

VILLAGE OF FALCONER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

A PATH FORWARD



DECEMBER 2019

Acknowledgments

Many community members contributed significant time and effort to help develop this comprehensive plan for Falconer. Their passion, commitment, enthusiasm, and hard work are greatly appreciated.

Steering Committee

Anna Fales, Village Clerk

Jim Rensel, Village Mayor

Brenda Cavallaro, Village Historian

Alan Gustafson, Village Code Enforcement Officer

Stephen Roach Jr., Business Owner

Larry Trask, Village Treasurer

Timothy Dunn, Village Trustee

Peter Fuller, Village Resident & DPW Superintendent

Jim Cusimano, Village Resident

Jamie Haight, Biologist NYS Department of health

James Sirianno, Business Owner

Matt Fuller, Village Resident

Holly Hannon - Village Resident & Falconer Central School Elementary Principal

Consultant

Ingalls Planning & Design

www.ingallsplanning.com



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Introduction

Comprehensive planning helps communities understand a broad range of issues and topics, and results in a single resource that should be used to progress toward desirable outcomes for these important issues and topics. A comprehensive plan utilizes a collaborative community-wide approach that involves a broad cross-section of stakeholders and residents. The primary purpose of this plan is to provide guidance to those in both the private and public sectors when making decisions that affect the future. It is not a detailed plan but rather a conceptual road map stating the community's goals with actions that must be taken to achieve them.

Who should be using the comprehensive plan?

Under New York State Village Law, the Village Board is responsible for adopting or accepting and maintaining the Comprehensive Plan as a guide to the community's development. It serves as a basis for the control of land uses and accountability of decisions by the various boards and agencies and for directing public improvements to help achieve a desired pattern of land use as well as making decisions regarding public investment.

The adoption of this Comprehensive Plan exemplifies the commitment by the Village to maintain and improve the quality of life for its residents. Village boards and committees should use this Plan to help make informed decisions regarding development and zoning applications and how they relate to the goals and objectives stated in the Plan. Citizens should also use this plan to better understand their community and evaluate the effectiveness of local government.

Village Offices & Library



What was the process for this plan?

It can be a daunting task to continually improve and change, especially in a critical and questioning way, but planning is an integral activity for any community. Comprehensive plans are meant to be used, and they should provide consistent and regular guidance to communities. During development of a comprehensive plan, there should be a clear process that guides decision-makers and members of the public.

A steering committee comprised of Village officials, residents, business owners, and other key stakeholders oversaw the development of this Comprehensive Plan. Their decisions informed key components and helped contribute to a vision for Falconer. The committee also provided several rounds of community engagement and a community-wide survey to get at the heart of key issues, opportunities, and assets. Qualitative feedback from community members was an invaluable ingredient to this plan, providing important groundwork that helped the committee fashion Falconer's vision, values, principles, priorities, and actions.

When should we do this again?

The comprehensive plan should guide future development in a community, but it should neither be the only tool for development nor should it exist in perpetuity without update or review. Demographics, priorities, and economic trends all shift over time and a regular update to the comprehensive plan is necessary to account and plan for these community changes. Communities should undergo a minor update to their comprehensive plan at least once every 5 years and a full update should take place every 10 years. The extent of these regular updates may vary but maintaining a regular timeframe will help Falconer adjust priorities as circumstances change.



Falconer Park

Planning Context

Understanding where the community currently is and where its been is an important step in the planning process. This understanding provides the context for which to plan. The considerations of demographic trends as well as housing, environmental, and local economic characteristics all help to suss out important challenges and opportunities that Falconer is facing or is likely to face over the course of the next decade.



Village namesake Patrick Falconer - Photo accessed from McClurgmuseum.org.

A Look to the Past

The early settlement of “Worksburg,” Falconer’s original name was closely tied with “Kennedy Mills,” later known as Kennedy. Our western New York area had been purchased for \$225,000 in 1791 and sold bit by bit to the Holland Land Company. In 1800, the Holland Land Company hired Joseph Ellicott (the Town of Ellicott is named in honor of him) to survey the area. Dr. Thomas Kennedy, from Meadville, Pennsylvania, married Joseph Ellicott’s niece. Through this family connection, he learned about the beauty of our area. By letter, he purchased 3,000 acres of land in the Kennedy area. In 1805 he built a sawmill in the settlement that came to be known as “Kennedy Mills,” later “Kennedyville” and finally “Kennedy.” Dr. Kennedy never actually lived in our area.

Dr. Kennedy had a friend, Edward Work, who was a lawyer and Postmaster in Meadville. In 1807, Edward Work and Dr. Kennedy purchased an additional 1,260 acres in the greater Falconer area and Work built a log home in what is now Falconer. The settlement became known as “Worksburg.”

Edward Work built a sawmill in 1808. He was actually the first to use the power from Chautauqua Lake. The first milled lumber was used for flat boats for trips to Philadelphia and New Orleans. Twelve boats were built and were launched from the Levant boat launch. Lumber and salts were sent to Pittsburgh, where lumber sold for \$7 for 1,000 feet. At this same time, Kennedy and Work opened a road between Worksburg and Kennedyville.

It wasn't until 1810 that "The Rapids," or Jamestown was started by James Prendergast. An account states that 1,000 acres were purchased by Prendergast at \$2 per acre!

Lumber was the main product of our area in the early 1800s. The area was dense with trees. There is an account of a woman and her one-month old baby who got lost walking the ½ mile to her neighbors for thread. She was found several days later.

The lumber in the area was so excellent that "Poland Quality" was a standard in lumber for many years. There are records of a tree 9 feet in diameter, and a tree that was 268 feet tall.

The only other source of cash in the early days was "salts," another lumber product. The early settlers bought land on credit, then burned the hardwood trees for ashes. These were then taken to asheries (Ashville is named for this) where they would be sold and then processed into salts or potash for soap, glass, and medicine. With this case, the early inhabitants then could pay for their land.

With the clearing of the land, agriculture as a way of life began to be profitable and was the chief occupation until about the 1870s.

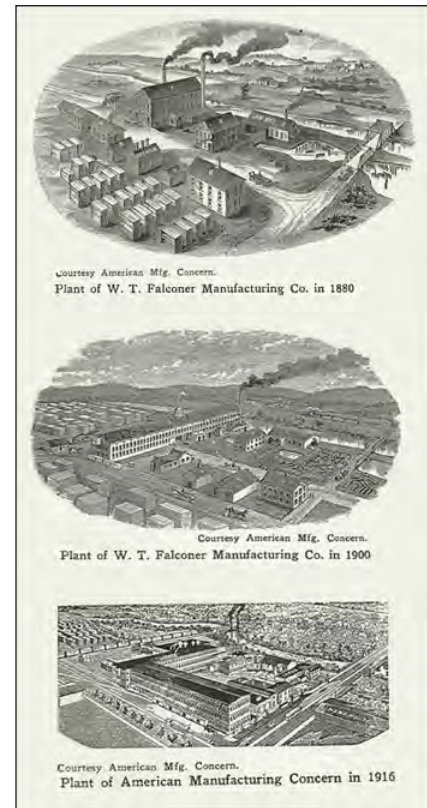
In the 1840s, Robert Falconer, from Sugar Grove, Pennsylvania, and his sons Patrick and William purchased most of the Work properties and land. Work maintained his home where the Marine Midland Bank is now. It was later moved to Mosher Street. By 1844, Patrick had bought out his father, and was considered the owner of Worksburg. His home is the present-day Baptist parsonage.

During the 1870s, the Dunkirk Allegheny Valley and Pittsburgh Railroad (DAV & P) started a line through the area. Worksburg was 50 feet less above sea level than Jamestown, which was a definite advantage to the railroad. Patrick Falconer also was willing to donate a generous amount of land to ensure its passage through Worksburg. The railroad did decide to have the depot here. Patrick then stipulated, so the story goes, that the name of the depot be "Falconer," and so the Village became known.

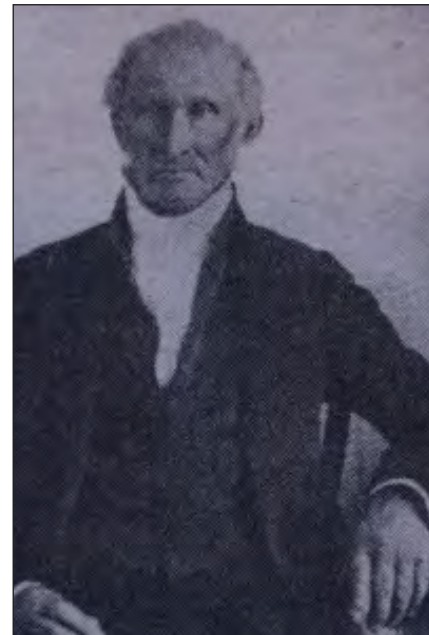
The W.T. Falconer Manufacturing Company was started by W.T. Falconer and P.E. Merrill in 1888. It was the area's first industry. It became the American Manufacturing and is today known as Fancher Chair.

The Village of Falconer was incorporated in 1891 – hence our 1991 Centennial celebration.

This writing was provided by the Centennial Book "The Early History of Falconer, NY", by Chrissi Lyon.



The Fancher Chair building has housed various different industrial manufacturing companies throughout the years - Photo accessed from fancherchair.com



Edward Work, one of the earliest settlers of Falconer - Photo accessed from McClurgmuseum.org.

Regional Context

Falconer is in Chautauqua County and within the Town of Ellicott. It borders the City of Jamestown and is also located near Lakewood, a popular small village on the south shore of Chautauqua Lake. Younger professionals and families tend to choose to live in either of these municipalities while Falconer has a hard time attracting these groups in significant numbers. The Village does, however, have some advantages that may be important in competing for future residents.

There are several significant employers in and around Falconer, including SKF Aerospace, Truck-Lite Industries, Bush Industries, Serta Simmons Bedding, Acu-Rite, and Monofrax. These companies employ many people, but few choose to live in Falconer. Appealing to existing and future employees of these companies could lead to a significant gain in Falconer residents.

