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INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Planning Committee

The Lowville Town and Village Boards established a Comprehensive Planning Committee in 1999 to help develop a new joint Comprehensive Plan for the Town and Village. The Committee was composed of members of the Town and Village Boards, the Joint Town/Village Planning Board, and other Town and Village officials. This committee was charged with studying the community and reporting to the Town and Village Boards their recommendations on a joint comprehensive plan. The Planning Committee enlisted the assistance of the New York State Tug Hill Commission and the Lewis County Planning Department in helping them with the technical aspects of preparing the plan. This initial plan was completed in 2005. Final approval by the Town and Village Boards occurred in 2007. The Plan has been reviewed and revised by an Ad-Hoc committee that met throughout late 2007 and the winter of 2008.

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the plan is to provide direction for future development within the Town and Village. The plan will provide a framework for the existing zoning and land subdivision controls. It will help assure that the growth of the area will be in accordance with existing plans for future water, sewer and road development. The plan will also help the Town and Village governments prioritize capital investments. Finally, it is hoped that other levels of government (state, county, and other local governments) will find the plan useful in shaping their future development activities. It is the purpose of this plan to help others to plan and develop in accord with the desires of the citizens of the area.

Periodic Review and Update of the Plan

Typically, comprehensive plans are designed to serve a community for 20 years. However, to serve the needs of a changing community, they must be continually monitored and updated, usually at five and ten year intervals.

It is the recommendation of the Comprehensive Planning Committee that this plan be periodically reviewed and updated by the Town and Village Boards and others, as designated by the Town and Village board, every three years. A three-year review will refresh the Town and Village Boards’ perspectives on the longer-range issues affecting Lowville and will help reinforce the link between day-to-day development decisions and longer range Town and Village policies. In addition, a periodic update will keep the plan current with the ever-changing conditions of the Town and Village without the need for large-scale planning efforts.

A review committee was initiated in December 2007. This committee consisted of representatives of the same Boards noted above. This committee met regularly in early 2008 to update the existing plan. Technical assistance was provided by the Tug Hill Commission.
2008 Boards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Town Council</strong></th>
<th><strong>Village Board</strong></th>
<th><strong>Review Committee</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arleigh Rice, Supervisor</td>
<td>Mary Youngs, Mayor</td>
<td>Arleigh Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Laribee</td>
<td>Charles Truax</td>
<td>Ruth Laribee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Virkler</td>
<td>Brian Western</td>
<td>Dennis Bishop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Farney</td>
<td>Dennis Bishop</td>
<td>Eric Virkler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Zubrisky</td>
<td>Dennis Kraeger</td>
<td>Barbara Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nancy Boucher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Suzanne Peters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kory Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bill Kilburn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Britt Abbey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LOCATION

The Town and Village of Lowville are located in central Lewis County on the eastern edge of the Tug Hill plateau. The town encompasses approximately 37.8 square miles or 24,192 acres. Bordering towns include Denmark, New Bremen, Watson, Martinsburg, and Harrisburg. Lowville is approximately 25 miles southeast of the City of Watertown and approximately 50 miles north of the City of Utica.

LOWVILLE HISTORY
Timeline of Events

1799 Road from Lowville to Turin constructed through “eleven mile woods”
1799 Number Three Road surveyed
1799 (approx.) East Road. constructed
1800 Town of Lowville formed from Mexico – March 14 – used to include the part of Denmark south of the Deer River (taken off in the formation of Harrisburg in 1803) – was Township 11 – named for Nicholas Low
1802 West Road. constructed
1805 Lewis County formed from part of Oneida County – March 28
1808 First Lowville Academy building built – wood structure 38x52, two stories, stood on site of stone church
1820 First Agricultural Society formed
1821 First fair, held at Lowville Academy, which at the time was located on the site of the present Presbyterian Church
1823 Methodist Episcopal Church built
1825 Baptist Church built – wood 40x50 structure
1825 Academy rebuilt, 12-sided brick structure – proved structurally unsound
1831 Presbyterian Church built
1836 Lowville Academy rebuilt
1846 Trinity Church built
1852 Proposals solicited for building a courthouse to secure the removal of the county seat from Martinsburg
1854 Village formally incorporated June 29
1854 Brick schoolhouse finished in north part of village – Morris D. Moore, builder and architect (Davenport & State residence)
1855 Village population is 908
1855 Courthouse built – cost is under $6000
1859 Present Lewis County Agricultural Society organized
1868 Railroad extended to Lowville
1869 St. Peter’s Church built on Church Street
1876 Lewis County Fairgrounds (Forest Park) located on present site
1880 Town population is 3,188
1888 Lowville Electric Light Company organized
1888 Electric street lights installed in village
1890 Current Baptist Church built
1893 First meeting to approve raising $65K for construction of a water system in village – source is a spring in Watson – reservoir capacity 2 million gallons
1894 Village water system completed
1900 Black River Telephone Company incorporated
1926 Current Lowville Academy built
1928 St. Peter’s Church rebuilt on Shady Avenue (present site)
1931-2 Lewis County Hospital built
1935 Second water reservoir completed – capacity 2.5 million gallons – old one relined – new capacity 1.8 million gallons
193x Village sewage treatment plant completed
1948 Sewer lines extended along Utica Blvd. (annexed to the village in 1947)
1960 Town population is 4,635
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Village and Town offices moved into shared space at 5402 Dayan Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Village of Lowville constructs three million gallon water storage tank on Number 3 Road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Town offices moved to Bostwick Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Village of Lowville Wastewater treatment plant upgraded to increase capacity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Village of Lowville’s Harold Woolslager water treatment facility constructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Village of Lowville Wastewater Treatment plant upgraded with larger blowers and aeration system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Town Consolidated water district #1 completed. This system includes a 200,000 gallon storage tank on Number 3 Road and distribution throughout much of the northern and western sections of the Town.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2008</td>
<td>Village of Lowville completes overall facility upgrades at Wastewater treatment plant and constructs a discharge pipeline to the Black River to meet NYS regulatory requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART I.  COMMUNITY INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population

According to the Census, the 1990s saw a 6.2% decrease in the population of the Town of Lowville including the Village. Most of this decrease occurred in the Town outside the Village, where population decreased 11.9%. During the same time period, the population of the Village decreased 4.3%. The County as a whole grew 0.6% during this period (see Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town including Village</td>
<td>4,849</td>
<td>4,548</td>
<td>-6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town outside Village</td>
<td>1,217</td>
<td>1,072</td>
<td>-11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>3,632</td>
<td>3,476</td>
<td>-4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis County</td>
<td>26,796</td>
<td>26,944</td>
<td>+0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York State</td>
<td>17,990,455</td>
<td>18,976,457</td>
<td>+5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

The population decrease seen during the 1990s is a reversal of a growth trend that occurred between 1980 and 1990, when the Town as a whole grew 5.3% and the Village grew 8.0% (see Figure 1). Census estimates for 2006 show the village continuing to lose population with a figure of 3,247. Estimates show the town outside the village growing with a figure of 1,151. The growth in the town may be due to the addition of Amish families.

Figure 1. Town and Village Population Ratio

Source: US Census Bureau
ECONOMICS

Household Size

Household size continues to shrink in Lowville, Lewis County and New York State. Mean household size decreased 14.3% from 2.8 persons to 2.4 persons in the Town as a whole and 8.0% from 2.5 to 2.3 persons in the Village between 1980 and 2000. Household sizes in the Town as a whole and in the Village were slightly smaller than the 2000 Lewis County average of 2.7 persons. Household size in the Town outside the Village was the same as the County at 2.7 persons.

Table 2. Household Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town including Village</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>-14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town outside Village</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>-34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>-8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis County</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>-12.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

Age

A comparison of age cohorts in 1990 and 2000 reveals that the population of the Town as a whole aged during that time period. The 2000 Census reported that 3,366 Town residents (74%) were 18 years old or above. The median age was 39.6 in the Town and the Village compared to 36.8 in the County.

Figure 2. Age Distribution

Source: US Census Bureau
Income

Table 3 illustrates changes in median household income between 1990 and 2000 for the Town as a whole and the Village compared to Lewis County and New York State. The 1990 figures are adjusted for inflation by the Consumer Price Index. The median household income of the Town decreased by 5.3% while the median household income of the Village increased by 9.7%. Lewis County and the New York State saw slight decreases of 0.1% and 2.0% respectively.

Table 3. Median Household Income (in dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town including Village</td>
<td>34,203</td>
<td>32,396</td>
<td>-5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village of Lowville</td>
<td>29,950</td>
<td>32,841</td>
<td>+9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis County</td>
<td>34,393</td>
<td>34,361</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York State</td>
<td>44,290</td>
<td>43,393</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

Poverty

The Town as a whole showed a very slight (half a percent) increase in the percentage of the population living below the poverty level during the 1990s. The percentage rose 2.9% in the Town outside the Village and fell 0.9% in the Village. The percentage of persons living below poverty level remained the same in Lewis County and increased 2.2% in New York State.

Table 4. Persons Below the Poverty Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990 % of total population</th>
<th>2000 % of total population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town including Village</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town outside Village</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis County</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York State</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

Educational Attainment

Table 5 illustrates the levels of educational attainment of Town (as a whole) residents (25 years of age and older) in 2000 compared to Lewis County and the State. Over 82.1% reported having high school diplomas and 17.6% reported having bachelors degrees. Approximately 17.9% reported having no high school diploma. These percentages are similar to those of Lewis County. New York State has a higher percentage of residents 25 and older with bachelor’s degrees while also having a higher percentage with no high school diploma.
This is an important factor in measuring the quality of the Town and Village labor force. In general, higher educational attainment should result in higher paying jobs, which should have a beneficial impact on the economic health of the area.

Table 5. Educational Attainment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No H.S. Diploma</th>
<th>H.S. Diploma</th>
<th>Bachelors Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town including Village</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis County</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York State</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

Employment

Table 6 illustrates the employment of Town and Village residents based on the industry in which they worked in 2000. The top five job types were: 1) education, 2) manufacturing, 3) retail, 4) public administration, and 5) arts and entertainment.

Table 6. Employment by Industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, mining</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, warehousing, utilities</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, management, administrative, waste management</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational, health, social services</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, food services</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 7 illustrates the employment of Town and Village residents based on occupation. The top three occupations were 1) management, professional, and related occupations, 2) sales and office occupations, and 3) service occupations.
Table 7. Employment by Occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management, professional, and related occupations</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Occupations</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and office occupations</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production, transportation, and material moving occupations</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

Transportation To Work

Approximately 77.3% of the employed residents of the Town as a whole were employed somewhere within the Town. This indicates that Lowville is not a bedroom community.

