



ROUTE 9W CORRIDOR STUDY



TOWN OF ATHENS, NEW YORK 2006

Laberge
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Purpose of Corridor Study

The purpose of the Route 9W Corridor Study is to analyze the roadway within the context of the community, the corridor, and the regional market that it serves. It is equally important to understand both the physical corridor and how it relates to the soci-economic issues that are influenced by the roadway.

The functionality of the Corridor is a critical element, along with traffic volumes, operating speed, type of terrain, development density and land use. Each is considered as part of this study to ensure the planning and design of the Corridor produces not only a safe and efficient transportation system, but also provides economic development opportunities. Athens recognizes the local and regional value of Route 9W as a transportation corridor, and through proper planning, hopes to capitalize on the economic opportunities it affords.

Local & Regional Setting

The Route 9W Corridor bisects the Town of Athens and is functionally classified as a Minor Rural Arterial by New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT). Route 9W provides regional access as a connecting arterial to the New York State Thruway (Interstate 87). Route 9W begins in Albany near the New York State Thruway (Interstate 87) and terminates in New Jersey near Interstate 95. Route 9W provides direct access to Interstate 87 ten miles north of the Town (Exit 21B) and five miles south of the Town (Exit 21). Through use of these routes, NY City and the greater Northeast Region of both the U.S. and Canada are easily accessible from Athens.

As a major non-interstate transportation corridor, Route 9W carries a significant amount of commercial, commuter and local traffic for the Town and Village residents. The Route 9W Corridor generally facilitates the economical movement of people, goods and services throughout the region. Therefore, a well-planned and designed Corridor is important to the economic integrity of both the Town and Village of Athens.

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Greene County: Route 9W Corridor Study, 1991

The Greene County Planning Board performed a countywide study of Route 9W in 1991. The purpose of the study was to develop design standards and an action plan that would assist the local municipalities in planning for better development. The study included background information such as existing land use, population, physical features and regulations, circulation, business and industry.

The study provided numerous recommendations, many of which have not been implemented for the length of the entire Corridor. It has been nearly fifteen years since Greene County's Route 9W Corridor Study was completed. The Study provided numerous recommendations specific to site development standards and regulatory items for the local communities to implement the Study. These recommendations included specifics with respect to the following:

- Site Layout
- Roadway Setbacks
- Conservation Setbacks
- Height of Structures
- Property Access
- Landscaping and Buffering
- Signage
- Gateways
- Zoning
- Subdivision Regulations
- Other Laws and Regulations

Although the Study was for all of Greene County, many of these specific recommendations remain relevant today for Athens. Many of these recommendations are included as part of this Corridor Study to continue to emphasize their importance.

Existing Conditions of the Corridor

The following section provides an inventory and analysis of the existing conditions of the Route 9W Corridor. The analysis examines the existing roadway conditions, land uses, zoning regulations, and signage regulations.

A field investigation was completed in August 2006 to verify, through visual assessment, the conditions reported in this section. The visual assessment is used to determine existing property uses and conditions within the Route 9W Corridor. Together, these existing conditions influence the development pattern along the Corridor and its economic opportunities. The visual assessment also evaluated the consistency and effectiveness of the application of local regulations as they relate to zoning, land use, and general property conditions.

Physical Roadway Conditions of the Corridor

Route 9W mainly consists of two undivided travel lanes and paved shoulders with a posted speed limit of 55 MPH. The terrain is rolling with several horizontal and vertical curves, often limiting the available sight distance.

Along this Corridor in Athens, Route 9W has two major intersections with east – west routes; the first is with the County Route (CR) 28 (Schoharie Turnpike) and the second is with CR 74 (Leeds Athens Road). CR 28 (Schoharie Turnpike) provides two undivided travel lanes with no paved shoulders and has a reduced speed limit of 45 MPH. Traffic at the intersection of Route 9W/CR 28 is controlled by a signalized traffic light. CR 74 (Leeds Athens Road) provides two undivided travel lanes with no paved shoulders and has a speed limit of 55 MPH in the Town. Traffic at the intersection of Route 9W/CR 74 is controlled by a warning traffic light for those traveling on Route 9W.



Traffic counts and road condition data were obtained for the Route 9W Corridor from the 2003 *NYS DOT Highway Sufficiency Ratings*. Table 1 compares the conditions of Route 9W near the Town of Athens/Coxsackie boundary line to the physical conditions of Route 9W near the Town of Athens/Catskill boundary line. Traffic volumes were slightly greater for the Route 9W Corridor in north Athens than the south. However, the percent of truck traffic was slightly greater in the south near the Athens/Catskill boundary.

Table 1: Physical Characteristics of Route 9W

	North Route 9W Athens/Coxsackie Boundary	South Route 9W Athens/Catskill Boundary
AADT	7,010 Vehicles	6,910 Vehicles
Truck Traffic	5%	7%
Pavement Width	30 feet	30 feet
Shoulder Width	2 feet	2 feet
Surface Condition	6 – Fair, distress is clearly visible (isolated alligator cracking)	7 – Good, distress symptoms are beginning to show

The field investigation indicated that the existing surface of Route 9W was recently repaved by NYSDOT. Shoulder space along Route 9W continues to be extremely limited (two feet) and does not afford sufficient space in many areas for a vehicle to pull-off. At the time of the field survey, the shoulder pavement was not graded flush with the adjacent off-road properties. This unsupported pavement edge creates a road hazard for vehicles attempting to pull-off along Route 9W.

Route 9W in Athens has experienced a slight rise in traffic volumes over the past ten years. Table 2 compares the Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) from 1996 to 2004 for the section of Route 9W between Schoharie Turnpike and the intersection of Route 23 in the Town of

Catskill. This information was obtained from the *2004 Traffic Data Report for New York State* prepared by the NYSDOT.

Table 2: Average Annual Daily Traffic of Route 9W Athens, 1996-2004

Year	1996	1999	2002	2004
AADT	6,650	6,450	6,900	7,200*
* Estimated by NYSDOT based upon 2003 AADT traffic count of 7,010.				

The Route 9W Corridor serves as a major connecting arterial for Athens and the neighboring communities. As noted earlier, Route 9W provides direct access to the NYS Thruway with exits just north and south of Athens' border. As a result of this direct and convenient access, many commuters have taken up residency in Athens. The Route 9W Corridor experiences more than 7,010 average vehicles per day. Heavy vehicles and truck traffic contribute to the Corridor's traffic volume. The Athens Generating Plant is just one destination within the Corridor.

Recent commuting trends demonstrate that people are willing to commute greater and greater distances to work. As a result, it is anticipated that the Route 9W Corridor will increasingly be utilized for commercial activity, as well as a main arterial route for commuters. As noted in *Table 3: Travel Time to Work Comparison, 2000* of the Comprehensive Plan, it was estimated that approximately 62.3% of Village and 57.5% of Town residents had a commute time of less than 25 minutes. Approximately 7.5% of the Village residents averaged between 25 and 34 minutes to get to work. This figure was comparatively higher for the Town with 12.4%. While the total residents of the Village and Town commuting between 35 and 60 minutes was 20.2% and 21.9% respectively.

