

Schuyler County Countywide Comprehensive Plan



PREPARED BY:



ADOPTED MAY 2014
AMENDED JUNE 2015

SCHUYLER COUNTYWIDE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2014 AMENDED 2015

GUIDANCE FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS

DEDICATION

This plan was completed for the benefit of all residents and visitors of Schuyler County.

DISCLAIMER

The CWCP is a future oriented guidance document that is intended to serve as a point of reference to attain the long-range vision of a community.

The CWCP provides background information and policies to assist with decision making in our community.

The CWCP is not law.

The CWCP is not law and therefore is unenforceable as regulation. However, a comprehensive plan does have legal standing and can support the actions of leaders and citizens.

The CWCP does not take away rights.

Protecting and enhancing rights is a key element of the CWCP. Adopting the CWCP does not result in the loss of any control at the local level or the elimination of citizen rights.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Steering Committee

Working Committee

Michael Bergen, Town of Hector, Planning Commission
Kate Bartholomew, Town of Montour, Planning Commission
Sarah Chicone, Village of Montour Falls, Planning Commission
Chad Hendrickson, Town of Reading, Planning Commission
Jim Murphy, Citizen
Rocky Kambo, Schuyler County Planning Department

Advisory Committee

Dale Walter, Village of Burdett
Carmella Hoffman, Town of Catharine
Kathleen Cleveland/Chris Arnold, Town of Cayuta
Dennis Fagan, County Legislator (CDNR)
Phil Barnes/Scott Yaw, Town of Dix
Donna Taber, Town of Montour
Jim Ryan/John King/Jim Howell, Village of Montour Falls
Tracy Gavich, Village of Odessa
Carol Rhoades/ Kristin Haner, Town of Orange
Judi Richards, Town of Reading
Jack Wilbert, Town of Tyrone
Chris Bond, Village of Watkins Glen

Cornell Interns

Travis North
Marjaneh Mottaghi
Dean Mack

Special Contributions:

Schuyler County Historical Society
Cornell University Program on Applied Demographics

Project Consultants

John Steinmetz and Molly Gaudioso, Steinmetz Planning Group
with Support Provided by Bergmann Associates

Project Coordination

Schuyler County Planning Commission
Schuyler County Legislature
Kristin VanHorn, Director, Schuyler County Planning Department

NYSERDA Cleaner Greener Communities Amendments 2015

Funding Provided by: NYSERDA

Project Coordination: Southern Tier Central Regional Planning Board Staff

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A large blue and white mechanical harvester is shown in a vineyard, harvesting grapes. The harvester has a long, angled arm with a green protective sleeve. Two workers are visible in the foreground, one in a blue shirt and yellow apron, and another in a red shirt and cap. The background is filled with dense green trees under a clear sky.

INTRODUCTION

The County Wide Comprehensive Plan (CWCP) is the product of a significant amount of time and energy provided over two years by the members of the Steering Committee, County Staff, Interns, and the consultants.

The CWCP is part of a series of successful planning efforts by the Towns, Villages, and County to articulate their individual and collective future. Some examples include the 2010 Village of Watkins Glen Lakefront Management & Development Strategy, 2011 Villages of Burdett & Odessa - Commercial District Improvement Strategy, 2012 Town of Orange Comprehensive Plan, 2013 Village of Watkins Glen Comprehensive Plan, and the 2013 Village of Burdett Comprehensive Plan.

Each of these efforts was successful due to participation of residents, business owners, public officials, agencies, and other key stakeholders. The CWCP continues the practice of community involvement throughout the planning process.

WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A comprehensive plan is the blueprint of a community. What does your community want to be in the future and how will your community get there? The comprehensive plan states this vision clearly and specifies the goals and strategies to make the vision a reality. A comprehensive plan is not law and therefore unenforceable as regulation. However, a comprehensive plan does have legal standing and serves as a general guidance document that can protect a community as well as help it reach its goals. It serves as the

foundation upon which future planning and policy decisions are to be based. However, it does not prevent future decisions that may not align precisely with the stated vision and policies.

In other words, a Comprehensive Plan provides an overall framework for future public and private investment in our community. This investment can take many forms, including, but not limited to, our community's financial, civic, and creative resources. In Schuyler County, this is a collective investment by our residents, businesses, churches, and our local governments that will shape the physical, social, and economic character of our county.

What is the County Wide Comprehensive Plan (CWCP)?

The CWCP is a comprehensive plan with a broader scale and focus. Instead of looking at a single municipality, the CWCP looks at all of the municipalities at the same time, which allows for a more cohesive approach. In addition, the CWCP covers a wider range of topics than a typical municipal comprehensive plan.

According to New York State County Law, Section 239-D a County Comprehensive Plan consists of, "general statements of goals, objectives, principles, policies, and standards upon which proposals for the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth and development of the county are based." The law goes on to state that a County Comprehensive Plan should take, "consideration of regional needs and the official plans of other governmental units and agencies within the county."

Why the County Wide Comprehensive Plan?

During the initial update of the County Comprehensive Plan in 2011, a number of municipalities also began updating and creating their own local comprehensive plans. Ultimately, seven of our twelve municipalities were developing or updating their own local comprehensive plans. This led to the idea for a CWCP.

The CWCP will serve three purposes.

- The CWCP will articulate the overall shared vision for the Villages, Towns and the County, and the means to achieve that vision. In short, the plan provides a picture of what we want to be in 20-25 years and the steps needed to get there together. As a community, the decisions we make shape our physical, social, and economic character. We want to make sure that we are all on the same page and working toward the same goals. A countywide comprehensive plan is the agreed upon strategy that guides us as we move forward together.
- The CWCP will assist municipalities in the development of their local plans. The CWCP will not only replace the existing county comprehensive plan, but also act as a resource for all of our municipalities as they create and update their own comprehensive plans.
- Lastly, the CWCP provides an opportunity for our municipalities to work together, leverage their resources, and reduce duplication of efforts.

PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process used in the development of this plan consisted of public input sessions held across the County, stakeholder interviews with individuals ranging from the agricultural community to school superintendents. Additionally, an advisory committee was formed to contribute to the process and plan development. An extensive review of local plans, studies, and public input session minutes was also completed in order to ensure alignment of the CWCP with local goals and objectives.

The Role of Home Rule

New York State law provides local governments the authority to enact laws. In the case of overlapping jurisdictions, such as a town within a county, authority is granted to the most local form of government. For example, even though the Town of Hector completely surrounds the Village of Burdett, it has no jurisdiction over the village because Burdett is the most local form of government of the two. This means any laws, land use regulations, or zoning codes must be enacted by the towns or villages.

Ultimately it falls upon the towns and villages to maintain and update their comprehensive plans, as well as to enact/enforce land use or zoning regulations in response to input from the citizens.

Public Input Sessions

Public Input Sessions were held in the Town of Cayuta, Town of Dix, Town of Hector, Town of Montour, Town of Reading, Town of Tyrone, and Village of Montour Falls. At each public input session approximately eleven topics were explored in further detail. Those topics and some of the common themes within each topic included:

- Agriculture/Forestry
 - As one of the largest segments of our local economy, agricultural land must be protected and promoted.
 - Soil and Water Conservation strategies need to be strengthened.
 - Reforestation should be a priority.
- Environment/Natural Resources/Water
 - Natural resources should be easily accessible to local residents.
 - Eco-tourism should be promoted.
 - Wetland protection is important.
 - Natural resources are a major component of our community.
 - The Finger Lakes are a precious water resource. They must be protected and maintained in order to make them last as a productive natural resource.
- Transportation/Infrastructure
 - There is a lack of regional transportation.
 - Presently, most people have no choice other than the automobile for transportation. Long term planning should promote alternatives (mass transit, rail).
 - Senior citizen transportation options should be considered.
 - Sewage treatment plant consolidation with Watkins Glen/Montour.
 - Maintain local authority over roads.
 - Funds for infrastructure are very tight.
- Economic Development/Businesses
 - Promote local agriculture and agri-tourism.
 - Bring in young minds with innovative technologies. Currently the younger generations have difficulty finding well paying jobs that are also fulfilling in the area.
 - Need a diverse range of businesses/economy.
 - Development of more wineries and small business and without a lot of large scale industrialization.
 - Financial incentives should be made available to entrepreneurs with innovative companies.



Photo Credit: Schuyler County Planning Department

- Tourism
 - Need to balance the need for tourism, without losing small town feel.
 - Need to package and sell events/attractions.
 - Inter-county scenic byways.
 - The Finger Lakes are a centerpiece for eco-tourism.
 - Comprehensive plan should advocate preservation of existing trail systems and the expansion of mountain bike trails.
- Education
 - Education within the County should provide a focus for indigenous issues such as agriculture, wine industry, renewable markets, and sustainability.
 - Too many school districts with students going in many different directions.
 - Need for apprenticeships within local businesses.
- Social Concerns/Health Care
 - Need for recreational opportunities for youth.
 - Hard for rural hospital to attract healthcare providers.
- Lack of housing for those with specialized needs (mental health, domestic abuse).
- Number of homeless is increasing.
- The county has overall poor health behaviors ranking 35th out of 62 NYS counties in health behaviors. Such as tobacco use, diet and exercise, alcohol use.
- Historic and Cultural Resources
 - Effort should be made to protect, restore, and re-purpose historic buildings.
 - Preserve cemeteries.
 - Create a salt museum.
 - Preserve old barns.
- Government and Public Services
 - In favor of green initiatives.
 - Coordination of town/village governments without losing identity of the community.
 - Taxes are too high.
 - There is merit in investigation of consolidation of services, perhaps merging of counties.
 - Tax-exempt entities should provide something in support of town services (payment in lieu of taxes).
- Energy
 - Wind Energy, Geothermal Energy and Micro Hydroelectric Generation are viable options within the County and should be explored.
 - Residential energy upgrades can be a source of local employment as well as a way to conserve energy and save money for homeowners. Both strategies help preserve our local economy.
 - Develop methods for using agricultural methane.
- Land Use and Housing
 - We cannot shut out development; must be done properly.
 - Prefer zoning vs. land use laws.
 - Preserve the idea of a rural county.
 - Promote “Green” building codes.
 - Need mix of housing.
 - Need housing to attract people to the area.

All of these topics and discussion items were used to create the village, town and county policy sections.

Schuyler County Planning Quick Facts\////\

	2012 Population	Land Use					
		Comprehensive Plan Date	Zoning	Site Plan	Subdivision	Planning Board	
Schuyler County	18,514	2015	-	-	-	Yes	
Town of Catharine	1,764	2015	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	
Town of Cayuta	554	No	No	No	No	No	
Town of Dix	3,912	2001	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Town of Hector	4,956	In progress	No	No	No	No	
Town of Montour	2,325	2007	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Town of Orange	1,668	2012	No	No	No	Yes	
Town of Reading	1,713	2004 - Update	In progress	No	Yes	No	Yes
Town of Tyrone	1,622	2013 - Update	In progress	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Village of Burdett	337	2014	No	No	No	No	
Village of Montour Falls	1,714	2007	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
Village of Odessa	589	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	
Village of Watkins Glen	1,860	2013	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. The foreground and middle ground are dominated by large, rectangular agricultural fields. Some fields are green, while others are brown, suggesting different stages of crop growth or harvest. A network of roads and paths crisscrosses the landscape. In the background, there are dense forests with trees showing some autumnal colors. The overall scene is a typical rural agricultural setting.

THE COUNTY

The following county profile provides a snapshot of the entire county and its characteristics. The profile begins with a brief introduction and key statistics followed by a narrative outlining the County's history, demographics, and assets, which help to identify opportunities and challenges to be addressed within the County. Collectively this information and data served to guide the creation of the countywide policies included at the end of this section.

Introduction



Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce

Schuyler County is located in the heart of the scenic Finger Lakes region of Upstate New York. The county is comprised of a vibrant community of small towns and villages supported by a flourishing agricultural, winery and tourist industry. Schuyler County offers a variety of landscapes, outdoor recreational activities, wildlife habitats, and economic opportunities.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the 2012 population of Schuyler County was 18,541. The county is approximately 328 square miles, with a population density that hovers around 54 people per square mile. The population and density varies greatly from town to town and between the villages and hamlets.

The defining feature of the Schuyler County landscape is Seneca Lake, which effectively bisects the County, leading to a physical division that often translates directly into community and economic differences. This physical division also has a tendency to make east-west travel around the County difficult. The county hosts the only National Forest in New York State and three state forests.

The area's early development as a tourist location was due in part to the many gorges and waterfalls that grace the County. However, most of the early water-related industrial development also revolved around these prime locations which can present current challenges as the push for redevelopment and community revitalization continues to grow.

The main challenges facing Schuyler County mirror those faced by many rural communities in New York State. Increasing operational cost and a low population density make it increasingly difficult to provide community services without large tax increases.

Key Issues

1. Protection of Farmland
2. Limited Transportation Options
3. Budget Constraints
4. Lack of Access to Goods and Services
5. Infrastructure Upgrades

AT A GLANCE

2012 Population 18,514

2000 Population 19,224

Land Area 328 Sq. Mi.

Water Area..... 14 Sq. Mi.

Median Age 44

Density... 59 People/Sq.Mile

Land Use Policies

Comp. Plan Yes
Zoning N/A
Site Plan N/A
Subdivision N/A
Planning Board Yes

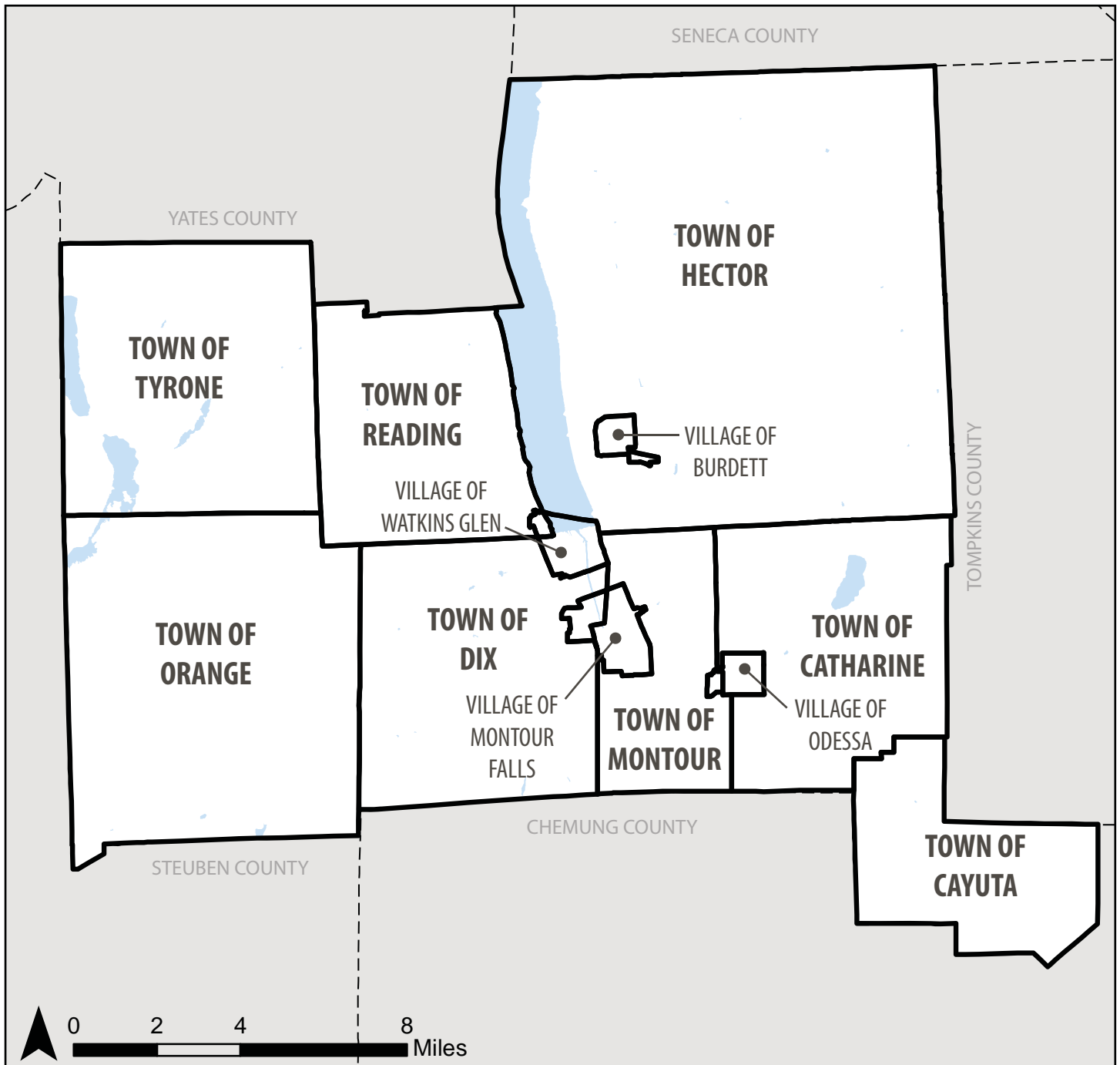


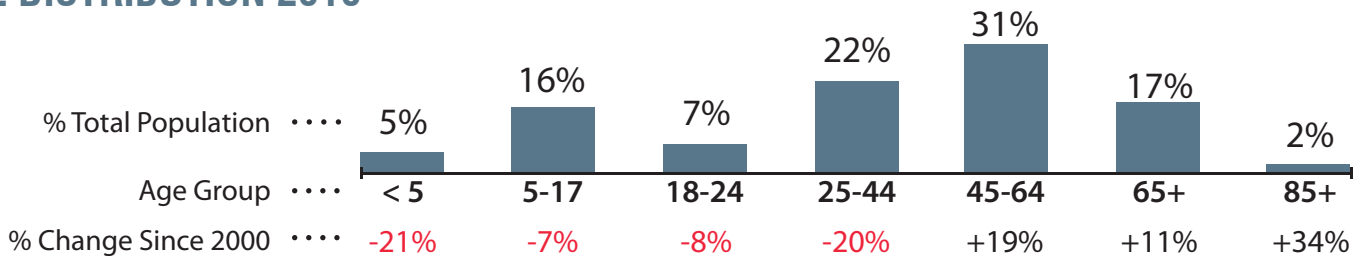
Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

Schuyler County Demographics

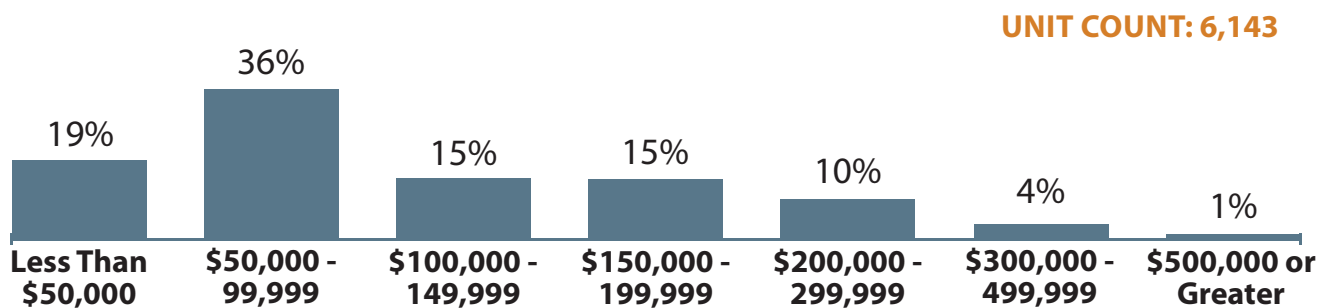
KEY INDICATORS



AGE DISTRIBUTION 2010

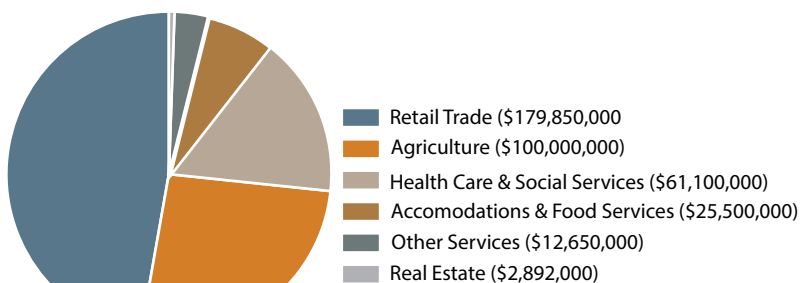


DISTRIBUTION OF HOME VALUES

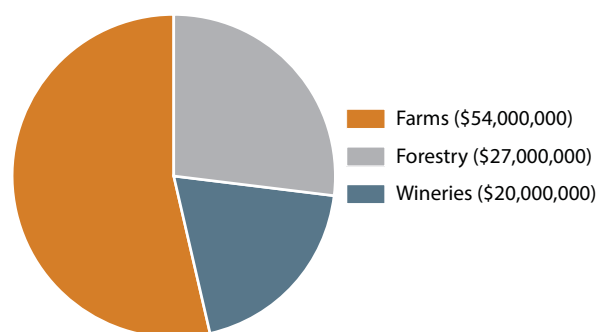


ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Industry by Revenue



Agricultural Industry by Revenue



*Economic Data for Manufacturing, Wholesale Trade, Information, Educational Services, & Arts and Entertainment is unavailable within the 2007 Economic Census

History



Formed in 1855 from three surrounding counties - Tompkins, Chemung, and Steuben, Schuyler County has a long history. The county was named in honor of General Philip Schuyler, a Revolutionary War patriot, who, along with General George Washington, planned the Sullivan-Clinton Expedition to rid the region of Indians loyal to the British.

After the war some of the veterans of the Sullivan-Clinton Expedition returned to the region to settle the lands. As they are known today, Schuyler's eight towns were formed as follows: Catharine in 1798; Hector 1802; Reading 1806; Tyrone 1822; Cayuta 1824; Dix 1835; Orange 1836; and Montour, the last defined geographically, 1860, five years after the County was established. Watkins Glen was officially declared the County seat in 1877 after a prolonged legal struggle with Montour Falls for the designation.

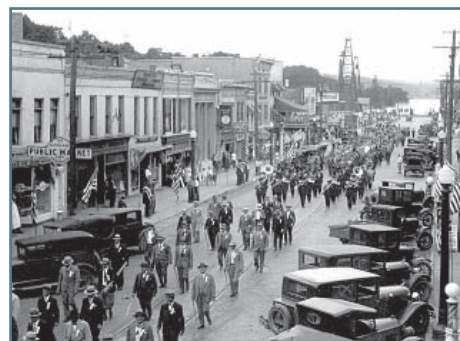
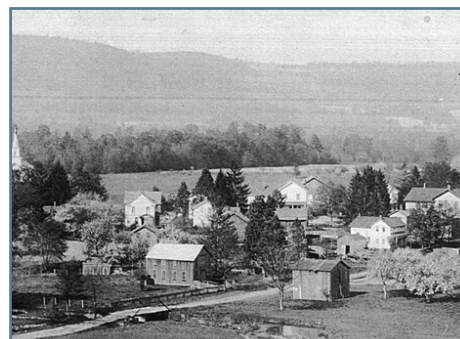
While Schuyler County is primarily a rural and agricultural county, auto racing has been an integral part of the history of the County and Watkins Glen since 1948. Watkins Glen held the first road race since before World War II on October 2, 1948. The original road course is now on the National Register of Historic Places and racing continues to be an important piece of Schuyler County's heritage.

Schuyler County's Historical Potential

Part of Schuyler County's unique sense of place comes from its long and rich history. However, there has been very little promotion of this history. While some historic plaques are located throughout the County there is an overall lack of signage, brochures or even tours around the County exploring its history.

Each fall the Grand Prix Festival of Watkins Glen is held. The festival celebrates the heritage of motor racing in Watkins Glen and attracts racing enthusiasts of all kinds to the community. The promotion of more events like this may be another way to grow tourism and the tax base.

Schuyler County's rich historical resources are an asset yet to be fully realized.



Photos: Watkins Glen c.1920 (Top Left)
Above: 1. Alpine c.1905 2. Odessa c.1910
3. Tyrone c.1910 4. Burdett c.1920
Photos Provided By: Schuyler County
Historical Society

Culture & Heritage



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

In 2011, the American Planning Association released an article, entitled “Community Heritage and Culture,” which linked a healthy community with its ability to preserve and develop its culture. In other words, a healthy community both acknowledges and respects its heritage and history, while welcoming newer cultural influences that arise over the years. The research suggests that a strong community culture can be developed with the addition of active community-based organizations and engaging public spaces.

The County has a great deal of cultural resources, providing a personal connection to the community for both residents and tourists as well as a source of economic potential as these resources are developed and enjoyed by visitors.

Much of the heritage and culture of the county is deeply tied to its historical character as a rural, farming community near the lakes, with a strong background in local food and wine, racing, wildlife and recreation, and seasonal tourism.

Our towns have a rich cultural resource in the form of the region’s natural environment. This provides our communities with a number of parks and open spaces that act not only as a public space for leisure or recreational activities, but also link residents and visitors to our unique heritage of natural resources and agriculture. Protecting the natural environment and local character will help to protect these resources as defining features of the area.

Our villages also have a great foundation of cultural resources that serve their local communities as well as the greater Schuyler County region. The existence of well-established churches, schools, civic associations, community social service agencies, lively main streets, parks, and other places where people gather in our villages help bring

our community together and highlight the history of the entire county. Protecting these cultural resources will involve efforts to preserve and enhance the existing infrastructure and social frameworks that support the institutions within our communities in order to continue to increase residents’ quality of life and attract visitors.

In order to build upon the existing cultural framework of our county and strengthen our cultural vitality, focus should be placed on providing residents and visitors alike with a diverse selection of leisure, arts, and recreational opportunities.

The arts community is on the rise in our County, and it will be important for the County to support the development of this emerging cultural asset. Enhanced recreational opportunities within of our local parks, natural areas, and green spaces should be a priority.

Likewise, festivals and events offered by our towns and villages and their local businesses or organizations are an important function of the community that highlights our past and present culture. These types of activities will not only attract more visitors, but also bring residents together, strengthening our sense of community pride and sense of place.

Increasing public access to these resources, our community can create vibrant spaces, which residents and visitors of all ages or incomes can enjoy. In addition, expanding the regular programming within these spaces increases the quality of life for residents, and enhances [the overall experience of visitors.](#)



Natural Resources

Schuyler County has abundant natural resources and recreational opportunities that not only draw tourists to the area but are also irreplaceable assets to the County. Natural resources provide the county with an essential component of the overall economic base.

In addition to the enormous economic benefits, the natural resources in the county provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and a means to foster healthy lifestyles by residents.

All of the natural resources, coupled with the numerous trails and gorges, provide nearly

unlimited recreational opportunities within the County, including, but not limited to, wildlife observation, nature study, hiking, mountain biking, canoeing, hunting, trapping, fishing and wildlife photography.

These activities provide a variety of opportunities and benefits for physical and mental health.

Water Resources

The county's natural water resources are beyond compare. The southern portion of Seneca Lake is located within Schuyler County. Seneca Lake is the largest of all of the Finger Lakes

and the deepest lake within the state. The lake is home to some of the best boating and fishing in the region. Waneta and Lamoka Lakes, located within the Town of Tyrone, are two of the better bass and muskie fishing lakes in the state.

Forest

The five state forests in the county as well as forest stands on private properties provide access to recreational opportunities and produce many environmental benefits. Residents and visitors have close access to a variety of activities such as hunting, hiking, and wildlife observation. This, in turn, contributes to the local economy.



Photos: (Top of Page) Watkins Glen State Park. (Clockwise from Above) 1. Sailboat on Seneca Lake 2. Finger Lakes National Forest 3. Fishing on the lakes 4. Kayakers in Seneca Lake Harbor 5. Trail Head - Catharine Valley 6. Shequaga Falls. **Provided By:** Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce

In addition, these forested areas absorb carbon emitted by industry and automobiles, capturing a large amount of air and water pollutants. Working to protect the forested areas of the county will contribute not only to the pristine air and water quality of the area, but also protect tourism sector of the local economy.

Located between Seneca and Cayuga Lakes, the Forest occupies 11,083 acres in Schuyler County and is managed by the US Forest Service as a multiple use land area and enjoyed for a wide range of quality recreational opportunities, forest scenery, and an extensive trail network. The Forest provides over 30 miles of trails, three developed campgrounds, one specifically for horse users, and ponds that are stocked with fish on an annual basis.

A 4 mile segment of the Finger Lakes Trail (or North Country Scenic Trail) travels thru the Forest along with the 12 mile Interloken connector trail. Additional recreational opportunities include, horseback riding, bird watching, hunting, skiing and snowmobiling.

State Park

The Watkins Glen State Park is one of the most visited state parks in New York State, and has a reputation for being one of the most breathtaking as well. The gorge path winds over two miles and descends 400 feet, generating 19 waterfalls along its course.

Views and Vistas

Throughout the County the views and vistas are attractions in themselves. In 2012, Route 414 along the east side of Seneca Lake received a Scenic Byway designation, making it the first within Schuyler County. Through continued promotion and preservation of natural resources they will remain a vital part of the County's great resources and continue to be a boost to tourism and the local economies.

Trails

Finger Lakes Trail

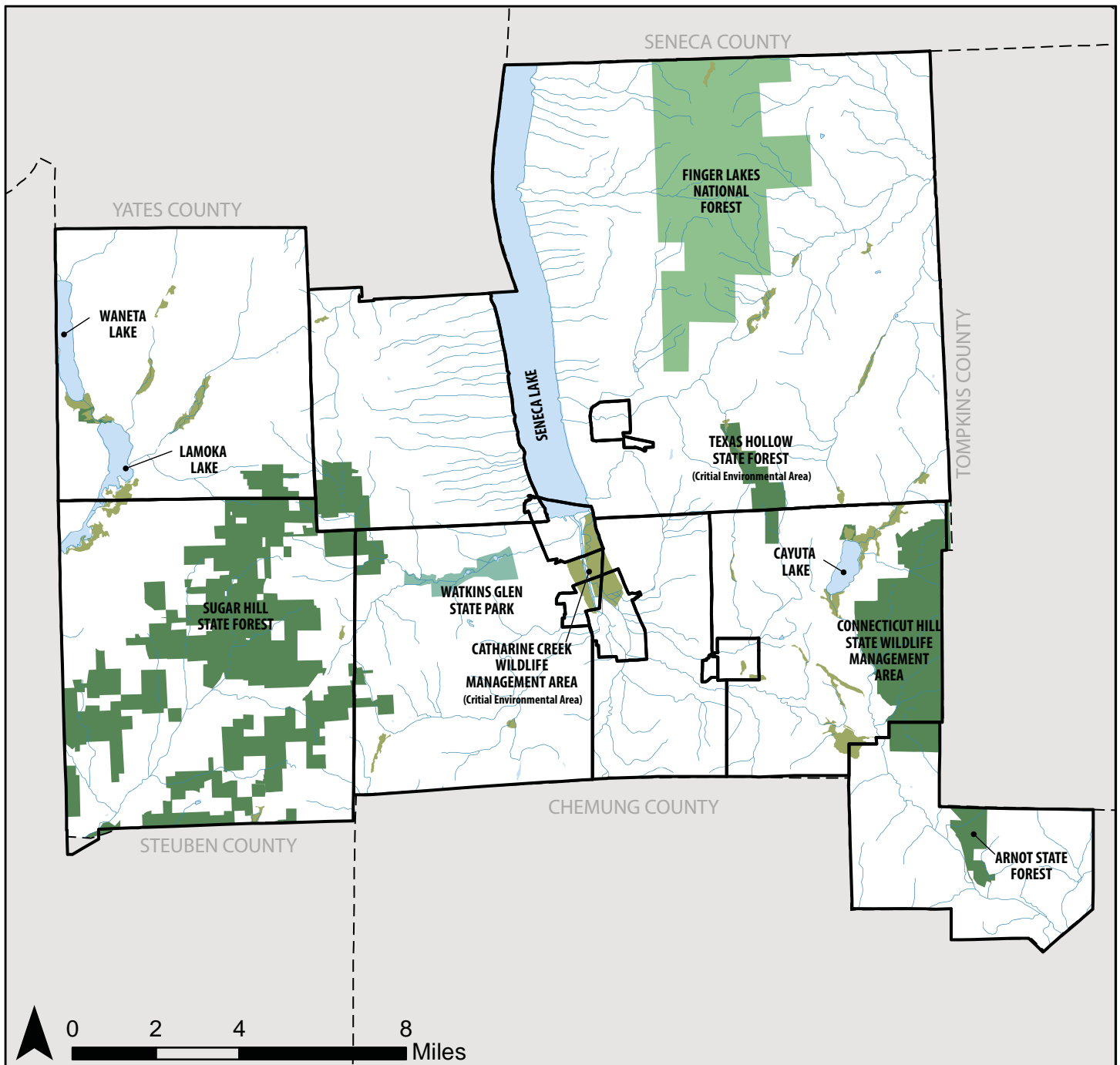
The Finger Lakes Trail (FLT) is a major asset to the county, running through seven towns and villages.

The FLT is a footpath spanning the entire state of NY, and contributing miles of hiking trails throughout the County. Multiple offshoot trails extend access to this resource to the surrounding areas. In all, the trail provides locals with opportunities for recreation and healthy lifestyles as well as drawing tourists to the area.

Catharine Valley Trail

The Catharine Valley Trail (CVT) provides nine miles of multiuse, primarily off-road facilities. This trail connects the villages of Watkins Glen and Montour Falls, and extends to additional villages in the adjacent Chemung County. The trail provides a great deal of opportunities for active recreation, pedestrian access to services, and preservation. The CVT also provides access to the Catharine Creek Marsh Wildlife Management Area.





Schuyler County - Natural Resources

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Lakes |  NYS State Park |
|  Streams |  Marsh/Wetlands |
|  National Forest |  Municipal Boundary |
|  NYS Forest | |



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

Agriculture

Agriculture within the County consists of three main components: farms (i.e. dairy, crops, and hay), forestry, and vineyards. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture there are 393 total farms within the County. Recently there has been a shift from large-scale farms to multiple small-scale farms. However, within the dairy industry, the opposite is occurring and land has become increasingly scarce and competitors are vying for land.

Schuyler County has three agricultural districts. Landowners within the agricultural districts are eligible for certain incentives and protections from the state and

local governments. The districts are designed to promote agricultural activity within a district.

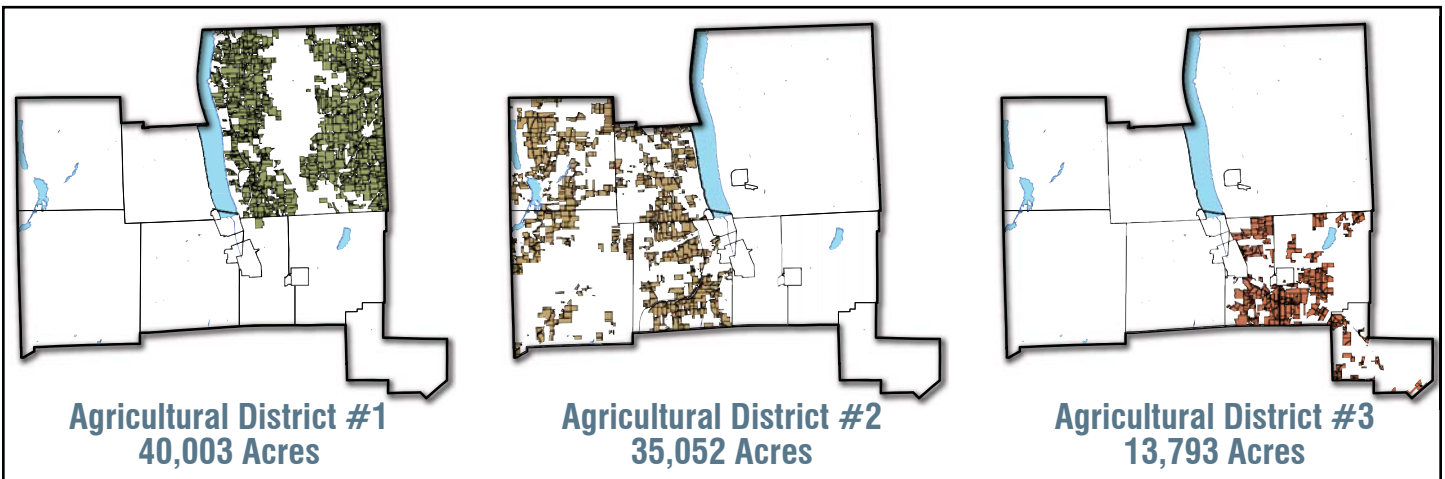
- District #1 was created in 1995, encompassing about 100 farms, primarily in the Town of Hector
- District #2 was created in 1999, encompassing about 70 farms in the Towns of Dix, Orange, Reading, and Tyrone.
- District #3 was created in 2000, encompassing about 45 farms in the Towns of Catharine, Cayuta, and Montour.

Development poses the most significant challenge to agricultural areas within the County. Development can come in the form of residential development or large-scale industrial development. Residential development

is a slower process where land is sold piece-by-piece, resulting in unfarmable discontinuous parcels of land. Large-scale development can convert a large amount of viable farmland in a single application.

As the agricultural industry and businesses continue to expand

A balanced approach to development is important to not negatively impact farmland.



and land becomes increasingly scarce, it will be imperative to not only protect farmland but also balance the need for additional farmland with the need for housing and community functions throughout the County to maintain a high quality of life for all of the County's residents and businesses.

Wine Industry

Capitalizing on Schuyler County's natural resources and climate, the wine industry is growing at a phenomenal pace. There are currently 26 wineries, up from 22 in 2008 (according to the New York Wine & Grape Foundation) and 61 vineyards in the County maintaining 1335 acres in grape production, down from 64 in 2007 (2012 Census of Agriculture).

As the number of wineries has continued to grow, the reputation of Finger Lakes wineries has also improved. More wineries are winning awards at both the national and international levels, attracting an increased number of visitors to the area

Agriculture's Economic Impact

Agriculture has a significant impact on the tourism industry and economy of Schuyler County. Tourists come to the County to visit many of the u-pick farms as well as the growing number of wineries. Agriculture produces much higher economic multipliers than any other sector of the Schuyler County economy, and as a result comprises a large portion of the County's economy. The three components of agriculture in Schuyler County contribute over \$100 million to the local economy.

Between 2002 and 2007, agricultural sales grew from \$17 million to \$33 million and the average sales per farm nearly doubled from \$44,000 to \$84,000.

The wineries in Schuyler County bring in nearly a million visitors every year and contribute approximately \$20 million to the local economy (Agricultural Development and Farmland Protection Plan 2008).

Agriculture produces much higher economic multipliers than other sectors of the Schuyler County economy.

Understanding the importance of farmland, the County was able to obtain a \$600,000 grant from New York State Agriculture and Markets to help protect farmland.

Agriculture has helped shape Schuyler County into what it has become today and is poised to continue to do so in the future.



Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce



Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce

Tourism

Schuyler County’s rural and agricultural roots exist alongside a newly thriving year-round tourism industry.

Auto Racing

The auto racing industry brings in tens of thousands of visitors every year. The original historic road course is a significant tourist draw. In 2012, the Grand Prix Festival brought in roughly 25,000 visitors.

Schuyler County is home to Watkins Glen International Speedway (WGI), which has been home to nearly every class of racing including: Formula 1, the World Sportscar Championship, Trans-Am, Can-Am, NASCAR Sprint Cup Series, and the IndyCar Series. The annual NASCAR race consistently ranks as the largest single day sporting event in New York State. In 2013, an estimated 94,000 people attended NASCAR weekend.

The International Motor Racing and Research Library, which provides an extensive archive on

the history of open wheel and motor cross racing, is located in the Village of Watkins Glen. The Library hosts multiple events and lecture series during the year to promote and celebrate the history of auto racing not only in Upstate New York but throughout the world.

Winery, Distillery and Craft Beer Industry

The wine industry has one of the largest impacts on tourism in Schuyler County. Drawing people from around the world to experience the world-class wines and beauty of the Finger Lakes Region. The Seneca Lake Wine Trail holds seven major weekend long events during the year, attracting thousands of visitors to each event as well as several smaller events that allow visitors to experience all that the area has to offer.

WGI hosts two large non-racing events each year, The Finger Lakes Wine Festival, a three day festival with nearly 200 wineries and non-wine vendors, and the newest event “Glentoberfest”

featuring many of the area’s craft breweries. These events allow the track to be utilized beyond the racing season, and help to continue to attract visitors and contribute to the Schuyler County economy.

Arts and Entertainment

WGI has also served as a successful concert venue with concerts bringing in visitors in the tens of thousands. Concert events at WGI are growing in popularity and should continue to be promoted.

There are several theater troupes within Schuyler County that put on multiple musicals, plays, and shows throughout the year.

Natural Resources

Schuyler County continues to attract tourists looking to explore the natural beauty of the area. The Watkins Glen State Park attracted roughly 530,000 visitors between January 2013 and September 2013.

The Catharine Valley Trail, which connects Watkins Glen and Horseheads, NY, is a well-known cross country skiing, cycling and hiking route, attracting visitors throughout the year to participate in organized events as well as enjoy the natural beauty of the trail. The regional Finger Lakes Trail crosses the County from east to west, connecting to other trails, as well as providing tourists the opportunity to hike across the County. The trail passes through the Watkins Glen State Park, the Finger Lakes National Forest.

The Finger Lakes National Forest, with a Visitor Center located on Route 414 in the Town of Hector, provides visitors the opportunity to camp and hike the many

trails available for hiking, horse-back riding, cross country skiing, mountain biking and snowmobile.

Schuyler County Agri-Tourism Initiative

Tourism and agriculture are two of the largest sectors of the Schuyler County economy. Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development (SCOPED), Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schuyler County and Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce have partnered to assist in adding a tourism component to some of the County's best farm businesses.

Accommodations

The county is home to approximately 15 Hotel/Motels, 20 Bed & Breakfasts, and numerous camping areas and vacation rentals. As a result of increased tourism within the County, room tax figures have increased steadily for the past nine years and are expected to continue to increase into the future.

A factor in the increase of room tax figures is the completion of the Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel, which has created an environment that is not only welcoming to visitors but to local residents as well. The hotel includes a 300 seat private conference room that not only attracts business and community events, but also contributes to the area's growing popularity as a wedding destination.

It will be important to continue to promote tourism as an opportunity for new development as well as a way to increase the tax base and sales tax revenue. The promotion of tourism throughout Schuyler County will also be integral to attracting visitors and maintaining high room tax revenue.



Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce



Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce



Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce



Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce



Photo Provided By: Village of Burdett Resident



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

Community Revitalization



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

Community Revitalization has become more prevalent within Schuyler County. There has been a great deal of revitalization due to the efforts of business owners and SCOPED, Schuyler County's economic development agency. The agency has focused on investments in the County's main streets, and the rehabilitation/reuse of its existing buildings and previously developed land to improve economic potential. More and more new businesses are locating in Schuyler County and many existing businesses are rehabilitating their buildings. To date, a total of over \$20 million dollars of grant money has been awarded; leveraging 36.5 million for our local communities.

Project Seneca

There is perhaps no greater example of community revitalization and redevelopment within Schuyler County than the recent development of Project Seneca. Project Seneca, is a world-class sustainable/livable community redevelopment effort that will drive regional economic growth through investment in targeted initiatives along the southern shore of Seneca Lake and throughout Schuyler County.

Project Seneca was conceived in 2012 as an effort to revitalize the lakefront in Watkins Glen. The concept was soon expanded to include additional economic development efforts in the Village of Watkins Glen, along the canal

and in the Village of Montour Falls it is estimated to be a \$200 million investment which is expected to spur \$1 billion in private investment.

The primary drivers of the project include the protection and improvement of Seneca Lake/Chemung Canal water quality, job growth, stimulating tourism and waterfront revitalization.

The new Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant will be the catalyst for all future Project Seneca development. Its relocation will create an opportunity for a world-class, mixed-use waterfront adjacent to a growing downtown redevelopment area in the Village of Watkins Glen.

It also creates an opportunity to redevelop the gateway to the Montour Falls waterfront area.

Key Components/Proposed Projects Include:

- Revitalization of the Southern Lakefront Area.
- Northern Gateway Area Improvements.
- Expansion of the existing waterfront multi-purpose path to provide a continuous connection between Seneca Harbor Park, Clute Park and Tank Beach.
- Development of a new Public Boat Launch/ RV Park along the east side of the Chemung Canal.
- Redevelopment of the Montour Falls Wastewater Treatment Facility site and the former Shepard Niles property.

Another large-scale investment within the County is the development of a \$12 million dollar, 235-mile optical fiber backbone. This backbone is a partnership with the surrounding counties and Corning Incorporated. Schuyler County has invested almost \$190,000 in this initiative. A new fiber backbone will enable residents in Schuyler County to access high-speed broadband connectivity, and it will reduce existing communications costs for public safety and interoffice communications.

SCOPED has also assisted in the creation of 50 new housing units within historic commercial buildings or historic schools in the downtown districts of Montour Falls and Watkins Glen over the last few years. The majority are upper floor units with retail opportunities on the first floor. There have been three main objectives with increasing the number of available housing units:

1. Revitalize older buildings that have had upper floor vacancy.
2. Increase the housing stock for our residents and workforce with more choices and options of living quarters.
3. Increase the tax base.

Many of these received funding through the New York State Main Street Program or the Restore New York Program. Plans are also currently underway for the redevelopment of the 94,000 square foot Watkins Glen Middle School, which is slated to be developed into 52 senior housing units.

Additional recent Economic and Community Development Projects:

- Visitor Center Feasibility Study (with Watkins Glen Chamber)
- Agri-Tourism Development (with Cornell Extension)
- Watkins Glen/Montour Falls Improvement Strategy (2005)
- Watkins Glen Main Street (with Cornell Extension) (2006)
- Montour House Renovation (2008)
- Montour Falls Main Street (incl. Montour House) (2008)
- Watkins Glen Lakefront Management Strategy (2010)
- Flats on Broadway Apartments (Rural Urban Center) (2010)
- Green Infrastructure Strategy (with Cornell Extension) (2011)
- Empire Pipeline Fund
- Watkins Glen NY Main Street (2011-13)
- Waterfront Master Development Plan (2012-13)
- Montour Falls Tree Grant (2011-13)
- Watkins Glen Water Works Development (2010-13)
- Watkins Glen Rural Area Revitalization Program (2012-14)
- Burdett Rural Area Revitalization Program (2012-14)
- Odessa Rural Area Revitalization Program (2012-14)

Projects such as these prove that Schuyler County is poised for growth and continued successful development.

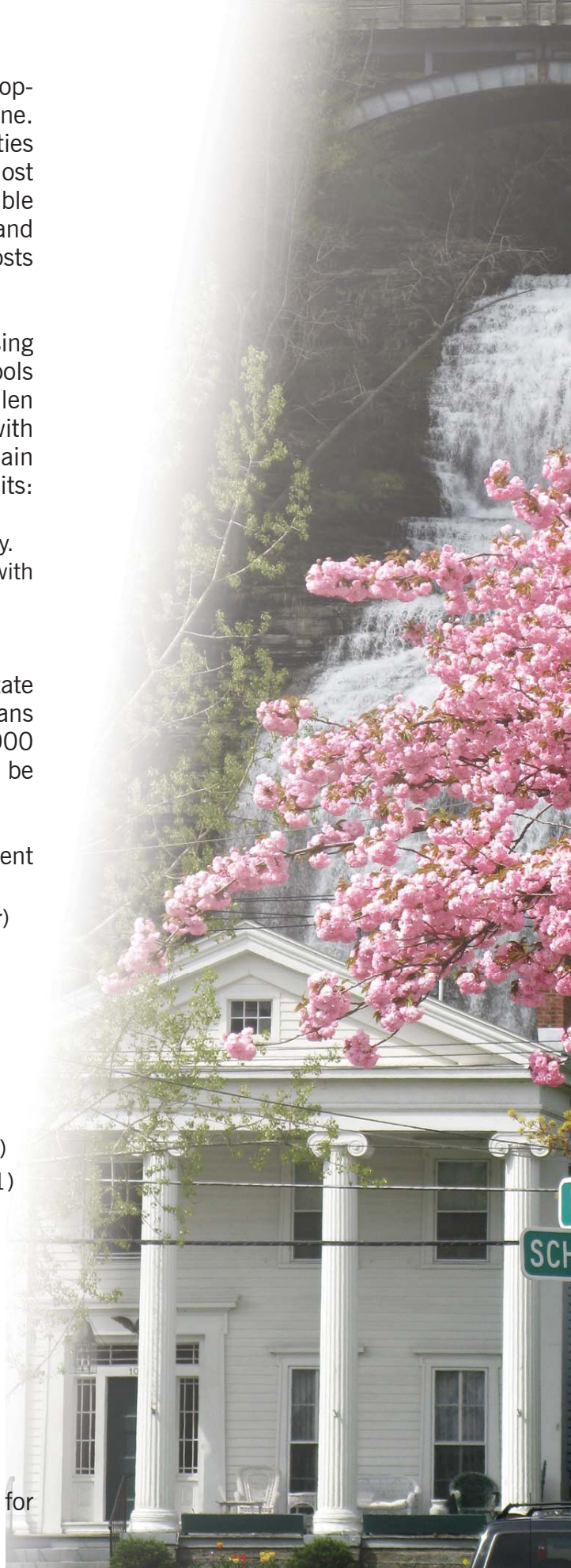


Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce



MEETING *the* CHALLENGES *of* TOMORROW

Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

Although the County has a number of positive aspects, it still faces challenges. Outlining these challenges is useful for framing the plan and creating policies. It helps to determine which challenges are the most pressing and focuses our attention on how to best solve them.

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

The great recession, which began in 2007, has resulted in significant economic strain for agencies, municipal departments, and the residents of Schuyler County. The recession has led to fewer grant opportunities and reduced program funding, which has resulted in hiring freezes and reduction of staff and programs. The loss of staff, coupled with private sector layoffs, has contributed to the rising unemployment rate in the County. From 2007 to 2012, the unemployment rate in the County rose from 5.1% to 8.4%.

Municipalities

Local municipalities work with limited budgets, largely due to small tax bases. They have begun to take a shared service approach where they share work and equipment, which helps to save money and maintain a high level of service to the local residents.

More dramatic measures include some discussion of government mergers, both at the local and county level. These discussions primarily focus on reducing costs and maintaining services to residents. Such an option would require documented cost savings and an agreement from municipalities, but if completed, would aid in reducing budgets.

Education

Due to the recession, schools have seen decreased funding, while costs continue to increase. All three school districts within the County have seen a decrease in enrollment, making it even more difficult to maintain class sizes and the number of academic programs offered to their students. All of these factors led to the merger of the Watkins Glen Middle School and High School in 2012, within the Watkins Glen Central School District.

Similar conversations to the government mergers have been held to merge school districts or athletic programs in order to save money and help lessen the strain on already stretched budgets.

High Taxes

A general sentiment in Schuyler County and around New York State is that taxes are too high. New York State taxes are a deterrent to business and create hardship for residents. High taxes also impact municipalities, as high taxes coupled with unfunded State mandates further strain already stretched budgets and personnel.

POPULATION Declining Population

The population of the County has decreased by 4.6% from 2000 to 2012, from 19,224 to 18,541 residents. Cayuta and Hector enjoyed a slight increase in population, likely do to their proximity to Tompkins County. The

decline in population has been greatest among young adults that leave the County seeking greater opportunities in employment and education. The decline in their numbers reduces the number of school age children, reducing school enrollment.

Across the County, the population is aging, the median age rising from 38.8 in 2000 to 44.2 in 2010. An aging population has greater needs for healthcare, housing, transportation and social services.

Seasonal Population

Schuyler County has a large seasonal population that has a significant impact on the area's economy, physical environment and quality of life. However this portion of the population is not accounted for within the Census which has a negative impact on securing population-based funding such as spending for schools, roads, bridges, hospitals and other essential services, as well as on planning for local needs.

Lack of suitable housing options may deter young professionals, families and recent retirees from purchasing homes and living in the County.

HOUSING

Housing is a long-standing problem within the County. The current housing stock is insufficient to meet demand in all market segments (high, medium and low-income). While new housing construction has been relatively steady over the past five years, new development has not been able to meet the increasing demand for housing.

Another housing challenge in Schuyler County is the poor quality of the housing stock. Housing is essentially the "face" of the community and poor housing conditions drive away potential residents, employees, and employers who choose to relocate to surrounding counties.

In recent years there has been an increase in the reuse and conversion/renovation of old buildings which has contributed more apartments to the housing stock in villages, along with achieving the renovation of historic buildings that add to the character of the local community.

The County continues to see a need for affordable housing for all income levels, along with creating suitable housing for young professionals, families and recent retirees seeking to rent or buy property within the County.

As new housing development occurs, it will be essential to balance the need for all three market segments to continue to attract new residents and meet

Primary Challenges \\\ \ \ \ \

[1] Declining & Aging Population

Over the past 10 years, Schuyler County has lost 4% of its population, while the median age has risen from 38.8 to 44.2. Young people are critical to maintaining a healthy tax base, while planning for an aging population will ensure the quality of life remains high for all residents.

[2] Reduced Budgets, Increased Demands

Budget reductions are in part due to a declining population, but also due to reduced state and federal funding. To stay competitive and maintain service levels, the County must now do more with less. Past efforts regarding department consolidation, sharing services, and finding new revenue streams need to continue into the future.

[3] Infrastructure Development

Developing infrastructure that enables marketplace and residential growth is critical to the County's future. These include public transportation, telecommunications, housing stock development, and ensuring quality public schools.

[4] Rural & Small Town Preservation

Equally important to infrastructure development is maintaining Schuyler County's rural and small-town character. Currently, 24.5% of residents in the county live in an incorporated village. Encouraging housing and business within villages while protecting agricultural land from unplanned development will further this goal.

the needs of the existing population. Considering mixed-use development that fosters pedestrian friendly environments should be additionally considered as a method for meeting the demand for many affordable housing options. In recent years there has been an increase in the reuse and conversion/renovation of old buildings which has contributed more apartments to the housing stock in villages, along with achieving the renovation of historic buildings that add to the character of the local community.

HEALTH & HEALTH CARE

Healthcare is a significant priority for residents and healthcare professionals in the County. Access to doctors and services is the primary issue for residents. Access issues refer to limited transportation choices and service options. For example, it can be difficult for some residents to get to and from doctors appointments, which relates back to the lack of public transportation options. Additionally due to limited services available within the County, residents often have to go outside of the County for specialist appointments.

In terms of health status, for the most part, Schuyler County residents are in good shape.

Schuyler residents fall within the New York State averages of various health indicators (i.e. mortality, health behaviors, and physical environment), and the County ranked 29 out of 62 counties in the New York State annual health rankings by Robert Wood Johnson.

While the overall health of the County is on the positive side, there are some issues that need addressing. As a result of the 2013 Community Health Assessment, the County has developed two community health priorities to prevent chronic disease. The first priority is to reduce obesity in children and adults. The Department of Health 2009 Community Health Assessment stated that the percentage of adults who are obese in Schuyler County was roughly 33% (State average is 23%) and the child obesity rate was 27%. While approximately 80% of adults in the County engage in some type of physical activity, our obesity rate has been increasing. In conjunction with the Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) committee, there should be an increased focus on creating built environments that promote healthy lifestyles and physical activity including infrastructure that provides safe options for daily activities and errands by foot or bike.

The second priority is to reduce illness, disability and death related to diabetes. Currently the diabetes death rate in Schuyler County of 30.2 percent is nearly double the NYS rate of 16.8 percent. The number of adults and children with Type II Diabetes has also been trending upwards.

Proper nutrition and access to healthy foods needs to be improved.

An additional concern of residents is with the increase in alcohol and drug use in the County, in both adults and adolescents. Students in junior and high school in Schuyler County frequently have a higher rate of substance abuse than the national averages, predominately in alcohol and tobacco usage, but they also reported higher usage in heroin, marijuana, and meth. Additionally, 25% of the adult population in the county is considered to be in excessive consumption of alcohol. These numbers are exacerbated and potentially linked to the number of poor mental health days in the County.



Photo Provided By: Village of Burdett Resident



Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

On average, residents experience 4.6 poor mental health days per 30 day period, one of the highest rates in the state.

Poor mental health, alcoholism, and drug abuse can cause tremendous amounts of stress and harm to families and the entire community. Working to effectively manage and react to existing mental health and substance abuse situations as well as working to prevent both younger and older populations from beginning these unhealthy cycles should be a priority.

