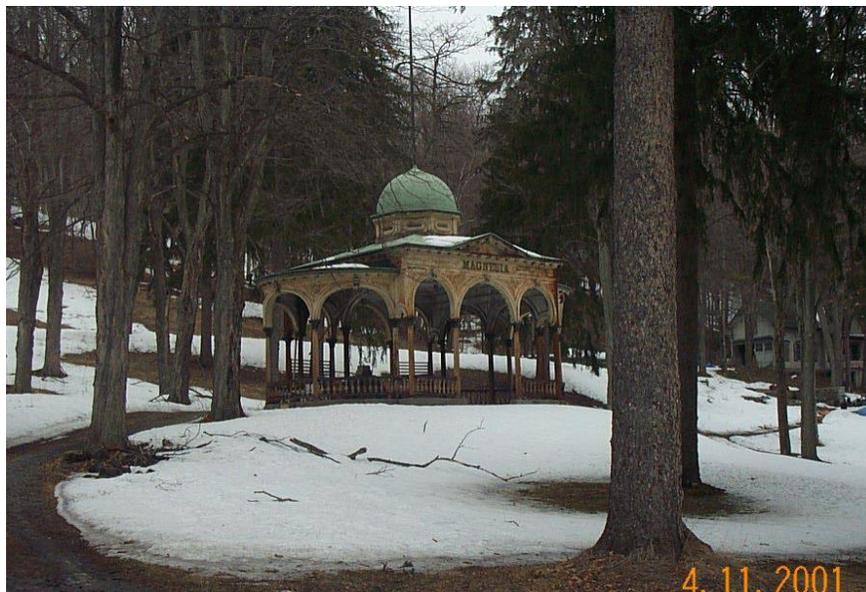


Village of Sharon Springs



Final Comprehensive Plan

February 2002

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1. Important Village Trends and Opinions

Demographics

Table 1: Population Data - Village of Sharon Springs

Description	1980	1990	2000
Total Population	514	543	547
No. of Families	127	130	131
No. of Married Couple Families	103	112	108
Female Household, No Husband	27	23	14
No. of Households	168	185	204

Source: 1980 & 1990 US Census of Population

Population: In 1990, the median age in the Village was 36.8 years, with 74% of people over 18 years old, and 23% over 65 years old. 65 families had children and the number of families have been steady at around 130. In 2000, the population was the same as in 1990, and increased by less than one percent to 547 people.

Between 1980 and 1990, population in the Village of Sharon Springs grew by 29 people (5.6%) (Table 1). In a 1992 update, an additional seventeen people were counted in the Village representing a 3.3% increase between 1990 and 1992. This rate of growth is typical of many upstate New York rural communities. It is higher than that seen in the Villages of Cobleskill and Schoharie, but less than that experienced by Richmondville and Middleburgh.

Over a longer period, the population growth rate is higher. Since 1970, population has increased by 28% in the Village (Table 2).

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Table 2: Tabulation of Population Changes 1970 to 1990 for Village of Sharon Springs, NY

1970	1980	1990	2000	Change 1970-2000
421	514	543	547	126 (29.9%)

Source: 1970, 1980 & 1990 US Census of Population

Education: Educational attainment in the Village of Sharon Springs is shown in Table 3. In 1990, there were slightly fewer people attaining a high school diploma than in 1980, but more going to complete one to three years of college. About the same number of people, (over 25 years of age), received a bachelors degree or higher.

Table 3: Educational Attainment - Village of Sharon Springs

Description: Educational Attainment (25+ yrs)	1980	1990
Less than High School Diploma (inc. Elem.)	133	*121
High School Diploma	143	*123
College 1-3 years	57	*90
Bachelors Degree or Higher	45	* 47

Source: 1980 US Census of Population

*Schoharie County Profile- July, 1995

Income: Between 1980 and 1990, median family income rose from \$19,781 to \$31,328 (Table 4). A similar increase is seen in per capita income. The number of families living below the poverty level fell slightly since 1980, but the number of female headed households living below the poverty level is about three times as high as in 1980. The total number of people living below the poverty level in the Village rose from 49 people in 1980 (9.5% of the total population in the Village) to 63 people in 1990 (about 12% of the total Village population).

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Table 4: Income Data - Village of Sharon Springs

Description	1980	1990
Family Median Income	\$19,781	* \$31,328
Per Capita Income (total persons)	\$6,140	* \$9,585
Families Below Poverty Level	13	*12.4%
Female Householders Below Poverty Level	8	25
Mean Social Security Income	\$4,307	\$7,652
Total No. of People Below Poverty Level	49	63

Source: 1980 & 1990 - US Census of Population

*Schoharie County Profile, July 1995

Housing: Forty-nine additional dwelling units were added to the housing stock in the Village between 1980 and 1990 (Table 5). Thirty-four of these were single family houses. In 1990, there were about 30 units vacant (about 10%). The number of vacant units used for seasonal dwellings increased from 34 in 1980 to 67 in 1990. About 70.3% of units are owner-occupied. 12% of all housing units are multi-family units (3 or more units). Gross rent and median value of housing doubled between 1980 and 1990.

The Village has a new senior citizen facility located off of Route 10, south. Residents have indicated that there is ample, inexpensive real estate available and that it is not expensive to live in Sharon Springs.

Table 5: Housing Data - Village of Sharon Springs

Description	1980	1990	<u>2000</u>
Total Number of Housing Units	232	* 281	<u>270</u>
Number of Owner Occupied Units	130	130	<u>128</u>
Number of Vacant Units	30 (year round)	29	<u>66</u>
Seasonal Units	34	*67	<u>29</u>
Mean Gross Rent	\$159	\$311	
Occupancy per unit	2.71	2.53	<u>2.63</u>

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Description	1980	1990	2000
Median Value of Owner-occupied Units	\$26,828	\$60,400	
Number of 1 Unit, Detached	151	*183	
Number of Attached	0	8	
Number of 2 Units	16	16	
Number of 3 and 4 Units	25	21	
Number of 5+ Units	2	4	
Number Mobile Homes/ Trailers	16	21	
Other	NA	26	

Source: 1980 & 1990 - US Census of Population

* Schoharie County Profile - July 1995

Comparison of Demographics: Table 6 compares major demographic features of the Village of Sharon Springs to that of nearby Schoharie, Schoharie County, New York State and the United States. Several features stand out. The Village of Sharon Springs shows a higher percentage of married couple families, of households headed by females, and of families living below the poverty rate than the others. The Village shows a lower percentage of owner occupied housing units, a lower median value of housing, and a lower unemployment rate than the others.

Table 6: Comparison of Demographics of Region and United States (1990 Data)

Region	United States	New York State	<i>Village of Sharon Springs</i>	Village of Schoharie	Schoharie County
No. Residents per square mile	7.21	38.10	431	614.7	51.2
% Married Couple Families	78%	67.6%	86.8%	74.3%	72.2%
% Female Householder Families	17%	13.8%	17.7%	19.8%	9.0%
% Owner Occupied Units	64.2%	47.9%	46.3%	57.8%	57.8%
Median Value of Housing Unit	\$79,100	\$82,900	\$60,400	\$81,000	\$72,200
Unemployment Rate	7.4%	8.5%	3.1%	8.9%	9.5%

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Region	United States	New York State	Village of Sharon Springs	Village of Schoharie	Schoharie County
Median Family Income	\$36,841	\$37,590	\$31,328	\$39,444	\$28,762
% of Families Below Poverty Level	11.5%	10%	12.4%	7.8%	11.1%
% of All Persons Below Poverty Level	14.2%	13%	13.6%	7.5%	17.1%

Source: 1990 US Census of Population

Employment: The largest percentage of people were occupied in executive/manager and professional positions followed by administrative support and other service oriented fields. In the past decade there have been major shifts in the type of occupations people of Sharon Springs are employed at. The number of people occupied in executive and administrative management positions increased from 14 people to 30 people in 1990. Sales moved from the tenth most common occupation to fifth most common. Administrative support occupations employed 32 people from the Village in 1980, but 25 in 1990. In 1990, there was an increase in the number of people employed within Schoharie County (145) as compared to 1980 (125) indicating more residents are employed locally. The shifts described here are common elsewhere and reflect an overall change in the United States economy to a more service and professional oriented workforce.

Table 7: Occupations by Percent of Employed Persons 16 years or Older

Occupations for employed Persons 16+	1980 (Numbers/Rank)	1990(Numbers/Rank)
Professional	27/2	32/1
Executive/ Manager	14/5	30/2
Admin. Support	32/1	25/3
Other Service	23/3	25/3
Sales	6/8	19/4
Craft/ Repair	27/2	18/5
Transport/ Moving	8/7	14/6
Farming/ Forestry		9/7
Laborer	10/6	7/8

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Occupations for employed Persons 16+	1980 (Numbers/Rank)	1990(Numbers/Rank)
Operator/ Inspector	18/4	4/9
Technical		3/10
Private Household Service		2/11
Protective Service	6/8	2/12

Source: 1990 US Census of Population

Table 8: Employment Data for Village of Sharon Springs

Description	1980	1990
Males in labor force (16 yrs & older)	98	106
Males unemployed	5	4
Males not in labor force	69	55
Females in labor force (16 yrs & older)	84	84
Females unemployed	3	2
Females not in labor force	154	143
Place of work- in county	125	145
Place of work- out of county	40	38
Place of work- out of state	2	4

*1980 mean travel time to work was 19.1 minutes

*1990 aggregate travel time to work was 39.8 minutes

Source: 1980 & 1990 - US Census of Population

Public Opinions

Resident and Landowner Survey Summary

People who responded to the survey were predominantly between 31 and 45 years old. Forty-three percent have lived in the Village for over 20 years; 87% own their own home, and most (74%) don't have children in home.

Village Services: The survey asked participants to rate Village services. Twenty percent or fewer participants rated Village services as “excellent”. Most services were rated “good” to “fair”. Water quality, water rates, sidewalk conditions, and maintenance were considered “poor” by almost half of the participants. Almost 20% rated water pressure, police protection, and pedestrian safety as “poor”.

The survey also explored people's perception of the appearance, accessibility and location of municipal buildings. Thirty-seven percent of participants felt that the museum and schoolhouse are “excellent” in appearance. Most other facilities were not rated as highly. About half rated the other facilities as “good”. A majority felt that the maintenance building appearance and accessibility are “good” and 25% said the location is “poor”. Most of the participants felt that the Village Hall appearance, accessibility and location are “good” to “fair” and only about 10% rated it as “poor”. The Water Plant and Sewer Plant's appearance, accessibility and location are “excellent” to “good” with only about 20% saying they are “fair” to “poor”. The overall rating of all the buildings in appearance, accessibility, and location was rated “good” to “excellent” by the majority of those who answered the survey.

Other aspects of the Village explored in the survey included traffic and sidewalks, business development, housing opportunities, and parks and recreational resources. The results are:

Traffic, Roads, Sidewalks:

- ◆ 68% of participants felt speed of traffic is an issue in the Village.
- ◆ Half of the participants rated the overall appearance of Route 10 as “fair” and 38% said “good”. ◆ Slightly less than half rated the overall appearance of Route 20 as “fair” and 34% said it is “good”.
- ◆ There were mixed feelings about whether parking in the Village is a problem or not. Participants were also equally split on whether additional municipal parking is needed within the Village (56% said yes, 44% said no).
- ◆ About half of the participants felt that they agree with the current sidewalk policy and half did not agree.
- ◆ The approaches to the Village were rated as “good” to “fair” by over 80% of people. Less than 10% felt these approaches were “excellent” or “poor”.

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- ◆ 67% felt that the signs advertising the Village were “adequate” (33% said they were not).
- ◆ Most participants felt that the Beautification Committee should have expanded efforts.

Businesses in the Village:

- ◆ 65% of respondents patronize Village retail businesses quite often and 28% do occasionally.
- ◆ 43% patronize *service* businesses quite often or occasionally (31%).
- ◆ Almost everyone that participated felt that the Village should provide access to resources to attract more businesses, and a majority (over 70%) were in favor of the Village committing to grants, tax incentives, low interest loans, and participation in state or federal programs.
- ◆ Feelings were about equally split about whether the Village should spend public funds for economic development or provide revolving loans.

Environmental Conditions:

- ◆ The following environmental aspects of the Village were rated: scenic views, air quality, farmland surrounding the Village, woodlands, the mineral springs, open space, historic buildings, and other. All the environmental aspects in the Village were considered to be either “very important” or “important” by about 80% of participants. 20% rated the environmental aspects as “somewhat important”. 7% of participants rated these features as “not important”. Air quality was rated by the most people as “very important” to be considered, followed, in rank order, by historic buildings, scenic views, woodlands, the springs, and then farmland surrounding the Village. Open space was considered to be “very important” by 36% of participants.

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources:

- ◆ Almost everyone (96%) was satisfied with cultural programs in the Village, 71% were satisfied with the recreational activities available, and 82% were satisfied with the recreational facilities.
71% felt there is a sense of community pride (28% said there is not).

Housing:

- ◆ Elderly, affordable and rental housing is considered to be average to adequate by most of the people who responded to this question. This was one area where a large number of participants indicated that they did not know how they felt (20 to 30% marked don’t know). The quality of elderly housing was considered to be better than the availability of it. Quality and availability of affordable and rental housing is considered to be adequate to average by most. About 12% felt that affordable housing is inadequate, and about 17% felt that rental housing is inadequate. More people were happier with the quantity and quality of elderly housing than housing for the rest of the population.
- ◆ Over 75% favored more residential growth in the Village.

