is a reflection of the proactive commitment of the villages towards the betterment of the community and the interests of the businesses and residents.



Infrastructure Strategy

Our Strategy

It is the strategy of the District Advisory Committee to ensure that the necessary infrastructure exists to effectively support a thriving downtown area in Montour Falls and Watkins Glen. More specifically, the Committee wishes to facilitate the prioritization and implementation of transportation, streetscape, water, and sewer projects that will serve to attract new investment.

Our Objectives

- A. Develop a capital improvement program to guide public investment in the downtown area
- B. Initiate and support NYSDOT efforts to address truck traffic in Watkins Glen and Montour Falls OR Address truck and other traffic along Franklin Street
- C. Improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities
- D. Ensure convenient and adequate parking is available
- E. Increase transportation connections from regional population centers and interstate highways
- F. Keep utility costs affordable
- G. Ensure ongoing maintenance is adequate to maintain a quality destination

Our Measures

1. Pedestrian or bicycle amenities placed in downtown (crosswalks, bike racks, etc)
2. Traffic calming measures utilized in downtown
3. Parking spaces per 1,000 square foot of floor area
4. Complaints (parking, pot holes, lighting)

Develop a capital improvement program to guide public investment in the downtown area

Watkins Glen is at the tail end of completing several capital improvement programs over the past few years. The general fund budget, however, includes funds that can be used for incidental or necessary small-scale improvements that may be required as needed. The street department identifies and prioritizes these projects for the village. In conjunction with these routine maintenance projects, the village should develop a coordinated capital improvement program aimed at improving the appearance and convenience of the commercial shopping district.

The Franklin Street infrastructure improvements should help create and sustain a safe and clean downtown and shopping district. This would include enhancing the pedestrian nature of the shopping district by adding benches, specialty accent pavements and crossings, trash receptacles, plantings and bicycle provisions to encourage alternative transportation means and help relieve the parking demand. Pedestrian scale lighting to illuminate sidewalks and pedestrian routes to convenient parking areas will also add to the streetscape as well as encourage utilization of more distant parking. As the Village invests in the streetscape environment, land owners will be more likely to invest in the upkeep and upgrade of their property.

Initiate and support NYSDOT efforts to address truck traffic in Watkins Glen and Montour Falls OR Address truck and other traffic along Franklin Street

Heavy traffic volumes occur on Route 14 (Franklin Street) within Watkins Glen north from Elmira and south from Geneva. According to the 2003 NYSDOT Traffic Volume Report, the average daily traffic volume on Route 14 between Montour Falls and Watkins Glen varies from 7,400 to 13,400 vehicles per day. Through the village, traffic is slowed down and subject to congestion via several traffic lights, which causes starting and stopping. This is normally not a concern for automobile traffic, and actually desirable from a commercial and traffic calming perspective, but due to the large volume of commercial truck traffic utilizing Route 14, it is exacerbated by the noise and fumes of braking and accelerating trucks. The truck highway traffic is seen as one of the major quality of life problems in Watkins Glen.

Several traffic bypass proposals have been explored in the past, but it is recognized that the Route 14 status quo is preferable to any new route that would cut off the community from the lakefront or completely bypass the commercial district of Watkins Glen. Ideally, any solution should be aimed at diverting as much truck traffic only as possible from the village center. The village should have a continuing dialogue with the NSYDOT to address truck traffic and seek opportunities to mitigate its impact within the village center.

Infrastructure Strategy

Improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities

One of the major goals of this study is to identify ways to enhance the walkability of the village to aid in the reduction of local truck traffic and the alleviation of parking demands, particularly for residents. In addition, improvement of the pedestrian function of streetscapes adds character, scale and activity to the streetscape environment, which in turn serves to attract more pedestrians. An increase in the pedestrian realm is followed by a decrease in the vehicular dominance of a streetscape, all desirable and sought after outcomes for the village commercial district. Improvements to the streetscape can include accent paving for special areas or areas of emphasis (storefront landings, crosswalks, mini focal points or pause areas, etc.), wider sidewalks, benches, specialty lighting for both vehicular and pedestrian zones and appropriate landscaping to enhance the village gateways and architectural features of the storefront entrances and facades. Bicycle accommodations (bike racks, designated bicycle parking) can encourage bicycle use and prevent damage to other features of the streetscape (tree trunks, light poles, benches) that are used as makeshift bicycle racks. Coordination of bicycles with mass transit can also help the non-vehicular mobility of residents and tourists and help in the reduction of traffic and parking demands.

