

CHAPTER TWO: OUR ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY AMENITIES

Margaretville Today⁸⁵

Commercial Revitalization

Historically, the Village of Margaretville has served as a commercial hub. Despite changes in needs and types of goods and services offered, it still serves as such a hub. Through the formation of a Comprehensive Plan Committee, in January 2007, visioning sessions, and the Public Forums in October 2007, the residents have demonstrated an intentional desire to retain, sustain and improve the Village's role in the region and for its residents. Developing and keeping businesses has been the declared number one priority since the initial meeting of 2006.

There are conditions that must be addressed for success in developing and keeping businesses. Among the issues that may interfere with businesses and their customers and employees are traffic congestion and a lack of parking on or near Main Street. While many businesses owners have a vested interest in the community, communication is weak between businesses. The area's successful farmer's market is not located in the Village. Some of the buildings need repair, particularly the rear facades. Commercial rental costs are a deterrent for encouraging start-ups or supporting adequate sales levels. Absentee landlords may be a factor in rent costs and building conditions. The issue of non-retail use of the limited square footage has been noted in the Community Forum³⁵ and the Catskill Corridor Study³² as a concern. On a wider scale, Margaretville isn't taking advantage of collaborative tourism marketing opportunities as it should.

While there is an overall trend of decline in sales among business owners in the Catskill area,³² Margaretville has much in place that will serve the community well to revitalize its economy. The Central Catskills Chamber of Commerce is active and works with other individuals and organizations to promote the economy. The Catskill Corridor Study is a resource document still relevant to the businesses of Margaretville, Arkville and the connecting section of Route 28. For example, this study indicated that almost 88% of the business owners consider themselves to be local residents.³² As residents, the business owner's concerns go beyond their individual businesses to the community. The purchase and potential redevelopment of the A & P property are expected to have positive impacts on downtown.³⁷ One of the Village's greatest assets is its small town ambience, rural character and lack of strip malls. The majority of buildings are in good condition and retain much of the original architectural details,⁸ generally presenting an attractive location for businesses and consumers alike. The M-ARK Project has obtained New York grants for façade improvements for businesses.

Innovative and Creative Economy

Margaretville has cultural and innovative assets for economic development, but they are neither well documented nor well understood. The Village of Margaretville and the Central

Catskills Chamber of Commerce have excellent web sites. The influx of innovative and creative second home and weekend visitors from the New York City metropolitan area provides an important source of creative and investment capital, specifically, the many individuals actively involved in arts, design, film, and media who have been drawn to the area. The Open Eye Theater Arts Assessment Project is a comprehensive inventory of arts and cultural organizations for the Middletown region.²¹

Employment

Margaretville is fortunate in its proximity to adjacent employment opportunities in larger towns and cities.³⁶ As the hub of the area's health care, public education and an attractive resource for recreational activities, Margaretville is home to two large employers (Margaretville Memorial Hospital and Margaretville Central School) and a third is located nearby (Belleayre Mountain Ski Center). Wages tend to be lower, which can help attract businesses, but can be a challenge for sustaining households. The decline in the 18-35 age groups, according to the 2000 Census, suggests lack of employment for high school and college graduates and insufficient social amenities. Margaretville also shares with other rural areas the difficulty in recruiting and retaining medical professionals.

Housing

Margaretville is dominated by older, single family homes that are owner occupied. Affordable housing choice presents a problem due to a complex and rapidly changing housing market. A limited amount of apartments and single family housing available creates subsequent difficulties for moderate and low income households, young families and first-time home buyers. The trend of second home, seasonal and recreational home ownership causes a shortage of rental properties and drives up the costs of housing.⁹ Forty-seven percent of renters in Margaretville are overburdened, paying too large a percentage of their incomes for housing.⁹ The combination of limited housing stock and rising property values will continue to make affordable housing problematic for low and moderate income residents and community housing choices necessary to support the local workforce.

Cultural and Historic Resources

The Village of Margaretville honors its cultural and historic resources and has undertaken efforts to preserve and promote them. One of the means undertaken to protect historic resources is the inventory of historic properties and nominations of properties to the National Register of Historic Places. While many of the buildings retain their architectural designs,⁸ other historic buildings are in need of repair or restoration.³⁵ The historic nature of the buildings as well as the Village's history are being carefully considered through previous design and façade renovation programs. The Historical Society of the Town of Middletown has developed brochures for a historically-oriented walking tour of the Village.

Culturally, Margaretville is striving to enhance art-based community development by supporting the growth of arts and historic institutions.¹⁷ Efforts are underway to reopen the historic Galli-Curci Theater, which has recently been added to the National Register. The

Margaretville Village Pavilion provides an excellent location for cultural events. The Open Eye Theater, including its interaction with the public school, provides cultural opportunities.

Recreation

The Village of Margaretville is beautifully suited for outdoor all-season recreation. It is located on the border of the Catskill State Park and is easily accessed by main routes. Within the Village, its streams, trails, and parks, as well as nearby ski centers, provide a variety of recreational opportunities for families and individuals. It is also surrounded by communities that provide further indoor and outdoor recreational amenities. The value Margaretville places in its role as a recreational resource is demonstrated in its re-development of access points and improved landscaping of the Village Park and ball field and the care and planning of the Margaretville Village Pavilion.



Village Park Site before Pavilion Project
Source: Village of Margaretville Comprehensive Plan Committee



Newly Completed Margaretville Village Pavilion replaced the earlier buildings
Source: © Michael Moran

A Vision for our economy and community amenities:

Margaretville's diverse community supports:

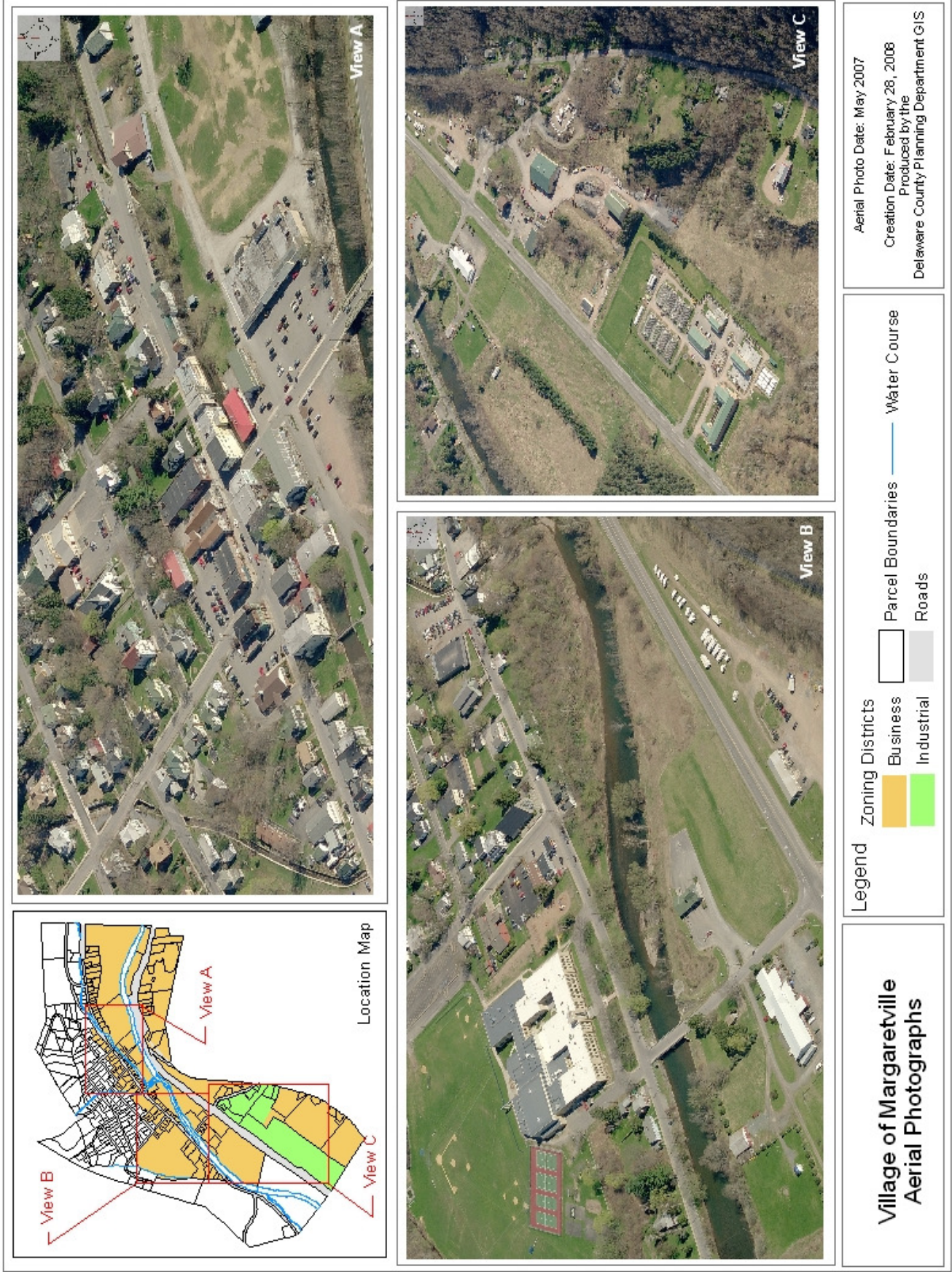
- ◆ An appropriate housing mix for all income levels
- ◆ Respect for historic properties
- ◆ Design guidelines for all properties

Margaretville's four-season business district:

- ◆ Is filled to capacity with a rich diversity of retail businesses
- ◆ Has ample parking
- ◆ Has sidewalks, parking lots and parks awash with color and art, benches and greenery
- ◆ Offers shopping opportunities that complement its mix of cultural and recreational resources
- ◆ Capitalizes upon its strategic location at the intersections of State Highways 28 & 30
- ◆ Provides an information infrastructure where residents and visitors can access and enjoy everything the village has to offer.

Margaretville's economic, housing, health, recreation and cultural sectors are deliberately integrated because the people and government of the village all work together on a regular basis to communicate about and coordinate their projects.

As a result of that cooperation, Margaretville's physical and cultural environment mesh well for both the visitor and resident, making the quality of life in the village very pleasurable and distinctively satisfying.



I. Revitalizing Commercial Activity

The commercial revitalization goals for Margaretville include:

- *Maintaining an economically viable and vibrant Main Street that caters to a broad variety of consumer markets.*
- *Developing Margaretville's reputation as a year-round destination.*

Recommendations:

Adopt a community-wide mind-set that Main Street revitalization is an ongoing, dynamic process that involves complex individual strategies woven together and implemented by many organizations and people working in the same direction over time.

Create a Main Street Management Plan that reflects a desire for a welcoming business climate and a downtown that appeals to the variety of people and keep prices affordable for everyone- recognizing that this does not happen by accident, but by design.

Buy in is required: A greater level of intensity, involvement and engagement in the retail economy and Main Street life of the central business district are essential.

- ✓ Implement a business survey to determine the needs of the business owners and find out if the misconceptions identified in the 1991 Catskill Corridor Study in areas such as customer base, still exist or if they have changed.

Spread the word - loud and strong - BUY LOCALLY, BUILD CAREFULLY, CELEBRATE OUR VILLAGE, AND ROW THE BOATS IN THE SAME DIRECTION!

- ✓ Develop an ongoing public face and communications mechanism for our community values and efforts using local and regional media to educate and encourage all local stake-holders.
- ✓ If necessary, create additional organizations or spin-off task forces and ad hoc committees that focus on particular issues or projects. These can also serve to bring together new talent and leadership to grow the social capital in the Village.

Direct travelers off the highway and into downtown.

Signage should direct people towards Main Street and off of Route 28.

- ✓ The purpose of this should be to divert through traffic from Route 28. Signage for parking should let shoppers know that parking and Main Street are both accessible.
- ✓ The community and the Village should evaluate business signage in a comprehensive manner, sign by sign and street by street, including DOT directional and interpretive signage as it relates to conducting business in the village. If it does not work, replace it.⁸

Give travelers a reason to leave the highway, disembark from their cars and spend money.

Identify and develop complementary retail and tourism support services that, if implemented, can provide the variety of activities to satisfy the traveling public. According to the Shifflet Market Study, the top five activities that travelers visiting the Catskills engage in are: sightseeing, dining, shopping, hiking/biking and entertainment.⁶¹ Provide a one-and-one-half to six-hour window of time in and around Margaretville surrounding these activities so that Margaretville is their secondary destination. This Comprehensive Plan includes recommendations in various places (Green Infrastructure, Recreation, Signage, Land Use, Creative Economy, Public Facilities etc.) that, if implemented, can provide the variety of activities to satisfy the traveling public.



