

## 2.6 BUSINESS AREAS

### 2.6.1 Business Characteristics in the Village

#### Location and General Character of Business Areas

Businesses occupy roughly five percent of the land in the Village. In accordance with the Village's established zoning districts, the Village has three retail business areas, one general business area for non-retail uses, and several office buildings and laboratories located on scattered sites. (See Figure 2-15). Briarcliff's principal retail district is located along Pleasantville Road and North State Road. This chapter will look at each major business area in turn, and at the non-residential uses located in Briarcliff Manor's neighborhoods.

#### Types of Business

Businesses in the Village offer convenience shopping to satisfy the daily and weekly household needs of local residents. In the downtown, along Pleasantville Road, businesses are mainly service retail, such as restaurants and cafes, a small food market and other specialty shops, i.e., a hardware store, a jewelry store, banks, manicure/pedicure shops, hair salons, dry cleaners, realtors, a florist, and a gas station. The east side of the downtown across Route 9A is occupied by Mrs. Green's, a bank, a gas station and mixed retail uses on North State Road. The other two retail business areas offer a limited amount of nationally and locally-known establishments. The Village also has a mix of small-scale offices, providing services to local residents, and larger offices with a regional/national market: Sony Electronics and Wüsthof on Route 9 and including Philips Laboratories on Scarborough Road.

#### Largest Employers, Landholders

In 2004, the top five employers within Briarcliff Manor were the Briarcliff Manor Union Free School District, Philips Laboratories, Trump National Golf Club, Clear View School, and Charles H. Sells Inc, an engineering firm. Each of these employers had at least 100 workers, according to the Westchester County Planning Department. The other large employers are USI Holdings, a publicly traded insurer headquartered in Briarcliff Manor, Atria Briarcliff Manor, Pace University, and the Village government which employs 81 people.

### 2.6.2 Central Business District (CBD)

#### Purpose of a Central Business District (CBD)

A central business district (CBD) serves as a focal point for the social and commercial activities of a village. A variety of businesses, municipal buildings, public spaces, cultural uses and residences are encouraged to support both local and regional commercial and cultural activities. Activities occurring in the CBD should be, for the most part, pedestrian oriented, with safety, mobility and general well-being of pedestrians as the overall goal.

The visual impact of the CBD is an important factor in conveying the nature and character of the Village. By designating an area as a CBD with careful zoning and design controls, the Village can regulate the scale, type, design, landscaping and architectural quality of new development and encourage the upgrading of existing lots and structures within the CBD.

#### Boundaries of the CBD

While the CBD does not have definite boundaries – meaning it is not officially designated on the Village's zoning map – it is generally considered to occupy two proximate areas with a loose physical connection, separated by Route 9A. To the west of Route 9A is the CBD



along both sides of Pleasantville Road. The southern boundary is the U.S. Post Office on the eastern side of Pleasantville Road and the Wachovia Bank parking lot on the western side of the road. The northern boundary is the intersection of Pleasantville Road and North State Road, including the Birrittella property, on the east side of Pleasantville Road and up to Central Drive on the west side of Pleasantville Road. To the east of Route 9A, the CBD includes the shopping center on North State Road (at its intersection with Route 9A) and the properties bounded by Route 9A, North State Road, Woodside Avenue and the Village's boundary with the Town of Mt. Pleasant.

### Existing Zoning

With the exception of the post office which is located in the R20B residence district, all properties within the CBD are located in either the B1 Retail Business District or the B2 General Business District. In the B1 district, examples of permitted uses include retail businesses, banks and professional offices, restaurants (excluding drive-ins), theatres, assembly halls, funeral homes and laundromats. In the B2 district, all of the uses in the B1 district are permitted as well as auto-related uses (repair, sales, and gas stations), labs, printing plants, light industrial, wholesale businesses and greenhouses/nurseries.

### Character of the CBD

Although the east and west sides of the CBD are largely zoned B1, they have a distinctively different character. While the Pleasantville Road CBD is built to more of a traditional village downtown scale, the area along North State Road is built to a suburban strip

development scale. Furthermore, Route 9A divides Pleasantville

Road and North State Road. The intersection at Route 9A and North State Road is difficult for pedestrians. For these reasons, the North State Road businesses are considered part of the CBD, but not strictly part of the downtown.

