

Bloomingtondale, New Jersey



A Vision Plan for
BLOOMINGDALE

Prepared for:

Borough of Bloomingtondale

 VISIONING
PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN
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On:

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“We can actually influence the future by the choices we make today...

After all, the future is not something we predict,

It is something we invent based on our **vision** for the world.”

Andrew Zolli, Futures Researcher



FORWARD

The Borough of Bloomingdale has made great strides in order to put in place a vision. This document outlines the process that the borough underwent, the results of the process and the future steps possible to realize that vision. There are couple important points that must be recognized in order to put in perspective where this document has come from, and where the future of Bloomingdale is headed.

In the summer of 2005, A. Nelessen Associates, Inc. was hired by the County of Passaic to utilize the trademarked community visioning process. The community visioning process is made up of three tools, that gets the maximum amount of participants in the community involved so that a "consensus" vision may be reached. The community visioning process includes the Visual Preference Survey[™] (VPS), the Demographic and Policy Questionnaire and the Vision Translation Workshop. These tools have been designed to use community input to create their own vision of their community's future.

Before the community visioning process began there was already a transformation of the "image" and "future" of Bloomingdale taking place. Because of active community, staff, and leadership within the community several projects had been started. For instance, the streetscape improvement plan was a great stride in the right direction to realizing the community's vision. Without those processes taking place, the need for a "consensus" vision and direction for the future of Bloomingdale may not have happened when it did.

The community vision process was very successful because of the leadership of the community, specifically the mayor and the involvement of the county department of planning. This Vision Plan is the result of many hours of synthesis, analysis and creative thinking. The Vision Plan leaves Bloomingdale with a focused future and a tool to take the next steps to realize the vision.

"Great places start with great visions..."

THE PROCESS

SECTION 1.0 THE PROCESS

The first part of the community visioning process, the VPS™ takes existing photographs of Bloomingdale's downtown and asks the community to rate the images from a positive ten to a negative ten. The VPS™ also asks participants to rate images from around the country, including images of building types, streets, pedestrian places, signage, transportation issues and open space. The images that are the most positive indicate "what people want", and those images rated negatively indicate the places "of greatest potential". The second element of the process is the Demographic, Market, and Policy Questionnaire that gives the participants an accurate profile of those who took part in the process. Utilizing that tool it is possible to pinpoint what images rated higher with certain demographic groups, what areas in the downtown need improvement, and what economic factors are driving the downtown. The third and final element of the process is the most exciting. It is the Vision Translation Workshop. It takes the results of the first two elements and has the community draw, color, and locate the key areas of the downtown. The workshop is done as a series of overlays, including existing conditions, susceptibility to change, future land use, and other development factors.

The process was very successful. Over 80 participants came out for the VPS™, and seven design teams for the Workshop. The sessions proved very productive and exciting with many different concepts and ideas generated.

Ultimately, the VPS™ informed us as to what people wanted. The Vision Translation Workshops told us where they want the images to be located. We "synthesized" the recommendations of the community through a series of overlays relating the VPS™ to the Questionnaire and Workshop. A "consensus" vision was then created and graphically represented through illustrative plans, simulations, and basic three-dimensional volumetric diagrams. The Vision Plan is based upon the synthesis of the VPS™ and Workshop.

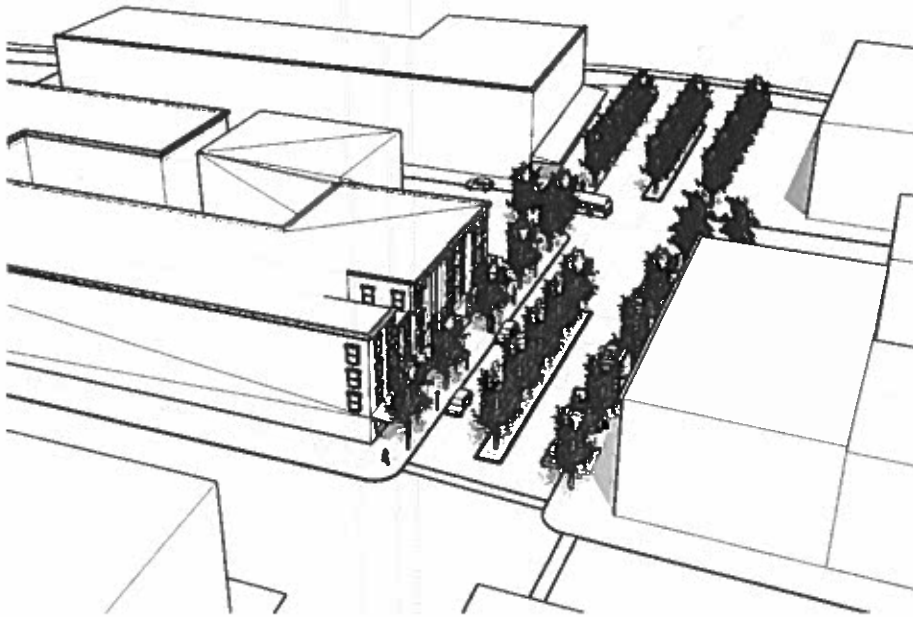
After developing professional recommendations based on the synthesis of the community, ANA conducted a "Did We Get it Right" presentation showing the community the plan, its key elements and the driving factors behind it. Also included in the professional recommendations was a series of strategies for implementation of the Vision.



BASIS OF THE VISION PLAN

SECTION 2.0 BASIS OF THE VISION PLAN

The Vision for Bloomingdale is a long term Vision. The plan represents what the future of the downtown of Bloomingdale could be if the elements were successfully implemented. The Susceptibility to Change Synthesis was clear: much of the study area is subject to change in the near future. Therefore, in the long term much of what is currently in the downtown of Bloomingdale needs revitalization and/or redevelopment.



These are a series of three-dimensional black and white basic volumes for the downtown area of Bloomingdale. They are very diagrammatic and simple and represent what the future of Bloomingdale may become.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

SECTION 3.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

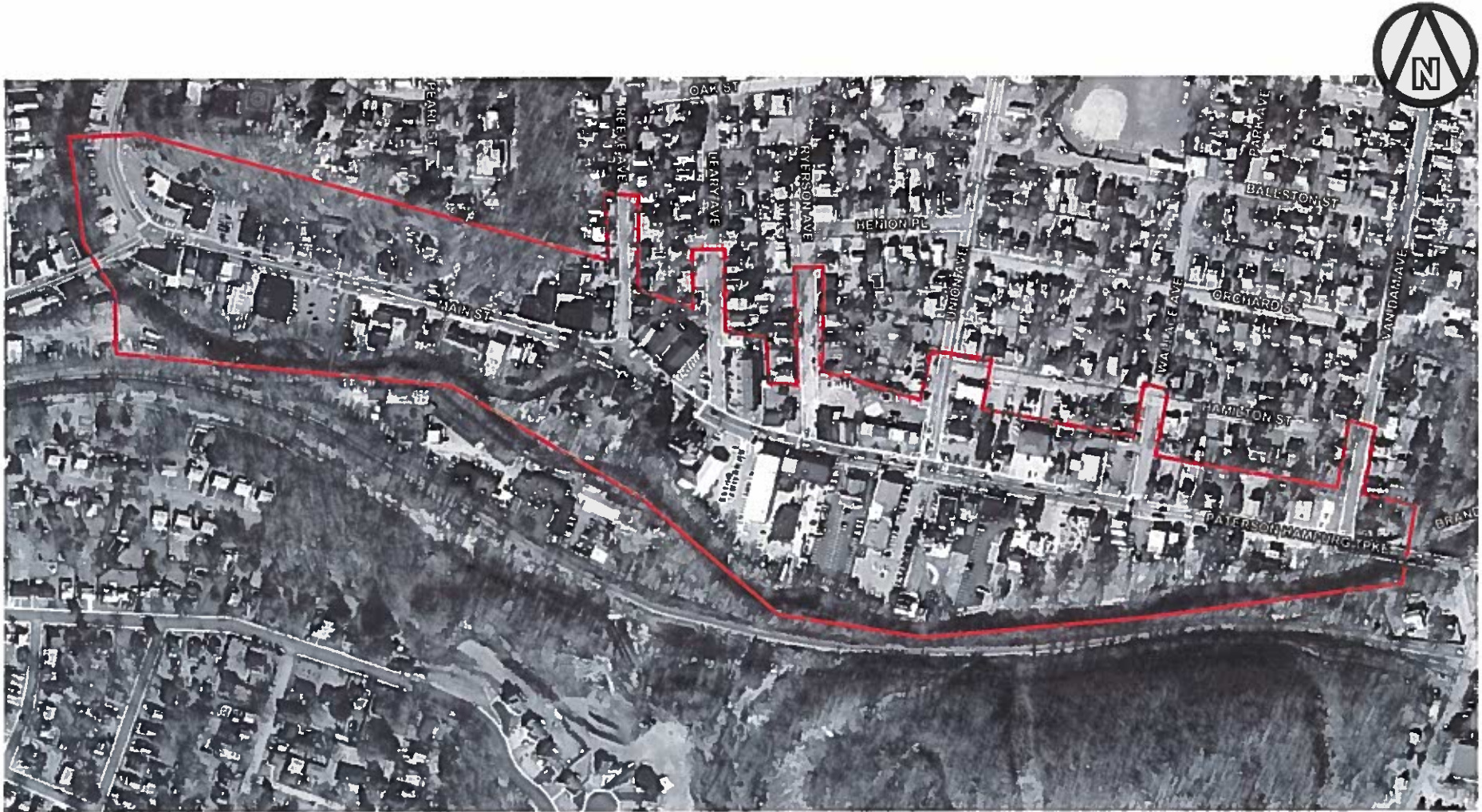
There are a variety of existing conditions along the Paterson-Hamburg Turnpike in Bloomingdale. The streets, properties and buildings are diverse in condition and use. The "Study Area" defined before the process focuses on the "downtown" of Bloomingdale. The goal of choosing this vision boundary was to focus efforts to help recreate a pedestrian friendly "Main Street".

