
GENESEE COUNTY SMART GROWTH PLAN 2019 REVIEW REPORT

PREPARED FOR THE
GENESEE COUNTY LEGISLATURE

by

Genesee County Department of Planning
County Building II
3837 West Main Street Road
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*Please Note: **Bolded Text** is new language since the 2016 Review



TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS..... I

THREE-YEAR REVIEW EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

 MAP 1: CURRENT DEVELOPMENT AREAS.....2

 MAP 2: RECOMMENDED DEVELOPMENT AREAS3

OBJECTIVES AND USES OF THE SMART GROWTH PLAN.....4

DESIGNATION OF DEVELOPMENT AREAS.....6

 PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS6

 RESERVED DEVELOPMENT AREAS7

METHODOLOGY FOR DELINEATING THE BOUNDARIES OF PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS.....8

 LAND IN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS.....8

 NYS REGULATED WETLANDS AND FLOOD HAZARD AREAS8

 LOCAL ZONING AND COMPREHENSIVE PLANS.....9

 SEWER AND WATER SERVICE AREAS.....9

CERTIFICATION OF RESERVED DEVELOPMENT AREAS 10

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING HOOKUPS INTO THE COUNTY WATER SYSTEM 12

 CRITERIA FOR APPROVING WATER HOOKUPS.....12



WITHIN DESIGNATED PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS OR IN CERTIFIED RESERVED DEVELOPMENT AREAS 12

OUTSIDE DESIGNATED PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS OR IN NON-CERTIFIED RESERVED DEVELOPMENT AREAS 12

PROCEDURES FOR APPROVING HOOKUPS.....13

PROCEDURES FOR ADOPTION OF AMENDMENTS TO THE SMART GROWTH PLAN..... 15

REFERENCE MATERIALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 16

PROMOTE FARMLAND PROTECTION OUTSIDE OF SMART GROWTH AREAS.....16

 COORDINATE WITH AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT PROGRAM..... 16

 COORDINATE WITH AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN..... 16

 ENCOURAGE CONSERVATION OF HIGH QUALITY FARMLAND THROUGH CONSERVATION EASEMENTS 17

ZONING TECHNIQUES.....17

 AGRICULTURAL PROTECTION ZONING 17

 DENSITY AVERAGING (CLUSTERING)..... 18

 INCENTIVE ZONING 19

 TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS 19

 FORM-BASED CODES 20

 PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD) 21

PROMOTE REVITALIZATION OF CITY AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIAL AREAS, BUSINESS DISTRICTS AND RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS22



SUPPORT THE USE OF STATE-RECOGNIZED NEW YORK STATE SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES WHERE APPROPRIATE:..... 22

ENCOURAGE RE-DEVELOPMENT AND RE-USE OF INDUSTRIAL SITES AND BUILDINGS IN AREAS WITH ACCESS TO INFRASTRUCTURE 22

REVITALIZE EXISTING CITY AND VILLAGE BUSINESS DISTRICTS 23

ENCOURAGE IMPROVEMENTS TO RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS WITHIN THE CITY AND VILLAGES 24

ENCOURAGE LOCAL ZONING REGULATIONS TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THE SMART GROWTH PLAN 25

ENCOURAGE LOCAL AND STATE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THE SMART GROWTH PLAN 25

STATE AND FEDERAL GRANTS..... 25

COORDINATE WITH THE GREEN GENESEE ROAD MAP OF THE GREEN GENESEE SMART GENESEE PROJECT..... 26

MAP 3: GREEN GENESEE ROAD MAP 27

APPENDIX - NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION & MAPS OF DEVELOPMENT AREAS BY MUNICIPALITY..... 1

TOWN OF ALABAMA 1

TOWN AND VILLAGE OF ALEXANDER 1

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS 2

CITY OF BATAVIA 2

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS 2

TOWN OF BATAVIA..... 2



2019 UPDATE COMMENTS 2

TOWN AND VILLAGE OF BERGEN..... 2

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS 3

TOWN OF BETHANY 3

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS 3

TOWN OF BYRON..... 3

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS 4

THE TOWN OF BYRON RECENTLY ADOPTED A NEW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND MAY PROPOSE CHANGES TO THE SMART GROWTH DEVELOPMENT AREA BOUNDARIES AT THE 2022 REVIEW OF THE PLAN 4

TOWN OF DARIEN..... 4

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS 4

TOWN AND VILLAGE OF ELBA 4

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS 5

TOWN AND VILLAGE OF LEROY 5

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS 5

TOWN AND VILLAGE OF OAKFIELD 5

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS 6

TOWN OF PAVILION..... 6

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS 6



TOWN OF PEMBROKE.....14

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS14

TOWN OF STAFFORD14

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS14



THREE-YEAR REVIEW EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is presented in accordance with the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan adopted by the Genesee County Legislature on May 9, 2001. The Plan requires that it be reviewed every three years by the Legislature. The Plan is a mitigating action under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) of potential significant environmental impacts of the Genesee County Water Supply Project upon the viability of agriculture in Genesee County.

Phase I of the County Water Supply project has been completed and work has begun on specific projects outlined in Phase II. Map 1 in the following pages shows the existing waterlines and the Smart Growth Development Areas prior to the revisions recommended in this report.

The majority of water hookups that have been made to the system have occurred mainly along major state highways and county highways. Although some have been made in agricultural production areas, they have complied with the Smart Growth Plan's objectives by hooking up only existing structures to public water. The majority of the hookups made were located within the Smart Growth Development Areas designated by the Legislature.

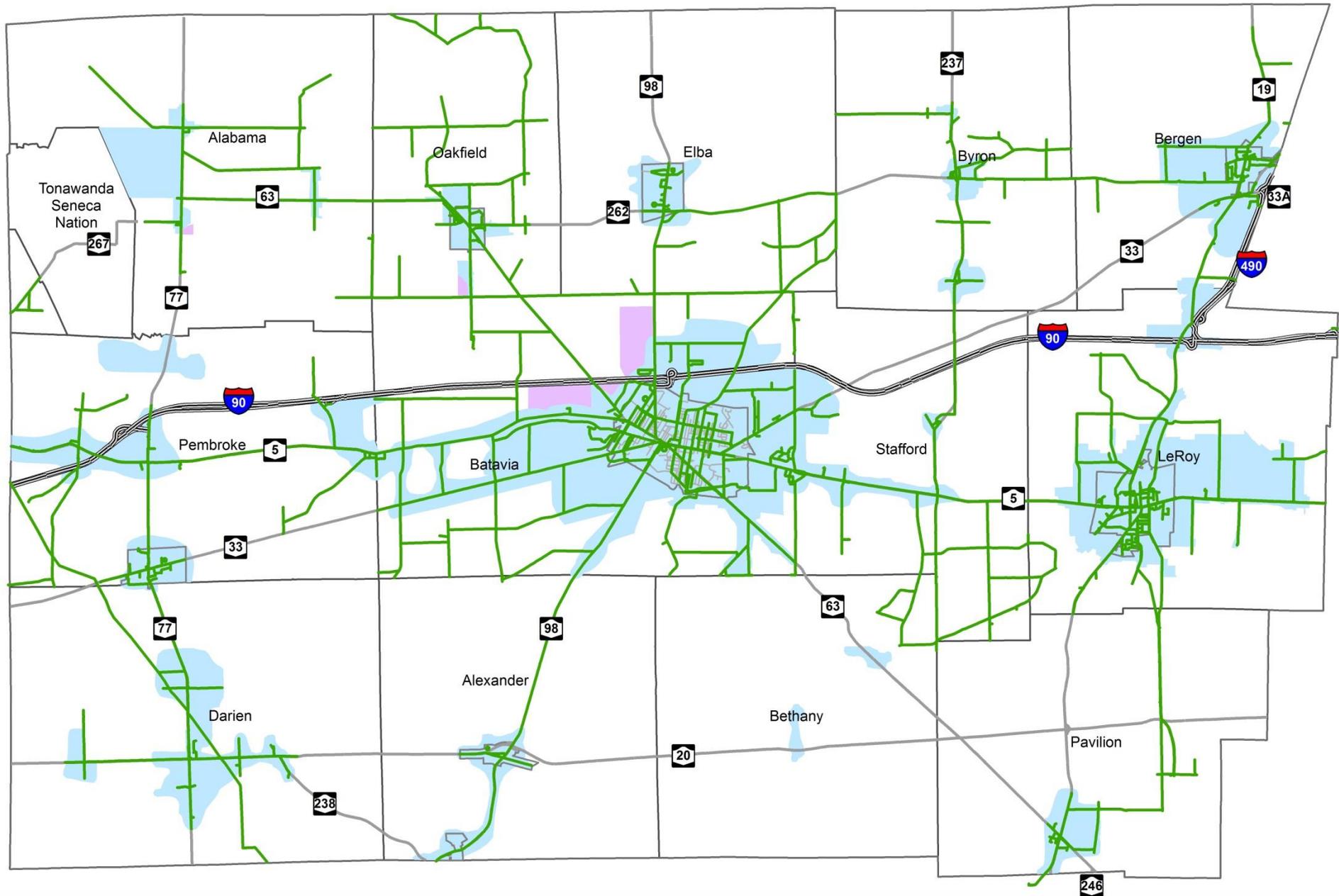
Since 2016, there have been eight additional requests for hookups outside of the Development Areas to structures built after the adoption of the Smart Growth Plan. This brings the total number of these special requests to 51. The Administrative Review Committee approved seven of the eight after careful consideration was given to their potential adverse impacts upon agriculture and farming in the area.

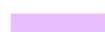
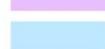
As a result of this review, and based upon existing comprehensive plans, local planning initiatives, findings of the GGSG project, results from NYS Agricultural District reviews and comments received during the public review process, it is recommended that the boundary of the Priority Development Area be expanded in the hamlet of Pavilion, and a new Priority Development Area be created in the hamlet of Texaco Town in the Town of Pavilion. Per conversations with the Town of Pavilion, the Development Area boundaries are recommended to be adjusted as much as possible to match parcel boundaries. No other changes are recommended in the development areas of the other municipalities in Genesee County (see Map 2).

This review also amends the Policies and Procedures for Managing Hookups section of the plan in two places. First, it amends the section dealing with the membership of the Water System Hookup Administrative Review Committee to allow for flexibility of the membership and to clarify the role of the alternate member. Previously, membership was determined by job title for the Soil and Water Conservation District and Cornell Cooperative Extension representatives. The changes will allow for delegation to other staff per the organizations' wishes. The second amendment to this section creates a process for applicants that had been denied a water hookup for new construction to submit a new application for hookup authorization after a period of ten years.

Map 1 Current Development Areas

GENESEE COUNTY SMART GROWTH PLAN 2019 Review Report



-  Water Lines
-  Reserved Development Areas
-  Priority Development Areas

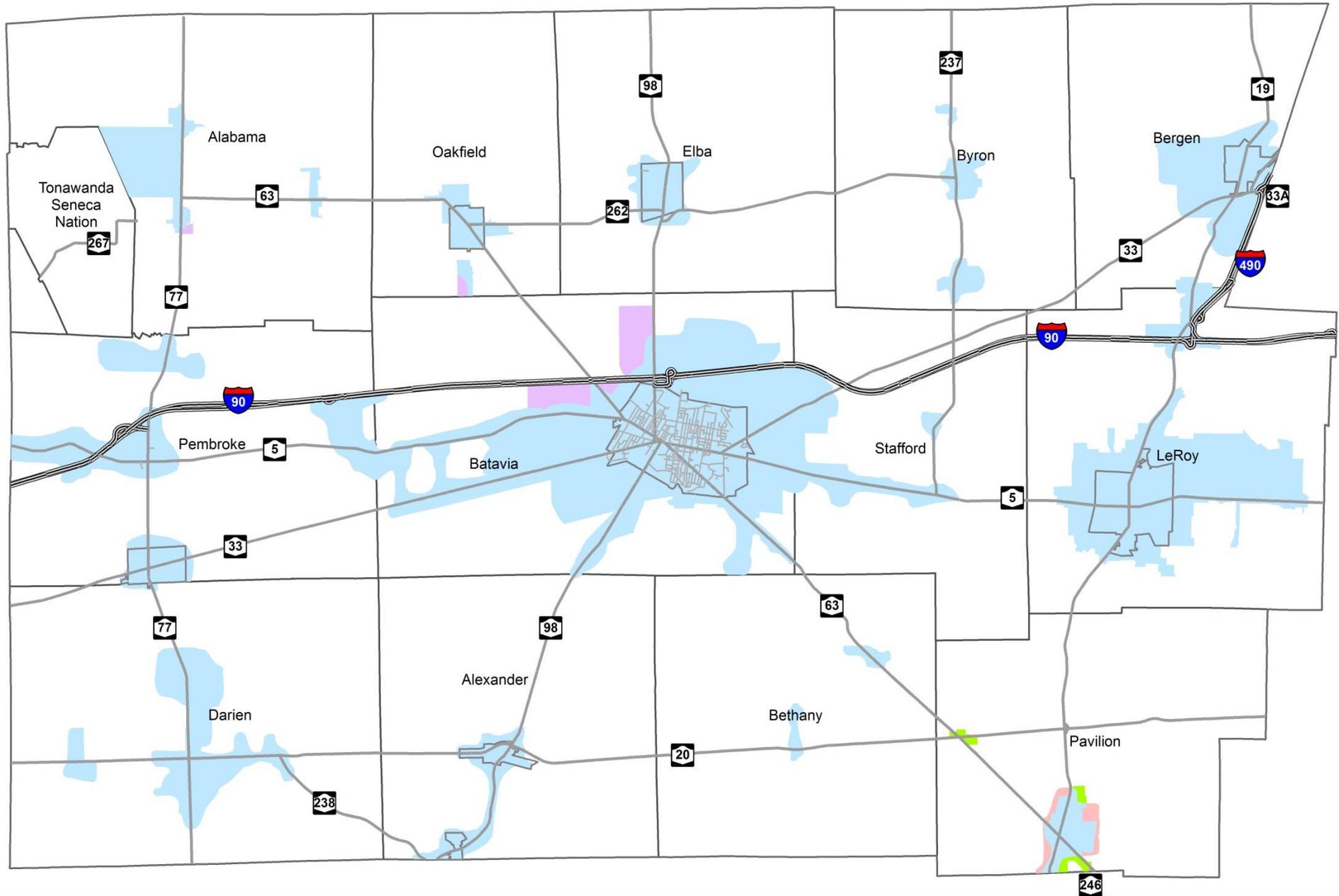


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Map 2 Recommended Development Areas

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Current Boundaries	Recommended Modifications
Priority Development Areas	Priority Area Expansions
Reserved Development Areas	Recommended Deletions



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OBJECTIVES AND USES OF THE SMART GROWTH PLAN

The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan was prepared by the Water Resources Agency on behalf of the County Legislature, in conjunction with a plan to extend water service in Genesee County.

The purpose of the plan is to minimize the impacts from additional growth and development that would otherwise occur as a result of the extension of water service. The County Legislature committed to preparing the Smart Growth Plan as a mitigating action identified in the Environmental Impact Statement prepared for the extension of water service.

The objectives of the Smart Growth Plan are to:

- Focus County resources to support economic development opportunities in the most promising locations;
- Encourage the revitalization of existing industrial areas, business districts, and residential neighborhoods in the City of Batavia and developed village areas; and
- Protect farmland and the rural character of the countryside, and maintain the viability of agriculture.

These objectives are consistent with the general principles of Smart Growth:

- Promote the efficient use of land resources and infrastructure
- Maximize the benefit of existing infrastructure
- Promote economic development in appropriate areas
- Encourage revitalization within the City of Batavia, villages and other developed areas, focusing on residential neighborhoods, downtown redevelopment, and re-use of environmentally damaged lands
- Protect prime agricultural soils and other natural resources and encourage the continued viability of agriculture

According to the Smart Growth America Building Better Budgets Report from May 2013:

- In general, smart growth development costs one-third less for upfront infrastructure.
 - Smart growth development saves an average of 38 percent on upfront costs for new construction of roads, sewers, water lines and other infrastructure. Many studies have concluded that this number is as high as 50 percent.
 - Smart growth development patterns require less infrastructure, meaning upfront capital costs, long-term operations and maintenance costs, and, presumably, cost for eventual replacement are all lower. Smart growth development also often



uses existing infrastructure, lowering upfront capital costs even more.

- Smart growth development saves an average of 10 percent on ongoing delivery services.
 - Smart growth development saves municipalities an average of 10 percent on police, ambulance and fire service costs.
 - The geographical configuration of a community and the way streets are connected significantly affect public service delivery. Smart growth patterns can reduce costs simply by reducing the distances service vehicles must drive. In some cases, the actual number of vehicles and facilities can also be reduced along with the personnel required.
- Smart growth development generates 10 times more tax revenue per acre than conventional suburban development.
 - On an average per-acre basis, smart growth development produces 10 times more tax revenue than conventional suburban development.

Genesee County has identified the most promising and appropriate locations for new economic development opportunities. These areas include land in and around the City of Batavia, as well as land surrounding the airport and the interchanges to the NYS Thruway. Water service extensions were designed to provide service to these areas, as well as to other developed areas in Genesee County.

The primary function of the Smart Growth Plan is to ensure that the extension of public water does not result in additional new development that is inconsistent with the principles of Smart Growth. The principles of Smart Growth recognized nationally include several design techniques that result in what are considered “livable communities.” The Plan includes a map designating areas within which development and re-development will be encouraged. The Plan will be used to limit new non-agricultural hookups into the County water system for development outside of these designated areas.

In addition, the Plan includes reference materials and recommendations to help County agencies and municipalities make coordinated and informed decisions affecting land use and infrastructure.



DESIGNATION OF DEVELOPMENT AREAS

The Smart Growth Map delineates Priority Development Areas and Reserved Development Areas within Genesee County. Within Priority Development Areas, development and redevelopment is encouraged and the County will not restrict access to the County-funded portions of the County's water system. Reserved Development Areas, once identified in the Smart Growth Plan, must obtain and maintain certification from the County in order for the County to not restrict access to the County-funded portions of the County's water system. Outside designated development areas or in non-certified Reserved Development Areas, access to the County-funded portions of the County's water system will be controlled in order to discourage growth that is inconsistent with the objectives and principles of the Smart Growth Plan.

The "County-funded portions of the County's water system" include all water lines that are constructed by the County, financially subsidized by the County, or supplied with water from a source built or subsidized by the County.

PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS

The Priority Development Areas include areas with significant potential for economic development, as well as areas that are already relatively densely developed with housing, commercial or industrial uses.

The Priority Development Areas were identified based upon the following criteria:

- Access to transportation, including the Interstate Highway System, the State highway network, and the airport;
- Feasibility of extending or enhancing public water service;
- Availability or potential for extending other public infrastructure and services to support development; and
- Minimal conflict with land in County Agricultural Districts and State regulated wetlands.
- Minimal conflict with land identified as an Ecological Network or Natural Asset Core by the Green Genesee Smart Genesee Project.

Priority Development Areas include:

- Land in and surrounding the City of Batavia, Village of LeRoy and Village of Bergen, and other Villages and hamlets in Genesee County;
- Interstate highway interchanges at Bergen (I-490), LeRoy (I-90/I-490), Pembroke (I-90) and Batavia (I-90); and
- Darien Lakes Resort.



RESERVED DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Reserved Development Areas are lands adjacent to Priority Development Areas that, at the time of the tri-annual Smart Growth Plan review, have been set aside for near future development of significant density through sufficient studies and plans by their respective municipalities. As noted in the preceding pages, water hookups are not automatic in Reserved Development Areas until these areas are certified by the County.

Currently, five uncertified Reserved Development Areas exist:

- **Town of Alabama**
 - **South of the hamlet of Basom, east side of NYS Rt. 77**
- **Town of Batavia**
 - **North of the NYS Thruway on the west side of NYS Rt. 98,**
 - **Just south of the NYS Thruway on NYS Rt. 63**
 - **Between the NYS Thruway and NYS Rt. 5 west of the City of Batavia**
- **Town of Oakfield**
 - **South of the Village, near the intersection of S Pearl Rd and Batavia-Oakfield Townline Rd.**



METHODOLOGY FOR DELINEATING THE BOUNDARIES OF PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Once the general locations of the development areas were determined, several overlay maps were prepared to assist in delineating the boundaries of the Priority Development Areas. The overlay maps depict areas that are more appropriate for conservation—wetlands regulated by New York State, flood hazard areas, and County Agricultural Districts—as well as areas that are more appropriate for development—existing sewer and water service areas, and land zoned for higher density residential, commercial and industrial uses. In addition, land use by tax parcel was examined to identify areas with relatively high densities of existing development.

Staff and consultants met with representatives from each of the municipalities in Genesee County, as well as the public, to review the proposed Smart Growth Plan and the boundaries of the Priority Development Areas. Input from the municipalities and the public was incorporated into the final Smart Growth Plan as presented to the County Legislature.

The following narrative describes the features depicted in the overlay maps. It also describes how the Agricultural District Program, local zoning, and other sewer and water service areas can be coordinated with the Smart Growth Plan and its future updates.

LAND IN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

Land within State-certified Agricultural Districts currently encompasses approximately 64% of the land area of Genesee County. Genesee County has designated four (4) Agricultural Districts pursuant to New York State Agriculture and Markets Law. Inclusion in an Agricultural District denotes a commitment on the part of the County and the landowner that the land will not be converted to a non-farm use for a period of eight (8) years. At the end of the 8-year period, the County Legislature may add or delete parcels from an existing Agricultural District, and renew the district for an additional 8-year period. In addition, as required by NYS Ag & Markets Law, land owners may petition the County to add land to a particular Agricultural District through the Annual Enrollment process, established by the County Legislature.

As land within an Agricultural District is presumed to be integral to the continued viability of agriculture in the County, these areas were generally excluded from the development areas. Future updates to the Smart Growth Map should consider changes made over time to the boundaries of County Agricultural Districts. The presence of Lateral Restriction Policies, enforced at the Town level, on certain water line routes should also be considered when revising Development Areas. Expansions of the Areas should avoid encroaching upon these locations as long as these policies are in effect.

NYS REGULATED WETLANDS AND FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

Wetlands mapped and regulated by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation encompass approximately 29,300 acres within Genesee County (approximately 9% of the land area in the County.) Large wetlands are located in the northern parts of the Towns of Alabama, Oakfield, Bergen and Byron. A relatively large number of smaller wetlands are located in the Towns of



Pembroke and Batavia. Development within these wetlands and within a 100-foot buffer area is restricted by State law and regulations.

Areas subject to periodic flooding have been mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Construction within flood hazard zones is restricted in order to prevent property damage due to flooding, and to maintain open pathways for flood waters. Federal Flood Insurance is available to residents within communities that have adopted local laws which restrict development in flood-prone areas.

The boundaries of the development areas were drawn to exclude land within regulated wetlands and flood hazard areas, as these areas are not suitable for development. Changes to the boundaries of these areas are not expected at this time. However, such changes should be reviewed in conjunction with future updates to the Smart Growth Map.

LOCAL ZONING AND COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

Local zoning regulations adopted by the governing bodies of individual municipalities specify the types and density of land uses that may be permitted in various locations within a community. Local comprehensive plans identify areas most suitable for various types of land uses and form the basis for local zoning. Typically, a community will identify areas most suitable for industrial, commercial, and various types of residential development. The density of development is controlled through local zoning by requiring a minimum lot size for dwellings.

Areas designated for higher density residential development, commercial development, or industrial development in local zoning and comprehensive plans were typically included within the designated development areas. Changes in local zoning district boundaries should be reviewed in conjunction with future updates to the Smart Growth Map.

SEWER AND WATER SERVICE AREAS

Locations of existing water and sewer service areas were mapped based on special water and sewer district boundaries shown on tax maps and other information provided by the County Planning Department. Land areas already served by public water and/or sewer were typically included in the development areas, unless the land was within an Agricultural District or contained sensitive natural resources such as wetlands.



CERTIFICATION OF RESERVED DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Once a Reserved Development Area is identified in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan, the municipality where this area is located may request the County Legislature to certify the area by determining if the conditions outlined below are met:

1. The area is identified in the local comprehensive plan for future development of significant density.
2. Smart Growth principles, as described below, are implemented in this area through form-based regulations.
 - a. Walkable Development- Pedestrian friendly street design (narrow, slow speed streets that include tree-lined sidewalks on at least one side of the road; buildings are close to the street and have front doors, windows and porches oriented toward the street; on-street parking is allowed; parking lots are located behind buildings and garages are placed in the side or rear yards).
 - b. Connected Transportation Network- Interconnected street grid network that disperses traffic and makes it easy for one to travel by means other than automobile. A hierarchy of narrow streets, boulevards and alleys should exist. A high-quality pedestrian network and public realm that connects commercial areas, parks and other public buildings and uses is also present.
 - c. Mixed Use and Housing Types- A mix of shops, offices, apartments and homes is available to the resident and visitor. Mixed-uses exist within neighborhoods, blocks and buildings. Various housing options for different age groups and income levels are evident.
 - d. Quality Architecture and Urban Design- Human scale architecture, comfort, and aesthetics are emphasized. A sense of place is created. All are accomplished by special placement of civic uses and sites within the development.
 - e. Sustainability- Minimal environmental impacts occur as a result of the development and its operations. Energy efficient, eco-friendly technologies and green infrastructure that respect the ecology and value of the local natural systems is utilized and evident.

The Water System Hookup Administrative Review Committee created by the County Legislature is charged with reviewing the municipal application for certification of a Reserved Development Area. In its review, the Committee will determine whether the proposed Reserved Development Area has sufficiently met all the criteria listed above and is consistent with the intent of the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The Committee will meet and issue a written decision to the requesting municipality no later than sixty-two (62) days after County Planning staff receives a complete application from the municipality. Only if certified will water hookups in Reserved Development Areas function as in Priority Development Areas.



For a period of sixty-two (62) days after the decision has been issued by the Water System Hookup Administrative Review Committee, the municipality may contest the decision through an appeal to the County Planning Board. After which, the municipality may make a new application for certification contingent upon a determination by the Committee that the application sufficiently differs from the original application.

The County Legislature authorizes the County Planning Department to monitor certified Reserved Development Areas to ensure that development in the area sufficiently follows the agreed to standards. The Water System Hookup Administrative Review Committee retains the right to reopen a certification application of a Reserved Development Area and rescind such certification if the Committee determines that the municipality is not implementing its adopted land use regulations as reviewed in its application and are determined to be inconsistent with the principles of the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan.



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING HOOKUPS INTO THE COUNTY WATER SYSTEM

The County Legislature or its designee will have the authority to approve hookups to the County-funded portion of the County's water system. This section presents the criteria for approving hookups, to be applied by the County or its designee, as well as the process by which the County Legislature can delegate the authority to approve water hookups.

CRITERIA FOR APPROVING WATER HOOKUPS

The following policies will apply to water hookups, and whether or not the hookup requires approval by the Water System Hookup Administrative Review Committee on behalf of the County Legislature.

WITHIN DESIGNATED PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS OR IN CERTIFIED RESERVED DEVELOPMENT AREAS

- All new and existing development is automatically entitled to hookup into the County Water System (subject to lateral restriction policies adopted by local municipalities for land within Agricultural Districts)

OUTSIDE DESIGNATED PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREAS OR IN NON-CERTIFIED RESERVED DEVELOPMENT AREAS

The following uses are automatically entitled to hookup into the County Water System:

- Structures for which a building permit has been granted as of the date the Smart Growth Plan is adopted or amended by the County Legislature;
- In a newly created water district existing structures shall mean those built, or structures for which a building permit has been issued, as of the public hearing for the District formation. Said structures are entitled to hookups.
- All existing and new agricultural uses

For all other types of development, hookups to the County water system will require approval on a case-by-case basis by the Water System Hookup Administrative Review Committee on behalf of the County Legislature. Requests for such hookups will be reviewed and evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Impacts on the viability of agriculture, including the proximity of the hookup to farms and surrounding farmland, hookup for immediate family members employed by the farm operation living on land subdivided from the farmed parcel, the property's enrollment status in the Agricultural Districts program, the enrollment status of property immediately surrounding it, the existence of



- drainage infrastructure, the farming history of the property, and the presence of prime farmland soils on a property yet to be built upon.
- Consistency with County economic development goals
 - Consistency with other available infrastructure (The presence of existing or proposed sewer service, the proximity of a sewer district or village, and the adequacy of the roadways to support growth are some of these factors.)
 - Consistency with local comprehensive plans, zoning and other land use controls and development objectives
 - Impact on land identified as an Ecological Network or Natural Asset Core by the Green Genesee Smart Genesee Project
 - Impact on Village/ City revitalization programs
 - Does the proposal meet a pressing public health or other community need?

The intent of this review is to minimize the impacts that may result from the provision of water to new, non-agricultural development outside of designated development areas.

PROCEDURES FOR APPROVING HOOKUPS

The Water System Hookup Administrative Review Committee on behalf of the County Legislature has the authority to approve all hookups to the County-funded portion of the County Water System. Outside of Priority Development Areas or in non-certified Reserved Development Areas, such hookups for new, non-agricultural uses must meet the criteria specified above.

The County Planning Department has established a procedure with the MCWA for processing water hookup applications whereby the applicant applies to the MCWA first. The application is then forwarded to the Planning Department for review.

The County Legislature has by resolution, created the Water System Hookup Administrative Review Committee to administer requests for such hookups. The County Legislature may also delegate the authority to approve such hookups to individual municipalities. The Committee administers requests for hookups only within those municipalities that do not have the authority to approve hookups.

The Water System Hookup Administrative Review Committee shall consist of five members and one alternate including two members from the County Planning Department, including the Director of Planning, the Genesee County Soil and Water Conservation District Manager or designee, the Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Genesee County or designee, and a farmer representative selected from the County's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board to ensure that the interests of farmers are included in the decision-making process. The alternate member shall also be selected by the County's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board and shall vote only when a regular member cannot vote by reason of absence or abstention due to a conflict of interest. Every motion or resolution of the Committee shall require for its adoption the affirmative vote of a majority of all of the Committee members.



The Water System Hookup Administrative Review Committee will apply the criteria outlined above to determine whether or not to approve the hookup. The Committee shall also request a recommendation from the municipality in which the proposed hookup is located. Municipalities will have five (5) business days to respond in writing with their recommendation to the Committee. The Committee would be expected to meet as needed to administer requests for hookups.

For a period of sixty-two (62) days after the decision has been issued by the Water System Hookup Administrative Review Committee, the applicant may contest the decision of the Committee through an appeal to the County Planning Board. After which, the applicant may make a new application for a hookup contingent upon a determination by the Committee that the application sufficiently differs from the original application.

Applicants that have been denied a water hookup for new construction and decide to build despite not having access to public water may submit an application for hookup authorization to the Department of Planning after a period of ten years from the date of the Certificate of Occupancy issued by the Code Enforcement Officer. In this application, the applicant must provide proof that the building has not been abandoned and been in continued occupancy for the preceding 10 years. Proof of occupancy can be in the form of a letter from the municipal assessor, code enforcement officer, or through utility bills or other similar evidence. Department of Planning staff will review the application for completion and, if given sufficient evidence, shall authorize a hookup for the existing building, and send correspondence informing the applicant, municipality and MCWA.

As stated in the preceding pages, the County Legislature may, by inter-municipal agreement, delegate the authority to administer requests for hookups to the County-funded portion of the County water system to individual municipalities. In order to receive authorization to review hookups, municipalities must have a legally adopted comprehensive plan that is consistent with the principles of “smart growth,” as described in this document. The County Legislature may request an opinion from the County Planning Department regarding the suitability of the local plan. To date, only the Town of Batavia has requested and been granted hookup authority.

Municipalities authorized to approve hookups will be required to keep records to demonstrate that the criteria described in the preceding pages are applied to each request. The County Legislature may require municipalities to prepare periodic reports to document the number and type of hookups permitted outside of designated development areas, as well as the rationale for permitting each hookup.

The County Legislature authorizes the County Planning Department to monitor hookup decisions made by municipalities. The County Planning Department may prepare a report, as requested, for submission to the County Legislature, summarizing each municipality’s compliance with the principles of the Smart Growth Plan in administering requests for hookups. The County Legislature will reserve the right to rescind the authority to approve hookups if a municipality does not follow the principles of the Smart Growth Plan.



PROCEDURES FOR ADOPTION OF AMENDMENTS TO THE SMART GROWTH PLAN

Amendments to the Smart Growth Plan are expected to be approved by the County Water Resources Agency and adopted by the County Legislature. The County Legislature will be responsible for implementing and updating the Plan as needed.

The Smart Growth Plan maps and recommendations should be reviewed every three (3) years. The review process should incorporate input from municipalities, the County Planning Board, the Water Resources Agency, and the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board, as well as other interested organizations and citizens.

The following procedures are recommended for amendments to the Smart Growth Plan:

1. Issue a notification that the Smart Growth Plan, including the boundaries of the development areas, is scheduled for review. The notice should be sent directly to all municipalities, County agencies and departments, and the media.
2. Review changes to Agricultural Districts, local comprehensive plans and zoning districts, sewer and water service areas, and land development patterns. Prepare updated overlay maps. Adjust boundaries of the designated growth areas.
3. Publicize the proposed changes to the Smart Growth map among municipalities and the general public.
4. Obtain input from the County Planning Board and the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board.
5. Prepare an update to the Smart Growth Plan that addresses the input from municipalities, County Boards and agencies, and the general public. Incorporate the environmental review as may be required pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR.)
6. Present the proposed update to the County Water Resources Agency for approval. The approved update may then be submitted to the County Legislature for adoption, following the completion of the appropriate State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process.



REFERENCE MATERIALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following narrative describes existing programs and identifies tools and techniques that can be applied by municipalities and Genesee County to encourage development patterns that are consistent with the objectives of the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan and the principles of Smart Growth. These programs and techniques help to promote farmland protection as well as revitalize existing industrial areas, business districts, and residential neighborhoods. Recommendations are included to encourage local zoning regulations and infrastructure investments to be consistent with the Plan.

PROMOTE FARMLAND PROTECTION OUTSIDE OF SMART GROWTH AREAS

COORDINATE WITH AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT PROGRAM

Genesee County currently has four (4) Agricultural Districts. Land within each of these Districts is enrolled for a period of eight (8) years.

After eight (8) years, the County reviews the District and may add or remove land from the Agricultural District. In addition, as required by NYS Ag & Markets Law, land owners may petition the County to add land to a particular Agricultural District through the Annual Enrollment process, established by the County Legislature.

The Agricultural District Program provides the following benefits to landowners to encourage land to remain in farming:

- Protection from local regulations that would restrict farm practices
- Protection from public acquisition
- Protection from nuisance suits (right-to-farm provisions)

Land areas within Agricultural Districts are presumed to contribute to a viable agricultural land base and economy. In general, land areas within agricultural districts should not be targeted for development. In creating the Smart Growth Map, land within Agricultural Districts was generally excluded from the development areas. However, the Smart Growth Plan will need to be modified as a result of changes in Agricultural District boundaries.

COORDINATE WITH AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

The County has completed an Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. This plan recommends, in further detail, a means to support the agricultural industry and to protect farmland. The Smart Growth Plan may be modified to ensure consistency with the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan.



ENCOURAGE CONSERVATION OF HIGH QUALITY FARMLAND THROUGH CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Voluntary conservation easements initiated by landowners and held by non-profit organizations. Landowners may place farmland under a permanent conservation easement to be held and monitored by a private land trust or other non-profit organization. The donation of easements may be helpful to some families in estate planning, as the value of the easement can be claimed as a tax deduction.

Purchase of Development Rights (also referred to as “Agricultural Conservation Easements”) is a public program which compensates farmland owners for agreeing to keep land from being developed. Such a program may be operated by a public entity or a not-for-profit organization. The value of development rights is calculated as the difference between the value of the land for agricultural purposes and its value for development. An easement restricts development on the parcel. An easement may be permanent or for a specified period of time. Ownership of the parcel does not change. The easement holder is responsible for ensuring that the property is not developed. The owner may continue to farm the parcel, and/or sell it.

ADVANTAGES:

- Protects agricultural land on a permanent basis (or for a specified period of time).
- Participation among landowners is voluntary

DISADVANTAGES

- Cost
- Time involved in purchasing easements
- Requires on-going monitoring by the easement holder
- Protects farmland on a piecemeal basis, and may not be effective in protecting a “critical mass” of farmland

ZONING TECHNIQUES

AGRICULTURAL PROTECTION ZONING

Agricultural Protection Zoning involves the creation of a zoning district that designates farming as the primary, preferred land use. Such a district targets the most productive soils and large contiguous areas of active farms. The minimum lot size is based on the size of the smallest viable farm unit—such as 25 to 40 acres.

The regulations for this district would limit non-agricultural development. They may incorporate density averaging or sliding scale provisions to limit the number of dwellings permitted. The regulations may also specify maximum (as well as minimum) lot sizes for non-farm development. A



conservation easement or other type of permanent protection is typically required to protect farmland permanently from development.

Such a district may allow farm-related businesses and home-based businesses.

Agricultural protection zoning may be combined with purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights or incentive zoning that encourages private purchase of development rights.

ADVANTAGES:

- Effective in limiting non-farm development and reducing conflicts between agriculture and non-farm neighbors.
- Can protect large areas of farmland at no cost to the public

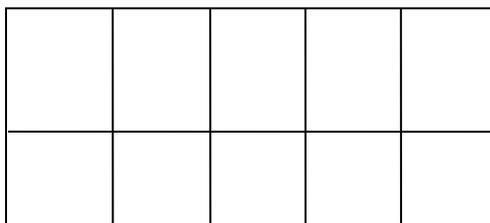
DISADVANTAGES:

- May reduce the market value of land.
- Not permanent as zoning can be changed.

DENSITY AVERAGING (CLUSTERING)

Density averaging or clustering allows residences to be built on smaller lot sizes than typically permitted by zoning, provided that the average density of the original parcel is not increased. For example, if zoning required a maximum density of one (1) dwelling per ten (10) acres, a farm of one-hundred (100) acres would be entitled to develop up to ten (10) dwelling units. If the ten (10) dwellings were built on a total of twenty (20) acres of the parcel (with an average lot size of two (2) acres), eighty (80) acres would remain open (see diagram below). The smaller lots should be sited in locations that are least suitable for farming, and that offer the most appealing views of open space and natural resources. Design of the subdivision should include buffers between the new residential development and the remaining farmland. A conservation easement would be placed on the remaining eighty (80) acres to prevent future development.

100 acres - 10 building lots



10 acre lots



2 acre lots
80 acres open



ADVANTAGES

- Relatively simple to administer through the subdivision review process
- Provides for permanent protection of farmland or open space
- Landowner retains full development potential (number of building lots)

DISADVANTAGES

- Results in non-agricultural development in close proximity to farming. May be more appropriate for open space preservation and retention of rural character than for retention of agricultural land.

INCENTIVE ZONING

Incentive zoning may be used to encourage the private acquisition of agricultural conservation easements (development rights) or to collect money toward a public fund to purchase such easements. Municipalities must designate an area or areas in which higher densities or more intensive uses may be permitted, provided that the applicant offers certain amenities that would meet specified community needs. Acceptable amenities may include conservation easements on farmland or cash to be used in a purchase of development rights program.

ADVANTAGES

- Flexibility in administration
- Can result in permanent protection of farmland if agricultural easements are provided as an amenity in exchange for higher densities
- Allows conservation easements to be purchased privately

DISADVANTAGES

- Requires designation of an area within which higher densities can be sustained.

TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

Transfer of development rights involves the private purchase of development rights to farmland in a “sending” zone, or farmland within a community that meets certain criteria, and the transfer of these rights to increase the density of development in a designated “receiving” area. Such a program typically operates in the private market.

ADVANTAGES:

- Operates within the private sector.
- Sale of development rights by agricultural landowners is voluntary
- Permanently preserves agricultural land through conservation easements



DISADVANTAGES:

- Complicated to administer
- Requires a market for development rights within the “receiving area”

FORM-BASED CODES

Form-based codes are an alternative to conventional zoning regulations. These codes are prescriptive (they state what you want), rather than proscriptive (what you do not want) and de-emphasize density and use regulations in favor of rules for building form. They also address the design of the streetscape, or public realm, and its relationship to the built environment.

Form-based codes emphasize mixed use and a mix of housing types to bring destinations into close proximity to housing and provide housing choices to meet many individuals’ needs at different times in their lives.

ADVANTAGES

- Accessibility - Uses pictures rather than words minimizing the need to argue over the interpretation of code language. Contains all relevant information in a concise format. Allows citizens to see what will happen where-leading to a higher comfort level and helping to reduce conflict, misunderstanding and the need for hearings as individual projects are reviewed.
- Mixed-Use Friendly - Assumes a mix of uses, especially in neighborhood or town centers and allowing for the continuation of historical settlement patterns and styles.
- Flexibility - Not focusing on use allows for easier adaptive reuse of existing buildings and better adapts to changing markets.
- Efficiency - Details are discussed and clarified when the code is developed allowing for a “build by-right” approach. Projects that meet all of the code’s requirements can be approved administratively reducing time, expense and uncertainty for the developer and reducing processing and hearing costs for the municipality involved. The removal of discretionary board approval also eliminates the requirement for County Planning Board referrals or to conduct costly and time consuming environmental (SEQR) reviews.
- Encourages Public Participation – Allows citizens to see what will happen where-leading to a higher comfort level helping to reduce conflict, misunderstanding and the need for hearings as individual projects are reviewed.

DISADVANTAGES

- Unfamiliarity - Form-based codes require re-educating everyone in the community—elected and appointed officials, planners, engineers, developers and residents.



- Larger Initial Investment - The initial development of the code is a large task that will more than likely involve hiring a consultant with expertise in this relatively new technique.

PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENT (PUD)

Whereas standard zoning may promote lot-by-lot development where the entire tract is covered with lots of uniform size, PUDs can include the possibility of several medium-sized or smaller lots where the owner(s) use PUD development options provided by the community. PUDs provide the opportunity to achieve flexibility in architectural design, a mix of compatible land uses, as well as the preservation of key natural or historic features that are otherwise difficult to achieve using traditional, lot-by-lot zoning.

Using a PUD allows for innovative uses of spaces and structures to achieve planning goals such as, conservation of resources by utilizing common recreation areas, common sewage and drinking water systems and benefiting the developer, building can be accomplished for less overhead due to the common areas.

Typically PUDs are found in undeveloped suburban areas near the metropolitan fringe, large lots within an urban location that has not yet been developed, or urban redevelopment areas. PUDs generally can be divided into two broad categories; those that deal with residential uses only and those that mix residential uses with non-residential uses.

Mixed-use PUDs blend residential, commercial and possibly industrial uses together within the same tract. This approach is usually used at locations where different uses are not only compatible, but where the 'blend' of uses will benefit the community as a whole.

ADVANTAGES

- A developer has the flexibility to design tracts of land as a whole versus lot by lot requirements or standards.
- There is greater economies of scale. Lower infrastructure costs are usually achieved because lot by lot restrictions are relaxed and the entire tract approach allows densities within the tract to be reallocated.
- Generally preserved open space can serve several purposes such as providing recreational areas for the community or preserving a unique natural resource.
- The PUD concept allows for improved design quality by assuring that a development project be an aesthetic asset to the total community.

DISADVANTAGES

- Phasing and timing of PUD may be longer than a conventional development, adding developer's costs.
- PUD must be properly marketed.
- Local and State regulations that must be met by large scale projects.



- Initial financing may be challenging with tracts that consist of hundreds of acres.

The creation of a PUD should be in accordance with a comprehensive plan and be created for the benefit of the whole community, not an individual property owner.

PROMOTE REVITALIZATION OF CITY AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIAL AREAS, BUSINESS DISTRICTS AND RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

SUPPORT THE USE OF STATE-RECOGNIZED NEW YORK STATE SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES WHERE APPROPRIATE:

- Compact, Mixed-Use Community Design
- Re-Use and Re-Development of Existing Buildings
- Regional Planning
- ‘Green’ Buildings and Infrastructure
- Mobility Choices --- Walking, Biking, Public Transit
- Well-Planned and Well-Maintained Parks and Public Spaces
- Targeted Investments in Affordable Housing
- Age-Integrated Communities
- Collaborative, ‘Bottom-Up,’ Stakeholder-Driven Planning

ENCOURAGE RE-DEVELOPMENT AND RE-USE OF INDUSTRIAL SITES AND BUILDINGS IN AREAS WITH ACCESS TO INFRASTRUCTURE

CITY OF BATAVIA INDUSTRIAL REDEVELOPMENT

The City of Batavia recently developed an Economic Development Action Plan to develop a targeted approach to economic development in the City. Some of the main recommendations of the Plan include:

Industrial Real Estate Preparation Program—Working with existing companies and the Genesee County Economic Development Center, the City is developing a program to purchase homes within industrial districts and resell the properties to existing or new industrial users. This effort could involve remediation of brownfields.

The City of Batavia received a grant from the New York State Department of State to prepare a Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) plan to advance redevelopment of strategic sites in the City. The City will focus on strategic sites in downtown, the industrial area between Harvester and Liberty Streets, and the Evans Street corridor.

The purpose of the project is to develop an area-wide redevelopment plan for underutilized, vacant, abandoned or contaminated brownfield properties that will catalyze redevelopment in the City. Local, regional and state partners will be involved throughout the project to help promote redevelopment, adaptive re-use and infill projects of strategic sites. The comprehensive



redevelopment plan developed under this project will be based on a community vision and balance environmental, economic and community needs. It will also evaluate land use, zoning, property ownership, utilities, transportation issues and environmental constraints that may be impediments to redevelopment.

Targeted Industrial Attraction—Focus economic development energy on companies that are most likely to succeed in the City.

Business Newsletter—To distribute information about economic development in the City to existing businesses.

Traffic Planning—Be involved in major future projects including 2001 Main Street project and southern bypass.

GENESEE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The Agency is involved with several on-going activities that are designed to support existing industries, build and upgrade industrial parks, and attract new industries to suitable locations in Genesee County.

REVITALIZE EXISTING CITY AND VILLAGE BUSINESS DISTRICTS

BATAVIA BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

The downtown merchants and the City of Batavia formed a public/private partnership to improve the business climate of downtown Batavia called the Batavia Business Improvement District or Batavia BID. In the District, merchants are assessed an additional tax to fund payments for an infrastructure bond, facade improvements and to fund operations. Infrastructure improvements have included new lighting, trees, benches, trash receptacles, parking lot improvements, and sidewalk work. Operation funds are used for marketing, downtown events, building relationships among businesses, and to fund the positions of a downtown manager and an assistant.

OTHER INITIATIVES

In addition, the City of Batavia Comprehensive Plan includes a focus on downtown redevelopment. It recommends placing niche retail, entertainment, professional offices, upper floor housing, government uses, and cultural uses in the downtown core. Moreover, it recommends a mixed-use, pedestrian oriented traditional downtown.

Existing Village business districts offer an alternative to standardized, large-scale retail development along highways. Each Village and City shopping district presents unique opportunities for commercial development.

Advantages include:

- Smaller, more specialized stores and services
- Relatively low overhead



- Pedestrian-friendly environment
- Historic streetscapes and “small town charm”

Keys to taking advantage of these opportunities include:

- Organization among business owners and operators
 - Joint advertising and promotions
 - Cooperation in physical improvement
 - Pool financial resources
 - Work together to develop common design themes
 - Upgrade signage—consider standards to present more consistent “look”
- Physical improvements to enhance shopping experience for pedestrians
 - Visible, accessible, centralized, safe and convenient parking
 - Sidewalks
 - Street lighting; consider historic theme
 - Street trees/ landscaping
 - Banners
- Events
 - Festivals, concerts, parades, etc. to bring people to the main shopping area
 - Focus on unique community assets: history, traditional harvests, local artists and craftspeople

ENCOURAGE IMPROVEMENTS TO RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS WITHIN THE CITY AND VILLAGES

The City of Batavia Comprehensive Plan includes initiatives intended to stabilize and improve residential neighborhoods. Prior to the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, the City had no “density hierarchy” for residential development. Large scale multi-family homes were allowed in the center as well as at the periphery of the City. Based on the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan, the City Council has adopted new residential down-zoning that establishes a density hierarchy: no multi-family homes are allowed in R-1 zones near the City’s edge, some are allowed in R-2 zones and all types of housing are allowed in R-3 zones near the City center. Rehabilitation of existing housing in residential neighborhoods is encouraged.



ENCOURAGE LOCAL ZONING REGULATIONS TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THE SMART GROWTH PLAN

IDENTIFY AREAS WHERE LOCAL ZONING IS INCONSISTENT WITH THE PLAN.

Local governing bodies are responsible for any changes to zoning maps or regulations. Such changes require a public hearing and should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for the community.

RECOMMEND CHANGES TO LOCAL ZONING REGULATIONS, WHICH ARE INTENDED TO:

- Encourage higher density development in areas that are served by public water and/or sewer including lands within a quarter (1/4) mile of a village or major hamlet served by public sewers.
- Encourage the continuation and expansion of farming within viable agricultural areas.
- Encourage types and densities of development that are consistent with available public services.
- Utilize incentive zoning and/or transfer of development rights to achieve higher densities within designated development areas and to protect farmland in prime agricultural areas.

The County Planning Department should assist municipalities to adopt zoning changes that are consistent with the Smart Growth Plan.

ENCOURAGE LOCAL AND STATE INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS TO BE CONSISTENT WITH THE SMART GROWTH PLAN

The Plan identifies areas currently served by public sewers. Municipalities may consult the Smart Growth Plan to evaluate the consistency of proposed sewer extensions with the principles of Smart Growth.

The County should review State, County and local proposals for improvements to transportation, drainage, and other infrastructure, to determine its consistency with the Smart Growth Plan. The Plan may be modified to reflect significant expansion of utilities.

STATE AND FEDERAL GRANTS

The New York State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Policy Act guides the State in making more sustainable and strategic infrastructure investments. This legislation requires State agencies to create Smart Growth Advisory Committees that evaluate public infrastructure investments based on the Smart Growth criteria and require that such investments meet the criteria to the extent practicable. This act has had the effect of promoting grant applications at the State level that follow the principles of Smart Growth.



Genesee County is currently the only county in New York State to have a county-wide Smart Growth Plan. This has had a positive effect on many grant applications by the County and its Municipalities to State and Federal Agencies.

PROTECT ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS AND PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

COORDINATE WITH THE GREEN GENESEE ROAD MAP OF THE GREEN GENESEE SMART GENESEE PROJECT

The purpose of Green Genesee Smart Genesee (GGSG) is to create tools and provide resources that help guide land and energy use in Genesee County. This will allow continued development of viable and lasting economies and strong, vital communities. The GGSG Project is composed of two parts:

Green Genesee: A county-wide road map (Green Genesee Road Map) that supplies a science-based, community-based tool for making sustainable land use decision in Genesee County.

