Exploring the Experience of
Vacancy in a Rural Village

This Capstone Report is submitted in partial fulfillment of the LSA800 Capstone Studio, for the Faculty of Landscape Architecture, State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry.

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Towns and cities across upstate New York face the difficult issues of economic decline and population loss. As a result, vacant places are visible at the centers of many communities. In one small community, the rural village of Red Creek, N.Y. widespread vacancy has resulted from the recent decline in its economy, its population, and other factors that influence residents’ quality of life. This decline has affected the condition and appearance of property, while defunct businesses have caused a marked decline in the availability of basic services and of employment for residents. Community members raised the issue of vacancy as critical to their experience in the village during a participatory visioning process. This concern pointed to a research question that would examine residents’ experiences of vacancy in greater detail. This research involved residents in focus group interviews to explore their experiences and perceptions of vacancy in their community. From a literature review and a coded data analysis of the discussions, the researcher identified themes of concern to residents that made clear what aspects of vacancy had the greatest effect on residents’ perceptions and experiences. The themes indicated that social phenomena, not simply physical or economic phenomena, play a large part in their experiences, although initial discussions pointed instead to the importance of economic and physical concerns. This pointed to approaches to addressing vacancy that not only centered on the physical manifestation but its underlying social causes and it social results. In addition to responses to social aspects of vacancy, the researcher selected sites that could be improved to address visual perceptions of vacancy, drawn from sites/areas of concern identified by residents. Site improvements involving a range of from volunteer to professional skills were outlined in phases so that community volunteers, village employees, and professionals could work together or separately on parts of each project.
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1. Introduction

The small village of Red Creek, New York lies 43 miles northwest of Syracuse and seven miles south of the Lake Ontario shoreline along the New York State Seaway Trail, which follows Route 104A on Main Street through the village. It is located in Wayne County. Its commercial core consists of the south end of Main Street and the adjacent west end of Wolcott St., where several Victorian-era buildings line one side of each street.

Only a small fraction of the commercial space within these is currently in use. Many storefronts are empty, such as those that used to house the grocery, the independent pharmacy, the bank, and other stores. Two historic storefronts are in use for retail businesses, one is in use as the library, and the upstairs of one is in use as an office. The others remain vacant and large windows provide views within from the street. At the corner of these two streets sits a historic hotel, now a rental residence and bar, and opposite it are two very small modern buildings with active businesses that fill part of the site where historic two-storey buildings were destroyed in a fire in the early 1980s. At either side of this site is an ice cream shop located in a former house and a pizza shop located in a former house that was the site of a regionally famous diner. Next to the pizza shop is the local newspaper and press building, and beyond it is the gas station. A few other small businesses, institutional buildings, and churches are scattered throughout the village’s residential streets.

Historic homes line village streets and a few modern homes and trailers infill some lots. A new development of small prefabricated homes sits on the edge of the village with its own cul-de-sac access off of Route 104A. The region’s centralized school system’s recently built school complex and recreation center sits just beyond the southern village boundary. The outlying area remains mostly fields, formerly highly productive farm land that was once the basin of Lake Ontario. The local fruit industry supplied the large cannery facility that sits a few blocks behind Main Street, vacant as of its closure in 2002, which eliminated the jobs of a few hundred people.

The roots of this project were in the village’s visioning process. Experts from the SUNY ESF Council for Community Design and Research (CCDR), which is within the college’s Faculty of Landscape Architecture, conducted a vision planning process for the village during the fall and winter of 2004-2005. The CCDR was hired by the village’s revitalization committee as a first step in their efforts, which also involved working with the
Wayne County Planning Department. In that participatory process, four workshops were conducted, each divided into group discussions and exercises for separate sets of participants at a time. During that process, residents expressed concern about the issue of vacancy. The CCDR completed the process in late February with recommendations for the village.

This capstone project began in Late January of 2005 with its impetus from the visioning process in the concept of residents’ concerns about vacancy, and the map of it that participants created in one of the workshops.

Problem Statement

As in many urban and rural communities throughout the Northeast, the rural village of Red Creek has undergone a marked decline in recent decades in its economic base, population, condition of private and public property, availability of services, and other aspects of its quality of life. Most of these changes occurred in the past ten years, as the largest employer and then small service businesses on Main Street closed. One effect of this change has been widespread vacancy in its major industrial complex, its historic Main Street commercial buildings, and its houses. This is visible in the lack of people—visitors or residents—downtown. Residents cited their concerns about vacancy during the participatory visioning process. This concern gave rise to the following research questions:

Central Research Question

How do people experience and perceive vacancy in the village of Red Creek?

Subquestions

Do residents’ experiences of vacancy differ according to age group and years of residency? If so, in what ways do they differ?

How can a design strategy respond to residents’ experiences to reduce negative perceptions of vacancy?

This question is compelling because it provides a window into people’s ordinary experiences of communities, and the landscapes of communities, undergoing decline. As such, it transcends the location of study. Economic decline and the breakdown of social fabric with
which it often coincides are common in many communities across the state and greater region. An understanding of individuals’ experiences of and reactions to this issue can potentially provide insight into priorities for responding to it at the community level.

**Orientation to the Report**

This report will explain the process the researcher used to determine the research question, to identify what data were needed to answer it, to collect and to analyze the data. It will then explain the results of the data collection and analysis. A discussion of the data analysis and a set of conclusions form the end of the report, with sample illustrations included for reference.

**Project Overview and Timeline**

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<th>Fall Semester</th>
<th>Dec/Jan</th>
<th>February</th>
<th>March</th>
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<td>CCDR Vision Planning Workshops</td>
<td>Literature Review &amp; CCDR data review</td>
<td>Focus Groups</td>
<td>Analysis &amp; Summary</td>
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**Goals and Objectives**

Goal 1) Understand the conditions of vacancy and the experience of vacancy in communities, and its underlying cognitive, perception, and behavioral factors.

objective a) Conduct a review of relevant literature on vacancy in rural and urban communities. Summarize findings in written format.
Goal 2) Understand residents’ perceptions of the physical conditions of vacancy.

objective a) Obtain residents’ mapping of the extent and visibility of vacancy in the village, including 1) all vacant or underused properties; 2) any structures in visible external disrepair or lots in poor condition.
objective b) Find and photograph all sites mapped for use in focus groups.

Goal 3) Understand residents’ experiences and perceptions of vacancy.

objective a) Develop focus group discussion topics from residents’ comments in CCDR visioning workshops and literature review.
objective b) Create road map and use to conduct focus group discussions.
objective c) Document discussion in audiotapes; transcribe conversations.
objective d) Analyze discussions by coding information according to qualitative research methods.
objective e) Summarize descriptions of experiences by tallying comments according to themes and categories of topics.

Goal 4) Apply this understanding of vacancy: generate a design response to address it at appropriate sites as determined from data analysis.

objective a) Establish criteria for site selection based on understanding of residents’ perceptions from vacancy focus groups. Choose sites where vacancy can be addressed with a design response.
objective b) Create design responses to vacancy in the village.
objective c) Document design response and program suggestions in appropriate graphic or written format.
objective d) Present design to the Red Creek Revitalization Committee and local officials and provide copies of final documents.
2. Literature Review

Summary of literature on the landscape of communities

Of the many areas of research on the landscape of communities that relate to vacancy, this literature review focuses on the following areas of environment and behavior research. These have been selected because they clarify the basis for people’s perceptions of place that may impact or be impacted by perceptions of vacancy:

- sense of community and lifescape (Kim and Kaplan 2004; Edelstein 2002)
- perceptions of contaminated or vacant community environments (Edelstein 2002, Bowman and Pagano, 2004)
- place attachment (Taylor 1985; Altman and Low 1992; Brown et al. 2003)
- length of residency (Hugill 1985, Brown et al. 2003)
- personal identity relating to landscapes (Stewart and Strathern 2003)

Other areas of research on the landscape of communities that may have a bearing on the research subject, but are not included in this literature review, include:

1) conservation of the historic meanings behind rural form and land use through economic strategies, such as establishing farmland cooperatives or public-private investment to spur entrepreneurial development programs in town centers (Ratner and Ide 1985, Stokes 1989).


3) narratives about place and community identity (Potteiger and Purinton, 1998).

4) theoretical approaches to design that address vacancy and its historical context in general categories of urban, suburban, or rural land use (Corbin 2003; Corner 1999).

A. Introduction, Sense of Community, Lifestyle and Lifescape

The majority of literature on vacancy in communities has centered on cities. A brief look at the importance of the topic in the eyes of researchers is worth noting for any place afflicted by vacancy. “It is through vacant land that one learns about a city, its culture, and its values” (McDonough in Bowman and Pagano, 2004). In the upstate New York region, this is
particularly relevant, as Northeast cities have the highest number of dilapidated and blighted structures even though they have much less vacant land than elsewhere in the country (Bowman and Pagano, 2004). This likely extends to much of the core developed land of rural communities. “Vacant land factors into both the positive and negative reactions [to a landscape]...It is in its distress-inducing role that it is most familiar” (Bowman and Pagano, 2004). Vacant land with or without structures “may be the ultimate resource—it may represent hope or despair” (Bowman and Pagano, 2004). Whether it is treated as a resource or as something to be wished away with neglect can determine a community’s resilience, and community members are the ones to make that choice.

In working with a small community that has chosen to come together to revitalize its village, it is important to gain an understanding of what drives people’s sense of community. Community has been defined as “sets of people who may identify themselves with a place or places in terms of notions of commonality, shared values or solidarity” (Stewart and Strathern 2003). A community is commonly conceptualized as rooted in a place, or taking place. “A place is a socially meaningful and identifiable space to which a historical dimension is attributed...Landscape refers to the perceived settings that frame people’s senses of place and community” (Stewart and Strathern 2003). The landscape of the village includes many facets: residents’ homes and properties; the downtown; the village as a whole; key sites within it; the countryside and towns beyond it; and natural areas such as the pond that are interspersed with developed areas.

People’s lifestyles encompass everything about the way they live, “including their pattern of activities and the relationships, places, and props needed to sustain these activities. Lifestyle embodies the core assumptions of a society” (Edelstein 2002). These are reflected as one sets personal goals and understands social expectations on the path to attaining a certain “quality of life;” significant “lifestyle impacts” occur when the fundamental patterns that comprise community life and private life are disrupted (Edelstein 2002). Edelstein refers to impacts from environmental contamination over the short or long term. While the decline over time of a community’s physical and social “props” relating to vacancy is a less severe or immediate threat, it might have similar elements such as the degree of emotional trauma it inflicts on residents.
Beyond routine activities, and before altering impacts occur, Edelstein terms our assumptions about life our “lifescape.” This is centered around five core ideas: “health, personal control, home, environment, and social trust…As with other cognitive paradigms, lifescape is generally invisible until it is disconfirmed by an anomaly [such as] a contamination event” (Edelstein 2002). As will be discussed later, personal control, environment, and social trust are factors significant to the study of vacancy.

Carrying out residential and other daily life activities in a compact, distinguishable place, as in a village, contributes to people’s sense of community; places, props, and relationships with fellow residents (even if simply recognition) are reinforced when there is repetition with fewer of them concentrated in a small area. A compact, distinct community such as a historic village is an appropriate place to apply questions about sense of community. Kim and Kaplan found that in a residential neighborhood whose layout and character is similar to that of a historic village, “residents perceived a substantially greater sense of community” than those living in a neighborhood with a suburban layout. Residents of the village-type neighborhood “express stronger attachment to their community and sense of identity with it [than those living in a suburban-style layout]. Physical features such as layout, architectural styles, natural features and open spaces all contribute strongly to their sense of community” (Kim and Kaplan 2004).

Many of these relationships to place, people and props are longstanding, and occur in the center of town. “The close proximity of a village’s core to its residential areas is one characteristic that distinguishes it from an urban setting” (Stokes 1989). This compact form is one of its most visible characteristics, and one that can provide continuity in one’s sense of community and perception of place over a great length of time. This can extend for one’s lifetime, if lived entirely in one place, and can even extend beyond it conceptually, when one confronts the archives of images, texts, and orally shared knowledge of place histories.

Sense of community arises from “emotional bonding or ties” residents feel with their community—“feeling at home” in it. Some ways that this is expressed include “satisfaction with homes and community” and a “sense of connectedness…to their community when it reminds them of their personal and community history…and familiar environmental characteristics.” Other expressions are a “sense of ownership [and] control over their homes or community” (Kim and Kaplan 2004). Another way in which people express “how they
feel at home” and “belonging to the community” is through place attachment, which Kim and Kaplan consider “a key domain of sense of community” (Kim and Kaplan 2004).

