

# **Town and Village of Seneca Falls**

## **Comprehensive Plan**

Prepared by the Town and Village of Seneca Falls  
Comprehensive Plan Committee

**Draft July 2008**

### **Part II: Issues, Vision, Goals and Strategies**

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# Introduction to Seneca Falls Comprehensive Planning Process

A comprehensive plan is a written document that identifies the goals, objectives, principles, guidelines, policies, standards, and strategies for the growth and development of the community. It is not a law in itself, but state statutes require that all land use laws in a municipality be consistent with a comprehensive plan. The town is authorized to develop and adopt a comprehensive plan by New York State Town Law Section 272-a and the Village is authorized by New York State Village Law Section 7-722.

New York State considers adoption of a comprehensive plan to be a critical tool to promote the health, safety and general welfare of the people of the town and to consider the needs of the people. A comprehensive plan is the policy foundation upon which communities are built. Once a comprehensive plan is adopted, there are several implications:

- 1) All government agencies involved in planning capital projects in Seneca Falls must consider this plan before they start any capital project. That means the town and village now have a much larger stake in what other governmental agencies want to do when they are proposing a project in town.
- 2) Community consensus and support can be built on the shared vision, goals, and strategies presented in the plan.
- 3) Programs and regulations may be adopted to implement your plan to protect the town and village's resources and encourage desired development and growth.
- 4) Comprehensive plans are also important documents to help be successful in finding grant monies.
- 5) This plan is the basis for regulatory programs. All land use laws are required to reviewed and updated where necessary to be in accordance with this plan.

The issues, goals and recommended strategies detailed in this comprehensive plan are based upon studies of information and data gathered about the Town and Village of Seneca Falls, as well as from the input of many town residents. Starting in March of 2004, the Seneca Falls implemented a comprehensive effort to involve the public in development of this plan. These efforts included initiating a comprehensive plan steering committee to facilitate the process, conducting a residential survey of all town and village residents, conducting youth workshops at the high school conducting personal interviews with large and small businesses, and conducting two planning workshops to learn opinions on needs and hopes for its future. A second public effort was made via

press releases, advertisements and a workshop to educate the public about the draft vision statement. All this public outreach assisted the Steering Committee in identifying key issues to be addressed in the plan. All public information collected can be found in Appendix 1.

While public input was being collected, other studies and analyses were also being conducted including: background studies of land use; a detailed economic analysis; population profiles; housing and community facilities analysis; transportation; recreation and educational resources; public safety programs; environmental conditions of the town; and analysis of the regional growth patterns and trends that have affected, and will continue to affect the area's growth.

Specific sources of information used to prepare this plan included:

- ✓ A resident questionnaire;
- ✓ A business survey (via interviews);
- ✓ A community visioning workshop;
- ✓ Three visioning workshops conducted at the high school;
- ✓ Extensive interviews of town and village officials, local groups, agencies, organizations, and emergency service departments to identify issues;
- ✓ Numerous public meetings; and
- ✓ Public hearings.

This Comprehensive Plan attempts to answer several questions for Seneca Falls:

1) Where are we now and where are we going? The profile and public input sections (found in Parts II and III) answer the “where are we now?” and “where are we going?” questions. This section describes current conditions, demographics, physical and cultural features, and information from the residents.

2) Where do we want to be? The Vision statement sets the tone and overall direction the town and village should take in the future. It was developed directly from the surveys, planning workshop, and other public comments received. The goals included in this plan are broad statements that reflect “ideal” future conditions desired by the community. They were identified through a comprehensive planning process that included multiple opportunities for public participation. The goals offer more specific direction and are consistent with the stated vision of the town.

3) How can we get there? This is answered by a series of recommendations or action steps that the town and village can take to accomplish each goal contained in this plan. When put into action, these strategies will help Seneca Falls attain its vision.

This comprehensive plan is not a local law. The recommendations made in this comprehensive plan will not take effect until the Town and Village boards decide to do so. This comprehensive plan will be implemented through local laws and programs. Each time a local law is amended or developed, public hearing(s), review by the county planning board, and an environmental review will be necessary.

Seneca Falls should use the plan to prioritize the strategies so that they can direct implementation efforts and review progress on an annual basis. The whole plan should be reviewed and updated by the Town and Village Boards, or a special “Ad-Hoc” committee every five years.



**Visioning Workshop with senior high students.**

## SWOT Analysis to Identify Issues

A valuable exercise in the comprehensive planning process is the identification of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) facing the community. Strengths are those available and valuable assets that should be preserved or improved on. Weaknesses are drawbacks or short-term challenges that need to be addressed so that they do not cause long-term problems to the viability of either the quality of life or the economy of the area. Opportunities are the long-range positive trends affecting the community as well as the positive paths that we might follow. Threats are long-term weaknesses that can undermine attempts to meeting the goals established by Seneca Falls.

The SWOT analysis was developed from data derived from public opinion (gathered at public meetings, interviews and through a residential survey) as well as interpretation of other inventory and profile information about Seneca Falls. This analysis is the basis for the development of goals and future strategies, and will be used to help identify opportunities that offer Seneca Falls a set of realistic, tangible, and affordable actions for the community to pursue.

### ***Strengths:***

- Attractive downtown/Main Street
- Many tourist draws and historic places
- Wineries
- Rich cultural history, birthplace of women's rights movement
- High quality of life, a good place to raise a family
- Proximity to amenities such as Cayuga Lake, Canal, heritage and cultural sites, Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, etc.
- Community Center Building
- Town parks and ball fields
- New library
- Museums
- Canal and Lakes
- Small town atmosphere
- Skill and diversity of residents
- Beautiful area/scenery
- National and State Parks, Wildlife refuge and the New York State

## Heritage Area

- New York Chiropractic college
- Comprehensive planning strategy in place for the region by the Finger Lakes Regional Planning Commission
- Quality schools are not near capacity
- Infrastructure (water & sewer) in good shape with room to expand
- Emphasis on the Village as the center of the community
- Good fire and police protection service



## ***Weaknesses:***

- Lack of job opportunities
  - Disconnected economically from the rest of the region
- Low attendance rates at existing tourist attractions
- Private and public properties need maintenance and improvements
- Little attention to landscaping and design along major transportation routes, and entrances to the Town and Village
- Some neighborhoods degrading
- Low levels of shopping and entertainment activity downtown during evenings and weekends
- Not enough parking downtown
- Downtown retail hours do not address the needs of residents or visitors seeking service on weekends and week nights.
- Overlapping governments
- Not enough effective government communication with the public
- Inability of Town to share landfill generated revenues directly with Village



- High taxes in the Village of Seneca Falls
- Prominence of landfill
- Few community events and programs
- Illegal activity downtown
- Little multi-residential housing or senior housing
- Seneca Falls Historical Society museum lacks space for displays, events, and storage, and has no handicapped access
- Dwindling fire and emergency volunteers
- No 24 hour on-duty ambulance service
- Distant health care access
- Town parks are at capacity
- Lack of basic services for visitors such as public rest rooms
- Not enough after school and daycare programs
- Zoning and building code enforcement
- Perception that there is little flexibility in historic district
- Lack of lodging rooms for tourists

***Opportunities:***

- Take advantage of downtown historic area
- Location is good for becoming a gateway to the region
- Improvements to canal and lake boating facilities
- Take advantage of National reputation as the birthplace of the women's rights movement
- Room for growth
- Industrial parks
- Room to add uses that are lacking in surrounding town's and villages, such as movie theater, restaurants
- Coordinate activities and programs among the many recreational and historic resources in the area
- Increasing attendance rates at the new library
- Increasing attendance rates at the Seneca Falls Historical Society

- More adult and senior activities at the Community Center
- Revitalization of Sackett business district
- Take advantage of New York Chiropractic College
- Revitalization of the former Trinity Episcopal Church at the Wescott Rule site
- Adaptive reuse of the Knitting mill along the canal
- Development of multi-residential housing
- Strengthening connections to the past (rail and canal roles in town's growth)
- Improvements to outdoor recreation programs
- Town and Village continue to work on joint ventures
- Town continue to invest in projects within the Village
- Innovative future uses for the Seneca Meadows landfill
- The Town can use its significant and stable source of revenue to fund projects
- Local needs can complement tourist needs in order to grow the local economy
- Strong support for improving small town atmosphere, scenic views, and open space
- Residents are open to consolidating services to save costs

***Threats:***

- Inability to diversify our economy
- Continuing change over to a global economy
- Loss of larger employers, such as Goulds Pumps
- The Native American Indian Issue
- Apathy of residents towards possible improvements
- Fear of pollution from landfill
- Increasing congestion problem when new tourist traffic is added to existing truck traffic
- Surrounding municipalities not participating in regional plan for growth

- Expense to maintain expanded water and sewer infrastructure
- Youth and young adults continue to leave the area
- Lack of consensus about benefits of growth among town/village residents and officials
- Development encroachment onto farmland
- Lack of space at the Seneca Falls Historical Society museum
- The seasonal lull that all businesses face
- Increasing housing costs
- Aging population
- Loss of small town feel
- Continuing illegal drug activity, and the negative perceptions that accompany it
- Increasing energy costs

## Vision Statement

### *Overall Theme:*

In 2015, the Town and Village of Seneca Falls is a thriving community where citizens collaborate with responsive community leaders to create an exceptional quality of life. Seneca Falls is a leader in economic diversification, education, historic preservation, the arts, civic life, and environmental quality. Other communities use our blueprint for success as a model for their own planning efforts.

Our strong business climate provides meaningful employment opportunities and offers retail, service, and high tech options for both residents and visitors. Our business-friendly policies and programs are coupled with high environmental and civic standards. The downtown business district, along with the canal, lakefront and wine trail, is a focal point for tourism and small business development.

Seneca Falls celebrates and builds on its close proximity to Rochester, Ithaca and Syracuse, its community character and its unique historical role in women's rights, industry, and transportation as it grows and develops. Our neighborhoods are safe, offer a mix of housing opportunities that serve all income levels, and have well-maintained pedestrian and traffic networks. Seneca Falls' diverse population supports a culturally rich environment that promotes quality educational and recreational opportunities. Our natural environment is enjoyed and nurtured by current and future generations.

# Topic Visions, Goals and Strategies

## *Topic: Economic Security*

**Economic Security Vision:** We understand that quality of life is *the* critical factor in attracting, retaining and growing businesses. Seneca Falls aggressively markets this aspect of itself to new residents, visitors and businesses. Our economy is diverse and includes industrial and small business development, tourism, and neighborhood-oriented local businesses.

Seneca Falls is a primary regional tourist destination and a gateway to the Finger Lakes Region and to Seneca County. Tourism in Seneca Falls has grown with increased emphasis on marketing cultural and recreational venues related to the canal and lake, the Women’s Rights National Historical Park and the National Women’s Hall of Fame, wine country, rural driving, and outdoor recreation. We are one of 18 heritage areas in



New York State. Seneca Falls’ economic development programs build on the strong educational resources and technology opportunities offered in Central New York.

Downtown serves as the retail, cultural and financial center while agricultural entrepreneurs take advantage of the active farmlands found outside the village. The Town and Village

support these economic development activities by providing economic development staff and support, improved technology and public service infrastructure for businesses and residences, enhanced downtown buildings and facades, and through enactment of business-friendly environment policies and procedures. Businesses participate in and invest in our education system, our health and environmental programs, and our cultural programs.

### **Goal 1: Follow the Plan and Organize Accordingly**

Strategy 1.1. Consistently follow and, as needed update, a comprehensive economic development strategy focused on diversifying, promoting, retaining, and expanding business in

Seneca Falls. Through the plan, associated actions and attitudes, be a business-friendly community and support an organizational strategy that pushes forward the community's objectives.

Strategy 1.2. Two staff equivalents are needed to work on economic development for the community. The two should work cooperatively, on downtown, tourism, and business enhancement, recruitment and business retention. Provide administrative support to these people. These positions will be crucial to the success of Seneca Falls' economic future. The community has reached a point where it has laid much of the groundwork for economic success, but it needs people out there selling and promoting the community on a daily basis.

Seneca Falls needs a person working daily to promote the community to potential new businesses and ensuring that the public sector is doing its job in supporting existing local businesses. As noted below, the community should become an active partner in the Rochester and Syracuse regional economic development initiatives as well as emphasize economic development opportunities and initiatives with Waterloo, Auburn, Geneva, Ithaca, and Watkins Glen; only a person who can attend meetings and focus on follow-up can accomplish this. Occasional attendance by elected officials will be important, but does not substitute for a professional economic development staffer who can consistently represent Seneca Falls. This person should work closely with the County Industrial Development Agency, but it should not be assumed that the County office can somehow perform the duties of this person. Their focus is on County level initiatives and given recent funding reductions, they are running a very lean operation. If Seneca Falls wishes to see results for itself on its specific projects, it must invest in staff-time to push those projects forward.

Tourism and main street revitalization will also need a person to advance local initiatives. These initiatives should include more festivals, events, regular downtown promotions and entertainment, more services for tourists, cooperative arrangements with other destinations and a range of other activities. All of these activities will require more than part-time volunteers; there needs to be a full-time person in charge of advancing these sectors of the economy.

Please note that this recommendation in no way criticizes the

Seneca County Tourism office. That office is doing a very effective job for its client—the County, of which Seneca Falls is a part. But, it is not the job of that office to prepare or push forward detailed community level tourism events and promotions or to see through business attraction and retention. The County office will be a very significant and important partner for Seneca Falls local tourism office, but it should not be seen as somehow being responsible for Seneca Falls' local projects.

Strategy 1.3. Create a Local Economic Development Program. It is critical for the public sector to pursue a five to ten year program to seed more tourism services and activities in the downtown, and to diversify other sectors of the economy. While the County economic development and tourism offices offer a foundation of staffing and support, their duties lie with the County as a whole. Seneca Falls needs an organizational and legal structure that will allow its local economic development staff to be most effective.

