

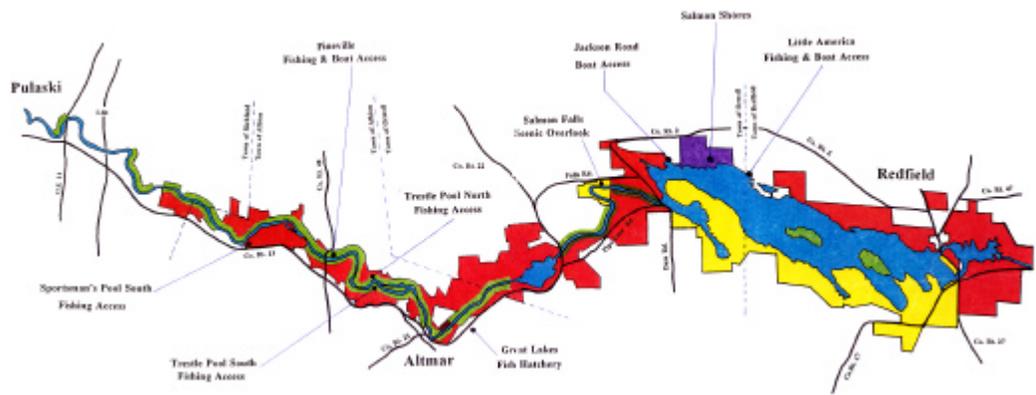
Architectural Resources

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Salmon River Greenway Corridor Community Enhancement Project

Visual Simulation Analysis



January 2, 2002

Submitted to:
Oswego County Department of Planning & Community Development

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Executive Summary

The Visual Simulation Analysis is one component of the Salmon River Greenway Corridor Community Enhancement Project. The purpose of the study is to present design guidelines and scenario graphics that describe how tourist-oriented economic development strategies can be implemented without adversely impacting the quality of the prized natural assets and rural character of the Salmon River Corridor.

The focus area consists of the Towns of Albion, Orwell, Redfield, and Richland as well as the Villages of Altmar and Pulaski. The Salmon River and its reservoir are centerpieces in the region's portfolio of recreational attractions, and the river has long been recognized for its outstanding sports fishing.

The Salmon River Corridor contains four distinct contexts in which physical land use development can occur. Each setting has unique qualities that need to be considered in any proposed development scenario. The four settings are:

- *Village Center*—The main center of population and commerce is in the heart of the Village of Pulaski. It has an attractive, historic building stock but some underutilized sites, and linkages to the nearby riverfront need to be enhanced.
- *Hamlet/Small Village*—Small clusters of buildings in rural areas are found in Altmar, Orwell, Port Ontario, and Redfield. They tend to have vacant buildings that can be adaptively reused, and they offer sensible locations for infill development.
- *Highway*—Rural development should be modest in scale and harmonious with the natural surroundings. Large footprint commercial structures should be channeled into the existing commercial strip on Route 13 near the I-81 junction in Pulaski.
- *Waterfront*—The primary concern in this setting is the visual impact of development from the water. Limited recreation-focused development should be set back and screened to preserve the serene vistas and natural settings.



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A common theme of the visual simulation analysis is that each of the four settings has special characteristics that need to be protected while simultaneously capitalizing on these traits to attain sustainable tourism-based economic development and a higher quality of life. Each of the settings offers opportunities for development projects that can expand the range of accommodations, attractions, and amenities to attract and retain tourists. Prudent design principles tailored to each setting will safeguard the character of the diverse areas of the Salmon River Corridor while nurturing desirable investment that supports a broad tourism strategy.



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Introduction

The visual simulation project is one of four components of the *Salmon River Greenway Corridor Community Enhancement Project*, initiated with the collaborative support of the New York State Quality Communities Demonstration Program, the New York State Department of State, and the Oswego County Environmental Management Council. The purpose of the project is to identify tourist-oriented economic development strategies that capitalize on the region's natural assets without compromising the integrity of these assets or the predominantly rural character that is valued by the community.

The visual simulation study was prepared concurrently with the other project components, including an economic development plan, a fiscal impact analysis, and a biological resource inventory. While each of these studies provides a distinct focus, the consultants worked in concert to develop overarching themes and interrelated concepts.

The role of the visual simulation is to present design guidelines and scenario graphics that illustrate how economic development projects can be accommodated in the Salmon River Corridor in harmony with the existing natural and built environment. Furthermore, the visual simulation will demonstrate that thoughtfully planned development can enhance the character of the Salmon River Corridor and provide more economic, recreational, and cultural opportunities for residents and visitors alike.

Project Area

The Salmon River Corridor project area is located entirely within Oswego County, New York, and consists of the Towns of Albion, Orwell, Redfield, and Richland as well as the Villages of Pulaski and Altmar. Despite the rural character of these communities, Oswego County is considered part of the Syracuse metropolitan area as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. The 2000 Census reports a total population of 9,768 in the Salmon River Corridor.



