Comprehensive Plan
Town of Scipio, NY

January 2011











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GIS DATA Disclaimer

The original sources of each dataset is identified on the maps. Due to the different sources and scales of projection, key features such as roads, parcel boundaries and streams may not overlap accurately when comparing several data layers on the same map.Acreage calculations for various parameters in this report were generated through the use of ArcGIS and are an approximation of the actual size. For more precise measurements, contact the Cayuga County Planning Department.



Looking North on Main Street (Route 34B) in the Hamlet of Scipioville, date unknown. (source: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/)

"When an adventurer carries his gods with him into a remote and savage country, the colony he founds will, from the beginning, have graces, traditions, riches of the mind and spirit. Its history will shine with bright incidents, slight, perhaps, but precious, as in life itself, where great matters are often as worthless as astronomical distances, and the trifles dear as the heart's blood."

-- Willa Cather, from her novel Shadows On The Rock, 1931

Introduction

The Town of Scipio Comprehensive Plan was initiated, generated, and supported by the Scipio community in a collaborative process intended to guide Town officials and the community in making decisions that affect the future of the Town. The comprehensive plan provides a basis for guiding future growth, development and community preservation. The plan also acts as a historical document that identifies present land use and infrastructure, as well as the physical, cultural, and demographic characteristics of the Town.

In early 2007, the Scipio Town Board in consultation with the Scipio Planning Board agreed to appoint a Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC) to research and prepare a comprehensive plan. In August of 2007, the Town Planning Board initiated a public request in the Town Newsletter for residents, landowners, business owners, and other concerned citizens to serve on the Comprehensive Planning Committee. The Town board appointed the CPC members and scheduled its initial meeting. In December 2007, the CPC held its first meeting and began to identify the formal process it would follow to develop the plan. The town of Scipio CPC was guided and assisted in the comprehensive planning process by the Central New York Regional Planning Board (CNYRPB), under a grant provided by Congressman James Walsh.

Through in-depth study, analysis, and community participation, the Comprehensive Plan provides a sound basis for guiding future growth, development, and community preservation. Community input from surveys and the Comprehensive Planning Committee played an important role in the development of the Comprehensive Plan by directly informing a series of clearly defined goals and recommended actions for the Town to pursue. Any future land use or zoning regulations must be consistent with the findings and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

Members of the Comprehensive Plan Committee:

Bruce Hatfield, Chair	Randy Lawrence	Dodie Rowlands
Marian Brown	Mark Malys	Mark Vorreuter
Mike Brown	Joe McSweeney	Keith Welch
Phil Buckhout	Gary Mutchler	Patricia White
Robb Jetty	Tom Olenych	

Public Participation

The Comprehensive Planning Committee formulated a survey which was mailed to 732 town residences and property owners and was available for public review at three public locations. The intent of the survey was to seek out opinions on present day Scipio and what the public sees for the Town of Scipio in the future. 168 completed surveys were returned, a 23% response rate. Analysis of the results of the written survey and community inventory formed the basis for this comprehensive plan. All CPC meetings were open to the public.

Plan Structure

The contents of this plan include an Introduction and four chapters. Chapter 1: Goals and Recommendations, lays out the specific goals and recommendations by topic area; Chapter 2: Community Inventory and Analysis, Chapter 3: Regional Influences is intended to give background information on existing conditions in the town and region; and Chapter 4: Issues of Community Concern, is a discussion of issues revealed through the public participation process. Four Appendices in the back of the Plan contain information on Principals of Smart Growth, Conservation Subdivisions, History of Planning and Land Use in the U.S., and the Community Survey.

Adopting and Implementing the Comprehensive Plan

Legislative Authority

In the State of New York, village and town governments are granted authority to adopt a comprehensive plan pursuant to Village Law §7-722 or Town Law §272-a. The comprehensive plan, a set of policy and analytic documents and maps, strategies and tools for the guidance of community well-being, land use, and development, is also intended to provide the foundation for local zoning laws. Once adopted, all land use policy decisions in the Town must be in accordance with the comprehensive plan. The review of future projects no longer occurs on an independent project-by-project basis, but rather in consideration of the comprehensive plan and the community vision. This Plan provides guidance as to where and how future development should occur in the Town. In addition, all other governmental agencies must consider this plan when directing or funding capital projects that occur within the Town.

Adopting the Comprehensive Plan

The purpose of adopting a comprehensive plan is the protection of the health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of the community and their environment. Once adopted, review of future projects occurs in consideration of the community vision and the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, all other governmental agencies must consider this plan when directing or funding capital projects that occur within the Town. Adoption of a comprehensive plan is a discretionary decision and is considered a Type I action pursuant to Article 8 of the Environmental Conservation Law and Title 6 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations Part 617.4(b)(1).This means that the plan must meet the provisions of the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) prior to final adoption by Town Board.

In accordance with New York State General Municipal Law 239, the Governing Board must refer the adoption or amendment of the proposed comprehensive plan to the County Planning Board's 239 Land Use Committee for review for potential inter-municipal impacts of the proposed plan. The Governing Board may adopt a Comprehensive Plan (or an amendment to a Comprehensive Plan) by resolution.

Review and Maintenance of the Plan

Because communities are continually changing and adjusting to new conditions, this comprehensive plan is a work in progress, and can be thought of as a document that provides guiding principles for the future development and growth decisions. This comprehensive plan should be reviewed regularly to ensure its continued relevance with the existing conditions, goals and objectives of the Town of Scipio. Following the adoption of the Plan; every five years, the Town Board should conduct an in-depth review of the plan and make changes as needed. This in-depth review should assess the status of the plan's recommendations and implementation actions such as land use regulation revisions, capital improvement programming, expansion of recreational opportunities, tourism, economic development, and progress on other work identified in the Goals & Recommendations (Chapter 1) of the plan. As policy-making changes and the physical characteristics of the community change, the comprehensive plan should also change. The plan should be a "living document".

Circumstances that may warrant revising the plan include:

- A finding of significant change within the community or substantial unforeseen circumstances or impacts;

- A finding of significant public benefit associated with the proposed revision or a need to maintain and protect public investments and resources; or

- The need to maintain compliance with new laws, regulations, court actions, or other mandates

Implementing the Scipio Comprehensive Plan

All of the work that the community has done thus far in preparing the Comprehensive Plan can be lost without a solid framework for implementation based on available funding resources and realistic expectations. Some recommendations in this plan may be implemented over a longer period of time, others will be a concentrated, short-term effort, but all elements of the Plan should be considered in terms of budgets and time frame.

A Comprehensive Plan is a valuable resource a community can use to win significant grant funding from a wide variety of sources. Forming partnerships with various public agencies at the local, county, state and federal levels is advisable as these agencies can often assist communities in their funding and implementation efforts. Special committees may be established by the Town Board to address specific focus areas identified in the Plan. These committees should include members of the community most familiar with the Comprehensive Plan and its guiding principles. Examples of such committees are a Farmland Preservation Committee, An Historic Preservation Committee, or a Energy and Technology Committee.

Community efforts can often be strengthened and community benefits broadened by cooperative planning and promotional strategies among neighboring communities. Through cooperative efforts with other agencies and inter-municipal relationships with neighboring municipalities, planning can have positive impacts on the community, as well as on the region as a whole.

History of Planning and Land Use in the U.S.

Towns across America, as a result of an evolving story of settlement, bare unique physical and cultural characteristics reflected in their villages and along their roadsides. Rural towns like Scipio contribute to, and are affected by regional centers of social, cultural, and economic activity. Rural life offers residents, employees, and visitors a wealth of opportunities and experiences to enjoy every day. Rural character and identity rests upon both tangible and intangible elements such as sights, sounds, scents and experiences that combine to provide the Scipio community with a familiar sense of place, and for many, a profound sense of meaning.

A comprehensive Plan provides a framework within which these unique characteristics and elements of a place can be drawn upon to create or preserve an environment supportive of a community's vision for itself. Through careful analysis, including direct community involvement in the process, rural planning addresses problems and takes advantage of opportunities to create unique, viable and pleasant rural places. This first Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Scipio, strives to do just that for a community already rich in citizen commitment and possibilities.

As European settlers emigrated to the United States they adopted English common law under which land they owned, their "property," meant a place in which they held a bundle of rights including:
1) the right to control and use the property;
2) the right to benefits from the property;
3) the right to transfer or sell the property; and
4) the right to exclude others from the property.
However, those rights were not absolute; they were, as they still are, subject to the rights of society often as codified in law. In the early history of the United States, society placed few limitations on the use of land as it seemed an endless resource, especially with a limited population base. From Jefferson's Corps of Discovery to the Homestead Act to massive federal irrigation, road building, and energy producing projects, the challenge was not limiting use of land but rather getting it settled, cultivated, and developed. However, as the population increased and people began to congregate in cities, the need arose for local governmental control to put some limits on the movement of industry and commerce into residential areas and to prevent residents from becoming nuisances to each other. These limitations generally took the form of zoning ordinances regulating incompatible uses, building heights, setbacks, and lot sizes. However, as

the density of populations grew and spread, some began to recognize a need for planning, and noting the changing times, Theodore Roosevelt reminded his constituents in the summer of 1910: "Every man holds his property subject to the general right of the community to regulate its use to whatever degree the public welfare may require it."

Concern for the public welfare reached a peak in the 1960s and 70s as members of Congress observed that the balance between economic growth and development on the one hand, and protection of natural resources on the other, had tipped too far in the direction of growth and development. Congress moved to expand legal limitations that would address the issue of dwindling natural resources and environmental degradation. As a result, federal laws such as The National Environmental Policy Act, The Wilderness Act, The National Forest Management Act, The Endangered Species Act, etc., were enacted that have had significant impacts on land use. Many states also passed their own laws and adopted policies that complemented the new federal laws.

In New York, the enactment of Article IX of the State Constitution, the Municipal Home Rule Law, the Statute of Local Governments, and the State Environmental Quality Review Act have provided municipalities the power to enact local laws that compliment several of the federal laws mentioned above. The scope of this power and the procedures for implementing it, are set out in the Municipal Home Rule Law, adopted in 1963. Section 10 of the Municipal Home Rule Law contains the constitutional grants of power to local governments and adds thereto the powers to collect local taxes authorized by the Legislature, to provide for the protection and enhancement of the physical and visual environment, the apportionment of local legislative bodies, and assessments for local improvements, as well as the powers granted to local governments in the Statute of Local Governments.

The Municipal Home Rule Law also includes a Bill of Rights for Local Governments and provision for a unique Statute of Local Governments, under which home rule powers may be given to quasi-constitutional protection against change (Section 2(b)(1)). Among the rights and powers enumerated under the Bill of Rights for Local Governments are the right to have a legislative body elected by the people; to adopt local laws; to have local officers elected or appointed by the local residents or officers; the power to agree (as authorized by the Legislature) with the federal government, a State, or other government, to provide cooperative governmental services and facilities. Also included are the power of eminent domain; the power to make a fair return on the value or property used in the operation of certain utility services, and the right to use the profits therefore for refunds or any other lawful purpose; and the power to apportion costs of governmental services of function upon portions of local areas as authorized by the Legislature.

Prior Local and Regional Planning Initiatives

Various community-based planning initiatives have contributed to the development of the Scipio Comprehensive Plan. In 1989, a preliminary twenty page report, considered a draft of the master plan and zoning law to be proposed to the Town Board was developed by the zoning commission of the Town of Scipio. The intention was "to update and analyze the socio-economic and land use data bases for the town so as to establish a basic, comprehensive plan upon which the revised zoning law would be based." Additional guidelines for future growth and development in the Town of Scipio came from the Zoning Law of the Town of Scipio also adopted in 1989 and amended with Local Laws in 1995. The Zoning Law of the Town of Scipio includes Articles regarding Planned Development Districts, Use Regulations, Special Conditions, Dimensional Requirements, Parking, Signs, and Nonconformities, in addition to general and administrative legislation for the town.

The development of the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Plan, in July of 2001, was a result of the collaboration, co-operation, and work of agency staff, municipal officials, and the public. The plan was produced by the Cayuga County Department of Planning and Development. Owasco Lake is an important resource to the communities within its watershed. Indeed, over 70% of the people residing in Cayuga County use it as a drinking water source. Residents and tourists enjoy recreational opportunities and the scenic views of the lake, while agriculture, fisheries, and wildlife depend on its water. The development of the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Plan was an important community action taken for the protection of the watershed and Owasco Lake water quality. The plan documents on-going lake management efforts, serves as a guide for future development and environmental initiatives in the watershed, and lists sources of revenue to fund projects. The Owasco Lake Watershed Management Plan Steering Committee and the Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency, with the support of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Owasco Watershed Lake Association, produced The State of the Owasco Lake Watershed Report which contains information on watershed characteristics, land use, economy, cultural resources, laws, ordinances, regulations, management programs, municipalities, and issues of concern. The report also discusses issues that affect or will affect the future of the lake. The information contained in the report was used in the development of the Owasco Lake Watershed Management Plan. Since watershed management is a dynamic process, the action plan will be evaluated and updated yearly by the Water Quality Management Agency.

In June of 1997, The City of Syracuse contracted with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Onondaga County to provide a lake management plan report for the Environmental Protection Agency for Skaneateles Lake, located in the Oswego River Drainage Basin. Skaneateles Lake, although not geographically connected to the Town of Scipio, is the next Finger Lake to the east of Owasco Lake and shares many physical characteristics and uses as both a regional water supply and recreational water body surrounded by agricultural lands. The Skaneateles Lake Watershed Management Plan was developed to chart the course for future lake management programs and the funding of the federal Clean Lakes Program in the Skaneateles watershed and may provide a good basis for developing Best Management Practices (BMPs) related to the Owasco Lake Watershed and the Town of Scipio. The plan is in no way conclusive, but does provide a number of recommendations for action that may be taken by the diverse municipalities, citizens, non-profit organizations, and government agencies that are charged with managing the resources of Skaneateles Lake and could be a helpful and informative resource for similarly situated municipalities like the Town of Scipio on Owasco Lake that may be facing similar issues.

Federal and State Planning Initiatives

As a part of the development of this Comprehensive Plan, relevant federal and state planning initiatives were reviewed. The New York State Open Space Conservation Plan (2009) serves as the blueprint for the State's land conservation efforts, which during the past several years have conserved nearly a million acres of land with an investment of more than $658 million. The Plan is required by law to be revised every three years. The plan references the federal Coastal and Estuarian Land Conservation Program (CELCP) established in 2002 to protect important coastal and estuarian areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses (Public Law 107-77, Department of Commerce, Justice, and State Appropriations Act of 2002). Priority status is given to lands which can be effectively managed and protected and that have significant ecological value.

Issues in the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan, of particular importance to the Town of Scipio, concern the Finger Lakes shorelines which are considered part of a Major Resource Area. The Plan notes that the shorelines of the Finger Lakes are tied up in private ownership to a degree seldom seen in other states resulting in most citizens having little direct experience of these unique lakes, even though their length provides hundreds of miles of shoreline. Public access for swimming, photography, shoreline fishing, and canoeing is extremely minimal, and natural, forested shoreline is itself a scarce resource having been incrementally lost over time to home site development. Strategies for these unique shorelines mentioned in the Plan include acquisition of additional public access, and consolidation of existing State projects. Specifically, lake shore protection projects are recommended that would establish "a network of strategically spaced open shoreline parcels to support low intensity and passive recreational uses including: kayaking, boating, birdwatching, angling, hunting, and simply seeking solitude by the water" (pg. 106). The Finger Lakes support a large and diverse population of waterfowl and raptors, which in turn generates significant public interest and educational opportunities. Four of the lakes are designated Important Bird Areas by New York Audubon and are a significant wintering area for waterfowl. Forested areas along and above the lakeshores provide habitat for raptors and neo-tropical songbirds.

The State Open Space Conservation Plan suggests that projects to preserve portions of the shoreline of these lakes, including Owasco Lake, for public access or wildlife could utilize acquisitions, easements, or additions to existing public segments. Parties including New York State, local governments, and non-profit organizations should prepare to capitalize on opportunities which will become increasingly critical as shoreline development and prices continue to climb, and while it is not possible to predict future opportunities, potential lakeshore protection projects should be considered wherever possible.

The New York Statewide Comprehensive Recreation Plan (SCORP) is prepared periodically by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) to provide statewide policy direction and to fulfill the agency's recreation and preservation mandate. The updated SCORP refers to the Finger Lakes including Owasco Lake as a major water recreational resource. The document serves as a status report and for overall guidance in recreation resource preservation, planning, and development through 2014. The document is also used to guide the allocation of state and federal funds for recreation and open space projects as well as for the allocation of municipal and not-for-profit funds to local areas and facilities with the greatest needs.



Old postcard image of Owasco Lake looking north from Ensenor, date unknown.
(source: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/)

Chapter 1: Goals and Recommendations

As a direct result of the public participation process and input from a community survey mailed to 732 Town residences and property owners and made available for public review at three public locations, the following survey summary analysis was made. This analysis resulted in a Community Vision Statement (see page 15) formulated by the Comprehensive Planning Committee and intended to provide guidance in planning and development decisions for the Town of Scipio in the future.

What did the community survey data reveal?

Most of the respondents to the community survey receive their information about Scipio either from the town newsletter or the newspaper, with only about 7% receiving it from the town website. Over 50% of the survey respondents were over the age of 55. Only 4% were under the age of 35, and 40% of the respondents were between the ages of 36 and 55 years. [1] Most survey respondents have lived in Scipio for over twenty years. However, it is notable that over 20% have lived in Scipio less than 10 years. Nearly 40% live on a public road, with only 12% living in the hamlets, and 24% living on farms. 16% of respondents live at Owasco Lake and 10% are part-time residents.

1 Note: With respondent age weighted heavily to older residents of the community, response percentages in many survey questions may be strongly reflective of this demographic group. Responses to questions such as the importance of local job opportunities, outdoor sports and recreational opportunities, farm and agricultural business opportunities, easy access to urban areas, and modern infrastructure may have been different had the survey been completed by a greater than 4% number of residents under the age of 35.

The most important issues (listed as very important) to most survey respondents were: a clean and healthy environment (91%), a reasonable cost of living (80%), and rural character (72%). In fact over 85% of respondents want Scipio to maintain its rural character.

What defines Scipio as a Place?

There were many reasons listed by respondents for living in Scipio, but the most common reason chosen (24%) was the rural character of the town. Location, family and environment, were each selected by over 12% of respondents as reasons for living in Scipio. 66% of recipients judged the air quality in Scipio to be good with about half considering affordability to be good. Unfortunately, most respondents (60%) judged the quality of the lake water to be poor. Most respondents (60%) rated the quality of the school district as good, and nearly 70% rated Town Days as good. In fact, not a single respondent thought poorly of Town Days. The biggest concerns of respondents (very concerned) were the quality of the lake water (52%), and the loss of natural areas (45%). Scipio is clearly a beautiful place that respondents want to keep that way with 85 % to over 90% indicating that Scipio should encourage the preservation of scenic views, the protection of natural resources, and remain rural.

What does the community want for the future of the Town?

It naturally follows; because survey respondents most valued a clean and healthy environment (91%), and want to maintain Scipio's rural character (85%); between 63% and 71% of respondents think Scipio should encourage tax incentives for preserving natural areas, especially those that are undeveloped, and also for open space. Respondents indicated that they want to protect their natural resources with the enhancement of stewardship of watersheds (85%), protect environmental quality through local law (82%), and not allow commercial mining (64%). A significant number of respondents (40%) would like to see improved availability of child care services, more single-family housing (92%), commercial wind turbines (75%), affordable housing (70%), and senior citizen housing (67%). They registered negative opinions on mobile home parks (79%), multi-unit rental houses (56%), and mobile homes on individual lots (52%). Concern for the loss of farmland (71%), loss of open space (76%), big truck traffic (60%), and speeding (69%) was also registered by survey respondents.

Other things survey respondents would like to see the town encourage are a farmers market (65%), a town historical society (61%), hiking and biking paths (57%), a town park (56%), public access to Owasco Lake (54%), and a community center (53%). Positive responses were indicated for restaurant facilities, professional services, cottage/home business, natural gas drilling, light manufacturing, retail business, and cell towers. Respondents would also like to see Scipio undertake an inventory of historic sites (68%), improved communications with other towns (71%), publishing a community events calendar (69%), and placing community events in the local paper (75%).

Survey respondents registered strong positive opinions, between 60% and 84%, on land use regulation. They gave favorable responses to having land use regulation for the upkeep of vacant properties, siting for wind power, upkeep of occupied properties, mobile home placement, adverse environmental impacts, degradation of environmentally sensitive areas, septic inspection requirements, minimum lot sizes, land use that lowers surrounding land values, rental housing inspection requirements, design standards for commercial development, and future subdivision of large parcels. A strong opposition (85%) was registered against heavy manufacturing in the town of Scipio.

Considering that survey respondents so strongly registered their appreciation for farmland, scenic views and open space, and that 31% of farmers taking the survey don't know what they'll do with their farms upon retirement, some important proactive strategies for farmland protection surfaced in the survey results. Between 56% and 67% of respondents think Scipio should give tax incentives for productive land, protect farmland through easements, and limit conversion of farmland to other uses.

From these survey responses, some clear conclusions can be drawn. The community's desire for the future of the Town of Scipio depends on the protection of its resources, both natural and cultural, and on improving land use regulations and town government policies with an eye toward accomplishing specific goals and objectives as identified in the survey. These include land-use regulation for the protection of the environment, and preservation of the rural/agricultural character of the town (scenic views), in addition to renewable energy development (wind turbines), affordable housing, and senior housing. Other conclusions raise questions and will require further investigation. For example; if the town pursues natural gas drilling which 65% of survey respondents indicated should be encouraged, will that result in negative environmental impacts which 82% of respondents wish to protect against? These questions must be thoroughly investigated and carefully considered before the community can make wise decisions for the future health and well-being of the Town and community.

Community Vision Statement:

"The Town of Scipio would like to preserve its rural character, scenic beauty, and cultural and historic assets, and protect its natural and agricultural resources as it continues to accommodate new growth and services that meet the changing needs of the community."

The community survey and the community inventory, and analysis have formed the basis for the following goals and recommendations. These goals and recommendations are referenced in Appendix D – Issues of Community Concern/Community Survey.

The Suitability Analysis Map for tax parcels in the Town of Scipio (page 17) highlights important physical features of lands in the Town including large (100+ acre) parcels, lands with 15 percent or greater slopes, wetlands, floodplain areas, agricultural districts, scenic vistas, and hamlets. The map provides a visual reference to potentially high priority conservation areas or conditions that call for special attention in future planning and development decisions based on the goals and recommendations in the following chapter.

Goals and Recommendations

Agriculture and Farmland Protection

1. Preserve the rural-agrarian character of the Town

a. Facilitate the protection of farmland balanced with managed community growth and preservation of open space through farmland protection and agricultural easements.
b. Facilitate a collaborative relationship with educational institutions and community-oriented organizations in support of local agriculture and the farming community (ex. Sponsor an annual "Agricultural Day" to educate the general public about the importance of agriculture, local foods, etc.)
c. Encourage farmland preservation by working in collaboration with related NYS, County and other agencies and programs.

2. Support future viability of local agricultural practices

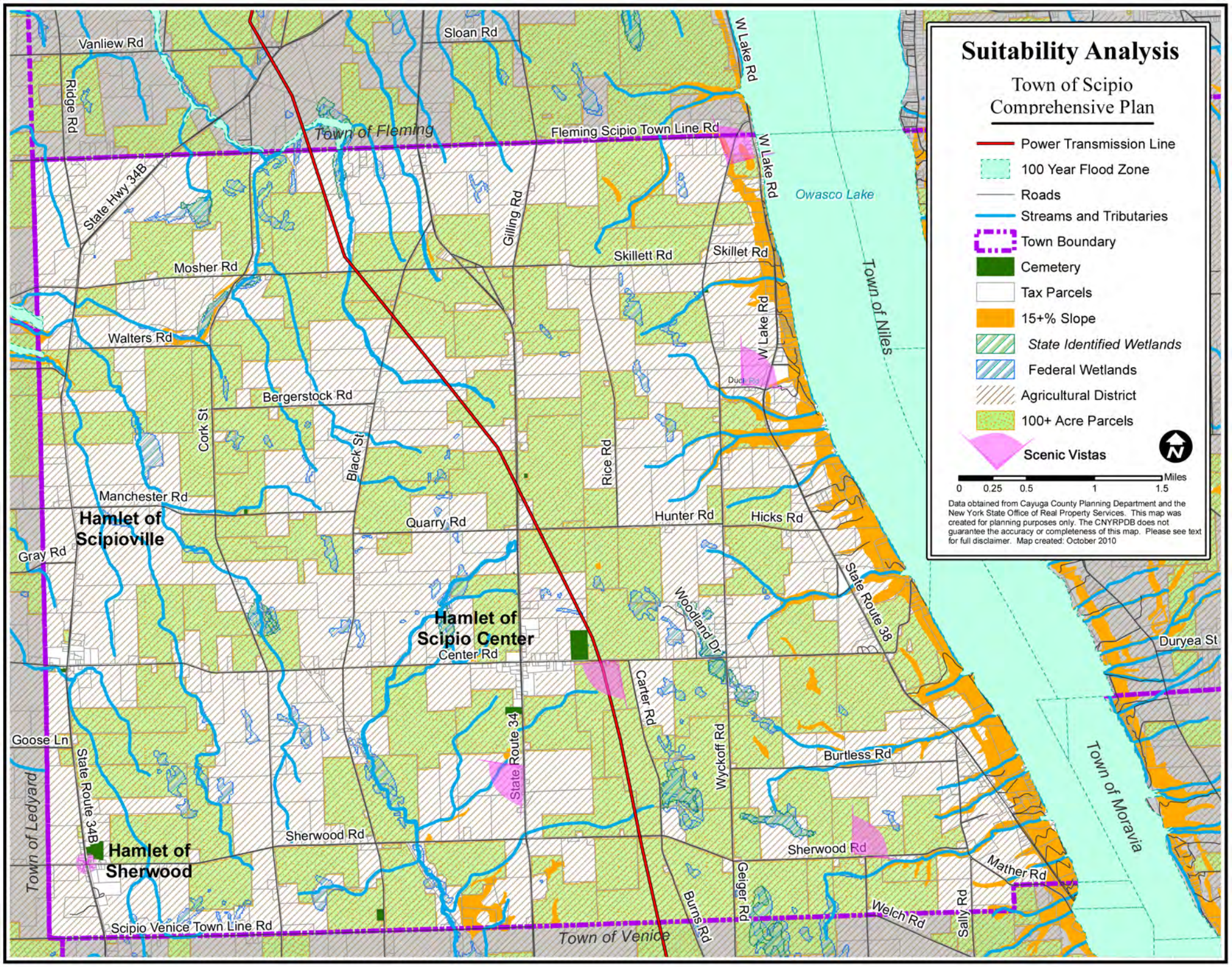
a. Encourage growth in a wide range of local agricultural services and businesses in support of a sustainable local farming community including local processing and local markets.[2]
b. Continue to support the Right-to-Farm law.
c. Work with Soil & Water District and Extension personnel on agricultural issues
d. Encourage the Town to support tax incentives to keep farmland in production.
e. Evaluate and implement tax abatement programs in agricultural assessments from the State Agricultural Assessment Program coupled with comparable penalties for converting farmland to non-farm use.
f. Encourage the use of programs such as the Cayuga County Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program for sustainable and best management practices in all agricultural activities in the town

Land Use, Planning, and Subdivision Regulation Supportive of the Community Vision

3. Protect the existing open space & scenic views of farmland and lakes in the Town of Scipio

a. Review and rework existing Town land use regulations to protect the Town's rural-agrarian and scenic identity while effectively planning for "Smart Growth" (see Appendix A).
b. Work with local or regional planning agencies to develop effective land use tools such as Overlay Districts, Easements, Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) or Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs to protect farmland, open space, scenic views, and historic areas in the town.[3]
c. Develop a town-wide plan to support low-impact development patterns and land uses that conserve resources, complement the rural character of the residential setting, and encourage farms to remain in farm production, while providing reasonable land area for neighborhoods of single-family dwellings at a medium to low density on a range of lot sizes using conservation-sensitive design (see Appendix B). (The resources, lands and values identified by the community as important to conserve include: rural character, agriculture, highly visible open space lands, scenic views, and wildlife buffer areas).
d. Use established environmental protection guidelines to regulate and limit building in areas with steep slopes (15% or more) reducing soil erosion, storm water run-off, and sedimentation of water resources.

2 see Agriculture and Farmland Protection Programs: Local Stakeholder Views, A Report to the New York State Advisory Council on Agriculture, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets November 5, 2003, http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/ACARoundTableReport.pdf
3 See "Protecting Aesthetic and Scenic Resources" on page 125, Appendix C: Issues of Community Concern


Suitability Analysis
Town of Scipio
Comprehensive Plan
Power Transmission Line
100 Year Flood Zone
Roads
Streams and Tributaries
Town Boundary
Cemetery
Tax Parcels
15+% Slope
State Identified Wetlands
Federal Wetlands
Agricultural District
100+ Acre Parcels
Scenic Vistas
N
Miles
0 0.25 0.5 1 1.5
Data obtained from Cayuga County Planning Department and the New York State Office of Real Property Services. This map was created for planning purposes only. The CNYRPDB does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of this map. Please see text for full disclaimer. Map created: October 2010
Vanliew Rd
Sloan Rd
W Lake Rd
Ridge Rd
Town of Fleming
Fleming Scipio Town Line Rd
State Hwy 34B
Gilling Rd
Owasco Lake
Skillett Rd
Mosher Rd
Town of Niles
Walters Rd
Bergerstock Rd
Cork St
Black St
Rice Rd
Manchester Rd
Hamlet of Scipioville
Quarry Rd
Hunter Rd
Hicks Rd
Gray Rd
State Route 38
Woodland Dr
Hamlet of Scipio Center
Center Rd
Duryea St
Carter Rd
Goose Ln
State Route 34
Wyckoff Rd
Burtless Rd
Town of Ledyard
State Route 34B
Hamlet of Sherwood
Sherwood Rd
Mather Rd
Geiger Rd
Burns Rd
Welch Rd
Sally Rd
Scipio Venice Town Line Rd
Town of Venice
Town of Moravia

e. Encourage both compact development and preservation of large and continuous areas of absorbent vegetated open space and the minimal overall land disturbance associated with development by allowing flexibility in site planning.

4. Protect the natural resources of significance to the Scipio community.

a. Maintain and reference (prior to development decisions) a current map of all natural resources including stream corridors, water bodies, undeveloped shoreline, beaches, wetlands, watershed areas, vegetation communities, woodlands, steep slopes, meadows, specimen trees, wildlife habitats, soils, geology, and aquifer contribution areas.
b. Review and amend existing lakefront local laws to ensure both shoreline and water quality protections through adequate minimum shoreline requirements.[4]
c. Ensure that site development requirements include standards for Best Management Practices (BMPs) is to minimize soil disturbance, erosion, and stormwater runoff, and ensure that those standards are met particularly in lakefront and streamside areas.[5]
d. Encourage sustainable land use practices through the implementation of Incentive or Overlay Zoning as in Riparian zone that identify and protect buffers along stream corridors.[6]
e. Establish local watershed preservation overlay districts to delineate protection of water resources.[7]

5. Maximize the potential of the town's history and historic resources to become sources of economic and cultural benefit to the community.

a. Establish a Local Preservation Commission with the mission of developing an inventory of historic resources in the Town and a Local Preservation District to protect Scipio's historic character
b. Adopt a Local Preservation Law that encourages preservation projects by providing tax incentives for investments in preservation district properties, while also establishing a review and approval process for exterior renovations of Local Preservation District properties. (Inclusion in a Local Preservation District increases property owners eligibility for state and federal preservation grant funds. Property owners may elect not to be included in the Local Preservation District and be exempted from the Local Preservation Law and potential preservation grant funding.)
c. Apply to NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to become a Certified Local Government (CLG) and then seek designation as a "Preserve America Community" to be eligible for federal preservation grant funding through the "Preserve America Grants Program."

4 Excessive development of environmentally sensitive lake shore lands can have direct, adverse water quality impacts. Existing local laws do not assure the preservation of water quality or environmental protection of sensitive shoreline areas. Appropriate shoreline minimum requirements would be best determined by an Environmental Carrying Capacity Study, but in general would are set at 70' of shoreline per dwelling unit where water quality and environmental protection are considered important (see *Fair Lake* Michigan *Environmental Carrying Capacity Study* : http://www.ftwrc.org/publications/Fairlakeecc.pdf).

5 It is a general rule that 1 acre of impervious surface = 1 million gallons of runoff per year. Carried with that runoff are the many chemicals and particulates that accumulate on lawn, driving and parking surfaces from fertilizers, herbicides and gasoline combustion engines. Permeable surfaces such as green roofs, water permeable concrete, and gravel help to minimize runoff and filter out pollutants and reduce their transfer to water bodies.

6 The composition of Land Cover (i.e. forests v.s. lawn, pavement, or frequent tilling) impacts water quality in very different ways. Ecosystem Services such as filtration and infiltration of stormwater runoff can be cost-effectively implemented by incentivising the conversion of frequently tilled land or less pervious surfaces such as lawn and traditional paving to no-till land, meadow, garden, shrubland, or forest. Ecosystem services such as this can prevent the need for a costly traditional engineered municipal water treatment system in the future.

7 Overlay districts are additive restrictions mapped out for specific areas such as limits on excavation of soil within 100 feet of a stream corridor, or limits on fuel stations within an aquifer contribution zone. Overlay districts can be used to protect valuable resources without applying broad zoning restrictions to large areas. Three criteria are important in their creation: 1) the district should have a clearly defined purpose, e.g. to protect groundwater, prevent erosion, or preserve historical character. 2) areas that relate to achieving the purpose of the overlay district must be identified and mapped. 3) specific rules should be developed that apply to the identified district such as development guidelines that require capture and filtering of runoff, architectural design guidelines, etc.

6. Plan for and seek opportunities to increase the availability of affordable single-family, and senior citizen housing in the Town

a. Identify desirable growth areas within or adjacent to existing hamlet areas.
b. Explore the possibility of rehabilitating vacant or under-used structures to meet housing demands

Environmental Stewardship and Water Quality Protection

7. Support water quality preservation through good stewardship of Owasco Lake and the Owasco and Cayuga Lake watersheds

a. Actively seek inter-town cooperation in both watersheds to improve water quality through a unified or coordinated set of zoning and land use regulations for all issues related to water quality and watershed protection.
b. Support the development of an agricultural watershed protection program such as the Skaneateles Lake Watershed Agricultural Program (SLWAP)
c. Actively work with the Owasco and Cayuga Lake watershed organizations to preserve and improve the quality of the water in both lakes.
d. Encourage participation in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Reserve Program (a program that assists farmers to convert highly erodible crop and pasture land to perennial cover - erosion control buffers)
e. Work cooperatively with the County Soil and Conservation District to implement improved and protective roadside ditch maintenance practices to lessen or prevent erosion and pollutant runoff
f. Encourage the development of an Environmental Education Outreach Program for town residents
g. Protect Owasco and Cayuga Lakes from increased pollution and nutrient run-off both from development and agricultural practices.
h. Encourage the use of buffer strips around streams and shorelines to reduce or eliminate run-off.
i. Ensure adherence to current regulations and guidelines for the spreading of manure and tilling of soils.
j. Encourage Best Management Practices and the minimization of phosphorous and other nutrient loaded fertilizers and products throughout the town.

Improved Public Utilities and Services

8. Improve Communications Infrastructure

a. Explore options to expand wireless internet access availability for town-wide service
b. Explore options to improve/broaden cellular phone service and be pro-active with cell phone companies in locating cell towers.

9. Explore potential benefits and impacts of renewable energy resource development

a. Conduct a critical review of both individual and commercial wind energy, solar energy, bioenergy, and potential associated benefits and impacts on the Town.