“Community attachment [is] based on individual experience and perception of sense of community, [whereas] community identity…[is] more related to collective and social perspectives of sense of community” (Kim and Kaplan 2004). Thus the individual feels attachment due to personal experience, yet comprehends the identity of his or her community through understanding others’ collective perspectives of it.

B. Place and Time

This understanding, combined with one’s lifescape, or landscape, can be understood to exist in past, present and future. Stewart and Strathern write that it is a “contextual horizon of perceptions, providing both a foreground and a background...[and] may apply equally to urban and rural sites because they are all equally molded by human actions and/or...perceptions.”

People’s molding of places over time makes landscape “a process because its shape at any given time reflects change and is a part of change. Nevertheless it often serves as a crucial marker of continuity with the past, as well as a reassurance of identity in the present and a promise for the future” (Stewart and Strathern 2003). When the landscape changes because new forces are shaping it, and individuals or those they know are no longer agents of change, individuals might feel confused or distressed. Having been familiar with a certain pattern of changes shaping their landscape, such as mostly positive actions, individuals might not see it the same way when an unfamiliar pattern of changes noticeably molds their landscape. It might cease to function as a marker of continuity with the past and a reassurance of present identity.

C. Place Attachment

According to Taylor, place attachment is “a deep-seated feeling that one has a bond with one’s residential environment...[which can be] a home range of typical activities or larger—region, state, country” (Taylor 1998). This is larger than an individual’s territory (discussed below). Attachment is strongly influenced by the physical and social qualities of the place—when these are positive, it is easier to be attached to place and to feel a sense of territorial control or responsibility (Taylor 1998). Attachment “involves dynamic but enduring positive bonds between people and prized sociophysical settings, such as homes.
These bonds reflect and help cultivate group and individual identity. Residential place attachments often translate into feelings of pride in the residential area and its appearance” (Brown et al. 2003). A study of Cazenovia, another upstate New York village, determined that the longer a resident had lived there, the greater his or her commitment to the “quality of place” (or place attachment). This was evident in the town’s traditional aesthetic valuation system, which emphasized the desirability of older houses and the upkeep of privatized views and open spaces (Hugill 1985). Thus greater lengths of residency in one place meant greater place attachment. This influenced people to value its appearance more than did those with shorter periods of residency.

When there are disruptions in people’s attachment to place, such as the erosion of its physical and social qualities, there can be negative consequences for the individual or group affected. One of these is an increase in fear of crime and disorder (disorder refers to deterioration of the physical or social status quo) (Taylor 1998, Brown et al. 2003). Groups may be attached to a location and respond together when it is threatened (Taylor 1998). If their attachment to place “is related to social and physical indicators of decline, then efforts to reverse decline require understanding...of place attachment bonds” (Brown et al. 2003).

Individual perceptions of place typically arise from routine experience, while shared perceptions of experience help create common identity across communities (Hirsch in Stewart and Strathern 2003). Experiences of place over time lead to place attachment (Kim and Kaplan 2004). Place attachment is also tied to perceptions of place:

“Perceptions [of landscape] shift, either gradually or dramatically, over time, so that landscape becomes a form of codification of history itself, seen from the viewpoints of personal expression and experience” (Stewart and Strathern 2003).

D. Identity

Place has been a focus of meaning and identity in people’s lives throughout history (Jakle 1987). Shaping identity are “two crucial elements...notions of memory and notions of place” according to anthropologists Stewart and Strathern. “For [some] people...senses of identity...[are] often most forcibly tied up with senses of landscape, of how a place appears as
an ordered form of environment *within which* place and community are perceived” (Stewart and Strathern 2003).

Community identity is defined as personal and public identifications with a specific physically bounded community with its own character….Many of the characteristics of identity also find expression in the physical environment,” though the social roots of identity have been the subject of more studies….“Community identity implies that local features of the built and natural environment characterize a physical identity of place, which in turn affects residents’ personal and group identity” (Kim and Kaplan 2004).

Kim and Kaplan hypothesize that several qualities contribute to personal identity: 1) a feeling of “uniqueness [or] distinctiveness…from others through associating with a group or a place.” 2) the continuity of links between residents’ past and present environments, which are kept strong by the “physical properties of community.” 3) the “significance” of a place through the “self-esteem” and “pride” that arise from “a positive evaluation of oneself, the group, or the place with which one identifies.” 4) “compatibility, [or]…a ‘good’ fit…[which] exists when the environment facilitates people’s everyday lifestyle and when they can perform well in that environment 5) “cohesiveness—the strong character of community expressed by a sense of homogeneity, intimacy, and compactness.” These qualities combine in various ways so that “community identity can thus contribute to residents’ sense of [individual] identity” (Kim and Kaplan 2004).

**E. Length of Residence/Residential Place Attachment**

Another aspect of sense of place that this study proposes to explore in detail is how length of residency affects perceptions of place attachment when vacancy has occurred. Brown et al. confirm past research findings that “long-term residents and home owners reported more positive overall place attachments” (Brown et al. 2003). The percentage of homeowners on a block was a significant predictor of attachment to the block/neighborhood, but average years of residence on a streetblock did not directly relate to block attachment. Length of residency leads to place attachment, which, when related to the residential area itself, often are seen in “feelings of pride in the residential area and its appearance and a general sense of well-being” (Brown et al. 2003).

Residential place attachments can change over time as places change. “Residential attachments provide stability, familiarity, and security. Yet attachments also change as
individuals and households develop, environments age, or the processes supported by settings alter…Place attachments are often related to, but not determined by, changing housing and neighborhood conditions” (Brown et al. 2003).

In Cazenovia, a long-thriving village two hours east of Red Creek, residents’ concern for “quality of place” has been tied to “rootedness” in place, or place attachment, and length of residency (Hugill 1995). In this village, Hugill found that this concern for quality of place was tied to its appearance and had a strong influence on social interaction. He found that “two factors distinguish the use of landscape in communication between social groups: (1) its longevity and (2) its susceptibility to control by a small group of individuals,” those whose families have lived there longer than others (Hugill 1995).

For most of the commuters [those who have lived there less long than the major component of village residents]...the more purely social gesture of length of residence” is recognized as significant. But “few seem to realize how fundamental it is to village social life....Length of residence in Cazenovia is critical” to those whose families have lived there longer (Hugill 1995).

“Concern with the landscape is also crucial…The ‘best’ landscapes are old, have been manicured by old elite families for a substantial length of time, and have excellent views of Cazenovia Lake or the surrounding country. The old elite have consistently shown concern with this aesthetic and its development since first settlement; the village record is filled with ordinances governing the appearance of the village…Today these families are prime movers behind the preservation foundation...and other ventures concerned with both the maintenance and the extension of their aesthetic. Old elite families without money, not that uncommon, behave similarly in all respects with the exception that their private residential landscapes are less lavish” (Hugill 1995).

Length of residence is thus deeply meaningful to one’s personal experience of place, as “long-term residence...helps lead to long-term social integration into the local area...creat[ing] an emotional bond between residents and their homes and community” (Kim and Kaplan 2004).
F. Territoriality and Perception of Disorder

In places where a community’s concern for place has been overwhelmed by economic and population changes, there can be widespread vacancy. One result of widespread vacancy is that there are not enough people traversing or populating some visible spaces to make them appear lived in, cared for, or watched over. This absence of people, in places such as streetblocks, means there are fewer for nearby residents to perceive daily or frequently. This degrades the ‘social legibility’ of the street, which erodes their feeling of vigilance or control. Those who spend time outside more often find a place more “socially legible;” they “have a better sense of who’s who”—an idea first called “eyes on the street” by Jane Jacobs in her early writings about Greenwich Village (Taylor 1988). Potential criminals (“offenders”) perceive they are more likely to be noticed when others are visible. Offenders may be deterred on blocks where many people are present, but as they become familiar with a site they can become aware of how willing others are to keep an eye on happenings and/or intervene (Taylor 1988). The lack of people in a place can be perceived by vandals or criminals as an invitation to act. When they do take action, such as vandalism, graffiti, or burglary, and when properties are deteriorating, residents tend to be less attached to a place. “Residents are less attached to neighborhoods perceived as physically disorderly or deteriorated” (Brown et al. 2003).

Vacancy also refers to the absence of people from spaces in front of buildings and from indoor spaces that are no longer used. This vacancy can be evident to a passer-by if a building shows signs of deterioration and disuse, such as limited maintenance, lack of lighting, and decaying façade finishes or sidewalks. These signs, if clear or persistent, signal a lack of caring about a place that contrasts with the typical treatment of a place where people live or work—where they might install visual indicators that show they take care of it and will continue to do so. Such visual ‘cues’ of caring are termed territorial markers. In his research on territoriality in spaces near the home and streetblocks, Taylor found that markers such as beautification or upkeep suggest caring, vigilance, and willingness to intervene in problems (Taylor 1988). Such efforts are highly needed on residential streetblocks, as vacant properties have been found to affect eight surrounding properties in a densely built double block of houses (Bowman and Pagano, 2004).
Offenders read the degree of property upkeep as an indication of how the owner will act if property is harmed. In public spaces, such as a downtown streetscape, a lack of investment in such markers may stretch over a significant amount of adjacent space if a large property or series of them is not in use. The public, while potentially concerned about the space, often does not take responsibility for it even if it disturbs them to see it in disrepair. In a study of lower income neighborhoods with vacant lots and residents concerned about crime, residents were not likely to assert control over these spaces unless they were manageable and the residents had been authorized to manage them (Taylor, 2002).

Studies of vacancy in communities have documented the common reactions people show toward vacancy in its many forms. City neighborhoods, which share some similarities in size and cohesion to villages, provide a comparable area for which individuals can easily construct their own ‘mental maps’ by daily interactions with a place. In city neighborhoods, residents concerned about the condition of vacant land “demanded that absentee landlords be held accountable for the upkeep of their property...and that, where possible, empty buildings be used for community functions. The general consensus was that the presence of vacant lots and abandoned structures diminished the sense of community” (Bowman and Pagano, 2004). In other cities where responses to landscapes were studied, “people responded positively to areas that were clean and well-kept, had abundant greenery and open space, and provided scenic views. They reacted negatively to sections that were dilapidated and dirty, [or] had poor upkeep...An open-ended question about what should be done to improve a city’s appearance yielded ...among the five most frequently mentioned actions...the renovation or replacement of old buildings, the cleanup of litter, and an increase in the amount of public green space” (Bowman and Pagano, 2004).

Taylor found that territoriality in public spaces is minimal compared to that in residential settings, and is limited spatially, temporally, and behaviorally. Its limited nature is due to the openness of the public settings, their programmatic usage, or their use by groups for functional needs only (Taylor 1988). This might well have to be substituted by official measures, though such efforts would likely rely on residents to alert officials to the many minor details that are most easily and promptly noticed by the neighbors of a property.

One such situation occurs in Seattle. Neighbors report broken windows, unkempt buildings, safety violations, and more to one city department. The department notifies the
owner of the violation of safety code and gives the owner a chance to correct it. If it is not immediately corrected, it is placed in a monitoring program and revisited every three months. After going three quarters with no violation, the property is taken off the list. The majority of violations are for single family structures. In one analysis by the city, of 778 properties on the list for three and a half years, fewer than 65 were still on the list after that period (Bowman and Pagano, 2004).

Brown et al. studied “whether residents’ place attachments to their homes and neighborhoods relate to perceived and observed physical decline and incivilities, rental housing, crime fear and victimization, and low levels of social cohesion and control” in a first-ring suburb (Brown et al. 2003). While that study involved gradual physical decline over long periods of time, it focused on housing and largely on social interactions and social fears. It did not focus on vacancy itself, but did address one of the factors of vacancy: poor housing upkeep and appearance. It states that this relates to other social indicators of decline, such as residents wanting to move out of the neighborhood. It often goes hand in hand with graffiti or litter or unchecked minor vandalism, which signals financial disinvestment due to a lack of control of the neighborhood, and an erosion of the social fabric of the community (Brown et al. 2003).

However, the Brown study found that place attachment was stronger in those who were homeowners with longer terms of residency and a lower fear of crime. Similar categories of information are obtainable from inquiries to residents in the current study, with the added insight into how these categories influence their perceptions of vacancy. Depending on their length of residency and/or their age, those perceptions could be more social and memory-related, or relate more to the physical landscape they view when moving through the village.

