

A photograph of a residential street with a sidewalk, trees, and houses under a blue sky. The sidewalk is made of concrete slabs and runs down the center of the frame. On either side of the sidewalk are green lawns and mature trees with green leaves. In the background, there are houses and a road with a yellow line. The sky is clear and blue.

# **Historic Valley Falls Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Plan**

**May 2024**

# Acknowledgments

## Steering Committee

The following individuals generously provided their time and expertise to guide the development of the Historic Valley Falls BOA Nomination Study. The Steering Committee met four times over the course of the one-year planning process and reviewed all deliverables to ensure they were consistent with the community's vision and needs.

- **Mayor Jay Overocker**, Village of Valley Falls
- **Kristina Younger**, Project Manager for the Village
- **Andy Kawczak**, Hoosic River Watershed Association
- **Brian Backstrom**, Village Resident and Former Trustee
- **Bruce Nelson**, Retired Geologist
- **Janet Weber**, Village Clerk
- **John Sassatelli**, Village of Valley Falls Trustee
- **Julie Weston**, Village Treasurer
- **Lauren Stevens**, Hoosic River Watershed Association
- **Lesley Zlatev**, Department of State
- **Shelley Carr**, Village Resident and Former Trustee

## Funding

This Nomination Study was prepared for the New York State Department of State with funds provided under the Brownfield Opportunity Areas Program.

## Technical Support

This Plan was prepared for the Village of Valley Falls by Bergmann Associates with assistance from Sustainable Planning Design, Lu Engineers, Camoin Associates, and Highland Planning.

# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	i
--------------------------------	---

## **Section 1. Project Description + Area Boundary**

Lead Project Sponsors.....	2
Project Overview + Description.....	4
Related Planning Initiatives.....	6
Community Vision + Goals.....	10
BOA Boundary Description.....	12

## **Section 2. Community Participation**

Enlisting Partners.....	16
-------------------------	----

## **Section 3. Existing Conditions Analysis**

Historic Context.....	22
Socio-Demographics.....	26
Land Use.....	30
Zoning + Land Ownership.....	34
Parks + Open Space.....	36
Historic Resources.....	40
Archaeological Areas.....	44
Transportation.....	46
Infrastructure.....	50
Natural Resources.....	54
Building Inventory.....	60
Potential Brownfields + Vacant Sites.....	64
Strategic Sites.....	68
Food Access + Commercial Centers.....	84
Economic Trends + Opportunities.....	86

## **Section 4. Valley Falls BOA Proposed Area Plan**

Introduction.....	94
Proposed Area Plan.....	96

## **Section 5. Implementation Strategy**

Implementation Plan Overview.....	116
Short-Term Action Plan.....	118
Long-Term Action Plan.....	122

## **Appendix A. Community Survey Results**

## **Appendix B. Meeting Summaries**

## **Appendix C. Railroad Assessment**

## **Appendix D. Environmental Site Profiles**

## **Appendix E. Economic + Market Analysis**

## **Appendix F. Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessments**



# Executive Summary

*The Executive Summary provides an overview of the Village of Valley Fall's Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Nomination Study. It describes the BOA boundary and public participation in the development of this Study, defines the community's vision and goals for the BOA, highlights key findings from the existing conditions analysis, and identifies recommended actions, projects, and next steps to achieve the proposed area plan and the community's vision.*

# Project Overview + Description

## Boundary Description

The Historic Valley Falls BOA is centered on the Village's Historic District and the State Street corridor. The BOA is entirely contained within the Village of Valley Falls, with the exception of one tax parcel located in the Town of Pittstown. The BOA encompasses several Village assets, including the Hoosic River, the Valley Falls Free Library, the Village Park, and the Chapko-Lewis Stadium Facility. The BOA also strategically includes the former Thompson Mill property. The former Mill building is dilapidated and a public hazard. Removal of the former Mill building and subsequent redevelopment of the site as a public waterfront park is a community priority.

The total area of the BOA is approximately 170 acres, and the total acreage of all tax parcels contained within the BOA is 136 acres. The total acreage of parcels north of the Hoosic River is 22 acres, and this portion of the Village is located within the Town of Schaghticoke. The total acreage of parcels south of the river is 114 acres and this portion of the BOA is located within the Town of Pittstown.

## Town of Schaghticoke

The portion of the BOA located in the Town of Schaghticoke is north of the Hoosic River and includes all parcels along both sides of North Street west of the State Route 67 bridge as well as the parcels bounded by Schaghticoke Road, Bunker Hill Road, and State Route 67 to the east of the bridge. It also incorporates the parcel at the corner of Schaghticoke and Bunker Hill Roads, parcels along the east side of Bunker Hill Road south of 105 Bunker Hill Road, and one landlocked parcel between 123 and 115 Bunker Hill Road.

## Town of Pittstown

The portion of the BOA located in the Town of Pittstown is south of the Hoosic River. To the west of State Route 67, the BOA includes the CSX railroad property, all Village parcels north of the railroad, one Town parcel between the Village boundary and river, parcels along both sides of Poplar Avenue, and one parcel on Powder Mill Road. Parallel to the Route 67 bridge, it incorporates properties with State Street frontage north of the former railroad tracks, including 53 and 50 State Street, as well as all Village parcels between Coons Road and Ella Street,

Burton Street parcels, and the former railroad property. East of Route 67, the BOA covers the CSX railroad property, parcels north of the railroad, and parcels along Route 67 west of 20 Riverview Drive.

## What is the Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program?

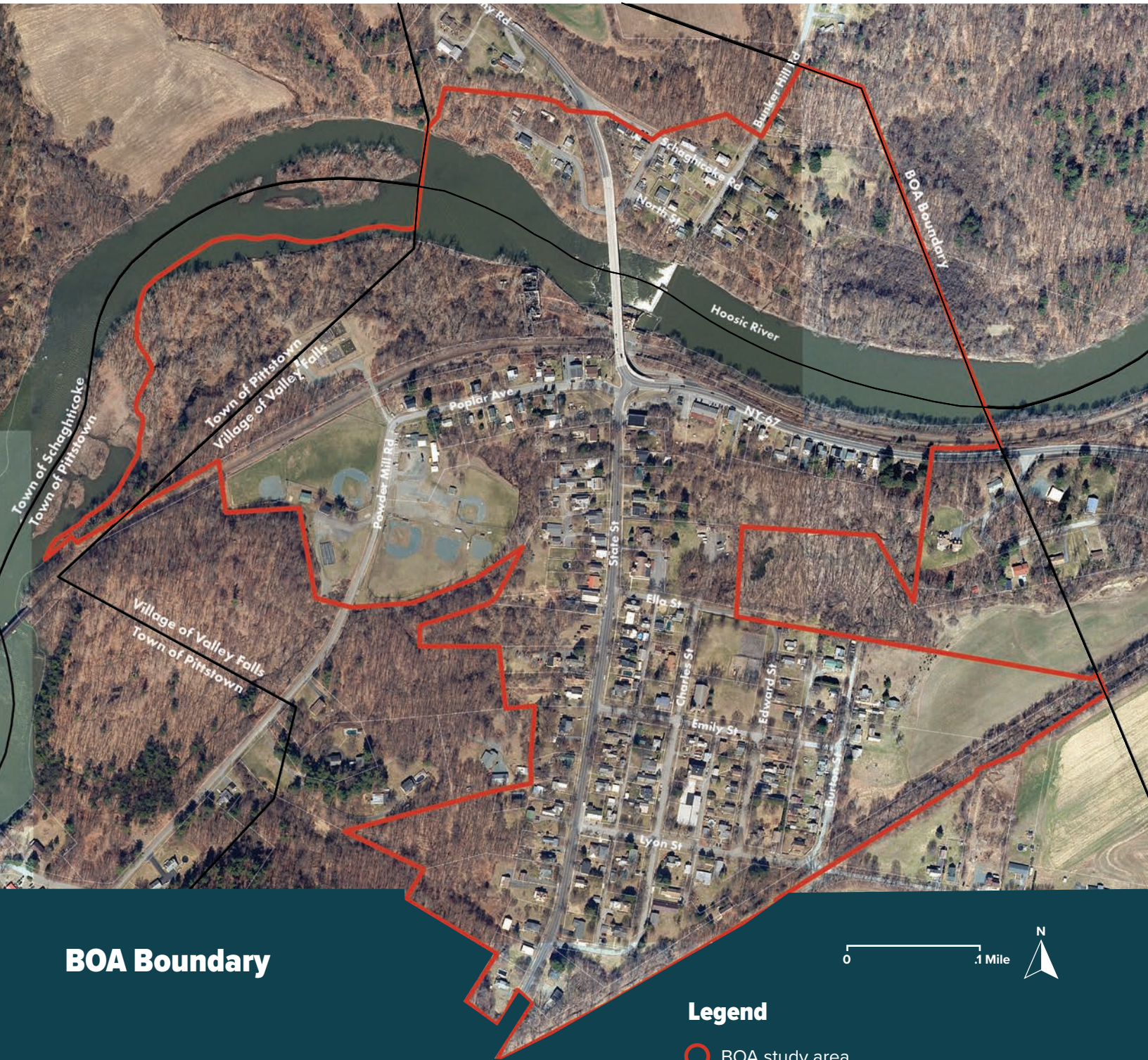
The BOA program is administered by the New York State Department of State (DOS) and provides funding to municipalities to develop area-wide plans focused on redeveloping vacant or underutilized sites impacted by real or perceived environmental contamination. Through this program, municipalities receive technical assistance to assess the impacts of known or suspected brownfield sites and develop a cohesive and coordinated vision and strategy for reinvestment and revitalization.

Recently, the BOA Program has been restructured to provide more funding for pre-development activities that will have a tangible impact in a community. Following the completion of a Nomination Study and formal designation of the BOA, a community can apply for funding to support a number of technical analyses and environmental investigations to begin the revitalization process and catalyze future development.

## What is a Brownfield Site?



As defined by NYS Environmental Conservation Law, ENV § 27-1405, "a 'Brownfield site' shall mean any real property where a contaminant is present at levels exceeding the soil cleanup objectives or other health-based or environmental standards, criteria or guidance adopted by the department that are applicable based on the reasonably anticipated use of the property, in accordance with applicable regulations."

For a description of real property excluded from this definition, please see NYS Environmental Conservation Law, ENV § 27-1405.



# BOA Boundary

## Legend

-  BOA study area
-  municipal boundary

# Community Participation

## Overview

Throughout the BOA planning process, a variety of engagement strategies were employed to gather input from community members. This input helped establish a strong vision for the future of the BOA. The Village believes its vision is achievable and will work to implement it through actionable goals and strategies. The vision statement to the right is a concise declaration of what the Village and the community envisions for the future.

## Project Partners + Engagement Strategies

The Historic Valley Falls BOA Nomination Study is sponsored by the Village of Valley Falls. The Village governance structure includes elected officials (i.e., the Mayor and Village Trustees) and two part-time positions, including a Village Clerk and Treasurer. To assist with the requirements of the Nomination Study, the Village hired a local project manager and consultant team to lead the planning process and produce the Nomination Study. Additionally, the Village established a Steering Committee consisting of key stakeholders, government staff, local residents, members of the Hoosic River Watershed Association, and State representatives who bring diverse perspectives and experiences to help inform and guide the planning process. The Steering Committee met four times at project milestones over the course of the planning process.

Various public engagement activities also occurred throughout the entire planning process including:

- Stakeholder interviews;
- Public meetings (3);
- Pop-ups at local events (1); and,
- a community survey.

## Steering Committee Members

Member	Affiliation
Kristina Younger	Valley Falls Project Manager
Lesley Zlatev	NYSDOS Liaison
J.P. Overocker	Valley Falls Mayor
John Sassatelli	Valley Falls Trustee
Brian Backstrom	Valley Falls Citizen (former Trustee)
Shelley Carr	Valley Falls Citizen (former Trustee)
Julie Weston	Valley Falls Treasurer / Citizen
Janet Weber	Valley Falls Clerk
Lauren Steven	HooRWA
Andy Kawczak	HooRWA
Bruce Nelson	Retired Geologist

## The Community Vision Statement

The Village of Valley Falls is a historic village characterized by a strong sense of community and the natural beauty of the Hoosic River. In the future, the Village will support a close-knit, multi-generational community. It will balance its small-town charm with targeted local economic activity to attract new residents and provide existing residents and visitors with affordable and diversified services. Its infrastructure will be well-maintained, providing a safe, accessible, and comfortable network of roadways, trails, and recreational destinations that celebrate the Village's scenic beauty, increase access to nature, and encourage walking. And, its historic character will be preserved in a manner that creates a safe, inviting, and livable community for all.



## Community Goals for the BOA

The following goals and strategies provide a comprehensive approach to achieving the community's and Village's vision for the future of the BOA. These goals are directly tied to the proposed area plan and recommended projects presented in Section 4.



### Preserve and maintain the Village's quaint historic character.

Proposed Strategies:

- Develop educational resources for property owners about accessing historic preservation tax credits to support rehabilitation of historic buildings in the Village of Valley Falls.
- Draft and adopt land use regulations that identify where different land uses could occur to reinforce the Village's desired character.
- Encourage the adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of existing structures and the infill of vacant lots.



### Upgrade and maintain the Village's public infrastructure to improve safety and connectivity.

Proposed Strategies:

- Repair sidewalks and drainage along the State Street corridor to improve accessibility and sustainably manage stormwater runoff.
- Upgrade and expand the amenities at the Village Park to increase accessibility and serve community members of all ages.
- Develop a long-term maintenance and operations plan for the wastewater treatment plant to ensure continuity and quality of services.



### Celebrate the Village's natural beauty by expanding recreational resources.

Proposed Strategies:

- Redevelop the former Thompson Mill as a publicly accessible waterfront park.
- Create an interconnected system of sidewalks, trails, and community services to encourage active modes of transportation providing access to local and regional destinations.
- Diversify recreational resources to appeal to all ages and abilities.



### Encourage local economic development to activate the Village's main thoroughfares.

Proposed Strategies:

- Draft and adopt land use regulations that define where commercial uses are appropriate, including development standards, to increase compatibility between residential and commercial uses.
- Allow for a mixing of land uses.
- Encourage small-scale locally-owned businesses that can occupy and activate existing historic buildings.



### Support a lively, multi-generational community.

Proposed Strategies:

- Develop land use and development regulations that support aging in place by allowing accessory dwelling units and locating areas suitable for senior housing.
- Provide continued support for and expand the Village's existing youth programs.
- Upgrade and maintain public infrastructure that encourages walking to provide accessible, healthy connections that encourage social interactions in the public realm.
- Provide transit services to increase access to regional services and amenities.

# Existing Conditions

## Location and Historic Context

The Valley Falls BOA is located along the Hoosic River, primarily within the Village of Valley Falls. This small population center is in the rural towns of Pittstown and Schaghticoke in the northern portion of Rensselaer County and is part of New York's Capital Region. The Village's location on the Hoosic River is key to the development of the community, particularly the mill industry that was powered by this natural waterway. The Village's location along two railroad tracks is also significant, as the railroads historically connected the area to the larger region. Although the mills have all closed and only one railroad remains active, the community retains its historic built form in a dense walkable scale. Surrounded by a rural agricultural and residential landscape, the Village is approximately 15 miles northeast of the City of Troy and 20 miles northeast of the City of Albany.

In 2018, the Valley Falls Historic District was listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, recognizing the local significance of the largely intact historic mill hamlet. The Historic District includes most of the Village and is encompassed by the BOA.

## Socio-Economic Characteristics

The Village of Valley Falls is a small community that has seen significant population decline since its peak of 835 residents in 1910, despite a period of growth in the 1960s-70s. After a slight increase to 510 residents in 2020, recent estimates for 2022 and projections for 2027 show the population returning to a downward trend. The Village's population is also far less diverse than the county and state, with 92% of residents identified as white compared to 77% in Rensselaer County and 52% in New York State.

The Village of Valley Falls has an estimated 2022 median age of 41.9 years, higher than Rensselaer County (41.0) and New York State (39.6), with a higher concentration of young adults and middle-aged residents but lower concentrations of children/adolescents and older seniors compared to the county and state.

## Housing

With an estimated 2022 average household size of 2.78 people, down from 2.93 in 1990, and a lower concentration of children/adolescents, Valley Falls may be seeing a decline in families with children. The majority (74%) of housing units are owner-occupied, higher than the county (54%) and state (48%) rates. Around 14% are renter-occupied and 13% are vacant, with 20 vacant units classified as "other vacant" in 2021. Despite an older housing stock with 61% of units built in 1939 or earlier compared to 33% county-wide, Valley Falls had a higher estimated 2022 median home value of \$275,000 versus \$244,082 for the county.

## Labor Force

Despite higher median home value and median gross rent in Valley Falls than in Rensselaer County, the 2022 median household income in the Village was \$74,522, which is less than the County's \$77,146 median household income. Household income distribution for 2022 shows that the Village has higher percentages of middle to upper-middle income households and lower percentages of low income and high income households.

The 2022 estimated educational attainment for Valley Falls residents aged 25 and over shows 98% have at least a high school diploma or equivalent, which is higher than the county (93%) and state (89%) levels. However, the estimated 31% of the Village's population with a bachelor's degree or higher lags behind the county (35%) and state (40%), despite growing since 2000.

## Environmental Setting

A primary feature of the BOA is the Hoosic River, which flows from east to west as it passes through the Village and under the State Route 67 bridge. The river spans 70-miles and crosses three states. Originating at the Cheshire Reservoir in Massachusetts, the Hoosic River winds north into Vermont and curves west through New York where it enters the Hudson River at Stillwater, NY. The River is part of the Hoosic River Watershed, which feeds the larger Upper Hudson River Watershed.

## Contamination

One of the primary objectives of the BOA Program is to identify sites that may be impacted by the presence or perceived presence of soil and/or groundwater contamination and/or soil vapor intrusion. As part of this Study, 16 sites in the BOA were identified as potential brownfield sites. Many of the environmental concerns in the BOA relate to the former Thompson Mill, a chlorinated groundwater plume from 11 Lyon Street, the possible presence of regulated building materials (RBM), such as lead and asbestos, documented spills, the presence of underground storage tanks (now or in the past), and past land uses that are associated with environmental contamination, such as industrial processes, gas stations, and car repair shops.

## Building Inventory

Over 60% of the housing units in the BOA were built prior to 1939. Older housing is generally more expensive to maintain, requires significant investment to update with modern amenities, and is frequently characterized by environmental contaminants (e.g., lead-based paint, asbestos).

The Valley Falls BOA is characterized by several pivotal structures that serve the community within the Village. Furthermore, the area encompasses two former community facility buildings that hold promising potential for repurposing. One such facility is the former fire station situated at 9 Charles Street, while the other is the former church located at 12 Emily Street. Using information from the 2022 Final Assessment Roll and the Valley Falls Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, these features and opportunities are detailed within the building inventory (see page 60).

## Infrastructure

### Transportation

State Route 67, a minor arterial, connects the Village of Valley Falls to Schaghticoke and Mechanicville in the west, and to the New York-Vermont state line eastward. The bridge over the Hoosic River in the Valley Falls BOA is the only connection between the north and south sides of the river in the village.

Within the BOA, State Street, alternatively known as Rensselaer County 117, functions as a minor collector road. This thoroughfare links northward to State Route 67 before traversing the Hoosic River, and extends southward to connect with Melrose Valley Falls Road at the Village boundary.

The Pan Am Southern railroad corridor, owned by a Norfolk Southern and CSXT joint venture, runs east-west along the Hoosic River's southern shore through the BOA. Up to six freight trains per day operate at 25 mph max on this line, which has two private at-grade crossings and one underpass in the village. While there are several other crossings nearby, there is no passenger rail service on this corridor.

### Hydroelectric Facility

Located along the Hoosic River under the State Route 67 bridge is the privately-owned hydroelectric power generation facility Valley Falls Hydro. The facility uses the raceway or mill race that powered the historic mills. In 1985, the raceway was altered to accommodate hydroelectric generation.

### Water

Property owners in the Valley Falls BOA rely on private water wells. According to the Rensselaer County website, County residents may receive assistance upon request regarding a variety of well water issues.

### Internet Connection

Access to high speed internet is a critical component of community infrastructure, as highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. High speed internet is available in Valley Falls, for example Spectrum provides internet options with speeds ranging from 300 Mbps to 1 Gbps.

### Wastewater System + Treatment Plant

Access to high speed internet is a critical component of community infrastructure, as highlighted during the The Village of Valley Falls owns and operates a Waste Water Treatment Plant at 243 Poplar Avenue and Powder Mill Road.

# Existing Conditions (CONT.)

## Economic Trends

### Economic Profile

The Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) in the Village of Valley Falls has been higher than county and state levels, reaching 73.7% in 2021 compared to 64.4% for the county and 63.1% for the state. However, Valley Falls has experienced more fluctuations in its LFPR over time.

Unemployment rates declined from 2012-2019 across Valley Falls, the county, and state, before rising during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. By 2021, unemployment had rebounded to near pre-pandemic levels, with Valley Falls at 4.2%, the county at 5.4%, and the state at 6.2%.

Rensselaer County has experienced job growth of 1.6% from 2017-2022, contrasting with job losses in the surrounding region. Growth areas include warehousing/storage, paper manufacturing, and mining/quarrying. Key leading industries are manufacturing, transportation/warehousing, education services, utilities, and retail trade.

Health care/social assistance and government are major employers that have seen job losses recently. A graph shows manufacturing and retail as leading concentrated industries, while health care and government are maturing but declining industries in terms of jobs.

In summary, Valley Falls has maintained a relatively high labor participation rate, unemployment rates have normalized post-pandemic, and the county has seen modest job growth led by specific industries like manufacturing and warehousing despite regional job losses overall.

### Housing Profile

The Village of Valley Falls had 205 housing units in 2022, a modest 5.1% increase since 2000, with no new units added since 2010. About 66% of units are single-family detached homes and 32% are multi-unit buildings. The median year housing was built is 1939, much older than county/state averages, with 72% built before 1970.

Home values in Valley Falls are relatively high, with a 2022 median of \$275,000 compared to \$244,082 for the county. Over 57% of homes were valued at \$250,000 or more. Median gross rent of \$1,092 is slightly higher than the county's \$1,046 median.

Valley Falls has a significantly older housing stock compared to surrounding areas, contributing to its historic character but also indicating potential issues with materials like lead and asbestos. Despite little new construction, home values have climbed steeply, pricing out some renters compared to the county.

### Remote Workers

While only 8.7% of occupations in the Village of Valley Falls and 8.9% in Rensselaer County are currently remote, attracting remote workers could serve as an economic development strategy for the historic village. Remote workers bring income into the local economy through spending on housing, groceries, dining and services. Their presence can increase housing demand and property values, benefiting existing homeowners. Many communities nationwide have launched remote worker attraction campaigns, offering financial incentives for relocation. Early indicators show positive impacts on home ownership and retention rates when incentives are combined with broader economic development strategies that help build community connections. Though fully remote work spiked during the pandemic, it is now declining, so promoting Valley Falls' charm as a remote work destination could capitalize on this evolving trend while diversifying the local economy.

This page is intentionally blank.

# Existing Conditions Key Findings

Category	Key Findings
<p><b>Historic Context</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Valley Falls BOA has a long history with a variety of opportunities for historic interpretation.</b> Valley Falls has a rich and diverse history that includes many stories. From its origins as Mohican land to the growth of water-powered industry and its development as a railroad hub, opportunities to interpret these stories would help to preserve the heritage of the area.</li> <li>• <b>The ruins of the Thompson Mill site provide a connection to the history of the Hoosic River and the milling industry that once lined the riverbank.</b> The site provides a unique opportunity to reflect the heritage of the area, including the Mohicans who lived along the Hoosic River and the mill workers who were employed in the factories.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Land Use</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The majority of the parcels in the BOA are used as single or two-family residences.</b> With 73% of the total land parcels, these two residential land uses characterize the BOA.</li> <li>• <b>With 18% of the total land area in the BOA, the vacant industrial land at former Thompson Mill site is key to the revitalization of the community.</b> This expansive 24-acre property is a dominant feature of the BOA.</li> <li>• <b>Although commercial and industrial uses are minimal, the community and recreational facilities within the BOA land uses support a village atmosphere.</b> The land uses reflect a shift from traditional goods and services of a village to community services and recreation of a BOA.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Zoning + Land Ownership</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Zoning regulations are needed to address development in the BOA.</b> Although the Village has put a moratorium in place to address this gap, a more long-term solution is needed.</li> <li>• <b>Most of the BOA is owned by local residents.</b> Although the BOA is primarily privately-owned, most of these owners are local members of the community.</li> <li>• <b>The Village is the only public owner in the BOA.</b> The Village’s ownership of the former Thompson Mill site provides a substantial amount of publicly-owned land in the BOA.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Parks + Open Space</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Village is home to two recreation destinations.</b> The Chapko-Lewis Stadium Facility Field and the Valley Falls Playground bring residents of the Town and the surrounding area into the Village to serve the needs of the community.</li> <li>• <b>Access to the Hoosic River is limited.</b> A major feature of the BOA is the Hoosic River, yet access is only provided at a small take-out area on the northern riverbank.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Historic Resources</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Contributing historic buildings can be seen throughout the BOA.</b> With 154 historically significant buildings lining each of the BOA streetscapes as well as a collection of historic objects and markers, the character of Valley Falls is distinctly historic.</li> <li>• <b>Listing on the State and National Register of Historic Places affords the majority of BOA property owners access to financial incentives.</b> Designation of the district provides a significant incentive to maintain and enhance the historic buildings in the BOA.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Archaeological Areas</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Valley Falls BOA, located along the Hoosic River, is in an area that has a high potential for historic and archaeological sites.</b> With its location along an important waterway and the presence of surrounding archaeological sites, there is potential for additional archaeological resources.</li> <li>• <b>Archaeological reports have identified include three historic and one prehistoric site within the BOA.</b> Archaeological field investigation findings have been limited to one prehistoric site related to tool manufacturing, two historic sites related to household trash and one historic site related to the structural remains of the historic mill.</li> </ul>

Category	Key Findings
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>State Street plays a primary role in the local transportation network.</b> With the entire residential neighborhood south of the Hoosic River connecting to State Street, this minor collector is critical to the movement of the community.</li> <li>• <b>The bridge and intersection with State Street are central features of the transportation network in the BOA.</b> These two features are where the community connects with regional transportation and interacts with the Hoosic River.</li> <li>• <b>Trail development along the defunct railroad line would support a regional network of trails.</b> The former railroad line along the southern edge of the BOA is part of the Capital District Trails Plan's regional supporting trail network.</li> <li>• <b>There are sidewalk repair needs along State Street and minor gaps within the BOA sidewalk system.</b> There are opportunities to improve the pedestrian environment within the BOA, including along State Street where most of the residential neighborhoods connect to the broader community.</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In 2004, the Village made critical wastewater collection and treatment improvements.</b> With these improvements, the BOA properties have access to a Village sewer system. Although there are no major issues, continued maintenance at the treatment facility is necessary.</li> </ul>
<b>Natural Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Thompson Mill site is within the floodway or the 100-year floodplain.</b> The location of this brownfield within a flood prone area is an important consideration for site remediation and redevelopment.</li> <li>• <b>The Village of Valley Falls is suspended from the NFIP.</b> The Village is in need of a flood management ordinance as part of the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).</li> <li>• <b>The Hoosic River is the primary natural feature of the BOA.</b> With the loss of industry, the river's focus has shifted to recognize its natural and recreational significance.</li> <li>• <b>Topography.</b> Sustainable stormwater management could be considered to filter, slow, and absorb water and reduce erosion along the Hoosic River. Elevated areas may provide opportunities for scenic views of the Hoosic River Valley.</li> </ul>
<b>Building Inventory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>There is a concentration of community facilities south of the Hoosic River, on or behind the State Street corridor.</b> The Valley Falls Free Library, the U.S. Post Office, the Community Hall, and the former Fire House are all within about a tenth of a mile walking distance. This concentration provide a hub for civic activity in the BOA.</li> <li>• <b>There is opportunity to expand on the existing community facilities hub in the BOA.</b> The former Church and the former Fire House both have the potential for reuse and are located near other buildings that bring people to the community as well as the Valley Falls Playground, which serves as the only public playground in Pittstown.</li> </ul>
<b>Economics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>There has been limited housing development in Valley Falls.</b> Only ten housing units were added between 2000 and 2010 and no new units were added between 2010 and 2022. This lack of development is due in part to an existing moratorium on development, with the exception of single family homes, and limited access to undeveloped land.</li> <li>• <b>There are opportunities to expand multi-family options that serve seniors.</b> Regionally, multi-family vacancy is low (less than 5%), indicating a high demand for this type of housing. Further, there is a growing number of seniors and middle-aged adults who are expected to drive demand for new housing options locally and regionally.</li> <li>• <b>It's recommended that Valley Falls focus on attracting remote-capable employees from the Capital Region.</b> Data trends suggest that most remote-capable employees may be willing to move farther away from their physical office to a more desirable community and in exchange, travel a longer commute just a few days a week. Therefore, Valley Falls could focus on attracting remote-capable employees from the Capital Region. The messaging could prioritize high speed and high capacity internet, quality of life, low cost of living, community connectivity, rich culture and history, and natural assets.</li> </ul>

# Potential Brownfields

## Key Findings

Potential brownfields include properties where there is a known presence or potential presence of environmental contaminants. These properties are often former commercial or industrial sites where mismanagement or improper handling of hazardous chemicals led to the real or perceived environmental contamination of the property and/or surrounding community.

It is important to understand where these hazards may exist to identify necessary remediation and redevelopment efforts. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's (NYS DEC) environmental site database and other sources were reviewed to develop a list of all potential brownfields within the Village of Valley Falls.

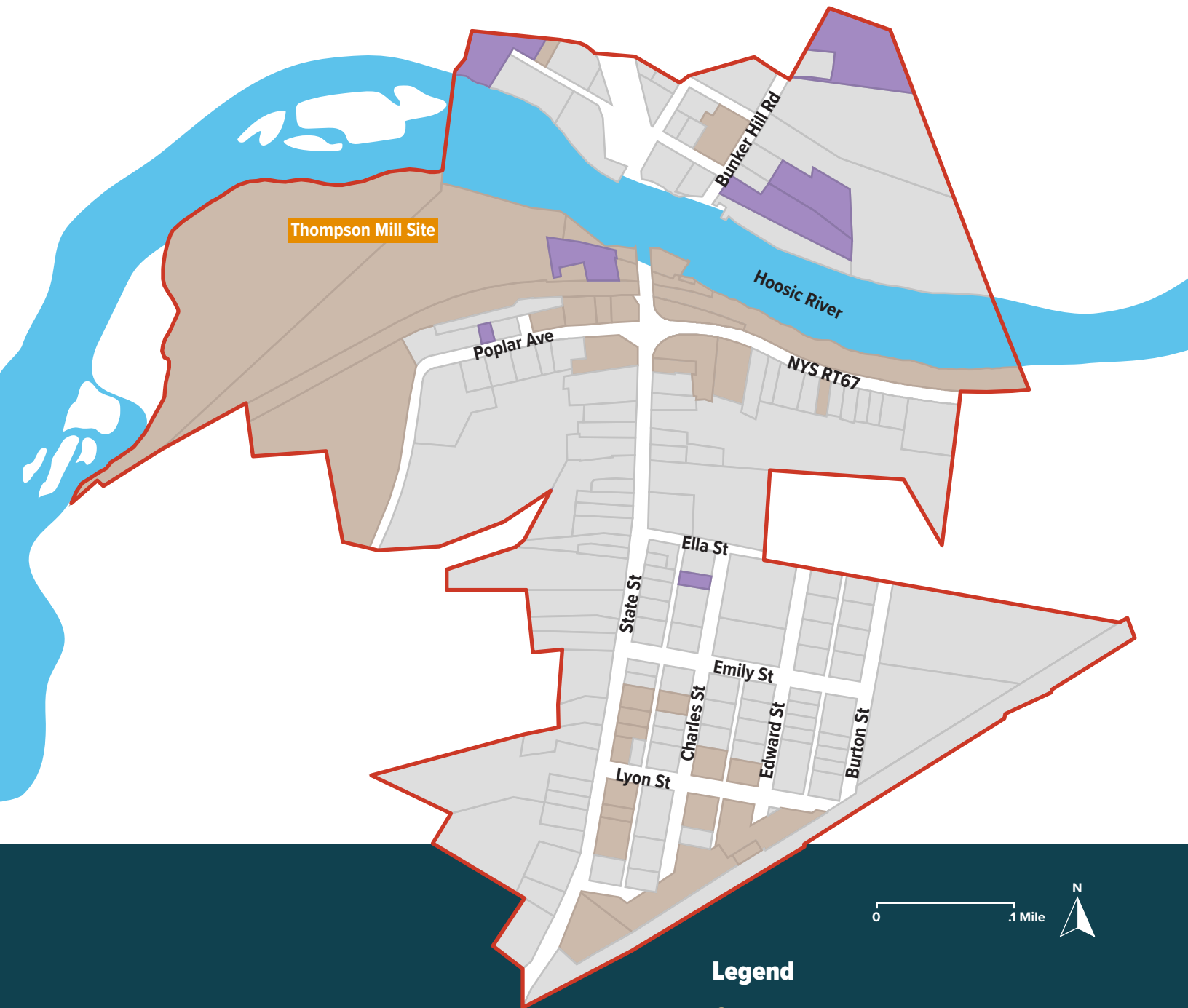
The sites flagged as potential brownfields are those that were listed within NYS DEC databases with known or suspected contamination, as well as those which have undergone remediation or cleanup. A total of 16 potential brownfields were identified and are shown on the map on the next page and are detailed in the table on pages 65-67.

Although a challenge, the presence of potential brownfields and vacant sites present a unique opportunity for the Village to remediate and redevelop these spaces in a way that improves public health, the local economy, and the environment.





# Potential Brownfield and Vacant Sites in the Valley Falls BOA



### Legend

- potential brownfields
- vacant parcels
- BOA study area

## Strategic Sites

Through an analysis of existing information as well as feedback from the Steering Committee, a total of thirteen (13) strategic sites were identified as being critical to achieving the community's vision and goals for the BOA. Each of these thirteen sites are described in detail on the following pages.

Strategic sites were selected based on the following criteria:

- Presence of known and/or suspected contamination on site, due to either current or past uses;
- Abandoned, vacant or underutilized status;
- Alignment with community vision and goals;
- Access and relationship to the Village Center and waterfront areas; and/or,
- Opportunities for enhancing the Village's historic character, increasing walkability, and diversifying its economy.

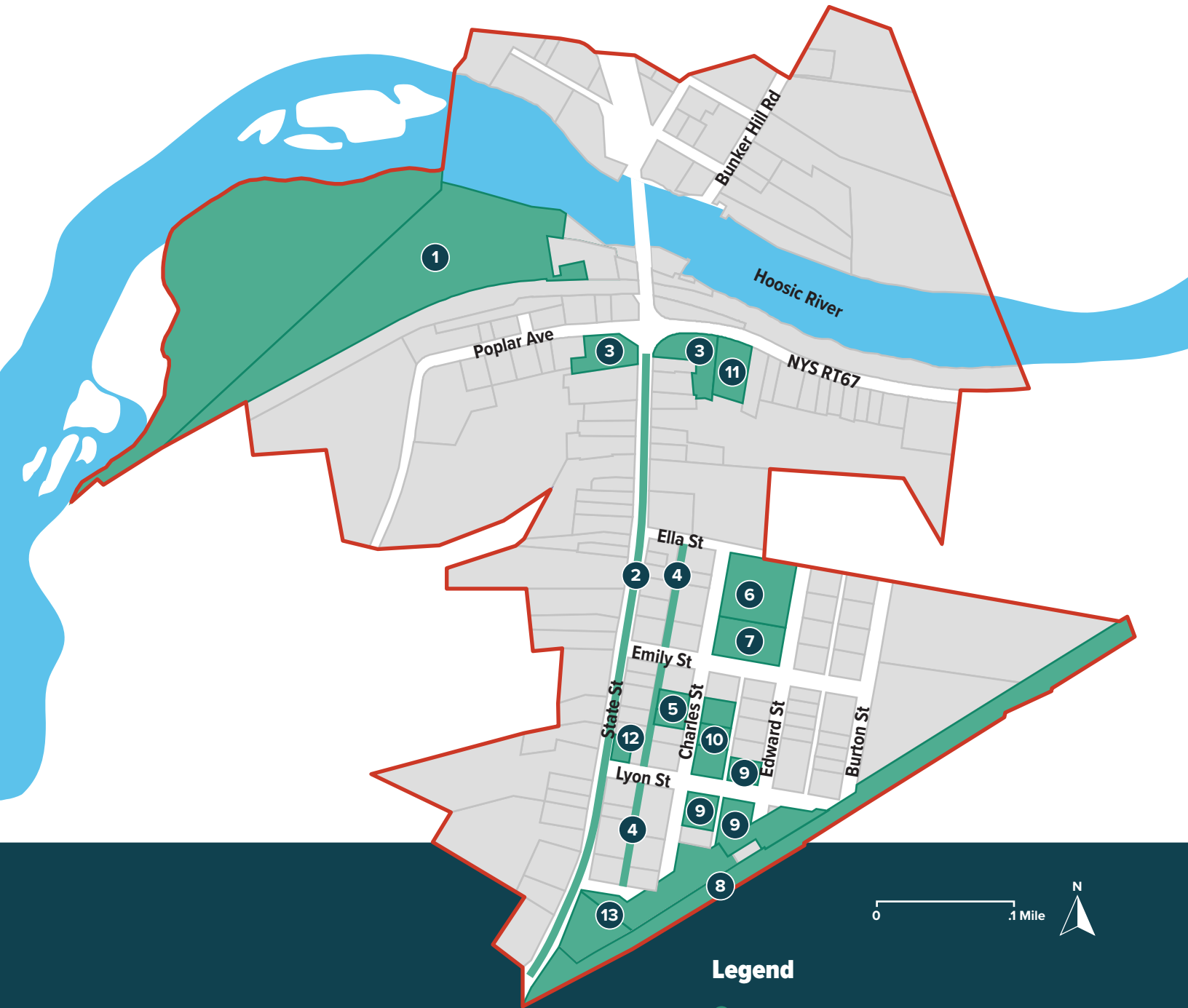
### Strategic Sites (see map on next page)

- 1 Former Thompson Mill Site
- 2 State Street Corridor
- 3 State Street and NY-67 Intersection
- 4 Alley Between State and Charles Streets
- 5 Village Hall / Former Fire Department
- 6 Village Park
- 7 Former Church
- 8 Former Railroad
- 9 Lyon Street Properties
- 10 Charles Street Properties
- 11 Valley Falls Auto Repair
- 12 Valley Falls Post Office
- 13 Former Gas Station



*Strategic Site #5. Village Hall and former fire department.*

# Strategic Sites



## Legend

- strategic site
- BOA study area

# Strategic Sites

	Strategic Site	Size	Ownership	Current Use	Former Use	Potential Contamination	Potential Reuse
1	<b>Former Thompson Mill Site</b> 243 Poplar Avenue / 1835 NY-67 / NY-67 / 1839 NY-67 / West of Powder Mill	24 acres	Village of Valley Falls / Valley Falls Associates LP	Vacant	Commercial	NYS DEC Petroleum Bulk Storage (PBS) facilities #4-021598.	Public Waterfront Park
2	<b>State Street Corridor</b> 1-53 State Street	3,500 linear feet	Rensselaer County	Public right-of-way lined by residential uses	Residential and commercial	Chlorinated groundwater plume nearby	Public space improvements; new local businesses in existing historic homes
3	<b>State Street and N-67 Intersection</b> 2 State Street / NY-67; 1 State Street	1.69 acres	Valley Falls Associates Inc & Gregg Properties LLC; Private	Residential / Vacant	Commercial / Residential	NYS DEC PBS facilities	Village gateway / Residential / Commercial
4	<b>Alley Between State &amp; Charles Street</b> East of 18 - 48 State Street	1,375 linear feet	Village of Valley Falls	Access road	N/A	None	Community Space
5	<b>Village Hall / Former Fire Dept.</b> 9 and 11 Charles Street	0.4 acres	Village of Valley Falls	Public service	Police / fire department	Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS)	Community Space
6	<b>Village Park</b> Edward Street	1.46 acres	Village of Valley Falls	Recreation	Undeveloped	None	Village Playground
7	<b>Former Church</b> 12 Emily Street	0.90 acres	Private	Commercial	Church	None	Commercial / Event Space
8	<b>Former Railroad</b> Coons Road	5.22 acres	Boston & Main Corp.	Vacant	Railroad	Railroad related concerns	Trail
9	<b>Lyon Street Properties</b> 11 Lyon Street, 10 & 12 Charles Street, and 9 Edward Street	1.94 acres	Multiple	Residential / Light Industrial	Laundromat	NYS Superfund Site	Commercial and/or residential if soil cleanup objectives can be met
10	<b>Charles Street Properties</b> 10 Charles Street	0.51 acres	State Street LLC.	Light Industrial Manufacturing	Light Industrial Manufacturing	None	Maintain current use
11	<b>Valley Falls Auto Repair</b> 1842 NY-67	0.67 acres	Valley Falls Associates Inc.	Automobile Repair Shop	Residences	NYS DEC Spill Site	Maintain current use
12	<b>Valley Falls Post Office</b> 40 State Street	0.22 acres	State Street & Valley Falls LLC.	Post Office	Grocery store	Multiple NYS DEC Spills	Maintain current use
13	<b>Former Gas Station</b> 16 Charles Street and 50 State Street	2.41 acres	Private	Residential	Filling Station & Auto Body Shop	Above Ground Storage Tanks (AST)	Maintain current use; commercial uses compatible with future rail trail



# Recommendations

## Overview

The proposed Village of Valley Falls BOA Area Plan presents the vision for the future of the Village. It is based on feedback from the community and steering committee and reflects the community's vision and goals.