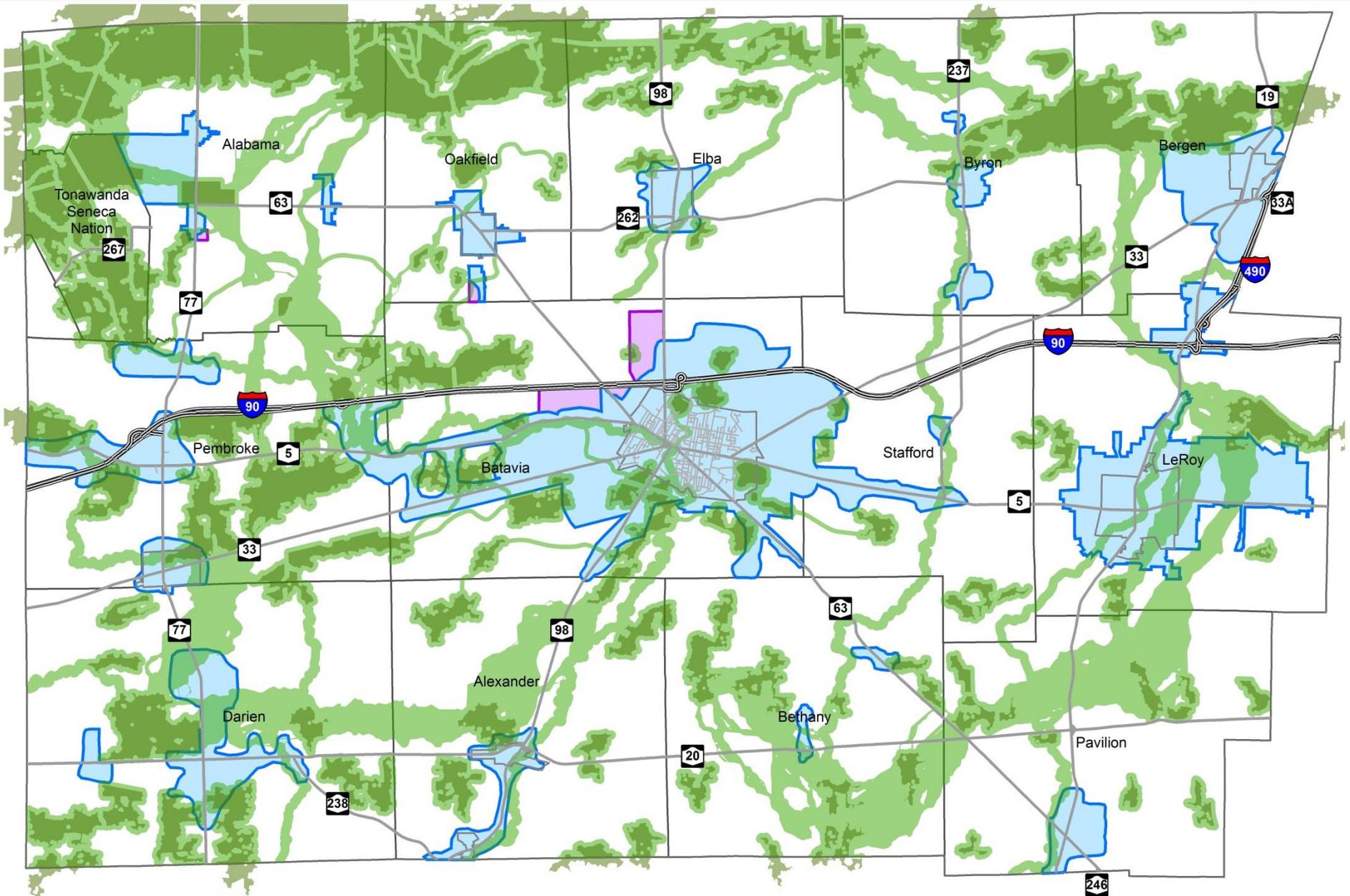
Smart Genesee: Integrating sustainability through green infrastructure and energy conservation strategies into municipal comprehensive planning and land use regulation codes.

The Green Genesee Road Map presented in Map 3 identifies the County's green infrastructure network or ecological network at a broad scale. This is a network of interconnected natural areas that are the key to the protection of air and water quality, conservation of soils, support for wildlife populations, and a source of outdoor recreation and scenic resources. The network including the buffers and corridors surrounding and connecting natural asset cores, reveals areas of the county that have regional significance whose value might otherwise be easily overlooked by local residents or agencies. The green infrastructure network is Genesee County's foundation for community health and quality of life. The purpose of the Road Map is to provide information that facilitates the protection of important ecosystem services provided by the County's green infrastructure. It can be integrated into planning documents, zoning, and planning board review and approval processes. It is not a regulatory map. It, in itself, does not dictate what a private landowner may or may not do with private land. The map provides information that could guide local, state, or federal land use rules and regulations, but it does not supplant existing regulations.

In the first phase of the project, the Towns of Alabama, Batavia and Oakfield, as well as the Village of Oakfield further refined the County-wide Green Genesee Road Map to their municipality. The value of the Road Map is that it can help communities and landowners understand the value of green infrastructure and coordinate resources to facilitate its protection and long term function. This option is far more efficient and less costly than both engineered solutions and after-the-fact restoration and protection endeavors. Future phases of the plan hope to calibrate the map to other municipalities in Genesee County; users of the current map should take into consideration that areas outside of the first-phase communities may need further refinement.

Map 3 Green Genesee Road Map

GENESEE COUNTY SMART GROWTH PLAN 2019 Review Report



Current Smart Growth Boundaries	Green Genesee Road Map
Priority Development Areas	Natural Asset Core
Reserved Development Areas	Ecological Network



Genesee County
Department of Planning
County Building 2

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APPENDIX - NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION & MAPS OF DEVELOPMENT AREAS BY MUNICIPALITY

TOWN OF ALABAMA

Two Priority Development Areas have been designated within the Town in areas with a concentration of existing development outside of NYS Agricultural Districts and with the STAMP site. These areas include: the hamlet of Alabama at the intersection of Alleghany Road (NYS Rts. 63 and 77) and Lewiston Road (County Rt. 12) including the STAMP site and the hamlet of Basom, at the intersection of Alleghany Road (NYS Rt. 77) and Bloomingdale Road; and the hamlet of South Alabama, at the intersection of Judge Road (NYS Rt. 63) and Maple/Knowlesville Road. The Town also has uncertified Reserved Development Area southeast of the hamlet of Basom on the east side of Alleghany Road (NYS Rt. 77).

The Town has zoned land surrounding these hamlet areas for R-Residential development (single-family dwellings with a 20,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size.) However, as these surrounding areas are within NYS Agricultural Districts, they were not included within the boundaries of the Development Areas. Land along the NYS Rt. 77 corridor, outside of the designated Development Areas, is sparsely developed. New non-agricultural development along this corridor should be limited.

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS

The Town of Alabama did not ask for revisions to the Smart Growth Plan or the Development Area boundaries during this review. They are working to certify the existing Reserved Development Area in the Town.

TOWN AND VILLAGE OF ALEXANDER

Development Areas in Alexander are located in and around the Villages of Alexander and Attica, and along Alexander Road (NYS Rt. 98) between the two Villages. Most of the land within the Development Areas is outside of a NYS Agricultural District.

Growth in the area east of the Village of Alexander, and along the east side of NYS Rt. 98, is limited due to a flood hazard area. An existing water district that extends west of NYS Rt. 98 is within Agricultural District No. 1.

Water transmission mains are proposed to be constructed along NYS Rt. 98 between the Village of Alexander and the City of Batavia, and along Broadway Road (NYS Rt. 20) west of the Village of Alexander. As nearly all of the land along these corridors is within Agricultural District No. 1, new non-agricultural development should be discouraged.



2019 UPDATE COMMENTS

Neither the Town nor the Village of Alexander expressed an interest in revisions to the Smart Growth Plan or the Development Area boundaries during this review.

CITY OF BATAVIA

All of the City of Batavia is within a Development Area.

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS

The City did not ask for revisions to the Smart Growth Plan or the Development Area boundaries during this review.

TOWN OF BATAVIA

Priority Development Areas in the Town of Batavia include lands in and surrounding the City of Batavia, the industrial park adjoining the NYS Thruway, and the Genesee County Airport. Other Priority Development Areas are located along West Main Street Road (NYS Rt. 5) and Pearl Street Road (NYS Rt. 33) west of the City, and along portions of several local roads. A portion of the land surrounding the airport is currently within Agricultural District No. 2. However, this location is also highly attractive for economic development. Parcels within this Priority Development Area should be removed from the Agricultural District as it is renewed, in order to encourage non-agricultural economic development. The Priority Development Areas west of the City of Batavia, along NYS Rt. 5 and NYS Rt. 33, are generally outside of NYS Agricultural Districts. Areas with high quality soils have been excluded from the Priority Development area. New non-agricultural development outside of the Priority Development Areas should be discouraged. The Town also has uncertified Reserved Development Areas North of the NYS Thruway and West of NYS Rt. 98 as well as just South of the NYS Thruway and North of the Walmart on NYS Rt. 63, and north of NYS Rt. 5.

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS

The Town did not ask for revisions to the Development Area boundaries during this review. They are working to certify the existing Reserved Development Areas in the Town.

TOWN AND VILLAGE OF BERGEN

Land in and surrounding the Village of Bergen is designated as Priority Development Areas. These areas are generally outside of NYS Agricultural Districts, and are zoned for commercial, industrial, and higher density residential development. The Town has targeted the I-490 interchange area for future economic development. Public sewer service is available within the Village of Bergen.

The Townline Road (NYS Rt. 262) corridor west of the Village passes through land in Agricultural District No. 4. The Byron-Bergen Central School is located on the south side of NYS Rt. 262 at the intersection with West Bergen Road. Other land use in this corridor is limited to



scattered residences and agricultural structures. New non-agricultural development along this corridor, west of the designated Priority Development Areas, should be limited.

Water lines have been extended north of the Village along North Bergen Road (NYS Rt. 19). A cluster of residences is located at the intersection with and along Peachey Road to the County line. The area encompassing this group of houses is not within a NYS Agricultural District. Future non-farm development should be concentrated around the intersection, and should be restricted along the corridor south of this cluster and north of the Priority Development Area surrounding the Village.

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS

Neither the Town nor the Village of Bergen expressed an interest in revisions to the Smart Growth Plan or the Development Area boundaries during this review.

TOWN OF BETHANY

Priority Development Areas in the Town of Bethany are located around the hamlet of Bethany Center, at the intersection of Broadway Road (NYS Rt. 20) and Bethany Center Road (County Rt. 15), and around the hamlet of East Bethany, at the intersection of Ellicott Street Road (NYS Rt. 63) and East Bethany-Le Roy Road (County Rts. 35 and 2). Water transmission mains are proposed to be extended to serve these areas in the future.

The remaining land in the Town is predominantly within Agricultural District No. 1. Non-agricultural development within the NYS Agricultural Districts should be discouraged.

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS

The Town of Bethany is working on Comprehensive Plan amendments and is likely to propose changes to the Smart Growth Development Area boundaries at the 2022 review of the plan.

TOWN OF BYRON

The Smart Growth Plan identifies Priority Development Areas at the hamlet of Byron, intersection of Byron Holley Road (NYS Rt. 237) and Townline Road (NYS Rt. 262) and at the hamlet of South Byron, intersection of Byron Holley Road (NYS Rt. 237) and Walkers Corners Road (County Rt. 19). The NYS Rt. 237 corridor connecting the two hamlets is dominated by the Black Creek floodplain. Although existing zoning permits single-family homes on 20,000 sq. ft. lots, little developable land is available. Land along this corridor is also within Agricultural District No. 4. Non-agricultural development along this corridor should be limited.

The hamlet of Byron is also designated as a Priority Development Area, due to the availability of public sewer service and a concentration of existing homes and businesses. In 2005, a 78-acre area was added to this Priority Development Area. This addition excluded a 29-acre area around Black Creek that is located in a FEMA Flood Hazard Area and preserved 9 acres of wooded open



space. This wooded open space and the NYPA power lines provide a buffer between working farm lands and non-farm uses. The area added is zoned for residential use.

Public water is proposed to be extended along NYS Rt. 262 from the Village of Bergen into the Town of Byron. The land along the proposed transmission main is within County Agricultural District No. 4. Agricultural soils in this area are typically very high quality. Existing development is limited to scattered rural home sites and agricultural buildings. New non-agricultural development along this corridor should be limited.

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS

The Town of Byron recently adopted a new Comprehensive Plan and may propose changes to the Smart Growth Development Area boundaries at the 2022 review of the plan

TOWN OF DARIEN

The Town's largest Priority Development Area is located around the Darien Lakes Theme Park and the hamlets of Darien Center and Darien City along Broadway Road (NYS Rt. 20) and Alleghany Road (NYS Rt. 77). The other Priority Development Area is at the intersection of NYS Rt. 20 and Harlow Road (County Rt. 4), including the southwest portion of Darien Lakes State Park. Land within the Priority Development Areas is generally outside of NYS Agricultural Districts. In 2005, 257 acres of Priority Development Area were added to the Town joining what had been two separate Priority Development Areas around the Theme Park and the hamlets to the south. The area that was added is strategically located near Darien Lakes Theme Park and possesses several advantages for economic growth and utilities expansion as a result. Although 79.6 acres of these lands are in Agricultural District No. 1, only 10 acres of the 79.6 acres is working farmland. 11% of 79.6 acres is classified as Prime Farmland Soils and only 10% is classified as Farmland of Statewide Importance. The Town of Darien Comprehensive Plan targets this area for short term growth.

Most of the land within the Priority Development Areas in the southern portion of the Town is currently served by public water. Although the existing water district extends beyond the boundary of the Priority Development area, new non-agricultural development outside of the Priority Development Areas is not recommended.

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS

The Town of Darien will be working on Comprehensive Plan amendments and is likely to propose changes to the Smart Growth Development Area boundaries at the 2022 review of the plan.

TOWN AND VILLAGE OF ELBA

Land within and surrounding the Village of Elba is designated as a Priority Development Area. This area includes existing concentrations of residences, and is predominantly outside of a NYS



Agricultural District.

A future water transmission main is proposed to be constructed along Drake Street Road (NYS Rt. 262) west of Elba to the Village of Oakfield, and south to the City of Batavia along Oak Orchard Road (NYS Rt. 98). Land along this corridor is sparsely developed and is part of County Agricultural District No. 2. New non-agricultural development along this corridor should be discouraged.

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS

Neither the Town nor the Village of Elba requested revisions to the Smart Growth Plan or the Development Area boundaries during this review.

TOWN AND VILLAGE OF LEROY

Priority Development Areas in the Town of LeRoy are located around the Interchange of I-90 and I-490, and within and surrounding the Village of LeRoy. Although farmed, much of the land around the Interchange is outside of a NYS Agricultural District. A limited amount of residential development exists in this area. The Interchange is targeted for economic development due to its location, access to the Interstate highway system, and its direct access to the City of Rochester.

Land in the Priority Development area around the Village of LeRoy contains residential strip development along several local roads, industrial development southwest of the Village, commercial development along East Main Road (NYS Rt. 5) east of the Village, including the large quarry north of NYS Rt. 5 and east of the Village.

A water transmission main was constructed along Lake Street Road (NYS Rt. 19) north of the Village. Approximately one mile within this corridor is located between the Priority Development Areas surrounding the Village and at the Interchange. New non-agricultural development within this segment of the corridor should be discouraged.

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS

Neither the Town nor the Village of LeRoy requested revisions to the Smart Growth Plan or the Development Area boundaries during this review.

TOWN AND VILLAGE OF OAKFIELD

Priority Development Areas in the Town of Oakfield include land within and surrounding the Village of Oakfield, an area along South Pearl Road south of the Village, and along Lewiston Road (County Rt. 22) northwest of the Village. Oakfield's Priority Development area includes existing residential development, both south and northwest of the Village, and industrially zoned land southwest of the Village.

A future water transmission main is proposed along Drake Street Road (NYS Rt. 262) between the Village of Oakfield and the Village of Elba. Existing development in this area is characterized by



scattered residences and agricultural structures. New non-agricultural development along this corridor should be discouraged.

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS

Neither the Town nor the Village of Oakfield expressed an interest in revisions to the Smart Growth Plan or the Development Area boundaries during this review.

TOWN OF PAVILION

The Priority Development Area in the Town of Pavilion is located at the hamlet of Pavilion, around the intersection of Ellicott Street Road/Big Tree Road (NYS Rt. 63) and South Lake Road (NYS Rt. 19). The hamlet is currently served by public water and sewer.

A new transmission main was constructed to supply the hamlet with a new source of water (LeRoy system). This main was constructed along Dillon Road east of the hamlet, connecting to South Street Road (County Rt. 3) and Walker Road (County Rt. 20). As the land along the transmission main is located within Agricultural District No. 3, new non-agricultural development along this corridor should be discouraged.

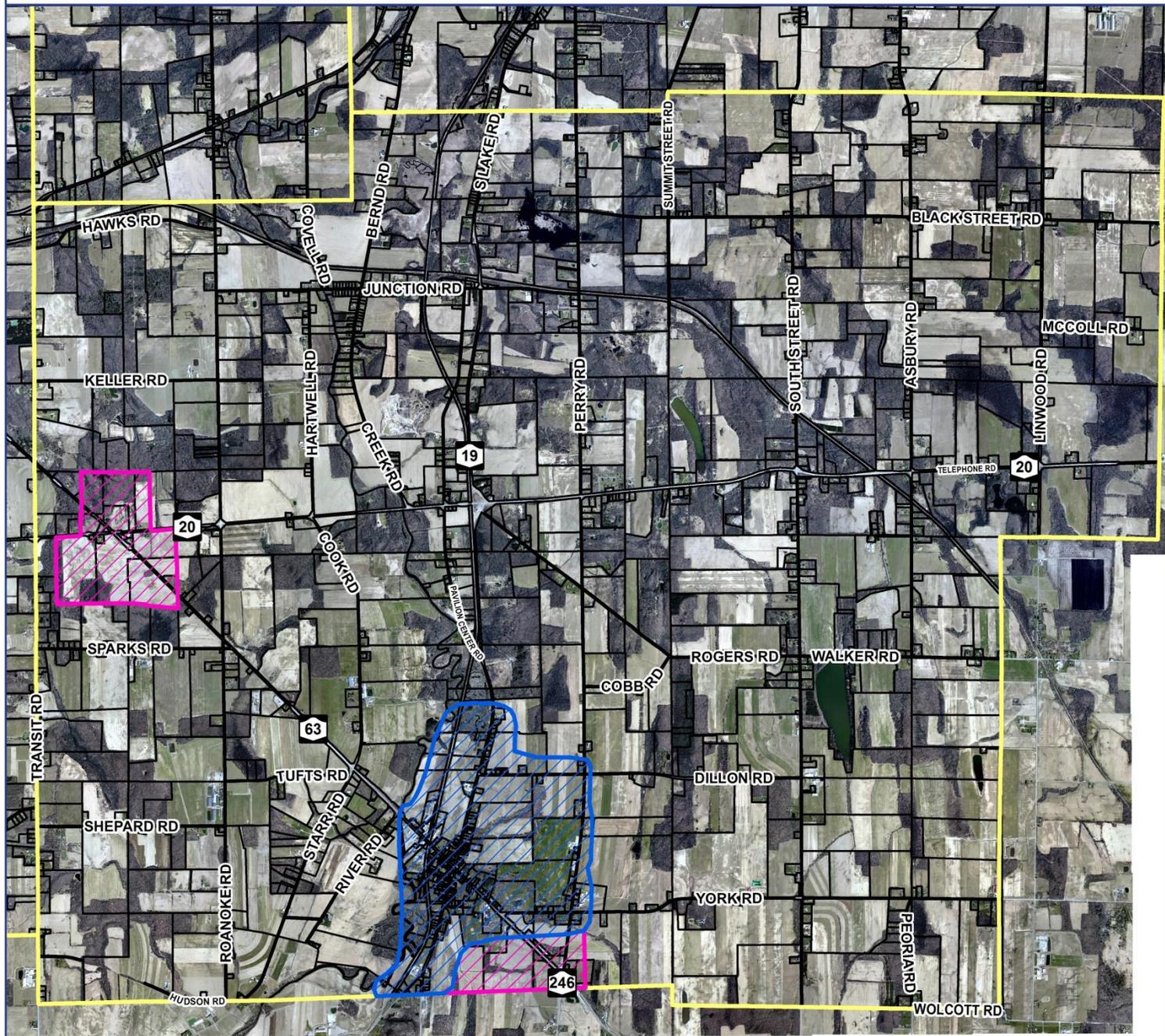
2019 UPDATE COMMENTS

The Town of Pavilion requested that two areas be added to its existing Smart Growth Priority Development Areas (see Map 4). As demonstrated by the table below, a total of 493 acres was proposed for addition to the Smart Growth Priority Development Area for the Town of Pavilion. Of these proposed additions, 440 acres are undeveloped. This total would be in addition to the 614 undeveloped acres of the current Smart Growth Priority Development Area. The Town of Pavilion did not propose that any land currently located in the Smart Growth Development Area be removed, however the Town was in favor of snapping the Smart Growth Areas to current tax parcel boundaries.

TOWN OF PAVILION - SMART GROWTH PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREA					
	Total (acres)	Undeveloped (acres)	Agricultural District (acres)	Currently Farmed (acres)	Strategic Farmland (acres)
Current	1,034	614	501	376	575
Proposed Additions	493	440	423	294	159

Map 4 Town of Pavilion Changes Proposed by the Town

GENESEE COUNTY SMART GROWTH PLAN 2019 Review Report



-  Priority Development Areas
-  Proposed Expansions
-  2019 Tax Parcels



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The Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Pavilion, updated in 2017, was referenced when evaluating the proposed additions. The areas under consideration are located in several classifications according to the Future Land Use map. The parcels in the hamlet of Texaco Town are slated to be used for both Industrial/Commercial. The parcels south of the hamlet of Pavilion are desired to be used in the future as Hamlet Residential, Hamlet Commercial and Rural Agriculture according to the Future Land Use map.

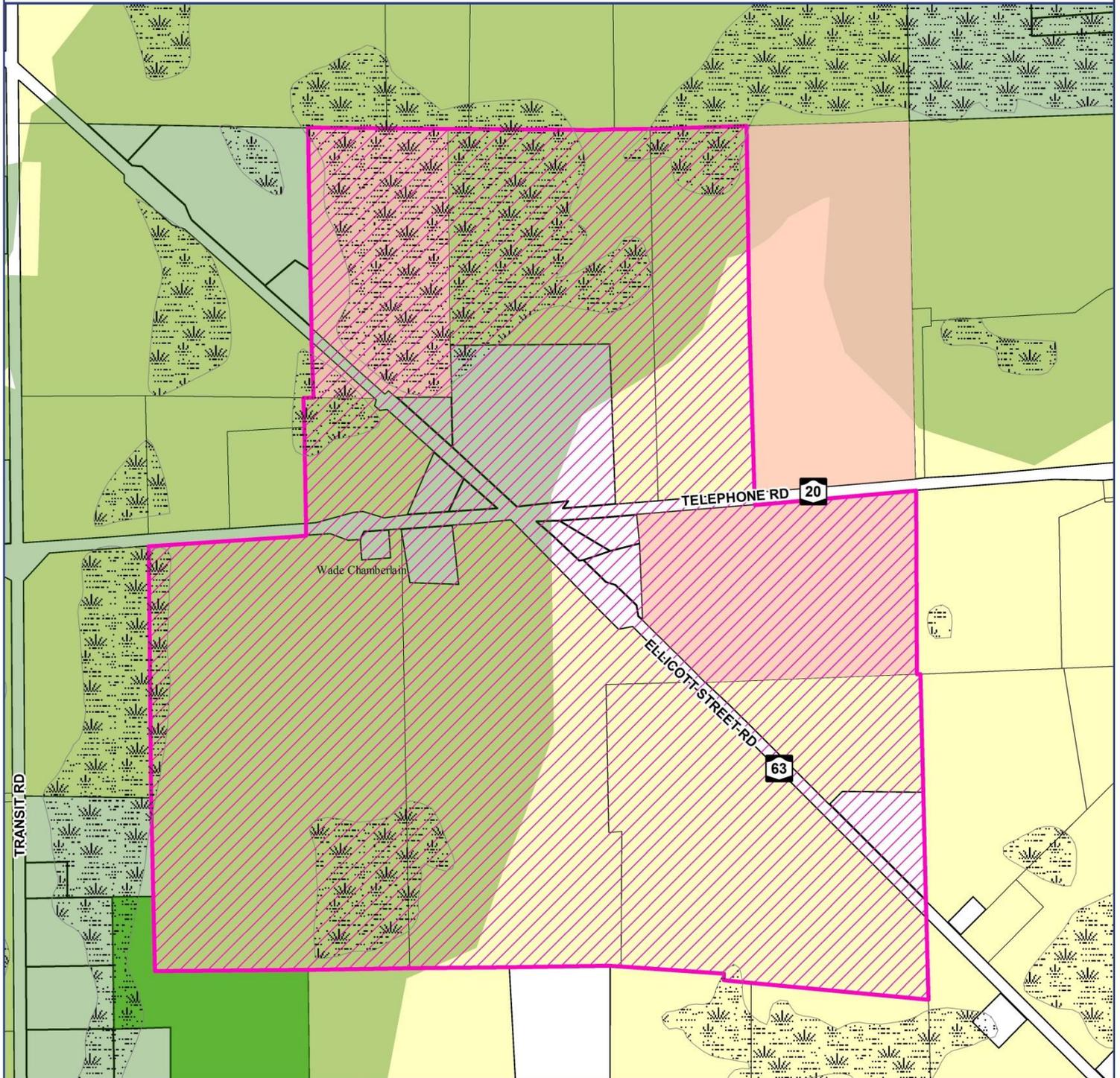
The current Zoning Law of the Town of Pavilion was also utilized as a tool for analysis of the above recommended additions to the Smart Growth Development Areas. The parcels located in the hamlet of Texaco Town are zoned Commercial and Agricultural-Residential-1. The parcels south of the hamlet of Pavilion are zoned Commercial, Residential and Agriculture-Residential-1.

An analysis of the proposed areas can be seen in Maps 5 and 6 in the following pages. The proposed expansion in the hamlet of Texaco Town includes mostly actively agricultural land enrolled in the Agricultural District Program. A few parcels at the intersection of NYS Rts. 20 and 63 are not enrolled and used for commercial businesses or are vacant land. Large parts of the land proposed north of the intersection are State designated wetlands and therefore have limited potential for development or agriculture but are important for the GGSG Ecological Network which connects the Oatka Creek Watershed in the Town of Pavilion to the Black Creek Watershed in the Town of Bethany (refer to Map 3). The NYS Agricultural District No. 3 covers the Town of Pavilion. This District is currently undergoing its eight-year review which allows land owners to add or remove land into the Agricultural District. Two parcels within the proposed area requested to be removed from the District (see Map 5).

The proposed expansion in the hamlet of Pavilion also includes mostly actively agricultural land enrolled in the Agricultural District Program. A few parcels at the intersection of NYS Rts. 246 and 63 are not enrolled and used for commercial businesses or are vacant land. Only one small parcel within the proposed area requested to be removed from the District (see Map 6).

Map 5
Town of Pavilion
Proposal Analysis - Texaco Town

GENESEE COUNTY
SMART GROWTH PLAN
2019 Review Report



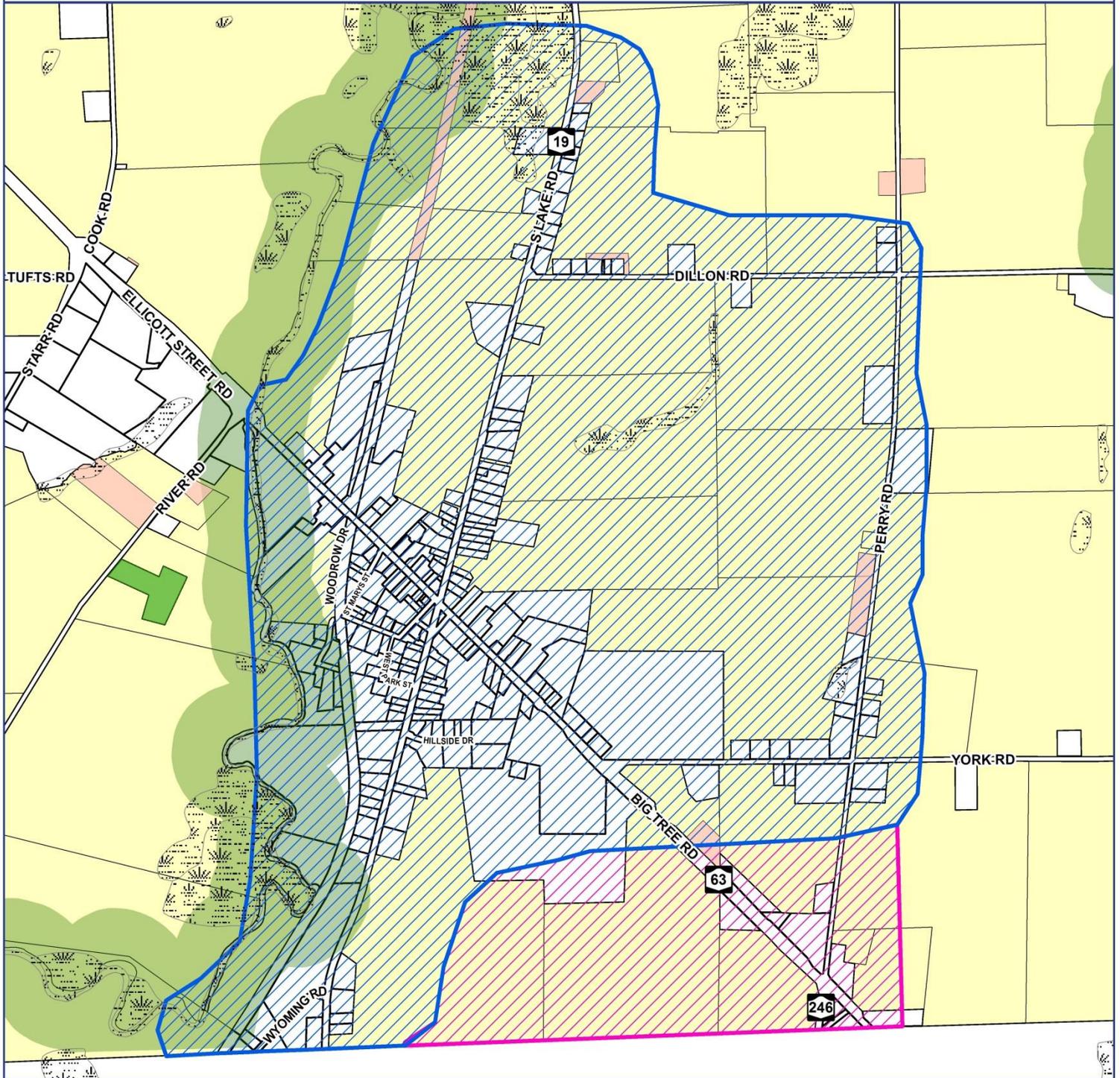
- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|
|  | Priority Development Areas | Ag District No. 3 Review |
|  | Proposed Expansions | Proposed Modifications |
|  | 2019 Tax Parcels |  Additions |
|  | Wetlands |  Deletions |
|  | GGSG Ecological Network | |
|  | NYS Agricultural Districts | |



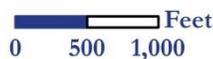
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Map 6
Town of Pavilion
Proposal Analysis - Pavilion Hamlet

GENESEE COUNTY
SMART GROWTH PLAN
2019 Review Report



- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|--------------------------|
|  | Priority Development Areas |  | Ag District No. 3 Review |
|  | Proposed Expansions |  | Proposed Modifications |
|  | 2019 Tax Parcels |  | Additions |
|  | Wetlands |  | Deletions |
|  | GGSG Ecological Network | | |
|  | NYS Agricultural Districts | | |



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The recommended changes to the Development Areas can be seen in Maps 7 and 8 in the following pages and the table below. It is recommended that a new 66-acre Priority Development Area be created in the hamlet of Texaco Town that includes the parcels currently zoned commercial, while avoiding wetlands/GGSG network in the northern part of the proposal. The only parcel in active agriculture that is recommended to be included in this new Priority Development Area is a 29 acre parcel that was requested to be removed from Agricultural District No. 3 per the 2019 review. This new Development Area would support the Town’s vision of strengthening the commercial nature of the hamlet while having a minimal impact on natural/agricultural resources.

In the hamlet of Pavilion, expansions to the Priority Development Area are recommended along the north side of NYS Rt. 63 where currently zoned commercial, on the south side of NYS Rt. 63, and squaring off parcels currently split by the boundary fronting on the east side NYS Rt. 19 south of the current Development Area. These expansions are offset by scaling back the Priority Development Area along Perry Rd. and along the Oatka Creek. The deletions west of the hamlet consist mainly of agricultural fields and wetlands of limited development potential due to their location between the creek and an active rail corridor. This deletion would also protect the GGSG corridor along the Oatka Creek. These recommendations strike the balance between future development and natural assets/agricultural protection. The recommendations also clarify the location of the Development Area Boundaries by adjusting them to existing tax parcel boundaries to the extent practicable.

TOWN OF PAVILION - SMART GROWTH PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT AREA					
	Total (acres)	Undeveloped (acres)	Agricultural District (acres)	Currently Farmed (acres)	Strategic Farmland (acres)
Current	1,034	614	501	376	575
Proposed Additions	493	440	423	294	159
Recommended Additions	157	128	110	88	73
Recommended Deletions	226	210	186	100	140
Recommended Net Change	-69	-82	-76	-22	-67

Map 7
Town of Pavilion
Recommended Changes - Texaco Town

GENESEE COUNTY
SMART GROWTH PLAN
2019 Review Report



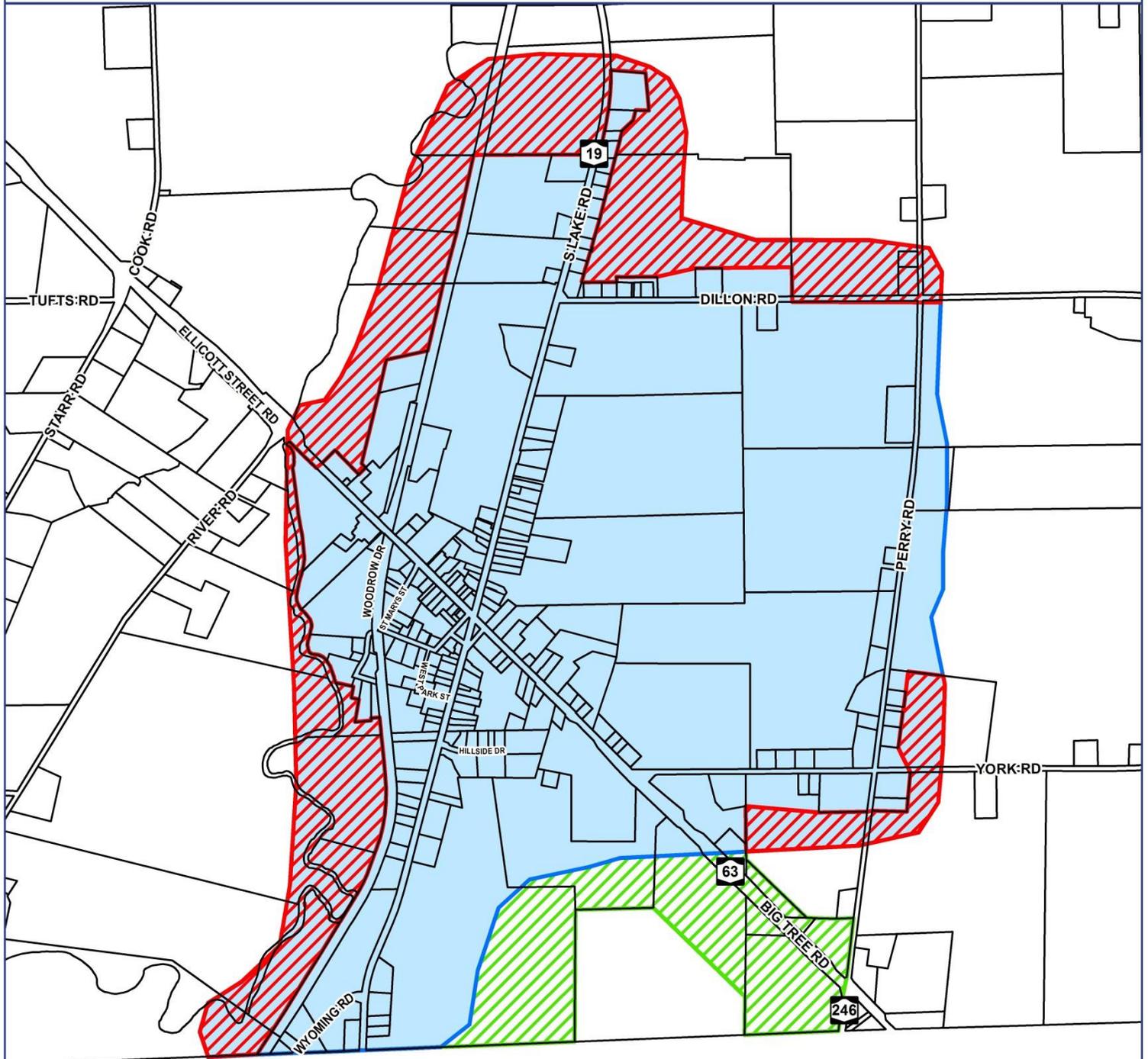
-  Priority Development Areas
-  Recommend Expansions
-  Recommend Deletions
-  2019 Tax Parcels



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Map 8
Town of Pavilion
Recommended Changes - Pavilion Hamlet

GENESEE COUNTY
SMART GROWTH PLAN
2019 Review Report



-  Priority Development Areas
-  Recommend Expansions
-  Recommend Deletions
-  2019 Tax Parcels



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TOWN OF PEMBROKE

A Priority Development Area is located around the NYS Thruway Exit 48A Interchange extending south around the hamlet of Brick House Corners at the intersection of Main Road (NYS Rt. 5) and Alleghany Road (NYS Rt. 77) and reaching west along NYS Rt. 5 to the County line. Other Priority Development Areas within the Town of Pembroke are located around the hamlets of East Pembroke and Cooksville, around the Village of Corfu, and around the hamlet of Indian Falls in the northwesterly part of the Town around the intersection of NYS Rt. 77 and Akron Road (County Rt. 11). Most of the land within Pembroke's Priority Development Areas is outside of NYS Agricultural Districts.

Water transmission mains are proposed to be built in the future along NYS Rt. 77, from Corfu north into the Town of Alabama. A Water transmission main was built along NYS Rt. 5, between NYS Rt. 77 and the Priority Development Area around the hamlet of East Pembroke. Only a small portion of the land in these corridors is within County Agricultural District No. 1. However, in order to encourage a compact pattern of development and to retain the rural character of the areas along these corridors, new non-agricultural development should be discouraged.

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS

Neither the Town of Pembroke nor the Village of Corfu requested revisions to the Smart Growth Plan or the Development Area boundaries during this review.

TOWN OF STAFFORD

Priority Development Areas within the Town of Stafford are located along Main Road (NYS Rt. 5), between the Batavia Town line and the hamlet of Stafford at the intersection with NYS Rt. 237, around the hamlet of Morganville at NYS Rt. 237 and Morganville Road, and along the Batavia Town line between NYS Rt. 5 and the NYS Thruway. Existing development in this area consists primarily of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional development along the roadside. Most of the land in these areas is outside of NYS Agricultural Districts.

A water transmission main was constructed along NYS Rt. 5 through the Town of Stafford. East of the hamlet, roadside development is relatively sparse, and most of the land is within Agricultural District No. 3. New non-agricultural development along this corridor should be discouraged.

2019 UPDATE COMMENTS

The Town of Stafford initially expressed interest in creating a Priority Development Area at the hamlet of Peaviner Corner (NYS Rt. 237 & NYS Rt. 33), but withdrew the request following a meeting with the Department.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TOWN OF ELBA

FIRSTADOPTED: July 8, 1999

UPDATED: May 2004

REVISED: May 2007

Town of Elba

7 Maple Avenue

P.O. Box 295

Elba, New York 14058-0295

Phone (585) 757 – 2762

Fax (585) 757 – 9200

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TOWN OF ELBA COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE

ORIGINAL COMMITTEE

Paul J. Ballard, Chairman
Edward Baldwin, Village of Elba
Scott Benz, Town Historian
Anthony Fasano, Town of Elba
David Franke, Planning Board
Kenneth Post, Planning Board
Leon Watson, Planning Board
Carl Yunker, Planning Board

2004 UPDATE COMMITTEE

David Franke, Chairman
Jeff Johnston, Village of Elba
Scott Benz, Town Historian
Anthony Fasano, Town of Elba
Kelly Schuler, Town of Elba
Paul J. Ballard, Planning Board
Daniel Post, Planning Board
Robert Zipfel, Planning Board
Andrew Wormuth, Planning Board
Peter Balonek, Zoning Board

2007 REVISION COMMITTEE

Andrew J. Wormuth, Chairman
Paul J. Ballard, Planning Board
Daniel Post, Planning Board
Robert Zipfel, Planning Board
Michael Riner, Planning Board

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**ELBA TOWN BOARD**

**1999**

**Anthony Fasano, Town Supervisor**  
**Wade Chamberlain, Town Board**  
**Lois Petote, Town Board**  
**Paul Reak, Town Board**  
**Earl Roth, Town Board**  
**Debra Mosier, Town Clerk**

**2004**

**Anthony Fasano, Town Supervisor**  
**Wade Chamberlain, Town Board**  
**Kelly Schuler, Town Board**  
**Deborah Bell, Town Board**  
**Joseph Bridge, Town Board**  
**Debra Mosier, Town Clerk**

**2007**

**Lucine Kauffman, Town Supervisor**  
**Wade Chamberlain, Town Board**  
**Deborah Bell, Town Board**  
**Joseph Bridge, Town Board**  
**Andrew J. Wormuth, Town Board**  
**Debra Mosier, Town Clerk**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....Page 4

Part 1 - Current Status and Trends In The Community .....Page 7

Part 2 - Implications for the Town .....Page 11

Part 3 - General Directions From the Residents .....Page  
14

Part 4 - Specific Recommendations .....Page 20

Appendices .....Page 22

## **INTRODUCTION**

This comprehensive plan is intended to serve Town of Elba officials as a guide for future decision making. It describes a vision of the people of the Elba community regarding development within the Town. The general guidelines and specific recommendations identified in this plan provide direction for governmental bodies in both establishing general policy and acting on individual cases. Knowledge of these guidelines and recommendations also provides guidance to individual citizens of the Town as they make decisions in the planning of their private affairs. Using this comprehensive plan, both governmental bodies and individual citizens stand to realize outcomes within our community which include effective use of Town resources and produces a high level of resident satisfaction.

Prior to the adoption of this document, there has never been a comprehensive master plan for the Elba community. This comprehensive plan is a product of several actions. One of the first actions was to seek representation from various municipal groups from both the Village and the Town. Other actions included a review of plans used in other similar nearby communities. Census and other statistical data regarding the current status of matters within the Town was also collected, reviewed and summarized. Much of that data is reported on the following pages in the appendices. The most significant action taken was the surveying of residents of the Town of Elba. This survey sought to obtain citizen input regarding their wishes for the future character and development of Elba. A detailed account of the responses to the survey also appears in the appendices of this document. In 2004 the Update Committee updated the data in Appendix 2 through 7 with 2000 Census Data. A review of that data was also used to update Part 1 of the Comprehensive Plan. In 2006 another citizen survey was conducted to see if there were changes to how people feel about the character and development of Elba.

The original review of citizen input yielded several themes. These included a notable preference for maintaining the rural character of the community. Most persons desired modest growth at most. On the other hand, there was a two to one interest in encouraging some light industry with an equal number of people looking to increase employment opportunities and to increase tax revenue. Similarly, some commercial retail development was desired, most notably more businesses selling groceries or hardware. A number of residents also indicated a desire for additional recreational space or facilities. Water and gas services outside the Village also ranked high in unmet needs cited by the survey of citizens.

The 2006 survey reaffirmed the results of the original survey. There is still a strong preference for the Town of Elba to preserve its rural character and for Town zoning regulations to protect and preserve the agricultural resources in the Town. Respondents were also generally in favor of commercial wind towers and for the Town to adopt incentive zoning provisions that would allow the community as a whole to benefit if certain zoning requirements were waived. Municipal water was again ranked very high as a service residents desired in addition to sewer, natural gas, high speed Internet and cable TV. Numerous comments about Elba's water and the need for high quality municipal water were received on the survey. Since the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, many Town officials have also received comments from residents about the water situation in the Town.

The Elba Planning Board endorses the vision suggested by the citizen input. It is the Board's judgment that the Town of Elba should seek to preserve its rural nature and agricultural base. The Planning Board believes there is room for limited compatible residential and light industrial development; but the current character of the community is what has attracted and is what keeps residents of the Town here. That character should not be radically altered. The general guidelines and specific recommendations of this comprehensive plan reflect this vision.

The remaining pages of this document are divided into four sections. Each part, and a description of its content, is listed below:

Part 1 - Current Status and Trends In The Community. This section presents information which portrays the Town as it now exists. This section also describes how the Town has changed between 1970 and now.

Part 2 - Implications for the Town. This section lists implications for the future of Elba which follow from the analysis of the data in Part 1.

Part 3 - General Directions From the Residents. Given the data and implications identified in Part 1 and Part 2, plus the input from the citizen survey, this section cites the general directions in which the Town ought to proceed.

Part 4 - Specific Recommendations. This section lists specific recommendations for action which follow from the general guidelines cited in Part 3.

Full implementation of the Part 4 recommendations will require alignment of the Town's zoning and zoning regulations. It will also require other significant actions by the Town such as seeking State and Federal grants, revision of the property tax structure, and undertaking some capital improvements.

Implementation of this comprehensive plan should be envisioned as a process which will require many years to complete

The first steps in implementing the recommendations should begin soon. In some instances, action should proceed soon simply because so much time is required to achieve the outcome. In other instances, failure to act on recommendations in a timely manner may result in undesirable changes that are irreversible. This danger is particularly the case in three important areas: preservation of prime agricultural land, appropriate siting of business and industry, and the types of housing which are allowed and encouraged.

As with any plan, it is essential that the comprehensive plan be a "living" document. It is essential that this plan actually inform and direct the day-to-day business of the Town. To insure this outcome, several steps are recommended:

- 1) The Planning Board should annually review progress toward achieving the goals set out in the comprehensive plan. The results of this review should be communicated in writing to the Town Council.
- 2) All Town officials should be provided with a copy of the comprehensive plan and be directed by the Town Council to align their actions on behalf of the Town of Elba with this plan.
- 3) Copies of the comprehensive plan should be made available to residents. Availability of this document should be periodically publicized to the community. The Comprehensive Plan should be available from the Town's website at [www.elbanewyork.com](http://www.elbanewyork.com).
- 4) The Town Board should designate an official to serve as an advocate for the comprehensive plan. This official should assume the responsibility of reviewing each proposed action of the Town in terms of whether such action would be consistent with the comprehensive plan.
- 5) The Town Planning Board should annually update a list of businesses operating within the Town of Elba. This listing should be the basis for an encouraged growth of business and industry and provide a basis for any control of development within a certain sector.
- 6) The Town Council should annually review with the Village Board the kinds, locations and status of Special Use Permits and Zoning Variances issued within the Town and Village.

## **PART 1 - Data Pertaining to the Town of Elba Current Status and Trends (1999)**

This section presents information which portrays the Town as it now exists. This section also describes how the Town has changed between 1970 and now.

### **TOTAL POPULATION.** (See Appendix 2.)

1. The 2000 population of 2,439 is a slight increase in the Town population.
2. The 1990 population was 2,407. This was a slight decrease from 1980 which was 2,487.
3. This growth is less than the growth experienced by neighboring communities of Byron, Batavia, and Albion.
4. This increase is less than the 3.7% growth for Genesee County as a whole.
5. Elba's population over the last 30 years has fluctuated slightly.

1970 - 2,312  
1980 - 2,487  
1990 - 2,407  
2000 - 2,439

#### 2004 Review:

- The population continues to fluctuate only slightly with a net gain of only 25 people in 10 years.
- Elba had a +.3% increase in population, similar to the +.5% increase in Genesee County.
- Byron showed a +6.3% increase, Batavia a -2.5 decrease, and Oakfield a -4% decrease in population.

### **AGE DISTRIBUTION.** (See Appendix 3)

1. The median age has increased from 29.1 years to 33.3 years in the last 10 years.
2. This change is primarily the result of three changes:
  - a. Among persons under 20, a drop from 39% of the total population to 32%.
  - b. Among persons 21 to 54, an increase from 46% of the total population to 47%.
  - c. Among persons 55 and over, an increase from 16% of the total population to 21%.

#### 2004 Review:

- The median age continues to increase in the Town of Elba, +3.3 years.

**EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND.** (See Appendix 4)

1. Approximately 46.8% of the adults have attained high school diplomas. This is more than 30% less than those with at least a high school diploma in Genesee County and 28% less than New York State.
2. Approximately 9.1% of the residents have at least a Bachelor's degree. Genesee County averages nearly 5% more people and New York State averages 14% more people with this level of education.
3. It is interesting to note that although the educational background of Elba residents is 30% lower than either Genesee County or the State, as a whole, the average income is higher.

2004 Review:

- There has been an increase in the percentage of persons with a high school education.
- There has been an increase in the percentage of persons with higher education backgrounds.
- The high school graduation rate is higher.

**FAMILY INCOME.** (See Appendix 5)

1. The median family income in 1990 was \$39,596, which is \$4,000 higher than the Genesee County average.
2. In 1990 about 5.4% of Elba residents lived below the poverty line. That figure is almost 3% lower than in Genesee County as a whole.
3. In the last 20 years, the median family income has grown at an average rate equal to over 4% per year.
4. The median family income has increased from slightly below that of the Genesee County figure in 1970 to well above in 1990.
5. In the last 20 years, the percentage of Elba residents living below the poverty level has increased slightly.

2004 Review:

- The median family income in the Town of Elba continues to be higher than that of Genesee County.
- Elba residents below the poverty line is smaller than that of Genesee County.

**OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND OF THE POPULATION.** (See Appendix 6)

1. The Elba civilian labor force continues to increase, however, there has been a decreased rate of growth. There were about half as many workers added to the total civilian labor force from 1980 to 1990, as there were from 1970 to 1980.
2. There was a significant decrease (40%) in the number of persons listing farming as their occupation from 1980 to 1990.
3. Over 20% of the persons in Elba list their occupations as managerial or professional from 1980 to 1990.

2004 Review:

- The workforce in Elba appears to be relatively stable.
- The number of residents describing their work as either managerial or professional has increased.

**HOUSEHOLDS AND RESIDENCES.** (See Appendix 7)

1. The number of households has increased over the past ten years.
2. The number of residences in Elba continues to increase. The number of residences added in from 1980 to 1990 is half the number added from 1970 to 1980.
3. The average value of a home in Elba has nearly doubled every ten years through 1990.

2004 Review:

- From 1990 to 2000, 45 new houses were built in the Town of Elba.

**BUSINESSES OPERATING IN ELBA.** (See Appendix 8)

1. There are approximately 75 businesses operating in the Town of Elba.
2. Of the businesses listed 70% have been operating for 10 years or longer in Elba.
3. The large majority of businesses operating in Elba are service oriented.
4. 33% of the businesses in Elba are agricultural related.

**BUSINESSES OPERATING IN ELBA.** (Continued)

2004 Review:

- There are approximately 106 businesses in the Town of Elba.
- Many of the businesses are service or agriculture related.
- A number of businesses listed in 1999 are no longer in business. The increase from 1999 may be more due to a more thorough listing than the addition of new businesses.

## **Part 2 - Data Implications for the Town**

This section lists implications for the future of Elba which are derived from the data in Part 1.

**POPULATION:** If the past 30 years serve as a guide, it appears that Elba is likely to continue only slight growth in population, probably at a rate much less than for Genesee County as a whole. Any real growth would probably be stimulated by new streets being opened up within the Village of Elba or if present farmland is sold as building lots within the Town.

**AGE DISTRIBUTION:** Data collected indicates that there will be an aging of the population within the Town. This and the survey results suggests that attention should be given to the needs of older residents which may include housing designed to accommodate them. There is a slight increase in all age groups.

**EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:** The latest census information shows that 85% of the residents have attained a high school diploma, which is higher than that of Genesee County. Building additions and renovations at Elba Central School and attainment of the New York State standards should continue to show improvement in educational levels in the community.

**INCOME DISTRIBUTION:** The latest statistics indicate that the median family income in the Town of Elba is about \$3,500 higher than the average of Genesee County. The average rate of growth of family income has exceeded the cost of living over the past thirty years. This apparent wealth may account for the continued concentration by families seeking and living in conventional middle class single-family housing. Some of the increase in household income may also be due to multiple income earners in families.

**OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND:** The census data is somewhat misleading when it comes to agriculture in the community. Some respondents may have listed themselves as laborers, managers, or even professionals. The total workforce in agriculture has increased on most farms in the Town of Elba. There are fewer farms, but they are larger. There is about the same amount of acreage in farming now as in the past. The role of agriculture in the economic life of the community and the importance of its influence on the character of the community is paramount.

**HOUSING UNITS AND HOUSEHOLDS:** Although the population has remained fairly flat in the Town, there has been an increase in the number of households. Between 1970 and 1990 the average value of homes in Elba have doubled every ten years; this, however, slowed in 2000. A lack of available building lots may be factors contributing to the slower pace of construction in the Village.

**RECREATIONAL FACILITIES:** Within the Town there are considerable land and limited water resources. Some of this property, which has the potential for recreational development, is public land and the rest is privately owned; the public property is in the Village. The school district has a playground and a number of playing fields which are used by the students and residents alike. The Village has refurbished the tennis courts and made a skateboarding/in-line

**Part 2 - Data Implications for the Town**, Continued

skating area. The Village Park also has a playground, playing fields and three covered pavilions. There is also an old railroad bed, which is now privately owned, which runs through the Town which could be used for hiking and biking if it were developed; it is being used for snowmobiling. There are very few water-related recreational areas, other than hunting within the swamps and wetlands. The school serves as a facility for children and adult recreation programs, including a walking program, during the winter months. There is also a fitness center and weight room at the school, but it is not adequately equipped for public use.

**EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES:** The educational facilities in the Town include Elba Central School a small public school that serves children from Kindergarten through Twelfth Grades in one building. The school also provides athletic and other extra curricular activities for students and the school is a large part of Elba's community identity. New York State has initiated programs raising student performance standards and has provided additional building aid to districts which need to do capital improvement projects to build their capacity to provide the educational program which is necessary. The 2002 building project included the construction of an auditorium, music rooms, connected the old bus garage (Annex) to the main building, added classrooms and added the fitness center. An ongoing community input group studies the suggestions of faculty, staff, administration and the community to determine the facility needs of the district. In addition to any construction which may be required, there is an identified need for significant repair and renovation to the existing 1938 building. The school and Town are closely linked and maintaining the school is tied to both the population and tax base in the Town to support the cost of having a small school district.

**MUNICIPAL SERVICES:** The absence of municipal water and sewer services beyond the Village of Elba diminishes the likelihood that any type of major housing developments or the construction of industries requiring large amounts of good water will occur within the Town. Should the Town develop or Village extend municipal water services, a change in the pattern of development may occur. The scattered nature of housing outside the Village, however makes water and sewer work expensive and would likely exceed the capacity of the existing facilities. The County water project leaves the option for future water and sewer development in the Village and Town.

**TRANSPORTATION:** There is no access to rail transportation within the Town. Route 98 and 262 are major North-South and East-West commercial trucking routes and provide easy access to major highways. Elba is approximately 5 miles from the Batavia exit of the New York State Thruway. The Genesee County Airport is about 4 miles to the South of Elba. The present airport has undergone a renovation to extend the runway to accommodate larger airplanes. Rochester International Airport and Buffalo International Airport are both approximately 45 minutes from Elba.

**TOPOGRAPHY AND SOIL:** The topography and soil of most of the land in Elba is suitable for housing, industry, commercial development and agriculture. 57% (14,594 acres) of the land can be classified with a High Yield Potential, 32% (8,203 acres) as Medium Potential and 11% (2,920 acres) as Low Yield Potential. A color coded map of the soil resources in the Town was developed based on soil type, yield potential and slope and is included as part of this

Comprehensive Plan. The suitability of Elba's land resources poses a potential for conflict as all four uses impact on the others. These conflicts must be addressed and monitored through zoning and zoning enforcement. The most valuable agricultural land should be zoned in a manner that assures its protection from non-farm uses.

**AGRICULTURE:** Agriculture is the predominant industry in the Town and is a key component of the rural character resident's desire. Farms in Elba are a combination of large vegetable, dairy and row crop operations. There are also smaller roadside vegetable stands, organic farms and greenhouses and nurseries. Many residents are employed on farming operations and numerous businesses that serve and support farms can be found in the Town. The abundance of farmland and crops combined with the implementation of various conservation practices protects the environment and provides excellent habitat for wildlife. Agriculture provides quality hunting and other outdoor recreational activities that are enjoyed by residents. Elba is home to the "Elba Muck" and is known as the "Onion Capital of the World". Two farm businesses located in the Town have been listed in the Top 100 Farms in the Nation by a leading Agricultural Magazine and they are known as very progressive and innovative businesses. The production, processing and sale of products from Elba farms generates employment, economic activity, income and tax revenue that benefits the Town and residents while farmland requires a lower level of public services. Zoning regulations that continue to support the Town's agricultural resources and businesses should be adopted as a way to preserve the rural character of the Town and to ensure the continued economic contributions that farms make to the community.

### **Part 3 - General Directions From the Residents**

Given the data and implications identified in Part 1 and Part 2, plus the input from the citizen survey, this section cites the general directions in which the Town ought to proceed over the next 20 years.

#### **RESIDENT SURVEY SUMMARY (1999)**

[NOTE (2004): No new survey has been taken.]

Over one quarter of the surveys mailed out were returned, which represents an over 40% response rate from residents. This is a very significant sample.

1. Most respondents live in a conventional home on a private lot. Only about 6% of the surveys received are from residents living in either an apartment or mobile home.

**Implication:** The residents responding to the survey reflect the general proportion of persons living in the various types of housing found in the community.

2. The respondents returning surveys are in proportion to the populations of people living in the Town or Village. The survey is, therefore, considered representative of the people living in each.

**Implication:** People in both the Village and Town have an equal interest in the community and recognize that circumstances in one part of the community affect the other.

3. Nearly three quarters of the respondents have lived in the Town of Elba for over 10 years. Residents living in the community from 0-5 years or 6-10 years are nearly equally distributed between the two ranges. Based on the number of surveys returned and the responses to the questions, it appears that both long term and more recent residents have an interest in the future of the Town.

**Implication:** It can be postulated that these voices have been expressed because they came to Elba and/or continue to live in Elba because they like the nature of the community and want the community to stay as close to the way it is as possible.

**Recommendation:** Town and Village government should continue to take input from members of the community as they have an interest in the affairs which impact on their way of life. While listening to individuals is important, government must be representative, keeping the welfare of the entire community in the forefront.

## **RESIDENT SURVEY SUMMARY**, Continued

4. All but 3 1/2 % of the respondents think that at least some importance must be placed on the rural character of the community.

**Implication:** A large majority think that the rural character of Elba is very important.

**Recommendation:** Zoning regulations and governmental actions should reflect this primary directive from the community at large.

5. More than half of the respondents thought that there is some degree of importance to having more housing built in the Town. Less than half thought that the need for more housing was an important issue.

**Implication:** This information, taken with responses to other parts of the survey, indicate support for modest addition of housing which keeps the population growth of Elba on a relatively slow pace.

**Recommendation:** The Town Board should review annually the building permits, land separations, and special use permits issued as a basis for determining the need to revise zoning laws. This review should be shared with the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Town Planning Board in a summary format.

6. 82% of the respondents felt that the preservation of the rural character of the community is more important than housing issues.

**Implication:** The majority of community members wish to maintain the rural character of the Town above all else.

**Recommendation:** The Town Board should insure that the types of housing constructed are compatible with the rural nature of the community.

7. In selecting housing preferences to be added in Elba, some of the respondents selected multiple options. The large majority favored conventional homes. Other options in order of preferences were mobile homes on private lots, mobile homes in mobile home parks, low income housing and more apartments. 28% of the respondents favored senior citizen housing.

**Implications:** Most respondents to the survey live in conventional homes on private lots and want to maintain that feel within the community.

As the citizenry of Elba become older the desire for senior citizen housing increases. The rural character makes Elba attractive to senior citizens because the community is quiet, relatively crime-free, and a place they have called home for years. The rural nature of Elba,

## **RESIDENT 1999 SURVEY SUMMARY**, Continued

however, presents problems for any senior citizen who is not mobile; the community has very few services.

**Recommendation:** Planners of such a senior citizen housing project should consider a low maintenance, single level facility which provides for social interaction, access to the limited services in the community, access to larger nearby communities and one which would be compatible with the rural character of the community.

8. In setting a priority for the housing needed to be added in Elba, again all options offered received some favorable response. The largest number of respondents agreed with the results in survey question #7: highest priority to conventional homes, followed by senior citizen housing. The other options received scant support.

**Implication:** There is minimal support for housing other than conventional homes on private lots, with the exception of senior citizen housing.

**Recommendation:** Restrict the creation of any new mobile home park, housing subdivision, or apartment complex authorizations.

9. There were 276 households responding to the survey. Responses from those who do not have, but would like to have utility services indicates a strong desire for residential natural gas service (48%), followed by municipal water (43%), and sewer lines (34%). A significant number of residents were also interested in cable television.

**Implication:** A substantial number of respondents are interested in additional utility services.

**Recommendation:** The Town Board should complete a cost of services study for the provision of services within the Town of Elba and present it to the residents for consideration.

10. The respondents to the survey expressed an interest in having more retail and service oriented businesses.

**Implication:** A number of respondents are interested in convenience of services, however, past history of the businesses in the community indicates that it is tough to compete and continue to operate on such a low volume of customers.

**Recommendation:** The Town Board should complete a study of past and present businesses in the community and work with the Genesee County Chamber of Commerce and GEDC (Genesee Economic Development Center) to develop a plan to entice compatible retail business.

**RESIDENT SURVEY SUMMARY**, Continued

into the community.

11. Light industry is favored by about two thirds of the respondents.

**Implication:** The level of response was not consistent with the overwhelming support of the preservation of the rural character of the Town. The postulation is, therefore, that the industry should be of a type and nature to fit into the rural character of the community.

**Recommendation:** The Town Planning Board should review any requests to establish light industrial operations in the community and insure that such a business is compatible with the character of the area in which it is being placed. Further, the Town Board should study the types of light industry presently in the community and identify any benefits, problems, etc. for the Town.

12. Equal numbers of those favoring light industry think that light industry should be in the Town to provide employment opportunities and to support the tax revenue of the Town.

**Implication:** Residents in favor of light industry do not have a clear agreement as to why it should be located in the Town. The respondents in favor of employment opportunities could easily reach light industry operated outside the Town of Elba.

**Recommendation:** Same as #11.

13. An overwhelming majority (92%) of respondents are opposed to the introduction of moderate or heavy industry in the community.

**Implication:** The community feels that any type of heavy or moderate industry is not desirable or compatible with the Town.

**Recommendation:** Local government officials should avoid encouraging any development of moderate or heavy industry in the Town of Elba.

14. About two thirds of the respondents oppose the creation of an industrial park to encourage industries to locate in the Town.

**Implication:** It may be surmised that those in favor of an industrial park view it as the most tolerable situation, if it were to happen, because it would have the least impact on the rural character of the community.

**Recommendation:** There is no overwhelming support for an industrial park, therefore, even light industry should be scattered throughout the community and not concentrated in one location.

**RESIDENT SURVEY SUMMARY**, Continued

15. About one third of the respondents favored the Town providing hiking trails. About one quarter favored Town support for biking trails, picnic areas and playing fields for organized sports.

**Implication:** Respondents expressed a notable interest for more recreational activities in the community.

**Recommendation:** The Town Board should create a cost and feasibility study for creating and maintaining hiking trails, biking trails, picnic areas and playing fields.

16. Approximately two thirds of the respondents favor population growth as in the past thirty years. Slightly over one quarter of those answering the question would favor no further change in population. Only about 7% of the respondents favor an increase in population for the community.

**Implication:** A vast majority of residents do not favor any trend change in the population of the community. Increased population has a direct effect on the "small" school which many favor.

**Recommendation:** Same as #5 and #8.

17. The idea of setting aside "forever green" areas of land, to be owned and operated by the Town, was favored to some degree (moderate to strong support) by 81% of the respondents.

**Implication:** Respondents associate the rural character of the Town with the green open areas of land. Much of the land in the Town is agricultural. The residents would be willing to have the Town purchase and operate a forever green space.

**Recommendation:** The Town Board should create a feasibility study for such an endeavor.

## **2006 SURVEY SUMMARY**

The 2006 Survey was sent to obtain an update on how the citizens felt about the importance of maintaining Elba's rural character and agricultural resources. Since those were significant findings of the first survey and those desires heavily influence this Comprehensive Plan, it was necessary to make sure that they were still applicable today.

**Implication:** Results from the survey indicate that Elba's rural character and agricultural resources are still important to the citizens.

**Recommendation:** The Town should adopt zoning regulations to protect and preserve the Town's agricultural resources.

Interest in commercial wind farms within the County has become a topic that has required town's to address possible sighting of commercial wind towers with new zoning regulations. In order to determine how residents feel about commercial wind towers being located in the Town, questions relating to commercial wind towers were asked.

**Implication:** Most people feel that commercial wind towers would not affect the rural character of the Town and they would support a commercial wind energy project if one was proposed in the Town.

**Recommendation:** The Town should adopt zoning regulations that allow land owners to place commercial wind towers on their property.

The prospect of a project such as commercial wind towers raises the situation of whether a project that could benefit an individual(s) but also impact the community at large is an acceptable practice. Incentive zoning is an option that towns can adopt where the town as a whole could benefit from waiving certain zoning requirements on a case by case basis.

**Implication:** Residents would prefer the Town to have the option of waiving certain zoning recommendations on a case-by-case basis if the community as a whole could benefit from doing so.

**Recommendation:** The Town should adopt Incentive Zoning Regulations.

## **Part 4 - Specific Recommendations**

This section lists specific recommendations for action which follow from the general guidelines cited in Part 3.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF MUNICIPAL SERVICES.**

**1) Recommendation:** Town and Village government should take input from members of the community regarding eliminating duplication of municipal services. It would seem prudent for the Town and Village officials to consider a survey of citizens on this topic and complete a study of similar size communities which have experienced mergers.

**2) Recommendation:** The Town Board should continually evaluate the feasibility and availability of providing the following services that residents have identified as being important: natural gas, municipal water, sewer, high speed Internet and cable TV within the Town of Elba. When appropriate, the Town should work to bring these services to Town residents.

### **HOUSING DEVELOPMENT.**

**1) Recommendation:** Zoning regulations and governmental actions should reflect the primary directive from the community at large which desires to maintain the rural character of the community above all else.

**2) Recommendation:** The Town Board should establish a meeting date, at least yearly, to review the building permits issued for new construction as a basis for determining the need for controls in the types and number of new houses added in the community.

**3) Recommendation:** Planners of any senior citizen housing project should consider a low maintenance, single level facility which provides for social interaction, access to the limited services in the community, access or transportation to larger nearby communities and one which would be compatible with the rural character of the community. There currently are no senior citizen housing facilities in the town but there appears to be a need and desire for it.

**4) Recommendation:** Any future high density population development plans would have to be reviewed in light of the desire of the community to retain its present rural character; the lack of municipal water and sewer services; and the limited availability of natural gas throughout the town.

### **INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT.**

1) **Recommendation:** The Town Board should complete a study of past and present businesses in the community and work with the Genesee County Chamber of Commerce and GEDC to develop a plan to entice compatible retail and service

business into the community.

**2) Recommendation:** The Town Planning Board should review any requests to establish light industrial operations in the community and insure that such a business is compatible with the character of the area in which it is being placed and consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

**3) Recommendation:** The Town Board should study the types of light industry presently in the community and identify any benefits, problems, etc. for the Town.

### **AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION.**

**1) Recommendation:** Agricultural preservation, a primary directive from the community, must drive zoning regulations and governmental actions. The issue of forever green areas and amount of housing construction and industrial development seem to be at odds with each other. Agriculture is directly related, however, to the rural character of Town.

**2) Recommendation:** The section from the zoning laws regarding agricultural priority should be made available to persons building residences in the agricultural-residential zoning areas.

**3) Recommendation:** Development of farms and other agricultural businesses (including farm stands, greenhouses, nurseries, trucking & distribution operations, etc.), agritourism businesses, and support businesses should be encouraged as another form of economic development for the Town in addition to light industry and commercial development.

**4) Recommendation:** The Town should continue to support the New York State Certified Agricultural Districts within the Town, The Genesee County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan, integration of Town actions with Genesee County's Smart Growth Plan, adoption of a Right to Farm Law or other actions deemed appropriate to support local farms and agricultural businesses. The Town should continue to support and market Elba's agricultural heritage and agricultural businesses in the Genesee County Chamber of Commerce Visitors Guide, other marketing publications and on the Town website.

**5) Recommendation:** To preserve farm land and open space, new housing and other development should be encouraged within the development zone identified in the Genesee County's Smart Growth Plan, or on land that could be served by existing municipal services.

## **RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.**

**1) Recommendation:** The Town Board should create a cost and feasibility study for creating and maintaining hiking trails, biking trails, picnic areas and playing fields.

**2) Recommendation:** Agreements should be made between the school district and the Town and Village regarding the upgrading and construction of recreational facilities as well as ways to utilize school facilities to provide recreational opportunities to the community.

**3) Recommendation:** The Town should work with the Village, school and other youth sports and development organizations to ensure that programs for youth are available, accessible and have the resources and facilities necessary to provide high quality recreational opportunities.

**4) Recommendation:** Any consideration to allow construction of an apartment building, mobile home park or multiple family dwelling should be reviewed for its potential impact on the recreational areas of the community.

## APPENDIX 1

### **1999 RESIDENT SURVEY**

#### **TOWN OF ELBA**

#### Citizen Response Summary

**Total Number of Surveys Mailed: 1,045**

**Total Number of Surveys Returned: 276**

**Total Number of Respondents (from surveys): 438**

#### **1. What kind of housing do you live in?**

\_258\_ A conventional house on a private lot.    \_\_5\_ An apartment house or duplex.

\_13\_ A mobile home on a private lot.

#### **2. Where do you live?**

\_192\_ In the countryside.    \_\_84\_ In the village of Elba.

#### **3. For how many years have you lived in the Town of Elba?**

\_224\_ 21 or more years.    \_\_76\_ 11 - 20 years.

\_\_53\_ 6 - 10 years.    \_\_57\_ 0 - 5 years.

#### **4. How important is it that the Town of Elba preserve its rural character?**

\_246\_ Extremely important.    \_84\_ Quite important.

\_\_54\_ Somewhat important.    \_\_14\_ Unimportant.

#### **5. How important is it that more housing be built in the Town of Elba?**

\_\_45\_ Extremely important.    \_\_60\_ Quite important.

\_140\_ Somewhat important.    \_188\_ Unimportant.

**APPENDIX 1, Continued**

**6. Given the choice between more housing and keeping the rural character of Elba, which do you feel is more important?**

\_321\_ Rural character.    \_\_70\_ Housing.

**7. If Elba is to have more housing, which of the following would you like to see?**

\_252\_ More conventional homes on private lots.    \_122\_ Senior citizen housing.

\_57\_ Conventional homes in a subdivision.    \_\_21\_ More mobile homes on private lots.

\_19\_ More mobile homes in mobile home parks.    \_\_16\_ More apartment housing.

\_17\_ Low income housing.

Other:

**8. If you favor more housing, which one type of housing listed above do you think is most needed in the Town of Elba?**

\_163\_ More conventional homes on private lots.    \_\_99\_ Senior citizen housing.

\_37\_ Conventional homes in a subdivision.    \_\_16\_ More mobile homes on private lots.

\_15\_ More mobile homes in mobile home parks.    \_\_11\_ More apartment housing.

\_18\_ Low income housing.

Other:

**APPENDIX 1, Continued**

**9. If you do not have these services, which of the following would you like to see made available to your residence?**

\_120\_ Municipal water.    \_\_94\_ Sewer lines.    \_133\_ Natural gas.

Other:

**10. Which of the following would you like to see in the Town of Elba?**

\_107\_ More grocery stores.    \_\_55\_ More places to eat.

\_107\_ More hardware and other retail stores.    \_\_65\_ More service stations.

\_\_60\_ More personal services, e.g., barber shops or beauty parlors.

Other:

**11. Light industry is the processing, fabrication, assembly or packaging of previously prepared or refined materials. Would you like to see more light industry in the Town of Elba?**

\_293\_ Yes.    \_130\_ No.

**12. If "yes" to question 11, which do you feel is more important?**

\_151\_ Industry which significantly increases employment opportunities in the Town.

OR

\_152\_ Industry which significantly increases the tax revenue in the Town.

**APPENDIX 1, Continued**

**13. Moderate or heavy industry is processing or manufacturing of materials or products from extracted or raw materials and may involve storage of hazardous or commonly recognized offensive conditions or processes involving flammable or explosive materials. Would you like to see moderate or heavy industry brought into the Town of Elba.**

**\_\_33\_ Yes.    \_\_378\_ No.**

**14. Would you favor creating an industrial park? This would be in an area of the Town set aside and developed specifically for the purpose of encouraging industries to locate in the Town.**

**\_146\_ Yes.    \_238\_ No.**

**15. Which of the following would you like to see provided in the Town?**

**\_112\_ Biking trails.    \_128\_ Hiking trails.    \_106\_ More picnic areas.**

**\_102\_ More playing fields for organized sports.**

Other recreation areas:

**16. The population of the Town (including the Village) of Elba increased from 2,312 in 1970 to 2,407 in 1990. Which of the following outcomes would you like to see between now and 2010?**

**\_262\_ A continuing increase in the population at the same rate as the last 20 years.**

**\_110\_ No further change in the population.**

**\_\_27\_ A much more rapid increase in the population.**

**\_\_6\_ A decrease in the population.**

## **APPENDIX 1, Continued**

**17. "Forever green" areas are areas of land which are forever preserved as woodlands and open space. No development is permitted on such land. How do you feel about setting aside forever green areas within the Town which are owned and operated by the Town of Elba?**

\_174\_ Strongly support the idea.    \_163\_ Moderately support the idea.

\_\_50\_ Moderately oppose the idea.    \_\_29\_ Strongly oppose the idea.

**18. From the standpoint of planning for the Town's future, what do you see as the most important issue over the next 20 years?**

Summary of the Comment(s):

There were 201 comments made for this question of the survey. The comments fell into one of five different categories dealing with the quality of life within the community: character of the community, growth and development of business and industry, services available in the community, population of Elba, taxes and education.

Character of the Town- 82 specific comments were made which pertained to the character of the community. These reinforced the summary from survey question number 4.

Housing- 34 comments were made which parallel the results of survey questions 5 through 8.

Services- 50 additional comments were made about services available in the community. See the summary of questions 9 and 10.

Taxes- 38 specific comments pertained to taxes. Of these comments, the general feeling was that taxes need to be kept in check.

Growth- 31 comments were made and are summarized in survey questions 11 through 14.

**APPENDIX 1, Continued**

Education- 10 comments were made about the school district. Comments ranged from very satisfied to consider a merger with another district.

Miscellaneous- A few comments were made along the lines that the Town and Village governments should consider a merger.

## APPENDIX 1A

### 2006 RESIDENT SURVEY

#### TOWN OF ELBA

Citizen Response Summary

Available at [www.elbanewyork.com](http://www.elbanewyork.com)

**Total Number of Surveys Mailed: 750**

**Total Number of Surveys Returned: 352 (47%)**

|                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Outside<br/>the Village</b> | <b>In the<br/>Village</b> | <b>TOTAL</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| <b>1.) Where do you Live?</b>                                                                                                                                       | 255                            | 97                        | <b>352</b>   |
| <b>2.) How Important is it that the Town of Elba preserves its rural character?</b>                                                                                 |                                |                           |              |
| Extremely Important                                                                                                                                                 | 128                            | 51                        | <b>179</b>   |
| Somewhat Important                                                                                                                                                  | 111                            | 35                        | <b>146</b>   |
| Unimportant                                                                                                                                                         | 12                             | 10                        | <b>22</b>    |
| <b>3.) Should the Town of Elba adopt zoning regulations that protect and preserve our Agricultural resources?</b>                                                   |                                |                           |              |
| Yes                                                                                                                                                                 | 199                            | 76                        | <b>275</b>   |
| No                                                                                                                                                                  | 37                             | 18                        | <b>55</b>    |
| <b>4.) To preserve the rural character of the Town of Elba, should the Town create an industrial park to encourage business development in a concentrated area?</b> |                                |                           |              |
| Yes                                                                                                                                                                 | 162                            | 58                        | <b>220</b>   |
| No                                                                                                                                                                  | 80                             | 37                        | <b>117</b>   |
| <b>5.) Do you think commercial wind towers in the Town of Elba would affect its rural character?</b>                                                                |                                |                           |              |
| Yes                                                                                                                                                                 | 81                             | 34                        | <b>115</b>   |
| No                                                                                                                                                                  | 157                            | 60                        | <b>217</b>   |
| <b>6.) If a commercial wind energy project was proposed in the Town of Elba, would you?</b>                                                                         |                                |                           |              |
| Support the project                                                                                                                                                 | 59                             | 19                        | <b>78</b>    |

|                                                               |     |    |            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|------------|
| Support the project if the Town could benefit financially     | 111 | 42 | <b>153</b> |
| Support the project if it was located in the right area       | 93  | 41 | <b>134</b> |
| Strongly oppose the project no matter the benefit or location | 28  | 14 | <b>42</b>  |
| No Opinion                                                    | 14  | 4  | <b>18</b>  |

**7.) Would you be in favor of the Town of Elba having the ability to waive certain zoning requirements, on a case-by-case basis, if the community as a whole could benefit from doing so? (examples: water, sewer, park, library, etc.)**

|     |     |    |            |
|-----|-----|----|------------|
| Yes | 200 | 73 | <b>273</b> |
| No  | 41  | 21 | <b>62</b>  |

**8.) Which of the following services are important to have available in the Town of Elba? (Check all that apply)**

|                     |     |    |            |
|---------------------|-----|----|------------|
| Municipal water     | 187 | 77 | <b>264</b> |
| Sewer Lines         | 118 | 68 | <b>186</b> |
| Natural Gas         | 141 | 70 | <b>211</b> |
| High Speed Internet | 99  | 45 | <b>144</b> |
| Cable TV            | 90  | 50 | <b>140</b> |
| Other               |     |    |            |

Elba Town Survey 2006

The following residents' comments from the completed, returned surveys appear exactly as written; no spelling, punctuation, or content editing was done, with the exception of deleted profanity:

Twenty-six surveys from people living in the village and 28 from people living outside the village contained additional comments.

**Question Two:**

\*[Somewhat Important checked] "but still must consider progress in the future for growth if Elba is to remain a viable community into the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

\* "You must mean the backwoods, hillbilly, redneck us vs. them mentality."

**Question Three:**

\* "Yes—with considerations of a more vibrant Main St. What can agruland [sic] do for Main St office farmer friendly businesses."

\* "Yes—your Comprehensive Plan and zoning for the town should take into consideration what you have to offer. Agriculture is probably still number one with the land use available."

\* "Yes—but not at the expense of growth."

\* "Yes—but not to the detriment of normal growth."

\* "Property owners dictate by owning land and they get tax breaks and help during good and bad years, while others lose jobs and they do not get the same help."

- \* “Such as? Most of the available land is in Ag District.”
- \* “At the expense of real & meaningful stepping toward the 20<sup>th</sup> century growth? Like real jobs for our kids instead of hoping that they will have a bright future driving manure around?”
- \* “If only it serves the greater good.”
- \* [No checked] “Not just for one family!!”

#### **Question Four:**

- \* “No—In order to plan for this, you would need the infrastructure to accompany an industrial park i.e. water supply, roads, cheap electricity, tax incentives. What usually occurs is the taxpayer up-fronts the initial cost to develop and rarely ever sees the tax rate go down again due to the cost of incentives.”
- \* “Must have infrastructure (water and sewer).”
- \* “Yes—but in doing so, do not ‘give away the store’ where the business is exempt from school and other property taxes.”
- \* “It’s in Batavia”
- \* “We DO NOT NEED ONE AT ALL – They already exist in Batavia, Pembroke and Bergen, LeRoy.”
- \* “Business development would be good anywhere.”
- \* “The “rural character” has nothing to do with it, we should be encouraging business development.”
- \* “Elba does not need an industrial park anywhere.”
- \* [No checked] “Unless utilities/water/sewer for new business is easier to supply to 1 dedicated area”
- \* “No Industrial Park.”
- \* “Definitely bring in jobs & increase the tax base!”

#### **Commercial Wind Towers/Commercial Wind Energy Project:**

- \* (Questions five and six) “Not sure—don’t have enough information.”
- \* (Questions five and six) “I am opposed to wind energy projects. Besides being unsightly, they are too expensive. It is unclear how long it will take to recover investment capital. The environmental impact will have a disastrous effect on any property near the site. Migratory flyway etc. Go nuclear—concentrated....local. More efficient and reliable in the long run, even more cost efficient. Wind energy will never meet the growing needs in terms of population, residential or industrial development. Once the wind farms are scattered all over the countryside maintenance will be much too expensive. The developers are going to make millions the land owners mostly farmers profit and neither care how it will effect individuals, community or environmental habitat.”

#### **Question five**

- \* “Depends on Where the Power Goes. We would prefer to keep the benefits.”
- \* “No—Great idea—Could the school district use this idea to help with energy costs!”
- \* “Yes—the wind companies will tell you where they want the towers based on wind direction and velocity, not where you think they should be and potentially damage the rural setting.”
- \* “Go to Lowville – It helped!”
- \* “Yes – Negative.”
- \* “But it would give cause for our rural characters to generate more wind.”
- \* “In favor as long as it does not bring more immigrants (Mexicans) to Elba!! We have more than enough already!!!”

#### **Question six**

- \* “2500 ft setback all around. \$/KW not just PILOT”
- \* “Setbacks from residential should be half mile or more.”
- \* “Commercial support – No. Private use – Yes”
- \* “If it includes a benefit to all Elban’s including those outside the village.”
- \* “All the people – as in lower electric rates. Not just the “town” or a chosen few!”

#### **Question Seven:**

- \* “Yes—subject to referendum”
- \* “Yes—without voter referendum”
- \* “No—may be a dangerous precedent”
- \* “No—unclear question”

- \* “No—You have a comprehensive plan and zoning regulations that should be reviewed frequently with changes made at the time of review. Your case by case analogy becomes very subjective and can erode the attempt of the original plan. If you want the examples cited, they should be in planning cycle to obtain, not on a case by case basis.”
- \* “No—spot zoning doesn’t work.”
- \* “These privileges always get abused. You can not go case by case. Make a rule and stick to it.”
- \* “I found it difficult to answer as the zoning board does not ever enforce the laws it has. i.e. example – Trailers where there not supposed to be – and talk about injuring the landscape! What about old unregistered vehicles – all over the place!!!”
- \* “Vote?”
- \* “As long as the majority of residents benefit, not just a few.”

**Question Eight:** Other services desired:

- \*Ambulance/Fire Department
- \*Electric generators for emergency power outage for rescue squad emergency
- \*Low income apartment complex
- \*Senior apartment complex
- \*Senior housing complex should include apartments, condos, assisted living, with limited medical facilities, “a complete complex”
- \*Water not from Lake Ontario
- \*Monroe County water
- \*Digital phone service
- \*Digital phone
- \*Garbage/Trash pickup
- \*Garbage disposal services home pickup
- \*Good grocery store
- \*Library
- \*Farm land
- \*Supervised summer rec. program for our children”
- \*WiFi
- \*Enforcement of property owners to clean up their properties & keep them cleaned up.
- \*Sidewalks in more populated area just outside the village.
- \*Low cost electric
- \*Municipal electric
- \*Garbage pickup for everyone
- \*Burger King
- \*Low Taxes
- \*Economical gas
- \*Cheap Electricity
- \*Lower School Taxes
- \*Updated telephone exchange
- \*Increase in tax base that is thoughtful and well planned
- \*Casino
- \*Lower school taxes
- \*Lower utility prices

**Miscellaneous Comments Regarding Question Eight:**

- \* “No—too expensive to taxpayers as a whole.” (No services checked.)
- \* “The larger question is, how does the town pay for them? Again, comprehensive planning with the citizens on services or service delivery will determine if a water district takes precedent over an expansion of the sewer district.”
- \* “In favor of those checked [all] but only if the entire town as a whole would benefit, and if the rural character of the town would not be damaged.”
- \* [Checked & circled Municipal Water] “PLEASE! ASAP! Elba’s water is horrible!”
- \* “A lot of areas in the Town of Elba are not wired for cable tv or internet access. This should be addressed when new agreements are due with the cable company.”

- \* “Preserve the rural/agricultural community. We have a gem – why do you want to carve it up into bunch of subdivisions & business parks?”
- \*[All choices marked] “All of the foregoing would significantly improve the quality of life here and would enhance property values. At a minimum, we need cable/internet access. This should be a priority. ALL TOWN RESIDENTS SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO HIGH SPEED INTERNET.”
- \* “If available to some, should be available to all!”
- \*[Municipal Water checked multiple times] “Too much cow xxxx!”
- \* “No written for all choices] “So we can all suffer with the same crappy water? Why are we so concerned about where the waste goes – I see it being spread all over the place without real environmental concerns why can’t we just all take dumps on each others lawns? What’s the big difference?”
- \* “Outside the village, water is horrible!”
- \* “We strongly urge the Town of Elba to consider installing municipal water. Our wells are in danger of contamination from underground streams in this agricultural area. Would like a Town meeting regarding this.”
- \* “Continue excellent highway care.”
- \* “As I check above [question 7] on a case by case basis need to notify public for meetings on these issues please!! “
- \* “Need water in town! Village should not be allowed to stop this.”
- \* “Water because of all the rural spreading of agricultural waste.”
- \* “Why do we not join the Monroe County Water Authority, as have the rest of the towns in the county?”
- \* “What about housing for elderly? We definitely need to help young & old residents. Create new jobs (not minimum wage) to encourage younger residents to stay or move in!”

**Miscellaneous Comments:**

- \* “Rerouting of eighteen-wheel trucks and farm machinery on Main Street and Mechanic Street. These vehicles could use Drake Street and Weatherwax, avoiding the village, with minimal cost involved.”
- \* “I would like to see a limit on the number of dogs allowed in a single home within the village limits. Also preemptive ban on dangerous breeds such as pit bulls. Other towns have had these guidelines in place for years for public safety.”
- \* “Elba desperately needs growth. Taxes are hurting a lot of residents.”
- \* “Please publish the results of this survey.”
- \* “Anything to encourage growth would improve tax base.”
- \* “If we don’t allow Elba to open itself to more housing/business, we will lose our school—no one wants that.”
- \* “We suggest you look carefully at laws re: agriculture. We don’t feel this falls under “normal farming procedures” and should be addressed. Possibly it could be damaging the environment. It’s annoying to find on personal property such as cars, houses + laundry. And I’m sure it’s unhealthy on children’s play equipment, picnic tables, etc.. We need and want family homes in our town. Property is no longer appealing or as valuable when the spreading of this manure reaches our property. And we certainly don’t want to curb “agriculture – crops” but PLEASE keep this subject in mind when you consider zoning regulations.”
- \* “I understand the need for development & growth but within a logical and conservative manner and not to increase the tax base for the citizens. The town of Elba voted down the increase in school taxes and the board found a loophole to raise them anyway. Why vote? The towns people want to be more involved in decisions.”
- \* “Forget the Windmills. Strongly support Gasohol plant. Farmers would have a market for corn, millions of dollars tax base. USDA, Government would not have to spend 300 billion dollars to protect crude oil. Spend the money in Elba.”

## APPENDIX 2

### TOTAL POPULATION TOWN OF ELBA

Source: U.S. Census

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>POPULATION</u>           |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| 1970        | 2,312                       |
| 1980        | 2,487                       |
| 1990        | 2,407                       |
| 2000        | 2,439                       |
| 2010        | 2,453 (projected estimate)* |

\*based on BUSINESS FIRST projections 11/24/97

## APPENDIX 3

### AGE DISTRIBUTION TOWN OF ELBA

Source: U.S. Census

| <u>AGE</u>  | <u>1970</u> | <u>1980</u> | <u>1990</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>2010*</u> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Under 18    | 934         | 905         | 667         | 675         | 680          |
| 18 to 64    | 1,157       | 1,389       | 1,471       | 1,492       | 1,500        |
| 65 and Over | 221         | 193         | 269         | 272         | 310          |
| Median Age  | ---         | 29.1        | 33.3        | 36.6        | 39.0         |

\*projected estimate

## APPENDIX 4

### EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF PERSONS 25 AND OLDER TOWN OF ELBA

Source: U.S. Census

| <u>H.S. GRADUATION OR HIGHER</u>   | <u>1970</u> | <u>1980</u> | <u>1990</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>2010*</u> |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Elba                               | --          | 50.0%       | 76.9%       | 85.7%       | 92%          |
| Genesee County                     | 55.8%       | 69.2%       | 77.4%       | 84.4%       | 90%          |
| New York State                     | 52.7%       | 66.3%       | 74.8%       | 79.1%       | 85%          |
| <u>BACHELOR'S OR HIGHER DEGREE</u> | <u>1970</u> | <u>1980</u> | <u>1990</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>2010*</u> |
| Elba                               | --          | 7.0%        | 14.6%       | 17.6%       | 22%          |
| Genesee County                     | 8.0%        | 11.5%       | 14.0%       | 16.3%       | 18%          |
| New York State                     | 11.9%       | 17.9%       | 23.1%       | 27.4%       | 31%          |

\*projected estimate

## APPENDIX 5

### INCOME TOWN OF ELBA

Source: U.S. Census

| <u>MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME</u> | <u>1969</u> | <u>1979</u> | <u>1989</u> | <u>1999</u> | <u>2009*</u> |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Elba                        | \$9,376     | \$21,729    | \$39,596    | \$51,058    | \$60,000     |
| Genesee County              | \$10,005    | \$21,318    | \$35,482    | \$47,771    | \$58,000     |
| New York State              |             |             |             | \$51,691    | \$60,000     |

| <u>BELOW POVERTY LEVEL</u> | <u>1969</u> | <u>1979</u> | <u>1989</u> | <u>1999</u> | <u>2009*</u> |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Elba                       | --          | 4.0%        | 3.0%        | 5.9%        | 7.0%         |
| Genesee County             | 7.3%        | 6.0%        | 7.3%        | 7.6%        | 8.5%         |
| New York State             |             |             |             |             |              |

**APPENDIX 6**  
**OCCUPATIONS**  
**PERSONS 16 AND OVER**  
**TOWN OF ELBA**

Source: U.S. Census

|                                     | <u>1970</u> | <u>1980</u> | <u>1990</u> | <u>2000</u> |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Managerial & Professional Workers   | 127         | 175         | 275         | 366         |
| Technical, Sales, Support Workers   | 151         | 193         | 295         | 278         |
| Service Occupations                 | 143         | 146         | 151         | 162         |
| Farming, Forestry, Fishing          | 120         | 134         | 83          | 38          |
| Precision Production, Craft, Repair | 291         | 150         | 169         | 242         |
| Operators, Fabricators, Laborers    | 163         | 146         | 210         | 164         |
| Total Civilian Labor Force          | 995         | 1,144       | 1,255       | 1,307       |

**APPENDIX 7**  
**HOUSEHOLDS**  
**TOWN OF ELBA**

Source: U.S. Census

| <u>YEAR</u> | <u>HOUSEHOLDS</u> | <u>RESIDENCES</u> | <u>MEAN VALUE</u> | <u>MEDIAN VALUE</u> |
|-------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1970        | 644               | 861               | \$17,016          | --                  |
| 1980        | 759               | 1,008             | \$36,600          | --                  |
| 1990        | 822               | 881               | --                | \$65,400            |
| 2000        | 853               | 910               | \$74,500 (est.)   | \$82,500            |

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Acknowledgement

1.0 Executive Summary.....1-1

2.0 Introduction .....2-1

    2.1 Regional and Local Setting.....2-2

    2.2 Reasons for Preparing a Comprehensive Plan.....2-2

    2.3 How the Plan Will be Utilized.....2-3

3.0 Goals and Objectives .....3-1

    3.1 Public Input.....3-1

    3.2 Goals and Objectives .....3-2

        3.3.1 Town of Alabama.....3-3

        3.3.2 Town of Oakfield .....3-6

        3.3.3 Village of Oakfield .....3-9

4.0 Existing Conditions of the Communities

    4.1 Existing Land Use .....4-1

        4.1.1 Community Land Use.....4-2

        4.1.2 Farmland and Agriculture.....4-5

    4.2 Land Use Regulation .....4-8

        4.2.1 Zoning .....4-8

    4.3 Natural Environment.....4-11

        4.3.1 Topography and Steep Slopes .....4-11

        4.3.2 Hydric Soils .....4-11

        4.3.3 Stream Corridors and Watersheds .....4-11

        4.3.4 Flooding and Wetlands.....4-13

        4.3.5 Wildlife Conservation Areas and Significant Wildlife Habitats.....4-13

        4.3.6 Scenic Resources.....4-14

        4.3.7 Historic and Archaeological Resources.....4-15

    4.4 Demographics and Socioeconomic Conditions .....4-15

        4.4.1 Existing Population Characteristics and Projections .....4-15

        4.4.2 Household Characteristics .....4-17

        4.4.3 Housing Characteristics .....4-17

        4.4.4 Employment Statistics .....4-17

        4.4.5 Income .....4-18

    4.5 Transportation .....4-18

        4.5.1 Roadways and Highway Access.....4-18

        4.5.2 Railroad Service.....4-19

        4.5.3 Public Transportation Services.....4-19

|       |                                                           |      |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------|
| 4.5.4 | Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes.....                        | 4-20 |
| 4.6   | Utilities .....                                           | 4-20 |
| 4.6.1 | Water Supply .....                                        | 4-20 |
| 4.6.2 | Wastewater Disposal.....                                  | 4-20 |
| 4.6.3 | Solid Waste Management .....                              | 4-21 |
| 4.7   | Community Facilities .....                                | 4-21 |
| 4.7.1 | Parks and Recreation.....                                 | 4-21 |
| 4.7.2 | Schools .....                                             | 4-21 |
| 4.7.3 | Emergency Services .....                                  | 4-22 |
| 4.7.4 | Government Facilities .....                               | 4-22 |
| 5.0   | Findings and Recommendations                              |      |
| 5.1   | Introduction .....                                        | 5-1  |
| 5.2   | Findings/Opportunities/Constraints.....                   | 5-1  |
| 5.2.1 | Town of Alabama.....                                      | 5-1  |
| 5.2.2 | Town of Oakfield .....                                    | 5-4  |
| 5.2.3 | Village of Oakfield .....                                 | 5-6  |
| 5.3   | Recommendations.....                                      | 5-8  |
| 5.3.1 | Town of Alabama.....                                      | 5-8  |
| 5.3.2 | Town of Oakfield .....                                    | 5-16 |
| 5.3.3 | Village of Oakfield .....                                 | 5-22 |
| 5.4   | Vision Map- .....                                         | 5-25 |
| 5.4.1 | Introduction .....                                        | 5-25 |
| 5.4.2 | Overall Regional Vision.....                              | 5-26 |
| 5.4.3 | Town of Alabama Vision Map .....                          | 5-26 |
| 5.4.4 | Town of Oakfield Vision Map.....                          | 5-28 |
| 5.4.5 | Village of Oakfield Vision Map .....                      | 5-29 |
| 6.0   | Implementation                                            |      |
| 6.1   | Introduction .....                                        | 6-1  |
| 6.2   | Utilization of This Section.....                          | 6-1  |
| 6.3   | Town of Alabama.....                                      | 6-3  |
| 6.4   | Town of Oakfield .....                                    | 6-7  |
| 6.5   | Village of Oakfield .....                                 | 6-11 |
| 7.0   | Environmental Review                                      |      |
| 7.1   | Introduction .....                                        | 7-1  |
| 7.2   | Environmental Setting.....                                | 7-1  |
| 7.3   | Potential Significant Adverse Environmental Impacts.....  | 7-2  |
| 7.4   | Adverse Environmental Impacts that Cannot be Avoided..... | 7-12 |
| 7.5   | Growth Inducing Aspects of the Plan .....                 | 7-12 |
| 7.6   | Mitigation Measures.....                                  | 7-12 |
| 7.7   | Evaluation of Alternatives .....                          | 7-17 |

8.0 Annual Review .....8-1

9.0 Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement.....9-1

Glossary

Appendices

- Publicity / Public Meeting Minutes
- Public Survey Results

**List of Figures & Charts**

|                                                                          | Page |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Figure 1A: Town of Alabama Land Use Percentages.....                     | 4-3  |
| Figure 1B: Town of Oakfield Land Use Percentages .....                   | 4-4  |
| Figure 1C: Village of Oakfield Land Use Percentages .....                | 4-5  |
| Figure 2A: Town of Alabama Zoning Districts and Permitted Uses.....      | 4-9  |
| Figure 2B: Town of Oakfield Zoning Districts and Permitted Uses .....    | 4-10 |
| Figure 2C: Village of Oakfield Zoning Districts and Permitted Uses ..... | 4-11 |
| Figure 3: Population Trends.....                                         | 4-15 |
| Figure 4: Age Distribution Graph .....                                   | 4-16 |
| Figure 5: NYS Route Traffic Counts .....                                 | 4-19 |

**List of Maps**

Following Page:

|         |                                              |      |
|---------|----------------------------------------------|------|
| Map 1:  | General Location.....                        | 2-2  |
| Map 2:  | Digital Orthoimagery.....                    | 4-1  |
| Map 3:  | Existing Land Use.....                       | 4-1  |
| Map 4:  | Agricultural Data.....                       | 4-5  |
| Map 5:  | Prime Farmland Soils.....                    | 4-5  |
| Map 6:  | Zoning Classifications.....                  | 4-8  |
| Map 7:  | Hydric Soils.....                            | 4-11 |
| Map 8:  | Watershed Boundaries.....                    | 4-11 |
| Map 9:  | Environmental Features.....                  | 4-13 |
| Map 10: | Wildlife Conservation Areas.....             | 4-13 |
| Map 11: | Transportation.....                          | 4-18 |
| Map 12: | School District Boundaries.....              | 4-21 |
| Map 13: | Community Features.....                      | 4-21 |
| Map 14: | Vision Map – Village.....                    | 5-25 |
| Map 15: | Vision Map – Three-Community Study Area..... | 5-25 |

## **SECTION 1.0**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

#### **1.1 Introduction and Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan**

The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan represents the culmination of a joint planning effort undertaken by the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield. These three rural communities recognized the importance of such cooperation and joined together to formulate a common vision for managing future growth and development. This Plan was prepared in conformance with NYS Town Law Section 272-a and NYS Village Law Section 7-722 and is designed to be consistent with the principles of the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan.

The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan outlines a strategy for managing and controlling the extension of water service throughout Genesee County. As a way of minimizing the potential impacts of additional growth and development, which would otherwise occur as a result of the extension of water service, this plan sets forth objectives aimed at ensuring that water extensions do not result in additional development that is inconsistent with the principles of "smart growth". The Plan designates "development areas" within which development and redevelopment would be encouraged and access to the County-funded portions of the County's water system would not be restricted. The "development areas" were delineated based on a certain set of criteria, and include areas with significant potential for economic development, as well as areas that are already relatively densely developed with residential, commercial or industrial uses.

The Smart Growth Plan establishes guidelines for implementing an approval process for water hook-ups, which calls for the creation of a County-level administrative review committee. However, the County Legislature may choose to delegate the authority to approve water hook-ups to individual municipalities that have adopted a comprehensive plan consistent with the principles of the Smart Growth Plan.

Although the Smart Growth Plan and the potential ability to receive public water was the driving force behind the effort to create this document, there were other issues that warranted the preparation of this Plan by the three partnering communities. The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan sets forth a strategy for addressing important issues and for guiding future growth and development, protecting agricultural uses and rural community character, and improving the quality of life in each community. The three communities have designed this plan to acknowledge existing conditions in each community, to establish their vision for the future, and to outline how they intend to achieve their goals and objectives for managing growth. This Plan is intended to serve as a framework wherein each community can evaluate future land use and development issues and decisions. The goals and objectives, recommendations, and implementation strategy outlined in this Plan are designed to address the individual concerns of each community, and reflect their unique and distinctive vision for the future.

Each municipality will individually adopt the Plan, and will be responsible for implementing the action items that pertain to their respective communities. It is hoped that in implementing this Comprehensive Plan, the communities will continue to work together, especially on those issues and actions that center around their common goals, have regional significance, and/or relate to the County's Smart Growth Plan. Once adopted, the Towns and Village should begin to implement this Plan by amending their land use regulations to better

follow the recommendations contained herein, and to consider the plan in all of their future land use decisions (site plans, subdivisions, and zoning actions).

## **1.2 Regional and Local Setting**

The study area includes the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield and the Village of Oakfield, and is located in northwestern Genesee County. The communities are approximately 25 miles east of Buffalo, 35 miles west of Rochester and 10 miles north of the City of Batavia. The three-community study area is predominantly a rural, agricultural region with small pockets of denser residential and commercial development located in hamlets and the Village of Oakfield. The rural landscape is dominated by gently rolling hills, farm fields, pockets of woodland and rural homes, interrupted only by the hamlets and Village where small stores, churches, and denser residential development exists.

## **1.3 Public Input**

The three communities recognized public input as a critical element in the planning process. Therefore, a variety of methods were utilized to gather input from local residents, including two public information meetings, written comment forms, a public opinion survey, individual meetings with government officials, an internet website, and press releases. In addition, the entire process was closely overseen by the Advisory Committee, which was comprised of representatives from each community. This Committee met on a regular basis to provide guidance and insight on the development of the plan, ensuring that the concerns of each community were being effectively addressed.

## **1.4 Goals and Objectives**

The goals and objectives represent the broad, general values and vision for the communities. With the assistance of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, the goals and objectives were devised by utilizing the communities' original rationale for preparing the comprehensive plan, data from the inventory and analysis, and input gathered from residents at public meetings, from written comments, and through a public opinion survey.

The goals focus on the major issues and concerns of the residents in the three communities. They are aimed at helping to guide future growth and development in the Towns and Village. They represent a consensus of the community's values and vision for guiding future land use decisions that could impact overall quality of life. The major goals for the three communities are listed below.

### Town of Alabama

- Protect, promote and preserve agriculture
- Maintain and enhance community character
- Provide potable water to appropriate areas of the Town
- Protect the environmental features and resources
- Provide for economic development
- Maintain and promote efficiency of government
- Encourage a diversity of housing types

### Town of Oakfield

- Promote the expansion public water to appropriate areas in the Town
- Provide for economic development
- Protect and preserve agriculture
- Maintain and enhance community character
- Protect the environmental features and resources of the community
- Encourage a diversity of housing types in the Town
- Maintain and promote efficiency of government

#### Village of Oakfield

- Promote and encourage investment and economic development in the Village
- Preserve the traditional neighborhood character of the Village
- Maintain and Promote efficiency of government

### **1.5 Existing Conditions**

Section 4.0 of the Comprehensive Plan summarizes information on the existing conditions and trends in each of the three communities. It contains information land use and land use regulations, the natural environment, demographics and socioeconomic conditions, transportation, public infrastructure and utilities and community facilities. This information provides a useful assessment of where the communities have been and where they are now in terms of growth and development. Furthermore, it is useful for identifying important issues and opportunities in each of the communities, as well as commonalties, and establishes the framework for planning recommendations. The general content of each subsection in Section 4.0 is described below.

#### Existing Land Use

This section outlines land use patterns throughout the region. Because farming has traditionally been an important component of land use in Genesee County, a subsection is provided that discusses agricultural activity in each community.

#### Land Use Regulations

This section summarizes the land use controls that govern how land may be used and developed in each municipality. It describes the various zoning districts and the types of uses allowed in each district. It summarizes supplemental zoning regulations that control particular uses such as home occupations, adult uses, and communications towers.

#### Natural Environment

This section provides information about the environmental setting of the three communities. It provides information about the topography, hydric soils, stream corridors by watershed, areas of flooding and wetlands, natural habitat and scenic resources. The final subsection describes the State and Federal wildlife conservation areas, which play a significant role in defining the character of the area.