Overall, healthcare within the County is better than some of the surrounding counties and communities, ranking 19 of 67 in terms of overall health outcomes. However, attention needs to be placed on improving access to affordable medical care, as 11% of county residents are uninsured. Priority should be given to improving certain health indicators as well as outcomes.

SOCIAL CONCERNS

During public input sessions, residents raised a number of social concerns, most frequently the issue of poverty and homelessness within the County. Although somewhat lower than the State poverty average of 14.5%, roughly 9% of residents in Schuylers County currently live below the federal poverty line. Poverty coupled with limited housing options increases homelessness.

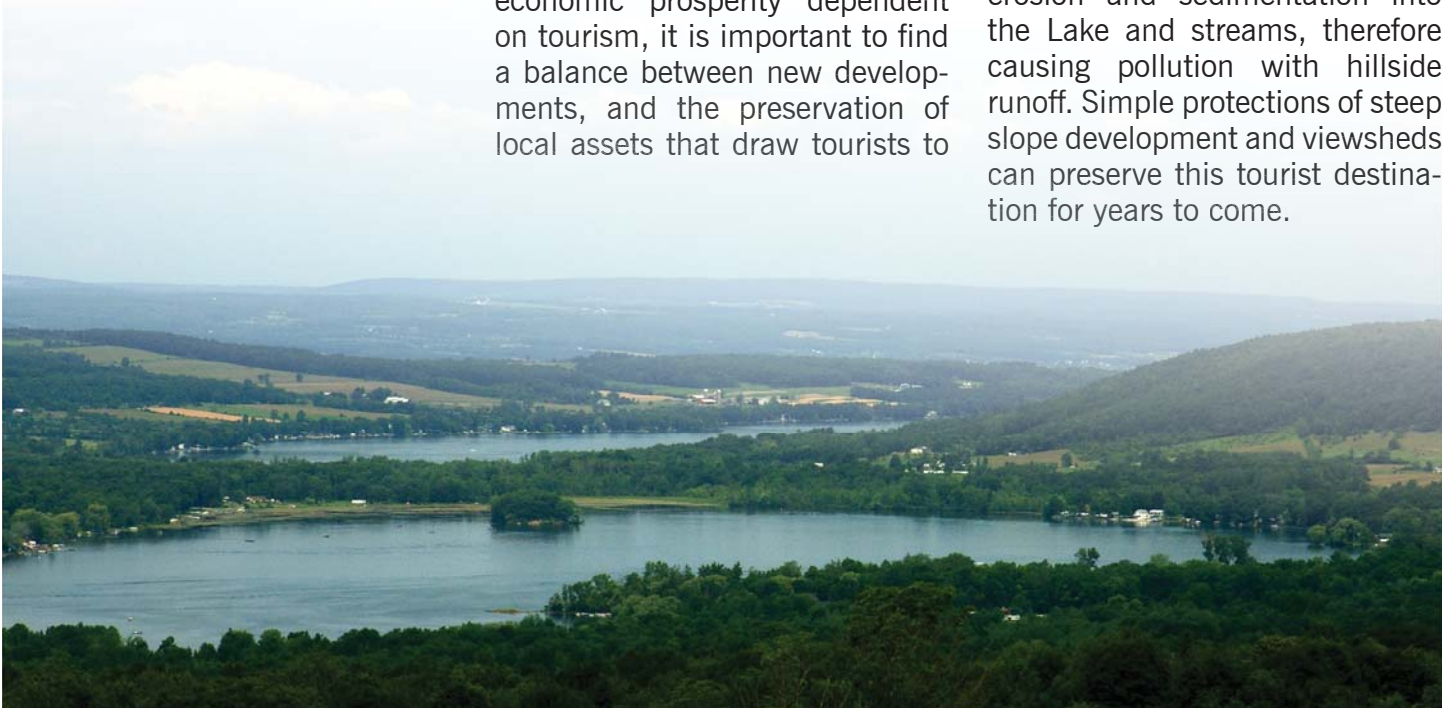
Hunger and nutrition are other significant concerns. Proper nutrition and, specifically, access to healthy food needs to be improved. Helping our residents with these problems is a challenge, especially with program cuts due to limited funding. However, through the creation of additional crop share programs, community gardens, and other community supported programs, positive improvements can be made in addressing the growing issues and concerns.

Scenic Viewsheds and Steep Slopes

With so much of Schuylers County's economic prosperity dependent on tourism, it is important to find a balance between new developments, and the preservation of local assets that draw tourists to

the area. Seneca Lake is a huge draw for tourists who participate in water recreation and stay in lakeside vacation homes. These vacation homes offer a beautiful view of the hills and vineyards that surround the lake. Finding ways to preserve these scenic viewsheds and protect it from contextually insensitive development, will allow the most treasured views to be maintained for years to come.

Just as important as preserving the scenic viewsheds, preserving (and improving) the water quality of Seneca Lake is vital to retaining the Lake as a tourist destination. Much of Schuylers County receives their drinking water from Seneca Lake. The Lake, as well as its tributaries, are used for water recreation sports such as boating, fishing, and swimming. Maintaining that water quality will be required to continue these activities. As the Lake is surrounded by rolling hills, it is imperative that development of the steep slopes (anything above 15% grade) be limited. Building on these steep slopes causes erosion and sedimentation into the Lake and streams, therefore causing pollution with hillside runoff. Simple protections of steep slope development and viewsheds can preserve this tourist destination for years to come.



WASTE MANAGEMENT

Solid Waste

Proper solid waste management and recycling practices can be an effective way to protect our land and environment. The collection and disposal of municipal solid waste within the County has historically been and will continue to be primarily handled by the private sector. Haulers then transport the waste to out of county landfills/transfer stations. Each municipality also contracts independently for recycling services for their residents with the exception of the Towns of Cayuta, Catharine and Montour who offer one central recycling drop-off center for the residents of all three towns. Of the five haulers offering recycling service, three offer single stream collection while the others offer source separated collections. Although this system may not be ideal for tracking waste, it is deemed the most effective and cost-efficient at this point in and for the near future

A potential way to reduce the overall costs associated with waste collection and recycling is through waste reduction. There should be a continued focus on waste reduction through ongoing public education programs on waste reduction opportunities, as well as the promotion of source reduction procurement policies in businesses and at the County level.

Hazardous Waste

In the past there has been a single hazardous waste collection day each year. While this has provided an important service to local residents it has not been sufficient to meet the need for hazardous waste disposal options throughout the year. Partnerships with neighboring counties should be entertained as a way to enhance the existing systems in place. This could also reduce local costs and the waste potentially going into our lakes, lands and forests.

Wastewater

Currently, the two existing wastewater treatment plants within the County are located in the Village of Watkins Glen, and Village

of Montour Falls. Both plants are approximately 50 years old and are nearing capacity or are operating with out-dated technology and infrastructure. Each Village is also experiencing escalating capital and operational and maintenance cost.

It is necessary to improve the existing infrastructure or construct a new regional wastewater treatment plant to handle the existing demand as well as future growth. Integrating clean technologies into new infrastructure could provide the new capacity along with additional economic and environmental benefits.

The first phase and key component of Project Seneca proposes a consolidated regional wastewater treatment plant located along the Chemung Canal to properly treat effluent from the villages of Watkins Glen and Montour Falls with no treated effluent being directly released into Seneca Lake, a primary source of drinking water for many of Schuyler County's residents as well as other municipalities.



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett



TRANSPORTATION

Schuyler County's rural character and low population density make transportation an especially important topic in any discussion of economic and community development.

Public Transportation

The county currently has a public transportation system that operates daily from 7:45 AM - 5:30 PM providing a connection between the Village of Burdett and the Village of Odessa via the Village of Watkins Glen. From 2010-2012, the local system has seen an increase in ridership, from 1,914 riders in 2010 to 14,950 riders in 2012. In January 2014 an additional Monday - Friday service to Corning, NY was established. This service helps connect riders from Schuyler County to the City of Corning and Corning Community College. Also three additional rural routes were established connecting; Bennetsburg, Burdett, Hector, Reynoldsville, and Valois to Watkins Glen. The increase in ridership and the additional routes are a positive sign and show that more residents are in need of additional transportation options. Car Pool and

Van Share options are available in the County, and their expansion or promotion could provide additional transportation access to some more rural areas.

Regional Transportation

There is also a need for an expanded local and regional transit system to assist residents traveling in the County and to neighboring counties. Extending existing lines to connect with existing lines in other counties could expand the transportation network at a reduced cost to taxpayers. An expanded network would support the transportation needs of senior citizens along with providing all residents with reliable transportation to employment opportunities in the population centers of other counties. A regional network could attract new residents into the County and potentially increase the tax base. The additional costs associated with the expansion of regional transit systems should be weighed against the long-term benefits of a successful transportation system.

In June of 2013 a Regional Transportation Study was completed by the Regional Planning Coalition that includes Schuyler, Seneca,

Tompkins, Cortland, Chemung, Tioga, and Cayuga Counties. The study identified the need for the development of a Regional Travel Management Communication Center (RTMCC) that's purpose is to link all of the partners, modes, and systems into a virtual communication system. This approach will provide up to date information and transportation communication in the region with minimal operations overhead. The goal of the project is to link, not duplicate services.

Industrial Transportation

Schuyler County's primary industries rely heavily on truck service for the movement of goods. The large volume of truck traffic contributes to increased noise levels and polluting fumes, along with congestion both in the villages and on the steep highway inclines in the County that require trucks to travel at a reduced speed.

As industries and tourism continue to grow throughout the County, additional traffic congestion and infrastructure issues will arise. It will be imperative to consider all transportation impacts of new development and seek ways to alleviate traffic congestion and reduce unnecessary pollutants.

Medical Transportation

Another significant challenge to both existing and future regional transportation options is NYS Dept. of Health's new Medicaid transportation brokerage having an unintended impact on public transportation, especially in rural counties in central and western Upstate New York. The Medicaid brokerage program has resulted in a significant decline in Medicaid funded passenger trips on rural

public transportation systems. Schuyler County had a cost sharing formula that included Medicaid as a participating funder of the public transportation system. The percentage paid by Medicaid was directly related to the percentage of non-emergency medical transportation riders of the public transit system. This percentage was evaluated and adjusted annually.

The regional call center, Medical Answering Service, currently receives the Medicaid transportation calls for 45 NY counties. The transportation model and rules for transportation do not encourage coordination and focus on the one-trip/one-person model that is not sustainable in rural areas, economically or environmentally, with limited transportation resources. This loss in funding for Medicaid reimbursed trips, coupled with a corresponding loss in state transit operating assistance, is resulting in reduced transit service to the public in many rural areas and threatens the viability of public transportation in a number of counties, including Schuyler.

Personal Auto Transportation

The use of the personal automobile contributes a great deal of noise, congestion, and pollutants into the atmosphere, putting

It will be imperative to consider all transportation impacts of new development and seek ways to alleviate traffic congestion...

strain on transportation systems, residents' travel times, and the natural environment. These negative effects can degrade the quality of life for residents who are driving, or who live near major roadways. While the use of the personal automobile is generally considered an essential component of many rural and less densely populated areas, the hamlets and villages in the county could provide opportunities for residents to drive less, spend less money on transportation costs, improve their individual quality of life and reduce their impact on the local environment and natural resources.

Pedestrian/Biking Transportation

While much of the county is rural, hamlets and villages provide many opportunities to walk or bike for errands or social activities. Providing adequate infrastructure for walking and biking can provide residents in or near those centers with a greater quality of life. A focus on safety and connectivity in these denser areas should be considered as important as

automobile transportation. By providing greater opportunities for residents or visitors to walk or bike safely will provide economic, environmental, and quality of life benefits.

Public Infrastructure Costs

Maintenance of local road systems is a major component of local government budgets. This transportation infrastructure is vulnerable to damage from erosion and flooding. Making investments that improve resilience to flood damage, such as increasing the drainage capacity of bridges and culverts, promote improved safety and reduce long-term costs.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Limited telecommunications access for county residents, in terms of both internet access and cellular network coverage, affects the transfer of information in the County. Limited internet access can deter new businesses from moving into the County.

Limited telecommunications are also a contributing factor to the



Photo Credit: Catharine Valley Trail



Photo Credit: Schuyler County Planning Dept.



Photo Credit: Michael Okoniewski, PPM Inc.

information-sharing problem in the County. Currently, there is no consistent, central point of information. Local news outlets, such as the Watkins Review & Express and the Odessa File, are great resources but they are not reaching all residents. Residents within Schuyler County are getting their information from different sources within and around the County. This coupled with lacking telecommunications means residents may not be receiving complete information.

Natural Resources

Natural Gas Extraction

In recent years, energy development has become a prominent topic in Schuyler County and in New York State.

While natural gas extraction was banned in NYS in 2014, related ancillary services development from the extraction in neighboring states could be a potentially contentious topic due to the social and economic benefits and negative impacts associated with this type of development.

Schuyler County's natural environment is its biggest asset and it is important to protect it in the best possible way. As such, currently the best bet is to err on the side of caution and put in place policies and procedures that will protect our community whether or not ancillary services from the natural gas extraction industry comes to Schuyler County or the surrounding area.

As such, this plan will provide policies that can help our municipalities mitigate, to the greatest extent possible, any negative impacts of the services related to natural gas extraction. By doing



Photo Credit: Eileen Malaney

this, we are neither promoting nor denouncing natural gas extraction. Instead, we are preparing our community for whatever may come.

Alternative Energy Development

In addition to natural gas, the County is beginning to see additional larger-scale industrial energy development. For instance, there is the possibility of a wind farm within the Town of Dix. Just like any large-scale development, it has its positive and negative effects.

Addressing renewable energy & land use issues will become more essential as projects such as the wind farm project wish to locate within the county. The County has additional capacity for clean technologies such as wind and solar energy, which could provide positive benefits for growing the local economy and creating local jobs through these industries. New energy developments might include large industrial scale energy production, or small scale commercial or residential installations.

For all alternative energy developments, a focus on mitigating the potential impacts of alternative energies should be considered in conjunction with the economic development and energy efficiency potential. A concerted effort to install these technologies where appropriate along with reasonable guidelines for contextually sensitive development would result in greater local reliance for energy, greater savings in energy costs, and the minimized negative impact of development on the county's natural resources (ie land, air, and water) and rural character.

The challenge is to ensure the continued protection of our natural resources (i.e. land, air and water), rural character and sense of place while making the most of local energy capabilities.



Photo Credit: Norrie Cornelius

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT **Small Town and Rural Character**

The local landscape is populated by agricultural fields, natural forests, and small towns and villages. The character of these areas are critically reflective of the local character. The protection of this character is essential to preserving residents' quality of life as well as the county's economic well-being. Although the county is not experiencing substantial growth at this time, any new growth will still need to be balanced with the existing character and needs of the community.

For instance, new rural residential development presents a direct conflict with farmland development. As farming is a major employer and economic base for the county, new development should respect the opportunities for farmland, and refrain from using land that has soils or positioning that provides the highest quality needed for agricul-

ture. Additionally, the small town and village characteristics of main streets and neighborhoods should consider contextually sensitive architecture and public improvements that enhance the quality of life for residents while preserving the local character.

Smart Growth, Mixed Use Development and Sustainability

While growth in the county is generally declining, new developments should continue to contribute to the economic and environmental well being of the county. Planning to locate new development in a manner that respects the limitations of municipal budgets, limitations on residents' time and money, and the limitations of the environment will be critical to ensuring local economic vitality.

The more development patterns reflect a spread-out approach, the higher the costs of municipal infrastructure and resident transportation, and therefore living in the county will become. Natural

resources and agriculture also suffer from this approach as they are further fragmented from larger into smaller pieces, making them less appealing and/or profitable.

If patterns instead reflect traditional, mixed use towns, hamlets, and villages, with housing and transportation choices near jobs, shops, and schools, or "smart growth", it will result in higher the quality of life for residents, higher economic benefits, and a greater level of environmental sustainability.

Mixed use and smart growth can be accomplished in a variety of ways such as reducing the restrictions for the placement of certain uses in local laws, (such as allowing a dentist to open an office in a contextually sensitive manner within an otherwise residential neighborhood), or building new developments with multiple uses (think of the traditional downtown store with apartment on top), and by generally

placing new developments in or near existing community centers such as hamlets and villages.

Appropriate mixed use strategies in the context of Schuyler County will likely differ depending on the location. Mixed use does not mean that all new developments must be “commercial on bottom, residential on top”. Instead, mixed use strategies in the county will also reflect a mixing of uses on a neighborhood or village level. Such strategies should place emphasis on the ability of people throughout each community to easily access their basic and most frequently needed services and jobs, through multiple modes of transportation. This plan reflects the knowledge that each community’s capacity and style of mixed use development will be different and will need to be sensitive to its surrounding neighborhood.

THE ROLE OF LAND USE & ZONING

Land use refers to the pattern of development occurring on, or planned for a specific area.

Schuyler County has a mix of land use regulations. Some municipalities have land use regulations (i.e. zoning, site plan, subdivision) while others do not.

Residents’ concerns and attitudes towards land use regulations can often be a potential impediment toward furthering orderly and proper development.

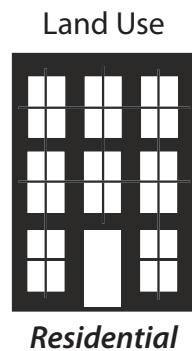
This plan recommends that municipalities adopt land use regulations and will offer advice and ways to implement land use regulations, but it will not require regulations. The ultimate decision to do so resides with the municipalities.

OUTLOOK

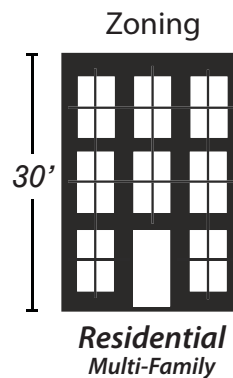
The outlook of course is not entirely negative. The challenges discussed within this section are just that, challenges. They are the obstacles that we need to overcome on our road to success. Fortunately, we have a great number of assets, from our people to our environment. In addition, a number of projects and initiatives are underway that will help counteract many of these challenges. The County Wide Comprehensive Plan (CWCP) will assist by directing our actions and resources to ensure the greatest impact and progress.

The Difference Between Land Use & Zoning

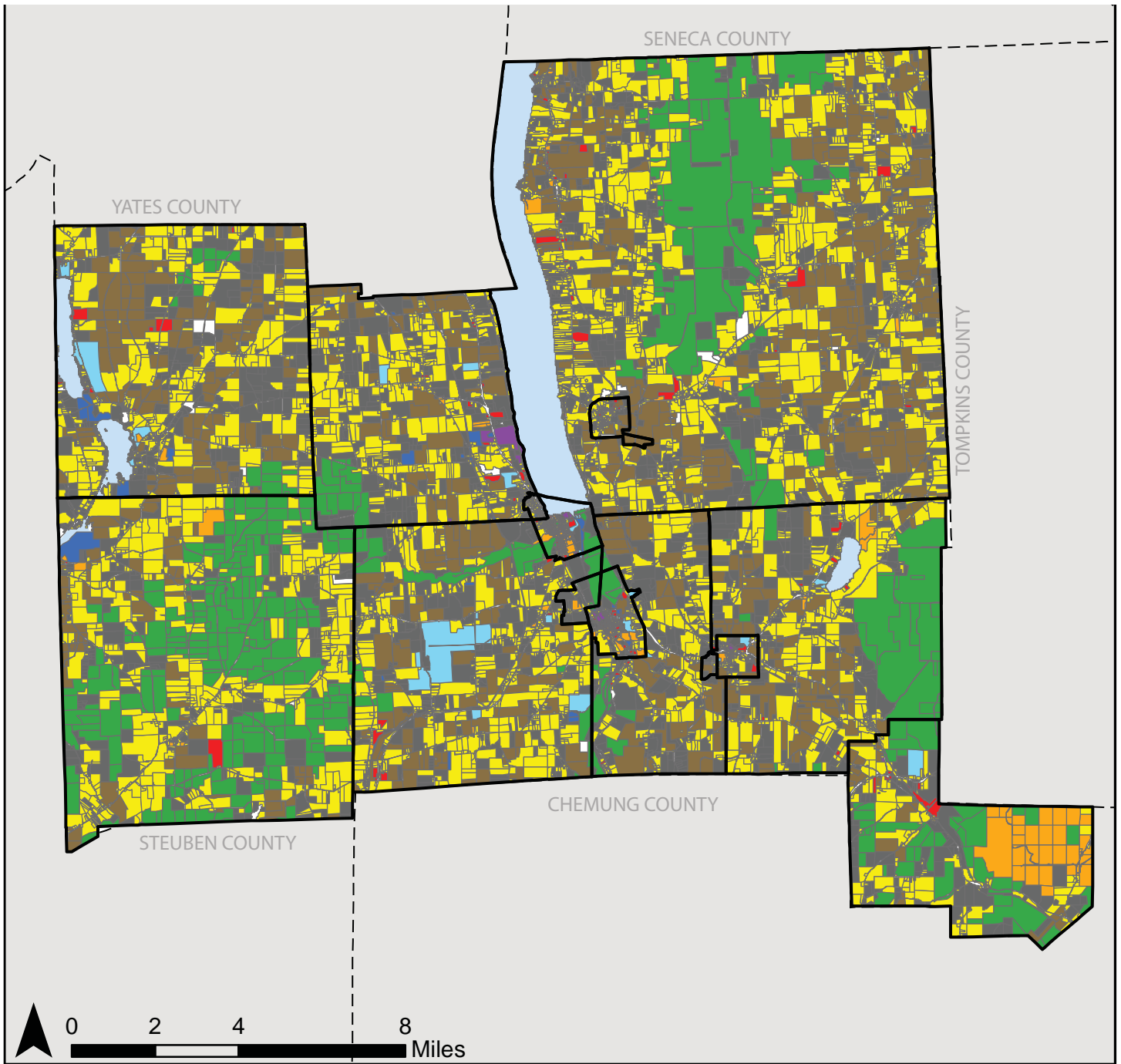
Land use refers to the pattern of development occurring on the land or planned for an area. Land use plans are more general in scope, often referring to such generalities as industrial, residential, or mixed use. They are meant to guide zoning regulations.



VS



Zoning is the regulatory tool to enforce land use plans and ensure land uses are compatible with one another. Zoning is more specific, often referring to such things as building heights, setbacks, and parking requirements for a specific land use.



Schuyler County - Existing Land Use Pattern (2014)



Economic Development



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

Schuyler County is well positioned for a variety of development possibilities with ample land and building space. Locally Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development (SCOPED) is able to aid the development process by working with developers to identify the financial and professional resources needed for business creation and expansion within Schuyler County.

Long-Term Job Growth.

Job growth is a primary economic development goal of most small communities. In general more employment opportunities lead to more residents, more spending at local businesses, and more tax revenues for local governments. Sustained job growth stimulates improvements in the education and skills of the local labor force, making the community a more attractive location for businesses in the future. As new development occurs there should be a focus on attracting industries that will contribute to year round job growth within the county.

Economic Incentives

Regional Programs

New York State provides a number of economic incentives for businesses interested in settling in the upstate region including:

- NYS Excelsior Jobs Program
 - The Excelsior Jobs Program provides job creation and investment incentives to firms in such targeted industries as biotechnology, pharmaceutical, high-tech, clean-technology, green technology, financial services, agriculture and manufacturing.
- Empire State Development Corporation (ESD)
 - ESD is the official economic development agency for the State of New York. ESD offers a variety of flexible financing incentives for new and expanding businesses, including assistance with site location, new facility construction, existing facility expansion or modernization of existing operations.

Local Programs

Several additional incentives are available within agencies in and around Schuyler County;

- Schuyler County Industrial Development Agency
 - The Schuyler County Industrial Development Agency (SCIDA) was created in 1971 to encourage economic growth in Schuyler County.
- Regional Economic Development and Energy Corporation (REDEC) and Relending Corporation (RRC)
 - REDEC and RRC are regional not-for-profit corporations that provide low interest loans to start-up and expanding businesses up to a maximum amount of \$100,000 in Schuyler, Chemung and Steuben Counties.
- Community Revitalization Funds
 - In conjunction with the State of New York, SCOPED can provide 1% funding for projects that utilize a collaborative approach to provide improved and diverse downtowns, mixed use options, and commercial and retail opportunities linked to neighborhood centers.
- Rural Initiative Funds
 - This program offers a regional low-interest loan fund to reduce financial risk and increase the sustainability of agriculture and forestry ventures and to encourage investment and job creation. The program can provide gap financing for priority activities, including development and promotion of value-added agricultural products, development of new markets, renewable energy initiatives, increased land productivity, applications of new technologies, and growth in net agricultural revenue.

Developing Business & Attracting People

Transportation

Importance

- Allows for the movement of locally produced goods and services regionally, as well as providing goods and services to local communities.
- Contributes to successful development patterns.

Challenge

- Seneca Lake divides the County, making east-west travel difficult.
- Industrial traffic must go through local villages, often causing congestion, noise, pollution, and safety concerns.
- Infrastructure is reflective of rural development patterns and has limited existing capacity.

Housing

Importance

- A range of housing types can increase the ability of local businesses to attract and retain new workers so that they can compete and expand in the changing economy.
- The quality of homes and neighborhoods in a community serves as a visual measure of the local quality of life.

Challenge

- Currently there is a limited quality housing stock.
- Avoiding discrepancies between the cost of homes on the market and the salary levels of existing and future jobs.

Telecommunications

Importance

- Provides an efficient communication stream between local, regional and national outlets.
- Allows businesses to locate in small regional locations and digitally connect to other businesses and industries.

Challenge

- Rural nature of the County makes connections to primary utility corridors difficult.
- Meeting the demand of local businesses and resident for access to telecommunication systems.

Schools

Importance

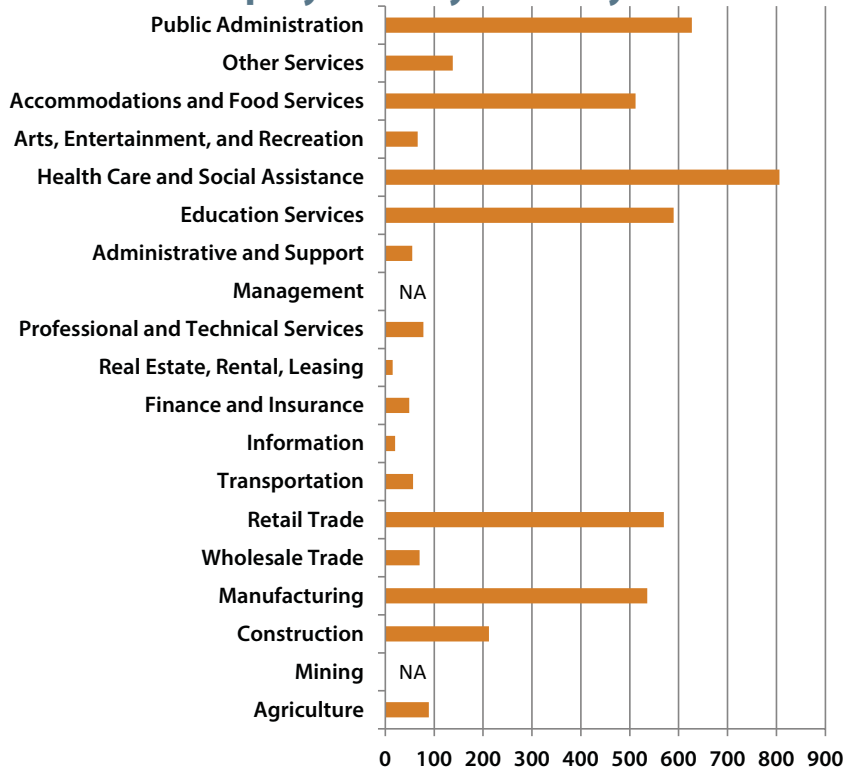
- Public schools are an important consideration in assessing the quality of life in the area, when businesses are evaluating new locations.
- High quality public schools can help make local areas more economically competitive.

Challenge

- Attracting locally educated students to return or remain in Schuyler County for full time work after college and graduate studies.

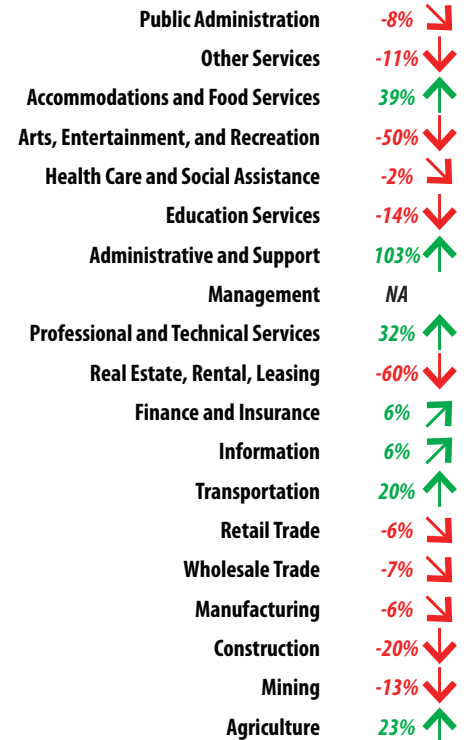
EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

2012 Total Employment by Industry



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Public Use Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI)

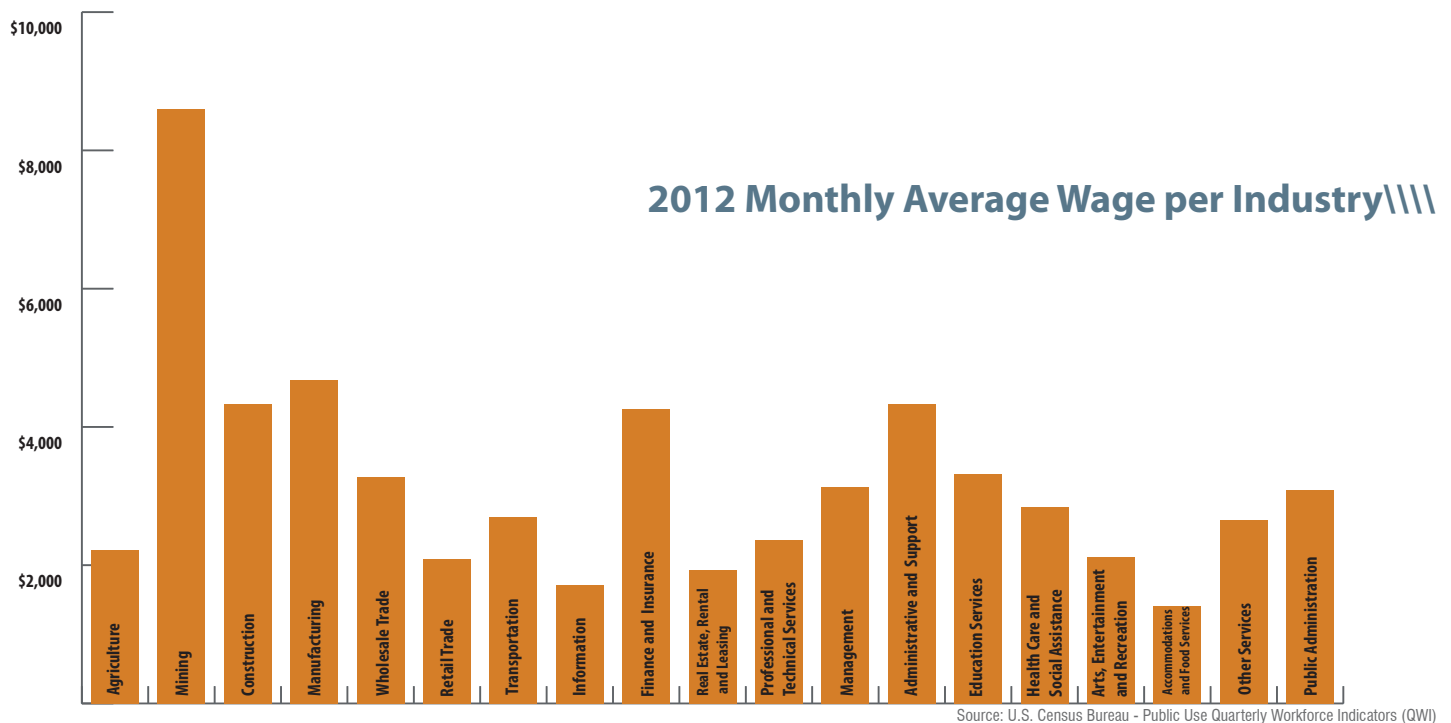
Countywide Five Year Job Growth Trend



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Public Use Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI)

The top employment industries within the county are Health Care and Social Assistance, Education Services and Public Administration, however they have all been experiencing a downward trend in job growth over the past five years. At the opposite end of the spectrum Administrative and Support, Accommodation and Food Service, and the Professional and Technical Services industries are experiencing significant amounts of growth. This indicates there will be a need to attract and retain a skilled and knowledgeable workforce to ensure continued growth within these industries.

LOCAL INDUSTRY IMPACTS ON SCHUYLER COUNTY



The skilled workforce has one of the greatest impacts on the local economy, having among the highest monthly average wages and the highest annual payroll, which is providing money that can be put directly back into the local economy. Accommodation and Food Services contributes over nine million annually to the local economy however it also has the lowest monthly average wage and is typically limited to seasonal employment opportunities. As the County continues to grow and new development occurs it will be important to continue to support the local skilled labor force in order to sustain year round job opportunities.

Industry	Annual payroll
Total for all sectors	110,921,000
Agriculture	157,000
Mining	*
Construction	12,430,000
Manufacturing	28,230,000
Wholesale trade	*
Retail trade	15,305,000
Transportation	7,097,000
Information	606,000
Finance and Insurance	1,871,000
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	373,000
Professional and Technical Services	696,000
Administrative and Support	933,000
Educational services	*
Health Care and Social Assistance	*
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	*
Accommodation and Food Services	9,157,000
Other Services	3,770,000

Note:
 *Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual companies; data is included in higher level totals
 Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 County Business Patterns.

Major Employers in Schuyler County	Employees
Schuyler Hospital	435
Schuyler County	253
WalMart	243
Harbor Hotel	128
US Salt	127
Cargill	111
Wine & Glass Tours	100
Wagner Hardwoods	90
Watkins Glen International	86
Parmenter Motors	85
Welliver	77
Hazlitt 1852 Vineyards	50
BMS	37

There is a need to attract and retain a skilled and knowledgeable workforce – including an emphasis on young professionals and entrepreneurs

Countywide Demographics

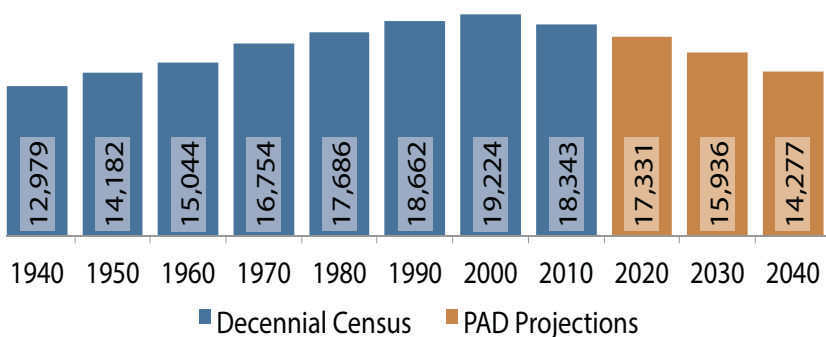
POPULATION TRENDS

Over the last decade the towns and villages of Schuyler County have lost, on average, 5% of their local population. In the table to the right the towns and villages are listed in order from largest to smallest by population. The County is the sum of only the town populations, as the village counts are included in their respective town's census.

Towns & Villages	2012 Population	2000 Population	% Change
Town of Hector	4,956	4,854	2.1%
Town of Dix	3,912	4,197	-6.8%
Town of Montour	2,325	2,446	-4.9%
Town of Catharine	1,764	1,930	-8.6%
Town of Reading	1,713	1,786	-4.1%
Town of Orange	1,668	1,752	-4.8%
Town of Tyrone	1,622	1,714	-5.4%
Town of Cayuta	554	545	1.7%
Schuyler County	18,514	19,224	-4.0%
Village of Watkins Glen	1,860	2,149	-13.4%
Village of Montour Falls	1,714	1,797	-4.6%
Village of Odessa	589	617	-4.5%
Village of Burdett	337	357	-5.6%

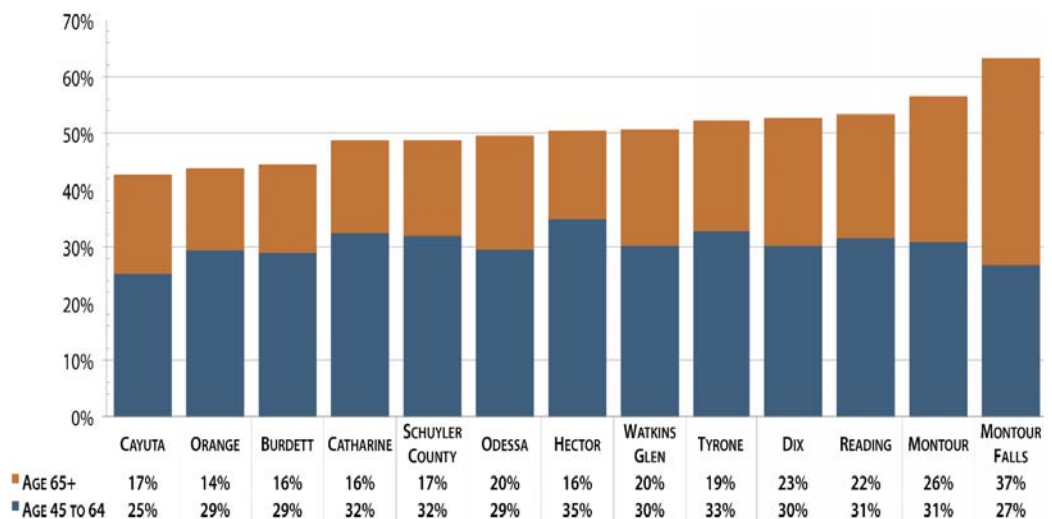
Sources: U.S. Census Demographics 2000, 2008 - 2012 American Community Survey

Schuyler County is facing both rapidly declining and aging population pressures.



Cornell University has developed a Program on Applied Demographics (PAD) that can be used to perform population projections based on U.S. Census Bureau data. The graph to the left was created by tracking the population trends and changes of Schuyler County from 1940 to 2010, and utilizing PAD to estimate the total county population for the next three decades. As indicated in the graph, the County's population is expected to continue to decline at an increasing rate.

Seniors, or residents that are 65 years of age or older, comprise, on average, 21% of the town and village populations. When residents that are 45 to 64 years of age are included that average increases to 51%. The graph to the right shows the composition of each town and village's elder population from smallest to largest. Schuyler County's rates have been included for reference.

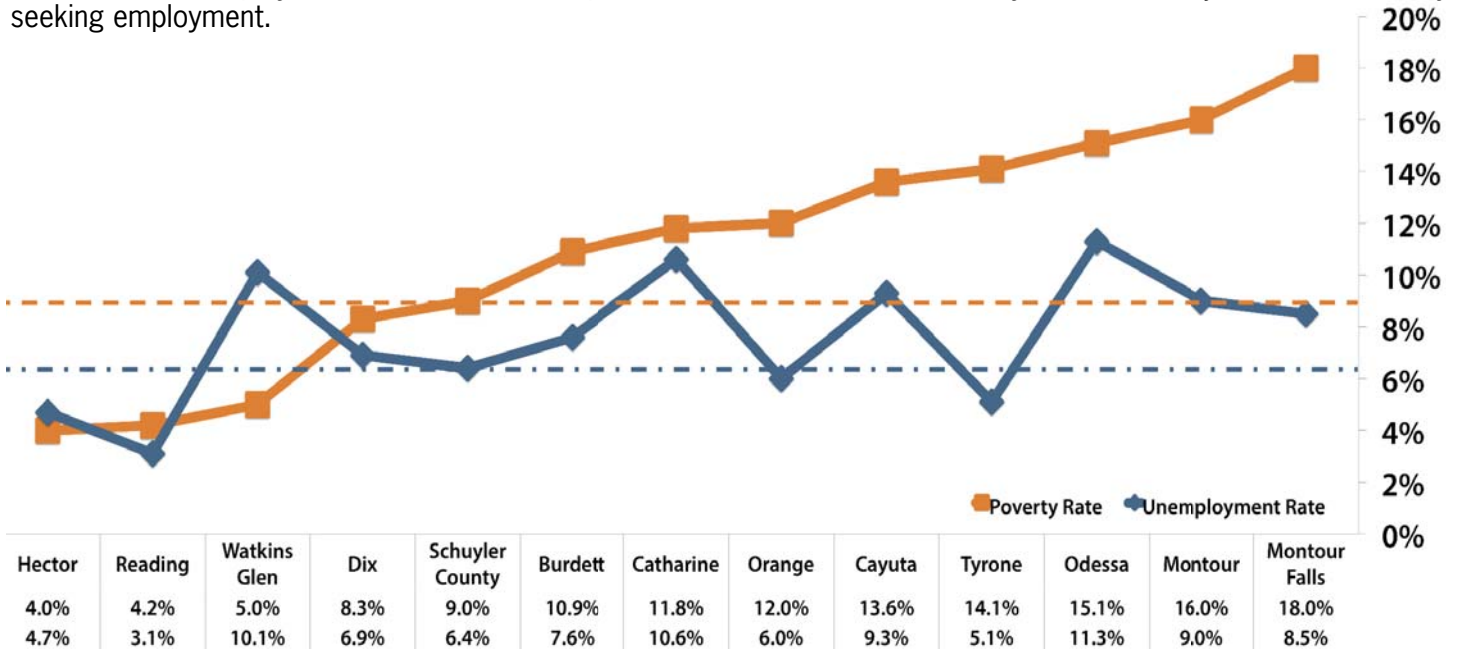


Source: U.S. Census Demographics, 2010

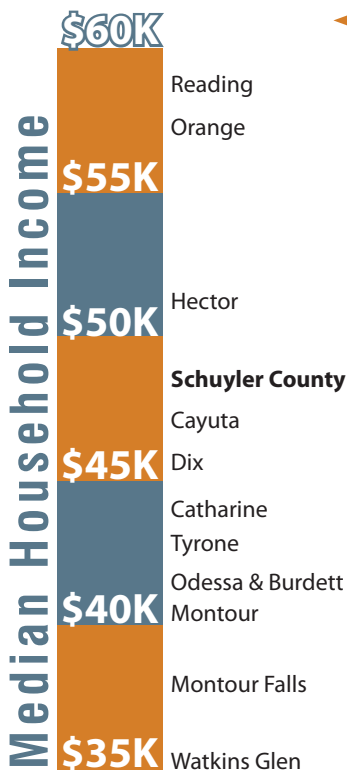
A Comparison of County, Town, and Village Data

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The graph below compares the poverty rate and unemployment rate of each town and village in the County. Trendlines for the County's rates have been included for ease of reference. The poverty rate represents the percent of individuals within each community whose income in the past twelve months was below the federal poverty level. Whereas the unemployment rate indicates the percent of individuals who currently are without a job, but are actively seeking employment.



Source: U.S. Census Demographics, 2010



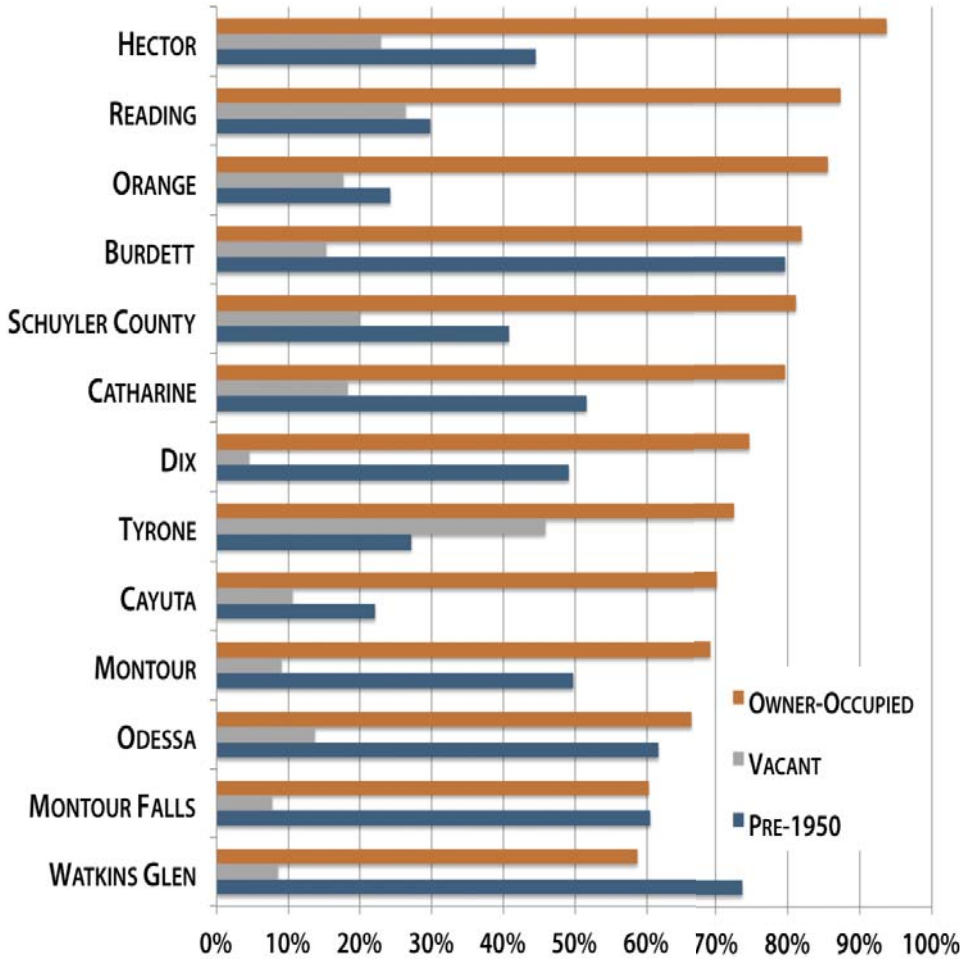
The range of median household incomes for each town and village in Schuyler County can be seen in the graphic to the left. The overall median household income for the County is \$47,804. Each town's and village's rank of median household income is indicated by their placement on the scale from lowest to highest.

Each town and village also has a trade or industry that employs the most residents. These employment opportunities are often the predominant industry for the community also. The chart to the right indicates the primary employment industry for each community and the respective share of jobs it provides.

Community	Primary Employment Industry	Share of Jobs
Catharine	Education	52%
Cayuta	Manufacturing	76%
Dix	Retail Trade Accommodation Food Services	33%
Hector	Manufacturing	25%
Montour	Health Care & Social Assistance	54%
Orange	Public Administration	43%
Reading	Manufacturing	46%
Tyrone	Public Administration	48%
Burdett	Retail Trade	58%
Montour Falls	Health Care & Social Assistance	58%
Odessa	Education	70%
Watkins Glen	Retail Trade Accommodation Food Services	34%

Source: U.S. Census Demographics, 2010

HOUSING STOCK CONSIDERATIONS



Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

The graph to the right shows the state of the housing market in each of the Schuyler County towns and villages today. The three categories highlight a few of the housing concerns that each community is currently facing with their existing housing stock.

The balance of owner-occupied and renter-occupied units in each town and village is represented by the orange bar, which measures the percentage of owner-occupied units.

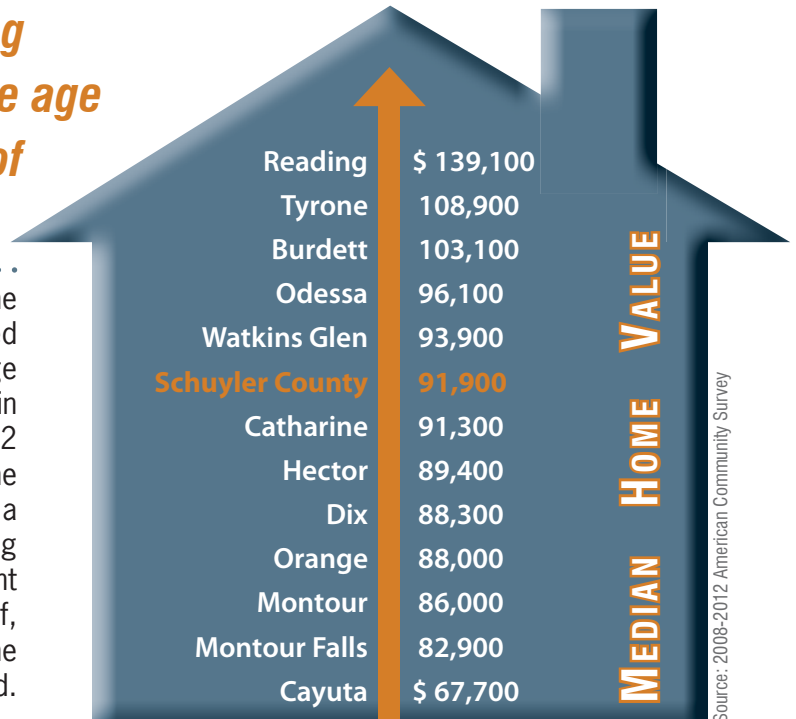
The percentage of vacant units in each community is indicated by the gray bar. This is a bigger concern for some towns or villages than others.

Finally, the blue bar shows the percentage of units in each community that were built before the year 1950. For some towns and villages more than half of their housing stock falls under this category, indicating that there hasn't been much development of newer residential units.

These indicators have also been included for Schuyler County as a whole, as a point of reference for each community to measure not only where they stand in comparison to other local communities, but also with the overall County.

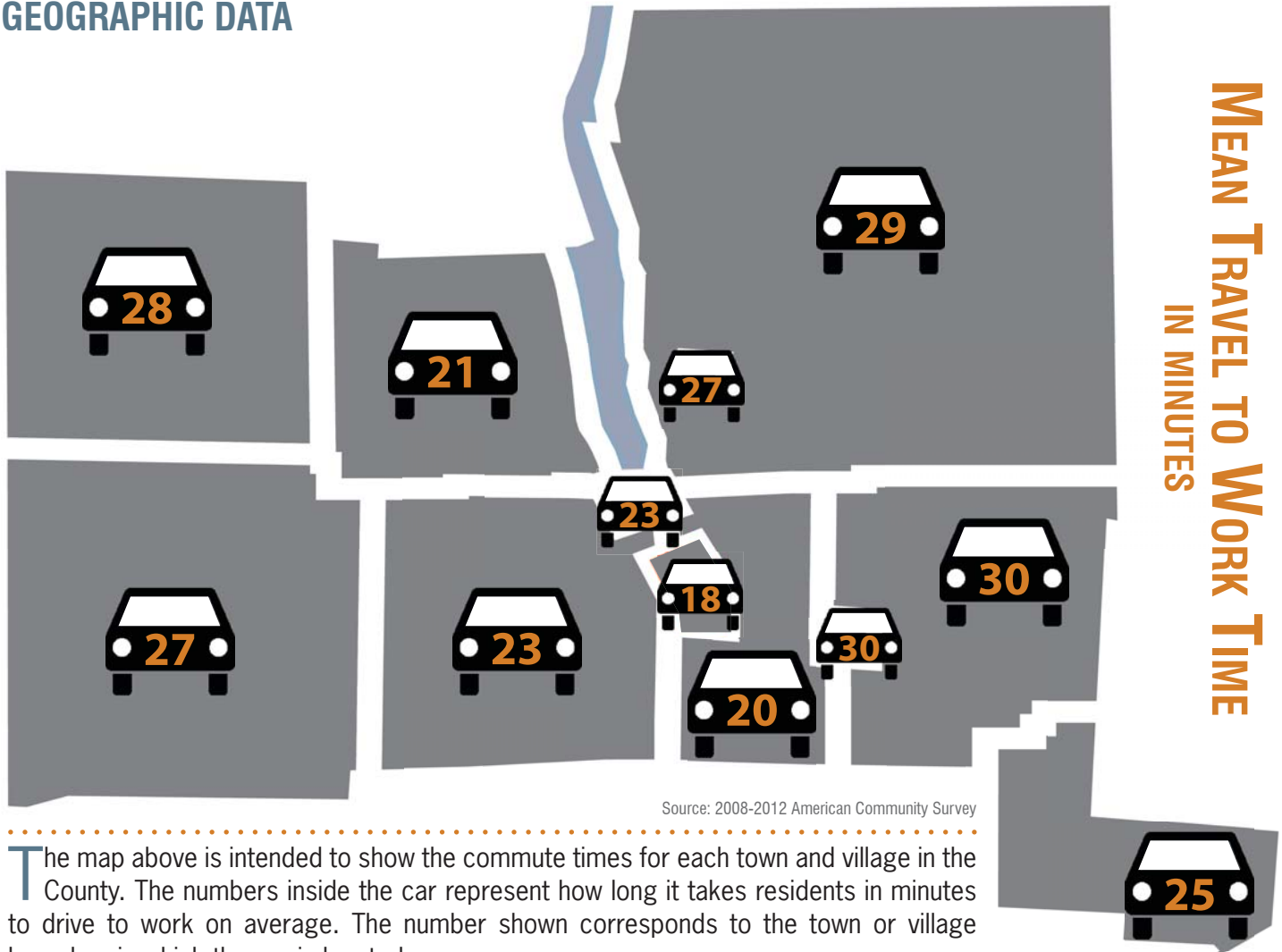
Some of the most pressing housing concerns facing the County are the age and quality of units, and the lack of variety in housing choice.

The U.S. Census Bureau calculates median home values based on the existing owner-occupied housing stock within each community. The range of median home values for each town and village in Schuyler County as reported in the 2008 to 2012 American Community Survey is indicated in the graphic to the right. On the whole, the County has a lower median home value than that of neighboring counties. However, there is quite a significant range in the values within Schuyler County itself, with more than \$70,000 difference between the lowest and highest median home values reported.



Source: 2008-2012 American Community Survey

GEOGRAPHIC DATA



The map above is intended to show the commute times for each town and village in the County. The numbers inside the car represent how long it takes residents in minutes to drive to work on average. The number shown corresponds to the town or village boundary in which the car is located.

Although Schuyler County is considered a rural county, the higher densities of its town centers and villages bring a unique urban character to many neighborhoods.

Below the towns and villages are listed by land area in order of largest to smallest. The total land area can be calculated by combining both the land area and water area figures. However, only a few of the communities' land area includes any square miles of water. The densities of each community are also listed to provide an opportunity to compare the development character of each town or village. As shown, the villages are much more dense than the towns.

Town or Village	Hector	Orange	Tyrone	Dix	Catharine	Reading	Cayuta	Montour	Montour Falls	Watkins Glen	Odessa	Burdett
Land Area (sq. mi.)	102.5	54.1	37.5	36.1	32.3	27.2	20.3	18.6	3	1.9	1.2	1
Water Area (sq. mi.)	10	0.3	2.1	0.5	0.6	0	0	0	0	0.4	0	0
Density (people per sq. mi.)	48	31	43	108	54	63	27	125	571	979	491	337

Source: City-data.com

Sustainability Outlook

LOCATION AFFORDABILITY INDEX



COST OF HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION AS A PERCENT OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME AND IN DOLLARS		
26%	31%	57%
\$12,446	\$14,839	\$27,285
IDEAL PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL INCOME NEEDED FOR AFFORDABILITY		
30%	15%	45%

While many statistics might only look at the median home price or average mortgage/rent to determine housing affordability, there is actually much more to the story. Transportation costs are the second-biggest budget item for most families and this cost has an important and direct relationship with the location of housing. Typically, housing further from developed areas is cheaper, but requires a household to drive for each of their daily needs. The more each household drives, the more money it needs to pay for gas, insurance, and maintenance. Consequently, the financial benefits of cheaper housing can be easily outweighed by the additional costs in transportation. As such, housing and transportation should be considered together when determining affordability. The housing in Schuyler County is overall considered to be affordable in relation to the median income. However, the County has a high transportation cost with respect to income, making living in the County less affordable overall. The high transportation cost is likely due to the rural nature of much of the County and the need for people to leave the county for employment or other daily needs. Increasing services and places of employment inside the County could increase the local economic sustainability, reduce the distances needed to travel for some needs, and reduce overall transportation costs. This would make the County an overall more affordable place to live.

