



Downtown & Waterfront Revitalization Plan

for the

Village of Rouses Point



Prepared for:
Village of Rouses Point
Clinton County, New York



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I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Village of Rouses Point is located on Lake Champlain at the northeastern corner of New York State. Rouses Point was founded in 1783 at the site of the northernmost ferry crossing on the lake. The Village's history is directly related to its advantageous position on the Canadian border and Lake Champlain. The only railroad bridge across Lake Champlain linked Rouses Point to Vermont. Later, the only automobile bridge on the lake north of Crown Point was constructed at Rouses Point. The Village was also the northernmost stop on the Lake Champlain Barge Canal.

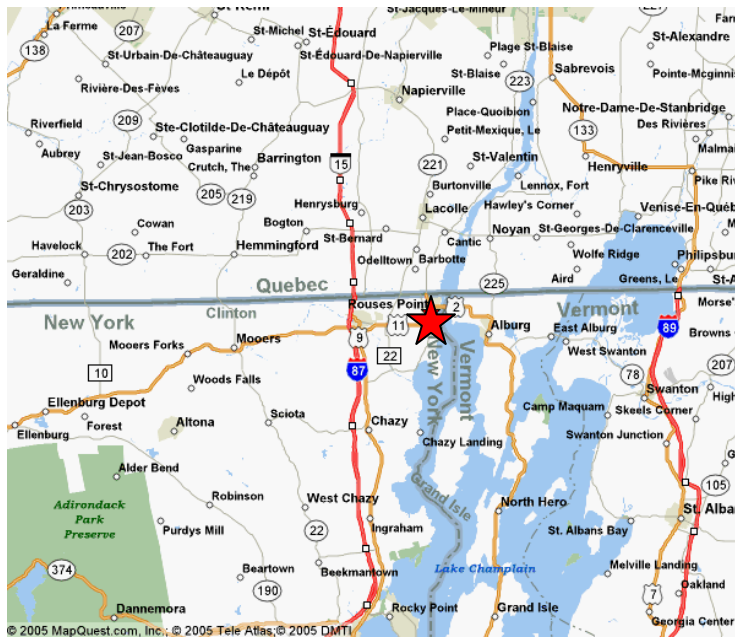


Figure 1 - Regional Location Map

As a result, Rouses Point was an important transportation and tourist center during the 19th and early 20th century. For a time, five railroads intersected in the Village. The railroad, lake steamers, and later automobiles brought summer tourists to the Village's numerous hotels and boarding houses.

While Rouses Point has undergone numerous changes since the turn of the last century, it largely remains intact as an active waterfront community. Over the years, Rouses Point has seen its economic focus shift from a transportation oriented

economy, based on shipping and rail, to light manufacturing and tourism, as a border community with Canada and Vermont. Given the construction of Interstate 87 and an improved vehicle connection across Lake Champlain, Rouses Point became increasingly accessible to more people.

Today, residents are seeking to revitalize the downtown and waterfront to restore the status of these features as icons of the community once again. Using the unique combination of assets such as the location on Lake Champlain, historic building stock, adjacent neighborhoods, and a proud community heritage, this downtown revitalization strategy has been prepared to reposition Rouses Point as a distinctive place in which to live and visit.

Rouses Point has a distinct advantage over other communities in New York State due to its authentic downtown located on a major lake. However, these two assets remain largely disconnected. There is a small sampling of establishments along Main Street that take advantage

of the waterfront location, but the majority of buildings and street connections do not invite people to linger at the lake edge. Establishing a visual and physical connection between these two assets is the key to this planning effort. The application of this plan will ensure that the downtown and waterfront are active, vibrant centers for the community for many years to come.



Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization To Date:

The Village of Rouses Point is currently engaged in a multi-year downtown and waterfront revitalization effort. Waterfront revitalization planning began in the Village of Rouses Point when the Village participated in the creation of the 1997 Essex/Clinton County Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP) funded by NYS Department of State Division of Coastal Resources (NYSDOS). The Village received a \$200,000 Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) Waterfront Revitalization grant in 1998 to begin implementation of its LWRP projects. Using the ESDC award, a planning study was prepared that suggested the creation of a Waterfront Park on the publicly-owned lakefront on Montgomery Street.

The Village of Rouses Point pursued the concept of the Montgomery Street Waterfront Park and obtained required construction monies from its partners, the New York State Department of State Division of Coastal Resources; the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; and the Empire State Development Corporation. A concept plan was developed last year, and final design of the project is underway, with construction scheduled for the summer of 2006. When completed, the Montgomery Street Waterfront Park will include a scenic pier on the site of the former State Dock, a shoreline walkway with connections to the boat launch and downtown, and an improved boat launch and parking area.

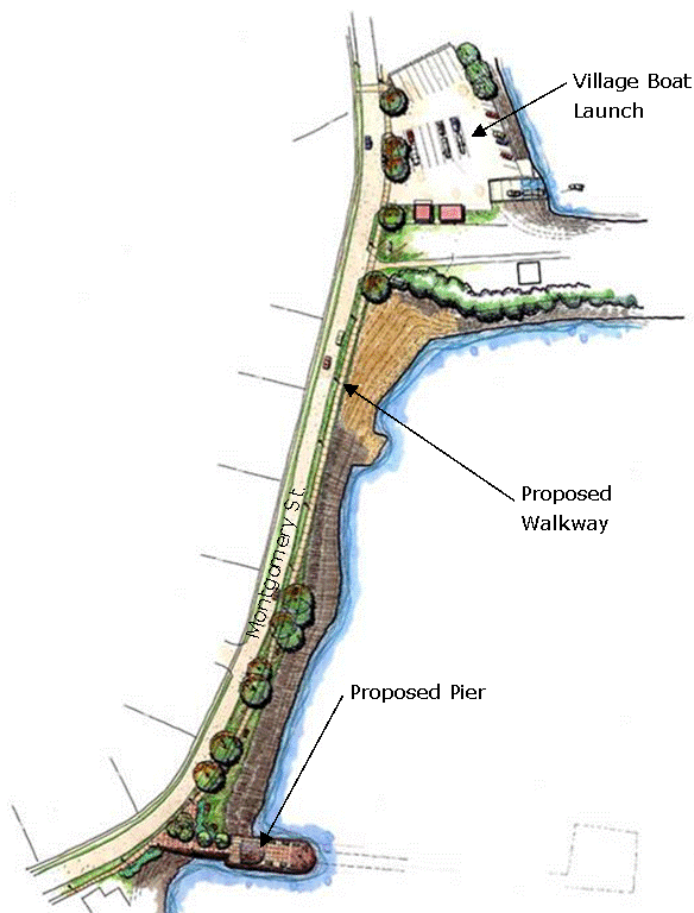


Figure 2 - Proposed Waterfront Revitalization Concepts

In 2002, the Village of Rouses Point was selected by the Department of State Division of Coastal Resources as a Demonstration Community in New York State's Quality Communities Initiative. Under the Quality Communities Initiative, the Village's downtown and waterfront revitalization efforts have been combined into a multi-year, multi-phase project. The Village of Rouses Point received EPF grants from the Department of State to draft this Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Strategy and Action Plan. This document,

prepared with public input, will serve as the blueprint for the Village's future revitalization efforts.

The Village, in conjunction with Friends of the North Country of Keeseville, New York, received a \$200,000 New York Main Street Program grant from the Division of Housing and Community Renewal for façade and building renovation in its historic downtown. The New York Main Street Program grant will fund downtown façade renovations and streetscape improvements on Lake Street.

The Village of Rouses Point has also acquired the former Delaware and Hudson railway station. The Village has applied for grant funding to begin the process of preserving this historic architectural treasure as a museum. Restoration of the building will create another important attraction for visitors to Rouses Point, the Northern Gateway.

Recent Grants Awarded to the Village of Rouses Point

Empire State Development Corporation, \$200,000 Waterfront Revitalization Grant (1998)

- Planning and Design for Waterfront Park
- Boat Launch Area Construction

New York State Bond Act Grant Award, \$200,000 from NYS OPRHP (2002)

- Repairs to Village Boat Launch, Waterfront Park

Quality Communities Demonstration Community Designation (2002)

New York State Environmental Protection Fund Grant Award, Department of State Division of Coastal Resources (2002)

- \$60,000 from NYS Department of State to develop a Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Strategy and Action Plan

Quality Communities Demonstration Community Grant, Department of State Division of Coastal Resources (2003)

- \$20,000 for Downtown and Waterfront Design Standards and Environmental and Architectural Assessment of Delaware and Hudson Train Station

New York State Environmental Protection Fund Awards, Department of State Division of Coastal Resources

- \$200,000 for Construction of the Montgomery Street Shoreline Park with connections to the Village Boat Launch and Downtown (2004)
- \$300,000 for Construction of the Montgomery Street Scenic Pier (2005)

Land and Water Conservation Fund Award, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation/National Parks Service

- \$250,000 for Construction of the Montgomery Street Scenic Pier (2005)

New York Main Street Program Grant Award

- \$200,000 from the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal for downtown façade and building renovations and Lake Street streetscape improvements (2005)

II. DOWNTOWN AND WATERFRONT VISION

A. The Future of Downtown Rouses Point

Prior to World War II, the downtown was the hub of most communities. Downtown buildings usually had several tenants--retail shops on the ground floor and offices or apartments on the upper floors. The banks, post office, library, and local government offices were also located in the downtown, bringing residents to the downtown on a daily basis. In addition to being the center of the community's commercial activity, downtown was also an important component of civic life; on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights, people filled the streets to meet friends, see a movie, and window shop.

Since then, America's downtowns, including downtown Rouses Point, have changed. The interstate highway system changed the way Americans shop. People could easily travel longer distances to outlying shopping centers and regional malls. Areas like Plattsburgh's Route 3 commercial corridor became regional shopping centers, and, as a result, businesses in the downtown closed or moved, the number of shoppers diminished, and property values and sales tax revenues fell.

To revitalize its downtown today, Rouses Point must look for ways to attract new businesses and customers. As explained later in this document, due to current market realities, Rouses Point revitalized downtown will not be the same as it was at the turn of the 20th century, when downtown stores met most retail needs for the community. Instead, it will be based upon the realities of the regional market in the 21st century, a complementary blend of tourist-based businesses and neighborhood retail.

Often, the initial impulse is to try to fill all of the empty storefronts with any business or use willing to locate in the downtown. However, experience proves this to be counterproductive, because successful downtowns today are no longer places where people simply shop or live. In order to be competitive, downtowns must reinvent themselves as the civic, social, and entertainment hub of the community and region, with high aesthetic, design, and "livability" standards that invite people to spend time and recreate.

People choose to live in Rouses Point because it is a lovely village and a pleasant place to make a home. While the health of the Village's downtown has not mirrored the healthy growth of the community in recent years, the downtown is the core of the community's identity--should the quality of the downtown decrease, the whole community will suffer. The village's ability to attract visitors and residents will suffer as well.

However, if the downtown is attractive and useful, the whole community will thrive. Downtown Rouses Point has the advantage of being one of the region's traditional downtowns that still retains its historic character. With its beautiful setting on Lake Champlain, its proximity to Montreal and its three million residents, and its direct access to Canada, Vermont, and Interstate 87, Rouses Point's downtown can attract and serve a population beyond local residents.

This plan focuses on what steps can be taken by the Village and its residents to recreate a downtown in which the entire community can take pride. A coordinated effort to improve the physical condition of the downtown while maintaining its historic quality, link the downtown to the Montgomery Street waterfront improvements, and launch a targeted marketing effort to recruit tourist based businesses that also appeals to the local population, is the foundation for long-term economic success.

B. The Public Vision Process

On January 8, 2005, a community-wide design workshop was held at St. Patrick's Church on Lake Street in downtown Rouses Point. Over 120 people attended the all-day event, where they provided their thoughts, ideas, issues, and concerns regarding the revitalization of downtown Rouses Point.

The workshop was comprised of a morning and afternoon session, with lunch provided by committee members. The attendees were separated into 11 tables to create a more comfortable setting in which to provide input. During the morning session, attendees were asked five questions and the answers were recorded on flip charts. The questions were:

1. In one word, describe the study area.
2. What are the three prominent defining features of downtown Rouses Point?
3. What issues/concerns need to be addressed?
4. What is missing? (i.e., selected store types, public open space)
5. What is your vision for Downtown Rouses Point in 20 years?

During the afternoon session, each table was given a base map of Rouses Point, colored markers, tracing paper, and rulers, and was asked to:

1. Locate new projects (i.e., uses and business types) throughout the downtown
2. Establish connections and walking loops
3. Prioritize new uses and projects

The summary of the information gathered at the workshop was used to inform the committee and planning process about the thoughts, ideas, and desires of the residents of Rouses Point.

A complete summary of the public workshop can be found in Appendix 1.

C. Vision for Downtown Rouses Point

The objective of the downtown and waterfront plan is to enhance the Village's unique downtown setting on Lake Champlain. This objective is achieved by:

1. Making downtown a destination with retail shops and entertainment venues that attract local residents, regional residents, Canadian leisure travelers, and area tourists
2. Establishing connections to the lakefront to create an exciting atmosphere for everyone to enjoy
3. Enhancing the pedestrian experience by providing improved amenities that include safe and attractive walks, shade trees, benches, easily interpreted signs, and places to engage other pedestrians in conversation
4. Preserving and enhancing the historic character of the downtown buildings
5. Enforcing regulations to ensure a clean and safe downtown setting

D. Common Themes/Guiding Principles

The next step in the planning process was to develop a series of guiding principles based on public input and research conducted during the course of developing the plan. These principles, listed below, provide the framework for the recommendations set forth in this report.