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The Salmon River Corridor is blessed with a splendid geographic setting that includes pristine forests, dramatic waterfalls, a Great Lakes shoreline, bucolic countryside, and of course the Salmon River. The river runs east to west from the Tug Hill Plateau to Lake Ontario through each of the communities in the project area and is world-renowned for its salmon fishing. The cover image provided by NM Holdings shows the geographic orientation of much of the project area, including the reservoir and river.

The Salmon River has a long history as a prolific fishing resource dating back to the Native Americans of the Iroquois Confederacy, whose name for the river means “where swim the sweet fish”. As early as 1657 Jesuit missionaries witnessed Iroquois fishermen hauling boatloads of salmon from the river, and the economy of the first white settlement founded in 1801 was based in large part on fishing. Fishing as a recreational attraction in the region dates from 1864, when a New York City attorney recorded details of his fishing trip and established a vacation home for fishing and hunting (source: “Salmon River History—Early Years”, accessed online at <http://home.aol.com/wogiewus/hist3.htm>).



Today sports enthusiasts converge in the area, especially in autumn, to reel in several varieties of salmon swimming upstream to their spawning grounds. A large reservoir lies behind a dam on the river, providing a diverse array of water recreation opportunities and beautiful scenery. The region also receives some of the heaviest snowfall totals in the nation, making it fertile ground for winter sports.

Recognizing the disparate physical settings that can be identified throughout the project area, the visual simulation study is organized into four distinct categories, each of which has its own set of design considerations. Graphics have been prepared for each type of setting to depict appropriate development concepts. The four main settings in the project area are:

- *Village Center*
- *Hamlet/Small Village*
- *Highway*
- *Waterfront*

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Project Approach

After an initial meeting with the Project Steering Committee and County Planning staff, four site visits were made to various parts of the Salmon River Corridor to gather baseline information. Draft concepts were developed and presented to the Steering Committee in October. After incorporating the Committee's input, a public presentation was held in the community in late October, at which additional feedback was received. The community had additional opportunities for participation at a series of workshops conducted by County Planning staff in November. The final design concepts were then revised and this accompanying report was prepared in December.



Citizens review materials at a public presentation.



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Village Center Design Setting

The Village of Pulaski (pop. 2,398) in the Town of Richland is the largest population center in the Salmon River Corridor. The Village center has a bustling main street (Jefferson Street) with attractive old building stock and pleasant green spaces, although there are several underutilized structures. The Salmon River runs roughly parallel and adjacent to Jefferson Street, but the riverfront is obscured by the rear of the buildings and there are no well-defined pedestrian connections to the river.

Enhancing the Fabric of the Streetscape

The pedestrian scale of Jefferson Street and the quaint charm of the historic building stock are assets that should be protected and enhanced. New investment in the village center should be encouraged, and the following strategies can ensure that physical development will be compatible with the existing character of the Pulaski village center and contribute to its increased vitality:



Late 19th Century buildings on Jefferson St.

- ***Enact design guidelines***
Design guidelines regulate the orientation and appearance of a building in its community context. For instance, a "zero setback" provision would require a structure to be positioned at the front of a parcel in close proximity to a sidewalk. Design guidelines would also specify appropriate building materials, size/bulk characteristics, lighting, and permissible signage that would complement other historic buildings in the village center.
- ***Promote infill development***
Some vacant sites within the village center would make excellent locations for building projects; such infill development would achieve a more productive use of the parcels and contribute to a critical mass of activity, which would diversify and strengthen the village core as a destination. Vacant or underutilized parcels can also



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be perceived as "missing teeth" that detract from the overall character and continuity of a streetscape.

- *Encourage mixed-uses to increase activity*
Many of the stately buildings on Jefferson Street have first floor storefronts with at least two more floors of usable space above; these upper levels often appear dark and underutilized. While most ground-level storefronts are occupied, numerous upper-level spaces appear dark and underutilized. Policies should promote different types of active uses within buildings that include residential units and offices in addition to a mix of retail establishments. This would stimulate activity at different times of the day and contribute to a more vibrant village life.

A site at the west end of Jefferson Street that includes a dilapidated former movie theater (presently used as an auto parts store) and an adjacent vacant lot was selected to illustrate how the above concepts might be applied in the Pulaski village center.



Vintage postcard image showing theater

Slide 1 includes a photo panorama of the existing conditions of the site as well as a rendering of what the same panorama might look like after an adaptive redevelopment of the theater and the construction of a mixed-use infill complex on the adjoining lot. In the proposed scenario the theater has undergone a renaissance as the "Salmon River Cultural Center", a flexible facility with the capability of hosting public concerts, film series, presentations, and other community-sponsored events. In this illustration the upper apartments on the adjoining mixed-use building have balconies overlooking the vibrant Jefferson Street, which offers a cafe and bookstore on either side of the rejuvenated theater.

