

The Creekside Planned Development District is a potential district for development and redevelopment which may require rezoning, as well as facilitating for park and trail development. This report assesses the potential for each area of the proposed development district, with recommendations based upon that assessment. Based upon public input and further analysis this study will recommend a variety of measures to move forward with.

The Creekside Planned Development District study area is comprised of three areas:

1. South and East parcels along Chittenango Creek,
2. Riverside Drive and Chittenango Creek Parcels
3. The Village parcel between Riverside Drive and Albany Street parcels including the library.



Each area has unique attributes and each affects the viability of the other whether for park development, or commercial or residential development.

1. South and East Creekside Parcels

The parcels to the south and east have commercial uses of primarily a professional office or service/commercial use. One parcel at 4 Chenango St. is a professional office building with a balance of land that is effectively wetland/natural areas associated with Chittenango Creek. This balance of the parcel has provided and has potential public use along the creek and a trail linking this parcel with the Atwell Mill area. The Atwell Mill area is that area to the east located on a private street and former railbed off of Albany Street. The dead end private street continues on to Veteran's ballpark as an informal trail and NYSEG ROW. There is no vehicular connection between the commercial property on Chenango Street and the properties behind the Atwell Mill.

2. Chittenango Creek/Riverside Drive

This area includes Chittenango Creek, the dam, repurposed former mill buildings, Boy Scouts camp and undeveloped land along Chittenango Creek and is shown with the diagonal hatch lines in the middle of the map above. This area is located entirely in designated floodplain, including the higher areas likely due to elevation of the floodplain by the dam.



The historic significance of this area and the former mill buildings and raceway are well documented and provide an opportunity for historical interpretation resources for parks and trails routed through this area. The undeveloped land along the creek is not exceptionally natural as it is very likely fill material from the former industrial activities, but there is a mix of vegetation along much of the bank including some larger trees. It has very good fishing access and due to the lack of vegetation makes for easy casting.

Riverside Drive itself is rather narrow, with only 20 feet of paved width and coming very close to an apartment building. Twenty feet is sufficient for a village side street that is a dead end, or that has sidewalks. However this drive is the only access to the Creekside area as well as the public parking lot. At one time Riverside Drive continued to Albany Street. The ROW is still there, however vehicular access is blocked. This former drive is informally used as a pedestrian and bikeway off of Albany Street.

3. Undeveloped Village Lot

Between Riverside Drive and the parcels fronting along Albany Street is an undeveloped lot, formerly the town's highway department garage and now owned by the village. The lot is terraced into two portions. The upper serves as a public parking lot, and is effectively the parking lot for the Cazenovia Library and Museum. It is unpaved, but signage, lighting and some guiding parking structures have been put in place. There is a connecting sidewalk between this parking area and Albany Street. Almost the entire property is included in some level of floodplain designation. The lower portion is dedicated to free all-day parking for the village and overnight parking by permit. There have been concerted efforts to develop the village parcel that have not come to fruition.



Analysis and Recommendations

Through review of the history of the parcels, village initiatives for development and meeting with stakeholders several objectives for each area have become obvious. Because the area is small, specific strategy with regard to development and redevelopment potential is warranted. The proposed PDD serves several pivotal roles in the

village such as central parking, parks, trails, historic preservation, stream and wetland conservation, infill development, and beautification. All of these roles and their ability to be played out affect the viability of the other.

1. South and East Creekside Parcels

The parcel coinciding with 4 Chenango Street is a commercial professional office building consisting of doctor's offices and a telecommunications office. Plans for expansion have been put off by the fact that this use is pre-existing and non-conforming in a residential zoning district. Mill Street leading away from the village center, and then turning to Chenango Street are primarily residential in character with larger



older homes increasing in lot size relative to distance from the village center. The creek and topography combined with lush vegetation and mature trees creates a quiet green corridor. The use at 4 Chenango Street as a professional office is likely due to the former industrial uses that dominated the area along the creek. The dam on the property creates a pleasing sound as water cascades over the spillway and serves as a reminder of the industrial heritage, and indeed the front of the building is actually toward the dam and the creek. There is vegetation to the south of the building which creates a natural buffer to the residential parcels.

Future Land Use

The parcel appears to coexist with neighboring residential uses. Professional office uses are generally accepted as compatible with residential uses with appropriate lighting and buffers and limited hours which this property complies with.