Table 3: Travel Time To Work Comparison, 2000

Workers 16+ by Means of Transportation to Work	Athens Village		Town of Athens		Greene County		New York State	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
< 10 minutes	108	15.4%	210	11.6%	3,699	19.3%	899,306	11.3%
10 - 24 minutes	330	46.9%	832	45.9%	7,147	37.4%	2,990,431	37.5%
25 - 34 minutes	53	7.5%	224	12.4%	3,035	15.9%	1,458,072	18.3%
35 - 44 minutes	64	9.1%	148	8.2%	1,332	7.0%	544,033	6.8%
45 - 59 minutes	78	11.1%	248	13.7%	1,739	9.1%	806,556	10.1%
> 60 minutes	70	10.0%	149	8.2%	2,178	11.4%	1,265,649	15.9%
Total (Employed Commuters)	703	100.0%	1,811	100.0%	19,130	100.0%	7,964,047	100.0%
Mean Travel Time	27.3		27.8		29.1		31.7	

Source: U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 2000.

Existing Land Uses for the Corridor

Land use patterns are a result of historic settlement characteristics coupled with modern building codes, zoning ordinances, and subdivision regulations. The development pattern along the Route 9W Corridor reflects such influences. Land uses along the Route 9W Corridor include a mix of commercial, residential, community services, and agricultural uses. According to land use information derived from real property tax data, the Town of Athens is comprised of 1,920 parcels, with 105 parcels sharing a border with Route 9W.

New York State Real Property Type Class Code is used to categorize the land use information for each parcel. Utilizing Geographic Information System (GIS) data, a detailed land use map was created to illustrate the existing land uses for each parcel along the Route 9W Corridor (see *Figure 2: Route 9W Corridor Adjoining Parcel Property Class*).

Agricultural – Property used as a part of an operating farm that does not have living accommodations and is used for the production of crops and/or raising of livestock.

Commercial: Property used for hotels, restaurants, automobile services, storage, retail, banks, offices, funeral homes, etc.

Community Services: Property used for schools, libraries, places of worship, cultural facilities, welfare services, hospitals, clinics, government, police, armed forces, correctional facilities, shelters, cemeteries, etc.

Industrial: Property used for the production and fabrication of durable and non-durable goods, mining, quarrying, etc.

Mixed Use/Multi-Purpose: Property used for more than one purpose, such as downtown row type housing, converted residences, mini-marts, etc.

Mobile Home/Mobile Home Park: Property used for one (1) individual mobile home or an area where mobile homes are owner occupied, but land and facilities are leased or rented.

Multi-Family Residential: Property used for apartments, and all types of residential dwellings that have more than two dwelling units.

Public Facilities and Utilities: Property used for electric or gas power generation or transmission, public drinking water and water treatment facilities, communications, train, plane, and bus terminals, canals, waste disposal sewer treatment, etc.

Recreation & Entertainment: Property used for parks, theaters, racetracks, bowling centers, health spas, beaches, campgrounds, etc.

Single-Family Residential: Property used for one-family, year round residence.

Two-Family Residential: Property used for two-family, year round residence.

Vacant Lands: Property that is not in use, in temporary use, or lacking permanent improvement.

Of the total parcels, only 26 parcels (or 1.4% of the total uses) are currently assessed as commercial property in the Town. Of these parcels, only 12 parcels share a border with Route 9W (see *Table 4: Properties Bordering the Route 9W Corridor*). The commercial properties generally consist of permitted uses in accordance with the Town’s Zoning Ordinance. Some of the commercial uses observed along the Corridor included auto services, antiques, motels, animal hospital services, heating and cooling supplies, and plumbing repair services.

Table 4: Properties Bordering the Route 9W Corridor

Property Class	Number of Parcels	Acres
Agricultural	1	116.8
Commercial	12	61.2
Community Services	2	3.2
Recreation and Entertainment	1	0.7
Residential	55	270.9
Vacant Land	34	667.8
Grand Total	105	1120.5

Property in the Town of Athens is most commonly used for residential purposes. The Town has 1,082 residential parcels or 56.4% of its total parcels are assessed as residential property. The land use pattern for the Route 9W Corridor follows this development trend. The Corridor has 55 residential parcels bordering Route 9W, which is 52.4% of the total uses in the Corridor. The residential properties generally consist of a variety of residential units as permitted by the Town’s Zoning Ordinance. Residential dwelling units observed along Route 9W primarily consist of single-family, two-family, and mobile home units.

Community services generally include land uses for cemeteries, government, cultural, and recreational uses. Land used for community services is typically limited to only a few parcels in each community, as is similarly experienced in the Town of Athens. Of the total twelve parcels in the Town, two of these parcels have access onto Route 9W.

Land used for agricultural purposes typically involves large tracts of land but generally includes fewer overall parcels. As a result, land use percentages are often distorted. Of the total parcels, only 22 parcels (or 1.1% of the total uses) are currently assessed as agricultural property in the Town. However, agricultural uses are the second largest land use in the Town and utilize 11.5% of the total land. There is only one parcel (116.8 acres) used for agricultural purposes with access onto Route 9W.

Route 9W Corridor Adjoining Parcel Property Class

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In general, the Corridor can be described as a mixed-use corridor with segments that have distinct commercial, industrial, and residential characteristics. Properties vary in parcel size. There is also a wide variation in intensity of use, ranging from small homes converted to businesses with small parking areas in front or in existing driveways, to large-scale buildings with large parking areas, to intensive industrial uses. Residential uses are dispersed throughout the Corridor. The commercial development pattern is typified by buildings setback further from the street with parking in the front.

Existing Zoning for the Corridor

Zoning regulations are intended to control, to some degree, development patterns. The level of detail and flexibility of Athens' zoning ordinance has varied over the years due to numerous factors including, but not limited to changes in administration and policies. Therefore, the development pattern along the Corridor appears inconsistent in places. Existing zoning districts along the Corridor allow a broad range of land uses over an extensive area.

The Town of Athens currently has six zoning districts: Open Space/Conservation (OS), Agriculture (Ag), Recreation Residential (Rr), Rural Residential (Ru), Highway Commercial (HC), and Light Industrial (LI). Figure 3 illustrates the location of each existing zoning district within the Town of Athens. Two of these districts are located along the Route 9W Corridor, including Highway Commercial (HC) and Light Industrial (LI). The minimum front yard setback for the HC district is 40 feet, whereas the LI district requires a minimum of 50 feet. This front yard setback requirement is generally consistent along the Route 9W Corridor.

The Route 9W Corridor is the only land area in the Town of Athens that is designated within the Highway Commercial (HC) district. The district begins at the northern boundary of Athens, and continues along both sides of Route 9W, to just south of the intersection with CR 28 (Schoharie Turnpike). At this point the district continues south along Route 9W, but only on the west side of the Corridor. From a point just north of the intersection with CR 74 (Leeds Athens Road), the HC district continues south on both sides of the Corridor to the southern boundary of the Town. The HC district is the only commercial district in the Town and according to the Zoning District Objectives, this district is intended to control commercial development along Route 9W. Design objectives for the district include minimizing traffic hazards and prevention of deterioration of existing commercial areas. The area's character and beauty are to be preserved by careful building design, landscaping, building setbacks, under-grounding utilities and sign control.