#### Demographics and Socioeconomic Factors

This section provides information about population trends, the age characteristics of area residents, and statistics on employment and income. It also provides an overview of the housing stock of the region.

□ Transportation

This section describes the transportation network serving the communities, including roadways, traffic volumes, public transportation and pedestrian and bicycle routes.

□ Utilities

This section provides information about the local infrastructure, including water (public water supply and wells), wastewater disposal (sewers and septic) and solid waste management.

□ Community Facilities

This section identifies the community facilities available for the use of the residents of the Towns and Village. These include area parks and recreational facilities, schools, emergency services (police and fire), governmental facilities and cultural resources (historic buildings and important archaeological sites).

## 1.6 Findings and Recommendations

The Findings and Recommendations are provided for each community as they relate to the major Goals and Objectives in Section 3.0. Findings, opportunities and constraints for each goal were identified using the existing conditions information found in Section 4.0, as well as public input received throughout the process. Based on the determined opportunities and constraints, general findings for each community were established. Findings are listed for each community under the following categories.

- Existing Land Use
- Agriculture and Farmland
- Natural Environment and Constraints
- Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Community and Government Facilities
- Zoning

Recommendations for achieving the opportunities or addressing constraints were formulated for each community utilizing the goals and objectives outlined in Section 3.0. For each community, each goal is discussed and then followed by a series of recommendations. The recommendations are further developed in Section 6.0 (Implementation).

## 1.7 Implementation

The Implementation section of the Comprehensive Plan outlines strategies for achieving the goals objectives outlined in Section 3.0, and for accomplishing many of the recommendations set forth in Section 5.0. The implementation strategy includes a step by step approach with established priorities. This Plan is an active document and over time, as local situations change, so may the priorities of each community. Therefore, upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, one of the first priority actions is for each community to designate an Implementation Advisory Committee to be responsible for the active implementation of this document.

Section 6.0 is broken into subsections for each participating community. Each implementation strategy for each community sets forth a prioritized, step-by-step approach. Priority 1 and 2 actions have been organized under four categories: Agriculture; Public Water/Smart Growth Plan; Zoning and other Land Use Regulations; and Other Actions. Priority 1 actions are those tasks that should be completed in the immediate term (one to two years). Priority 2 actions are those actions that should be undertaken over the short term (three to five years out). Priority 3 Actions are also included, which are either longer-term activities or alternative actions that may or may not be necessary depending on the outcome of Priority 1 and 2 actions. Key implementation strategies for each municipality are as follows.

#### Town of Alabama

- Revise the Agricultural–Residential zoning district to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in the district.
- Work with Genesee County to more specifically expand the designated “development areas” in the 2005 Update of the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan.
- Outside of the identified growth areas, review and update the list of non-agricultural land uses allowed by Special Use Permit.
- Establish zoning overlay districts for hamlet areas (within long-term growth boundaries on the Vision Map).
- Adopt regulations for the review and approval of the major and minor subdivision of land, separate from the Zoning Ordinance, as per Section 276 of the NYS Town Law.
- Draft a set of rural development guidelines that provide written standards and graphic examples to ensure that the vision for growth and development set forth in this document is achieved.
- During future reviews of the County’s Agricultural District, recommend to Genesee County that non-agricultural lands be removed from the district. This is primarily the case in Basom and South Alabama.
- Investigate residents’ requests/needs for public water due to public health and safety concerns.
- Relocate Town Hall, along with other Town facilities, to the Alabama hamlet.
- Work with Genesee County and the Town of Oakfield to investigate the feasibility and potential funding for a rails-to-trails project on the abandoned Penn Central rail corridor.

#### Town of Oakfield

- Revise the schedule of permitted uses for the Residential Agricultural zoning district (R&A) to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in this district.
- Work with Genesee County to expand the designated “development areas” in the 2005 Update of the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan.
- Identify a new growth area in the East Oakfield crossroads area of Lockport Road and Fisher Road for both public water and as a residential development area.
- Expand water from the Village of Oakfield to the growth area surrounding the Village. Lateral restrictions should be implemented along Fisher Road north to East Oakfield.
- Adopt regulations for the review and approval of the **major** and minor subdivision of land, separate from the Zoning Ordinance, as per Section 276 of the NYS Town Law.
- Revise zoning to include provisions for cluster residential subdivisions as per Section 278 of the NYS Town Law, with proper reference made in the **Town's Subdivisions regulations**.
- Establish a zoning overlay district for East Oakfield hamlet (within long-term growth boundaries on the Vision Map).

- During future reviews of the County’s Agricultural District recommend to the Genesee County that non-agricultural lands be removed from the district.
- Investigate residents’ requests/needs for public water due to health and safety concerns.
- Adopt Site Plan Review regulations.
- Adopt a new zoning district (separate from R&A) that would focus on protecting important agricultural lands and prime soils from intrusive or incompatible uses or ill-designed subdivision layouts.
- Develop a strategy for the U.S. Gypsum facilities in the event they become available for redevelopment.
- Work with the Village of Oakfield to create a long-range plan for expanding sewer service into the Town within the identified growth areas.
- Work with Genesee County and the Town of Alabama to investigate the feasibility and potential funding for a rails-to-trails project on the abandoned Penn Central rail corridor.

#### Village of Oakfield

- Support the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama in their efforts to modify the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan to reflect the long-term growth boundaries shown on the Vision Map.
- Develop a long-range water plan depicting where water may be expanded outside the Village.
- Establish a zoning overlay district for the Central Business District, with architectural design guidelines, landscaping standards, signage requirements and parking standards.
- Amend zoning to allow multi-family housing in the commercial districts with a special use permit.
- As an incentive for reinvestment, adopt a local law allowing the Village to participate in the Real Property Tax Law Section 485-b program.
- Establish a Business Improvement District.
- Establish landscape standards in the zoning code as part of site plan review.
- Work with the New York State Department of Transportation as the Village implements streetscape improvements along Main Street.

### **1.8 Environmental Review**

Section 7 provides a mechanism for the environmental review of the Comprehensive Plan. The Plan has been developed to serve as a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS), as allowed by §272-a.8 of NYS Town Law and §7-722.8 of NYS Village Law. This format enables the Lead Agency, Involved Agencies and the public to review one comprehensive document that contains a plan for managing future growth, and evaluates the potential environmental implications of adopting the plan.

A GEIS must include a section on Environmental Setting. Section 4 (Existing Conditions) of this Comprehensive Plan provides a review and analysis of the environmental setting of the Towns and Village, as they exist now. The underlying purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to guide future growth and development by promoting appropriate land use in suitable areas, thereby avoiding potential significant adverse impacts. For this multi-jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan, the impacts specific to each community are outlined individually, facilitating review of the document by all involved and interested parties. Section 5 (Findings and Recommendations) provides the necessary evaluation of existing conditions in order to establish the importance and nature of potential impacts.

Adverse environmental impacts that cannot be avoided are put into perspective by the fact that with or without the adoption and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, there will continue to be limited new development, some reuse, and pressures to sell-off building lots in agricultural areas. Adoption of this Plan will allow the Towns and Village to better manage growth and development, reducing potential environmental impacts. The Plan provides techniques for controlling growth, along with mitigation measures, such as lateral restrictions on water hook-ups and overlay districts that minimize impacts to a level that do not create significant adverse environmental impacts. The Environmental Review section of the Plan also assesses the No-Action alternative (not adopting the Plan).

### **1.9 Annual Review**

In an effort to keep the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan relevant as conditions change and to reflect the results of the implementation actions, a process for the regular review of the Plan should be established. Section 8 (Annual Review) recommends that each community conduct an annual review of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure that it remains a dynamic and useful document. This review will also measure the accomplishments of each community, individually and in partnership, for implementing and achieving the goals and objectives of the Plan. The Planning Board or a designated review committee, as authorized by the municipality's legislative board, would conduct this review.

By undertaking this review on a yearly basis, the communities can evaluate their achievements for implementing the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan. This is important in order to keep the implementation process moving forward and to make adjustments to the implementation strategy, as required.

## **SECTION 2.0**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In October of 2000, Genesee County drafted a Smart Growth Plan as a strategy for managing and controlling the extension of water services throughout the County. As a way of minimizing potential impacts this plan generally outlines what areas in the County would qualify to receive public water and the reasoning behind these decisions. Those areas that were designated to receive water are known as “Development Areas”, and were determined to meet a certain set of criteria. Examples of criteria that may make an area suitable as a Development Area include:

- Existing patterns of dense development,
- Zoning that permits higher density development,
- access to transportation networks,
- feasibility of extending water service, and
- minimal conflict with agricultural districts and State designated wetlands.

As set forth in the Smart Growth Plan, three key reasons for limiting potential connections to public water supply include:

- promoting the efficient use of land resources and infrastructure,
- encouraging revitalization of existing developed areas, and
- protecting prime agricultural soils and natural resources.

The Smart Growth Plan gives reasons for properly planning future hookups and establishes guidelines for implementing an approval process. This process calls for the creation of an administrative review committee by the County Legislature, to include representatives from various County agencies. This committee will then review requests for service connections on a case by case basis, using the criteria outlined in the Smart Growth Plan. The County Legislature may choose to delegate the authority of administering requests for service connections to the individual municipalities by entering into inter-municipal agreements. To be eligible to review requests for service connections a municipality must have a legally adopted comprehensive plan that is consistent with the principles of the Smart Growth Plan. Without such a plan, the community would not be able to review requests within their own municipal jurisdiction. In addition, by having an adopted comprehensive plan a municipality would also have a stronger position and founded reasoning for requesting revisions to Development Areas when the Smart Growth Plan is amended every two years.

For the above reasons, the Towns of Alabama, Oakfield, and the Village of Oakfield have collaborated to draft a Comprehensive Plan. None of these communities have undertaken any previous comprehensive planning efforts. Although the Smart Growth Plan and the ability to receive public water was the driving force behind the effort to create this document, there were other issues that warranted the preparation of the plan. This comprehensive plan is intended to set forth a strategy for addressing the important issues in each partnering community and for guiding future growth and development, protecting rural character and improving the quality of life. The three communities have designed this plan to acknowledge existing conditions in each community, to establish their vision for the future, and to outline how they intend to achieve their goals and objectives for managing growth.

## 2.1 Regional and Local Setting

The study area, which includes the Town of Alabama, the Town of Oakfield, and the Village of Oakfield, is situated directly north of the New York State Thruway (Interstate 90) in northwestern Genesee County. Located west of New York's Finger Lakes, the study area is uniquely situated at the crossroads of four counties, Erie, Niagara, Orleans, and Genesee (see Map 1). The three communities are approximately 25 miles east of Buffalo, 35 miles west of Rochester, 20 miles south of Lake Ontario, and 10 miles north of the City of Batavia. The surrounding communities include the Towns of Shelby and Barre to the north, the Town of Elba to the east, the Towns of Batavia and Pembroke to the south and the Towns of Newstead and Royalton to the west.

The population of the study area was reported at 5,084 persons in the 2000 Census, with the populations for the Town of Alabama, Town of Oakfield (excluding the Village), and Village of Oakfield being 1,881 persons, 1,398 persons, and 1,805 persons, respectively. These numbers actually show a 4.3 percent decrease in population for the study area over a ten-year period, with the largest decline evidenced in the Town of Alabama. The number of households in the three-community study area generally remained stable.

The study area is predominantly a rural/agricultural area, with small pockets of denser residential and commercial development located in hamlets and the Village Oakfield. The landscape is very typical of rural Western New York communities with the area being dominated by gently rolling hills, farm fields, pockets of woodlands, and rural homes. The rural landscape is interrupted only by the hamlets and Village where small stores, churches, and denser residential development can be found.

## 2.2 Reasons for Preparing a Comprehensive Plan

It is important for each community to have an effective comprehensive plan to guide future growth and development. New York State Law indicates that Town and Village planning, zoning, capital budgeting and other decisions should be based on a current comprehensive plan that represents the community's vision for its future. The goal of the comprehensive plan is to develop recommendations for future development in the Towns and Village, while recognizing each community's unique assets and considering impacts upon surrounding Towns. This Plan is intended to serve as a framework within which each community will be able to evaluate future land use and development issues. It examines the environmental, demographic, physical and development aspects of each community, and the regulatory setting that guides these factors. It addresses the issues and concerns specific to each community, based on citizen input from local residents through a variety of forums, including a community survey. The goals and objectives, recommendations and implementation actions included in this plan are designed to address each community's individual concerns, and reflect its unique and distinctive vision for its future. It is the intended that this plan be adopted by each of the three communities and become a blueprint for the region's growth into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## 2.3 How the Plan Will be Utilized

In accordance with Section 272-a of Town and Section 7-722 of Village Law, Towns and Villages have the authority to undertake comprehensive planning and to adopt a plan to help promote the health, safety and general welfare, with due consideration given to the needs of the people of the region. The comprehensive plan is defined by these laws as such: A comprehensive plan consists of the materials, written and/or graphic,

including but not limited to maps, charts, studies, resolutions, reports and other descriptive material that identify the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, devices and instruments for the immediate and long range protection, enhancement, growth and development of a municipality.

By law, (pursuant to Sections 272-a and 7-722) the adoption of a comprehensive plan has the following effect:

- a. All Town or Village land use regulations must be in accordance with a comprehensive plan adopted pursuant to §272-a.11.(a) or 7-722.11.(a).
- b. All plans for capital projects of another government agency on land included in the Town or Village comprehensive plan, adopted pursuant to Section 272-a or 7-722, shall take such plan into consideration.

Once adopted, the Town or Village should begin to implement the plan by amending its land use regulations to conform to the comprehensive plan, and consider the plan in all of its land use decisions (site plans, subdivisions, and zoning actions). Yearly, the municipality should utilize the plan in formulating its capital project plan and in helping to determine what projects and other implementation actions should be undertaken in the following year.

Copies of the adopted comprehensive plan must be filed with County and State agencies, and should be utilized by those agencies in planning projects and actions that could affect the planning community.

## **SECTION 3.0**

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

This section presents the goals and objectives that were developed for the three-community study area with the assistance of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee. The goals and objectives have been designed for each community utilizing the communities' original rationale for preparing the comprehensive plan, data from the inventory and analysis, and input gathered from residents at public meetings, from written comments, and through a public opinion survey.

The goals and objectives focus on the major issues and concerns of the residents in the three communities. They are aimed at helping to guide future growth and development in the Towns and Village. The recommendations that follow in Section 5 include more specific actions that each community can implement to achieve the intent of these goals and objectives.

#### **3.1 Public Input**

The three communities involved in the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan were committed to the idea that a critical element of the planning process is effective public participation. From its inception, the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan was prepared with extensive public input. A variety of avenues were utilized to solicit input, including two public information meetings, comment forms for the submittal of written comments, a public opinion survey, individual meetings with government officials, an internet website, and press releases. In addition, the entire process was closely overseen by the Advisory Committee, which was comprised of representatives from each of the participating communities. This committee met on a regular basis to provide guidance and insight into the planning process and to ensure that the concerns of each community were being effectively addressed.

- **Public Information Meetings**

At the outset of the project, public information meetings were held in the Town of Alabama and the Town of Oakfield. These meetings were held on July 22<sup>nd</sup> and August 6<sup>th</sup> of 2002 to introduce the public to the project consultants, the Advisory Committee and the project. A brief overview of the project, the reasoning behind it and an understanding of how the plan would be developed was provided. This was followed by an open discussion of important issues and opportunities designed to generate public comments. An important goal of these meetings was to gather as much public input as possible regarding what features residents liked about their communities, where they had concerns, and what they saw as key opportunities for improving their quality of life. Brainstorming encouraged attendees to articulate their "vision" for their communities. Based on this input, a preliminary list of issues was prepared for use in developing the goals and objectives.

- **Public Opinion Survey**

This project included a public opinion survey. The survey was sent out in the fall of 2002. The survey was tailored slightly for each municipality, with the Town of Oakfield survey including questions relating to the Village of Oakfield and visa versa. The surveys provided additional input, insight and clarification

into the issues facing each community. The results of these surveys, which are provided in the Appendix, were utilized to further define the goals and objectives.

- **Additional Sources of Input**

As noted above, a internet website was established for this plan. The website was used as a forum for providing the public with information about the progress of the plan. For example, data summaries, maps and survey results were posted, as were the goals and objectives and preliminary recommendations. The schedule of public meetings was also posted, as a supplement to the press releases and other methods used to advertise the meetings.

Following the drafting of the recommendations and implementation strategy, meetings were held with public officials (Town Boards and Planning Boards) in each of the three communities to go over the report, and ensure that it was consistent with their vision for their communities. These public representatives will be responsible to adopt and implement the plan, and this step of public input is very important to help ensure the success of the project. Their comments were incorporated into the final draft of the report.

- **Advisory Committee**

Finally, the Advisory Committee was a very important source of input and guidance for the plan. These community volunteers reviewed the report and directed its progress at each stage of the process. They also helped to advertise and facilitate the public meetings, and were instrumental in developing and distributing the public opinion survey. They served as important liaisons between their respective communities and the project consultants, and provided useful comments, feedback and revisions to the plan.

The Appendix to this report, referred to above, provides examples of materials used to solicit public input, public opinion survey results, and additional information on the public input process for the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan.

### **3.2 Goals and Objectives**

The goals and objectives listed in this section are large-scale visionary ideas that can be utilized to evaluate actions in each community. To help facilitate the development of recommendations and implementation steps and set forth the “vision” for each area, the following goals and objectives are presented separately for each community.

### **3.2.1 Town of Alabama**

#### **1. Protect, promote and preserve Agriculture**

Agriculture is an important aspect of the Town of Alabama; it helps define the character of the area, provides jobs, preserves open space and is an integral part of the community.

- Promote the protection and preservation of farms and farming-related activities that are economically viable.
- Protect and promote farming activity as a priority to preserve open space and scenic vistas that help shape and maintain the rural character of the Town.
- Maintain farming and agriculture activities to provide jobs and economic activity for a large portion of residents in the Town.
- Encourage and allow farm-related business as a secondary interest and support service to farming.

#### **2. Maintain and enhance community character in the Town of Alabama**

- Maintain and enhance a strong sense of community in the Town.
- Maintain the unique rural character and small-town atmosphere in the Town of Alabama through proper planning and development.
- Manage growth in the Town to ensure that development occurs at an appropriate scale and pace, and in locations suitable for the type of development that is proposed.
- Promote the positive image of the Town as a desirable community in which to live and work.
- Preserve viewsheds, mature vegetation, open space and other natural resources that contribute to the rural character of the Town.
- Promote the distinct heritage and historic identity of the Town.
- Encourage architectural development styles that are consistent with the historic and rural character of existing development in and around the Town.

#### **3. Provide potable water to appropriate areas of the Town**

Public water is a quality of life issue and water services should be extended to appropriate areas of the Town to address needs.

- Work with Genesee County to further outline and identify what areas of the Town should receive public water.
- Provide public water in areas of dense development (hamlets) where groundwater sources are inadequate, of poor quality or polluted, to address such problems and encourage growth.
- Provide public water to areas where the quality or quantity of potable water resources threatens public health.
- Provide public water to areas targeted for industrial and commercial growth.
- Protect groundwater and surface water resources from contamination from failing septic systems and other sources of pollution.
- Promote the provision of assistance for improving farming practices to protect the quality of groundwater and the environment.

#### **4. Protect the environmental features and resources of the Town of Alabama**

The Town contains a variety of environmental features and is home to over 1,000 acres of wildlife conservation areas.

- Protect and preserve the abundant natural resources of the Town.
- Protect groundwater sources as a high priority to maintain the viability of private wells that are susceptible to pollution.
- Promote public education with regard to septic system maintenance to protect groundwater quality.
- Promote sound farming techniques that limit non-point source pollution.
- Promote the protection of natural stream corridors and watersheds.

#### **5. Provide for economic development in the Town of Alabama**

The expansion of industrial and commercial growth, and other economic development activities, helps provide jobs and a stronger tax base for the community.

- Target areas for new commercial and industrial growth and support the extension of necessary infrastructure to these areas.
- Protect and support the existing economic base of the Town and the expansion of existing businesses in an appropriate manner.
- Promote the establishment and growth of new business enterprises in the Town, particularly in and around the hamlet areas and in other areas designated for economic growth.
- Identify areas in need of redevelopment and encourage the re-use of existing structures and utilization of vacant properties in these areas.
- Promote new growth and the expansion of existing businesses to provide job opportunities for youth to help them remain in the area.

- Encourage the development of tourism-related businesses and services that support activities associated with the wildlife conservation areas.
- Ensure the development of compatible land uses to avoid use conflicts.

#### **6. Maintain and promote efficiency of government**

The Town of Alabama should strive to offer the highest quality and most cost-effective services possible.

- Promote the sharing of services, equipment, and personnel, to the highest level possible, with the Town and Village of Oakfield (or other neighboring municipalities) to cut costs and maintain a high degree of service.
- Maintain and enhance the strong collaboration between the community and the Oakfield-Alabama School District.
- Advocate effective zoning, land use, and development regulations and enforcement.
- Manage long-term growth and development in the Town through a comprehensive planning process.
- Plan for and foster a balance and diversity of uses in the Town to control the cost of, and the need for, public services and future service upgrades.

#### **7. Encourage a diversity of housing types**

As the population of the Town changes over time, and the economic conditions vary, the housing stock should be made diverse to accommodate the changing needs of the community.

- Maintain the quality of the existing housing stock.
- Encourage the provision of a greater variety of housing styles and types to accommodate a wider range of housing preferences, income levels and household types
- Maintain and protect residential property values.
- Encourage the development of housing in a manner that discourages sprawl and enables residents to use existing services and infrastructure efficiently.

### **3.2.2 Town of Oakfield**

#### **1. Promote the expansion public water to appropriate areas in the Town of Oakfield**

Public water is a quality of life issue and water services should be extended to appropriate areas of the Town.

- Work with Genesee County to further outline and identify what areas of the Town should receive public water.
- Provide public water in areas of relatively dense development (hamlets) where groundwater sources are inadequate, of poor quality or polluted, to address such problems and encourage growth.
- Provide public water to areas where the quality or quantity of potable water resources threatens public health.
- Provide public water to areas targeted for industrial and commercial growth.
- Protect groundwater and surface water resources from contamination from failing septic systems and other sources of pollution.
- Promote the provision of assistance for improving farming practices to protect the quality of groundwater and the environment.

#### **2. Provide for economic development in the Town of Oakfield**

The expansion of industrial and commercial growth, and other economic development activities, helps provide jobs and a stronger tax base for the community.

- Target areas for new commercial and industrial growth and support the extension of necessary infrastructure to these areas.
- Promote the establishment and growth of new business enterprises in the Town, particularly in the area situated northwest of the Village of Oakfield, which has emerged as an industrial growth area.
- Encourage new commercial growth, particularly in the hamlet and around the Village of Oakfield.
- Identify areas in need of redevelopment and encourage the re-use of existing structures and utilization of vacant properties in these areas.
- Protect and support the existing economic base of the Town and the expansion of existing businesses.
- Promote new growth and expansion of existing businesses to provide job opportunities for youth to help them remain the area.
- Encourage the development of tourism-related businesses and services that support activities associated with the wildlife conservation areas.
- Ensure the development of compatible land uses to avoid use conflicts.

#### **3. Protect and preserve agriculture in the Town of Oakfield**

Agriculture is an important aspect of the Town of Oakfield; it helps define the character of the area, provides jobs, preserves open space and is an integral part of the community.

- Promote the protection and preservation of economically and ecologically sound farming practices so as to maintain farming without affecting the quality of life for citizens within the community.
- Protect and promote farming activity as a priority to preserve open space and scenic vistas that help shape and maintain the rural character of the Town.
- Maintain farming and agriculture practices to provide jobs and economic activity for a large portion of residents in the Town.
- Encourage and allow farm-related business as a secondary interest and support service to farming.

#### **4. Maintain and enhance community character in the Town of Oakfield**

- Maintain and enhance a strong sense of community in the Town.
- Maintain the unique rural character and small-town atmosphere in the Town of Oakfield through proper planning and development.
- Manage growth in the Town to ensure that development occurs at an appropriate scale and pace, and in locations suitable for the type of development that is proposed.
- Promote the positive image of the Town as a desirable community in which to live and work.
- Provide opportunities for passive recreation, such as picnicking.
- Preserve viewsheds, mature vegetation, open space and other natural resources that contribute to the rural character of the Town.
- Promote the distinct heritage and historic identity of the Town.
- Encourage architectural development styles that are consistent with the historic and rural character of existing development in and around the Town.

#### **5. Protect the environmental features and resources of the community**

The study area contains numerous environmental features and is home to a large wildlife conservation area.

- Protect and preserve the abundant natural resources of the community.
- Protect groundwater resources as a high priority to maintain the viability of private wells that are easily susceptible to pollution.
- Promote public education with regard to septic tank maintenance to protect groundwater quality.
- Promote sound farming techniques that limit non-point source pollution.
- Promote the protection of natural stream corridors and watersheds.

#### **6. Encourage a diversity of housing types in the Town**

As the population of the Town changes over time, and the economic conditions vary, the housing stock should be made diverse to accommodate the changing needs of the community.

- Maintain the quality of the existing housing stock.
- Encourage the provision of a greater variety of housing styles and types to accommodate a wider range of housing preferences, income levels and household types.
- Maintain and protect residential property values.
- Encourage the development of housing in a manner that discourages sprawl and enables residents to use existing services and infrastructure efficiently.

**7. Maintain and promote efficiency of government**

The three communities within the study area should work together to offer the highest quality and most cost effective services possible.

- Promote the sharing of services, equipment, and personnel, to the highest level possible, with the Village of Oakfield and the Town of Alabama (or other neighboring municipalities) to cut costs and maintain a high degree of service.
- Maintain and enhance the strong collaboration between the community and the Oakfield-Alabama School District.
- Advocate effective zoning, land use, and development regulations and enforcement.
- Manage long-term growth and development in the Town through a comprehensive planning process.
- Plan for and foster a balance and diversity of uses in the Town to control the cost of, and the need for, public services and future service upgrades.

### 3.2.3 Village of Oakfield

#### 1. Promote and encourage investment and economic development in the Village

The Village of Oakfield serves as the commercial center for the Towns and outlying areas. Efforts should be made to protect, enhance, and promote the Village.

- Provide opportunities for existing enterprises to expand within the Village.
- Encourage a diversity of retail and commercial uses in the Village business district.
- Promote and market the Village business district to enhance its vitality.
- Promote the re-use of existing structures and vacant facilities for new and expanding retail, commercial and light manufacturing establishments.
- Enhance the visual quality of older structures of local significance in the downtown area of the Village.
- Encourage multi-use of existing structures to enhance activity in the business district.
- Provide adequate, safe parking in and around the business district.
- Encourage the development of tourism-related businesses and services that support activities associated with the wildlife conservation areas.

#### 2. Preserve the traditional neighborhood character of the Village

- Recognize the unique character of the Village as an important asset to the area, which should be supported and preserved.
- Maintain and enhance the high quality of life within the Village.
- Promote streetscape and roadway improvements to further enhance the aesthetics and pedestrian-oriented character of the Village.
- Maintain and preserve the architectural integrity of buildings within the downtown area.
- Ensure that development and redevelopment in the Village is compatible with the existing character in terms of architectural design, style and scale, and is integrated into the surrounding area to promote community interaction.
- Encourage the development of multi-family housing and other such housing alternatives to accommodate a range of incomes and age groups.
- Improve linkages between the business district and the outlying Town.
- Provide opportunities for passive recreation, such as picnicking.
- Encourage the provision of a greater variety of housing styles and types to accommodate a wider range of housing preferences, income levels and household types.

#### 3. Maintain and Promote efficiency of government

The three communities within the study area should work together to offer the highest quality and most cost effective services possible.

- Promote the sharing of services, equipment, and personnel, to the highest level possible, with the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama, to cut costs and maintain a high degree of service.
- Maintain and enhance the strong collaboration between the community and the Oakfield-Alabama School District.
- Advocate effective zoning, land use, and development regulations and enforcement.
- Manage long-term growth and development in the Village through a comprehensive planning process.
- Plan for and foster a balance and diversity of uses in the Village to control the cost of and need for public services and future service upgrades.

## **SECTION 4.0**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS OF THE COMMUNITIES**

#### **4.1 Existing Land Use**

For the purpose of studying existing land use patterns within the study area a land use classification map was created. The map was created by first obtaining digitized tax parcel data from the Genesee County Department of Planning. These data were placed into a geographic information system (GIS) and sorted by the property classification attribute fields within the database. By doing this, it is possible to see how the respective Town and Village assessors classify the parcels for taxation purposes. Each property class number within the database represents a different land use type (i.e. - 201 = single family residential). For the purposes of taxation, land use categories are broken down into very specific uses. For example, agricultural uses are broken down into such categories as poultry and poultry products; dairy products; cattle, calves, hogs; sheep and wool; honey and bees wax; and so on, until all possible uses are covered. For the purposes of this study, this represents too much detailed information. Therefore, we grouped all those individual uses into the category of agricultural. This same technique was used for all categories found on Map 3: Existing Land Use. We can now easily sort, reproduce, and edit land uses within the study area. Past experiences have shown that these type of land use maps are 90 percent± accurate and can be easily modified by field visits, public input, etc., to increase the level of accuracy. At such a small scale, this level of accuracy performs very well in portraying existing land use patterns.

Another aid in studying land use and development patterns is digital orthoimagery (see Map 2). Digital Orthoimagery is simply vertical aerial imagery that has had all distortions caused by ground elevation changes and camera distortions removed through computer processing and placed in a digital format that can be used with computer applications. By looking at an area from above, it is possible to gain unique perspectives on land use and development patterns, especially if there are older orthoimages available for comparing different time frames. Utilizing digital orthoimagery allows you to see things that might otherwise go unnoticed.

#### 4.1.1 Community Land Use

##### Town of Alabama

The Town of Alabama is very rural in nature. There are three predominant land uses within the Town of Alabama that help to keep the rural nature of the community intact: agriculture, wildlife conservation, and the Tonawanda Indian Reservation.



A typical rural landscape in the Town of Alabama

Agriculture is by far the most prominent land use in the Town making up almost 50 percent of the Town. Unlike some areas of Western New York, where farming is no longer a viable economic option, it remains very much intact in the Town of Alabama. A drive through the Town will yield many views of large farming operations, as well as small family farms throughout the countryside. The wildlife conservation areas include the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area (in the northern portion of the Town), the Tonawanda State Wildlife Management Area in the western portion, and the New York State White Memorial Game Farm in the center of the Town. Other land uses are found scattered throughout the Town in less abundance. In a much denser land use pattern, single family and multi-family residences, commercial uses, and public uses are found in the hamlets of Basom, Alabama, Wheatville, and South Alabama.



Examples of denser, mixed use developments in the hamlets of Alabama.

This type of development pattern is very typical of rural/agricultural communities. The majority of the land is used for the production of agricultural products, while these small pockets of development serve the surrounding area. These hamlets most often contain small stores, churches, gas stations, and similar uses. In general, these hamlets are found along major roads or at major intersections. The following is a table containing the breakdown of land uses within the Town of Alabama by total percent.

**Figure 1A Town of Alabama Land Use Percentages**

| Land Use                      | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Agriculture                   | 47.01 %    |
| Commercial                    | 0.02 %     |
| Government/Public             | 0.09 %     |
| Indian Reservation            | 17.52 %    |
| Industrial                    | 0.68 %     |
| Multi-Family Residential      | 0.05 %     |
| Multiple Residential          | 0.71 %     |
| Single Family Residential     | 4.19 %     |
| Unknown                       | 0.84 %     |
| Utilities/Infrastructure      | 0.26 %     |
| Vacant/Undeveloped/Open Space | 2.69 %     |
| Wildlife Conservation Areas   | 25.94 %    |

Source: Map 3 Existing Land Use

### **Town of Oakfield**

The Town of Oakfield is much like the Town of Alabama in that it is rural and agricultural in nature. The Town of Oakfield also has three land uses that cover the majority of the Town. Over 80 percent of the land is either agriculture, vacant/undeveloped/open space, or a wildlife conservation area. Agricultural land uses however are the most predominant, covering 58 percent of the Towns. Large lots and vast tracks of land in agricultural production typify the landscape outside of the Village. There are, however, areas of road frontage residential development along South Pearl Street Road, Town Line Road, and Drake Street Road in the southeastern portion of the Town. The majority of denser residential and mixed-use development within the Town of Oakfield takes place in and around the Village. Industrial development can be seen along Judge Road, just west of the Village with the largest tracts of land belonging to the U.S. Gypsum Company. Starting in the early 1900's, U.S. Gypsum conducted subsurface mining operations in the vicinity of their facility in Oakfield, with mines extending to the west, into Alabama, and further east (see Map 10).

The Oakfield – Alabama Central Schools are located in the Town, just northwest of the Village on Lewiston Road. The following table offers a breakdown of land uses by percentage of the total area for the Town of Oakfield.

**Figure 1B Town of Oakfield Land Use Percentages**

| <b>Land Use</b>               | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Agriculture                   | 58.02 %           |
| Commercial                    | 0.20 %            |
| Government/Public             | 0.62 %            |
| Industrial                    | 1.47 %            |
| Multi-Family Residential      | 0.41 %            |
| Multiple Residential          | 0.11 %            |
| Parks                         | 0.27 %            |
| Single Family Residential     | 8.23 %            |
| Unknown                       | 7.77 %            |
| Utilities/Infrastructure      | 0.21 %            |
| Vacant/Undeveloped/Open Space | 11.56 %           |
| Wildlife Conservation Areas   | 11.13 %           |

Source: Map 3 Existing Land Use

**Village of Oakfield**

The Village of Oakfield is the central hub for the three-community study area. It is a destination for residents from the surrounding area. People come to shop, do business, go to school, and more. The Village is the most densely populated and developed area in the three municipalities. The Village is developed mostly with residential uses, along with a mix of other community-oriented uses. Commercial uses are located primarily along North Main Street and South Pearl Street, although other commercial properties and some industrial uses can be found in other areas in the Village. The following table provides a break down of land uses by percentage of the total area for the Village.

**Figure 1C Village of Oakfield Land Use Percentages**

| Land Use                      | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Agriculture                   | 7.01 %     |
| Commercial                    | 2.96 %     |
| Government/Public             | 3.77 %     |
| Industrial                    | 0.81 %     |
| Multi-Family Residential      | 5.12 %     |
| Multiple Residential          | 2.16 %     |
| Parks                         | 2.16 %     |
| Single Family Residential     | 38.81 %    |
| Unknown                       | 25.07 %    |
| Utilities/Infrastructure      | 3.77 %     |
| Vacant/Undeveloped/Open Space | 8.36 %     |

Source: Map 3 Existing Land Use

As is illustrated by Map 3 and the table above, the Village is developed with a mixture of land uses. Residential uses make up the largest portion composing just under 50 percent of the area. The Village also contains the largest mixture of residential housing types. The Towns of Alabama and Oakfield each have less than one percent of their land uses comprised of multi-family (two and three -family homes) and multiple (apartments, group living facilities, etc.) residential units. The Village has approximately 15 percent of its housing stock as multi-family and multiple residential. Large unclassified tracts of land at the south and west end of the Village account for nearly 25 percent of the land area. The rest of the Village is divided rather evenly between a mix of other uses that include churches, parks, government offices, businesses, and cemeteries, among others.

#### **4.1.2 Farmland and Agriculture**

Because so much of the land within the study area is in agricultural production it is useful to take a closer look at these properties. Two maps are provided to aid in the study of these areas - - Map 4 Agricultural Data and Map 5 Prime Farmland Soils. Map 4 was generated by taking the existing land use file and displaying parcels that were known to be in agricultural use and then overlaying New York State Agricultural Districts.

Agricultural Districts are areas that are voluntarily formed by landowners and adopted by county legislative bodies, following state certification. Agricultural districts allow landowners the opportunity to receive real property assessments based on the value of their land for agricultural production rather than on its development value. In addition, these landowners gain protection from local regulations that would unreasonably restrict farming operations, and receive greater protection from development under the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process. Properties located in Agricultural Districts in Genesee County are enrolled for 8-year periods, at the end of which time they are reviewed and can either remain in the district or be removed. The purpose of the Agriculture District is to encourage the land to remain in agricultural production and contribute to the agricultural economy of the area. The second map provided to help analyze existing farmland and agricultural use (see Map 5). This map examines digital soils information obtained from the Genesee County Planning Department (which was produced and distributed by the USDA, NRCS, and GCSWCD). One of the features shown on this map is the prime farmland soils classification. The data displayed on Map 5 falls into one of three categories: not prime, prime when drained, and prime. The USDA defines prime farmland soils as,

*“Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops and is also available for these uses. It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce economically sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods, including water management. In general, prime farmlands have an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. They are permeable to water and air. Prime farmlands are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time, and they either do not flood frequently or are protected from flooding.”*

It is also important to note that agriculture not only has an affect on the economy of the study area, but on their character, as well. Rural landscapes such as farm fields, woodlands, and picturesque farmhouses create an identity for the communities in addition to supporting the local economy. By preserving farming not only are jobs being preserved, but so is the rural quality of life.

### **Town of Alabama**

In the Town of Alabama just over 47 percent of the land is classified as agricultural, as defined by the real property survey. The majority of this land falls within Genesee County Agricultural District #2. This district in the Town encompasses nearly all of the land south of Casey and Roberts Road, west of Macomber Road, and east of the Tonawanda Indian Reservation. The district also encompasses a small portion of land in the southwest corner of the Town. The key omissions from the district include the Alabama hamlet, the New York State White Memorial Game Farm, and the Buffalo Crushed Stone industrial property on Ledge Road. Map 5 indicates that a large portion of the land within the Town has prime farmland soils. As noted above, these soils have the best properties for agriculture uses. The combination of factors including protection of farming by the agricultural districts, proper soils for good agricultural production, and the critical mass of farms in one location helps to maintain the stability of agriculture in the area. Genesee County has also implemented a Smart Growth Plan that guides the expansion of water services to currently non-serviced areas of the County. This plan calls for minimizing the number of hookups in areas of agricultural districts. It is the intent of this plan to discourage hookups to the County portion of the water system in these areas that will, in theory, help to keep development pressure down, which in turn helps to preserve agriculture. Other issues affecting agriculture are the economics of farming and the desires of future generations to farm.

### **Town of Oakfield**

The Town of Oakfield is similar to the Town of Alabama regarding the area dedicated to agriculture. It too, has the majority (58 percent) of its land involved in agriculture and is also mostly located within one agricultural district. Genesee County Agricultural District #2 takes in nearly 75 percent of the Town, covering much of the land area south of the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area. A few of the obvious omissions from the District are the Village of Oakfield, the US Gypsum property on Judge Road, and some vacant undeveloped lands just southwest of the Village. Oakfield also contains nearly 50 percent prime farmland soils with the largest concentration located in the vicinity of Lewiston Road northwest of the Village. In the Town of Oakfield, much of the land is either owned or operated by Lamb Farms, or the land is owned by the U.S. Gypsum Company and leased to farmers. Lamb Farms is the largest dairy farm in the County and one of the largest in Western New York.



Lamb Farms, one of the largest dairy farms in Western New York, is located on Albion Road

Another critical aspect to maintaining farming is the concept of critical mass. This concept relates to having enough agricultural related operations in one location to support the necessary businesses needed to maintain farming. By looking at Map 4 for at the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield it is obvious that this critical mass is obtained in these two communities. The presence of agriculturally related businesses is also an indicator of critical mass.

### **Village of Oakfield**

The Village of Oakfield only contains three parcels of land that are listed as agricultural by the real property survey. There are no agricultural districts located within the Village boundaries, however, Genesee County Agricultural District #2 surrounds the entire Village. The Village may not have agricultural land use to the extent that the surrounding Towns do, but it still plays an important role



An agricultural related business in the Town of Oakfield (Goodridge Farm Supply)

in the agricultural economy of the area. It acts as the hub of the communities where farmers can go to purchase necessary supplies and goods to maintain their farming operations. It should be noted that the property in the southwest corner of the Village, which is listed as unknown on the existing land use map, is comprised almost entirely of prime and prime when drained farmland soils.

## 4.2 Land Use Regulation

The Town of Alabama, Town of Oakfield and Village of Oakfield all regulate land use through the application of zoning regulations. Land use is also regulated through the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and the requirements of the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law for those properties located within an agricultural district. Zoning classifications for each of the municipalities are shown on Map 6. The following paragraphs provide a brief synopsis of each communities zoning laws. Please refer to each individual zoning law for specific regulations and requirements.

### 4.2.1 Zoning

#### Town of Alabama

The Town of Alabama has six zoning classifications identified within its zoning law. The majority of the Town falls within two zoning classifications, Agricultural-Residential and Land Conservation. The Residential and Commercial zoning classes are found mostly (although not entirely) within the three hamlet areas of the Town. Industrially zoned land is found on Ledge Road (at the Buffalo Crushed Stone property) and on Wright Road in the southwest corner of the Town. The final zoning class, Planned Unit Development (PUD), is not identified anywhere on the zoning map (sometimes referred to as a floating zone). It is a zoning district that is available for use if a development proposal for a particular piece of property is determined to meet the intent of the regulations. The site would then be rezoned to PUD. The table below highlights the permitted uses allowed within each zoning class; for specific uses please refer to the Town of Alabama Zoning Law.

**Figure 2A: Town of Alabama Zoning Districts and Permitted Uses**

| District                      | Permitted Uses                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A-R: Agricultural-Residential | Farms and all related agricultural operations, single and double family dwellings, single mobile homes, churches, schools, and other public uses and buildings.    |
| R: Residential                | Single family dwellings, farms and all related agricultural operations excluding stabling of farm animals, churches, schools, and other public uses and buildings. |
| C: Commercial                 | General commercial uses (i.e. restaurants, motels, professional offices, banks, etc.)                                                                              |
| I: Industrial                 | General industrial uses (i.e. manufacturing, warehousing, trucking terminals, etc.)                                                                                |
| LC: Land Conservation         | Wildlife refuge areas, farms and related farming activities.                                                                                                       |
| PUD: Planned Unit Development | Permitted uses will vary. Each PUD is looked at on an individual basis.                                                                                            |

Source: Town of Alabama Zoning Law June 8, 1987

Within the zoning law, each zoning class is listed with all actual permitted uses by right, as well as those uses that are allowed by Special Use Permit. Special Use Permits are required for certain uses because they may not generally be appropriate and may require additional regulations and/or restrictions. Bulk regulations regarding lot size, street frontage, yard setbacks, height, and lot coverage for each individual zoning classes and certain specified uses within those zoning classes are outlined in the Town of Alabama Zoning Law.

Many times a community is faced with an application for development that is difficult to regulate through standard zoning laws. The Town of Alabama has addressed needs and requirements of some of these uses through Article VI of its zoning law, supplementary regulations. Some examples of uses that require supplementary regulations within the Town of Alabama are home occupations, adult uses, and cellular communication towers. By having these supplementary regulations in place the Town is able to address issues specific to these uses without placing undo hardship on other allowable uses within a zoning class.

It should be noted that the Town of Alabama does not have any separate subdivision regulations in effect although the subdivision of land is regulated through Section 401C. of the Zoning Ordinance.

**Town of Oakfield**

The Town of Oakfield has five zoning classifications (see Map 6), which are very similar in nature to those of the Town of Alabama. The following table contains a list of the zoning classifications and general permitted uses. The table is just an overview and generalization of the zoning class, specific inquiries should refer to the Town of Oakfield Zoning Law.

**Figure 2B: Town of Oakfield Zoning Districts and Permitted Uses**

| <b>District</b>                 | <b>Permitted Uses</b>                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| R & A: Residential Agricultural | Single family dwellings, mobile homes, farms and related agricultural operations, churches, schools, and other public uses and buildings |
| R: General Residential          | Single and double family dwellings, farms and related agricultural operations, churches, schools, and other public uses and buildings    |
| C: Commercial                   | Motor vehicle sales and service, retail shops, offices and banks                                                                         |
| I: Industrial                   | General industrial uses (i.e. manufacturing, warehousing, research and development facilities, distribution facilities, etc.)            |
| LC: Land Conservation           | Farms and related agricultural operations                                                                                                |

Source: Town of Oakfield Zoning Law August 11, 1981

The Town of Oakfield’s zoning law also lays out each zoning class and lists all actual uses permitted by right, as well as those uses that are allowed by Special Use Permit. Bulk regulations for each zoning class and certain specified uses within those zoning classes are outlined in the Town of Oakfield Zoning Law. The Town of Oakfield adopted a Land Separation Local Law and Land Subdivision Regulations in June of 1992. Although the Land Separation Law, which regulation minor splits of four lots or less, was repealed in 1997, the major subdivision regulations remain in effect. Subdivision of land is also addressed under Section 411.3 of the Zoning Ordinance.

**Village of Oakfield**

The Village of Oakfield has six separate zoning classifications. Similar to the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield, the zoning classifications outline actual uses permitted by right, as well as those permitted by special use. The

following table provides a generic overview of the zoning classifications and the uses permitted therein. Please refer to the Village of Oakfield zoning law for specific regulations. Bulk regulations for zoning classifications within the Village can be found in Sections 301, 305, and 504 of the Zoning Law, Sections 306 through 311. Certain issues and uses that require a higher level of scrutiny have been individually addressed under Article V, Supplementary Regulations. Examples of these include adult uses, mobile home parks, light industrial uses and cellular communication towers. Similar to the Town of Alabama, the Village does not have separate regulations for subdivision; it is regulated under Section 301 of the Zoning Ordinance.

**Figure 2C: Town of Oakfield Zoning Districts and Permitted Uses**

| District                      | Permitted Uses                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| R-1: Residential              | Single family dwellings                                                                                |
| R-2: Residential              | Single and double family dwellings                                                                     |
| C-1: Neighborhood Commercial  | Small to medium sized commercial uses (i.e. bakeries, retail stores, restaurants, etc.)                |
| C-2: Central Commercial       | Concentrated commercial development (i.e. business and professional offices, hotel/motel, banks, etc.) |
| I: Industrial                 | General Industrial Uses (i.e. manufacturing, warehousing, freight or trucking terminal, etc.)          |
| PUD: Planned Unit Development | Permitted uses will vary. Each PUD is looked at on an individual basis.                                |

Source: Village of Oakfield Zoning Law

### 4.3 Natural Environment

#### 4.3.1 Topography and Steep Slopes

The majority of the study area is extremely flat with very gently sloping land. There are a few areas of steep slopes although they are small and limited. Areas of slopes can be found in the Town of Alabama along Ledge Road and in the northeastern portion of the Town of Oakfield along Fisher Road.

#### 4.3.2 Hydric Soils

Map 7 shows the location of hydric soils within the study area. Hydric Soils are defined by the USDA as, "...a soil that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions in the upper part." Essentially hydric soils are those soils that may be wet during parts of the year and typically support wetlands. The majority of these soils are concentrated in the northern portion of the two Towns, in the vicinity of the wildlife conservation areas. There is another concentration of these soils along the south side of Ledge Road in the Town of Alabama.

#### 4.3.3 Stream Corridors and Watersheds

There are four watersheds located within the study area: Mud Creek, Ledge and Tonawanda Creeks, Murder Creek, and Oak Orchard Creek (see Map 8). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines watersheds as the area of land that catches rain and snow melt, which drains or seeps into a marsh, stream, river,

lake or groundwater. Two watersheds drain approximately 96 percent of the land within the study area, the Ledge and Tonawanda Creek, and Oak Orchard Creek Watersheds.

The smallest of the watersheds in the study area is Murder Creek, in the southwest corner of the Town of Alabama. The Murder Creek Watershed represents less than one percent of the land area drained.

The Mud Creek Watershed is located in the northwest corner of the Town of Alabama and represents three percent of the land drained. It drains the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and the Tonawanda State Wildlife Management Area.

The Ledge and Tonawanda Creeks Watershed drains the majority of the land in the southwestern portion of the Town of Alabama. This watershed represents just under 23 percent of the total land area. The land area that is drained by this watershed is dominated by agricultural land uses, the Tonawanda Indian Reservation, a small portion of the Tonawanda State Wildlife Management Area, and the hamlet of Basom. Tonawanda Creek runs almost directly through the center of the watershed boundary parallel to Meadville/Sand Hill Road with Ledge Creek being located in the southwest portion of the watershed, running parallel to Wright Road.

The Oak Orchard Creek Watershed is by far the largest watershed in the study area, covering just over 73 percent of the land area. This watershed covers almost the entire central and eastern portions of the Town of Alabama along with the entire land area of the Town and Village of Oakfield. Oak Orchard Creek runs along the northern portions of the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield through the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area and the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge. Because of the size of this watershed, it encompasses a myriad of land uses from agricultural, residential, forested lands, commercial and industrial, among others.



Oak Orchard Creek

#### **4.3.4 Flooding and Wetlands**

The region contains flood zones that have been designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as areas subject to flooding. These areas are depicted on FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. The

flood zones are established based upon the degree to which an area is susceptible to flood damage. There is one flood zone that exists within the study area:

- 100 – Year flood zone, base elevations unknown – (also called the “A” Zone and the area of special flood hazard) is that area of land that would primarily experience still water flooding, without significant wave activity, during the 100-year storm event.

These natural flood zones or plains are flat areas surrounding streams that are periodically inundated with water due to overbank flow. As shown on Map 9: Environmental Features, most floodplains are located in the northern portions of the study area, within the wildlife conservation areas and along Tonawanda Creek within the Tonawanda Indian Reservation. Another small area of 100-year floodplain is contained primarily within the Village along the creek corridors.

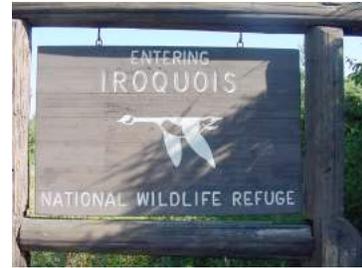
By examining Map 9, it is easily apparent why the northern portions of the study area have been designated wildlife conservation areas. These lands contain an inordinate amount of environmental features. These areas covered by the 100-Year Floodplain and are also dominated by wetlands.

Wetlands are defined by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) as transition areas between uplands and aquatic habitats. They are identified by a variety of factors including the presence of standing water, vegetation type, and soil type. Map 9 shows that wetlands, both state and federal are located throughout the entire study area. State-designated wetlands are defined and regulated as any wetlands area measuring 12.4 acres or larger. Regulated federal (or non-jurisdictional wetlands) can measure between 0.1 acre and 12.4 acres and require association with a navigable waterway.

Wetlands are an extremely important environmental resource that performs numerous functions. The NYSDEC has listed some of these functions as flood and storm water control, surface and groundwater protection, erosion control, pollution treatment and nutrient cycling, and fish and wildlife habitat, as well as public enjoyment.

#### **4.3.5 Wildlife Conservation Areas and Significant Wildlife Habitats**

Map 10 shows the location of the wildlife conservation areas within the study area. There are four such areas, which include the Tonawanda State Wildlife Management Area, Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, and Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area, which together are known as the Alabama Swamp Complex. The fourth is the New York State John White Memorial Game Farm. In total, the wildlife conservation areas cover approximately 19,000 acres of land area and occupy approximately 25 percent of the land within the study area (excluding the Tonawanda Indian Reservation). These areas serve as important wildlife habitat and provide permanent protection for important environmental features. They are also important recreation areas for the residents of, and visitors to, the communities, as well as a regional resource.



#### 4.3.6 Scenic Resources

In general, there are many scenic resources within the study area. The wildlife conservation areas, farms, and rural residences throughout the area are all important resources. Particular views of interest include Fisher Road overlooking the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area and



Above are views of the Oak Orchard SWMA, Kenyon Road looking north, and a sweet corn field Kenyon Road looking north to the Somerset Power Plant. The Village also offers quaint visual appeal, with its historic structures and small town charm. The scenic landscape contributes significantly to the rural character of the three communities.

