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THE VILLAGE AND THE RIVER

(A planning analysis of the potential for improved utilization
of the Hudson River as a positive Village resource)

VILLAGE OF HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON, NEW YORK

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original

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Regional Context

The growing concern of the Village of Hastings over its lack of contact with the Hudson River is no mere local phenomenon. The River, as a regional resource, is not only a major artery of trade but also an important source of water, a magnificent source of scenic beauty, and a sometimes-significant source of recreational amenity. Yet, the communities along the Hudson share certain severe problems in taking advantage of the River.

One of the most pervasive of these is the effect of the Hudson Division of the Penn Central Railroad, which draws a serious barrier between the River and abutting communities. A concomitant problem has been the historical growth of industry along the rail line, thus reinforcing the barrier. The sad result is that numerous communities find themselves turning their backs on the River. Hastings is no exception.

The Hudson River Valley Commission is an agency which has come into being to deal with all of these River-related problems in terms of the whole River Valley. Its purpose is "to enhance the River's recreational, industrial, historic, scenic, cultural, residential and esthetic values and preserve these values for the future." Toward this end, the Commission has review powers for projects which constitute a change in the use of the land within its jurisdiction - a corridor of land at least one mile wide on either side of the River. This review process has the potential advantages not only of discouraging inappropriate uses, but also of enhancing the appearance of acceptable uses, and improving their functional qualities (such as capacity to handle traffic efficiently). The hoped-for result would be a River-oriented region with well integrated elements of developed areas, significant recreational resources, open-spaces, and visual amenity.

Waterfront Land-Use in Other Communities

Trends in the use of Hudson waterfront properties in Westchester in the past few years are varied. A survey of projects reviewed by the Hudson River Valley Commission since 1967, which received Commission approval and are assumed to be either constructed or under construction, shows that about 2/7 of the projects were industrial or light industrial uses, 2/7 residential uses, and the remaining 3/7 other uses. It is significant that nearly 1/7 of the uses installed in that time were recreational and park uses. Representatives of the Project Review staff at the Hudson River Valley Commission indicated that they felt a great number of nursing homes were being constructed

in the area under the purview of the Commission. This trend is not indicated on the list below because the list refers only to waterfront properties, not to the whole swath of land under Commission jurisdiction, and furthermore, the list refers only to Westchester.

WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT IN WESTCHESTER
APPROVED BY HUDSON RIVER VALLEY COMMISSION

1967 - 1970*

13 Industrial & light industrial uses including:

- Manufacturing Plants
- Power Plants
- Gas & Oil Storage & Transfer

4 Public Works Projects:

- Power Plant
- Solid Waste Compacting Plant
- Sewage Treatment Plants

4 Commercial Uses:

- Offices
- Motel
- Woodworking Shop

12 Residential Developments:

- 5 Single-Family
- 7 Multi-Family

5 Recreational Uses

- 3 Parks
- 1 Marina
- 1 Seaplane Marina

4 Institutional Improvements & New Uses

- Nursing Home
- Additions to Sing-Sing

*These are only those projects constructed, or assumed to be slated for construction very near the waterfront.

Of the uses listed above, manufacturing plants have located principally in Yonkers and in Northern Westchester, and oil and gas tanking operations have been concentrated in Yonkers; all power plants have located in Northern Westchester. Likewise, sewage treatment and waste compacting plants have been located in Yonkers and in Northern Westchester. Commercial uses have been rather evenly distributed among the various waterfront communities. Residential uses are also rather well distributed, although Yonkers and Ossining do account for a large portion. Recreational uses have been largely concentrated in the northern half of Westchester. The bulk of proposals for institutional redevelopment of the waterfront in Westchester have been concerned with improvements at Sing-Sing prison.

The listing indicates that the possibilities for waterfront development are still varied; that the options for diversity have not become as limited as one might presuppose. Among the recently developed projects, the uses which tend to generate positive acceptance - residential and recreational uses - are at least equal in number to those which tend to generate negative response - industrial and public works projects. In terms of acreage they may even be greater in scope.

A recent study prepared for the New York State Department of Conservation showed that Westchester County has only about 20 marinas, boat clubs, and boat launching sites on the Hudson River. The same study, comparing New York Hudson River facilities to New Jersey boating facilities found the Hudson River marina facilities "woefully inadequate."

As part of the cure for this inadequacy the study recommended not only completion of the proposed marina facilities at Peekskill, Tarrytown and Yonkers, but in addition the establishment of four or five well-located multi-lane launching ramps with over-all capacity equal to that of 23 single lane launching ramps. Furthermore, "because launching ramps by virtue of their low revenue-producing abilities are not expected to attract private investors," the study recommends "that the department of Conservation provide guidance, technical advice and financial assistance . . ."¹

The study cited above is only one manifestation of the growing interest in refurbishing the Hudson. An even more striking manifestation is the growing number of urban renewal projects in Hudson River communities. The following is a list of municipalities within the purview of the Hudson River Valley Commission which have undertaken urban renewal projects:

1. Marina Facilities Study prepared by Peat, Marwick, Mitchell & Co., 1970, for the New York State Department of Conservation.

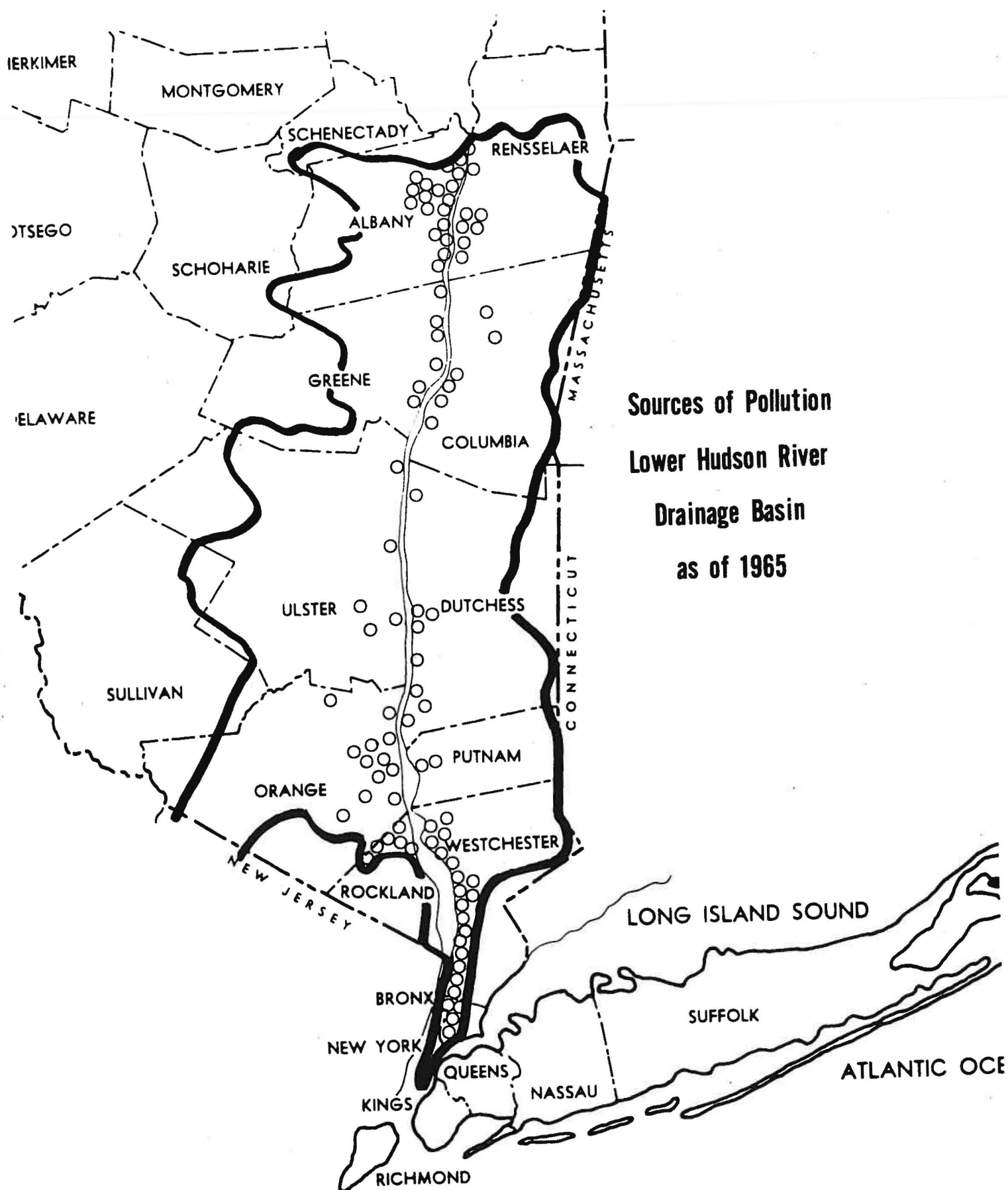
Albany	North Tarrytown
Beacon*	Nyack
Cohoes*	Peekskill
Glen Falls	Poughkeepsie*
Hudson*	Rensselaer
Kingston	Tarrytown*
Mechanicsville*	Troy*
Newburgh*	Watervleit

Yonkers

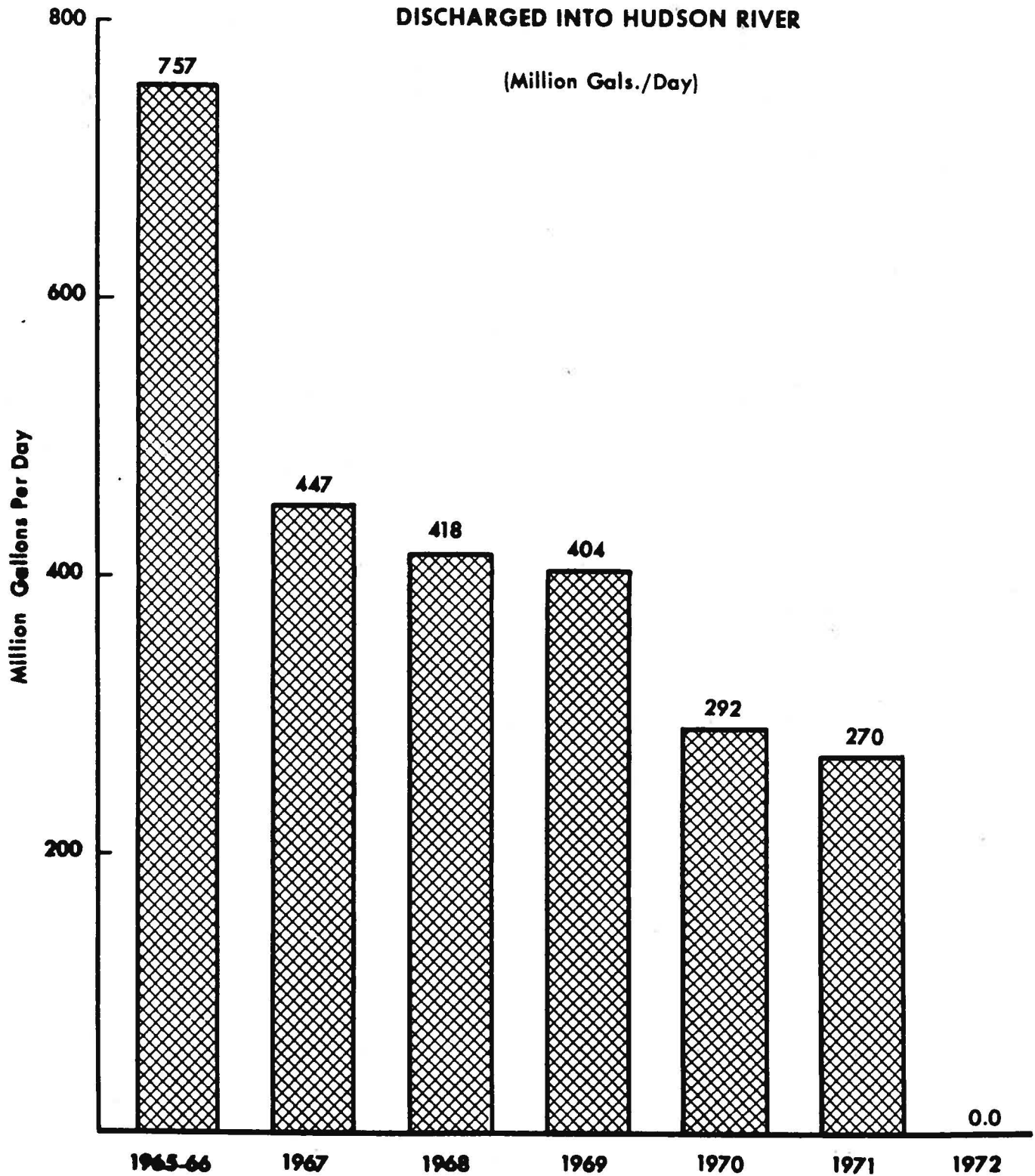
It seems significant that eight of the seventeen communities engaging in urban renewal have seen fit to concentrate their effort at the waterfront. In these communities, as in Hastings, some of the oldest and least sound structures are located near the waterfront. Both the need to replace such structures and the desire to do away with an unsightly barrier to the waterfront have combined as motivation to give these communities the impetus to take massive action against waterfront blight through urban renewal.

Other massive action being directed at River improvement is the New York State Pollution Abatement program. The River will be considerably enhanced - not only from a health standpoint, but also in esthetic and recreational value - when the program of constructing sewage treatment plants has brought the pollution sources under control. The following map, prepared by the New York State Health Department, illustrates the magnitude of the problem by pointing out the major sources of pollution. The chart accompanying the map shows the 1965 projection of pollution abatement progress, with 1972 indicated as the completion date. Although it is now apparent that this 1972 deadline cannot be met, the State Health Department hopes to achieve its aim only a few years later.

*Directly waterfront-oriented projects.



**INADEQUATELY TREATED WASTES
DISCHARGED INTO HUDSON RIVER**



Hastings

Visual Amenity

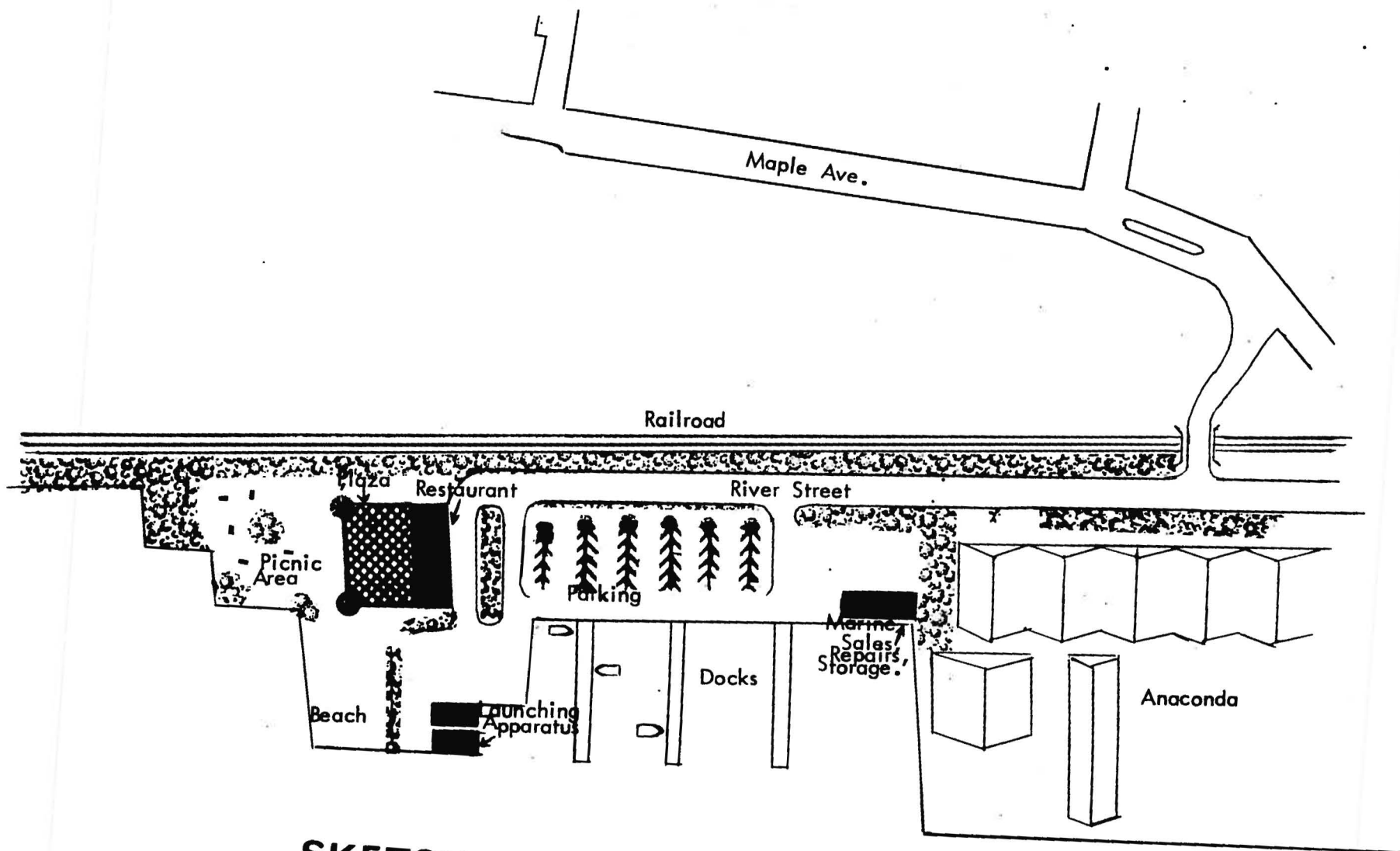
In Hastings, there are a number of natural vantage points which offer magnificent views of the River and the Palisades. The garden apartments along North Broadway command lovely vistas from their "back yards." Just to the east of these apartments, as the land rises to a crest in Riverview Manor, many private homes also have beautiful views, especially in those seasons when trees are not foliated enough to screen the view. Similarly, homes located along New Broadway have an even more splendid view of the River in fall and winter than in summer. The Andrus Memorial Home, standing above those homes along another crest, boasts a year-round vista, as does the Graham School.

It would be to the advantage of the Village to protect the view qualities of these areas both for general esthetic reasons and for the purpose of maintaining good property values. A possible means to accomplish this aim might be the establishment of "View Districts" in which any new structures would potentially be subject to Site Plan Review by the Planning Board. Site Plan Review would not apply to new or expanded single family homes unless it were the determination of the Building Inspector that the home or addition would obstruct the view of the River or Palisades from neighboring buildings or properties.

In addition to preservation of these natural vantage points in "View Districts", there are opportunities in the Village to provide pleasing visual surprises by means of man-made structures. One example of a conscious effort to create such a view spot is the new library. Site landscaping has been employed to create a controlled picture through its expansive windows.

Another, albeit unintended, view spot is the Warburton Avenue Bridge over Zinsser Plaza. From this point the River and Palisades can be observed above the roof of the Anaconda buildings. Although the Anaconda buildings intrude upon the picture, it is possible that if a plaza were built out at this height, either as part of a parking structure or some larger development, a controlled and pleasing view of the River could be created, as in the library. Similar opportunities present themselves along a good stretch of Warburton Avenue - from Ridge Street, along Williams Street, along Marble Terrace and Nodine Street - where proper building development could be used to take advantage of the view.

Another way in which the visual appreciation of the River could be enhanced is by treating the industrial development area itself to make it less unsightly. For instance, site treatment could include extensive landscaping both for appearance purposes and as a screening device at the borders of the site, especially along roadway approaches. Thus, an over-view of the industrial area would include not only black roofs but also green trees and bushes. One other technique which might be applicable here in certain situations, is a requirement that new low-lying buildings actually make garden spots on their roofs so that higher structures look down not on tar paper and gravel, but on urban gardens.



**SKETCH of DEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES
RECREATION AREA**

Recreational Use of the Waterfront

As demonstrated by the four existing marina areas in Hastings - the Tower Ridge Yacht Club, the Hastings Marina, the Pioneer Flying Club, and the Palisades Boat Club - Hastings does have an active interest in river-oriented recreation. This interest could potentially make for a much better and more widely available use of the waterfront.

Opportunities for increased utilization of the River for recreation exist both to the north and to the south of the area of industrial development. For the near future, the northern portion of the Hastings waterfront seems best suited for development of boating uses. Only the Robison Oil Tanking operation stands between the Hastings Marina and the Tower Ridge Yacht Club, and it is possible that this tanking activity may be phased out soon. Therefore, a good expanse of contiguous waterfront land, requiring minimal land fill, could be coordinated for optimum recreational development.

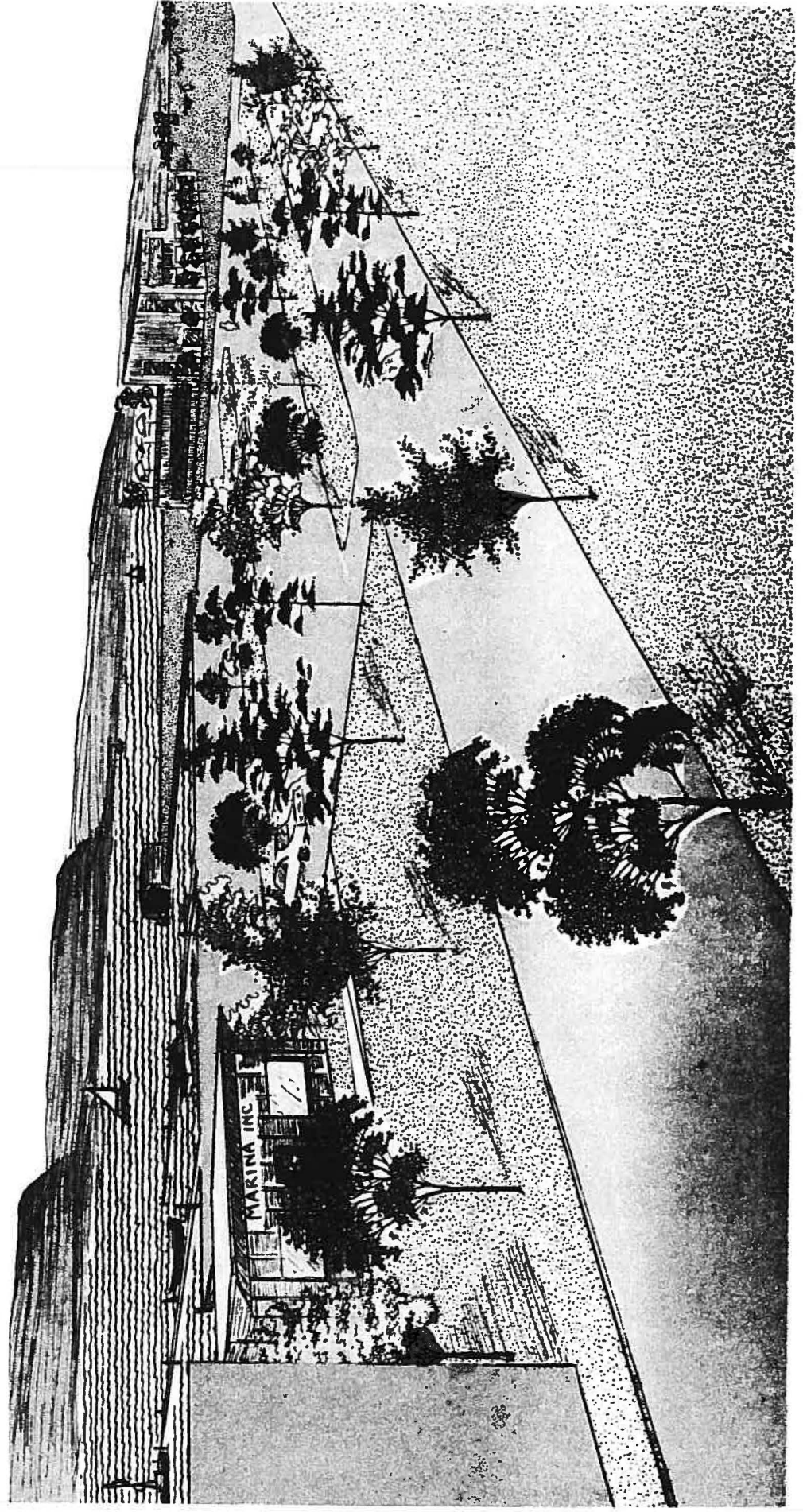
Furthermore, of the two bridges presently crossing the railroad tracks, the better one gives access to these properties. Still, the approach to this area could be greatly improved in visual quality through the simple expedient of planting rows of poplar or hemlock as a foliage screen along both sides of River Street.

Recreational uses of this site need not be limited to boating activities. For the short term, waterfront parks, and plazas would be a substantial contribution to the Village's recreational resources. Despite the murkiness of the water, fishing is currently possible in the River; the striped bass which anglers seek in Long Island Sound spawn here. Furthermore, neighboring communities such as Irvington provide for swimming in the River, and the activity is approved by the County Health Department.

As for recreational use of the area to the south of the industrial zone, long-term opportunities may be presented there over a period of time. A large parcel listed on the Village tax rolls as New York State Underwater Lands could possibly be opened up for development once a connecting road to Warburton Avenue has been built from Southside Avenue.

Many possibilities for mixed use, and mixed public/private development might emerge if the land were to become more accessible. For instance, private residential development of land east of the railroad tracks might be coordinated with public recreational development of the waterfront with public/private operation cooperation on the provision of access and parking area. Parking and access arrangements might also be cooperatively achieved with the neighboring industrial area, since industry's greatest demands would be on weekdays, while recreation would generate weekend demand.

Sketch of Recreational Development Possibilities For the Waterfront



Another significant aspect of recreational development of the waterfront would be the linking of the River with other green areas of the Village. For instance, a walking trail could connect the riverfront with the Old Croton Aqueduct. Since the Aqueduct abuts both Draper and Zinsser Parks, a virtual network of greenbelt/park areas would be created.

This effect could be reinforced by protecting the visual link between those areas of the Village which already command a view of the River, and by encouraging the creation of new vistas where the view is now obstructed.

Industry on the Waterfront

With regard to the main body of the industrial waterfront development, there seems to be little hope for a change of use in the foreseeable future. The Anaconda property continues to represent a fairly viable economic enterprise and the physical plant still appears to have a considerable life expectancy. Furthermore, this property accounts for roughly 11 percent of Village tax revenues. However, two serious Village problems are related to this development. Truck traffic traveling from the industrial site through the Village remains a major problem and the buildings are visually unattractive and block the view of the River in one of the few areas with a significant amount of land west of the railroad tracks.

With regard to the Anaconda land, it seems that the best course would be to treat the problems generated by the property, rather than try to change the uses at this point in time. The Village should work with the industries to help find and fund solutions to the truck traffic and appearance problems.

The other major industrial property on the waterfront, Tappan Tanker, represents a use of more dubious value to the Village. Structures are in poor condition generally and are not well maintained or kept in good repair. Also, although the property is roughly one half the size of the Anaconda holdings, it produces only slightly more than one sixth of the tax revenues of the other industrial property. Further, the oil tanking activities generate much of the congesting truck traffic through the Village's main streets and business district.

It would seem that redevelopment of this segment of the Industrial Zone would be a somewhat more feasible possibility than the Anaconda area. Three major land use types could be considered for this land: residential development, office buildings and industrial uses.

Residential use of this property would have to be of a fairly high density, apartment type if it is to represent an economically viable alternative. Residents would have magnificent views of the Hudson River, and, potentially, outstanding recreational facilities at their doorstep. Such use should also be of great tax advantage to the Village (refer to Housing Analysis and Large Tract Study). However, two serious problems exist. It might be difficult to interest a developer in building a type of luxury apartment complex ..

which might logically go on this site because of the inhibiting effect of having an industrial next-door neighbor and because of the poor road access - from both the aspects of traffic capacity and appearance. These problems might be overcome, at least in part, through proper site design and the construction of a southbound road connection to Warburton Avenue.

Redevelopment of the property for office uses would face some of the same problems, but in a slightly altered order of importance. It might, perhaps, be somewhat easier to attract an office use next to Anaconda, but even more difficult to give it adequate access because offices use generate the greatest amount of automobile traffic, particularly during peak traffic periods.

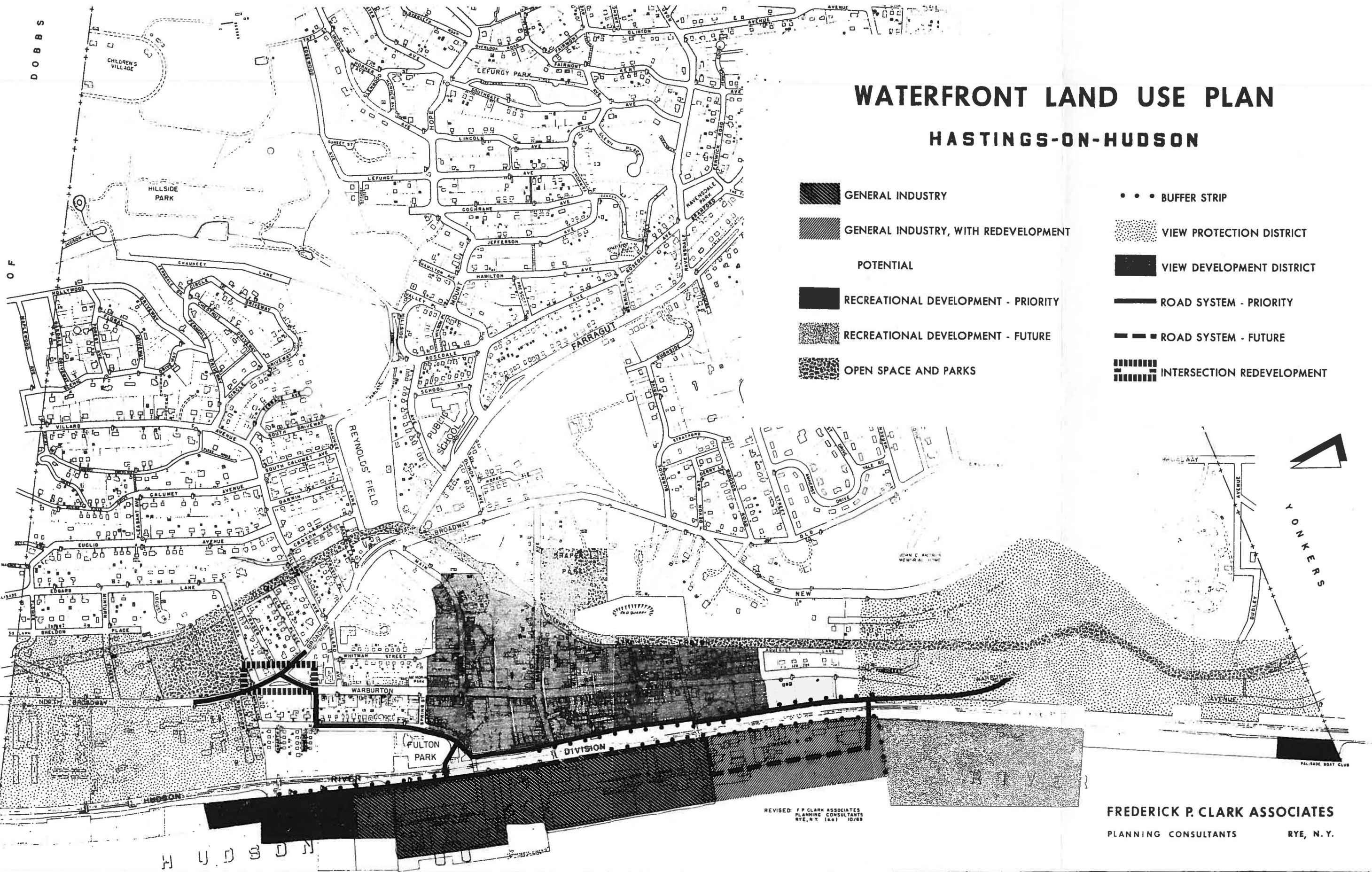
The use of this area for industry, as at present, represents a third alternative. However, it should not be automatically assumed that the existing type of industrial use is best suited for this property. As the Village knows from hard experience, the oil tanking activities press a great hardship on the community by sending their heavy, cumbersome trucks through the constricted Village Center. The trucks represent expense and inconvenience to the Village not only because of damage to the streets but also because of the negative effect of the trucks on the business and residential portions of the community.

Redevelopment of the Tappan Land should be considered with an eye on three important factors:

1. Traffic - Reduced traffic generation and/or rerouting of traffic to avoid congestion in the center of the Village, and improvement of the over-all traffic circulation system. Redevelopment of the Tappan land should also include redevelopment of the access road - Southside Avenue - which is by all standards inadequate, as well as the access bridge which may be sound, but is still too narrow for heavy traffic and extremely unsightly. Southside Avenue could be visually improved by use of landscaping and trees for screening.
2. Esthetics - New development should be of a quality such that the blighting aspects of this property will be removed. Building quality, site layout, landscaping and screening should result in a positive, rather than negative, effect for the Village.
3. Tax Revenues - Comparison with the neighboring Anaconda property indicates that the Tappan land produces proportionally far less revenue. New development might be expected to compare more favorably with Anaconda's income-producing significance to the Village.

VILLAGE

DOBBS



Implementation of Waterfront Improvements

Master Plan for the Waterfront

In order to guide both the short-range and long-range improvements of the waterfront toward a coherent development of the whole area, it is recommended that the Village adopt a Master Plan for the Waterfront.

The following text constitutes the recommended provisions for a Master Plan for the Waterfront.

Short Term:

Recreation

Recreational uses should be planned for all land north of the Anaconda property including the Robison oil tanking operation. Development could include not only pleasure-boat marinas but also fishing boat facilities and a swimming area, possibly modelled after Irvington's municipal park.

In cluded in the development would be landscaping of River Street, as well as creation of a landscaped parking area and a foliated buffer between the recreation and industrial areas. Commercial enterprises, such as restaurants, should be considered as possibly advantageous special uses in this area.

Traffic Circulation

Since the traffic generated by Hastings' waterfront activities has so great an impact on the Village circulation pattern, the following road improvements should be planned in conjunction with riverfront development:

- Widening of Southside Avenue
- Extension of Southside Avenue to Warburton Avenue
- Widening of North Street
- Improvement of River Street
- Improvement of bridge to Tappan property

Industry

Industrial use of the Anaconda property should be improved with site landscaping and screening. Any changes in the structures should be made with consideration of the future creation of an internal road system for the entire industrial area.

Use of the Tappan Tanker property should not increase in intensity without improved access. The widening and extension of Southside Avenue are especially important to this area, as is the refurbishing of the bridge over the railroad tracks. However, if these access improvements are all made, the Tappan property would present a desirable prospect for redevelopment with more intense use.

If the whole property does not become available for redevelopment at one time, a staged development program should at least include comprehensive landscaping of each parcel; screening foliage along all perimeters and approaches; creation of a clear path to allow for eventual construction of an internal road system for the industrial zone; siting of parking areas in a manner which allows coordination with development of other industrial parcels, and possibly with the projected recreation area to the south.

If the whole Tappan property becomes available the possibility of developing the entire site as an integrated whole would warrant consideration of changed land use and a different type of relationship to neighboring areas. For instance, apartment development could be feasible and beneficial if the Southside improvements were made. The same might be true for office development.

In other words, the Tappan area should be planned for continued industrial use unless wholesale redevelopment becomes possible. If this should occur, consideration should be given to changed land use, providing that proposals show comprehensive treatment of the area, in keeping with the aims of the Master Plan for the Waterfront.

Visual Amenity

A policy of protection should be adopted regarding natural view areas in the Village - notably along Broadway and along Warburton at the northern and southern ends of the community.

Another constructive policy would apply to the height of buildings in the central portion of the Village where there presently exists a quantity of deteriorated housing. The areas surrounding Ridge Street and Nodine Street, for instance, could potentially command lovely views of the River if buildings were allowed to rise to a height great enough so that Anaconda and Tappan structures would no longer block the view. The double advantage of replacing deteriorating housing and providing new vistas of the Hudson could thus be achieved. Another potential site of this type is the Zinsser Parking Plaza where additional parking and residential development could be combined to serve the parking, housing and esthetic needs of the Village. Further advantages of redevelopment would be an expanded tax base for the Village as well as increased customer population for the business area, located within walking distance.

Other Considerations

In order to foster a stronger relationship between the Village and the waterfront, walkways should be planned to connect waterfront recreation areas with the Croton Aqueduct, and thereby with much of the Village's park areas.

Another planning consideration is the tax value of view or changed land uses to the community and the school district.

Long Term:

Recreation

Recreational use of the "New York State Underwater Lands" should be projected for the future, partly contingent on the southward extension of Southside Avenue. At such time as the Village is ready to contemplate this development, it should consider planning contiguous areas for more dense residential development. This would accomplish two positive results: it would help to meet some of the Village's housing needs; and it would create an opportunity for the recommended joint public/private development of this presently unused segment of the riverfront.

Traffic Circulation

As recommended in the Traffic Circulation Study, long term treatment of the trucking traffic problem will call for re-engineering the whole Broadway/Warburton intersection.

Implementation of the Plan

The Zoning Ordinance text should be altered to describe standards required for future development in the waterfront area. Proposals for such alterations will be submitted separately by the Consultants as part of the Zoning Study.

Another tool for implementation is the Zoning Map, which could be altered in either of two ways to encourage desired development. One way would be to change the zone in response to a developer's proposal (as discussed regarding the Tappan property) if such a proposal were deemed to be a comprehensive treatment of the site, in keeping with the aims of the Master Plan for the Waterfront. Another even stronger method would be incentive zoning. That is, a property could be rezoned for a use more profitable than the existing use so that it attracts developers to come in and rebuild. The latter method is an active, rather than passive, position which the Village could adopt to pursue the desired development results, without requiring local expenses or participation in State and Federal programs.

Site Plan Review is another aspect of the zoning law important to implementation of a Plan. Present requirements for Site Plan Review should be extended so that all non-residential and multi-family residential structures be referred to the Planning Board for recommendations before a building permit may be issued. Proposals for such an extension will be included in the Zoning Study.

Site Plan Review is a significant tool because it allows the Planning Board to make constructive contributions to development efforts, and to help direct those efforts, case by case, toward the best result for the Village. It is an additional means of assuring that Village development policy will be respected.

For the riverfront, Site Plan Review will be particularly important because it is the crucial tool for assuring that private development be carried out in such a way as to effectuate the Master Plan for the Waterfront.

In addition to the review powers of the Planning Board under Site Plan Review, the Village can take greater advantage in the future of the review powers of the Hudson River Valley Commission. The Village should make a policy of informing potential developers of the jurisdiction of the Hudson River Valley Commission and of the need to submit plans to the Commission at the earliest possible date, to expedite the review process.

Funding

The following is a list of State and Federal programs which could be of use to Hastings in implementing a program for improving the waterfront:

1. Bureau of Outdoor Recreation - division of US Department of Interior - Through this bureau up to 50% of the acquisition costs for recreation land can be supplied by the Federal Government. The application is handled through New York State.
2. Next Step Program - New York State Conservation Department - Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation - Under this program 50% of the costs of developing land for recreation uses will be supplied to the community by the State. This program is most frequently used in conjunction with the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation acquisition funds.
3. Open Space Beautification Program - Department of Housing and Urban Development - This program also offers up to 50% of the development costs for recreation. In some instances this program can be used in conjunction with the Next Step Program to supply as much as 75% of the total development costs for a recreation program. However, in no case can a full 100% of development costs be supplied through the two programs or any combination of programs.
4. Urban Beautification . Program - Department of Housing and Urban Development - Under this program up to half of the increase in yearly recreational expenditures for the Village can be supplied by the Federal Government. However, it seems that for a community of the size of Hastings only about \$10,000 would be available.
5. Urban Renewal - Department of Housing and Urban Development - This program may provide Federal grants for up to two-thirds of the costs of redeveloping former slum areas. Urban Renewal projects emphasize the construction of recreation facilities, including parks and playgrounds.

6. TOPICS - U. S. and N. Y. S. Departments of Transportation - TOPICS is designed to provide traffic operations improvements on existing streets and highways in urban areas. Its purpose is to maximize the efficiency and safety of the existing urban system. The Federal Government may contribute 50% of costs.