



City of Beacon Comprehensive Plan Update

March 27, 2017

BFJ Planning



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Executive Summary

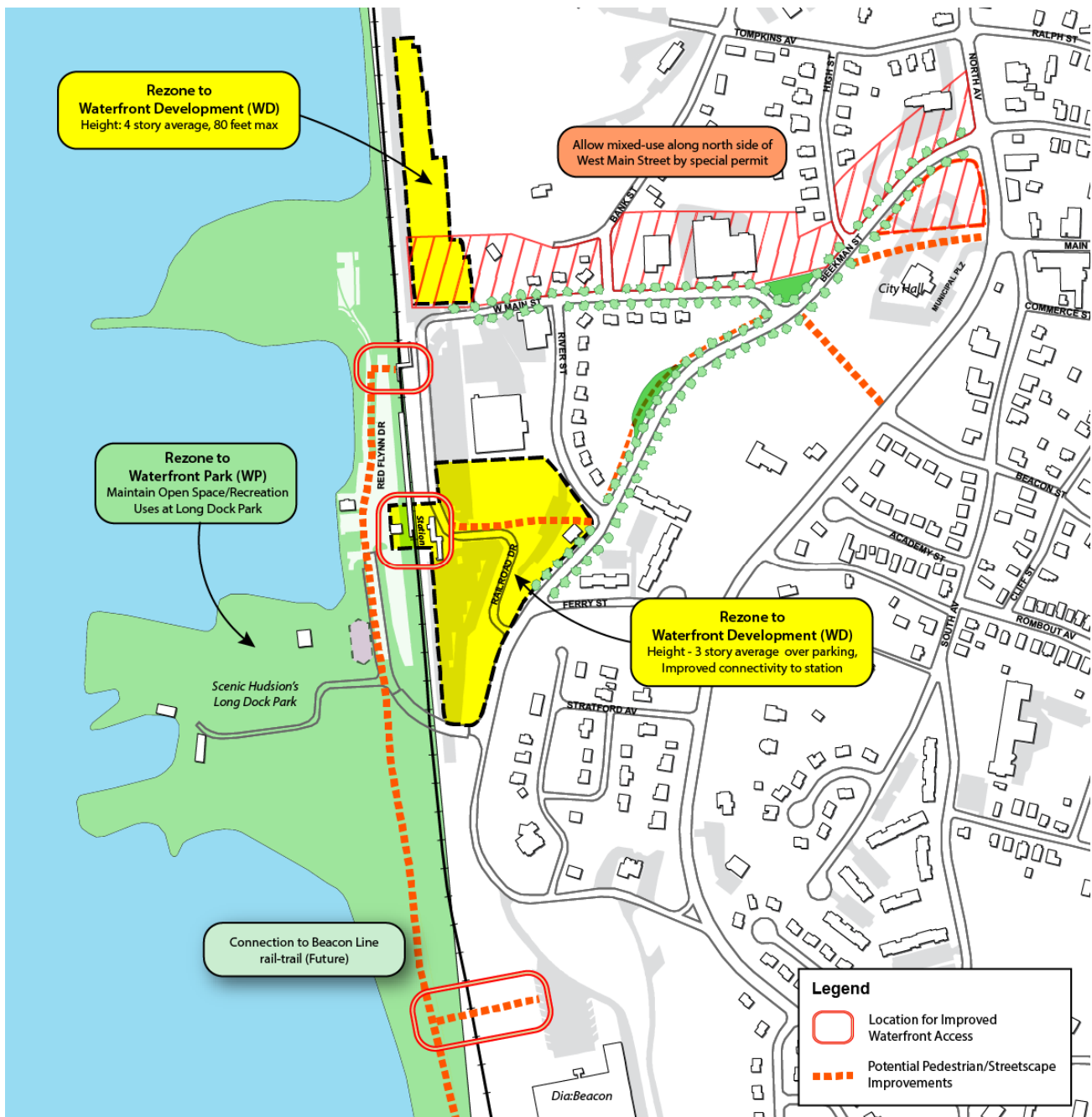


The City's 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update (2017 Plan) reflects land use, demographic and socioeconomic changes that have taken place since the prior plan was adopted in 2007. It also incorporates policies developed for other planning efforts (such as the City's Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP)), as well as feedback from City staff, civic representatives, residents and other key stakeholders. The 2017 Plan's updated recommendations address environmental protection, economic development, affordable housing and improved community services and facilities.

The primary focus area for the 2017 Plan is the waterfront and train station area (see Section 10). The vision for this area is to create a destination that serves as a "gateway" to Beacon, to reclaim the riverfront and to link that riverfront to downtown Beacon. Given the desire to create land use synergies with the resources present at the station area, this plan proposes zoning changes to allow for sufficient density to support a transit oriented community focused toward residents, workers and visitors ~~that~~ who seek the convenience of transportation facilities in a walkable community framework. Building heights are limited along the waterfront and train station area to protect established upland views. The guidelines in Section 10 establish a basic framework for buildings with siting, massing, scale, materials and street rhythm that are compatible with the neighborhood context. The guidelines also consider elements such as public open space, transportation access and how buildings relate to each other.

It is recommended that the City rezone all of the area west of the train station and railroad tracks to Waterfront Park (WP). This would prohibit past plans for a convention center and hotel. This recommendation is consistent with the City's LWRP, which gives preference to water dependent and water enhanced uses within the waterfront area. It is also consistent with sustainable practice by minimizing development within the 100-year floodplain.

The changes proposed in the 2017 Plan consist primarily of restricting development along the waterfront. Development between the railroad tracks and the upland area on Metro-North property would be reduced in height and density from what was proposed in the previous Comprehensive Plan. This is intended to preserve upland views of the Hudson River and reduce traffic impacts. No additional commuter parking is proposed in the current plan, which will also reduce traffic impacts over what was proposed previously.



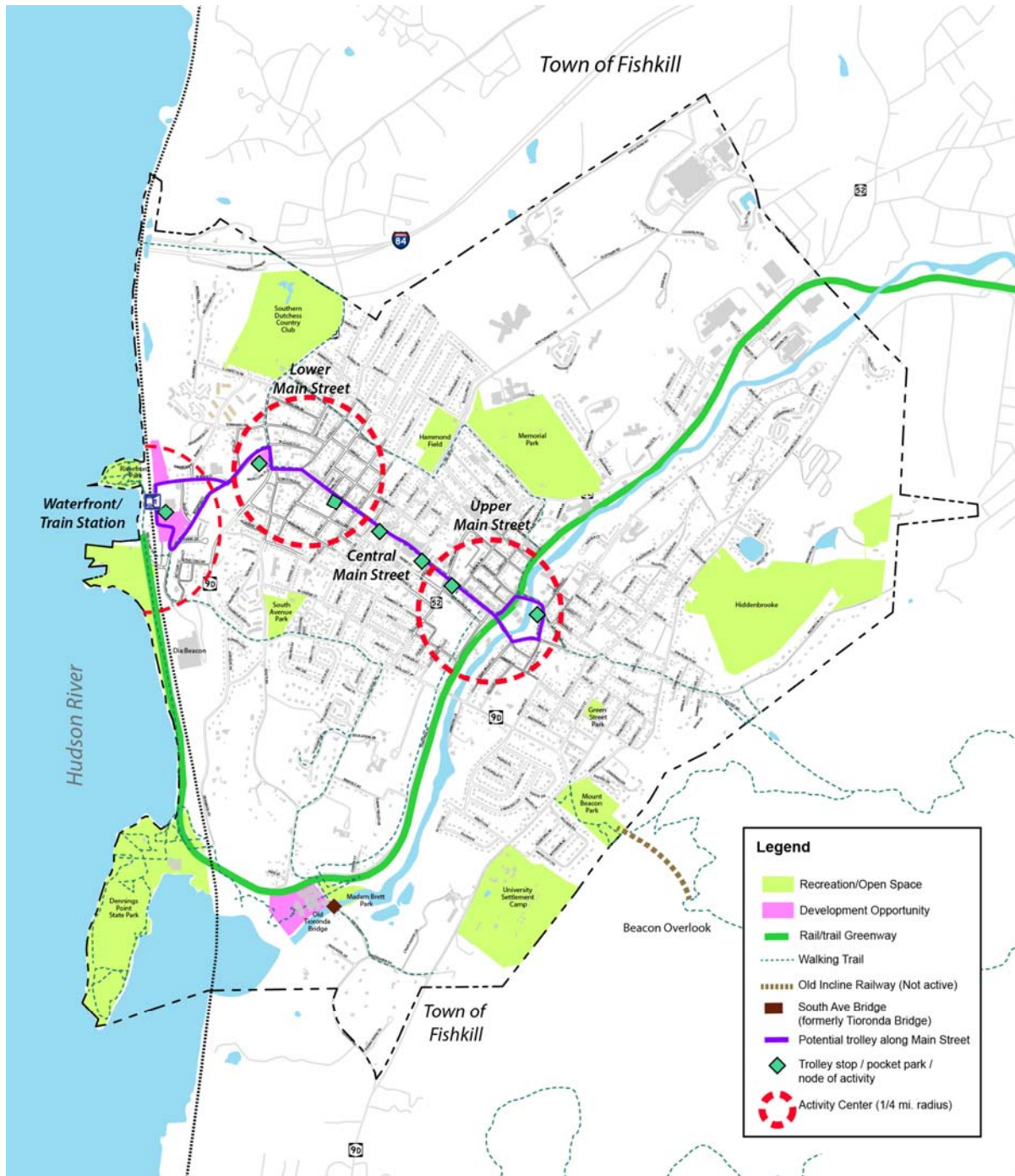
Recommendations for waterfront/train station area (see Section 10)

Most of the land uses proposed elsewhere represent the preservation and continuation of existing land uses, including established residential neighborhoods near Main Street, low-density residential areas in the south and east, and a mixture of business on ground floors and residential uses on upper floors on Main Street. The following zoning recommendations are items the City can pursue as it moves forward with implementation of the overall Comprehensive Plan. These items are summarized in Section 12.

- Rezone Scenic Hudson's Long Dock Property from Waterfront Development to Waterfront Park.
- Rezone two (2) areas in MTA Parking Lot to Waterfront Development (WD)
 - Allow 4 stories over parking on northern site
 - Allow 3 stories over parking on southern site
- Allow retail by special permit on north side of West Main Street in Linkage District
- Extend Central Main Street (CMS) regulations to upper (east end) and lower (west end) ~~upper and lower sections of~~ Main Street
- Extend CMS regulations to Route 52 between Main Street and Verplanck Avenue
- Rezone various areas along the Fishkill Creek to reflect adjacent zoning and existing land use.

One of the main goals for the 2017 Plan is to improve connections between Main Street, the waterfront/station area, and Dia:Beacon. Some of the recommendations that address this include:

- Improve streetscape between Main Street and train station (along Beekman Street and West Main Street);
- Improve connections across train tracks to waterfront area;
- Support rubber wheeled trolley service connecting Main Street to waterfront/train station area;
- Encourage infill development along Main Street as well as pocket parks at identified nodes of activity; and
- Support development of Beacon Line as a ped-bike path with potential for future commuter service (i.e. light rail).



Potential Main Street/Train Station Loop with stops at activity centers (see Section 6)

Section 1: Introduction

The Beacon Comprehensive Plan is a dynamic document that reflects the hopes and expectations of the people of Beacon, with specific objectives and recommendations about how to guide growth so as to preserve important environmental and historic resources and improve the quality of life of the residents, workers, and visitors in the community. The Plan should change as the existing conditions and the goals and objectives of the community change.

The New York State Legislature, in City Law Section 28-a, finds that “[a]mong the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to a city government is the authority and responsibility to undertake city comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety, and general welfare of its citizens.” While a comprehensive plan is not in itself a law or a regulation, it sets the stage for laws and regulations affecting a City’s development by examining current conditions, existing regulations, and recommending regulatory changes. It helps to ensure that land use controls are based upon a factual understanding of a community’s needs.

In 2007, the City adopted a Comprehensive Plan which included specific objectives and recommendations about how to guide growth in Beacon. The Plan represented a product of time and effort by City officials and residents. The 2007 plan had a special focus on opportunities for commercial and residential development along Main Street’s Central Business District, industrial sites along Fishkill Creek, and the waterfront/train station area. The 2007 Plan was prepared for the City by Frederick P. Clark Associates.

The purpose of this plan is to review and update the existing 2007 Plan to reflect changes that have taken place since the original plan was developed. This includes updated policies that address environmental protection, economic development, affordable housing and improved community services and facilities. The 2017 Plan includes a new section which relates to use of the waterfront and train station area (Section 10). This planning effort was led by a Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee which is comprised of City staff, civic representatives and other key stakeholders.

1.1. Regional Location

The City of Beacon is located in the Hudson River Valley ~~6~~⁵0 miles north of New York City in the south-west corner of Dutchess County. The City of Beacon is connected to the region by ~~Interstate I-~~84, which runs north of the city and across the Hudson River on the Newburgh-Beacon Bridge (see Figure 1-1). The Interstate provides connections to Taconic State Parkway, New York State Thruway, and Stewart International Airport. The airport is located 5 miles away and can be reached by a 10-minute bus ride from the ~~Beacon train station~~ Beacon Train Station.

Beacon has a number of arterial roads that accommodate thru-traffic and offer access to major development centers (see Figure 1-2). These include NY Route 9D, which runs south from the intersection with I-84, through Beacon toward Putnam County and NY Route 52.

Metro-North Railroad provides a commuter service between Beacon and New York City along the Hudson ~~River~~ Line. The line also continues north to Poughkeepsie and this service is also utilized by commuters. The ferry service between Newburgh and Beacon has been restored to provide an alternative connection for Orange County commuters to Metro-North. A municipal bus service is provided by Dutchess County Public Transit, which also provides commuter and weekend services. On the weekend, the Putnam County Trolley provides shuttle service between Cold Spring and Beacon including stops at Mount Beacon, Main Street, the Metro-North Train Station and Dia:Beacon.

Beacon's Main Street is one mile long and its character changes along the corridor. It consists of three sections: 1) lower Main Street, which is the west end between Route 9D and Digger Phelps Court; 2) central Main Street which continues east to Route 52 (Fishkill Avenue); and 3) upper Main Street which is the west end from Route 52 to East Main Street at the Fishkill Creek.

There are several designated pedestrian trails within the city. These are part of a regional network of recreational paths and greenways such as the Fjord Trail. Other recreational opportunities include river-related activities and hiking on Mount Beacon and Denning's Point State Park.