There are some distinct advantages within the area. See Exhibit 1.0 for the study area. The advantages include, the age of the building structures, the amount of surface parking that is vacant, the diverse topography of the area and the Pequannock River. In addition there is an existing park, Sloan Park, that is framed by the river and is geographically in the center of the study area which has great potential.

There is currently a series of street improvements, sidewalk texturing, textured crosswalks, a lighting standard, ornate bollards and various entry improvements at Sloan Park. The improvements that have been completed or are currently under way are a great start to implementing the type of character the "Main Street" in Bloomingdale wants to become. However, there are elements of the streetscape improvement plan that may be added upon in the Vision Plan.



Exhibit 1.0 The Study Area



Susceptibility to Change Map

The Susceptibility to Change Map reflects residents' view of the potential for change of each parcel and building based on its condition and susceptibility to being redeveloped. This map was an overlay completed during the Vision Translation Workshop. Exhibit 2.0 is the synthesis of the seven design teams overlays. There are four different categories.

High Susceptibility to Change (Shown in Red)

These buildings/lots can be one story, deteriorated, vacant, underutilized (as parking lots or empty buildings), storage areas, and lots or uses likely to be redeveloped.

Moderate Susceptibility to Change (Shown in Orange)

Deteriorated and/or underutilized buildings/lots that have some use but need significant improvement.

Low Susceptibility to Change (Shown in Yellow)

Buildings/lots that are vacant lands or those likely for development beyond 25 years as well as areas/buildings that are in good condition, that are new and/or that have historical value. Minimum or no revitalization.

No or Low Susceptibility to Change (Shown in Green)

Buildings/lots in excellent condition or that are new or have historical value. No or minimum revitalization.

The Susceptibility to Change Map synthesis indicates much of the study area is eligible for some type of change in the future. Whether change is in the form of rehabilitation, revitalization or redevelopment is up to the market and land use type. The Vision Plan utilizes this map to formulate a plan that best depicts the vision of the community.

Exhibit 2.0 Susceptibility to Change Map



Susceptibility to Change Legend

-  Highly Susceptible
-  Moderately Susceptible
-  Low Susceptibility
-  No Susceptibility

THE VISION PLAN

SECTION 4.0 THE VISION PLAN

After the synthesis of the Visual Preference Survey™, Demographic and Public Policy Questionnaire, and the Vision Workshop materials, the team developed a concept to meet the vision of the residents of Bloomingdale.

The goal of the Vision Plan is to create and identify safe and efficient street types, a mixed-use core for the downtown of Bloomingdale, an interesting parking strategy, and a viable and interesting pedestrian realm.

The Implementation Strategy will help the vision become reality by outlining the creation of residential areas that will support a range of units and be walkable, future transportation options for a more sustainable future, a variety of parks and open space creating recreational opportunities downtown, and a riverwalk.

The elements of the Vision Plan include:

Safe and efficient Street Types,

A Mixed-Use Core for the downtown of Bloomingdale,

An interesting Parking Strategy,

A viable and interesting Pedestrian Realm,

Residential Areas that will support a range of units and be walkable,

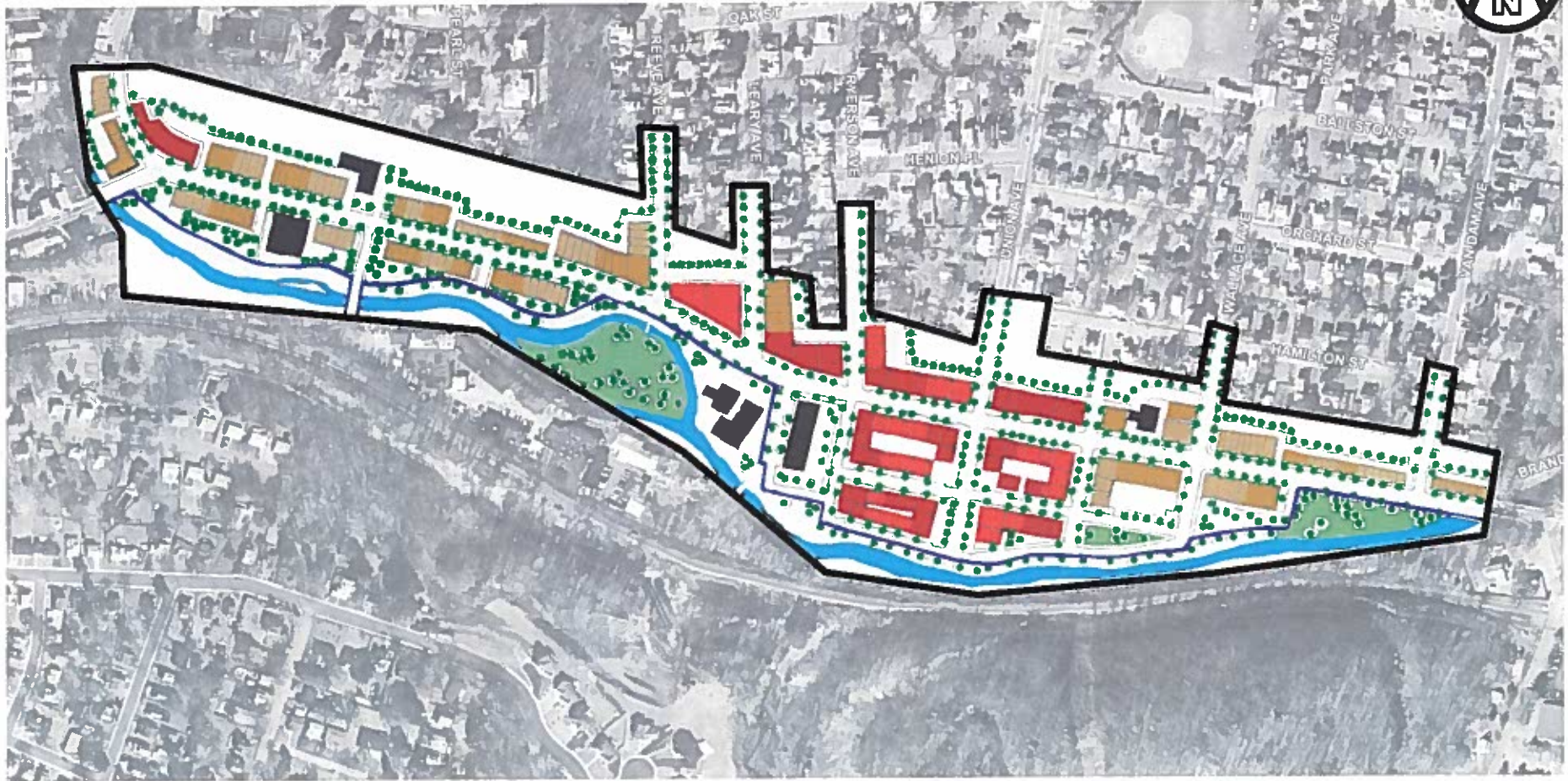
Future Transportation Options for a more sustainable future,

A variety of Parks and Open Space creating recreational opportunities downtown,

A Riverwalk,

and an Implementation Strategy to help the vision become reality.