- Preserve and maintain the historic small-town character of Rouses Point through building restoration and the integration of new development
- Preserve and enhance views from downtown to the lake and from the lake into downtown
- Create a pedestrian friendly environment
- Expand retail offerings
- Provide public access to the lake
- Enhance the facades of downtown buildings
- Improve quality of life issues (i.e., cleanliness, public safety, pedestrian safety, enforcement, etc.) throughout the study area
- Connect to the tourism economy

III.DOWNTOWN AND WATERFRONT PROFILE

A. VILLAGE SETTING

The Village of Rouses Point is a waterside community with a history as a seasonal resort and a center of railroad related industry. Rouses Point's history as a village dates back to 1783, when it was founded by Jacques Rouse, who ran a ferry to Vermont. Early growth was fostered by the lakeside setting and geographical location as it related to commerce with Canada, the neighboring State of Vermont, and communities along Lake Champlain.

The Village of Rouses Point is located in the northeastern corner of Clinton County and New York State. The state of Vermont is to the east and is connected by Route 2, which bridges the Richelieu River and Lake Champlain. The Canadian border forms the northern boundary of the Village, with an international border crossing on Route 11. A second border crossing is located just west of the Village in the Town of Champlain on Route 276.

The current population of the Village is approximately 2,400 residents. A decrease in population may occur over the short term due to the closing of Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, the primary employer in the Village. This company has a workforce of approximately 1,200 employees drawn from the Village and surrounding areas.

Population centers near the Village include Montreal Canada, 30 minutes to the north; the cities of Plattsburgh (30 minutes) and Chazy (8 miles) to the south; Alburg (10 minutes) and Burlington, Vermont (45 minutes) to the east; and the Town and Village of Champlain, (5 minutes) Mooers (10 minutes), and Hemingford, Quebec (30 minutes) to the west.

Primary vehicle routes near the Village include Route 87, (the Northway), located approximately six miles west of the Village via Route 11. Route 2 runs through the Village and is the major connection to Vermont, and Route 9 connects the Village to Plattsburgh and points south.

The Village has an excellent infrastructure system with low cost municipal electric. In addition, there is telecommunication infrastructure along the railroad right-of-way. The Village of Rouses Point can offer state of the art telecommunications capabilities to prospective businesses, which can choose between DSL and cable fiber optic broadband service. In light of the vacant prime office space in the downtown and the quality of life advantages in Rouses Point, the possibility of capitalizing on the emerging "rural sourcing" trend should be considered.

The Village of Rouses Point is approximately 1.8 square miles in area. It is situated along the western shore of Lake Champlain at the head of the Richelieu River, which flows 130 miles to the north into the Saint Lawrence River. The area of the Lake adjacent to the Village is navigable and supported by numerous recreational marina operations located in the downtown district. The Village has nearly three miles of waterfront, with three-quarters of a mile situated within the downtown district.

B. STUDY AREA PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT

The Village is comprised of various land uses, including residential, commercial, civic, industrial, recreational, and public open space. This spectrum of land uses is also found in the downtown district, as exhibited by the professional offices, retail and commercial services, single and multifamily residential homes, water-based and traditional recreational uses, local government center and services, and civic uses that include churches, libraries, and service organizations. See Appendix 7 for a complete inventory of the existing conditions in the study area.



The project study area is at the confluence of three elements: the waterfront in the area of downtown, the transportation corridors, and the section of Lake Street with the highest density of commercial uses. The physical boundary of the study area originates at Gaines Marina, continues north along Lake Street (including the parcels on the west side of Lake Street), travels east along Route 2 to the intersection with Montgomery Street, then heads south along the shoreline to include all lands back to the point of origin.

Like many Villages in New York State, the character of Rouses Point is defined by a traditional “Main Street”, which in this case is Lake Street. Several downtown buildings evoke the historical character of the Late Victorian era and early 20th century Italianate style period. The Village Hall, situated at the southern end of downtown, is true to the original Italianate architectural style.

As with other turn of the century downtowns, some of the buildings constructed during that era have been lost to fire; however, much of the downtown remains intact. A majority of the lots made vacant by fires are now the sites of newer building construction with a broad array of

architectural styles. However, the architectural quality and the general condition of the buildings varies, which leads to a disharmonious character.

The vacant windows of the commercial building located along Lake Street detract from the historic character of the street. Likewise, the first floor residential units located in former commercial spaces diminish the image of the downtown district and deaden the once active streetscape. However, the vacant building lots located along Lake Street provide positive opportunities for new building infill and for connections to the Lake. These views to the water promote the perception that Rouses Point is a waterside community connected to the Lake.

The pedestrian experience along Lake Street is varied. Between Village Hall and Pratt Street, Lake Street has two travel lanes and parallel parking stalls along each side. The width of the street contributes to the pedestrian scale. Traveling north toward the Civic Center, the character



Figure 4 – Existing Sidewalk System

of the street becomes a more suburban, as the building locations are set back from the street edge with parking in front of the building. This creates an uncomfortably open and exposed impression in the pedestrian. South of Village Hall, sidewalks are located only on the west side of Lake Street.

The pedestrian experience along Lake Street is significantly diminished by the truck traffic, specifically from excessive noise due to acceleration and breaking, the intimidating scale of the trucks, and unsafe travel speed. In terms of pedestrian safety, the sidewalks require repair and improvements. The brick-size unit pavers installed approximately 12 years ago have settled, making it difficult to walk, especially for those with impaired abilities. In addition, the

sidewalks have an excessive number of driveway crossings, resulting in an inconsistent slope.

Street trees are planted along Lake Street, but are exhibiting stress and are in poor health. The Village's beautification committee maintains large urns planted with flowering annuals along Lake Street.

Rouse Park, located midway along Lake



Figure 5 - Lake Street

Street, is well situated. The park is a tremendous asset to downtown and the overall condition of the park is good. There are views of the lake from the park, although direct access to the shoreline from Lake Street in the downtown area is not provided.

A second green space is located along Lake Street across from Saint Patrick's Church. The Parish owns this parcel for overflow parking. Adjacent to this site is a smaller lawn area owned by the Village, which features a wooden gazebo. There is a fair amount of public use of this park; it is an excellent place to view the lake and boat docks.

Public parking is provided along both sides of Lake Street in the downtown core. A recently paved parking lot is located near the intersection of Lake and Washington Streets behind the Ole Tymes Café. There is also a large parking lot in front of the Civic Center.

Currently, the gazebo park adjacent to the Village Hall is the only public connection to the lakefront from Lake Street. Montgomery Street also offers limited connections to the lake via the public boat launch. However, there are no public facilities to provide access for seating, swimming, or picnicking. Some of the buildings along the east side of Lake Street have back yards and docks; however, these are private areas for the residents of the buildings.



Figure 6 - Village Gazebo

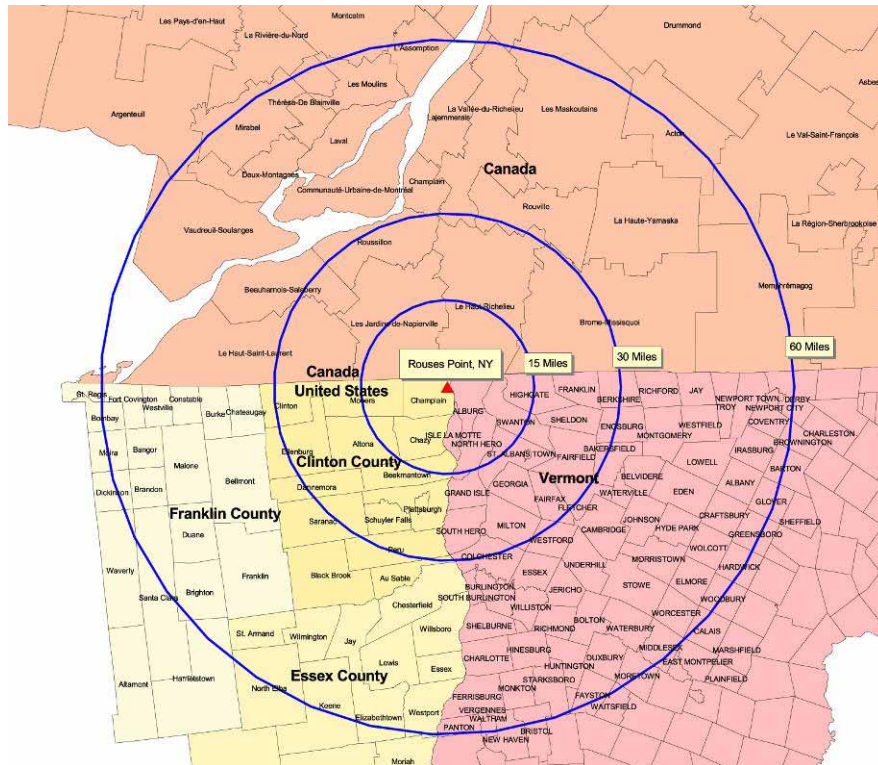
C. EXISTING MARKET CONDITIONS

Rouses Point has the distinct advantage of having several assets and opportunities that will allow the economic repositioning of the downtown as a viable core of the community. These include Lake Champlain, the historic building stock, tourism, and adjacent neighborhoods, which can be combined to form a strong base on which to rebuild the downtown economy. Another asset is the ability to tap into the Canadian leisure travel market. The City of Montreal and its southern suburbs are within 1 hour's travel from Rouses Point. The potential market of this area is over 3 million people, which is more than 30 times the population of Clinton County.

To ensure long-term economic success and to help determine the market potential of downtown, an analysis of local and regional demographics and retail expenditures was completed. By determining the identity of potential customers, where they live, and what their needs are, the general store types and entertainment venues that could benefit from a location in downtown Rouses Point can be identified. These analyses should also be the justification for enhancing the physical environment to meet the expectation of new customers.

1. Retail Trade Area

Downtown Rouses Point's primary retail trade area is the geographic area from which the



majority of retail customers are currently drawn and which represents the greatest opportunity for growth. Based on current customer travel patterns and discussions with the Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Steering Committee and government officials, the primary downtown retail trade area was defined as a 15-mile radius around downtown and with a secondary trade area at a 30-mile radius.

Due to the rural nature of northern New York and the fact that people are willing

Figure 7 - Retail Trade Areas

to drive further for goods and services, a 60-mile radius around Rouses Point was examined as a supplemental trade area. This radius captures the City of Montreal and its southern suburbs.

2. Retail Market Indicators

This section provides key economic and demographic data for the trade areas surrounding Rouses Point. While Figure 6 includes Canada in the trade areas, the numbers below are for the United States only unless noted. A full report of all demographic variables for the United States portion of the trade areas can be found in Appendix 2.

a. Population and Households

The primary and secondary trade area have a combined 2005 estimated population of 132,652 (24,848 in the primary trade area and 107,804 in the secondary trade area) and a combined 49,876 households with an average household size of 2.51. Of these households, approximately 74% are owner occupied.

Adding in the Canadian population to the trade area increases these population figures by more than 3 million people. This portion of the trade area includes the City of Montreal and its southern suburbs which are located within 1 hour of Rouses Point.

b. Age Breakdown

The median age in the primary and secondary trade area is 37.1 years. The age cohort with the highest percentage is 35 to 44 years (16.2%), 45 to 54 years (15.3%), and 5 to 14 years (12.8%).

c. Household Income

The average household income in the primary and secondary trade area is \$55,163 and the per capita income is \$21,535.

3. Existing Business Inventory

The downtown study area currently contains a mix of retail businesses, offices, restaurants, marinas, and residences. Appendix 3 contains a list of the businesses in the study area as well as all of the businesses located within the Village limits.

4. Tourism in Clinton County

In April 2004, Davidson-Peterson Associates prepared a report called *2003 Economic Impact of Expenditures by Tourists on Northern New York State* for the Northern New York Travel and Tourism Research Center, located at SUNY Potsdam. The purpose of the study was to measure the economic benefits derived by Northern New York residents and governments from the dollars spent in the region by tourists.

In summary, the study indicated that there were a high number of person visits to Clinton County as compared to all of Northern New York and that people were more apt to travel for business than pleasure. When visiting Clinton County, visitors spent money on food, shopping and lodging.

5. Retail Potential

Consumer behavior patterns are a key indicator of retail potential for any given area. Understanding where people travel and for what types of goods and services in general can be compared to existing conditions in an area to provide insight on what markets may be served versus where there may be opportunities. With this as a basis of understanding, additional markets may be explored. The data below do not include Canadian expenditures.

a. Retail Sales and Demand

Total retail sales in the primary and secondary trade area are \$1,116,486,966, and total sales of food and drink are \$128,188,274, for a total of \$1,244,675,240. Sales are estimated by ESRI and represent sales to consumers by establishments.

Total retail demand in the primary and secondary trade area is \$1,066,958,410, and total demand for food and drink is \$159,856,689, for a total of \$1,166,815,099. This demand, estimated by ESRI, represents the expected amount to be spent by consumers at retail and food establishments.

The top ten categories of retail demand relate to general merchandise, groceries, and food and beverage. Appendix 4 has a full breakdown of sales and demand for multiple retail categories.

a. Retail Demand Relative to Supply

Examining retail sales and demand is one way to determine what people spend their money on and what they would like to buy. Another analysis examines where people spend their money. This determines whether Rouses Point fulfills the retail demand of the consumers in the trade area. If people are traveling outside Rouses Point to buy a certain item, there may be an opportunity to open a store to fulfill this need.