10. Maintain or improve the present quality of Town roads and services

a. Review road maintenance procedures to ensure continued quality of town roads
b. Work with other town/government agencies to address the impact of heavy truck traffic on the community
c. Maintain the Town's current practice of holding 2 clean-up days annually
d. Continue the town transfer station program and keep the cost to the taxpayers low.
e. Investigate future options for public water districts

Community Development and Historic Preservation

11. Encourage the improvement or development of additional community recreational facilities

a. Explore options for the acquisition of additional town land for the development of community recreational facilities including parks, recreational trails, playing fields, and lake access.
b. Explore options for improving public waterfront recreation areas including amenities at town-owned Rights-of-way on Owasco Lake (see photo-concept and plan view, pg. 22-23)
c. Explore the possibility of developing an interconnected system of hiking trails and bike paths with historic and recreational points of interest throughout the town and hamlets.

12. Seek opportunities to increase community participation and civic resources

a. Explore the possibility of upgrading and expanding the Town Newsletter.
b. Encourage the development of a community website
c. Encourage recruitment of a growing volunteer base for Town organizations

13. Support volunteer recruitment for fire and ambulance services.

a. Explore creative ways to provide incentives for community volunteer programs
b. Support and implement effective incentive programs for fire and emergency volunteers

14. Expand efforts to support the preservation of the historic heritage of the Town.

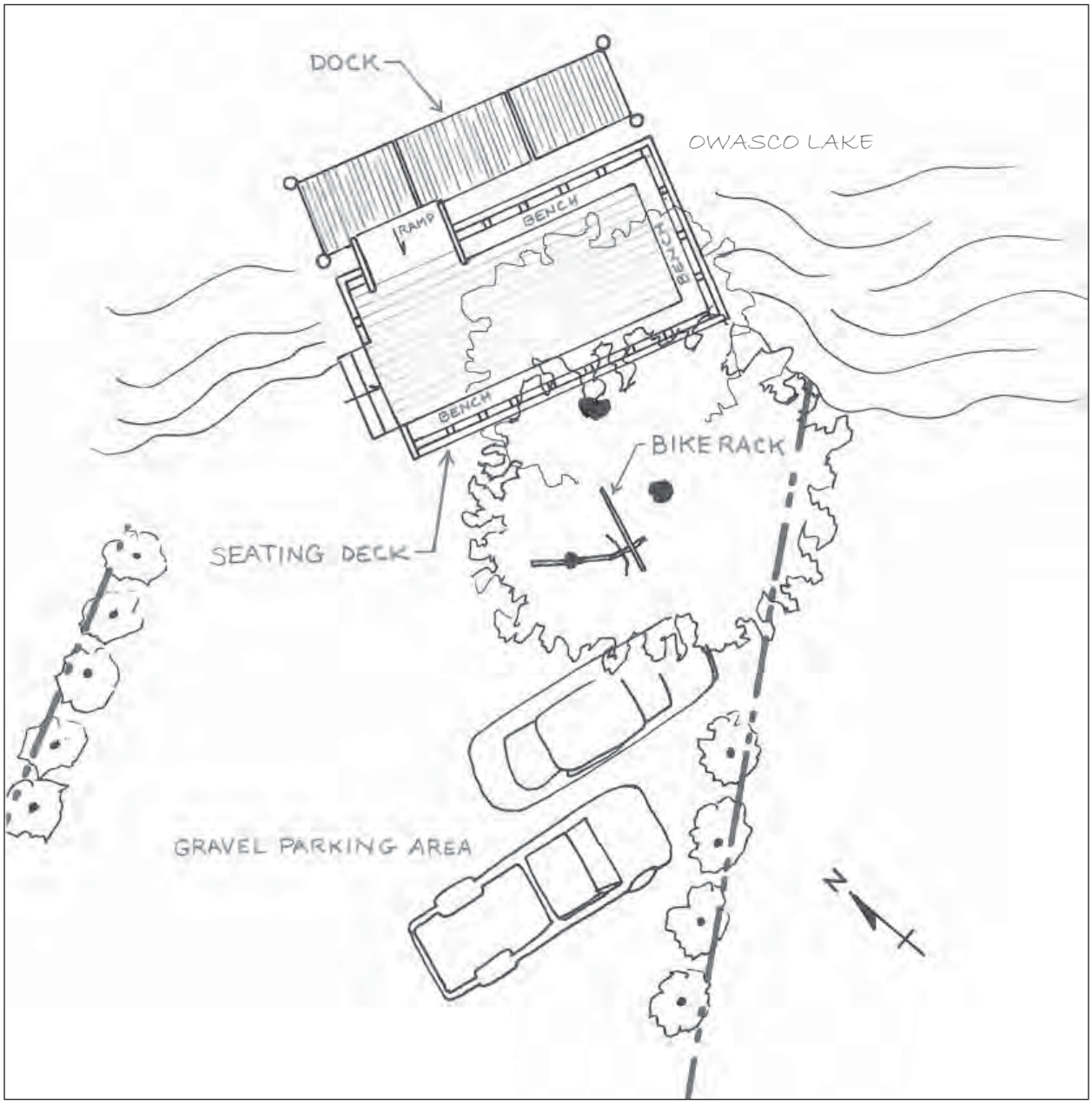
a. Evaluate the potential for the development of a town history museum in an existing historic structure.
b. Coordinate promotion of town historic sites with other regional heritage tourism programs through website links, maps and brochures
c. Explore upcoming grant funding opportunities for preservation planning, capital improvements and interpretation of the Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District through the National Park Service "Network to Freedom" program, the National Women's History Project Act - "Votes for Women Trail", and the "Save America's Treasures" program (see recommendations a, b, and c under Goal 5 as first steps toward this recommendation).



Existing conditions at the Town right-of-way to Owasco Lake at Ensenore Road, May 2009.



Photo-concept showing theTown right-of-way to Owasco Lake at Ensenore Road improved for public recreational use.



Previous page (top) shows existing conditions at the Town-owned right-of-way at the end of Ensenore Road on Owasco Lake. The photo-concept at the bottom of the page illustrates how improvements including a waters edge seating deck and small dock, along with a bicycle rack would provide a comfortable community space for enjoyment of the lake shore.

Above, a plan view illustrates a potential approximate arrangement of the seating deck, dock, bike rack and parking within the right-of-way, as well as edge planting treatment to provide screening from neighboring properties.



Looking east over farmland above Owasco Lake in the Town of Scipio, New York

Chapter 2: Community Inventory and analysis

Location

The Town of Scipio is located south of the center of Cayuga County in the heart of the Finger Lakes Region of Central New York. The Town is bounded on the north by Fleming, on the south by Venice, and on the west by Springport and Ledyard. The eastern border of the Town of Scipio is formed by Owasco Lake. Cayuga County is comprised of a hilly southern plateau where the Town is located, and a relatively flat central plain region with drumlins in the north. Cayuga means "People of the Great Swamp" in the Iroquoian language of the Cayuga people native to the region. Primarily a rural, agricultural community, Scipio is located to the south of the City of Auburn and is nestled between Owasco Lake to the east and Cayuga Lake to the west, approximately halfway between the southeastern shore of Lake Ontario and the New York/Pennsylvania border. The region features deep north-south valleys bordered by beautiful sloping shorelines occasionally cut by picturesque glens and gorges. (http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/services/largemarkers/inventoryfour.html) The gently rolling farmland between the lake shores varies in elevation between about 700 and 1400 feet. In places, the landscape of the Town offers spectacular views of the deep, glacially-formed lakes and surrounding farmland. Owasco Lake, though recently indicating a decline in water quality, offers a prime water supply sources to populations in the region.

The Town of Scipio is within easy commuting distance of several state and private Colleges and Universities including: Cayuga County Community College, Cornell University, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Ithaca College, Le Moyne College, Onondaga Community College, Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry (ESF), SUNY - Cortland, SUNY Health Science Center, SUNY - Oswego, Syracuse University, Tompkins-Cortland Community College, University of Rochester, and Wells College.

Key	Name	Key	Name	Key	Name
1	BRYANT AND STRATTON BUSINESS INSTITUTE-PENN CAN CAMPUS	13	HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES	25	STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AT OSWEGO
2	BRYANT AND STRATTON BUSINESS INSTITUTE-SYRACUSE	14	ITHACA COLLEGE	26	STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY AT MORRISVILLE
3	CAYUGA COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE	15	KEUKA COLLEGE	27	STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK COLLEGE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND FORESTRY AT SYRACUSE
4	CAZENOVIA COLLEGE	16	LE MOYNE COLLEGE	28	STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT SYRACUSE
5	CENTRAL CITY BUSINESS INSTITUTE	17	NAZARETH COLLEGE OF ROCHESTER	29	SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
6	COLGATE UNIVERSITY	18	NEW YORK CHIROPRACTIC COLLEGE	30	SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE CENTER OF THE FINGER LAKES OF SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
7	CORNELL UNIVERSITY	19	ONONDAGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE	31	TOMPKINS-CORTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
8	CORNING COMMUNITY COLLEGE	20	ROCHESTER BUSINESS INSTITUTE	32	UTICA SCHOOL OF COMMERCE-CANASTOTA
9	CROUSE HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF NURSING	21	SAINT JOHN FISHER COLLEGE	33	WELLS COLLEGE
10	ELMIRA BUSINESS INSTITUTE	22	SAINT JOSEPH'S HOSPITAL HEALTH CENTER SCHOOL OF NURSING-SYRACUSE		
11	ELMIRA COLLEGE	23	SIMMONS INSTITUTE OF FUNERAL SERVICE, INC.		
12	FINGER LAKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE	24	STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AT CORTLAND		

Regional Location Colleges & Universities

Town of Scipio Comprehensive Plan

MAP 1

50 Mile Buffer around the Town of Scipio

Municipal

- Town of Scipio
- County Boundary
- Cayuga County
- Urban Areas

Natural Features

- Water Body
- Park or Forest

Transportation

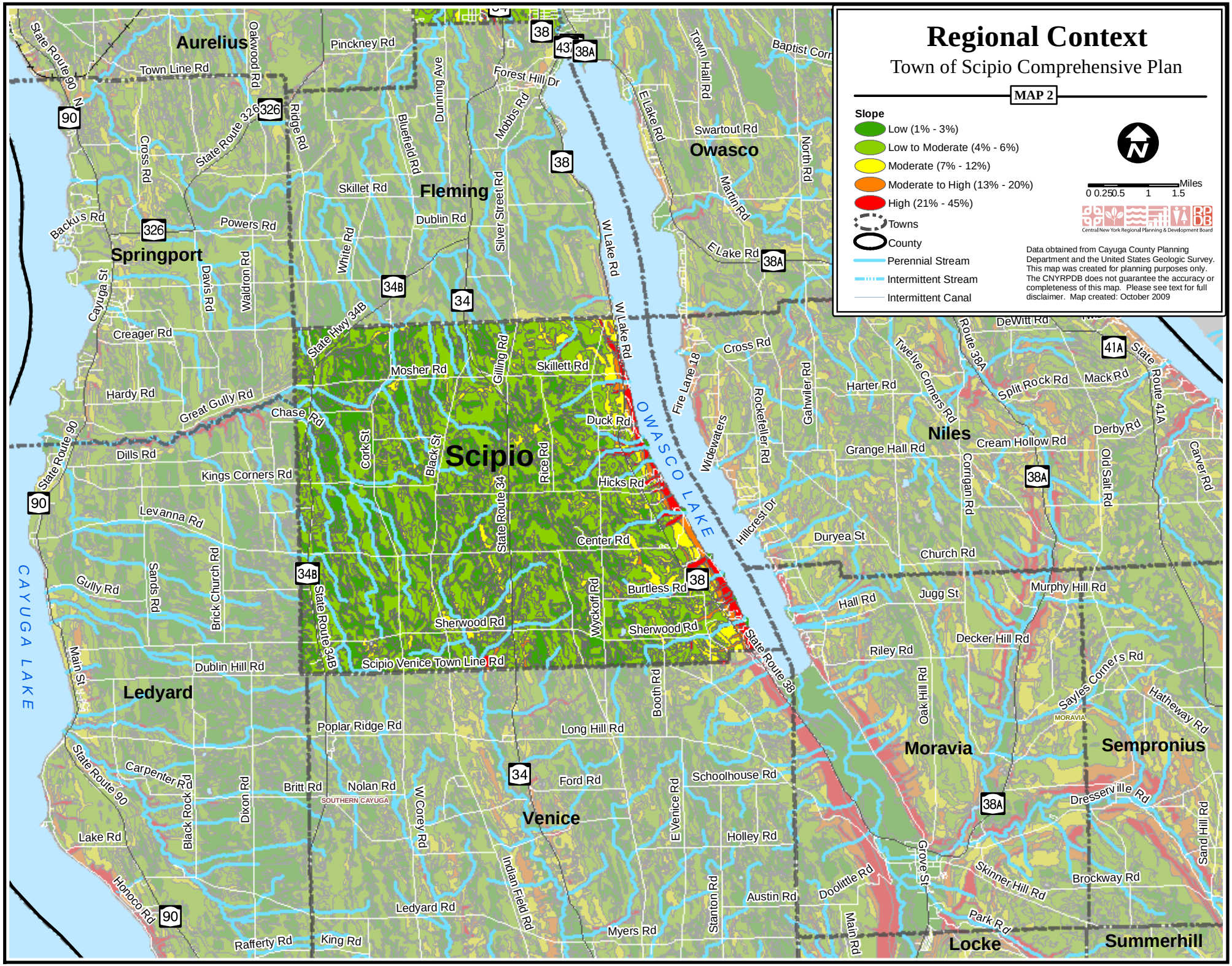
- Limited Access
- Highway
- Major Road

0 3.75 7.5 15 22.5 30 Miles

Central New York Regional Planning & Development Board

Data obtained from Cayuga County Planning Department and the New York State Education Department. This map was created for planning purposes only. The CNYRPDB does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of this map. Please see text for full disclaimer. Map created: October 2009

Lake Ontario
Oneida Lake
Seneca Lake
Cayuga Lake
Owasco Lake
Skaneateles Lake
Scipio
Syracuse
Elmira
Oswego
Sodus
Lyons
Newark
Canandaigua
Geneva
Weedsport
Auburn
Skaneateles
Oneida
Chittenango
Rome
Cazenovia
Hamilton
NY
Adirondack Park


Regional Context
Town of Scipio Comprehensive Plan
MAP 2
Slope
Low (1% - 3%)
Low to Moderate (4% - 6%)
Moderate (7% - 12%)
Moderate to High (13% - 20%)
High (21% - 45%)
Towns
County
Perennial Stream
Intermittent Stream
Intermittent Canal
N
Miles
0 0.250.5 1 1.5
Central New York Regional Planning & Development Board
Data obtained from Cayuga County Planning Department and the United States Geologic Survey. This map was created for planning purposes only. The CNYRPDB does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of this map. Please see text for full disclaimer. Map created: October 2009
Scipio
Fleming
Aurelius
Springport
Owasco
Niles
Ledyard
Venice
Moravia
Sempronius
Locke
Summerhill
OWASCO LAKE
CAYUGA LAKE
Pinckney Rd
Town Line Rd
Oakwood Rd
Dunning Ave
Forest Hill Dr
Mobbs Rd
Town Hall Rd
E Lake Rd
Swartout Rd
North Rd
Martin Rd
Bluefield Rd
Ridge Rd
Cross Rd
Skillet Rd
Powers Rd
Dublin Rd
Silver Street Rd
W Lake Rd
Backus Rd
White Rd
Waldron Rd
Davis Rd
Cayuga St
Creager Rd
Hardy Rd
Great Gully Rd
Chase Rd
Mosher Rd
Gilling Rd
Skillett Rd
Duck Rd
Fire Lane 18
Widewaters
Rockefeller Rd
Gahwiler Rd
Cross Rd
Harter Rd
Twelve Corners Rd
Route 38A
DeWitt Rd
Split Rock Rd
Mack Rd
Derby Rd
Cream Hollow Rd
Grange Hall Rd
Corrigan Rd
Old Salt Rd
Carver Rd
Hillcrest Dr
Duryea St
Church Rd
Murphy Hill Rd
Jugg St
Hall Rd
Decker Hill Rd
Riley Rd
Sayles Corners Rd
Hatheway Rd
Oak Hill Rd
Dresserville Rd
Sand Hill Rd
Brockway Rd
Skinner Hill Rd
Park Rd
Grove St
Doolittle Rd
Austin Rd
Holley Rd
Schoolhouse Rd
Ford Rd
Long Hill Rd
Booth Rd
Poplar Ridge Rd
Ledyard Rd
Myers Rd
Stanton Rd
Main Rd
Indian Field Rd
E Venice Rd
W Corey Rd
Nolan Rd
Britt Rd
Carpenter Rd
Black Rock Rd
Dixon Rd
Lake Rd
Honoco Rd
Rafferty Rd
King Rd
Dublin Hill Rd
Scipio Venice Town Line Rd
Sherwood Rd
Wyckoff Rd
Burtless Rd
Hicks Rd
Center Rd
Levanna Rd
Kings Corners Rd
Dills Rd
Gully Rd
Sands Rd
Brick Church Rd
Main St
Cork St
Black St
Rice Rd
State Route 34
State Route 34B
State Hwy 34B
State Route 90
State Route 326
State Route 38
State Route 41A
SOUTHERN CAYUGA
MORAVIA

The quality of life in Scipio is enhanced by the availability of low-cost, and architecturally intact historical housing, good schools, nearby cultural attractions, parks and recreational opportunities, and low crime rates. Outdoor recreation opportunities abound in central Cayuga County with opportunities for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing and enjoying the outdoors. In the Town of Scipio, direct access to Owasco Lake offers opportunities for water activities including boating, sailing, canoeing, kayaking, swimming, and sport fishing, although there is little public access available to these resources. (http://www.cayuganet.org/profile.html#dem)

History of the Community

Cultural History

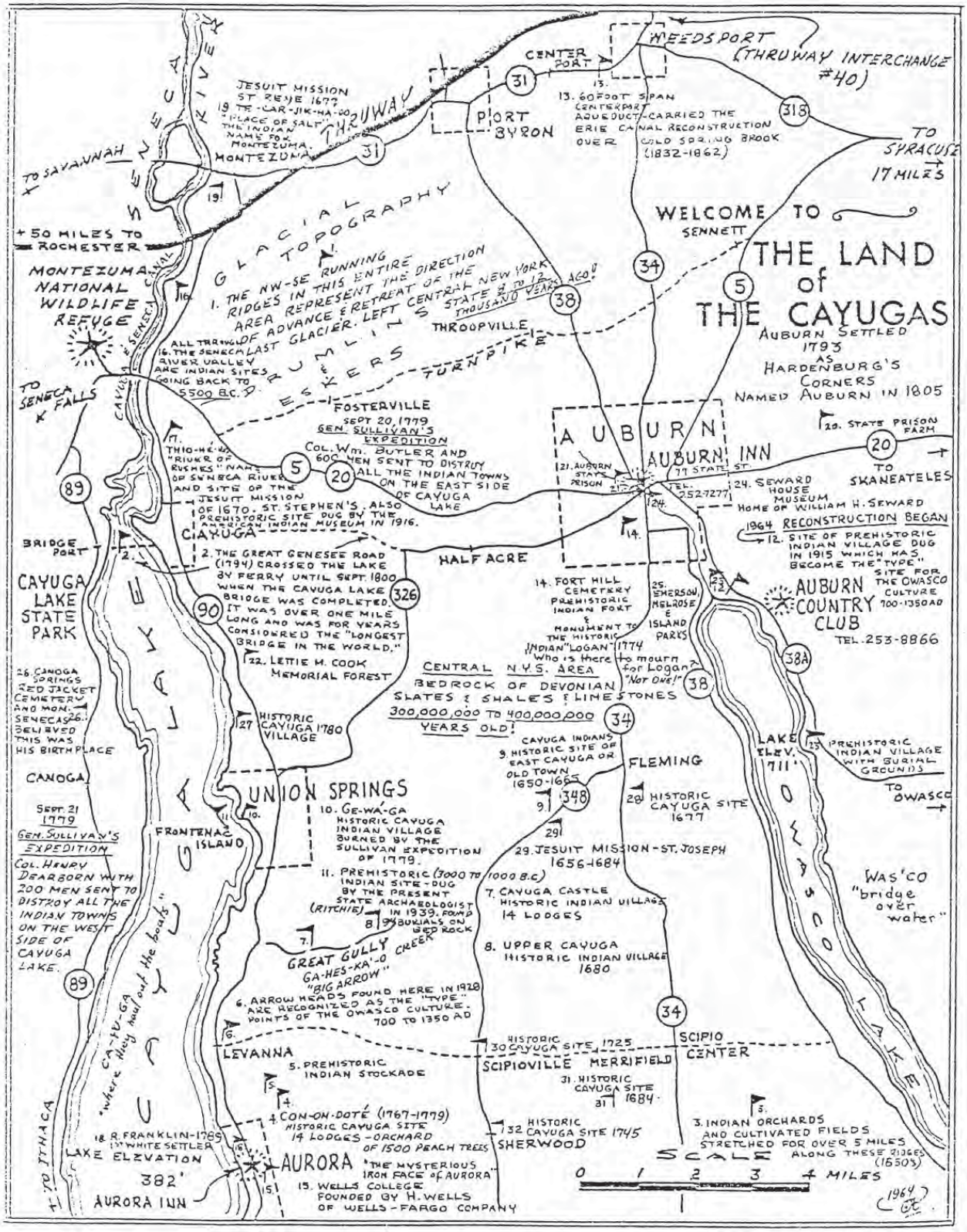
Prior to European colonization, lands in the Finger Lakes Region of Central New York were home to the Haudenosaunee (ho-den-o-shaw-nee) People of the Six Nations of the Iroquois. The Cayugas, one of the six nations, were known as the "People of the Great Swamp." The Haudenosaunee raised crops and livestock in clearings, wetlands, and forested areas they maintained near regionally nomadic settlements.

During the Revolutionary War, both New York State and the Continental government offered land as a bounty for enlistment in the military forces. In 1779, George Washington launched an effort to clear the Iroquois people from their ancestral homes across New York State, and that year the Sullivan-Clinton Campaign employed over 5,000 troops, roughly one third of the Revolutionary Army in that effort. By Sullivan's official report, the 1779 Campaign burned 40 Haudenosaunee towns and their agricultural fields including those of the settlement at Cayuga Castle just to the west of the Town of Scipio.[8]



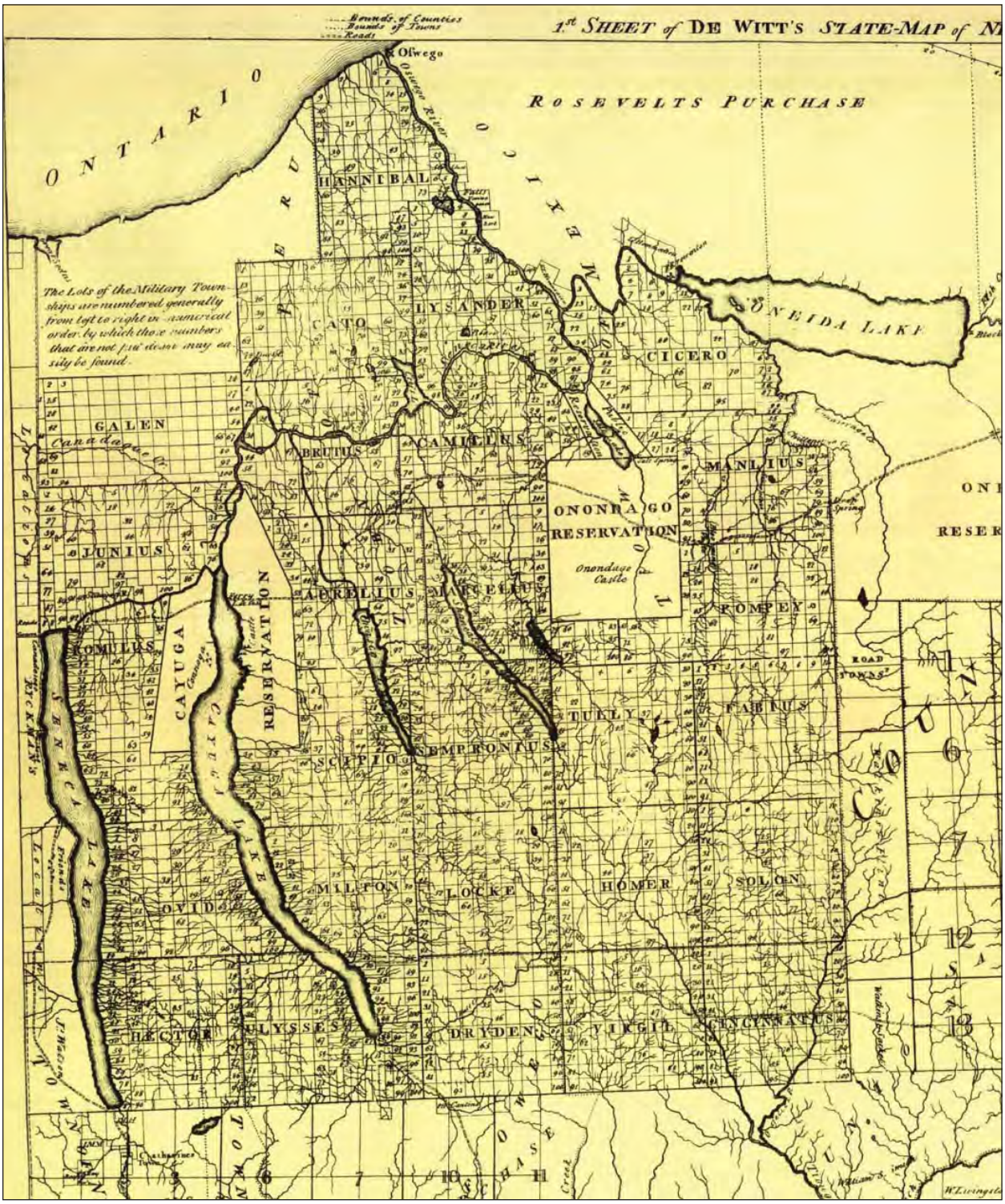
"Map of the Expedition of the army under General John Sullivan against the Indians of Western New York, in the Seneca and Cayuga lake regions, June 18th to Sept. 15, 1779. Manuscript." (Source: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com)

8 Source: (http://sullivanclinton.com/texts)



"Land of the Cayugas" map created in 1964 showing locations of some Haudenoshaunee villages, sites and orchards in the vicinity of the Town of Scipio prior to the 1779 Sullivan Campaign. (Source: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com)

On March 20, 1781, in an attempt to raise two military regiments, New York State passed legislation promising bounties of un-appropriated land equal to five times the grant of the federal government (500 acres) to an enlisting private fulfilling a three year enlistment. By July 1782, an area in central New York known as the Military Tract was set aside for this purpose. The Military Tract, located in the Finger Lakes area,



Map of the Military Tract of Central New York, 1793 (source: http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nycayuga/maps/1793/dewitt.jpg.

contained 28 Townships, including two Native American reservations for the Cayugas and the Onondagas. In both 1795 and 1807, as the new American colonial government continued to pursue a westward push, the State of New York purchased the lands of the region from the Iroquois, although the state land purchases were never ratified by the U.S. Congress.[9] Each of the subsections or Townships within the Military Tract was comprised of 60,000 acres, and the Townships were named for classical heroes as they were surveyed, mapped and numbered 1 through 26. The townships as originally surveyed were too large and geographically challenging to administer and were gradually divided into smaller towns. Maps of the early 1800s indicate a large reservation of land labeled Cayuga Reservation around the north end of Cayuga Lake and located immediately to the west of what would in 1796 become the western border of the Town of Scipio.



Detail of an 1825 map of Scipio and surrounding Towns by Vance showing the extent of the Town of Scipio across Owasco Lake to what is today the Town of Niles. (Source: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com)

The Town of Scipio, one of the earliest townships of the Military Tract, was formed March 5th, 1794 and named for a Roman General. It became Township number 12, and originally was contained within what was then Albany County; and included Sempronius (set off in 1799), part of Marcellus, Onondaga County (set

9 Source: (Iroquoia, Engelbrecht, William, 2003)

off in 1804), the towns of Ledyard, Venice, and a part of Springport which were set off in 1823.[10] It once extended across Owasco Lake to what is presently the Town of Niles. Today, the eastern border of the Town is formed by the west shore of Owasco Lake.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Scipio was largely virgin forest. Prior to cleared roadways, there were paths and blazed trails through the forested lands to Aurora at Cayuga Lake. Wildlife was abundant in Scipio forests; indeed the first town meeting, held in 1794, placed a bounty of $5.00 (raised to $12.50 in 1796) on every grown wolf taken. In the early years following settlement of the Town, and continuing into the first half of the nineteenth century, the major thoroughfare crossing southern Cayuga County in a north-south direction was along Route 34B, then known as Poplar Ridge Road. Travel east and west between Owasco and Cayuga Lake was by way of Sherwood Road. The Hamlet of Sherwood, settled by Judge Seth Sherwood of Vermont in 1794, developed at the intersection of these two early roads and was home to the first county seat, courts, and jail as early as 1804.[11] The History of Cayuga County 1789 – 1879 by Elliot G. Storke calls attention to the productive soil in the town which inevitably led to the growth of a wealth of farming enterprises in Scipio.

Scipio was the birthplace of portrait artist, Charles Loring Elliott in December of 1812 near Scipio Center. Elliott painted portraits for several years in the western part of New York State and later opened a studio in New York City. He is said to have painted more than 700 portraits of eminent men during the later half of the nineteeth century. Among his subjects were James E. Freeman; Matthew Vassar, in Vassar College; Louis Gaylord Clark; W. W. Coreoran; Fletcher Harper; Fenimore Cooper; Governors Seymour and Hunt, in the New York City Hall; and Erastus Coming, in the New York State Library, Albany. Several of Elliott's works were at the National Academy in 1868, including Don Quixote, Falstaff, Andrew Van Corlear, the Trumpeter, his own portrait, and The Head of Skaneateles Lake, said to be the only landscape that he painted.[12]

James Stuart, a British visitor to America, traveled across New York State by stage in September, 1828, on the well-known Genesee Road. In order to see more of the Finger Lakes Region than was possible on this central route, he took a side tour from Auburn to Ithaca which would have had him travelling through or very near the Town of Scipio. The following passages are from his journal:

> "*There is a great deal of ground in the neighbourhood [of Aurora] devoted to orchards, at present in all their glory, loaded with fruit. The coachman drove so near the trees close to the road that we had as many apples as we chose to pull. We dined at a small hotel at Aurora on pork, which, as we have always hitherto found it in this country, was excellent. The hogs are allowed in this country to run out in the forests and orchards, where they subsist in great measure in the autumn on nuts, acorns, and fallen apples, and in some cases on fallen peaches. Before being killed they are put up for a short time on Indian corn. The flesh of the hogs fed in this way is firm and good. Our fellow-passengers consisted of a Pennsylvania farmer; an Ithaca storekeeper; and a female, with her son Ulysses. We passed many good farms, some of them recently brought into cultivation, on which the usual processes of housebuilding, and inclosing by strong wooden rails, were in progress.*" [13]

10 Source: 1789 History of Cayuga County, New York, by Elloit G. Storke, Syracuse, NY, pg.417.
11 Source: Sandie Gilliland, Town of Scipio Historian, 12/07/2008, and 1789 History of Cayuga County, New York, by Elloit G. Storke, Syracuse, NY.
12 Source: Edited Appletons Encyclopedia, Copyright © 2001 VirtualologyTM
13 From Three Years in North America, by James Stuart, (Edinburgh, 1833), Clayton Mau.



AGRICULTURAL FAIR AT AUBURN.

Above is a lithograph by J.S. Skinner of the 1850 Agricultural Fair at Auburn, NY showing a variety of livestock, visitors and buildings in an enclosed fairgrounds, looking like an early predecessor of the New York State Fair. (Source: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com).(Source: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com).

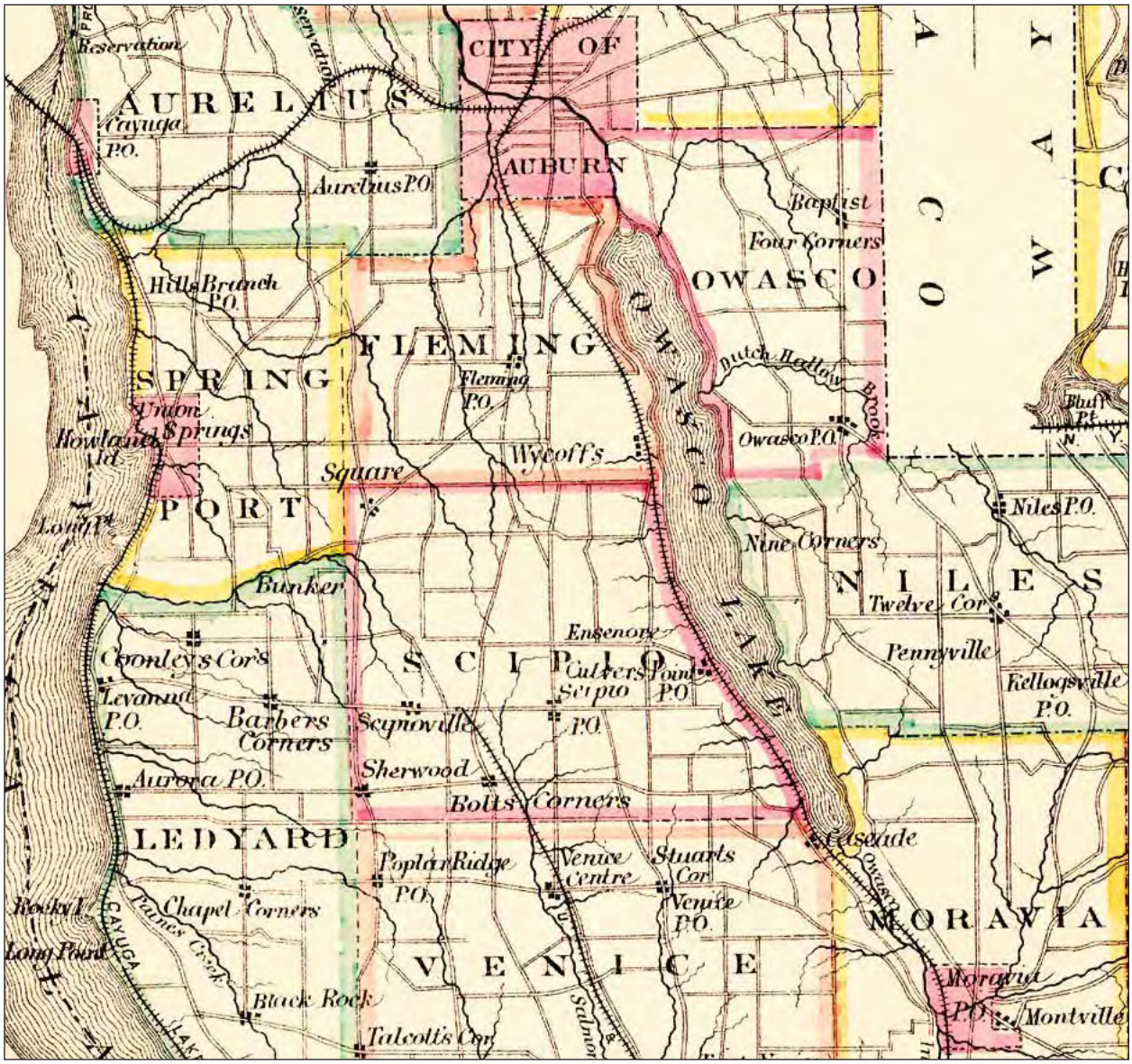
At right a "Comparitive View of the Agricultural Condition of the County of Cayuga in 1850 and 1845" (Source: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com).