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION



1,017 People/ 12.32%

Population Using Alternative Transportation

Alternative Transportation includes carpooling, walking, biking, or taking public transit. The percentage of people using alternative transportation in the county has remained relatively stable in the county, with a slight decrease in the last year. Increasing the opportunities for alternative transportation in central hubs will increase choices for residents, improve air quality, and improve the local quality of life.

PUBLIC HEALTH



33%

Percent Obesity, Adults



4.6

Poor Mental Health Days/30



30/100,000

Diabetes Death Rate

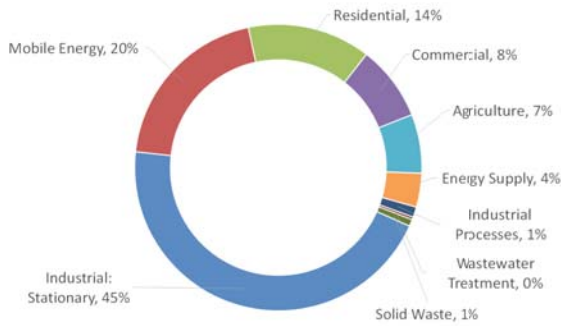


25%

Percent Excessive Drinking

Public Health outcomes in Schuyler County are relatively good compared with other counties in NYS. However, some indicators show that certain health behaviors and outcomes need attention. In particular, the prevalence of diabetes and obesity in the county are much higher than the rest of the state. Schuyler County also has more poor mental health days than most of the rest of the state. Additionally, Schuyler County has one of the highest percentages of excessive drinking in adults. Poor health can affect the quality of life for residents. Addressing and improving county wide policies, funding strategies, programs, and the built environment can contribute greatly to improved health outcomes.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS: COUNTYWIDE



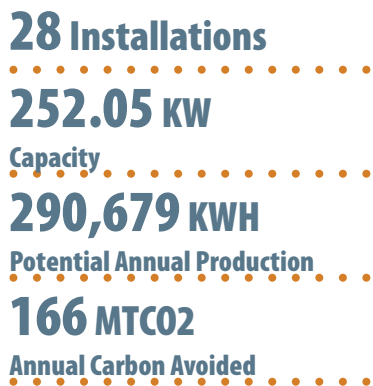
The predominant source of carbon emissions in the county is from industrial stationary energy usage. While preventing air pollution is an important goal, much of the regulation on industrial standards is governed at the state level. The next two biggest sources of emissions come from mobile energy (personal automobile usage, industry/commercial trucks, freight rail, off-road vehicles) and residential energy (electricity and fuel used for heating, lighting, etc). By promoting compact development and energy efficiency in new developments and retrofits through educational programs for the public and businesses, Schuyler County could see a significant reduction in emissions over the long run.

WIND ENERGY



Schuyler County currently does not have any wind energy installations. However, potential new turbines have recently been proposed for the Town of Dix, and there is potential for additional wind systems in other parts of the county. The County could consider ways that appropriate wind energy development could be incorporated and promoted into municipal and countywide projects. Doing so could result in greater energy independence, better air quality, and economic development potential for certain landowners, and therefore the county as a whole.

SOLAR ENERGY



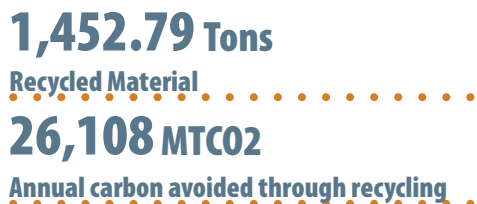
Both residential and commercial solar energy installations provide Schuyler County with over 250 KW of solar capacity. This technology at its peak generates over 290,000 KWh, saves money on residential and commercial electric bills, and reduces community GHG emissions by 166 MTCO2 each year. The County should consider additional ways that solar energy can be included and promoted including integrating solar power into more municipal and county development projects, and resident and business education on state energy programs.

PRESERVED FOREST AREA



Preserved forest areas in Schuyler County comprise over 17% of the land area and contribute to improved recreation activities, open space, and quality of life. Air quality in particular is improved because forests use carbon in the atmosphere instead of producing it. This process counterbalances the carbon emitting processes in the rest of the county. Given the county's vast forest resources, improved forest management and targeted reforestation activities could further increase these benefits.

SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING



All municipalities in Schuyler County have some form of recycling, and three of the villages have curbside pickup. Residents produce approximately 3.1 lbs of waste per person each day, with 85% of that waste being diverted into landfills and 15% being recycled. Recycling reduces GHG emissions and reduces waste that must be landfilled. Encouraging further recycling participation through education, incentives and programs could further reduce the GHG emissions from waste.

County Policy Framework

In order to be successful, a Comprehensive Plan should be developed and implemented on multiple levels. It must address the short and long term needs of a community as well as provide varying levels of detail. The intent of the policy framework is to be future-oriented, acting as a guide to achieve the community's vision. This plan has four key elements:

VISION A general statement that describes the aspiration of the Village, Town or County; it is an end towards which all actions are aimed. The Vision will not dramatically change over time but rather be consistent throughout the planning horizon. Ideally, the Vision contained in this plan should be useful for the 10-year planning horizon.

POLICY Similar to a vision in that it is a general statement of a future condition towards which actions are aimed. However, the scope of a policy is much more narrow. It should support the vision by addressing a particular area or issue facing the community. Policies should not dramatically change over time but rather be consistent throughout the planning horizon. Ideally, the policies contained in this plan will be useful for the 10-year planning horizon.

OBJECTIVE A statement of a measurable activity to be accomplished in pursuit of the policy; it refers to some specific aspiration which is reasonably attainable. Think in terms of actions such as “increase”, “develop”, or “preserve”. It should be noted that the municipality may already be undertaking some of the objectives articulated in this plan and wish to ensure that they continue to do so over the next decade. The general lifespan of an objective is 6 to 10 years.

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS A specific proposal to do something that relates directly to accomplishing a strategy; it can take the form of a plan, project, or program. The lifespan of an implementation item can vary from one to 10 years depending on the item.

Our County's Vision

It is the vision of Schuyler County to have healthy residents, profitable businesses, and sound natural resources that foster our individual and collective well-being. We will be a county known for our...



Photo Credit: Norrie Cornelius

- I. Public Health & Safety
- II. Economic Health & Prosperity
- III. Environmental Health & Sustainability
- IV. Community Health & Livability

... Vitality in our region will be achieved through sustainable growth that supports our local economic drivers, preserves our environmental integrity, and encourages community pride. Our County will also strive to take the lead in efforts that individual municipalities may not be able to accomplish on their own. These efforts will increase access to services and amenities while helping our towns and villages enhance their unique small-town charm.

Public Health & Safety

Introduction



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

A healthy community is one that promotes not only the physical health of its residents and visitors, but also their intellectual and emotional wellbeing through the provision and support of community resources. For the purposes of this plan, a community resource is broadly defined as any program, service, or infrastructure that positively contributes to our County’s quality of life. The importance of these resources to our residents cannot be overstated. The following table identifies some of the most common community resources available within our County.

Emergency Services	Educational System	Faith Community	Gas & Electric Service
Highway Operation & Maintenance	Law Enforcement	Library	Local History
Open Space/ Parks & Recreation	Health Care	Public Transportation	Water & Sewer Service

Currently these services are being provided by the combined efforts of the County, our Towns, our Villages and other regional and local governmental agencies. Other community needs may be fulfilled via partnerships with neighboring municipalities, and any number of quasi-governmental agencies, not-for-profit groups, or private entities that seek to provide the remaining programs or services.

Because a number of these resources span jurisdictional boundaries, it is important that our County take a holistic approach to providing these services. The County should assist local municipalities with efforts that allow for the efficient and effective allocation of infrastructure and services. By utilizing a regional perspective, the County can ensure that it is complimenting rather than duplicating local efforts to meet the needs of the local population regardless of age or socioeconomic status.

In general, our County should focus on two distinct efforts within this regional approach. The first includes ensuring that the services necessary to provide for the health and safety of residents are both convenient and accessible for residents throughout the County. Second, the County should continue to monitor the level of service to ensure it is adequate to meet the current and future needs of our citizens.

In order to address any service or program deficits that are identified through these efforts, an active implementation program will need to be established. Achieving the goals of the implementation program will require regional collaboration, and a number of funding sources. As a result, the County will need to engage in high levels of communication and coordination with the residents, community groups, public and private agencies, stakeholders, and other municipalities.

The following policy has been included to serve as a guide for the realization of the County’s Public Health and Safety objectives, including the desire for an enhanced quality of life for all.

Public Health & Safety Policy Statement

It is our policy to value the **physical, intellectual, and emotional well-being** of our residents. The physical health and safety of our residents is dependent on access to clean drinking water, proper sewage disposal facilities, safe development sites, medical providers, and our emergency services. Our intellectual and emotional well-being is supported by our local school districts, parks, public libraries, historical societies, faith community, and various service organizations throughout the County. We will strive to support the public services, civic organizations, and religious institutions that contribute to the healthy lifestyles and safety of our residents. It is critical that the level of service provided by these organizations be evaluated over time to reflect the new demands of our changing population.

OBJECTIVES



Photo Credit: Schuyler Hospital

- A. Increase the residents' access to healthcare and other services directly related to their health and wellness as well as increasing access to a built environment that promotes healthy lifestyle choices.
- B. Mitigate motor vehicle and truck traffic so it does not negatively impact the quality of life or the quality of the environment for residents and businesses along major travel routes.
- C. Encourage connections to major roadways within our County, while protecting local roads from increased traffic burdens.
- D. Mitigate sub-standard drinking water and waste water treatment facilities.
- E. Prioritize development in a way that respects the limitations of the existing public works infrastructure, encourages new development in existing infrastructure areas, and promotes the expansion of these resources when necessary.
- E. Continue to support the delivery of social services for low income and disadvantaged groups.
- G. Prioritize educational and developmental opportunities for our County's residents of all ages.
- H. Encourage the elimination of direct discharge of sewage and waste water into Seneca Lake.
- I. Reduce the effects of environmental pollution on county residents by curbing polluting development practices and working to curb existing and future pollution contributors.
- J. Encourage pedestrian connections between neighborhoods, to hamlets and downtowns to ensure safe routes for errands and school trips. Do so by expanding on and creating new walking and biking trails to foster healthy lifestyles.
- K. Encourage development patterns that are safe from flooding and protect the beneficial water management functions of stream corridors, floodplains, and wetlands.

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

1. Implement the objectives and interventions contained in the Schuyler County Community Health Improvement Plan completed in October 2013.
2. Increase outreach of temporary housing, food pantries, and battered women services to a larger portion of the County population in need.
3. Identify best delivery routes for tractor-trailer traffic to decrease burden on local roads and infrastructure.
4. Commission traffic study for tourism season to identify ways in which pressure on local neighborhoods can be reduced.
5. Encourage shared or collaborative public service delivery between towns and villages.
6. Encourage the completion of the new regional wastewater treatment plant serving the Villages of Montour Falls and Watkins Glen while eliminating the direct discharge of wastewater effluent into Seneca Lake.
7. Evaluate the feasibility of and possible solutions for sewage treatment in Burdett and Odessa.
8. Encourage collegiate learning opportunities for post high school population.
9. Evaluate opportunities to improve access to telecommunications services.
10. Evaluate opportunities to improve access to health and medical services.
11. Encourage mixed-use development along with increased access and variety of transportation options.

Economic Health & Prosperity

Introduction

According to “A Primer on Economic Development Strategies” published by the Washington State Department of Community Trade and Economic Development, “active citizens can directly shape the local economy, and the community will benefit in numerous ways”:

- ◇ **Increased Tax Base:** Additional revenue to support, maintain, and improve local services such as roads, parks, libraries, and emergency medical services.
- ◇ **Job Development:** To provide better wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement.
- ◇ **Business Retention:** Businesses that feel appreciated by the community and, in turn, feel as if they are contributing to the economy will stay in town.
- ◇ **Economic Diversification:** Helps expand the economy and reduces a community’s vulnerability to a single type of business.
- ◇ **Self-Sufficiency:** Public services would be less dependent on County, State, and Federal aid that may change with each election.
- ◇ **Quality of Life:** More local tax dollars and jobs raise the economic tide for the community, which generally increases the overall standard of living of the residents.
- ◇ **Recognition of Local Products:** Oftentimes, successful economic development will occur when locally produced goods are consumed to a greater degree in the local market.

Membership on local economic development boards or committees—indeed, their very existence—is testimony to the belief that people can and do make a difference when they actively participate in shaping local economies.”

For rural communities in particular, achieving economic growth and development can be difficult. They often do not have the human or financial resources necessary to effectively implement an economic development strategy. Therefore, the Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development will need to continue its role as the primary resource for our economic development efforts. “The mission of the Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development is to optimize the process of economic development by creating an in-depth partnership with public and private organizations giving focus to expanding income and employment opportunities in Schuyler County.”

The County should continue to focus on an economic development strategy that utilizes our existing natural resources, agricultural, and tourism assets as leverage for potential industrial and commercial development that will positively contribute to the local tax base and employ local residents. Over the next decade, the County will need to communicate with local municipalities, as well as regional and state agencies in order to pursue various economic opportunities that may be too large for a single municipality to attract on its own.

The County should also make economic development strategies that support our existing agricultural industry a priority, which will assist local municipalities in the reinvestment of our greatest economic driver. Efforts to attract and expand the County’s commercial operations, especially those related to current agricultural practices, will further stimulate the local economy with new jobs and an increased tax base.

Furthermore, the Finger Lakes Region’s thriving tourism industry continues to be a growing economic driver for our County. Visitors come to our communities to indulge in the pastoral atmosphere, agricultural experience, and recreational activities they offer. With support by the County, our towns and villages can work together to enhance the visitor experience by investing in our urban commercial centers, as well as public transportation options connecting those centers, and marketing the entire region as a complete destination.

The County should utilize the following Economic Health and Prosperity policy as a guide for efforts that encourage the expansion of the existing agriculture and tourism industries, as well as support the development and connection of the towns’ and villages’ own commercial centers to increase the profitability of our businesses and quality of life for both residents and visitors. The County should encourage the reuse of developed lands to improve the economic potential of the denser village and hamlet areas.

Economic Health & Prosperity Policy Statement

It is the policy of the County to have a **healthy economy and prosperous economic development** opportunities within our towns and villages for residents of all ages. A significant portion of our economic base is derived from the land's natural resources and the businesses that have formed from them. This includes our two primary industries, agriculture and tourism. Our residents and visitors benefit from the vitality and character that these industries contribute to our region. The County will continue to work with our partners to grow existing businesses, establish new companies run by local entrepreneurs, and recruit investors and operators from outside the County.

OBJECTIVES



Photo Credit: Norrie Cornelius

- A.** Continue to support local business in the towns and villages through the marketing of the region as a tourism destination.
- B.** Expand the existing tourism season beyond the fall and summer seasons.
- C.** Enhance the visitor experience by connecting destinations and the amenities offered by local communities through public transportation.
- D.** Attract food related industries to serve as a market for the existing farming and agricultural operations in the County.
- E.** Continue efforts to recruit businesses into the Schuyler County Business Park and the expansion of all business and industry beyond tourism and agriculture.
- F.** Explore ways the County can enhance and support the local arts community.
- G.** Retain and attract an educated workforce, including employees of the innovation and technology industries and young professionals.
- H.** Invest in the development of businesses and services in the commercial centers to keep businesses profitable and town and village centers vibrant.
- I.** Promote the reuse of developed land to maximize resource efficiency and improve long-term economic potential of town and village centers.
- J.** Preserve irreplaceable agricultural resources.
- K.** Promote opportunities to incorporate renewable energy development into new developments in the County to create more jobs and create more energy independence as a region.
- L.** Attract appropriate businesses into areas with good neighborhood access to attract a viable workforce.

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

1. Encourage the expansion of agri-tourism industry in the region, capitalizing on the wineries, creameries, and breweries.
2. Create enhanced "day trip" experiences for visitors that connect nearby villages and towns.
3. Promote locally grown food and increase access to healthy food for residents.
4. Create a culture that encourages artists to move to the County, as it is a pocket of creative innovation.
5. Continue implementation of Project Seneca.
6. Continue implementation of the County program to contribute to the cost of locating in the Business Park.
7. Encourage the redevelopment of Camp Monterey.
8. Pursue development of food processing related industries (i.e. wine barrel making).
9. Explore opportunities to host corporate retreats and provide co-operative office spaces.
10. Pursue opportunities to attract an industry that supports an educated workforce (i.e. innovation/technology).
11. Encourage the redevelopment of previously developed land to reduce pressure on undeveloped lands.
12. Explore opportunities to bring more renewable energy projects to the County.
13. Explore opportunities to raise funds, connections, and ridership for public transportation options between town village centers.
14. Support the protection of natural resources as a major contributor to the local economic wellbeing.

Environmental Health & Sustainability

Introduction



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

A community's natural environment consists of its air, soil, and water resources. The presence and quality of a community's natural resources have a direct impact on the quality of life enjoyed by its residents. As a rural county, our residents benefit from a diverse natural environment that includes numerous waterways and forests, as well as a beautifully cultivated agricultural landscape. Because so much of our County's economic health and residents' wellbeing relies on our natural resources, the sustainability of our environment is directly tied to the sustainability of our communities.

The principle of sustainability was founded on this idea that the general welfare of a population is dependent upon its region's natural resources and environment. Although there is no simple way to define sustainability, sustainable practices are often identified as those that allow for the growth of a community to meet its current economic, social, and environmental needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet such needs of their own. In other words, sustainability recognizes the finite nature of natural resources and commits to the use of them in a way that conserves their integrity for the long term.

One of the greatest assets that our County enjoys is the pastoral character and unique natural environments that flow within and across its local jurisdictional boundaries. Areas of open space and green space provide great value to residents and businesses in many forms. We are proud of our better-known features such as Seneca Lake, Watkins Glen State Park, Havana Glen and the Finger Lakes National Forest. Whether it is the public parks providing recreational and leisure activities, the cultivated land contributing to the local economy, or the natural open spaces preserving the region's aesthetic appeal, the diverse physical environment serves all who work in, live in, and visit our County.

Schuyler County residents also take great pride in our high level of environmental integrity. As we seek to develop and grow, the County will need to carefully consider a regional balance of development and preservation in order to maintain their present character and level of integrity. By emphasizing sustainable practices and compact development patterns in new investment opportunities, the County can ensure protection of our natural resources from potential degradation.

The ongoing trend of increased heavy rainfall events suggests a need for improved resilience to extreme weather conditions. Flooding causes damage to infrastructure and private property and eroded sediment impairs water quality in the county's lakes, which can have significant economic impacts on the tourism economy as well as quality of life for residents.

The following Environmental Health and Sustainability policy is intended as a guide the County in its role as a leader in sustainable practices across the region. Adopting a regional sustainable approach to development will allow for community growth while still preserving the existing natural environment and resources our County relies on for generations to come.

Environmental Health & Sustainability Policy Statement

It is the policy of our County to be a community known for its **diverse natural resources and environmental stewardship**. The natural environment as well as the cultivated landscape shape our communities and add to the quality of our lives. Our natural environment is characterized by unique resources such as Seneca Lake as well as numerous waterfalls, forests and waterways. Our cultivated environment is the result of agricultural practices that have shaped the land over centuries. These practices include farming, forestry and grape growing. Over time, we will strive to invest in our towns and villages in a manner that protects our natural environment, our farmland and our vineyards for future generations. In an effort to ensure a sustainable future, the County will promote sound development practices; work closely with food and wine producers; and foster community stewardship to prevent degradation of these resources.



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

OBJECTIVES

- A. Pursue new “cleaner” technologies in the agricultural industry to ensure that cultivation of our County’s land is sustainable and uses the industry’s best practices.
- B. Continue to utilize land use controls and review processes that protect open space and vacant land from inefficient development patterns and fragmentation of open space.
- C. Educate local decision makers and residents on environmental stewardship efforts that apply to their geographical region (i.e. watersheds, energy efficiency, stream processes, forestry).
- D. Consider ways to decrease our County’s environmental footprint. (i.e. improving energy efficiencies, reducing overall vehicle miles traveled, promoting efficient development patterns, erosion control, stormwater management)
- E. Consider ways to increase local production of renewable energy.

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

1. Protect the natural wetlands of the region.
2. Support the elimination of wastewater effluent discharge into Seneca Lake and the Chemung Canal.
3. Increase residents’ direct access to the natural environment of the region for public recreation, providing more opportunities to foster a healthy lifestyle.
4. Continue administration of the Agricultural District Program.
5. Evaluate the feasibility of implementing a Countywide programs to reduce waste, including; recycling, hazardous waste recycling, composting, and farm waste reduction programs.
6. Work to ease restrictions at local recycling centers, and explore opportunities for collaboration between neighboring municipalities for shared recycling.
7. Support regional wastewater treatment facility goal to compost septic, organic waster, and waste water sludges for their beneficial reuse.
8. Explore opportunities for collaboration in composting residual winery and brewery waste.
9. Explore renewable energy technologies that could provide jobs and decrease the county’s environmental footprint and reliance on non-local energy production.
10. Support smart growth mixed-use development in town and village centers that protects the environment, especially environmentally sensitive areas, by promoting efficient development patterns and reducing the resources needed to sustain the community.
11. Provide education for leaders and residents on the possibility for grants or home/business retrofits that can improve energy efficiency and save money.
12. Promote and seek funding for clean technology upgrades.
13. Promote the use of conservation easements on environmentally sensitive areas.

Community Health & Livability

Introduction

What makes a community “livable” is dependent upon its ability to provide for the needs of a wide variety of residents and enhance their quality of life, while promoting a strong sense of community pride. The nature of our County already appeals to a variety of lifestyles, providing opportunities for residents to enjoy the small-town feel of compact, pedestrian friendly neighborhoods, as well as the larger, rural homesteads spread across the hillsides. Our County also has a strong sense of community pride in the history and character of the region, which strengthens the community ties in each town and village.

Over the past few decades, however, the needs of our County’s resident population have changed, and the continued development of our communities has not kept pace. Therefore, over the next decade the County will need to champion efforts to accommodate future housing needs without compromising existing neighborhoods and homesteads. According to the public input received during this plan’s development; some of the most pressing issues of livability facing our residents today include the lack of housing choice, the ability of seniors to age-in-place, the availability of quality and affordable housing, and the deterioration of our older housing stock.

Currently 81% of the County’s housing stock is comprised of owner-occupied, single-family units. A high single-family homeownership rate is often considered desirable among communities today, providing a balance of housing choices will better serve the various ages, incomes, and family structures of our residents. In order to provide increased options to current and future residents, the County will need to support the local municipalities with efforts to diversify their housing stock. With a variety of housing types available, current and potential residents will be more likely to find a home that meets their needs within our County instead of having to look elsewhere. Supporting more housing choices in village and hamlet centers, will also increase residents’ choices in accessing other needs such as daily errands and social/cultural activities. Encouraging mixed-use development and removing zoning code barriers to mixed use development will also town and village centers to thrive, while providing additional housing choices.

Arguably the most pressing housing related concern for the County will be providing our increasing elderly population with the ability to age-in-place. Across the nation, urban and rural areas are facing new demands from their rapidly aging populations, largely due to the expansive Baby Boomer Generation that began turning 65 at the start of 2011. This trend is no different in our County, as we are already experiencing pressures to provide services for seniors, which make up 17% of the population. The County will continue to see these pressures increase over the next two decades, due to the fact that half of our current population is 45 years of age or older. In order to address the desire of seniors to age-in-place, both now and into the future, the County will need to assist with local efforts to provide new housing options meeting the unique needs of seniors.

Affordability and quality of our housing stock is also a major community health and livability concern for the County. Currently 55% of occupied housing units are valued at less than \$100,000. The median home value is \$91,900; more than \$70,000 behind that of neighboring Tompkins County. As a result, the County will need to focus on increasing the quality, and subsequently the value, of the existing housing stock, while also pursuing new development opportunities. New development will likely bring higher quality units and increased property values, making the preservation of housing affordability a resulting focus. A disproportionate amount of new development could cause housing prices to increase at a rapid and unsustainable rate, potentially driving current residents out of their homes. Therefore, the County’s housing efforts should strive to achieve a balance between increasing the quality of existing units and attracting new residential development opportunities.

Further, because transportation is the second biggest budget item (housing being the first) for many families, the location of new developments will directly contribute to the affordability of living in the county. Currently residents spend 27% of their income on housing (30% or less is considered affordable) and 58% of their income on housing and transportation combined (45% or less is considered affordable). This means that while housing costs are affordable, transportation costs contribute significantly to the costs of living in Schuyler. Locating more housing in existing communities that provide the option to use alternative transportation for at least some trips, would make the county more affordable overall.

The age of units in our housing market is another issue the County will need to address. Currently 41% of housing units across the County were built pre-1950. These homes require more upkeep and maintenance than new construction and many of our residents cannot afford the necessary repairs. As a result, many homes deteriorate with the potential of becoming a blight on the neighborhood and the community at large. Furthermore, older homes often do not benefit from the modern home advances of energy efficiency. The cost to renovate or retrofit older homes for better heating, cooling, or air filtration can be a burden to homeowners. In order to preserve and update our existing historic housing stock, the County will need assist the towns and villages with a long-term approach supporting the maintenance and renovation of older units by providing education and financing information to residents.

Due to the aforementioned housing related concerns facing the County, the following Community Health and Livability policy has been included to help guide efforts to address both current and future housing needs.

Community Health & Livability Policy Statement

It is the policy of our County to **make investments in our communities** that enhance their unique character and sense of pride. Our towns and villages share a rich history, provide a variety of lifestyles that serve to foster a distinctive hometown feel that is welcoming for both residents and visitors. For example, our villages and hamlets have a compact settlement pattern that consists of close knit and pedestrian scaled neighborhoods and streets. Our towns have open spaces and grand vistas with homesteads dotting the hillsides. The County will continue to partner with the towns and villages to preserve historic resources, provide quality housing options and enhance community identity. In order to accomplish this, the County must strive to provide a high quality of life to current residents, adapt to the lifestyle needs of changing populations, and foster communities that are healthy and livable.



OBJECTIVES

- A.** Encourage reinvestment and development in village centers to help retain current populations and attract new populations for a more sustainable neighborhood development pattern.
- B.** Foster diverse housing options across the County to better serve the aging population desiring to age-in-place.
- C.** Pursue development potential to expand the diversity of housing and transportation options for varying population needs and income levels (i.e. middle income, persons with disabilities, persons without personal automobiles).
- D.** Promote walkable, pedestrian friendly environments in towns and villages, including development near alternative transportation options, to enhance not only the quality of life of residents, but also the experience of visitors.
- E.** Support traditional, mixed use development patterns that preserve the existing small-town neighborhood feel in towns and villages.

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

1. Foster a more consistent level of code enforcement throughout the County.
2. Encourage the development and implementation of a program that requires an inspection before a property can be rented.
3. Continue the Schuyler County Housing Committee to identify specific housing needs and issues and identify possible programs or solutions.
4. Utilize the County's recent Housing Study as a tool for creating and implementing housing policies or programs.
5. Create a rehab program for low-income and market rate housing stock.
6. Explore the reuse of larger homes to provide residents with opportunities to downsize and age-in-place
7. Promote the County lifestyle to attract new and younger families.
8. Act to save critical community resources and historical properties.
9. Educate home owners about historic home improvement benefits through the State Historic Preservation Office.
10. Explore feasibility of a vacant building tax.
11. Educate home owners about energy efficiency programs and financing to support the renovation of housing stock.
12. Promote connectivity in new development or investment opportunities.
13. Support building of schools and business areas in or near neighborhoods to reduce the distance that people must travel to access their daily needs and work.
14. Seek funding to develop new and expand on existing walking trails and bike lanes for use of alternative transportation as well as outdoor recreation.

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TOWNS

Schuyler County is comprised of eight towns that share a small-town rural character and charm, but differ in geographic size, population, and natural resources. The following community profiles have been developed to provide a snapshot of each town, as well as a brief analysis of existing conditions. Each profile contains a summary of the town's history, demographics, key issues and statistics, which help identify current and future opportunities or challenges facing the community. These profiles are intended to provide an overview of relevant topics rather than an exhaustive, detailed study of a single issue or trend. They will also serve to inform the creation of policies for not only the Towns themselves, but also for their Villages and the County as a whole. Collectively they have also served to inform the creation of a set of preliminary policies for each Town, which is included at the end of this section.

Introduction

Town of Catharine

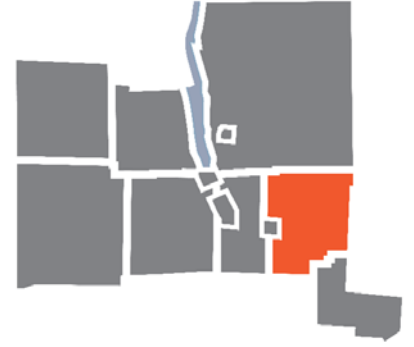


Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

The Town of Catharine is located in the southeastern portion of Schuyler County. It shares a northern border with the Town of Hector, a western border with the Town of Montour, a southern border with Chemung County and the Town of Cayuta, and an eastern border with Tompkins County.

Catharine also contains one of Schuyler County's four villages, the Village of Odessa. The most recent population counts for Catharine report 1,764

residents (including village populations) with a median age of 42.7, making it the third youngest town in the County. Within the Town's borders, residents and visitors benefit from the natural and recreational areas of Connecticut Hill, Texas Hollow, and Cayuta Lake. Cayuta Lake is the largest water body in Catharine, and can be found in the northeastern area of the Town. There is a public boat launch on Cayuta Lake, called "Little Lake" by locals, which provides public access for all residents and visitors.

Established in 1798, the Town of Catharine's first settlers took up residence in "Johnson's Settlement," which is now a hamlet of the same name. Although a transient hunter by the name of Paulding had resided in the town briefly, John Mitchell and his family became the first permanent settlers. Their name is still carried today in Mitchell Hollow. The first congregations to build a church in the Schuyler County region were members of the Methodist Episcopal faith and the Protestant Episcopal faith (St. John's). In 1809, the first Church was built in Catharine, followed by a second in 1810. Additionally, the Catharine Valley Agricultural Society was founded in 1826, decades ahead of any county fair unit in the region.

Of all the towns in Schuyler County, the Town of Catharine lost the largest percentage of its population over the past decade. This may be associated with the economic challenges facing the Town today. Catharine currently holds the second highest unemployment rate in the County at 10.6%, heavily influenced by the high unemployment rate among teens (over 45%). The 11.8% of residents living below poverty in Catharine is nearly one-third higher than the County's rate. Furthermore, the median household income for the Town is the third lowest in the County at \$44,148.

Despite the difficult economic conditions it faces, the Town of Catharine is a quaint place with plenty of outdoor activities, recreational areas, and rural pastures. Residents appreciate the small town feel offered by Catharine and value their access to clean water and air, as well as open natural areas. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation manages the Cayuta Lake boat launch, as well as the Texas Hollow Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Connecticut Hill State Game Management Area, which encompasses much of the western part of the Town. The citizens of Catharine are interested in improving their existing zoning policies in order to continue developing in a way that improves services while maintaining the natural assets they enjoy so much.

Key Issues

1. Lack of access to high speed internet.
2. Concern for uncontrolled development in environmentally sensitive areas (e.g. Cayuta Lake).
3. Underutilization of natural areas for recreation and lack of organized sports or activities.



Photo Credit: 1-2. (Top Left) Richard Owlett \\\ 3-6. Carmella Hoffman \\\

AT A GLANCE

2012 Population 1,764

2000 Population 1,927

Land Area 32.3 Sq. Mi.

Water Area..... 0.6 Sq. Mi.

Median Age 42.7

Density..... 54 People/Sq. Mi.

Land Use Policies

Comp. Plan.....	In Progress
Zoning	Yes
Site Plan	No
Subdivision	Yes
Planning Board.....	Yes

Did You Know?

1. Cayuta Lake is known for its excellent fishing and healthy fish populations. In particular the Walleye, Pickerel, and Large Mouth Bass catches that often weigh in at over five pounds.
2. The Town of Catharine is home to part of the largest Wildlife Management Area in the State of NY. This section, known as Connecticut Hill, totals over 11,645 acres of land, and originally was a farming area after the Revolutionary War.
3. The town seal depicts important aspects of the Town that have shaped it today including farming, forestry, lake life, and the religious history.

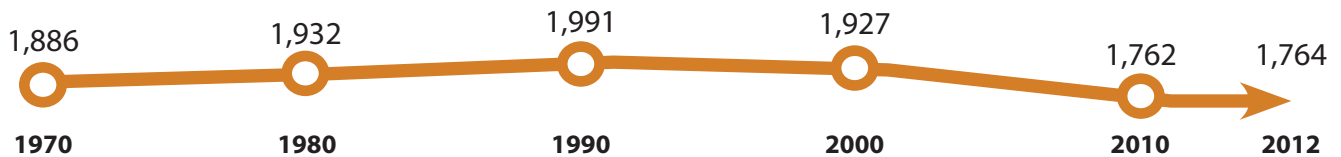
Demographics

Town of Catharine

KEY STATISTICS

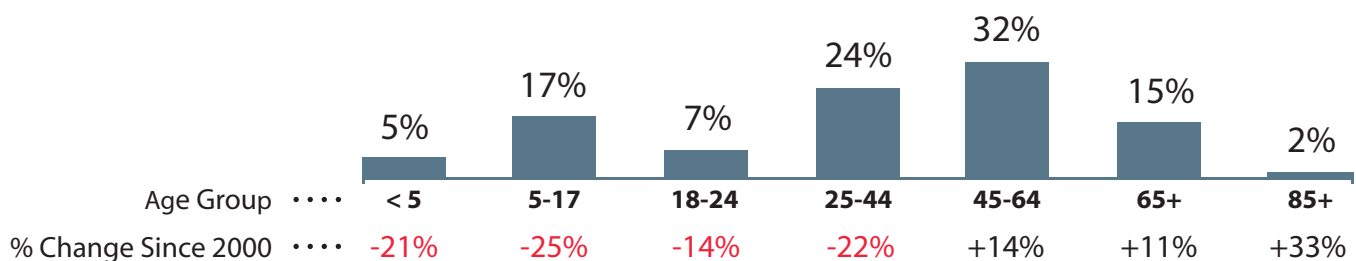


HISTORIC POPULATION COUNTS



The overall declining population throughout Schuylers County and Catharine over the past 20 years is worrisome, as a stable or growing population helps maintain a strong community. Although Catharine has seen a slight increase in residents from the 2010 census, the Town should work towards slowing population decline and lessen the potential negative impacts to their local economy and the community as a whole with efforts that both retain and attract residents.

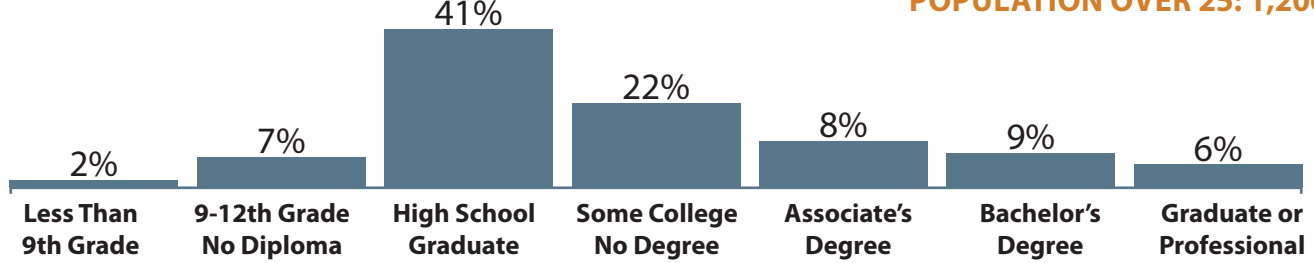
AGE DISTRIBUTION (2010)



Like the County, Catharine's population is aging without the counter balance of growth in younger age cohorts. This lack of young professionals and new families is a concern for the Town, as they represent two population groups that positively contribute to the growth of a community and its tax base. In addition, pressures from the growing senior population stress the community to provide more services and resources for elder care so older residents are able to age-in-place. In order to respond to these population pressures, Catharine will need to focus on policies that address the needs of young and old alike.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2013)

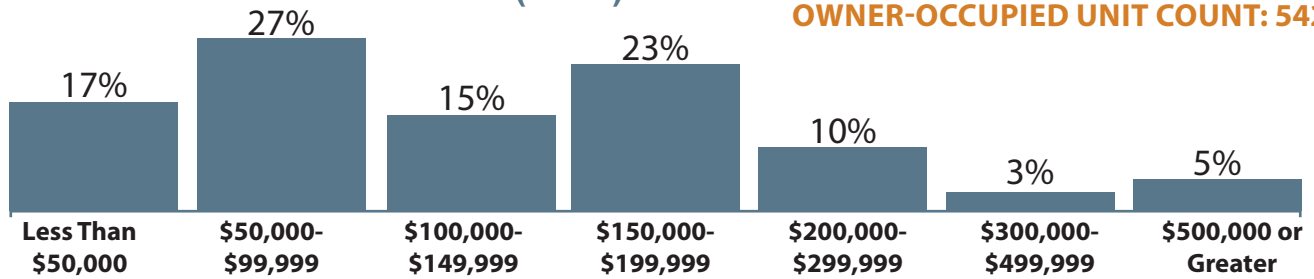
POPULATION OVER 25: 1,206



A recent study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce found that, by 2018, some 63% of all jobs in New York State will require postsecondary training beyond high school. Currently only 49% of Catharine's population would be qualified for these positions. Not only is this data meaningful for guiding Countywide efforts to increase access to higher education, but also for the Town's future economic development efforts.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOME VALUES (2013)

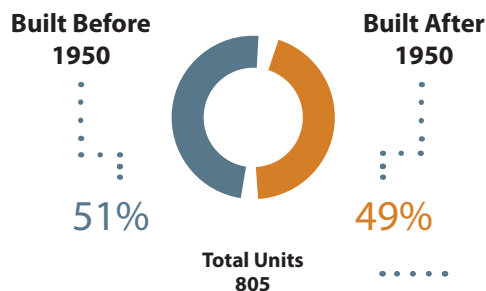
OWNER-OCCUPIED UNIT COUNT: 542



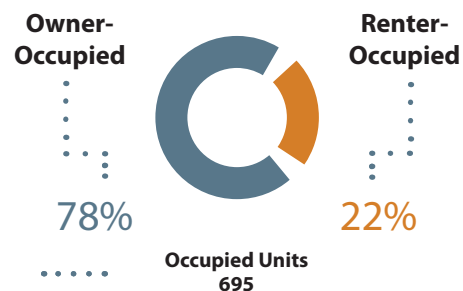
Home values provide a general gauge of the desirability of a community. In addition, maintaining home values is important to communities because of the contribution to its tax base these values have in the form of property taxes. With 44% of homes in Catharine valued at less than \$100,000; the Town needs to focus on economic policies and efforts that boost existing home values and develop the upper end of the real estate market.

CURRENT HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS (2013)

AGE OF UNITS



OCCUPIED UNITS



Due to their age, houses built before 1950 typically require more repairs, higher utility bill costs, and costly updates. Homes that aren't repaired or well-maintained often result in a lower quality housing stock for the community. With 51% of its units built before 1950, Catharine should explore strategies to update its existing housing stock including upgrading energy efficiencies and ensuring that all units are compliant with the Building and Property Maintenance Codes of NYS. Providing education to residents on energy upgrades and financing could work towards a better overall housing stock.

High home-ownership rates are often considered an indication of community and neighborhood stability. Catharine's ownership rate of 86% is on par with the County rate. However, Catharine should still strive to maintain a balance of ownership options within the housing stock, which will meet a wider variety of their resident's needs. The County's recent housing study is one tool the Town has to build upon.

LOCATION AFFORDABILITY INDEX



AS A PERCENT OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME		
27%	32%	59%
\$12,925	\$15,318	\$28,243
IDEAL PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME FOR AFFORDABILITY		
30%	15%	45%

Housing in the Town of Catharine is considered to be affordable. However, the town has a transportation cost that is over twice as expensive as is affordable with respect to income, making living in Catharine less affordable overall. This is likely due to the rural nature of the town, with people driving outside the town to nearby and distant village centers for employment or daily errands. While Catharine is likely to remain fairly rural, making longer travel distances for some errands unavoidable, supporting development in nearby villages such as Odessa, Montour Falls, and Watkins Glen will ensure that residents have relatively close access to many services.

PRESERVED FOREST AREA



4,861 Acres

Forested Land

5,930 MTCO₂

Sequestered by Forest Land

Forests provide many local benefits. The town has some forested land in the form of state forests and wildlife management areas, and likely has additional vacant agricultural and residential land that has been partially reforested. Forests sequester carbon instead of producing it, benefiting air quality. In fact, forest land in Catharine sequesters 65% of the carbon emitted by personal automobiles, the largest single sector of emissions in the town. Forests also soak up additional stormwater runoff, contributing to water quality. In addition, forests provide habitats for animals, providing recreational enjoyment for residents. Catharine should work to preserve existing forests when new development occurs, and look for appropriate targeting of reforestation opportunities.

PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE USAGE

30 Minute
Daily Commute



31,067 Miles
Vehicle Miles Traveled, Household



9,068 MTCO2
Annual Auto Emissions, Village



21,591,565 Miles
Vehicle Miles Traveled, Village



Personal automobile usage is associated with both community and personal costs in terms of money, air pollution, and traffic congestion. This affects residents in terms of higher cost of living, sub optimal public health outcomes, and diminished quality of life. The average commute in Catharine is longer than the county and national average of 25 minutes. Supporting development, especially in Odessa and other nearby villages could reduce commute times, reduce overall transportation costs for residents, and reduce the carbon emissions associated with personal auto travel.

SOLAR ENERGY CAPACITY



2 Installations

6.3 KW
Capacity

7,395 KWH
Potential Annual Production

5.1 MTCO2
Annual Carbon Avoided



Photo Credit: Watkins Glen Central School District Website

Residential solar energy installations provide the Town with over 6.3 KW, or 2.5% of the current solar capacity of Schuyler County. This technology saves money on residential electric bills and reduces community carbon emissions by 5.1 MTCO2 each year. The town should consider additional ways that solar energy can be included and promoted including integration during municipal power upgrades and developments as well as resident and business education on state energy programs.

Introduction

Town of Cayuta



Photo Credit: Schuyler County Planning Department

The Town of Cayuta is located in the southeastern corner of Schuyler County, surrounded on three sides by Chemung County and sharing a northern border with Tompkins County. With a 2012 population estimate of 554 residents, Cayuta is the least populated of the eight towns. The rural charm of Cayuta reflects the character and natural beauty also found across the greater Schuyler County region. The Town's most notable natural asset is Arnot Forest, which is currently used as Cornell University's teaching forest. Additionally, a portion of the Connecticut Hill Wildlife Management Area is located within Cayuta. The Connecticut Hill Wildlife Management Area is the largest of its kind in New York State, spanning 11,645 acres

across both Schuyler and Tompkins County. There are also numerous streams and ponds located throughout the Town. Some of the ponds, those built between 1948 and 1950, were originally used to attract waterfowl. However, these water bodies have since become popular with other wildlife in the area, making Cayuta a popular area for hunting, fishing, bird watching, and primitive style camping.

Captain Gabriel Ogde arrived in the Town of Cayuta in 1798. He was the first to operate a tavern in the Town. However, since major routes to several market and shipping areas passed through Cayuta, over time a half dozen taverns opened to accommodate the men driving livestock through. Also in 1798, Reverend David Jaynes, who was believed to be the first resident pastor in the County, became a resident of Cayuta. The post office was established in 1815. The boundaries of the Town were altered considerably during its incorporation with Schuyler County in 1824. In 1921, B.J. Cotton and H.A. Hanlon founded Cotton-Hanlon, Incorporated. The company's original operations were the manufacturing of hardwood lumber, opening their first two sawmills near Cayuta. Today the company focuses on the long-term profitable management of over 33,000 acres of timberland in New York and Pennsylvania.

Cayuta also happens to be the least dense town in the County with 27 residents per square mile. The low population density makes the provision of services to its citizens financially challenging. Adding to this challenge is the current economic climate of Cayuta. Although the Town's median household income of \$46,667 is only slightly below the County average, Cayuta suffers from the fourth highest rate of unemployment (9.3%) and fifth highest rate of poverty (13.6%) in the County. While Schuyler County as a whole has lost population over the last three decades, the population of Cayuta has remained remarkably stable. It is one of just two towns to have gained residents in the last decade, joined by the Town of Hector. Cayuta also has the lowest median age in the County at 39.1 years, indicating a larger young population than other towns.

The largest industry in Cayuta today is Wagner Hardwoods, the third largest sawmill in the state. Much of the early economic activity in the County revolved around the lumber industry, and Cayuta's lumberyard is one of the only enterprises that has maintained a presence in the region. Economic development initiatives that benefit the existing industries in the Town will be critical to maintaining infrastructure and services. Cayuta would like to protect its rural character and natural resources while pursuing such opportunities. For example, residents at public input sessions voiced concerns about agricultural runoff pollution of their water wells due to the close proximity of farm fields. In order to maintain current conditions, Cayuta will need to create a plan for preserving and protecting the quality of accessible ground water and its other natural resources.

Key Issues

1. Desire to enhance local public parks and trails.
2. Concern for the protection of local water sources, especially the aquifer.
3. Lack of local economic development initiatives.



Photo Credit: 1-6. Schuyler County Planning Department \\\

AT A GLANCE

2012 Population 554

2000 Population 545

Land Area 20.3 Sq. Mi.

Water Area..... 0.0 Sq. Mi.

Median Age 39.1

Density..... 27 People/Sq. Mi.

Land Use Policies

Comp. Plan	No
Zoning.....	No
Site Plan	No
Subdivision	No
Planning Board	No


Did You Know?

1. Cayuta is the least populated town in Schuyler County. It also happens to be one of the smallest towns in New York by population.
2. Portions of the Connecticut Hills Wildlife Management Area and Arnot Forest, Cornell University's teaching forest, are located within the Town of Cayuta
3. During the era of railroads, roughly 1800 to 1950, Cayuta was a thriving hamlet with a creamery, general store, hardware store, hotel, tavern, and other small businesses supported by the busy railroad depot.

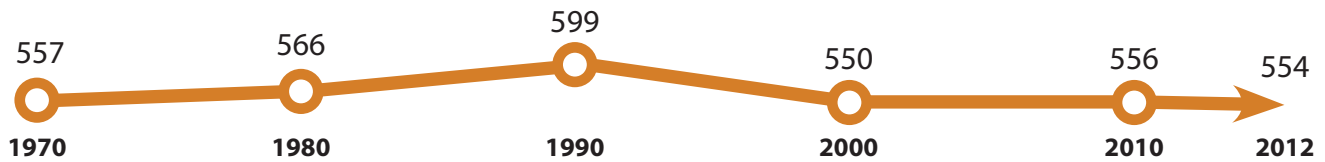
Demographics

Town of Cayuta

KEY STATISTICS

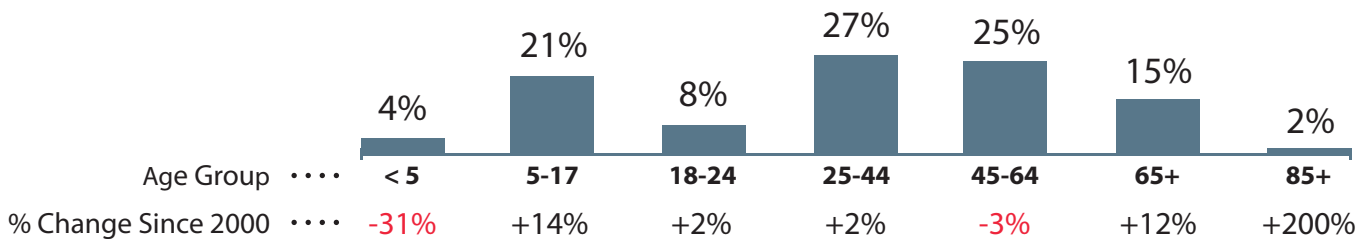
Primary Employment Industry	Primary Land Use	Unemployment Rate	Poverty Rate	Median Income
				
Manufacturing	Forest	9.3%	13.6%	\$46,667
Comprises 76% of Jobs in Cayuta	3 RD Most Common in the County	4 TH Highest Rate in the County	5 TH Highest Rate in the County	4 TH Highest Household Income in the County

HISTORIC POPULATION COUNTS



The overall declining population of the Schuyler County region over the past 20 years is worrisome, as a stable or growing population helps maintain a strong community. The Town of Cayuta, however, has maintained a stable population throughout the past few decades. Despite Cayuta's population retention, the Town remains the least populated and in the County, which creates unique challenges for the Town. For example, Cayuta's human resource capital is inherently lower than other towns, and town services are harder to provide efficiently.

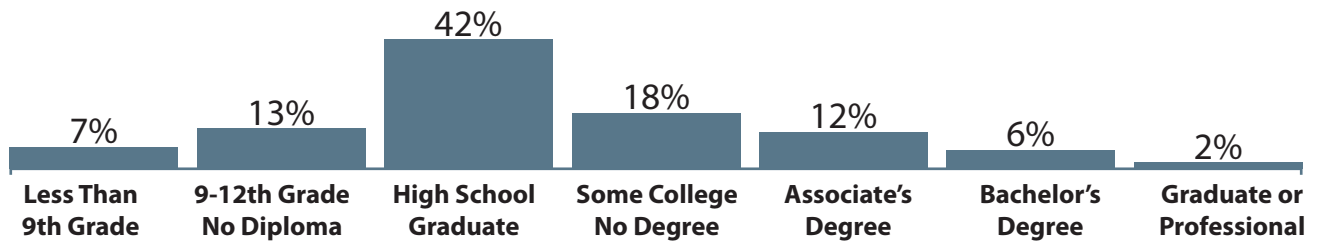
AGE DISTRIBUTION (2010)



Like the County, Cayuta's population is aging without the counter balance of growth in younger age cohorts. This lack of young professionals and new families is a concern for the Town, as they represent two population groups that positively contribute to the growth of a community and its tax base. In addition, pressures from the growing senior population stress the community to provide more services and resources for elder care so older residents are able to age-in-place. In order to respond to these population pressures, Cayuta will need to focus on policies that address the needs of young and old alike.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2013)

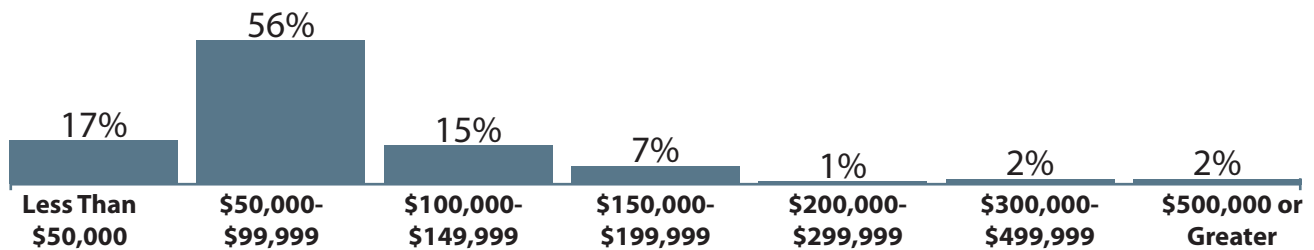
POPULATION OVER 25: 330



A recent study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce found that, by 2018, some 63% of all jobs in New York State will require postsecondary training beyond high school. Currently only 38% of Cayuta's population would be qualified for these positions. Not only is this data meaningful for guiding Countywide efforts to increase access to higher education, but also for the Town's future economic development efforts.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOME VALUES (2013)

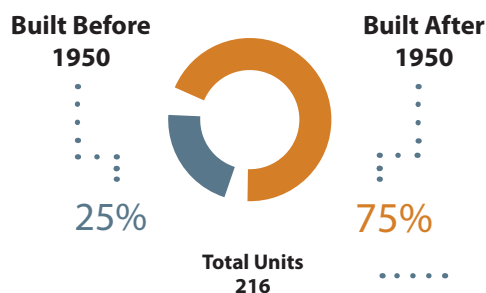
OWNER-OCCUPIED UNIT COUNT: 137



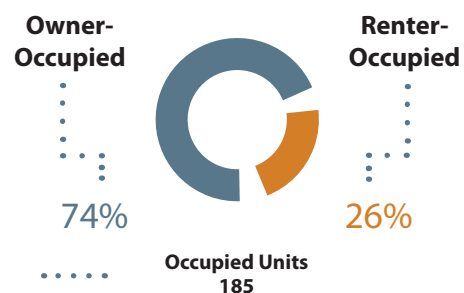
Home values provide a general gauge of the desirability of a community. Maintaining home values is important to communities because of the contribution to its tax revenue the values have in the form of property taxes. With 73% of homes in Cayuta valued at less than \$100,000; the Town needs to focus on economic policies and efforts that boost existing home values and develop the upper end of the real estate market.

CURRENT HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS (2013)

AGE OF UNITS



OCCUPIED UNITS



Of the 75% of homes built post 1950, 25% were built in the 1990s during a time of economic success across the country. However, less than 2% of housing units have been built since that time. These figures indicate that Cayuta should not only strive to bring older housing units up to NYS Codes, but the Town should also focus on developing newer housing units that address the needs of the existing market. Providing education to residents on energy upgrades and financing could work towards a better overall housing stock.

High home-ownership rates are often considered an indication of community and neighborhood stability. However, the Town should strive to maintain a balance of ownership options within its housing stock, which will meet a wider variety of its resident population's needs. The County's recent housing study is one tool the Town has to build upon. Currently, Cayuta is below the County homeownership rate at 74%.

LOCATION AFFORDABILITY INDEX



AS A PERCENT OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME		
26%	31%	57%
\$12,446	\$14,839	\$27,285
IDEAL PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME FOR AFFORDABILITY		
30%	15%	45%

Housing in the Town of Cayuta is considered to be very affordable. However, the town has a transportation cost that is over twice as expensive as is affordable with respect to income, making living in the town less affordable overall. This is likely due to the rural nature of the town, with people driving outside the town to distant city and village centers for employment or errands. While Cayuta is likely to remain fairly rural, making longer travel distances for some errands unavoidable, supporting development in nearby villages will improve residents' access to some services.

PRESERVED FOREST AREA



3,761 Acres

Forested Land

4,588 MTCO₂

Sequestered by Forest Land

Forests provide many local benefits. The town has some forested land in the form of state forests and likely has additional vacant agricultural and residential land that has been partially reforested. Forests sequester carbon instead of producing it, benefiting air quality. The Town of Cayuta actually has enough forest land to mitigate all of the emissions relating to personal automobile travel, the largest single sector of emissions in the town. Forests soak up additional stormwater runoff, contributing to water quality. In addition, forests provide habitats for animals, providing recreational enjoyment for residents. Cayuta should work to preserve existing forests when new development occurs, and look for appropriate targeting of reforestation opportunities.

PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE USAGE

25 Minute
Daily Commute



30,519 Miles
Vehicle Miles Traveled, Household



2,373 MTCO2
Annual Auto Emissions, Village



5,646,015 Miles
Vehicle Miles Traveled, Village



Personal automobile usage is associated with both community and personal costs in terms of money, air pollution, and traffic congestion. This affects residents in terms of higher cost of living, sub optimal public health outcomes, and diminished quality of life. The average commute in Cayuta is the same as the county and national average of 25 minutes. Supporting development in hamlets and in nearby villages could reduce commute times, reduce overall transportation costs for residents, and reduce the carbon emissions associated with personal auto travel.

SOLAR ENERGY CAPACITY



1 Installation

4.91 KW
Capacity

5,757 KWH
Potential Annual Production

4 MTCO2
Annual Carbon Avoided



Photo Credit: Watkins Glen Central School District Website

Residential solar energy installations provide Cayuta with nearly 5 KW, or nearly 2% of the current solar capacity of Schuyler County. This technology saves money on residential electric bills and reduces community carbon emissions by 4 MTCO2 each year. The town should consider additional ways that solar energy can be included and promoted including integration during municipal power upgrades and developments as well as resident and business education on state energy programs.