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Land Use:

- ◆ About half of the participants indicated that they were familiar with the zoning code in the Village of Sharon Springs. Of those that were familiar with it, over 65% did not feel the permitting process is clear or understandable, but still felt zoning benefits the village as a whole.
- ◆ Over 77% felt that mixed use zoning would benefit the Village. 29% said that existing land use regulations work “fair”, 27% said they work “not well”, but over 36% said they had “no opinion”.
- ◆ 86% were aware there is a National Historic District in the Village, but only slightly more than half of participants knew there is a tax credit program associated with it. About 88% of participants felt that it is “important” and “very important” to preserve the historic character of the Village. About half of the participants felt it is “very important” to preserve the historical character, and an additional 35% said it is “important”. 8% said it was “not important”.
- ◆ 73% said that it would be beneficial if the historic district was revitalized (nobody said it would not be beneficial), and felt that a local historic revitalization program would be favorable.

Telephone Business Survey Summary

Thirty-three businesses were surveyed through a personal telephone survey conducted by the Comprehensive Plan Committee. The goal of this survey was to better understand how businesses perceive the Village and to learn about what their issues and desires were.

About the businesses who participated:

About half of those that were surveyed were service oriented businesses. When asked why their business was located in Sharon Springs, the most common response was that the owners were residents in the Village. Another common response was that they liked the small town and village setting. Almost half of the businesses were established since 1990. 127 full time employees and 17 permanent part time employees were reported from those surveyed. Fourteen of the businesses reported no other employees. 73% of business owners live in the Village and 66% of them own their place of business. 70% indicated that most of their business comes from outside of the Village.

Nine were not tourist oriented at all, nine said less than 10% of their business comes from tourists, three said 50% comes from tourists, three said between 50% and 90% does, and two responded that 100% of their business is from tourists. 55% said they see an increase in their business on weekends or seasonally. The reason for this increase was mainly due to seasonal or tourists.

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Village Services:

Business owners felt that the fire and police protection in the Village of Sharon Springs is excellent. Other services were rated by the majority of businesses as “good” or “fair”. Water quality and water rates were rated by almost half as “poor”. They commented that water taxes are way out of line. They additionally commented on the need for municipal parking (5 people), the need for different trash pick up days and the need for litter pick-up.

60% were aware of the Village sidewalk policy. Several people felt that it was unfair, and that everyone should share costs or that the Village should be responsible for maintenance. Other comments were that there is a lack of, or disrepair of, sidewalks in the Village.

Route 10 and Route 20 Issues:

33% felt that businesses on Route 20 benefit those on Route 10 and 15% said that there is no influence (other people responded with other comments). 27% said that Route 10 businesses benefit or influence those on Route 20, while 21% said there was no influence or benefit. Some participants did not know.

When asked about the problems between “downstreet” and “upstreet”, 27% (9 people) indicated that they did not know there was a problem. For those that do feel there is a problem, six said that the difference is that upstreet has full time ordinary business while downtown has seasonal business. Others mentioned that the two areas have different needs, that the problem stems from different ethnic groups in the two areas. Two people mentioned that downstreet has new people and activities and those doing business upstreet feel left out. A wide variety of answers with similar undertones were given. More communication, a unified vision, revitalization of the whole Village economically, education about our resources, and continued input from both groups were listed as steps that could unify the two areas.

70% felt there are enough business locations in the Village to accommodate new growth because there are plenty of empty structures and vacant land. Physical conditions of existing buildings were rated by about half as “fair” and by the other half as “poor”.

73% said that they felt it would be beneficial if the historic district were to be revitalized and an equal number favored a historic district revitalization program. A new spa, a restaurant and complete renovation of buildings were ideas on how this could take place. Lots of other ideas were given.

Landscaping, lighting, property maintenance and working together, among other ideas, were the most frequent responses to what ways the business community could help improve the aesthetics of the Village.

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Half of the businesses felt the primary benefit of having their business in the Village is that it is accessible and centrally located. Six people said they benefitted from the Village utilities and three people said there was no particular benefit to being in the Village. Other benefits mentioned were that tourists like the quaintness and history, and proximity to the baths. Drawbacks were expensive water and sewer, and no parking. Eight people said there were no drawbacks. Other comments offered relating to issues of doing business in the Village were lack of customers, not a very welcoming village, unequal enforcement of codes, and truck traffic.

The Town-wide yard sale was the only event felt to be of large benefit to the majority of businesses. The other events listed on the survey were not considered to have a benefit. Other ideas for business friendly events were an antique fair and a seasonal community harvest event.

The list of additional businesses that these business people desired to see in the Village (in order from most frequently cited to least frequently cited) included: better restaurants, liquor store, antiques, pharmacy, book store, light manufacturing, spa restored, clothing, small tourist business, another bank, theater, wine and cheese shop. 19 other ideas were listed. Gas stations, fast food, adult entertainment and bars, convenience stores, tattooing, chain stores and a slaughterhouse were the main businesses listed as not desirable.

Renovation of vacant buildings and building on vacant lots were the most frequently cited opportunity for additional commercial development in the Village. Taxes, unfriendly village government, sprawl, land use restrictions and traffic were considered to be threats to additional business growth.

About half of the business participants were familiar with the zoning code, but most of those who were familiar did not feel the permitting process is clear and understandable. Seven of these felt the current code does meet their business needs. 61% felt that mixed use zoning would benefit the business community.

Visual Preference Survey Results

In order to identify and document people's preferences for design styles and various scenes and landscapes in the Village of Sharon Springs, a visual survey was done. Residents, landowners and business owners were invited to attend a program where over 90 35 mm slides were shown. 38 people attended. Participants rated each slide on a scale of -5 to +5 according to how the scene was aesthetically pleasing to them. A variety of scenes from around the region were portrayed in the visual survey, including 28 from within the Village. The results allow us to evaluate people's visual preference for commercial buildings, including stand-alone and strip mall designs, multi-family housing, single family housing sited on individual lots and in subdivisions, and views from a variety of common local streets. This technique was also used to assess preferences for signs, general building design, landscapes and other factors that influence

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our visual preferences such as utility poles and wires, sidewalks, road widths, and preferred setbacks.

Summary of Slide Survey:

- ◆ There was no statistical difference between how residents, non-residents and non-resident landowners rated the slides.

- ◆ There was a strong consensus in ratings. There is little deviation from the average scores on 75% of slides rated positively and negatively. This indicates that the participants had similar preferences and means that there is strong consensus on those images. 25% of slides showed wide variation. For these slides, this means there was a wide range of responses received (i.e. there was no consensus reached on these images). However, wide variation such as this does not indicate unsure feelings about an image, but rather shows that different people have very different feelings about it.

- ◆ Strong aesthetic feelings exist among participants. Many slides were rated very highly negative or very highly positive.

Characteristics of top rated positive and negative slides

Positive Rated Slides

The top rated slide was the Magnesia Temple in the Village.

Commercial Buildings: The highest rated commercial buildings were all old structures. The common theme for commercial building preferences is that people liked old buildings that have been adaptively re-used. Almost all top rated slides showing commercial uses were residential structures that had been converted into commercial uses, and were traditional, colonial or Victorian in style. There were two highly rated slides showing new commercial buildings that were designed to compliment and fit in with an adjacent, traditional architectural style. For example, one highly rated slide showed an old church adjacent to a brand new bank designed to fit in and capitalize on the church's design.

Streets: All slides depicting tree lined streets were rated very high regardless of the style of housing or building type lining the street. In addition to being tree-lined, these streets were two-lane and narrow. Most of the Sharon Springs streets shown received high positive ratings (2 to 3).

Residential Buildings: Highly rated individual residences were old, traditional in architecture

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and of colonial, Victorian or federal styles.

Negative Rated Slides

The three top rated negative slides were of scenes with conventional, modern-style buildings having flat tops, internally lighted, plastic signs. The metal highway department building in the Village was also one of the most negatively rated slides.

Commercial: Each slide depicting a new building built in a strip mall fashion or in “box” style was rated negatively. Examples of these included images of fast-food restaurants, a large supermarket plaza, new gas stations, mini-warehouse storage facilities, and convenience stores.

Residential: Most slides showing multi-family housing (including apartments, senior citizen, attached townhouses, and duplexes) were rated negatively. The one slide that was rated positively showed a new dwelling built in a style that mimics a single-family house style (it is difficult to tell it apart from a single family dwelling). All images of subdivisions received negative ratings except one. That one exception received a slight positive rating (.81) and showed green space around traditional colonial style homes.

Streets: All multi-lane streets received negative ratings. These types of streets tended to have few trees, numerous telephone and utility poles, and lots of traffic. Viewed from all directions, the Route 20/Route 10 intersection received quite low ratings and was the only street from Sharon Springs to have received negative ratings. Route 20 looking west out of the Village, and looking at the school grounds, received slightly positive ratings (0 to +1).

Slides with no Consensus

There were some slides where no consensus emerged. Slides showing attempts at building multi-family housing in a more traditional style received higher ratings, but responses were still very variable. The same results are seen with newer commercial buildings built in more traditional styles (some people would call these “faux” historical). These new buildings were not negatively rated, on average, but participants had very mixed reactions to them.

Slides from Sharon Springs

Several slides were shown from Sharon Springs. Participants had very positive feelings about the visual character of the Village. Out of 28 slides shown from Sharon Springs, only five were negatively rated (see below). These were the highway department building, Bassett Healthcare building, Wal-Mart distribution center, and Route 20 in the vicinity of Route 10.

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Only four slides were in the range of 0 to +1. These were slides where there were a wide variety of responses received (no real consensus) and include the vacant lot on Route 10, the school grounds at Route 20, Route 20 looking west out of the Village, and Route 10 south. Route 10 locations received higher scores than Route 20 locations.

The temples received the highest positive scores. The following table illustrates the scores for locations within Sharon Springs.

Slide Locations	Average Score (Ranked -5 to +5)
Route 10, from sewer plant looking up hill	1.32
Washington Street near Roseboro	2.39
Route 10 businesses	1.58
Building with Rockville Café	1.34
Route 10 near Magnesia Temple looking south	1.38
Park Street	2.52
Route 20 looking towards Stewarts	-2.42
Route 20 looking towards Stewarts (different angle)	-2.34
Church on Route 20	2.59
Central National from Route 10 corner	1.03
Wal-Mart	-1.56
Route 10 vacant lot	.81
Route 10 south looking towards Village Hall	1.06
Red museum building	2.72
Bassett building	-.78
Pavilion Ave (past most of houses)	2.09
Village Hall and next two buildings	1.25
Route 20 and school grounds	.78
Central National from Rockville Café	1.72
Route 20 looking into village from Bassett	1.81

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Slide Locations	Average Score (Ranked -5 to +5)
Sharon Springs sign (the Welcome to Sharon Springs sign at the Village entrances placed by the Rotary Club)	1.69
Highway building	-3.41
White Sulphur Springs	3.34
Route 20 near school grounds looking west	.81
On Route 10 looking south, up hill, towards center of village	.97
Magnesia Temple	4.22
Chestnut St.	2.38
Residences on hill along Route 10 before Village Hall	2.31

The Visual Preference Survey included several written questions designed to explore what participants felt were the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses of, and threats to the Village of Sharon Springs. What people liked the most about the Village were (in order of priority) its historic resources, the small town and rural atmosphere, friendly people, the concert series and summer programs, new small businesses and revitalization efforts, its diverse population and lifestyles, the scenic and geologic features, including the springs and baths, the Arts Council, and trees and flowers within the Village.

What people disliked about the village (in order of priority) were the disrepair of sidewalks, unkept and rundown rooming houses, a perceived unwillingness of the Village to change and to be more open to ideas, water quality issues, lack of public parking, the upstreet-downstreet conflicts, lack of vision for the entire Village, litter on the streets, lack of interaction between the school and community, small town attitudes, and the water billing system based on fixtures rather than usage.

The top factors felt to threaten the Village included the potential for modern architecture and low quality development in the Village such as fast food establishments and strip malls, further deterioration of buildings, over development and unplanned growth, high taxes, population increases resulting in a decrease in the small town atmosphere, increased traffic, and lack of citizen interest and local support of businesses in the Village.

Several positive opportunities to improve the Village were offered in this survey. These included tourist outreach, appearance standards (painting, lighting, signage, flowers), better

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enforcement and building maintenance standards, upgrade the baths, offer tax and other incentives to encourage new businesses, bike and walk paths, especially along the old railway, and a more open government with more meetings, better planning, and a unified vision.

2. Physical and Environmental Conditions

Geology

The defining geological features of the Village of Sharon Springs are the karst (limestone) formations. Except for the northeast and central portions, the rest of the Village is underlain with limestone rock. Karst features include caves, sink holes, sinking streams, cracked limestone pavement. These are formed when ground water dissolves the limestone rocks, forming cracks. Over time, these small cracks have become bigger as more limestone has dissolved away. Eventually, the karst features seen today form. Several karst features are seen in the Village including a karst spring and sink holes. In addition to the karst spring, at least five sulphur springs are also found within the Village near Brimstone Creek. Sulphur springs likely come from underlying shales whereas karst springs form in limestone. There is a large karst spring behind the Village Hall. Water in this spring comes from the Old Maid's sinkhole (south of Route 20), and was determined by dye testing in the 1960's. Cracks and crevices leading to karst springs are analogous to pipes and thus these systems are very susceptible to pollution.

Old Maid's Hole is a significant sinkhole in the Village. The area that this sinkhole drains is, at this point in time, undetermined. Recently, the cave associated with the sinkhole has not been taking water in as quickly as it used to. As a result, water has flooded across Route 20 more frequently.

Another suspected sinkhole is located just north out of the Village on Beechwood. On Route 10 there is a spring exiting a vertical face of a cliff. It is covered with tufa, a secondary deposit of calcite. There are huge sinks to the west of the Village near the cemetery in Leesville. The destination of flow from these sinks are unknown, although they may flow to Old Maid's.

Topography

Elevation in the Village ranges from 940 feet at its northern limits to approximately 1,460 feet on the east and west of the Village. Much of the Village is not characterized by restrictive slope. However, an area of 16-25% slope runs from the northern border of the Village through the center portion south, south almost to Route 20. This area lies just west of the Route 10 downtown area, between Route 10 and Beechwood. These areas are limited for the most part to open space and selected recreational use and those lands with an incline of over 25 percent are generally too rugged and otherwise poorly suited to accommodate development of any substantial nature and is best suited to woodland, open space and wildlife habitat use.