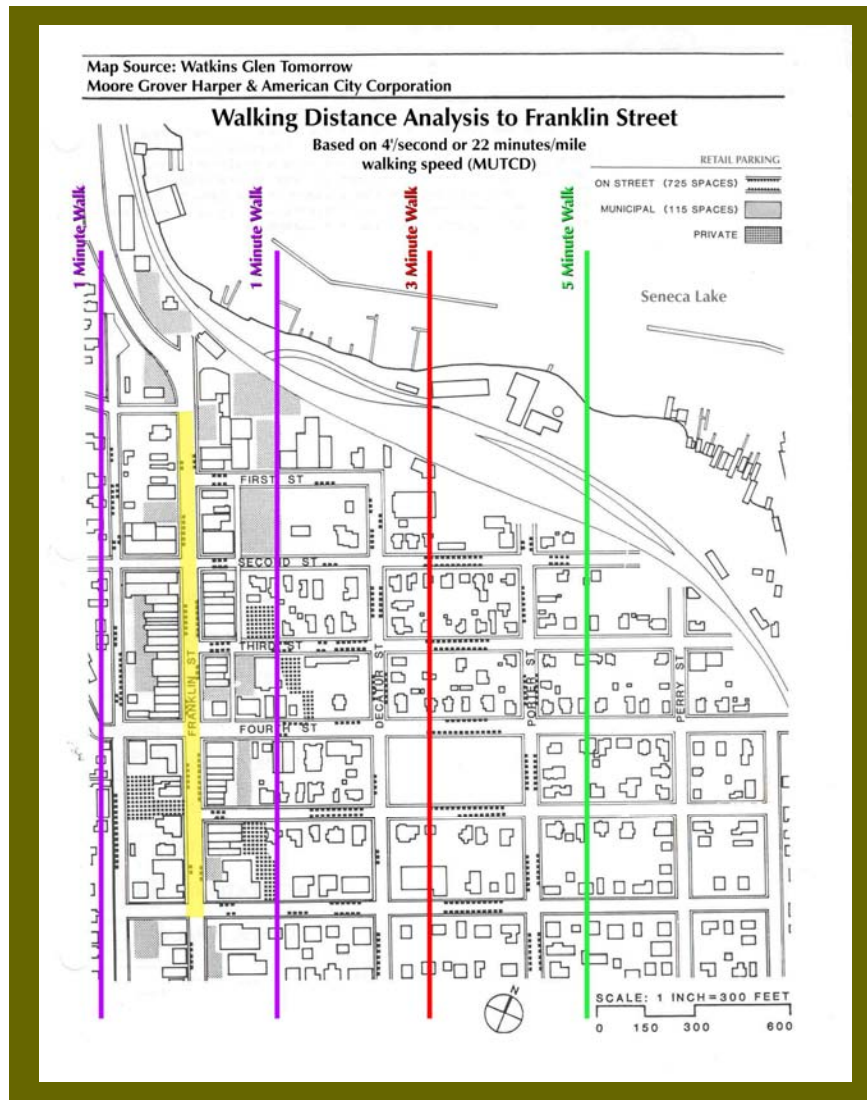
In addition to the facilities downtown, the potential exists to develop a multi-use trail between the two Villages for bicycles and pedestrians. This project is described in more detail in the Design Strategy and should be the topic of future grant applications for the DAC, the Villages, Towns, and County.

Ensure convenient and adequate parking is available

Convenient, adequate parking is an important factor for a successful village commercial core, but it is not the most important factor. Convenient and adequate parking is also a matter of perception.

Watkins Glen. Approximately 226,000 square feet (SF) of first floor commercial space is available in the commercial core of Franklin Street within the Village of Watkins Glen. According to the parking study conducted in 1979 for the "Watkins Glen Tomorrow" study, approximately 840 parking spaces are available to support this retail core. This equates to a 3.7 parking space per 1000 SF ratio. Typical parking ratios for suburban retail developments are 5 parking spaces per 1000 SF, where almost all of the shoppers arrive by car with very few pedestrians. In more urban or village settings, the required parking is typically in the range of 2 to 3 parking spaces per 1000 SF. This lower parking ratio can be attributed to 1) the mix of retail, office and residential uses within a traditional downtown area and 2) the greater number of pedestrian and bicycle trips generated due to the close adjacency of local neighborhoods.

While the lack of parking may appear to be a major issue, the real problem may lie in its perception. While adequate, many of the parking spaces may be viewed as undesirable or inconvenient due to the distance located from Franklin Street. However, based upon the average walking speed of 4 feet/sec, or 2.7 miles per hour, all of the available parking that currently exists to support the Franklin Street commercial



district falls within a less than 5 minute walk, and the majority of parking occurs with a 3 minute walk from Franklin Street.

Montour Falls. Public parking in Montour Falls exists on the north side of West Main Street, east of Montour Street. While this lot is not striped, there is ample parking in this area to support the business district.

Communicating and enhancing the connections to available parking will help to dispel the negative perception of inadequate or inconvenient parking.

Streetscape and pedestrian enhancements envisioned for Franklin and Main Street can be continued down the side streets to some degree to reinforce the connection from parking area to the commercial district. Pedestrian visual cues can be incorporated into the streetscape enhancements to promote the parking connection, similar to techniques employed within large parking facilities to aid shoppers in orienteering and way finding. These cues can be as simple as color-coded features or themes per street, or the utilization of subtle but memorable techniques visible only to the pedestrian such as sidewalk inlaid markers with symbols or way finding information.



Additionally, there is a need to police time limited spaces so that residents and employees do not park in spaces that are intended for business patrons.

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In addition to the promotion of existing available parking resources, the Village of Watkins Glen should perform an updated parking management study that identifies and quantifies available public parking for the commercial district. Potential municipal parking areas can be identified for future development as required. Care must be taken to disperse the parking areas along the length of the commercial strip to prevent large, suburban type parking lots and to keep parking areas behind Franklin Street and West Main Street buildings to preserve the village character and scale.