The Area Plan is intended to provide direction for future development as well as guide policy decisions in the near-term and long-term. These projects were identified based on the opportunities and challenges identified in the inventory and analysis, public engagement, feedback from the Steering Committee, and design best practices.











To facilitate action, this Study includes an Implementation Framework which provides a phased approach through the identification of short-term and longer-term actions as well as potential funding sources. Short-term actions are those that the Village and its partners can feasibly complete in the next one to three years focus largely on building partnerships, advancing the design of proposed projects, updating policies and regulations, and seeking grant funding. These immediate next steps are critical to maintaining the momentum generated by this Study and to positioning the proposed projects for public and private investment and implementation.

The short-term action plan can be found on page 118 of the Historic Valley Falls BOA Nomination Study and the long-term action plan is on page 122. The long-term action plan is also contained on the following pages in this Executive Summary.

## Proposed Area Plan Key

-  **Strategic Sites**
-  **New Building**
-  **Public Parking**
-  **Trailhead**
-  **Walking Loops**
-  **Adaptive Reuse of Existing Building**

## Strategic Sites (see map on facing page)

-  **1 Waterfront Park at the former Thompson Mill Site**
-  **2 State Street Corridor Improvements**
-  **3 Village Gateway and Intersection Improvements at State Street / NY-67**
-  **4 Alley Enhancements**
-  **5 Rehabilitation of the Village Hall and Former Fire Department**
-  **6 Village Playground Improvements**
-  **7 Adaptive Reuse of Former Church**
-  **8 Rail to Trail**
-  **9 Lyon Street Properties**
-  **10 Valley Falls Post Office**
-  **11 Valley Falls Auto Repair**
-  **12 Maintaining Light Industry on Charles Street**

# Proposed Area Plan



# Long Term Action Plan

Area Plan ID	Project	Timeframe	Lead / Partners	Estimated Cost & Funding Sources
1	<p><b>Waterfront Park at the former Thompson Mill Site.</b> Removal of the Thompson Mill building and site remediation. Subsequent development of a waterfront park including a pedestrian ramp park entrance, accessible walking trails, parking, pavilion, flexible use spaces, fishing access, and a natural play area.</p>	<p><b>Building Removal &amp; Remediation</b> Mid-Term (3-5 years)</p> <p><b>Park Construction</b> Long-Term (5+ years)</p>	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valley Falls Free Library</li> <li>• NYS OPRHP</li> <li>• NYS DEC</li> <li>• US EPA</li> <li>• Historic Hudson Hoosic Rivers Partnership</li> <li>• Lakes to Locks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$3-5 Million for building removal and remediation</li> <li>• \$3-8 Million for park design and construction</li> </ul> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Building Removal and Site Cleanup</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EPA grant programs</li> <li>• NRBC Catalyst Program</li> <li>• New proposed State Program (NYS Assembly Bill A3988)</li> </ul> <p><i>Pre-Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOA</li> </ul> <p><i>Construction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NY Forward</li> <li>• EPF Parks Program</li> <li>• CSC</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>State Street Corridor Improvements.</b> Improvements along the State Street corridor to increase pedestrian safety and accessibility, encourage walking, improve stormwater drainage, and enhance the overall aesthetics of this main corridor. Over time, land use along this corridor may expand to include small-scale retail, such as shops and food/beverage.</p>	Mid-Term (3-5 years)	<p><b>Lead</b> Rensselaer County</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village of Valley Falls</li> <li>• NYS DOT</li> <li>• Capital Region Transportation Council</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b> \$1.5 Million</p> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Pre-Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOA</li> </ul> <p><i>Construction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NY Forward</li> <li>• TIP</li> <li>• CSC</li> <li>• GIGP</li> <li>• Main Street Grant</li> <li>• Historic District Tax credits</li> <li>• NBRC Catalyst Program</li> </ul>



Area Plan ID	Project	Timeframe	Lead / Partners	Estimated Cost & Funding Sources
3	<p><b>Village Gateway and Intersection Improvements at State Street / NY-67.</b> Intersection improvements to increase pedestrian safety and accessibility, improve traffic flow and safety, and create a welcoming and recognizable gateway to the Village. Once this intersection is reconfigured, more dense commercial and residential development could occur at this location to reinforce this intersection as a gateway to the Village.</p>	Long-Term (5+ years)	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rensselaer County</li> <li>• NYS DOT</li> <li>• Capital Region Transportation Council</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b> \$3.75 Million</p> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Pre-Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOA</li> </ul> <p><i>Construction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NY Forward</li> <li>• TIP</li> <li>• NBRC Catalyst Program</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Alley Enhancements.</b> Physical improvements to make the alley between State and Charles Streets an accessible and walkable corridor connecting multiple Village destinations. This project also includes intermittent activation of the alley with temporary events, garden sales, Historic District tours, and/or community art exhibits.</p>	Short-Term (1-3 years)	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Neighbors</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b> \$25,000 - \$100,000</p> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOA</li> <li>• NY Forward</li> <li>• TIP</li> <li>• Market NY</li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Rehabilitation of the Village Hall and Former Fire Department.</b> Renovations to the former Fire Department to stabilize the structure and interior improvements to the Village Hall and former fire department to modernize the facilities and expand access to community resources, amenities, and services.</p>	Mid-Term (3-5 years)	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Neighbors</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b> \$30,000 (for building condition assessment and programming plan; construction costs TBD)</p> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Pre-Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOA</li> <li>• EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant</li> </ul> <p><i>Construction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NY Forward</li> <li>• Capital Improvements for Arts &amp; Culture Grant</li> <li>• NBRC Catalyst Program</li> </ul>
6	<p><b>Village Playground Improvements.</b> Upgrades to the Village Playground and Park, including new play equipment and surfacing, accessible parking and charging stations, an accessible walking loop, picnic grove, and a new skatepark.</p>	Short-Term (1-3 years)	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Neighbors</li> <li>• Youth summer programs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b> \$300,000</p> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Pre-Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOA</li> </ul> <p><i>Construction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NY Forward</li> <li>• EPF Parks Program</li> </ul>

## Long Term Action Plan (CONT.)

Area Plan ID	Project	Timeframe	Lead / Partners	Estimated Cost & Funding Sources
7	<p><b>Adaptive Reuse of Former Church.</b> Adaptive reuse of the former church at 12 Emily Street to preserve this historic building and its associated grounds and provide a space for small-scale events within the Village.</p>	Mid-Term (3-5 years)	<p><b>Lead</b> Property Owner</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Village of Valley Falls</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b> <i>Unknown at this time</i></p> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Pre-Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BOA</li> <li>Private investment</li> </ul> <p><i>Construction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Historic District Tax credits</li> <li>NY Forward</li> <li>Restore NY</li> <li>Private investment</li> </ul>
8	<p><b>Rail to Trail.</b> Conversion of the former Boston and Main railroad corridor along the southern boundary of the BOA into a paved multi-use trail, including the establishment of a trailhead at Lyon Street. In the future, this section of trail could connect to a regional trail system following the abandoned rail line and provide connections east to Vermont and west to Troy.</p>	Long-Term (5+ years)	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rensselaer County</li> <li>Town of Pittstown</li> <li>Capital Region Transportation Council</li> <li>Capital District Regional Planning Commission</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b> \$550,000</p> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Pre-Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BOA</li> </ul> <p><i>Construction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CSC</li> <li>NY Forward</li> <li>Recreational Trails Program</li> <li>TIP</li> </ul>
9-12	<p><b>Long-Term Development of Other Strategic Sites.</b> Several strategic sites are privately-owned. If land use or ownership changes, redevelopment aligning with this BOA Plan's vision and goals is recommended. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Valley Falls Post Office:</b> Any future redevelopment of this structure retains retail on the ground floor and residential uses on the upper floor.</li> <li><b>Lyon Street Properties:</b> Pending additional environmental investigations related to the chlorinated solvent plume impacting these properties, future uses could include expanded residential uses that diversify the Village's housing stock.</li> <li><b>Valley Falls Auto Repair:</b> Property retains commercial uses, but could be redeveloped at a higher density and/ or other complementary uses could be introduced.</li> <li><b>10 Charles Street (Bader Manufacturing Facility):</b> Property remain as a light industrial use to continue to grow and diversify the local economy.</li> </ul>	Long-Term (5+ years)	<p><b>Lead</b> Property owners</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Village of Valley Falls</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b> <i>Costs will vary based on necessary environmental remediation and future redevelopment plans</i></p> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Environmental Investigations and Remediation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BOA</li> <li>EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant</li> <li>EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant</li> </ul> <p><i>Construction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NY Forward</li> <li>Main Street Grant</li> <li>Restore NY</li> </ul>

## BOA-Wide Projects

Project	Timeframe	Lead Partners	Funding Sources
<p><b>Land Use Regulations.</b> The development of land use regulations to promote future development in the Village in line with the vision and goals of the comprehensive plan.</p> <p>The development of a comprehensive plan, possibly in partnership with an adjoining municipality (e.g., Town of Pittstown), is recommended as a first step. The comprehensive planning process would establish a vision and policy priorities for the entire Village and could build partnerships with other municipalities that could provide capacity/resources for jointly implementing future land use regulations.</p>	Short-Term (1-3 years)	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYS DOS</li> <li>• Town of Pittstown</li> <li>• Town of Schaghticoke</li> <li>• Rensselaer County</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$50,000 - \$150,000 for land use regulations</li> <li>• \$100,000 - \$200,000 for joint comprehensive planning effort</li> </ul> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Comprehensive Plan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smart Growth Grant Program</li> </ul> <p><i>Land Use Regulation Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOA</li> <li>• Smart Growth Grant Program</li> </ul>
<p><b>Educational Resources/Programming about Historic Tax Credits.</b> The development of educational resources and programming to expand the community's knowledge of and use of historic tax credits with the Valley Falls Historic District.</p>	Short-Term (1-3 years)	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYS OPRHP</li> <li>• Valley Falls Free Library</li> <li>• Good Neighbors</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$5,000 - \$10,000 per year for programming and educational resources</li> </ul> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOA</li> <li>• EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant</li> </ul>



## SECTION 1

# Project Description + Area Boundary

*This section provides an overview of the Village of Valley Fall's Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Nomination Study, provides a brief overview of recent, related planning initiatives, defines the community's vision and goals for the BOA area, and defines and describes the Village's BOA boundary.*

## Lead Project Sponsors

### Historic Valley Falls Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Nomination Study

In 2021, the Village of Valley Falls was awarded funding from the New York State Department of State (NYS DOS) to complete a Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Nomination Study. The intent of the Nomination Study is to support a community-based planning effort to identify a unified vision for the Village's future and identify opportunities for public improvement projects, environmental remediation, and the redevelopment of vacant and/or underutilized sites in a manner that celebrates the Village's rich history and natural resources.

### Lead Project Sponsor and Project Partners

The Historic Valley Falls Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study is sponsored by the Village of Valley Falls. Within the Village are elected officials, including the Mayor and Village Trustees, as well as a Village Clerk and Village Treasurer who serve as part-time employees. To assist with the requirements of the Nomination Study, the Village hired a local project manager and consultant team to lead the planning process and produce the Nomination Study. Additionally, the Village established a Steering Committee that consists of key stakeholders, government staff, and local property owners who bring diverse perspectives and experiences to help inform and guide the planning process.

### What is a Brownfield Site?

As defined by NYS Environmental Conservation Law, ENV § 27-1405, "a 'Brownfield site' shall mean any real property where a contaminant is present at levels exceeding the soil cleanup objectives or other health-based or environmental standards, criteria or guidance adopted by the department that are applicable based on the reasonably anticipated use of the property, in accordance with applicable regulations."

For a description of real property excluded from this definition, please see NYS Environmental Conservation Law, ENV § 27-1405.

### The Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program

The BOA program is administered by the New York State Department of State (NYS DOS) and was created by the State's Superfund Law of 2003. It provides communities with grant funding and technical assistance to develop area-wide plans for the assessment and redevelopment of known or potential brownfields and other vacant or abandoned properties. There are three key steps to the BOA program:

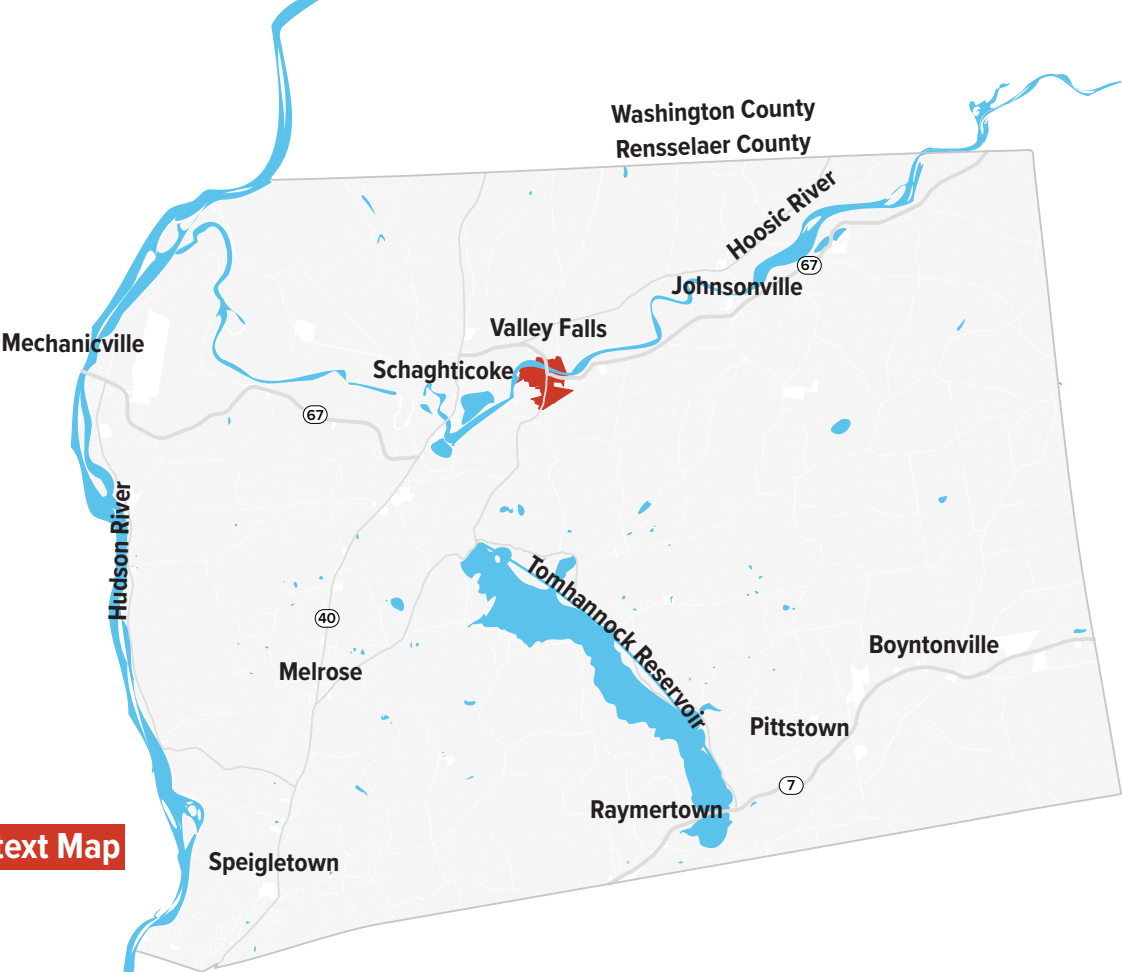
- **Planning:** The foundation of the program is a planning process that is driven by the community to develop a vision for the redevelopment of real or potential brownfields and community revitalization. Through this process a *Nomination Study* is prepared that sets community goals and identifies planning strategies to capture opportunities for catalytic community investment and improvement.
- **Designation:** Upon completion of the Nomination Study, the community may request designation by the Secretary of State. The application process includes a letter of request, public notice and presentation of supporting documentation and a complete BOA Nomination.
- **Implementation:** Designated BOAs have greater access to State funding to stimulate redevelopment including increased eligibility for pre-development funding and other pre-development activities. Additionally, private developers enrolled in the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP) to redevelop sites in the designated BOA are eligible for a tax credit increase for projects that align with the BOA Nomination Study vision.

### Village Location

The Valley Falls Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) is located along the Hoosic River, primarily within the Village of Valley Falls. This small population center is in the rural towns of Pittstown and Schaghticoke in the northern portion of Rensselaer County and is part of New York’s Capital Region. The Village’s location on the Hoosic River is key to the development of the community, particularly the mill industry that was powered by this natural waterway. Also significant is the location along two railroad tracks that connected the area to the larger region. Although the mills have all closed and only one railroad remains active, the community retains its historic built form in a dense walkable scale. Surrounded by a rural agricultural and residential landscape, the Village is approximately 15 miles northeast of the City of Troy and 20 miles northeast of the City of Albany.



Capital Region Context Map



Local Context Map

## Project Overview + Description

### BOA Characteristics

The BOA is comprised of 164 parcels of land, 25 of which are north of the Hoosic River in the Town of Schaghticoke and 139 of which are south of the Hoosic River in the Town of Pittstown. All parcels are located within the Village of Valley Falls, with the exception of one 13 acre parcel located exclusively in the Town of Pittstown. Key features that characterize the BOA are its designated Historic District, a large village-owned waterfront parcel that includes the ruins of a former mill, and the Chapko-Lewis Stadium Facility Field.

- **Historic District:** In 2018, the Valley Falls Historic District was listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, recognizing the local significance of the largely intact historic mill hamlet. The district includes most of the Village and is encompassed by the BOA.
- **Former Thompson Mill:** Located on the south side of the Hoosic River, west of the State Route 67 bridge, is a 24-acre property that is the site of the last working mill in the Village. Operated by James Thompson & Co., this former textile factory that was once a major employer in the village closed in 1992, leaving the large waterfront property vacant and neglected. After over a decade of decay, in 2009 a fire destroyed two of the three buildings and left the third in ruins. With concerns about the structural safety, environmental contaminants and potential for vandalism, the Village pursued funding to assess the hazardous materials, acquire the property, and initiate a strategy for reuse.
- **Chapko-Lewis Stadium Facility Field:** Located at 229 Poplar Avenue, across the railroad tracks from the former Thompson Mill site, is the Chapko-Lewis Stadium Facility Field. This non-profit organization facility provides ballfields for baseball and softball programs that draw people to the community.

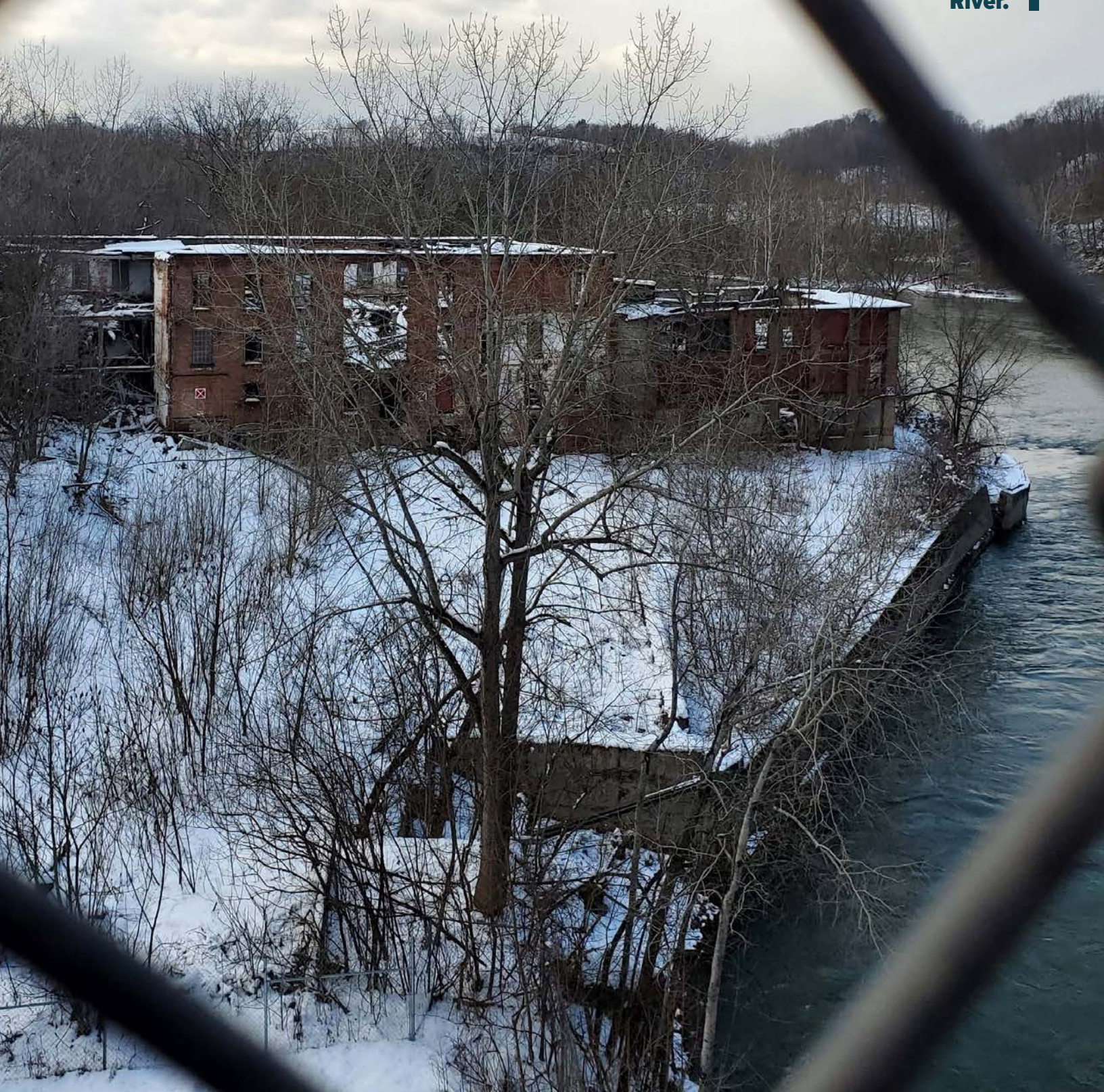
### The BOA's Potential

The BOA program seeks to capture the unmet potential that lies within the historic and natural landscape of the Village of Valley Falls. Once home to water-powered mills, these industries have all closed leaving the waterfront and the Village ripe for redevelopment. Specific opportunities within the Village include:

- **A Hoosic River Waterfront Park:** Positioned at a bend in the Hoosic River, proximate to the intersection of the primary roadways in this historic village, the former Thompson Mill site offers the potential to transform an industrial scar on the waterfront into a community asset. With nearly half a mile of riverfront along this more than 20-acre publicly-owned site, there is an extraordinary opportunity to create a passive recreation park with trails and river access that support active lifestyles and historic interpretation.
- **Investment in the Local Historic Resources:** Leveraging the development of a waterfront park is the Valley Falls Historic District. Listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places, the Historic District provides opportunities for tax credits for private property owners and matching state historic preservation grants for municipal and non-for-profit property owners.
- **Connection to Regional Recreation and Natural Corridors:** Located along the Hoosic River, a former railroad track and County and State transportation routes, the BOA offers a variety of opportunities to link to the surrounding region. Developing in concert with the region will improve access to recreational features and natural corridors for Village, Town and County residents.



**The former  
Thompson  
Mill site  
provides an  
opportunity  
to refocus  
Valley  
Falls on  
the Hoosic  
River.**



## Related Planning Initiatives



### Related Local Initiatives

The Village of Valley Falls has utilized planning and local investment to accomplish important community improvement projects including the Wastewater Treatment Facility and sewer system, the Valley Falls Historic District Nomination and the Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) at the former Thompson Mill. The BOA nomination builds upon these community efforts to further revitalization in the Village.

### Village Sewer and Wastewater Treatment Plant

To address water quality and service provision for its residents, a major wastewater infrastructure project was needed in the Village of Valley Falls. Due to small lot sizes, septic systems were not a sound option. Although there was a historic sewer system in some areas, it discarded waste directly into the Hoosic River. Despite the Village's small size, between 1992 and 2002, it was able to successfully complete a \$2.1M project to provide a Village-wide sewage collection system and wastewater treatment plant. To accomplish the project a combination of grant funds and municipal bonding were used. As part of the project environmental reviews, archaeological potential reports, permitting and land acquisition through eminent domain were completed. The results eliminated raw sewage dumping and allowed for the conversion of Village properties to the local sewer system.

### Historic District Nomination

The Village of Valley Falls has a collection of historic buildings that line its streets, yet prior to 2018 it did not have any buildings recognized on the State or National Historic Registers. Detailing the Village's history and the buildings that contribute to its historic significance, a nomination for the Valley Falls Historic District was completed in 2018. As a result, the district was listed on both the State and National Registers of Historic Places and was documented as a representation of a historic mill hamlet. In addition to the advantages of being listed on the Registers, the nomination provides a wealth of information about the development of Valley Falls.



### Former Thompson Mill

The last vestige of the Village’s historic mill industry was the Thompson Mill. Closed in 1992, the decline of the mill began in the 1970s and the 1980s when operations were moved to other locations. Left vacant and in disrepair, what remained became a Village eyesore with unpaid taxes. After so many years deterioration, a fire in 2009 highlighted the mill as a community hazard. With concern for the safety of its residents and risk of vandalism, the Village began a campaign to clean up the site and redevelop it as a park. Working with the Rensselaer Land Trust and the Hoosic River Watershed Association, the Village applied for a 2016 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

In 2017, the Village of Valley Falls was awarded a \$200,000 EPA grant to assess contamination at the former Thompson Mill. With this funding the Village completed a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) that was approved in 2019, conducted County property foreclosure and transfer to the Village, and completed a Phase II ESA that was approved in 2020. Additionally, incorporated as part of the Phase II ESA was a Hazardous Building Material (HBM) assessment and a Phase IA Archaeological Assessment and Archaeological Monitoring. Recommendations from these studies included restricting access to the site and demolishing the building as soon as possible. Other considerations were for removal of impacted debris, additional assessment and archaeological monitoring and eligibility for National Register of Historic Places.

## Destruction Timeline at the Thompson Mill

2006



2013



2021



## Related Planning Initiatives (CONT.)

### Related Regional Initiatives

The BOA seeks to align with other community and regional planning efforts to expand the potential for redevelopment opportunities. By coordinating planning efforts with the Town of Pittstown, the Town of Schaghticoke, Rensselaer County, the Capital District as well as with non-profit organizations such as the Hoosic River Watershed Association and the Rensselaer Land Trust, the Village can multiply its ability to accomplish community and regional goals. The following summary identifies the published regional reports from these organizations and how policies and recommendations relate to the Village of Valley Falls.

#### Town of Pittstown Zoning Schedule and Land Use Regulations and Development Code (2019)

The Town of Pittstown land use regulations serve to preserve the rural character of the community, provide for controlled growth, preserve the unique character of Town resources, and promote the health, welfare and safety of the community. Related to the Village of Valley Falls, the regulations specify that its objectives be consistent with inter-community considerations. In addition to these regulations, the Town has a 2006 Comprehensive Plan.

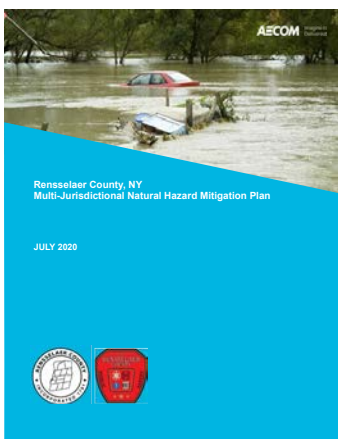
#### Town of Schaghticoke Comprehensive Plan (2005)

The Town of Schaghticoke Comprehensive Plan details a vision, goals and recommendations for the community. Although the Village of Valley Falls is not directly discussed in the plan, the vision statement describes the Hoosic River as having a more prominent role in the economic, recreational and scenic character of the town. In addition, to comply with the Comprehensive Plan, the Town has zoning regulations that were amended in 2013.

#### Rensselaer County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020)

Utilizing grant funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Rensselaer County completed a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation planning effort that serves to lessen the impacts associated with hazard events over the long-term through continued plan implementation. The County's 22 municipalities were invited to participate in the planning effort. Among these municipalities, the Village of Valley Falls passed a resolution to participate in an update of the Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2019.

## Regional Planning Documents



Rensselaer Land Trust

Land Conservation Plan: 2018 to 2030



October 2018

Prepared by: John Winter and Jim Tolbano, Innovations in Conservation, LLC  
Rick Ludere-Baron, Uprate LLC  
Michael Barber  
Nick Conrad



Capital District Trails Plan  
Advancing a Vision for Connecting Communities

As part of the plan, specific hazard priorities were identified for the Village of Valley Falls, including flood, tornado and wind hazards. With respect to the Village's hazards of greatest concern, 14 mitigation actions were proposed, including playground drainage, a drainage system at the corner of Edward and Ella, reinstatement of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), an update of the floodplain management ordinance, and mill site clean-up. Also identified were County-led action items such as ordinance and comprehensive plan review, to ensure hazards are addressed.

### **2050 New Visions for a Quality Region (2020)**

As the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for communities in Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga and Schenectady counties, the Capital Region Transportation Council (CRTC) completed a Long-Range Transportation Plan in 2020 that establishes investment priorities and strategies to guide decision-making. The 15 investment principles established are: invest in a quality region; support economic development; make investments regionally equitable; preserve and manage the transportation system; maintain travel reliability; invest in safety; invest in security; invest in Complete Streets; encourage bicycle and pedestrian travel; move freight efficiently; invest in transit; provide essential mobility for all; prioritize affordable and convenient travel options; preserve the environment; and leverage technology. Examples of how to support the goals of New Visions, which relate to the Village of Valley Falls BOA, include: the development of plans that consider bicycle and pedestrian access and mobility and transit-oriented development strategies; the development of walking and bicycling routes to public parks, playgrounds and preserves; the identification of opportunities where parks can be included in walking and bicycling networks; the provision of secure bike parking at parks and playgrounds; the construction of trails on utility corridors where feasible; and support of the regional trail network as a tourist attraction.

### **Capital District Trails Plan (2020)**

The Capital District Trails Plan was prepared with funding and support from the CRTC and serves as an appendix to the CRTC's New Visions 2050 Plan. Identified within the Trails Plan is a vision for a seamless regional transportation network and an implementation strategy to advance the Capital District trails system. Also detailed within the Trails Plan are the many socio-economic benefits of trails as well as various best practices for trails management. The Village of Valley Falls connects to the supporting trail network of Rensselaer County, which is part of the Capital District trail system.

### **Hoosic River Watershed Association Strategic Plan**

The Hoosic River Watershed Association (HooRWA) is a citizens' group that is dedicated to the habitat restoration, conservation and enjoyment of the Hoosic River and its watershed, through education, research and advocacy. The organization's Strategic Plan has a goal of providing recreational opportunities and river access that specifically addressed the Village of Valley Falls in its strategy to work with the Village on a project to develop public recreation at the former Thompson Mill site.

### **Land Conservation Plan: 2018 to 2030**

In 2018, the Rensselaer Land Trust developed a plan that identified key lands for conservation in Rensselaer County. In the Village of Valley Falls, these lands include high priority ecological areas and water resource areas along the Hoosic River as well as high priority scenic areas along the State Street corridor and the defunct railroad tracks. In addition to the identification of priorities, the plan serves to "assist and inspire the conservation efforts and land use decisions of its partner organizations and the municipalities in the region."

## Community Vision + Goals

### Community Vision for the BOA

The community played an important role in developing a vision for the future of the Historic Valley Falls BOA. Community input on the vision statement was collected during the first half of the planning process during meetings with the steering committee, stakeholder meetings, via a community survey, and at the first public workshop (for more information community participation in the BOA planning process, please see Section 2).

The vision presented to the right is ambitious, yet achievable, and will be implemented through a series of actionable goals presented in the next section.

### The Vision

*The Village of Valley Falls is a historic village characterized by a strong sense of community and the natural beauty of the Hoosic River. In the future, the Village will support a close-knit, multi-generational community. It will balance its small-town charm with targeted local economic activity to attract new residents and provide existing residents and visitors with affordable and diversified services. Its infrastructure will be well-maintained, providing a safe, accessible, and comfortable network of roadways, trails, and recreational destinations that celebrate the Village's scenic beauty, increase access to nature, and encourage walking. And, its historic character will be preserved in a manner that creates a safe, inviting, and livable community for all.*



## Community Goals for the BOA

The following goals and strategies provide a comprehensive approach to achieving the community's and Village's vision for the future of the BOA. These goals are directly tied to the proposed area plan and recommended projects presented in Section 4.



### Preserve and maintain the Village's quaint historic character.

Proposed Strategies:

- Develop educational resources for property owners about accessing historic preservation tax credits to support rehabilitation of historic buildings in the Village of Valley Falls.
- Draft and adopt land use regulations that identify where different land uses could occur to reinforce the Village's desired character.
- Encourage the adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of existing structures and the infill of vacant lots.



### Upgrade and maintain the Village's public infrastructure to improve safety and connectivity.

Proposed Strategies:

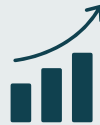
- Repair sidewalks and drainage along the State Street corridor to improve accessibility and sustainably manage stormwater runoff.
- Upgrade and expand the amenities at the Village Park to increase accessibility and serve community members of all ages.
- Develop a long-term maintenance and operations plan for the wastewater treatment plant to ensure continuity and quality of services.



### Celebrate the Village's natural beauty by expanding recreational resources.

Proposed Strategies:

- Redevelop the former Thompson Mill as a publicly accessible waterfront park.
- Create an interconnected system of sidewalks, trails, and community services to encourage active modes of transportation providing access to local and regional destinations.
- Diversify recreational resources to appeal to all ages and abilities.



### Encourage local economic development to activate the Village's main thoroughfares.

Proposed Strategies:

- Draft and adopt land use regulations that define where commercial uses are appropriate, including development standards, to increase compatibility between residential and commercial uses.
- Allow for a mixing of land uses.
- Encourage small-scale locally-owned businesses that can occupy and activate existing historic buildings.



### Support a lively, multi-generational community.

Proposed Strategies:

- Develop land use and development regulations that support aging in place by allowing accessory dwelling units and locating areas suitable for senior housing.
- Provide continued support for and expand the Village's existing youth programs.
- Upgrade and maintain public infrastructure that encourages walking to provide accessible, healthy connections that encourage social interactions in the public realm.
- Provide transit services to increase access to regional services and amenities.

## BOA Boundary Description

The Historic Valley Falls BOA is divided by the Hoosic River and is primarily contained within the Village of Valley Falls, with only one parcel located exclusively in the Town of Pittstown. The total area of the BOA is approximately 170 acres, and the total acreage of all parcels contained within the BOA is 136 acres. The total acreage of parcels north of the Hoosic River is 22 acres, and this portion of the Village is located within the Town of Schaghticoke. The total acreage of parcels south of the river is 114 acres and this portion of the BOA is located within the Town of Pittstown. Key BOA features are the former Thompson Mill property, the Valley Falls Historic District and the Chapko-Lewis Stadium Facility Field. The boundary to incorporate these lands into the BOA generally follows parcel lines, and includes right-of-ways for a contiguous area. The following descriptions detail the north and south portions of the BOA.

### Town of Schaghticoke

North of the Hoosic River, west of the State Route 67 bridge, the boundary incorporates all parcels along both sides of North Street. East of the State Route 67 bridge, the boundary includes all parcels bounded by Schaghticoke Road, Bunker Hill Road and State Route 67. Along the north side of Schaghticoke Road, the boundary incorporates the parcel at the corner of Schaghticoke Road and Bunker Hill. The remainder of the northern portion of the BOA includes parcels with frontage along the east side of Bunker Hill Road, south of 105 Bunker Hill Road as well as one landlocked parcel between 123 Bunker Hill Road and 115 Bunker Hill Road.

