



Figure 3  
Detail of Map from 1903 Showing the Village of Warwick

# Existing Conditions and Challenges

UNSIGHTLY RAILROAD R.O.W. DEBRIS AND UNDER UTILIZED STRUCTURES



DEGRADED BANKS OF CREEK ADJACENT TO ATTRACTIVE VILLAGE SHOPS AND OPEN SPACES



NEED FOR ADDITIONAL WALKWAY CONNECTIONS ALONG CREEK



INADEQUATE BUFFER BETWEEN PARKING AND PEDESTRIAN USES



RAILROAD TRACKS USED AS MAIN PEDESTRIAN LINK THROUGHOUT VILLAGE



VISUAL AND PHYSICAL IMPEDIMENTS TO WALKING BY AND VIEWING CREEK



RAPID RISE OF WATER CREATES SCOURING, EROSION AND FLOODING



REAR OF BUILDINGS ABUTTING CREEK NEGLECTED



STREAM WATER QUALITY AN ECOLOGICAL AS WELL AS VISUAL ISSUE



NEED FOR ADDITIONAL VEGETATED AREAS AND STREAM BUFFER BETWEEN PARKING AND CREEK

OPPORTUNITY TO PLANT ATTRACTIVE NATIVE VEGETATION WITH SEASONAL INTEREST



HISTORIC STRUCTURES STILL INTACT SUCH AS BANK STREET BRIDGE



IMPORTANT PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS EXIST BETWEEN MAIN STREET AND CREEK CORRIDOR



PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE OVER CREEK USES HISTORIC DESIGN VOCABULARY



ATTRACTIVE VILLAGE STREETS AND VIBRANT CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT AN ASSET



OPPORTUNITY FOR WALKWAYS AND LIGHTING TO UNIFY CREEK CORRIDOR



EXISTING ASSET OF MATURE TREES ALONG CREEK IN CENTER OF VILLAGE



WALLS OF EXISTING HISTORIC BUILDINGS CREATE A PLEASING CHANNEL



OPPORTUNITY TO SEPARATE WALKWAY FROM RAILROAD R.O.W. FOUND IN OTHER COMMUNITIES



WAWAYANDA CREEK A NATURAL HABITAT THAT LINKS MEMORIAL PARK TO REST OF VILLAGE

## Areas of Interest

### Areas of Interest Along the Main Study Corridor

To fully appreciate the current conditions of the Wawayanda Creek corridor and look at strategies for improving and for better integrating the Creek into the fabric of the Village of Warwick community, this plan describes sections or ‘Areas of Interest’ that have a particular identity. There are issues, however, that are common to most if not all of the study area corridor and it is helpful to briefly note the general strategic approach and describe them in more detail in project recommendations:

#### Backs to the Creek

Much of the Wawayanda Creek corridor historically has been considered an expendable area that is a convenient repository for parking, trash, storage, transportation, utility and other “backyard” uses. Thus, over the years, the Creek has experienced degraded visual as well as environmental quality. Some strategies are simple and direct. A Village wide clean-up of yards abutting the Creek would have immediate results over the entire corridor and could be followed by periodic community stream clean-up days. Fencing that is in a consistent style, screening backyard dumpsters and unsightly areas and modest landscape improvements to backyards, particularly in the heavily used Village center, would make a significant contribution.

#### Bridges

All bridges that cross the Wawayanda Creek within the study area, from the Elm Street Bridge to the Forester Avenue Bridge, including the pedestrian bridge at the heart of the Village, offer unimpeded views of the Creek. Regardless of style (historic as well as NYS DOT specification design) they are important elements that form a rhythm throughout the Wawayanda Creek corridor and each can be emphasized by descriptive wayfinding or interpretive signage. Bridge walkways for pedestrians to view the Creek at these locations are important. Local artists might propose a visual treatment for each bridge in the study area such as an identifying color, or a nearby sculpture related to the bridge’s location, attributes or history.