The owner of the parcel has applied for a planned development district which revolved around the expansion of the building for office use. This proposal included designation of the creekside area as some type of public space including a trail that connects to the Atwell Mill area. The owner's request has been tabled pending this analysis and follow up actions.

Current Condition

The building and grounds at 4 Chenango are in good condition and blend into the neighborhood well. It is highly unlikely that the building will be redeveloped into another use in the foreseeable future. However it would be an attractive residential setting for apartments, condominiums or townhomes.

Possible Approach

The village should pursue some means of allowing an expansion of use on the site, and accept the owner's offer to formally convey rights for public space along the creek. This would allow for a more formal trail along the south side of the creek connecting to the private development and the informal trail to Veteran's Park.

This could be accomplished by allowing professional office as a use by special permit in a new zone. Special use permits are sometimes referred to as those uses allowed in a zoning district, but not everywhere in a district. The primary concerns of a Special Use Permit have to do with the impact on the neighborhood. This can either be written into a new planned development district zone, or the pre-existing non-conforming use language might be altered to allow expansion of current uses by Special Use Permit. The altering of the current language would require analysis with regard to the number, type and possible expansion of current pre-existing non-conforming uses. Often there is a fear that this type of allowance will create havoc, but ongoing planning and zoning efforts should try to resolve these issues. The reason that many laws limit expansion or improvement is the anticipation that the use will conform over time. The reality is that the uses persist, but in a limited state, and without any means of addressing any issues with incompatibility. This often results in chronic deterioration of properties, which affects the value of the property as well as neighboring properties. By carefully assessing uses at the time of expansion, the permitting process allows for mitigation of compatibility issues, while at the same time giving the owner a reason to improve the property. In other words, it is through the process of approval that conditions can be placed on the property to conform to the neighborhood. Hoping the use goes away does not accomplish anything.

The Balance of the South and East Creekside Parcels

It isn't likely that the Atwell Mill area on the east side of Chittenango Creek is in need of any land use changes. However, the private drive along the utility Right of Way leads to an informal trail to Veteran's ballfield on Chenango Street, with the former and potential trail from 4 Chenango Street leading to this right of way and private street. Before a more formal trail is established to this area, right of way easements should be established to the Veteran's Ballfield and Albany Street, and a plan for signage and any paths should be developed. Establishing the ROW easement for a trail is recommended but the trail should have an outlet that is legally accessible by the public. This leads to the overall recommendation in the trails section below.

2. Chittenango Creek and Riverside Drive

This area, as described above, is largely designated as floodplain. This is more severe for the portion along the creek and to the north. At the corner of Riverside Drive and Mill Street, the parcels sit much higher than the lower section of Riverside Drive. The south corner lot is used as a warehouse/commercial telecommunications company and although is adjacent to the dam does not include most of the dam.



The warehouse property is a relatively small lot. And although it has a higher elevation than the properties on lower Riverside Drive, its proximity to the dam causes it to be in a designated floodplain. This is sometimes difficult for people to understand, but the dam's presence increases the flood risk by elevating the floodplain. For this site, it greatly complicates any redevelopment. Ideally, it might be possible to have an attractive building of 2-3.5 stories of a similar footprint to the existing that might contain apartments or condominiums.



In this case, the building is not maintained at a similar level as many of the homes in this area and the use is incompatible and detracts from the neighborhood. That is not to say that the current occupants are derelict, the property is kept at a minimum level of maintenance and includes sufficient screening from Mill Street. In contrast to the stately homes on Mill Street, the natural setting of the creek and the private parks and trails, it is a relic of former land uses. The building itself lacks in any character and in another less visible location in the village it might be rather more harmless.



Lower Riverside Drive has an interesting mix of buildings, mostly former mill buildings that have been converted to other uses. The first neighboring the warehouse is a former mill building that has been repurposed as an apartment building. It is interesting in its close proximity to the street and that it spans along the slope, exposing the foundation. This is a curious building and is important to the character of this area. It is a direct example of the former mill activity, and is the type of older building that lends character to a village. A redevelopment proposal that sought to use both this building and

a newer one on the corner might prove to be very interesting.