Table 8. Place of Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Work</th>
<th>All Town/Village Residents</th>
<th>% of pop.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work in Town/Village</td>
<td>1,643</td>
<td>77.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work outside Town/Village</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

According to Census data, about 90.4% of Town and Village residents drove to work (either alone or in a car pool) in 2000. Approximately 9.6% walked to work and 6.2% worked at home.

Table 9. Means of Transportation to Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means of Travel to Work</th>
<th>All Town/Village Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drove Alone</td>
<td>81.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpooleled</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taxi</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biked</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walked</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Means</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked at Home</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau
FINANCE

Town of Lowville

According to Town records, 2006 revenues for the Town of Lowville totaled approximately $1,133,000 and were raised mostly from general revenues (45%). Next were highway (29%) and part-town highway revenues (21%).

Figure 3. 2006 Revenues - Town

During the same year, transportation made up the largest expenditure (51%), followed by general government (40%), and fire protection (5%). The remaining expenditures consisted of workers compensation payments.

Figure 4. 2006 Expenditures by Function – Town

Source: NYS Office of the State Comptroller

Source: NYS Office of the State Comptroller
**Village of Lowville**

Village revenues totaled $3,182,790 during 2006 and were made up mostly of sewer and water income (50%) and property taxes (38%). Other revenues consisted of interest on investments, intergovernmental revenues (state and federal aid) and non property taxes.

Figure 5. 2006 Revenues - Village

During that year, the largest expenditure was made on home and community services (43%), followed by general government (22%), transportation (16%) and police (11%). Other expenditures included fire, culture – recreation, health, other public safety, and economic assistance.

Figure 6. 2006 Expenditures by Function - Village
PROPERTY TAXES

The full taxable value (tax base) of real property in the Town of Lowville as a whole was $394.3 million in 2007.

In 2007, Town property owners paid $28.57 per $1000 assessed full value in property taxes (including town, county and school) while Village property owners paid $37.92 per $1000 assessed full value (including village, town, county and school). Figures 7 and 8 depict the breakdown of property tax payments by recipient government or school district.

Figure 7. 2007 Property Tax Breakdown – Town

Source: NYS Office of Real Property Services

Figure 8. 2007 Property Tax Breakdown - Village

Source: NYS Office of Real Property Services
LAND USE

Land subdivision resulted in 85 new parcels in the Town (including the Village) between 2000 and 2007. This 4.2% increase averages out to 12.1 new parcels per year during that period. The total number of tax parcels was 2,098 in 2007.

TAX PARCELS BY PROPERTY CLASS

The majority (63%) of tax parcels in the Town (including the Village) were assessed as residential in 2007. The next largest categories were agricultural (11%), vacant (10%), and commercial (9%).

Figure 9.

ASSESSED VALUE BY PROPERTY CLASS

When total assessed value is broken down by property class, about one third of the value is in residential parcels. Next are community services parcels (28%), public service parcels (13%), and commercial parcels (13%).
Figure 10.

ACREAGE BY PROPERTY CLASS

Figure 11.
Agriculture

The largest land use in the Town of Lowville is agricultural and consists of approximately 19,104 acres. Much of this land is active agricultural land. The Village consists of only approximately 90 acres of agricultural land.

Residential

Land development for residential uses represents the largest active land use in the Village and the second largest active land use in the Town. Single-family residential development is predominating in both sectors. Residential growth in the Village is minimal whereas agricultural lands located within the Town are the target for development of single-family housing.

Vacant Land

Vacant land comprises approximately 72 acres in the Village and 663 acres in the Town. Vacant or undeveloped lands include parcels that may have significant development constraints, such as wetlands, critical habitat, stream courses, and steep slopes; as well as inactive farmland and developable properties.

Commercial

Within the Village, commercial uses are the third largest existing use. There is a total of 123 acres of commercial uses. The majority of these commercial uses are located along the main NYS Route 12/Utica Boulevard corridor that runs through the center of the Village. These commercial areas consist of strip commercial and office development. There are scattered commercial properties located in other areas of the Village within concentrations on Shady Avenue and East State Street. These types of uses include a school, banks, a post office, retail shops, a County Court house, a grocery store, restaurants and auto dealers. Retail development opportunities exist on Utica Boulevard and in the P&C Plaza.

The Town has a total of 100 acres of existing commercial uses. The most intense concentration of commercial development occurs in the form of strip development along NYS Route 12 and County Route 26 (Number Four Road). A Walmart Super Center now exists on NYS Route 12 and additional development in this area is possible. Other commercial uses scattered throughout the Town include a hardware store, a bank, auto sales and repair shops, country stores and greenhouses, motels, restaurants, landscaping and cattle auction facilities.

Industrial

Industrial land use within the Village consists of approximately 54 acres and is located in three main areas. Kraft Inc. and Qubica AMF are located at the southern entrance of the Village on NYS Route 12/Utica Boulevard. Additionally, V.S. Virkler has a concrete plant located on River Street and FiberMark is located on the northern edge of the Village off of Bostwick Street.
The Town contains 31 acres of industrial uses. These consist of Climax Manufacturing to the north of the Village, and mining pits located on Rice Road and Route 26.

**Public and Community Service**

Public services in both the Town and Village include electric and communications utilities (transmission lines, substations and cell towers) but not municipal utilities. These uses are considered community services and include municipal utilities (sewer and water), municipal facilities (other than recreation), fire and emergency service stations, police stations, schools and school district offices, and community centers. Public services uses consist of 102 acres in the Village and 127 in the Town of Lowville. Community service uses consists of similar acreage, 104 in the Village and 127 in the Town.

The Village of Lowville is the county seat of Lewis County. As a result there is a substantial amount of tax exempt property owned by the County and State. This includes the County Court House, the Social Services and Public Safety Complex, the County owned Hospital, the County Highway Department, County Alcohol Abuse Prevention office, the County Agricultural Fairgrounds, and the DEC Office in Dadville as well as DOT facilities. In addition, the Lowville Central School district is located completely within the Village and a number of religious and other organizations, such as the United Cerebral Palsy office, the DPAO, the DAPO, and the Maple Ridge Wind Farm, exist in the Town.

**Recreation and Forest**

Recreational land uses in the Village of Lowville compose approximately 59 acres. The majority of this land is either a Village Park or the Lewis County Fairgrounds. In addition to parks and the Fairgrounds, there is a large sports field belonging to the Lowville School District. Additionally, the Town has 136 acres of forest land uses. A major portion of this acreage is composed of the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Demonstration Area and Forestry Nature Trail. This is located just outside of the Village on NYS Route 812.
PART II. COMMUNITY VISION

Visualizing the future of the Town and Village of Lowville is an intensive and very important component of the Comprehensive Plan. It requires the input of the Town and Village leaders, residents, and the knowledge of Town and Village resources that provide opportunities and constraints on land use and services. Individual visions are biased by personal goals and preferences. To limit these biases, good comprehensive planning seeks public input early in the process. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the first step of the comprehensive planning process is the initiation of a community survey.

Community Survey

A community survey was distributed to every tax parcel owner in both the Town and the Village. The purpose of the broad distribution was to afford the majority of people in the community the opportunity to participate in the planning process. It was also a means of informing everyone about the comprehensive plan process, a process that relies on input from the community in order to be successful.

Approximately 395 of the 1,280 surveys that were mailed were returned. The survey format allowed two responses per survey in order for two adults in the same household to respond separately. This brought the total number of respondents to approximately 574.

The top three responses to the question “What were your reasons for choosing to live in the Lowville area?” were: family and friends here; the rural atmosphere; and quality of life. The top three responses to the question “What aspects discourage you from staying in the Lowville area?” were: lack of job opportunities; cost of living; and lack of recreation opportunities for adults. The survey results are summarized in Appendix A.

In addition, surveys were mailed to 250 businesses within the Town and Village. Of the 250 surveys, approximately 72 were returned. The survey results are summarized in Appendix B.

Public Hearings

The Comprehensive Planning Committee held a public hearing on the draft plan July 31st, 2008. The Village Board held a public hearing on the final version of the plan October 1st followed by the Town Board, who held a hearing __________.

In conclusion, community outreach is essential to reach consensus. Not only is consensus important for the adoption of the Plan, it is crucial for the future implementation of the Plan. Town and Village officials should feel confident that the majority of residents and business people support the recommendations.
Community Vision Statement

Both the Town and Village’s vision of the future is perhaps the single most important guiding principle used throughout the planning process. The vision states:

“Both the Town and Village of Lowville envision themselves as distinctive rural communities. They are desirable and attainable places for families and individuals of all ages to live and work. There is a variety of local and regional opportunities for employment, education, recreation and cultural activity. The Town and Village place high value on small town feeling and wish to retain the character of both the Town and Village while allowing responsible growth to occur.”
PART III. GOALS & STRATEGIES

From the Community Vision and a series of topical workshops, the Town and Village prepared a list of goals and strategies that would be used to prioritize decisions, investments, and actions to further community development.

General Goals

A. Preserve and enhance the historic, residential, agricultural and rural nature of the Town and Village of Lowville and maintain a continuing planning process for the Town and Village to emphasize quality of life, health and safety for all residents.

B. Encourage controlled economic growth and ensure that all future development takes into account its environmental impacts on the Town and Village, especially in water supply, water quality, air quality, open space, and historic preservation.

C. Pursue appropriate opportunities to cooperate with other municipalities within the County in order to reduce the cost of public facilities and services.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL 1: PROMOTE A DIVERSE ECONOMIC BASE THAT PROVIDES INCOME, EMPLOYMENT AND FISCAL RESOURCES TO THE COMMUNITY IN A MANNER THAT IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE CHARACTER OF LOWVILLE.