Exhibit 3.0 Vision Plan



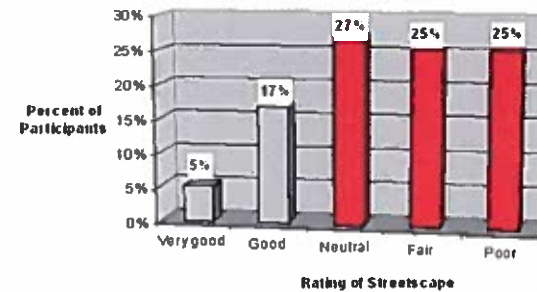
SECTION 4.1 STREET TYPES

Recommendations

The results of the community visioning process yielded important recommendations regarding the shaping of the street network of Bloomingdale. By creating an interconnected network of streets to maximize efficiency, realignment of the major intersection of Reeve Avenue and Hamburg Turnpike, the creation of a “Main Street” from Hamburg Turnpike with on-street parking, street trees, and wide sidewalks, and providing sidewalks, plantings, and necessary improvements to the residential streets of Reeve, Leary, Ryerson, Union, Wallace, and Van Dam Avenues will improve the quality of the streetscape in the area.

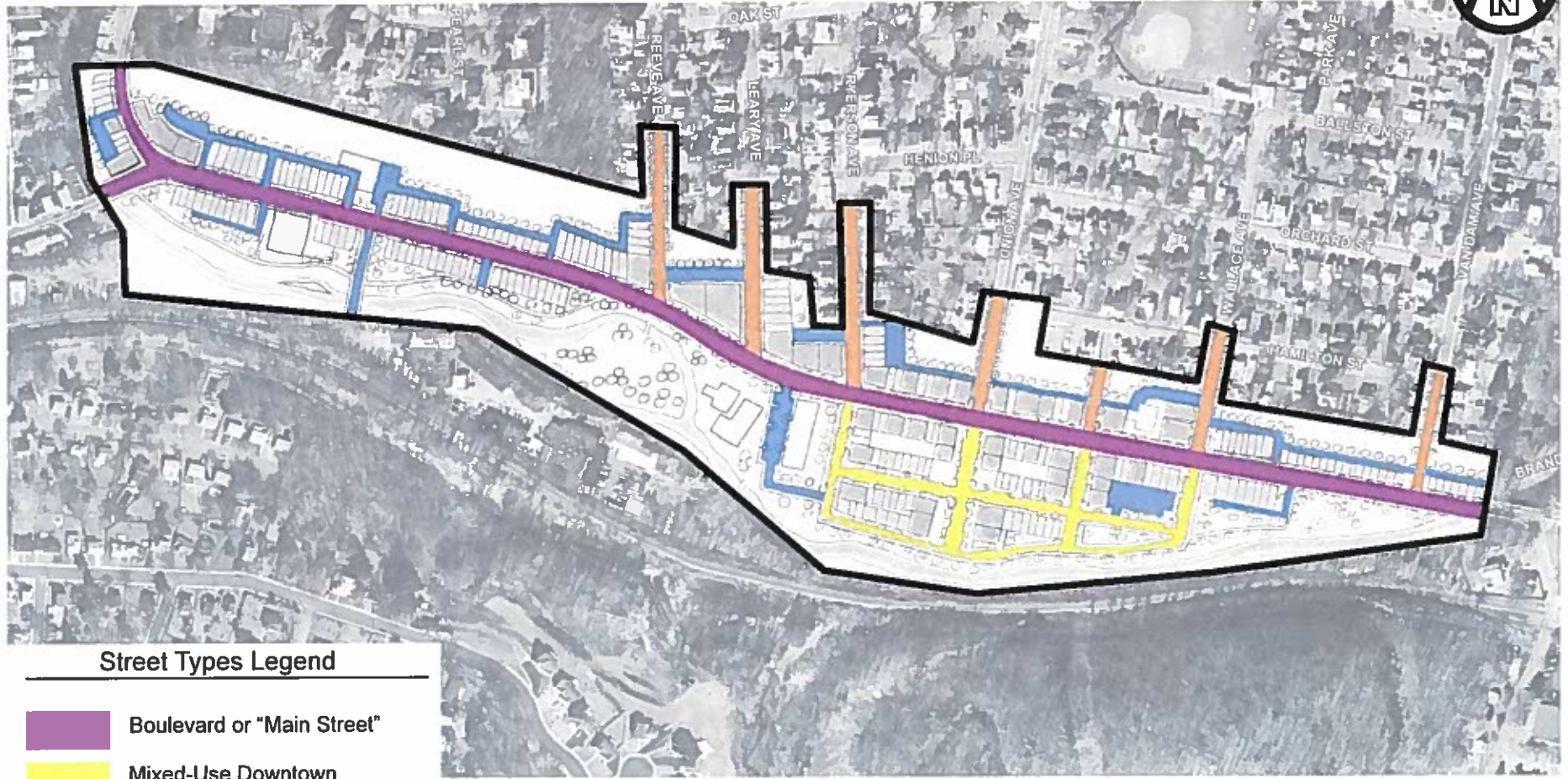
Traffic and parking concerns were also addressed in the Community Process. Introducing traffic calming, such as medians, textured intersections and crosswalks, “bump-outs” and signalization where necessary and encouraging the use of alleys and parking lanes to access all parking in the rear of buildings and residential units. In addition allowing and encouraging on-street parking on all streets is very important for street life activity and traffic calming.

HOW DO YOU RATE THE QUALITY OF THE STREETScape (TREES, STREET LIGHTING, SIDEWALKS, STREET FURNITURE, ETC.) ALONG MAIN STREET AND ADJACENT STREETS?



For Bloomingdale to “re-establish” downtown the streets need improvement and need to be a part of a connected street network...

Exhibit 4.0 Street Regulating Plan



Street Types Legend

-  Boulevard or "Main Street"
-  Mixed-Use Downtown
-  Residential Streets
-  Alleys and Parking Lanes

Exhibit 5.0 Street Types

An example of each street type is shown in the following images. Many characteristics in each image are similar. It is important for the street network to include; texture, standard lighting practices, street trees and greening, wide sidewalks, crosswalks, bump-outs, parallel parking and where necessary a center island median. From these images and the vision concept it will be possible to develop diagrams of the street typologies and their relationships to the pedestrian realm as well as the building typologies recommended in the vision.



Boulevard or "Main Street"



Mixed-Use Downtown



Residential Streets



Alleys and Parking Lanes



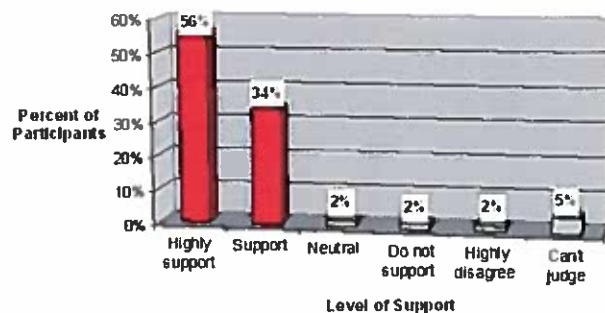
SECTION 4.2 THE MIXED-USE CORE

Recommendations

Establishing a mixed-use core for Bloomingdale is the essential element to revitalizing the downtown of Bloomingdale. The core should integrate and relocate existing businesses into “newer” mixed-use buildings with retail on the ground floor and apartments or offices above. All mixed-use buildings will contain their parking within the building so there is no break in a continuous retail façade. Localized and neighborhood retail is encouraged. Restaurants, cafés, delis and other food service should be located near the plazas or corners in order to allow for outdoor seating. Green roofs and terraces are strongly encouraged, to reduce stormwater runoff.