Therefore, it is recommended that the community create a local economic development organization. (One example of such an organization may be a local economic development program). There is great interest in the community related to economic development and the economic development program should be open and responsive to the public. This not-for-profit entity can be managed by a board of directors comprised of representatives from the Village and the Town, as well as the private sector. Its funding can come from Village and Town support, as well as private sector support. Foundations and grants might also be funding sources, but only to a limited degree since the time required to pursue grants can significantly dilute the time spent on real economic development activities. Such a structure would allow for the purchase and sale of land and buildings, private financing and loans, hiring and firing staff and in generally moving faster than the public sector can move.

Priority actions for the local economic development program are the following:

- A. hire staff
- B. build a spec building at the Deer Run Business Park
- C. downtown promotion
- D. business recruitment

E. tourism support services

F. industrial retention and attraction



**Goal 2: Enhance the local tourism economy.** Seneca Falls aggressively takes advantage of its heritage, the lake and canal, and its transportation access to promote year-round tourism.

#### Strategy 2.1 Tourism Involvement in the Local Economic Development Program.

There are currently insufficient visitors to Seneca Falls to justify the private sector's provision of needed goods and services to visitors. The result is a tourism sector that is growing gradually, but also losing businesses due to low visitation levels and also not providing critical services that should support further tourism growth (e.g., canal boater services, bicycle rentals, boat tours, kayak rentals, wine related experiences, etc.).

It is recommended that Seneca Falls pursue a variety of actions to increase visitation and to provide more visitor services. The intent should be to seed these services by the public sector and then transfer them to the private sector once the market is sufficiently strong. It is suggested that a concessionaire model be used—similar to the National Parks and some state parks.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Footnote: A concessionaire model refers to the common practice in National Parks and other parks of renting or leasing space to private companies to operate within the Park.



It is recommended that this tourism development enterprise provide the following services:

- A. Provide showers, bathrooms, laundry facilities, and other needed harbor services for lake and canal boaters.
- B. Explore extended stay options for lake and canal boaters. Currently docking is limited to 48 hours. Allowing extended stays will allow for more spending and more activities by boaters. Provisions should be made to recoup costs associated with such stays (e.g., water, electricity, wastewater, etc.)
- C. Offer power boat rentals as well as kayak rentals.
- D. Offer boat tours along the lake and canal.
- E. Hire a Harbor Master to oversee the above activities and supervise docking.
- F. Offer bicycle rentals.
- G. Support some kind of children-oriented park or amusement area that can entertain little kids for a few hours. Examples of activities might include miniature golf, creative water spouters and fountains, a maze, bumper boats, and a state-of-the-art playground.
- H. Operate a retail store that offers 'The Best of Seneca Falls'. This would include wine and related products, farm products, goods made in the County and other relevant goods that mesh with but do not compete with existing Seneca Falls stores.
- I. Encourage the development of a wine-oriented market, display, etc. in downtown Seneca Falls.
- J. Provide daily van/small bus service to the wineries and other key destinations that lake and canal boaters or other downtown visitors might want to see. This service could also take visitors to sites within the downtown. In addition to using existing bus services, this service should

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Lodging, food, transportation and other services are often provided in this manner. Contracts run from one to several years.

be supported by both County transportation funding and destination (e.g., winery) funding. In other words, all attractions that benefit from the tours should pay a fee-per-head for these delivered customers.

Revenues from this operation should help support staff, overhead, insurance and other operating costs. It is not anticipated that these revenues will cover 100% of the costs initially. Based on the experience of other areas, it is more likely that local economic development program revenues may cover initially no more than 10% of the cost and will then rise perhaps up to 50-75% of costs or higher. This will all be dependent on entrepreneurial energy that is put into the enterprise and the funding and energy placed on general tourism promotion. Over a period of 5 years, the objective should be to raise the profitability of the operation to a point that private concessionaires can be found to operate aspects of the operation.

This enterprise should also be looked at as an opportunity to employ local youth and train them in the hospitality industry and give them business experience. Explore hospitality training with the local BOCES. This aspect of the program might open doors to education and training funding. This is a great example of where the community should take advantage of the training and labor expertise lying within the Seneca-Cayuga ARC organization.

Strategy 2.2. Market Seneca Falls. Allocate sufficient funds annually to market Seneca Falls to visitors through print media, signage, television, etc. Seneca Falls faces a situation typical for smaller communities in that visitation has grown gradually over the years based on County promotion and the promotion of the local destinations, but that growth has plateau-ed. Now visitation will only grow significantly if the community invests in more assertive promotion and marketing on its own-- if it moves to the next level of professionalism and commitment to tourism. There are several potential directions the community should pursue:

- A. An important component of this marketing should be gaining more exposure through the travel media. This translates into bringing more travel journalists to the area. Pursue a media marketing program for Seneca Falls. This will not only promote tourism but also promote the community to people who might move themselves or their businesses to the area. Such a program can have widely

different costs depending on the level of activity.

- B. Buy billboard space along the Thruway. Such advertising will promote the community to the regional market very effectively. Costs for Thruway billboards range from \$400 to \$1000 monthly depending on location. Work with an advertising firm to identify sign promotion opportunities at strategic locations within a radius of 50 to 100 miles from Seneca Falls. At the minimum signage should be placed at key intersections in the following areas: Syracuse, Rochester, Ithaca, and all relevant Thruway intersections. Further, additional banners and signage for light posts should be developed.
- C. Work with County tourism officials and local tourism businesses to define a marketing tag for Seneca Falls.
- D. Work closely with the County and State tourism offices to maximize the local impacts from county and the I Love New York promotion campaigns. Support these programs since any County promotion will ultimately benefit the Town and Village as well.
- E. Maximize regional marketing and public/private options efforts through such mechanisms as cooperative advertising buying.
- F. Annually track the success of all marketing efforts.

Strategy 2.3. Improve the visibility of the downtown Heritage Area Visitor Center. Currently, the street level prominence of the Heritage Area Visitor Center on Fall Street is insufficient to draw many visitors. There needs to be a stronger sign and awning and better window displays to draw in visitors. As noted in other recommendations, overall direction and information signage in the downtown should be improved and those actions will also help the visitors center. The Visitor Center and its contents are adequate, but more effort needs to be made to make visitors aware of the Visitor Center. In addition, as the Visitor's Center ages, the Town and Village should work cooperatively to support funding for refurbishing and keeping the center current.

Strategy 2.4. Support a Finger Lakes Wine Center and Winery in the downtown and perhaps at Exit 41. Seneca Falls lies within the wine

country of the Finger Lakes, perhaps the second most well-known wine region in the United States, yet there is no information, activity or retail products in the downtown related to this industry. Encourage the creation of a Wine Interpretive and Education Center in downtown Seneca Falls. Integrate a wine making operation within the Center. Have tastings, sell wine, give classes, promote the vineyards of the region, give tours. Be a front office for the Seneca and Cayuga Lakes vineyards.

Strategy 2.5. Work with and Support the Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway. Seneca Falls lies along this state scenic byway. This road is exceptionally beautiful and should draw substantial visitors each year. The Town and Village should work together to ensure that signing is well-done, byway kiosks provide information about the area's resources and that the area supports byway marketing efforts.

The Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway surrounds Cayuga Lake. The route, themed around the Lake, features scenic views of the Lake and its shores, rural and woodland landscapes and numerous recreational, natural, tourist and cultural attractions. The Byway offers travelers an opportunity to observe the glacial-formed Cayuga Lake, visit local wineries and farms, explore the region's villages and hamlets and utilize Cayuga Lake's extensive recreational resources. A corridor management plan has been developed for the Byway and it seeks to capitalize on the unique nature of the route to generate sustainable economic growth along the corridor. The Plan advocates:

- a) The creation of visitors centers to provide Scenic Byway information material;
- b) The development of interpretive centers and information kiosks to tell the story of the lake's geology, history, industry and culture;
- c) The use of themed signage to link the Lake's amenities together as a system;
- d) The development of a regional marketing campaign that looks beyond each County as a single destination to themed tours along the Lake;
- e) Monitoring changes in tourism based activity to gauge the impact of the Byway activity on the local economy; and
- f) The shared management of the Scenic Byway route through the utilization of a not-for-profit organization. For full information on the Scenic Byway and the Corridor Management Plan established for it, see the Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway Nomination Document available at the Village and Town offices.

Strategy 2.6. Join the Cayuga Wine Trail organization.

Related to the above recommendation, join the Cayuga Wine Trail organization and marketing effort. Currently, the downtown has

nothing that would qualify it for membership, but the community should quickly put together a project that will allow it to participate, such as a winery downtown. If the downtown can become part of the Cayuga Lake Scenic Byway, then it could apply for 80%-20% funding for a visitors center from the America's Byways program. The scenic byway must become a national byway in order to qualify for these funds.

Strategy 2.7. Support Empire Farm Days and expand on that theme. Empire Farm Days is a hugely successful tourism event that occurs just south of Seneca Falls each summer. When it ends, there are no other events that echo or reinforce this event. Support the major annual event and then work with local farmers and related businesses to develop a series of two or three associated events that could occur during other seasons and which would bring in people. Use Empire Farm Days as a foundation event upon which to build other farming-related events and festivals such as the Seneca Falls Spring Planting Bluegrass Festival or a major harvest festival in the fall.

Strategy 2.8. Work with Waterloo and Geneva to create a 'Head of the Lakes' or 'Three Sisters' regional initiative to market these communities as a portal to the Finger Lakes. These communities have much in common as access portals to the Finger Lakes. They share Thruway exits. Together, they should be the 'Three Sisters of the Finger Lakes' or project some other appropriate marketing image. Together, they encourage the majority of the region's visitors to enter the Finger Lakes through their downtowns, stay in their downtowns, learn about the region from their facilities and generally use these towns as base-camps from which to explore the region.

Strategy 2.9. Work to Create Local Marinas and a Resort. Given Seneca Falls proximity to water, the area should establish more water recreation options. Consider a marina on Van Cleef Lake at the end of Fall Street or along Bove Drive. Such a facility is needed, is close to the village and will serve both residents and visitors. In addition, Cayuga Lake, also offers an exceptional opportunity to create a full-scale marina. In order to make it more appealing and competitive, consideration should be given to integrating a lodge and resort spa into the project. The presence of the New York Chiropractic College so close to the lake offers an unusual opportunity for that organization to participate and give the spa a distinctive character and flavor. The exact location of the marina and resort will require study by the community, land owners and developers, but the

proximity of the lake to Rochester, Syracuse, the wineries and to Seneca Falls make the project a potential winner. With a marina would come more boats, more visitors, more upscale lodging and more year-round visitation.

Strategy 2.10. Regional tourism signage system. Develop a regional tourism signage system to provide visitors with easy and understandable access to tourism-related destinations. Follow the recommendations made in the regional tourism signage study produced by the Finger Lakes Regional Planning Commission.

Strategy 2. 11. Create and promote distinct cycling routes around the Village, Town and nearby County areas. The nearby area and the Village offer good opportunities for several distinct routes including a birding route, a farm landscape route and a lakeview route. This is a simple tourism 'product' to create and promote.

Strategy 2.12. Explore creating one or more business improvement districts. A Business Improvement District (BID) is publicly sanctioned, yet privately directed organization that supplements public services to improve shared, geographically defined, outdoor public spaces. Moreover, such organizations subscribe to a self-help doctrine, whereby a compulsory self-taxing mechanism generates multi-year revenue. In Seneca Falls, use of multi-jurisdictional BID's should be explored, such as a cooperative program with Waterloo.

### **The BID Concept**

The BID concept borrows elements from the special purpose district, the special assessment district, and the special zoning district. BIDs tend to be innovative service providers. Their programs fit into three general categories: clean, safe, and attractive, yet BIDs create unique programs to respond directly to local needs. Under the rubric of "clean," BIDs offer sidewalk cleaning, graffiti removal, and landscape maintenance services. To promote safety, BIDs develop and support such crime prevention programs as security patrols, police mini-stations, and safety seminars. Most also perform hospitality-related functions such as assisting visitors with directions. In addition, some BIDs coordinate crime prevention strategies with local police departments. BIDs take on a number of projects and services to make commercial areas more attractive to visitors and residents. These range from executing marketing campaigns to implementing comprehensive

streetscape improvement programs. Some BIDs establish an identity that they use to promote the commercial area.

**Goal 3: Strengthen and diversify Seneca Fall's industrial base**

Strengthen Seneca Falls' industrial base. Rehabilitation of existing commercial and industrial facilities is promoted. Commercial and industrial development provides a diversity of economic and job opportunities in an attractive, safe, and healthy environment manner consistent with the character of Seneca Falls.

Strategy 3.1. Develop a spec building at the Deer Run Industrial Park. The Deer Run Industrial Park has everything it needs to succeed, but an appearance of success. The Town and Village should support the construction of a building for speculation on the site to bring the park to life. Doing this project through a local economic development program would allow it to be done through a combination of traditional and public-funding financing. Further, utilizing this location for commercial and industrial development would not only benefit the Seneca Falls School District, but would allow an efficient and quicker development process (See box below). This location has already been identified, zoned, and developed to be useable for a variety of commercial and industrial uses. To enhance commercial and industrial use of this site, it is recommended that a GEIS (Generic Environmental Impact Statement) be written for this site to pre-analyze environmental issues (see page 23 and 24).