The Town of Athens has one large section of land designated as the Light Industrial (LI) district which is designed to concentrate any future industrial growth in this area. The Route 9W Corridor includes a stretch of the LI district along the eastern side of Route 9W between the HC district.

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Permitted uses are subject to all the requirements of the pertinent zoning district. Additional uses are allowed by Special Permit granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals, as well as accessory uses customarily and necessarily incidental to the foregoing uses. However, the special permit uses are not clearly defined in the zoning ordinance for each district. Site Plan Review is required for all proposed buildings except one and two family residential structures. The following are the permitted uses identified for each zoning district along the Route 9W Corridor in Athens:

Highway Commercial (HC) District

Permitted Uses:

1. Retail sales
2. Personal service establishments
3. Laundromat, dry cleaning or laundry pick-up
4. Sit-down eating or drinking establishment
5. Bank
6. Professional, governmental or business office
7. Medical clinic or office
8. Auto service station
9. Auto body or major repair shop
10. Trailer rental
11. Auto, boat, mobile home, trailer or RV sales/rental
12. Drive-in restaurant
13. Motel
14. Car wash
15. Single-family dwelling (permitted but discouraged)

Light Industrial (LI) District

Permitted Uses:

1. Industrial

Signage Regulations

All signage in the Town of Athens is required to be in compliance with §180-19 of the Zoning Ordinance. Signage regulations vary by use of the property and/or by the size of buildings. For example, in residential districts nameplate and identification signs may be of no more than two square feet announcing the name, address or profession or home occupation of the occupant. However, businesses are permitted greater flexibility in how signage is designed and incorporated.

Each business is permitted two signs, one freestanding sign and one attached to the building. The size of permitted signage is required to be in proportion to the land use, lot and building size, and in no case exceed ½ square feet per linear foot of lot frontage. Freestanding signs are permitted to a maximum size of 50 square feet, while signage on a building is permitted to a maximum size 100 square feet. Therefore, each business may have a total of 150 square feet for the two signs.

Streetscape Assessment

There is little or no landscaping in front of many of the buildings along the Corridor and parking lot space is often underutilized and often lacks landscaping altogether. Multiple curb cuts make the traffic pattern hazardous to drivers. No sidewalks were present to accommodate pedestrians. The only street lighting provided is at the two intersections. This lighting is not pedestrian friendly and is provided only as a traffic safety mechanism. No other streetscape improvements were noted.

The following two figures highlight the visual assessment completed for the Corridor with emphasis on the two major intersections along the Route 9W Corridor.

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Route 9W & Leeds Athens Rd Existing Conditions & Recommendations

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Corridor Constraints

Environmental

The Route 9W Corridor has an abundance of vacant parcels available for development. However, development of many of these parcels may be constrained by environmental features such as steep slopes, wetlands, and/or hydric soils. Figure 6 illustrates the environmental constraints/features of the Route 9W Corridor.

The Route 9W Corridor divides two distinct topographical ranges, the fairly level terrace flanking the Hudson River and the Kalkbergs (Dutch for “limestone mountain”). The terrace is mostly level and ranges in elevation from 150 to 200 feet. The Kalkbergs is a range of low hills parallel to and at the west margin of the Hudson River terrace. The range is less than a mile wide and varies in altitude from 200 to 350 feet. As a result of this divide, a narrow band of very steep slopes (over 45%) is seen on the edge of the Kalkbergs or the western parcels of Route 9W. Overall, there are relatively few areas within the town that are constrained by steep slopes.

Pursuant to New York State Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) Article 24 Parts 662 and 663, New York State protects freshwater wetlands larger than 12.4 acres and enforces a 100-foot protective buffer encompassing such wetlands. Smaller wetlands may also be protected under federal regulations and are not subject to the 100-foot buffer restrictions. The Freshwater Wetlands Act, aimed at preventing wetlands being filled or drained, regulates activities within or adjacent to designated wetlands, including the buffer area. A permit issued by the NYSDEC for regulated activities is required. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has jurisdiction over all wetlands not administered by the NYSDEC. Permits need to be secured prior to any filling, alteration, or construction in or adjacent to any wetlands.

Wetland mapping shows many regulated wetlands in Athens, mostly in the mid-portions of the Town and east to the Hudson River, including the Route 9W Corridor region. Most of the wetlands near the Route 9W Corridor are associated with, and found along creeks and streams. According to available wetland mapping, the wetlands appear to be located several feet behind many of the parcels with fronting 9W. Hydric soils are soils characterized by excessive moisture or water. According to hydric soil mapping, the hydric soils near Route 9W Corridor tend to correlate with the wetlands. As a result, there will be some development limitations on many of these parcels. A wetland survey should be required of all development along the Route 9W to ensure potential impacts to wetlands are avoided and/or minimized.

Historical & Archeological

According to the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Route 9W Corridor has a potential for historical and archeologically significant resources. The entire length of the Corridor is identified as an archeologically sensitive area. In addition, the Flint Mine Hill Archeological District, listed on the National Historic Registry, includes all parcels along the Route 9W Corridor from the intersection of Schoharie Turnpike north into the Town of Coxsackie. All future development along the Route 9W Corridor should be required to complete

a Phase 1 Archaeological Investigation to ensure potential impacts to these resources are avoided and/or minimized.

Route 9W Corridor Environmental Constraints

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Economic Profile of the Corridor

As a major non-interstate transportation corridor, Route 9W serves as a main connection for commercial, commuter and local traffic for the Town and Village. The Route 9W Corridor is essential to the movement of people, goods and services throughout the region.

The assessment of existing conditions strives to answer the following questions:

- What are the demographic, socio-economic and lifestyle characteristics of existing and potential consumers?
- What trends are likely to influence consumer-spending patterns in and around the Route 9W Corridor?
- What are the spending habits of local and regional area residents?
- What are current retail sales in and around the corridor and surrounding trade area?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the economy?
- What is the market potential for various types of businesses in and around the corridor?

Socio-Economic Profile

According to US Census estimates and population projections from ESRI Business Analyst Online (BAO), between 2006 and 2011 the population for the Town and Village of Athens is projected to experience a growth rate of 2.8% and 3.2%, respectively. This projected growth is very much dependent upon several factors, including economic expansion, environmental capacity, housing suitability, varying needs within age cohorts, and overall regional desirability.

As detailed in the Demographic Profile, **Section XXX**, the population for the Town and Village has been on the rise since 1990, reflecting the community as a whole offers a desirable quality lifestyle. The largest age group in Athens is comprised of residents between the ages of 35 – 54 years. Generally, this age group is characterized as stable and typically settled into a region due to family and/or employment. Overall, the population of Athens can be characterized as generally aging, however, the younger generation is not being replenished. This is a major national trend known as the “graying of America” due to the aging of the vast baby-boomer generation.