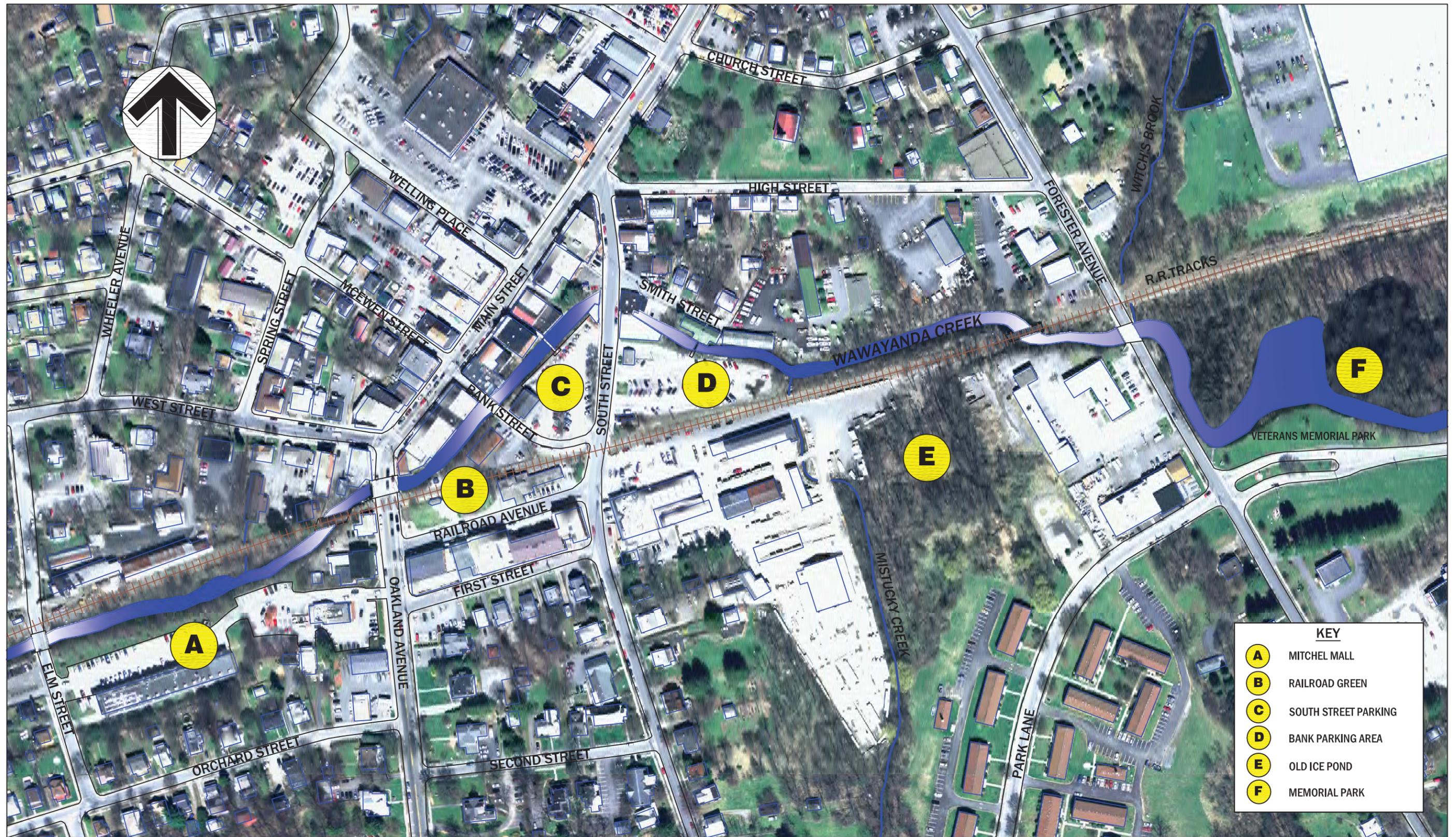
#### Railroad Right-of-Way

As a primary landowner along the Creek, the railroad has historically had a great influence on the development of Warwick as well as the physical course of the Wawayanda as it flows through the Village. Dialogue with the railroad, both the owner, Norfolk Southern, and the lessee, Middletown-New Jersey, might lead to changes in current harmful maintenance practices for the right-of-way such as herbicide spraying in the Creek corridor so more sustainable practices can be implemented. In addition, visual quality is compromised by discarded railroad ties and other incompatible railroad debris. Recent railroad repairs are not consistent with the quality of historic Village structures, for example, where rough gabions were installed next to antique cut stone near Railroad Green. With the railroad’s cooperation, creating a “Heritage Railroad Corridor” as an interpretive theme as recommended in this report may provide a vehicle for surmounting some of these obstacles.

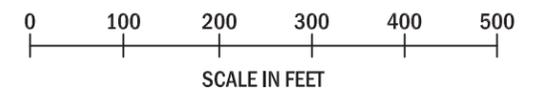
### Areas of Interest from Elm Street to Memorial Park

If one wished to experience the Wawayanda Creek and the lively Village of Warwick center, perhaps beginning the exploration at the pedestrian bridge in the heart of the business district would be most meaningful. Any of these sections can be experienced on their own, some less easily because of accessibility issues, but all the areas of the Wawayanda Creek and its tributaries within the study area have character, interest, problems and potential. It is not necessary to experience the whole corridor by foot, and treating each area as a node and connecting these areas by various means of transport is a realistic approach. It is, however, most meaningful to experience as much of the Creek corridor first hand as a pedestrian if possible. For the purposes of this Strategic Study, the corridor will be examined from west to east: Elm Street to Memorial Park, moving upstream along the Creek.





WAWAYANDA CREEK PRIMARY CORRIDOR - AREAS OF INTEREST  
 VILLAGE OF WARWICK, NEW YORK



## Area A: Mitchel Mall—Elm Street to Oakland Avenue

### Elm Street Bridge and Northern Bank of Creek

The Elm Street Bridge offers views of the contrasting vegetated stream buffer on the south and the stark railroad right-of-way to the north but reveals its fascinating agricultural and railroad history. Wayfinding signage and bridge identity as previously noted could begin at this area.