**Zoning for this location (M-1 in the Village) says that** "Any manufacturing, assembly or other industrial or research operation meeting the requirements of the performance standards of this chapter; Farms, farm uses and customary farm occupations; Warehouses for enclosed storage of goods and materials, distribution plants, wholesale businesses" are permitted principal uses. Accessory uses are simply described as "Signs; Customary accessory uses incidental to a permitted use." Special uses are listed as "Large-scale industrial park development; Junkyards; Automobile service and repair stations." It does note that "Uses incompatible with industry are not to be permitted."

Strategy 3.2. Work with the New York Chiropractic College and others

on the potential for an urgent care facility on their campus. Seneca Falls could use a stronger local urgent care medical facility. Work with the partners in the medical community, especially the chiropractic college located right in the community to envision a way to create such a facility. The campus might have suitable space; the facility might offer useful educational experiences for the NYCC's students.

Strategy 3.3. Sponsor a steady industrial and commercial retention program. There is a need for significant, cooperative retention efforts by the County, State, Town, and Village to retain existing commercial and industrial uses in Seneca Falls, especially related to Gould's Pumps. Using staff defined above, and working with existing agencies, the economic development program in Seneca Falls should assess existing businesses needs. Staff should development ongoing methods to communicate with these businesses. These could include meetings at least once a year. In addition, hold a Business Development Forum once a year to bring together local business leaders and think about community-wide economic development efforts.

Through these and other efforts, maintain an active presence in all local business groups, listen to their ideas and needs, and develop strategic tools to address those needs.

Strategy 3.4. Participate in Industrial/Business Recruitment.

Economic development staff should participate in all regional business recruitment efforts (e.g., represent the area at trade shows, etc.) The County IDA already attends many such events and therefore the Seneca Falls staff can work with them to make the local presence extend farther.

Allocate \$25,000 to promote the community to businesses. Work with County IDA to identify the most cost effective ways to support county efforts and to promote Seneca Falls. Meet with state economic development staff regularly to convey the community's efforts and willingness to work with new businesses. Listen for trends and feedback that these people can offer. Be a 'go-to' community for the state officials. That is, be the type of place that has its procedures, attitudes and staff so well organized, that a state economic development representative can confidently recommend Seneca Falls to any potential new business and know well that Seneca Falls will handle the lead appropriately,



professionally and in a way that is a model for other communities.

Should there be a future need for increased industrial capacity, the Town could consider the following options to fine-tune the zoning designation and establish additional light and heavy industrial zones and opportunities. See Part I for an analysis of industrial capacity in Seneca Falls.

**Option 1:** Two zoning districts exist in the Town east of the Village: one at Bayard Street Extension, and the other on Route 20, south of Hyatt Street. Expand both of these zoning districts to include additional land but with standards or setbacks to protect water quality and erosion/protections from the steep slopes, regulated wetlands, and streams that run through there. (This could be left as text or mapped.) There are floodplain, steep slope and wetland issues in the middle of the Route 20 M1 area, but land surrounding it that could be expanded to all the way to the railroad tracks.

**Option 2:** Amend Town zoning to include a Planned Industrial Development (PID). Town zoning already has a PUD (for planned unit development for mixed commercial/residential development). The PID is a similar process and would treat industrial development as a floating zone. It allows large lots to be developed in a more flexible manner than allowed by the underlying zoning. The PID could require developers to compensate for any impacts of their projects by setting aside open space, providing its own infrastructure, or offering other community facilities and services. The PID would allow utilization of innovative planning and design concepts and would still have the scrutiny of the Town Board and site plan review. The disadvantage is that since it is not mapped until a project is proposed, it does create some uncertainty. It can be very effective however at permitting large industrial facilities and gives the developer more freedom to find a site that will work and the town to pre-set certain standards it expects.

**Option 3:** Designated one or more new M1 zones and map it. This would take some analysis of environmental conditions and coordination with roads/railroads to determine but could be done. I would recommend that the existing M1 areas be expanded before new areas are set however. If you want to do this, I would look at all lands in the Seneca Falls School District that has minimal environmental limitations, along with access to the Rail road and major roads. We could do this analysis via the GIS to help identify possible locations.

Light Industry versus Heavy Industry: Light industry is usually less capital intensive than heavy industry, and is more consumer-oriented than business-oriented (i.e., most of light industry products are produced for end users rather than as semi products for use by other industries). Light industry usually has less environmental impact than heavy industry and is more tolerated in residential areas. Some economic definitions state that it is a "manufacturing activity that use moderate amounts of partially processed materials to produce items of relatively high value per unit weight". Heavy industry usually refers to manufacturing activities engaged in the conversion of large volumes of raw materials and partially processed materials into products of higher value; hallmarks of this form of industry are considerable capital investment in large machinery, heavy energy consumption, and final products of relatively low value per unit weight.

Strategy 3.5. Become a Model Community for Responsible Environmental Development.

- A. The Town and Village of Seneca Falls should critically evaluate, mitigate, or discourage new development that would be detrimental to the environment and counter to the goals established in this plan.
- B. Establish local Type I lists under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) in both the Town and Village. This list includes locally identified uses that are felt to have potential significant impacts and will help clarify and ensure that comprehensive environmental reviews are conducted on uses that might negatively impact the community.
- C. In order to promote communication between adjacent municipalities and to have the opportunity to evaluate proposals elsewhere that might impact Seneca Falls, request that the Town and Village be granted the "Interested Agency" status for SEQRA procedures. The Town and Village will not have a say in the ultimate decision made by another community, but "Interested

Agency” status will allow you to comment during SEQR proceedings in a more formal manner.

- D. Consider developing a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS). A GEIS is a type of environmental impact statement (EIS) that is more general than a site-specific EIS and typically is used to consider broad-based actions or related groups of actions that the community may undertake. A GEIS can examine the environmental effects of certain types of development that may take place such as industrial or large scale growth. In this manner, Seneca Falls can “pre-evaluate” the cumulative impacts, secondary effects, and can set forth conditions or criteria under which future development can be undertaken. This is beneficial because a GEIS may save future work by reducing the need for individual EIS’s and can assist the Planning Board when reviewing a project proposal.
- E. Consider establishing a joint Town/Village Conservation Advisory Council (CAC). This advisory group is made up of volunteers appointed by the boards and is generally assigned the role of offering opinions and assisting in a cooperative and positive manner, the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Appeals during the environmental review processes. Many communities that have CAC’s use them as the “environmental eyes and ears” for the planning board.
- F. The acceptance of the Seneca Meadows landfill was controversial for the community and in some respects it continues to be controversial. It is a large facility that generates negative traffic, sound, odor and image impacts. It has also benefited both the Town and Village by generating large fees for the Town (which has allowed the Village to benefit by having no town tax levies), has provided local jobs, is generating significant amounts of methane and energy which is supporting a very competitive industrial park and it is making steps toward being less visible and intrusive. Further, the landfill has been community oriented and has supported such facilities as the library.

Seneca Falls should use the landfill and its emerging alternative energy and recycling activities as a foundation

for being a cutting edge environmentally responsible and innovative community. Energy production, recycling, reuse of materials, energy and material reuse and looping – all of these concepts should be promoted and encouraged. In this way, any business that moves to the area immediately is able to use this community image to enhance its own image. In addition, *like attracts like*, or in other words, beginning to aggregate a community of industries and related operations will only draw more of those businesses in the future.

The Seneca Meadows landfill will continue to have both supporters and opponents, but for at least the next ten to fifteen years, the landfill will continue to operate in the community. During that period, the community has the choice to actively use the landfill's strengths to diversify the economy. No matter what longer term approach Seneca Falls takes with the landfill, it is the position of this comprehensive plan that in the short run, the community should gain as many economic benefits from the facility as possible.

- G. Another component of the environmental community concept could be the promotion of zero energy homes, the Energy Star compliance program, and other alternative energy programs. A Zero Energy Home combines state of the art, energy-efficient construction and appliances with commercially available renewable energy systems such as solar water heating and electricity. This combination can result in zero energy consumption from the utility company. This concept could be implemented both in terms of incentives for new homes built or existing buildings retrofitted in Seneca Falls subdivisions and in terms of seeking to recruit companies that build zero-energy homes. The spin-offs associated with this concept are many and include: solar panels, super insulation, wind power and many other emerging technologies around this topic. Initiatives at regional universities like Syracuse and Cornell are creating these technologies; Seneca Falls should work to transfer those ideas to its local economies. Utilize information from the United States Department of Energy, National Renewable Energy Laboratory and their northeast team member Steven Winter Associates in Norwalk, Connecticut (<http://www.swinter.com/>) for assistance. Zoning and other land use regulations should not place barriers for building these types of structures.

### Strategy 3.6. Enhance Regional Presence.

Become active members in Syracuse's, Binghamton, and Rochester's regional economic development efforts. These major economic development initiatives will produce more jobs and businesses. There will be a tendency for those new businesses to go to the urban and suburban communities that participate the most, who get the leads on incoming businesses, who provide the best facilities. Typically, the outlying rural communities will benefit last, but that is usually because they participate the least. Seneca Falls should be an assertive small town leader in these regional initiatives. Seek to draw projects related to these initiatives to the community. Offer financial resources to become active players in these regional efforts. Seneca Falls should be a model regional player. Define what you can bring to the table; don't just look for the scraps from the table.

Strategy 3.7. Pursue the Development of a Thermal Depolymerization Conversion Plant at the Landfill. These new technology facilities take any organic substance and convert it to oil, gas and oil/gas byproducts. This energy is clean and ready for use. The materials at the landfill along with organic waste (i.e., residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural) from the region can result in a virtually infinite supply of energy flowing from the landfill site and the region. Currently, the Department of Energy is searching for sites to build these test facilities. Facilities are under construction in the west and midwest. Seneca Falls should explore these and consider hosting the first Northeastern Test Site.

To learn more about thermal depolymerization go to: [http://forums.biodieselnow.com/topic.asp?TOPIC\\_ID=829](http://forums.biodieselnow.com/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=829) and <http://www.thermaldepolymerization.org/>.

The technology is new, it is undergoing testing, but it might promise an important new source of both recycling and energy production. These are two themes that Seneca Falls might incorporate into all of its future economic development marketing.

This facility could also be a tourism attraction and deliberate efforts should be made in the design of the facility to incorporate an interpretive and educational element.

Strategy 3.8. Integrate the Airport into Economic Development Planning. Take advantage of the Depot runway which is the longest east of the Mississippi. Plan for the future increased use of the Finger Lakes Regional Airport by the next generation of small commuter jets. These new jets will make it much more affordable (e.g., cost savings over current jets may exceed 80%) for businesses to offer service from small airports to larger regional airports and hubs. Businesses will have the option of locating in more remote locations and still having air service.

Prepare an airport expansion study. This should include evaluation of any FAA requirements and should result in zoning and programming that meshes county airport plans with local zoning and programs.

The critical action for the Town of Seneca Falls is to zone land near the airport to office and light industrial use so that businesses can locate near the airport. In addition, plans should be made to extend sewer and water service south along Highway 414 to the zoned land.

Strategy 3.9. Utilize all existing industrial sites. The Town and Village should explore with State and Federal government agencies the various legal and funding options to clean up and utilize all former industrial sites.

#### **Goal 4: Strengthen the downtown**

Downtown plays a central role in meeting the economic, cultural, and recreational goals of Seneca Falls, and as such, it must be a critical component in future economic development strategies.

Strategy 4.1. Initiate a Main Street Program. Form a Main Street program with support from the National Trust's Main Street Program. Use their resources to develop a multi-faceted approach to downtown revitalization. This effort will formalize the downtown program and give downtown merchants access to other areas that have revitalized themselves. There is a wealth of information out there on how to bring back downtowns to life and Seneca Falls has so many of the components already in place. What is missing is staff support, a cohesive, vital program to make it happen and public funds to energize the area and attract more merchants and more

visitors.

### **Overall Economic Revitalization Philosophies for A Main Street Program**

From the National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street Program:

#### 1. Clear direction is vital.

Establishing a direction for the economic growth of Main Street is central to the revitalization process. The vision statement and goals included in this Comprehensive Plan should be used to define this direction. In order to be economically successful, Seneca Falls should work towards developing a diversified economy including retail, service and tourist industries. However, in the shorter term, Seneca Falls must capitalize on its greatest assets...its natural, cultural and historical features.

#### 2. The process must be multi-faceted, concern the entire Village and Town, and follow a long-term plan.

A strong commitment on the part of all players including Town and Village leaders, businesses, and residents will be needed in order to be successful. The process must be multi-faceted: It must be concerned with not only specific commercial activities taking place but should also seek to unite the economic activities taking place at different locations. All activities must work together through an overall plan to meet the needs of all segments of the community.

Experiences of other communities throughout the United States have shown that if such a long term strategy is not followed, it is likely that the economic benefits seen during the early revitalization attempts will be only temporary. Economic restructuring ultimately means establishing a comprehensive strategy to bring about positive economic change by attracting financial investment. The recommended economic strategy for Seneca Falls should apply the following major tenets:

- ★ Insist on quality;
- ★ Be a public-private partnership;
- ★ Focus on existing assets;
- ★ Encourage emotional investment in the community;
- ★ Change people's attitudes by demonstrating that positive change is taking place; and
- ★ Be incremental in nature and implementation oriented.

Seneca Falls should work towards strengthening their existing economic base first, and then gradually expand it. Economic recovery will be successful only if both the public and private sectors are involved. It is recommended that as a first step, a formal revitalization program and organization to oversee the effort should be initiated. A successful model for such an activity should be the National Trust's Main Street Center Program. The Main Street Approach advocated by this group, has been successfully used in hundreds of small towns and villages across the country. The Main Street Approach is based on four points:

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Design                 | (improving the areas' image by enhancing its physical appearance)   |
| Organization           | (building consensus and cooperation among the groups that play roles in the economy of the area)                |
| Promotion              | (marketing the areas' unique characteristics to shoppers, investors, new businesses, tourists, and others), and |
| Economic Restructuring | (strengthening the existing economic base while diversifying it).   |

Many of the points discussed below detail this approach. The Village must ensure that all parties involved in the economic revitalization effort make a minimum of a three-year commitment to the process. This time frame is necessary to have the effort become self-sufficient and firmly rooted. Past success from the Main Street Approach has shown that all four points outlined above must be worked on.