Analysis of Consumer Spending Patterns

In an effort to identify how residents may be underserved locally by existing businesses, and in order to learn about the spending patterns of Athens residents, a Retail Goods and Services Expenditure report was obtained from ESRI Business Analyst Online (BAO) for both the Town and Village of Athens. Business Analyst Online (BAO) provides reports and maps to businesses

to help them understand the lifestyle and buying behaviors of the households in a particular market in order and to find optimal sites for new store locations. BAO combines Geographic Information technology with extensive demographic, consumer, and business data to deliver more than 50 reports and maps over the Web. BAO uses data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) Consumer Expenditure Surveys to identify baseline-spending patterns. Data from additional surveys, including the weekly Diary Survey for daily purchases and quarterly Interview Survey for general purchases, are used to refine the spending estimates. BAO integrates data from both surveys to provide a comprehensive database on all consumer expenditures.

Many communities across the country have researched consumer-spending behaviors to understand local trends. In general, consumers prefer to shop for everyday items close to home. These items include goods and services such as groceries, home cleaning supplies, personal care items, alcohol, cigarettes, automobile repair, beauty salon services, and restaurants. In contrast, consumers are willing to travel farther from home for larger ticket items such as furniture, furnishings, appliances, electronics, clothing, entertainment, automobiles, recreational vehicles and medical services. Finally, consumers are willing to take longer day trips from home in search of specialty shopping experiences that may include dining, entertainment, and recreation.

The Retail Goods and Services Expenditure report details the spending habits of Athens residents which can be compared to the existing business along the Route 9W Corridor. Evaluating where local and regional consumers spend their money is important, because it reflects the dollars that could be spent along the Route 9W Corridor, if the right mix of stores was available to accommodate the demand.

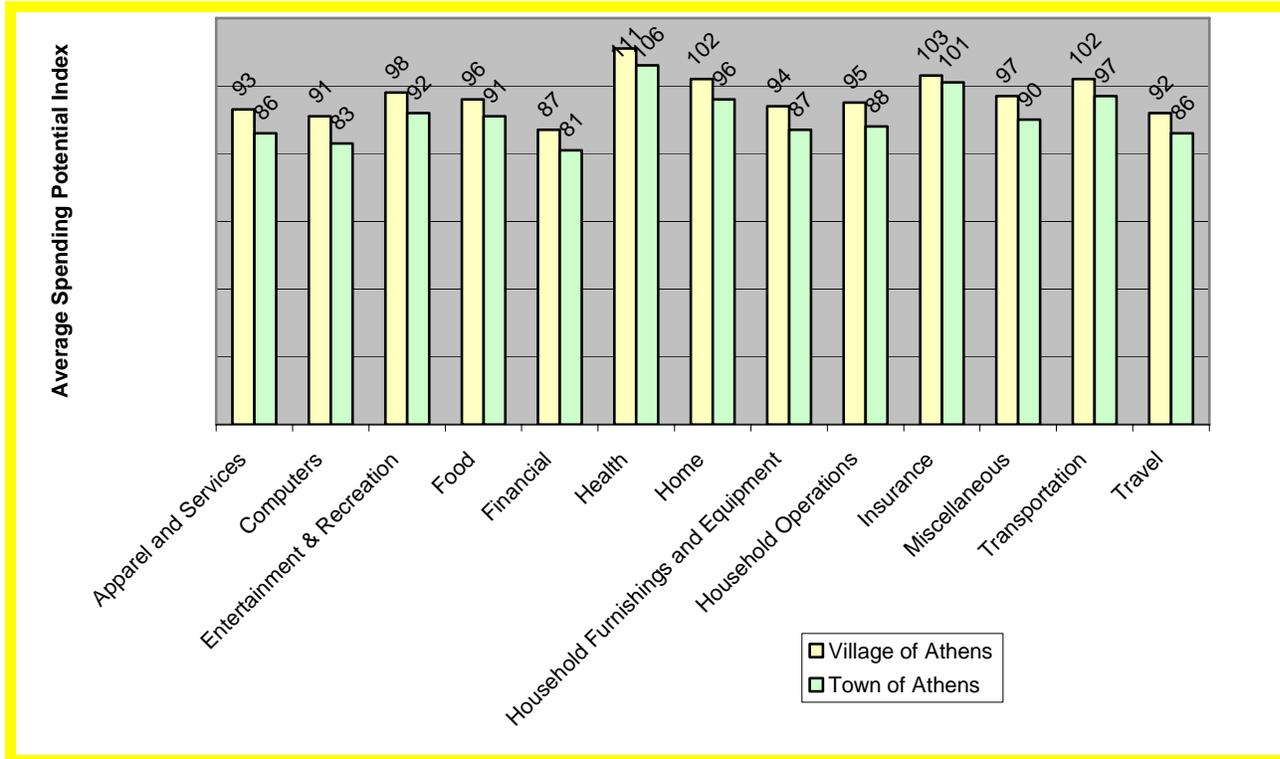
The Spending Potential Index (SPI) is household-based, and represents the amount of money spent for a product or service relative to a National average of 100. Analysis of this data helps businesses identify important changes and significant trends in consumer spending and buying habits within a particular market, and helps identify the best areas to market specific products and services. These figures are not meant to represent annual expenditures made within Athens. Rather, the figures represent the potential total annual expenditures of Town and Village residents as might be spent both within and outside of Athens. While local spending habits are compared to a National average, the expenditure outlays are not corrected for regional inflation. Therefore, that a given community spends less on specific goods or services may reflect one of several things: (1) local residents are able to obtain the desired goods or services at a cheaper cost; (2) local residents' interests in such goods and services falls short of the National average or the goods and services are not easily available, or (3) local residents have less disposable income to spend on such items.

According to the SPI, for every \$1 spent nationally on retail goods and services, Town of Athens residents spend between \$0.62 and \$1.23, while the Village of Athens residents spend between \$0.83 and \$1.20. *Graph 1: Athens Spending Index* compares the residents' average spending potential index for each category in the Village and Town of Athens. *Table 5: Retail Goods and Services Expenditures* provides an expanded summation, with subcategories, of the spending potential index for each category. As a whole, the consumers of this area spend slightly less than the national average on most goods and services with a few exceptions. Overall, Athens

consumers spend close to the national average on items such as health, insurance, home, and transportation services.

As seen in Graph 1, the top two categories by expenditures for Athens are Health (Village – 111 and Town – 106) and Insurance (Village – 103 and Town – 101). The category with the lowest average expenditure ranking is Financial (Village – 87 and Town – 81).

Graph 1: Athens Average Spending Potential Index



Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions (ESRI BIS). Expenditure Data area derived from the Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Data was updated in September of 2003 based on Consumer Expenditure Surveys from 1999, 2000, and 2001.

The average amount spent per household on each of the goods and service subcategories is comparable in both the Village and Town. However, the Village spends slightly more per dollar in each subcategory. The following are the subcategories with the highest and lowest spending potential index for both the Village and Town.

Village: Highest Spending Potential Index (S.P.I.)

1. Recreational Vehicles & Fees (123)
2. Prescription Drugs (120)
3. Maintenance & Remodeling Materials (114)

Town: Highest Spending Potential Index (S.P.I.)