The three remaining parcels with buildings on upper Riverside Drive are not available for redevelopment. The first is a camp/storage building of sorts and is located on the creek. As a preexisting building it is compatible, but redevelopment would be extremely difficult and unlikely due to the proximity to the dam and the creek and being in the lowest floodplain. An elevated building might be possible, but is unlikely and cost prohibitive. The next building downstream is the Boy Scout camp. This is even lower in the floodplain, and is directly on the creek and is likely a former mill building. There is reportedly a restrictive covenant on the property that requires that it revert to an estate if does not continue as a Boy Scout camp. Both of these parcels are fairly green and in

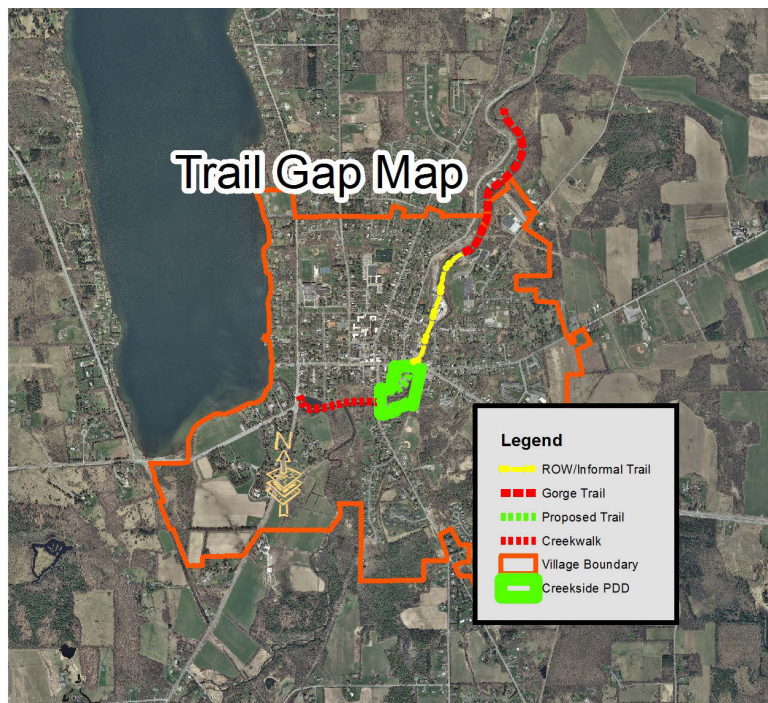
keeping with the natural setting of the creekside area. The third property is an attractive single family home and not available for any type of redevelopment.

A complication or opportunity in this area has to do with the lot lines and the village street. The residence on the north side of Riverside Drive also includes an odd shaped parcel along the south side of Riverside Drive adjacent to the Boy Scout camp and the upper storage parcel. If the owners are willing and the recommendations in this report are followed, it would make sense for the village to purchase that odd lot by adjusting lot lines to include as part of a linear park and trail.

General Recommendations for the Chittenango Creek and Riverside Drive Area:

- Develop a plan for trail development and design and creation of a linear park along the creek,
- Revise code to reflect redevelopment of the warehouse site based upon a realistic build out analysis,
- Encourage maintenance and preservation or redevelopment of the apartment building,
- Encourage maintenance and current uses for the remaining three buildings,
- Purchase by the village of the odd shaped lot for a trail/linear park.

Trail connection and development



This area of the village is a broken link in a chain of potential linear resources in the village. There is a great opportunity to tie these resources together with a Creekside trail that would continue an existing trail on Cazenovia Preservation Foundation property to the west and through to the Gorge trail to the north. A formalized trail would link the lake with the rural areas to the north and connect recreational, cultural, and natural resources along the creek corridor in the village. This would also provide a significant linear park with multiple opportunities for cultural and environmental interpretation along its length. The corridor is promised through the village on various properties from Riverside Drive to Clark Street where the Gorge Trail begins. The goal is to have a

connective pedestrian corridor linking the lake (Lakeland Park), Carpenter's Pond/Creekwalk, Riverside Drive (library, parking, village center, Chittenango Creek), and the Gorge Trail and beyond.

A linear park along Chittenango Creek with interpretive facilities

The area along Chittenango Creek has the highest potential as a public park on both banks. This is due to the restrictions on this area being in the floodplain and the degree to which it is already used as a park and fishing access. Also, a park would align well with the Boy Scouts use along the creek on the north side. On the south side, the presence of the dam and the wooded area with the pond form a natural park like feel near the parking lot for the parcel at 4 Chenango Street.