To see how other community leaders have used the Main Street Approach see "*Main Street Success Stories*" published by National Main Street Center, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1997. The web site of the National Main Street Program is: [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org)

Strategy 4.2. Support live entertainment in the downtown. Allocate annual funding in Town and Village funding to support festivals, events, entertainment in the downtown. Without these funds, the downtown will limp along. The downtown needs to re-create itself as one of the most fun, lively downtowns in the Finger Lakes Region. People from Syracuse and Rochester should think about Seneca Falls throughout the year as a fun place to go for an evening or for a weekend. The public funds should be matched against private funds to leverage their impact, but this is a clear case where public dollars will be needed to seed future private



investment interest.

Strategy 4.3. Ensure inclusion of the Sackett Business District on the south side of the canal in the Main Street program. As a part of a Seneca Falls Main Street Program, Canal Street and the surrounding neighborhood in the Sackett Business District should be included. Whether the goal is the creation of a 'Little Italy' or some other theme that builds in the area's interesting past, this neighborhood should be a destination for residents and visitors to both sides of the canal. A good example of a model project would be to redevelop the Old Franklin Hotel as a new hotel or inn. Festivals and events should be sponsored, but public funds will be needed initially to make it happen.

Strategy 4.4. Redevelop the Gould Hotel on State Street as a historic inn or hotel. Downtown Seneca Falls needs more lodging. It needs a historic hotel. An analysis should be performed of the potential to redevelop the Gould Hotel and bring it back to life again.

Strategy 4.5. Create a wine promotion center in the downtown.

As noted in the tourism section, support the development of a wine education center in downtown Seneca Falls. This facility is a natural addition to the downtown and it will become a focal point for events, festivals and a must-see for all visitors to the greater Finger Lakes Wine Region.

Strategy 4.6. Encourage a greater diversity of businesses along Fall Street. The downtown programs should encourage a diversity of businesses to thrive along the Main Street. As more visitors come and as the place becomes more active and as merchants follow an agreed upon revenue generating schedule for openings and events, the diversity will follow.

Strategy 4.7. Keep prime commercial space available.

Ensure that local laws allow only commercial activities on the front street level in Fall Street buildings. In addition, this space should be used by retail and personal/business services businesses, rather than social services or professional offices. Desired types of activities include stores, restaurants, tourism related enterprises and direct consumer services such as copy shops. Rear or upper floor space could be developed for residential uses. In other words, do not lose potentially prime Fall Street commercial space to residential or office uses just because recent years have been lean for the area's retail market.

Strategy 4.8. Work to bring and keep a movie theatre to Downtown Seneca Falls.

A movie theatre would help the downtown immensely. It would bring weekend and evening traffic, it would bring summer rainy day traffic, it would bring energy to the downtown. The downtown will not likely succeed in attracting one of the chain theatres, but it might succeed in finding a successful small privately owned theatre in upstate New York that is looking to open at another location. Any support the community can provide in terms of affordable rents or easy parking access will help to ensure the success of this risky venture.

Strategy 4.9. Support the Redevelopment of the Knitting Mill Property.

Plans are underway for the Seneca Falls Knitting Mill property. Potential reuse options include the National Womens Hall of Fame, a visitor's center, offices, condos, retail space and other uses. The Village and Town should support this reuse and find ways to incorporate the activities of the local economic development program (see above) into this effort.

As redevelopment proceeds, the Village should place a priority on the development of the waterfront into a park-like setting similar to the north side of the canal at People's Park.

Strategy 4.10. Reinvigorate lake and canal-related festivals.

The lake and canal are wonderful amenities for the downtown. Find ways to hold events and festivals that make use of these resources. This physical feature is a competitive advantage that many other places do not have; make use of it!

Strategy 4.11. Pursue Parking Strategies to Handle Future Increased Visitation and Encourage Downtown Redevelopment.

Create additional parking in the Village. Parking in downtown Seneca Falls is a problem. At some point in the near future, the Village will lose a wonderful potential downtown business because parking is insufficient. At that point the community will realize that it must make some hard choices. Numerous studies performed over the last two decades have identified a number of different solutions to the absence of parking in the downtown. Each solution involves the demolition of structures in the downtown area, in order to create more street-level parking. A new parking inventory should be performed and then transportation engineers must be hired to evaluate past parking studies and make a

recommendation for what the Village should do next. It is likely that difficult decisions regarding building demolition will be required to provide significantly more parking in the downtown area. A parking program should also include adequate parking signage, marking, pedestrian crossings, and educational programs.

Create satellite parking strategies that can serve the downtown during high visitation periods. The van system described above in the tourism section for winery tours would also provide service from these satellite sites to the downtown.

Bus parking is also needed in the downtown. Seneca Falls has natural destinations for group tours, but it must provide better parking for the buses. In addition, tour routes and neighborhood parking guidelines must be considered.

Strategy 4.12. Set up an advisory committee with the National Park Service to work to strengthen ties between women's rights facilities and the community. Further, work with the women's rights destinations to design more activities and events oriented toward children.

The women's rights attractions are wonderful and important. They are not particularly interesting for more than one visit nor do they cater to children and families. Reassess the activities held by these important facilities and find ways to make them 'multiple-visit' destinations. Continue to work with them to encourage ways that children's activities can be better supported at women's rights facilities and in downtown in general.

Strategy 4.13. Market the community to artists. Encourage the development of low cost living and working space for artists.

As a part of the overall marketing of the community, consider promoting the town more strongly to artists. Encourage private entities to offer working and living space to artists. These people provide a natural boost of energy to any downtown.

Strategy 4.14. Explore creating a business incubator in downtown and coordinate with other regional incubators.

Central New York is home to more business incubators than anywhere else in the U.S. This might be a sign that there are too many incubators, but it might be a sign that the concept works and that Seneca Falls is missing out by not offering this type of

business support facility. In addition to creating a business incubator in downtown, other appropriate areas outside of the village may also be appropriate if the incubators are complimentary and coordinated.

**Business Incubator:** Is an economic development organization designed to accelerate the growth and success of entrepreneurial companies through an array of business support resources and services that could include physical space, capital, coaching, common services, and networking connections. A business incubator's main goal is to produce successful firms that will leave the program financially viable and freestanding. Recognized as a practical approach for creating new jobs through business formation and expansion, business incubators have become recognized worldwide as a viable tool for economic development.

**Goal 5: Support the revitalization of peripheral commercial areas outside the downtown**

Strategy 5.1. Work to Redevelop the Liberty Plaza Commercial Site as a Niche Retail Facility

Find local or state funds to make site and façade improvements to the Liberty Plaza commercial plaza site.

In addition, analyze the amount and location of available commercial land along the Route 20 corridor in order to understand the degree to which redevelopment of older plazas will occur or, conversely, will not occur due to high amounts of vacant commercially zoned land.

Strategy 5.2 Work to encourage appropriate commercial growth to the existing C-2 commercial zone along Route 20 to Route 318 (north of the Village of Seneca Falls). This location is underutilized and already zone for a variety of commercial development. However, this area should not necessarily compete with the businesses found along Route 414 and should be oriented towards recreation, niche, and tourist oriented enterprises as well as to accommodate local residents. Business growth in this area would benefit the Seneca Falls School District through tax revenues, but at the same time must be consistent with the character of the Town of Seneca Falls. The Town may also be able to capitalize on the more scenic qualities and reduced traffic levels along Route 318 to direct visitors to the Village and lake-area via Route 318 and Route 20.

As Route 20 in Auburn develops further, this corridor has opportunities to become more traveled.

## **Goal 6: Define and promote a clear image for Seneca Falls**

Strategy 6.1 Prepare marketing materials. It will be important to prepare materials that indicate how far the area has come, what it has done to revitalize itself and what it plans to do in the future. Prepare a full color brochure or a more elaborate set of materials on the community.

Work on an environmental/industrial image that meshes the landfill, methane, other energy sources and other ways that Seneca Falls could become a leader in 'green businesses'.

Be a model 21<sup>st</sup> Century community. Working with both local and regional local business and regional business initiatives, develop a program that will highlight a way in which Seneca Falls is a leader among communities. Seneca Falls could, for example, promote itself as a healthy community, or a place with a broad range of alternative health care services or a responsible yet practical environmentally concerned community or as an event-filled community or as a place that supports the arts.

As a part of these efforts, better gateway signage should be erected at the edges of the Town and Village. In addition, encourage the gradual removal of old signs and billboards along 318, 414 and 5/20. Important gateways include:

- Route 89/Garden Street Extension intersection;
- Route 414 South (south of Thruway Exit 41);
- Routes 5 & 20 East at or near the junction with Route 414 South;
- Routes 5 & 20 West near the junction with Route 89;
- Route 414 North approaching from the south;
- Intersection of Route 318 and Gravel Road;
- Intersection of Route 318 and Blackbrook Road;
- Intersection of Route 89 and Lower Lake Road;
- River Road, from the West; and
- Route 89 intersection with East Bayard Street.

Strategy 6.2 Ensure compliance with town and village site plan review processes. The Town and Village of Seneca Falls must work closely with applicants for development projects so that they understand the various zoning and site plan requirements (Village

Zoning ~250-17 and Town Local Law No. 4 of 2005). This communication should take place at the earliest stage of the review and application process as possible.

## ***Topic: Social Well-Being and Community Services***

**Social Well-being and Community Services Vision:** Town and Village services will be efficient and will support new development while protecting our environment and historical character. Our streets and pedestrian networks are safe. Property tax and other revenue sources have been invested wisely and used efficiently. Services are unified and consolidated in order to promote this efficiency.

The health of our citizens continues to be a priority. We work with our New York Chiropractic College and quality regional hospitals to find ways to provide excellent health care options through coordination of new care models, technology, and transportation.

We have quality schools and educational institutions that provide students of all ages with the skills necessary to be successful and productive. Educational programs look for ways to generate future leaders, and to create citizens engaged in civic life. This has resulted in a high degree of involvement of individuals and organizations in our community and our decision making process is open, accessible and a model for other small towns.

<b>Goal 7. There is a strong sense of civic pride.</b>
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### **Programs:**

Strategy 7.1. Support the Seneca Falls Community Pride ad hoc group to assess current programs related to civic pride and involvement, identify projects, work to engage the public, implement programs, and celebrate Seneca Falls.

Strategy 7.2. Develop a town/village newsletter to ask for citizen's ideas on how community pride and citizen involvement can be enhanced. Implement these ideas via the Community Pride Group.

Strategy 7.3. Seek grant funds to implement some of the ideas above.

Strategy 7.4. Publicly recognize local people for community involvement and enhancement projects.

Strategy 7.5. Engage more youth in community pride and town activities. Build on the teen outreach of this plan and develop a teen forum to discuss teen needs and programs that they can get

involved in on an on-going basis. Involve the High School in this effort.

Strategy 7.6. Enhance advertisement of Seneca Falls web site and create an email discussion group related to community pride, citizen involvement etc.

Strategy 7.7. When plan is completed, work to develop a summary brochure and mail to all households.

Strategy 7.8. The Town and Village Boards can sponsor an annual or bi-annual "Community Meeting" to discuss issues, strengths, weaknesses, and ways to move forward together.

Strategy 7.9. Initiate a joint town/village volunteer recruitment program for involving more people in programs, especially in these committees to implement this plan.

<b>Goal 8. The Town and Village cooperate to provide public services and infrastructure in a cost-effective and efficient manner.</b>
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**Programs:**

Strategy 8.1. Develop a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) showing the proposed expansion, upgrading, maintenance and financing of all infrastructure projects including land purchases, roads, sidewalks, buildings and equipment. A CIP plans for the location, expense and timing of major infrastructure construction and repair. It allows for better financial management and more careful locating of growth in the future.

Strategy 8.2. There is a high level of support in the community for sharing many services between the Town and Village. And 58% of survey participants indicated support for full merger between the Town and Village. One of the largest impediments to full consolidation of local governments is public opinion. As there is an unprecedented level of support for sharing services, the Town and Village should initiate a sharing/merger program as follows:

1. Advance a culture of cooperation and undertake a program to share services as an immediate and first step. Perform a needs assessment to determine functions that can benefit from restructuring to a shared system.



2. Conduct a feasibility analysis to determine whether it makes sense economically, operationally, and administratively to do so. Utilize the New York State Comptrollers 3CS program to assist in this feasibility study. This state agency offers a cooperation and consolidation consulting service and they can conduct studies and audits to examine the service improvements and cost savings that can be gained through cooperation or consolidation. Especially study consolidation of government functions that are duplicative, especially by combining the planning boards, and zoning board of appeals.
3. As part of this study, determine the benefits of full consolidation of the Town and Village. This option is likely to be more difficult due to public perceptions and fears about loss of identify and control. Once shared services are in place, and working well, full consolidation may be very acceptable.

Strategy 8.3. Arrange for ongoing joint town/village training of all planning and zoning officials including those from the planning board, zoning board of appeals, code enforcement, and historic preservation commission so that there is efficient administration of local laws and consistency in decision making.

Strategy 8.4. Enhance enforcement of laws through zoning officer.

Strategy 8.5. Work with Mynderse Academy to explore and implement methods to make the school more of a focal point in the community. Explore ways to open the school up more for community functions.