Increase transportation connections from Regional Population Centers and interstate highways

In order to increase potential tourism, as well as capitalize on the retail needs of the existing regional population, clear links should be established to adjacent urban areas in order to minimize the distance perception. Well-signed, convenient travel routes to each of the nearby urban areas should be established, with mile-distance indications along the entire length of the route at appropriate intervals (e.g. Ithaca - 24 miles, Horseheads - 17 miles, etc.) so that tourists immediately know the distance to be traveled, know they are on the correct route, and feel as if they are being escorted from one community to the next. This extra effort helps break down the distance/barrier perceptions within the region and portrays a welcoming and hospitable, caring community.

Bus transportation between the cities can be encouraged and promoted as easy, affordable, convenient and entertaining. Bike racks can be installed on the buses to encourage and accommodate bicycle and recreational

travel, as well as become part of an overall regional plan to encourage non-vehicular transportation and bicycle touring within the Finger Lakes region.

Keep utility costs affordable

Adequate water and sewer service is currently available in both village business districts. The DAC should stay informed of changes to utility company economic development programs by appointing a liaison to NYSEG. Current programs that may be relevant to the business districts include:

- Incubator Development Incentive (IDI): This program provides a reduction from the standard electric tariff rate, on a per kilowatt-hour basis, to multi-tenant business incubator facilities which can assist in the development, growth and success of new business enterprises.
- Economic Development Outreach: NYSEG may supplement other economic development funding, on a per initiative basis, for strategic outreach projects that will primarily focus on attracting new business investment into the NYSEG service area.

Ensure ongoing maintenance is adequate to maintain a quality destination

All the infrastructure improvements in the world are not enough to revitalize a downtown if there is no plan for sustained maintenance and upkeep. No single factor contributes to the perception of a neglected, tired and failing area more than the deterioration of the public/private interface. Even with modest improvements, a sound maintenance program can go a long way in effecting a positive change to the streetscape and overall image of the area, creating a good first impression for visitors and leaving them with a lasting positive memory. In addition, routine maintenance prolongs the lifespan of the improvements and preserves the public investment. It is essential that the village establish a regular maintenance program to address the most visual aspects of the streetscape environment. Oftentimes the simplest of actions makes the largest impact. Weedy tree pits, leaning signposts, peeling or rusted light poles, and street litter are easily rectifiable; however, when allowed to persist, they immediately convey a negative image and set the stage for the visitors' experience and future actions. Many times, once a first impression is formed, it is hard to change, reinforcing the fact that favorable first impressions are paramount for a tourist community.

In order not to unduly burden the village resources, another approach involves partnering with the merchants of Franklin Street and West Main Street or other local civic groups. If the merchants see the commitment the village will contribute, they may be more willing to invest not only in their own properties but also expand their efforts to the curb line. The village could be proactive in establishing a program of maintenance, a contact person, and a schedule so the

merchants can be assured that they will be supported in their efforts. Establishing a positive relationship with the merchants, and letting them know the village and the storeowners share the same common goal – success – will break down barriers, establish trust, and foster a cooperative partnership. Through this partnership, the village can educate the merchants on what actions would be the most effective and possibly aid them in their efforts. For example, clean windows and storefront entries are one of the most important aspects in conveying a successful and conscientious, customer-oriented business. Many very successful retail centers have a daily window and storefront washing program, as they know the value of a well maintained storefront increases the economic viability of their centers. Encouraging the merchants to also maintain the public realm in front of their establishments will help the village stretch their resources for maintenance.

Another example could involve the planning and maintenance of flowering annuals in planters or tree pits by the merchants, with materials provided by the village. The village could establish an annual or seasonal theme/planting scheme and provide the planters and/or plants at no or low-cost to the merchants, provided they commit to keeping them watered during the season. The village could present an award to the best display as an incentive and to encourage merchant 'peer' pressure to maintain the plantings.

Due to the current depressed economic climate of the region, it may be more efficacious for the village to be creative and develop win-win scenarios for sustained maintenance rather than establishing a special assessment district and levying additional taxes for maintenance on an already struggling business district.

Infrastructure Strategy



strategic Plan

The tables on the following pages:

- Summarize the steps discussed within this section;
- Quantify the length of time necessary to complete each item;
- Designate a responsible party to lead the effort; and
- Identify the partners that will be required to ensure the items successful implementation.

This table is a guide. It is reasonable to assume that opportunities may arise to complete some items sooner than planned. On the other hand, due to unforeseen circumstances, some short term projects may be delayed.

