

## Chapter 7.0

### COMMUNITY FACILITIES and SERVICES

The community facilities - the town's buildings, parks and schools - are important in shaping the community's quality of life. As the population increases, services may have to be extended, and space and structures for their efficient operation may need to be provided. The following is an analysis of existing and future space needs for the various community facilities and services in the town. It deals with community facilities such as the town's administration, fire and police protection, libraries, and with utilities such as water supply, sewage disposal and refuse collection and disposal. Generally, the town provides good community services and facilities, and seeks to respond to taxpayers' needs by offering more or different services.

#### 7.1 Town Government

The town's government offices and Police Department are currently located in a complex of buildings in Bedford Hills, near the intersection of Cherry Street and Route 117. All of the town's administrative offices except the Highway Department are located there. The town currently has two buildings for its administrative offices: the Town House on Route 117 and the office building at 425 Cherry Street, purchased and refurbished in 1999.

The 1986 renovation to the Town House basement increased the amount of space for town services, but space is still limited. The most severe need is the Town Court System. The Court's need has gone far beyond the town's population growth, increasing its caseload primarily due to the large amount of speeding and traffic tickets issued by police on Interstate 684. It is one of the busiest courtrooms in the state. The current courtroom is not large enough for the caseload, and neither the clerk's office nor the courtroom is fully handicapped accessible. Construction of a new courthouse addition to the Town House began in 2000 and completion is expected in 2002. The new courthouse will be able to accommodate the high caseload, be handicapped accessible, and allow the Court to operate more efficiently. There are no other administrative space needs at this time.

Bedford's town government consists of an elected Town Board: four board members and the supervisor (mayor equivalent). Members serve four-year terms and the supervisor serves a two-year term. The town clerk is also an elected official, serving four-year terms. The Town Board appoints the department heads. These are the highway superintendent, building inspector, superintendent of recreation and parks, chief of police, town attorney, and deputy attorney. The Town Board appoints members of the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, the Wetlands Control



*Town Hall*



*Municipal Offices at 425 Cherry Street.*



*Courthouse under construction, April 2000.*

Commission, the Conservation Board, the Tree Advisory Board, and the two Historic District Commissions. Other town officials are the assessor, town justices, director of planning, and director of finance and personnel. The Town Board occasionally appoints committees, such as the Comprehensive Plan Committee, to work on discrete projects. These committees have mandates from the elected officials but are not part of town government. The town should maintain a current list of all officials and departments on its website and in ways available to the general public.

Bedford should examine its Emergency Management System to ensure that the most current practical plans are in place and to ensure that its plan is coordinated with those of local hospitals and the county.

The comprehensive plan acknowledges Bedford's commitment to using the latest technology to communicate, connect, and promote Bedford. In particular, geographic information systems technology (GIS) will be a mainstay in prudent planning and information tracking for municipalities. Bedford should ensure that it uses this technology for its own local use and for interaction with Westchester County and New York City Department of Environmental Protection.

Municipalities are exempt from complying with local site plan requirements. However all Bedford's departments should comply with state environmental quality review (SEQR) requirements, local SEQR requirements (such as those covering the town's critical environmental areas), and other environmental ordinances, such as those protecting local wetlands.

It is the Town Board's policy to enforce local laws. The plan recommends that the Town Board determine if enforcement procedures and staffing are adequate to enforce the existing laws and to implement the plan. It should be town policy consistently to upgrade and modernize local enforcement, while recognizing the personnel and economic factors may be involved.

## **7.2 Police Department**

The Police Department moved to the former Silvano's Restaurant building in 1978. At the time the 1988 Town Plan was adopted, the department's space needs were sufficient, based upon the

town's projected population growth. However, conversations with the police chief and the town staff identified space needs for the classroom area, men's locker room area, and storage space as priorities for the next few years. Other needs identified included increasing space in the women's locker room, creating more overall office space, improving the garage building to utilize the space more efficiently, increasing available parking, and having an impound yard closer to the station building. Current space is so limited that two small rooms in the Town House basement are used for storing boxes and file cabinets.



*Town of Bedford Police Department.*

The police chief expects slight growth in the police workforce over the next several years, from 43 police officers today to approximately 45-50. This growth may require the department to expand its current building, utilize space in another building, or reallocate existing space. There are some commercial storage facilities available for use by the police department for storage of older, less frequently needed materials. The building behind police headquarters located at 21 Park Avenue might be considered for use by the Police Department once it is vacated by the courthouse staff occupying it during courthouse construction.



*Town of Bedford Highway Department Building.*

### **7.3 Highway Department**

The Bedford Highway Department currently uses two separate sites for its operations – one 2.2 acre site on Adams Street in Bedford Hills and one 7.8 acre site located off New York Route 172 in Bedford Village. The Department operates primarily out of the more centrally located Bedford Hills site, where the main garage housing offices (built in 1955) and equipment maintenance operations are located as well as the Town Recycling Center. A stone crusher, small garage, and stockpiles of stone, sand, and salt are located on the Bedford Village site. An additional site along Railroad Avenue is being considered for placement of a salt dome. The existing salt storage should be upgraded to federal Environmental Protection Agency standards. The Adams Street site will continue to be used until a new location can be identified. Given this, the town should landscape the grounds to reduce the site's visual intrusiveness.

### **7.4 Fire Protection**

Four separate volunteer fire companies, Katonah, Bedford Hills, Bedford Village and Mount Kisco,

provide fire protection to the town. Most of the town is served by the first three departments, with each district roughly centered in the respective hamlet business areas, where the fire houses are located. The area along Sarles Street and Byram Lake in the southwesterly corner of the town is served by the Mount Kisco Fire Department. All town fire departments are run by volunteers. Each department has a chief who leads the day-to-day operations and a commissioner who provides general oversight and communicates with the other hamlets' fire departments. Action is required in the following areas to improve fire safety and fire protection services. They are:

- Better access to I-684 for all departments for emergency purposes as currently there is a long distance between the two exits with no access from Bedford Center Road.
- Standardized budgeting and maintenance program for dry hydrants and storage tanks.
- Sprinkler: Bedford should require industrial and commercial structures to have sprinklers.
- Affordable housing to enable volunteer firemen and their families to reside in Bedford.
- More volunteers, as the Bedford Highway Department operates as the de facto fire department during daytime business hours until the volunteer firemen arrive at home in the evenings from their places of work.
- Emergency access and training for any water-related environmental accidents at area reservoirs, including Byram Lake.

Bedford Hills and Katonah have sufficient space in their buildings to provide fire protection services. However, Bedford Village is looking for a new site because it needs additional space. Bedford Hills needs permanent, additional parking for its firefighters since the current parking lot is owned by NYS Department of Transportation.