1.1 Businesses in the Village of Lowville

Table 11 provides a snapshot of economic activity in the Village of Lowville from the 1997 and 2002 Economic Censuses. Businesses are grouped by the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS). The economic census is the major source of facts about the structure and functioning of the Nation’s economy. Data is available for communities with populations of 2500 or more. According to the data, the number of establishments in the village grew between ’97 and ’02. A more detailed analysis of the retail economy in the area was conducted for the Lowville Infill Development Plan conducted by consultant peter j. smith and company.
Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAICS CODE</th>
<th>BUSINESS</th>
<th># OF ESTABLISHMENTS 1997</th>
<th># OF ESTABLISHMENTS 2002</th>
<th>EMPLOYEES 1997</th>
<th>EMPLOYEES 2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31-33</td>
<td>MANUFACTURING</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>WHOLESALE TRADE</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>101</td>
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<tr>
<td>44-45</td>
<td>RETAIL TRADE</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>427</td>
<td>360</td>
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<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>INFORMATION</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>REAL ESTATE &amp; RENTAL &amp; LEASING</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, &amp; TECHNICAL SERVICES</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>ADMINISTRATIVE &amp; SUPPORT &amp; WASTE MANAGEMENT &amp; REMEDIATION SERVICES</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>HEALTH CARE &amp; SOCIAL ASSISTANCE</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, RECREATION</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICES</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>OTHER SERVICES (EXCEPT PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>138</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendations

1. Inventory vacant commercial, office, industrial and agricultural sites.

2. Pursue physical streetscape design improvements, including curbs and sidewalks, façade renovations, signage, parking, overhead wires.

3. Identify scenic, recreation and tourist sites and evaluate enhanced signage for these community assets.

4. Continue to gather pertinent economic and community data via informal and formal surveys. Support county wide efforts to analyze markets and economic conditions.

5. Work with the Lewis County IDA, County Economic Development Department and other organizations to provide “one stop shopping” and other assistance to promote business development.

6. Capitalize on existing area tourism sites, such as Whetstone Gulf, the Maple Ridge Wind Farm, Constable Hall and the Lewis County Historical Society.

7. Focus on maintaining existing businesses and promoting growth of small business, tourism and other compatible enterprises.

8. Support the Lowville Business Association and the Chamber of Commerce. Continue to support Made in Lewis County, local events and festivals and other county wide marketing initiatives.

9. Support the continuation of agriculture as an economic activity.
HISTORIC RESOURCES

GOAL 2: RECOGNIZE LOWVILLE’S HISTORIC RESOURCES AND PRESERVE AND ENHANCE CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE COMMUNITY.

2.1 Importance of Historic Properties

A town’s historic sites and structures provide a visible link to its past. Historic resources contribute greatly to the town’s sense of place and identity and provide clues as to how early residents lived and worked. As these resources are demolished, abandoned or allowed to deteriorate, this identity is slowly chipped away. Historic preservation makes sense economically as it boosts tourism in communities. This is witnessed locally in villages such as Sackets Harbor.

While the burden of protecting these properties lies primarily with individual building owners and landowners, several tools are available to help Lowville accomplish its preservation goal.

2.2 National Register Properties

Four properties in the Village are currently listed on the National Register. These are the Bateman Hotel on State St., the Franklin B. Hough House on Collins St., the Presbyterian Church on North State Street and the Lewis County Fairgrounds on Bostwick St.

There has recently been interest in establishing a National Register of Historic Places Historic District in the Village. The proposed district includes approximately fifty properties in the central downtown area located between Trinity Ave and Stowe Street. See the textbox on page 30 for the benefits that come with National Register listing.

2.3 Tax Incentives and Grants

Other tools available to NYS communities are implementation of section 444-a of the Real Property Tax Law, which authorizes a partial exemption from real property taxation resulting from increased assessed valuation for the alteration or rehabilitation of historic property. Also, the Village could become a Certified Local Government (CLG), which would give it access to CLG subgrants, as well as technical assistance. Access to these programs requires the Village to adopt some form of review process for development in historic areas.

Recommendations

1. Consider pursuing a National Register historic district in the Village.

2. Consider historic overlay zoning in Village.

3. Develop and maintain a comprehensive, up-to-date list of important sites and structures.
4. Cultivate public awareness of historic and cultural resources through the
town and village historians.

5. Protect sites and structures through site plan review and SEQR.
What is the National Register of Historic Places?

The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect our historic and archeological resources. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Criteria for Evaluation

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
D. That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

In addition to honorific recognition, listing in the National Register results in the following for historic properties:

- Consideration in planning for Federal, federally licensed, and federally assisted projects;
- Eligibility for certain tax provisions;
- Consideration of historic values in the decision to issue a surface mining permit where coal is located in accordance with the Surface Mining Control Act of 1977; and
- Qualification for Federal grants for historic preservation, when funds are available.
HOUSING

GOAL 3: PROVIDE A BALANCED BLEND OF QUALITY HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES, INCLUDING A DESIRABLE RANGE OF HOUSING TYPES AND PRICE RANGES, WHICH ARE AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE FOR RESIDENTS.

3.1 Importance of a Quality Housing Stock

The availability of safe, affordable housing is important to the Village and Town’s future. Decent housing is not only a key contributor to the quality of life of current residents, but is also necessary if the community is to attract new business and industry. While factors that contribute to the cost of housing are largely outside the control of local government, there are measures the Town can take to keep costs down.

3.2 Conditions and Trends

Census data reveals a 5% increase in the number of housing units in Lowville between 1990 and 2000. All of this growth occurred outside the Village, however, with the Town showing a net gain of 99 units (a 29% increase). The trend of a village showing minimal or no housing growth while the town that surrounds it grows is common in upstate New York. The new units in the Town outside the Village consist of single family dwellings and multi-family dwellings. Lowville is unusual in the fact that it saw a net decrease in mobile homes during the 1990s.

An analysis of the mix of different types of housing shows the typical pattern of villages having a more diverse mix of single family and multi-family dwellings than the towns that surround them (which consist mostly of single family dwellings).

Table 14 lists housing vacancy rates in Lowville compared to Lewis County and New York State. A homeowner vacancy rate of 5% is generally considered adequate (over 5% indicates an oversupply and under 5%, an undersupply). Rental vacancy rates are typically in the 10% to 12% range. The Village of Lowville had a homeowner vacancy rate of 1.4% according to the 2000 Census. The town as a whole had a homeowner vacancy rate of 1.9. These were comparable to the state and lower than the County.

Table 12. Total Housing Stock

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>Percent Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lowville</td>
<td>1,934</td>
<td>2,033</td>
<td>+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town outside Village</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>+29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>1,588</td>
<td>1,588</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis County</td>
<td>13,182</td>
<td>15,134</td>
<td>+15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York State</td>
<td>7,226,891</td>
<td>7,679,307</td>
<td>+6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau
Table 13. Percentage of Housing Units by Dwelling Type, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>One Family</th>
<th>Two Family</th>
<th>Multi-Family</th>
<th>Mobile Home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lowville</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town outside Village</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

Table 14. Housing Vacancy Rate (Percentage), 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Homeowner</th>
<th>Rental</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lowville</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis County</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York State</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau

**Recommendations**

1. Complete and maintain a housing needs assessment.

2. Review zoning lot size and other development standards (such as off street parking minimums) to lower development costs.

3. Continue to utilize CDBG, Main Street and other State and Federal programs to improve housing.

4. Encourage quality housing opportunities for the elderly and those with disabilities, that will allow residents to remain in the community despite their changing housing and care requirements.

5. Encourage the development and rehabilitation of housing in the downtown area.

6. Encourage residential solar energy systems and protect their function through zoning laws.
NATURAL RESOURCES

GOAL 4: PROTECT IMPORTANT NATURAL RESOURCES, WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE DIVERSITY, CHARACTER AND GENERAL HEALTH AND WELFARE OF LOWVILLE.

4.1 Surface Waters (Flood Plains, Wetlands, Stream Corridors)

Floodplains have been mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These include only flood hazard areas which have a probability of flooding at least once in 100 years. These flood hazard areas are nearly entirely located in the close vicinity of the Black River, east of Ridge Road and Waters Road. The Mill Creek stream corridor is also considered a flood hazard area throughout most of its length.

Certain major wetlands have been mapped by the Department of Conservation (DEC). These include only wetlands of greater than 12.4 acres. Most of these wetlands are located in extensive areas between the Black River and East Road, northeast of the Village. There are a few isolated wetlands of major size in scattered locations throughout the Town. Development projects located within 100 feet of these areas requires a DEC permit.

The DEC has classified stream corridors based on water quality. Streams are ranked AA, A, B, C, or D (AA being highest) based on existing or expected best usage. There are several small stream corridors of minor significance in the Town, however, the Mill Creek corridor is of major significance. This corridor runs from the western central portion of the Town, in an easterly direction through the Village, and on to the Black River. Mill Creek is classified “C” above the Village and “D” below. Disturbance of any streambed requires a DEC permit. Certain streams are utilized for outdoor recreational activities.

4.2 Groundwater

Groundwater is water that has accumulated, over a period of time, beneath the surface of the ground and is the source of springs, wells, and aquifers. As growth continues in rural areas, there is an ever-increasing demand on groundwater resources to fulfill continuing needs of residents, farmers, and industries. Land use decisions can have significant and unanticipated impacts on groundwater and surface water resources. Adequate water supplies of high quality are necessary both for community use and local ecosystems. Lowering the water table can lead to the introduction of deeper water of poorer quality to shallower depths. In addition, in order to protect the source water’s quality and quantity, a town must keep the region’s "recharge" areas free from overdevelopment. Examining groundwater quantity issues to evaluate whether sufficient water is available for future development and generations is becoming a growing concern. The challenge is acting while things are in relatively good shape, not just for human use but for wildlife and ecological balance. A study titled “Groundwater Availability in the Black River Basin, New York” was completed by the USGS in 1986. It delineates aquifers in the Lowville area.
Recommendations

1. Consider impact and need for specific zoning restrictions for mining activities.

2. Educate the public in regard to compliance with state and federal wetlands programs and the state stream protection program.

3. Work with State and Federal agencies to ensure water quality of Black River and other streams and creeks is protected.

4. Require an erosion and sediment control plan for new development.

5. Consider impact and need for specific zoning restrictions for water bottling and commercial water sales operations.

6. Maintain and improve surface and ground water quality – especially aquifers.

7. Develop a comprehensive source water protection plan by identifying groundwater sources, analyzing undeveloped land, determining susceptibility to new growth, and implementing protection measures.

8. Make full use of State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) when reviewing development projects.

9. Use zoning to protect quality of private and municipal wells and water table levels.

10. Develop regulations, such as site plan review standards, to protect landowners from the adverse impacts of natural gas drilling on neighboring properties.
AGRICULTURE

GOAL 5. PRESERVE LAND THAT IS SUITABLE FOR FARMING, PROVIDE FOR THE PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURE AND OPEN SPACE AND ENSURE THAT FARMING REMAINS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

5.1 Agriculture and Open Space

Farming is an integral part of life in Lowville and has been for over 200 years. Agriculture comprises up to 80% of the land use in Lowville and more than any other single factor creates the rural Lowville landscape. The soils in general are well-adapted for farming and grazing. In 2005, there were a total of approximately 60 active farms in the Town of Lowville. Farms of three types: traditional family farms; Amish farms; and large farms with their headquarters in adjacent towns using former family farms in Lowville as ancillary lands. The third type raises the concern of agricultural buildings (belonging to the former family farms) being abandoned.