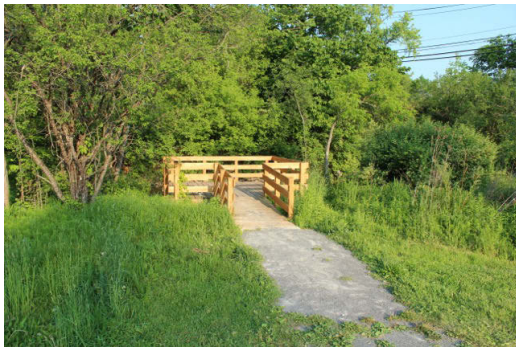
The Need for a Trail Plan

There is a definite need to create a trail plan. The amount of detail does not need to be high, but high enough to base general decisions on, as well as form the basis for future funding requests (funding discussed below). This is also a good way to gain public support of the trail, as well as inform the public of the potential and establish the level of use and preliminary design.

Challenges

Although there are some design challenges to further establishment of this trail, namely road crossings, there may also be some policy/funding challenges.

The only non-private non-local funding sources are federal sources. This funding is very limited and competitive.



It also can double the ultimate cost of a project with very strict design and process requirements. The other factor with using federal funding is that the trail must meet a high level of public use. That is, most, if not all, federally funded trails require handicap accessibility which means a higher level of paving and development. This means a simple rough path is not eligible or acceptable.

What this means is that in order to utilize larger federal funding sources, the community will need to develop an overall vision for the trail corridor, and its “level of use” so to speak through development of a trail plan for the corridor. Alternatively, the village, town and Cazenovia Preservation Foundation may find it easier to work together to raise funding for improving each section based upon a locally developed plan.

Road Crossings

As a part of this study, Mill Street and Albany Street were assessed for possible trail corridor crossings. Each street can accommodate a safe trail crossing, which will at the same time provide traffic calming. However, the funding for the Albany Street crossing really should be included as a Transportation Improvement Project for the region. In order to secure this funding, the trail ROW will need to be improved with signage etc. in order to demonstrate the level of public service provided by the trail.



The Mill Street trail crossing would occur at the bridge over Chittenango Creek on the north side. The pavement would ideally be narrowed, either physically or with paint, to form bulb-outs on both sides which reduces the distance of the crossing, and provides a queue for cyclists and pedestrians waiting to cross. This type of crossing is a growing trend and has been successfully installed around the state.

After crossing Mill Street, the east side will need a specific design to enhance the sidewalk to Riverside Drive.



Redevelopment of the SE corner of Riverside Drive and Mill Street should include and require accommodation of the trail around the corner.

Along Riverside Drive the trail would have to be on the road, using signage and street paint to indicate as much until there is enough ROW width to install a formal trail on the side. The trail would help define the creekside park and make its way to Albany Street. A connection should be included in parking and development plans to connect the trail and creekside park to the library and path to Albany

Street for pedestrians with good bike parking provided in the parking lot for the library. *(need map)*

Albany Street

Crossing Albany Street where the current Riverside Drive is blocked off is challenging but certainly possible. Alternatives such as going under Albany Street at the bridge over Chittenango Creek, and even routing the trail along the eastern bank and crossing on the east side of the bridge were given consideration. Crossing at the end of Riverside appears to be more feasible.



Creating a median of some type in Albany Street just west of the bridge deck will be necessary to make the crossing safe, and cause traffic to both slow and be aware that there is a crossing at this location. The median would simply consume the excessive middle turning lane that seems to serve no useful purpose at this location. Ideally, the median crossing would not cross the road directly, but rather turn to the right forcing trail users to look more directly at oncoming traffic. This would also better define the left turn into Buyea's for traffic moving east and also further require that left turns into the gas station parking lot be executed further to the west.

Creekside Park

The Village should continue to develop and expand a creekside park along Chittenango Creek. There appears to be some opportunity for acquiring some odd shaped lots adjacent to the village owned lot. The park with the trail has great opportunities for a variety of activities related to the creek, the historic mills, and the museum. The unique layout of this area and topography forms a natural amphitheatre, and this could be enhanced in order to create a venue for plays, music and other activities.



3. Undeveloped Village Lot

The core of this development district is the lot owned by the village, formerly the town garage and adjacent parcels along Albany Street and Riverside Drive. The hope for development of this area for a variety of purposes has proved economically infeasible on a grand or wholesale context to date, although that could change. Also, with an expanding public library, and new issues of overnight parking for Albany Street residents as second and third stories are developed as apartments, these hopes need to be realigned with a more realistic expectation.