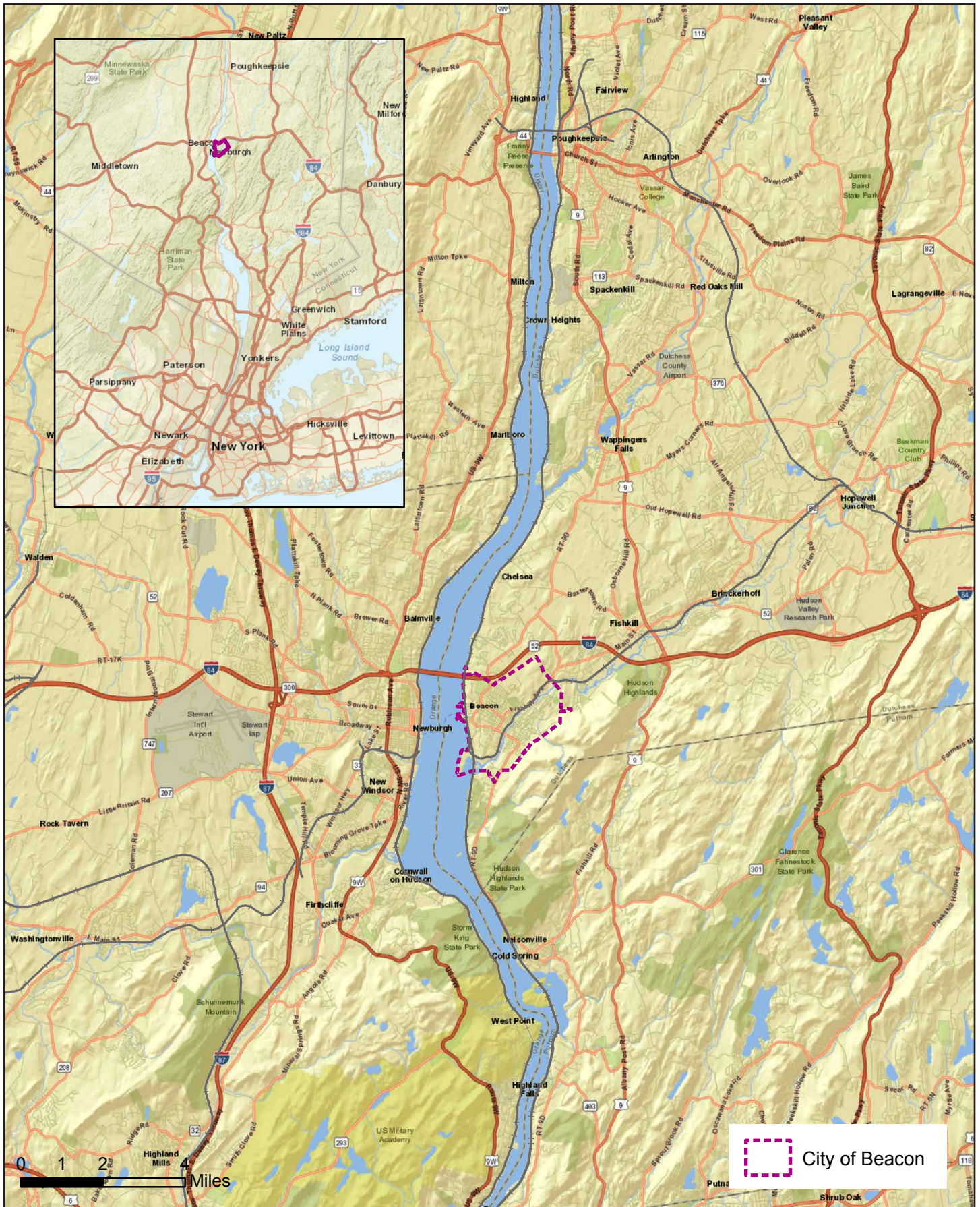


FIGURE 1-1: REGIONAL LOCATION MAP

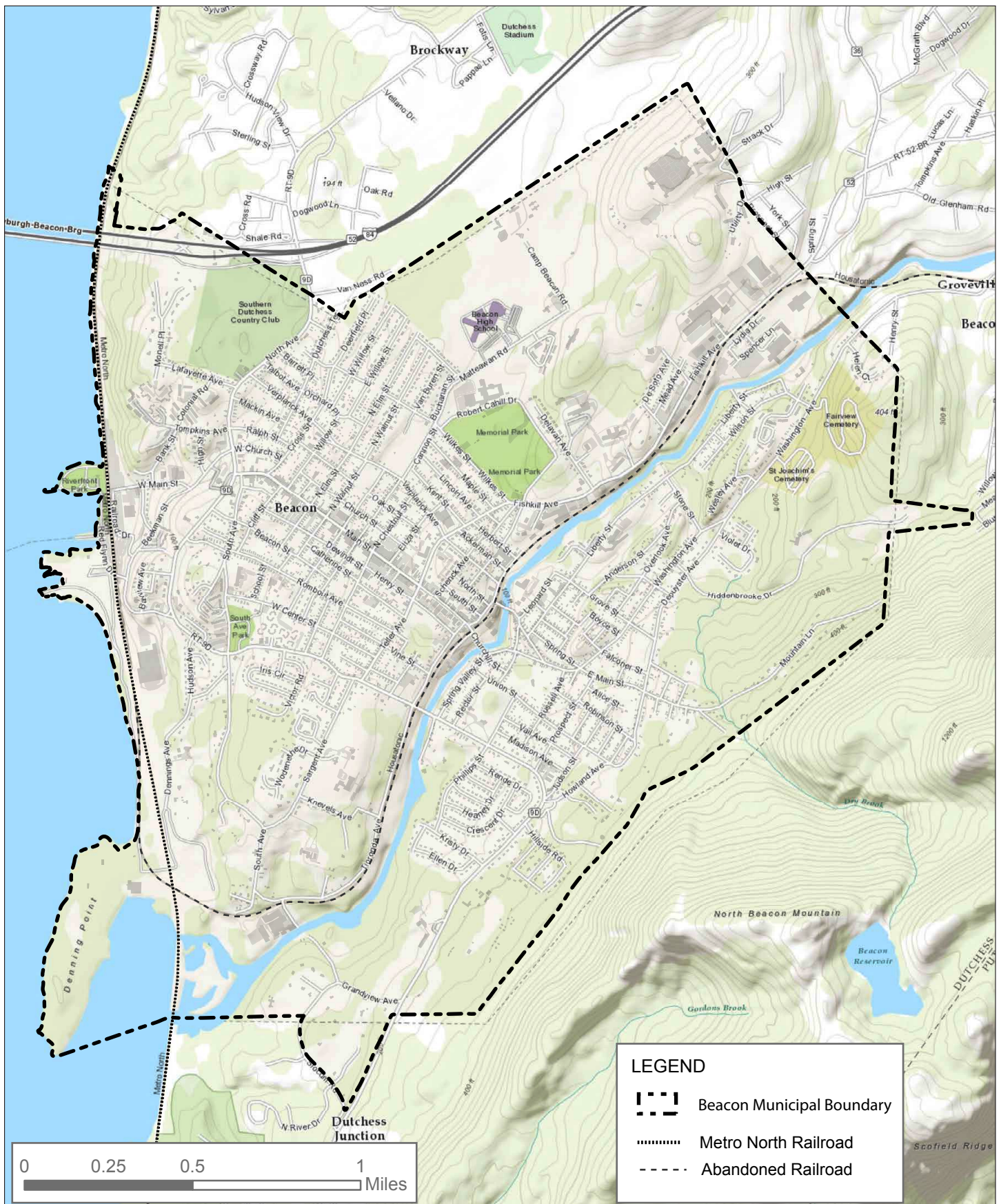


FIGURE 1-2: STUDY AREA

1.2. Prior Planning Efforts

In 2007, the City adopted a Comprehensive Plan to address existing conditions and needs and to guide land development throughout the City. The Comprehensive Plan represents not only a product of much time and effort, but also the beginning of a process which involves changing existing conditions, regulations, and procedures in the City.

Numerous strategic plans and studies focusing on specific topics or areas of the City have also been prepared since the 2007 Plan, including an update to the City's 1992 Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP), traffic calming studies, zoning studies, open space inventories, environmental conservation plans, and water capacity and stormwater management studies. The 2017 Plan includes recommendations and policies from these prior planning efforts to ensure consistency including:

- City of Beacon Comprehensive Plan, City of Beacon (2007)
- Beacon Transportation Linkages Program, City of Beacon (2008)
- Harbor Management Plan, City of Beacon (2012)
- University Settlement Camp Master Plan, City of Beacon (2009)
- Waterfront Redevelopment Traffic Management Study, City of Beacon (2009)
- City of Beacon LWRP, City of Beacon (2012)
- Fishkill Creek Greenway & Heritage Trail Master Plan, City of Beacon (2013)
- Reservoir Safe Yield Analysis and Groundwater Supply, City Of Beacon (2014)
- Beacon Center City Parking Analysis, Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development and City of Beacon (2014)
- Annual Water Quality Report, City of Beacon (2015)
- Complete Streets Guidelines (2016)

Potential development around the Beacon Train station has been the focus of past planning efforts. The development concept considered by the City involves “transit-oriented development” (or TOD) which is a combination of compact residential, retail and office uses within a short walk of transit. A TOD concept was proposed by in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan; however Metro-North and the City were unable to come to terms on the appropriate density of the project and the mix of uses that are compatible with existing Main Street businesses. Section 10 addresses the waterfront and train station area, which is a focus area for the 2017 Comprehensive Plan update.

The City has taken steps to ensure that new development in the city is balanced in size and type and is affordable to a range of incomes. In 2010, the zoning code was amended to include a provision requiring that projects with 20 or more units contain at least 10% below-market rate units. A Senior

Affordable Housing Overlay District was also established in 2012 to create affordable housing opportunities for seniors and to provide for the adaptive reuse of older buildings.

In December 2016, the City adopted a Complete Streets Policy, to encourage the development of streets that provide safe, comfortable and convenient access for all modes, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders.

REGIONAL PLANNING EFFORTS

This plan recognizes that the City of Beacon is one of several municipalities guiding development in southwest Dutchess County. Indeed, the City has participated in two rounds of inter-municipal planning and cooperation with neighboring communities, once in 1962, and again in 1973.

This Plan is in harmony with the Third Regional Plan for the New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Metropolitan Area, produced by the Regional Plan Association for the New York Metropolitan Area in 1996. The Third Regional Plan concentrates on five campaigns: Greensward, Centers, Mobility, Workforce, and Governance. This Plan contributes actively towards enhancing the city as a regional center, and proposes local improvements in public transportation and economic development. This Plan also contributes locally to the Greensward campaign through recognizing the Hudson Highlands as a valuable ecological area to be protected.

The 1987 Dutchess County Plan, *Directions*, places Beacon in the regional context as a small city, second to Poughkeepsie, and the focus of southwestern Dutchess County. The Plan calls for inter-municipal cooperation regarding sewer and water utilities, and envisions Beacon's municipal sewage treatment plant as eventually expanding to serve the Village of Fishkill and large portions of the Towns of Fishkill, East Fishkill and Wappinger. In terms of land use, the Plan recommends the following, which still remain as priorities for the City:

1. Protection of residential areas from incompatible development.
2. Renovation of the railroad station and the immediate vicinity.
3. Redevelopment and protection of the riverfront area.
4. Continued revitalization and strengthening of the downtown area.
5. Adoption and enforcement of strict standards for site and architectural design and building construction.
6. Expansion of the economic base.

Dutchess County's *Greenway Connections* document, dated March 2000, is in many respects a plan. The "Settlement Patterns" on page 24 recommends close-knit and compact centers that support central utilities and have a mixture of uses within a five- to 10-minute walk of surrounding

residential areas, all features of Beacon today. Beacon is also included in a list of communities that could benefit from transit-oriented infill development around the train station. Greenway Guides organized around the theme “Strengthening Centers” are all relevant to Beacon’s current condition and future development. The City has joined the Greenway Compact, which provides grant opportunities and planning, environmental, and other benefits to the City.

The City of Beacon seeks to work closely with neighboring municipalities, particularly the Town of Fishkill, to improve the following:

- I. Proactive and coordinated planning and development, following Greenway principles, with particular focus on areas near the municipal borders and transportation corridors along Route 9D and Route 52, including mutual code amendments to require notice to the City or the Town, as appropriate, regarding development at a scale beyond certain thresholds within these transportation corridors and near municipal borders;
- II. Environmental protection and enhancement, including:
 - A. Protection of water quality near surface waters and aquifers
 - B. Preservation of the entirety of Mount Beacon and nearby open space
 - C. Protection of viewsheds, in particular views of the Hudson River, Mount Beacon and Fishkill Creek
 - D. Greenway corridors along the Hudson River and Fishkill Creek and trails between the City and Mount Beacon
- III. Consolidation and/or sharing of municipal services (or at least active coordination) to achieve tax savings and/or service improvements, including:
 - A. Water, sewer, roads and other infrastructure
 - B. Emergency and public safety services
 - C. Recycling and trash
 - D. Recreational opportunities, both active and passive, and cultural programs
 - E. Administrative and other areas
- IV. Annexation and/or swapping of lands, so as to best serve residents and preserve core elements of both the City of Beacon and the Town of Fishkill, including:
 - A. Portion of Hudson River fronting the City of Beacon
 - B. Portion of Mount Beacon facing the City of Beacon
 - C. Van Ness Avenue & I-84 environs
 - D. Dutchess Junction (accessible through the City of Beacon)

CITIZEN-BASED PLANNING PROCESS

This 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update is heavily based on the work and public outreach involved with the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. Public outreach for the 2007 Plan included four public visioning workshops held at various locations throughout the city in an effort to solicit the diverse views of City residents. The effort also included a 22-question survey sent to every household in the City, which asked residents to prioritize planning issues, identify potential recreational and cultural facilities to improve quality of life, and to identify strengths and weaknesses of the City.

Citizen participation was an important component of this planning process to test whether the goals from the 2007 plan are still valid, gain input on issues and opportunities that should be addressed, and to develop and test ideas related to the waterfront and train station area. The planning process included two public workshop, summaries of which can be found in the Appendix. Both workshops had a turnout of more than 100 participants, who were encouraged to provide feedback on issues and opportunities and voice any concerns, comments, or recommendations related to the Comprehensive Plan. Stakeholders were also encouraged to provide feedback on comment cards handed out at the public meeting or by email. The meetings were also taped and broadcast on the City's website.

The consultant team, led by BFJ Planning, met regularly with the Steering Committee and representatives from the City to gather feedback and ensure that the developed recommendations are supported to the maximum extent possible by residents, property owners and the City. This effort was also coordinated with key stakeholders to solicit feedback and gather information on existing conditions, planned projects and proposed recommendations. Documents relevant to the update (with Spanish translations), meeting updates and videos of the public meetings were posted on the City's website (cityofbeacon.org).



Public Workshop #1

September 22, 2016

~150 Participants



Public Workshop #2

November 17, 2016

~100 Participants

1.3. Comprehensive Plan Goals and Objectives

This Plan takes a comprehensive look at the range of factors that will affect future growth in Beacon, which are grouped into the following topic areas:

- Land Use and Zoning (Section 2)
- Population and Residential Development (Section 3)
- Commercial, Office and Industrial Development (Section 4)
- Water Supply, Wastewater and Stormwater Management (Section 5)
- Transportation (Section 6)
- Environmental Features (Section 7)
- Historic Resources (Section 8)
- Recreation and Community Facilities (Section 9)
- Waterfront and Train Station Area (Section 10)
- Land Use Plan (Section 11)
- Implementation Plan (Section 12)

For each of these topic areas, the Comprehensive Plan provides a complete picture of current conditions, issues and opportunities in the area, and identifies specific objectives and recommendations to accomplish the desired changes. The outcomes incorporate best practices for land-use planning, environmental constraints, fiscal realities and the limitations of the City's existing and anticipated future infrastructure system.

Section 11 includes the Future Land Use Plan which geographically illustrates general future land uses based on the policies stated in the Master Plan. While the Future Land Use Plan recognizes existing land use patterns and environmental constraints, it also considers potential future development, infrastructure improvements and economic trends.

