

Town of Germantown Local Waterfront Revitalization Study

FINDINGS REPORT

Review Existing Plans and Meet with Community Leaders

April 2017



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Task 9

Prepared by:



Town of Germantown
Local Waterfront Revitalization Study
Project Advisory Committee

With Assistance from:



DELAWARE ENGINEERING, D.P.C.
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Department
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1.0 Introduction

Background

The Town of Germantown has received a matching grant from the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS) to develop a Local Waterfront Revitalization Study. The purpose of the Study is to improve public access and recreational use of the Hudson River and Roeliff Jansen Kill while protecting and preserving natural resources. The Study's long range goals are to foster waterfront revitalization, sustainability and economic investment within the Town. The Study will assess existing waterfront access and recreational resources, identify issues and opportunities, develop conceptual plans for improvement projects and actions, and recommend implementation steps. The Study is not intended to be a full Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) and will not have the regulatory impact on Town governance of a full LWRP.

Project Team

The Town of Germantown has established a Waterfront Advisory Committee (WAC) to guide the Study and has selected Delaware Engineering, D.P.C. to facilitate its development. The WAC is composed of key representatives of local community organizations who are invested in the future of the Town's waterfront.

Waterfront Revitalization Study Area

The Waterfront Revitalization Study Area is based on the NYS Coastal Area Boundary with extensions to include all of the Town parks. The Study Area includes the area between the center of the Hudson River and State Route 9G, the Roeliff Jansen Kill along the northeastern Town border, all four municipal parks (Cheviot, Lasher, Palatine and Roe-Jan), and two Town-owned underwater parcels. It incorporates the Town's Waterfront Scenic Overlay District as well as portions of two NYS Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance: the Catskill-Olana District and the Estates District. A map of the Waterfront Revitalization Study Area is included as Figure 1.

Task 9

Task 9 in the NYSDOS Work Plan is "Review Existing Plans and Meet with Community Leaders." In order to understand waterfront issues in the community and neighboring municipalities the Waterfront Advisory Committee has reviewed existing planning documents and met with local community leaders. The purpose of this report is to identify waterfront issues and opportunities in Germantown and neighboring communities and explore the potential for joint waterfront planning.