Introduction

Town of Dix

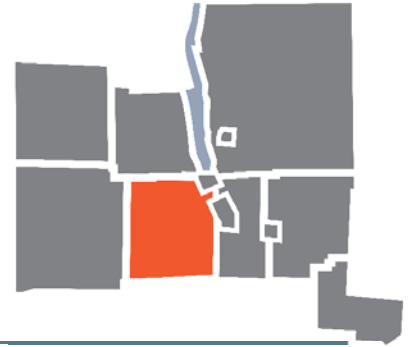


Photo Credit: Schuyler County Planning Department

The Town of Dix is central to Schuyler County not only geographically, but also in regional significance. Dix shares borders with the Town of Reading to the north, the Town of Orange to the west, Chemung County to the south, and the Town of Montour to the east. The Villages of Montour Falls and Watkins Glen also are partially located within the Town of Dix, as they cross the Town's borders to the northeast. Dix is home to the County seat, whose office is located within the Village of Watkins Glen. The Town also boasts two famous assets of Schuyler County, the Watkins Glen International Speedway and Watkins Glen State Park. Dix has the fourth largest land area in the County at 36.1 square miles, and in 2012 reported 3,912

residents (including village populations), making it the second most densely populated town in the County, just after Montour.

The first residents came to Dix in 1797. John Diven and William Baskin moved with their families to Dix, choosing to settle in the hill area above what is presently called Watkins Glen. About the same time, David Culver settled near what is now the entrance of Watkins Glen State Park. Culver was instrumental in developing this area of the Town, as he was responsible for improving the road and setting up a tollgate. For a time, this settlement was named Culverstown in his honor.

The hamlet of Beaver Dams, located in the southwest corner of Dix, received its name because the early pioneers found beaver dams on both ends of the area that would become the settlement. Townsend, another early settlement in Dix, is also named after its first settler, Claudius Townsend. The auto racetrack, Watkins Glen International speedway (WGI), abuts the hamlet of Townsend today. In 1973 the racetrack hosted a huge open-air concert, called Summer Jam, that featured the Grateful Dead, the Allman Brothers, and The Band. Over 600,000 people attended this concert, which at that time was the largest rock concert on record. Today, the presence of WGI in Dix still brings thousands of visitors every year from across the country, giving the Town an opportunity to reroute tourists to the area's many natural attractions, wine trails, and fishing, as well as its historic village communities.

Dix is on par with the averages of Schuyler County demographics, as the Town's median age (44), median household income (\$45,339), unemployment rate (6.9%) and poverty rate (8.3%) are either at or near county levels. Because Dix is one of the most densely populated towns, its demographic profile has many urban traits. The Town has one of the highest rates of home renter-ship versus ownership, and holds the lowest rate of housing unit vacancy at 4.5%. However, like other Schuyler County towns, Dix also has many rural characteristics. There are a number of farms in the Town that serve as important sources of local food and income for its citizens. The most abundant crop in Dix is hay, which is characteristic of the region due to its northern location.

Based upon the public input provided during this process, Dix residents would like to realize investment that allows for the maintenance of its rural feel and agricultural lands. Additionally, the Town would like to increase the availability of jobs, quality housing, and services that are necessary to attract and retain new residents and young people. Residents are also interested in cultivating their abundant wind resources; namely, establishing wind farms that could create jobs and potentially enable green energy use.

Key Issues

1. Desire for natural resource and farmland protection from development.
2. Need to attract more businesses and develop support for existing ones.
3. Lack of local economic development initiatives.



Photo Credit: 1.(Top Left) Norrie Cornelius \\\ 2-4. Schuyler County Planning Department \\\ Photos 5-6. Richard Owlett \\\

AT A GLANCE

2012 Population 3,912

2000 Population 4,197

Land Area 36.1 Sq. Mi.

Water Area 0.5 Sq. Mi.

Median Age 44

Density 108 People/Sq. Mi.

Land Use Policies

Comp. Plan Yes
 Zoning Yes
 Site Plan Yes
 Subdivision Yes
 Planning Board Yes

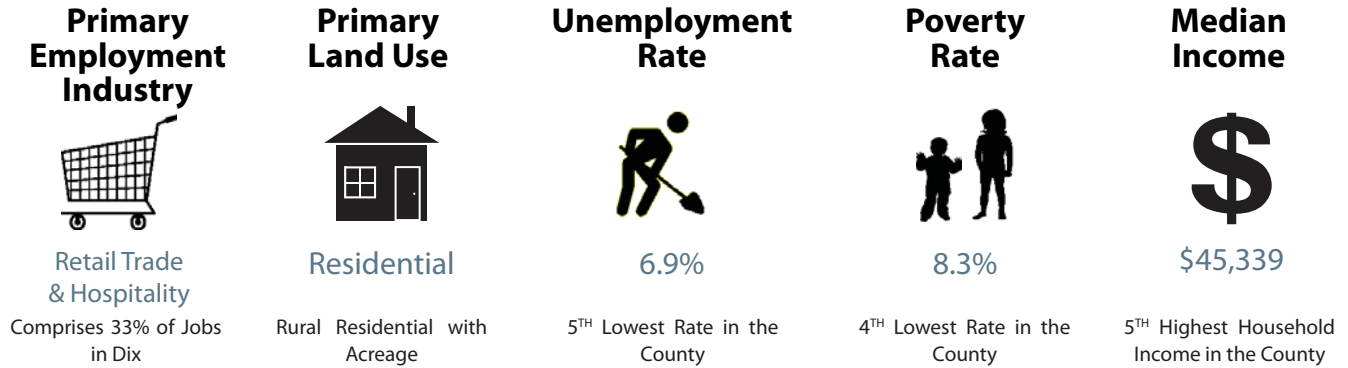
Did You Know?

1. Dix is home to the Watkins Glen International (WGI) Speedway, which attracts thousands of visitors to the region each year.
2. Two of the four villages in Schuyler County are partially located within the Town of Dix, both the Villages of Watkins Glen and Montour Falls.
3. In 1973, the Watkins Glen International Speedway was the stage for a rock concert featuring the Grateful Dead, Allman Brothers, and The Band. The concert attracted over 600,000 attendants from all over the country.

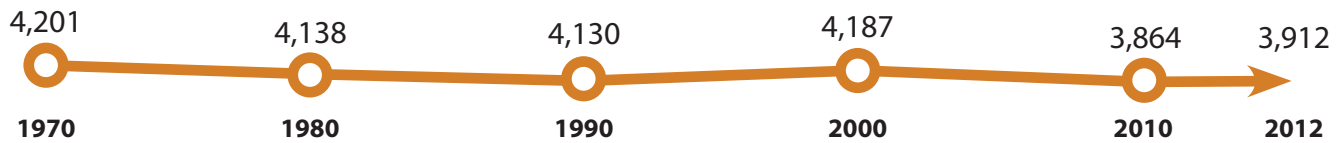
Demographics

Town of Dix

KEY STATISTICS

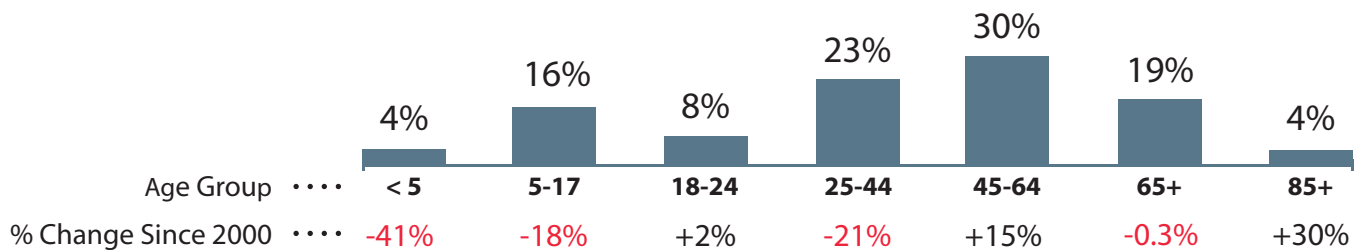


HISTORIC POPULATION COUNTS



The overall declining population throughout Schuyler County and the Town of Dix over the past 20 years is worrisome, as a stable or growing population helps maintain a strong community. Although Dix has seen a slight increase in residents from the 2010 census, the Town should work towards slowing population decline and lessening the potential negative impacts to the community with efforts that both retain and attract residents.

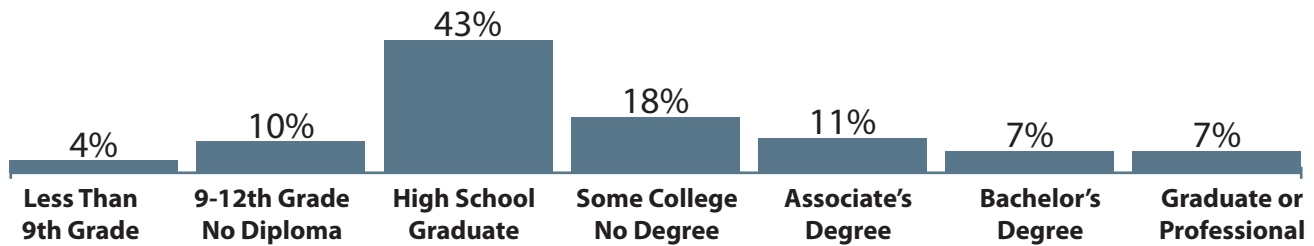
AGE DISTRIBUTION (2010)



Like the County, Dix's population is aging without the counter balance of growth in younger age cohorts. This lack of young professionals and new families is a concern for the Town, as they represent two population groups that positively contribute to the growth of a community and its tax base. In addition, pressures from the growing senior population stress the community to provide more services and resources for elder care so older residents are able to age-in-place. In order to respond to these population pressures, Dix will need to focus on policies that address the needs of young and old alike.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2013)

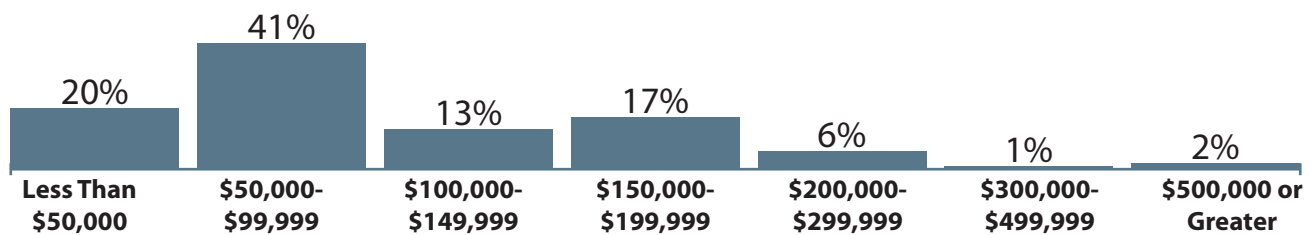
POPULATION OVER 25: 2,820



A recent study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce found that, by 2018, some 63% of all jobs in New York State will require postsecondary training beyond high school. Currently only 43% of Dix's population would be qualified for these positions. Not only is this data meaningful for guiding Countywide efforts to increase access to higher education, but also for the Town's future economic development efforts.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOME VALUES (2013)

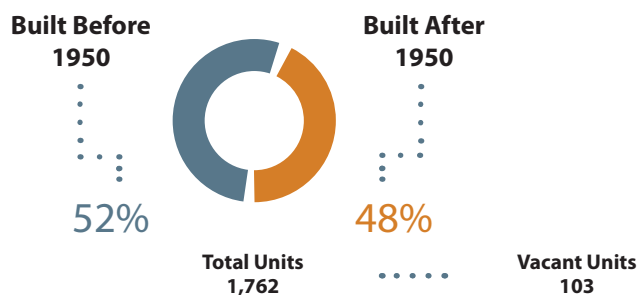
OWNER-OCCUPIED UNIT COUNT: 1,270



Home values provide a general gauge of the desirability of a community. In addition, maintaining home values is important to communities because of the contribution to its tax base these values have in the form of property taxes. With 61% of homes in Dix valued at less than \$100,000, the Town needs to focus on economic policies and efforts that boost existing home values and develop the upper end of the real estate market.

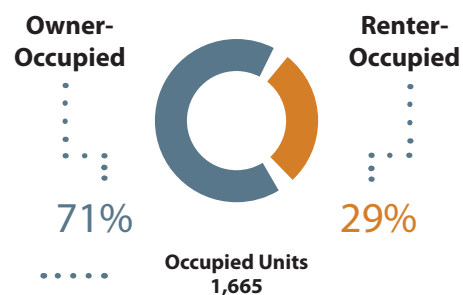
CURRENT HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS (2013)

AGE OF UNITS



Due to their age, houses built before 1950 typically require more repairs and costly updates. Homes that aren't repaired or well-maintained often result in a lower quality housing stock for the community. With 52% of its units built before 1950, Dix should explore strategies to update its existing housing stock including energy upgrades and ensuring that all units are compliant with the Building and Property Maintenance Codes of NYS. Providing education to residents on energy upgrades and financing could work towards a better overall housing stock.

OCCUPIED UNITS



High home-ownership rates are often considered an indication of community and neighborhood stability. However, the Town should strive to maintain a balance of ownership options within its housing stock, which will meet a wider variety of its resident population's needs. The County's recent housing study is one tool the Town has to build upon. Currently, Dix is below the County homeownership rate at 71%.

LOCATION AFFORDABILITY INDEX



AS A PERCENT OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME		
27%	31%	58%
\$12,925	\$14,839	\$27,764
IDEAL PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME FOR AFFORDABILITY		
30%	15%	45%

Housing in the Town of Dix is considered to be affordable. However, the town has a transportation cost that is over twice as expensive as is affordable with respect to income, making living in the town less affordable overall. This is likely due to the rural nature of the town, with people driving outside the town to distant and nearby village centers for employment or errands. As transportation cost is directly linked to the location of housing, consideration for the location of additional housing development in Dix should reflect the towns wishes for the desired level of affordability in the town. As transportation cost is directly linked to the location of housing, consideration for the location of additional housing development in Dix should reflect the towns wishes for the desired level of affordability in the town.

PRESERVED FOREST AREA



1,696 Acres

Forested Land

2,069 MTCO2

Sequestered by Forest Land

Forests provide many local benefits. The town has some forested land in the form of state forests, state parks, and part of a wildlife management area, and likely has additional vacant agricultural and residential land that has been partially reforested. Forests sequester carbon instead of producing it, benefiting air quality. While Dix has a fair amount of forest acreage, the carbon sequestering benefits provided are outnumbered by the carbon emissions from residents' personal automobiles. Forests soak up additional stormwater runoff, contributing to water quality. In addition, forests provide habitats for animals, providing recreational enjoyment for residents. Dix should work to preserve existing forests when new development occurs, and look for appropriate targeting of reforestation opportunities.

PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE USAGE

23 Minute

Daily Commute



31,292 Miles

Vehicle Miles Traveled, Household



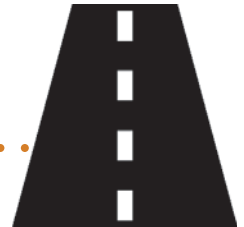
21,883 MTCO2

Annual Auto Emissions, Village



52,101,180 Miles

Vehicle Miles Traveled, Village



Personal automobile usage is associated with both community and personal costs in terms of money, air pollution, and traffic congestion. This affects residents in terms of higher cost of living, sub optimal public health outcomes, and diminished quality of life. The average commute in Dix is slightly shorter than the county and national average of 25 minutes. While Dix is likely to remain largely rural, making longer travel distances for some errands unavoidable, supporting development, especially in the two adjacent villages, could increase the services and employment opportunities available, could reduce commute times, reduce transportation costs for residents, and reduce the community wide carbon emissions associated with personal auto travel.

SOLAR ENERGY CAPACITY

2 Installations



14.1 KW

Capacity

16,551 KWH

Potential Annual Production

11.4 MTCO2

Annual Carbon Avoided



Photo Credit: Watkins Glen Central School District Website

Commercial solar energy installations provide the Town of Dix with over 14 KW, or nearly 6% of the current solar capacity of Schuyler County. This technology is saving money in commercial electric bills and reduces community carbon emissions by 11.4 MTCO2 each year. The town should consider additional ways that solar energy can be included and promoted including integration during municipal power upgrades and developments as well as resident and business education on state energy programs.

Introduction

Town of Hector

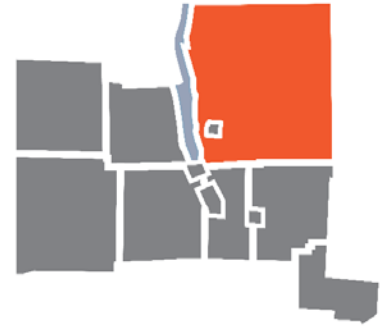


Photo Credit: Schuyler County Planning Department, Kristin VanHorn

Located in the northeastern corner of Schuyler County, the Town of Hector is bordered by Seneca Lake to the west, Seneca County to the north, Tompkins County to the east, and the Towns of Montour and Catharine to the south. Hector's geographical location is known for its healthy soil and lush vegetation. Additionally, the Town contains the only national forest in New York State, and has the longest stretch of Seneca Lake coastline in the County. Hector is by far the largest town in Schuyler County with 102.5 square miles of land area, and contains the largest share of water area with an additional 10 square miles. Hector also boasts world famous wineries and an innovative distillery lining a scenic byway that provides elevated views over Seneca Lake's waters from its edge.

The first settlers came to Hector in 1790, the Town was formed in 1802, making the Town of Hector the second oldest municipality in the County. Historically, Revolutionary War veterans sought settlement in Hector as part of the Central New York Military Tract, having come upon the land during a northern offensive against Native Americans sympathetic to England. The military tract granted parcels of land to veterans wanting to return to the area. It was these same veterans who became Hector's founders, seeking to enjoy the natural beauty and resources that the Iroquois had before them.

Hector has a history of socially engaged citizens. In 1818, the Hector Temperance Society formed to combat drinking in the Town. By 1832, alcohol consumption decreased by 90%, and nine of eleven active distilleries had shut down. The town ledger reported membership in this group by marking a "T" next to a member's name. It is from this practice that the name teetotaler came about as a nickname for members and eventually to refer to Hector's historic society of clean living. Yet the conditions that make Hector an ideal place for the production of wine and spirits did not change, and today the Town is the center of one of America's greatest wine producing regions.

Along with being the largest town geographically, Hector has the largest 2012 population in the County with 4,956 residents, including the Village of Burdett. In addition, Hector joins Cayuta as the only two Schuyler County towns that experienced population growth over the past decade. One of the main reasons Hector is an attractive location for residents is its proximity to Tompkins County. This proximity and the resulting influx of Tompkins County residents could account for the higher median household income (\$51,528), and low unemployment rate (4.7%) in Hector. The Town also offers a high quality of life for its residents. It is itself a microcosm of the Finger Lakes region, possessing waterfalls, lake houses, farms, wineries, trails, and hunting grounds. Residents appreciate the rural feel of living in a town with only 44 people per square mile, while they are still able to access amenities located nearby.

Hector has many resources that will ensure a prosperous future. The Town has recently held wine and dairy festivals, a green energy festival, and fruit-picking event that all draw people from the greater region. Hector's lakeside is noted for its absence of high-density vacation housing that has challenged ecosystems along some of the Finger Lakes, and the obstructed views that come with such development. It is for these reasons Hector is intent on maintaining the value of its natural assets while still developing its booming agricultural businesses with sustainable and modern practices.

Key Issues

1. Providing senior residents with the ability to age in place.
2. Desire to protect farmlands from the negative impacts of development.
3. Land is being broken up into small parcels for individual sale at higher prices



Photo Credit: 1. (Top Left) Molly Schamel \\\ 2. Wikipedia User: Dmadeo \\\ 3-4. Richard Owlett \\\ 5. Village of Burdett Resident \\\ 6. Schuyler County Planning Department \\\

AT A GLANCE

2012 Population 4,956

2000 Population 4,854

Land Area 102.5 Sq. Mi.

Water Area 10 Sq. Mi.

Median Age 44

Density 48 People/Sq. Mi.

Land Use Policies

Comp. Plan Yes
 Zoning No
 Site Plan No
 Subdivision No
 Planning Board No

Did You Know?

1. Home to a variety of vineyards and farms, Hector has a lot to offer in terms of agritourism, including wineries, breweries, creameries, and fruit farms.
2. Despite the overall population decline in the County, the Town of Hector is one of only two towns that has experienced population growth over the last two decades.
3. Hector is the largest town in Schuyler County in terms of land area and population.

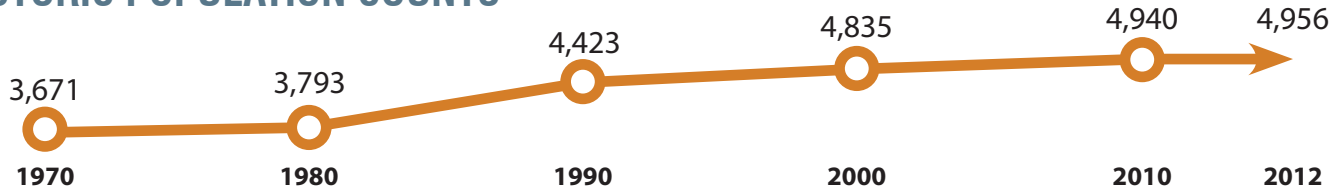
Demographics

Town of Hector

KEY STATISTICS

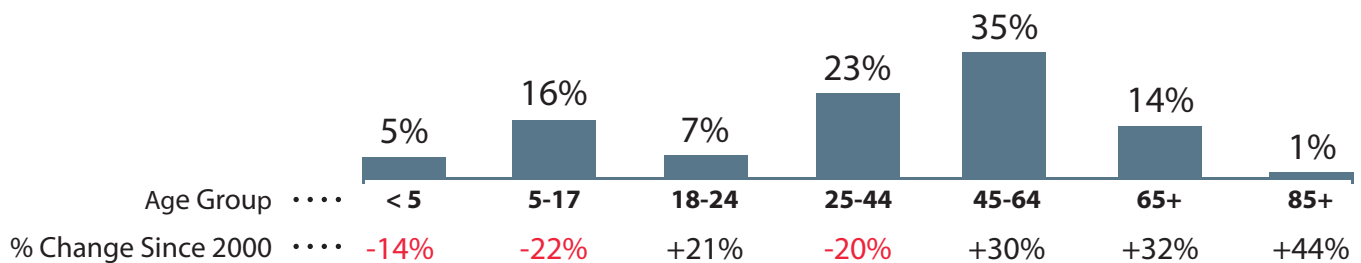


HISTORIC POPULATION COUNTS



The overall declining population of the Schuyler County region over the past 20 years is worrisome, as a stable or growing population helps maintain strong communities. However, Hector tells a different story as the Town's population has been steadily rising for decades. Comprising nearly 27% of the County's population, Hector holds a great deal of the region's human resource capital. This gives the Town an advantage when it comes to local economic growth strategies and community development.

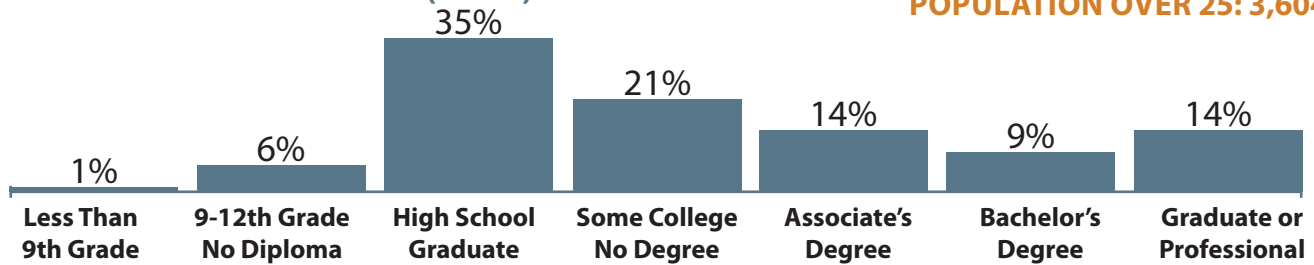
AGE DISTRIBUTION (2010)



Like the County, Hector's population is aging without the counter balance of growth in younger age cohorts. This lack of young professionals and new families is a concern for the Town, as they represent two population groups that positively contribute to the growth of a community and its tax base. In addition, pressures from the growing senior population stress the community to provide more services and resources for elder care so older residents are able to age-in-place. In order to respond to these population pressures, Hector will need to focus on policies that address the needs of young and old alike.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2013)

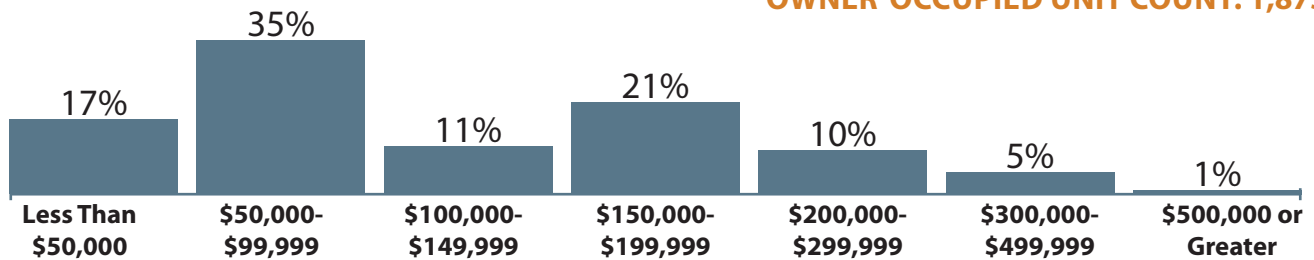
POPULATION OVER 25: 3,604



A recent study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce found that, by 2018, some 63% of all jobs in New York State will require postsecondary training beyond high school. Currently only 42% of Hector's population would be qualified for these positions. Not only is this data meaningful for guiding Countywide efforts to increase access to higher education, but also for the Town's future economic development efforts.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOME VALUES (2013)

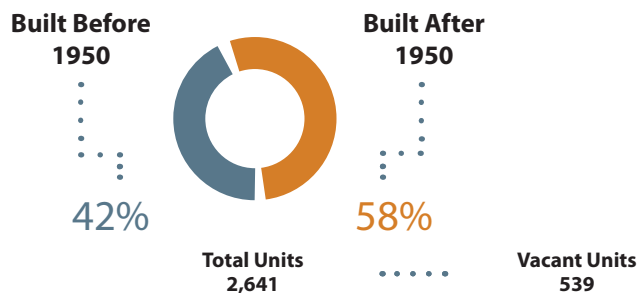
OWNER-OCCUPIED UNIT COUNT: 1,873



Home values provide a general gauge of the desirability of a community. Maintaining home values is important because of the contribution to a community's tax base in the form of property taxes. Hector has a number of high-end lakefront homes that skew its distribution of home values. Although 17% of the Town's homes are valued at \$200,000 or more, 52% are valued at less than \$100,000. Therefore, Hector should focus on efforts that help decrease the existing disparity in home values.

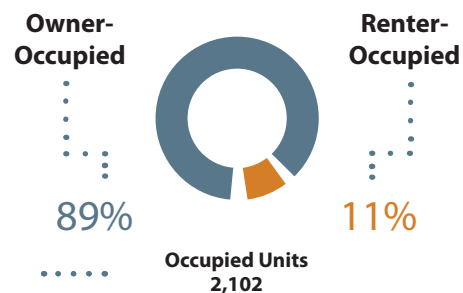
CURRENT HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS (2013)

AGE OF UNITS



Due to their age, houses built before 1950 typically require more repairs and costly updates. Homes that aren't repaired or well-maintained often result in a lower quality housing stock for the community. With 42% of its units built before 1950, Hector should explore strategies to update its existing housing stock including energy upgrades and ensuring that all units are compliant with the Building and Property Maintenance Codes of NYS. Providing education to residents on energy upgrades and financing could work towards a better overall housing stock.

OCCUPIED UNITS



High home-ownership rates are often considered an indication of community and neighborhood stability. Although Hector's ownership rate of 89% is well above the County rate, the Town should strive to maintain a balance of ownership options within the housing stock, which will meet a wider variety of their resident population's needs. The County's recent housing study is one tool the Town has to build upon.

LOCATION AFFORDABILITY INDEX



AS A PERCENT OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME		
28%	32%	60%
\$13,403	\$15,318	\$28,721
IDEAL PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME FOR AFFORDABILITY		
30%	15%	45%

Housing in the Town of Hector is considered to be affordable. However, the town has a transportation cost that is over twice as expensive as is considered affordable with respect to income, making living in Hector less affordable overall. This is likely due to the rural nature of the town, with people driving outside the town to village centers for employment or errands. As transportation cost is directly linked to the location of housing, consideration for the location of additional housing development in Hector should reflect the towns wishes for the desired level of affordability in the town.

PRESERVED FOREST AREA



11,629 Acres

Forested Land

14,188 MTCO₂

Sequestered by Forest Land

Forests provide many local benefits. Hector has many forest resources, most predominantly in the Finger Lakes National Forest, and likely has additional vacant agricultural and residential land that has been partially reforested. Forests sequester carbon instead of producing it, benefiting air quality. In fact, the forest land in Hector sequesters nearly 1/2 of the carbon produced just from personal automobiles in Hector. Forests also soak up additional stormwater runoff, contributing to water quality. In addition, forests provide habitats for animals, providing recreational enjoyment for residents. The Town of Hector should work to preserve existing forests when new development occurs, and look for appropriate targeting of reforestation opportunities.

PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE USAGE

29 Minute
Daily Commute



32,430 Miles
Vehicle Miles Traveled, Household



28,630 MTCO2
Annual Auto Emissions, Village



68,167,860 Miles
Vehicle Miles Traveled, Village



Increases in personal automobile usage are associated with community and personal costs in terms of money, air pollution, and traffic congestion. This affects residents in terms of higher cost of living, sub optimal public health outcomes, and diminished quality of life. The average commute in Hector is longer than the county and national average of 25 minutes. Because Hector is likely to remain rural, the need to drive longer distances is somewhat unavoidable. However, supporting development in the 2 adjacent villages could increase local services and employment opportunities, and could reduce commute times, reduce overall transportation costs, and reduce the carbon emissions associated with personal auto travel.

SOLAR ENERGY CAPACITY



6 Installations

42.36 KW
Capacity

49,723 KWH
Potential Annual Production

34.3 MTCO2
Annual Carbon Avoided



Photo Credit: Renewable Rochester

Both residential and commercial solar energy installations provide the Town of Hector with over 40 KW, or over 15% of the current solar capacity of Schuyler County. This technology saves money in residential and commercial electric bills and reduces community carbon emissions by 34.3 MTCO2 each year. The town should consider additional ways that solar energy can be included and promoted including integration during municipal power upgrades and developments as well as resident and business education on state energy programs.

Introduction

Town of Montour



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

The Town of Montour is located in the south central area of Schuyler County. Montour shares a southern border with Chemung County, a northern border with the Town of Hector, an eastern border with the Town of Catharine and the Village of Odessa, and a western border with the Town of Dix and the Villages of Watkins Glen and Montour Falls. The Town is located in such a way that it accommodates a number of transportation routes into the center of the County. Route 14 provides direct access to US17/I-86 and serves as the main thoroughfare for both the Town and the Village of Montour Falls. Furthermore, Route 224 links the Village of Montour Falls to the Village of Odessa to the east.

Montour is the smallest geographically and most densely populated of the County's towns with a 2012 population of 2,325 residents (including villages) living within 18.6 square miles. Despite the densely populated character, Montour has many natural recreation areas like the Queen Catharine Marsh. This marsh is home to a variety of birds, flora, and fauna, and acts as a great recreational resource for the Town with a number of hiking trails. Montour is also home to many creeks rife with rainbow trout, which attract thousands of anglers each year.

In 1860, the Town of Montour was established from a piece of the Town of Catharine. The first permanent settlers were Phineas Catlin, Silas Wolcott, and a Mr. Wilson. At the time, the area was known as Catharinestown, in honor of Catharine Montour who was the last leader of the local group of Seneca Indians. In 1802, the County's first post office was established in Catharinestown. George Mills established a mercantile business and tavern along the original bank of Catharine Creek, creating an additional settlement that was then called Mills Landing.

Although there is no waterway by the name of Montour Falls in the Town, there are numerous waterfall attractions like Havana Glen, Deckertown Falls, Aunt Sarah's Falls, and the spectacular Shequaga (Chequaga) Falls, which the Indians called Tumbling Waters. Catharine Creek, famous for its great spawning water for rainbow trout, also flows through the Town. A great vantage point to view many of these unique features can be found along Skyline Drive, or Route 8, that runs north-south above Catharine Valley providing an unparalleled vista of Schuyler's western hills and farmlands.

Like the Town of Dix, Montour's demographics indicate that it is less rural than the towns that lie on the periphery of Schuyler County to the north, east and west. The Town has the highest home renter-ship rate in the County, and the densest development pattern of all the Schuyler County towns. However, Montour faces very difficult economic challenges. The Town has the third lowest median household income in the County (\$40,307), the second highest poverty rate (16%), and the fifth highest unemployment rate (9%). It also has the highest median age at 47 years, indicating a strong need for social services that serve an aging population. Because Montour is central to three of the County's four villages, it provides more convenient access to services than other towns in the County. While the demographics indicate a more urban area, the rural nature of the County is still present in Montour. As such, the majority of the Town maintains a quaint and pleasant small-town feel, which allows the quality of life to remain high.

Key Issues

1. Public areas are in need of improvement.
2. Concern for the protection of farmland from negative impacts of development.
3. Lack of job creation and local economic development initiatives.



Photo Credit: 1-3. Richard Owlett \\\ 4-5. Schuyler County Planning Department \\\ 6. Charles Haeffner (Odessafile) \\\

AT A GLANCE

2012 Population 2,325

2000 Population 2,446

Land Area 18.6 Sq. Mi.

Water Area 0.0 Sq. Mi.

Median Age 47

Density 125 People/Sq. Mi.

Land Use Policies

Comp. Plan Yes
 Zoning Yes
 Site Plan Yes
 Subdivision Yes
 Planning Board Yes

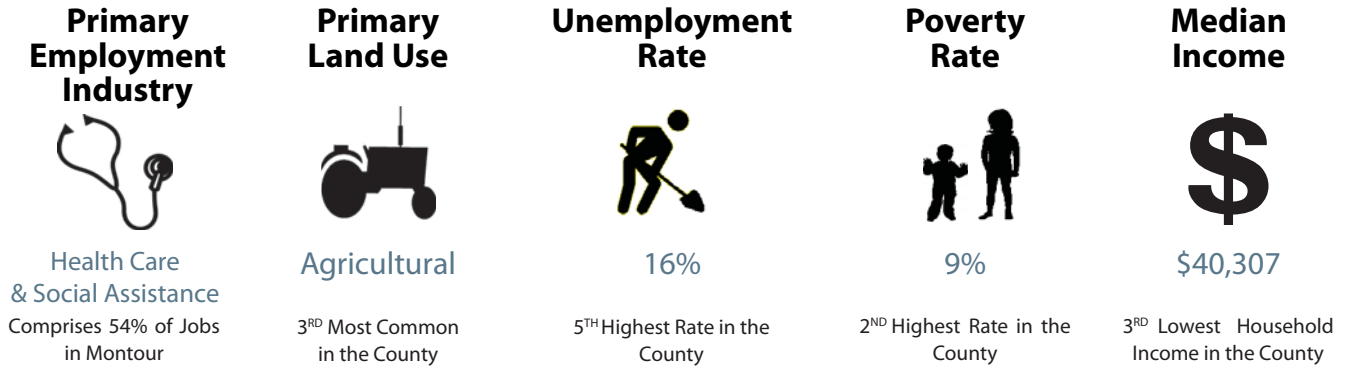
Did You Know?

1. The Town of Montour is home to Havana Glen Park, which is a park known for its hiking trails and water falls.
2. After its completion in 1833 until falling into disuse in 1878, the Chemung Canal passed through Montour connecting Seneca Lake to the Chemung River.
3. Montour established Schuyler County's first post office within its limits in 1802.

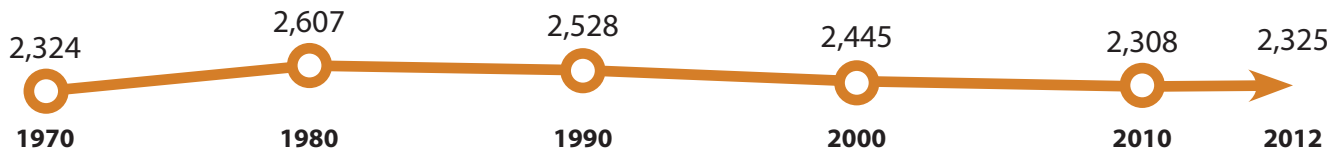
Demographics

Town of Montour

KEY STATISTICS

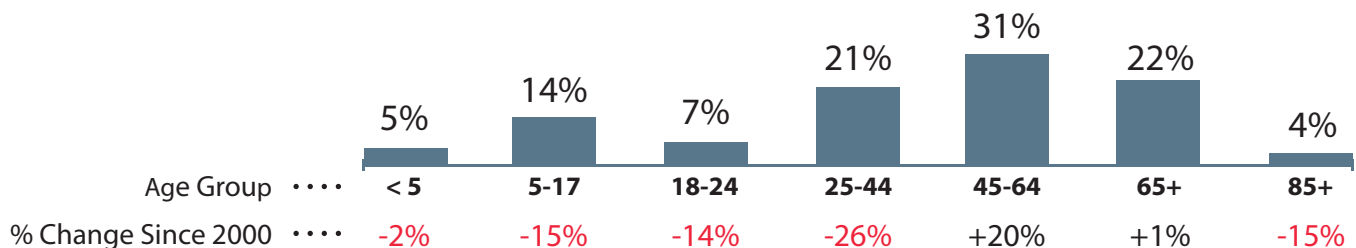


HISTORIC POPULATION COUNTS



The overall declining population throughout Schuylers County and the Town of Montour over the past 20 years is worrisome, as a stable or growing population helps maintain a strong community. Although Montour has seen a slight increase in residents from the 2010 census, the Town should work towards slowing population decline and lessen the potential negative impacts to the community with efforts that both retain and attract residents.

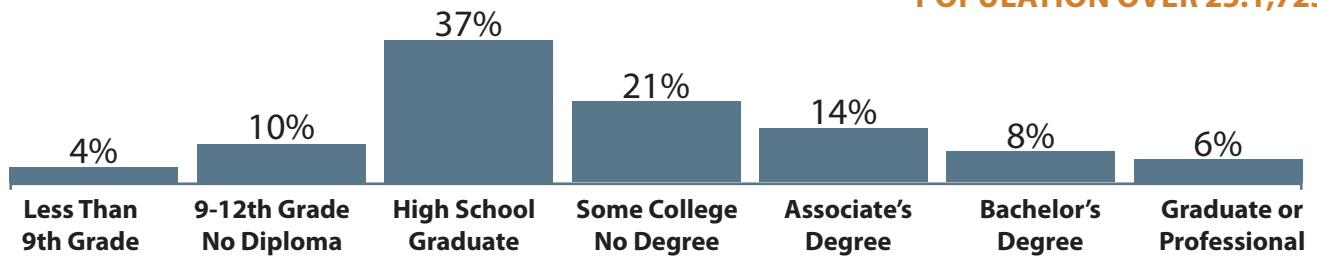
AGE DISTRIBUTION (2010)



Like the County, Montour's population is aging without the counter balance of growth in younger age cohorts. This lack of young professionals and new families is a concern for the Town, as they represent two population groups that positively contribute to the growth of a community and its tax base. In addition, pressures from the growing senior population stress the community to provide more services and resources for elder care so older residents are able to age-in-place. In order to respond to these population pressures, Montour will need to focus on policies that address the needs of young and old alike.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2013)

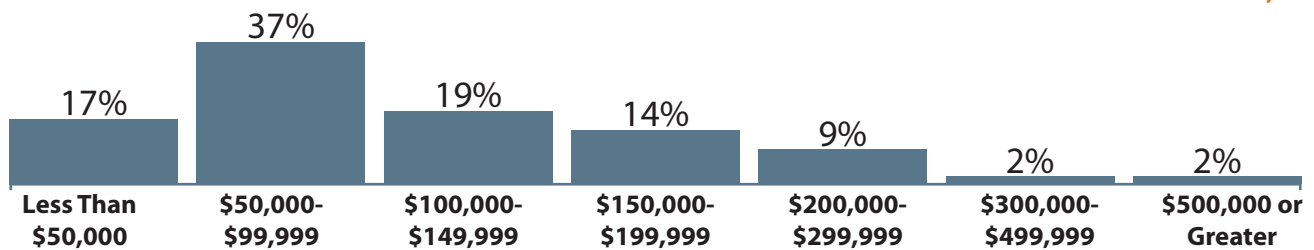
POPULATION OVER 25: 1,723



A recent study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce found that, by 2018, some 63% of all jobs in New York State will require postsecondary training beyond high school. Currently only 49% of Montour's population would be qualified for these positions. Not only is this data meaningful for guiding Countywide efforts to increase access to higher education, but also for the Town's future economic development efforts.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOME VALUES (2013)

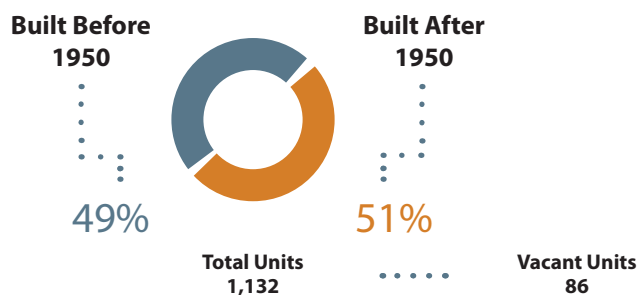
OWNER-OCCUPIED UNIT COUNT: 1,046



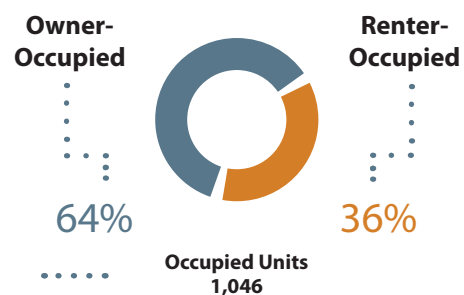
Home values provide a general gauge of the desirability of a community. In addition, maintaining home values is important to communities because of the contribution to its tax base these values have in the form of property taxes. With 54% of homes in Montour valued at less than \$100,000, the Town needs to focus on economic policies and efforts that boost existing home values and develop the upper end of the real estate market.

CURRENT HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS (2013)

AGE OF UNITS



OCCUPIED UNITS



Due to their age, houses built before 1950 typically require more repairs and costly updates. Homes that aren't repaired or well-maintained often result in a lower quality housing stock for the community. With 49% of its units built before 1950, Montour should explore strategies to update its existing housing stock including energy upgrades and ensuring that all units are compliant with the Building and Property Maintenance Codes of NYS. Providing education to residents on energy upgrades and financing could work towards a better overall housing stock.

High home-ownership rates are often considered an indication of community and neighborhood stability. However, the Town should strive to maintain a balance of ownership options within its housing stock, which will meet a wider variety of its resident population's needs. The County's recent housing study is one tool the Town has to build upon. Currently, Montour's rate of 64% is below the County's rate.

LOCATION AFFORDABILITY INDEX



AS A PERCENT OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME		
28%	31%	59%
\$13,403	\$14,839	\$28,242
IDEAL PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME FOR AFFORDABILITY		
30%	15%	45%

Housing in the Town of Montour is considered to be affordable. However, the town has a transportation cost that is twice as expensive as is affordable with respect to income, making living in the town less affordable overall. While the town is mostly rural in nature its boundaries reach three village centers. Many people in Montour, likely still drive outside the area to distant village and city centers for employment or errands. Supporting development in nearby villages such as Odessa, Montour Falls, and Watkins Glen will ensure that residents have relatively close access to more services.

PRESERVED FOREST AREA



536 Acres

Forested Land

654 MTCO₂

Sequestered by Forest Land

Forests provide many local benefits. Montour is not a heavily forested town, but does have some access to forests and natural wetland areas that contribute open space benefits. Having these forested and natural lands helps to counterbalance the carbon emitting processes in the rest of the town. Forests sequester carbon instead of producing it, benefiting air quality. Forests also soak up additional stormwater runoff, contributing to water quality. In addition, forests provide habitats for animals, providing recreational enjoyment for residents. The Town of Montour should work to preserve existing forests when new development occurs, and look for appropriate targeting of reforestation opportunities.

PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE USAGE

20 Minute

Daily Commute



31,092 Miles

Vehicle Miles Traveled, Household



13,659 MTCO2

Annual Auto Emissions, Village



32,522,232 Miles

Vehicle Miles Traveled, Village



Increases in personal automobile usage are associated with community and personal costs in terms of money, air pollution, and traffic congestion. This affects residents in terms of higher cost of living, sub optimal public health outcomes, and diminished quality of life. The average commute in Montour is shorter than the county and national average of 25 minutes. Supporting development, especially in the 3 adjacent villages, could reduce commute times, reduce overall transportation costs for residents, and reduce the carbon emissions associated with personal auto travel.

SOLAR ENERGY CAPACITY



0 Installations

0 KW

Capacity

0 KWH

Potential Annual Production

0 MTCO2

Annual Carbon Avoided



Photo Credit: Watkins Glen Central School District Website

There is currently no solar energy production in the Town of Montour. The town should consider additional ways that solar energy can be included and promoted including reviewing town laws to ensure that solar power is adequately addressed, integrating solar power into municipal power upgrades and developments, and resident and business education on state energy programs.

Introduction

Town of Orange

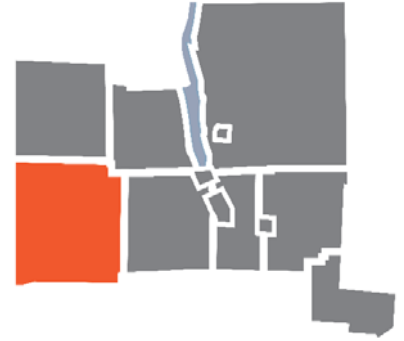


Photo Credit: Carol Rhoades

The Town of Orange is located in the southwest corner of Schuyler County. Orange shares its borders with Steuben County to the west and south, and the Towns of Tyrone and Reading to the north. It also shares its eastern border with the Town of Dix, except for a small southern portion that borders Chemung County.

Orange has wide expanses of forested hills and agriculture lands. A majority of the Town's forested land is made up of state designated parkland. In fact, over 56% of Orange is classified as a state forest or park. Despite the Town's 2012 population of 1,668 residents being relatively average for the County, the combination of more land area (54.1 square miles) and a large amount of designated state forests (56% of land area) makes Orange one of the least dense towns in the County at 30 people per square mile, just above Cayuta. The abundance of designated state lands in the Town is a benefit for residents' quality of life, but can also be a burden to Orange's finances. With so much undevelopable land, the tax base is limited as growth can occur only on less than half of the Town's total land area.

Henry Switzer and his wife Anna Marie Neff, with their family and two other individuals, first settled Orange in roughly 1802. The area they settled is still referred to as Switzer Hill. The first schoolhouse was established in 1825, and Orange was then officially formed in 1836. The Town got its name after Orange County, New York, which many of the early settlers originally moved from. The main hamlet in Orange today is known as Monterey. While another hamlet and state forest area, named Sugar Hill for the abundant maple trees in the area, is also well known by residents and visitors.

A review of the socioeconomic indicators for the Town of Orange reveals a very dynamic and diverse community. The Town has the second lowest median age in Schuyler County at 40.3 years. However, the overall population has aged more than twice as fast as the County over the past decade, with significant drops in younger age cohorts and rapid growth in the senior population. It also has the County's highest rate of income inequality. While the Town's median household income of \$57,955 is more than 20% higher than the County average and is the second highest in the County, its rate of poverty is over 30% higher than the County average at 12%. However, Orange is home to the Monterey Shock Treatment Facility, a unique low security prison focused on rehabilitation that opened in 1958. The presence of this employer may account for some of the disparity of incomes in the Town, as well as its high male to female ratio.

What is unique about Orange is the living experience provided by its location and culture. Orange is a small town with a strong community spirit. In the summer, tourists and residents can walk or ride horses along the Six Nations trail, once used by the Iroquois. In the winter, people can use those same trails and rural roads for snowmobiling and cross-country skiing. It is important to the residents of Orange to create jobs by developing agriculture, exploring opportunities in the energy industry, and promoting tourism, all while maintaining the Town's natural beauty.

Key Issues

1. Redevelopment of the Monterey Shock Treatment Facility.
2. Limited amount of developable and taxable land.
3. Not located on a main highway, and is halfway between two culturally different communities

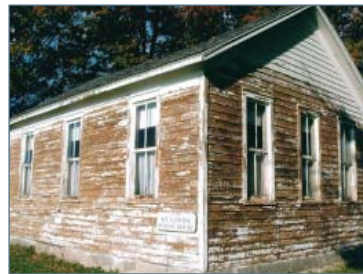


Photo Credit: 1-6. Carol Rhoades \\\

AT A GLANCE

2012 Population 1,668

2000 Population 1,758

Land Area 54.1 Sq. Mi.

Water Area 0.3 Sq. Mi.

Median Age 40.3

Density 31 People/Sq. Mi.

Land Use Policies

Comp. Plan Yes
 Zoning No
 Site Plan No
 Subdivision No
 Planning Board Yes

Did You Know?

1. In the early 1900s, Monterey was known as the “Horse Trading Capital” of the state and surrounding areas.
2. In the early settlement years, the Town of Orange grew mostly tobacco on its farmlands.
3. “Six Nations” was named for the six different nationalities in the area, Dutch, English, French, German, Irish, and American Indian, not for the Iroquois confederacy.

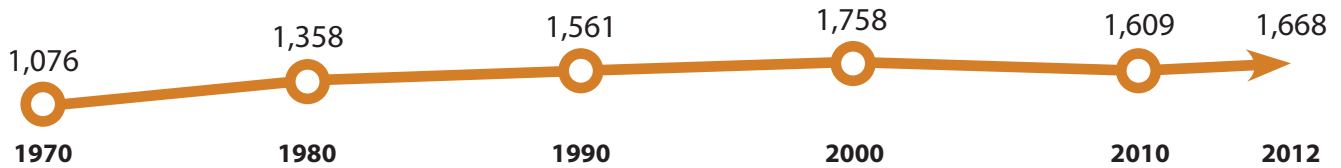
Demographics

Town of Orange

KEY STATISTICS

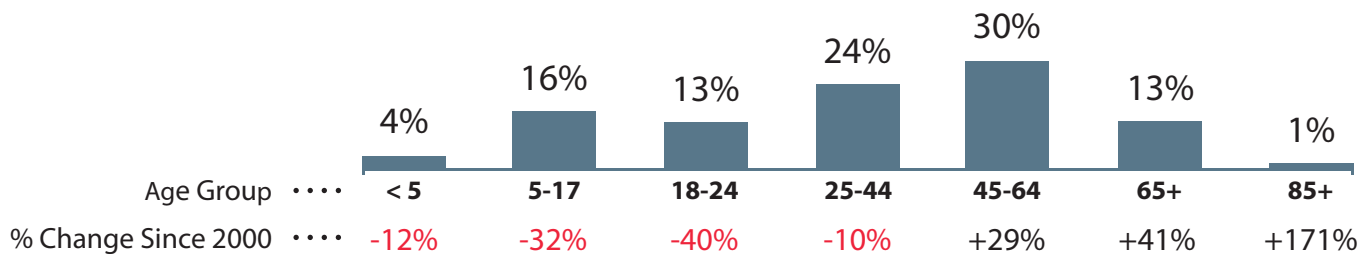


HISTORIC POPULATION COUNTS



The overall declining population throughout Schuyler County and the Town of Orange over the past 20 years is worrisome, as a stable or growing population helps maintain a strong community. Although Orange has seen a slight increase in residents from the 2010 census, the Town should work towards slowing population decline and lessen the potential negative impacts to the community with efforts that both retain and attract residents.

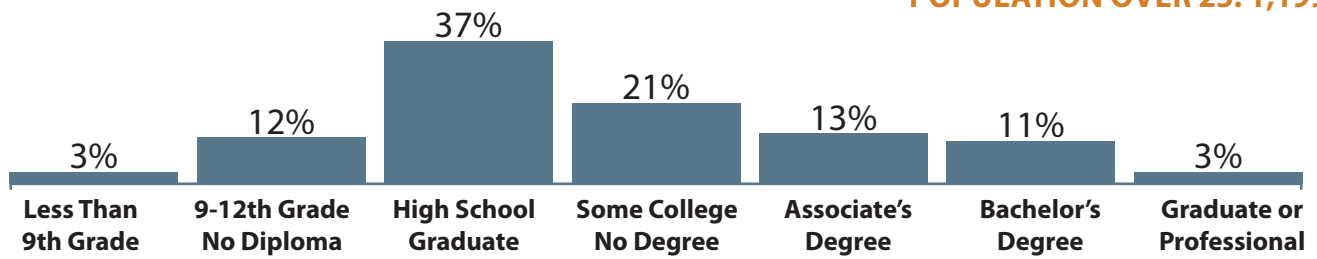
AGE DISTRIBUTION (2010)



Like the County, Orange's population is aging without the counter balance of growth in younger age cohorts. This lack of young professionals and new families is a concern for the Town, as they represent two population groups that positively contribute to the growth of a community and its tax base. In addition, pressures from the growing senior population stress the community to provide more services and resources for elder care so older residents are able to age-in-place. In order to respond to these population pressures, Orange will need to focus on policies that address the needs of young and old alike.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2013)

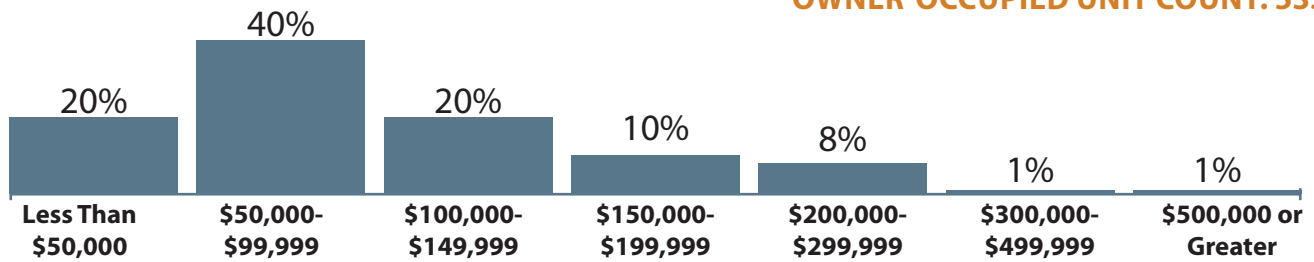
POPULATION OVER 25: 1,199



A recent study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce found that, by 2018, some 63% of all jobs in New York State will require postsecondary training beyond high school. Currently only 48% of Orange's population would be qualified for these positions. Not only is this data meaningful for guiding Countywide efforts to increase access to higher education, but also for the Town's future economic development efforts.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOME VALUES (2013)

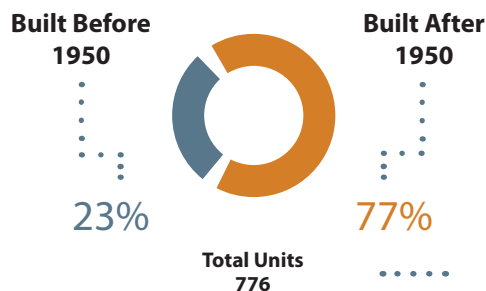
OWNER-OCCUPIED UNIT COUNT: 533



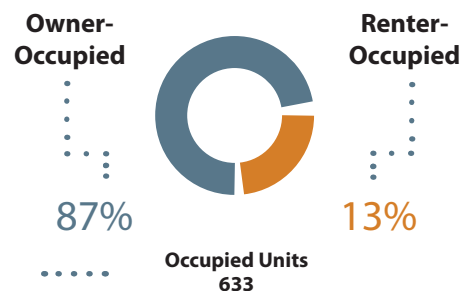
Home values provide a general gauge of the desirability of a community. In addition, maintaining home values is important to communities because of the contribution to its tax base these values have in the form of property taxes. With 60% of homes in Orange valued at less than \$100,000, the Town should strive to preserve and enhance its existing real estate market while increasing the Town's nonresidential tax base.