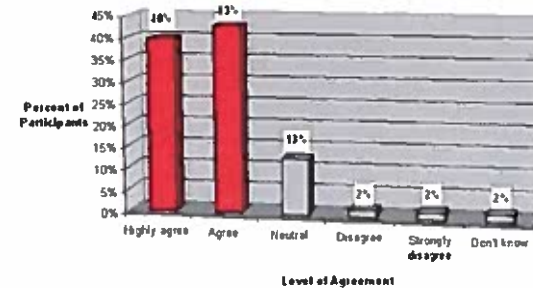
The mixed-use core will establish the walkable “market” type appeal in the downtown area. It will focus the retail, commercial and office components in a key area, allowing for a more walkable atmosphere.

THE BOROUGH SHOULD ENCOURAGE INFILL MIXED-USED DEVELOPMENT ALONG MAIN STREET THAT COULD INCLUDE NEW RETAIL, NEW MIXED-USE BUILDINGS (RETAIL/OFFICES/HOUSING/PARKING), TRAFFIC CALMING, ETC.



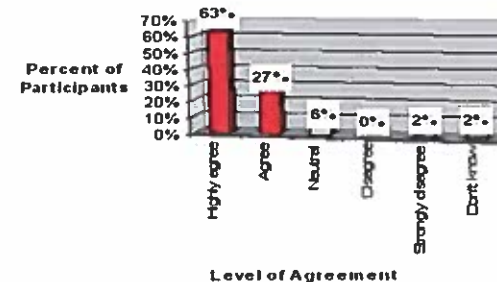
Nearly 90% of the participants encourage the development of mixed-use buildings along “main street”...

THE BOROUGH SHOULD DEVELOP A FUTURE PLAN TO INFILL VACANT, UNDER-UTILIZED AND SURFACE PARKING LOTS ALONG THE MAIN STREET CORRIDORS WITH A RANGE OF RETAIL, RESIDENTIAL, AND MIXED-USE BUILDINGS THAT CONTAIN THEIR OWN PARKING.



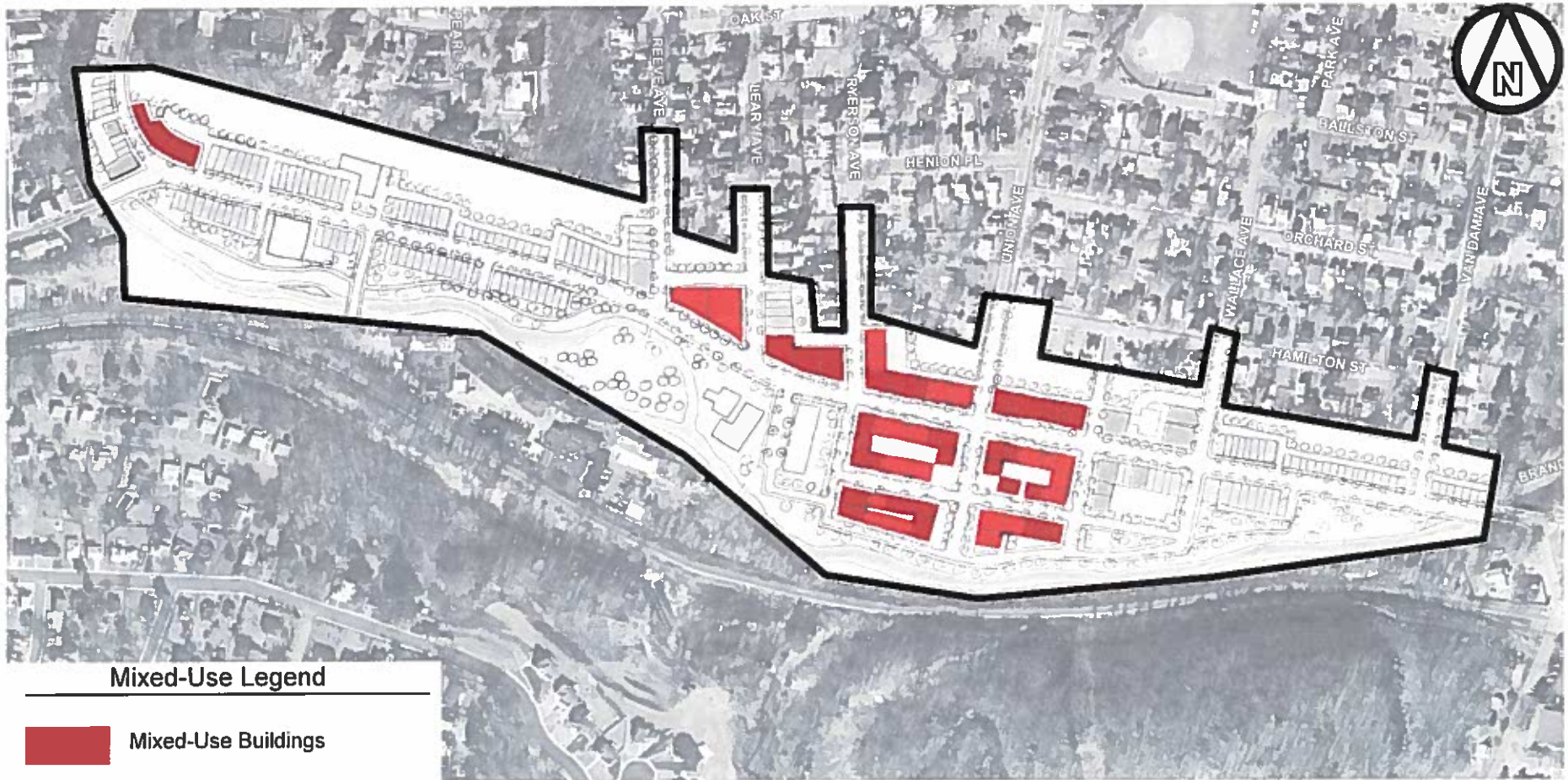
In addition to redeveloping existing lots on the “main street” over 80% of participants agree vacant or under-utilized parking lots should be developed...

THE BOROUGH SHOULD LOOK TO ENHANCE ITS “TOWN CENTER”



90% of the participants agree that Bloomingdale should enhance its town center...

Exhibit 6.0 Retail Mixed-Use Area Plan



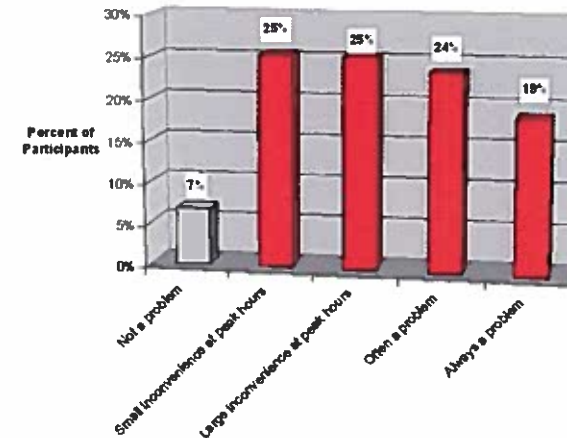
SECTION 4.3 PARKING

Recommendations

Parking is recommended and encouraged on all streets to provide additional parking to merchants and traffic calm roadways. All parking should be located in the rear of buildings, embedded in the building or in a well landscaped and screened surface lot. There are possibilities for structured parking in the downtown mixed-use core ,if necessary. In addition, shared parking is encouraged allowing for fewer “vacant” spots at night diminishing the “high cost of free parking”.

