

Village of Greenwich Vision Planning Greenwich, New York

In the fall of 2009 the Village of Greenwich participated in a Community Visioning Process with the SUNY ESF's Center for Community Design Research (CCDR). Through workshop activities and community dialogue area residents contributed to the development of a vision statement, goals and action strategies. The vision statement is a broad statement that represents the collective view for the Village's future and the goals support and describe the Vision Statement's components in more detail. The Action Strategies are ways to accomplish these goals that came from participant and CCDR recommendations. Each Action Strategy will need an Action Plan to guide it through completion, including individuals and organization that will be involved, resources needed, tasks to be accomplished and a schedule.

Vision Statement:

The Village of Greenwich is a rural riverfront community that appreciates, stewards and sustains its many residents. It's vibrant, walkable commercial district is at the heart of a diverse economy that supports village characteristics, welcomes visitors, and invites return. Development exhibits respect of the traditional compact village characteristics, and for the history, historic buildings, cultural resources and natural setting. The community encourages strong families and close community relationships to reinforce residents of all ages.

Goals and Action Strategies:

Goal: Reinforce the village as a walkable community and strengthen pedestrian oriented connections to civic, commercial and recreational resources.

- Complete an inventory of walking conditions throughout the Village, identifying strategic streets with sidewalks or paths for improvement based on the existing conditions, estimated costs and importance of street or path as a village connector, and developing a plan and budget for the improvements.
- Work at the regional level to investigate the potential for a regional public transportation system.
- Continue working closely with the state Department of Transportation and state government representatives to ensure that projects within their responsibility will contribute to and support the village's vision, in particular the goals of reinforcing a walkable community and respecting and marketing the historic and traditional characteristics that define Greenwich.
- Create a 'Friends of the Battenkill Railroad' group that helps to maintain and support existing and future development of the rail line based around its ability to relieve truck traffic congestion and its potential as a historic tourist attraction.



Goal: Strengthen the sense of community, pride and belonging in residents of all ages

- Initiate a feasibility study that examines the reuse of vacant or underutilized buildings as places for community activities in the Village, including identifying sites and buildings, investigating ownership, assessing location, condition and physical characteristics, identifying appropriate activity matches, and determining improvements, costs and timing.
- Convene a steering committee with representatives of village government, local business, the school district and other stakeholder organizations that is responsible for guiding implementation of the Vision Plan and continuing to grow community involvement.
- Convene a multi-generational committee to identify needs and develop plans for programs of year round and affordable activities for all ages and to advise the village on the facility needs and possible location for recreation, leisure and other activities.
- Develop programs and services for teens, such as employment programs, mentoring services, support groups, and a service-learning program through which they can be involved in implementation of the vision.

Goal: Establish strong physical and visual connections between the village and the Battenkill and incorporate the river as an active, vital corridor within the village.

- Prepare a plan to guide the improvement of Rock Street Park so that this site will support a variety of activities for youth and adults and enhance its location as a riverfront open space.
- Consider the temporary use and improvement of vacant Riverfront related land for seating, gathering and overlook areas to increase visual access.
- Conduct a comprehensive waterfront feasibility study that determines potential public access of riverfront properties, including current ownership status, existing environmental conditions, appropriate use and activities for each property, economic and other costs and benefits, and potential for hydro-electric power on one or more properties.
- Prepare an exhibit revealing the Battenkill's history and connection to Greenwich to be displayed in the Village.

"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 1901-1978

Goal: Establish a sustainable diversified village economy, strengthening the Main Street business district as the center of commercial activity, and bringing appropriate new uses to strategic redevelopment sites.

- Conduct an inventory of the condition and characteristics and develop preliminary cost estimates for renovation of vacant buildings, homes and lots within the village, giving initial priority to the lower section of Main Street.
- Develop a strategy to address vacant properties that includes a comprehensive market study to determine the types of uses and redevelopment that would be economically viable and appropriate to the village setting, with emphasis on Main Street and other strategic sites (the IGA site, Kmart plaza, Dunbarton Mill and Mill Hollow area).
- Based on the results of the market study, develop a multi-year marketing plan to attract the uses and development identified in the market study.
- Prepare a parking study for downtown Greenwich which considers the desire to create a Main Street that favors pedestrian activity. The study should include a survey of the location and quantity of existing parking, identification of parking demand at different times, identification of potential sites for off-street parking and research into alternative effective parking approaches that have been used in other pedestrian oriented village settings.
- Consider green and sustainable light industrial use of underutilized sites that builds on local resources.
- Continue to support existing businesses in downtown Greenwich, producing educational materials to encourage residents to utilize local businesses, marketing that highlights the unique characteristics of the village, and organizing year round events that appeal to both residents and visitors.
- Explore opportunities for community supported economic development through cooperative businesses.
- Collaborate with nearby municipalities to develop a regional tourism plan.

Goal: Encourage care, maintenance and improvement of public and private properties that reflect a shared pride in the village

- Set up a mechanism to assist building owners and homeowners in repairing and rehabilitating their properties, including understanding and addressing the issues and challenges preventing them from doing so now.
- Prepare a plan for comprehensive (potentially phased) capital improvements to the sidewalk and other pedestrian spaces along the Main Street corridor, focusing on safety and maintenance (e.g. replacing heaving or cracking sidewalks, reducing crossing widths for pedestrians, installing pedestrian scale lighting) as well as comfort and interest (e.g. places to sit in sun and shade, street trees for shade and continuity, well designed and informative signage).
- Develop strategies to alleviate the sense of vacancy in empty storefronts in the interim before they are occupied, which may include regular window washing, minor repairs and façade improvements, temporary window displays, and seasonal planting to enliven the sidewalk.
- Initiate a participatory vision design process to determine alternative approaches for use of the village owned property around the reservoir.
- Review, update and enforce village codes that address building and site condition and appearance.
- Continue to provide pedestrian amenities and signs of caring along upper Main Street and extend to lower Main Street, including seasonal displays, gardens, potted plants, benches, and public art.
- Create a committee or task force charged with investigating ways to integrate sustainable practices into village operations, building renovations, energy use, waste handling and other areas of village life.

Goal: Respect and market the historic and traditional characteristics that define Greenwich (including the village scale, historic structures, and the traditional history scale, development patterns and relationship to the agricultural landscape).

- As an important historic structure, prepare a feasibility study and a plan to renovate the Village Hall, including determining the best uses for the spaces within.
- Organize community events to commemorate historic events that occurred in or relate to the Village of Greenwich.
- Develop and implement a plan for growth in the Village that preserves the traditional village scale and development patterns and the distinct edge between the developed land and the surrounding agricultural landscape.
- Create a committee or organization to understand and educate building owners about the opportunities available for making improvements within the Village of Greenwich's Historic District (listed under the State Register of Historic Places), and seek to expand those opportunities by seeking recognition under the National Register of Historic Places.
- Prepare a study defining the characteristics of Main Street and the Village that the community would like to preserve and enhance with future development and renovations.
- Develop guidelines for future development and renovations that reflect the study's defined desirable characteristics.
- Incorporate the guidelines for future development and renovations into the Village's comprehensive plan.



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