#### 4.3.7 Historic and Archaeological Features

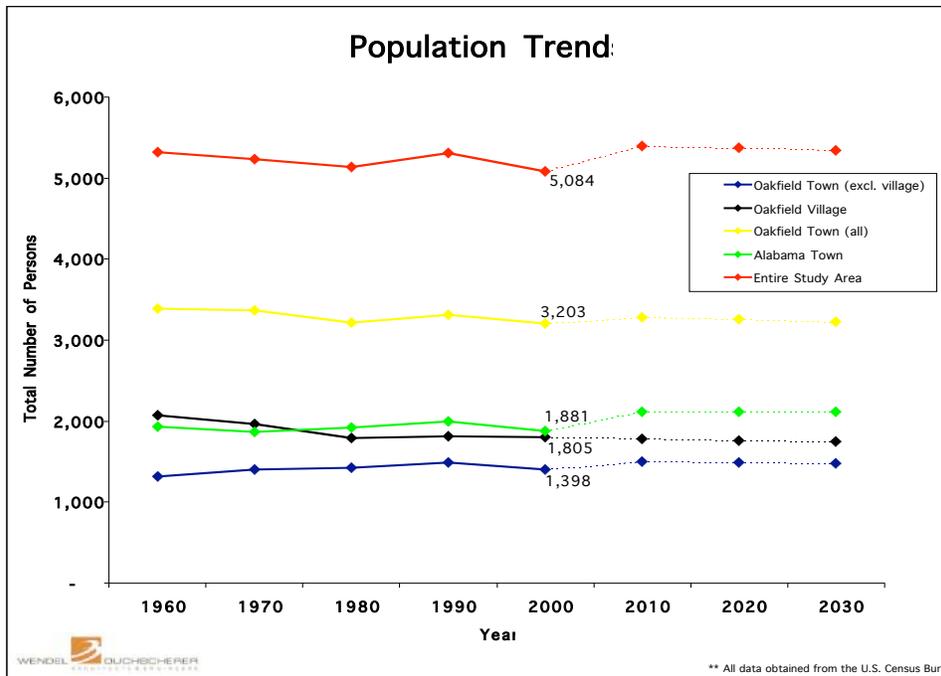
The Oak Orchard Creek Marsh was designated as a National Natural Landmark in May of 1973. The marsh is located within the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area. The marsh is one of only 26 areas in New York State designated by the National Park Service (NPS) as a National Natural Landmark. It is described by the NPS as an area that is a relatively undisturbed marsh, which is rare for this part of New York State.

#### 4.4 Demographics and Socioeconomic Conditions

##### 4.4.1 Existing Population and Projections

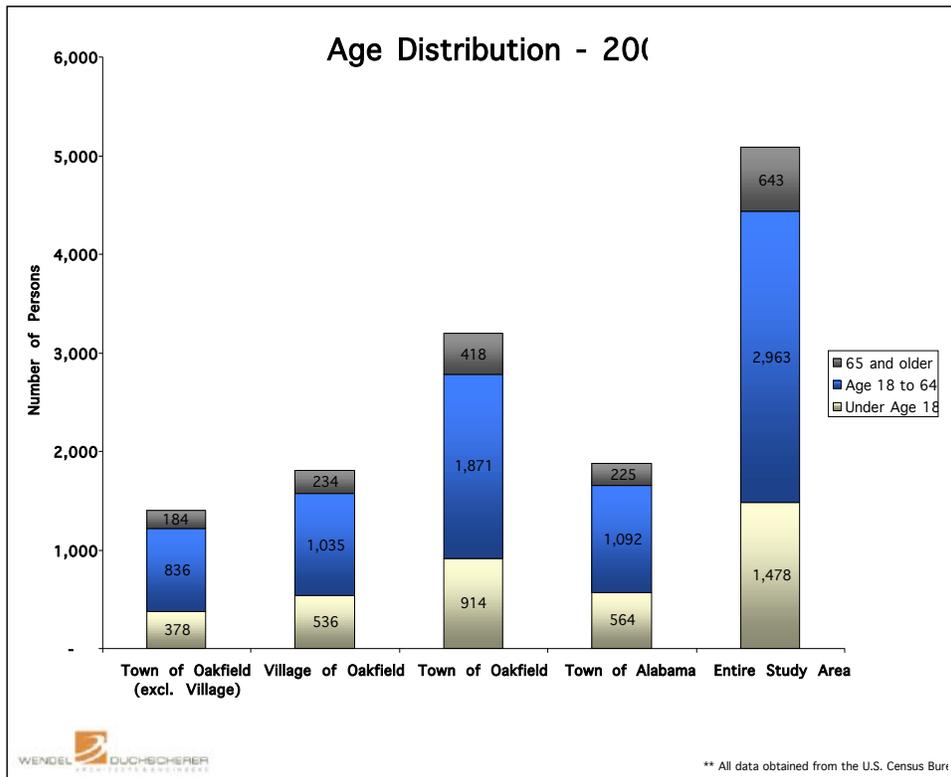
The Oakfield-Alabama area has experienced some modest decreases in population over the past ten years. The population in the Town of Alabama declined by 117 persons, representing 5.9 percent of the population. Oakfield, Town and Village, lost a combined 112 persons between 1990 and 2000, or 3.4 percent of the total population. Over the same time period, Genesee County was essentially unchanged, with an increase of 310 persons, or about 0.5 percent.

Figure 3



The composition of the population in the Oakfield-Alabama study area tends to be somewhat younger than that of Genesee County. Approximately 30 percent of the population is under the age of 18, compared to 26.6 percent in the County. Persons aged 65 and older make up about 13 percent of the population in the Town and Village of Oakfield, and 12 percent of the population in Alabama. Fourteen percent of the population of the County is aged 65 or older. This age distribution pattern is very similar to the age distribution of ten years ago, with only a very slight increase in the numbers of seniors, and a slight decline in the number of children under age 18.

Figure 4



The Genesee-Finger Lakes Regional Planning Board has prepared projections for the area, showing population trends to 2030. Overall, the Oakfield-Alabama region is expected to grow slightly over the next thirty years, increasing to 5,347 persons by 2030. Most of the growth is expected to occur in the Town of Alabama, which is projected to increase by 12.5 percent. The Village of Oakfield is expected to lose about three percent of its population, whereas the Town outside the Village is expected to grow by approximately six percent. The net effect in the Town of Oakfield, including the Village, is to remain essentially stable. The projections were prepared prior to the release of the 2000 Census. They overestimated growth in the Towns between 1990 and 2000, and underestimated growth in the Village. It is projected, however, that growth over the next thirty years will be relatively modest and easily absorbed within the communities.

#### 4.4.2 Household Characteristics

The number of households in the Towns and Village has remained essentially stable. The Town and Village of Oakfield had 25 fewer households in 2000 than in 1990, and the Town of Alabama lost four households between 1990 and 2000. Household growth was stronger in Genesee County, with an increase of 5.7 percent (1,225 households) between 1990 and 2000.

Following national trends, the average household size in each of the communities declined between 1990 and 2000. There are an average of 2.77 persons per household in Oakfield, and 2.84 persons per household in Alabama. This is modestly higher (almost 10 percent) than the County, where there is an average of 2.59 persons per household.

The majority of households in Oakfield and Alabama are family households. Between 72 and 75 percent of households in each community are families. Slightly more than half of all family households include children under the age of 18 who are living at home. The majority of non-family households are one-person households. On average, roughly five percent of all households in the study area are “non-traditional” households, consisting of non-related persons living together. This proportion is slightly higher in the Village of Oakfield. These data indicate that the households in the study area communities are families, unlike the entire U.S. where non-family households are predominant.

#### **4.4.3 Housing Characteristics**

There are a total of 1,950 housing units in the study area, which essentially is unchanged since 1990, when there were 1,944 units. Vacant units total 136, or 7 percent of the housing stock. The Town of Alabama has the lowest vacancy rate of the three communities, with 5.3 percent of the housing stock unoccupied. The Town of Oakfield, outside the Village, has the highest vacancy rate, at 8.2 percent.

Most residents own rather than rent - - 78.7 percent of all households in the study area are owner-occupied. The Village of Oakfield has the largest proportion of renters, where 30.6 percent of all households are in rental units. About 19.5 percent of the housing in the Town of Alabama is renter-occupied, as is about 12 percent of the housing in the Town of Oakfield, outside the Village.

#### **4.4.4 Employment Statistics**

Approximately 2,500 persons in the Oakfield-Alabama study area are employed. The unemployment rate is about six percent in each of the individual communities. In comparison, unemployment in Genesee County is 4.3 percent.

In terms of the composition of the workforce, roughly one-quarter of employees classify themselves as in management or professional occupations, with a similar proportion in sales or office occupations. About 18 percent of Oakfield residents and 20 percent of Alabama residents work in production or transportation occupations.

The industrial category that employs the most residents in Oakfield is education, health and social services, with approximately one-quarter of the workforce falling into this category. In Alabama, the largest share of employment is in the manufacturing industry, which employs 24 percent of the Town’s workers. Oakfield Town, outside the Village, is the most agriculturally oriented, with 18 percent of the workforce working in agricultural, forestry, fishing or mining industries, compared to seven percent in Alabama, and just three percent in the Village of Oakfield.

#### **4.4.5 Income**

Median income in Oakfield and Alabama is comparable to the County median, which is \$40,542. In the Town of Alabama, median household income is \$40,223. Oakfield Village has a median income of \$40,580, while the Town, including the Village, has a slightly higher median income of \$41,579.

Because households tend to be somewhat larger in Oakfield and Alabama and there are slightly more children under the age of 18, per capita income lags the county somewhat, ranging from about \$14,800 in Alabama to approximately \$16,400 in the Town of Oakfield, including the Village. In Genesee County, per capita income is approximately \$18,500.

About 7.8 percent of residents of the Town of Oakfield, and 6.3 percent of the residents of the Town of Alabama, are classified as living in poverty status. Poverty in the Town of Oakfield is heavily concentrated in the Village, where 211 of the 248 individuals in the Town classified with poverty status are located. The poverty rate is comparable to that of the County, where 7.6 percent of the population is below the poverty line. Statewide, 14.6 percent of the population is under the poverty level.

**4.5 Transportation**

**4.5.1 Roadways and Highway Access**

There are three major New York State roads that make up the backbone of the roadway system within the study area, Routes 77, 63 and 262 (see Map 11). Route 77 runs north to south, between the northwest corner of Alabama and its southern boundary with the Town of Pembroke. It's here in the Town of Pembroke, on Route 77, that access is gained to the State Thruway system, via exit 48A. Exit 48, in the Town of Batavia (just off of Route 63), provides a second point of access to the Thruway.

State Route 63 runs from the north central portion of Alabama, where it borders the Town of Shelby, east to the Village of Oakfield, exiting the study area in the southeast corner of the Town of Oakfield. State Route 262 runs from the center of the Village of Oakfield east to the Village of Elba, and points beyond. The following table provides traffic counts for certain points along these major thoroughfares within the study area.

**Figure 5: NYS Route Traffic Counts**

| Route # | Where to Where                                | AADT          |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------|
| 77      | Niagara County Line to Route 63               | 2750 vehicles |
| 77      | Judge Road to Bloomingdale Road               | 8300 vehicles |
| 77      | Bloomingdale Road to southerly Town line      | 5900 vehicles |
| 63      | Northerly Town line to Route 77               | 3900 vehicles |
| 63 & 77 | Lewiston Road to Judge Road                   | 4950 vehicles |
| 63      | Route 63 and 77 intersection to Macomber Road | 4750 vehicles |
| 63      | Route 262 to southerly Town line              | 7300 vehicles |
| 262     | Route 63 to easterly Town line                | 1600 vehicles |

Source: Genesee Transportation Council

\*AADT – Average Annual Daily Traffic taken in 2000

A brief analysis of these data shows where the majority of the traffic is headed within the study area. The majority of traffic appears to be headed to and from the NYS Thruway via Routes 77 and 63 or to the Tonawanda Indian Reservation. The AADT's increase significantly along these portions of roadway system as compared to other roadways within the study area (see Map 11).

There are no roadway construction and improvements projects within the study area that are listed on the transportation improvement program (TIP) for the NYSDOT or the Genesee Transportation Council (GTC). The TIP is a long-range plan that outlines upcoming work that is in various stages of the planning process. The TIP for the NYSDOT is for work on State roadways and, similarly, the TIP for the GTC is for work on roadways receiving Federal funding. It is possible, however, that State Routes 63 and 262 in the Village of Oakfield will be reconstructed in 2006, but it has yet to be placed on the NYSDOT's TIP for various reasons. The Village has been regularly replacing and repairing its roads and will continue with these upgrades in the foreseeable future.

#### **4.5.2 Railroad Service**

As shown on Map 11, the only railroad lines that run through the study area are abandoned. There are no active lines in the three communities, although there are active lines in other parts of the County.

#### **4.5.3 Public Transportation Services**

The Batavia Bus Service (B-Line, BBS) provides limited bus service in the study area. The Batavia Bus Service offers “curb to curb” service from Alabama and Oakfield to Batavia and back on Tuesdays. This service costs \$3.00 for adults and \$1.50 for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. To use this bus service, however, you must call 24 hours in advance.

#### **4.5.4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes**

No formal multi-use trails for pedestrians, bicycles or horses were identified in the study area. Although conversations with various local agencies confirmed that the abandoned Penn-Central railroad corridor is used informally by walkers/hikers, bikers, snowmobiles and farmers, it has not been formally designated as such.

### **4.6 Utilities**

#### **4.6.1 Water Supply**

Currently public water is available to the Village of Oakfield and an area immediately surrounding the Village within the Town of Oakfield. Water is provided to these areas through a line that extends from the City of Batavia along Route 63, Galloway Road and South Pearl Road into the Village. The Village water treatment plant is located in the Town of Batavia on Route 63, just south of the Village. In 1994, the entire water system in the Town of Oakfield, outside the Village, was replaced. Water is also available in the western portion of the Town of Alabama. The remaining portions of Oakfield and the Town of Alabama receive potable water from private wells.

Although large portions of the study area do not currently have access to public water, an informal plan is in place to provide service to some of the more densely developed areas, particularly areas in Alabama that are experiencing well contamination problems. These areas are identified in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan and include the hamlets of South Alabama, Alabama, and Basom. Initial plans call for water to be routed along State Routes 77, 63 and 262 to serve these areas. The possibility of extending this water service is presently several years off, however. According to the Genesee County Department of Health problems with

private wells and on-site septic systems are due to soils that are not suitable for conventional sewage disposal systems, the age of the existing stormwater collections system that does not remove standing water fast enough, and the small size of the lots in the hamlet areas (R. Garney, GCHD, November 17, 2004)

#### **4.6.2 Wastewater Disposal**

Similarly to water service, the only portion of the study area that has sanitary sewer service is the Village of Oakfield and a very limited number of properties just outside the Village. Unlike water, where there are numerous properties outside the Village that receive service, only a few of those same properties are provided sanitary sewer service. The remaining areas outside of the Village in the Town of Oakfield, and the entire Town of Alabama, utilize on-site septic systems. The Village has a sewage treatment plant, which is located at the north end of Irving Parkway, which is privately operated by Valley River Inc. The plant has a capacity of 500,000 gallons per day but operates at about half its capacity, or approximately 225,000 gallons per day.

#### **4.6.3 Solid Waste Management**

The Town of Oakfield does not pick up solid waste, it is handled by private haulers, mainly Modern Disposal. The Town operates a recycling center and garbage composting and yard waste facility.

### **4.7 Community Facilities**

#### **4.7.1 Parks and Recreation**

The Towns of Alabama and Oakfield host large tracts of publicly owned wildlife and conservation areas, which are available for both active and passive recreation such as hiking, bird watching, hunting, fishing, boating (non-motor), nature programs, limited camping, dog training and cross-country skiing. Due to their size (over 19,000 acres, including areas in neighboring towns), these open space features dominate the land in the northern sector of both towns. They include the two NYSDEC Wildlife Management Areas (Oak Orchard and Tonawanda) and the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge. As previously noted, these features are characterized by state and federal wetlands and are located in a floodplain. A fourth conservation area is the John White Memorial Game Farm on Route 77, north of Route 63, which is closed to the general public. However, the game farm is leased to environmental and hunting organizations for training and education programs. The wildlife and conservation areas together provide important open space, wildlife habitat and recreation areas, as well as limiting future development in the northern twenty percent of the study area.

Within the Village of Oakfield are three recreation areas each offering different amenities. Located on Church Street is the Oakfield Fire Department, which has a ball diamond. In the center of the Village is the Village Park, which is the site of the annual Labor Daze Festival. This park is passive in nature with benches and walks spread throughout, and provides a pleasant venue for taking a stroll or just sitting and enjoying the Village scenery. The Town of Oakfield also owns and maintains a park on Drake Street in the Village.

#### **4.7.2 Schools**

There are actually five school districts within the study area - - Royalton-Hartland, Akron, Medina, Elba, and Oakfield-Alabama (see Map 12). Royalton-Hartland, Medina, and Elba all make up small portions in northwest

Alabama, northeast Alabama, and eastern Oakfield, respectively. Akron Central school district covers a large area of the western portion of the Town of Alabama, including the entire Tonawanda Indian Reservation. The remainder of the communities are served by the Oakfield-Alabama Central school district. This district also serves four other municipalities, including the Towns of Pembroke, Batavia, Elba and Barre. The school district facilities are located just northwest of the Village on State Route 63.

#### **4.7.3 Emergency Services**

Police services are provided by the Genesee County Sheriff's Office. None of the three communities has an individual police department. The Village of Oakfield, in the past, had contracted out police services from other agencies, but the process was deemed too costly and ineffective. Fire services are provided volunteer fire departments. The Town of Alabama is served by the Alabama Volunteer Fire Department Inc., which is located on Judge Road, adjacent to the Town Hall. The Town and Village of Oakfield are served by the Oakfield Volunteer Fire Department, located on Church Street in the Village.

#### **4.7.4 Government Facilities**

##### **Town of Alabama**

The Town of Alabama local government offices are located on Judge Road, east of Knowlesville Road, in South Alabama hamlet. The town hall is home to the Town Clerk's office, Town Court, and services a variety of other municipal needs. The Town of Alabama also has a facility located on the corner of State Route 63 and Ham Road. This building houses the Town's Highway Department.

##### **Town of Oakfield**

The Town of Oakfield municipal offices are located just east of the Village of Oakfield on Drake Street (State Route 262). The building houses the municipal offices and the Highway Department. The Town also owns and maintains the Haxton Memorial Library, as well as the Park located on Drake Street, both of which are situated in the Village.

##### **Village of Oakfield**

The Village of Oakfield municipal offices are located in the heart of the Village on Main Street. The Village also owns and maintains a public works building on South Pearl Street, the sewage treatment plant on Irving Parkway, the park in the center of the Village, and a water treatment plant located in the Town of Batavia (which is currently not in operation).

## **SECTION 5.0**

### **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This section provides the Findings and Recommendations for each community, as they relate to the major goals and objectives. Utilizing the information found in Section 4.0 (Existing Conditions of the Communities), issues identified through the public opinion survey and comments gathered at the public information meetings, opportunities and constraints for achieving each goal were determined. Based on these opportunities and constraints, general findings for each community were established. Recommendations for achieving the opportunities or addressing constraints were then devised for each community. These ideas and recommendations were refined and evaluated, with input from the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, and finalized as outlined in Sub-sections 5.2 and 5.3 below.

#### **5.2 Findings/Opportunities/Constraints**

Following the format of the Existing Conditions section of this Plan, the generalized findings (observations, opportunities and constraints) for each community are outlined as follows.

##### **5.2.1 Town of Alabama**

###### Existing Land Use

- Agriculture is the most significant land use by area and is spread fairly uniformly throughout the Town.
- Three land use categories (agricultural, Indian reservation and wildlife conservation areas) account for 90 percent of total land area. Indian reservation and wildlife conservation areas represent lands that are either not readily available for development or whose use is outside the jurisdiction of the Town. Conceptually, some believe that agricultural lands are also not available for development.
- The Tonawanda Indian reservation dominates the western sector of Town. A small area of the Town is insulated from the remainder of the Town by the reservation.
- There are four hamlets in Town (Alabama, Wheatville, Basom and South Alabama) comprised of slightly higher density mixed-use development.
- Most residential development consists of low-density single-family housing, situated along Town highways.
- Land use is regulated in the Town solely through the zoning ordinance.
- A small amount of commercial development exists in and around the hamlets.
- A rock quarry is located in the south-central portion of the Town.
- The south-central portion of the Town is underlain by former gypsum mines (see Map 10).

###### Agriculture and Farmland

- Most of the agricultural land is included in Genesee County Agricultural District No. 2.
- Agriculture is the predominant active land use, accounting for 83 percent of the land area outside of the wildlife and conservation areas and Indian Reservation.

- A large portion of the Town contains soils classified as prime farmland soil.
- The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan restricts the number of new water connections-ups to new, non-agricultural land uses in agricultural districts, unless they are located in a designated development area.
- Agricultural preservation is viewed as important by approximately 80 percent of the Alabama residents that responded to the public opinion survey. Sentiment contends that farms should be protected as viable businesses and open space, and for continuing the rural character of the Town.

#### Natural Environment and Constraints

- The topography of the Town is generally flat, with the exception of the escarpment that extends through the southern portion of Town. Steep slopes do not present a development constraint.
- Hydric soils are limited to the northern portion of the Town within the wildlife and conservation areas and along stream corridors.
- Floodplains were identified along Oak Orchard Creek.
- Most mapped wetlands and floodplains are located within the wildlife and conservation areas.
- The wildlife and conservation areas provide important open space, wildlife habitat, and locations for passive recreation.
- Agricultural lands and the open wetlands in the wildlife and conservation areas provide valuable scenic vistas, adding to the unique character of the area.
- Most of the Town of Alabama lies within the Oak Orchard watershed, with smaller areas situated within the Murder Creek and Mud Creek watersheds.
- Small creeks and streams generally flow northward combining with the major streams, which flow out of the study area.
- The abandoned U.S. Gypsum mines noted on Map 10 could potentially cause ground subsidence, which could result in damage to aboveground structures or personal injury. The location of the former mines should be noted in future land use decisions in affected areas.

#### Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

- The Town population has remained relatively stable for over 40 years with modest decreases in population shown over the last ten years.
- Population projections indicate that the Town's population will likely decline over the next 25 years.
- Household size has decreased from 2.84 to 2.59 persons per household. At the same time both the number of households and number of occupied housing units have remained stable.
- Unemployment is higher in the study area (6.0 percent) than in the County as a whole (4.3 percent).
- A majority of respondents believe that commercial and industrial growth is needed in Alabama.

#### Transportation

- State Routes 63 and 77 are the major transportation routes through the Town.
- Bloomingdale Road and Ledge Road provide access from the Tonawanda Indian reservation to State Route 77, in the western portion of the Town.
- No major capacity or operational deficiencies were identified on state or local highways.

- An abandoned railroad corridor runs west to east, through the Indian reservation to the Village of Oakfield, continuing to the east and out of the study area. It is currently being utilized by snowmobilers and ATV riders.
- Some problematic intersections were noted along State Route 77, at Ledge and Bloomingdale Roads.

#### Utilities

- There currently is no public water service in the Town.
- The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan identifies Alabama, South Alabama and Basom hamlet areas as "future development areas," where public water could be extended.
- Public water supply could be made available through Darien, Pembroke or Newstead from the west or Oakfield to the east.
- Most residents responding to the public opinion survey indicated that public water should be provided Town-wide.
- There currently is no public sewer service in the Town. The closest sewer system is located in the Village of Oakfield.

#### Community and Government Facilities

- Besides the wildlife and conservation areas, there are limited public facilities in the Town.
- Town facilities include the Town Hall, Fire Hall and Town Highway Garage.
- The majority of students in the Town of Alabama are part of the Alabama-Oakfield Central school district. Other areas are served by Akron Central, Royalton-Hartland or Medina Central school districts.
- Residents believe additional recreational facilities are needed, such as playgrounds, sports facilities and picnic areas.
- Residents indicate that shared services and inter-governmental cooperation should be expanded for highway, recreation, garbage/solid waste disposal, youth services and seniors services.

#### Zoning

- The R Residential zoning classification, in particular the dimensional standards, is very similar in nature to the A-R classification and does not promote or limit particular uses in the hamlets.
- Numerous uses are allowed by Special Use Permit in the AR and R districts, which essentially allows a wide number of uses in the residential districts.
- Within Alabama there is not a lot of commercially zoned land, but commercial and industrial uses can be achieved throughout much of the Town with a Special Use Permit.
- There are no hamlet design standards or other mechanisms to help define the hamlets.

### **5.2.2 Town of Oakfield**

#### Existing Land Use

- Agriculture is the predominant land use by area.
- Agricultural, vacant/undeveloped/open space, and wildlife conservation areas account for 80 percent of the total land area.
- Residential land use is low-density in nature.
- The Town of Oakfield's primary method for land use regulation is through zoning.

- The Village of Oakfield is located in the southern section of the Town and contains the densest pattern of development.
- The densest land use patterns in the Town are located just outside the Village.
- The U.S. Gypsum site is just west of the Village and is currently underutilized.
- The south-central portion of the Town is underlain by former gypsum mines (see Map 10).

#### Agriculture and Farmland

- Most of the agricultural land is included in Genesee County Agricultural District No. 2.
- A large portion of the Town contains soils classified as prime farmland soils.
- The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan calls for minimizing the number of new water connections within agricultural districts.

#### Natural Environment and Constraints

- Local relief is generally flat and, with localized exceptions, steep slopes do not present a development constraint.
- Hydric soils are most widespread in the northern portion of Town within the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Areas, along stream corridors, and within a large wetland area north of the Village.
- Floodplains were identified along Oak Orchard Creek, in the northern portion of Town.
- Most of wetlands and floodplains are located in the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area.
- The wildlife conservation area provides important open space, wildlife habitat, and a location for passive recreation.
- Agricultural lands and the open wetlands of the wildlife conservation area provide valuable scenic vistas and add to the unique character of the Town.
- Almost the entire Town of Oakfield lies within the Oak Orchard watershed.
- Small creeks and streams generally flow northward combining with the major streams, which flow out of the study area.
- The abandoned U.S. Gypsum mines noted on Map 10 could potentially cause ground subsidence, which could result in damage to aboveground structures or personal injury. The location of the former mines should be noted in future land use decisions in affected areas.

#### Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

- Long range trends show modest decreases in population over the last ten years.
- Projections indicate that the population will grow slightly by an estimated 6.0 percent over the next thirty years.
- Combined growth in the Village and Town is expected to remain modest and be easily absorbed within the community.
- The population (Town and Village combined) decreased by 112 persons (3.4%) between 1990 and 2000. While the size of households has also decreased to 2.77 persons per household, the number of households has remained relatively stable.
- Unemployment is higher in the study area (6.0 percent) than in the County as a whole (4.3 percent).
- A majority of residents believe that commercial and industrial growth is needed in the Town of Oakfield.

### Transportation

- State Routes 63 and 262, along with Albion Road and Lockport Road, are the major transportation routes in the Town. The major highways in Town converge with the Village.
- No major capacity or operational deficiencies were identified on state or local highways in the Town.
- An abandoned railroad line runs from west to east through the Town and Village and is currently being utilized by snowmobilers and ATV riders.
- The intersection of State Route 63, at the school entrance, has been identified as a location of safety concerns. This intersection will be part of a planned NYSDOT reconstruction project on State Route 63 through the Village.

### Utilities

- Only limited areas along State Route 63, South Pearl Road and North Pearl Road, currently receive public water.
- In the Town of Oakfield, the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan limits future development to areas immediately adjacent to the Village. These areas are located along State Route 63-Lewiston Road, North Pearl Road, South Pearl Road and State Route 262.
- The Smart Growth Plan promotes future water line extensions along State Route 63 to the west and State Route 262 to the east, but discourages non-agricultural development.
- Public sewers extend to a very small area of the Town from the Village of Oakfield. The remainder of the Town utilizes on-site septic systems for sanitary waste disposal.

### Zoning

- Similar to the ordinance in Alabama, the R&A – Residential Agriculture zoning district is very similar in nature to the R – General Residential classification and does not promote significantly different uses in either district.
- The R district does not limit (or encourage) particular uses in the hamlets.
- Because sewer service can be extended from the Village, and the capacity exists, higher residential densities for residential development with sewers could be accommodated in areas outside the Village.
- There are no design standards or guidelines to control random development to ensure that it is in keeping with the character of the Town.
- The possibility of the redevelopment of the U.S. Gypsum site should be acknowledged and planned for, with consideration given to the routing of truck traffic and other potential impacts to Village and surrounding area.

## **5.2.3 Village of Oakfield**

### Existing Land Use

- The Village is the commercial center of the study area.
- The Village is comprised of mixed-use development.
- The Village has higher residential densities.
- Land use on Main Street consists of a mix of commercial and residential uses, government offices and some institutional uses.
- Residential land use accounts for 46 percent of the total land area in the Village.

- Almost all multi-family and multiple residences that exist in the study area are located in the Village.
- The Village's primary method for land use regulation is zoning.
- There are a number of large commercial and industrial uses in the southwestern section of the Village.
- The Village is essentially built-out, with future development coming in the form of redevelopment.
- The southeastern portion of the Village is underlain by former gypsum mines (see Map 10).

#### Agriculture and Farmland

- The Village is not included within the boundaries of the County Agricultural District.
- The agricultural nature of the surrounding Towns plays a significant role in shaping the Village's commercial land use mix and character in general.

#### Natural Environment and Constraints

- Topography in the Village is generally flat; steep slopes are not an issue.
- Regulatory floodway and 100-year flood areas are limited to the relatively narrow creek corridors in the central and southeast sectors of the Village.
- The abandoned U.S. Gypsum mines noted on Map 10 could potentially cause ground subsidence, which could result in damage to aboveground structures or personal injury. The location of the former mines should be noted in future land use decisions in affected areas.

#### Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

- Modest decreases in population have been shown over the last ten years.
- Projections indicate that the Village is expected to lose approximately 3.0 percent of its population over the next thirty years (a typical trend in most built-out villages).
- Combined growth in the Village and Town is estimated to remain modest and be easily absorbed within the community.
- While the population has decreased, so has the size of households and, therefore, the net number of residential units has remained relatively unchanged.
- There are more rental units in the Village (30.6%) as compared to the two Towns (19.5 in Alabama and 12.0% in Oakfield).
- Unemployment is higher in the study area (6.0 percent) than in the County as a whole (4.3 percent).
- A majority of residents believe that commercial and industrial growth is needed in the Village of Oakfield.

#### Transportation

- State Routes 63 and 262 are the major highways serving the Village.
- No major capacity or operational deficiencies were identified on state or local highways.
- Only limited public bus service is available and requires a 24-hour advanced request.
- The abandoned railroad corridor is currently being utilized by snowmobilers and ATV riders.

#### Utilities

- The entire Village is serviced by public water.

- The Village has identified the need for a new water tower and associated improvements to the water distribution system. A new tower could be designed to service areas in the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama.
- The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan includes the entire Village and some of the surrounding area in the Town of Oakfield within its recommended development area.
- The Village Wastewater Treatment Plant currently operates at approximately half of its 0.5 million gallon per day capacity leaving sufficient opportunity for connections with new development in the Village and the immediately adjacent area in the Town.

#### Zoning

- The Village has few areas of vacant land.
- The smallest lot sizes and highest development densities are allowed in the Village.
- The Village contains the greatest amount of commercially zoned property (in two distinct districts). There are no building form standards (architectural and historic) to control the character of new and redevelopment structures.
- The Planned Unit Development regulations do not provide for clustering.
- The Village allows a diverse range of housing to meet residents' preferences.
- Multi-family housing is not allowed in the commercial districts or as a permitted use in any of the other zoning district (requires a special use permit).
- Currently the zoning defines tourist homes (which includes bed and breakfast establishments) but neither are listed as allowed uses in any zoning districts.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are patterned after the goals that were established for each community. They are designed to address the opportunities and constraints identified for each area.

#### **5.3.1 Town of Alabama**

##### **Goal: Protect, promote and preserve agriculture**

The Town of Alabama is characterized by rural open space, wildlife conservation and wetland areas, open farmlands, and older residential structures mixed with some newer homes. Residential development is denser in the vicinity of the hamlets, but is very low density throughout the remainder of the Town. There has been little to no major subdivision activity in Alabama. There are a large number of active farms in the Town and a great amount of open land, which is situated within the wildlife and conservation areas. There is strong public sentiment in Alabama to protect farmland and preserve open space.

Devising and implementing measures for preserving farmland and prime farm soils is the most effective way to acknowledge the public's concern for protecting agricultural resources in the Town. Residential lot sizes should be reassessed in certain areas to better manage future growth and non-traditional development techniques implemented to preserve open space. Rural development guidelines should be instituted to avoid sprawl (e.g., better guidelines or standards for road frontage development and encouraging more creative development techniques). In formulating these recommendations, it must be understood that the extent of, and limited pressure for, growth is presently not impacting agriculture and agricultural operations in the community.

In addition, the Town should enforce the newly adopted wind energy regulations. The use of wind power can reduce energy costs for individual farmers. The decision to build individual wind turbines and, more importantly, larger wind farms requires a comprehensive study to identify wind speed and consistency, costs and benefits and impacts to local ecology.

***Recommendations:***

- Consider the adoption of an agricultural zoning classification that would limit non-agricultural development. This district would incorporate large farms and areas of good farm soils and focus on development density as a means of protecting agricultural uses. This zoning category could be used in combination with conservation easements or a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program to ensure that potential rezoning actions would not result in the development of prime farmland.
- Review and expand the Town zoning to include innovative non-traditional development standards, such as open development areas, overlay districts and rural cluster development regulations.
- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines, to control growth, manage sprawl and preserve farmland (which do not take away the right to develop, but enable development to occur in a more managed fashion to achieve particular goals). Unlike some other communities, the limited level of development pressure and low growth rate in Alabama reduces the need for utilizing these guidelines. Therefore, the tools should be used as follows:
  - Establish subdivision regulations, with a particular emphasis on minor subdivision.
  - Utilizing (permitting) open development areas could be helpful along State Routes 77 and 63, and in areas that have important views or environmental resources that should be preserved. The use of open development areas provides a more creative approach for allow minor subdivisions, helping to avoid the standard creation of roadway frontage lots which result in long "bacon strip" parcels.
  - Overlay zoning could be used in areas that require more creativity in residential design and along major roadway corridors to establish more appropriate setback standards. They can also be used for the incorporation of aesthetic standards, such as landscaping, architectural design or signage, in certain areas (such as the hamlets).
  - Rural development guidelines may be the most important tool to guide potential developers with site designs that are in concert with the surrounding community. These guidelines could be inserted into the zoning code or subdivision regulations for easy reference and utilization. The Town could begin the preparation of rural development guidelines by researching what they like and dislike in terms of subdivision design.

It should be noted that none of these tools and land use measures eliminate the right to develop land. Rather, they provide flexibility and guidance to enables land to be developed in a manner that achieves the goals and objectives of this Plan.

- Institute programs to preserve important areas of farmland and prime farm soils, such as a purchase of development rights (PDR) program, conservation easements and other similar mechanisms. The Town should work with the County to ensure that such efforts are consistent with the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan and the Smart Growth Plan. Agricultural conservation easements may be the first step, to be followed at a later date with a PDR program as required. The Town should also evaluate the economic impacts of a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program. It is suggested that this type of planning be done in conjunction with the Town of Oakfield (a joint agricultural protection plan).

Because of the low level of development pressure, programs such as PACE or PDR are considered long-term actions and should be considered as feasible actions when the time is right.

- Develop hamlet overlay zoning, that incorporates traditional neighborhood design standards and allows for denser development in and around the hamlets, which is consistent with the policies of the County's Smart Growth Plan.
- Consider the adoption of a right to farm law that would be complementary to the State and County programs, and would offer additional protection against unwarranted complaints aimed at farming operations, such as noise, odor, etc.
- Special use permits could be written to support home occupations and secondary businesses that help residents and farmers generate additional sources of income, such as tourism activities or day camps for children.
- Limit water extensions in the Town to eliminate the potential for extensive growth and to protect agricultural uses. The County's Smart Growth Plan should be considered when planning water extensions. Emphasis should be placed on addressing locations with potential public health and safety concerns, and on controlling development on individual parcels outside the hamlets by utilizing lateral (water line) restrictions. Such restrictions may be necessary to minimize development pressure on farmlands and discourage non-agricultural uses in those areas.
- Long-term potential for sewer service or on-site (package) wastewater treatment systems should continue to be investigated as an option for the hamlet areas.
- Consider the establishment of an agricultural advisory committee to assist in clarifying and mediating, and alleviating, conflicts that may arise, and to promote the concerns and desires of farmers. This committee could be utilized to provide a better understanding of the needs of farmers and farming operations in the local community. Through this committee, this information could be for easily transferred to County and State governments to help keep farming viable in the region.
- Adopt and enforce guidelines for siting, construction, site restoration and monitoring of individual wind turbines and wind farms.

**Goal: Maintain and enhance community character**

The Town of Alabama is a rural farming community, with vast tracts of open space and farmland. Over 25 percent of the community encompasses wildlife and conservation areas. The Town has experienced no significant subdivision activity and the densest residential development exists in and around the four hamlets of Basom, Alabama, Wheatville and South Alabama. Every planning effort undertaken in the Town should take the preservation of rural character into consideration.

***Recommendations:***

- Necessary road improvements to address drainage or safety concerns, which are undertaken outside the hamlets, should limit the installation of sidewalks, curbing, street lighting or other suburban features.
- Require the use of non-traditional development techniques, such as open development area, cluster development and planned unit development to control future growth, manage sprawl and preserve farmland.
- Focus attention on addressing traffic problems along State Route 77 at Ledge and Bloomingdale Roads, which are impacting the character of the community.
- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines.
- Adopt and enforce hamlet development guidelines in the hamlets, and assess the zoning in these areas to support increased development densities in these areas ( $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre lots are the smallest that can be approved in non-sewered areas).

- Consider zoning overlay districts for the hamlets, with architectural and historic preservation standards, to protect and enhance the character of development in these areas.
- Zoning overlays could also be used to control develop along the two major road corridors, limiting commercial development to the hamlets (particularly Basom), and preventing commercial strip development. This is especially important in those areas that receive public water.
- Adopt zoning classifications, or strengthen existing zoning, to protect existing agricultural uses and prevent residential sprawl.
- Review and update permitted uses, and uses allowed by Special Use Permit in the AR Zone. Any revisions to the schedule of land uses should specify those existing land uses conforming to today’s zoning would be able to continue as pre-existing uses.
- Identify and protect important scenic vistas that add to the character of the Town and include their consideration in new subdivision regulations.

**Goal: Provide public water to appropriate areas of the Town**

Potable water in the Town of Alabama is procured from private wells. The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan outlines policies for extending water primarily to developed hamlets to prevent urban sprawl. The provision of water services is essential to address certain health and safety factors associated with contaminated wells and failing septic systems, as acknowledged by the Genesee County Department of Health.

***Recommendations:***

- Support and encourage the extension of public water along the major state highways, thus connecting the hamlet areas through a looped system of water line extensions along State Route 77, north to Alabama hamlet; east along Lewiston Road, with a northerly extension along Knowleville Road to Wheatville hamlet; south along Knowlesville Road to South Alabama; and west along State Route 63, back to State Route 77 (hydraulically efficient, servicing the most densely populated areas).
- Utilize lateral restrictions along the roadways between the hamlets to control growth and protect agricultural uses from development pressures. This would also apply to any future extension along State Route 63, between South Alabama and Oakfield, where development pressures are expected to increase. Other controls such as the overlays can help control development in areas where water is primarily run to loop the water system.
- Focus the provision of public water to hamlet locations that have urgent need due to health and safety issues.
- Ensure the extension of public water for targeted commercial and industrial growth.
- Protect groundwater resources from contamination. Sponsor educational opportunities in groundwater protection for households and farms.
- The looped water system will provide a backbone for the potential development of future water extensions (a very long-term consideration).

**Goal: Protect the environmental features and resources of the Town**

The wildlife and conservation areas comprise approximately 26 percent of the land area in the Town of Alabama. The Town contains a variety of other important environmental features including wetlands, large expanses of mature woodlands, tributary stream corridors and floodplains. Groundwater is also an important environmental resource since the population of the Town relies on this resource for potable water. The former U.S. Gypsum mines shafts extend through the southeastern and south central portions of Alabama (Map 10). Any proposals for future development activity in this area of the Town must take this into consideration.

***Recommendations:***

- Groundwater quality must be protected. Efforts should be undertaken to ensure that on-site sanitary waste disposal systems are properly maintained, and that failing systems are detected and properly mitigated. The communities should work with the appropriate County and State agencies to address this problem through public education programs and the provision of technical assistance to help residents understand and address this important issue. Monies may be made available through Rural Development programs supported by the federal government.
- In identified groundwater problem areas, the Town should require larger lot sizes.
- In order to mitigate the impacts from aging and deteriorating on-site septic systems, communal septic systems or "package" wastewater treatment systems should be investigated for the hamlet areas.
- In those areas not receiving public water, consideration should be given to subdivision regulations that require soil testing as part of the application procedure. If poor or problematic soils are identified, stricter standards could be imposed, such as larger minimum lot size requirements, or limitations on the number of subdivisions.
- To protect important environmental features, proposed development actions should avoid identified wetlands, floodplains and prime farm soils. (Depending upon the structure of the wetland, avoiding wetlands has the additional benefit of protecting the groundwater resource.) Mandate usage of cluster development or open development areas to help avoid these environmentally sensitive features.
- Wetlands protection should include both State and Federal wetland areas including the required 100-foot setback areas required by the State. A local law could be utilized to help protect these important areas.
- Support farming practices that recognize environmental resources and the importance of avoiding or minimizing point and non-point source contaminant threats to groundwater, surface water and the environment as a whole. This can be accomplished by working with organizations such as Cooperative Extension and County Soil and Water District.
- Assess the zoning in the vicinity of the wildlife and conservation areas to reduce potential impacts from development.
- Develop a more formalized trail system along the abandoned railroad corridor and encourage the State to establish official bike routes along State Routes 63 and 77.
- With respect to the former underground gypsum mines, the Town should investigate the need to institute zoning revisions or additional regulations to address the risk to future property owners in underground mining areas. Assistance from the State should be sought for this effort. In addition, consideration should be given to adopting minor subdivision regulations to allow the Town to further evaluate the risks of subdividing and developing properties in these areas.

**Goal: Provide for economic development in the Town**

The expansion of commercial and industrial growth, and other economic development activities, helps provide jobs and a build a stronger tax base for the community. Farming will continue to dominate as the primary industry in the Town of Alabama. An economically sound town helps support the school district and Village.

***Recommendations:***

- New commercial uses should be limited to the hamlets, in particular, Basom and Alabama and to a lesser extent South Alabama. Focus should be placed on how State Route 77 should be developed, particularly in the vicinity of the Basom hamlet. Avoid zoning or zoning changes that would allow areas of commercial strip development to build up in the Town (outside the hamlet long-term growth areas identified on the Vision Maps) which would adversely impact the character of the community. This is especially important with retail uses that should only be allowed in certain hamlets or the village. Farm related businesses or some "nuisance business" should continue to be allowed in the rural areas by special use permit.
- The Basom Hamlet could allow auto dependant uses in response to the traffic to the reservation. It must be done in such a way not to destroy the rural atmosphere of this area.
- The South Alabama Hamlet is the community center but should not have a focus on business or retail development, but is a residential hamlet. The Town Hall may or may not continue at this location.
- Efforts should be centered on revitalizing the hamlets through redevelopment and in-fill activities.
- Support farming as the primary industry in the Town and consider a separate zoning classification, or strengthening existing zoning, to protect and enhance this industry. Non-agricultural uses should be highly restricted on prime farm soils. However, secondary commercial or home occupations related to agriculture should be encouraged.
- Target locations for future commercial and industrial development along State Route 77 and Ledge Road. The Ledge Road area (near the existing quarry) should be restricted for residential development and only allow agriculture or other uses not impacted by the quarry operations.
- Recreation-oriented economic activity should be supported, such as campgrounds, riding stables, etc. Support services for the recreational sector should also be encouraged. Again, these uses could be allowed in the more rural areas outside the hamlets. The Alabama Hamlet could have a focus on tourism support uses.
- Promote visitation to the wildlife and conservation areas and find ways to capitalize on this environmental tourism. Include specific regulations in the zoning codes for bed and breakfast establishments in the hamlets and surrounding areas.
- Coordinate activities with the State, and cross market these recreational – tourism related activities. Help in marketing the attributes of the region.

**Goal: Maintain and promote efficiency of government**

The Town of Alabama, in cooperation with the surrounding Town and Village of Oakfield, must strive to offer the highest quality and most cost-effective services to the community.

***Recommendations:***

- Cooperation between the communities will be essential for infrastructure expansion. Consider joint or regional funding grant applications.
- Utilize this Comprehensive Plan to promote continued cooperative approaches and plans with the Town of Oakfield, and where feasible, the Village of Oakfield. The three-community committee should be continued and should meet yearly to review the plan.
- Continue to work with the Town of Oakfield to develop ways to share essential services, equipment and personnel.
- Implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to establish appropriate and alternative development standards and regulations to manage growth.
- Utilize and enforce land use regulations to properly manage growth and encourage the development of a mix of uses to balance the tax base and control the costs of public services.
- Keep working with the surrounding communities of Village of Oakfield and Town of Alabama to develop ways to share recreational opportunities.
- Continue and strengthen the relationship with the Oakfield-Alabama School District to sharing services and improving relations between the Towns and Village.
- Many of the recommendations for the Town of Alabama are the same for the Town of Oakfield, and therefore these communities could work together in implementing these recommendations. This could keep costs down and ensure that regulations are similar in these adjoining communities.

**Goal: Encourage diversity of housing types in the Town**

As the population of the Town changes over time, and the economic conditions vary, a variety of housing options should be available to accommodate the changing lifestyles, incomes and needs of the community. Presently, the Town's zoning regulations allows for diversity in housing stock. However, single-family detached homes are the primary form of residential development in Alabama. The lack of sewers severely limits the types of construction that can take place in the town. Higher density housing types should be expected in the Village of Oakfield, where sewer is available.

***Recommendations:***

- Denser development should occur in and around the hamlets in the Town. The zoning of these areas should be assessed to ensure that a variety of housing types are permitted.
- Promote alternative housing types to satisfy the needs of single individuals, seniors and other non-traditional households that are affordable in nature, such as in-law (accessory) apartments, and attached single-family dwellings.

**5.3.2 Town of Oakfield**

**Goal: Promote the expansion of public water to appropriate areas in the Town**

Potable water in the Town of Oakfield is primarily obtained from private wells. Some public water is provided to areas of the Town situated immediately outside the Village of Oakfield. The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan outlines policies for extending water primarily to developed hamlets to prevent urban sprawl.

***Recommendations:***

- The Town currently has public water in the areas adjoining the Village. A primary opportunity for additional public water in the Town of Oakfield is to selectively extend water along certain main roads directly outside of the Village to enable a limited amount of new develop over the long term. This plan is also being coordinated to help in providing water to the Town of Alabama.
- Support and encourage the extension of public water along the major roadways, thus connecting the Five Corners and East Oakfield hamlets with the Village through a system that extends water along State Route 63, out Drake Road and northwest on Lewiston to Maltby Road. Consider future long-term extensions along Maple and Hutton Roads.
- Consider providing public water to the Birdseye property and other suitable locations for commercial and industrial development.
- Utilize lateral restrictions along the roadways between the hamlets to control growth and protect agricultural uses from development pressures. This would also apply to any future extension of water along State Route 63, between Oakfield and the South Alabama hamlet where development pressures could increase in the future.
- Over the long term, focus the provision of public water to locations that are identified as having an urgent need due to health and safety issues.
- Protect private wells from contamination. Sponsor educational opportunities in groundwater protection for households and farms.
- Based upon the existing land use pattern, anticipated growth, and lands available for development (or re-development), it is recommended that the future development area surrounding the Village continue to expand outward from the Village (there are several opportunities).
- The area along State Route 63 between the Village and South Alabama should receive public water in order to bring water to appropriate areas in Alabama. An overlay zone of enhanced land use controls should be established in order to control the type and density of new development that may wish to benefit from public water.
- A looped water extension should continue east on State Route 262 to Fisher Road and south to State Route 63 to provide a more hydraulically efficient system. This area would be a long-term growth area and should not be considered for near term development.

**Goal: Provide for economic development**

The expansion of industrial and commercial growth, and other economic development activities, helps provide jobs and a stronger tax base for the community. A vibrant Town also provides opportunities for Village businesses as long as they don't compete.

***Recommendations:***

- Commercial uses should be limited to the Five Corners hamlet or the Village of Oakfield. Avoid zoning or zoning changes that would allow commercial retail strip development in the Town.
- Support and promote the retention and expansion of existing industrial uses through zoning and capital improvements. Non-retail businesses surrounding the Village will help the Village by providing customers for the Downtown.
- Target areas along State Route 63 and South Pearl for commercial and industrial development.

- Develop a redevelopment strategy for the U.S. Gypsum property. Work with the property owner, county and state officials to appropriately locate new uses on this site.
- Identify new target industries that could be compatible with the existing infrastructure, land use patterns and community objectives (in the U.S. Gypsum area and off the southwest corner of the Village).
- Support farming as the primary industry in the Town and consider a separate zoning classification, or strengthening existing zoning, to protect and enhance this industry. Non-agricultural uses should be highly restricted on prime farm soils.
- Recreation-oriented economic activity should be supported, such as campgrounds, riding stables, etc. Support services for the recreational sector should also be encouraged.
- Work with the village in targeting areas for sewer extensions.

**Goal: Protect and preserve agricultural land uses**

Similar to Alabama, the Town of Oakfield is characterized by rural open space and large tracts of farmland. The Town has also has a large wildlife and conservation area, that characterizes the landscape. The large extent of farmland and undeveloped open space contributes to the rural character of the Town. There is also strong public sentiment in Oakfield to preserve and protect farmland and the overall rural nature of the Town.

Preserving farmland and good farm soils would address public concerns for protecting agricultural resources in the community. To better manage future growth, non-traditional development techniques should be implemented. Rural development guidelines should also be considered to avoid sprawl and the inefficient development of agricultural lands. In addition, guidelines should be established to manage the development of wind turbines in the Town. The use of wind power can reduce energy costs for individual farmers. The decision to build individual wind turbines and, more importantly, larger wind farms requires a comprehensive study to identify wind speed and consistency, costs and benefits and impacts to local ecology.

***Recommendations:***

- Consider the adoption of an agricultural zoning classification that would limit non-agricultural development. This district would incorporate large farms and areas of good farm soils and focus on development density as a means of protecting agricultural uses. This zoning category could be used in combination with conservation easements or a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program to ensure that potential rezoning actions would not result in the development of prime farmland.
- Review and expand the Town zoning to include innovative non-traditional development standards, such as open development areas, overlay districts and rural cluster development regulations.
- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines, to control growth, manage sprawl and preserve farmland (which do not take away the right to develop, but enable development to occur in a more managed fashion to achieve particular goals). Unlike some other communities, the limited level of development pressure and low growth rate in Oakfield reduces the need for utilizing these guidelines.
- Rural development guidelines may be the most important tool to guide potential developers with site designs that are in concert with the surrounding community. These guidelines could be inserted into the zoning code or subdivision regulations for easy reference and utilization. The Town could begin the preparation of rural development guidelines by researching what they like and dislike in terms of subdivision design.
- Zoning overlays and cluster regulations should be carefully designed to help preserve features in the community and to not allow the proliferation of long narrow "bacon strip" farm lots.