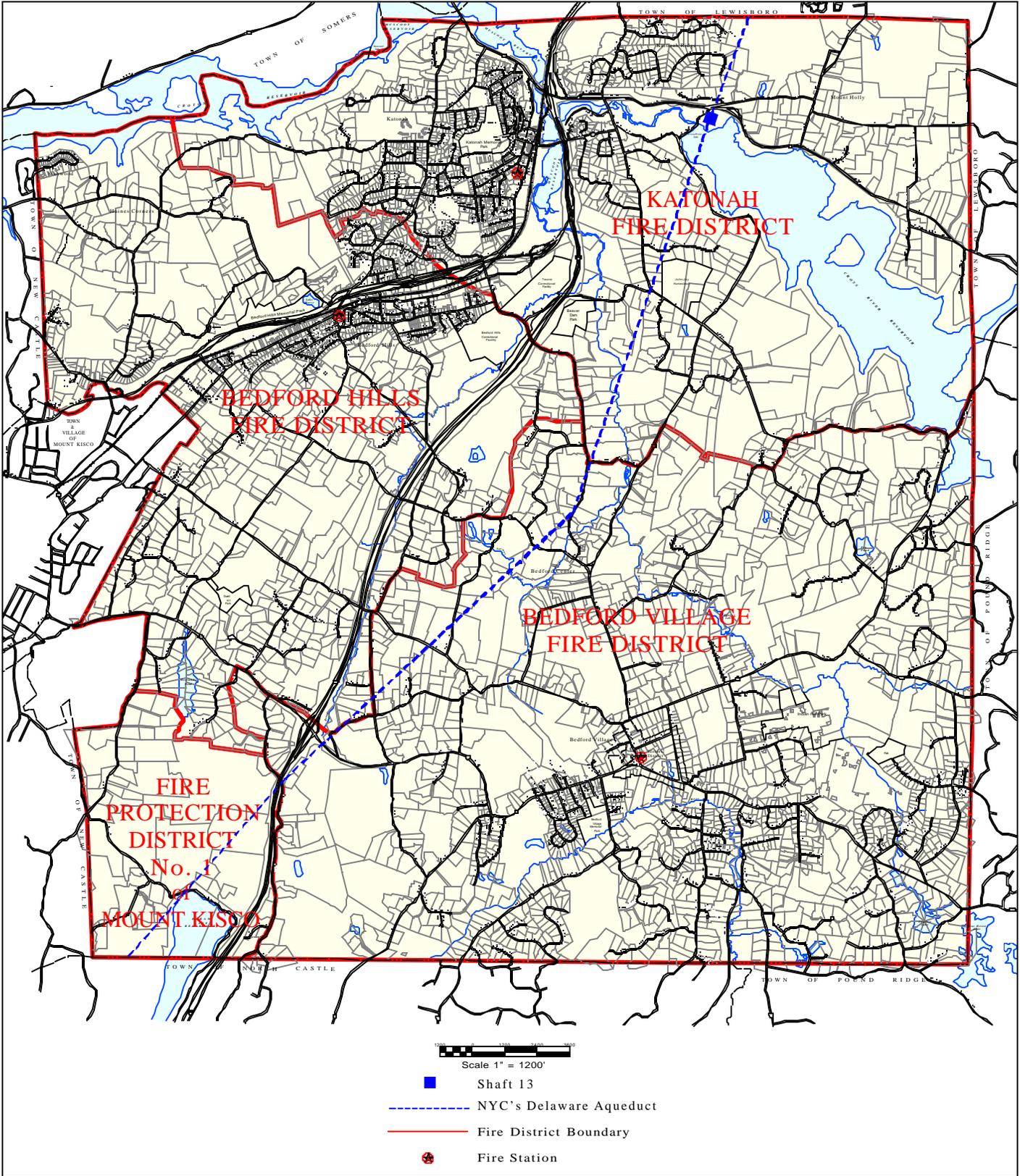
*Katonah Fire Department.*



*Bedford Village Fire Department.*



*Bedford Hills Fire Department.*



Town of Bedford Comprehensive Plan  
Town of Bedford, NY

Figure 7.2 Town Fire Districts

Bedford needs to continue its careful subdivision review to be sure that new development helps solve rather than exacerbate the space problems mentioned above. Currently, each major new project is given to the respective local fire district for its review and recommendations, and the recommendations of the fire departments are followed closely.

## 7.5 Refuse Disposal

Currently, the town's refuse collection is handled by small-scale private firms who contract with individual property owners for their service, under authorization by the town. Refuse disposal is not under the town's purview at this time. The majority of Westchester's solid waste is taken to the County's waste-to-energy plant called the Charles Point Resource Recovery Facility in Peekskill.

However, each private hauling firm handles its solid waste individually.

Bedford's Recycling Center is located on Railroad Avenue next to the Highway Department building. Residents may bring their recyclables there during normal hours of operation, three days per week. Currently, the recycling operation is working successfully with weekly usage by approximately 400 vehicles delivering recyclables.



*Town Recycling Center.*

## 7.6 Town-Owned Recreational Facilities and Parks

Bedford's physical character is largely shaped by its attractive open space, some publicly- and others privately-owned. The following list of general types of parks, recreation, and open space summarizes the important elements in Bedford's rural and open quality:

- *State Park:* John Jay Homestead State Park.
- *County Parks:* Merestead (partly in New Castle).
- *Local Parks:* Katonah Memorial Park, Bedford Hills Memorial Park, Beaver Dam Road Park, Guard Hill Park, Bedford Village Memorial Park, and Indian Hill Park
- *Privately-Owned Nature Preserves:* Eugene Meyer Nature Preserve, Palmer Lewis Preserve, Guard Hill Preserve, Tobias Family Preserve, Marsh Memorial Sanctuary (partly in New Castle), Butler Memorial Sanctuary, Westmoreland Sanctuary (partly in North Castle), Mianus River Gorge Reserve (mainly in North Castle), Piney Woods Preserve, Ketchum Memorial Sanctuary, A. Ketchum Preserve, Bedford Audubon Society, Beaver Dam Sanctuary, Ramsey Hunt Sanctuary (partly in Lewisboro), and Mount Holly.
- *Parkway Reservation Lands:* Saw Mill Parkway.

- *Private Recreation Areas:* Katonah Hills, Glen Arbor Golf Club, Caramoor, and Bedford Golf and Tennis Club.
- *Public Institutional Uses:* Fox Lane High School and Middle School, West Patent Elementary School, Katonah Elementary School, Bedford Hills Elementary School, Bedford Village Elementary School, Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, and Taconic State Correctional Facility.
- *Private Institutional Uses:* the Harvey School, St. Mary's School, K'hal Adas Kashau, Rippowam–Cisqua Schools, Seven Springs (partly in North Castle), St. Matthews Church and Glebe, and St. Patrick's School.

Bedford has many active recreational facilities for use by the town's residents. Swimming pools, tennis courts and playfields are located in three Memorial Parks serving their respective hamlets, Bedford Village, Bedford Hills and Katonah. Some park facilities, particularly due to the recent growth in youth sports programs, are so heavily used that they now need major renovation or expansion. For each of the three hamlet parks, the storage facilities which have served as the day camp offices should be replaced. Though they have been usable, they are now inadequate and problematic as they serve as both storage for day camp supplies and equipment and as the day camp offices.



*Soccer fields at Bedford Hills Memorial Park.*



*New playground at Bedford Hills Memorial Park.*

### **Bedford Village Memorial Park**

This 26 acre park is well equipped to meet the recreational needs of the area's residents. Restrooms and a new picnic pavilion were recently added; the school age playground is new; and the tennis and basketball courts are newly rebuilt and resurfaced. The pool shell will undergo a major renovation, planned for the fall of 2001. Some needs include renovation and expansion of the preschool play area; replacement of two platform tennis courts; and renovation of the bathhouse. A small garage-type portion of a cinder-block building is used for the day camp office, storage of day camp supplies and equipment and the first aid facilities. Though the space serves the purpose, it can be uncomfortable to deal with an ill child, handle a disciplinary issue (child or staff member), or speak with a parent with staff constantly going in and out of the building for supplies, equipment, paperwork, permission slips, and first aid.

## **Bedford Hills Memorial Park**

This 28 acre park has the facilities to meet present needs. Expansion of the park was completed in 1998 with the addition of a Little League baseball practice field and regulation softball/baseball field. The tennis courts were rebuilt in the fall of 2000; and a new playground was recently completed for school age children. The pre-school play area should be considered for expansion and replacement. A main feature of the park is the swimming pool complex; the town is considering rehabilitation of the bathhouse facilities for the fall of 2002.

Similar to Bedford Village Memorial Park, an old garage-type building is used in Bedford Village Memorial Park for day camp purposes. The building has separate storage areas for arts and crafts and the athletic equipment but both of these areas (formerly small restrooms) are extremely small and several types of supplies and equipment must be kept in the area used as the office. Again, directors must deal with children for first aid, staff and children's discipline, and parents while counselors constantly go in and out of the office throughout the camp day.

## **Katonah Memorial Park**

In addition to the facilities located at the other memorial parks, this 46 acre park features an extensive walking trail system. A new school age playground was recently installed; the tennis courts were rebuilt in the fall of 2000; and the basketball court was recently added. Two platform tennis courts are used infrequently and are in mint condition. Renovation of the pool shell was planned for 2001 and rehabilitation of the bath house was planned for 2002.



*Playfields at Katonah Memorial Park.*

The day camp's cabin has been entirely removed. In its place, a portion of the shelter by the paddle tennis courts was enclosed and - as with the Memorial Parks in the other two hamlets - serves as both storage facility and day camp office. The space is storage for all camp supplies, equipment, games, etc. It is too small and creates awkward situations for business or meetings. In addition, this is Bedford's largest day camp program with the largest camp enrollment and the most staff members.

## **Indian Hill Park**

This 108 acre park borders on the Stone Hill River, just east of Indian Hill Road and encompasses much of Pitch Swamp. It should be conserved as a natural wetland area. Any improvements should be limited to trails that would be part of an open space network and provide for nature study within the swamp. To ensure that all of Pitch Swamp is similarly preserved, the park should be expanded to include town ownership of the entire wetland, or conservation easements should be obtained for such remaining wetlands areas.

**Recommendations.** The town has received several parcels dedicated for recreational use as passive parks or walking trails. These can help to meet the continued demand for active and passive recreational opportunities, particularly due to the growing popularity of youth sports programs. The town can meet this growing demand in several ways. These include:

- Replace the storage facilities in each Memorial Park, which have served also as the day camp offices, with adequate and separate day camp office and storage facilities.
- Provide incentives for developers of new subdivisions to build recreational facilities for subdivision residents.
- Set aside vacant parcels of land in high density residential areas as small parks which could include sitting areas and small playfields and serve as buffer areas between different zoning districts.
- Acquire new small community parks.
  
- Establish small but accessible nature preserves.
- Continue to designate small parks where there are historic points of interest, special natural features and/or scenic views such as Bedford Cross, the Bedford Oak and the Bedford Clock Tower.
- Build bicycle paths to circumvent busy town roads in order to provide Bedford's youth and walkers with easier and safer access and links between the town's business districts, schools, parks and open spaces.