1. Recreational Vehicles & Fees (120)
2. Prescription Drugs (118)
3. Lawn & Garden (109)

Village: Lowest Spending Potential Index (S.P.I.)

1. Investments (69)
2. Child care (82)
3. Admission to Movie, Theatre, Opera, Ballet (83)
3. Admission to Sporting Events, excel Trips (83)

Town: Lowest Spending Potential Index (S.P.I.)

1. Investments (62)
2. Child care (73)
3. Moving, Storage, Freight Express (74)

Most of the retail goods and services that residents are willing to spend more per dollar on, are not provided along the Route 9W Corridor. Indicating that residents are finding these services elsewhere. Recapturing even a portion of sales currently spent elsewhere represents a significant market opportunity. Achieving this vision will require establishing a critical mass of quality retail and service businesses throughout the Corridor to enhance the area’s drawing power and consumer spending potential.

Table 5: Retail Goods and Services Expenditures, indicates the spending habits of the Athens residents, as compared to a nationwide standard.

Table 5: Retail Goods and Services Expenditures

Retail Goods & Services Categories	Village			Town		
	Spending Potential Index (S.P.I.)	Average Spent per Household (Village)	Total Spent per Year (Village)	Spending Potential Index	Average Spent per Household (Town)	Total Spent per Year (Town)
Apparel and Services	93	\$2,559.14	\$1,888,647	86	\$2,373.49	\$4,075,281
Men's	95	\$495.07	\$365,365	88	\$460.19	\$790,150
Women's	93	\$841.59	\$621,096	86	\$775.79	\$1,332,028
Children's	94	\$406.99	\$300,361	88	\$379.67	\$651,899
Footwear	89	\$447.74	\$330,434	83	\$417.92	\$717,571
Watches & Jewelry	96	\$241.09	\$177,924	89	\$223.20	\$383,231
Apparel Products and Services	87	\$126.65	\$93,467	80	\$116.72	\$200,402
Computer	91			83		
Computers and Hardware for Home Use	90	\$223.39	\$164,863	82	\$202.74	\$348,101
Software and Accessories for Home Use	92	\$26.99	\$19,916	83	\$24.40	\$41,891
Entertainment & Recreation	98	\$3,059.01	\$2,257,547	92	\$2,865.67	\$4,920,351
Fees and Admissions	87	\$524.48	\$387,066	78	\$473.26	\$812,587
Membership Fees for Clubs	91	\$149.21	\$110,118	83	\$135.60	\$232,822
Fees for Participant Sports, excl. Trips	89	\$102.54	\$75,678	80	\$92.41	\$158,672
Admission to Movie/Theatre/Opera/Ballet	83	\$121.30	\$89,519	75	\$108.59	\$186,444
Admission to Sporting Events, excl. Trips	90	\$50.18	\$37,032	81	\$45.23	\$77,656

Retail Goods & Services Categories	Village			Town		
	Spending Potential Index (S.P.I.)	Average Spent per Household (Village)	Total Spent per Year (Village)	Spending Potential Index	Average Spent per Household (Town)	Total Spent per Year (Town)
Fees for Recreational Lessons	83	\$101.25	\$74,719	75	\$91.43	\$156,993
TV/Video/Sound Equipment	96	\$991.12	\$731,445	90	\$924.67	\$1,587,652
Community Antenna or Cable Television	100	\$551.02	\$406,654	95	\$523.77	\$899,311
Color Televisions	91	\$104.56	\$77,166	84	\$95.88	\$164,629
VCRs, Video Cameras, and DVD Players	91	\$34.44	\$25,415	81	\$30.58	\$52,511
Video Cassettes and DVDs	94	\$38.51	\$28,418	85	\$34.75	\$59,674
Video Game Hardware and Software	90	\$30.48	\$22,495	81	\$27.60	\$47,395
Satellite Dishes	103	\$3.04	\$2,243	98	\$2.88	\$4,945
Rental of Video Cassettes and DVDs	89	\$55.94	\$41,286	80	\$50.17	\$86,143
Sound Equipment	94	\$167.58	\$123,671	86	\$153.93	\$264,300
Rental and Repair of TV/Sound Equipment	91	\$5.55	\$4,097	83	\$5.09	\$8,744
Pets	106	\$374.06	\$276,055	102	\$359.14	\$616,651
Toys and Games	95	\$193.04	\$142,462	89	\$181.12	\$310,977
Recreational Vehicles and Fees	123	\$413.17	\$304,919	120	\$401.14	\$688,764
Sports/Recreation/Exercise Equipment	95	\$209.71	\$154,767	91	\$199.85	\$343,138
Photo Equipment and Supplies	96	\$138.41	\$102,147	88	\$127.26	\$218,506
Reading	97	\$215.02	\$158,686	90	\$199.23	\$342,076
Food	96	\$7,628.27	\$5,629,663	91	\$7,174.03	\$12,317,814
Food at Home	98	\$4,642.53	\$3,426,190	93	\$4,400.39	\$7,555,465
Bakery and Cereal Products	98	\$691.85	\$510,585	93	\$655.39	\$1,125,305
Meat, Poultry, Fish, and Eggs	97	\$1,230.51	\$908,119	93	\$1,175.33	\$2,018,035
Dairy Products	99	\$510.79	\$376,965	94	\$483.75	\$830,605
Fruit and Vegetables	95	\$792.38	\$584,779	90	\$750.83	\$1,289,182
Snacks and Other Food at Home	99	\$1,416.99	\$1,045,742	94	\$1,335.08	\$2,292,338
Food Away from Home	94	\$2,985.74	\$2,203,473	88	\$2,773.65	\$4,762,349
Alcoholic Beverages	90	\$461.14	\$340,323	82	\$419.52	\$720,310
Nonalcoholic Beverages at Home	101	\$398.91	\$294,398	95	\$376.90	\$647,131
Financial	87			81		
Investments	69	\$5,796.27	\$4,277,646	62	\$5,143.51	\$8,831,411
Vehicle Loans	105	\$5,660.96	\$4,177,786	99	\$5,385.57	\$9,247,019
Health	111			106		
Nonprescription Drugs	107	\$106.02	\$78,240	101	\$100.76	\$173,009
Prescription Drugs	120	\$645.65	\$476,489	118	\$634.33	\$1,089,137
Eyeglasses and Contact Lenses	105	\$89.92	\$66,362	98	\$84.19	\$144,546
Home	102			96		
Mortgage Payment and Basics	94	\$7,487.20	\$5,525,552	88	\$7,001.02	\$12,020,746
Maintenance and Remodeling Services	97	\$1,533.07	\$1,131,408	92	\$1,443.18	\$2,477,937
Maintenance and Remodeling Materials	114	\$369.20	\$272,468	107	\$344.19	\$590,980
Utilities, Fuel, and Public Services	101	\$4,216.57	\$3,111,831	96	\$4,013.49	\$6,891,168
Household Furnishings and Equipment	94			87		
Household Textiles	94	\$119.04	\$87,850	87	\$109.38	\$187,808
Furniture	89	\$543.45	\$401,065	82	\$501.53	\$861,125
Floor Coverings	93	\$73.03	\$53,897	87	\$67.95	\$116,664