The northern Creek banks are bordered by the active railroad right-of-way and are in poor condition due to herbicide spraying, cutting of woody growth, and lack of protective vegetative cover that prevents erosion. An occasional pedestrian will use the tracks in this area as the most direct way to the center of the Village by foot. Large metal covered structures from Warwick's agricultural past once served by the railroad are visible across the Creek. Old railroad ties and other defunct railroad material are piled in the right-of-way in this location. A small watercourse enters the Creek from the north through a culvert under the railroad tracks and appears to be the spring that Spring Street was named for and that now runs underground. Litter is visible at the watercourse entry point and adjoining backyards along the Creek.

The large grain storage facility reminiscent of the Village's agricultural past is prominently in view of the corridor and appears to be underutilized. These could be rehabilitated and reused in some constructive capacity. To the east, the small watercourse entering the Creek would greatly benefit from clean-up, as would the rear yards of buildings just before the railroad bridge. The railroad right-of-way in this section is denuded of brush and appears to be heavily sprayed with herbicides. Piles of discarded railroad ties litter this area. As described above, working with the owners and lessees of the railroad is important to open dialogue for maintenance and other issues.

### Mitchel Mall

Mitchel Mall, a small modern retail center, includes a bank and an intriguing variety of food establishments from pizza to French pastry. The architecture is simple but pleasing and picks up some of the architectural details that are so important to the Village's identity. A linear parking lot is located to the south of the Creek and a stream buffer of approximately 50 feet exists between the paved parking area and the Creek consisting of a mowed swath and a mixture of native and invasive plants on the Creek banks. Mallard ducks and a variety of song birds are attracted to this area, and during lower water an interesting island with black willows appears in

the stream. Lighting for the parking lot is in poor repair due to frost heaved footings. A grease container and garbage dumpster are located between the parking lot and the Creek creating an impediment to walking along the stream corridor.