The Falconer Central School District is considered a strong asset to the community and contains three schools for children living in and near the Village. The school district is served by two elementary schools and one school for junior-high and high school students. The presence and success of the school district could also help Falconer compete for young families.

Key Demographics

Population

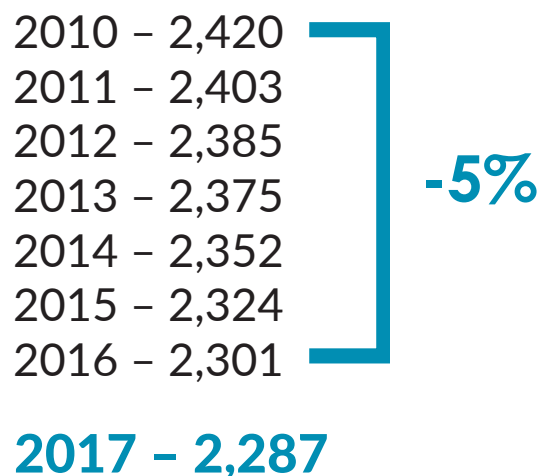
Like most communities in New York State, Falconer has been declining in population although it has not fallen at a rapid rate in recent years. From 2010 to 2017, Falconer lost 5% of its population.

Age

Many communities in the United States are aging rapidly due to the Baby Boomer generation. Falconer is aging gradually and the Village's median age is about the same as New York State - 38 years old. Almost 1/3 of the Village population is over the age of 55, and nearly 1 in 5 Falconer residents is older than 65. As older residents pass away or retire to other locales, total population will continue to decrease without new residents or births. This could cause Falconer to struggle to maintain services and a steady tax base. The Village should seek to attract younger individuals and families.

Income

The Village of Falconer has a lower median income than many other communities in Chautauqua County. Falconer's median household income is slightly more than \$41,000, and 33% of the Village population earns less than \$25,000. Many workers in Falconer are in positions that are typically identified as blue-collar jobs. More than 46% of Falconer residents are employed in positions in the service sector or production, transportation, or material moving positions.



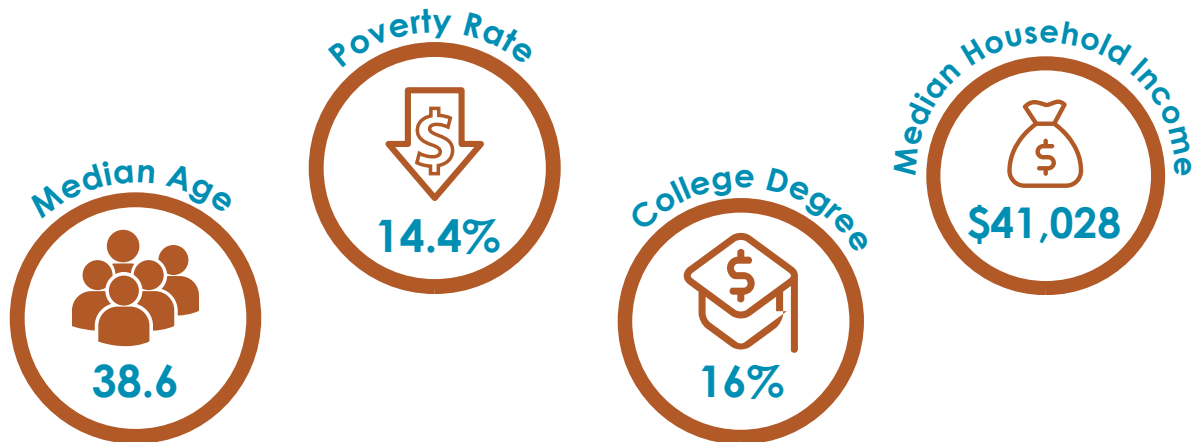
*Village of Falconer Population
Data Source: American Community Survey (2013-2017)*

Implications of Changing Demographics

By 2030, nearly 20% of Americans will be over the age of 65 which equates to roughly 14.3 million people. The growing population of senior citizens will impact housing development. Communities will need to find ways to help their senior populations 'age in place.' Aging in place successfully occurs when seniors can live in their homes without having to sacrifice on things required for their daily life, including health and social needs.

Housing needs and preferences for people over 65 will invariably differ from needs and preferences of others, although there are certain overlaps with the desires of Millennials. Both groups are more amenable to renting over owning a home. As seniors age their desire and ability to maintain a traditional single-family home decreases and renting becomes attractive. Millennials choosing to rent is also borne out of a lack of desire to own and maintain a home, but many Millennials also rent out of financial necessity.

Falconer's Demographics at a Glance



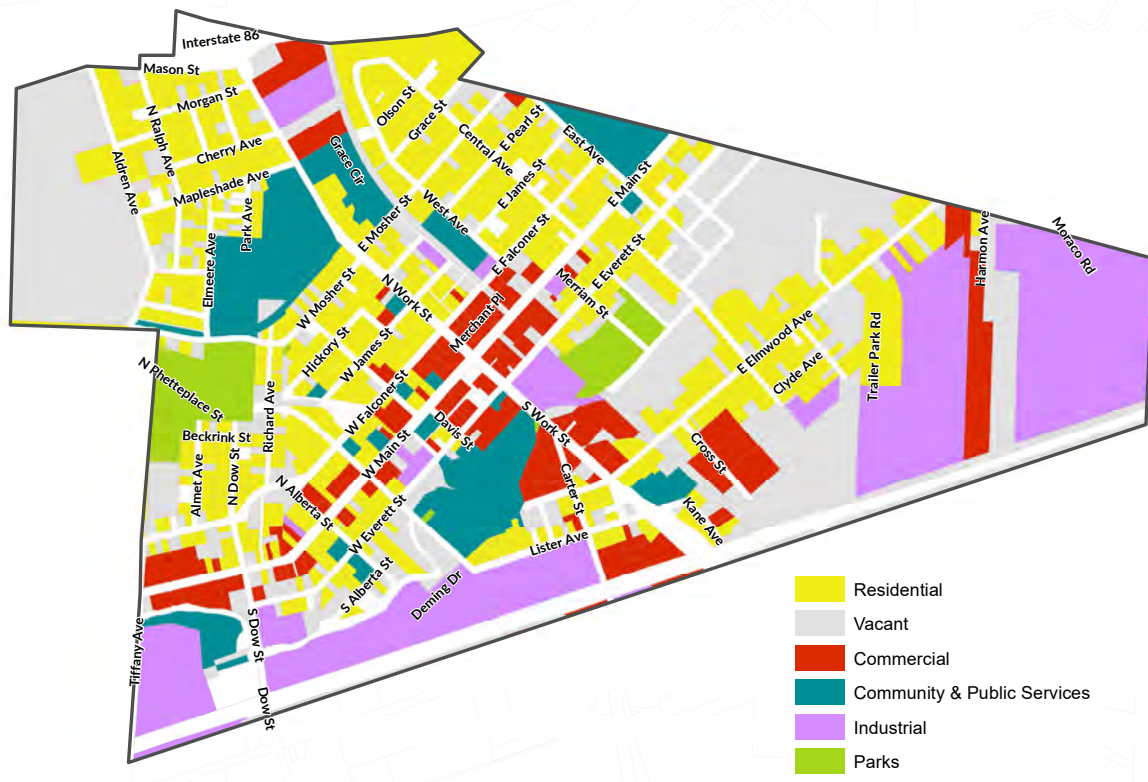
Village of Falconer Demographic Data
Data Source: American Community Survey (2013-2017)

Falconer Should Re-imagine its Land Use

Existing land uses do reflect many of the existing zoning districts and permitted uses. However, the zoning code is dated. The Village's existing development needs and potential are almost certainly different than they were when the code was originally written. There are several larger parcels and groups of parcels in the Village that are either vacant or under-utilized, and there may be potential for this land to be utilized in a better way. There is, however, a lack of vision in the current land use for these parcels, and it's hard to discern whether they fit into the existing land use pattern of their adjacent properties or if they need to be re-imagined and repositioned to better attract new development.

There are several vacant parcels along the Chadakoin River on the eastern side of the Village and while this land is home to significant wetlands, it currently lies in the residential district and permits all residential uses. Residential development in this land may be both infeasible and undesirable, but without a vision for these parcels it is hard to determine how the land should be used. There are a couple other large parcels and groups of parcels that currently are vacant or underutilized.

The committee developed a future land use map to iron out some of these unimagined parcels as well as determine the direction of land use for the entire Village. Ideally, this map will inform changes to Falconer's zoning code.