G. Visual Literacy, Experience and Perception of Vacancy: Case Study Village

Designers describe landscape perception in terms of the relationships between the spaces, structures and natural features we view within it. Jakle, a designer who writes about landscape perception, states that gaps in the landscape produce rhythms or patterns of alternating enclosure and openness; these add to the character of many townscapes even though they are often unnoticed. But he notes that a gap must mean something in a sequence of visualization or the experience breaks down (Nairn in Jakle 1987). Space must relate to
other spaces and solids in a rhyme of openness and solidity, and spaces must appear pervaded by “visual substance” (Arnheim in Jakle 1987). He describes emptiness as the absence of relationship as well as of matter. Gaps in a landscape “disrupt” rhymes, as they usually result from the removal of elements that are not replaced in visual kind (Jakle 1987).

This is precisely the situation in the approach to the primary village intersection at the end of the main route into the village core in Red Creek from the east, where a row of two-storey historic buildings burned down two decades ago and now two tiny, shed-like structures and an unimproved lot are the central view. For those who remember the former functional commercial buildings, the unclear use, from a distance, of the newer ones might contribute to the perception of vacancy in the village, though they are also filled with three small businesses. “Buildings are expected to show how they can be used. People expect correspondence between visual properties and functional characteristics.... [Buildings are remembered] “more for what they do than for how they look” (Jakle 1987). When remembering a building that is gone or in disuse, one’s cognitive mapping of it “appears to relate less to form or visual appearance than to utility or use, although visibility and ease of linguistic labeling are important also” (Jakle 1987). However, residents of Red Creek have already pointed to appearance as one of the major factors in their perception that the village is in a condition of great concern (CCDR research). Discovering whether appearance or function/remembered function has greater influence on residents’ perception of vacancy would lead toward understanding how to address vacant sites.

These newer buildings, in addition to lacking lack the detail that enables viewers to find a “human quality in place,” something most strongly perceived in traditional buildings with windows prominent in solid walls (Jakle, 1987). “Windows, like human eyes, imply ‘intelligences behind them, looking out’” (Campbell in Jakle, 1987). Though the newer Main Street buildings have windows, they are small and don’t allow a view into the stores; the size of the buildings is so small that they do not command as much attention as do the rest of Main Street’s building facades, only look out of place. Traditional facades with significant windows “make the city appear social and thus alive” (Jakle, 1987). A lack of social interaction and liveliness in the village center, visible to residents and tourists alike, are two aspects of decline in Red Creek. The existence of these uninviting buildings at such a prominent place in the downtown can only add to this perceived lack of liveliness.
In studying how tourists perceive place, Jakle refers to their shared perceptions of places as “place consensa.” He writes that these are influenced by:

“beliefs, attitudes, and icons…Beliefs are understandings about places around which behavioral expectations are formed (the sense of place utility pervading) whereas attitudes are the associated positive or negative charges inclining people toward or away from places as behavior settings.” Icons “are features in the landscape to which beliefs and attitudes attach” (Jakle 1987).

Icons symbolize beliefs and attitudes that help define the meaning of place. More commonly referred to as landmarks, they are the “most prominent parts of people’s mental pictures of place” (Jakle 1987).

One facet of the vacancy downtown is the lack of people, including tourists; residents have raised the point that the village must attract more of them to help stave off its decline. In this study, it will be possible to inquire whether there are icons that generate strong ‘place consensa’ for village residents, and whether they believe these will function the same way for outsiders or tourists. Residents have mentioned that they are concerned about the way outsiders view the village; this may have an influence on their sense of identity for the village. Vacancy “has often come to symbolize disinvestment, blight, and decay” and “is perceived by observers to be a pernicious destroyer of community” (Bowman and Pagano, 2004).

As in Red Creek, “many rural communities...are struggling to escape the grip of economic stagnation and decline.” These smaller communities “tend to be more vulnerable to such changes than cities because they are often dependent on a single business or commodity for their economic well-being.” This decline can be caused by national or international trends, or local problems “such as the bankruptcy of a major business, the closing of a rail line, or the construction of an interstate highway bypassing the community” (Stokes 1989).

All three of these, to some degree, have happened to Red Creek. State route 104 that brings tourists to Lake Ontario was rerouted around town over 20 years ago, and the main employer in the area shut down five years ago, eliminating hundreds of jobs. As commuters and residents disappeared, local businesses saw fewer customers;
this resulted in the closure of the community-founded bank, the independent pharmacy, and the independent grocery in Red Creek. These changes are often coupled with demographic changes, as evidenced in cities where “many neighborhoods eventually decline, as housing stock and residents age, owned homes convert to rentals, and poor renters move in” (Brown et al. 2003).

“Few rural towns...are the diverse, largely self-sufficient communities they were when settled, or even 25 years ago. Rural Americans are increasingly making their purchases in regional shopping malls or in larger towns. As a result, many smaller towns...have suffered. Not only have businesses gone under, but also key social institutions, such as the local school, church, or post office, have often become the victims of consolidation in the name of cost-effectiveness. With the loss of their stores, schools, post offices, cafes, and gas stations, many villages survive as little more than a collection of houses, alone and out of context” (Stokes 1989).

While much of this is a problem in Red Creek, there is one bright spot: the area schools centralized and Red Creek is the location of the district school. This brings many people to the outskirts of the village, where the facility was recently built. Even the old village school is being used again for a daily educational program for agricultural workers’ children. Added to that, tourists come through the village on their way to Lake Ontario via the state’s seaway trail, which shares Main Street. There is already a reason for many people to come to Red Creek, and that base of visitors represents part of the village’s hope for the future.

H. Conclusion to Literature Review

The perceptions each person has of a place are intertwined with the ways others see it and express their perceptions of it. Individual and collective expressions of people’s perceptions of place influence the routine of one’s lifestyle and the broader all-encompassing ‘lifescape’ that are rooted in where one lives. Living in one neighborhood or town over an extended period of one’s lifetime, a person is likely to develop place attachment and an individual sense of identity related to place, especially if the boundaries of place are well-
defined. This attachment and sense of identity are related to the perception over time of the neighborhood’s physical setting and character, and its collective sense of community and identity, as well as the territoriality toward it expressed by other residents or stakeholders.

The shaping of these aspects of place, by residents of the community, outsiders, or both, changes over time. Thus, residents’ perceptions change; their notions of identity are tied to their memories and perceptions of a place over time. When place is shaped by unfamiliar forces, it can cause distress in those who have lived there longer. However, the effect of changes on place perception can be felt across the spectrum of lengths of residency. Changes such as disorder, seen in a deterioration of overall signs of caring for property, are commonly interpreted as a signal that a place has a lowered sense of community, that negative interactions with others will occur there, and that eventually, crime will become a problem. This perception of disorder can lead to a weakening of place attachment, a disinvestment by residents who previously invested in upkeep of property, and dissociation with a place that might culminate in moving away.

Often the changes that distress residents are a result of an economic downturn. Its resulting loss of population and/or increase in rental population, coupled with the loss of smaller businesses that once helped shape a self-sufficient community, can cause a once-vibrant neighborhood to be little more than a collection of houses. More often, this is the case when such changes occur in a small rural community, where economic change hits the hardest. Residents shop, work, and spend leisure time elsewhere as these are not available locally, and the result is an even lower sense of community due to the lack of common interactions in regular activities.

In researching this subject, little was found on vacancy in small or rural communities; the majority of related studies have centered on urban places. Yet these provide ample points of comparison to learn from. Bowman and Pagano, for instance, closed their work with a list distributed by the Brookings Institution and CEOs for Cities that provides action steps for officials seeking to convert vacant land into valuable sites. Its lessons may apply to any community:

- Know your territory [create an inventory of vacant and underused sites]
- Develop a citywide approach to redevelopment
- Implement neighborhood plans in partnership with community stakeholders
• Make government effective
• create a legal fabric for sound redevelopment
• Create marketable opportunities
• Finance redevelopment
• Build on natural and historic assets
• Be sensitive to gentrification and relocation issues
• Organize for success

The ideas listed are in agreement with what the authors recommend: considering vacant land as an asset and taking actions to make it become so. While the financial imperative of finding developers for vacant sites is often a priority, “the social imperative is at least operational, and in some cases dominant” in the choice by officials to turn vacant lots into “green magnets” that are gathering spaces for social interaction (Bowman and Pagano, 2004). As this study explores, the social implications of the existence of vacant land may be among the strongest hurdles to overcome.

**Implications for Research**

This review of the literature leads directly to the structure of the research in this study. Previous research showing the way people perceive a place (the setting for their ‘lifescape’) and form attachments to it over time, underlies of the research question and key elements in the road map of questions for the focus groups. The selection of focus groups as the format for research into the understanding of place is derived from these facets of research; in-depth interviews are more likely to approach these specific issues than are surveys or brief group sessions. Making the interviews group-based was chosen partly in order to inspire conversation prompted by others’ comments, but also so that people would be more likely to speak freely, being grouped with others of similar generations.

The research topics that informed the study questions most significantly were the issues of place identity, sense of community, perception of place over length of residency, and perception of territoriality and disorder.

The perception and experience of vacancy in certain village elements, such as Main Street commercial buildings, that formed the basis of residents original perceptions about the place they live, might lead those who once had a strong sense of community, identity, and place attachment to doubt all three in the face of change.
• How does this differ from the experience of those who are relative newcomers, or young people—those for whom the changes might not have altered links to their personal past?
• How has vacancy, in existence for most or all of their village life, affected the way they develop a sense of community and identity in their hometown? Has it led them to have little attachment to place?
• Based on this understanding of residents’ perceptions, what changes can be made that might address their experiences and perceptions of vacancy?

This study seeks to understand whether or not vacancy has a similar effect on the ways residents of different ages and lengths of residency perceive and experience their village. It builds on this understanding by considering ways to address these perceptions with design and program responses that residents can carry out in whole or in part after collectively deciding which are of greatest priority. The potential for residents to act on such responses comes from the degree of place attachment that some residents express as a desire to mitigate the visual appearance of vacancy in a place where they plan to remain:

“Given the reality that many residents of declining neighborhoods will not accept or cannot afford a move, it may be sensible from the standpoint of both psychological health and policy efficiency to focus on programs that can translate residents’ positive bonds of place attachment into place improvements...Place attachment may also be a resource for neighborhoods struggling with issues of physical decline, loss of social cohesion, and threats of crime. The next step is to understand how place attachments can be mobilized to enhance neighborhood quality of life.” (Brown et al. 2003).

The potential agreement across categories of participants in this study could inspire a meaningful, effective way to address the changes about which all participants are concerned to some degree. Even without a strong consensus on the perceptions of vacancy, the sharing of divergent viewpoints on alternative designs could result in agreement substantial enough to inspire residents to taking their ideas forward.
3. Methods

Residents in and near the village expressed concern over the conditions of vacancy, along with related issues, while participating in the visioning process explained in the introduction to this report. As a small part of that process, groups of six or more discussed vacancy in one activity session lasting twenty minutes. Properties within the village that residents perceived to be vacant or underused were mapped on an aerial photo; participants provided a brief description of why it was included. This map/photo document was used as a base of general knowledge from which to inquire further in the capstone project.

The capstone project was structured around the use of focus groups, which brought together a sample of residents for longer discussions in smaller groups (compared to the workshops) that would allow time for each participant to speak in greater detail. The researcher facilitated discussions of perceptions of vacancy, focusing on spaces at the core of the village, using photos of all sites mapped to generate discussion and enable participants to prioritize their responses. With analysis of these discussions, this study sought an in-depth understanding of the experience of vacancy. This was sought for use in developing design responses that address both physical concerns and social themes expressed in the discussions as interpreted by the researcher.

A) Literature Review

The researcher reviewed literature on the conditions of vacancy, the experience of vacancy in communities, and the underlying cognitive, perception, and behavioral factors affecting the understanding of vacancy.

B) Map of Vacant Sites Perceived by Residents

The researcher obtained an aerial photo with mapping of vacant, underused, and active sites from a CCDR vision planning workshop, and became familiar with the locations mapped. The researcher visited each site and took photos, then printed them for reference in focus group discussions.
C) Focus Groups

The researcher selected four age categories for focus groups. Each group was intended to include those representing a range of lengths of residency in the village. A village leader determined which residents would fit into the desired categories of age group and length of residence and provided contact information. The researcher phoned residents to arrange group meetings and met with up to six participants per age group for an hour to an hour and a half. Some groups were divided into smaller groups when not all participants in an age group could attend the same meeting times. One to two from each group were not interviewed due to schedule conflicts or decisions not to participate.