Following is a description of the character of the CBD beginning with Pleasantville Road. As mentioned, the character of Pleasantville Road is distinctly different from the character of North State Road. Pleasantville Road itself is distinctly different between the east and west sides of the street. Figure 2-16 shows the existing conditions along Pleasantville Road: land uses, the siting of buildings on their lots and landscape features. At its southern end, the east side of Pleasantville Road is occupied by stand-alone structures, including brick and wood frame buildings. These buildings are generally situated near the front lot lines and have landscaping along Pleasantville Road, including grass areas and trees, street furniture, both cement and red brick sidewalks and a stone wall. North of this area are attached buildings that create a nearly continuous street wall. In front of these structures are street furniture, brick pavers, street trees and angled parking, with additional parking in the rear. While this area has a generally pedestrian-friendly design, the overall visual quality is poor. The buildings have varied facades and rooflines, out-dated awnings, inconsistent window treatments and varying levels of maintenance.



*Residence-style Commercial Building*



*Former Firehouse, Now Offices and Restaurant*



*East Side of Pleasantville Road, Strip-Style Commercial Buildings*



- Retail
- Office
- Banking
- Gas Station
- Public Facilities
- Residential



In contrast, the west side of Pleasantville Road is not pedestrian-friendly. It is occupied by uncoordinated and discrete development. A majority of the buildings are stand-alone structures situated on various areas of the lots and set back from the front lot line or sidewalk. Parking for businesses on the west side of the street is located in front or to the side of the buildings. This is a late 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban commercial design, in contrast to the traditional urban design found across the street. Brick sidewalks run along portions of the west side of Pleasantville Road. However, sidewalk continuity is hampered by the presence of numerous driveways, lots that have no curb cuts (driveways into the on-site parking lots), and some parking areas that have been designed to only provide landscaping, not sidewalks. The outdated and poor visual quality of this side of Pleasantville Road has a particularly negative effect on the overall quality of the downtown. The development is out-dated and not representative of a planned downtown and traditional CBD. Furthermore, the quality of design and existing mix of uses is not conducive to the Village’s existing needs.

The existing pedestrian network leading to and within downtown along Pleasantville Road is incomplete. Long stretches of road are without sidewalks and parts of the roadway are lined with partial sidewalks. Within the downtown, the discontinuity of sidewalks is largely caused by the presence of numerous driveways and the incompatible design of certain parking lots. The Village has improved pedestrian access to the CBD with sidewalks along North State Road and Pleasantville Road from the post office to Law Park and Route 9A.

Retail development along North State Road is unequivocally suburban in layout. The multi-tenant buildings on both sides are larger in footprint than on Pleasantville Road, and provide on-site parking in front of the stores. The parking is minimally landscaped and does not have pedestrian aisles leading from the spaces to the stores. The overall aesthetic quality is tired. The disorganized quality of the street network and site layout may hinder economic development, especially in the B1 and B2 areas bounded by Route 9A and North State Road.

This area currently has a mix of stores, office buildings, and semi-industrial businesses served by Woodside Avenue.



*Wachovia Bank, Set Close to Road*



*East Downtown Industrial Area: Example of Adaptive Reuse*



*Buildings set back from West Side of Pleasantville Road*



*Development on North State Road*



*Industrial Land Uses off Woodside Avenue*

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

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#### Development and Change

Recent development has focused on Pleasantville Road, and is a mix of renovation and new construction. The florist is an example of a retrofitted building. The Wachovia Bank is well-situated on its site with the parking to the rear and side. The next large investment in the downtown may be at the Village Hall, which may be expanded on site and renovated over the next few years. The municipal building, as it is now, does not have sufficient department or public meeting room space, and significant space is shared with the Fire Department.



*Village Hall*



*Retrofitted Building on Pleasantville Road*

Beautification is also underway. The Village convened a Beautification Committee in 2005 which reported on measures to improve the downtown experience, with a focus on creating pedestrian safety and access, lighting, building scale, façade design, public spaces, welcoming gateways, and connecting the areas east and west of Route 9A. The Village will also draw upon a streetscaping plan prepared by the Westchester County Planning Department; this is described in more detail below.

The planning process revealed some agreement among residents on the direction that future downtown improvements should take. For the most part, residents are satisfied with the scale of local businesses, but would like more basic goods and services such as a children's clothing

store. The appearance of the downtown is a paramount concern: future investment should focus on additional municipal parking, connecting the existing lots, and improving the pedestrian and shopping experience. Those measures would cover lighting, signs, sidewalks, street trees, small parks, and better control over commercial facades. Any new development on the west side of Pleasantville Road should complement the urban design of the east side which has a continuous street wall, coordinated development and improved pedestrian access and safety.