**Route 28 entranceway to Village of Margaretville.
Attractive incentives to exit the highway are essential.
Source: M-ARK**

- ✓ Businesses have to be open to engage in commerce. Gain cooperation from downtown businesses for uniform hours of operation.
- ✓ Develop guide services, package tours and other tourism support service venues.
 - ☑ Capitalize on the natural, agricultural, cultural and historic tourism resources, making sure that inventories of the region's assets (including ownership, hours, seasonality, contact information) are integrated, available electronically through the web and are up to date.⁸⁹
 - ☑ Encourage more cooperative and integrated marketing programs with regional tourism venues and coordinate them with the arts and cultural venues, agribusinesses, festivals and other events.^{29 & 89}
 - ☑ Develop more packages with existing retail services in Margaretville (i.e.2007's Holiday Passport Program) through promotional coupons that get residents and visitors into businesses, farms and amenities.
 - ☑ Provide adequate staffing for the information center to connect travelers to the area's amenities.
 - ☑ Provide hospitality training to retail staff.
 - ☑ Create a brand for Margaretville and apply the signature branding to a marketing campaign for Margaretville.^{13 & 19} Include in this branding process interpretive signage, brochures, web sites, and promotional materials.¹⁹
 - ☑ Evaluate the needs and benefits of crafts or farmers' market stalls and food vendors, as well as other kinds of site-enhancing, outdoor vendors and how they might add to the ambience and liveliness of the Village.
 - ☑ Study what other regions, such as the Adirondacks or Vermont, are doing in terms of regional and cooperative marketing. There are hundreds of successful regional marketing campaigns to evaluate and learn from.

Find ways to serve the existing residential consumer market and not let gentrification or tourism dollars obscure this important market share.

Support the continuance and promote the development of commercial and retail businesses that provide essential services (pharmacy, grocery, hardware, local foods, etc.) for the year-round population, especially low and moderate income residents who may not be able to travel far for essential services or products .^{32 & 89} "A multitude of small businesses, each selecting goods based on the interests and needs of local customers, guarantees a much wider range of product choices."⁵⁷

- ✓ Provide model business and marketing plans for prospective business owners that demonstrate market share of essential services purchased by locals and weekenders.
- ✓ Provide financial assistance and subsidies through programs, such as the HUD Micro Lending and Entrepreneurial Program, to purchase properties or existing businesses that are ready for retirement.

- ✓ Establish a micro-enterprise loan and grant program that underwrites entrepreneurs and small businesses that provide essential services.
- ✓ Utilize a Catalytic Development Company (See Best Practices Cameo⁵⁸), Local Development Company or Land Trust model to purchase and re-sell or lease operations with covenants and/or rent subsidy supports to enable essential services to stay in place.

Support efforts to establish a grocery store and theatre to complement existing retail mix. ⁷⁶

- ✓ Assist developers on an as-needed basis with ombudsman and troubleshooting services.
- ✓ Make every possible effort through Site Plan Review and other procedures to ensure that the physical design of the facades and landscaping enhance the area in which they are located and contribute in a positive way to downtown Margaretville.
- ✓ Provide financial and tax incentives for suitable and sustainable development.



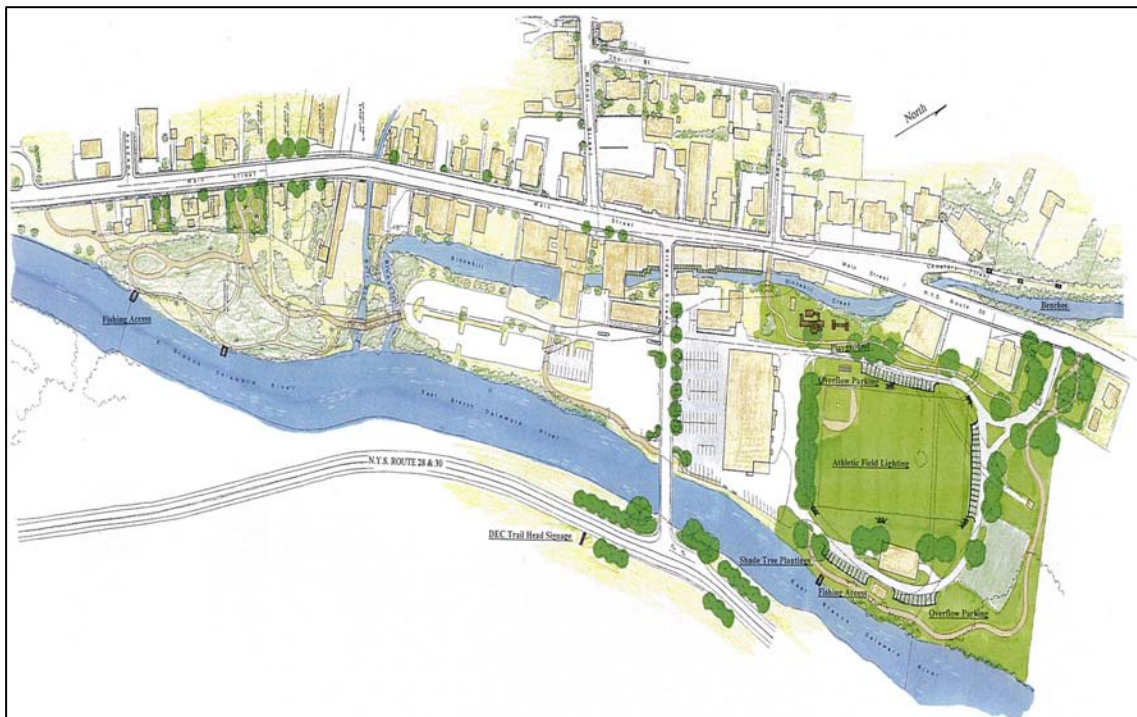
Margaretville is full of good examples of well done signage, façade improvements and awnings, as well as beautifully appointed walls and landscaping.
Source: M-ARK

Develop the business infrastructure that supports a strong downtown economy.

Develop a Parking Plan that incorporates the recommendations of the 2001 Revitalization and Recreational Use Plan, Informal 2006 study and addresses who is actually parking on Main Street. Parking was voted the #5 priority issue at the January 2007 Public Forum. A chronic and systemic issue, parking was the most common concern voiced by the businesses participating in

the 1991 Catskill Corridor Plan. Currently there are 159 public parking places available for Main Street customers – not adequate for the marginal level of business in the Village currently. In order to facilitate any new business-sector growth, it is essential that the Village identify and create new parking.