### Town of Pittstown

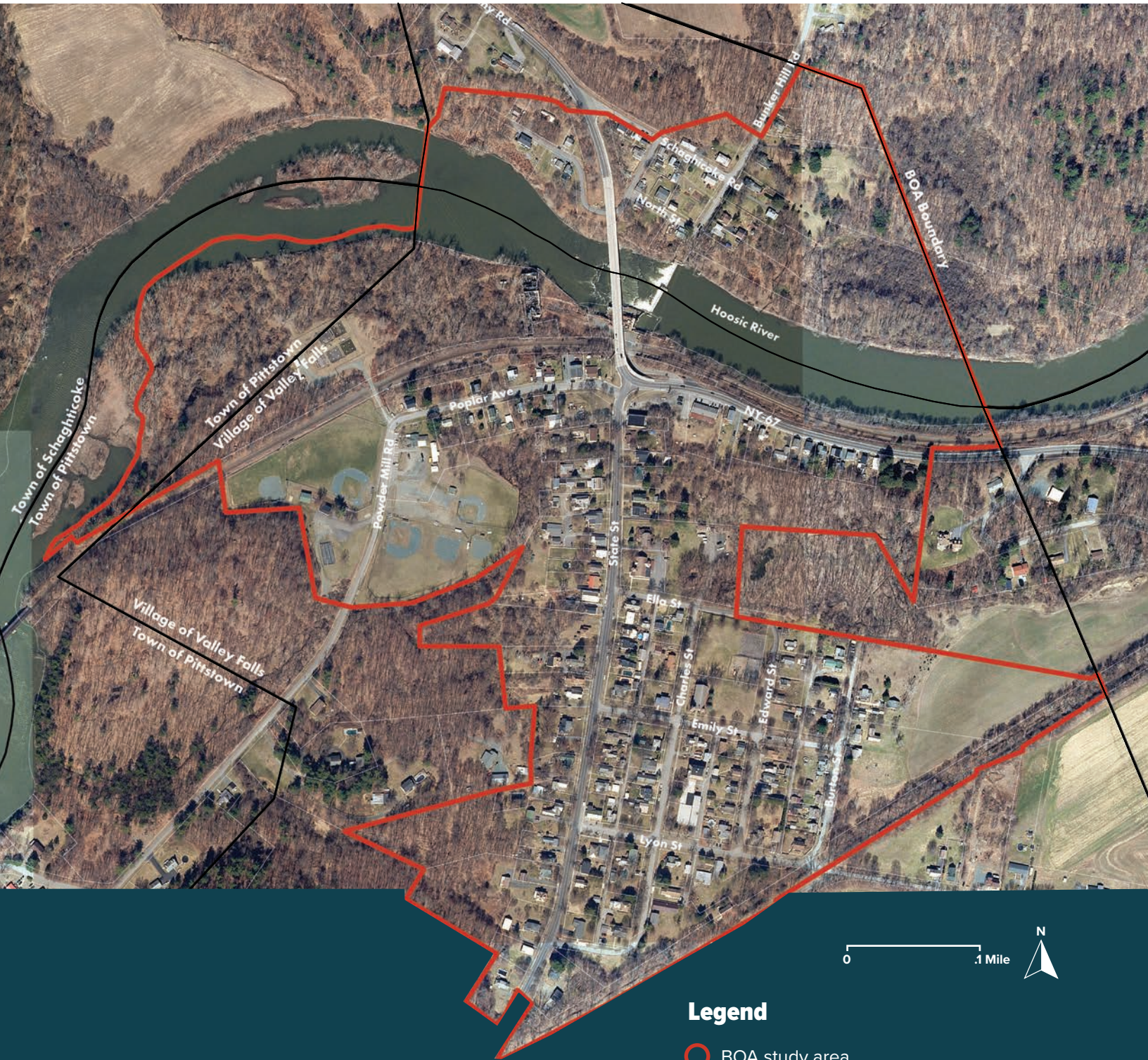
South of the Hoosic River, west of the State Route 67 bridge, the boundary incorporates the CSX railroad property and all parcels north of the railroad within the Village as well as one parcel within the Town that is between the Village boundary and the Hoosic River. Also west of the State Route 67 bridge, the boundary incorporates all parcels along both sides of Poplar Avenue and one parcel along Powder Mill Road south of 242 Poplar Avenue.

Parallel with the State Route 67 bridge, the boundary incorporates all property with frontage along State Street north of the former railroad tracks including 53 and 50 State Street. East of State Street, the boundary incorporates all parcels within the Village that are north of Coons Road and south of Ella Street including parcels with frontage on Burton Street and the former railroad property.

East of the State Route 67 bridge, the boundary incorporates the CSX railroad property and all parcels north of the railroad. Also incorporated into the boundary are all parcels with frontage on State Route 67 that are west of 20 Riverview Drive.

**The Valley Falls BOA comprises almost half of the Village's entire land area. Furthermore, due to larger parcel sizes, only about 20% of the parcels within the Village fall outside of the BOA.**





**Legend**

- BOA study area
- municipal boundary



NIKE

Washington park replaces the former Thompson... members would you like to see incorporated into

## SECTION 2

# Community Participation

*The Historic Valley Falls Nomination Study is a community-based plan. This section summarizes the different strategies used to gather input and feedback from the community throughout the planning process. Topics in this section include:*

- *Steering Committee Meetings*
- *Community Survey*
- *Project Website*
- *Public Events*
- *Stakeholder Meetings*

*For detailed meeting summaries describing public input received throughout the planning process, please see Appendix B.*

## Enlisting Partners

### Steering Committee Meetings

At the onset of the planning process, the Village identified a Steering Committee comprised of current and former Village Trustees, local residents, environmental organizations, and the Department of State. The role of the Committee was to guide the planning process, confirm the vision and goals, assist with public outreach, advise on strategic site selection and recommendations, and review all draft project deliverables.

#### Meeting 1

The first Steering Committee meeting was held on January 27, 2023 and set the foundation for the project's direction. The Steering Committee and consultant team discussed the project's scope of work and schedule, anticipated outcomes, and final deliverables. Immediately following the meeting, the Committee and consultant team took a walking tour of the Historic Valley Falls BOA.

#### Meeting 2

The second Steering Committee meeting was held on June 16, 2023 to provide an overview the key findings from the existing conditions analysis. A substantial portion of the meeting focused on the potential brownfields and how to portray these sites in the Nomination Study. The meeting also included a review of the findings from the market analysis, including retail and housing opportunities. The meeting concluded with a discussion of the proposed strategic sites.

#### Meeting 3

The third Steering Committee meeting was held on November 3, 2023. The Committee reviewed and discussed the vision and goals for the BOA, and then reviewed recommendations for each strategic site. The feedback received during this meeting was used to refine the proposed area plan and implementation strategy.

#### Meeting 4

This meeting was held on January 12, 2024 to review a complete draft of the Nomination Study, with a focus on the proposed area plan, proposed projects, and the implementation strategy. Concerns raised during this meeting focused on the overall costs to implement the proposed recommendations. The Committee's feedback

provided during this meeting was used to refine the implementation strategy and finalize the complete draft of the Nomination Study for public review.

### Community Survey

Early in the planning process, a survey was developed to help the project team better understand the community's current perception of the Village, their vision for the future of Valley Falls, and the types of improvements or changes they would like to see made in the Village of Valley Falls. The survey was broken down into four categories:

1. A Bit About Yourself
2. Quality of Life
3. Access to Services
4. Your Vision for Valley Falls

The survey was available online through the project website and hard-copies were available at the Valley Falls Free Library. The survey received 24 responses from April through June 2023. Key findings from the survey are described below, and a summary of all the results is available in Appendix A:

- A majority of survey respondents were residents of the Village of Valley Falls (83%), and all others lived in the Town of Pittstown.
- A majority of respondents have lived in the Village for over 15 years (56%).
- Most respondents felt the housing stock was affordable in the Village (85%) and suggest that single family and two-family homes remain the predominant housing types to preserve the Village's character. Several respondents also noted the need for senior housing.
- The condition of public amenities was rated an average of 6 out of 10 by respondents. The most requested public improvements included sidewalk repairs and playground equipment upgrades at the Village Park.
- The most requested amenities at a new or upgraded park included: river access (e.g., fishing, kayaking), hiking trails, bike paths, walking paths, picnic areas, and nature-/bird-watching,

- While most survey respondents drive a car to work (83%), 41% of respondents noted that walking was their preferred mode of transportation for recreational purposes.
- When asked what type of new businesses and/or services they'd like to see in Valley Falls in the next 10 years, 50% or more of respondents selected food and beverage, expanded recreational options, and childcare/youth programming. Many respondents noted they would not like to see new industrial/manufacturing uses, gas stations, chain retail stores, and uses that would generate additional motor vehicle traffic.
- When asked what makes the Village of Valley Falls a unique place to live, work, or visit the most frequent responses included: the community, its historic charm, small town feel, quiet and quaint.
- Currently, respondents describe the Village as quaint and beautiful, but also somewhat run-down. Respondents noted that the vacant and deteriorating houses along State Street create a negative perception of the Village.
- The top-ranked strategies for improving the Village in the future included: removing the former Thompson Mill building, preserving the Village's historic character, upgrading and expanding the Village's public infrastructure, and expanding recreation amenities.
- In the future, respondents would like to be able to describe the Village as well-maintained, inviting, historic, and refreshed/revitalized.

## Project Website

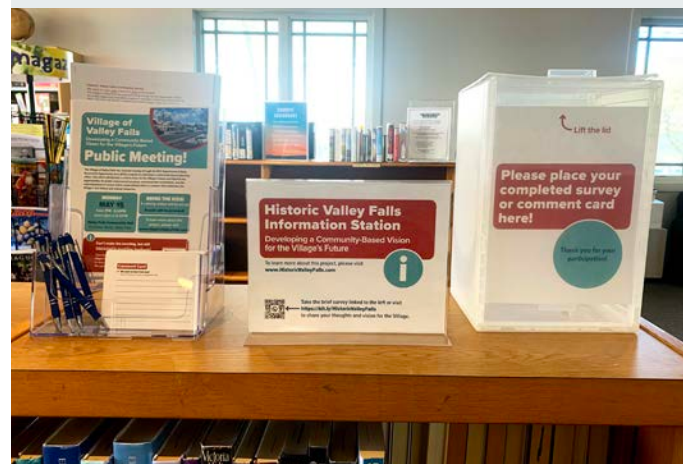
A project website for the Village of Valley Falls BOA was created to provide community members and interested parties an opportunity to learn more about the project and provide input ([www.HistoricValleyFalls.com](http://www.HistoricValleyFalls.com)). The project website provided access to related project information (e.g., environmental studies at the former Thompson Mill site), the community survey, meeting notifications and summaries, and draft project deliverables. The website also included an online comment form allowing the public to submit comments at anytime.

## Building Awareness about the BOA

At the onset of the project, postcards were mailed to Village residents using the United States Postal Service's (USPS) Every Door Direct mailing service. These postcards included a brief overview of the project, links to the project website and community survey, and information about the first public meeting.

## Project Information Station at the Valley Falls Free Library

To provide convenient public access to project materials — including information about upcoming public events, hard-copies of the community survey, and brochures about the Historic Valley Falls BOA — an “information station” was set-up at the Valley Falls Free Library from April through the fall of 2023.



## Enlisting Partners (CONT.)

### Public Events

Community-wide meetings were conducted throughout the planning process to provide the public opportunities to learn about the goals and objectives of the Village's BOA Nomination Study. Four public events were held over the course of the planning process, including two interactive workshops and one pop-up event at the Village Garage Sale.

#### Public Meeting #1

Held on May 15, 2023, the first public workshop introduced the community to the BOA Nomination Study. The meeting consisted of a brief presentation about the project's scope of work, schedule, and anticipated outcomes. The presentation was followed by a question and answer session and several interactive exercises where attendees were encouraged to share their ideas about the Village and its future. Approximately 30 people attended the event.

#### Pop-up #1

The project team set up a booth at the Village-wide Garage Sale which was held on June 10, 2023. Attendees were able to speak with the project team and provide feedback regarding their vision for the Village and improvements they'd like to see made. Participants were also asked to share their thoughts on amenities for the proposed waterfront park at the former Thompson Mill site, and this feedback directly informed the recommendations in Chapter 4 of this Nomination Study. Hard-copies of the survey were available and respondents could receive a free Stewart's ice cream or coffee coupon if they completed the survey. Approximately 15 people were engaged during this event.

#### Public Meeting #2

Held on December 8, 2023, this public workshop was an open house and solicited feedback on the draft vision and goals as well as several recommended projects at the strategic sites -- from sidewalks and drainage improvements along the State Street corridor improvements to a new waterfront park at the site of the former Thompson Mill. Roughly 25 people attended.

### Public Meeting #3 / Public Hearing

The final public meeting was structured as a public hearing for the draft Historic Valley Falls BOA Nomination Study. Approximately 18 people attended the public hearing, including the Mayor and five Village Trustees. Public feedback emphasized that the primary goal of the BOA Plan should be the removal of the former Thompson Mill building for public safety and liability reasons. Other concerns raised at the meeting included rail safety and the high cost of fully implementing the Study's recommendations. Support for the Study's recommendations focused on the proposed intersection improvements at State Street/NY-67 to increase safety, drainage and sidewalk upgrades along the length of State Street, and the proposed alley enhancements.

### Stakeholder Meetings

Several stakeholder meetings were conducted throughout the planning process to engage various organizations and individuals within the Village of Valley Falls. These meetings provided first-hand knowledge of local challenges and opportunities in the Village. Stakeholder interviews and meetings were held with the following organizations and individuals:

- Shelley Carr, who led the designation of the Valley Falls Historic District
- Valley Falls Playground (Denile Brown)
- Valley Falls Free Library (Jeanette Sassatelli)
- Valley Falls Village Clerk (Janet Weber)
- Good Neighbors of Valley Falls
- Former Mayor and operator of the Village Wastewater Treatment Plant, Dick Andrew
- Stephen Bader Co.
- Town of Pittstown
- Developers of former church at 12 Emily Street







## SECTION 3

# Existing Conditions Analysis

*This section provides a snapshot of where the Village is today, including a brief history of the Village's development and the significance of the Hoosic River. Key findings, challenges, and opportunities identified in this section will lay the foundation for the development of an area-wide plan to guide future development. Topics addressed in this section include:*

- *Historic context*
- *Socio-demographic profile*
- *Land use, zoning, and land ownership*
- *Parks, historic, and archaeological resources*
- *Transportation systems*
- *Infrastructure*
- *Natural resources*
- *Building inventory*
- *Potential brownfields and vacant sites*
- *Strategic sites*
- *Food access and commercial centers*
- *Economic trends and opportunities*

## Historic Context

### Early History

Valley Falls is in a region with a long and intricate past. Part of the Hudson River Valley, the area was home to Native American societies long before the arrival of Dutch and English settlers in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the Upper Hudson River Valley, this included the Mohicans, who had a large territory that featured the Hoosic River.<sup>1</sup> A significant trait of the Mohicans was their relationship with the water, which is reflected in the nomenclature of the Hoosic River. Derived from a Mohican word, Hoosic is associated with the Greylock Mountain range that was written about by a Mohican named John Adams in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Greylock was called Hoosuck from the Mohican word Hoothuk, meaning kettle, as the mountain was said to look like an upside-down pot. While the word has various spellings, “hoos” means kettle or pot and “ic” is a locating suffix meaning “place of,” which combine to mean “place of the kettle” or Hoosic.<sup>2</sup>

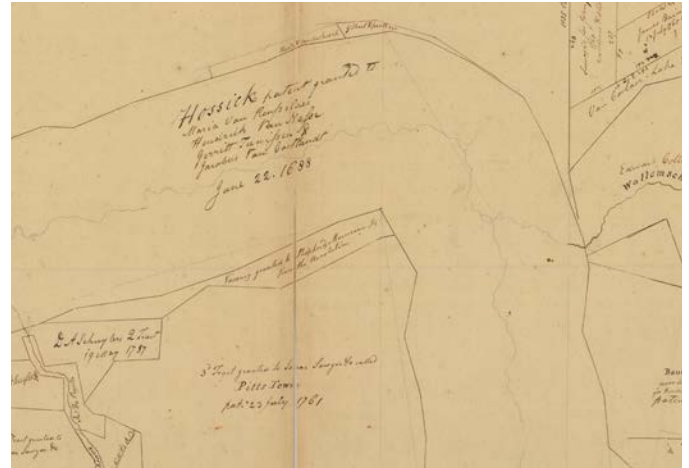
Although the Mohicans did not keep written accounts, information about this early history was uncovered in 1994 through land transaction research.<sup>3</sup> One such recorded land transaction shows that in 1684, a large tract along both sides of the Hoosick River was sold by Mohicans named Mesekampe and Wachkehoostachqua to Maria Van Rensselaer and her associates.<sup>4</sup> Later known as the Hoosic Patent, the land included parts of the present-day towns of Pittstown and Schaghticoke, on both sides of the Hoosic River, thus beginning a period of settlement in the area.

1 Jungkurth, Allison. *Dutch And Native American Heritage In The Hudson Valley White Paper*. Prepared for the Hudson River Valley Greenway. July 17, 2018. <https://www.hudsonrivervalley.com/documents/dutch-native-american-paper>

2 Information gathered from Bonney Hartley, a Tribal Historic Preservation Manager with the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians and a 2015 Berkshire Eagle Letter to the Editor from Lion Miles.

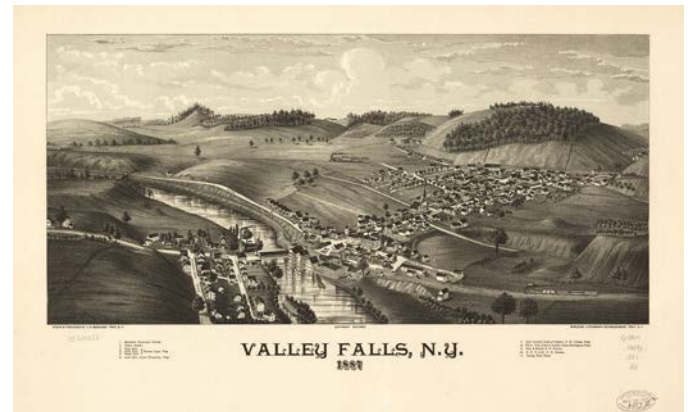
3 Dunn, Shirley W. *The Mohicans and Their Land 1609-1730* (Purple Mountain Press, Ltd., NY 1994), 7.

4 Ibid, 159, 296.



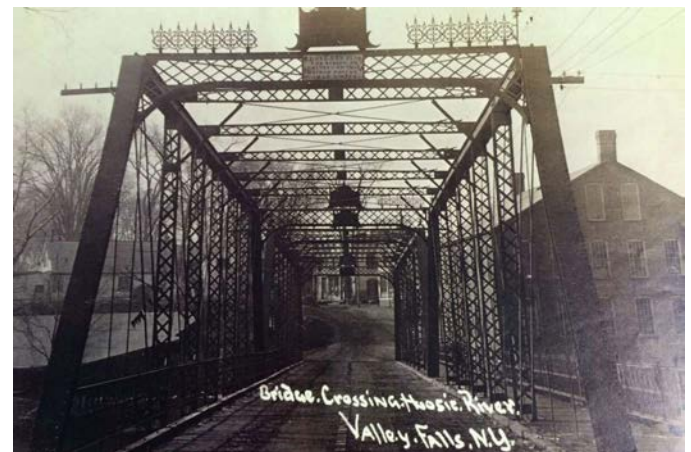
**Hoosick Patent and Pittstown Patent and Adjacent Land**

New York State Archives. New York (State). State Engineer and Surveyor. Survey maps of lands in New York State, ca. 1711-1913. Series A0273-78, Map #751.



**Perspective map of Valley Falls from 1887**

Burleigh, L. R., 1853?-1923, and Burleigh Litho. Valley Falls, N.Y. [Troy, N.Y., 1887] Map. <https://www.loc.gov/item/75694858/>.



**Undated Bridge Over the Hoosic River**

Courtesy of the Village of Valley Falls via timesunion.com

## Land Acknowledgment

It is with gratitude and humility that we acknowledge that we are fishing, working, and gathering on the ancestral homelands of the Mohican people, who are the indigenous peoples of this land. Despite tremendous hardship in being forced from here, today their community resides in Wisconsin, and is known as the Stockbridge-Munsee Community, “the people of the waters that are never still”. We pay honor and respect to their ancestors past and present as we commit to building a more inclusive and equitable space for all.

## Water-Powered Industry

Industrial development arrived in Valley Falls by the 1800s. Recorded in the 1820 Census of Manufacturers was Viele’s cotton factory, which was located on the south side of the Hoosic River.<sup>5</sup> Viele also built a wooden toll bridge to link the factory to the north side of the Hoosic River, addressing transportation challenges of the location and connecting to a road that traveled to the Hudson River at Stillwater. Other early factory operations that capitalized on the available water-power of the Hoosic River include the Giles Slocum cotton factory that was recorded as opening on the north side of the river in 1831, opposite the Viele factory. Following Giles, his cousin, Lewis B. Slocum bought and began operating the former Viele cotton factory in 1883. As industrial development continued along the Hoosic River, there were cotton, woolen, flax, linen, grist, paper, oil (flaxseed) and saw mills recorded. Although located just outside the village, the Schaghticoke Powder Mill began major mill operations along the Hoosic River in 1850. The fourth largest producer of powder to Union troops during the Civil War, the powder mill was a long standing icon and employer in the Village until it closed in 1928.<sup>6</sup>

## Arrival of the Railroad

By the 1850s railroads arrived in Valley Falls, with two lines on the south side of the Hoosic River. The Albany

Northern Railroad constructed tracks that paralleled the Hoosic River just south of the industry that lined the riverbank. The Troy & Boston Railroad constructed tracks south of the village development along a berm and was known as the “upper tracks.” The development of the railroad brought freight, people and mail to the community and in 1854 a post office was established.<sup>7</sup> It was the post office that adopted “Valley Falls” as the recognizable name for the village. Up until this period, the community had been known as the Valley or Valley Bridge, which was likely an Anglicization of Viele’s Bridge, reflecting its early mill industry development.<sup>8</sup>

## Housing Development

While residential properties existed on both sides of the Hoosic River in Valley Falls including along Bunker Hill Road, North Street, State Street, River Street (State Route 67) and Poplar Avenue, the 1865 state census showed that most workers lived in tenements north of the river in Schaghticoke.<sup>9</sup> Yet in 1863, industrialist Thomas Lape began to greatly expanded the residential development south of the river by subdividing farmland in Pittstown into rectilinear plats east of State Street. The development was locally known as the “Promised Land” for the many down payments the buyers promised to fulfill. The streets were named for Lape’s children, a vestige that remains today.<sup>10</sup>

## Crossing the Hoosic River

Throughout the early development of the village, movement across the river was integral to the community, with people walking across the bridge as a part of community life. Bridges across the Hoosic River included a wooden bridge built as early as 1815 and a two-span iron truss bridge built in 1889. These bridges had a similar alignment as the current bridge, but crossed into Schaghticoke at Bunker Hill Road. Yet in

<sup>7</sup> Kay, John L. and Smith Jr., Chester M. *New York Postal History: The Post Offices and First Post Masters from 1775 to 1980* (American Philatelic Society, PA 1982), 267.

<sup>8</sup> Ravage, Jessie A. *Valley Falls Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2018), 43.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 52.

<sup>10</sup> David H. McMahon, “Town of Pittstown History.” Typescript. [1984]. 5. (Pittstown Historical Society Collections)

<sup>5</sup> Ravage, Jessie A. *Valley Falls Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2018), 44.

<sup>6</sup> McMahon, David. *Pittstown Historical Society Newsletter* (Issue VII, Spring, 2005), 7-8.

## Historic Context (CONT.)

1939, a steel bridge was reconstructed with an overpass that added a steep climb for pedestrians to travel across the river, the railroad and the mills. Although the bridge has since been replaced, the current bridge maintains the same alignment and overpass.<sup>11</sup>

### The Thompson Mill

James Thompson opened his linen mill by the early 1870s on the southern bank of the Hoosic River at the site of previous factory operations. The brick mill was vertically organized, from spinning of yarn to weaving to finishing. Mill products included buckram, netting and twine.<sup>12</sup> According to the New York State Census for 1875, the mill employed 14 men that were paid an average \$17 per month, 21 women that were paid an average \$7.40 per month, 16 boys that were paid an average of \$9.50 per month and 16 girls that were paid an average of \$6 per month.<sup>13</sup> The mill became a major employer in the Village and around the late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was said to employ 300 people.<sup>14</sup> According to an article from the Pittstown Historical Society, the mill was a common thread that tied people together as most of its workers lived close by and walked to work. The newsletter states, “The Thompson Mill was the heart beat of the small Village of Valley Falls, and even if you did not work there you were aware of the morning, noon, and evening whistles.”<sup>15</sup>

### Historic Structures and Stories

The mid-20<sup>th</sup> century brought changes that had a significant impact on the Village, including the loss of railroad passenger service, the closing of the local Valley Falls school and the loss of industrial employers. The

<sup>11</sup> Ravage, Jessie A. *Valley Falls Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2018), 4, 55, 61

<sup>12</sup> [www.jamesthompson.com](http://www.jamesthompson.com)

<sup>13</sup> Ravage, Jessie A. *Valley Falls Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2018), 53.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>15</sup> Lohnes, Dick. *Pittstown Historical Society Newsletter*, Issue XVI, 2009, 1.

last operating mill was the Thompson Mill, but by the 1970s and 1980s it only had a skeleton crew having moved manufacturing to other locations and officially closed in 1992.<sup>16</sup> Once supporting a variety of small town businesses, by the 1960s things that people had formerly been able to buy in Valley Falls were no longer available.

Still, with little development since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the Village has been able to maintain its concentration of historic character. The existing historic structures invite an opportunity to tell the unique stories of the community, such as how some of the houses in the Village were improved with tin ceilings that wouldn't crumble in the event of an explosion at the nearby Powder Mill or how a replica of a house in New England was built in Valley Falls to attract a mill manager who loved his house too much to relocate to the Village.

Maintaining historic structures and interpreting the unique history will help to preserve the stories that characterize the Village of Valley Falls.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

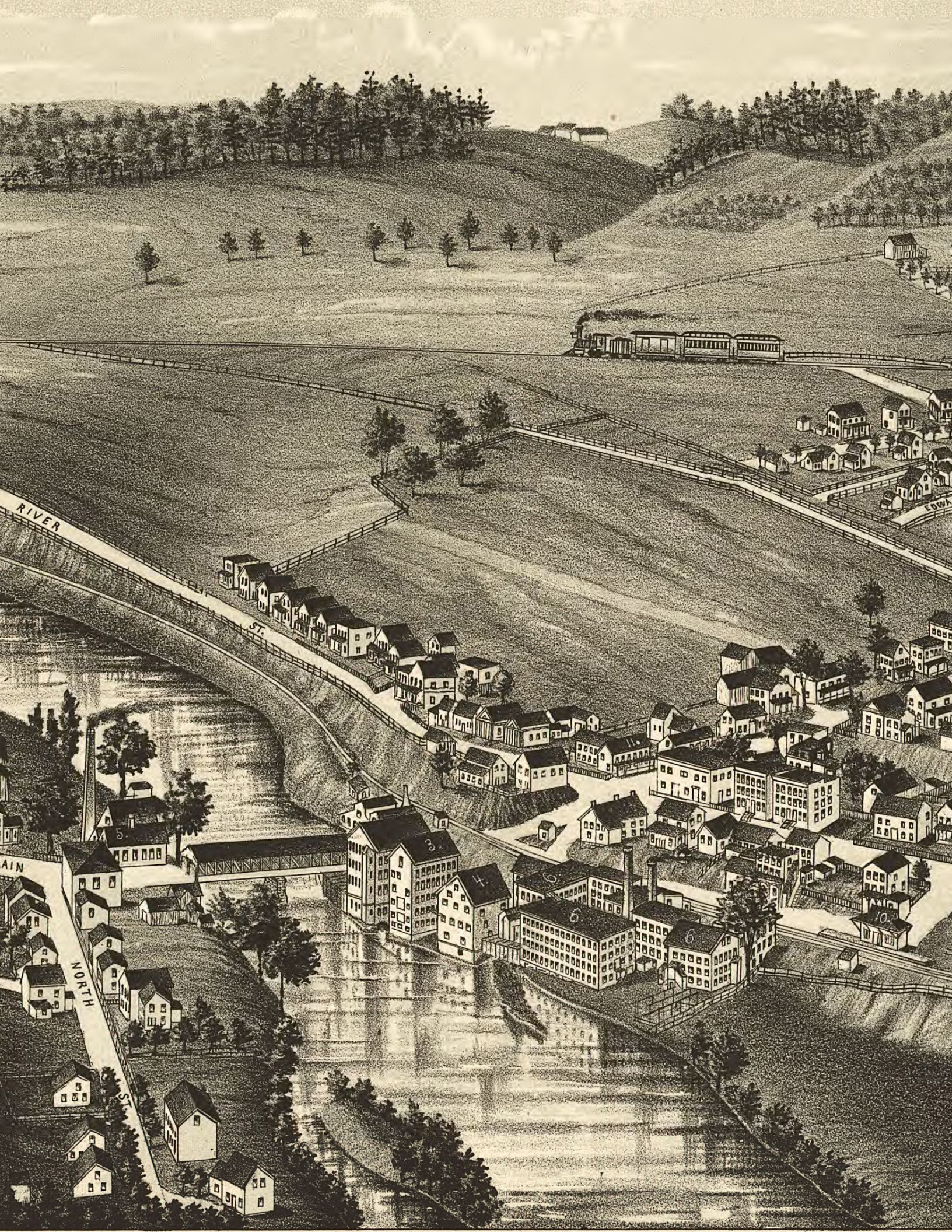
### Key Findings

#### ① The Valley Falls BOA has a long history with a variety of opportunities for historic interpretation.

Valley Falls has a rich and diverse history that includes many stories. From its origins as Mohican land to the growth of water-powered industry and its development as a railroad hub, opportunities to interpret these stories would help to preserve the heritage of the area.

#### ② The ruins of the Thompson Mill site provide a connection to the history of the Hoosic River and the milling industry that once lined the riverbank.

The site provides a unique opportunity to reflect the heritage of the area, including the Mohicans who lived along the Hoosic River and the mill workers who were employed in the factories.



RIVER

ST.

NORTH ST.

AIN

EDWIN

3

6

6

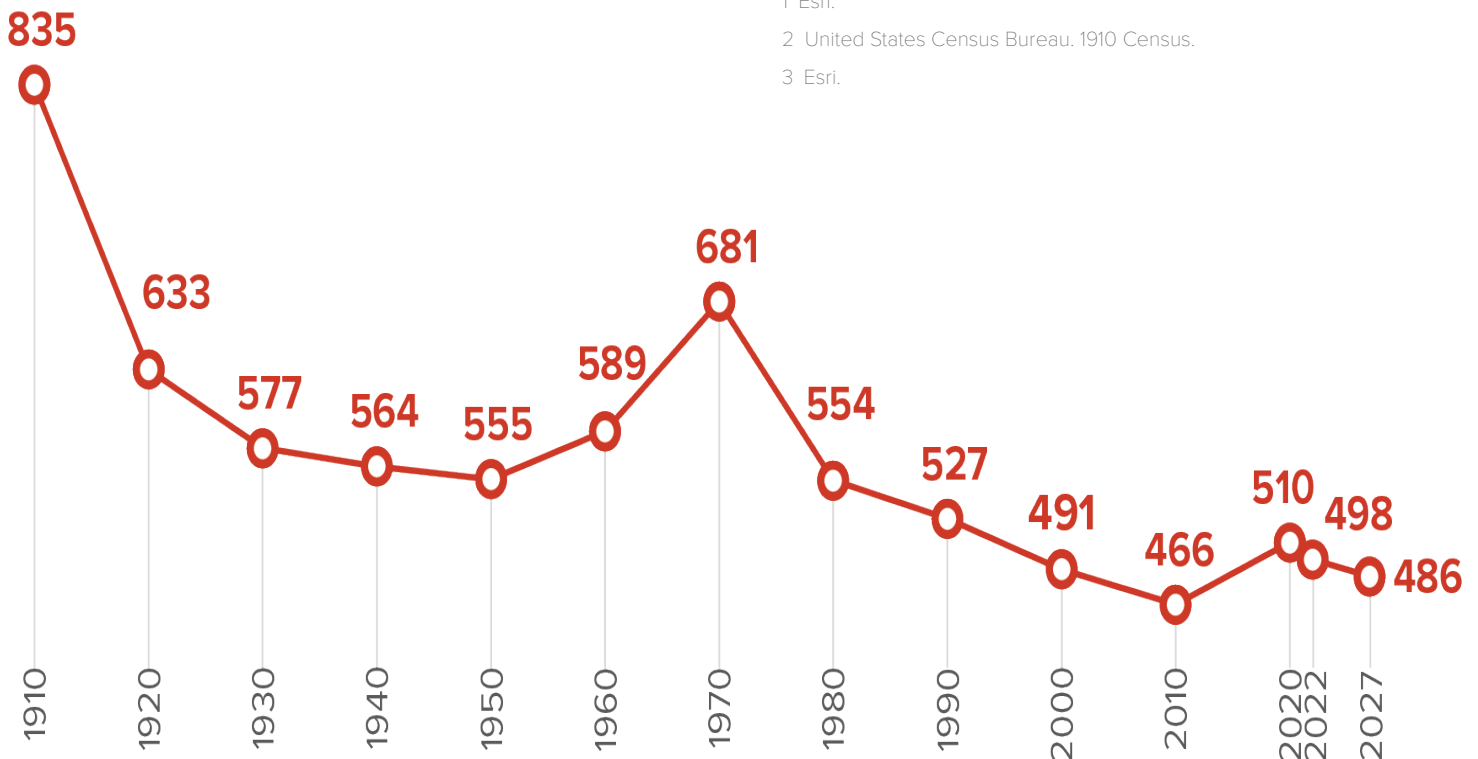
10

## Socio-Demographics

The Village of Valley Falls serves as the community context for the Historic Valley Falls BOA. With approximately 80% of its parcels within the BOA boundary, the socio-economic characteristics of the Village provide valuable indicators of the existing conditions. Understanding key features of the Village population, housing and economic data, gathered from several different sources, will support analysis and recommendations that address the needs of the community.

**From 1910 to 2020, the Village population declined by 39%.**

### Village of Valley Falls Total Population



Sources: 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970 and 2020 Census Data from the United States Census Bureau; Capital District Regional Planning Commission Community Fact Sheets (sourcing 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010 Census data); Esri (for 2022 and 2027).

### Population, Race and Ethnicity

The Village of Valley Falls is a small community with an estimated 2022 population of 498 residents.<sup>1</sup> The population has significantly shrunk since its recorded peak of 835 residents in 1910.<sup>2</sup> Although there was a period of growth in 1960s and 1970s, generally the population throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been in decline. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the 2020 population increased to 510 residents, yet the 2022 population estimate and the 2027 population projection show a return to the Village's pattern of population decline.

Estimated 2022 population data identifies 92% of the residents as white, compared to the more diverse geographies of Rensselaer County where 77% of residents were identified as white and New York State where 52% were identified as white. The data also identifies 5% of Village residents as American Indian / Alaska Native, 1% of Village residents as black / African American and 1% of Village residents as Hispanic.<sup>3</sup>

1 Esri.

2 United States Census Bureau. 1910 Census.

3 Esri.

### Median Age and Age Distribution

At 41.9 years, the Village’s estimated 2022 median age is higher than Rensselaer County (41.0 years) and New York State as a whole (39.6 years). The 2022 age characteristics are further demonstrated in the estimated distribution by age cohort, which shows higher concentrations of young adult and middle age residents in the Village than in the County or in the State. The Village age cohorts with lower concentrations than in the County or the State include children/adolescents and older seniors.<sup>4</sup>

To illustrate how the age characteristics have changed over time, data from the United States Census Bureau shows the median age for 2000 and 2010. This data indicates that the Village has an aging population.

<sup>4</sup> Esri.

**For the Village of Valley Falls:**

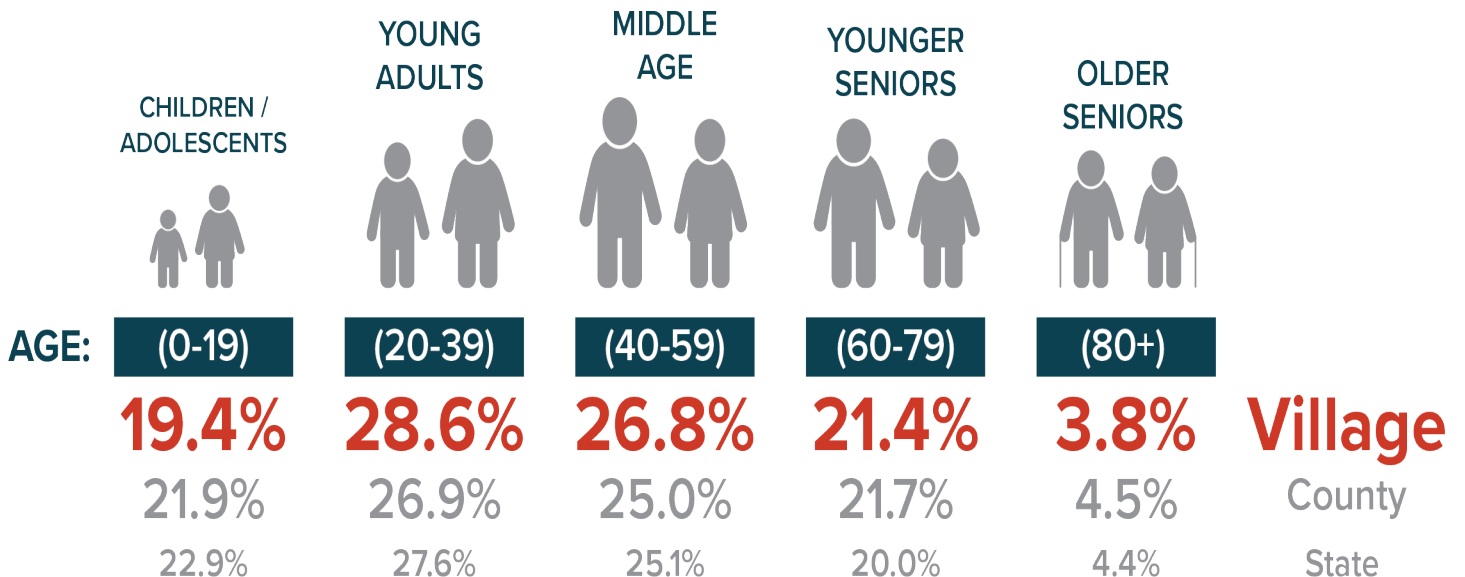
**In 2000 the median age was 34.8 years.**

**In 2010 the median age was 38.2 years.**

**The 2022 median age estimate is 41.9 years.**

Source: 2000 DEC Summary File 1 and 2010 DEC Summary File 1 from the United States Census Bureau and Esri.

### 2022 Age Distribution by Cohort for the Village of Valley Falls, Rensselaer County and New York State



Source: Esri.

# Socio-Demographics (CONT.)

## Household Size and Housing Units

With a 2022 estimated average household size of 2.78 people, households appear to be getting smaller since 1990 when the average household size was 2.93 people. This combined with the lower concentration of the children / adolescents age cohort in 2022, may indicate a declining amount of families with children in the Village.

## Housing Tenure

Housing tenure refers to whether a housing unit is owner or renter occupied. Within the Village it is estimated that the majority of housing units are owner-occupied at 74%, a percentage that is greater than that of the County (54%) and the State (48%). Estimated renter occupied units comprise 14% of the total housing units. The remaining housing units are vacant, at an estimated 13% of the total. According to the 2021 American Community Survey Vacancy Status for Valley Falls, there are an estimated 20 vacant units, of which 5 are classified as for sale only and 20 are classified as other vacant. Also notable, Valley Falls is estimated to have no units for rent.

## Age and Value of Housing Stock

The Village of Valley Falls has an older housing stock, with an estimated 61% of the housing units built in 1939 or earlier, far less than the County where only 33% of the housing units fall into this category. Still housing value data shows a higher median home value, at an estimated \$275,000 than the County at an estimated \$244,082. Similarly, the median gross rent for renter households in Valley Falls is estimated at \$1,092 per month, higher than the \$1,046 per month estimated for the County.<sup>1</sup>

## Household Income

Despite higher median home value and median gross rent in Valley Falls than in Rensselaer County, the 2022 median household income in the Village was \$74,522, which is less than the County's \$77,146 median household income. Household income distribution for 2022 shows that the Village has higher percentages of middle to upper-middle income households and lower percentages of low income and high income households.

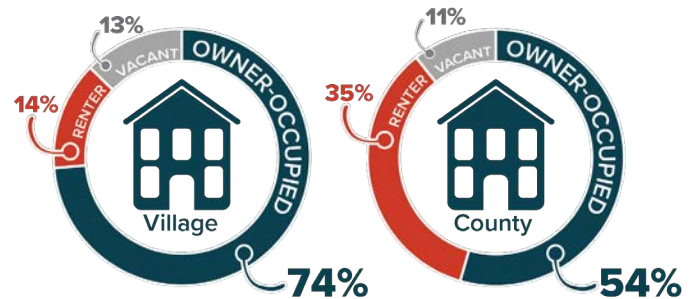
<sup>1</sup> Esri.