COMPARATIVE VIEW OF THE AGRICULTURE CONDITION of the County of Cayuga in 1850 and 1845.

	1850	1845	Increase	Decrease
Improved Acres	298633	295651	2982	
Unimproved acres	998			
Horses	12503	13932		1429
Cows	18113	19715		1602
Oxen	3428	25541		2208
Other Cattle	19905			
Sheep	122446	175148		52702
Swine	28769	43346		14777
Wheat Bushels of	468730	652896		184166
Barley " "	303953	143516	160437	
Oats " "	735441	652281	83160	
Rye " "	29695	4415	25280	
Indian Corn	704954	479151	225803	
Peas & Beans "	5691	60278		54587
Buckwheat "	46784	74066		27282
Potatoes " "	281602	536033		255241
Hay tons of	72590			
Butter lbs "	1673315	1696764		23449
Cheese " "	217413	394001		176588
Clover seed Bushels	2545			
Other grass seed	1678			
Flax lbs of	10761	139126		128365
Flaxseed Bush	1324			
Hops lbs of	1442			
Wool " "	367085	412667		45582
Maple Sugar "	109048			
Molasses Gallon	410			
Beeswax & Honey lbs	34678			
Domestic Fabrics $	23117	85546		62429
Animals slaughtered	$350676			
Population	55489	49663	5826	

The New York Oswego & Midland Railroad, or the Short Line, as it was also known, was a rail line that travelled during the late nineteenth century by a more central route north and south through the county just to the east of Bolt's Corners and Scipio Summit or Merrifield in the Town of Scipio on its way between Auburn and Ithaca. The Southern Central Railroad along the western shore of Owasco Lake was in operation until nearly the middle of the twentieth century, and for a time it was possible through many connections to travel by steam train from the Town of Scipio to major metropolitan cities including Syracuse, Chicago, New York, and Boston.

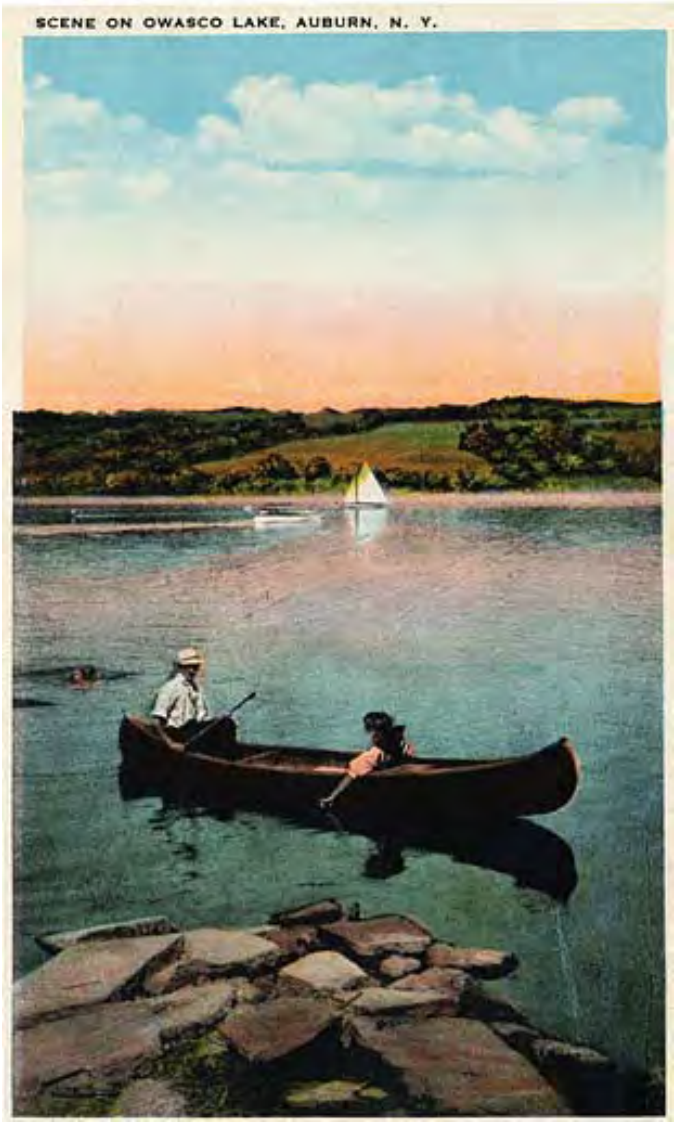
During and following the Civil War years, at around the time of the introduction of the railroads across Cayuga County, Scipio became a center for social reform movements including abolishionism, the underground railroad, education and women's rights.



1879 map showing the Southern Central and New York Oswego & Midland Railroads in the Town of Scipio (Source: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com).

A predominant contingent of the Society of Friends, or Quaker faith, was catalyst to an unusually dedicated and effective community effort toward equal rights reforms in the young nation including equal access to education provided by the community at the Sherwood Select School, which was organized and operated entirely by women until its absorption into the public school system in 1926.[14]

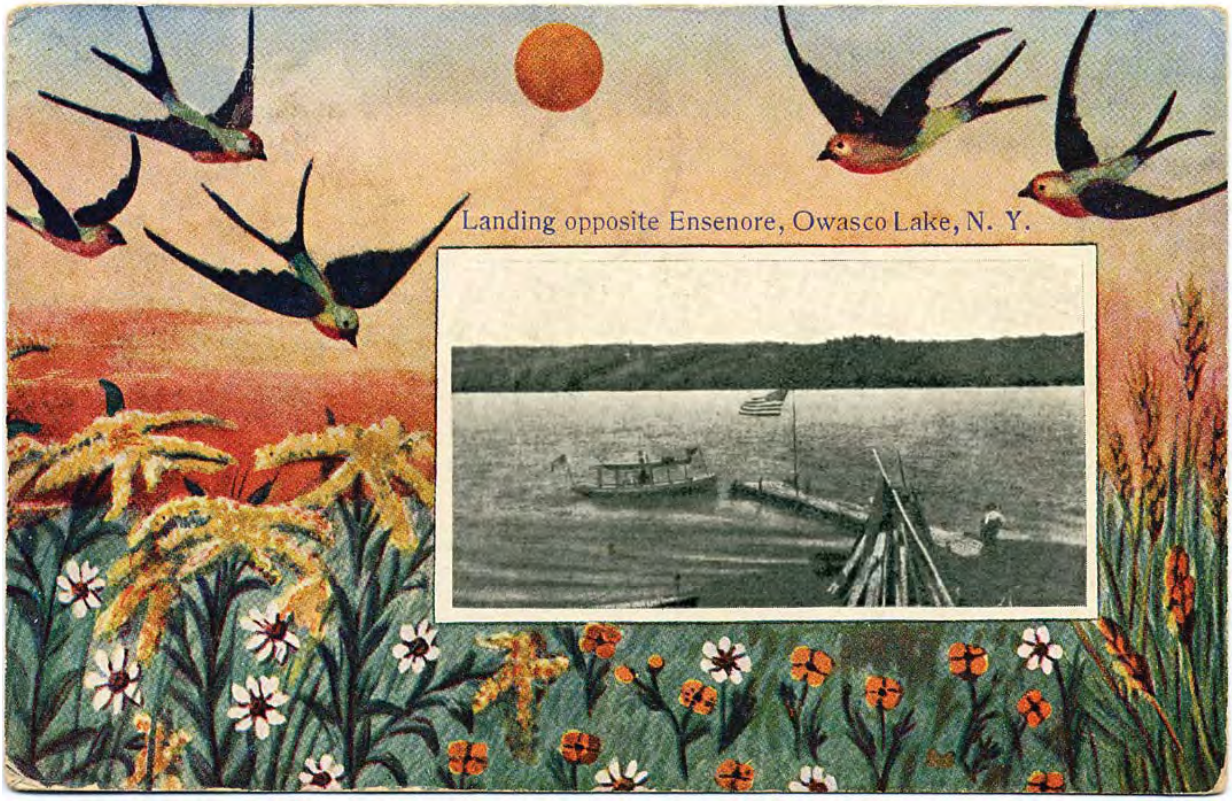




Above left, the Sherwood Select School, c.1904. The building was demolished in 1954. The site is now home to the Emily Howland Elementary School. At right, is a scene showing the boating on Owasco lake, date unknown (Source for both images: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com).

14 National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet, Sherwood Historic District, Appendix 1, Page 4

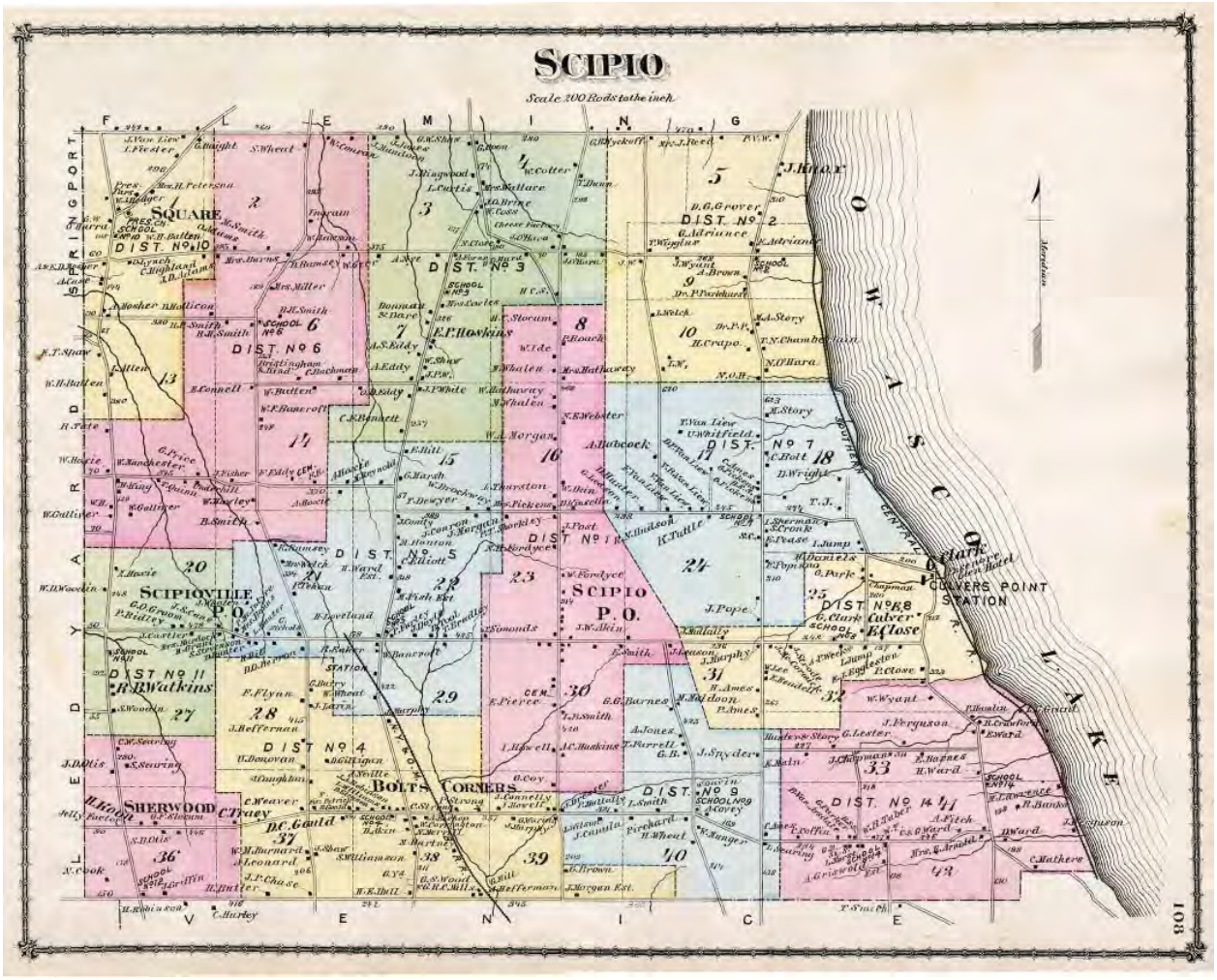
The Southern Central Railroad connected Auburn and Ithaca with local stops at Wyckoff Station just north of the Scipio Town line in Fleming and Culver's Point Station in Scipio. Culver's Point was the location of the Ensenore Glen Hotel where recreational visitors were hosted for the Town's beautiful lake shore for sailing races, swimming, and other popular summer activities. In 1878, a rowing contest was held between Cornell and Harvard University on Owasco Lake.[15]





Top image is a postcard from the Ensenore Glen Hotel, date unknown. Bottom image is of boating on Owaso lake, date unknown (Source for both: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com).

15 Source: Cornell Crew Supplement, September 1892, Volume XIII No.2, Ithaca NY



1875 map of the Town of Scipio (Source: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com).

Hamlets and Historic Settlements

As the Scipio population grew to 2,702 in 1829, so too did the need for local products and services. Community settlements and commercial centers of activity developed at Scipio Center, Scipioville, Sherwood, and Bolt's Corners. Smaller settlements developed at Waring's Corners, Merrifield (also known as Scipio Summit), and Wood's Mill which was located on Scipio-Venice Town Line Road between Route 34 and Black Street.

Scipio Center



Looking north west at the intersection of Route 34 and Center Road in the Hamlet of Scipio Center.

Scipio Center is situated on State Route 34 at the intersection of Center Road. According to Elliot Storke, Dr. Ezra Strong started the first store in this location in 1808 which later became a mercantile business and continuing in existence until sometime after 1875. Other businesses once in operation at Scipio Center included a cider-mill, two wagon shops, two blacksmith shops, and a hotel. Today, the hamlet of Scipio Center consists of a cluster of several residences, Scipio Community Church, River of Life Church (former St. Patrick Catholic Church), a Post Office, Masonic Lodge, a hair salon, an auto refinishing shop, a tavern, and a monument company.

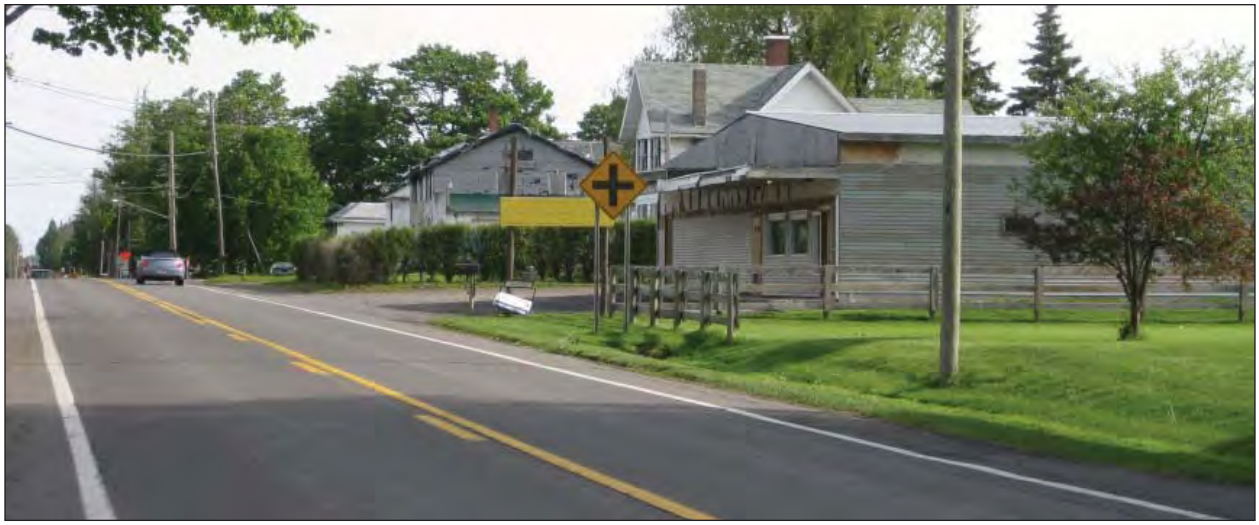
There are several nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings still standing in the hamlet. Some are in very good physical condition, and some, although their historic character remains intact, are in dire need of repairs and restoration. Scipio Center, characterized by a mix of stately historic homes, barns, and small twentieth century buildings and surrounded by open farm fields, is the most geographically extensive hamlet in the Town of Scipio. It is the only hamlet in the Town with two churches and contiguous development extending approximately 1000 feet in four directions from it's center. State Route 34, a busy connector road between Auburn and Ithaca, runs north and south through the hamlet. Center Road runs east and west through the Hamlet connecting State Route 38 above the shores of Owasco Lake with State Route 34B and the Hamlet of Scipioville and Levanna to the west.



The southwest corner of State Route 34 and Center Road in the Hamlet of Scipio Center.



Two buildings at the southeast corner of State Route 34 and Center Road in the Hamlet of Scipio Center.



Looking north along State Route 34 at the southern edge of the Hamlet of Scipio Center.

Scipioville

Scipioville (below) is in the western part of the township, at the intersection of State Rt. 34B and Center and Levanna Road. The community was first settled by Henry Watkins in 1790-91, and was called Watkin's Corners. Later it became known as Fitch's Corners, Mechanicsburg, and finally Scipioville in 1836 with the establishment of the first post office. A leather currier and tannery was started in Scipioville in 1797. In 1806, Paine Fitch built a tavern, and there were two general stores, one on the southwest corner and one on the northeast corner. A distillery, tin shop, creamery, fertilizer storage, meat shop, buggy shop, and a grist, saw and planning mill were also located there. Webster's hotel was located on the southeast corner of Scipioville, and a building to the east of the hotel once served as a community dance hall.



Aerial image of the Hamlet of Scipioville (Source: www.bing.com/maps).

Today, Scipioville consists of a small cluster of residences mainly to the east of Route 34B including Scipioville Presbyterian Church (moved in 1961 from east of the four corners on Center Road to a new location on Route 34B within the hamlet). Farm buildings, surrounding farm fields, hedgerows, and a scattering of small wood lots and ponds also characterize the hamlet.



Looking southwest in the Hamlet of Scipioville, May 2010.



Scipioville Presbyterian Church was moved in 1961 from east of the four corners on Center Road to this location on Route 34B in the Hamlet of Scipioville.

Sherwood

The Hamlet of Sherwood, settled by Judge Seth Sherwood from Vermont in 1794-1795, is located to the south of Scipioville at the intersection of State Rt. 34B and Sherwood Road. A short time prior to the hamlet's settlement by Judge Sherwood, a family named White settled in the area, clearing about four acres of land about a half mile southeast of the corners.



Aerial image of the Hamlet of Sherwood (Source: www.bing.com/maps).

In 1796, Judge Sherwood built the first hotel on land just to the north on the northeast corner (the site of the present antique store, historically called The Block). A later owner, Henry Fisher built a harness shop in back of the hotel. For a brief time, in 1804 -1805, the Hamlet of Sherwood served as the County seat. In 1808, Joseph Barnes and Melvin Brown opened a store on the southeast corner dealing in potash. The upper floors of this building housed a shoe and boot store. Slocum Howland later used the barn to the east of this building to assemble the cast iron plows invented by Jethro Wood. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Sherwood was a lively community and a center for abolitionism, equal rights, and the Underground Railroad movements with Quaker settlers actively assisting freedom seekers.



Looking east at Cleavland's Antiques and the Howland Stone Store Museum at the center of the Hamlet of Sherwood, May 2010.

Today, the historic Hamlet features a mix of small and grand, deteriorated and restored, historic residential and commercial buildings. The Hamlet features many mature trees, old farm buildings and is surrounded by open farm fields. An early racially integrated cemetery, a reminder of the settlement's important historic role in the abolitionist movement, is located in Sherwood.

Although the Hamlet has been dubbed the "Sherwood Equal Rights Historic District" by the State of New York for it's rich history of social activism, and has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Sherwood today struggles to maintain many of its aging and largely neglected historic structures. Some of the historically important buildings that remain in the hamlet are literally crumbling from years of neglected maintenance, or abandonment added to the effects of age and weather. Others remain in poor to fair condition and await much needed investments of labor and money. Still, the compact rural Hamlet remains a striking reminder and record in both physical form and documented history, of the community's, the State's, and the Nation's early settlement, development, and participation in key historical movements.

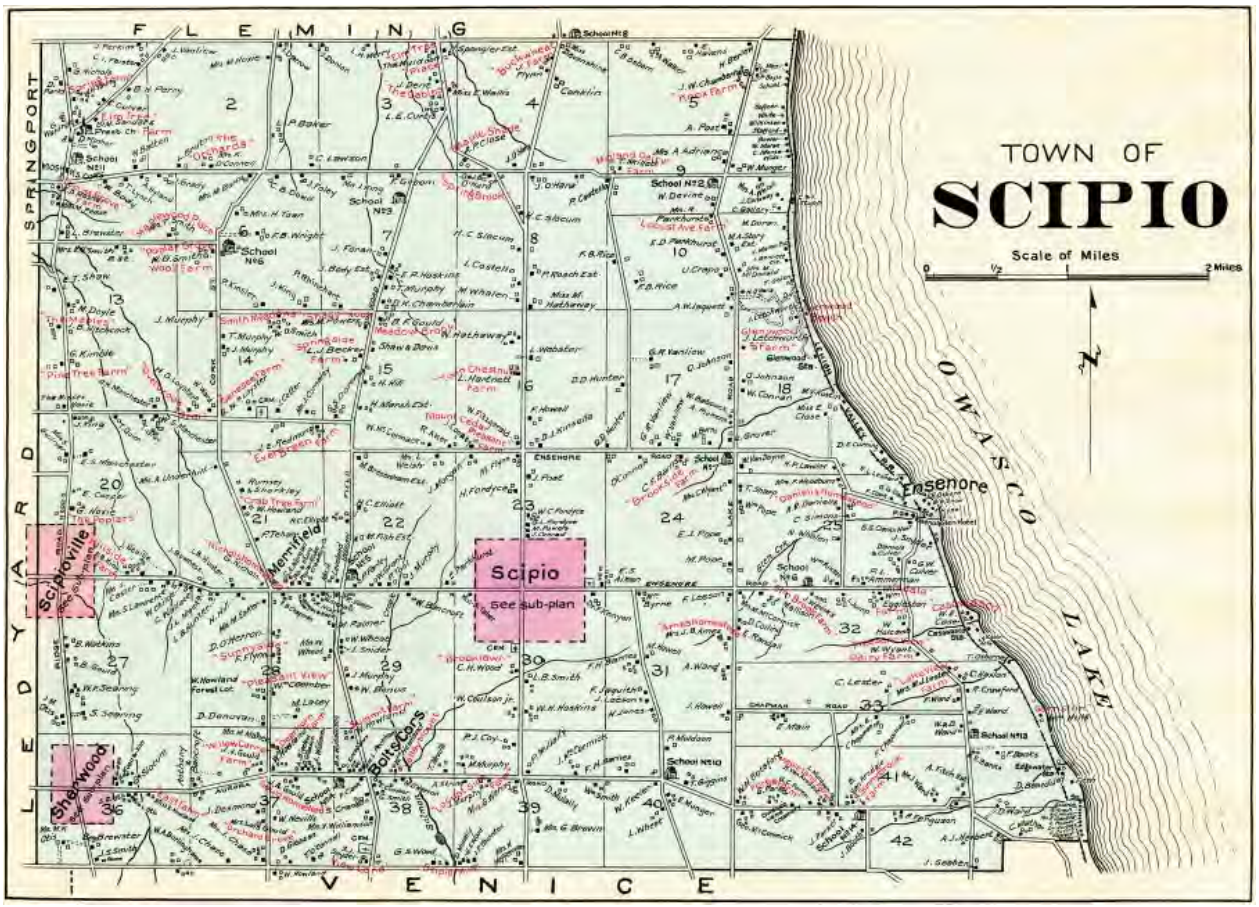
Bolt's Corners

The intersection of Sherwood Road, Black Street and Indian Field Road is the site of one of the earliest settlements in the Town of Scipio, Bolt's Corners. Its first settlers, Elisha Durkee and Gilbert Tracy arrived in 1788, each clearing some land and building log cabins there. James Wilcox acquired land and built a hotel in 1789, and in the nineteenth century, Bolt's Corners was an active community center. As the settlement grew, businesses at Bolt's Corners included an ashery, saw mill, grist mill, and brickyard. A significant building constructed at Bolt's Corners, a church built in 1821, had a steeple over 100 feet high, and in 1828 the congregation had a membership of over 300 people. A short line, the New York & Oswego Midland Railroad "Milk Train" passed through Scipio just east of Bolt's Corners during the late nineteenth century contributing to the hamlet's status as a commercial center where the local community came to purchase every day supplies. In the late nineteenth century, Bolt's Corners was the prime social and business center in the area, outside of the settlement of Aurora to the west on the shore of Cayuga Lake.



Looking west at Valley Mound Farm on the northeast corner of Bolt's Corners in the Town of Scipio, May 2010.

Today, Bolt's Corners is a rural four corners featuring a cluster of agricultural buildings and facilities on both the southwest and northeast corners. Open land and vast expanses of farm fields surround the crossroads, and the trace of the former New York & Oswego Midland Railroad remains alongside Salmon Creek to the east of the crossroads. One old homestead remains on the northwest corner of the former hamlet.



1904 map of the Town of Scipio showing the location of "Merrifield" between Scipio Center and Scipioville (Source: http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com).

Waring's Corners

The intersection of Sherwood Road and State Route 34 is known as Waring's Corners. The southwest corner, now marked with a State Historic Marker, was once the site of Waring Place, a tavern built in 1806 and later used as both a Masonic Lodge and school house. Meetings of the Scipio Morning Star Lodge 169 F. & A.M. were held at Waring Place from 1811 to1814, and again from 1822 to 1842. The intersection, today, features a farmstead on the northeast corner and a residence on the southwest corner. A small tributary to Salmon Creek cuts diagonally through the area just to the north of the crossroads which are surrounded by vast and open cultivated fields. Scattered hedgerows remain between some of the open fields and some mixed vegetation exists along parts of the stream corridor.



Scipio Summit (Merrifield)

Scipio Summit, or Merrifield as it is also known, is located just south of the intersection of Center Road and Black Street. It was the designated location about equally distant from settlements at Scipio Center, Scipioville, and Sherwood. 1872, Charles Morgan started a business in this location which included the sale of lumber, and grain. Mr. Morgan was also the agent for the railroad and the telegraph company. Of the two stores once located in Merrifield, one was in the basement of a residence, and the other at the railroad station. A post-office was established in Merrifield in 1876. Scipio Summit, or Merrifield, served as the northern terminus of the Utica, Ithaca and Elmira Railroad between 1873 and 1876. The line was extended from Merrifield to Auburn in 1889 as the Ithaca, Auburn & Western Line, but was abandoned in just three years later in1891.

Today, the quiet, rural-agrarian settlement of Scipio Summit seems more aptly-named Merrifield. With just a few residences, barns and farm fields, and the railroad long gone, the scenic location is more of a sleepy wayside than a centrally-designated place in the Town.



Historic and Cultural Resources



The "scenically unique" rural-agrarian landscape of the Finger lakes Region. This view is looking northeast across a farm field from Ensenore Road in the Town of Scipio, 2007.

The Rural-Agrarian Landscape

As described by O. D. Von Engeln in his 1988 book *The Finger Lakes Region, Its Origin and Environment*, the Town of Scipio is located in a region that is "scenically unique." Von Engeln's description of the geographical environment of the Finger Lakes Region with "its general expression wide farm acres and level upland pastures [amid] long, narrow, roughly parallel lakes...with high, almost cliff-steep shores.[and] narrow, deep gorges" is an accurate description of the landscape surrounding the Town of Scipio. Located roughly halfway between NYS Designated Scenic Routes 20 and 90 to the north and south respectively, Scipio is at the heart of the picturesque region of the eastern Finger Lakes.

NYS Routes 38, 34, and 34B originate in the City of Auburn and cross the Town of Scipio to the south continuing on to Ithaca and Dryden in Tompkins County. There are scenic vistas of farmland gently sloping toward Owasco Lake along Route 38 in the Town of Scipio. Route 34 bisects the Town between the Hamlet of Fleming just north of Scipio and heading south to the Hamlet of Venice. Route 34B is a scenic two lane rural-agrarian road featuring picturesque farm fields with historic barns and buildings along its course.

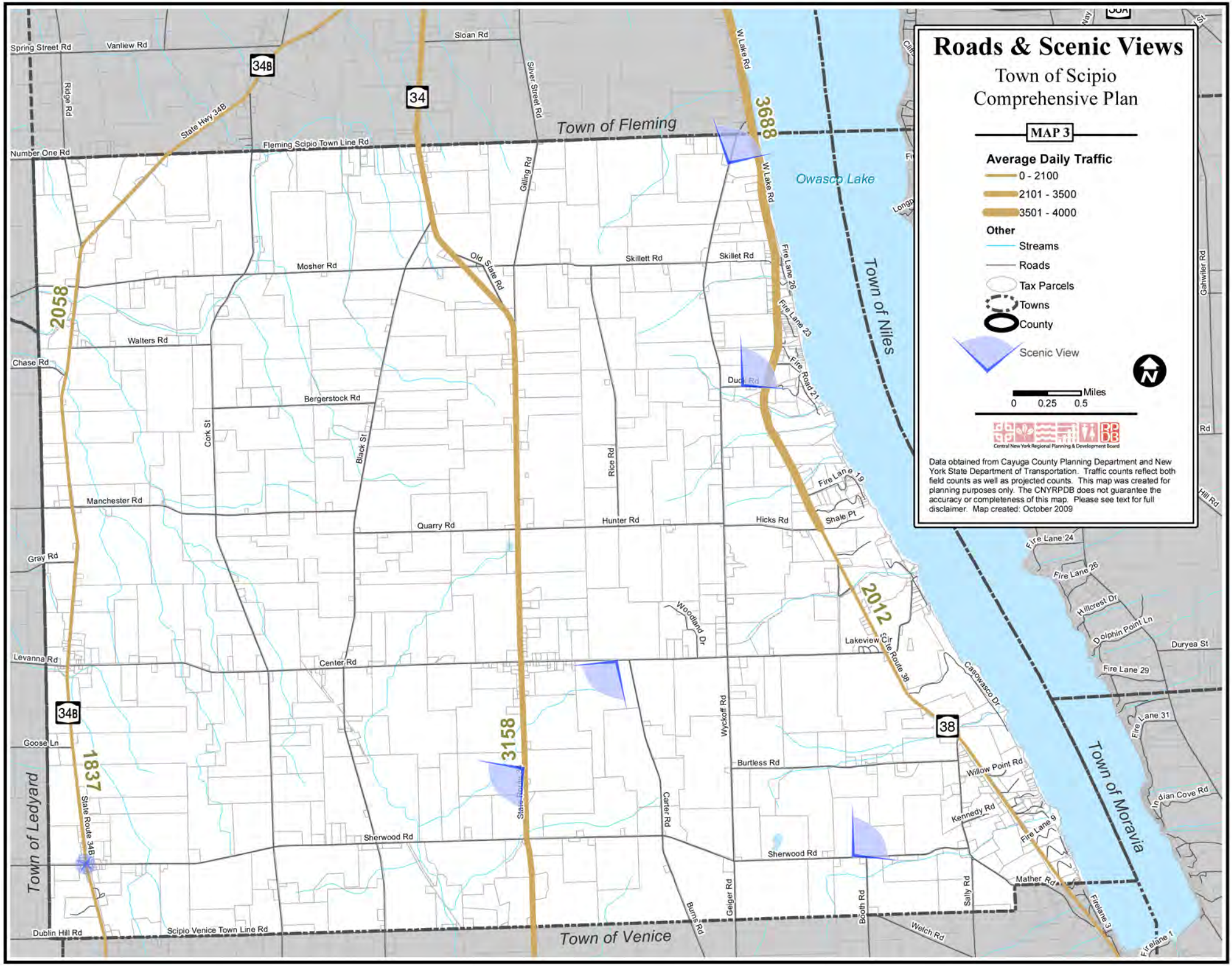
Several roads in the Town of Scipio feature scenic views of historic buildings and vast acres of farmland, some of them are spectacular from the heights above the lakes to the east and west. Some of the most impressive publicly accessible views in the Town are the eastward view from the heights of Sherwood Road of farmland sloping to Owasco Lake, and the southwestward view over Scipio farmland from Center Road and State Route 34 near the Hamlet of Scipio Center. The historic Hamlet of Sherwood with it's compact cluster of diverse nineteenth century homesteads and commercial buildings surrounded by farm fields on State Route 34B is an architecturally unique surviving example of traditional American rural hamlet form (see Map 3). There are beautiful northeastern views of Owasco Lake from Duck Road and Wyckoff Road in the northern section of the Town.



View from Duck Road in the northern part of the Town of Scipio, 2007.



Farmland along Sherwood Road looking east toward the slope above Owasco Lake, 2010.


Roads & Scenic Views
Town of Scipio
Comprehensive Plan
MAP 3
Average Daily Traffic
0 - 2100
2101 - 3500
3501 - 4000
Other
Streams
Roads
Tax Parcels
Towns
County
Scenic View
Miles
0 0.25 0.5
Central New York Regional Planning & Development Board
Data obtained from Cayuga County Planning Department and New York State Department of Transportation. Traffic counts reflect both field counts as well as projected counts. This map was created for planning purposes only. The CNYRPDB does not guarantee the accuracy or completeness of this map. Please see text for full disclaimer. Map created: October 2009
Town of Fleming
Town of Niles
Town of Moravia
Town of Ledyard
Town of Venice
Owasco Lake
Spring Street Rd
Vanliew Rd
Sloan Rd
Ridge Rd
State Hwy 34B
Silver Street Rd
W Lake Rd
Number One Rd
Fleming Scipio Town Line Rd
Gilling Rd
Mosher Rd
Old State Rd
Skillett Rd
Fire Lane 26
Fire Lane 23
Fire Road 21
Walters Rd
Chase Rd
Bergerstock Rd
Cork St
Black St
Rice Rd
Manchester Rd
Quarry Rd
Hunter Rd
Hicks Rd
Shale Pt
Fire Lane 19
Gray Rd
Levanna Rd
Center Rd
Woodland Dr
Lakeview Cir
State Route 38
Casowasco Dr
Wyckoff Rd
Goose Ln
Burtless Rd
Willow Point Rd
Kennedy Rd
Fire Lane 9
Carter Rd
Sherwood Rd
Mather Rd
Geiger Rd
Booth Rd
Sally Rd
Burns Rd
Dublin Hill Rd
Scipio Venice Town Line Rd
Welch Rd
Firelane 31
Firelane 1
Fire Lane 24
Fire Lane 26
Hillcrest Dr
Dolphin Point Ln
Duryea St
Fire Lane 29
Fire Lane 31
Indian Cove Rd
Gahwiler Rd
Hill Rd
Rd
2058
3688
2012
3158
1837
34B
34
38

TOWN OF VENICE

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2021



ADOPTED JANUARY 13, 2022

THOMA
Development Consultants

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CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION

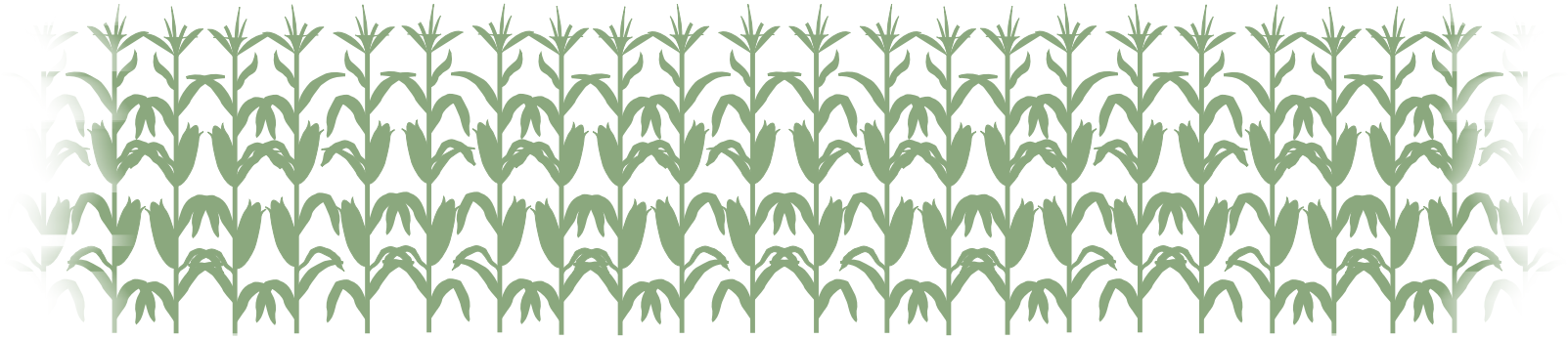
In this chapter...