Slide 2 shows three distinct photo simulations of the same site. The first image depicts the same redevelopment concept illustrated in Slide 1. In addition to three levels of prime office or residential space, the infill building features an inviting pedestrian connection through the base of the building to the adjoining riverfront.





Existing

Key Design Attributes

- **Promote Continuity of Village Fabric**
 - Consider streetscape guidelines (zero setback, building materials, signage)
 - Promote infill development
 - Consider screening off-street parking
- **Encourage Mixed-Use Development**
 - Promote a mix of retail, residential, and commercial use to enhance street activity
 - Emphasize enterprises that appeal to visitors



Re-design of Jefferson Street theater showing the “Salmon River Cultural Center”, a multi-use entertainment venue flanked by mixed-use buildings offering ground-level retail.



Postcard image showing historical qualities of Jefferson Street.



Visual simulation with theatre renovations and existing parking area with infill development and pedestrian linkage to riverfront.



Visual simulation of infill development on both the theatre site and the existing parking area.



Visual simulation with theatre renovations and existing parking area with brick screen wall and pedestrian linkage to riverfront.

Key Design Attributes

- **Promote Continuity of Village Fabric**
 - Consider streetscape guidelines (zero setback, building materials, signage)
 - Promote infill development
 - Consider screening off-street parking
- **Encourage Mixed-Use Development**
 - Promote a mix of retail, residential, and commercial use to enhance street activity
 - Emphasize enterprises that appeal to visitors
- **Enhance Linkages with Salmon River**
 - Create attractive gateway paths from Jefferson Street
 - Mitigate prominence of parking areas
 - Improve rear of properties (facing river)



Site of former Log Cabin Restaurant
Possible redevelopment site

Pulaski

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The second image on Slide 2 is a different variation with a greater emphasis on mixed-use infill development in the streetscape. This alternative was developed after the community expressed a desire for additional site redevelopment options during the public participation process. The cumulative impact of the two new buildings on the streetscape is substantial, injecting new continuous residential, commercial, and retail space onto Jefferson Street.

Each of the first two illustrations on Slide 2 emphasize how building scale and facade traits of redevelopment should blend into the established pattern of the streetscape. It is also important to nurture such establishments as the multi-use cultural venue, eateries, and interesting retail in order to provide activities for tourists and families throughout the year that complement the region's outdoor attractions. The images also show redevelopment that bridges a void on Jefferson Street, which would create a seamless and more appealing streetscape.

Improve Linkages with the Salmon River



View from a Jefferson St. rooftop looking at Salmon River and parking areas.

The panoramic photo above shows the rear of the buildings along Jefferson Street in Pulaski, the Salmon River, and large parking lots in between. There is an access platform and pathways leading to the water that are extremely popular during the fishing season. The proximity of the river to the main Pulaski commercial district is an underutilized asset that can be further tapped during the fishing season and beyond to attract more visitors and keep them longer. Strategies to enhance the linkages between the village center and the river include:

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- ***Create attractive gateway paths from Jefferson Street***

Establishing well-defined, inviting pathways from the heart of Pulaski to its adjacent riverfront will remind pedestrians of the village's exciting geographic setting and encourage them to explore in greater detail. These gateway paths should feature materials such as brick pavers or wooden planks to distinguish them from sidewalks or parking areas and to increase the lure of the route. Ample landscaping will lend to the pleasing natural aura of the walking route and serve to beautify the village core. The pathways may eventually be linked to more comprehensive hiking routes in the region, establishing Pulaski's village center as a hub within a Salmon River trail network where tourist-oriented amenities could thrive.



Existing connection between Jefferson St. and rear parking.



- ***Mitigate the prominence of parking areas***

Parking areas are situated on two grade levels between the Jefferson Street commercial district and the Salmon River. While parking areas are utilized by business patrons and fishermen, they create an unintentional barrier for pedestrians walking from the river to Jefferson Street and vice versa. The asphalt expanses also detract from the appealing natural setting of the area and dramatic viewsheds. With only a slight reduction in the number of parking spaces (to allow for pedestrian crosswalk access as well as generous landscaping), connectivity between the Salmon River and the village center of Pulaski would be greatly enhanced.

- ***Improve the rear of Jefferson Street properties (facing river)***

The venerable old buildings that line Jefferson Street were oriented to be impressive from the streetscape. As a result, the backside of some structures appear dilapidated when viewed from the riverfront. Increased focus and investment on the rear facades would improve the visual appeal of the village from the perspective of fishermen and hikers enjoying the riverfront. There may also be opportunities for restaurants/cafe development in the rear of Jefferson Street that could capitalize on the unique location and increased pedestrian volume.