## **Future Parks**

Continued, improved maintenance and renovation of current recreational facilities and the implementation of the techniques listed above will add substantially to the existing parks system. However, there are some specialized facilities that cannot be provided in the existing parks. Useful facility additions include a skate park, an ice skating rink, indoor recreation center, municipal golf course, and a group outing area. According to the Recreation and Parks Department, a number of residents in recent years have shown interest in a Skate Park being developed in the town. Several other Westchester communities have built Skate Parks in the last few years and the demand for one in Bedford may grow more compelling in the future. Also, a dog park should be considered; these facilities are becoming extremely popular throughout the country and resolve numerous problems with residents ignoring leash laws.

Due to their extensive space requirements and high development costs, the facilities listed above should be provided in a centrally located park that serves the entire town. Land for such a town-wide park would first need to be acquired from the private sector, as Bedford does not own an available parcel appropriate for a park. One appropriate site would be within the I-684 corridor. Such a park should be at least 50 acres in size, but preferably contain more than 100 acres. The I-684 corridor has several suitable sites that would meet the town's open space and recreational goals.

The town should work towards:

- Donation or purchase of land for conservation, park or recreational purposes within the corridor.
- Location of facilities such as schools and churches within the corridor where they are suitable and compatible with neighboring residential uses.
- Establishment of conservation easements on certain properties within the corridor, in order to link trails between properties as part of an open space network.
- Use of conservation zoning techniques to allow design flexibility in new development.

The town needs to acquire, preserve, protect, improve, and maintain land within its boundaries to preserve open spaces and for active and passive park and recreational uses. While parks and recreational facilities are only one element of the town's open space, they play an important role in contributing to its unique natural character.

## 7.7 Libraries

Each hamlet in Bedford is served by its own library. Each library is part of the Westchester County Library System. The library system is excellent; conversations with town and library officials indicate that the libraries are widely used and residents and users are satisfied.

The Katonah Village Library is chartered to serve the 6,500 Katonah residents but as the largest library in northeastern Westchester County, it serves more than 74,000 people per year as a reference center and as part of the Westchester Library System. More than half of all users come from towns outside Bedford, especially North Salem and Somers. The library collection contains approximately 70,000 items, and has the largest collection of reference materials and services in the northeastern part of the County. Special services include meeting rooms for rental and for use by community groups, audio-visual materials, 150 periodicals with back-files of five years, *New York Times* microfilm since 1960, and local newspapers since 1900. The library has four online computer terminals with free Internet access. The Katonah library does not currently need additional space. However, some capital expenditures are needed for improvements. These include upgrading the building's wiring and adding a new roof. While the library would like to secure additional parking, the availability of off-street



*Bedford Hills Free Library.*



*Katonah Library.*

parking sites is limited due to its location in a busy residential and shopping area. In 2000, the Bedford Hills Free Library Board of Trustees decided not to expand, but rather to enhance and maintain the existing facility. This decision was based on concern that a fund drive for an addition might fall short of its goal and impact the Library's operation. The office was completely renovated by the end of 2000, a new roof was installed, and the Children's Room was improved with a new ceiling, expanded lighting, paint, and carpeting. A new children's circulation desk to accommodate computer technology and processing of materials is planned for the near future. Since the library is housed in an 1860s building, there will ongoing needs for changes in shelving to hold audio visual materials and displays of periodicals. A future need will be an additional public access internet terminal, and two terminals for online catalog use only. As in Katonah, the Bedford Hills Library has limited street parking available for patrons. At present, it leases four staff spaces in the Griffin Avenue parking lot at the rear of the library. The library would like more parking, if possible.

The Bedford Village Library converted part of its second floor space from apartment to library use in 1988. This conversion increased shelf space and seating capacity in the library. However, the library had additional space needs in its adult and children's areas. The library has one online computer terminal in the adult section, and it hopes to add one more terminal to the children's area this year. This would help to better meet current needs for internet and library catalog access for users of all ages. An internal fundraising effort raised approximately \$1,000,000 for renovation and expansion of the adult stack area and children's spaces on the first and second floors. This four-teen-month project was completed in the spring of 2001. As a result of this expansion, the library is able to better serve the Bedford community.



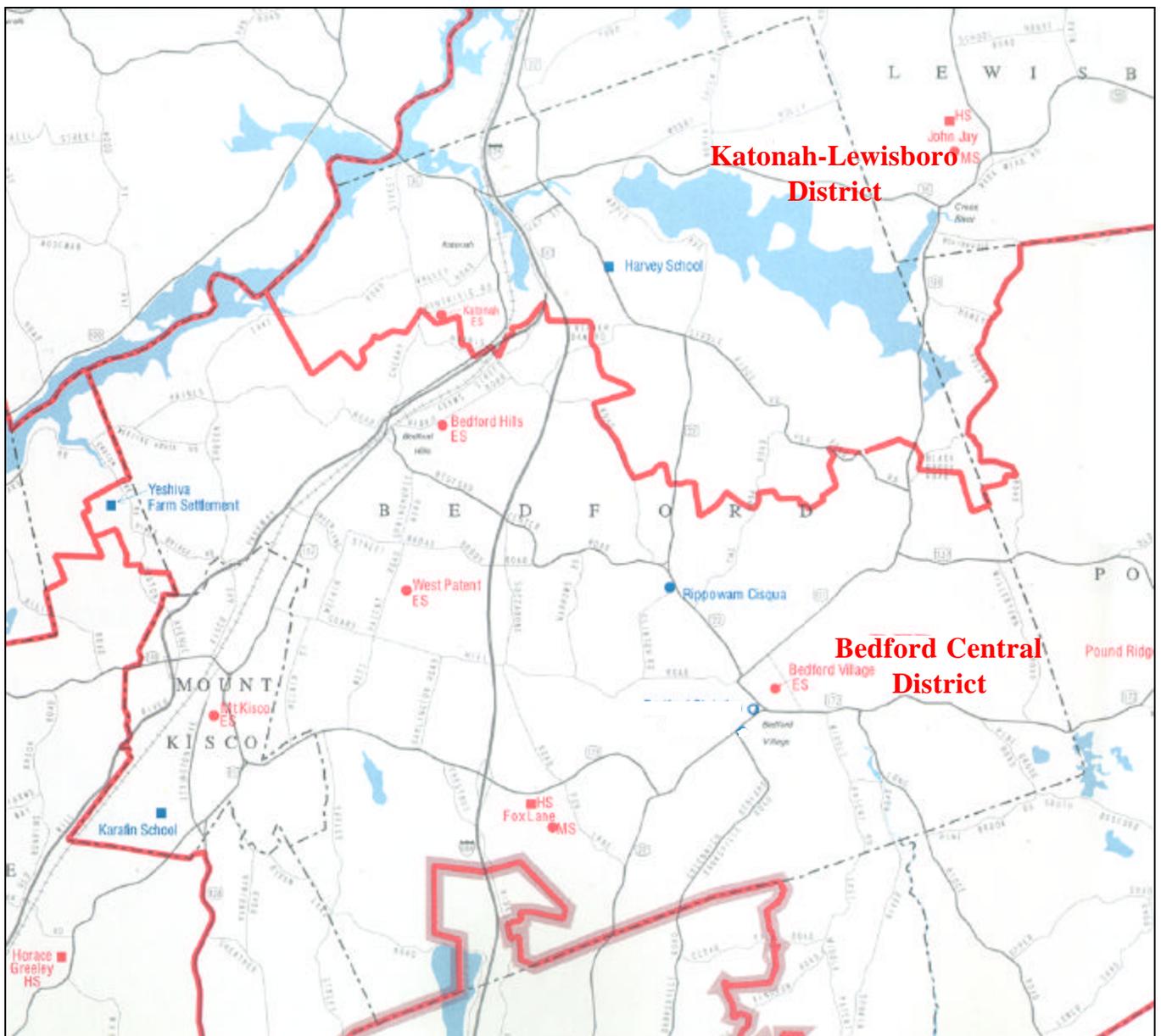
*Bedford Village Library.*

### **Libraries and the Westchester Library System**

In the past, library resources were measured by numbers of books relative to the population served. These standards were recommended by the American Library Association. To meet these standards, libraries required shelf and stack space to hold books and periodicals. These old standards are no longer applicable due to the arrival of the computer and internet age. The availability of computers and the unlimited information accessible on the internet has made many print materials obsolete. The Westchester County Library System is one great benefit for town library users. Its automated system allows residents to orders books, publications, videos, DVDs, and CD-ROMs on-line at each of the 38 libraries in the system or from patron's homes at [www.wls.lib.ny.us](http://www.wls.lib.ny.us). Their orders are sent to one of the hamlet libraries, usually within one day of being ordered. This facilitates town residents' access to reading materials while allowing the hamlet libraries to better serve their patrons.