- Vision Statement
- Background
- Development of the Plan
- Public Participation



VISION STATEMENT

The Town of Venice, in developing a comprehensive plan, seeks to preserve the rural character of the town by sustaining and improving upon the small-town appeal and the quality of life its residents enjoy. The town seeks to ensure the long-term viability of the town's agricultural practices; protect the important natural, open space, and scenic resources of the town; and enhance the livability of existing neighborhood developments.



BACKGROUND

This Comprehensive Plan is an exclusive guide that will promote the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of the Town of Venice. The process of Comprehensive or Master Planning is the effort by a municipality to guide the development, revitalization, and conservation of the Town's natural and built environment, as well as sustain and improve its quality of life. This Comprehensive Plan recognizes the importance of sustainability and provides Venice with the tools needed to move into the future responsibly, while retaining the rural small-town qualities that the citizens hold in high regard. Significant decisions and actions affecting the immediate and long-range protection, enhancement, growth, and development of the Town can be influenced by the goals and implementation measures stated in this Comprehensive Plan. The plan not only serves as a guide in addressing key issues facing the community today, but also assists in responding to new opportunities and challenges in the future. This long-range document provides recommendations for future action and helps prioritize choices for the allocation of resources.

A comprehensive plan is not a regulatory document but serves as a guiding document for the town when land use management and policy decisions are made. A sound plan will serve as a legal defense of a community's land use management policies and decisions.

The purpose of this Comprehensive Plan is to explore current strengths and challenges of the town to develop goals and implementation measures and create a conceptual road map to achieving them. A comprehensive plan provides guidance to leaders, agencies, community organizations, local businesses, and residents to ensure that the community's needs are met in both the short-term and long-term. It is a detailed plan, produced with a 10-15 year time frame in which to accomplish the goals set forth in this plan.

NEW YORK STATE STATUTES

New York State statutes authorize local governments to prepare comprehensive plans and recommend specific components for inclusion. The State recognizes that significant decisions and actions affecting communities are made at the local level. One of the most important powers granted by the legislature to local government is the authority to undertake comprehensive planning. New York State's definition of a comprehensive plan, the suggested elements it may contain, as well as procedural requirement for development and adoption, are found in Town Law 272-a (Town Comprehensive Plan). The adoption of a comprehensive plan under these statutes is voluntary.

New York State requires that municipalities with an adopted comprehensive plan must ensure all land use regulations be in conformance with that plan. Adopting land use regulations that conform to an up-to-date comprehensive plan provides significant legal protection for

such regulations. Land use regulations are not limited to zoning that separates a community into zoning districts and specifies land uses, building dimensions, and yard requirements in each zone; but may also include regulations that protect natural resources, slopes, historic districts, and view sheds, to name a few.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

REASON FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Town of Venice has recognized the need to thoughtfully plan for the future of the town as it relates to development, public services, safety, and infrastructure. Unlike many similar towns in New York State, or even in Cayuga County, Venice did not have a comprehensive plan. In order to properly address the myriad of issues that a town government must face, the Venice Town Board determined that the comprehensive planning process would be appropriate.

The town's comprehensive planning process has evolved over the course of 2021, and has been based on the values, concerns, and thoughtful comments of the town residents, landowners, and stakeholders. Community members were involved in the planning process by participating on the steering committee, speaking at public meetings, attending planning workshops, and/or participating in a community survey. Public participation ensured that the plan addressed the needs of the community. It allowed the steering committee and consultant to better understand the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and critical issues in the Town of Venice.

PLAN PREPARATION

The Town of Venice hired Thoma Development Consultants (THOMA) to assist in the development of the town's comprehensive plan. Founded in 1980, Thoma is a community development consulting firm located in Cortland, NY. Thoma has 40 years of experience in community development. In addition to analyzing the information gathered through public meetings, surveys, and steering committee meetings, Thoma has also referenced information from the U.S. Census in preparing the plan. Thoma provided input on the plan based on the experience and expertise of its staff and knowledge garnered over their many years of working in the field. All data is referenced throughout the plan, and so noted.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Community involvement in developing a vision for the future of the town is crucial. The Town of Venice created opportunities for the citizens, stakeholders, and property owners in the town to provide input on the comprehensive plan. This process fosters "ownership" of the plan, allowing residents to have a voice in determining the future of their community. Below are the processes used to encourage and ensure citizen participation.

STEERING COMMITTEE

The Town of Venice comprehensive plan steering committee was appointed by the Town of Venice Board and charged with guiding the development of the town's comprehensive plan. The steering committee was composed of local residents, political representatives, and representatives of local organizations. Membership of the Town of Venice comprehensive plan steering committee included:

Brian Sheils - Deputy Town Supervisor
Ed Denton- Town Councilperson
Evan McGonagle - Resident
Robert Donald - Farmer
Dean Whitten - Resident
Kia Larsen - Resident
Gary Stevens - Resident
Andy Simkin - Town Clerk
Colleen Rejman - Business Owner
Andy VanNostrand - Resident

SURVEYS

A survey was created for all residents of Venice to complete. The survey was hosted online, and paper copies were available at the Town Hall. To reach as many residents as possible, a mailing list was derived from the tax roll and voting registration lists. Additionally, a large banner was placed in front of town hall, directing residents to fill out the survey. This survey was used to determine discussion topics and to better understand the issues that were important to the residents who completed the survey, so that these issues could be discussed with the steering committee, and discussed in a group setting at the public meetings. The survey results are summarized below:

There were 111 responses to the town-wide survey, which equals approximately 9% of the population. The survey consisted of many different questions and questions types. In addition, all questions gave a space for comments on the question material or to expand on respondent's answers.

Some key results that should be noted include the following:

- 53% of respondents have lived in the Town of Venice for over 30 years.
- 93% of respondents live in a single-family home
- A majority of respondents do not want the town to develop a community

center or town athletic fields.

- 60% of respondents think the town should encourage public access to Owasco Lake.
- Town respondents indicated that any development should be mindful of agricultural processes and lands.
- Respondents indicated a moderate need for development of senior housing, single family housing, and two family housing.
- A majority of respondents said that the town should have land use regulations to address specific issues identified in the survey.
- Respondents indicated that they would like the town to encourage development of in-home businesses, light-manufacturing, restaurants, retail, and professional services.
- Respondents indicated a need for improvement in code enforcement, information delivery, accessibility/ availability of the Town Clerk, affordable housing, internet service quality, cell phone service reception, trash removal options, and child care options.
- Overall themes of the survey responses were farmland protection, land-use regulations, housing affordability, childcare access, and town operations.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

The Town of Venice also held two public meetings in order to engage residents, stakeholders, and landowners. These meetings were open to anyone in the town and were advertised by newspaper, sign banner at town hall, Facebook postings, and home mailings. The outreach was far and wide to encourage as much participation as possible.

Meeting one was held on September 16th, 2021 and consisted of the following agenda:

- General overview of comprehensive planning and why the town is working towards drafting and adopting a comprehensive plan.
- Three open house style stations which included: an interactive strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis of the town; an interactive infrastructure map for



Image 1: Meeting attendees listen to a presentation during the first public meeting. Source: Thoma

residents to call out areas that need attention; and a map of the town for attendees to indicate areas of poor broadband or telecommunication signals or service.

Meeting two was held on October 21st, 2021 and consisted of the following agenda:

- Comprehensive Plan Overview
- Agriculture section draft overview and comment period
- Renewable energy overview and comment period
- General question and response

The two meetings were well attended, and produced many opportunities for great discussions between concerned citizens, the consultant group, and persons representing the local government.
These public meetings allowed the steering committee and consultant team to hear valuable feedback on how to draft the comprehensive plan goals and objectives, allowing this team to hear the specific concerns that meeting attendees had regarding the different issues at hand.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The goals and implementation strategies identified in the Town of Venice comprehensive plan are the result of significant deliberation by the town's appointed steering committee. The goals are based on careful review of the input provided by residents, landowners, and stakeholders of the town. The goals are also guided by the vision of the plan and the observations and experience of the town's consultant. The town and its departments should work diligently to ensure that future decisions, actions, and projects are consistent with these goals.

The implementation strategies, following each goal, are a series of action steps that the town can take to achieve implementation of each goal for the comprehensive plan.



Image 2: Meeting attendees participate in a question and response session during the second public meeting. Source: Thoma

CHAPTER II : SETTING THE SCENE

In this chapter...

- History
- Venice Today
- Demographics



HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF VENICE

The Town of Venice derived its name from the famous city in Italy. The land was settled as early as 1790, and at the time was part of the Town of Scipio. In 1823, Scipio divided, creating the Town of Venice. Situated between the Town of Ledyard to the west, and Moravia and Locke to the east, the Town lies in the southern part of Cayuga County. To the south is the Town of Genoa, and Scipio is to the north. The northeast corner of the town is bounded by the head of Owasco Lake, the sixth largest Finger Lake.

The Town of Venice is a series of fields and forest land, with small rolling hills and fertile soils. The town's streams include the Salmon and Little Salmon Creeks and their tributaries, which flow into Cayuga Lake. Additionally, a smaller eastern portion of the town's watershed has numerous small streams that flow into Owasco Lake.

There are five hamlets within the town, Cascade, Stewarts Corners, East Venice, Venice Center, & Poplar Ridge. At some point or another, each hamlet had at least three of the following businesses: a general store, church, school, post office, black smith shop, train station, hotel, creamery, grist mill, saw mill, grain elevator, library, repair shop, masonic lodge & grange hall. Most of these businesses catered to the farming community.

A railroad crossed the northeast comer of the town along the shoreline of Owasco Lake with a station at Cascade. In later years it was known as the Lehigh Valley Railroad, a system that opened in 1872 and was abandoned around 1970. Another



Image 3: Saxton's Store, Venice Center NY. Source: Genoa Historical Society

railroad crossed through the center of the town with a station in Venice Center and another station on Meyers Road. The station in Venice Center still stands today and is owned by the Town of Venice. The full route of that railroad was Auburn to South Lansing, known as the short line. It was in operation from 1907 to 1923.

At one time there were twelve one room school houses located within the town limits, replaced in the early 1950s by three larger centralized school districts spanning across Venice and surrounding towns. In the mid 1960s, these schools merged to one large, consolidated school district, known as the Southern Cayuga Central School District. The campus is within town limits at Poplar Ridge.

In 1938 a fire district was formed which included the town of Venice, Scipio, and a portion of the Town of Ledyard. Two of the fire houses are located in the town, with the third in Scipio. In 1968 a volunteer ambulance service was formed. It is located at Poplar Ridge and is known as the Southern Cayuga Instant Aid Ambulance Service.

Agriculture and dairy farming is the primary economic driver in the Town of Venice. In 1875 the town population was 1,753. That same year there were approximately 1,100 dairy cattle within the town. Currently there are an estimated 1,236 people in the town and 8,000 to 8,500 dairy cattle on five farms within the town.



Image 4: 1879 Cayuga County Map.
Source: Cayugageneology.org

VENICE TODAY

The town has remained primarily agricultural with smaller farms merging, rented or bought out by larger farm operations. Evidence of this is the older barns and out buildings located in the town no longer in use, some in various stages of disrepair.

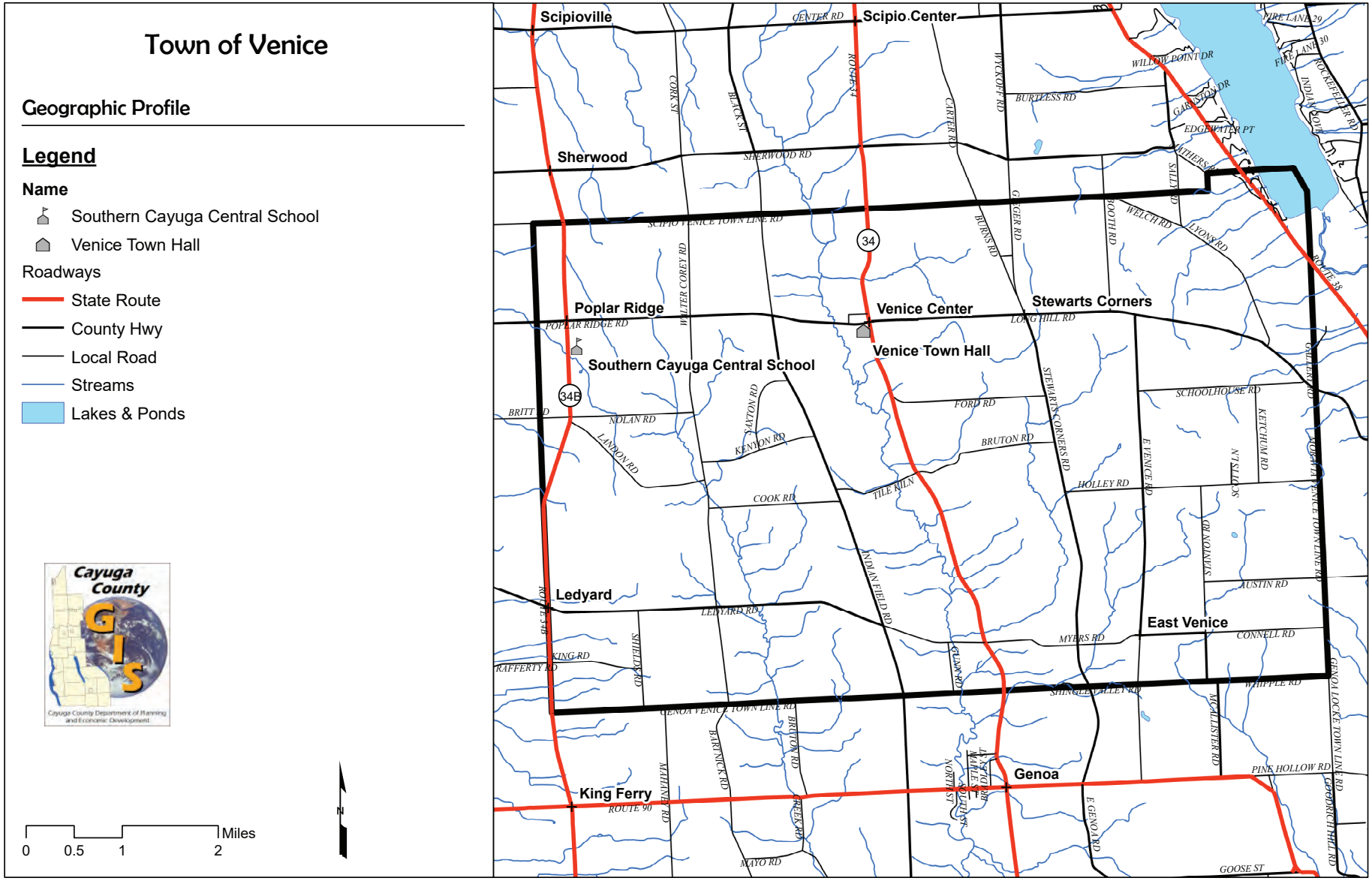
There are about a dozen non-farm small businesses within the town. Most of these businesses are dependent on the area population. The hamlet of Cascade on Owasco Lake has a restaurant and marina that cater to the boaters, anglers and cottage owners on the lake.

Over the years different types of farm products have been produced in the town. In the 1950's and 60's, the town produced sugar beets, red kidney beans, and smaller scale potatoes and cabbage. At the time, canning companies contracted with farmers to produce many of these crops. However, now, a good share of field crops in the town are grown to feed the dairy cattle in the town and surrounding areas.



Image 5: Venice Town Hall. Source: Google Street View

MAP 1: GEOGRAPHIC PROFILE



DEMOGRAPHICS

INTRODUCTION

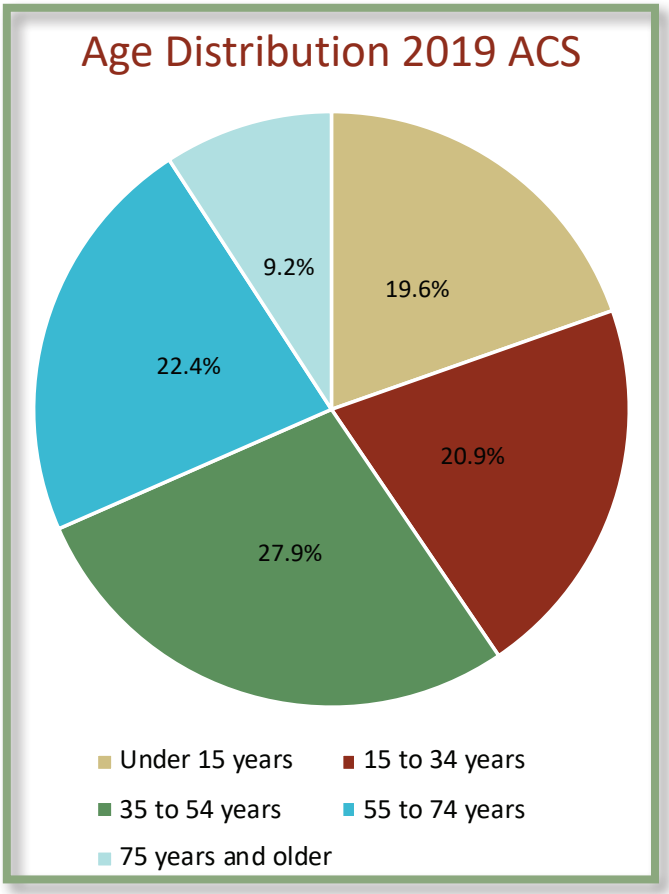
This section gives an overview of data from the U.S. Census data on the Town of Venice. The data is compiled from the U.S. 2000 and 2010 census, along with the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates. These facts, figures, and commentary are intended to give insight into the past conditions and trends of the population's demographic information and help guide the comprehensive plan in matters that are relevant to the data.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

According to the 2010 Census, the Town of Venice had a population of 1,368. In 2019, the ACS estimated a town population of 1,264, a 7.6% decrease in population. A chart depicting the estimated change in population from 2010 to 2019 is shown below and depicts an increase in population in the first decade, followed by a decline over the next nine years. In comparison, Cayuga County experienced a steady decline in population over the 19 year period.

The population age makeup of the Town of Venice is well distributed, with approximately 40% of the population under 34 years of age, and 60% 35 years old or older.

Figure 2



Source: 2019 ACS 5-year estimates.

Figure 1

POPULATION TRENDS 2000-2020

Municipality	2000 Census	2010 Census	percent change	2020 Census	percent change
Town of Venice	1,269	1,368	7.8%	1,236	-9.6%
Cayuga County	81,963	80,026	-2.4%	76,248	-4.7%

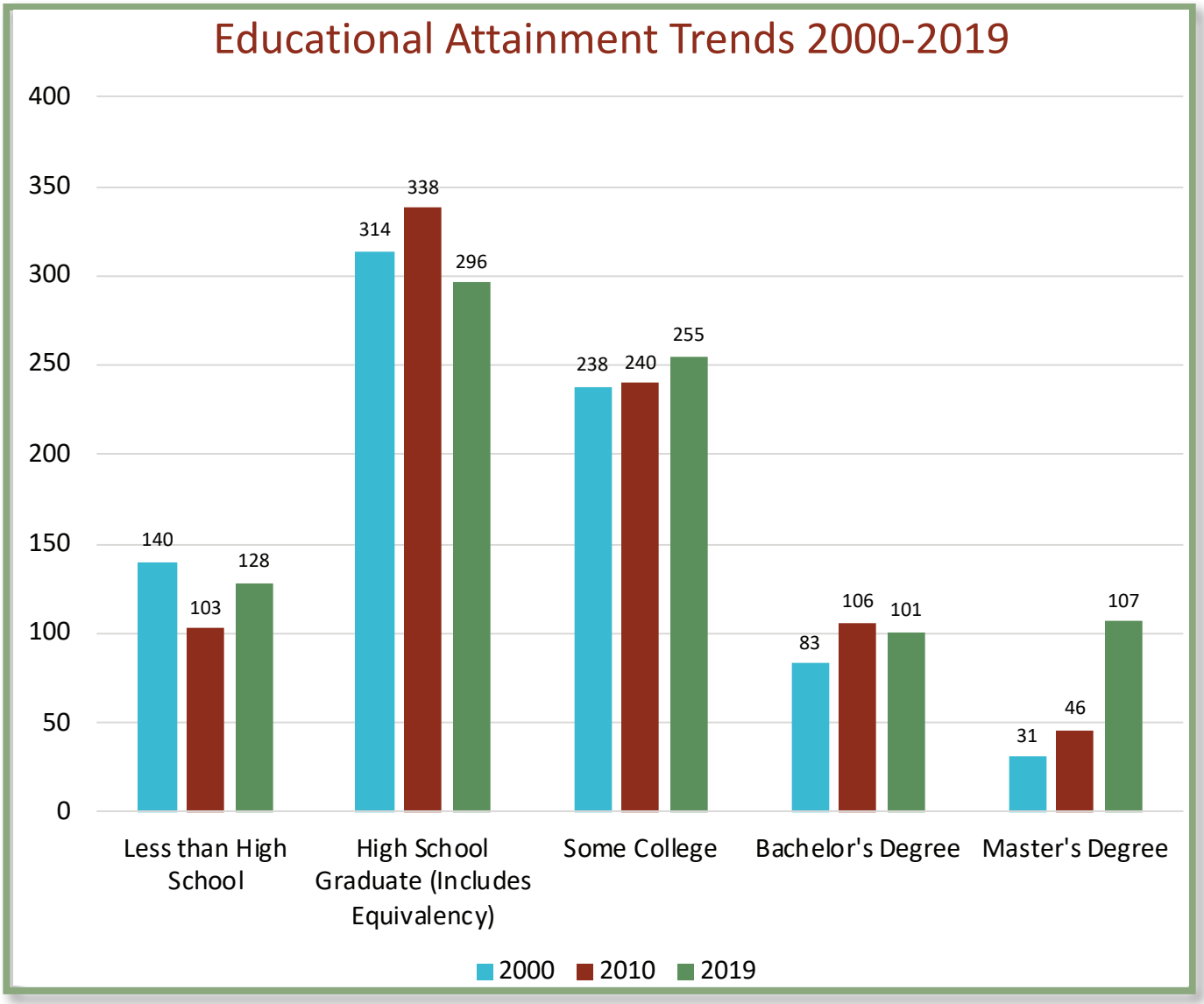
Source: 2000, 2010, 2020 U.S. Census estimates.

EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

In 2010, approximately 40% of the population in the Town of Venice had at least a high school education. In 2019, that figure was estimated to be 7% lower at 33%. To compare, Cayuga County's 2019 ACS estimate for high school education was also 33% of the population.

Figure 3, which shows the educational attainment trends for the town, depicts a slight increase in those with some college education among the population, a stable trend for those with a bachelor's degree, and a sharp increase in population that have attained a master's degree.

Figure 3



Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census and 2019 ACS 5-year estimates.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

As shown in figure four below, most of the population of the Town of Venice live in owner-occupied units. Only 17% of residents live in renter-occupied units. The average household size is estimated at 2.57 persons, with the average family size at approximately three people. 76% of the structures are single family detached homes, with only 2.1% of residential structures containing two or more units.

RACE AND GENDER CHARACTERISTICS

The Town of Venice is approximately 90% white, with other races, primarily Hispanic and African American, making up the remainder of the 10%.

The gender makeup of the town is 53% male and 47% female.

INCOME AND WORKFORCE CHARACTERISTICS

The Town of Venice median income is estimated at $67,917, compared with the county median of $58,665.

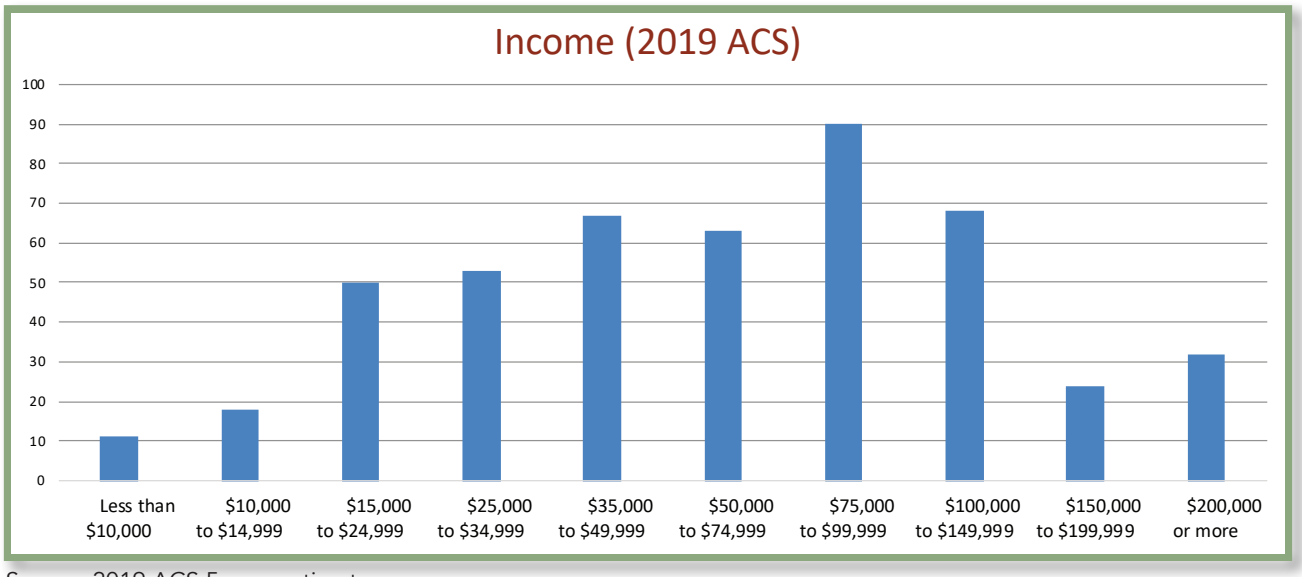
The labor force in the Town of Venice is approximately 650 residents, with the two main industries being agriculture and educational and healthcare services. After these, residents primarily work in manufacturing, retail, arts, and transportation.

Figure 4

Housing Tenure Trends 2000-2019		
Unit Type	2000	2010
Occupied Housing Units	476	596
Owner-Occupied	395	499
Renter Occupied	81	97

Source: 2019 ACS 5-year estimates.

Figure 5



Source: 2019 ACS 5-year estimates.

CHAPTER III : INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter...

- Open Space and Natural Resources
- Town Operations, Infrastructure, and Telecommunications
- Housing
- Education
- Land Use
- Agriculture
- Renewable Energy
- Plan Implementation Matrix

OPEN SPACE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Open space and natural resources are vital to the makeup of any community. For a rural community like the Town of Venice, the natural environment is vital to the character and appeal of the town for its residents and visitors alike. Below is a review of the natural resources and open space found within the town.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Town of Venice is made up of 48.65 square miles of land area, with approximately 0.17 square miles of surface water of Owasco Lake. While the town is primarily comprised of forest and farmland, there are a handful of public open spaces to enjoy. The first of these public open spaces is the Owasco Flats Nature Preserve. This preserve is owned by the Finger Lakes Land Trust and allows visitors to explore the preserve via walking paths and the Owasco Inlet with kayaks or canoes. According to information on the preserve found on gofingerlakes.org, "the inlet serves as an important habitat of fish spawning within its emergent marshes, which also does double duty as a natural water quality buffer for Owasco Lake" and "the Flats are part of the Greater Summerhill Important Bird Area (IBA)". While the entire preserve is not located within the town, a private boat launch and trail access are within the town's municipal boundary.

In addition to the Owasco Flats, the Town of Venice also has open space at the Southern Cayuga Central School. The school has basketball courts, tennis courts, a playground, multi-purpose fields, and a track. These amenities are open to the public, and offer town residents recreational space if needed.

While discussing open space, members of the steering committee identified a potential town park/community center at the site of the Venice Pavilion. This location is currently underutilized, but holds potential. The existing pavilion structure and surrounding grounds could be a potential community park location. Town residents could use the site for a wide variety of events or for casual use. Currently, the site is privately owned, and the town should work alongside the owners to determine the best course forward to utilize this community asset.

NATURAL RESOURCES

SURFACE WATER:

The Town of Venice at its northeastern-most corner includes a small portion of Owasco Lake. Owasco lake is one of the Finger Lakes in Central New York. This lake is 11 miles long with a maximum width of 1.3 miles and a maximum depth of 177

feet. The only public boat access for the lake is at the northern end at Emerson Park off of Route 38. At the south end of the lake in the Town of Venice, there is a private marina and boat launch named the South Shore Marina. The South Shore Marina charges a fee for boat launching and has wet and dry slips available for boaters. As mentioned earlier, the town is also home to a portion of the Owasco Flats Nature Preserve. This preserve is a vital piece of the natural resources of the town as it works to provide habitat for a diverse range of plant and animal species, while also filtering large quantities of water as it enters the lake. This filtration cleans the water in the lake which makes up a large percentage of drinking water used by Cayuga County residents.

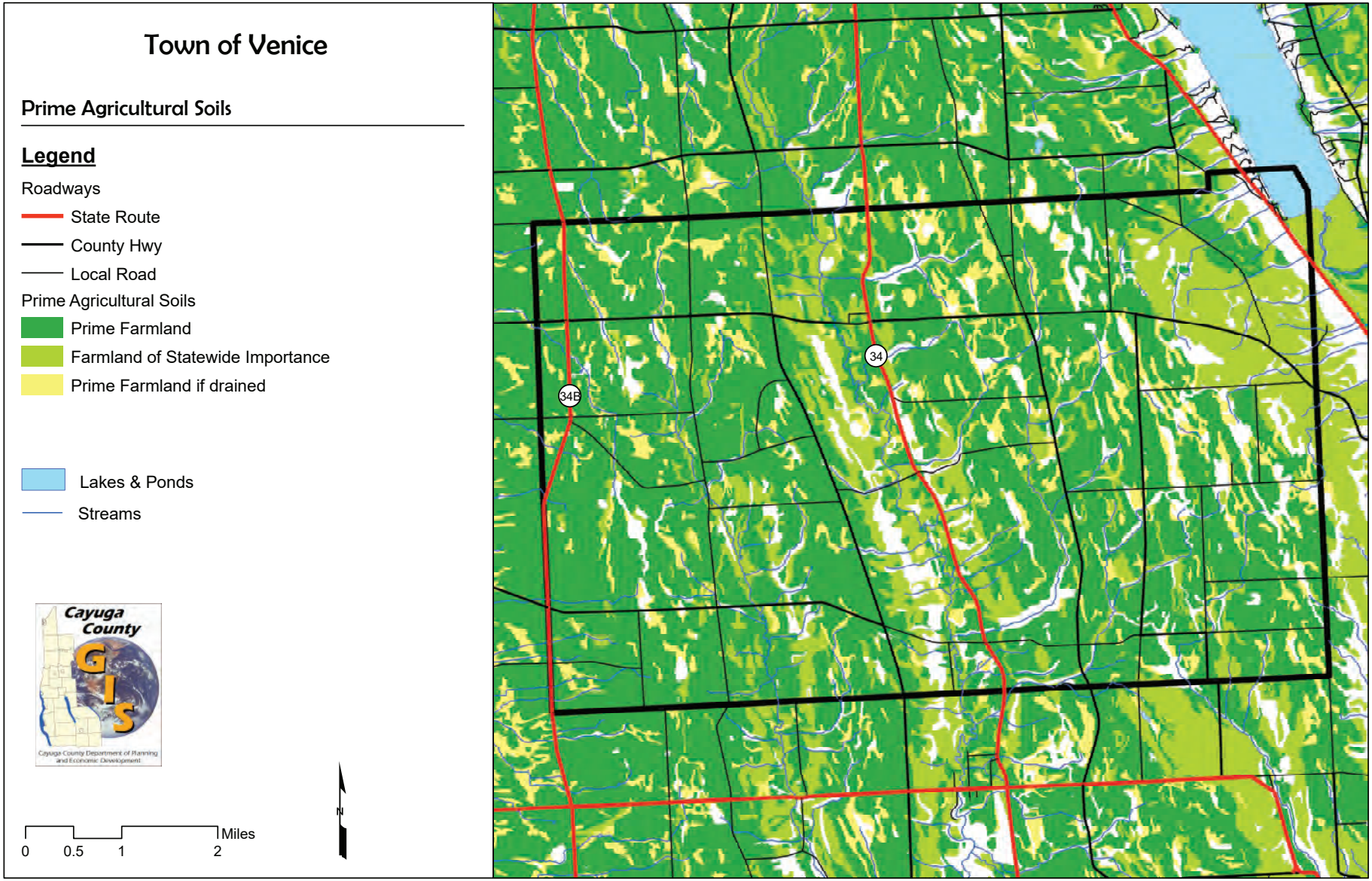
LAND RESOURCES:

The Town of Venice, as mentioned throughout this plan, is an agricultural community. One look at the town from an aerial map shows the viewer the vast coverage of agricultural land that makes up the majority of the town's land area. This is primarily due to the rich and fertile soils found in the town. As shown in the following Prime Agricultural Soils map, most of the town is categorized as prime farmland, with large swaths of land also in the categories of either "farmland of Statewide importance" or "prime farmland if drained". These rich soils have led to generations of farming, driving the town's economy, and providing employment for many residents.