## Village of Valley Falls Average Household Size



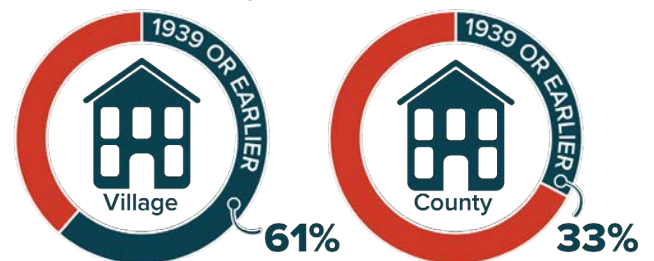
Sources: Capital District Regional Planning Commission Community Fact Sheets (sourcing 1990 Census data), 2000 DEC Summary File 1 and 2010 DEC Summary File 1 from the United States Census Bureau and Esri.

## 2022 Housing Tenure for the Village of Valley Falls and Rensselaer County



Source: Esri.

## 2022 Housing Year Built for the Village of Valley Falls and Rensselaer County



Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates from the United States Census Bureau.

## 2022 Median Household Income for the Village of Valley Falls and Rensselaer County



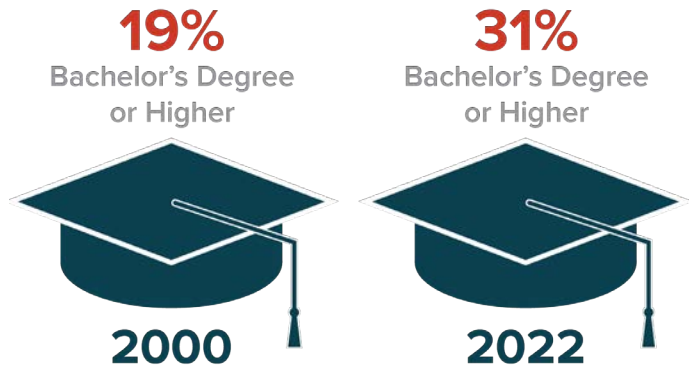
Source: Esri.



### Village of Valley Falls Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Older

#### Educational Attainment

The 2022 estimated level of educational attainment for the population 25 year and older in the Village of Valley Falls shows the large majority (98%) has at least a high school diploma or equivalent. Additionally, the Village had a smaller percentage of the population with less than a high school education than in the County (7%) or the State (11%). With higher percentages of the population with an associate’s degree, some college, a high school diploma or equivalent, the Village’s estimated 31% of the population with a bachelor’s degree or higher was lower than in the County (35%) or the State (40%). Still, Census data shows that the percentage of the Village’s population with a bachelor’s degree or higher has grown since it was recorded in 2000.



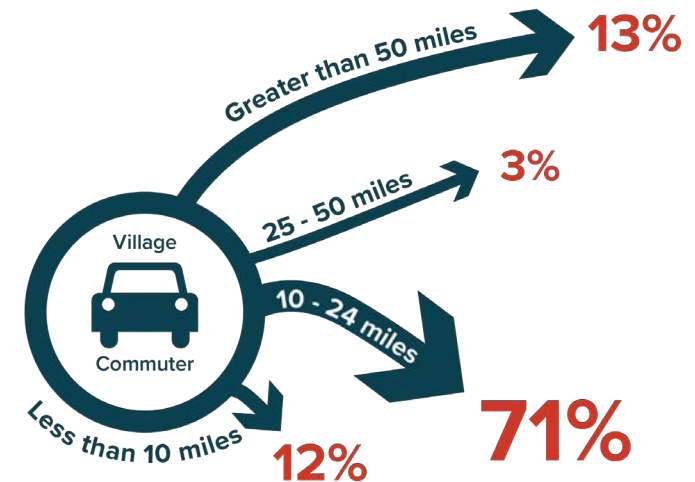
Sources: 2000 DEC Summary File 3 from the United States Census Bureau and Esri.

#### Commute Distance

It is estimated that, in 2019, all of the employed residents in the Village of Valley Falls commuted outside of the Village to work. Of these commuters, 83% travel less than 25 miles to work.<sup>2</sup> The primary means of transportation for workers 16 years and older was by car, truck or van; it is estimated that 81% of workers drove one of these vehicles to work alone in 2021. In addition to driving alone, an estimated 8% workers carpooled in a car, truck or van. Another consideration for means of transportation is working from home. In 2021, work from home was the second largest means of transportation at an estimated 9%; with all residents commuting elsewhere for employment this may be an important consideration for the Village.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the residents that commute outside the Village to work, there are a small number of workers that commute into the Village to work. These 11 workers live outside of the Village, potentially reflecting specialized skills needed for available employment positions.

### 2019 Commuting Distance for Village of Valley Falls Residents



Source: Census OnTheMap

<sup>2</sup> Census OnTheMap.

<sup>3</sup> Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates from the United States Census Bureau.

## Land Use

Identification of existing land uses provides information that is essential to community planning. Land uses help demonstrate how the area functions and what development opportunities are compatible with the surrounding area. To complete this analysis for the Valley Falls BOA, parcel data was reviewed using Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping and the New York State property classification system.

### Residential

The majority of the Valley Falls BOA is residential land. Out of 161 parcels, 81% are used for residential purposes. Over 90% of these parcels are less than an acre, but range from approximately 5.4-acres to 0.1-acres. Due to the relatively small size of these residential parcels, they account for only 56% of the total 136-acre land area.

The largest type of residential land use is single-family residences, which comprise 60% of the total land uses. These parcels are located throughout the BOA, on both sides of the Hoosic River. Two-family residences are the second most common type of residential land use and account for 12% of the total land uses. These residences are mostly located along State Street and Poplar Avenue, but also include two residences north of the Hoosic River. Three-family residences consist of less than 2% of the total land uses and include two parcels on State Street and one parcel on Edward Street.

**Understanding land use patterns is important when determining whether a proposed project is compatible with the existing community fabric and strategies to promote compatible growth. The New York State Office of Real Property Services uses nine categories to classify land based on the primary use of each property.**

Other types of residential land uses include multi-purpose or multi-structure residential lands and residences with incidental commercial uses. The residences with incidental commercial uses have been partially converted or adapted for commercial use. These parcels include the former Church property on Emily Street and the southern corner of State Street and Poplar Avenue.

Apartment buildings are also present within the BOA, with three apartment buildings on State Street and one apartment building on Poplar Avenue. Although the New York State property class code for these parcels is commercial, they have been included as part of the residential land uses because they provide housing.

### Key Findings

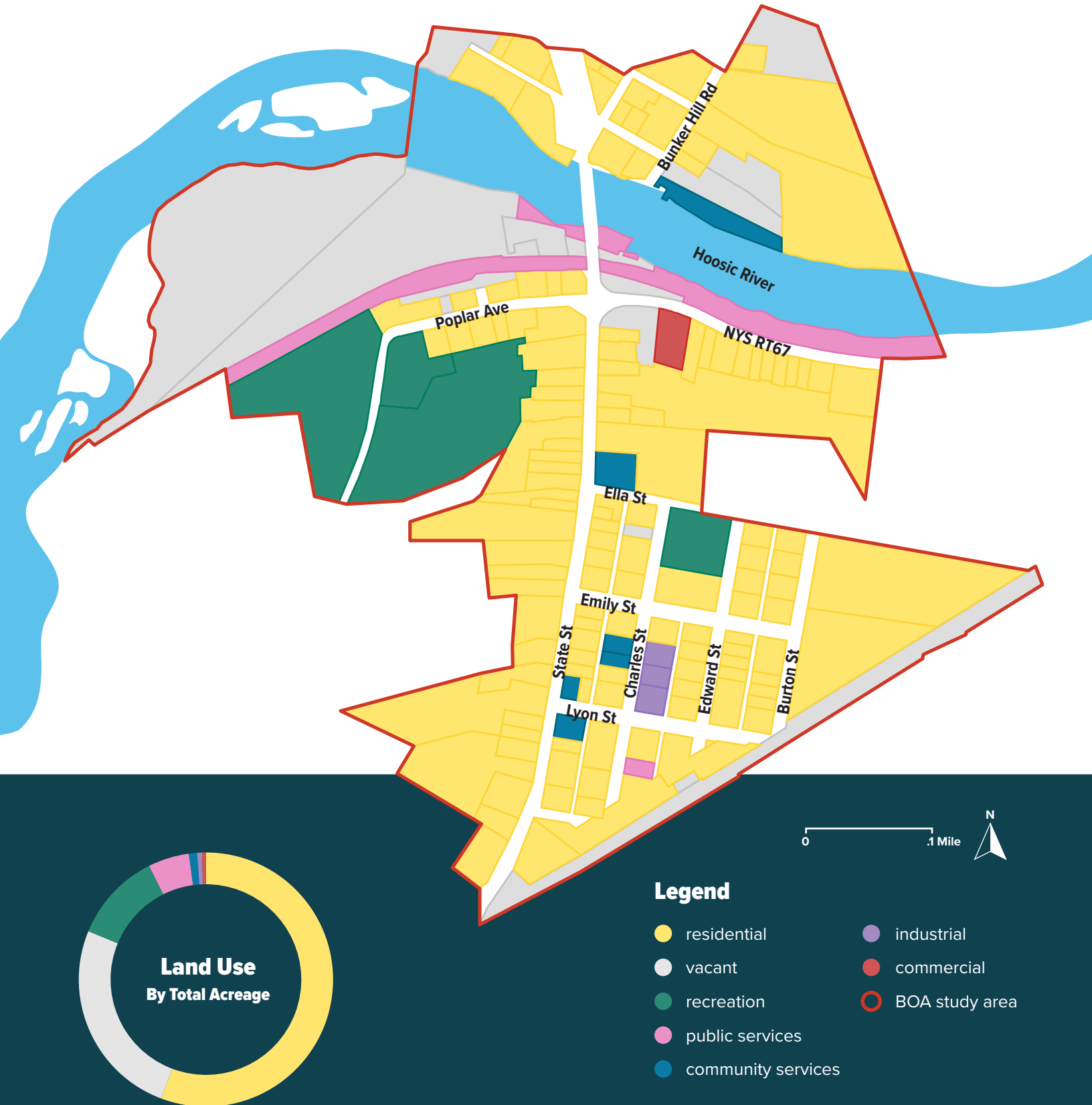
- ① **The majority of the parcels in the BOA are used as single or two-family residences.**
- ② **With 18% of the total land area in the BOA, the vacant industrial land at former Thompson Mill site is key to the revitalization of the community.**

With 73% of the total land parcels, these two residential land uses characterize the BOA.

- ③ **Although commercial and industrial uses are minimal, the community and recreational facilities within the BOA land uses support a village atmosphere.**

The land uses reflect a shift from traditional goods and services of a village to community services and recreation of a BOA.

MAP 3.1. Land Use in the Historic Valley Falls BOA



## Land Use (CONT.)

### Vacant

Vacant land uses cover 25% of the 136-acre BOA, making it the second largest land use category. Consisting of only 13 parcels of land, the majority of these vacant land uses are within the 24-acre former Thompson Mill site. Other large vacant parcels include several north of the Hoosic River that are classified as vacant residential land, one adjacent to the auto-body shop at the corner of State Street and State Route 67 that is classified as rural vacant land and one along the southeastern border of the BOA that was a former railroad line and is now classified as rural vacant land.

### Recreation + Entertainment

Four parcels in the BOA are classified as a recreation and entertainment land uses, including two athletic fields, a playground and a social organization, for a total of 15.5-acres of land. The two largest parcels comprise the Chapko-Lewis Stadium Facility Field at 229 Poplar Avenue and Powder Mill Road, with approximately 12-acres combined. The other recreation and entertainment land uses include the Village of Valley Falls Playground on Ella Street and the VFW Post 1938 at 242 Poplar Avenue.

### Community + Public Services

Community and public services land uses are located on approximately 6% of the total BOA parcels, with five parcels dedicated to community service and four parcels dedicated to public service. Community service land uses cover 1.4-acres of land, which supports the Village's Community Hall and the former Fire House located along Charles Street as well as the Valley Falls Free Library and the Valley Falls United Methodist Church located along State Street. Also included as a community service land use is the U.S. Post Office located along State Street. Although the New York State property class code for this parcel indicates it is a multi-use commercial building, it has been included because the primary use is community facility.

Public service land uses cover a total of 71-acres, the largest of which is a 5.4-acre parcel classified as a railroad. This railroad parcel spans the width of the BOA, paralleling the Hoosic River before shifting south of the former Thompson Mill site. Other public service land uses include those associated with telephone services and the hydroelectric power facility located on the Hoosic River.

### Industrial

The only industrial property in the BOA consists of three parcels located on Charles Street in the historic Union Free School building. This 0.8-acre property houses the Stephen Bader Company, which manufactures grinding and polishing machines.

### Commercial

The only commercial property in the BOA is an auto-body repair shop on the southern side of State Route 67 near the intersection with State Street. This 0.7-acre parcel is home to Valley Falls Auto Repair.

## Valley Falls BOA Land Use By Parcels and By Acreage

Land Use	Total Parcels	Percentage of Total Parcels	Total Acreage	Percentage of Total Acreage
<b>Residential</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>75.6</b>	<b>56%</b>
Single-Family	97	60%	53.2	39%
Two-Family	20	12%	7.3	5%
Three-Family	3	2%	2.4	2%
Multi-Purpose / Multi-Structure	5	3%	9.5	7%
Residence with Commercial	2	1%	1.5	1%
Apartment	4	2%	1.6	1%
<b>Vacant</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>34.5</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Recreation + Entertainment</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Public Services</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Community Service</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Industrial</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>Commercial</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>135.6</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Valley Falls BOA Ownership By Parcels and By Acreage

Ownership	Total Parcels	Percentage of Total Parcels	Total Acreage	Percentage of Total Acreage
<b>Private</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>96%</b>	<b>109.8</b>	<b>81%</b>
Private	143	93%	87.6	65%
Quasi-Public	11	7%	22.3	16%
<b>Public</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>135.6</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Rensselaer County Parcel Data.

## Zoning + Land Ownership

Zoning and land ownership are important factors in assessing development opportunities. Zoning regulations outline what is allowed within an area, while land ownership details who has control over a property. For the development of public facilities, such as a public park, public ownership is an important factor in developing an accessible space for the community.

### Village Zoning

Currently, the Village does not have zoning regulations or a comprehensive plan to govern and regulate development within the BOA. To address this gap, in 2021 the Village adopted temporary restrictions that only allow for the development of single-family residential dwellings. This moratorium on development is limited to three years and allows the Village time to adopt planning and zoning regulations.

### Town Zoning

One of the BOA parcels that comprise the former Thompson Mill site is located just outside the Village of Valley Falls. The parcel is in the western portion of the site along the bend of the Hoosic River in the Town of Pittstown, where zoning regulations are in effect. This vacant industrial land is within the Town's Residential Agricultural (RA) District. Uses within this district are predominantly open spaces with low density residential. Parks are allowed as a Special Use Permit in the RA District.

### Private Ownership

Most of the BOA is privately owned, with 81% of the total land area and 96% of the total parcels under private ownership. Of these private owners, 75% have mailing addresses in the Village of Valley Falls.

**Property ownership influences the use of land within the Village of Valley Falls BOA and can affect how the public interacts with the community and its assets. Ownership patterns can also impact the type, location, and potential for future development.**

Within this privately-owned land are several properties that have quasi-public functions. This includes community facilities such as the Valley Falls Free Library, the Valley Falls United Methodist Church and Church Parsonage, the VFW Post and the Chapko-Lewis Stadium Facility Field, which are each tax-exempt properties. The U.S. Post Office is located on privately owned land as well, although this property is not a tax-exempt.

Also part of the privately owned land in the BOA are the Verizon telephone facility, the Valley Falls Associates, LP hydro-electric facility and the CSX railroad.

### Public Ownership

The only public owner in the BOA include is the Village of Valley Falls. The properties owned by the Village include the four parcels of land that comprise the 24-acre former Thompson Mill site. Other parcels owned by the Village include the Village Playground, the Community Hall and the former Fire Hall.

### Key Findings

#### ① Zoning regulations are needed to address development in the BOA.

Although the Village has put a moratorium in place to address this gap, a more long-term solution is needed.

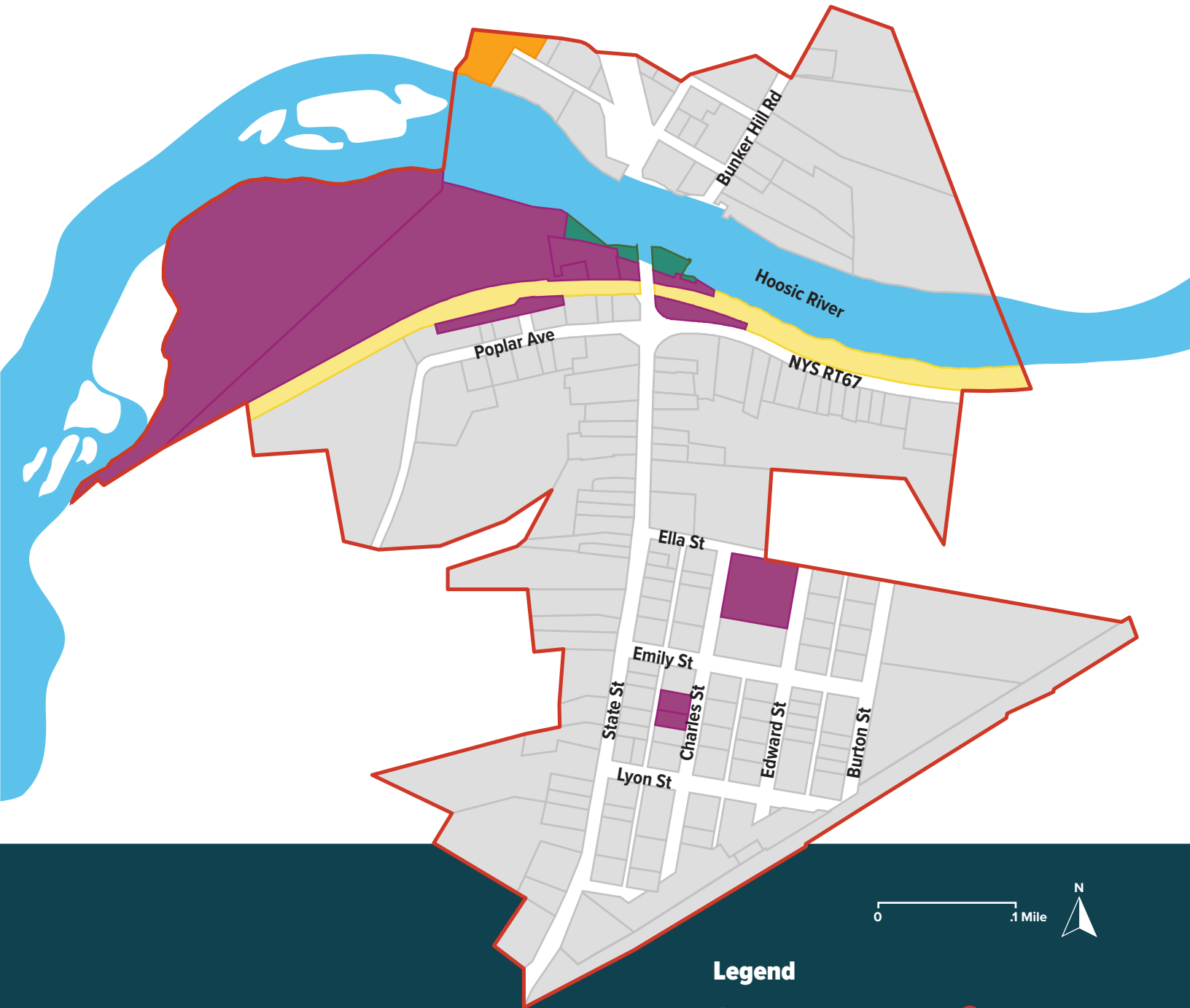
#### ② Most of the BOA is owned by local residents.

Although the BOA is primarily privately-owned, most of these owners are local members of the community.

#### ③ The Village is the only public owner in the BOA.

The Village's ownership of the former Thompson Mill site provides a substantial amount of publicly-owned land in the BOA.

MAP 3.2. Land Ownership in the Historic Valley Falls BOA



**Legend**

- Village of Valley Falls
- Rensselaer County
- Railroad
- Hydro Electric Facility
- Privately Owned
- BOA study area

## Parks + Open Space

An important factor in providing a high quality of life in a community is the ability to access parks and open space. These facilities provide opportunities for recreation and healthy living as well as contribute to the identity of the community and support economic development. In the Valley Falls BOA there are two parks facilities that provide 14 acres of land area as well as a Hoosic River access area on the northern riverbank and connections to recreational trails.

### Chapko-Lewis Stadium Facility Field

The Chapko-Lewis Stadium Facility Field is located in the Village of Valley Falls on two parcels of land that are divided by Powder Mill Road: 229 Poplar Avenue and the parcel south of 242 Poplar Avenue. These parcels comprise a 12.6-acre site that has a total of six fields to support its baseball and softball programs, as well as a snack bar with bathrooms for participants and guests and a gravel parking area. The fields border the CSX railroad tracks and are proximate to the Valley Falls Wastewater Treatment Plant and the former Thompson Mill.

The Chapko-Lewis Stadium Facility Field is owned by the Hoosic Valley Athletic Association, a non-profit organization which offers youth athletic programs including baseball, softball, soccer, volleyball and basketball. The land for the field was donated to the organization in 1977 by Alex Chapko and again in 1988 by the family Chapko family. In 1990, the facility was renamed the Chapko-Lewis Stadium in tribute to Al Lewis for his contributions to build and maintain Chapko Stadium. This important recreation asset is recognized as a popular Valley Falls attraction that draws people to the community.

### Hoosic River Take-out Access Area

A public waterfront access area is located on the northern bank of the Hoosic River at the terminus of the Bunker Hill Road right-of-way. This grassy area provides parking for three or four vehicles and is identified by a James Thompson Hydroelectric Project sign. The sign details that the access area is for canoes and car-top boats only and warns to proceed with caution.

According to the Hoosic River Watershed Association, which provides a reference map and recreation guide to the Hoosic River Watershed, the access is for take-out only. The guide describes the stretch of river between the Valley Falls dam and the next impediment downstream as characterized by remnant dams, rapids and large rocks that are only safely paddled by expert floaters.

### Valley Falls Playground

Located along Ella Street, between Charles Street and Edward Street, is the Valley Falls Playground. This Village-owned park is a 1.5-acre facility that provides playground equipment and a basketball court along Edward Street in the southeast corner. Home to the Town of Pittstown's only public playground, the community has been working to enhance park offerings. In 2022, a \$10,000 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant from the Town of Pittstown was used to purchase new benches, picnic tables, bases for a field, resealing and striping of the basketball court, new signs and the construction of a 20x30 covered pavilion. Future improvements include upgrading the approximately 20 year old playground equipment, addressing accessibility, improving parking, and adding a new walking trail with exercise stations.



*Barn quilt public art installation at the Valley Falls playground.*



MAP 3.3. Parks + Open Space in the Valley Falls BOA



**Parks and open space play a major role in economic development and contribute to a strong, healthy community.**

**Legend**

- ballfields
- public park and playground
- BOA study area

## Parks + Open Space (CONT.)

### Upper Hudson Wine Trail

State Route 67, through the Valley Falls BOA is part of the Upper Hudson Wine Trail. A newer trail, it includes 12 wineries that are spread throughout the region.<sup>1</sup> Signage for the Wine Trail is located on State Route 67 traveling west before crossing the bridge at the Hoosic River.

### Snowmobile Trails

A snowmobile trail of the Rensselaer County SnowRiders runs through the Valley Falls BOA. The snowmobile club maintains trails in the towns of Pittstown and Schaghticoke. Signage for a snowmobile trail can be seen on either side of the State Route 67 bridge.

### Regional Recreation Destinations

Nearby regional recreation destinations include the Tomhannock Reservoir and Pittstown State Forest, both of which are in the Town of Pittstown south of the Valley Falls BOA. The Tomhannock Reservoir has a variety of fishing opportunities and is most known for its abundant walleye population. Shoreline access points are available along Reservoir Road. Because the Tomhannock Reservoir is the public water supply, swimming and boating are not permitted. The Pittstown State Forest expands south into the Town of Grafton, covering 1,167-acres. The forest features several miles of trails maintained for mountain biking. Other activities include hiking, primitive camping, hunting and trapping, snowmobiling and wildlife viewing. In addition, the forest is used for timber production, watershed protection and wildlife habitat.

<sup>1</sup> [www.discoverupstateny.com](http://www.discoverupstateny.com)



### Key Findings

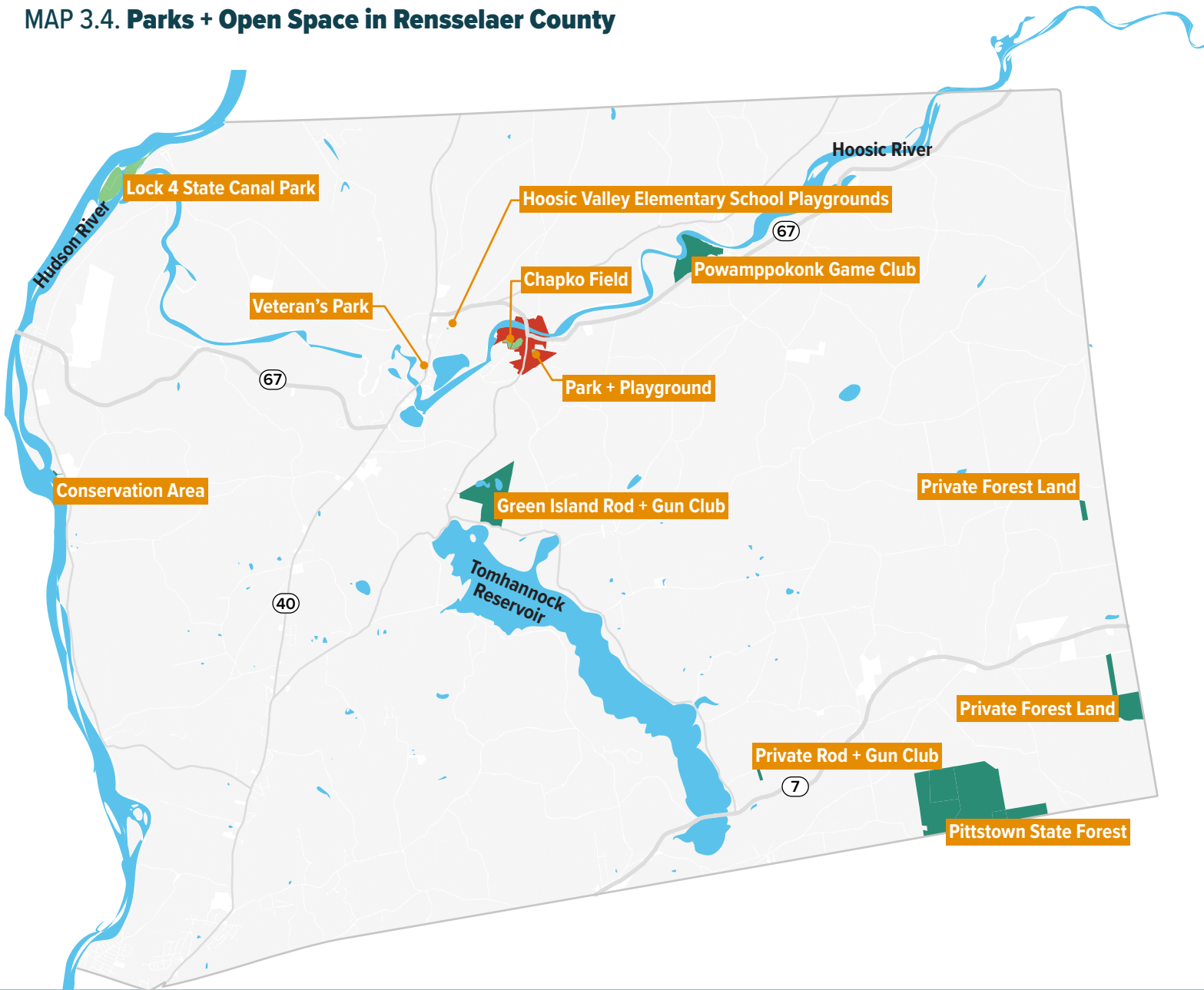
#### 1 The Village is home to two recreation destinations.

The Chapko-Lewis Stadium Facility Field and the Valley Falls Playground bring residents of the Town and the surrounding area into the Village to serve the needs of the community.

#### 2 Access to the Hoosic River is limited.

A major feature of the BOA is the Hoosic River, yet access is only provided at a small take-out area on the northern riverbank.

MAP 3.4. Parks + Open Space in Rensselaer County



**Legend**

- recreation
- forested area, conservation area, or public parks
- BOA study area

## Historic Resources

Historic resources are the buildings, sites, districts, areas or structures within a community that are significant in a local, state or national context. The historic resources in the Valley Falls BOA include the Valley Falls Historic District, which was listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places in 2018 as well as two historic markers at the Valley Falls Free Library.

### Valley Falls Historic District

Utilizing a 2016 Preserve New York Grant from the Preservation League of New York State, the Village of Valley Falls completed a National Register of Historic Places nomination to provide property owners with access to state and federal tax credits. In 2018, the Valley Falls Historic District was listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, recognizing the district's historic significance. Although the listing does not place restrictions on designated properties, it does provide property owners access to financial incentives and enables protection from government actions. For properties in the Valley Falls Historic District there is an opportunity to utilize state and federal tax credits for rehabilitation of these historic properties.

Although these incentives have been available to property owners since the district was listed, there is said to be only a limited number of residents that have taken advantage of this opportunity. With additional education regarding the resources available, there is a greater potential for these incentives to have an impact on the preservation and maintenance of historic buildings in the Village.

**The designation of the Valley Falls Historic District on the National Register provides financial advantages to the contributing buildings including access to state and federal tax credits for private owners and access to state grants for municipal and nonprofit owners.**

The Valley Falls Historic District encompasses most of the BOA and a majority of the Village parcels. Concentrations of historic features within the district are located on both the Schaghticoke and Pittstown sides of the Hoosic River, connected by the State Street corridor. With 154 buildings and three objects contributing to its significance, the built form of the Historic District characterizes the BOA and the Village of Valley Falls as a whole.

The nomination for the Historic District collected detailed information about the Village history and its built form. The District is described as an excellent representation of a historic mill hamlet, with a period of significance from circa 1813 to 1940. Most of the district buildings are residential, with a few building constructed as commercial as well as a two churches, a school and a library. Also part of the Historic District are the ruins of the Thompson Mill, which connects to the industrial heritage of the Village. The architectural styles that can be seen in the district are vernacular examples of styles that were popular during this period such as Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Stick, Queen Anne, Victorian, and Craftsman.

### Key Findings

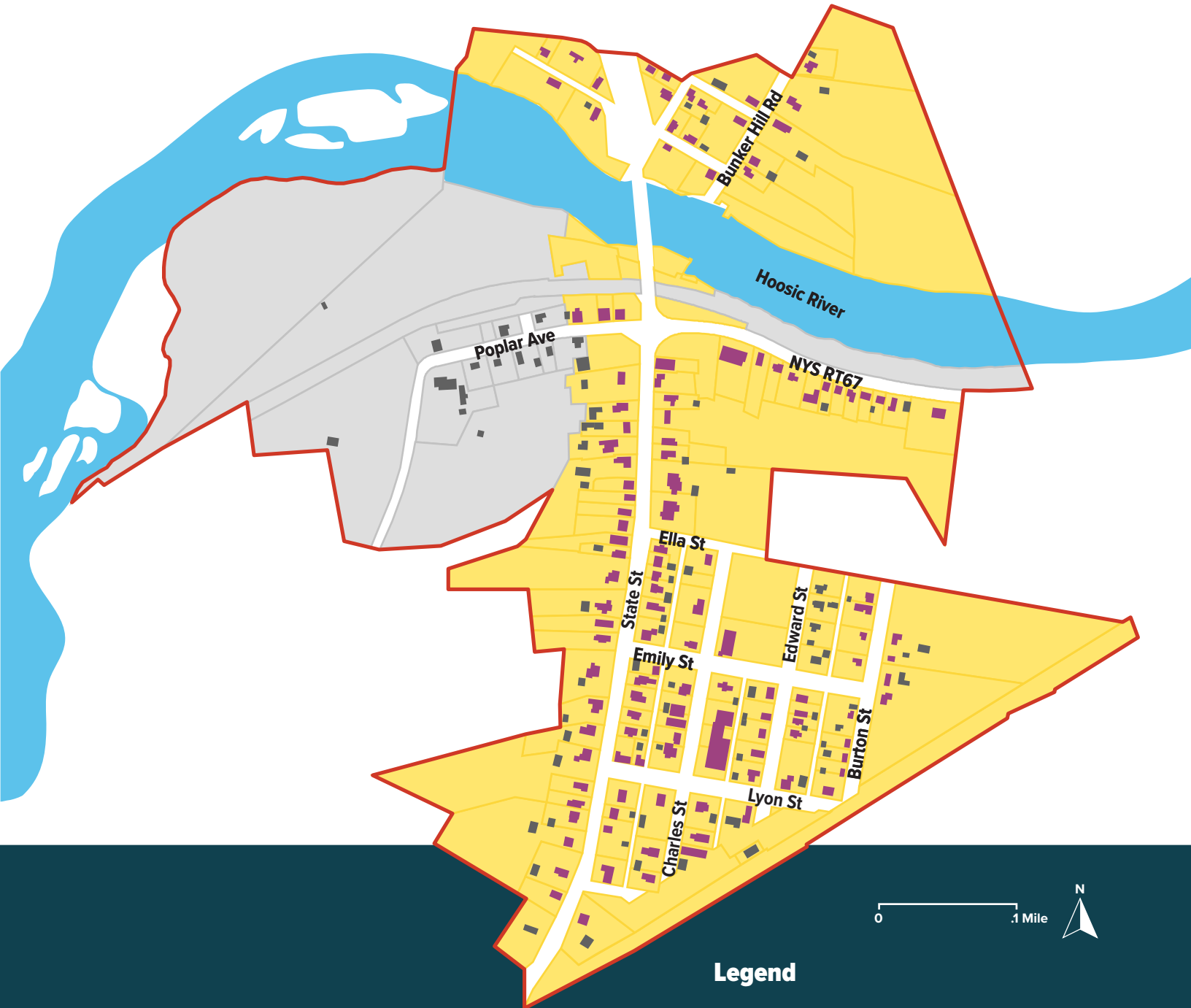
#### ① Contributing historic buildings can be seen throughout the BOA.

With 154 historically significant buildings lining each of the BOA streetscapes as well as a collection of historic objects and markers, the character of Valley Falls is distinctly historic.

#### ② Listing on the State and National Register of Historic Places affords the majority of BOA property owners access to financial incentives.

Designation of the district provides a significant incentive to maintain and enhance the historic buildings in the BOA.

MAP 3.5. **Historic Resources in the Valley Falls BOA**



**Historic resources are an essential component of a healthy local economy, as they help strengthen and sustain a community's identity.**

**Legend**

- Historic District
- building on National Register
- building footprint
- BOA study area

## Historic Resources (CONT.)

### Historical Markers

Located on the site of the Valley Falls Free Library are two historic markers:

- **Julia Blanche S. Clum:** Dated 1867 to 1919, Julia Blanche S. Clum is noted as a leader for women's suffrage and one of the founders of the Rensselaer County's first Political Equality Club. It was through the efforts of the Political Equality Club that the Valley Falls Free Library Association was formed.
- **Valley Falls WWI & WWII Memorial:** On the corner of State Street and Lyon Street a monument holds a plaque honoring those who served in WWI and a plaque honoring those who served in WWII. The WWI plaque was dedicated in 1920 and originally sat near the corner of State Street and State Route 67.



*Julia Blanche S. Clum Historic Marker*



*Craftsman Features at 34 State Street*



*Period Features at 33 State Street*



*Greek Revival Features at 39 State Street*

## Historic Residential Properties Characterize Valley Falls



*Mansard Roof at 26 State Street*



*Period Features at 5 Charles Street*



*Greek Revival Features at 35 State Street*



*Greek Revival Features at 115 Bunker Hill Road*  
Photo by Jessie A. Ravage, 2017



*Italianate Features at 28 State Street*



*Craftsman Features at 14 State Street*

## Archaeological Areas

Archaeological resources are material remains that provide important information about past human activity. These resources have the potential to significantly predate the historic built environment records to detail a broader picture of early peoples and places. A review of the online mapping provided by the New York State Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS), shows a buffer area around recorded archaeological resources that encompasses the Valley Falls BOA. To further address the archaeological sensitivity of specific areas within the BOA, several reports on archaeological potential have been completed, including one for the former Thompson Mill site and two for the Village Waste Water Collection and Treatment Project.

### Archaeological Report for the Former Thompson Mill Site

As part of the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA), a Phase IA archaeological sensitivity assessment and archaeological monitoring was completed for the former Thompson Mill Site in 2019 by Landmark Archaeology, Inc. The archaeological sensitivity assessment information indicated that the parcel is considered high potential for the presence of historic and prehistoric archaeological sites. Among the assessment findings was the identification of five archaeological sites within one mile of the project area as recorded by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). These sites include a prehistoric site and a historic site within the former Thompson Mill site. The archaeological monitoring completed for the site revealed two previously undocumented archaeological sites, including an early 20<sup>th</sup> century historic dump and the structural remains of the Thompson Mill. Additionally, buried paleosol soils, which are defined by the USGS as ancient soils formed in the past, were found in three of the twelve test pits monitored. Although no artifacts were found in these soils, there is potential to yield materials in other locations.

The conclusion of the Phase IA assessment and monitoring is that a Phase IB investigation appears warranted for the parcel should future development require earth moving including tree removal.

### Archaeological Reports for the Waste Water Collection and Treatment Project

To construct a waste water treatment facility and install sewer lines in the Village of Valley Falls, a report on the archaeological potential and a report of field reconnaissance was completed in 1994 and 1995, respectively. Based on the findings of the archaeological potential report, the area was considered highly sensitive to the presence of prehistoric archaeological material and historic material associated with nearby historic structures. Prehistoric sensitivity factors included the location on the Hoosic River that suggests a higher than average probability of occupation or use by Native Americans who may have inhabited the area and that the prehistoric archaeological sites reported in the vicinity of Valley Falls are located in areas with similar terrain to the Village.<sup>1</sup>

Following the archaeological potential assessment, two previously undocumented archaeological sites were

<sup>1</sup> Hartgen Archaeological Associates, Inc., Wastewater Collection and Treatment Project, Prepared for Lamont, 1994, 6.

### Key Findings

- ① **The Valley Falls BOA, located along the Hoosic River, is in an area that has a high potential for historic and archaeological sites.**

With its location along an important waterway and the presence of surrounding archaeological sites, there is potential for additional archaeological resources.

