

PLAN NYACK



Blueprint for the Future

Village of Nyack Comprehensive Plan

Working Draft May 25, 2016

Draft Recommendations

Prepared for
The Village of Nyack

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1. INTRODUCTION AND VISION

VISION STATEMENT

Nyack is a Village that strives to:

- **Value** its rich historic assets and walkable neighborhoods and the diverse and creative culture that has grown from them.
- **Enhance** its Hudson River waterfront as a vital and attractive resource that should be fully accessible and enjoyed by all.
- **Strengthen** its vibrant downtown community to help current businesses thrive, attract new investment and visitors and provide economic opportunities for Village residents.
- **Protect** neighborhood character while creating housing opportunities for a wide range of people, including seniors, young professionals, low-income individuals and families, and the disabled.
- **Create** a sustainable and resilient community capable of balancing interdependent needs in a lasting way, and prepared for and adaptable to the impacts of climate change.

Nyack's Comprehensive Plan seeks to protect and enhance its historic and residential neighborhoods; facilitate revitalization of the downtown, waterfront and gateway areas; and chart a path toward a more sustainable and resilient future.

2. REGIONAL CONTEXT AND HISTORY

REGIONAL PLANNING ISSUES

1. The Tappan Zee Bridge and the I-287 Corridor
2. Watershed Planning and the Nyack Brook
3. Growth and Accommodation of Bicycle Transportation
4. Impact of Major Retail Destinations on Local Commerce
5. Capitalizing on Proximity to an Exceptional Park System

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3. SOCIOECONOMICS AND HOUSING

SOCIOECONOMICS AND HOUSING RECOMMENDATIONS

Growth, Development and Housing

1. Preserve the current overall built context of Nyack and its neighborhoods.
2. Manage growth demand by prioritizing townhouse and multifamily development where appropriate, with sensitivity to the existing village context of low-rise single-, two-, and three-family residences and small apartment buildings.
3. Guide new development toward the most walkable and transit-proximate places to reduce household costs and maximize efficiency of public investments.
4. Increase housing opportunities that respond to Nyack's changing population, including seniors and young adults.
5. Continue to seek federal and state grants for affordable housing.
6. Facilitate maintenance of existing neighborhood multifamily housing stock.

Downtown

1. Prioritize the siting and highest-caliber design of a user-friendly transit hub (bus) serving the Village core and connecting it with regional economic hubs.
2. Encourage redevelopment of the Superblock site with new ground-floor retail, a cultural anchor, upper-floor housing and a public gathering place.

Waterfront

1. Establish and codify a waterfront vision that guides its future redevelopment to provide maximum public benefit and preserve community character; create a new, cohesive civic place and guide future development according to community goals.

4. LAND USE AND ZONING

LAND USE AND ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

Area and Bulk Provisions

1. Consider adjusting FAR and residential density in zoning districts where both are used, to ensure that they function appropriately together.
2. Explore adopting requirements controlling impervious coverage in addition to building coverage or increase open space requirements in more zones.

Downtown Zoning

1. Consider shrinking the boundaries of the DMU district to match those of the DMU Overlay District, and rezoning the remaining areas of the current DMU zone either to the Residential Mixed Use (RMU) district or a newly created transition zone.
2. Explore increasing the allowable height in the DMU zone to four stories, or 48 feet.
3. Within the DMU zone, clarify the bulk and density incentives to determine the specific bonuses or additional uses to be provided.
4. Evaluate whether additional uses may be defined and permitted in the DMU zone, such as microbreweries and live/work studios, to promote a wider range of activities.

Gateway Area

1. Establish site design and landscaping controls to improve functionality and aesthetics. Examples include provisions for building orientation toward the street with parking to the side or rear, more specific landscaping standards and provisions for street trees.

Waterfront

1. Continue to closely monitor the WF zone to ensure an appropriate and complementary development pattern.

Open Space Zoning

1. Look into establishing an open space zone for Memorial Park and Oak Hill Cemetery, or alternatively, rezone the cemetery to SFR-1.

Sustainability Incentives

1. Continue to monitor the effectiveness of the incentives and adjust as needed to ensure they are functioning properly to promote sustainability objectives.
2. Consider adding incentives to promote car-sharing services and charging stations for electric vehicles.