In this analysis, the sales and demand figures listed above are compared to determine 'Leakage/Surplus Factor', which is a measure of demand relative to supply. The factor ranges from 100 (total leakage) to -100 (total surplus). For example, if there were demand for a retail item that was not available in the primary or secondary trade area, the factor would be 100. This means that consumers are seeking that item outside of the 30-mile radius around Rouses Point.

Within the primary trade area (i.e., 15 miles) the data are showing a slight leakage for retail trade (11.5) and a large outflow in food and drink (62.8). In the secondary trade area (i.e., 30 miles) the retail leakage turns into a slight surplus (-5.2), and the food and drink leakages decreases to

11. This indicates that the stores and restaurants in and around Plattsburgh are the likely places where people are shopping. See Appendix 4 for a complete breakdown of the data.

Within the primary trade area, store types with a large leakage are bookstores, specialty foods, furniture, and general merchandise. The store types in the secondary trade area are similar to the primary trade area; however, the leakage factor is greatly reduced.

6. Consumer Intercept Survey

As part of this study, the Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Steering Committee conducted a survey of customers patronizing Village businesses in December of 2005. The purpose of the survey was to gain information about Rouses Point's current customers to further inform the economic analysis as part of this plan. Surveys were conducted between December 14 and December 29, 2005, and 227 responses were received. A brief summary of the results follows. The full results and survey form can be found in Appendix 5.

- Over two-thirds of the respondents (70%) were from New York, 19% from Vermont, 6% from Canada and 5% from 'other'.
- Just over one-half (53%) drove five minutes or less to the Village and 31% drove between 10 and 15 minutes.
- The top requested shops and services were (listed by number of mentions):
 - General merchandise/department store/variety store
 - Grocery store (or expanded offerings from the current Save-A-Lot)
 - Bank
 - Restaurant
 - Bakery
 - Hardware store
- Specialty types of shops that were mentioned include:
 - Florist
 - Sporting goods
 - Gifts
 - Butcher/Cheese
 - Arts and Crafts/Hobby
 - Antiques

When the survey was conducted there appeared to be general lack of knowledge about the variety of shops and services in Rouses Point, even among existing customers, indicating that a cooperative advertising effort would be beneficial. For example, respondents encouraged the Steering Committee to attract a pharmacy, coffee shop, bank, dry cleaner, and video store, all of which are currently available in the Village. Many customers also indicated that they patronized only one business, supporting the concept of cross-marketing among existing businesses.

D. TRANSPORTATION – ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

Truck traffic within the downtown was analyzed as part of the effort to revitalize downtown Rouses Point and the village's waterfront. Edwards and Kelcey, acting as a sub-consultant to Elan Planning and Design, examined truck traffic in the downtown area of the Village of Rouses Point, NY. The truck traffic analysis was conducted to address the concerns raised during the visioning process for the downtown revitalization plan. Existing travel patterns and volumes were reviewed using data published by New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). In addition, to assess the types of trucks, the intersection of Route 2 and 11 was observed for a 2-hour weekday period. See Appendix 6 for the complete truck traffic analysis.

Trucks comprise a significant portion of the traffic on Lake Street (State Route 11) in the downtown area. However, a review of existing land uses and businesses in Rouses Point indicates that only a small portion of the truck traffic is local (defined as having its origin or destination within the village.) Concerns about noise, vibration, and safety have been identified during the downtown planning process. These create detrimental impacts to pedestrian safety and comfort. To pedestrians, these factors are distracting and uncomfortable at best, and in the worst-case scenarios pose a safety hazard. In addition, concerns regarding the compatibility of truck traffic with the economic revitalization efforts were also raised.

Truck travel in Rouses Point is affected directly by three state roadways (NY Route 11, NY Route 9 and VT Route 2) and two interstate roadways (Interstates 87 and 89). As a result of the confluence of these highways, the village serves as a “funnel” point for regional truck traffic. Lake Street is the only existing roadway in the village that extends continuously north-south from the intersection of Route 2 to the intersection of Route 9B and 11 (where Route 11 travels east west). Thus, the truck traffic is concentrated onto Lake Street. This problem is intensified by the lack of additional bridge crossings on Lake Champlain.

This analysis has identified several factors regarding the truck traffic in the Village of Rouses Point. There is moderate to significant truck traffic in the village. (See Appendix 6, page 4) The truck route currently utilizes Lake Street (Route 11) to travel through the Village. This traffic detracts from the commercial businesses on Lake Street and degrades the pedestrian environment. Truck traffic in the village is almost exclusively through traffic; the Village itself has almost no generators of truck traffic. Future development of the downtown, main street areas, or pedestrian zones would compound safety, noise, and vibration issues with current truck traffic. Truck traffic currently does not completely overwhelm the Village but it is a serious concern. Exacerbating this problem is the probability of an increase in truck traffic as northern New York and Vermont grow.

IV. DOWNTOWN/WATERFRONT REVITALIZATION PLAN

A. DOWNTOWN AND WATERFRONT ENHANCEMENTS

Physical condition is an important factor in determining whether a downtown becomes popular with customers and residents. A deteriorated downtown deters return visits, while a well-maintained place sends a positive message about the quality of goods and services available downtown.

The following discussion of physical enhancements is based on a thorough assessment of existing conditions within the study area. The plan elements, which address gateways, intersections and streetscapes, parking, open spaces, and retail areas, are designed to support the findings of the marketing analysis. In addition, these featured proposals have the greatest potential for positive impact, taking into account short-, medium-, and long-term goals for the physical enhancement downtown and the waterfront.



Figure 8 – Downtown and Waterfront Enhancement Plan

1. Projects

a. Gateways

The Village gateways serve as the first and last impression of Rouses Point, as well as signifying a sense of arrival into the community as a whole. These gateways may or may not be located at the boundaries to the Village; the location is dictated by a sense of arrival, which may be influenced by physical landmarks such as intersections, views, or buildings.

Three Village gateways were identified in this study: the intersection of Route 2 and Montgomery Street (at the bridge to Vermont), the intersection of Lake Street and Route 2, and the intersection of Lake Street and Route 11.

Each was examined to determine what measures could be taken to enhance the sense of arrival and create the most positive impression possible. Non-vehicular gateways, such as the train station and boat docks, are explored as well. The proposed site designs which follow were intended to achieve these objectives with small-scale projects which would be feasible for the Village to undertake.

In addition, a gateway was identified where Chapman Street enters the Village from the west. There are several historic railroad buildings in this area, including a largely intact turntable and roundhouse, and it is recommended that this gateway receive similar treatment as the proposed Pratt Street streetscape, outlined on page 39.

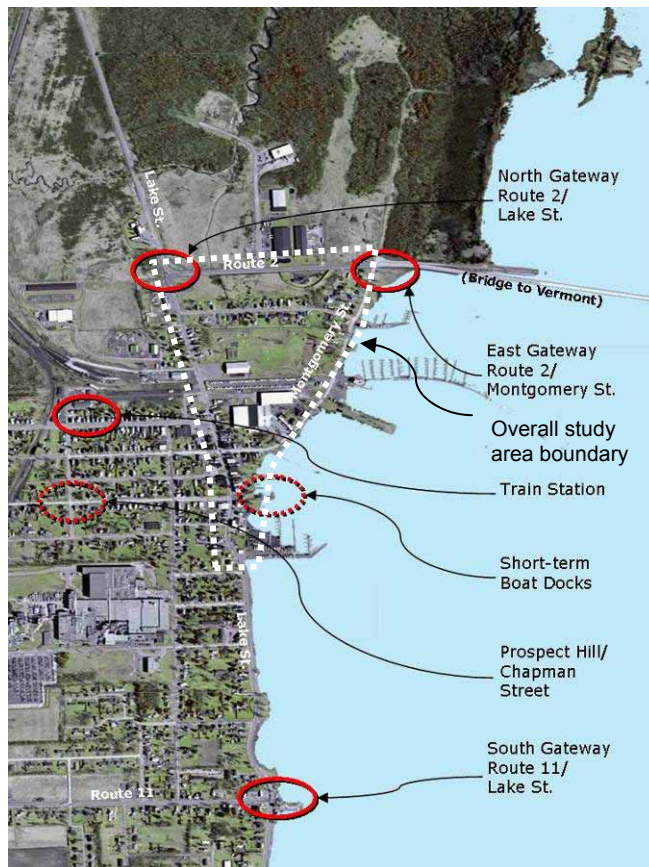


Figure 9 - Gateways

Route 2/Montgomery Street

For travelers arriving from Vermont, the intersection of Route 2 and Montgomery Street is the first view of the Village. This area is also the north terminus for the proposed Shoreline Walkway. As drivers travel west over the bridge from Vermont, they are greeted with a beautiful panoramic view of Rouses Point. However, upon arriving on the western side of Lake Champlain, the initial view belies the beauty of the Village as seen from the bridge. Currently, this area features several mismatched signs, with a wide-open landscape dominated by meadow and farm fields. In the past, this area served as a swimming beach for Rouses Point residents. Several small cottages face the lake along the west side of Montgomery Street. To the north of Route 2 is a large asphalt area, used as a traffic turn-around for road maintenance vehicles.



Figure 10 - Existing Condition, Route 2/Montgomery St.



Figure 11 - Proposed plan, Route 2 & Montgomery St.

Recommendation:

The proposed design attempts to improve the view from the bridge while making this area a more useful terminus for the Shoreline Walkway. To improve the view traveling west from the bridge, the proposed plan consolidates the “welcome” signage. Also, the proposed landscaping creates a backdrop for the signs, improving the visual definition against the fields and meadows.

Trees were proposed along Route 2. This vertical element will visually minimize the pavement width. The improvements to the waterfront area within this gateway are also proposed. Specifically, a small park has been designed, with picnic tables, benches, lighting, landscaping, and a 10-car parking area. This plan will provide visitors and residents with a place to enjoy a picnic, or simply to sit by the lake. The proposed landscaping and tree plantings will provide shade, frame views of the lake, and buffer impacts from traffic on the Route 2 bridge. A sign on the south side of Route 2 indicates that this park area is the end of the Shoreline Walkway.

Route 2/Lake Street

The intersection of Route 2 and Lake Street also forms an important gateway for the Village. In addition to the visitors arriving via Route 2, this gateway is used by people crossing the border from Canada. Currently, this intersection features standard highway signage, a small restaurant, and some gravel pull-off areas near the road.

Recommendation:

To make this area more appealing, the plan proposes a double row of street trees to provide definition to the road edges. In addition, improved signage and landscaped backdrop will guide visitors to the shops and services downtown, as well as reinforce the welcoming message. The signage will also provide an attractive visual terminus for drivers arriving from Route 2.



Figure 12 - Existing Condition, Route 2 & Lake St.



Figure 13 - Proposed Plan, Route 2 & Lake St.

South Gateway

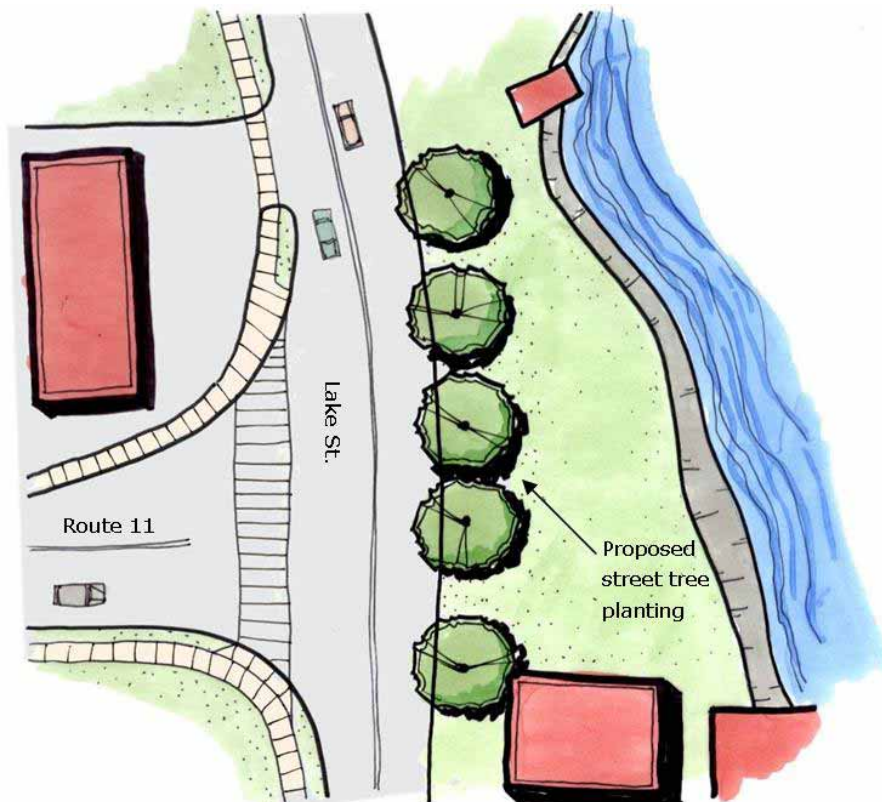
The final vehicular gateway is located at the intersection of Route 11 and Lake Street. Visitors arriving to Rouses Point via Interstate 87 travel through this intersection, as do drivers traveling north via Route 9B. This area is home to the former Rope Tow Ferry building, now vacant, as well as a pocket of commercial businesses including a gas station, motel, liquor store, and the old Saxony hotel. The pavement width at this intersection is very wide. The view to the lake from the west is partially blocked by overgrown vegetation.



Figure 14 - Existing Condition, Route 11 & Lake St.