A topic road map is an interview guide made up of topic-related questions or activities that is used to prompt conversation, but allows participants to talk freely about ideas that arise from these and other topics. The researcher created a road map of discussion topics to guide group discussion toward topics relevant to the understanding of vacancy. Topics were chosen partly from residents’ comments in CCDR visioning workshops and partly from the literature on vacancy. An example of this is that many stated that vacancy or under-use was a concern due to the appearance of properties. The literature provided an understanding that the appearance of properties can lead to fear of disorder and to a negative identity regarding a place. This was applied in the construction of some questions in the road map so that participants could speak about their perception of the identity of the village. Definitions of unfamiliar terms follow the road map.

Focus Group Road Map:

**Topic Area 1: Change/Identity/Place attachment**

1) Something that’s always occurring in any community is change. From your own experience, what has changed in Red Creek?

2) How have these changes affected your life in the community?

[Do you do about the same amount of things as you used to do in the village?]

3) How have these changes affected how you feel about Red Creek?

4) How do you think these changes may have affected the way outsiders view Red Creek?
**Topic Area 2: Perception of Vacancy**

5) In the vision planning process, vacancy came up as an issue that some people were concerned about. Do you agree that it is a concern? Explain.

6) Take a look at the aerial photo of the village that residents marked with vacant and under-used places in the first vision planning workshop. Look also at the photos next to it that represent every property on that map.

Write down on a card which vacant places in the village you are most concerned about and why. Then we’ll listen to you explain your choices.

7) Are there any places in the village you avoid or don’t go to at all?

8) Why do you avoid them?

**Topic Area 3: Vacancy ‘improvements’**

9) In the vision planning process, some residents brought up vacancy as an issue that they were very concerned about. Do you think that it is a concern?

10) Which space or site do you think it’s most important to improve? Why?

11) How do you think the place should be improved? What do you hope the change would accomplish? [If anything were possible, what would you like to see happen?]

Focus group discussions were recorded on audiotape solely for the purpose of transcribing and coding conversations. Participants were promised that they would remain anonymous, thus transcripts are not included in this report as village residents will have access to it. The summary and analysis of the findings provided the substance needed for the conclusions.

**D) Analysis and Summary: Coding Process**

Transcriptions were analyzed according to qualitative methods of coding. These methods involve choosing broad themes and, within those, detailed categories of topics of interest to the research, then extracting raw data to use in analysis by attributing a color code to each comment pertaining to a category and theme. Raw data is then analyzed by counting the frequency and order of its appearance in conversations, and tallying those frequencies from each group and all groups combined. The steps below describe exactly how the data was derived for later use in summaries and research conclusions.

- Determine coding guidelines
Each transcript was read twice so that an understanding of the conversation would lead the researcher to suggest preliminary themes and categories for each conversation. These were then compared, and main themes and detailed categories within each theme were developed. Colors were assigned to each theme and to each category.

- **Code transcripts for content**

  Comments that matched content categories and themes were underlined. A two-color code was placed alongside each; one color for the theme, one for the category represented. A number was assigned to each comment in order throughout the transcript.

- **Summarize and chart coding content**

  Frequency of comments within groups was counted and charted in a preliminary table. Frequency of content categories across groups was summarized and charted in Table 1. This allowed conclusions to be drawn regarding the importance of topics due to the number of times they were mentioned by all participants.

  Topic order was summarized to determine whether that could lend insight into the importance of themes or categories. As only Question 1 led to participants consistently voicing topics of their own choosing and ordering, this was not as complete a data set as the frequency and priority summaries; thus it was considered in the discussion but not factored directly into the conclusions.

  The order of concerns about vacant sites, in response to the road map question, was listed in the 2nd column of Table 2 to see whether it correlated with the order of site priorities.

  Priority sites listed in each group were listed in the preliminary versions of Table 2 so that any consensus across groups could be determined. As there were repetitions of the same sites, this was condensed into the final version of Table 2 where only four sites are listed. This is the summary of priority sites across groups.

  Results of the road map question on expected outcomes of site improvements (directly referring to the responses to the previous question) were listed in the 4th column of Table 2. From these, main underlying social themes were determined from an understanding of the literature. These themes were listed in the preliminary version of Table 2.

  Charts were simplified and rows of repeated data were combined to clarify and facilitate data analysis.
The summary of site priorities and social themes underlying the choosing of priority sites were listed. As social themes of site improvement outcomes were the same as those for site priorities, only site priority themes were included in the final chart. Table 2 and its preliminary versions were included in Appendix B.

E) Site Selection and Design/Program Response

Site selection criteria were determined directly from the final charting of data on site priorities and their underlying social themes. Sites from within the site priority list (which were areas and/or actual sites) were selected if responses at those sites could also address social themes and include components able to be accomplished partly or completely by trained volunteers from the community (or assisting village employees or professionals). A few of the response projects, however, that involve building rehabilitation/maintenance and redevelopment, will by nature rely more heavily on professional work.

All potential sites were located on an aerial photo for reference. Selected sites for which examples of detailed responses were listed and illustrated were located separately on aerial photos.

An abbreviated list of ideas, followed by a list of all responses with detailed explanations of levels of community or professional involvement, is included in Appendix B.

F) Documentation and Sharing

A copy of this Capstone report is to be provided to the village revitalization committee for their reference in helping to decide what projects to begin as part of their revitalization efforts. The researcher will present the results, conclusions, and illustrations to the revitalization committee in person and answer any questions raised about the project.
4. Results

Sample focus group conversations:
Facilitator: What has changed in Red Creek?
Participant (teen/young adult):
“It’s gone downhill a lot. I think everybody’s losing confidence in it and I think everybody wants to see it rebuilt but it’s just not happening for whatever reasons.”
1--Theme: Identity. Category: Physical Indicators of Negative Identity
2--Theme: Fear of/Reaction to Social Change. Category: Hopelessness
3--Theme: Fear of/Reaction to Social Change. Category: Learned helplessness

Facilitator: How have these changes affected your life?
Participant (teen/young adult):
“I never do anything in my own community. I always go other places to do things. Yes, I used to [do things here].” (Other participants: Yeah, I used to.)
4--Theme: Breakdown of Social Fabric. Category: Lack of community
5,6,7--Theme: Breakdown of Social Fabric. Category: Lack of activities in village core

These examples of coding transcripts for topic categories represent the core step in understanding the study’s results. Categories corresponded to broader themes (each of which encompassed a set of categories). Themes for analysis were determined to be: the physical indicators of disorder, the breakdown of social fabric, the fear of or reaction to social change, economic factors, and opportunities or positive factors. The last one was indicated by the comments only; the first four were issues found in the literature and indicated by many comments.

Results began with the transcribing of focus group conversations (sample responses to questions are included in section A below), the coding of relevant comments from those conversations, and the summary of the coded data for each group and for all groups. The
analysis of this information began with noting the order of topics raised by participants in response to the first question of what changes have taken place (the order of topics is listed in section D). The next step in the analysis involved the coding of all comments in each group and the tallying of frequency of those comments for each category and theme.

After the data for each group had been coded and tallied, the results were combined to give a picture of the overall frequency of categories and themes in the conversations (A summary of the frequency of comments for each category is listed in sub-section B below. A summary of the frequency of comments for each theme is listed in sub-section C). The researcher then summarized the order of sites listed as priorities for improvement (listed in section E). As a final exploration of the issues of concern regarding sites, participants’ expected outcomes for the improvement of priority sites were summarized for reference during analysis. These results pointed directly to the categories and themes of the research that would be addressed by improving the sites selected from priority site areas (sites are listed at the end of the results section).

An explanation of the findings from each step follows, in sub-sections A through I.

A. **Focus Groups: Sample Road Map Responses**

- **What changes have occurred in Red Creek?**

  “They were all together on Main St., playing...the kids would roller skate and bike ride on the sidewalk, not like today, they can’t do anything on the sidewalks—there’s nothing for children. Back then, the children were our community.” (older adults)

  “…almost every new home being built is a wide body. I understand why people do it, but I mean, it’s changing the landscape a lot--whereas it used to be farmhouses and open fields, now it’s deteriorating farmhouses and widebodies.” (older adults)

- **How have these changes affected your life in the community?**

  “I don’t like it because my friends and I used to go to the grocery and take a walk...and you don’t want to go buy pizza [every time you go to the village center] and when you go down there, you don’t have anywhere to sit and talk…” (youth)
“...it’d be nice to know who these 500 people are--the makeup. Because at one time when you had major businesses in town, like, Becker’s dad was mayor, head of the funeral home, you had Bob Robinson, you had the Insurance agency, you had a bank, there was all kinds of stuff going on. I guess when all that began to disappear, I don’t know who the 500 people are!”

“I don’t know that many people in town. You never see them, because there’s no place for them to congregate in town to see them.” (older adults)

• How have these changes affected how you feel about Red Creek?

“People used to say, you live in the neatest place. Lawns were well-kept, storefronts were well-kept, the streets were immaculate—now the sidewalks are unkempt, the buildings are run down, you see junk in front yards—now, we don’t have our friends come to visit, we go visit them. We’re embarrassed!” (older adults)

• How do you think these changes may have affected the way outsiders view Red Creek?

“I kinda feel like an outsider looking in, ‘cause I haven’t lived here that long. And it didn’t even make me stop and think about it, there wasn’t anything to think about. I just figured it was a bunch of buildings that had been abandoned.” (teen/young adult)

“They’d think it’s disgusting, because it is--there’s litter all around, trash in the pond, old cars broken down. I saw someone throw this pipe from his car into the pond.” (youth)

• In the vision planning process, some residents brought up vacancy as an issue that they were very concerned about. Do you think that it is a concern? [all participants answered affirmatively, most did so immediately, a few did after some discussion]

• Write down which vacant places in the village most concern you and why.
“I think about Henderson’s [grocery] store, I looked at it and it looks like a baseball hit it, and I really wish they’d fix that up because it looks like someplace that gets more and more people who are, like, mean. I mean, I saw some teenagers who looked really mean. I think it’s just something that, maybe the town was making them reckless...” (youth)

• Are there any places in the village you avoid? Why?

--”That hotel, as far as I know, is unsafe, there’s a lot of drugs and stuff.”
--”People live there more than anything. I have been freaked out by people standing on the porch. They’re just kinda looking.”
--”They don’t look like very sane people, you don’t want to walk slowly past there. [Have you seen or heard of drug use there?] It’s just kinda, that’s the impression you get by looking at it, whether they’re there or not.” (teen/young adult)

• Which space or site do you think it’s most important to improve? Why?
  [These results were summarized in tables 2 and 3]

• How do you think it should be improved?
  [These results were summarized in tables 2 and 3]

• What do you hope these changes would accomplish?

--”Well, just make it more family-oriented, so when people drive by, they’d think, oh, that’s really cute...make it more lively.”
--”Make it so kids can hang around and become friends with other kids. Most kids here become so restless that they become bullies, because this place is boring, there’s nothing to do.”
--”They’re shut up too tight. It’s like leaving a dog on its chain for a year...” (youth)

[This response by two participants started out in a positive light, but ended up focusing on negative aspects of the current condition of the village—an atypical response to this question.]
Most responses focused on the improvement in sense of community, sense of village identity, and demonstration of caring about the community that improving sites would achieve.

Summaries of all comments, in response to all questions or brought up by participants, are on the next few pages. Those summaries include category names from the coding of responses. Responses were coded according to terminology found in the literature. A brief list of unfamiliar terms follows.

**Disorder**: A deterioration of the physical or social status quo (long-existing structure). (Taylor, 1998)

**Fear of Disorder**: A continuum ranging from dissatisfaction with the lack of maintenance of properties, to the strong unease of seeing unknown people on the street where there once were familiar people, to a fear that the changes will invite criminal behavior. (Taylor, 1998)

**Over-Control**: A reaction to overall disorder that attempts to remedy certain aspects of it with overly strict rules to govern behavior.

**Identity**: The general description, definition, or association people instinctively assign to a place (or person) upon becoming familiar with its physical or social attributes or character.

**B. Focus Group Conversation Coding: Content Category Frequency**

This list shows the total number of times each category was mentioned by all participants in all groups. It was summarized in order to show the topics that were of greatest importance to residents across all age groups. Appearance, the highest number, would be even higher if village-owned and private properties were combined, which they are in reality when seeing the village as a resident or tourist.

**Most frequent categories discussed --all groups combined**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Appearance/Upkeep of private structures, lots, and vegetated areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Fear of disorder and crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Lack of community/individual responsibility to community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Loss of businesses or convenient, walkable services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Appearance/Upkeep of village-owned properties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Identity: village is “dead” or “nothing”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
See Appendix A, Table 1, for the frequency of all comments in all categories and themes.