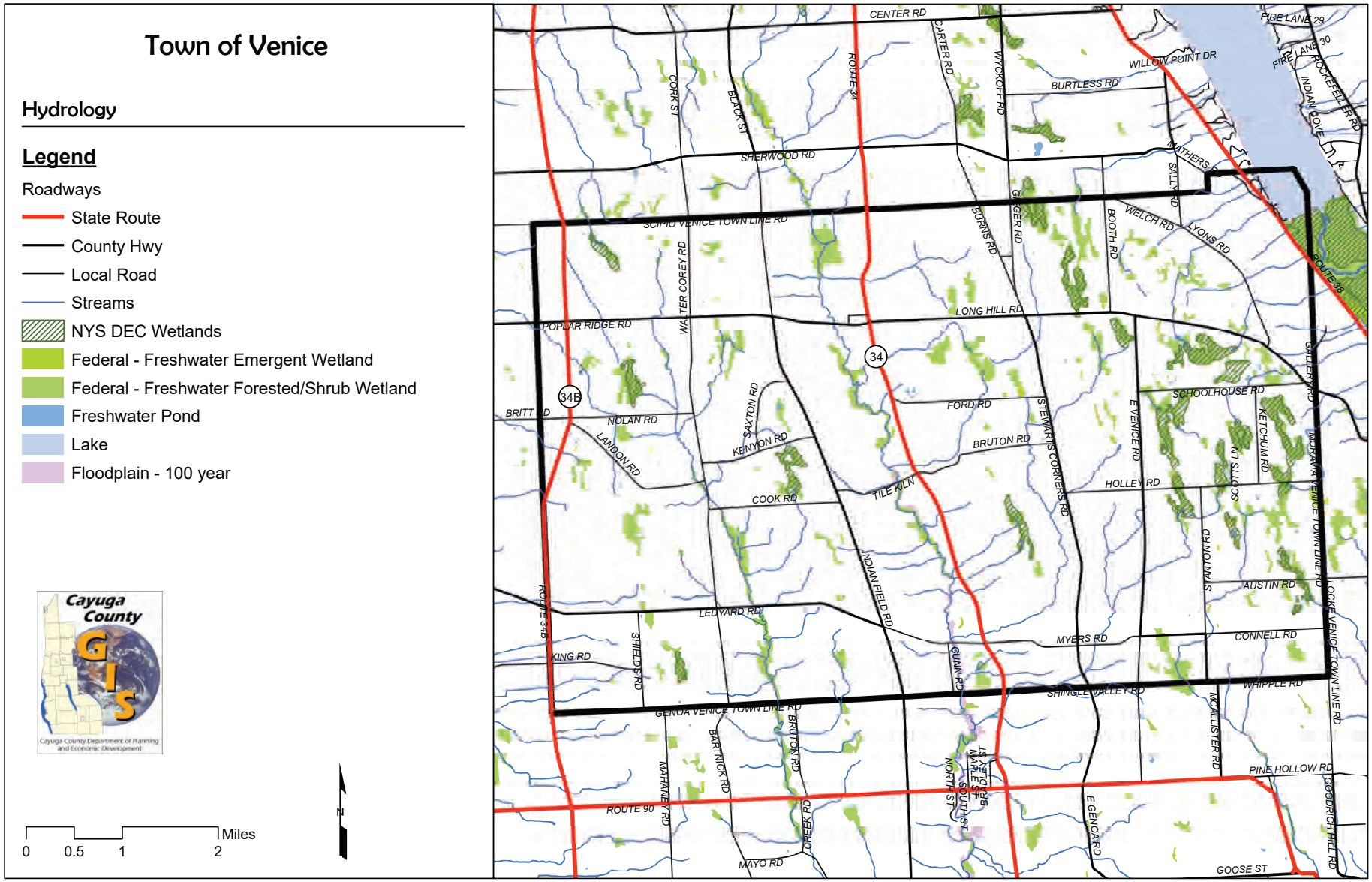


Image 6: Owasco Flats map and information. Source: Bill Hecht, from gofingerlakes.org

MAP 2: PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS



MAP 3: HYDROLOGY



GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Preserve and protect the natural resources of the town.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

Ensure that new development is carefully planned while considering the valuable natural resources of the town. A primary way to accomplish environmental protection is by ensuring that all projects strictly comply with SEQRA for projects that require such review. The town should also review land use regulations and make changes as needed to protect important water and land resources.

Goal 2: Partner with the Southern Cayuga Farmers Festival Association to support the Venice Pavilion as a community asset.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

Utilizing the existing community space, the town should work to support the efforts of the Southern Cayuga Farmers Festival Association. This partnership should ensure that the Venice Pavilion can be used by residents for a variety of events including meetings, parties, events, fundraisers, reunions, farmers markets, etc.



Image 7: Venice Pavilion. Source: Google Street View



Image 8: Children skating in the Venice Pavilion. Source: Colleen Rejman

TOWN OPERATIONS, INFRASTRUCTURE, & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

TOWN OPERATIONS

The Town of Venice operations and municipal services provide the services required to meet the needs of town residents. As a rural town with a population of under 1,500, the town government is comprised of an elected Town Supervisor, Town Clerk, Highway Superintendent, Town Board, and Town Tax Grievance board. The Venice Town government also employs the Tax Assessor, Code Enforcement officer, Town Historian, Town Attorney, and Town Court Justice. The Town of Venice website, hosted by Cayuga County, holds information on town government, hours, and board meetings. The steering committee cited that it can be a difficult site to find. Information access and sharing was identified by the steering committee and the public survey as an area of needed improvement. After the comprehensive planning process began, the Town of Venice created an official Facebook page for residents to access updates on events, meetings, and other information for residents to stay informed of town business.

The Town of Venice Highway department maintains the town roads, performing maintenance and clearing of roads year-round. Maintenance includes oil and stonework, paving, and plowing. The county and state are also responsible for their roads within the Town of Venice. There have not been any major issues raised about road maintenance or plowing in the town. However, there are some concerns about large equipment damaging roads and bridges – this is discussed in the agriculture section of this plan.

A primary concern of the comprehensive plan steering committee and respondents of the community survey is the failure of drivers to adhere to the speed limit throughout the town. In particular, the Town Board has previously attempted to designate a "reduced speed" zone through Venice Center along State Route 34. This request has been denied by NYDOT. The Town of Venice is the only municipality in Cayuga County without a reduced speed zone along Route 34.

Additionally, there is no reduced speed zone for one road adjacent to the Southern Cayuga School campus. Poplar Ridge road travels alongside the school property and there is no speed zone for the school on this road.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Town of Venice relies on a network of services for public health and safety. This network includes County Sheriffs and State Troopers along with shared fire-

fighting services. The town relies on the cooperation of three volunteer fire services located at Poplar Ridge, Scipio Center, and Long Hill. The steering committee expressed the need for more volunteer fire fighters in the town and recognizes that a shortage of this service may be detrimental to the town. In addition to the fire and police services, Southern Cayuga Instant Aid is located within the Town of Venice and provides ambulance services for the town and surrounding areas.

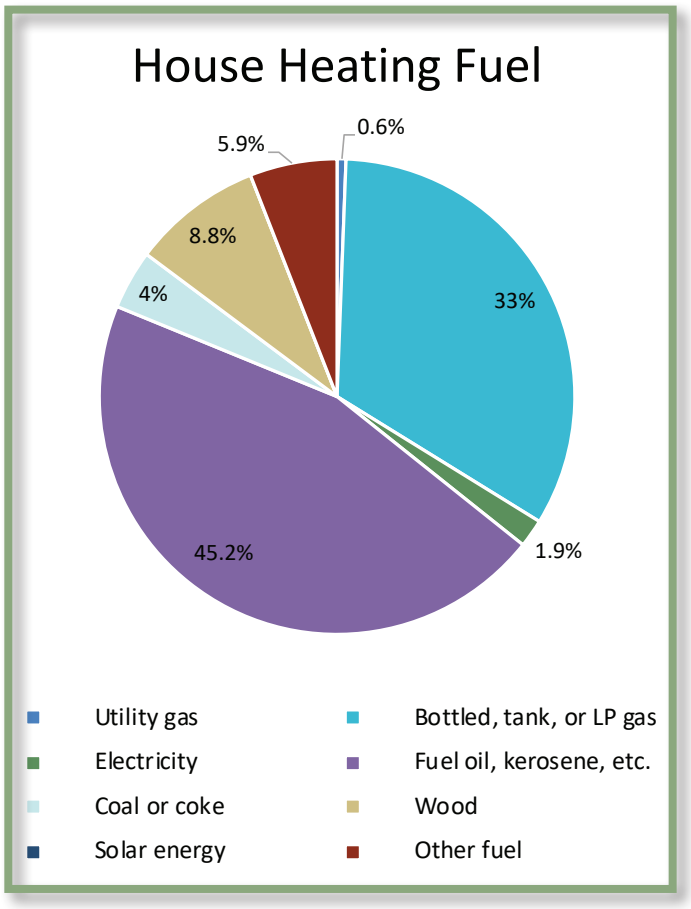
BROADBAND AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Broadband service has been expanded to cover most of the Town of Venice, with some areas still lacking service or with poor connectivity. Service offerings are provided by Verizon FIOS fiber optic, Spectrum Cable, or satellite broadband companies. While there has been increased service availability and increasing connectivity speeds for some, others continue to experience poor service or have no service options that suit their needs. Similar to broadband, cell service also has connection issues within the town. While there are many provider options and services available, there are places within the town with no service or unreliable service. In addition, some users of landline phones have experienced dropped calls or poor connections. As of summer 2021, the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board along with Cayuga County and ECC Technologies, LLC has been conducting surveys throughout the region with the intent to prepare a plan to improve broadband access for communities within Cayuga County.

ELECTRIC, GAS, FUEL, AND HOMEOWNER INFRASTRUCTURE

The Town of Venice has electric power available throughout the town, provided by NYSEG. Homeowners heat their homes with many different fuel sources such as fuel oil, propane, wood, electricity, etc. The largest percentage of fuel use is fuel oil at 45.2% of households. 33% of households use propane, and approximately 9% of users heat with wood. Figure 6 shows this data and expresses the reliance on private providers of fuel for heating and other household appliances in the Town of Venice.

Figure 6



Source: U.S. Census ACS 2019

The Town of Venice has no public water or sewer services. All homes and businesses within the town operate on private well and septic systems. It is important to note that for many homeowners, wells and septic systems are difficult to maintain or repair due to high costs, leading to inadequate fresh water or sewer disposal. As mentioned in the housing section of this inventory, the town should consider a housing conditions survey to determine the need for well and septic replacement or repair assistance.



Image 9: Fall foliage on the farm. Source: Ed Denton

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Improve information delivery to town residents and stakeholders.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

The Town of Venice will benefit from improved information delivery via internet and printed media. As mentioned, the town now has an official Facebook page that residents can follow to receive information updates. Ensuring this page is updated often will best allow for accurate and timely information delivery to those who use this source for their information. The town should also explore the potential of a newsletter or using a local newspaper to spread information about any relevant town business, updates, meetings, etc., so that those who do not have internet access or are unfamiliar with internet capabilities can still receive information. In addition, the Town of Venice official website, which is hosted by Cayuga County, should be updated regularly to include government information, meeting dates and times, and all other relevant town data or information. This will serve as a more formal outlet as compared to the social media page(s). Town residents should be informed of the website's location and be informed on how to access the page.

Goal 2: Create a reduced speed zone along State Route 34 around Venice Center to reduce speeds through the hamlet area.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

Request another review of the traffic and speed patterns through the Venice Center area by NYDOT. Encourage the development of a reduced speed zone citing the comprehensive planning document and the community support that was shown in the planning process. If there are no options for a reduced speed zone and the request to NYDOT is rejected, the town should explore alternate speed reduction techniques.

Goal 3: Improve broadband and communications access, reliability, and service.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

The town should conduct outreach to determine broadband and communication connectivity issues and pinpoint locations of service gaps. The town should work with internet and communication providers, the regional planning board, Cayuga County, and other stakeholders to address service gaps. The town should also consider the potential for public wi-fi access at the Town Hall or public school.

Goal 4: Maintain or improve quality of town services and roads/bridges

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

The Town of Venice should work to maintain town roads so that they remain an asset to the community's residents, businesses, and visitors. Farm equipment and harsh winters can often degrade roads, and it is a priority to ensure these roads remain in good condition for safe and efficient use.



Image 10: Winter on the farm. Source: Ed Denton

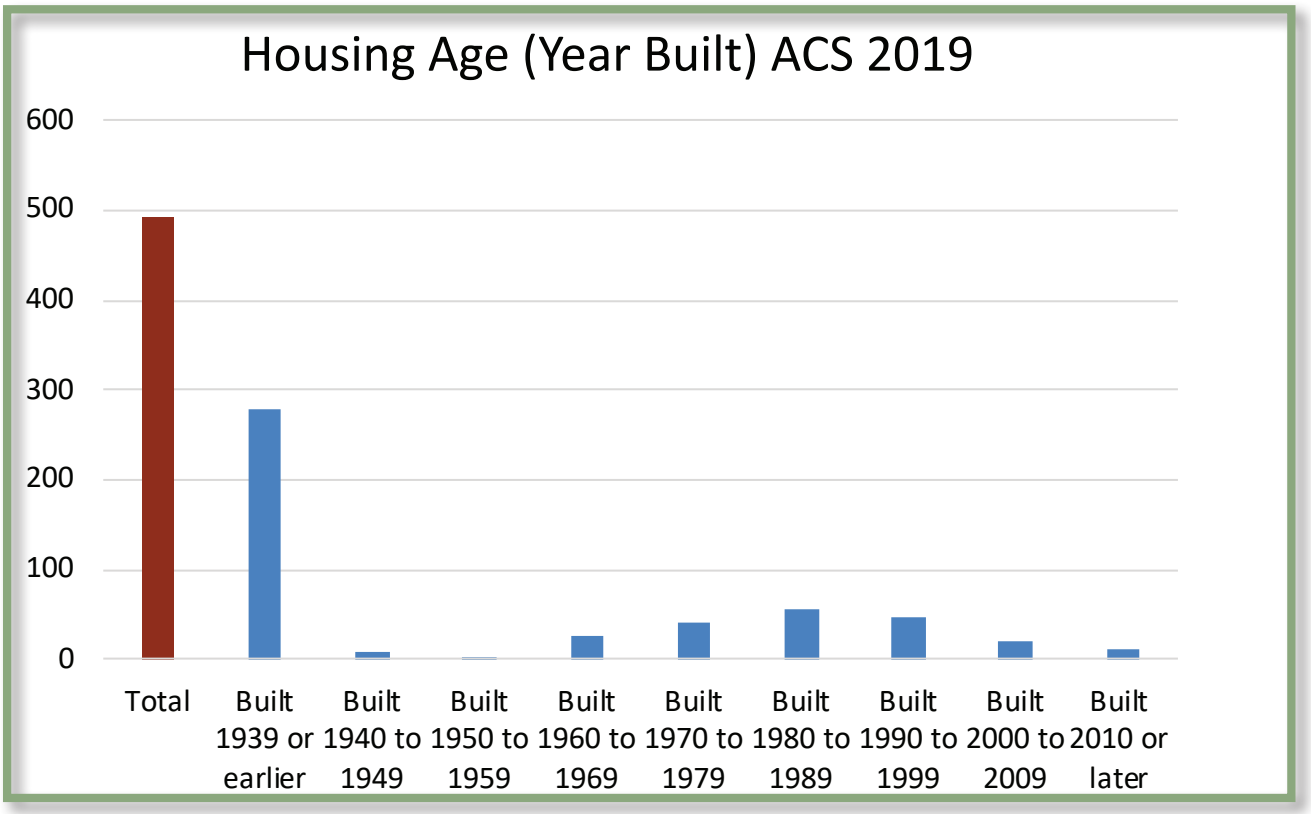
HOUSING

TOWN HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

The existing housing supply within the Town of Venice is made up of predominantly older, single-family homes. This farming community has a scattering of homes spread across the town's 48.65 square miles, with a population density of approximately 32 persons per square mile, compared to Cayuga County's 89 persons per square mile. The U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) results from 2019 estimate there are 591 total housing units in the Town of Venice, down from 596 in 2010. In 2019, 115 homes were reported as vacant. This could be a combination of abandoned homes and vacation homes on or near the lake. The 2019 ACS also indicated that 83% of the homes are owner-occupied and 17% are renter-occupied. Approximately 80% of the homes are single-unit detached structures, 18% are mobile homes, and 2% are structures with multiple units.

The chart below indicates the age and volume of housing stock in the town. Generally, the housing stock in the town is older with 47% of homes built in 1939 or earlier. The plethora of older housing stock in Upstate New York communities often leads to cases of deferred maintenance or upkeep as housing structures require more maintenance and care as they age. Additionally, older homes are typically less energy efficient, which also places an additional cost burden on the homeowner.

Figure 7



Source: U.S. Census ACS 2019

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Given that housing within the Town of Venice is predominantly owner-occupied, figure eight below is an indicator of the affordability for residents regarding their housing cost/burden ratio. According to HUD, those who spend more than 30% of their income on housing are cost burdened. Housing affordability is an increasingly urgent issue in many places around the United States. The data from the ACS estimates shows that in the Town of Venice, approximately 20% of the population is burdened by their housing costs, with 15% spending over 35% of their income on housing.

Median home value in 2019 was estimated to be $122,300, with the majority of homes in the town valued between $50,000 and $200,000. The real estate market in 2021 in the Town of Venice is limited, with only three homes listed for sale: two single family homes and one mobile home. Taking these active listings and homes sold in 2021 into consideration, the median sale price within the town is approximately $135,000. Given the town's median income of $67,917, a family earning this income could afford the median purchase price of a home in the town. However, with limited purchase price data given, and the housing market boom in relation to the covid-19 pandemic, these figures are difficult to pinpoint. The shortage of listed homes does, however, point to a lack of housing available in the town while this plan was being developed.

Figure 8

Home-Buying Affordability

Purchase Price	$135,000	
Down Payment	$27,000	
Mortgage	$108,000	
	Monthly	Annual
Principal and Interest	$440	$5,280
Taxes	$338	$4,056
Insurance	$80	$960
TOTAL	$858	$10,296
	Monthly	Annual
Median Household Income	$5,583	$67,000
30% (HUD)	$1,675	$20,100
28% (banks)	$1,563	$18,760

*30 year fixed mortgage @ 2.8%

HOUSING FOR THE AGING

The results of the community survey showed very little interest in housing development, generally. However, many participants indicated a known need for housing options for the aging population within the town. One issue that arises due to the age of housing stock is a lack of accessibility in design and an excess of square footage as many of these older farmhouses are two-story, multi-bedroom homes. As previously mentioned, older homes are less likely to be energy efficient and could result in very high energy costs or a lack of adequate heat during the winter months. Typically, the construction of new, smaller, single-family homes is attractive in this demographic market as elderly residents look to downsize. If the Town were interested in encouraging this type of development, consideration should be given to the accessibility of services and retail. For this reason, elderly housing should be located closer to or within population centers.

SUSTAINABILITY IN HOUSING

As previously mentioned, the town's housing stock consists mostly of older homes which tend to be less energy efficient. Today, there are a wide range of energy options for a homeowner that are far more efficient and environmentally friendly than most currently utilized sources. Many new homes are heated or cooled using radiant floor heating, high-efficiency natural gas or wood burning boilers, geo-thermal energy, heat pumps, mini-split air conditioners and more. Fuel-oil is a traditional heating technique that many homeowners continue to use because their home is already equipped with this heat source. This type of heating is expensive, less sustainable, and uses fossil fuels. The Town of Venice is committed to protection of the environment and will need to stay informed of alternative methods that can be implemented to not only achieve more sustainability but encourage homeowners to invest in these energy sources so that they can benefit from the advantages that alternative energy provides. Aside from addressing the heating source in homes, replacing or adding insulation, replacing old single-pane windows, and ensuring the envelope of the home is well sealed are ways to modify existing homes to reduce energy costs and provide a healthier living environment.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Maintain and rehabilitate existing housing stock to ensure community's welfare, retain existing community members, attract new community members, and increase sustainability.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

The Town of Venice should complete a housing conditions survey to inventory the conditions of the town's housing stock and determine the need for town support. If needed, the town can seek out funding sources to renovate homes through rehabilitation programs. Priority will be given to low-and moderate-income homeowners. In addition, the town's Code Enforcement Office can work to continue to provide rapid, efficient service with building permits and inspections to facilitate new construction and improvements to existing housing, in compliance with all applicable building codes.

Goal 2: Work towards affordable and accessible housing units available to current and potential residents of the Town of Venice.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

Determine the demand for housing within the town and work with qualified developers who share a common vision of the town in developing housing units that meet the needs of the community. Work with local, state, and federal housing agencies and organizations regarding the housing needs of special needs populations, including but not limited to: handicap accessibility, square footage needs of the elderly, location to nearby services, etc.



Image 11: Home in the Town of Venice. Source: Ed Denton.

EDUCATION

SOUTHERN CAYUGA CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Town of Venice is home to the Southern Cayuga Central School District campus. The school district spans the land area between Cayuga and Owasco lakes, serving approximately 700 students. The school district is comprised of a central campus, located on NY Route 34 B near the northwest corner of the town. The school district has many unique facilities including a planetarium, an observatory, a greenhouse, and a pool. The school district engages the local community by sharing these resources through monthly astronomy nights and by utilizing the greenhouse to grow food for the community and the school.

The school campus and amenities serve as the only public recreational space in the town. The school has a playground, track, athletic fields, tennis courts, and a basketball court. Additionally, there is an indoor pool that has held public swim hours in the past. These facilities create important opportunities for residents to exercise or utilize the playground, etc.

The Town of Venice aims to increase the amount of communication and cooperation that occurs between the Southern Cayuga Central School District and the town government. This cooperation would allow both parties to increase their capacity to disseminate information and achieve their overarching goals as the school and town work to serve their constituents.

Another unique and significant aspect of the school is the Anne Frank Tree Project. The Anne Frank Tree Project website states that "The Southern Cayuga Central School District is one of 11 sites nationwide to receive an Anne Frank Tree sapling from the Anne Frank Center USA." The mission of the project is to educate and empower children by encouraging them to recognize their abilities as individuals to use their thoughts, words, and deed for the good of their community. The tree was planted as a reminder of the impact an individual



Image 12: Southern Cayuga Central School Campus. Source: Southerncayuga.org

can have to create change and improve the quality of life for all.

HAZARD PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Hazard Public Library is located in the same hamlet as the school campus, Poplar Ridge. The library serves not only the Town of Venice, but many surrounding communities between Cayuga and Owasco Lakes. The library is part of the Finger Lakes Library System, which expands the network of available books for library patrons. This is a great asset for the community as the library seeks to serve the community through "fostering literacy and a love of reading".



Image 13: Anne Frank Tree
Source: sccsannefranktree.org



Image 14: Hazard Public Library. Source: Brian Sheils

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Increase communication and cooperation between the Town of Venice and the Southern Cayuga Central School District

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

The Town of Venice can work with the superintendent and school board members of the Southern Cayuga Central School District to streamline communication between both parties. This open communication will allow for combined efforts of information sharing. Additionally, the town will work to connect the school with volunteers for special programming, field trips, and other community events.



Image 15: Harvesting Soy Beans. Source: Brian Sheils

LAND USE

LAND USE SUMMARY

The Town of Venice's land use makeup is varied, with most of the land dedicated to agricultural uses. Other common uses within the town include residential, recreational, protected land, and community services. Map four shows the land uses within the town, depicting the abundance of agricultural use.

While there are no areas of centralized development in the Town of Venice, there are a few locations that have "hamlet" characteristics with clusters of homes and businesses. These nodes of development are located at the intersection of NY Route 34 and Long Hill Rd (known as "Venice Center"), the intersection of NY Route 34B and Poplar Ridge Rd (known as "Poplar Ridge"), and the intersection of NY Route 34B and Ledyard Rd (known as "Ledyard") – which is half in the Town of Venice and half in the Town of Ledyard. These intersections have greater concentrations of residential uses and smaller parcels that make up the hamlets. Another notable concentration of residential homes in the town is the Owasco Lake waterfront community. While the Town of Venice has less than a mile of lake frontage, there are approximately 50 residential structures that are either year-round residences or lakefront cottages along this small section of shoreline. Apart from these few hamlet areas, the rest of the town consists of farmland and residences scattered along the major and minor roadways.

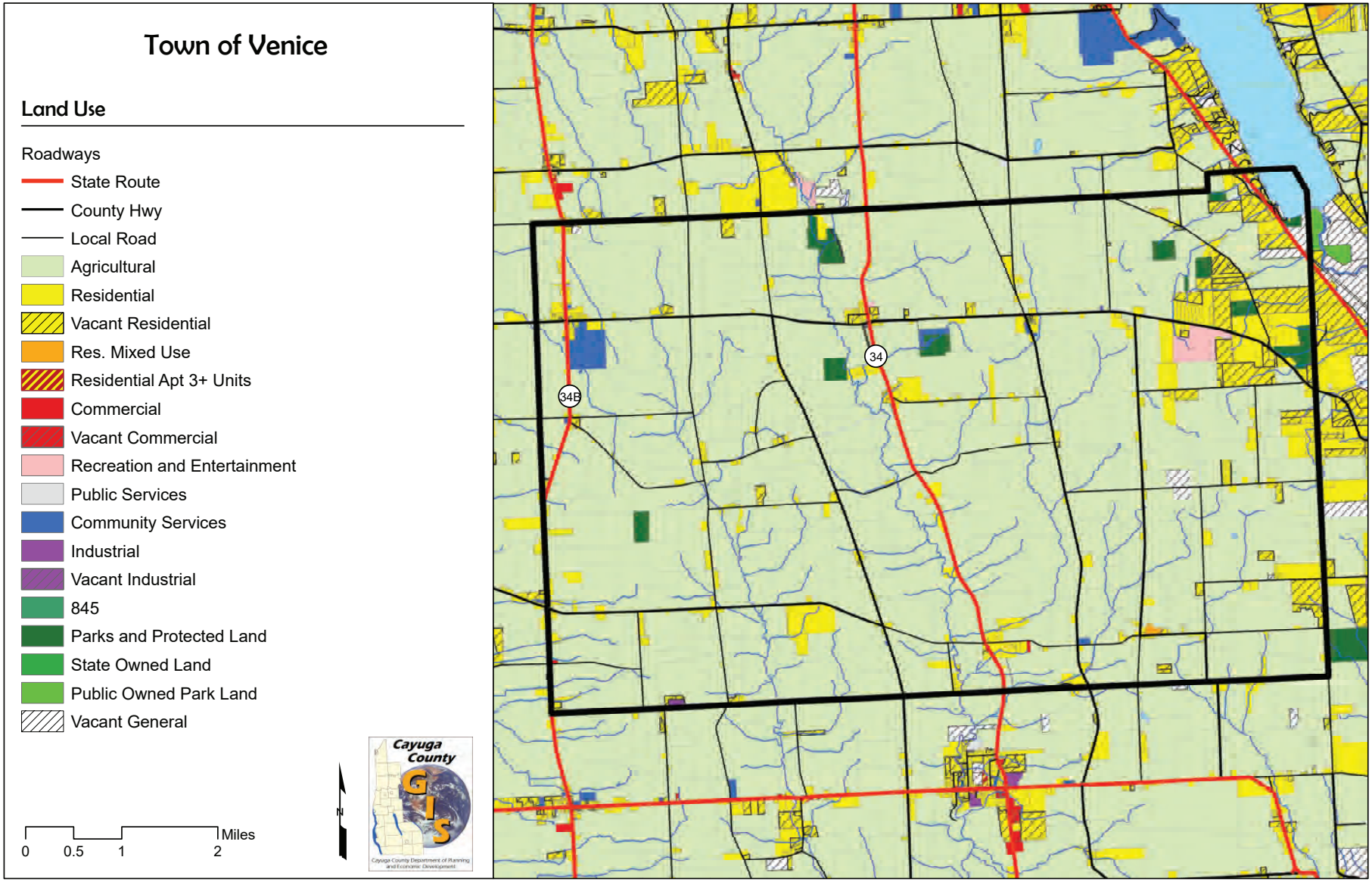
ZONING

The Town of Venice does not have any zoning regulations at this time. Given the lack of development pressure on the town, the consensus among the steering committee, and feedback from public outreach during this planning process, zoning regulations are not recommended for the Town of Venice at this time. Zoning regulations are meant to guide the form and land use of development in a particular zoning district to avoid conflicting uses. The Town of Venice would not benefit from this form of land regulation as there is not pressure for the types of development that zoning is meant to regulate. The needs or desire to initiate a zoning code can be revisited by the town if it is decided that the developmental needs have changed.

LAND USE REGULATIONS

All land use regulations in Venice are governed through NY State Building Codes and local laws. Local Laws impact land use through restrictions on specific development types due to their potential impact on the community. Local laws that regulate land uses benefit the town by protecting the interests of the community while still permitting landowners to develop their lands. Local laws must be thoughtfully drafted with the aid of the town attorney, to ensure that they are sufficiently comprehensive and help to regulate developments in a careful manner.

MAP 4: LAND USE



GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Maintain an appropriate balance between property rights of individual landowners and the community as a whole

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

The Town of Venice will ensure that land uses support the goals of the community at large by implementing municipal laws that regulate potentially detrimental developments. The town understands that zoning is not necessary given the lack of development pressure at this time but should be aware of any changes over time and consider if zoning regulations would be helpful if the need should arise.



Image 16: Spraying Tractor. Source: Brian Sheils

AGRICULTURE

CONTEXT

The Town of Venice is an agricultural community, with agricultural land making up the vast majority of land uses. An aerial view of the town shows the thousands of acres of farmland covering the town's landscape, with some wooded areas mixed in and more dense forest areas in the northeast corner of the town. The land use map in the Land Use section above depicts the abundance of agricultural land. All agricultural lands within the Town of Venice are also within a New York State (NYS) certified agricultural district. The NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets website states the following:

> The New York State Constitution directs the Legislature to provide for the protection of agricultural lands. The Agricultural Districts Law fulfills this constitutional mandate, in part, by providing a locally initiated mechanism for the protection and enhancement of farm lands as both a viable segment of the local and State economies, and as an economic and environmental resource of major importance.
>
> *-Agricultural Districts Law: A Current Summary*

Cayuga County, which is home to the Town of Venice, was one of the first counties in the state to create an agricultural district to protect the farmland in the county. Approximately 80% of the county's total land area falls under the agricultural district designation. According to the Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan adopted in 2014, "the Agricultural Districts Law requires that state agencies, municipal governments and public benefit agencies avoid or minimize adverse impacts to farm operations in the agricultural district when pursuing projects that involve the acquisition of farmland or that advance public funds for certain construction activities" and "Under the New York State Right- to-Farm Law, agricultural activities on parcels within the District are protected from unreasonably restrictive local laws and from private nuisance lawsuits involving agricultural practices."

AGRICULTURE AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Agriculture plays a vital role in the local and regional economy. The chart below highlights the agricultural sales trends in Cayuga County in 2012 and 2017. This data was taken from the National Agriculture Census and depicts the agricultural sales for Cayuga County, showing the importance of the industry for the region. The 2017 agricultural census documented 842 farms in Cayuga County, which combined, total 225,204 acres of agricultural land. This equates to approximately 40% of the total land area of the county. This estimate of land dedicated to agricultural use is down by just under 6% from the previous census completed in 2012. Additionally, the total sales from agriculture uses decreased approximately 2% in Cayuga County from 2012 to 2017. Another data point of

interest is that of sales per acre. Despite the 5.6% reduction in acres operated, the sales per acre in 2017 was 3.9% higher than it was in 2012. This could mean that the production and efficiency in the industry is increasing over time, but is not conclusive given the limited data. While all of this data is recorded for the entire county, it gives insight into the agricultural environment that the Town of Venice contributes to and depicts trends that are likely occurring within the town.

While farm sales themselves make up a significant portion of the local economy, there is also a network of related 'agri-businesses' that support agricultural operations that add to the economic stability of the town and county. Examples of these support services include trucking, equipment sales, mills, veterinarians, mechanics, and more which all have a co-dependent relationship with the agricultural industry in and around Cayuga County.

POTENTIAL FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH IN AGRICULTURE

The Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan outlines potential avenues to sustain and encourage growth in the agricultural sector for the county. The first goal the plan states is to "Improve economic opportunities for agriculture-related businesses in Cayuga County". To achieve this goal, the plan states six objectives:

1. Integrate existing and emerging local food production into the local food system
2. Improve local consumer access to locally produced foods
3. Enhance existing support resources for agriculture-related business development and training
4. Work with state and federal policy-makers to address burdensome regulations

Figure 9

Agriculture Sales Trends: Cayuga County

	2012	2017	Percent Change
Number of Farms	891	842	-5.5%
Acres Operated	238,444	225,204	-5.6%
Sales per Operation	$329,376.00	$341,868.00	3.8%
Crop Totals	$99,211,000.00	$69,912,000.00	-29.5%
Animal Totals	$194,263,000.00	$217,941,000.00	12.2%
Sales per Acre	$1,230.79	$1,278.19	3.9%
Total Sales	$293,474,000.00	$287,853,000.00	-1.9%
Net Income in $/Operation	$81,572.00	$87,868.00	7.7%

Source: 2017 Census of Agriculture

5. Improve aggregation, processing, and distribution infrastructure for local farmers

6. Support agri-tourism businesses and growth in the agri-tourism sector

Each of the above objectives is supported by specific action items laid out in the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan which can be found at the Cayuga County website: cayugacounty.us/694/countywide-agriculture-plan.

CHALLENGES TO AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION

While agricultural practices have been prevalent in the Town of Venice for centuries now, it is important to discuss and address potential threats and challenges that could lead to a reduction in active or productive farmland. Discussion with the comprehensive plan steering committee and the public pointed to some specific challenges to the Town of Venice. Demographically, the town consists of an aging population with fewer young families. An aging population poses a risk of workforce shortages and reduces the likelihood of familial succession. In relation to a lack of young farmers, concerns were raised about the lack of interest among the younger town residents. The Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan also identified these challenges, but also spoke of the potential strengths and opportunities in addressing new and young farmers. The plan states that "Experienced farmers in Cayuga County are often willing to assist their newer farmer neighbors and colleagues in gaining the experience needed to farm successfully" and "Increasing agricultural educational opportunities for all school age children and increasing FFA membership in the county is a great opportunity to reach young people who may not otherwise have an opportunity to discover an interest in an agricultural career."

Development pressure is a common threat to agricultural preservation nation-wide. Historically, the Town of Venice has not experienced development pressure on a large scale. Today, like many upstate communities, the town's open space is an attractive option for development of renewable energy production through solar farms or wind turbines. Renewable energy production is an important source of energy in New York and is growing at a rapid pace on a statewide, nationwide, and global scale. Additionally, solar and wind farming has the potential to expand and diversify the economic development sector of the Town of Venice. However, it is important for the town and its residents to consider the development pressure on agricultural lands that is present with solar and wind development.

The Town of Venice faces a difficult task when considering its agricultural and farmland protection in relationship to the rise in demand for sites that can accommodate solar arrays to support New York State's goal of reducing reliance on carbon-emitting energy sources. The American Farmland Trust and United States Department of Agriculture provide resources for smart solar siting and addressing the potential conflicts between increasing energy production through solar farms and preserving and protecting prime agricultural lands. In May 2018, the

Cornell University Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future supported a paper entitled *Approaches to Balancing Solar Expansion and Farmland Preservation: A Comparison across Selected States*. This paper, authored by Travis Grout and Jennifer Ifft, explores the need to balance these conflicting interests and presents case studies from six states that produce a significant portion of the nation's solar energy. These case studies give guidance as New York moves forward in its goal of purchasing 70% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030.

The primary conflict between agricultural preservation and solar development is that they share the same environment – flat, dry land, that receives an abundance of sunlight. The recognized outcomes of agricultural conversion include but are not limited to removing land from agricultural production for the duration of the lease, or longer; landowners assuming new financial and environmental risks; increased costs for farmers who rely on rented farmland; and negative perception of renewable energy in rural communities. There are also benefits that can come from land conversion such as a potential per-acre profit increase for landowners, reliable revenue stream based on a contract period, and potential for reinvestment in farming operations from an influx of capital for farmers who were previously unable to access credit.

Many states make it a point to prevent subsidizing solar development conversion of prime soils. This in turn encourages solar development to be focused in either less productive farmlands, other areas such as brownfields, or other open space that has not been identified as ideal for agricultural uses. In addition to the disincentive from conversion of prime soils, all states studied include a penalty payment for the conversion of agricultural land that was previously taxed at a reduced rate for agricultural purposes. New York State already has a similar rule in place as well. This tax penalty aims to recoup the taxes that were subsidized to encourage agricultural production and again works to prevent subsidizing the conversion of prime soils to commercial solar use. In addition, many states have programs that offer protection of farmland in exchange for tax and regulatory incentives for the landowner such as the purchase of development rights (PDR) or conservation easements. *Renewable energy is addressed in further detail in this plan in the Renewable Energy section.*

PLANNING TOOLS FOR AGRICULTURAL PROTECTION

There are a number of planning tools that a municipality can deploy to protect and maintain agricultural practices within the town. The Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan was adopted in 2014 and is currently the only adopted planning tool that the Town of Venice can lean on for local agricultural protection. In addition, the town can encourage landowners interested in farmland protection to participate in the Cayuga County Farmland Protection Program. As of 2014, this program had secured development rights to over 7,000 acres of farmland in several towns in Cayuga County. The Protection Plan explains that "Funding for this program has come from the NYSDAM Farmland Protection

Implementation Grant program through the state's Environmental Protection Fund." The protection program relies on using the purchase of development rights (PDRs) to secure the development rights of farmland and prevent uses that are not agricultural from occurring on the protected land. See the box below for an in-depth description of PDRs.