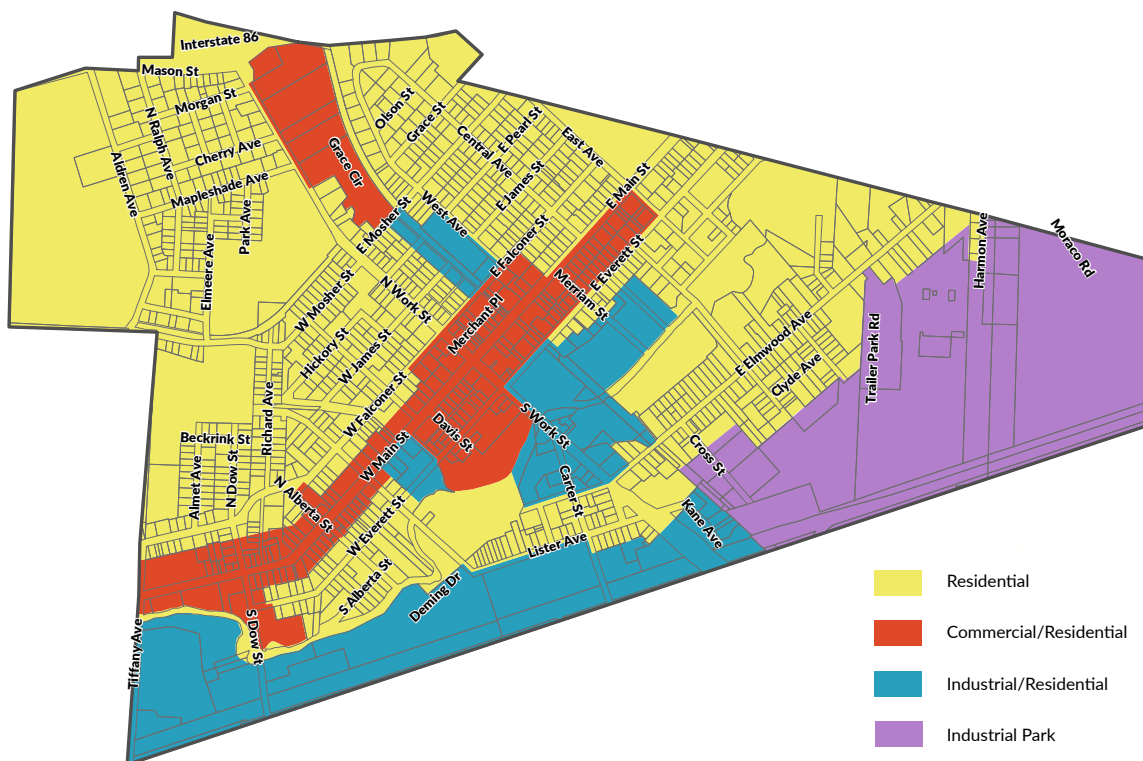
Village of Falconer Existing Land Use Map
Data Source: Chautauqua County Property Information File

The Zoning Code is Showing its Age

Falconer's current zoning code is almost 30 years old and in need of an update. There are several glaring challenges with the existing code that may make future development difficult. The Village code is a traditional Euclidean zoning code wherein residential, commercial, and industrial uses are distinctly divided geographically. There is very little nuance or flexibility in some areas of the code and too much flexibility in other sections of the code. The Village's sole residential district does not explicitly permit any residential uses aside from single family homes. However, the Village's definition of "dwelling" indicates that any residential property regardless of number of families or style is permitted anywhere in the residential district. This may not be a big issue unless there are certain neighborhoods or streets with defined residential character that the Village may want to preserve.

There is nothing in the code that promotes a mixing of uses. Mixing uses, either horizontally or vertically, can provide greater flexibility along Main Street and the commercial district while also bringing more coherence to development. Falconer's zoning code, as currently constituted, does not expressly prohibit the mixing of uses in the commercial district, but there is no language explaining how or where a mixing of uses should function.

Without design standards or guidelines in place, it will be difficult for the Village to maintain the level of character that it is accustomed to on Main Street. New development is not currently required to build close to the street, tuck parking lots behind buildings, provide any landscaping or screening, or ascribe to any physical design details on any structures. Without any guidance or requirements for design, Main Street could look very different in the future.



Village of Falconer Existing Zoning Map.
Data Source: Village of Falconer Zoning Map, adopted in 1990

Wetlands Provide Both Challenges & Opportunities

There are significant wetlands surrounding the Chadakoin River on the eastern side of the Village, south of E Main Street and north of E Elmwood Avenue. This portion of the river is considered a wetland at both the State and national level. The State designation of the Chadakoin River wetland extends farther than the national designation.

This portion of the river is either inaccessible to the public or has access that is difficult to find. There is a passive walking trail that is well-maintained by owners of the properties adjacent to the river, but this does not appear to be formalized public access regardless of how it's commonly used.

People do kayak and paddle along the river, although there are several difficult sections including near the pedestrian bridge off of Prosser Street. Kayakers often have trouble with clearance under this bridge, which is partially due to a need to dredge the Chadakoin River. Falconer should consider pursuing a regular dredging schedule with the Army Corps of Engineers to improve flow.



Village of Falconer Wetlands and Linear Hydrography Map
Data Source: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Falconer's Parks Are Underutilized and Under-programmed

Falconer benefits from having several significant parks within the Village. The largest park is Falconer Park, located off Richard Avenue on the western side of the Village. The park has several playing fields and ball fields, but there are few other recreation options. Moon Brook runs along the southern boundary of the park, but the park does not engage with the water in any significant way. The Village should consider developing a walking trail and seating areas near the water's edge. Falconer Park has limited programming for family-friendly events, despite being the Village's largest park. Falconer should consider a wide variety of programming options to continually engage people and families.

Abe-Mattison Millrace Park is another significant Village park. The Chadakoin River runs through the park and there is an informal small craft launch. A walking trail follows along the river, but it would benefit from some upgrades. Widening the trail and including markers and other signage would greatly improve the trail. The Village should also consider improving wayfinding and directional signage to better attract and guide people to Abe-Mattison Millrace Park. The park is tucked away behind Fancher Chair Company and it is difficult to locate and find the parking area with the existing signage.

There is also a small Village park on Main Street and across from the library that largely caters to passive recreation including sitting and walking. This park would also benefit from expanded programming, as well as some additional seating areas and defined walking paths.



Falconer Park - Photo taken in Falconer NY, 2019.

Abe-Mattison Millrace Park

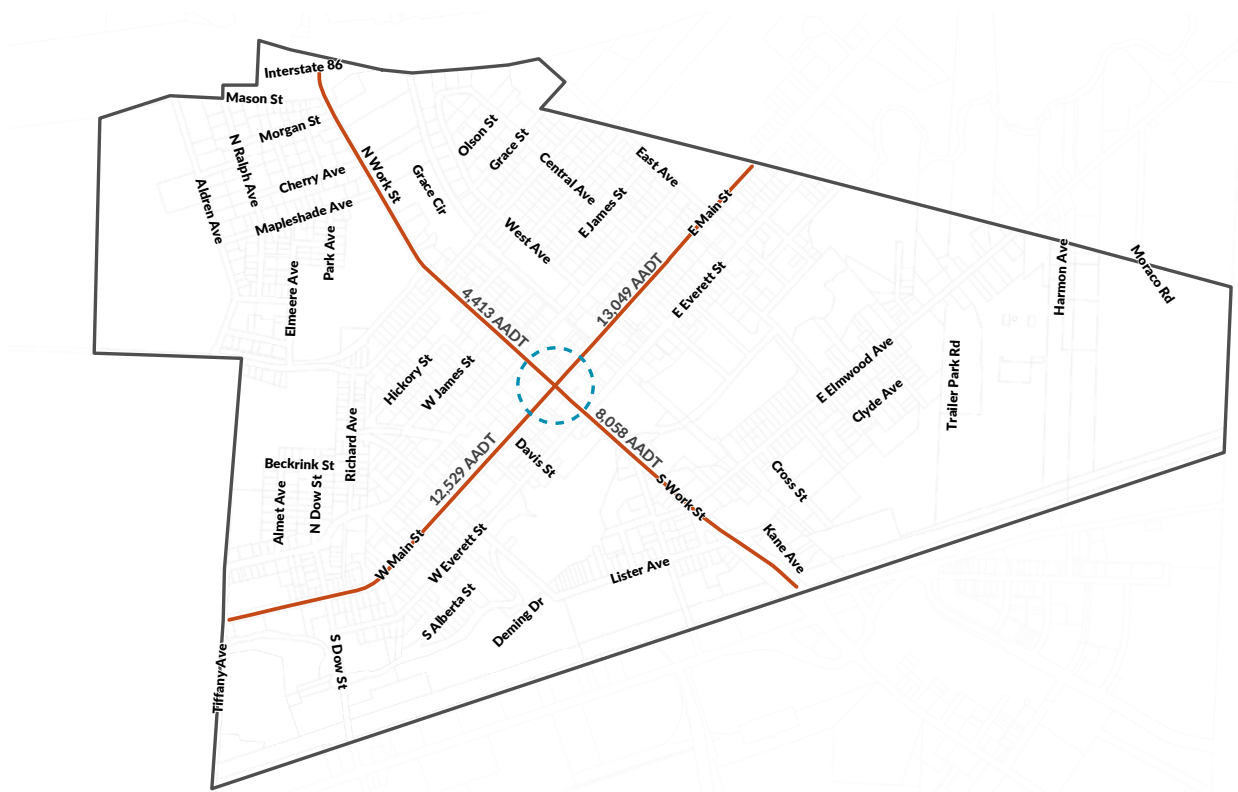


Pros and Cons of the Heavily Traveled Main Street Corridor

The existing Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) for Falconer's two main corridors is significant, to say the least. The map below contains AADT figures for both Main Street and Work Street in Falconer, and identifies the intersection of Main Street and Work Street. More than 13,000 vehicles drive through Falconer, via Main Street, on a daily basis. The intersection of Main Street and Work Street has some of the highest AADT counts in the region. Falconer should view this as a tremendous opportunity for the Village. Rather than be content with the high level of traffic passing through the Village, Falconer should actively pursue and encourage development that may persuade some of these motorists out of their cars and onto their feet to spend time and money on Main Street.

While the existence of this heavy daily traffic provides untapped economic potential for Falconer, it can also be a contributing factor to generally unsafe pedestrian and bicyclist conditions for Main Street. Steering committee members and Falconer residents both expressed concern for the existing conditions on Main Street. They feel unsafe crossing during heavy traffic, and feel that motorist speeds are unsafe during off-peak travel on Main Street.

Pedestrians should always feel comfortable and safe when using Village crosswalks, and Falconer needs to identify and pursue physical improvements for the intersection of Main Street and Work Street and for downtown in general. These improvements should prioritize safety and comfort for pedestrians and bicyclists while reducing vehicle speeds on Main Street.



Village of Falconer Annual Average Daily Traffic
Data Source: New York State Department of Transportation

Main Street Would Benefit From Physical Improvements

A well-designed streetscape significantly contributes to developing a strong sense of place and a vibrant public realm. Communities create vibrant streetscapes through physical changes, but the vibrancy that is cultivated is less about aesthetics than it is about evoking a warm and inviting environment on the street. An inviting streetscape sends a message that the street is the primary public space that should be enjoyed by all.