C. Focus Group Conversation Coding: Content Theme Frequency

Most frequent themes discussed – all groups combined (with sample comments from teens/young adults)

Central Themes Total across groups

• Physical Indicators of Disorder 101
  “The overall upkeep of places is going down. The whole pond area probably
  throws people off too cause it’s not the best-looking pond, and the backs of the
  buildings look all run-down and that doesn’t look very good.”

• Breakdown of Social Fabric 89
  “Lately, the laws have gotten a little stricter. The skateboarders get stopped,
  as soon as they start skating. Someone calls the cops. It’s crazy too, where
  else are they gonna go? It’s a sport…”

• Fear of/Reaction to Social Change 81
  “I don’t know if more people have moved in and out of there who are like,
  more low-income…it doesn’t attract people.”

• Economic Factors 58
  “When Becker’s pharmacy was open it was a lot more helpful, like me, I don’t
  have a car, so having something there, it’s great.”

• Identity 51
  “--It says a lot about the people who live here too, that people might think
  we’re kinda like that too, kinda run down, but we’re not. We care a lot, but for
  whatever reason…” “--We just don’t know what to do.”

• Opportunities/Positive Factors 44
“I really appreciate its quiet laid-back atmosphere, in good ways. I’m not stressed here. There is something to be said for that even if it is boring to some people.”

Average number of comments coded per group: 57
Total number of comments coded: 458

D. Focus Group Conversation Coding: Order of Content Topics

Order of topic categories participants brought up in discussing changes (responses to question 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th>Order of topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9-14</td>
<td>Disorder related to pollution, crime and structural safety; Appearance; Lack of places to play/interact; Over-control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-29</td>
<td>Loss of business; Appearance; Lack of activities in core; Disorder related to crime; Over-control of activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-49</td>
<td>Loss of community; Lack of leadership; Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>Disorder related to structural safety; Loss of community; Loss of business; Appearance; Lack of leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A summary of site and theme priorities follows.
Table 2: Site Priorities and Their Underlying Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary: Site Priorities</th>
<th>Site Frequency</th>
<th>Summary: Priority Themes</th>
<th>Minimum Responses Should Include</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>vacant/general house upkeep</strong></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>disorder, social fabric</td>
<td>help people repair and maintain properties with structured community-building program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>commercial area upkeep/use</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>disorder, economic, social fabric</td>
<td>activate spaces that are vacant/underused with structured community-building program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>pond/shore reuse</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>disorder, social fabric</td>
<td>create ordered use of pond and pond edge with structured community-building program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>youth activities/in village core</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>social fabric</td>
<td>create activities in village center for kids with structured community-building program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The four site priority areas are shown separately on the graphics that follow.

[Images of graphics showing the four site priority areas: Commercial Area, Houses, Pond and shore, creek access, Village core—youth activities]

Aerial photos from: www.nysgis.state.ny.us
5. Discussion

One of the most striking results of this study is that young and old have such a unified outlook on the problems associated with vacancy in their community. Many residents sense an absence of community and feel that it stems partly from the lack of opportunities or reasons to go to the core of the village. Yet, their agreement on the importance of this issue—and, more significantly, on the meanings behind it and the feelings it provokes—is itself a strong basis for strengthening the community. The fact that residents are part of a physical community and have a shared sense of place, no matter how negative that sense may be, is a significant starting point for their efforts to revitalize the place they call home.

A starting point in combating this lack of a sense of community will most likely be the creation of spaces for gathering, as many noted the inadequate opportunities for people to spend time together in the village, especially in the commercial core. Whether new opportunities would be used mainly by those already noticing this lack, or others would be inspired by new opportunities to gather with their neighbors in the village core, will be evident only after such places are installed. But judging from the number of participants interested in this issue, and the broad range of ages represented who would appreciate a chance to spend time in the village, it is likely that such spaces would be well-used. Its use by just the actual number of participants in this study would make a significant impact on the sense of community in the village core. Modest numbers of people visible from the street would make it look more lively and begin to change the perceptions that it is “dead” (the definition of village identity, by many participants, referring to theirs and to outsiders’ perceptions).

Residents’ perceptions of the conditions of vacancy in the village were similar to those of residents living in city neighborhoods cited in the literature review. They were concerned about the appearance of dilapidated commercial buildings and the safety of their outer features for passers-by, litter, debris visible in front yards or side yards of houses or garages, trash and debris in the pond visible from the sidewalk, the appearance of vacant houses, and the safety of vacant houses and poorly fenced abandoned waste bed ponds at the industrial site that could invite children to explore.

These perceptions were related to the time they had spent in the village. Whether length of residency would be an influence on people’s perceptions or experiences of vacancy was part of this study’s research question. While only one newer resident was less concerned about the appearance of vacancy (and agreed it was an overall concern but thought activity at current and future businesses was the main priority for revitalization), other participants shared the outlook that it was a priority concern. An interesting finding was that even the youngest residents and those who had recently moved to Red Creek were as concerned as longer-term residents about the appearance of properties, the lack of or loss of business activity, and the lack of business or other destinations at the core.

This was true both for youth who did remember being able to walk to the now-vacant grocery and for youth who did not but instead remembered that in other places such as previous hometowns, there were places to go to in town. Some youth also stated that they would consider moving elsewhere. Some youth already had decided on this tack of dissociating themselves from the place (also a part of the literature on this subject), yet could not do so until they reached college age. In comparison, only one adult mentioned considering moving away, and one mentioned that others had considered it.
Although leaving one’s hometown is a common goal of youth approaching college age, in this case the strength of the sentiment expressed could indicate that their place attachment is weak or nonexistent. The lack of development of place bonds could be attributed to their lack of ample opportunities to make strong memories of place within the village. This opportunity is lacking in that activities and gathering places are few and are tied to school (outside village boundaries) or to the two places in the village core where youth can buy inexpensive food and remain on site. While community experiences are possible outside of structured activity, such as in friendships or in village events, it is in the more reliable opportunities to see others that memories of place are formed. It is these everyday experiences of ‘place over time’ that lead to place attachment, as discussed in the literature review.

Memories of these experiences are what older residents cite as evidence that they once had a vibrant and caring community. This evidence of place attachment bonds points to perhaps a more strongly felt experience of the changes in these and other aspects of quality of life in the village—the only difference between the adults and the youth on this issue. The older or longer-term residents were more likely to remember a full picture of how life was lived in past years, when people interacted with others more meaningfully and more often. Examples were children playing along the streets as neighbors looked after each other’s kids, and residents chatting when they bumped into acquaintances and friends at the grocery, where nearly everyone went every week. These minor interactions, which take place where people gather or go to as a destination, are what is largely missing for youth within the village. Thus place bonds regarding the village were created through the opportunity for activity with others within the village itself.

Longer-term or older residents agreed with youth on the importance of appearance in addition to opportunities for activity. The issue of appearance also plays into the formation of place attachment, as stated in the literature. As described in the literature, residents read poor upkeep of housing and other minor signs of disorder, such as litter, as signs of disinvestment due to a breakdown in social fabric. These signs may decrease residents bonds to a place as it appears less worthy of their own emotional and financial investment in it. In Red Creek, this type of disorder was a prominent part of residents’ concerns about properties and about the village as a whole. Some connected it to a lack of investment that would turn away potential home buyers and make the village appear fit only for rental properties. Some added that renters would not care about how a property looked, so there would be even less incentive for owners to maintain it.

Both younger and older residents believe that making improvements to vacant sites would usher in a greater sense of community by demonstrating that residents care about the place and about creating opportunities for all residents to experience a sense of community. This reinforces what was found in the literature, in that sense of community is related to how residents of a place see its identity, both through their own eyes and those of others. As residents understand that its appearance is negative, they think outsiders passing through will also see that and conclude that the village is unappealing (or worse)—and assign it a negative identity. Residents want things to look better not only for their own satisfaction with the place, but so that their village—and by extension, they themselves—will be positively perceived by others.

Such reactions elucidate Joan Nassauer’s well-known theory that signs of caring are a fundamental influence on people’s understanding of, and reaction to, a place. Perhaps the
most visible signs that a place is not cared-for occur when the simplest of tasks, such as getting rid of unwanted material that is visible from the street, is not done. What points to a more serious problem is when that lack of caring, over many months or years, provokes no action by authorities to make property owners take responsibility, at the very least billing owners for its removal by a third party.

While youth might not be aware that government has authority to take action on code violations and bill a property owner in such a case, one youth immediately noted anger at the village authorities for not cleaning trash and pollution from the pond so that it could be used. Adult reaction to the lack of property upkeep (and possibly of codes to govern it), common in Red Creek, was worth noting. Some adults interviewed in this study expressed more frustration at the village’s lack of action than at the property owners’ lack of responsibility. This was clear in the medium to high number of comments that cited a lack of leadership in the village to regulate such issues. Evidence that some owners do not care about the visible condition of village property is bad enough to bear for residents who care about the appearance of their homes and their village; knowing that officials will do nothing to cause property owners to comply with codes or ordinances is more devastating for some residents, as it is a realization that the future of their village is in jeopardy.

Many expressed fears for the future: of the buildings on Main Street collapsing or being condemned and torn down with nothing, or the wrong thing, to go in their places, fears that all the caring residents were either older and would not be around much longer or would move away, that renters would move in who would not care about the upkeep of their properties, and that property values were already low and no buyers would be interested. This is a reaction supported by the literature, which explains that vacancy symbolizes disinvestment and decay and contributes to the decay of communities themselves.

Understanding that “the term ‘vacant land’ frequently carries a negative connotation—abandoned, empty, dangerous,” it makes sense that these are the reactions of many residents to the longest-empty sites in Red Creek (Bowman and Pagano, 2004). The large abandoned industrial site of the cannery buildings was a concern in terms of the difficulty of finding a business that would be able to use the site and the need to clean up any hazards there. In listing their priorities, residents overwhelmingly bypassed that site in favor of the most visible ones at the village core. But the cannery site’s adjacent open wastebed, surrounded only by a decaying low fence, caused adults and children alike serious concern over the chance of a child getting into the remaining pond and drowning. Even small sites such as houses near the center of the village caused great concern in the older adults and the youngest children over safety of the structures and the likelihood that a child would explore them and get hurt. The worries over the danger of structures falling apart, whether houses or large commercial store buildings on Main Street, was a central focus of the youngest (the 9-14 age group) and oldest (the 50+ age group) as well. This is also supported by the literature in that it is the youngest and the oldest who typically have the strongest concerns about the safety of structures and open areas.

“The abandonment of a structure, whether residential or commercial, disrupts a neighborhood. If other abandonment follows, the neighborhood’s character changes commensurately. The area may survive...but the built environment no longer represents its past. The past exists only in memory” (Bowman and Pagano 2004). This has been true even in one of the youngest residents interviewed for this study, who remembered walking to the now-vacant grocery store on Main Street for a parent, then going to the library next door.
Even though the library is still functioning in the same place, the resident expressed a lack of interest in walking to the village core any more because the experience was no longer as full as it once was.

For adults, the memories of the place’s past functions are even harder to let go. Knowing there used to be service businesses located in convenient proximity to their homes, many adult participants expressed a strong desire to see these brought to the village anew. The bank (locally founded and owned until its last 5 years of operation, which ended in about 2000), the pharmacy, and the grocery were mentioned by nearly all at least once, as significant factors missing in the village. While their presence would certainly be helpful in many ways to the health of the village, the summary of all comments made clear that it was not these remembered icons, but the overall cohesive appearance of the village, that weighs most heavily in people’s minds. Residents’ memories of these three essential services loom large, especially as they are reminded of them every day when passing the now-vacant buildings on Main Street and Wolcott Street.

Yet the need for these businesses is only one factor in the vacancy at hand. The highest number of comments by far centered on disorder, in the form of physical decay, unmanaged debris, and the social implications of unkempt and/or vacant properties in general. This has to do just as much with the fact that the commercial buildings’ owners do virtually nothing to maintain their outward appearance (some owners are also not local and not in touch with village concerns), as it does with the lack of businesses operating in them. It is for this reason that the conclusions to this study centered on the concept of a program to ensure maintenance needs identification, notification, financial assistance if necessary, and ultimate code enforcement through fines or property tax augmentation.

As this has not been taking place in the recent past, some adult participants strongly emphasized the lack of leadership on this issue. If village leadership takes a serious stand on code enforcement and invests in it, many of these physical manifestations of vacancy would be alleviated or eliminated. Property owners would be more likely to comply with the codes before the village would have to take punitive action, as was noted by Bowman and Pagano about Seattle’s use of David Rusk’s “broken window theory” in its struggle against vacant properties. While cities have far more staff and tax revenue to tackle problems, the smaller number of properties in a village are proportionately within the scope of village government action.