#### **Capital Improvements:**

Strategy 8.6. The Town and Village should establish a joint town hall/village hall to share costs and facilities and to expand public opportunities. The Town and Village should work together to find a location for this joint facility. The east end of Fall Street is suitable for both economic development and municipal purposes. This site could house a park and water access to Van Cleef Lake.

#### **Regulation and Policy Changes:**

Strategy 8.7. Consider having a joint town/village land use code for ease of administration and consistency between municipalities. If this were to occur, the Village, along with its existing zoning

districts and regulations, could be included as a distinct area within the town. If complete consolidation is not feasible, consider using inter-municipal agreements to avoid duplication of services.

Strategy 8.8. There are a variety of changes that could be made to the Town Zoning Law to make the review and administration of the zoning more efficient. Any changes made would require at least one public hearing, review by the County Planning Board and a State Environmental Quality Review process. These include:

- A. Develop and print a new zoning map (in color) that is easier to read and consistent with the zoning districts identified in the written law.
- B. Review, and change as necessary, Section 103-20 so that it is consistent with, or simply refers to state and federal wetland laws.
- C. Develop more detailed standards to determine what is meant by vague terms that exist throughout the zoning such as “architectural design shall be harmonious with surrounding development.” The reviewing boards need to have details and more concrete standards upon which to make equitable decisions.
- D. Zoning language for “home occupations, where an activity is carried out for financial gain by a resident in their residential dwelling, needs to be encouraged but controlled to prevent problems. To do this, split home occupations into three new sub-categories: exempt, minor and major. Exempt home occupations are those with no clients, customers, signage, or exterior needs such as parking. Minor and Major home occupations should have specific standards, expanded beyond what is in the current zoning. Major home occupations would have the most chance to impact neighborhoods and thus, should go through site plan review.
- E. Section 103-49 (Zoning Board of Appeals) should have time frames and procedures that match, or exceed, those set by New York State Town Law. Current procedures and time frames are not up-to-date.
- F. Ensure that the site plan review law is consistent with meeting the goals of this plan.

- G. Uses that require a special use permit should also undergo site plan review.
- H. Reconsider the role of the Planning Board. Currently, the Planning Board conducts subdivision reviews and advises the ZBA on other matters such as special permit uses. It seems to be more efficient and a quicker process to have one board review and make a decision on special use permits rather than the current situation. It is recommended that the Planning Board take the lead role for subdivision, site plan review, special use permits, and zoning permits while the ZBA take on the variance, appeals and zoning interpretation roles.
- I. Amend zoning to add detailed purpose statements for each zoning district. This is vital to convey the reason why the district exists and what it is to accomplish for the town. There are currently no purpose statements in zoning.
- J. Review the fee schedule and update on an annual basis. In the zoning, simply refer to the fees “as established by the Town Board” rather than list the dollar amounts so that the zoning does not become out of date when fees are changed.
- K. All time frames for all review processes (subdivision, site plan review, appeals, and special use permits) must be consistent, or more rigid, than those established by New York State Town Law. These changes should be made throughout the zoning law as well as the subdivision law.
- L. Remove C-1 from the zoning as it is not mapped.
- M. The Town should review all use schedules in the zoning. This review should ensure that all permitted, special conditions, and special uses listed for each district are those that are desired and meet the purposes of that district and that are consistent with this plan.

Strategy 8.9. The Village Zoning code should:

- A. Include an updated and easier to read map.

- B. Change zoning district acronyms (R-1 for example) to more user friendly terms such as Residential -1.
- C. Remove inconsistencies and update to be consistent with New York State Village law.
- D. Remove the role of the Village Board in issuing Site Plan approvals. Since the Planning Board already has responsibility for review, it will be more efficient to give the Planning Board this responsibility.
- E. Clearly identify what uses require site plan review in the Use Table and enhance site plan standards and review processes.
- F. The Village should review all use schedules in the zoning. This review should ensure that all permitted, special conditions, and special uses listed for each district are those that are desired and meet the purposes of that district and that are consistent with this plan.

Strategy 8.10 The Town should institute policies and programs that work to encourage locating new non-residential development in the Town within the Seneca Falls School District so that district could benefit from the enhanced tax base.

<p><b>Goal 9. Communications between local government officials, their agencies and the public is improved.</b></p>
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**Programs:**

Strategy 9.1. Enhance communication with public and encourage open dialogue with citizens/more events for area to build community/people need their voices heard.

Strategy 9.2. Enhance reporting to community on all town and village efforts by utilizing the web site for posting all official minutes, meeting agendas, plans, maps, laws, bus schedules, announcements, etc.

Strategy 9.3. Initiate a Town and Village or joint Town/Village newsletter to be mailed on a periodic basis to residents.

Strategy 9.4. Meeting dates of government boards need to be

consistently well publicized and not altered at the last minute.

Strategy 9.5. Consider video taping all Town, Village and joint Town/Village meetings and broadcast them on the local cable access channel.

Strategy 9.6 Encourage more interaction between the Town, Village and the Seneca Falls School District to effectively promote and develop education programs.

### **Capital Improvements:**

Strategy 9.7. Establish a community bulletin board in a prominent location for announcements. The sign should be designed to fit into the character of the Village and in a historically appropriate manner.

**Goal 10. Seneca Falls coordinates, provides and maintains a high-quality, safe, and efficient infrastructure that avoids undesirable environmental impacts, reduces traffic congestion, conserves natural and man-made resources, and is consistent with the aesthetic character of the Town and Village.**

### **Capital Improvements:**

Strategy 10.1. Initiate discussions with the fire department to explore and implement improvements in providing fire protection to the North Side of Town. In order to aid this, develop a response study first to determine more precisely the needs and issues.

Strategy 10.2. A proposal to re-route truck traffic away from the Village. While there may be benefits to this, the Town and Village should coordinate and work together with New York State DOT and ensure that mistakes common to other by-passes are not duplicated in Seneca Falls. Typical by-passes common in the 1960's resulted in routing of all traffic away from downtown or other business locations and caused serious negative impacts on economies. This situation must be avoided should re-routing take place. The National Park Service, Women's Rights National Historical Park has also expressed concern about additional truck traffic on Fall Street and its negative impacts on visitor's experiences.

Strategy 10.3. Analyze and redesign locations that have traffic problems, including, for example, Cayuga and Fall Street, Rumsey and Fall Street, Route 5/10 and Route 414 right turn at the bridge, and the Cayuga Street and Auburn Road intersections.

**Regulations and Policy:**

Strategy 10.4. In order to ensure that the infrastructure matches growth, establish an Adequate Public Facilities (APF) local law to ensure coordination between infrastructure and development needs. As with all other legal adoptions or amendments, the Town and/or Village would be required to hold a public hearing, ensure that there is County Planning Board review and a SEQR before adoption. This is a local law that requires that there be detailed information provided by the applicant for development regarding the availability of adequate road, sewer, water, schools, and other critical facility capacity to serve proposed development prior to that development. Such regulations can require developers to wait until the community can provide the necessary infrastructure to make the development safe, accessible and in compliance with health standards. The net effect is typically to keep development more compact and contiguous to existing development, or to cause it to locate in nodes around other service providers. A basic set of APF controls provides that development shall be approved only if the Planning Board analyzes information provided by the developer and makes explicit findings that there is, or will be at the time of actual development, an adequate supply of water to serve the needs of the project, adequate capacity to collect and treat wastewater from the project, adequate road capacity to handle traffic to and from the project, and adequate capacity in stormwater drainage to handle stormwater runoff from the project. Some communities also add in that there needs to be adequate school facilities to handle the growth.

Strategy 10.5. The more access points onto main roads, the more traffic congestion will result. In order to control traffic and minimize the effects of new development on roads and traffic conditions, institute Traffic Access Management tools in the commercial zones in Town. This includes use of shared driveways, shared parking lots, use of rear access roads, and other tools to limit access to specific points and locations when development occurs.

Strategy 10.6. Regulations and Policy: Review Town Law Chapter 55

(Highway Construction) and ensure that the standards incorporated into this law allow for rural road standards.

**Goal 11. Seneca Falls pursues development of alternative transportation modes not only to improve transportation opportunities, but to enhance recreational opportunities.**

**Program:**

Strategy 11.1. Have a marketing campaign to educate local residents on the bus services available.

**Goal 12. Seneca Falls residents have access to quality medical services.**

Strategy 12.1. Encourage more doctors and health professionals to open offices in Seneca Falls.

Strategy 12.2. Utilize the New York Chiropractic College as a lead and expand services that currently exist on campus at the Community Health Center.

Strategy 12.3. Evaluate medical services available in Seneca Falls and work with local and regional medical staff and agencies to address future medical needs.

## ***Topic: Natural Resources, Open Space and Agriculture***

**Natural Resources, Open Space and Agriculture Vision:** Natural resources are protected for the benefit of all and also play an important role in our tourism economy. Significant environmental features and open spaces are preserved and contribute to our quality of life by maintaining our area's scenic beauty, quality environment, and outdoor recreational opportunities. We continually invest to both protect the environment and bring it closer to everyday life. New trails, parking areas, sidewalks, interpretive programs, camping areas, and children-friendly parks make it easier for every person in Seneca Falls to access, enjoy, and benefit from the natural environment.

Farms remain profitable and active farmlands contribute to diversity of our landscape and our small town and rural character. Our Seneca Farms effort has opened channels for regional vineyard and farm products into a wide range of markets.



**Goal 13. Open spaces are protected to enhance the quality of life and enjoyment of the area's environment. Open spaces also help preserve the rural character of the town and protect those areas which have significant environmental, scenic or cultural value.**

### **Regulations and Policy:**

Strategy 13.1. Require the use of clustered or conservation subdivision designs foster open space and low-impact development and to minimize development of new infrastructure, maintain active agricultural fields and conserve open space and natural resources



for all major subdivisions and when required by the Planning Board for minor subdivisions. Clustered and conservation subdivisions provide for the setting aside of open space land within the subdivision.

Strategy 13.2. Clustering section of zoning needs enhancement to include standards, procedures, and more detail to guide the process better than exists.

Strategy 13.3. For a clustered or conservation subdivision designed to protect agricultural land, preserved lands should be the most valuable agricultural land based on soil productivity, be big enough for agricultural purposes, and allow long term ag use to provide consistent resource management. Ensure that land set aside in these subdivisions remains open for agricultural uses. Flexible subdivisions are especially important in A-1.

Strategy 13.4. For creeks with mapped 100-year floodplains, extend the floodplain zoning overlay zone to the entire mapped floodplain instead of the current 500' from the stream.

Strategy 13.5. For creeks with mapped 500 year floodplains only that are not included in the town's floodplain zone, initiate a 100' no-disturbance buffer.

Strategy 13.6. Maintain the forested areas along the floodplain as these areas have important ecological functions.

### **Capital Improvements**

Strategy 13.7. Utilize some of the money received from the landfill for establishing a fund to purchase development rights on important open space lands and farmland.

**Goal 14. Unique or distinctive natural features and ecosystems are conserved and preserved in recognition of the irreplaceable character of such resources and their importance to the quality of life in Seneca Falls.**

### **Programs:**

Strategy 14.1. Ensure that all highway personnel receive training on the state and federal Phase II Storm Water Regulations that became

effective March 2003 as they impact road building and maintenance activities.

Strategy 14.2. Institute best management practices as soon as possible after road construction or maintenance activities such as using hydroseeding to re-vegetate areas left bare.

Strategy 14.3. Collaborate with US FW staff to implement Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge management plan goals and objectives.

Strategy 14.4. Initiate a viewshed analysis to identify important natural and cultural scenic locations in both the Town and Village and develop strategies to protect those areas. A “viewshed” is the geographic area from which a location may be seen. The first step to any scenic protection program is to understand what and where these resources are. Programs designed to protect scenic resources are most accepted when based on community driven data such as called for in this set of strategies. This analysis should have significant public participation in both the inventory stage and when developing strategies. Build on the existing Geographic Information System (GIS) database developed for this plan to aid in this activity. Ensure that this analysis includes historic locations such as the Wesleyan Chapel on Fall Street and the Elizabeth Cady Stanton House on Washington Street. Strategies to protect scenic locations include:

- A. Establish educational initiatives such as developing a Seneca Falls Landscape Field Guide illustrating and describing the component parts of the town and village viewscape, developing an interpretive tour guide for local roads, and developing roadside viewing pull offs.
- B. Develop a property owner’s guide that provides information to people who own land with scenic resources on how to make changes to their property in keeping with the visual character of the area. This guide could contain information on planting, paving, clearing vegetation, fencing, etc.
- C. Develop a citizen educational program to inform citizens about the importance of scenic vistas and viewsheds and to encourage voluntary protection. This could include community walks or drives, photographic exhibitions, or slide shows.

- D. Consider protecting critical viewsheds by purchasing those lands (fee simple) or through use of purchased or donated conservation easements. Explore use of view easements for this purpose. Alternatively, consider use of leaseback arrangements where the land is purchased by the town and then leased back subject to certain restrictions for management of the scenic (or other) resources.
- E. Develop a set of recommended voluntary design and siting guidelines for new residential development that includes tools to protect scenic views. This should include a discussion of use of setbacks, screening (or lack of), land clearing, and alternate layouts of new homes using clustering or conservation subdivision design.
- F. Consider use of a recognition program: a plaque or award to a landowner can encourage protection.
- G. Consider use of non-binding agreements. These are agreements that are negotiated privately with a willing landowner which stipulate long-term protection measures for the property. The agreement is voluntary, and based on mutual trust and pride in the resource.
- H. Consider use of binding agreements. These are similar to a non-binding agreement except that they are legally binding for a specific period of time.
- I. Consider use of monetary incentives through use of tax abatement programs, assistance through grants and loans or reimbursement for expenses.
- J. Evaluate the character of the entrances to the Town and the existing sign entrance signs and update if needed.
- K. Consider use of a density bonus as an incentive during development to protect important viewsheds or other environmental resources.
- L. Establish a viewshed or scenic corridor overlay district. Once known, a variety of regulatory controls to protect critical scenic areas could be included. The following controls could fall under such a corridor overlay district:

1. Sign controls: amend zoning to more effectively regulate height of signs, as well as more details on placement, lighting and landscaping of signs. Also consider adding design standards or guidelines for signs.