Long term protection of open space (considered in its broadest sense and comprising both of farm fields and woodlands) is essential if Lowville's rural character is to be conserved for future generations.

Provisions must be made for the long-term protection and management of the significant open space, farm, and natural resources in the rural areas when lands are being developed or subdivided. The site plan review process should give significant consideration to the entire parcel and seek to minimize the impact on these resources. Anything that can assist farmers in protecting their land for agricultural use will help ensure the existence of agricultural opportunities for the next generation.

5.2 Agricultural Shifts

Loss of farms and farmers will dramatically change the Town's character, which was established from the earliest period of settlement. The Town therefore wishes to take an active role in the preservation and encouragement of agriculture, which has been slowly changing over the last twenty years. Lowville continues to have good access to markets, especially the Kraft plant in the Village, H.P. Hood in Vernon, and the expanding Great Lakes Cheese operation in Adams that is increasing demand for milk production in the region. Over a long period of time there has been a shift to larger dairy farms and crop farming.

The town has seen a growth in the number of Amish farmers in recent years and this influx is helping the town maintain family farm characteristics that promote a rural atmosphere. In addition Lowville is seeing more family owned agricultural businesses that provide farm fed local meats, and locally grown fresh produce. A local winery, including u-pick fruit, is in the process of being established. Maple syrup is another added benefit to the local economy. Farmers markets, along with the concept of “buying local” have become popular and there is the potential for growth. It is our hope that by focusing our energies and attention; we can locate resources and develop plans and means for invigorating the changing farming economy.
5.3 Current Protective Measures

There are current agricultural protective measures in place in the Town of Lowville. New York State, through the Department of Agriculture and Markets, has established “agricultural districts” for the protection of farmlands. There is one agricultural district in Lewis County. Nearly the entire Town of Lowville lies in this district with the exception of some lands on State Route 12, Bardo Road, and Waters Road. Ag districts are designed to protect agriculture from over restrictive zoning, excessive real property taxation assessments, ad valorem assessments for special improvements, the exercise of eminent domain, and certain policies of State agencies.

New York Environmental Conservation Law provides measures that afford some protection to farmers from excessive land taxation through voluntary conveyance of conservation easements to another entity such as a local government or a nonprofit organization. Similar to this are purchase of development rights (PDR), lease of development rights (LDR), and transfer of development rights (TDR) programs. These strategies are all designed to remove development rights from selected farmlands and thus afford their preservation as viable agricultural operations.

Lewis County participates in an eight county “Come Farm With Us” program that is a marketing initiative program involving Lewis, Essex, Franklin, Madison, Jefferson, Oneida, Oswego, and St. Lawrence Counties. Established approximately six years ago, the effort concentrates on promoting the continued success of agriculture in areas that provide strong agribusiness infrastructure, a quality rural lifestyle, competitive crop yields, and affordable land prices.

5.4 Future Protective Measures

A positive measure under current consideration that can promote farming and community compatibility is the development of individual or shared methane digesters. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, farms can use anaerobic digesters—also known as biodigesters—to recover methane (biogas) from animal manure for producing electricity, heat, and hot water along with the positive ecological advantage of reducing methane emissions. This process requires more than 150 large animals to cost effectively generate electricity. Biodigesters can reduce overall operating costs of high cost agricultural, animal waste, or sewage disposal, and the effluent has economic value.

Recommendations

1. Focus our energies and attention on locating resources and developing plans and the means for invigorating the changing farming economy.

2. Develop a local tourism map to promote Lowville agricultural products

3. Identify and conserve the Town’s high potential agricultural soils for agricultural use.

4. Create incentives, including financial and regulatory tools, for property owners to protect working land and develop criteria for their application.
5. Encourage diverse agricultural enterprises, including dairy, livestock and crop, produce stands, and specialty farms such as wildflowers, nurseries, berries, orchards, produce, and organic farming as well as agricultural support businesses.

6. Consider the impact of individual and shared methane digesters that can produce electricity, heat, and hot water.

7. Continue to participate in the New York State, Department of Agriculture and markets establishment of “agricultural districts” for the protection of farmlands.

8. Continue to participate with the eight county “Come Farm With Us” program.

9. Consider the impact of biofuels development.

10. Encourage maple syrup (sap) production to maximize output and marketing to add volume.

11. Maintain infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, to support farming and farming support vehicles.

12. Discourage the trespass of snowmobiles and ATVs on agricultural lands.
TRANSPORTATION & MOBILITY

GOAL 6: PROVIDE SAFE, CONVENIENT AND EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS FOR PEOPLE AND GOODS WITHIN LOWVILLE, WHICH ARE SUPPORTIVE OF THE COMMUNITY’S LAND USE POLICIES, AND WHICH MINIMIZE THE IMPACT OF TRAFFIC ON COMMUNITY CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF LIFE.

6.1 Roads

The Town is criss-crossed by 84.6 miles of public roads. Of this total, approx. 20.5 miles are under state jurisdiction, approx. 12.6 miles are under county jurisdiction, approx. 41.2 miles are under town jurisdiction, and 13.06 miles are Village streets. The most traveled segment of road in Lowville is the overlap of State Rts. 12 and 26 in the village core which has an average daily traffic count (ADT) of 12,787. Both the town and the village have local law road standards.

Several Town roads have segments designated as seasonal use. They are (at the present): Hoffman Rd., Wilcox Rd., and part of Nefsey Rd. Seasonal use is an annual designation by the Town Board to limit snow plowing.

There has been much concern in recent years about traffic, particularly truck traffic at the Village’s main intersection (State St. and Dayan St.). NYSDOT is currently planning improvements at this intersection.

6.2 Pedestrian Amenities

The Village of Lowville contains public infrastructure for pedestrians in the form of crosswalks, curbing, sidewalks, and street trees. These features add greatly to the character and livability of the Village, calming traffic, creating a safer walking environment, and providing shade in the summer. This infrastructure is in various states of quality. The maintenance of a quality pedestrian environment is a critical factor in luring new businesses to locate in Lowville. The Village has short term plans to create a pedestrian trail on the rail corridor in the center of the Village. Also, a NYS Department of Transportation project scheduled for 2010 will allow for significant sidewalk and streetscape improvements to the downtown area.

Recommendations

1. Develop a map of future road and streets throughout the Town and Village

2. Evaluate the affect and discuss with the NYS DOT, a bypass of the Village using any feasible route.

3. Advocate the development of a four lane highway to Utica.

4. Encourage the redevelopment of the rail line to Utica.
5. Maintain and enhance highway facilities and roadways as prescribed in NYSDOT guidelines.

6. Continue to enhance the pedestrian environment and safety with street crossings, improved crosswalk signals and consideration of speed limit modifications where necessary.

7. Improve and add sidewalks where necessary.

8. Consider additional parking opportunities in the downtown area and the possibility of shared parking for adjacent lots.

9. Develop a comprehensive walking and pedestrian plan.

10. Complete the Lowville Village Center Pedestrian Trail.

11. Work with other County municipalities on a public transportation system.

12. Require sidewalk construction with new development.
RECREATION

GOAL 7: PROVIDE SUFFICIENT AND AFFORDABLE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL TOWN AND VILLAGE RESIDENTS.

7.1 Public Lands

The Town of Lowville is unusual for a town in the Tug Hill region in its lack of New York State Forests or Wildlife Management Areas. The Town is in proximity to the Tug Hill W.M.A. and Whetstone Gulf State Park, however. The Town is home to a 98 acre NYSDEC Demonstration Area in Dadville. The site, which was formerly the Lowville Tree Nursery (in operation from 1923 to 1971), features a nature trail, an arboretum with 500 different species of trees and shrubs, and a trout pond.

The Maple Ridge Center, formerly a 182 acre horse farm on the East Road, is being developed jointly by the Adirondack Mennonite Camping Association and the Lewis County Agricultural Association. The AMCA is developing 50 acres for the purpose of community service programming and another 57 acres is being designated as a public park to be operated by the Ag Association. Thus, 75 acres remain for development with the Pratt Northam Foundation responsible for future plans.

The Village features the 49-acre Lewis County Fairgrounds site located in its northeast corner. The area became home to the County Fair in the 1870s. The property features a racetrack with a grandstand, a baseball diamond, a soccer/football field, and a skating rink. Also located within the Village is Veteran’s Memorial Park, which is located behind the Post Office.

Lowville Academy and Central Schools is a leader in providing recreation and community facilities in Lowville. The school facilities are used for adult and youth recreation for both indoor and outdoor programs. This includes the athletic fields at Bostwick Street and the athletic fields at the Lewis County Fairgrounds. Beginning in 2008, the School will create an artificial turf athletic field behind the school grounds and improve their tennis court facility. The School is also the location for the Town/Village Summer Recreation Program.

7.2 Black River

The Black River, an over 200 mile waterway that forms the eastern boundary of the Town, is a prime recreation and tourism draw. Activities, include fishing and canoeing and kayaking. Lowville’s portion of the river features a boat launch located at Beeches Bridge. The Village and Town share the goal of enhancing the quality of the Black River and developing additional recreational opportunities with this natural asset.

7.3 Mill Creek

Mill Creek flows from west to east through the Village. The creek’s scenic qualities give it potential as a recreational resource, possibly as a site for trail development.
Recommendations

1. Consider the need for upgrades of the existing Village park.

2. Continue to enhance recreational opportunities on the Black River.

3. Continue to support and expand year round youth and adult athletic, recreational and cultural programs.

4. Work with Lowville Central School and the Lewis County Fair Association to continue to develop public recreational facilities.

5. Work with other municipalities and organizations to assess the need for a community center or other community recreational assets.

6. Continue to support the development of the Maple Ridge property.
INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC UTILITIES

GOAL 8: PROVIDE A UTILITY INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEM THAT MEETS THE DEMANDS OF THE CURRENT RESIDENTS, MAINTAINS EXISTING INVESTMENTS AND SUPPORTS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT.

8.1 Public Water

The Village and surrounding portions of the Town are supplied with public water. The system was originally constructed in the 1890s. Water from spring and stream sources near Crystal Lake in the Town of Watson flows nine miles west to a pump station on E. State St. (near the Shady Ave. intersection) on the east side of the Village, where it enters the distribution system with excess pumped to a 3 million gallon storage tank northwest of the Village on Number Three Rd. The system is permitted by the DEC to withdraw 1.6 million gallons per day. Filtration capacity is 1.2 million gallons per day. The average daily usage was approximately 950,000 gallons per day in calendar year 2007.