Section 12 identifies specific measures to achieve the recommendations made in this Plan. The chapter explains how community members and public leaders can make use of this Plan, which represents a compilation of the best information available to date on how the City can guide growth in a way that is most beneficial to community members and to the environment as a whole.

A brief synopsis of the highest priority goals are listed below. These goals are generally consistent with those presented in the 2007 Plan. Each chapter provides updated objectives and recommendations that correspond to the stated goals.

2017 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

Land Use (Section 2.0)

- Maintain the character of established neighborhoods, protect and preserve sensitive ecological areas and encourage the development of the Central Business District, the Waterfront/Train Station area and underutilized industrial sites along Fishkill Creek.

Population and Residential Development (Section 3.0):

The City, through its zoning and other policies should:

- Strive to maintain a variety of housing opportunities that are accessible to a wide variety of income levels;
- Preserve the existing density and settlement pattern of established neighborhoods;
- Encourage housing development at relatively greater densities within and adjacent to the central business district and the Waterfront/Train Station area;
- Encourage residential development of vacant and underutilized former industrial sites;
- Encourage redevelopment of vacant and underutilized industrial sites;
- Ensure continued racial, ethnic, age and economic diversity of the population through encouraging a wide range of housing choices.

Commercial, Office and Industrial Development (Section 4.0):

- Encourage a vibrant business community in harmony with existing commercial and industrial areas throughout the community. Employ all available mechanisms to meet the City's objectives for economic development.

Transportation (Section 5.0):

- Develop an integrated and efficient transportation system consistent with City land use patterns and objectives and the regional transportation plan to assure the effective and economic movement of people and goods within and through Beacon, including public transportation, pedestrian and bicycle systems.

Water Supply and Sewage Treatment Goals (Section 6.0):

- Maintain and improve City utilities, emphasizing environmental protection, health and safety. Work cooperatively with area municipalities to maintain and improve water and sewer utilities. Comply with the State's Stormwater Management Program.

Environmental Resource Goals (Section 7.0):

- Preserve environmentally significant features and create an open space system of sufficient size to reserve adequate areas for the protection of water related resources, wildlife, and land forms of particular environmental value. The rare assets of the City, such as the Hudson River and Fishkill Creek, should be protected, as should the Hudson Highlands on the slopes of Mount Beacon.
- Encourage high environmental standards for development and infrastructure, develop sources of renewable energy and improve the environmental performance of City-owned property.

Historic Resources (Section 8.0)

- Encourage the preservation of historically and culturally significant buildings, landscapes, and neighborhoods.

Recreation and Community Facilities (Section 9.0):

- Community services for all age groups should be provided consistent with the economic growth of the City and its available resources. Regional facilities should be encouraged to locate in the City.
- Develop a recreational open space system of sufficient size and locational qualities to meet the complete range of recreational needs for the people.

Waterfront and Train Station Area (Section 10.0):

- Support sustainable development that will enhance the City while providing an improved connection to the train station (see Section 10 for additional goals and recommendations).

Public Awareness and Participation

- Continue meaningful public participation in local decision making through broad dissemination of clear and pertinent information.
- Support constructive citizen participation and involvement in the planning and implementation process and foster leadership for all groups. The City should be an open and welcoming place for people of diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. Diversity is central to our civic strength. We strive to support all members of our community against intolerance and discrimination.

Section 2: Land Use and Zoning

2.1. Existing Land Use

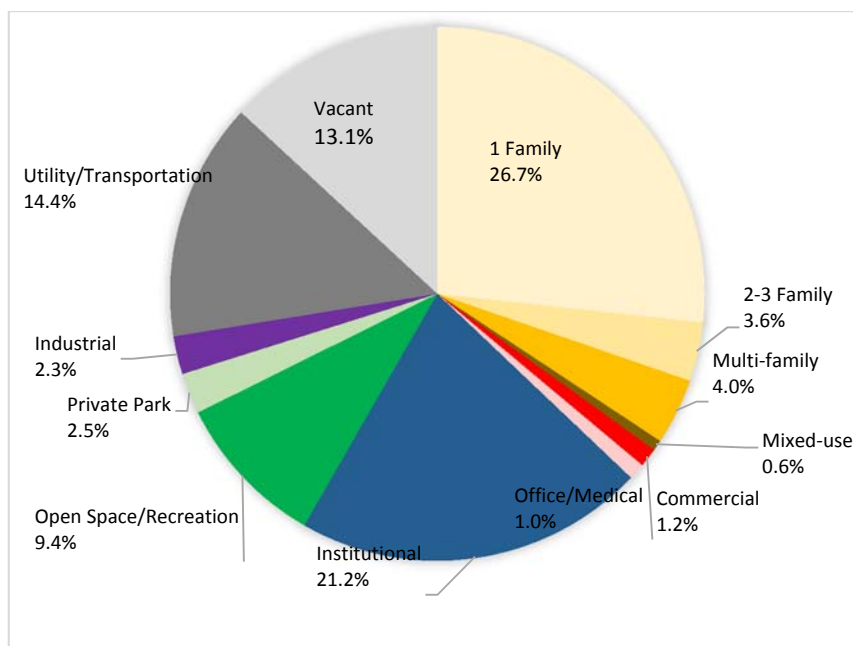
This chapter focuses on the existing types, amounts and locations of land uses in the City of Beacon. The Existing Land Use Map (Figure 2-1), shows the existing land uses, including the locations and concentrations of land use activities throughout the City.

Land use data were obtained from the Dutchess County Office of Real Property Tax. This information was analyzed, supplemented and updated through field checks and review of the aerial photography by the City's planning consultants and City staff. Field checks were made to verify recent land use changes. In addition, drafts of the land use maps were coordinated with, and reviewed by City staff.

A summary of current land uses, acreages and percentage of the total land area for each category in the City of Beacon are identified in Table 2-1, below.

Table 2-1: Beacon Land Uses

	Acre
1 Family	830.9
2-3 Family	110.6
Multi-family	124.9
Mixed-use	19.6
Commercial	36.3
Office/Medical	31.0
Institutional	658.9
Open Space/Recreation	291.5
Private Park	76.9
Industrial	71.8
Utility/Transportation	449.0
Vacant/Underwater	407.8
Total	3109.1



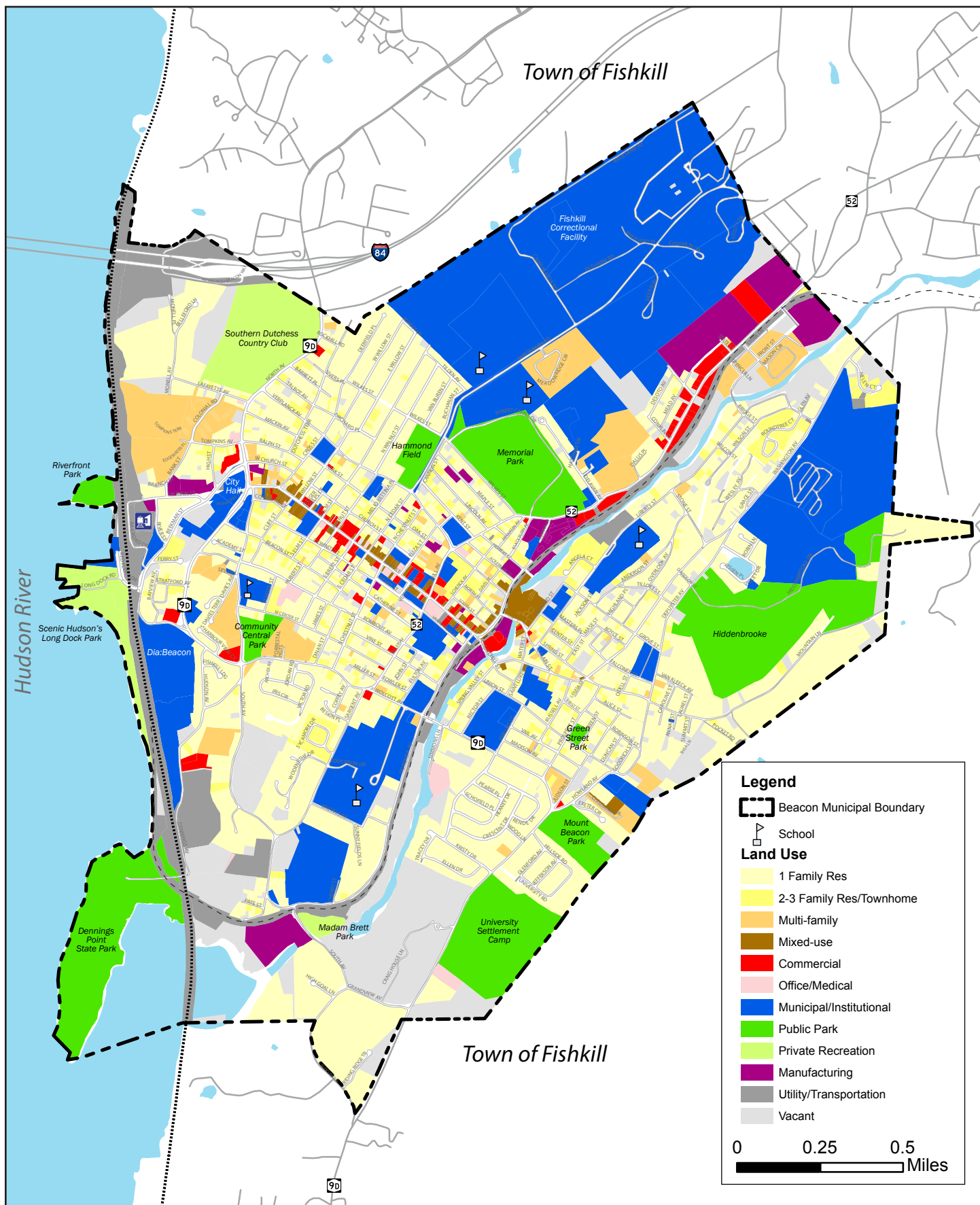


FIGURE 2-1: LAND USE

Residential

The residential land uses have been classified as single-family residential, two- and three-family residential, and multi-family residential. Residential land uses comprised approximately 36% of the City.

Single-Family Residential

The Single-Family Residential category consists of detached, single-family dwelling units that are constructed to accommodate year-round residences. This category contains the largest land use category in the City, comprising approximately 27% of the area in the City.

The *Existing Land Use* map shows the distribution of single-family residential housing throughout the City. As can be seen in the figure, the vast majority of single-family residences are currently located within one-half of a mile from Main Street, with areas to the northeast and southwest settled at lower densities. The relative density of single-family development can be surmised from a review of the *Existing Land Use* map - the smaller the lot size, the more single-family residences there are in a given area.

2-3 Family Residential

The 2-3 Family Residential land use category consists of lands occupied by either: two-family residences, three-family residences, or lands that contain multiple residences (e.g., two single-family residences on one lot). Two-family residences are scattered among the single-family residences, clustered most densely between Verplanck Avenue north of Main Street and Rombout Avenue south of Main Street. Three-family residences are clustered in the area around the east end of Main Street. Approximately 4% of the City was occupied by such land uses in 2017.

Multi-Family Residential

The Multi-Family Residential Development category includes structures that have been built or converted into four or more dwelling units, and the various multi-family developments in the City. These residences are generally distributed among large parcels on North and South Avenues (Route 9D). Nursing homes are also included in the multi-family category. Multi-Family developments comprise approximately 4% of the City.

Commercial

Retail / Service

The Retail/Service land use category includes a variety of uses, including: retail stores and shopping centers; restaurants; motor vehicle sales, hotels, automobile services and gas stations; and such commercial uses. As shown on the Existing Land Use map, the majority of the commercial development is concentrated along the Main Street corridor, with a smaller cluster on Fishkill Avenue (Route 52). Such uses comprise 36 acres, approximately 1.2% of the City.

Office/Professional

This category includes professional offices, medical offices and banks. Such uses comprise 31 acres, approximately 1% of the total land area in the City. Office uses are generally located on Main Street.

Mixed Use

The Mixed Use land use category includes developments that contain a mixture of uses such as retail/service and multi-family residential on a single parcel of land. Such uses occur together on parcels that total approximately 0.6% of the total land area of the City. Mixed-use buildings are generally located along Main Street.

Industrial

The Industrial land use category consists of manufacturing, storage, warehouse and distribution facilities located within the City. This land use category comprises 72 acres, 2.3% of the land area City. Industrial uses are found on Main Street west of City Hall and on Fishkill Avenue. Some properties formerly designated as industrial, notably along Fishkill Creek, have been redeveloped for other uses (i.e. apartment buildings) and are no longer shown as industrial.

Public Uses

Institutional

The Institutional category includes schools and other educational facilities, hospitals and other health facilities, religious facilities, cemeteries, police and fire protection facilities. These uses comprise almost one quarter of the total land area in the City. While these land uses are distributed fairly evenly throughout the City, there are a few significant uses including the Fishkill Correctional Facility in the northern portion of the City and [DIA Beacon](#) museum south of the train station.

Public Recreation/Open Space

The Public Recreation/Open Space category includes active State and local parks and community recreational areas such as playing fields and courts. These community uses comprise 291 acres of the total land area in the City, or 9.4%. University Settlement Camp, Memorial Park, Riverfront Park and Denning's Point State Park are the largest. The South Avenue Park and Green Street Park are smaller, more centrally located community parks. The Hiddenbrooke Property in the northeast portion of the City is another passive open space owned by the City.

Private Recreation/Open Space

Private recreation includes golf courses and private parks, and specifically includes Southern Dutchess Country Club near I-84, , Scenic Hudson's Long Dock Park and Madam Brett Park. Approximately 77 acres (2.5%) of the City constitutes this land use category.

Utilities

Roads and utilities comprise approximately 449 acres of the City. This includes paved roadways, the Metro-North Railroad right-of-way along the Hudson River and the railroad right-of-way along Fishkill Creek, the sewage transfer center, the closed landfill site, the land south of I-84 owned by the New York State Bridge Authority and a number of other smaller publicly owned utility sites throughout the City.

Vacant Land

This category includes the vacant parcels in the City which are not in use or without permanent improvements. Approximately 13% of the total land area in the City fits into the Vacant land use category. As shown on the Existing land Use map, there are only a few large vacant properties located throughout the City. Specifically, the majority of the vacant land consists of the following properties: land surrounding the Fairview Cemetery, a couple lots south of City Hall, land south of Dia:Beacon, land south of the closed landfill and adjacent to a vacant industrial site, and the Craig House site in the southern part of the City.

LAND USE CHANGES

Dutchess County has experienced rapid population growth over the last five decades, with approximately 100,000 additional residents in the County since 1960. Most of the development associated with this population increase has occurred in the southwest portion of the County surrounding Beacon, while the City itself has maintained a relatively constant population. Suburban growth surpassed the rate of growth in Beacon because the structure of the regional economy shifted from agriculture and mills on relatively small parcels in the 19th and early 20th centuries to an integrated metropolitan economy with industries and large employers located throughout the suburban periphery, where land costs were lower, power was no longer concentrated around sources of hydropower, and transportation was more convenient. Regional commercial centers are generally outside of the City in areas where auto-oriented transportation is more convenient and larger lots allow for large parking areas.

