

**TOWN AND VILLAGE OF SKANEATELES  
JOINT  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

*Adopted July 11, 2005*

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## **SECTION I. INTRODUCTION**

Pursuant to Town Law §272-a, this Joint Comprehensive Plan for the Town and Village of Skaneateles represents a desire to anticipate and assess the potential impact of future change and to influence such change in ways that will conserve and protect those scenic and environmental qualities that distinguish this area and maintain the local economic base. This Plan builds upon earlier comprehensive plans from 1974 and 1996, and is presented as an updated version of these plans.

General growth and development activity in Onondaga and Cayuga Counties will determine, for the most part, the magnitude and nature of future growth pressures in the Skaneateles area. There can be little doubt, however, that this attractive community, with its lake, its hills and varied land forms will continue to be a popular place for people to live and that changes in the Town and Village land use patterns are going to occur in the years to come. This Comprehensive Plan presents an opportunity for the community to express its vision for the future and provide guidance on how to direct and shape growth and to preserve what it values most.

The process employed in preparing the plan in 1974 (known as the Niederkorn Plan)<sup>1</sup>, and the 1996 Joint Comprehensive Plan, involved several specific steps: making a thorough review of existing conditions; identifying current and anticipated problems related to the physical environment; evaluating possible future changes and development alternatives; establishing acceptable planning goals and development policy; and recommending actions that could be taken to move the community toward their planning goals. This same process has been used in the preparation of this Joint Comprehensive Plan update of 2005.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan, as set forth in this report, is the fundamental component of a planning program for the Village and Town of Skaneateles. While the Plan covers planning programs and action recommendations for both the Town and Village, responsibility for implementing these programs and recommendations rests with each municipality for those actions that are within its respective jurisdiction. The Plan represents a conscious effort of cooperation between the two municipalities, recognizing that they are in reality one community.

The plan consists of a group of broad policy statements that can be used to guide the continued social, economic and physical development of the area. The Plan attempts to maintain water quality for the Skaneateles community. Maps and drawings are an important part of the Joint Comprehensive Plan document; they are based on expressed planning policy and depict a comprehensive but generalized graphic representation of proposals for land use and traffic movement. The Plan refers to and incorporates by reference other documents and plans, some of which have been collected into a separate volume entitled "Appendices." Others are available in the offices of the Town Clerk and Village Clerk.

## **SECTION II.BACKGROUND DATA: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

A summary of pertinent background data is included as an introduction to the policy statements and future land use proposals of the Joint Comprehensive Plan.

### **A. LAND NEEDS**

Population projections based on thirty-year trends indicate that the number of people living in Skaneateles will continue to decline or will level off at approximately the 7,500 level. A 50-year analysis, however, indicates that the population has been increasing by an average of about 10 percent per decade. There is no reason to believe that, after three decades of decline, the population will grow at anything near the 10 percent-per-decade level for the next twenty years. However,

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<sup>1</sup> General Plan: Town and Village of Skaneateles, New York, March 1974, Thomas Niederkorn, Ithaca, New York.

straight-line projections of past population trends over any given time frame can be highly misleading, as they cannot predict the effects of changed circumstances. A comprehensive plan must consider a range of possible contingencies, and provide tools for the community to manage its future under various plausible scenarios.

This Joint Comprehensive Plan, could assume, based on trends over the past 30 years, that a moderate population increase of only 3 percent per decade will occur in Skaneateles. This would produce a total population of about 7,543 persons in the year 2010, an increase of approximately 17 over 1990 figures. Using the current (2000) average household size (2.5 for the Town), the number of new households in the year 2010 would be about 88. As an example, an average gross density of two acres per household would mean that 176 acres of currently undeveloped land would be converted to housing over the next two decades. In view of the fact that some development may occur in the Village, where greater densities are possible and appropriate, these estimated land needs for predicted new growth in the year 2010 might even be overstated. However, there is also a countervailing trend throughout New York State and the United States as a whole, sometimes referred to as “sprawl without growth.” There is convincing evidence that in areas where population is relatively static or even declining, the amount of developed land is still increasing at alarming rates. This is because the number of people per household is declining, while the amount of land consumed per household is increasing due to larger lot sizes.

It should also be noted that the figures above do not consider the fact that there appears to be an increased number of new subdivision applications in both the Town and Village. In addition, a number of earlier development proposals that have been under consideration for many years are now at or close to the final stages of the approval process. In the event that these projects are approved and that the real estate market absorbs them rapidly, a significant spurt of new growth could occur. As will be described elsewhere in this Comprehensive Plan, population pressures could thus be greater than might be expected based on the assumptions and projections in the preceding paragraph. Anecdotal evidence in the form of a rapid escalation in real estate prices, the growing recognition of Skaneateles as an important second-home and tourist destination, summertime traffic congestion, and increased developer interest in the community, all suggest that the Town and Village could be at a turning point in which the historically low growth rates are about to change. This concern has been expressed widely around the community and has motivated measures such as a moratorium on residential developments while this Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Law are revised.

Thus, despite the historically low demand for land in the community for new development, this Comprehensive Plan must look ahead to a possible future in which much of the open space and farmland that the community values will come under pressure for development. For this reason, the Comprehensive Plan recommends a series of measures designed to protect the most important of these resources, especially farmland and other undeveloped land in the Skaneateles Lake watershed. In addition, it is not just the total acreage of developed land that matters. Development of even small amounts of land that is highly scenic, prominent and loved by the community, prime farmland, and land that is ecologically sensitive, can have effects on the community’s well-being and sense of place disproportionate to the mere acreage. This is another reason why protection of important resource lands is a priority of this Comprehensive Plan. Because of the phenomenon of suburban sprawl occurring even in areas experiencing little population change, this Comprehensive Plan must take affirmative measures to curtail the consumption of land for development, while still allowing development that is needed to meet community needs.

## **B. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

(See Table 1)

Distribution of population by age groups shows a significant decrease in the number of younger people and an increase in the number of older people in both the Village and Town of Skaneateles since 1970. There has been a slight increase since 1990. There continues to be a steady increase in the number of older people. In the Town (excluding the Village), the number of people in the "under 19" age group declined by 29 percent, from 1,921 in 1970 to 1,357 in 2000. During

the same 30-year period; the 19 to 54 year age group grew by only 3% from 1,992 to 2,052 persons and the 55 and older age group increased by 51% percent from 857 in 1970 to 1,298 in 2000.

Similar characteristics apply to the Village population. In 1970, the number of children under the age of 19 was 1,069. By the 2000 census, this age group had decreased by 32% to 724, while the 19 to 54 year old age group decreased 12% over the same thirty years to 1097 persons. The 55 and older age group numbered 742 in 1970 and 795 in 2000, an increase of 7 percent. This is a 5 percent drop since 1990 when the population of 55 and older persons was 833.

The number of Town residents (excluding the Village) that are 65 and older increased from 434 in 1970 to 687 in 2000, an increase of 58% percent. During the same period, the number of persons 65 and older living in the Village increased from 410 in 1970 to 509 in 2000, an increase of over 24% which is slightly lower than that of 1990 when it was 531. Nineteen percent of all persons living in the Village in 2000 were 65 years old or older, only a small decrease since 1990. In 1970, one of every 7.5 persons was 65 or older. Much of this change is partially due to the Senior Citizen housing that has been built in the Village.

While the number of people living in Skaneateles has been declining, the number of households has been consistently increasing over the decades in both the Town and Village. (See Table 2.) Between 1970 and 2000, the number of households in the Village has increased by 15% while the Town (excluding the Village) has experienced a 21% increase in households over the thirty-year period. In 1970, 38% of all the households in the Town were located inside Village boundaries. By 2000, the Village share had dropped to 37%.

A decline in population accompanied by an increase in households means that the average household size has gotten smaller. Census figures over the past forty years indicate a steady decrease in the average number of persons per household. Since 1970, the household size in the Village has dropped from 3.0 to 2.2 persons. In the Town (excluding the Village), the number has dropped from 2.8 to 2.3 persons.

**TABLE 1**  
**AGE DISTRIBUTION: 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000**  
**TOWN OF SKANEATELES (Including Village)**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Under 19</u>	<u>19-54</u>	<u>55-64</u>	<u>65 &amp; Over</u>	<u>Total</u>
1970	2,990	3,236	755	844	7,825
1980	2,491	3,583	811	920	7,805
1990	2,001	3,589	856	1,080	7,526
2000	2,081	3,149	897	1,196	7,323
<b>1970-2000</b>	<b>-30%</b>	<b>-3%</b>	<b>+19%</b>	<b>+42%</b>	<b>-6%</b>

**VILLAGE OF SKANEATELES**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Under 19</u>	<u>19-54</u>	<u>55-64</u>	<u>65 &amp; Over</u>	<u>Total</u>
1970	1,069	1,244	332	410	3,055
1980	823	1,224	322	418	2,787
1990	662	1,229	302	531	2,724
2000	724	1,097	286	509	2,616
<b>1970-2000</b>	<b>-32%</b>	<b>-12%</b>	<b>+7%</b>	<b>+24%</b>	<b>-14%</b>

**TOWN OUTSIDE VILLAGE**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Under 19</u>	<u>19-54</u>	<u>55 – 64</u>	<u>65 &amp; Over</u>	<u>Total</u>
1970	1,921	1,992	423	434	4,770
1980	1,668	2,359	489	502	5,018
1990	1,339	2,360	554	549	4,802
2000	1,357	2,052	611	687	4,707
<b>1970–2000</b>	<b>-29%</b>	<b>+3%</b>	<b>+44%</b>	<b>+58%</b>	<b>-1%</b>

**TABLE 2**  
**Housing Units**  
**1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000**

**TOWN OF SKANEATELES (Including Village)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Housing Units</b>
1970	2,713
1980	3,083
1990	3,179
2000	3,233

**VILLAGE OF SKANEATELES**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Housing Units</b>
1970	1,031
1980	1,102
1990	1,223

2000 1,190

**TOWN OUTSIDE VILLAGE**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Housing Units</b>
1970	1,682
1980	1,981
1990	1,956
2000	2,042

**TABLE 3**  
**Population Table 1950-2000**

	<b>1950</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Onondaga County</b>	<b>341,719</b>	<b>423,028</b>	<b>472,835</b>	<b>463,920</b>	<b>468,973</b>	<b>458,336</b>
<b>Village of Skaneateles</b>	<b>2,331</b>	<b>2,921</b>	<b>3,055</b>	<b>2,789</b>	<b>2,724</b>	<b>2,616</b>
<b>Area Outside Village</b>	<b>2,862</b>	<b>3,682</b>	<b>4,770</b>	<b>5,006</b>	<b>4,802</b>	<b>4,707</b>
<b>Total Town of Skaneateles</b>	<b>5,193</b>	<b>6,603</b>	<b>7,825</b>	<b>7,795</b>	<b>7,526</b>	<b>7,323</b>

**C. GROWTH TRENDS**

(See Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3.)

Growth in Skaneateles, as in many suburban communities in Onondaga County, has been affected by the suburbanization phenomenon that occurred between the late 1940's and early 1970's. In the fifty-year period between 1950 and 2000, the County's population increased by 34%. However, the last decades of that period showed a decline in the 1970's, followed by a slight increase during the 1980's, and a decrease during the 1990's. The net result was a small decrease in the number of people living in the County between 1970 and 2000.

The Town of Skaneateles (excluding Village residents) increased in population by 64% between 1950 and 2000 and during the same period the Village increased by 12%. Most of that growth occurred between 1950 and 1970. During the 1970 decade, the Town's population (excluding village residents) increased only slightly (5%), but almost all of that growth was lost during the 80's and continued to decrease in the 90's. As a result, the Town's population in 2000 was actually 63 persons less than the count made in 1970. In contrast, the Village's population reached a high point of 3,055 persons in 1970 and then declined by almost 9% during the 1970's, 2% during the 1980's and another 4% during the 1990's. As a result, the Village's population in 2000 was 439 persons less than the 1970 count.

Several conclusions important to planning can be drawn from census figures for the past fifty years:

1. In Onondaga County, the considerable suburban growth pressure of the 1950 and 1960 decades appears to have stopped.
2. Population changes in the Town and Village of Skaneateles are consistent with changes at the County and State level. There was a decline from 1970 to 1980 followed by a slight increase during the 1980 decade and a decrease during the 1990 decade. The net result has been virtual stability over the past thirty years.
3. The Village of Skaneateles has lost population during the past three decades and now has about 10 percent fewer people than in 1960.
4. Village population, as a percentage of total Town population, has declined from 39 percent in 1970 to 36 percent in 2000.
5. Population projections used in the 1974 Niederkorn Plan, and based on historic growth rates, predicted a magnitude of growth for Skaneateles that was in error by over 10,000 people.
6. Based on 10, 20 and 30-year trends, limited population growth in Skaneateles can be expected over the next twenty years. This growth is more likely to occur in the Town than in the Village.

The above conclusions are based in part on the information contained in Tables 1, 2 and 3. It should be noted that both the Town and Village have experienced what appears to be a recent surge in development proposals. As noted above, this could lead to a considerable increase in population and land consumption, especially if the amount of land per person and per household increases significantly. Zoning restrictions and the availability of water and sewer facilities will influence the location and nature of future growth.

Information for the years 2000 – 2004 released in April, 2005 by the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency on residential building permits and subdivisions indicates that in 2004 Skaneateles (Town and Village) had a total of 29 new residential building permits, of which 24 were for single-family residences and 5 were for units in 2 – 4 family dwellings. Of these, four single-family units were in the Village and all five multi-family units were in the Village. Over the four-year period from 2000 – 2004, 57 new lots were created in the Town and Village on 235.34 total acres, averaging 4.13 acres per lot. These figures are consistent with the rate of growth described above, but the fact that several subdivision proposals are currently pending may change the trend line for the second half of the decade.

#### **D. SOILS**

The planning area can be grouped into four major soil associations: Honeoye-Lima, Cazenovia-Ovid, Benson-Ontario, and Palmyra. About 80 percent of the Town, including the Skaneateles Lake watershed, consists of soils in the Honeoye-Lima Association. These soils are slowly permeable, a characteristic that generally imposes severe limitations on development that is dependent on septic systems for sewage disposal. Additionally, the steeper slopes in the Honeoye-Lima Association are prone to extensive erosion.

Land use activity in the Skaneateles Lake watershed is a major determinant of the lake's water quality. Because of the dual soil characteristics of poor permeability and erosion hazard, development in the watershed, and the land use regulations that control development, will have a direct impact on lake water quality.

The Skaneateles Creek area consists primarily of Cazenovia-Ovid soils which are somewhat better than the Honeoye-Lima, but also impose severe limitations on effective septic tank operations. As a general observation, it can be concluded that concentrated development is not practical or desirable in areas that are not served by public sewers. Of the Town's 27, 224 acres of land, 16,952 acres (62%) are considered to be prime farmland, according to the local office of the



Natural Resources Conservation Service. This is a significant resource that merits protection efforts.

## **E. WATER AND SEWER SERVICE**

Public sewers are available only in the Village of Skaneateles with some very limited extensions into adjacent Town land.

In 1982, a new wastewater treatment plant was constructed by the Village to replace an inadequate plant that provided only primary treatment. The 1982 plant has been faced with problems of excessive groundwater infiltration and inflow. Lack of sewage treatment capacity is a major limiting factor on growth in the Village and the Town. The Village has made a conscious decision not to expand the sewer plant's capacity. This increases the importance of decisions about the allocation of any remaining capacity or any capacity created by reducing groundwater infiltration and inflow. Such capacity should be allocated in a manner that is consistent with the recommendations in this Comprehensive Plan. Full information on the Village's wastewater treatment capacity is available in the Stearns and Wheler 2003 Wastewater Treatment Capacity Report, available in the Village Clerk's Office.

As new technologies become available that permit cost-effective decentralized sewage treatment, the Town Board will need to develop a policy regarding whether such treatment systems are acceptable in particular locations and if so, how they are to be maintained and managed. Such systems have the potential, if coupled with proper land use regulations, to allow for compact, "smart" growth which also preserves open space. However, if there are not careful controls over such systems and the land uses that they support, the result could be highly damaging to both the community's water quality and its character.

Public water is available throughout the Village and in portions of the Town. Public water is available generally along Jordan Road from the Village line to the Town of Elbridge and along Route 321 from the Village line to Mottville Road. Service also extends along Route 20 to the east and west and includes a portion of New Seneca Turnpike to Gully Road. Water is also provided to the north as far as the Old Seneca Turnpike and from the village line on West Lake Street south to the Skaneateles Country Club.

Water for the local system is taken from the large main that carries water from Skaneateles Lake to Syracuse. Chlorination is the only treatment required at present but the threat of increased pollution of the lake is causing concern. Currently the City of Syracuse and the Village of Skaneateles are under an indefinite filtration waiver from the State of New York. Filtration would be an enormously expensive infrastructure improvement for both Syracuse and Skaneateles and every effort should be made to avoid this. Since increased pollution of the lake is one possible result of development in the watershed, the consequences of future public water extensions to watershed areas must include, among others, the potential financial, environmental and aesthetic costs of filtration. Other measures to minimize pollution sources or contamination in the watershed must also be pursued.