- Institute programs to preserve important areas of farmland and prime farm soils, such as a purchase of development rights (PDR) program, conservation easements and other similar mechanisms. The Town should work with the County to ensure that such efforts are consistent with the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan and the Smart Growth Plan. Agricultural conservation easements may be the first step, to be followed at a later date with a PDR program as required. The Town should also evaluate the economic impacts of a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program. It is suggested that this type of planning be done in conjunction with the Town of Alabama (a joint agricultural protection plan). Because of the low level of development pressure, programs such as PACE or PDR are considered long-term actions and should be considered as feasible actions when the time is right.
- Keep denser development activity centered in the areas around the village and in one hamlet area, consistent with the policies of the County's Smart Growth Plan, to prevent sprawl and protect agricultural land.
- Consider the adoption of a right to farm law that would be complementary to the State and County programs, and would offer additional protection against unwarranted complaints aimed at farming operations, such as noise, odor, etc.
- Special use permits should be written to support home occupations and secondary businesses to help residents and farm operations establish additional sources of income. The Zoning Code should be revised to more specifically address agriculturally related home occupations and secondary uses in the R-A zone.
- Limit water extensions in the Town to eliminate the potential for extensive growth and to protect agricultural uses. The County's Smart Growth Plan should be considered when planning water extensions. Emphasis should be placed on providing water to areas that have potential public health and safety concerns, and on controlling development on individual parcels outside the Village by utilizing lateral (water line) restrictions. Such restrictions may be necessary to minimize development pressure on farmlands and discourage non-agricultural uses in those areas.
- Any extension of the Village of Oakfield sanitary sewer system into the Town of Oakfield should be carefully scrutinized to ensure that such action does not place development pressures in areas of important agricultural use (west and south of the Village are high priority areas for protection).
- Consider the establishment of an agricultural advisory committee to assist in clarifying and mediating, and alleviating, conflicts that may arise, and to promote the concerns and desires of farmers. This committee could be utilized to provide a better understanding of the needs of farmers and farming operations in the local community. Through this committee, this information could be for easily transferred to County and State governments to help keep farming viable in the region.
- Adopt and enforce guidelines for siting, construction, site restoration and monitoring of individual wind turbines and wind farms.

**Goal: Maintain and enhance community character**

The Town of Oakfield is a rural farming community, with vast tracts of farmland, open space and wildlife and conservation area. Residential development in Oakfield is very low density, with denser development in the vicinity of the Village of Oakfield. Residential use outside the Village is typically frontage development, particularly in the Five Corners and East Oakfield hamlets and along Pearl Street, south of the Village. No major residential subdivisions have occurred in the Town. Every planning effort undertaken in the Town should take the preservation of rural character into consideration.

***Recommendations:***

- Necessary road improvements to address drainage or safety concerns, which are undertaken outside the hamlets, should not include sidewalks, curbing or street lighting (no suburban atmosphere).
- Require the use of non-traditional development techniques, such as open development area, cluster development and planned unit development to control future growth, manage sprawl and preserve farmland.
- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines.
- Encourage and support residential development in and around the hamlets.
- Adopt and enforce hamlet development guidelines in the hamlets, and assess the zoning in these areas to support increased development densities in these areas.
- Consider zoning overlay districts for the hamlets, with architectural and historic preservation standards, to accomplish a protect and enhance the character of develop these areas.
- Zoning overlays could also be used to control develop along the two major road corridors, limiting commercial development to the hamlets and area adjacent to the Village and preventing commercial strip development.
- Adopt zoning classifications, or strengthen existing zoning, to protect existing agricultural uses and prevent residential sprawl.
- Identify and protect important scenic vistas that add to the character of the Town.
- Adopt minor subdivision regulations that better manage the division of properties into four or less lots.

**Goal: Protect the environmental features and resources of the community**

The study area contains numerous environmental features and is home to large wildlife conservation areas. The former U.S. Gypsum mines shafts extend through the southern portion of Oakfield (Map 10). Any proposals for future development activity in this area of the Town must take this into consideration.

***Recommendations:***

- Groundwater quality must be protected. Efforts should be undertaken to ensure that on-site sanitary waste disposal systems are properly maintained, and that failing systems are detected and properly mitigated. The communities should work with the appropriate County and State agencies to address this problem through public education programs and the provision of technical assistance to help residents understand and address this important issue.
- In those areas not receiving public water, consideration should be given to subdivision regulations that require soil testing as part of the application procedure. If poor or problematic soils are identified, stricter standards could be imposed, such as larger minimum lot size requirements.
- To protect important environmental features, proposed development actions should avoid identified wetlands, floodplains and prime farm soils.
- Support farming practices that recognize environmental resources and the importance of avoiding or minimizing point and non-point source contaminant threats to groundwater, surface water and the environment as a whole.
- Assess the zoning in the vicinity of the wildlife and conservation areas to reduce potential impacts from development.
- Promote public education programs for the maintenance of septic systems to protect groundwater quality.
- Protect the Old Indian Woods area as a cultural and historic resource of local significance. This area is part of the Iroquois Nation and includes woodlands and a stream corridor that warrants protection.

- With respect to the former underground gypsum mines, the Town should investigate the need to institute zoning revisions or additional regulations to address the risk to future property owners in underground mining areas. Assistance from the State should be sought for this effort. In addition, consideration should be given to adopting minor subdivision regulations to allow the Town to further evaluate the risks of subdividing and developing properties in these areas.

**Goal: Encourage a diversity of housing types in the Town**

As the population of the Town changes over time, and the economic conditions vary, options for housing should be available to accommodate changing the lifestyles, incomes and needs of the community. Presently the Town's zoning regulations allows for diversity in housing stock. However, single-family detached homes are the primary form of residential development in the Town.

***Recommendations:***

- Denser development should occur in and around the Village in the Town. The area around the Village has easier access to water and sewer services, which are needed to support denser development.
- The zoning around the Village and in the hamlets should be assessed to ensure that a variety of housing types are permitted. Provisions should be made to expand the R Residential district to accommodate more properties available for multi-family development.
- Promote alternative housing types to satisfy the needs of single individuals, seniors and other non-traditional households that are affordable in nature, such as multi-family units (apartments), in-law (accessory) apartments, and attached single-family dwellings.

**Goal: Maintain and promote efficiency in government**

The Town of Oakfield, in conjunction with the Town of Alabama and Village, must strive to offer the highest quality and most cost-effective services to the community.

***Recommendations:***

- Utilize this Comprehensive Plan to promote continued cooperative approaches and plans with the Village of Oakfield and Town of Alabama.
- Continue to work with the Village of Oakfield to develop ways to share essential services, equipment and personnel.
- Implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to establish appropriate and alternative development standards and regulations to manage growth.
- Utilize and enforce land use regulations to properly manage growth and encourage the development of a mix of uses to balance the tax base and control the costs of public services.
- Keep working with the surrounding communities of Village of Oakfield and Town of Alabama to develop ways to share recreational opportunities.
- Continue and strengthen the relationship with the Oakfield-Alabama School District to sharing services and improving relations between the Towns and Village.

**5.3.3 Village of Oakfield**

**Goal: Promote and encourage investment and economic development in the Village**

The Village of Oakfield is the commercial service center in the community. It serves as a community center and is an important component of the community's character. There is potential for the re-use of existing structures and for some in-fill development. There are also some opportunities for new development. The challenge is to maintain the unique identity of the Village and provide a distinct business experience that can offer essential services to the surrounding community and compete, as required, with other districts in the region.

***Recommendations:***

- Develop an economic revitalization strategy to promote business in the downtown, including an assessment of the public's desire for services and amenities in the area.
- Support and preserve the vitality of the Main Street corridor.
- Develop a clear identity for the Village that is useful in the promotion of the area.
- Implement a streetscape project to improve the economic prosperity of the Village, as well as the visual quality of the area. The streetscape project should focus on the central business district (CBD), but provide other types of aesthetic improvements in the areas north and south of the CBD.
- Projects and policies should be designed to encourage walking and biking in the Village and to manage traffic congestion, which can have a negative impact on the Village center.
- Adopt the proposed zoning revisions that provide design guidance for signs and awnings.
- Improve the availability, appearance and visibility of parking in the Village center.
- Plan appropriately for vacant land in and around the Village. Ensure that any new development or redevelopment is compatible with existing development in terms of size, scale, setbacks and historic/architectural characteristics.
- Develop a strategy to capitalize on tourism associated with both the wildlife and conservation resources (which draw visitors to the surrounding area) and agricultural uses in the community. Consider adopting bed and breakfast regulations or allowing this use by special permit.
- Take advantage of the Small Cities and Community Development Block Grant programs to revitalize the Village.
- Support growth around the Village by working with the Town in extending water and sewer service to appropriate areas. This growth will benefit the Village business district and the overall vitality of the Village. Redevelopment of the US Gypsum site would provide needed jobs, activity and people to the area.
- To assist with redevelopment in the central business district, utilize the 485(b) tax incentive program.
- Explore use of a Business Improvement District (BID) or a Business Enhancement district for the downtown area.
- Identify grant or low-interest loan programs (county, state or federal programs) to help fund a façade improvement program in the CBD.

**Goal: Preserve the traditional neighborhood character of the Village**

The Village of Oakfield is a charming community that possesses a rural appeal, with a small-town atmosphere. There are few agricultural uses in the Village and limited areas of undeveloped land. Residential development in the Village consists of one and two-family dwellings on small lots. Many structures in the commercial

district have second-story residential or office space. Most of the housing stock is older, enhancing the character of the community.

The commercial district functions as the rural service center for the surrounding area and contains a number of public uses, as well as historic structures. The area is pedestrian friendly, which adds to its appeal.

Village population has been essentially stable over the past decade, but modest growth is projected for the next 15 years. Increases in the number of households in the Village are also expected to continue, but at a pace that the Village can absorb. While the Village will continue to have a large proportion of family households, it is expected that there may be an increasing number of empty nester (parents without children) and senior households in the future, whose housing needs will change. There are areas in the vicinity of the Village center that can accommodate in-fill development. Emphasis should be placed on accommodating changing lifestyles and further diversifying the existing housing stock.

The former U.S. Gypsum mines shafts extend through the southeastern portion of Oakfield Village (Map 10). Any proposals for future development activity in this area of the Village must take this into consideration.

***Recommendations:***

- Complete the Village streetscape plan for incorporation into a NYSDOT reconstruction project that is proposed for State Route 63 prior. Request the NYSDOT to assist with streetscape and/or landscape improvements as a part of this project.
- Promote walking and the preservation of the pedestrian friendly atmosphere throughout the Village. This issue is closely linked with the community character of the area.
- Adopt architectural standards or guidelines, possibly in conjunction with hamlet development guidelines, to preserve and protect important structures and ensure that new development and redevelopment is designed in harmony with the character of the Village. Architectural standards could be accomplished through the creation of a zoning overlay district for the Village (or tied to a Village sponsored façade improvement program).
- Implement rural and hamlet development guidelines.
- Adopt landscaping standards or guidelines to help improve the visual quality of commercial and industrial development and redevelopment in the Village. These landscaping standards could be linked with a zoning overlay (noted above).
- Consider developing community gateways at the major entry points to the Village.
- Secure land within the Village for the establishment of a Village park.
- Ensure protection of important historic structures in the Village. Consider adopting standards or guidelines for protecting and enhancing historic character, which could be linked with a zoning overlay district (noted above).
- Continue and maintain the diversity of housing types in the Village.
- Future revisions to zoning requirements and procedures should anticipate and facilitate redevelopment proposals rather than the development of vacant open space.
- Make sure 485b programs are well advertised and utilized by the existing businesses in the community.
- The school, although not within the Village, is an integral part of the character of the community. Connections to the school property should be encouraged. The streetscape project should extend out to the school.

- We respect to the former underground gypsum mines, the Village should investigate the need to institute zoning revisions or additional regulations to address the risk to future property owners within underground mining areas. Assistance from the State should be sought for this effort. In addition, consideration should be given to adopting minor subdivision regulations to allow the Village to further evaluate the risks of subdividing and developing properties in these areas.

**Goal: Maintain and promote efficiency of government**

The Village, in conjunction with the two surrounding Towns, must strive to offer the highest quality and most cost-effective public services to the community.

***Recommendations:***

- As the Village is considering replacing its water tower, initial planning and design should include future expansion into the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield as per the recommended areas in the Vision Map.
- Utilize this Comprehensive Plan to promote continued cooperative approaches and plans with the Town of Oakfield, and where feasible, the Town of Alabama.
- Continue to work with the Town of Oakfield to develop ways to share essential services, equipment and personnel.
- Implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to establish appropriate and alternative development standards and regulations to manage growth.
- Utilize and enforce land use regulations to properly manage growth and encourage the development of a mix of uses to balance the tax base and control the costs of public services.
- Keep working with the surrounding communities of Town of Oakfield and Town of Alabama to develop ways to share recreational opportunities.
- Continue and strengthen the relationship with the Oakfield-Alabama School District to sharing services and improving relations between the Towns and Village.

## **5.4 Vision Plan**

### **5.4.1 Introduction**

The Vision Plan for the three communities is represented as Map 14 and Map 15 for the Village of Oakfield. The Vision Plans are based on the findings and recommendations outlined in the previous sub-section and were developed to more specifically illustrate the vision concepts for the area. These plans do not directly correlate to zoning or land use (not future land use or zoning maps). These maps are overall guidance tools that represent the overall vision for the communities and can help with the recommendations outlined in the Plan.

The vision represented on Map 14 is useful in illustrating the synergy between the three communities. The Vision Map for the Village (Map 15) is provided for ease in viewing more detail in this area and should be used along with the overall Vision Map.

### **5.4.2 Overall Regional Perspective**

The remoteness of the study area helps to create the setting for the vision. Being located approximately 30 miles from both the City of Buffalo and Rochester, and approximately 10 miles from the population center of the City of Batavia, makes this region quite remote. The Indian reservation and the wildlife refuge and management areas also provide isolation from the surrounding communities.

These factors have led to very little development pressure and have allowed agriculture to remain as a viable land use. The Village of Oakfield has, therefore, thrived as the communities' center, with other community hamlets serving other needs.

Due to the strength of the Village core, the Town of Oakfield's development pattern has focused around the Village. Only one small rural hamlet area exists outside of the direct influence of the Village (just north of the Village at the intersection of Albion and Lockport Roads).

The Town of Alabama, on the other hand, has four hamlet areas. South Alabama acts as the community center with the Town Hall and Fire Department located in its boundaries. The other hamlets serve different purposes within the community and are discussed under the Town of Alabama's vision map.

The closing of the U.S. Gypsum Plant, the potential for waterline expansions, and other needs of the communities have forced these municipalities to look differently at their future. The success of implementing each individual community's vision is highly dependent and linked with development and planning actions in the other communities.

### **5.4.3 Town of Alabama Vision Map**

In the Town of Alabama, the key issue for the Town is controlled growth, primarily in the areas surrounding the hamlets of Alabama, Basom, South Alabama and Wheatville. As shown on the Vision Map, the majority of the Town outside these hamlet areas is devoted to agricultural and conservation uses. The Town would like to see future commercial and residential development located in and around the hamlet areas rather than having such uses sprawl throughout the Town in the form of residential frontage lots or commercial development that requires a special use permit. The hamlets are the areas where the Town would like to provide public water and this is where future, long-term growth should occur, particularly in Basom, Alabama and South Alabama.

The Town of Alabama's largest land use features include the Indian reservation and major wildlife areas. The reservation isolates a small area in the southwestern corner of the Town, which is a mixed-use area. This area has a potential for receiving water through the Town of Newstead, which could enable future development and redevelopment in this area.

The major transportation corridors in the Town of Alabama are State Route 77 and State Route 63, which bisect the Town. Three of the hamlets lie along these corridors, each serving a different purpose. The hamlet of Basom is located on State Route 77 as you enter the Town from points south, including the NYS Thruway. It is located near the major entry points to the reservation (Bloomingdale and Ledge Roads). The area presently has a few small businesses and a limited amount of residential development. The plan supports that the area encompassing the lands along State Route 77 between Bloomingdale and Marble Roads be considered as the area where growth could occur over the long term. Automobile-related uses, agrarian support businesses and limited residential development should be the focus of long-term growth in this area. This would allow the

Town to take advantage of the traffic coming from the thruway and the traffic heading towards the reservation. Due to the existing pattern of vehicles moving in and out of the reservation, and problems associated with this traffic, the intersections of State Route 77 with Bloomingdale and Ledge Roads should be considered for future traffic mitigation to address these concerns.

The hamlet of Alabama, located at the intersection of Lewiston/Lockport Roads (State Route 77 to the west) and State Route 63, also carries traffic coming from the NYS Thruway heading to the north. It presently includes some auto-related businesses and a grocery store. The area includes the Town's highway garage, a fire hall, an American Legion Post and a cemetery. The long-term growth envisioned for ~~area of~~ this hamlet could include recreational and tourism-support businesses and residential development. As a long-term planning area, the hamlet could extend south to Ham Road to pick up town lands and west on State Route 77 pick up existing development patterns.

The Hamlet of South Alabama is located along State Route 63, towards the Village of Oakfield, and acts as the Town center. This area includes the Town Hall/historical building, a church and fire hall. There is little commercial development, but it has the largest concentration of residential development in the Town. A small growth area is included around this hamlet that would accommodate some additional long-term residential growth. This hamlet is the closest dense residential hamlet area to the Village of Oakfield.

The final hamlet in the Town is Wheatville, which is located north of South Alabama. This is a small residential hamlet with a church that could experience a small amount of residential growth well into the future. Hence, this area is not considered an area that will see substantial long-term growth. The planning issue for this area is the provision of public water.

Throughout the Goals and Recommendations, the plan calls for increased development controls in the agricultural areas outside the hamlet areas. With the exception of the hamlet of Wheatville, the long-term planning areas identified on the Vision Map are generally in keeping with the proposed "development areas" as mapped in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The major difference between the Town's plan and the County's is that this plan calls for larger long-term planning areas, while providing controls to manage future growth. Expanding the boundaries of the hamlet areas will enable the Town to better focus growth in these areas and eases the expansion of water to these areas. It will also help to achieve the goal of preserving the surrounding agricultural land by concentrating long-term development in the hamlets.

To accommodate the long-term growth pattern of the Town of Alabama, it is proposed to expand a water system along State Route 63 and State Route 77. A loop would be added northward to Wheatville and along Ham Road to complete a loop of the water system. In areas that have waterlines proposed that are not in long-term planning areas, a strong lateral restriction policy should be put in place (restricting new residential frontage lot development from tying into the system).

The abandoned railroad line running east/west through the Town would provide an excellent connection feature from Basom to South Alabama to the Village of Oakfield. This feature could be utilized for biking, walking and other non-automotive forms of transportation.

On-road bicycle lanes should be considered for State Route 77 from Pembroke into Niagara County. It also would run northward on State Route 63 into the wildlife areas and into Orleans County. It should also run east

on State Route 63 to the Village of Oakfield. This would provide ties to three of the hamlets, the wildlife areas, and surrounding communities including the Village.

A quarry area in the south-central part of the town should be protected from non-compatible development (restrict residential in this area). Furthermore, former underground mine locations must be considered when proposals for residential development are received. These areas are not considered suitable for future residential use.

The areas along State Routes 77 and 63 that are not within hamlet areas should have a rural development zoning overlay put in place that would protect rural-agrarian enhancement of these areas, and protect this important travel way in Alabama from poor development patterns (hurting the town image).

The remainder of the town (in white) should remain rural/agrarian and allow small development within rural development guidelines (suggest rural development guidelines law).

#### **5.4.4 Town of Oakfield Vision Map**

The major features in the Town of Oakfield include the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management area, the Village of Oakfield and the U.S. Gypsum facility. The Village by far is the most important feature and provides the focal point of the community. In support of the Village, the Town's long-term planning area surrounds the Village. This area is considered suitable for future, long-term residential and industrial development. It includes the U.S. Gypsum area and the area abutting Birdseye and is non-competitive with the Village. The reuse/redevelopment of the U.S. Gypsum site will not only benefit the Town, it could provide much-needed jobs for residents in the Village and in the region. Long-term residential growth should occur around the Village, where services are available, rather than sprawling throughout the Town in the form of frontage lot development (which is already occurring along Drake, Fisher, Albion, Lewiston and Maltby Roads.

The "Five Corners" area of the Town (the intersection of Lewiston/State Route 63, Albion Road and Maltby Road) is included in this long-term planning area. This area includes the school, some commercial and industrial businesses and limited residential development. This area is an important focal point of the Town and Village, and should include the development of regulations to foster aesthetic improvements and gateway features.

The only other hamlet type area is north of the Five Corners area on Albion Road at its intersection with Lockport Road. This area could support a small residential growth pattern. In concert with the Town of Alabama, these planning areas would be supported by the planned expansion of the County water system on State Route 262, Pearl Street and State Route 63 from the Village through the Town of Oakfield to Alabama. This water system should also be looped down State Route 62 and up Fisher Road to State Route 262. It should also be looped up North Pearl to Maltby and west to the Four Corners area. Long-term, the Town should also look at extending the waterline up to the residential hamlet north of the Village. In waterline areas not within growth areas, the Town should place lateral restrictions.

The area included within the long-term planning area boundary encompassed by the Fisher Road waterline extension would be a long-term growth area and not intended for "change" in the near future. Furthermore,

planning efforts in this area are oriented toward securing providing water service and not dense residential development or the loss of viable farmland.

Also in concert with the Town of Alabama, the abandoned railroad right-of-way should be utilized for a multi-use trailway connecting two of Alabama's hamlets and part of the Town of Oakfield to the Village of Oakfield. Non-automotive transportation access (bike lanes) should be added to State Route 63 on both sides of the Village and connecting to the hamlet to the north. The residential growth areas immediately surrounding the Village should also be tied with sidewalks to the Village, and some areas considered for sewer extensions.

#### **5.4.5 Village of Oakfield Vision Map**

The Village of Oakfield is an integral component of the region. This three-community map depicts how the communities fit together and how their visions can be completed together. Due to the scale of this map, the vision for the Village is also depicted on Map 15.

The key features of the Village are the Main Street corridor and central business district, the industrial area, the school (which is actually outside the Village in the Town), and the residential streets. Like many rural villages, Oakfield is struggling to keep its central business district (CBD) a vibrant center of the community. The vision map illustrates the village's CBD as the area along Main Street from Forest/Maple to Pearl including the Library and Park. Main Street to the north of this is mainly residential with a small mix of businesses. Similarly, the area to the south is mainly residential with a few businesses. These areas should be the focus for development and redevelopment, and the investment of Village, County and State monies. Another area for attention and investment is the industrial (Birdseye) area, in the southern portion of the Village. This area provides vital jobs and supports downtown businesses. This area is especially important since the closure of the U.S. Gypsum site. This area also has the potential for the expansion of industrial uses.

Areas of focus for the CBD include parking improvements, a future passive park, streetscape improvements and economic incentive programs. The vision map illustrates gateway features at each end of Main Street, as you enter the Village. To a lesser extent, gateways are also featured at the southern end of the Village on South Pearl and at the eastern end on Drake Street.

The southern end of Main Street also includes a large vacant parcel that is envisioned for multi-family housing. Surrounding this area and around much of the Village are agrarian lands, that the Town is utilizing for potential long-term residential development. This growth would provide residential support to the Village downtown.

It is important that major features in the community be tied together by sidewalks, walkways and trails. The vision map depicts a potential for a greenspace/trail between the Old Indian Woods and the school, which could be linked to the sidewalk system that leads to the central business district.

## **SECTION 6.0 IMPLEMENTATION**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The preparation and adoption of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan is only the beginning of an overall planning process. The Comprehensive Plan is an active document and should continually be utilized and updated to guide local decision making. Therefore, the Towns and Village should take the necessary steps to ensure that the recommendations of this Plan are implemented. This section of the Plan outlines an implementation strategy for accomplishing many of the recommendations set forth in Section 5.0 and achieving the goals and objectives, as outlined in Section 3.0 of this document. The following implementation strategy includes a step by step approach with established priorities.

It should be understood that because the Oakfield – Alabama Comprehensive Plan is an active document and, over time, as local circumstances change, so too may the priorities of each community. Therefore, upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, one of the first priority actions is for each community to designate an Implementation Advisory Committee that would be responsible for the implementation of this document. The local Legislative Board in each community shall maintain the authority to appoint representatives from their respective community to assist with this action. Furthermore, information contained in the Comprehensive Plan must be kept current. That way, the recommendations, as well as the implementation process, are based on and reflect current conditions. As outlined in Section 8.0 of this Plan, an annual or bi-annual review process should be established to allow for the continuing review and updating of this Plan.

In addition, members of the Implementation Advisory Committee or their designated representatives should meet with other local, County and State agencies to discuss the recommendations and implementation strategy outlined in the Oakfield – Alabama Comprehensive Plan. The goal would be to determine how these agencies could help each community with the implementation of this Plan.

### **6.2 Utilization of this Section**

This section is broken into subsections for each participating community. In this manner, each community can look at its respective implementation strategy and discern the steps they need to take to accomplish their vision and achieve their goals and objectives. The general intent of implementation actions is to tailor land use controls to guide potential long term residential development, but not restrict what existing residents can do on their property.

Each implementation strategy outlines a prioritized, step-by-step approach for the community. Priority 1 actions are those tasks that should be completed in the immediate term (one to two years). Priority 2 actions are those actions that should be undertaken over the short term (three to five years out). Priority 3 Actions are also included, and are either longer-term activities or alternative actions that may or may not be necessary depending on the outcome of Priority 1 and 2 actions. Priority 3 actions are considered “tool box” actions—a list of alternative ideas to consider if Priority 1 or 2 Actions do not yield the desired results.

For the priority 1 and 2 action items, the actions have been broken down into four categories: Agriculture, Water/Smart Growth Plan, Zoning and Land Use Regulations, and Other Actions. The first category focuses on a variety of issues related to supporting agriculture in the region as the primary factor in defining the community character. The second category deals with recommendation items that can support the individual community's request to modify certain provisions of the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The third category, Zoning and other Land Use Regulations, are actions to be utilized by legislative boards to control land use in their community. The last category may include cooperative actions that should be done in cooperation with the other participating communities or the County and/or some other agency. Under each of the categories, there is also a methodology section that explains who should complete the actions and how they should be accomplished.

## 6.3 Town of Alabama

### Priority 1 Action Items – Years 1 and 2:

#### General

1. Adopt the Comprehensive Plan and establish an Implementation Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation, review and updating of the Plan. The committee should be appointed by the Town Board and have representatives from the Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and key town officials. If desired, this duty could be assigned to the Planning Board.
2. Establish an annual budget for the implementation of the Oakfield - Alabama Comprehensive Plan.
3. The Implementation Advisory Committee should convene annually with the Implementation Advisory Committees from the Village and Town of Oakfield in order to map the progress of each municipality's implementation plan, initiate their annual review, discuss common implementation issues, and identify other inter-municipal planning opportunities.

#### Agriculture

1. Revise the Agricultural-Residential (A-R) zoning district in order to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in this district, and residential uses are secondary. The A-R district should limit non-residential and non-agricultural uses by not allowing them as "permitted uses". Existing uses, including home occupations would remain as pre-existing uses. Under this new scenario, the A-R district would be reduced in geographic area to only those areas that would likely remain in farming, areas with prime farmland soils, areas outside the hamlets or other areas identified as development areas. Corresponding increases in the size of the Residential District (R) or other multi-use districts (around the hamlets) should be adopted in order to provide appropriate planning areas for potential long term residential growth (See Vision Map).
2. Incorporate prime farmland soils as into review criteria for non-agricultural development.
3. Consider adoption of a local Right to Farm Law.
4. Refer to the County Agricultural Protection Plan to identify properties for a Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) program.

#### Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. Work with Genesee County to expand the designated development areas in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan in a manner that does not impact agriculture and fully utilizes the existing infrastructure in the Town. The Vision Map depicts larger long-term planning areas. The development areas delineated in the existing Smart Growth Plan closely follow the existing pattern of hamlet development and represent appropriate limits for sustaining short term growth. As future demand for growth may dictate, the development area boundaries should be expanded to correspond with the Vision Map.
2. Commence preliminary plan development for bringing public water service to Basom, Alabama and South Alabama.
3. Support the continued extension of water service from the Town of Newstead into the western portion of Alabama.

4. When water is provided, institute protective lateral restriction regulations to control residential building outside the long-term planning areas along Route 63 and Route 77. Lateral restrictions on water service should also be established along Knowsville Road and Lewiston Road. Water service hook-ups should only be provided where water quality problems have been identified.
5. Investigate appropriate remediation for failing septic systems in the Alabama and Basom hamlets to address water quality problems.

#### **Zoning and other Land Use Regulations**

1. Outside of the identified long-term planning areas, review and update the list of non-agricultural land uses allowed by Special Use Permit.
2. To offset the more stringent use regulations proposed for the A-R district, expand the residential districts within the boundaries of the long-term planning areas surrounding the hamlet areas.
3. Establish Overlay Districts for hamlet areas (within long-term planning area boundaries on Vision Map).
4. Adopt regulations, separate from the Zoning Ordinance, for the minor and major subdivision of land in accordance with Section 276 of the NYS Town Law.
5. Revise the Town's cluster development regulations to incorporate rural development design guidelines.
6. Permit the establishment of bed and breakfast establishments in the A-R and R zoning districts

#### **Other Implementation Actions**

1. Establish a plan for creating attractive and informative gateway features at:
  - south end of Basom along Route 77 to guide travelers coming into Alabama from the south,
  - north end of Basom in the vicinity of Bloomingdale Road
  - Establish informative directional signage at the intersection of Route 63 and Route 77 in order to link Basom, the Tonawanda Indian Reservation, Alabama and the Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area.
  - Northwest of Alabama, on Route 77, coming out of Wildlife Management Area.

#### **Priority 2 Action Items – Years 3-5:**

##### **General**

1. The Implementation Advisory Committee should provide its annual report to the Alabama Town Board.
2. The Alabama Town Board should reappoint Implementation Advisory Committee members and appoint subcommittees, as necessary, to address the coming year's action items.
3. With input from Implementation Advisory Committee, the Town Board should prioritize the coming year's action items and budget accordingly.

##### **Agriculture**

1. Establish a Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) program.

2. In future review of the Agricultural District, recommend to Genesee County that non-agricultural lands be removed from the district. This is primarily the case in Basom and South Alabama.

**Water/Smart Growth Plan**

1. Investigate the need and feasibility of bringing water to the crossroads in Wheatville.

**Zoning and other Land Use Regulations**

1. Investigate the necessity and intent on accommodating junkyards in the Zoning Ordinance – Section 609. If retained as an acceptable use in the Town, junkyards should only be allowed in the Industrial District and not in the A-R district. If it is determined not to allow junkyards anywhere, then they should be prohibited and Section 609 (and corresponding definition) be removed from the ordinance.
2. Sections 503 and 613 should be amended to only allow Adult Uses in the Industrial District with a Special Use Permit. Adult Uses do not have to be allowed as permitted uses; they can be limited to Special Use Permits. Although adult uses must be allowed in some district within the Town, the Town does not have to ensure that there is land available in that district. If the Town is attempting to encourage additional commercial activity in the hamlet areas (Basom and Alabama) the commercial districts may expand and open more opportunity for adult uses to attempt to locate in the hamlets.

**Priority 3 Action Items - Long Term and Optional:**

1. Relocate Town Hall, along with other Town Facilities, into the Alabama hamlet as it continues to grow as a Town Center.
2. Work with Genesee County and the Town of Oakfield to investigate the feasibility and potential funds for a rails-to-trails project on the abandoned Penn Central rail corridor.
3. Establish a mechanism to ensure that reclamation and reuse plans are in place for the quarry areas on Ledge Road.
4. Institute non-traditional rural development tools to control potential long term growth and preserve farmland, while at the same time not eliminate the landowner's right to sell property. Adopt provisions, including minimum lot size, for "open development areas" along Route 63 and Route 77 to allow minor subdivisions having more creative lot configurations – shared driveways, minimal frontage for access only.
5. Work with Genesee County and State agencies on ground water protection education programs.
6. Establish an inter-municipal shared services community with Oakfield, Village of Oakfield and the school district to investigate opportunities to continue to work together on shared services (water, sewer) or facilities.

## 6.4 Town of Oakfield

### Priority 1 Action Items – Years 1 and 2:

#### General

1. Adopt the Comprehensive Plan and establish an Implementation Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation, review and updating of the Plan. The committee should be appointed by the Town Board and have representatives from the Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and key town officials. If desired, this duty could be assigned to the Planning Board.
2. Establish an annual budget for the implementation of the Oakfield - Alabama Comprehensive Plan.
3. The Implementation Advisory Committee should convene annually with the Implementation Advisory Committees from the Village Oakfield and Town of Alabama in order to map the progress of each municipality's implementation plan, initiate their annual review, discuss common implementation issues identify other inter-municipal planning opportunities.

#### Agriculture

1. Revise the schedule of allowed uses for the Residential Agricultural District (R&A) in order to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in this district, and residential uses are secondary. The R&A district should limit non-agricultural uses by not allowing them in as permitted uses. Under this new scenario, the R&A district would be reduced in geographic area to those areas most likely to remain in active farming, areas of prime farmland, areas outside the hamlets, and areas otherwise identified as agricultural development areas. Corresponding expansion of the General Residential Districts (R) should be adopted in order to provide appropriate areas for future residential growth within the boundaries of the long-term planning areas (See Vision Map).
2. Consider adoption of a local Right to Farm law.

#### Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. Work with Genesee County to expand the designated development areas in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan in a manner that does not impact agriculture and fully utilizes the existing infrastructure in the Town. The Vision Map depicts a larger long-term planning area around the Village of Oakfield that represents the Town's long term vision for growth. The designated development area boundary established by the Smart Growth Plan, as depicted on the map, represents the most appropriate limit for sustaining short term growth, as the future demand for growth may dictate, the development area boundary around the Village should be expanded.
2. Lateral restrictions on public water service should be implemented along Fisher Road (see Vision Map).

#### Zoning and Other Land Use Regulations

1. Write an intent or introductory section for each zoning district in order to give the reader, Enforcement Officer, applicant or land owner an understanding of how the Town wants to see that particular district be utilized.

2. Adopt regulations, separate from the Zoning Ordinance, for the minor and major subdivision of land in accordance with Section 276 of the NYS Town Law.
3. Revise zoning to include provisions for cluster residential subdivisions as per Section 278 of the NYS Town Law.
4. Establish Overlay Districts for hamlet areas (within Long Term Planning Area boundaries on Vision Map).
5. Incorporate rural development guidelines into subdivision regulations.

**Other Implementation Actions**

1. Draft a set of rural development guidelines to provide written standards and graphic examples to facilitate guiding potential long term growth to meet the vision.
2. Establish a plan for creating attractive informative features at:
  - Route 63 Lewiston Road near Fisher Road
  - Route 262 Drake Road between Fisher Road and the Town line
  - Route 63 Judge Road at Macomber Road - A site should be located that may be coordinated, visually, with a similar gateway feature for Alabama.

**Priority 2 Action Items – Years 3–5:**

**General**

1. The Implementation Advisory Committee should provide its annual report to the Oakfield Town Board.
2. The Oakfield Town Board should reappoint Implementation Advisory Committee members and appoint subcommittees, as necessary, to address the coming year's action items.
3. With input from Implementation Advisory Committee, the Town Board should prioritize the coming year's action items and budget accordingly.
4. Adopt hamlet development guidelines for the East Oakfield and Five Corners areas.

### **Agriculture**

1. In future review of the Agricultural District recommend to the Genesee County that non-agricultural lands in East Oakfield be removed from the district.
2. Establish purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program.

### **Water/Smart Growth Plan**

1. Investigate residents' requests/needs for public water due to health and safety concerns.
2. Consider the need to continue plans for any water expansion outside the Village that did not occur in years 1 and 2. Focus on Route 262/Fisher Road/Route 63.
3. If the Town's desired changes to the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan were not made by the County, the Town should review and update its recommendations and request revisions as a part of the next update of the Plan.

### **Zoning and Other Land Use Regulations**

1. Investigate the necessity and intent on accommodating automobile junkyards and sanitary landfills in the Zoning Ordinance – Section 570. If retained as acceptable uses in the Town, automobile junkyards and sanitary landfills should be assigned to a specific district. If not, than they should be prohibited and Section 570 (and corresponding definitions) removed from the ordinance.
2. Adopt Site Plan Review requirements, standards and review procedures for a defined list of land uses allowed as Permitted Uses as well as Special Use Permit.
3. Adopt a new zoning district (separate from R&A) that would focus on protecting agriculture uses from intrusive or incompatible uses, and prime soils from subdivision designs that would call for the development of this resource.

### **Other Implementation Actions**

1. Work with U.S. Gypsum, Genesee County and NYS agencies to develop a reuse strategy for U.S. Gypsum facilities that may become available for redevelopment.
2. Work with State and Federal agencies on methods to coordinate conservation areas (signage, awareness, events) with local recreation-oriented businesses.
3. Extend Village streetscape project to the Oakfield - Alabama School property.

### **Priority 3 Action Items – Long Term and Optional:**

1. Consider incorporating Site Plan Review requirements/procedures into Zoning as authorized by NYS Town Law Section 274-a.
2. Consider incorporating powers and authorities of Planning Board into the Zoning as allowed by NYS Town Law Section 272.
3. Work with the Village of Oakfield to create a long-range plan for expanding sewer service into the Town within the identified long term planning areas.
4. Evaluate the feasibility of expanding public water service to the East Oakfield crossroads area of Lockport Road and Fisher Road.
5. Work with Genesee County and the Town of Alabama to investigate the feasibility and potential funds for a rails-to-trails project on the abandoned Penn Central rail corridor.
6. Work with Genesee County and State agencies on ground water protection education programs.

7. Establish an inter-municipal shared services community with Alabama, Village of Oakfield and the school district to investigate opportunities to continue to work together on shared services (water, sewer) or facilities.

## 6.5 Village of Oakfield

### Priority 1 Action Items – Years 1 and 2:

#### General

1. Adopt the Comprehensive Plan and establish an Implementation Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation, review and updating of the Plan. The committee should be appointed by the Village Board of Trustees and have representatives from the Village Board of Trustees, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and key village officials. If desired, this duty could be assigned to the Planning Board.
2. Establish an annual budget for the implementation of the Oakfield - Alabama Comprehensive Plan.
3. The Implementation Advisory Committee should convene annually with the Implementation Advisory Committees from the Town of Oakfield and Town of Alabama in order to map the progress of each municipality's implementation plan, initiate their annual review, discuss common implementation issues identify other inter-municipal planning opportunities.

#### Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. The entire Village of Oakfield is contained within one of the designated development areas established by the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The Town of Oakfield is proposing that the designated area around the Village be enlarged. The Village should support the Town's efforts to expand the boundary of the development area around the Village. As the demand for growth dictates, the Village should work with Town and Genesee County to expand the designated development area in future updates of the Smart Growth Plan.
2. A long-range water plan should be developed depicting where future water service may be expanded outside the Village.
3. Support the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama in their efforts to modify the "development areas" identified in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan to reflect the long-term planning area boundaries, as shown on the Vision Map.
4. Investigate cost/feasibility for extending water out Route 63 into Towns of Oakfield and Alabama.

#### Zoning and other Land Use Regulations

1. Establish an overlay district for the Central Business District (CBD). The CBD Overlay District would require that new and re-development projects meet architectural design guidelines, landscaping standards, special signage and parking standards.
2. Amend zoning to allow multi-family housing in the commercial districts with special use permit.
3. Add tourist homes and Bed & Breakfast Inns as uses allowed with a special use permit in the R-1 and R-2 districts.

#### Other Implementation Actions

1. Expand Village open space/parkland by acquiring and developing the land for a future passive park on underutilized commercial land on the south side of Maple Street.

2. As an incentive for reinvestment, adopt a local law allowing the Village to participate in the Real Property Tax Law Section 485-b to partially exempt from taxation the value of improvements made to commercial and industrial facilities.
3. Apply to Governor's Office for Small Cities for funding from the Community Development Block Grant program to conduct a strategic revitalization plan for the Village.
4. Establish a Business Improvement District. Seek assistance from New York State Urban Council, Inc.

**Priority 2 Action Items Years 3-5:**

**General**

1. Develop an overall streetscape plan to be implemented as improvements are made to Route 63.
2. Seek funding (CDBG) to establish a façade improvement program in CBD.

**Water/Smart Growth Plan**

1. Support expansion of water into the Town of Oakfield within the designated long-term planning areas.

**Zoning and other Land Use Regulations**

1. Amend the zoning to allow, by Special Use Permit, bed and breakfast inns. Establish enhanced regulations specific to bed and breakfast inns (related to parking, lighting, signage, and number of guests) for their review and approval.
2. Establish landscape standards in zoning as part of site plan review (site plan waiver).
3. Amend zoning to protect locally significant historic structures by facilitating reuse, but requiring additional approvals for "tear-down" development.

**Other Implementation Actions**

1. Continue to work with the New York State Department of Transportation in implementing the streetscape and Main Street improvements previously designed and initiated.
2. Assist a key group of Village business owners to establish a local businessmen's association.
3. Develop an overall plan to create attractive and information gateways:
  - near Village line on South Pearl Street
  - on Route 63 Main Street at beginning of streetscape project
  - near Farnsworth

**Priority 3 Action Items – Long Term and Optional:**

1. Continue to work with the Town of Oakfield to create a long-range plan for expanding sewer service into the Town within the identified long term planning areas.
2. Establish an inter-municipal shared services community with Alabama, Oakfield and the school district to investigate opportunities to continue to work together on shared services (water, sewer) or facilities.
3. Consider eliminating Mobil Home parks as allowed uses in Planned Unit Developments.
4. Acquiring easements to assemble an open space/creek corridor linking Old Indian Woods with the school property.

5. Identify potential locations for a Village Park.

## **SECTION 7.0**

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

Typically, the potential environmental impacts of a Comprehensive Plan are evaluated through a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS). To meet this requirement, the Comprehensive Plan itself can be set up to represent the GEIS (see §272-a.8 of NYS Town Law and §7-722.8 of NYS Village Law). This format enables the reviewers, the Lead Agency, Involved Agencies, Interested parties, and the public to review one comprehensive document that outlines plans for the future and the evaluation of the potential environmental implications of these plans. This section of the Comprehensive Plan has been provided to assist with the environmental review for this document.

#### **7.2 Environmental Setting**

A GEIS, like an Environmental Impact Statement, includes a section on Environmental Setting. Section 4 (Existing Conditions) of this Comprehensive Plan provides a review and analysis of the environmental settings of the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield and the Village of Oakfield, as they exist now. Section 4 includes information on the following:

- Existing Land Use (4.1)
- Farmland and Agriculture (4.1.2)
- Land Use Regulations (4.2)
- Topography and Steep Slopes (4.3.1)
- Hydric Soils (4.3.2)
- Stream Corridors and Watersheds (4.3.3)
- Flooding and Wetlands (4.3.4)
- Wildlife Conservation Areas and Significant Wildlife Habitats (4.3.5)
- Scenic Resources (4.3.6)
- Demographics and Socioeconomic Conditions (4.4)
- Transportation (4.5)
- Utilities (4.6)
- Parks and Recreation (4.7.1)
- Schools (4.7.2)
- Emergency Facilities (4.7.3)
- Government Facilities (4.7.4)
- Historic and Archeological Features (4.7.5)

### 7.3 Potential Significant Adverse Environmental Impacts

The underlying purpose and a major goal of the Comprehensive Plan is to promote appropriate land use and avoid significant adverse environment impacts in the communities that it covers. However, it is important to acknowledge and discuss potential adverse impacts. For this multi-jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan, the impacts specific to each community are outlined individually. Although this leads to some redundancy, it facilitates review of the document by all involved and interested parties.

#### *Short Term/Long Term and Cumulative Impacts*

Based on the environmental settings of the Towns of Alabama, Oakfield, and the Village of Oakfield, the following potentially significant adverse environmental impacts could occur if these communities do not plan appropriately and provide the proper tools for the management of growth and development. The reader can also refer to Section 5 (Findings and Recommendations) for an understanding of potential impacts. The Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan is designed to properly guide growth in the Towns and Village avoiding significant adverse impacts on land use and development decisions, which are made outside the framework of a community plan.

- a. ***Impacts on Land*** (See Existing Land Use Map, Prime Farmland Soils Map, Hydric Soils Map, and Environmental Features Map in Section 4)

#### **Town of Alabama**

- The Town of Alabama is very rural in nature, a characteristic that is valued by area residents. Inappropriate planning and development actions could negatively impact the character of the Town.
- The Town of Alabama has significant areas of hydric soils, wetlands and floodplains, primarily in the northern quarter of the Town and following drainage corridors. Improper development of these areas could result in drainage, flooding and/or erosion problems within the Town and in downstream areas.
- A large portion of Alabama has soils that are categorized as “prime farmland”, or “prime farmland when drained”. Over-development in areas having these soils could result in a significant cumulative loss of irreplaceable resources (prime farmland soils).
- Outside the Tonawanda Indian Reservation and State and Federal wildlife conservation areas, there are only a few significant areas of mature woodland in Alabama. Inappropriate development of these areas could have a negative impact on the rural character of the Town, wildlife habitat and important open space.

#### **Town of Oakfield**

- The Town of Oakfield is very rural in nature with the exception of the Village of Oakfield. This rural attribute helps define the character of the community with agricultural lands and open space. Inappropriate planning and development actions could negatively affect the character of the Town.
- The Town of Oakfield has only minor areas characterized by steep slopes of 15 percent or higher (northeast along Fisher Road).
- The Town of Oakfield has significant areas of hydric soils, wetlands and floodplains, primarily in the Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area in the northern quarter of the Town

and, to a lesser extent, following drainage corridors in the remaining areas. Development of these areas could lead to erosion, drainage or flooding problems.

- There are some large areas of soils that are categorized as “prime farmland”, or “prime farmland when drained” in the Town of Oakfield. Over-development in areas having these soils could result in a significant cumulative loss of irreplaceable resources (prime farmland soils).
- Outside the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area, there are only a few significant areas of mature woodland in the Town of Oakfield. Inappropriate development of these areas could have a negative impact on the rural character of the Town, wildlife habitat and important open space.

#### **Village of Oakfield**

- The Village of Oakfield is an important rural center for the surrounding communities. There is a Central Business District (CBD), existing and some underutilized industrial spaces, and some remaining agricultural land.
- Less than nine percent of the Village is categorized as vacant, undeveloped or open space. Inappropriate planning and development/redevelopment actions could impact its character and its viability as an economic center.
- Inappropriate development of the creek corridors running through the Village could lead to flooding or erosion problems and a loss of open space.
- There are no significant areas of steep slopes or wetlands in the Village that represent constraints to development.

**b. *Impacts on Water*** (See *Hydric Soils Map, Watershed Boundaries Map and Environmental Features Map in Section 4*)

#### **Town of Alabama**

- Tonawanda Creek, Witney Creek, Ledge Creek, Brinningstool Creek, and numerous tributaries of these waterways run through the Town of Alabama. These creeks are important for environmental protection, open space preservation, drainage, wildlife habitat and aesthetics, particularly in the case of those that run through the two major wetland areas in the Town: Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area and the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge.
- Floodplains surround portions of some of these waterways, primarily Tonawanda Creek. Inappropriate development could lead to flooding or drainage problems, and hazards to public safety.
- Most of the Town of Alabama is within the portions of four watersheds. Ledge- Tonawanda Creek covers the west to southeast portion of Alabama. Mud Creek covers a small area in the northwest corner of Alabama. Murder Creek is located on very small area in southwest corner. The Oak Orchard Creek watershed covers the entire north central to east half of the Town. Inappropriate development in these watersheds could potentially have adverse impacts on water quality, groundwater resources and habitats in the Town and downstream of the Town.
- The Town of Alabama is dependent upon groundwater resources for their potable water supply. Improper or inappropriate development could affect these groundwater resources.
- Nearly all residences also use on-site septic systems to treat sanitary waste. The effluent of which is ultimately discharged to groundwater.
- At times the groundwater resource can be under stress due to drought conditions, accidental spills or contamination.

- The Town is investigating the possibility of extending water from Newstead into the southwest corner, and out from the Village of Oakfield (county water service). This will improve water quality and quantity for residents, but could cause additional problems with septic system failures and induce growth. Uncontrolled development could create potential groundwater resource supply problems, have adverse impacts on community character, and cause conflicts with agriculture uses.
- Town residents use on-site septic systems to treat sanitary waste. The effluent is ultimately discharged to groundwater. Lack of maintenance and failing systems can pose threats to groundwater wells.
- There are areas of wetlands and hydric soils. Inappropriate development in these areas could lead to flooding and drainage problems, and adversely impact groundwater resources and wildlife habitat.

#### **Town of Oakfield**

- The Town of Oakfield is traversed by Oak Orchard Creek and its numerous tributaries. Floodplains surround the major creeks, and many areas of wetlands are found in their vicinity. These creeks are also important for environmental protection, open space preservation, drainage, wildlife habitat and aesthetics, particularly in the case of Oak Orchard Creek, which runs through the Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area. Inappropriate development of these lands could lead to flooding, erosion, and drainage problems. Threats to public safety could also result. These creeks are important for environmental protection, community character, open space preservation, drainage, wildlife habitat and aesthetics.
- The entire Town of Oakfield falls within the Oak Orchard Creek watershed. Inappropriate development could have adverse impacts on water quality, groundwater resources and habitats.
- Only some of the Town's residential areas that are located near the Village have public water. The majority of residents are dependent upon groundwater resources for potable water supply.
- Town residents use on-site septic systems to treat sanitary waste. The effluent is ultimately discharged to groundwater. Lack of maintenance and failing systems can pose threats to groundwater wells.
- The Town is investigating bringing water out from the Village of Oakfield (county water source). Uncontrolled development could create potential groundwater resource supply problems, have adverse impacts on community character, and cause conflicts with agriculture uses.
- There are areas of wetlands and hydric soils. Inappropriate development in these areas could lead to flooding and drainage problems, and adversely impact groundwater resources and wildlife habitat.

#### **Village of Oakfield**

- Two creeks run through the Village of Oakfield. Flooding is not a particular problem. However, inappropriate development within the floodplain could lead to flooding, erosion and threats to public safety. Drainage problems could also result. In a village setting, creeks are important for flood mitigation, community character, open space preservation, drainage, and aesthetics.
- All of the Village of Oakfield is within the Oak Orchard Creek watershed. Inappropriate development could have adverse impacts on water quality and/or groundwater resources for downstream communities. Habitats could also be affected.

- The only areas of wetlands and hydric soils in the Village are those areas associated with the creek corridors. Inappropriate development in these areas could lead to flooding and drainage problems, and adversely impact groundwater resources.

**c. *Impacts on Plants and Animals (See Digital Orthoimagery and the Environmental Features Map in section 4)***

**Town of Alabama**

- The NYS Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area and Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and John White Memorial State Game Farm are significant resources for wildlife habitat, which together cover approximately 25 percent of the northern portion of the Town. The Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area and Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge (part of the larger Alabama Swamp complex) provide excellent bird and fish habitat, including state-listed endangered, threatened and special concern bird species. Because these areas are under the ownership and management of State and Federal conservation agencies it is not anticipated that any changes resulting from the implementation of this Comprehensive plan will result in significant adverse impacts. Areas just outside of these resources could have some effect on them.
- Outside the wildlife conservation areas, the Town’s expansive areas of agricultural fields, open meadows, and old fields, as well as the wetlands and creek corridors, provide a variety of habitats for many non-threatened and non-endangered plant, avian and animal species. These areas also provide an important element of the rural character of the Town. Inappropriate development and poor site planning could adversely impact these resources.

**Town of Oakfield**

- The NYS Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area (part of larger Alabama Swamp complex) is a significant wildlife habitat resource in the northeast corner of the Town. Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area, together with the Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area and Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge provide excellent bird and fish habitat, including state-listed endangered, threatened and special concern bird species. Because the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area is under the ownership and management of the State Department of Environmental Conservation, it is not anticipated that any changes resulting from the implementation of this Comprehensive plan will result in significant adverse impacts to this area.
- Outside the wildlife conservation areas, the Town’s expansive areas of agricultural fields, open meadows, and old fields, as well as the wetlands and creek corridors, provide a variety of habitats for many non-threatened and non-endangered plant, avian and animal species. These areas also provide an important element of the rural character of the Town. Inappropriate development and poor site planning could adversely impact these resources.

**Village of Oakfield**

- There are areas within the Village of Oakfield with open fields, hedgerows, wooded areas and creek corridors. The creek corridors through the Village also are important habitats for a variety of vegetation, avian and animal species. Inappropriate development or poor site design could have a negative impact on these areas.