While streetscaping is not entirely about catering to pedestrians, people should enjoy walking along a Main Street. Pedestrian activity is highly dependent on the streetscape conditions. People prefer to walk along streets that feel safe and comfortable and also provide an interesting and enjoyable walk. Street trees, crosswalks, extended curbs, sidewalks, on-street parking lanes, bicycle activity, benches, and other components can combine to make the pedestrian experience safe and interesting.

Street trees provide shade which is not only beneficial to people but they also provide aesthetic beauty to passersby. Trees can improve the function and feel of the street by creating enclosure which makes the street feel narrower, thereby slowing traffic and enhancing pedestrian-friendliness.

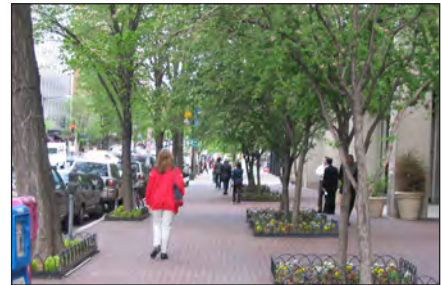
On-street parking is an existing advantage in Falconer, as both sides of the street have parallel parking lanes. On-street parking combines with street trees, pedestrian activity, and other factors to calm vehicular traffic.

High-visibility crosswalks and curb extensions are critical to create a safe and pedestrian-friendly streetscape. Highly visible design treatments at prominent crossings send visual cues to motorists to slow down for pedestrians. Curb extensions are traffic calming devices that physically narrow the roadway, while also giving the appearance of a much narrower roadway. They create shorter crossings for pedestrians, while helping to reduce vehicle speeds. Falconer should consider pursuing highly visible crosswalk treatments and curb extensions at the busy intersection of Main Street and Work Street.

“It is difficult to cross Main Street with the volume and speed of traffic and the width of the road. Crossing with my children usually makes me nervous.”



Street trees, outdoor seating, on-street parking, and wide sidewalk combine to create this pedestrian-friendly streetscape - Photo taken in Rochester NY, 2012



Street trees adorning pedestrian-friendly street - Photo taken in Washington DC, 2004



High-visibility crosswalk - Photo by NACTO



Curb extension - Photo by NACTO

Housing Characteristics

Generally Affordable

Falconer's home values have remained stable in recent years, and the median has fluctuated within a small range of \$66,500 and \$68,300 in the last five years (2013-2017). The most often used rule of thumb is that a home is affordable if it is up to 2.5 times the buyer's income. This number has been consistently linked to home affordability under stable economic conditions. In Falconer, homes were only 1.65 times the Village median income in 2017. The value-to-income ratio has also decreased in recent years, meaning that housing in Falconer has been affordable in recent years and continues to be affordable to this day. These home values are considerably lower than nearby villages such as Lakewood, but Falconer still has a tough time attracting new residents.

The Market for Rentals is Changing

The map below shows the probable residential rental properties in Falconer. These properties were identified from the 2018 property information data provided by Chautauqua County. The properties with a multifamily property code are included on the map below. Additionally, properties where the owner's address does not match the physical site address or properties owned by an LLC were also included. More than 60% of the probable rental units were labeled with a property code for single family units, meaning that the majority of these units are single family homes that are likely being rented.

The percent of renter-occupied housing units in Falconer has increased from 31% in 2010 to 42% in 2017. This is in line with other national and regional trends that have seen renter-occupied housing increase in recent years due to various reasons. The increase in renter-occupied housing, especially single family homes, is something that Falconer should monitor. Renter-occupied units are often not as well maintained as owner-occupied units. Over time, this could lead to a reduced assessment.

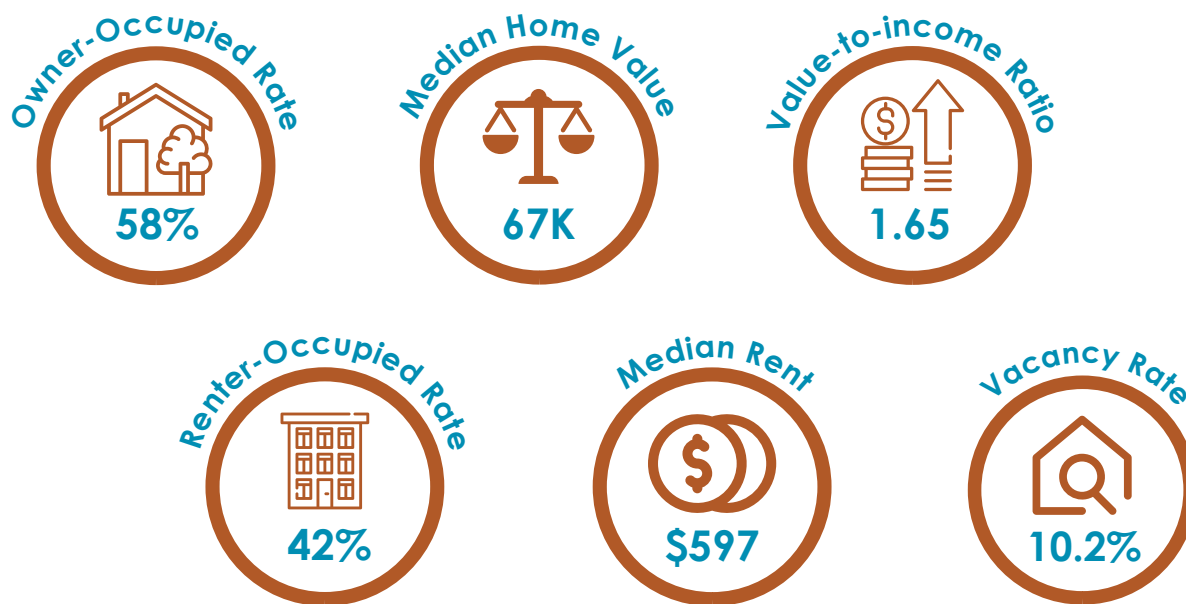


Village of Falconer Probable Residential Rental Properties
Data Source: Chautauqua County Property Information File

Mixed Income Housing Development

The Urban Land Institute (ULI) defines workforce housing as “housing that is affordable to households earning 60 to 120 percent of the area median income.” Historically, it has been difficult to garner wide political support for workforce or mixed income housing, but there are myriad benefits to pursuing housing that caters to a mix of income levels. Mixed income development can be a useful tool that helps communities avoid having a heavy concentration of the same type of housing, while also strengthening neighborhoods. Income diversity can provide improved housing quality, services, and neighborhood conditions for lower-income residents not to mention increased tolerance for diversity for residents at all incomes. The key to success is balance. Concentrating income-based housing in Falconer, or any other community, is not a sustainable community development strategy and should be avoided. The Village should encourage mixed income residential development throughout the Village.

Falconer's Housing At a Glance



Village of Falconer Housing Data
Data Source: American Community Survey (2013-2017)