Onondaga County has major concerns with protection of the quality of its water supply systems. In 1985, the County created the Water Quality Management Agency, one purpose of which is to oversee development in watershed areas to prevent water quality degradation.

## **F. INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE**

The high quality of life that Skaneateles enjoys is one factor that has helped to attract and keep local businesses. While Skaneateles is not a major employment center in Onondaga County there is diversity in the Town in terms of the size of industry, type of product or service, and required labor force skills. Shopping facilities are located primarily in the long-established Village Center and a limited amount of service commercial and automobile-oriented development located along Route 20 east and west of the Village. Additional commercial development has been locating along Fennell Street, in effect extending the downtown to the north by several blocks. Considerations should be given to allowing limited

expanded uses for preexisting nonconforming structures that were built prior to 1996 located along Route 20 East and West of the Village.

Over time, the downtown retail center has responded to identified market strengths. . In recent years, there has been a significant shift in the types of retail and service businesses found in the Village, with more of these businesses catering to visitors and fewer to local residents, as evidenced by the number of gift and specialty shops. There is also strength in personal services and in the provision of food and beverages. Professional offices and financial services round out the land use pattern of the downtown. Residents from neighboring communities frequently visit Skaneateles for goods and services, and shopping centers in Auburn, Marcellus and the Syracuse area are used to satisfy most shopping needs of local residents.

Because of the dramatic appeal of its beautiful lake, central portions of Skaneateles have achieved the widespread image of a charming, desirable residential community and tourist destination. However, as this positive image becomes more and more well-known, the impacts of increased tourism and second-home population will continue to change the nature of the community. One of the biggest changes since the last comprehensive plan is the degree to which Skaneateles is now “on the map” as a tourist destination. This has important implications for the character of the community, the amount of development pressure, the type of businesses and nature of the local economy, and the capacity of the Town and Village to handle an ever-growing population of both seasonal residents and transient visitors. The development of regional attractions such as Bass Pro Shops and possibly “DestiNY” in Syracuse could overwhelm the community.

Within the context of regional development, and consistent with current goals and policies expressed in Onondaga County's *2010 Development Guide* (excerpted in Appendix A), the Skaneateles area is not viewed as a major center of commercial activity or industrial employment. While some expansion of the light industrial and commercial sector is occurring, it is likely to continue at a slow pace, primarily involving the expansion of existing businesses. The increasing cost of land and housing in Skaneateles, and the lack of infrastructure, make it a less cost-effective place to attract new employment centers than other communities in the region. In addition, the region itself has been in a prolonged economic slump from which a recovery is not foreseen in the near future. Relatively little of whatever new industrial or commercial development occurs in the region is likely to happen in Skaneateles. Because of its high real estate values, physical beauty, and excellent schools, the biggest growth sectors will be residential, second-home, and tourism-oriented development, along with local support services for these sectors.

## **G. HOUSING**

With an increase in the relatively high quality of housing in the Town and Village of Skaneateles, there are fewer areas where deteriorated housing exists. Some effective programs to provide housing for the elderly have been implemented and there are plans to expand available facilities for this growing segment of the housing market. While there are concerns that affordable housing may become a problem, housing prices in the Town are varied and there has recently been significant price escalation throughout the community, especially near the Lake and in the Village. Future development of rental housing located in the Village and in hamlets is encouraged where shopping and municipal services are within walking distance and water and sewer services are available. Some of this rental housing could be located above storefronts in the expanded downtown mixed-use area on Fennell Street.

Affordable housing should also be encouraged in the Town, especially in the hamlets, provided that such housing is in scale with the hamlets and their rural surroundings. Conversion of existing buildings to multi-family use is generally more appropriate than construction of new apartments, particularly if such apartments are located in isolated single-use "pods." New apartment buildings should be in scale with existing farmhouses and barns, and of similar design and materials. Site layouts should follow the patterns of hamlets or rural farmsteads. Densities should be kept well within the

carrying capacity of the land, especially within the Skaneateles Lake watershed, where sewage disposal and run-off should be controlled with the greatest care.

## **H. TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION**

The Village of Skaneateles and Routes 41 and 41A have become centers of highway traffic movement through this part of the County. North-south and east-west traffic crisscrosses in the built up part of the Village where narrow residential streets are often inadequate to handle the traffic they must carry. While recognizing that the trucking industry is essential to our economy, there are increasing safety and quality of life concerns related to heavy truck as well as automobile traffic. This problem is compounded during summer months when the village experiences an increase in resident and tourist traffic. Opportunities for rerouting through truck traffic to the NYS Thruway and the Interstate Highway System should be continued to be explored and studies should be conducted by County and State level agencies to determine the feasibility of developing or constructing truck bypass routes.

A priority stated in the County's *2010 Development Guide* is to maintain and protect the highway system so as to facilitate and improve travel between communities. While this objective will benefit residents in Skaneateles, the major problem of heavy traffic within the Village remains.

In addition, the traffic-carrying function of most major roads is being diminished by the growing number of curb-cuts required to provide access to strip development of adjacent land.

## **I. COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES**

Existing governmental office space, public works storage and maintenance space, and library, health and educational facilities are, for the most part, adequately meeting the present need of the Skaneateles communities. There is an immediate need to construct a new fire station. The relocation of the post office in a downtown location and the construction of a joint public works/school bus garage facility have both been positive additions to the community.

The Skaneateles School District has played a major role in making the community an attractive place to live. The recent upgrade of school facilities has greatly enhanced their quality and provided some limited capacity expansions. Enrollment projections for the schools are somewhat uncertain, and will depend in large part upon the demographic profile of new residents of both existing and new homes. In the near term, there appears to be little need for expansion of school facilities, although this could change significantly depending upon how many families with school-age children move into the community in the coming years. The outstanding reputation of the Skaneateles schools could itself become a magnet for new growth, attracting families with children who will, in turn, create the need for school facility expansion.

If population increase over the next two decades continues to be limited, there will be little need for new or expanded public facilities to accommodate growth. However, a long-term capital plan for public facilities should be undertaken, particularly if population growth exceeds the modest projections based upon the growth of the last 30 years. In particular, a review of the location and amount of space used by Village and Town public works facilities is needed. This evaluation should determine whether or not some consolidation is possible and advantageous. It should also assess the highest and best use of land currently devoted to public works activities. This long-term plan should contemplate a range of potential growth scenarios ranging from the slow-growth trend of recent decades to a possible spike in growth resulting from new development activity.

## **J. RECREATION**

A major improvement in indoor recreation opportunities has been the construction of the Skaneateles Community Center close to the schools and Austin Park.

In general, there is a growing need for outdoor recreation space for use by Town and Village residents. The 292-acre Skaneateles Recreation Area, including the Federal Farm, has helped to meet that need. In the Town, public recreation opportunities related to Skaneateles Lake and its shoreline are very limited. Appropriate lakeside facilities could include a range of active and passive opportunities such as picnic and sitting areas, play areas and swimming. Currently in the Village, a public dock is provided and maintained by the Skaneateles Chamber of Commerce. Boating is, of course, an obvious attraction of Skaneateles Lake but public boat launching and mooring facilities are limited.

Skaneateles Creek is a natural resource with great recreation potential which should be seriously explored by both Town and Village officials. While this might well take some years to assemble and develop, a "Creekwalk" could become one of the major natural attractions of the Skaneateles area. Small scale neighborhood recreation facilities are appropriate in hamlet areas such as Mandana, Mottville, Skaneateles Falls, and Shepard Settlement. Whenever possible, existing natural resources should be incorporated into these small recreation facilities.

## **K. SKANEATELES LAKE AND ITS WATERSHED**

Clearly, the most important natural feature of the Skaneateles area is the lake. Because of its extreme attractiveness, the lake has become a major target for *economic*, recreational and residential development. It is, at the same time, the principal water supply for the City of Syracuse. The City of Syracuse, by law, (See decision of the NY Water Power and Control Commission approving Water Supply Application No. 609 dated September 22, 1931 (Volume 41); N.Y. Public Health Law '1100 and rules promulgated there under) has responsibility for and the right to control lake water quality. Control of lake water quality and, by extension, land use activity in the watershed is one of the major problems and responsibilities facing the Skaneateles Lake watershed communities, the City of Syracuse and Onondaga County.

Since only 27 percent of the lake's drainage area, 45 percent of the water surface and 40 percent of the shoreline lie within the Town of Skaneateles' boundaries, it is obvious that an agency with broad jurisdiction is needed to effectively regulate development around this body of water. (See Figure 1.) Partially in response to this increasingly important need, Onondaga County created a Water Quality Management Agency in 1985 and, in the *2010 Development Guide*, recommended that this advisory Agency "create lake watershed community entities...to facilitate communication, public education, and the implementation of desired watershed protection and management actions."

The purpose of this recommended policy is to provide oversight and advice on the creation of land use strategies in watershed communities to prevent water quality degradation in Skaneateles and Owasco Lakes (a portion of Owasco Lake's watershed is in the Town of Skaneateles). Reduction of water quality can result from impervious surfaces, storm water runoff, grading and other land disturbances, erosion and some kinds of agricultural operations (nonpoint source pollution). Septic systems, fertilizers and similar development-related activities are the cause of so called nonpoint source pollution. Point source pollution usually follows development; nonpoint source pollution comes from surface

drainage across open land. Both can reduce water quality and make expensive treatment procedures necessary. This is a continuing concern of the Skaneateles communities, Onondaga County and the City of Syracuse. The City produces annual reports called "City of Syracuse Department of Water, Water Quality Management, Skaneateles Lake and Watershed." The reports from 1995 through 2004 are available in the office of the Town Clerk, and each subsequent year's report will be added to the collection.

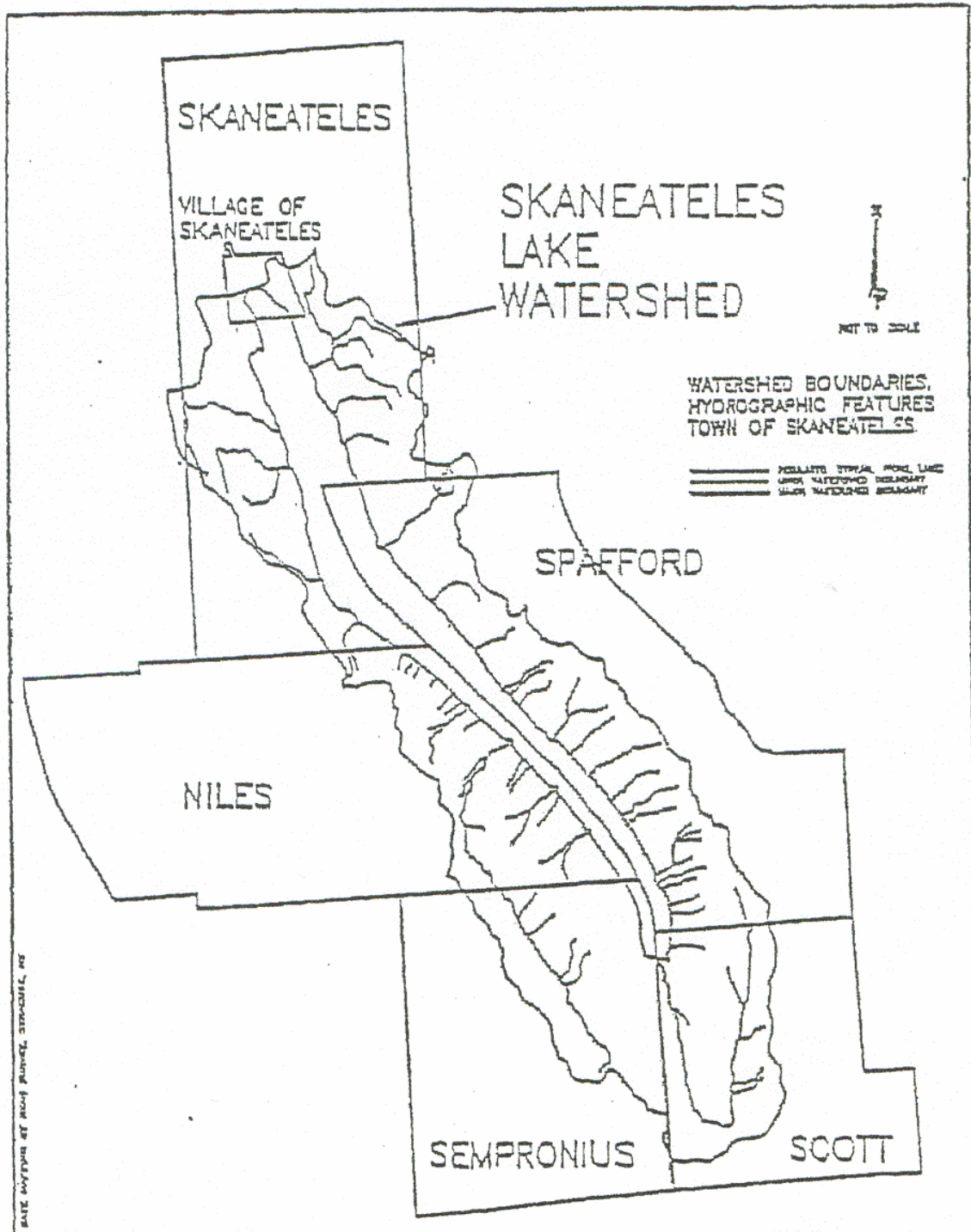
The City of Syracuse sponsors the voluntary Skaneateles Lake Watershed Agricultural Program (SLWAP) through the Onondaga Soil and Water Conservation District. All farms with gross receipts of \$10,000 over a two-year period are eligible. Approximately 95% of the farms in the watershed land base are enrolled in the program as of April, 2003. The resulting "Whole Farm Plans" endeavor to reduce agricultural pollution that can reach the tributaries and shoreline of Skaneateles Lake, without negatively impacting the farm economics. The plans cover nutrient management and field, pasture and barnyard management. Plans utilize Best Management Practices (BMPs) primarily to reduce the water quality impacts of pathogens, nutrients and sediment. The City has begun a Phase II of this successful program to begin in 2004. Consideration should be given to have regulations with more flexibility and less restrictions for agricultural uses in approved agriculture districts. Information on this program is available through the Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District.

While some would argue that public sewers in the watershed can help reduce pollution from septic systems, the provision of water and sewers along the lake is considered detrimental. Extensive development cannot be permitted in the absence of an effective sewage disposal system. The availability of public utilities would be a catalyst and an incentive for future growth which would add new pollution to the lake from point and non-point sources.

An issue that has become increasingly important is the demolition of existing structures on the lake front and their replacement by much larger homes, as well as the expansion and reconstruction of existing homes. Most of these are on non-conforming lots that do not comply with the Town's limitations on impermeable surface coverage. This issue has been the subject of numerous zoning variance requests. The Town needs to develop a new approach to controlling these larger homes so that they do not detract from the Lake's scenic character or water quality. One way to do this is to carefully review the design quality of such expansions and to mitigate any impacts on Lake water quality. Preserving undeveloped land in the watershed as a trade-off for allowing larger homes on non-conforming lots can be an effective way to mitigate any impact, because it lessens the long-term build-out of the watershed and thereby protects water quality.

Figure 1

Skaneateles Lake Watershed



### **SECTION III. LAND USE: POLICY AND OBJECTIVE**

Policy determination is fundamental to the planning process. To provide a firm basis for land use and circulation proposals included in the Joint Town and Village Comprehensive Plan, and to justify specific decisions on land use regulations, it is essential that a clear stand be taken on basic development issues. Guidelines are needed to indicate the Town and Village position on important questions related to development. Such guidelines are referred to in this report as Land Use: Policy and Objectives; they represent value judgments and attitudes about many things that are important for the Skaneateles communities, now and in the future.

Once officially established and made known, land use policy provides a rationale for public and private capital investment. Policy also becomes justification for many decisions on zoning, land subdivision and site plan review that must be made by local government officials. Since policy forms the essential foundation for planning, and since communities change and are not static, it is important that policy statements be reviewed periodically and changed as conditions and local attitudes change. Such review has been undertaken as part of this Master Plan update.

#### **A. COUNTY DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

As part of Onondaga County the Town and Village of Skaneateles will be affected by long range development plans made at the County level. While Skaneateles must determine its own future, local planning policy should properly be related to the broader context of the surrounding region.

In the Onondaga County *2010 Development Guide*, prepared in 1992 by the Syracuse-Onondaga County Planning Agency, the Guide sets forth five major development goals and contains 236 recommendations for policies aimed at achieving the goals. This broad array of policies is divided into two general categories: Management and Fiscal Policies; and Environmental, Infrastructure and Land Development Policies. A number of policies adopted by Onondaga County have direct relevance to long-range planning in the Town and Village of Skaneateles and were considered and were influential in the formulation of this planning document. These policies, extracted from the County's *2010 Development Guide*, are listed in Appendix A.

#### **B. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

While the proposed approach to growth, and the overall direction for future development patterns established by Onondaga County (see Appendix A), provide valuable context and guidance for Skaneateles, it is the prerogative of both Town and Village to determine their own long-range development goals and establish land use policy related to values and needs. It is to be expected, that a number of goals and objectives established at the County level will coincide with those that are considered appropriate at the local level.