Much of the rest of the Village is in the 2-5% slope category. Such areas generally provide

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sufficient incline for proper run-off while at the same time posing few limitations by way of change in grade for most types of development.

Areas having 6-10% slope lie along the western border of the Village, in the north-east corner of the Village, and in the area between Pavilion and Washington Aves. Another, narrow band, runs from Route 20 east of and then across route 10. The 6-10% slope category is often some of the most desirable residential land not only because of sufficient incline to assure proper surface run-off, but also because the lay of the land tends to be more interesting in terms of setting. At the upper range of this category, however, the degree of incline begins to pose limitations to the highway system and consequently to any intensive level of development.

Those lands in the 11-15% category are likely to be restricted to isolated residential and limited agricultural use and may be suited to open space use requiring limited vehicular access and minimum disturbance of the land and its natural cover.

Wetlands and Waterways

The Village of Sharon Springs has one major creek within its borders: Brimstone Creek. Brimstone Creek is a year-round stream, which drains a large portion of the Village and flows in a northerly direction into the Canajoharie Creek. There is one small wetland within the just to the east of Route 10, near the water treatment facility. This is not a NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) regulated wetland. Several NYS DEC regulated wetlands are located in the Town of Sharon near the Village however (Cedar Swamp, for example). Bowmaker Pond lies south of the Village border. Seven acres of created wetlands are located on the Wal-Mart property, north of the building.

Soils

Approximately 14 different soil types can be found in the Village. They are basically silty clay or rocky silt loams. Many of these are deep, well drained to moderately drained soils. Many are seasonally wet. The soil types found in the Village generally have moderate to severe limitations for homesites, septic tank effluent, and streets and parking lots due to seasonal wetness or slow permeability.

Transportation: Streets, Sidewalks, Traffic, Parking

Streets

Routes 10 and 20 are both major New York State highways that intersect in the Village of Sharon Springs. Route 20 is an east-west four-lane highway and Route 10 is a north-south two lane highway. They intersect at a traffic light. Both roads are maintained by the New York State

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Department of Transportation. No major road repairs or projects are planned by the NYS DOT in the near future except for work related to drainage from Old Maids Hole on Route 20. There are 4.34 miles of streets under the Village’s jurisdiction. These residential streets can be generally described as local streets.

According to the Highway Department, current local road needs are as follows: additional parking at the Route 10/20 intersection, difficult access to Route 20 from Beechwood, and limited sight distances from Park to Beechwood and on South Street. There are no major road projects planned in the near future. It is anticipated that most highway work will be maintenance oriented. For enhanced maintenance of local streets, the following equipment is needed: brush clipper, loader/backhoe, two-way radios, 5 yard bucket loader, street sweeper, snowmobile/4-wheeler to check watershed area, water pump on wheels, walk-behind snowblower for cleaning sidewalks, and a new 30'x50' storage building.

Sidewalks

Many roads in the Village do not currently have sidewalks, including Route 20, Beechwood Road and the area north of Willow Street. In other locations where sidewalks do exist, most are in fair to poor condition. Poor conditions include sidewalks having cracks, pavement heaving, excess grass or vegetation growing through them, or narrow conditions. A large percentage of the Village sidewalk system is in need of maintenance.

Traffic

Data from New York State Department of Transportation (1989 to 1998) shows that there has been over a 100% increase in the average daily traffic along Route 10 from Route 20 to the Village line. There was a 35% increase in traffic between 1988 and 1997 on Route 165 to Route 20, a 14% increase along Route 20 from the Otsego County line to Route 10, and a 5% increase on Route 10 to Route 145. Most of the traffic increase on Route 10, from Route 20 to the Village line, came between 1995 and 1998.

TRAFFIC COUNT DATA (source: DOT Binghamton, counts are for a 24 hour period)

Location	Date	Average Daily Traffic	Percent Change
Route 10 from Route 20 to Village line	1989	1, 150	102% from 1989 to 1998
	1991	1, 450	
	1995	1, 950	

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Location	Date	Average Daily Traffic	Percent Change
	1998	2,325	
Route 165 to Route 20	1988	1,330	31.6% from 1988 to 1997
	1991	1,050	
	1994	1,350	
	1997	1,750	
Otsego County line to Route 10	1989	2,400	14.6% from 1989 to 1995
	1992	2,650	
	1995	2,750	
Route 10 to Route 145	1990	3,200	4.7% from 1990 to 1996
	1993	2,600	
	1996	3,350	
Route 165 on Route 10 to Sharon Springs	1998	1,575	NA

Parking for Commercial Uses

Limited on-street and off-street parking can be found in the Village. In commercial areas, on-street parking is allowed only along Route 10 in the downtown section of the Village where several commercial uses exist, although at times people use the shoulder for parking near the Church across from the school. In the other commercial areas, off-street parking lots are privately owned. There are no municipally-owned or maintained parking lots. Several private, off-street lots exist however to serve individual businesses. For businesses near the Route 10/Route 20 intersection, approximately 70 spots exist. East on Route 20 both the Bassett Health Clinic and the Log House have parking lots. Approximately 100 off-street parking spots are located within the Village.

Aesthetic Characteristics

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The aesthetic character of the Village of Sharon Springs is derived from a combination of environmental and cultural factors. Participants in the Visual Preference Survey described various locations within the Village that were both very aesthetically pleasing and displeasing. The aesthetic characteristics of Route 20 were described in both positive and negative terms: People like the rural setting with vistas and surrounding farmlands, the school complex, neat homes and wide clean streets. Participants do not like the Wal-Mart Center, gas stations and chain stores, lack of signage and uniform aesthetic standards, and the feel of strip zoning. Route 10's aesthetic character is generally very favorable and is described as: having charming, appealing historical architecture, a rural setting, old hotels, a revitalizing Main Street, and street trees. Negative aesthetic characteristics of Route 10 included: lack of adequate sidewalks, run-down buildings, too many open spaces where buildings used to be, lack of landscaping along roads, and lack of unifying signage.

The aesthetic character of Pavilion, South, Washington and Union Streets were generally favorable with people commenting on the historic and interesting (charming, quaint, beautiful) architecture. The negative comments relating to this area of the Village centered around lack of sidewalks, rough roads, and the pool area being unsightly. The character of Chestnut, Park and Beechwood Roads was described positively as a rural, tree-lined residential area. The disrepair of sidewalks and too many mobile homes in this area were viewed negatively. Several people commented that this area is less interesting compared to other areas of the Village.

In addition to the aesthetic character in the Village created by the historic and rural nature of the Village, several scenic locations were identified during the surveying process. The “golf course area” is considered to be an important vista as viewed from the Town pool, as is the view of the valley from the “Log House” on Route 20. Along Route 10, the Brimstone Creek ravine is a hidden asset. Though there is no direct visual access to the Brimstone Creek ravine, a waterfall, with fragile rock faces give character to this undeveloped area.

Emergency Services

Both fire and ambulance services are provided by a volunteer department. The Joint Fire District serving the Village was formed in 1964. They have one ambulance, three pumper engines, one tanker and other miscellaneous equipment. About 40 volunteers make up the fire department and an additional 20 for the ambulance service. There are about 220 combined fire and ambulance runs per year.

Municipal Services - Water, Sewer, Facilities

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Village Hall - The current Village Hall used to be a jail, and then was a fire department. The ground floor houses the Village Office and the Library, and the upstairs is a large meeting room with a kitchen, none of which are handicapped accessible. The Office capacity is ten people. The Library has two separate rooms; the room at the front of the building has a capacity of fifteen people and the other room has a capacity of ten. The upstairs meeting room can accommodate forty people. There is a restroom between the Village Office and the Library which is used by the public only from the Library side. The office space is adequate for current Village purposes. When the Library has science or craft activities for children, the upstairs room is used so that students can spread out. Usually during the book studies there is more than enough space in the front room of the Library. That room is also used by several groups for meetings, e.g. the Recreation Committee, the Planning Board, the ZBA, Library Board, sometimes the Village Board, and others.

Village Water System - In 1889, a three million gallon reservoir, located two miles southwest of the Village was built. The reservoir is supplied by two springs located further west in Otsego County. A filtration system was added in 1915, and a well and 50,000 gallon elevated water storage tank were added in 1931. As demand grew, another well and storage tank were added to the system in 1933. At this time, Engleville Pond was connected to the reservoir. By 1986, the filters had reached the end of their design life and a new facility was designed and built at a cost of \$1,687,200 (funded by federal grants and low interest loans). In 1991, the new water treatment facility became operational. The system is designed for a 500,000 Gallons Per Day (GPD) capacity and has the potential for expansion to a future capacity of 1,000,000 GPD. The water source is Engleville Pond (primary) with 42 million gallons and a backup well that can supply 250 GPM. The demand in the year 2010 was expected to reach up to 487,000 GPD. The water treatment facility has state-of-the-art filtration, chemistry, and plant control features. There is an 11,000 gallon wastewater holding tank that discharges to the Village Sanitary Sewer System.

Village Sewer System - The Sanitary Sewer System is a digester/sludge system with a capacity of treating 430,000 gallons per day. The system is not at capacity at this time. It averages between 250,000 and 375,000 gallons per day. Sludge from the system is drawn to a landfill.

Code and Building Enforcement- Two part-time officers are employed by the Village for land use enforcement and code enforcement (building and fire codes).

Highway Department - the Maintenance Garage is located on Route 10 north of the Village Hall. This building houses the department and its equipment. An uncovered salt pile is located at this site along Brimstone Creek.

Cultural, Educational and Recreational Resources

Sharon Springs Central School: The Sharon Springs Central School District has 425 students (in the year 2000). The ratio of students to teachers in the high school is 20 to one and in the elementary and middle school is 15 to one. Thirty-two students graduated in 2000. Of these, 22 went on to college, two went into the military, three into vocational schools, and five went directly into employed positions. Most of those who are now employed took positions with factory or trades. The drop-out rate for the district is .7%. In 2000, there was 16 home schooled children. The District does permit non-school activities to take place in the school facilities by special request to the principal. The School is currently completing a building expansion that will include additional classrooms.

Sharon Springs Summer Recreation Program: A six week summer program for kids aged kindergarten through sixth grade is available. Funding for the program comes from the Town, Village and the Decentralization grant program. Local people are employed in the program. The program runs daily and includes swimming lessons, arts and crafts, outdoor games and a reading program (in concert with the school). They also host visiting speakers and workshops focusing on the arts, dance, puppet shows, etc. A winter teen program is also available including teen nights at the school and inexpensive outings such as ice skating and skiing trips.

Pool: The Town of Sharon owns the pool facility on Pavilion Ave. and it is jointly operated and maintained by the Town and Village.

Chalybeate Park: This park is owned and operated by the Arts Council. The park includes a gazebo and a small building currently undergoing renovations. In the summer, a tent on the site houses the summer concert series. The Arts Council plans on renovating the building for restroom and concession facilities and hope to build a permanent-roofed building for the concerts.

Library: The Sharon Free Library was the first public library in Schoharie County and was founded in 1915. As part of the Mohawk Valley Inter Library Association, the facility has access to over 30 libraries. The facility itself has 9,314 volumes in house. The Library Board consists of 12 members. The librarian is a salaried position with support from volunteers and board members. Programs include book lectures and discussions, kids summer reading (which had 100 children participating in 1999), craft workshops and parenting programs. There are currently three internet computers available for public use and a fourth for use solely by the librarian.

Mineral baths and springs: the Mineral Baths are privately owned and are open for business for six to eight weeks in the summer.

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Museum: The Sharon Museum Complex is owned by the Village of Sharon Springs and run by the Sharon Historical Society. The complex consists of a museum building, which was donated by Esther Sticht in 1972, the 1860 Chestnut Street School, which was moved to the site in 1989 along with its outhouse. Also on the site is a barn that is currently used as storage. There are plans to convert the barn into more museum exhibition space in the near future. The collection contains articles, paper and ephemera from the Town's early days as well as the spa resort's history. The Museum is entirely staffed by Historical Society volunteers and open throughout July and August daily from 2 to 4 pm.

Little League: The Little League facility is not associated with the Village, but is organized and managed by parents. Many children in the Village participate in Little League activities.

Dance Studio: A privately owned dance studio located on Route 10 offers dance programs year-round.

Historical Resources

Sharon Springs has a wealth of historical resources throughout the Village. In addition to the many sites and buildings located in the Village, there are numerous books, booklets, and collections showcasing the rich history of the Village. Books and booklets that explore the Village's history include "Reflections of Sharon", "Short Season of Sharon Springs" by Dr. Stuart Blumin, and the Founder's Day booklets. The Mitchell Collection, housed at the Sharon Central School, is a diverse set of historic photographs and memorabilia on the Village. The museum also has a postcard collection depicting various aspects of Sharon's history.

Several historical sites are located at the intersection of Routes 10 and 20 and along Route 20. Currently housing several new businesses, including Baby Janes and The Rockville Café, the main building at this intersection used to be an opera house with a ballroom upstairs. It also housed a hardware store and grocery store. Where the post office and bank are now located, the Fethers (Feathers) Hotel once stood. From the 1930's through the 1970's, the same corner was the Twin Pines Restaurant and liquor store. Another hotel, Crammell's Hotel, stood across the street. A drug store and grocery store used to be located at the Route 20 and Beechwood corner. Other "upstreet" uses such as the creamery, other grocery stores, and numerous hotels have burned or been torn down over the years.