Parking

1. Explore reconfigurations to municipal parking lots, as needed, to ensure their maximum functionality while increasing landscaping and lighting within the lots.
2. Develop a plan to better coordinate public and private parking lots to improve efficiency and aesthetics.
3. Reactivate the in-lieu parking fee and establish a reasonable amount.
4. Consider establishing a designated Parking Manager, reporting to the Village Administrator, to oversee management of funds from in-lieu parking fees and other sources, for use in implementing long-term parking improvements.
5. Grant authority to the Planning Board to reduce parking requirements upon a shared parking analysis showing a lower actual need.

4. LAND USE AND ZONING

6. Look at relaxing parking requirements in the DMU zone.

Application Procedures and Board Duties

1. Consider merging the ARB and Planning Board so that design review is considered as part of site plan or subdivision review. This would retain the full function of the ARB, but would require expansion of the Planning Board to seven members to incorporate additional members from the ARB.
2. Create design guidelines for the mixed-use and CC zones, to provide greater clarity in architectural review.
3. Look into revising the zoning regulations to eliminate aesthetic review of minor building modifications that are not visible from the street.

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5. INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS

Water Supply

1. Advocate for low-impact development and similar best practices in the Lake DeForest watershed area.
2. Through incentives, promote water conservation measures such as reuse of rainwater and greywater; use of efficient building fixtures; and controls on the use of potable water for irrigation, car washing and other outside activities.
3. Incorporate appropriate elements of NYSERDA's *Guide to Water Conservation and Reuse* and the EPA's WaterSense program into the Zoning Code.
4. Continue to implement action items of the Nyack Green Infrastructure Report as appropriate and feasible.
5. Promote residential water conservation through advocacy and education programs.

Sanitary Sewer

1. Explore development of a program to encourage and incentivize the disconnection of illegal downspouts and sump pumps from the sewer system.
2. Establish a discharge compliance certificate program and continue education and outreach about the issues of infiltration and inflow.
3. Support the Town of Orangetown in its infiltration and inflow remediation efforts.

Stormwater Management and Flooding

1. Continue to seek funding and implementation of the Nyack Brook Improvement Project as the Village's highest-priority infrastructure project.
2. Promote the daylighting of the Nyack Brook, as appropriate and feasible, as part of development and redevelopment. Explore the potential for daylighting the Brook at Village-owned properties, where appropriate.
3. Develop planting and maintenance standards for street trees and other trees on Village properties.
4. Undertake a stormwater master plan to establish best management practices for Nyack that address its unique challenges. Some elements of this plan could include:
 - Establishing a stormwater management banking fund that can be used to implement capital projects or identify off-site projects that can address stormwater impacts of future projects.
 - Creating a flood hierarchy plan to identify a priority system for floodable areas such as open space, parking, secondary roads, etc.
 - Explore the potential for green infrastructure elements along Broadway and other Village roadways, to improve stormwater management as well as aesthetics and pedestrian-friendliness.
 - Explore partnerships with vendors for discounted products and installations for permeable pavements, rainwater cisterns and other stormwater runoff reduction methods, with a particular focus on the use of these methods at Village facilities.

Solid Waste

1. Increase the prevalence of recycling Village-wide, with a focus on municipal and Housing Authority facilities.
2. Provide additional locations for recycling in public areas and assess the location of existing recycling bins to ensure effectiveness.

5. INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

3. Promote the reduction of solid waste through programs such as:
 - A public awareness campaign to promote donation of large bulk goods rather than disposal;
 - Publicizing the Rockland County Solid Waste Management Authority's program offering compost bins and rain barrels for purchase;
 - Hosting regular donation or "swap" events for used sports equipment, toys, Halloween costumes, etc.;
 - Consideration of a quantity-based user fee (i.e., pay per bag or pay per pound) to encourage people to reduce the amount of recyclable or compostable material they throw away; and
 - Partnerships with the Nyack Farmer's Market and Community garden to facilitate local composting of food and plant waste.
4. Work with the business community and vendors at the Farmer's Market to reduce the use of disposable bags.
5. Host regular hazardous waste drop-off and shredding events and include electronic waste pickup days several times a year in the carter's contract.