**d. *Impacts on Agricultural Land Resources (See the Agricultural Data Map, Existing Land Use Map, and Prime Farmland Soils Map in Section 4.0)***

**Town of Alabama**

- Agricultural land resources are an important part of the rural character of the Town and the region. Agricultural land use is still an important part of the local land use pattern and local economy. Large areas of “prime farmland soils” and “prime farmland soils when drained” are important to the continuation of agriculture as an industry and as a way of life. Agricultural land resources are a critical element that helps define the Town’s rural character. Inappropriate or uncontrolled development could have a negative impact on these resources.
- Agricultural lands comprise a significant proportion of the Town of Alabama land use. Nearly all lands in the Town, excluding lands in the wildlife management areas and Tonawanda Indian Reservation, are within the State-designated Agricultural District No. 2. Location within an Agricultural District provides benefits (agricultural value assessment) and generally encourages landowners to continue to leave farmland in production. Although increased development pressures could have a major negative impact on these resources, the Agricultural District designation helps to somewhat reduce the potential for development that would significantly affect these agricultural resources.

**Town of Oakfield**

- Agricultural land resources are an important part of the rural character of the Town and the region. Agricultural land use is still an important part of the local land use pattern and local economy. Large areas of “prime farmland soils” and “prime farmland soils when drained” are important to the continuation of agriculture as an industry, and as a way of life. Agricultural land resources are a critical element that helps define the Town’s rural character. Inappropriate or uncontrolled development could have a negative impact on these resources.
- Agricultural lands comprise a significant proportion of the Town of Oakfield land use. Nearly all lands in the Town, excluding lands in the Wildlife Management Areas are within the State-designated Agricultural District No. 2. Location within an Agricultural District provides benefits (agricultural value assessment) and generally encourages landowners to continue to leave farmland in production. Although increased development pressure could have a major negative impact on these resources, the Agricultural District designation helps to somewhat reduce the potential for development that would significantly affect agricultural resources.

**Village of Oakfield**

- Agricultural lands are not a significant resource within the Village of Oakfield. The agricultural lands in the surrounding communities are an important component of the character of the Village and the region. It is not anticipated that the actions called for in this Comprehensive Plan will impact agricultural resources related to Village.

**e. *Impacts on Aesthetic Resources***

**Town of Alabama**

- The aesthetic resources of the Town of Alabama include significant views, rural landscapes of farm fields and wood lots, open space (characterized by the Tonawanda Wildlife Management Areas and Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge), and creek corridors. The hamlets also provide an aesthetic resource contributing to the character of the Town. These resources contribute to the quality of life and community character of the Town, and could be negatively affected by inappropriate development.

**Town of Oakfield**

- The aesthetic resources of the Town of Oakfield include significant views, rural landscapes of farm fields and wood lots, open space (characterized by the Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Areas), and creek corridors. The hamlets also provide an aesthetic resource contributing to the character of the Town. Inappropriate development could result in negative impacts on the quality of life and community character of the Town.

**Village of Oakfield**

- The aesthetic resources of the Village include views of the rural landscape surrounding the Village, but more significantly, the buildings and landmarks in the central business district and the residential housing stock also contribute to the Village’s aesthetic character. These resources could be negatively affected by inappropriate in-fill development or redevelopment of existing facilities that are incompatible with the surrounding area in terms of architectural style and scale, or based on poor site design.

**f. *Impacts on Historic, Cultural and Archeological Resources***

**Towns of Alabama and Oakfield and Village of Oakfield**

- The historic resources of each municipality are described in Section 4.7.5. Oak Orchard Creek Marsh (located within the Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area) was designated as a National Natural Landmark in May of 1973. This relatively undisturbed marsh is rare for this part of New York State. Although inappropriate development or management could negatively impact this resource, it’s location within the publicly owned and managed wildlife areas makes it unlikely that changes resulting from the implementation of this Comprehensive Plan will result in negative impacts.

**g. *Impact on Open Space, Parks and Recreation (See Community Features Map)***

**Town of Alabama**

- Parks and recreation resources in the Town of Alabama are identified in Section 4.7.1.
- A significant area (approximately the north quarter of the Town) is within the NYS Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area, Iroquois National Refuge conservation areas and the John White Memorial Game Farm. These areas provide significant open space and recreation opportunities for the Town, as well as the region. Because these areas are under the ownership and management of State and Federal conservation agencies it is not anticipated that any changes resulting from the implementation of this Comprehensive plan will result in significant adverse impacts to recreation or open space resources.

**Town of Oakfield**

- Parks and recreation resources in the Town of Oakfield are identified in Section 4.7.1.
- The NYS Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area provides significant open space and recreation opportunities for the Town as well as the region. Because this area is under the ownership and management of the State Department of Environment Conservation, it is not anticipated that any changes from the implementation of this Comprehensive plan will result in significant adverse impacts to open space or recreational resources.

**Village of Oakfield**

- Parks and recreation resources located in the Village of Oakfield are identified in Section 4.7.1.
- The Village also has important recreation areas including: ball diamonds at the Oakfield Fire Hall, Village square at Pearl/Drake and Main Street, Village open space off Mill Street and the Town of Oakfield Park on Drake Street.
- Inappropriate development could have an adverse effect upon these resources. Although present growth trends in the Village are stable, growth trends around the Village in the Town of Oakfield could place increased demand on these resources.

**h. *Impact on Critical Environmental Areas***

**Towns of Alabama and Oakfield and Village of Oakfield**

- There are no designated Critical Environmental Areas in any of the three study communities.

**i. *Impact on Transportation (See Transportation Map)***

**Town of Alabama**

- The transportation system in the Town of Alabama is heavily dependent upon roadways and automobiles. Public transportation is very limited, and there are no active rail lines.
- The major roadway corridors in the Town are described in Section 4.5.1. They include Routes 77, 63 and 262.
- Travel for pedestrians and bicyclists can be difficult in the Town. There are no designated bicycle routes or paths. The abandoned Penn-Central railroad corridor is informally used for hiking, bicycling and snowmobiling, although no formal designation exists.
- Additional development in the Town has the potential to increase demands on the transportation network. More intensive development may also increase potential conflicts between automotive and non-automotive modes of transportation.
- The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan does not recommend development patterns that will significantly alter the transportation patterns of the community.

**Town of Oakfield**

- The transportation system in the Town of Oakfield is heavily dependent upon roadways and automobiles. Public transportation is very limited, and there are no active rail lines.
- The major roadway corridors in the Town are described in Section 4.5.1. They include Routes 63 and 262.
- Travel for pedestrians and bicyclists can be difficult in the Town. There are no designated bicycle routes or paths. The abandoned Penn-Central railroad corridor is informally used for hiking, bicycling and snowmobiling, although no formal designation exists.
- Additional development in the Town has the potential to increase demands on the transportation network. More intensive development may also increase potential conflicts between automotive and non-automotive modes of transportation.
- The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan does not recommend development patterns that will significantly alter the transportation patterns of the community.

**Village Oakfield**

- The transportation system in the Village of Oakfield is strongly oriented toward the automobile.
- The major roadway corridors in the Town are described in Section 4.5.1. They include Routes 63 and 262 and North/South Pearl Street.

- The Village also has a higher proportion of pedestrian and bicyclist traffic. This is because activity centers are close enough to support non-vehicular traffic, and the physical infrastructure (sidewalks, streets) makes it easier to walk or bike. Traffic congestion is not a problem.
- NYS Department of Transportation is in the planning stages to reconstruct Main Street (Route 63) through the Village center in the near future. This redesign may incorporate improved pedestrian and streetscape features.
- Additional development in the Town and redevelopment in the Village have the potential to adversely impact the transportation network. In particular, more intensive development and/or redevelopment may result in potential conflicts between automotive and non-automotive modes of transportation.

**j. *Impact on Growth and Character of Community or Neighborhood (See Vision Maps)***

**Town of Alabama**

- The population of the Town of Alabama slightly decreased (5.9%) between 1990 and 2000. Population projections suggest that there will be growth (12.5%) over the next three decades. However, current trends suggest the population will remain relatively stable.
- The rate of residential construction in Alabama, since 1990, has been modest. The Comprehensive Plan does not encourage or facilitate uncontrolled development, but rather directs reasonable growth within use and design parameters in limited areas.
- The Town’s Goals and Objectives (Section 3.2.1) clearly support controlling growth to protect community character.
- The hamlets of Alabama, Wheatville, Basom and South Alabama serve as activity centers (residential/business/public facilities) for the Town. The Town recognizes the importance of these hamlets and wishes to provide support for local businesses.
- The Town’s goals and objectives clearly indicate the preference for directing growth toward the hamlet areas, and to control the rate of growth in areas without services or along rural road frontages, in order to protect community character.
- The Comprehensive Plan recommends that public water service be extended into the Town of Alabama, primarily to serve the existing residences within the hamlet areas and allow limited development in the surrounding areas. Although it is possible that public water may induce higher growth rates, it is more likely that the availability of public water will steer what limited growth that does occur, to the desired areas.

**Town of Oakfield**

- The population of the Town of Oakfield (including Village) slightly decreased (3.4%) between 1990 and 2000. Population projections suggest the Town will grow by 3.0% between 2000 and 2030.
- The rate of residential construction in Oakfield, since 1990, has been modest. The Comprehensive Plan does not encourage or facilitate uncontrolled development, but rather directs reasonable growth within use and design parameters in limited areas.
- The Town’s goals and objectives (Section 3.2.2) clearly support controlling growth to protect community character.
- The Town has limited non-residential development. The Village Oakfield serves as the central business district and service center for the Town of Oakfield.
- The Town’s goals and objectives indicate the preference for directing growth (beside the Village) toward the hamlet areas of Five Corners and East Oakfield, and to control the rate of

growth in areas without services or along rural road frontages, in order to protect community character.

- The Comprehensive Plan recommends that public water service be extended further into the Town of Oakfield, primarily to serve the existing residential hamlets and allow limited development in the immediately surrounding areas. Although it is possible that public water may induce higher growth rates, it is more likely that the availability of public water will steer what limited growth that does occur to the desired areas.

#### **Village of Oakfield**

- The population of the Village of Oakfield declined between 1990 and 2000. Because the Village is primarily "built-out", projections suggest slight decreases in population from 2000 to 2030.
- Similar to the Town of Oakfield, the rate of residential construction in Oakfield, since 1990, has been flat. The Village of Oakfield provides the central business district and service center for the region. The Village is very supportive of the business district and supports efforts for continued investment in, and revitalization of, these businesses in order that the Village may continue to effectively fulfill its function into the future.
- The Comprehensive Plan outlines recommendations and actions to strengthen the Village without adversely changing its character.

### **7.4 Adverse Environmental Impacts that Cannot be Avoided**

With or without the adoption and implementation of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan, the three-community study area will continue to have limited new development, some reuse, and pressures to sell-off building lots in the agricultural areas. There will continue to be concerns regarding water quality and quantity and, therefore, an increasing demand for public water. The adoption of this plan will allow the Towns and Village to better manage growth and development, and reduce potential environmental impacts. All development actions taking place after the adoption of this plan will still be subject to the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process on a site/project specific basis. This comprehensive plan will assist with the review of development actions. In the instance of a rezoning request, this plan will have a much greater impact on that decision and the SEQR process. Zoning must be in accordance with the community's comprehensive plan.

### **7.5 Growth Inducing Aspects of the Plan**

Most of the implementation actions outlined in this plan will help to control and moderate growth within the three communities. Certain actions will act to encourage development in and around the hamlet areas of Oakfield and Alabama. Specifically, redevelopment in and around the Village of Oakfield is encouraged and public water is recommended for the smaller hamlet areas in each of the Towns.

These areas have been deemed to be the most appropriate areas for development. While the Comprehensive Plan indicates some areas for growth (see Long Term Growth Boundaries on Vision Map), it equally provides rationale for restricting growth in a majority of the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield. The extension of public water and development in the more rural areas of the Towns will not be encouraged as a high priority action, unless shown necessary for health and safety reasons.

### **7.6 Mitigation Measures**

It is the objective of this Comprehensive Plan to help reduce the potential impacts that could be caused by future development in the three study communities. This can be accomplished by providing techniques for guiding development that may occur, such as amending zoning, adopting other development regulations, or providing tools to help mitigate the possible impacts of development (limiting infrastructure, increased/improved design standards for development, etc.). This Comprehensive Plan provides techniques for guiding the direction of growth in the partnering communities, and the tools for minimizing impacts to a level that does not create significant adverse environmental impacts. The following section discusses the recommendations of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan, analyzing why and how they help mitigate the potential impacts of future growth.

**a. *Impacts on Land***

**Towns of Oakfield and Alabama**

- To protect the rural character and environmental resources of the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield and the Village of Oakfield, this plan recommends zoning revisions, aesthetic regulations, infrastructure limitations, new development regulations and guidelines, and protection and preservation of important features.
- Agricultural lands in the Towns will be protected. Depending upon the situation, the land will be preserved through various techniques:
  - Town of Alabama: amendment of the Agricultural-Residential (A-R) zoning district, recommending the use of rural development guidelines, adopting a Right to Farm Law, and the use and adoption of more flexible zoning techniques (open development areas, zoning overlay districts and cluster provisions for residential subdivisions).
  - Town of Oakfield: amendment of the Residential and Agricultural (R and A) zoning districts, recommending the use of rural development guidelines, adoption of a Right to Farm Law, and the use and adoption of more flexible zoning techniques (open development areas, zoning overlay districts and clusters provisions for residential subdivisions).
  - Lateral Restrictions on some proposed public water extensions. (See Vision Map).
  - Use of Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) for farmland preservation.
  - Utilizing prime farmland soils information when making land use decisions.
  - Participation in the NYS Agricultural Districting program.
  - Adopting **Minor Subdivision** Regulations.
- In general, the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield are presently not experiencing high rates of growth and are under minimal pressure for development. The Comprehensive Plan generally allows these communities to continue this course by providing techniques to protect the community's land resources, and also ways of directing growth to appropriate areas. This is a pro-active approach rather than being re-active to development pressure and demands for growth.
- Where practicable, residential subdivision is recommended to be encouraged in and around the Village and designated hamlet “Long-term Growth Boundaries” (See Vision Map).

**Village of Oakfield**

- The plan calls for growth in the Village to be primarily in the form of redevelopment, re-use or in-fill development.
- The adoption of a zoning overlay district could provide architectural and site design guidelines in the central business district.
- The Plan calls for protection of some of the remaining important open space features in the Village and expanding the amount of public parkland.

- The Plan directs growth away from the creek corridors.

**b. *Impacts on Water***

**Towns of Alabama, and Oakfield and Village of Oakfield**

Smart Growth Plan

- The Comprehensive Plan mitigates potential impacts from growth through its general support of the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The Comprehensive Plan builds upon the concepts in the Smart Growth Plan by establishing “Short-term and Long-term Growth Boundaries” (see Vision Map). Where public water is proposed to be extended, the plan also calls for lateral restrictions or other protective techniques to control growth outside of the designated areas. The Comprehensive Plan does not anticipate significant increases in residential growth rates, but it does provide the Town’s enhanced land use controls to best guide that growth and minimize potential adverse impacts.

Surface Water

- An objective of the Comprehensive Plan is the protection of the important stream corridors and floodplains within the three-community study area.
- Increased drainage standards, and avoidance of poor soil areas, will also reduce potential impacts from development on surface waters.

Groundwater

- Directing growth to areas where public water extensions are recommended will help in the protection of groundwater resources in the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield.
- In Alabama and Oakfield, the extension of public water will relieve the problems associated with strained private wells and failing or faulty septic systems, alleviating health and safety concerns due to water quality and quantity.
- The plan suggests employing education and awareness programs for local residents as they relate to the maintenance and repair of septic systems.

**c. *Impacts on Plants and Animals***

**Towns of Alabama, and Oakfield and Village of Oakfield**

- As discussed previously in this section, the three communities will be undertaking efforts to protect and preserve the stream corridors and open space areas. By targeting these important habitats for protection, the Towns are minimizing potential impacts to the flora and fauna of the region.
- The plan also identifies important features like floodplains, wetlands and unique environmental features, so that they can be properly incorporated into site designs and preserved. The plan also enhances the ability of the communities to plan together and save more contiguous features in the region.
- The Comprehensive Plan recommends adopting **minor and** major subdivision regulations and cluster provisions in the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield in an effort to protect environmentally sensitive or resource-constrained areas.

**d. *Impacts on Agricultural Land Resources***

**Towns of Alabama and Oakfield**

- The mitigation actions recommended above for minimizing potential impacts to the land also apply to potential impacts to agricultural land resources in the Towns of Alabama and

Oakfield. In some cases agricultural land resources will be preserved through one or more of the following techniques:

- Town of Alabama: amendment of the Agricultural-Residential (A-R) zoning district, requiring the use of rural development guidelines, adopting a Right to Farm Law, and utilizing more flexible land use techniques (open development areas, zoning overlay districts and cluster provisions for residential subdivisions).
- Town of Oakfield: amendment of the Residential and Agricultural (R and A) zoning districts, requiring the use of rural development guidelines, adopting a Right to Farm Law, and utilizing more flexible land use techniques (open development areas, zoning overlay districts and cluster provisions for residential subdivisions).
- Lateral Restrictions on some proposed public water extensions (see Vision Map).
- Use of Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE) for farming.
- Use of prime farmland soils information in making land use decisions.
- Participation in the NYS Agricultural Districting program.
- Each of the Towns will seek to manage growth and development and focus on the common goal of agricultural preservation. This involves balancing the need to maintain viable farming operations and contiguous farmland with the need to provide opportunities for residential growth.

**e. *Impacts on Aesthetic Resources***

The preservation of community character is one of the major goals of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan.

**Towns of Alabama, and Oakfield**

- Community character includes the aesthetic resources in the Towns, such as scenic views, open space, farmland, locally significant and historic structures, and the communities' overall rural quality of life. Each Town has identified community character as a significant resource, and has outlined actions to proactively protect and preserve those features that establish community character in their area.

**Village of Oakfield**

- The Village has identified significant visual and cultural resources, as well as methodologies for protecting and preserving these features. The Village has a central business district and plans to improve the streetscape in this area.
- The aesthetics of the CBD will also be protected through recommended code revisions, the adoption of a zoning overlay district, and a recommended façade improvement program.

**f. *Impacts on Historic and Archaeological Resources***

- In considering future development proposals that require discretionary approvals (site plans and subdivisions) the Towns and Village must consider impacts to cultural resources. These reviews are coordinated with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and will result in the identification of cultural resources and appropriate methods for minimizing potential impacts to these resources.

**g. *Impacts on Open Space, Parks and Recreation***

- The plan identifies the key open space and recreation features in the three-community study area.

- The wildlife management areas have a total of approximately 19,000 acres. All of these are under the control of New York State and the federal Department of the Interior and, therefore, are outside the direct jurisdiction of the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama.
- The Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan avoids recommending development of infrastructure extensions in the vicinity of the wildlife management areas. The exception is the John White Memorial Game Farm, which is a more active educational and training facility (presently unutilized), located between the hamlets of Alabama and Basom in the Town of Alabama.
- The Comprehensive Plan also provides methodologies to protect and preserve open space resources from potential adverse development impacts.
- The communities can cooperatively plan to ensure that open space features are protected to the maximum extent possible, recreational needs are efficiently provided, and parks are connected and considered in development scenarios in each community.

**h. *Impacts on Critical Environmental Areas***

- There are no Critical Environmental Areas, designated through SEQR, in the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan study area.

**i. *Impacts on Transportation***

- Transportation in the Oakfield-Alabama study area is heavily reliant on roadways and automobiles. There are no significant transportation issues/deficiencies that will be exacerbated by the plan.
- A major recommendation of this plan is to work with the New York State Department of Transportation and the Genesee Transportation Council to implement streetscape improvements along Route 63 in the Village of Oakfield and down to the school property in the Town of Oakfield.
- To avoid sprawl, growth is being targeted around the Village and existing hamlets in the Towns. This helps to preserve community character and protect environmental features by reducing the potential for potential transportation-related impacts.
- The Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan also identifies a potential multi-use trail along the abandoned Penn-Central railroad grade to provide for non-vehicular related travel and recreation.

**j. *Impact on Growth and Character of Community or Neighborhood***

- Growth rates and pressure for development in the three communities is low, and for planning purposes, this is not projected to dramatically change. The plan for each community directs and accommodates growth within appropriate areas, without impacting resources or the character of the community.
- It is clear from the goals and objectives of the three communities, that community character and quality of life should not be adversely impacted by growth. Many of the recommendations of the plan provide ways to achieve this through the direction of growth to the Village and hamlet areas, emphasis on the protection of agricultural land uses, and the preservation of significant natural resources.
- The recommendations for public water extensions focus future development in and around the Village and the hamlet areas, providing residents who are currently experiencing water quality and quantity problems with the opportunity to obtain public water. The recommended “Long-term Growth Boundaries”, as shown on the Vision Maps, are not intended to create demand for development but, rather, they provide the communities a means for controlling and guiding growth in a manner that minimizes potential environmental impacts.

## 7.7 Evaluation of Alternatives

Throughout the planning process, alternatives for helping the three municipalities achieve their goals and objectives were evaluated. These recommendations and implementation alternatives were evaluated for not only their desired results, but also to assess their potential impact on the environment, the needs of local residents, private property rights, quality of life, and the vitality of each community.

It should be noted that long term recommendations have not been thoroughly evaluated in this section. These actions have only been outlined for consideration under circumstances where the Towns and Village experience greater levels of growth pressure as the result of the implementing short term recommendations, or where short term recommendations are not achieving the desired results.

### No-Action Alternative

#### **Town of Alabama**

- The No Action alternative (not adopting the Comprehensive Plan) was considered for the Town of Alabama. However, this alternative does not adequately enable the Town to direct and manage growth trends to achieve the Town's vision.
- The No Action alternative does not allow the Town to properly plan for its chosen future, or to better direct and manage growth and development.
- The No Action alternative does not support the concentration of development and revitalization activities in the hamlet areas.
- The No Action alternative does not address local need for public water supply.
- The proposed plan would more effectively allow the Town to realize its future goals, and provide greater protection to the environment than the continuance of present trends under the No Action alternative.

#### **Town of Oakfield**

- The No Action alternative (not adopting the Comprehensive Plan) was considered for the Town of Oakfield. However, this alternative does not adequately enable the Town to direct and manage growth trends to achieve the Town's vision.
- The No Action alternative does not allow the Town to properly plan for its chosen future, or to better direct and manage growth and development.
- The No Action alternative does not support the concentration of development and revitalization activities in the hamlet areas.
- The No Action alternative does not address the local need for public water.
- The proposed plan would more effectively allow the Town to realize its future goals, and provide greater protection to the environment than the continuance of present trends under the No Action alternative.

#### **Village of Oakfield**

- The Village of Oakfield is largely built-out. The No Action alternative (not adopting the Comprehensive Plan) does not provide methods to guide revitalization and redevelopment activities within the CBD.
- The No Action alternative does not provide for a higher level of protection to the environmental features in the Village, or more effectively manage future growth and

development in a manner that is consistent with the desired goals, as articulated by area residents and officials.

- The No Action alternative would not enable the Village to make effective use of its infrastructure or plan growth effectively with the Town of Oakfield.

## SECTION 8

### ANNUAL REVIEW

Each of the three partnering communities should conduct an annual review of the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan to ensure that the Plan remains a dynamic and useful document, and to gauge the accomplishments of each community, individually and in partnership, in implementing and achieving the goals and objectives of the Plan. This review should be conducted by the Planning Board or a review committee, as designated and authorized by the respective Town and Village Boards. This annual review should include some or all of the following.

- A review of all major site plan and subdivision approvals issued during the previous year in conjunction with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan to determine where this activity has occurred, and if it has occurred consistent with the recommendations of the Plan. These planning approvals should be assessed with regard to their overall impact on the general land use trends in the community and their potential impacts on adjoining communities.
- A review of all major rezoning decisions issued during the previous year in conjunction with the recommendations of the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan to determine if these actions were consistent with the recommendations of the Plan. These actions should also be assessed with regard to their overall impact on the general land use trends in the community and their potential impacts on adjoining communities.
- A review of the priority listing of zoning amendments specified for each community to determine which items were accomplished and which ones should be undertaken in the coming year. The overall impact of these rezoning decisions should be evaluated with respect to general land use trends as well. It should also be determined if there are any new zoning actions that should be added to this list in each community.
- A review of the list of other priority items, as contained in Section 6.0 of the Plan (Implementation), to determine which items were accomplished during the previous year. It should also be determined if there is a need to update or amend the individual community lists.
- A review of any comments received from respective Town and Village Boards, departments and committees, and any public input gathered during the previous year, in conjunction with the information ascertained from the reviews outlined above. This information should be utilized to assist in the development of an implementation action plan for each community for the coming year.

The Planning Board or designated review committee in each community should prepare a statement outlining the accomplishments of the past year, including a listing of all major site plan, subdivision and rezoning approvals, and other accomplishments, as specified in the Comprehensive Plan (including joint efforts by the partnering communities). This information, along with the action plan for the continuing implementation of the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan, should be presented to the respective Town and Village Boards for their review and approval.

By undertaking this review on a yearly basis, the communities can evaluate their achievements for implementing the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan, so as to keep the implementation process moving forward and make adjustments to the implementation strategy, as required. The information generated from this

review process should be incorporated into each community's Comprehensive Planning files through the formal acceptance of the respective Legislative Board.

Approximately every five years (or sooner if deemed necessary), the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan should be more extensively reviewed (using these annual reports) and updated, as necessary, through a formal adoption process (including draft changes, public hearings and SEQR review).

**SECTION 9.0**

**FINAL GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
FOR THE  
OAKFIELD-ALABAMA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

**Applicant:**

**Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield**

**Lead Agency:**

**Town of Oakfield  
Town Hall  
3219 Drake Street  
Oakfield, New York 14125**

**Contact:**

**Ken Dodd, Supervisor  
585-948-5835**

**DGEIS Submitted: December 16, 2003  
DGEIS Acceptance by Town Board: January 13, 2004  
Public Hearings: January 26, February 5, and February 10, 2004  
Comments Accepted Through: February 27, 2004  
FGEIS Acceptance by Town Board: June 13, 2005  
Findings Adopted by Town Board: July 11, 2005**

**Prepared By:**

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Andrew C. Reilly, P.E., AICP, Principal in Charge**

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

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**NOTICE OF COMPLETION  
OF THE  
FINAL GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
for the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama  
and the Village of Oakfield**

**Lead Agency:** Town of Oakfield Town Board

**Address:** Town Hall  
3219 Drake Street  
Oakfield, New York 14125

**Date:** September 22, 2004

This notice is issued pursuant to Part 617 of the implementing regulations pertaining to Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act) of the Environmental Conservation Law.

A Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement has been completed and accepted for the proposed action described below.

**Name of Action:** Adoption of the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan for the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield.

**Location:** Town of Oakfield (and the Town of Alabama and Village of Oakfield), Genesee County, New York

**Description of Action:** The Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield have completed and propose to adopt a Comprehensive Plan in accordance with Town Law Sections 272-a and 284, and Village Law Sections 7-722 and 7-741. The Plan will act as a comprehensive plan for each of the partnering communities and assist them in considering the region in their decisions and actions.

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

*A copy of the FGEIS may be obtained from:*

*Kenneth A. Dodd, Supervisor  
Town of Oakfield  
Town Hall, 3219 Drake Street, Oakfield, New York  
(585) 948-5835*

*A copy of this Notice of Completion and the FGEIS have been sent to:*

Commissioner, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation  
Division of Environmental Permits, 625 Broadway, Albany, New York 12233-1750

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Division of Environmental Permits  
Region 8, 6274 East Avon-Lima Road, Avon, New York 14414-9519  
Attention: Peter A. Lent

Linda Franks, Town Clerk  
Town of Alabama, 2218 Judge Road, Oakfield, New York, 14125  
Attention: Supervisor Guy Hinkson

Shelly L. D'Alba, Village Clerk/Treasurer  
Village of Oakfield, 1910 Bowen Road, Elma, New York, 14059-7699  
Attention: Raymond F. Cianfrini, Mayor

New York State Department of Transportation  
Donovan State Office Building, 125 Main Street, Buffalo, New York 14203-3088  
Attention: Brian O. Rowback

Genesee County Planning Department  
3837 W. Main Street Road, Batavia, New York 14020  
Attention: James Duval

NYSDEC Environmental News Bulletin  
625 Broadway, Albany, New York 12233-1750

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

**Table of Contents**

*Cover Sheet*

*Notice of Completion of the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement*

*Section 1 - Executive Summary*

|                                        |   |
|----------------------------------------|---|
| Submission Objectives.....             | 1 |
| Discussion of Substantive Issues ..... | 2 |
| Additional Information.....            | 3 |

*Section 2 - Responses to Comments*

|                                                                                                            |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| A. Correspondence, Letters and Comments Received from Involved and Interested Agencies and the Public..... | 4  |
| B. Substantive Comments Received at the Public Hearings .....                                              | 10 |

*Section 3 - Amendments to the Draft Oakfield - Alabama Comprehensive Plan and Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS)*

*Appendix*

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| Genesee County Planning Board Zoning Referrals Notice of Final Decision for the Town of Oakfield                                                                                                                |  |
| Comments and correspondence received from Interested and Involved Agencies and the public                                                                                                                       |  |
| Copy of letter to Supervisor Kenneth Dodd from U.S. Gypsum Company regarding location of former USG underground mines                                                                                           |  |
| Copy of letter received from the Genesee County Department of Health and other correspondence regarding on-going water quality problems with individual water supply wells and septic systems in Alabama hamlet |  |

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

## **SECTION 1 - EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This document is submitted as a final generic environmental impact statement (FGEIS) for the adoption of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan for the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield, pursuant to the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) regulations set forth in 6 NYCRR Part 617.

The FGEIS contains correspondence from local municipal agencies and the public that was obtained during the public comment period for the Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement (DGEIS). The DGEIS was determined to be complete by the Lead Agency on December 16, 2003 and is made part of this FGEIS by reference (Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan and Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement dated January 2004). This action commenced the public comment period, during which time interested parties and the general public were encouraged to submit written comments or verbally express their comments at the public hearings held in the Village of Oakfield on January 26, 2004; the Town of Alabama on February 5, 2004; and the Town of Oakfield on February 10, 2004. In addition, by reference, the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan for the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield is made a part of this FGEIS.

### **Submission Objectives**

The purpose of preparing and filing this FGEIS is to provide a response to the questions and comments raised during the public comment period for the DGEIS. A direct response is provided only for comments on the contents of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan and DGEIS that are substantive. All of the issues raised during the public comment period relate to the potential impact the Plan could have on the physical and social/cultural environment. This document will identify the components of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan that may be revised in order to address the concerns of the public and mitigate potential significant impacts.

In addition to providing responses to the comments, the filing of the FGEIS continues the SEQR process and allows the Lead Agency and other involved parties to prepare their Findings that will later be the basis for their decision on this adoption action.

### **Discussion of Substantive Issues**

Several significant issues were raised during the public comment period. The majority of these comments were focused on at meetings held subsequent to the public hearings.

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

On April 4, 2004, representatives of the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan Committee and Wendel Duchscherer met with James Duval, the Director of the Genesee County Planning Department. This meeting was held to discuss the County Planning Board's vote to disapprove the Town of Oakfield's component of the Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan (see Notice of Final Action contained in the Appendix). The County Planning Board, under their review of the draft Plan pursuant to the 239-m referral process, had voted against the Plan for the Town of Oakfield, issued no vote for the Town of Alabama, and approved the component for the Village of Oakfield.

The April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting focused primarily on the County's perception and concern that the recommendations for long-term growth, as illustrated on the Vision Map and outlined in the Plan, deviated from the policies and recommendations of the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The County felt that the proposed long-term growth boundaries proposed in the Plan were considered to be too large and encompassed many areas that lie within State-designated Agricultural Districts. The communities and their consultant tried to explain that these areas were actually long-term planning areas where potential growth could occur. Presently, the Towns' have zoning that allows many uses throughout the entire study area community, providing little direction for growth. The Comprehensive Plan attempts to better focus this development into smaller areas for potential long-term growth around the established hamlets and the Village of Oakfield. The "Smart Growth Areas" illustrated in the County Smart Growth Plan allocate little area for long-term growth and basically represent areas that are already developed. The Comprehensive Plan recommends expanded areas for long-term growth to afford the Towns more focused options for future development. It is not the intent of the Town to have these areas immediately be designated Smart Growth Areas and have water supplied to them. Rather, these areas provide the Towns with ideas for long-term planning and possible infrastructure extensions, where warranted. It would be naïve of the County to think that no new development would take place in these communities over the next twenty years. Housing will be constructed and businesses started, and the communities must provide better direction for this growth, regardless of how fast or slow it occurs. The Town's are committed to updating their laws and regulations to better guide their future growth as part of the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. They understand that these recommendations in the Plan must be

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

implemented before these new areas are designated for any new growth. These implementation actions include making changes to the Zoning Map, instituting lateral restriction policies for water line extensions through agricultural areas, and adopting Zoning Overlay regulations, local Right-to Farm legislation, Rural Development Guidelines and improved subdivision and site plan review regulations.

In addition to the comments received at the April 4, 2004 meeting, additional comments were received from the Genesee County Planning Department and the public, as outlined in Section 2 (as follows).

**Additional Information**

Title 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Recommendations (6 NYCRR), Part 617.14(I) requires that the FGEIS include the DGEIS (by reference) and any revisions or supplements to it. Section 3 of the FGEIS includes the amended pages and maps for the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan and DGEIS.

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

**SECTION 2 – RESPONSES TO COMMENTS**

***Correspondence, Letters and Comments Received from the Involved and Interested Agencies and the Public***

The following comments were received from the Genesee County Planning Department and the public. Copies of the original comment letters are provided in the Appendix. Revised pages of the Comprehensive Plan are included in Section 3.

Genesee County Planning Department (Email correspondence dated June 10, 2004)

*Executive Summary, pg. 1 - "this plan identifies what areas in the County would qualify to receive public water... Those areas designated to receive water are know as Development Areas".*

Comment: The Smart Growth Plan does not qualify areas for public water. Water lines and water service are not restricted to Develop Areas only, and they are not required for existing residents to connect into the County coordinated water system.

Response: The wording in this section of the report has been revised to acknowledge and reflect the comments.

*Executive Summary, pg. 6 - (Oakfield) "Adopt Subdivision Regulations as per Section 276 of the New York State Town Law."*

Comment: Oakfield adopted subdivision regulations in 1992.

Response: It is acknowledged that the Town of Oakfield adopted a Land Separation Local Law and Land Subdivision regulations in June of 1992. Although the Land Separation Law, which regulated minor subdivision (four or less lots), was repealed in 1997, the regulations for the major subdivision of land remain in effect. Subdivision of land is also addressed under Section 411.3 of the Zoning Ordinance. The Comprehensive Plan has been revised, where required to reflect these facts.

*Section 4.2.1, pg. 4-10 - (Oakfield) "Town of Oakfield does not have a separate law for the regulation of the subdivision of land."*

Comment: See above.

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

Response: As noted above, it is understood that the Town currently regulates the subdivision of land by way of a provision in the Zoning Ordinance. The reviewer's comment does not appear to recognize the intent of the statement highlighted above, which is merely to identify the fact that the Town does not have stand alone regulations for subdivision. Hence, the text has been revised to clarify this intent.

*Section 4.2.1, pg. 4-10 - (Oakfield Village) "Similar to other communities in the study area, the Village does not have separate regulations for subdivision."*

Comment: Village adopted subdivision regulation in 1992.

Response: It is understood that the Village currently regulates the subdivision of land by way of a provision in the Zoning Ordinance. Again, the reviewer's comment does not appear to recognize the intent of the statement highlighted above, which is merely to identify the fact that the Village does not have stand alone regulations for subdivision. Hence, the text has been revised to clarify this intent.

*Section 4.6.1, pg. 20 - "The Village and surrounding areas receive water from the City of Batavia via a line that runs up State Route 63."*

Comment: The water line runs up NYS 63 to Galloway Road, heads due west on Galloway Road to South Pearl Road, then north to the Village.

Response: This comment is acknowledged and the text in the report has been revised to reflect the accurate routing of this water line.

*Section 4.7.3, pg. 22 - "Police services are provided by the New York State Police."*

Comment: The Genesee County Sheriff's office is the primary law enforcement entity. They receive all 911 calls.

Response: This comment is acknowledged and the text in the report has been revised to reflect the accurate provision of police protection in the area.

*Section 4.7.4, pg. 22 - (Oakfield Village) "... and a water treatment plant in the Town of Batavia."*

Comment: This treatment plant is now off-line.

Response: This comment is acknowledged and the text in the report has been revised to reflect the current status of the treatment plant.

*Section 5.2.1, pg.1 - (Alabama) "Land use is regulated in the Town solely through the Zoning."*

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

Comment: It's a Zoning Law, not an ordinance.

Response: An ordinance, as defined (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, 2004), is a "law set forth by governmental authority, i.e. - a municipal regulation". Therefore, the term ordinance is used appropriately here. In fact, the Town of Oakfield zoning code is named "Zoning Ordinance".

*Section 5.2.1, pg.2 - (Alabama) "The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan calls for minimizing the number of new water connections within agricultural districts."*

Comment: The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan goes farther than "calling for", it officially restricts hook-ups to new, non-agricultural uses in Agricultural Districts unless located in a Development Area.

Response: The comment is acknowledged and the report text has been revised to reflect that the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan restricts the number of new water connections-ups to new, non-agricultural land uses in agricultural districts, unless they are located in a designated development area.

*Section 5.2.1, pg.2 - (Alabama) "Population projections indicate that the Town's population will grow by an estimated 12.5 percent over the next thirty years."*

Comment: This projection, cited from two statistical studies done by the GFLRPC, is false. A hybrid of two different studies conducted by the GFLRPC was improperly used. The 1997 projections were revised in the 2002 report to reflect the decrease experienced in the Town found in Census 2000. The Town population is expected to decline from 1,881 in 2000, to 1,814 in 2030.

Response: The comment is acknowledged and the report text has been revised to reflect the revised population projections.

6

*Section 5.3.1, pg.10 - (Alabama) "Water extensions should only be considered in accordance with the County's Smart Growth Plan (as amended by this plan) or in areas that have potential public health and safety concerns."*

Comment: The Smart Growth Plan is not amended by local comprehensive plans. A report is prepared by the County Planning Department to recommend changes.

Response: This comment is acknowledged and the reference in the text regarding amendment of the Plan has been removed.

*Section 5.3.1, pg.11 - (Alabama) "The provision of water services is essential to eliminate certain health and safety factors associated with contaminated wells and failing septic systems."*

Comment: The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan provides no scientific or survey evidence (with statistical significance) of well contamination or failing septic systems in the Town.

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

Response: The factors contributing to the on going problems with individual water supplies and on-site subsurface wastewater disposal systems are outlined in a letter received from the Genesee County Health Department on November 17, 2004. Basically this letter confirms that problems exist and are aggravated by unsuitable soils, the age of the stormwater collections system in the area and the small size of the existing lots, which challenges the required separation distance between private wells and septic systems. The Comprehensive Plan has been revised to reflect this information.

*Section 5.3.1, pg.12 - (Alabama) "In known groundwater problem areas, the Town should require larger lot sizes."*

Comment: The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan provides no scientific or survey evidence (with statistical significance) of well contamination or failing septic systems in the Town.

Response: See response to previous comment

*Section 5.3.2, pg.15 - (Oakfield) "A primary opportunity for additional public water in the Town of Oakfield is to continue extending water along the main roads out of the Village. This pattern expands upon, but generally conforms to, the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan."*

7

Comment: The proposed plan does not generally conform to the Smart Growth Plan, since these areas are primarily agricultural. The Smart Growth Plan seeks to focus growth in hamlets, not expanding it into NYS Agricultural Districts, which the County Plan strictly avoids in as practical a manner as possible.

Response: The comment is acknowledged and the text has been revised to reflect these concerns and better clarify the long-term desires of the Town.

*Section 5.3.2, pg.16 - (Oakfield) "Focus the provision of public water to locations that have urgent need due to health and safety issues."*

Comment: The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan provides no scientific or survey evidence (with statistical significance) of well contamination in the Town.

Response: Since the Genesee County Health Department only confirmed water quality concerns in the Town of Alabama, we have removed this recommendation from the Plan.

*Section 5.3.2, pg.18 - (Oakfield) "Limit water extensions in the town to eliminate the potential for extensive growth. Water extensions should only be considered in accordance with the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan or in areas that have potential public health and safety concerns."*

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

Comment: The proposed plan does not conform to the Smart Growth Plan, since these areas proposed for water extensions are primarily agricultural. The Smart Growth Plan seeks to focus growth in hamlets, not expanding it into NYS Agricultural Districts, which the County Plan strictly avoids in as practical a manner as possible.

Response: The comment is acknowledged and the text has been revised to reflect these concerns and better clarify the long-term desires of the Town.

*Section 6.4, pg. 8 - (Oakfield) "Adopt subdivision regulations as per Section 276 of the NYS Town Law."*

Comment: They adopted subdivision regulations in 1992.

Response: As previously noted, the Comprehensive Plan document has been revised to reflect the fact that the Town adopted Land Subdivision Regulations in June of 1992 to regulation the major subdivision of land. At the time the Town had also adopted a Land Separation Local Law to regulate

8

minor subdivision, but this law was repealed in 1997. The Town should adopt regulations to control the minor subdivision of land (splits of four or less parcels).

General Comment: The Plan doesn't address issues regarding the mines underlying land that should never be residentially developed.

Response: The general location of the former U.S. Gypsum mines has been illustrated on Map 10. Consideration to the location of these mines, and potential future residential development in areas underlain by mines, has been added to Sections 4 and 5 of the Comprehensive Plan.

Joseph J. Richthammer, 1240 Casey Road, Basom, New York 14013 (email dated August 4, 2004)

Comment: With the Highway Department being the biggest cost to the Town of Alabama, it should be required that our Town Council and Supervisor attend Highway Superintendent schools and seminars to help them understand the deployment of highway equipment and materials. This would also be helpful in formulating better cost effective decisions.

Response: This comment is acknowledged.

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

***B. Substantive Comments Received at the Public Hearings***

**Town of Oakfield (Held January 26, 2004)**

None offered.

**Town of Alabama (Held February 4, 2004)**

None offered.

**Village of Oakfield (Held February 10, 2004)**

None offered.

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

**SECTION 3 - AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT OAKFIELD-ALABAMA COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN AND DRAFT GENERIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
(DGEIS)**

The following section includes the pages that have been revised in the original Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan and DGEIS, with revision shown in bold italics. Maps that required major revisions have also been included. Some maps that only required minor changes have not been included, but descriptions of the changes are discussed.

These modifications, combined with the Findings issued for this action, will determine the Final version of the Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan. As mentioned previously, the entire Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan is incorporated into this FGEIS by reference.

## SECTION 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Introduction and Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan represents the culmination of a joint planning effort undertaken by the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield. These three rural communities recognized the importance of such cooperation and joined together to formulate a common vision for managing future growth and development. This Plan was prepared in conformance with NYS Town Law Section 272-a and NYS Village Law Section 7-722 and is designed to be consistent with the principles of the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan.

The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan outlines a strategy for managing and controlling the extension of water service throughout Genesee County. **As a way of minimizing the potential impacts of additional growth and development, which would otherwise occur as a result of the extension of water service, this plan sets forth objectives aimed at ensuring that water extensions do not result in additional development that is inconsistent with the principles of "smart growth". The Plan designates "development areas" within which development and redevelopment would be encouraged and access to the County-funded portions of the County's water system would not be restricted. The "development areas" were delineated based on a certain set of criteria, and include areas with significant potential for economic development, as well as areas that are already relatively densely developed with residential, commercial or industrial uses.**

The Smart Growth Plan establishes guidelines for implementing an approval process for water hook-ups, which calls for the creation of a County-level administrative review committee. However, the County Legislature may choose to delegate the authority to approve water hook-ups to individual municipalities that have adopted a comprehensive plan consistent with the principles of the Smart Growth Plan.

Although the Smart Growth Plan and the potential ability to receive public water was the driving force behind the effort to create this document, there were other issues that warranted the preparation of this Plan by the three partnering communities. The Oakfield Alabama Comprehensive Plan sets forth a strategy for addressing important issues and for guiding future growth and development, protecting **agricultural uses and** rural community character, and improving the quality of life in each community. The three communities have designed this plan to acknowledge existing conditions in each community,

Page 1-1

Recommendations for achieving the opportunities or addressing constraints were formulated for each community utilizing the goals and objectives outlined in Section 3.0. For each community, each goal is discussed and then followed by a series of recommendations. The recommendations are further developed in Section 6.0 (Implementation).

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

## **1.7 Implementation**

The Implementation section of the Comprehensive Plan outlines strategies for achieving the goals objectives outlined in Section 3.0, and for accomplishing many of the recommendations set forth in Section 5.0. The implementation strategy includes a step by step approach with established priorities. This Plan is an active document and over time, as local situations change, so may the priorities of each community. Therefore, upon adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, one of the first priority actions is for each community to designate an Implementation Advisory Committee to be responsible for the active implementation of this document.

Section 6.0 is broken into subsections for each participating community. Each implementation strategy for each community sets forth a prioritized, step-by-step approach. Priority 1 and 2 actions have been organized under four categories: Agriculture; Public Water/Smart Growth Plan; Zoning and other Land Use Regulations; and Other Actions. Priority 1 actions are those tasks that should be completed in the immediate term (one to two years). Priority 2 actions are those actions that should be undertaken over the short term (three to five years out). Priority 3 Actions are also included, which are either longer-term activities or alternative actions that may or may not be necessary depending on the outcome of Priority 1 and 2 actions. Key implementation strategies for each municipality are as follows.

### Town of Alabama

- Revise the Agricultural–Residential zoning district to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in the district.
- **Work with Genesee County to expand the designated development areas in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan in a manner that does not impact agriculture and fully utilizes the existing infrastructure in the Town. The Vision Map depicts larger long-term planning areas. The development areas delineated in the existing Smart Growth Plan closely follow the existing pattern of hamlet development and represent appropriate limits for sustaining short term growth. As future demand for growth may dictate, the development area boundaries should be expanded to correspond with the Vision Map.**

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

- Draft a set of rural development guidelines that provide written standards and graphic examples to ensure that the vision for growth and development set forth in this document is achieved.
- During future reviews of the County’s Agricultural District, recommend to Genesee County that non-agricultural lands be removed from the district. This is primarily the case in Basom and South Alabama.
- Investigate residents’ requests/needs for public water due to public health and safety concerns.
- Relocate Town Hall, along with other Town facilities, to the Alabama hamlet.
- Work with Genesee County and the Town of Oakfield to investigate the feasibility and potential funding for a rails-to-trails project on the abandoned Penn Central rail corridor.

Town of Oakfield

- Revise the schedule of permitted uses for the Residential Agricultural zoning district (R&A) to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in this district.
- **Work with Genesee County to expand the designated development areas in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan in a manner that does not impact agriculture and fully utilizes the existing infrastructure in the Town. The Vision Map depicts a larger long-term planning area around the Village of Oakfield that represents the Town’s long term vision for growth. The designated development area boundary established by the Smart Growth Plan, as depicted on the map, represents the most appropriate limit for sustaining short term growth, as the future demand for growth may dictate, the development area boundary around the Village should be expanded.**
- Identify a new growth area in the East Oakfield crossroads area of Lockport Road and Fisher Road for both public water and as a residential development area.
- Expand water from the Village of Oakfield to the growth area surrounding the Village. Lateral restrictions should be implemented along Fisher Road north to East Oakfield.
- **Adopt regulations for the review and approval of the minor subdivision of land, separate from the Zoning Ordinance, as per Section 276 of the NYS Town Law.**
- Revise zoning to include provisions for cluster residential subdivisions as per Section 278 of the NYS Town Law, with proper reference made in the Town's Subdivisions regulations.
- Establish a zoning overlay district for East Oakfield hamlet (within long-term growth boundaries on the Vision Map).
- During future reviews of the County’s Agricultural District recommend to the Genesee County that non-agricultural lands be removed from the district.
- Investigate residents’ requests/needs for public water due to health and safety concerns.
- Adopt Site Plan Review regulations.

Page 1-6

Town Line Road, and Drake Street Road in the southeastern portion of the Town. The majority of denser residential and mixed-use development within the Town of Oakfield takes place in and around the Village. Industrial development can be seen along Judge Road, just west of the Village with the largest tracts of land belonging to the U.S. Gypsum Company. **Starting in the early 1900's, U.S. Gypsum conducted subsurface mining operations in the vicinity of their facility in Oakfield, with mines extending to the west, into Alabama, and further east (see Map 10).**

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

The Oakfield – Alabama Central Schools are located in the Town, just northwest of the Village on Lewiston Road. The following table offers a breakdown of land uses by percentage of the total area for the Town of Oakfield.

**Figure 1B Town of Oakfield Land Use Percentages**

| <b>Land Use</b>               | <b>Percentage</b> |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Agriculture                   | 58.02 %           |
| Commercial                    | 0.20 %            |
| Government/Public             | 0.62 %            |
| Industrial                    | 1.47 %            |
| Multi-Family Residential      | 0.41 %            |
| Multiple Residential          | 0.11 %            |
| Parks                         | 0.27 %            |
| Single Family Residential     | 8.23 %            |
| Unknown                       | 7.77 %            |
| Utilities/Infrastructure      | 0.21 %            |
| Vacant/Undeveloped/Open Space | 11.56 %           |
| Wildlife Conservation Areas   | 11.13 %           |

Source: Map 3 Existing Land Use

**Village of Oakfield**

The Village of Oakfield is the central hub for the three-community study area. It is a destination for residents from the surrounding area. People come to shop, do business, go to school, and more. The Village is the most densely populated and developed area in the three municipalities. The Village is developed mostly with residential uses, along with a mix of other community-oriented uses. Commercial uses are located primarily along North Main Street and South Pearl Street, although other commercial properties and some industrial uses can be found in other areas in the Village. The following table provides a break down of land uses by percentage of the total area for the Village.

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

The following table contains a list of the zoning classifications and general permitted uses. The table is just an overview and generalization of the zoning class, specific inquiries should refer to the Town of Oakfield Zoning Law.

*Figure 2B: Town of Oakfield Zoning Districts and Permitted Uses*

| <i>District</i>                            | <i>Permitted Uses</i>                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>R &amp; A: Residential Agricultural</i> | Single family dwellings, mobile homes, farms and related agricultural operations, churches, schools, and other public uses and buildings |
| R: General Residential                     | Single and double family dwellings, farms and related agricultural operations, churches, schools, and other public uses and buildings    |
| C: Commercial                              | Motor vehicle sales and service, retail shops, offices and banks                                                                         |
| I: Industrial                              | General industrial uses (i.e. manufacturing, warehousing, research and development facilities, distribution facilities, etc.)            |
| LC: Land Conservation                      | Farms and related agricultural operations                                                                                                |

Source: Town of Oakfield Zoning Law August 11, 1981

The Town of Oakfield’s zoning law also lays out each zoning class and lists all actual uses permitted by right, as well as those uses that are allowed by Special Use Permit. Bulk regulations for each zoning class and certain specified uses within those zoning classes are outlined in the Town of Oakfield Zoning Law. **The Town of Oakfield adopted a Land Separation Local Law and Land Subdivision Regulations in June of 1992. Although the Land Separation Law, which regulation minor splits of four lots or less, was repealed in 1997, the major subdivision regulations remain in effect.** Subdivision of land is also addressed under Section 411.3 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Village of Oakfield

The Village of Oakfield has six separate zoning classifications. Similar to the Towns of Alabama and Oakfield, the zoning classifications outline actual uses permitted by right, as well as those permitted by special use. The following table provides a generic overview of the zoning classifications and the uses permitted therein. Please refer to the Village of Oakfield zoning law for specific regulations. Bulk regulations for zoning classifications within the Village can be found in Sections 301, 305, and 504 of the Zoning Law, Sections 306 through 311. Certain issues and uses that require a higher level of scrutiny have been individually addressed under Article V, Supplementary Regulations. Examples of these include adult uses, mobile home parks, light industrial uses and cellular communication towers. **Similar to the Town of Alabama, the Village does not have separate regulations for subdivision; it is regulated under Section 301 of the Zoning Ordinance.**

Page 4-10

**4.5.3 Public Transportation Services**

The Batavia Bus Service (B-Line, BBS) provides limited bus service in the study area. The Batavia Bus Service offers “curb to curb” service from Alabama and Oakfield to Batavia and back on Tuesdays. This service costs \$3.00 for adults and \$1.50 for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. To use this bus service, however, you must call 24 hours in advance.