The following items highlight the major changes in development the City has experienced since 1960:

- Developed Land: In 1960, 68% of the land area of the City was developed (991 acres were undeveloped); in 2017 87% of the City was developed (408 acres were undeveloped). Recreation areas were included in a different category and not counted as undeveloped land.
- Residential Land: Acreage used for residences (only) more than doubled in this time period, rising from 407 acres (13% of City land) to 1,066 acres (34% of City land).
- Industry: Lands used for industrial purposes have decreased from 159 acres in 1960 to 72 in 2017.
- Recreation: Recreation (public and private) and open space lands comprise almost 400 acres, or 12% of the City. This use has significantly increased since 1970, which had 170 acres, or 5% of the city.
- Commercial Land: Use of commercial land (includes retail, service, office, and mixed use) has slightly increased between 1960 and 2017.

Some of the major land use changes since the prior plan in 2007 include:

- Some properties formerly designated as industrial, notably along Fishkill Creek, have been redeveloped for as multi-family or mixed-use buildings.
- The creation of Scenic Hudson Long Dock Park.
- The creation of two form-based zoning districts, the Linkage (L) District and the Central Main Street (CMS) District.

2.2. Existing Zoning

The City's zoning regulations are major influences on development patterns, along with subdivision regulations, the street network and environmental features. Existing land uses by and large conform to the City's zoning map, shown in Figure 2-1 and Figure 2-2. Zoning is the primary land use control device available to the City. Under the current regulations, Beacon has 30 zoning districts, with 15 residential zones, five commercial zones (business and office), two industrial zones, three waterfront districts, two form based districts, and three overlay zones. Table II-2 below contains a summary of the existing zoning in the City of Beacon and the amount and percent of land area associated with each zoning district.

Residential

Single Family Housing

Beacon has six single-family residential zoning districts: R1-120, R1-80, R1-40, R1-20, R1-7.5, R1-5. The districts range in density, as shown in Figure 2-1, permitting homes built on 1/8th acre lots (R1-5) to homes on 3-acre lots (RA-120). In addition to single-family homes, these districts permit religious institutions, schools, libraries, parks, municipal buildings, etc.

Designed Residence District

Beacon has seven Designed Residence zoning designations: RD-7.5, RD-6, RD-5, RD-4, RD-3, RD-1.8, and RD-1.7. The purpose of the Designed Residence districts is to allow a variety of different uses, such as single-, two- and multi-family units, senior housing and conservation and open space. Certain provisions are provided to the Planning Board to assure that the designated common areas for open space are well-designed and will be maintained for the intended purposes.

Multi-family Residence Districts

The City has two multi-family residence districts: RMF-1.5 and RMF-.8. These districts are not mapped for any locations in the City, however, RMF-1.5 residential densities are allowed in mixed use buildings in the CB district.

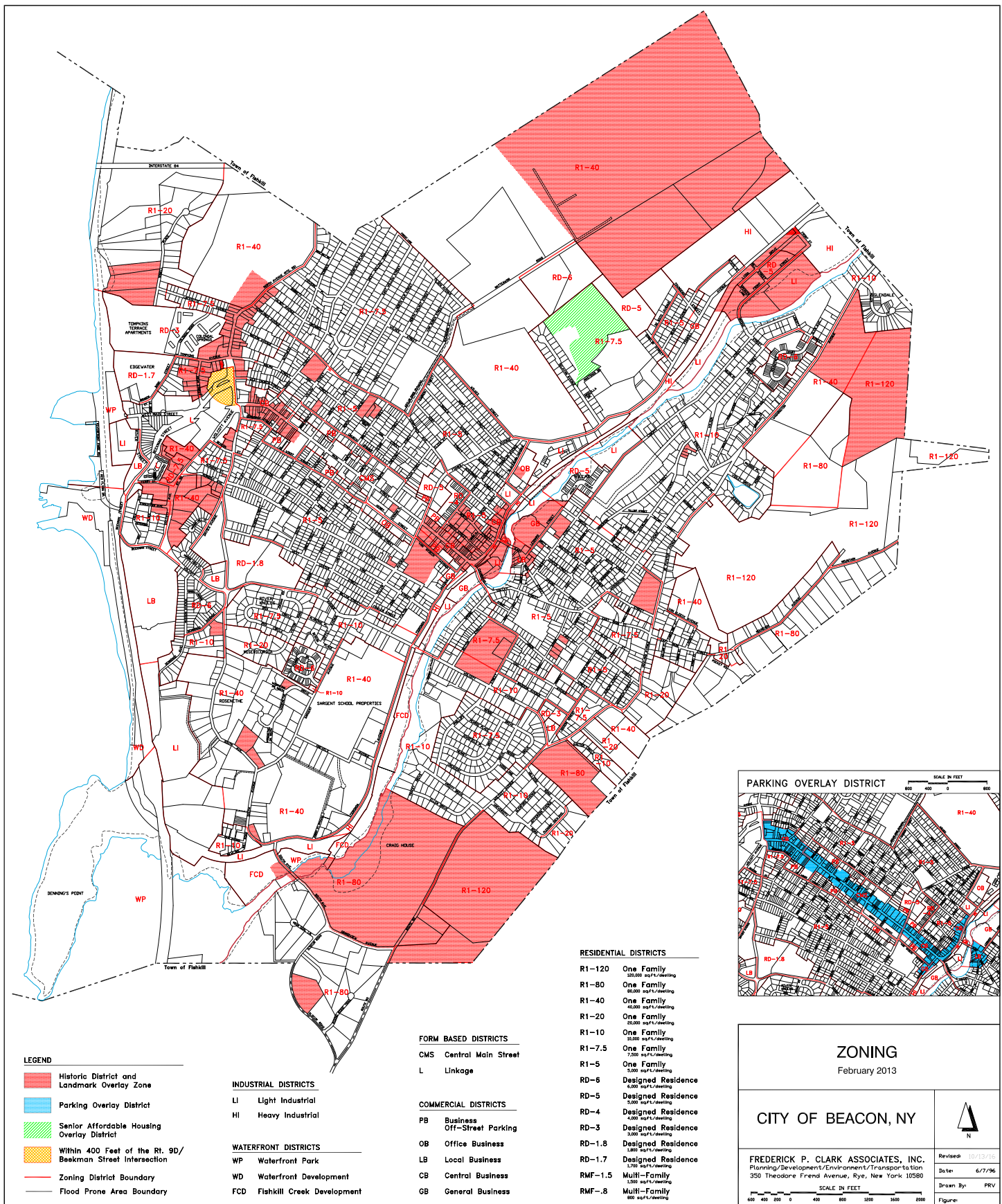


FIGURE 2-2: ZONING MAP

Table 2-2: Residential Districts

District	Permitted Lot Size	Maximum Height
<u><i>Single Family Districts</i></u>		
R1-120	120,000 sq. ft.	2.5 stories, 35 feet
R1-80	80,000 sq. ft.	2.5 stories, 35 feet
R1-40	40,000 sq. ft.	2.5 stories, 35 feet
R1-20	20,000 sq. ft.	2.5 stories, 35 feet
R1-10	10,000 sq. ft.	2.5 stories, 35 feet
R1-7.5	7,500 sq. ft.	2.5 stories, 35 feet
R1-5	5,000 sq. ft.	2.5 stories, 35 feet
<u><i>Designed Residence District</i></u>		
RD-7.5	7,500 sq. ft. per dwelling; minimum lot size 2 acres;	3 stories, 35 feet
RD-6	6,000 sq. ft. per dwelling; minimum lot size 5 acres;	2.5 stories, 35 feet
RD-5	5,000 sq. ft. per dwelling; minimum lot size 5,000 sq. ft.	3 stories, 35 feet
RD-4	4,000 sq. ft. per dwelling; minimum lot size 2 acres;	2.5 stories, 35 feet
RD-3	3,000 sq. ft. per dwelling; minimum lot size 5,000 sq. ft.	2.5 stories, 35 feet
RD-1.8	1,800 sq. ft. per dwelling; minimum lot size 5,000 sq. ft.	10 stories, 100 feet
RD-1.71	1,700 sq. ft. per dwelling; minimum lot size 5,000 sq. ft.	4.5 stories, 55 feet
<u><i>Multi-family Residence District</i></u>		
RMF-1.5	1,500 sq. ft. per dwelling; minimum lot size 5,000 sq. ft.	13 stories, 135 feet
RMF-.8	800 sq. ft. per dwelling; minimum lot size 5,000 sq. ft.	13 stories, 135 feet

Commercial

PB Business Off-Street Parking District (PB)

The purpose of this district is to allow for parking lots (by special permit), specifically in areas behind buildings that front on Main Street. In addition to allowing off-street parking for commercial uses on Main Street, the district permits residential uses from the least restrictive adjoining residential district.

OB Office Business District (OB)

This district permits office buildings and off-street parking areas. Restaurants, auto-repair shops and artist studios are allowed by special permit. Uses in the least restrictive adjoining residential district are also allowed. The maximum building height is 35 feet with a floor-area-ratio of 1.0.

¹ Added in 2010

LB Local Business District (LB)

The LB District allows uses permitted in the OB District along with retail stores and gallery/museums. Gas stations, bars, and artist live/work spaces are allowed by special permit. The maximum building height is 35 feet with a floor-area-ratio of 2.0.

CB Central Business District (CB)

The CB District is found along lower Main Street and upper Main Street. The CB District allows uses permitted in the LB District. Residential uses with densities permitted in RMF-1.5 are allowed on upper floors of buildings located on Main Street. The district also allows for a range of commercial uses including theaters, hotels, commercial recreation, colleges and instructional schools. The maximum building height is 35 feet with a floor-area-ratio of 2.0.

GB General Business District (GB)

The GB district allows uses permitted in the CB District in addition to wholesale commercial uses, workshops, and automotive commercial uses subject to special permit. The maximum building height is 35 feet with a floor-area-ratio of 2.0.

Industrial***LI Light Industrial District.***

Allows for uses permitted in the CB District (not including residential uses) and workshops, industrial uses using electric power only, and offices. Auto related uses, adult uses, artist live/work spaces and wholesale storage (excluding junkyards) are allowed by special permit. The maximum building height is 35 feet with a floor-area-ratio of 2.0.

HI Heavy Industrial District

The HI District allows for uses permitted in the GB and LI districts and other non-residential uses deemed appropriate by the Board of Appeals.

Form-Based Districts

Beacon adopted two form-based districts in 2013, which have regulations intended to foster predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle. The codes address the relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks. Diagrams are provided to illustrate the appropriate form and scale of desired development. The

guidelines also provide for a simplified and streamlined review process that facilitates redevelopment in accordance with the provisions and the intent of the Comprehensive Plan

CMS Central Main Street District (added in 2013)

The purpose of this district is to “increase the vitality, attractiveness, and marketability of Main Street and the Central Business District by providing more flexibility of land use while maintaining and enhancing urban form as recommended in the City’s Comprehensive Plan.” Provisions in the code are intended to promote a vibrant public realm with a mix of uses. Residences are allowed on upper floors.

L Linkage District (added in 2013)

The Linkage District was created to implement the general intent of the Linkages Plan developed by the City. Regulations encourage residential development to help support Main Street businesses and to “create a vibrant, economically successful, walkable, and environmentally sustainable connection between Beacon’s Central Business District and the train station and riverfront.” The district allows residential uses excepting single family units, hotels/inns, artist studios and parks. Retail is allowed by special permit provided the use is less than 5,000 square feet and it is within 400 feet of the Route 9D-Beekman Street intersection. Office and manufacturing uses less than 25,000 square feet near the same intersection are also allowed by special permit.

Waterfront Districts

The three districts promote positive development and revitalization of waterfront areas in a manner consistent with the City’s LWRP. The districts permit types and intensities of uses compatible with each districts’ waterfront location as well as surrounding land uses. Regulations promote the protection of natural resources at the water’s edge, while providing for development commensurate with the public services and facilities in the area.

WP Waterfront Park Zone (WP)

The WP Zone includes the publicly owned lands of Denning’s Point and Riverfront Park. Provisions in the district ensure that proposed uses of these areas in the district remain primarily open space uses. The WP Zone allows for park and other recreational facilities that are related to the waterfront (i.e. swimming, fishing, boating and wildlife viewing).

WD Waterfront Development Zone (WD)

The WD Zone includes the privately owned property of the Long Dock Peninsula. The purpose of this district is to “stimulate the revitalization of the City and its waterfront by establishing a well-designed central focus for the City’s waterfront area.” Regulations encourage a comprehensively planned development at and around the Long Dock Peninsula that will have a high standard of site planning and

architectural design. A high priority is placed on increasing public access to the waterfront. The district allows for land uses consistent with the City's LWRP, including multi-family residential and waterfront commercial uses. All projects would include a waterfront development concept plan which shows the designation of land uses for the development of the Peninsula.

FCD Fishkill Creek Development District (added in 2010)

This district encourages the development/redevelopment of underutilized industrial properties along the Fishkill Creek with a mix of residential and nonresidential uses. The development of greenways for public recreation are encouraged along the Hudson River and Fishkill Creek as well as linkages to trails towards the Hudson Highlands and the slopes of Mount Beacon. Principal uses include apartments and multi-family dwellings, artist live/work spaces, inns, spas, restaurants, small business offices, galleries, community facility buildings, and light industrial uses. A Fishkill Creek development may be a single use, or a mixed use which incorporates various permitted land use elements as part of a comprehensive development plan.

Other Zones

Historic District and Landmark Overlay Zone (HDLO)

HDLO encourages "the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of buildings and structures and appurtenant vistas having special historical or aesthetic value which represent or reflect elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history." Exterior alteration of landmarks or properties within the district must obtain a certificate of appropriateness from the Planning Board or a certificate of economic hardship from the Zoning Board. This is not needed for interior alterations, or to architectural features not visible from a public street.

Senior Affordable Housing Overlay (SAHO) District

The SAHO District promotes affordable housing opportunities for seniors through the adaptive reuse of buildings more than 50 years old. A senior affordable housing project may consist of affordable studio/efficiencies, one-bedroom and two-bedroom dwelling units. There only area designated as SAHO is Saint Francis Hospital on Hastings Drive in the northeast portion of the City.

2.3. Land Use and Zoning Goals and Recommendations

GOAL:

Maintain the character of established neighborhoods, protect and preserve sensitive ecological areas and encourage the development of the Central Business District, the Waterfront/Train Station area and underutilized industrial sites along Fishkill Creek.

OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. *Compatible Land Uses and Densities*

Land should be distributed in a compatible arrangement so that conflicts between various uses and intensities are avoided and so that harmonious land uses are encouraged to locate near each other.

Regulations:

- 2.1 Regulate house size in relation to lot size promote housing at a scale that is contextual with established neighborhoods.
- 2.2 Discourage land subdivisions that will create lots with out-of-scale housing development. Encourage or require clustered housing wherever lots are 20,000 square feet in area or greater.

B. *Focus Growth in the Central Business District*

Encourage growth in and around the Central Business District, rather than spreading out along Route 9D and Route 52. Focus areas for greater densities should be within the City's central commercial core and the waterfront/train station area.

- 2.3 In portions of the R1-5 area closest to Main Street, consider reducing setback requirements to allow slightly larger footprints of homes on small lots (generally 50-feet by 100 feet). Current setback requirements limit the footprint of homes, effectively limiting density in an area where there is an important community interest in increasing density.
- 2.4 Additional recommendations for Main Street are provided in Chapter 4.