Develop a capital improvement program to guide public investment in the downtown

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Develop coordinated capital improvement program aimed at districts		uuu		Villages	DAC, SCOPED, MFIA, DMA
2. Support Franklin Street infrastructure improvements		uuu		DAC	Villages, SCOPED, MFIA, DMA

Initiate and support nysdot efforts to address truck traffic

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Explore solutions to divert truck traffic		uuu		DAC	NYSDOT, SCOPED, DMA, MFIA, SC
2. Continue dialogue with NYSDOT to mitigate impact within village center			uuu	DAC	NYSDOT, SCOPED, DMA, MFIA, SC

Improve bicycle and pedestrian facilities

Implementation Item	Short term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Streetscape improvements		uuu		Villages	DAC, SCOPED, DMA, MFIA
2. Bicycle accommodations		uuu		Villages	DAC, SCOPED, MFIA, DMA
3. Develop multi-use trail between villages				SC	Villages, Towns, SCOPED, MFIA, DMA

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Ensure convenient and adequate parking is available

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Enhance parking connections	uuu			Villages	DAC, SCOPED, DMS, MFIA
2. Enhance streetscape and pedestrian		uuu		Villages	DAC, SCOPED, DMA, MFIA
3. Incorporate pedestrian visual cues to		uuu		Villages	DAC, SCOPED, DMA, MFIA
4. Police time-limited spaces	uuu			Villages	DAC, SCOPED, DMA, MFIA
5. Updated parking management study	uuu			Villages	DAC, SCOPED, DMA, MFIA

Increase connections from regional population centers and interstates

Implementation Item	Short term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Establish well-signed travel routes		uuu		DAC	SCOPED, MFIA, DMA
2. Encourage bus transportation		uuu		DAC	SCOPED, MFIA, DMA,

Keep utility costs affordable

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Appoint a liaison to NYSEG	uuu			DAC	SCOPED, MFIA, DMA
2. Investigate incentive programs		uuu		SCOPED	DAC, MFIA, DMA, NYSDOT

Ensure ongoing maintenance

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Establish maintenance plan	uuu			Village	DAC, SCOPED, MFIA, DMA
2. Create partnerships with businesses	uuu			DAC	SCOPED, Villages, MFIA, DMA
3. Plan and maintain tree pits and flower pots		uuu		DAC	SCOPED, Villages, MFIA, DMA



Involved Community Strategy

Introduction

“Never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” ~ Margaret Mead

According Dr. Tom Daniels, one of nation’s leading small town planners and rural economists, a community requires a minimum of 5,000 residents to implement an effective and ongoing revitalization effort. In his opinion, smaller communities simply do not have the human and financial resources necessary to accomplish the number of tasks that are required to transform a struggling economy into a thriving one. In other words there are not enough people to serve as volunteers to contribute the time, energy, and ideas needed to staff committees and complete projects in a timely manner. In addition, there is not enough collective wealth present to tap into for fundraising efforts in many rural Towns and Villages to finance the volunteers’ efforts. As a result, it is imperative that Villages like Montour Falls and Watkins Glen create partnerships to maximize the available resources and achieve our mission.

As previously stated, the populations of the Villages of Montour Falls and Watkins Glen are approximately 1,800 and 2,100 respectively for a combined population of less than 4,000 people. In order for the Villages’ downtown revitalization efforts to succeed, additional partnerships must be created within the Village, County, and Region. One of the most obvious and beneficial relationships that should be fostered is between the two Villages. This relationship has begun to formalize as part of the Downtown Advisory Committee that has guided the planning process that led to this strategy.

As part of this planning process, an inventory of the volunteer groups that will have the most significant impact on the implementation of this plan was conducted. At present the following groups are active within the villages:

Community	Organization	Members
Montour Falls	Village Board	5
	Planning & Zoning Boards	10
	Improvement Association	12
	Properties	42
	SUB TOTAL	69
Watkins Glen	Village Board	5
	Planning & Zoning Boards	10
	District Management Assoc.	15
	Properties	111
	SUB TOTAL	141
Schuyler County	SCOPED Staff	4
	District Advisory Committee	12
	SUB TOTAL	16
TOTAL		226

A review of the table indicates that the two Villages have similar number of volunteers. However, the Village of Watkins Glen has approximately twice the number of properties in its downtown area than Montour Falls. As a result, they also have twice the number of property owners on which to build a revitalization effort. The next section addresses techniques to increase the number of citizens involved in the revitalization of both downtown areas.

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Our Strategy

It is the strategy of the District Advisory Committee to foster a positive attitude towards the revitalization of both downtown areas that will result in a long term commitment by residents, business owners, and property owners. The Committee recognizes that both Villages have limited resources and that, additional partnerships within the County, Region, and State will be necessary to achieve its mission.

Our Objectives

- A. Increase volunteerism in the community
- B. Improve enforcement efforts (parking, zoning, etc.)
- C. Develop partnership with regional agencies, specifically NYSDOT
- D. Ensure community planning efforts are kept up to date
- E. Engage the service organizations in any re-vitalization efforts
- F. Select one or two projects that everyone can agree upon and accomplish them
- G. Facilitate development and investment within the community
- H. Designate a group to lead the revitalization effort
- I. Develop a fundraising strategy

Our Measures

- 1. Volunteers in the downtown improvement project database
- 2. Activities held each year and approximate attendance of volunteers
- 3. Board and volunteer training sessions held each year
- 4. Donations and contributions to the DAC



On Saturday, October 23, 2004 the Montour Falls Improvement Association held a clean up day to spruce up the downtown area.