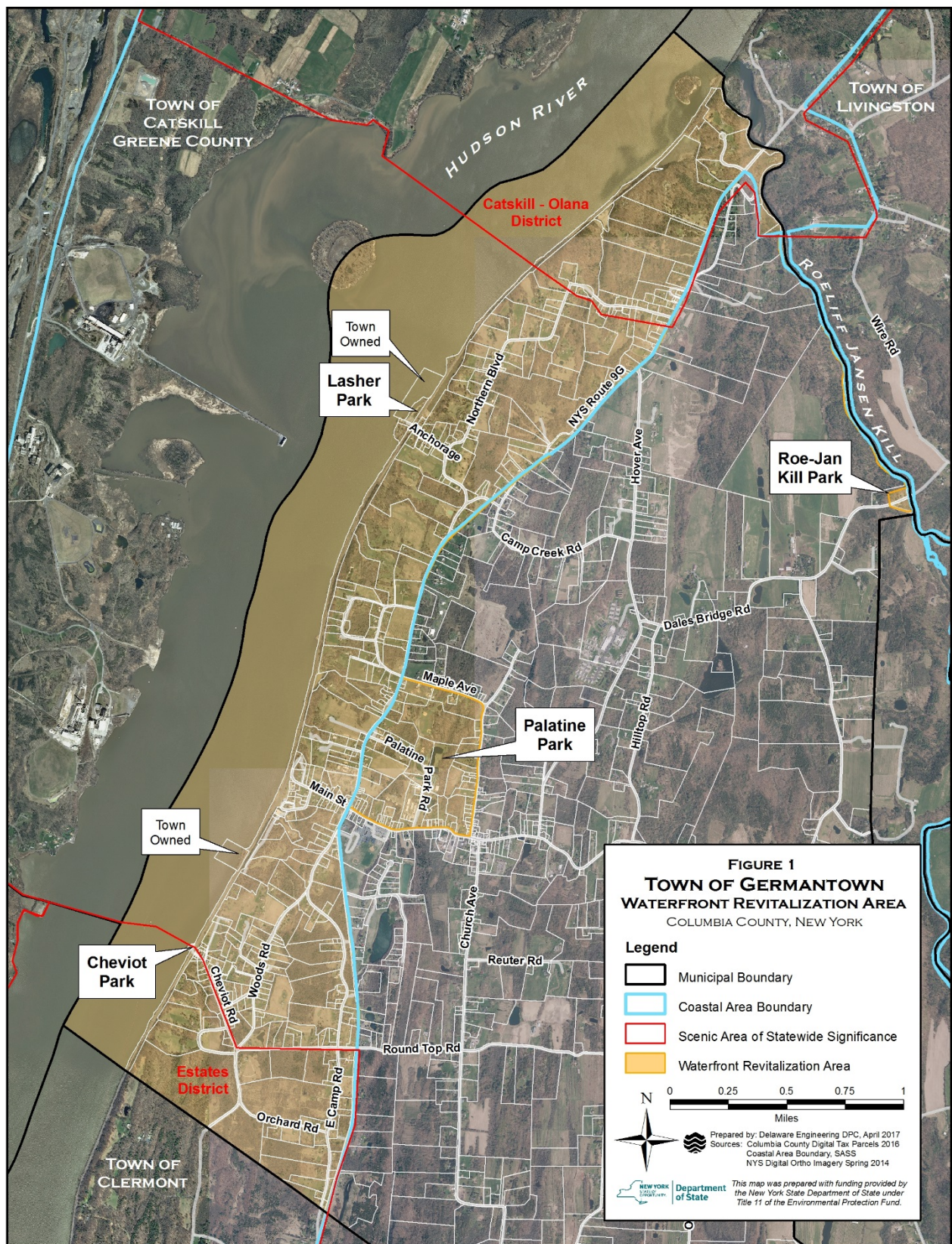


Figure 1. Waterfront Revitalization Study Area

2.0 Existing Planning Documents

The Waterfront Advisory Committee has reviewed existing local planning documents that apply to the Waterfront Revitalization Study Area including the adopted 2007 Town Comprehensive Plan and the 2009 Waterfront Revitalization Questionnaire and list of potential projects, and regional plans such as the Hudson River Valley Greenway Act, New York State Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance, New York State Rail Plan and Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area.

2.1 Town of Germantown Existing Comprehensive Plan

The Town of Germantown's existing Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2007 and is currently being updated. This section will focus on the existing Comprehensive Plan; results of recent meetings between the Waterfront Advisory Committee and the Comprehensive Plan Committee and an analysis of recent community surveys will be discussed in Section 3.0.

The Town of Germantown has planned to create a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan for over a decade. The 2007 Comprehensive Plan states:

"A Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan should be developed with NY State funding to extend public access and public trails along the Hudson River and to protect, preserve and promote appropriate use of important natural and cultural resources in the area."

The Plan includes the following recommendations and Action Strategies directly related to the Waterfront Revitalization Study Area:

8. *Extend the current system of sidewalks to better connect existing and planned future commercial, residential and recreational areas of the Town. (The Town could enhance its planned paths project by extending the system of sidewalks along Route 9G from Main Street north to Palatine Park Road and along Lower Main Street from 9G to the Hudson River to tie in with a future walking trail along the river to Cheviot.)*
9. *Encourage Columbia County to establish bike paths on county roads throughout the Town.*
18. *Establish a Trails Committee to examine trails and linkage opportunities within Germantown and with county and regional connections.*
20. *Apply to the NY Department of State for funding to develop and implement a Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan to promote public access to and enhance responsible use of the Hudson River waterfront.*
21. *Work with railroad agencies and landowners to place a walking trail adjacent to the Hudson River from Cheviot to North Germantown.*

