

2.11 Historic Areas and Resources

Bronxville's early development in the 19th Century and its carefully planned residential subdivisions during the 1920s left the Village a valuable heritage of attractive, historic buildings and neighborhoods. Of particular significance are the majority of homes in Lawrence Park, built before World War I. In 1980, 20 acres in Lawrence Park were listed as a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. The District includes 98 structures, of which 85 are listed as "significant" and 13 as "compatible additions."

Other noteworthy historic resources include the Masterton-Dusenberry House and the Abijah Morgan House. The Masterton-Dusenberry House, built in 1835 at 90 White Plains Road, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. The Abijah Morgan House was built in the pre- to early 1800s at 339 Pondfield Road and is listed on the Westchester County Inventory of Historic Places⁸

Bronxville residents take an active role in promoting the Village's history and historical resources. In 1998, as part of Bronxville's centennial celebrations, residents established the Bronxville Historical Conservancy to promote the Village's architectural, artistic and cultural heritage. The Conservancy offers publications, lecture series, and special events open to the public.

Figure 2.15 shows the major historic areas and buildings in Bronxville including Lawrence Park and the Masterton-Dusenberry and Abijah Morgan Houses.

2.12 Tax-exempt Land

In a community such as Bronxville, which is largely developed according to the density provisions of the zoning code and has few vacant building lots, the impact of tax-exempt properties on Village finances is particularly significant. Tax-exempt properties occupy 97 acres, or 19.8% of the 490 acres which constitute the Village area, exclusive of streets, or 14.6% of the total 666 acres of the Village. On an assessed value basis, approximately 2.99% of the Village's land is tax-exempt.

Tax-exempt properties include the following categories:

- Government-owned facilities that are operated for public purposes such as the Village Hall and Garage, and Library, the School, and the firehouse. These uses cover about 20 acres.

⁸ The Abijah Morgan House is also marked by Anne Hutchinson Chapter NADAR (1967).



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Figure 2.15: Historic Areas

- Historic District
- Historic Structure
- Building built before 1910

- Bronxville-owned recreation space: Maltby Park, the Dogwood Park Tennis Center, Bacon Woods, Sagamore Play Park and the Bicentennial Park, all of which comprise 8.5 acres.
- Westchester County Parks Commission and Bronx River Parkway Commission land along the Bronx River, which covers about 22 acres within Village boundaries.
- The Village parking areas of Kraft Avenue South, Kraft Avenue, Kensington Road, Garden Avenue and Cedar Street, with a total of approximately 4 acres.
- Properties owned and operated for religious purposes: the five churches together with their residences, schools, and accessory uses, comprise approximately 11.5 acres.
- Concordia College which occupies approximately 23 acres in Bronxville, with 10 additional acres in Tuckahoe, consisting mainly of recreational facilities.
- The Lawrence Hospital and Palmer Hall, both of which cover three acres.
- Miscellaneous areas including the Bronxville Cemetery (approximately one acre of which is in Bronxville).

2.13 Tax Base

County-Wide Context

Bronxville is unusual in Westchester County because its school district boundaries are coterminous with the Village boundaries. This allows Bronxville residents a somewhat clearer picture of budget and tax issues than other Westchester communities where varying taxing jurisdictions are not coterminous.

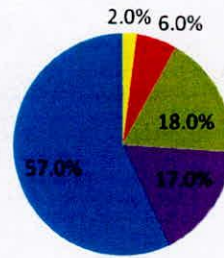
Bronxville's ability to increase its tax base, however, is more limited than many other communities. The Village is small, its land area is effectively built out, the population is stable and there is a limited commercial base. This means residential land uses will continue to form the prime source of real estate taxes. Despite this limitation, the Bronxville tax rate compares favorably against other Westchester communities with noted school systems such as Scarsdale, Rye and Larchmont.

Existing Conditions

Bronxville residents pay Village, Town (Eastchester), School and County taxes (including to the sewer and refuse districts) as well as taxes to the fire district. The accompanying charts on the following page break down the tax bill for the 1990-91, 1996-97, 2001-02 and 2008-09 fiscal years. As can be seen, the school budget represents the largest single item (roughly 69% of the total tax bill and 83% of the School/Village tax bill for the 2008-2009 fiscal year). The percentage of the

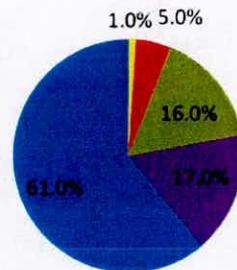
total tax bill for Bronxville's residents devoted to school taxes has steadily increased in recent years, and now makes up more than two-thirds of the total bill.

Property Tax Distribution, 1990-91



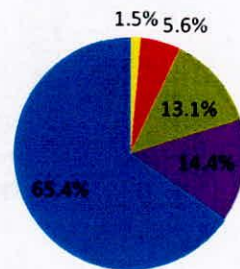
- Town
- Fire
- County
- Village
- School

Property Tax Distribution, 1996-97



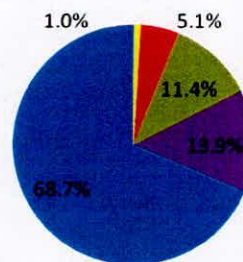
- Town
- Fire
- County
- Village
- School

Property Tax Distribution, 2001-02



- Town
- Fire
- County
- Village
- School

Property Tax Distribution, 2008-09



- Town
- Fire
- County
- Village
- School

The county, town, fire, refuse and sewer district taxes are all levied by those taxing jurisdictions and thus limit the Bronxville taxpayer's control and influence. The major source of tax revenue in the Village is the residential tax base; this land use category has consistently formed at least two-thirds of the total tax base.

Bronxville's Community Plans since at least 1992 recommended that the Village conduct a Village-wide property reassessment. The last such property assessment was conducted in 1967, and changing real estate values with differing land uses and geographic areas may have created inequities since that time.

In early 2006, the Village retained the services of Tyler Technologies/Cole Layer Trumble, a highly qualified real estate revaluation firm to visually and physically inspect each real estate parcel in the Village. Tyler Technologies, under the supervision of the assessor's office, gathered comparable sales information, income and expense data from commercial property owners and re-measured the structures lying on the land. Subsequently they developed up-to-date fair market values for each parcel as of January 1, 2007. The process was completed in compliance with New York State Law that required the public notice of each value developed to be published on the Final Assessment Roll on April 1, 2007.

From all accounts, the revaluation was well received and came in within acceptable tolerances set forth by the New York State office of Real Property Services and International Association of Assessing Officials. Both of these organizations believe that a tolerance level or Coefficient of Dispersion (COD) of 10% or less is a reasonably achievable expectation for equitable taxation

A similar but streamlined procedure was commenced in the year 2007, the goal of which was to update the preceding values and correct neighborhood value inconsistencies. This process was completed with the publication of the Final Assessment Roll on April 1, 2008.

Table 13 compares assessed valuation of taxable properties in the Village for the 1990, 1996, 2001 and 2008 tax rolls. As shown, property value assessments declined between 1990 and 2002, with the exception of multi-family dwellings (apartments, condominiums and cooperatives), which increased slightly (3%) between 1996 and 2001. This increase is attributed to the construction of 110 units of rental housing (the Avalon development) that expanded the multi-family tax base. The overall decrease in multi-family assessed values from 1990 to 2002 partly reflects a 1981 State law that requires these units to be assessed on actual or theoretical income or earning capacity rather than the fair market value standard applied to single-family residences. This assessment procedure has encouraged certiorari proceedings which have resulted in lower valuations.

The steadily declining assessed property values in Bronxville through 2002 reflected the fact that the Village had not conducted a property reassessment since the late 1960s, as well as the fact that assessment procedures are limited by equalization formulas. This created a situation in which the market value of properties in Bronxville, particularly single-family homes, dramatically increased

over the years, but assessed valuation did not keep pace. Thus, assessment values continued to decline despite actual increases in market value.

Table 13: Assessed Property Values, 1990-2009

	2008-09		2001-02		1996-97		1990-91		% Change 1990-2009
	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	
Single-Family	\$2,565,728,722	66.6%	\$55,439,703	72.8%	\$56,984,715	71.9%	\$58,362,835	68.4%	+4,296.2%
Multi-Family	\$30,854,368	0.8%	\$13,360,418	17.6%	\$12,958,228	16.4%	\$14,756,103	17.3%	+109.1%
Commercial	\$507,004,407	13.2%	\$6,320,553	8.3%	\$7,686,005	9.7%	\$9,504,445	11.1%	+5,234.4%
Public Utilities	\$8,072,011	0.2%	\$282,770	0.4%	\$320,100	0.4%	\$780,100	0.9%	+934.7%
Special Franchise	\$18,078,782	0.5%	\$710,873	0.9%	\$1,276,186	1.6%	\$1,947,068	2.3%	+828.5%
Wholly Exempt	\$720,191,372	18.7%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
TOTAL	\$3,849,969,662	100%	\$76,114,317	100%	\$79,225,234	100%	\$85,350,551	100%	+4,410.8%

Source: 2002 Village of Bronxville Community Plan, Village of Bronxville Assessor, 2008

Since the 2007 property reassessment procedure, total assessed property value in Bronxville has increased dramatically, from approximately \$85.4 million in 1990-91 to \$3.85 billion in 2008-09. The most significant gainers in terms of total assessed value are single-family dwellings and commercial properties. Single-family dwellings continue to constitute the largest share of assessed property values (67%), but this represents a decrease from their 2001-02 level of 73%. Commercial properties substantially increased both their assessed value and their share of the Village's total assessed property values. While the assessed property value of multi-family dwellings more than doubled as a result of the reassessment, their share of the total value dropped sharply, from 17.3% in 1990-91 to 0.8% in 2008-09, largely due to the 1981 State law discussed above. Both public utilities and special franchise properties also increased significantly in assessed value, but both decreased their share of the total value.

Another notable change in the 2008-09 assessed property value list is the addition of a wholly tax-exempt category, representing approximately 19% of the total assessed value. Most of the Village's tax-exempt properties consist of its institutional uses (Village Hall, the library, the school, churches and parks), which are not likely to change and add to Bronxville's community character. However, the Village's tax base is reduced by properties such as the Kensington Road parking lot, which are Village-owned and therefore tax-exempt. Returning such properties to the tax rolls would reduce the percentage of tax-exempt land within the Village and increase the tax base.

The 2007-2008 reassessments added transparency and certainty to Bronxville's long-range tax planning, and responded to a long-held recommendation of the Village's Community Plans. A recent study conducted by the assessor's office indicates that the Village now levies taxes on a very sound tax base with tolerance levels below 8%. The Board of Trustees, together with the Assessor, is currently determining the appropriate length of time between property reassessments.

Furthermore, the Village has resolved a number of outstanding tax certiorari litigation proceedings, some of which extended back approximately 15 years. The net result of this effort is that the current taxable assessments are solid and truly represent the real estate wealth of the community. The certiorari refund exposure has been greatly reduced and has stabilized financial planning for the Village and School.

A second major form of revenue for Village services is user fees (such as for parking and recreation). The basic philosophy of these fees is to generate revenue from the "user" of a Village service so that the cost of the service is paid for by those who use it most. Bronxville has successfully used such fees to reduce potential increases in Village taxes. This can be seen in the preceding pie charts which show the percent of total taxes represented by the Village actually declining between 1980 and 2009.

3.0 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Many of the goals and objectives that are listed below were identified in the previous Community Plan prepared in 2002. Given that there have been few land use or demographic changes in the Village over the past six years, many of the 2002 goals and objectives are relevant today. The chapter below highlights the overall goals for the Village, followed by a list of major objectives grouped under seven selected topics.

3.1 Overall Goals

The overall purpose of this Community Plan is to maintain Bronxville as a small scale, attractive community in which the pattern and quality of land uses reflect the needs of residents, businesses, institutions and other interest groups within the Village.

To achieve this overall goal, the community must:

- Preserve and promote the special architectural character and appearance of existing buildings and neighborhoods.
- Maintain the natural landscape of the Village.
- Retain the pedestrian scale of buildings, streets and open spaces that currently exist in the downtown area.
- Encourage development and land utilization that is appropriate to the existing pattern of development and which will help ensure the economic stability of the whole community.
- Control the impacts of flooding on residential and commercial properties within the Village.

3.2 Objectives

Village objectives for the next decade include the following:

Residential Areas

- Retain the roughly even balance between single-family and multi-family units.
- Continue to encourage development of appropriately scaled multi-family units adjacent to or within the CBD, to enhance the value of the neighborhood.
- Preserve the quality and character of existing single-family residential zones.

Commercial Uses

- Maintain the "village" character of the CBD through careful control of land uses, storefronts, lighting and signage; adequate building maintenance; and on-going streetscape improvements.
- Maintain and improve the mix of retail stores, services and other commercial uses that are geared to the needs of local residents and those in the immediate adjoining communities.
- Ensure that any new development is related in scale and character to the existing buildings within the CBD.

Transportation and Parking

- Promote policies to help ensure convenient and safe traffic flow on the Village street network.
- Ensure adequate public transportation services, particularly for residents without access to private automobiles.
- Provide for adequate off-street parking for any new multi-family development.
- Ensure an adequate supply of parking for commuters, shoppers, merchants and other visitors to the CBD consistent with the residential character of the Village.
- Encourage continued improvement in the utilization of metered parking spaces.
- Relocate commuter parking to outlying parking parcels.

Open Space and Recreation

- Preserve and enhance existing public open space areas with special attention to landscape improvement of Village streets, parking lots, and Station Plaza area.
- Encourage continued use of natural landscape elements within existing development.
- Ensure high quality maintenance of existing recreation facilities.

Community Facilities

- Maintain high quality services and facilities for Village residents.

- Ensure efficient use and maintenance of public services provided by the Police and Fire Departments and the Department of Public Works.

Tax Base

- Maintain balance between user fees and the costs of providing services.
- Achieve fiscal savings without sacrificing existing high quality Village services.
- Preserve the commercial property tax base in the CBD.
- Conduct regular revaluation updates as needed to ensure that assessed property values are consistent with real estate values and other conditions.
- Enforce regular assessment updates of individual properties to reflect any improvements that may change their assessed value.

Flood Control

- Implement a flood protection system to protect Village, school and private property.

4.0 PLANNING ISSUES

4.1 Village Assets

Bronxville's reputation as one of the most attractive residential communities in Westchester can be attributed to a number of assets making it one of the most desirable places to live. These qualities include the following:

- The Village has integrated its transportation services with its land uses to create a true planned community. The commercial core is centered around a transit hub, which is then surrounded by higher density residential buildings and public and institutional uses that together create a sense of community.
- The Village is visually appealing. The varied topography and careful landscaping create an attractive setting which is reinforced by the decorative and historic character of much of Bronxville's architecture.
- The Village's relatively small size – it encompasses an area of approximately one square mile (666 acres) – helps to ensure a neighborhood feeling and reinforces the quality of a pedestrian scale recognized by Bronxville residents.
- Bronxville contains, for a suburban community, an unusual mix of housing stock. A balance of apartment buildings and individual lots is almost equally split, in terms of dwelling units, between multi-family units and single-family homes.
- The Village is particularly well endowed with high quality services, programs and public institutions. The public school, library and government buildings, churches and specialized institutions such as Concordia College and Lawrence Hospital provide a rich range of educational, health, social and cultural services for the community. The public school has an excellent local and national reputation and continues to be a significant magnet for young families. It is a U.S. Department of Education nationally recognized School of Excellence, and the Bronxville Middle School was awarded the National Blue Ribbon Schools Award for 2008.
- Existing highways and the railroad station make Bronxville highly accessible to major employment centers, airports and other regional facilities.

Together, these qualities give the Village a small town atmosphere with a sense of history. These assets will continue to maintain and foster Bronxville's reputation as a highly desirable residential community.

4.2 Issues and Concerns

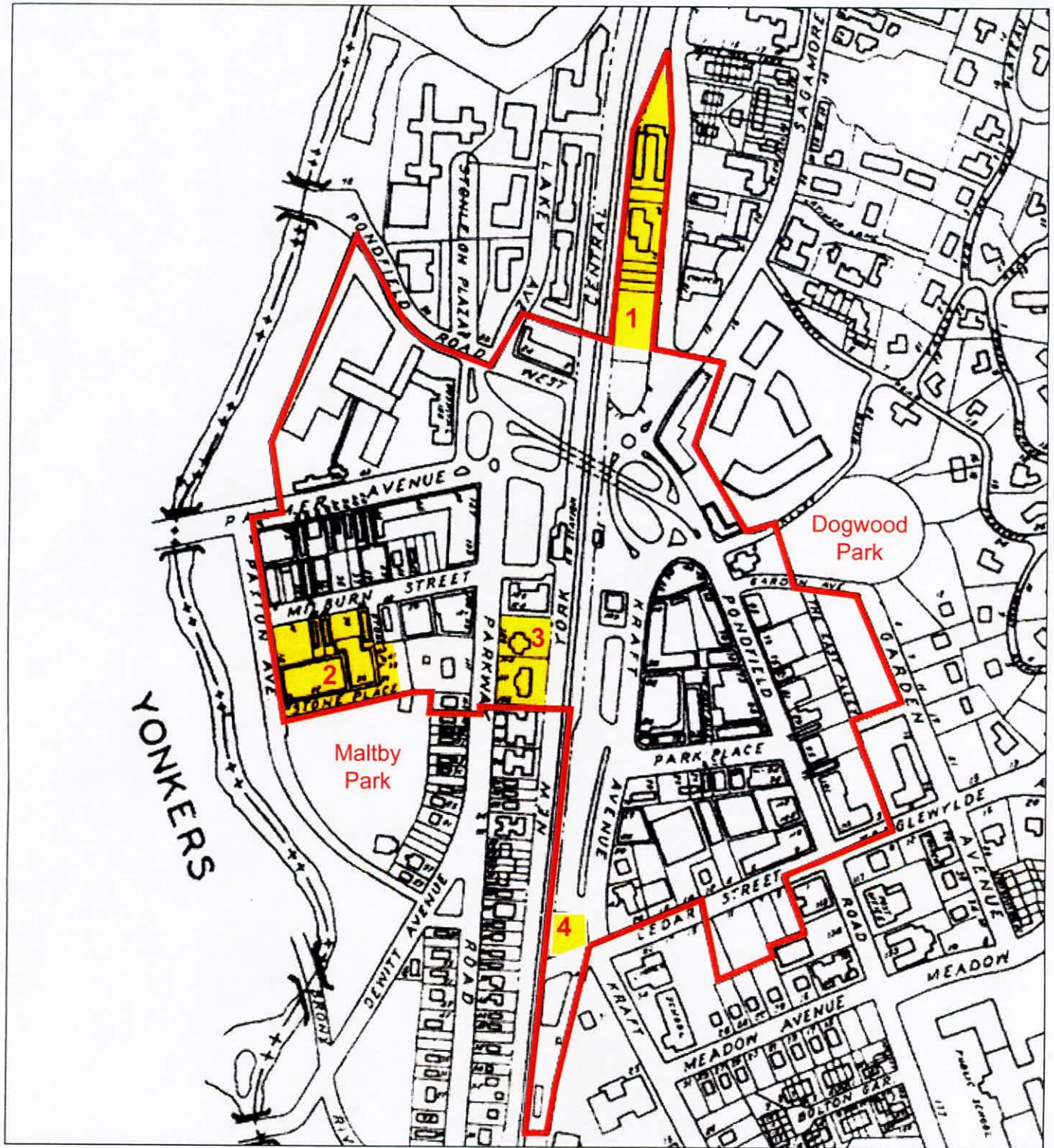
Because Bronxville has little vacant or underutilized land, few significant changes can be expected in terms of land use mix and population composition. However, several land use issues and concerns have been identified that need to be addressed within the framework of this Plan. The key concerns are summarized below:

Redevelopment Sites and Undeveloped Property

Although the Village is essentially fully developed, certain parcels have been identified as possible redevelopment sites (see Figure 4.1). A selection of these include:

- **Paxton Avenue Area.** This area is located on the west side of the CBD, and includes a mix of retail, office, light industrial and service properties as well as a privately-owned vacant site. The area is currently somewhat underutilized, with single-story buildings and at-grade parking lots. Development of the site is constrained by its location in the Bronx River floodplain, and, because it is privately owned, the Village has limited control over its improvement. However, the area offers an opportunity for expanded mixed-use development, including residential and commercial uses and parking for CBD shoppers.
- **BAMS Auto Repair/Gas Station.** The lease on this Village-owned site is set to expire at the end of 2008. Current plans are to raze the structure and replace it with approximately 40 new parking spaces, and to redesign and repave the Kraft Avenue/Cedar Street intersection to improve traffic flow and safety. This project provides an opportunity for streetscaping improvements that could enhance the surrounding area.
- **The "Mobil Lot".** This 0.6-acre site, originally part of the proposed Bronxville West Side development plan (now the Avalon development), is now rented by the Village, as lessee, and used for public parking. The Village intends to continue leasing the site for parking to help alleviate parking needs for commuters and CBD shoppers.
- **Kensington Road Site.** This Village-owned site was formerly a garage and parking lot and is currently a parking lot for commuters and CBD merchants. A study was completed in 2002 to assess ways to provide more on-site parking. The Kensington, a 54-unit luxury condominium project with additional commuter parking, was later proposed to be developed on the site. The proposal went through the Village's approvals process; however, the project sponsor was not able to pursue the project because of financial problems they incurred in the 2008 real estate recession. Future development of the site should incorporate a

Village parking component to alleviate commuter and shopper parking demand.



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Figure 4.1: CBD Redevelopment Sites

- CBD Boundary
- 1 Kensington Road Site
- 2 Paxton Avenue Area
- 3 "Mobil Lot"
- 4 BAMS Auto Repair/Gas Station

Housing

Future housing issues focus primarily on preserving the character of Bronxville's residential neighborhoods and ensuring a diversity of housing opportunities, as described below.

- Single-family home additions. As emphasized in the 1997 and 2002 plans, ensuring high-quality refurbishment of homes is important to maintaining the quality and architectural integrity of Bronxville's housing stock, much of which was built before 1930. However, an additional and increasing concern in the last five years has been the construction of housing additions that may be viewed as incompatible in scale and design with the character of Bronxville's neighborhoods. To address this concern, the Village adopted a floor area ratio (FAR) limit on residential structures. There may be a need to further examine and revise the zoning code to address ongoing issues. For example, the Village could require that, if more than a certain percentage of a house on an undersized lot is removed, the owner will need to go before the Zoning Board of Appeals for approval to replace the structure. Other ongoing concerns regarding maintaining and character of single-family homes include:
 - Regulation of "green" structures such as solar panels and wind power devices, as well as generators and air conditioning units.
 - Treatment of yard and setback requirements for corner lots and detached garages.
 - Dealing with teardowns and other out-of-scale residential development, as well as the aesthetic impacts of significant landscaping and excavations.

Central Business District

The economic health and physical conditions of the Village's Central Business District have been a major focus of planning efforts. In 1992, the Special CBD Committee issued a report that noted a number of negative changes in the CBD, including building deterioration and a noticeable increase in retail turnover. To address these problems, the Village instituted a streetscape beautification program and enacted zoning changes, including a provision prohibiting fast-food restaurants. These changes have noticeably improved the appearance and economic health of the CBD.

The Village also implemented many of the recommendations made in its 1997 "Streetfront Retail Commentary and Evaluation" study of the CBD's retail conditions. The study recommended that:

- Village and CBD property owners solicit tenants in under-represented retail categories, such as children's apparel, better shoes, kitchenware, gourmet shops, and sporting goods.
- Ground-floor space be reserved for retail uses, to help strengthen Pondfield Road as the CBD's retail center. The Village's zoning regulations have been amended to incorporate this recommendation.
- Subsequent to the adoption of the 2002 Plan, the Village adopted a series of additional zoning amendments limiting square footage for Central Business District (CBD) offices and dwelling units, establishing regulations for dwelling units in Central Business A districts, extending the prohibition of offices along Pondfield Road between Kraft Avenue and Cedar Street/Tanglewylde Avenue, and on Palmer Avenue between Parkway Road and Paxton Avenue and prohibiting street-level personal service establishments along Pondfield Road between Kraft Avenue and Cedar Street/Tanglewylde Avenue.

The CBD has become a stronger commercial center as a result of business attraction and beautification initiatives. The next step in strengthening the CBD is to address the lack of adequate parking for shoppers and for merchants. The limited availability of parking spaces has deterred potential shoppers and could weaken the CBD. The development of the BAMS and Kensington Road sites, as previously discussed, may help reduce this shortage.

Future CBD issues focus primarily on maintaining its economic vitality and character, as described below.

- Density of residential uses in the CBD. The regulations governing dwelling units in Central Business A districts may need to be further examined and revised to address the size of residential units.
- Further limitations on street-level banks and real estate offices. To ensure that the CBD remains a strong retail center for the Village, the prohibitions of these uses, as discussed above, may need to be extended to side streets off Pondfield Road.

Traffic and Parking in the CBD

Providing adequate parking for shoppers and merchants is crucial to preserving a strong business district. In Bronxville, the lack of adequate parking in the CBD has been underscored over the years by several studies, including the Parking 2000 Report: A Comprehensive Proposal for Parking Management (November 1991) and the 1997 retail study.¹ The studies have cited the need for additional parking spaces within the CBD, particularly for short-term use by shoppers and concern that existing parking would not be able to accommodate any additional retail or residential development.

With several sites in the CBD available for redevelopment, the Village has the opportunity to evaluate how much additional parking is needed and ensure that public parking plans are incorporated into future development proposals. In particular, providing adequate merchant parking along the perimeter of the CBD may ensure the availability of centrally located parking spaces for short-term use by shoppers. Any new parking lots should be attractively landscaped so that they are compatible with the character of the CBD.

Traffic congestion in the CBD should also be addressed. Although Bronxville is well served by regional access roads and a network of local streets, traffic congestion occurs during peak travel times on the approach roads leading to the CBD and around the school.

Utilities

Adequate maintenance and repair of major sewer lines is an increasingly important issue for those communities (including Bronxville) that use and rely upon Westchester County's Yonkers Joint Treatment Plant. The possible future need to replace or reline sewer pipes within Village boundaries should be continuously monitored. In addition, opportunities to move power lines underground should be explored, as feasible.

Landscaping

Continued landscaping and general maintenance of the public domain within the Village should be encouraged for aesthetic as well as environmental reasons. Other future issues include:

- Site plan approval for certain significant landscaping and excavation activities. Because of the significant impacts these activities can have on neighboring properties, there may be a need to make them subject to permits or site plan approval. The

¹ Earlier reports noted the problem as well, including the Parking Task Force Report, October 1985 and the proposed Master Plan Amendment, January 1987.

Village would need to determine which activities would trigger the requirement for further scrutiny.

- Parking in front yards. There may be a need to refine the yard requirements to allow parking in circular driveways, with adequate screening, distance between curb cuts and setbacks.

Historic Preservation

A notable number of historically significant and architecturally attractive buildings exist throughout the Village. Efforts to preserve these buildings, as well as to designate additional historic districts and individual buildings, should be undertaken. The train station and the Stone Arch Bridge are examples of structures which could be listed on the National Register. The Bronxville Historical Conservancy contributes to historic preservation efforts by promoting Bronxville's architectural, artistic and cultural heritage, and the Village should continue to coordinate historic preservation activities with the conservancy so that residents are familiar with Bronxville's historic character and resources.

Tax Base

Property taxes have increased significantly between 1980 and 2008, and further increases in tax rates are anticipated over the next decade due in part to rate increases in other tax jurisdictions, particularly in the school district. Several steps have been investigated to reduce this rate of growth, including evaluating limited new development within the Village, such as at the Kensington Road and Paxton Avenue sites, as a means of adding to the commercial tax base.

Other issues that will affect Village finances include:

- Re-assessment: In 2007, Bronxville completed a Village-wide property assessment, the first such assessment conducted since 1967, which responded to the recommendations of the community plans since at least 1992, and which significantly increased the Village's total assessed property value. A similar but streamlined procedure was completed in April 2008, to update the preceding values and correct neighborhood value inconsistencies. A recent study conducted by the assessor's office indicates that the Village now levies taxes on a very sound tax base with tolerance levels below 8%.

During the course of this two-year period, the Village resolved a number of outstanding tax certiorari litigation proceedings, some of which extended approximately 15 years. The net result of this effort is that the current taxable assessments are solid and truly represent the real estate wealth of the community. The certiorari refund exposure has been

greatly reduced and has stabilized financial planning for the Village and School.

Finally, the Village Board of Trustees has resolved to maintain equitable taxation standards. The Board is currently considering various options and weighing pros and cons of periodic systematic revaluations. One serious proposal being considered links revaluation updates to periodic reporting by the Assessment Department of current tolerance levels (Coefficient of Dispersion, or COD). The Board of Trustees will review the findings of the department, together with other operational and financial considerations, prior to taking any action on revaluation. The Board is expected to decide this issue by the end of 2008.

However, regular Village-wide assessments do not address changes in individual property values that may result from improvements or other alterations. This situation will require the Village to be diligent about updating property assessments on an individual as well as Village-wide basis.

- **Cooperative Services:** There are several ways for different jurisdictions to share services to provide greater economies of scale. One is the possibility of joint purchasing of goods and services; another is cooperation between administrative or financial staffs. A third is actual consolidation of services. For example, the Fire Department is now provided at the Town level, and refuse disposal is provided at the County level. In addition, Bronxville, Eastchester and Tuckahoe share equipment and service contracts for road paving and have agreements on recycling of yard waste. Bronxville's department heads, particularly Police and Public Works, work closely with their counterparts in the other two jurisdictions. Consolidation of services, however, should be carefully balanced against Bronxville's own goals for public facilities, including maintaining the quality services that attract residents to the Village.
- **Balanced Growth:** There is very little opportunity for any substantial growth, particularly development that might impact the Village's scale and transportation network. However, the Village will need to balance its fiscal concerns against the special quality of life that its school system and its services have created. Fiscal savings are desirable, but only if they do not sacrifice the quality standards that Bronxville residents have come to expect.

Open Space and Recreation

Preserving the high quality of the Village's open space areas and parks is a priority. The Village should continue to be active in protecting its open space amenities. In addition, recent upgrades in Village parks, such as the replacement of paddle courts at Maltby Park and the new playground area

at the School Field, have improved and modernized facilities for active and passive recreation. However, as with many municipalities in southern Westchester, the Village is contending with a shortage of multi-purpose athletic fields that can be used for school and other recreational purposes.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The Bronxville Village Code calls for a review of its comprehensive plan in approximate five-year intervals. This well-spaced review enables the Village to analyze changes in goals and policies, to assess changes in existing conditions and to review the status of recommendations made in earlier plans. The community plan updates afford the opportunity to recommend new policies and initiatives that address changing conditions in a timely manner. It is recommended that the Village adjust the timing of the plan updates to more closely coincide with the completion of the U.S. Census to have contemporaneously accurate data.

Many of the recommendations contained in the 1997 and 2002 Plans have been implemented. The Village has introduced measures to strengthen the Central Business District through streetscape improvements and zoning amendments, has undertaken a comprehensive update of its zoning code and has implemented traffic improvements, street beautification programs and renovations to public facilities such as the Library and Village Hall. At the same time, as discussed in Chapter 4.0, several issues remain, such as limited parking in the CBD, undeveloped sites in the CBD, and the priority of preserving the Village's scale and character.

This chapter presents a summary of the key recommendations of the 2002 Plan and reviews the specific actions that have been taken towards implementation of these various proposals. It also presents recommendations that are designed to address the issues discussed in Chapter 4.0.

5.2 2002 Plan Recommendations and Village Actions, 2002 – 2008

It is important to look at the recommendations made in the 2002 Community Plan and what action has been taken on each of these proposals.

Redevelopment Sites and Undeveloped Property:

<u>2002 Recommendations</u>	<u>Actions Taken 2002 – 2008</u>
• Develop Mobil Lot and Kensington Road sites for parking.	• Kensington condominium project (including commuter parking) approved; project sponsor was not able to pursue the project because of financial problems they incurred in the 2008 real estate recession.
• Examine potential commercial and residential development for the Paxton Avenue area.	• Mobil Lot leased by the Village and developed for public parking.
• Examine the potential for affordable	• No opportunities identified.

2002 Recommendations
housing at Paxton Avenue area.

Actions Taken 2002 – 2008

Housing:

2002 Recommendations

- Consider incorporating floor area ratio (FAR) standards into the zoning code for the three single-family residential districts.
- Consider requiring site plan approval for significant excavations, earth moving and retaining walls.
- Consider adopting an open space requirement whereby a specified percentage of each site within the three single-family districts would need to be landscaped area or permeable surfaces open to the air.

Actions Taken 2002 – 2008

- Adoption of FAR limits on residential buildings. These may need to be further examined to address issues like teardowns and sizeable additions.
- Further approvals for significant landscaping and excavation still under consideration.
- This recommendation is currently under consideration.

Central Business District:

2002 Recommendations

- Improve mix of retail stores in CBD and encourage continued study of this issue.
- Continue to maintain and improve the attractiveness of the CBD.

Actions Taken 2002-2008

- Adoption of zoning amendments limiting square footage for CBD offices and dwelling units, establishing regulations for dwelling units in Central Business A districts, extending the prohibition of street-level banks and real estate offices along Pondfield Road to Palmer Road and prohibiting street-level personal service establishments along these roads.
- All crosswalks within the CBD and at major intersections are being repainted in order to amplify and highlight their presence for pedestrians.

Traffic, Parking and Transportation:

2002 Recommendations

- Undertake a comprehensive parking study to explore how parking availability can be expanded for CBD shoppers and multifamily residential uses.
- Continue to allocate parking space so that short-term parking for shoppers is located in the central

Actions Taken 2002 – 2008

- Mobil Lot site leased and developed for public parking.
- The Village plans to raze the BAMS auto repair/gas station facility at Kraft Avenue and Cedar Street and replace it with approximately

2002 Recommendations

areas of the CBD and longer-term commuter parking is located in satellite parking parcels. The Kensington Road site and the privately owned Mobil Lot site each present viable options for parking.

Actions Taken 2002 – 2008

40 parking spaces.

- The Village completed two traffic and parking studies focusing on the CBD.

Public Services and Utilities:

2002 Recommendations

- Evaluate results of Village Hall space needs and utilization study and prioritize expansion/renovation plans.
- Continue current sewer maintenance program and implement results of the 2001 stormwater flooding study to evaluate flooding problems around the school property.

Actions Taken 2002 – 2008

- The Village has completed improvements to Village Hall, including the addition of space, use of "green" energy facilities and provision of ADA compliance.
- Work was completed on repairing and relocating the stormwater lines around the school property. The School District has taken measures to protect against flooding, such as the use of water-resistant building materials, relocation of offices and utilities in the short-term; and potential on-site retention fields and pumps longer-term. The boiler is to be relocated in 2009.
- The Village joined the Bronx River Watershed Coalition, which developed a comprehensive management plan with a strategy for limiting the amount of pollution entering the river and its tributaries via stormwater runoff.
- The Village is seeking grants for flood remediation work, and commissioned engineering studies to evaluate flood remediation solutions.

Landscape Improvements and Historic Preservation:

2002 Recommendations

- Continue landscape improvements to public domain.
- Encourage the designation of additional historic districts and buildings, such as the train station and stone arched bridge.

Actions Taken 2002 – 2008

- Streetscaping improvements continued in the CBD. Currently, all crosswalks within the area and at major intersections are in the process of being repainted.
- Bronxville Women's Club listed on State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Open Space:

2002 Recommendations

- Continue maintenance and improvement of park and recreation areas to maintain active and passive recreational facilities in the Village.
- Ensure the protection of the Village's trees by funding the purchase of new trees and the maintenance of existing trees.

Actions Taken 2002 – 2008

- Several open spaces within the Village have been upgraded and improved (including the paddle courts at Maltby Park and the new playground area at the School Field), and others are scheduled for improvements.
- This program is ongoing.

Tax Base:

2002 Recommendations

- Continue to employ user fees in conjunction with real estate taxes to balance the Village budget.
- Return properties to the tax base where possible.
- Evaluate property reassessment programs to address inequities caused by changing real estate values with differing land uses and geographic areas.
- Continue exploration of cost-sharing and cooperative services.
- Reinforce the commercial tax base.

Actions Taken 2002 – 2008

- The use of user fees has continued.
- The Kensington Road project is not being pursued by the developer because of financial problems they incurred in the 2008 real estate recession.
- The Village completed a comprehensive property reassessment in 2006.
- Eastchester, Bronxville and Tuckahoe share equipment and service contracts for road paving to reduce costs and also have agreements on the recycling of yard waste.
- The Chamber of Commerce is working to identify opportunities to reinforce the commercial tax base.

5.3 General Recommendations

The recommendations contained in the following section build on the 2002 proposals and the subsequent Village actions that have taken place during the period between the publication of the 2002 plan and this current Community Plan. The recommendations also respond to the following general objectives:

- The Village should ensure that any future changes in land uses, policies or services are designed to maintain and enhance the quality of life that currently exists in Bronxville.

- The Village's character is in part defined by the mix of building uses and the attractive appearance of its commercial center. These qualities must be carefully preserved.
- The high quality services and varied cultural and social programs available to Village residents should be maintained.

5.4 2009 Recommendations

The recommendations that follow reflect these guidelines. They are grouped under nine specific topics:

Redevelopment Sites and Underdeveloped Property

The CBD contains several potential improvement sites: Paxton Avenue area, the BAMS auto repair/gas station and the Kensington Road site. Given the strong need for parking in the CBD, the Village should continue to pursue redevelopment of the Kensington Road site, including the provision of additional parking. Plans to replace the BAMS building with approximately 40 parking spaces should continue to be pursued, including the provision of landscaping and improvements to the Kraft Avenue/Cedar Street intersection to improve traffic flow and safety. Finally, the Village should continue to lease, as planned, the old Mobil Lot for public parking. The Paxton Avenue area may be suitable for commercial and residential development. Any future uses on the site must be determined through careful study, particularly because of the environmental constraints (e.g. flooding from the Bronx River) and because the area is privately owned. Any new development must be designed to accommodate flooding from the Bronx River and to provide off-street parking as mandated by the zoning code.

Housing

With very limited vacant or underutilized land remaining within the Village, future policies should emphasize preserving the character of Bronxville's neighborhoods.

The attractiveness of Bronxville's neighborhoods is highly valued by Bronxville residents. The appealing design of Bronxville's homes, many of which were constructed before 1930, and the mature trees and landscaping along its street create a comfortable scale and an open space feel. Several recommendations will help the Village preserve the character of its neighborhoods.

Open Space Requirements

To further preserve open space and neighborhood character, the Village may want to consider requiring site plan approval for significant excavations, earth moving and retaining walls. In addition, the Village may wish to consider adopting an open space requirement whereby a specified percentage of each site within Bronxville's three single-family residential districts would need to be landscaped area or permeable surfaces open to the air.

Further Regulation on Teardowns and Sizeable Additions

The construction of out-of-scale housing additions remains a concern within the Village. The adopted FAR limits on residential structures were a significant step in

addressing this issue. However, there may be a need to further refine the zoning code, by making the FAR limits more stringent, to address ongoing concerns about teardowns. The Village may wish to consider a provision that, if more than a certain percentage of a house on an undersized lot is removed, the owner will need to go before the Zoning Board of Appeals for approval to replace the structure.

Regulation of "Green" Structures and Similar Equipment on Residential Uses

The use of "green" structures such as solar panels and wind power devices may become more prevalent on residential uses, including single-family homes, and equipment such as generators and air conditioners will continue to be used by Village residents. There may be a need for standards to govern the aesthetic and noise impacts of these structures.

Corner Lots and Garages

A number of homes within the Village are situated on corner lots, creating a different set of issues than typical lots, and their setback and yard requirements may need to be adjusted. There may also be a need to adjust the setbacks for detached garages.

Central Business District

The recommendations summarized below merit consideration:

Improve Retail Mix of CBD

The Village should continue its efforts to attract under-represented retail categories, as recommended in the 1997 Retail Study. Retailers to consider include gourmet foods, sporting goods, toys, antique shops, and other retailers. Any new use, however, must conform to Bronxville's current character and scale in order to preserve the Village's small town charm. This would include appropriate signage, window treatments and landscaping.

Continue to Maintain and Improve the Attractiveness of the CBD

In addition to improving the Village's retail mix, momentum needs to be maintained concerning the upkeep and preservation of the CBD. Efforts to keep the streets and sidewalks clean, public areas free of litter and dirt, plants and flowers watered, trash receptacles emptied and to enforce litter and shopping cart ordinances need to be continued. Improvements should include: design standards for sidewalks, curbing and public signage; landscaping including planters, maintenance of trees and tree pits, benches and waste receptacles; and continued implementation of the lighting master plan. As sidewalks in the CBD are replaced, consideration should be given to the replacement and installation of additional globe lights.

Address Density of Residential Uses in the CBD

Subsequent to the adoption of the 2002 Plan, the Village adopted a series of zoning amendments, including regulations for dwelling units in Central Business A districts. These regulations may need to be further examined to address any remaining issues.

Parking

Transportation needs are well served by the existing network of roads and by the Metro-North railroad. As discussed in Section 4.0, the most crucial transportation issue is expanding parking options in the CBD. The Village undertook a comprehensive parking study exploring how parking availability can be expanded for CBD shoppers and multi-family residential uses. To alleviate demand for parking in the CBD, the Village should continue to allocate parking spaces so that short-term parking for shoppers is located in the central areas of the CBD and longer-term commuter parking is located in satellite parking parcels. The Kensington Road site and the BAMS site each present viable options for parking.

Public Services and Utilities

A key goal of the Community Plan is to maintain the high quality of existing public services and facilities for Village residents. Additional improvements and changes to be sought by the Village include:

Public Works Garage

The Village has current plans to renovate and upgrade the Public Works Garage facilities. These plans are expected to remedy the existing space problems and ensure that the facilities can accommodate contemporary vehicles. The plans also include the reopening of Palumbo Place.

Infrastructure

The current sewer maintenance program being undertaken by the Village will need to be continued so that any spot repairs can be carried out efficiently and at minimum cost to the Village. Service lines not included in a 2001 county stormwater flooding study will need to be surveyed by the Village in order to establish a consistent maintenance program.

The Village completed stormwater flooding impact studies in 2007 and 2008, in response to the April 2007 flood at the Bronxville Public School. A flood protection system should be implemented to protect Village, school, and private property.

Landscape Improvements

The Village should continue landscape improvements to the public domain, including replacement and addition of street trees, landscaping of public parking lots, and the continual maintenance of the taxi and station plaza area, and the railroad easement in association with Metro-North.

Additional recommendations for the Village to consider include:

Site plan approval for certain landscaping and excavating activities

The Village may want to make significant landscaping and excavating activities subject to permits or site plan approval. The Village would need to determine which activities would be subject to these additional approvals.

Parking in front yards

The Village does not currently allow parking within required front yards, but there may be a need to refine the yard requirements to allow parking in circular driveways, with adequate screening, distance between curb cuts and setbacks.

Historic Preservation

As noted in Section 2.0 of this report, a significant number of historic and architecturally attractive buildings, both residential and commercial, exist in the Village. The preservation of these buildings is clearly an important objective. The Bronxville Historical Conservancy, established in 1998, contributes to historic preservation efforts by promoting the architectural, artistic and cultural heritage of the Village. It will be important to continue these efforts so that Village residents are familiar with Bronxville's historic character and resources.

Open Space

Protecting and enhancing the high quality of Bronxville's open space areas, including its parks and landscaped public areas, is a priority in the Village. The Village has already undertaken improvements to several of its parks to improve the playing fields and recreational facilities. Continued maintenance and improvement of these areas will be important to maintaining the much-used active and passive recreational facilities in the Village. Another important step in preserving these qualities is ensuring the protection of the Village's trees, which provide both aesthetic and environmental benefits. The Village should continue to fund the purchase of new trees and the maintenance of existing trees to preserve these important assets.

Tax Base

As previously noted in Section 2.0, it is expected that increased pressure on real estate taxes can be expected in the future. In order to fairly distribute and slow the rate of increase in taxes, and to promote economic diversity in the Village, several steps are recommended:

User Fees and Real Estate Taxes

Bronxville offsets some of the burden on real estate taxes by carefully monitoring revenue from user fees for such items as recreation and parking. It will continue to be necessary to employ user fees in conjunction with real estate taxes to balance the Village budget.

Return Properties to the Tax Base Where Possible

In cases where the Village has publicly owned property which may not be essential to its long-term needs, such property should be evaluated for private or shared use. A lease of the Kensington Road site is an example of this.

Continue to Evaluate Property Reassessment

The recent Village-wide property reassessment was a positive step that directly responded to the recommendations of recent Community Plans. The Village should determine how often such property assessments should be completed and conduct them on a regular basis.

Enforce regular assessment updates of individual properties

In addition to the regular completion of Village-wide property reassessments, the Village should be diligent about updating the assessments of properties on an individual basis to reflect any improvements that may change their assessed value.

Continue Exploration of Cost-Sharing/Cooperative Services

There are several ways for different jurisdictions to share services to achieve economies of scale or greater efficiencies. Bronxville has begun sharing services with Eastchester and Tuckahoe for road paving and recycling of yard waste, and may wish to explore further cooperation. Such endeavors will need further exploration so that cost savings can be balanced against the goal of maintaining high quality facilities that attract residents to the Village.

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