- ② **Archaeological reports have identified include three historic and one prehistoric site within the BOA.**

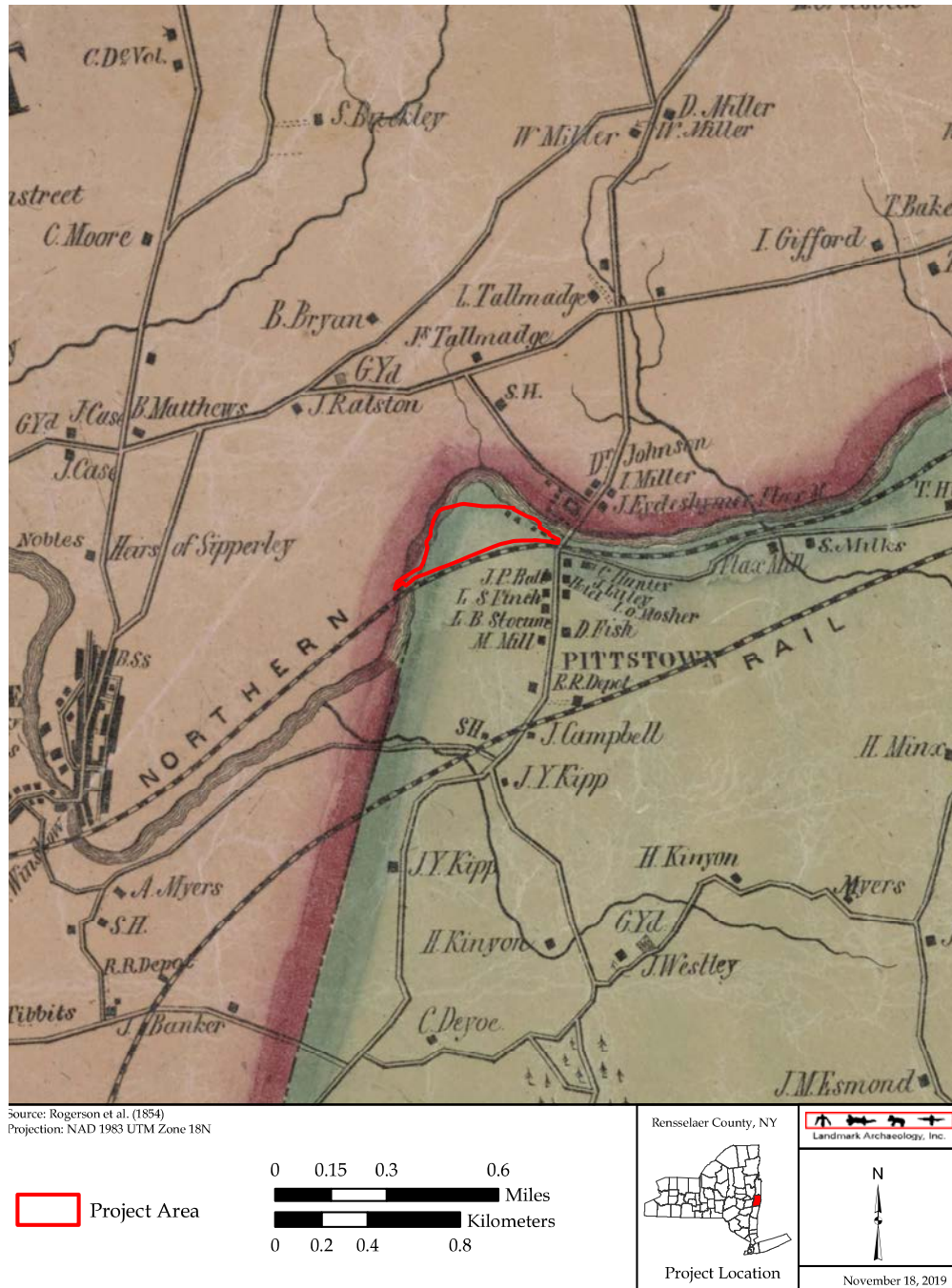
Archaeological field investigation findings have been limited to one prehistoric site related to tool manufacturing, two historic sites related to household trash and one historic site related to the structural remains of the historic mill.



identified including a prehistoric site and a historic site. The prehistoric materials found were debitage or waste flakes of chert and quartzite produced during tool manufacturing or maintenance as well as cobbles with wear patterns indicating use as hammerstones. The historic materials found that appeared to date from the early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century including predominantly household trash deposits of ceramics and kaolin smoking pipe fragments. The conclusion of the report indicated that, except for an undetermined outfall route, the treatment plant and sewer lines were to be located in areas previously disturbed and will avoid impacting archaeologically sensitive area.

### Archaeological Report for the State Route 67 Bridge Project

According to the Valley Falls Waste Water Collection and Treatment Project Report for Archaeological Potential, in 1985 and 1986 a cultural resource survey was completed for the proposed relocation of the State Route 67 bridge. During the initial survey only miscellaneous historic materials were found. Additional testing for several project alternatives found materials associated with early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century domestic sites. No evidence of prehistoric sites were found.



The Phase IA archaeological sensitivity assessment report for the former Thompson Mill site included a review of historical maps, overlaying the outline on the study area. The map from 1854 shows the northern point of the shoreline in this area extending further into the Hoosic River than the current shoreline.

# Transportation

Transportation systems are essential components of a thriving community, as they affect how residents and visitors move throughout an area. In the Valley Falls BOA, these systems include the street network and the railroad, and have the potential to connect to a regional network of trails.

## Street & Sidewalk Network

The primary transportation system that supports circulation within the Valley Falls BOA is the street network. This network includes a minor arterial and a minor collector as well as a series of local streets, most of which are organized in a grid pattern.

### State Route 67

Within the BOA, State Route 67 serves as a minor arterial. This street connects west to the Village of Schaghticoke and the City of Mechanicville and east to the state line between New York and Vermont. New York State Department of Transportation provides annual average daily traffic (AADT) data for State Route 67 that shows between State Route 40 in Schaghticoke and State Street in Valley Falls, the AADT was 8,247 vehicles, 6% of which were trucks. This traffic volume reduces in the section from State Street to County Route 111 in Johnsonville where the AADT was 4,096, 7% of which were trucks. Within both of these stretches of State Route 67, there is a village speed limit that reduces from 55 mph to 35 mph.

The central feature of State Route 67 in the Valley Falls BOA is the bridge over the Hoosic River. The State Route 67 bridge provides the only connection between the north and south sides of the river within the Village of Valley Falls. It was constructed to pass over the CSX railroad track south of the river and an adjusted alignment of North Street north of the river. Prior to 1939, the bridge was at-grade and had an alignment that connected to Bunker Hill Road.

### State Street

State Street, also known as Rensselaer County 117, serves as a minor collector in the BOA. This street connects north to State Route 67 before crossing the Hoosic River and south to Melrose Valley Falls Road at the village border. Signage along State Street posts the village speed limit of 35 mph.

A key feature of State Street is that it collects traffic from all the local streets in the BOA that are south of the Hoosic River. At State Route 67 near Poplar Avenue, State Street ends and connects with regional traffic before crossing the Hoosic River, making this intersection an important node within the community.

## Key Findings

### ① State Street plays a primary role in the local transportation network.

With the entire residential neighborhood south of the Hoosic River connecting to State Street, this minor collector is critical to the movement of the community.

### ② The bridge and intersection with State Street are central features of the transportation network in the BOA.

These two features are where the community connects with regional transportation and interacts with the Hoosic River.

### ③ Trail development along the defunct railroad line would support a regional network of trails.

The former railroad line along the southern edge of the BOA is part of the Capital District Trails Plan's regional supporting trail network.

### ④ There are sidewalk repair needs along State Street and minor gaps within the BOA sidewalk system.

There are opportunities to improve the pedestrian environment within the BOA, including along State Street where most of the residential neighborhoods connect to the broader community.

MAP 3.6. Transportation Systems in the Valley Falls BOA



Traffic volume data obtained from the NYS DOT Traffic Data Viewer (2019)



**Legend**

- > 8,000 annual avg. daily traffic
- 4,000-8,000 annual avg. daily traffic
- sidewalk
- at-grade railroad crossing
- BOA study area

**Transportation networks and systems are essential components of a thriving community, as they affect how residents and visitors move throughout an area.**

# Transportation (CONT.)

## Local Streets

The majority of streets in the Valley Falls BOA are classified as local streets. These include Poplar Avenue, which becomes Powder Mill Road as it exits the BOA and loops back to State Street near the defunct railroad track, a small square of local roads in Schaghticoke and a small grid of local roads in Pittstown.

The local road grid in Pittstown is located east of State Street between Ella Street and Myron Street and features alleyways that provide access to the rear of the properties. The only block in this area that is not separated by an alleyway is home to the Village Playground and 12 Emily Street.

Also within the BOA is a right-of-way that is not currently in use along Poplar Avenue. The right-of-way, named Depot Street, connects north to the railroad tracks.

## Sidewalks

Most village streets have sidewalks on one or both sides of the right-of-way. Sidewalks along State Street serve as a key pedestrian circulation route within the BOA. The condition of these sidewalks is in need of improvement, with uneven surfaces on both sides of State Street causing a pedestrian safety hazard.

Areas where there are significant gaps in the sidewalk system include:

- The portions of Charles Street, Edward Street and Ella Street that surround the village playground and 12 Emily Street;
- The north side of State Route 67 that travels along the south side of the Hoosic River and the east side of the State Route 67 bridge as it crosses the Hoosic River;
- North Street, where it travels under the State Route 67 bridge;
- The west end of Poplar Avenue, and
- Powder Mill Road.

Improving conditions and filling gaps in the sidewalk system is key to a safe pedestrian environment. As stated by the Capital District's New Visions 2050 plan,

maintaining a system of sidewalks in good condition and that are in compliance with ADA regulations is vital for facilitating the efficient movement of people and access to places and opportunities.<sup>1</sup>

## Parking

Although there are no municipal parking lots within Valley Falls, there is street parking available. Several areas along State Street have unmarked paved parallel parking within the right-of-way.

## Trails

Although there are no existing trails within the Valley Falls BOA, there are opportunities identified for segments of a supporting trail network as part of the Capital District Trails Plan. One segment is a 30-mile off-road trail that follows the Hoosic River, which the plan identifies as the Mahican Trail. The concept for the trail utilizes the existing railroad line, where feasible; in Valley Falls, the trail would follow the defunct railroad along the southern edge of the BOA. If constructed, the trail segment would connect Valley Falls west to the villages of Schaghticoke and Stillwater and east to the village of Hoosic Falls and the Hoosic River Greenway. This trail concept ties to a much larger vision to expand the existing Mohican-Mohawk Trail in Massachusetts to a 100-mile trail from the Connecticut River to the Hudson River. The path for the trail reflects opportunities identified in 1992, when a group of Williams College students explored the historic connection between the Connecticut and Hudson valleys, following the Hoosic and Deerfield rivers.

Other trail segments identified in the Capital District Trails Plan are two conceptual plans that link to the regional trail system: the Uncle Sam link and the Tomhannock North Ridge Run. The Uncle Sam link concept is for an 8.8-mile off-road trail that would meet with the potential trail at the southwestern edge of Valley Falls and generally parallel Route 40, serving as a northern extension of the existing Uncle Sam Bikeway in the City of Troy. The Tomhannock North Ridge Run concept is for a 14-mile on-road bike route that would connect the Village near State Street and travel south along Melrose-Valley Falls Road, following the northern edge of the Tomhannock Reservoir.

<sup>1</sup> Capital District New Visions 2050, 35.

## Rail

One existing active railroad corridor traverses the BOA, the Pan Am Southern. This corridor is an east-west route between Mechanicville, NY and Ayer, MA, owned and operated by a joint venture of Norfolk Southern and Pan Am Railway (now CSXT). Within the BOA, this line follows the southern shoreline of the Hoosic River.

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) records indicate that up to six freight trains operate through Valley Falls per day at a maximum and average operating speed of 25 mph. There are no transit rail operations. This line has two private at-grade crossings and one railroad-under crossing in the Village of Valley Falls. The corridor has several at-, above-, and below-grade crossings within five miles of the BOA.

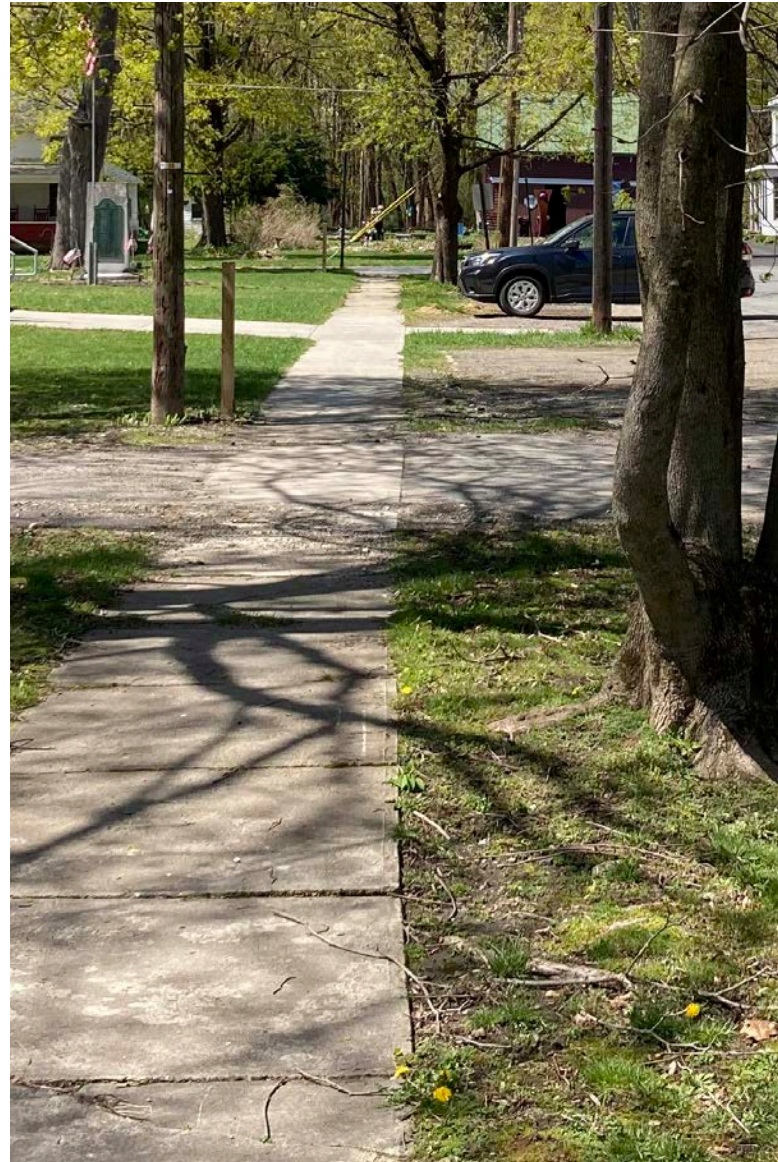
### *Railroad Crossing Safety*

Railroads emphasize safety, including in their interactions with the public, as a highest priority. In furtherance of the railroad's priority on safety, many railroads are publicly opposed to the establishment of any new grade crossings, and this position is supported by programs of the U.S. Department of Transportation and state agencies to eliminate grade crossings by constructing bridges or by diverting traffic to existing overhead, subgrade, or at-grade crossings.

In February 2024, a freight train derailment occurred on the CSX rail line in the BOA study area east of the Route 67 bridge over the Hoosic River in Valley Falls. Out of the 94 rail cars, 10 cars went off the tracks, two of the 10 cars carrying plastic pellets that were dumped into the Hoosic River. The cause of the derailment was determined to be a broken rail, which has since been repaired by CSX. Emergency crews responded to secure the area and begin recovery operations to re-rail the freight cars, remove the two cars that fell into the river, and recover the plastic pellets from the riverbank and downstream.

Prior to February 2024, the FRA database includes no reports of incidents at railroad-roadway crossings involving trains or other on-track railroad equipment and the public in the BOA over the past 25 years. Within five miles of the project area, there was one incident at the Fisherman's Lane crossing in Schaghticoke, NY,

where the terrain and visibility conditions are like those that exist within the study area. In 2014, a southbound tractor trailer vehicle failed to yield and entered the crossing where the vehicle was struck by an eastbound train, resulting in non-life threatening injuries to the driver and substantial damage to the vehicle. The roadway conditions during the incident were icy and the vehicle was traveling down grade, both of which may have contributed to the incident. The crossing had only passive warnings (crossbuck signs) at the time of the incident, but active warning devices (gates, bells, flashers) have been installed at the crossing since the incident occurred. For more information on the railroad, see Appendix C.



## Infrastructure

Local infrastructure supports essential functions of daily life for the community and its residents. A well-maintained infrastructure system can help to attract and retain businesses and lead to property value increases. In the Valley Falls BOA, the local infrastructure system includes public and private facilities.

### Public Infrastructure Facilities

#### Stormwater Sewers

Stormwater drainage within the Valley Falls BOA includes a combination of gutters and open channels. Gutters are located on the State Route 67 bridge, along the south side of the State Route 67 where it parallels the Hoosic River and at the corner of North Street and Valley Place. North of Ella Street, an open channel on the east side of State Street collects substantial amounts of runoff as it slopes toward the Hoosic River. This roadway is noted as in need of stormwater infrastructure upgrades. An area where the State Street drainage has been identified as an issue for neighboring properties is at Lyon Street, proximate to the Valley Falls Free Library.

#### Solid Waste Management

Curbside waste and recycling collection is provided for the Village of Valley Falls through the Eastern Rensselaer County Solid Waste Management Authority (ERCSWMA), a public benefits corporation established in 1989. In the Pittstown portion of Valley Falls, this includes five day collection by Casella Waste Management and monthly clean up days for other materials at the Town Garage. In the Schaghticoke portion of Valley Falls, this includes four day pick up by County Waste, Christmas tree collection



*Poor stormwater drainage along State Street impacts the Valley Falls Free Library.*

and monthly clean up days for other materials at the Town Highway Garage. Yard materials are collected as part of the monthly clean up days in both towns.

### Wastewater System + Treatment Plant

The Village of Valley Falls owns and operates a Waste Water Treatment Plant that is located at 243 Poplar Avenue and Powder Mill Road. The system is single pass sand filter and chlorine treatment facility with six open beds that is permitted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for 60,000 gallons per day.

The plant and sewer lines were constructed in 2004, connecting the Village to a system for the collection and treatment of wastewater. Prior to the development of the wastewater treatment plant, raw sewage was being dumped into the Hoosic River via old sewer lines. Using grant funds and municipal bonding, the Village was able to complete this \$2.1 million project to construct the Waste Water Treatment Plant and convert Village properties from septic to sewer to prevent the discharge of raw sewage into the Hoosic River.

Currently, the Waste Water Treatment Plant has reserve capacity. Recent issues relate to exceedances due to difficulties with the chlorine dosing system. Clogs in the system can lead to improper dosing based on unexpected drainage levels. Causes include “flushable” wipes and weed growth on the open beds. To address this issue the Village has completed maintenance on the metering system, and using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, begun a removal and refresh of the top of the sand filter beds. The weed growth is an ongoing problem that could be addressed with enclosures, but costs have been prohibitive.

Heavy rains during the summer of 2023 also caused the Waste Water Treatment Plant to exceed its licensed volume of 60,000 on a few occasions (rolling averages, however, did not exceed permit requirements). These exceedances can be exacerbated by residents illegally pumping basement ingress/stormwater into the sanitary system. These issues will likely intensify with climate change and the expected increase in the frequency and intensity of storms.

MAP 3.7. Infrastructure Systems in the Valley Falls BOA



**Key Findings**

- 1 In 2004, the Village made critical wastewater collection and treatment improvements.

With these improvements, the BOA properties have access to a Village sewer system. Although there are no major issues, continued maintenance at the treatment facility is necessary.

**Legend**

- hydroelectric dam
- bridge
- wastewater treatment plant
- open drainage channel
- BOA study area

# Infrastructure (CONT.)

## Private Infrastructure Facilities

### Hydroelectric Facility

Located along the Hoosic River under the State Route 67 bridge is the privately-owned hydroelectric power generation facility Valley Falls Hydro. The facility uses the raceway or mill race that powered the historic mills. In 1985, the raceway was altered to accommodate hydroelectric generation.

### Water

Property owners in the Valley Falls BOA rely on private water wells. According to the Rensselaer County website, County residents may receive assistance upon request regarding a variety of well water issues.

### Internet Connection

Access to high speed internet is a critical component of community infrastructure, as highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic. High speed internet is available in Valley Falls, for example Spectrum provides internet options with speeds ranging from 300 Mbps to 1 Gbps.





# Natural Resources

Natural resources are essential to shaping the health and well-being of a community, providing clean water and fresh air, as well as supporting wildlife habitats and recreational opportunities. Effective planning and development require an understanding of the location and quality of these resources. In the Valley Falls BOA, natural resources such as the Hoosic River, freshwater wetlands, flood hazard areas, soils, and topography are critical components. Protecting and enhancing these resources through revitalization efforts can help create a more sustainable and resilient community.

## Hoosic River

A primary feature of the BOA is the Hoosic River, which flows from east to west as it passes through the Village and under the State Route 67 bridge. The river spans 70-miles and crosses three states. Originating at the Cheshire Reservoir in Massachusetts, the Hoosic River winds north into Vermont and curves west through New York where it enters the Hudson River at Stillwater, NY. The River is part of the Hoosic River Watershed, which feeds the larger Upper Hudson River Watershed.

## State Assessment

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) utilizes Waterbody Segment Assessment Factsheets that are based on the 2021 Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology (CALM). As part of this factsheet, waterbodies are classified and assessed based on the best use the water is able to support. The segment of the Hoosic River that includes Valley Falls is identified as the lower main stem and runs from the mouth of the river to the Johnsonville Dam. It is classified as a class B waterbody, meaning that the best use is for primary and secondary contact recreation, and fishing. In 1998, this segment was listed as impaired due to PCB pollutants, but according to the draft 2020-2022 List of Impaired Waters, it has been unlisted due to flaws in the original analysis. Also identified on the factsheet was impairment to primary and secondary contact recreation due to unconfirmed pH pollutants, citing the Division of Water's Stream Monitoring and Assessment Section from 2012.

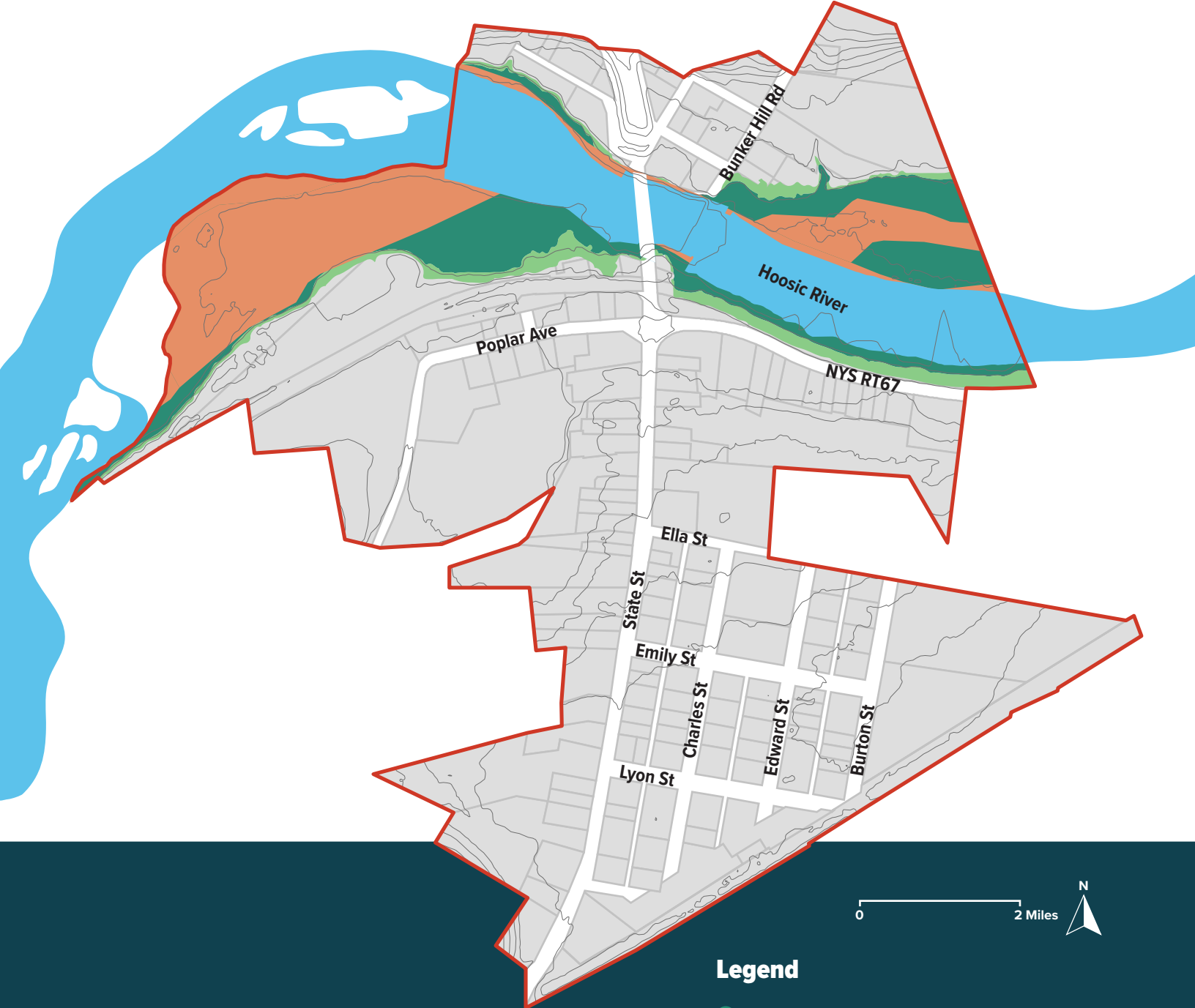
## Hoosic River Watershed Association Report Card

To supplement the NYSDEC assessment, the Hoosic River Watershed Association (HoorWA) conducts a Watershed Report Card each year to evaluate the water quality. The evaluation is based on the attributes of the small bottom-dwelling aquatic animals and the aquatic larval stages of insects to determine the water quality category. In 2023, HoorWA conducted sampling at Johnsonville and South River Road in Valley Falls and determined water quality was slightly impacted at both locations. In 2022, HoorWA assessed the Hoosic River at a station above Bridge Street in Johnsonville, NY and found it to be slightly impacted. Similarly, in 2021 a station just off River Road in Valley Falls, NY found to be slightly impacted. The slightly impacted water quality category identifies waterbodies that are altered from the pristine state. These waters are considered to be supportive of the waterbody's expected aquatic life, but may have limited ability to support fish propagation.

## Key Findings

- 1 The Thompson Mill site is within the floodway or the 100-year floodplain.**  
The location of this brownfield within a flood prone area is an important consideration for site remediation and redevelopment.
- 2 The Village of Valley Falls is suspended from the NFIP.**  
The Village is in need of a flood management ordinance as part of the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).
- 3 The Hoosic River is the primary natural feature of the BOA.**  
With the loss of industry, the river's focus has shifted to recognize its natural and recreational significance.
- 4 Topography.**  
Sustainable stormwater management could be considered to filter, slow, and absorb water and reduce erosion along the Hoosic River. Elevated areas may provide opportunities for scenic views of the Hoosic River Valley.

MAP 3.8. Natural Systems in the Valley Falls BOA



**Legend**

- 100-year floodplain
- 500-year floodplain
- wetland
- 10' contours
- BOA study area

## Natural Resources (CONT.)

### Fish & Wildlife

The ecosystem of the Hoosic River has provides habitats for fish and wildlife. With changes over the last century, it has been noted by the Hoosic River Watershed Association that native species, once lost, have begun to return. An example is the presence of bald eagles, which live and breed along the Hoosic River. Currently, there is an active bald eagle nest at the former Thompson Mill site. Additionally, the Hoosic River is noted by the NYSDEC as a wild brown and rainbow trout stream.

A concern for native species, among other harms, are invasive species within the Hoosic River. According to the Rensselaer Land Trust, boat pull-outs along the Hoosic River have become increasingly choked with water chestnuts that make it difficult to navigate.<sup>1</sup> To address this issue, the organization has organized community events to remove this invasive species.

### Tomhannock Reservoir Watershed

The Tomhannock Reservoir is located directly south of the Village of Valley Falls and provides drinking water for several municipalities in Rensselaer, Albany, and Saratoga Counties including Troy, Menands, Halfmoon, Brunswick, East Greenbush, North Greenbush, Poestenkill, Rensselaer, Schaghticoke and Waterford. Increased development within the Reservoir's 66 square mile watershed (42,240 acres) can negatively impact water quality in the Tomhannock Reservoir by increasing sediment and nutrient runoff. For example, the Reservoir has suffered harmful algal blooms in the last few years, illustrating the vulnerability of this resource.

The Rensselaer Land Trust (RLT) has an active New York State Department of Conservation grant for \$2.5 million to preserve and protect the lands in the Tomhannock Watershed. To date, the RLT has protected 120 acres in the watershed with an additional ten land owners considering conservation easements or the sale of land.

Additional efforts to improve water quality and protect drinking water in the Tomhannock Reservoir watershed include the Capital District Regional Planning Commission's update of the Tomhannock Reservoir Protection Plan in partnership with the City of Troy.

### Wetlands

#### National Wetland Inventory

In the Valley Falls BOA there are two wetlands that are classified and mapped by the National Wetlands Inventory as freshwater forested/shrub wetlands. These include an 11-acre wetland in the former Thompson Mill site and a 3-acre wetland north of the Hoosic River and west of Bunker Hill Road, extending into the Town of Schaghticoke. Also mapped on the National Wetlands Inventory is the Hoosic River, which is classified as a riverine, and the islands within the River, which is classified as freshwater forested/shrub wetlands. Although the National Wetlands Inventory is not a regulatory map, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) protects wetlands, irrespective of size. Under section 404 of the Clean Water Act, regulated wetlands require a federal permit for construction or fill activities from the USACE.

#### NYSDEC Wetlands

Due to the size of the wetlands within the BOA, these resources are not shown on the NYSDEC Environmental Resource Mapper. Under the Freshwater Wetland Act, New York State maps and regulates wetlands that are 12.4 acres or have unusual local significance.

### Flood Hazards

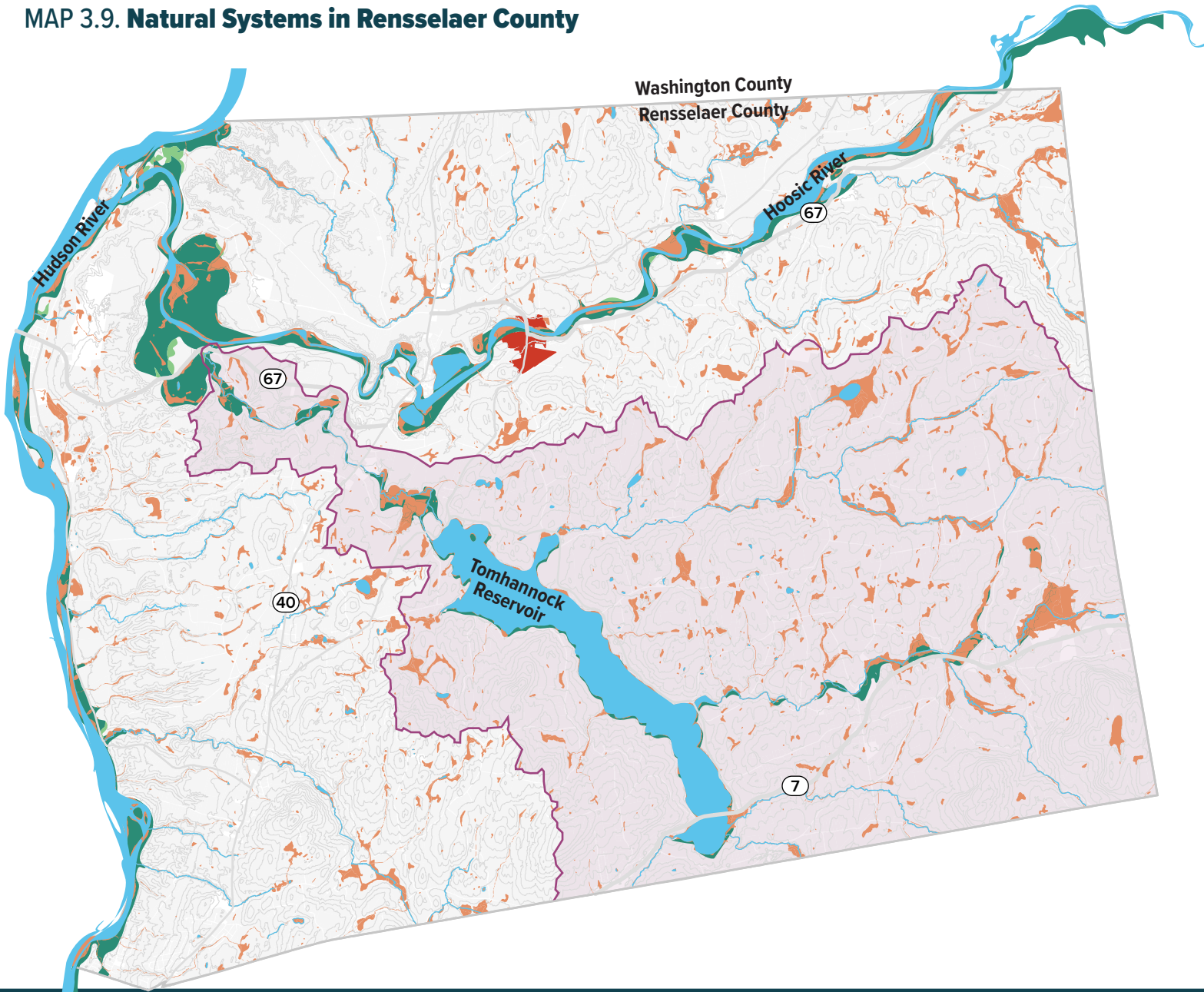
Flood hazard areas are shown in the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) that support the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Within the Valley Falls BOA, flood hazard areas shown on FIRMs surround the Hoosic River and include a floodway area and areas considered part of the 100- and 500-year floodplain.

#### Floodway

A floodway is the channel of a stream plus any adjacent floodplain areas that must be kept free of encroachment so that the 1% annual chance flood can be carried without substantial increases in flood heights. The floodway in the BOA generally expands only slightly from the Hoosic River waterway, except at the site of the former Thompson Mill where the floodway expands significantly inland.

<sup>1</sup> [www.renstrust.org](http://www.renstrust.org)

MAP 3.9. Natural Systems in Rensselaer County



**Legend**

- 100-year floodplain
- 500-year floodplain
- wetland
- Tomhannock watershed
- 50' contours
- BOA study area

**Identifying a community's natural resources allows it to grow in a way that balances the need for environmental protection with planned and ongoing economic development.**

## Natural Resources (CONT.)

### Floodplains

Areas that are part of 100-year flood plain are within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). These areas are subject to flooding based on a 1% annual chance of flood. Parts of the BOA in the SFHA parallel the floodway and expand inland at the former Thompson Mill site and the area north of the Hoosic River between Bunker Hill Road and the Village boundary. Areas that are part of the 500-year floodplain parallel the SFHA and expand slightly further inland. These areas are subject to flooding based on a 0.2% annual chance of flood.

### Flood Insurance

The Village of Valley Falls entered the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in 1985, but was suspended from the program in 2016 after its floodplain management ordinance was not renewed.

According to the FEMA website, to join the NFIP program communities must complete an application, adopt a resolution of intent to participate and cooperate with FEMA, adopt and submit a floodplain management ordinance that meets or exceeds the minimum NFIP criteria, and adopt a FIRM or Flood Hazard Boundary Map (FHBM) for the community.

### Soil Quality

Over half of the soils in the Valley Falls BOA are comprised of Hoosic gravelly sandy loam, including properties along State Street, properties east of State Street and properties north of the Hoosic River. Also notable, there is a concentration of Unadilla silt loam soils present at the former Thompson Mill site. Based on the soil survey data, the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) assesses suitabilities and limitations for use. Ratings include very limited, somewhat limited and not limited. Very limited indicates the soil has one or more features that are unfavorable for the specified use. Somewhat limited indicates the soil has features that are moderately favorable for the specified use. Not limited indicates the soil is appropriate for the specified use.

For proposed uses that include paths and trails, most of the BOA is identified as somewhat limited. This rating is based on the soil properties that affect trafficability and erodibility, such as stoniness, depth to a water table, ponding, flooding, slope, and texture of the surface layer.

For proposed uses that include picnic areas, the former Thompson Mill site and most of the residential areas north and south of the Hoosic River are identified as somewhat limited. This rating is based on soil properties that affect the ease of developing picnic areas and that influence trafficability and the growth of vegetation after development. The main factors affecting the development of picnic areas are slope and stoniness.

### Topography

The topography of the Village BOA is characterized by elevations that generally slope toward the Hoosic River. The lowest elevation is 272 feet above sea level, located in the west where the Hoosic River exits the BOA. Lower elevations expand up the river and into the former Thompson Mill site before reaching steeper inclines at the northern riverbank, the river dam and within the mill site at the Village's Waste Water Treatment Plant.

The topography in the BOA reaches the highest point at the southern boundary in Pittstown where elevations reach 408 feet above sea level. The Pittstown side of the BOA expands further from the Hoosic River than the Schaghticoke side, where the rise in elevation is more gradual. In Schaghticoke the elevation reaches 388 feet above sea level and is characterized by steeper slopes, particularly along the northern boundary of the BOA. Elevation changes are evident along State Street and State Route 67 as it crosses the Hoosic River before traveling west. These roads transverse the BOA from north to south crossing the river and its surrounding valley. The roadways may have increased stormwater management concerns where the slopes are particularly steep. Additionally, areas where there are steep slopes overlooking the Hoosic River may be opportunities for scenic views.



## Building Inventory

Several key buildings characterize the Valley Falls BOA as they provide community services to the Village. Additionally, within the BOA are two former community facility buildings that have potential for reuse. Using information from the 2022 Final Assessment Roll and the Valley Falls Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, these features and opportunities are detailed within the building inventory.

### Community Hall

Located at 11 Charles Street is the Community Hall for the Village of Valley Falls. This one-story, front-gable wood frame building with vinyl siding was constructed circa 2000 on a 0.17-acre lot.<sup>1</sup> Owned by the Village, the building holds Village Board meetings and other community events. A potential improvement at the Community Hall is the acquisition of a generator to support the facility when needed. Noted as being echoey and cold, there may be other opportunities for improvements within the building.

### Fire House

Located at 9 Charles Street is the Valley Falls Fire House, which served the Valley Falls Volunteer Fire Company until the company dissolved in 2020. The one-story wood frame building was originally built circa 1938 and is a contributing building in the Valley Falls Historic District. Constructed in phases, the front-gable wood frame garage was added in the 1960s or 1970s. Also, adjoining the building is a house trailer manufactured circa 1980.<sup>2</sup>

Owned by the Village of Valley Falls, the building is connected to the Village sewer system and well water. The current use of the building includes storage for Village equipment. Additionally, since 2022, the rear of the property has served as a space for a community garden organized by the Good Neighbors of Valley Falls community group. Although there are no formal plans for the reuse of the building, potential uses identified include a community center or gymnasium.

<sup>1</sup> Ravage, Jessie A. *Valley Falls Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2018), 12.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 12.



Photo by: Doug Kerr (Flickr user Dougtone) 2010 [www.flickr.com/photos/dougtone/5040772228/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/dougtone/5040772228/)

## Key Findings

- 1 **There is a concentration of community facilities south of the Hoosic River, on or behind the State Street corridor.**

The Valley Falls Free Library, the U.S. Post Office, the Community Hall, and the former Fire House are all within about a tenth of a mile walking distance. This concentration provides a hub for civic activity in the BOA.

- 2 **There is opportunity to expand on the existing community facilities hub in the BOA.**

The former Church and the former Fire House both have the potential for reuse and are located near other buildings that bring people to the community as well as the Valley Falls Playground, which serves as the only public playground in Pittstown.