2. Landscape regulations: in certain places screening may be desired and in other places, a long view with no vegetation to inhibit viewing is desirable. Consider implementing landscape requirements for all commercial developments, major subdivisions, and other residential development in critical view areas.

3. Setback requirements: Setbacks of structures significantly affects the character as viewed from the road. Consider implementing alternative or flexible setbacks to protect viewsheds.

4. Design review: Design guidelines discussed above in (e) are suggested to be voluntary. Design review suggested here is mandatory and included in zoning or another local law and could be applied only to commercial development. Consider establishing design review that regulates building mass and proportion, roof pitch, windows, siting, and the relationship of buildings to one another and to the roadway for commercial development.

5. Lot and density requirements: Consider reducing development density in locations that have sensitive environmental features, including important viewsheds. Further, consider de-emphasizing minimum lot size and instead, move towards use of a true density measurement: number of dwellings per acre.

6. Road access management: Multiple curb cuts along a rural road can be very negative influences on rural and aesthetic character. Consider allowing (with controls) use of shared driveways, shared access drives, access roads, shared parking lots or at least interconnected parking lots for non-residential entities.

M. Establish limits of disturbance for each site in subdivision. Site disturbance would include the structure, accessory structures, utilities, services, drainage areas and septic fields. Amend subdivision law to require establishment of limits of disturbance on the subdivision plat using criteria

designed to minimize visual impacts, prevent erosion, promote fire prevention and safety, and preservation of significant vegetation, if present.

- N. Lighting control: For all non-residential development, require use of fully shielded or 100% cut-off lighting fixtures. These fixtures direct light downwards rather than to the side and can eliminate glare and light trespass. Consider limiting lighting pole heights to 18 feet.

### **Regulatory Programs:**

Strategy 14.5. Local laws should ensure that the Planning Board and ZBA review the optimal siting of land uses in consideration of environmental constraints such as wetlands, scenic views, important open spaces, etc. and direct new uses away from these important locations.

Strategy 14.6. In the Village, northwest corner has hydric soils and wetlands and this should be rezoned to LC.

Strategy 14.7. In Town, maintain the other existing LC districts and boundaries.

Strategy 14.8. Implement recommendations related to Seneca Falls from the Cayuga Lake Watershed Management plan.

Strategy 14.9. Conserve lake and canal edges and open space that exist. Initiate programs that control erosion of the lake and canal banks.

Strategy 14.10. Preserve natural riparian and lake shore vegetation – all uses should be sited away from the waterfront and appropriately screened. New development should be compatible with surrounding architecture and neighborhood character.

Strategy 14.11. The Town's Subdivision chapter 86-26 needs substantial improvement to include more information, purposes, standards, and performance expectation of subdivisions in order to ensure that natural resources are adequately reviewed and protected during subdivision. This should coordinate with language implemented for conservation and clustered subdivisions.

Strategy 14.12. Ensure that zoning, subdivision and site plan laws have up to date stormwater and drainage management regulations, or refer to current New York State DEC Stormwater Pollution Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) regulations.

Strategy 14.13. Amend zoning to ensure that the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) requirements are met. In addition, SEQR should be utilized to minimize negative air quality impacts from future development.

**Goal 15. Productive agricultural lands hold important environmental and economic value and are conserved for active agricultural operations.**



**Programs:**

Strategy 15.1. Initiate a local farmers market, perhaps to be housed in the canal corridor.

Strategy 15.2. Consider farmland a natural resource and encourage use of conservation easements on farmland to preserve them as agricultural uses. Conservation easements are always done on a voluntary

basis by a willing landowner and can be donated or sold to a municipality or local land trust. Consider establishing a local conservation easement program organized by the Town. The Town can offer tax incentives for willing landowners who wish to place a permanent or term (temporary) easement or the Town can initiate a fund to purchase easements.

Strategy 15.3. Have farmer serve as an agricultural member of the Town Planning Board.

Strategy 15.4. Have a farmer serve as a member on any economic development boards, committees, or organizations to ensure that the agricultural perspective is heard.

Strategy 15.5. Properly assess specialized agricultural structures such as silos, milking parlors and greenhouses. Ensure that assessors

have depreciation schedules for these uses which can enable more accurate valuations. Ensure that assessors receive training on assessment of agricultural structures.

Strategy 15.6. Consider initiating local tax policies to support agriculture. Term easement tax abatement programs, ad valorem limitations, building exemptions and other programs can support farmers for providing benefits to the community.

### **Capital Improvements:**

Strategy 15.7. Focus infrastructure such as water and sewer in already developed areas and do not extend water lines to non-developed agricultural areas.

Strategy 15.8. Work with local farmers and farming organizations to promote organic farming.

### **Regulations and Policy:**

Strategy 15.9. Allow buffer zones between farmland and residential uses. New residential development should provide for its own buffer zone and/or landscape plantings for screening when necessary.

Strategy 15.10. Remove the R-2 zone as this area is better served as an Agricultural zone (A-1).

Strategy 15.11. Adopt a local right to farm law. A local law such as this can establish a policy that agriculture is of benefit to Seneca Falls and can express the value that agriculture plays to town's quality of life through open space, wildlife habitat, watershed purification, natural resources preservation.

Strategy 15.12. Ensure that State Ag and Markets law requirements are included in zoning, subdivision and site plan review requirements. These requirements are designed to ensure that new development in a NY Certified Agricultural District does not negatively impact continuing agricultural activities. These include a notice of intent and determining the project's impact on agriculture.

Strategy 15.13. Ensure that zoning definitions of agricultural terms are broad, inclusive, and consistent with Ag and Markets guidelines.

Strategy 15.14. Determine if a zoning change is needed along the Landfill where it is currently A-2 between Route 414 and CR 102. This may be better served as Ag.

Strategy 15.15. Decrease density in the A-1 zone. The current density of 30,000 square feet to 1 ½ acres in the A-1 and A-2 zones will not protect agriculture, rural character or the environment. Either increase minimum lot sizes or establish true densities and de-emphasize minimum lot sizes. Use of a true density (# dwellings per acre) can establish a desired and sustainable growth level for the rural parts of Seneca Falls.

Lot Size versus Density: When a community controls its density through establishment of a minimum lot size (such as in Seneca Falls), all new homes are required to have a minimum amount of land. Using minimum lot sizes are generally a poor substitute for controlling the amount of development through actual density. Use of minimum lot sizes simply spreads out residential development and is one of the underlying causes of sprawl. On the other hand, use of a density as measured by the number of dwellings allowed per acre allows much more flexibility. The minimum lot size should be tied only to what is required in order to satisfy water and septic requirements. When density is separated from minimum lot sizes, landowners have the ability to create a variety of lot sizes and preserve open space at the same time. Creative lot layout techniques such as conservation subdivisions and clustering are much easier to accomplish when a density is set rather than a minimum lot size.

Strategy 15.16. Consider making the agricultural district boundaries (A-1 and A-2) coincide with the NYS Certified Agricultural District that exists so that new standards to protect and promote farming can be put in place. Other areas falling outside this Ag zone should be renamed to be Rural Residence or RR.

Strategy 15.17. Add a new category in the zoning use schedule for industrial livestock farm or intensive agricultural uses, and require new facilities to go through a modified site plan review when proposed. Consider utilizing the recommended modified Site Plan Review developed by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to address issues related to industrial livestock farms.

**Goal 16. The Town and Village support and encourage a diversity of agri-businesses as an important part of our economy and work to**



## expand agricultural economic activities.

### Regulations and Policy:

Strategy 16.1. Allow flexibility in zoning to accommodate needs of agricultural businesses. The zoning is currently not optimally “farm-friendly”. Regulations should allow for expanded hours of ag-business operations, temporary signs, parking near pick-your-own fields, allowance in zoning of pick your own and other ag businesses differently than retail. Further:

- A. Consider eliminating the requirement that farm uses must obtain a special use permit. New York State Ag and Markets laws do not allow undue regulation of farm uses in agricultural districts. There appears to be no rationale as to why farms need to go through a special use permit in an certified Ag. District where the presumption is that agriculture is the primary land use.
- B. Consider changing the current farm stand regulations and allow farms to sell produce from other areas, not just the farm that it is located at.
- C. Approval of farm stands, however, should take into consideration parking and traffic safety needs and concerns.

Strategy 16.2. Specifically allow for accessory agricultural uses such as veterinarians, custom farm providers, equipment dealers, etc. and non-traditional or retail based farm businesses.

Strategy 16.3. Allow roadside stands or pick your own operations by right and that they be allowed to sell produce purchased elsewhere.

## ***Topic: Parks, Recreation and Culture***

**Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Vision:** The Seneca Falls Community Center is a significant recreational and cultural location with enhanced uses for teens and senior citizens. Additional state-of-the-art recreational facilities are also available within the community. The Cayuga Lake State Park is a major destination for both local residents and visitors. Seneca Falls also offers a diversity of cultural and entertainment opportunities in performing and visual arts, such as the Seneca Community Players.

**Goal 17. A diversity of state-of-the-art cultural, educational, and recreational resources exists.**

### **Programs:**

Strategy 17.1. Enhance functioning of the existing recreation committee. Include teens on the committee and develop a town-wide recreation master plan.

Strategy 17.2. Reach out and work with the local schools and local colleges to develop an adult education/continuing education program locally.

Strategy 17.3. Fully collaborate with the National Park Service in reaching the full potential of the Women's Rights National Historical Park and Seneca Falls Heritage Area management plans.

Strategy 17.4. The Recreation Commission should work with the Recreation Center to determine Town and Village needs, evaluate programs, and develop new programs to need identified needs.

Further, the Commission should develop a town-wide recreation plan that studies recreation needs and develops a strategic recreation plan. According to the survey, overall, participants had a strong interest in public access to canal and lakes, hiking trails, walking/running paths and cultural activities. There was also high percentage of interest in bike paths, playgrounds with equipment, ice skating, supervised activities for seniors, a senior citizen center, and public picnic areas. A further examination of the survey results shows that there is a higher percentage showing strong interest by young couples and families with school age children in the following recreational uses: public access to canal and lake, public swimming pool, swimming in the lake, hiking trails, bike

paths, playgrounds with equipment, ice skating, walking/running path, cultural activities, and teen center.

The Town-wide recreation plan should include strategies for providing these specific recreational opportunities.

Strategy 17.5. Re-evaluate community center programs and determine needs of all ages and adjust programs appropriately. The Recreation Center needs to meet the needs of its users. There is an impression that the Center currently does not meet the needs of teens and this should be addressed. List the Recreation Commission and its related information on the web site.

Strategy 17.6. Improve communication and connections between State Park and Village/Town and work to increase citizen engagement at State Park. Seek to establish a working group of town and village officials and local citizens to explore ways of accomplishing this.

Strategy 17.7. Initiate weed control at the northern end of the lake to make that resource more inviting and to increase the diversity of recreation activities that can take place there.

### **Capital Improvements:**

Strategy 17.8. Establish a prominent information kiosk along Fall Street in the middle of the Village.

Strategy 17.9. Identify and plan for creation of several small pocket parks in the Village. These parks could have benches, picnic tables, or equipment such as swings and there should be access to some park within walking distance from each neighborhood in the Village.

Strategy 17.10. Enhance boater facilities along the canal to include showers, clearly marked restrooms, and other facilities. See also recommendations in the Economic Development section related to this.

Strategy 17.11. Work with Cayuga Lake State Park to establish a trolley or shuttle from one or more central locations within the Village to the Park.

Strategy 17.12. Implement the proposed recreational projects as outlined in the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan including the

completion of the Canalway trail segment through the town and village, Sucker Brook Boat Launch and Trail Development, boating facilities, and development of Kingdom Road Fishing Access Site and Boat Launch.

Strategy 17.13. Also consider using, if feasible, the old railroad bed to connect a trail to the Cayuga Lake State Park via Garden Street Extension.

Strategy 17.14. Establish bike/hike trails and establish a map showing existing and potential trails. Further, the Town and Village should support development of the Erie Canal hiking/biking trail and assist with the organizing committee and county agencies to facilitate work with landowners on securing easements and right of ways.

Strategy 17.15. Encourage use of existing golf courses and allow for careful development of new golf courses. Explore the feasibility of providing golf at Vince's Park.

### **Regulations and Policy:**

Strategy 17.16. During development review, the Town and Village should work towards building in public access to the waterfront as much as possible. During development, make provisions for public access via canalway trail segments where they exist or are planned.

<b>Goal 18. Seneca Falls supports cultural, performing and visual arts programs.</b>
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### **Programs:**

Strategy 18.1. The various community groups and cultural venues in Seneca Falls need to be more coordinated. Consider a local cultural coordinating committee that works with other organizations and the Seneca County Arts Council to help everyone work together to build on each others strengths. Better coordination and communication will strengthen the effectiveness of all events. Establish a community calendar that is widely distributed to the community.

Strategy 18.2. Enhance the Ovid Street overlook with information on the site, resources available, etc.

Strategy 18.3. Enhance the Heritage Area Visitor Center with history and location of the “Falls”.

**Capital Improvements:**

Strategy 18.4. Work with property owners and neighborhood residents to explore the feasibility of redeveloping the former Pump Station at Waynes Grove as outlined in the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan.

Strategy 18.5. Finish the Sculpture Trail.

Strategy 18.6. Establish more visual and physical access points to the canal wherever possible.