The system serves approximately 3,500 people in the Village and 297 other properties in 15 water districts. About 172 Town properties near the Village receive public water through six water districts. The system serves seven districts in the Town of Watson, one in the Town of Martinsburg and one in the Town of New Bremen. Recent upgrades to the system include a water storage tank between Number Three Road and New York State Route 26 (an area of high elevation).

8.2 Public Sewer

The Village of Lowville public sewer was built in 1939 and updated in 1994, 1998, 2001 and 2006. The system serves approximately 3,500 people and has a permitted flow of 1.8 million gallons per day. The system covers the entire Village and parts of the Town along portions of Waters Road, Number Four Road, and NYS Routes 12, 26, and 812. Effluent flows to a treatment plant on East State St. in the southeastern corner of the Village and is discharged into Mill Creek, designated by DEC as a class D stream at the discharge point. The 2006 upgrade at the Treatment Plant improved the aeration capacity and replaced much of the aging infrastructure. Based on DEC mandate, the Village will be constructing a discharge pipeline to take the effluent directly to the Black River. This project is expected to be completed in 2008.

8.3 Wind Energy

The towns of Lowville and Martinsburg are home to the Maple Ridge Wind Farm, the largest wind energy producer in New York State. The complex features 195 towers, each of which stand 400 tall (when a blade tip is vertical) and produce 1.65 megawatts. The town of Lowville is currently developing a wind energy regulation local law.

Recommendations

1. Continue to develop a joint sewer and water capital plan including evaluation of future expansion.
2. Establish an urban services boundary which delineates the geographical limit of village supplied sewer and water expansion.

3. Complete the sewer pipeline project to the Black River.

4. Develop a storm water infrastructure improvement plan.

5. Upgrade water delivery lines, as needed.

6. Upgrade water meters, as needed.

7. Consider need for future sewer treatment capacity increases.

8. Improve telecommunications infrastructure.

9. Consider impact of additional wind farms on the economy, land use, and quality of life.
COMMUNITY FACILITIES

GOAL 9: ENSURE THAT A HIGH QUALITY LEVEL OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES ARE PROVIDED TO TOWN AND VILLAGE RESIDENTS.

9.1 Institutional Buildings

The Village of Lowville has what is sometimes referred to as “vertical” infrastructure. This includes government buildings such as the Town and Village halls, county office buildings, a library, schools and the post office. It is important that these facilities remain in the Village as they strengthen its function as a center and bolster traffic at neighboring retail establishments as well. The County of Lewis will be completing a new Court House construction project in 2008. This facility will be located adjacent to the existing Court House. It is important to work with County officials to determine the location of future County building projects.

9.2 School Districts

The Town and Village of Lowville are served by the Lowville Central School District. The district operates one facility, Lowville Academy and Central School, which houses grades K-12. Total enrollment in 2007-08 was 1,395. The total number employed by the district in 2007-08 was 220.

The revenues for the district were approx. $13.6 million in 1998-99, 70% of which came from state aid, 21% from real property taxes, and 9% from other revenues. The revenues for 2007-08 were $21.7 million, 64% from state aid, 17% from property taxes, and 19% from other revenues. Expenditures for 2007-08 were 20.8 million.

The only other schools located in the community are Amish school houses.

9.3 Health and Safety

The Town and Village are served by the Lowville Fire Department. This volunteer organization provides fire protection to the entire area and their Fire Hall is located on State Street within the Village. Lewis County Search and Rescue, a non-profit entity located on West State Street, provides emergency services to the Town and Village.

Recommendations

1. Maintain inventory of municipally owned and other community facilities.

2. Work with appropriate agencies to develop a centrally located community center.

3. Locate Town and Village offices downtown (to the extent possible).

4. Support improved continuing education services.

5. Support expanded affordable day care services.
6. Advocate for County, State and School facilities to be located in the downtown area.

7. Continue to promote municipal cooperation and shared services whenever appropriate and feasible.
PART IV. LAND USE POLICIES

This section of the comprehensive plan identifies the policies that, when implemented, will guide development in the Town and Village over the next 20 years. The policies provided in this section may be implemented through existing or new growth management techniques such as zoning and subdivision regulations, use of incentive zoning, and transfer or purchase of development rights to name a few.

RURAL AREAS

AGRICULTURE

The Importance of Agriculture to Lowville

Agriculture is of fundamental importance to the economy of both Lowville and the region. It is important not just for the farm jobs that are created, but also for the agri-business which supports farm operations. Lowville is made up of large amounts of prime agricultural lands, most of which are still in production. This natural resource is an important and valuable economic asset, which must be managed wisely.

Agriculture is important for non-economic reasons as well. The culture of Lowville and the region is agriculturally oriented. Agriculture is responsible for the rural atmosphere that residents feel is important. This atmosphere is largely defined by rural landscapes composed of open space, farm fields and pastures, farm buildings and outbuildings, and rural lifestyles.

Challenges to agriculture in the region are the intrusion of nonfarm uses into traditional agricultural areas and the parcelization of the farms into smaller lots. Nonfarm uses mixed into agricultural areas can be a problem, particularly when they are residential in nature. Agriculture is an industry. It involves many activities which may impact residential living such as irregular hours of operation, the use of heavy machinery, the spraying of chemicals, the spreading of manure—unpleasant noise, lights, and smells. Urban and suburban residents often move to rural areas for open space and need to understand the industrial aspects of agriculture.

Agricultural Protection in Lowville

The loss of farmlands to development so far has been characterized mainly by small, incremental development decisions being made by farmers to subdivide small parcels over long periods of time. The acreage of vacant agricultural land is minimal. This land has mostly reverted to succession growth. Development pressures are not a major factor in agricultural loss. While there has been some farmland loss due to subdivisions for residential, some of the agricultural lands have changed hands from small family farms to a few large farms and crop farming.

While development pressures in Lowville are presently low, this could change quickly and the town should be prepared. The agricultural land protection programs listed on page xxx are good options. A more aggressive means of preserving farms is through agricultural zoning. By this method, farms are prevented from being subdivided into parcels below a size considered to be viable for agricultural operations. Such a size is believed to be
approximately 100 acres. This acreage represents the "core" parcel of the farm, excluding the out-parcels, and thus is not in any way intended to represent the gross farm size believed to be viable. Other zoning approaches are cluster development (see appendix C) and limiting subdivision of large lots by regulating the amount of their frontage that can be converted into new lots. This technique is illustrated in appendix C.

COMMERCIAL USES IN RURAL AREAS

Lowville is largely an agricultural/residential community. Most commercial and non-farm industrial uses are located within the Village in compact commercial and industrial areas. There are relatively few commercial or industrial businesses in the rural areas of the Town. These businesses are generally located in the vicinity of the Village of Lowville, and are largely located in a linear or "strip" pattern along principal State arterial highways. There are a few agriculturally related businesses scattered throughout the remainder of the Town.

The Town should be prepared to locate low-density mixed residential/commercial uses in suitable areas where market forces dictate. Some of these areas might then have the potential to become the focus for new hamlet development combining an appropriate mix of commercial and residential uses. The hamlets of Dadville and West Lowville are such areas. With proper design controls, building height and bulk controls, and parking screening and placement, many nonresidential uses can be assets when in close or mixed proximity to residential neighborhoods. Careful buffering and screening can also be used in areas where there are more serious problems of use compatibility.

Stand alone or unconcentrated commercial development is appropriate, but should be restricted to small areas of the Town and to those types of developments which have an appropriate scale and character with the existing surrounding area, and have a vital economic reason to locate this way. Unconcentrated development should be only sparingly allowed, and where it is allowed, it should be carefully regulated by performance criteria which significantly reduce impacts on adjacent lands. Adult commercial uses are inappropriate in the town and should be prohibited. Provisions have been made for their location in the village.

Home based businesses are becoming increasingly popular. It is important to the health of the local economy to accommodate such business start-ups where the use can be demonstrated to be in harmony with the neighborhood, and will not detract from or compete with the existing Village center commercial area. Controls on the intensity of the use—site lighting, signs, parking, aesthetics, traffic generation, noise, and other such characteristics are important. The allowed use of the site must be clearly defined so that subsequent owners and changes in use do not alter the site so as to detract from the neighborhood.

RESIDENTIAL USES IN RURAL AREAS

Historical Patterns of Residential Development

The majority of the existing and new residential construction in the Town is single-family detached dwellings. The single-family dwelling pattern has historically predominated, usually at very low densities, on isolated tracts of land, scattered throughout the Town. Houses are usually located on lots that were former farmlands that have been subdivided. There are very few large scale subdivisions of land and there are no examples of large-tract subdivisions.
Mobile homes are an important part of the local housing stock. They are popular as affordable housing, and are a traditional housing type. Severe restrictions on mobile homes in the Village of Lowville have increased their popularity in the Town. There have been some attempts to locate mobile home parks in the Town, but a mobile home park has yet to be developed.

Reasons for the Existing Pattern

The demand for housing has been slow but steady. Even the recent impact of the Fort Drum expansion did not initiate proposals for large scale subdivisions. Higher density development has historically tended to locate within the Village where public water and sewer facilities are available.

There are few Town-based water or sewage disposal facilities, although several Village water lines have been extended into the Town over the years. These water lines were not planned or directed by either the Village or Town government. Six water supply special improvement districts have recently been established by the Town to administer these water lines. They are generally not considered suitable for large scale residential development until they are physically upgraded. These new water districts may eventually provide opportunities for higher density residential expansion in the future. Five sewer districts also currently exist within the Town.

Concentrations of residential development have been forced to locate where there is the availability of well water, and soil suitability for on-site sewage disposal. Existing constraints created by these factors have necessitated very low density construction, as on-site sewage disposal systems require at least 20,000 square feet (and often more area) for proper functioning.

Variety in Residential Development Patterns

There are a number of forms that residential developments can take, depending on the economics of the development and the goals to be achieved. Larger scale single-family subdivision developments in rural areas are usually of three patterns. They can be linear along existing highways, they can cover entire tracts of land, or they can be in a clustered configuration.

Linear roadside subdivisions have a negative effect on the function of major highways, by allowing an excessive number of entrances which endanger traffic flows. While the preservation of open space may be a desirable goal, a pattern of open space locked-up behind a row of houses along the road is often an undesirable pattern. The open space may be inaccessible to the public for recreation and enjoyment. It places new housing construction on display, not the unique landforms, vistas, vegetation, and agricultural activities which form the character of the Town. The linear pattern may ultimately detract from the preservation of the rural character and quality of life which makes Lowville a unique place to live.

