
III. Existing Conditions

The following sections describe the Village of Herkimer, housing conditions, and community needs.

A. Community Description

1. General Location

The Village of Herkimer is located in the Mohawk Valley region approximately 10 miles east of Utica. The Village is in the south central portion of Herkimer County along the north shore of the Mohawk River/Erie Canal. The West Canada Creek forms the eastern border of the Village.

2. Population

The 2000 population was 7,498 persons, which is 6 percent less than the 1990 population of 7,945. The population includes 289 (4 percent) minority persons and 1,693 (23 percent) persons over the age of 65. A total of 1,934 persons (26 percent) are under the age of 20.

3. Development Pattern and Land Uses

The Village of Herkimer is densely developed. NYS Route 5, a five lane arterial roadway, divides the Village into north and south halves. This north/south separation is furthered by East and West Albany Streets, which parallel Route 5 and are separated from the arterial by a deteriorated chain link fence and narrow median areas. The Route 5/Albany Street corridor includes highway-type commercial establishments, two medical facilities, and the Folts Home nursing home. A Wal-Mart anchors the western end of the Route 5/Albany Street corridor.

The southern portion of the Village includes the smaller "South Main Street" portion of the Central Business District, older one and two family homes throughout, and commercial uses along Mohawk and Caroline Streets. Mohawk Street (NYS Route 28) is a main gateway to the Village from the New York State Thruway. A public housing

complex, Creekside Court, is located in the southeast portion of the Village. The main line of the CSX railroad separates the southern portion of the Village from the Erie Canal.

The northern portion of the Village includes the larger “North Main Street” portion of the Central Business District and predominately one family housing, including a large subdivision type development in the northwest portion of the Village. In addition to traditional retail commercial uses, the “North Main Street” Central Business District includes the Herkimer County Office complex, Village offices, senior citizen housing, H.M. Quackenbush industrial buildings, and the “Historic Four Corners” district.

Herkimer County Community College (HCCC) overlooks residences and the business district from its hillside location in the northern portion of the Village. College housing is interdispersed throughout the Village. HCCC is a significant force in the local economy.

The “Hydraulic Canal” extends through the Village from north to south through the Village’s eastern neighborhoods. This overgrown drainage ditch is a blight on the housing that abuts it, and creates environmental problems for the Village. Portions of the Canal that extend through the Central Business District have been effectively piped and filled.

4. Income Characteristics

The Village is a low income community with 51.4 percent low income persons according to the 1990 Census. Twenty (20) percent of the Village residents have incomes below the poverty level. The median household income is \$17,019, which is 26 percent below the County median of \$23,075. The per capita income is only \$9,743.

5. Housing Characteristics

The Village of Herkimer contains a wide variety of housing types and structures. One and two family homes are predominate, but the Village also has garden type apartments and two mid-rise apartment projects.

The 2000 Census counts 3,528 total housing units in the Village, including 3,184 occupied and 344 vacant units. Of the occupied units, 1,568 (49.2 percent) are owner occupied, and 1,616 (50.8 percent) are renter occupied. Of the vacant units, 162 were for rent and 37 were for sale.

6. Housing and Neighborhood Conditions

As noted above, the Village of Herkimer undertook a windshield survey of housing conditions on a Village-wide basis. This survey covered only 1-4 family residential structures. Mixed-use buildings and apartments were not included. A total of 1,876 structures and 2,047 units were covered by the survey.

The Village rated structures as standard, moderately substandard, severely substandard, and dilapidated according to the standards set forth by the Governor's Office for Small Cities as these standards could be applied via exterior survey only. Results were tabulated according to six neighborhood areas, the "balance" of the Village, and Village-wide. Conditions are outlined on Table 2. Based on exterior survey, 38 percent of the structures and 41 percent of the units in the Village were rated substandard. Almost 300 units were rated severely substandard.

Highest concentrations of substandard conditions are located in the southern portion of the Village, and the northeast neighborhood between North Washington Street and Route 28. Smaller pockets of poor housing conditions are located along First, Second, and Bellinger Streets in the southwest neighborhood, and along Bellinger Avenue adjacent to the Cental Business District. In these areas, well over 50 percent of the housing is substandard.

Neighborhoods in the northern portion of the Village are in generally good condition with scattered deterioration. Conditions are illustrated on the Housing Conditions Map.

More detailed information on housing and neighborhood conditions is included in Section III. B. below.

7. Economic Development

The Village economy has evolved to be very service oriented. The presence of the Herkimer County Office Building complex, Herkimer County Community College, and two medical facilities provides jobs and attracts commerce to the Village.

The major industrial employer is H.M. Quackenbush Inc., a company that specializes in metal plating. This company is located in the heart of the Village's downtown area. Hale Manufacturing, a producer of bookcases, is now in the process of relocating its operations from a

facility on West German Street to a newly created industrial park in the nearby Village of Frankfort.

8. Natural Features

Although the Village is bordered by the Erie Canal/Mohawk River, access to this resource has been restricted by the New York State Thruway and the CSX rail lines. A small but very strategic parcel of land owned by the Canal Corporation, however, is now being privately developed as a tourist information center with retail shops, floating docks, and marina facilities.

The topography of the Village is relatively flat. Above German Street however, steeper topography must be negotiated to reach the new housing in the northwest portion of the Village, Herkimer County Community College, and the facilities of Brookwood Park.

Housing Conditions



Housing rehabilitation programs are needed Village-wide and in targeted neighborhoods.