There is a great deal of potential for enhancing the stream corridor in this location as well as bringing the stream into the consciousness of shoppers and pedestrians and connecting the mall with the Village center. Because of the wide variety of eating establishments at the Mitchel Mall it seems that outdoor eating near the Creek would be a sought after option for patrons during the warmer months. There is adequate room within the grassed area to install a few tables with seating, trash receptacles and also some individual benches for viewing the Creek. Outdoor furnishings could be designed to be removable but secured during use in case of flooding. It is an opportune time to replace existing compromised lighting with more attractive lighting fixtures in the 'Village style' such as that used at Railroad Green.

Attractive native plants could replace invasive ones observed along the Creek Corridor in this location. A safe viewing area of the Creek could be established especially for the area of the 'willow island'. Many of the trees growing along the Creek here are native and removal of the invasive trees such as Norway Maple would help the biodiversity of the corridor. This area is surprisingly a favorite of birds and offers an opportunity for residents to relax, eat and observe nature in a relatively developed area.

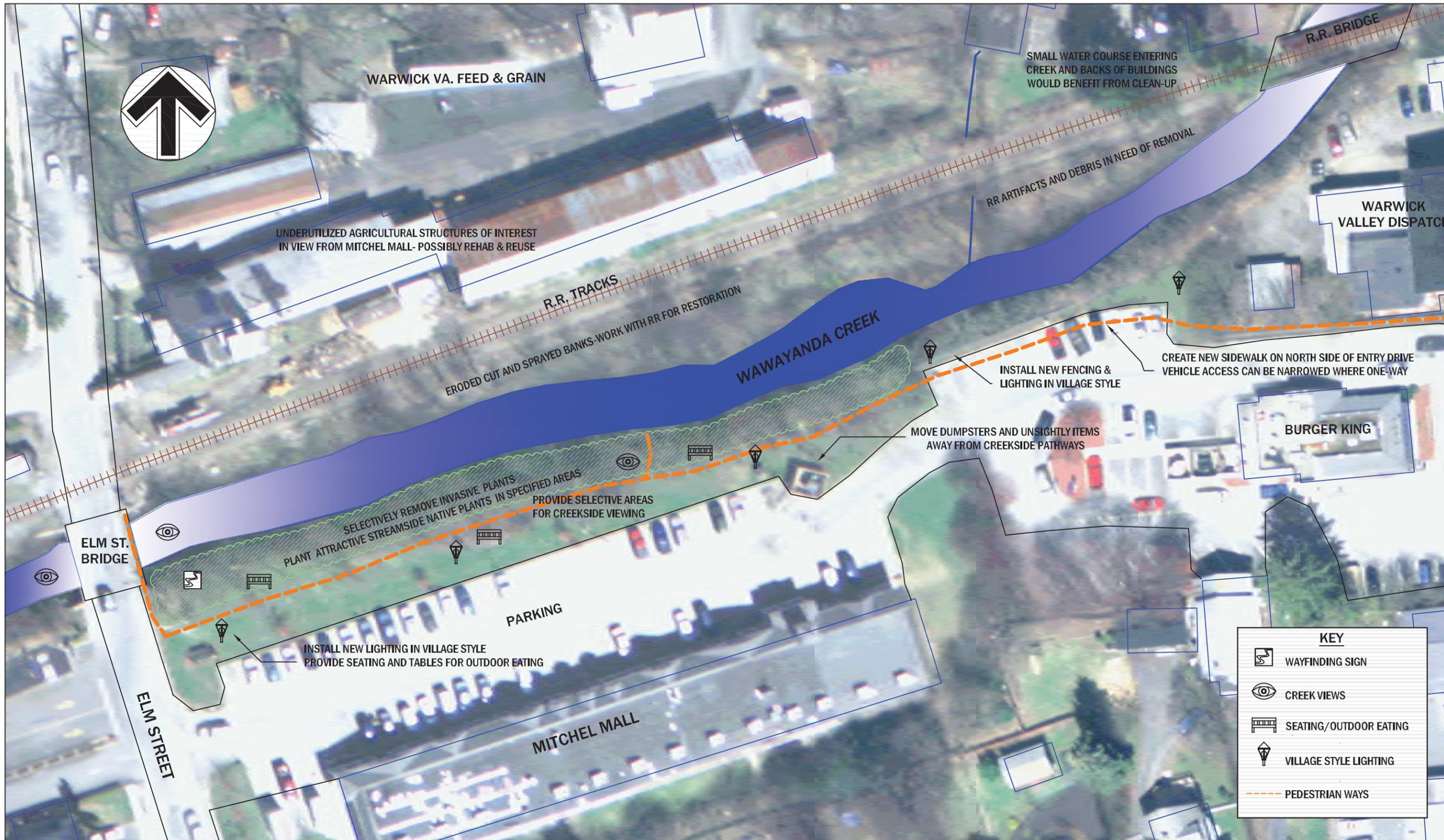
### Village Connections

Proceeding east, the Mitchel Mall parking lot connects with Burger King parking and becomes two-way, extending pavement towards the creek corridor. Unattractive lighting, signage and worn fencing line the Creek at the Burger King parking area with little opportunity for streamside pedestrian passage. For pedestrian access to Oakland Avenue or from Oakland Avenue to the Mitchel Mall, a pedestrian must walk in the entry drive along with traffic. From this point there is no direct Creek access since the Wawayanda runs behind the historic brick building that is the headquarters of the Warwick Valley Dispatch. There is a