- ✓ Parking can have a dramatic effect during high season and weekends, the community needs to consider actions that can address key parking issues during peak times. These may include two hour parking limits (and enforcement) and, at a minimum, encouraging employees and business owners to find alternative parking off Main Street. The 1991 Plan indicated that, "*Discussion with Margaretville businesses revealed that part of the parking problem stems from the fact that employees and even employers use some of the most convenient and desirable parking spaces in the [Central Business District].*" The 1991 plan goes on to say, "*Business owners could organize and commit themselves to insuring that the best parking spaces are reserved for customers.*"^{25, 32, 8 & 35}
- ✓ Study the option of building a parking garage that can be accommodated in a floodway or floodplain at a location near the central business district. Investigate Brownfield capital and planning funding for the purchase of a privately owned parcel for this purpose.¹⁶
- ✓ Identify and develop municipal parking for Main Street that is centrally located, easy to find, and plentiful.



The Village of Margaretville Revitalization and Recreational Use Plan 2001 features a great deal of useful information and drawings still of current value. Source: M-ARK

Evaluate the costs and benefits of districts and zone tools, such as Tax Increment Financing, Business Improvement Districts, Empire Zones, etc. for Margaretville as a way to raise capital and to incentivize various business improvement projects identified by the Chamber and others.

Through close cooperation with area non-profits and governmental organizations, continue to capitalize on public grant opportunities that present themselves.

- ✓ Position the Village to take advantage of these opportunities by being aware of the programs that exist and their ongoing changes. Set aside funds so that resources are available to take advantage of opportunities as they become available.

For anchor businesses with long-term ties to the community, business succession planning is critical.

- ✓ Identify core businesses that might benefit from succession planning and evaluate their status. With the agreement of the owner, package a contingency plan for business transfer.¹⁸

Encourage non-governmental organizations to package entrepreneurial and educational services for retail businesses that enable them to electronically "follow their customer's home," thus achieving a higher operating capacity through web, wholesale and retail sales.

- ✓ Provide telecommunications infrastructure, marketing, promotion and media underwriting support.

Encourage facade renovations (both front and reverse) based upon the recommendations provided in the Revitalization and Recreational Use Plan.

- ✓ Consider organizing a public or non-profit historic land trust to purchase or receive façade easements for the first foot of each building from the owners to manage and maintain them. This approach can also be used for the rear (reverse) facade of the buildings facing the riverfront.

Consider various alternative approaches that may achieve the goals of extended businesses hours, generation of employment, sales tax etc.

For example, purchase vacant buildings through a commercial land trust⁵⁷, Catalytic Development Company⁵⁸ or cooperative joint venture.

- ✓ Renovate and either sell (turn key) or lease them with lease or sale conditions that specify what the community wants. “A city could buy a commercial building and contract for its management with the stipulation that space be leased only to locally owned businesses that meet community needs. Rents would be stable and below market, reflecting the city's actual costs of owning and maintaining the building, without a profit margin.”⁵⁷

Long term issues associated with the fixed size of the central business district include a future when 100% occupancy creates demand for space.

Research indicates that successful downtown approaches include increased density and compaction through vertical growth, better infill and reuse of space.

Best Practices Cameo:

Featured Businesses in Communities With Populations less than 5,000

The following table describes actual business start ups in small communities that have been featured in the innovative and best small business practices database of the Center for Community and Economic Development at University of Wisconsin. The website enables the searcher to bring up a profile of each business in the database and connect the reader to a network of start up entrepreneurs showcased in the database.

Business Name	Business Type	Location
Blue Spoon Café	Food Service and Drinking Places	Prairie du Sac, WI
Brew Moon Coffee House & Internet Café	Food Service and Drinking Places	Eagle River, WI
Cuda Café	Food Service and Drinking Places	Deerfield, WI
Hanler’s	Gift Stores, Office Supplies & Stationery	Shullsburg, WI
Hurley Coffee Co. LLC	Food Service and Drinking Places	Hurley, WI
Ladles to Linens	Food and Beverage Stores	Winnsboro, TX
Maple City Candy Co.	Food and Beverage Stores	Aldeo, IL
Nina’s Department and Variety Store	General Merchandise Stores	Spring Green, WI
OJ’s Midtown Restaurant	Food Service and Drinking Places	Gillett, WI
Poppy Seed Primitives	Antiques and Used Merchandise Stores	Genoa, IL
Tanglevine Crossing	Gift Stores, Office Supplies and Stationery	Farmland, IN
The Quiet Cricket	Furniture and Home Furnishing Stores	Vergas, MN
Walkabout	Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	Eagle River, WI

*Source: Center for Community and Economic Development
University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension⁵⁵*



<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/downtowns/innovative/search.cfm>



Location Map

Aerial Photo Date: May 2007
Creation Date: February 29, 2008
Produced by the
Delaware County Planning Department GIS

Legend

	Business		Industrial
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Zoning Districts

**Village of Margaretville
Central Business District**

Promote the notion that Margaretville is a year-round destination.

The market exists for travelers to come and visit. For example, the Belleayre Mountain Ski Center has reinvented itself as a year round destination facility and reports an annual visitor count of 170,000.¹

- ✓ Piggyback local retail packages and promotions with these venues in order to gain name recognition, cross promotion and commerce opportunities for vendors.
- ✓ Network with Chambers of Commerce throughout the Catskills to determine the status and condition of the regional marketing campaign.
- ✓ Ask for technical assistance from the *I Love New York Tourism Department* of the New York State Department of Economic Development.
- ✓ Create regional retail packages that cater to the older traveler profile that has emerged from the travel and tourism studies and target promotional campaigns to this group.
- ✓ Support and promote the Central Catskill Chamber of Commerce as a resource for area businesses in marketing, startup assistance, promotion campaigns, etc., to increase familiarity with Village and area stores.

Position Margaretville to lead the way in making the central Catskills a tourism hub.

