

Historic Valley Falls BOA Nomination Study
PUBLIC WORKSHOP #1 | May 15, 2023 @ 7-8:30PM
Valley Falls Community Hall

FACILITATORS

- Liz Podowski King – Bergmann (Consultant)
- Bridget Snover – Bergmann (Consultant)

ATTENDEES

Approximately 30 people from the community were in attendance.

FORMAT

This was the first public workshop of the planning process. The workshop began with a brief presentation by Liz Podowski King; she introduced the project team and the Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) program and provided an overview of the project purpose, scope, and schedule. Liz also highlighted several local and regional assets and presented future community engagement opportunities, including the project website and community survey. The presentation was followed by an informal open house with several informational and interactive boards on display for attendees to engage with and provide feedback. Project team members were available to answer questions.



PUBLIC FEEDBACK

This section summarizes the public feedback gathered during the open house portion of the workshop.



1. VISIONING – Understanding Valley Falls Today

What makes the Village of Valley Falls a unique place to live, work, or visit:

- The people – they are true neighbors and help each other
- Very close-knit, yet very tiny
- Farming community within the Village
- Great Library
- Historic buildings/houses – a wide variety of architectural styles
- Community gardens
- Trick-or-treating

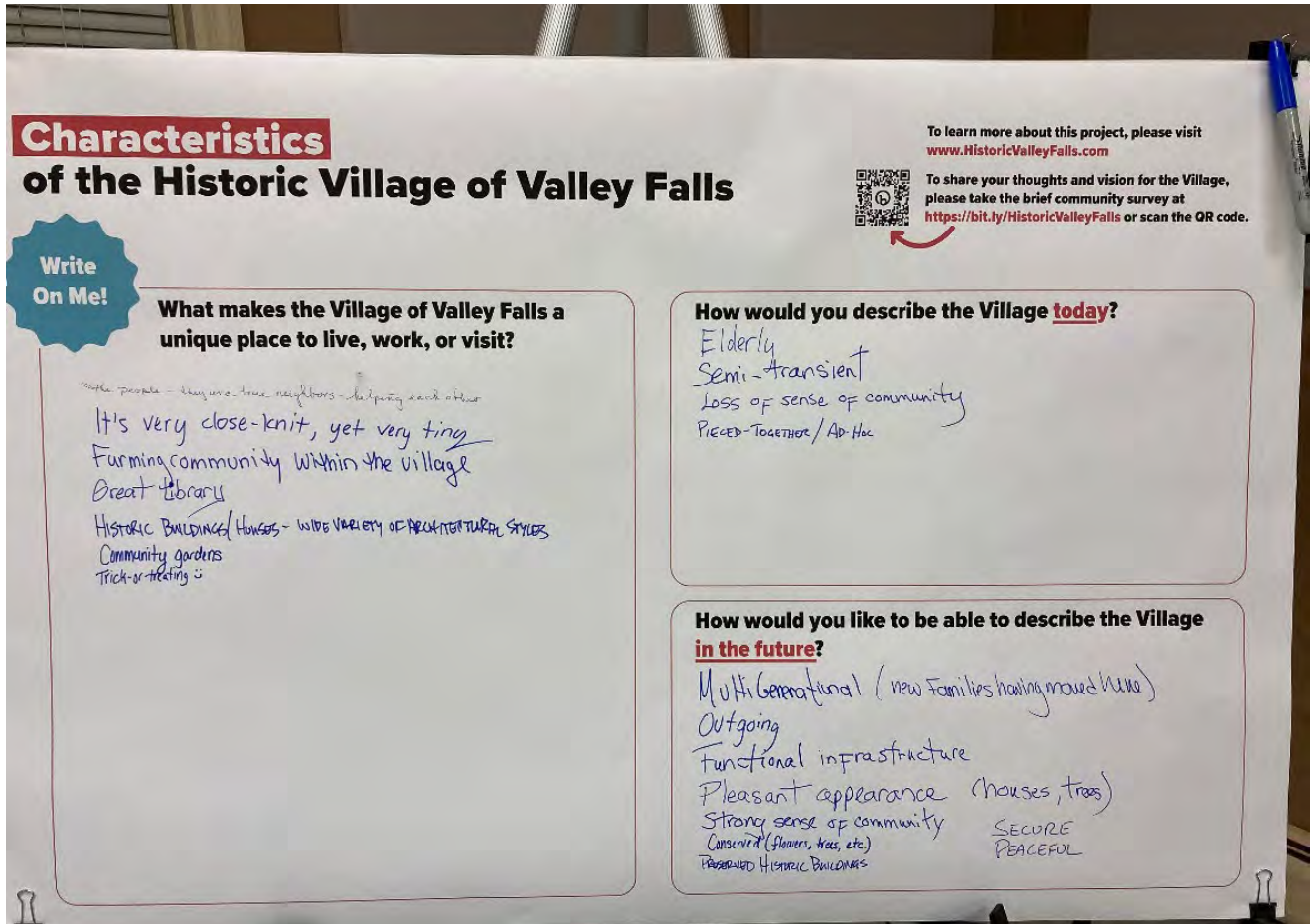
How would you describe the Village **today**?