Recommendation:

To make this gateway more appealing, the proposal includes the addition of street trees. Unlike the overgrown vegetation that currently occupies this space, manicured street trees will frame views of the lake while adding definition to the road edge. This plan allows for the land between



Route 11 and the lake to be used by future owners of the Rope Tow Ferry building, because the proposed trees would be located in the right-of-way of the road.

Figure 15 - Proposed Plan, Route 11 & Lake St.

Train Station/Boat Docks (Non-vehicular Gateways)

Not all visitors to Rouses Point arrive by car. To acknowledge this fact, the enhancement plan also explores non-traditional gateways, such as the train station and boat docks.

Currently, the area surrounding the Amtrak station features the vacant historic train depot building, a senior center, and residential buildings. The Village, in recognition of the importance of this gateway, has proposed rehabilitating the historic depot for use as a museum and visitor's center. As part of this process, the building was nominated for and subsequently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

As part of the plans for re-use of the depot, the grounds surrounding the building will be renovated. Since the structure is historic, the inspiration for the new plan should be taken from historic photos of the station during its heyday. This entails recreating the green area between the building and Pratt Street, and replacing the trees within the new planting bed. A flagpole and historic marker are also proposed. The former platform will be repaved with concrete unit pavers, so that this space can function as a patio. The front entrance will conform to ADA guidelines with new stairs and a

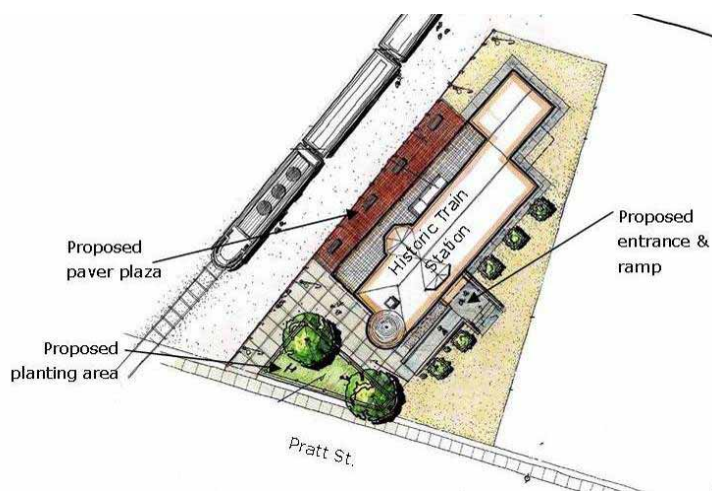


Figure 18 - Proposed Plan, Train Station

short-term dock space must currently use a private marina. To alleviate this deficiency, the enhancement plan calls for temporary boat docks as part of the downtown lake access project. This is discussed in greater detail in the following section of the report.



Figure 16 - Existing Condition, Train Station



Figure 17 - Historic Photo of D&H Train Station

ramp. This area will also feature large raised planters, which will house annual plantings for seasonal color. The train station could also be a location for a downtown business directory, to guide visitors to the shops and services on Lake Street. Visitors arriving by train will also benefit from pedestrian improvements to Pratt Street, which are discussed in greater detail on page 39.

Visitors who arrive via boat in need of short-term dock space must currently use a private marina. To alleviate this deficiency, the enhancement plan calls for temporary boat docks as part of the downtown lake access project. This is discussed in greater detail in the following section of the report.

b. Downtown and Waterfront

The goal of the physical enhancements for the study area is to increase the benefit that a traditional village venue confers on the community. The study area is the core of the community and plays many roles. It is the setting for private economic development, civic gathering spaces, and public services. As such, the physical condition in this area can affect how well the downtown functions. For instance, if pedestrians are uncomfortable walking on the sidewalks, they are less likely to window-shop. If public spaces fail to encourage people to linger, the casual interactions between residents that tie a community together may not occur. If the overall appearance of the downtown is shabby, tourists are less likely to stop, and more importantly, less likely to spend money.

Both the waterfront and downtown are included in the study area. To make the most of the study area, the following objectives were identified:



Figure 20 - Downtown & Waterfront Areas

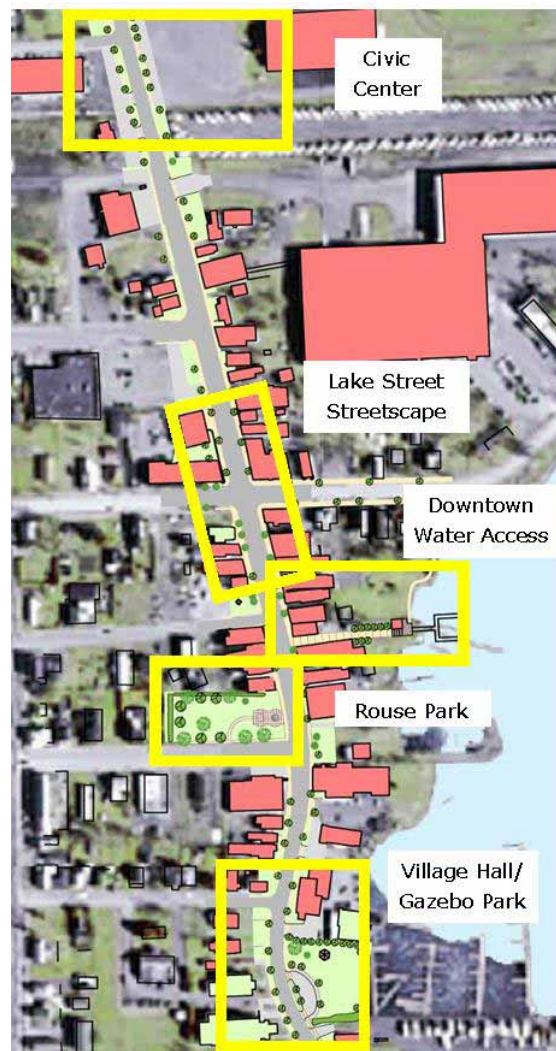


Figure 19 - Downtown Concept Plan Locations

- Reduce the number of curb cuts by eliminating unused entrances
- Improve parks and green spaces functionally and aesthetically
- Increase pedestrian use by improving sidewalk connectivity through additional crosswalks, walkway placement, and repair of damaged walks
- Enhance the village streetscape
- Provide public access to the lake
- Preserve and enhance views from downtown to the lake and from the lake into downtown

These objectives focus on the conditions in the Village that need the most attention, and will provide the most positive impact given limited resources. The areas selected for focused study include the Civic Center/North Lake Streetscape, Rouse Park, Village Hall/Gazebo Park, Downtown Lake Access, Parking Enhancements, and Infill Potential.

Civic Center/North Streetscape

The streetscape near the Civic Center acts as a “mini-gateway” into the downtown area. At this point on Lake Street, the land use from north to south transitions from residential to commercial, signaling the edge of the denser downtown village environment. This area is home to the Civic Center, a large building set back from the road, as well as a hardware store, the fire department, and boat storage. Because the buildings are set back from the curb, the road seems quite wide, and there is little to buffer pedestrians from the traffic.



Figure 21 - Existing Condition, North Streetscape

Recommendation:

To tie this area in with the more traditional downtown setting, street trees are proposed to enhance the streetscape. As with the gateways, this creates a vertical edge along the street, which calms traffic, defines the street, and minimizes the width of the road visually. The plan also calls

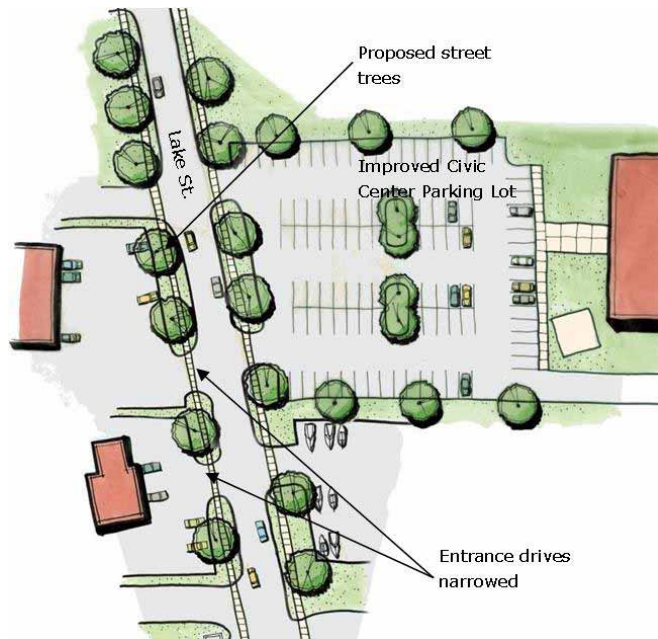


Figure 22 - Proposed Plan, Civic Center/ North Streetscape

for the curb cuts for the various parking areas to be narrowed or consolidated, to minimize the likelihood of pedestrian/vehicle conflicts. This also reduces the uninterrupted stretches of pavement along the road edge and creates the opportunity for street trees. Finally, the Civic Center parking lot was reconfigured, to reduce the visual impact of the large pavement area. Landscaped islands in the middle of the lot were added, and several trees were located at the edges of the lot to buffer the pavement from surrounding land uses.

In addition to the enhancements along the street edge, a recreational feasibility study should be completed for the Civic Center and its grounds. Because this property is large

and runs between Lake Street and the lakeshore, it can provide a critical link in the pedestrian circulation system of downtown. (See a discussion of walking loops below.) Also, given the size of property, the Village may consider additional uses that would expand the recreational offerings.

Rouse Park

Rouse Park is a small municipal green space centrally located on the west side of Lake Street. The view of this park from Lake Street is dominated by a small water fountain, installed in the early 1900's by the Women's Temperance Union. In addition, there are several mature deciduous and coniferous trees and a small flowerbed. Concrete benches and trash receptacles are other features in this section of the park. Behind the fountain, the park extends about two hundred feet along Chapman Street. This part of the park is mostly lawn, bordered by mature silver maples and a tall hedge. A private residential yard abuts this area as well.



Figure 23 - Existing Condition, Rouse Park

Recommendation:

Like the plans for the Lake Street area, the proposal for this park focused on enhancing the existing features, to make them more functional and aesthetically pleasing. Implementation of the proposal involves the following elements:

- **Park Plaza w/WCTU Fountain as the Central Feature:** A new, expanded plaza and planting area was created as a cohesive center for the park. This plaza could consist of specialty pavers or memorial bricks. This layout eliminated the two small diagonal walks from Lake Street by creating a wide, well-defined entrance. The expanded plaza will give this memorial fountain greater visual substance. The circular planting area builds on the current flowerbed; the proposal simply defines the area more clearly by integrating the planter into the plaza.
- **Enhanced Landscape Plantings:** The new landscaping plan was designed to add definition to the park features. A hedgerow was proposed to screen the residential lot and vacant commercial property on the north side of the park. Additional deciduous trees add definition to the lawn area and Chapman Street. Finally, the plan proposed removing the large blue spruce on the southeast corner of the park. This tree is quite large and blocks the view of the lake from the park. More importantly, this tree blocks the view of the park for drivers traveling north on Lake Street. The park itself is quite charming and an effective incentive for tourists to stop, for example, to buy a sandwich and enjoy a picnic on a park bench. However, this benefit is diminished if visitors fail to see the park until they have driven past it. The removal of this tree will give Rouse Park a more visible presence within the Village.

- Entrance from Chapman Street. A new pedestrian entrance with landscape plantings and lighting has been proposed for Rouse Park. This replaces the existing concrete sidewalk used to access the park from Chapman Street. The proposed light fixtures and vegetation will define this secondary park entrance. This proposal also calls for relocating the Rouse Park Memorial Stone to the new planting area located in the expanded plaza.



Figure 24 - Proposed Plan, Rouse Park

Village Hall/Gazebo Park Improvements

The final design concept for the downtown is the Village Hall and Gazebo Park. Like the Civic Center to the north, this area acts as a “mini-gateway” for the downtown. In addition, the seat of government for the Village should reflect the high level of pride the residents have in their community. Finally, this area provides another chance for residents and visitors to enjoy Lake Champlain.

Currently, this area is home to a small park with a Village-owned gazebo, picnic tables, and open lawn. The nearby St. Patrick’s church owns a portion of the land, used as overflow parking on Sundays. The Village Hall is located just north of the park, and the entrance to Gaines Marina just to the south. A nondescript commercial building is also located at the entrance to Gaines Marina.



Figure 26 - Proposed Plan, Village Hall/ Gazebo Park



Figure 25 - Existing Condition, Lake St. at Gaines Marina

Recommendation:

The physical enhancement plan calls for several improvements to this area. First, the gravel parking area across from the church was formalized, with asphalt paving, curbs, and discrete entrances. This retains spaces for church use while enhancing the experience for visitors during the week. The reintroduced sidewalks will appear to narrow the road visually, which will result in a traffic calming effect. Next, landscaping enhancements were proposed. The placement of shade trees along Lake Street and the new parking area was designed to preserve views of the lake, while providing separation from the street. Small trees screen the water works building and Village Hall parking areas from the park. Landscaping was also proposed for the commercial building,

although this would depend on private investment. Curb cuts along Lake Street were also narrowed or consolidated, especially at the entrance to Gaines Marina and the formalized parking area. This adds definition to Lake Street, as well as making these entrances safer for pedestrians to cross. Wide entrances encourage higher vehicle speeds, while narrowing these driveways to within NYS DOT standards will slow traffic down when entering these areas. Finally, a “Welcome to Downtown” sign is proposed at the south end of the study area. This alerts drivers to the fact that they are entering a downtown area, with the attendant pedestrians, traffic patterns, and driving conditions.