- ✓ Identify common ground with neighboring communities on the Routes 28 and 30 corridors and discuss collaborating on regional projects such as tourism development.
- ✓ Collaborate and connect with communities that share common problems and opportunities. This is a very economical way to reach out and expand marketing opportunities.
 - ☑ Arrange community exchange days with other Catskill communities that Margaretville thinks are doing an excellent job at community and economic development. Recruit a group of locals to visit there with a host group. Spend the afternoon walking around, having lunch and talking through their strategies and planning processes. Conduct exchanges twice each year.¹⁵
- ✓ Work with other Route 28 and 30 Communities to obtain Scenic Route designation for Routes 28 and 30 in the Margaretville area.
 - ☑ Develop a Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan.
 - ☑ Implement the plan. Margaretville and other Catskill communities are missing out on key grant resources from NYS and US DOT that are paying for tourism marketing and promotional assistance.¹⁹

Work cooperatively with the Town of Middletown to address sprawl on Route 28.

The Route 28 strip between Margaretville and Arkville suffers from unsightly sprawl. If this kind of development is encouraged, it will detract from Margaretville's and Arkville's strong and distinctive identities as communities. It will erode their central business districts' vitality.

- ✓ Develop a plan that builds on the strength of both the Village and Route 28 and that identifies what businesses are best for each location and are complementary, working together to make them both competitive and answer more of the needs and desires of current and future residents and visitors.
- ✓ Boldly design an appealing entryway to the Village.
- ✓ Advocate for design guidelines for both Route 28 and the Village.
- ✓ Work with the Town to tackle the difficult land use, signage and landscaping issues surrounding the Route 28 corridor leading from Arkville to Margaretville.
- ✓ Explore annexation of part of the Route 28 strip into the Village in order to better zone or plan this area or develop a shared land-use-plan with the Town of Middletown.

Best Practices Cameo:

**The Seaway Trail and the 13 Adirondack-Based Scenic Byways:
The New York State Scenic Byways Program**

*All NYS Scenic Byways are listed at <https://www.nysdot.gov/portal/page/portal/programs/scenic-byways>. Check out the areas in New York State that have participated in this program; **Seaway Trail** is an exemplary scenic byway. So are **Lakes to Locks** and all the **Adirondack Park scenic byways**. When you visit the site, you will notice that the Catskills have NOT participated in the Scenic Byways program very well and as a result have missed out on this program. The Route 28 corridor is not a designated scenic byway, nor is Route 30...so all efforts must start at the very beginning to obtain designation.*

A Scenic Byway must have an official DOT-approved Corridor Management Plan to be eligible to apply for Scenic Byway Program funding through DOT. Municipalities apply for Transportation Enhancement funding (see Best Practices Cameo under Natural Resources). The Scenic Byway status is noted in the TE applications to earn allotted points. The following site <https://www.nysdot.gov/portal/page/portal/programs/scenic-byways> provides information for byway managers and has a great deal of useful information.

Best Practices Cameo:

The MERC: A Community Department Store

“Missing in many downtowns today---aside from the dozen or so Maine towns served by Reny’s, a local chain of discount department stores---is a store that sells basic, affordable clothing and household goods. Such a store could provide an alternative to the big boxes and an important anchor for downtown commerce. One potential solution to this problem is to open a community-owned department store. It may sound far-fetched at first, but there are in fact more than half a dozen successful community-owned department stores operating in the Rocky Mountain region, and business and civic leaders in two New England towns affected by the closure of Ames--Greenfield, Massachusetts, and Middlebury, Vermont---are now pursuing the idea.

These stores are generally structured as state-chartered corporations and capitalized through stock shares sold to local residents (bylaws stipulate that stockholders must live in the state.) They are run by a board of directors elected by the shareholders and managed day-to-day by a store manager. Investors generally expect that much of their return will be in the form of community benefits, rather than financial gains. Over the last few years, about half a dozen community-owned department stores have opened in Montana and Wyoming, and several more are in the works.

*A good example is **The Mercantile** in Powell, a town of 5,500 in northwestern Wyoming. The store was largely a response to the closure of Stage, a Houston-based chain of small department stores that pulled out of Powell and several other towns a few years ago, leaving residents with no place to buy basic clothing and shoes for the whole family. Rather than allow the town’s commercial base to decline, a group of residents hit upon the idea of opening a community-owned store. They drew up a business plan, filed incorporation papers with the state, and began selling shares priced at \$500 each. Within a few months, they’d sold over 800 shares, raising more than \$400,000 in capital.*

*The **MERC** opened in July 2002. The store sells affordably-priced clothing and shoes for men, women, and children. With a Wal-Mart supercenter just 20 miles away in Cody, some Powell residents predicted that **The MERC**, like most small town stores focused on basic needs, would fail. But the store has been remarkably successful, meeting vital local needs, boosting sales at other downtown businesses, and even turning a profit.*

*During its first year, **The MERC** took in \$500,000 in revenue, outpacing projections, and generated a profit of \$36,000. The earnings were used to expand the store from 7,500 to 10,000 square feet. Founders cite several factors in **The MERC’s** success, including top-notch customer service and a board made up of experienced local businesspeople. With no debt to service or stockholders demanding high rates of return, prices can be kept relatively low. “We’re probably not quite as low as Wal-Mart,” said store manager Paul Ramos, “but we’re close and we usually do better than the mall up in Billings.”*

*Ramos says the store has had no problems building good relationships with suppliers. **The MERC** and a similar community-owned store in Worland, Wyoming, often purchase goods together in order to reduce costs by buying larger quantities. Another significant factor in **The MERC’s** success, according to board member Ken Witzeling, is the community’s sense of ownership. “When you walk down the street and talk to people about the store,” he said, “they all refer to it as ‘our store.’ Not ‘the store,’ or ‘that store.’ It’s ‘our store.’”*

In Middlebury, Vermont, and Greenfield, Massachusetts, committees have formed to explore the possibility of launching a community-owned department store. For more information, contact the Cooperative Development Institute...”⁵⁷

Best Practices Cameo:

Pick and Shovel Do it Best Building Materials, Newport, Vermont

Expanding product line to meet local demands.

“Newport, VT Community Profile: Population of City – 5,000. Population of 10-mile ring 16,000. The community serves a local residential base as well as seasonal tourism visitors to the Northeast Kingdom region of Vermont. From the outside, the business appears much like a regular hardware store. Once in the door, you are greeted by helpful and friendly staff dressed in red shirts and eager to direct you to departments that provide day-to-day necessities often lacking in a small town.