MAP 3.10. Building Inventory in the Valley Falls BOA



## Building Inventory (CONT.)

### Former Church

The former Valley Falls Roman Catholic Church is located at 12 Emily Street on a 0.90-acre lot adjacent to the Valley Falls Playground. With over 4,000 square feet on the main level and another 4,000 square feet on the lower level, the building is monumental structure. Although there was a roof leak that caused some moisture damage, the building was said to be in excellent condition in its listing prior sale in 2021.<sup>3</sup> The building is now privately-owned and classified as a residential property with a commercial use.

Built between 1889 and 1890, the former church is a contributing building in the Valley Falls Historic District. Its gable-roofed brick construction is characterized by Gothic and Romanesque features and two asymmetrical towers that frame the front facade.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> zillow.com

<sup>4</sup> Ravage, Jessie A. *Valley Falls Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2018), 17.



### U.S. Post Office

The U.S. Post Office at Valley Falls is on the first floor of a multi-use building located at 40 State Street at the corner of Lyon Street. Privately-owned, the building also features upper story apartments. Constructed circa 1885, 40 State Street is a contributing building in the Valley Falls Historic District. This two-story, front gabled wood frame commercial building, features an open, shed-roofed front porch along the State Street facade with access ramp that wraps around to the Lyon Street facade.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 30.



## Valley Falls Free Library

The Valley Falls Free Library has a service area of over 5,000 citizens, including residents in the Village of Valley Falls and in the Town of Pittstown.<sup>6</sup> Located at 42 State Street, on a 0.28-acre lot at the corner of Lyon Street, the library facility is a purpose-built brick arts and crafts building that was designed by architect Louis Niles Milliman and constructed by Easton Rising and Warden in 1913.<sup>7</sup> The library was maintained as a one room library with a basement until 2013, when a bathroom was added. More recently, the library received funding from New York State for Library Construction to complete a major addition. The new construction doubled the size of the library with an additional 1,500 square feet as well as created an accessible entrance, added public restrooms with family and changing areas and provided outdoor gathering space with picnic tables. Completed in 2019, this addition allows the library to provide flexible community space and enhance the offerings for area residents.

A community improvement need that is currently impacting the library is drainage along State Street. Drainage issues along the roadway relate to water pooling in front of the library that causes unsafe conditions, particularly in colder weather.

<sup>6</sup> Valley Falls Free Library. Strategic Long-Range Plan 2021-2024. Approved by the Board of Trustees on November 9, 2020. valleyfallslibrary.org

<sup>7</sup> Ravage, Jessie A. *Valley Falls Historic District National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2018), 30.

## Valley Falls United Methodist Church

Located at 16 State Street, a gable roofed buff brick building is characterized by Gothic features and a tower with an open belfry along the State Street facade. Built in 1923, the church was designed by Louis Niles Milliman and is a contributing building in the Valley Falls Historic District.<sup>8</sup> This historic structure is home to the Valley Falls United Methodist Church, which provides weekly church services as well as a space for United Women in Faith and Alcoholics Anonymous. Additionally, the church is on the Red Cross shelter list, which publicizes facilities opened during a particular event.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 24.



**Valley Falls Free Library.** Poor drainage in front of the library is a persistent issue at all times during the year. During freeze-thaw cycles the “library lake” is particularly dangerous slipping hazard.

## Potential Brownfields + Vacant Sites

One of the primary objectives of the BOA Program is to identify sites that may have been impacted by the presence or perceived presence of soil and/or groundwater contamination and/or soil vapor intrusion. This section provides an overview of sites which may be impacted by environmental contamination within the Village of Valley Falls BOA.

### Potential Brownfields

This section identifies and describes properties where there is a known presence or potential presence of environmental contaminants in the BOA. These properties are often former commercial or industrial sites where mismanagement or improper handling of hazardous chemicals led to the real or perceived environmental contamination of the property and/or surrounding community.

It is important to understand where these hazards may exist to identify necessary remediation as part of redevelopment efforts. The sites identified as potential brownfields in this section are those that were listed within NYS DEC databases with known or suspected contamination, as well as those which have undergone remediation or cleanup. A total of 16 potential brownfield sites were identified and are presented in the summary table on **pages 65 - 67**. Full descriptive profiles of each identified site are presented in **Appendix D**.

**The presence of potential brownfields and vacant lands presents a unique opportunity for the Village to remediate and redevelop these lots -- benefiting public health, the local economy, and the environment.**

### Lead and Asbestos

As a community comprised largely of historic homes, the probability of encountering structures containing asbestos and/or lead-based materials in the walls, ceiling, roof, and/or floors is very high. It is critical to check for these hazardous regulated building materials (RBMs) prior to any improvements or demolition activities, particularly in structures built prior to the 1980s.

### Rail

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and pesticides are known to be associated with railroad equipment, activities, and track maintenance. Further, by law, rail carriers cannot outright refuse transportation of any commodity, and thus there is potential now or in the future for hazardous materials to be transported within the BOA. Over the past 25 years, no spills related to the operations of the railroad have been reported to NYS DEC within the BOA. Within five miles of the project area there has been one spill reported to NYS DEC that may or may not have been related to railroad operations; in 2014, an incident was reported that an unknown amount of creosote was spilled by an unnamed party on the railroad right of way.

Reported spills in the vicinity of the BOA are largely from sources other than the railroad. By all accounts, the recent railroad operations in and nearby the BOA have a very low rate of spill incidents.

### Key Words

<b>AST</b>	Above-Ground Storage Tanks
<b>ERP</b>	Environmental Regulation Project
<b>PBS</b>	Petroleum Bulk Storage
<b>RBM</b>	Regulated Building Material (includes asbestos and lead-based paint)
<b>SMP</b>	Soil Management Plan
<b>UST</b>	Underground Storage Tanks

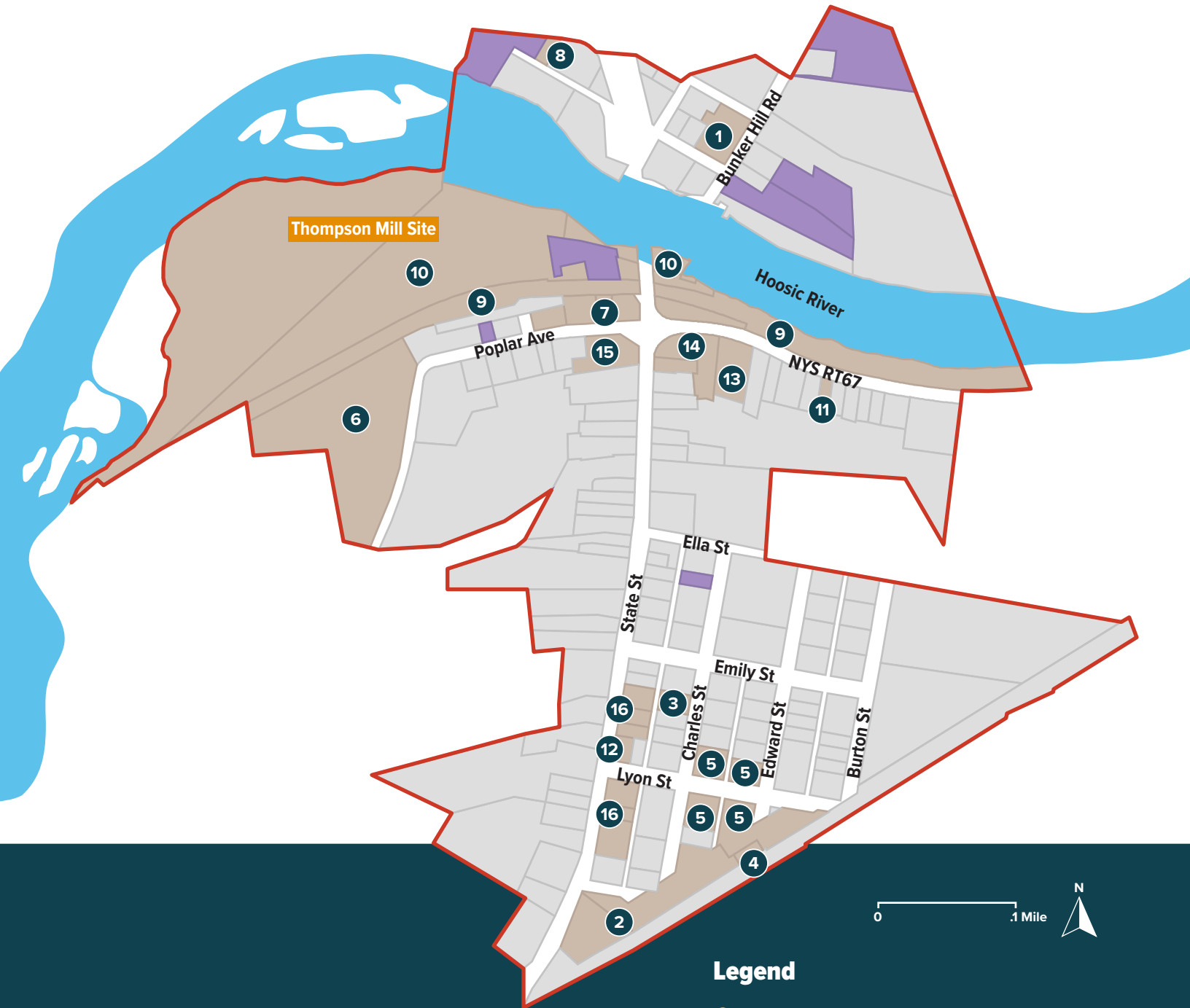
## Potential Brownfields Summary Table

Map ID	Site Name / Address	Ownership	Environmental Concern
1	122 Bunker Hill Rd	Private	Possible building debris
2	50 State St	Private	Possible impacts from former tanks, including 3 gasoline above ground storage tanks (ASTs) and 1 kerosene AST depicted on the 1933 Sanborn map; northern portion of site may be impacted by former dry cleaning facility (site #5). No NYSDEC records.
	16 Charles St		
3	9 Charles St	Valley Falls Fire House	Possible impacts from fire suppressant usage that may have contained Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS)
4	South of Edward St	Private	Possible impacts from groundwater plume from 11 Lyons Street (site #5) and railroad related concerns
5	11 Lyon St	Private	NYS Superfund Site 442028 & Spill #9912300. Remediation actions have achieved soil cleanup objectives for commercial use, and residual contamination in the soil, groundwater, and sediment is being managed under a Site Management Plan.
6	229 Poplar Ave	Hoosic Valley Athletic	Potential railroad related impacts due to adjacency to railroad (site #9).
7	267 Poplar Ave	Private	Due to railroad adjacency (site #9), railroad related impacts may be present in the surface and subsoil at the property.
	271 Poplar Ave	HMG Enterprises LLC	
	275 Poplar Ave	Private	
	279 Poplar Ave	H&M Online LLC	
8	44 North St	Private	NYSDEC Spill #0800573 is listed for this property associated with #2 fuel oil spilled in the basement and pumped out onto lawn by the owner. Possible impacted soil may be present on the property.
9	CSXT Railroad	Pan Am Southern LLC	Potential PCBs and pesticides due to railroad equipment activities, and track maintenance
10	243 Poplar Ave	Village of Valley Falls	<b>Former Thompson Mill Site.</b> NYS DEC Petroleum Bulk Storage (PBS) facilities #4-021598. A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was conducted in 2019 and identified several areas of concern including: closed NYSDEC Spill (#8906784) associated with #2 fuel oil released and the cleanup was completed on December 31, 1997; likely releases related to past use of the Site; solid waste disposal; proximity of the railroad line (site #9) and former Jim's Auto facility (site #14); and, RBMs. A Phase II ESA identified low levels of metal impacted shallow soils across the Site and semi-volatile organic impacted soil on the eastern portion of the Site.
	1835 NY-67		
	1839 NY-67		
	NY-67	Valley Falls Associates LP	
	West of Powder Mill	Village of Valley Falls	

**Potential Brownfields Summary Table (cont.)**

Map ID	Site Name / Address	Ownership	Environmental Concern
11	1858 NY-67	Lorraine Linzner Family Trust	NYS DEC Spill #0613519 (closed). Possible impacted soil and/or groundwater due to presence of #2 fuel oil in basement
12	40 State St	State Street and Valley Falls LLC	Two closed NYS DEC Spills, #9006937 and 9010154. Both spills consisted of #2 fuel oil spills. This site is also located along the western extent of the chlorinated groundwater plume from 11 Lyon Street (site #5).
13	1842 NY-67	Valley Falls Associates Inc.	NYS DEC Spill #0913564 (closed) due to release of 200-gallons of gasoline.
14	NY-67	Valley Falls Associates Inc.	NYS DEC PBS facility #4-043664. Three 4,000 gallon USTs installed in 1986 and no record of removal. Eastern portion of Site adjacent to former Thompson Mill (site #10), site #15, and site #7.
	2 State St	Gregg Properties LLC	
15	1 State St	Private	NYS DEC Spill #9407550 (closed) due to release of 35 gallons of kerosene in an AST. Site is also adjacent to site #7 and site #14.
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 34 State Street</li> <li>• 36 State Street</li> <li>• 38 State Street</li> <li>• 40 State Street</li> <li>• 42 State Street</li> <li>• 44 State Street</li> <li>• 46 State Street</li> </ul>	Private	These residential properties, the Valley Falls Free Library, and the Post Office are located along the western extent of the chlorinated groundwater plume from 11 Lyon Street (site #5).

MAP 3.11. Potential Brownfields + Vacant Sites in the Valley Falls BOA



**Legend**

- potential brownfield
- vacant
- BOA study area

## Strategic Sites

Through an analysis of existing information as well as feedback from the Steering Committee, a total of thirteen strategic sites were identified as being critical to achieving the community's vision and goals for the BOA. Each of these thirteen sites are described in detail on the following pages.

Strategic sites were selected based on the following criteria:

- Presence of known and/or suspected contamination on site, due to either current or past uses;
- Abandoned, vacant or underutilized status;
- Alignment with community vision and goals;
- Access and relationship to the Village Center and waterfront areas; and/or,
- Opportunities for enhancing the Village's historic character, increasing walkability, and diversifying its economy.

**Thirteen sites in the BOA were identified as strategic sites with input from the Steering Committee. While some of these sites contain a level of suspected environmental contamination, mitigation of existing hazards and redevelopment of these sites can help catalyze future investment and enhance the quality of life for current and future residents in the Village Center.**

### Strategic Sites (see map on next page)

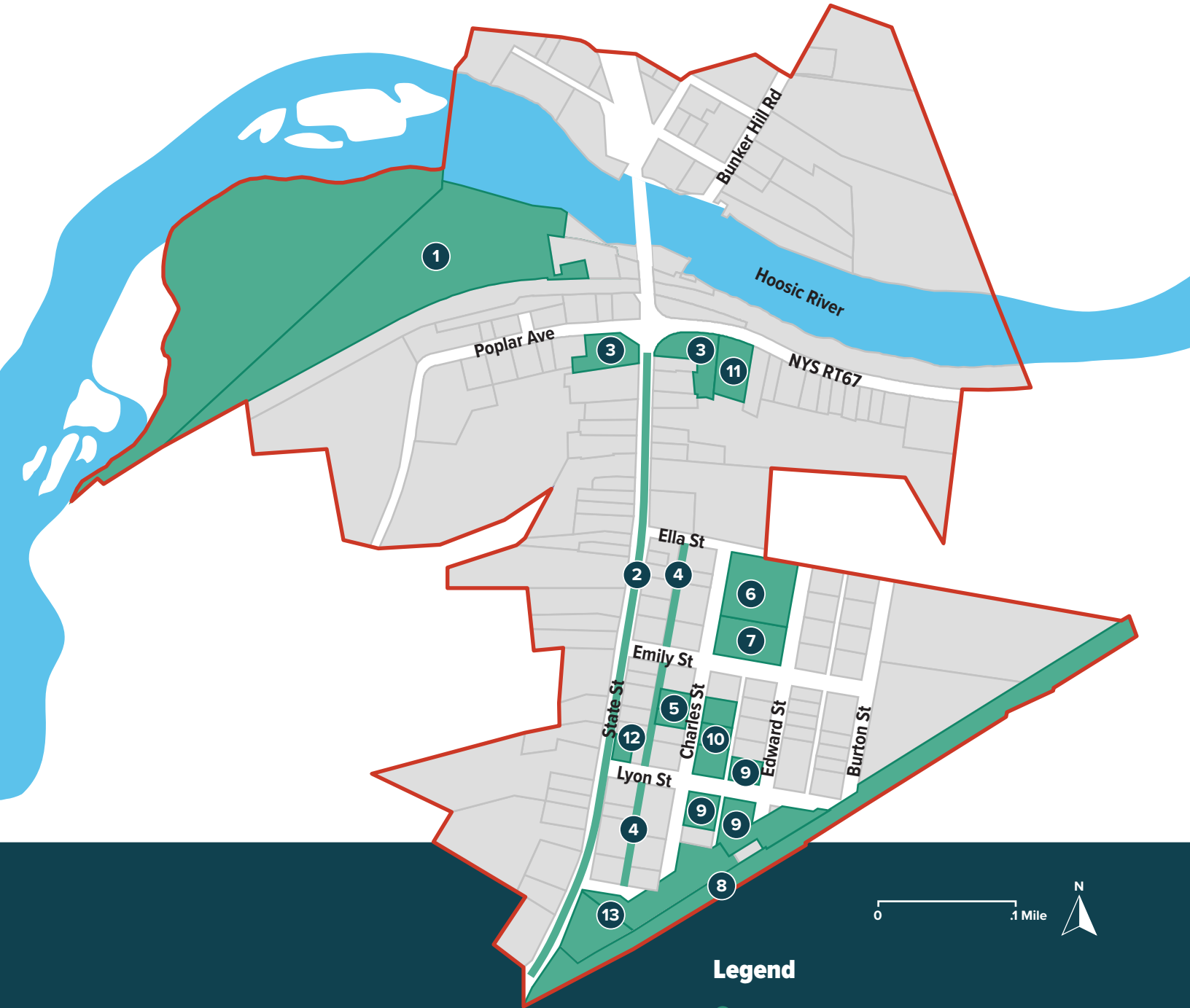
- 1 Former Thompson Mill Site
- 2 State Street Corridor
- 3 State Street and NY-67 Intersection
- 4 Alley Between State and Charles Streets
- 5 Village Hall / Former Fire Department
- 6 Village Park
- 7 Former Church
- 8 Former Railroad
- 9 Lyon Street Properties
- 10 Charles Street Properties
- 11 Valley Falls Auto Repair
- 12 Valley Falls Post Office
- 13 Former Gas Station



Strategic Site #5. Village Hall and former fire department.



MAP 3.12. Strategic Sites



## Strategic Site #1

## Former Thompson Mill Site

## Site Summary

The former Thompson Mill Site comprises a large portion of the BOA and is located between the railroad and the Hoosic River. This approximately 24 acre site is developed with one approximately 13,000 square feet, three (3)-story brick building with a partially submerged and partially slab-on-grade foundation. The Site was formerly operated as a textile mill and manufacturing facility since its construction in the early 1800s. The Mill closed in the 1970s and was significantly damaged in 2009 due to a fire. Currently, the Mill buildings are dilapidated, abandoned, and a public health hazard.

The central portion of the Site is developed with the Valley Falls wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). Various WWTP structures are within a fenced area, and an outfall structure is located north of the WWTP discharging to the Hoosic River. The remaining portions of the Site are either wooded upland areas or wet areas with a less dense canopy. Notably, the Site is also home to a bald eagle's nest.

A significant amount of work has already been invested into this Site to understand the type and extent of potential environmental contaminants. The Village is committed to demolishing the former Mill building and remediating any remaining environmental hazards in order to transform this Site into a public waterfront park featuring water access points, gathering areas, and trails that celebrate the natural beauty and history of the Site.

## Key Features

**Address**

243 Poplar Avenue / 1835 NY-67 / NY-67  
1839 NY-67 / West of Powder Mill

**Property Owner**

Village of Valley Falls / Valley Falls  
Associates LP

**Size**

24 acres

**Current Use**

Vacant

**Structures**

3-story brick building (dilapidated)

**Former Uses**

Commercial

**Use Potential**

Public waterfront park



## Strategic Site #2

## State Street Corridor

### Site Summary

The State Street Corridor consists mainly of residential properties. Records indicate that the State Street Corridor has been residentially and commercially developed since the mid-1800s. Commercial properties historically located along State Street include:

- A historic hotel at 51 State Street in the 1890s
- A library constructed in 1913 at 42 State Street
- A former carriage shop at 34 State Street in the 1890s
- A storefront at 15 State Street from the 1880s-1910s that was demolished
- A church constructed at 16 State Street since the 1880s
- A former meat market/grocery store at 11 State Street from the 1880s to the 1930s that has been demolished
- A cigar shop at 9 State Street in the 1880s then at 7 State Street in the early 1900s and a plumbing service in the 1930s
- A bank and drug store at 3 State Street in the early 1900s prior to the construction of the current residential home.

While many of the small businesses that once lined this corridor no longer exist, State Street remains the Village's Main Street and bustles with activity, especially at Halloween. Public realm improvements that focus on upgrading sidewalks and addressing drainage issues have the potential to improve walkability, strengthen the Village's connection to the waterfront, attract new residents, and support the establishment small, local businesses within the historic structures lining this important corridor.



### Key Features

#### Address

1-53 State Street

#### Property Owner

Rensselaer County

#### Size

Approximately 3,500 linear feet

#### Current Use

Public right-of-way lined by residential uses

#### Structures

Roadway, sidewalk, street trees, utilities

#### Former Uses

Residential and commercial

#### Use Potential

Public space improvements to support walkability; new local businesses in existing historic homes



## Strategic Site #3

## State Street and NY-67 Intersection

**Site Summary**

The intersection at State Street and NY-67 is an important gateway into the Village of Valley Falls. The parcels located at the southeastern corner of the intersection (2 State Street) include a residential apartment (2 State Street) and undeveloped land immediately south of NY-67. The parcel located at the southwestern corner of the intersection (1 State Street) is a residential property, and the primary structure is setback from State Street by approximately 200 feet.

A review of Sanborn maps from the 1800s-1933 indicates that the properties southeast of the State Street/NY-67 intersection were home to the former Valley Falls Hotel, which was constructed in 1870 and depicted in the 1884 Sanborn Map. The parcel at 2 State Street was redeveloped as a residential apartment in 1940. The property southeast of the intersection and immediately south of NY-67 was once home to Jim's Auto, an auto care facility, but has been undeveloped since the mid-1980s.

The parcel located southwest of the intersection (1 State Street) was developed with multiple dwellings including a general store throughout the late 1800s according to Sanborn maps. The current residential structure has been on the property since 1930, and it was reported that this property was developed and utilized as a funeral home until 1988 when the building burned.

Concentrating new development at the State Street / NY-67 intersection would increase visibility and access to new land uses and strengthen this intersection as a gateway into the Village. Given the longstanding use of this area for housing and lodging, this area would be a good site for senior housing -- a need the public has highlighted to serve the Village's aging population. Any redevelopment around this intersection could also consider connectivity to the future waterfront park at Strategic Site #1.

**Key Features****Address**

SE of intersection: 2 State Street / NY-67

SW of intersection: 1 State Street

**Property Owners**

SE of intersection: Valley Falls Associates Inc. and Gregg Properties LLC

SW of intersection: Private owner

**Size**

SE of intersection: 0.20 acres and 0.78 acres

SW of intersection: 0.71 acres

**Current Uses**

SE of intersection: Residential / Vacant

SW of intersection: Residential

**Structures**

SE of intersection: 2-story apartment building

SW of intersection: Residential building

**Former Uses**

Commercial / Residential

**Use Potential**

Village gateway / Residential / Commercial



## Strategic Site #4

## Alley Between State and Charles Streets

### Site Summary

Just east of State Street, an alley runs north-south providing a low-traffic and continuous connection between Myron Street, the Valley Falls Free Library, Lyon Street, the Village's community garden, Emily Street, and Ella Street. An important corridor for accessing homes along State Street and Charles Street, this alley also provides access to the historic barns (many of which are adorned with quilt patterns) that characterize the many homes lining State Street.

This alley provides an opportunity to expand upon the Village's walkability and celebrate its unique and historic architecture. The alley connects several important community destinations, including the library, post office, Village Hall, and the Methodist Church, which hosts summer youth programs. With limited improvements, the alley could serve as a year-round pedestrian connection as well as be activated intermittently with community art shows, events, and barn sales. The barns fronting on the alley also provide a unique opportunity to support aging in place, as the barns could be converted into accessory dwelling units to house immediate or extended family members. Alternatively, the barns could be treated as rental properties enabling the property owner to generate additional income.



### Key Features

**Address**

East of 18-48 State Street

**Property Owner**

Village of Valley Falls

**Size**

1,375 linear feet

**Current Use**

Access Road

**Structures**

N/A

**Former Uses**

N/A

**Use Potential**

Community Space



## Strategic Site #5

## Village Hall and the Former Fire Department

### Site Summary

The Village Hall (11 Charles Street) and former fire department (9 Charles Street) are located immediately adjacent to one another and are both owned by the Village of Valley Falls. Given the adjacency and the Village's site control of these sites, they are being considered as one joint strategic site.

The former fire department was originally developed as a police and fire department in 1938, and in the 1970's a garage was added to the property. This site was home to the Valley Falls Volunteer Fire Company until the company dissolved in 2020. While there are no NYSDEC spill records for the property, due to its past use as a fire department, potential environmental hazards may include fire suppressants containing Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS). Currently, the one-story wood frame building is used as storage for Village equipment and is a contributing building in the Valley Falls Historic District. Since 2022, the rear of the property has served as a space for a community garden organized by the Good Neighbors of Valley Falls community group.

The Village Hall is a public resource, providing a space for Village Board meetings and community events. However, there are several opportunities to modernize this facility. For example, many community members noted the need for a kitchen space and an updated interior to make the building feel more warm and welcoming.

While there are no formal redevelopment plans for this strategic site, future improvements could include the following potential uses identified by the community: a community center, gymnasium, and/or emergency shelter. This strategic site could also provide a more permanent home for the Village's summer youth program, which currently uses the Methodist Church and the Village Playground.



### Key Features

#### Address

11 Charles Street / 9 Charles Street

#### Property Owner

Village of Valley Falls

#### Size

0.4 acres

#### Current Use

Public Service

#### Structures

Buildings and garage

#### Former Uses

Police/fire department

#### Use Potential

Community space



## Strategic Site #6

# Village Park

### Site Summary

This strategic site is located on the west side of Edward Street, south side of Ella Street, and east side of Charles Street and is utilized as a playground and open space. A review of Sanborn maps and aerial photographs indicates that the property was undeveloped land with trees along the eastern portion until approximately the 1960s when it was developed into a playground. From approximately 1910-1933, a shed was located on the southern portion of the parcel, but the use of the shed is unknown.

The Village Park is an important local and regional community resource. It is the only public playground in the Town of Pittstown and provides a space for several community programs, including boy scouts and the Village's summer youth program. The playground is out-dated, and the community has raised concerns regarding the safety and accessibility of the play equipment. The Village recently upgraded several elements in the park, including the installation of a new pavilion and resurfacing of the basketball courts.

The community has identified several additional needed upgrades to the Village Park, including new playground equipment and play surfacing, a new accessible walking loop to serve visitors of all ages, a formalized parking area with accessible parking spaces, and a new skatepark to better serve the community's youth.



### Key Features

#### Address

Edward Street

#### Property Owner

Village of Valley Falls

#### Size

1.46 acres

#### Current Use

Recreation

#### Structures

No structures

#### Former Uses

Undeveloped

#### Use Potential

Village playground



## Strategic Site #7

## Former Church

## Site Summary

Located at the northeast corner of Emily Street and Charles Street, adjacent to the Village Park, this strategic site was home to the former Valley Falls Roman Catholic Church, which was built between 1889 and 1890. With over 4,000 square feet on the main level and another 4,000 square feet on the lower level, the building is monumental structure and is a contributing building in the Valley Falls Historic District. Although there was a roof leak that caused some moisture damage, the building was said to be in excellent condition in its listing prior sale in 2021.<sup>1</sup> The building is now privately-owned and classified as a residential property with a commercial use. Beyond potential regulated building materials, there are no suspected environmental hazards associated with this site.

The current owner has plans to preserve the historic church structure and redevelop the building as a wedding venue and artist studios with a botanical garden on-site. The owner has also conveyed that making sure the property blends into the current fabric of the Village is a priority.

<sup>1</sup> zillow.com

## Key Features

**Address**

12 Emily Street

**Property Owner**

Private

**Size**

0.90 acres

**Current Use**

Commercial

**Structures**

8,000 square foot building

**Former Uses**

Church

**Use Potential**

Commercial / Event space





## Strategic Site #8

## Former Railroad

## Site Summary

This strategic site parallels Coons Road and serves as the southeastern edge of the Village of Valley Falls BOA boundary. Currently vacant, this site was formerly used as an active railroad that at one time connected commuters in Valley Falls to Troy, New York. There are several potential environmental hazards associated with railroads and rail equipment. The use of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) and pesticides, in particular, are known to be associated with railroad activities and track maintenance. Therefore, volatile and semi-volatile organic contaminants may be present due to the long term use of this site as an active railroad.

The conversion of this abandoned rail corridor into an off-road trail is specifically recommended in the Capital District Trails Plan. The proposed Uncle Sam to Mahican Trail Link (8.8 miles) would connect the Village of Valley Falls and the City of Troy, and the proposed Mahican Trail (30 miles) would follow the meandering Hoosick River and connect the Village of Valley Falls to North Pownal, Vermont. Converting this abandoned rail corridor into a trail would not only expand local and regional connectivity but would also create a recreational destination.



## Key Features

**Address**

Coons Road

**Property Owner**

Boston &amp; Main Corp.

**Size**

5.22 acres

**Current Use**

Vacant

**Structures**

No structures

**Former Uses**

Railroad

**Use Potential**

Trail



## Strategic Site #9

## Lyon Street Properties

## Site Summary

Located at the southeast corner of the Lyon Street and Charles Street intersection, this strategic site was developed with a two story residential building in 1865. Winchell Dry Cleaners was established in the 1940s and operated continuously through the early 1970s. The property was sold in the early 1970s and the new owner continued dry-cleaning operations. The property was resold and abandoned in the mid-1970s. The current owners purchased the property in 1978 and utilize the property as a residence. The dry-cleaning facility was demolished in 1993. Portions of the slab foundation and a section of the building remain on the property.

The 11 Lyon Street property is identified as a NYSDEC Petroleum Bulk Storage (PBS) facility and as a NYS Superfund Site. A total of three underground storage tanks (USTs) (2,000 gallons, 1,000 gallons, and 500 gallons) were recovered, cleaned, and disposed of off-site in 2012. Two of the USTs that were used to store petroleum products were corroded and leaked product to the soil. Approximately 270 tons of chlorinated solvent impacted soil, an abandoned septic tank, dry well, and associated piping were removed from the site. Remedial actions have successfully achieved soil cleanup objectives for commercial use. Residual contamination in the soil, groundwater, and sediment has impacted a number of adjacent properties and is being managed under a Site Management Plan (SMP). This site is also listed as a NYSDEC Spill Site associated with #2 fuel oil that was spilled to the soil and was closed in 2005.

It is suggested that the potential for soil vapor intrusion into nearby structures be investigated. Railroad related impacts may also be present in the surface and subsoil at the property, due to the proximity to the former railroad (strategic site #8). NYSDEC Soil and Groundwater Management Plan and other requirements must be followed for any subsurface disturbance on this site or within the chlorinated solvent groundwater plume.



## Key Features

**Address**

11 Lyon Street, 10 Charles Street, 12 Charles Street, and 9 Edward Street

**Property Owner**

Multiple

**Size**

1.94 acres

**Current Use**

Residential / Light industrial

**Structures**

8,000 square foot building

**Former Uses**

Laundromat

**Use Potential**

Commercial and/or residential if soil cleanup objectives can be met



## Strategic Site #10

## Stephen Bader Company Inc.

## Site Summary

This site is located at the northeast corner of Lyon Street and Charles Street and was impacted by the chlorinated solvent contamination that originated at 11 Lyon Street. Originally, Stephen Bader Co. Inc. operated out of the first floor of the former Union Free School building at 10 Charles Street. As the company grew, they constructed a new one story facility that was expanded in 2001. Currently, the owner does not have plans for further expansion. The former school building is still owned by Stephen Bader Co. Inc. and is currently used for storage.

Stephen Bader Co. Inc. manufactures custom polishing and grinding equipment used in a variety of industries from automotive and aircraft manufacturing to medical equipment manufacturing. This light industrial use is compatible with the Village's residential character and is one of the few businesses in the Valley Falls BOA. It is recommended that this site remains light industry so that it can continue to contribute to the Village's economy. If a new storage facility for Bader Co. could be identified in the future, this would create an opportunity for the redevelopment and activation of the former Union Free School building, which is a contributing structure in the Valley Falls Historic District.

Soil vapor intrusion (SVI) sampling is recommended if any future redevelopment on this site introduces a residential use due to the impacts of the chlorinated solvent plume from the former dry cleaning facility at 11 Charles Street.



## Key Features

### Address

10 Charles Street

### Property Owner

State Street LLC.

### Size

0.51 acres

### Current Use

Light industrial manufacturing

### Structures

16,000 square foot building

### Former Uses

Light industrial manufacturing

### Use Potential

Maintain current use



## Strategic Site #11

## Valley Falls Auto Repair

### Site Summary

This strategic site is located on the south side of NY-67 and is currently used as an automobile repair facility.

This property was undeveloped until the early 1900s according to Sanborn maps. The property was first developed with two dwellings in approximately 1902. In 1910, two additional dwellings, a shed, and a barn were added to the property. Since the 1930s, the property has been used commercially by Valley Falls Auto Repair, and in 1933, a 30-car garage and two gasoline underground storage tanks (USTs) were depicted on the 1933 Sanborn Map.

NYSDEC Spill #0913564 is listed for this property due to the release of 200-gallons of gasoline resulting from a truck rollover. The NYSDEC spill report was closed in 2010. Further information has been requested from the NYSDEC regarding tank removal.

If this site is redeveloped, rehabilitated, and/or a change in use occurs, it is recommended that a subsurface investigation be conducted to identify potential impacted soil and/or groundwater due to past and current uses at this site.

### Key Features

#### Address

1842 NY-67

#### Property Owner

Valley Falls Associates Inc.

#### Size

0.67 acres

#### Current Use

Automobile repair shop

#### Structures

3,800 square foot building

#### Former Uses

Residences

#### Use Potential

Maintain current use or other commercial / retail use



## Strategic Site #12

## Valley Falls Post Office

### Site Summary

Located at the northeast corner of State Street and Lyon Street, this strategic site is currently a mixed-use property with commercial uses on the ground floor and residential uses on the second floor. A multi-use building was first constructed on this site in 1885 and included a grocery store. Currently, the first floor is occupied by the US Post Office and the second floor is utilized as a residence.

Two closed NYSDEC spills are listed for this property. The first spill is associated with #2 fuel oil that was spilled; this spill report was closed in 1990. The second spill is associated with 50-gallons of #2 fuel oil that was spilled; this spill report was closed in 1991. This site is also located within the chlorinated groundwater plume extending from 11 Lyon Street (Strategic Site #9).

It is recommended that a subsurface investigation be considered for this property to address potential impacted soil and/or groundwater that may be encountered during redevelopment and/or street and sidewalk rehabilitation.

### Key Features

#### Address

40 State Street

#### Property Owner

State Street and Valley Falls LLC

#### Size

0.22 acres

#### Current Use

Post Office

#### Structures

Multi-use building

#### Former Uses

Grocery store

#### Use Potential

Maintain current use



## Strategic Site #13

## Former Gas Station

## Site Summary

This strategic site is located on the east side of Charles Street and is currently used as a residential property. Based on a review of Sanborn maps, 16 Charles Street and the southern portion of State Street was developed with a two (2)-story building identified as G.W. Luhne's Lumber and Coal Yard in 1884. The 1891 Sanborn Map indicates that 16 Charles Street was identified as Herington & Co., and by 1897 an open shed-roof porch facing the railroad had been added. 50 State Street was developed with a three (3)-family residential building, constructed in 1920 with a garage. The 1933 Sanborn Map depicts a filling station near the intersection of State Street and Myron Street (i.e., 50 State Street), as well as an auto body shop on the southeast corner. A State highway Garage was also located on this property that included asphalt trucks and oil trucks. 16 Charles Street was owned by Wiley Brothers and utilized as a hardware store until 1964. In 1964, the property was converted into a residence and has continued to serve as a residence since.

The property is not listed with the NYSDEC. Three (3) gasoline above ground storage tanks (ASTs) and one (1) kerosene AST were depicted in the 1933 Sanborn Map. No tank removal reports or NYSDEC spill reports are on file associated with the tank removals. Former building remnants are visible on the aerial photographs. The northern portion of 16 Charles Street has also been impacted by the former dry cleaning facility located adjacent to the east (Strategic Site #10).

This site also serves as a gateway into the Village and is located along the former rail corridor (strategic site #8), which has the potential to be converted into a trail.



## Key Features

**Address**

16 Charles Street and 50 State Street

**Property Owner**

Private

**Size**

2.41 acres

**Current Use**

Residential

**Structures**

Four buildings (2 residential structures, one garage, and one barn)

**Former Uses**

Filling station and auto body shop

**Use Potential**

Maintain current use and/or introduce commercial uses compatible with adjacent future rail trail



This page is intentionally blank.

## Food Access + Commercial Centers

Access to fresh, healthy food is a critical component of a thriving community, yet many communities struggle with limited options for purchasing groceries and other food items. In the Valley Falls BOA, residents do not have access to grocery stores, farmers markets or other food outlets. As a result, residents travel to nearby commercial centers to purchase fresh food. One way the community has addressed this issue is through the development of a community garden, which provides a space for residents to grow their own produce. Still, access to local healthy food options remains a challenge.

### Local Commercial Centers

With no grocery stores, farmers markets, convenient stores, restaurants, or specialty food stores in the BOA or the Village of Valley Falls, residents have limited access to fresh food. As a result, many residents travel to nearby commercial centers to purchase fresh food.

The closest commercial center is the Village of Schaghticoke, located about a mile west of the BOA via State Route 67. Schaghticoke is home to the Hoosic Valley Shop & Save grocery store, the Stewart's Shop convenience store, and a farmer's market that operates from June to October. There are also several restaurants in Schaghticoke including Chrissy's Cravings, Sammy Cohen's, Lewis' Tavern, Richie's Pizza and Subway.

To the east of the Village of Valley Falls is a local Community Supported Agriculture or CSA called St. Croix Farm where residents can subscribe to meat shares.

**Food insecurity is a widespread challenge that many communities throughout the United States face. Land use planning provides an opportunity to address healthy food accessibility through zoning and the siting of developments and other community amenities.**

Other nearby commercial centers where groceries can be purchased include the City of Mechanicville, where a Price Chopper grocery store is located about 9 miles away, the City of Troy, where a Hannaford grocery store is located about 11 miles away, and the Village of Hoosic Falls, where a Tops Friendly Market grocery store is located about 14 miles away.

### Community Garden

The Good Neighbors of Valley Falls is a community group that has organized a community garden located behind the former Fire House on Charles Street within the BOA. The garden features raised beds, free soil, and access to the Fire House hose for watering. The community garden is run in partnership with the summer youth program, and there is no fee to participate. In exchange for the use of the garden, gardeners are asked to occasionally mentor two to four children while growing flowers and/or vegetables.

The garden is pesticide-free and provides a place for people without their own gardening space or favorable growing conditions to participate in gardening.