Veteran's Park Enhancements

Veteran's Park is situated on the eastern portion of the Civic Center property and overlooks Lake Champlain, and is near Lighthouse Point Marina, and the Sportsman's Pier. It is a scenic park that contains a few benches, flowers, and a military tank.

Recommendation:

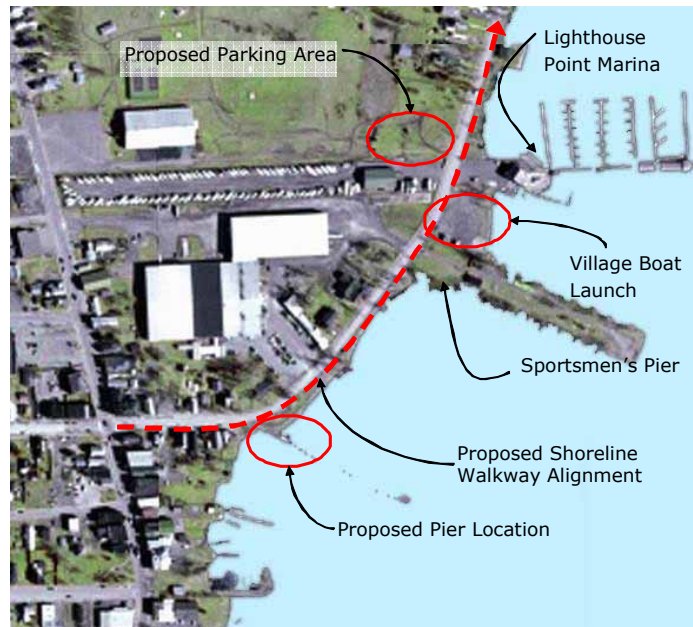
Enhanced landscaping, pedestrian connections and enhancements, and signage would assist in integrating this park with the other shoreline improvements to create an area where visitors and residents can enjoy the lake. In addition, as discussed in the Pier & Waterfront Design Report, parking dedicated to waterfront users, including handicapped accessible spaces, is being considered for this area. The location of this parking area will be convenient to the Waterfront Walkway and encourage the establishment of a pedestrian loop from the Waterfront Walkway, to the Community Center, down Lake Street, and then returning to the waterfront on Montgomery Street. A master plan for the park should be considered that explores the proposed enhancements including whether this park is an appropriate location for the military tank.



Figure 28 Veteran's Park



**Figure 29 Veteran's Park Looking
Toward Waterfront Pier**



**Figure 27 Location of Veteran's Park in Relation to the
Waterfront Improvements**

Downtown Lake Access

As part of the effort to strengthen the link between the Village's downtown and the waterfront, the physical plan proposes creating a small lake access walkway from Lake Street between the Calgah Building and Kathy's Furniture. Currently, a narrow alley provides private access to a small section of waterfront.

Recommendation:

The proposal calls for this area, currently privately owned, to be opened to the public. This proposition is predicated on financial feasibility and the cooperation of private property owners. A

small pavilion, with an associated seating plaza, would create a seasonal retail opportunity for boat rental, concession, or other use. A short-term boat dock would allow visitors the opportunity to stop into the Village while enjoying a day on the lake. This will establish another non-vehicular gateway to the Village. The plan also calls for enhanced landscaping, paved walkway, and decorative streetlights. The proposed trees will frame views along the alley to the lake, and provide some separation between public and private land. Annual beds are also proposed, to add color and interest to the area.



Figure 30 - Existing Condition, Downtown Lake Access



Figure 31 - Illustration of proposed downtown lake access

The Downtown Lake Access will add dimension to the retail element on Lake Street. It provides an interesting opportunity for a pedestrian side trip, and creates another place for retailers to provide services – the buildings to either side of the alley will gain two additional building frontages.

The plan also calls for a pedestrian walkway along the waterfront. The idea of a boardwalk along the lake was

discussed several times in the course of the revitalization process. The final plan, which calls for connections between the Village boat launch, State Dock, and newly proposed Downtown Lake Access, was judged the most feasible from a physical and financial standpoint. Other walkways that were proposed, such as a southern walkway from Gaines Marina to Route 11, were determined to be too costly. Therefore, the focus is on the downtown section of the waterfront.

For more information concerning the options discussed for the waterfront, see the Pier and Waterfront Design Report located at Village Hall.

This pedestrian walkway would connect the downtown lake access to the shoreline walkway, a project which is already underway. This simple concrete walkway could be enhanced by lighting, landscape plantings, and benches. However, the proposed walkway alignment requires the Village to acquire easements or access rights to private property, or to purchase the necessary area outright. Therefore, the final location, size, and features of this walkway cannot be specifically determined until the Village obtains rights to the property in question.

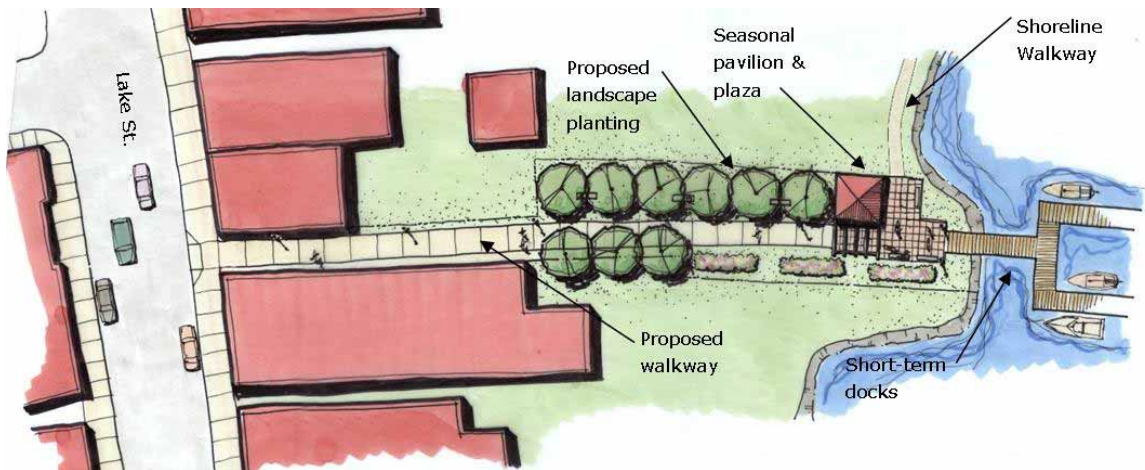
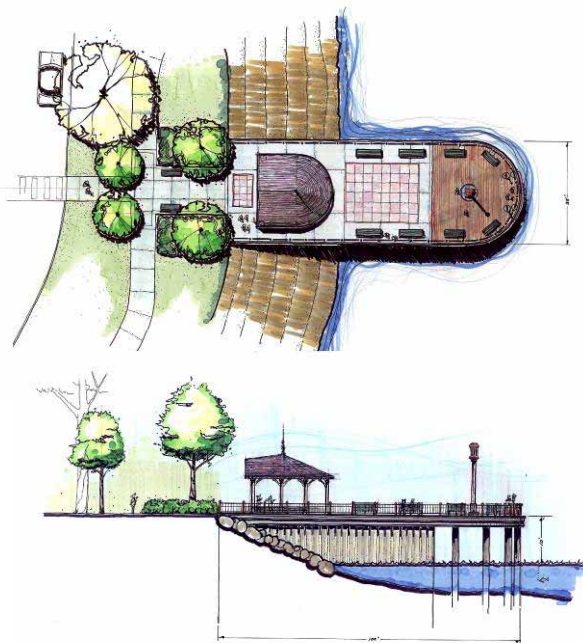


Figure 32 - Proposed Plan, Downtown Lake Access



As stated previously, the Downtown Lake Access will link the downtown to the waterfront revitalization projects, which are currently underway. These projects are intended to make the waterfront an integral part of the Village's identity once again. They include improvements to the area along Montgomery Street between the old State Dock and the Route 2 bridge to Vermont, including a new waterfront pier, located at the former State Dock site, a shoreline walkway, and improvements to the Village Boat Launch.

Figure 33 - Plan and Section of Waterfront Pier Project

Walking Loops

The enhancements listed above will create the opportunity for several pedestrian walking loops throughout the Village, shown in Figure 28. These could link several important features such as the Train Station, Civic Center, Shoreline Walkway, Rouse Park, adjacent neighborhoods, and Village Hall. Some of these routes take advantage of existing sidewalks, while others are proposed.

Recommendations:

Connections the Town should pursue include:

- Paths around the north side of the Civic Center
- Downtown Lake Access walkway
- Shoreline Walkway (discussed in the Pier & Waterfront Design Report), with potential future connection to Fort Montgomery



Figure 34 - Proposed Walking Loops

These connections would increase the walkability of the downtown, which is of value to the Village in several ways. Increased pedestrian access will encourage residents of the neighborhoods west of Lake Street to walk downtown, which could increase patronage to downtown businesses. In addition, a strong pedestrian infrastructure is prized by certain land uses, such as bed-and-breakfasts and waterfront-related retail, recommended elsewhere in this report.

Village Parking Lot Enhancements

The Village maintains a small parking lot that runs the length of the block between State and Washington Streets, behind the buildings on the west side of Lake Street. This parking area provides convenient, off-street spaces for anyone to park and walk the downtown area. The enhancement plan calls for this area to be improved, so that the aesthetics of this parking area do not detract from the overall look of downtown. It is especially important to provide a good impression on visitors, whose first steps outside their car may be in this parking lot. In addition, the improvements will provide better organization to the parking scheme, which will increase the functionality of the lot.



Figure 35 - Existing Condition, Village Parking

Recommendation:

The proposed improvements to the parking lot are intended to integrate this area into the pedestrian streetscape. Landscaped tree lawns have been proposed at the perimeter of the lot. This creates a visual break for the large expanse of pavement, as well as providing vertical elements along the street edge. Pedestrian-scaled lighting will also add to this effect. Wayfinding signage, which directs drivers to the lot from Lake Street, and within the lot directing visitors to shops and Village features, will increase the usefulness of the lot. An organized striping plan maximizes the capacity of the asphalt.

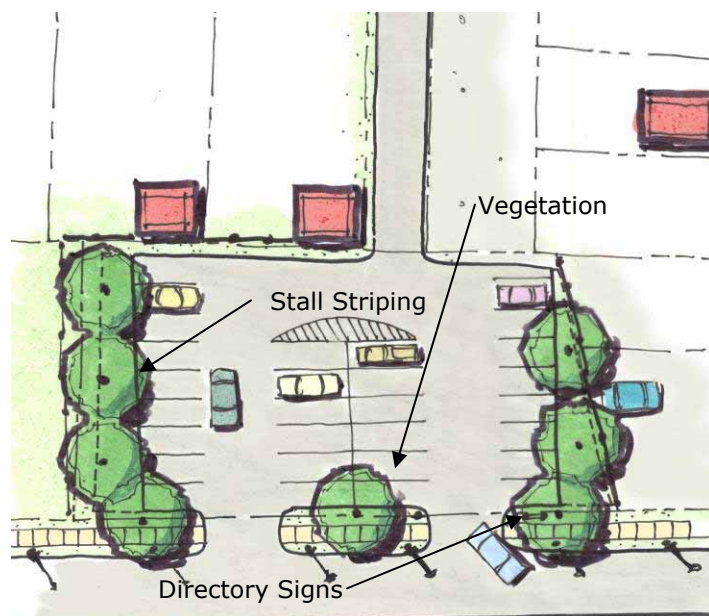


Figure 36 - Proposed Plan, Village parking

As discussed in the Pier & Waterfront Design Report, parking dedicated to waterfront users, including handicapped accessible spaces, is being considered for an area immediately south of Veteran's Park. It is anticipated that some motorists will park on Lake Street and the adjoining lots and walk to the waterfront, which is approximately 500 feet away. Approximately three spaces are proposed for the area along the shoreline walk near the

cottonwood trees. Parking is also available along both sides of Montgomery Street between the pier and Lake Street.

Additional Projects for Consideration

- Visitor Information/Center: Given Rouses Point's location as the northern gateway to New York from Canada and Vermont, a visitor center would be appropriate. The purpose of the center would be to disseminate information not only on Rouses Point but also northern New York, Lake Champlain, the Lakes to Locks Passage, and other destinations. Given the recommended enhancements to the historic D&H train station, this would be an appropriate location for the visitor's center. However, because the train station is located a few blocks away from the heart of downtown, it is recommended that a 'satellite' visitor center be located downtown. This could be accomplished by collaborating with a downtown building owner to locate kiosks, informational flyers, etc. for dissemination and informing the visitor of the full visitor's center at the train station.
- Fort Montgomery: During the public process, many people mentioned Ft. Montgomery as an asset to the community. Situated on the US/Canada border, this historic fort could be developed as an asset to residents and visitors as an historic and environmental interpretive center. However, there are some issues related to wetlands, access, and parking which require further evaluation. The Village should work with state and federal officials to create connections and enhance this area.

c. Streetscape Improvements

Downtown Lake Street

In addition to focusing on specific project areas, the streetscapes within the study area were examined. The length of Lake Street located between Pratt Street and Gaines Marina, and Pratt Street between the train station and Lake Street received special attention. These streetscapes have a large influence on Rouses Point's downtown character. Since they connect the gateways, shops, and points of interest in the Village, these streetscapes represent the major route that people use to move around the downtown. As such, the physical appearance and condition are important for the success of the downtown enhancement plan.