There are alternative ways that growth and change can occur in the Skaneateles area. The shape and character that actually materializes in this community will depend, to a large extent, on policy decisions that are made now as part of the planning process. Any opportunities for land acquisition by the Town and Village should be evaluated as they occur.

The Town and Village have formulated the following policy statements as the basis for a future land use plan. These statements are intended to set forth the Town's and Village's position on important community planning issues. They can provide a rationale for public and private capital investment; they also provide justification for zoning ordinance modifications and for decisions that come before local boards for review. It is believed that these policies reflect basic community values and support small town, village, and rural life styles and a high quality environment.

##### **1. GROWTH**

Both the Town and Village recognize the unique character and qualities that make Skaneateles an attractive place to live and work. Further, it is recognized that tourism is an increasingly important segment of the local economy and is directly dependent upon the preservation of Skaneateles' unique character and qualities. New development will continue; and while past trends indicate that the pace of population growth will be moderate to slow, more recent indications are that the pace could accelerate in the near future. The increasing need for adequate systems to dispose of sewage and the protection of natural resources will be the major determinants of how much growth can be accommodated. In the absence of sewer infrastructure, growth will most likely be accommodated in a relatively low-density pattern that consumes open land. If development pressures increase, the Town will face policy decisions as to how to deal with sewage disposal in order to fulfill its goals of compact development and open space preservation. New development should be designed and located in a manner that maintains the unique balance among residents, businesses and tourism and preserves environmental quality.

**A. GOAL:** To manage growth in a manner that provides protection for areas of recognized environmental sensitivity and preserves the character prized by Skaneateles residents and visitors i.e. a village/hamlet character within a small town, village, and rural setting.

*Objectives:*

- a. To prepare and review every five years a comprehensive land use plan that will become a guide for public and private decisions on the future use and development of land.
- b. To preserve and improve the qualities that distinguish the Skaneateles community, while accommodating modest growth that is beneficial to the community.
- c. To support growth and more intensive land use activity in the Village and in the Town along the Jordan Road and Fennell Street corridors and in the existing hamlets.
- d. To improve the visual character and traffic safety of key entry points to the Village, especially Route 20 East and West of the Village boundary, by limiting commercial growth that may detract from these entries while upgrading the design of existing commercial uses; to maintain the rural character of the northern entry on Route 321 .
- e. To establish reasonable limits to non-farm growth in the watersheds of Skaneateles and Owasco Lakes.
- f. To promote public acquisition of development rights and/or conservation easements and encourage alternate uses of abandoned farmland that preserve its rural character in the Skaneateles and Owasco Lake watersheds.
- g. To revise current Town and Village land use regulations (such as zoning, subdivision approval, erosion and sedimentation control, etc.) in order to achieve long range land use goals.
- h. To revise current Town and Village zoning, subdivision, and other land use regulations so that they are consistent with the concepts of the Joint Comprehensive Plan and the Traditional Neighborhood Development Guidelines of the Onondaga County Settlement Plan.
- i. To adopt a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) system to encourage development in hamlets and other areas suitable for intensive development and to discourage development in the watershed, on farmland, and in other areas that are of special value as open space.



- j. In the event that growth pressures accelerate over the coming years, to consider the following tools for managing rapid growth:
- an “adequate public facilities” review of new development.
  - the use of impact fees (of limited utility due to current state law, but worth considering in the event that state law changes), especially for dealing with increased capacity needs of the school district in the event of unforeseen growth.

## **2. NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE**

In any long-range planning program for Skaneateles, one of the most important considerations must be the adequate and continuing recognition, protection and preservation of an outstanding natural environment. Foremost among many concerns is maintenance of water quality in Skaneateles and Owasco Lakes, the watersheds of which include portions of the Town of Skaneateles. These lakes and their watersheds are extremely sensitive areas. The Town and Village should protect the watersheds by managing land use carefully and should consider designating all or a portion of them as Critical Environmental Areas (CEAs) to encourage the protection that such a designation affords. Other distinctive natural features, including a variety of types of open space in the Town have environmental significance that must be acknowledged in comprehensive planning efforts. Densely wooded areas, mineral deposits, wildlife, wetlands and floodplains; steep slopes, Skaneateles Creek and other major drainage ways represent resources that help to define the community and give it character. Both Town and Village will make the protection of distinctive natural resources a high priority as future development and change occurs. The preservation of various open space resources should be distinguished from the preservation of agriculture, which requires not only protection of the resource (farmland), but also profitability of farming (see 3 below).

- A. GOAL:** Skaneateles Lake and ground water quality that is at least as good as it was in 1995.
- B. GOAL:** Public policies and actions that truly reflect the local and regional value of important natural resources and preserve, protect and enhance all environmentally sensitive areas whenever possible.
- C. GOAL:** Broad community awareness of environmental, social, and economic interdependency and the negative consequences of unregulated growth and change.

### *Objectives:*

- To establish a monitoring program to regularly assess the state of the lake and thereby measure the effectiveness of the comprehensive plan in protecting the lake. The monitoring program should measure parameters that will give a clear indication of the state of the lake and the status of the major threats to the lake, such as eutrophication, invasive species, turbidity, and contamination by pesticides, herbicides or other harmful substances. The first step would be to establish a committee of knowledgeable scientists to prepare a plan for lake monitoring, at little or no cost to the Town, using available resources from local agencies, organizations, and universities. The sampling should include near shore, stream mouth and open water, using a schedule that would monitor normal and storm events in order to achieve the earliest possible warning of impending damage to the lake.
- To consider designating Skaneateles Lake and a limited area near the Lake lying within the Town and Village of Skaneateles, as a Critical Environmental Area (CEA), and to encourage similar designations by all Towns within the watersheds of Skaneateles Lake and Owasco Lake.
- To reduce the adverse impact of impervious surface coverage in the watershed by keeping the average at 10% or less,

including the Village. Where there is an expansion of a building on lot with more than 10% impervious surface coverage, there should be a compensating measure restricting development on other land in the watershed to help maintain the average at or below 10%.

- d. To reduce impacts on lake and creek water from erosion, sedimentation and drainage, including development of an environmentally sound highway and ditch maintenance program and implementation of appropriate water quality and soil and erosion control ordinances in both the Town and Village.
- e. To more carefully identify and define exceptional natural areas and designate them, when warranted, as Critical Environmental Areas under State Environmental Quality Review regulations. This should extend to consideration of the Lake itself, considering impacts from activities in the watershed on habitats within the Lake's ecosystem.
- f. To educate and inform government agencies and the general public about the relationship between water quality and the importance of voluntary reduction in the use of chemicals, fertilizers and pesticides in residential and recreational areas.
- g. To cooperate with the city of Syracuse, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the United States Department of Agriculture and other concerned agencies in formulating regulations protective of Skaneateles Lake and its watersheds within the town from pollution, chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides, sedimentation and other pollutants originating in residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural uses of land.
- h. To work with the City of Syracuse and other municipalities and public and private agencies as necessary to prepare the state mandated Skaneateles Lake Watershed Management Plan outlining priorities and an action plan. The action plan should take into account the need to protect the lake against the introduction of invasive species.
- i. To support agricultural and other private sector efforts to protect and minimize impact on sensitive environmental areas such as streams, drainage ways, wetlands, wooded areas, steep slopes, and watersheds.
- j. To maintain the maximum amount of vegetation in all development projects and encourage and coordinate the planting of appropriate tree species along streets and roads and in parking areas.
- k. To study and utilize when appropriate the use of incentive zoning, innovative subdivision regulations, voluntary conservation easements, and similar techniques in an effort to strike a reasonable balance between private property rights and public environmental concerns.
- l. To prepare a detailed open space plan to identify all of the priority natural resource areas that need protection, and to recommend tools and techniques to preserve them.

### **3. AGRICULTURE**

The Town intends to foster a spirit of cooperation between farm and non-farm residents in preserving agricultural resources while supporting responsible growth. Right-to-Farm ordinances and similar measures can be useful in protecting operating farms from undue harassment and lawsuits. The Town recognizes that the preservation of agriculture requires profitability of farming, and should take all reasonable measures to minimize its interference in agricultural operations and to provide economic incentives for farmers to keep farming.

- A. GOAL:** An integrated program of farm practices and land use regulations that will benefit farm owners, protect the environment and preserve farmland.

**B. GOAL:** Farms that include economically diverse agribusiness activities and in-home occupations which are environmentally compatible with the lake watershed.

**C. GOAL:** Varied forms of agriculture.

*Objectives:*

- a. To enact and enforce appropriate local laws, including zoning; that will support and encourage viable agriculture, minimizing any burdens on agriculture from zoning laws.
- b. To establish and maintain a dialogue with the farm community to address mutual concerns over which farmers and local government have some control.
- c. To develop land use controls that will allow farmers to have compatible agricultural businesses, on their farms and to minimize residential driveway intersections on major roads through agricultural areas.
- d. To encourage compliance with the existing regulations for agricultural use including minimizing pollution of streams and drainage ways in the Town of Skaneateles. This shall include among other things , cooperation with the USDA regulations governing soil erosion and water control and the implementation of its "Best Management Practices," and Integrated Pest Management (IPM).
- e. To develop a strategy in coordination with surrounding towns in the Skaneateles Watershed to preserve some of our best farmland for future generations. The Strategy should consider, among other things, the viability of agriculture, preservation of viewshed and critical open spaces
- f. To develop a comprehensive farmland protection plan for the Town that provides a combination of regulatory incentives and relief, compensation to landowners such as tax rebates or leasing of development rights, and a funding mechanism to finance the preservation of farmland.

#### **4. WATER AND SEWER SYSTEMS**

The New York State Department of Health (DOH) has directed the City of Syracuse to implement a plan to filter the water it receives from Skaneateles Lake. The City of Syracuse has implemented a plan to obtain approval from the DOH to avoid such filtration. The Village of Skaneateles receives its supply of water from the City of Syracuse intake line. The Village has also implemented a plan to obtain approval from the DOH to avoid filtration of the water it receives from the City. Failure to avoid such filtration will result in the imposition of a substantial tax burden on the City and Village to build filtration plants. As part of its plan, the Village has completed additional chlorination facilities to protect that water supply for Village residents and those Town residents receiving that water through a number of water districts. The plans and measures implemented by the City of Syracuse and the Village to avoid filtration include improved protection of the watershed to maintain the purity of Skaneateles Lake. Such improved protection includes, but is not limited to, the prevention of contamination from defective septic systems and storm water runoff. The filtration avoidance plans should include efforts to improve the review of applications for new septic systems and monitoring all such systems after installation and monitoring storm water runoff. However, the level of existing municipal control over the review and monitoring process will require greater involvement of the Town and Village in that process through their land use controls.

Current capacity limitations of the Village's sewage treatment plant impose constraints on new development in the Village and contiguous areas of the Town. The cost of constructing additional treatment capacity is beyond the Village's current financial ability and additional capacity is unlikely to be provided in the foreseeable future.

At present, the Town does not have its own sewage treatment plant and neither past nor projected growth rates justify building a sewage treatment plant- It may be appropriate to consider creating new municipal sewer districts for portions of the Town. However, to permit growth to occur in accordance with the concept proposed in this Plan, any such Town

Sewer District may only be created to serve areas outside of the Skaneateles Lake Watershed. This Joint Comprehensive Plan encourages future development in the Hamlet districts and along the Fennell Street and Jordan Road corridors, north of the Village. To preserve open space and encourage compact development patterns, this Joint Comprehensive Plan encourages the use of cluster development and other forms of flexible development including development designated as "performance subdivision" in the current Zoning Law and as "open space subdivision" in the proposed Zoning Law. The Town should investigate a range of options for providing sewer service within areas that are outside the watershed and in the best location to absorb office, industrial, research, types of commercial and residential growth.

It should be noted that the New York Environmental Conservation Law Section §17-1709(1) prohibits any sewage discharge into Skaneateles Lake or its tributaries. As to areas outside the watershed, the Town concurs with the Onondaga County Plan Report 3, *2010 Development Guide*, that "private creation of [wastewater treatment systems] under the state provisions for 'Transportation Corporations' has not proved to be reliable for ensuring long term operation, maintenance, funding and replacement." Furthermore, insufficient justification exists for the Town to incur the additional sewage obligations associated with obtaining one or more SPDES permits. Any future treatment plant expansion will be more efficient and economical if done regionally rather than on a development by development basis.

Private sewage disposal systems, including package systems, in the Town will continue to be allowed on individual properties only if the construction, operation and maintenance of such systems are determined to be satisfactory by appropriate State, County, City and Town agencies. However, the Town and Village should encourage the City of Syracuse and the County Department of Health to raise the standards and improve the process for review of new applications for such sewage disposal systems and for monitoring existing systems to implement and maintain the filtration avoidance plan. The Town should require the applicant for a new septic system to pay for the expenses incurred by the Town to obtain expert assistance in making a determination whether the soil conditions and percolation rate are acceptable to support the proposed sewage disposal system. Privately owned treatment systems that serve multiple owners should be prohibited. Private systems serving a single owner, particularly an owner of an industrial, office, or research development, are more likely to be properly maintained over time and less likely to become a municipal responsibility.

Public water systems should not be extended to support new growth in the lake watershed, in agricultural districts or in areas where private sewage disposal systems are inadequate. The construction of such infrastructure would encourage more development in areas that the Town has determined are inappropriate.

- A. GOAL:** Consider sewage treatment technologies and institutional arrangements that reinforce the Joint Comprehensive Plan's basic goals of preserving open space and encouraging compact mixed-use development that is in scale with the Village/Hamlet character within a small town, village and rural setting outside of the Skaneateles Lake Watershed.
- B. GOAL:** Assure that development in the Town can be properly serviced by private septic systems or any other effective technologies under institutional arrangements that have been proven to be workable for long-term operation, repair and maintenance.
- C. GOAL:** Limit extensions of public sewers and the creation of any new Town sewer districts to areas outside the Skaneateles Lake Watershed.
- D. GOAL:** Limit extensions of public water supplies serving new development to areas outside the Skaneateles Lake Watershed.

*Objectives:*

- a. To discourage development where public sewage disposal services are not available.

- b. To prevent the creation of private sewage treatment plants serving multiple owners that Onondaga County and the Town Board believe to be unreliable in terms of long term operation and maintenance.
- c. To consider sewage treatment districts to serve the light industrial areas and hamlets in the Skaneateles Creek/Jordan Road corridor.
- d. To encourage the City of Syracuse to continue periodic inspections to insure proper functioning of private sewage disposal facilities throughout the Lake Watershed.

## 5. HOUSING

Skaneateles is a desirable residential community. Both Town and Village acknowledge the strong attraction of this area as a place to live, work, raise a family and retire. The broad housing needs of current and future residents should be met in ways that retain the area's village, small town and rural character to the fullest extent possible. Low-density sprawl and large or isolated high-density pockets of apartments in the Town should be avoided. Apartment development should occur on a scale that blends in with the existing built fabric of the Village and the Town's hamlets and farmsteads. Developers of industrial, office, or retail development should be encouraged to integrate housing into their developments to provide housing for employees and reduce impacts on the transportation system.

- A. GOAL:** A variety of dwelling types and living arrangements to satisfy the housing requirements of existing and future Skaneateles residents, particularly for those with limited income.
- B. GOAL:** Housing development patterns that encourage and preserve viable agricultural activity and natural resources.
- C. GOAL:** Housing development patterns that help retain open space and preserve the traffic-carrying function of major roads.
- D. GOAL:** Housing development which reinforces the historic scale and character of the Town and Village.

### *Objectives:*

- a. To support a variety of housing opportunities for different age groups, family sizes and income levels. In particular, the community needs more market-rate senior citizen housing.
- b. To realize a diversity of Village residential development opportunities while retaining the historic character of the village.
- c. To support residential development where adequate public water, sewer services, and storm water drainage systems are present or can be provided, but only and if such development is consistent with the character of the surrounding area.
- d. To conserve open space through appropriate means, including but not limited to acquiring development rights, enacting appropriate land use regulations, encouraging cluster housing, and supporting agricultural uses.
- e. To protect environmentally sensitive areas (watersheds, slopes with grades of greater than 12%, wetlands, stream banks, etc.) from the negative impacts of residential development.

- f. To develop and enact regulations aimed at reducing the number of residential driveways entering major roads.
- g. To examine reasonable development/re-development standards for pre-existing non-conforming lots in the Village and Town.
- h. To create a supply of permanently affordable housing.

**6. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY**

Skaneateles provides a reasonable range of shopping and employment opportunities.

Tourism is an increasingly important part of the local economy, but it is recognized that the basic day-to-day need for goods and services must also be met. Rather than establishing competing shopping centers in the Town to provide basic goods and services, the Village commercial district (which has been the traditional focus of retail sales) should remain the center for shopping in the community. Support will be given to programs that will maintain the retail shopping center in the village district and improve its range of services, its convenience and its attractiveness. Light industry, research and professional office development are recognized as an important stabilizing element in the Skaneateles economy. Opportunities for this type of land use activity will be provided in areas where adequate highway access can be obtained and where water and sewage disposal requirements can be adequately met.