As territoriality is typically not strong in public spaces, it is not surprising that the only publicly/collectively designed territorial markers evident in downtown Red Creek are the village signs restricting youth activity on sidewalks, the placement of a few large planters along the sidewalks for summer beautification, and the placement of lighted holiday decorations along the upper levels of buildings in the winter. There are few, if any, other expressions of territoriality in the public spaces, save for a minor amount in park spaces. This is coupled with virtually none by private owners of the many downtown properties, who instead appear to perform no upkeep.

Longer-term and shorter-term residents expressed territoriality, but only toward their homes and property adjacent to their own. Buying land next door to prevent undesired uses of it, whether it was an already run-down building or a potential site for a housing development, was a temptation for about four participants. As found in the Taylor literature on the subject, there was not much territoriality expressed toward the public spaces in the core, except for a wish that they were better maintained (that others would express
territoriality toward the properties they owned). The only connection people made between themselves and the idea of helping to make the village look better was in saying that they did not and had not known what to do to achieve this, and that possibly now the revitalization effort would inspire them and others to understand what to do and help in a communal effort. The former, called ‘learned helplessness’ in the literature, is a development that typically occurs at a later stage in the process of decline. The fact that soon after stating ‘learned helplessness,’ people expressed the desire or potential to contribute to group efforts (if they learned what to do) is a sign that this process can indeed be reversed if the right steps are taken by village leaders.

One priority step this study recommends is the creation of a gathering space at the center of the village (in the parking lot directly beyond the T intersection of Wolcott St. and Main Street, on Route 104A). This has the potential to begin building community and in turn, influence perceptions of the village as a whole. As the literature review discusses, gaps in the fabric of a neighborhood are not necessarily a negative. The mixture of spaces and solids creates a rhythm that is interesting to the eye. What would make that meaningful, in this case, is an outdoor gathering space at such a visible location: it would demonstrate to locals and tourists that there is investment in that community and people actively enjoying their community because of it. The fact that the site is also adjacent to food-centered businesses will mean its use is assured. Food vending is an important ingredient in public space design, as William H. Whyte concluded in his well-known research on urban public spaces.

This and other site improvements would not only make it possible for residents to create memories that contribute to their place attachment to the village, they would function as influences on those passing through the village. While one expert noted the need for a grand structure to serve as a beacon that draws people to notice a place, that is not a likely development in the near future for the village. Instead, it is possible that highly visible and well-used open spaces could become icons of place, as discussed in the literature review, which help tourists form understandings of place, or ‘place consensa.’ Tourists were noted by many as simply passing through, not stopping or remembering the village.

When discussing improvements, many residents referred again to outsiders or tourists in stating their shared belief that improving sites would cause people to remember the village and stop there. The potential influence on outsiders’ perceptions of the village is one outcome; a more important one is the potential influence these actions will have on residents’ perceptions of place, place identity, and the identity they believe outsiders attribute to the village. Turning these perceptions around in residents’ own eyes is the most important first step; thus it is imperative that visible, useful, and meaningful actions are taken to improve the village in the ways that will have most impact on residents’ perceptions of place.
6. Conclusions

The conclusions from this study center on the most frequent topics and themes evident in data analysis, and the selection of sites for improvement from that analysis. As the themes centered on both physical manifestation of vacancy and on its social implications, conclusions address both physical aspects of vacancy and the social aspects arising from the low numbers of people spending time in the village core. Themes and categories were:

**Physical Indicators of Disorder**
- Appearance/upkeep of private property
- Appearance/upkeep of village-owned property
- Pollution of natural areas
- Abandonment of properties
- Vacant or empty structures
- Unused, wasted, or under-used structures/sites

**Breakdown of Social Fabric**
- Loss or lack of community
- Lack of leadership
- Lack of activities in core for youth
- Loss of people on street/interactions/population
- Lack of individual responsibility to community
- Lack of gathering/walking destinations

**Fear of/Reaction to Social Change**
- Fear of disorder or crime
- Hopelessness
- Over-control by authorities (strict rules)
- Fear of low-income/rental population increase/
  Territoriality re: property adjacent to homes
- Learned helplessness (don’t know what to do)
- Unpredictability (don’t know whom you’ll see)

**Economic Factors**
- Loss of business/convenient walkable services
- Difficulty to sell properties/draw residents
- Lack of general vitality in core of village
- Need tax/service incentives: draw/keep business
- Need econ. vitality to draw business/residents

**Identity**
- Village identity is “dead” or “nothing”
- Anger, sadness, frustration, embarrassment
- Physical indicators reflecting negative identity
- Dissociation with village

**Opportunities/positive factors**
- Hope/Community action or support will occur
- Capitalize on village physical/social qualities
- New Leadership will make a difference
- Can build sense of community
- New businesses can draw new residents
- Capitalize on village location on tourist route
From data analysis, it was clear that residents noted four site areas of greatest concern (measured in frequency of mentions across groups). These site priorities had underlying themes that correspond to themes found in the data analysis: physical indicators of disorder and the breakdown of social fabric. The former is evident in that many reasons for indicating these sites have to do with their appearance/lack of upkeep, the latter is evident in the common discussion of the lack of a sense of community or opportunities for regular community activities when discussing site areas.

When residents discussed the improvements they imagined could be made to these sites, they mentioned ideas such as fixing dilapidated structures, maintaining the vegetation around the pond and providing places to walk. When asked what might be the result of such improvements, participants focused on the positive instead of the negative, an abrupt switch from the conversation leading up to that point, in which they had discussed concerns about negative issues. In those positive outcomes mentioned, an overwhelming emphasis on two social themes was clear. The themes were physical indicators of disorder and breakdown of social fabric. The two themes from the ‘expected improvements’ comments are identical to the themes underlying the agreement on four priority sites. Thus, the confirmed importance of these two themes is even more compelling and addressing them should be prominent in the responses to vacancy.

From within the areas pertaining to the four site priorities, sites for improvements should address these two main social themes and address the physical issues noted in the site priorities. Both programming and physical improvements should be combined at the sites so that residents will have greater reason to be there on a regular basis, which will strengthen community and compel people to notice and contribute to the maintenance needs of the site. Before improvements are made, the village revitalization committee should choose priorities from among the site improvement ideas, according to their judgment, financial allotments, popular interest in program ideas and availability of volunteers for physical improvement work. Interest and availability might be gauged by circulating a survey by mail or on the village web site, or by holding meetings. In addition to programming and physical improvements, residents should be involved in both program leadership and regular site activities, and in maintenance. In addition, a longer-term programmatic use for the site should be in tandem with the site improvement.

For example, a community volunteer group that does the physical work to improve a site functions as a community-building and leadership-building program, while the site improvement addresses the physical recommendations for that site. Both together bring people to the site more than each alone would. They give people a reason to be involved over a longer period of time in ways that increase their commitment to, and caring for, the site and the place as a whole.

An example of this is the greenhouse and nursery, where youth and/or adults and elders would work together to research and set up the operation and the building, and then work on projects together or in shared space as a year-round activity. The space could be used by youth for after-school time, and by elders in the mornings if youth interest is stronger regarding separate timing. At the same time, re-using the site for this purpose eliminates concerns about the site’s appearance and upkeep (the two houses were noted by nearly all participants as priority properties for improvement). The material produced at the site then becomes a source for improving the appearance of other future sites.
In order to include the community-building and leadership-building programmatic aspects of each response, site improvements must include parts that can be achieved by community members. Community involvement in initiating projects such as site improvements has been noted in the literature on community participation to increase the likelihood that residents remain involved over the long term in the use and maintenance of a public site. Thus, projects with steps that can be done by volunteer workers have been included in most responses, even if only the first or last of many steps.

Special effort should be made to include youth as a resource in the processes of decision making and volunteering/program setup. Not only are they a great portion of current residents, they represent the greatest potential source of future residents on which the village will depend. The likelihood of gaining their substantial involvement will depend on whether their views and needs are included, as this will inspire them to contribute more than they otherwise might. The fact that they share the concerns of adults in equal strength is an ample starting point from which to include them in further discussion.

Volunteers should be made up of a cross-section of the community for projects to find wide support and a likelihood of completion in a village of such small size (approximately 500 people). This cross-section is likely to be obtained, as youth, teens, younger adults and older adults have similar perceptions about the issues related to vacancy and the importance of remedying those issues for the health of the village. This is an important conclusion to this study, as it answers one of the research subquestions: whether perceptions and experiences of vacancy differ according to age group. The contribution of community volunteers is not only a social necessity; it is a financial one for a village operating on a small budget. Making the community commitment clear before work is approved and funds allocated would likely influence village officials or community leaders to give the go-ahead to project work.

Conclusion summary:
Within the four priority sites, address the two majority themes with a range of landscape architectural design and programming from volunteer to professional in scope.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sites</th>
<th>themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>vacant/all houses</td>
<td>breakdown of social fabric</td>
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<tr>
<td>commercial area</td>
<td>physical indicators of disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pond/shore</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>youth activities in core</td>
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**Project Complexity/Ranges of Involvement**

Site improvement programmatic and design responses should accommodate the range of help that is available to village leaders; this will rely heavily on volunteers from the community for work such as the installation of plantings and simple walkways. Thus, listed below is the range of workers needed to complete projects. These terms are included in the sample list of projects and the detailed list of projects that follow.

Volunteer------------volunteers with or without simple training; simple training/tools
Trained-------------village employees and/or volunteers with moderate training/tools
Professional-------expert village employee or professional firm
Site Selection
Potential sites within the four site areas are shown below.

Sample houses from data—Actual sites to be determined by village residents

Commercial area sites
Connectors to pond (arrows are larger than actual sites for visibility)

Pond, shore, creek access

Village core sites (includes most sites shown)

Examples of Priority Site Improvements with Conceptual Graphics

The following pages list examples of program and site improvement concepts for each of the four areas and the two main themes from the conclusion, along with aerial photograph mapping of each site’s location. While data analysis, site selection, and improvements were the bulk of this research project, graphics for a few site improvements were created with the time remaining after the main aspects of the project were completed. Photographs of current site conditions and graphics of site improvement concepts follow for the few examples for which concept graphics were created.
Example Project A:  

**Housing**

**Home Maintenance Program**

- Identify maintenance and financial needs. Create program to help homeowners with one initial upkeep project each through volunteer and professional exterior and/or interior work.
- Create financial and advising program to help owners complete ongoing maintenance projects; monitor completion through code enforcement and notification system tied to tax payments.

**Phasing:** one block per summer

**Action:** volunteer and professional cleanup/repair crews

**Involvement:** Volunteer to Professional

**Categories Addressed:**

- Appearance/Physical indicators of disorder/Fear of disorder, hopelessness
- Lack of Community, loss of people on the street/interactions
- Lack of individual responsibility to community
- Physical indicators reflect negative identity
- Lack of leadership/ Difficulty to sell properties/draw residents
- Lack of activities in core (if youth volunteer program is involved)
- Can build sense of community/Hope and community support for action

Example Project B:

**Housing**

**Front Yard Plantings program**

- Install plantings along foundations or mow strips of vacant properties and/or those chosen by village committee/those whose owners request plantings

**Phasing:** First summer

**Action:** clean up yards at vacant houses, install plantings

Each following summer: one block per summer

**Action:** plant in all or owner-requested yards

**Involvement:** Volunteer

**Categories Addressed:**

- Appearance/Physical indicators of disorder/Fear of disorder/Hopelessness
- Lack of community/Lack of individual responsibility to community/Abandonment of properties
- Lack of leadership/Learned helplessness/Fear of low-income rental population increase
- Physical indicators reflect negative identity/Village identity is dead/Emotional reaction
- Lack of activities in core (if youth volunteer program is involved)
- Can build sense of community/Hope and community support for action
Example Project C: Commercial Area Upkeep

Building and Property Upkeep
• Program to identify maintenance and financial needs; require commercial building owners to maintain properties; provide minor façade and grounds upkeep through volunteer work

Phasing: One building per month in summer/fall
Involvement: Simple to Professional

Example Project D: Commercial Area Upkeep

Public gathering space with parking/temporary performance space

Phasing: First summer
Action: Remove smallest building (owner might be closing it; it is too small for most future businesses). Build trellis shading structure and flooring, and pave/line rear of lot.
Second Summer
Remove center driveway pavement, grade/smooth center space, plant lawn, shrubs, and trees

Involvement: Volunteer to Professional

Categories Addressed:
• Lack of gathering places/walking destinations/Lack of community
• Appearance/Physical indicators of disorder/Hopelessness/Learned helplessness
• Village identity is dead/Emotional reaction
• Lack of activities in core/Lack of leadership
• Can build sense of community/Hope and community support for action

Site Location
Current Site Conditions

Potential Site Use – Concept Graphic
Example Project E: Commercial Area Upkeep

All-Ages Cafe

- Change hotel-bar to all-ages café; redesign parking lot into seating area and more efficient rear lot

Phasing: First summer:

Action: Organize and line rear of lot; designate entrances with lines/ signage: in through Main St. driveway, out through connector street driveway, not Wolcott St.