CURRENT HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS (2013)

AGE OF UNITS



OCCUPIED UNITS



Older homes typically require more repairs and costly updates, and when they aren't repaired or well-maintained a lower quality housing stock is often a result. Although only 23% of homes in Orange were built before 1950, over 31% were built from 1960-1980. Orange should be proactive in updating its existing housing stock, including energy upgrades and ensuring that all units are compliant with the Building and Property Maintenance Codes of NYS. Providing education to residents on energy upgrades and financing could work towards a better overall housing stock.

High home-ownership rates are often considered an indication of community and neighborhood stability. Although Orange's ownership rate of 87% is on par with the County rate, the Town should strive to maintain a balance of ownership options within the housing stock, which will meet a wider variety of their resident population's needs. The County's recent housing study is one tool the Town has to build upon.

LOCATION AFFORDABILITY INDEX



AS A PERCENT OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME		
27%	32%	59%
\$12,925	\$15,318	\$28,243
IDEAL PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME FOR AFFORDABILITY		
30%	15%	45%

Housing in the Town of Orange is considered to be very affordable. However, the town has a transportation cost that is over twice as expensive as is affordable with respect to income, making living in Orange less affordable overall. This is likely due to the rural and forested nature of the town, with people driving outside the town to distant city and village centers for employment or errands. While Orange is likely to remain fairly rural, making longer travel distances for some errands unavoidable, supporting development in nearby villages will improve residents' access to many services.

PRESERVED FOREST AREA



13,588 Acres

Forested Land

16,577 MTCO₂

Sequestered by Forest Land

Forests provide many local benefits. The town has some forested land in the form of state forests, and likely has additional vacant agricultural and residential land that has been partially reforested. Forests sequester carbon instead of producing it, benefiting air quality. In fact, the Town of Orange actually has enough forest land to mitigate all of the emissions relating to personal automobile travel, the largest single sector of emissions in the town. There are other sources of carbon emission, and as such, Orange should work to preserve and add new forest lands when appropriate to enhance the local benefits of forests. Forests also soak up additional stormwater runoff, contributing to water quality. In addition, forests provide habitats for animals, providing recreational enjoyment for residents. The Town of Orange should work to preserve existing forests when new development occurs, and look for appropriate targeting of reforestation opportunities.

PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE USAGE

27 Minute
Daily Commute



31,612 Miles
Vehicle Miles Traveled, Household



8,405 MTCO₂
Annual Auto Emissions, Village

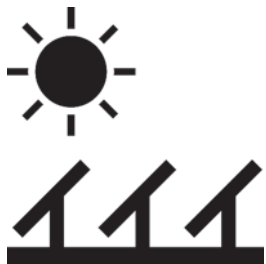


20,010,396 Miles
Vehicle Miles Traveled, Village



Sprawled development patterns contribute to longer commutes for work and errands, increasing the amount of time that people must spend in their personal automobile. Increases in personal automobile usage are associated with community and personal costs in terms of money, air pollution, and traffic congestion. This affects residents in terms of higher cost of living, sub optimal public health outcomes, and diminished quality of life. The average commute in Orange is longer than the county and national average of 25 minutes. Supporting development in town hamlets and in nearby villages could reduce commute times, reduce overall transportation costs for residents, and reduce the carbon emissions associated with personal auto travel.

SOLAR ENERGY CAPACITY



0 Installations

0 KW
Capacity

0 KWH
Potential Annual Production

0 MTCO₂
Annual Carbon Avoided



Photo Credit: Watkins Glen Central School District Website

There is currently no solar energy production in the Town of Orange. The town should consider additional ways that solar energy can be included and promoted including reviewing town laws to ensure that solar power is adequately addressed, integrating solar power into municipal power upgrades and developments, and resident and business education on state energy programs.

Introduction

Town of Reading

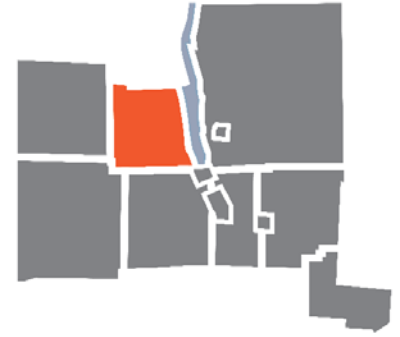


Photo Credit: Martin Roberts

The Town of Reading is located on the west side of Seneca Lake within Schuyler County. It shares a western border with the Town of Tyrone, a northern border with Yates County, a southwestern border with the Town of Orange, a southern border with the Town of Dix, and a southeastern border with the Village of Watkins Glen. Reading has a 2012 population of 1,713 (including the Village of Watkins Glen), and covers an area of 27.2 square miles. This leaves Reading with a population density of 63 people per square mile, making it the third most dense after the more urban towns of Montour and Dix, with densities of 124 and 107 people per square mile respectively.

In 1798, John Dow came to the Town of Reading as an early settler. He had previously stayed with the Culver family, and with the followers of Jemima Wilkinson northward in Yates County on Seneca Lake's western shore. In 1801, the Culvers moved to a farm in Reading, opening a tavern and a store. Both were near the soon-to-be hamlet of Reading Center. The Town formed in 1806 and was named Reading at the suggestion of an early resident from Reading, Pennsylvania. In the following years, the first Reading schoolhouse was built. The only other settlement on record in Reading is the hamlet of Irelandville, named for the family of land speculators who moved there around 1806. Still standing in this settlement is a drover's tavern erected in 1828.

The economic climate of the Town of Reading is one of the best in Schuyler County. Reading has the highest median household income (\$58,583) of all towns in the County, the lowest unemployment rate (3.1%), and second lowest poverty rate (4.2%). Reading's homeownership rate of 87% is higher than the County; however, its vacancy rate is the second highest at 26%. The Town also has the second highest median age of all eight of the County's towns at 46 years, indicating that it's older population is comparatively larger. Although Reading is also facing the same challenge of a shrinking and aging population base as other towns, Reading's population has shrunk the least over the last decade.

The natural resources of Reading help make the Town economically successful. US Salt, the Town's largest employer and an important source of manufacturing in the region, is located within Reading on the Watkins Glen border. Furthermore, Reading offers residents all of the benefits of living in the Finger Lakes region of New York State. Views include not only Seneca Lake, but also Hector's lakeside hills and vineyards. West of Seneca Lake, Reading's landscape is made of rolling hills and a variety of crops that also add to residents' quality of life.

The Town's citizens are aware of the value contained in the natural beauty of Reading and are intent on preserving and protecting its rural character. They are also proud of their local government and are focused on balancing future growth in the Town. There is a concern that new development will cause taxes to increase and property values to raise too high (already 28% of homes are worth over \$200,000), making it difficult for people who have lived there for a long time to remain. Therefore, there is demand for a balance of new high-, medium-, and low-income housing options and sustainable growth of the tax base. The people of Reading want to make sure that the rural character remains intact through any development efforts.

Key Issues

1. High rate of housing unit vacancy.
2. Desire to protect farmlands from the negative impacts of development.
3. Desire for responsible development of natural resources and protection of rural character.



Photos Provided By: 1-6. Lakewood Vineyards \\\

AT A GLANCE

2012 Population 1,713

2000 Population 1,787

Land Area 27.2 Sq. Mi.

Water Area 0.0 Sq. Mi.

Median Age 46

Density 63 People/Sq. Mi.

Land Use Policies

Comp. Plan Yes
 Zoning No
 Site Plan Yes
 Subdivision No
 Planning Board Yes

Did You Know?

1. The Town of Reading has a hilly terrain due to the moraines formed during the ice age.
2. There are numerous successful wineries located throughout the Town of Reading.
3. Although a smaller rural town, Reading balances both agriculture and industry within its borders.

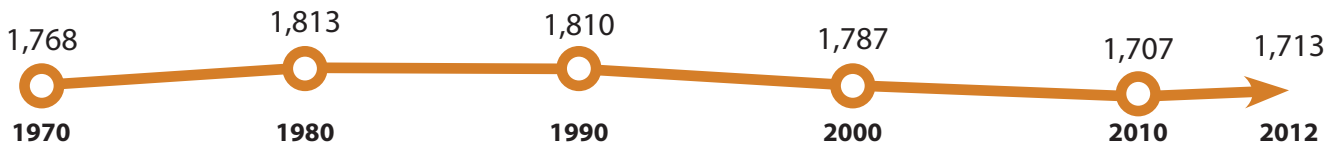
Demographics

Town of Reading

KEY STATISTICS

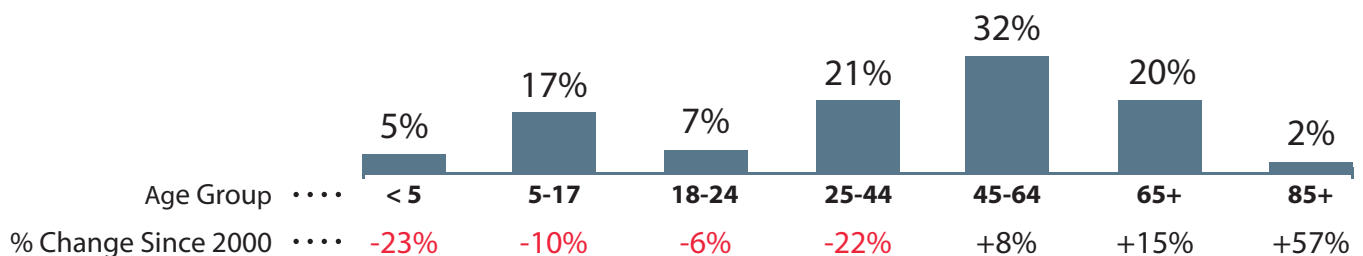


HISTORIC POPULATION COUNTS



The overall declining population throughout Schuylers County and the Town of Reading over the past 20 years is worrisome, as a stable or growing population helps maintain a strong community. Although Reading has seen a slight increase in residents from the 2010 census, the Town should work towards slowing population decline and lessen the potential negative impacts to the community with efforts that both retain and attract residents.

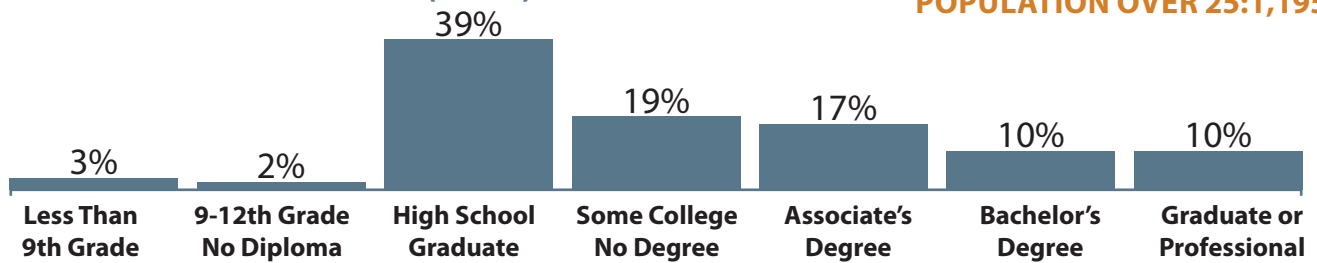
AGE DISTRIBUTION (2010)



Like the County, Reading's population is aging without the counter balance of growth in younger age cohorts. This lack of young professionals and new families is a concern for the Town, as they represent two population groups that positively contribute to the growth of a community and its tax base. In addition, pressures from the growing senior population stress the community to provide more services and resources for elder care so older residents are able to age-in-place. In order to respond to these population pressures, Reading will need to focus on policies that address the needs of young and old alike.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2013)

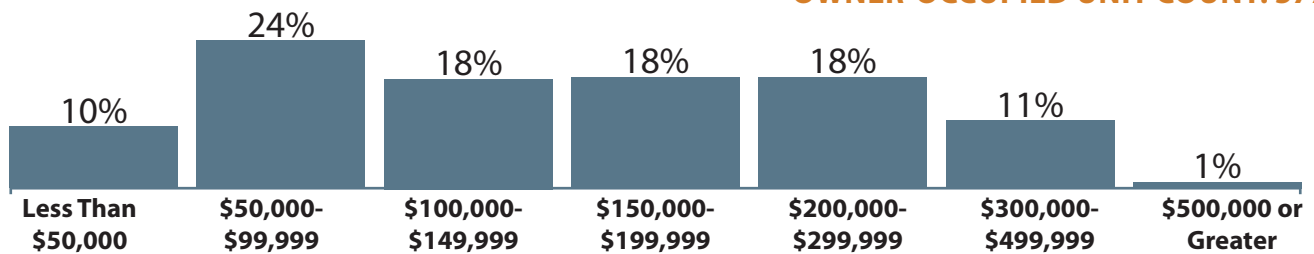
POPULATION OVER 25: 1,195



A recent study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce found that, by 2018, some 63% of all jobs in New York State will require postsecondary training beyond high school. Currently only 56% of Reading's population would be qualified for these positions. Not only is this data meaningful for guiding Countywide efforts to increase access to higher education, but also for the Town's future economic development efforts.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOME VALUES (2013)

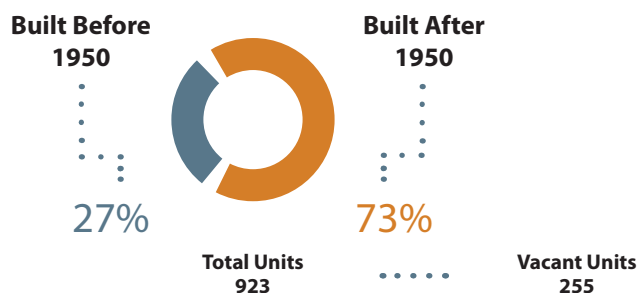
OWNER-OCCUPIED UNIT COUNT: 577



Home values provide a general gauge of the desirability of a community. Maintaining home values is important because of the contribution to a community's tax base in the form of property taxes. Reading has a number of high-end lakefront homes that skew its distribution of home values. Although 30% of the Town's homes are valued at \$200,000 or more, 34% are valued at less than \$100,000. Therefore, Reading should focus on efforts that help decrease the existing disparity in home values.

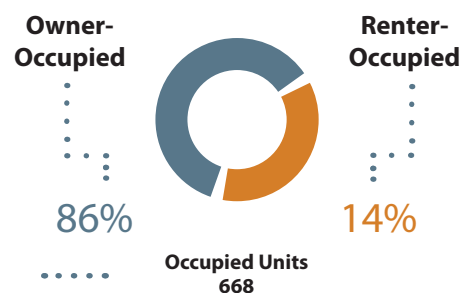
CURRENT HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS (2013)

AGE OF UNITS



Because only 27% of homes in Reading were built before 1950, the high vacancy rate becomes more pressing for the Town. A portion of this could be due to the 11% of homes built during the recent housing bubble. Low vacancy rates are preferred as they allow for turnover, while indicating investment in the Town. Reading should explore ways to reduce vacancies, as the Town rate is well above the County average.

OCCUPIED UNITS



High home-ownership rates are often considered an indication of community and neighborhood stability. Although Reading's ownership rate of 86% is above the County rate, the Town should strive to maintain a balance of ownership options within the housing stock, which will meet a wider variety of their resident population's needs. The County's recent housing study is one tool the Town has to build upon.

LOCATION AFFORDABILITY INDEX



AS A PERCENT OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME		
29%	32%	61%
\$13,882	\$15,318	\$29,200
IDEAL PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME FOR AFFORDABILITY		
30%	15%	45%

Housing in the Town of Reading is considered to be affordable relative to the median income. However, the town has a transportation cost that is over twice as expensive as is affordable with respect to income, making living in Reading less affordable overall. This is likely due to the rural nature of the town, with people driving outside the town to distant village centers for employment or errands. As transportation cost is directly linked to the location of housing, consideration for the location of additional housing development in Reading should reflect the towns wishes for the desired level of affordability in the town.

PRESERVED FOREST AREA



964 Acres

Forested Land

1,176 MTCO₂

Sequestered by Forest Land

Forests provide many local benefits. The town has some forested land in the form of state forests, and likely has additional vacant agricultural and residential land that has been partially reforested. Forests sequester carbon instead of producing it, benefiting air quality. Despite its size, the Town of Reading only has enough forest to mitigate 1/8th of its carbon emissions related to personal auto usage. Forests also soak up additional stormwater runoff, contributing to water quality. In addition, forests provide habitats for animals, providing recreational enjoyment for residents. The Town of Reading should work to preserve existing forests when new development occurs, and look for appropriate targeting of reforestation opportunities.

PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE USAGE

21 Minute

Daily Commute



31,447 Miles

Vehicle Miles Traveled, Household



8,823 MTCO2

Annual Auto Emissions, Village



21,006,596 Miles

Vehicle Miles Traveled, Village



Increases in personal automobile usage are associated with community and personal costs in terms of money, air pollution, and traffic congestion. This affects residents in terms of higher cost of living, sub optimal public health outcomes, and diminished quality of life. The average commute in Reading is shorter than the county and national average of 25 minutes. While Reading is likely to remain a rural town, supporting any new development in adjacent and nearby villages would increase the local service and employment opportunities and could reduce commute times, reduce overall transportation costs for residents, and reduce the carbon emissions associated with personal auto travel.

SOLAR ENERGY CAPACITY



1 Installations

47 KW

Capacity

50,000 KWH

Potential Annual Production

34.5 MTCO2

Annual Carbon Avoided



Photo Credit: Renewable Rochester

Commercial solar energy installations provide the Town of Reading with over 47 KW, or nearly 20% of the current solar capacity of Schuyler County. This technology saves money in commercial electric bills and reduces community carbon emissions by 34.5 MTCO2 each year. The town should consider additional ways that solar energy can be included and promoted including integration during municipal power upgrades and developments as well as resident and business education on state energy programs.

Introduction

Town of Tyrone

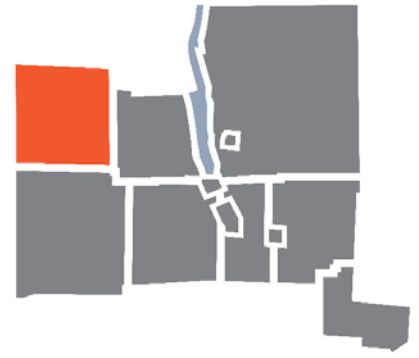


Photo Credit: Jack Wilbert

Located in the northwest corner of Schuyler County, the Town of Tyrone is the third largest town in the County at 39.6 square miles. The Town shares a border with Yates County to the north and east, Steuben County to the west, the Town of Reading to the east and the Town of Orange to the South. Its border with Reading is contiguous with the Old Preemption Line, established in 1786 by the Treaty of Hartford. This line originally divided the Native American lands of western New York between New York State and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

With a 2012 population of 1,622 and a density of 40 people per square mile, Tyrone is of average population size and density for the County as a whole. The natural environment of the Town is consistent with the rural character of the County, and is enhanced by 2.1 square miles of water resources. Included in this is Lamoka Lake, Waneta Lake, and Tobehanna Creek. Residents and visitors alike are able to benefit from Tyrone's existing fishing and recreation areas, as well as its trademark rolling hills.

Over 3,000 years ago, the indigenous peoples of the Lamoka culture settled on Lamoka Lake within the current boundaries of Tyrone. While the Lamoka people disappeared by around 1300 BCE, they left behind evidence of the first identified prehistoric native culture in North America. It was not until 1798 that others would rediscover the area; shortly before the Bennett brothers and the families of two of their sons settled the Town in 1801. Originally Tyrone was known as the "Irish Colony" until General William Kernen, a settler in 1801, renamed it in 1822 after County Tyrone of Ireland.

Tyrone also has strong religious roots. The Town has the distinction of being located closer to the "burned over district" of western New York than any other town in the County. The "burned over district" was the center of the Second Great Awakening, a Protestant revival movement that birthed many new religious sects. Furthermore, the paternal grandparents of Mormon leader and founder of the State of Utah, Brigham Young, lived in the Pine Grove section of Tyrone. Young would visit them and spend time in the local churches of the region.

Tyrone's housing stock is younger than most in the County, with over half of housing units built after 1960, and over a quarter after 1980. However, the boom in housing construction that occurred has left the Town with an unprecedented housing vacancy challenge, as almost half of the units remain vacant today. Tyrone also has challenges economically, with the sixth lowest median household income in the County (\$42,461), and the fourth highest poverty rate (14.1%). Despite these figures, the Town has a notably low unemployment rate of 5.1%, the third lowest in the County.

Today Tyrone is a mostly rural town with a large amount of land dedicated to agricultural production of hays and other field crops. The Town is looking for ways to preserve its local beauty and natural resources while promoting economic development and ensuring the provision of necessary services to all of its citizens. Experiencing growth in its agriculture and tourism industries, Tyrone is also seeking ways to capture revenue in order to drive economic development by promoting agricultural businesses and exploring new spin off ventures like ecotourism.

Key Issues

1. Preserve and maintain the natural environment and open undeveloped land areas and water quality.
2. Preserve the quiet, relaxed natural beauty and small town atmosphere.
3. Maintain effective infrastructure system of roads and bridges.



Photo Credit: Schuyler County Planning Department\\\\

AT A GLANCE

2012 Population 1,622

2000 Population 1,699

Land Area 37.5 Sq. Mi.

Water Area 2.1 Sq. Mi.

Median Age 45.6

Density 43 People/Sq. Mi.

Land Use Policies

Comp. Plan Yes
Zoning No
Site Plan Yes
Subdivision Yes
Planning Board Yes

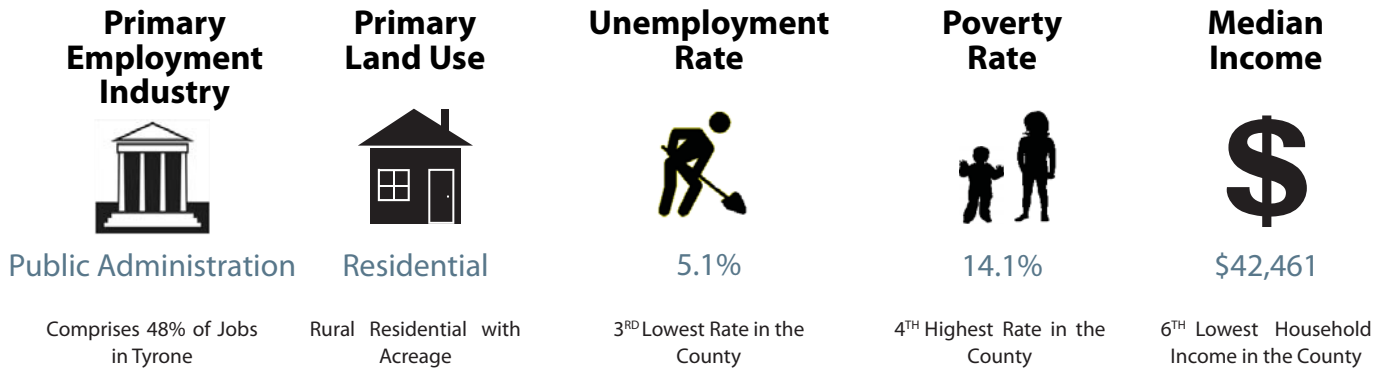
Did You Know?

1. A half mile long stone fence built in 1890 using flat stones and no mortar still stands in the Town of Tyrone today.
2. Tyrone is home to both the Lamoka and Waneta Lakes, comprising nearly 2.1 square miles of the Town collectively.
3. The remains of the first identified prehistoric native culture in North America was found within the borders of the Town of Tyrone.

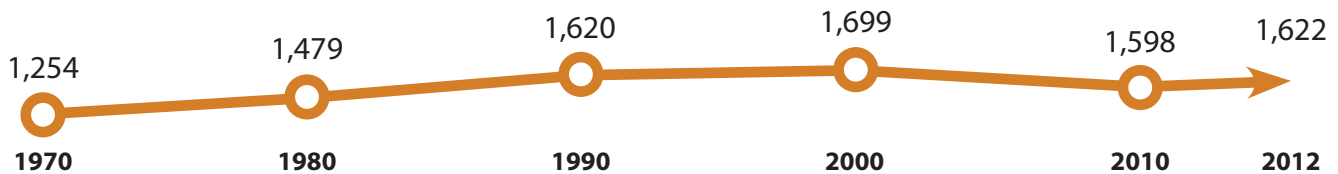
Demographics

Town of Tyrone

KEY STATISTICS

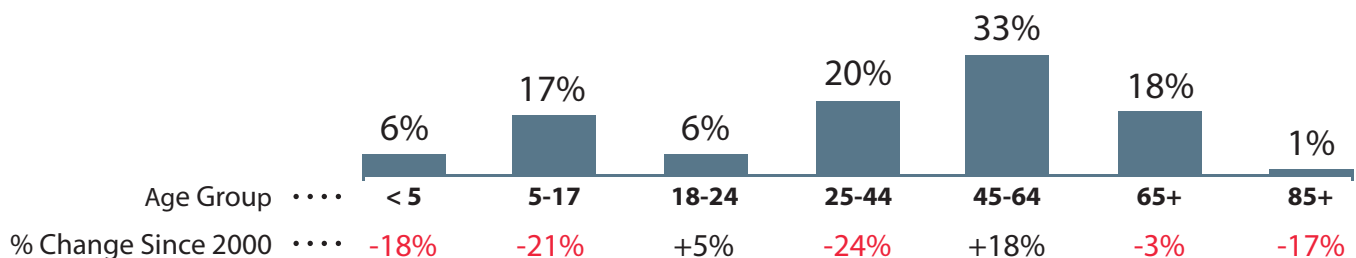


HISTORIC POPULATION COUNTS



The overall declining population throughout Schuylers County and the Town of Tyrone over the past 20 years is worrisome, as a stable or growing population helps maintain a strong community. Although Tyrone has seen a slight increase in residents from the 2010 census, the Town should work towards slowing population decline and lessen the potential negative impacts to the community with efforts that both retain and attract residents.

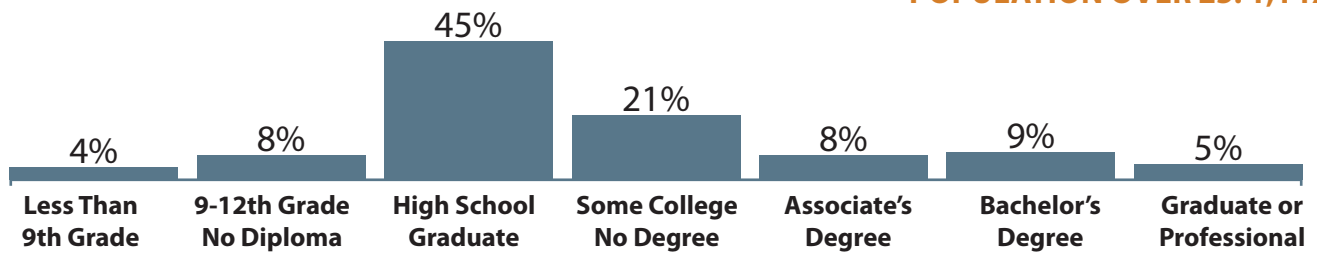
AGE DISTRIBUTION (2010)



The Town of Tyrone's age distribution shows population growth in the 18 to 24 and 45 to 64 year old cohorts only, with the largest percentage of the Town's population being in the latter age group. The overall population loss, along with the lack of young professionals and new families is a concern for the Town, as population growth, particularly in those two groups, positively contributes to a community and its tax base. Furthermore, the majority of Tyrone's residents will become seniors over the next two decades and will be looking for opportunities to age-in-place. As a result, Tyrone needs to focus on policies that serve to attract and retain young and old residents.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2013)

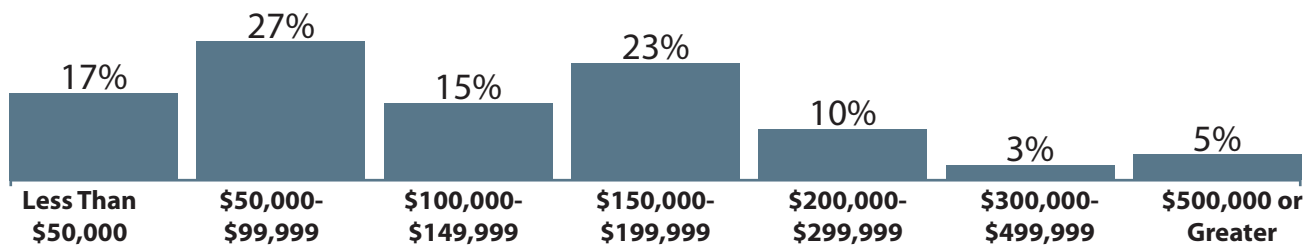
POPULATION OVER 25: 1,147



A recent study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce found that, by 2018, some 63% of all jobs in New York State will require postsecondary training beyond high school. Currently only 43% of Tyrone's population would be qualified for these positions. Not only is this data meaningful for guiding Countywide efforts to increase access to higher education, but also for the Town's future economic development efforts.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOME VALUES (2013)

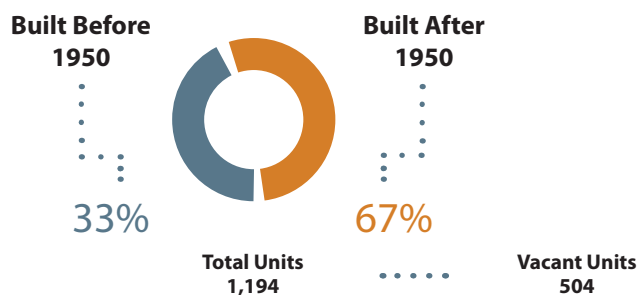
OWNER-OCCUPIED UNIT COUNT: 491



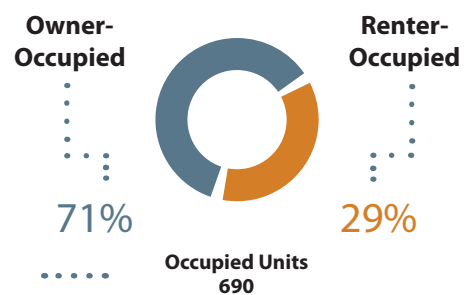
Home values provide a general gauge of the desirability of a community. In addition, maintaining home values is important to communities because of the contribution to its tax base these values have in the form of property taxes. With 44% of homes in Tyrone valued at less than \$100,000, the Town needs to focus on economic policies and efforts that boost existing home values and develop the upper end of the real estate market.

CURRENT HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS (2013)

AGE OF UNITS



OCCUPIED UNITS



Because only 33% of units in Tyrone were built before 1950, the high vacancy rate becomes more pressing for the Town. The majority of vacancies are among rentals, with a 13% vacancy rate compared to 3% in owner-occupied units. Low vacancy rates are preferred as they allow for turnover, while indicating investment in the Town. Tyrone should strive to reduce this rate as it has negative impacts on the community.

High home-ownership rates are often considered an indication of community and neighborhood stability. However, the Town should strive to maintain a balance of ownership options within its housing stock, which will meet a wider variety of its resident population's needs. The County's recent housing study is one tool the Town has to build upon. Currently, Tyrone's rate of 71% is below that of the County.

LOCATION AFFORDABILITY INDEX



AS A PERCENT OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME		
26%	31%	57%
\$12,446	\$14,839	\$27,285
IDEAL PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME FOR AFFORDABILITY		
30%	15%	45%

Housing in the Town of Tyrone is considered to be very affordable. However, the town has a transportation cost that is over twice as expensive as is affordable with respect to income, making living in Tyrone less affordable overall. This is likely due to the rural nature of the town, with people driving outside the town to distant village centers for employment or errands. As transportation cost is directly linked to the location of housing, consideration for the location of additional housing development in Tyrone should reflect the towns wishes for the desired level of affordability in the town.

PRESERVED FOREST AREA



634 Acres

Forested Land

774 MTCO₂

Sequestered by Forest Land

Forests provide many local benefits. Tyrone has less access to forests than other towns with most of the available forests clustered in the South Eastern part of town, has additional vacant agricultural and residential land that has likely been partially reforested. Tyrone should work to preserve existing forests when new development occurs, and look for appropriate targeting of reforestation opportunities. Forests sequester carbon instead of producing it, benefiting air quality. Forests also soak up additional stormwater runoff, contributing to water quality. In addition, forests provide habitats for animals, providing recreational enjoyment for residents. The Town of Tyrone should work to preserve existing forests when new development occurs, and look for appropriate targeting of reforestation opportunities.

PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE USAGE

28 Minute

Daily Commute



31,614 Miles

Vehicle Miles Traveled, Household



9,162 MTCO2

Annual Auto Emissions, Village



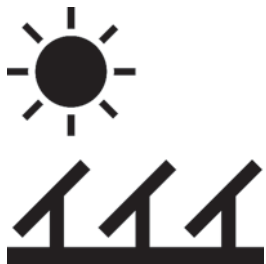
21,813,660 Miles

Vehicle Miles Traveled, Village



Increases in personal automobile usage are associated with community and personal costs in terms of money, air pollution, and traffic congestion. This affects residents in terms of higher cost of living, sub optimal public health outcomes, and diminished quality of life. The average commute in Tyrone is longer than the county and national average of 25 minutes. While Tyrone is likely to remain a rural town, supporting developments in the nearby villages would provide better access to more services and employment opportunities and could reduce commute times, reduce overall transportation costs, and decrease the associated carbon emissions from automobile travel.

SOLAR ENERGY CAPACITY



0 Installations

0 KW

Capacity

0 KWH

Potential Annual Production

0 MTCO2

Annual Carbon Avoided



Photo Credit: Watkins Glen Central School District Website

There is currently no solar energy production in the Town of Tyrone. The town should consider additional ways that solar energy can be included and promoted including reviewing town laws to ensure that solar power is adequately addressed, integrating solar power into municipal power upgrades and developments, and resident and business education on state energy programs.

Town Policy Framework

In order to be successful, a Comprehensive Plan must be developed and implemented on multiple levels. It must address the short and long term needs of a community as well as provide varying levels of detail. The intent of the policy framework is to be future-oriented, acting as a guide to achieve the community’s vision. This plan has five key elements:

.....

VISION A general statement that describes the aspiration of the Village, Town or County; it is an end towards which all actions are aimed. The Vision should not dramatically change over time but rather be consistent throughout the planning horizon. Ideally, the Vision contained in this plan should be useful for the 10-year planning horizon.

POLICY Similar to a vision in that it is a general statement of a future condition towards which actions are aimed. However, the scope of a policy is much more narrow. It should support the vision by addressing a particular area or issue facing the community. Policies should not dramatically change over time but rather be consistent throughout the planning horizon. Ideally, the policies contained in this plan should be useful for the 10-year planning horizon.

OBJECTIVE A statement of a measurable activity to be accomplished in pursuit of the policy; it refers to some specific aspiration which is reasonably attainable. Think in terms of actions such as “increase”, “develop”, or “preserve”. It should be noted that the municipality may already be undertaking some of the objectives articulated in this plan and have included them to ensure that they continue to do so over the next decade. The lifespan of an objective is usually 6 to 10 years.

IMPLEMENTATION ITEM A specific proposal to do something that relates directly to accomplishing a strategy; it can take the form of a plan, project, or program. The lifespan of an implementation item can vary from one to 10 years depending on the item.

MEASURE A specific measure that relates directly to accomplishing the objectives; it identifies how, when, and the amount to be done. Think in terms of, “How do we tell if our objectives are working?” Measures should be reviewed every one to two years to determine if the objectives are effective. The measures included in this plan are more general and do not specify a time frame and amount to be accomplished. The Town and Village should work to establish the baseline condition for all the measures in this plan and then determine the level and timing that is desirable. (It should be noted that interns are a good resource available to communities in gathering this type of information.)

.....

Each policy is intended to function as part of this document or to be used as a stand alone work plan that can be taken out, copied, and assigned to a committee to undertake.

Our Town's Vision

It is the vision of our Town to be an attractive place to visit, live, raise a family, start a business and enjoy retirement. It will be a place known for its...



Photo Credit: Norrie Cornelius

- I. Vast expanses of farmland and agricultural heritage;
- II. Attractive and safe residential living areas;
- III. Scenic natural resources;
- IV. Diverse economic opportunities;
- V. Thriving hamlet(s); and
- VI. Quality community resources.



Photo Credit: Norrie Cornelius

... The Town will strive to achieve this vision while managing future growth in a way that maintains its rural character and small town charm. The Town also recognizes that the hamlet(s) is the social and cultural center of the Town, which enhances its overall appeal and the quality of life of its residents.

Agriculture & Farmland

Introduction

Throughout the planning process, it has been made clear that town residents are proud of their community's small-town charm and rural character. In addition, residents have expressed a strong connection to their agricultural heritage due to the ongoing presence of farming operations throughout Schuyler County. Originally founded as agricultural communities, our towns continue to benefit from the presence of local farms and the work of our farmers. Over the last 200 years, our towns have grown due in large part to the success of the agricultural sector. As we look forward, the towns should continue to support their agricultural industries and look for ways they can help farmers capitalize on existing and future cultivation opportunities throughout the region.



Photo Credit: Village of Burdett Resident

Much of the existing development within the towns has been shaped by the presence of the agricultural sector. The towns' economic prosperity is directly tied to farming and the financial benefits that it provides in the form of tax revenue and employment opportunities, as well as the aesthetic benefits in the form of open space. These benefits provide a significant contribution to our quality of life. Over the next decade, the towns should strive to maintain a healthy balance between new development and minimizing the loss of prime farmland. Promoting smart growth development will help to accomplish both goals, while still allowing for any needed development in the town.

The agricultural heritage of the towns within Schuyler County also supports the region's economy by directly enhancing our thriving tourism industry. Agritourism defined as the practice of inviting visitors to experience agricultural life first hand, should remain a priority in each town. Tourism in the Finger Lakes Region is largely centered on the cultivation of grapes for use by area wineries. Because the Schuyler County towns are located in the heart of the Finger Lakes, they should continue to capitalize on our region's success by enhancing the visitor experience around their own existing agricultural assets.

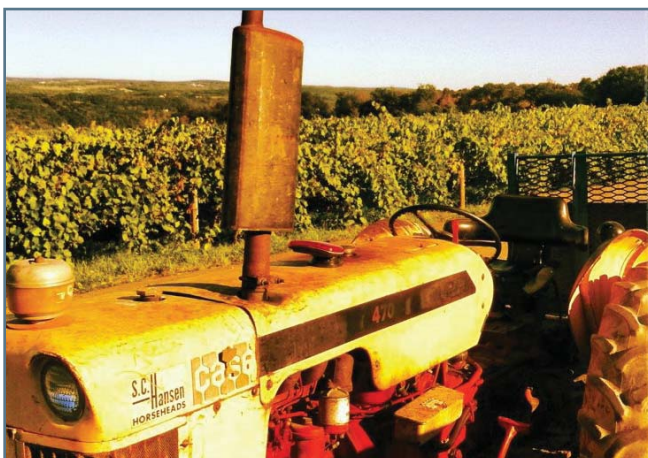


Photo Credit: Norrie Cornelius

The towns should utilize the following Agricultural and Farmland policy as a guide for achieving the greatest possible economic benefit from the agricultural sector, while still protecting their existing farmlands, open space and rural character.

Agriculture & Farmland Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Town to be a rural community that **values its farmland and agricultural heritage**. In addition to agriculture's contribution to the community's rural character, the Town acknowledges that farming and farmland contribute to the local economic base and provide a public service in the form of open space. Agriculture provides fresh food and jobs to our residents, tax base to help deliver services and is responsible for much of our tourism industry. The Town will support programs and strategies that protect prime agricultural land from conversion to other uses and will work to support the viability and success of agricultural businesses.



Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce



Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce

OBJECTIVES

- A. Identify and protect prime soils for current and future agricultural use.
- B. Ensure that the infrastructure necessary for successful agricultural operations is in place and properly maintained.
- C. Support the agricultural economic development needs and opportunities of the local farming community.
- D. Increase the community's awareness of the significance that agriculture and farming have in their daily lives.
- E. Ensure that local regulations and permit procedures are supportive and protective of agricultural activities.
- F. Maintain positive relationships between the various levels of government and the farming community.

MEASURES

- 1. Number of farms.
- 2. Value of agricultural products sold.
- 3. Acres of active farmland.
- 4. Acres of prime farmland that is lost or preserved.
- 5. Number of nuisance complaints received by the Town.

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

- 1. Protect farmland and agricultural soils by directing development away from farmlands and towards town center areas.

Residential Living

Introduction

Accommodating future housing needs without compromising existing neighborhoods and homesteads should be a priority for the towns over the next decade. According to the public input received during this plan's development, some of the most pressing issues facing our towns include the lack of housing choice, the ability of seniors to age-in-place, affordability of good housing, and the deterioration of our older housing stock.

Currently the housing stock within the towns is mostly comprised of owner-occupied, single-family units. Although a high single-family home-ownership rate is often considered desirable among communities today, towns that provide a balance of housing choices do a better job of serving the various ages, incomes, and family structures of their residents. In order to provide increased options to current and future residents, the towns will need to focus on diversifying their housing stock. By providing a variety of housing types, residents will be more likely to find a home that meets their needs within the town instead of having to look elsewhere as their needs change.

Arguably the most pressing housing related concern for the towns will be providing increasing elderly populations with the ability to age-in-place. Across the nation, urban and rural areas are facing new demands from their rapidly aging populations, largely due to the expansive Baby Boomer Generation that began turning 65 at the start of 2011. This trend is no different in the towns of Schuyler County, as we are already experiencing pressures to provide services for seniors, which make up on average 19% of our town populations. The towns will continue to see these pressures increase over the next two decades, due to the fact that approximately half of each town's current population is 45 years of age or older. In order to address the desire of seniors to age-in-place, both now and into the future, the towns should ensure that new housing options include units that meet the unique needs of seniors.

Preserving affordability in the housing market is also an important consideration for these towns, as new investments will likely bring quality housing units and increased property values. Development that causes housing prices to increase at a rapid and unsustainable rate could potentially drive current residents out of their homes. The towns should remain focused on preserving affordability in both existing residential development and when new residential development opportunities arise. By including affordability considerations in residential policies, the towns ensure that residents of all income levels may benefit.

Many of our towns have a very old housing stock. For example, approximately half of the existing homes in Catharine, Dix, Hector, and Montour were built before 1950. These homes require more upkeep, and more maintenance, and higher utility costs than new construction and many of our residents cannot afford the necessary repairs. As a result, many homes deteriorate and become a blight on the neighborhood and the community at large. The towns will need to develop a long term approach through educational programs on upgrading and retrofitting options to assist property owners in breaking this cycle and preserving its existing housing stock for future generations.

Creating and encouraging mixed-use, centralized denser patterns in new developments (i.e. smart growth) will not only help alleviate concerns about expanding public utilities, but will also help to reduce greenhouse gasses by decreasing the distance needed to travel needs and services. This will also promote better public health for residents by providing them with a more active lifestyle and higher quality of life.

Due to the aforementioned housing related concerns facing the towns, the following Residential Living Policy has been included to help guide decision makers in addressing the towns' current and future housing needs.

Residential Living Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Town to **have neighborhoods and residential living opportunities that are safe, attractive and foster an active lifestyle**. In the hamlet(s), the Town will focus its efforts on preserving the character and improving the quality of existing neighborhoods while developing new neighborhoods that reflect a more traditional development pattern. Outside of the hamlet(s), future residential development will be located in a manner so it can be efficiently served by public infrastructure, while minimizing the loss of high quality farmland and avoiding environmentally sensitive areas. Over the next decade, the Town will strive to have a combination of housing types available to residents of various ages, incomes, and family structures.



OBJECTIVES

- A. Explore ways in which the Town can preserve existing property values.
- B. Direct development to areas where public water and sewer exist or can be provided in the future.
- C. Increase the variety of living and transportation options available, with an emphasis on being able to “age-in-place”.
- D. Encourage a dense living pattern within and immediately adjacent to the hamlet(s).
- E. Develop opportunities for non-motorized connections between residential areas, recreational facilities and commercial areas (ie. Catharine Valley Trail).

MEASURES

1. Number of seniors (over 65) living in the community.
2. Change in residential property values.
3. Number of new housing lots by size ($\frac{1}{4}$ acre, $\frac{1}{2}$ acre, etc) and location (in or adjacent to the hamlets, in an agricultural district, etc).
4. Number of property code violations or complaints filed for residential properties.
5. Acres of Farmland gained/lost
6. Number of housing upgrades or retrofits.



Photo Credit: Water Works Luxury Condos, Facebook

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

1. Utilize the New York State Building and Property Maintenance Code to reduce the number of property violations in the Town.
2. Consider loosening regulations to allow for denser development within hamlet or other developed areas.
3. Provide education and incentives for retrofitting homes for energy efficiency as well as allowing for the development of residential renewable energy generation.

Natural Resources & Sustainability

Introduction

Founded on the principle that the well-being of a population is dependent upon its region's natural resources and environment, the concept of sustainability is an important consideration for the towns of Schuyler County. Although there is no simple way to define sustainability, sustainable practices are often identified as those that meet current economic, social, and environmental needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet such needs of their own. In other words, sustainability recognizes the finite nature of natural resources and commits to the use of them in a way that reserves their integrity for the long term.



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

One of the greatest assets that each town shares is our pastoral character and our natural environments that flow within and across town boundaries. A majority of this environment is made up of forests, which remains the primary land use in every town today. Areas of open space and green space provide great value to residents and businesses in many forms. Whether it is the public parks providing recreational and leisure activities, the cultivated land contributing to the local economy, or the natural open spaces, steep slopes, and forested areas preserving the region's aesthetic appeal, the diverse physical environment serves all who work in, live in, and visit these towns.

Town residents also take great pride in our high level of environmental integrity. As these towns seek to develop and grow, they will need to carefully consider a balance of development and conservation in order to maintain their present character and level of integrity. By emphasizing sustainable practices and development patterns in new investment opportunities, the towns ensure protection of their natural resources from potential degradation.



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

The following Natural Resources and Sustainability policy is intended as a guide for the towns' approach to their physical environments and resources. When reviewing new and existing regulations or economic development opportunities, the towns and their decision makers should carefully consider the objectives set for in this policy. Specific steps for accomplishing these objectives have also been included as implementation items that can be realized through the efforts of various departments, committees, and stakeholders within each town.

Natural Resources & Sustainability Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Town to be a **community that preserves and sustains the quality of its natural resources** through the combined efforts of its residents, businesses and government. Sound development practices, appropriate regulations and community stewardship should be employed to reduce or eliminate the degradation of these resources. In particular, special attention should be given to protect the Town's open space, such as wetlands, woodlands, streams, farmland and parks, due to their environmental, aesthetic and recreational value as well as to reduce risks from flooding and other natural hazards.



OBJECTIVES

- A. Pursue green technologies, energy conservation measures, and renewable energy techniques to minimize the community's environmental footprint.
- B. Expand the reduction, reuse and recycling of appropriate materials.
- C. Ensure that future development activities protect and sustain our environment.
- D. Safeguard residents and property from the hazards associated with flooding
- E. Investigate and utilize techniques to preserve open space within the Town, targeting environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands, steep slopes, stream corridors, and floodplains.
- F. Identify and remediate contaminated sites to reduce the negative effects of contamination and to improve the ability to redevelop such lands.
- G. Preserve existing noninvasive trees, native plants, and pervious surfaces
- H. Promote stormwater management practices that manages runoff near its source and prevent erosion.

MEASURES

1. Cubic yards or tonnage of recycled material collected.
2. Creek/Lake water testing results.
3. Changes in acres of preserved open space, wetlands, floodplains, riparian buffers (along streams and lakeshores), and woodlands.
4. Quality of surface or ground water.
5. Level of access to nature and natural recreational opportunities.
6. Number of renewable energy or energy conservation projects installed

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

1. Ensure that local officials are well educated on the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act and the USEPA MS-4 Standards and how other communities have applied them to development proposals within their community.
2. Provide training to community officials and board members on environmental policies and practices.
3. Research and implement ways to increase the recycling and reuse of materials in the town.
4. Review current laws to ensure preservation of the town's natural resources including steep slopes, forested areas, and scenic viewsheds when considering new developments.
5. Preserve and protect important trees, native plants, and pervious surfaces during construction projects.

Economic Opportunities

Introduction

According to “A Primer on Economic Development Strategies” published by the Washington State Department of Community Trade and Economic Development, “active citizens can directly shape the local economy, and the community will benefit in numerous ways:

- ◇ **Increased Tax Base:** Additional revenue to support, maintain, and improve local services such as roads, parks, libraries, and emergency medical services.
- ◇ **Job Development:** To provide better wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement.
- ◇ **Business Retention:** Businesses that feel appreciated by the community and, in turn, feel as if they are contributing to the economy will stay in town.
- ◇ **Economic Diversification:** Helps expand the economy and reduces a community’s vulnerability to a single type of business.
- ◇ **Self-Sufficiency:** Public services would be less dependent on County, State, and Federal aid that may change with each election.
- ◇ **Quality of Life:** More local tax dollars and jobs raise the economic tide for the community, which generally increases the overall standard of living of the residents.
- ◇ **Recognition of Local Products:** Oftentimes, successful economic development will occur when locally produced goods are consumed to a greater degree in the local market.

Membership on local economic development boards or committees—indeed, their very existence—is testimony to the belief that people can and do make a difference when they actively participate in shaping local economies.”

For rural communities in particular, achieving economic growth and development can be difficult. They often do not have the human or financial resources necessary to effectively implement an economic development strategy. However, the towns of Schuyler County do have vast natural, agricultural, and tourism resources that form an essential component of their economic base, and will likely continue to be so into the future. The towns will need to not only preserve these assets, but use them to leverage for potential complementary industrial and commercial development that will positively contribute to the local tax base and employ local residents. Over the next decade, the towns will need to continue to partner with county, regional and state agencies to pursue various economic opportunities that may be too large to attract for a single municipality.

Economic development strategies that support the agricultural and tourism industries allow the towns to reinvest in one of our greatest economic drivers. By expanding the towns’ industrial operations, especially those related to current agricultural practices, the local economy is rejuvenated with new jobs and an increased tax base.

The region’s thriving tourism industry continues to be a strong economic driver for the County, towns and villages. Visitors come to our towns to indulge in the pastoral atmosphere, agricultural experience, and recreational activities they offer. By enhancing the visitor experience with the addition of commercial activity centers within the towns, residents and visitors will be drawn to the small clusters of commercial development. It is in these centers that the towns have an opportunity to create a complete visitor experience.

The towns should utilize the following Economic Opportunities policy as a guide for efforts to enhance their local communities for both residents and visitors alike.

Economic Opportunities Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Town to have rewarding economic development opportunities within the community. Priority will be placed upon fostering commercial activity in a manner that provides convenient access to goods and services by local residents. This is to be accomplished by capitalizing on the steady influx of tourists that visit our region and locating new investment in or adjacent to our existing activity centers (Villages and Hamlets). The Town also recognizes the contributions that agricultural and industrial activity make to the local economy in the form of jobs, tax base, and charitable contributions. As a result, the Town will seek to expand the size and number of industrial operations while protecting existing farming activity and our rural character.

OBJECTIVES



Photo Provided By: SCOPEd



Photo Credit: Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel, Facebook

- A.** Promote and support the viability of agricultural operations and appropriate non-agricultural, rural economic development projects (such as renewable energy) within the Town.
- B.** Ensure that there is adequate infrastructure in appropriate locations place to accommodate new commercial and industrial operations.
- C.** Maintain or increase the commercial and industrial tax base within the Town.
- D.** Ensure there is a balance of residential, commercial and industrial development to ensure sustainable future growth that does not negatively impact the overall tax base.
- E.** Continue to work with local business groups to promote existing businesses and solicit new businesses that are consistent with our community objectives.
- F.** Support the preservation and enhancement of natural resources as a basis for tourism and other economic development opportunities
- G.** Ensure that transportation infrastructure is resilient to flood damage.

MEASURES

1. Percentage of occupied commercial or industrial space.
2. Per Capita Income or Median Family Income.
3. Number of retail and service establishments located within the Town.
4. Poverty Rate and Unemployment Rate.
5. Location Affordability Index

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

- 1.** Continue the positive working relationship with the Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development (SCOPEd) to market and attract industrial developers to the Town.

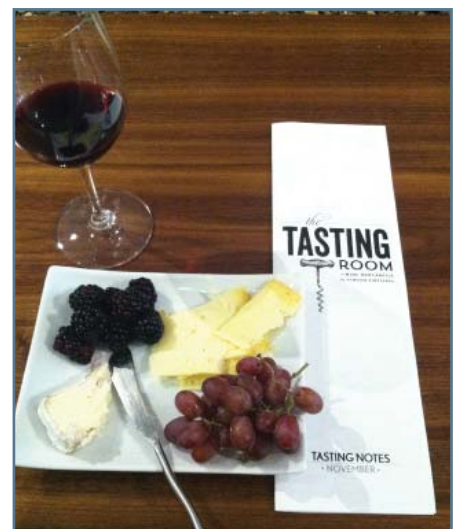


Photo Credit: Atwater Vineyards

Hamlet Revitalization

Introduction

Although New York State law does not define “hamlet,” the term is often used to refer to small communities within towns across the state. Hamlets are usually identifiable by boundary and name, but do not fall under Home Rule, as they are not officially incorporated places. Currently there are 32 recognized Hamlets within the towns of Schuyler County, which function as the economic, social, and cultural centers to their respective populations.



The existing traditional character of the Hamlets, provides a great foundation for development patterns offering a mix of uses. While hamlets will likely remain relatively low in population, encouraging future development in or near hamlets will bring many positive benefits including closer proximity to services, economic revitalization, reduced strain on the environment, and the opportunity for residents to lead healthier lifestyles. In order to revitalize and strengthen our Hamlets, the towns will need to concentrate future investment opportunities into their respective Hamlets. Efforts should be made through these investments to improve the aesthetics of the communities, and the availability of goods and services for both residents and visitors.

As investment occurs within the Hamlets, the scale of the development will be an important consideration for our towns. Special attention should be paid to the appropriate location, size, height, setback and design of new development, as the traditional character of the Hamlets and the surrounding town may be negatively impacted by improperly scaled or sited developments. The towns should also consider opportunities to enhance walkability and the pedestrian experience as they arise.

The following policy has been included to guide the towns in revitalizing their existing Hamlets.



Photo Provided By: Village of Burdett Resident



Photo Credit: Schuyler County Planning Department

Hamlet Revitalization Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Town to **focus future public and private investments within the hamlet(s)**. The hamlet should continue to serve as the economic, social, and cultural center of the community. Over the next decade, the Town will strive to improve the appeal of the hamlet(s) in order to attract new services, shopping opportunities, civic uses, jobs, and unique housing options. The community recognizes that there may be some economic development opportunities that are best placed outside of the hamlet(s) due to their particular needs or their potential to negatively impact the traditional character of the Hamlets.



OBJECTIVES

- A. Prioritize the location of residential, business, civic and social uses within the Hamlets.
- B. Develop a more pedestrian friendly environment within the Hamlets.
- C. Increase the number of people living in the Hamlets.
- D. Preserve the historical and architectural value of key sites and structures.
- E. Improve the overall appearance of the commercial and industrial operations located in the Hamlets.
- F. Work to reuse developed lands to improve economic potential and give priority to the reuse of developed lands, over the use of undeveloped lands.

MEASURES

1. Occupancy of commercial space.
2. Number of facade improvements completed.
3. Number of residents living within the hamlet(s).
4. Number of pedestrian enhancements placed within the hamlet(s).
5. Number of businesses located within the hamlet(s).



IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

1. Continue the positive working relationship with the Schuyler County Partnership for Economic Development (SCOPED) to market and attract commercial uses to the Town.

Community Resources

Introduction

For the purposes of this plan, a community resource is broadly defined as any program, service, or infrastructure that positively contributes to a town's quality of life. The importance of these resources to our towns cannot be overstated. Community resources provide our residents and businesses with the infrastructure and services that is necessary for them to thrive. The following table identifies some of the most common community resources available within our towns.



Photo Credit: Schuyler County Planning Department File Photo

Emergency Services	Educational System	Faith Community	Gas & Electric Service
Highway Operation & Maintenance	Law Enforcement	Library	Local History
Open Space	Parks & Recreation	Public and Pedestrian Transportation	Water & Sewer Service

In New York State, local governments are typically responsible for only a portion of these activities. Quasi-governmental agencies, not-for-profit groups, or private entities play a key role in providing the remaining programs or services. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the entire town community to ensure that these resources are able to successfully meet the needs of local residents.