More information about economic issues is available in the economic report prepared for the Chamber of Commerce, and a summary of that report is available from the Chamber. Because the community’s scenic and historic character is essential to its economic success, maintaining these qualities is an important component of this Comprehensive Plan. A report compiled by the Skaneateles Architectural and Visual Identification Team (SAVIT) is in Appendix C. It contains a list of some of the historically important buildings and recommends a process for preserving important elements of the community’s character.

Given the changing technology, there is an increase in residential home- based commercial and professional activities. The Town should accommodate such activity provided there is no significant negative impact on the neighbors and the activity is consistent with existing zoning laws.

**A. GOAL:** To maintain the village district as the primary retail sales area in the community for goods and services and to preserve the character of this area as the center for increasingly economically important tourism.

**B. GOAL:** Increased employment opportunities that will broaden and strengthen the local tax base.

*Objectives:*

- a. To maintain a viable downtown, by providing opportunities for commercial development in the village commercial district consistent with its character.
- b. To encourage revitalization, landscaping improvements, installation of curbs and sidewalks and well-defined driveways and other techniques which would improve the appearance of highway service commercial areas and the visual impressions they convey.
- c. To support and encourage commercial and light industrial development that makes use of local labor and products.

- d. To support and encourage a diversity of business opportunities while retaining the historic character of the Village Center.
- e. To prevent aesthetic deterioration in hamlets and other mixed use locations and at the edges of commercial development areas and to consider other possible uses for preexisting nonconforming structures that were built prior to 1996.
- f. To reduce, to the maximum practical extent, the number of commercial entrance and exit drives on major traffic routes in the Village and Town.

## 7. TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

Effective traffic routes connecting Skaneateles to the surrounding region are essential to the economic vitality of the town and village, and Skaneateles' businesses and industries including agriculture. Tourists and visitors use these routes to get to the lake and downtown destinations; employees commute into as well as out of the community to work places; residents get to their homes and from one part of the community to another on the local road network. Local land use regulations should be designed to recognize the traffic carrying function of major roads and to preserve this function in every practical way. Use of existing parking facilities should be maximized to support the needs of local businesses and residents. New or expanded parking lots as well as larger existing lots should be screened from surrounding streets and controlled in scale by planted islands, landscaping, interspersed buildings, and similar features. Increased traffic is a growing concern to Skaneateles residents for reasons of safety and congestion.

- A. GOAL:** A highway system in the Town that will facilitate traffic movement and minimize points of conflict and delay, while protecting the safety and welfare of the residents.
- B. GOAL:** A local road network that will enable future extension of local roads as adjacent land develops.
- C. GOAL:** A system of sidewalks, footpaths and bikeways that will facilitate movement in the Town and Village by means other than motorized vehicles.
- D. GOAL:** To reduce the number of long haul truckers who travel through the Village and Skaneateles Watershed.

### *Objectives:*

- a. To establish criteria which reflect the functional classification of roads in the Skaneateles area based on the needs of both local and through traffic.
- b. To encourage and develop policies, methods and enforcement mechanisms to encourage long haul truckers and hazardous waste haulers to reroute to or remain on the New York State Thruway and other interstate highways rather than travel through the village and within the pristine Skaneateles Lake watershed.
- c. To develop incentives and equitable control mechanisms to minimize the number of driveway cuts and other potential obstructions on the area's major roads.
- d. To develop and implement a long-range plan for maximizing the use of existing parking facilities in the Village commercial district and the Fennell Street Corridor. (This is a Village Board responsibility.) The principles of the

Fennell Street Plan, involving small, scattered parking lots that are screened by buildings, should be followed elsewhere within the commercial areas of the Village.

- e. To provide and implement a long-range plan for the establishment of a system of pedestrian and bikeways.
- f. To provide for future extensions of local roads through the subdivision approval process.
- g. To provide for extensions of sidewalks through the subdivision approval process where they are extensions of the existing or the potential future system around the Village and Hamlets.

## **8. RECREATION/QUALITY OF LIFE**

Skaneateles, with its lake, hills, streams, parks, museum, and festivals, is a community endowed with a variety of cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities. Both Town and Village acknowledge that many local cultural and recreational resources have appeal far beyond their municipal boundaries. While providing residents with a variety of cultural events and a full range of recreation activities is a continuing imperative, the need to preserve and perpetuate these resources for the enjoyment of future generations will not be forgotten in the local planning process.

In addition to the more traditional and active recreation pursuits, preservation of natural resources and open space is also a primary objective of recreation planning. A diverse population, increased mobility, park use, and health consciousness, when added to the current emphasis on outdoor recreation, have sharply focused attention on the need to preserve prime open areas for the future use and enjoyment of generations to come.

**A. GOAL:** The establishment of an integrated open space and recreation system that protects critical environmental areas which provides a wide variety of active and passive recreation opportunities for all age groups.

**B. GOAL:** Maintenance and expansion of a high level of recreational, cultural and educational opportunities in the Skaneateles community.

### *Objectives:*

- a. To meet the needs of the existing and expected resident population for community and neighborhood parks and recreation facilities.
- b. To continue to work cooperatively to improve existing cultural, educational and recreational facilities and support programs provided for local residents.
- c. To maintain, enhance and control Town access to Skaneateles Lake for such activities as picnicking, fishing, swimming and boating in ways that will not degrade the lake. The provision of public access through a lakeside Town Park would be desirable.
- d. To accommodate an interconnecting system of pedestrian and recreational trails and bikeways that incorporate natural features such as the Skaneateles Creek corridor, segments of the lake shore, stream corridors.
- e. To make maximum use of Federal and State programs and grants to supplement funding from local sources for recreational, cultural and educational facilities and activities.



- f. To encourage the Village, Town, and School District to work cooperatively, to promote the successful use of Austin Park, the Skaneateles Conservation Area, the Charlie Major Nature Trail and the Skaneateles Community Center.
- g. To create, where possible, new recreation and natural resource conservation areas in the Town to preserve and enhance natural features while providing reasonable recreational activities that have minimal impacts on the environment.

**9. IMPLEMENTATION**

The Joint Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a guide for ongoing public and private actions in Skaneateles; its broad concepts will be used as a resource in public decision-making. Both Town and Village are committed to achieving the Plan's major goals and objectives and will use available land development regulations, environmental review techniques, capital improvement programming and other measures as necessary to accomplish this end. More detail on implementation recommendations is contained in Section VI, Implementation.

**GOAL:** To enact legislation implementing major recommendations of the Joint Comprehensive Plan and to hold the Planning Boards responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Plan, keeping it up to date, and reporting progress to the Town and Village Boards on a regular basis.

The Town Board and Village Board, upon a recommendation by the appropriate Planning Board, may appoint ad hoc non-member citizen committees to perform the task of assembling information and making reports to them on particular subjects.

*Objectives:*

- a. To revise current zoning laws and subdivision regulations in the Town and Village so that they reflect proposals in the Joint Comprehensive Plan.
- b. To develop and incorporate into Town and Village laws and ordinances techniques such as performance and incentive zoning, site plan review procedures, clustering and other land subdivision regulations, conservation easements, capital improvements programming and similar measures needed to provide legislative and administrative support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan. Where these already exist, to update and refine them so that they are more effective.
- c. To create a list of specific criteria against which achievement of Plan objectives can periodically be measured.
- d. To provide a mechanism for on-going review and updating of the Joint Comprehensive Plan and related programs and regulations.
- e. To ensure that new members of Village and Town boards (including trustees, councilors, and members of the Planning, ZBA, and other advisory boards) are issued a copy of the Joint Comprehensive Plan and the Traditional Neighborhood Development Guidelines of the Onondaga County Settlement Plan upon their election or appointment.

Due to unforeseen circumstances or changing community attitudes, these – the proposals in this Joint Comprehensive Plan, may be subject to change over time. It is to be expected, therefore, that the Plan will be periodically reviewed, reevaluated and revised as conditions warrant. (See Section VI, Implementation)

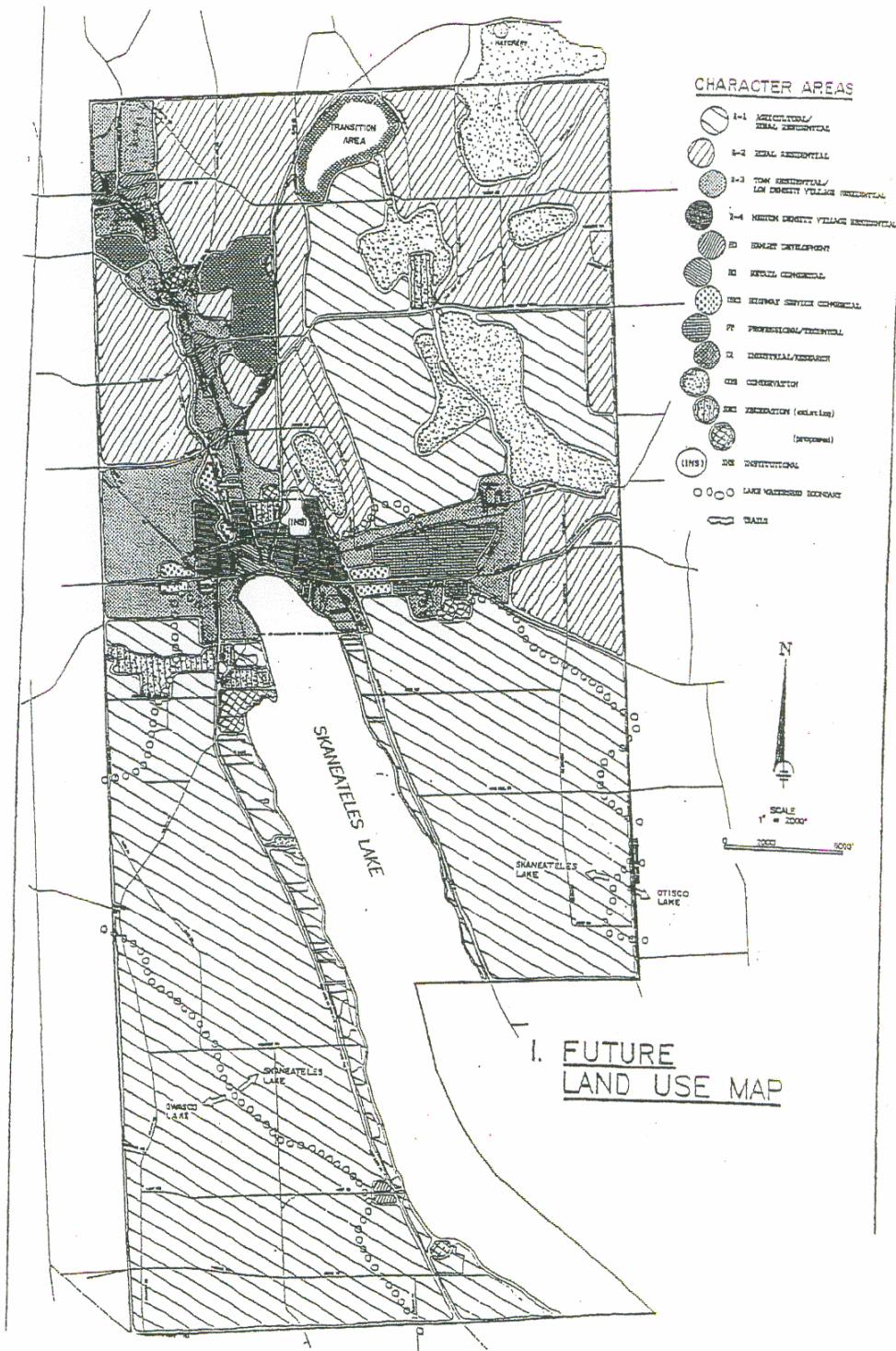
**SECTION IV. FUTURE LAND USE**

Recommendations for future land use are illustrated on Figure 2, Future Land Use Map. Proposals are based in part on existing conditions and perceived opportunity for change; they are also strongly influenced by the recognition that many of the community values prized by Skaneateles residents could easily be compromised or lost if sensitive environmental areas are not safeguarded to the fullest extent feasible.

Some of the proposals illustrated on the map and described on the following pages represent short-term targets that could be achieved in the relatively near future. Some proposals must be viewed as being very long range. (Figure 2)

FIGURE 2, FUTURE LAND USE MAP

ger format map is available at Skaneateles Town Hall.



## ***LAND USE CHARACTER AREAS***

As illustrated on the Future Land Use Map, the Joint Comprehensive Plan proposes that the Town and Village of Skaneateles be divided into identifiable character areas. In most cases, character areas are distinctive geographic areas with similar physical characteristics and settlement patterns. Each area has important qualities which either exists at present, are to be preserved, or are deemed to be desirable and achievable as change occurs in the future.

Character areas are included in the Joint Comprehensive Plan so that desired characteristics of the natural and developed environment for each area can be described. Once this has been accomplished, specific planning concerns related to future change and development can be identified. Zoning and other land use and development regulations can be tailored to address these planning concerns. The purpose of these character area designations is not to delineate specific zoning districts, but to describe distinctive qualities of different areas that should be considered in formulating zoning district provisions. The Town of Skaneateles Zoning Law uses these character areas as a starting point for establishing districts, sometimes grouping together character areas with similar qualities. These character areas should be considered when changes are proposed to the Town and Village zoning laws. When making case-by-case decisions on special permits, site plans, variances, rezonings, and subdivisions, reviewing boards should take the recommendations of this portion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan into account when setting conditions or determining whether or not to approve a specific proposal. [NOTE: Some of the abbreviations used in this Plan for the land use character areas, such as R-1 and R-2, happen to be abbreviations that were also used in the previous Town zoning ordinance. This is purely coincidental. The abbreviations from the old zoning are not intended to carry over into this Plan or the Zoning Law, which uses different abbreviations to avoid confusion.]

### **A. AGRICULTURAL CHARACTER AREAS**

Farming is the largest land use activity in the Town; it makes and sustains the rural character of Skaneateles and is an important component of the local economy. As of 2002, 5300 acres in the Town enrolled in the Agricultural District Program; but 6200 acres are actually being worked. Agricultural land contributes to the visual openness of the community, is used for some forms of recreation and is vital to wildlife habitat. Loss of farmland to other uses is a local and national concern. Effective preservation of this critical resource is a primary planning goal. (See Agricultural and Markets Law.) There are two types of agricultural character areas shown on the Future Land Use Map. (See figure 2)

#### **1. AGRICULTURAL/RURAL RESIDENTIAL AREAS (R-1)**

These are the Town's most active agricultural districts, many of which are located in the lake's watersheds and in the near Northeast quadrant of the Town. Farming and farm-related businesses are the predominant and desired land use activities; measures to preserve the viability of these activities are appropriate. Planning concerns relate to assuring the continuation of farming on prime agricultural land, limiting the extent of non-farm development and cooperating with the City of Syracuse, the USDA and other concerned agencies to stop lake degradation from surface water runoff and erosion. Some non-farm development in these areas has occurred and more can be expected.

It is proposed that such development be primarily single family housing with low density in the lake watershed and greater density per dwelling unit in other parts of the area. If land is subdivided and if performance standards for septic systems can be met, clustering should be encouraged to preserve farmland and ensure open space. (See Onondaga Department of Health, Septic Regulations.)

R-1 areas occupy most of the land area in the Town. Except for land adjacent to the highway, all of the area south of Route 20, on both sides of the lake, is proposed as appropriate for R-1 land uses. This area includes the lake's watershed (see Watershed District, below). Large areas in the northeast part of Town are also proposed as R-1 areas, notably the farmland

enclosed by Route 20, Highland Avenue, Old Seneca Turnpike and the Town's eastern boundary. Undivided farm parcels north and south of Stump Road and east of Vinegar Hill Road are also in this category. R-1 areas are designated RF (Rural and Farming) in the Town's current Zoning Law.

## **2. RURAL RESIDENTIAL AREAS (R-2)**

These areas, such as Shepard Settlement, are also essentially rural in character with active farming as the primary land use. They differ from R-1 areas in that they are not located in the watershed, parcels are generally smaller in size and some land subdivision into building lots has been occurring. Planning concerns relate to the loss of rural character through random, small-lot subdivisions in strips along existing roads and potential water and septic system problems associated with poor soils. Continued farming activity is a likely, and an appropriate, land use throughout R-2 areas and should be encouraged. As non-farm development occurs, a low gross density would be appropriate if performance standards for septic systems can be met. Incentives to encourage clustering (performance subdivisions) should be considered, for both major and minor subdivisions. Residential strip development along existing roads should not be approved when viable alternatives such as reverse frontage, and service roads are available. R-2 areas are proposed in two locations: the northeastern corner of the Town and east and west of the Skaneateles Creek/Jordan Road corridor. A number of smaller-lot subdivisions have already been established in these areas. While these areas appear to be in transition, the continuation of farming activities is proposed as the predominant land use for the next ten to twenty years. These areas have been designated RR (Rural Residential) in the Zoning Law.

## **B. TOWN RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER AREAS (R-3)**

Substantial amounts of non-farm development, primarily residential, establish the character of these areas. Farming continues to be active in some locations but, for the most part, is no longer a significant land use activity. Most of the larger farm parcels have been subdivided and are in transition to housing of various types.