Conventional subdivisions completely consume all land in the subdivision area. Open space is dispersed in small pieces to individual homeowners. While giving each landowner a small piece of private property, conventional subdivision does not reserve enough open space to meet many important community objectives. The open space in
a conventional subdivision, while constituting a major part of the subdivision, is configured in such a way that its visual impact is significantly diminished or negated. A conventional subdivision, even with massive amounts of open space, has no rural character. Conventional subdivisions can also cause traffic problems because they typically have only one or two points of access to the main road they lie along. These access points can become busy intersections. Finally, conventional subdivisions can impede a sense of community and walkability from one to another.

Cluster subdivisions are a viable alternative to conventional types and are discussed in detail in appendix C.

Mobile Homes

Mobile homes are a popular north county housing choice. They can create problems, however, when a preponderance of them in an area begins to discourage other higher valued housing types from locating in the area. The experience of many communities is that large numbers of unregulated mobile homes may have the effect of seriously eroding the local tax base due to rapid depreciation and aesthetic deterioration.

There are three things that can be done to lessen the impact of mobile homes. These include 1) prohibiting mobile homes in some areas of the Town, thus leaving land free and available for higher valued development, 2) setting a minimum width standard for mobile homes, and 3) establishing mobile home design standards.

Design standards can have a significant impact on the appearance of mobile homes. The most effective design considerations include requiring 1) a pitched roof, 2) exterior siding of traditional site-built homes, and 3) horizontal dimensions approximating site-built homes. Proper site locations along with accessory buildings and screening can significantly change the appearance of horizontal dimensions.

These design improvements can help make mobile homes fit in much better with neighborhoods of conventional housing, protecting housing values and the community tax base. These design improvements will increase the cost of housing, however, so they may not be appropriate in all areas where mobile homes are allowed.

Rural areas are regulated by the following zoning districts:

**R-30/R-40 – Residential** (town zoning law)
**OC - Open Space and Conservation** (town zoning law)
**AG - Agriculture** (town zoning law).

Location and Character

These zones cover most of the town and consist of woodlands, farms (active and abandoned) and low density residential development made up of single family dwellings and mobile homes. Scattered commercial uses are also present. These areas include large acreages of DEC regulated wetlands, flood hazard areas and steep slopes. These areas are interspersed by town and county roads as well as NYS Routes 12, 26, and 812.
Policies

- The intensity of development should be compatible with a rural environment and lower than that of the Village.
- Trees, vegetation and other landscape features should be retained as much as possible on development sites. Uses should be appropriately landscaped so as to fit into the rural setting.
- Signs should be limited and placed so as to minimize impacts on naturally aesthetic views.
- Scenic roadsides and viewsheds should be identified and preserved.
- Land subdivisions should preserve large lots of agricultural and wooded open space whenever possible.
- Nonfarm intrusions into agricultural areas should be minimized, thus minimizing conflicts with existing agricultural operations.
- Low density zoning in agricultural areas should be maintained to minimize subdivision activity.
- Agricultural support uses should be allowed in close proximity to primary agricultural areas.
- Residential lots should be large enough to ensure that sewage which is disposed of on-site can safely percolate, and that wells will not overdraw groundwater supplies.
- Mobile homes should be permitted in some areas, but should be subject to design standards appropriate for the areas they are located in.
- Residential uses should be buffered from commercial, office, and other conflicting uses that rely on vehicular transportation.
- Minimum lot frontages directly along principal highways outside the Village should generally be 220 – 240 feet so as to substantially limit access points.
  - Stand alone commercial/industrial site development can be allowed in certain parts of the Town. Standards for buffer zones, screening, building size and bulk, impervious surfaces, lighting, noise, odor, signs, on-site circulation, parking and loading, access, drainage and erosion control should be used to ensure that the impacts of development are controlled.
- Parking areas should generally be to the side or rear of buildings, and appropriately screened from public view.
  - Home businesses should be accommodated but regulated to promote harmony with the neighborhood.
  - Mining should be carefully controlled.

VILLAGE NEIGHBORHOODS

The bulk of the Village of Lowville is made up of pleasant traditional neighborhoods. These areas have a small town feel and create a sense of community for their residents. Most are also within a short walk of the village center. Although these areas are primarily residential, some institutional uses, such as churches and schools, and small commercial operations are located within them. There are also several established nodes of concentrated commercial uses within them.
Lots are typically small, ranging from around 9,000 square feet to 20,000 square feet with frontages ranging from approximately 40 ft. to 160 ft. Buildings are typically two to three stories and are located relatively close to the street. The relationship between building height and the space between buildings on opposite sides of a street creates spatial enclosure which creates a very comfortable environment for pedestrians.

These areas are served by public sewer and water and most feature sidewalks, curbs and street trees. Infill development should be encouraged here as well as new development (where soil and other environmental conditions permit).

Variety in Residential Dwelling Types

It is important that Lowville provide opportunities for a variety of residential types and situations. Opportunities should be provided for homes for people of all ages and income levels, at various densities. In pursuing this objective, it is important to accommodate single-family dwellings, accessory apartments, duplexes, and multiple-family dwellings.

Village neighborhood areas are regulated by the following zoning districts:

**R - Residential** (village zoning law)

Location and Character

This zone consists of the stable single-family residential neighborhoods surrounding the central business district. These neighborhoods are of three types. The older traditional neighborhoods of the village core consist of residences close together on long narrow lots. There is a strong street orientation, including uniform front yard setbacks, street trees and sidewalks. A second type of neighborhood includes some of the newer neighborhoods which have lot arrangements similar to the older traditional neighborhoods, but with far less of a street orientation. They are lacking some of the street amenities such as street trees, and in some cases, sidewalks. A third distinctive neighborhood is a new area of housing on very large wide lots with virtually no street orientation or amenities whatsoever.

Policies

- Lots should be kept in the 7,500 to 24,000 square feet range so that efficient use of existing infrastructure (sewer system, sidewalks, etc.) is made.
- Future streets should be laid out in a block pattern that respects the current one. Cul de sacs should be discouraged unless absolutely necessary to preserve environmental features.
- Buildings should respect a maximum setback or “build-to” line.
- Parking should be to the rear of buildings.
- Sidewalks and street trees shall be required.
- Buildings should range from two to three stories in height.
- Maintenance easements should be required for lot line development.
- Multi-family dwellings require parking to rear, adequate space, screening, bulk control, sidewalks and street orientation.
Accessory apartments and multi-family dwellings should be in character with single-family dwellings.

NC - Neighborhood Commercial (village zoning law)

Location and Character

These zones are commercial areas that include small scale retail sales and service establishments which are closely surrounded by dwellings. These areas have generally been developed more recently with commercial uses of designs which tend to contrast sharply with the character of the residential neighborhoods of which they are part.

Policies

- Buildings should respect a maximum setback or “build-to” line.
- All uses should be buffered and screened from adjacent residential uses and residential zones.
- Storage and parking should be to the rear or side of buildings.
- Sidewalks and street trees should be required.
- Lighting should be controlled.
- Planted areas should be retained along the street.
- Free standing signs should be prohibited.
- Building scale, form and materials (ie. roof pitch, materials and colors) should be consistent with the neighborhood.

VILLAGE CENTER AREA

Downtown Lowville functions as the center of the Lowville community as well as the Lewis County seat. Several factors are necessary for the Village to function as a vital pedestrian oriented social center. First, there must be pedestrian origins and pedestrian destinations. Second, there must be proper pedestrian facilities to allow the movement of people comfortably and conveniently between uses.

Pedestrian origins refer to houses, apartments, and convenient parking areas. Housing within walking distance of downtown uses is considered important to a central business district’s success. Apartments over commercial buildings, housing close to the core, senior citizen or special needs housing in and around the village center are all useful to retaining a commercial base. For people accessing the center from outside a normal five-minute walking distance, convenient parking is necessary to create a suitable walking origin. Parking areas should be shared by property owners, or municipally owned. On-site parking for individual uses should be discouraged so as to maximize developable land, and keep central Village building densities high enough to make walking between uses convenient and practical.

Likewise, pedestrian destinations are important to the vibrancy of the downtown area. Public institutions such as schools, churches, meeting halls, libraries, public safety
buildings, and government buildings are important assets to the downtown area, bringing spin-off pedestrian traffic to businesses. Retail sales and services are often a primary pedestrian destination of village centers, and provide an important part of the commercial economic base that the Village needs to sustain itself. New infill development of these uses should be sought. The Lowville village center has historic integrity. This is an asset in its own right, providing a quality of life that is increasingly unobtainable in other areas. It is also an asset in attracting tourist dollars. New development and building improvements should complement this integrity.

The Village has historically been a road transportation junction. Motor vehicle traffic funnels through the Village in many directions. This traffic often conflicts with the traditional Village center function. The Village is experiencing difficulty in maintaining itself as a traditional social/commercial center partially because of traffic congestion. This can be aggravated by the conflict of motor vehicles with large groups of pedestrians such as school children at lunch hour using the streets.

The village center is regulated by the following zoning district:

**C - Village Center** (village zoning law)

**Location and Character**

This zone encompasses the existing village central business district. This area has a traditional pre-1950s development pattern of store fronts along a common front building line, facades often unbroken between stores, and building heights of one to three stories.

More recent infill has broken the traditional building pattern. Parking lots have been placed on the street front, and some commercial buildings have been constructed which are not of traditional scale or architecture. This area could benefit greatly from better definition and organization of parking spaces and is troubled by traffic congestion.

**Policies**

- Buildings should respect a maximum setback or “build to” line.
- Parking should be to the rear or side of buildings.
- Parking in side yards shall be fenced/screened to maintain the front building line.
- Where parking lots abut residential land uses, buffering/screening should be provided.
- New curb-cuts should be limited and shared access should be encouraged or required.
- Uses that are high traffic generators, ie. drive-through banking, convenience stores, etc. should be prohibited.
- High density retail sales and services and office uses should be encouraged with retail located on ground floors and office uses above.
- The pedestrian friendliness of the Village center should be enhanced though proper, human scale building setbacks, street trees, sidewalks, and street furniture.
• New construction should respect the architectural character of neighboring buildings.

INDUSTRIAL AREAS

Industrial uses require access to major transportation routes, such as railroads and/or important highways. Hamlets and villages are ideal locations due to the fact that they typically have this access. These locations also allow some workers who live nearby to walk to and from work. Care must be taken, however, to separate industrial uses from centers and residential neighborhoods. Better locations are at neighborhood and village/hamlet edges.