Germantown's adopted Comprehensive Plan states that private ground water and the lack of a Town water system is a major concern. The landscape of lush wetlands and streams create a false sense of plentiful water. The private wells of most citizens are of greatly variant quality, a concern raised by many. More than three quarters of respondents in 2007 supported expanding protections of wetlands, streams, aquifers, groundwater and steep slopes near waterways. The Plan outlines the need to form a standing Water Resources Committee to guide future efforts to protect groundwater quality and supply by:

- a. proposing zoning and subdivision amendments to regulate the density of development, minimum lot sizes and adequate well spacing according to the availability of groundwater resources, as recommended in the Groundwater Protection Plan, and to ensure that new development not have adverse impacts on water supply to existing wells and on groundwater resources that may supply future public water-supply wells by requiring a groundwater-extraction impact assessment prepared by a qualified hydrogeologist,
- b. developing a program to protect groundwater from potential contamination, including from development activity not served by the public sewer system,
- c. exploring the feasibility of a municipal water source through mapping of identified potential areas, working with landowners and conducting testing for water quality and quantity, and
- d. creating an emergency response plan in the event that water sources fail due to contamination or drought.

The Comprehensive Plan also discusses air quality as a potential concern, presumably particularly at the riverfront across from the cement plants. The only monitor in Town was removed from the school roof in the mid nineties and not replaced, so hard data is lacking. In 1980 there were three active cement plants in Greene County across from Germantown, in 2007 only two remained, and today there is just one, and it is operating below capacity. So air quality remains a concern, but probably a lesser concern today than the recent past.

The Plan discusses the waterfront in relation to the Town parks. Cheviot, Lasher, Roe Jan and Palatine Parks are described as underutilized and underdeveloped. At that time, swimming was permitted at Lake George South. The pending plans discussed for Roe Jan Campsites have been completed but are not widely used. The Plan discusses campsite potential for both the Van Tassel Property and the Icehouse property owned by the Town. The conversion of Lower Main Street from private use to a municipal park with a sidewalk to the Town Center is proposed. A Town-wide walking trail system and bike path and points on the Hudson Valley Greenway are also discussed but have not been implemented.

Review of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan Survey shows a Town that cares deeply about its future. The response rate for the mailed survey in 2007 was 46% (15% is considered a good rate of return). Ninety-seven percent of those who responded rated “Germantown’s rural character” as important, and when asked to rate twenty-two different aspects of the Town, 95% named “Maintaining open spaces” as important. Forty-six percent answered “Yes” when asked if they would support increased Town spending to preserve open space and farmland if it meant increased taxes.

During preparation of the 2007 Comprehensive Plan the Parks Commission had been inactive for some years. It has recently had a few years of resurgence but seems to be dwindling again. Town Councilwoman and Parks Commission member Brittany DuFresne recently stated that their numbers have fallen to three and they have more ideas than completed projects.

2.2 Previous Waterfront Revitalization Planning

Building upon the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan, the Germantown Neighbors’ Association distributed a Waterfront Revitalization Questionnaire in 2009. The survey asked questions about which Town waterfronts were utilized by the respondents, what recreational activities were enjoyed, and how the waterfronts could be improved. The results of the survey indicated that Palatine Park Lake and Lasher Park were the most popular waterfront sites, that picnics, swimming and fishing were the most enjoyed activities, and that most respondents wanted more recreational facilities and wildlife protection projects.

A list of potential waterfront revitalization projects was created as part of this planning effort:

1. Conduct a feasibility study of Germantown waterfronts to determine the facts about complex issues of land ownership, public access rights, the physical status and condition of access points and parks, areas needing upgrading and maintenance, and utilization patterns and projections for the future.
2. Evaluate the fish and wildlife habitats of the following waterfront areas including pollutants, invasive plant, fish or animal species: the Hudson River waterfront, the Roeliff Jansen Kill and Lake George South in Palatine Park.
3. Build user-friendly kayak and small boat launches at Lasher and Cheviot Parks including an improved dock at Cheviot.
4. Upgrade facilities at Lasher Park to include picnic and sport facilities, a kayak storage facility and a Hudson River ecology display in the small existing Parks Department building.