- Elderly
- Semi-transient
- Loss of sense of community
- Pieced together/ad-hoc

How would you like to be able to describe the Village **in the future**?

- Multi-generational (new families have moved in)
- Outgoing
- Functional infrastructure
- Pleasant appearance (houses/trees)

- Strong sense of community
- Conserved (flowers, trees, etc.)
- Secure/peaceful
- Preserved historic buildings



2. VISIONING – Implementing the Community’s Vision

If you could implement one project in the Village, regardless of cost, what would it be?

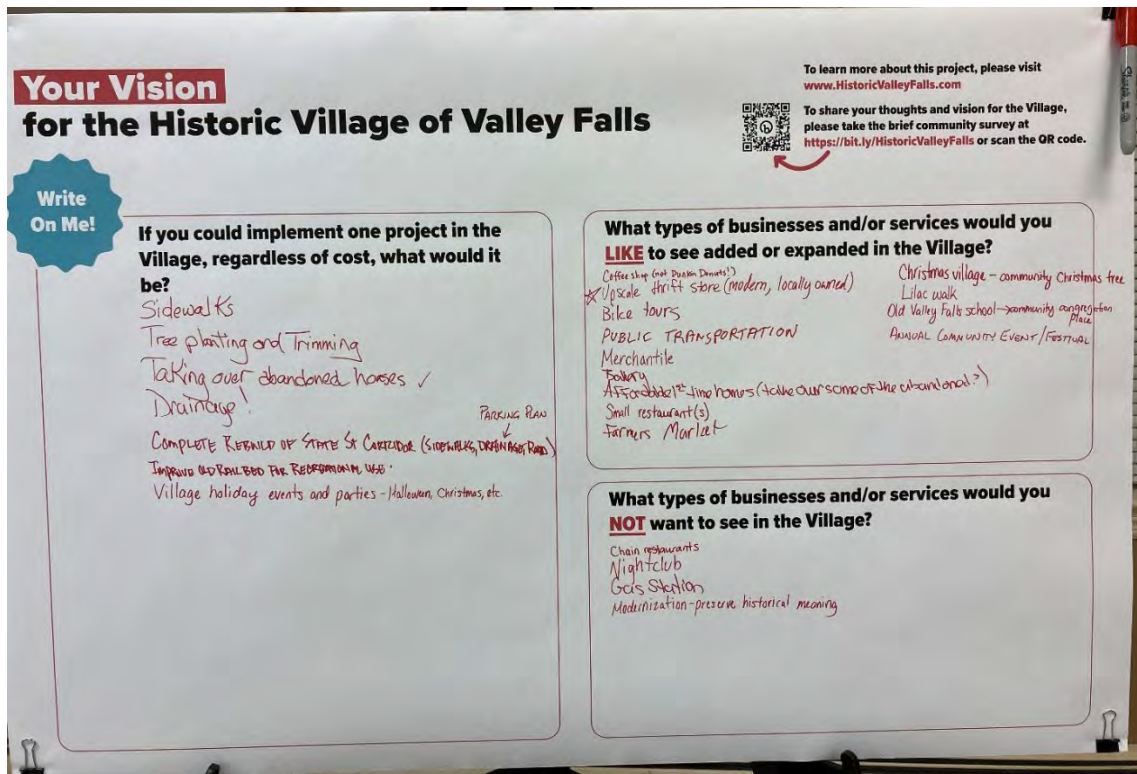
- Sidewalks
- Tree planting and trimming
- Taking over abandoned houses
- Drainage
- Rebuild of State St corridor (sidewalks, drainage, parking plan, road)
- Improve old rail bed for recreational use
- Village holiday events and parties – Halloween, Christmas, etc.

What types of businesses and services would you **like to see** added or expanded in the Village?

- Coffee shop (not Dunkin Donuts!)
- Upscale thrift store (modern, locally owned)
- Bike tours
- Mercantile
- Bakery
- Affordable first-time homes (take over abandoned homes)
- Small restaurant(s)
- Farmers Market
- Christmas Village – Community Christmas
- Lilac walk
- Old Valley Falls school becomes a community congregation place
- Annual community event/festival

What types of businesses and/or services would you **NOT** want to see in the Village?