A survey of historical resources in the Village of Sharon Springs was conducted in 1993 by Dr. Jane Busch. The survey covered what is today known as the "downstreet" portion of the Village and what historically constituted the mineral water spa. This survey was used as the basis for

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National Historic District designation. Notable historic resources include the spring and bath houses, hotels and boardinghouses, private houses, commercial buildings, and religious buildings. Details on these historical resources can be found in the “Sharon Springs Historic Survey, 1993, Summary Report by Jane C. Busch”. In review, these historical resources include:

+Four spring houses and four bath houses that define Sharon Springs as a mineral water spa. These include the Magnesia Temple (1863), Chalybeate Temple (1920's), White Sulphur Temple (1930) and the spring house sheltering the Magnesium Spring (1920's). The Lower Bath House (1876) and the Inhalation Bath House (1884) are rare surviving examples of 19th century bath houses. The Beaux Arts Imperial Bath House (1927) and the Upper Bath House (early 1900's) were built to provide more modern bathing facilities.

+Hotels and boardinghouses are prominent in the Village landscape and like the bath and spring houses, define Sharon Springs as different than its neighbors. The largest hotels include the Adler Hotel (1928), Roseboro Hotel (1896), and the American Hotel (1850). Other medium-sized hotels are the 1898 Washington, 1927 Empire and 1930-35 Columbia. In addition to these hotels, there are about twenty boardinghouses. Most of these were built as private homes and later expanded as boarding houses.

+Private residences make up about half of the 125 buildings included in the survey. About a third of the houses are vernacular Greek Revival style. Other house styles include Italianate houses, Queen Anne, Gothic Revival, Second Empire, Colonial Revival and Arts & Crafts. Four family estates were established in Sharon Springs and exist today.

+In addition to the hotels and boarding houses, there are fourteen commercial buildings. Most are located on Main Street. There are three brick commercial blocks: Klinkhart Hall (1885), has a movie theater on the first floor and Masonic Hall on the second floor; the Samson block (1906), housed the bank and post office until 1989; and Smith, Empie, and Smith Department Store (1910). The Sharon Springs Garage, built in 1924 was of concrete block construction.

+Trinity Church, 1856, and Rectory (1860) are Gothic Revival buildings of local limestone. The Sharon Springs Synagogue (1904) has Queen Anne style detailing. Other buildings noted in the survey include the Golf Club House (1932), the three White Sulphur Barns (1840-60) and the Chestnut Street Schoolhouse (1864). The schoolhouse was moved to Main Street in 1989.

The historic survey concluded “ *The survey area as a whole has great integrity. Out of 125 buildings, only nine date after World War II; i.e. nine buildings would currently be considered non-historic. There is also high integrity for individual buildings; perhaps ten have been so altered that they have lost their historic appearance. Because of this integrity, the survival of so many historic buildings with so few modern intrusions, visitors to Sharon Springs can sense*

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what it was like to visit an early 20th century mineral water spa. This sense of a past way of life is conveyed despite the poor condition of many of the buildings. As a collection of spa-related buildings, Sharon Springs is a rarity, to say the least; it's a site of national historic significance."

Land Use

Current Land Uses

There are 347 parcels in the Village comprising 1,100.23 acres of land. In 1999, the land value totaled \$4,907,102.00 and the total value of all properties was \$80,966,719.00. Land uses in the Village (See Map ?) are concentrated on what can be described as being a core of small residential or commercial lots surrounded by many, very large parcels classified either as vacant lands or as unbuilt, residentially zoned lands. Smaller vacant lots can be found throughout the Village, however. Residential development, either in single or multi-family units, makes up about half of the land area of the Village. Most of the currently developed residential parcels contain single family dwellings.

Vacant lands account for another large portion of the Village. Except for a few scattered commercial uses, the majority of commercial uses are located either at the intersection of Route 10 and 20 or further north along Route 10. The Wal-Mart Distribution Center on Route 20 is a very large commercial parcel that was annexed to the Village in 1995. Several large parcels described as "recreation or entertainment land uses" exist. Two large parcels along Route 20, adjacent to and just west of the Wal-Mart Distribution Center are in agriculture.

There are 30 businesses located on either Routes 10 or 20 in the Village. These businesses include not only the hotels, motels, and bed & Breakfast establishments, but several restaurants, a bank, liquor store, gifts, convenience store, a laundromat, and several recreational businesses such as the bowling lanes, and the Imperial Baths. Other services are located in the Village including a medical office, an adult home, auto repair, and the post office. There are 106 currently available hotel, motel, and B&B rooms in the Village with a total potential of approximately 340 hotel and B&B rooms.

Building Development

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New building in the Village has been at a relatively low level for many years. Since 1989, six building permits have been issued for new residential uses. In addition, the Spring Meadows senior housing unit was built during this time period. Eight new permits have been issued for commercial uses, including the Wal-Mart Distribution Center. The Distribution Center lands were annexed into the Village in 1995. In addition to these permits given for new buildings, numerous permits were issued for demolitions, garages, decks and porches, and renovations.

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New Commercial Development

There has been a good deal of business revitalization in the Village of Sharon Springs. Sixteen new businesses have located to or opened up in Sharon Springs within the past five years. These range from a health clinic to a dance studio and antiques.

In addition to these new business enterprises, at least two major renovations of historic hotels have begun (the Roseboro and the American) and numerous home occupations exist.

Current Land Use Regulations

The Village of Sharon Springs currently has building and sanitary, subdivision, and zoning regulations in place.

The building and sanitary regulations provide basic and uniform standards relating to the condition and maintenance of existing structures and uses, and the construction and installation of new structures. They are designed to establish reasonable safeguards for the safety, health and general well-being of the occupants.

The subdivision regulations outline the standards and required improvements for lands to be subdivided and set forth the review procedures and time lines for subdivision approval.

The zoning regulations establish zoning districts, set density and required dimensions of lots and setbacks, provide for conditional uses, and procedures to administer the regulations. Zoning also provides standards and requirements for off-street parking and loading, signs, and screening. The zoning schedule outlines permitted standard uses, permitted conditional uses, minimum lot requirements, lot coverage, allowed building heights and yard dimensions. These regulations are administered by the code enforcement officer and the Board of Appeals. The Planning Board has an advisory role in reviewing zoning permits. No site plan requirements currently exist.

Four residential districts exist: R (Residential), R-T (Residential-transitional), R-M (Residential-mobile homes), and R-2 (Residential - Seasonal). Minimum lot sizes requirements in the residential districts range from 20,000 square feet to 2 acres, depending on type of residence. Minimum lot sizes are also set for uses having overnight accommodations. Three commercial zones exist: M-S (Main Street with an 8000 square foot minimum lot size), C-B (Commercial-Business with a 15,000 square feet to 2 acre minimum lot size) and C-I (Commercial Industrial with a 2 acre minimum lot size). An open space zone (O-S) is available to encourage open space recreation, but single family dwellings are allowed in this district as well. There is a flood hazard overlay (F-H) with specific requirements to protect people and property in the flood zone.

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In addition, the zoning code makes provision for the creation of one or more of several types of planned development districts (Planned residential, recreational, commercial or industrial). These are overlay districts that permit land developments on several parcels to be planned as single units and often contain both residential dwellings and commercial uses. They are permitted in Sharon Springs zoning code, but are not mapped. The code outlines the process for regulating and approving a planned development.

Conditional use permits are required for home occupations, multiple and group dwellings, tourist homes and hotels, public and semi-public uses or utilities, commercial recreation uses, gasoline stations, service stations, and other commercial uses provided for in the C-B (Commercial - business) and C-I (Commercial - Industrial) districts.

Village of Sharon Springs Vision Statement

Sharon Springs is a vibrant community built on a rich and diverse heritage as a health spa and resort. Through a strong and ongoing effort that includes public/private partnerships and careful planning, Sharon Springs is a village that continues to celebrate and preserve its uniqueness, but always looks towards the future in forward-thinking and energetic ways. It is a village that has a mix of residential, commercial, and open space uses. Sharon Springs encourages both the creative reuse of existing buildings, and new growth that maintains its historic, aesthetic, and small village atmosphere. It has become a year round tourist destination and a desirable residential location by capitalizing on its unique historic characteristics and the spa setting, and by offering a high quality of life. Sharon Springs strong pedestrian orientation, beautiful streets, and updated signs unify the various sections of the village. All these qualities, along with expanded tourist, business, and recreational opportunities make Sharon Springs a unique and dynamic community.

3. Key Concerns, Goals and Strategies (not in any priority order)

Housing

Key Concerns:

- 1) Building maintenance and repair of housing units, especially seasonal units is often poor.
- 2) Housing for singles, families and senior citizens needs to stay affordable.
- 3) Quality residential neighborhoods need to be maintained.

Goals and Strategies

- 1) To offer safe, affordable, quality housing to all residents in the Village:
 - 1.1. The Village should support efforts to help implement a variety of affordable housing options, such as assistance for first time home buyers.
 - 1.2. Ensure that the zoning regulations allow for mixed and multiple uses in buildings and within zoning districts.
- 2) To ensure that new residences and subdivision of land is done in a manner consistent with the Village's historical architecture and setting:
 - 2.1. Amend zoning and subdivision regulations so that new subdivisions have street sizes, building lot layouts, setbacks, build-to-lines, and lot sizes that are consistent and compatible with existing and traditional patterns.
 - 2.2. Amend zoning and subdivision regulations so that amenities such as sidewalks, street trees and lighting are design and layout requirements of new subdivisions.
 - 2.3. Amend zoning and subdivision regulations so that all utilities and wires associated with new subdivisions are buried underground.
 - 2.4. Amend zoning and subdivision regulations so that subdivisions on parcels of 5 or more acres in size have a percentage of land that is to be set aside for green space and/or recreation through a conservation subdivision mechanism.
- 3) To encourage new year-round residents and to promote creative uses of existing buildings for new year-round residential housing opportunities in ways that also encourage seasonal uses and businesses:
 - 3.1. An evaluation and assessment of older buildings in Sharon Springs should be

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completed to determine their potential for renovation to single family or other affordable housing. This assessment should include a determination if the building is currently used seasonally.

3.2. To encourage adaptive use of historic buildings, aggressively work to access funding for new and rehabilitated housing from Housing and Urban Development, Small Cities Program (United States Government) and the HOME Program (New York State Division of Housing). To facilitate this, work closely with the Schoharie County Rural Preservation Office in Cobleskill. Seek funding especially to convert unused, historic buildings into single or multi-family housing. For those structures where, because of the Uniform Fire Prevention and Building Code regulations, upper stories can not be used for living space, creatively utilize these spaces for recreation, office, or other uses. Seek economic development funds to match with these housing funds to accomplish this.

3.3. Initiate a Village-sponsored housing committee or other mechanism whose role is to encourage housing that meets the goals of this plan. Specific roles could also be to work with agencies such as the Rural Preservation Program in Cobleskill to research and obtain funding for new housing opportunities, and to recruit, encourage and work with private developers to promote additional private investment in rehabilitation and creation of new affordable housing, including seasonal units as well as other commercial uses such as bed and breakfasts. Such private investment may benefit from programs through the Affordable Housing Corporation, and the Housing Trust Fund Corporation. In addition, after the 2000 census figures are available, this committee should reassess the housing needs and projections to identify target groups that may need assistance and to set specific long term goals for the creation of affordable units.

3.4. The Village should encourage private initiatives and government programs that promote the development of a diversity of housing of varying price ranges in the housing stock.

3.5 Explore funding building owners to enhance buildings, especially their facades and signs. The Village should explore funding a small grant/facade improvement program, use of tax incentives for building improvements and seek other funds for programs such as new sign design. A long term analysis on the impact of tax incentives on the Village budget should be included in the study prior to implementation. Obtaining status as a Certified Local Government will enable the Village to become eligible for grants, training, and other assistance from the State for such purposes.

4) To improve year-round maintenance of buildings:

4.1. Enact a maintenance provision in the zoning code, or as a stand-alone local law for

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commercial and residential structures. Ensure that adequate tools, criteria and standards are in place in these regulations. This detail is needed to express the expectations and procedures of the Village so that the code enforcement officer can be the most effective. The Village should provide sufficient funds for enforcement and prosecution efforts. To further enhance enforcement activities, the Village should require on-going training of the Code Enforcement Officer.

4.2. A maintenance provision should include the following steps: inspection, warning time to repair or maintain, signing off on completed work, or if not completed in a timely manner pressing legal action, and if necessary, assessing or preparing liens or fines against the property owner. In addition, the Village should implement a policy that provides for the Village to complete necessary repairs and bill the landowner, putting any unpaid portion on the next tax bill.

4.3 Landlords should be encouraged to upgrade and maintain their properties up to code. Stricter penalties should be enforced for non-compliance.

The Transportation System

Key Concerns

- 1) There are few local road standards, except those in the subdivision law.
- 2) Protecting the views and gateways to the Village is important.
- 3) Speeding and traffic violations in the Village are a safety issue.
- 4) There is a lack of signs, and many of those that exist are confusing and/or do not enhance the theme of the historic, small village. Signs at the gateways to the Village are not located properly. Signage is not uniform and does not convey any theme. Signs located at the intersection of Route 10 and Route 20 are confusing. Finally, signage does not direct travelers from Route 20 to Route 10 north to the historic area of the Village.
- 5) Route 20, especially, and portions of Route 10, are very wide, and lack sidewalks, street trees and landscaping, and on-street parking.
- 6) Sidewalks throughout the Village are inadequate. This problem is not only a safety issue, but contributes to the disconnection between the Route 20 and Route 10 portions of the Village. Where sidewalks do exist, year-round maintenance is problematic and sidewalks become unuseable in the winter. Few pedestrian crosswalks exist to aid people in crossing Route 20 or Route 10. There are only two pedestrian crosswalks in the Village, one at Routes 10 and 20 and one in front of the school.
- 7) There is a lack of parking at the Route 10/20 intersection to adequately serve economic development in that area. There is a lack of signage as to where appropriate parking locations are. As economic development continues in the Village, a lack of parking to support new

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businesses and events will be problematic.

8) On-going flooding along Route 20 near Old Maids Hole is problematic.

Goals and Strategies

1) To implement traffic and road planning options that are consistent with the existing small town scale of streets in the Village:

1.1. New street layout should result in streets that are interconnected in a grid or modified grid pattern, rather than cul-de-sac's.