## 7.8 Schools

There are thirteen public school buildings serving Bedford's residents, and five private schools are located in Bedford that serve students from the town and the surrounding area. The public school system is divided into two districts, the Katonah-Lewisboro School District (Katonah-Lewisboro) and the Bedford Central School District (Bedford-Central), both of which serve residents in Bedford and its neighboring towns. (See Figure 7.2.) Bedford-Central serves the southern two-thirds of the town including the hamlets of Bedford Village and Bedford Hills as well as the village of Mt. Kisco, Pound Ridge and parts of New Castle and North Castle. It has a high school, a middle school and five elementary schools. Katonah-Lewisboro serves the northern one-third of the town, primarily Katonah, and Lewisboro, and portions of Pound Ridge and North Salem. It has a high school, a middle school, and four elementary schools and a variety of of teacher training and other educational services.



Source: Westchester County Department of Planning

Figure 7.2 School District Boundaries 1999

The town is also served by four private schools and a parochial school. Rippowam-Cisqua is a private day school that provides instruction for kindergarten through ninth grade on two campuses. The Harvey School is a boarding school and a day school, providing coeducational college preparatory schooling for grades six through twelve. Soundview Preparatory School in Mt. Kisco is an independent day school for students in grades 6-12, providing a traditional college preparatory curriculum. The Karafin School in Mt. Kisco provides schooling for children with special educational needs. St. Patrick's in Bedford Village is a parochial elementary school associated with the adjoining St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church.

Nursery schools in Bedford include the Boys and Girls Club of Northern Westchester, the Hi-Ho Nursery School, the Little Preschool, the All Aboard Nursery School, the Discovery School, and the Bedford Village and Village Green Nursery Schools.

In addition to the local public and private schools, the town is served by the Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) located in Yorktown Heights. BOCES serves eighteen public school districts for special and occupational education, technical education, child development, and a variety of teacher training and other educational services. Each year, a number of high school students enroll for part of their day at occupational education classes offered by BOCES. This technical program is primarily for young people who want to work in trades upon graduation from high school. BOCES also offers a Continuing Education program for adults.

### **Bedford-Central School District**

Bedford-Central serves an area with a population of approximately 30,500. Total enrollment for Bedford-Central in 2001/02 was 4,051 for grades K-12. The peak year in the projection period is expected to be 2010/11, with 4,371 students. Bedford-Central elementary schools are projected to reach peak enrollment in 2004/05, middle schools in 2007/08, and high schools in 2010/11. The chart below shows actual and projected enrollment for elementary, middle and high schools for the next ten years in the Bedford-Central District. The Bedford-Central faculty consisted of 362 persons in 1998/99. This is an approximate average of 11 students per teacher. This information is based on a study done by Western Suffolk BOCES Office of Planning and Research.

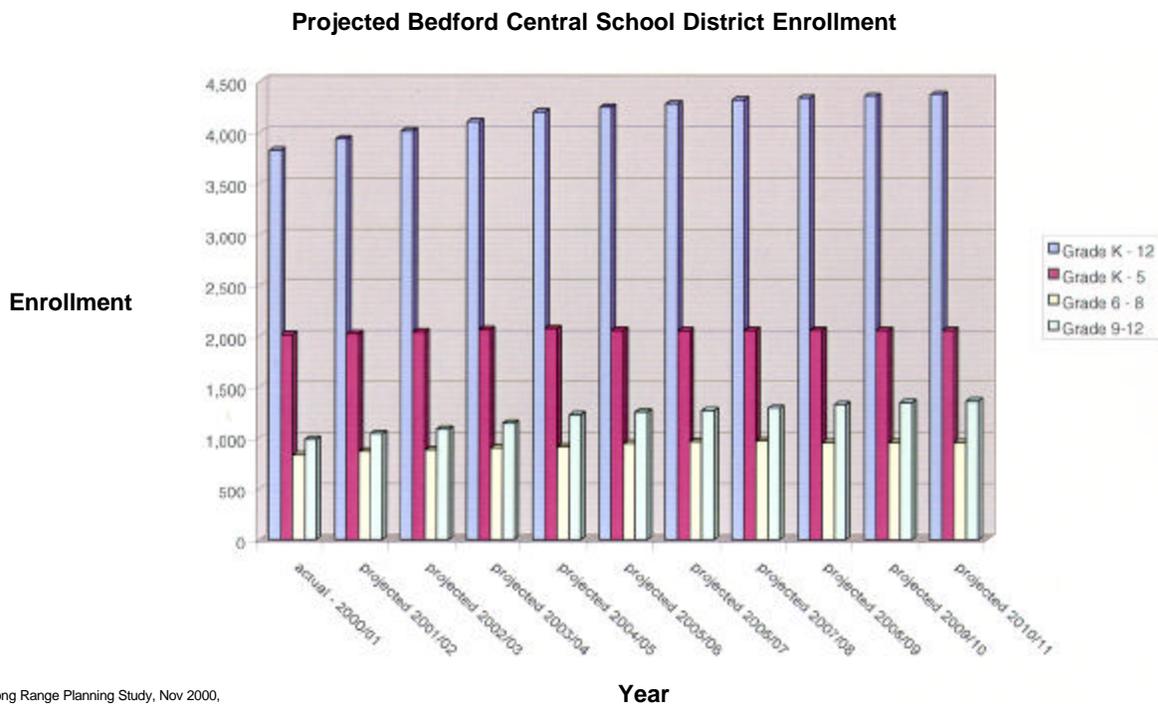


*Fox Lane High School.*



*Fox Lane Middle School.*

According to interviews with the school district staff, the existing school facilities are adequate for the current and projected student population. New schools are not anticipated in Bedford-Central. A major bond referendum for school expansion and improvement passed in January 2002. West Patent Elementary School has additional space on its grounds for expansion should it be needed in the future. Renovations at the Fox Lane Middle School were completed in 1999. These included a new cafeteria/library/media center building and newly renovated classrooms. The new corridors join all three academic houses and the new cafeteria/library building and facilitate access throughout the middle school. Significant renovations were also completed at the high school. These include an improved cafeteria and kitchen area, renovation of the girls' locker room, electrical and mechanical upgrades, and other site renovations. There are no plans to expand the high school in the future. Future needs include additional outdoor playing fields, new tennis courts and bleachers.



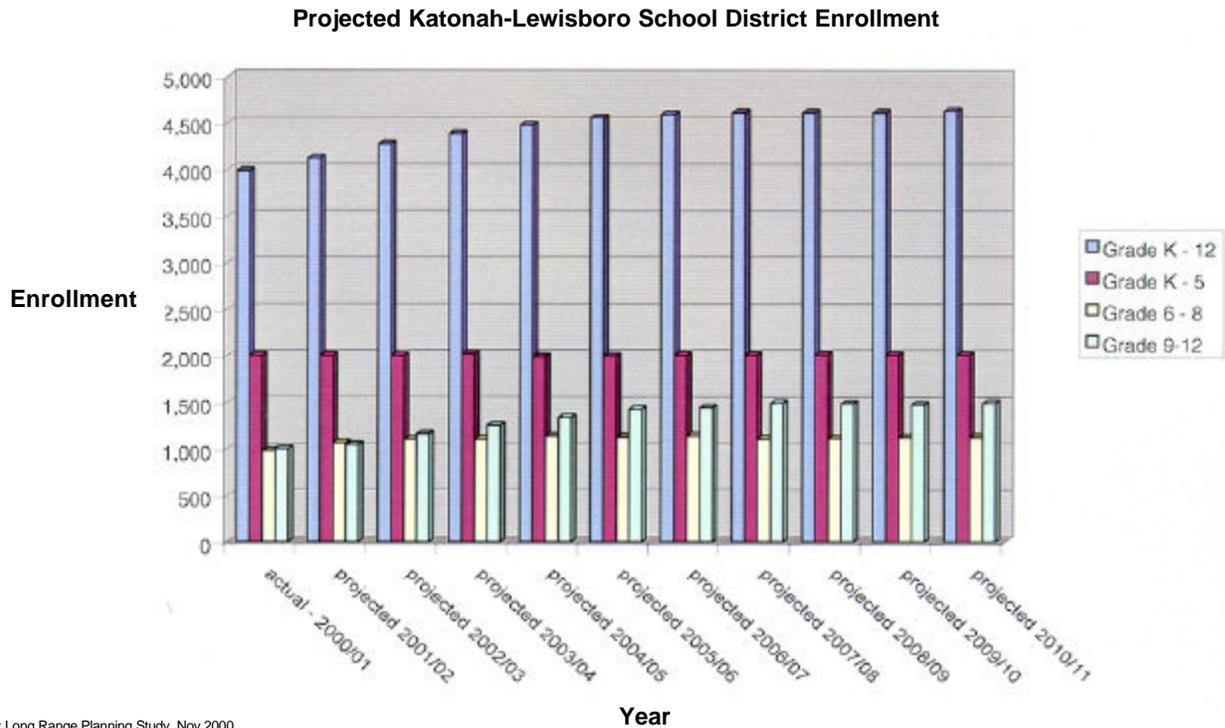
Source: Long Range Planning Study, Nov 2000, by Western Suffolk BOCES Office of Planning and Research

Transportation-related needs include finding an alternate location for bus facilities in front of the high school, identifying additional parking for students and staff, and creating a left turn lane on Route 172 near Succabone Road to reduce the high number of traffic accidents there. This plan recognizes that Bedford's town government has no jurisdiction over the school districts and cannot require these transportation improvements.