Second Summer:

Action: Create seating area on existing pavement, dig bed/plant trees on edge of lot along street; buffer seating area from lot with planters.

Involvement: Owner and: Volunteer to Professional

Categories Addressed:

- Appearance/Physical indicators of disorder/Fear of disorder or crime
- Lack of gathering places/walking destinations/Lack of community
- Lack of activities in core/Lack of leadership
- Village identity is dead/Emotional reaction/Physical indicators of negative identity
- Can build sense of community/Hope and community support for action

Site Location
Current Site Conditions

Potential Site Use—Concept Graphic
Example Project F:  
Commercial Area Upkeep

Curbside Farm Market

**Phasing:** First summer: obtain funds for tents and tables; invite area farmers; publicize.

**Action:** weekly/twice-weekly ½-day market along Main St. sidewalk (and possibly Wolcott St. sidewalk at later date) in spring, summer, and fall. Farmers bring products or are helped with delivery by village driver; youth help with setup, sales, or delivery to customer cars for school project or modest village-subsidized payments.

**Involvement:** Volunteer to Professional

**Categories Addressed:**
- Lack of gathering places/walking destinations/Lack of community/Lack of vitality in core
- Lack of leadership/Must show economic vitality to draw businesses/Loss of businesses
- Village identity is dead/Emotional reaction/Difficulty to draw residents/Hopelessness
- Can build sense of community/Hope and community support for action
- Appearance/Physical indicators of disorder/Fear of disorder or crime
- Capitalize on location on tourist route and village physical qualities

Example Project G:  
Commercial Area Upkeep, Pond /Shore Use

Pond Cleanup, Commercial Building Maintenance/Marketability

- Complete sewer line connections for all properties adjacent to pond or in commercial center so that recreation on/near pond and creek is possible. Follow up with completion of connections throughout village for all properties.

**Phasing:** First year priority project. Direct funds and leadership efforts to ensuring completion within one year.

**Action:** Set aside certain number of leadership personnel hours or committee to ensure project funds are secured and work is completed within one year. Make project completion a priority village using village funds or newly obtained grant funds. Pass village ordinance to require adjacent and commercial core properties to be connected within one year, others within the following year. Fund in part with village funds, part owner funds; set up payment plan for remaining properties.

**Involvement:** professional

**Categories Addressed:**
- Physical indicators of disorder/Physical indicators of negative identity/Fear of disorder
- Lack of gathering places/walking destinations/Lack of community/Lack of vitality in core
- Lack of leadership/Must show economic vitality to draw businesses
- Village identity is dead/Emotional reaction/Difficulty to draw residents/Hopelessness
- Hope and community support for action
- Capitalize on village physical qualities
Example Project H: Pond/Shore Use

Connecting Walks/Walkability Improvements

- Three walks connecting heart of village to new pond walkway at far left arrow and two arrows at right; one boat launch driveway at remaining arrow (between commercial buildings where driveway exists). Crosswalks throughout village; stop sign at main intersection where Rte. 104 turns north. Replace all sidewalks.

Phasing: one to two paths per summer. Sidewalks: one area/street per summer. Boat Launch: once priority sewer line connections are complete.

Action: even surface, spread mulch, dig bed, plant trees; paint crosswalks, install stop sign

Involvement: Volunteer to Trained

Sites Addressed: commercial area and pond / shore

Categories addressed:
- Lack of gathering places/walking destinations/Lack of activities in core
- Physical indicators of disorder/Lack of community/Lack of leadership
- Village identity is dead/Emotional reaction/Difficulty to draw residents/Hopelessness
- Can build sense of community/Hope and community support for action
- Capitalize on village physical qualities

Site Locations
(illustrated area circled)
Current Site Conditions

Potential Site Use—Concept Graphic
Example Project I: Pond/Shore Use
Creekwalk

Phasing: First year: from pondside park (Hunter’s Park) to first crossroad
Second year: from crossroad, loop to central public gathering space
Future: extend to railroad right of way (rail-to-trail) connect to upper Main St.
Involvement: simple to professional

Categories addressed:
• Lack of gathering places/walking destinations in core/Capitalize on physical qualities
• Lack of community
• Physical indicators of disorder/Fear of disorder
• Village identity is dead/Emotional reaction/Difficulty to draw residents/Hopelessness
• Lack of leadership
• Can build sense of community/Hope and community support for action

Site Location (detail area circled)
Current Site Conditions

Potential Site Use – Concept Graphic
Example Project J: Youth Activities in Village Center

Greenhouse & Outdoor planting space

**Phasing:** First summer: Community/professional crew rehabs house and removes next-door house; youth/adults determine leadership program for greenhouse setup/classes/training, visit nurseries, consult experts
Following year: Research greenhouse operation, setup and training; order plant stock/materials; plant/maintain

**Involvement:** volunteer to professional

**Categories Addressed:**
- Lack of youth activities in core (year-round) and adult activities in core
- Lack of community/Lack of destinations in village core
- Physical indicators of disorder/Fear of disorder
- Physical indicators of disorder (provides material for beautification of other sites)
- Village identity is dead/Emotional reaction/Difficulty to draw residents/Hopelessness

![Site Location](image-url)
Current Site Conditions

Potential Site Use – Concept Graphic
Example Project K: Youth Activities in Village Center

Activity Lanes (bike, skate, scooter, jogging)

Phasing: first summer:
Core streetblocks (Center-most blocks of Main, Wolcott, and South Streets)
Second summer: next ring of streetblocks.

Action: remove, re-align and paint new yellow lines, add edge striping for bike lanes (two sides) and for parking lane (one side) along widest sections of Main St. and Wolcott St.; no parking on other streets except fisherman’s spots next to pond; change ordinance to allow activities; install signage.

Involvement: simple to moderate

Categories Addressed:
• Lack of community/ Lack of people on the street/interactions
• Physical indicators of disorder/Fear of disorder
• Lack of activities for youth in core
• Capitalize on physical qualities
• Village identity is dead/Emotional reaction/Difficulty to draw residents
• Lack of leadership/Hopelessness
• Can build sense of community/Hope and community support for action

Site Location (detail area circled)
Current Site Conditions

Potential Site Use – Concept Graphic
Summary List: Improvements/Responses
(A detailed list follows)

Range of Involvement:
- volunteers with or without training; simple tools
- village employees and/or volunteers with moderate training
- trained village employee or hired professional firm

Creating Order/Promoting Community/Offering Destinations
in central commercial area
Categories addressed -------------------------------------Community, Economic, Activity, Order

1) Public outdoor gathering
   & performance space
1b) Redesign/improvement of parking lot
   next to Brooks’
2) Cafe & outdoor seating area at Hotel
2b) Redesign/improvement of parking lots
   next to Hotel, Grocery
3) Greenhouse & outdoor planting space
4) Curbside Farm Market
5) Restaurant or cafe with pondside seating

Walking/Recreation/Destination
Categories addressed--------------------------------------Community, Activity, Order, Walking Destinations

1) Connect heart of village to pond walkway
2) Creekwalk east/north of pond
3) Pond walkway (proposed by CCDR; omitted)
4) Biking/skating park in village core

Creating Order
Categories addressed ---------------------------------- Appearance, Community, Activity, Identity

1) Pollution/litter reduction/vegetation management
2) Junk Haul
3) Activity Lanes
4) Housing/Commercial Building Maintenance Program

Leadership: Village Ordinance/Zoning/Code Suggestions (see full list below for details)
Categories addressed -----------------------------------Disorder, Community, Identity, Leadership

1) Property Management
2) Zoning
3) Codes
4) Ordinances
Detailed List: Improvements/Responses

Creating Order/Promoting Community/Offering Destinations in central commercial area
Categories addressed--------------------------------------Community, Activity, Order, Economic

1) Public outdoor gathering & performance space

Age: by/for all level: volunteer to professional

What:
--cement “stage”/platform for seating in shade for food take-out, event spectators
--rear parking lot doubles as temporary performance site with portable stage from county
--highly visible gathering of people in center of town
--will draw people; located near already active spots
--grass, planting beds with moveable benches, for eating, watching, playing

Who: Village takes ownership of parcel, hires professionals to design and install, volunteers help with site preparation and plantings
When: Spring/Summer/Fall
Where: Parking lot next to Brooks’, Pizza shop
Outcome:
--A place that welcomes all to gather and get to know others
--activates vacant/underused space at village center; visible in front of drivers on main route
--encourages people to walk to center, keeps parking out of the way/out of sight

1b) Redesign/improvement of parking lot next to Brooks’ and Pizza shop/to rear edge

Age: by/for all level: volunteer to professional

Who: Village, business owners, community volunteers
When: all year
What/Where: Create two rows of designated spots along rear edge with one-way entry/exit to area; limit lot access to Canada St. entrance and Brooks’ entrance; remove paving next to Pizza shop to provide more gathering space and eliminate 3rd entry. (reorganizing space is to provide uncluttered, pedestrian-friendly gathering space along street and between businesses for outdoor eating, picnicking, events—see first response in first section); Remove invasive vegetation at rear.
Outcomes:
--Reduce disorder/create order
--create appealing parking for access to main street businesses & attractions
--improve/generate community spirit with gathering destination, volunteer work
--improve appearance with planting beds along edges, etc. (to show a cared-for community)

2) All-ages Cafe with outdoor seating area (change from Hotel-Bar)

Age: by/for all level: volunteer to professional
Who: Hotel owner, or new owner in cooperation with village
When: all year
Where: Hotel building and parking lot
Outcome:
--eliminates disorder creates order maintain property (incentives to improve maintain)
--visible gathering of people (a welcoming community)
--A place that serves all (youth-friendly) and appeals to majority of residents
--activates village center, provides welcoming destination for all
--create
--add ornamental vegetation along street for beautification
--create outdoor gathering space in village center for all ages and daytime use
--improve generate community spirit

2b) Redesign improve Hotel parking lot
--create outdoor seating area on lot, designate two access points (one-way), move cars to rear
and west side
--becomes village maintained lot for all businesses to use; Hotel owner relieved of
maintenance costs
--eliminate need for parking along pond edge appealing way to park for nearby businesses
--require use by other businesses (or on street at south side of Wolcott) instead of pond side
parking
--add parking in unused space south of funeral home or across street at corner if needed
--planting beds and trees along lot edges installed by volunteers

Who: Village ordinance, business owners, assistance through village funds employees
When: all year
Where: Lot next to hotel and grocery, limit to two one way access points, install seating
along street, park cars in rear of lot; add new lot at vacant corner lot across side street from
Hotel
Outcome:
--Reduce disorder by changing bar to café by ordering lot spaces and entry exit, and by
improving lot with beautification plantings

3) Greenhouse nursery outdoor planting space
Age: by all, for all level: volunteer to professional
--Plant propagation, maintenance

Who: kids, adults and elders
When: all year
Where: grown in converted vacant house and nearby vacant lots; Planted throughout village
on private and public property
Outcome:
--beautification of vacant and active properties village lands
--creating community, opportunity to know others with year round activity
--learning hobby/job skills, learning via research to set up greenhouse
--activities in village for kids after-school and throughout year for all ages; activities for adults

4) Curbside Farm Market
Age: by all, for all          level: volunteer to professional
--Sale of fruits and vegetables, homemade goods

Who: Area farmers/with sales help if needed from local children (paid by village)
Where: Main Street sidewalk
When: Summer/Fall, 2x/week
Outcomes:
--create community
--provide healthy foods for families without need to drive
--bring people to village center on foot
--activate center
--provide economic outlet to area farms to help keep them in business and prevent sprawl
--inspire people to farm on area lands

Economic, Historic Preservation, Tourism
Categories addressed --------------------------------------Economic, Community, Activity, Order

1) Café, Bakery, or Restaurant with pondside seating area at Historic Building (Trading Post or neighboring building)
Age: by/for all          level: volunteer to professional

What: Village takes ownership of building, obtains grant for rehab; rents/sells to restaurateur
Who: New business owner/renter with restaurant experience; Village official/other to write
      grant for building rehabilitation
When: all year
Outcomes:
--visible gathering of people (a welcoming community)
--Destination for both adults and youth (kid- and teen-friendly) and tourists
--activates village center/ economic project can draw other businesses
--eliminates disorder/creates order
--reactivate vacant building in center whose condition causes distress to residents
--make use of key village asset: view of pond
--create community
--incentives to improve/ maintain property