*In addition to a full stocked hardware store, **Pick and Shovel** includes a building materials center, appliance store, clothing, sporting goods, toys, pet store, laundromat, and more. In response to resident requests, the store offers a wide selection of socks, jeans, boots, shirts and other apparel items. In addition, they have focused on many quality items, such as Carhart boots, and offer very competitive pricing. A stop in the store isn't complete without stopping for a soft serve cone at the ice cream stand located on the street as a landmark feature of the storefront.*

Market Segments Served

Pick & Shovel focuses primarily on serving do-it-yourself home improvement customers. As a result, it focuses on the residential base as well as second-home owners in the region. Accordingly, its diversified product lines have a community-serving focus.

Contributions to the Business Community

*The community-serving focus of the store has established it as an anchor business downtown. Its location across the street from the post office and a block from the library has contributed to a diversified main street with jewelry, clothing, gifts, sporting goods and other locally owned stores. While **Pick & Shovel** is bracing for the potential opening of the first Wal-Mart in the region, their diversification efforts will help it co-exist as a truly home-town business that has been a genuinely good, community-serving neighbor”⁵⁴*

II. Driving the Innovative and Creative Economy

The innovative and creative economy goals for Margaretville include:

- *Encouraging environmentally friendly businesses that help Margaretville build sustainable wealth.*
- *Developing economically sustainable businesses that incorporate green construction guidelines, sustainable business practices, and generate jobs at the community scale.*
- *Promoting and expanding opportunities to experience arts, culture, healthy lifestyles and generate a community of well being in Margaretville.*

Recommendations:

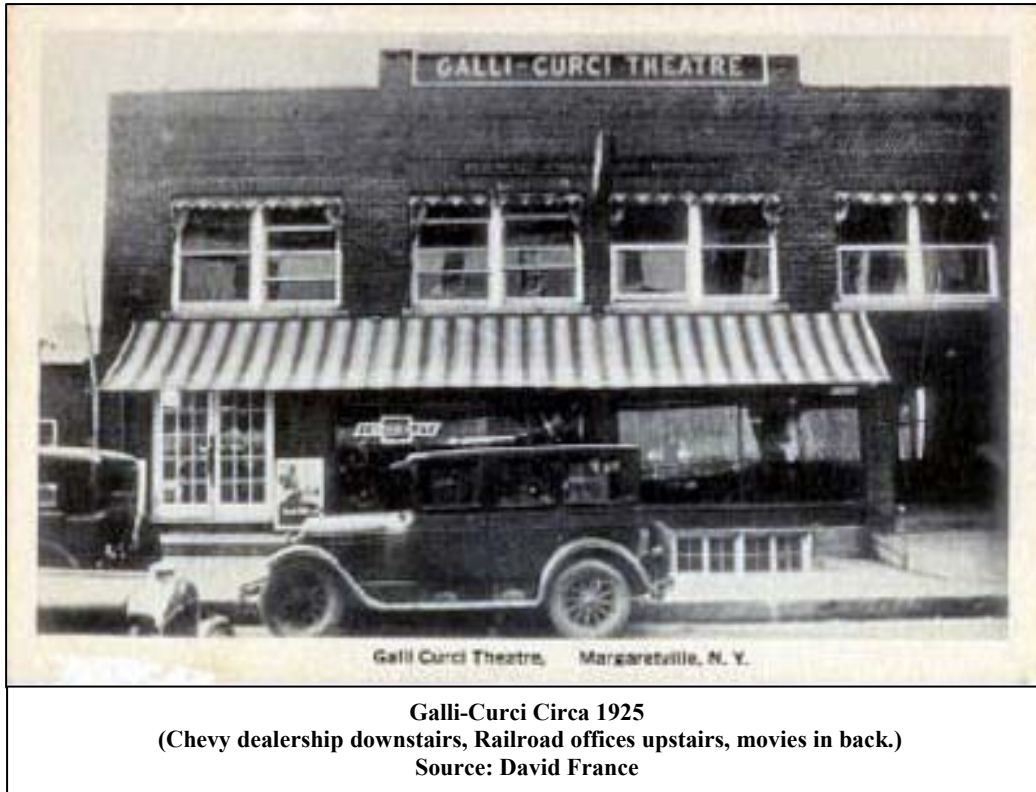
Position Margaretville as the Region's Vanguard in Entertainment.

Gather information about what is already happening in the innovative and creative economy.

What resources, including social, institutional and economic already exist? How are they doing? Are they thriving? What support services do they need to grow? Are collaborative marketing opportunities missed?

- ✓ For example, the Open Eye Theater Arts Assessment Project should be followed up with an art and cultural marketing and promotion collaborative network. This network could work to organize cultural and arts activities in Margaretville that complement the Chamber's activities to promote commerce.²¹

Utilize the Open Eye and Galli-Curci Theaters as the arts and culture anchors for downtown Margaretville and to enhance Margaretville's growing image as a center for the arts.



Encourage a variety of cultural events and activities that coincide with businesses and restaurant's open hours.

Promote the new Margaretville Park Pavilion as a location for destination weddings, cultural activities, design tourism, and arts programming.

Arts and cultural events are multiple spending generators, creating ripple effects in the community. Babysitters, transportation, meals, lodging, after-event refreshments, etc. all circulate currency in the local economy. According to the Arts and Economic Prosperity III Study, "When a community attracts cultural tourists, it harnesses even greater economic rewards. Nonlocal audiences spend twice as much as their local counterparts (\$40.19 vs. \$19.53)."^{22 & 49}

In addition to other retail purposes, promote retail businesses that are arts and culture-related and can provide a studio of "live-work" artist space in conjunction with retail space.

Studios co-located with retail and gallery space are tourist magnets and can provide two-story retail uses downtown. Upper floors of commercial structures may be appropriate (subject to building code limitations) for loft development and adaptive reuse as high end arts studio lofts i.e. the Longyear Gallery.

- ✓ Zoning changes can include allowable uses for second and third floor mixed uses, promoting residential and commercial mixed use in the business and industrial districts either as allowed uses or secondary uses.

Review recent market studies for creative economy venues.