Industrial areas are regulated by the following zoning districts:

I-1/I-2/I-3 – Industrial (town zoning law)
I - Industrial (village zoning law)

Location and Character

Mill Creek Commerce Park has been located within the Town and Village on the Number Four Road. The park allows all types of commercial and industrial uses, including retail sales and services. This park can be serviced by Village utilities, and has the potential to be an important commercial/industrial employment center in the future. The commerce park is an ideal location for uses that are generally unsuitable for Village locations because of space needs or potential negative impacts on adjacent residential uses.

The Village also has an industrial area located along the historical railroad corridor east and south of the Village center. This area is home to Lowville’s large industries such as Kraft and AMF. This area is largely built out.

Policies

• The limited space of the Mill Creek commerce park and the existing Village industrial area should be used for appropriate commercial and industrial uses.
• Uses should be buffered and screened from residential zones.
• Uses should comply with drainage controls.
• Lighting controls needed to protect nearby residences
• Front yards should be minimized to prevent waste of valuable land.
• Mining should be carefully controlled.

AUTOMOBILE COMMERCIAL AREAS

Some areas along major highways should be designated for automobile oriented uses which are inappropriate in the Village center area. These areas should be small and within
walking distance of residential areas. These uses might include large product retail facilities for boats, mobile homes, cars, etc.; car washes; fast-food establishments; drive-through businesses; service stations; motels; and other like businesses. These types of businesses require a commercial strip location. Some of the negative images of these strips, and their highway-function destroying nature, can be managed through proper sign controls, access management techniques, pedestrian friendly design, and the appropriate screening of unattractive features.

Automobile commercial areas are regulated by the following zoning districts:

**CB – Commercial Business** (town zoning law)
**CB-R – Commercial Business Residential** (town zoning law)
**AC - Automobile Commercial** (village zoning law)

**Location and Character**

These zones include some of the area along NYS Routes 12, 26 and 812 with the most intensively developed area being along South State Street. These areas have been more recently developed with commercial uses with an automobile rather than pedestrian orientation.

**Policies**

- Parking areas should be to the rear or side of buildings.
- Front yard parking (when necessary) should have a vegetative buffer.
- Uses shall comply with drainage controls.
- Access controls should be maintained, including shared access where possible.
- Buffering and screening of side and rear yards shall be provided adjacent to residences and residential zones.
- Free standing signs should have height and size limitations.
- Land and buildings should be developed in an aesthetically pleasing way as these areas are located at entrances to the Village.
APPENDIX A

TOWN AND VILLAGE OF LOWVILLE COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the spring of 1998, the Lowville Town and Village Planning Boards began work on a community survey for the Town and Village. Of the 1280 surveys that were mailed to residents, 395 were returned. The survey format allowed two responses per survey in order for two adults in the same household to respond separately. This brought the total number of respondents to approximately 574. The average survey respondent has lived in the Lowville area over 20 years, owns his/her home and either works in the Town/Village of Lowville or is not currently working.

Participants were first asked the following two questions about life in Lowville. The top five responses are listed for each question.

1) What were your reasons for choosing to live in the Lowville area?

   1. family and friends here
   2. rural atmosphere
   3. quality of life
   4. quality of schools
   5. low crime rate

2) What aspects discourage you from staying in the Lowville area?

   1. lack of job opportunities
   2. no aspects discourage me from staying
   3. cost of living
   4. lack of recreation opportunities for adults
   5. lack of recreation opportunities for youth

Next, participants were asked to rate a variety of community services and infrastructure conditions. Areas that 33% or more of the participants rated inadequate were:

- recreation facilities for adults and youth
- road and street maintenance
- availability of parking

Next, participants were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with a list of growth and development objectives. Objectives that 66% or more of the participants agreed with were:

- encourage job diversity
- encourage job growth
- encourage increased commercial development
- encourage industrial development
- encourage tourism
- encourage and attract new retail businesses
- encourage and attract new agribusinesses
- encourage home based businesses
- increase recreational opportunities
- maintain/improve open space
- encourage orderly development
- protect environmental quality
- protect historic structures
- improve traffic flow (in the Village)

Next, participants were asked to list specific problems they perceive in the Lowville area. Noteworthy comments included the following:

- lack of employment opportunities
- noise / odor from industries and farms
- poor drinking water quality
- encroachment of commercial uses into residential areas
- lack of retail businesses
- deteriorating conditions in downtown core (dirty appearance, unpainted buildings, poor retail hours)
- parking problems downtown
- pedestrian problems downtown (sidewalks and crosswalks)
- traffic problems downtown (truck traffic)
- lack of curbing/storm drainage problems in Village
- lack of handicapped accessibility (sidewalks, post office)
- lack of cultural opportunities
- lack of recreational facilities (no indoor gym, pool, skating rink)
- lack of public transportation
- hospital issues
- high energy prices
- historic properties deteriorating or in danger of demolition
- inefficiencies and duplication of services (especially police departments)

Finally, participants were asked to suggest objectives for a comprehensive plan. Noteworthy comments included the following:

- expand hours of landfill/transfer station
- attract new retail businesses
- revitalize downtown
- consider a bypass for downtown
- improve street infrastructure (ex. sidewalks, drainage)
- lessen restrictions of home-based businesses / Strengthen restrictions on home based businesses
- examine inefficient delivery of services, develop intergovernmental partnerships
- encourage “buying locally”
- solve hospital problems
- investigate municipal power
APPENDIX B

VILLAGE OF LOWVILLE BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABOUT THE SURVEY

In November of 1998, the Lowville Town/Village Planning Board surveyed businesses in the Town and Village of Lowville. The surveys were sent to 250 businesses of which 72 were returned. The results will assist them in redefining its comprehensive plan.

MAJOR ISSUES

Business Characteristics:
The majority of the survey respondents is located in downtown Lowville and has owned their businesses for over twenty years. Most were from the retail and service sectors followed by financial/professional, manufacturing, agricultural and health/medical.

A wide range of products and services were represented by these businesses. Retail products offered by the area stores include appliances, clothing, computers, fast food, fuel, furniture, groceries, home improvement supplies, jewelry, office supplies and vehicles. Some of the many services that are offered include appliance, computer, home and vehicle repair. Professional services such as employment, financial, hairdressing, health and fitness, janitorial, legal, printing and real estate are also available. Manufacturing enterprises include cabinet manufacturing and machining, and the agricultural industries include cattle sales and a dairy cooperative.

Markets/Opportunities:
The major marketing area for businesses in the Town/Village of Lowville is Lewis County and the North Country. Sales for a few companies extend throughout the country and even worldwide.

Owners face a number of challenges in the operation of their businesses. Among the most significant is the availability of parking, traffic congestion, competition, recruiting skilled labor and community support. Managing the direct costs to a business is always of concern as well. The local businesses find that labor and energy are their greatest expense followed by raw product and transportation costs.

Zoning:
Overall, zoning regulations have not made a major impact on the success of a business, and most feel that zoning changes would not aid their business.

Parking is more of a concern with downtown merchants than with businesses located elsewhere. There was not sufficient parking according to 21 of the 31 downtown merchants who responded to the parking question. Only 4 of the 19 village respondents reported that they did not have enough parking.

There is much agreement regarding the formation of a downtown revitalization effort, and of those, most agreed that a cooperative effort should be organized to handle issues
such as parking, signage and pedestrian traffic. Many felt that this effort should include improving the appearance of downtown, increasing services and encouraging people to support the local businesses.

**Government:**
The majority of the users expressed satisfaction with sewer and water service, but some felt the cost was too high. Other concerns included the quality of water, old piping and sewage backup. It was mentioned that municipal power and the extension of water and sewer lines would be beneficial.
APPENDIX C

Growth Management Tools

The basic premise of the plan recommendations is that a Town or Village should continue to exercise control over development so that it occurs in a manner that is consistent with the Town or Village’s vision for a quality community; a place that is desirable to live, work, and play for an entire lifetime.

Growth management is a process by which a community develops the methods and means (tools) to control the type, location and amount of land development (growth) in the community. The most common growth management tool is zoning. Zoning identifies distinct districts within which land use parameters are established for the type or use, density, and layout (setbacks) of development. Zoning can be an effective growth management tool when based on a community’s comprehensive plan. However, zoning is just one of the tools available to local municipalities. Other tools falling into this category include subdivision regulations and various ordinances dealing with signs, landscaping, open space, noise, odors, and others depending on the needs of a particular community.

Regulatory tools are essential to ensure orderly growth in a community. However, other growth management tools that rely on incentives and voluntary involvement by landowners, are also available to assist communities who understand the importance of managing their growth. Some of these tools include easements, purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, voluntary land acquisition, and development guidelines in conjunction with community supported plans.

Current growth management tools have been effective to a point, however, it is clear that if development is allowed to continue only under the guidance and regulatory framework of current zoning, the pattern of development will be similar to other highly suburbanized areas of the State and country.

The following pages provide a brief description of some of the growth management tools and techniques that might be appropriate for Lowville based upon the dialogue that has occurred during this comprehensive planning process. These tools are not direct recommendations. It is anticipated that future land use and open space studies will determine the appropriate growth management tools for both the Town and Village. The following information will provide some understanding and definition of these potential tools.

A. Clustering

The general concept behind clustering is that density is separated from lot size. In this way, the same number of homes are allowed but there is more flexibility in where the homes are located. Currently, the Town regulates density by having a minimum lot size for each zoning district. The minimum lot size in a particular zoning district, for example, might be 1 acre. Under this regulation, each home must be placed in the middle of a one acre “box”. Another way to express this density is that a person can build 1 dwelling unit (du) per acre – so on 10 acres a person can build 10 homes. However, by
expressing the density in this way, the person is no longer confined to dividing the land into one-acre lots. Smaller lots, as the capacity of the land can support, could be clustered on a portion of the site while the remainder remains open. In this way, the entire site is not divided into building lots and the homes can be sited in the most suitable locations.

There are many options for the remaining open lands derived from clustering. In all cases the open land should be restricted from any further development in some way. One method is through a conservation easement, held by the Town, a land trust, or both. There are several options in terms of ownership of the open land under easement. For example, if the original parcel was owned by a farmer, the farmer could retain ownership of the remaining lands. In this case the farmer would continue to farm the land and would retain all the rights of ownership (including the right to transfer title) except the property’s development rights, which would already have been used. Or the large remaining open parcel could be sold for a large “estate” farm (as one of the housing units allowed based on the original lot count). In both cases, the open space would be managed by a private land owner.