1.2. Develop street standards that allow for new residential roads to be built in a manner that does not result in over-built roads. For example, two-way residential streets, allowing parking on one side can have a 50 foot right of way with room for four foot sidewalks on each side, street trees, and about 24 feet of pavement.

1.3 Ensure that all new roads have sidewalks and street trees.

1.4 Discourage new residential buildings that present a garage as the main part of the structure facing the main street and encourage new residential buildings that place garages to the rear of the dwelling or set-back from the dwelling on a side yard.

2) Resolve issues relating to sight distance limitations, speeding, streetscape character, signage, pedestrian safety, and parking on New York State highways in the Village:

2.1. Continue to open up and pursue lines of communication with Region 9 staff of NYS Department of Transportation (DOT).

2.2. Work to reduce speeds through the Village by creating a more "village-like" streetscape along Route 20. Work closely with Region 9 staff of NYS DOT to reduce the number of lanes on Route 20 through the Village to two lanes (with a maximum of three going east up the hill) and use the extra space for on-street parking and tree-planting. New trees should be planted as close to the road as NYS DOT will allow. A streetscape design for Route 20 should be developed to provide for transitional elements that will enhance people's perception of the Village. This design should include, where feasible, changes in pavement texture, more formal landscaping, street trees and sidewalks, enhanced lighting, and new village entrance symbols.

2.3. Increase the number of pedestrian crosswalks on Routes 10 and 20. Explore the feasibility with NYS DOT, of developing pedestrian islands to accommodate pedestrian crossings of Route 20. Include NYS DOT in planning for using the road and pedestrian

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system along state highways to enhance the connection between “upstreet” and “downstreet” locations. If possible, the pedestrian walkway across a street should be defined by a change in texture in the street

2.4. Remove the existing clutter of signs at the Route 10 and 20 intersection. Work with NYS DOT to ensure that new directional signs are less confusing and better designed. Specifically, new signs or changes to signs are needed as follows: a) signs stating “speed limit strictly enforced” and “speed zone ahead” should be placed at the entrances to the Village; b) a sign near the dance studio should be placed to alert vehicular traffic to children at play; c) a sign stating “Village of Sharon Springs” should be placed at the entrance coming north from Cobleskill; d) A “Parking Area Ahead” sign should be placed entering the Village coming south coming from Canajoharie; e) a new historic district sign, along with appropriate directional (TOD) signs are needed at Route 20 to direct people to the historic district; f) Main Street signs are needed on Main Street; g) Put a sign at the Routes 10 and 20 intersection that points out Sharon Hill, Sharon Center, and the Historic District, and h) Work with Wal*Mart to allow their trucks to park off-hours on their property thus solving the idling truck problem.

2.5. The local highway department should determine which locations have sight distance limitations and, with NYS DOT, work to cut back vegetation to open up these areas.

2.6. Increase local enforcement efforts to reduce speeding and traffic violations on Routes 20 and 10 and on village streets.

2.7. Work with NYS DOT to choose and implement traffic calming devices that will work to slow traffic. These could include planting street trees, pedestrian crossing signs and markings, textured pavements, bike lanes and benches.

3) To enhance signs both at the entrances of and within the Village, in a uniform manner to effectively communicate attractions, directions, and the character of the Village:

3.1. In order to heighten the sense of entry into the Village of Sharon Springs, landscaped signs should be placed at the four major entrance points. Sign design should be such that the small town and historical nature of the Village is promoted.

4) To provide a well maintained, safe and contiguous system of sidewalks throughout the Village:

4.1. Work closely with NYS DOT engineers and landscape architects to re-design a pedestrian system of sidewalks along Routes 20 and 10. Enhancements should pay

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careful attention to providing not only for the sidewalk, but also for ensuring the pedestrian's safety and regarding ADA accessibility. This would include adequate lighting and crosswalks. Ensure that any new sidewalks along Route 10 and 20 are continuous and that they follow through across driveways. Consider, where feasible, use of texturing of the sidewalk to create a more pleasurable walking experience. Concrete sidewalks can be scored and colored to simulate materials such as brick. Seek federal and state funding for enhancing the sidewalk network.

4.2. Seek mechanisms to implement a new lighting system in the Village. Street lights should be decorative and blend with the historic style of the Village. If lighting is installed, consider using twelve foot high decorative lamp posts located no greater than 80 feet on center. Lighting in residential areas could be confined to intersections and corners. Use of minimum wattage, color corrected lighting and shielded light fixtures to prevent glare, consistent with the recommendations from the New England Light Pollution Advisory Group and the International Dark Sky Association, is encouraged.

4.3. Encourage use of street furniture to enhance use of the pedestrian network. This should include benches, waste containers, planters, and bicycle racks. Street furniture should be selected to ensure compatibility with the architecture of the surrounding buildings and the character of the area. The zoning code should be amended to ensure that street furniture is allowed and encouraged. Consider making street furniture a component of new commercial uses in the Village.

4.4. Explore alternatives for maintenance of sidewalks.

5) To identify and provide adequate parking for residents and businesses:

5.1. Consider increasing the requirement for off-street parking for new residential buildings to be from one space per each dwelling unit to two spaces per each dwelling unit.

5.2. Create a parking model to predict future parking needs. Consider using "The Parking Handbook for Small Communities" by John Edwards and published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Main Street Center as a guide to developing this model.

5.3. Seek parcels of land in or adjacent to the business districts that could be purchased and utilized for public parking. Consider using Chapter 4 of "The Parking Handbook for Small Communities" as an aid in planning and developing new parking facilities. Inventorying parcels in and around the business districts that may be vacant or

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appropriate for such a use is a first step. Consider using public funds to purchase, pave and maintain the lot(s). Work with NYS DOT to seek funding for off-street parking lots.

5.4. One other mechanism that could be explored to increase public parking would be to implement use of mitigation fees in certain locations of the Village. These fees would be paid to the Village in lieu of the developer providing parking spaces for their use. The Village could use these fees to acquire and construct public parking.

6) To develop and implement a road and pedestrian network that encourages and supports a variety of users including cyclists, and pedestrians:

6.1. Identify locations in the Village that could be used for accommodating a bike/hike trail. Specifically explore locations such as along Brimstone Creek, and places where a trail could connect with sidewalks in the village.

6.2. Develop a bike/hike trail system plan that delineates potential trails, funding sources, long term maintenance needs, and costs and explores landownership issues, insurance and safety considerations. The trail system should be a regional village/town effort. A Village or Village/Town sponsored committee would be appropriate to develop a draft plan to accommodate biking and hiking. Pursue local, state, federal and private funds for bicycle compatible improvement projects.

6.3. Explore the feasibility of and work with NYS DOT to provide for a shared roadway system that allows cyclists in a bike lane. Provision of useable shoulders on local roads may be the most economical method for accommodating bicyclists along many of the Village's streets. The "FHWA Selecting Roadway Treatments to Accommodate Bicycles" offers a variety of standards that can be used for roadway design that accommodates bikes.

6.4. Once developed, explore methods of funding the adequate marking and maintenance of all bike routes.

6.5. Provide bike racks in the business districts. As bike paths are developed, work to connect them with the business locations in the Village.

6.6. Build a scenic overlook on Route 10 to allow viewing of the ravine and waterfall. Seek money from NYS DOT as an environmental initiative to help fund this effort.

Infrastructure (Streets, Water, Sewer, and Municipal Buildings)

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Key Concerns

- 1) There is a need for consistently high quality drinking water.
- 2) There is concern among residents and businesses that the system used for billing water usage is inadequate and unfair.
- 3) On-going leakage of water from the public water system is costly and wastes water. There is need for continued repair and maintenance of the water and sewer system.
- 4) Budgeting and planning for road maintenance is needed to ensure that proper equipment and prioritizing of work is available.
- 5) There is a desire to enhance the aesthetic quality of municipally owned buildings.
- 6) In addition to the aesthetic concerns, the upstairs Village Hall meeting room is not fully handicapped accessible.

Goals

- 1) To provide infrastructure to support sustainable economic and residential development in the Village:

1.1. The Village should continue to implement the wastewater distribution system replacement plan developed by the Village engineers. This plan outlines and prioritizes sections of the water and wastewater system that need replacement. Funding for this project has been out of the annual budget. To allow completion of this project additional funding should be secured through grants, loans, or other mechanisms such as a capital improvement fund.

1.2. An implementation plan should be developed that outlines the scope of work and budgets needed to complete the project.

- 2) To ensure that the water billing system is sufficient to meet private and public needs:

2.1. Consider an alternative water billing system that is based on water usage rather than number of fixtures. Prior to making a decision, the Village should conduct a study of alternatives that compares Sharon Springs to other similar communities, and that identifies the cost of putting in and maintaining water meters. The study should educate the Village Board on the options and issues.

2.2. Consider use of an automated water billing system software program to manage this utility. There are many models and examples on the market that are designed for small systems such as in the Village.

2.3 Regularly do an inventory of fixtures.

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3) To provide high quality drinking water:

3.1. Continue to implement the NYS Health Department recommendations for water and wastewater.

3.2. The Village Board should immediately address the need for consistent water quality management.

3.3. Work with the Towns of Sharon, Roseboom and Cherry Valley to establish the watershed of the Village of Sharon Springs as a Critical Environmental Area and ensure that the Village be treated as an “involved” agency during any SEQR review within that location in those communities.

3.4. Work with the Department of Health, Environmental Protection Agency and other local municipalities to learn about other mechanisms to protect the watershed such as watershed rules and regulations.

4) To provide for well maintained local streets in a safe and cost-effective manner:

4.1. Work with the Highway Department to develop a Capital Improvement Program that plans for highway related work in 5 year increments. This plan should prioritize roads for maintenance and repair, estimate costs, outline equipment needs, and outline mechanisms for funding.

5) To improve the aesthetics of municipal buildings and ensure that the highway activities do not negatively impact the environment. (See also “Aesthetics” section):

5.1. The Village should explore funding for and consider moving the Highway Department building from its current location on Route 10. This location could be used as parking or park space.

5.2. Any new building facility built by the Village should meet the same design standards as required or recommended for other commercial buildings. New municipal buildings should be consistent with the traditional setbacks, layouts, and building design found in the Village of Sharon Springs. Existing municipal buildings should be painted.

5.3. Other beautification efforts for municipal properties should include landscaping along the creek to buffer views of the sewer plant on Route 10; placing window boxes and landscaping around the municipal buildings; and landscape around the Maintenance

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Building especially between the Chalybeate Park and the Highway Building.

5.4. The Village should work towards finding a more acceptable location to store salt away from Brimstone Creek (See “Environmental” section, below).

6) To provide public facilities available to all residents and visitors.

6.1. The Village should either seek funds to improve accessibility to the upstairs meeting room, or should seek a new location that is, or could easily be adapted for handicapped accessibility. It may be feasible to use existing space in another building. As an alternative, the Village should explore the feasibility and costs associated with building a new facility. New space should serve multi-purposes such as for both meetings and community activities.

6.2 The Village should encourage the development of public restrooms within the Village.

Environmental Resources

Key Concerns

- 1) An uncovered salt pile near Brimstone Creek may pose a threat to creek water quality.
- 2) A majority of street trees are old and no mechanism exists for maintenance and/or replacement.
- 3) To conserve and enhance the natural environment, sensitive lands, and springs of the Village of Sharon Springs. A high priority should be placed on environmental protection, open space, and scenic qualities.

Goals

1) To protect water quality of Brimstone Creek and the springs:

1.1. Work with the Town of Sharon to building an intermunicipal salt building. Find an environmentally feasible location for this building. The new locations should also not be on or near locations having Karst features such as sinkholes, sinking streams, or cracks and crevices which would allow salt to run into ground water. If this is not practicable, ensure that the salt pile is adequately covered or contained to prevent salt runoff. Funding from the New York State Environmental Bond Act is still available for such projects. The Village should apply for these monies as soon as possible.

1.2. Work with the Northeast Cave Association and other Karst experts to conduct a

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study of the springs. This study's goal should be to fully identify sources of water feeding the springs, and to understand what influences on the land may impact the quality and quantity of that water. This may be a project suitable for a graduate student to undertake as part of their studies. Contact Union College or SUNY Oneonta, Departments of Geology, to pursue this option. Once the hydrology of the system is understood, recommendations should be developed to protect these water sources.

1.3. Control runoff and chemical runoff from impervious surfaces, such as large parking lots.

1.4. Address floodplain protection needs and enact the FEMA floodplain regulations.

1.5. Control stormwater runoff from new land uses within the Village.

2) To enhance appreciation of and protect the natural resources of the Village:

2.1. The Village Board should appoint a Conservation Advisory Council (CAC). The ability to appoint a CAC is enabled through New York State Village Law. This advisory committee can serve the Village in a variety of capacities to protect the environment. They could assist in any water studies, inventory and map open spaces and other important environments in the Village, could be asked to advise the Village Planning and Zoning Boards as to potential environmental impacts of development proposals, and could carry out environmental education efforts. CAC's throughout the state are involved in inventorying their community's natural resources, and have developed educational programs and materials.

2.2. Work with the Sharon Springs Historical Society to encourage additional programs that relate to the environmental resources of the village, past and present.

2.3. Better signage of historic sites are needed including markers for identifying the springs.

2.4. Work with landowners to enhance the maintenance and upkeep of the springs. Consider use of easements to accomplish this. Work with the Schoharie Land Trust to implement use of easements.

3) To ensure that the Village serves as a model for environmental sustainability:

3.1. In an effort to promote more sustainable patterns of land use and sustainable resource management, the Village should encourage resource management practices that

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have the least negative environmental impacts, encourage activities that conserve water and open spaces and that use resources that are most easily renewed. In order to accomplish this, for new, large-scale commercial development and major subdivisions, the Village should:

OEnsure that a thorough site specific assessment of development projects is done to identify geographic, topographic, water, and other unique resources as part of the review process. This includes identifying historical, cultural and archeological features. Village site plan review requirements should include these elements.