Figure 37 - Existing Condition, Lake Street

This portion of Lake Street was redesigned several years ago to improve the appearance of the street. The sidewalks are made of concrete pavers that are designed to resemble brick. The streetlights are pedestrian scale double-globe fixtures, which add an interesting visual element to the sidewalk. There are also street trees interspersed along the road. Finally, the street width allows for on-street parking between Pratt Street and just south of Chapman Street.



Figure 38 - Existing Lake St. Sidewalk

Recommendations:

Although these improvements have made a positive impact on the appearance and functionality of the downtown, some adjustments to the design could benefit the Village by tying the overall downtown enhancement plan to this streetscape. These include:

Street Tree Infill: New trees should be added at appropriate locations to create a consistent pedestrian experience. It is important to note that the distribution of these trees should not be determined by establishing a set distance between trees, but rather by the locations of important architectural features, such as entrances. Ultimately, the tree planting patterns should complement the historic architecture of downtown.

New Wayfinding Signage: The plan calls for the placement of signs at the corner of Lake and Montgomery that point out businesses, services, and parking in the downtown and waterfront areas. This also creates an opportunity to use a cohesive design strategy, since these signs could match the fonts, coloring, or other attributes of the gateway signage. Additional signs with a similar purpose may be located throughout the downtown.

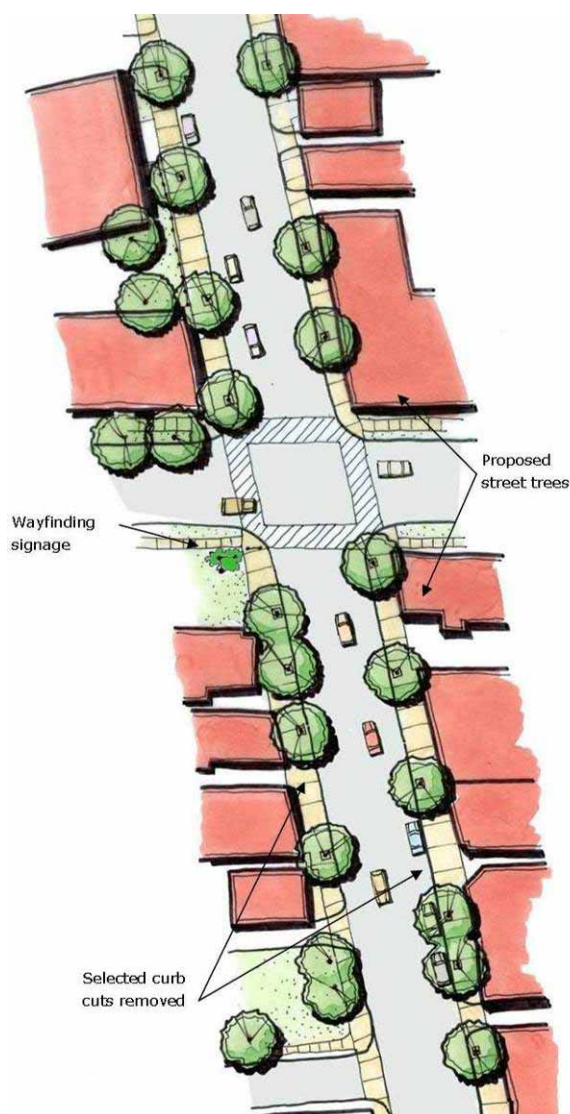


Figure 39 - Proposed Lake St. Streetscape

Reduce the Number of Curb Cuts: The new sidewalk treatment is not uniformly popular among residents. In particular, some report that the sidewalks are difficult for the elderly or disabled to walk on, due to the inconsistent slope. These “dips” are the result of the grading for curb cuts, some of which are not in use. By eliminating unnecessary curb cuts, the sidewalks will have more consistent slope without hazardous “dips”.

General Streetscape Improvements: Amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, and banners would work to add character to the streetscape. Similarly, the flower displays currently maintained in planters along the street are very effective and should remain. The Village could also consider different types of pavement, some of which may be more in keeping with the aesthetic and physical goals of the streetscape. The current brick pavers exacerbate the difficulty mentioned above that some residents have in walking on the sidewalk. In addition, the color of the pavers is not shown to its best advantage during the long North Country winter. Other materials, such as plain concrete, may contribute to an overall neater appearance to the streetscape throughout the year.

Other Downtown Streets

In addition to improvements to Lake Street, the Village should consider improvements to those streets running east-west which connect the neighborhoods to the downtown core area. As a typical example, a section of Pratt Street was examined for this plan. The portion between Lake Street and the train station plays an important role in tying the downtown area to the neighborhoods and gateway to Rouses Point via Amtrak.



Figure 40 - Existing Condition, Pratt St.

Recommendation:

This streetscape treatment should successfully transition between the downtown area and the neighborhood west of Lake Street. This involves new asphalt paving for the road, as well as new concrete sidewalks. The utility poles should be removed and the lines should be buried, to frame the view from Lake Street. Street trees and a grassy tree lawn should separate parking areas, sidewalks, and road pavement. Pedestrian-scale light fixtures should be



Figure 41 - Historic Marnes Inn Photo



Figure 42 - Proposed streetscape, Pratt St.

added to create a consistent experience along the street. Rather than install double-globe fixtures similar to those currently found on Lake Street, the lighting in this area should reflect a separate identity from Lake Street. The plan proposes using luminaries and poles similar to the historic features found in Rouses Point, seen in this postcard photo of the Marnes Inn.

This streetscape treatment is also very appropriate for Montgomery Street, especially the short section between Lake Street and the State Dock. The Village recently improved this area, by burying utility lines and installing new lighting. To complete the streetscape as described above, a new grass strip between the curb and the sidewalk, curbing, and street trees would need to be added. A photo illustration of the proposed result is shown in Figure 42. The photoillustration was completed prior to the Holland Hotel fire in June 2006.



Figure 43 - Existing Condition, Montgomery St.



Figure 44 - Proposed Condition, Montgomery St.

2. Infill Development and Redevelopment

As the revitalization process begins to take shape, buildings are upgraded, and vacant lots are redeveloped, it is critical that the form of new development be in keeping with the vision and guiding principles of this plan. This best tool to accomplish this is the Design Guidelines, discussed below. It is also important that the new uses bring people into the downtown. This may include people shopping or seeking entertainment, but may also include other uses such as housing or office development. To accomplish the appropriate mix of uses, the Village should review its Zoning Ordinance and revise it if necessary to adjust the allowable uses in the downtown districts. Figure 45 illustrates an appropriate mix of land uses which would further the goals of the revitalization plan.

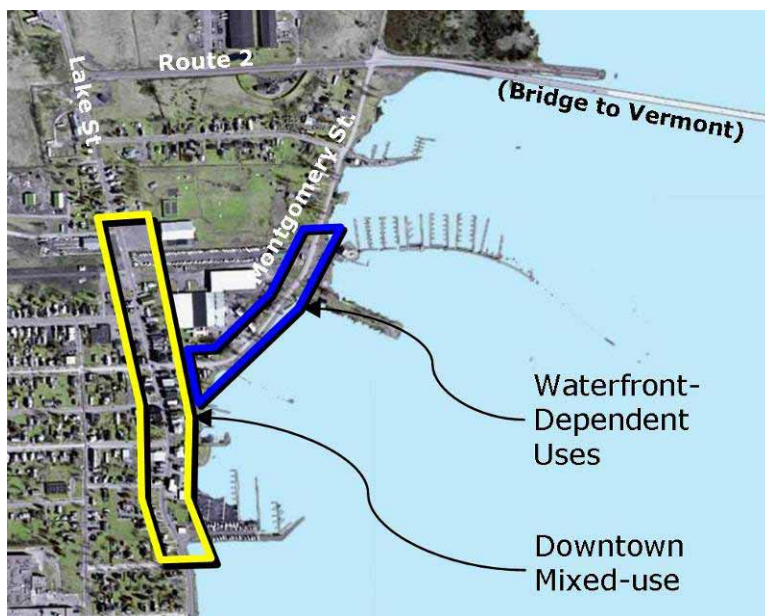


Figure 45 - Appropriate Land Uses

Recommendation:

For buildings and vacant lots along Lake Street and Montgomery Street, the ground floor should be occupied with uses that generate foot traffic such as retail shops, restaurants, pubs/taverns, coffee shops, etc. Additionally, where there is adequate space on the sidewalk, outdoor cafes are encouraged to help enliven the public space between the building fronts and the roadway. The upper floors of these buildings should be occupied with residential units, office space, art galleries, or low

traffic commercial services. All new buildings should be designed to conform with the Village's *Design Guidelines for Building Facades, Site Development, and Downtown Streetscapes* (Appendix 8). The intent is to encourage a mix of uses with active uses on the ground floor and less active uses on the upper floors. In addition, mixing retail, commercial, office, and residential provides a multi-dimensional aspect to downtown by providing activity after the end of the workday. Examples of vacant lots that, when rebuilt, should strictly adhere to these recommendations include the former Ducks Auto Parts Lot, Holland Hotel site, and the vacant parking lot on Montgomery Street. If the Ducks Auto Parts Lot is not developed as a building, it should be investigated as a potential expansion area for Rouse Park.

For buildings and vacant lots facing Lake Champlain, a mix of uses is encouraged. However, retail and residential uses that directly benefit from having waterfront property should be given priority. In terms of appropriate retail uses, this may include restaurants with outdoor dining, boat rentals, marina supplies, apparel, gifts, boat rides, etc. Waterfront property is also another opportunity to integrate a different residential product not found in Rouses Point, such as townhouses and/or condominiums.

3. Design Guidelines

The concepts described above illustrate ways that the Village can improve discrete areas, to further the overall enhancement of Rouses Point. However, these concepts only apply to land the Village owns or controls. For the enhancement plan to be fully successful, private properties should also participate in improving their buildings and sites. To improve the appearance and functionality of the entire community, the Village of Rouses Point seeks to encourage development that is attractive as well as pedestrian-friendly. One way to accomplish this is by applying consistent guidelines to development and redevelopment projects. In turn, this can benefit individual business owners, due to increased patronage, an attractive community setting, and civic pride. To accomplish this, the Village recently prepared the *Design Guidelines for Building Facades, Site Development, and Downtown Streetscapes* (Appendix 8), which contains site design and architectural guidelines.

The guidelines are intended to supplement to the Village of Rouses Point zoning ordinance, and set forth standards in support of the goals for enhancing downtown. These guidelines are intended to apply to all Commercial and Mixed-Use zones in the downtown and waterfront. The site guidelines address building placement, circulation and parking, landscaping, and lighting. Architectural guidelines relate to the appearance and form of the facades of the structures on the site. Below is an example of how these guidelines could be applied to buildings and sites in Rouses Point.



Figure 46 - Existing Lake St. buildings



Figure 47 - Potential redevelopment scheme using Design Guidelines

These images illustrate the redevelopment of a building that is in keeping with the historic character of Rouses Point. While the building may be redeveloped as one project, it is important to recognize that, due to high costs, an incremental approach would also be effective. If buildings are redeveloped incrementally, it will be important to ensure that each improvement does not preclude the ability to make the next improvement.

B. ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION STRATEGY

1. Market Focus

When close to home, people seek basic goods and services such as personal care items, groceries, liquor, and restaurants. People are willing to travel further from home for regional retail items such as those found at major big box retail centers. People are willing to travel even further if the result of their effort is a distinctive store, recreation experience, entertainment venue, or restaurant. Stores, restaurants, entertainment venues, and recreational attractions in this category can be thought of as “destinations.” For example, people may be willing to travel further for a specialty store that sells unique items, or a special recreational experience. The destination experience can also be a combination of both, such as a restaurant with outdoor seating on a lakefront, or a retail store combined with an art gallery. Healthy downtowns have a mixture of all three scales of retail and entertainment. These types of retail stores, restaurants, entertainment venues, and recreational experiences can serve the local market by making the community a fun and exciting place to live, as well as bringing in people from outside the community to spend time and money.

An evaluation of the identity of the market served by downtown Rouses Point reveals a mixture of services from neighborhood scale stores, such as the pizza shops and the bakery, to regional services, such as the post office and the pharmacy. A few retail stores and one restaurant fill the destination experience niche, including Ole Tymes Café, Chazy Hardware, Kathy’s Furniture, and Ray’s Appliance.

While there are stores that fall into each category, there is not an overabundance in any group. With regard to the Regional Retail component, these types of goods and services are largely provided at the major retail centers on NYS Rt. 3 in Plattsburgh. With this market segment being mainly fulfilled outside of downtown Rouses Point, and with existing stores at the neighborhood scale, the third component (i.e., destination scale venues) provides a unique market opportunity to bring in visitors to the community and to make Rouses Point an exciting and fun community in which to live.

This market opportunity should be based on superior quality and experience, as opposed to the large volume, low cost environment of big box retailers found at regional shopping centers. When people visit Rouses Point, or become a resident, there are certain expectations for an experience beyond what big box retailers provide. If retailers, restaurateurs, entertainment, or recreational providers strive to provide a high quality “product” then people will be more willing to make an investment in time and money because their expectations have been met. Focusing on providing quality and experience throughout downtown and along the lakefront will help distinguish Rouses Point from other destinations and expand the market.