### Katonah-Lewisboro School District

Katonah-Lewisboro covers an area of about 55 square miles and serves an estimated population of 19,850. Total enrollment for the Katonah-Lewisboro in 2001/02 was 4,031 for grades K-12. The peak year in the projection period is expected to be 2010, with 4,628 students. Katonah-Lewisboro elementary schools are projected to reach peak enrollment in 2003, middle schools in

2006, and high schools in 2007. The following chart shows actual and projected enrollment for elementary, middle and high schools for the next ten years in the Katonah-Lewisboro District. Katonah-Lewisboro had a faculty of 362 teachers in 2002. This is an approximate average of 9 students per teacher. This information is based on a study done by Western Suffolk BOCES Office of Planning and Research.



Source: Long Range Planning Study, Nov 2000, by Western Suffolk BOCES Office of Planning and Research

There are no plans to build a new school in the Town of Bedford serving the Katonah-Lewisboro. At present, the existing school facilities are adequate for the current and future student population. However, additions are planned for John Jay Middle School and John Jay High School. Future school district needs include additional athletic fields, since the schools often rely on Lewisboro Parks and Recreation’s facilities. Additional or alternate parking for school buses is needed since the current use of the parking lot at Katonah Elementary School for bus parking and maintenance is problematic. One possible location for additional parking is near the Harris Road/Katonah bypass. However, this is currently approved for a commercial building. A major bond referendum was recently approved for the expansion and renovations of existing facilities.

## 7.9 Water Supply

### Water Sources

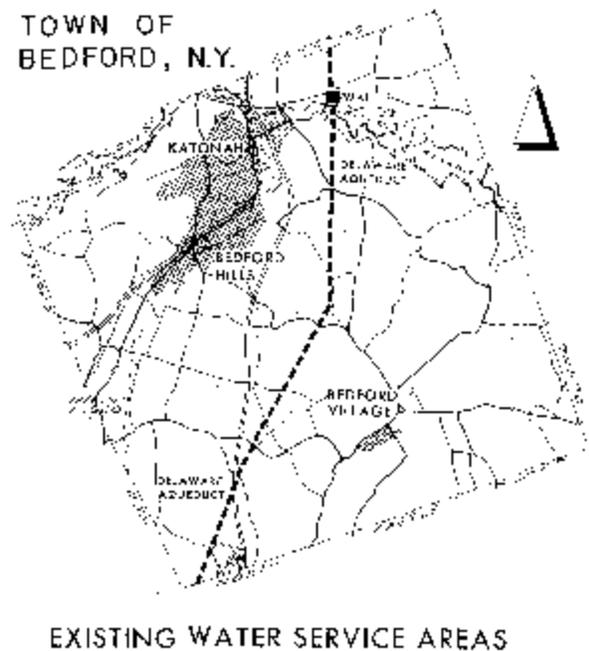
All Bedford’s potable water supply is drawn from groundwater wells located within the town. All surface waterbodies in the town provide potable water to other municipalities and communities in lower Westchester County, New York City, and Connecticut. These surface water sources are New York City’s Croton Watershed, the Byram River Watershed supply system, used by Mount Kisco, and Connecticut’s Mianus River Watershed. Nearly all of Bedford’s land area lies within

the Croton Watershed (a total watershed area of 177 square miles in ten municipalities). The Mianus River Watershed is 35 square miles in size. The Mianus River has its headwaters in North Castle, then flows through Bedford, and empties into the Long Island Sound. The Mianus River and its watershed are valuable ecological and hydrological resources, providing drinking water for approximately 130,000 people in Connecticut.

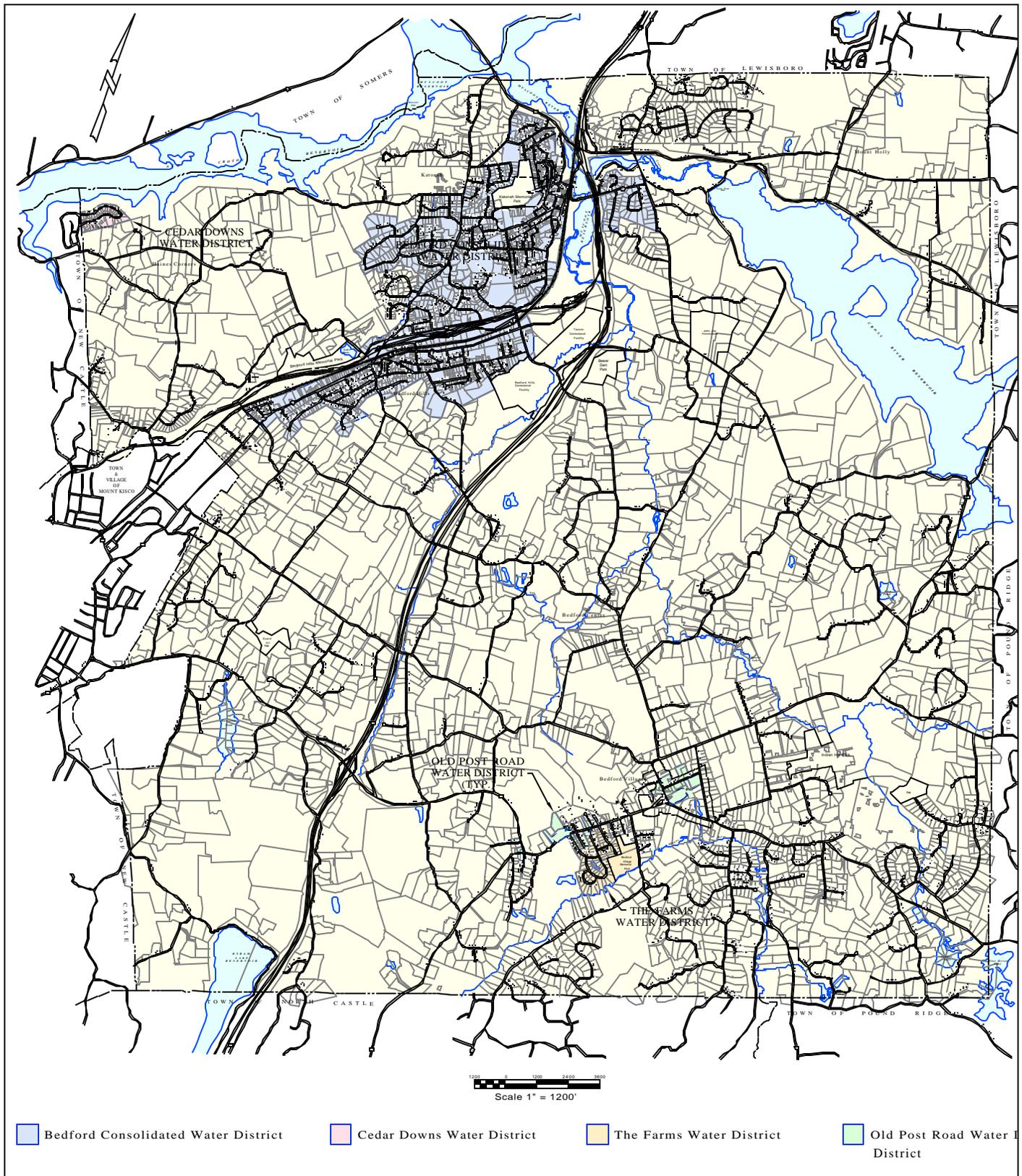
The Delaware Aqueduct, which delivers water to New York City and towns in Westchester County, travels under the town; and water from this aqueduct could be tapped at Shaft 13 (indicated on the map below) for use by the town. In the past, the town requested water access but was denied by New York City. Thus, Bedford residents continue to rely solely on water from groundwater wells and on storage tanks that feed from groundwater wells as their main drinking source. Four independent and not inter-connected public water systems exist in Bedford. Together these, with private wells, supply the majority of the town's water. The water supply system presently supplies a sufficient quantity of water to the district. However, future improvements will be required to maintain the present level of service and meet future increased demands as the town's population increases. These improvements should include policy actions by the town to protect the three watershed areas and ensure a pure drinking water supply for all of its users.