Energy

1. Increase the use of solar energy Village-wide, including consideration of installing solar panels on municipal facilities such as the water plant and holding tank.
2. Promote reduced energy use at municipal and Housing Authority facilities through renovations and retrofits that use energy-efficient technology.
3. Promote the use of energy-efficient street lights and lighting in Memorial Park.

6. TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Vehicular Circulation

1. Reduce congestion along Main Street by upgrading signals with video detection actuation.
2. Increase traffic enforcement in the downtown along Broadway and Main Street to improve circulation and help guide visitors.
3. Create additional loading zones and incentives for businesses to accept deliveries outside of peak hours.
4. Install wayfinding signage at Route 59 and High Avenue gateways to direct visitors to the downtown via Main Street.

Safety

1. Install pedestrian signal heads at all signalized intersections.
2. Reduce speeds by implementing traffic calming on streets identified as high-crash or high-speed corridors.
3. Adopt a Complete Streets Policy.
4. Address the condition of sidewalks in the downtown and residential areas, particularly along Upper Depew and in the Waldron Terrace neighborhood, including pavement conditions, streetscaping and lighting.

Public Transportation

1. Advocate for regional transit improvements and support Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) within Nyack.
2. Explore the feasibility of a shuttle to connect the Nyacks with the Village's downtown.
3. Improve bus stop amenities at all marked stops.

Bicycle Circulation

1. Create a bicycle route network that accommodates local, regional and long-range cyclists.
2. Introduce an improved wayfinding system that directs travelers to appropriate streets and destinations.
3. Increase bicycle parking opportunities in the Village core to encourage local bicycle use.
4. Introduce temporary bicycle corrals or valets in appropriate locations, such as Artopee Way, to accommodate large influxes of bicyclists during summer weekends and special events. Strategic and appropriate placement of bike racks can also serve to calm traffic and clear sidewalks for pedestrian use.
5. Extend the Esposito trail to Depew Avenue and then provide for shared bike lanes into Downtown via Franklin Street.

Pedestrian Circulation

1. Create a pedestrian master plan that provides an implementation strategy for the construction, renovation and ongoing maintenance of sidewalks and pathways, crosswalks and ADA-compliant curb ramps.
2. Develop a "Safe Routes to School" program to focus on improving pedestrian infrastructure within student walk zones.
3. Improve walkability along the Route 59 corridor to strengthen pedestrian connections to the Waldron Terrace neighborhood and Central and West Nyack.
4. Permit restaurants to use parklets, temporary sidewalk extensions installed in parking lanes, during the warmer months to better accommodate outdoor dining and preserve walking space along Downtown streets.
5. Consider stricter guidelines for sidewalk cafes to ensure that sufficient pedestrian space is maintained.

6. TRANSPORTATION

6. Explore the potential for occasional temporary closures of Main Street to create a pedestrian plaza during special events, such as street festivals.

Parking

1. Monitor the parking demand by conducting routine occupancy counts to inform parking management strategies.
2. Review parking regulations to accommodate parking near houses of worship during Saturday and Sunday worship hours and other events.
3. Explore better landscaping and lighting for existing surface lots in the downtown. As new development occurs in the Superblock, encourage the use of high-quality structured parking incorporated with other land uses.
4. Improve landscape, lighting and signage in municipal lots, including the use of green infrastructure to improve stormwater management and reduce the heat island effect.
5. Reserve spaces for electric vehicle charging stations and car-share vehicles in municipal lots.
6. Incorporate parking into wayfinding signage.

Ferry Potential

1. Engage ferry operators to measure their interest in providing service to Nyack at the Village marina site location, with a goal of issuing an RFP early in 2017 to start a seasonal ferry service during the summer of 2017. If there is significant interest in providing a Nyack-to-Manhattan service, follow up in 2017 with a formal Request for Expressions of Interest.
2. Seek State funding for and implement a pilot program to obtain actual ridership data and operator feedback which will inform long-term investment in ferry service
3. Coordinate with other municipalities to develop a network of ferry landings for weekend/recreational use.
4. Seek State funding for development of:
 - A parking terrace to serve Memorial Park, the Village marina, the restaurant and the ferry landing; and
 - If the pilot project proves to be successful, establishment of a more permanent ferry landing at the Village marina.
5. Initiate discussions with the MTA to explore its willingness to contract with a private operator to provide a Nyack-to-Tarrytown ferry service.

7. NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE RECOMMENDATIONS

Natural Resource Protection

1. Consider strengthening the regulation of steep slopes to encourage the use of low-impact development and other development techniques to preserve or enhance the condition of sloped areas.
2. Explore whether the threshold for regulation of multifamily and nonresidential development on steep slopes should be reduced from 50%.
3. Improve and streamline the regulation of tree removal by revising the definition of significant trees, reducing the penalty for violation and improving enforcement.
4. Consider creating a separate section of the Village Code to cover trees, including the portion currently part of the zoning code as well as standards for street trees.
5. Explore ways to encourage homeowners to retain trees and plant additional vegetation, including education and outreach and potentially providing free trees for planting in municipal rights-of-way or front yards.
6. Reassess the View Protection Corridors to better establish the Village's scenic resources and provide greater clarity in their protection.
7. Explore opportunities to daylight the Nyack Brook where it is feasible and appropriate, including encouraging private property owners to daylight portions of the brook on their sites, as was done with the Pavion redevelopment.

Water, Air, Noise and Light Pollution

1. Consider upgrading Village parking lots with green infrastructure and/or solar energy facilities.
2. Develop GHG emissions reduction targets in association with the Nyack Climate Action Plan.
3. Consider changes to the regulation of leaf blowers to reduce their noise and other environmental impacts, and continue to educate property owners about the benefits of mulching in place.
4. Adopt a policy promoting dark sky-friendly lighting that can be considered in land-use approvals and implemented on municipal facilities. Also, study areas where more lighting may be necessary for safety, particularly in the downtown area.

Climate Change

1. Consider the most current climate science in designing, constructing or repairing infrastructure and in reviewing development applicants.
2. Develop a comprehensive emergency management plan and improve emergency communications in the Village.
3. Work with local utilities to improve resilience.
4. Advocate and coordinate with Rockland County, Orangetown and Clarkstown to increase infrastructure, access and stormwater resilience.
5. Work through the Rockland County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan to position Nyack for resiliency actions and funding opportunities.
6. Incorporate sustainability and resilience considerations into a revised LWRP.
7. Adopt and regularly update sea level rise and flood projections recommended by the State and FEMA for municipal decision-making and planning purposes.

7. NATURAL RESOURCES, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

8. Consider promoting “soft” (vegetated) shoreline treatments or riprap except where engineered bulkheads are required for the docking of vessels or other purposes.

Parks and Open Spaces

1. Implement the Memorial Park Master Plan.
2. Enhance the marina through a public-private partnership.
3. Consider relocating Veteran’s Memorial Park as part of a revitalization of the Riverspace site and municipal parking lot, and officially designating the new space as a Village park.
4. Work with the Clermont Condominiums to facilitate repairs to the Clermont Pier and improve its accessibility to the public.
5. Explore the potential to create pocket parks at Village-owned spaces, including the end of Laveta Place, the triangular lot at Depew and Highland Avenues and the reservoir site on Dickinson Avenue, in coordination with adjacent property owners to minimize impacts and DPW to ensure that ongoing maintenance costs can be managed.
6. Consider implementing an ecological restoration project for the State-owned parcel at the southern end of the waterfront.
7. Consider designating the Rockland Rowing Association property for passive open space, and encourage its acquisition by the State, Scenic Hudson or another third party.

8. HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND MUNICIPAL RESOURCES

HISTORIC, CULTURAL AND MUNICIPAL RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS

Historic Preservation

1. Support local preservation advocates in their research on the potential for designation of a local historic district in Nyack.
2. Support state and federal historic designation for individual sites in Nyack, including those already determined eligible for listing.
3. Conduct a public education campaign to inform property owners about the benefits of historic designation.
4. Re-examine the Village's historic preservation regulations to ensure that they meet objectives without over-burdening property owners.
5. Consider establishing design guidelines for historically designated properties.

Arts and Culture

1. Promote Nyack's arts and cultural opportunities through marketing, outreach and special events.
2. Consider establishing an Art in Public Places program modeled after the county's program.
3. Take advantage of regional arts, cultural and tourism organizations such as Historic Hudson River Towns.