### Key Findings

#### ① The BOA is activated by a community garden behind the former Fire House.

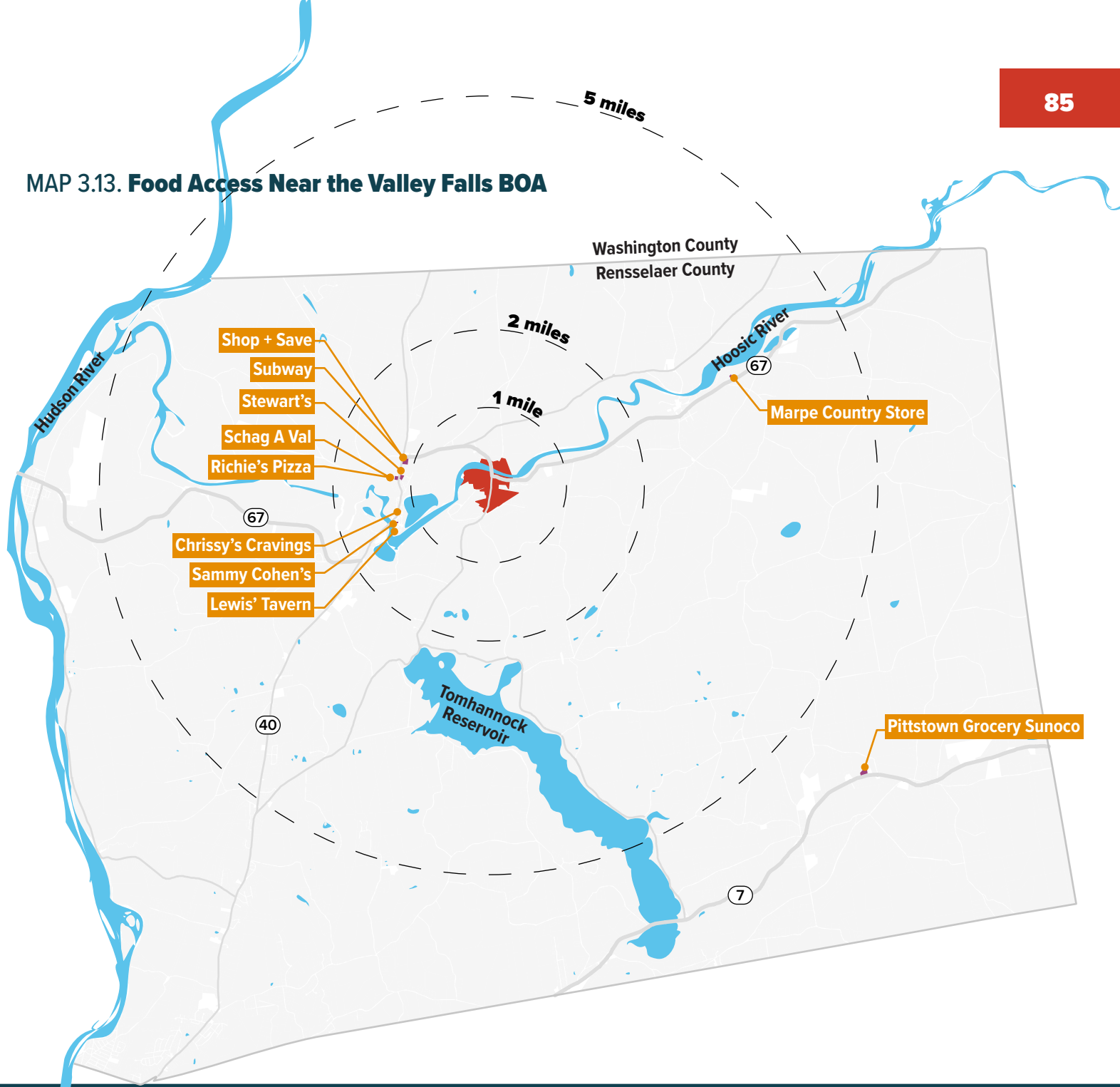
The Good Neighbors of Valley Falls provides this engaging resource for the community, together with the summer youth program.

#### ② The nearest grocery store is just over a mile away in the Village of Schaghticoke.

BOA residents must travel to Schaghticoke or beyond to purchase fresh groceries.



MAP 3.13. Food Access Near the Valley Falls BOA



**Legend**

- store/restaurant
- BOA study area

## Economic Trends + Opportunities

An economic and market data analysis of the Village of Valley Falls BOA and the surrounding region (comprised of Rensselaer, Albany, Saratoga, Washington, and Schenectady counties) was conducted in support of this Nomination Study. Key findings and opportunities identified in the economic and market analysis are summarized below and the full report is available in Appendix E.

### Economic Profile

#### Labor Force Participation

The Labor Force Participation Rate (LFPR) quantifies the percentage of the population over the age of 16 that is working or actively seeking work. This measure is important as it indicates how actively working-age adults are participating in the overall labor market. When labor force participation rates increase, it indicates that more people are working or looking for work, when labor force participation rates decrease, the opposite is true. LFPR in the Village of Valley Falls has outpaced the county and state rate; however, rates have fluctuated more heavily in the village than at the county or state levels. In 2021, the LFPR was 73.7% for Valley Falls compared to 64.4% for the county and 63.1% for the state.

The unemployment rate in the village has generally decreased from 2012-2019, in line with state and national trends. The COVID-19 pandemic did however cause an increase in unemployment in 2020, but over the last two-years across geographies, unemployment has rebounded to its 2019 rates. Unemployment in 2021 was 4.2% in Valley Falls, compared to 5.4% for Rensselaer County and 6.2% for the State of New York. Overall, the geographies have seen historically low unemployment rates outside pandemic-related unemployment in 2020.

Rensselaer County has added jobs over the last five years, increasing by +1.6% (921 jobs) from 2017 to 2022. This growth rate was in stark contrast to the surrounding region, where total employment decreased from 2017 to 2022. The growth in the county is primarily attributed to increases in employment for General Warehousing and Storage, Paper Manufacturing, and Nonmetallic Mineral Mining and Quarrying. Job loss in the region is primarily driven by losses in Full-Service Restaurants, General Medical and Surgical Hospitals, and State Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals.

### Total Employment and Growth by Region

Region	2017 Jobs	2022 Jobs	2017-2022 Jobs Change	2017-2022 Jobs % Change
<b>Rensselaer County</b>	<b>57,141</b>	<b>58,062</b>	<b>921</b>	<b>1.6%</b>
Economic Region	476,034	451,864	-24,170	-5.1%
New York State	10,292,214	9,921,904	-370,310	-3.6%

Data Source: Lightcast

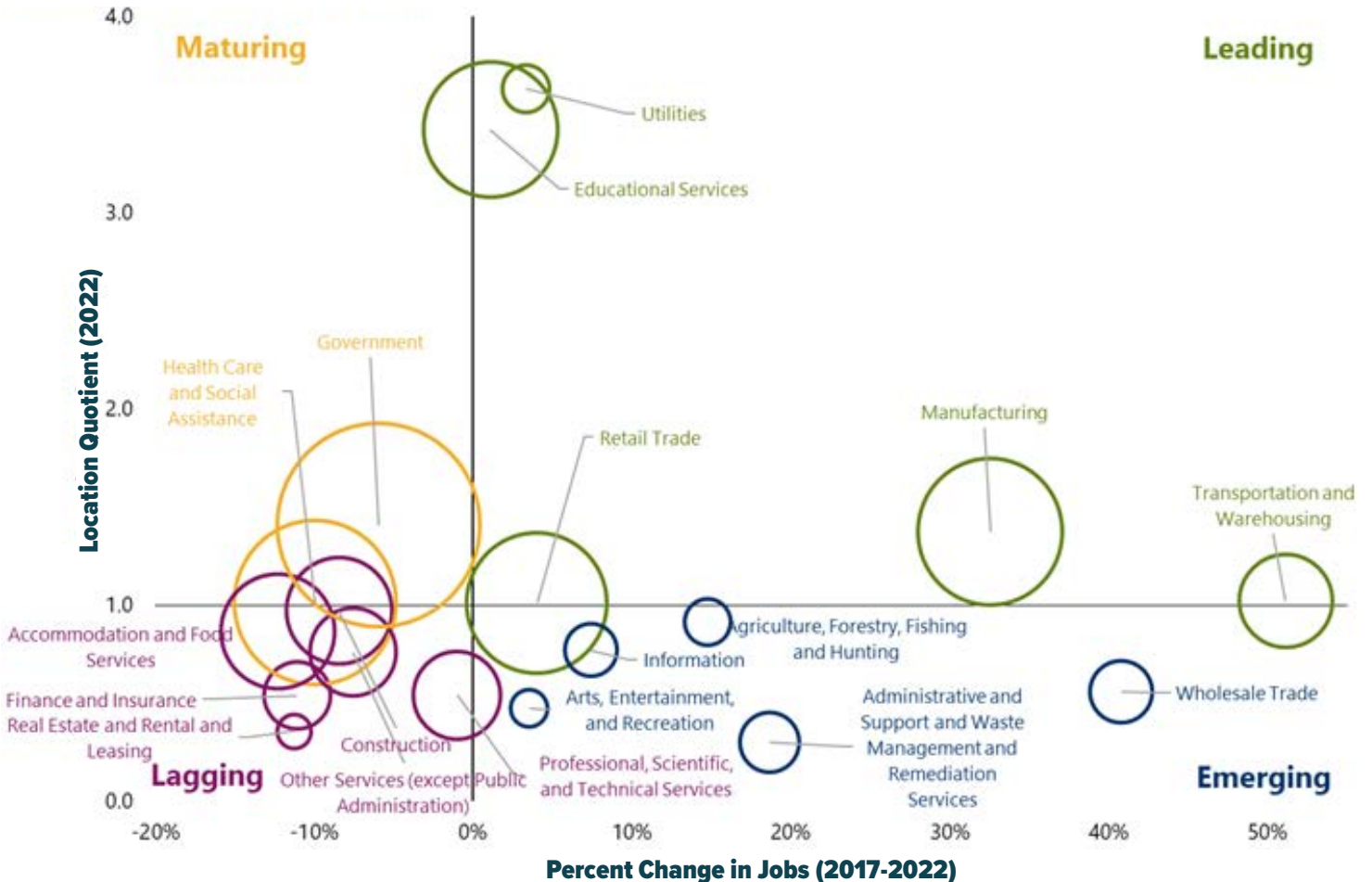
**Key Industries**

Key leading industries in Rensselaer County are Manufacturing, Transportation and Warehousing, Educational Services, Utilities, and Retail Trade. Government and Health Care and Social Assistance are maturing industries. Agriculture and Health Care and Social Assistance are lagging industries.

The following graph illustrates the relationship between job change and location quotient (a measure of the industry concentration in Rensselaer County, compared to the national average) by an industry's total employment (with bubble based on total jobs in the industry). Manufacturing and Retail Trade are leading industries in Rensselaer County. Health Care and Social Assistance and Government are key maturing industries, in the county, as they are highly concentrated but have lost jobs over the last five years.

**Key Industry Metrics by Sector in Rensselaer County**

Bubble size indicates 2022 job count



The chart below displays how each of these sector's measures against each other. Each sector is classified as leading, emerging, maturing, or lagging.

**Leading industries** experienced job growth over the last five years and have a location quotient greater than 1.

**Emerging industries** saw positive job growth over the last five years but have a location quotient less than 1.

**Maturing industries** have a location quotient greater than 1 but had negative job growth over the last five years,

**Lagging industries** have a location quotient less than 1 and saw negative job growth over the last five years.

Data Source: Lightcast

## Housing Profile

### Housing Stock

According to estimates from the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), the Village of Valley Falls had 205 housing units in 2022. This represents a net gain of 10 units since 2000 (5.1% increase from 2000 to 2022). The county added units at a higher rate than the village, with a total of 8,302 units since 2000, increasing 12.6% since 2000. Notably, the village has not added any additional units since 2010, a stark contrast to the gains over the last decade in the county, Economic Region, and New York as a whole.

Approximately 66% of Valley Falls' housing units consist of single-family detached units and 2% consist of single-family attached units (e.g., rowhouses). The remaining 32% is comprised of multi-unit housing units.

The median year built of housing units in the Village is estimated to be 1939, which is older than the county (1962), the economic region (1966), and New York State (1957). Approximately 14% of housing units have been built since 2000, while 72% were built prior to 1970. This older housing stock increases the likelihood that regulated building materials (RBM), such as lead and asbestos, are present in many houses in the Village of Valley Falls. The Village's older housing stock also contributes to its sense of place and historic character.

## Housing Units in Structure, 2021

Units	Village of Valley Falls		Rensselaer County	
	Count	Share	Count	Share
1 Unit, detached	139	66%	41,418	56%
1 Unit, attached	5	2%	2,584	3%
2 Units	22	10%	9,649	13%
3 to 4 Units	38	18%	6,790	9%
5 to 9 Units	6	3%	4,019	5%
10 to 19 Units	0	0%	2,357	3%
20 to 49 Units	0	0%	1,588	2%
50+ Units	0	0%	3,578	5%
Mobile Homes	0	0%	2,015	3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>210</b>		<b>73,998</b>	

Data Source: ESRI ACS 5 Year Estimates, 2021

## Housing Units by Geography

Region	Total Housing Units			Percent Change		
	2000	2010	2022	2000-2010	2010-2022	2000-2022
Village of Valley Falls	195	205	205	5.1%	0%	5.1%
Rensselaer County	66,120	71,475	74,422	8.1%	4.1%	12.6%
Economic Region	374,619	404,910	434,022	8.1%	7.2%	15.9%
New York State	7,679,307	8,108,103	8,555,596	5.6%	5.5%	11.4%

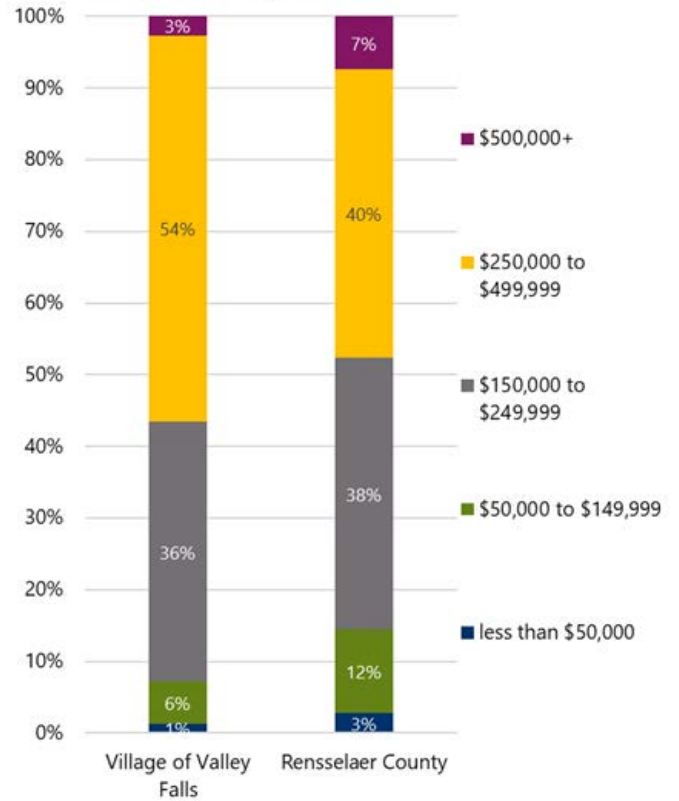
Data Source: ESRI

*Housing Value*

Home values have climbed drastically in recent years in Valley Falls and Rensselaer County. While home value data from ESRI is not an accurate representation of actual recent home sale prices due to steep market-wide price escalations, it can be used to compare relative values across communities. In 2022, the median home value in Valley Falls was \$275,000, which was higher than the county at \$244,082. Over 57% of Valley Falls homes were valued at \$250,000 or more, compared to 47% county-wide.

The median gross rent for renter households in Valley Falls is estimated at \$1,092 monthly, a rate slightly higher than the county median of \$1,046. Valley Falls also has a lower percentage of renters with lower cost rents than the county, with about 34% of renters paying less than \$1,000 a month compared to 44% of renters paying less than \$1,000 a month at the county-level.

**Owner-Occupied Units by Value, 2022**



Data Source: ESRI

**Key Findings**

- 1 There has been limited housing development in Valley Falls.**

Only ten housing units were added between 2000 and 2010 and no new units were added between 2010 and 2022. This lack of development is due in part to an existing moratorium on development, with the exception of single family homes, and limited access to undeveloped land.
- 2 There are opportunities to expand multi-family options that serve seniors.**

Regionally, multi-family vacancy is low (less than 5%), indicating a high demand for this type of housing. Further, there is a growing number of seniors and middle-aged adults who are expected to drive demand for new housing options locally and regionally.

## Remote Working Potential

According to data from the American Community Survey (ACS), it is approximated that only 8.7% of the occupations in the Village are remote. These roles are primarily within management, business, and sales sectors. Likewise, in Rensselaer County, about 8.9% of all occupations are remote, accounting for a significant count of over 7,000 positions.

Promoting a historic village such as Valley Falls as a great place to work remotely can be a viable economic development strategy when combined with other efforts. A remote worker attraction strategy can help bring income into the local economy as new residents spend money on groceries, dining, and local services. The caveat being that these services must exist locally in order to capture this spending. The presence of remote workers can also increase property values as the demand for housing increases, benefiting existing homeowners and encouraging property investments.

Many communities across the US have embarked on remote worker attraction campaigns with some preliminary success. Notable examples include Vermont's Remote Worker Grant Program and Tulsa Remote<sup>1</sup>. Both efforts launched in 2018 and offered financial incentives for people to relocate. A discussion of the impact of these programs concluded:

*The long-term benefits are yet to be determined, but early indicators around home ownership and retention rates are positive. Remote worker incentives that are integrated with other economic development and marketing strategies, engage partners and stakeholders, and that help remote workers build connections with their new communities are most likely to be successful.*

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated remote work trends and altered people's perceptions of where they can live and work. Now, four years later, the fully remote

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.stateeconomicdevelopment.org/blog-post/new-findings-on-remote-worker-attraction-programs-lessons-for-communities-striving-to-attract-remote-workers/>

## Remote Workers

Geography	Estimate	MOE	Share of Total Jobs
<b>Village of Valley Falls</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>±21</b>	<b>8.7%</b>
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	17	± 20	6.7%
Service occupations	0	± 13	0.0%
Sales and office occupations	5	± 7	2.0%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	0	± 13	0.0%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	0	± 13	0.0%
Military specific occupations	0	± 13	0.0%
<b>Rensselaer County</b>	<b>7,600</b>	<b>± 739</b>	<b>8.9%</b>
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	4,350	± 563	5.5%
Service occupations	493	± 195	0.6%
Sales and office occupations	1,627	± 257	2.1%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	195	± 96	0.2%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	341	± 152	0.4%
Military specific occupations	0	± 30	0.0%

Note: MOE is Margin of Error

Data Source: ESRI ACS 5 Year Estimates, 2021

workplace model that spiked during the pandemic is in decline. But, that doesn't mean there has been a complete return to the office. Instead, hybrid models, where people split time between remote and office work are projected to continue to increase through 2024 and become the most prevalent type of work arraignment for remote-capable jobs. Recent polling by Gallup of remote-capable employees across the US found that:

- 5 in 10 are working hybrid
- 3 in 10 are working remotely
- 2 in 10 are working on-site

Within the Capital Region, it is estimated that roughly 40,000 state government workers with offices in Albany work remotely at least some of the time, and of those workers, about 2,500 are completely remote. The Downtown Albany Business Improvement District (BID) has been tracking daytime foot traffic downtown and estimates that current activity has returned to 94% of what it was in 2019, which is a 32% increase from 2022 levels<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.timesunion.com/capitol/article/hybrid-work-options-prevail-many-state-agencies-18490774.php>

## Key Findings

### ① It's recommended that Valley Falls focus on attracting remote-capable employees from the Capital Region.

The data trends suggest that most remote-capable employees are not likely to move outside of the labor-shed in which they work; however, they may be willing to move farther away from their physical office to a more desirable community and in exchange, travel a longer commute just a few days a week. Therefore, in order to attract remote workers, any marketing campaign for Valley Falls could focus on attracting remote-capable employees from the Capital Region, particularly those who have family in the village or were once residents. The messaging could prioritize what the Village can offer that is important to these remote workers, such as high speed and high capacity internet, quality of life, low cost of living, community connectivity, rich culture and history, and natural assets.

### ② It's recommended that attracting remote workers be part of a comprehensive economic development approach.

The success of a remote worker initiative in Valley Falls hinges on its seamless integration into the overarching economic development efforts. This entails undertaking comprehensive measures to modernize and diversify the housing stock and encourage a mix of local business offerings. While attracting remote workers to Valley Falls would have some economic advantages, a multi-pronged approach is needed to re-build a diverse economic foundation for the Village and support long-term community vitality.





**SECTION 4**

# Valley Falls BOA Proposed Area Plan

*This section describes the proposed area plan for the Historic Valley Falls BOA and includes a detailed overview of the proposed projects that comprise the area plan. The proposed area plan builds on the opportunities identified in the Existing Conditions Analysis (Chapter 3) and advances the community vision and goals presented in Chapter 1. Specific topics addressed in this section include:*

- *Alignment of Area Plan with Community Goals*
- *Proposed Area Plan*
- *Proposed Projects*

## Introduction

The Historic Valley Falls BOA proposed area plan presents a cohesive vision for the future of the Village. It is based on public input and the community's vision, goals, and strategies, and it is intended to guide future development and policy decisions in the near- and long-term. The area plan consists of a mix of complementary private and public projects, which were identified to advance the opportunities and address the challenges identified in the Existing Conditions Analysis (Section 3) and in direct response to public input and feedback from the Steering Committee.

The next page clearly defines the ways in which the Historic Valley Falls BOA advances the community's goals and is followed by an illustration of the proposed area plan and a detailed description of the proposed projects and programs that comprise the area plan.



## Goal #1



### Preserve and maintain the Village's quaint, historic character.

**The plan advances this goal by:**

- ✓ Encouraging the adaptive reuse and rehabilitating of existing structures and the infill of vacant lots
- ✓ Adopting land use regulations to achieve the Village's desired character.
- ✓ Developing educational resources for property owners about accessing historic preservation tax credits to support rehabilitation of historic buildings in the Village

## Goal #2



### Upgrade and maintain the Village's public infrastructure.

**The plan advances this goal by:**

- ✓ Repairing sidewalks and drainage along the State Street corridor to improve accessibility and sustainably manage stormwater runoff
- ✓ Upgrading and expanding the amenities at the Village Park to increase accessibility and serve the community
- ✓ Enhancing safety and accessibility at the State Street and NY-67 intersection

## Goal #3



### Celebrate the Village's natural beauty by expanding recreational resources.

**The plan advances this goal by:**

- ✓ Developing the former Thompson Mill as a publicly accessible waterfront park
- ✓ Creating an interconnected system of sidewalks, trails, and community services to encourage active modes of transportation providing access to local and regional destinations
- ✓ Diversifying recreational resources to appeal to all ages and abilities

## Goal #4



### Encourage local economic development to activate the Village's main thoroughfares.

**The plan advances this goal by:**

- ✓ Allowing for a mixing of land uses
- ✓ Adopting land use regulations to define where commercial land uses are desired
- ✓ Encouraging small-scale locally-owned businesses to occupy and activate existing historic buildings

## Goal #5



### Support a lively, multi-generational community.





**The plan advances this goal by:**

- ✓ Developing land use and development regulations that support aging in place
- ✓ Improving pedestrian infrastructure to provide healthy, walkable connections throughout the Village
- ✓ Rehabilitating the former Fire Department and Village Hall to expand community services and amenities

# Proposed Area Plan



## Proposed Area Plan Key

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|  Strategic Sites |  New Building |  Adaptive Reuse of Existing Building |
|  Public Parking  |  Trailhead    |  Walking Loops                       |

### Strategic Sites (see map on previous page)

- 1 Waterfront Park at the former Thompson Mill Site
- 2 State Street Corridor Improvements
- 3 Village Gateway and Intersection Improvements at State Street / NY-67
- 4 Alley Enhancements
- 5 Rehabilitation of the Village Hall and Former Fire Department
- 6 Village Playground Improvements
- 7 Adaptive Reuse of Former Church
- 8 Rail to Trail
- 9 Lyon Street Properties
- 10 Valley Falls Post Office
- 11 Valley Falls Auto Repair
- 12 Maintaining Light Industry on Charles Street

# Waterfront Park at the Former Thompson Mill Site

Area Plan Site: **1**



## Location

243 Poplar Ave / 1836 NY-67 / 1839 NY-67 / West of Powder Mill Rd

## Property Owner

Village of Valley Falls / Valley Falls Associates LP

## Timeframe

Long-Term, 5+ Years

## Estimated Cost

\$3-8 million

- \$2 million for park design and construction
- \$1 million for upgraded at-grade rail crossing (opt. 1)
- \$6 million for bridge/ramp system design and construction (opt. 2)

## Goals Achieved:



**Upgrade Infrastructure**



**Preserve Character**



**Expand Recreation**



**Support Lively Community**

## Project Description:

The former Thompson Mill property presents a current challenge, but also a unique opportunity for the Village. Situated along the banks of the Hoosic River at the gateway to the Village, this contaminated site contains the community's wastewater treatment facility and the remains of the historic Thompson Mill structure. In its current condition, the Thompson Mill site is an eyesore and poses risks and liabilities to Valley Falls. As such, the site detracts from first impressions of Valley Falls for visitors and residents alike. Proposed improvements include the removal of the former mill building and redevelopment of the site as a public waterfront park that celebrates the Village's indigenous and industrial past, provides access to the Hoosic River, and supports a diversity of different uses and user groups.

Two conceptual design alternatives are presented on the next page for the future park. Both alternatives include a 12-foot wide pedestrian access ramp connecting Poplar Avenue to the park. Due to the presence of the railroad, this pedestrian access ramp will begin as a bridge to achieve the necessary vertical clearance over the railroad and then will descend into the park at an accessible grade, providing a unique perspective and experience of this stunning site on the banks of the Hoosic River. Both alternatives also include:

- Accessible walking trails winding throughout the site;
- Biking trails (natural surface);
- Interpretive signage along the park entrance ramp system telling the story of the former Mill and the area's indigenous people;
- A gathering area, flexible use spaces, fishing access, and a natural play area;
- Emergency and maintenance park access via the at-grade rail crossing adjacent to the wastewater treatment plant; and,
- A dedicated parking area for the park. In the first alternative, parking is proposed as part of Strategic Site #3 on the southeast corner of the State Street / NY-67 intersection. In the second alternative, parking is proposed along Poplar Avenue, immediately adjacent to the park entrance

Development of the proposed park is closely tied to the implementation of intersection improvements at State Street and NY-67 (Strategic Site #3). As this intersection is redesigned, it is recommended that it be considered both a gateway to the Village and to the future park.

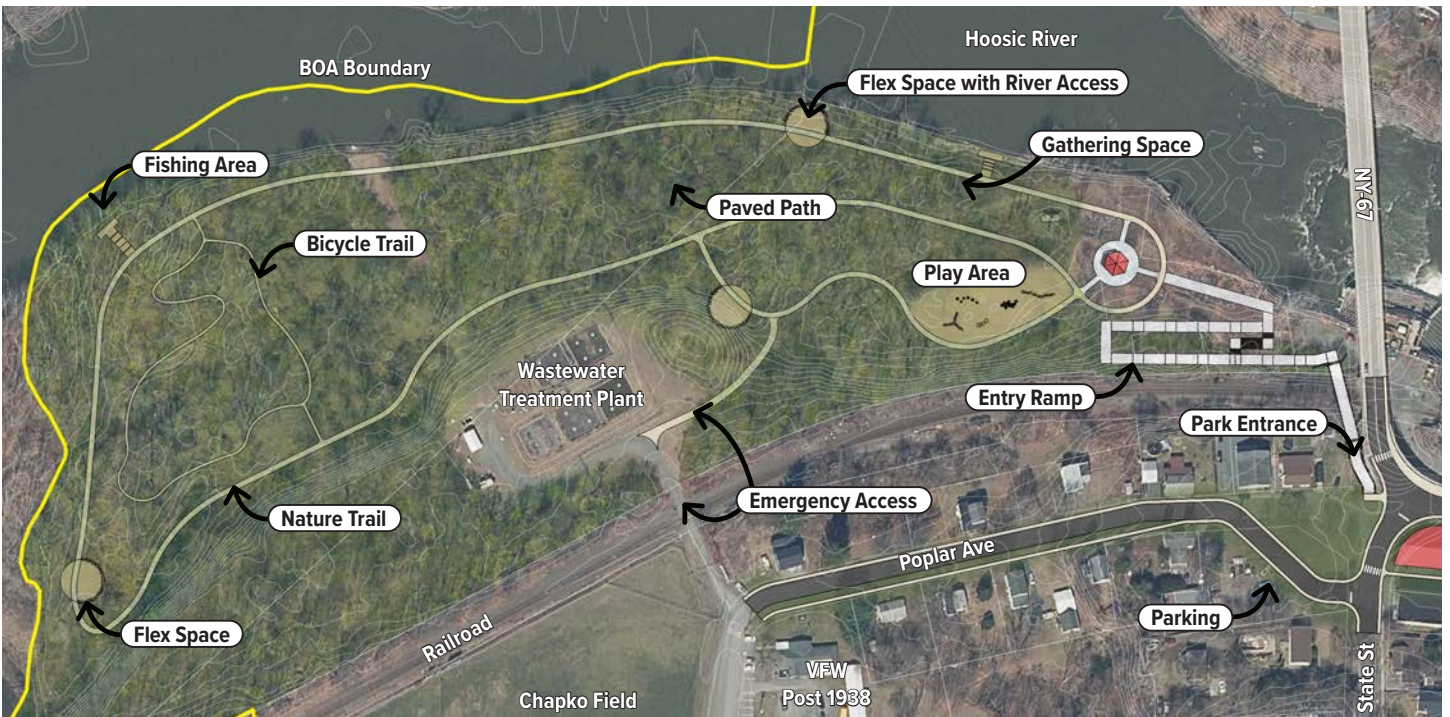


*Existing condition of the Thompson Mill property*

### Conceptual Rendering Alternative 1



### Conceptual Rendering Alternative 2



# State Street Corridor Improvements

Area Plan Site: **2**



## Location

1-53 State Street

## Property Owner

Rensselaer County

## Timeframe

Short-Term, 1-3 Years

## Estimated Cost

\$1.5 million

## Goals Achieved:



**Upgrade  
Infrastructure**



**Support Lively  
Community**

## Project Description:

The State Street corridor is the main thoroughfare in the Village of Valley Falls with historic homes lining the street. The roadway is owned and maintained by the County of Rensselaer and serves Village residents and visitors, including hundreds of children every Halloween. Infrastructure improvements are needed to improve on-street parking, pedestrian accessibility and experience, and drainage conditions. In particular, stormwater infrastructure varies along the length of the street with drainage managed in both open and closed systems. Stormwater runoff from State Street also negatively impacts the area in front of the Valley Falls Free Library on a regular basis.

Proposed improvements along State Street include:

- Sidewalk repairs and replacement on both sides of State Street to promote Village walkability and community health;
- Accessibility improvements at intersections, including curb ramps and detectable warning surfaces;
- Resurfacing and restriping of the road to clearly delineate on-street parking along the length of State Street. This will also require regrading of several steep slopes at the edges of the roadway; and,
- Stormwater drainage system improvements. These drainage improvements could be implemented as bioretention areas, a closed drainage system, or a combination of both. A bioretention system would include native plantings to manage large amounts of rainfall and runoff, increase and support biodiversity, and provide a landscaped buffer between pedestrian facilities and the street. A closed drainage system would channel all stormwater into catch basins and an underground drainage system, resulting in a gently sloping lawn between the sidewalk and street.

Improvements along the State Street corridor are closely tied to the implementation of intersection improvements at State Street and NY-67 (Strategic Site #3).

Therefore, it is recommended that the design of these two projects is advanced simultaneously.



*Existing condition of the open drainage along State Street*



### Conceptual Rendering Alternative 1

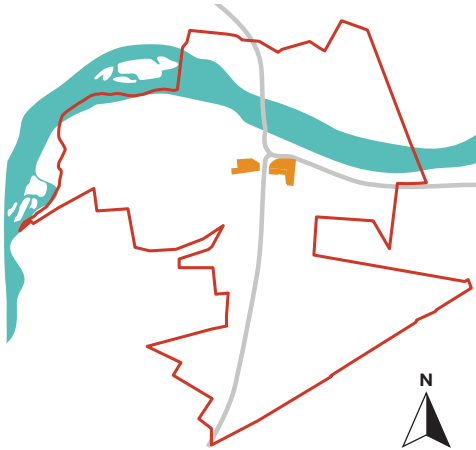


### Conceptual Rendering Alternative 2



# Village Gateway and Intersection Improvements at State Street / NY-67

Area Plan Site: **3**



**Location**

SE of intersection: 2 State Street / NY-67  
 SW of intersection: 1 State Street

**Property Owner**

Valley Falls Associates Inc. and Gregg Properties LLC / private

**Timeframe**

Long-Term, 5+ Years

**Estimated Cost**

\$3.75 million  
 (intersection improvements only)

**Goals Achieved:**



Upgrade Infrastructure



Expand Recreation



Support Lively Community

**Project Description:**

Located at the northern entrance to the Village, the intersection of State Street and NY-67 has the potential to become a prominent gateway into the Village of Valley Falls and the proposed waterfront park. The current configuration of the intersection enables motorists to easily bypass the Village, and it is a challenging intersection for pedestrians to cross. This intersection is also a major connection between the north and south sides of the Village; residents on the north side of the Hoosic River must cross this intersection to access all Village amenities.

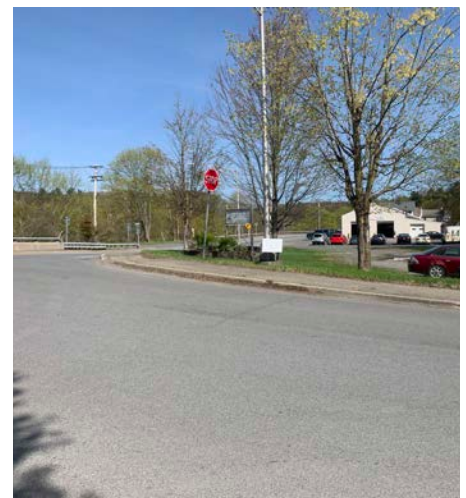
Proposed improvements at this intersection include reconfiguring the intersection to reduce potential conflicts, enhance pedestrian safety and accessibility, and create a gateway to the Village and future waterfront park. Two conceptual design alternatives for this intersection are described below:

**Alternative 1:** Reconfigure Poplar Avenue so that it intersects with State Street farther south of NY-67 to simplify the intersection and reduce potential conflicts.

**Alternative 2:** Redesign the intersection as a round-a-bout to slow traffic, create a more prominent gateway to the Village, and improve access to the future proposed waterfront park at the former Thompson Mill site.

This intersection also poses a prime opportunity for new, potentially more dense, development in the future. It is easily accessible and highly visible from NY-67 and is flanked by vacant and underutilized properties. New development at this intersection could include commercial uses, a mix of commercial and residential uses, or residential uses that diversify the Village’s housing stock (e.g., housing for seniors). Not only would new development at this intersection create more economic opportunity, but it would also reinforce this intersection as a gateway to the Village.

**To advance this project, a Phase 1 Environmental Assessment was conducted at 2 State Street and NY-67. See Appendix F for the full Phase 1 Environmental Assessment report.**



Existing condition at the intersection of NY-67 and Poplar Avenue

**Conceptual Rendering Alternative 1**



**Conceptual Rendering Alternative 2**



**Conceptual Rendering Alternative 2**



# Alley Enhancements

Area Plan Site: 4



Conceptual Rendering



## Location

East of 18-48 State Street

## Property Owner

Village of Valley Falls

## Timeframe

Mid-Term, 3-5 Years

## Estimated Cost

\$55,000 (upgrade surfacing)

\$25,000 - \$100,000 (murals / rotating art shows)

## Project Description:

The alley between State Street and Charles Street is a utilitarian corridor, predominantly used for rear access, parking, and trash pickup for the residences with frontages along the alley. Several community facilities also have frontage along the alley or are proximate to the alley, including the Village Hall and its community garden, the former Fire Department, the Methodist Church (which hosts the summer youth program), and the Valley Falls Free Library.

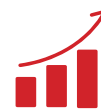
The alley also provides a unique perspective of the Village's historic properties, including their iconic barns. In an effort to enhance walkability, celebrate the Village's historic district, and activate this alley with community events while still maintaining its utilitarian functions, the following improvements are recommended:

- Upgrade the surfacing of the alley to increase accessibility and formalize the alley as a connector to several Village amenities such as the Valley Falls Free Library, Village Hall, Methodist Church, and the Village park; and
- Host community events in the alley periodically to draw visitors and grow the local economy. Events may include historic walking tours, barn sales, community art shows, barn quilt displays, community garden sales, and Halloween-related events.

## Goals Achieved:



Preserve Character



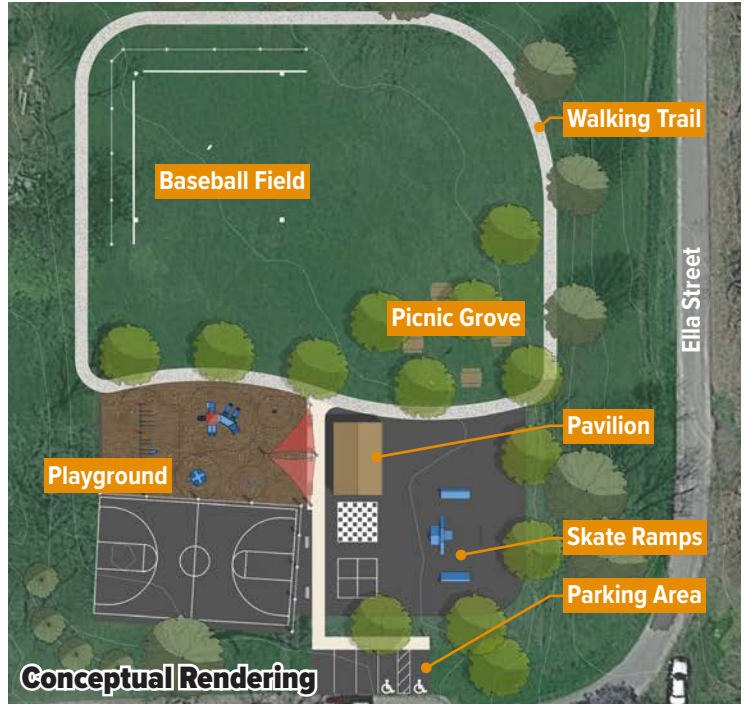
Grow Economy



Support Lively Community

# Village Playground Improvements

Area Plan Site: 6



### Location

Edward Street

### Property Owner

Village of Valley Falls

### Timeframe

Short-Term, 1-3 Years

### Estimated Cost

\$300,000

### Project Description:

The Village Park is the only public playground in the Town of Pittstown that is not affiliated with a school, and it is the only public green space in the Village, making it a major asset to the local and regional community. While several recent improvements have been made to the Village Park, the play equipment is outdated, the playground surfacing does not meet safety standards, and several other improvements have been identified to increase the park's accessibility and appeal to a broader population, including:

- An updated playground with new accessible play equipment and safety surfacing, benches, and shade structures;
- Skate park features;
- A formalized parking area along Edward Street to with accessible spaces and charging stations;
- A new picnic grove with picnic tables and large shade trees; and,
- A new accessible stone dust walking loop.