Retail Goods & Services Categories	Village			Town		
	Spending Potential Index (S.P.I.)	Average Spent per Household (Village)	Total Spent per Year (Village)	Spending Potential Index	Average Spent per Household (Town)	Total Spent per Year (Town)
Major Appliances	101	\$274.74	\$202,756	95	\$258.92	\$444,564
Housewares	97	\$92.41	\$68,197	91	\$87.06	\$149,476
Small Appliances	100	\$35.21	\$25,985	93	\$32.69	\$56,123
Luggage	85	\$9.06	\$6,683	76	\$8.07	\$13,853
Telephones and Accessories	94	\$48.78	\$36,003	88	\$45.67	\$78,421
Household Operations	95			88		
Child Care	82	\$344.36	\$254,140	73	\$306.90	\$526,939
Lawn and Garden	113	\$473.21	\$349,226	109	\$458.93	\$787,985
Moving/Storage/Freight Express	85	\$43.06	\$31,780	74	\$37.91	\$65,097
Housekeeping Supplies	101	\$681.13	\$502,671	95	\$643.12	\$1,104,231
Insurance	103			101		
Owners and Renters Insurance	109	\$453.62	\$334,769	106	\$438.34	\$752,625
Vehicle Insurance	100	\$1,296.12	\$956,538	94	\$1,229.03	\$2,110,239
Life/Other Insurance	107	\$676.51	\$499,267	102	\$647.96	\$1,112,542
Miscellaneous	97			90		
Personal Care Products	96	\$389.55	\$287,490	90	\$362.08	\$621,687
School Books and Supplies	86	\$97.83	\$72,197	77	\$86.88	\$149,175
Smoking Products	109	\$540.97	\$399,236	103	\$512.23	\$879,501
Transportation	102			97		
Vehicle Purchases (Net Outlay)	104	\$5,817.86	\$4,293,577	99	\$5,521.78	\$9,480,888
Gasoline and Motor Oil	105	\$1,935.65	\$1,428,511	100	\$1,844.83	\$3,167,572
Vehicle Maintenance and Repairs	98	\$1,011.66	\$746,607	92	\$949.06	\$1,629,535
Travel	92			86		
Airline Fares	88	\$356.62	\$263,186	81	\$327.03	\$561,517
Lodging on Trips	97	\$386.80	\$285,455	91	\$363.36	\$623,887
Auto/Truck/Van Rental on Trips	88	\$43.50	\$32,105	80	\$39.78	\$68,303
Food and Drink on Trips	96	\$432.21	\$318,969	90	\$402.93	\$691,839

Economic Development Opportunities

Infrastructure

Municipal water and sewer is often one of the key amenities used to attract new businesses and industries. Extending municipal water and sewer to the Route 9W Corridor would create enormous economic development opportunities for the Town.

The Town of Athens does not have its own municipal water supply or municipal sewer. However, municipal water and sewer is provided to a majority of properties within the Village of Athens. The source of the public water supply is Hollister Lake located along Schoharie Turnpike in the northwestern part of the Town of Athens. Water is then piped along the Schoharie Turnpike through its intersection with Route 9W. Due to the Corridor's proximity to

the watermain, the Town should investigate the feasibility of connecting to the Village's water supply and extending it to limited areas along the Route 9W Corridor.

Creating a sewer extension would be a different task altogether, as existing sewer mains are not in proximity to the Route 9W Corridor. In addition to the lengthy sewer pipe extension, the Village wastewater treatment plant would require significant improvements and upgrades in order to accommodate waste from the Route 9W Corridor. The cost for such an extension may not immediately be economically feasible. However, the Town should consider future opportunities to share the burden with developers of Route 9W. The expansion of municipal water and/or sewer to the Corridor would ultimately serve as a catalyst for economic development.

Empire Zone Program

Empire Zones (EZs) are designated areas throughout the State that offer special incentives to encourage economic and community development, business investment and job creation. Businesses located within an EZ are eligible to receive significant tax credits and benefits. The Empire Zone Program is an important initiative to implement forward-looking growth policies and programs to encourage the expansion of private sector businesses in the county.

New York State recently designated a new EZ in Greene County, which includes 167 acres of privately-owned land in the Town of Athens. Parcels along the Route 9W Corridor were not included in this designation; however, Route 9W will serve as the primary access route to these EZ properties. As a result, the Route 9W Corridor has the potential to be a magnet for the EZ and create additional economic opportunities.

Through marketing and good planning efforts, the Town may be able to create attractive incentives for new businesses, mixed-uses, and industries to the area. Many businesses are seeking immediate available space. In order for the Town to take advantage of these businesses, sites should be "shovel-ready". Priority sites often are served by municipal water and sewer. Although, municipal water and sewer is not currently available such an extension may be feasible in the future.

In order to establish "shovel-ready" sites, the Town should prepare a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) for all properties along the Route 9W Corridor and the Schoharie Turnpike to the EZ properties. The GEIS would evaluate the potential impacts associated with the future development of these sites, the potential impacts of a water and/or sewer expansion, and identify the necessary improvements to mitigate any associated impacts. The completion of a GEIS helps to alleviate the obstacles associated with developing land. "Shovel-ready" sites eliminate the unknowns associated with developing property and allow the Town to market to future businesses not only within the EZ, but also the Route 9W Corridor.

Route 9W Corridor Recommendations

Introduction

The Town and Village of Athens are poised for redevelopment and rediscovery of its identity and importance. Opportunities exist to reinvigorate the area's economy by capitalizing on the strengths of the Route 9W Corridor. Strengths of the Route 9W Corridor include its central location within the Town, ample vacant land, proximity to a traditional village design, and recreational opportunities, and access to transportation opportunities.

Athens is unique with many natural, historic, and cultural themes while also sharing similar themes with the regional area. Coordinated efforts and sharing of resources can enable the Town to establish a destination for travelers. These efforts cannot only make the area an interesting place to visit, but can improve the quality of life for permanent residents as well. The Route 9W Corridor can be transformed into a thriving transportation corridor – a place where residents and visitors will feel comfortable driving, biking, walking, shopping, working, and living.

This section presents general recommendations for the 9W Corridor as a whole, divided into three major topics: Transportation, Land Use and Zoning, and Economic Development. A successful transportation corridor promotes safe driving, with clear signage, separate pedestrian and bicycle corridors, and attractive streetscapes. To visually represent the recommendations, two existing conditions photographs were altered to provide a visual simulation of “tomorrow’s” Route 9W Corridor.

Route 9W Photo simulation

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Transportation

Many of America's roadside communities are experiencing the growth of vehicular and pedestrian usage, and are looking to provide proper planning and interaction between motorized and non-motorized users. At the same time, local communities need to protect and enhance the rural persona and historical significance of the area, while maintaining a positive image and safe place where pedestrians, motorists, and non-motorist users can coexist.