R-3 areas are located in an existing water district or a possible future extension of an existing district. For the most part, development has followed existing roads. Planning concerns include extensive strip development that reduces the effectiveness of traffic corridors and a current lack of adequate sewage disposal. A higher gross density is recommended where public water is available and standards for subsurface septic systems can be met. A lower gross density is recommended in the absence of a public water system and where standards for sub-surface water systems cannot be met. Clustering should be encouraged when sewage disposal problems can be solved.

An R-3 area is proposed as a corridor stretching along Skaneateles Creek and Jordan Road from the Village to the Elbridge town line. Numerous small lots exist in this corridor and there is presently a substantial amount of development, most of which is residential. The Hamlets of Mottville and Skaneateles Falls are located in this corridor. (See Hamlet Development Areas.) R-3 areas are also proposed to the east and west of the Village boundary. If sewage disposal needs can be met through a means acceptable to the Town other than connecting to the Village Sewage treatment plant, then more extensive concentrations of housing might be appropriate in these locations. Relatively high density residential development consistent with the availability of suitable wastewater treatment should be available in these areas. These areas are zoned RR in the Zoning Law.

## **C. VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL CHARACTER AREAS**

These areas describe portions of the Village where extensive housing development has occurred over the years. Density, lot size and dwelling type varies greatly but the prevailing character is that of relatively dense, single-family housing concentrated in an urban setting. Two types of Village residential character areas are shown on the Future Land Use Map.

### **1. LOW DENSITY VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL AREAS (R-3)**

R-3 development is proposed for the Village residential areas south of the properties which front on the Genesee Street corridor. These areas have public water and sewer service available. Low density development of open land in the Kane Avenue area is currently in process with the clustering approach. This approach is endorsed as a good way to concentrate development while keeping overall densities low, preserving open space, protecting the watershed and minimizing the cost of infrastructure installation and maintenance.

### **2. MEDIUM DENSITY VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL AREAS (R-4)**

The housing type in R-4 areas along the Genesee Street corridor and north of the Genesee Street corridor are primarily detached 19th and 20th century single family homes on individual lots of varying size. Some of these homes are historically significant and almost every home contributes to the Village's attractive, pedestrian-oriented neighborhood character. To preserve and maintain the Village's distinctive residential character, it is desirable that new development reflect the traditional styles, architectural qualities, scale and massing, shallow setbacks and small frontage dimensions typical of existing Village neighborhoods. Front porches and detached garages behind homes are two signature features of older, traditional Village homes which are especially encouraged to be repeated with new development.

Several of the larger parcels in this part of the Village have the potential for subdivision. If this is done in a manner that was compatible with the existing visual character of the area it could provide attractive new residential opportunities in the Village. New subdivision development should, to the greatest extent possible, expand upon the Village's traditional grid-network of streets and sidewalks. Dead-end streets, curved streets and curvilinear cul-de-sacs are appropriate only when topographical or other physical constraints eliminate the possibility of traditional grid patterns.

Special permit or planned development regulations should be considered in the village to permit the construction of some townhouses, small multifamily apartments, and specialty housing such as that needed by older and retired residents. If designed and sited in a manner compatible with the Village's historic residential neighborhood framework, this type of housing could offer attractive and reasonably priced housing alternatives for Village residents.

### **3. HIGH DENSITY VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL AREAS (R-5)**

Residential areas adjacent to the village center, including Hannum Street and Jordan and State Streets north to Academy Street, are primarily detached 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century single and two-family homes on small lots with minimal open space. The Density Control Schedule should be revised to reflect the character of this area. Review of applications to renovate houses in this area should take the neighborhood special characteristics into consideration.

### **D. HAMLET DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREAS (HD)**

This describes small clusters of concentrated mixed-use development in Skaneateles Falls, Mottville, Mandana and, to a lesser extent, Willow Glen. These hamlets are located around one or more road intersections and have historic place-names by which they are identified. They have or have potential for similar land use, density and appearance characteristics as are found in parts of the Village but, for various reasons, have not grown to the same extent. Adequate sewage disposal is the planning concern and key limiting factor for future small-lot growth in HD areas. These areas are solid and valued residential neighborhoods, however, and providing the services needed to sustain and enhance them deserves serious consideration. While hamlets are viewed as primarily residential clusters, a traditional mixture of nonresidential land uses, or multiple uses in one building, has added to their physical and visual diversity and is appropriate for future development in these areas.

Hamlet District areas shown on the Future Land Use Map are essentially the existing hamlets. The actual physical extent of

these areas must be flexible since, at their edges, they tend to blend into adjacent areas. Regardless of the configuration shown on the map, hamlets should include the cluster of properties whose occupants identify with the historic place-name. Proposed future development can include residential, commercial and industrial land use activities with the type of activity, the scale of development and good site planning being critical determinants of suitability. These HD areas are zoned HM (Hamlet) in the Zoning Law.

## **E. COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL CHARACTER AREAS**

In addition to extensive agricultural activity, local economic resources of the Town and Village of Skaneateles include an array of business, industrial, professional and technical enterprises. These land uses are, for the most part, concentrated in several locations in the community where they create a distinctive physical and visual character related to the nature of the activity and the type of structures in which the activity occurs. The Future Land Use Map illustrates four types of commercial/industrial character areas.

### **1. RETAIL COMMERCIAL AREAS (RC)**

This land use category describes areas where the proposed visual character and scale of development are that of a "Village Center." Planning concerns relate to strengthening the usefulness and competitiveness of the retail core while maintaining its Village Center qualities. Smaller stores, specialty shops, offices, restaurants, entertainment, professional and personal services, and upper floor apartments would be found in these areas. Much of the day-to-day convenience shopping of a small population base should be accommodated by stores in the RC district. That means that a reasonable range of businesses, convenient hours and appropriate parking are essential to the long-range viability of the center.

It is proposed that the existing village downtown commercial center be maintained and strengthened as the principal retail shopping district for the Skaneateles community. It is also proposed that every effort be made to keep convenience uses such as postal services, groceries and pharmacies in the retail center. Consideration should be given to incorporating some of the amenities of Skaneateles Creek into the development of the Village retail center. Future expansion of the Retail Commercial area is proposed to be located along both sides of Fennell Street, especially inner Fennell. This area approximately corresponds with the new Downtown "D" District in the Village Zoning amendments.

### **2. HIGHWAY SERVICE COMMERCIAL AREAS (HSC)**

These districts contain commercial businesses that are not normally considered to be compatible with the smaller scale, pedestrian-oriented retail shopping environment of the Village Center. The intent of HSC areas is to provide for business activities that supplement, rather than displace, downtown commerce. HSC districts are often located along major roads since many service businesses depend on automobile and truck traffic. Planning concerns relate to excessive strip development along well-traveled roads and the need to improve landscaping, limit curb-cuts and generally create a more visually appealing setting in HSC areas. Professional and technical businesses would also be appropriate in such locations. Adequate off-street parking and effective sewage disposal are essential. Highway commercial development can have a range of adverse effects including traffic problems, visual intrusions, storm water impacts, and undermining the economic viability of the Village Center as the community's commercial core. Because there is no shortage of this type of development in surrounding communities, the Town and Village of Skaneateles seek to limit highway commercial development to what is essential for servicing the local community.

Three areas of HSC development are proposed in the plan. One of the areas is located along a portion of Fennell Street and extends northerly from the Village line to Old Seneca Turnpike. Consideration should be given to extending commercial uses to buildings existing at the time of enactment of 1996 zoning. This area is relatively discrete, being defined by the hillside to the east and Skaneateles Creek on the west. Since this will be an area of mixed use, care for protecting residential uses should be exercised until such time, if ever, the conversion is complete. Because highway commercial uses are not

needed in this area for the time being, the proposed zoning designates some of this area as RR (Rural Residential). The RR District does allow some business uses, such as service businesses and light industry, but on a very limited scale, with a maximum building footprint of 4,000 square feet for most non-residential uses. At some future time it may be appropriate to rezone the rest of this corridor to a more intensive commercial category.

Other HSC areas are proposed along Route 20 on the east and west approaches to the Village. These are designated HC (Highway Commercial) in the zoning. The character of these areas has been established for a number of years and most of the parcels shown on the map are already developed. Highway service commercial development in these areas should be confined primarily to where it already exists, allowing infill and limited expansion of existing commercial uses. Extension of commercial uses should be permitted only to the minimum extent necessary to respect the interests of landowners who have made application for commercial development on land currently zoned commercial. New development in HSC areas should be strictly limited to auto-dependent uses that would not fit well into the tight-knit fabric of the Village center.

As gateways to the Village, HSC areas have been suggested as part of the proposed "greenway corridors." They should be upgraded by adding sidewalks, landscaped strips or berms along the right-of-way, curbs with well-defined driveways, and other techniques to improve the negative visual impression they convey. New businesses should follow strict architectural guidelines, including the prohibition of trademarked architecture and drive-up windows. They should be encouraged to locate parking at the rear of the lot when this is practical. The feasibility of constructing parallel service roads to reduce access points and improve safety should also be evaluated particularly on the west and east sides of the Village. Since Route 20 is a State highway, the State DOT would likely be interested in any improvements affecting the right-of-way and should want to participate in roadside upgrading.

### **3. PROFESSIONAL/TECHNICAL AREAS (PT)**

This land use category describes areas where some type of professional office or technical research and development is considered to be appropriate. Ease of access, visibility, adequate services and available land are important characteristics of PT areas. Planning concerns relate to minimizing strip subdivision along major roads, maintaining a degree of visual consistency as these districts develop and providing an acceptable septic system where soil conditions are poor. A well-landscaped, planned development that included some Town Residential (R-3) density housing as well as office or research land uses would also be appropriate in PT areas; clustering could be used effectively to maintain a feeling of openness.

A PT area is proposed for land east of the Village, between Route 20 and New Seneca Turnpike. Relatively large open parcels in this area, and a varied topography, provide opportunities for the development of interesting office or research parks or for this type of use combined with housing. Water is available in this area but sewers are not. Therefore, if development is to occur, it is essential that septic tanks and leach fields meeting stringent performance standards be provided. Because the western part of this area is located in the lake watershed, larger lots, a limit on impermeable surfaces and additional storm water management procedures are important considerations in site plan and environmental impact reviews. Since Route 20 is a major highway, service roads or reverse frontage lots should be incorporated in site planning.

Two smaller areas of PT development are proposed for the south side of Route 20. These parcels are also relatively large with good access from the highway. One is the 80-acre parcel owned by the Town of Skaneateles, a part of which is recommended for ball fields or other recreation purposes (see Recreation, below). A combined office park and public recreation area could work effectively in this area. The other area, presently zoned commercial, is also vacant. Because the Town and Village both wish to discourage further highway commercial development outside the Village, professional/technical uses could take advantage of this Route 20 location while protecting the visual qualities of this entry to the Village through adequate setbacks and vegetative buffering. This would also be a way to implement the "greenway corridor" concept. Watershed protection measures would apply to these small PT areas as well.

PT land use character areas have been zoned IRO (Industrial/Research/Office).

### **4. INDUSTRIAL/RESEARCH AREAS (IR)**

This land use category describes areas where some form of light manufacturing, fabrication, assembly or research is the



desired land use. Planning concerns are accessibility, impacts on nearby neighborhoods, disposal of waste and, with regard to mining, successfully restoring the area of operation as defined by the state mining laws. The community would welcome other environmentally sensitive, model industries such as Welch-Allyn. Smaller industrial or research operations might be interested in a Skaneateles location, and depending on the scale and type of operation, small industrial businesses could be successful in, or adjacent to, existing residential areas.

Other industrial activities might tend to cluster on larger sites where some form of cooperative on-site sewage disposal that would meet the technological and institutional criteria described in Section III and other applicable performance standards could be provided.

The largest IR area shown on the Future Land Use Map is located between Route 321 and Vinegar Hill Road and includes the existing Welch-Allyn site. Adjacent parcels to the north and west are large enough to accommodate several smaller independent businesses, some of which might find a location near Welch-Allyn to be advantageous. A second IR area is proposed for the area between Sheldon and Jordan Roads. This rolling but relatively flat site has access from Jordan Road and is large enough to accommodate several small businesses. The two remaining IR areas shown on the map represent existing businesses located in Skaneateles Falls. Improving the negative aesthetic impact of an abandoned plant in this area should be given a high mitigating priority by the Town. The larger IR areas have been zoned IRO (Industrial/Research/Office) in the Zoning.

The large IR area between Route 321, Kingston Road and Stump Road is viewed as an industrial area in transition. Mining operations can be expected to continue as long as natural resources last but eventually the character of this area will change. Restoration plans should be reviewed in terms of the ultimate reuse of this area. A combination of residential, recreation and conservation uses would be appropriate in the future. Therefore, this area has been designated RF (Rural and Farming), which allows soil mining by Special Permit in the Zoning.

## **F. CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE CHARACTER AREAS**

Much has been said about the importance of the natural environment to residents of Skaneateles and the surrounding region. Skaneateles Lake is the principal water source for several villages, towns and the City of Syracuse. In addition, the lake and its watershed, streams and drainage ways, wooded areas and wetlands are local resources that contribute in a major way to the uniqueness and attractiveness of the Skaneateles community. All of these resources are susceptible to degradation through misuse. It is essential that planning policy and land use management be formulated to specifically to preserve these resources. To help achieve this objective, three categories of conservation/open space character areas are recommended, as shown on the Future Land Use Map.

### **1. LAKE WATERSHED AREA**

The approximate locations of watershed boundaries for Skaneateles and Owasco Lakes are indicated on the Future Land Use Map (see Figure 1). While this character area does not represent a proposed future land use, it does represent a resource of extreme environmental sensitivity and great importance for Skaneateles and the region that has relied on this high-quality water source for over 100 years. Planning concerns include the implementation of effective measures to control pollution from point and nonpoint sources, minimize erosion from storm water runoff, stop excessive removal of vegetation and preserve the integrity of stream banks, and the lake shore. The highest conservation efforts should be given to the northern end of the lake and its tributary areas as this is where the intake pipe for drinking water is located.

### **Recommendations for Lake Watersheds**

- a. Skaneateles Lake's watershed has been established as a special character zone with an overlay district in the Town Zoning ordinance. Appropriate criteria and thresholds relating to construction, impermeable surface coverage, land disturbance and appropriate environmental reviews should be reviewed, required and established where necessary with regulations relating to the overlay district.
- b. Continue working toward the establishment of an intermunicipal advisory council, including representatives from the City of Syracuse, three Counties, five Towns, and one Village, that would facilitate communication and education, and make recommendations for Skaneateles Lake watershed management.
- c. Actively encourage the City of Syracuse to implement the Skaneateles Lake watershed Management Plan it has promulgated towards the establishment of uniform rules, regulations and procedures in the entire lake watershed.
- d. Support and cooperate with other regional watershed management efforts to protect Owasco Lake.

**2. CONSERVATION AREAS (COS)**

These districts consist of environmentally distinctive land features in the Town of Skaneateles. Included are areas of dense woods, wetlands, steep slopes, streams, drainage ways, waterfalls, and aquatic sites such as spawning or nursery grounds for fish and wildlife.. These natural resources can be negatively affected by most types of development. Planning concerns relate to protecting the integrity of such areas and finding feasible ways to prevent degradation and loss. If such resources are perceived to be of sufficient importance to the entire community, public ownership should be considered as the most direct and effective way to preserve them. Acquiring development rights, and conservation easements, or offering open space incentives to the owners of these properties are other techniques that should be evaluated. In lieu of these options, some agricultural or recreational uses would be appropriate. In general, residential development in these COS areas should not be encouraged.

Outside of the Skaneateles and Owasco Lake watersheds, most COS areas are located in the northeastern quadrant of the Town. A tributary of Nine Mile Creek springs from just north of Old Seneca Turnpike and proceeds diagonally to the southeast into the Town of Marcellus. Over the centuries this tributary has cut into the landscape creating a narrow but substantial gully in the process. The overall drop from Stump Road to Nine Mile Creek has been reduced to about 100 feet and much of the upper reach is now virtually flat. The result is a linear but intermittent wetland lying between steep, wooded hillsides and stretching from Stump Road to the Marcellus town line.

This entire area has been given the COS designation and is proposed for multi-purpose wildlife and conservation uses.