Strategy 18.7. Develop a marina on Van Cleef Lake in the Village to create more public access to the water.

**Regulations and Policy:**

Strategy 18.8. Give priority to water dependent commercial uses such as marinas, boat building, etc. and mixed use development along 5/20, River and Bayard Street for property fronting both 5/20 and canal shoreline.



## ***Topic: Community Character and Historic Preservation***

**Community Character and Historic Preservation Vision:** We respect and build on our heritage. Whether it is women's rights, industry, the Cayuga/Seneca Canal system, or our farming heritage/economy, we have made a variety of creative efforts to protect these qualities and integrate them into our daily lives. New residential and commercial development is consistent with our historical, architectural, and small town rural character while meeting the demands of modern businesses and industries.

**Goal 19. The small town and historic character of Seneca Falls is preserved. New residential and commercial development is consistent with our historical, architectural, and small town rural character.**

### **Regulations and Policy:**

Strategy 19.1. In the Town and in the Village outside of the historic district, establish design standards for commercial buildings to help new buildings be constructed to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. These design standards should be presented in an illustrated format so that all parties understand the community expectations for design. These standards would be part of the normal site plan review and/or special use permits issued and would not create a new historic district. The items that are not adequately addressed, but that play critical roles in community character that should be addressed in these standards are roof pitch and style; parking lot placement, landscaping and location; how to handle monotonous facades or large expanses of windowless walls; eliminating trademarked architecture; lighting; tree preservation and planting; curb cuts and gutters; screening of roof equipment.

Strategy 19.2. Amend zoning in the Village to ensure that new development is consistent with development patterns of existing neighborhoods. Road widths, build-to-lines, street patterns, garages and driveways, on-street parking and planting of street trees are all important dimensions that should be evaluated and amended to be consistent with existing, desired patterns. RP: Along routes 5/20 and 414 where development has not taken place yet, consider changing the strip style commercial development zone (C-2) to commercial nodes instead. (A commercial node is where

there is a concentration of commercial activities at strategic locations or at key intersections with each node separated by open spaces or residential uses. The goal of using commercial nodes is to prevent commercial strip-style sprawl along all major roadways.) The original 1969 plan shows nodal development and this is more to meet community character goals.

Strategy 19.3. Implement the waterfront design guidelines set forth in the NYS Canal Recreationway Plan. This includes such design guidelines as keeping new development out of sight when viewed from the lake, or clustered to conserve farmland and open space as well as views from and to the Canal.

Strategy 19.4. Expand Village zoning to enhance site plan review process, administration, and standards.

Strategy 19.5. Develop rural siting guidelines in Town zoning for non-clustered or non-conservation subdivisions to ensure that all new development is sensitive to the rural and small town character goals of Seneca Falls.

Strategy 19.6. The performance standards identified in Town Zoning related to glare only seem to pertain to industrial districts. Glare from lighting can be an issue wherever lights are used and can be particularly problematic where commercial zones meet or mix with residential zones. The requirement for use of shielded light fixtures should be for all non-residential uses.

Strategy 19.7. Amend zoning to enhance sign standards. In order to maintain and enhance community character in the Town, additional sign standards should be included such as height (bringing them lower), size (making them smaller), addressing internal and external lighting, addressing landscaping of sign bases, etc. More information is needed on style of sign allowed (free standing, ground mounted, projecting, wall, awning, sandwich, etc. as well.

Strategy 19.8. Consider the effect of billboards on the community's character and determine if billboards should be prohibited. They are currently allowed in some zones up to 200 square feet.

Strategy 19.9. Initiate a property maintenance law at the Town level.

Strategy 19.10. Site Plan Review should ensure that all waterfront areas of the Town and Village have maintained or enhanced visual character when developed and the local site plan laws should

reflect this.

Strategy 19.11. Enhance code enforcement. All local laws that address code enforcement must be clear, consistent and efficient. Laws relating to property maintenance should be strengthened so that they include provisions for dealing with nuisances, vacant property, complaints, inspections, and exterior maintenance.

Strategy 19.12. Implement the Route 89 Cayuga Scenic Byway recommendations.

Strategy 19.13. Encourage alternatives to continuous linear development along the Canal. This would include use of clustered subdivisions, conservation subdivisions that leave open space along the canal, and changing zoning districts to be more “nodal” than strip-style along the roads.

Strategy 19.14. New development and improvements at the Deer Run Industrial Park should be sensitive to the waterfront location. All new development should be appropriately buffered.

**Goal 20. Historical resources are promoted and protected, and connections to our past are strengthened in order to improve our economic future and quality of life.**



Places

**Programs:**

Strategy 20.1. Seek grants to offer low interest loans to improve building facades of downtown buildings and other historic homes.

Strategy 20.2. At the town level, do a full survey of historic and cultural resources and work to help landowners get properties listed on the National Register of Historic

Strategy 20.3. Dedicate resources to rehabilitate and restore older and historic buildings in village and hamlet of Bridgeport in Town.



Strategy 20.4. Through grant programs, initiate funding for providing local tax incentives for preservation and restoration of historic homes.

Strategy 20.5. Sponsor workshops on historic preservation techniques for homeowners.

Strategy 20.6. Work to make the Historic District more “user-friendly” and understood by the community. Develop brochures to explain the purpose and intentions of the Historic District, to show the review process and time line, assistance available, and performance standards (in summary). Do a better job of publicizing to the public the accomplishments of the Historic District, programs initiated, grants received, etc. The Heritage Preservation Commission should be brought into the Main Street Revitalization process and should be considered an important part of the effort.

**Capital Improvements:**

Strategy 20.7. Offer rehabilitation grants and tax incentives for rear façade improvements along the Canal.

**Regulations and Policy:**

Strategy 20.8. Maintain the current historic district and current design standards used.

Strategy 20.9. Support the National Park Service in its efforts to ensure the long-term preservation of nationally significant historic sites and landmarks that are a vital part of Seneca Falls history.

**Goal 21. Roads, gateways, and streetscape improvements improve the aesthetic character of Seneca Falls.**

**Programs:**

Strategy 21.1. Work with the school district to develop enhanced signage and access to the high school.

**Capital Improvements:**

Strategy 21.2. Complete lighting along the southern side of the canal.

Strategy 21.3. Long-term, work to bury all utility lines. A priority should be utilities along the canal behind Fall Street. An efficient and appropriate time to consider having utilities buried would be when road work is being done

Strategy 21.4. Enhance signage in and out of Seneca Falls.

Strategy 21.5. Support façade improvement, rear façade along canal improvement, façade improvement along 5/20 between villages and commercial district at Bridge and Bayard on south side of canal.

Strategy 21.6. Remove building materials and alterations such as false facades that detract from historic architectural character of downtown.

Strategy 21.7. Improve visual access of canal from all locations.

Strategy 21.8. At the east end of Fall Street, return the median from Cayuga Street to Van Cleef Lake to its original state and use this location for signage for community events.

Strategy 21.9. Improve landscaping and streetscape at the intersection of 5/20 and Route 414. This should be a welcoming intersection to both the Town and Village and currently is “every place USA” without any distinction to being in Seneca Falls. This location should be the formal gateway to the Villages of Waterloo and Seneca Falls and the entire canal corridor.

Strategy 21.10. For the Sackett Business District:

- A. Finish installation of historic lighting
- B. Place banners to announce the business district location and to identify the area as a unique location within the village.
- C. Establish a prominent location to install the old clock so that it is visible. Explore use of the knitting mill for this purpose.
- D. Brick-like pavers should be installed at the street intersection of Bridge and Bayard streets.

Strategy 21.11. Initiate a street tree and streetscaping project for all village streets and major entryways in the Town, especially along Route 414 (as a major entryway into Town). This would include upgrading of sidewalks, where needed, inventory of street trees and their condition, and establishing a tree planting program to maintain healthy street trees. Utilize the Tree City USA program sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation.

Strategy 21.12. Enhance the street presence of the Visitor Center.

Strategy 21.13. Work with the Landfill to enhance perimeter landscaping and screening

Strategy 21.14. Consider establishing a 50' Right-of-Way maintained between the canal or lake shoreline and residential property when new residential uses are built to protect the visual character of the waterfront.

Strategy 21.15. Use brick-like pavers on the street from Fall Street to State Street up to the railroad tracks as part of revitalization effort.

### **Regulations and Policy:**

Strategy 21.16. Encourage water-oriented uses such as marinas, boat rental enterprises or restaurants with direct access to the water to optimally utilize waterfront properties. This can be accomplished by changing the use schedule to specifically permit water-oriented uses for waterfront parcels or the Town and Village could designate a "waterfront overlay" zone that is designed to encourage water-related uses as recommended in the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan.

Strategy 21.17 Seneca Falls must ensure that all other government agencies, including the New York State Department of Transportation become aware of, and consider the street and transportation recommendations in this plan whenever any capital improvements are planned in the community.

## ***Topic: Housing and Neighborhoods***

**Housing and Neighborhoods Vision:** People of all income levels have access to safe, decent and affordable housing. The Village offers higher density, mixed uses while the town remains largely rural with low density residential development creatively designed to protect open spaces and farms. Tree-lined streets, well maintained properties and enhanced landscaping contribute to our quality neighborhoods. A system of linked cycling and walking trails and paths provide increased access from our neighborhoods to parks, open spaces, and cultural areas.

**Goal 22. A diversity of housing types and densities are encouraged in order to assure decent housing for people of all ages and income levels.**

### **Programs:**

Strategy 22.1. Encourage retirement community development and second home development.

Strategy 22.2. Create a town/village sponsored entity or partnership with existing non-profit housing groups to develop affordable housing programs.

### **Regulations and Policy:**

Strategy 22.3. Expand the use schedule of both communities to allow for more affordable housing that fits into the character of the neighborhood including senior housing and upscale housing.

Strategy 22.4. Allow for a variety of mixed housing types along the Canal and in commercial zones. This can be accomplished by adding mixed housing uses (single family, two-family, senior citizen, and multi-family) along the proposed Waterfront Overlay, or change the use table for those districts to allow for these uses. This means allowing for mixed use, higher density, multi-family and 2-family dwellings in the C-2 areas and allowing for the conversion of commercial structures to these uses as well.

Strategy 22.5. Allow for in-law apartments and accessory apartments in the A-1 zone and in the Village as a special use permit.

Strategy 22.6. Allow townhouse and condominium uses. The Seneca

Knitting Mill property would be a location that would be very suitable for this type of development.

Strategy 22.7. Future development should encourage the building of continuing care retirement communities.

Strategy 22.8. Zoning laws in the town and village should be amended to include, or refer, to state law requirements for senior housing.

**Goal 23. Our neighborhoods are safe for cars and pedestrians.**

**Programs:**

Strategy 23.1. Reroute truck traffic away from the Village.

Strategy 23.2. Maintain the police department in the Village to ensure high levels of public safety.

**Goal 24. Our properties are well maintained.**

**Programs:**

Strategy 24.1. Reduce problems with absentee landlords by developing a local law that requires all landlords of rental properties to register with the Village. In this way, the village can efficiently hold and manage the name and address of the appropriate person to contact should an issue arise regarding the property. Often enforcement proceedings are hampered by lack of knowledge or insufficient communication with absentee landlords.

**Goal 25. Neighborhoods in both the Village and Town are linked with a pedestrian system.**

**Capital Improvements:**

Strategy 25.1. Condition of sidewalks is a serious concern in the Village. The Village has a sidewalk policy according to Village law §204-14B and this should be continued. This law establishes maintenance and repair of sidewalks as a responsibility of the property owner. However, the Village budgets funds each year for a cost sharing incentive to repair/replace sidewalks. The Village will reimburse 50% of sidewalk repair/replacement, not to exceed \$800, or \$1600

for corner lots, per property as long as the budgeted funds last. This program should be continued in the Village. Although liability issues would prevent mapping or listing sidewalk defects, the Village should include planning and budgeting for sidewalk improvements annually via the recommended Capital Improvement Plan.

Initiate a sidewalk inventory and management program and consider initiating a cost sharing sidewalk maintenance program in the Town. In the Town, new sidewalks should be required for future residential and commercial development, but not for agriculturally or industrially zoned development. Major residential development (such as major subdivisions) should be required to install sidewalks. The Planning Board should be given the ability to require sidewalks for smaller subdivisions if it would allow connections and enhanced pedestrian uses and if it is likely for future connections. The Town should avoid, however, “sidewalks to nowhere” associated with small subdivisions. The Planning Board (Town) should also be given the authority to require walking paths and trails as alternative pedestrian opportunities during residential development. Issues of public safety should always be a priority when considering development of sidewalks.

Strategy 25.2. Identify potential links between retail, recreational, cultural, and residential locations where additional walking and biking trails can be promoted. Use of conservation subdivisions at the town-level can be used to locate preserved open spaces in places easily linked by a network of trails.

Strategy 25.3 The Town and Village will work to have all public facilities handicapped accessible.

**Goal 26. Residential development outside the village is designed to allow for new growth that also preserves open spaces, farms, and rural character.**

**Regulations and Policy:**

Strategy 26.1. Utilize conservation subdivisions and clustered subdivision layouts for residential growth in the Town. Use these techniques with requirements that a percentage of each parcel remains as open space or that use performance standards such as open space ratios or floor area ratios.

Strategy 26.2. Should any large residential development be proposed,

consider using flexible techniques to allow development of a new hamlet-style project that includes amenities, services and transportation. This can be accomplished through use of the Planned Unit Development policies and procedures.

Strategy 26.3. Offer incentives to land developers to preserve open space or other important features by offering a density bonus. A density bonus is a tool where the municipality offers additional density of housing above what is allowed in the zoning in return for the landowner protecting a desired resource.