In general, the towns should focus on two distinct efforts: The first includes an ongoing monitoring effort to ensure that the level of service provided by its community resources is adequate. The second includes an active implementation program to address any program or project related deficits that are identified. Achieving the goals of the implementation program will require involvement of other groups and outside funding sources. As a result, the towns will need to engage in high levels of communication and coordination with the residents, community groups, public and private agencies, stakeholders, and other municipalities.



Photo Credit: Schuyler County Planning Department File Photo

The following policy has been included to serve as a guide for the realization of the towns' community resource objectives, including the desire for an enhanced quality of life.

Community Resources Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Town to **have community resources that provide a high level of service** to the local businesses and residents at a reasonable cost. The quality of life within the Town is positively impacted by the health and safety benefits provided by law enforcement and emergency service providers, as well as public water and sewer service (in certain areas). The community's well being is ensured by the combined efforts of the school district, the faith community, and public recreation facilities. As the population characteristics change within the community, it is imperative that the community resources continue to meet the needs of Town residents.



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

OBJECTIVES

- A. Provide services or access to the services necessary to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of residents.
- B. Enhance recreation and leisure activities within the Town.
- C. Expand the number of volunteers in the community.
- D. Promote and expand alternative transportation options within the Town such as pedestrian trails and public transit

MEASURES

- 1. Crime rate or number of calls for assistance.
- 2. Miles of road, sidewalks, pedestrian trails, and bike facilities/access maintained each year.
- 3. Number of recreation programs (town, school, etc) that serve the local young people and senior populations.



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

- 1. Update various Town facilities to meet current needs and accessibility requirements.

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A scenic view of a town street with a forested hill in the background, a white domed building, and a waterfall. The image is used as a background for the text overlay.

THE VILLAGES

There are four distinct villages within Schuyler County, each with its own unique character, that range in geographic size, population density, and occurrence of natural resources. The following profiles have been developed to provide a snapshot of each village, as well as a brief analysis of their current conditions. Each profile contains a summary of the village's history, demographics, key issues and statistics, which help identify current and future opportunities or challenges facing the community. These profiles are intended to provide an overview of relevant topics rather than an exhaustive, detailed study of a single issue or trend. They will also serve to inform the creation of policies for not only the villages themselves, but also for their respective towns and the County as a whole. Collectively they have also served to inform the creation of a set of preliminary policies for each Village, which is included at the end of this section.

Introduction

Village of Burdett



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

The Village of Burdett is located in the southwestern section of the Town of Hector. It is fully contained within Hector's borders and acts as a gateway to the eastern Seneca wine trail and Village of Watkins Glen via State Route 79. Burdett is the smallest village within Schuyler County geographically and by population, measuring one square mile in land area and reporting 337 residents in 2012. Despite the Village's population loss of 18 residents (nearly 5%) since 2000, Burdett would like to enhance its existing community and become a destination center for, not only the Town of Hector, but also the greater Schuyler County region.

Burdett was known in the past as Hamburg or Tod Pole, the latter name derived from the erection of a political "totem" near a local tavern. The first permanent settler of the Village was Joseph Gillespie in 1799. He had been given a property title to the area as payment for his services during the Revolutionary War. The first post office was established by 1819, and there were 360 inhabitants by 1860. As settlement continued residents gained access to three churches, a woolen factory, iron foundry, gristmill, sawmill, and a tannery. In 1868, *The Burdett Local Visitor*, Burdett's first newspaper began circulation. Construction of the Lehigh Valley Railroad followed in 1891 and finished by 1892. However, it wouldn't be until six years later, in 1898, that the Village would be incorporated.

Burdett is a small and quaint village with an appealing mainstreet core, accessible by State Route 79 that runs through the Village center. Although a smaller village, Burdett reported a 2012 population density of 340 residents per square mile, making it the least dense of any village, but more than double that of any town. Burdett's unemployment rate and poverty rate, of 7.6% and 10.9% respectively, are slightly higher than the County's rates. This does create an economic challenge, furthered by the fact that the Villages of Burdett and Odessa share the forth-lowest median household income level at \$41,250.

Regardless of these figures, Burdett has a number of assets that make it well positioned for growth. First, it has the second highest level of educational attainment among Schuyler County villages, behind the County seat of Watkins Glen. Second, Burdett is a gateway to the continuously growing agricultural industries that have helped make the town of Hector the center of population growth in Schuyler County it is today. Third, Burdett is home to many businesses that serve both tourists and the citizens of Burdett. For example, there is a popular horse stable, Painted Bar Stables, which leads horseback tours through area trails and along the gorgeous vistas provided by the elevated hills of Seneca Lake's eastern shoreline. Lastly, Burdett's unique character and proximity to Tompkins County make it an attractive place to live.

As Schuyler County becomes an increasingly popular destination in New York State, Burdett has the potential to increase employment opportunities and enhance its overall community. It can do so by continuing to link with the Town of Hector and other villages on economic development initiatives. One such initiative is Burdett and Odessa's Commercial District Improvement Strategy (2011), which was designed to identify opportunities to sustain economic vitality in the two downtowns and boost the quality of life for residents.

Key Issues

1. Need for improvement and expansion of wastewater infrastructure.
2. Difficulty in raising revenue and the tax base.
3. Desire to pursue smart growth strategies and retain small town charm with development.



Photos Provided By: Village of Burdett Resident\ \ \ \

AT A GLANCE

2012 Population 337

2000 Population 355

Land Area 1.0 Sq. Mi.

Water Area..... 0.0 Sq. Mi.

Median Age 41

Density..... 337 People/Sq. Mi.

Land Use Policies

Comp. Plan In Progress
 Zoning No
 Site Plan No
 Subdivision No
 Planning Board No

Did You Know?

1. In about 1790, the Village was the site of the first settlement in the Town of Hector, which was known for its support and participation in the Temperance Movement.
2. The area surrounding Hector Falls Creek, which was originally named Cranberry Creek, is where much of the early development in the Village was located.
3. Burdett is currently taking measures to improve upon and develop its Main Street and village core.

Demographics

Village of Burdett

KEY STATISTICS

Primary Employment Industry



Retail Trade

Comprises 58% of Jobs in Burdett

Primary Land Use



Residential

Single-family Homes

Unemployment Rate



7.6%

6TH Lowest Rate in the County

Poverty Rate



10.9%

5TH Lowest Rate in the County

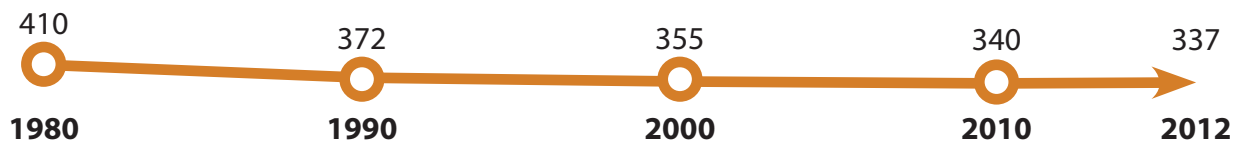
Median Income



\$41,250

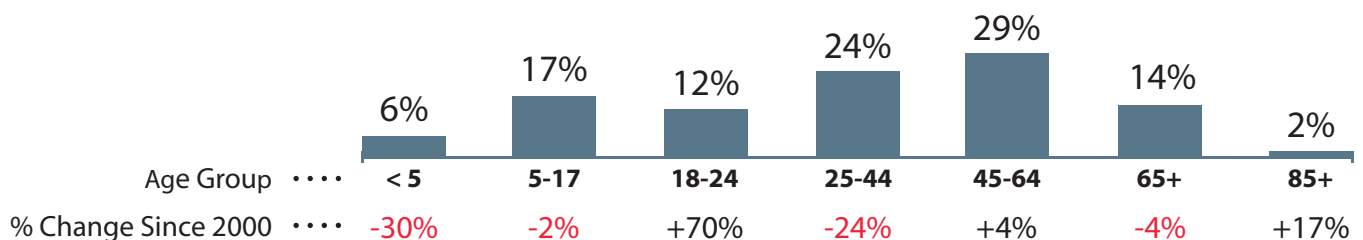
4TH Lowest Household Income in the County

HISTORIC POPULATION COUNTS



The overall declining population throughout Schuyler County and the Village of Burdett is worrisome, as a stable or growing population helps maintain a strong community. The Village's population is not only important to the local community but also to Hector, the town in which Burdett is located. Therefore, the Village should work towards stabilizing its population and lessening the potential negative impacts to the greater community with efforts that both retain and attract residents.

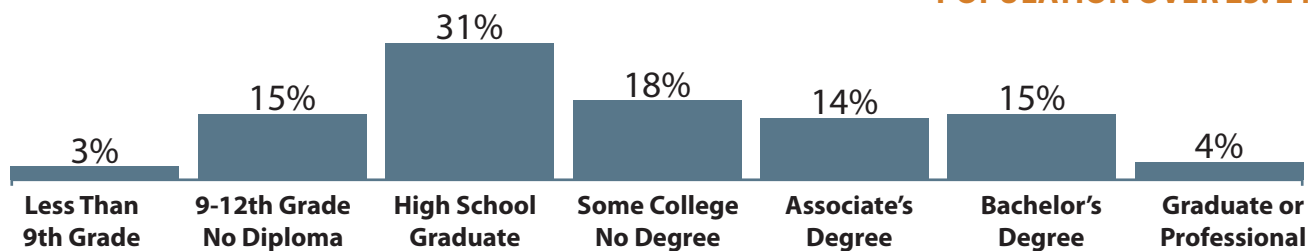
AGE DISTRIBUTION (2010)



The Village of Burdett's age distribution shows population growth in the 18 to 24, 45 to 64, and 85 plus age cohorts only, with the largest percentage of growth among young adults. Despite this growth, the overall population loss along with the lack of new families is a concern for the Village, as new families positively contribute to a community and its tax base. Furthermore, the majority of Burdett's residents will become seniors over the next two decades, and will subsequently be looking for opportunities to age-in-place. As a result, the Village needs to focus on policies that serve to attract and retain residents of all ages.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2013)

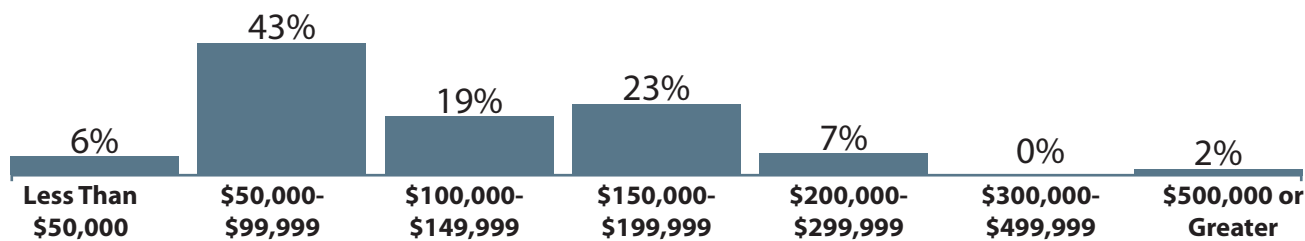
POPULATION OVER 25: 243



A recent study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce found that, by 2018, some 63% of all jobs in New York State will require postsecondary training beyond high school. Currently only 51% of Burdett's population would be qualified for these positions. Not only is this data meaningful for guiding Countywide efforts to increase access to higher education, but also for the Village's future economic development efforts.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOME VALUES (2013)

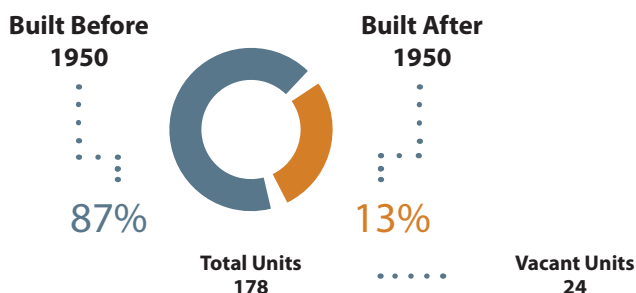
OWNER-OCCUPIED UNIT COUNT: 109



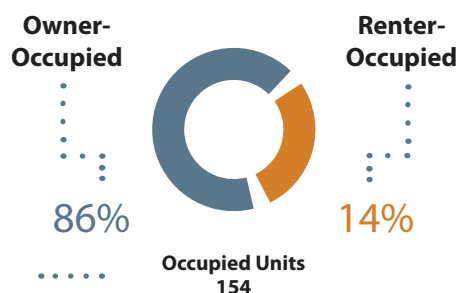
Home values provide a general gauge of the desirability of a community. In addition, maintaining home values is important to communities because of the contribution to its tax base these values have in the form of property taxes. With 49% of homes in Burdett valued at less than \$100,000, the Village needs to focus on policies and efforts that boost existing home values and develop the upper end of the real estate market.

CURRENT HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS (2013)

AGE OF UNITS



OCCUPIED UNITS



Due to their age, houses built before 1950 typically require more repairs and costly updates. Homes that aren't repaired or well-maintained often result in a lower quality housing stock for the community. With 87% of its units built before 1950, Burdett should explore strategies to update its existing housing stock including upgrading energy efficiencies and ensuring that all units are compliant with the Building and Property Maintenance Codes of NYS. Providing education on programs and financing opportunities for upgrades would work towards a better overall housing stock.

High home-ownership rates are often considered an indication of community and neighborhood stability. Although Burdett's ownership rate of 86% is on par with the County rate, the Village should strive to maintain a balance of ownership options within the housing stock, which will meet a wider variety of their resident population's needs. The County's recent housing study is one tool available to build upon.

LOCATION AFFORDABILITY INDEX



AS A PERCENT OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME		
28%	33%	61%
\$13,403	\$15,797	\$29,200
IDEAL PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME FOR AFFORDABILITY		
30%	15%	45%

The housing in Burdett is considered to be affordable in relation to the median income. However, the Village also has one of the highest transportation costs in the county with respect to income, making living in the village less affordable overall. This likely reflects the need to drive outside the village for employment or other daily needs. Locating additional services and places of employment inside the village could reduce the distances needed to travel for some needs, reducing overall transportation costs.

WALKSCORE

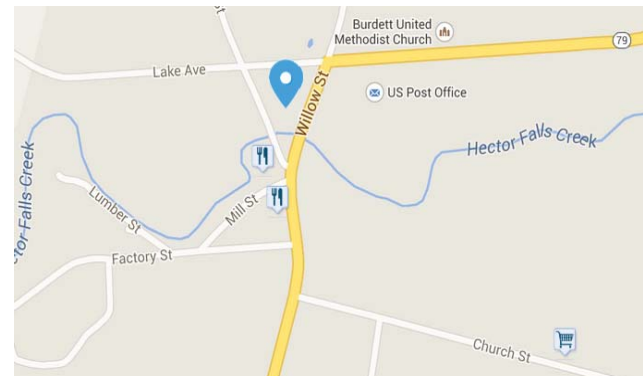


16/100

Downtown

10/100

Village Edge



On the Main Street of Burdett, the Walk Score is 16, indicating that very few errands including restaurants, groceries, and the post office can be accessed on foot. On the outer limits of the village the Walk Score drops to around 10. As walkability becomes more important in real estate decisions, improving Burdett's walkability will be influential in attracting new residents and retaining current ones. While the Burdett population is not slated to grow, the surround town of Hector has seen an increase in population in the previous decades. Attracting residents who might otherwise locate in Hector might provide better support for increasing local services and employment opportunities, and thereby increasing walkability in the village. Another strategy would be to focus on safety improvements to existing infrastructure and look to expand the social, cultural aspect of town services in existing infrastructure.

PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE USAGE

27 Minute
Daily Commute



33,010 Miles
Vehicle Miles Traveled, Household



2,134 MTCO2
Annual Auto Emissions, Village



5,083,540 Miles
Vehicle Miles Traveled, Village



Increases in personal automobile usage are associated with community and personal costs in terms of money, air pollution, and traffic congestion. This affects residents in terms of higher cost of living, sub optimal public health outcomes, and diminished quality of life. The average commute in Burdett is longer than the county and national average of 25 minutes. Enhancing and preserving the traditional village character of Burdett by increasing the local services and employment opportunities could reduce commute times, reduce overall transportation costs for residents, and reduce the carbon emissions associated with personal auto travel.

SOLAR ENERGY CAPACITY



11 Installations

57.78 KW
Capacity

64,300 KWH
Potential Annual Production

44.3 MTCO2
Annual Carbon Avoided



Photo Credit: Watkins Glen Central School District Website

Residential solar energy installations provide Burdett with over 50 KW of solar capacity, or over 20% of the current solar capacity of Schuyler County. This technology saves money on residential electric bills and reduces community carbon emissions by 44.3 MTCO2 each year. The village should consider additional ways that solar energy can be included and promoted including integration into municipal power upgrades and development projects and resident and business education on state energy programs.

Introduction

Village of Montour Falls



Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce

The Village of Montour Falls is located south of Seneca Lake and the Village of Watkins Glen, split between the eastern border of the Town of Dix, and the western border of the Town of Montour. As the southern gateway to the Finger Lakes Region, the Village is becoming an important destination center for residents and visitors of Schuyler County. With a land area of three square miles, Montour Falls is the largest village in the County geographically and the second largest in population with 1,714 residents in 2012.

Montour Falls also has historical significance to the region, as it is home to the only Historic District in

Schuyler County. The “Glorious T” District received its place on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. The District is made up of 24 buildings, and the iconic Shequaga (Chequaga) Falls, which tumble 156 feet into the heart of the Village. Montour Falls also boasts a unique sense of place with the historic Greek Revival, Italianate, Queen Anne, and Victorian architecture of the residential and public buildings throughout the Village.

Like all of Schuyler County, Montour Falls is fortunate to have an abundance of natural resources. The Village is home to the Queen Catharine Marsh, Shequaga (Chequaga) Falls, Aunt Sarah’s Falls, and a portion of the Catharine Valley Trail. Montour Falls also has some of the best vantage points to view the marsh, wineries, and pastures in the central section of Schuyler County, whether it is from the route just north of Shequaga Falls or along Skyline Drive (Route 8). Levees and other structures protect the village from flooding by Catharine Creek and Shequaga Creek.

In 1836, the Village was incorporated under the name “Havana.” However, the name changed to the Village of Montour Falls in 1893 in honor of Indian “Queen” Catharine Montour. During the 1700s Montour led a large village of the Seneca Nation of Indians located on the site. Charles Cook, the Village’s founder, came to Montour Falls in 1829, just seven years prior to its incorporation. His influence was widespread throughout the County and is remembered through the former Cook Academy he had built, which is known today as the New York State Academy of Fire Sciences. Cook was also instrumental in the growth of Montour Falls through his commercial enterprises, including the creation of the Chemung Canal and efforts to establish the Schuyler area as a county of NYS. The Village today is primarily residential with a mix of commercial uses located along Main Street, and it is also home to the only hospital located within Schuyler County.

Montour Falls faces a number of economic challenges, however. The Village has the highest poverty rate in the County (18%), and the sixth highest unemployment rate (8.5%). Furthermore, the Village has the second lowest median household income at \$37,500; which is nearly \$10,000 less than the average of all the towns and villages. A public and private investment partnership has developed a shared wastewater treatment facility that will hopefully spur economic development within the Village as well as the County. Despite these challenging factors, there is no doubt that the character of Montour Falls is enchanting, and is enjoyed by residents and tourists as a part of their overall experience in the County and the Finger Lakes Region.

Key Issues

1. Lack of new housing stock and maintenance of older homes.
2. Need for improvement and expansion of wastewater infrastructure.
3. Desire for revitalization and infill development within downtown.

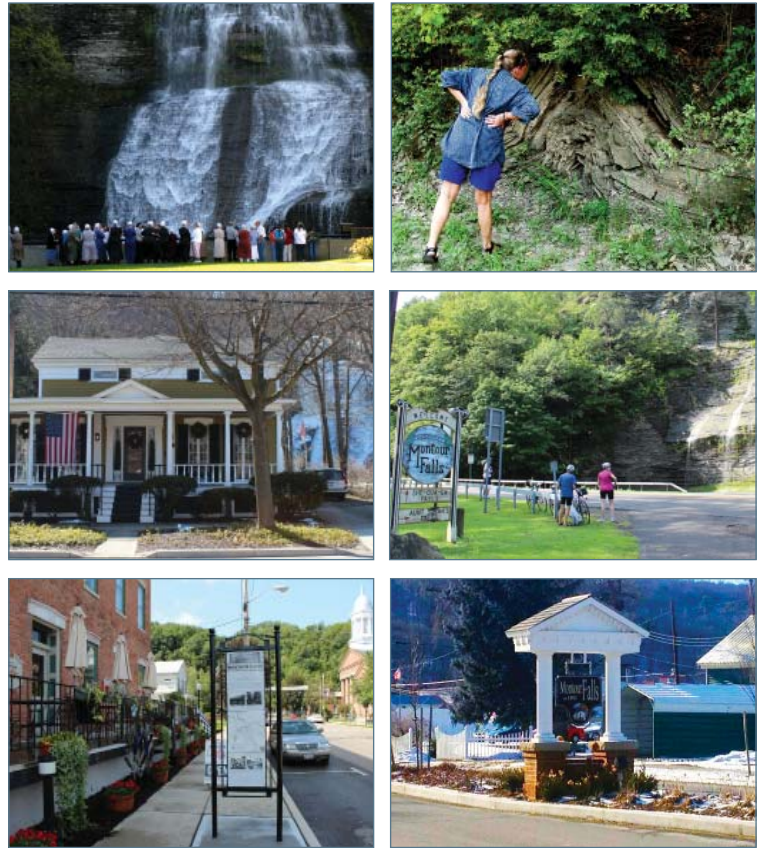


Photo Credit: 1-2.(Top Left) Richard Owlett \\\ 3-6. Schuyler County Planning Department \\\

AT A GLANCE

2012 Population 1,714

2000 Population 1,814

Land Area 3.0 Sq. Mi.

Water Area..... 0.0 Sq. Mi.

Median Age 48.8

Density 571 People/Sq. Mi.

Land Use Policies

Comp. Plan Yes
 Zoning Yes
 Site Plan Yes
 Subdivision No
 Planning Board Yes

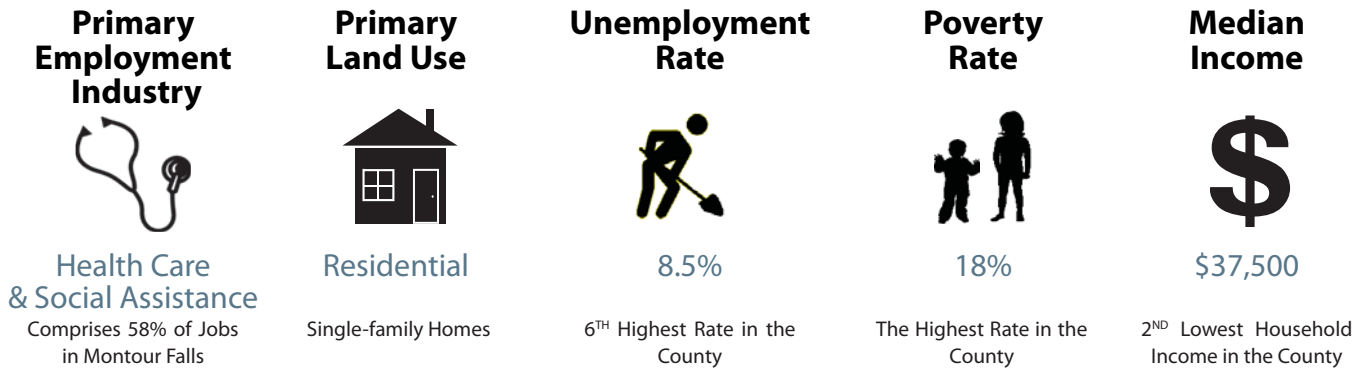
Did You Know?

1. David Bennett Hill, who served as Governor of New York State from 1885 to 1891, was a resident of Montour Falls. He is best known for having signed a bill to preserve the lands that would eventually become Adirondack Park.
2. Charles Cook fought a famous battle with Ezra Cornell, founder of Cornell University, to earn the New York Land Grant University designation for his academy, which was awarded from 1863-1865.
3. Shepard Niles, a major crane, hoist, and monorail manufacturing company, operated within Montour Falls for over 100 years.

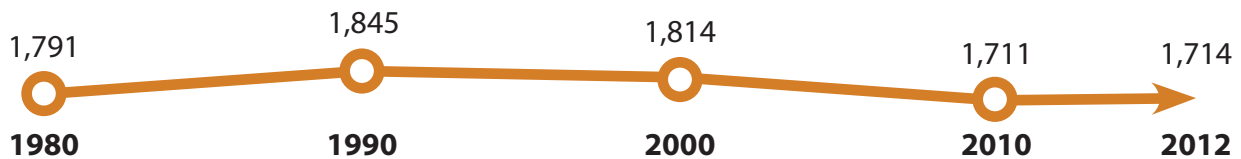
Demographics

Village of Montour Falls

KEY STATISTICS

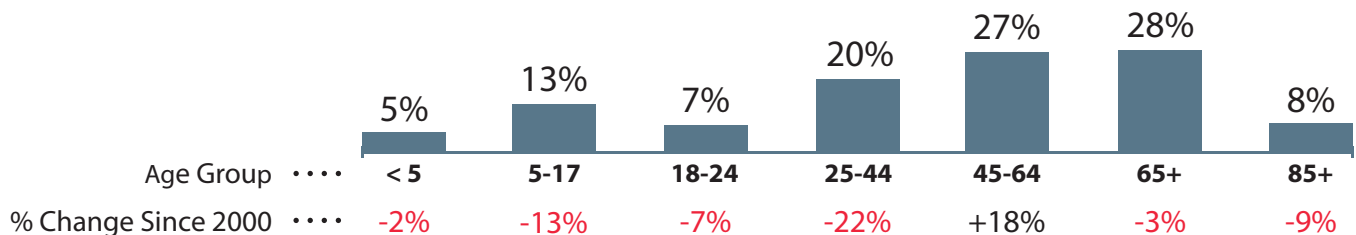


HISTORIC POPULATION COUNTS



The overall declining population throughout Schuyler County and the Village of Montour Falls is worrisome, as a stable or growing population helps maintain a strong community. The Village's population is not only important to the local community but also to Dix and Montour, the towns in which Montour Falls is located. Despite a slight increase in residents from the 2010 census, the Village should work towards stabilizing its population and lessening the potential negative impacts to the greater community with efforts that both retain and attract residents.

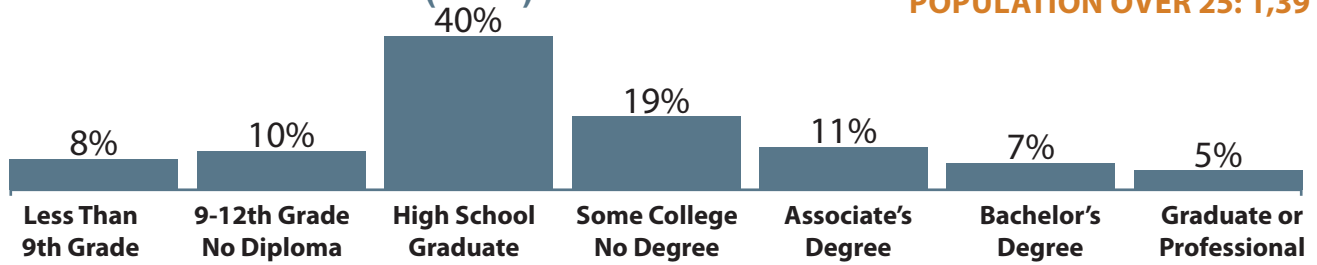
AGE DISTRIBUTION (2010)



The Village of Montour Falls' age distribution shows population growth in the 45 to 64 age cohort only, with 63% of the Village's population being 45 years of age or older. The overall population loss, along with the lack of young professionals and new families is a concern for the Village, as population growth, particularly in those two groups, positively contributes to a community and its tax base. Furthermore, the 45 to 64 age cohort of Montour Falls' residents will become seniors over the next two decades and will be looking for opportunities to age-in-place. As a result, the Village will need to focus on policies that serve to attract and retain residents of all ages.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2013)

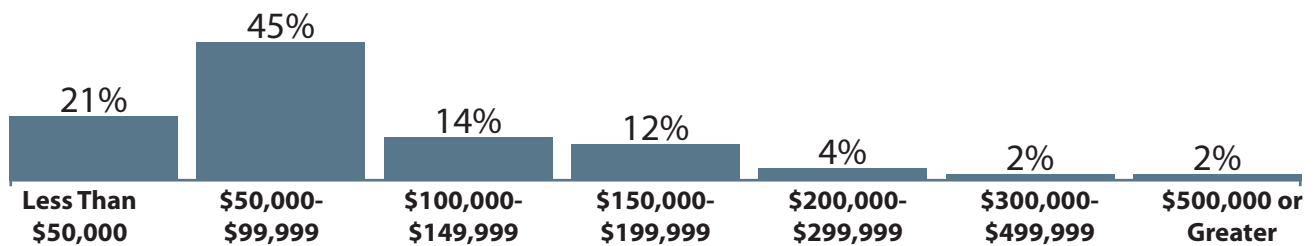
POPULATION OVER 25: 1,391



A recent study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce found that, by 2018, some 63% of all jobs in New York State will require postsecondary training beyond high school. Currently only 42% of Montour Falls' population would be qualified for these positions. Not only is this data meaningful for guiding Countywide efforts to increase access to higher education, but also for the Village's future economic development efforts.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOME VALUES (2013)

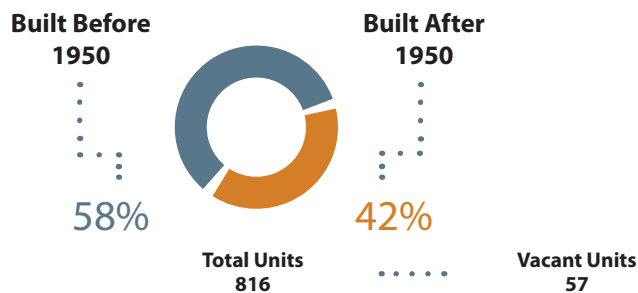
OWNER-OCCUPIED UNIT COUNT: 405



Home values provide a general gauge of the desirability of a community. In addition, maintaining home values is important to communities because of the contribution to its tax base these values have in the form of property taxes. With 66% of homes in Montour Falls' valued at less than \$100,000, the Village needs to focus on policies and efforts that boost existing home values and develop the upper end of the real estate market.

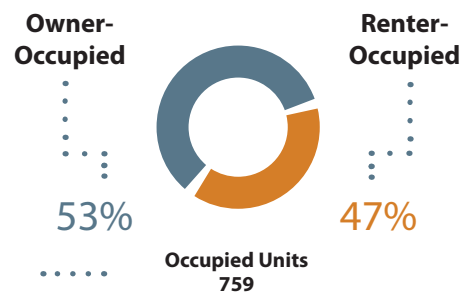
CURRENT HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS (2013)

AGE OF UNITS



Due to their age, houses built before 1950 typically require more repairs and costly updates. Homes that aren't repaired or well-maintained often result in a lower quality housing stock for the community. With 58% of its units built before 1950, the Village should explore strategies to update its existing housing stock including upgrading energy efficiencies and ensuring that all units are compliant with the Building and Property Maintenance Codes of NYS. Providing education on programs and financing opportunities for upgrades would work towards a better overall housing stock.

OCCUPIED UNITS



High home-ownership rates are often considered an indication of community and neighborhood stability. However, the Village should strive to maintain a balance of ownership options within its housing stock, which will meet a wider variety of its resident population's needs. The County's recent housing study is one tool the Village has to build upon. Currently, Montour Falls' rate of 53% is below the County rate.

LOCATION AFFORDABILITY INDEX



AS A PERCENT OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME		
25%	28%	53%
\$11,967	\$13,403	\$25,370
IDEAL PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME FOR AFFORDABILITY		
30%	15%	45%

The housing in Montour Falls is considered to be affordable in relation to the median income. However, the Village also has a high transportation cost with respect to income, making living in the village less affordable overall. This could reflect the need to drive outside the village for employment or other daily needs. However, Montour Falls has the lowest transportation costs in the county [tied with Watkins Glen]. Attracting additional services and places of employment into the village could reduce the distances many people need to travel for some errands, reducing overall transportation costs.

WALKSCORE

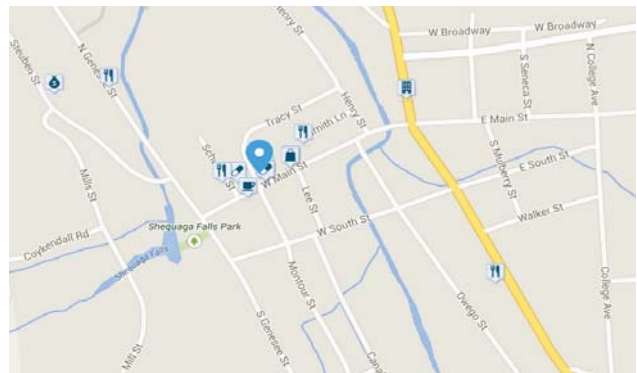


42/100

Downtown

3/100

Village Edge



The Village of Montour Falls is the second most compact, densely populated population center in the county. In the heart of Downtown Montour Falls, the Walk Score is 42, indicating that only some errands can be accomplished on foot such as going to restaurants, parks, entertainment, schools, and coffee shops. On the outer limits of the village the Walk Score drops significantly to around 3 meaning that essentially no errands can be accomplished on foot. As an established village, Montour Falls has a significant and unique opportunity to capitalize on the walkability in a small village atmosphere. As walkability becomes more important in real estate purchasing and development decisions, improving the village’s walkability will be influential in attracting new residents and retaining current ones. Supporting walkability could mean adding additional services or businesses to the village, or supporting the development of additional housing opportunities in the village limits instead of the surrounding town. Further, Montour Falls might focus on safety improvements to existing infrastructure and look to expand the social, cultural aspect of town services in existing infrastructure.

PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE USAGE

18 Minute

Daily Commute



28,003 Miles

Vehicle Miles Traveled, Household



8,927 MTCO2

Annual Auto Emissions, Village



21,254,277 Miles

Vehicle Miles Traveled, Village



Increases in personal automobile usage are associated with community and personal costs in terms of money, air pollution, and traffic congestion. This affects residents in terms of higher cost of living, sub optimal public health outcomes, and diminished quality of life. The average commute in Montour Falls is much shorter than the county and national average of 25 minutes. Enhancing and preserving the traditional village character of Montour Falls by increasing the local services and employment opportunities in the village could reduce commute times, reduce overall transportation costs for residents, and reduce the carbon emissions associated with personal auto travel.

SOLAR ENERGY CAPACITY

1 Installations



6.25 KW

Capacity

7,336 KWH

Potential Annual Production

5.1 MTCO2

Annual Carbon Avoided



Photo Credit: Watkins Glen Central School District Website

Residential solar energy installations provide Montour Falls with over 6.25 KW or nearly 3% of the County's solar capacity. This technology saves money on residential electric bills and reduces community carbon emissions by 5.1 MTCO2 each year. The village should consider additional ways that solar energy can be included and promoted including municipal projects that involve power upgrades and resident and business education on state energy programs and opportunities.

Introduction

Village of Odessa



Photo Credit: Schuyler County Planning Department

The Village of Odessa is situated along the western border of the Town of Catharine, and the eastern border of the Town of Montour. Only slightly larger than the smallest village, Burdett, the Village of Odessa is 1.2 square miles in land area, and has a 2012 population of 589 residents. However, it acts as a gateway village to the larger Villages of Watkins Glen and Montour Falls, as travelers taking Route 224 to the Watkins Glen International Speedway or the Town of Hector's wine trail pass through Odessa by the tens of thousands each summer. Having a central location within the County, Odessa is also just minutes from Schuyler County's popular attractions, and is home to a seat of one of the County's three school districts.

In 1827, Phineas Catlin and John Foster were responsible for plotting and surveying Odessa. Foster named the Village of Odessa in the years following, and erected the first tavern and general store by 1836 and 1838 respectively. The first sawmill was erected in 1799, adjacent to Catlin Creek. This area would become the first set of boundaries for what are now the limits of Schuyler County. The first gristmill was built in 1801, followed many years later by the first schoolhouse circa 1825. The poultry business was a major source of revenue for the Village in its early years, as there were an estimated 20,000 laying hens within Odessa's limits during the 1930s.

Odessa's resident population peaked by 1990 with nearly 1,000 residents, dropping back to its 1980 level of roughly 600 citizens by 2000. During the decades of population decline, however, the Village saw a rise in median household income of 39% from \$29,674 in 1989 to its present estimate of \$41,250. The decades of decline also saw a boom in construction during the 1990s, the largest seen by the Village since the 1960's. Although when the population declined, many homes were vacated leaving nearly 14% of the housing units unoccupied by 2010.

Today, Odessa is a charming, quiet village with a few local amenities that provide food and goods to the neighboring rural areas. Yet, the Village faces a number of economic challenges. The unemployment rate for Odessa is the highest in the County at 11.3%. Additionally, Odessa shares the rank of fourth lowest median household income with the Village of Burdett at \$41,250; which is indicative of its high poverty rate at 15.1%. As a smaller village in the County, Odessa faces difficulties in terms of gaining revenue, stimulating economic development, and tapping into human capital resources.

In order to address these challenges, the Village has recently engaged with other communities in a water development sharing effort that should help improve access to sewers and mitigate other barriers to development. The Villages of Odessa and Burdett also partnered on a Commercial District Improvement Strategy to identify opportunities that would sustain economic vitality in the two downtowns and enhance the quality of life for residents. Based on public comments received, Odessa residents would like to see improvements to its infrastructure and retail offerings currently available within the Village, while maintaining its history and charm.

Key Issues

1. Desire to attract more business to downtown.
2. Difficulty raising revenue and tax base.
3. Experienced steep drop in population, particularly in younger age groups.



Photo Credit: 1-3. Schuyler County Planning Department \\\ 4-5. Village of Odessa Fire Department \\\ 6. Richard Owlett \\\

AT A GLANCE

2012 Population 589

2000 Population 605

Land Area 1.2 Sq. Mi.

Water Area..... 0.0 Sq. Mi.

Median Age 47.1

Density..... 491 People/Sq. Mi.

Land Use Policies

Comp. Plan Yes
 Zoning Yes
 Site Plan Yes
 Subdivision No
 Planning Board Yes

Did You Know?

1. Odessa has the second highest median age of Schuyler County at 47.1 years. This is largely due to the fact that 50% of the Village's population is at the age of 45 or older.
2. A great example of modernist architecture, generally characterized by a simpler form and minimal decoration, can be found in the municipal building of the Village of Odessa.
3. Located within the Village is the Odessa Montour Central School District, which includes the Howard A. Hanlon Elementary School (3rd to 6th), and Odessa Montour Junior/Senior High (7th to 12th). BC Cate Elementary School (Pre-K to 2nd) is located in Montour Falls but is part of the Odessa Montour Central School District

Demographics

Village of Odessa

KEY STATISTICS

Primary Employment Industry



Education

Comprises 70% of Jobs in Odessa

Primary Land Use



Residential

Single-family Homes

Unemployment Rate



11.3%

The Highest Rate in the County

Poverty Rate



15.1%

3RD Highest Rate in the County

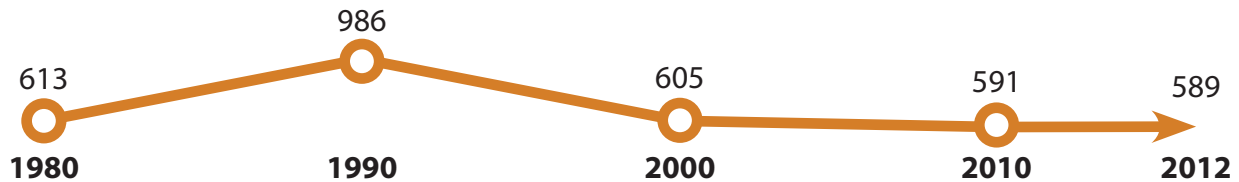
Median Income



\$41,250

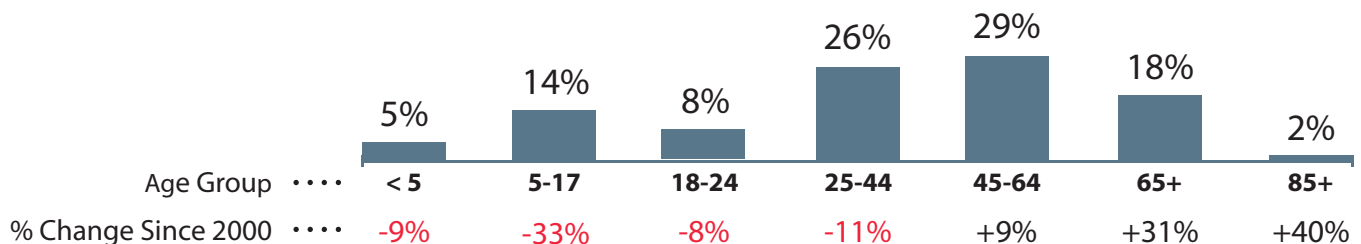
4TH Lowest Household Income in the County

HISTORIC POPULATION COUNTS



The overall declining population throughout Schuyler County and the Village of Odessa is worrisome, as a stable or growing population helps maintain a strong community. The Village's population is not only important to the local community but also to Catharine and Montour, the towns in which Odessa is located. Therefore, the Village should work towards stabilizing its population and lessening the potential negative impacts to the greater community with efforts that both retain and attract residents.

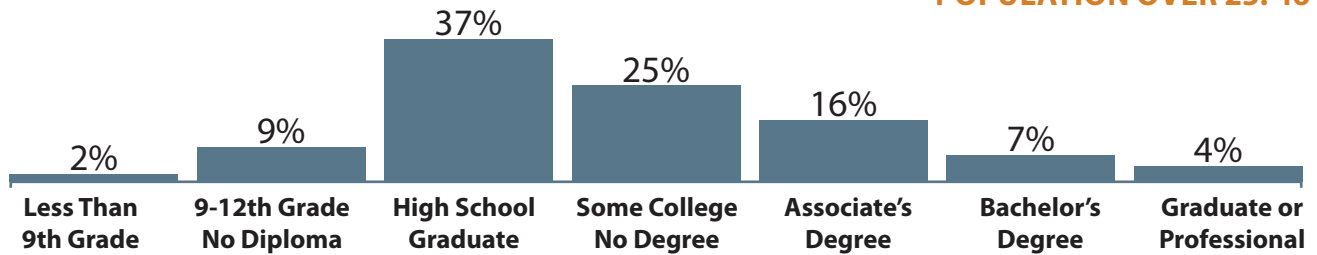
AGE DISTRIBUTION (2010)



Like many of the towns, the Village of Odessa's population is aging without the counter balance of growth in younger age cohorts. This lack of young professionals and new families is a concern for the Village, as they represent two population groups that positively contribute to the growth of a community and its tax base. In addition to this, pressures from the growing senior population put additional stress on the community to provide more services and resources for elder care so older residents are able to age-in-place. In order to respond to these population pressures, Odessa will need to focus on policies that address the needs of young and old alike.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2013)

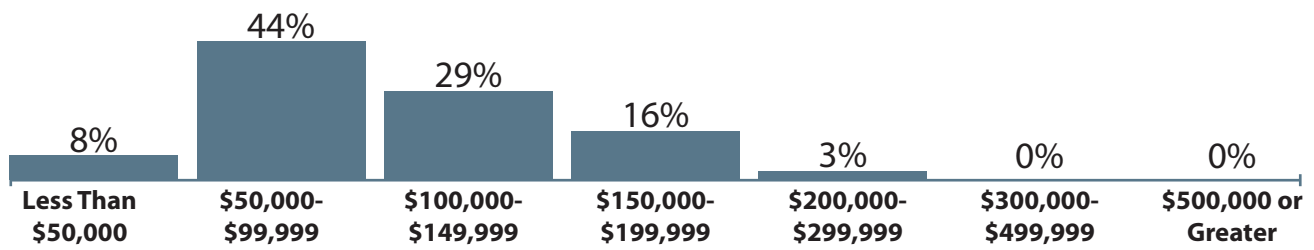
POPULATION OVER 25: 461



A recent study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce found that, by 2018, some 63% of all jobs in New York State will require postsecondary training beyond high school. Currently only 52% of Odessa's population would be qualified for these positions. Not only is this data meaningful for guiding Countywide efforts to increase access to higher education, but also for the Village's future economic development efforts.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOME VALUES (2013)

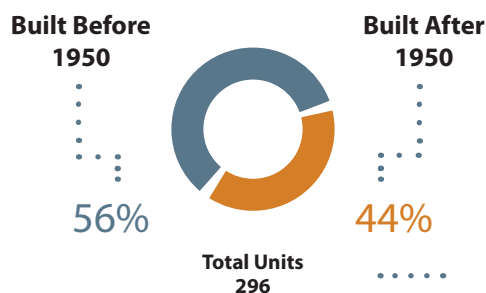
OWNER-OCCUPIED UNIT COUNT: 183



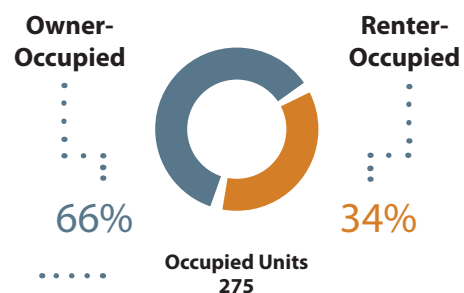
Home values provide a general gauge of the desirability of a community. In addition, maintaining home values is important to communities because of the contribution to its tax base these values have in the form of property taxes. With 52% of homes in Odessa valued at less than \$100,000, the Village needs to focus on policies and efforts that boost existing home values and develop the upper end of the real estate market.

CURRENT HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS (2013)

AGE OF UNITS



OCCUPIED UNITS



Due to their age, houses built before 1950 typically require more repairs and costly updates. Homes that aren't repaired or well-maintained often result in a lower quality housing stock for the community. With 56% of its units built before 1950, the Village should explore strategies to update its existing housing stock including upgrading energy efficiencies and ensuring that all units are compliant with the Building and Property Maintenance Codes of NYS. Providing education on programs and financing opportunities for upgrades would work towards a better overall housing stock.

High home-ownership rates are often considered an indication of community and neighborhood stability. However, the Village should strive to maintain a balance of ownership options within its housing stock, which will meet a wider variety of its resident population's needs. The County's recent housing study is one tool available to build upon. Currently, Odessa's rate of 66% is below the County rate.

LOCATION AFFORDABILITY INDEX



AS A PERCENT OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME		
27%	31%	58%
\$12,925	\$14,839	\$27,764
IDEAL PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME FOR AFFORDABILITY		
30%	15%	45%

The housing in Odessa is considered to be affordable in relation to the median income. However, the Village also has a high transportation cost with respect to income, making living in the village less affordable overall. This likely reflects the need to drive outside the village for employment or other daily needs. Locating additional services and places of employment inside the village could reduce the distances needed to travel for some needs, reducing overall transportation costs.

WALKSCORE

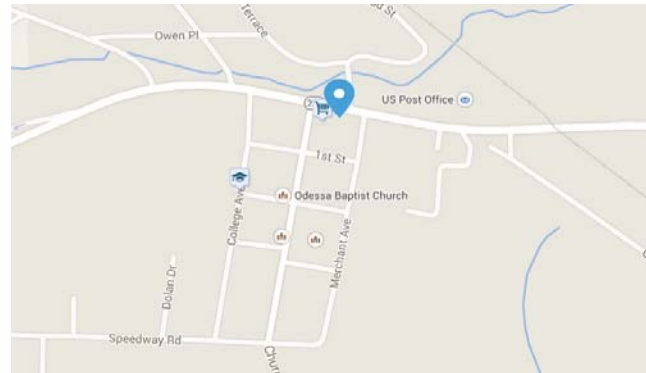


18/100

Downtown

6/100

Village Edge



Along the main street in Odessa, the Walk Score is 18, indicating that very few errands such as going to school and the post office can be accomplished on foot. On the outer limits of the village the Walk Score drops to around 6. As walkability becomes more important in real estate decisions, improving Odessa’s walkability will be influential in attracting new residents and retaining current ones. As the population of Odessa and the surrounding towns is not slated to grow, focusing on new development might not be the best use of resources. Instead, Odessa might focus on safety improvements to existing infrastructure and look to expand the social, cultural aspect of town services in existing infrastructure rather than on new developments.

PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE USAGE

30 Minute
Daily Commute



30,990 Miles
Vehicle Miles Traveled, Household



3,580 MTCO2
Annual Auto Emissions, Village



8,522,250 Miles
Vehicle Miles Traveled, Village



Increases in personal automobile usage are associated with community and personal costs in terms of money, air pollution, and traffic congestion. This affects residents in terms of higher cost of living, sub optimal public health outcomes, and diminished quality of life. The average commute in Odessa is longer than the county and national average of 25 minutes. Enhancing and preserving the traditional village character of Odessa by increasing the local services and employment opportunities in the village could reduce commute times, reduce overall transportation costs for residents, and reduce the carbon emissions associated with personal auto travel.

SOLAR ENERGY CAPACITY



0 Installations

0 KW
Capacity

0 KWH
Potential Annual Production

0 MTCO2
Annual Carbon Avoided



Photo Credit: Watkins Glen Central School District Website

The Village of Odessa currently does not have any solar power developments. The village should consider additional ways that solar energy can be included and promoted in Odessa including reviewing village laws to ensure that solar power is adequately addressed, integrating solar power into municipal power upgrades and developments, and resident and business education on state energy programs.

Introduction

Village of Watkins Glen

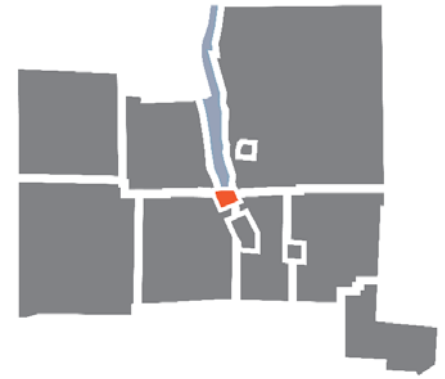


Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce

The Village of Watkins Glen is located at the foot of Lake Seneca, offering itself as a primary gateway to the central Finger Lakes region. The Village limits span a portion of Seneca Lake to the north, the northeastern corner of the Town of Dix, the southeastern corner of the Town of Reading, and share a border with the Town of Hector to the northeast. The Village of Watkins Glen is the largest village in the County by population, reporting 1,860 residents in 2012 living within its 1.9 square miles. Watkins Glen is uniquely urban for the region, as it has the highest population density in the entire County at 978 people per square mile.

Despite the urban nature of the Village, Watkins Glen also shares in the expansive natural resources of Schuyler County. Catharine Creek, a one of a kind fresh water nature preserve, leads from Seneca Lake's southern shore through the Village of Watkins Glen and continues across the Town of Montour into the Village of Montour Falls. Watkins Glen also hosts the entrance to Watkins Glen State Park, where gorgeous waterfalls and cliffs stretch into Town of Dix along Glen Creek.

The Village gets its name from founder Dr. Samuel Watkins, who arrived in 1828. He ordered the construction of a large hotel, which stood at the main intersection until 1977, bearing the name of Jefferson House. Originally called Salubria, the Village was renamed Watkins in 1851, to honor Dr. Watkins after his death. In 1926, Glen was added to the name in order to match the name of the local state park.

Also very instrumental to the growth of the area was John Magee, who arrived by 1864. As the owner of booming young coal mines in Pennsylvania, Magee arranged for a rail line to bring his coal to Seneca Lake where it was transferred to canal boats for distribution. Products were sent to sites along the Erie Canal, which were then delivered to Elmira and Corning. Magee also contributed to the cost of constructing the County's courthouse, and was largely responsible for the building of a Presbyterian Church in the area. He also operated a successful stagecoach route.

From 2000 to 2010, Watkins saw a decrease in population of about 13.5%. During this time the median age of residents within the Village increased from 39.6 in 2000 to 43.2 in 2010. In addition to the recent stress of a declining and aging population, Watkins Glen faces some economically challenging figures. The Village has the lowest overall median household income in the County at \$34,969; and the third highest unemployment rate at 10.1%. However, Watkins Glen has the third lowest poverty rate of all the County's villages at 5%.

Today, Watkins Glen is focusing on the development of its downtown lakeside into a bustling destination center for visitors to the Finger Lakes. The waterfront features lodging amenities, including the highly rated Harbor Hotel and quaint bed and breakfast operations. In addition, the Village boasts an expansive lakeside park and diverse array of retail offerings all within walking distance from the shore. Gorgeous Victorian and colonial homes dot the streets leading to the lake, which are targeted for creative reuse to maintain the historic feel of the Village. Watkins Glen is the heart of Schuyler County's administrative and economic vibrancy, and is poised to lead the region as it matures.

Key Issues

1. Development, especially of waterfront, provides threat to small town charm.
2. Desire to increase retail and restaurant offerings in downtown.
3. Need for improvement and expansion of public infrastructure.



Photo Credit: 1.(Top Left) Richard Owlett\\\\\\\\ 2. Norrie Cornelius\\\\\\\\ 3. Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce\\\\\\\\ 4-6. Schuyler County Planning Department\\\\\\\\

AT A GLANCE

2012 Population 1,860

2000 Population 2,097

Land Area 1.9 Sq. Mi.

Water Area..... 0.4 Sq. Mi.

Median Age 43.2

Density 979 People/Sq. Mi.

Land Use Policies

Comp. Plan Yes
 Zoning Yes
 Site Plan Yes
 Subdivision No
 Planning Board Yes

Did You Know?

1. The Village is home to Seneca Harbor Park, as well as the aptly named Watkins Glen State Park that boasts 19 waterfalls within two miles.
2. As a gateway to the Finger Lakes Region, Watkins Glen provides direct access to the Seneca Lake Wine trail, which hosts over 50 wineries.
3. American road racing was revived in Watkins Glen, the first road race run since before World War II. The 6.6 mile circuit ran through the Village streets, starting and ending in front of the Schuyler County Court House.

Demographics

Village of Watkins Glen

KEY STATISTICS

Primary Employment Industry



Retail Trade & Hospitality

Comprises 34% of Jobs in Watkins Glen

Primary Land Use



Residential

Single-family Homes

Unemployment Rate



10.1%

3RD Highest Rate in the County

Poverty Rate



5%

3RD Lowest Rate in the County

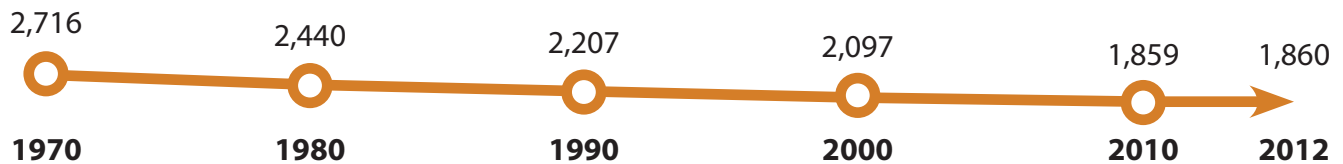
Median Income



\$34,969

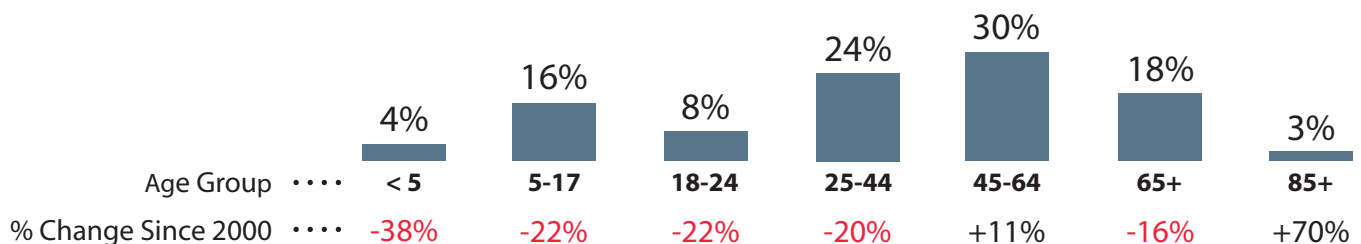
The Lowest Household Income in the County

HISTORIC POPULATION COUNTS



The overall declining population throughout Schuyler County and the Village of Watkins Glen is worrisome, as a stable or growing population helps maintain a strong community. The Village's population is not only important to the local community but also to the Towns of Dix and Reading, and the County as a whole. The vibrancy of the Village is important since it is the County Seat and a prime destination spot for the region. Therefore, the Village should work to stabilize its population and lessen the potential negative impacts to the greater community.