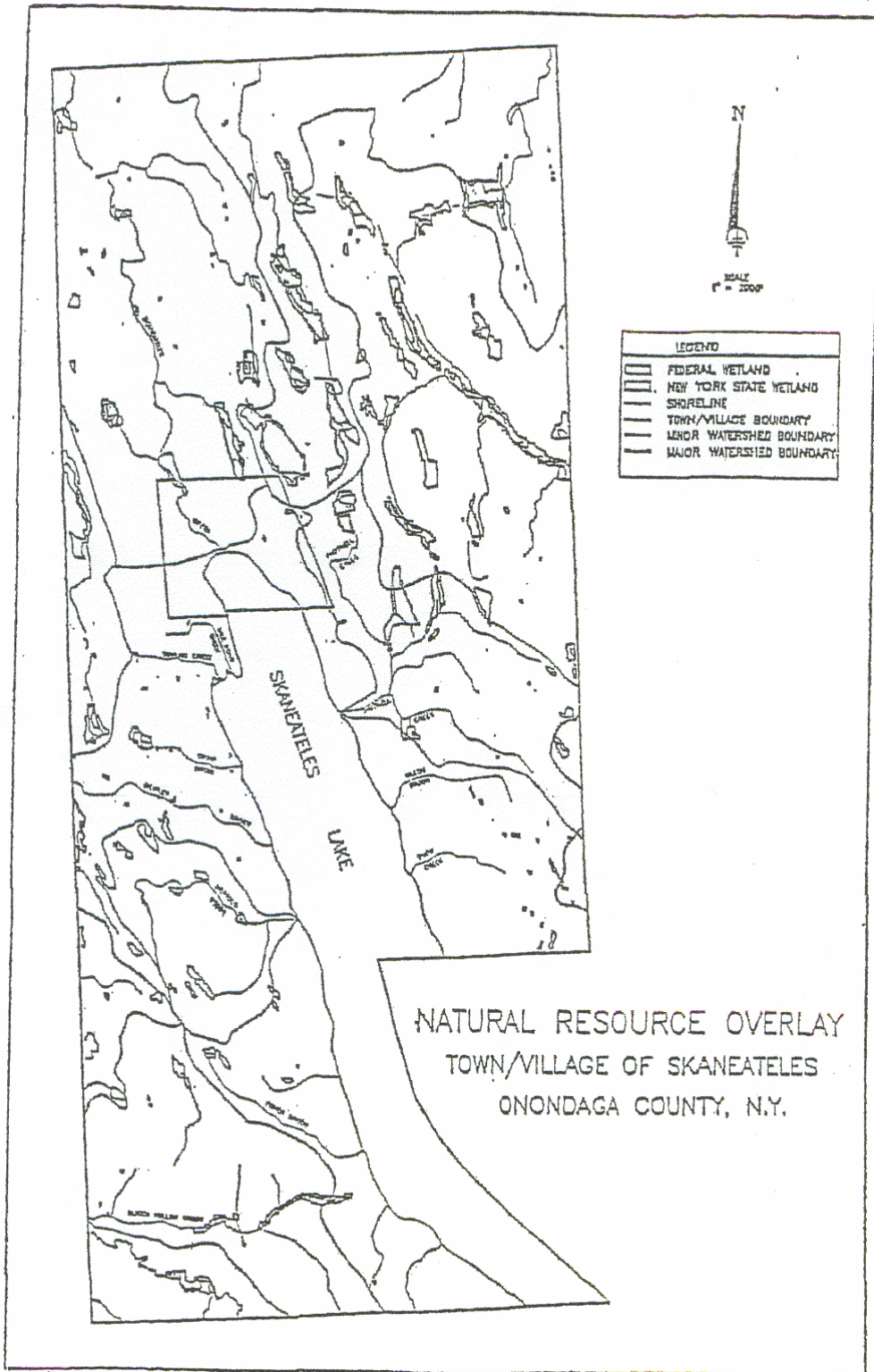
Two additional wooded wetlands are proposed for the COS designation: the large area lying between East Street and Highland Avenue and a triangular area east of Chapman Road and south of Stump Road. These areas provide sanctuary for deer, birds and other wildlife; obtaining easements to limit the potential for development should be considered.

An interesting geomorphic region is located just east of Foster Road. A tributary called Cat Hollow flows into Carpenter's Brook through this undulating landscape and through the County Fish Hatchery in the Town of Elbridge.

Conservation areas have been zoned RF (Rural and Farm) in the Zoning Law.

Figure 3

Natural Resource Overlay



### **3. OPEN SPACE AREAS**

It is important to recognize the role open space plays in the scheme of settlement and development patterns in a rural community. Open space is an area of land not developed with structures. There are many kinds of open space, which perform different functions such as providing wildlife habitat, watershed protection, passive recreation, active recreation, scenic vistas, forest land, and farmland. Many areas provide multiple open space benefits and some kinds of open space, especially farmland, depend upon having successful businesses operating on them to function properly. The intent of the open space protection is not to prevent development, but to maintain, to the maximum extent feasible, the various functions that open space performs for the community. With careful development planning and appropriate incentives, much of the open space valued by this rural community can be preserved. An open space committee has recently been created by the Town of Skaneateles and is charged with the task of identifying appropriate land, research funding opportunities and ways to implement the Town's goals to preserve open space.

The character of open space is usually either natural vegetation or cultivated farmland and forestland. Without such open space being preserved by future development, a feeling of residential sprawl will overtake Skaneateles and a suburban character will replace the rural. In order to achieve this sense of open space, cluster development (called "open space development" in the zoning) is encouraged. "Cluster development...enables and encourages flexibility of design and development of land in such a manner as to promote the most appropriate use of land, to facilitate the adequate and economical provision of streets and utilities, and to preserve the natural and scenic qualities of open lands." (NY Town Law §278.) (See Appendix B for significant views).

The following areas are recommended as possible open spaces. It is anticipated that the newly formed open space committee will propose a revised list of recommended open space areas.

1. East of the Village at the east end of the professional-technical zone, on the north side of Route 20.
2. Highland Avenue at north end near Seneca Turnpike, both side of road.
3. Route 41 (East Lake Road) at Pork Street corner, northeast and southeast of East Lake.
4. Mines should be considered for reclamation as greenspace in the future.

### **G. RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL CHARACTER AREAS**

These areas include land and facilities used for public and private recreational purposes and for institutional activities. Historic sites and structures are also included in this designation. Three types of recreational and cultural character areas are shown on the Recreational Future Land Use Map. See the Open Space and Recreation Plan, which is a separate document incorporated by reference into this Comprehensive Plan and available at the Village and Town Halls.

#### **1. RECREATION AREAS (REC)**

This category describes a variety of areas that are presently used for recreation purposes as well as proposed additions to the existing inventory. The category includes existing and proposed formal parks and recreation areas (Skaneateles Community Center, C.M. Austin Park, Charlie Major Nature Trail, and Skaneateles Conservation Area), private facilities (i.e. golf, sailing, polo, Rod and Gun Club), lakeside areas (i.e. F.E. Austin, Thayer, Clift, and Shotwell parks, boat launch sites), small neighborhood parks (i.e. Skaneateles Falls, Mandana) and specialty features such as trails and connections. Planning concerns include the need to enhance existing recreation facilities and effectively capitalize on opportunities to expand the system, especially in terms of lake access.

A range of recreation proposals should be considered.

- a. A Lakeshore plan should be considered before all opportunities for public ownership disappear.
- b. To provide more localized recreation facilities for existing and expected residents, two small neighborhood parks are proposed. The precise location of these parks is less important than the principle of accessibility. Ideally, a neighborhood park would be within walking or biking distance from most of the service area. It should provide at least a cleared open space for informal play but may also include a small apparatus area for children, picnic tables and a small parking area. In this regard, the existing park in Skaneateles Falls should be evaluated for possible additional seating and play equipment.
- c. The approximate 100-acre +- parcel owned by the Town and located on Route 20 at the junction of Route 175 has recreation potential and could easily be used to help satisfy the growing need for ball fields for youngsters and adults.
- d. The ridgeline surrounding Skaneateles Lake provides many dramatic views and vistas. While a ridgeline trail is not shown on the Future Land Use Map, any opportunity to consider developing such a trail should not be missed. It is understood that participation by landowners would be entirely voluntary.
- e. The 1974 General Plan and 1996 Joint Comprehensive Plan included a detailed study of the recreation potential of Skaneateles Creek. Portions of the proposed lineal recreation area, or creek walk, described in the 1974 Plan are in place but additional potential remains.
- f. Other lineal connections are possible and should be created as opportunities arise. For example, the proposed conservation areas in the northeast section of the Town are indicated as being connected by some form of natural Greenway. These could contain a trail if easements were secured, or be left in a natural state. While not shown on the map, it is recommended that an interconnected system of marked footpaths, horse, bicycle and cross country ski trails be created over a period of time. Natural features such as Skaneateles Lake, segments of the shoreline, stream corridors and ridge lines should be incorporated in the trail system whenever possible.

## **2. INSTITUTIONAL AREAS (INS)**

These areas represent the larger institutional land uses in the community. Existing uses among others include the campus of the Skaneateles School District and the lakeside land of the Stella Maris Retreat Center. These activities and their sites are expected to remain stable in the foreseeable future. The concept of a centralized school complex, with its attractive campus, is a traditional and highly valued part of the Skaneateles community and will continue to play a dominant physical and social role. No additional large institutional land uses are anticipated in the foreseeable future. Government buildings, churches, the library, museum and private schools are also classified as institutional uses but their small lot requirements preclude illustration on a small-scale map.

## **3. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL AREAS**

The Skaneateles community is rich in historical and cultural resources that do much to establish the ambience and quality of life prized by residents, businesses and visitors. These resources have important physical, social and economic implications for the Town and Village and must be included in any plans for future change and development. Appendix C (SAVIT Report) recommends a process for doing this. Three types of cultural/historical resources are included in this plan:

### **a. Village Historic District**

An area centered on the commercial core along East Genesee Street with its identifying architectural characteristics has been designated an historic district. Maintaining the integrity of this district should continue to be a major objective with any

construction or improvements limited to existing street and cornice lines. Property owners should be encouraged to restore the architectural details of individual buildings, subject to the approval of the Village Historical Landmark Commission.

Consideration should also be given to extending the historic district to include other architecturally and historically significant structures, corridors and neighborhoods in the village.

**b. Significant Historic Buildings and Sites**

In addition to the historic district discussed above, there are a number of historically and architecturally significant buildings and sites in the village and town of Skaneateles. In an effort to raise community awareness, a list of historically important buildings has been compiled by the Town and Village historians and is included as part of Appendix C. At some time in the future, detailed historic inventories of these properties should be made and consideration given to submitting some of them for listing on the State or Federal Register of Historic Places.

**c. Significant Cultural and Athletic Events**

Part of the appeal of living in the Skaneateles area is related to the high level of cultural and athletic activity that is present in this community. In addition to making a tangible contribution to the quality of life of the community, cultural and athletic events can also have positive economic impacts that need to be acknowledged in a comprehensive planning program.

Many people enjoy the various opportunities existing in Austin Park, the annual Skaneateles Festival, lakeside community band concerts, Barrow Gallery, regattas, golf, skating, ice skating, hockey, polo, the Antique & Classic Boat Show, and a host of other cultural and athletic activities throughout the year. Not only do these events enhance the lives of local residents, but the temporary influx of visitors benefits local businesses and restaurants as well. Appropriate funding, facilities, and strong community support are essential ingredients needed to sustain the high level of cultural and athletic activity that Skaneateles provides.

**4. IMPORTANT VIEWS**

Geologic history has left a striking mark on the Skaneateles community as it has throughout the Finger Lakes area. The lake was created in a deep basin left behind as the last glacier receded to the north. Another byproduct of glacial action is found in the moderately rolling hillsides with their ridge lines and summits. These earth formations have produced dramatic views and vistas throughout the Town but particularly on the hillsides south of the Village.

A visual inventory has been conducted in preparation of this plan. The purpose of this inventory is to identify highly valued views and sensitize the community to the importance of these natural resources as a determinant of community character. Obstructions to these views by non-agricultural development should be minimized by selective placement of structures on the site and by architectural design that is sensitive to the surroundings. The Town may wish to consider development incentives as a means of preserving these important views and others as they are identified.

A list of notable views identified by the Joint Committee is included as Appendix B.

**SECTION V. TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION**

In the comprehensive planning program for the Town and Village of Skaneateles, six elements of a traffic and circulation system are considered to be significant at this time:

- A road classification system based on the amount and type of vehicular traffic carried and the degree of control exerted by the Town or Village over the use, design, construction, and maintenance of the road.
- General design principles related to the location and design of future roads.
- Opportunities for the eventual establishment of landscaped highway corridors and entry points.
- Balance the need of adequate and accessible off-street parking in support of downtown commercial interests with maintaining the aesthetic, recreational, and residential enjoyment of the Village.
- Encourage an integrated bicycle and pedestrian trail/footpath system.
- Provision of sidewalks for new development in areas of the Town that are adjacent to the village.

## **A. HIGHWAYS AND ROADS**

The type and volume of vehicular traffic strongly influence several development parameters along a road. These include the frequency of curb cuts, the density and intensity of development, the depth of building setbacks, and the need for vegetative buffering, street trees, and other landscape features. While the Town and Village can regulate these development parameters, municipal officials must work with the Department of Transportation to bring about changes in the use of our highways that will protect the Village, Watershed, local economy and pedestrians.

The Town and Village of Skaneateles contain six state roads (*Routes 41, 41A, 175 (Lee-Mulroy Rd.), 321, 359, 38A*), U.S. Route 20, about a dozen each of Town and County roads, and about ten miles of Village streets. In establishing parameters for development, the Town and Village should consider not only existing traffic patterns but also the likelihood of future changes. A copy of the 1992 Transportation & Circulation Map is available at the Town Clerk's Office.

### **1. ROUTE 20**

U.S. Route 20, is the major east-west state highway traversing the Town and Village. Trucks that might otherwise use the New York State Thruway may be using Routes 20 and 41 or 41A as short cuts to Interstate Route 81 in Cortland. This will have serious negative impacts on public safety, quality of life, and the character of the historic downtown shopping districts and nearby neighborhoods. The NY State Department of Transportation has made efforts through increased signage and toll adjustments to encourage Thruway use.

The Town and Village should continue to explore and support actions to minimize through tractor trailer traffic on the communities, and to eliminate the transport of certain hazardous materials in the Skaneateles Lake Watershed.

Under no circumstances should Route 20 be widened through the village or town to accommodate more traffic or expedite movement. Widening would grossly deteriorate the residential neighborhoods along Route 20, destroy the scale and character of the village and make pedestrian road crossings more hazardous.

Efforts should be made to explore with the New York State Department of Transportation the designation of Route 20 as a scenic highway. This program might offer some technical and/or financial assistance to the village and the designation might

be beneficial.

## **2. ROUTES 41 AND 41A THE LAKE ROADS**

Both of these roads are in the lake watershed and require special consideration. The Town and Village should continue to explore and support actions to minimize through and larger tractor trailer traffic on these roads and eliminate the transport of certain hazardous materials in the Skaneateles Lake Watershed.

The importance of their traffic carrying function must be balanced with the residential and agricultural character in zoning and subdivision regulations. Narrow lots and numerous driveway intersections on the lake side of Route 41 have already resulted in speed reductions. For undeveloped land along Routes 41 and 41A, wider lot frontages, deeper building setbacks, and the requirement of reverse frontage lots, where possible, should all be considered. Reverse frontage lots are lots that back up to an existing road, but have driveway access from an interior road within the subdivision. Their “lot frontage” is on the interior road and their rear lot line is generally the major road’s right-of-way (hence “reverse frontage”). The number of driveway entrances on these major roads should be restricted to the maximum extent that is legally possible.

## **3. STATE ROAD 321**

Route 321 has become a major route for access to Syracuse and commercial areas north of the community, such as Welch Allyn and Hanson Mine. Efforts should be made to maintain the residential character of the road and the current greenway corridor entrance to the Village. Bike paths and pedestrian walkways should be encouraged in this corridor leading into the Village.

The Town and Village should continue to encourage the Department of Transportation to review the safety precautions necessary to accommodate the increasing use of this highway.

## **4. OTHER STATE, COUNTY, AND LOCAL THROUGH ROADS**

Driveway entrances should also be limited, through subdivision and site plan requirements, on all other roads which carry through traffic and provide access to abutting land. Incentives should be considered to discourage strip residential development along these roads and encourage interior roads and common driveways.

## **5. NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS**

Neighborhood streets are located primarily in built up areas such as the Village and along the lake shore. These roads should have as their principal, if not only, function the provision of access to abutting property, most of which is residential. Frequent driveway cuts for residential lots are to be expected. If traffic obstacles, such as stop signs, are needed to discourage through or fast traffic from using these roads, such management techniques would be appropriate and should be considered. Keeping these roads narrow and tree-lined, with on-street parking, also discourages fast traffic.

Although cul-de-sacs prevent through traffic, their overall impact on traffic patterns is negative, by overloading the existing network of through streets and increasing the number of vehicle miles traveled from one part of the community to another. For this reason, through streets should be encouraged.

## **B. FUTURE ROAD CONNECTIONS**

Continued development of some magnitude and land use type will occur in Skaneateles over the next 15 to 20 years. There is no sure way to predict where this development will occur but past experience indicates that, in the Town at least, it will be



scattered and uncoordinated unless an overall plan can be used to provide a basic road pattern. New roads will eventually be needed to support future development in areas that are now agricultural or vacant. It is this emerging road pattern that connects new development to the existing traffic network and contributes significantly to the evolving physical character of the community. Cul-de-sacs are generally to be avoided, except in open space subdivisions and conservation density subdivisions, as they are functionally impractical and inconsistent with the nature and character of Skaneateles.

Some proposed future road connections are indicated on the 1992 Transportation and Circulation Map. It should be noted that these are only diagrammatic illustrations of a design objective. Unless the Town or Village intends building such connections themselves, their precise location cannot be determined in advance of land subdivision projects. The principle followed is that the subdivision of larger parcels should produce a road system that connects to other roads in the area and builds on the existing modified grid system. This is considered to be preferable to the development of a series of isolated parcels with no interconnecting road system to tie them together. The interior road network should be designed in such a way as to provide adequate access to adjacent land while discouraging through traffic in the neighborhood.