Increase volunteerism in the community

“Volunteer - a person who voluntarily undertakes or expresses a willingness to undertake a service”

~ Miriam Webster Dictionary

The exact number of volunteers needed to achieve the mission statement is impossible to determine. However, it is safe to say that a few dedicated members of an organization can accomplish more than a large number of people whose participation is inconsistent. One of the most important roles of the DAC is to continually increase the number of volunteers involved in this effort and ensure that they become reliable resources for various activities. How is this accomplished?

Step 1: Educate potential volunteers on the mission and importance of the program. A public outreach program within the community must be developed and maintained. The purpose of this program is different from the promotional efforts discussed in the Promotion and Marketing Section whose emphasis is bringing visitors to the two villages. The outreach program should include the following:

- A handout or brochure describing the program, its accomplishments, and why it is important to get involved
- Ongoing presentations at meetings of local community groups and clubs
- Provide local groups and clubs with a list of speakers that can be called upon to discuss the program at the last minute to fill in if a previously scheduled speaker has to cancel

- Announce it in local churches
- Media coverage of the program
- Publicly recognize current volunteers

Any good outreach program knows its audience. In Montour Falls and Watkins Glen this means taking into consideration the demographics of the two Villages. For example, the data collected by RKG Associates indicates that there are a large percentage of persons over the age of 65 in both Villages. This age group typically has more free time to devote to volunteer activities due to retirement. Therefore, it may be worthwhile to focus an outreach effort on retired persons over the age of 65.

Step 2: Ask for volunteers. This should be a combination of an ongoing recruitment effort as well as a more focused membership drive.

- Hold a membership drive once or twice a year with advertisements in the local media
- Introduce new businesses or residents to the program through direct mailing or an informal welcome meeting
- Ask for volunteers at presentations to local community groups, clubs, and churches
- Develop programs with the local high school or court system to become part of community service assignments

In an effort to increase the number of volunteers available for this project, sign up sheets (included in the appendix) were passed out during each of the three public meetings conducted to complete this plan. Approximately two dozen people signed up as volunteers during the first two meetings

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conducted in November and January.

Step 3: Provide an orientation packet so volunteers can learn more about the program. This packet should include:

- Letter of Welcome from the DAC
- Mission and background of the program
- Description of each committee and/or strategy area
- Organization chart
- Phone list
- Brochures of the program
- Map of the program area
- Relevant news articles
- Previous meeting minutes
- Bibliography or publications on downtown revitalization

Step 4: Maintain volunteer database. Every volunteer should be entered into a database in order to facilitate matching a volunteer with an appropriate activity. At a minimum the DAC should maintain the following information:

- Name and contact information
- Best time to reach you
- Why are you volunteering
- Interests, skills or hobbies
- Things you would like to learn
- Tasks you would not want to be asked to do

It should be noted that sign up sheets with this information have already been provided and are being used by the DAC.

Step 5: Have jobs ready for volunteers to do. If volunteers are not called upon in a timely manner, it sends the message that the program does not really need or is ready for any assistance. This can create a cynicism about the program that can become a public perception that must be overcome. The best case scenario is that volunteers are contacted promptly and utilized in a manner that is effective and that they enjoy themselves. This will ensure a positive experience with the program and help to create a good working relationship with that person and may result in excellent word of mouth advertising.

Step 6: Recognize volunteers. Due to the small number of residents and business owners in the two villages, the DAC must work to ensure that volunteers continue to be involved over time. One technique to accomplish this is to recognize the achievements of groups and individuals that volunteer. Listed below are a few examples of how to recognize the service of your volunteers:

- Service pins or certificates
- Award lunches or banquets
- Putting their names in print or make them the subject of a local news story
- Gift certificates or discounts and local stores or restaurants
- Increase their responsibilities or roles in the program
- Say thank you

Improve enforcement efforts

The effectiveness of local enforcement efforts are critical to ensuring that the operation and appearance of the downtown areas are properly maintained. The DAC recognizes that local enforcement efforts are a direct responsibility of the village government. However, the DAC will help to facilitate appropriate and consistent enforcement efforts by increasing the dialogue of enforcement issues between the Villages, business owners, and property owners.

In order to accomplish this, the DAC will educate various village boards on the importance of enforcement to the success of the program and to the vitality of the downtown areas. The DAC will also help to educate merchants on local enforcement practices and New York State Property Law. Finally, the DAC should invite the code enforcement officers to their meetings on a regular basis to discuss the status of specific issues.

Develop partnerships with regional agencies

As stated earlier, the DAC cannot achieve their mission without the assistance of other groups and agencies operating within the region. The involvement of SCOPED and Cornell Cooperative Extension in the revitalization of the downtown areas is a prime example of the partnerships that are necessary. Over the past twelve months, SCOPED and CCE have provided the following efforts:

- Researched and applied for a grant to fund this study for both downtown areas
- Served as project manager for this project
- Providing technical assistance to the District Management Association in Watkins Glen
- Actively pursuing the development of a hotel and conference center in downtown Watkins Glen
- Applying for NYS Main Street Funding for Watkins Glen
- Writing a grant for a joint Comprehensive Plan for the Town and Village of Montour Falls
- Securing the services of DCI International to develop a marketing campaign for the County

There is every indication that SCOPED and CCE will maintain their involvement in the implementation of this plan for the foreseeable future.