### Public Water Supply Systems

**Katonah and Bedford Hills District.** Primary public water supply system service area covers the higher density areas of Katonah and Bedford Hills. (See Figure 7.3.) It serves approximately seven thousand people and consists of thirteen water service districts with wells, storage tanks, an emergency water supply connection, and a distribution system. Water is supplied by three wells: one on Harris Road, another near Lake Marie in Bedford Hills, and a third between Route 117 and the Saw Mill River, just north of Nottingham Road in Katonah. There is another pumping facility on Haines Road that is not in use due to high concentration of manganese found there in 1994. This well could be remediated for future use by the town. Together, these wells have a pumping capacity of about one million gallons per day. The system's storage capacity is about 900,000 gallons, which is less than a one-day supply under near-peak demand conditions. Current average daily use for this entire system is approximately 700,000 gallons per day. The area served by the primary public system is approximately two square miles. Water supply during peak and near-peak conditions is a problem for the Bedford Hills-Katonah system. In the late 1980s, usage during hot days regularly exceeded one million gallons, more than the system's pumping capacity. Demand continued to rise throughout the 1990s. Part of the ongoing problem stems from the closure of the Haines Road well due to contamination, in 1994. In the past, the town has met the shortfall by purchasing water from the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility on an as-needed basis. Many of the smaller water mains in the distribution system are undersized, aged and slated for



EXISTING WATER SERVICE AREAS



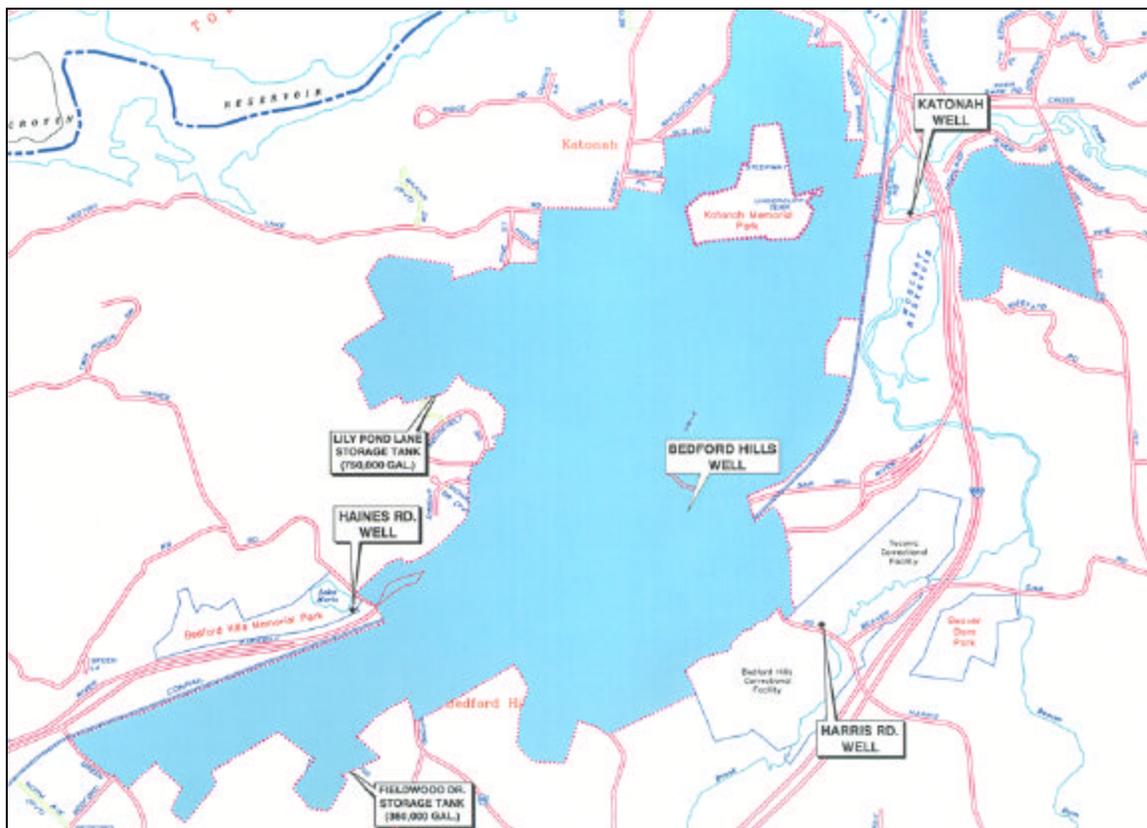
Town of Bedford Comprehensive Plan  
Town of Bedford, NY

Figure 7.3 Town Water Districts



replacement for improved domestic service and fire fighting capabilities. The following improvements have recently been made to the existing water system: water leak detection surveys to help locate and repair leaks; increasing water storage capacity by expanding existing facilities; replacing undersized and aged water mains for increased fire protection and improved flow; and repairing individual water service lines with new copper lines. The town hopes to increase its water supply by identifying possible new well locations. One option that is being explored is to tap the wells or use the holding tanks at the Bedford Correctional Facility on a more regular basis.

**Other Districts.** Three other systems also exist in Bedford, each with its own well and storage facility. The Bedford Water Department operates a system for 40 houses in the Cedar Downs Water District in the northwest corner of the town. This system serves approximately 175 people through 62 service connections. The Bedford Farms Water District (a separate system) serves 82 connections and Old Post Road Water District serves 54 connections. Both are located in Bedford Village. Some of Bedford Village's water supply wells were contaminated in the mid-1980s. New water lines, wells, and pumping, fire hydrants, and other equipment were installed through Superfund and other monies through the creation of a Superfund Water District. A subsequent problem arose when the contamination plume began to travel in two directions – due to the powerful drawing action of the new equipment - into previously clean parts of the groundwater supply north of the original contamination site. While the plumes continue to travel, their effects have been rectified with added equipment that strips the toxins from pumped wellwater. The stripper remains in operation to evaporate volatile contaminants; it cannot remove heavy metals, salt, and nitrogen and it does not purify the plumes in the ground. A Dvirka and Bartilucci report on the Hunting Ridge Mall Site proposed a water supply service area that would encompass the areas



*Bedford Consolidated Water District No. 1, showing wells and storage.*

affected by the plumes: the mall and plant nursery on Route 22 north to the intersection of The Farms Road, and the homes on Lake and Vinton Avenues.

**Recommendations.** Bedford should prohibit the selling of water pumped from Bedford to purchasers outside the town. Bedford should discourage new residential and commercial use of groundwater for recreational purposes and artificial pond and lake creation. The town should prohibit the use of surface and underground irrigation systems for use on lawns during designated drought emergencies.

### **Private Systems and Wells**

The remainder of the town's water is supplied by independent water systems and private wells. In order to ensure that water in the private wells is not contaminated, the town tests approximately 30 private wells every year in all three hamlets. The existing water district pattern generally adheres to the engineering rule-of-thumb that public water systems be established in areas where the population density is higher than three persons per acre. Therefore, the lower density areas are served by private water supply systems.

### **Aquifer Protection**

In 1986, Bedford enacted several policies aimed at preserving the quality of its aquifers, which were recommended in a study by the groundwater consulting firm of Leggette, Brashears & Graham, Inc. The impetus for this study came in 1985 with a public meeting sponsored by two citizen groups, with the Committee to Save Bedford carrying the momentum forward. This was an important undertaking with the committee working with hydrologists and attorneys and culminating in the Aquifer Protection laws. The Leggette, Brashears & Graham map was written into the legislation. The study identified contamination from organic chemicals, hydrocarbon fuels, and dry-cleaning solvents as significant risks to Bedford's water supply. At particular risk are Bedford's stratified-drift aquifers, which occur in valleys and supply much more water than bedrock aquifers. (See Figure 7.4.)

It is easier and less costly to preserve groundwater quality than to purify contaminated drinking water or restore contaminated aquifers. For this reason, the 1986 study recommended the following preventive measures: (1) revision of the Zoning Code to require site-specific hydrological studies on any proposed development of greater than one residence per acre, (2) annual sampling of a select number of private, institutional, and commercial wells (with the owners' permission), and (3) the adoption of local laws regulating underground fuel storage tanks. These measures were enacted. Further, the county is pursuing requiring inspection and maintenance of private, institutional, and commercial septic systems. The county will be creating a pilot program to test these requirements, and will be creating a licensing program for septic field pumpers. Bedford supports this effort.

### **7.10 Sewage Disposal**

Sewage systems fall into three broad categories: public, community, and individual. Public systems generally have large treatment plants and serve large areas encompassing part or all of one or more municipalities. Community systems serve individual developments, campuses, or other



large developments, and typically utilize manufactured “package” treatment plants that are delivered intact to the site. Both public and community systems treat more than one residential, commercial, or industrial use. Individual septic systems (or SSDA, subsurface disposal area), by contrast, treat sewage from a single source, through septic tanks and leach fields. Public systems are generally considered the preferred option in medium or higher density areas because of their dependability, longevity, economies of scale, and relative ease of maintenance. Individual SSDA systems are sufficient treatment given low densities, such as Bedford’s 2-acre and 4-acre zones, and good soils.

The Town of Bedford relies on individual septic systems, a small number of community systems, and no public sewage systems. The community systems serve Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, K’hal Adas Kasha, St. Mary’s of Assumption school and church, an elementary school, and two Bedford Hills apartment complexes. The remainder of the town is served by individual septic systems.