- Chain restaurants
- Nightclub
- Gas station
- Modernization – preserve the historic presence



3. Transforming the Former Thompson Mill into a Waterfront Park

DESIRED PARK AMENITIES	VOTES
Walking Trails	11
Picnic Tables	6
Fishing Access/Dock	6
Benches	5
Trash Cans	5
Bike Racks/Rentals	2
Rain/Shade Structure	2
Water Bottle Filler	1
Lighting	1
OTHER IDEAS	
Railroad Crossing	
Pet Waste Bag Dispenser	

WHAT PEOPLE WANT TO DO IN THE PARK	VOTES
Birding	7
Fishing	6
Walking	6
Social Gatherings	5
Cycling	5
Running	4
Outdoor Fitness	2
OTHER IDEAS	
Dog Park	
Weddings	
Historical Displays	
Story Walk/Hike	
Plein Air Style Fine Art	

If the Thompson Mill was gone what would you **like to see** on site?

- Walking trails
- Fishing access
- Picnic tables
- Pavilion
- Bird and wildlife identification signs
- A place for bird watching, creating artwork, walking trails
- Dog park
- The eagles!!
- Christmas village – community Christmas tree
- Historic markers
- Bowl amphitheater
- Nature plaques showing the nature around the site
- Water access
- Running paths
- Cross-country course

If the Thompson Mill was gone what would you **like to do** on this site?

- Run, swim, kayak
- Picnic
- Walk/hike
- Bird/wildlife activities
- School trips/research

- Art classes
- Walk dogs
- Enjoy the sights
- Watch the sunrise/sunset over the river

4. MAP-BASED ACTIVITY – IDENTIFYING ASSETS + AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

Village Assets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseball fields draw in families • Quiet back streets for walking • Library • Boat access North side of Hoosic River

Village Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the Thompson Mill site – Nature Park • Playground at the Village Park • Junkyard at the corner of Poplar Ave and State St • Old Catholic Church • Former School • Fire House • Railroad Trail • Village Gateway

Areas of Concern
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vacant house on the corner of Lyon and Charles • Drainage along State St • Sidewalk • 29 State St abandoned house • Parking along State St • 8 State St abandoned house • State St NY-67 intersection and walkability

5. IDEAS/QUESTIONS/FEEDBACK

- Be sure the team represents the population
- Over communicate/transparency

Historic Valley Falls BOA Nomination Study

PUBLIC WORKSHOP #2 | December 8, 2023 @ 5:00-7:00PM

Valley Falls Community Hall

FACILITATORS

- Lesley Zlatev – NYS DOS
- Liz Podowski King – Bergmann (Consultant)
- John Steinmetz – Bergmann (Consultant)

ATTENDEES

Approximately 20 people from the community were in attendance.

FORMAT

This was the second public workshop of the planning process, and it was formatted as an open house. Attendees were invited to review large format goals summarizing the draft community vision and goals and the proposed improvements at each strategic site. Each board included a prompt for attendees to respond and provide feedback. Project team members were available to answer questions.



PUBLIC FEEDBACK

This section summarizes the public feedback gathered during the public open house.

1. Draft Vision, Goals, and Strategies

Attendees were asked to identify the goals that they most strongly supported. The most frequently selected goals included:

- Upgrade and maintain the Village's public infrastructure (11 votes)
- Preserve and maintain the Village's quaint character (5 votes)
- Celebrate the Village's beauty by expanding recreational resources (5 votes)

Attendees were also asked to identify and goals that were missing; however, no additional goals were suggested.

2. Strategic Site: The Thompson Mill and the NY-67/State Street Intersection

Two different concept alternatives were presented illustrating proposed improvements at the former Thompson Mill site and the adjacent NY-67/State Street intersection. Attendees were asked the following questions:

If the Library were to rent out items for use at the waterfront park, which items would you want offered? Attendees selected the following options, which are listed below with the most preferred at the top and least preferred at the bottom:

- Fishing poles and binoculars (4 votes each)
- Maps (3 votes)
- Compass (2 votes)
- Hammocks (1 vote)
- Other suggestions:
 - Kayaks
 - Clinics on how to fish
 - Birding
 - Classes on how to use compass/maps

How would you like to use flex spaces in the waterfront park? Attendees selected the following options, which are listed below with the most preferred at the top and least preferred at the bottom:

- Seating / hammocks (4 votes)
- Yoga / fitness and outdoor classroom (3 votes each)
- Youth activities (2 votes)
- Plein air painting (1 vote)
- Other suggestions:
 - Skatepark – lots of kids skate/bike around

Feedback on the NY-67/State Street Intersection Alternatives. Two alternatives were presented for reconfiguring the NY-67/State Street intersection. One alternative included a round-a-bout and the second alternative shifted Poplar Avenue farther south on State Street to make the NY-67/State Street intersection a three-way intersection. Public comments on these alternatives included:

- Consider truck access with the round-a-out option as many trucks travel from NY-67 to State Street to Bader Manufacturing.
- Love the entryway and round-a-bout idea!
- Improve NY-67 westbound sightlines to turn into Village.