railroad bridge over the Creek in this location. Small logs and sticks caught on the bridge indicate that flood levels reach the tracks. Next to the Warwick Valley Dispatch building a small diagonal bluestone walkway connects to Oakland Avenue sidewalk and street crossings that lead to the center of the Village.

Creating a new sidewalk from Oakland Avenue to the Mitchel Mall on the north edge of the Burger King entry drive and parking area would make important pedestrian connections as well as better integrate this area into the main business district of the Village. The Creek corridor would become more visible and appreciated if fencing and lighting at the Burger King parking lot were replaced and upgraded to the Village style as recommended for the Mitchel Mall, and if a sidewalk running parallel to the Creek Corridor were installed. The generous entry drive that is partially one-way would render this possible. Walking along the southern façade of the historic Warwick Valley Dispatch building would add interest to the route. From the Mitchel Mall parking area to Elm Street bridge a less formal walkway may be needed because of the grassed area that is already walkable, provided that the dumpsters are moved across the parking area to provide unimpeded access.



*Creekside Pedestrian Walk Needed for Safe Access from Mitchel Mall to Oakland Ave.*



WARWICK VA. FEED & GRAIN

UNDERUTILIZED AGRICULTURAL STRUCTURES OF INTEREST  
IN VIEW FROM MITCHEL MALL- POSSIBLY REHAB & REUSE

R.R. TRACKS

ERODED CUT AND SPRAYED BANKS-WORK WITH RR FOR RESTORATION

WAWAYANDA CREEK

RR ARTIFACTS AND DEBRIS IN NEED OF REMOVAL

R.R. BRIDGE

WARWICK  
VALLEY DISPATCH

INSTALL NEW FENCING &  
LIGHTING IN VILLAGE STYLE

CREATE NEW SIDEWALK ON NORTH SIDE OF ENTRY DRIVE  
VEHICLE ACCESS CAN BE NARROWED WHERE ONE-WAY

BURGER KING

MOVE DUMPSTERS AND UNSIGHTLY ITEMS  
AWAY FROM CREEKSIDE PATHWAYS

SELECTIVELY REMOVE INVASIVE PLANTS  
PLANT ATTRACTIVE STREAMSIDE NATIVE PLANTS  
PROVIDE SELECTIVE AREAS  
FOR CREEKSIDE VIEWING