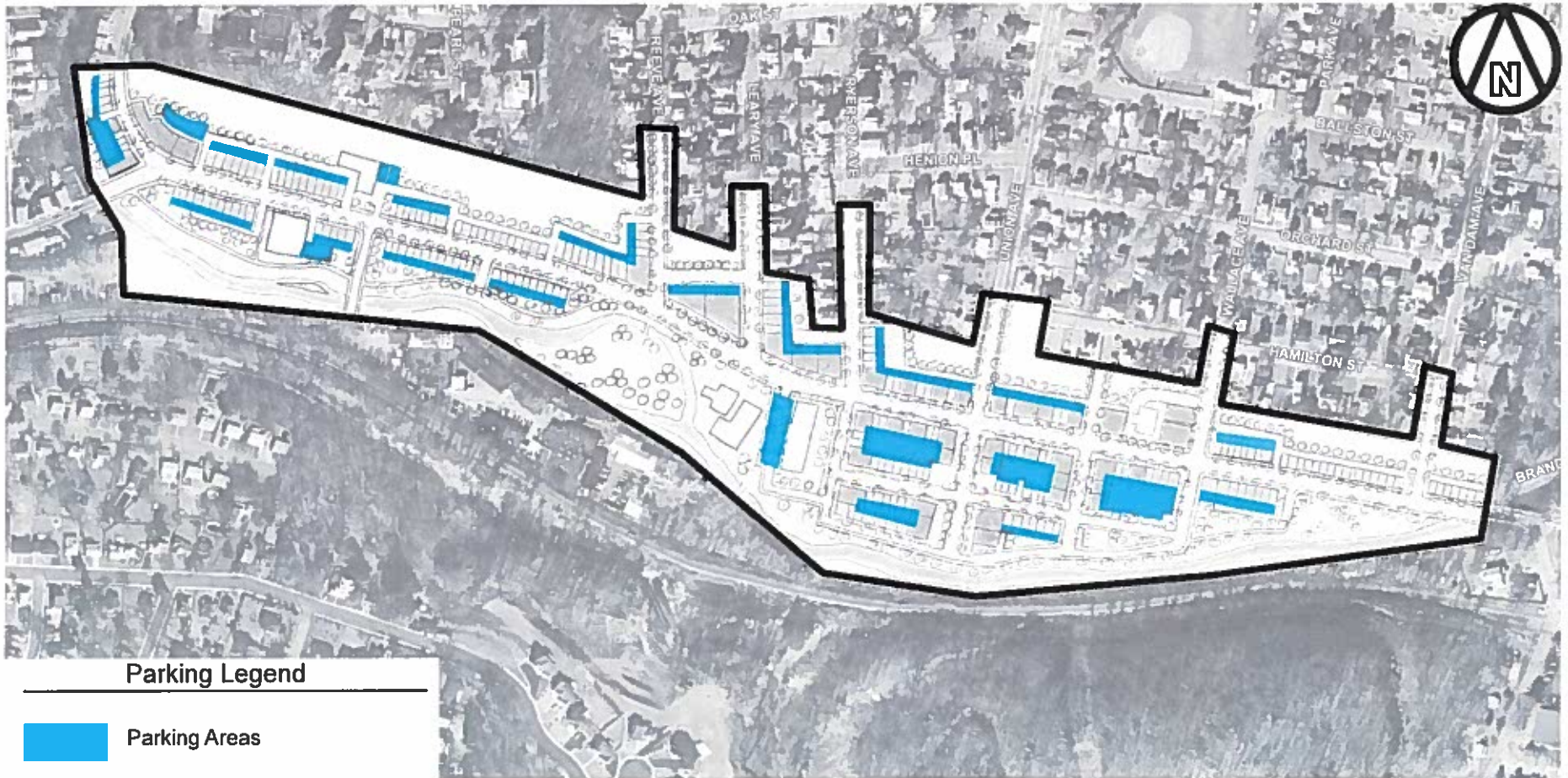
Parking is often the most expensive part of a development or redevelopment project, therefore the integration of uses and the encouragement of shared parking is recommended. The vision looks at parking as a necessity to the extent it is a method of getting individuals into a space, out of their cars and out onto the sidewalk, riverwalk or plazas within the plan.

HOW DO YOU GENERALLY RATE THE ADEQUACY OF PARKING ALONG MAIN STREET AND ADJACENT STREETS?



93% of participants feel parking is some type of problem, with over 40% of participants “often” experiencing a problem, Therefore an innovative and efficient parking strategy is needed for the future...

Exhibit 7.0 Parking Plan



Parking Legend

 Parking Areas



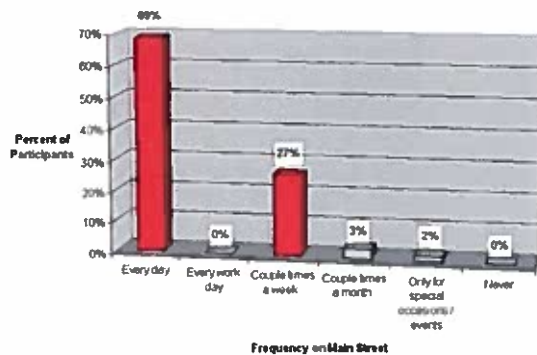
SECTION 4.4 THE PEDESTRIAN REALM

Recommendations

The pedestrian realm is arguably the most important element behind the vision. It is important to first revitalize the existing streetscape where possible, however there are certain elements that are a must. Wide sidewalks (minimum 8 feet) allow for many people to use the sidewalk at once. Crosswalks should be placed at all major intersections allowing for the easiest pedestrian access possible. Sidewalks and crosswalks should be textured with brick, cobblestone or patterned concrete.

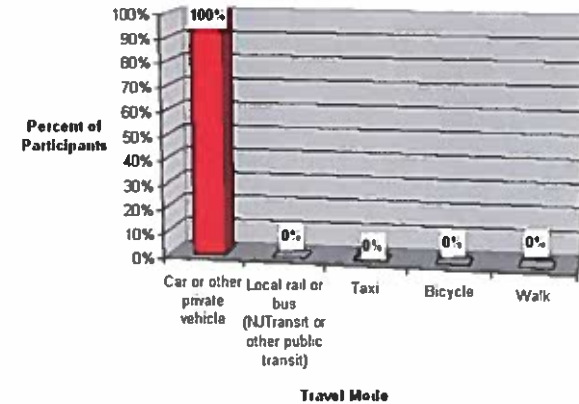
Streetscape elements (trees, benches, garbage receptacles, lighting) add the necessary detail and interest to engage people on the street. Sidewalks should always end at an intersection, plaza or park and never in the middle of nowhere. The pedestrian realm should continue into the surrounding areas, in order to facilitate a greater range of participation.

HOW OFTEN ARE YOU ON MAIN STREET IN BLOOMINGDALE?



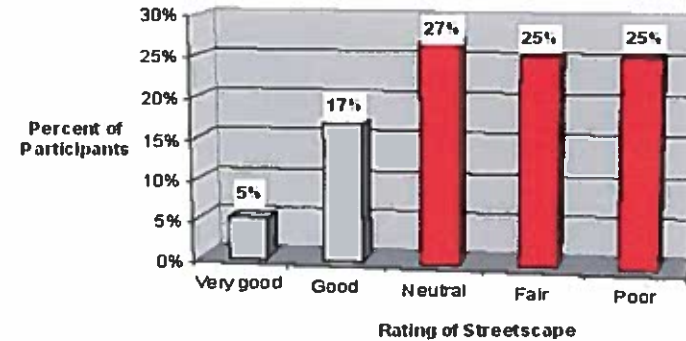
Over 95% of the participants are on the “main street” in Bloomington during the week, however...

HOW DO YOU TYPICALLY TRAVEL AROUND AND/OR BEYOND BLOOMINGDALE?