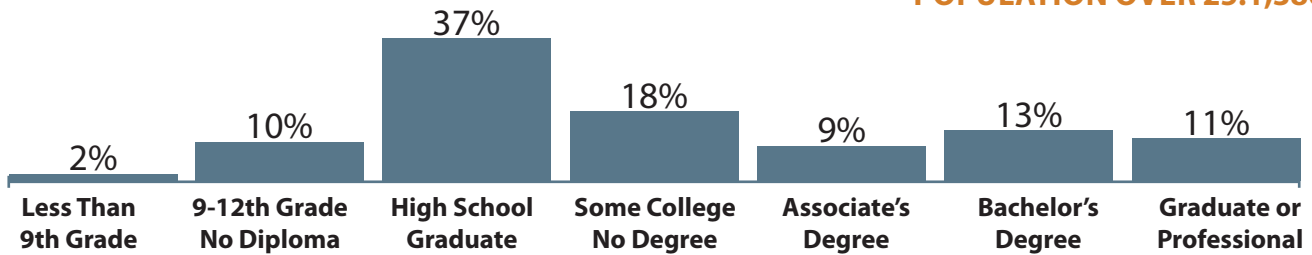
AGE DISTRIBUTION (2010)



The Village of Watkins Glen's age distribution shows population growth in the 45 to 64 and 85 plus age cohorts only, with the largest percentage of its population in the 45 to 64 age range. However, the overall population loss, along with the lack of young professionals and new families, is a concern for the Village, as these groups positively contribute to a community and its tax base. Furthermore, the majority of the Village's residents will become seniors over the next two decades, and will be looking for opportunities to age-in-place. As a result, Watkins Glen needs to focus on policies that serve to attract and retain residents of all ages.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (2013)

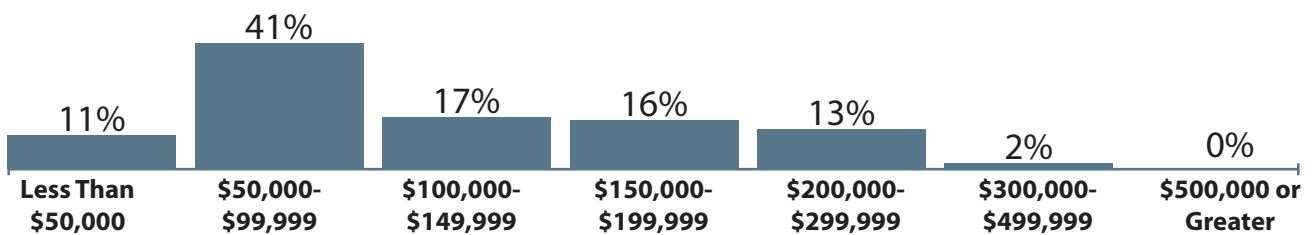
POPULATION OVER 25: 1,380



A recent study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce found that, by 2018, some 63% of all jobs in New York State will require postsecondary training beyond high school. Currently only 51% of Watkins Glen's population would be qualified for these positions. Not only is this data meaningful for guiding Countywide efforts to increase access to higher education, but also for the Village's future economic development efforts.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOME VALUES (2013)

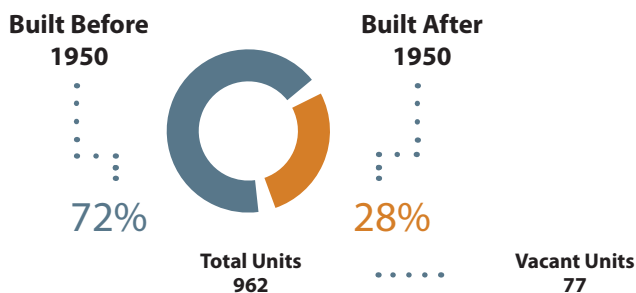
OWNER-OCCUPIED UNIT COUNT: 478



Home values provide a general gauge of the desirability of a community. In addition, maintaining home values is important to communities because of the contribution to its tax base these values have in the form of property taxes. With 52% of homes in Watkins Glen valued at less than \$100,000, the Village needs to focus on policies and efforts that boost existing home values and develop the upper end of the real estate market.

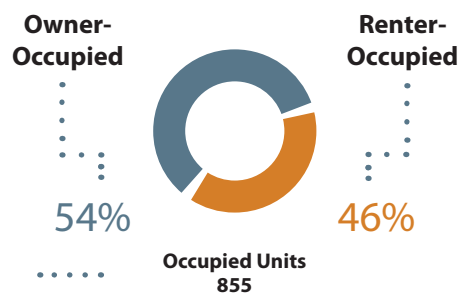
CURRENT HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

AGE OF UNITS



Due to their age, houses built before 1950 typically require more repairs and costly updates. Homes that aren't repaired or well-maintained often result in a lower quality housing stock for the community. With 72% of its units built before 1950, the Village should explore strategies to update its existing housing stock including upgrading energy efficiencies and ensuring that all units are compliant with the Building and Property Maintenance Codes of NYS. Providing education on programs and financing opportunities for upgrades would work towards a better overall housing stock.

OCCUPIED UNITS



High home-ownership rates are often considered an indication of community and neighborhood stability. However, the Village should strive to maintain a balance of ownership options within its housing stock, which will meet a wider variety of its resident population's needs. The County's recent housing study is one tool the Village has to build upon. Currently, Watkins Glen's ownership rate is below the County rate.

LOCATION AFFORDABILITY INDEX



AS A PERCENT OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME		
26%	28%	54%
\$12,446	\$13,403	\$25,849
IDEAL PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL MEDIAN INCOME FOR AFFORDABILITY		
30%	15%	45%

The housing in Watkins Glen is considered to be affordable in relation to the median income. However, the Village also has a high transportation cost with respect to income, making living in the village less affordable overall. This could reflect the need to drive outside the village for employment or other daily needs. However Watkins Glen has the most affordable transportation cost of any municipality in the County (tied with Montour Falls). Locating additional services and places of employment inside the village could reduce the distances needed to travel for some needs, reducing overall transportation costs.

WALKSCORE

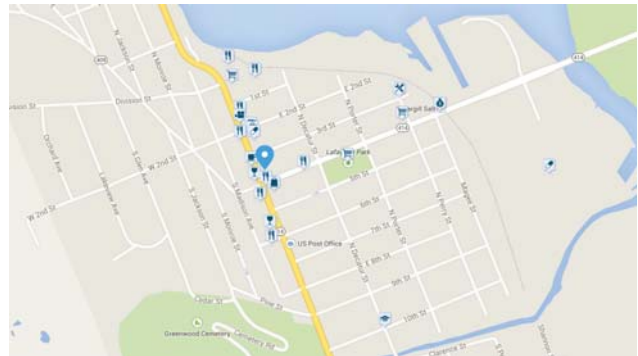


67/100

Downtown

22/100

Village Edge



The Village of Watkins Glen is the most compact, densely populated population center in the county. In the heart of Downtown Watkins, the Walk Score is 67, indicating that many errands such as going to restaurants, groceries, parks, entertainment, schools, and coffee shops can be accomplished on foot. On the outer limits of the village near the Tops Supermarket or Salt Point Road, the Walk Score drops significantly to 42 and 22 respectively. As an established village, Watkins Glen has a significant and unique opportunity to capitalize on the walkability of a small village atmosphere. As walkability becomes more important in real estate purchasing and development decisions, improving the village’s walkability will be influential in attracting new residents and retaining current ones. Supporting walkability could mean adding additional services or businesses to the village, or supporting the development of additional housing opportunities in the village limits instead of the surrounding town. Further, Watkins Glen might focus on safety improvements to existing infrastructure and look to expand the social, cultural aspect of town services in existing infrastructure.

PERSONAL AUTOMOBILE USAGE

23 Minute
Daily Commute



27,992 Miles
Vehicle Miles Traveled, Household



10,405 MTCO2
Annual Auto Emissions, Village



24,772,920 Miles
Vehicle Miles Traveled, Village



Increases in personal automobile usage are associated with community and personal costs in terms of money, air pollution, and traffic congestion. This affects residents in terms of higher cost of living, sub-optimal public health outcomes, and diminished quality of life. The average commute in Watkins Glen is slightly shorter than the county and national average of 25 minutes. Enhancing and preserving the traditional village character of Watkins Glen by increasing the services and employment opportunities located within the village could reduce commute times, reduce overall transportation costs for residents, and reduce the carbon emissions associated with personal auto travel.

SOLAR ENERGY CAPACITY



4 Installations

65.35 KW
Capacity

76,702 KWH
Potential Annual Production

52.9 MTCO2
Annual Carbon Avoided



Photo Credit: Watkins Glen Central School District Website

Both residential and commercial solar energy installations provide Watkins Glen with over 65 KW or over 25% of the current solar capacity of Schuyler County. This technology saves money on residential and commercial electric bills and reduces community carbon emissions by 52.9 MTCO2 each year. The village should consider additional ways that solar energy can be included and promoted in Watkins Glen including incorporation into municipal power upgrades and development projects and resident and business education on state energy programs.

Village Policy Framework

In order to be successful, a Comprehensive Plan must be developed and implemented on multiple levels. It must address the short and long term needs of a community as well as provide varying levels of detail. The intent of the policy framework is to be future-oriented, acting as a guide to achieve the community’s vision. This plan has five key elements:

.....

VISION A general statement that describes the aspiration of the Village, Town or County; it is an end towards which all actions are aimed. The Vision should not dramatically change over time but rather be consistent throughout the planning horizon. Ideally, the Vision contained in this plan should be useful for the 10-year planning horizon.

POLICY Similar to a vision in that it is a general statement of a future condition towards which actions are aimed. However, the scope of a policy is much more narrow. It should support the vision by addressing a particular area or issue facing the community. Policies should not dramatically change over time but rather be consistent throughout the planning horizon. Ideally, the policies contained in this plan should be useful for the 10-year planning horizon.

OBJECTIVE A statement of a measurable activity to be accomplished in pursuit of the policy; it refers to some specific aspiration which is reasonably attainable. Think in terms of actions such as “increase”, “develop”, or “preserve”. It should be noted that the municipality may already be undertaking some of the objectives articulated in this plan and have included them to ensure that they continue to do so over the next decade. The lifespan of an objective is usually 6 to 10 years.

IMPLEMENTATION ITEM A specific proposal to do something that relates directly to accomplishing a strategy; it can take the form of a plan, project, or program. The lifespan of an implementation item can vary from one to 10 years depending on the item.

MEASURE A specific measure that relates directly to accomplishing the objectives; it identifies how, when, and the amount to be done. Think in terms of, “How do we tell if our objectives are working?” Measures should be reviewed every one to two years to determine if the objectives are effective. The measures included in this plan are more general and do not specify a time frame and amount to be accomplished. The Town and Village should work to establish the baseline condition for all the measures in this plan and then determine the level and timing that is desirable. (It should be noted that interns are a good resource available to communities in gathering this type of information.)

.....

Each policy is intended to function as part of this document or to be used as a stand alone work plan that can be taken out, copied, and assigned to a committee to undertake.

Our Village's Vision

It is the vision of the Village to remain the civic, social, and economic center of the broader community. It will be a place known for its...



Photo Credit: Norrie Cornelius

- I. Safe and attractive neighborhoods;
- II. Vital downtown area;
- III. Strong local economy;
- IV. Diverse leisure and cultural assets;
- V. Scenic natural resources; and
- VI. Quality community resources.

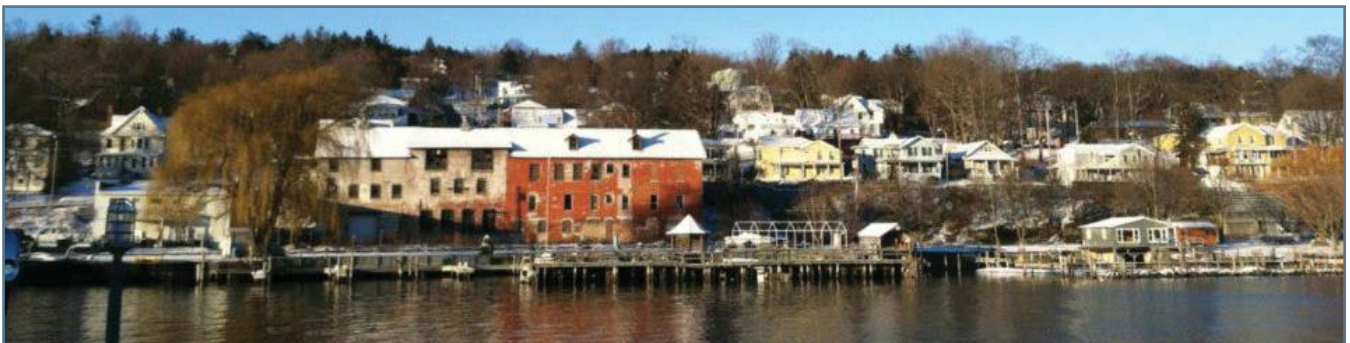


Photo Credit: Norrie Cornelius

... The Village will strive to achieve this vision while maintaining its traditional pedestrian scaled development pattern. The Village also recognizes that the rural setting that surrounds it is part of its character, enhances the quality of life of its residents, and should be preserved.

Neighborhoods

Introduction



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

According to a survey conducted by the National Association of Homebuyers, the following amenities were most influential in choosing to move into a new community: highway access, walking/jogging/bike trails, sidewalks on both sides of the street, a nearby park area, playgrounds, and shops within walking distance. The survey also indicated that buyers were willing to pay more for a home that offered these amenities. In addition, a leading market research firm (Zimmerman Volk & Associates) believes that as many as 50% of homebuyers prefer homes built on smaller lots with traditional neighborhood elements. The four villages within Schuyler County offer a more traditional lifestyle that is consistent with these national trends.

Within Schuyler County, our villages generally have a higher percentage of renter occupied housing units compared to the towns. These rental units add to the diversity of living options available to village residents. As a result, the villages should continue to focus on efforts to ensure that the presence of rental properties does not detract from the overall character of the neighborhoods in which they are located.

Arguably one of the most pressing housing related concerns for the villages will be providing increasing elderly populations with the ability to age-in-place. Across the nation, urban and rural areas are facing new demands from their rapidly aging populations, largely due to the expansive Baby Boomer generation that began turning 65 at the start of 2011. This trend is no different in the villages of Schuyler County, as we are already experiencing pressures to provide services for seniors, which make up on average 23% of our villages' populations. The villages will continue to see these pressures increase over the next two decades, due to the fact that approximately half of each village's current population is 45 years of age or older. Fortunately, the compact development pattern of our villages makes them well suited to accommodate the needs of our senior citizens. The villages should ensure that new housing options and the local transportation network are designed to meet the unique needs of our seniors.

Many of our villages have a larger percentage of older homes compared to the towns. For example, the average percentage of homes built before 1950 within our villages is 69%. By comparison, this percentage for our towns is 37%. These homes require more upkeep, more maintenance, and higher utility bills than new construction, and many of our residents cannot afford the necessary repairs. As a result, many homes deteriorate and become a blight on the neighborhood and the community at large. The villages will need to develop a long-term approach to assist property owners in breaking this cycle and preserve their existing housing stock for future generations.

Characterized by their aesthetically pleasing, pedestrian friendly elements, the traditional development pattern of our villages helps define their charm. These elements help promote walkability in neighborhoods with amenities such as sidewalks, street trees, and proximity to parks or open space. Therefore, new residential development projects should continue to be designed in a way that respects the existing neighborhood framework and promotes an active lifestyle.

Creating and encouraging mixed-use, centralized denser patterns in new developments (i.e. smart growth) will not only help alleviate concerns about expanding public utilities, but will also help to reduce greenhouse gasses by decreasing the distance needed to travel needs and services. This will also promote better public health for residents by providing them with a more active lifestyle and higher quality of life.

Due to the aforementioned housing related concerns facing the villages, the following Neighborhood Policy has been included to help guide decision makers in addressing the villages' current and future housing needs.

Neighborhoods Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Village to **have neighborhoods that are a source of community pride**. The existing neighborhoods within the Village are capable of accommodating a variety of lifestyles while enhancing the daily lives of residents as well as visitors. The preservation of the historic character, architectural quality, and traditional appeal of the existing neighborhoods should continue to be a priority of the community. In addition, new neighborhoods should be developed in a manner that reflects the existing scale and style of traditional village development patterns.



OBJECTIVES

- A. Increase all residential opportunities utilizing existing and new housing stock.
- B. Ensure there are living options that enable residents to age in place.
- C. Encourage future residential development in areas where municipal services are available.
- D. Preserve existing trees and encourage the planting of additional trees where appropriate.
- E. Design new neighborhoods in a pedestrian friendly manner (streets, sidewalks, building elements, trees, etc).
- F. Preserve existing housing values.
- G. Promote the reuse of developed lands to improve economic potential.

MEASURES

1. Percentage of home ownership, vacancy rate, housing mix, and housing density.
2. Change in average home price (adjusted for inflation).
3. Miles of new sidewalks and number of other pedestrian amenities constructed or repaired.
4. Number of street trees planted per year.
5. Proportion of the population that is between the ages of 35 to 54.
6. Number, type, and location of new residential developments
7. Updated location affordability index and walk score from various parts of the village
8. Annual miles driven per capita

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

1. Eliminate gaps in the existing sidewalk system and ensure sidewalks are extended as new housing or neighborhoods are built.
2. Require new developments or improvements to provide convenient and safe connections to neighborhoods and other services.
3. Reduce the development of dead end roads and non-connected transportation networks.
4. Revise zoning to ensure the adequate planting of new street and residential trees in the village.
5. Consider loosening regulations (i.e zoning or land use) where appropriate to allow and encourage schools and places of work to be built in or near neighborhoods where residents and children can travel less distance to their daily needs and work.



Photo Provided By: Watkins Glen Area Chamber of Commerce

Downtown Introduction

The downtowns of our four villages vary in size, as well as the type of goods and services offered to residents and visitors. However, each of them still has the traditional, compact development pattern with a mix of land uses that makes them the heart of our respective villages.



Photo Credit: Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel (Facebook)

Over the past four decades the role of traditional downtown areas has changed dramatically. Up until the 1960's, downtowns were the civic, social, and cultural centers of our communities. As development patterns embraced the automobile, many of the uses that were typically associated with a downtown or central business district began to relocate to outlying areas with convenient highway access and parcels of land large enough to accommodate surface parking lots. Public uses began to follow suit (such as US Post Offices). This resulted in increasing vacancy rates within downtown areas. In order to combat this trend, government organizations such as the Urban Renewal Agency in the 1960's and 1970's began tearing down older, multi-story buildings in order to place new one-story buildings with large amounts of off street parking along Main Street. This had disastrous effects that can still be seen in communities across upstate New York such as Newark and Batavia. As a result, throughout the 1970's and 1980's, most downtowns struggled to attract businesses and activity.

During the 1990's a shift occurred in the global economy. Historically, workers followed jobs and then found a place to live nearby. The new paradigm is to select a place to live based on the lifestyle that it offers and then find a job. A key element in that lifestyle is a thriving downtown area. Communities that focused on downtown revitalization throughout the 1980's suddenly had a competitive advantage over those that did not focus on their downtown and let their Main Street districts deteriorate. This policy area is intended to help the villages create a vibrant downtown area by enhancing the appearance of the district, providing convenient and sustainably developed auto and pedestrian access to the area, and increasing the level of activity within it.

In addition to accommodating many of the goods and services required by our residents, our downtowns play a key role in the tourism economy of the Finger Lakes Region. Visitors gravitate towards our villages to stroll "main street", window shop and appreciate the historic architecture. In order to foster this role, the County has partnered with the villages to develop and implement an economic development strategy for our villages. These efforts have resulted in millions of dollars in grants and private investment coming in to revitalize some of our downtown areas.

The villages should utilize the following Downtown policy as a guide for the ongoing revitalization efforts that are already underway at the local and county level to direct investment into our downtown areas.

Downtown Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Village to **have an attractive and prosperous downtown area** that is the cultural, social, and economic center of the community. The Village recognizes that the vitality of this area is dependent on local population size, the purchasing power of the community, and tourists, as well as the diversity and appeal of merchandise and services available.

OBJECTIVES



- A. Improve the appearance of the Main Street commercial area.
- B. Preserve the traditional development pattern along Main Street.
- C. Ensure adequate parking and public transportation connections are available to support the uses in the downtown area.
- D. Develop a more pedestrian friendly downtown.
- E. Ensure that new commercial uses in the Village complement existing activity downtown.
- F. Develop a pattern of retail and limited services at the street level.
- G. Utilize available upper floor space for additional commercial or residential uses.
- H. Promote and market the downtown area to the County, region, and state.

MEASURES

1. Building vacancy rate (street level and upper floors).
2. Number of facade improvements completed annually.
3. Gross sales tax receipts (adjusted for inflation) from the downtown area.
4. Walk Score



Photo Credit: Famous Brands Inc.

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

1. Aggressively pursue funding to promote downtown economic development and construct needed capital improvements.
2. Invest in more safe and convenient pedestrian connections in the downtown and into adjacent neighborhoods in new developments or improvement projects.

Leisure & Culture

Introduction

Last year, the American Planning Association released an article, entitled “Community Heritage and Culture,” which linked a healthy community with its ability to preserve and develop its culture. In other words, a healthy community both acknowledges and respects its heritage and history, while welcoming newer cultural influences that arise over the years. The research suggests that a strong community culture can be developed with the addition of active community-based organizations and engaging public spaces.

Our villages have a great foundation of cultural resources that serve their local communities as well as the greater Schuylers County region. The existence of well-established churches, schools, civic associations, community social service agencies, and other places where people gather in our villages help bring our community together and highlight the history of the villages themselves. Also, the region’s natural environment provides our communities with a number of parks and open spaces that act not only as a public space for leisure or recreational activities, but also link residents and visitors to our unique heritage.

In order to build upon the existing cultural framework of our villages and strengthen our cultural vitality, focus should be placed on providing residents and visitors alike with a diverse selection of leisure, arts, and recreational opportunities. The arts community is on the rise in our County, and it will be important for the villages to support the development of this emerging cultural asset. Enhanced recreational opportunities within of our local parks and green spaces should also be a priority. By increasing public access to these community resources, our villages can create vibrant spaces, which residents and visitors of all ages or incomes can enjoy. Expanding the local programming within these spaces increases the quality of life for residents, and enhances the overall experience of visitors. Likewise, festivals and events offered by our villages and their local businesses or organizations are an important function of the community that highlights our past and present culture. These types of activities will not only attract more visitors, but also bring residents together, strengthening our sense of community pride.

The villages should utilize the following Leisure and Culture policy as a guide for efforts to enhance the existing recreational and cultural framework within their communities that will increase residents’ quality of life and attract visitors.



Photo Credit: Kristin VanHorn



Photo Credit: Norrie Cornelius

Leisure & Culture Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Village to be **the center of leisure and cultural activities** within the community. The restaurants, churches, community events, and our waterfront are attractions that residents of the Village, Town, and neighboring municipalities enjoy. The Village's parks and green spaces provide recreational opportunities, promote active living and give residents places for quiet reflection. The combination of these assets contributes to a strong sense of community and fellowship within our Village. This fellowship fosters a high level of respect and compassion amongst our friends and neighbors.



Photo Credit: Charlie Haeffner, Odessafile



Photo Credit: Norrie Cornelius

OBJECTIVES

- A. Continue to meet the recreational needs of the Village population regardless of age.
- B. Improve public connections and access to and enjoyment of the waterfront.
- C. Expand the existing system of trails and green spaces.
- D. Promote the events and attractions available within the community to the County, region, and state.
- E. Capitalize on the growing tourism market using the community's history and cultural assets.

MEASURES

1. Public expenditures on recreation.
2. Miles of walking, hiking, and biking trails maintained or added/lost.
3. Bed and restaurant tax revenues.
4. Number of "hits" on the Village website.
5. Attendance at festivals and events.

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

1. Develop a capital improvement plan for parks and recreational facilities.

Natural Resources & Sustainability

Introduction

A community's natural resources consist of its air, soil, and water resources. The presence and quality of a community's natural resources have a direct impact on the quality of life enjoyed by its residents. Within our villages, many of our natural resources have been re-shaped by human hands over the last two centuries. A prime example is the southern shoreline of Seneca Lake within the Village of Watkins Glen. Despite the prior manipulation of our villages' natural resources, the sustainability of our environment is directly tied to the sustainability of our communities.

Founded on the principle that the well-being of a population is dependent upon its region's natural resources and environment, the concept of sustainability is an important consideration for the villages of Schuyler County. Although there is no simple way to define sustainability, sustainable practices are often identified as those that meet current economic, social, and environmental needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet such needs of their own. In other words, sustainability recognizes the finite nature of natural resources, and commits to the use of them in a way that conserves their integrity for the long term.

Village residents take great pride in our high level of environmental integrity. As our villages seek to re-develop and grow, we will need to carefully consider and mitigate potential negative impacts on our natural resources in order to maintain or improve their present character and level of integrity. By emphasizing sustainable practices in new investment opportunities, the villages ensure protection of their natural resources from potential degradation.

The following Natural Resources and Sustainability policy is intended as a guide for the villages' approach to their physical environments and resources. When reviewing new and existing regulations or economic development opportunities, the villages and their decision makers should carefully consider the objectives set forth in this policy. Specific steps for accomplishing these objectives have also been included as implementation items that can be realized through the efforts of various departments, committees, and stakeholders within each village.



Photo Credit: Schuyler County Planning Department, File Photo



Photo Credit: Norrie Cornelius

Natural Resources & Sustainability Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Village to be a **community that preserves and sustains the quality of its natural resources** through the combined efforts of its residents, businesses and government. Sound development practices and appropriate regulations and community stewardship should be employed to reduce or eliminate the degradation of these resources. In particular, special attention should be given to protect the Village's waterways, watersheds, habitats and local ecology, due to their environmental, aesthetic and recreational value, and to reduce risks from flooding and other natural hazards.



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

OBJECTIVES

- A. Pursue green technologies, energy conservation techniques, and renewable energy policies to minimize the community's environmental footprint.
- B. Expand the reduction, reuse and recycling of appropriate materials.
- C. Ensure that future development activities protect and sustain our environment in a manner that fosters our Village's traditional character.
- D. Safeguard residents and property from the hazards associated with flooding.
- E. Identify and remediate contaminated sites to reduce the negative effects of contamination and to improve the ability to redevelop such lands.
- F. Promote stormwater management practices that manage runoff near its source and prevent erosion.

MEASURES

1. Cubic yards or tonnage of recycled material collected.
2. Creek/Lake water testing results.
3. Trends of any changes of acres of preserved open space, wetlands, floodplains, riparian buffers, and woodlands.
4. Quality of surface or ground water.
5. Access to nature and natural recreational opportunities.



Photo Credit: Schuyler County Planning Department, File Photo

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

1. Ensure that local officials are well educated on the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act and the USEPA MS-4 Standards and how other communities have applied them to development proposals within their community.
2. Implement a village-wide cleanup day.
3. Provide training to local officials and board members.
4. Review current law to ensure protection of the surrounding natural resources including steep slopes, forested areas, and scenic views, to reduce the negative impact from new developments.

Economic Opportunities

Introduction

According to “A Primer on Economic Development Strategies” published by the Washington State Department of Community Trade and Economic Development, “active citizens can directly shape the local economy, and the community will benefit in numerous ways”:

- ◇ **Increased Tax Base:** Additional revenue to support, maintain, and improve local services such as roads, parks, libraries, and emergency medical services.
- ◇ **Job Development:** To provide better wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement.
- ◇ **Business Retention:** Businesses that feel appreciated by the community and, in turn, feel as if they are contributing to the economy will stay in town.
- ◇ **Economic Diversification:** Helps expand the economy and reduces a community’s vulnerability to a single type of business.
- ◇ **Self-Sufficiency:** Public services would be less dependent on County, State, and Federal aid that may change with each election.
- ◇ **Quality of Life:** More local tax dollars and jobs raise the economic tide for the community, which generally increases the overall standard of living of the residents.
- ◇ **Recognition of Local Products:** Oftentimes, successful economic development will occur when locally produced goods are consumed to a greater degree in the local market.

Membership on local economic development boards or committees—indeed, their very existence—is testimony to the belief that people can and do make a difference when they actively participate in shaping local economies.”

For smaller communities in particular, achieving economic growth and development can be difficult. They often do not have the human or financial resources necessary to effectively implement an economic development strategy. The villages of Schuyler County will need to use our County’s existing agricultural and tourism assets as leverage for potential commercial development that will positively contribute to the local tax base and employ local residents. Over the next decade, the villages will need to continue to partner with county, regional and state agencies to pursue various economic opportunities that may be too large to attract for a single municipality.

The region’s thriving tourism industry continues to be a strong economic driver for the County, towns and villages. Visitors come to our villages to indulge in the small-town atmosphere while enjoying the quality goods and services we offer. The visitor experience can be further enhanced with efforts to retain and attract local, niche businesses to the commercial cores of our villages. Residents will also benefit from the vitality of these activity centers as new jobs are created and a wider variety of goods and services are offered. It is in these commercial cores that our villages have an opportunity to create a complete visitor experience.

The villages should utilize the following Economic Opportunities policy as a guide for efforts to enhance their local communities for both residents and visitors alike.

Economic Opportunities Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Village to be a **community that attracts tourists and businesses** as well as a place where its residents enjoy rewarding employment opportunities. The attraction and retention of businesses in the Village depends upon many elements: a skilled work force; a high quality school system; and adequate infrastructure. Meanwhile, the attraction of tourists depends on the quality of our retail and services operations; our public amenities; and our community attitude. The Village will work closely with local, regional and state organizations to ensure we continue to be a forward looking community, one which is attuned to the future of tourism, technology, and communications.



Photo Credit: Nelson Development Group



Photo Credit: Nelson Development Group

OBJECTIVES

- A. Increase the number of local jobs available.
- B. Ensure that there is adequate infrastructure in place to accommodate new and existing commercial and industrial operations.
- C. Promote local assets and events to increase tourism.
- D. Place local business activity and “niche” retail within the downtown area.
- E. Develop an outreach campaign to identify and solicit new businesses that are consistent with our community objectives.
- F. Ensure that transportation infrastructure is resilient to flood damage.

MEASURES

1. Percentage of occupied commercial or industrial space.
2. Per Capita Income or Median Family Income.
3. Number of employers in the Village.
4. Poverty Rate and Unemployment Rate.
5. Location Affordability Index Rating.

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

1. Continue the positive working relationship with the Schuylar County Partnership for Economic Development (SCOPEd) to market and attract visitors to the Village.
2. Support policies or developments that connect neighborhoods and workplaces.
3. Support policies or developments that protect and enhance local natural resources.

Community Resources

Introduction

For the purposes of this plan, a community resource is broadly defined as any program, service, or infrastructure that positively contributes to a village's quality of life. The importance of these resources to our villages cannot be overstated. Community resources provide our residents and businesses with the infrastructure and services that are necessary for them to thrive. The following table identifies some of the most common community resources available within our villages.



Photo Credit: Schuyler County Planning Department File Photo

Emergency Services	Educational System	Faith Community	Gas & Electric Service
Highway Operation & Maintenance	Law Enforcement	Library	Local History
Open Space	Parks & Recreation	Public and Pedestrian Transportation	Water & Sewer Service

In New York State, local governments are typically responsible for only a portion of these activities. Other community resource needs may be fulfilled via partnerships with neighboring municipalities and any number of quasi-governmental agencies, not-for-profit groups, or private entities that serve to provide the remaining programs or services. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the entire village community to ensure that these resources are available and are successfully meeting the needs of local residents.

In general, the villages should focus on two distinct efforts. The first includes an ongoing monitoring effort to ensure that the level of service provided by its community resources is adequate. The second includes an active implementation program to address any program or project related deficits that are identified. Achieving the goals of the implementation program will require involvement of other groups and outside funding sources. As a result, the villages will need to engage in high levels of communication and coordination with the residents, community groups, public and private agencies, stakeholders, and other municipalities.



Photo Credit: Richard Owlett

The following policy has been included to serve as a guide for the realization of the villages' community resource objectives, including the desire for an enhanced quality of life.

Community Resources Policy Statement

It is the policy of the Village to have **community resources (public services, civic organizations, and business groups) that meet the needs of residents and support local businesses.** The Village enjoys the health and safety benefits provided by local law enforcement and emergency service providers, as well as its water, sewer, and transportation system. The welfare of its residents is attended to by the school system, park system, public library, post office, historical society, and the faith community. The local economy is enhanced by the efforts of local merchant and business associations. The collective efforts of these groups and services are an invaluable asset to the community, and it is critical that the current level of service they provide be maintained or increased in the future at a reasonable cost.



Photo Credit: Schuyler County Planning Department

OBJECTIVES

- A.** Provide services or access to the services necessary to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of residents.
- B.** Ensure that the provision of services does not negatively impact the historic and visual resources of the Village.
- C.** Locate community (Town, Village, educational, etc.) facilities within or adjacent to the Village.
- D.** Improve biking, walking, transit facilities, and multi-modal facility connections to foster the mobility of families without access to an automobile and to promote a healthy lifestyle.
- E.** Ensure the transportation system meets the needs of persons with disabilities and senior citizens.
- F.** Create opportunities for increased public involvement in building a better community.

MEASURES

1. Number of fire calls per year.
2. Crime rate.
3. Miles of road maintained each year.
4. Number of volunteers.
5. Number of biking, walking, and transit facilities built and maintained each year.
6. New and existing community facilities built in the Village each year.

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS

1. The Village should apply for state grants and funding sources to address waste water issues.
2. Invest in transportation facilities that increase village connectivity within the village, as well as to other villages, hamlets, or activities.

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A photograph of a stone arch bridge spanning a waterfall. The bridge is constructed from dark, layered stone blocks. The waterfall flows over several tiers of stone, creating white water. The surrounding area is a forest with fallen leaves on the ground and some green plants. The scene is captured from a low angle, looking up at the bridge.

CONCLUSION

In 1998 the County Legislature initiated the process to create a new Comprehensive Plan for Schuyler County. The County's Plan was completed in 2004 and has served as a decision making tool for the past decade. In 2011, the County began the process to update its Comprehensive Plan. At that time, five different local municipalities (Catherine, Hector, Orange, Burdett, and Watkins Glen) were also engaged in the development of their own Comprehensive Planning documents. Each of these local planning efforts included similar outreach and input, but was on a different schedule, resulting in an unnecessary duplication of effort and potential community fatigue. It became clear that a collaborative approach between the County, the towns, and the villages would be most efficient. As a result, the County, with the help of their consultant and the Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), endeavored not only to update the existing Countywide Plan, but also to draft preliminary Town and Village Comprehensive Plan elements based on local data and input gathered as part of the Countywide Comprehensive Plan process.

Countywide Comprehensive Plan

When the County began the update of the 2004 County Comprehensive Plan in 2011, the Plan was already a number of years past its intended review and revision date. Although the existing Comprehensive Plan was a thorough and informative document with sound recommendations, it was not a very user friendly document. In addition to desiring a revision of the information contained in the 2004 Plan, the County wanted to create a well-organized, easy to use document. As a result, the 2014 Countywide Comprehensive Plan (CWCP) was updated to not only provide a long-range vision for the County, but also a means for achieving said vision. By establishing priority programs or projects and guidance efforts to complete them, the 2014 CWCP fosters community stability and growth beyond the scope of one task. The CWCP also supports many important community development tools, such as capital improvement planning to assist with budgeting, grant opportunities, as well potential cultural and economic investments.

Any community that seeks to thrive long into the future should articulate their overall vision and objectives within a Comprehensive Plan to help ensure that future decisions are consistent with the objectives outlined in the Plan. The CWCP is not intended to foreclose future decision-making, but rather serve as a guidance document for both current and future County employees, elected officials, appointed committees, and other community leaders as they continue to shape our County over the next decade.

Our Countywide Comprehensive Plan was developed with the help of County officials and staff, as well as a number of volunteer members who were selected to represent the diverse opinions, desires, needs, and goals of the various towns and villages located within Schuyler County. The County also solicited input from the general public throughout the Comprehensive Planning process, to ensure representation from the County community as a whole. Although the Plan may not specifically address the concerns or desires of every resident or stakeholder, the document attempts to understand and tie together the varying opinions of the community in a unified vision.

Our Comprehensive Plan is also a document that reflects on the history of Schuyler County, and its strong desire to maintain and enhance our rural character and culture while fostering prosperity and growth across the County. The intent of the Comprehensive Plan is not to simply preserve our past or prescribe change for change's sake, but to enrich the fabric and culture of the County that continues to be at the core of our community today. As a result, the Plan utilizes both the historical and existing context of our County in an attempt to accommodate for both current and future populations.

Because of the future-oriented nature of the CWCP, it should be acknowledged as a “living document” that requires continual updates to ensure that it accurately addresses the changing environment of the County. As markets vary and continue to develop, the Plan should be revisited and revised as necessary to reflect the ever-evolving opinions, desires, and needs of our community.

Implementation of the CWCP is designed to occur at many levels. While the County will endeavor to undertake some of the action items as part of its governmental practice, the cooperation of the private sector, towns and villages, and school districts will be necessary to achieve many of our common policies. Though all of the objectives contained within the Plan are considered to be important to the County, they cannot be accomplished simultaneously. Rather, the implementation of these policies will be staged over a period of years, dependent upon their respective time and monetary requirements.

With the formal adoption of the CWCP, it is our hope that our community will collectively take the next step towards embracing and implementing this Plan for the betterment of all Schuyler County residents and stakeholders for years to come.

Preliminary Town and Village Comprehensive Plan Elements

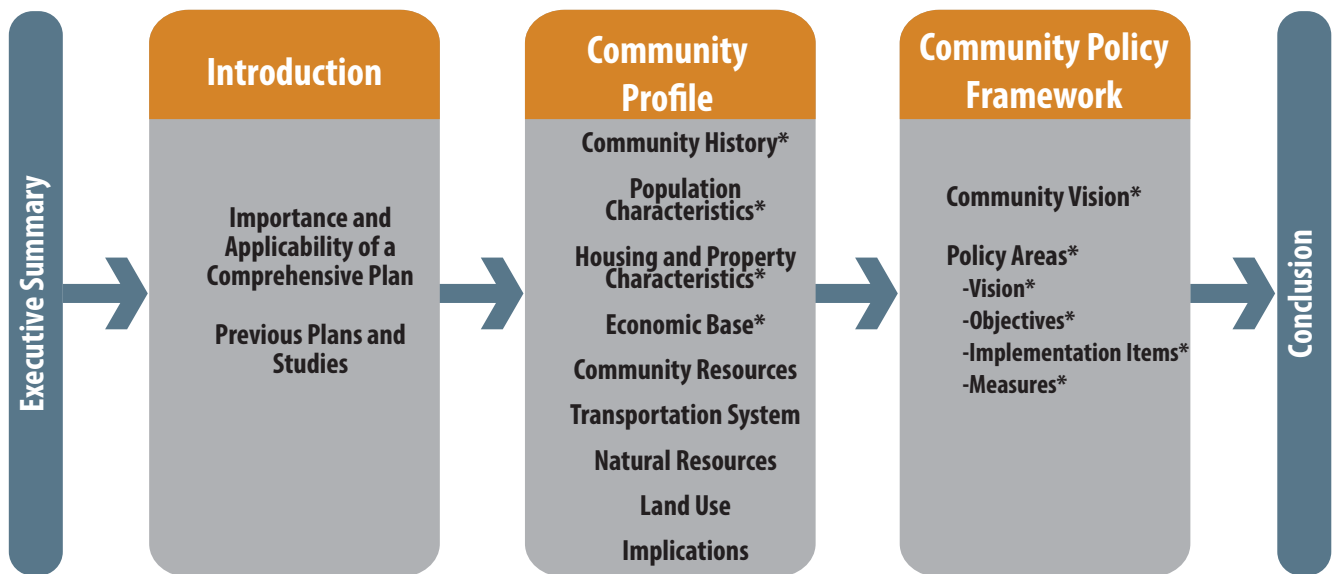
“Among the most important powers and duties granted by the legislature to a [town/village] government is the authority and responsibility to undertake [town/village] comprehensive planning and to regulate land use for the purpose of protecting the public health, safety and general welfare of its citizens.”
 – NYS Town Law, Section 272-a (1)(b); NYS Village Law, Section 7-722(1)(b)

In the early stages of the Countywide Comprehensive Planning process, it became clear that the towns and villages of Schuyler County were facing a number of similar concerns and challenges. Although the CWCP touches on some of these issues at the County level, the County Legislature cannot formally adopt the town and village sections of this document on behalf of the local municipalities. Therefore, it is up to each town and village to complete their own Comprehensive Planning efforts and address the challenges facing their community within their own Plan.

As a result, the Schuyler County Planning Department has included basic town and village information within its CWCP to serve as a potential foundation for each local municipality and assist in local planning efforts. The intent of the town and village sections is to provide guidance for the local municipalities looking to create or update their own Comprehensive Plan documents. Each town or village can utilize as much or as little of the CWCP draft as they choose, as editing of the content to fit their own community’s needs is recommended and encouraged.

Comprehensive Plans typically include some or all of the following sections, depending on their level of detail. It will be up to each town or village to determine which chapters to address and how much detail is desired.

Typical Comprehensive Plan Sections



Comprehensive Plans typically include some or all of the following sections, depending on their level of detail. It will be up to each town or village to determine which chapters to address and how much detail is desired. The sections starred (*) indicate those that have been included in the Countywide Comprehensive Plan in an effort to provide each community with an equal starting point. The community profiles include a brief history of the town or village, key issues, demographics, economic indicators, and housing statistics.

The community profiles within the CWCP include a brief history of the town or village, key issues, demographics, economic indicators, and housing statistics. A draft town or village policy framework has also been provided following the community profiles. The CWCP draft includes six preliminary policy areas for consideration by the towns and villages, based on the most common issues and concerns heard as part of the public input session for the Countywide Plan.

The suggested Town policy areas are as follows:

1. Agriculture & Farmland
2. Residential Living
3. Natural Resources & Sustainability
4. Economic Opportunities
5. Hamlet Revitalization
6. Community Resources

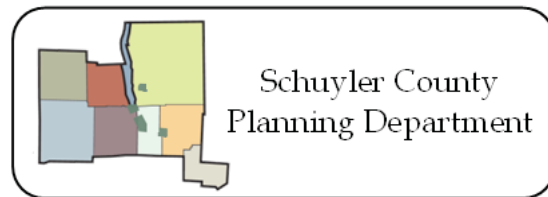
The policy areas drafted for the villages are very similar to that of the towns, but focus on their unique development patterns and character. The suggested Village policy areas are as follows:

1. Neighborhoods
2. Downtown
3. Leisure and Culture
4. Natural Resources & Sustainability
5. Economic Opportunities
6. Community Resources

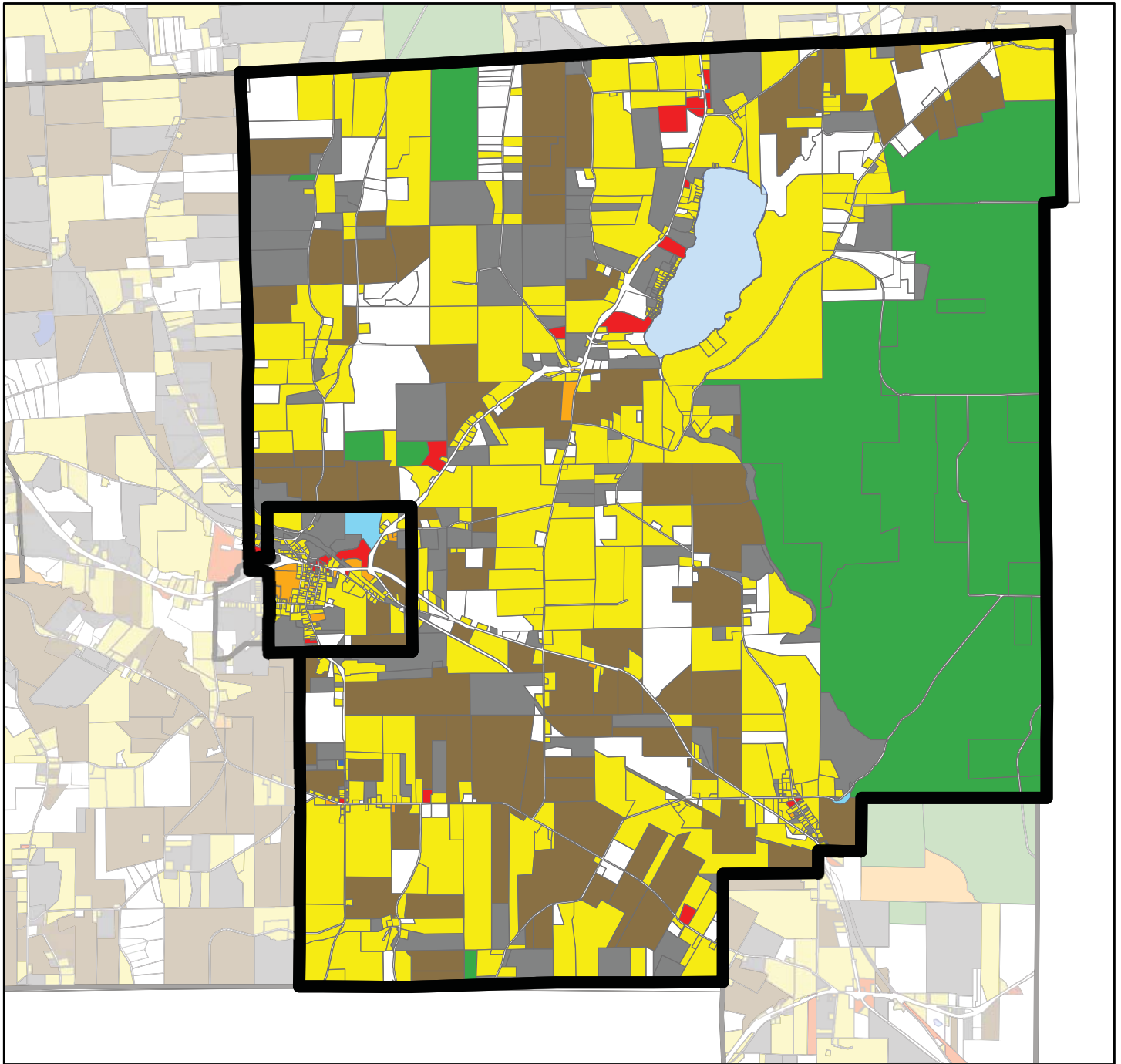
NYS Town and Village Law recognizes that the “great diversity of resources and conditions that exist within and among the [towns and/or villages] of the state compels the consideration of such diversity in the development of each [town and/or village] comprehensive plan.” It is for this reason that the County recommends each community appoint their own steering committee with diverse local representation to oversee the drafting of their Comprehensive Plans. It will also be up to the community and/or its committee to determine the level of engagement they will seek from the public during the development of their respective plans.

The Schuylar County Planning Department is committed to being a resource for each local municipality throughout this process. Towns and villages may seek assistance with data collection and analysis, public outreach efforts, plan content and layout, as well as guidance for the formal review and adoption process. It is important to note that any community looking to adopt a Comprehensive Plan is required by NYS Town and Village law to hold a formal public hearing, satisfy State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) requirements, and keep a copy of the Plan in their local municipal office accessible by the public. Additionally, NYS General Municipal Code 239-m requires every town or village to refer their Comprehensive Plan to the County Planning Board or Agency for review and recommendation prior to adoption.

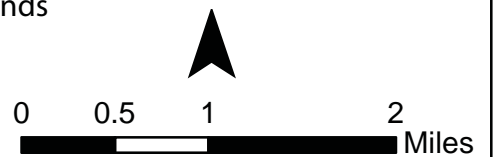
It is the hope of the County Planning Department and the individuals that assisted in the development of the CWCP that each town and village within Schuylar County will give consideration to creating or updating their local Comprehensive Plan, as its adoption supports long-term community stability and economic growth. As previously stated, any community that seeks to thrive long into the future should articulate their overall vision and objectives within a Comprehensive Plan in an effort to ensure that future decisions are consistent with the objectives outlined in the Plan. The intent of a town or village Comprehensive Plan is not to foreclose future decision-making by local officials, but rather serve as a guidance document for both current and future elected officials, appointed committees, and other community leaders as they continue to shape the town or village over the next decade.