In order to maintain existing partnerships and to create new ones, the DAC must continually engage regional agencies. This includes inviting representatives from various groups to discuss organizational practices, ongoing efforts, and funding opportunities with the DAC. It may also be beneficial to host forums or workshops with the agencies, community leaders,

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and merchants to discuss key issues and how to solve them.

One potential topic of a future forum or workshop could be the impacts (smell, noise, etc) of truck and vehicular traffic along Main Street Watkins Glen. This issue was identified throughout this planning process as a weakness that should be addressed. A “Walkable Communities” workshop jointly sponsored by the DAC and the New York Department of Transportation could be held to develop solutions to pedestrian and vehicular traffic and circulation problems along NYS Route 14, from First to Tenth Street. This venue could also serve to make the public aware of the limitations (funding, traffic volumes, etc) that NYSDOT must take into account during its decision making process.

Regional agencies that could assist in the implementation of this program:

- Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development (SCOPED)
- New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT)
- Schuyler County Chamber of Commerce
- Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board (STC)
- Finger Lakes Wine Country Tourism Marketing Association
- Elmira Chemung Transportation Council (ECTC)
- Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE)
- Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)
- Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)

Ensure community planning efforts are kept up to date

Planning efforts are generally voluntary activities. As a result, it is difficult to develop administrative and political mechanisms that will guarantee they are kept up to date. However, the DAC should work to ensure that planning efforts are current enough to be relevant to local decision makers. The following narrative provides some insight on when planning efforts should be updated.

Sound planning efforts are based upon a set of assumptions that are developed after a review of existing conditions and trends. For example, the recommendations in this plan assume the population of the two villages and the county will remain relatively stable over the next ten years. By comparison, areas in the southern and western parts of the nation are experiencing dramatic increases in population. The recommendations for those areas would be of a different nature. The DAC should consider re-visiting this planning effort if and when the region begins to experience changes in demographic, social, or economic changes.

This plan has a number of very specific implementation items that the DAC will work towards accomplishing over the next several years. Once a number of these items have been finished, this plan’s usefulness will diminish. In other words, a new planning effort should be undertaken once many of the tasks it recommends have been completed.

As described in the plan introduction, this planning effort has been designed to promote a widespread dialogue and understanding of the key issues with the residents, business own-

ers, property owners, and community leaders. The DAC members have had the benefit of hearing this dialogue first hand. This experience has helped the DAC to better understand the relationship between the issues and the recommendations. Over time, members of the community will change as will the make-up of the DAC. Once a number of members have retired and new members have been added, the first hand knowledge of the key planning issues raised in 2005 will decline. A new planning process will help the new members better understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that face the organization and the downtown areas and how to deal with them.

Other planning efforts that will aid the DAC in achieving their mission include:

- A plan for the pedestrian realm
- A marketing and promotion plan
- Downtown design guidelines and standards
- A parking supply and demand study for Watkins Glen
- Traffic calming study for Watkins Glen
- Establishment of a Local Redevelopment Authority

Engage the service organizations in any revitalization efforts

Both villages have a number of service organizations within the downtown area. These currently include:

- Mechanics Club
- Lions Club
- Moose Lodge
- Elks Lodge
- Rotary Club
- Churches
- Masonic Temple
- Redman's Lodge

The presence of the service organizations within the two villages is an asset to both downtown areas. Service organizations tend to be community minded and typically make good partners in revitalizing downtown areas. Special outreach efforts should be made to introduce these groups to the program and its mission.

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Select one or two projects that everyone can agree upon and accomplish them

“Success breeds success” ~ unknown

At the Community Forum in November, 2004 one of the ideas that was put forth by an attendees was to select one or two projects and successfully complete them. Ideally, the projects will involve a broad cross section of the community involved from planning to implementation. It is also recommended that these projects be somewhat high profile to ensure that people can actually see positive change occurring. Some examples might include:

Hotel & Conference Center - The construction of a hotel and conference center in downtown Watkins Glen is a short term project that would have an immediate benefit to the community by generating excitement and bringing visitors to the area.

NYS Main Street Program - A successful Main Street Grant application to the NYS Housing Trust Fund help to fund a number of façade improvements and building rehabilitations in Watkins Glen.

Clean Up Day – On Saturday October 23, 2004, the Montour Falls Improvement Association held a very successful clean up day. The volunteers picked up litter, cleaned windows, and applied fresh paint in order to spruce up the appearance of the downtown area.

Streetscape & Gateway Enhancements – The projects described in the Design Strategy Section are opportunities to make very visible improvements to either downtown area.

These projects will likely involve little or no private property or funding. As a result, public controversy should be kept to a minimum.

Additional Planning Efforts – A large amount of public interest and excitement has already been generated by the planning process used to complete this plan. This can be attributed to the nature of the process as well as the effective promotion of the various public meetings. Future planning efforts should follow suit and be seen as accomplishments in and of themselves.

Facilitate development and investment within the community

There is a perception that it is difficult to invest in both villages due to 1) excessive governmental regulations and 2) not enough government assistance. These negative perceptions are typically held by a limited number of people and are based upon one or two bad experiences. The DAC should not expend much energy to verify these perceptions due to their subjective nature. However, they should work aggressively with both Village governments to create positive experience for anyone interested in locating a business in the downtown area.