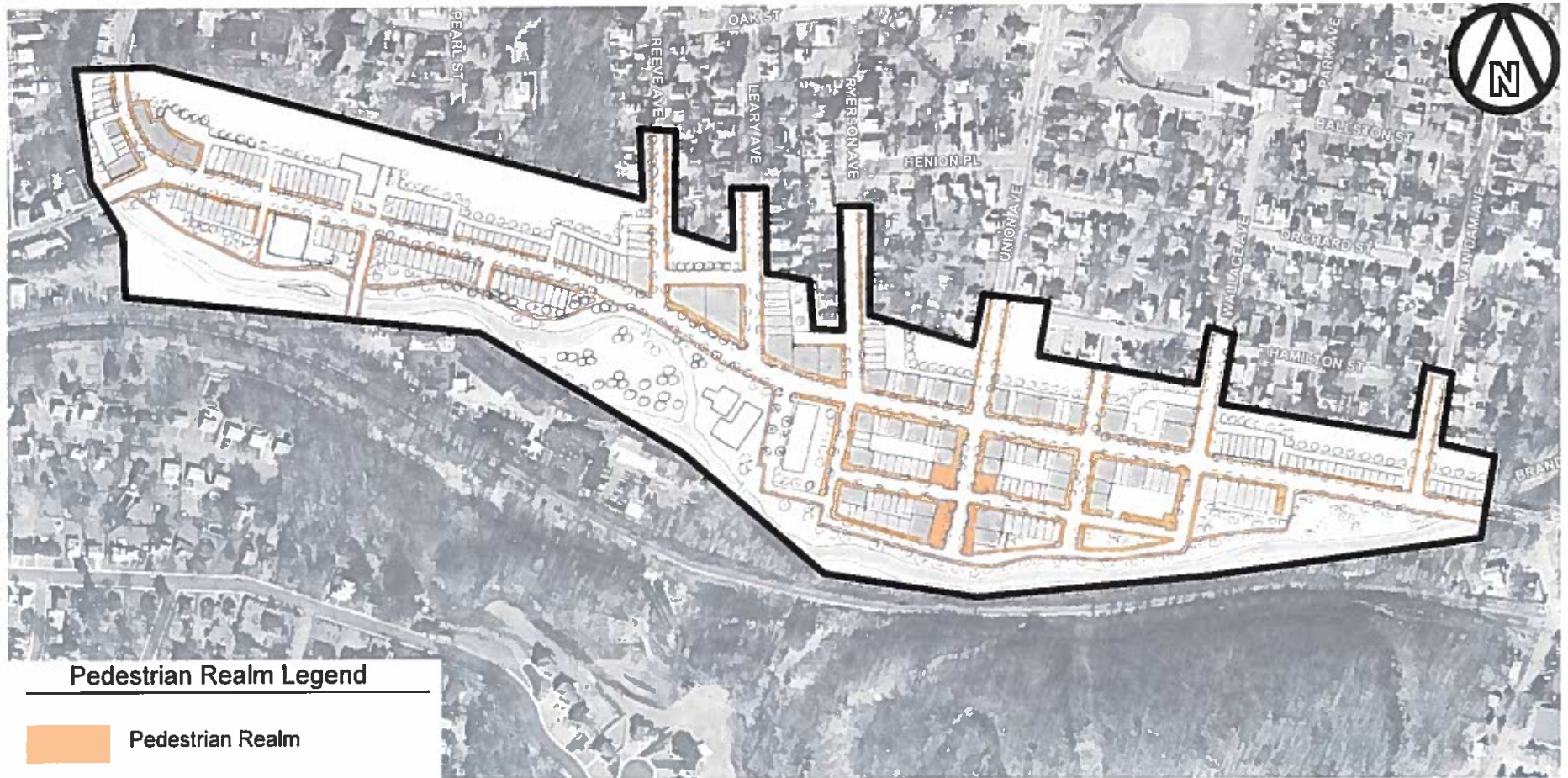
100% of the participants drive around Bloomington...

HOW DO YOU RATE THE QUALITY OF THE STREETScape (TREES, STREET LIGHTING, SIDEWALKS, STREET FURNITURE, ETC.) ALONG MAIN STREET AND ADJACENT STREETS?



And the streetscape needs improvement according to 75% of the participants. So, the vision for Bloomington incorporates a viable pedestrian realm with wide sidewalks, streetscape elements, and connected pathways...

Exhibit 8.0 Pedestrian Realm Plan



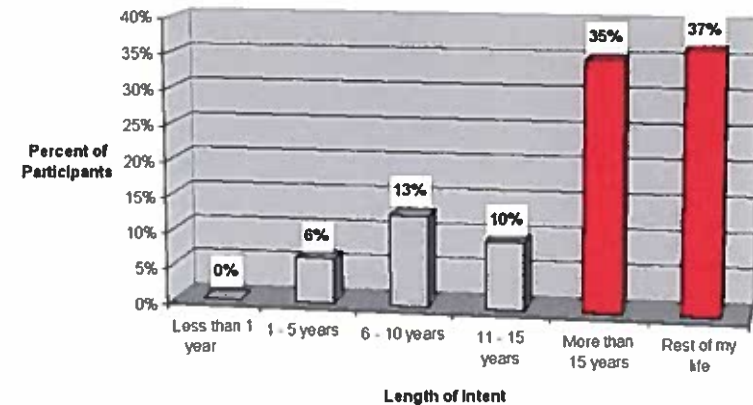
SECTION 4.5 RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Recommendations

A diverse range of unit types such as; apartments, condominiums, live-work units and townhouses. All units should have their parking accessible in the rear of the building, either under the unit or directly behind. All residential buildings will be under four stories or 50 feet in height. Residential buildings will respect the architecture of the surrounding area.

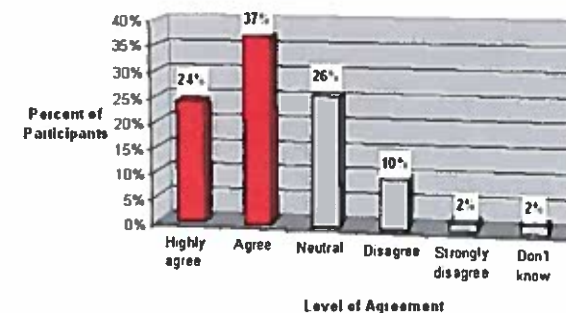
The residential buildings will vary in façade articulation, story height and roof type in order to break up long building façades along the “main street”. Townhouses will have a semi-public edge fronting onto the “main street”. Live-work units are encouraged closer to the “downtown core”. Green roofs and terraces are strongly encouraged to reduce stormwater runoff.

HOW LONG DO YOU INTEND TO LIVE/WORK IN BLOOMINGDALE?



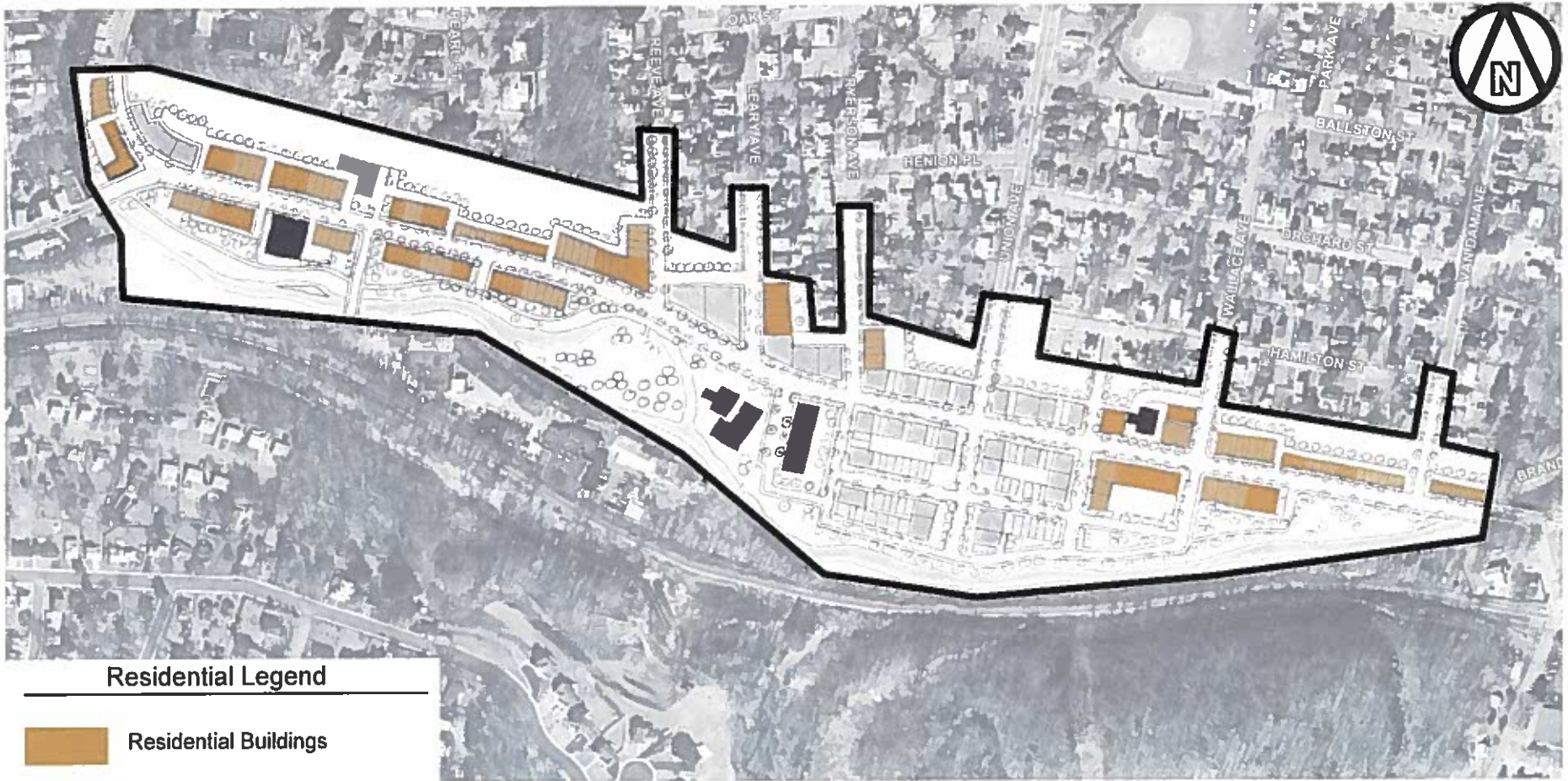
Over 70% of those who took the survey plan on living in Bloomingdale for more than 15 years...

