

**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

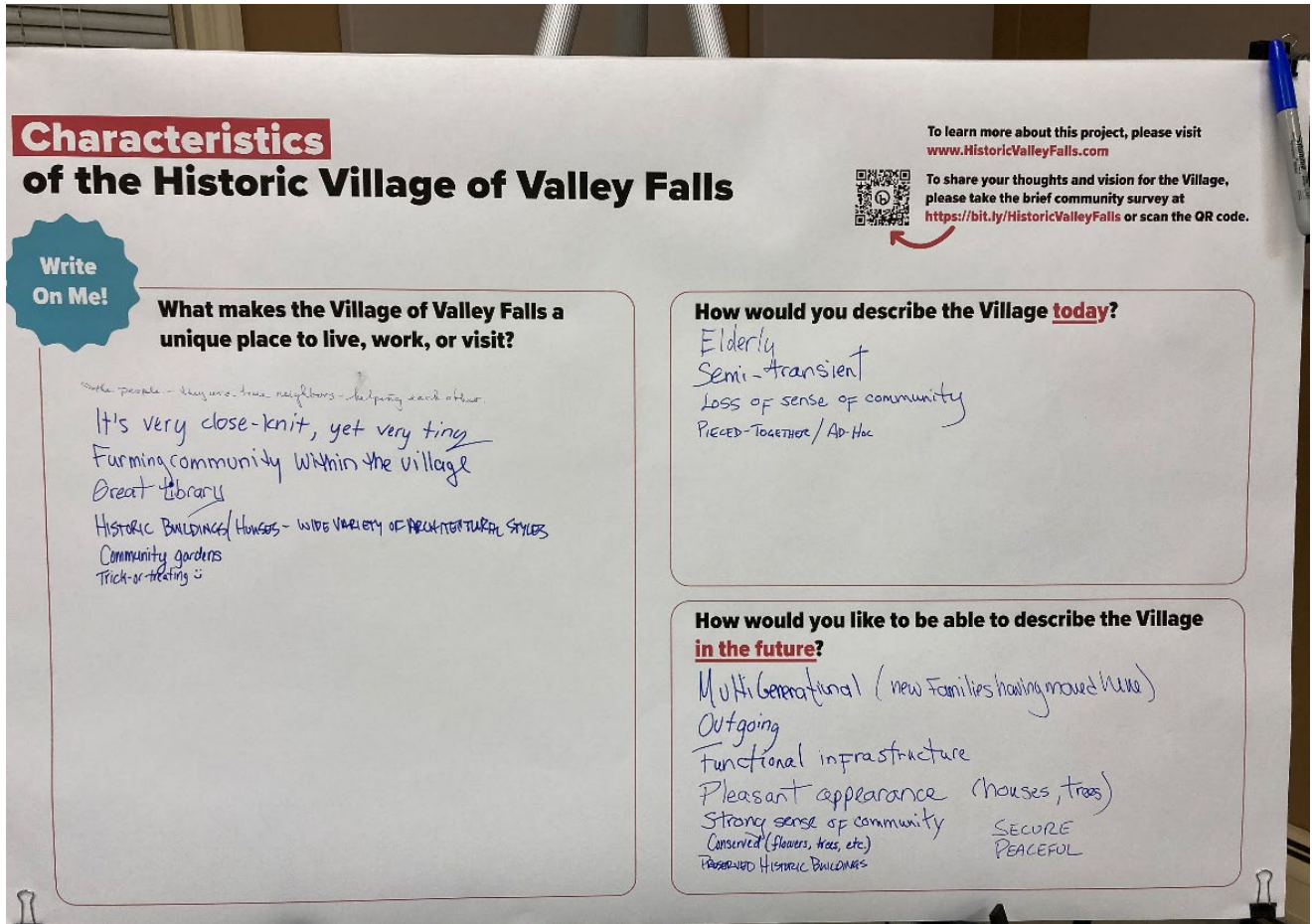
How would you describe the Village **today**?

- 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?

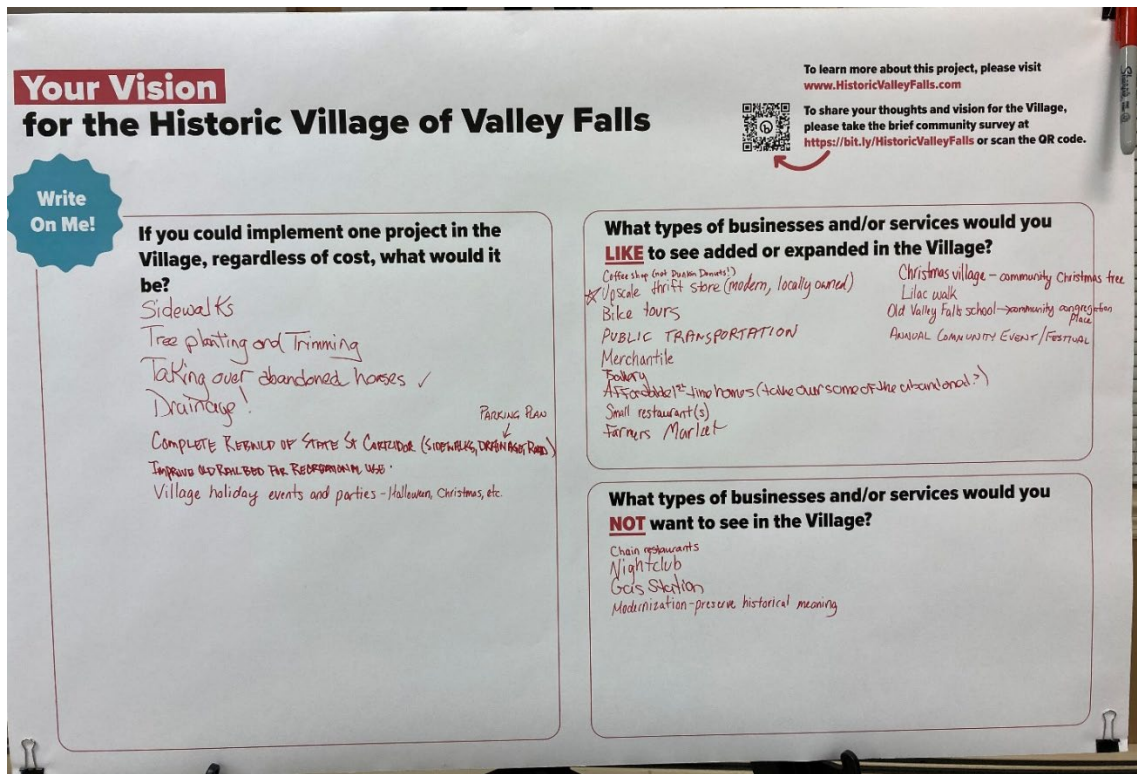
- Sidewalks
- Tree planting and trimming
- Taking over abandoned houses
- Drainage
- Rebuild of State St corridor (sidewalks, drainage, parking plan, road)
- Improve old rail bed for recreational use
- Village holiday events and parties – Halloween, Christmas, etc.

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
<b>OTHER IDEAS</b>	
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
<b>OTHER IDEAS</b>	
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

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

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

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

#### 5. IDEAS/QUESTIONS/FEEDBACK

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