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Returning to the theater and adjoining vacant lot in Slide 2, the third image illustrates the concept of the pathway connection. The Salmon River Cultural Center is once again depicted in the old movie theater, but the adjoining lot is now shown as a pathway leading to the river and trail network. Brick pavers, newly planted trees, and public art encourage foot traffic to follow the sounds of the river which are clearly heard from Jefferson Street. A low brick wall is proposed as a buffer between the sidewalk and the parking lot, bridge the gap in the streetscape.

Slide 3 provides a bird's-eye perspective of how a relatively modest capital investment can enhance the connections between the village core and the Salmon River. Well-defined paths provide three possible access routes between village and river, and there are links to a larger recreational trail at the top of the bluffs overlooking the river. A path also leads to the village historic society and ironworks factory building (presently vacant but potentially a revitalized asset in the future). The access points on Jefferson Street already exist, but investment is needed in signage to direct people and in pedestrian-friendly amenities to attract them. Only a few parking spaces would be lost in the concept to allow for a pedestrian crosswalk to the riverfront bluffs.



Unique ironworks building near the river in Pulaski





Rear-parking behind Jefferson Street structures with limited connection to River.



Conceptual redevelopment of Riverfront/Jefferson Street with pedestrian linkages.

Key Design Attributes

- Enhance Linkages with Salmon River
 - Create attractive gateway paths from Jefferson Street
 - Mitigate prominence of parking areas
 - Improve rear of properties (facing river)



Existing pedestrian access to rear-parking. (No connection to river).



Existing vehicular access from rear-parking to Jefferson Street.

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Hamlet/Small Village

There are several smaller places in the Salmon River Corridor that exhibit distinctly different traits from those that characterize the relatively large Village of Pulaski. These places, which include the Village of Altmar and the Hamlets of Orwell, Port Ontario, and Redfield, have interesting clusters of residential, civic, and commercial buildings that contribute to the quaint, rural character of the Salmon River Corridor.

These places have the potential to play a larger role in the economic development of the region by accommodating tourist-oriented entrepreneurial infrastructure in an appealing location. Channeling such development into the small clusters of hamlets/small villages where service provision is more practical will limit unwanted development on the natural rural lands cherished by residents and visitors alike. The following are key themes in a strategy to incorporate the important small places of the Salmon River Corridor into an economic development program:



Dilapidated former church in Redfield.

- ***Adaptive reuse of vacant structures***
Identifying feasible uses for the many historically significant and architecturally interesting vacant structures in the hamlet/small village settings will breath new life into the local economy. The reinvestment in dormant structures will improve the overall aesthetic appeal of the communities.
- ***Encourage appropriate infill development***
In addition to reinvesting in existing underutilized structures, a careful mix of new development can contribute to a critical mass of activity in the hamlet/small village setting and expand the range of attractions and establishments that nurture tourists. Channeling development into hamlets/small villages is also sensible since the infrastructure for public services can be easily connected. As with Pulaski's village center, design guidelines should govern new building



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characteristics to ensure that they contribute to the unique pastoral character.

- *Link components within the entire hamlet/small village*--Investment should be made in amenities such as sidewalks, plantings, benches, and signage that integrate the clusters of buildings within a hamlet/small village. Parking areas should also be limited in size, discreetly positioned, and screened. These features will encourage people to spend more time exploring the entire place rather than pulling off the road to visit one attraction. In addition to creating a mutually beneficial impact for existing and new businesses, these links will improve the quality of life in the hamlet/small village setting.



Luxury Jaguar automobile departing fishing access area in Altmar.



The top of Slide 4 shows existing conditions of a vacant church that occupies a prominent parcel at an intersection in the Village of Altmar. The dormant building, just a short walk from a world-class fishing spot on the Salmon River, needs work and is listed for sale. The simulation demonstrates how a modest investment with no structural alterations can transform the church into a niche retail establishment that would enhance the character of the Village and provide a shopping opportunity for visitors. The "Altmar Craft Center" received a coat of paint, plantings, and offers an artistic display on its grounds. It has been integrated into the fabric of the village with a brick-paver sidewalk that includes a bench.

The Hamlet of Redfield lies next to the large reservoir created behind a dam on the Salmon River. There are some vacant commercial buildings just a short walk from the waterfront that also have potential for a productive reuse. The bottom image on Slide 4 shows a presently vacant commercial building in the Hamlet of Redfield after a possible rejuvenation as the "Redfield General Store", an interesting retail establishment. The parking lot has been screened from the road, and the façade of the storefront itself has benefited from a paint job, a porch railing, and landscaping. A brick-paver footpath provides access to the front door.