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## **D. Village-wide Conditions and Needs**

### **1. Housing Rehabilitation**

As outlined in the "Community Description" section, the Village has completed a Village-wide survey of 1-4 unit structures. The six neighborhood "Areas of Study" include the highest concentration of substandard housing conditions in the Village, but areas outside these neighborhoods have rehabilitation needs as well. Outside the neighborhood areas described above, the Village surveyed 1,134 units, of which 285 or 25 percent were deemed substandard. Most of these units were located in the northeast section of the Village. Very little substandard housing exists in the more recently developed northwest portion of the Village.

### **2. Homeownership**

The Village of Herkimer has a high concentration of rental units (50.3 percent) and low income persons (51.4 percent). This combination is an indicator of the need to increase the number of owner-occupied units in the Village, and to encourage and assist lower income households in their effort to purchase homes within the Village. Increased homeownership helps to stabilize neighborhoods and contributes to revitalization efforts.

The Village has begun to implement a homeownership assistance program using a 2001 HOME grant. Should this program be implemented successfully, additional programs should be justified and appropriate funding pursued.

### **3. Senior Citizen Housing**

With an aging population, neighborhoods with significant housing rehabilitation needs, and a high concentration of senior citizens without the resources to maintain their older homes, additional senior citizen housing is justified in the Village.

Such new housing would allow seniors to stay within the Village, and would further open the housing market to first-time homebuyers. Any new senior citizens housing project, however, should examine the potential impact on such units under the control of the Herkimer Housing Authority.

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#### **4. Public Housing**

Public housing needs were outlined in the context of neighborhood conditions in Section III. B. above.

The Herkimer Housing Authority receives only \$250,000 to \$275,000 annually from the Federal government to address critical needs, and can no longer compete for the large grants needed to upgrade the 175 units located in the Village, all of which are over 30 years old.

As the needs of Herkimer neighborhoods are addressed using Small Cities and/or other programs, the needs of Eastern Gardens, Creekside Courts, and Mid-Town Apartments should be considered and incorporated into neighborhood revitalization plans. The Village should also consider the impact of potential revitalization programs on public housing projects. For example, improving properties on the north side of Bellinger Avenue would be of great benefit to the adjacent Mid-Town Apartments building.

#### **5. Recreation and Open Space**

Recreation facilities are located in several but limited Village parks. The Basloe Field Recreation Site is located in the extreme northern portion of the Northeast/North Washington Street neighborhood, but has a Village-wide service area. This park includes the municipal pool, a ball field, a basketball court, tennis court and play facilities, and needs to be upgraded. Located adjacent to the Village DPW facility and a blighting heavy commercial property, the potential exists to expand Basloe Field and address the Village's lack of open space and recreation facilities.

Brookwood Park extends along Bellinger Brook in the Village's northwestern section. This park contains a large field used for soccer and football, picnic facilities along the brook, and several wooded trails. The brook is partially walled with a stone culvert and in other locations is subject to erosion. A gravel access road is lighted, but neither the road nor the lights are in excellent condition.

Myers Park is located between Bellinger Street and Prospect Street just west of the "North Main Street" Central Business District. This attractive park includes mature trees, walking paths with pedestrian lighting, benches, several statues and memorials, and a gazebo/ bandstand that is used for concerts throughout the summer. It is in good condition, but should be aggressively maintained as a Village focal point of activity.

# Basloe Field Recreation Site

Relocating DPW would facilitate expansion.



Acquiring this Harter Street blight would facilitate the future expansion of Basloe Field.



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The only other recreation facility in the Village is the Herkimer Little League complex along the Marginal Road south of the CSX railroad. This complex includes three baseball fields, play equipment for young children, a basketball court, tennis court, and wading pool.

A fishing access site with picnic pavilion and parking area is located adjacent to the Mohawk River just east of South Washington Street. This facility, including the access road and parking area, is in need of improvement.