5. Develop a Blueways Trail linking the mouth of the Roeliff Jansen Kill to Lasher and Cheviot.
6. Develop scenic nature study trails, bicycle paths and shore roads to connect with the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trails system.
7. Create a new park and watercraft landing at the end of Lower Main Street, including a pedestrian bridge over the railroad tracks.
8. Extend public sidewalks along Lower Main Street to the riverfront.
9. Clean up and restore the Roeliff Jansen Kill and complete the construction of the park and campsite on Town land. *(completed)*
10. Restore several beaches on the Hudson River shore through “soft engineering” to control sedimentation.
11. Restore the historic Cheviot pier as a modern environmentally friendly facility for small board mooring and fishing.
12. Upgrade the traffic safety mechanisms (gates/lights) at Cheviot and Lasher Parks.
13. Develop sustainable solutions for chronic invasive species issues at Lake George South.

2.3 Hudson River Valley Greenway

The Hudson River Valley Greenway Act was enacted by New York State in 1991 to “create a process for voluntary regional cooperation” for communities along the Hudson River. The act created two organizations in the State Executive Branch: the Greenway Communities Council, a council which coordinates and funds local and county efforts to “develop and enhance local land use planning techniques” and the Greenway Conservancy which is a public benefit corporation that coordinates efforts to establish a Hudson River Valley Trail system and promote the Hudson River Valley as a tourist destination. The 2015 annual report indicated that the Greenway awarded more than \$9.6 million to support over 770 grant projects to “help plan communities, build trail connections, provide more public access, and advance regional values in local projects.” The Town of Germantown is listed as having been awarded a \$5,000 grant in October 2015 with a \$15,000 match to update the Comprehensive Plan.

The Greenway organization promotes four “paths” in New York State: the Water Trail System, Land Trail System, the Empire State Trail, and Scenic Byways. First, the Hudson River Greenway Water Trail connects communities along the Hudson via the river. Currently, both Cheviot and Lasher Parks are shown on Water Trail Maps. Lasher Park (referred to as “North Germantown

Landing” on the printed maps) is listed as having cartop and trailered launches, day use picnicking and grilles, fishing, and is a “natural resource attraction.” Cheviot Park is shown to have similar amenities, though is not listed as supporting fishing nor is it a “natural resource attraction.”

The Greenway Water Trail project has received a \$90,000 grant from Empire State Development to develop maps, guides, and other materials to promote the Greenway Water Trail. Greenway also promotes a Greenway Land Trail map and guide, though Germantown does not have any land trails currently featured by the group. Next, Governor Cuomo is working to create the “Empire State Trail”, which “when completed in 2020 will create a 750-mile bike and walking pathway from New York City to Canada and from Albany to Buffalo.” Currently, the trail is shown to pass through Germantown via the route from Clermont to Olana, though no definition is provided on the path the route will take through the Town. Finally, Woods Road in Germantown has already been designated a “Scenic Byway”, by the group, while Route 9G has been identified by the Scenic Byways project as a potential opportunity.

2.4 Scenic Areas of Statewide Significance

New York State adopted the Coastal Management Program in 1981, which formally announced that “New York State’s coastal area and inland waterways are unique with a variety of natural, recreational, industrial, commercial, ecological, cultural, aesthetic, and energy resources of statewide and national significance”, and that the public policy of the State is “to achieve a balance between economic development and preservation that will permit the beneficial use of coastal resources while preventing the loss of living marine resources and wildlife, diminution of open space areas or public access to the waterfront, shoreline erosion, impairment of scenic beauty, or permanent damage to ecological systems”.