One technique to achieve this is for the DAC to create a welcome committee. This could include the following representatives:

- DAC member
- Village Board member
- DMA or MFIA member
- Code enforcement officer
- Planning Board Chairperson or member
- Fire Marshall
- SCOPED staff person

This group should designate one of its members as a point of first contact. This person would be responsible for responding to any inquiries from potential businesses looking to open in the downtown area. A meeting should be arranged with the entire group to review the following items:

- Type of business, including space and operational

requirements of the operation

- Building, fire, or zoning code issues
- Financial assistance that may be available
- Planned infrastructure improvements that may benefit the business
- The role of the DAC, its mission, and how the proposed business does or does not fit into the program

The approach of the group should be one of excitement and eagerness to learn about the prospective business. If it is seen as an asset to the downtown area the group should emphasize the importance of any design related issues (storefront, signs etc). It should also be conveyed to the applicant how to address the various code issues. If the business is not appropriate for the downtown area every effort should be made to steer the operator to a better location elsewhere in the village or the county.

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Designate a group to lead the revitalization effort

In the Approach Section of this plan there is a more detailed discussion of the various groups currently operating in downtown Montour Falls and Watkins Glen as well as their roles and responsibilities. It is imperative that one group acts as the lead for any revitalization effort. It is recommended that the DAC be the lead agent to implement the five strategies outlined in this plan.

Develop A Fundraising Strategy

Any successful organization must have the financial resources necessary to complete their mission. The funding of the DAC's activities will be an ongoing task. The DAC should consider establishing themselves as a non-profit corporation as defined by New York State. This will enable the DAC to raise and spend money. Downtown Organizations are typically funded through:

- Public funding (General Fund, Grants, etc)
- Special districts (assessment districts)
- Memberships and contributions
- Events

Public funds can consist of an ongoing commitment by a Village or County government to contribute directly to the Main Street Program as part of their annual budget. It can also consist of indirect assistance in the form of grant writing services, office space in a municipal hall, and copy or mailing services. A good example of this is SCOPED's involvement in writing the grant to fund this study and then contributing staff time to complete the plan.

Special assessment districts or Business Improvement Districts enable a self-imposed tax to be placed on property within a specific area to accomplish projects or programs. For example, it is common for a special assessment district to be formed in order to fund streetscape improvements such as textured sidewalks, decorative lighting, benches, and street banners. Property owners along Main Street that directly benefit from the street improvements agree to pay additional taxes to cover the cost of the project. It should be noted that

special assessment districts are limited to capital investments.

Business Improvement Districts are similar to special assessment districts but their purpose goes beyond physical improvements. Taxes paid to a BID can contribute to programs aimed at promotion, management, maintenance and development of that district.

Memberships are an essential part of a Main Street Program and can become a predictable source of revenue for the DAC. It should be a goal of the DAC that every merchant in both downtown areas becomes a member of the program within five years. Members should receive a window sticker for their storefront to recognize their involvement. At-large members could also be included. These typically include larger employers that are not located on Main Street, so the DAC should approach Wal-Mart regarding membership.

Contributions typically occur throughout the year and are less reliable than revenue from memberships. In order to lend some predictability to the contributions for budgeting purposes, a fundraising drive should be conducted once a year.

Events and special promotions can be the most lucrative form of fundraising for the Main Street Program. These typically involve the selling of food or selected items. For example, the Leader Group in LeRoy, New York sold calendars with historic photos of the community for \$10 each beginning in late October to capitalize on the Christmas season. In Hilton, they are considering selling food at the weekly concert in the park on Wednesday evenings. This will not only benefit the Hilton revitalization effort but increase attendance at an existing

event. In other places, they host a downtown festival and all the drink sales go to the program. The most sophisticated programs are beginning to offer a Main Street Credit Card that contributes a portion of the charges back to the program.

Regardless of the fundraising techniques used by the DAC, once they begin to raise and spend money, an annual budget will become necessary. The annual budget for the program should include estimated revenues by type, and estimated expenses related to personnel, office expenses, professional development, and committee programs. The DAC should also have monthly or quarterly statements in order to track the current year's progress.

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Strategic Plan

The tables on the following pages:

- Summarize the steps discussed within this section;
- Quantify the length of time necessary to complete each item;
- Designate a responsible party to lead the effort; and
- Identify the partners that will be required to ensure the items successful implementation.

In general, items that promote awareness of downtown revitalization, increase the number of volunteers, and raise money for the DAC should be accomplished first. These items can be completed in a relatively short period of time with minimal costs to the Villages or the DAC.

The remaining implementation items will require involvement of other groups and outside funding sources. As a result, a higher level of communication and coordination will be required. In order to be successful, these items will take longer to complete.

It should be noted that the table is a guide. It is reasonable to assume that opportunities may arise to complete some items sooner than planned. On the other hand, due to unforeseen circumstances, some short term projects may be delayed.