THE BOROUGH SHOULD ENCOURAGE LIVE-WORK INFILL DEVELOPMENT FOR BUSINESSES AND PARCELS ALONG MAIN STREET SO THAT BUSINESS OWNERS OR EMPLOYEES COULD LIVE CLOSER TO THEIR BUSINESSES AND TO PROVIDE MORE SECURITY.



Bloomingdale is ready for more “infill” type development along the “Main Street” according to 61% of the participants...

Exhibit 9.0 Residential Area Plan



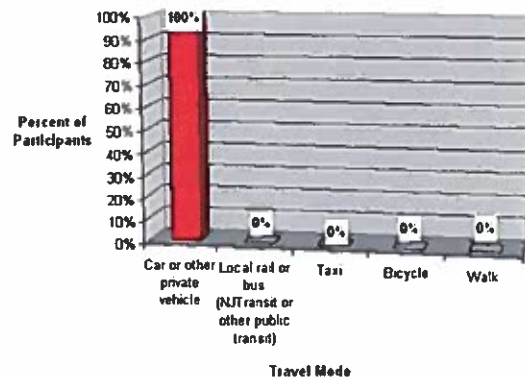
SECTION 4.6 TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Recommendations

There are limited transportation options at this point for Bloomingdale. However there are several concepts that may be implemented to reduce traffic flow on Hamburg Turnpike during peak hours. The vision suggests a Bus Route operated by New Jersey Transit during peak hours on Hamburg Turnpike to major destinations, including train stations nearby. In addition a local "Circulator" should be implemented to help residents and visitors get to and from the downtown mixed-use core without having to drive.

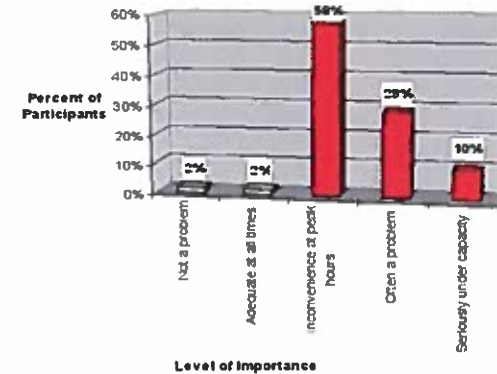
Traffic calming should be implemented on Hamburg Turnpike to slow traffic to manageable speeds without signalization. The concept of "Computer Commuter" On-Demand Transportation is a feasible option and should be explored for use. On weekends and holidays, the increase of walkers and cyclists will help reduce traffic on the main thoroughfares.

HOW DO YOU TYPICALLY TRAVEL AROUND AND/OR BEYOND BLOOMINGDALE?



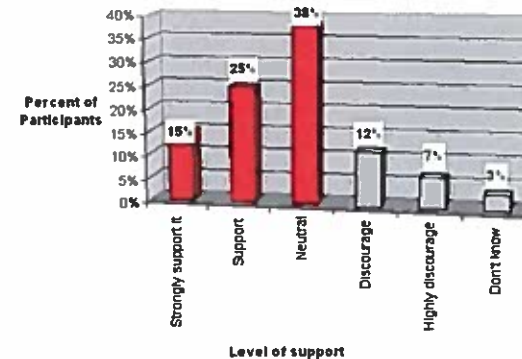
100% of the participants use their car or another private vehicle to get around or beyond Bloomingdale...

HOW DO YOU GENERALLY RATE THE TRAFFIC FLOW ALONG MAIN STREET AND THE ADJACENT STREETS?



Nearly all of the participants feel that traffic is a problem at least during the peak hours on Hamburg Turnpike, so...

HOW STRONGLY WOULD YOU SUPPORT AN "ON DEMAND" TRANSIT/IMO SERVICE IN BLOOMINGDALE THAT WOULD PICK YOU UP AND DROP YOU OFF ANYWHERE WITHIN A FIFTEEN MINUTE DRIVE OF THE CENTER OF TOWN, IF IT WERE AVAILABLE WITHIN SIX MINUTES AND COST LESS THAN A TAXI?



Alternatives such as "on-demand" transportation, buses and bicycling are needed to begin to address the auto culture of Bloomingdale...

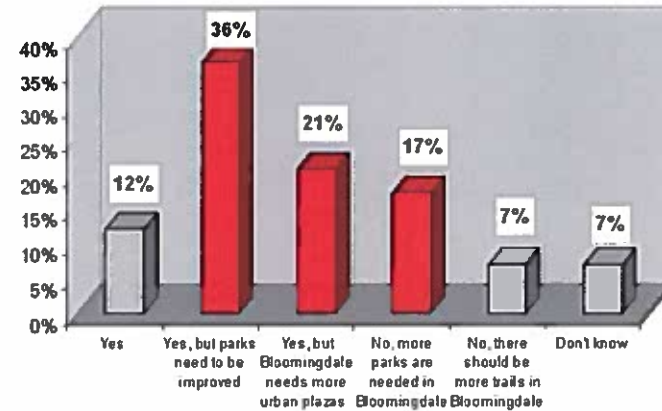
SECTION 4.7 PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Recommendations

The current park, Sloan Park, needs revitalization of its overall area and entry and can prove to be the most valuable asset for Bloomingdale. Create open space along the Pequannock River that is accessible to all residents. Hardscaped plazas should be created in the mixed-use core of the downtown to allow for outdoor cafés, markets and meeting places. A gateway park should be created upon the entry to Bloomingdale directly adjacent to Hamburg Turnpike and the Pequannock River softening the transition into downtown.