2) Committee to research possibility of establishing a farming cooperative for fields in proximity to village/determine amount of interest by residents/area students
Age: adult/teen          level: volunteer to professional
[best outcome: launch youth & adult farmer training (for restaurant supply) & property tax incentive program for farm use of surrounding village lands—see training programs at Intervalle organization, Burlington, VT]

**Walking/Recreation Opportunities/Destinations**

1) **Connections from heart of village to planned pond walkway**

**Age:** by/for all  
**level:** volunteer

**What:**
--Simple paths from sidewalk down to pond walkway (gravel if funds are limited)  
--Signage for visibility  
--Ordinance against parking next to pond (or within 50 feet except on South St.)  
--Move parking to improved lots behind Grocery, across from School  
--Plantings along paths and at corner

**Who:** Village takes ownership of land or partners with business owners to provide maintenance for easement; volunteers install walks & plants

**When:** Year-round

**Where:** a) On corner between Insurance building and house  
   b) Between auto parts store and car dealership—to remain a wide gravel path for future use as a boat launch

**Outcome:**
--ease of access between walking destinations and features of village (pond and new park)  
--activates and draws attention to vacant natural area next to village center  
--eliminates disorder and pollution due to vehicles parked along edge of pond

1b) Pond walkway (already proposed by CDDR, thus not featured on this list)

2) **Pond Recreation programming**

**Age:** by/for all  
**level:** volunteer to professional

**What:**
--Designate one leader (official or volunteer) to coordinate all programming through other volunteers  
--Sailboat, kayak, and canoe launch: occasional through car dealer/garage parking lot  
--wide public-use dock with bench seating at end of commercial area below boat launch  
--Special village ordinance to require re-siding of rear of buildings or tearing down of additions  
--boating classes for youth & adults to teach skills and promote outdoor activity, get to know others  
--Tree planting along walkway between path and buildings

**Who:** Village to claim ownership of buffer zone around pond; volunteers to install gravel pathway; professionals to build and install docks, remove decaying walkway cover, replace fence with wooden fence

**When:** for use all year (if skating is possible)
Where: designed walkway with plantings from Hunter’s Park to end of business district. Anchored by two wide docks at either end and over existing sidewalk bump-out. All three enhanced with wooden railings and benches to create destinations for gathering, spending time in natural area, fishing, boat launch/tie-up.

Outcomes:
--create community, opportunity to get to know others
--village-centered activity for youth, adults who learn or teach boating
--access to pond as a major walking destination
--focus on a key village asset whose use for recreation is highly desired by residents
--eliminates disorder of un-maintained pond, edge and bridge cover
--creates incentive to clean up/keep up highly visible dilapidated structures next to pond

3) Creekwalk west of pond
Age: by/for all level: volunteer to professional

What/Where:
--village takes ownership/easement of rear edges of private properties (areas currently not in use); volunteers clear pathway starting directly across from Hunter’s Park, down slightest grade of slop, to creek edge, build bridge across to flat area, continue path to Canada St. Continue path to connect to public gathering space (boardwalk through old creekbed) and beyond to connect with former railroad tracks in future.

Who: village employees, volunteers

When: for use all year

Outcomes:
--create community through site preparation work, site use
--village-centered walking destination for youth, adults
--access to creek as a nature-centered walking destinations (desired by residents)
--focus on a natural asset that builds upon desire for use of pond/extends usable nature area
--eliminates disorder and creates use for un-maintained woods near center of town
--easement only needed at rear edges of private properties currently used for storage/no residential use

4) Biking/skating park in village core
Age: by/for all level: volunteer to professional

What/Where:
Create park in field behind old school building adjacent to parking lot.

Who: Professional designer; village employees or hired professionals create BMX-style bike park with raised dirt mounds, first with earth moving equipment; pave or install other surfaces at later date when funds are raised. Research by inquiring about Binghamton BMX park.

When: for use all year

Outcomes:
--village-centered activity for youth, healthful outdoor activity
--create community, opportunity to get to know others
--focus on a village asset to create opportunity for recreation that is highly desired by
residents who want to spend time in their community

Creating Order
Categories addressed-----------------------------Appearance, Community, Activity, Identity

1) Pollution/litter reduction and vegetation management
Age: by/for all                                 level: volunteer

Who: Village and volunteer committees/yearly recruits (for a, b, and c)

1a) Priority: Completion of sewer line connections to all structures in village. Core
commercial area and properties adjacent to pond: first year. Remaining streets of village:
second year.

1b) Pollution/Litter reduction
What:
--spring and fall cleanup of litter; village ordinance with fines for littering
--mailings to property owners to ask for help on community cleanup days
--incentive of free haul-away by village first summer
--phased completion by Village of sewer line hookup to all properties in village: First year--
those in first ring surrounding pond, second year--second ring, third year--third ring, etc.
--shared cost with village and phased payments over ten years from property owners, scaled
for financial need
--ordinance: no vehicles parked within 50 feet of pond, on private or public property
--severe fines for dumping garbage into pond; signage encouraging witnesses to report it
immediately to village officials/police
--village hires contractor to remove trash and logs from pond edges with priority near outlet.

1c) Pollution Education
What: school science classes research lawn fertilizer’s effect on water quality, put together a
brochure or the raw material for it; village prints/copies/distributes to all residents to educate
public about damage to pond water quality by lawn fertilizers around pond.
Outcome:
--get kids involved in and aware of a ‘real’ science topic; encourage participation and
help in solving one problem affecting their opportunity to use the pond.
--use volunteer work to accomplish a positive change and generate more volunteer
interest

1d) Vegetation management  (see pictures at end of this section)
What:
Eliminate highly invasive species on private or public property: Pizza lot edge, homeowner
yard on Wolcott St., other sites to be determined (see picture)
When: will need three-year approach of repeated weed-killing solution application, cutting
Outcomes:
--eliminate highly invasive species that could kill off wanted vegetation/spread rapidly
--free up space for ornamental planting/other use
--create order and present a cared-for community

What: Maintain vegetation with yearly inspections and pruning of old trees, protection and pruning for young trees, and weed-cutting/removal at edge of pond, other maintenance to be determined for each site
When: yearly inspection and maintenance; hire seasonally or use volunteers for most jobs—consult Cornell Cooperative Extension for training programs and literature (see pictures)
Outcomes:
--reduce hazards to people, houses, and wires from vulnerable older tree limbs
--create order; present a cared-for community
--free up areas for desired plantings/safer use/views/more light
--ensure healthy growth of desired vegetation and health of water body

2) Junk Haul
Age: by/for all level: volunteer
Who: Village sponsored/village equipment, property owners, volunteer committee/recruits
What: announce free village haul-away service for all debris visible from sidewalks—including back yards
When: First summer at no cost to homeowners; thereafter with village ordinance requiring it to be removed by June 1st or be hauled by village and billed to property owners.
Outcome:
--create order, reduce hopelessness, show it is a cared-for community
-- improve/generate community spirit
--galvanize residents to clean out properties with financial incentive

3) Activity Lanes
Age: by/for all (especially youth) level: volunteer to trained
Who: Village officials, village road crew
What: Remove yellow center lines and repaint off-center; Paint white stripe four feet from curb to narrow roads for bike, scooter, and skate lanes at both edges (parking on one side of road only, at widest core sections of Wolcott St. and Main St. only)
--wheeled activities allowed along all streets with lanes; install signs to inform that parking is not allowed in lanes. Signs direct parking to Hotel lot or Brooks’ lot.
When: all year
Outcome:
--reduce high intensity of conflicts (witnessed by researcher) over residents who want to use roads and sidewalks to walk or drive/residents who have no place to skate or bike.
--reactivate center and side streets with people enjoying village; encourage youth and adults’ physical activity by providing outdoor activity space
--create order without relying on harsh laws and time-consuming, community-eroding enforcement
--accommodate youth as valued part of community whose need for outdoor activity space is valid; fairness will encourage youth to volunteer with adults to work on other projects that need high energy and volunteer manpower, especially during summer
4) **Housing/Commercial Building Maintenance**

**Age:** by/for all

**Level:** volunteer to professional

**Who:** Village officials, citizen advisory committee, homeowners, volunteers: ‘Let’s work together’

**What:** Program to identify maintenance and financial needs and help homeowners/commercial building owners with upkeep

--Determination of codes/unacceptable conditions, financial and labor needs

--Announced, regular inspection program for condition of siding and painted wood structures

--Financial incentives program to relieve property taxes or give outright financial assistance

--Volunteer labor combined with village-financed labor

--Volunteer committee and kids’ school credit program/volunteer program

--homeowners phone or stop in at Village Hall to sign up, or through inspector

--Projects split into those doable by volunteers with limited skills & those needing contractors

**When:** Interiors: winter, Exteriors: Spring/summer/fall, rotating schedule of one street per year.

**Outcomes:**

--improve/generate community spirit, get to know others, know that others are there to help

--upkeep of properties improves image of village and property values, sense of community

--show it is a cared-for community

--reduce/eliminate feelings of helplessness/hopelessness

--kids/adults learn skills, experience benefits of volunteering

--volunteers feel sense of accomplishment in taking action to create change

--preserve historic homes for long-term so value is maintained and homes are more likely to be purchased by future village residents

**Leadership:** **Village Ordinance/Zoning/Code Suggestions**

Categories addressed-----------------------------------Disorder, Community, Identity, Leadership

1) **Property management:**

Require absentee landlords of all properties to designate an agent who is a village resident to relay information to/from officials and facilitate compliance with ordinances/maintenance of properties.

2) **Zoning:**

Zone for lot size to accommodate single-family houses with separate yards within boundaries of village; disallow new road-building and require new development to be on existing roads.

Give tax incentives for new home building to take place on empty lots within village core or entire village.

Zone for building façades and additions to retain historic character and identical materials in all new work and any possible removal of modern coverings on historic façades (such as the one on Wolcott St.). Institute program to help owners finance the difference in costs for this
work in comparison to inexpensive treatments. Consult licensed architect who specializes in historic restoration on plan approval decisions.

Zone to disallow franchise businesses, unless approved by special village board meeting. Protect historic character of village while allowing for exceptions if the right business owner is interested and will work with village ordinances/design guidelines.

Press for similar zoning for outskirts of village to prevent suburban sprawl and chopped-up lots that diminish character of historic village layout. (Example: Require minimum lot size).

Define center of village. Zone all new businesses to be in center of village, and allow for exceptions (variances) for a limited range of accepted reasons (define reasons).

3) Codes:
Review codes; add codes or strengthen existing codes to assure proper maintenance/appearance of all visible aspects of structures (e.g. paint or siding on walls), as well as their structural/safety aspects. Institute regular code inspections of every property in village. Start program for financial/volunteer assistance for upkeep and warning/fine system that provides a cost estimate for village-initiated projects; allow three months to comply voluntarily before project is billed to owner’s taxes.

Village ordinance to require re-siding and new glass if in poor condition; or tearing down of additions or non-residential buildings in poor condition as per code officer’s determination.

Fines for littering, especially into pond; signage along South and Wolcott Streets, not at pond edge.

4) Ordinances: Combating Pollution, Creating Order

No parking along pond edge or within 50 feet of pond except on-street along South Street for fishing access.

Ordinance that no lawn fertilizers be used on properties immediately surrounding pond. Educate public about damage to pond water and vegetation quality by lawn fertilizers around pond: ask school science classes to produce brochure about issue; village prints/copies it and distributes to all residents.

Ordinance to create bike, scooter, and skate lanes along road edges; wheeled activities allowed along all streets with lanes; parking not allowed in lanes (parking only on one side of street at widest sections, no street parking on other sections).

Vegetation management: list species of highly invasive vegetation with pictures; create ordinance that it be removed immediately by repeated cutting and herbicide applications; provide assistance or training pamphlet from village after initial volunteer cleanup. See example photos next page.
Vegetation Management -- Examples of need

Tree/Limb Removal:             Highly Invasive Species Removal:

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7. Bibliography


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**Notes:**
- Frequency indicates the number of participants who mentioned the site or theme.
- Summary: All Site Priorities includes the main topics of concern to be addressed through site selection and programming.
- Summary: All Central Themes includes the physical areas that serve as priority sites are chosen.
- Conclusions: Site Criteria indicates the criteria for site improvements.
- Conclusions: Theme Criteria indicates the priorities for sites or social qualities between age groups.