

## CHAPTER SEVEN LAND USE

The Village is a developed, urban environment consisting of a concentrated mix of residential uses, small shops and stores and commercial uses. The Village has also been able to accommodate large commercial uses due to its proximity to the heavily travelled Route 9 and Interstate 84. This Village is divided by NYS Route 9 which acts as a physical barrier between the original historic core of the Village and the more highway-business oriented Route 9 area.

**Land Use Trends:** Over recent years, the Village has expanded its traditional small-scale development pattern to include larger commercial franchises and transportation intensive developments, especially in the Route 9 corridor. Included in this mix is higher density residential development along Merritt Boulevard.

The most apparent change in the traditional land use pattern is the emergence of the Route 9 corridor and the resultant highway-dependent types of businesses that have located there. Route 9 has an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of approximately 42,000 vehicles per day.

**Commercial Development:** The Village is laid out in two distinct sections: the traditional Village with its small-scale settlement pattern and the more commercial, highway business district which occurs primarily along the Route 9 corridor. There is a sharp contrast between these two areas – the west side retaining the historic charm of past years and the east side which is characterized by large commercial and highway business uses.

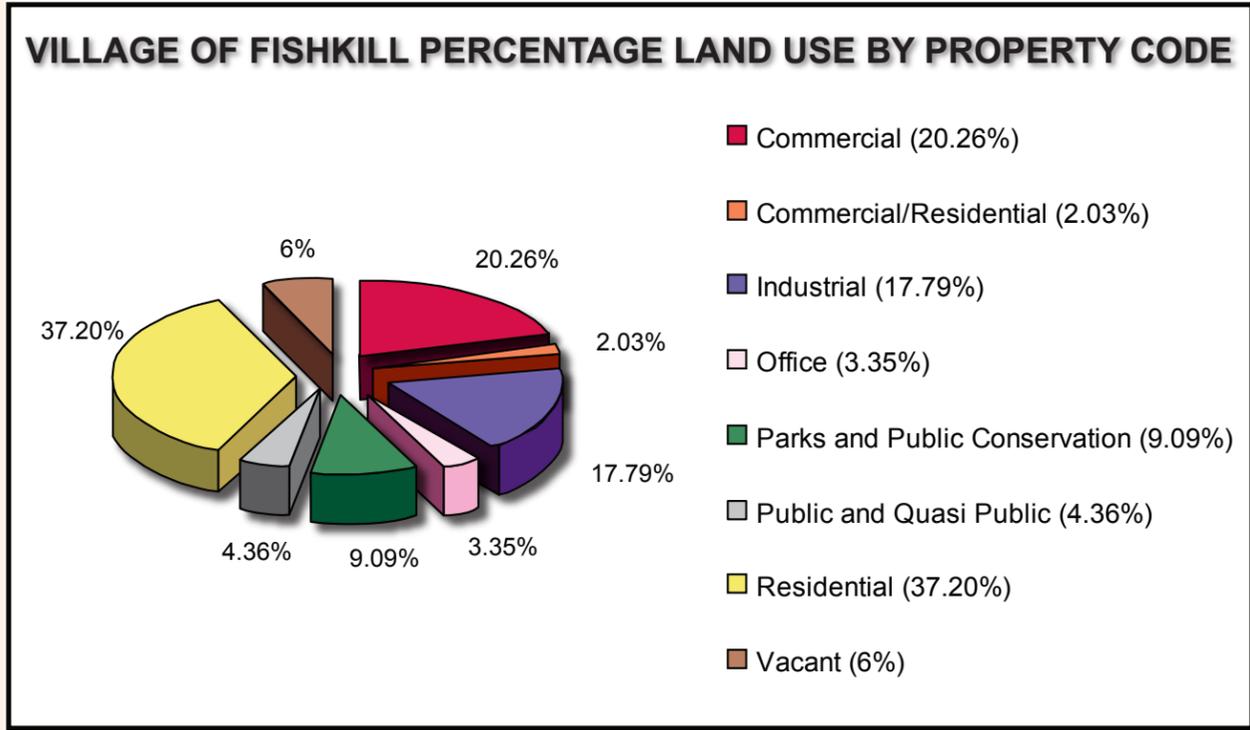
**Residential Development:** As the Village is largely built-out, there is no definitive trend in new residential development. The newest development of any great scale was the development that occurred as a result of the GAP distribution facility being built along Merritt Boulevard. At the time, Merritt Park Condominiums and townhomes were proposed with the idea of providing affordable housing to those who worked at the GAP facility. After these residential units are fully constructed, no new areas for large residential growth are proposed.

The more consistent pattern of residential growth is the renovation of one-family households to allow expansions and small additions to allow for change and growth without the need for relocation. Mixed-use home and office buildings remain a large component of the mix of uses within the Village.

**Public, Quasi-Public and Recreation Uses:** Another major type of land use in the Village is in the category of public or quasi-public uses. Included in this list would be the Village Hall, post office, library, Sarah Taylor Park, schools as well as churches and not-for-profit uses. Villages typically have a large percentage of land dedicated to these uses. According to the Assessor's data, the amount of land dedicated to such uses is 75.72 acres of the total Village acreage which is approximately 13.45% of the total land. The Village currently owns a 5.21 acre parcel in the north east corner of the Village. It is currently zoned to accommodate a Planned Unit Development, but with the extensive NWI wetlands, and presence of hydrologic soil types, the Village should restrict development to this site.