The NYS Department of State conducted a review in 1993 which identified a small portion of southern Germantown in the “Estates District” and northern Germantown in the “Catskill/Olana District”, though the majority of Germantown’s viewshed is not designated a Scenic Area of Statewide Significance (SASS). As a result, Policy 24 of the Coastal Management Program now applies to those areas in a SASS, which requires that when considering a proposed action, agencies must consider how the scenic resources might be impacted and must follow siting guidelines recommended in the 1993 report. As of 2017, the 1993 report is still promoted by the NYS Department of State, Office of Planning & Development.

The Catskill/Olana District was created primarily because it was the home of two prominent artists of the Hudson River School of Painting, Thomas Cole and Frederic Church. Germantown’s portion of the area is in subunit CO-8, the Roeliff Jansen Kill Subunit; this unit was also the site of

Livingston's Manor house and is considered an important archaeological site. As indicated by the report, "water remains an important element of the landscape...Along the Hudson...and the Roeliff Jansen Kill, vegetated bluffs remain generally undisturbed...the SASS is generally free of discordant features. Its many undisturbed natural features plus its historic associations and diverse cultural character render this area unique in the Hudson River coastal area, New York State, and the nation." The report also identifies the railroad tracks connecting New York City to upstate as an "important public platform for viewing the river corridor."

The Estates District SASS extends from Cheviot landing south through Dutchess and Ulster counties. It is designated as a SASS because it consists of over "twenty major and numerous minor historic estates and the Hudson River toward which they are oriented." Southern Germantown is included in subunits ED-1 and ED-2, though the waterfronts are all located in ED-1, the "Clermont Subunit" which celebrates the historic Livingston Manor among other smaller estates. This subunit is considered unique, as it exemplifies "the blending of exceptionally sited architecture integrated with an enhanced natural setting that typifies the aesthetic sensibilities of the owners and the Age of Romanticism which shaped the Estates District SASS."

2.5 New York State Rail Plan

The Germantown Waterfront borders land owned by CSX which is currently leased and operated by Amtrak. In 2009, the NYS Department of Transportation released the New York State Rail Plan, a planning document with a 20-yr horizon which has been reviewed for a better understanding of the future of the NYS rail system and what impacts it may have on the Germantown waterfronts. NYS is committed to maintaining and expanding the use of both passenger and freight rail because it is an exceptionally energy efficient form of transportation. The primary focus of upgrades to the existing rail lines are weight ratings, clearance heights, and maximum speeds.

The Empire Route, the name of the track through Germantown, currently has a clearance of 19'-0", while the highest clearance is just one grade above that at 20'-3". Additionally, the Germantown track is rated for 286,000 lbs, while the highest rating is just one grade above that at 315,000 lbs. As freight is more commonly moved along the tracks on the west side of the Hudson River, it is not anticipated that weight capacities are a near term focus for the Empire Route. Finally, the Empire Route is not a priority for introduction of high-speed rail. The New England Corridor is the primary focus for implementation of high-speed rail, as it has the highest potential for passenger use by connecting two major cities, Boston and New York City. Overall, no major upgrades are planned for the Empire Route through 2030.

Germantown is along a “core route”, which means it has been designated as essential to the State's constituencies. The Empire Route connects New York City and Albany, as well as routes west from Albany to Niagara Falls, which means these routes were prioritized during the nationalization of passenger rail service and the creation of Amtrak in the 1970s. Though some portions of these priority routes are provided property tax relief, the CSX property in Germantown has full taxable status. This suggests there is incentive for CSX to sell any of their unused land.

2.6 Hudson River National Heritage Area

In 1996, the United States Congress designated the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area (HRVNHA), which is one of 49 federally recognized NHAs in the US. The HRVNHA partners with the National Park Service to “interpret, preserve, and celebrate the nationally-significant cultural and natural resources of the Hudson River Valley”. The HRVNHA is managed by the Hudson River Valley Greenway discussed in Section 2.2. The HRVNHA also dispenses grants for projects that support the goals of the organization. Germantown is located in the Upper Hudson Valley region of the HRVNHA, though none of the 90 officially designated Heritage Sites within the region are located in Germantown.