Municipal Facilities and Services

1. Pursue a study of a municipal consolidation of Nyack, South Nyack and Upper Nyack.
2. Continue to explore shared services with adjacent municipalities.
3. Explore the potential for a new DPW/firehouse complex on Catherine Street, with the potential for consolidation of one or more nearby firehouses as a result.
4. Explore creation of a new community center complex at the existing Head Start facility to house Head Start, the Senior Center and other services such as a police substation, indoor recreation, a health clinic and the new Rockland Pride Center.
5. Pursue opportunities to improve the functionality of Village Hall, including digitizing records, window replacement and potential added parking.
6. Implement sustainability measures for municipal facilities and services, as recommended by the Sustainable Nyack Action Plan.

9. Economic Development

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Improve Access to Employment Opportunities

1. Facilitate the development of appealing BRT stations in Nyack that improve bus and intermodal transit connections while making the transit experience more attractive.
2. Advocate for the widening of I-87/287 to reduce congestion and ensure continued, free-flowing automobile and bus access to and from Nyack at Exits 10 and 11.
3. Explore the potential for new ferry service to and from Nyack, including a phased approach to infrastructure investment (parking and required dock infrastructure) that could encourage a larger-scale service to develop over time.

Expand the Village Economy

1. Carefully consider sensible locations for limited, attractive office and production spaces, particularly in the Gateway district, to bring good jobs closer to Nyack residents.

Strengthen Sense of Place

1. Leverage a more civic waterfront and Nyack's downtown arts and culture orientation to create activity loops linking these areas.

Reduce Housing Cost Burden

1. Encourage more infill housing, as appropriate, to respond to the ongoing demand for new residential and mixed-use development interest.
2. Consider expanding requirements for mixed-income housing beyond the currently required 10% set-aside. Potential strategies include:
 - Deepening the alternative developer contribution to the Affordable Housing Buyout Fund (currently set at \$40,000 per required unit), or
 - Expanding the inclusionary percentage and AMI requirements to incorporate a wider band of the Village population.

Waterfront

1. Facilitate a unified waterfront experience that offers activities to attract people at more times of day and more times throughout the year. Potential strategies include:
 - Creation of a continuous public waterfront walkway from Memorial Park to the Nyack Boat Club site;
 - More water-related recreational activities (fishing, boating, get-downs and walking);
 - Landscaping that is pedestrian-oriented, with less impervious pavement; and
 - Attracting a high-quality concessionaire to the former River Club restaurant space to generate lease revenue and local spending.
2. Improve wayfinding and signage to create a stronger relationship between the waterfront area and downtown.

Downtown

1. Consider and promote redevelopment alternatives for the Superblock site that include:
 - Improvement of the surface parking lots in the short-term through lighting and landscaping;
 - In the long-term, a potential interior parking structure wrapped in retail and other uses; and

9. Economic Development

- Potential establishment of a cultural use to anchor a mixed-use, mixed-income development at a scale comparable to the opposite (north) side of Main Street.
2. Address issues of flooding downtown during significant storm events, with the Nyack Brook improvement project given high priority.
 3. Promote infill housing at the Superblock and throughout the downtown core, at a range of unit sizes and price points.
 4. Work with representatives in the real estate and business community, including the Nyack and Rockland chambers of commerce, to identify locations for education, job training and greater local employment.
 5. Support the continued success of Visit Nyack and other nonprofit groups working to attract tourism and business to the Village.
 6. Consider creation of a business improvement district (BID) to address concerns about the quality of the public realm, including streetscaping and façade improvements.
 7. Look at ways to streamline regulatory processes for opening businesses, to reduce upfront costs and increase efficiency.
 8. Explore appointing a voluntary or paid business liaison at Village Hall to act as a single point of contact for the business community and develop interest by merchants and businesses that could invest in Nyack.

Gateway

1. Promote new uses that could leverage recent development, including multifamily residential, new office space and light manufacturing/production.
2. Create safer and more attractive pedestrian and bicycling connections between the Gateway and nearby residential neighborhoods through sidewalk improvements, better lighting and marked bicycle routes.
3. Use signage, public art and streetscape improvements to establish an attractive and welcoming entrance into Nyack.