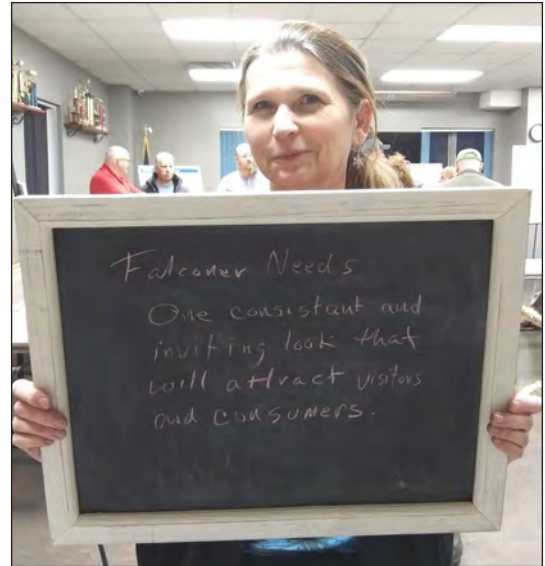
Community Engagement

Workshops

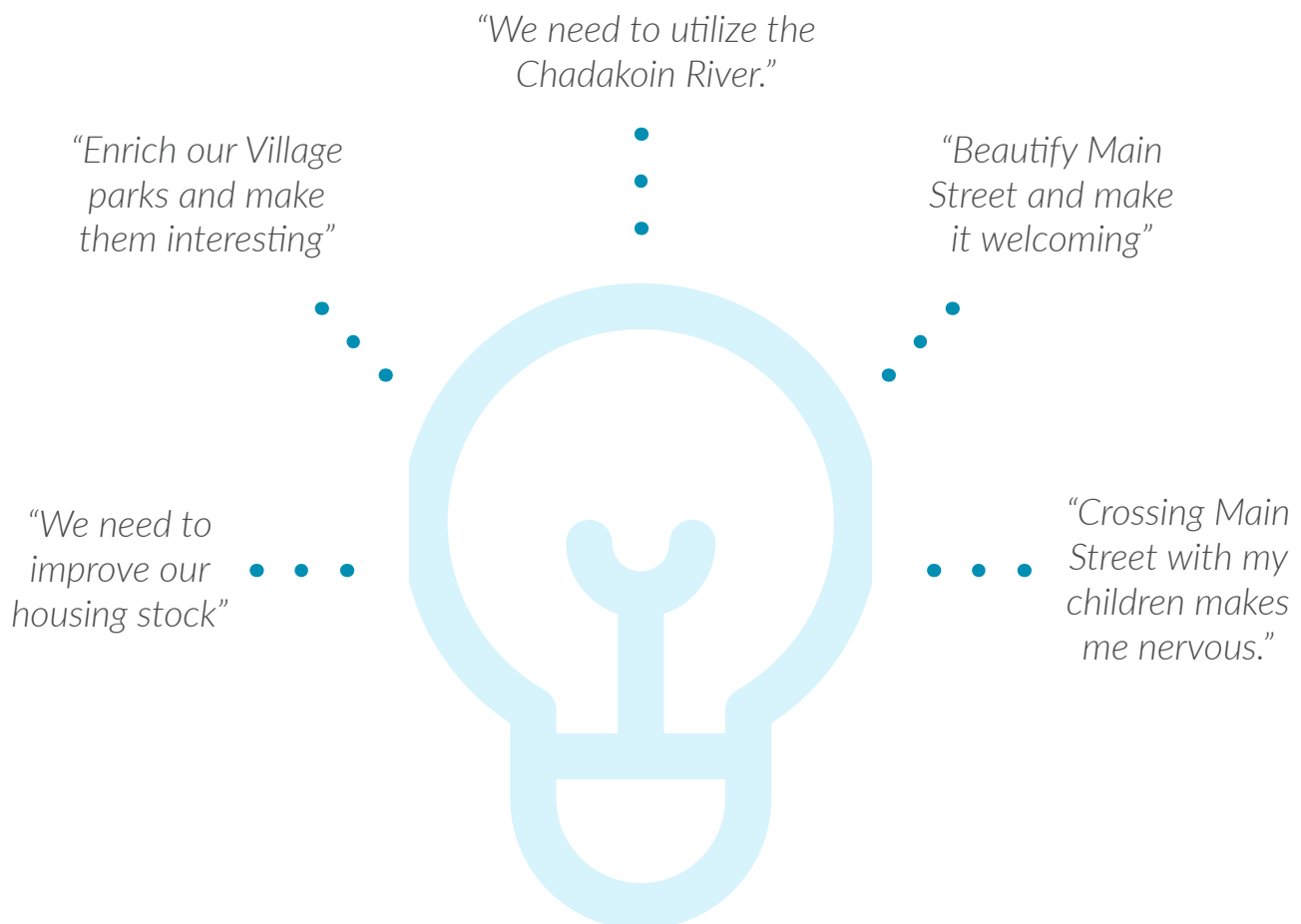
A community workshop was held in January of 2019, and members of the public were tasked with identifying challenges, opportunities, and assets for Falconer. Attendees were also asked to describe, in a word or short phrase, “One Big Thing” that they feel is important to the Village.

Community members were asked to imagine that their fictitious Aunt Sally moved away from Falconer and ten years had passed. They were to write her a postcard telling her how much had changed. The purpose of this exercise, was to have attendees envision and write about Falconer’s future.

A second community meeting was held in May 2019 regarding components of the draft plan. Attending community members were asked to review and comment on draft materials, including: vision, values, principles, priorities, and actions.



Falconer community member shares ‘One Big Thing’ for the future of the Village - Photo taken at community workshop in January 2019.

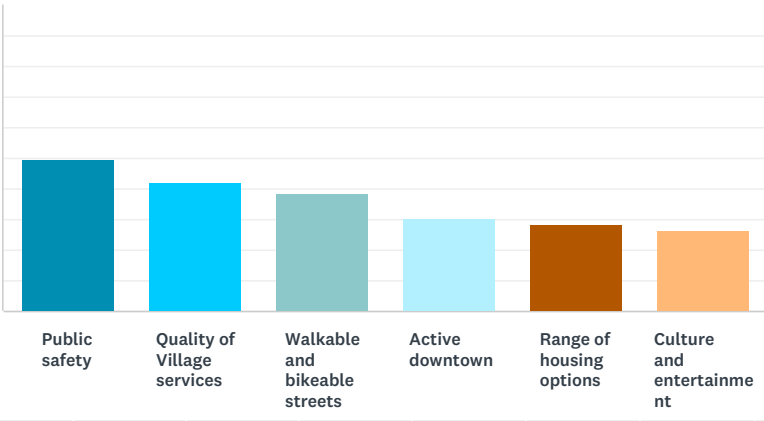


Online Survey

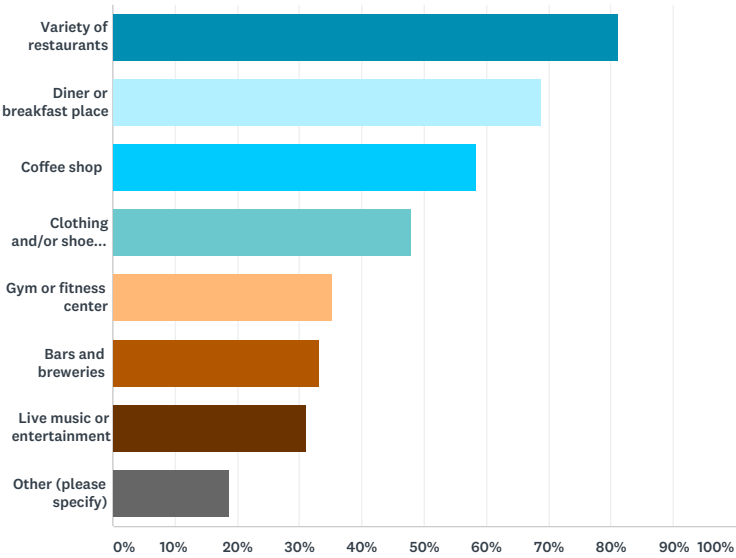
In addition to face-to-face engagement, Falconer provided a short community survey which covered a range of topics. The survey results provided key insights into land use, streetscape, housing, community services, and business development. Below are some of the more specific insights from the survey results.

Respondents, by and large, valued walkable streets, sidewalks, and crosswalks. This was consistent with many public comments and insights put forth at the first community workshop.

One survey question asked respondents to choose three components that should be important to Falconer’s identity. ‘Main Street Businesses and Shops’ was the most chosen component followed by ‘Parks and Recreation Space’ and ‘Walkability.’ These answers informed the development of Falconer’s priorities in the last section of this plan, and they are also reflected in the values and principles.



How important are the following characteristics to your quality of life in the Village of Falconer - Responses to Question 3 of the Falconer Community Survey.



What types of businesses would you patronize in the Village - Responses to Question 12 of the Falconer Community Survey.

Several types of businesses were identified in survey responses as desirable land uses for Main Street in Falconer. Some of the most popular choices included a variety of restaurants, diners, coffee shops, and clothing and shoe stores. These uses are consistent with the fabric of a small and walkable Village. It can be difficult to target or pursue a specific type of development or a specific type of land use, but it is important for Falconer to know uses that have high demand among Village residents. This provides a general guide for future commercial development considerations and decision-making.

A Vision for Falconer

Looking toward the future is a complicated exercise. It can be incredibly difficult for community members to think to the future with the unsolved challenges of today on their minds. Visioning is a participatory process for which the goal is to identify a long-term desired outcome for the community. This process works best when it is inclusive and open to all community members and when creative methods are used to cultivate a vision that is not only desired but also achievable. A vision began to take shape once community members unfettered their thoughts from existing issues and answered a simple question: What do you want Falconer to be in the future?

Values

Values are what we believe in – the things that define who we are. They shape our vision for what we want the Village to become. Our values are the community's most deeply held beliefs. They are the basis for our vision and typically don't change much over time.

We are...self reliant

People in Falconer are known for their strong work ethic. The Village is largely comprised of those who know how to pull up their bootstraps and get things done. The Falconer community does not have the temptation to avoid hard work and heavy lifting that achieves desirable results.

We are...walkable

New York Villages are often known for their dense and walkable environments, and Falconer is no different. Although not a traditional value, the ability to walk easily to destinations from their homes is integral to people in Falconer and is something that community members will continue to value moving forward.

We are...friendly and inviting

Falconer is a small and close-knit community where people interact with and enjoy knowing their neighbors.

We are...a community that perseveres

Recent years have seen tragedy strike Falconer's Main Street, but the Village has persevered and strived to focus on the future. The Falconer community realizes that hardship and setbacks are temporary, and the opportunity to grow and evolve is bright. Although it didn't always know it, Falconer has learned over the last few years that it's a community that perseveres.

Our Vision

Falconer is a friendly community where people of all ages live and work. Main Street is beautiful and thriving with a variety of businesses and storefronts catering to residents and visitors. The Village is a regional employment center and reflects its identity as a hardworking community. With its small-town character and walkable streets Falconer has reinvented itself in a lasting way as an authentic Village where people are proud to call it home.

Principles

The planning principles will help guide our decision making. We will use these to evaluate the challenges we face - both the ones we know now and the ones that unforeseeable - and assist us in making progress toward our vision. Our values are rooted in our principles. Future decision-making and development should adhere to the following principles.

We will...support local business and be accommodating to future industry

We have a wide variety of local employers located inside the Village and should strive to provide a friendly environment to local business and industry. We will promote Falconer as a great place to work, but also as a great place for our workers to live.

We will...have streets to comfortably accommodate all users

We will continue to pursue bicycle facilities that make it easy to ride and park bicycles with ease throughout the Village. We will strive to make our streets comfortable, safe, interesting, and useful for pedestrian travel. We will provide safe and efficient travel for motorists without compromising the safety and comfort of bicyclists and pedestrians.

We will...have a traditional Main Street

Our Main Street is likely to experience dramatic change in the very near future, but this change should occur in ways in which we are comfortable. We will encourage and pursue Main Street development that contributes to a pedestrian-friendly environment, champions mixed use, and provides desired and needed business.

We will...have strong neighborhoods

We want to pursue projects that lead to more connectivity between the Village and its neighborhoods. We will convey community togetherness and pursue policies and plans that increase Village cohesion.

We will...enhance our parks and improve access to our waterfront

Recreational opportunities should be a high priority for Falconer. We will pursue projects that provide a wider array of recreational activities ranging from more passive activities such as walking trails and seating areas to more active activities such as water access for small crafts and winter trails for snowmobiles.