Another planning tool for protection of farmland is subdivision regulations. This tool is used to prevent the subdivision of agricultural lands for residential or commercial structures that lead to smaller fields for farming, spread out residential properties along roadways, obstructed viewsheds, and potential conflicts between farming operations and residences. Subdivision regulations encourage residential and commercial development to occur in development nodes such as hamlets or intersections that hold a higher concentration of homes. Concentrating development in areas that are already more densely populated can increase the neighborhood feel of these areas which can lead to increased services, while preserving the agricultural lands in larger lot sizes that are easier to work and plant without subdivided lots splitting or reducing fields.

Conservation Easements (CE) are another tool that can ensure lands are preserved. CEs are typically formed between a landowner and a public or private group that has an interest in preserving open space for a variety of reasons. A CE is a perpetual and permanent conservation easement and landowners who participate in CE also have the potential to qualify for the CE tax credit program in New York.
In addition to these other planning tools,

PURCHASE OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

The purchase of development rights (PDR) through the Cayuga County Farmland Protection Program "places a deed restriction, known as a conservation easement, on productive farmland after the property owner voluntarily sells his or her right to develop that land for non- agricultural uses. Farmers who choose to participate in this type of program are financially compensated for their development rights and help ensure that their land will be available to future generations of farmers regardless of future ownership."

"When land owners choose to sell or donate their development rights they retain all other rights of ownership and can continue to farm their land or lease it to others. Farmland that is protected in this way can be passed on to family members or sold, but subsequent owners are required to follow the terms of the agreement just like any other deed restriction."

Excerpt from the Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

the Town of Venice could formally adopt a Right-to-Farm Law. While there are statewide protections for farming practices in agricultural districts, the Town of Venice could increase the public awareness of agricultural practice protections through the adoption of a Right-to-Farm Law and placing signage at roadway entrances into the town. The Right-to-Farm Law outlines the rights that agricultural and farmland operations have to operate loud machinery, produce odors, etc. in order to carry out the necessary operations of their business. These practices can sometimes create conflict between neighboring residents and farming operations, but a Right-to-Farm Law gives agricultural workers a document to point to in defense of reasonable agricultural practices. In tandem with this law, a municipality may also have an Agricultural Advisory Committee. This would be a committee made up of local residents and stakeholders that can serve the town as it makes regulatory decisions that have impacts on agriculture. This committee would be able to provide comments and make suggestions that the town board could consider when making regulatory or other decisions for the town.



Image 17: Corn fields in Venice. Source: Google Street View

MAP 5: CAYUGA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT

Town of Venice

Cayuga County Agricultural District

Legend

Roadways

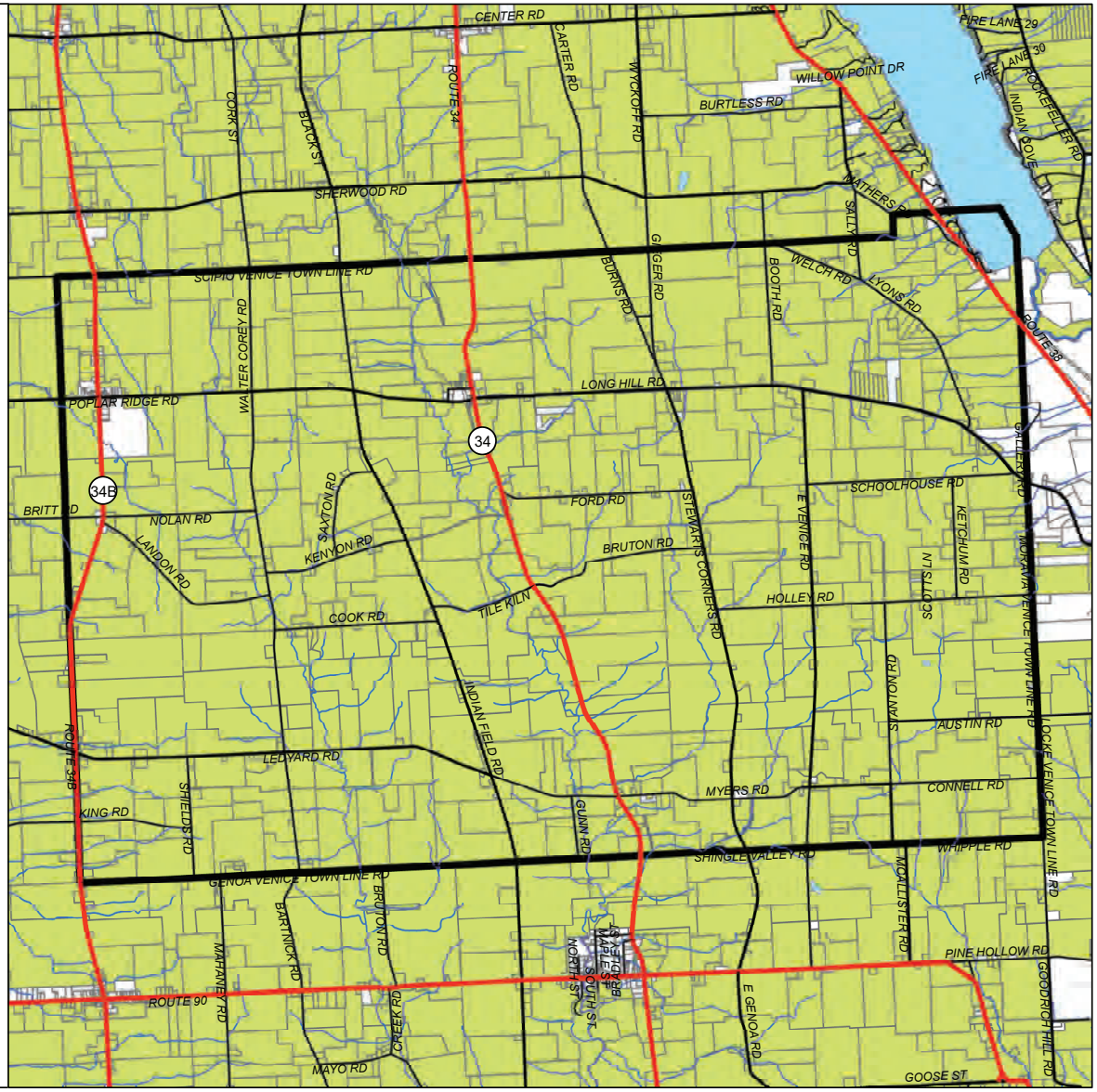
- State Route
- County Hwy
- Local Road
- parcels
- Cayuga County Ag. District #5

- Lakes & Ponds
- Streams

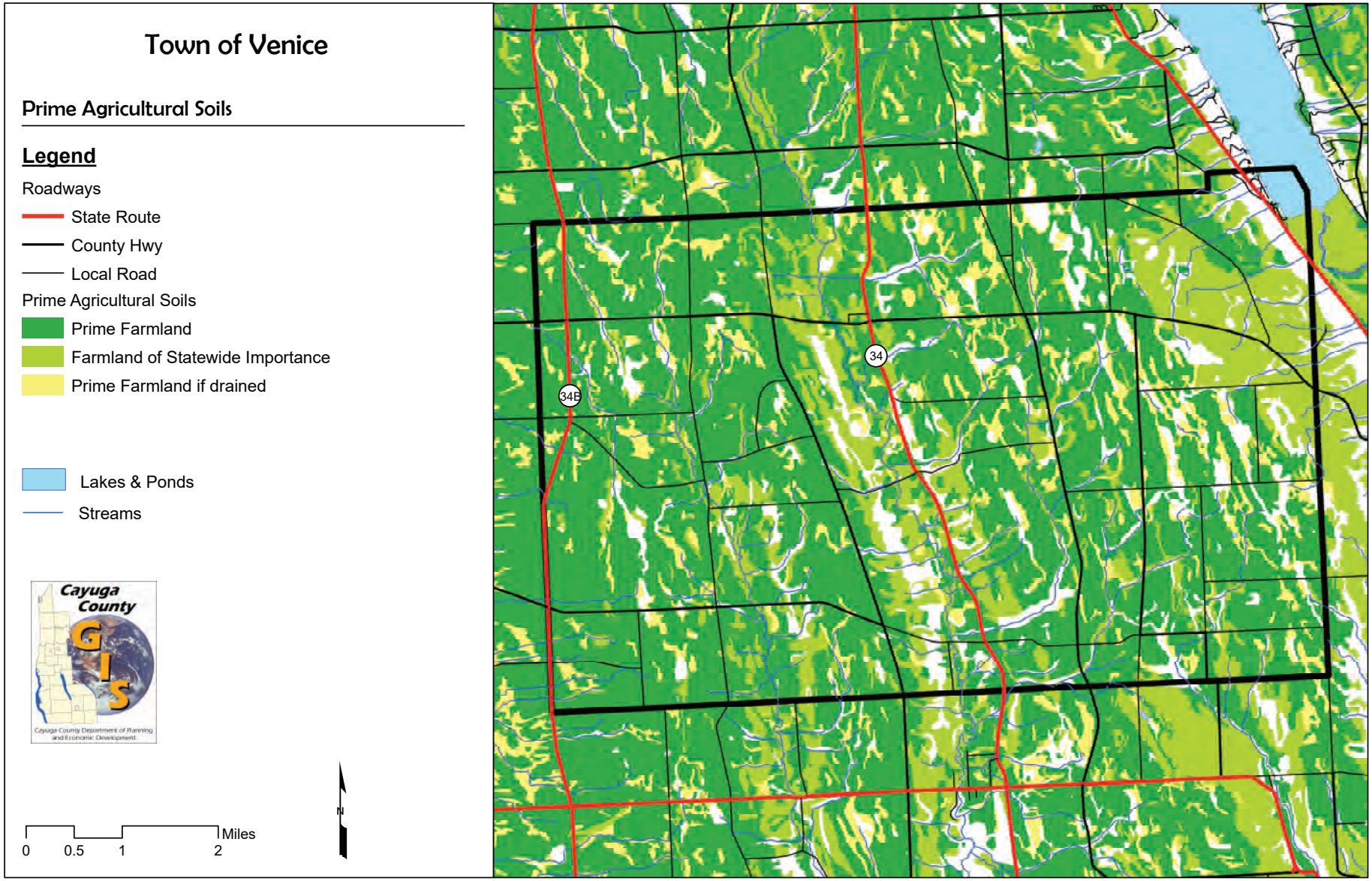
Cayuga County GIS
Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development

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MAP 6: PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS



GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Review and implement the Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

The Town of Venice should be familiar with the content, goals, and action items that are laid out in the Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan so that the town can implement the goals and action items that are relevant and useful to the town. Implementing this county-wide plan in the town will allow for further protection of agricultural land and a cohesive regional approach to the goal of agriculture and farmland protection across the county.

Goal 2: Increase education of agricultural practices for non-farmers and younger residents

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

The Town of Venice can work with the local school district to encourage greater integration of agricultural topics into primary and secondary school education materials. Encourage volunteers from the agricultural community to give guest lectures and/or provide farm tours and field trips to give school-age children a first-hand look at the processes involved in different agricultural practices. To engage non-farmers in agricultural education, the town can encourage and support farm-related events such as farm-to-table community dinners, farmers markets, and offering tours of farms to showcase unique or interesting processes related to agriculture.

Goal 3: Enhance local agricultural economy and support agricultural economic development incentives

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

The Town of Venice can work to support agri-business and agritourism through information dissemination on local vendors and events to encourage residents and visitors to do business in the town. The town can also explore the creation of a uniform way-finding system on a local or regional level that would direct consumers using high-traffic roadways to farm stands or local produce marketplaces.

Goal 4: Encourage continued communication and cooperation between farmers and local government

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

Consider the need for a town Agriculture Committee with the responsibility of advising the town board on matters pertaining to agriculture. This committee could also have the specific task of steering the town's implementation of the town's comprehensive plan agricultural goals and the county-wide agriculture and farmland protection plan goals. The town can also work closely with the Cornell Cooperative Extension and the county Soil and Water

Conservation office to address various agricultural concerns such as erosion control, farm management, and continued education on best practices for agricultural businesses.

Goal 5: Develop a Town of Venice Right-to-Farm Law

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

The Town of Venice should develop a Right-to-Farm law that will increase the local protection of agricultural business in the town. The Right-to-Farm Law will provide agricultural business owners a local regulatory document to point to in defense of reasonable agricultural practices. Allow for public input in the development of the law to ensure it meets the specific needs of the Town of Venice community and its residents. Once adopted, post signs at town boundary lines to inform residents and visitors alike that Venice is a Right-to-Farm community.



Image 18: Landscape scene in Venice. Source: Dean Whitten

RENEWABLE ENERGY

INTRODUCTION

Renewable energy is a new topic to many comprehensive plans, as "clean energy" production has grown in popularity across the nation since the turn of the century. New York State has set a goal of relying on renewable energy to produce 70% of the electricity consumption in the state by 2030 and a goal of having a 100% emissions-free electrical grid by 2040. To achieve these goals, the state has encouraged the development of renewable energy production state-wide. Currently, the state is at 27% of this 70% goal, with another 23% falling into the contracted/pipeline renewables category. This leaves another 20% of electricity production that has yet to be developed or contracted and will need to be developed in the next nine years for the state to reach its goal. The sources of renewable energy that are currently in use on a commercial scale in the state of New York are hydroelectric, land-based wind, offshore wind, distributed solar, and large-scale solar.

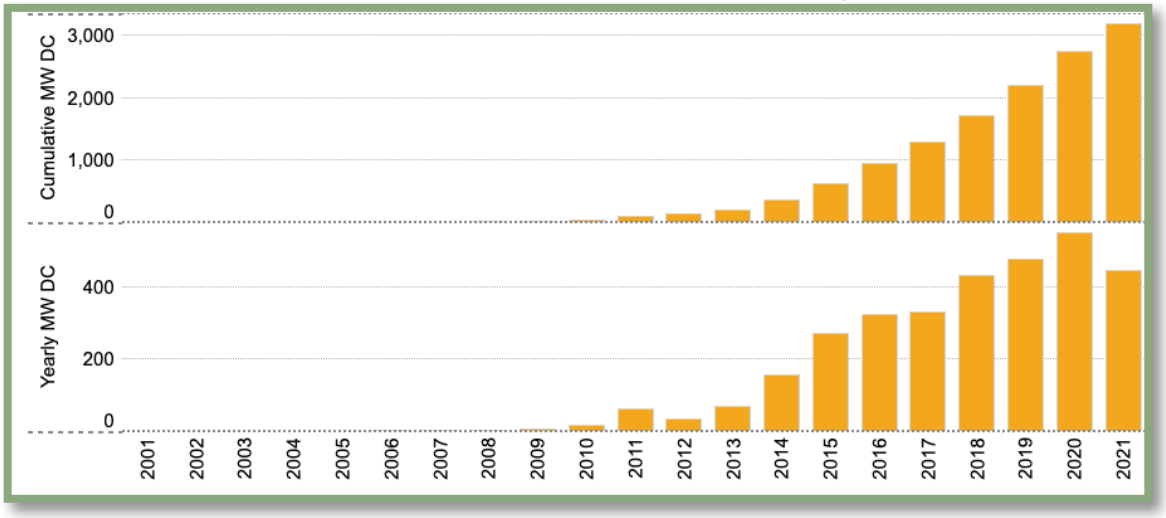
Renewable energy production is valuable and important not only to the state of New York, but to the Town of Venice. The town recognizes that these forms of energy production utilize the abundant renewable energy sources of the solar and wind energies that exist within the town. The Town of Venice desires to provide a balance between providing for the town's energy consumption needs through renewable resources, while protecting the physical environment and agricultural landscape that gives Venice its rural character.

OVERVIEW OF CLEAN ENERGY PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES

SOLAR

There are two primary types of solar energy generating technology: photovoltaics (PV) and concentrating solar-thermal power (CSP). PV is the most common and is used in solar panels. The solar panels have PV cells that absorb

Figure 10: Solar Energy MW Production Capacity by Year

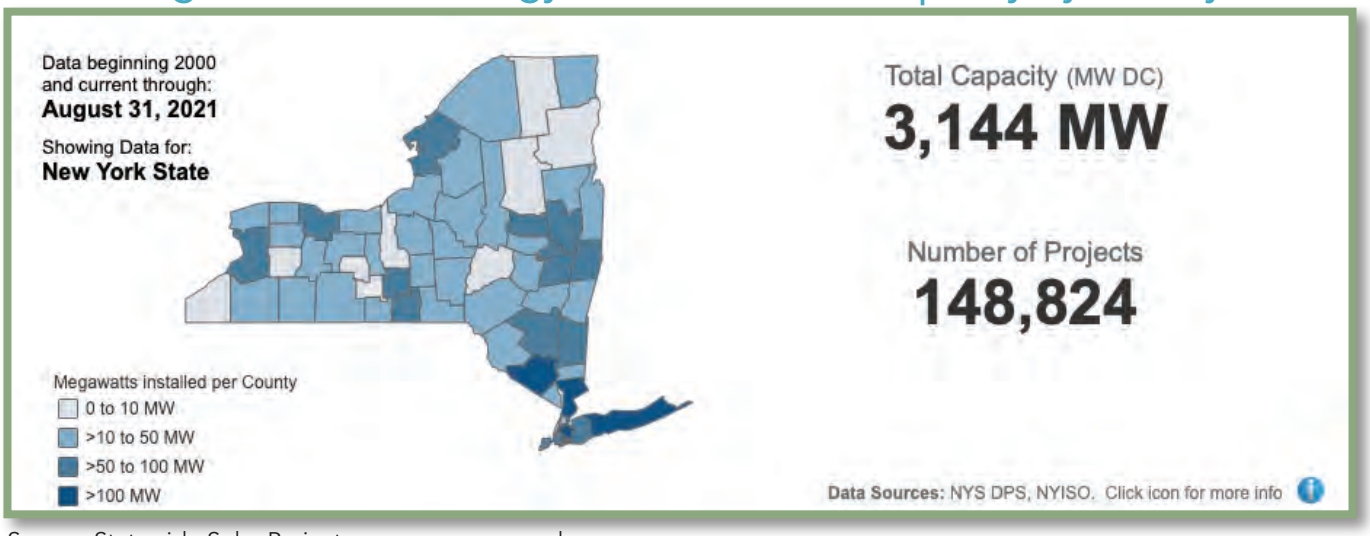


Source: Statewide Solar Projects page - www.nyserda.ny.gov

sunlight and create an electrical charge that causes electricity to flow. CSP systems use mirrors to reflect and concentrate sunlight onto receivers that collect the sunlight and convert it into heat that can be used to create electricity. In New York, PV solar panels are the preferred solar energy production method, and the state has seen an exponential increase in development of these solar arrays over the last decade. Figure 10 shows the production increase that has occurred in the last 12 years, as the state grew from virtually zero megawatts (MW) of capacity to a total of over 3,000 MW this year.

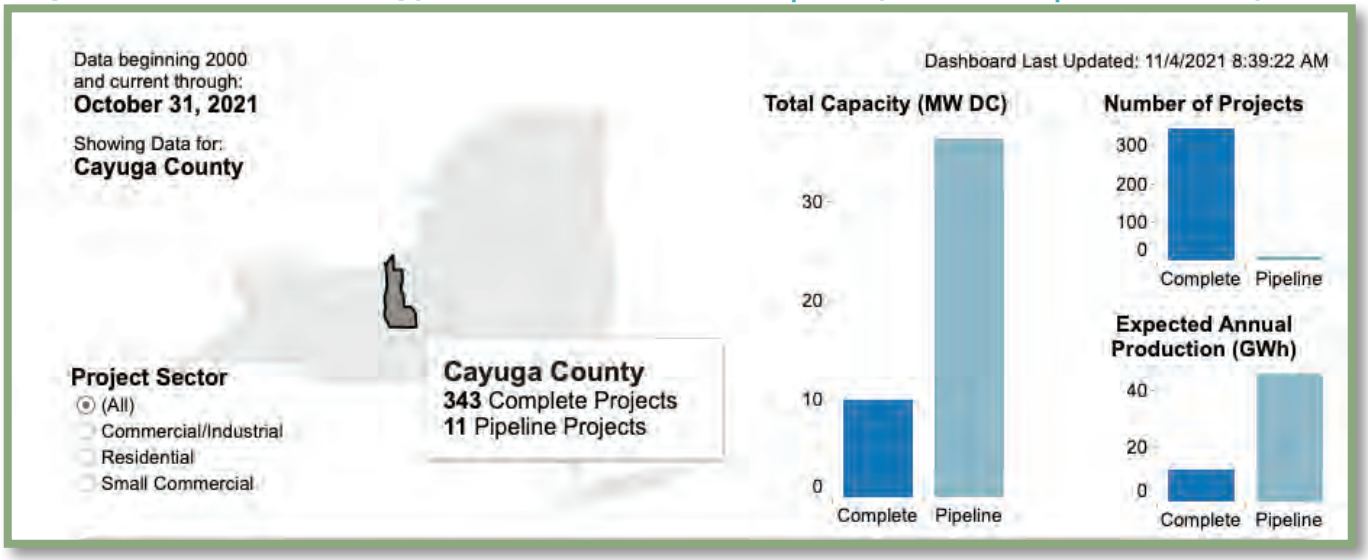
On a regional scale, Cayuga County is one of nine New York counties that have less than 10 MW of capacity from solar powered energy sources. Of the almost 150,000 solar projects in the state of New York, Cayuga County has seen 343 completed projects with a total capacity just under 10 MW. However, according to NYSERDA, the county has 11 "pipeline" projects that will increase this capacity to well over 40 MW. The graphics below depict this data as reported by the NYSERDA website.

Figure 11: Solar Energy MW Production Capacity by County



Source: Statewide Solar Projects page - www.nyserda.ny.gov

Figure 12: Solar Energy MW Production Capacity and "Pipeline" Projects



Source: Statewide Solar Projects page - www.nyserda.ny.gov

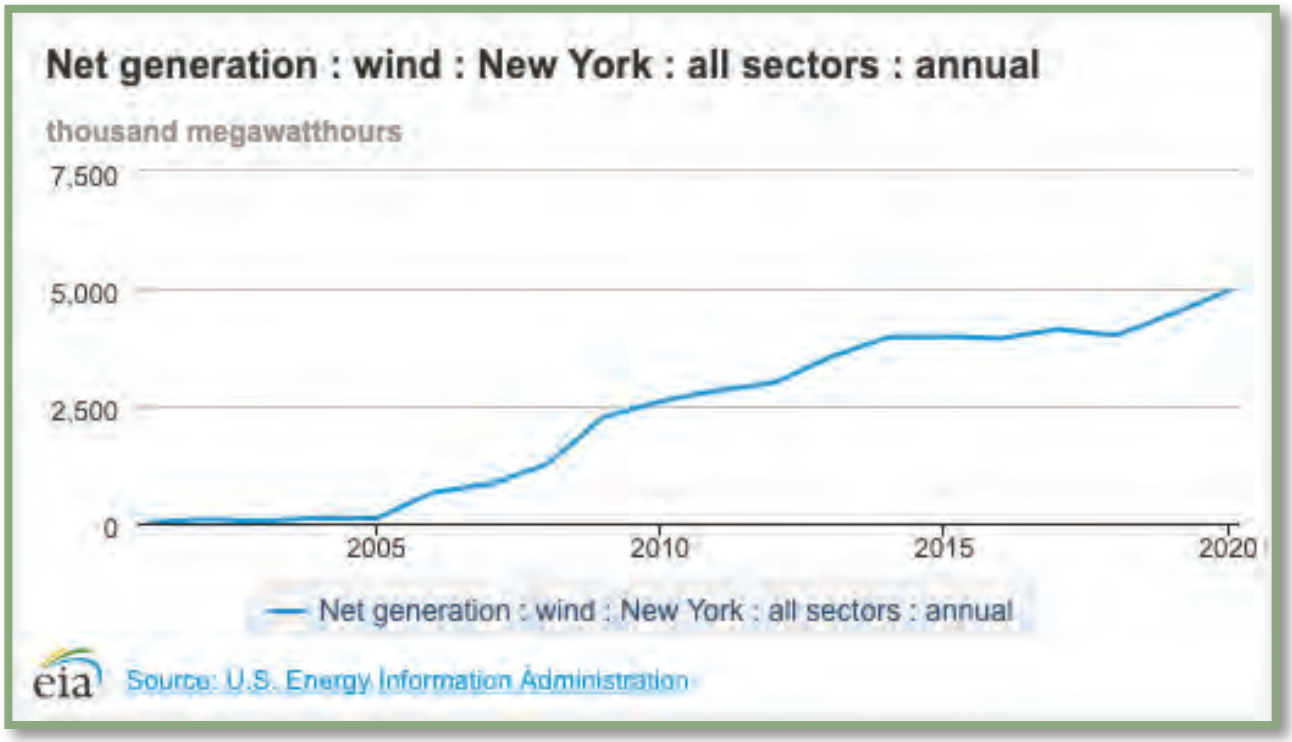
WIND

In New York, wind is harnessed by wind energy conversion (WEC). Wind power is generated by turbine blades spinning and turning a generator to produce electricity. In the state of New York, wind energy currently produces around 5,000 MWH of electricity annually, which equates to approximately 7% of the state's current electrical usage. As shown in figure 13, wind generation has increased significantly over the last 16 years, from producing just above zero MWH to producing almost 5,000 MWH of electricity statewide. As the state continues to push for a reduction of reliance on carbon-based energy sources, wind generation is expected to continue to increase.

ANAEROBIC DIGESTERS

According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Anaerobic digestion is the practice of "processing organic materials in anaerobic conditions by microorganisms which break down the material into biogas and a digestate". The biogas product contains a significant amount of methane that can be used as a renewable energy source and the digestate can be used as a soil amendment or processed into fertilizer pellets for agricultural purposes. Anaerobic digestion is most commonly used to process manure from cattle and can produce a gas that can then be used by the agricultural operation to power a generator and meet a portion of the electrical needs of the farming business. The regulation of anaerobic digesters is controlled by 6 NYCRR Subpart 361-3.3 through NYSERDA and the DEC. As of 2021, the state records indicate that there are two anaerobic digestion systems in the Town of Venice.

Figure 13



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration. *Net Generation from Wind.* Updated Annually.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

It would be difficult to cover all possible sources of renewable energy, especially in a field that has changed rapidly over the past 20 years. This plan is meant to create a long-term vision for the Town of Venice, with goals that can be achieved across a ten-to-fifteen-year period. As new technologies become viable, or existing ones such as geo-thermal, nuclear, or hydrogen fuel cells continue to advance, the town should address potential developments in the same way as it will address solar and wind developments – with careful consideration to the possible benefits while preserving the rural character and agricultural assets of the community.

CONSIDERATIONS AND REGULATIONS:

When considering renewable energy developments, a municipality has several points it must consider. All renewable energy technologies have different spatial, geographic, and infrastructure needs. Allowing these developments in the appropriate location is a primary consideration for all types of development in a town. This is particularly true for large-scale or commercial developments. Siting control is a key consideration for commercial projects in the town, especially given the lack of zoning regulations that would otherwise prevent the development in certain areas. A community should also consider bulk/area standards to ensure that developments are appropriate for their proposed location and to minimize impacts on surrounding properties. Regulatory specifics for each form of energy production are discussed further below.

Another key consideration is the potential environmental impacts of renewable energy developments. These impacts can vary widely depending on the specific type, size, and location of the renewable energy project. The environmental impacts are very different when considering a solar array and a wind turbine, and the town must be prepared to address the potential impacts and potential mitigation techniques before a project is given clearance for construction. Under the State Environmental Quality Review Act, the state requires that an environmental assessment form (EAF) be completed before a project is permitted. This is common for projects of all types that are not predetermined to have no negative environmental impact. The EAF is completed at the local level and a positive or negative declaration is made to determine if a full environmental impact statement (EIS) is required to address potential impacts in greater detail.

Decommissioning of renewable energy projects is an additional matter to address. While many renewable energy technologies have improved in design and durability, they all have a limited useful life. The Town of Venice should ensure that there is a plan in place to address the need to decommission commercial energy production projects once they are no longer producing electricity. To avoid a gap in funding for this process, many municipalities are making it a common practice to require that owners and/or operators set aside funds to ensure that the project can be decommissioned when it is deemed appropriate. Setting aside the required funds, or bond, relieves the municipality and taxpayers from the

burden of properly decommissioning a project.

Taxation is the final major concern that applies to all forms of large-scale renewable energy production. In the Town of Venice, there are multiple reasons to investigate taxation of large-scale clean energy projects including but not limited to PILOT programs, conversion of previously exempt farmland, and using partial parcels of agricultural lots for renewable energy production. Tax regulations and incentives vary widely for renewable energy projects across the nation and can be regulated at the county or municipal level. Specific tax regulations are discussed below in more detail.

In New York, renewable energy projects that are greater than 25 MW in production are automatically regulated by the New York State Office of Renewable Energy Siting (the Siting Office). Additionally, projects that are between 20-25 MW may opt-in to the new siting process. The Siting Office has guidelines and requirements that must be met including opportunities for local input and determining community and local government benefits. All developments that are expected to produce less than the 25 MW threshold are commonly referred to as either "residential" or "community" solar projects and the local jurisdiction has full regulatory control.

Energy storage facility siting review is often paired with the review of an energy production facility as storage facilities most commonly accompany a large development that exceeds the 25 MW threshold. In this case, the regulatory siting and approval process falls under the state's jurisdiction. Any storage facilities that are associated with projects under the 25 MW threshold are under the regulatory jurisdiction of the local municipality.

SOLAR

Solar arrays, like all renewable developments, have considerations that are specific to their design and construction. First among these are the visual and aesthetic impacts that commercial solar arrays have. Large scale solar panel arrays significantly change the visual character of a landscape. This visual impact can be mitigated by careful site design and layout.

Agricultural land impacts are another factor to carefully navigate when developing any large solar array. As discussed in the agriculture section of this plan, the Town of Venice is largely made up of agricultural lands and agriculture is the primary business for a significant percentage of the town's residents. The Town of Venice must work collaboratively with landowners and contractors who desire to develop solar arrays to prevent harm to prime soils and soils of state significance in the town. As the state encourages development of renewable energy technologies, it has expressed the need to protect the prime soils that serve the agricultural sector of the state as well. Any projects that convert prime soils to commercial use must undergo a stringent regulatory process and implement mitigation techniques to reduce the effects on farming operations in the town. Solar arrays should be located on lands that do not possess prime soils and should be sited in a way that allows for continued agricultural practices.

When considering regulations that address solar energy developments, the Town of Venice has many options. Many communities statewide have adopted or are in the process of adopting renewable energy laws that specifically regulate these developments as they continue to be developed across the state. However, it is important to note that there are some limitations that restrict local municipalities from regulating siting and enforcing local laws. As previously mentioned, in New York, all projects that are expected to produce more than 25 MW are regulated by the Siting Office and therefore not regulated by the local municipality. The Town of Venice should consider all of the above-mentioned impacts and any others that could occur in consideration of solar projects within the town.

WIND

Wind energy conversion (WEC) projects also have specific considerations just like the other forms of development. WEC developments consist of one or more wind turbines that range in height but are typically approximately 600 ft tall and require an acre of land area. This significant height has obvious visual and aesthetic impacts, but on a different scale than a solar array. Unlike solar arrays that can vary from 1-1000 acres in size, wind turbines occupy a relatively small amount of land area, and their visual impact comes from their height. Along the lines of visual impact, a common concern with wind turbines is "shadow flicker". This term refers to the wind turbine casting a flickering shadow on a residence or other occupied building when the sun is low enough to cast a long shadow from the tower to neighboring structures. Commonly, to reduce this impact, the wind turbines that are producing this flicker are set to automatically turn off during the times when the sun is at a position to produce a shadow flicker. Another important factor with wind turbines is their environmental impact. Wind turbines are known to kill birds, and Central New York is home to a variety of protected, endangered, and migratory species. The Town of Venice should consider all of the above-mentioned impacts and any others that could occur in consideration of WEC projects within the town.

ENERGY STORAGE

As the technology continues to be developed, energy storage facilities are expected to play a major part in the successful reduction of reliance on fossil fuel energy production. Storing electricity is a difficult task and is a primary reason why existing clean energy developments do not have the impact on current energy consumption that they could in the future. Energy storage will allow production to occur at all hours and energy produced in excess of demand would be stored and accessed when peak demand outweighs production. Like all developments, there are aspects of the technology that must be taken into consideration when a project is proposed in the town. The primary issue to address is fire safety and incident management. The storage of large amounts of energy always carries associated risks, and the town must be made fully aware of these risks and assess the most appropriate ways to mitigate risks and prepare for accidents. Developers of battery storage should include a fire safety and incident management plan with their proposal and provide the appropriate

means and training to deal with any problems that might arise. The Town of Venice should consider all of the above-mentioned impacts and any others that could occur in consideration of energy storage projects within the town.

GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Goal 1: Balance the town's benefits from renewable resources, while protecting the physical environment and agricultural landscape that gives Venice its rural character.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

The Town of Venice should encourage the development of renewable energy facilities in a way that minimizes impacts on the environmental and agricultural landscape of the town. The town should minimize the siting of renewable energy projects on prime soils and soils of statewide importance. The town can identify specific soils as mapped by the state and prioritize these lands while encouraging the siting of clean energy development to alternative parcels or locations that are not priority soils. The Town of Venice should only allow the conversion of prime agricultural soils to site renewable energy projects if mitigation measures for the agricultural impacts have been identified and addressed.

Goal 2: Maximize the benefit of clean energy projects to low-to-moderate income households through community energy projects.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

Work with clean energy providers to encourage the development of properly sited and sized clean energy developments that will provide a direct benefit to low-to-moderate income households by creating clean energy and reducing energy costs.

Goal 3: Decrease the cost of energy to town consumers by utilizing the renewable energy resources abundant in the town.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

Ensure that there is community wide benefit as commercial renewable energy projects enter the town to utilize the natural resources that are present in Venice. As the landscape and environment are impacted by these developments, town residents and business owners should see a direct benefit from these developments.

Goal 4: Develop a Town of Venice Solar Energy Law

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

The Town of Venice should be prepared for solar energy developments by drafting and adopting a solar energy law. The town should utilize the current solar laws that exist in New York State in similar communities and tailor a law that best suits the needs of the Town of Venice and addresses the desires and concerns of town residents. The solar law should protect the town's agricultural and farmland operations while also allowing for the economic and environmental benefits that come with renewable energy development.

Goal 5: Develop a Town of Venice Wind Energy Law

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

The Town of Venice should be prepared for wind energy conversion (WEC) development projects by drafting and adopting a wind energy law. The town should utilize the current wind energy laws that exist in New York State in similar communities and tailor a law that best suits the needs of the Town of Venice and addresses the desires and concerns of town residents. The wind energy law should protect the town's agricultural and farmland operations while also allowing for the economic and environmental benefits that come with renewable energy development.

Goal 6: Support the existing anaerobic digestion operations of farm waste within the town and encourage further methane capture through biogas creation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES:

Work with farming operations to connect the agricultural businesses with appropriate state office and resource departments to access state incentive funding and support. Encourage connections with the Cornell cooperative extension in regard to anaerobic digestion systems and funding availability.



Image 19: Venice Center train station. Source:

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The plan implementation matrix below is a summarization of the goals for the comprehensive plan. This matrix allows readers of the plan to easily access goals and expected time frame for completion of the goals. The three categories in the "Time Frame" column are ongoing, short-term, and long-term. These are intentionally general, to give the town flexibility as it works to implement the goals of the comprehensive plan. Short-term goals will ideally be completed in years 0-3 after adoption. Long-term goals will ideally be completed in years 3-10 after adoption. Ongoing goals are more general goals that the town should consider and implement with all decisions.

The column labeled "Local and Regional Partners/Agencies" is intended to give the town board and readers of the plan insight into the parties that could be involved in achieving that goal. This column allows for a more streamlined process, and encourages local and regional collaboration to accomplish the goals.