C. Encourage Development of Activity Centers along Main Street

Work with local business associations to encourage the development of different activity centers along Main Street. Each activity center should feature public open spaces (i.e. a pocket park) and should be served by public transportation.

- 2.5 Prepare an urban design plan concurrently with zoning amendments for Main Street to coordinate redevelopment and the location of new outdoor public spaces in the central business district.
- 2.6 Encourage public/private partnerships for the development of both public and private, interior and exterior spaces along Main Street.
- 2.7 Encourage trolley service along Main Street with stops at activity nodes (see Section 4.2)

D. Neighborhood Stores

Maintain and support local shopping areas that serve everyday needs or a distinct market niche. These shopping areas should remain at a small scale so as not to detract from the major commercial centers, and with a design that is harmonious within the neighborhood context.

- 2.8 Maintain LB (Local Business) Districts as presently indicated; evaluate the costs and benefits of any other isolated local businesses that may be pre-existing non-conforming uses in residential or other zones, and rezone accordingly.
- 2.9 Consider limiting the square footage of all non-residential uses in the LB District.
- 2.10 Neighborhood stores should have appropriate design that is harmonious within the existing built fabric.

E. Waterfront/Train Station Area

Encourage appropriate development which will improve conceptual and physical connections between Main Street and the waterfront/train station area.

Recommendations for the Waterfront and Train Station Area are provided in Chapter 10.

F. Brownfield Redevelopment

Encourage the remediation and development of underutilized former industrial sites which ~~are~~ potentially may be polluted, and the adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

- 2.11 Change the zoning for former industrial sites along Fishkill Creek to allow for residential development or a mix of uses as specified in the Future Land Use Plan.

G. Regulation of Development

All development should be of high architectural quality and should be related to the scale and pattern of the existing built environment. The City shall maintain strong enforcement of building codes and improve regulatory standards for architectural design. The City shall also encourage high environmental standards for construction of new buildings and retrofitting of existing buildings.

- 2.12 The current standard of “not too similar, not too dissimilar” is not adequate. Revise Chapter 86 of City Code to establish clear, more objective standards which relate to the Secretary of the Interior’s standards for Rehabilitation (which are the basis for tax credits). These include the following excerpt from Standard #3, “each new property shall be recognized as a physical record of its own time, place and use.” New construction should respect its neighbors with regards to setback, orientation, scale, and proportion; massing, height, details and rhythm, however new and innovative design shall be encouraged when said design respects the aforementioned principles. These guidelines have been established in the CMS and L zoning districts. Detailed and descriptive guidelines shall be developed for Main Street, where more similarity is important, and made available through a publicly accessible format via the Beacon city website, the Planning Board, and/or a Building Department handout, resulting in more predictable and efficient applications.
- 2.13 Amend the Code to specify that applications involving only changes of use from a more intense use of land to an equal or less intense use of land should be reviewed by the Building Department when proposed in particular areas, such as in the Central Business District. Alternatively, the City could amend the Code so that applications meeting criteria such as described above could be processed by the Planning Board without holding a public hearing.

H. Implement land use regulations that promote sustainability.

- 2.14 Encourage new development to adhere to LEED and LEED Equivalency standards.
- 2.15 Increase permeable surfaces through green infrastructure projects (e.g. green roofs, rain gardens, permeable pavers, and bioswales).
- 2.16 Reduce stormwater run-off from all municipal owned grounds and structures. Review floodplain development regulations in light of sea level rise projections.

Section 3: Population and Residential Development

The homes of Beacon, whether single-family or multi-family, renter- or owner-occupied, provide the social and physical context for daily living, and the foundations for the City's economy. This chapter provides an analysis of the state of residential development in the City, and goals, objectives, and recommendations for preservation and development. Also, by examining the population of Beacon, this chapter involves not just an accounting of the total number of people living in the City, but also an analysis of the demographics of the City, including the numbers of people in different age groups, racial and ethnic groups, and economic groups. The analysis of demographic trends helps us understand where the City has been and where it is going.

3.1. Demographic Conditions and Trends

The City's population has remained relatively stable over the past eight decades, while rural communities in Dutchess County grew rapidly following the 1950s, and the population of nearby cities fell dramatically for several decades, rebounding somewhat in the past two decades. The City's current population of 14,347 is slightly more than its 1950 population of 14,012. Beacon's population has been increasing slowly but steadily since 1980. As seen in Table 3-1, the City's population increased by 10.9 percent from 1980 to its population of 14,347 in 2015. This growth rate outpaced some of its neighbors, including the City of Poughkeepsie (+2.1%) but has been slower than growth in the City of Newburgh (+20.7%).

Table 3-1: Population of the City of Beacon & Surrounding Communities, 1980 to 2015

Year	City of Beacon	City of Newburgh	City of Poughkeepsie	Town of Wappinger	Town of Fishkill
Population Count					
1980	12,937	23,438	29,757	26,776	15,506
1990	13,243	26,454	28,844	26,008	17,655
2000	14,810	28,259	29,871	26,274	19,256
2010	14,599	28,866	31,045	27,048	23,049
2015	14,347	28,290	30,371	N/A	N/A
Percent Change					
1980-1990	+2.4%	+12.9%	-3.1%	-2.9%	+13.9%
1990-2000	+11.8%	+6.8%	+3.6%	+1.0%	+9.1%
2000-2010	-1.4%	+2.1%	+3.9%	+2.9%	+19.7%
2010-2015	-1.7%	-2.0%	-2.2%	N/A	N/A
1980-2015	+10.9%	+20.7%	+2.1%	N/A	N/A

Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses & 2015 Annual Resident Population Estimate.

The population data does not account for recent development in the City, which includes approximately 500 units built in 2016 and 500 units planned for 2017. This growth will be shown in 2020 Census data. Population forecasts provided by ESRI² show that Beacon will continue attract new residents in the near future. It is anticipated that over the period from 2010 to 2021, Beacon will add 1,455 residents, a gain of 10 percent. As seen in Table 3-2 the projected population growth is larger than those of its neighbors.

Table 3-2: Population of the City of Beacon & Surrounding Communities, 2010-2021

Year	City of Beacon	City of Newburgh	City of Poughkeepsie	Town of Wappinger	Town of Fishkill
2010 (historic)	14,599	28,866	31,045	27,048	23,049
2021 (forecasted)	16,054	30,473	31,964	28,265	23,600
Change, 2010-2021	+10.0%	+5.6%	+3.0%	+4.5%	+2.4%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census & ESRI Population Forecasts, 2021.

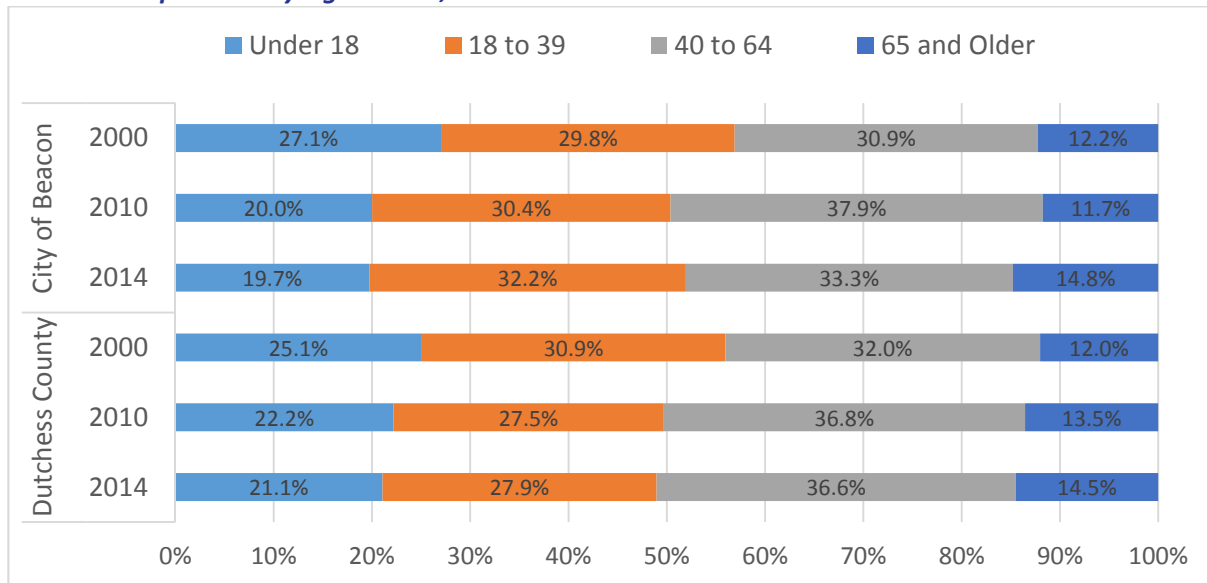
Age

Like the rest of the County and the State, Beacon has seen increases in the size of its senior population. Between 2000 and 2014 the median age of Beacon residents increased by 2.3 years from 36.4 to 38.7. Beacon residents remain slightly younger than Dutchess County residents as a whole, which had a median age of 40.8 in 2014. The share of seniors aged 65 or older increased in both the City of Beacon and Dutchess County, from one-in-eight to one-in-seven residents.

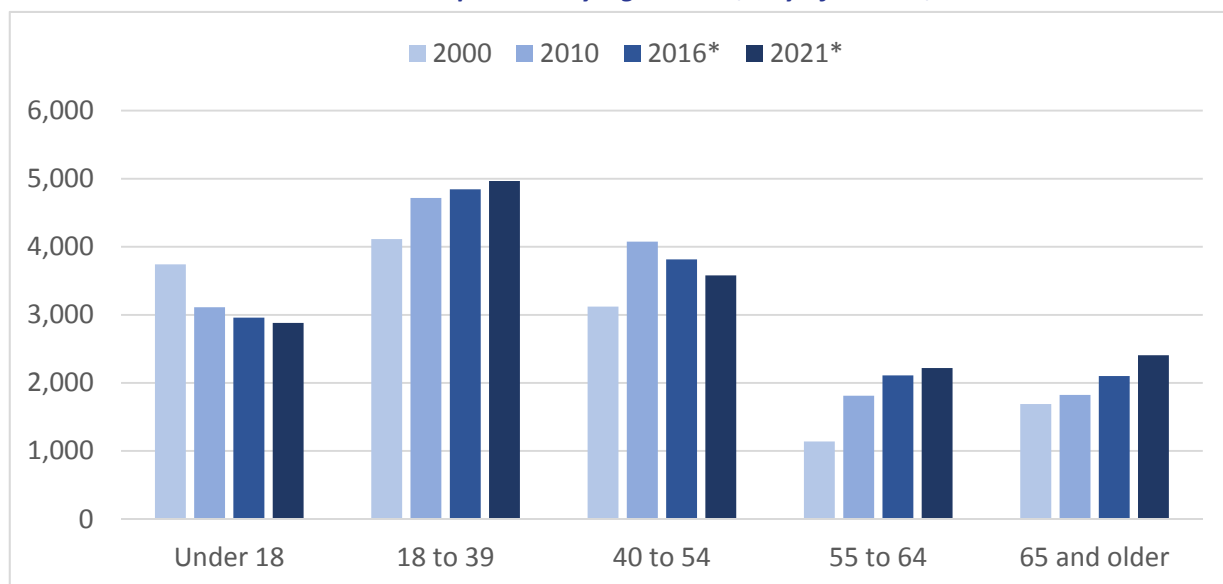
As seen in Chart 3-1, the population of residents under the age of 18 has fallen in the past five years. Roughly one-fifth of both residents in the County and in Beacon were under age 18 in 2014, down from more than a quarter in 2000. The share of the supportive or working age population (aged 18-64) in Beacon climbed almost 5 percentage points to 65.5 percent of the population. In terms of economic and fiscal health, this type of growth ensures a large labor force capable of paying local taxes and improvements in public services.

Decennial Census data and ESRI population forecasts (see Chart 3-2) suggest that Beacon will continue its recent trend of attracting early stage families and young adults aged 18 to 39 in addition to empty nesters and seniors aged 55 and older through the next five years. The share of youth under age 18 and the population aged 40 to 54 are both expected to decrease. The declining population under 18 means that there will be fewer school children and less pressure to expand school facilities.

² ESRI population forecasts are prepared for household and group quarters populations using the 2010 Decennial Census as a base year with annual updates informed by county-to-county migration data from the IRS, building permits and housing starts, plus residential postal delivery counts. Additional data inputs on household change are obtained from Experian and Metrostudy, a Hanley Wood company, in addition to several ancillary sources.

Chart 3-1: Population by Age Cohort, 2000-2014

Source: US Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses & ACS 2010-2014 5-Year Estimate.

Chart 3-2: Historic and Forecasted Population by Age Cohort, City of Beacon, 2000 to 2021

Note: (*) ESRI Population Projections

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 & 2010 Decennial Censuses, ESRI 2016 & 2021 Population Projections

Race-Ethnicity

The demography of the City has changed over the years, and Beacon has become more ethnically and culturally diverse. In 2014 the City of Beacon was more diverse than Dutchess County; just over half of the population identifies as White non-Hispanic (56.9%) compared to 73.5 percent of Dutchess County residents overall. As shown in Table 3-3, Hispanics are the most prevalent minority group at 20.2 percent of the total population in Beacon, followed by Black or African American Non-Hispanic residents at 17.3 percent.

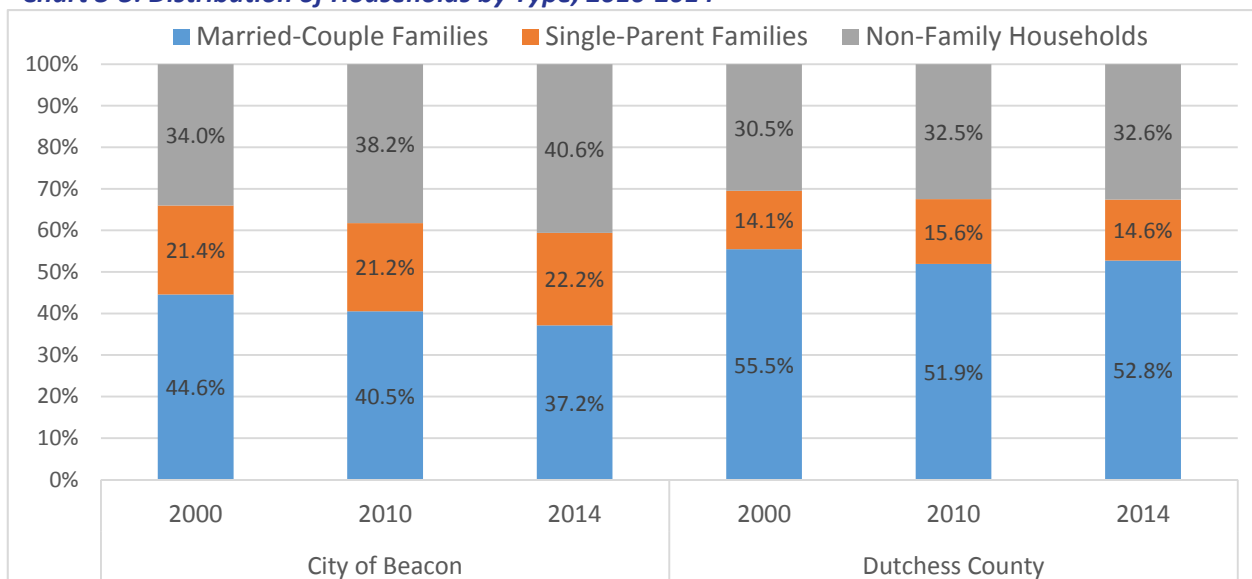
Table 3-3: Population by Mutually Exclusive Race-Ethnicity, City of Beacon, 2000 to 2014

	Count			Change	
	2000	2010	2014	2000-2010	2010-2014
Total population	13,808	15,541	14,437	+12.6%	-7.1%
White, non-Hispanic	8,377	8,333	8,211	-0.5%	-1.5%
Black or African American, non-Hispanic	2,556	3,232	2,494	+26.4%	-22.8%
Asian/Other, non-Hispanic	232	355	312	+53.0%	-12.1%
Two or more races, non-Hispanic	309	402	499	+30.1%	+24.1%
Hispanic or Latino	2,334	3,219	2,921	+37.9%	-9.3%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000-2010 Decennial Censuses & ACS 2010-2014 5-Year Estimate.