Clustering can be included in the Town’s land use regulations as an option or as a requirement. As an option, it is often ignored by developers who are unfamiliar with the concept and therefore are reluctant to try it. This is true even though they can often save money due to shorter road and infrastructure lengths. As a mandate, the Town could simply regulate density in terms of dwelling units per acre, as described above, and require some minimum percentage of open space for any subdivision. The minimum percentage of open space should be significant – at least 50% to make a real impact in terms of protecting resources and rural character. It is important to reiterate that the overall allowed density with clustering would not exceed what is possible with a conventional subdivision.
One technique to maintain lower density (a form of cluster subdivision) is a minimum lot frontage to lot depth ratio of 1:3 and a lot frontage to lot width ratio of 1:3. For example when a lot that is 1200’ by 1800’ (#1 below) is subdivided, typically 6 new lots can be created, leaving a “flag lot” with 200’ of frontage (assuming there is a 200’ minimum frontage requirement) (#2 below). With a 1:3 minimum frontage to depth ratio requirement, one of the newly created lots would be required to have a road frontage of at least 600’ (1800 divided by 3). The remainder of the lots would be allowed to have smaller frontages of 200’. The original lot would yield 4 new lots rather than 6 (#3 below).

B. Conservation Development

The conservation development is a resource-based process for subdivision design. The Town should consider the design of conservation developments instead of conventional subdivisions. The conservation design approach is quite simple and involves collaboration between the Planning Board and the applicant at the earliest state of design – the concept or sketch plan phase. To determine the yield, or possible lot count for a site, subtract the lands which contain severe constraints to development (defined in the subdivision regulations – wetlands, floodplains, very steep slopes, etc.). The maximum number of housing units would be based on the number of acres remaining and the maximum allowable density in the zoning district (for example, 1 du/acre).

Once the number of housing units is established, the design process can begin. Start by identifying the resources present on the site (agriculture land, historic or scenic views, significant tree stands, etc.). Illustrated residential design guidelines, described below, could assist in this process. Once the analysis of resources is done, it is possible to identify lands where development is most appropriate. Locate the homes in these development areas, design road alignments to connect these homes, and then draw the lot lines. Because the area and bulk regulations used for conventional subdivisions are not applicable, the process is creative and not driven strictly by regulations. Randall G. Arendt, in his book Conservation Design for Subdivisions: A Practical Guide to Creating Open Space Networks (1996), provides excellent guidance in the use of this approach to subdivision design.
The important aspect of the conservation development is that it is an opportunity for a Planning Board to become involved very early on in the site development process. Under standard subdivision and site plan review procedures, a Planning Board or Zoning Board is in a reactionary mode and must wait for a concept plan to be presented. Under a conservation development procedure, the Planning Board is involved in the process of identifying developable and undevelopable land before sketches and concept plans are laid out. The process works well for standard subdivisions as well as cluster developments.

C. Incentive Zoning

An incentive zoning program establishes a framework that derives community benefits from development activity. The incentive program would generally function as follows; in return for the provision of specified (in advance by legislation) public benefits, the Town could permit some increase in allowed density (also specified by legislation). An example of a public benefit that the Town might desire would be public access through open lands set aside as part of a conservation development. This access might be used for the development of walking, bicycle, or horse riding trail systems linking different parts of the community. Examples of other public benefits might be the donation of public open space for a park, the donation of public lakes access, or the provision of low and moderate income housing. The amenities are given to the Town at no financial cost in exchange for the density bonus incentive. The Town would ensure that the amenities gained are "worth" the incentives as part of the incentive zoning review process.

A specific example of the potential use of incentive zoning in the Town would apply to the protection of important viewsheds and environmental features. Incentive zoning would permit waving of formal dimensional requirements provided that a conservation design is employed. This would allow flexibility in site design in pursuance of the goals of the incentive program. This growth management tool could be effective to protect the stream corridors, ravines, viewsheds and viewpoints, and other ecologically sensitive areas.

D. Conservation Easements

One way for the Town and Village of Lowville to protect scenic resources, open farmlands, and other resources of value to the community would be to encourage the use of conservation easements to protect open land. A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between the landowner and the Town, or a third party such as a land trust, to protect land from development by permanently restricting the use and development of the property, thereby preserving its natural or manmade features. The legally binding agreement is filed in the Office of the Lewis County Clerk in the same manner as a deed. The landowner retains ownership of the land, and all of the rights of ownership except the ability to develop the land. The specific restrictions are detailed in the easement agreement.

A landowner can choose to donate a conservation easement on all or part of his/her land. There are often income and estate tax benefits for the landowner associated with the donation of a conservation easement. As part of land development proposals, conservation easements can also be used to permanently protect open space set aside as part of a conservation (clustered) subdivision.
There are additional uses of conservation easements that can be promoted by the Town or Village. The Town or Village could consider taking a more pro-active approach to keeping specific parcels of land undeveloped. These are further described in the following three sections.

**E. Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program**

The community can take an active role in protecting open space and farmland using conservation easements. The development value of specific parcels of land can be purchased by the Town or a land trust. Conservation easements are the legally binding document that ensures that once the development rights are purchased, the land remains undeveloped in perpetuity (although the land may or may not remain in production agriculture). If the development rights are purchased, the process is called Purchase of Development Rights (PDR). The cost of PDR depends on the specific parcel. It is calculated by determining the current appraised value of the property and its appraised value as open or agricultural land without development potential. The difference between these two numbers is the value of the development rights.

Generally speaking, PDR programs are regarded as being fair to landowners because the landowners are compensated directly for their contribution to something the public desires. In other words the community must “put its money where its mouth is.” The land remains on the tax rolls and is taxed at an assessed value that reflects its restricted use. These programs are also popular with residents because they achieve permanent land protection.

In order to implement a PDR program, the Town would need to make a commitment to funding this activity. Initially, this may seem to be a very large expense — and it is. However, through careful analysis, some communities have found that their investment will actually cost less in the long term than it would cost to provide services for new residences that might instead be built on that land. Communities have paid for these programs in various ways including bonding for the money to spread the cost over a period of years. There are also sources of state and federal grant funding available to assist communities in permanently protecting farmland and open space in this manner.

A Purchase of Development Rights program requires up-front planning to implement. Communities with well-defined programs have a higher likelihood of receiving grants due to their competitive nature. The return on this investment in planning can be substantial in terms of both the community’s fiscal situation and community character.

**F. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program**

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs use real estate market activity to focus development in suitable locations while protecting open spaces. To establish such a program, the town designates specific areas as “sending zones”. Sending zones are places that the community seeks to preserve. The town also establishes “receiving zones”. These are areas that are suitable for fairly high density development. Through the TDR program, development rights are sent from the sending zone to the receiving zone. Land in the sending zone will therefore be protected while land in the receiving zone will be densely developed.
Development in the sending zones is tightly regulated for natural resource and open space protection. However, landowners in the sending zone are allowed to sell a certain number of “development rights” to land developers at a price that they negotiate with the developer. Land developers who seek to build in the “receiving zones” can purchase those development rights in order to develop their land more densely. When the landowner in the sending zone sells development rights to the developer, the landowner is required to place his/her land under a permanent conservation easement. (Note: TDR can also be accomplished through incentive zoning.)

A TDR program also requires up-front planning. Sending and receiving zones must be carefully designated. In some cases it may be necessary to consider the development of public water and sewer infrastructure to accommodate the higher density development. In addition, the town must set up the administrative mechanisms to make the program work efficiently. Still, in Lowville, it might be possible to make a TDR program work for portions of the Town.

G. Term Easements and Tax Abatement Program

This type of program, used by several communities in New York State, provides tax abatements for term easements on particular parcels of open space or farmland. As the name implies, a term easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and the Town which is written to last for a period of years, most commonly for 5 to 20 years. Tax abatements are usually calculated on a sliding scale with a larger tax abatement for a longer term easement. If these protected lands are converted to development prior to the expiration of the term, the tax benefit must be returned and a penalty paid. While these programs are effective in addressing the loss of open space and farmland in the short term, they simply place these lands on hold. Long-term solutions must still be developed for the future of these spaces.

H. Residential Development Design Guidelines

The Town and Village could consider creating illustrated design guidelines for new development. Illustrated design guidelines complement the increased design flexibility allowed by conservation (clustered) subdivisions. No longer restricted to maximizing the number of X-acre boxes allowed by zoning’s minimum lot size requirements, the designer of a subdivision can be more conscious of the natural features of the parcel(s) and the surrounding landscape. It is best for the community to provide guidance in this regard by describing what it values and what it seeks to protect. Illustrations make these guidelines more easily understood by developers, review boards, and the public. All types of items can be incorporated into a community’s design guidelines depending upon what the community values. Design guidelines could include specific requirements that:

- The builder maintain existing trees to the maximum extent possible during the construction of homes (as opposed to clearing the entire site).
- Homes be located away from rural highways and collectors, or that they be visually buffered from these roads in order to maintain their rural character. Frontage lots should be discouraged.
- Low volume local roads (including subdivision streets) be designed to an alternative rural road standard more in context with their setting. Examples of
rural road standards are available from several sources including the Cornell Road Program and the Dutchess County Department of Planning.

- Natural drainage ways, wildlife habitat areas, contours and land forms be respected and disturbance to these areas minimized.
- Cut and fill activity be minimized and that all disturbed areas be restored with vegetation.

A pre-application conference or sketch plan workshop between the applicant and the Planning Board becomes extremely important in order to creatively deal with design issues early in the process.

Design guidelines are generally informational and collaborative in nature. That is, the applicant has an opportunity to review the guidelines prior to designing a project in order to understand what the community and the Planning Board desires. The sketch plan workshop with the Planning Board is another opportunity to discuss initial design options before the more thorough and expensive design work begins. The workshop should focus on creativity and not confrontation. It will always be in the applicant’s best interest to work cooperatively with the Planning Board because the board must ultimately decide where to approve the final plans. Achieving consensus at the start can significantly reduce the time and cost of the review process for the applicant.

1. Fiscal Model

A fiscal model is a planning tool that can be used to identify the implications of current zoning and other future land use planning scenarios. It is intended as a means of comparing land uses, such as residential and commercial, to determine how increased growth rates would impact the fiscal budget of the Town, Village and school districts.

The model includes a series of variables that are model input. For example, a scenario might compare the impact of increased economic development against the current growth rates. There are many useful implications of such a model. Another benefit is that the model is open-ended, which means it is capable of expansion into a much more detailed program without the need to rewrite the model.
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