3.0 Meetings with Community Leaders

3.1 Local Community and Waterfront Leaders

WAC Members

Members of the Waterfront Advisory Committee are leaders and active participants in a wide variety of community organizations. Many of these organizations are directly involved in efforts to preserve the Town's waterfront natural resources and improve recreational opportunities. These organizations include the Roe-Jan Creek Boat Club, the Germantown Sportsmen's Association, the Roe Jan Watershed Community, the Germantown Library, the Germantown Neighbors' Association, the Friends of Clermont, the Boy Scouts, the Germantown branch of Riverkeeper's River Sweep, the Columbia County Sheriff's Office and the Southern Columbia Little League and Soccer League. These organizations have ongoing input in the preparation of the Local Waterfront Revitalization Study.

Columbia County Environmental Management Council

WAC members recently spoke with Ellen Jouret-Epstein, the Town's representative to the Columbia County Environmental Management Council. She provided information on water resources, climate change resiliency planning, and wildlife habitat. She was direct in her recommendations: Germantown should create a Conservation Advisory Council, which would research and advise the Town Board on environmental issues. This council could then pursue programs such as the "Climate Smart Communities" or "Clean Energy Community" programs run by various state agencies. She advised that participation in these programs helps promote environmental conservation and could make the Town more successful at obtaining grant money which could be used to implement waterfront revitalization plans.

3.2 Comprehensive Plan Update Committee

The Town of Germantown is updating the Comprehensive Plan in parallel with the development of the Local Waterfront Revitalization Study. Members of the current Comprehensive Plan Committee (CPC) and Waterfront Advisory Committee met on March 9, 2017 to discuss potential overlap of issues and strategies for coordination. At that point, the CPC had already conducted two visioning sessions with the public and collected results from an online survey.

The two groups discussed the results of the Strengths-Weakness-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis conducted at the second Public Visioning Session. Just over 90 community members expressed preferences for various categories/issues that had been established in the first visioning session. Each participant was given two adhesive dots to vote for their top priorities in each of the four SWOT categories.

The following responses related to Germantown's waterfront:

- About 13% of participants ranked "waterfront access/docks" and "Lake in Town" and "Waterfront revitalization" as an important strength.
- About 15% of participants ranked an "Under-utilized waterfront" as a significant Town weakness.
- About 13% of participants ranked the "Waterfront" as a significant opportunity.
- About 14% of participants ranked "Expansion of Trails and Public Access to Waterfront" as an additional significant opportunity.

Note that the above estimates assume that participants used their two dots for two separate issues, and the figures would be lower if any participants used both dots for waterfront issues.

The CPC also created a brief online survey that was completed by 43 people. Six responses (14%) to the survey mentioned improving the waterfront.

The CPC felt that waterfronts were considered a low priority at the Visioning Session when compared to more controversial Town issues. However, the highest ranking priorities help identify the character of waterfront development that would be supported by the Town.

- **Strength** – The biggest strength was the Town's ability to nurture small, non-boxy business in the Main Street/hamlet area of the Town, followed by "rural small town character" and then "viewshed."
- **Weakness** – The biggest weakness was "land use regulations", which was described as meaning uncertainty for current and future businesses, having no controls in place for business development, and lack of a conservation committee; implementation of a LWRP could be one of many steps to address this weakness.
- **Opportunities** – The biggest opportunity for the Town is "manage growth to strengthen community character", though that category included varied subcategories like "more capacity for commercial development", "integration of 9G and business hamlet", and "make all biz reflect specifics of Germantown-biz rural character parameters."
- **Threat** – By far, with over half of the responses, the biggest threat to Germantown is "character of development", or more specifically corporate development and outsized/oversized national franchises. In summary, initial findings indicate that the majority of participants at the first meeting want to encourage business development but in a regulated and controlled manner that supports rural, small town character.