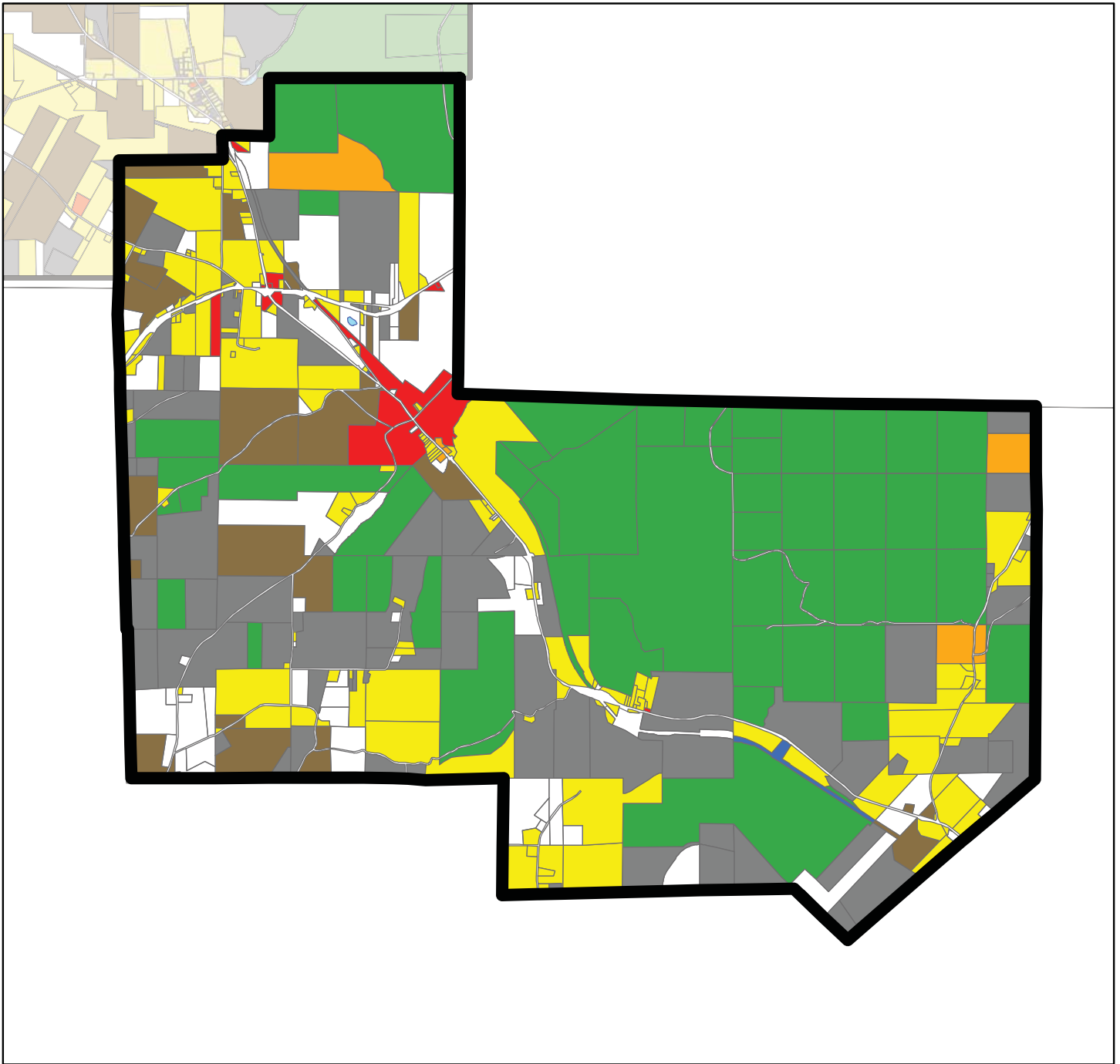


APPENDIX A

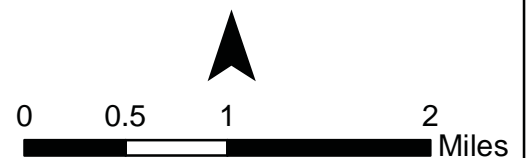
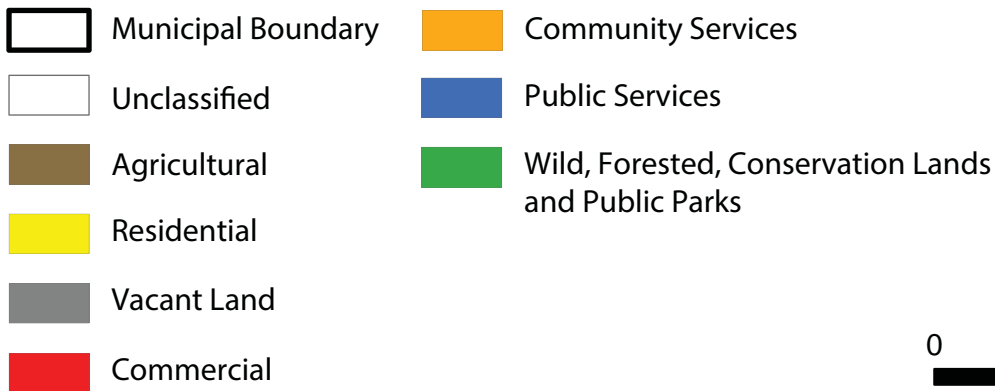


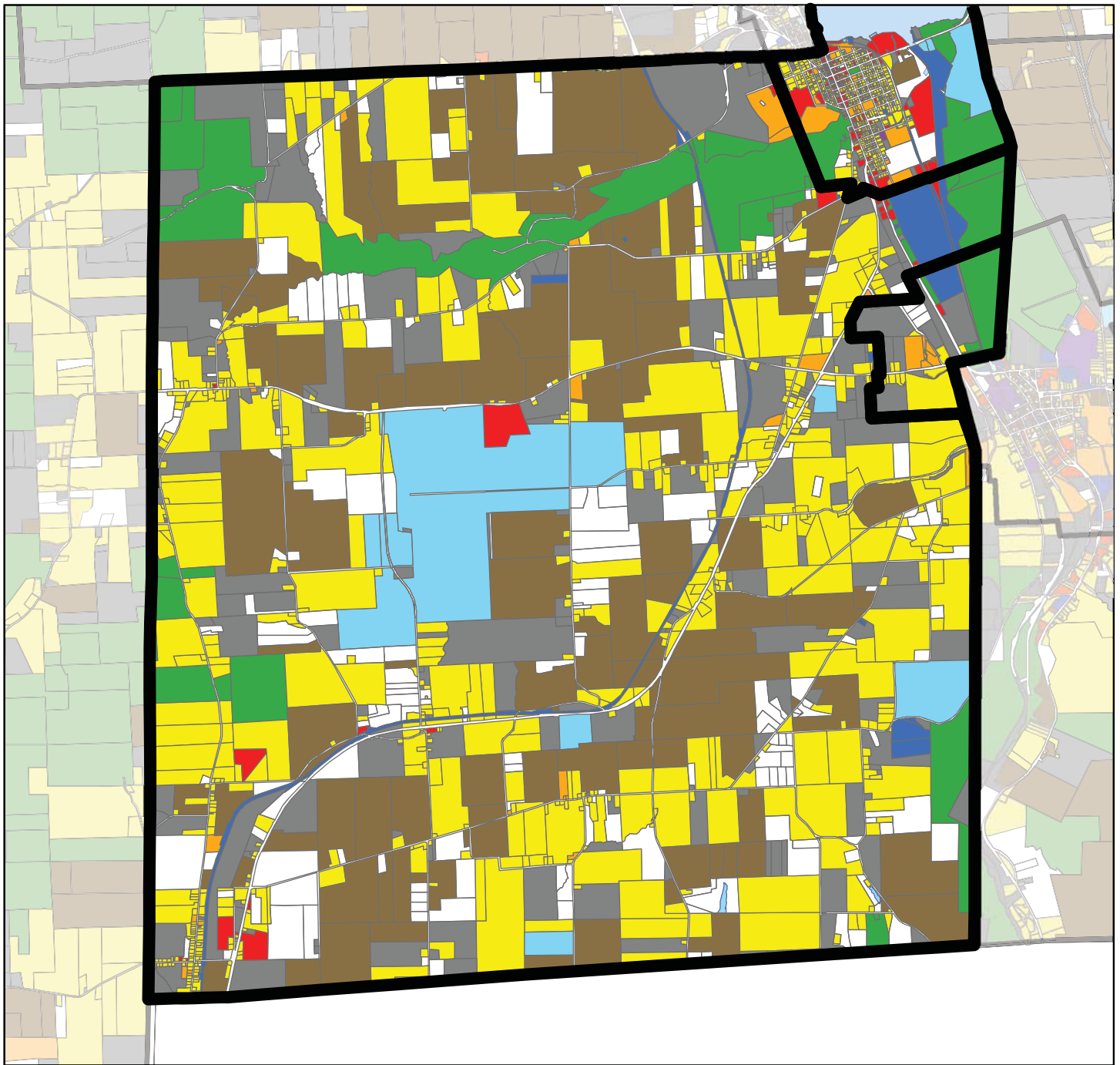
Town of Catharine - Existing Land Development Pattern (2011)



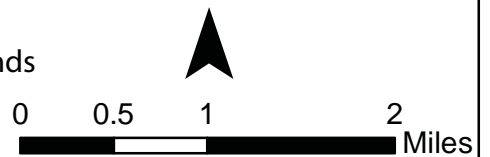


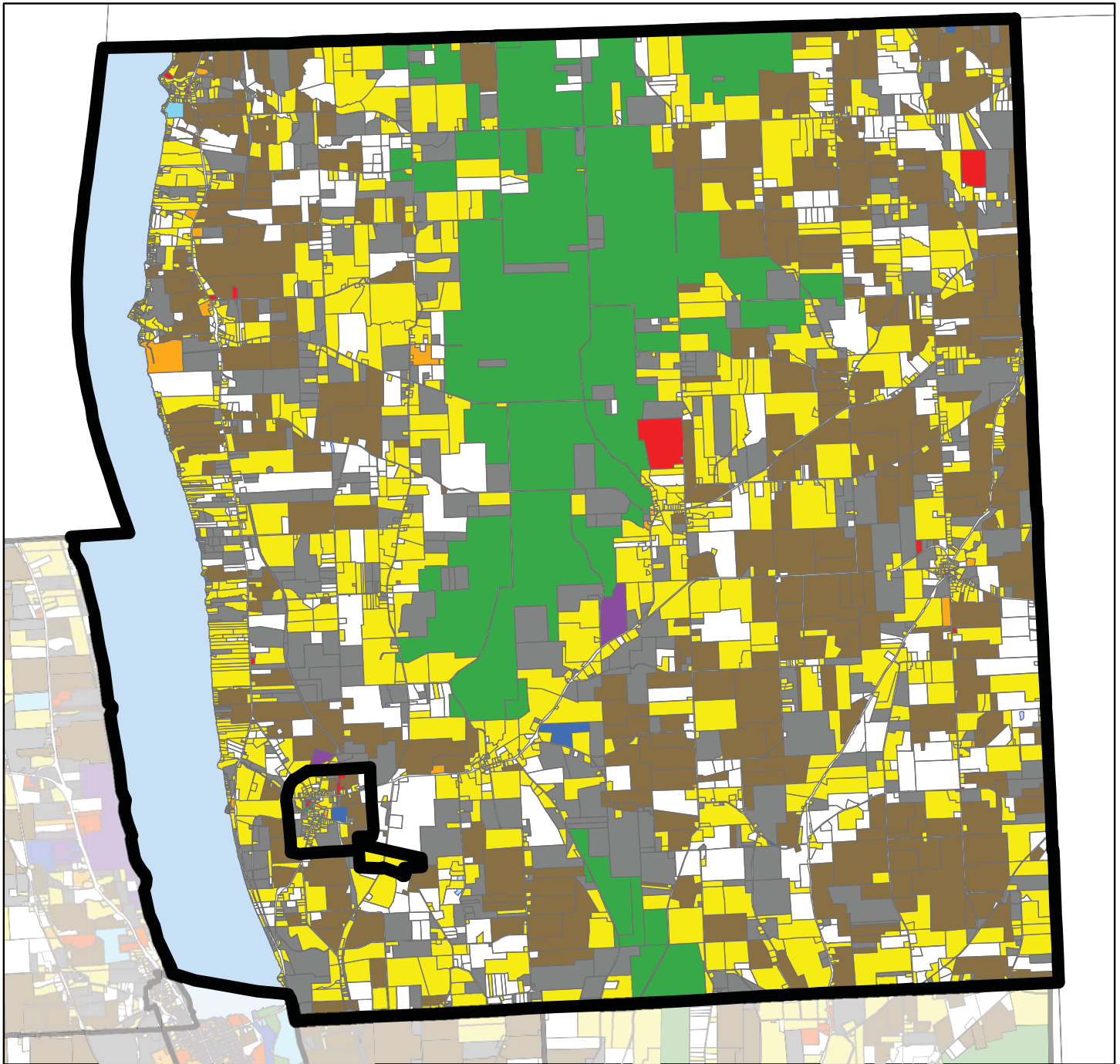
Town of Cayuta - Existing Land Development Pattern (2011)



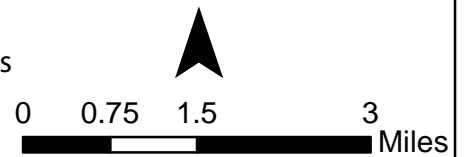


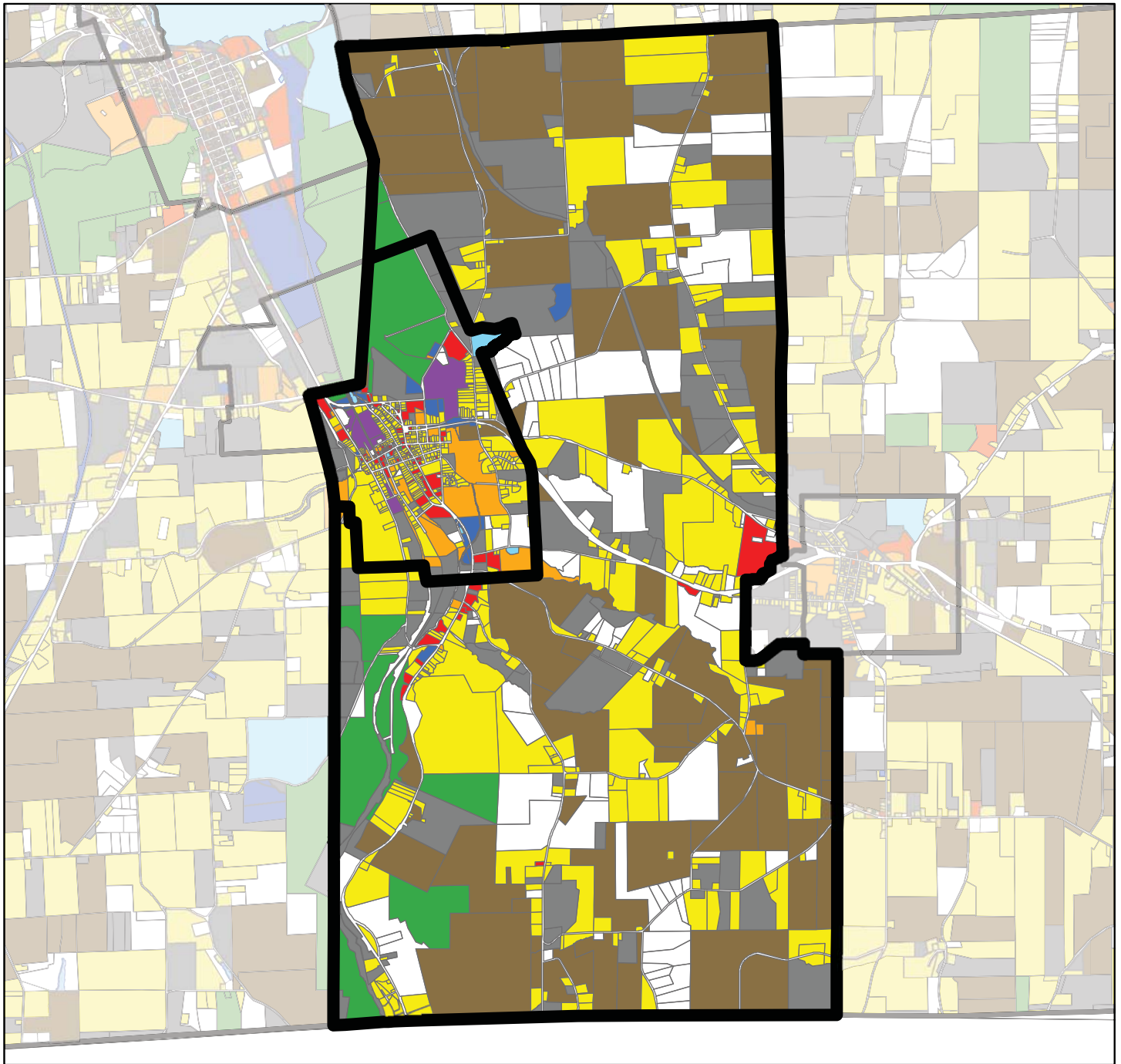
Town of Dix - Existing Land Development Pattern (2011)



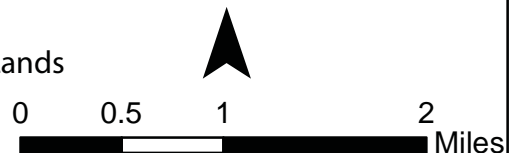


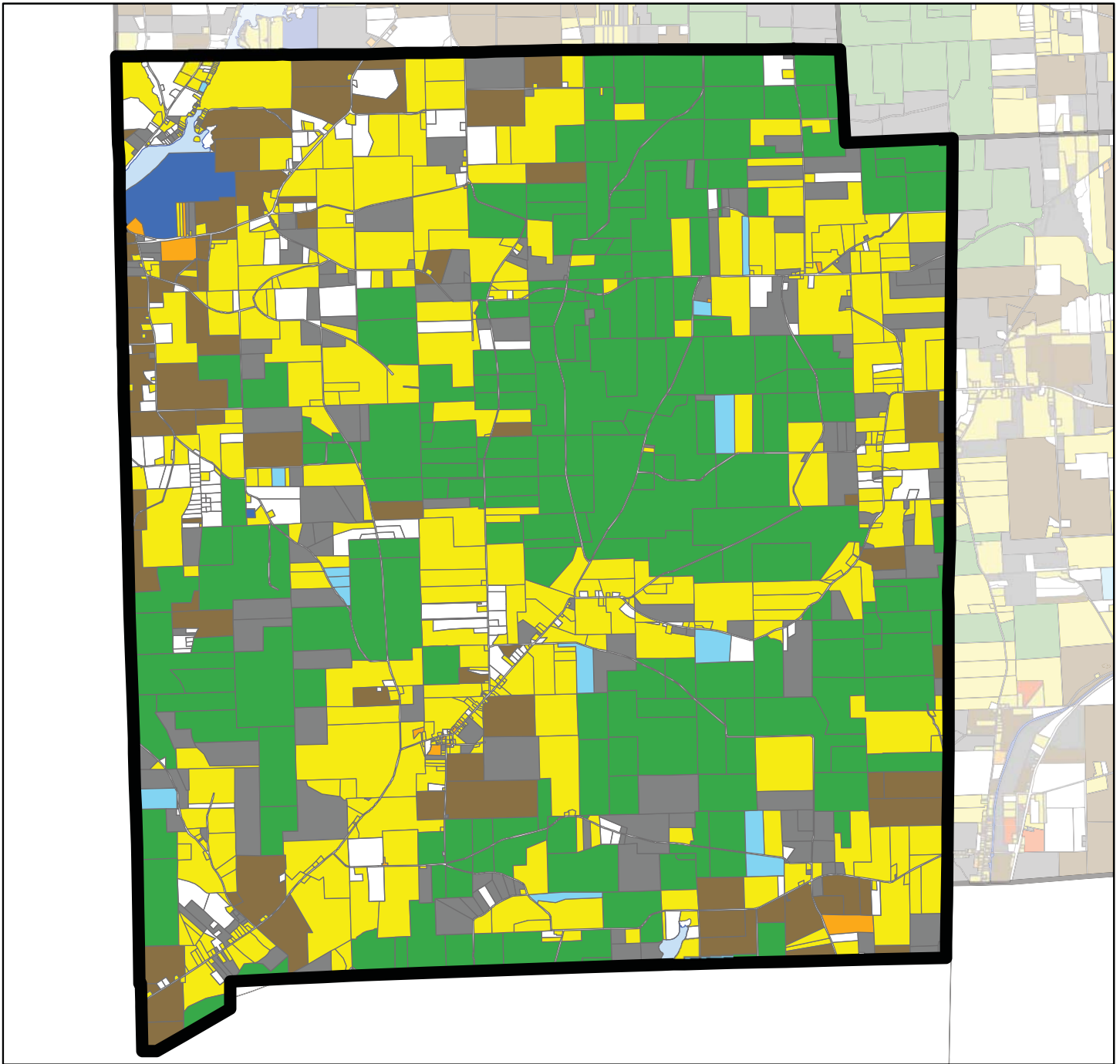
Town of Hector - Existing Land Development Pattern (2011)





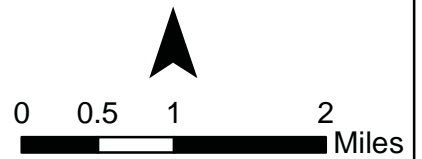
Town of Montour - Existing Land Development Pattern (2011)

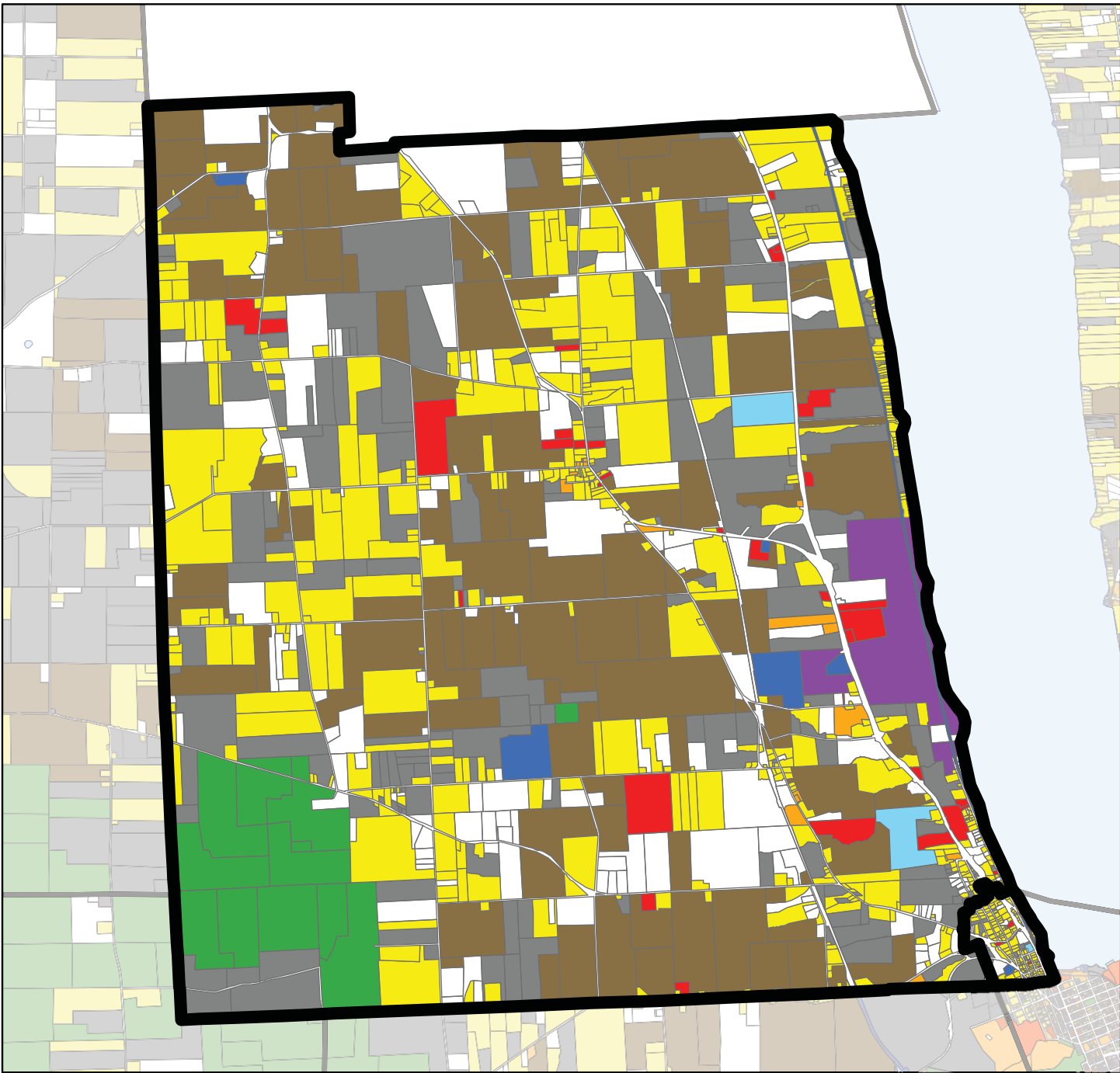




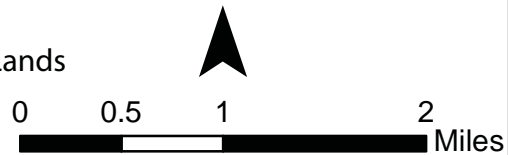
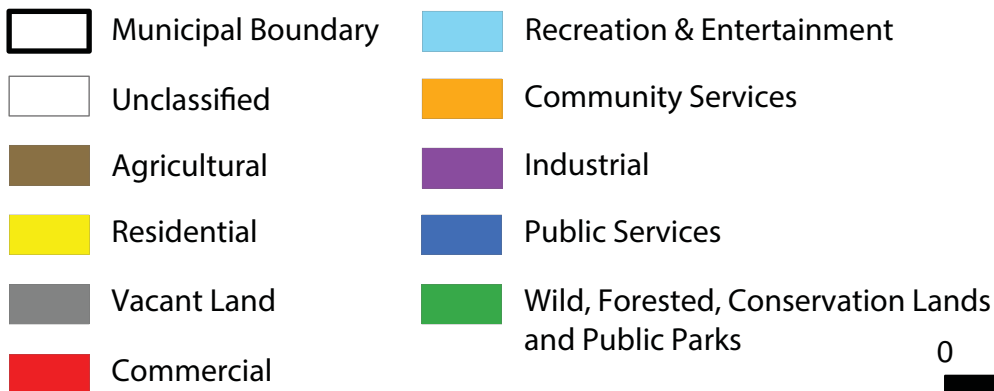
Town of Orange - Existing Land Development Pattern (2011)

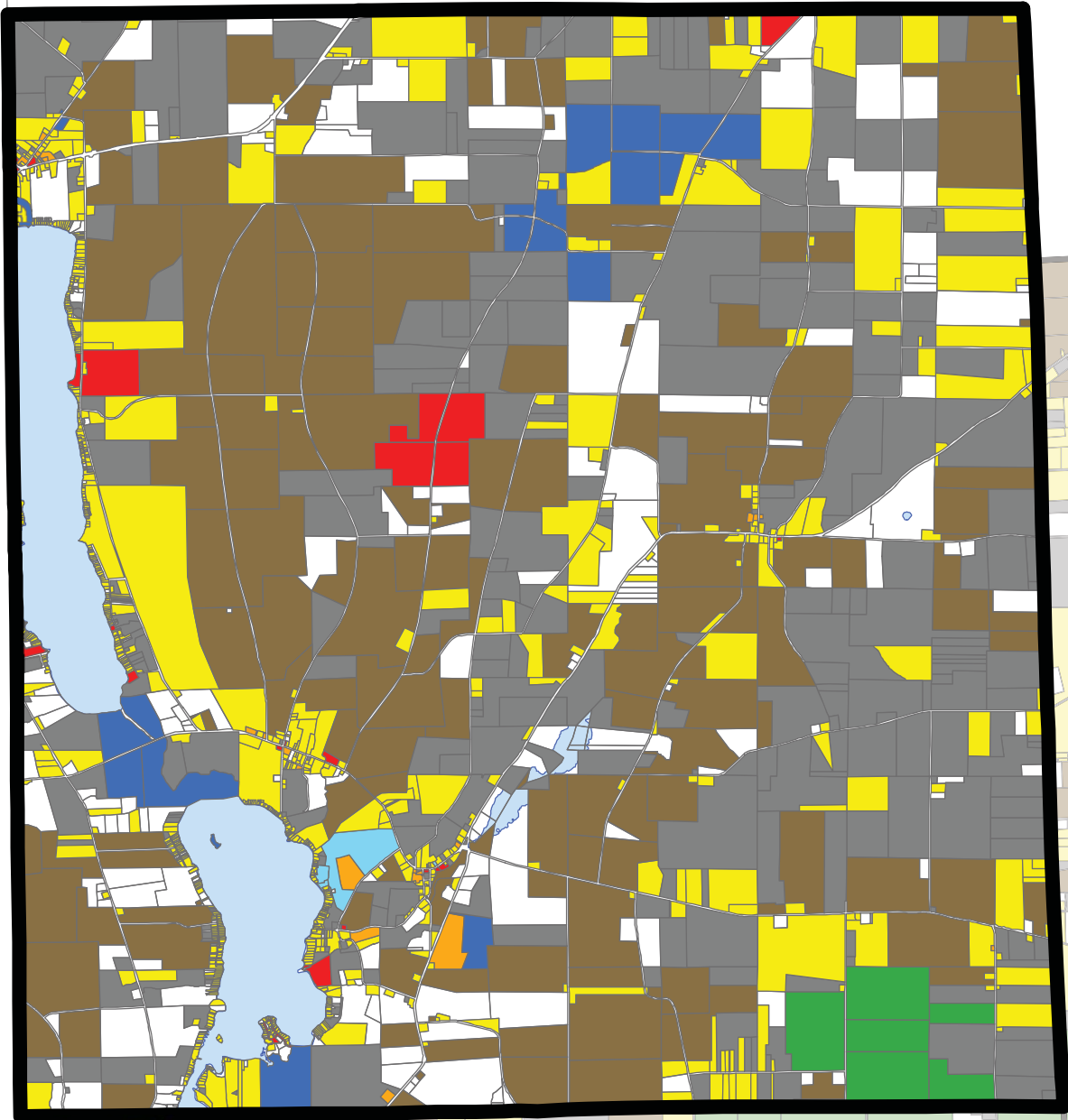
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|--|---|
|  Municipal Boundary |  Recreation & Entertainment |
|  Unclassified |  Community Services |
|  Agricultural |  Public Services |
|  Residential |  Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands and Public Parks |
|  Vacant Land | |



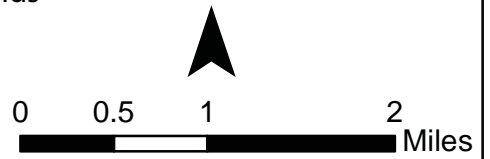


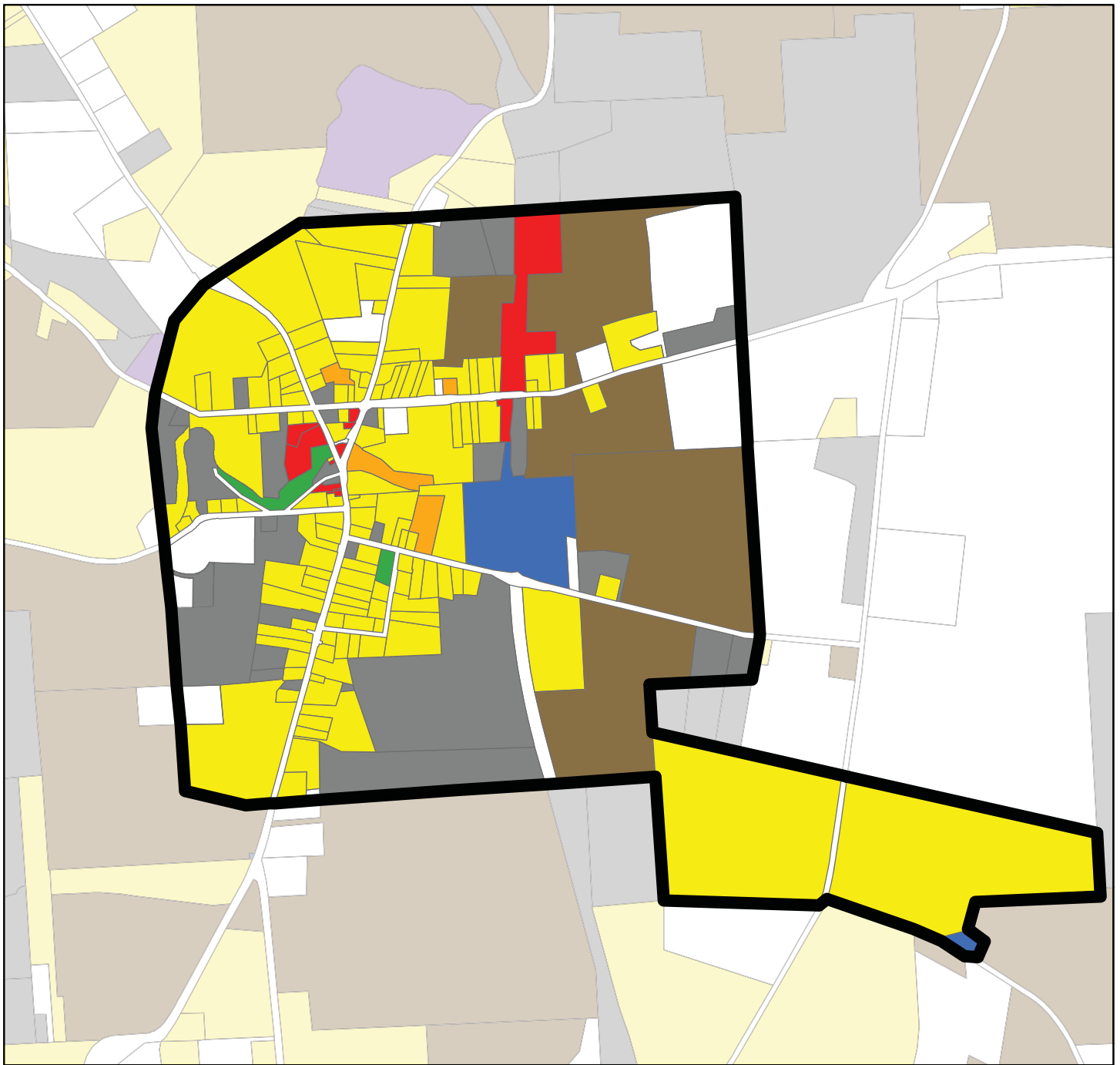
Town of Reading - Existing Land Development Pattern (2011)





Town of Tyrone - Existing Land Development Pattern (2011)

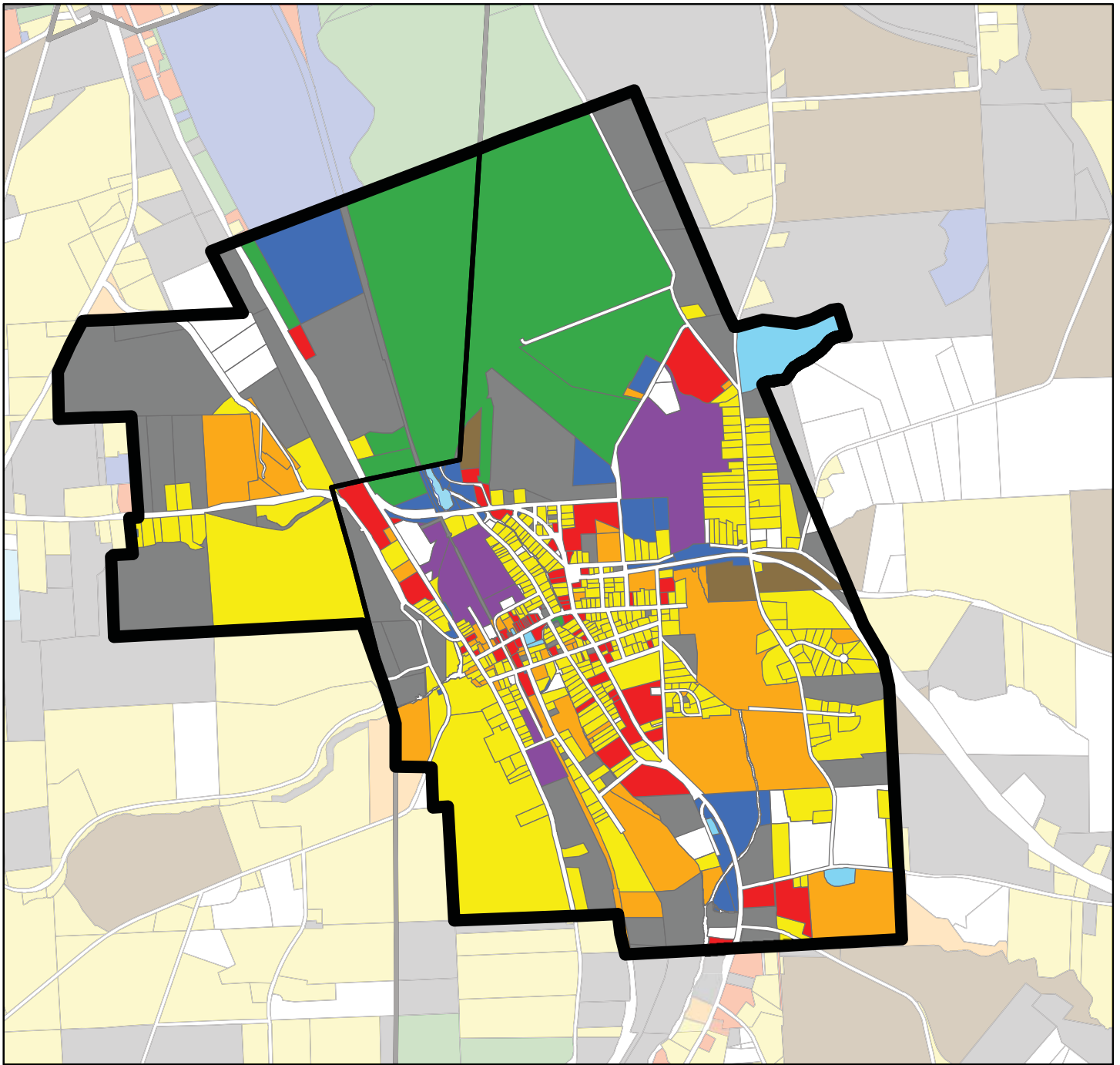





Village of Burdett - Existing Land Development Pattern (2011)

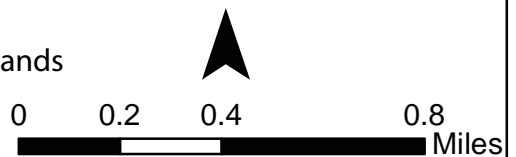
- | | | | |
|---|--------------------|---|---|
|  | Municipal Boundary |  | Commercial |
|  | Unclassified |  | Community Services |
|  | Agricultural |  | Public Services |
|  | Residential |  | Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands and Public Parks |
|  | Vacant Land | | |

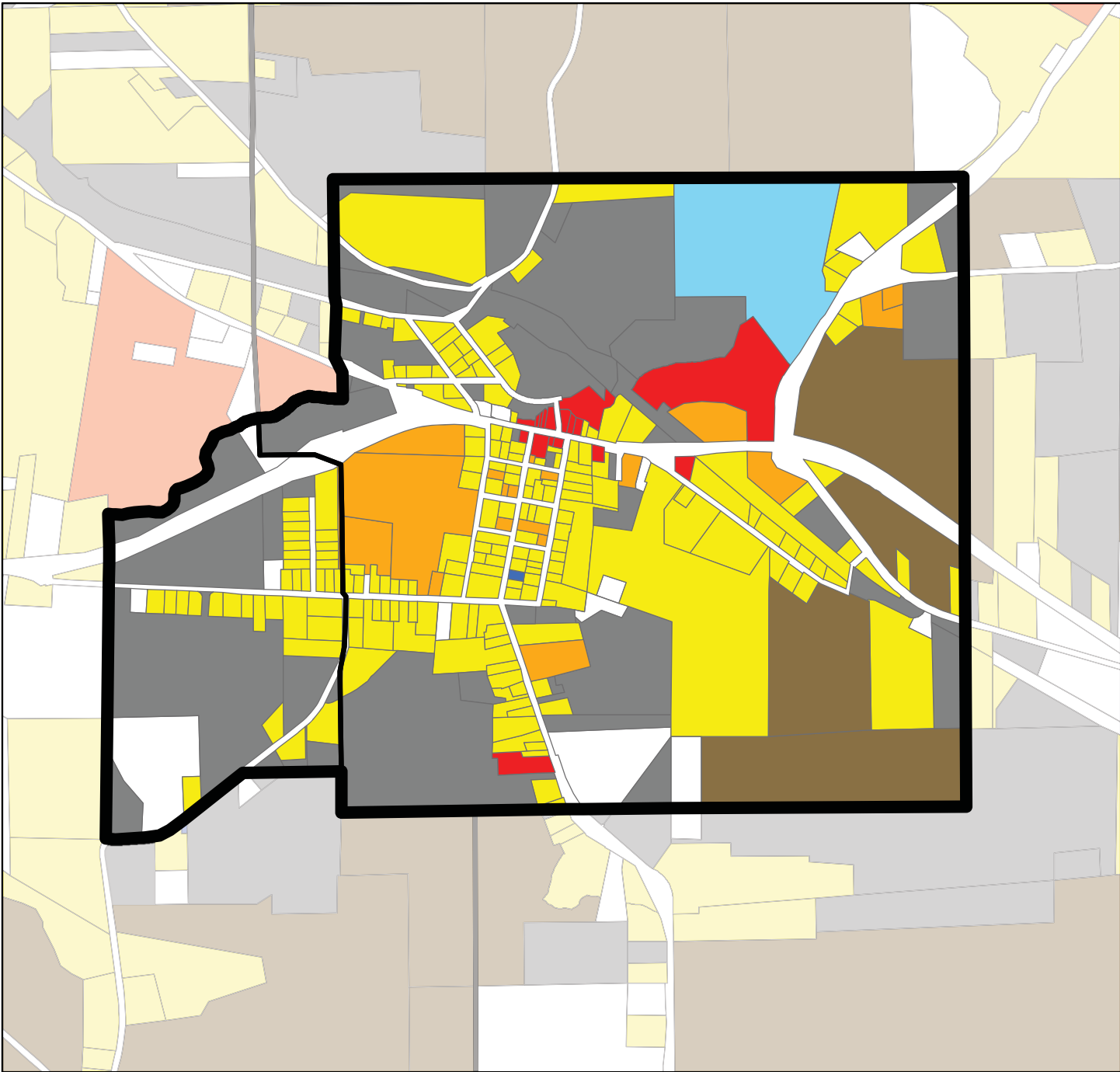













Village of Montour Falls - Existing Land Development Pattern (2011)

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Municipal Boundary |  Recreation & Entertainment |
|  Unclassified |  Community Services |
|  Agricultural |  Industrial |
|  Residential |  Public Services |
|  Vacant Land |  Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands and Public Parks |
|  Commercial | |

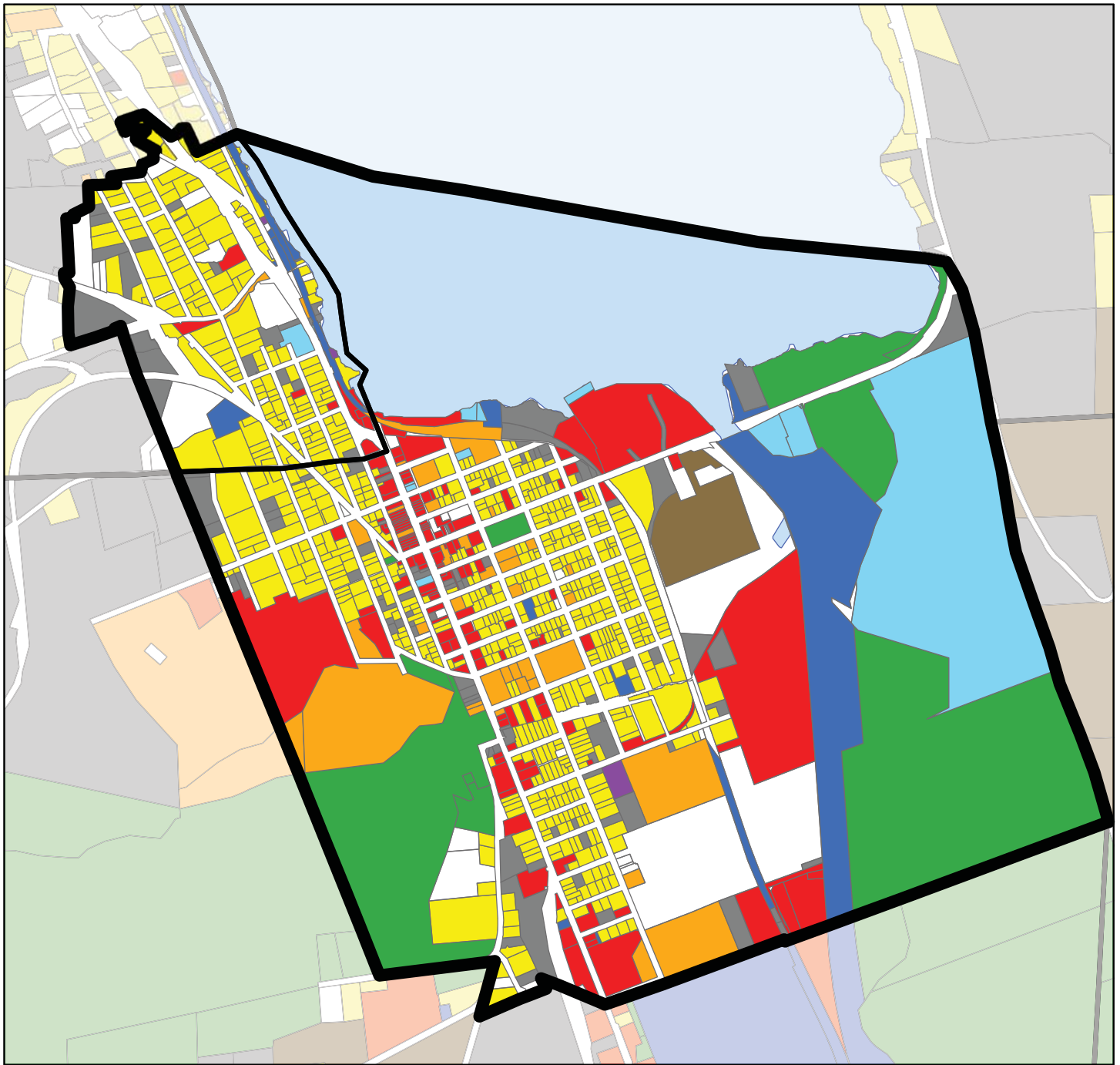





Village of Odessa - Existing Land Development Pattern (2011)

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Municipal Boundary |  Commercial |
|  Unclassified |  Recreation & Entertainment |
|  Agricultural |  Community Services |
|  Residential |  Public Services |
|  Vacant Land | |





Village of Watkins Glen - Existing Land Development Pattern (2011)

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Municipal Boundary |  Recreation & Entertainment |
|  Unclassified |  Community Services |
|  Agricultural |  Industrial |
|  Residential |  Public Services |
|  Vacant Land |  Wild, Forested, Conservation Lands and Public Parks |
|  Commercial | |

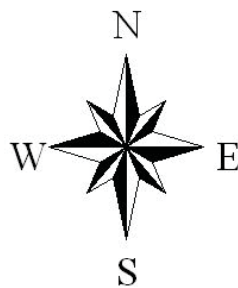
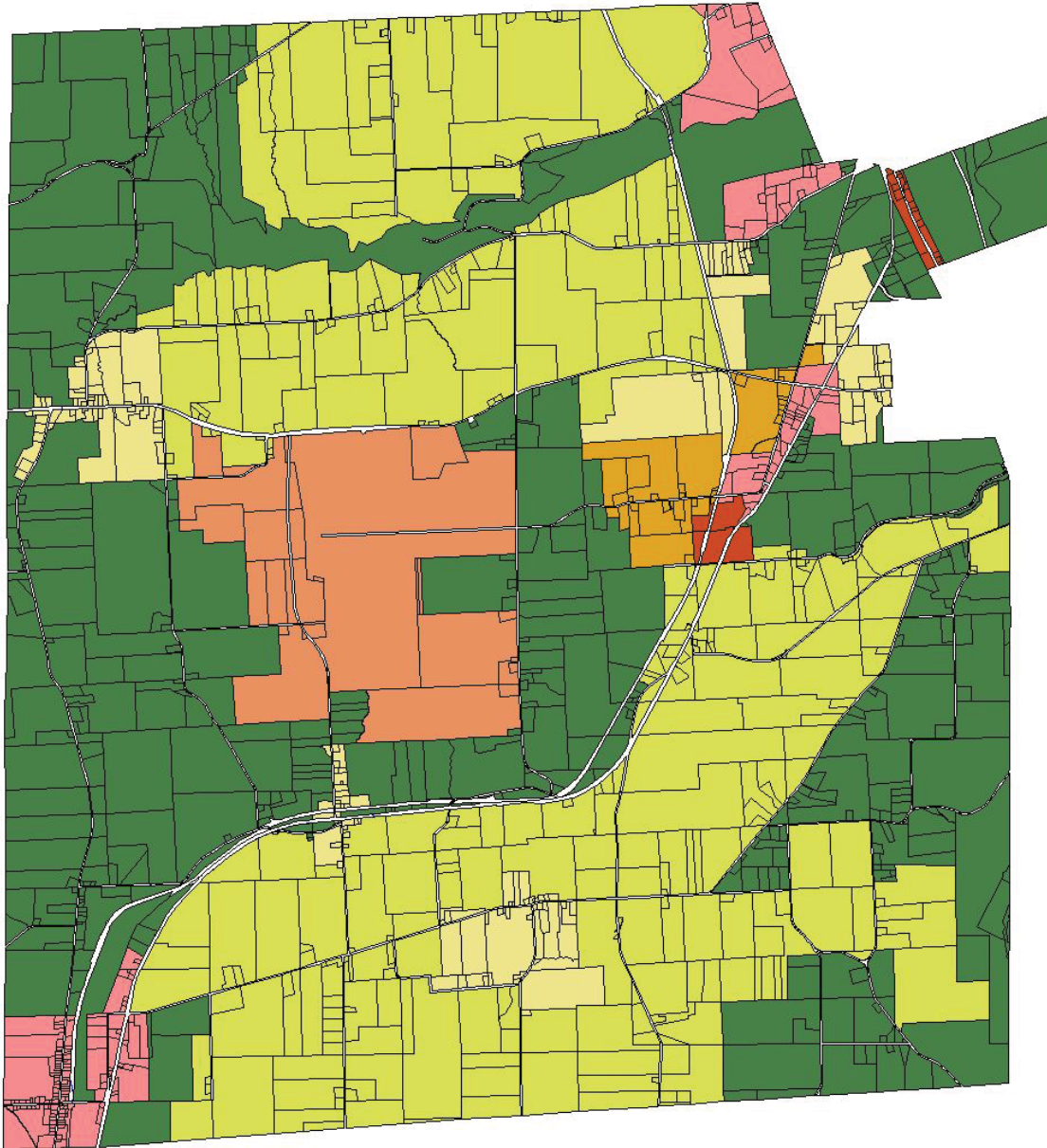


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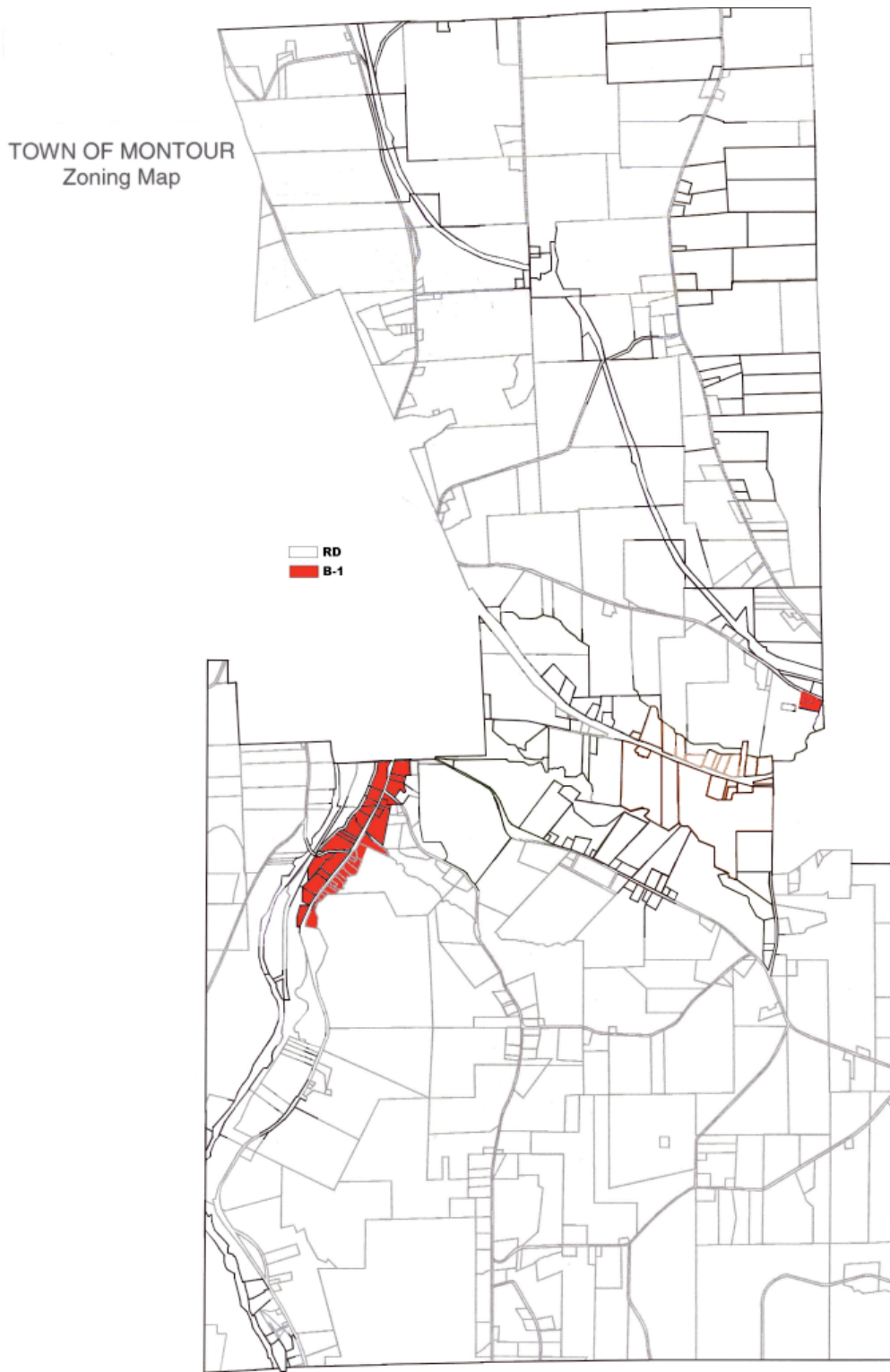
APPENDIX B

EXISTING ZONING MAPS

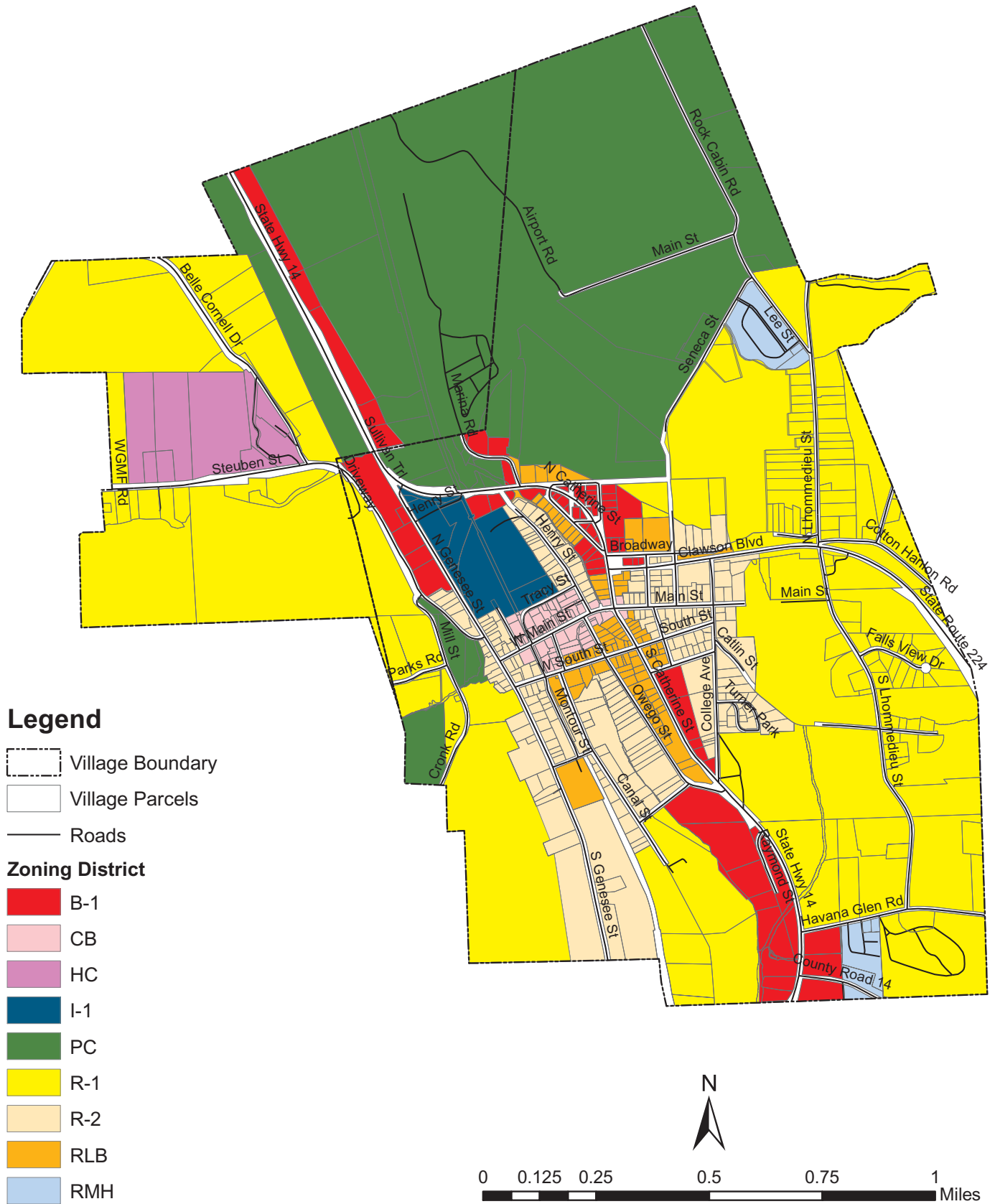
Town of Dix Zoning Map



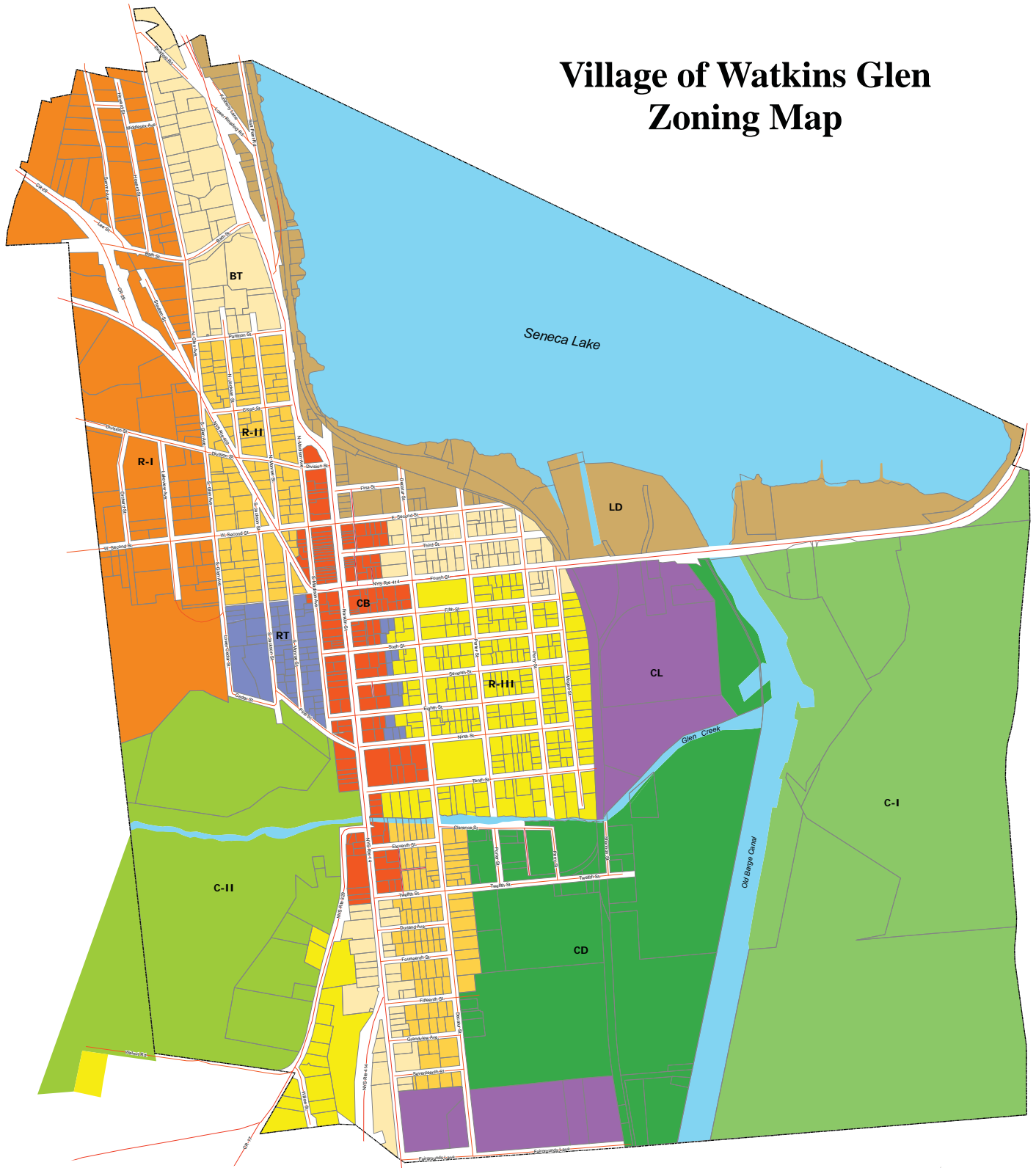
- Osd-2.shp
- Rr-c-2.shp
- Rr-s-2.shp
- Mu.shp
- Ag.shp
- Ca.shp
- Cb.shp



Village of Montour Falls Zoning Map



Village of Watkins Glen Zoning Map

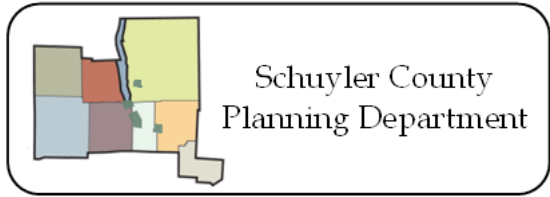


Legend			
	Conservation I		Residential Low Density
	Conservation II		Residential Moderate Density
	Canal District		Residential High Density
	Residential Transition		Business Transition
	Commercial Light Industrial		Central Business
	Lake Front Development		Water



0 150 300 600 Feet





Schuyler County
Planning Department