### Goals Achieved:



Expand Recreation



Support Lively Community



Upgrade Infrastructure

# Rehabilitation of the Village Hall and Former Fire Department

Area Plan Site: **5**



## Location

11 Charles Street / 9 Charles Street

## Property Owner

Village of Valley Falls

## Timeframe

Mid-Term, 3-5 Years

## Estimated Cost

\$30,000 (for building condition assessment and programming plan; construction costs TBD)

## Goals Achieved:



Upgrade  
Infrastructure



Expand  
Recreation



Support Lively  
Community

## Project Description:

The Village Hall and former Fire Department are immediately adjacent properties on Charles Street. Currently, the former Fire Department is vacant and the building will require significant improvements before it can support a new use. The Village Hall houses the Village offices and is used for Village Board meetings, community meetings, and has a community garden behind the building. Both buildings are centrally located in the BOA and proposed improvements focus on modernizing these existing structures and expanding the resources, amenities, and services these spaces provide to the public.

The following improvements are recommended to enhance the Village Hall and former Fire Department structure so they better serve the community:

- Rehabilitate the existing Village Hall to include an updated meeting space, a full or partial community kitchen, and an expanded community garden;
- Rehabilitate the former Fire Department to stabilize the structure;
- Renovate the interior of the former Fire Department to introduce new community amenities, such as an indoor recreational facility, a gym and exercise space, and/or a multi-purpose community room that can be used for youth programs or a game room with ping pong, foosball, puzzles, board games, etc.; and
- Establish a shared outdoor seating area with picnic tables and shade structures that complements the community garden and supports community gatherings and garden parties/sales.



Existing condition of the Village Hall and former Fire Department

**Representative Imagery**



**Representative Imagery**



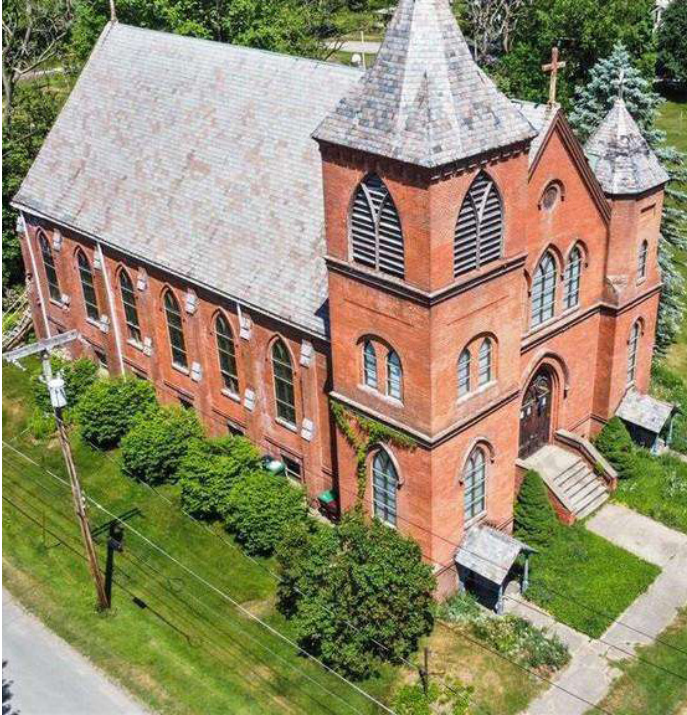
**Representative Imagery**



# Adaptive Reuse of Former Church

Area Plan Site: **7**

## Existing Condition



## Representative Imagery



## Project Description:

The former church on the corner of Emily Street and Charles Street was purchased in 2021 by a private owner. It is adjacent to the Village Park and features a large lawn area. The following design features are recommended:

- Adaptive reuse of the church to preserve its historic character;
- Establish the former church as an event venue that could host weddings, markets, conferences, live music, and other community events to grow the local economy and attract visitors; and
- Transform the lawn area into a botanical garden or other outdoor destination that supports events at the former church but is also compatible with adjacent residential uses.

## Location

12 Emily Street

## Property Owner

Private

## Timeframe

Short-Term, 1-3 Years

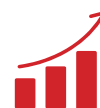
## Estimated Cost

Unknown at this time

## Goals Achieved:



**Preserve Character**



**Grow Economy**



# Rail To Trail

Area Plan Site: 8



**Location**

Coons Road

**Property Owner**

Boston & Main Corp.

**Timeframe**

Mid-Term, 3-5 Years

**Estimated Cost**

\$550,000

*(does not include property acquisition)*

**Project Description:**

The former Boston and Maine railroad corridor that serves as the southern boundary of the BOA is currently overgrown and underutilized. This half-mile corridor, which parallels Coons Road and is accessible via Lyon Street, has been identified as part of a proposed regional trail system that could connect the Village to the City of Troy and Vermont. To advance this regional trail concept, expand Village recreation, and support healthy living, the following improvements are recommended to:

- Creation of a trailhead at Lyon Road that features trail signage and pet-waste bags and receptacles; and,
- A new 12-foot wide paved multi-use path for pedestrians and bicyclists, which could be expanded west to Troy and east to Vermont in the future.

**Goals Achieved:**



**Expand Recreation**



**Support Lively Community**

## Long-Term Development of Other Strategic Sites

Area Plan Site: 9 10 11



### Location

Varies

### Property Owner

Varies

*To advance this project, a Phase 1 Environmental Assessment was conducted at 16 Charles Street and 50 State Street. See Appendix F for the full Phase 1 Environmental Assessment report.*

### Project Description:

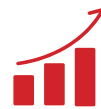
Many of the strategic sites identified in this BOA Plan are privately-owned. If the use or ownership of these properties changes, additional environmental investigations and redevelopment of these properties in line with vision and goals of this BOA Plan are recommended. Below are several potential redevelopment scenarios for privately-owned strategic sites that could positively benefit the community by providing space for new housing, businesses, or other amenities.

- **Valley Falls Post Office:** Continue to maintain this structure as mixed-use, with a retail on the ground floor and residential spaces on the upper floor;
- **Lyon Street Properties:** Pending additional environmental investigations related to the chlorinated solvent plume impacting these properties, future uses may include expanded residential uses that diversify the Village's housing stock (e.g., patio homes for aging residents); and
- **Valley Falls Auto Repair:** Maintain as a commercial use, but consider redeveloping at a higher density and/or introducing other complementary uses (e.g., residential on the upper floors).

### Goals Achieved:



Preserve Character



Grow Economy

## Maintaining Light Industry on Charles Street

Area Plan Site: 12



### Location

10 Charles Street

### Property Owner

Stephen Bader Co. Inc.

### Project Description:

Stephen Bader Co. Inc. is a manufacturing company located on Charles Street across from the Village Hall and the former Fire Department. It is recommended that this property remain as a light industrial use to grow and diversify the local economy. If the opportunity arises to renovate and redevelop the former school located on this property, environmental investigations will be necessary to identify any potential impacts from the chlorinated solvent plume associated with 11 Lyons Street. Redevelopment of the former school would preserve a contributing structure in the Valley Falls Historic District and could serve other community needs, such as housing.

### Goals Achieved:



Grow Economy



Preserve Character

# Educational Resources for Accessing Historic Preservation Tax Credits

Village-wide

Representative Imagery



**Location**

Entire BOA Boundary

**Property Owner**

Multiple

**Timeframe**

Short-Term, 1-3 Years

**Estimated Cost**

\$5,000-\$10,000 per year for programming and educational resources

**Project Description:**

A majority of the structures in the Valley Falls BOA are located within the Valley Falls Historic District, which is listed on the National and State Register of Historic Places. The designation of the historic district is relatively recent, and there is a need to better educate property owners about the benefits of historic tax credits and how to access those credits. Furthermore, expanding access to financial support for building renovations will help preserve the quality and character of the Village’s historic building stock.

The following actions are recommended to educate the community about and expand the use of historic preservation tax credits:

- Provide educational resources on historic preservation tax credits in the library and host multiple training sessions each year;
- Inform all new property owners in the Village about the availability and benefits of historic tax credits; and,
- Host walking tours of the historic district to broaden general awareness of the Village’s history and historic resources.

**Goals Achieved:**



**Preserve Character**



**Grow Economy**

# Development of Land Use Regulations

Village-wide



## Location

Entire BOA Boundary

## Property Owner

Multiple

## Timeframe

Short-Term, 1-3 Years

## Estimated Cost

\$50,000 - \$150,000 for land use regulations

\$100,000 - \$200,000 for joint comprehensive planning effort

## Goals Achieved:



Preserve  
Character



Grow  
Economy



Support Lively  
Community

## Project Description:

As of the writing of this plan Valley Falls has no formal land use regulations. The Village Board recognizes this is a situation that needs to be addressed in the near future. As a result, the Village adopted a moratorium on May 18, 2021. The moratorium states:

*“The Village of Valley Falls currently lacks a comprehensive development plan and an associated structure of zoning regulations. As such, it is possible that development could occur that is detrimental to the value of property currently held by Village property owners, the quality of life established in the Village, or the health and safety of Village residents...Until such time as the Village adopts a formal Comprehensive Plan (“Master Plan”) governing development within Village limits and the establishment and application of appropriate associated planning and zoning regulations, allowable development shall be restricted to single-unit residential properties. No new commercial development shall be allowed, and no change in the use of existing properties, residential or commercial, shall be authorized without the express authority of the Board of Trustees until such time as a Master Plan for the Village is in effect.”*

It is important to understand that local land use regulations can take many forms and are tailored to reflect the community’s values. The following approaches represent a range of regulatory techniques that could be considered by the Village.

- Local Land Use Law:** Some communities adopt a Local Land Use Law as a precursor to a zoning code. This law would apply to the Village and can address Site Plan Review, the issuance of Special Permits, prohibited uses, signs, lot sizes and setbacks, buffering requirements, and requirements for specified uses. Unlike a zoning code, this law does not divide the entire Village into separate districts. It may not ensure that incompatible land uses are not placed next to each other. Its goal is to ensure that adjacent land uses are arranged to ensure they do not negatively impact surrounding properties and the natural environment.
- Village Design Guidelines or Handbook:** These can be a stand-alone document or a part of a Local Land Use Law. They are intended to assist the Village in conducting site plan reviews by recommending approaches to site layout that preserves the traditional character of the community. Topics typically addressed include the placement of buildings and driveways, the preservation of the historic development pattern and architectural features, and the conservation of the natural environment.
- Zoning Code:** The primary purpose of zoning is to protect a community’s health, safety, and welfare through establishing land use controls. According to the NYS Department of State, “Zoning regulations should be carefully constructed to make sure they will help carry out municipal planning goals. Some communities don’t pay enough attention to the translation of those goals into the drafting of their zoning regulations. The result often brings frustration with zoning itself as a technique, when in reality the problem is that the zoning regulations have not been carefully enough constructed. This will in turn frustrate the achievement of municipal planning goals.” In other words, if Valley Falls chooses to develop of a zoning code, it is recommended that the content not be “borrowed” from another community but written specifically for the Village to achieve the proper level of regulation.

### Proposed Land Use Plan



#### Legend\*

- Mixed-Use (retail + residential)
- Community Service
- Event Space
- Recreation
- Opportunity for Commercial/Higher Density Development (ex. senior housing)
- Ⓜ Trailhead

*\*all other areas recommended as residential uses, with consideration for allowing accessory dwelling units and other strategies that increase density while preserving the Village's character*



## SECTION 5

# Implementation Strategy

*This section provides an action plan for implementing the proposed area plan and recommended projects in Section 4. The Short-Term Action Plan outlines immediate next steps that can be funded through BOA Pre-Development funds to advance community priorities. The Longer-Term Action Plan organizes all project recommendations and aligns them with potential regional, state, and federal funding sources. Specific topics covered in this section include:*

- *Short-Term Action Plan*
- *Potential Funding Sources*
- *Long-Term Action Plan*

# Implementation Plan Overview

This Section establishes an implementation plan for advancing the proposed projects, policies, and programs described in Section 4 of this Plan. Specifically, this Section identifies lead project sponsors, key partners, planning-level cost estimates, potential funding sources, necessary pre-development work, and approximate time frames for implementation.

In order to clearly differentiate between short-term and long-term actions needed to maintain the Plan's momentum and achieve the community's vision, the implementation plan is divided into two subsections:

**1. Short-Term Action Plan.** These actions focus on advancing high priority projects and are eligible for pre-development funding through the BOA program.

**2. Long-Term Action Plan.** This comprehensive action plan defines next steps for all recommended projects and programs contained in Section 4 of this Plan.

## Short-Term Action Plan

### *Eligible for Pre-Development BOA Funding*

Upon designation by the New York State Secretary of State, the Village of Valley Falls BOA will become eligible for pre-development funding through the NYSDOS BOA Program. This subsection identifies pre-development actions that are eligible for BOA funding which will advance priority projects identified in this Plan. Project actions identified in this subsection include:

- Projects, policies, and programs that are community priorities;
- Sites where additional environmental assessment work is required;
- Sites where additional pre-development work is required to attract investment; and/or
- Sites with public control or a willing property owner.

## Long-Term Action Plan

This subsection outlines a long-term approach to implementing all of the capital projects, regulations, and programs recommended in Section 4 of this Plan. The matrix is organized by project type and identifies lead project sponsors, key partners, anticipated project implementation time frames, action items, planning-level cost estimates and potential funding sources. This subsection also includes a summary of other potential regional, state, and federal funding sources that could be leveraged to assist with implementation.

## ! Priority Projects

Based on conversations with the Steering Committee and the public, the following projects were identified as community priorities:

- Development of land use regulations (Village-wide);
- Removal of the former Thompson Mill building and creation of a riverfront park;
- Infrastructure improvements along the State Street corridor to address drainage issues, increase pedestrian safety, and create a welcoming gateway into the Village;
- Upgrades to the Village Park and Playground;
- Rehabilitation of the former fire department and Village Hall; and,
- Development of educational resources to increase the use of historic tax credits for building renovations.



### Eligible Pre-Development Activities

Available Funding for Designated BOAs

Eligible Pre-Development Activities	Examples
<b>Development of Marketing Materials</b>	Market analyses; creation of websites, brochures, and other materials to promote BOA projects
<b>Development of Plans and Specifications</b>	Schematic design; survey; construction document development
<b>Real Estate Services</b>	Creation of developer RFPs; legal services; development of real estate disposition strategies
<b>Building Conditions Studies</b>	Architectural and structural studies; lead, mold, asbestos, radon, and/or vapor intrusion surveys
<b>Infrastructure Analyses</b>	Feasibility studies; traffic studies; infrastructure improvement plans
<b>Zoning and Regulatory Updates</b>	Developing land use regulations
<b>Environmental, Housing, and Economic Studies</b>	Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs); archaeological/cultural surveys; financial feasibility studies; target industry analysis (e.g., tourism, housing, industrial)
<b>Public Outreach</b>	Community meetings; neighborhood events; temporary demonstration projects

## Short-Term Action Plan

### Actions Recommended for Pre-Development BOA Funding

The following table identifies recommended actions to pursue once the Historic Valley Falls BOA receives designation from the New York State Secretary of State. This section only includes projects that are ready to move forward in the near-term, advance the community's vision and goals and are community priorities, align with BOA pre-development funding requirements, and are necessary next steps to further develop, refine, and better position proposed projects for implementation.

Area Plan ID	Project Description	Lead / Partners	Actions Eligible for Pre-Development Funding
<b>Village-Wide</b>	<p><b>Development of Land Use Regulations.</b> Develop Village-wide land use regulations in alignment with the proposed BOA area plan and community vision.</p>	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYS DOS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of regulations (\$30,000-\$100,000)</li> <li>• Public outreach</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p><b>Waterfront Park at the Former Thompson Mill Site.</b> Development of a waterfront park including a pedestrian ramp park entrance, accessible walking trails, biking and hiking trails, parking, pavilion, flexible use spaces, fishing access, and a natural play area.</p> <p><i>*Advancement of this project requires the removal of the former Thompson Mill Building and any necessary site remediation. Funding for building removal and site remediation is currently being pursued through US EPA funding sources</i></p>	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Valley Falls Free Library</li> <li>• NYS OPRHP</li> <li>• NYS DEC</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey (\$100,000)</li> <li>• Development of design documents (\$300,000)</li> <li>• Public outreach</li> </ul>
<b>2 and 3</b>	<p><b>State Street Corridor Improvements and Intersection Improvements at State / NY-67.</b> Improvements along the State Street corridor and at the intersection of State Street and NY-67 to create a gateway into the Village, increase pedestrian safety, accessibility, and walkability and improve drainage. Pre-development activities include conducting a feasibility study to evaluate concept alternatives through a public process, obtaining survey, and developing construction documents.</p>	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rensselaer County</li> <li>• NYS DOT</li> <li>• Capital Region Transportation Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feasibility Study (\$55,000)</li> <li>• Survey and development of design documents (\$350,000 - \$500,000)</li> <li>• Public outreach</li> </ul>



## Accessing BOA funding through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA)

As part of New York's efforts to expand economic growth, the NYS Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) was created to support the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) Initiative. The CFA allows applicants to access multiple state funding sources, including BOA pre-development funds, through one application.

**Plan ahead!** The CFA typically opens in May each year and grant applications must be submitted by the end of July. Many funding programs also require a local resolution to be passed in support of the grant application. All of the actions identified in this Short-Term Action Plan could be advanced through a CFA application.

Area Plan ID	Project Description	Lead / Partners	Actions Eligible for Pre-Development Funding
4	<p><b>Alley Enhancement.</b> Physical improvements to make the alley an accessible and walkable corridor connecting multiple Village destinations. This project also includes intermittent activation of the alley with temporary events, garden sales, and/or community art exhibits.</p>	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Neighbors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration project to create a series of temporary art installations along the alley (\$50,000)</li> <li>• Hosting Historic District walking tours (\$5,000-\$10,000)</li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Rehabilitation of the Village Hall and Former Fire Department.</b> Renovations to the former Fire Department to stabilize the structure and interior improvements to the Village Hall and former fire department to modernize the facilities and expand access to community resources, amenities, and services.</p>	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Neighbors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building condition assessment for the former Fire Department (\$15,000)</li> <li>• Programming plan for both buildings (\$15,000)</li> <li>• Survey and development of design documents*</li> <li>• Public outreach</li> </ul> <p><i>*Cost will depend on building condition assessment and desired programming</i></p>
6	<p><b>Village Playground Improvements.</b> Upgrades to the Village Playground and Park, including new play equipment and surfacing, accessible parking and charging stations, an accessible walking loop, picnic grove, and a new skatepark.</p>	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Neighbors</li> <li>• Youth summer programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey (\$4,000)</li> <li>• Development of design documents and SEQR (\$12,000)</li> <li>• Public outreach (\$5,000)</li> </ul>

## Short-Term Action Plan (CONT.)

Area Plan ID	Project Description	Lead / Partners	Actions Eligible for Pre-Development Funding
Village-Wide	<p><b>Educational Resources/Programming about Historic Tax Credits.</b> The development of educational resources and programming to expand the community's knowledge of and use of historic tax credits with the Valley Falls Historic District.</p>	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYS OPRHP</li> <li>• Valley Falls Free Library</li> <li>• Good Neighbors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and distribution of educational materials and programming (\$5,000 - \$10,000 annually)</li> <li>• Hosting Historic District walking tours (\$5,000-\$10,000)</li> </ul>
Village-Wide	<p><b>Environmental Studies.</b> Additional environmental investigations are recommended for several sites to better understand the type and extent of potential contamination.</p> <p>Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) are recommended for the following sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 Charles Street and 50 State Street (strategic site #13)</li> <li>• 1842 NY-67 and 2 State Street (strategic sites #3 and #11)</li> <li>• 44 North Street (site #8 on the potential brownfields map in Section 3)</li> </ul> <p>While a Phase I ESA and some ground sampling has been completed, a full Phase II ESA is recommended for the former Thompson Mill Site (strategic site #1).</p>	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property Owners</li> <li>• NYS DEC</li> <li>• NYS DOS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phase I ESA (\$2,500 per site)</li> <li>• Phase II ESA (varies; \$10,000 - \$25,000)</li> <li>• Geophysical Survey (\$10,000 - \$15,000)</li> </ul>



LEE SIGNS  
- VALLEY FALLS -

HONEY CLOVER

## Long-Term Action Plan

### Potential Funding Sources

Many of the proposed projects will require large investments to design, build, and maintain. Therefore, it will be important for the Village to layer multiple funding sources from state and federal sources in order to implement the proposed projects. The table below describes potential funding sources for the implementation of all aspects of the Historic Valley Falls Area Plan — from design through construction — and includes state and federal grant programs and tax credits. These proposed funding sources are linked to relevant projects in the long-term action plan, which begins on page 122. In addition to the funding sources listed below, project-specific funding sources, such as private investment, are also identified in the implementation matrix.

### State Grant Programs

Funding Source Description	Eligible / Relevant Activities	Award
<b>Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) Program, Pre-Development Grants</b> // <i>NYS Department of State (NYS DOS)</i>		
Provides designated BOAs with guidance, expertise, and financial assistance to implement revitalization strategies for neighborhoods or areas affected by brownfields or economic distress	Infrastructures analyses, development of plans and specifications, development of marketing materials, real estate services, building condition assessments, zoning and regulatory updates, environmental studies, housing & economic studies, outreach	Varies; funds can cover up to 90% of total eligible project costs
<b>Climate Smart Communities</b> // <i>NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC)</i>		
Provides technical assistance and grants to help local governments take action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to a changing climate	Implementation of projects related to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions outside the power sector (e.g. transportation) and climate change adaptation (e.g. reducing flood-risk)	Varies; 50% local match required
<b>Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) and NY Forward (NY Forward)</b> // <i>NYS Department of State (NYS DOS)</i>		
Provides technical and financial assistance to transform downtown neighborhoods into vibrant communities where New Yorkers want to live, work and raise families	Development of a Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) and implementation of projects identified in the SIP	\$10 million (DRI); \$4.5 million or \$2.25 million (NYF); one-time award; no local match required for public projects
<b>Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) for Parks, Preservation and Heritage</b> // <i>NYS Office of Parks and Recreation and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP)</i>		
Provides funding for capital projects that protect the environment, expand recreational opportunities, enhance communities, and support historic preservation	Land acquisition, planning and development of new parks, rehabilitation of existing parks	Varies; local match 50% unless in an environmental justice area
<b>Green Innovation Grant Program (GIGP)</b> // <i>NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (NYS EFC)</i>		
Grants for the design and construction of green infrastructure and cutting-edge green technologies	Funds the design and construction of projects that improve water quality and mitigate the effects of climate change through one or more of the following green practices: green stormwater infrastructure, energy efficiency, water efficiency and environmental innovation.	Varies; local match between 10% and 50%

## State Grant Programs (cont.)

Funding Source + Description	Eligible / Relevant Activities	Award
<p><b>HOME Program</b> // U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, NYS Homes + Community Renewal (NYS HCR)</p> <p>Funds may be awarded to units of local government to implement strategies to increase homeownership and affordable housing opportunities for low and very-low income households.</p>	<p>Housing rehabilitation, assistance to renters and home-buyers, new construction of housing for low and very-low income families</p>	<p>Varies</p>
<p><b>Main Street Program</b> // NYS Homes + Community Renewal (NYS HCR)</p> <p>Provides funds to local governments and not-for-profit organizations committed to revitalizing historic downtowns, mixed-use neighborhood commercial districts, and village centers</p>	<p>Mixed-use building renovations (facade and interior), streetscape enhancements paired with building renovations, downtown anchor development</p>	<p>Varies; local match required</p>
<p><b>Market New York - Tourism Grant Program</b> // NYS Empire State Development (NYS ESD)</p> <p>Provides funding to support eligible projects that will create an economic impact by increasing tourism throughout the state</p>	<p>Not-for-profit corporations, municipalities, tourism promotional agencies (TPAs), and public benefit corporations and for-profit companies may apply</p>	<p>Varies; local match required</p>
<p><b>NY-Sun Solar for All</b> // NYS Energy + Research Authority (NYSERDA)</p> <p>A utility bill assistance program for income-eligible households that funds community solar development to benefit homeowners and renters who may not be able to access solar otherwise</p>	<p>Homeowners or tenants that meet the income eligibility criteria are eligible for the program</p>	<p>Up to \$180 annual savings per household</p>
<p><b>Recreational Trails Program</b> // Federal Highway Administration and NYS OPRHP</p> <p>Provides funds to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses</p>	<p>Applicants may include municipalities, state entities, and not-for-profit corporations. Eligible activities include trail condition assessments, trail construction, maintenance and restoration activities, creation of trailheads, and acquisition of easements</p>	<p>Up to \$250,000; local match at least 20%</p>
<p><b>Restore NY</b> // NYS Empire State Development (NYS ESD)</p> <p>Provides financial assistance to municipalities for the revitalization of commercial and residential properties. The program encourages community development and growth through the elimination and redevelopment of blighted structures</p>	<p>Must be initiated by municipalities and priority is given to projects in Empire Zones and Brownfield Opportunity Areas, as well as to projects that leverage other state or federal redevelopment, remediation, or planning programs.</p>	<p>Varies; local match at least 10%</p>
<p><b>Small and Midsize Capital Improvements Grants for Arts and Culture</b> // NYS Council of the Arts</p> <p>Funds nonprofit arts and culture organizations of any size that prioritize accessibility, artistry, cultural development, sustainability, health and safety, and structural and historical improvements</p>	<p>Only funds capital projects and capitably-eligible expenses, including the construction of new facilities and the renovation or restoration of existing buildings, as well as the permanent installation of new, complete equipment systems</p>	<p>\$10,000, \$25,000, and \$50,000 no-match grants are available for organizations with operating budgets under \$2 million</p>
<p><b>Smart Growth Comprehensive Planning</b> // NYS Department of State (NYS DOS)</p> <p>Provides funding to municipalities to plan and zone for their community by addressing all aspects of Smart Growth. This program can also fund joint municipal planning efforts (e.g., a joint comprehensive plan with the Town of Pittstown and the Village of Valley Falls).</p>	<p>Must be initiated by municipalities or counties, regional planning entities, and eligible not-for-profits on behalf of the municipality. Includes preparing the plan and/or zoning ordinance, community engagement, government entities coordination, environmental review, and project management</p>	<p>Varies; local match at least 10%</p>

## Long-Term Action Plan (CONT.)

### State Grant Programs (cont.)

Funding Source + Description	Eligible / Relevant Activities	Award
<b>Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)</b> // Federal Highway Administration, NYS Department of Transportation (DOT), regional transportation council (Capital Region Transportation Council)		
Provides funding for highway, transit, and non-motorized transportation projects	Priority projects are identified with the NYS DOT and the Capital District Transportation Council and align with the four-year Federal Fiscal Year	Varies; local match required
<b>Weatherization Assistance Program</b> // NYS Homes + Community Renewal (NYS HCR)		
Helps reduce heating and cooling costs for income-eligible homeowners and renters by providing free services that help conserve energy and improve safety and health standards	Sealing of holes and cracks, insulation, heating system repairs/ replacement, window and door repair/replacement, minor repairs, mitigation of energy-related health and safety issues	Free for home occupant; owners of rental buildings must invest funds toward weatherization services on their property

### Federal Grant Programs

Funding Source + Description	Eligible / Relevant Activities	Award
<b>Brownfield Assessment Grants</b> // U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)		
Provides funding to local governments to conduct a range of planning activities, develop site-specific cleanup plans, and conduct community engagement related to brownfield sites. This program is for communities that are beginning to address their brownfield challenges, as well as for communities that have ongoing efforts to bring sites into productive reuse.	Eligible activities include inventory activities, monitoring activities, Phase I ESAs, the development of site specific Quality Assurance Plans, Sampling and Analysis Plans or Field Sampling Plans, a wide range of planning activities, and public outreach	Applicants may request up to \$500,000
<b>Brownfields Cleanup Grants</b> // U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)		
Provides funding for eligible entities, including local governments, to carry out cleanup activities at brownfield sites. Applicants must demonstrate that the proposed site(s) has been sufficiently characterized for the cleanup to begin and a Phase II ESA must be underway or completed prior to application submission.	Entities under local government may apply. Applicants must own the site for which it is requesting funding. Grants cover cleanup activities as well as direct costs associated with programmatic management of the grant, such as required performance reporting, cleanup oversight, and environmental monitoring of cleanup work.	Applicants may request up to \$500,00 and in limited instances up to \$2,000,000; a local match of 20% of the total project cost is required



## Federal Grant Programs (cont.)

Funding Source + Description	Eligible / Relevant Activities	Tax Credit
<p><b>Catalyst Program</b> // Northern Border Regional Commission</p> <p>Designed to stimulate economic growth and inspire partnerships that improve rural economic vitality across the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) four-state region. This Program supports a broad range of economic development initiatives that will: modernize and expand water and wastewater systems; revitalize transportation infrastructure; establish workforce development programs and facilities; grow outdoor recreation infrastructure and economies; and construct new childcare and healthcare facilities.</p>	<p>Eligible activities include construction of infrastructure to support economic development, including transportation, basic public, telecommunications, and renewable energy infrastructure. Non-infrastructure activities can also be funded, including resource conservation, tourism, recreation, and preservation of open space, and enhanced access to public services.</p>	<p>Infrastructure projects may receive up to \$3,000,000. Non-infrastructure awards are up to \$500,000. Local match is required but the amount is not specified.</p>

## Tax Credit Programs

Funding Source + Description	Eligible / Relevant Activities	Tax Credit
<p><b>Brownfield Cleanup Program Tax Credit</b> // NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC)</p> <p>Encourages private-sector cleanups of brownfields and promotes their redevelopment.</p> <p>Private developers participating in the Brownfield Cleanup Program to remediate and redevelop sites in a designated BOA are eligible for a tax credit increase or “bump-up” of 5% of the tangible property tax credit when development conforms with the goals and priorities of the designated BOA in which the site is located.</p>	<p>To be eligible for the tax credit, development projects must first be enrolled in the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Brownfield Cleanup Program (BCP).</p>	<p>For a non-manufacturing use, up to \$35M or three times the cost of site preparation; for a manufacturing use, up to \$45M or six times the cost of site preparation</p>
<p><b>Historic District Tax Credit Program</b> // NYS OPRHP and Federal</p> <p>Tax incentives for the rehabilitation of historic commercial and residential properties, and historic barns. There are several different tax credit programs: state and federal tax credit programs for commercial properties, including residential rentals; the State Historic Homeownership Rehabilitation Credit; and, the State Historic Barn Rehabilitation Tax Credit.</p>	<p>Qualified expenses are defined by each tax credit program, but typically include the rehabilitation, repair, maintenance, and upgrades to historic properties. To be eligible for the tax credit, the building must be listed in the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places individually or as a contributing building in a listed Historic District.</p> <p>For the state historic barn tax credit, the barn must be built prior to 1946, but National Register listing is not a requirement.</p>	<p>Tax credits vary by program, but range from a credit of 20% to 30% of the expenditures incurred to rehabilitate a historic building or barn</p>

# Long-Term Action Plan (CONT.)

## Proposed Projects

Area Plan ID	Project	Timeframe	Lead / Partners	Estimated Cost & Funding Sources
1	<p><b>Waterfront Park at the former Thompson Mill Site.</b> Removal of the Thompson Mill building and site remediation. Subsequent development of a waterfront park including a pedestrian ramp park entrance, accessible walking trails, parking, pavilion, flexible use spaces, fishing access, and a natural play area.</p>	<p><b>Building Removal &amp; Remediation</b> Mid-Term (3-5 years)</p> <p><b>Park Construction</b> Long-Term (5+ years)</p>	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Valley Falls Free Library</li> <li>NYS OPRHP</li> <li>NYS DEC</li> <li>US EPA</li> <li>Historic Hudson Hoosic Rivers Partnership</li> <li>Lakes to Locks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$3-5 Million for building removal and remediation</li> <li>\$3-8 Million for park design and construction</li> </ul> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Building Removal and Site Cleanup</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EPA grant programs</li> <li>NRBC Catalyst Program</li> <li>New proposed State Program (NYS Assembly Bill A3988)</li> </ul> <p><i>Pre-Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BOA</li> </ul> <p><i>Construction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NY Forward</li> <li>EPF Parks Program</li> <li>CSC</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>State Street Corridor Improvements.</b> Improvements along the State Street corridor to increase pedestrian safety and accessibility, encourage walking, improve stormwater drainage, and enhance the overall aesthetics of this main corridor. Over time, land use along this corridor may expand to include small-scale retail, such as shops and food/beverage.</p>	<p>Mid-Term (3-5 years)</p>	<p><b>Lead</b> Rensselaer County</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Village of Valley Falls</li> <li>NYS DOT</li> <li>Capital Region Transportation Council</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b> \$1.5 Million</p> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Pre-Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BOA</li> </ul> <p><i>Construction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NY Forward</li> <li>TIP</li> <li>CSC</li> <li>GIGP</li> <li>Main Street Grant</li> <li>Historic District Tax credits</li> <li>NBRC Catalyst Program</li> </ul>

**Proposed Projects (cont.)**

Area Plan ID	Project	Timeframe	Lead / Partners	Estimated Cost & Funding Sources
3	<p><b>Village Gateway and Intersection Improvements at State Street / NY-67.</b>                      Intersection improvements to increase pedestrian safety and accessibility, improve traffic flow and safety, and create a welcoming and recognizable gateway to the Village. Once this intersection is reconfigured, more dense commercial and residential development could occur at this location to reinforce this intersection as a gateway to the Village.</p>	Long-Term (5+ years)	<p><b>Lead</b>                      Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rensselaer County</li> <li>• NYS DOT</li> <li>• Capital Region Transportation Council</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b>                      \$3.75 Million</p> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Pre-Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOA</li> </ul> <p><i>Construction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NY Forward</li> <li>• TIP</li> <li>• NBRC Catalyst Program</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Alley Enhancements.</b>                      Physical improvements to make the alley between State and Charles Streets an accessible and walkable corridor connecting multiple Village destinations. This project also includes intermittent activation of the alley with temporary events, garden sales, Historic District tours, and/or community art exhibits.</p>	Short-Term (1-3 years)	<p><b>Lead</b>                      Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Neighbors</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b>                      \$25,000 - \$100,000</p> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOA</li> <li>• NY Forward</li> <li>• TIP</li> <li>• Market NY</li> </ul>
5	<p><b>Rehabilitation of the Village Hall and Former Fire Department.</b>                      Renovations to the former Fire Department to stabilize the structure and interior improvements to the Village Hall and former fire department to modernize the facilities and expand access to community resources, amenities, and services.</p>	Mid-Term (3-5 years)	<p><b>Lead</b>                      Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Neighbors</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b>                      \$30,000 (for building condition assessment and programming plan; construction costs TBD)</p> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Pre-Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOA</li> <li>• EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant</li> </ul> <p><i>Construction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NY Forward</li> <li>• Capital Improvements for Arts &amp; Culture Grant</li> <li>• NBRC Catalyst Program</li> </ul>

## Long-Term Action Plan (CONT.)

### Proposed Projects (cont.)

Area Plan ID	Project	Timeframe	Lead / Partners	Estimated Cost & Funding Sources
6	<p><b>Village Playground Improvements.</b> Upgrades to the Village Playground and Park, including new play equipment and surfacing, accessible parking and charging stations, an accessible walking loop, picnic grove, and a new skatepark.</p>	Short-Term (1-3 years)	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good Neighbors</li> <li>• Youth summer programs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b> \$300,000</p> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Pre-Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOA</li> </ul> <p><i>Construction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NY Forward</li> <li>• EPF Parks Program</li> </ul>
7	<p><b>Adaptive Reuse of Former Church.</b> Adaptive reuse of the former church at 12 Emily Street to preserve this historic building and its associated grounds and provide a space for small-scale events within the Village.</p>	Mid-Term (3-5 years)	<p><b>Lead</b> Property Owner</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village of Valley Falls</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b> <i>Unknown at this time</i></p> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Pre-Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOA</li> <li>• Private investment</li> </ul> <p><i>Construction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historic District Tax credits</li> <li>• NY Forward</li> <li>• Restore NY</li> <li>• Private investment</li> </ul>
8	<p><b>Rail to Trail.</b> Conversion of the former Boston and Main railroad corridor along the southern boundary of the BOA into a paved multi-use trail, including the establishment of a trailhead at Lyon Street. In the future, this section of trail could connect to a regional trail system following the abandoned rail line and provide connections east to Vermont and west to Troy.</p>	Long-Term (5+ years)	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rensselaer County</li> <li>• Town of Pittstown</li> <li>• Capital Region Transportation Council</li> <li>• Capital District Regional Planning Commission</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b> \$550,000</p> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Pre-Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOA</li> </ul> <p><i>Construction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CSC</li> <li>• NY Forward</li> <li>• Recreational Trails Program</li> <li>• TIP</li> </ul>

**Proposed Projects (cont.)**

Area Plan ID	Project	Timeframe	Lead / Partners	Estimated Cost & Funding Sources
9-12	<p><b>Long-Term Development of Other Strategic Sites.</b> Several strategic sites are privately-owned. Should land use or ownership of these sites change in the future, redevelopment that is consistent with the vision and goals of this BOA Plan is recommended. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Valley Falls Post Office:</b> It is recommended that any future redevelopment of this structure retains retail on the ground floor and residential uses on the upper floor.</li> <li>• <b>Lyon Street Properties:</b> Pending additional environmental investigations related to the chlorinated solvent plume impacting these properties, future uses could include expanded residential uses that diversify the Village’s housing stock (e.g., smaller homes for aging residents).</li> <li>• <b>Valley Falls Auto Repair:</b> It is recommended this property retains commercial uses, but it could be redeveloped at a higher density and/ or other complementary uses (e.g., residential on the upper floors) could be introduced in the future.</li> <li>• <b>10 Charles Street (Bader Manufacturing Facility):</b> It is recommended that this property remain as a light industrial use to continue to grow and diversify the local economy.</li> </ul>	Long-Term (5+ years)	<p><b>Lead</b> Property owners</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village of Valley Falls</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b> <i>Costs will vary based on necessary environmental remediation and future redevelopment plans</i></p> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Environmental Investigations and Remediation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOA</li> <li>• EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant</li> <li>• EPA Brownfield Cleanup Grant</li> </ul> <p><i>Construction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NY Forward</li> <li>• Main Street Grant</li> <li>• Restore NY</li> </ul>

## Long-Term Action Plan (CONT.)

### BOA-Wide Projects

Project	Timeframe	Lead Partners	Funding Sources
<p><b>Land Use Regulations.</b> The development of land use regulations to promote future development in the Village in line with the vision and goals of the comprehensive plan.</p> <p>The development of a comprehensive plan, possibly in partnership with an adjoining municipality (e.g., Town of Pittstown), is recommended as a first step. The comprehensive planning process would establish a vision and policy priorities for the entire Village and could build partnerships with other municipalities that could provide capacity/resources for jointly implementing future land use regulations.</p>	Short-Term (1-3 years)	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYS DOS</li> <li>• Town of Pittstown</li> <li>• Town of Schaghticoke</li> <li>• Rensselaer County</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$50,000 - \$150,000 for land use regulations</li> <li>• \$100,000 - \$200,000 for joint comprehensive planning effort</li> </ul> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <p><i>Comprehensive Plan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smart Growth Grant Program</li> </ul> <p><i>Land Use Regulation Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOA</li> <li>• Smart Growth Grant Program</li> </ul>
<p><b>Educational Resources/Programming about Historic Tax Credits.</b> The development of educational resources and programming to expand the community's knowledge of and use of historic tax credits with the Valley Falls Historic District.</p>	Short-Term (1-3 years)	<p><b>Lead</b> Village of Valley Falls</p> <p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NYS OPRHP</li> <li>• Valley Falls Free Library</li> <li>• Good Neighbors</li> </ul>	<p><b>Estimated Total Cost</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$5,000 - \$10,000 per year for programming and educational resources</li> </ul> <p><b>Potential Funding Sources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BOA</li> <li>• EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant</li> </ul>



Emily St