Tourism Economy

A link with the Canadian leisure travel market presents an opportunity to catalyze the destination market focus. The City of Montreal and its southern suburbs are located within 1 hour of Rouses Point. This potential market contains over 3 million people, more than 30 times the population of Clinton County. A study completed by the Plattsburgh North Country Chamber of Commerce entitled, “The Economic Impact of Canada on Clinton County, New York 2004” states that the economic impact of tourism and retail in Clinton County rose from approximately \$194 million in 1995 to over \$310 million in 2004, an increase of 60% in seven years

The Lakes to Locks Passage (LTLP) is a designated New York State Byway that recognizes the early nation building activities of North America. The core of the Byway is the interconnected waterway between Canada and the US, consisting of the Chambly Canal, Richelieu River, Lake Champlain, Lake George, Champlain Canal, and the upper Hudson River. As stated in the marketing plan developed for LTLP in December 2005, the LTLP has enormous potential for growth as a tourism destination. This marketing plan focuses on Baby Boomers/Empty Nesters as the primary group to sustain regional tourism through the next 20 or 30 years. This market is affluent and active, enjoying boating, biking, hiking, fishing, and what is often called “experimental tourism.”

An additional focus of the LTLP marketing report is to brand the Byway as entirely water based. It notes that there is no other interconnected waterway and multi-modal (car, boat, rail, bicycle, walking/hiking) Byway in the nation. Given its Lake Champlain location as a gateway community to the US portion of the LTLP, Rouses Point can play an active role in serving this market effort of LTLP.

The Village of Rouses Point is in an extremely favorable position to capitalize on the projected growth of tourism in the Lakes to Locks Byway. Rouses Point, dubbed the “Northern Gateway” to the Lakes to Locks Passage because of its location on the Quebec and Vermont borders and Lake Champlain, has exceptional opportunities for multi-modal tourism development. Rouses Point is easily accessible from major population centers via car, train, boat, and bicycle. It is a Lakes to Locks waypoint community, offering marina and lodging choices, as well as a variety of restaurants, stores, and services within easy walking distance of its scenic waterfront and historic downtown.

2. Targeted Retail Businesses

Building on the market analysis in Section III of this report, two economic themes and specific store types have been identified. New development activity in downtown Rouses Point should build on these themes in a coordinated manner, to achieve a critical mass of retail activity that serves the local resident, the regional resident, and the tourism community.

Community Retail Theme:

The first economic theme builds on the consumer behavior patterns described earlier. In general, when people are close to home, they need and seek basic goods and services such as personal care items, groceries, liquor, and restaurants. It is suggested that the Village of Rouses Point expand on this theme by seeking store types such as:

- Themed Family Restaurants – mix of food and music, sports, and special events
- Food for the Home – Wine, liquor store, specialty foods
- General Merchandise
- Produce Stand
- Florist
- Candy/Ice Cream
- Pubs/Taverns
- Coffee House/Bakery
- Newsstand
- Physical Fitness Studio
- Dance Studio
- Housing above 1st floor Uses

Non-Retail:

- Arts and crafts/cultural center
- Residential
- Senior Housing
- Offices on Upper Floors

Destination Tourism and Regional Retail and Entertainment Theme:

As downtown continues to provide the necessary goods and services for the local resident, there is a market opportunity to become a center for regional retail and entertainment activity. Rather than trying to compete as low cost providers of retail goods and services, these shops and activities should work together to create a special experience that encourages people to linger and enjoy the atmosphere.

A second component to this theme builds on the tourism activity found throughout Northern New York and Clinton County. As discussed in Section III, Clinton County has seen growth in tourism and benefits from expenditures in a variety of categories including lodging, recreation, food, shopping, and transportation. As people visit or pass through the area, Rouses Point can play a key role in providing goods, services, and entertainment venues to make the visit more enjoyable.

Store types and entertainment venues in this theme are listed below. Included in this list are options for winter activities to accommodate an extended tourism season into the winter months.

Prepared Food:

- Entertainment Restaurants – mixing of food with music, sports, and special events
- Coffee House/Bakery
- Candy/Ice Cream
- Pubs/Taverns
- Outdoor Cafes especially on lakefront

Entertainment:

- Historic walking tour
- Museum at train station
- Expanded community events
- Information/Tourism Center
- Link to Ft. Montgomery

Specialty Retail:

- Antiques
- Frame Shop
- Bike/Boat Rentals
- Souvenir/Gifts/Cards

- Diving/Shipwrecks
- Fishing Guides (summer and winter)
- Used Books
- Home Decorating
- Children's Apparel/Toys
- Florist
- Sporting Goods
- Snowmobile Tours
- Cross Country Ski Tours/Rentals
- Marina Supplies/Apparel/Gifts
- Boat Rides

Lodging:

- Hotels/Motels
- Inns
- Bed and Breakfasts

The replication in store types and services in each economic theme illustrates the overlap in the market opportunities. Focusing strictly on one economic theme will not be a detriment to the others. However, combining opportunities found in each theme will help achieve the desired result – downtown revitalization.

C. TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the truck traffic analysis (see Appendix 6 for the complete analysis) was to understand truck traffic patterns in the community, identify potential alternative options for truck travel routes for future study and to assess the benefits and constraints of those options in a preliminary manner. All recommendations are based on the community's preferred alignment for alternative truck travel routes. The community's preference was determined through the study advisory committee meetings and general research analysis for the village. Recognizing that the developments of an alternative truck route may be a long-term goal, short-term actions are presented to help mitigate current concerns and conditions. In addition, this study recommends the next steps for determining how to meet the community's vision for truck travel through the village.

With the understanding that the truck bypass is a potential solution that can only be realized in the long-term, the Village should pursue some immediate ways to ameliorate the effects of truck traffic downtown. One method is to continue the inspections of the Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Unit. Random safety inspections can also be utilized as an accessory to the stationary control points. In addition, signage is a simple and effective way to control truck traffic within the Village of Rouses Point. Signs posting applicable regulations are very helpful to truck drivers, by making clear what is illegal and what is advisory. Implementation of a signage program is straightforward and immediate. Signage should be installed in conformance with the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD).

In addition to these specific short-term recommendations, the physical enhancements that were discussed previously would help to mitigate/calm truck traffic along Lake Street. The completion of these enhancements (i.e., street trees, pedestrian signage, reduced curb cuts, and general landscaping) help to inform the truck traffic that downtown is a pedestrian zone rather than a vehicular pass-through.

The Village should also consider sidewalk bump-outs as another traffic-calming feature along Lake Street. These serve to slow car and truck traffic. In addition, bump-outs at corners narrow the crosswalk distance, making it safer and more comfortable for pedestrians to cross the street. These potential benefits are sufficient to warrant further analysis of whether curb bump-outs should be included on Lake Street.

Further analysis of a truck bypass is warranted to address the quality of life issues and concerns in the downtown area. There are many detrimental impacts to pedestrian safety and comfort caused by trucks traveling along Lake Street. Trucks are a highly visible component of downtown traffic. This traffic in the downtown area is the main cause of noise, dust, and vibration on the street. To pedestrians, these factors are distracting and uncomfortable at best, and in the worst-case scenarios are safety hazards. Trucks make up approximately 6 percent of

all traffic on Lake Street. This steady volume of trucks through the Village only exaggerates and perpetuates the quality of life concerns for residents and visitors in downtown Rouses Point. Given these factors, a truck bypass may be warranted.

There are concerns regarding the economic impact of a bypass on the downtown community, especially the potentially negative economic impact of trucks bypassing the downtown area. However, the truck traffic analysis in Appendix 6 discusses a previously published report that stresses that a negative impact will not result because local businesses do not rely on through traffic for revenue. The excerpt *Summary of Highway Bypass Studies* from the report Economic Impact Analysis: St. Croix River Crossing – Minnesota TH 36 / Wisconsin STH 64 prepared by Economic Development Research Group for the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, July 1999, cites these significant conclusions from communities with bypasses:

- Very little retail flight has occurred in bypassed communities, meaning that few business have relocated or developed new operations in the area adjacent to the bypass route.
- Communities view their bypasses as beneficial overall, while at the same time understanding that the bypasses presented changes that must be addressed proactively.
- Many factors other than bypasses affect the economy of small towns and individual firms, and these various factors together are substantially more important than bypasses.
- Political and business leadership in a given area seems to play an important role in the evolution of the community after the bypass opens.

Although the creation of a bypass does not automatically create an economic hardship for a community, steps should be taken to attract desirable traffic to the downtown rather than continuing on the truck bypass. Development of a structured “gateway” into the Village at the intersection of Lake Street and the proposed bypass at Route 2 would be of utmost importance in directing desirable traffic to the village downtown. The goal of the gateway treatment would be to encourage passenger vehicles traveling west from Vermont or south from Canada to visit the downtown area. This gateway might include:

- A more defined treatment of the travel lanes in this intersection, including curbed edges to narrow down the travel lanes indicating a ‘decision point’ for approaching vehicles.
- Vertical landscape plantings, such as tall trees, to further define the space.
- Continuing the downtown street light installation on Lake Street to this intersection to

connect the gateway with the downtown streetscape.

- The use of color, in the form of annual flower plantings, to soften the appearance of the downtown area as opposed to the truck bypass. This would require large planting beds in order to be effective.
- The extension of sidewalks along Lake Street, to further the connection with the downtown area.
- Appropriate use of signs, in a style in keeping with the downtown character. The sign at this location would be similar to the other “Welcome to Rouses Point” signs proposed elsewhere in this plan.

These components would work together to make the choice to turn onto Lake Street as attractive as possible for visitors and residents.

The detailed truck analysis, located in Appendix 6 of this report, identified several routing options and two preferred potential bypass routes. The first, identified as Option 5A, would involve trucks from Vermont continuing straight from Route 2 directly west on a new connector road crossing Route 276. (No turning movement left onto Route 11 at the intersection with Route 2 would be allowed for trucks as they would be directed to continue straight and connect with Route 276 north of Pratt Street.) The new connector road would follow along the former



Figure 48 - Bypass Route Option 5A

railroad bed crossing Prospect Street and intersecting with Route 276 south of the school. The route would then turn left onto Route 276 and then turn right onto Route 11.

Option 5B, which is very similar, involves trucks from Vermont continuing straight from Route 2 directly west on a new connector road, crossing Route 276. The route follows the new connector road along the former railroad bed crossing Prospect Street and continuing southbound intersecting with Route 11; turning right onto Route 11. Option 5B would not involve Route 276 near the school.

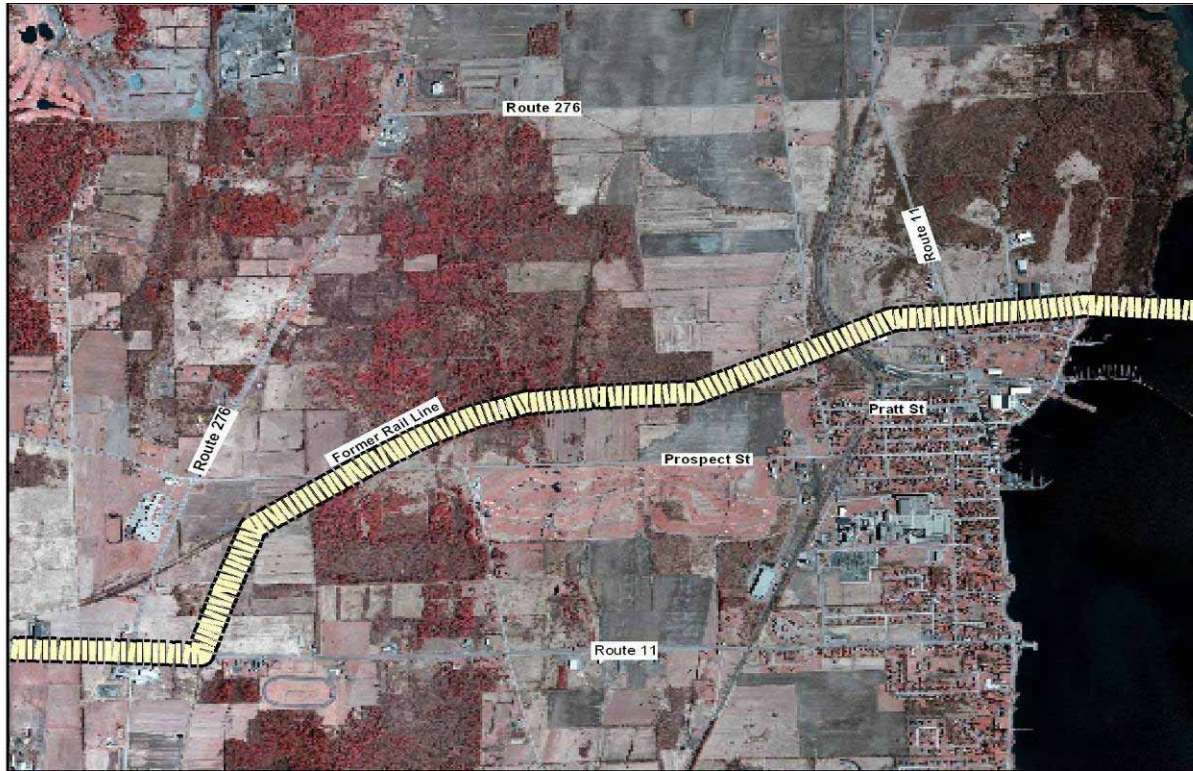


Figure 49 - Bypass Route Option 5B

The next step in pursuing the creation of a bypass would be to commission an Origin-Destination survey. An origin-destination study (O-D study) is used to determine travel patterns of traffic for a particular location or section of roadway during a typical day. These studies are used to obtain a clearer insight regarding the potential positive or negative impact on the community. They are useful in long-range traffic planning, especially when substantial changes are anticipated in the local or regional traffic flow. In this case, an O-D study would serve to verify, expand on, and analyze current traffic patterns for the Village, which could be used to further refine the preferred options for the bypass.