OThrough the permitting process, ensure that new land uses are designed and implemented to maintain existing vegetation. Identify and preserve greenspaces and corridors of high wildlife habitat and water quality value within the Village.

OEncourage use of low-flow water devices.

OEncourage reduction, recycling and reuse of wastes whenever possible, including those generated by the Village government. Create a composting program.

OEncourage energy efficient technologies in manufacturing and building design, including use of building materials that will not become hazardous waste at the end of their useful life.

OEncourage and utilize low-impact transportation by providing an enhanced sidewalk system along with walking paths and bicycle paths.

OEncourage new land uses to work with the contours of the Village to avoid excessive mechanical land and soil movement, such as blasting and filling.

OEncourage use of permeable surfaces for drives and parking lots instead of asphalt.

4) To protect existing trees and plan new ones along streets:

4.1. Initiate a shade tree committee and set up a public-private program to maintain and enhance street trees. This committee should develop a program, subject to Board approval, that will outline responsibilities and procedures for planting, replacing, and maintaining trees along Village Streets.

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4.2. Obtain, from existing sources, information for homeowners on street tree maintenance and care. For example, the United States Department of Agriculture, Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Arbor Day Foundation all have excellent materials on street trees. Ensure that all landowners have these materials.

4.3. Require that all new development includes the planting of street trees. Preferably, these trees should be located in the green parkway or swales between the street and sidewalk. Street trees are usually planted every 30 feet on center.

4.4. Set up a mechanism with the utility/electric company to ensure that they adequately notify both the Village and private landowners when they have slated trees to be pruned or removed along roads and power line right of ways.

4.5. Work with staff from NYS Department of Transportation (NYS DOT) to develop a landscape plan for Route 10 and 20 and implement mechanisms to ensure that DOT replaces street trees during any road renovation.

4.6 Discourage use of herbicides along public sidewalks and roads.

Parks, Cultural and Recreational Resources

Key Concerns

- 1) The Village and Town of Sharon have an excellent youth recreation program. However, there are some inadequacies that need addressing. The size of the pool is small, it is often over-crowded, and needs on-going maintenance especially to fix leaks. The recreation area has only one basketball hoop, and there are no areas in which to play other ball sports. The facility is over-used. There are access problems at the town pool which is owned by the Town but the village has a legal right-of-way to it.
- 2) The Library has inadequate space for its volumes and programs.
- 3) The Village has no public parkland of its own. The National Recreation and Park Association recommends between 6.25 and 10 acres of accessible public open space per 1,000 people served. Using the most recent population counts in Sharon Springs of 540 people, the minimum parks and recreation needs of the Village are between 3 and 5 acres.
- 4) There needs to be improved communication with the school to facilitate community uses of the school resources.
- 5) There is a desire for bike/hike trails through the Village.
- 6) Additional youth activities are desired.

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Goals

1) To improve recreational and cultural opportunities for citizens through public and private efforts:

1.1. The Village and the Town of Sharon cooperatively, should locate appropriate lands for a public park and work to purchase and develop it. Funding should be sought from State programs through the NYS Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and other sources. This future park should be easily accessible by both cars and pedestrians. It is recommended that the Village identify specific park uses that may be desired and obtain feedback from the community prior to implementation. For example, the Village could consider providing park benches, picnic areas, ball field(s), tennis and basketball court(s), young children play area and swing set or barbecue(s). In order to be successful at obtaining grants for such a program, the Village should develop a full plan that includes desired facilities, location, construction and maintenance costs, and a plan for on-going maintenance of the park.

1.2. Village officials should communicate with the School regularly to discuss recreational needs, issues, and joint solutions.

2) To enhance the Village's pedestrian environment (See also Transportation recommendations, above):

2.1. Use Housing and Urban Development , Community Development Block Grants (HUD CDBG), TEA-21 (Transportation Enhancement Act), and other state and federal funding for construction of new, and replacement of old sidewalks.

2.2. Require that sidewalks be constructed by all developers of new construction.

3) To improve access to and opportunities for passive recreational uses:

3.1. The Village should work cooperatively with surrounding municipalities to develop a bike-hike trail and nature trails. Consider use of a shared roadway system for such biking along Route 10 and 20.

4) To provide additional recreational opportunities, especially for young people:

4.1. Work with the Town of Sharon to re-locate and enhance the community pool.

4.2. Develop a year-round youth center that has activities such as a supervised after-

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school and evening program and facilities for skateboarding, ballfields, basketball and volleyball.

5) Explore the possibility of combining the school and public libraries to increase available resources.

Historical Resources

Key Concerns

- 1) There are a great number of buildings needing renovation, protection, or demolition, and no uniform strategy (including funding) exists to accomplish this.
- 2) Local land use codes need to facilitate adaptive reuse of existing buildings and encourage preservation.
- 3) Few incentives are in place to help private owners protect historic resources.

Goals

- 1) To encourage protection and restoration of existing structures to maintain the historic character of the Village and to allow adaptive reuses:
 - 1.1. The Village should encourage historically sensitive rehabilitation of historic properties that are being restored or adapted to new uses.
 - 1.2. The Village should require new development to be compatible with the setting, scale, and design of surrounding architecture and landscape.
 - 1.3. Designate appropriate areas within the Village as a local historic district. The Village should amend the zoning law to require approval for any major exterior alteration or demolition of a structure designated within the local historic district, as well as new construction adjacent to landmarks. This will protect the Village from incompatible new architecture, unnecessary demolition, or destructive renovation. A local historic district is a regulatory zone that details the standards and criteria for altering or building new structures so that they are compatible with the historic structures in the district. The Village Board establishes standards that a preservation commission, or the planning board, uses to permit, condition, or deny projects proposed in historic districts.
 - 1.4. The Village should amend the zoning law so that it allows new uses in existing buildings.
 - 1.5. In order to encourage adaptive reuse or renovation of existing buildings, especially

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those in the Historic District, the Village should seek all avenues of funding to initiate programs that will result in the renovation and reuse of historic buildings. Facade improvement programs and setting up a low interest loan pool are among the most successful options to consider. In order to secure this funding, the Village should work with the Schoharie Department of Planning and Economic Development and other agencies to identify and obtain monies.

1.6. The Village should gain status as a Certified Local Government once the local historic district is in place. This will allow Sharon Springs to gain additional technical and funding support for historic preservation efforts.

1.7. Implement incentives where feasible, to encourage additional historic preservation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings within Sharon Springs.

1.8. Develop materials and/or programs to educate residents and landowners about the long term and economic benefits of being in a historic district.

2) To ensure that new construction in the Village is compatible with the existing architecture and layout:

2.1. This was discussed under aesthetics, and strategy 1.2 above.

3) To improve maintenance and safety of older buildings:

3.1. The Village should update zoning requirements that address maintenance and safety issues.

3.2. The Village should implement enforcement that addresses maintenance and safety issues.

4) To capitalize on the significant historical resources in the Village to reach tourism and economic development goals:

4.1. Implement the SHARE IT grant program (Save Historic Assets - Renew Economies by Inviting Tourism). The Village and surrounding municipalities have received grant monies from the NYS Department of State to develop a regional, tourism-based planning program. The goal of this program is to understand and carefully take advantage of the tourist-shed in this region, resulting in historic renovation, creation of more sustainable economies, protect undeveloped lands, and gain greater municipal cooperation. The Village should ensure that this project be carried out as proposed and implement

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recommendations.

Emergency Services

Key Concerns

- 1) More police protection is desired by some.
- 2) The current high quality of the ambulance and fire departments needs to be maintained.

Goals

1) To provide efficient, high-quality emergency services to all residents and businesses in the Village:

- 1.1. Continue to support emergency programs serving Sharon Springs, especially through funding.
- 1.2. Nationwide, trends show many small communities have difficulties maintaining volunteer emergency fire and ambulance services. Should the need arise in the future, coordinate professional services with surrounding communities to share costs and resources.
- 1.3. Initiate a program to control traffic violations on Route 10 and 20 in the Village. Work with the Schoharie County Sheriff's office and the New York State Police to increase highway patrols, especially to control speeding.

Aesthetic Resources

Key Concerns

- 1) Residents and businesses feel that the Village has a run-down feel to it.
- 2) There is concern that new development will occur in a manner not consistent with historical or traditional patterns and that the small village atmosphere in Sharon Springs will not be maintained.
- 3) Municipal buildings are considered poor to adequate in terms of aesthetics, and many consider the Highway Maintenance building, including the salt pile, to be out of place and in a poor location.
- 4) The appearance of Route 20 through the Village is not considered to be "village-like" by many.
- 5) The appearance of the gateway entrances to the Village along Route 20 and Route 10 are not considered adequate, and neither signage nor landscaping exist to enhance and identify these important locations.

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- 6) Preserving Brimstone Creek and springs historic and aesthetic quality is considered to be very important.
- 7) The planned subdivision north of Bowmakers Pond might detract from the entrance into the Village from the south on Route 10.
- 8) Aesthetic character of the Route 10 and 20 intersection is poor. There are no signs identifying that one is actually in the Village of Sharon Springs. The intersection was rated very low on the visual preference survey.
- 9) Maintenance of some vacant and seasonal use buildings is poor.

Goals

- 1) To improve the overall aesthetic quality of businesses and residences in the Village:
 - 1.1. Develop a basic design vocabulary that incorporates those features which characterize the Village's architecture and setting. This design vocabulary can set out guidelines for buildings and landscape features, especially for commercial buildings. The goal of such a tool is to help new and old buildings share basic design elements which compliment each other. A design vocabulary should be illustrated and include architectural style recommendations, streetscape features, and any desired building detail guidelines such as for roofs, windows, and signs. Rather, it should serve to create a framework in which diversity and originality are encouraged, and where new development is compatible and visually positive for the Village.
 - 1.2. New buildings should use this design vocabulary so that they are compatible with the buildings and neighborhood surrounding it. Village zoning should be amended to incorporate this requirement.
 - 1.3. Develop a sign ordinance, or include it in the zoning code, to regulate signs and sign design so that they encourage quality signs that enhance street aesthetics. Encourage externally lit signs, no neon signs and restrict signs as to height and size to ensure pedestrian and vehicular safety. Include use of an incentive program for signs in local zoning that allow increases in sign sizes in return for incorporation of specific design features.
 - 1.4. Refer to the New England Light Pollution Advisory Group (NELPAG) for recommended standards for lighting and include these in any design guidelines for the Village.
 - 1.5 Encourage the use of painted plywood over windows on seasonal residences.
 - 1.6 Encourage the use of historical fixtures for street lighting and other outdoor uses.

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2) To protect the small village and historical character of Sharon Springs while allowing for new commercial and residential development:

2.1. Zoning and subdivision laws in the Village should be amended to ensure that new commercial and residential development is consistent with the traditional layout patterns. This includes setbacks from streets, building height, and build-to lines, and lot-layout. Where large buildings are proposed, traditional character can be maintained by requiring facade breaks that honor traditional styles.

2.2. Open space in the Village can be maintained by utilizing the Conservation Subdivision technique that results in clustered homes on smaller lots and with a portion of the remaining lands permanently protected as open space by a conservation easement. Such a subdivision design will not only protect open space, but will result in home layout that is more consistent with the existing neighborhoods in Sharon Springs, than the typical “cookie-cutter” subdivision, and enhance property values.

2.3. Road standards for new roads and streets in the Village should be developed so that they are in keeping with rural and small community standards. The Village should ensure that any new road or street is not overbuilt with excess pavement or right-of-ways.

3) To improve the overall aesthetic quality of Routes 10 and 20 and Village streets:

3.1. Develop a landscape ordinance that requires the planting of street trees with new construction, additions to commercial buildings or change of use.

3.2. Continue use and maintenance of banners and flags to beautify the streetscape.

3.3. Development of new sidewalks and repair of existing ones will improve the aesthetics along these routes.

3.4. Add other features to beautify the Village such as flower baskets and pots, benches, and an information kiosk detailing the Village and its businesses.

3.5. Ensure that new subdivisions or commercial developments bury utility wires, or place them to the rear of buildings.

3.6 To protect the scenic views, the Village should pursue the use of scenic easements.

4) To improve the approaches to the Village so that there is a clearer sense of arrival:

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4.1. Change zoning so that it protects the edges of the village to maintain the visually discernable boundary between the Village and the Town, in the form of a Village growth boundary or village green buffer. In order to accomplish this, the Village should consider keeping density relatively high within the Village boundaries surrounded by a “ring” where land uses are allowed at lower densities. This “growing space” should be further surrounded by a “ring” of land where agriculture and open space are the predominant land uses with little or very low density of development. To reinforce the Village as a central identity of the Town and region, other specific measures include eliminating the possibility of strip commercial centers of business near the village borders and work cooperatively with the Town to prevent large-scale rezonings near the Village that would displace business from the Village commercial center.

4.2. Work with local groups, to place signs at the gateway to the Village. Gateway improvements could include adding landscaping and flowers, and ensuring that the signs are unified and with a theme that conveys a positive message about the Village. These signs should exist at all four main entrances to the Village. Consider use of historical markers for individual buildings and place signs to mark the boundaries of the historic district.

5) To improve the aesthetics of municipal buildings and ensure that public buildings set the tone and model for aesthetic character in the Village:

5.1. The Village should explore funding for and consider moving the Highway Department building from its current location on Route 10. This location could be used as parking or park space.

5.2. Any new building facility built by the Village should meet the same design standards as required or recommended for other commercial buildings. New municipal buildings should be consistent with the traditional setbacks, layouts, and building design found in the Village of Sharon Springs. Existing municipal buildings should be painted.

5.3. Other beautification efforts for municipal properties should include landscaping along the creek to buffer views of the sewer plant on Route 10; placing window boxes and landscaping around the municipal buildings; and landscape around the Maintenance Building especially between the Chalybeate Park and the Highway Building.