- ✓ Obtain a copy of “Catskills Region Top Line Visitor Profile 2004“ by D.K. Shifflet and Associates, Ltd.
- ✓ Obtain limited market data for the Belleayre Resort Project from the developers.
 - ☑ Review and analyze these studies.
 - ☑ If there are gaps in information, authorize a travel and tourism survey of the central Catskills.
 - ☑ Determine current major destinations and the activities, duration and expenditures of the traveling tourists who visit within 50 miles of Margaretville.
- ✓ As large scale developments are planned in surrounding areas, it is important to remember that visitors do not always spend their entire day or stay at the venue. The presence of other retail and cultural activities, and cooperative marketing with those venues, can provide Margaretville with a linked economic benefit.
- ✓ If Margaretville can promote itself as an arts and culture destination, it can take advantage of a visitor niche that spends more (\$623 vs. \$457) and stays longer (5.2 nights vs. 3.4 nights) than other kinds of travelers.⁴⁹
- ✓ Business owners, Village Board Members and other interested parties should take advantage of the workshops and roundtables offered by Parks & Trails New York and the New York State Canal Corporation on marketing the Canal way Trail to bicycle tourists. Bicycle tourists are a great niche market for the roads and byways surrounding Margaretville and can be an important revenue source for creative economy venues in the village.³

Tap into the wealth of brain power residing in the Margaretville area.

Conduct a Social Capital inventory of the Margaretville area. Social Capital refers to the “relationships of trust embedded in social networks.”⁶⁸ and these social networks are central to the implementation of the plan and its recommendations. According to Ivan Light, “...the value of social capital lies precisely in its conversion into other desirable resources.”⁶⁸ This ability for all forms of capital; financial, physical, human, cultural and social, to convert to one another is exactly why Margaretville needs to take a beginning inventory. “Entrepreneurship fuels

America's economic innovation and prosperity, and serves as a key means for families to move out of low wage jobs and into the middle class." (10 Reasons Why Maine's Homegrown Economy Matters)⁵⁷

- ✓ Utilize a semi-formal form of periodic community conversations to get residents who comprise the social capital network talking and working towards implementing the Comprehensive Plan, including a focus on the innovative and creative economy concepts. Use the Catskill Mountain News as a forum for the exchange of ideas.
- ✓ Install communications infrastructure that makes telecommuting possible for seasonal and weekend property owners with business connections in NYC.
- ✓ Promote the New York City-Margaretville connection.
 - ☑ Encourage collaborations such as the grassroots initiative that built the Margaretville Park Pavilion with Parsons, The New School for Design. Encourage and welcome local, ad hoc undertakings such as the Citizens' Initiative for Community Spaces that give a forum for weekenders and part-timers to invest in Margaretville.
 - ☑ Sponsor week-end socials, entrepreneur investment clubs or retreats for part-time residents to explore investment and business opportunities in Margaretville.
 - ☑ Let entrepreneurs know that support exists locally (financing, technical assistance, back office support, etc.) to enable them to capitalize upon new business ventures that utilize new and emerging technologies to compete globally.
 - ☑ Work to bridge the gap between Margaretville's native residents and more recent arrivals.

Continue to improve all aspects of Margaretville's web presence, including links to other regional web sites

Encourage the development of locally made and marketed products, books, etc. by providing financial incentives, subsidized space and workrooms, and back office support.

Participate in the regional branding, marketing and promotion of Catskill-made products and showcase the products locally.

Promote Margaretville as a "well-being" vacation or recreational destination for holistic and natural therapies. (See study, assessment and marketing approaches outlined for tourism development.)

III. Generating Jobs

The job generation goals for Margaretville include:

- *Creating 50-100 locally available full-time jobs*
- *Attracting and retaining health practitioners*

Recommendations:

Locally-owned businesses build strong communities by sustaining vibrant town centers, linking neighbors in a web of economic and social relationships, and contributing to local causes.⁵⁷ Support entrepreneurial efforts as stand-alone businesses and as models for others of small business. (See other sections of the Economic Sectors for ways to support this action.)

Encourage entrepreneurship from people who live in and visit the region.

- ✓ Encourage a business climate in the community where Living Wage standards,⁸³ green construction guidelines, and sustainable business practices that generate jobs are welcomed.²²

Engage in activities that promote an emigration of young people to the area.

Establish a community higher education scholarship program that underwrites the cost of college with the caveat that graduating college students return to the community to work.

- ✓ Set up a tracking program where the top ten students from the most recent ten graduating classes are followed and provided with technical assistance, training and capital to establish businesses in Margaretville.
- ✓ Join regional and statewide efforts already underway (see Best Practices Cameo on following page) to stabilize or reverse the brain-drain trend.

Best Practices Cameo:

Emerging Programs to Address the Brain Drain

Out-migration of youth is a systemic problem that many rural regions and states are facing. Vermont, Maine, New York, New Hampshire and other places are all concerned about this trend and many proactive approaches are being initiated at various levels of government and in the private sector to counteract this trend. Incremental action at the local level can contribute to stabilizing or reversing the trend, as well as advocacy and action to support regional and state-wide programs and incentives to encourage youth to return or stay after college.

*The Northern Forest Center, in its Sustainable Economy Initiative, is studying the issue for the four northern states. According to the Times Union an initiative called, "I Live New York" in an effort to address the brain drain. **40 Below** is a network that has held a summit and developed a marketing and promotion campaign to help retain and attract young people. **Emerge Northern New York, The Finger Lakes, and Pipeline 4 Progress** are just a few examples of regional efforts to stop the brain drain and retain and encourage well-educated young people to stay in the area or relocate here. ^{35 and 38 and 39}*

IV. Enhancing Community Housing

The housing goal for Margaretville is:

- *To ensure a healthy, well balanced mix of affordable housing that serves all income and age groups.*

Recommendations:

In order to prevent residential streets from converting to home businesses and professional offices, and to encourage commercial development on Main Street, review the Village's zoning ordinance and tighten language to restrict and prohibit commercial and retail uses in residential areas. (See Land Use Section.)

- ✓ If and when public funds are used to rehabilitate or renovate subsidized housing, place restrictive covenants on properties to restrict or prohibit commercial and retail uses.
- ✓ Take into consideration the presence of an Agricultural District and active farmland within the Village limits and take steps through the modification of the land use laws to protect these lands from conflicting land uses and farmland conversion pressures.⁸⁹

- ✓ According to the 1991 Catskill Corridor Study, the parking regulations in the current zoning ordinance may prohibit utilization of downtown for second or third floor housing.³²

Develop a community housing strategy that protects the Village from the ill effects of gentrification.

Address the impacts that changing demographic and real estate trends in the region have on the low and moderate income year-round residents as they occur by providing a suite of community housing products that help existing and new residences stay affordable in a gentrifying market.