ELM ST.  
BRIDGE

PARKING

INSTALL NEW LIGHTING IN VILLAGE STYLE  
PROVIDE SEATING AND TABLES FOR OUTDOOR EATING

MITCHEL MALL

ELM STREET

KEY	
	WAYFINDING SIGN
	CREEK VIEWS
	SEATING/OUTDOOR EATING
	VILLAGE STYLE LIGHTING
	PEDESTRIAN WAYS



AREA OF INTEREST - **A**  
MITCHEL MALL

## Area B: Railroad Green—Oakland Avenue to Bank Street

### Oakland Avenue Bridge

The Oakland Avenue bridge gives good views of the Creek downstream as it turns sharply south and flows under the metal railroad bridge. On the upstream side of the Oakland Avenue bridge views are particularly pleasing because they take in the sight of multiple bridges, the historic Bank Street bridge and the pedestrian bridge, reminiscent of a European scene, with the channelized Creek running past stone foundations of historic buildings and vegetation cascading over the sides. This is the area where the incongruities of the railroad's appearance are most noticeable. Railroad Green, a Village park, cared for by the Warwick Valley Gardeners, is directly south of the tracks and is beautifully kept and seasonally planted with colorful bulbs and annuals. Gabions used for a railroad repair at the bridge next to antique cut stone, and the view of the black tar signal housing next to a magnificent heritage Sycamore tree overhanging the Creek, add to the visual disparity. Because so much of the Creek corridor is owned by the railroad, cooperation is key to solving these issues.



*Maintenance of Railroad Right-of-Way Incongruous with Village Character*

### Connecting to Railroad Green

Railroad Green is an important node along the corridor although it is fully separated from the Creek by the tracks. Foot passage is not possible along the Creek in this constricted area and the most direct path for pedestrians is to walk along Railroad Avenue until reaching the South Street parking lot and head north to the Creek edge along the back of the Main Street shops. This route has the advantage of bringing people to the Railroad Avenue shops and restaurants and further integrating this area into the Village

center. Here wayfinding and interpretive signage could help, particularly with identifying the historic buildings and uses that grew up around the Creek corridor. The historic railroad station is important to the character of this area as well as the Railroad Green's use as a site for Village outdoor music events and as a community gathering space.

An alternative pedestrian connection could be established from Railroad Green directly through to Memorial Park with the cooperation of the railroad and private landowners on the south side of the railroad right-of-way (See *Area of Interest 'D'*).

On the north side of the Creek, Main Street restaurants and shops between Oakland Avenue and Bank Street do have views or potential views of the Creek from the back portions of the historic buildings where they are directly adjacent to the Creek. Keeping the Creek corridor healthy and attractive throughout the business district helps improve the business climate and ambiance of the Village core.