Section 04

Future Land Use

One of the primary functions of a comprehensive plan is to provide communities with guidance for future land use. The Future Land Use map on the following page should be a tool Falconer uses to assist with land use and development decisions. This map functions as a generalized vision of the community's land use over the next decade. Unlike the Village's Zoning Map, the Future Land Use map does not represent clear regulatory boundaries. This is intentional. Future land use changes should be implemented in an update to Falconer's zoning code, but it offer no regulatory power on its own.

Categories

The locations of these land uses were based on analysis of existing conditions and future needs, priorities and actions identified and developed by the steering committee, and input from the first community workshop and the community survey. Parks are not specifically identified on the map, but it should be noted that parks are appropriate land under most of the land use designations. The following designations were the five land uses that determined by the project steering committee:

Residential

Land within this land use designation is largely comprised of single family homes. Many of these streets and neighborhoods cater specifically to residential uses and it is unlikely that land use here will drastically change in the future.

Mixed Residential

Much of the land that has been designated as 'Mixed Residential' contains a blend of single family homes, two-family homes, and multifamily residential buildings. There may also be some minor commercial uses, but land under this designation is intended to be mostly residential.

Mixed Use

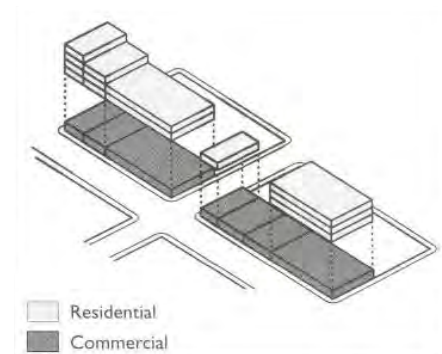
Mixed use development can include a variety of uses such as residential, commercial, and office. Development in a mixed use designation is characterized by both vertical and horizontal organization of uses. Mixed use development near and in Falconer's downtown should reflect traditional building and design standards.

Mixed Light Industrial

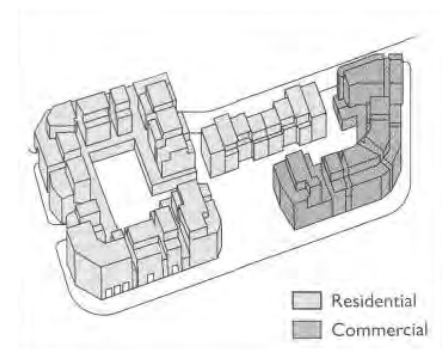
This can include a mix of industrial uses such as light manufacturing, assembly, warehouses and storage, and distribution centers.

Conservation

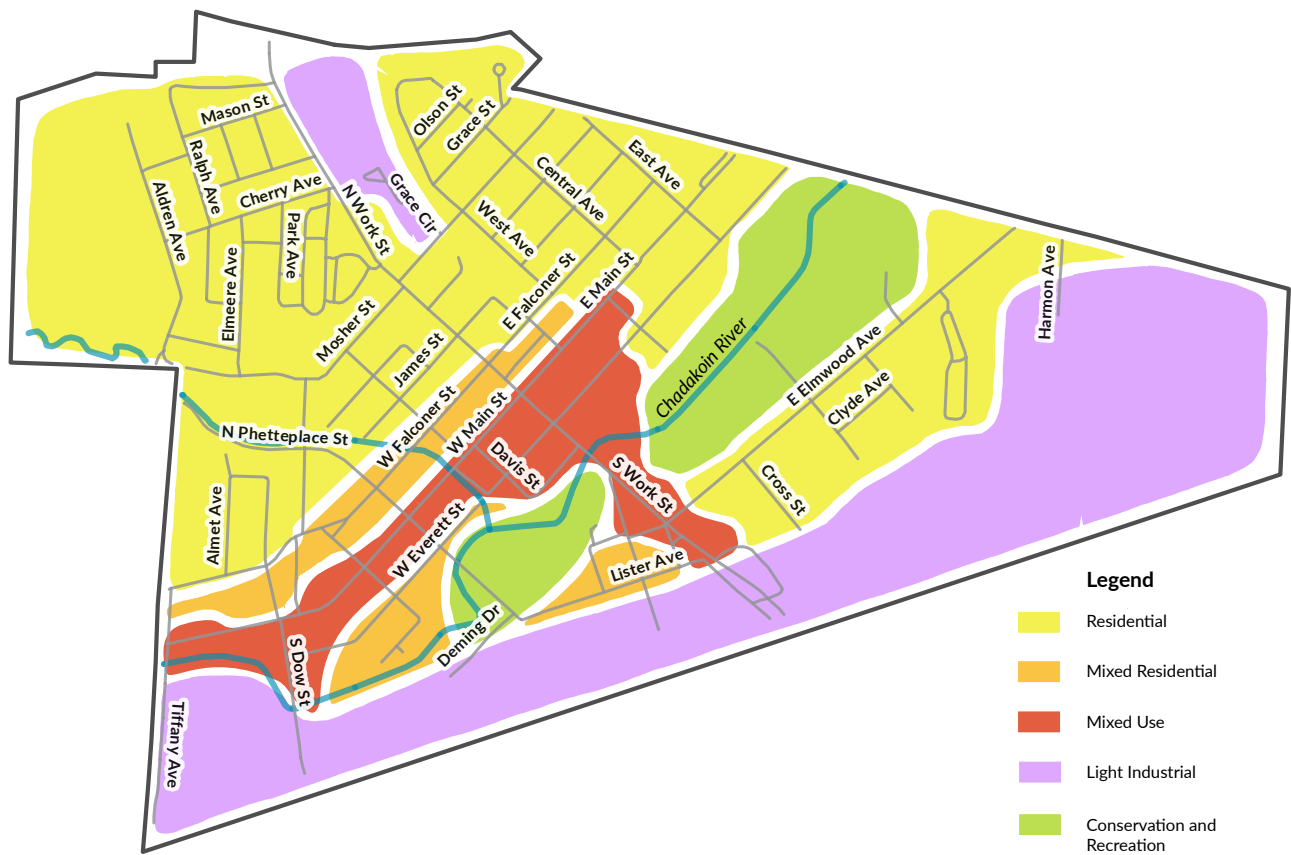
This designation is meant to protect and preserve area around the Village wetlands and the Chadakoin River, while also encouraging recreational uses on existing parkland and along and on the water. Residential development should be discouraged on this land.



Vertical mixed use allows for mixing of different uses on multiple floors of the same structure.



Horizontal mixed use allows for a variety of uses in multiple structures across a few parcels.



Village of Falconer Future Land Use Map

Data Source: Qualitative feedback from Falconer community members and stakeholders

Priorities, Action Plans, and Implementation

Once the steering committee developed a vision for future land use, a set of priorities emerged. Once the future land use was established and the priorities were agreed upon, the steering committee was able to develop action plans to help address each of the four Village priorities. The following are organized to detail both the priorities and the action plans. The closing pages contain a detailed implementation matrix for each individual action that the Village of Falconer wants to pursue.

Priorities, Actions, & Implementation

Communities are constantly changing as new issues emerge and opportunities present themselves. However, it is important to manage that change and to take a proactive approach in addressing the things that are known and can be planned for in present day.

The four distinct priorities below were developed to assist Falconer in organizing work programs that address key issues, capitalize on existing opportunities, and leverage important assets in a manner that is consistent with the Village's vision, values and planning principles.

1 Main Street



Falconer's Main Street is the backbone of the community. The fires in 2017 and 2018 left significant gaps and there has since been interest from developers in these now empty lots. It's important for Falconer to rebuild and reinvigorate Main Street, but future development must contribute to building a coherent Main Street character. It's envisioned to have a mix of compatible land uses that contribute to activity and life on the street in ways that reflect a traditional village Main Street.

2 Housing & Neighborhoods



Falconer has had a tough time competing for new residents with other nearby communities, despite many existing trends and conditions that are favorable to potential new residents and home-buyers. As previously stated, median home values are lower in Falconer than in other nearby communities, including the Village of Lakewood. There may be an untapped market for housing in Falconer, given the number of large employers located in or near the Village and its close proximity to the Southern Tier Expressway (I-86). Efforts need to be made to promote and improve the Village housing market to successfully compete for new residents.

How Did We Choose These Priorities?

The steering committee considered all collected data to draft the pressing priorities on which Falconer needs to act. Survey responses, feedback from the community workshop, and insights from key stakeholders were invaluable in determining Falconer's priorities. Each identified priority has a set of actions for the Village to pursue to achieve the desired outcomes.

3 Parks & Recreation



Falconer benefits from two sizable neighborhood parks and a river running through the middle of the Village. The Village lacks a clear direction and vision for its existing parks and recreation, and should better capitalize on various existing and potential recreational opportunities common to the region. Quality parks and recreational opportunities are important to retaining and attracting young families.

4 Retain & Attract Young People



Falconer is not among the many New York communities that is aging at a rapid rate, but it does have difficulty attracting young professionals and families who often choose nearby communities like Jamestown and Lakewood. Falconer must position itself so that it's appealing to people of all ages, especially young professionals and families that are looking to buy a home or start a business.



Main Street Action Plan

Outcomes to Seek:

- Coherent and quality urban design for sites, buildings, and streets;
- Increased business activity; and
- Increased pedestrian and bicyclist activity.

1A Update the Village Zoning Code

Falconer's zoning code needs a complete update. The current Village code is dated and vague and makes enforcement a tricky task. A full code update should include but not be limited to new districts identified in the Future Land Use map, purpose statements for each district, new and updated definitions, and a level of organization that makes the code easy to navigate and enforce. The code update should address recommended actions from this Comprehensive Plan and should be written with clear and direct language, providing the Village and code enforcement with an intuitive and user-friendly code.