FUNDING SOURCES

To achieve the goals created by this plan, The Town of Venice can seek funding from local, regional, state, and federal sources. One example is the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The New York State office of Homes and Community Renewal (HCR) administers the CDBG program for New York. The CDBG program offers a variety of funding opportunities such as housing rehabilitation, home-buyer down payment assistance, private water/wastewater system assistance, planning assistance, and manufactured housing replacement. These programs have been created to assist low and moderate income residents of the town.

For additional funding sources, the town can access the Regional Economic Development Councils' (REDC) guidebook published each year that highlights the available Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) resources. This guidebook describes the categories of funding available and the specific programs for which the town could apply.

GOAL	TIME FRAME	LOCAL AND REGIONAL PARTNERS/ AGENCIES
Preserve and protect the natural resources of the town.	Ongoing	Town of Venice, Cayuga County, Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board
Partner with the Southern Cayuga Farmers Festival Association to support the Venice Pavilion as a community asset.	Short-Term	Southern Cayuga Farmers Festival Association
Improve information delivery to town residents and stakeholders.	Short-Term	Cayuga County
Create a reduced speed zone along State Route 34 around Venice Center to reduce speeds through the hamlet area.	Short-Term	State Department of Transportation, Venice Highway Dept.
Improve broadband and communications access, reliability, and service.	Ongoing	Cayuga County, Local and regional providers
Maintain or improve quality of town services and roads/bridges.	Ongoing	Venice Highway Dept.
Maintain and rehabilitate existing housing stock to ensure community's welfare, retain existing community members, attract new community members, and increase sustainability.	Ongoing	

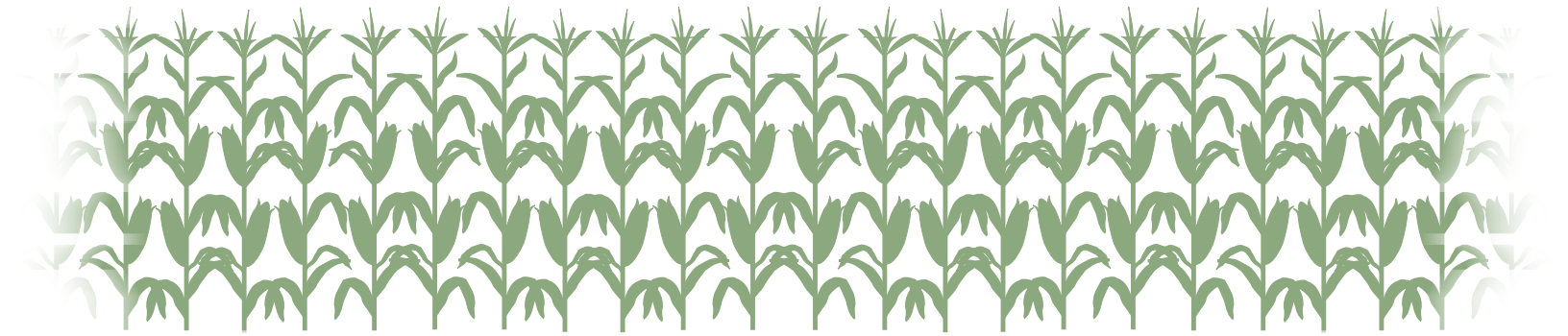
GOAL	TIME FRAME	LOCAL/REGIONAL PARTNERS/ AGENCIES
Work towards affordable and accessible housing units available to current and potential residents of the Town of Venice.	Long-Term	
Increase communication and cooperation between the Town of Venice and the Southern Cayuga Central School District.	Long-Term	Town of Venice, Southern Cayuga Central School District
Maintain an appropriate balance between property rights of individual landowners and the community as a whole.	Ongoing	Town of Venice
Review and implement the Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan.	Short-Term	Cayuga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board
Increase education of agricultural practices for non-farmers and younger residents.	Ongoing	Southern Cayuga Central School District, Cornell Cooperative Extension
Enhance local agricultural economy and support agricultural economic development incentives.	Long-Term	Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cayuga County
Encourage continued communication and cooperation between farmers and local government.	Ongoing	Town of Venice

GOAL	TIME FRAME	LOCAL/REGIONAL PARTNERS/ AGENCIES
Develop a Town of Venice Right-to-Farm Law.	Short-Term	Town of Venice
Balance the town's benefits from renewable resources, while protecting the physical environment and agricultural landscape that gives Venice its rural character.	Ongoing	Town of Venice
Maximize the benefit of clean energy projects to low-to-moderate income households through community energy projects.	Ongoing	Town of Venice, Cayuga County, NYSERDA
Decrease the cost of energy to town consumers by utilizing the renewable energy resources abundant in town.	Long-Term	Town of Venice, Cayuga County, NYSERDA
Develop a Town of Venice Solar Energy Law.	Short-Term	Town of Venice, NYSERDA
Develop a Town of Venice Wind Energy Law.	Short-Term	Town of Venice, NYSERDA
Support the existing anaerobic digestion operations of farm waste within the town and encourage further methane capture through biogas creation.	Ongoing	Town of Venice, NYSERDA, Cornell Cooperative Extension

CHAPTER IV : ADOPTION AND MAINTENANCE

In this chapter...

- Formal Adoption
- Period of Review and Filing
- Effect of Adoption



FORMAL ADOPTION

The Venice Town Board appointed a special board, namely the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, to prepare the proposed comprehensive plan. By state statute, the steering committee held a public hearing on December 13, 2021, and recommended the proposed comprehensive plan to the Venice Town Board for adoption.

Prior to the Venice Town Board formally adopting the comprehensive plan, the plan was submitted to the Cayuga County GML -239 review board for evaluation and recommendations as required by State law. Within 90 days of the Steering Committee's recommendation, the Venice Town Board held a second public hearing, which opened on December 28, 2021 and was closed on January 13th. Prior to both public hearings the proposed plan was made available for review in the Venice Town Clerk's office and digitally by request.

The Town of Venice Comprehensive Plan is subject to the provisions of the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). Under Town law § 272-a, adoption of a comprehensive plan is classified as a Type I action. Therefore, prior to adoption, the Town of Venice satisfied the requirements for a Type I action under SEQRA. This process required a public hearing prior to the town's determination of significance. The draft SEQRA long form or GEIS was completed and made available for public review at the same time as the draft comprehensive plan, as detailed above.

PERIODIC REVIEW AND FILING

As time passes, community conditions, values, and attitudes may change. If the comprehensive plan does not continue to reflect the values of the town, the plan should be revisited, changed, and amended according to the community's desire. Revisiting the plan on a periodic basis for amendment considerations, rather than ignoring the plan, will keep the town's comprehensive plan up to date. Therefore, the Venice Town Board will review the comprehensive plan every five years, which will be the maximum interval for a review process.

After adoption, this plan must be filed in the Town Clerk's Office, and a copy must also be filed with the Cayuga County Planning Department.

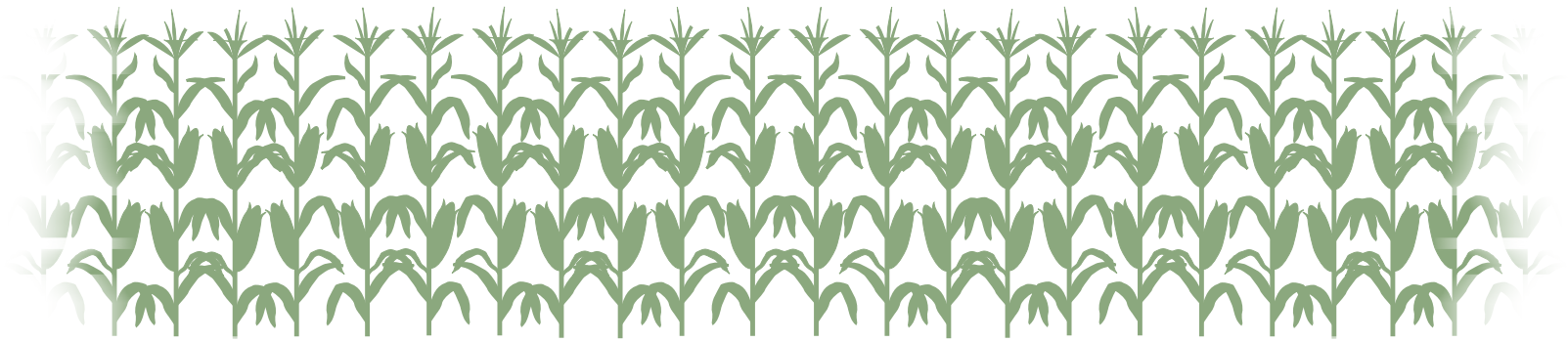
EFFECT OF ADOPTION

Should the Town of Venice decide to adopt any type of land use regulation, the regulation needs to be in accordance with this comprehensive plan. In addition, all plans for capital projects of another governmental agency on land included in the Town of Venice Comprehensive Plan should take this plan into consideration.

CHAPTER V : APPENDIX

In this chapter...

- Community Survey Results

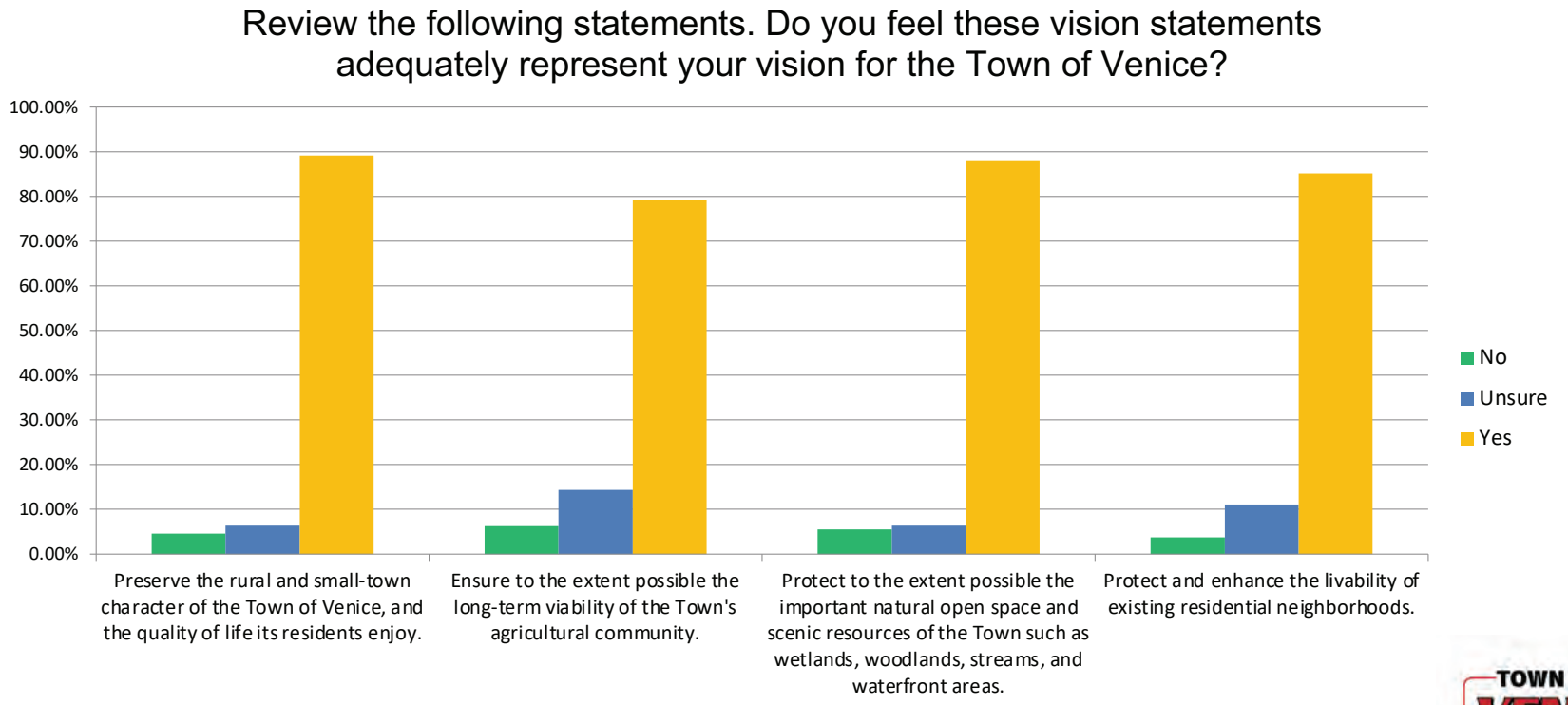


COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

Purpose of the Community Survey

- The community survey is not meant to be the basis for decision making
- The survey process helps you, the committee, and us, the consultant, gain awareness into the important topics/questions/insights that we should discuss further and explore with Town residents and stakeholders
- Survey questions are not meant to drive the planning document, but guide our discussions here and provide content to explore topics further with Town stakeholders and residents

Question 1


Review the following statements. Do you feel these vision statements adequately represent your vision for the Town of Venice?
100.00%
90.00%
80.00%
70.00%
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Preserve the rural and small-town character of the Town of Venice, and the quality of life its residents enjoy.
Ensure to the extent possible the long-term viability of the Town's agricultural community.
Protect to the extent possible the important natural open space and scenic resources of the Town such as wetlands, woodlands, streams, and waterfront areas.
Protect and enhance the livability of existing residential neighborhoods.
No
Unsure
Yes

Comments related to the Q1 vision statements:

1. “I believe that we all are likely to see significant stresses and changes in our future, to a greater degree and at a faster pace than before. It is essential that we strengthen the economic and institutional resilience of our households and our community. To that end, we should consider how to expand and diversify our local capacity and availability of resources to meet essential needs.”

2. "Solar farmers will destroy property values and the values of the families and residents of the town. If solar farms are built, many family legacies, and generations of land investments will be lost. Families will be displaced. People will loose what generations have worked for.”

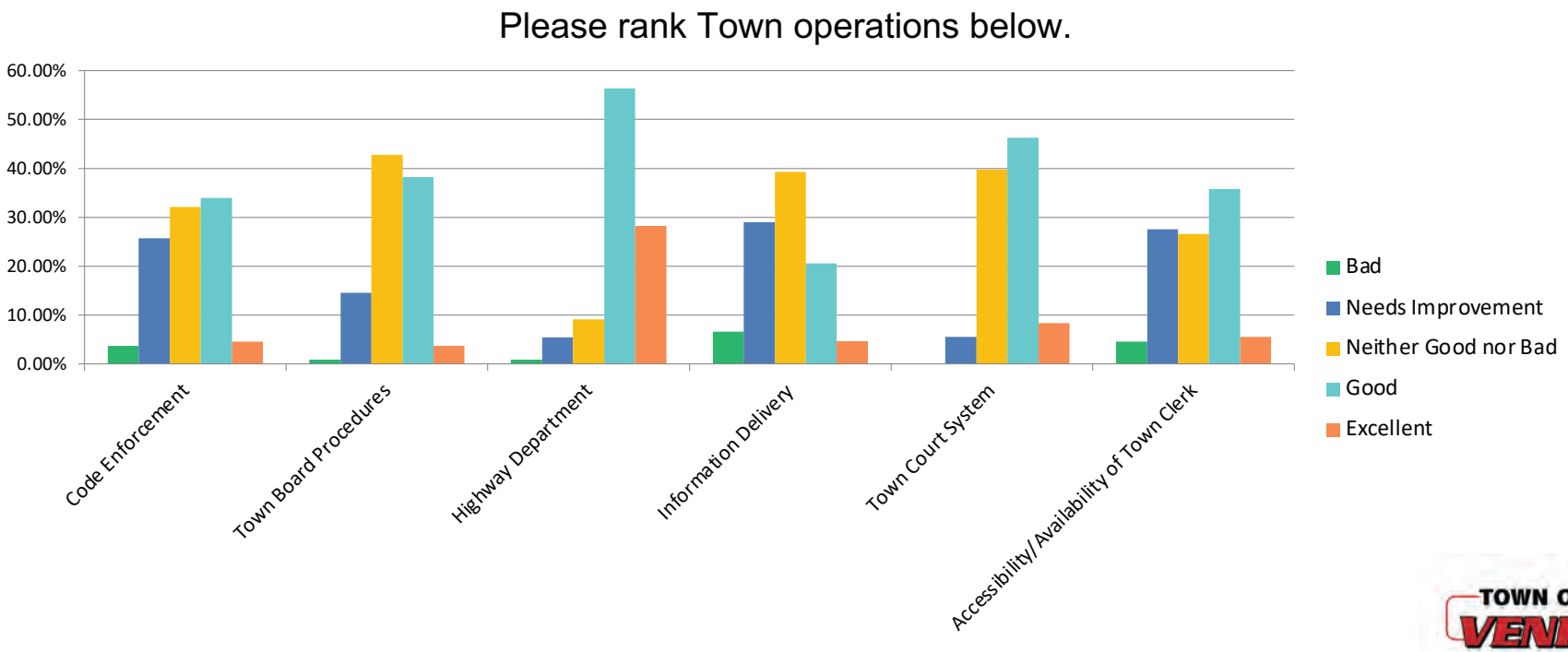
3. "Preserving the open rural space is important, but we need to be open to our changing world. We need to integrate alternative energy sources in a sensitive visual way"

Q2: Please rate the Town of Venice in the following categories.

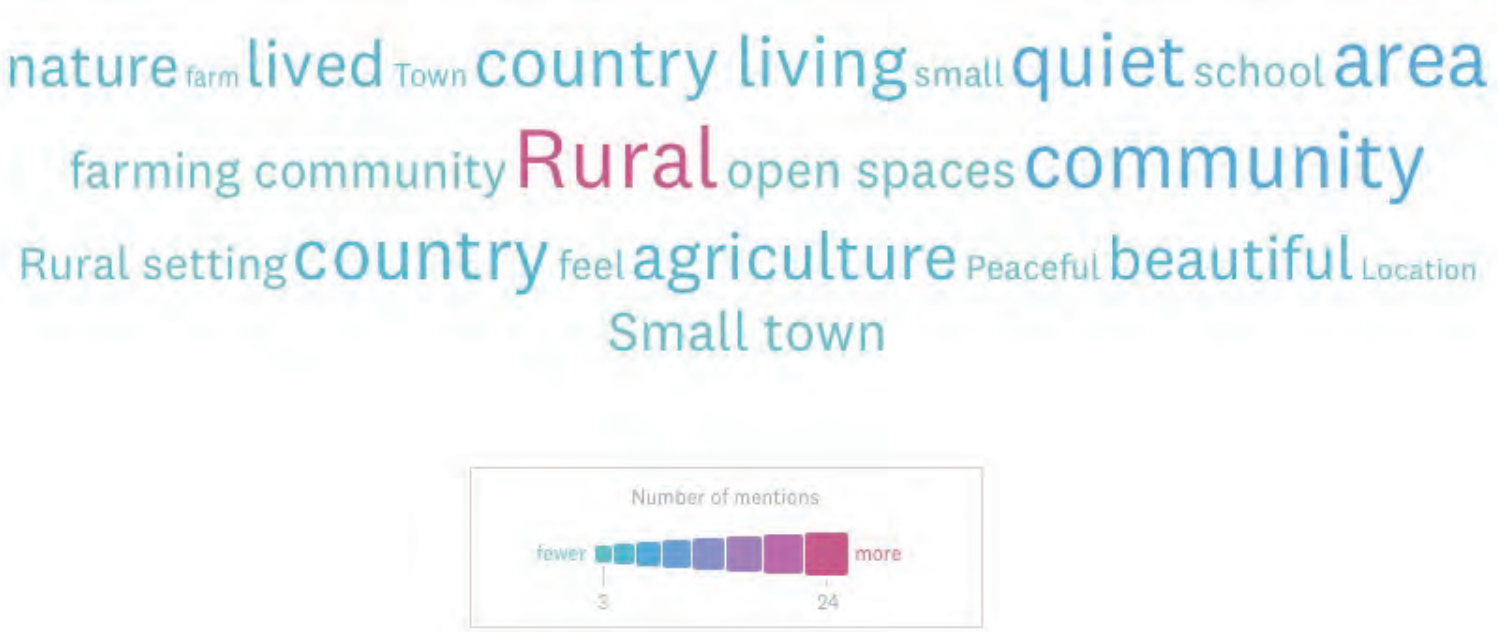
The following categories were determined "Bad" or "Needs improvement" by at least 20% of surveyors.

- Childcare services
- Housing Availability
- Housing Quality
- Internet Service Availability / Quality
- Cell Phone Service
- Proximity to health services
- Private Trash Removal Services
- Lake Water Quality (Owasco)

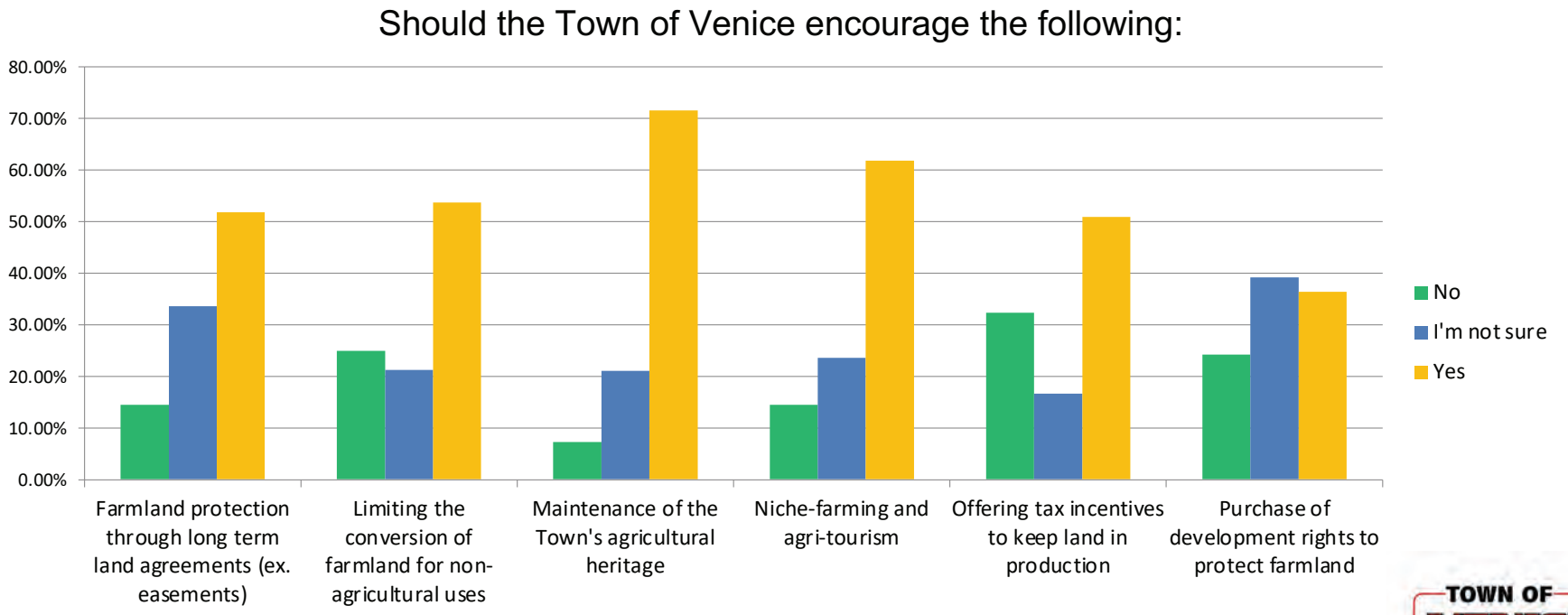
Question 3


Please rank Town operations below.
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Code Enforcement
Town Board Procedures
Highway Department
Information Delivery
Town Court System
Accessibility/Availability of Town Clerk
Bad
Needs Improvement
Neither Good nor Bad
Good
Excellent

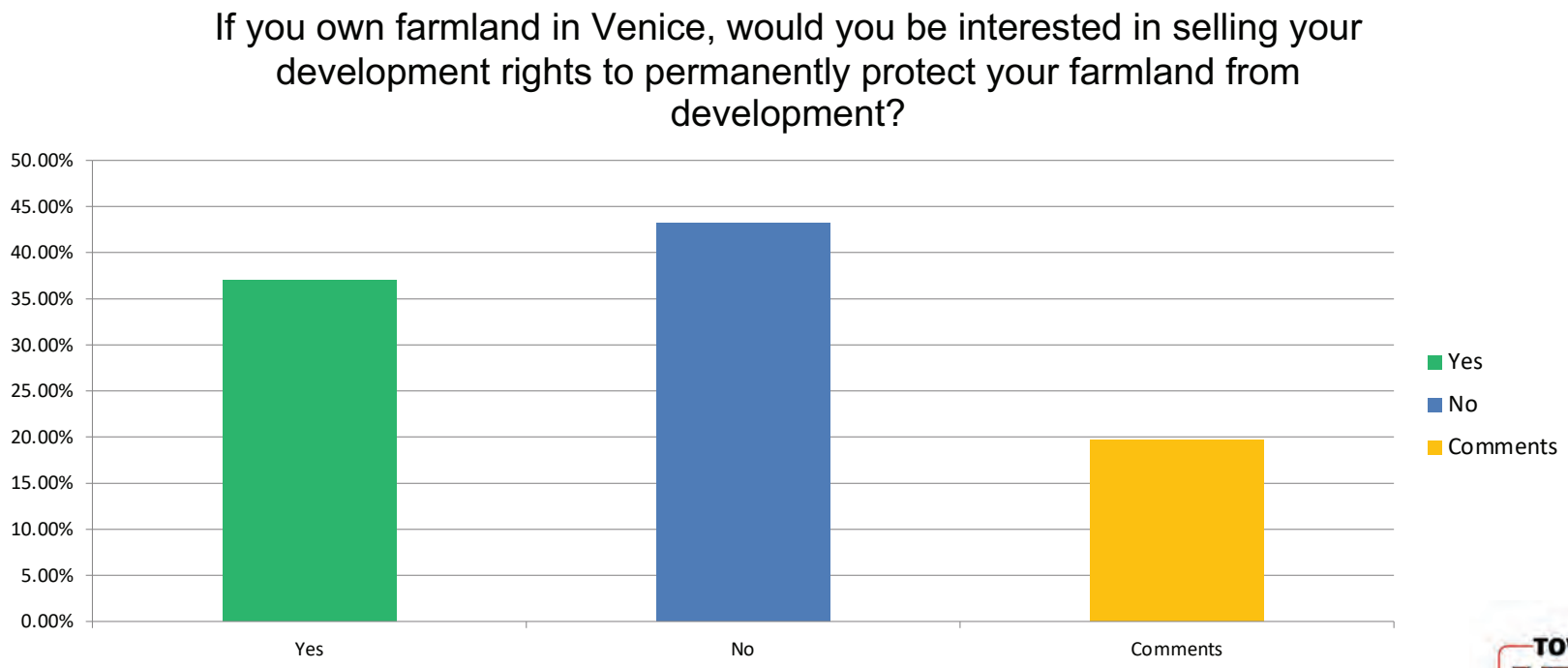
Q4: What do you like most about the Town of Venice?



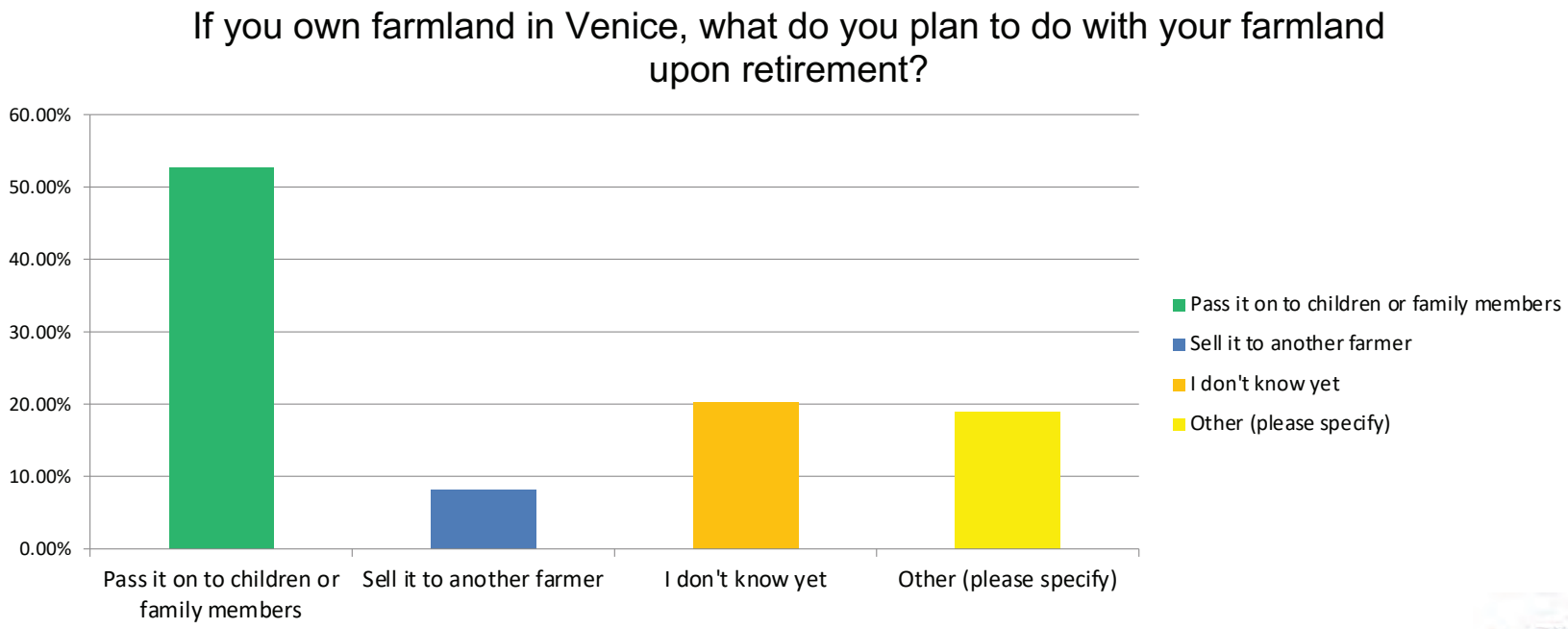
Question 5


Should the Town of Venice encourage the following:
80.00%
70.00%
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Farmland protection through long term land agreements (ex. easements)
Limiting the conversion of farmland for non-agricultural uses
Maintenance of the Town's agricultural heritage
Niche-farming and agri-tourism
Offering tax incentives to keep land in production
Purchase of development rights to protect farmland
No
I'm not sure
Yes

Question 6


If you own farmland in Venice, would you be interested in selling your development rights to permanently protect your farmland from development?
50.00%
45.00%
40.00%
35.00%
30.00%
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
Yes
No
Comments
Yes
No
Comments

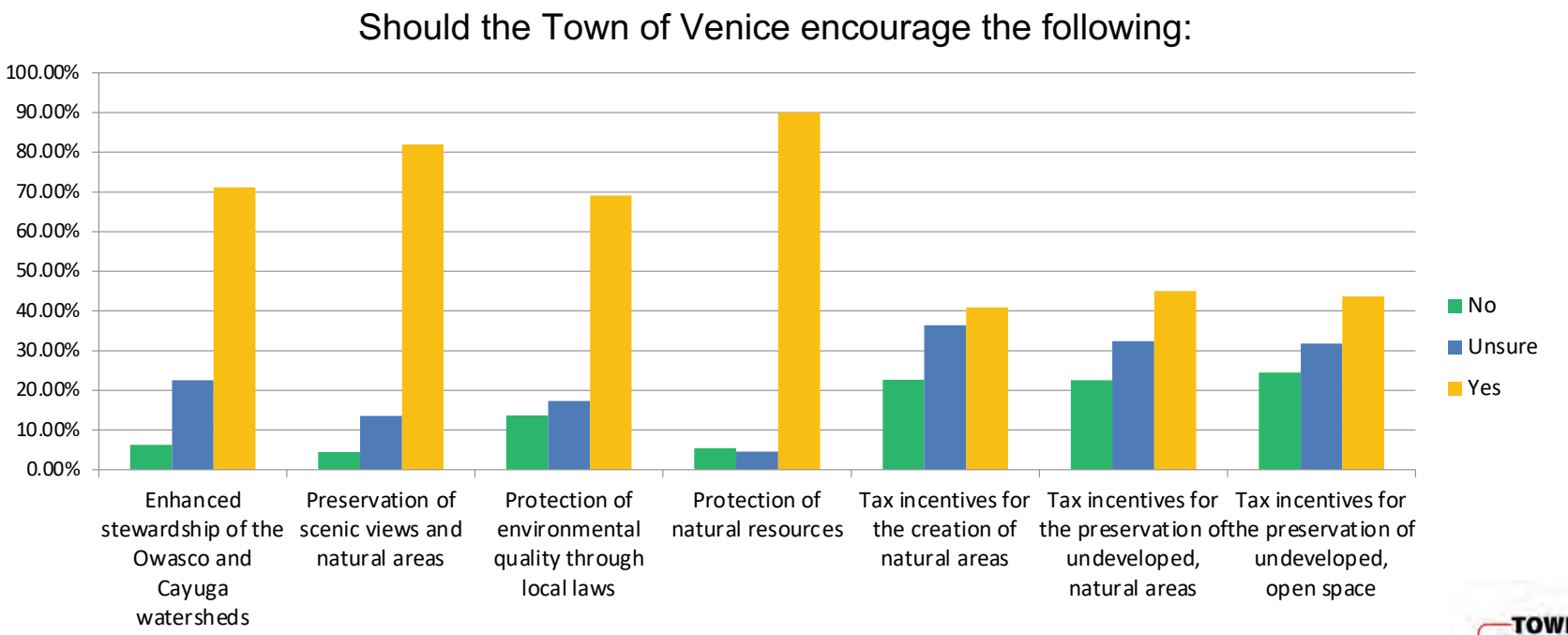
Question 7


If you own farmland in Venice, what do you plan to do with your farmland upon retirement?
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Pass it on to children or family members
Sell it to another farmer
I don't know yet
Other (please specify)
Pass it on to children or family members
Sell it to another farmer
I don't know yet
Other (please specify)

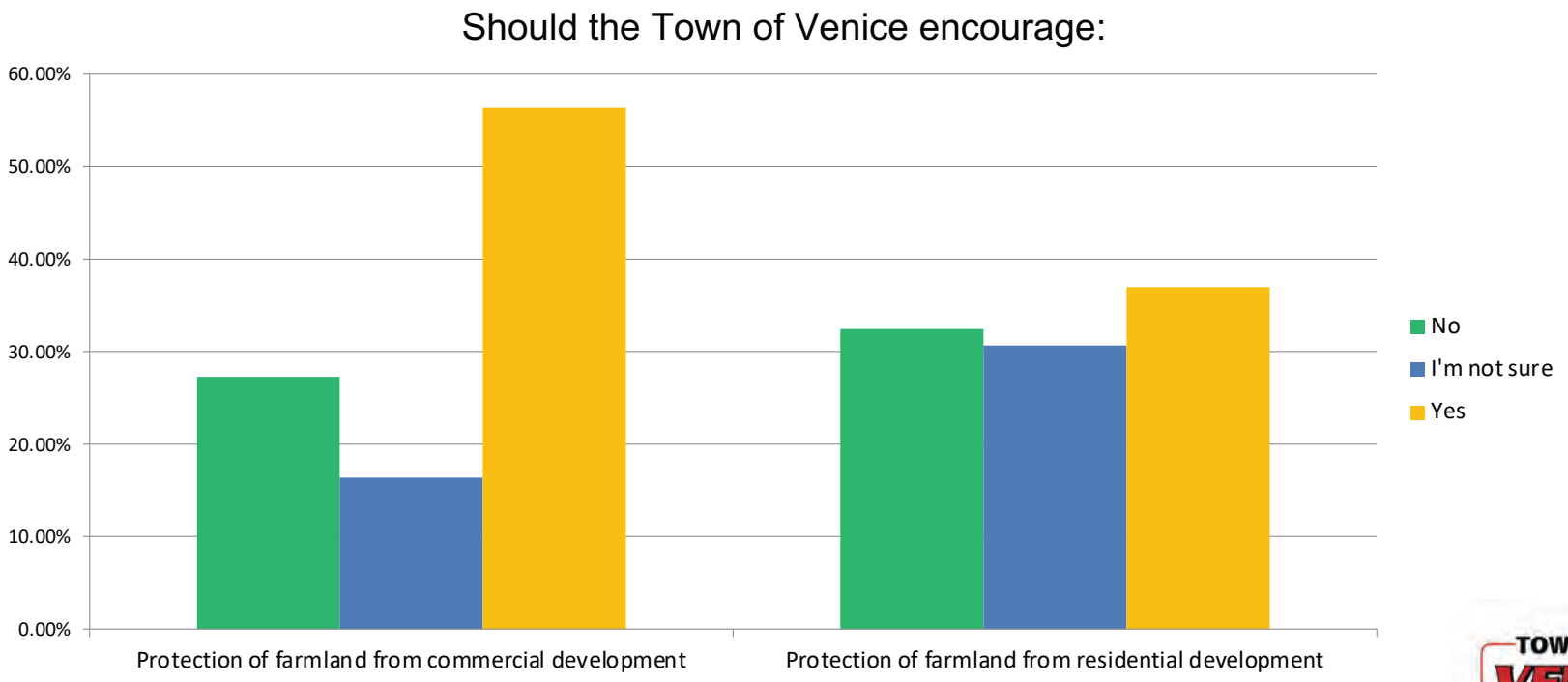
Q8: Please share any general thoughts on agriculture in the Town of Venice

- “Agriculture in Venice is historically important and should be maintained for future generations.”
- “We should not be forced by the State to give up our good farmland for Large Scale Renewable Energy Projects. If forced, the town tax payers should be compensated heavily.”
- “Agriculture is a ever evolving industry. Capitalism drives it. The most profitable use of land will influence its use. It will not look or operate as it has in the past. The town should not attempt to control the use of Ag lands.”
- “I would like to see an emphasis on environmental protection through regulation and fines and not allow farms to pass the costs of their environmental impacts onto the community.”
- “Tractors and other machinery do the most wear and tear of the roads, not to mention manure, mud and fertilizer spills left behind. The "quietness" of the outskirts of the rural town are non-existent now with the removal of tree lines between fields; that also creates more wind and soil erosion on slopes”
- “Agriculture land needs to be used for agriculture use. ”
- “I love farming, but I hate how our big farmers have cleared all their hedgerows and filled in their ditches ,now NY looks like Kansas.”