### Bank Street Bridge

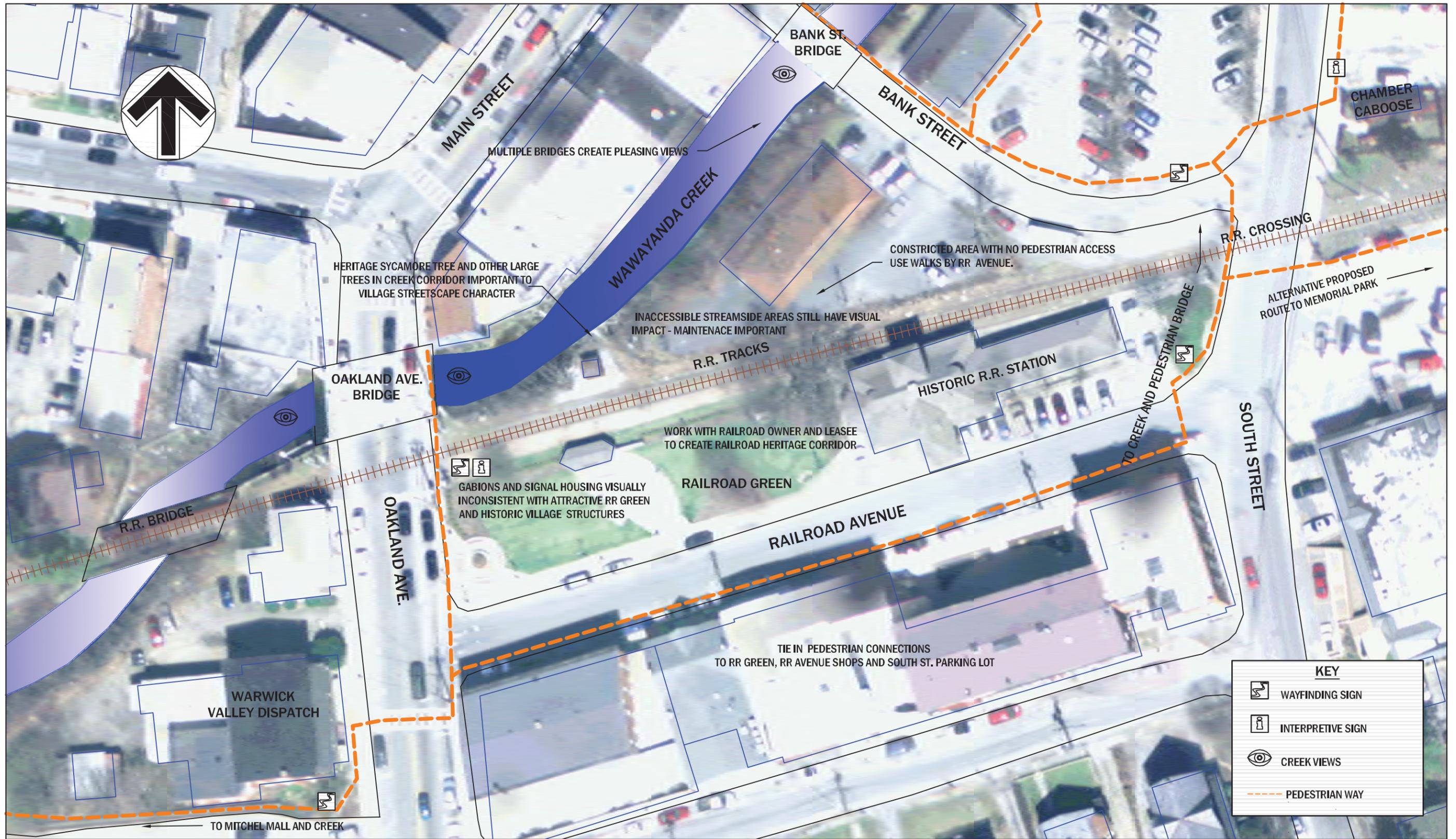
The only remaining historic bridge in the Village is located on Bank Street and it creates an important visual rhythm with the pedestrian bridge that repeats the design. Lighting on the bridge is authentic and also repeated in the pedestrian bridge. It is extremely important to retain the character of this bridge through restoration rather than removal. A Wawayanda Creek advocacy group in conjunction with the Warwick Historical Society could help protect historic resources within the Village Creek corridor and investigate funding for restoration as opposed to removal.



*Bank Street Bridge an Historic and Visual Asset*



*Railroad Green and Shops Important Node Along Corridor*



AREA OF INTEREST - **B**  
RAILROAD GREEN & OAKLAND AVE.