Increase Volunteering In The Community

Implementation	Short	Medium	Long	Responsible	
Item	Term	Term	Term	Party	Partners
1. Public outreach campaign		uuu		DAC	
a. Develop brochures, handouts, etc		uuu			SCOPED, CCE, Printing merchants
b. Meet with local groups		uuu			Appropriate members of DAC
c. Coordinate with media		uuu			SCOPED
2. Solicit volunteers	uuu			DAC	MFIA, DMA, SCOPED
a. Sign up efforts	uuu				MFIA, DMA, SCOPED
b. Membership drive		uuu			SCOPED, CCE
c. Access local institutions		uuu			School system, Town Court, Scouts
3. Orientation packet		uuu		DAC	Printing merchants
4. Volunteer database	uuu			DAC	Cornell
5. Job / task list	uuu			DAC	MFIA, DMA, SCOPED
6. Recognize volunteers	uuu			DAC	

Improve Enforcement Efforts

Implementation	Short	Medium	Long	Responsible	
Item	Term	Term	Term	Party	Partners
1. Board education		uuu		DAC	Code enforcement officers (CEO)
2. Merchant education			uuu	DAC	CEO, MFIA, DMA
3. Code officers attend DAC meetings		uuu		DAC	CEO

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Develop Partnerships With Regional Agencies

Implementation Item	Short term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Invite representatives to DAC meetings			uuu	DAC	NYSDOT, ECTC, DEC, ARC, etc
2. Host forums/workshops with other groups		uuu		DAC	Village Boards, MFIA, DMA
3. Attend agency meetings		uuu		DAC	NYSDOT, ECTC, DEC, ARC, etc

Ensure Future Planning Efforts Are Kept Up To Date

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Plan for the pedestrian realm	uuu			Villages	NYSDOT, SCOPED, DMA, MFIA
2. Marketing & promotion plan		uuu		SCOPED	DAC, DMA, MFIA
3. Downtown design guidelines & standards	uuu			Planning Bds	DAC, DMA, MFIA
4. Parking supply & demand study for Watkins Glen		uuu		SCOPED	DAC, DMA
5. Traffic calming study for Watkins Glen			uuu	DMA	DAC, SCOPED
6. Review this plan for necessary updates		uuu		DAC	CCE, SCOPED

Engage Service Organizations In Any Revitalization Effort

Implementation Item	Short term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Focused outreach efforts		uuu		DAC	SCOPED

Agree on one or two projects & accomplish them

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Consult Villages & other groups	uuu			DAC	Villages, MFIA, DMA, SCOPED
2. Project completion		uuu		Unknown	Unknown

Facilitate development & investment in the community

Implementation Item	Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Form welcome committee	uuu			DAC	SCOPED
2. Designate point of contact	uuu			Welcome	DAC, SCOPED
3. Meet with interested businesses	uuu			Welcome Committee	DAC, SCOPED

Designate a group to lead the re-vitalization effort

Implementation Item	Short Term	Time Frame	Long Term	Responsible Party	Partners
1. Discuss DAC as the lead group	uuu			DAC	SCOPED



Photograph courtesy of www.odessafile.com

Montour Falls

"I believe not only a building was crushed today - our community's spirit was crushed as well." ~ Village Trustee

The demolition of the Kelly Hardware Building along Main Street Montour Falls occurred as this planning process was nearing completion. As the photo on the opposite page illustrates, the fate of the building is in stark contrast to the possible improvements shown in the design strategy section of this plan. As a result of the demolition, the community has experienced a significant loss of architecture, local history, and community spirit.

There is little that can be done to remedy the loss of local history. However, it is up to the community to determine if this event will strengthen their resolve to implement this plan's recommendations or let it leave them frustrated and apathetic. In the short term, the energy and emotion created by the demolition should be channeled into creating the appropriate zoning techniques to help ensure that a well-designed, multi-story building is constructed on the site and that future demolition of buildings in the downtown area have greater public input. This will help to remedy the loss of architecture created by the destruction of the Kelly Building and fill the gap that now exists in the streetscape.

It remains to be seen if this event will act as a catalyst to get stakeholders working together in order to achieve other aspects of this plan. If successful, future generations may remember the demolition of the Kelly Building as one of the defining moments of Village history rather than one of the darkest.

Watkins Glen

As stated throughout the plan, the Village of Watkins Glen has numerous assets on which to build. The Village needs to refine these assets in order to maintain and increase the quality of life it offers to residents and visitors.

One of the biggest industries in the Village is tourism. The competition for tourist dollars is increasing daily from other communities. The Village and its merchants need to work together to ensure that visitors have a pleasant experience in Watkins Glen. In doing so, residents will reap the benefits from projects such as a more visually appealing streetscape, cleaner downtown area, and rehabilitated storefronts. In other words, if you help tourism, you also help your neighbors and yourself.

Working Together

As previously stated, the Downtown Advisory Committee should continue to facilitate the revitalization of both downtown areas. However, the extent of the DAC's involvement will need to be determined over time. The DAC could be an integral part of the day to day revitalization process or it could come together as needed to accomplish specific tasks that have been identified in this plan. Either way, the benefits of both communities working together is undeniable. Montour Falls and Watkins Glen will each accomplish more if they approach the next decade with the mindset of "one community with two villages".

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