Household Formation

The number of households in Beacon has increased approximately seven percent from 2000 to 2014, which is comparable to household gains for Dutchess County. Much of this growth in the City can be attributed to increased non-family households, including people who live alone or who share their residence with unrelated individuals. Over the 15-year period, these types of households increased in number by 27.8 percent while traditional married-couple families have decreased by 10.7 percent. Single-parent households increased by just over 10 percent. The share of Beacon households with children has dropped from 38.0 to 29.1 percent from 2000 to 2014, mirroring a similar decline in the County. If these trends continue over the long-term, demand for housing will expand even if the population decreases.

Chart 3-3: Distribution of Households by Type, 2010-2014

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000-2010 Decennial Censuses & ACS 2010-2014 5-Year Estimate.

Educational Attainment

As the City of Beacon's economy has increasingly diversified beyond manufacturing and embraced the creative economy, the share of highly educated residents has proliferated. Since 2000, the City of Beacon has experienced a steady gain in the number of residents aged 25 or older with a college degree or higher. At the same time, the number of residents with less than a high school diploma has fallen sharply. As a share of the population aged 25 or older, residents with four years of college or more increased from 18.8 percent in 2000 to 30.5 percent in 2014 while those without a high school diploma fell from 22.4 percent to 12.1 percent.

Labor Force Participation

According to the US Census Bureau, from 2000 to the 5 year period from 2010 to 2014³, Beacon's labor force expanded by 1,208 workers, an increase of 18.7 percent. Relatively speaking, this gain was larger than that experienced at the County level and was largely driven by an influx of minorities and millennials seeking employment. As job growth failed to keep up with population growth, the unemployment rate rose during this period from 5.7 percent in 2000 up to 11.5 percent in 2014. The labor force participation rate peaked in 2010 at 65.3 percent then edged down to 63.0 percent in 2014.

³ The Census Bureau's American Community Survey trends are drawn from estimates over two 5-year periods, 2006 to 2010 and 2010 to 2014, showing the change in economic conditions prior to and following the 2007-2009 recession.

Household Income

Beacon experienced declines in the number of households at both the upper and lower tiers of the income spectrum from 2006 to 2014,⁴ a sign that wealth has increased primarily among upper middle-class households.⁵ The drop among those middle-class households earning \$50,000 to \$99,999 (Shown in Table 3-4) suggests that middle income households may have found themselves priced out of a once highly affordable city as housing prices have surpassed gains in income.

Table 3-4: Households by Annual Household Income, City of Beacon & Dutchess County, 2010-2014

	2010		2014		Change, 2010-2014	
	Dutchess County	City of Beacon	Dutchess County	City of Beacon	Dutchess County	City of Beacon
Total households	106,952	5,789	106,898	5,452	-0.1%	-5.8%
Less than \$50,000	37,605	2,541	36,668	2,374	-2.5%	-6.6%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	36,298	1,896	34,107	1,584	-6.0%	-16.5%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	19,512	922	19,655	1,042	+0.7%	+13.0%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	7,737	222	9,040	345	+16.8%	+55.4%
\$200,000 or more	5,800	208	7,428	107	+28.1%	-48.6%

Source: US Census Bureau, ACS 2006-2010 and 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates.

From 1999 to 2014, the City of Beacon and Dutchess County's median household income climbed by 39.9 percent and 36.5 percent, respectively (see Table 3-5). This does not consider the effects of inflation over time. In both areas, the adjusted median household income failed to keep up to pace with inflation, decreasing by 1.5 and 3.9 percent respectively.⁶

Table 3-5: Median Household Income (Unadjusted), 1999-2014

	Median Income			Percent Change	
	1999	2010	2014	2000-2010	2010-2014
City of Beacon	\$ 45,236	\$ 60,987	\$ 63,284	+34.8%	+3.8%
Dutchess County	\$ 53,086	\$ 69,838	\$ 72,471	+31.6%	+3.8%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 SF3, ACS 2006-2010 & 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates.

⁴ The Census Bureau's American Community Survey trends are drawn from estimates over two 5-year periods, 2006 to 2010 and 2010 to 2014, showing the change in economic conditions prior to and following the 2007-2009 recession.

⁵ It should be noted that the Census Bureau measurement of money income does not reflect income-producing investments such as stocks, bonds, or income from rental property which could substantially elevate the upper income bracket affluence.

⁶ According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, annual inflation in the New York area, measured as the monthly price of urban food and services, rose 42 percent over the period from 1999 to 2014.

3.2. Housing Conditions and Trends

Housing Supply

The City of Beacon has experienced a steady gain in housing development since 2000 (see Table 3-6), adding 456 units from 2000 to 2014 (+8.4%). Dutchess County added 12,745 units over that period, a gain of 12 percent.

According to the Census Bureau's Building Permit Survey, Beacon's Buildings Department issued 434 building permits for new units from 2000 to 2015 of which just over half (53.5%) were issued for single-family homes. Multifamily housing accounted for the remainder of building permits including four permits for buildings with 3-4 units and 198 permits for buildings with 5+ units.

Table 3-6: Housing Supply

	Count			Percent Change	
	2000	2010	2014	2000-2010	2010-2014
City of Beacon	5,406	5,715	5,862	+5.7%	+2.6%
Dutchess County	106,103	118,638	118,848	+11.8%	+0.2%

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000-2010 Decennial Censuses & ACS 2010-2014 5-Year Estimate.

Vacancies and Tenure

According to the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey, rental vacancy rates fell from 7.4 percent to 5.5 percent from 2010 to 2014, a sign that rental markets are somewhat weak with little growth in rents. These rates were slightly less than the County as a whole. Since 2000, the homeowner vacancy rate in Beacon has remained very low, falling below 1 percent in 2014, a sign that homeowner turnover is minimal and homeowner values are rising sharply. Census data show that from 2000 to 2014, there was absolute and relative growth in renter households as well as reductions in the number of homeowner households in the City. If current trends continue, rental households will likely become the majority over the next decade.

Units in Structure

Regionally, single-family housing remains the dominant form of residential development, though in the last few years, it has become slightly less common as multi-family housing construction has increased. In Beacon, since 2000 the share of single-family homes has dropped by approximately 4 percent (to 55.7 percent) while the share of multi-family units increased by 4 percent (to 44.2 percent). In Dutchess County, the share of single family housing units saw a minimal decline of just a single percentage point. In terms of actual units, single-family homes in Beacon increased by 42 units (+1.3%) as multi-family housing expanded by 422 units (+19.4%). Despite a gain in multi-family housing, the City of Beacon has

largely maintained its small city character, largely due to the expansion of moderate-density residential buildings.

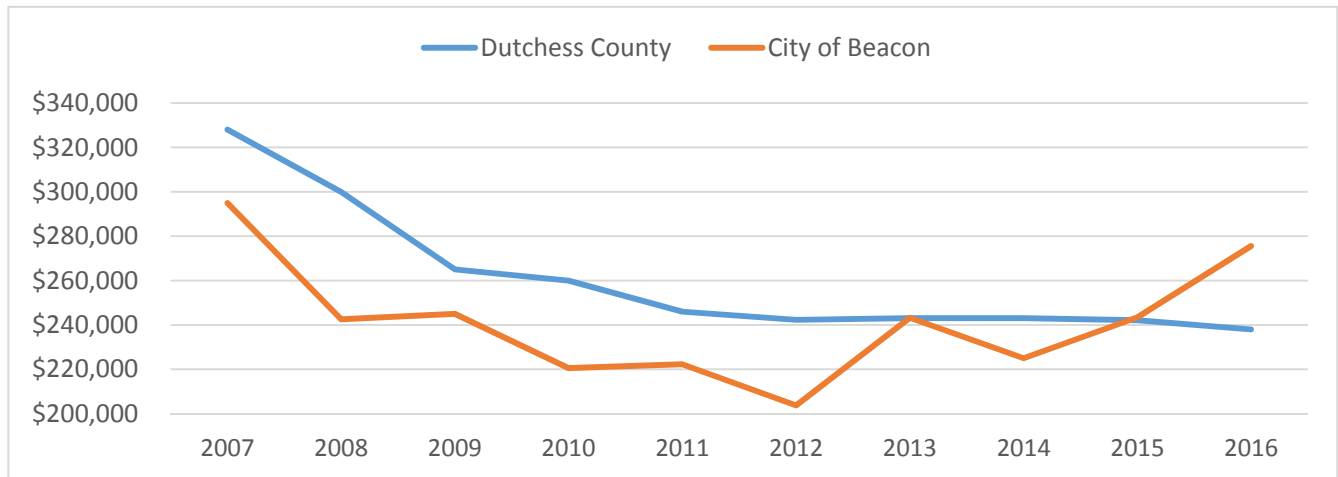
Housing Costs

Housing costs in both Beacon and Dutchess County far exceeded the 42 percent rise in national inflation over the period from 1999 to 2014. Among renter households, the median cost of housing, including both rent and utilities, increased by roughly 60 percent in both the City and the County, an 18 percent rise beyond inflation. For homeowners, those with a mortgage saw housing costs rise by 62.8 percent in the County and 76.8 percent in Beacon while those without mortgages saw housing costs increase by 83.3 percent in Dutchess County and 81.2 percent, nearly double the rise in inflation. By 2014, housing costs in Beacon had risen to levels close but slightly less than those in Dutchess County. Median monthly rental payments reached \$1,061 in Beacon compared with \$1,124 in the County while monthly housing costs for mortgage holders reached \$2,109 in Beacon, \$167 less than those housing costs in the County.

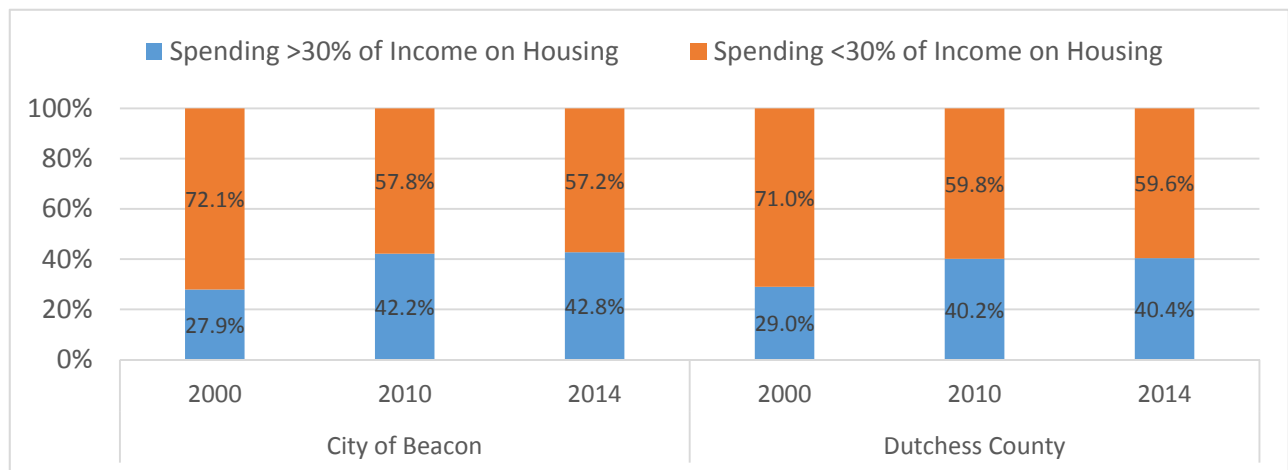
According to Houlihan Lawrence, a leading realty services firm in the region, median single family home sales prices in the City of Beacon have been on the rise from a 10-year low in 2012 of \$203,723 (see Chart 3-4) while home sales in Dutchess County have steadily declined since 2007. The City has historically maintained lower housing prices than the County, but that trend started to change in 2013 when median home sales were equal in both areas. By 2016, Beacon had a higher median sales price than the County for the first time since 2007 (\$275,525 in Beacon compared with \$238,000 in Dutchess County). While neither the City of Beacon nor the County have fully recovered from the recession of 2007-2009, single-family housing prices in Beacon remain just 6.6 percent below 2007 levels, while prices in the County are down 27.4 percent.

Affordability

While the national economy has greatly improved since the financial crisis of 2007-2008, housing affordability continues to be a major cause for concern in the region. In both the City of Beacon and the County, the share of households that spend more than 30 percent of their income on costs, such as mortgage or rent payments and utility bills, an indicator of housing cost burdened households, has remained largely unchanged over the period from 2010 to 2014 (see Chart 3-5). The share of cost burdened households remains high, accounting for 42.8 percent of Beacon households in 2014, up from 27.9 percent in 2000. This trend was also seen in Dutchess County, signifying that the regional supply of affordable housing remains low and largely unchanged in recent years. The long-term growth in housing-cost burdened households is likely a result of reduced household income due to changes in the regional economy.

Chart 3-4: Median Single Family Home Sales Price, 2007-2016

Source: Houlihan Lawrence and MHMLS, 2016.

Chart 3-5: Housing Cost Affordability, 2000-2014

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 SF3, ACS 2006-2010 & 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates.

3.3. Population and Residential Development Goals and Recommendations

This sections provides goals, objectives and recommendations for preservation and development of residential housing. These goals were informed not only by an analysis of the state of housing, but through public outreach and discussion of issues and needs. A public survey completed for the 2007 Plan showed that Beacon residents favor single-family homes on mid-sized lots, as well as homes for seniors and homes for low- and moderate-income residents. Many people participating in the visioning workshops for the 2007 Plan valued Beacon's diverse population, including cultural, racial, and economic diversity. Both newcomers and long-term residents stressed the importance of the affordability of housing in Beacon as a factor for choosing to live in the City. Participants expressed a desire for affordable housing with high standards of architectural quality, for both single-family and multi-family types of housing. Many felt that there should be a City-wide housing policy encouraging or requiring affordable/workforce housing in all areas of the City.

Workshop participants felt that new single-family housing in the City has been too large and out of scale with the character of the adjacent areas and the City as a whole. Many agreed that housing density on and near Main Street should be increased, particularly in the area between Elm and Teller; participants felt that more people living in the vicinity of Main Street would help ensure the economic vitality of Main Street. Some participants also wanted to see denser residential development around the train station. Finally, some workshop participants expressed a belief that there continued to be an unmet demand for artist live/work space.