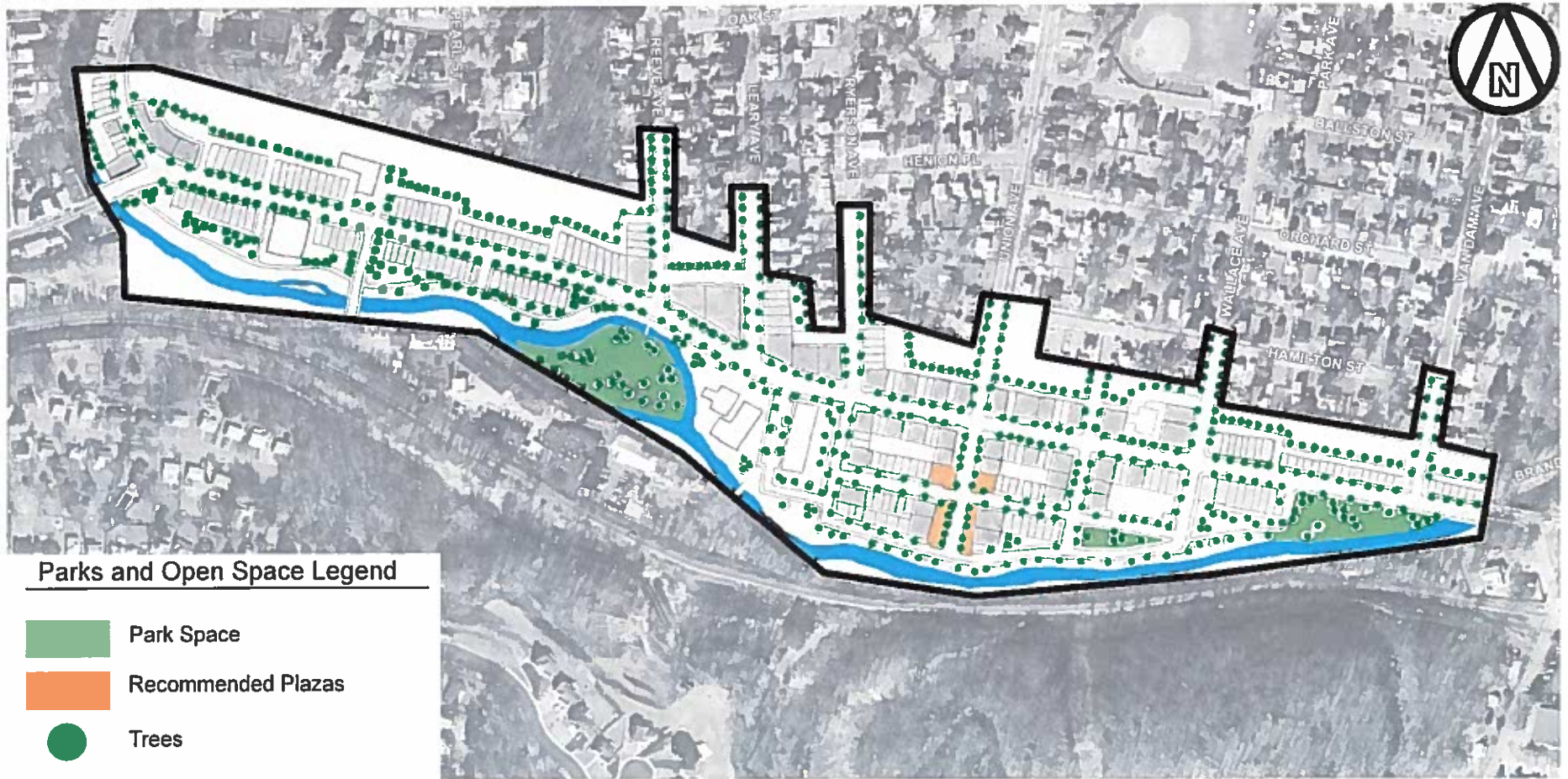
As much as possible streets, medians and parking lots should be planted with low level coverage and trees. Also the greening of roofs, terraces and parking facilities reducing stormwater runoff as well as increasing the value of the residential units within the area.

DO YOU THINK BLOOMINGDALE HAS AN ADEQUATE AMOUNT OF OPEN SPACE, PARKS, AND URBAN PLAZAS TO MEET EXISTING AND FUTURE NEEDS AND DESIRES?



There is a need for park revitalization, park creation and a need for urban plazas in the downtown area of Bloomingdale...

Exhibit 11.0 Parks and Open Space Plan



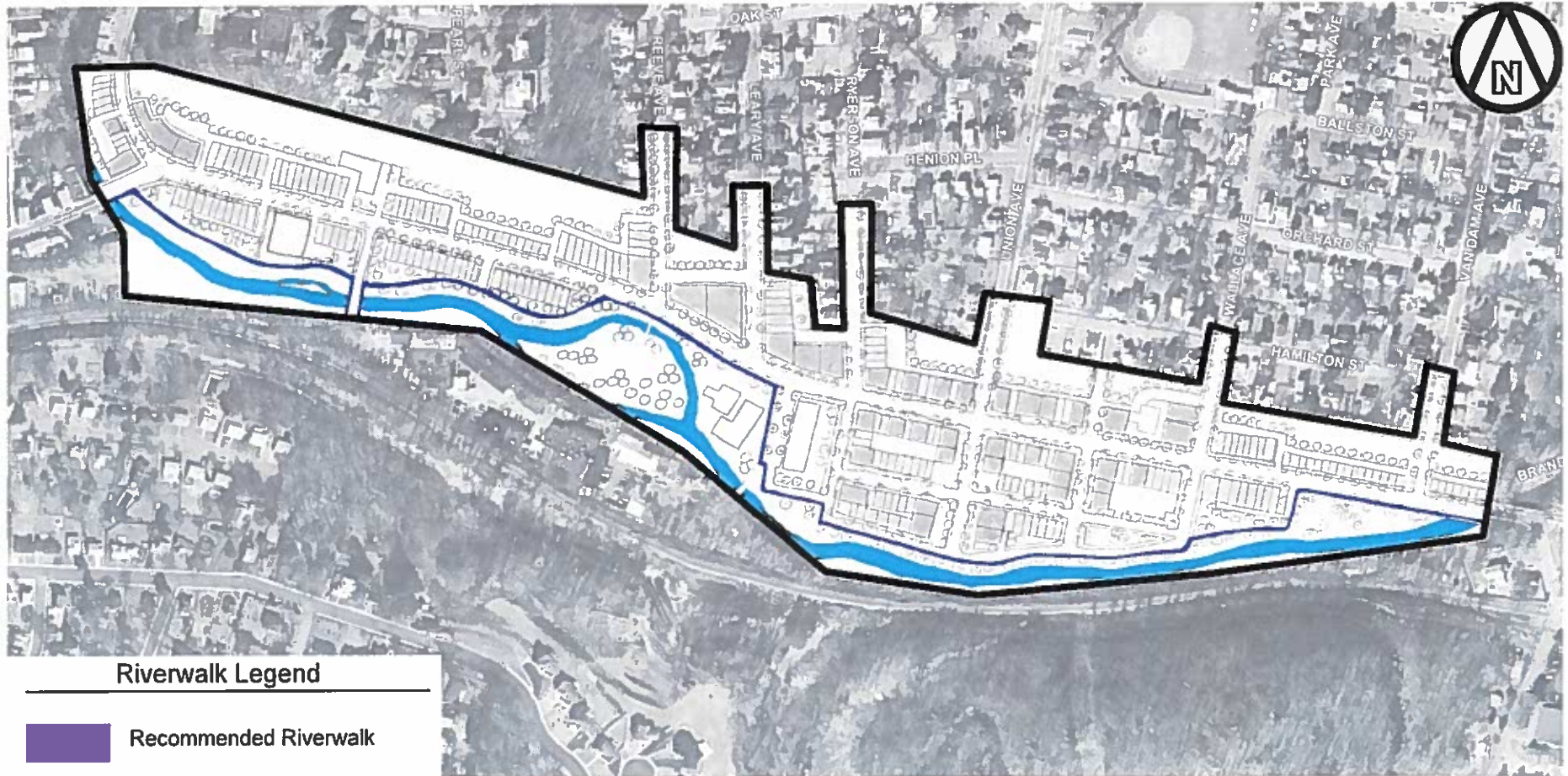
SECTION 4.8 THE RIVERWALK

Recommendations

The vision plan highlights a riverwalk element, using the Pequannock River as a distinct advantage for Bloomingdale. The riverwalk carries a "soft" edge along the river meaning there is a buffer of at least 15 feet at all times from the river edge. The riverwalk is meant more as a walking and biking trail. The riverwalk will not be paved rather it will be more of a compressed gravel surface to allow for little to no stormwater issues.

The riverwalk will be accessible from many points throughout the downtown of Bloomingdale, most notably near the center of the mixed-use core. It is also recommended that the riverwalk be planted on either side with trees and provide some non-invasive lighting to ensure maximum safety at all hours of operation.

Exhibit 12.0 Riverwalk Plan



Riverwalk Legend

 Recommended Riverwalk



IMPLEMENTATION

SECTION 5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

There is a series of "Next Steps" Bloomingdale may undertake to make the vision a reality. The implementation of the vision plan may take some time, however it is recommended that the momentum carried throughout the visioning process be used to help implement the vision.

Many municipalities choose to complete any or all of the steps for implementation. Funding is available through grant monies from the state to implement smart growth strategies. This plan promotes smart growth strategies, therefore certain funding may be available in the future.

1. Adopt the Vision Plan by resolution of Council.
2. Conduct an "Area in Need" study for the downtown area of Bloomingdale.
3. Declare the study area of the Vision Plan an "Area in Need of Rehabilitation," which does not include the power of eminent domain; however it will allow for a form-based redevelopment code to be written.
4. Request that a Form-Based Redevelopment Code be written for the areas within the Vision Plan.
5. After completion of a redevelopment code, release a request for developers to make the vision a reality.