## **6. Industrial Uses**

The Village of Herkimer has limited and shrinking industrial resources. Its main industry, H.M. Quackenbush, is inappropriately located in the heart of the Central Business District, and its other main industry, Hale Manufacturing, is relocating to a nearby industrial park outside the Village. There is little land available for industrial growth, and the Village's older industrial buildings are multistory structures not well suited for modern manufacturing.

Industrial development options are limited in the Village. Redevelopment of the industrial site at the corner of East German Street and Route 28 would be costly, and the property is limited in size. Similarly, the Hale site on West German Street is undersized, and the building is also not well suited to modern manufacturing.

Industrially zoned lands in the southern portion of the Village are dominated by the Herkimer County Highway Department and a large cement operation.

## **7. Blight Removal**

The Village of Herkimer has at least four dilapidated, blighting residential structures that should be demolished. There are also several larger structures, including the Munger's and Smith Brothers buildings and heavy commercial buildings along Harter Road, that cast a blight over the Village.

Perhaps the most significant blight in the Village is the Hydraulic Canal that extends through several Village neighborhoods, and which needs to be piped and filled to remove the blight caused by poor drainage, overgrowth, and insect infestation.

On a lesser scale, the Route 5/Albany Street Commercial Corridor is blighted by the deteriorated fencing and median conditions that

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separate these roadways. Poor sidewalk, streetscape, and facade conditions in the North Main Street portion of the CBD are also blighting influences.

Property maintenance is a serious problem in the older portion of the Village. Vigorous code enforcement is needed in most areas.

## **8. Community Facilities and Infrastructure Needs**

Field surveys, interviews with local officials, the Communities 2000 process, and the citizen participation actions undertaken as part of the data gathering process identified a number of community facility and infrastructure needs in the Village. These needs are described and analyzed in the following subsections.

### **a. Hydraulic Canal**

The Hydraulic Canal is a drainage culvert that extends through the Village's eastern neighborhoods. Most of the Hydraulic Canal is open and overgrown, and blights the residential neighborhoods through which it flows. Between Suiter and Folts Streets, the Canal has been piped, land filled, and the property above redeveloped as parking for the Herkimer County Office Building complex. Between Green Street and Route 5, the Canal has been piped and filled, and the Mohawk Valley Health Center has been redeveloped on the site.

One of the Village's highest priorities is to fill and pipe the balance of the Hydraulic Canal to eliminate its blighting impact and increase open space in the neighborhoods through which the Canal extends. The large cost associated with this project will probably necessitate completion of the project in phases.

### **b. Community/Recreation/Youth Center**

One of the major community needs in the Village is the need to develop a multipurpose Community Center that would provide space for recreation, youth, and social service-type programs. This need has been identified through the Communities 2000 process, at workshops, and by Village officials.

A newly created "Herkimer Recreation" office has surveyed local youth and seniors, and documented a major need for a Community Center.

## Hydraulic Canal



Piping and filling is needed to eliminate blight.



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The most appropriate location for a Community Center would be the former Masonic Lodge on North Main Street. This building has almost 15,000 square feet of vacant space that includes meeting rooms, a "Great Room", a high ceilinged basement, and a kitchen area. This building could easily accommodate such activities as meals programs, dances, mentoring and tutoring programs, day care, recreation activities, and movies and theater programs, among others.

**c. Library**

The Frank J. Basloe Library is located on North Main Street in the heart of the Central Business District. Major exterior needs at the Library include landscaping and refurbishment of the mini-park/walkway adjacent to the building, repointing of the brick exterior, replacement of aged HVAC units, and installation of energy efficient windows.

Interior needs include new carpeting, repainting, and new furnishings including new tables and chairs, computer desks, and a circulation desk.

An assessment of the building, a space analysis, and new master plan have also been identified as significant needs.