The site has constraints in the way of floodplain designation, lack of access, some contamination, and proximity to the creek. The site's current state of appearance as an empty lot is not a good incentive to propose incremental development on adjacent lots on Albany Street, or consolidation of lots to create a viable development parcel or parcels. So the existing uses persist with little improvements here and there.

It is often the hope of communities that a developer will propose a grand scheme for a lot or area such as this. And that is still possible here. Alternatively, the board may decide that the development potential should be better balanced with other public resources such as an improved public parking area, a park and trail in addition to infill development. If the village makes these investments incrementally, it will encourage private investment

in the area. Also, measure within the land use regulations can require private development to provide for some of these amenities.

Wholesale Development

In a similar case, the village of Marcellus, NY experienced a wholesale redevelopment of a former woolen mill site where the Upper Crown Mill was completely redeveloped. This was a successful development that was adjacent to a creek, in the floodplain and even had a dam involved where the spillway was removed to alleviate the flood risk. The site boasts a large condominium building with underground parking, a public library building, and restoration of a wreck of a building into a professional office. The site was not without its issues, but does show what is possible. The village could revisit the RFP process for specific types of development with requirements for retaining public parking, parks, and trails. This would allow development interests to perform the calculus necessary to propose the number and types of units, building sizes and orientation to make the site profitable and provide the necessary public amenities to make the sale of public property worthwhile with respect to public interest.

Alternatively, the village could seek to develop the public amenities, parking, park, trail, improved access, that would then refine and better define the potential development areas. This would require a specific plan and coordination with adjacent land-owners, study of parking requirements in terms of both number of spaces and area, delineation of a trail right of way, park areas along the creek and some type of pedestrian/linear park connection to the library and Albany Street access. A plan and commitments and consent from adjacent landowners on improved vehicular access from and to Albany Street, and internal site circulation of vehicles and pedestrians would also need to be spelled out in a plan. Finally, this effort would create a defined development envelope.

These are the common themes whether the village or a developer takes the initiative to improve the area:

- Public Parking/Connection of Creekside Park/Trail with Albany Street Access at the Library



- Access and Internal Circulation
- Adjacent Landowner Consent

Public Parking

Currently, some improvements have increased the organization and utility of the parking area directly behind the library. Because of the slope of the site and proximity to the library this is the most used area for parking.

There is a need for a variety of parking at

this location. The library drives most of the need, but the village hall and businesses along Albany Street would benefit from a fully developed public parking lot. Improvements such as lighting, paving, striping, curbs, stormwater management, landscaping furniture such as benches, trash receptacles, sidewalks etc. can be funded through parking fees. Some of these fees may be through metered parking, but also a fee schedule for the library and any other resident that may need overnight parking which would be designated parking spots.

In addition to Albany Street, the establishment of a trail and creekside park would contribute to the need for a formal parking area.

Challenges

The challenge is to develop enough area for useful parking, but reserving space for development and creating a meaningful connection between the sidewalk to Albany Street and the creek/park/trail. This may require a reorientation of the site, addition of fill, and possibly a new alignment of Riverside Drive.

Access and Internal Circulation

Another challenge is access to and from the Riverside Drive area, as well as internal circulation. Currently all access occurs on Riverside Drive, which as described above has limited width adequate for vehicles, but struggles to accommodate more than that. Increased regular traffic and the addition of a trail alignment that will likely see increased use as the trail is improved will put further pressure on this limited width street. Because of this, the possibility of creating an access point on Albany Street has been studied and appears to be very possible.

There is an ideal location on the western property line of the Red Apple store's lot leading directly into the village lot. This access could be one way into the area from Albany Street, and one way out Riverside Drive to Mill Street. The parking lot would provide internal flow, and future development may create a loop along the back property line of Albany Street properties, through the parking lot and down to the existing Riverside Drive. This would provide much better exposure to the existence of a parking area behind Albany Street, as well as the trail and creekside park. It would also allow for better multiple modes of travel on the narrow segment to Mill Street.

The trail would likely consume most of the Riverside Drive ROW to Albany Street with only emergency vehicle access and a shared drive for the two residences in this area if alternative access isn't established.