3. Strategic Site: State Street Corridor

Attendees were asked the following question: ***Which stormwater management method would you prefer on State Street?*** Attendees selected the following options, which are listed below with the most preferred at the top and least preferred at the bottom:

- A combination of open/closed drainage (3 votes)
- Closed drainage (2 votes)
- Open drainage / green infrastructure (1 vote)
- Other suggestions:
 - Prefer whichever option is completed most quickly!
 - Need to find a way to prevent people from parking cars on the grass adjacent to the roadway

4. Strategic Site: Village Hall + Fire Department

Attendees were asked the following question: ***What amenities would you like to see at the rehabilitated Village Hall and former Fire Department?*** Attendees selected the following options, which are listed below with the most preferred at the top and least preferred at the bottom:

- Community room (5 votes)
- Community garden and recreation room (3 votes each)
- Kitchen and youth programming (2 votes each)
- Other suggestions:
 - Ping-pong tables in the community room
 - Free kitchen access/use
 - Pickleball courts

5. Strategic Site: Alley Improvements

Attendees were asked the following question: ***What activities would you like to see take place in the alley periodically?*** Attendees selected the following options, which are listed below with the most preferred at the top and least preferred at the bottom:

- Barn quilt display (6 votes)
- Community art show and historic walking tours (5 votes each)
- Barn sale (3 votes)
- Other suggestions:
 - Halloween events/activities
 - Road races
 - Community garden and demonstrations
 - Display of the old fire truck

6. Strategic Site: Village Playground

Attendees were asked the following question: ***In the future, what are you most looking forward to doing in the Village Park?*** Attendees selected the following options, which are listed below with the most preferred at the top and least preferred at the bottom:

- Social gatherings (5 votes)
- Skateboarding (4 votes)
- Walking (3 votes)
- Playing on the playground (2 votes)

7. Strategic Site: Rail to Trail

Attendees were asked the following question: ***How would you like to use the nature trail?*** Attendees selected the following options, which are listed below with the most preferred at the top and least preferred at the bottom:

- Cycling (4 votes)
- Walking (3 votes)
- Birding (2 votes)
- Cross-country skiing (1 vote)

8. Strategic Site: Former Church

Attendees were asked the following question: **What types of events would you like to see hosted in the Village?** Attendees selected the following options, which are listed below with the most preferred at the top and least preferred at the bottom:

- Live music (4 votes)
- Markets (3 votes)
- Conferences (2 votes)
- Weddings (1 vote)
- Other suggestions:
 - Garden tours
 - Concern that recommendations are being considered for this site due to the fact that its privately owned

9. Other Ideas / Feedback

- Long-term: Construct senior housing (e.g., condos, apartments) on the site of the former Thompson Mill with parking nearby and possibly a convenience store on the first floor.
- The railroad crossing is a major obstacle.
- If a railroad overpass crossing isn't feasible, consider a pedestrian bridge from Noth Street on the old abutments to the south side, with parking at the bridgehead on the north side. The main challenge with this recommendation is possible interference with the hydro station property.

SIGN-IN SHEET:

Sign-In Sheet

Historic Valley Falls BOA Nomination Study

December 8, 2023 – 5PM - 7PM
Public Open House at the Valley Falls Community Hall

Name	Email	Affiliation
Scott Wiley	swiley@historicvalley.com	40 State Street
John Malm	j.malm@nycapire.com	37 Riverside Dr
Todd Peterson	blackshooter727@gmail	
Chusko Barta		P.O. Box 13 VT
Richard J. Anklam		16 Charles ST U.F.
JOHN SASSATELLI	V.F. TRUSTEE JMS C.G. MAIL.COM	STEERING COMMITTEE
Lesley Zlatev	lesley.zlatev@dos.ny.gov	NYS DOS
Andrea Sassatelli	andreadreads10@gmail	NYS DOS
Jeanette Sassatelli	jsassatelli@gmail	
Ted + Sue Wright	wrightsafrica@gmail	Village Bd, Good Neighbors
John T. Betts	JTBETTS43@Yahoo	com NBS BETTS + JTB
Jay Overacker	37 State	37 State St
Jane Weber	jweber4131@AOL	
Jalini Weston		