Strategy 26.4. Promote compact development to avoid unnecessary extension of water lines.

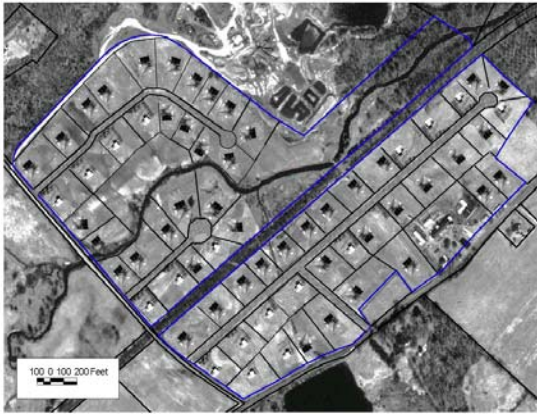
Strategy 26.5. As an alternative to the existing zoning in the Town and Village, consider use of a Transect-based Zoning that would combine both into one united zoning code. (See Illustrations and Text at end). The value of the Transect is that it serves to locate any given place within a context in which all the parts fit together harmoniously. This would allow the Town and Village to be cohesive and coordinated in their land use regulations and would also facilitate joint planning and zoning boards. Currently, Onondaga County has adopted and is implementing transect zoning.

## Appendix A: Illustrations of Clustered and Conservation Subdivision

### An Illustration of Clustering



This photo simulation illustrates a conventional subdivision at a density of one dwelling per four acres where the minimum lot size equals four acres. Note how all land in this parcel is “used” by being split up and part of individual home lots, including the stream corridor. This is an actual aerial photo of a sod farm in Orange County, NY.



This photo simulation illustrates a similar conventional subdivision, but at a density of one dwelling per two acres where the minimum lot size equals two acres. Note that all land in this parcel is “used” by being part of individual home lots.



This photo shows a clustered subdivision at a density of one dwelling per two acres, but houses are clustered around the existing farmstead with minimum lot sizes of one acre. Note that the majority of the parcel remains as open space and will continue to be used for sod farming. This subdivision would allow continued farming, as well as protection of the stream corridor that passes through the property. Ownership of the preserved

parcel could remain with the original landowner, be owned by a homeowners association, or by one of the new landowners as a type of “estate lot”.



## An Illustration of Conservation Subdivision

Example of A Conservation Subdivision (all illustrations from *Growing Greener*, by Randall Arendt, published by National Landmark Trust, 1999)

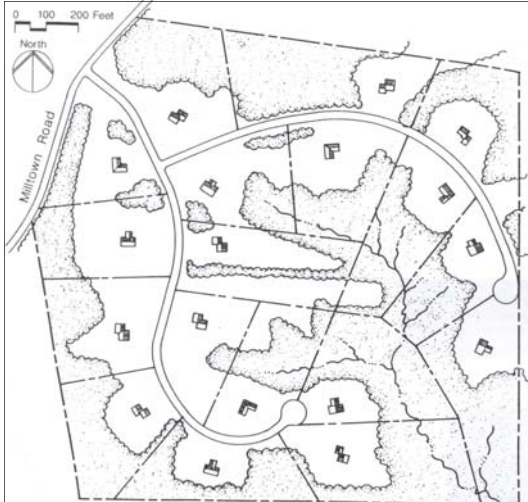


Figure 1: Conventional Subdivision Design

Lot layout of a site showing a typical subdivision where no open space is preserved. This lot layout yields 18 sites for building. The illustration below, and next page illustrates how this site could be developed under a conservation design. Using the flexibility of the tool, there are numerous ways the site could be developed.

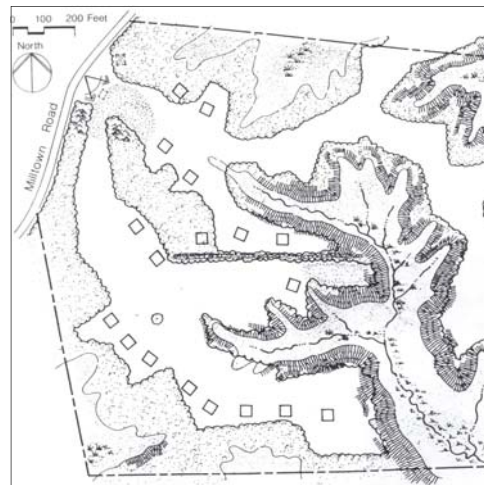
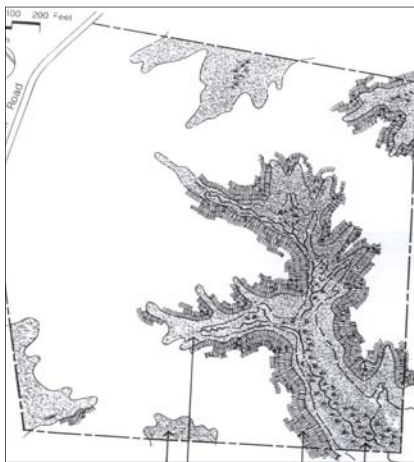
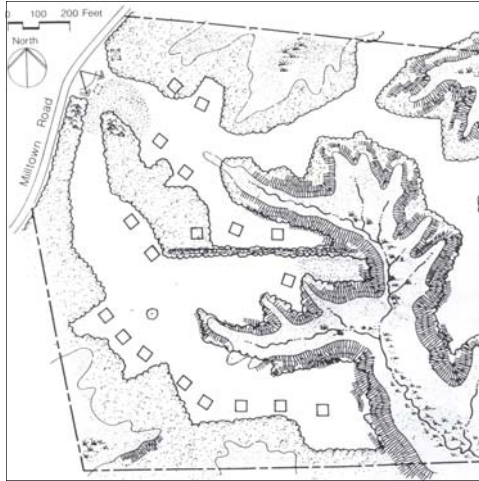


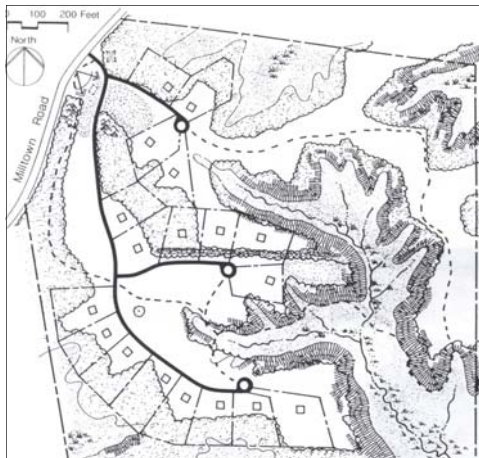
Figure 2: Conservation Subdivision Design



Step 1 of Conservation Subdivision design: identify areas to be conserved. In this example, wetlands, steep slopes over 25% and a 100-year floodplain are identified as critical areas to be preserved on this parcel.



Step 2 of Conservation Subdivision design: locate house sites to maximize the number of homes with a view or direct access to the preserved areas of the parcel. Building envelopes or areas of disturbance are typically set.



Step 3 and 4 of Conservation Subdivision design: align streets and trails, and draw in lot lines. Streets should minimize new curb cuts from the access road. The last step is to draw in the lot lines. In this technique, lot lines are the least important task compared to a conventional subdivision where lot lines are drawn in first. Note that there are still 18 lots created in this subdivision at the same time that at least 50% of the site is preserved in an unbuilt condition.

## Appendix B: Transportation Enhancement Options

- Consider amending off-street parking requirements in the Town and Village zoning to avoid over-built lots. Parking lots should be designed for average demand, not peak demand. Consider establishing general minimum requirements and allow for “fine-tuning” of parking spaces during the site plan review process based on specific needs of applicants.
- Enhance the character and siting of off-street parking lots, especially along Routes 414, 5/20 and other commercial areas. Amend zoning to minimize parking located in the front of the building and direct it to the side or rear. The front setback may need to be adjusted to accommodate this change. Removing large expanses of paved parking between the street and the building will be more aesthetically pleasing and will enhance the visual character. Zoning should be amended to provide for screening, buffering and landscaping of parking areas to offer visual relief and shading. Parking requirements should also take into consideration pedestrian-circulation needs. Crosswalks should be provided within large parking lots. Textured paving of crosswalks would be preferred, instead of painted lines.
- To control traffic, speed, and to enhance safety, the Town and Village should work closely with the New York State Department of Transportation to develop a formal traffic management plan that considers ‘smart growth’ guidelines as well as Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) for the combined benefit to pedestrian, vehicular and transit users as discussed below in this section.
- Development of this traffic management plan would include, as a first step, conducting a detailed study of Routes 414 and 20, and Fall Street including use of peak traffic counts and aerial photography to develop an existing traffic model. According to New York State Village Law Section 7-772, when a municipality adopts a comprehensive plan, all plans for capital projects of another governmental agency shall consider that plan. It is the intent of the Town and Village to outline goals and potential ideas related to state highways through town to facilitate future transportation planning with the NYS DOT.
- Coordinate the traffic signal system by either “time based” or “hard” wire connections between adjacent signals. “Time-based” refers to adjusting adjacent traffic signal controllers according to the same internal clock patterns, or offset timings such that traffic is allowed to progress through the system at a pre-determined rate (i.e. no more than 30 mph). This is very efficient way of controlling traffic but it will likely incur costs, depending on the existing system. In order to implement this recommendation, the status of the ownership/maintenance agreement with New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) must be determined for signals within the town. That agreement will determine if signal improvements would fall under local or NYSDOT control. NYSDOT is likely to have an interest in improving progression of traffic and potentially reducing accident rate frequencies and severity along their roadway.

- Additionally, it is recommended that Seneca Falls seek to qualify the main corridors within the Town and Village for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program, which might provide funding for signal improvements.
- Optimize traffic signal “green time” to the capacity ratio for all corridor signals. This means constantly changing green time according to a pre-set timing pattern, recall settings, or real time demand.
- Curb-cut management is needed along both sides of the entire corridor. Generally, curb cuts should be located as far from intersection approaches as possible (refer to NYSDOT ‘Policy and Standards for Entrances to Highways and Streets, 1998). Also, provide central access to large development centers and shared access to groups of individual centers. Encourage connection to and from the rear of buildings via an access road and a common frontage road.
- Improve internal circulation for retail sectors along the main corridors by removing barriers that prevent traffic from traveling between parking lots would improve internal circulation and reduce traffic congestion.
- Consider geometric and signal timing improvements for predominant turn movements where possible. Current peak hour turning movement counts and review of accident histories for intersections and highway segments are recommended to identify “hot spots” or problem areas.
- To enhance visual character and the pedestrian network, the Town and Village should develop a formal traffic management plan and ensure that zoning and other programs implement the following recommendations and strategies:
  - Reduce all lane widths to the minimum allowed by NYSDOT in an effort to calm traffic speeds and maximize use of available roadside area for pedestrian and transit uses.
  - Initiate a street tree planting and landscaping program where creation of a tree canopy along both sides of the street would serve to beautify the area while separating pedestrians from motorists, and potentially reducing area traffic speeds.
  - Optimal street tree conditions include a road-side landscaped buffer. Obstructions such as trees must be in conformance with NYSDOT policy on roadside ‘clear zone’.
  - Adopt a zoning provision that requires new uses along these main corridors to provide for sidewalks and street tree planting, and maintenance of trees or other landscaping. Ensure that landscape design standards restrict trees and other objects from intersection corners to provide adequate line of sight for motorists look either left or right. Standards should also include provisions for undercutting vegetation between two and seven feet under the canopy to achieve clear center viewing. Trees should be deciduous.

- Provide well-identified crosswalks consistent with current ADA guidelines. Crosswalks will be most effective at intersections, rather than mid-block.
  - To further enhance use and safety of crosswalks, consider enhancing the ground texture of the sidewalk and crosswalk to create a ground pattern different in color and texture from the roadway. Use brick or concrete pavers or scored and colored concrete to simulate natural materials.
  - Ensure that local zoning for uses along 414 and Route 20 creates a proportion of street width to building height of 1:1 or 2:1. These proportions optimize a “human scale” that enhances pedestrian safety and use of sidewalks.
- **Some additional traffic and safety planning and design alternatives include the following features:**
    - “Jug handle” design for left-turns from major streets. Jug Handle design refers to redirecting a major street left turns to the right to intersect the approaching minor street. By means of signalized or unsignalized control, a major street left-turn can be transformed into a minor street through- movement.
    - Coordination and combination of opposing left-turn movements, thereby reducing, where possible, pedestrian crossing widths and freeing up more signal ‘green time’ for remaining major vehicle movements.
    - Provide dedicated turn lanes where applicable to assist in the flow of traffic by removing conflicting vehicle movements from main stream traffic.
  - **Traffic and Safety Improvements for off-street strip mall and plaza areas could include:**
    - Roadway alignment of opposing driveways with associated “free” rights as applicable and as permitted by NYSDOT.
    - Consider internal circulation options that promote benefit to all users including vehicles, pedestrians, localized transit service, parking, service and maintenance vehicles, bicycles and disabled persons.
    - Consider direct connection from plaza and retail strip areas to secondary or frontage road system where possible, limiting impact to adjacent residential parcels.

## **Appendix C: Maps**

Aerial Photograph, 1995 and 2002

Agriculture

Bedrock Geology

Flood Hazards

Important Places Identified at Workshop

Industrial Site Analysis:

    Individual Constraints with Zoning Districts

    Merged Constraints with Zoning Districts

    Merged Constraints with Property Class Centroids

    Merged Constraints with Seneca Falls School District

    Merged Constraints with Aerial Photographs

Neighborhoods Identified by Committee

Property Class

Public Land and Historic Places

Roads

School Districts

Slope

Surficial Geology

Topography

Town Zoning Districts

Water Features

Watersheds