Based upon information provided by the Athens Comprehensive Planning Committee (ACAC), the public, and stakeholders there is a general awareness that improvements are needed for the Corridor in order to create a sense of identity and attract new businesses. It is the vision of Athens to create interesting places and linkages for motorist, pedestrians and bicyclists visiting the Route 9W Corridor to warrant the transportation improvements and amenities. It is important that Athens continues to have the foresight towards implementing this vision to create the Route 9W Corridor of tomorrow.

The following are the transportation recommendations for the Route 9W Corridor:

Access

A permit is required from NYSDOT for all driveway and curb cut access onto Route 9W. As a result, numerous individual property access points line the Corridor for all land use types. Shared access to multiple properties is permitted and encouraged, however it is uncommon along Route 9W.

- Reduce the number of driveways along Route 9W to eliminate motorist conflicts. New development should be coordinated so that ingress and egress points can be combined to decrease access points along Route 9W. Shared access should be encouraged between property owners to reduce the overall number of curb cuts.
- Enforce driveway design standards for both residential and commercial driveways to ensure vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclist safety. Standards should take into consideration but are not limited to, driveway width, sight distance, and surface material.
- As future developments are proposed along the Corridor, the Planning Board should analyze the need for road widening, the addition of right and left turn lanes, a wider shoulder, sidewalks and/or a minimum landscaping buffer strip. The current minimum setback requirements for the HC and LI districts may need to be increased in order to accommodate

roadway widening, or where appropriate, to provide a conservation setback to preserve the semi-rural character of the Corridor.

- Consider requiring the construction of secondary access roads and interconnections of parking lots as part of any future development to further decrease access points along Route 9W.
- Require that developers conduct a Traffic Impact Analysis for all developments that are proposed to add 100 cars or more per day along the Route 9W Corridor. The study should take into consideration various potential uses, as well as types of potential vehicular traffic (i.e. automobile versus heavy truck traffic versus pedestrian traffic). The Traffic Impact Analysis will be utilized to determine any improvements and mitigation necessary to offset the traffic impacts to the Route 9W Corridor.
- As future developments are proposed along the Corridor and traffic increases, work with NYS DOT to lower the speed limit from 55 MPH to something more appropriate for the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.

Example Recommended Access Design Improvements



Source: Route 4 Corridor Management Plan, 2004, Town of Fort Edward, New York. All rights reserved: Synthesis LLP and Laberge Group.

Parking Standards

Vehicular parking along the Route 9W Corridor is limited to the parking lots owned by private businesses. In most locations, parking spaces are delineated by pavement markings. Although parking striping is often provided, the markings are also often faded, causing vehicles to park haphazardly. No on-street parking is available and is not encouraged due to the traffic speeds along the Corridor. Landscaping and streetscape amenities should be encouraged and incorporated in the site layouts for each parking area along the Corridor.

- Incorporate landscaping requirements into parking design standards. Landscaping may be used to screen parking areas, visually break-up parking aisles, and to create an attractive streetscape. Where appropriate, berms should be used to screen industrial uses.
- Encourage business owners and developers to design site plans with shared parking areas.
- Encourage future parking to the side and rear of buildings to create and protect the streetscape along the Route 9W Corridor.

Pedestrian & Bicycle Access Improvements

The Route 9W Corridor does not provide any pedestrian or bicycle safety elements. No sidewalks were noted along the Route 9W Corridor to enable pedestrians to safely walk between businesses.

- Encourage vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle safety throughout the Corridor through the provision of bike lanes, sidewalks, pedestrian signage, etc. To the extent practical, all developments should encourage the separation of vehicular traffic from pedestrian traffic by creating separate rights-of-ways, and well-defined pedestrian routes.
- Coordinate with neighboring communities and NYSDOT to establish a regional bike path along the Route 9W Corridor.
- Coordinate with property owners to develop snow removal plans to ensure future pedestrian elements are accessible throughout the year.
- Require pedestrian and bicycle elements to be incorporated as part of any future development and included in the overall transportation system. This includes adding pedestrian elements along secondary streets connecting to Route 9W.

Infrastructure

- Coordinate the replacement of any aging infrastructure with the NYSDOT to coincide with any planned reconstruction or improvements to the Route 9W Corridor.
- Work cooperatively with the Village of Athens to implement a long-term program for expanding the water and/or sewer infrastructure to the Route 9W Corridor. Any future expansions of the water and/or sewer should be limited to the “commercial nodes” which are further discussed in the following Land Use and Zoning Recommendations. This concept is intended to avoid the creation of a continuous commercial strip along 9W. The commercial nodes include the areas around the intersections Schoharie Turnpike and Leeds Athens Road.

Expansions south of Leeds Athens Road, as well as east and west along Leeds Athens Road should be discouraged.

- Consider future opportunities to share the burden with developers for the expansion of municipal water and/or sewer to the Route 9W Corridor.

Street Lighting

- Provide ornamental street lighting along Route 9W to improve the visual character. Street lighting should be provided within each of the commercial nodes and along the section of Route 9W connecting the two commercial nodes.
- Increased lighting levels should be considered where pedestrian activity or improvements are provided.

Streetscape

- Coordinate with the NYSDOT to design a landscaping scheme for the Route 9W Corridor that includes a variety of street-tree species of differing size, leaf color and flowering ability to add to the aesthetic beauty of the Corridor.
- Select street trees to meet the climatic conditions, spatial requirements, and urban stresses of the propose planting location. The small brochure *Recommended Urban Trees: Site Assessment Selection for Stress Tolerance Planting* should be consulted prior to choosing any tree species.
- Preserve existing, healthy mature trees. If determined that such trees must be removed, they should be replaced with appropriate native species.

Utilities

- Relocate overhead lines, where practicable, underground to improve the visual character of the area.
- Require the placement of empty conduit underground whenever the ground is opened (i.e. as part of development, construction, improvements, etc.) for the future lighting and fiber optic cable.



Land Use & Zoning

As noted previously, the Route 9W Corridor contains the Highway Commercial (HC) district, the only commercial district in the Town. The Route 9W Corridor is intended to control and contain existing and future commercial development. Design objectives for the district include minimizing traffic hazards, preventing a deterioration of existing commercial areas, and maintaining a balance with adjacent uses. In conjunction with these objectives, the Town is additionally seeking to improve upon the land development patterns, preserve architectural diversity, and creating a stronger sense of place throughout the Corridor. The Town should respect the planning efforts of the Village to ensure uses along the Route 9W Corridor enhance, rather than compete with the economic climate of the Village.

As signage along the Route 9W Corridor is permitted to vary by the size of building, it is difficult to have a consistent appearance along the Corridor. A variation to the permitted quality of signage has also affected the Corridor's appearance. Large billboards were observed along the Corridor, often detracting from the visual character of a Corridor.

Setback requirements for signage also varied throughout the Corridor. Some signs were very close to the road, while others setback much further. Some freestanding signs were elevated on poles while other signs were leaning against objects on the ground. Over the years, a range of signage approvals, with respect to quality, location and design have had a visual impact on the Corridor.