North State Road is a focal point for concerns about pedestrian and driver safety, both getting in and out of the parking lots here and traversing the Route 9A intersection. The planning process found support for strengthening the tax base of the CBD by careful targeting of the North State Road area for larger-scale retail stores. These would not be appropriate along Pleasantville Road, but could have their retail space and parking needs accommodated on North State Road.

The concerns about design, business types, pedestrian friendliness, and cross-9A connection are ones that the Village has studied for a few years. The prior planning efforts are summarized in the section that follows.

#### Prior Planning

Over the years, numerous plans for the downtown have been prepared for the Village including the [East Side and West Side Plans for Pleasantville Road](#), the [CBD Study](#) for a new downtown prepared by F.P. Clarke, the [CBD Blight Study](#), and the [County Streetscaping Plan for the Pleasantville Road Business District](#). The Village's Beautification Committee has also focused its efforts on improving the downtown experience. This plan recommends implementing these earlier plans – thus all recommendations can be found in the Vision Chapter.

### 2.6.3 Retail Areas Outside the CBD: Chilmark and Chappaqua Road Shopping Centers

There are two B1 Retail Business Districts outside the downtown area; one in the Chilmark neighborhood and the other on Chappaqua Road. These shopping centers are traditional suburban strip-mall designs, with on-site parking and a mix of local and regional or national franchises. The Chilmark Shopping Center is the larger of the two, at around 38,000 square feet of building space. It is located on the heavily traveled Pleasantville Road near the boundary with Ossining, and also has access from Orchard Road. At the time of plan writing, this shopping center's anchor was a Food Emporium, with several other major or growing businesses (Dress Barn, Radio Shack, Carvel, Subway, Curves, and State Farm Insurance) and a number of local and smaller businesses. There are four disconnected groups of buildings, with parking and internal roads squeezed in around them.

Both shopping centers are well-located in terms of access from arterial and collector roadways and proximity to residential areas. While neither is especially attractive, they serve their purpose well. During the public outreach process, there were few comments made about either the Chilmark or Chappaqua Center.



*Chilmark Shopping Center*

### 2.6.4 Office and Business Areas: North State Road Offices, Route 9 Offices, Stand-Alone Offices and Laboratories

Medical and professional offices, located in stand-alone, purpose-built structures, can be found on North State Road, east of the B1 retail areas. Other offices and businesses are located on Route 9 (South Highland Avenue) within the B2 General Business and BT Business Transitional zoning districts. Medical and dentist offices, a diner, and an animal hospital are located on Route 9 in the B2 zone in stand-alone buildings on the Village's northwestern boundary, opposite Ossining's Arcadian Shopping Center. The Wüsthof-Trident building is the only structure in the BT zone, also on Route 9. The building is situated in a campus-like setting, not visible from Route 9. In 2006, the Board of Trustees granted special permit approval to permit multi-tenancy use of the property. As per the special permit, interior renovations of the existing building are allowed, but no exterior construction or renovation is allowed other than a change in signage to reflect the second floor tenancy.



*Free-Standing Office Building*

There are four areas in the Village zoned B Planned Office Building and Laboratories. Offices here are Philips Laboratories on Scarborough Road, Sony on Route 9, the Briarcliff Executive Park (formerly Mearl) on Old Briarcliff Road, and the Briarcliff Corporate Campus on Pleasantville Road. With the exception of Philips Laboratories, the

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buildings are visible from the street. However, each is set back from the roadway, accessed by private driveways and with a significant amount of landscaping. The Philips Laboratories campus is about 90 acres, part of which is residentially zoned.



*Former Mearl Building*



*Young Wonders*

### 2.6.5 Special Business Uses in Residential Areas

Not all businesses in the Village are located within areas zoned for business use. Some businesses are located within residentially-zoned areas yet these businesses are compatible with the surrounding residential uses and provide services to Village residents. Examples of these types of businesses are the Trump National Golf Club, which provides recreation opportunities, and Atria Assisted Living, Brandywine Adult Home, and Senior Quarters at Briarcliff Manor, which provide housing and support services for Village seniors. There are also three businesses provide childcare services.