6) Expand the efforts of the Beautification Committee:

6.1. The Beautification Committee should become more involved in helping the Village implement the above suggestions to beautify the community.

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6.2. Communicate with other local organizations such as the 20th Century Club, the Historical Society, and Rotary, to expand the membership of, and provide new ideas to the Beautification Committee.

Land Use

Key Concerns

- 1) There is a perception among those that are familiar with the zoning code that it is confusing and does not meet the needs of the village.
- 2) There is a perception that there is an inequality and lack of code enforcement.
- 3) There is lack of building maintenance.
- 4) There are many unmaintained vacant lots.
- 5) There is a disconnect between the Route 10 and Route 20 locations of the Village.
- 6) Land use procedures need to be such that they encourage new business and residential development, but that they are done in a manner that protects the character and historic nature of the Village.
- 7) The land use code is in need of procedural updating and amending in order to meet the goals outlined in this plan.
- 8) There are many existing buildings that are in need of restoration.

Goals

- 1) To provide for mixed uses on Main Street.
- 2) To maintain the small town atmosphere in the Village.
- 3) To provide for orderly growth within Sharon Springs to meet residential and commercial requirements consistent with the Village's vision.
- 4) To ensure that new development is in keeping with the Village's historical character and with its' vision.
- 5) To preserve the integrity and character of existing residential and commercial neighborhoods.
- 6) To provide for equitable, efficient, and straight forward land use regulations and code enforcement that meet the goals and vision of this plan.
- 7) To institute land use programs to unify the Route 20 and 10 locations in the Village.
- 8) To ensure that properties and buildings are well maintained.
- 9) To encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

Land Use Recommendations and Strategies

According to a general analysis of the land use code, the following limitations and issues have been identified. The Village should ensure that amendments are made to land use related laws to

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rectify these problems. The following proposed amendments to local laws will meet many of the above goals:

Procedural Updates

- A. The code needs to be rewritten and consistently maintained. New amendments must be properly filed and updated in the code.
- B. The zoning map needs to be updated to reflect past amendments, and any new changes as recommended in this plan. When digital tax parcels are made available from the Schoharie County Real Property Tax Department, develop a new computerized zoning map for the Village.
- C. The code needs to be updated to reflect the requirements and procedures from the 1992 to 1995 amendments to the New York State Village Law.
- D. Implement a planning board and transfer jurisdiction for land use permits and planning from the Zoning Board of Appeals to the Planning Board. The role of the planning board should be to review and approve site plan and subdivision applications and to issue special permits. They also should have an advisory role to the Village Board, including the preparation of zoning provisions, site plan and subdivision regulations, reviewing and commenting on requests for specific zone changes or amendments to the comprehensive plan, or other regulations being considered by the trustees, and reviewing and commenting on other matters affecting the development of the Village. The role of the Zoning Board of Appeals is to grant variances and interpret provisions of the zoning law. Another role of the Zoning Board of Appeals is quasi-judicial - persons aggrieved by a decision of the code enforcement officer can appeal them to the ZBA.

Subdivision Law Amendments

- A. Expand and update Section 10 of the Subdivision Law to be in accordance with 7-738 of the Village Law. This is an important section on clustering of residences. As an alternative, the Village could allow or require use of conservation subdivisions, which are similar to a clustering technique.
- B. There needs to be specific standards for roads, either in the code itself, or in this plan as the code refers to a plan for guidance and none exists so far.
- C. Section 14. B. 5(a) discusses exceptions to the prohibition of cul-de-sacs in the Village. This should be re-worded to eliminate the loop-hole words "...may be permitted where no through connection is possible or *desirable*....".
- D. Review Section 14, B. 6 so that minimum pavement areas of any new streets, especially for minor streets, are in keeping with traditional, small residential streets. The dimensions for minor streets may be too wide to be consistent with other Village streets. When looking at street width, emergency vehicle access should be considered.
- E. Review Section 14.C. 3 to ensure that the potential for new oil and stone streets to be

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- built is still acceptable.
- F. Review Section 14.C. 10. This section outlines how sidewalks are required only when the Planning Board deems them necessary. The Village should require new sidewalks in all new subdivisions to enhance the pedestrian network and safety.
 - G. Review Section 15.B. This sets the block size for new subdivisions at no more than 1500 feet, nor less than 750 feet. These figures are large and may result in block sizes much bigger than currently exists in the village. More common block sizes are between 400 and 800 feet. Block sizes should be set to reflect current village patterns within reason.
 - H. Review and enhance Section 20 (Street lights, trees, signs and screening) to ensure that these requirements will maintain traditional village character as described in this plan. Strengthen language, for example, to require street trees. Provide illustrated standards and guidelines so that expectations for these improvements are understood by all. There is too much open for interpretation.
 - I. Section 21.B. (Public Sites and Open Spaces). This section is vague and does not give enough details to guide either the Planning Board or the applicant on when parks will be required. Additional guidance and standards need to be included.
 - J. The subdivision law should be amended in other ways so that it is consistent with the development goals of this comprehensive plan.

Zoning Law Amendments

- A. There are no purposes or goals offered to illustrate the reasoning behind regulations in each of the zoning districts. Purpose and goal statements should be added for each major section.
- B. More details are needed to guide when and where a planned development may occur. There are several excellent models of such a technique that could be used to update this section.
- C. The mobile home requirements need updating and expanding to ensure quality mobile home community development.
- D. Section 13, G. of the zoning code discusses projections of buildings and structures into yards. It does not allow for porches to extend into front yards, however. It is recommended that zoning sets a build to line in the front that can be varied by a percentage, or number of feet, so that a porch may extend into the front yard. This variation is the traditional pattern.
- E. Additional illustrations and/or definitions are needed throughout the remainder of the zoning code to clarify terms that are frequently used such as “adequate”, “in keeping with the area in question”, etc.
- F. Additional standards are needed for many of those uses requiring conditional permits. Such standards serve the purpose of outlining exactly what is expected, and ensuring that permitted activities will meet the goals of the Village for maintenance of village, traditional and historical character. Without standards, it is up to the interpretation of the

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- Zoning Board of Appeals and that interpretation may not be in accordance with this plan.
- G. The sign requirements offer no guidance as to the Village's expectations for design or theme. This may result in signs that do not fit in with the vision and character of the Village.
 - H. The following topics are not currently included in the Village's zoning code. The Village should consider adding to the local law in these areas to help meet the goals outlined in this plan: designation and regulation of a local historic district; building design standards for new buildings; landscape requirements for new commercial buildings; lighting standards (to prevent glare and improve design); regulating telecommunication towers; and adult uses.
 - I. Review yard requirements to ensure that new buildings fit into neighborhood and have consistent setbacks, yards, build-to-lines, etc. as discussed above.
 - J. Ensure that the zoning law allows and encourages a mix of uses in buildings and in adjacent buildings in commercial areas. For example, the zoning should allow commercial uses on the ground floor and office or residential uses on upper floors. Additionally, the zoning could allow for mixed use of older buildings to allow for adaptive reuses. This may include allowing residential or hotel uses on main or lower floors and recreation, office, or other uses on upper floors.
 - K. The Village should enact a local building maintenance law directed at ensuring that buildings and their yards are well maintained and not allowed to fall into disrepair.
 - L. The Village should permit home occupations, including professional uses, with standards that prevent disruption of neighborhood character.
 - M. Site plan review requirements should be deleted from the subdivision law and placed in the zoning law. Require that golf courses be subject to site plan review.
 - N. The Village Board should review all municipally owned properties and determine which parcels should be maintained for public purposes and which, if any, should be sold for commercial or residential uses.
 - O. The use schedule of the local zoning law should be amended to reflect the goals and policies of this comprehensive plan and to list permitted uses as generic and not directed to specific buildings.
 - P. A new zoning map should be developed. The zoning districts should be reviewed and amended, if needed, to be consistent with this comprehensive plan.
 - Q. The zoning code should be amended in other ways so that it is consistent with the goals of this comprehensive plan.

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Village Government and Public Involvement

Key Concerns

- 1) There is a perception that the Village has unfriendly attitudes.
- 2) There is a perception in the Village that government resists new programs and change.
- 3) Tow-year terms lead to short-term government memory.
- 4) There is a lack of communication between the Board and the staff.
- 5) There is no clear definition of lines of responsibility.

Goals and Strategies

- 1) To continue to foster an open dialogue on the future of Sharon Springs between residents, businesses, school, and Village government.
 - 1.1. The Village should continue the regular newsletter to be provided to each household and work towards increasing its frequency. This newsletter should include village government news, as well as promote activities going on, meetings, or other news.
 - 1.2. The Village should promote development and use of a village-sponsored web site that could be used to communicate programs, meetings, regulatory changes, etc.
 - 1.3. Consider placing a well-designed, attractive municipal sign so that pedestrians could stop and read about upcoming events and meetings easily.
 - 1.4. Consider alternative forms of communicating with residents and businesses including use of focus groups, suggestion boxes, or other types of mailings.
- 2) Citizen participation in events, issues, activities, boards, and committees is important to foster both community spirit and communication, as well as to implement many facets of this comprehensive plan. The Village should work to reintroduce citizens to the decision-making process and affirm their positive contributions to the Village.
 - 2.1. The Village should work to increase volunteerism. Senior citizens, high school students, seasonal residents, and others should be actively recruited to volunteer to implement the various programs needed in the village. It is important to have clearly outlined roles for volunteers and to ensure that volunteer jobs have beginning and end-points. The Village may want to develop short job descriptions so that volunteers clearly know their role and responsibilities. To support volunteerism, the Village should initiate a public recognition program (“Hometown Heroes”, for example). There are many

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resources available on attracting volunteers and keeping citizens involved. The Village should acquire some of these resources. Many would be available through the library or researched over the Internet.

2.2 There are many resources available to help Village officials learn how to enhance citizen participation. A concerted effort should be made to research and acquire materials to help with this task. Consider purchasing books available from the American Planning Association, Planners Book Service on citizen participation (see www.planning.org).

2.3 Sponsor educational opportunities for citizens who volunteer to serve on planning or zoning boards. Request that the NYS Department of State come to the Village to train members of these boards. The New York Planning Federation in Albany conducts training sessions for a fee.

2.4. Look into other training possibilities including covering expenses for members to participate at one of the many planning or government related conferences held around the state, providing written statements of roles and duties of members, and offering educational materials to new board members. The NYS Department of State has a variety of free publications already available to help with this task.

- 3) This comprehensive plan should be reviewed and updated, as needed, every five years. A citizens group should be appointed to assist the Village Board with this task.
- 4) four-year terms should be considered.
- 5) A list of responsibilities and a job description should be developed for each position.
- 6) The Board needs to be informed, in a timely manner, of any possible violations.

Economic Development

Key Concerns

- 1) There is no strategy to enhance economic development in Sharon Springs, but a great desire for additional commercial and tourist growth.
- 2) Few resources and dollars exist for economic development programs.
- 3) A small population may be unable to support businesses.
- 4) The one main seasonal business in the Village is in precarious condition.
- 5) Sharon Springs is strategically located and has an opportunity to catch the overflow tourists from Cooperstown.

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- 6) There are opportunities to link economic activities with the Mohawk Valley Corridor.
- 7) There are numerous buildings that could be used for enhanced economic activities, but they are in poor condition.
- 8) There is an underutilization of the springs and spa.
- 9) The zoning code is not adequate to meet future needs in the Village, although a recent amendment did allow additional business development on Main Street.
- 10) There are a lot of people living on a fixed income in the Village.
- 11) Many young people leave the Village to live and work.
- 12) There has been a great deal of publicity about Sharon Springs recently, more people are coming to the area, and more businesses have moved in.

Goals

- 1) To strengthen and improve year-round opportunities for small business and tourist related development in the Village.
- 2) To capitalize on Sharon Springs location at two major state highway intersections and within the tourist-shed of Cooperstown.
- 3) To redevelop under-utilized locations and buildings in the business districts of the Village.
- 4) To ensure that local land use regulations are conducive to small business, home-based businesses, and tourist related development while being compatible with residential uses.
- 5) To provide incentives to encourage new economic development and entrepreneurship.
- 6) To promote year-round tourism as the initial basis for economic development in the Village.
- 7) To promote economic development that will help ensure that essential household and family commercial needs are met.
- 8) To encourage the on-going revitalization of the existing commercial locations in the Village.
- 9) To encourage a diversity of local businesses.
- 10) To obtain grants and increase participation in state and federal economic development programs.

Rebuilding Sharon Springs' Economic Vitality

Overall Economic Revitalization Philosophies for the Village

1. Clear direction is vital.

Establishing a direction for the economic growth of the Village is central to the revitalization process. The vision statement and goals included in this Comprehensive Plan should be used to define this direction. In order to be economically successful, the Village of Sharon Springs should work towards developing a diversified economy including retail, service and tourist industries. However, in the shorter term, the Village must capitalize on its greatest asset...its natural and historical features that made it a tourist destination in the past. The economic recovery should focus on the spa and heritage tourism, and on recruiting a wide variety of small businesses and professionals that support and complement the community. It must also capitalize on the recently renewed entrepreneurial and pioneering spirit seen in the Village.

There is great potential in Sharon Springs for an economic recovery. Revitalization efforts are well underway in the areas of new businesses, cultural events, community beautification, and building restoration. It is important to recognize, however, that the process of decline in the Village did not take place quickly. Many factors at work over many years have contributed to the decline. Change will not take place quickly either. Improvements will be incremental with one success building on another.

2. The process must be multi-faceted, concern the entire Village, and follow a long-term plan.

A strong commitment on the part of all players including Village leaders, businesses, and residents will be needed in order to be successful. Not only should the economic development in Sharon Springs be a gradual restructuring, the process must be multi-faceted as well. It must be concerned with not only specific commercial activities taking place but should also seek to unite the economic activities taking place at different locations within the Village. All activities must work together through an overall plan to meet the needs of all segments of the community.

Experiences of other communities throughout the United States have shown that if such a long term strategy is not followed, it is likely that the economic benefits seen during the early revitalization attempts will be only temporary. Economic restructuring ultimately means establishing a comprehensive strategy to bring about positive economic change by attracting financial investment. The recommended economic strategy for Sharon Springs should apply the following major tenets:

*insist on quality;

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- *be a public-private partnership;
- *focus on existing assets;
- *encourage emotional investment in the community;
- *change people's attitudes by demonstrating that positive change is taking place; and
- *be incremental in nature and implementation oriented.

The Village of Sharon Springs should work towards strengthening their existing economic base first, and then gradually expand it. Existing businesses could be strengthened by paying particular attention to:

- *stabilizing and improving the value of commercial real estate;
- *identifying areas of opportunity and designing strategies to build on these opportunities;
- *helping existing business find better ways to meet their customers needs and then expand to meet market opportunities;
- *enhancing the physical appearance;
- *finding new or better uses for underused or vacant buildings; and
- *developing incentive programs to stimulate commercial and real estate development;

Economic recovery will be successful only if both the public and private sectors are involved. It is recommended that as a first step, the Village initiate a formal revitalization program and organization to oversee the effort. A successful model for such an activity should be the National Trust's Main Street Center Program. The Main Street Approach advocated by this group, has been successfully used in hundreds of small towns and villages across the country. The Main Street Approach is based on four points:

Design	(improving the areas' image by enhancing its physical appearance)
Organization	(building consensus and cooperation among the groups that play roles in the economy of the area)
Promotion	(marketing the areas' unique characteristics to shoppers, investors, new businesses, tourists, and others), and
Economic Restructuring	(strengthening the existing economic base while diversifying it).

While the Main Street Approach is typically designed for main street downtown areas, it can be adapted for larger economic revitalization such as in the Village of Sharon Springs. Many of the points discussed below detail this approach. The Village must ensure that all parties involved in the economic revitalization effort make a minimum of a three-year commitment to the process. This time frame is necessary to have the effort become self-sufficient and firmly rooted. Past success from the Main Street Approach has shown that all four points outlined above must be worked on.

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Specific Strategies

The economic revitalization program in Sharon Springs should consist of the following strategies:

1. Initiate a formal revitalization effort and organization. Follow the Main Street Approach and purchase all pertinent manuals, guides, and other resources from the National Trust and others to help. The group should include property owners, business owners, renters, real estate agents, lenders, local government officials, and the general public. This will ensure that the effort is community designed and driven. The primary goal of this organization is to build a revitalized economy based on local assets, values and identity, and to maximize hidden, undervalued potential.

2. Link economic restructuring efforts with promotional and design activities. This is important so that new efforts don't "price existing businesses out of the market". Building design improvement projects must take place in conjunction with the ability of business owners to pay higher rents that reinvestment usually generates. In order to ensure that this link takes place, the Village must have an ongoing understanding of the local economy. This understanding includes an inventory.

A first task of the economic revitalization group should be to inventory buildings and vacant lots. This is to build a database of information on what is available and what the properties' characteristics are. The Village should be prepared to answer requests for information about the commercial market and available locations. This inventory will help determine the economic role of the building or lot and will start to give information on how it can be taken advantage of for existing or future opportunities. In order to complete this inventory, seek assistance from Realtors familiar with the Village and the local assessor. The inventory should include:

- *a definition of how the buildings or lots are used;
- *a description of their condition;
- *description of the size, sale or rental costs, ownership, significant alterations and historical data;
- *photographs (current, and historical, if possible); and
- *contact people and phone numbers of owners or real estate agents.

In order to market and promote the Village, the Village should encourage further development and use of web pages.

3. Ensure that the Village's zoning code allows and supports the commercial areas for

retail activity, service and professional businesses, restaurants, housing, financial institutions, and even light industry. Standards can be set to make certain that these uses do not negatively impact neighbors or the community. Ensure that zoning also allows and encourages home based businesses, provided that they do not negatively impact the historical or residential character of their neighborhood.

4. Make small, visible improvements early in the revitalization process. Small property improvements such as new paint, new signs, removing inappropriate facade covers, or other simple repairs must happen early and be highly visible. This work must be aggressively promoted both within and outside the Village. Cooperation of the Village, residents and landowners, and businesses is vital in order to accomplish these tasks.

5. Consider hiring a program manager to help the public/private economic development organization. Seek grants to fund this position. This person's role should be to help the group develop and implement policy, and to serve as the day to day coordinator for activities. This person is to be a full-time advocate for the Village and should be an authority on information, resources and programs related to the revitalization effort. The most successful economic revitalization projects from around the United States have been coordinated by a full-time person. However, it may be feasible to share a full time person with one or more nearby communities undertaking similar efforts.

6. Concentrate initial design efforts (as recommended in other sections of this plan) on improving the physical infrastructure of the Village. Concentrate on sidewalks, street trees, street furniture, lighting, parking, etc and on upgrading the local zoning code as detailed in this plan. In the zoning update, particular attention should be paid to the use schedule, and in developing building and lot design standards.

7. Work to maintain and enhance existing businesses first. Especially work towards economic efforts at revitalizing the spa.

8. Promote the Village as a unified shopping area with a unique identity and a commitment to meeting consumer needs. Consumers should include both visitors and local people.

9. Recruit new businesses to help strengthen the economic base by filling gaps in the existing business mix. Ensure that new businesses offer a high quality of retail and service. However, do not become involved in active recruitment of businesses during the first year or two of the revitalization effort so that the Village can concentrate on understanding the local economy and getting a clear sense of direction.

10. In order to recruit those businesses which are desired and needed, the local economy should be measured and understood. Evaluate the economy of the whole village and the trade

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area of Cooperstown and Cobleskill. The Village, along with the business community, should consider hiring a marketing specialist to help with this evaluation. The revitalization group should decide which potential businesses are best for the village as a whole using the Comprehensive Plan as the base and vision. Other specific information that could be collected is the volume of sales leakage to other locations, understanding why people shop elsewhere, and what they want in the Village.

Refer to the survey conducted for this Comprehensive Plan which showed that better restaurants, and stores for liquor, antiques, pharmacy, books, light manufacturing, a restored spa, clothing, small tourist businesses, another bank, theater, and a wine and cheese shop were desired. Gas stations, fast food, adult entertainment and bars, convenience stores, tattooing, chain stores and a slaughterhouse were the main businesses listed as not desirable. This information should be updated every five years to keep current with the commercial climate and desires of Village residents.

11. Once business recruitment efforts are underway, it is recommended that the Village promote and assist in completing the golf course located within the Village. Should the golf course become a reality, ensure that it is designed and managed in an environmentally friendly manner. Encourage the golf course to seek certification as a “Signature Golf Course” through the not-for-profit organization *Audubon International*. This environmental group promotes sustainable development and has a program where they work with, and certify that the golf course has been built and managed in a sustainable and non-polluting manner.

12. In order to be successful with business expansion efforts, develop a clever presentation and creative ways to market and recruit potential business owners. A widespread good first impression must be made. Put together any information a prospective business will need to make an informed decision. Include, at the very least, information about the Village, its people, history and quality of life. Quality of life factors should include the school, recreational and cultural resources, community character, location, and infrastructure.

13. Over time, identify the strengths and weaknesses in the Village’s business mix. An inventory of what is currently existing in the Village should be made and cross-referenced to those commercial activities that are needed or desired. Ensure that this inventory is kept current and included in the regular Five Year Comprehensive Plan Update.

14. Use the most up-to-date information as possible. The revitalization groups should, as part of their study of Sharon Spring’s economy, use the demographic information in this plan and from the 2000 Census data (when available) and any tourism demographics available from local businesses or chambers of commerce to analyze potential customers and markets. Because consumers spend money in different ways, it is important to know the demographics of people in

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the Village. This information can help the economic program identify potential customers and determine their needs. Particular attention should be paid to the number of women in the Village, the number of working women, average age of residents, commuting times and locations, income levels, numbers of people owning and renting homes, number of people per household, numbers of people in different occupations, and unemployment rate. In addition to the most recent information, the Village should include figures for these categories for the past 20 years. This will help identify any trends.

15. Stimulate building improvements and create new commercial space in old buildings by creating financial incentives and programs to reduce the risk of investing in building rehabilitation or business expansions. Consider low-interest loans, incentive grants, specially designated block grant funds, or interest buy-down programs. Small loan pools having low interest rates (\$50,000 with 3% interest, for example) are generally more successful than large loan pools (\$500,000, for example). If buildings are rehabilitated for rental commercial properties, do not allow the rehabilitation to push rents too quickly above the budgets of businesses. The Village should educate landowners about and assist them in taking advantage of tax credits, delayed assessments, and other programs available to preserve historic buildings.

16. A major task of the revitalization group must be to explore and aggressively seek financing for economic activities. Look into the following financing options:

- *Community Development Block Grants (HUD): See County Planning & Development Agency
- *HUD 108 Loans
- *Economic Development Agency Planning Grants
- *Economic Development Agency Public Works Grants
- *TEA-21 Funds
- *Tax Increment Financing
- *The Mohawk Valley Economic Development Corporation
- *Setting up a Special Improvement District or Business Improvement District
- *Micro-loan/Small Loan Program
- *Using the Community Reinvestment Act - work with Banks
- *Raise money with Sponsorship Programs, (such as selling “bricks” for \$20.00) each.
- *Contact NYS Department of State to learn about, and tap into, state level funding opportunities.

The Village should also research grants and fundraising strategies. Consider purchasing “The Five Strategies for Fundraising Success” by Mel Warwick and published by the American Planning Association to help.

17. Ensure that the Village has as high-tech communications networks and infrastructure

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as possible. High speed Internet access and other technologies should play a role in business recruitment.

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Appendix A. List of Volunteer Committees To Assist in Implementation of Plan

Page 29: Strategy 3.3, Housing Committee whose role is to encourage housing that meets the goals of this plan.

Page 37: Strategy 2.1, Conservation Advisory Council whose role is to assist in any water studies, and inventory and map open spaces and other important environments in the Village. A CAC can also advise the Village Planning and Zoning Boards as to potential environmental impacts of development proposals, and could carry out environmental education efforts.

Page 38: Strategy 4.1, Shade Tree Committee to maintain and enhance street trees. This committee should develop a program, subject to Board approval, that will outline responsibilities and procedures for planting, replacing, and maintaining trees along Village Streets.

Page 41: Strategy 1.3, Preservation Committee whose role could be to review and approve applications for new structures or alteration of existing buildings in a local historic district if one is designated.

Page 46: Strategy 6, Expand Beautification Committee whose role would be to implement the various aesthetically related strategies recommended in this plan.

Page 54: Strategy 1, Economic Development/Main Street Revitalization Committee is suggested to be made up of property owners, business owners, renters, real estate agents, lenders, local government officials, and the general public. This committee's role will be to ensure that the economic development effort is community designed and driven and to organize the effort to build a revitalized economy that is based on local assets, values and identity, and to maximize hidden, undervalued potential.

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Appendix B. List of and Contact Information for Resources, Organizations, and Publications referenced in this plan.

Affordable Housing Corporation

www.state.ny.us

C/o NYS DHCR

Flanigan Square

547 River Street

Troy, NY 12180

518-402-7377

American Planning Association and Planners Book Service

www.planning.org

122 S. Michigan Ave. Ste. 1600

Chicago, IL 60603

Arbor Day Foundation

100 Arbor Ave.

Nebraska City, NE 68410

www.arborday.org

Audubon International

PO Box 1226

Cary, NC 27512

919-380-9640

Certified Local Government Program

c/o NYS OPRHP, Lucy Breyer

CLG Program

Agency Building One

Empire State Plaza

Albany, NY 12238

518-486-1883

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Schoharie County

41 South Grand St.

Cobleskill, NY 12043

234-4303

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Environmental Protection Agency
Region 2
290 Broadway
New York, NY 10007-1866
212-637-3000

Federal Emergency Management Agency
Region 2
26 Federal Place
Suite 1337
New York, NY 10278
www.fema.gov

Housing Trust Fund Corporation
www.dhcr.state.ny.us

Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
Albany Office
52 Corporate Circle
Albany, NY 12203
518-464-4200

National Trust for Historic Preservation/Main Street Center
1785 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036
202-588-6296

New York State Police
Mineral Springs Road
Cobleskill, NY 12043
518-827-5988

New England Light Pollution Advisory Committee
c/o Daniel Green
60 Garden St.
Cambridge, MA 02138
<http://cfa-www.harvard.edu/cfa/ps/nelpag.html>

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New York Planning Federation
44 Central Ave.
Albany, NY 12203
518-432-4094

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Region 4
1150 N. Westcott Rd.
Schenectady, NY 12306-2014
518-357-2234

New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Agency Building 1
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12238
518-474-0456

New York State Department of State
41 State Street
Albany, NY
518-486-9888

New York State Department of Transportation, Region 9
44 Hawley Street
Binghamton, NY 13901-3200
607-721-8250

New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal
Albany Regional Office
Flanigan Sq.
547 River Street
Troy, NY 12180
518-402-7377

New York State Health Department
Corning Tower
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12223
518-474-2121

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Northeast Cave Association
c/o Speleobooks
PO Box 10
Schoharie, NY 12157
518-295-7978

Schoharie County Sheriffs Office
157 Depot Lane
Schoharie, NY 12157
295-7066

Schoharie Rural Preservation Office
RR#3, Box 12
6 Mineral Springs Road
Cobleskill, NY 12043
518-234-7604

Schoharie County Department of Planning and Economic Development
RR#3, Box 12
6 Mineral Springs Road
Cobleskill, NY 12043
518-234-3751

Schoharie Land Trust
PO Box
Cobleskill, NY 12043

SUNY Oneonta, Department of Geology

Union College Department of Geology
Union Street
Schenectady, NY 12309
518-388-6000

United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Extension Center
41 S. Grand St.
Cobleskill, NY 12043
518-234-4377