Part of the 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update included a public workshop that asked participants to reflect on goals adopted in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan. Participants strongly agreed with promoting housing that maintains the scale and pattern of the existing built environment with high architectural qualities. Participants were also supportive of the idea of developing an urban design plan for Beacon's waterfront and the area around the train station. Participants also supported developing housing affordable to residents who were raised in Beacon and ensuring affordability for the growing artist community in the City.

The Plan's recommendations, listed below, will guide future development in areas that can feasibly accommodate residential growth, while preserving natural, historic and cultural resources. They will help meet the demand of alternative housing options for Beacon's growing workforce and senior populations and protect existing housing stock, helping to preserve the City's quality of life and character.

GOALS:

The City, through its zoning and other policies should:

1. Strive to maintain a variety of housing opportunities that are accessible to a wide variety of income levels;
2. Preserve the existing density and settlement pattern of established neighborhoods;
3. Encourage housing development at relatively greater densities within and adjacent to the central business district and the Waterfront/Train Station area;
4. Encourage residential development of vacant and underutilized former industrial sites; and
5. Ensure continued racial, ethnic, age and economic diversity of the population through encouraging a wide range of housing choices.

OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. *Variety of Housing and Diverse Income Levels*

Housing should be provided across a wide range of size, type and character, and should be provided for all income levels.

- 3.1 Ensure that City taxing methods do not unduly burden existing moderate-income homeowners and those on fixed incomes. The City should periodically compare taxes for a sample of properties with incomes in various brackets. If taxes are found to be unduly burdensome, the City should focus on alternative sources of tax revenue, such as expanding the base of commercial properties, or other revenue-generating sources.
- 3.2 Encourage the provision of work/live housing to support the burgeoning artist and craftsman community in the City.
- 3.3 Study where to encourage or require a percentage of privately constructed affordable/workforce housing as a portion of market-rate development. Zoning regulations should be adjusted according to the capacities of the market to produce such housing, as well as the infrastructure capacities of the city and consideration of neighborhood character.

- 3.4 Provide incentives, such as increased density, for including affordable housing as defined in residential development projects. All affordable housing units so constructed should be consistent with the exterior architectural quality of market-rate housing in the same development, and may be smaller in size, so long as they are similar in exterior appearance to market rate housing. The City currently requires 10% workforce housing in developments with 20 or more units. The City is also in the process of developing new recommendations and regulations that support affordable housing.

B. Senior Housing

Encourage the development of age-restricted housing, senior housing and assisted living facilities to meet the needs of the City's senior population.

- 3.5 Actively encourage housing types frequently preferred by seniors, such as flats and townhomes with master bedrooms on the same floor as kitchens, dining areas, and living rooms.
- 3.6 Encourage senior housing in locations near transit.

Section 4: Commercial, Office and Industrial Development

This section looks at the location and type of retail, office, and industrial development and other activities. Existing economic conditions, such as employment trends and labor resources, as well as growth trends and regional context are also covered.

The traditional settlement pattern of the City naturally focuses transportation, social activity and economic activity along the spine of Main Street, and as such, it is the most important civic space in the City. Economic development is important to the continued revitalization of Main Street, for the development of good jobs, for the production of a satisfactory variety of goods and services, and for a strong tax base that can reduce pressure on residential property taxes.

The key areas that drive economic activity in the City include Main Street, which is made up of different segments with very different characteristics (e.g., the East, ~~Middle~~ Central and West Main Street ends); the City's natural resources, including the waterfront and Mount Beacon which provide tourism opportunities; the concentration of industrial buildings along Fishkill Creek, many of which are potentially suitable for restoration or redevelopment; Dia:Beacon and other cultural assets that have positioned Beacon as a major regional tourist destination and a center for the arts and industry; and Beacon's transportation assets, including the Metro-North station. Not to be lost is the positive impact that the schools, libraries and various non-profit partners play in Beacon's resurgence. All of these elements are significant factors in the future economic development and health of the City of Beacon.

4.1. Local Business Trends

Establishment Trends

According to the US Census Bureau's Economic Survey, Beacon added 40 additional firms (20% increase) over the period from 2007 to 2012 as revenues expanded from \$210.5 million to \$236.6 million. All of the sectors aside from the Real Estate sector expanded, with the largest gains in retail, manufacturing; information; administration, support, waste management and remediation services.

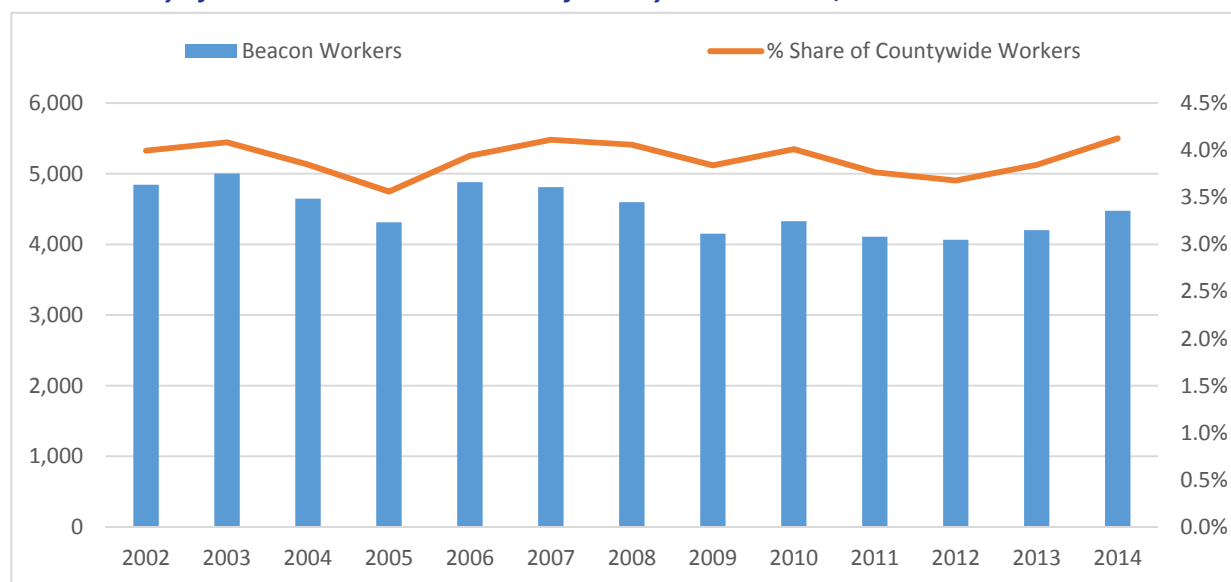
Employment Trends

Over the period from 2002 to 2014, the number of jobs within the City of Beacon hovered around 4,000 to 5,000 in total, falling from 4,845 to 4,151 from 2002 to 2009, then increasing to 4,475 by 2014 (see Chart 13). Since 2007, the City of Beacon lost 7 percent of its jobs (-335), slightly less than the relative

rate of job losses in Dutchess County (-7.3%). Beacon experienced major job losses in 2003 and 2004, unaffected by Countywide trends, and saw employment levels reach a 12 year low in 2012 followed by moderate growth from 2012 to 2014(+10.1%).

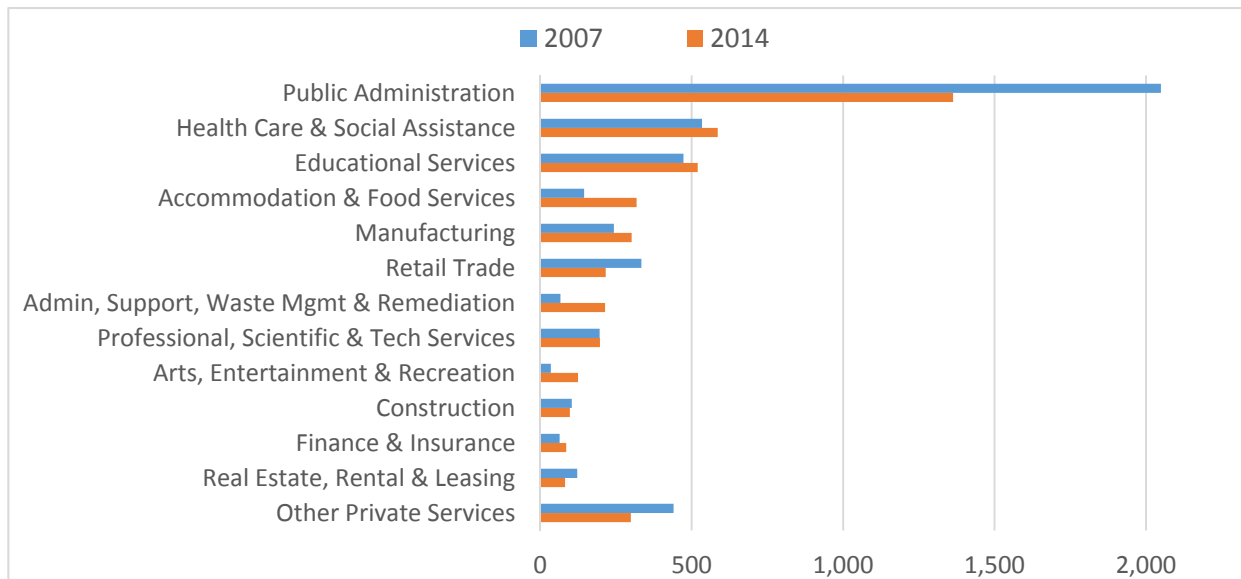
During the recent recovery from 2012 to 2014, job gains were highest among higher-income workers. Over this period, job gains among workers 25 years or older were highest among those with 1-4 years of college (43.6%) followed by workers with a Bachelor's degree or higher education (25.7%) with less than a high school education (16.2%) and those with a high school education (14.5%). These demographic trends among recent hires suggest that the City of Beacon's employment base is becoming increasingly both higher educated and better paid, all signs that the City is becoming more oriented toward a service economy.

Chart 4-1: City of Beacon Workers and Share of Countywide Workers, 2002-2014



Source: US Census Bureau, LEHD Program & QCEW.

In 2014, Public Administration remained the largest industry sector in the City with 1,363 jobs, though the industry lost 686 workers from 2007 to 2014 (see Chart 14), mirroring a trend among government agencies across the nation in response to a reduced tax base following the 2007-2009 recession. Aside from Retail and Construction which also both suffered job losses, eight of the City's 10 largest industry sectors all experienced job gains.

Chart 4-2: City of Beacon Workers by Industry Sector, 2007 & 2014

Source: US Census Bureau, LEHD Program & QCEW.

Retail Trends

According to the Census Bureau's Economic Census (see Table 8), the City of Beacon saw growth in the retail sector from 2007 to 2012, with the addition of three establishments, growth in revenues from \$128,623,000 to \$144,552,000 and employment increasing from 246 to 250 workers.⁷ Estimates of the retail sector by ESRI and InfoGroup provide a more up-to-date and detailed view of the industry. These estimates show that the retail sector is diverse including a broad selection of convenience and luxury goods.

⁷ Given the small size of the economy, data for several retail subsectors were withheld due to privacy concerns.

Table 4-1: City of Beacon Estimated Retail & Food Establishments, 2016

	Firms	
	Count	Percent
Total	149	100.0%
Food Services & Drinking Places	52	34.9%
Retail Trade	97	65.1%
Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers	9	6.0%
Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores	4	2.7%
Electronics & Appliance Stores	7	4.7%
Building Material & Garden Equipment & Supplies Dealers	1	0.7%
Food & Beverage Stores	15	10.1%
Health & Personal Care Stores	11	7.4%
Gasoline Stations	4	2.7%
Clothing & Clothing Accessories Stores	11	7.4%
Sport Goods, Hobby, Book, & Music Stores	5	3.4%
General Merchandise Stores	4	2.7%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	24	16.1%
Nonstore Retailers	2	1.3%

Source: ESRI & InfoGroup, 2016

Gaps Analysis of Retail and Restaurant Activity

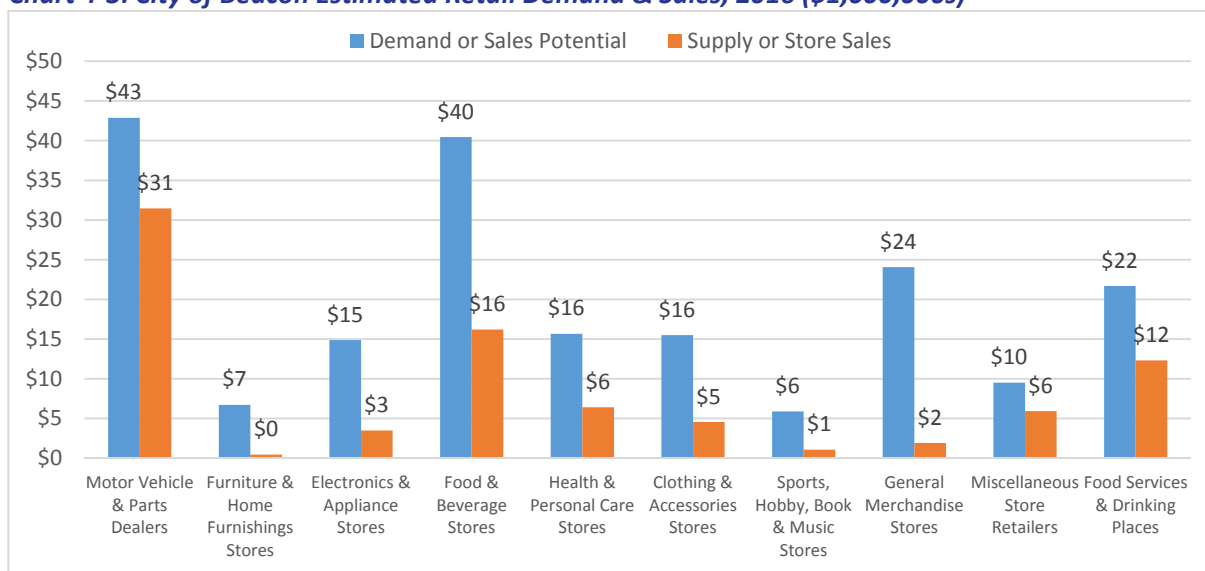
The total value of Retail Trade and Food Services sales in the City of Beacon was estimated at \$90.1 million in 2016.⁸ The demand, or retail sales potential estimated by the market size and disposable income of the resident community was \$223.2 million. Therefore, the local supply or retail sales falls short of demand or retail sales potential by \$133.0 million. This deficit suggests that the volume of retail and restaurant activity in the City is less than half that of local demand. Since this analysis does not account for demand from non-residents including visitors to Dia:Beacon and Mt. Beacon, actual demand is likely far greater, especially among restaurants and drinking places.

As the City's retail sector is concentrated along Main Street in the form of traditional storefronts, much of Beacon's retail sector is structured to serve the local community. At the same time, Dia:Beacon, the nation's largest contemporary arts museum, has been largely responsible for the City's transformation as a top destination for the arts in the Hudson Valley with 105,000 annual visitors in 2015. The weekenders and tourists that are drawn both to Dia and Mt. Beacon (roughly 30,000 visitors annually) as well as the city's transplant population of musicians, writers, artists, and art-enthusiasts strongly support the city's large concentration of art galleries, cafes and restaurants.