The following land use and zoning recommendations apply to the Route 9W Corridor:

Land Use Pattern & Design

- Enforce the vision established in the Comprehensive Plan for the Route 9W Corridor. This vision will assist the Planning Board during all future site plan reviews to ensure the Corridor is developed appropriately. The Route 9W Corridor Study should be used to organize and define the land uses along the Corridor to create distinct "commercial nodes". The Town should require all future developments to provide lighting, landscaping, streetscaping, right-of-ways, etc to ensure the Corridor is developed as envisioned. Such elements will only be implemented through gradual enforcement, which will ultimately change the overall look of the Route 9W Corridor.
- Develop an overall set of specific, detailed architectural and site design guidelines, in accordance with the Community Image Survey, to govern future commercial and industrial development along the Corridor.

-
- Work with developers to build attractive architecture with character unique to Athens, abundant landscaping, and appropriate signage. Architectural recommendations should reflect the results from the Community Image Survey.
 - Ensure that the size and scale of new commercial, residential, and industrial development is sensitive to all historic, cultural, and natural resources. As a general principal, heights should not exceed 45 feet for commercial or industrial sites, and 35 feet for residential structures. Archeological and wetland surveys should be required to ensure these resources are protected.
 - Ensure adjoining uses are compatible and avoid conflicts with areas identified as properties of importance or significance.
 - Develop “gateway” entrances for the Route 9W Corridor. Utilize landscaping, lighting, artwork, and signage that are unique and attractive to Athens. Incorporate existing buildings and natural features when developing the gateway image. Each gateway should be planted with vegetation that will withstand harsh winter and drought conditions, as well as planted with seasonal flowering perennials and annuals.

Zoning

- Revise the boundaries of the Highway Commercial (HC) zoning district to encourage more dense commercial activity in designated commercial nodes and create a mixed-use environment along the remainder of the Corridor. The large area along the Corridor between the intersections of Schoharie Turnpike and Leeds Athens Road should be amended to a new mixed-use district. Light industrial uses could continue to be permitted in the mixed-use district through special permit procedures.
- Amend the zoning code to address the uses permitted along the Route 9W Corridor. As the available commercial land is limited, single-family dwellings should not be a permitted use in the revised Commercial District. However, the revised Commercial District should permit residential uses, community services, and health services as part of a mixed-use structure.
- Define all light industrial uses to ensure future uses are in character with the Corridor.
- Review and update existing regulations, where needed, to encourage the use of aesthetically pleasing architectural design, signage, landscaping, setbacks, and parking for all commercial and industrial areas along the Corridor.
- Determine the types and size of uses for each of the zoning districts along the Route 9W Corridor that will serve to enhance both the Town and Village’s economic efforts.

Signage

- Revise signage regulations to create a consistent appearance for the Route 9W Corridor. A professional design firm may be retained to create a prototype sign, specifying a range of colors, size, lettering style and sign positioning, so that the signage in the Corridor has a coordinated appearance.

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- Revise signage regulations to eliminate billboards along the Route 9W Corridor. Billboards often negatively alter the visual character of a roadway.



Economic Development

The following recommendations for economic development are designed to position the Route 9W Corridor as a vibrant corridor offering a mix of store, restaurants, and essential services to local residents and regional visitors. Achieving this vision will require establishing a critical mass of quality retail and service businesses throughout the Corridor to enhance the area's drawing power and consumer spending potential. Recapturing even a portion of sales currently spent elsewhere represents a significant market opportunity.

Components of the economic revitalization strategy include recommendations for business recruitment, marketing and promotion, organization, and lastly design and beautification.

Business Friendly Environment

- Establish procedures to simplify review and permitting processes for business development and/or expansion. Procedures that streamline development will encourage new businesses to locate in the Route 9W Corridor. Such procedures may include special meetings for commercial development and/or supplemental information to assist developers through the planning process.
- Develop an entrepreneur assistance program that assists existing and new business ventures in developing effective marketing programs. Assist existing businesses in identifying and pursuing appropriate funding and grant opportunities, as well as advising businesses on local regulations, and providing other types of assistance.
- Retain and improve existing businesses along the Route 9W Corridor. Identify local business needs to create local growth opportunities that provide businesses the ability to continue to serve the Town and Village of Athens.
- Develop proactive measures to foster improved communication between the Town and businesses along the Route 9W Corridor. A Town staff person could be appointed to act as a Town-business liaison. Responsibilities could include advising small businesses and local entrepreneurs on local programs and services, as well as assisting with state and county agencies.

Business Incentives

- Develop incentives for existing business to improve their signs, parking areas, or landscaping.
- Develop a pro-active business attraction program. The Town should focus on (1) identifying how it wants to be perceived; (2) preparing appropriate marketing and promotion materials; and (3) pursuing businesses that correlate with its future vision.
- Create a Commercial Development Grant/Loan Program. Such a program may include but is not limited to: a 50/50 grant/loan façade improvement program and/or a micro-enterprise low-interest loan pool. Funds can be awarded or given as incentives to businesses that improve the aesthetic appearance of the community. This can be used to encourage new acquisition of currently vacant structures. In addition to façade improvements, monies can be used for rehabilitation activities such as upgrades to a building’s heating, electrical or structural systems. Develop additional methods by which the Town can assist small business owners.
- Consider local tax incentives to encourage redevelopment and reinvestment. Section 485b of the New York State Real Property Tax Law establishes a schedule for property tax abatements for new commercial, business, or industrial projects. This exemption is a local option.

Community Image & Marketing

- Use banners and signage to give visitors a sense of place along the Route 9W Corridor. Additionally, Athens should consider creating a tourism information kiosk/welcome center, as the Route 9W Corridor is the primary entrance to Athens for many visitors. This location can be used to post flyers about events and activities as well as information about local resources.
- Utilize the Greene County website, to provide interested individuals with a one-stop connection to Greene County government, Greene County Planning and Economic Development, and to Greene County Tourism. The website can be used to attract and retain business to the Route 9W Corridor and to promote county and State economic development programs available to new and existing businesses.
- Coordinate marketing efforts with the *GreeneBusiness Partnership* and the Coxsackie Area Chamber of Commerce to promote the development of light industrial, commercial, and warehousing as well as computer and high tech businesses to the Route 9W Corridor. In addition to providing quality employment opportunities, these businesses also benefit local taxpayers by supporting the local economy.

Create Development Opportunities

- Work with Greene County to expand the Empire Zone to the Route 9W Corridor.
- In order to establish “shovel-ready” sites, the Town should consider the preparation of a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) for all properties along the Route 9W Corridor and the Schoharie Turnpike to the Empire Zone (EZ) properties. The GEIS would

evaluate the potential impacts associated with the future development of these sites, the potential impacts of a water and/or sewer expansion, and identify the necessary improvements to mitigate any associated impacts. The completion of a GEIS helps to alleviate the obstacles associated with developing land. “Shovel-ready” sites eliminate the unknowns associated with developing property and allow the Town to market to future businesses not only within the EZ, but also the Route 9W Corridor.

- Create an inventory of developable resources. The inventory should provide detailed information on vacant buildings and vacant lands, including the gross floor area of the building or size of the parcel, selling price, contact information, and development constraints (zoning or other).



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