### **Individual Septic Systems**

The continued viability of individual septic systems in Katonah and Bedford Village is a problem due to medium densities, small lots, aging systems, and sandy soils. Additionally, only some of the town’s dirt roads are equipped with catch basins to handle wastewater before it enters rivers and streams. Occupancy of upper floors is now prohibited in some cases in both hamlets because of the lack of septic capacity, and many businesses in the hamlets must absorb high costs due to required system pumping caused by inadequate capacity. Problems of this sort are expected to worsen without public action. Bedford’s presence within New York City’s surface-water drinking water supply system also complicates sewage questions.

SSDA systems consist of two basic components: a septic tank and a drainfield. The septic tank performs two functions once wastewater leaves the house: it is a holding tank that allows the solids to settle out; and it enables naturally occurring bacteria to break down solids and destroy pathogens. After the treatment process is started in the septic tank, the effluent enters the drainfield. There it percolates through a gravel bed, then the effluent exits the drainfield and goes into natural soil, where the remaining pathogens are destroyed. The cleaning process continues as the water migrates through the soil. SSDA systems are one of the best choices for treating wastewater, even from a financial and environmental perspective; but they must be properly maintained. Some limitations on SSDA systems include: overloading the system with excess water, putting plastics or other non-biodegradable items into the system, dumping chemicals in the system, and letting solids build up in the system.

**Recommendations.** Westchester County’s Board of Health controls septic fields and enforces the relevant public health laws. Currently, the county is preparing an ordinance that is expected to introduce more stringent standards and a requirement for periodic inspection and pumping. Bedford should support the county’s efforts. The town should also consider adopting its own septic system ordinance. One of the leading causes of septic failure is inadequate maintenance of septic systems and particularly the lack of period pump-outs. Period pumping should be required, especially in critical environmental areas, aquifer zones, wetlands, and wetlands buffers.

## Public Sewer Service Planning History

Numerous studies of the sewage situation in Bedford have been undertaken over the past decades to address these issues:

**1977 "208" Plan.** In 1977, Westchester County offered a plan under Section 208 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, known as the "208" Plan, which would have created a county sewer district encompassing Mount Kisco, Bedford Hills, Katonah, and Croton Falls and utilizing the treatment plant in Yonkers. Bedford's hamlets of Bedford Hills and Katonah would be connected by sewer line to a pumping station in Mt. Kisco, and then forwarded to Yonkers. The plan was never enacted.

**1979 Velzy Plan.** Two years later, with the 208 Plan unrealized, the County retained Velzy Associates to prepare a more modest sewer system plan. This called for an interim solution that would have provided sewerage service only to Katonah and Bedford Hills. Lack of adequate funding made this plan unworkable as well. Velzy was hired again in 1987 to reassess the situation. The firm found numerous malfunctioning existing septic systems to be leaking into the aquifer, and it issued similar recommendations for requiring sewage treatment. Again, these were not enacted due to high costs.

**1988 Hahn Study.** In 1988, Hahn Engineering conducted a study of the situation in Bedford Village, whose effluent drains into the Mianus River and into Connecticut water systems. The study developed cost estimates for a treating sewage from the Bedford Village center at a centralized sewage treatment plant and eliminating existing discharges into the Mianus River. No action was taken pursuant to the report due to local opposition to the project.

**1990 Hudson Study.** A 1990 study by Hudson Engineering found an urgent and clear need for sewerage service in the hamlets of Katonah and Bedford Hills. Unlike previous recommendations, Hudson called for spreading out the costs. The proposed Bedford Sewer District would have encompassed the entire town; the areas of Katonah and Bedford Hills (service area no. 1) were to have been fitted with gravity sewers, pumping stations, force mains, and a new treatment plant, while the rest of the proposed district (service area no. 2) was to have been provided with treatment of septic tank effluent. The entire district would have been assessed a debt-service charge on the total estimated cost of approximately \$13 million, at estimated annual per unit charges ranging from \$172 to \$186. This sewerage service plan was placed on the ballot as a referendum in 1991 for a public vote. It was defeated.

In recent years, two plans have emerged for the town to deal with sewage issues: the Bedford Correctional Facility wastewater treatment plan and the Westchester County wastewater diversion plan.

**Leasing Excess Capacity at Bedford Correctional Facility.** This alternative involves leasing the excess capacity at the state's wastewater treatment facility at the Bedford Correctional Facility to treat wastewater. The plant has been recently upgraded and has excess capacity. The major benefit of this alternative is the lower cost compared to implementing DEP's wastewater diversion plan. In this plan, Bedford would need to ensure that all water exiting the facility would be pure enough to be discharged into the Cross River Reservoir. This alternative has been recently discussed with the town, the Department of Corrections, The Northern Westchester Watershed Committee and the DEP.

All agencies have agreed that this alternative is the most logical choice for sewerage the denser areas of Bedford Hills and Katonah at a reasonable cost. The town is actively pursuing this alternative.

**DEP Wastewater Diversion Plan.** A Memorandum of Agreement, signed in 1997, unites watershed communities (including Bedford) with New York City, New York State, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Agreement provides a framework for protecting New York City's watersheds, over which the City's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has extra-territorial jurisdiction, while allowing for planning and development in the watershed communities. (See Figure 7.5.) An element of the Agreement is the Watershed Protection and Partnership Program, under which New York City will spend approximately \$70 million on water quality planning and infrastructure improvement projects through direct agreements with Westchester and Putnam counties. Partnership programs include septic system inspection and rehabilitation, construction of new, centralized sewage systems, and extension of sewer systems to correct water quality problems. The county and its affected towns and New York City have not agreed on how the \$70 million should be expended. The Northern Westchester Watershed Committee meets monthly to discuss these issues.

The Wastewater Diversion Plan was developed in June 1998 as a joint study between Westchester County and DEP since contamination of the Croton Watershed System is a key issue of concern to DEP and to Bedford. Approximately 80% of Bedford is in the Croton Watershed. One goal of NYC DEP is to prevent all effluent discharge from entering the watershed because it pollutes surface water through the addition of chemicals and excess nutrients. The diversion study was undertaken to determine the feasibility of diverting wastewater generated in the Croton and Kensico watersheds to wastewater treatment plants on the Hudson River for treatment.

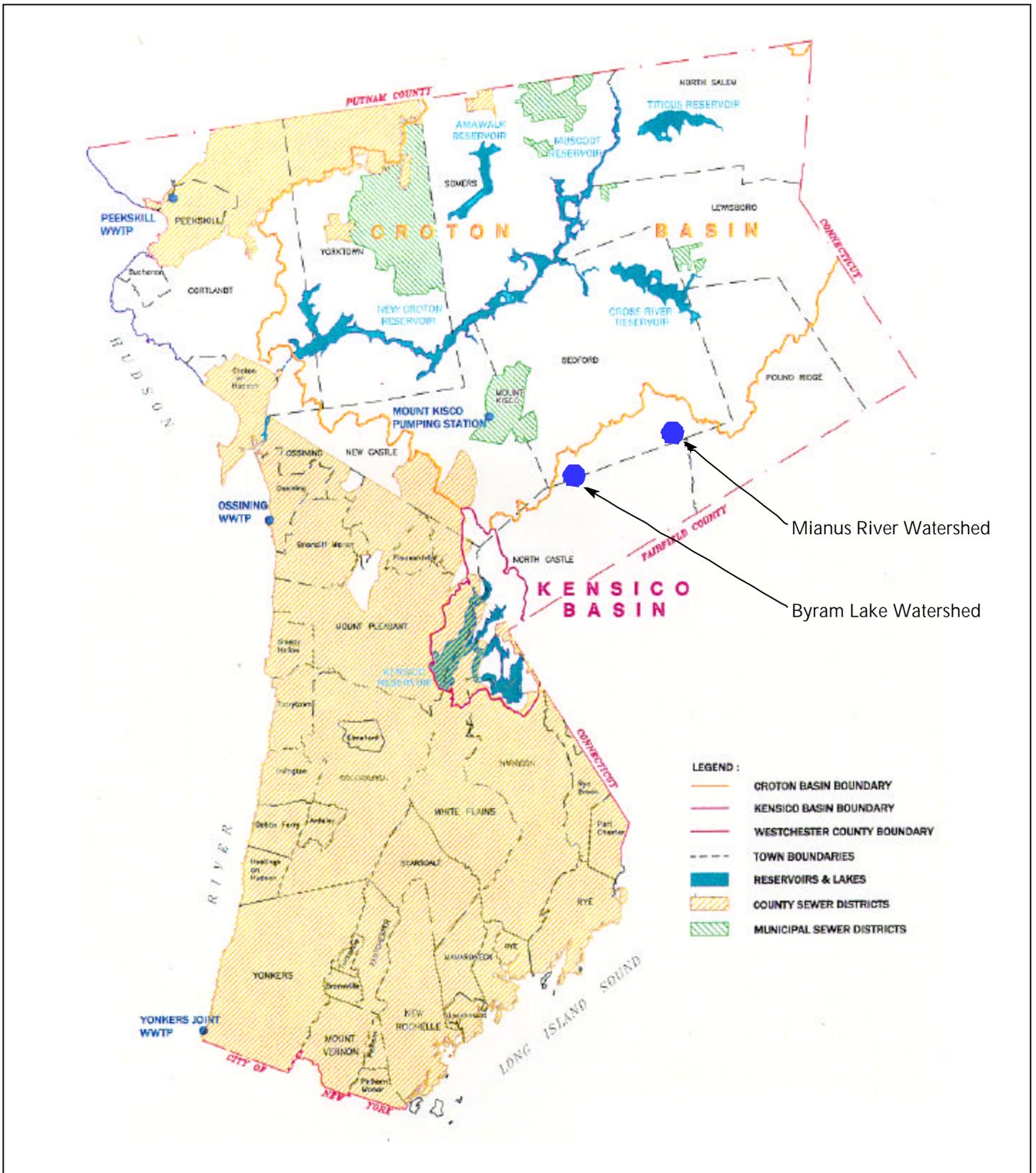
The Plan identified six alternatives that would 1) treat wastewater within the watershed followed by diversion of effluent to the Hudson River, or 2) divert raw sewage out of the watershed for treatment at one or more of the existing county-owned wastewater treatment plants.