⁸ Source: ESRI Retail MarketPlace Profile & InfoGroup, 2016

Just two store types exceed local demand in Beacon: Alcoholic Drinking Places as well as Beer, Wine and Liquor Stores. Together, sales at these establishments exceeded local demand by \$493,500 or 13.8 percent, likely the result of both regional tourism and weekend visitors from surrounding communities. All other store types have unmet demand. It is likely that this demand is being met in neighboring towns with shopping centers along high traffic roads where accessibility is strong such as in the Town of Fishkill at the Dutchess Mall (580,000 SF), Hudson Valley Towne Center (100,000 SF), Fishkill Plaza (126,000 SF) and in the City of Newburgh at the Mid Valley Mall (244,400 SF), The LOOP-Hudson Valley (650,000 SF), Newburgh Plaza (248,000 SF), and Newburgh Mall (380,000 SF).

Chart 4-3: City of Beacon Estimated Retail Demand & Sales, 2016 (\$1,000,000s)



Note: Building Materials, Gasoline, and Nonstore Retailers were excluded because they are not urban retail uses

Source: ESRI & InfoGroup, 2016

Trends in the composition of retailers and revenues suggest that Main Street has become reenergized in recent years. A count of new retailers by Urbanomics found 14 clothing retailers, with all but one opening since 2007, and 15 art galleries including seven that have opened since 2007. As sales potential has increased, older general merchandise retailers have been replaced by niche retailers that offer unique high-quality products that command greater sales prices. Main Street continues to be dominated by small independent business owners, but as sales potential increases, higher rents may follow.

Retail Trends

According to asking prices provided by LoopNet and Gate House Realty in September 2016, there were just four retail properties for rent, all located on Main Street. Asking rents ranging from \$16 to \$35 per square foot on an annual basis with an average rate of \$27. Average retail rates were nearly 70 percent higher than those in Dutchess County at \$18 per square foot. Three retail properties for sale were all located beyond Main Street and ranged in price from \$82 to \$317 per square foot with an average price of \$183 per square foot.

Little new retail space has been constructed in recent years, while older industrial buildings are increasingly being converted for retail use. One East Main Street, a former industrial building, is currently being converted into a mixed-use property with five retail spaces totaling 5,500 square feet, and 426 Main Street is being converted into a hotel with a roof-top restaurant.

Office Trends

Table 10 provides an overview of the range of service sector industries. The largest sector (by number of workers) is professional, scientific and technical services (23.4% of office workers), followed by Real Estate, Rental and Leasing (19.9% of office workers), Administrative, Support, Waste Management and Remediation Services (13.5% of office workers).

The City has seen little office development in recent years, while live/work units have become increasingly popular for artists and home business use. Notable projects include The Lofts at Beacon (114 live/work units under construction) and The Lofts at Beacon Falls (5 live/work units completed in 2010).

Table 4-2: Estimated Office Industries & Workers, City of Beacon, 2016

	Firms		Workers	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Total	181	100.0%	704	100.0%
Information	12	6.6%	78	11.1%
Finance & Insurance	31	17.1%	85	12.1%
Central Bank/Credit Intermediation & Related Activities	27	14.9%	59	8.4%
Securities, Commodity Contracts & Other Financial Investments	2	1.1%	7	1.0%
Insurance Carriers & Related Activities; Funds, Trusts & Other Financial Vehicles	2	1.1%	19	2.7%
Real Estate, Rental & Leasing	28	15.5%	140	19.9%
Professional, Scientific & Tech Services	48	26.5%	165	23.4%
Legal Services	16	8.8%	56	8.0%
Administrative, Support, Waste Mgmt & Remediation Services	15	8.3%	95	13.5%

Source: ESRI & InfoGroup, 2016

Industrial Trends

Over the period from 2007 to 2012, the US Census Bureau reported that the City of Beacon increased its number of manufacturing firms from 16 to 18 firms. However, numerous industrial properties in the City have been recently converted into other uses, and there have not been any new industrial construction projects recently, a sign that industrial rates will continue to climb as supply is reduced and demand remains strong.

MAIN STREET BUSINESS DISTRICT

The Central Business District, which runs the length of Main Street, consists of approximately 30 acres and 185 properties, including 157 lots with buildings covering an area of approximately 11 acres, with a total floor area of approximately 890,000 square feet. The upper and lower areas of Main street are zoned CB, which have a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of 2.0 and a limit of building height to three stories. The central area is zoned CMS which has a maximum building height of four stories (five on north side with a special permit), and no maximum FAR. Even with the considerable development potential, there has been a relatively small amount of new construction, indicating that this area has not been viewed as sufficiently profitable and/or that the development review process has not been viewed as sufficiently predictable by owners and potential developers.

Although there has been little new construction of retail, office or mixed-use buildings on Main Street in the past 10 years, there has been much investment in the renovation of existing structures. According to the City Building Department, one new building has been constructed (The Inn and Spa at Beacon at 151 Main) and two more have been approved since 2007. There were 30 significant building permits issued between 2007 and 2016 for Main Street properties, all of which were renovations ranging from several thousand dollars of work to approximately one million dollars invested. The Building Department estimates that more than half of the buildings on Main Street have been renovated within the last decade. This level of investment in improvements of real property on Main Street exceeds that of the past several decades. Currently, there are no buildings on Main Street that are vacant; however there may be a few storefronts that are currently not occupied.

4.2. Goals and Recommendations

Public outreach conducted for the 2007 Plan affirmed that the primary economic development goal was to preserve and enhance Main Street vitality. Participants in the workshops stated that they were generally proud of Main Street as the civic heart of the city, noting the walkable scale of the city, and the prevalence of locally-owned shops and restaurants in the historic buildings on both ends of Main Street. Workshop participants expressed a desire for a greater variety of goods and services on Main Street, including a high-quality supermarket, a butcher, baker, hotel and theatre. Increasing job opportunities and the availability of retail goods and services was the second-highest ranking issue. Improving access to parking, traffic circulation, public transportation and sidewalks were also ranked as a third priority.

Beacon residents want to encourage the development of a balanced local economy that provides good jobs, not just goods and services for residents and weekend visitors. Workshop participants commented that encouraging more businesses in the City could reduce the municipal tax burden on residences.

While Main Street is viewed as an important asset of the City, many residents expressed the need to improve the “transition area” between Teller and Digger Phelps Street. This area lacks the density and architectural features of the more historic sections of Main Street to the east and west. The 2007 Plan stated that many residents felt the City should encourage the development of more residences on Main Street, particularly in the transition area, which would help provide a larger local market for businesses. Participants also expressed interest in the creation of a community center and one or more centrally-located parks in the transition area.

The 2007 Plan also cited the lack of a strong connection between Main Street and Dia:Beacon and the train station. Workshop participants recommended several methods of improving connections between these areas, which included more bus routes and/or a trolley, improving signage and kiosks, promoting walking tours of the City, encouraging residential development along Beekman Street to provide for a more attractive and interesting streetscape, and encouraging the installation of public art on Main Street.

Participants felt that the business district on Route 52 served the needs of larger businesses requiring large buildings and on-site parking. Suggestions for this area included improving the streetscape and landscaping, and encouraging the development of a movie theater, office supply store, garden supply store, supermarket, large office buildings and education centers.

Community feedback from the 2017 Comprehensive Planning process echoed many of the ideas expressed by the Public for the 2007 Plan. Participants in the first public workshop gave support to encouraging commercial growth along the waterfront that is not in competition with Main Street. Participants also desired better public transit, pedestrian, and biking options that connect the waterfront, main street, Dia:Beacon, and the open space network.

The decade-long revitalization of Main Street has encouraged residents and weekend visitors to rediscover the goods and services available in the civic heart of the City. However, Main Street lacks a strong connection to Dia:Beacon and the train station, and the section of Main Street between Digger Phelps and Teller is considered by many residents to be economically and aesthetically weak. The Main Street business district needs an increased residential population in the area near Main Street in order to support a larger market necessary for long-term economic viability. There appears to be available parking in the Main Street area during weekday business hours, and traffic congestion is minimal. There are opportunities for redevelopment of underutilized industrial sites, and for streetscape and landscaping improvements to the Route 52 business district. If the City is able to address these issues and opportunities in a timely and effective manner, there is considerable potential for the kind of economic developed envisioned by the citizens of Beacon.

One way to improve access and movement for residents and visitors along Main Street and to and from the train station and waterfront is a rubber-wheeled trolley. This service has been previously attempted in Beacon but failed for lack of ridership. However, much has changed since these previous efforts. Beacon has grown and with the establishment of Dia:Beacon and renewed economic life and stability on Main Street, it is an idea that remains relevant and viable.

If service were to be reestablished, it should be provided at low-cost or be free to riders. This suggests that the City should seek outside funding and private partners to supplement costs. This model of sponsorship has established and been successful in other locations in New York and nationwide.

For a trolley to be successful, riders need predictability in both the trolley's route and schedule of service. An idea to help ensure this was mentioned in the 2007 Comprehensive Plan and has been updated for this Plan. It involves creating designated stops along Main Street to connect the activity centers to the east and west as well as strengthen Main Street's center section by providing improved access (see Figure 4-1). Other key stops for the trolley would include far eastern locations of Main Street, City Hall, the train station and Dia:Beacon.

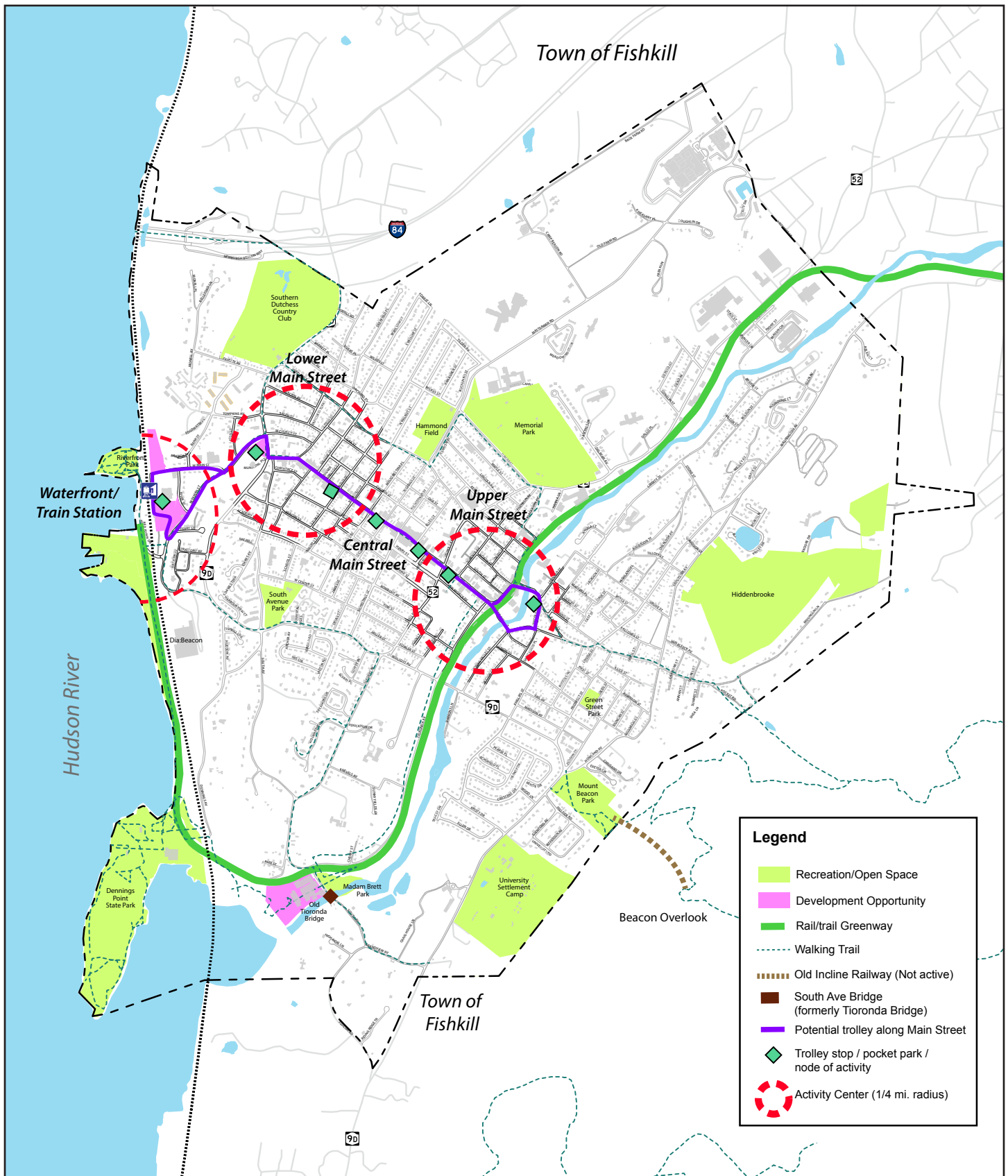


FIGURE 4-1: ACTIVITY CENTERS AND POTENTIAL MAIN STREET TROLLEY

Main Street is approximately two miles long, and a trolley running on a predictable schedule with designated stops that are more than a sign on a pole, but are pleasant places to sit, stay and wait for a ride, would help improve trolley ridership. Therefore, in certain locations, stops could be established and made identifiable with designated green spaces (or pocket parks). These could be developed in conjunction with private mixed-use development investment, coordinated by the City. For example, as shown in Figure 6-1, the Dutchess County Center parking lot could be improved substantially by reconfiguring the parking thus providing area for a new infill building and a small green as a resting place along Main Street. This could be designed to accommodate a pull-in lane for the trolley to accept passengers without obstructing traffic flow along Main Street. Of note is that the sketch plan for this improvement results in no loss of parking for the County Center.

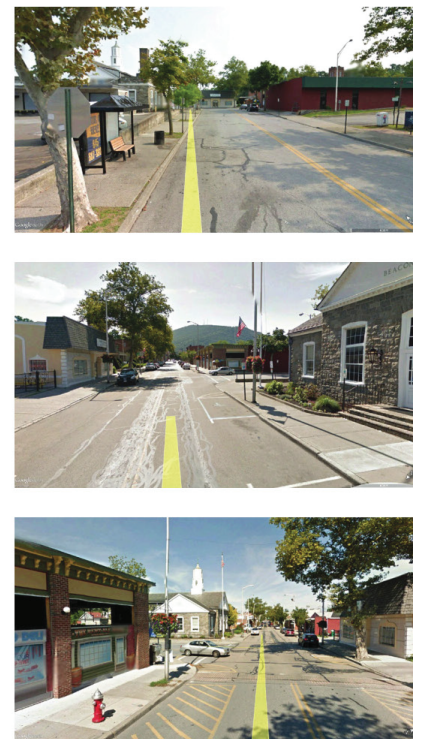
Another opportunity to create a pocket park/trolley stop could be at Veterans' Place. Here Veterans' Place could be closed between Main Street and Henry Street, and a small pocket park with a trolley pull-in lane could be accommodated. The County bus stop could be relocated to Main Street, placing it in a more accessible location, and the pull-in lane could accommodate the bus as well as the trolley.

Any effort to create a successful trolley should include a great signage program to clearly identify stops, route and schedule. Such signage, if done well, would be aesthetically pleasing and contribute positively to Main Street's identity and sense of place.



Dutchess County Center

Source: John Clarke



Park and Potential Infill Development at Veterans Place

Source: John Clarke, BFJ Planning

FIGURE 4-2: POTENTIAL MAIN STREET NODES OF ACTIVITY

CITY OF BEACON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE