

ALPLAUS HAMLET PLAN

*Completed by the
Alplaus Residents Association*

2019



(Clockwise from top: view down Alplaus Ave.; Mohawk River; old Post Office sign; Alplaus Methodist Church; Alplaus Firehouse; Alplaus Kill)

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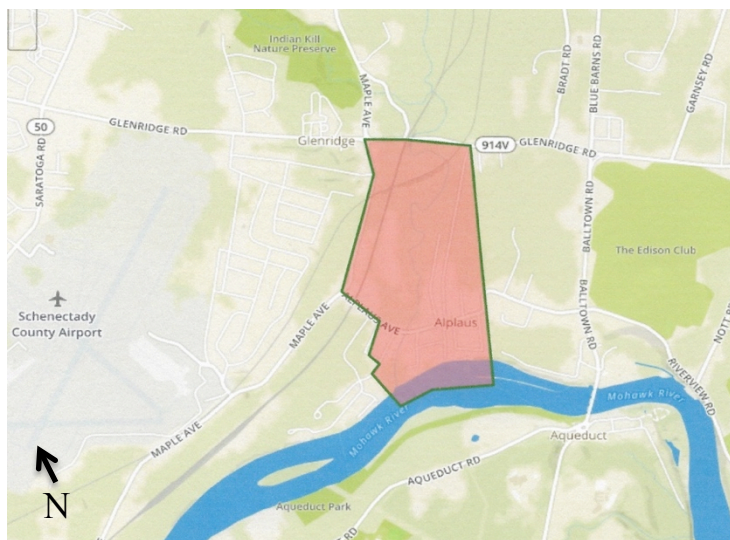
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1. INTRODUCTION

Alplaus is a hamlet located in the eastern part of the Town of Glenville, Schenectady County, New York. Alplaus is 5 miles from the city of Schenectady and a 30-minute drive each from Albany, Troy, and Saratoga Springs.

There are approximately 180 residences in Alplaus, housing approximately 450 residents, with a total area of roughly 500 acres. The hamlet's boundaries, as commonly understood, are Maple Avenue (western), the line between Schenectady and Saratoga counties at Riverview Road (eastern), Glenridge Road/NYS 914V (northern), and the Mohawk River (southern/eastern). Alplaus is located in the Niskayuna School District and served by Glenclyff Elementary School, in the neighboring hamlet of Rexford.

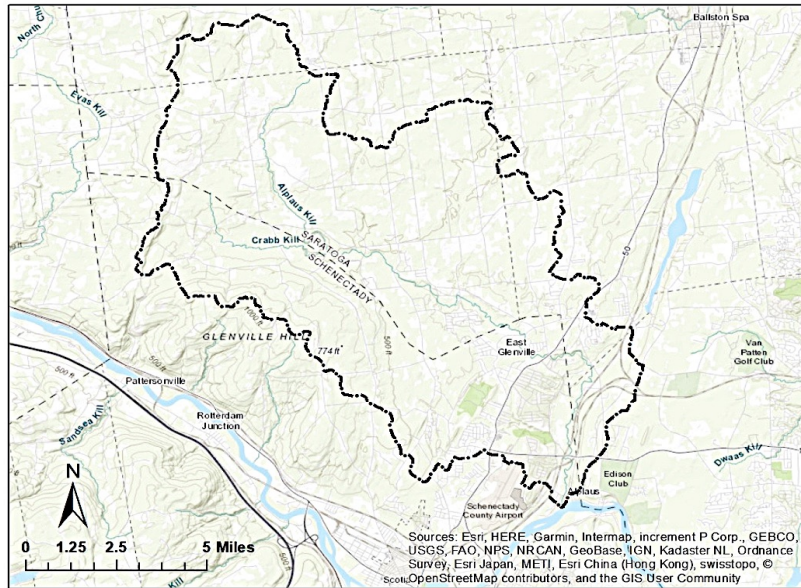
See the map below of the Alplaus ZIP Code area for general reference.



History. Most of the homes in Alplaus were built in the early 1900s or later, but a few homes, now renovated, were built in the mid-1800s or even earlier, as can be seen by their hand-laid stone foundations. The hamlet contained at least six large farms in the 1800s and contributed to food production for surrounding areas until the early 1900s, when the need for housing resulted in the subdivision of farms for development. A total of 125 acres was also deeded to the Delaware and Hudson Railroad by several landowners in 1921 to allow construction of the railroad freight terminal now operated by the Pan Am Southern Railroad. The former rural character of the hamlet is still evident in a few remaining large parcels of vacant land.

Natural Features. Alplaus is a place of great natural beauty, with more than 100 acres of undeveloped woods, fields, and wetlands and more than two miles of waterfront along the Alplaus Kill and the Mohawk River. The Alplaus Kill is 21.4 miles long, and the watershed encompasses

55.8 square miles (see map below). The Alplaus Kill originates in the Town of Charlton, NY, in central Saratoga County and flows south through Saratoga County into Schenectady County and the Town of Glenville. The creek bisects the hamlet of Alplaus before emptying into the Mohawk River. The name “Alplaus” comes from the Dutch Aal Plaats, or “Place of Eels,” after the river eels found near the mouth of the creek by Native Americans and Dutch settlers centuries ago.



Neighborhood Features. Alplaus is predominantly single-family residential but does not fall neatly into categories such as suburban or rural. While relatively dense, like many hamlets and villages in upstate New York that grew rapidly in the late 1800s and early 1900s, it also conveys the feeling of being in the country. The houses along Alplaus Avenue and its side streets reflect several eras of American architectural styles, including Victorian, colonial revival, Arts and Crafts-style cottages, classic bungalows, and modern.

While Alplaus is mostly residential in character, the hamlet is also home to: the Alplaus Fire Department (Glenville Fire District No. 2); the Alplaus United Methodist Church; Mohawk Valley Marine; the businesses of the Mohawk Industrial Park; Glen Hills Swim Club; a pediatric physical therapy company; a software design firm; two high school rowing clubs; a freight-handling firm; and several in-home or home-based businesses.

Life in Alplaus. This combination of features, complemented by the great natural beauty of its setting, is the basis of the hamlet’s unique character and the cohesiveness of its community. Alplaus is a place where neighbors know they can have privacy yet depend on each other to help, without being asked, when help is needed. In a modern world where the sense of community is too often missing, Alplaus residents are proud of the community they maintain. It should be easy to understand why Alplaus residents are deeply committed to preserving, and enhancing, the essential character of the hamlet.

For more than 90 years, Alplaus had its own post office. Much to the dismay of residents, and although the Alplaus post office was profitable, in 2011 the USPS decided not to renew its contract. Residents had fought twice before, successfully, to keep the post office, but a spirited attempt to preserve it a third time failed. Nevertheless, we remain proud to have our own zip code (12008, as can be seen on the first above map).

Service and Civic Organizations and Activities. The Alplaus Fire Department, under Glenville Fire District No. 2, has been serving the community and other residents within the fire district since 1930 in providing volunteer fire and emergency protection. A new larger, more modern firehouse was completed in 2015, to house a variety of apparatus, including 2 fire trucks, 1 EMT vehicle, and an airboat. A growing Explorer Program is a vital part of the fire department, providing young firefighters and EMT candidates with education, hands-on training, and a path to success in these important fields. Both the Alplaus Volunteer Fire Company and the Ladies Auxiliary support the department in its important role.

For more than 40 years, the Alplaus Residents Association (ARA) has represented residents of the hamlet, giving them a focused voice to speak to local government officials and to promote the general well-being of residents in matters affecting their safety, health, lifestyle, and historic sense of community. ARA officers and directors are elected at an annual meeting each March; the board holds monthly meetings, or more often, as needed, to address issues affecting the hamlet.

The Fire Department, Ladies Auxiliary and the ARA host a variety of functions each year: Fourth of July Parade and Celebration; Kids Carnival; Old Timer's Dinner; Apple Fest; Alplaus Run Around (1 mile and 5K race); Chili Challenge; Pancake Breakfasts; Spaghetti Suppers; Election Day Bake Sale; Halloween Kids Party; Holiday Party and Bake Sale; Defensive Driving and CPR courses and others.

The Alplaus United Methodist Church has served its congregation in Alplaus for more than 100 years. The church holds community events as well as church-related events for its followers.

Since the 1940s (with some interruptions), hamlet residents have produced our own community newsletter, the *Hometown News*. The HTN, which covers Alplaus community events and news, reports from the ARA president and the fire company, a kids' page, and other points of interest, is a sign of the vitality of our community.

The civic organizations and activities described above are a big part of what makes Alplaus unique. Unlike some communities, these organizations are created, staffed, and operated by people whose first and last names are known to all residents. Residents draw their identity from membership in and service to these organizations, which form the fabric of the community.

For so many residents, to live in Alplaus is to be an Alplausian. Several local families are generations deep. Where we live is a strong part of who we are.

2. A MASTER PLAN FOR ALPLAUS

In conversations with town and county elected officials in 2018, it was suggested that the ARA develop a master plan for the hamlet, similar to the Comprehensive Plans of formal municipalities encouraged by New York state law, to provide a framework for possible future growth and development of the hamlet, and to facilitate understanding and cooperation among the residents and their elected officials. The purpose of the hamlet plan is to provide a “roadmap” and policy foundation for possible future growth that promotes the well-being of Alplaus residents and maintains the features of hamlet life described in the Introduction.

Following the Plan’s adoption by the Alplaus Residents Association, the ARA will ask town, county, and state officials to consider it first in:

1. Adopting programs and policies to protect the hamlet’s resources and to direct desired development and growth;
2. Planning any capital projects in the hamlet;
3. Creating or amending any land use and zoning regulations within the hamlet; and/or
4. Seeking grants for a variety of services and programs for Alplaus.

This plan is the result of a survey of, and discussion among, Alplaus residents and the ARA board. It reflects a consensus of opinion as to the best way forward for the hamlet and its residents.

Surveys were distributed door-to-door and in the *Hometown News*, as well as posted on the hamlet website, Alplaus.org, to gather as much feedback as possible from residents. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix A.

The ARA Board received a generous response to the survey, which included ranked questions as well as requests for general comments or ideas. Many residents did respond with specific comments, which are also reflected in the hamlet plan. In preparing it, we have tried to represent residents’ priorities on a variety of issues.

Overall, it is clear from the survey results and discussions at recent community meetings that Alplaus residents place the highest priority on preserving the uniquely charming character of the community and in limiting growth that conflicts with that character.

This plan is a starting point only, and it will see revisions as specific proposals for development are made and as new ideas are presented. It is a “living document,” which should be updated as conditions in the hamlet change.

We believe that this plan is consistent with the Town of Glenville’s recently adopted Comprehensive Plan.

We do specifically request, however, that the town modify its Comprehensive Plan map, as discussed and agreed upon with Alplaus residents at public meetings, to show the Mohawk Marina and Industrial Park, former Maritime Center and wetlands parcels all as part of the hamlet of Alplaus, so zoning rules are promulgated consistent with the character of the hamlet.

3. VISION STATEMENT

Our Vision for the Future of Alplaus

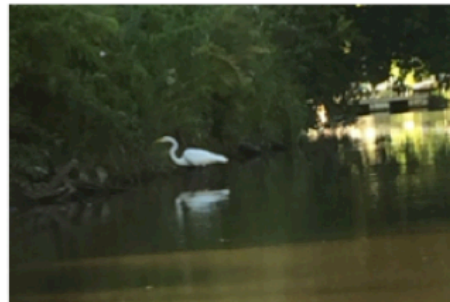
Alplaus is distinguished by a strong sense of place and identity. **The community’s vision for the future of our hamlet is one of preserving its character and continuing its traditions while embracing positive change.**

Alplaus residents are proud of our corner of the Town of Glenville, which somehow manages to seem out of the way while at the heart of things. We love its natural beauty, wide-ranging architectural styles, and rich history. We are proud of our diverse backgrounds and the mix of residents’ ages, professions, and walks of life. Perhaps most of all, we are proud of our proven self-reliance and independent spirit.

Residents hope and expect to retain the unique character of the hamlet, as described in the Introduction. At the same time, we understand and respect commercial property owners’ desire to reasonably develop their properties. Thus, we are open to growth consistent with the character of the hamlet, as reflected in this Hamlet Plan.

We firmly believe that letting Alplaus be Alplaus benefits the Town of Glenville as a whole. Therefore, we ask town and county officials to be as committed to preserving the hamlet’s character as we are.

Alplaus has long been and continues to be a community of individuals: we respect one another’s rights as we band together and work cooperatively in ways that are environmentally, socially, and economically sound. We understand the importance of history and tradition while constantly striving to ensure that our community thrives in the years ahead.



4. LAND USE

The Mohawk Riverfront and the Mohawk Industrial Park

A) Description

There are two large parcels of land, a total of approximately 85 acres, which include the Mohawk riverfront area, the Industrial Park and the entrance road for these businesses. These parcels start at the southern end of the hamlet of Alplaus, bordered by the river on the east, and extend northerly up to Mohawk Avenue and westerly to the Pan Am Southern Railroad tracks.

The waterfront parcel houses a marina with an adjoining field used for winter boat storage.

Adjacent to the winter boat storage field is a roughly ten acre industrial park, with ten buildings used for a variety of industrial/commercial or light manufacturing type businesses. From about 1940 to 1960, the site was leased to General Electric Company, as an agent of the Dept. of Navy, for use as a nuclear development laboratory and as a rocket and jet engine test site. There is some evidence of contamination of the site which needs to be considered in any future development of the parcel.

Most of the remaining acreage is federally protected wetlands.

Current Use of Riverfront



A third 6-acre parcel was conveyed out of the two larger parcels in 1998 to the now-defunct Capital Region Maritime Center. That parcel is now owned by Happy Rehab, LLC, a pediatric physical therapy practice. Happy Rehab, LLC leases a portion of its land and an additional waterfront easement area originally granted to the Maritime Center, to two high school rowing clubs who maintain their boathouses and docks on the site

B) 2017 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL AND ISSUE OF CONTAMINATED LAND

In 2017 the parcels' owners and a developer attempted to obtain approvals for construction of more than 200 units (apartments/condominiums/townhouses) on the waterfront portion and the adjacent floodplain (the area of the winter boat storage). Alplaus residents strongly and actively opposed this proposal, and ultimately the developer withdrew the application.

The developer did some soil and water testing at the site, as did one of the previous owners. Some of the results were submitted to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation as part of the developer's Brownfield Cleanup application seeking tax credits for the development project.

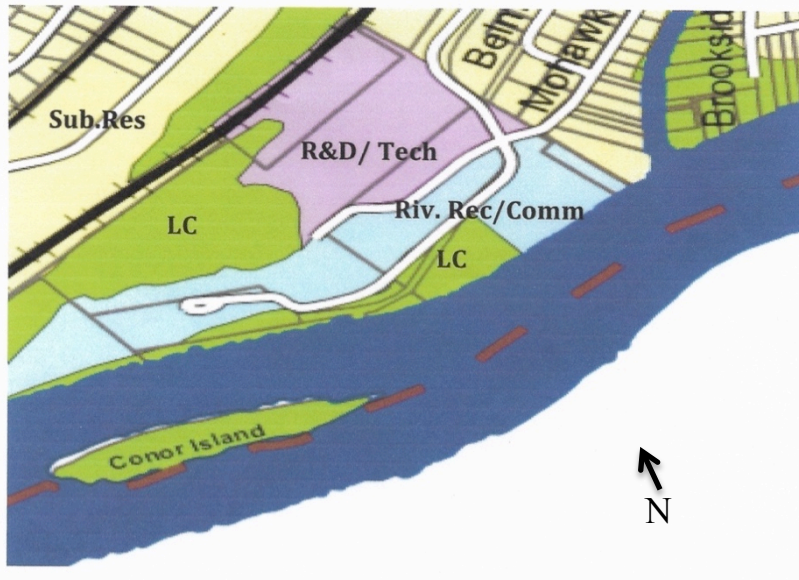
The results submitted did not appear to be complete or conclusive. Thus, for future uses of this parcel, further testing would be necessary to determine (1) the types of contamination, (2) the exact levels of contamination, and (3) the most practical method of remediation.

Remediation may involve removal or encapsulation of the contaminated soil, which appears to be limited to an area of a few acres within the roughly ten-acre industrial park area. It is assumed that either option would entail a significant cost.



C) ZONING

Zoning varies across the two parcels, as can be seen on the current zoning map, below, for the Town of Glenville:



LC – Land Conservation, No buildings

Sub.Res. – Suburban residential, single-family houses

Riv.Rec./Comm – Riverfront recreation, commercial (marinas, lodging, campgrounds, restaurants)

R&D/Tech. – Research, development, technology (light industry, auto repair, enclosed manufacturing, etc.)

It's important to note that these zoning classifications for the two parcels may change once the Glenville Zoning Commission develops new zoning rules per the town's new Comprehensive Plan and such rules are adopted by the Glenville Town Board. It is expected, however, that the new rules won't vary much from current zoning.

It's also important to keep in mind that it is now and will remain possible for any proposed developer to ask for treatment of the entire site as a Planned Development District (PDD), allowing a change from whatever zoning may be in effect at the time of the proposed development.

All of the businesses located on the three parcels discussed above share access via Maritime Drive, a $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile paved road running south from Alplaus Avenue near the Pan Am Railroad tracks through the first two parcels and ending at the physical therapy company building. This road was paid for by NYS funds to provide access to the now-defunct Maritime Center. With the closure of Mohawk Avenue at its intersection with Maritime Drive, Maritime Drive became the sole means of access for the marina, industrial park, rowing clubs, and physical therapy business.

D) THE FUTURE OF THE MARINA AND INDUSTRIAL PARK

The owners have indicated that they remain interested in selling the two main parcels. While it seems possible to develop the waterfront in a reasonable way and at a reasonable cost, the industrial park is more difficult due to costs associated with cleaning up the contamination left by General Electric.

Our survey showed that 83% of respondents feel it is important to ensure reasonable and appropriate development—if any—of the waterfront area. Interestingly, the percentage of those who feel it is important to clean up the contaminated portions of the park is lower, at 63%. As this difference in percentages suggests, many residents fear that remediation may create new problems. In their comments, residents expressed the concern that attempts to remediate the contaminated area may in fact *increase* the risk of harm to residents by releasing and/or spreading the contaminants. For these residents, the preferred option would be leaving any contamination in place.

At some point it may be determined that cleanup of the contaminated portions of the industrial park is advisable and an important objective. Residents understand that there is likely a significant cost in doing so. **It is critically important to recognize that residents do not want the character of Alplaus to be fundamentally changed as a result of any development.** Residents also believe that the cost of cleanup *should be borne by the owners or any interested developers*, not by Alplaus residents in the form of high-density development of any kind.



E) POSSIBLE USES AND IMPROVEMENTS

In the clearest response to any of the survey questions, 94% of respondents place the highest priority on the conservation of the waterfront, floodplain, and wetlands.

Likewise, the comments received with the survey results show clearly that Alplaus residents see the natural beauty of the waterfront as a valuable asset to our hamlet. Among possible improvements, they would welcome the expansion of the marina to include a restaurant and perhaps a small inn with lodging for marina patrons. They are open to the idea of limited residential development, but not in the floodplain or wetlands areas.

Depending on results from further soil, water, and air testing, the contaminated area could possibly be remediated at a reasonable cost, allowing for development of the industrial park area in ways that will be consistent with and that complement and reinforce the existing character of the hamlet. Until the testing is completed, however, the actual best method and consequent costs of remediation are unknown.

An alternative to private development, if remediation costs are too great for a proposed purchaser and the current owners, might be to pursue a public–private community-led remediation effort under one of the established federal or state brownfield revitalization programs.

Again, any such program first requires further testing, to determine the exact nature and extent of the contamination. If the site qualifies, then funds for remediation may be available from the federal or state governments, in the form of tax credits or grants, as well as from private charitable entities such as land trusts.

Participation in any revitalization program, indeed any future development of the waterfront, wetlands, and/or industrial park, requires the cooperation of the landowners as well as the municipality (town or county and/or state) and funds for a comprehensive assessment of the extent and level of contamination by a qualified environmental consultant.

In this case, if the owners are willing to share all of their existing test results, the residents of Alplaus may be able to assist them in finding a qualified consultant to determine what additional testing may be necessary. If the contaminated site fits within the US EPA “Targeted Brownfield Assessment Program” guidelines, it’s even possible that government funds may be available to help pay for the assessment.

It is the opinion of the majority of residents of Alplaus that, when and if the waterfront and industrial park parcels are developed, it must be done in a way that does not change the fundamental character of the hamlet.

Alplaus residents are hopeful that, through dialogue with the owners, and with town, county, state, and federal officials, a satisfactory nonconventional plan, which emphasizes leveraging federal and state grants, can be created for the development of the subject parcels. It is understood that this can be a lengthy process and residents are committed to the effort.

Vacant Parcels Elsewhere in the Hamlet

There are other parcels of vacant land in the hamlet that may be considered for development in the future. When and if the owners of these parcels seek to develop them, the ARA and residents will communicate with them to determine if their plans are consistent with the Town of Glenville's Comprehensive Plan, consistent with local zoning rules, and in accordance with the goals of the community as expressed in this Hamlet Plan.

5. PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND SPEED REGULATION

For more than 30 years, residents have expressed to town and county officials the need for a safe pedestrian corridor through the hamlet. Concern increased greatly in 1995, when a resident was struck and almost killed by a passing car as she was walking along the north side of Alplaus Avenue (County Route 16) just west of Hill Street.

More than 80% of residents indicated, in their survey responses, that pedestrian safety is a very important issue.

In 2016 residents formally expressed their concerns about pedestrian safety when the county rebuilt the bridge over the Alplaus Kill. The bridge now includes sidewalks on both sides, but these sidewalks continue, in very poor condition, only for approximately 100 feet east of the bridge. The sidewalk also extends, in poor condition, west of the bridge to where Alplaus Avenue meets Belmont Avenue.

Alplaus residents would be well served by a sidewalk extension on at least the south side of Alplaus Avenue to Maritime Drive, a popular pedestrian and biking route for local residents.

We understand that creating sidewalks along Alplaus Avenue east of the bridge may require taking down established trees and obtaining easements from affected property owners (or lengthy and expensive condemnation proceedings); that they would be costly; and that the sidewalks would present maintenance and liability concerns for the county and landowners. County officials have been telling us these things for more than 30 years.

Nevertheless, we still feel that a sidewalk or other type of walkway along Alplaus Avenue, all the way to the Glenville/Clifton Park town border, would be the best way to ensure pedestrian safety in the hamlet. On some stretches of the hamlet's main thoroughfare, the existing shoulders are so narrow as to be practically nonexistent. It is dangerous to walk beyond the firehouse on the north side of the avenue, especially where it curves around the turn into the Town of Clifton Park. This S-curve is even more dangerous in bad weather.

Alplaus residents prefer to undertake a community-minded design for a safe and attractive pedestrian pathway through the hamlet. This will necessarily involve the county, with cooperation from the town, to include the features mentioned in this section. Faced with the county's repeatedly stated reasons why we can't have sidewalks, however, residents have explored the alternatives stated below.

A) Widened Shoulder

The idea of a widened shoulder, on both sides of Alplaus Avenue or on the north side only, seems to be a practical solution:

- Costs would be minimal.
- No trees, mailboxes, or power poles would need to be removed or relocated as the new blacktop could be wrapped around them.
- No easements would be required, as the additional strip of blacktop would be wholly within the existing county right of way.
- Maintenance after snowfalls would consist merely of dropping the wing on snowplow trucks to clear the additional 2-3 feet of blacktop as needed.
- Liability should not be any greater for the county than the existing roadway. In fact, liability may be reduced, as the county will have provided a much safer way for pedestrians to use the main road in the hamlet.

Notably, the Federal Highway Administration endorses widened paved shoulders on both sides of the roadway when sidewalks are not affordable or feasible. (See FHWA “Benefits of Walkways, Sidewalks and Paved Shoulders” at: <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov>)

Our proposal, based on residents’ expressed concerns about pedestrian safety, is a 2- to 3-foot paved shoulder along at least the north side of Alplaus Avenue, from the point at which the existing sidewalk ends, which is approximately 100 feet east of the bridge. This widened shoulder should extend along Alplaus Avenue at least to its intersection with Bath Street (a town road), or, ideally, all the way to the town border. (This would depend on the feasibility of the second phase of the sidewalk/widened shoulder improvements discussed below.)

Ideally, the county and town could work together on the project, sharing in the design and construction of the widened shoulder as well as the cost, which could be partially funded by CHIPS (NYS Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program) or other grants.



B) Path to Glencliff School

A second phase of this important improvement might be to create a path from the end of Bath Street to Glencliff Elementary School, allowing children to safely walk or ride their bikes to school.

In order to create a walking path from the end of Bath Street to Glencliff, either the town or county would have to accept responsibility for it and easements with acceptable “hold harmless” language would have to be negotiated with three property owners as well as with the Niskayuna School District. Once a design is agreed upon, financing for construction could be found through grants, donations, and/or the budgets of the town, county, and/or school district. Regular maintenance would have to be arranged and paid for.



C) Designated Crosswalks

As part of the pedestrian improvement plan, it would be important to place a marked and lighted crosswalk across Bruce Drive at the intersection of Bruce Drive and Alplaus Avenue.

Additional marked crosswalks across Alplaus Avenue at Maritime Drive, Mohawk Avenue, Snyder Lane, and Bath Street would also greatly improve pedestrian safety.

We expect that the Town and County can work together to research and implement this suggestion.

D) Speed Regulation

Our survey also showed that residents view the regulation of speed on main roads in the hamlet as an important issue that relates directly to pedestrian safety. Traffic flowing at excessive speeds through the hamlet has been a primary concern of Alplaus residents for decades.

Alplaus Avenue and Bruce Drive are popular cut-throughs for motorists traveling between Clifton Park and Glenville and Schenectady, especially during rush hour. The recent paving, while much needed and appreciated by Alplaus residents, may encourage motorists to drive even faster through Alplaus.

Town police occasionally set up a radar patrol at the firehouse property or along Bruce Drive, and a mobile speed sign is used a few times each year as well. Although these efforts reduce speeders temporarily, they do not provide a durable solution. Glenville is a large town to patrol, and the mobile speed sign is more often needed elsewhere.

As compared to mobile speed signs, permanent radar-enabled speed signs along Alplaus Avenue and Bruce Drive would be a better deterrent to speeding motorists.

Private funds from an Alplaus resident have been offered to the town for such purchase, and further action by the town and the county (Alplaus Avenue is a county road) is awaited in this regard. The suggested small flashing signs could be easily attached to existing speed limit signs. They are designed to collect speed and time data, which can be transmitted to Glenville Police to enable them to better focus enforcement efforts.

We request that town officials allow these radar-enabled speed signs to be purchased, at no cost to the town taxpayers, and used on Alplaus Avenue and Bruce Drive to remind drivers to slow down to the posted speed limit.

An ARA representative is working with the Glenville Traffic Safety Committee to decide which lighted speed signs are best and how they will be deployed and controlled. Some maintenance and data retrieval is required; as a result, the Glenville Town Board will have to authorize the police department to accept that responsibility.

Additionally, as a condition of the sizable private donation, we will need an agreement by the town confirming that, although the signs will be owned by the town, they will be used only at the locations cited above, that is, on Alplaus Avenue and on Bruce Drive.

Alplaus residents who frequently walk along Alplaus Avenue know that drivers view it as a way to get where they're going in a hurry rather than a road through our neighborhood. We look forward to continuing to work with the town and the county on the best—and most durable—means of controlling the speed of traffic in the hamlet.

E) LED Lighting on Alplaus Avenue and Bruce Drive

Many of the streetlights in the hamlet are older sodium or mercury vapor lights that have decreased in efficiency as they age. LED street lighting would help provide a brighter, more natural light, increasing the safety and appearance of the streets within the hamlet.

A study of the benefits of new lighting should be conducted by the town and/or county with the understanding that the new fixtures would be adjusted to focus the light down and not sideways, so as to minimize the invasive effects of the brighter light on nearby dwellings.

6. INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

A) Road Conditions and Drainage

The survey results show that a majority of Alplaus residents feel that road conditions and drainage, in particular, are important issues to be addressed. Given that repaving was completed in fall 2018, it appears that poor drainage is the greatest concern.

There are still drainage problems at the following locations:

- On First Street, where rainwater washes out driveways and lawns.
- At the Alplaus Avenue intersection with Belmont Avenue, where water pools on lawns and in the street after a heavy rain.
- On Bruce Drive, where water pools deeply in the drainage ditches year-round, rather than draining, creating an enormous breeding pool for mosquitoes.
- On Maritime Drive, where proper drainage ditches were never constructed and the land that it was built on is very wet year-round. In some years the flooding creates a pond on the west side, near the intersection with Alplaus Ave.

We ask town and county officials to work with residents in these areas to address their concerns and to fix the drainage problems around the hamlet.



B) Connection of Bike/Walking Path to Rest of Glenville and Scotia/Schenectady Bike Paths

With completion of the multipurpose path from Glenville's Indian Meadows Park on Droms Road to the Anderson Dog Park on Van Buren Road, in 2017, a trail system linking the neighborhoods of Glenville came closer to reality.

A walking trail from Van Buren Road to Town Center, then down Glenridge Road to Woodhaven and St. Helen's Estates, is planned, per town officials.

While not deemed a high priority, survey results show that the residents of Alplaus welcome these additions to town infrastructure and look forward to a trail system connecting Alplaus to Woodhaven/Maple Avenue to the west and extending to the south along the Mohawk River (through lands of National Grid) to Freeman's Bridge Road and along the existing bike path to Scotia.

This is a multiyear project with design and funding still uncertain, but the residents of Alplaus support the concept of connected neighborhoods and the creation of safe and healthy pedestrian corridors through the town.

C) Condition of Trees on Alplaus Avenue

Alplaus residents are proud of their beautiful hamlet—its houses, yards, water views, gardens, and, not least, its trees. Trees form a natural and beautiful barrier between the roadway and the front yards of those residents living on Alplaus Avenue.

Several dead or dying trees along the avenue are of concern to residents. Not only are they unsightly, they may pose a danger or lead to disease in other trees in the area. As many of the trees are located within the county right of way, the county, as the owner of the land and trees, should better maintain their health, trimming as necessary and replacing as needed in order to maintain the natural buffer and scenic charm of our main thoroughfare.

We ask that the county give adequate notice of any tree work to be performed and, if possible, to give us an opportunity to raise funds to replace any trees that the county highway supervisor may feel need to come down.



D) Improvement of Dilapidated Properties

A few properties in the hamlet are in need of repairs/improvements to bring them up to code and to bolster the values of adjacent properties. Alplaus is a welcoming, diverse, and friendly community and neighbors are always treated with respect. When the owners are unable or unwilling to make basic repairs or improvements, however, residents look to town and county elected officials to help with the process.

When properties are allowed to fall into serious disrepair or are abandoned, as occasionally happens, residents will notify town officials so that they are aware of the situation. Corrective steps should be taken to prevent the abandoned buildings from becoming a threat to public health and safety.

When real property and school taxes are unpaid for the requisite period, residents will ask the town to exercise its right to transfer the lien of unpaid taxes to the county so that it may proceed with an In Rem tax foreclosure proceeding in order to sell the property at public auction.

It is generally true that buyers at public auction are motivated to quickly improve the purchased property to inhabit or to sell.

As this Hamlet Plan is intended to be a living document, no specific properties will be listed here, but the ARA will send letters to the town and county notifying them of the few properties that currently fit these criteria, as well as any others that do in the future, so that formal action may be taken.

E) Animal Control Issues

Alplaus residents, especially those who live close to the industrial park, regard the problem of the feral cat colony in that part of the hamlet, as well as an intermittent problem of off-leash dogs in that area, as a nuisance and potential threat to public safety.

Feral Cats

For many years there has been a sizable population of feral cats in the Mohawk Industrial Park, with an explosion in the cat population in 2018. These cats have attacked Mohawk Ave. pet cats and become nuisances when they seek shelter in garages, under sheds and porches, and in boats kept in residents' yards and driveways.

Following earlier efforts by Alplaus residents, a concerned Glenville resident in 2018-2019 undertook a major trap/spay-neuter/release project. Of the 46 cats trapped, some were adopted out and some euthanized; the remaining unadoptable animals were "fixed" and returned to the industrial park area, where at least they can no longer reproduce. Through the efforts of this citizen, supported by a fund-raising campaign to which many Alplaus residents, the ARA, and business owners contributed, major progress has been made in controlling the cat colony population. But there is no doubt that follow-up will be needed.

Dogs

Over the years there have also been repeated incidents of dogs getting off leash from the industrial park and running loose on Maritime Dr. and Mohawk Ave. These dogs present a threat to pedestrians who are walking their own pets in the area. Residents have reported being chased by some of these dogs and having to carry small pet dogs to protect them.

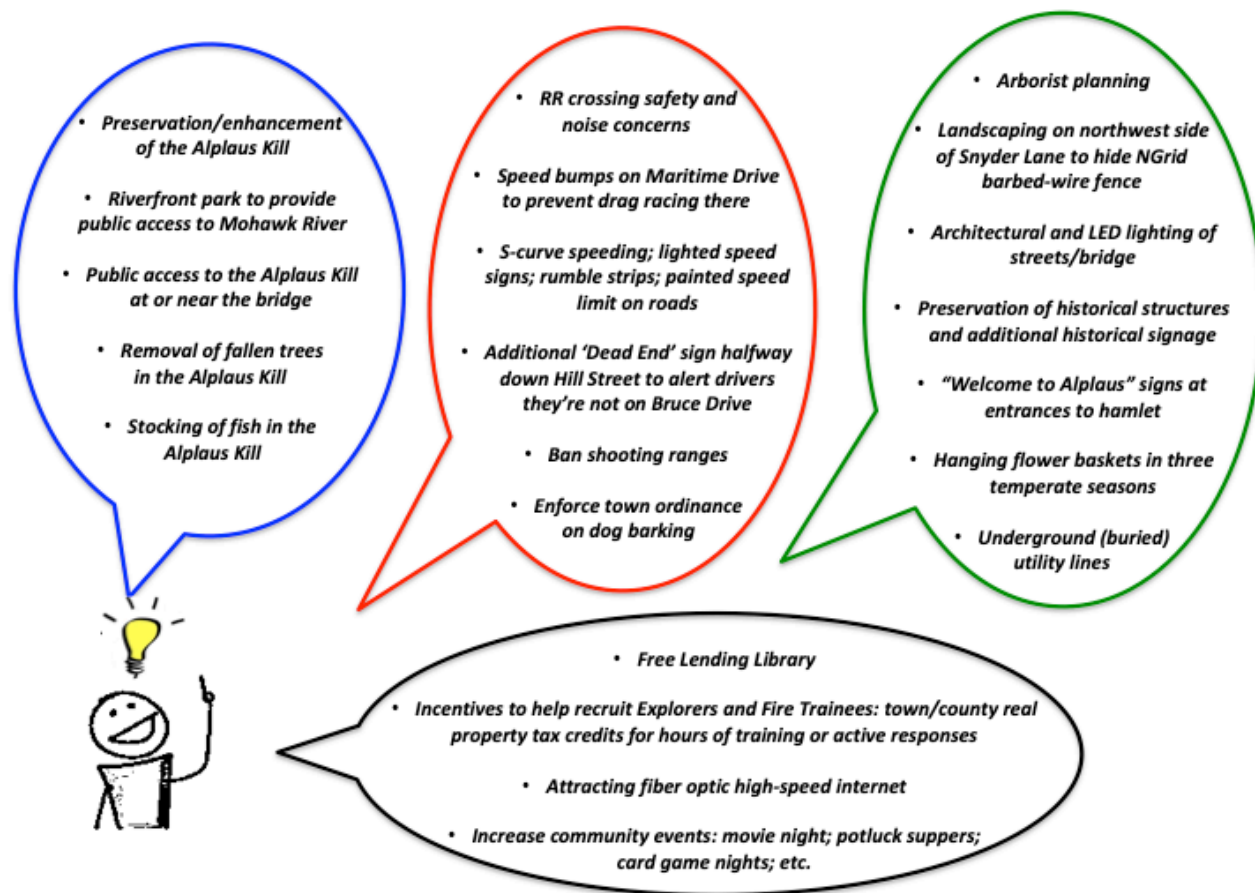
In response to ARA requests, the Town of Glenville animal control officer has warned the owners of the unleashed dogs to keep them on leash. As a deterrent, said officer should fine these owners for any further instances of letting their dogs off leash.

In general, it is expected that cooperation among the landowners and tenants, the town, and local residents can resolve any future animal control issues.

7. ADDITIONAL IDEAS

In our survey, we invited residents to write in comments and offer their suggestions and ideas. A frequently mentioned suggestion is the need for a central, informal meeting place for the hamlet. With the loss of the post office and Samuel's eatery, residents feel that a new community space would be a great benefit to us all. The multipurpose room at the firehouse is often used by resident groups for formal meetings, although it is most often used by the Fire Company and Fire Department for purposes related to their tax-funded mission.

A sampling of other suggestions is presented here:



8. Summary of Action Items to Implement the Hamlet Plan

Based on the resident responses to the survey conducted by the Alplaus Residents Association in fall 2018, it is clear that the primary goals of our community, both short- and long-term, are:

- **to allow for continued growth and improvement of the hamlet without sacrificing its quaintness, charm and uniqueness**
- **to protect and preserve the waterways, waterfront, and sensitive wetlands areas**
- **to make our roads safe for pedestrians and bicyclists with sidewalks or widened shoulders added, speed limits enforced, and drainage and signage improved**

Specific suggestions for consideration and action by public officials are listed below.

1. *Conform zoning of the Mohawk Marina and Industrial Park parcels to the Town of Glenville Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Glenville Town Board in 2018.*
2. *Amend the map of Alplaus in the Comprehensive Plan to include the Mohawk Marina, former Maritime Center and Industrial Park parcels within the hamlet.*
3. *Encourage meetings between the owners of the Mohawk Marina and Industrial Park and Alplaus residents to explore optimal development of the area when owners are ready to do so.*
4. *Increase pedestrian safety by constructing sidewalks and/or widening the shoulder of Alplaus Avenue and creating crosswalks.*
5. *Follow through on Alplaus resident's offer to pay for lighted speed signs on Alplaus Avenue and Bruce Drive.*
6. *Improve drainage and lighting of roads and streets within the hamlet.*
7. *Enforce regulations for the care and maintenance of housing stock within the community and complete tax foreclosures on abandoned properties.*
8. *Preserve and maintain the trees along Alplaus Avenue and elsewhere along public roads where trees lie within the public right-of-way.*
9. *Enforce animal control laws within the hamlet and respond to residents' calls regarding violations of said laws.*

Appendix A. Alplaus Hamlet Survey

SURVEY: WHAT DO WE WANT FOR THE FUTURE OF ALPLAUS?

The Alplaus Residents Association (ARA) is in the process of writing an Alplaus **Hamlet Plan**. This plan will state the community's vision for the future of our hamlet, stressing the importance of preserving its character and presenting ideas for beneficial change. The finished document will be submitted to the Glenville Town Board, county legislators, and state representatives. The hamlet plan will facilitate understanding and cooperation among residents and our elected officials, help us to secure potential funding for hamlet improvements, and put our priorities **ON THE RECORD**. **The ARA has identified the items below as the most important areas to be addressed in the hamlet plan. Now we need to know what YOU think.**

*Alplaus residents' vocal opposition played a major role in stopping the recent proposed massive development for the current site of the marina, Mohawk industrial park, and portions of the waterfront by the rowing and maritime center buildings. This is NOT likely to be the last proposal for that site. Therefore, we think a **hamlet plan** is needed more than ever.*

Please complete this brief survey. Circle 1-5, with (1) being not very important and (5) being extremely important to you:

Appropriate development of the riverfront (marina & rowing center area/industrial park):

1 2 3 4 5

Cleanup of industrial park area:

1 2 3 4 5

Conservation of waterfront and wetlands:

1 2 3 4 5

Pedestrian safety: sidewalks or widened shoulder on Alplaus Ave.

1 2 3 4 5

Walking path from Alplaus Fire Dept. to Glencliff:

1 2 3 4 5

Speed regulation on Alplaus Ave and Bruce Dr:

1 2 3 4 5

Maintenance and improvements of vacant, dilapidated houses/lots:

1 2 3 4 5

Tree planting on Alplaus Ave. to replace diseased/dying trees:

1 2 3 4 5

Addressing road and drainage issues:

1 2 3 4 5

Connecting to bike/walking path in rest of Glenville and Scotia/Schenectady bike paths:

1 2 3 4 5

Animal control issues (unleashed dogs/feral cat colony at Maritime/Mohawk):

1 2 3 4 5

WHAT ELSE is important to you and should be included in the plan?:

Please return this survey to us by **September 21, 2018:**

Preserving the character of Alplaus will depend on people in our community sharing ideas and working together.

- Scan and send by email to: Alplaus12008@yahoo.com OR
- Drop off at Red Argyle (formerly Samuel's) at 258 Alplaus Ave. OR
- Send by regular mail to: ARA, P.O. Box 43, Alplaus, NY 12008 OR
- Hand it to any ARA member listed below
- **DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS?** Feel free to email Bud Watson: Alplaus12008@yahoo.com. Or call Bud: 518-391-3528, or Jessica Evans: 399-4706, or Kathy Boyle: 399-0421

We thank you for your responses!

Alplaus Residents Association

Bud Watson, President
Myrtle Major, Vice President
Vicki Watkins, Treasurer
Kathy Boyle, Secretary
Sue Breslin
Tom Esmond
Jessica Evans
Judy Harris

Kate McHale
Mike McHale, Past President
Garry Polmateer
Sara Mae Pratt
Jeff Sheely
Marjorie Smit
Gray Watkins
Bob Winchester