One alternative discussed was the diversion of untreated effluent from Bedford Hills and Katonah to the Yonkers treatment plant. This alternative was not recommended by the Northern Westchester Watershed Committee. It was also discouraged by DEP because the watershed regulations prohibit sewer lines crossing reservoirs or reservoir property.

A plan for diversion of sewage from the northerly section of the Town of New Castle including the Stanwood community in New Castle and Bedford to the Yonkers treatment plant has been recommended for funding by the Northern Westchester Watershed Committee.

### ***Recommendations***

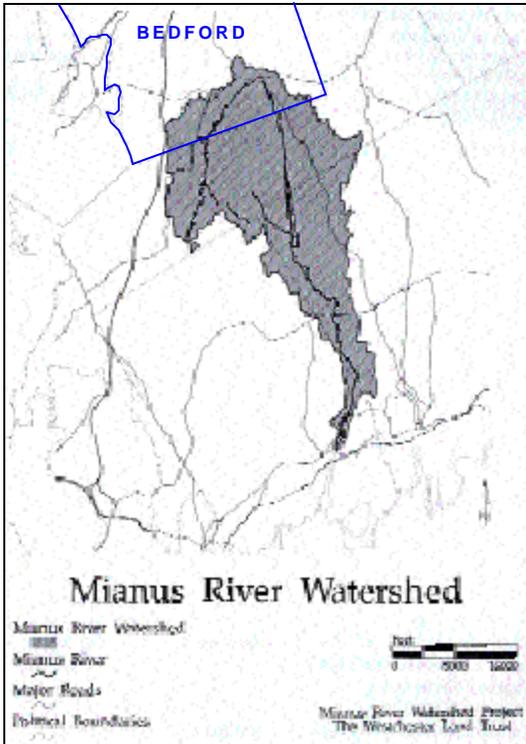
**Croton Watershed.** With respect to the Croton Watershed, the town's land use controls can be effectively superseded by New York City's DEP new watershed regulations. DEP has in recent years been extremely reluctant to approve new sewer plans within its watershed. The town will have to work with county, DEP and state officials to pursue the use of the existing sewage treatment facility operated by the Department of Corrections to serve the needs of the developed areas



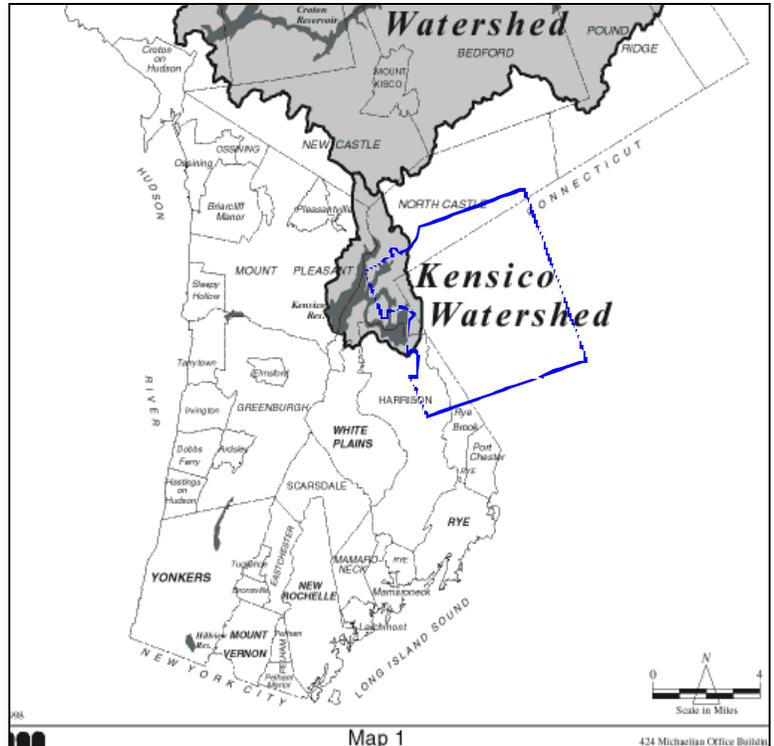
Town of Bedford Comprehensive Plan  
Town of Bedford, NY

Figure 7.5 Watersheds Within the Town of Bedford





Mianus River Watershed, from Westchester County Land Trust, 1992



Croton Watershed System, from Westchester County Department of Planning, 2001.

of Bedford Hills and Katonah. The plan must be designed to be remedial only; it cannot serve as a development stimulant within the sewer district or the immediately abutting areas. All areas outside the sewer district should be developed at low densities so the conventional subsurface disposal systems (septic systems) are sufficient treatment.

The town should also continue to pursue construction of the previously approved plan for the sewerage of the Stanwood area.

**Mianus River Watershed Groundwater Supply.** Bedford Village and approximately 20 percent of the town's land area lies in the Mianus River watershed. The 1988 Hahn plan (mentioned above) recommended a public sewage system for Bedford Village, with such a system to be designed to serve only the needs of existing development, so as to avoid inducing additional and potentially more dense housing development within the hamlet and its sewer service area. No public sewer system has been created; the septic fields in this hamlet are aging and failing, and failure may ultimately lead to contamination of the Mianus Watershed groundwater supply. Sewer service has now become an important factor in revitalizing the hamlet businesses.



Private pond in Bedford Village, within Mianus River watershed.

The two plans that have emerged for the town to deal with sewerage issues - the wastewater diversion plan and the Bedford Correctional Facility wastewater treatment plan - would not help Bedford Village with its sewer needs. The hamlet lies outside the Croton Watershed and in a watershed that serves communities in Connecticut and parts of southern Westchester. Because of the extramural nature of the Mianus Watershed lying in New York and its protective regulation arising from Connecticut, this comprehensive plan cannot provide an easy answer. However, this plan recommends that the Town Board continue to actively investigate funding sources for a sewer system for Bedford Village.



Croton Watershed pump station.

Given these difficulties, Bedford should pursue the following recommendations:

- Bedford must continue to protect the drinking water supply served by this watershed through strict enforcement of its controls on wetlands, storm drainage, erosion and sedimentation, and allowed land uses.
- Bedford should strengthen its wetlands law to provide greater protection to the Mianus River and its floodplain.
- The Planning Board and Wetlands Control Commission should work with property owners bordering the Mianus River to establish conservation easements and/or restrictive covenants to provide permanent protection to the river's banks, buffers, and floodplains.
- The town should enact a law requiring periodic septic tank pumping so as to reduce the risk of septic failure and consequent damage to watershed areas.
- The town should consider hiring a wastewater disposal consultant to assist in introducing a plan for a modern stand-alone system to the public, with emphasis on:
  - 1) The sewer district should have a limited and remedial capacity to serve only the areas presently in need,
  - 2) The sewer district should be designed to avoid stimulating development stimulator, and
  - 3) The sewer district should assist in revitalizing the hamlet businesses. The sewer plan should rely on modern advances in treatment technology in the design of a stand-alone sewage treatment plant (a "community" or "package" plant).

Bedford should enter into an intermunicipal agreement with all Mianus River watershed towns, including those in Connecticut, in order to best preserve this source of drinking water for all those communities down river from Bedford.

Concomitant with a sewer plan, town policy should be to avoid sewers in the R-1A, R-2A, and R-4A districts. The town will discourage development forms and intensities that exceed on-site carrying capacity for water supply and sewage disposal and that are inconsistent with rural character.

***Byram Lake Watershed.*** Byram Lake is in a unique situation of being within the boundaries of two towns, while a third town is the largest user of its drinking water. Bedford is cognizant of its responsibility to help protect the lake's potability. The town should work with the Town of North Castle and the Village/Town of Mt.Kisco in an intermunicipal agreement to provide maximum protection for this valuable source of drinking water through a local watershed management program. This concept has been endorsed by Bedford's Town Board.