1B Develop Design Guidelines and Standards

Design standards will help to ensure that future development and redevelopment improves and adds to the Village's built environment. Design standards should embrace the public realm, encourage sustainable development practices, promote walkability and bikeability, and contribute to an attractive and consistent streetscape. Design standards should apply to all properties fronting both sides of Main Street. The following standards, among others, should be considered for properties with Main Street frontage:

- Building placement, orientation, and frontage;
- Building and facade composition;
- Site layout;
- Pedestrian and vehicular access & circulation;
- Off-street parking;
- Multi-building developments; and
- Landscaping.



1C Update the Development Review Process to Include Site Plan Review

The Village is lacking a clear and controlled development review process. Falconer should adopt site plan review to ensure that future development is consistent with the community's vision, values and principles. Developing site plan review will also clarify and encourage appropriate safety, environmental, and aesthetic characteristics.

1D Encourage Mixed Use Buildings on Main Street

Mixed use buildings should be encouraged all along Falconer's Main Street, particularly near the center of the Village. Mixed use development on Main Street, coupled with design guidelines, will contribute to a walkable and compact Village center.

Commercial and retail uses are preferable for the bottom floors of buildings with Main Street frontage. Residential and/or office uses are preferable for the upper floors.



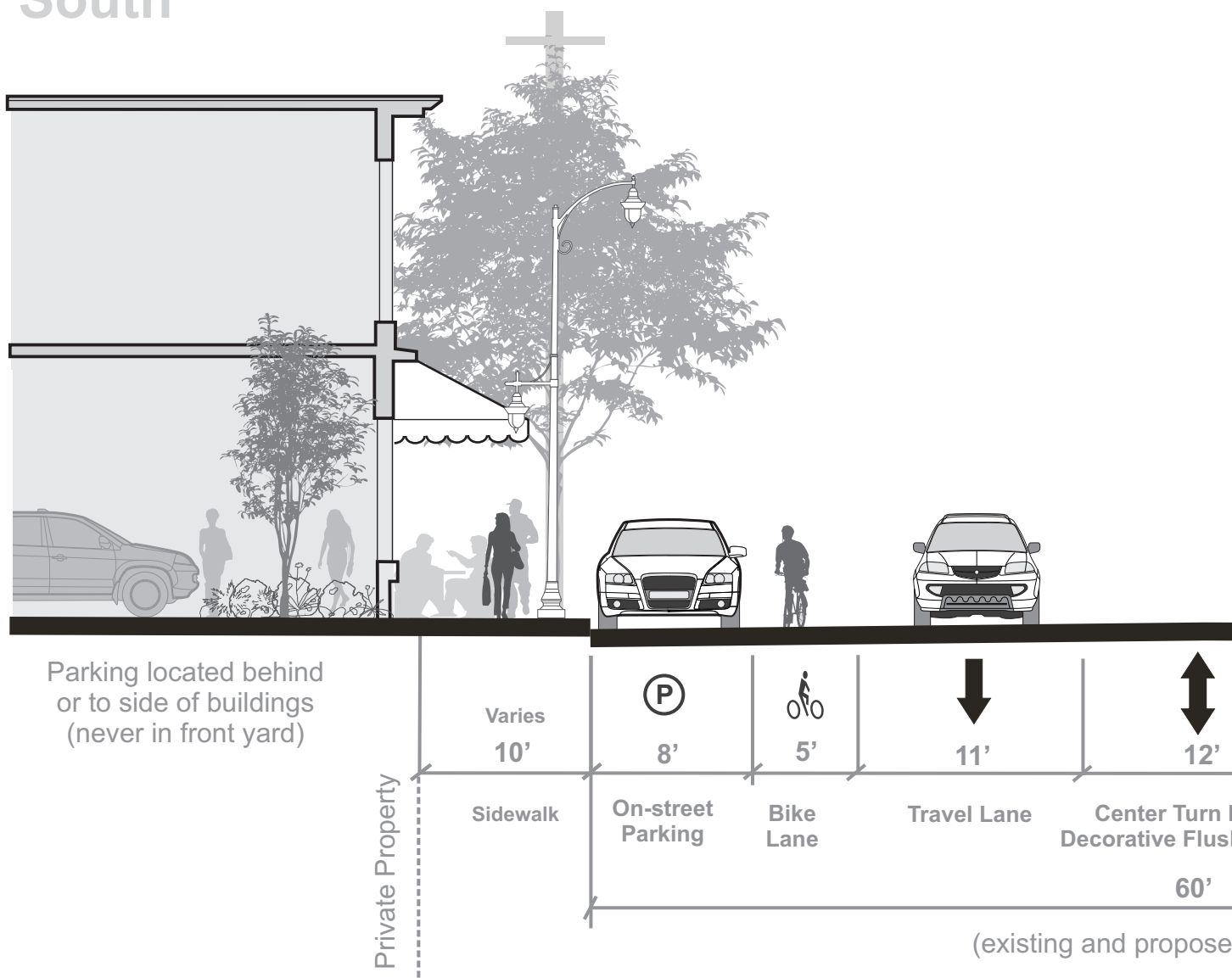
1E

Develop Main Street Master Plan

In anticipation of redevelopment along Falconer's Main Street, the Village should look to develop a detailed Main Street Master Plan. At a minimum, it should include a schematic plan showing locations and character of future buildings, off-street parking, parks and plazas, and a detailed streetscape plan. However, if an update to the zoning code that includes urban design guidelines and standards is developed prior to the development of the Main Street plan then a master plan illustrating desired buildings might not be necessary. The plan should then focus more on Main Street streetscape improvements. These improvements should include but not be limited to:

- Street trees;
- Benches and street furniture;
- High-visibility crosswalks;
- Curb extensions at select intersections & mid-block crossings;
- Narrowed travel lanes;
- Bicycle lanes; and
- On-street parking.

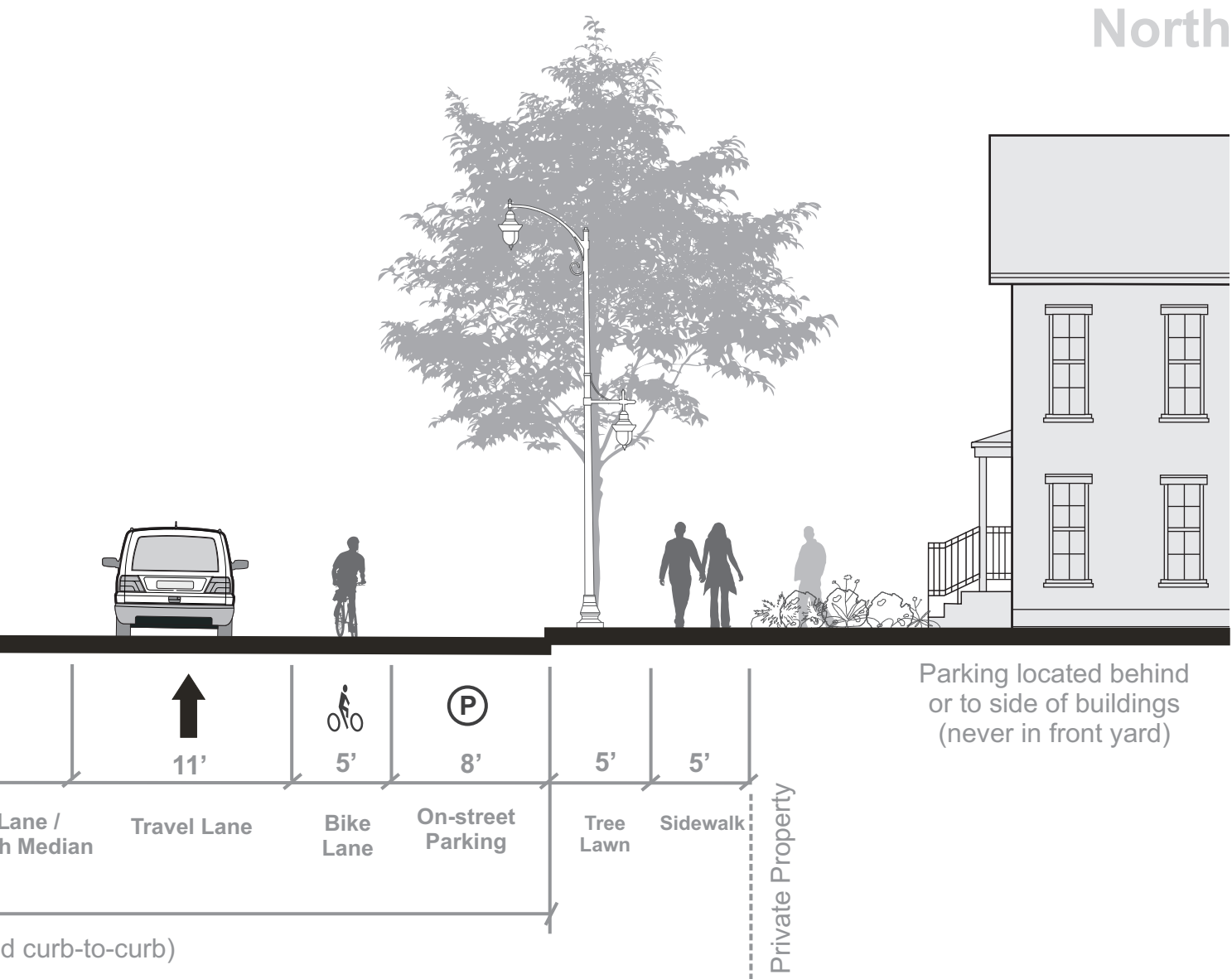
South



In order to develop the “Main Street” character and feel desired by residents and business owners, urban design standards must be included that prohibit front yard parking, provide shallow front yard setbacks, encourage multi-story buildings with first floor spaces designed for commercial and retail uses, and include a pedestrian circulation system that encourages people to walk. Close attention must be paid to the relationship between the public realm (streets and sidewalks) and the private realm (buildings).