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

#### 4.5.4 Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes

No formal multi-use trails for pedestrians, bicycles or horses were identified in the study area. Although conversations with various local agencies confirmed that the abandoned Penn-Central railroad corridor is used informally by walkers/hikers, bikers, snowmobiles and farmers, it has not been formally designated as such.

#### 4.6 Utilities

##### 4.6.1 Water Supply

Currently public water is available to the Village of Oakfield and an area immediately surrounding the Village within the Town of Oakfield. Water is provided to these areas through a line that extends from the City of Batavia **along Route 63, Galloway Road and South Pearl Road into the Village**. The Village water treatment plant is located in the Town of Batavia on Route 63, just south of the Village. In 1994, the entire water system in the Town of Oakfield, outside the Village, was replaced. The remaining portions of Oakfield and the Town of Alabama receives potable water from private wells.

Although large portions of the study area do not currently have access to public water, an informal plan is in place to provide service to some of the more densely developed areas, **particularly areas in Alabama that are experiencing well contamination problems**. These areas are identified in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan and include the hamlets of South Alabama, Alabama, and Basom. Initial plans call for water to be routed along State Routes 77, 63 and 262 to serve these areas. The possibility of extending this water service is presently several years off, however. **According to the Genesee County Department of Health problems with private wells and on-site septic systems are due to soils that are not suitable for conventional sewage disposal systems, the age of the existing stormwater collections system that does not remove standing water fast enough, and the small size of the lots in the hamlet areas (R. Garney, GCHD, November 17, 2004).**

Page 4-20

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

Oakfield-Alabama Central school district. This district also serves four other municipalities, including the Towns of Pembroke, Batavia, Elba and Barre. The school district facilities are located just northwest of the Village on State Route 63.

#### 4.7.3 Emergency Services

**Police services are provided by the Genesee County Sheriff's Office.** None of the three communities has an individual police department. The Village of Oakfield, in the past, had contracted out police services from other agencies, but the process was deemed too costly and ineffective. Fire services are provided volunteer fire departments. The Town of Alabama is served by the Alabama Volunteer Fire Department Inc., which is located on Judge Road, adjacent to the Town Hall. The Town and Village of Oakfield are served by the Oakfield Volunteer Fire Department, located on Church Street in the Village.

#### 4.7.4 Government Facilities

##### **Town of Alabama**

The Town of Alabama local government offices are located on Judge Road, just east of Knowlesville Road, in South Alabama hamlet. The town hall building is home to the Town Clerk's office, Town Court, and services a variety of other municipal needs. The Town of Alabama also has a facility located on the corner of State Route 63 and Ham Road. This building houses the Town's Highway Department.

##### **Town of Oakfield**

The Town of Oakfield municipal offices are located just east of the Village of Oakfield on Drake Street (State Route 262). The building houses the municipal offices and the Highway Department. The Town also owns and maintains the Haxton Memorial Library, as well as the Park located on Drake Street, both of which are situated in the Village.

##### **Village of Oakfield**

The Village of Oakfield municipal offices are located in the heart of the Village on Main Street. The Village also owns and maintains a public works building on South Pearl Street, the sewage treatment plant on Irving Parkway, the park in the center of the Village, and a water treatment plant located in the Town of Batavia **(which is currently not in operation)**.

## SECTION 5.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

This section provides the Findings and Recommendations for each community, as they relate to the major goals and objectives. Utilizing the information found in Section 4.0 (Existing Conditions of the Communities), issues identified through the public opinion survey and comments gathered at the public information meetings, opportunities and constraints for achieving each goal were determined. Based on these opportunities and constraints, general findings for each community were established. Recommendations for achieving the opportunities or addressing constraints were then devised for each community. These ideas and recommendations were refined and evaluated, with input from the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, and finalized as outlined in Sub-sections 5.2 and 5.3 below.

### 5.2 Findings/Opportunities/Constraints

Following the format of the Existing Conditions section of this Plan, the generalized findings (observations, opportunities and constraints) for each community are outlined as follows.

#### 5.2.1 Town of Alabama

##### Existing Land Use

- Agriculture is the most significant land use by area and is spread fairly uniformly throughout the Town.
- Three land use categories (agricultural, Indian reservation and wildlife conservation areas) account for 90 percent of total land area. Indian reservation and wildlife conservation areas represent lands that are either not readily available for development or whose use is outside the jurisdiction of the Town. Conceptually, some believe that agricultural lands are also not available for development.
- The Tonawanda Indian reservation dominates the western sector of Town. A small area of the Town is insulated from the remainder of the Town by the reservation.
- There are four hamlets in Town (Alabama, Wheatville, Basom and South Alabama) comprised of slightly higher density mixed-use development.
- Land use is regulated in the Town solely through the zoning ordinance.
- A small amount of commercial development exists in and around the hamlets.
- A rock quarry is located in the south-central portion of the Town.
- **The south-central portion of the Town is underlain by former gypsum mines (see Map 10).**

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

Agriculture and Farmland

- Most of the agricultural land is included in Genesee County Agricultural District No. 2.
- Agriculture is the predominant active land use, accounting for 83 percent of the land area outside of the wildlife and conservation areas and Indian Reservation.
- A large portion of the Town contains soils classified as prime farmland soil.
- **The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan restricts the number of new water connections-ups to new, non-agricultural land uses in agricultural districts, unless they are located in a designated development area.**
- Agricultural preservation is viewed as important by approximately 80 percent of the Alabama residents that responded to the public opinion survey. Sentiment contends that farms should be protected as viable businesses and open space, and for continuing the rural character of the Town.

Natural Environment and Constraints

- The topography of the Town is generally flat, with the exception of the escarpment that extends through the southern portion of Town. Steep slopes do not present a development constraint.
- Hydric soils are limited to the northern portion of the Town within the wildlife and conservation areas and along stream corridors.
- Floodplains were identified along Oak Orchard Creek.
- Most mapped wetlands and floodplains are located within the wildlife and conservation areas.
- Agricultural lands and the open wetlands in the wildlife and conservation areas provide valuable scenic vistas, adding to the unique character of the area.
- Most of the Town of Alabama lies within the Oak Orchard watershed, with smaller areas situated within the Murder Creek and Mud Creek watersheds.
- Small creeks and streams generally flow northward combining with the major streams, which flow out of the study area.
- **The abandoned U.S. Gypsum mines noted on Map 10 could potentially cause ground subsidence, which could result in damage to aboveground structures or personal injury. The location of the former mines should be noted in future land use decisions in affected areas.**

Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

- The Town population has remained relatively stable for over 40 years with modest decreases in population shown over the last ten years.
- Population projections indicate that the Town's population will likely decline over the next 25 years.

Page 5-2

- Residents indicate that shared services and inter-governmental cooperation should be expanded for highway, recreation, garbage/solid waste disposal, youth services and seniors services.

Zoning

- The R Residential zoning classification, in particular the dimensional standards, is very similar in nature to the A-R classification and does not promote or limit particular uses in the hamlets.

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

- Numerous uses are allowed by Special Use Permit in the AR and R districts, which essentially allows a wide number of uses in the residential districts.
- Within Alabama there is not a lot of commercially zoned land, but commercial and industrial uses can be achieved throughout much of the Town with a Special Use Permit.
- There are no hamlet design standards or other mechanisms to help define the hamlets.

**5.2.2** Town of Oakfield

Existing Land Use

- Agriculture is the predominant land use by area.
- Agricultural, vacant/undeveloped/open space, and wildlife conservation areas account for 80 percent of the total land area.
- Residential land use is low-density in nature.
- The Town of Oakfield's primary method for land use regulation is through zoning.
- The Village of Oakfield is located in the southern section of the Town and contains the densest pattern of development.
- The densest land use patterns in the Town are located just outside the Village.
- The U.S. Gypsum site is just west of the Village and is currently underutilized.
- **The south-central portion of the Town is underlain by former gypsum mines (see Map 10).**

Agriculture and Farmland

- Most of the agricultural land is included in Genesee County Agricultural District No. 2.
- A large portion of the Town contains soils classified as prime farmland soils.
- The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan calls for minimizing the number of new water connections within agricultural districts.

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

- Floodplains were identified along Oak Orchard Creek, in the northern portion of Town.
- Most of wetlands and floodplains are located in the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management Area.
- The wildlife conservation area provides important open space, wildlife habitat, and a location passive recreation.
- Agricultural lands and the open wetlands of the wildlife conservation area provide valuable scenic vistas and add to the unique character of the Town.
- Almost the entire Town of Oakfield lies within the Oak Orchard watershed.
- Small creeks and streams generally flow northward combining with the major streams, which flow out of the study area.
- **The abandoned U.S. Gypsum mines noted on Map 10 could potentially cause ground subsidence, which could result in damage to aboveground structures or personal injury. The location of the former mines should be noted in future land use decisions in affected areas.**

Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

- Long range trends show modest decreases in population over the last ten years.
- Projections indicate that the population will grow slightly by an estimated 6.0 percent over the next thirty years.
- Combined growth in the Village and Town is expected to remain modest and be easily absorbed within the community.
- The population (Town and Village combined) decreased by 112 persons (3.4%) between 1990 and 2000. While the size of households has also decreased to 2.77 persons per household, the number of households has remained relatively stable.
- Unemployment is higher in the study area (6.0 percent) than in the County as a whole (4.3 percent).
- A majority of residents believe that commercial and industrial growth is needed in the Town of Oakfield.

Transportation

- State Routes 63 and 262, along with Albion Road and Lockport Road, are the major transportation routes in the Town. The major highways in Town converge with the Village.
- No major capacity or operational deficiencies were identified on state or local highways in the Town.

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

- The Village is essentially built-out, with future development coming in the form of redevelopment.
- **The southeastern portion of the Village is underlain by former gypsum mines (see Map 10).**

Agriculture and Farmland

- The Village is not included within the boundaries of the County Agricultural District.
- The agricultural nature of the surrounding Towns plays a significant role in shaping the Village's commercial land use mix and character in general.

Natural Environment and Constraints

- Topography in the Village is generally flat; steep slopes are not an issue.
- Regulatory floodway and 100-year flood areas are limited to the relatively narrow creek corridors in the central and southeast sectors of the Village.
- **The abandoned U.S. Gypsum mines noted on Map 10 could potentially cause ground subsidence, which could result in damage to aboveground structures or personal injury. The location of the former mines should be noted in future land use decisions in affected areas.**

Demographics and Social-Economic Characteristics

- Modest decreases in population have been shown over the last ten years.
- Projections indicate that the Village is expected to lose approximately 3.0 percent of its population over the next thirty years (a typical trend in most built-out villages).
- Combined growth in the Village and Town is estimated to remain modest and be easily absorbed within the community.
- While the population has decreased, so has the size of households and, therefore, the net number of residential units has remained relatively unchanged.
- There are more rental units in the Village (30.6%) as compared to the two Towns (19.5 in Alabama and 12.0% in Oakfield).
- Unemployment is higher in the study area (6.0 percent) than in the County as a whole (4.3 percent).
- A majority of residents believe that commercial and industrial growth is needed in the Village of Oakfield.

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

- The Village contains the greatest amount of commercially zoned property (in two distinct districts). There are no building form standards (architectural and historic) to control the character of new and redevelopment structures.
- The Planned Unit Development regulations do not provide for clustering.
- The Village allows a diverse range of housing to meet residents' preferences.
- Multi-family housing is not allowed in the commercial districts or as a permitted use in any of the other zoning district (requires a special use permit).
- Currently the zoning defines tourist homes (which includes bed and breakfast establishments) but neither are listed as allowed uses in any zoning districts.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are patterned after the goals that were established for each community. They are designed to address the opportunities and constraints identified for each area.

#### **5.3.1 Town of Alabama**

**Goal: Protect, promote and preserve agriculture**

The Town of Alabama is characterized by rural open space, wildlife conservation and wetland areas, open farmlands, and older residential structures mixed with some newer homes. Residential development is denser in the vicinity of the hamlets, but is very low density throughout the remainder of the Town. There has been little to no major subdivision activity in Alabama. There are a large number of active farms in the Town and a great amount of open land, which is situated within the wildlife and conservation areas. There is strong public sentiment in Alabama to protect farmland and preserve open space.

Devising and implementing measures for preserving farmland and prime farm soils is the most effective way to acknowledge the public's concern for protecting agricultural resources in the Town. Residential lot sizes should be reassessed in certain areas to better manage future growth and non-traditional development techniques implemented to preserve open space. Rural development guidelines should be instituted to avoid sprawl (e.g., better guidelines or standards for road frontage development and encouraging more creative development techniques). In formulating these recommendations, it must be understood that the extent of, and limited pressure for, growth is presently not impacting agriculture and agricultural operations in the community.

**In addition, guidelines should be established to manage the development of wind turbines in the Town. The use of wind power can reduce energy costs for individual farmers. The decision to build individual wind turbines and, more importantly, larger wind farms requires a comprehensive study to identify wind speed and consistency, costs and benefits and impacts to local ecology.**

Page 5-8

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

Develop hamlet overlay zoning, that incorporates traditional neighborhood design standards and allows for denser development in and around the hamlets, which is consistent with the policies of the County's Smart Growth Plan.

- Consider the adoption of a right to farm law that would be complementary to the State and County programs, and would offer additional protection against unwarranted complaints aimed at farming operations, such as noise, odor, etc.
- Special use permits could be written to support home occupations and secondary businesses that help residents and farmers generate additional sources of income, such as tourism activities or day camps for children.
- Limit water extensions in the Town to eliminate the potential for extensive growth **and to protect agricultural uses. The County's Smart Growth Plan should be considered when planning water extensions. Emphasis should be placed on addressing locations with potential public health and safety concerns, and on controlling development on individual parcels outside the hamlets by utilizing lateral (water line) restrictions.** Such restrictions may be necessary to minimize development pressure on farmlands and discourage non-agricultural uses in those areas.
- Long-term potential for sewer service or on-site (package) wastewater treatment systems should continue to be investigated as an option for the hamlet areas.
- Consider the establishment of an agricultural advisory committee to assist in clarifying and mediating, and alleviating, conflicts that may arise, and to promote the concerns and desires of farmers. This committee could be utilized to provide a better understanding of the needs of farmers and farming operations in the local community. Through this committee, this information could be for easily transferred to County and State governments to help keep farming viable in the region.
- **Adopt and enforce guidelines for siting, construction, site restoration and monitoring of individual wind turbines and wind farms.**

**Goal: Maintain and enhance community character**

The Town of Alabama is a rural farming community, with vast tracts of open space and farmland. Over 25 percent of the community encompasses wildlife and conservation areas. The Town has experienced no significant subdivision activity and the densest residential development exists in and around the four hamlets of Basom, Alabama, Wheatville and South Alabama. Every planning effort undertaken in the Town should take the preservation of rural character into consideration.

***Recommendations:***

Necessary road improvements to address drainage or safety concerns, which are undertaken outside the hamlets, should limit the installation of sidewalks, curbing, street lighting or other suburban features.

Page 5-10

- Focus attention on addressing traffic problems along State Route 77 at Ledge and Bloomingdale Roads, which are impacting the character of the community.
- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines.
- Adopt and enforce hamlet development guidelines in the hamlets, and assess the zoning in these areas to support increased development densities in these areas ( $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre lots are the smallest that can be approved in non-sewered areas).

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

- Consider zoning overlay districts for the hamlets, with architectural and historic preservation standards, to protect and enhance the character of development in these areas.
- Zoning overlays could also be used to control develop along the two major road corridors, limiting commercial development to the hamlets (particularly Basom), and preventing commercial strip development. This is especially important in those areas that receive public water.
- Adopt zoning classifications, or strengthen existing zoning, to protect existing agricultural uses and prevent residential sprawl.
- Review and update permitted uses, and uses allowed by Special Use Permit in the AR Zone. Any revisions to the schedule of land uses should specify those existing land uses conforming to today's zoning would be able to continue as pre-existing uses.
- Identify and protect important scenic vistas that add to the character of the Town and include their consideration in the Town's adopted Subdivision regulations.

**Goal: Provide public water to appropriate areas of the Town**

Potable water in the Town of Alabama is procured from private wells. The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan outlines policies for extending water primarily to developed hamlets to prevent urban sprawl. The provision of water services is essential to address certain health and safety factors associated with contaminated wells and failing septic systems, **as acknowledged by the Genesee County Department of Health.**

***Recommendations:***

- Support and encourage the extension of public water along the major state highways, thus connecting the hamlet areas through a looped system of water line extensions along State Route 77, north to Alabama hamlet; east along Ham Road, with a northerly extension along Knowleville Road to Wheatville hamlet; south along Knowlesville Road to South Alabama; and west along State Route 63, back to State Route 77 (hydraulically efficient, servicing the most densely populated areas).

Page 5-11

expected to increase. Other controls such as the overlays can help control development in areas where water is primarily run to loop the water system

- Focus the provision of public water to hamlet locations that have urgent need due to health and safety issues.
- Ensure the extension of public water for targeted commercial and industrial growth.
- Protect groundwater resources from contamination. Sponsor educational opportunities in groundwater protection for households and farms.
- The looped water system will provide a backbone for the potential development of future water extensions (a very long-term consideration).

**Goal: Protect the environmental features and resources of the Town**

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

The wildlife and conservation areas comprise approximately 26 percent of the land area in the Town of Alabama. The Town contains a variety of other important environmental features including wetlands, large expanses of mature woodlands, tributary stream corridors and floodplains. Groundwater is also an important environmental resource since the population of the Town relies on this resource for potable water. **The former U.S. Gypsum mines shafts extend through the southeastern and south central portions of Alabama (Map 10). Any proposals for future residential use in this area of the Town must take this into consideration, as these areas may not be suitable for such development.**

***Recommendations:***

- Groundwater quality must be protected. Efforts should be undertaken to ensure that on-site sanitary waste disposal systems are properly maintained, and that failing systems are detected and properly mitigated. The communities should work with the appropriate County and State agencies to address this problem through public education programs and the provision of technical assistance to help residents understand and address this important issue. Monies may be made available through Rural Development programs supported by the federal government.
- In **identified** groundwater problem areas, the Town should require larger lot sizes.
- In order to mitigate the impacts from aging and deteriorating on-site septic systems, communal septic systems or "package" wastewater treatment systems should be investigated for the hamlet areas.
- In those areas not receiving public water, consideration should be given to subdivision regulations that require soil testing as part of the application procedure. If poor or problematic soils are identified, stricter standards could be imposed, such as larger minimum lot size requirements, or limitations on the number of subdivisions.

Page 5-12

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

- To protect important environmental features, proposed development actions should avoid identified wetlands, floodplains and prime farm soils. (Depending upon the structure of the wetland, avoiding wetlands has the additional benefit of protecting the groundwater resource.) Mandate usage of cluster development or open development areas to help avoid these environmentally sensitive features.
- Wetlands protection should include both State and Federal wetland areas including the required 100-foot setback areas required by the State. A local law could be utilized to help protect these important areas.
- Support farming practices that recognize environmental resources and the importance of avoiding or minimizing point and non-point source contaminant threats to groundwater, surface water and the environment as a whole. This can be accomplished by working with organizations such as Cooperative Extension and County Soil and Water District.
- Assess the zoning in the vicinity of the wildlife and conservation areas to reduce potential impacts from development.
- Develop a more formalized trail system along the abandoned railroad corridor and encourage the State to establish official bike routes along State Routes 63 and 77.
- **With respect to the former underground gypsum mines, the Town should investigate the need to institute zoning revisions or additional regulations to address the risk to future property owners in underground mining areas. Assistance from the State should be sought for this effort. In addition, consideration should be given to adopting minor subdivision regulations to allow the Town to further evaluate the risks of subdividing and developing properties in these areas.**

Goal: Provide for economic development in the Town

The expansion of commercial and industrial growth, and other economic development activities, helps provide jobs and a build a stronger tax base for the community. Farming will continue to dominate as the primary industry in the Town of Alabama. An economically sound town helps support the school district and Village.

*Recommendations:*

New commercial uses should be limited to the hamlets, in particular, Basom and Alabama and to a lesser extent South Alabama. Focus should be placed on how State Route 77 should be developed, particularly in the vicinity of the Basom hamlet. Avoid zoning or zoning changes that would allow areas of commercial strip development to build up in the Town (outside the hamlet long-term growth areas

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

the community. Presently, the Town's zoning regulations allow for diversity in the housing stock. However, single-family detached homes are the primary form of residential development in Alabama. The lack of sewers severely limits the types of construction that can take place in the Town. Higher density housing types should be expected in the Village of Oakfield, where sewer is available.

***Recommendations:***

- Denser development should occur in and around the hamlets in the Town. The zoning of these areas should be assessed to ensure that a variety of housing types are permitted.
- Promote alternative housing types to satisfy the needs of single individuals, seniors and other non-traditional households that are affordable in nature, such as in-law (accessory) apartments, and attached single-family dwellings.

**Town of Oakfield**

**Goal: Promote the expansion of public water to appropriate areas in the Town**

Potable water in the Town of Oakfield is primarily obtained from private wells. Some public water is provided to areas of the Town situated immediately outside the Village of Oakfield. The Genesee County Smart Growth Plan outlines policies for extending water primarily to developed hamlets to prevent urban sprawl.

***Recommendations:***

- The Town currently has public water in the areas adjoining the Village. **A primary opportunity for additional public water in the Town of Oakfield is to selectively extend water along certain main roads directly outside of the Village to enable a limited amount of new develop over the long term.** This plan is also being coordinated to help in providing water to the Town of Alabama.
- **Support and encourage the extension of public water along State Route 63 to connect the Five Corners area with the Village. Consider future long-term extensions to the East Oakfield hamlet, as warranted.**
- Consider providing public water to the Birdseye property and other suitable locations for commercial and industrial development.

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

- Support farming as the primary industry in the Town and consider a separate zoning classification, or strengthening existing zoning, to protect and enhance this industry. Non-agricultural uses should be highly restricted on prime farm soils.
- Recreation-oriented economic activity should be supported, such as campgrounds, riding stables, etc. Support services for the recreational sector should also be encouraged.
- Work with the village in targeting areas for sewer extensions.

**Goal: Protect and preserve agricultural land uses**

Similar to Alabama, the Town of Oakfield is characterized by rural open space and large tracts of farmland. The Town has also has a large wildlife and conservation area, that characterizes the landscape. The large extent of farmland and undeveloped open space contributes to the rural character of the Town. There is also strong public sentiment in Oakfield to preserve and protect farmland and the overall rural nature of the Town.

Preserving farmland and good farm soils would address public concerns for protecting agricultural resources in the community. To better manage future growth, non-traditional development techniques should be implemented. Rural development guidelines should also be considered to avoid sprawl and the inefficient development of agricultural lands. **In addition, guidelines should be established to manage the development of wind turbines in the Town. The use of wind power can reduce energy costs for individual farmers. The decision to build individual wind turbines and, more importantly, larger wind farms requires a comprehensive study to identify wind speed and consistency, costs and benefits and impacts to local ecology.**

***Recommendations:***

- Consider the adoption of an agricultural zoning classification that would limit non-agricultural development. This district would incorporate large farms and areas of good farm soils and focus on development density as a means of protecting agricultural uses. This zoning category could be used in combination with conservation easements or a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program to ensure that potential rezoning actions would not result in the development of prime farmland.
- Review and expand the Town zoning to include innovative non-traditional development standards, such as open development areas, overlay districts and rural cluster development regulations.

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

as required. The Town should also evaluate the economic impacts of a purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) program. It is suggested that this type of planning be done in conjunction with the Town of Alabama (a joint agricultural protection plan). Because of the low level of development pressure, programs such as PACE or PDR are considered long-term actions and should be considered as feasible actions when the time is right.

- Keep denser development activity centered in the areas around the village and in one hamlet area, consistent with the policies of the County's Smart Growth Plan, to prevent sprawl and protect agricultural land.
- Consider the adoption of a right to farm law that would be complementary to the State and County programs, and would offer additional protection against unwarranted complaints aimed at farming operations, such as noise, odor, etc.
- Special use permits should be written to support home occupations and secondary businesses to help residents and farm operations establish additional sources of income. The Zoning Code should be revised to more specifically address agriculturally related home occupations and secondary uses in the R-A zone.
- Limit water extensions in the Town to eliminate the potential for extensive growth **and to protect agricultural uses. The County's Smart Growth Plan should be considered when planning water extensions. Emphasis should be placed on providing water to areas that have potential public health and safety concerns, and on controlling development on individual parcels outside the Village by utilizing lateral (water line) restrictions.** Such restrictions may be necessary to minimize development pressure on farmlands and discourage non-agricultural uses in those areas.
- Any extension of the Village of Oakfield sanitary sewer system into the Town of Oakfield should be carefully scrutinized to ensure that such action does not place development pressures in areas of important agricultural use (west and south of the Village are high priority areas for protection).
- Consider the establishment of an agricultural advisory committee to assist in clarifying and mediating, and alleviating, conflicts that may arise, and to promote the concerns and desires of farmers. This committee could be utilized to provide a better understanding of the needs of farmers and farming operations in the local community. Through this committee, this information could be for easily transferred to County and State governments to help keep farming viable in the region.

**Goal: Maintain and enhance community character**

The Town of Oakfield is a rural farming community, with vast tracts of farmland, open space and wildlife and conservation area. Residential development in Oakfield is very low density, with denser

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

- **Adopt and enforce guidelines for siting, construction, site restoration and monitoring of individual wind turbines and wind farms.**

**Goal: Maintain and enhance community character**

The Town of Oakfield is a rural farming community, with vast tracts of farmland, open space and wildlife and conservation area. Residential development in Oakfield is very low density, with denser development in the vicinity of the Village of Oakfield. Residential use outside the Village is typically frontage development, particularly in the Five Corners and East Oakfield hamlets and along Pearl Street, south of the Village. Major residential subdivisions do not occur in the Town. Every planning effort undertaken in the Town should take the preservation of rural character into consideration.

***Recommendations:***

- Necessary road improvements to address drainage or safety concerns, which are undertaken outside the hamlets, should not include sidewalks, curbing or street lighting (no suburban atmosphere).
- Require the use of non-traditional development techniques, such as open development area, cluster development and planned unit development to control future growth, manage sprawl and preserve farmland.
- Adopt and enforce rural development guidelines.
- Encourage and support residential development in and around the hamlets.
- Adopt and enforce hamlet development guidelines in the hamlets, and assess the zoning in these areas to support increased development densities in these areas.
- Consider zoning overlay districts for the hamlets, with architectural and historic preservation standards, to accomplish a protect and enhance the character of develop these areas.
- Zoning overlays could also be used to control develop along the two major road corridors, limiting commercial development to the hamlets and area adjacent to the Village and preventing commercial strip development.
- Adopt zoning classifications, or strengthen existing zoning, to protect existing agricultural uses and prevent residential sprawl.
- Identify and protect important scenic vistas that add to the character of the Town.
- Adopt minor subdivision regulations that better manage the division of properties into four or less lots.

**Goal: Protect the environmental features and resources of the community**

The study area contains numerous environmental features and is home to large wildlife conservation areas. **The former U.S. Gypsum mines shafts extend through the southern portion of Oakfield (Map 10). Any proposals for future development activity in this area of the Town must take this into consideration.**

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

***Recommendations:***

- Groundwater quality must be protected. Efforts should be undertaken to ensure that on-site sanitary waste disposal systems are properly maintained, and that failing systems are detected and properly mitigated. The communities should work with the appropriate County and State agencies to address this problem through public education programs and the provision of technical assistance to help residents understand and address this important issue.
- In those areas not receiving public water, consideration should be given to subdivision regulations that require soil testing as part of the application procedure. If poor or problematic soils are identified, stricter standards could be imposed, such as larger minimum lot size requirements.
- To protect important environmental features, proposed development actions should avoid identified wetlands, floodplains and prime farm soils.
- Support farming practices that recognize environmental resources and the importance of avoiding or minimizing point and non-point source contaminant threats to groundwater, surface water and the environment as a whole.
- Assess the zoning in the vicinity of the wildlife and conservation areas to reduce potential impacts from development.
- Promote public education programs for the maintenance of septic systems to protect groundwater quality.
- Protect the Old Indian Woods area as a cultural and historic resource of local significance. This area is part of the Iroquois Nation and includes woodlands and a stream corridor that warrants protection.
- **With respect to the former underground gypsum mines, the Town should investigate the need to institute zoning revisions or additional regulations to address the risk to future property owners in underground mining areas. Assistance from the State should be sought for this effort. In addition, consideration should be given to adopting minor subdivision regulations to allow the Town to further evaluate the risks of subdividing and developing properties in these areas.**

Goal: Encourage a diversity of housing types in the Town

As the population of the Town changes over time, and the economic conditions vary, options for housing should be available to accommodate changing the lifestyles, incomes and needs of the community. Presently the Town's zoning regulations allows for diversity in housing stock. However, single-family detached homes are the primary form of residential development in the Town.

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

#### 5.4.2 Overall Regional Perspective

The remoteness of the study area helps to create the setting for the vision. Being located approximately 30 miles from both the City of Buffalo and Rochester, and approximately 10 miles from the population center of the City of Batavia, makes this region quite remote. The Indian reservation and the wildlife refuge and management areas also provide isolation from the surrounding communities.

These factors have led to very little development pressure and have allowed agriculture to remain as a viable land use. The Village of Oakfield has, therefore, thrived as the communities' center, with other community hamlets serving other needs.

Due to the strength of the Village core, the Town of Oakfield's development pattern has focused around the Village. Only one small rural hamlet area exists outside of the direct influence of the Village (just north of the Village at the intersection of Albion and Lockport Roads).

The Town of Alabama, on the other hand, has four hamlet areas. South Alabama acts as the community center with the Town Hall and Fire Department located in its boundaries. The other hamlets serve different purposes within the community and are discussed under the Town of Alabama's vision map.

The closing of the U.S. Gypsum Plant, the potential for waterline expansions, and other needs of the communities have forced these municipalities to look differently at their future. The success of implementing each individual community's vision is highly dependent and linked with development and planning actions in the other communities.

#### 5.4.3 Town of Alabama Vision Map

In the Town of Alabama, the key issue for the Town is controlled growth, primarily in the areas surrounding the hamlets of Alabama, Basom, South Alabama and Wheatville. As shown on the Vision Map, the majority of the Town outside these hamlet areas is devoted to agricultural and conservation uses. **The Town would like to see future commercial and residential development located in and around the hamlet areas rather than having such uses sprawl throughout the Town in the form of residential frontage lots or commercial development that requires a special use permit. The hamlets are the areas where the Town would like to provide public water and this is where future, long-term growth should occur, particularly in Basom, Alabama and South Alabama.**

Page 5-25

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

The major transportation corridors in the Town of Alabama are State Route 77 and State Route 63, which bisect the Town. Three of the hamlets lie along these corridors, each serving a different purpose. The hamlet of Basom is located on State Route 77 as you enter the Town from points south, including the NYS Thruway. It is located near the major entry points to the reservation (Bloomingdale and Ledge Roads). The area presently has a few small businesses and a limited amount of residential development. The plan supports that the area encompassing the lands along State Route 77 between Bloomingdale and **Marble** Roads be considered as the area where **growth could occur over the long term**. Automobile-**related** uses, agrarian support businesses and limited residential development should be the focus of long-term growth in this area. This would allow the Town to take advantage of the traffic coming from the thruway and the traffic heading towards the reservation. Due to the existing pattern of vehicles moving in and out of the reservation, and problems associated with this traffic, the intersections of State Route 77 with Bloomingdale and Ledge Roads should be considered for future traffic mitigation to address these concerns.

The hamlet of Alabama, located at the intersection of Lewiston/Lockport Roads (State Route 77 to the west) and State Route 63, also carries traffic coming from the NYS Thruway heading to the north. It presently includes some auto-**related** businesses and a grocery store. The area includes the Town's highway garage, a fire hall, an American Legion Post and a cemetery. The long-term growth **envisioned for** this hamlet could include recreational and tourism-support businesses and residential development. **As a long-term planning area**, the hamlet could extend south to Ham Road to pick up town lands and west on State Route 77 pick up existing development patterns.

The Hamlet of South Alabama is located along State Route 63, towards the Village of Oakfield, and acts as the Town center. This area includes the Town Hall/historical building, a church and fire hall. There is little commercial development, but it has the largest concentration of residential development in the Town. A small growth area is included around this hamlet that would accommodate some additional **long-term** residential growth. This hamlet is the closest dense residential hamlet area to the Village of Oakfield.

The final hamlet in the Town is Wheatville, which is located north of South Alabama. This is a small residential hamlet with a church **that could experience a small amount of residential growth well into the future. Hence, this area is not considered an area that will see substantial long-term growth. The planning issue for this area is the provision of public water.**

Page

5-26

Throughout the Goals and Recommendations, the plan calls for increased development controls in the agricultural areas outside the hamlet areas. With the exception of the hamlet of Wheatville, the **long-term planning** areas identified on the Vision Map are **generally** in keeping with the proposed "development areas" as mapped in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The major difference between the Town's plan and the County's is that this plan calls for larger long-term planning areas, while providing controls to **manage future growth**.

Expanding the **boundaries of the** hamlet areas will enable the Town **to better focus growth in these**

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

**areas** and eases the expansion of water to these areas. It will also **help to achieve** the goal of preserving the surrounding agricultural land by concentrating **long-term** development in the hamlets.

To accommodate the **long-term** growth pattern of the Town of Alabama, it is proposed to expand a water system along State Route 63 and State Route 77. A loop would be added northward to Wheatville and along Ham Road to complete a loop of the water system. In areas that have waterlines proposed that are not in **long-term planning** areas, a strong lateral restriction policy should be put in place (restricting new residential **frontage lot** development from tying into the system).

The abandoned railroad line running east/west through the Town would provide an excellent connection feature from Basom to South Alabama to the Village of Oakfield. This feature could be utilized for biking, walking and other non-automotive forms of transportation. On-road bicycle lanes should be considered for State Route 77 from Pembroke into Niagara County. It also would run northward on State Route 63 into the wildlife areas and into Orleans County. It should also run east on State Route 63 to the Village of Oakfield. This would provide ties to three of the hamlets, the wildlife areas, and surrounding communities including the Village.

A quarry area in the south-central part of the town should be protected from non-compatible development (restrict residential in this area). **Furthermore, former underground mine locations must be considered when proposals for residential development are received. These areas are not considered suitable for future residential use.**

The areas along State Routes 77 and 63, not within hamlet areas should have rural development overlay in place that would protect rural-agrarian enhancement of these areas, and protect this important travel way in Alabama from poor development patterns (hurting the town image).

The remainder of the town (in white) should remain rural/agrarian and allow small development within rural development guidelines (suggest rural development guidelines law).

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

#### 5.4.4 Town of Oakfield Vision Map

The major features in the Town of Oakfield include the Oak Orchard State Wildlife Management area, the Village of Oakfield and the U.S. Gypsum facility. The Village by far is the most important feature and provides the focal point of the community. In support of the Village, the Town's **long-term planning** area surrounds the Village.

This area is **considered suitable for future, long-term residential and industrial development. It includes the U.S. Gypsum area and the area abutting Birdseye and is non-competitive with the Village. The reuse/redevelopment of the U.S. Gypsum site will not only benefit the Town, it could provide much-needed jobs for residents in the Village and in the region. Long-term residential growth should occur around the Village, where services are available, rather than sprawling throughout the Town in the form of frontage lot development (which is already occurring along Drake, Fisher, Albion, Lewiston and Maltby Roads.**

The "Five Corners" area of the Town (the intersection of Lewiston/State Route 63, Albion Road and Maltby Road) is included in this **long-term planning** area. This area includes the school, some **commercial and industrial** businesses and limited residential development. This area is an important focal point of the Town and Village, and should include **the development of regulations to foster** aesthetic improvements and gateway features.

The only other hamlet type area is north of the Five Corners area on Albion Road at its intersection with Lockport Road. This area could support a small residential growth pattern. In concert with the Town of Alabama, these growth areas would be supported by the planned expansion of the County water system on State Route 262, Pearl Street and State Route 63 from the Village through the Town of Oakfield to Alabama. This water system should also be looped down State Route 62 and up Fisher Road to State Route 262. It should also be looped up North Pearl to Maltby and west to the Four Corners area. Long-term, the Town should also look at extending the waterline up to the residential hamlet north of the Village. In waterline areas not within growth areas, the Town should place lateral restrictions.

The area included within the long-term planning area boundary encompassed by the Fisher Road waterline extension would be a long-term growth area and not intended for "change" in the near future. **Furthermore, planning efforts in this area are oriented toward securing providing water service and not dense residential development or the loss of viable farmland.**

Also in concert with the Town of Alabama, the abandoned railroad right-of-way should be utilized for a multi-use railway connecting two of Alabama's hamlets and part of the Town of Oakfield to the

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

### 6.3 Town of Alabama

#### Priority 1 Action Items – Years 1 and 2:

##### General

1. Adopt the Comprehensive Plan and establish an Implementation Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation, review and updating of the Plan. The committee should be appointed by the Town Board and have representatives from the Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and key town officials. If desired, this duty could be assigned to the Planning Board.
2. Establish an annual budget for the implementation of the Oakfield - Alabama Comprehensive Plan.
3. The Implementation Advisory Committee should convene annually with the Implementation Advisory Committees from the Village and Town of Oakfield in order to map the progress of each municipality's implementation plan, initiate their annual review, discuss common implementation issues, and identify other inter-municipal planning opportunities.

##### Agriculture

1. Revise the Agricultural-Residential (A-R) zoning district in order to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in this district, and residential uses are secondary. The A-R district should limit non-residential and non-agricultural uses by not allowing them as "permitted uses". Existing uses, including home occupations would remain as pre-existing uses. Under this new scenario, the A-R district would be reduced in geographic area to only those areas that would likely remain in farming, areas with prime farmland soils, areas outside the hamlets or other areas identified as development areas. Corresponding increases in the size of the Residential District (R) or other multi-use districts (around the hamlets) should be adopted in order to provide appropriate planning areas for potential long term residential growth (See Vision Map).
2. Incorporate prime farmland soils as into review criteria for non-agricultural development.
3. Consider adoption of a local Right to Farm Law.
4. Refer to the County Agricultural Protection Plan to identify properties for a Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement (PACE) program.

##### Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. Work with Genesee County to expand the designated development areas in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan **in a manner that does not impact agriculture and fully utilizes the existing infrastructure in the Town.** The Vision Map depicts these areas **as larger, long-term planning areas. The development areas delineated in the**

Page 6-

3

- existing Smart Growth Plan closely follow the existing pattern of hamlet development and represent appropriate limits for sustaining short-term growth. As future demand for growth may dictate, the development area boundaries should be expanded to correspond with the Vision Map.**
2. **Commence preliminary plan development for bringing public water service to Basom, Alabama and South Alabama.**

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

3. Support the extension of water service from the Town of Newstead into the southwest corner of Alabama.
4. When water is provided, institute protective **lateral restriction** regulations to control residential building outside the **long-term planning areas** along Route 63 and Route 77. Restrictions on lateral water services **should also be established** on Knowsville Road and Ham Road. Water service hook-ups **along these roadways** should only be provided where water quality **problems have been identified**.
5. **Investigate appropriate remediation for failing septic systems in the Alabama and Basom hamlets to address water quality problems.**

**Zoning and other Land Use Regulations**

1. Outside of the identified **long-term planning areas**, review and update the list of non-agricultural land uses allowed by Special Use Permit.
2. To offset the more stringent use regulations proposed for the A-R district, expand the residential districts **within the boundaries of the long-term planning areas** surrounding the hamlet areas.
3. Establish Overlay Districts for hamlet areas (within long-term planning area boundaries on Vision Map).
4. Adopt regulations, **separate from the Zoning Ordinance**, for the minor and major subdivision of land in accordance with Section 276 of the NYS Town Law.
5. Revise the Town's cluster development regulations to incorporate rural development design guidelines.
6. **Permit the establishment of** bed and breakfast establishments in the A-R and R zoning districts

**Other Implementation Actions**

1. **Develop regulations to govern the construction of wind energy turbines and telecommunication towers.**
2. Establish a plan for creating attractive and informative gateway features at:
  - south end of Basom along Route 77 to guide travelers coming into Alabama from the south.

Page 6-4

**Priority 3 Action Items - Long Term and Optional:**

1. Relocate Town Hall, along with other Town Facilities, into the Alabama hamlet as it continues to grow as a Town Center.
2. Work with Genesee County and the Town of Oakfield to investigate the feasibility and potential funds for a rails-to-trails project on the abandoned Penn Central rail corridor.
3. Establish a mechanism to ensure that reclamation and reuse plans are in place for the quarry areas on Ledge Road.
4. Institute non-traditional rural development tools to control potential long term growth and preserve farmland, while at the same time not eliminate the landowners right to sell property.  
**Adopt provisions, including minimum lot size, for "open development areas" along**

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

Route 63 and Route 77 to allow minor subdivisions having more creative lot configurations – shared driveways, minimal frontage for access only.

5. Work with Genesee County and State agencies on ground water protection education programs.
6. Establish an inter-municipal shared services community with Oakfield, Village of Oakfield and the school district to investigate opportunities to continue to work together on shared services (water, sewer) or facilities.

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

## 6.4 Town of Oakfield

### Priority 1 Action Items – Years 1 and 2:

#### General

1. Adopt the Comprehensive Plan and establish an Implementation Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation, review and updating of the Plan. The committee should be appointed by the Town Board and have representatives from the Town Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and key town officials. If desired, this duty could be assigned to the Planning Board.
2. Establish an annual budget for the implementation of the Oakfield - Alabama Comprehensive Plan.
3. The Implementation Advisory Committee should convene annually with the Implementation Advisory Committees from the Village of Oakfield and Town of Alabama in order to map the progress of each municipality's implementation plan, initiate their annual review, discuss common implementation issues and identify other inter-municipal planning opportunities.

#### Agriculture

1. Revise the schedule of allowed uses for the Residential Agricultural District (R&A) in order to build upon the intent that agricultural uses are primary uses in this district, and residential uses are secondary. The R&A district should limit non-agricultural uses by not allowing them in as permitted uses. Under this new scenario, the R&A district would be reduced in geographic area to those areas most likely to remain in active farming, areas of prime farmland, areas outside the hamlets, and areas otherwise identified as agricultural development areas. Corresponding expansion of the General Residential Districts (R) should be adopted in order to provide appropriate areas for future residential growth **within the boundaries of the long-term planning areas** (See Vision Map).
2. Consider adoption of a local Right to Farm law.

#### Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. Work with Genesee County to expand the designated development areas in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan **in a manner that does not impact agriculture and fully utilizes the existing infrastructure in the Town**. The Vision Map depicts a larger **long-term planning** area around the Village of Oakfield up through **that represents the Town's long-term vision for growth**. **The designated development area boundary established by the Smart Growth**

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

**Plan, as depicted on the map, represents the most appropriate limit for sustaining short-term growth, as the future demand for growth may dictate, the development area boundaries around the Village should be expanded.**

**Zoning and Other Land Use Regulations**

1. Prepare an intent or introductory section for each zoning district in order to give the reader, Enforcement Officer, applicant or land owner an understanding of how the Town wants to see that particular district be utilized.
2. Adopt regulations, **separate from the Zoning Ordinance**, for the minor and major subdivision of land in accordance with Section 276 of the NYS Town Law.
3. Revise zoning to include provisions for cluster residential subdivisions as per Section 278 of the NYS Town Law.
4. Establish Overlay Districts for hamlet areas (within long-term **planning area** boundaries on Vision Map).
5. Incorporate rural development guidelines into subdivision regulations.

**Other Implementation Actions**

1. Draft a set of rural development guidelines to provide written standards and graphic examples to facilitate guiding potential long term growth to meet the vision.
2. Establish a plan for creating attractive informative features at:
  - Route 63 Lewiston Road near Fisher Road
  - Route 262 Drake Road between Fisher Road and the Town line
  - Route 63 Judge Road at Macomber Road - A site should be located that may be coordinated, visually, with a similar gateway feature for Alabama.
3. **Develop regulations to govern the construction of wind energy turbines and telecommunication towers.**

**Priority 2 Action Items – Years 3–5:**

**General**

1. The Implementation Advisory Committee should provide its annual report to the Oakfield Town Board.
2. The Oakfield Town Board should reappoint Implementation Advisory Committee members and appoint subcommittees, as necessary, to address the coming year's action items.

**Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement**

---

- 1. Evaluate the feasibility of expanding public water service to the East Oakfield crossroads area of Lockport Road and Fisher Road.**
2. Work with Genesee County and the Town of Alabama to investigate the feasibility and potential funds for a rails-to-trails project on the abandoned Penn Central rail corridor.
3. Work with Genesee County and State agencies on ground water protection education programs.
4. Establish an inter-municipal shared services community with Alabama, Village of Oakfield and the school district to investigate opportunities to continue to work together on shared services (water, sewer) or facilities.

## 6.5 Village of Oakfield

### Priority 1 Action Items – Years 1 and 2:

#### General

1. Adopt the Comprehensive Plan and establish an Implementation Advisory Committee to oversee the implementation, review and updating of the Plan. The committee should be appointed by the Village Board of Trustees and have representatives from the Village Board of Trustees, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and key village officials. If desired, this duty could be assigned to the Planning Board.
2. Establish an annual budget for the implementation of the Oakfield - Alabama Comprehensive Plan.
3. The Implementation Advisory Committee should convene annually with the Implementation Advisory Committees from the Town of Oakfield and Town of Alabama in order to map the progress of each municipality's implementation plan, initiate their annual review, discuss common implementation issues identify other inter-municipal planning opportunities.

#### Water/Smart Growth Plan

1. The entire Village of Oakfield is **contained** within one of the **designated development areas established by the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan. The Town of Oakfield is proposing that the designated area around the Village be enlarged. The Village should support the Town's efforts to expand the boundary of the development area around the Village. As the demand for growth dictates**, the Village should work with Town and Genesee County to expand the designated development area in **future updates** of the Smart Growth Plan.
2. A long-range water plan should be developed depicting where future water service may be expanded outside the Village.
3. Support the Towns of Oakfield and Alabama in their efforts to modify the "development areas" identified in the Genesee County Smart Growth Plan to reflect the long-term planning area boundaries, as shown on the Vision Map.
4. Investigate cost/feasibility for extending water out Route 63 into Towns of Oakfield and Alabama.

Oakfield-Alabama Comprehensive Plan  
Towns of Oakfield and Alabama and the Village of Oakfield  
and  
Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement

---

**APPENDIX**

## **GLOSSARY**

The following are definitions of words and planning terms used in this document. It is an attempt to explain these items in common language for the benefit of the reader.

### ***Aquifer***

An underground source of water that lies within or between water bearing layers of permeable rock, sand or gravel.

### ***Agricultural Preservation***

A variety of techniques employed to help support farming as an economic activity and farmland as a land use.

### ***Central Business District***

The area of the Village or a hamlet, consisting of retail, commercial, institutional, and public service establishments, that functions as the primary location for commerce.

### ***Clustered Development***

Clustered Development is a design technique for development projects that concentrates residential buildings in specific areas on a site to allow the remaining land to be set aside for recreation, common open space or environmental preservation. This is done by allowing housing to be constructed on smaller lots as long as the original density (the number of houses that can be built as-of-right on the property under the existing zoning) does not change.

### ***Conservation Easements***

Conservation easements are a legal means of controlling development on a particular parcel in order to preserve open space. Lands subject to Conservation Easements have controls or regulations limiting development.

### ***Corridor (stream, scenic, open space, habitat)***

A connection linking open space, wildlife habitats or other environmental features.

### ***Effluent***

Outflowing material (such as stormwater or wastewater) that is discharged into the environment.

### ***Genesee Transportation Council (GTC)***

The Genesee Transportation Council (GTC) is the interagency planning group that establishes transportation policies and programs for Genesee Finger Lakes. The organization provides a regional decision-making forum for the development of a multi-modal integrated transportation system that best serves the region.

### ***Headwater(s)***

The source or beginning of a stream, including the general area contributing runoff or drainage to the stream channel.

### ***Housing Stock***

The overall supply of housing in an area, including all sizes and styles of residential development.

### ***Hydric Soils***

Soils are considered to be hydric if they are saturated, flooded or impounded long enough during the growing season to develop low oxygen levels and changeable chemical conditions in the upper layer. These soils are very poorly drained and have a high probability of containing wetlands.

***Infrastructure***

The underlying framework of public works systems that includes sewers, water lines, roadways, drainage piping, and other utility and service systems.

***Level of Service***

This term refers to a measurement of the amount of automobile traffic on roadways. Level of Service or LOS, is a qualitative measure describing the operational conditions within a stream of traffic. It is a means of quantifying or “grading” the operational quality of service provided by a roadway facility. LOS employs a rating system of “A” through “F”, with “A” representing the best conditions with minimal delays and “F” representing failing conditions with extensive congestion.

***Neo-Urbanist Concepts***

Neo-urbanist, or neo-traditional, planning concepts emphasize mixed-use development reminiscent of traditional “small town” type development. Traditional grid street patterns are preferred. Additional design standards typically found in neo-urbanist plans include smaller building setbacks so that buildings create a street-line, use of public buildings or parks as focal points in design, and pedestrian-friendly features, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, benches and street trees.

***Overlay District***

An Overlay District is created by identifying an area on a municipality’s Zoning Map and specifying additional regulations to supplement the underlying zoning regulations. The underlying zoning of the area does not change. Rather, additional restrictions are overlain onto the district. When development is proposed within the boundaries of an overlay district, the developer must comply with the requirements of the existing zoning district and the overlay district.

***Passive Recreation***

Passive recreation involves non-strenuous activities such as picnicking, bird watching, casual walking and scenic viewing.

***Potentially Hydric Soils***

Soils that drain somewhat poorly and contain some wetland characteristics. Most potentially hydric soils have a seasonally high water table.

***Planned Unit Development (PUD)***

Planned Unit Developments (PUD) allow the mixing of commercial, industrial and residential uses on a single property. Typically zoning does not allow mixing uses, but this technique allows for a more creative site plan, subject to municipal approval. The usual use of PUD’s is the creation of a planned community, with a proper mix of uses and layout. If they are allowed within a municipality, the Code specifies the minimum size of a PUD (acreage), and the requirements that must be followed. It must be understood that this zoning category is not an “open approval” to all uses. A plan must be submitted and approved by municipal authorities. A subcategory of

PUD's is the Planned Residential District, or PRD. In this zoning category, only residential uses are allowed, but there is greater leeway in the mixing of housing types (single-family, duplexes, apartments, condominiums, etc.)

***Subdivision***

The division of any parcel of land into two or more lots for immediate sale or development with or without streets or highways.

***Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)***

This is a legal mechanism for preserving land and open space, by allowing denser development elsewhere within the municipality. In the areas identified for protection, the "development rights" can be sold or transferred to a receiving area, where denser development is appropriate. The area that purchased the development rights is allowed increased density (more units per acre, for example). In exchange, development is prohibited in the area selling the development rights.

***Wetlands***

Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, or that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands include bogs, swamps, marshes, cattail ponds, wet forests and meadows. These areas may not be wet or covered by water throughout the year.

***Zoning Districts***

In a municipality there exists zoning which tells you what can be built on the property (the use), and how it shall be built on the land (bulk requirements including size, height, etc.). Each zoning district has specific regulations regarding uses and bulk which must be followed. The zoning districts are identified through a zoning map that depicts where the boundaries of the zoning district exist.