Development of bypass would require significant funding to commission traffic and engineering studies, acquire right-of-ways, and construct the roadways. For projects such as this, funding can be located through various agency grants and loans, village, county, state funds, or bonds and tax increases. In many cases, a variety of funds is required to fully fund a project and inure minimal taxpayer burden. This cost to the community is a factor that should be considered during future discussions regarding the bypass option.

Another potential option to the bypass discussed above is the proposed Northern Tier Expressway (NTE), which is in the initial planning phase. The NTE is envisioned as a way to maximize economic development growth opportunities in Northern New York. At this stage, the initial study recommends that a new four-lane expressway follow the existing right-of-way along US Rt. 11 as much as possible.¹ The technical memorandum states that the routing of the eastern end of the corridor could continue on Rt. 11 east to Rouses Point and connect to the Rt.2 bridge to Vermont or follow the NYS Rt. 190 Corridor to connect to Interstate 87 just west of the City of Plattsburgh. Given the recent improvements to the Champlain Port of Excellence and the increased capacity at this border crossing, it would be beneficial to connect the NTE along the US Rt. 11 alignment in the Town of Champlain continuing onto the Village of Rouses Point. The completion of the NTE in this area would also alleviate the need for a truck bypass as discussed in this study.

¹ Northern Tier Expressway (US Route 11 Corridor Study). Technical Memorandum #1 prepared by Wilbur Smith Associates to the NYS Department of Transportation.

V. ACTION PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION TECHNIQUES

A. MANAGEMENT

1. Lead Group

Section III of this report lists a series of suggestions that build upon the guiding principles formulated in the public visioning session. It is important to recognize that some of these recommended actions can be implemented immediately, while others may take significantly longer. Although the Village may prefer to implement all of the recommendations immediately, an incremental approach is likely to be more efficient and realistic, based on the availability of funding resources, staff, and volunteers.

Director of Community Development

The Village employs a Director of Community Development to oversee a variety of public initiatives, including seeking grant funding, implementing grant awards, and overseeing this study. To begin implementing this plan, retain this position as the lead contact. Without a “point person” to steer the revitalization effort, elements of this plan will go unrealized. This position would become a de facto “Main Street Manager.” To assist this staff position, continue the existing partnerships such as with the Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Steering Committee and regional efforts.

Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Steering Committee

The Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Steering Committee has been actively engaged in the effort to complete this study. A continuation of Community Development to oversee a variety of public initiatives which include seeking grant funding, implementing grant awards, and overseeing this committee will be essential to achieve downtown revitalization.

Local Development Corporation

In addition to continuing this relationship, the Village may consider establishing a Local Development Corporation (LDC), a non-profit authority that can be created using NYS enabling legislation. There are many benefits to an LDC, including enabling the Village to gain access to different sources of funding that are not available to local governments.

Business Improvement District

As redevelopment begins to take shape in Rouses Point, the Village and the downtown business owners can begin to explore the creation a Business Improvement District. A BID is an entity formed by authorizing resolution of the Village Board. It provides the ability to create a partnership between the public and private sector to undertake specific activities including

marketing, promotion, outreach, applying for grant funding, and overseeing development projects. If this avenue is pursued, the Director of Community Development and members of the Downtown and Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Steering Committee should be active participants.

2. Partnerships

Rouses Point has a strong history of partnerships with various local, state, and federal agencies. These include the North Country Chamber of Commerce, the Lakes to Locks Passage, Clinton County, NYS Department of State, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, NYS Department of Housing and Community Renewal, NYS Economic Development Corporation, the New York State Department of Transportation, and others. The Village should continue to participate with these and other agencies to implement the revitalization plan.

B. QUALITY OF LIFE

Several easy-to-implement actions can be undertaken immediately to yield results and gain momentum for the revitalization process.

1. Cleanliness

Public and private landowners should work together to keep the downtown public spaces clean at all times (including streets, sidewalks, and parking areas). A neat appearance is instrumental in attracting customers and investors, and often involves little or no cost to achieve. Ways to implement this goal include:

- Frequent sweeping of entrances and sidewalks by downtown shop owners
- Addition of trash receptacles and ashtrays for pedestrian use
- Frequent emptying of on-street trash receptacles
- Speedy removal of ice and snow from public areas
- Enforcement of litter laws
- Semi-annual “Downtown Clean-up” days, perhaps performed in conjunction with student groups
- Regular weeding of green spaces
- Maintenance and upkeep of public facilities and private property

These efforts should be publicized throughout the community and should be a source of pride for residents and business owners. Private efforts, though voluntary, should be encouraged by the Village. In turn, the Village must fulfill its obligation by taking a proactive approach to those actions it has direct control over. Once the benefits of cleanliness are experienced by a few business owners, others will follow suit, resulting in a Village where neatness is the rule, not the exception.

2. Public Safety

The Village of Rouses Point is a safe place with low levels of crime. The perception that public places are safe is often as important as the actual level of safety. The Village should continue to foster the perception of public safety in the downtown and the waterfront area.

3. Pedestrian Safety

As mentioned previously, Rouses Point is a very walkable community. Many of the recommendations revolve around ways to make walking a more attractive and pleasant

experience. However, to maximize the benefit of this asset, the Village should strive to make the pedestrian experience as safe as it is pleasant. The Village should consider the following:

- Installation of clearly striped crosswalks
- Installation of pedestrian right-of-way signs
- Continuation of aggressive snow and ice removal

These measures will increase the pedestrian safety on Lake Street, which in turn increases the attractiveness of the downtown as a place to walk and shop.

4. Enforcement

The consistent enforcement of Village regulations will also be important to the success of this revitalization plan. Code enforcement efforts will ensure that all buildings are held to the same standards for safety and appearance and encourage new investment in downtown. This measure complements the previously discussed efforts to achieve consistent cleanliness in the downtown. Aggressive enforcement of speed limits and parking laws will also work to make the downtown area safer for drivers and pedestrians.

5. Wayfinding

As mentioned previously, wayfinding signs are important for making visitors feel comfortable and welcome. To accomplish this, two sets of signs are needed: those directed towards vehicles and those for pedestrians.

Vehicular signs should be clear, easy to read, and should have simple text or symbols so that drivers can easily find their way to destination points, major roads, and parking areas. The Village should consider making these signs language-neutral, to make French-speaking visitors at home. This can be accomplished by using universal symbols, such as those used to indicate parks or parking lots, or by making text bi-lingual. The locations should be logical and eye-catching and should complement existing traffic signs.

Pedestrian oriented signage presents a different set of opportunities. These signs can go into greater detail and contain more text. The material, craftsmanship, and style of the sign should be high-quality, since it will be viewed at a very close range. These signs should be placed at logical intervals, such as important intersections, destination points, and parking areas, so that visitors always have an opportunity to explore the Village comfortably.

6. Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines discussed previously should be implemented immediately. This will ensure that private development and redevelopment projects which occur incrementally throughout the Village all contribute to the effort to improve the aesthetics of the Village. In addition, the Village should keep these guidelines in mind when undertaking improvement projects. Although the enhancements presented in Section IV A specify the use of certain design parameters within the context of the individual projects, the Village should insure that future projects not proposed in this plan match the aesthetic qualities promoted in the design guidelines.

7. Maritime Connection/Border Crossing

Presently, boaters who cross from Canada must stop at one of the marinas in Rouses Point, pay a dock fee, call the Border Patrol, and wait for an inspection. Many times these stops can be lengthy, leaving the travelers very frustrated. To help improve this situation, the Village should coordinate with state and federal officials to establish a border inspection station closer to the Canadian border. Although Ft. Montgomery is in need of major improvements, this area could be a potential location. Other areas should be investigated to determine the most effective location for a border crossing. In addition, every effort should be taken to eliminate holdups at marinas. Once these measures are in place, the Village should cross-promote the maritime border crossing to attract new users to this service.

C. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT/EXPANSION

1. Business Retention

The Downtown and Waterfront Revitalization Steering Committee, working with the Village Director of Community Development, should continue to coordinate with existing businesses to encourage expansion or stabilization. While recruitment will be necessary to expand the economic base, economic development should begin with the already established businesses.

Every effort should be made to continue to assist existing business owners to understand the nuances of this report and connect them to resources that can help stabilize or grow their businesses. This may include:

- Connecting business owners with local development agencies that may be able to provide technical assistance, such as the North Country Small Business Development Center and the North Country Chamber of Commerce, and the Rouses Point Chamber of Commerce
- Learning how to take advantage of the Village's Main Street façade restoration funds
- Establishing a micro-loan that would assist small businesses by providing loans and grants. This program would be targeted to business that cannot obtain a commercial loan
- Sharing this study with the private sector, to educate about the intent of this revitalization plan
- Linking local businesses with the Village's web site to provide an outlet to summarize the retail and service offerings within the Village. Using this summary, gaps can be identified and perhaps fulfilled with existing businesses.

An example of technical assistance could be to educate storeowners about the importance of window displays in creating a vibrant atmosphere in downtown. Based on national retailing 'rules-of-thumb', window displays should:

- Attract and hold attention, and indicate immediately the type and quality of merchandise.
- Be large enough to see easily into the store from the sidewalk, or for customers inside to be able to see the street outside.
- Take 8 seconds to capture persons walking; 2-3 seconds if driving.
- Be kept up-to-date
- Be simple, clean and well lit; let merchandise take center stage.

- Rotate merchandise every 1 to 5 days.
- Be lit until 10:00 pm.

For vacant storefronts, the Village could work with building owners to create a consistent display that adds vitality to the street by making the storefront interesting, even educational if desired, rather than an empty, dusty window. The result gives the appearance that the community cares and is working to revitalize its downtown.

2. New Business Recruitment

In addition to helping existing businesses expand, the Village Community Development Director and Committee should work with various regional agencies such as the North Country Chamber of Commerce and other members of the private sector to recruit new businesses. Informal business consultation should be provided in order to spread the message that Rouses Point is a ‘good place to do business.’

a. Attracting New and Appropriate Businesses

Using the Market Opportunities section as a guide, new businesses should be attracted to downtown Rouses Point. While it is not yet likely that national chain stores and restaurants will look to Rouses Point to locate a new store, there are quality independent stores that may find the area favorable. Independent store types should correlate to the targeted retail businesses discussed in section B of this report. With a critical mass of two to three independent stores or restaurants, and an increase in foot and vehicular traffic, Rouses Point may begin to attract some national chains. If national chains come to Rouses Point, the Village should use the Design Guidelines to ensure that they fit into the historic character of the Village.

As a starting point, a list of companies and organizations who are potentially interested in Rouses Point can be compiled. Once identified, a direct mail campaign can be initiated which includes a summary of this study and an invitation to meet the Community Development Director and Committee. Regional companies with multiple locations can be targeted as a starting point.

b. Work with the Real Estate Community

The Village Community Development Director and Committee should work with the real estate community to identify prospects and place them into the target area. As a starting point, each realtor should be given a copy of this plan. Using the physical plan and marketing opportunities as a guide, the targeted business types should be explained and desired physical locations should be identified. When located, prospects should be invited to downtown Rouses Point for a personalized tour given by the Village and Committee. If they are interested, the prospect should be put in contact with the property owner or leasing agent.

c. Prepare a Recruitment Package

A recruitment package can be an effective way to attract new businesses. To this end, the Village Community Development Director and Committee should seek funding to prepare a professionally designed, high quality package for distribution to interested parties. Contents of the package should include:

- A Template Letter
- A Summary of the Market Analysis Findings and Anticipated Physical Enhancements
- A Listing of Technical Assistance
- Information About Specific Properties

D. MARKETING AND PROMOTION

In addition to efforts aimed at business development, the Village needs to connect to the tourism market and create reasons to visit and stay in Rouses Point. An effective marketing and promotion campaign can help sustain this effort. The message should be concise and create the desired image of a destination retail, entertainment and recreation area based on superior quality and experience.

Various marketing techniques include:

- Preparing a web site. The site can stand alone and/or in partnership with the Village or other entities such as the North Country Chamber of Commerce.
- Preparing a downtown Rouses Point directory of shops and services. This should be widely distributed throughout the village and region including the train station, local visitor centers, coffee shops in Plattsburgh, border crossings, and other areas in the region.
- Adding more community special events as a way of projecting a positive image. Event types might include:
 - Snow/Ice Sculpting Festival
 - Ice Boating
 - Youth Activities
 - Expanded Fishing Derby
 - Farmer's Market
- Promoting Rouses Point's retail, entertainment, and recreation opportunities at community special events by setting up a booth to promote the culture, architecture, and history of Rouses Point and handing out printed materials
- Preparing a black and white 11 x 14" newsletter which highlights the ongoing activities in downtown Rouses Point. The creation of the newsletter could be funded with small business ads.
- Taking out a small ad in the Plattsburgh Press Republican to promote downtown Rouses Point
- Institute a 'Buy Local' campaign
- Focus on the waterfront by creating a series of festivals

- Marina/Merchant Cooperation – Establish a “Dock and Shop” program between the shop owners and the marina owners. The intent is to link the marina ‘residents’ and visitors to the shops and services in the downtown. The marina and shop owners and Village staff should meet, review this study, and establish a program.

Cross Promote Rouses Point Events with Regional Events and Points of Interest

Tourism has become an important component of the regional economy. Throughout Northern New York, many communities and organizations have recognized this trend and are organizing events and/or programs to improve visitation.

To draw visitors to downtown Rouses Point, and to extend visitation in the region, the Village should continue to coordinate with entities throughout Northern New York, such as the Lakes to Locks Scenic Byway, Plattsburgh/North Country Chamber of Commerce, and others. Providing additional activities will help increase visitation and encourage visitors to spend more time and money in Rouses Point, helping to boost economic activity and bring life back to downtown.