Main Street should be focused on moving people and not just automobiles. The existing Main Street composition includes travel lanes and parking bays that are excessively wide for a village main street. The aim should be to develop a “complete street” that accommodates all modes of travel. Working within the existing curbs, the cross-section below illustrates how reallocating pavement widths can better accommodate bicyclists and slow traffic that will help to make Main Street more walkable. Consideration should be given to adding curb-extensions at intersections and mid-block crossings to help reduce pedestrian crossing distances and protect people when parking on the street. Adding street trees, decorative pedestrian level lighting, and furnishings will bring a human scale to the streetscape. The Village should work with the New York State Department of Transportation to seek funding and make improvements to Main Street that will help position it as an attractive, walkable and bikeable community ripe for revitalization.

North





Housing & Neighborhoods Action Plan

Outcomes to Seek:

- Growth in homeowners living and working in Falconer;
- Increasing values for residential properties; and
- A stronger housing market with well-maintained properties.

2A

Develop a Targeted Code Enforcement Approach to Key Areas in the Village

Disinvestment in properties can occur for a variety of reasons including financial or situational stresses for homeowners. Elevating maintenance standards requires a strategic and targeted approach to code enforcement. The Village should strive to define a system of strategies that respond to different problems and seeks to understand whether property owners are able but unwilling to improve their property or willing but unable to improve their property. Falconer should aim efforts toward areas with a high concentration of owner-occupied properties and should also target properties that are not too far beyond repair. Small investments of time and capital in the near-term can help prevent further decline and stimulate some virtuous investment.

2B

Establish a Rental Registration Program for Residential Properties

Many communities in New York State are experiencing increases in renter-occupied housing, including the Village of Falconer. A rental registration process can provide the Village with an additional source of property inspection that will help to maintain the health, safety and welfare of the community. It will also enable the Village to keep track of the growth of rental units and help monitor property maintenance in renter-occupied properties.

These two actions (2A and 2B) will require a lot of specific code-related evaluation and work. The Village should consider hiring a full-time code enforcement officer.



2C Work With Human Resources Departments for Local Businesses

Falconer should actively reach out to and work with local businesses and major employers to better understand the housing needs of potential employees and potential future residents. In this way, the Village will be armed with knowledge of how to expand housing choice and encourage residential development that provides wider variety in the Falconer housing market. The Village should identify qualified staff members to carry out this action, and should develop a bank of questions to ask and draft a timeline to complete this task.





Parks & Recreation Action Plan

Outcomes to Seek:

- Consistent and regular programming for the parks; and
- Increased usage of Chadakoin River and Village trails.

3A

Program Village Parks to Include a Variety of Regular Events and Activities

Falconer has two significant Village parks. Falconer Park, particularly, would benefit from a wider and fuller calendar of programming. Village Staff should coordinate with the Falconer School District, local businesses, and others to identify programs that would be well-received among all groups.

3B

Expand Recreational Opportunities

In addition to programming, the Village would benefit from a wider variety of available recreational activities in and near its parkland. The following is a non-exhaustive list of endeavors that should be pursued through various funding channels:

- Hiking and walking trails with clear directional and wayfinding signage;
- All-season trails that cater to snowmobiling in the winter and hiking or biking in the summer; and
- Small craft and hand-carry launches for kayaks and canoes.



3C Formalize and Improve Public Access to the Chadakoin River

Falconer benefits from Moon Brook and the Chadakoin River, but access to both is limited to few places in the Village. Falconer should identify locations to add or improve access to the water. These access points could include walking or hiking trails, benches or seating areas along the water, and small craft launches.





Retain & Attract Young People Action Plan

Outcomes to Seek:

- An increase in younger families and professionals owning and renting in the Village; and
- Increased reputation for Falconer as a desirable place for younger generations to live, work, and play.

4A

Invest and Promote Walkability and Bikeability of Village Streets

Younger people, particularly Millennials, prefer their communities to be both walkable and bikeable. Many Millennials are choosing compact walkable environments where they can easily access entertainment, shopping, and recreation via their feet or bikes.

Village residents appreciate and depend on the walkability of Falconer, but there are opportunities to further improve both the walkability and the bikeability of the Village. Survey results indicated that there are several dangerous pedestrian crossings in Falconer. Physical improvements should be sought for these areas, particularly for the intersection of Main Street and Work Street. Bicycle facilities and parking should be prioritized on a Village-wide scale, but they are especially important for Main Street. Sidewalks, street trees, and real and perceived safety all contribute to the walkability of the Village so they should be well-kept.

4B

Establish a Youth Committee to Reach Out to Younger People

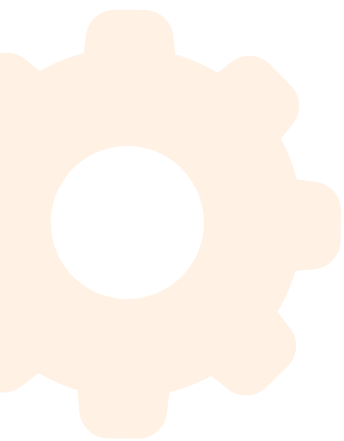
Attracting younger people to live in our communities is not an exact science. Engaging and soliciting input from a group of younger members of the community will provide the Village with valuable additional insight that will help them make decisions that will attract young professionals and families to Falconer. A concerted effort should be made to get young people more involved in Village government including but not limited to the planning, zoning and Village boards.



4C

Adopt a Modern Social Media Strategy

Social media can be an important tool for municipalities. Many municipalities have Facebook pages, but these are only effective if they are updated on a regular basis. Falconer should use Facebook to advertise for upcoming events and activities, spread news and happenings around the Village, and provide facts and information about the Village. In addition to improving their social media presence, Falconer should update and improve their website to include online bill pay, download-able permit applications, relevant information concerning Village boards and committees, and a link to the Village Facebook page.



How and When Should We Implement?

Village officials, Village staff, and members of the comprehensive plan's steering committee should be the driving forces behind implementation of the Falconer comprehensive plan. The first step in implementation was the formal adoption of the comprehensive plan in the fall of 2019. Adoption of the plan signaled the Village's commitment to actively pursue the contents of the Action Plans.

The Action Plans outlined recommended actions that will address the Village's priorities. The tables on the following pages will provide needed details for each action including: "who" to involve, "what resources" are available to help the Village pursue each particular action, and a rough timeline for "when" to initiate work on each action.

	Action	Who?	What Resources?	When?
1A	Update the Village Zoning Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village Staff Village Code Enforcement A small committee of technical advisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village budget - \$30K-\$40K Consider hiring a consultant to complete an update to the code 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate this in the fall 2019 following the comprehensive plan
1B	Develop Design Guidelines and Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village Staff Village Code Enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A small committee of technical advisors should facilitate the process Village budget - \$10K-\$15K 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate this in the fall 2019 following the comprehensive plan
1C	Update the Development Review Process to Include Site Plan Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village Staff Village Code Enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New York State Department of State Chautauqua County Planning & Economic Development Village budget - \$10K-\$12K 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate this in the fall 2019 following the comprehensive plan



	Action	Who?	What Resources?	When?
1D	Encourage Mixed Use Buildings on Main Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village Staff and Boards Village Code Enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developers familiar with Mixed Use Updated Village Zoning Code Informed Village Staff and Boards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate in the 2020
1E	Develop a Main Street Master Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village Staff Chautauqua County Planning & Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New York State Office of Homes and Community Renewal New York State Department of Transportation New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) Cost Approx. \$40K-\$60K 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate in the next 1-2 years

New York State Route 394 runs through Falconer's Main Street, and is a candidate for repaving in either 2022 or 2023 through New York's Department of Transportation. The repaving would include all of Main Street within the Village limits. The Village should pursue funding for other desired Main Street streetscaping elements to align with the State's repaving efforts. These streetscaping elements should include but not be limited to: 5' bicycle lanes, 8' on-street parking lanes, 11' travel lanes, high-visibility crosswalks, and curb extensions at the intersection of Main Street and Work Street.

	Action	Who?	What Resources?	When?
2A	Develop a Targeted Code Enforcement Approach to Key Areas in the Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village Staff Village Code Enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Development Block Grant program through New York State Office of Homes and Community Renewal Chautauqua County Planning & Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate in the next 1-2 years Identify target areas with high concentrations of owner-occupied properties where homes are not yet beyond repair
2B	Establish a Rental Registration Program for Residential Properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village Staff Village Code Enforcement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chautauqua County Planning & Economic Development - see if other communities in the County have set up similar rental registration programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate in the winter or spring of 2020
2C	Work With Human Resources Departments for Local Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village Staff Human Resources Departments and Professionals at Village Businesses and Employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County of Chautauqua Industrial Development Agency (CCIDA) Human Resources Departments and Professionals at Village Businesses and Employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate in the next 1-3 years
3A	Program Village Parks to Include a Variety of Regular Events and Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village Staff Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Falconer Central School District Jamestown Young Professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a shortlist of new programs for the parks in the next 1-2 years
3B	Expand Recreational Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village Staff Chautauqua County Planning & Economic Development Adjacent municipalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate in the next year to identify a project to pursue through the CFA in 2020 and/or 2021

	Action	Who?	What Resources?	When?
3C	Formalize and Improve Public Access to the Chadakoin River	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village Staff Village Public Works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation New York Department of State New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) with local match from Village budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate in the next year to identify a project to pursue through the CFA in 2020 or 2021
4A	Invest and Promote Walkability and Bikeability of Village Streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village Staff Village Public Works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New York State Department of Transportation New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) with local match from Village budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing starting now Pursue physical improvements after completion of a Main Street Plan in 2-4 years
4B	Establish a Youth Committee to Reach Out to Younger People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village Staff Jamestown Young Professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jamestown Young Professionals County of Chautauqua Industrial Development Agency (CCIDA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put together a committee in the winter of 2020 This should be an ongoing effort
4C	Adopt a Modern Social Media Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Village Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New York State Office of Information Technology Services Consider reaching out to local schools and universities for support or potential internships New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) with local match from Village budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate in the fall of 2019 after adoption of the comprehensive plan This should be an ongoing effort