**d. Water and Sewer**

According to the Village's Director of Public Works and Consulting Village Engineer, most of the water and sewer lines in the Village are antiquated and aged beyond their useful life. A comprehensive program of water and sanitary sewer line replacement is needed, and this should be implemented as streets in the Village are reconstructed and repaired. Infiltration problems with old tile-type sanitary sewer lines are a Village-wide problem.

A new water line along East Steele Street from William to King Street is needed to complete a fire system loop.

A sanitary sewer line along German Street needs to be replaced between Wood Lane and North Main Street.

Storm sewer lines are needed along the German Street extension, and a new 48 inch storm sewer line at Lou Ambers Road is needed to eliminate flooding problems.

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**e. Bridge Replacements**

Bridges near the Dayton/Steuben and West German/Maple Grove intersections need to be replaced. The bridge at Dayton and Steuben Streets should be demolished, and replaced with a culvert structure.

**f. Street/Intersection Needs**

The Village has methodically and systematically completed street improvements over the past two decades so these needs are, for the most part, not as critical as other infrastructure needs. One significant need, however, is the need to improve the intersection, street and drainage along West German Street between Lou Ambers Drive and the High School.

**9. Waterfront**

The Village has an extensive waterfront along the Erie Canal/Mohawk River and along the West Canada Creek. This waterfront, however, is difficult to access.

The Herkimer Canal Port Project, now referred to as the "Gems Along the Mohawk" Project, includes the development of a tourism and retail center on lands owned by the NYS Canal Corporation adjacent to Exit 30 of the NYS Thruway. The project includes the construction of 8,400 square feet of space for use as a tourist information center, retail shops, a restaurant, and small office. The project has involved the NYS Canal Corporation which is improving docking facilities along their bulkhead; the NYS DOT which has developed parking facilities on site; and the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development which is providing loan and grant funds needed to complete public improvements and finance building construction. The project is being developed by Unlocked Legends, Inc., a private enterprise.

The "Gems Along the Mohawk" Project will help the Village's tourism efforts, and will place a new emphasis on the Village's waterfront resources. This project needs to be developed to its maximum potential. Additional funds are needed to complete improvements beyond its first phase. The conversion of the freight terminal to an interpretive center is planned as a second phase project. Other needs at the site include play facilities for children, additional walkway improvements, landscaping, and ornamental lighting.

# “Gems Along the Mohawk” Project



New waterfront development will increase tourism.



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Additional needs along the waterfront include the development of trails, and improvements to the aforementioned fishing access/picnic facility adjacent to South Washington Street and the Mohawk River.

## 10. Summary of Village-wide Needs

- ◆ Non-targeted, Village-wide housing rehabilitation.
- ◆ Improve property maintenance through various code enforcement.
- ◆ Increase homeownership.
- ◆ Additional senior citizen housing.
- ◆ Public housing improvements.
- ◆ Basloe Field Recreation Site improvements and expansion.
- ◆ Brookwood Park improvements.
- ◆ Industrial site redevelopment.
- ◆ Spot demolition in Village neighborhoods.
- ◆ Pipe and fill the Hydraulic Canal.
- ◆ Streetscape improvements along the Route 5/Albany Street Commercial Corridor.
- ◆ Development of a Community/Recreation/Youth Center.
- ◆ Continuing the systematic street resurfacing program.
- ◆ Comprehensive water and sewer line replacement.
- ◆ Replacement of German Street sanitary sewer line.
- ◆ Improvement of West German Street between Lou Ambers Drive and the High School.
- ◆ Installation of storm drainage along the German Street extension.
- ◆ Frank J. Basloe Library Renovation.

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- ◆ Full development of the “Gems Along the Mohawk” Project.
  - ◆ Installation of 48 inch storm sewer line at Lou Ambers Road.
  - ◆ Replacement of bridges at the Dayton/Steuben and West German/Maple Grove intersections.
  - ◆ Development of a waterfront trail system.
  - ◆ Improvement of the Mohawk River fishing access site.