- ✓ Consider the Market Conclusions made by the Waverly Research Group in their Market Study in which they state, "*There is a substantial demand in this housing market for up to 80 additional units of elderly rental housing.....and up to 91 additional units of general occupancy rental housing....*"⁹
- ✓ Ensure that M-ARK and other area housing initiatives have the financial support they need.
- ✓ Support M-ARK Project's implementation of its strategic plan which calls for "a multi-pronged approach to addressing community housing needs." This comprehensive approach includes first time homebuyer assistance, development of new affordable units (rental and owner units) and the preservation of existing units.⁹
- ✓ Establish a local housing/land trust and foundation that can serve as a focal point for capital contributions and funding for an affordable housing campaign for the Village. This local trust can purchase land and buildings and conduct a range of activities from turn-key projects, subsidized mortgages, land leases, etc. in order to combat the loss of mixed income neighborhoods as a result of rising property values and gentrification that accompanies it. Use restrictive covenants in the event of sale to maintain and perpetuate housing stock on residential streets in the Village.
- ✓ Keep property taxes at a reasonable level.

V. Benchmarking Cultural and Historical Resources

The cultural and historic resources goals for Margaretville are:

- *To preserve, protect and restore culturally and historically significant structures in the community.*

Recommendations:

Protect, renovate and preserve historic buildings and structures

- ✓ Demolition should be the option of last resort. “In an increasingly homogenized world, communities that preserve their one-of-a-kind businesses and distinctive character have an economic advantage.”⁵⁷
- ✓ Conduct a historic resources and cultural survey of the village.
 - ☑ This recommendation is supported as the number three priority issue generated from the January, 2007 Public Forum.³⁵



Margaretville's 19th Century architectural fabric is critical to its unique sense of place.
Source: M-ARK

Support the efforts of the Historic Society of the Town of Middletown.

Become an active and engaged group in the Village and the Town.

- ✓ Establish a History Center that will house exhibit, archives and research facilities.
 - ☑ Encourage the siting of such a facility within the Village and to co-locate with another arts facility if possible in order to maintain hours of coverage during high tourist season.²³
 - ☑ Encourage commerce by holding festivals and local events during the seasons immediately before and after the peak tourist season.

Showcase local heritage, traditions and customs by expanding festivals and local events and adding dimensional activities that blend recreational, cultural, and historic events and activities.

- ✓ Utilize the railroad and other similar local assets to advantage through coordination of events at multiple venues during a festival or event.



Street Fairs and Festivals are important drivers of the Main Street economy. They generate commerce the day of the event and can produce lasting customer bases for local businesses through return visits and web-based commerce.

Source: Village of Margaretville Comprehensive Plan Committee

Best Practices Cameo:

Festive Fridays in Downtown Colebrook, New Hampshire

“The Colebrook Downtown Development Association invites residents and visitors to come to Colebrook often throughout the holidays, to experience the spirit of the season and the community, and the value of shopping close to home.

The ‘Festive Fridays’ package is an expansion of the former ‘Late Nite Madness’ tradition.’ For added variety and fun, each week has a special theme and purpose, all telling a part of Colebrook’s story. It will all begin at 5:30 pm on November 30, at the grand lighting of the Village Christmas Tree, hosted by two favorite characters, Mr. and Mrs. Moose, and friends. Inside each inviting shop, merchants are encouraged to offer their best services, specials, and hours. The unpredictable winter weather (like last year’s icy eve) can always add another element of excitement, or a reason to come back again.

The theme, scheduled activities and store hours may vary, but every Friday, shoppers can stop by the ‘Twinkle Tent’ near the Village Christmas Tree, for cocoa and cookies. This is also the place for detailed schedules and the new ‘Frequent Fridays’ cards. Compliments of Liebl Printing, these cards will be punched each Friday, then entered for an ‘Experience Colebrook’ prize bundle of gift certificates from a variety of local businesses. The cards must be entered by 7 pm on the final, or ‘Frantic Friday,’ for the drawing on Saturday, December 22 at the TubaChristmas concert.

*The CDDA believes in the great, spirited story that Colebrook has to offer, and works closely with several other partners to help weave it all together. Weaving in the strongest threads are the merchants who show their ‘shop local’ support with their contributions to prize bundles, added in-store specials, extended hours, and investments into beautiful, inviting storefront and window displays”.*⁵³



Margaretville's role as a commercial hub in the Catskill Park gives it a competitive advantage.
Source: M-ARK

VI. Promoting Recreation

The recreation goals for Margaretville include:

- *Integrating the region's recreational amenities into Margaretville's quality of life.*
- *Capitalizing upon recreational assets and integrating them into the Margaretville economy.*

Recommendations:

Develop recreational assets as lifestyle amenities for both residents and visitors.

- ✓ Re-examine the Village of Margaretville Revitalization and Recreational Use Plan⁸ to determine if its suggestions are still feasible, and move forward on those remaining recommendations the community thinks best fit the vision of Margaretville.

- ✓ Maintain the restrooms and keep them open during activities and the busy tourist season. Consider creating a "Friends of the Margaretville Park" organization that stewards the restrooms and other park amenities.

Promote the development of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities that advance a healthy lifestyle. Develop facilities that are child-centered and family friendly.

- ✓ Encourage and promote individual initiatives to bring recreational tourism to the area, including the new pool in Arkville, a planned competitive Catskills Bike Race, and other efforts.
- ✓ Promote increased physical activity and programs for children in an effort to fight childhood obesity.⁸⁷
- ✓ Encourage the development of recreational venues for the adventure sports enthusiasts as well as structured activities for young people both inside the village and in the region.
- ✓ Part of the marketing and promotion effort branding Margaretville as a place for young people requires that there be a variety of suitable activities to engage people in a lifestyle they consider attractive.^{36 & 32}

Work with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York City Department of Environmental Protection to promote recreational access to public lands.

- ✓ Work with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (and DOT) to promote interpretive and directional signage, brochures and maps that help residents and visitors take advantage of the public lands and recreational facilities that exist around Margaretville. (Recommended in the 2001 Village of Margaretville Revitalization and Recreational Use Plan.)⁸
- ✓ Determine DEC's long range plans (Unit Management Plan (UMP)) for public lands surrounding Margaretville and participate in the public planning process.
- ✓ Identify, enhance and place signage for public fishing access. Promote these locations for fishing and birding.