The two committees also discussed methods of advertising and conducting public outreach meetings. The CPC recommends using both public meetings and online surveys to reach a broader audience. They also recommend using a few open ended, forward thinking questions, although they admitted that summarizing and categorizing responses has been one of their most difficult tasks. For the meetings, they recommend advertising early, talking for no more than 10 minutes, and using interactive activities. Based on this discussion the WAC plans to conduct online surveys and will hold the community workshops on a mixture of Saturday mornings and weeknights to accommodate different schedules and add variety to the outreach. The WAC and CPC plan to share resources and perhaps hold some joint activities in the future.

3.3 Neighboring Municipalities

WAC members have also reached out to neighboring municipalities to discuss shared issues and opportunities and the possibility of joint waterfront planning.

Town of Clermont

The Town of Clermont Supervisor Raymond Staats said that the Clermont has very limited access to the river and waterfront areas. He would be interested in exploring the possibility of a connecting bike path/walking path between the two Towns.

Village of Tivoli

WAC members spoke with Joel Griffith, the Mayor of Tivoli, on April 4, 2017. Tivoli created a Local Waterfront Revitalization Program in 1991, and provided a link for the plan. Interestingly, they are due for an update and may update their LWRP this spring, in parallel with Germantown's Study. He stressed the significance of a LWRP, as theirs has been consulted for every zoning or local law change since its acceptance. The boundary of their LWRP encompasses the entire Town. Mayor Griffith was happy to hear of Germantown's plans to look at waterfront revitalization, and looks forward to collaborating in the future.

Tivoli is poised to be a valuable informational resource to Germantown, as they are mid-development of a waterfront revitalization project on the Hudson River. They are creating a community park on riverfront land previously owned by CSX. The Village identified a desire to improve public access to the waterfront in the 90s, and approached the railway, Conrail at the time, about the possibility of land acquisition. It wasn't until 2010 that a parcel was finally acquired. At that time, it was CSX's opinion that most land that is more than 25' from either track's centerline (a corridor they utilize for maintenance vehicles) is open to negotiation. In the final deal, CSX sold the Village 1.09 acres on the river side of the rail tracks and 1.25 acres just across

the tracks to the east at the end of Broadway. The land was assessed at about \$210,000, but CSX sold it for about \$40,000, which covered the surveying, legal, and other administrative costs to prepare the land for sale. In exchange, the Village agreed to close its existing at-grade vehicle crossing. Future plans include construction of a pedestrian bridge to access the riverside parcel from Friendship Street. Scenic Hudson was the primary funding source for this land acquisition, though that grant was one of many accessed to support the overall development, design, and construction of this project. Tivoli is also planning to build a walkway from the center of the Village to Friendship St with design fees paid for by a Greenway grant.

Town of Livingston

On April 6, 2017, WAC members met with Town of Livingston officials, specifically James Guzzi, Town Supervisor, Will Yandik, Deputy Supervisor, and Donna Lynk, President of the Livingston Library Board Trustees. Livingston has a park on Lockwood Road with 2 baseball fields, a tennis court, and more. There is also a nature walk through the park which was created in partnership with Iroquois, owner of a natural gas pipeline project through the Town. The Town also owns a green space on Twin Lakes with 150' of lakefront access and a car top boat launch, which represents their only public waterfront access. Livingston's border along the Hudson River is mostly privately owned, though parcel 138.-1-9 is 319.58 acres of New York State forest land. There are no plans for that riverfront except to maintain it as a conservation district. One major reason for the lack of development is the steep slopes at the river's edge. Similarly, Livingston has no public access to the Roe Jan, though there are unofficial fishing and kayak access spots where bridges cross the creek.