**Potential Development Areas:** The relatively small amount of vacant land available in the Village coupled with the relatively small lot size results in a perceived limitation for new development.

There are, however, opportunities for new development and redevelopment within the Village. These areas include the remaining vacant parcels on the east side of Route 9 between Schuyler Boulevard and Merritt Boulevard as well as the potential for redevelopment of the old Main Street Plaza, Village Square Plaza, on the western side of the Village south of Main Street and the Cecilwood Plaza on the northern side of Main Street.



In addition, Elm Street, located on the west side of Route 9 above the railroad tracks, could be redeveloped at some point in the future. Due to the existing lot sizes and road configuration, smaller-scale uses should be considered. Any redevelopment in this area should be sensitive to the residential neighbors on historic Broad Street.

The east side of Route 9 is dominated by highway-business type uses which are auto dependent. The GAP distribution facility constructed a 1.2 million square foot facility just north of the Interstate 84/Route 9 interchange. In recent years a new retail plaza, franchise hotel chains and a car wash have located between the GAP and Route 52 to the north. Opportunities exist for additional development in this location.

The old Main Street Plaza and Village Square Plaza were constructed in the mid 1970's and do not complement the historic nature of the Village core. New development or redevelopment in this area should blend into the traditional pattern of development the Village was founded upon, with buildings rather than parking lots fronting the street. For additional information, developers should be referred to Greenway Guide C1 *Commercial Strip Redevelopment*. Continuing the traditional streetscape found at the core of the Village west along Main Street will complement the historic character of the area. If redeveloped with sensitivity, new buildings will add a positive component to the streetscape and the Village as a whole. Additionally, a mix of commercial and residential uses could have a dual benefit of providing additional tax revenues and providing living accommodations for those who will spend their money in the Village in the off-hours.

**Streetscape:** It is important for the Village to maintain the elements of its historic streetscape. In 2002 the Village, in cooperation with the New York State Department of Transportation, undertook a streetscape project which included the installation of granite curbs, sidewalks, traditional street lighting, crosswalks, benches and trash receptacles.

Of significant importance to the Village is the Mid-Hudson Medical Group property on the corner of Main and Jackson Streets. This site presents a unique opportunity for redevelopment. It will be important to maintain the original historic building as part of any redevelopment plan.

In furthering this effort, the Village partnered with Cornell Cooperative Extension's S.W.A.T. (Specialized Weekday Arborist Team) to inventory the existing trees which line Village streets. The inventory includes tree location, condition, species and applicable recommendations from the team. At the initial public workshop, residents indicated that the maintenance of existing street trees is important. To maintain the street trees in good condition, ongoing tree maintenance and replacement should be provided for.

The Village has other ways to ensure that the streetscape remains attractive while retaining its diversity and mix of uses. The Village may wish to consider additional regulations on home occupations and commercial vehicles, or even more common elements such as signage, to ensure that these uses successfully blend and strengthen the fabric of the Village, rather than detract from it.



**Summary:** The Village maintains three distinct areas of the Village: the historic Main Street area on the west side of Route 9, the auto-dependent highway business uses along Route 9, and the residential uses on the eastern side of Route 9. The Village of Fishkill has been able to maintain a healthy mixed-use, traditional Village core, while also providing for highway commercial uses.

While it may look like there is no room for additional development, the Village's old plazas present a unique opportunity for new, mixed-use development. Further, if redeveloped in a traditional manner, these areas would add to the historic fabric of the traditional Village. Redevelopment of these areas should be sensitive to the historic pattern of development that exists in the core commercial area.

The appearance and functionality of the Village is important to maintain. Mixed-use development should continue to be promoted in the central business area as this is the fundamental necessity of a vibrant Village. The separation of uses should be avoided at all costs. Not only do apartments over storefronts provide affordable housing options for Village residents, but they enliven Village streets by providing a measure of activity and an element of security in evening hours. Zoning regulations should be crafted to allow certain home occupations and other mutually-beneficial uses throughout the Village.

Another important element of the Village is its street trees. Not only do street trees provide a variety of environmental and biological benefits, but they serve as a unifying feature to the many different types of development within the Village. A street tree program should also be established to continually provide for street trees throughout the Village.

## DECLARATION OF INTENT AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

**GOAL: To promote a pattern of land use which respects the historic character of the Village and allows for a continued mix of residential and commercial uses.**

- 7.1 The Village will update its zoning and subdivision regulations to reflect policy recommendations within the master plan and require future development to conform to the goals of the master plan.
- 7.2 The Village will provide for maintenance of existing street trees and replacement of trees that have died or have been removed and will provide a budgetary line for the replacement of street trees.
- 7.3 The Village's tree committee will investigate becoming a "Tree City U.S.A." member.
- 7.4 The Village will promote land use practices that protect surface and groundwater and work to eliminate known sources of pollution.
- 7.5 The Village should consider rezoning parcels in the Planned Business district to allow for Village-scale development that is commonly found in the heart of the Village.
- 7.6 The Village should provide for multi-family housing, at a Village density within the central business area along Main Street.
- 7.7 The Village should consider adding language that restricts use of Village owned parcels that possess environmental constraints and/or have recreational value.
- 7.8 The Village should review the list of allowed uses in the Elm Street area to determine if they are appropriately scaled.
- 7.9 The Village will consider ways to preserve the appearance of the Village while allowing mixed development.