## Area C: South Street Parking Area and Pedestrian Bridge

### South Street Parking Area & Linear Park

This is the heart of the Village and the area with the most direct contact with the Wawayanda Creek visually and culturally. The South Street parking area is an important public open space for the seasonal farmer's market and for events such as the yearly Duck Derby. Improvements have been made along the Wawayanda Creek in this area, most notably the pedestrian bridge, lighting, fencing and bluestone sidewalk. While these improvements are important, they need to be expanded upon to create a truly usable public open space. This space works well when vehicles are removed for events, primarily for the farmers market, but on regular business days, vehicles intrude upon the narrow walk and do not afford comfortable viewing or seating next to the Creek.

The narrow strip along the Creek in this parking lot, known as Linear Park, can be improved dramatically by modestly extending the open space area to include seating for outdoor eating, benches, relocating the light fixtures that are now within the Creek banks, and introducing shade trees and other attractive plantings and amenities. Most parking could be retained including handicap parking and the electric vehicle fueling station. Because this is a more urbanized center than the outlying sections of the Creek corridor, additional paving that is permeable and closely matches the interlocking concrete paving at the Railroad Green would expand Linear Park as a viable public space and make it more user friendly.



*The South Street Parking Area Becomes a Vibrant Public Open Space during Village Events*

Because the South Street parking area has the potential to be such an important public space in a community that emphasizes walkability, alternatives to its overriding use by vehicles should be explored including the provision

of a parking garage or the reconfiguration of parking areas within the Village core. If this is not presently feasible, any addition of a buffering strip by widening the space between pedestrians and cars in this area would provide a safer and more comfortable viewing area and path adjacent to the Creek.

### Views of Creek Banks

The Wawayanda Creek can be viewed from the north side at the several restaurants with outdoor dining areas or windows, from the pedestrian bridge, and from the walkway along the southern side of the Creek at Linear Park. Existing vegetation in the Creek at this juncture is a mixture of volunteer woody and herbaceous plants, both natives and invasives, that have been cut back to keep them under control. Poison ivy grows along the banks and up onto the sidewalks presenting a maintenance problem and hazard.

Here the Creek flows swiftly between the channelized banks, the seasonal water level fluctuates dramatically and erosion is an issue. This area presents special challenges for establishing attractive plantings within the Creek banks because of frequent flooding and swift currents. (For these reasons special recommendations and a planting plan for the Creek banks at this location have been drawn up and described as part of this Strategic Plan.)

A sanitary sewer line is visible and runs along the bed of the Creek. Unsightly corrugated sewer connections line the walls of the building foundations that act as the Creek's northern bank. The foundations themselves are interesting and some are built of cut stone or are poured concrete. Plants have found cracks and spaces for a foothold and the walls are covered with plants during growing season. This portion of the Creek corridor is surprisingly full of bird life with swallows dipping and diving for insects during the summer months.

The sanitary sewer line itself is not visually a problem because it looks like part of a wall or curb structure within the Creek. The corroded sewer connections are disruptive however and could be made less obtrusive by a different type of housing or low-key paint. To the east of the pedestrian bridge, the Creek is set back from the foundations of historic buildings that comprise the Village business district fronting on Main Street. Many structures are architecturally notable such as the original Odd Fellows Hall. The more generous space allows for expanded opportunities but also for some of the 'backyard' problems described previously such as overgrown ornamental landscaping, fencing in disrepair and obtrusive trash containers

if viewed from the Creek side. Here attractive uniform fencing, screening and landscape improvements would contribute significantly to the visual quality of the Creek corridor behind Main Street.

### Connections

As an area of interest or node, the South Street parking area is the center of the study area. Easy connections from this point to the rest of the Creek do not exist other than the railroad right-of-way which is active and potentially dangerous. As described, the connection from Oakland Avenue bridge could be via Railroad Avenue and then to Bank Street alongside the historic railroad building that is now a well appointed wine shop and proceeding to Linear Park and the important pedestrian bridge connection to Main Street. Other connections are possible from this 'heart' of the Village but attempting to follow the Creek towards the east, additional obstacles are encountered and two alternative routes are proposed in the next section.



*The Pedestrian Bridge Makes Important Connections to Main Street*