Question 9

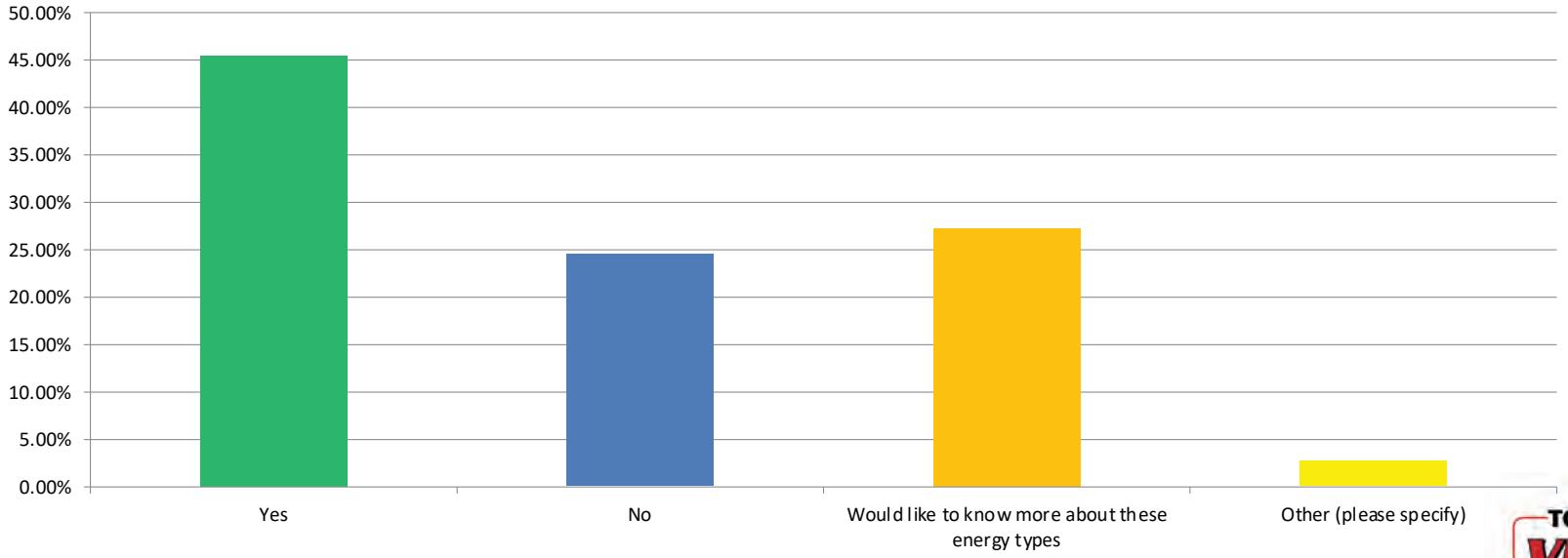

Should the Town of Venice encourage the following:
100.00%
90.00%
80.00%
70.00%
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Enhanced stewardship of the Owasco and Cayuga watersheds
Preservation of scenic views and natural areas
Protection of environmental quality through local laws
Protection of natural resources
Tax incentives for the creation of natural areas
Tax incentives for the preservation of undeveloped, natural areas
Tax incentives for the preservation of undeveloped, open space
No
Unsure
Yes

Question 10

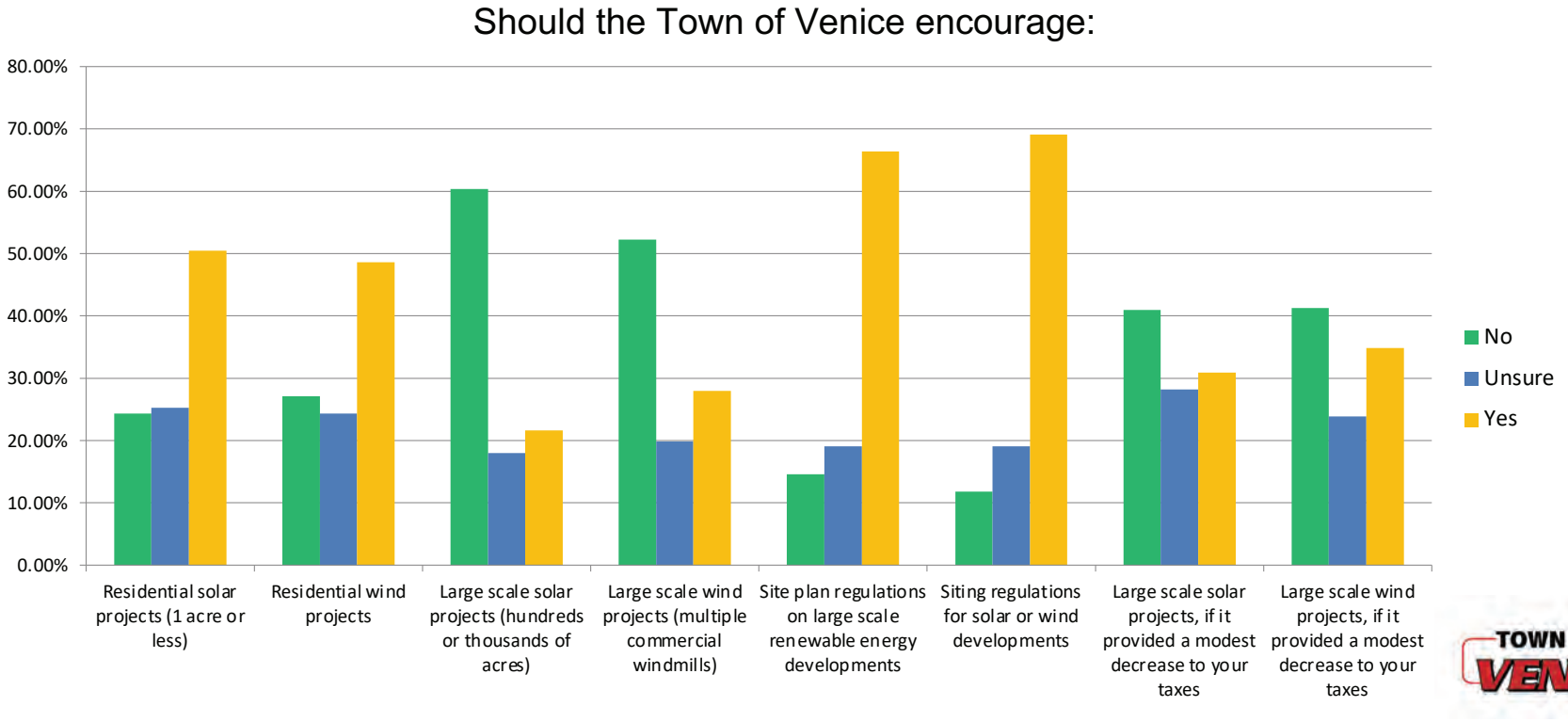

Should the Town of Venice encourage:
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Protection of farmland from commercial development
Protection of farmland from residential development
No
I'm not sure
Yes

Question 11

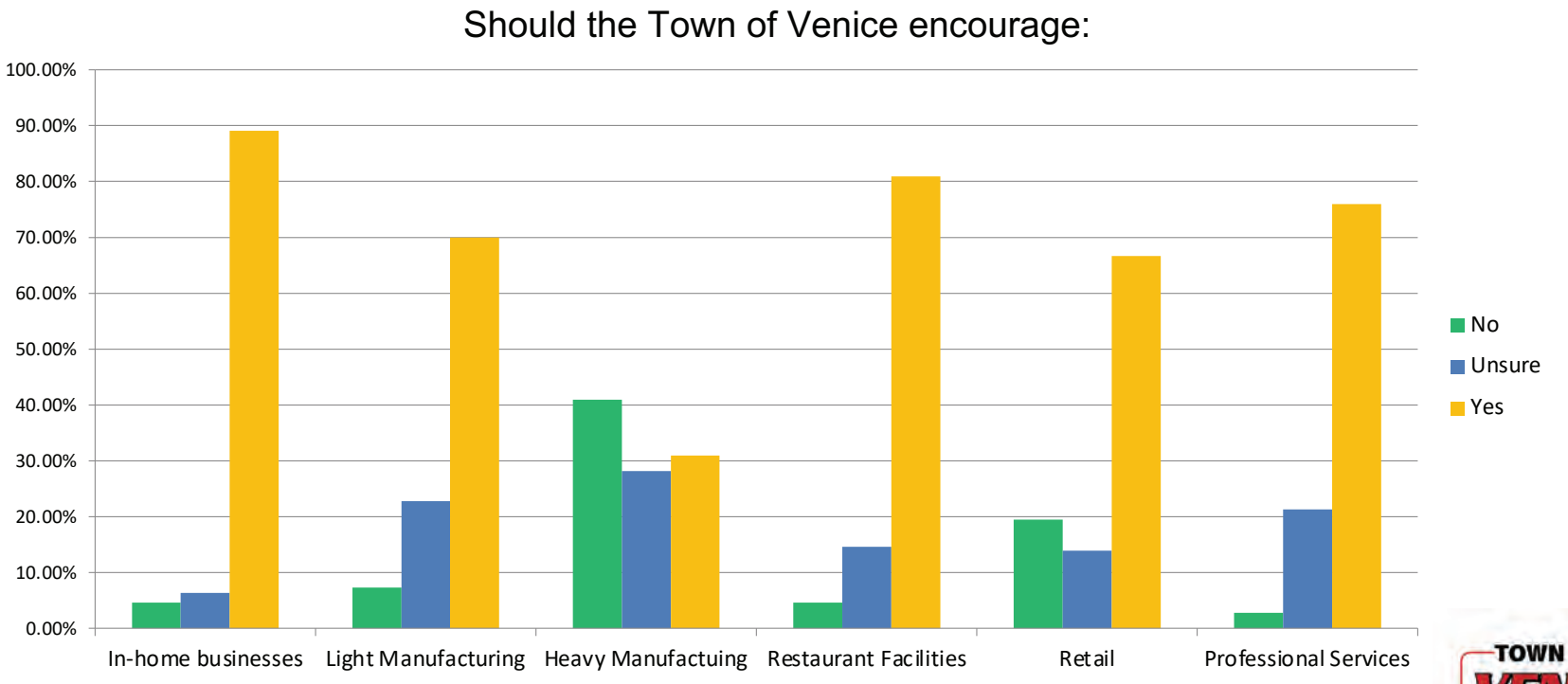
Do you feel that you have enough information or knowledge to make decisions on: • potential renewable energy sources such as wind turbines or solar arrays • existing or potential methane digesters in the Town



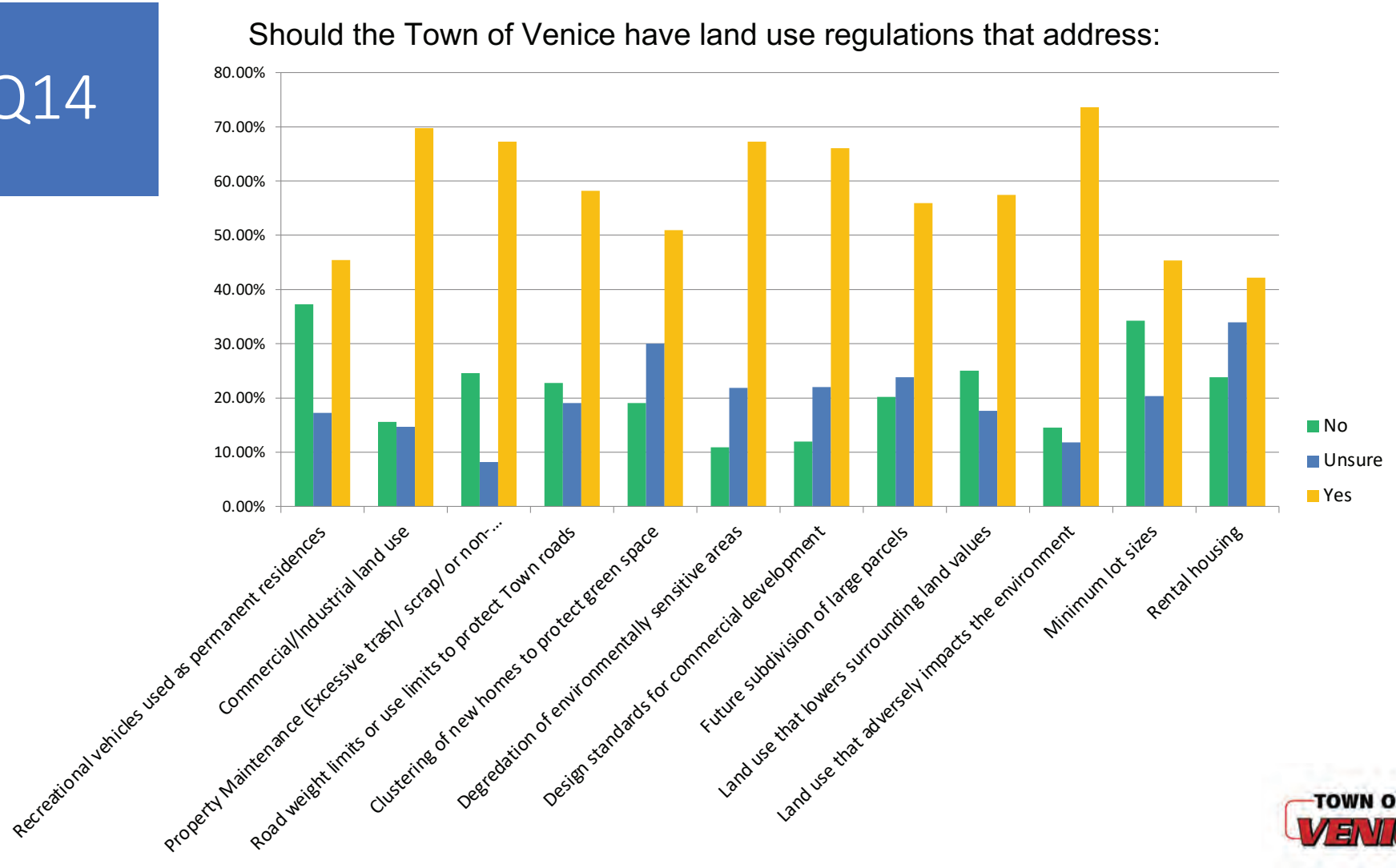
Question 12


Should the Town of Venice encourage:
80.00%
70.00%
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Residential solar projects (1 acre or less)
Residential wind projects
Large scale solar projects (hundreds or thousands of acres)
Large scale wind projects (multiple commercial windmills)
Site plan regulations on large scale renewable energy developments
Siting regulations for solar or wind developments
Large scale solar projects, if it provided a modest decrease to your taxes
Large scale wind projects, if it provided a modest decrease to your taxes
No
Unsure
Yes

Question 13

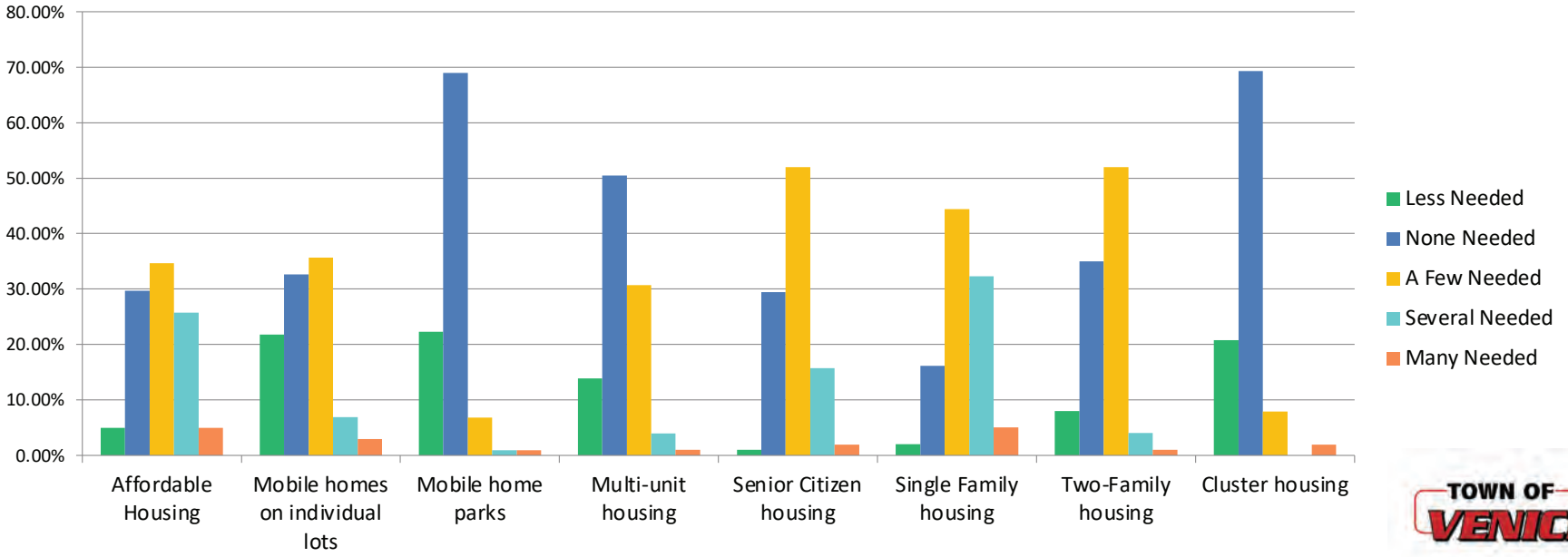

Should the Town of Venice encourage:
100.00%
90.00%
80.00%
70.00%
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
In-home businesses
Light Manufacturing
Heavy Manufactuing
Restaurant Facilities
Retail
Professional Services
No
Unsure
Yes

Q14

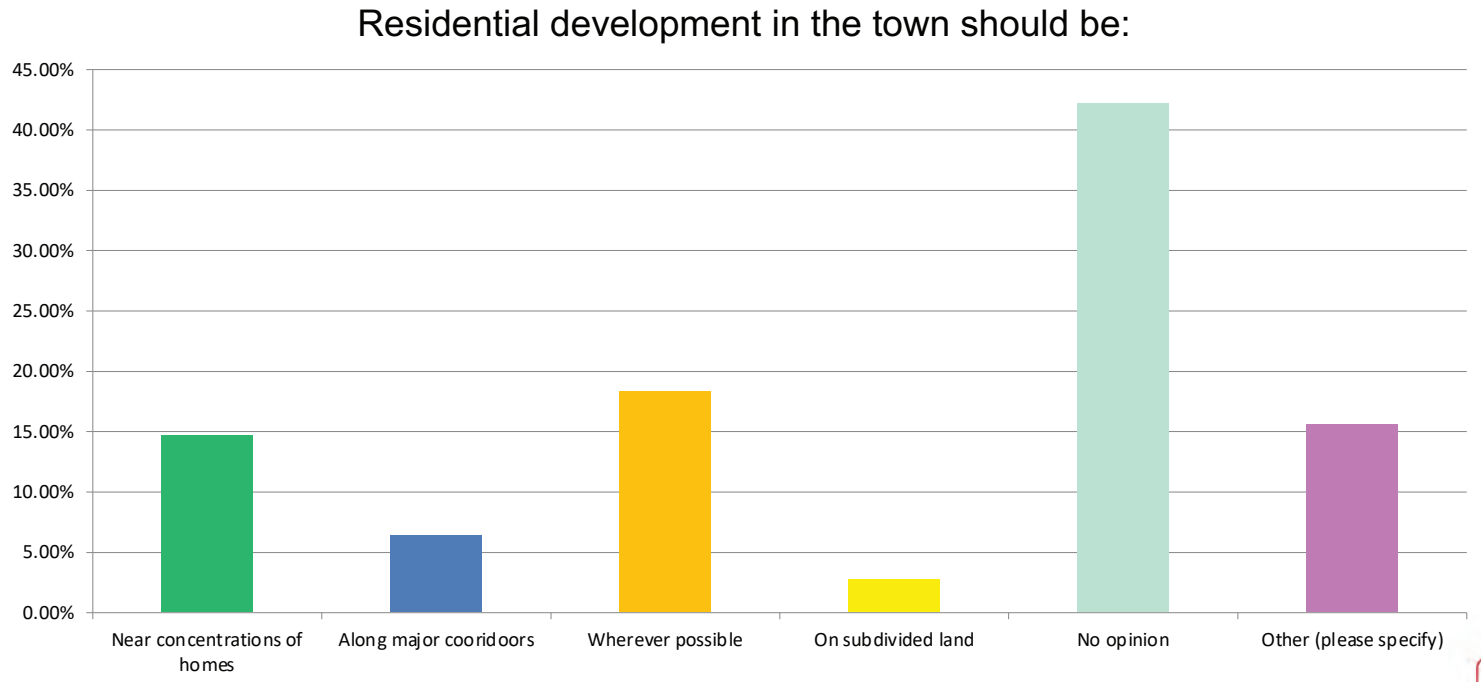

Should the Town of Venice have land use regulations that address:
80.00%
70.00%
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Recreational vehicles used as permanent residences
Commercial/Industrial land use
Property Maintenance (Excessive trash/ scrap/ or non-...
Road weight limits or use limits to protect Town roads
Clustering of new homes to protect green space
Degredation of environmentally sensitive areas
Design standards for commercial development
Future subdivision of large parcels
Land use that lowers surrounding land values
Land use that adversely impacts the environment
Minimum lot sizes
Rental housing
No
Unsure
Yes

Question 15

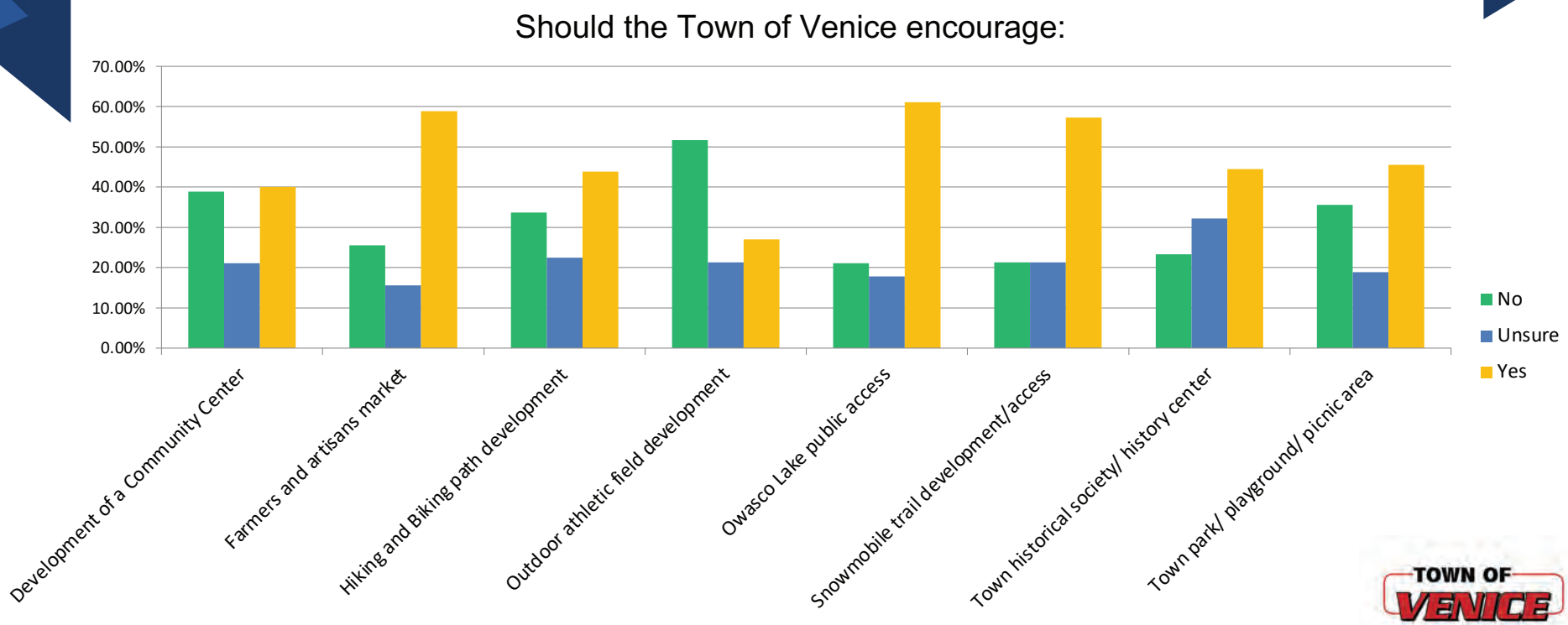
Based on your knowledge of the Town of Venice, please describe your feelings on the level of need for each type of housing development in the future. Please comment if you have specific thoughts on any of the following.



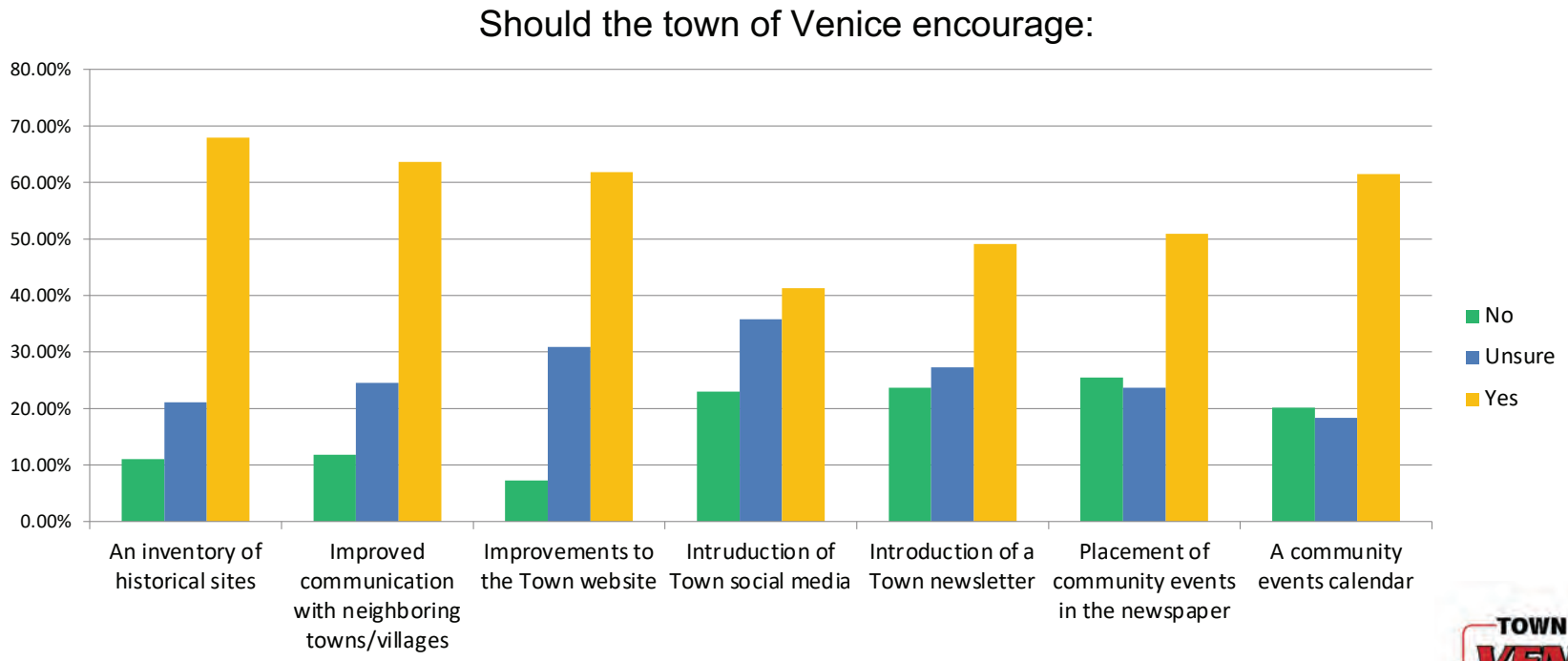
Question 16


Residential development in the town should be:
45.00%
40.00%
35.00%
30.00%
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
Near concentrations of homes
Along major cooridoors
Wherever possible
On subdivided land
No opinion
Other (please specify)

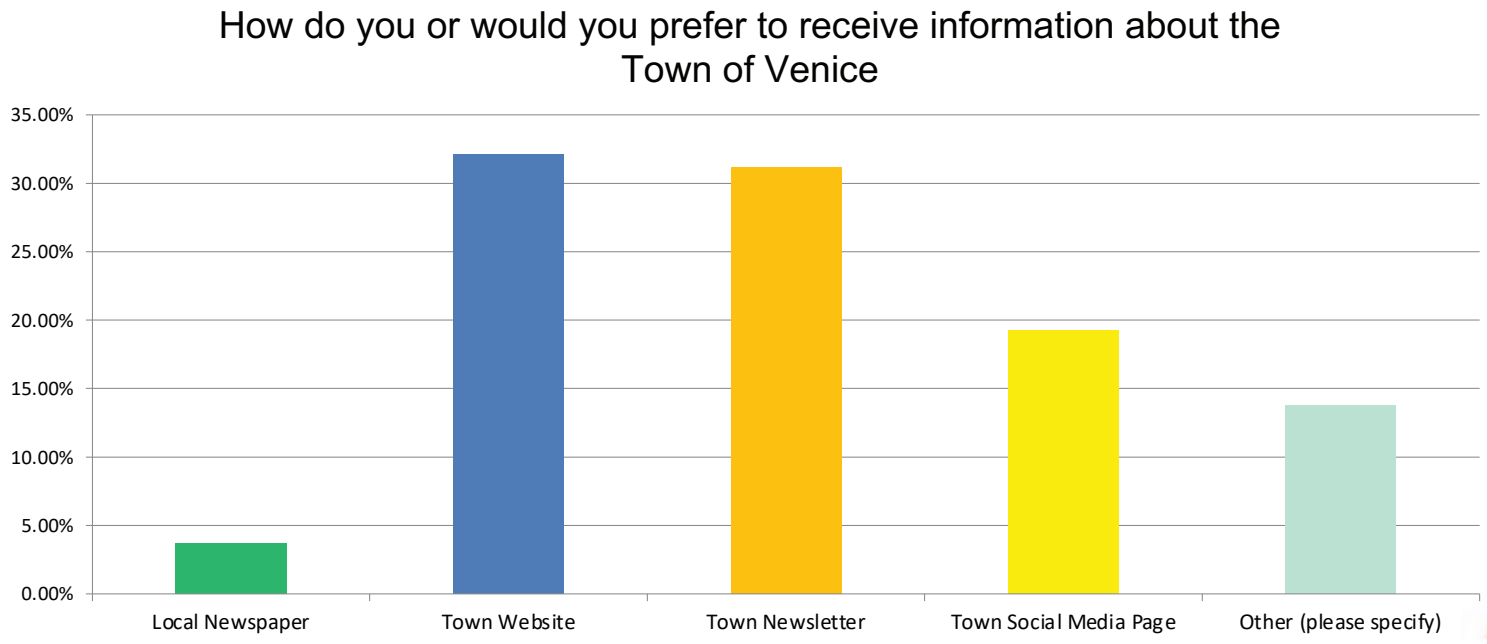
Question 17


Should the Town of Venice encourage:
70.00%
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
Development of a Community Center
Farmers and artisans market
Hiking and Biking path development
Outdoor athletic field development
Owasco Lake public access
Snowmobile trail development/access
Town historical society/ history center
Town park/ playground/ picnic area
No
Unsure
Yes

Question 18


Should the town of Venice encourage:
80.00%
70.00%
60.00%
50.00%
40.00%
30.00%
20.00%
10.00%
0.00%
An inventory of historical sites
Improved communication with neighboring towns/villages
Improvements to the Town website
Intruduction of Town social media
Introduction of a Town newsletter
Placement of community events in the newspaper
A community events calendar
No
Unsure
Yes

Question 19


How do you or would you prefer to receive information about the Town of Venice
35.00%
30.00%
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
Local Newspaper
Town Website
Town Newsletter
Town Social Media Page
Other (please specify)

Q21: Important issues not covered in survey

- Speed limit postings and vehicular speed issues
- Drinking water contamination
- Zoning board creation

Demographics

- All but two responses were from Venice residences.
- 95% of respondents own their home
- 47% of respondents have lived in Venice more than 30 years
- Most respondents were between 46-65 years of age – almost all respondents were over the age of 30.
- 93% of respondents live in a single-family home
- 20% of respondents farm in Venice for work – 44% of respondents work outside the Town – 18% of respondents are retired

Key Topics from Survey

- Agriculture
  - Preservation
  - Pollution/ Expansion/ Buffering
  - Protection
  - Freedom of choice
- Renewable Energy
  - Residential vs. commercial
  - Information
  - Town protection/ oversight
  - Maintenance
  - Siting/buffering
- Land-Use Regulations
  - Site control
  - Design standards
  - Lot sizing
  - Environmentally sensitive areas
- Housing affordability/ availability
- Childcare access
- Infrastructure
  - Broadband and Phone access/quality
    - High costs
    - Unreliable service
  - Clean water
  - Road damage from ag equipment
  - Trash removal
    - Burning of plastics
  - Volunteer fire – lacks enough members
- Town operations
  - Website/ newsletter
  - Internet access to meetings/minutes
  - Clerk availability