Supervisor Guzzi stated that because of Livingston's lack of access to the Hudson River waterfront, many Livingston residents go to Germantown's Lasher Park for fishing and boating. Additionally, when Lake George South of Palatine Park was open for swimming, Livingston used to contribute \$5,500-\$7,500 a year for use of the facility by the Livingston Recreation Program. Guzzi said that Germantown has a major asset with Lasher and Cheviot Parks, and ought to focus on improving those facilities rather than spreading efforts too thinly across multiple projects. He suggests providing restrooms, improving handicap accessibility, cleaning up and improving parking, and improving lighting. Based on a history of shared facilities, Livingston could also be a valuable partner in future waterfront revitalization projects. An informational flyer for the first community outreach meeting on April 22, 2017 was given to Supervisor Guzzi, who also posted it on the Town website to encourage input from local Livingston residents.

4.0 Findings

The Waterfront Advisory Committee reviewed existing Town and regional planning documents and met with local and neighboring community leaders to identify common issues and opportunities and the potential for joint waterfront planning. The Committee makes the following findings:

1. The Town of Germantown has historically recognized the Hudson River waterfront as a vital scenic, recreational and environmental resource. Several previous planning efforts resulted in thoughtful waterfront recommendations that the WAC will review and build upon in the current Study:
 - The 2007 Comprehensive Plan recommended the development of a LWRP “to extend public access and public trails along the Hudson River and to protect, preserve and promote appropriate use of important natural and cultural resources in the area.” Specific recommendations included extending the sidewalk system to tie the hamlet area to the waterfront at Lower Main Street, working with railroad agencies to create a riverfront walking trail connecting Cheviot and Lasher Parks, encouraging Columbia County to establish new bike paths on county roads, and establishing a Trails Committee to examine trails and linkage opportunities with neighboring communities.
 - The Germantown Neighbors’ Association conducted a preliminary planning effort in 2009 that created a detailed list of waterfront improvement projects including: build user-friendly kayak and small boat launches at both parks, an improved dock at Cheviot, and upgraded picnic and sports facilities, kayak storage and an ecology display at Lasher; develop a water trail linking the Roeliff Jansen Kill to Lasher and Cheviot; develop nature trails and bike paths to connect with the Hudson River Valley Greenway Trail System; create a park and watercraft landing at the end of Lower Main Street connected by new sidewalks and a pedestrian bridge; restore beaches along the Hudson by “soft engineering”; and restore the historic Cheviot pier for small boat mooring and fishing.
2. Cheviot and Lasher Parks are both currently listed on the Greenway Water Trail map as official Water Trail access sites. The Study will make recommendations on improvements needed at these parks to attract and safely accommodate local and visiting paddlers, and will also explore the possibility of creating new water trail sites and land trails to connect to the Greenway System. The Hudson River Valley Greenway may be an important future funding source for development of land and water trails.

3. The CSX Rail corridor is the biggest obstacle to public access and enjoyment of the Germantown waterfront. However, a review of the NYS Rail Plan and discussions with the Village of Tivoli give hope that it is not an insurmountable obstacle. The Rail Plan shows that the Empire Route through German-town is not scheduled for the introduction of high-speed rail or any major upgrades through 2030.

Most importantly, Tivoli Mayor Griffith shared the Village's valuable experience in dealing with CSX and looks forward to collaborating with the Town in the future. After decades of negotiation the Village successfully acquired several acres of CSX surplus land for a waterfront park and is now planning to construct a sidewalk extension and pedestrian bridge to access the riverfront parcel.

4. The neighboring towns of Clermont and Livingston both have very limited waterfront access and are interested in collaborative planning. Town of Clermont Supervisor Staats would like to explore the possibility of a connecting bike path/walking trail between Germantown and Clermont.

Town of Livingston Supervisor Guzzi said many residents go to Lasher Park for fishing and boating. In addition, when Lake George South was open for swimming the Livingston Recreation Program shared use of the facility for an annual fee. He thinks the Town of Germantown has a major waterfront asset in Lasher and Cheviot Parks and should focus on improving those facilities with restrooms, handicapped accessibility, improved parking and lighting. He will post the Local Waterfront Revitalization Study Community Workshop flyers on the Town website to encourage input from Livingston residents, and may be a valuable partner in future waterfront planning.