### **C. GREENWAY CORRIDORS**

A series of Greenway Corridors are proposed for the primary entry roads to the Village as illustrated on the Future Land Use Map.

The objective of the greenway corridor concept is to encourage the planting of selected street tree species on public and private land along these corridors and, over time, to create heavily landscaped routes that help to define and beautify major entry ways. Consideration should be given to providing requirements or incentives to accomplish this goal in regulations governing zoning, part of site plan and special permit reviews and approvals. As another incentive, the Town and Village should also consider establishing a Tree Planting Program and share in the cost of installation and maintenance of trees planted along these proposed greenway corridors.

The following greenway corridors are recommended:

1. West of the Village, from the end of the commercial zone to the Village line, along both sides of the road.
2. East of the Village, from the east end of the professional-technical zone to the Village line.

### **D. DOWNTOWN PARKING**

Redevelopment of the Village shopping center was included as a special study in the 1974 Plan. Expanding commercial development activities on Fennell Street and increasing parking capacity were among the major recommendations of that plan. The Fennell Street corridor is still considered as the most likely opportunity for new commercial development. A long range parking analysis continues to be explored with various parking options in the Village. Minibus systems, shuttle bus and park and ride options should also be explored.

### **E. SIDEWALKS, FOOT PATHS, AND BICYCLE ROUTES**

Establishing footpath and bicycle systems would reduce resident dependence on motor vehicular transportation. In addition to those trails recommended in Section IV of this report, opportunities for new interconnecting bicycle routes and pedestrian ways should be considered by the Village and Town Planning Boards. In particular, new development adjacent to, or within, one mile of Village boundaries should be tied to the urban center by a system of bicycle, sidewalk and pedestrian ways. Such facilities would be established as new development occurs and, in existing areas, as funding becomes available. As development occurs in the hamlets, where appropriate, sidewalks should be installed.

It is recommended that priority be given to installation of sidewalks on Route 321 (State Street), East Street north of Waterman School, West Elizabeth Street, the west side Jordan Street, Fennell Street, Genesee Street, Kane Avenue and East Lake Road, paralleling the roads. An important goal should be to provide safe and convenient non-motorized connections to the downtown area and to schools and major recreation facilities in the Skaneateles community. Bicycle racks should be encouraged in the Village and the Hamlets.

Expansion of the Nature Trail should be encouraged for use as a foot and bicycle path from the village center to the Elbridge town line.

## **F. COMMUNICATION**

The information age, with emphasis on speed of telecommunication and including telephones, cable television contracts, computers and interactive television, impacts the Skaneateles community. Underground installation of utility lines, fiber optic cables, and the development of regulations aimed at discouraging large satellite dishes and communication towers will be important future aesthetic considerations. Placement of antennas and communication towers, if necessary, should meet public health and safety standards and respect the natural features and aesthetic character of the Town.

## **SECTION VI. IMPLEMENTATION**

The Joint Comprehensive Plan is an important tool for any community that wishes to direct future change toward desired objectives. It is beneficial to look at historic development, analyze current trends and identify critical resources. Establishing policy is an effective way to articulate community attitudes and establish goals. Describing specific proposals for the long-range use of land and for a circulation system is an effective way to consider alternatives and visualize possibilities.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide guidelines for public and private actions. Once its broad concepts are approved by the community the plan can, in many instances, provide a valid rationale for land use regulations, for capital investment and for day-to-day decision making.

This section outlines a series of specific actions that the Town and Village can take to implement the goals, objectives, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan. The most important test of the effectiveness of a Comprehensive Plan is how many of these recommendations are actually implemented over time.

### **A. REGULATORY ACTIONS**

Review and modification of zoning and subdivision regulations must be an integral part of the comprehensive planning process. To this end, the Town and Village should cooperate to analyze existing zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations to identify inconsistencies among the documents, and the Joint Comprehensive Plan. Further, the Town and Village should work toward developing consistency between Village and Town regulations. The Town began the process of adopting new subdivision regulations after the 1996 Plan was adopted. It is anticipated that the Town will adopt new subdivision regulations to bring them up to date with state law and make them consistent with this updated Comprehensive Plan.

Some of the zoning changes recommended for the Town include the following:

1. Making the zoning more “farm-friendly” following the recommendations of the state Department of Agriculture and Markets.

2. Establishing a transfer of development rights program (TDR) to encourage development in appropriate locations and discourage it where land is most prized for open space. Allow developers to pay into an open space fund (see B 2 below) as an alternative to purchasing development rights.
3. Refining and improving the “performance subdivision” provisions in the Town’s zoning law so that it is more effective in preserving open space. This will involve a combination of technical and substantive changes that create better incentives for the use of such subdivisions.
4. Dealing with small subdivisions, which are fragmenting the landscape more quickly than large ones. This has been called “death by 1000 cuts,” and it is harder to control than the development of a large parcel where open space buffers can be built into the design of the development. However, landowners sometimes need to sell off a lot here or there, and their need to do this must be balanced against the impact it has on the Town.
5. Adopting zoning incentives or requirements to encourage affordable housing. These may include:
  - Incentives for multi-family housing in appropriate locations
  - Restricting the seasonal rental of accessory apartments
  - Providing infrastructure to accommodate higher densities, especially in Skaneateles Falls
  - Encouraging the conversion of large older buildings, including barns and mill buildings, to apartments and small businesses
  - Creating a supply of permanently deed-restricted “affordable housing” using zoning incentives and other mechanisms, with preferences for certain categories of buyers or tenants, such those who are municipal employees, school employees, or emergency services volunteers.
  - Allowing more accessory apartments and multi-family housing in locations that have the infrastructure to handle such housing.
6. Developing better controls on non-conforming lots in the Town within the watershed. Currently, the requirement that lots can be “grandfathered” only if they have 40,000 square feet of area has resulted in a large number of variance requests. The Town needs to develop a system to allow some reasonable expansion of homes on smaller lots without damaging the Lake.
7. Creating an open pit mining overlay district for the existing mining operations and new operations within a limited area. This overlay district would cover the portion of the RF district lying north of Old Seneca Turnpike.
8. In the HC District on Rte 20 in the Town at the Village boundaries, allowing a greater variety of uses with controls on building size and design, including a significant reduction in the maximum building footprint. Allow more flexibility for existing buildings than for new ones, to encourage reuse and investment in those buildings, while discouraging new buildings that would increase the level of commercial activity in these locations. In particular, this area should accommodate automobile-oriented uses that would create traffic or parking problems if located in the downtown area of the Village. Another major criterion for uses in these locations should be low water consumption, to minimize demand for Village sewer capacity.
9. Revising the regulations on watercourses to ensure they are achieving an appropriate balance between property rights and watershed protection. The very broad definition of watercourse and the regulations that it triggers in the Lake Watershed Overlay has caused considerable concern in the farm community and beyond, because even drainage channels and road ditches trigger substantial setbacks. This should be re-evaluated and changes recommended either to the definition of watercourse or to the watershed overlay regulations, or both.

## **B. NON-REGULATORY ACTIONS**

In addition to zoning and other regulatory changes, effective implementation of a Comprehensive Plan depends upon other types of actions being taken by both public officials and private citizens. Some of these take the form of further planning initiatives, while others may involve changes in municipal management practices, strategic capital investments, or actions by businesses or citizen organizations. Some of the most important non-regulatory actions that will be needed to implement this Plan include the following:

1. Revising and implementing an Open Space, Recreation, and Farmland Protection Plan. The current Open Space and Recreation Plan, available in the Town and Village Offices, is hereby incorporated by reference.
2. Establishing a funding mechanism for open space, recreation, and farmland protection, using recreation fees, private donations, as well as possibly a bond issue, real estate transfer tax (if state law enables this), and money raised through the development approval process (TDR fee). This fund could also leverage other sources of funding, such as state and federal funds and City of Syracuse land acquisition funds. The first step is a feasibility study to determine how best to organize and raise such a fund.
3. Creating an entity (which may be a non-profit organization) that can be a buyer of farmland that goes on the market, offer the farmer a fair price, and find alternatives to conventional development of that land. This entity could also purchase development rights to land that might otherwise be sold for development, enabling the farmer to keep farming the land while getting an economic return from selling it.
4. Implementing the Fennell Street Master Plan in the Village. The Fennell Street Master Plan has been adopted by the Village Board. It is hereby incorporated by reference into this Joint Comprehensive Plan.
5. The Town and Village should consider doing a tourism study to analyze the potential impacts of increased tourism and second-home development and to determine how to deal with the changes that a heavily tourist-oriented economy will have on the community.
6. Coordinating between the School district and the Town and Village Boards and the Planning Boards on matters that involve significant amounts of new development. It is important for the School District's planning to know about development proposals, while the Town and Village governments need to understand the impact of developments that they approve on the School District.
7. Considering creation of municipal sewage management districts, primarily in hamlets and outside the watershed, to allow innovative wastewater treatment systems needed to fulfill the goals and policies of this Plan, which would be managed by a contractor hired by the Town.
8. Establishing a committee of knowledgeable scientists to prepare and implement a plan for monitoring of Skaneateles Lake to regularly assess the state of the Lake and measure the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan in protecting the Lake. This can be done at little or no cost to the Town, using qualified volunteers and available resources from local agencies, organizations and universities.
9. Considering designation of the Lake and a limited area near the Lake lying within the Town and Village of Skaneateles as a Critical Environmental Area (CEA). This would require all Boards reviewing any application for the development of land lying within the CEA to consider the impact development may have on the Lake, and enable the Boards to provide protective measures to mitigate adverse impacts. CEA designation requires a higher level of scrutiny of proposed projects within a CEA under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA).

### **C. IMPLEMENTATION FOLLOW-THROUGH AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

In order to implement the Plan, it will be essential to undertake and complete the actions listed in Sections A and B above, as well as other actions to fulfill the goals and objectives listed in other sections of this Plan. Some of these actions will be undertaken solely by the Town or Village, some will require joint efforts by both governments, and some will require the cooperation of the private sector, the school district, and/or other agencies or entities. The Town and Village Boards should make a list of all of the recommended actions in the Plan, assign responsibility to specific boards, committees, or staff to accomplish these actions, provide time frames in which these should be done, and hold accountable those assigned responsibility. This follow-through should be done by the Town and Village Boards or by a Joint Town-Village Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee. Whoever is assigned responsibility for supervising this process should submit an annual report on Comprehensive Plan Implementation Progress, along with recommendations for changes to the Plan and the land use regulations that implement it. The Comprehensive Plan is a living document that should be constantly revisited, updated, and improved. As circumstances require, it should be rewritten or amended with an update supplement.

#### **APPENDIX A**

#### **EXCERPTS FROM ONONDAGA COUNTY 2010 DEVELOPMENT GUIDE**

County policies which influence Town/Village of Skaneateles include:  
Environmental, Infrastructure and Land Development Policies

1. All County agencies authorized to issue permits or approvals relating to development will take natural site limitations such as steep slopes, shallow depth to bedrock, shallow depth to water table and poorly suited soils into consideration in issuing permits.
2. The County Legislature and County Planning Board will adopt a written policy to protect the environment by encouraging development in locations that can take advantage of existing infrastructure, and by discouraging development outside of service areas that would exceed the natural ability of a location to withstand development impacts.
3. The County Legislature will adopt a policy of restricting the construction of water and sewer projects within agricultural districts.
4. City, Town and Village Boards should seek input from the County Soil and Water Conservation District on projects they review that involve significant soil disturbances, and should adopt appropriate soil erosion control ordinances.
5. The County will protect drinking water supply as the priority use for both Skaneateles Lake and Otisco Lake; this use should be maximized to the extent possible within hydrologic, environmental, recreational and riparian constraints.
6. The Onondaga County Water Quality Management Agency will create lake watershed community management entities for Skaneateles Lake and Otisco Lake to facilitate communication, public education and the implementation of desired watershed protection and management actions.
7. The County will oversee development of density related land use strategies in the watershed areas to prevent water quality degradation in Skaneateles and Otisco Lakes.
8. The siting of a water filtration plant for Skaneateles Lake is critical as it affects the ability of this source to provide treated water to the Southwest Branch pipeline in case of emergency in the Metropolitan Water Board System. Location of the plant will also determine whether Skaneateles, Elbridge and the City of Syracuse need to build separate filtration plants.
9. Decisions to construct major public water supply service expansion projects should consider: a) the potential impact of public water supply availability upon residential growth; b) the need for new or additional wastewater treatment facilities; and c) the potential impact upon existing transportation arteries.
10. Acceptance of community (wastewater) treatment plants must be carefully reviewed in terms of financial resources, operational resources and maintenance capabilities, receiving waters and surrounding area.
11. County approval of community wastewater treatment systems will be conditioned upon the creation of town sewer districts which will assume ownership, responsibility for operation and maintenance, and funding long term replacement.
12. Criteria for sewer service extension will be established based on the community need for new urban areas, adequacy of area highway networks, environmental impacts, fiscal capacity, proximity to trunk sewers and treatment plant capacity.
13. Town zoning requirements for low density and high lot frontage should be used in concert with and to supplement Health Department requirements for on site treatment systems in rural areas with no potential for public sewers. Large individual lot size requirements should be waived for cluster development.

14. Smaller lot size and frontage requirements should be promoted in urban areas to obtain maximum benefits from public sewers.
15. A development strategy for urban fringe areas should be formulated to forestall premature extension of sewers while permitting timely extension at reasonable costs. Lot sizes must accommodate interim on site systems, but not lead to premature extension of sewers or prohibit sewers at the proper time.
16. Large lot size requirements (2-5 acres) consistent with soil suitability for wastewater treatment and ground water protection for sustainable development should be adopted for rural areas. (NOTE: Rural areas are defined as areas that “are not expected to have public water and sewer facilities within a twenty year time frame due to agricultural land uses, restrictive environmental features, distance from existing utilities and lack of a need for urban land development densities.”)
17. NYSDEC’s technical memorandum “Stormwater Management Guidelines for New Development” should be considered for application under SEQR in the following actions:
  - Land clearing or grading projects involving 5 or more acres
  - Residential development of 5 or more dwelling units
  - Industrial or commercial projects that result in an impervious surfact of one acre or more.
18. Onondaga County, through its planning and permit processes, will develop programs and recommend regulations for municipal adoption that protect highway functions and preserve future capacity.
19. Municipal subdivision regulations and project reviews should promote property access from local streets and a system of local connector roads between neighborhoods and subdivisions.
20. Municipal regulation of land along County roads should include lot frontage, building setback, parking and driveway criteria that minimizes curb cuts upon County roads and potential conflicts between traffic mobility and abutting land uses.
21. Onondaga County will encourage municipal planning for land within highway corridors that promotes land use patterns consistent with highway functions.
22. Low density development in Onondaga County results in increased dependency on automobiles and leads to decline in air quality and high energy costs. The County will take these effects into consideration when recommending the future development patterns.
23. Municipalities and Onondaga County will enter into a dialogue to achieve a consensus on the urban growth pattern for the next two decades: the extent of suburban development, the need to protect rural and agricultural areas from residential expansion, the future of older urban areas and local coordination measures to guide future growth.
24. The towns and villages should work to reformulate their land use policies to encourage development where infrastructure exists, and to designate the future extent of public sewer and water service at the suburban-rural fringe.

## **APPENDIX B**

## SIGNIFICANT VIEWS

The following list of views is recommended as a starting point, recognizing that there are many other notable views worthy of preservation throughout the Town and Village.

1. Sandy Beach – from north, south, east and west
2. Village waterfront parks three views of lake from north, south, east and west
3. View of Village on Route 20 (Genesee Street) between Routes 41 and 41A
4. West Lake Road – Bradley property looking east from Heifer Road, and north
5. Hencoop Road – at Hencoop and Weeks Road looking east and southeast and Hencoop and Giles Road looking south and southwest
6. Coon Hill Road looking west from halfway up the hill
7. Richard Road just south of Pork Street intersection looking south and southwest at drumlin
8. East Lake Road at Pork Street looking north and south and southwest
9. Long view of creek from high point of County Line Road north of Crow Hill Road
10. Highland Avenue at Old Seneca Turnpike end; north, south, east and west at high point of Highland Avenue, the drumlins and open fields; 360 degrees
11. Long view; Sheldon Road and County Line Road to the south
12. East Lake Road, 2½ miles from Village, natural cove where lake abuts road looking northwest, east and southwest
13. West Lake Road – Falcone’s farm from all sides
14. Crow Hill Road – looking southeast; long view-Crow Hill at bridge over creek, looking north and south up and down creek
15. Shepard Road looking north
16. Hillside Drive looking southeast and southwest

## APPENDIX C

# *SAVIT*

(SKANEATELES ARCHITECTURAL & VISUAL IDENTIFICATION TEAM)

A Sub-Committee Report

To

Comprehensive Plan Review and Advisory Committee

7/1/01

Committee members

Paul Fiutak -Chairman  
Beth Battle  
Pat Blackler  
Michael P. Falcone Jr  
Charles Major  
Andy Ramsgard  
Paul Vaivoda  
Chuck Williams

Special Assistants

Tammy Murray  
Joyce Jowaisas



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SAVIT Town of Skaneateles map with military number identification

### Attachments:

- 1) SAVIT ID/Key Feature Reference List
- 2) SAVIT Inventory Form #2001 (For submitting properties for consideration)
- 3) Example photos to submit with Inventory Form #2001
- 4) 1862 photograph

## **SAVIT Mission Statement**

“In support of, and in conjunction with, the Comprehensive Plan Review & Advisory Committee’s designated five year re-evaluation of the Skaneateles Comprehensive Plan, the Skaneateles Architectural & Visual Identification Team (SAVIT) proposes to identify and catalog items of significant historical, natural, and cultural prominence within the Town and Village of Skaneateles.”

## **Committee Summary & Findings**

The depth of experienced personnel resources within this committee is hoped to build the reader's trust that SAVIT's recommendations offer a working tool to "Save Skaneateles" for our future generations. Its credentials include:

- Town & Village historians
- Two architects
- A past Town Supervisor
- A prominent local & nationally acclaimed developer
- Current Chairman of the Village of Skaneateles Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission
- Current Chairman of the Town's Board of Assessment Review

With the completion of our Mission Statement, the immediate goal was to provide a practical, working document that would bring life to the well intended but seldom used original Historical Building attachment to the Comprehensive Plan of 1996.

The committee found that a new life had to be instilled into the SAVIT ID/Key Feature Reference List attachment. The new list had to:

- a) Offer a more expansive & interesting list of features critical to securing the character of our Town & Village
- b) Be a readily available and easily referenced document for Town & Village officials to consider, without pouring through lists, pages, etc.
- c) Be easily updated and current
- d) Be accessible to architects, developers, real estate firms & contractors working in Skaneateles as well as students, citizens, local library, etc.

To this task the SAVIT committee has:

- 1) Expanded the Historical Building attachment to include
  - 173 plus, buildings, vistas, cemeteries, farms & monuments
  - a listing which is non-threatening, non-penalizing to the citizen, without National Registry implications
- 2) Developed an overlay, key coded, military plot map for immediate and simple reference by any interested party who seeks to know if a project is in proximity to a Town or Village critical feature (see attachment #1-SAVIT ID/Key Feature Reference list with overlay)
- 3) Established a form & system of inventorying both old & new features (see attachment #2 – **SAVIT** Building Structural Inventory Form #2001).
- 4) Recommended a method of advertising this document to all key town bodies to include, Planning Boards, Zoning Boards, Architects, Chamber of Commerce, Developers & Real Estate Firms via personal presentations by **SAVIT** members.
- 5) Proposed the use of a graduate student architectural photographer, skilled in the method of capturing the essence of the **SAVIT** ID/Key Feature List. Based on the acceptance of **SAVIT's** report, a grant funded, architectural graduate student photographer will be hired for this position and overseen by the professional staff of **SAVIT**.
- 6) Proposed the continued funding by both Town & Village governments. To support an annual audit of the list and use of the reference materials. (see attachment #3 and Recommendation #III, page 55)

## ***THE SAVIT REPORT AS AN EVOLVING TOOL***

The merits of this report in identifying items that are influential in defining the character of the Skaneateles area have been previously discussed. However, a reference tool must be accurate and up to date in order to remain truly useful.

Our community is constantly in a state of flux, not only from the standpoint of new development occurring on formerly vacant land but also modifications to existing structures. It is this committee's belief that due to the extensive quantities of properties that have been identified within this report, it is assumed that in time, listed structures or properties will be directly affected. This may be in the form of additions and/or alterations to structures, restoration of properties formally in a state of disrepair, reclamation of lost view corridors, etc. Additionally, there may be new construction within our community that is of such superior quality that it too must also be included within the list. Consequently, in order for the report to remain effective, it must be re-examined periodically to document these changes. The frequency of revisiting the list is open to review, but it seems appropriate to SAVIT, that this evaluation should coincide with the five-year assessment of the Skaneateles Comprehensive Plan.

It is with this in mind, that the SAVIT committee requests of both the Town and Village boards, the allocation of funds in their respective operating budgets for the review of the report. The projected amount of capital required for the updating of the report could be estimated in the year prior to the five-year assessment, and be based upon the number of affected properties. These monies then could become an integral part of, and a subset of the Comprehensive Plan Review budget. Moreover, the SAVIT report could permanently become part of this five-year review.

As with any tool, if it is not available and within easy reach, we are often forced to compromise both the process and the outcome. Therefore, SAVIT highly recommends that associated map and documentation be prominently displayed within both the Town and Village public meeting areas. It is our vision that the material be located immediately adjacent to the zoning map and be referenced with similar frequency. The map would be within an acrylic frame that would allow for the identification of affected properties in question with an attached dry marker and the documentation close at hand for further reference. The location of the material will not only compel consideration during meetings relating to future development, but will also be easily available to the public for review in preparation for presentation to the respective boards.

**Of special note**, had been:

- A) The committee's realization that recent past good intentioned official policy of supporting vigorous forestation of our Town might be creating a "private" lake. The blocking of Lake views to the average citizen & visitor may be counter productive and was brought to reality when viewing an 1862 photo looking east towards West Lake Street and Skaneateles Lake from the present day Kane Avenue.(see attach #4)
  
- B) The committee has found an invaluable tool for future SAVIT groups & Town & Village Officials i.e. The Onondaga County Settlement Plan 2001 (a copy available upon request)

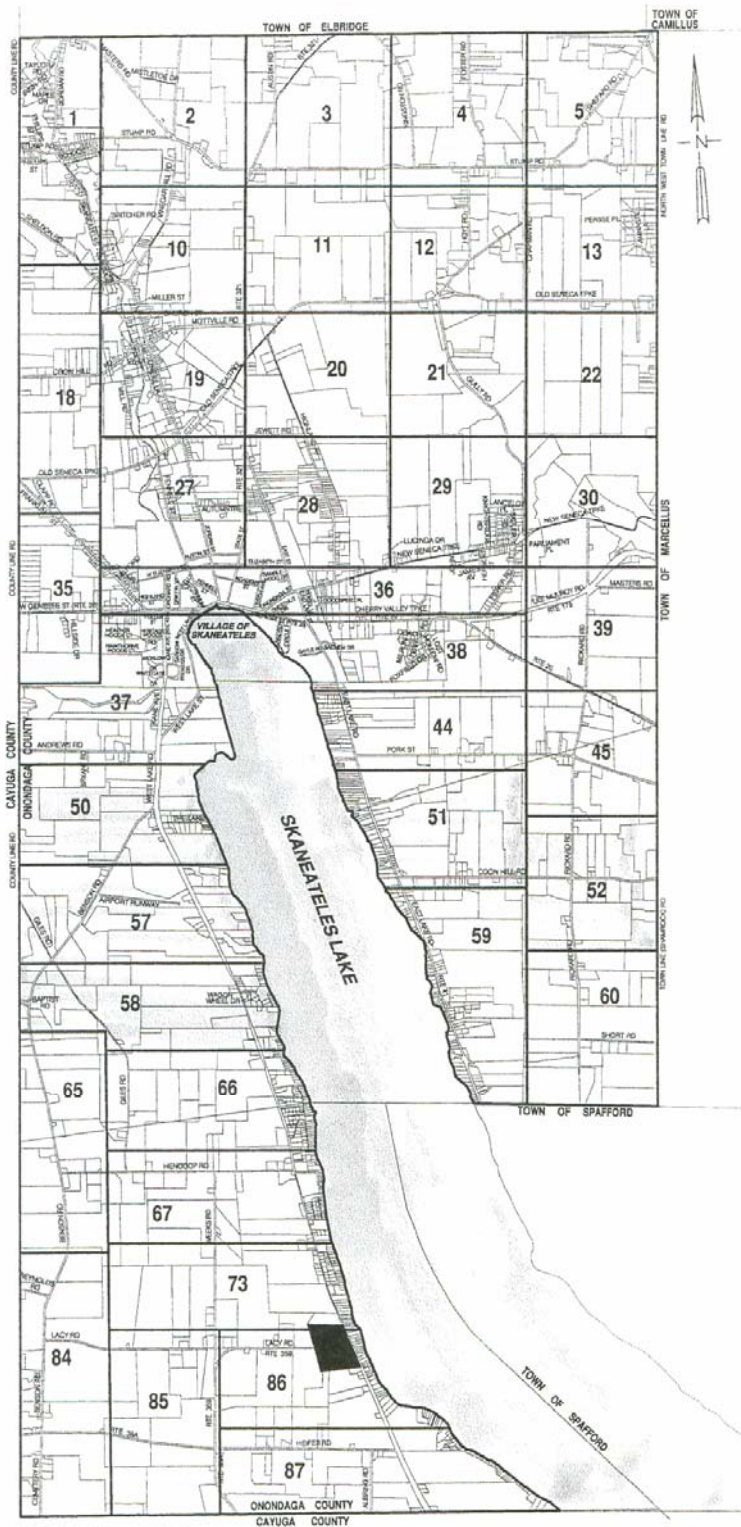
## COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

### A) RECOMMENDATIONS:

- I. Seek acceptance of SAVIT's new list methodology from Comprehensive Plan Review and Advisory Committee
- II. Present both Town & Village Boards with a SAVIT Map Overlay by August 1, 2001.
- III. Continue the SAVIT function as part of an annual assessment of utilization of the SAVIT Tools Via Town & Village funding (\$500 budget) of an update of the **SAVIT** ID/Key Feature Reference List (attachment #1)
- IV. Seek NYS & Federal Grant monies (\$3,500 to \$9,000) with **SAVIT** direction, for contributing architectural photographs to enhance the present listing and map key codes.
- V. Prepare an Index of the **SAVIT** tools for users ease of accessing information.

### B) Conclusions:

- I. Ease of access to identifying critical Skaneateles Features will help to save that which has made our Town & Village a treasure for both citizen and visitors.
- II. The **SAVIT** ID/Key Feature Reference List (attachment #1) is by no means complete and demands immediate scrutiny. The Committee has found that putting The List to the **SAVIT** Building Structural Inventory Form #2001 test will result in its practical and frequent utilization.



**SAVIT MAP**  
**TOWN OF SKANEATELES**

JUNE, 2001



**SAVIT** ID/Key Feature Reference List, 7/2/01  
Skaneateles Architectural & Visual Identification Team

Important Buildings, Cemeteries, Farms, Vistas, etc.

The following properties have been identified as significant to the Village and Town of Skaneateles. Some of these properties may be on historic registers, though most are not. The Village historic district encompasses both sides of Genesee Street from Onondaga Street west to the corner of Jordan Street, north on Jordan to Fennell Street to include the Tallcot Mill.

The intention in identifying these properties is to heighten community awareness and help educate citizens about the community's history. It is not intended that property owner's rights be restricted because of being on this list. It is expected that this list will expand over time.

<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>KNOWN AS</u>	<u>HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE</u>
7 Academy St.	Nottage House	
13 Academy St.	Neibert House	
17 Academy St.	Kowalski	
29 Academy St.		
31 Academy St.		
37 Academy St.		
39 Academy St.		
45 Academy St.		
11 East Elizabeth St.	Polley House	Polley Sleigh
25 East Elizabeth St	John Stephenson House	Skaneateles Free Press
115 East Genesee St.	Gerst	David Colton
130 East Genesee St.	Stella Maris	Fred Roosevelt House
East Genesee St.	SE corner of Genesee and East Lake	
72 East Lake St.	Gregory House	
111 East Lake St.	Delaney House	
15-17-19 Fennell St.		
Mclaughlin Teasel Barn Fennell St.		
31 Fennell St.		
35 Fennell St.	Weeks House	Ice Business
41 Fennell St.	Allen House	President of Village
52 Fennell St.	Martin Fennell House	Steamboat Captain
Skaneateles Office Supply	Site of Bowdish Boats	
6 Hannum St.		
8 Hannum St.		
7 Hannum St.	Les Hunt Garage	
6 Jordan St.	Country Cabin	Powell Hotel
72 Jordan St.	Gregory House	Teasel Merchant
74 Jordan St.	St. Mary's Convent	
81 Jordan St.	ST. Mary's Rectory	
109 Jordan St.	Forrest Weeks House	

10 Leitch Ave.  
12 Leitch Ave.  
18 Leitch Ave.  
20 Leitch Ave.  
21 Leitch Ave.  
24 Leitch Ave.  
32 Leitch Ave.

Howard

5 Onondaga St.  
7 Onondaga St.  
9 Onondaga St.  
10 Onondaga St.  
11 Onondaga St.

Delaney  
McLean  
Cahill

36 State St.  
37 State St.

George Tucker House  
Academy

20 West Genesee St.  
40 West Genesee St.  
48 West Genesee St.  
49 West Genesee St.  
57 West Genesee St.  
59 West Genesee St.  
61 West Genesee St.  
63 West Genesee St.  
67 West Genesee St.  
69 West Genesee St.  
Tice Motel

Syracuse Water Bldg.  
Havemeyer  
Manilla  
Presbyterian Manor  
  
Conan  
  
Millers  
Masters Greenhouse

2 West Lake Street  
3 West Lake Street  
60 West Lake Street  
72 West Lake Street  
105 West Lake Street  
3384 West Lake Street  
3406 West Lake Street  
3405 West Lake Street

Lady of the Lake  
Ardia  
Liegel  
Lynch  
Kenan  
Ruston  
Parker  
Reynolds

Earl Boat House  
  
Netherland Farms  
Westgate  
  
John Hazard  
Francis Sinclair

(All homes on West Lake Street to the Village line should be considered)

Sites

Austin Park  
School Campus  
St. Mary's Cemetery  
Parks

Cliff-Shotwell  
Thayer-Austin



# SAVIT

Skaneateles Architectural & Visual Identification Team

The purpose of this form is to document individual properties, features and views of architectural, historic, cultural and natural significance within the Skaneateles area that are instrumental in providing our Village and Town with its unique character. In completing this form, please be as specific as possible and see support materials for additional information.

## General Information

Item Name or Description: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Grid Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Tax Map No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Original Construction: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Current Owner: \_\_\_\_\_ Use: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Original Owner: \_\_\_\_\_ Use: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Significant Intermediate Owner: \_\_\_\_\_ Use: \_\_\_\_\_

## Architectural Description

Primary Architectural Style: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Primary Exterior Materials: \_\_\_\_\_  
 General Condition: \_\_\_\_\_ Excellent \_\_\_\_\_ Good \_\_\_\_\_ Fair \_\_\_\_\_ Deteriorated  
 Architectural Integrity: \_\_\_\_\_ Original Site & General Character \_\_\_\_\_ Moved (& Date)  
 Major Modifications (date & description): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Significant Architectural Features/Attributes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Historical/Cultural Description

Describe primary Historical/Cultural aspects and persons relating to the site or structure:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Natural/Context Description

Describe significant Natural/Contextual features inherent to the site:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Miscellaneous Information

Provide any additional information unique to the site or structure:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

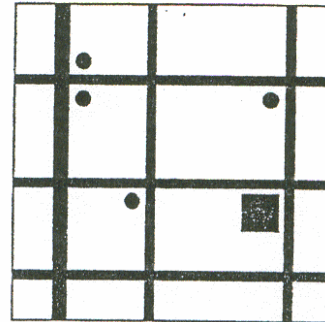


SAVIT

Skaneateles Architectural & Visual Identification Team

### Item Location & Photographs

Item Name or Description: \_\_\_\_\_



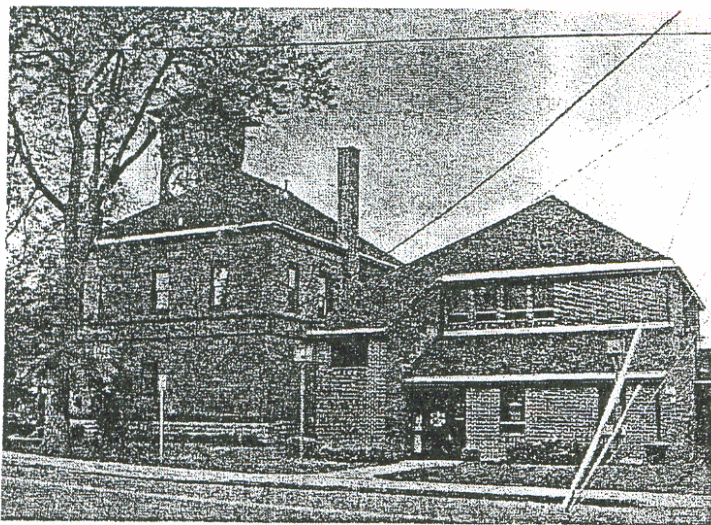
Site Location



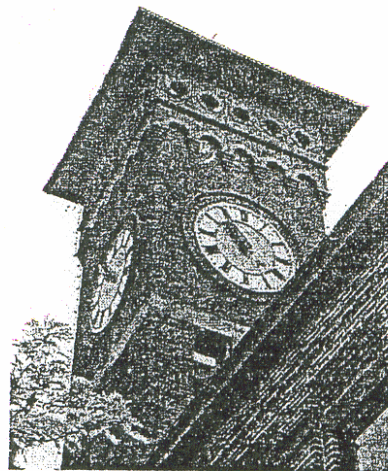
South Elevation



Main Entry Detail



East Elevation



Clock Tower Detail

